It happens to plenty of hunters; the law catches up to you and suddenly you find yourself in prison. Dean Winchester never thought it would happen but there he is, right smack dab in a maximum security hellhole. Biding his time until parole should be easy enough except his cellmate, Sam, is freakin’ gorgeous and has a girlfriend and is driving him insane. Then there's the unexplainable deaths he keeps hearing about that are only making his hunter's instincts itch.

Sam is a man on a mission. He shouldn't be in prison but it was his choice and he refuses to leave until he figures out the truth behind the deaths. He's considered almost every possible scenario until his new 'roommate' enters the picture and pierces the veil.
** Regarding the warning of Rape/Non-con - this is a prison fic. I figured I would just go ahead and cover myself since I'm not sure what the story might present. I don't foresee anything nasty happening to the boys but that's a TOTAL 'just in case'!!!

** The NC-17 rating will take a few chapters but I promise it will come eventually ... pun intended. ;)

This story was born out of my sudden need to revisit every season of OZ. The imagery is loosely based on the OZ set and although I would love a little Beecher/Keller background lovin, I have absolutely no plans to make this a crossover. Just wanted to throw that out there.
“Keep your head down. Keep to yourself. And for heaven’s sake keep your nose clean. You heard the judge. Possibility for parole in eighteen months. Don’t fuck it up, kid.”

Bobby had cuffed him on the ear softly and then pulled him into a quick bear hug, working to hide the tears that were gathering in the corners of his eyes.

His father, he noted, hadn’t come. He was ashamed. Unlike his Uncle Bobby, his father had believed everything they had said about Dean. The lack of faith the man had in him was unsurprising but his absence in the courtroom had still stung a little more than Dean had anticipated.

“I’ll… It’ll be okay, Bobby. I can take care of myself. You did a real good job making sure of that.”

Bobby nodded against his shoulder and pushed him gently away, walking out of the courtroom where Dean’s life had just been rearranged, reconfigured, and more or less ruined.

The guards chained his hands and feet, the shackles hanging heavy and cold against his skin, and walked him slowly out of the courthouse and directly to a transport van. They were wasting no time. He would be firmly ensconced at the Joseph F Bolt Correctional Facility by the end of the day.

They weren’t taking any chances with such a dangerous criminal.

The thought nearly made Dean laugh out loud. The sheer irony, not to mention stupidity, of the situation… How the Hell did he get there? Oh yeah, he had trusted the wrong people. That had gotten him in plenty of trouble in the past. He had always been way too trusting, especially when a pretty face was involved. It had always been a quirk, a slight character flaw maybe, but never had he seen it as one day leading him to a maximum security penitentiary.

He pressed his face against the smooth glass of the van window and watched the scenery pass by – trees, houses, a school where kids were chasing one another on the playground, warehouses, coffee shop, grocery stores, empty lots, more houses… Eventually the cityscape gave way to small farms, pastures where cows stood grazing, and the occasional house set far from the road. These were images he had never given much thought to. He had taken the world around him for granted and now his eyes hungrily drank it all in, the things he knew he would no longer see. At least not for a year or so…if he was lucky.

As they arrived at their destination, he noted the tall metal fences topped with what seemed like miles and miles of looping razor wire. The compound was a muted grey concrete and steel structure that sprawled out before him like a living tomb. Dean’s stomach dropped at the site and scale of it all.

“Prisoner Number 211B653,” The guard read off as they pushed, pulled, urged, and yanked him through processing. He was photographed by a woman that barely looked his way, violated by a man who seemed to enjoy having a gloved hand up his ass way too much, and shoved into a processing cell unceremoniously by an overweight guard that looked like he was working on a short fuse and would beat him to a pulp should he dare to step an inch out of line.

A change of clothes (another delightful bright orange jumpsuit), a thin cotton blanket, a pitiful
cloth covered lump that was to serve as a pillow, a plastic sack containing a new toothbrush, soap, and a roll of toilet paper was shoved into his arms. “211B653. Follow me.” The grumpy guard barked.

Clutching his new belongings tightly, Dean gritted his teeth and tried to hold his head up. He would not walk in to this like a scared child. No, he would show no fear. He wouldn’t give anything away or give any of them the satisfaction of seeing him flinch. He might be a fool and a victim but he would be damned if this place made him even more of one.

*Head down.*

*Keep to yourself.*

*Nose clean.*

*Eighteen months.*

## 211B653 ##

“Wesson! Got a new roommate for ya,” Sam heard Cappy bellow.

Asshole.

Cappy (or Crappy the Craptastic Crapman as most of the inmates called him behind his back) was possibly one of the worst correctional officers Sam had ever seen. Besides being bitchy ninety-eight percent of the time, he liked to belittle, he was slow to respond to anything that meant a prisoner was in trouble, and he seemed to delight in the discomfort and pain of others. Sam seethed anytime he saw the man.

The fact that the lump of a man came bearing the news of a new “roommate” just made him all the more detestable.

“Yeah? Thought I paid extra for a single suite,” Sam replied snarkily, tossing the book he’d been reading down onto his bunk.

He knew it had been coming. Wasn’t like they would keep the bunk empty for long since the prison was typically at or above capacity. If it were a motel, there would be a no-vacancy sign constantly lit. The last guy that had been in the cell with him kept to himself mostly but he was kind of an ass. Branson had been a serial arsonist and all it took was one good toilet fire in the middle of the night to (a) make Sam question his own life expectancy and (b) get the dude thrown into a stricter unit (one where they searched you daily for drugs, weapons and apparently matches). He had been rather enjoying the luxury of a silent pod. No snoring, no weird smells, no forced conversation… Guess nothing lasted forever.

Moving to the doorway, he leaned an arm against it, peering out at the sight before him. Just beyond Cappy’s wide girth stood a man who couldn’t have been older than twenty-four or twenty-five, clutching his little crap-pile of a ‘welcome gift’ to his chest and staring at Sam, wide-eyed.

The staring. Yeah, Sam got that a lot. It was his size (6’4”, taller than the average sasquatch), his hair (which he kept slightly longer than strictly fashionable), or the nasty scowl that seemed to be permanently affixed to his face these days.

He watched slightly amused as the guy worked to control his reaction, turning his head away and breaking eye contact before standing up a little straighter, his chin jutting out in an attempt to look unaffected.
“Winchester, Wesson.” The C.O. nodded back and forth between them curtly. “Wesson’ll show you the ropes.”

“Do I get a say in this?” Sam asked the guard’s already retreating form.

“Yeah, Wesson. I’m just gonna run and get us some coffee then we’ll sit down and discuss what you would like to happen here.” Cappy snorted condescendingly and shook his head.

When they were alone – or as alone as you can get in a unit with twenty-eight other inmates - Sam turned and looked his cellmate over.

There was no denying the man was strikingly handsome, even he had to admit. He was only maybe a few inches shorter than Sam, maybe six foot or six-one. He had green eyes, he noted. They were the color of new leaves and made Sam instantly think of warm Spring days – his favorite time of year. A slight curve in the bridge of his nose denoted a past break but did nothing to mar his good looks. It occurred to Sam that the man also had what was likely the sexiest mouth he had seen on anyone male or female. It just…begged to be bitten or licked or wrapped…

“Uh… hi. I’m Dean. Dean Winchester,” the new guy stuck out his hand, breaking Sam’s inappropriate train of thought and planting him right back in the present.

He blinked at the innocent gesture. It was so rare. You didn’t touch here unless you were fighting, slipping contraband or maybe if you were playing basketball or something. On the outside, Sam would have taken that hand and shaken it amiably. Smiled and said something banal like ‘very nice to meet you, Dean’ before introducing himself and welcoming him into his home.

But here they were, in the middle of a pod, in the middle of a unit, in the middle of a prison, in the middle of nowhere. And all Sam could see was a guy that was trying really hard to look tough when even he knew he was walking into a lion’s den completely unarmed. After seeing so many hardened criminals walk thru with an almost comical amount of ego on parade, the lack of bravado was refreshing. It was almost endearing and Sam’s first instinct was to comfort the guy - assure him it would be okay - but he wouldn’t. Time and experience were definitely something he had gotten plenty of there and he wasn’t going to get involved. Besides, for all he knew the guy was a serial killer or a rapist.

Of course, he didn’t believe that for a second. He was good at reading people, always had been. Some said Sam was the best and it helped a lot in his line of work. When he looked at Winchester, something in the man’s eyes was too clear, too honest. Not totally innocent but certainly not evil.

Sam sneered before his face could even have the chance to form the smile that it naturally wanted to and he looked down at the proffered hand. “Sam Wesson.” He turned and walked further into the pod.

“I’m bottom. You’re top.” He glanced back in time to see Dean blushing, his eyes widened to the size of saucers, and his plump fuck-me lips being pulled in between his teeth and Sam had to close his eyes.

Shit! He hadn’t meant it to sound sexual but Dean’s reaction had him biting back a groan. He wished conjugal visits included girlfriends. He could seriously do with seeing Jess. Of course Jess didn’t even know where he was. He hadn’t been able to speak to her for four months other than through Joe.

Dean, finally understanding what Sam was referring to, tossed his pillow and blanket on the top bunk and Sam indicated he should put his extra uniform, soap, and toilet paper on the small inset
shelf beside the mini-sink.

“Toilet,” he pointed towards the obviously exposed metal toilet in the corner of the pod, “sink, bunk bed,” he spread his arms over the small expanse of space around them. “Welcome to the Ritz.”

Dean chuffed at that and Sam could tell the other man was tense as Hell. Keeping him isolated in there wasn’t going to help any of that so he pushed on. “Alright, now for the grand tour.” Sam led the way back out into the common room.

“So, this is Unit A, your new home away from home.”

As Sam watched Dean take in the scene before him, the old man passed by muttering in response to Sam’s words. “A” for appeal, “a” for alleged, “a” for…ass-rape!

“Deluca, how about we tone down the crazy right now, okay man? This is Winchester.”

Deluca spared the new guy a small nod and then inched his way into Sam’s personal space, his lined face pinched. “Did you get it for me, Wesson? Please tell me ya got it.”

Sam hated hearing the old man beg. He hated hearing anyone like that, but Deluca was a good guy. “Yeah ‘course. Here,” He reached in his pocket and palmed the item casually to the guy. Putting a finger in his face, Sam glared at him. “Don’t get caught. You know you aren’t supposed to have that and if any of the geniuses around here get a’hold of it there is no tellin’ what’ll happen.”

“Just for emergencies. Go hide it now,” he mumbled heading into the cell next to his and Dean’s.

“That was George Deluca. He’s more or less bat-shit crazy but he really is a good dude. He’s in for larceny. Used to make a living stealing cars but I think he found himself on the wrong end of a police chase, some bad shit happened, and… well he’s here.”

“What did you give him?” Dean asked.

Sam could tell it took a lot of courage for the question to work it’s way out of his mouth and he gave the man a little more respect for managing the words without sounding terrified. Yet as much as he didn’t want to be a caretaker, there was no way he could, in good conscious, let Dean get killed - or worse – because he didn’t educate him.

“First off, don’t ask questions like that. EVER!” He got in Dean’s face. “I am a freaking day in the park compared to some of the bastards around here. They will cut your dick off for looking at them wrong much less asking questions like that. Just keep your nose out of people’s dealings, got it?

Dean nodded, swallowing visibly. “G-Got it.”

Sam softened if just a bit. “Also, get that ‘scared straight’ look out of your eyes, man.” He glanced to see if anyone was looking their way. “Guys around here are gonna know you’re new. They sense that you’re scared and it’ll be like blood in the water. You will become their new entertainment and the torment won’t end for a good long while. I’ve seen it happen. We have a whole lot of hours in the day here and you don’t want all that time filled with watchin’ your back and wondering how they’re gonna get you next.”

Dean shook his head, staying mute. He straightened up and closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them, it was like a whole new person was standing before him. His chest was out, shoulders back, head up and a look of steely indifference was on his face.
Sam nodded and smiled at the change but quickly covered it with his own brand of apathy.

“So like I was saying, this is Unit A. It’s divided into fifteen cells or pods; five upstairs across from the guard platform there, and the other ten down here on the main floor. Five on each side of the unit. Two guests per room, making for thirty current residents, for anyone not keeping up with the math portion of our tour.”

Dean smiled at his aside and Sam almost tripped. If possible, Dean was even more beautiful when he smiled. And that wasn’t even a big smile. That was a miniscule humoring smirk. Sam wasn’t that funny - at all - but he thought he might gladly start working on a stand-up routine for a the chance of having a grin leveled at him.

Wait! WHAT?!

He shook his head firmly. Obviously he was loosing his mind.

“Alright. Now, that corner is for television,” he indicated a small flatscreen bolted to the wall behind a sheet of plexiglass. There were four or five guys sitting in front of it watching an episode of what looked to be ‘The Golden Girls’. “We are only allowed half an hour a day but the C.O.s are usually not hard-asses about it if we go over.

“If the boob tube isn’t your thing, we have a library but you have to request the visit and a C.O. has to walk you there and back. Also we have a small gym; same process to get there.

“Laundry room there and next to it are the showers,” he indicated a glass wall that looked in on a blue tiled room. There were six showerheads spread out along the wall and a waist high partition running in front of them to give a small semblance of privacy. Of course it was all bullshit. There was no privacy in this place.

“Where do we eat?”

“Cafeteria is a short walk. It’s just like school – our unit goes together at seven, noon, and six-thirty. Have they assigned you a job yet?”

“No. Not…not that I know of.”

Sam nodded. “Probably waiting for you to see the overseer.”

“Overseer?”

“S’what we call the guy in charge of us. Our councilor. His name is Stanton.”

“Oh yeah. I have a meeting with him tomorrow morning.”

Sam nodded. “He handles our work assignments, talks to us if they think we’re having any ‘issues’, helps us find resources if we want to work on getting a degree or if you’re working on filing an appeal. Things like that. He also arranges conjugals. You…gonna have need for that, Winchester?”

After a beat of silence, Sam started coughing and sputtering at his own question. How the hell had his mouth managed to slip that one past his brain?

Dean slapped him on the back several times until his breathing returned to somewhat normal. Even then, he felt Dean’s hand steady and still pressed between his shoulder blades. The hand was warm and large and firm and Sam felt it with laser focus. He didn’t like to be touched. He abhorred being touched under these circumstances. But he found himself leaning back unconsciously towards the
other man’s touch.

“You okay?”

He blinked at Dean’s question and then had the good sense to elbow his arm away, shrugging it off roughly. “M’fine,” he spat.

Seeming undaunted by Sam’s harsh reaction, Dean shrugged and a corner of his mouth lifted in a sad half-smile. “And, since you asked… No conjugals. Don’t think they let exes visit and wouldn’t bother with that dickhead even if they did.”

So Winchester was unattached. Possibly referring to a male ex. Typically one didn’t refer to women as a dickhead but then again Sam didn’t really know Dean. Still the hint of this information satisfied him.

Until he started asking himself why on God’s green Earth it should matter.

And why the hell were they just standing there staring at each other?

And why the hell did it feel like someone let a jar of butterflies loose in his stomach?

Way too many thoughts were swimming through Sam’s head, all of them involving the man in front of him and things he’d not done with another man in a very long time. Abruptly, he turned on his heels and marched quickly back to their pod and threw himself back onto the bottom bunk, picking up his book and managing to keep his eyes and most of his brain there until it was time for dinner.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean was scared. He stared at the structure before him and timidly poked at it with his finger as if it might fall apart upon contact. He grimaced. How was he ever going to do this?

“Just get up on the damn bed already,” Sam snapped from where he was already sprawled on the bottom bunk, reading a novel in the subdued lighting.

Dean sighed. The guards had called lights out ten minutes before and after fumbling around brushing his teeth and splashing water on his face, Dean had pulled his jumpsuit off and was standing there staring apprehensively at the bunk wearing only his boxers and a white t-shirt.

He’d never felt so vulnerable in his life. After coming back from a tense first dinner, he had actually been relieved when they had been locked in their pod for the night. If he thought too hard about it, he would probably freak out and get claustrophobic in the small 8 foot by 10 foot room. He wouldn’t think that hard about it though. He couldn’t afford to flip his lid. He needed to see it as a ‘base’ of sorts. He needed it to be his safe zone.

He could see through the glass panel door and floor-to-ceiling window that looked out into the common area, that the guards were walking past at regular intervals to check that everything was Kosher. This reassured him to some extent, although he noticed most of the correctional officers seemed more or less indifferent about what the inmates did as long as blood wasn’t being shed on their watch.

He had witnessed this first hand when he saw some guy being bullied in the vestibule on the way back from dinner. There were three burly white guys, all with shorn heads and visible swastika tattoos, crowding a younger and much smaller man who looked like he just wanted someone to put him out of his misery. It was glaringly obvious that they were tormenting the man but even as one
of the bigger men wrapped his arms around him from behind and one of his cohorts proceeded to grind lewdly against the young man as they laughed, the guard nearest just rolled his eyes. Foster, the only female C.O. in the unit that he’d seen so far, watched from the tower, merely seeming bemused.

Dean cringed. He hoped the younger guy was okay. He’d heard stories, he’d seen prison dramas on tv and he knew rape and brutality was not a myth in lock-up. With that thought in mind, he had started towards the scene in hopes of breaking it up but Sam had apparently seen his direction and he’d found himself being yanked by the collar towards his own pod. “Best not, newbie,” was all Sam said.

It had been the first thing Sam had said to him since he'd abruptly concluded their unit ‘tour’.

Finally sucking it up, Dean put his foot on the horizontal side bar at the end of the bunk and pulled himself up onto the top. He shifted and shimmied a little, bounced up and down for a second, rocked from side to side…

“What in the name of all that’s holy are you doing up there?”

Dean froze. He had momentarily forgotten himself. “Uh…sorry. I was just wondering… Is this mattress actually a mattress? Or maybe just a sack full of old sweat socks?”

He heard Sam chuckle and tried to ignore the warmth and relief that spread through him at the nearly friendly sound. “I’ve been thinkin’ maybe it was a sack of old jumpsuits. If you cut it open, maybe it would bleed that nauseating orange color.”

Dean smiled, stretched out and tried to find a comfortable position.

“So, what are you in for, Dean?”

Dean was a little shocked by the query since he had been lectured, not three hours ago, about getting into people’s business. Still, he liked Sam for some reason (other than the glaringly obvious fact that the man looked like sex on a stick) and he felt inclined to answer the softly spoken question.

“Honestly?” He cleared his throat. “They think I killed someone.”

“They think? So you didn’t do it?”

Dean laughed mirthlessly. “I know, cliché right? Sitting in prison, saying I’m innocent. That must be a pretty standard tune around here.”

“You’d be surprised. Some of these guys are proud of what they did. Get them in the right mood and they’ll start telling you about shit that they were never even convicted for. It’s… a little unnerving.”

He stared at the ceiling and clasped his hands behind his head, contemplating what Sam had just said. “Well, I didn’t do it. I was trying to help. Sometimes you just… you don’t get there in time.”

“Yeah,” a whisper floated up from below him and Dean felt the melancholy that surrounded the word.

“What are you here for?”

“That’s none-,” the words began harshly but were quickly silenced. Dean braced for more, waiting
to be chastised by Sam Wesson once more. It didn’t come however. Sam just sighed heavily. “Same.”

“You mean you don’t deserve to be here either?”

“Yes and no. Killed someone. Was accidental though.”

Dean believed Sam. There was a strong honesty in his voice and Dean was usually a pro at sniffing out liars and dirtbags. Sam was neither. He might even stake his life on it.

“You got family?”

“Dude, are you always this talkative?”

“You started it!” He rolled his eyes and scratched his fingers through his short crop of hair. “You think this is talkative?”

Sam snorted. “Is when I’m trying to read.”

“Well…sorry. Won’t say another word.”

After another minute, he heard what sounded like the book hitting the floor and he heard Sam shift below him. “No real family. My parents died a while back. But I have … some friends. Have a girlfriend too.”

“Oh yeah?” Dean’s heart sank a bit at this information, though he couldn’t have said why. “That would be awesome. You could call it P-Harmony.”

“I always knew I’d be a millionaire one day. Just never thought that would be how.”

Dean reveled in the feeling of normalcy that surrounded the conversation. For a moment, he tried to pretend that they weren’t in this place. He imagined meeting Sam elsewhere. Maybe Sam was another hunter and they were commiserating in the hunter hostel that Ellen, his dad’s friend, kept in a shack behind her bar. The bunker there was not unlike the pod so it actually worked as far as fantasies went. Maybe they would have a beer or two, shoot the shit, one thing would lead to
“What about you, Winchester?” Sam broke the silence, shoving Dean out of the burgeoning daydream. “Got family on the outside?”

Dean closed his eyes tightly, the question bringing back the rejection of his father that was still fresh in his mind. “Mom left when I was little. Got a dad, but… he’s not really speaking to me right now, I guess. My uncle Bobby is probably the closest thing to family I have these days.”

“What’s or Mom’s?”

“What?”

“Is he your dad’s or mom’s brother?”

“Neither. He’s… a family friend I guess you could say. Best man I know. He’s wicked smart and, even though he’s got a nasty temper on him he’s probably the biggest pushover you’d ever meet. Like a big ole teddy bear. He runs a salvage yard and taught me nearly everything I know about cars.”

“Sounds like an interesting guy.” Dean could hear the smile in Sam’s voice and had to resist leaning over the side of the bed so that he might finally be able to see it.

“That’s an understatement.”

He heard Sam yawn and almost instantaneously he yawned in response. It had been a pretty draining day. Dean sniffed, pulled his thin blanket up to his chest and settled back into his pillow and his bag of sweat socks.

“Hey… Dean?”

Dean dramatically feigned a sigh. “Do you always talk this much?”

Ignoring Dean’s poke at him, “ That thing I slipped Deluca…?”

“Yeah. The thing you said I should not ask about upon pain of castration?”

“Uh… I don’t think that was exactly what I said, but… Anyway, just wanted you to know….”

“What is it?”

“It was an e-cig.”

“A what now?”

“An electronic cigarette. It wasn’t drugs. I know you probably thought it was.” Dean actually had wondered but really, after growing up with the nomadic lifestyle that he had, he knew better than to jump to conclusions.

“That’s… that’s weird. Why would you give him an e-cig?”

“They’re considered contraband here. Cigarettes you can have but e-cigs not so much. Makes no sense. Deluca… well, his health is iffy right now. He wanted to stop smoking but was having trouble and they wouldn’t give him anything to curb the cravings so…”

“So you snuck him a little cessation aide.”
“Yeah.”

Dean wondered about the guy lying on the bunk below him. He had seemed like such a hard ass mere hours ago. Dean had been a little nervous that they were going to be stuck in a pod together. Now he wasn’t really sure what to make of Sam. His instincts were telling him he was a good guy. Maybe he just took a little time to warm up to people.

On a whim, Dean did finally lean over the side of the bunk and smiled widely down at his ‘roommate’. Sam had his arms crossed and his eyes fluttered open at the sound of movement. Seeing Dean, he bit his lip, a frown on his face. After a moment, he gifted Dean with a slow smile of his own. It wasn’t a grin, but it was just as gorgeous as Dean had imagined it would be.

“Goodnight, roommie,” he said with a quick wink.

“G’night, Dean.”
“Rise and shine, ladies!”

Sam groaned at the booming voice of a passing C.O. “Fuckers. Wish they came with a snooze button.”

He had been talking to himself but he heard Dean mumble “Are they serious?” rather grumpily from above him.

“Unfortunately.”

The locks that sealed the door at night and during lock-downs, snicked as they retracted allowing prisoners to roam freely once more.

He turned onto his back and stared at the stained bottom of the top bunk mattress through the wire frame. Thinking back to the night before, he was a little surprised with himself. He had told Dean quite a bit more about himself than he had meant to. He’d have to watch that. There was just something about the other man. He brought out protective instincts and made Sam curious. Made him want to know more. Yet the number one rule while being undercover was never to get involved with the civilians. He knew better.

He sighed and scrubbed a hand down his face.

There had been another death; The first death in two months, since right before he’d come. It had happened a week ago now and was weighing heavily on him. The guards had tried to keep it hush-hush so as not to spook the inmates but prison was worse than a small-town high school. Gossip was entertainment and with little else to do, it was a sure bet that if something happened worth knowing about, it was common knowledge before the day was out. Sam had more intel from the prison grapevine by five o’clock that evening than he’d gotten the next day from his partner who was working the case from the outside.

This most recent death was the seventh. Seven mysterious deaths over the course of eight months.

He bristled at the term ‘mysterious deaths’. They were murders, plain and simple. He knew this. Except there was absolutely nothing plain or simply about them and he no clue how to go about proving it. No evidence whatsoever had been found at any of the seven crime scenes. Not a single murder weapon, not a single fingerprint, not a single ounce of detectable DNA other than the victims’. The first two hadn’t even been classified as crime scenes since the lack of evidence pointing to foul play had left everyone believing they were simply natural deaths. It wasn’t until those natural deaths had reached a count of three, and a pattern began to emerge, that the FBI was brought in.

A complaining groan issued from the bed frame as Dean shifted and suddenly a pair of feet appeared right next to Sam’s head. He watched as the toes wiggled and flexed and the feet swung freely for a moment, and he tried very hard not to think that it was kind of cute. Except that it was.

Dean jumped down and landed on the floor next to the bunk. He twisted his body from side to side, stretched his arms up over his head and finally bent down to touch his toes, likely working the kinks out after a night on the bedding from Hell.

Sam averted his eyes from Dean’s ass, but not before he noticed the cotton boxers had been plastered nicely to the firm round globes as he stretched. Before his mind could wander too far, he
closed his eyes, working quickly to picture Jess. Jess in her skimpy lace nighty, Jess writhing under him, Jess in…blue cotton boxers that stretched just right over…

Nope. Even his mind’s eye was still coming back to Dean’s ass.

Damn it, but he needed to get laid.

Sam ground the palms of his hands into his eyes and groaned.

“Not a mornin’ person I take it?” Dean mumbled around his toothbrush.

“Not here.”

“On the outside?” Dean spit and rinsed his mouth before grabbing his uniform and pulling it on.

“On the outside I got up every morning at five on the dot, without fail. I would run a few miles, shower, have breakfast, and still have time to sit and have a leisurely cup of coffee before heading in to the office.”

“Office, huh? So you were a paper pusher on the other side?”

“Um… yeah. You could say that, I guess.” Sam propped himself up on one elbow and watched Dean hop around, trying to get his feet through the legs of the ugly jumpsuit.

“You weren’t a lawyer were you?”

“No,” Sam was trying hard to suppress his hilarity at Dean’s uncoordinated movements. “Definitely not a lawyer.”

“Good. I got a little beef with the law right now after that joke of a trial.”

Sam cleared his throat and diverted the conversation back to Dean. “So what did you do when you were still an upstanding citizen?”

Dean paused in his hopping for a moment and considered the question. “Odd jobs mostly. Truth is, I was raised by a single father who constantly traveled for his job. When I was old enough I just fell in to the family business. Never even had a chance to settle down and be any kind of citizen, let alone upstanding.”

“That must have been tough. So you didn’t have a home?”

Dean shook his head and finally managed to get his legs successfully into his pants. His look of unmitigated triumph actually drew a hardy laugh from Sam.

“What?” Sam asked when he noticed Dean was staring openly at him.

“Nothing. It’s just… you have a real nice laugh.”

Sam felt his face get warm at the softly spoken words. His gut clenched and he sucked in a quick breath.

“We gotta get going. Breakfast starts in ten. If we don’t get out there for inspection, we don’t eat.”

Dean made a little retching sound. “If it’s anything like last night’s five star cuisine then I’m going back to bed.”
“You need to eat.”

Guilt settled over Sam. The night before he had actually ditched Dean, choosing to sit with Deluca and his pod-mate, Bob Rebadow or as he called them ‘Grumpy Old Men’ because, well, that’s what they were.

It wasn’t that he had been trying to be a dick, but his initial reaction to the new guy had thrown him for a major loop. At the time, he wasn’t sure he wanted to be near the man. Wasn’t sure it was wise. Last thing he needed was to complicate things.

But the guy had looked so dejected sitting at the end of the table all alone, picking at food he barely ate. Sam had kept an eye on him and noticed several other sets of eyes following Dean in and out of the cafeteria as well. In trying to stay away, Sam wondered if it might have been faster just to paint a bullseye on Dean’s back. In the end, wise or not, Sam just couldn’t watch the guy get jumped because he was choosing to isolate him.

“C’mon, Winchester. I’ll even sit with you,” he offered as atonement.

Dean bat his eyelashes at him melodramatically. “Aww… Saint Wesson.”

Sam rolled off the bed and grabbed his uniform, shrugging it on in a matter of seconds. He smirked cockily at Dean. “Yep. That’s me.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean felt like he was in a principal’s office, except for the guard posted at the door. Yeah, that was a little different.

There was a large paperwork laden desk in front of him as he perched himself on one of the short wooden chairs. In the five minutes he had been sitting there, the man behind the desk had yet to look up from his computer screen but his face was a flurry of emotions ranging from frustration to anger to curiosity and then back to frustration. “Where did everything go? It was just here. Hate these damn things,” he smacked the monitor of the outdated machine as if a touch of violence might make it cough up the disappearing information.

“What program are you in?”

The guy glanced up, at Dean’s question, his eyes visible over the top rims of his glasses. “Excel.”

“Um…,” He gestured to the PC. “Do you mind?”

Stanton shoved his chair back from the desk and waved his hand. “Be my guest.”

A few short keystrokes later and the document had been restored. Dean returned to his seat to see a broad grin spread on the man’s face.

“What program are you in?”

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A few short keystrokes later and the document had been restored. Dean returned to his seat to see a broad grin spread on the man’s face.

“Hey, thanks! It would have taken me another week to put that information back together.” Now that he could focus on something other than the computer, Stanton picked up a file bearing Dean’s name, prison number, and case number and began reading in earnest. “Dean - may I call you Dean?” Without waiting for confirmation he pressed on. “If I may say so, your file reads like a Dickens novel, young man. Frequent boys homes, a dozen schools under your belt before you were even fifteen, dropout at sixteen, got your GED at seventeen… Looks like you were picked up several times for vagrancy and/or larceny and/or breaking and entering.”
Dean examined his fingers where they sat clasped on his lap. He knew the file. Had it thrown in his face quite a bit during the lead up to his joke of a trial. It seemed funny to him how everyone just saw the same things when they were taken out of context. Never once did anyone ask him how much of it was valid. Not that he could tell them much anyway. Wasn’t like he could explain it all away by saying ‘well sure, but we were hunting monsters and sometimes in the midst of trying to kick the ass of a skin walker, breaking and entering just kinda happens.

“I’ve read your testimony from the trial. I know you said it was accidental. I’m no judge and I wasn’t sitting on the jury, but I will say that I think sometimes people get raw deals. Guilty or not, I want to try and help you make the most of your time here. You have just over a year before you’re eligible to go before the parole board. I want you to work on showing them that you will be an asset to society.”

Dean bit the inside of his cheek and nodded. Stanton seemed genuine enough and he would do just about anything to secure an early release. No matter how decent his morning had been, after eating alone in the cafeteria the night before, with a whole lot of hostile vulture-like eyes on him, followed by what had to be the worst sleep of his life on the monstrosity they deemed a mattress, he was already itching to get the hell out. “What can I do?”

“First off, I want you to work on furthering your education, if you’re at all interested. The resources are available to you so it would be foolish not to take advantage. Also, work detail. I want you to work in the hospital ward. Most of the docs are here on a volunteer basis for a few hours each day but we have one full-time physician and he needs someone to help with some of the random chores there. You’ll report there each day after lunch and stay until two.” Stanton made a few notes and then closed the file folder, indicating they were done.

“Yeah, okay. Sounds like a plan. Thanks.” Dean moved to leave. “If you need anything, feel free to come see me. Oh and one last thing,” Stanton said as he neared the door. Dean turned back to face him. “There are a lot of choices here. It may not seem like it, but there are. You need to take each choice to heart and make sure you’re making the right ones. You seem like a decent enough fella. Don’t want to see you going down the wrong road.”

“I’ll… keep that in mind, sir.”

Stanton waved at the C.O. through the glass and the man opened the door, taking Dean by the arm and escorting him silently back to Pod A.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Sam was freaking out. He felt like ants were crawling on him. He felt like he couldn’t quite draw enough oxygen into his lungs for his liking. He did not like this one bit.

That morning, they had sat with the Grumpy Old Men at breakfast, alongside a few of the ‘queens’ who, when not being tormented for their proclivities, were pretty down to earth people (just a little more colorful than most). After the initial shock had worn off for Dean, having been confronted so early in the morning by the sight of a slight man wearing a sarong, an off the shoulder top and bright red lipstick, he had managed to chat animatedly with the old guys and boys in drag alike. Sam had been a little amazed considering how timid Dean had originally seemed, yet he sat there and listened to the conversation as the new guy regaled them with a story about a horrible road trip gone wrong.

Deluca and Rebadow had oohed and ahhed over his rather loving description of his car – a near mint ’67 Impala. The ‘queens’ had laughed at his fumbling attempts to flirt with the decrepit old
woman that ran the hotel as he realized he had lost his wallet and after securing a room, he had somehow managed to get himself locked in the bathroom for two days.

Sam had laughed along with the others, which seemed to earn him a few open mouth stares. Apparently he didn’t do that a lot.

After breakfast they had been allowed into the yard and that’s when it happened.

They had one opportunity each day to go out into the yard for half an hour. The yard consisted of a big ass slab of concrete surrounded by walls and the usual fencing. Typically there would be a few games of basketball being played but most of the guys just milled around chatting and smoking.

Deluca had taken Dean by the arm and was introducing him to some of the less frightening inmates as if Dean were his long-lost grandson or something.

Since he didn’t have Winchester there to distract him, Sam had every intention to head over to one of the guys from Unit B that was sitting on top of a picnic table chain smoking. If he had been standing any other spot in the yard, he wouldn’t have seen it but as it was, a glimmer of light and green caught his eye. Tilting his head slightly to the left, peering through the thin strip of torn tarp, he had a momentary glimpse of grass. Based on the positioning of the prison, he knew it to be the empty field that sat to the East.

He’d sucked in a deep breath as the realization that he hadn’t been outside these walls in nearly over two months came crashing down on him. Not only that but the fact that someone had already died while he was working to solve the case… It felt like his fault. He should have figured this out by now. It wasn’t like he wasn’t trying. He had spoken to every person that knew the victims, he had checked out the locations of all crime scenes, he had memorized the schedules of every unit in hopes of working it out based on timeline… He was loath to admit it but prison was wearing on him and he was beginning to wonder if the mental strain was affecting his judgment on the case.

It was with that thought that he entered the visitation room later that morning.

“Joe.”

“Sam.”

The two men greeted each other through the thick barrier of glass, each holding a phone receiver so that they might hear the other. Despite Joe being nearly a foot shorter than Sam, their facial features looked similar enough that they could have passed for brothers or at least cousins. It was just good luck that it worked out that way. Noone suspected anything when Joe came each week wanting to see Sam during visitation hours.

“How ya doin’ man?”

“Oh, just super duper swell. And how are you?” Sam replied in the most sarcastic and chirpy tone he could manage.

“I see that prison is still working to make you even more charming.”

“Bite me.”

“Oh and your vocabulary has improved as well. Wonderful! Glad to see our tax payer dollars at work.”

“Joe, c’mon. Don’t need this shit right now.”
Joe held up his hands, “Okay, okay. Sorry man. I see now that we’re a wee bit ‘sensitive’ today. So…Got anything new?”

Sam ran his fingers through his hair several times and propped his head up on his fist letting out a long defeated sigh. “Not a damn thing.” It hurt to say it. It was gnawing at his gut constantly, knowing it was only a matter of time before something happened again. If he couldn’t figure out who was behind the deaths…”

“Look, Sam… It’s been almost over two months. Maybe it’s time we pull you out, buddy.”

“No.” he said stubbornly, refusing to give in and admit defeat. “I have one more lead to check into. Just… give me another week. If I have nothing at that point we’ll pull the plug and work it from another angle.”

“Agreed.” Sam’s partner looked relieved.

“What’s the new direction?”

“Know how four of the deaths happened in the hallways between Unit B, the med-ward and the library?”

Joe nodded, glancing around automatically to double check that no one was paying them any attention.

“Well, I know we’ve looked at these guys before but I still think it’s important that it’s near Unit B. I was thinking about trying to get transferred over.”

“Sam, Unit B is -”

“Lifers, I know.”

“Yeah, Lifers; A bunch of jerks with nothing whatsoever to lose. They’ll never transfer you. Even on Larson’s direction they wouldn’t,” he said, referring to the warden of the prison – the only person in the entire facility that knew the real reason he was there. “No way.”

“Fine. Then what if I get my work duty changed so I can get closer to the area.”

“That sounds like a much saner plan, so yes let’s go with that.”

Neither of them had liked this assignment particularly.

In the three years they’d worked as partners, the FBI had bounced them from case to case but almost exclusively in the vein of drug trafficking. They were damn good at spotting dealers and following the shit right up the to the top dogs. Joe was great at schmoozing and talking shit so he was always able to get in good with the dealers and into inner circles. Meanwhile Sam had a very specific knack for sniffing out anything that didn’t match up. He was a natural lie detector. Together they had been responsible for two of the biggest drug cartel take-downs in the history of the agency. So when the word came down the chain of command that they were going after a serial killer that was hidden within the walls of a prison, they had questioned the logic. Sure, no one was looking to rest on their laurels but to have them entrenched in a prison, where murders with absolutely no clues or leads could be found… Well it wasn’t exactly up their street.

Still, Sam had looked at it as a challenge and a chance to swap out their roles, to shake things up. He had asked that he be the one to go undercover while his partner combed through records and scene reports, trying pick out any little inconsistency. It’s what he went into training for. He
wanted to save people. Wanted to make a difference and leave things a little bit better than they
head been. Maybe it was a naïve way to look at things, but when it came down to it, Sam still
thought naïve wasn’t such a bad thing every now and then.

“Now, personal question,” Sam started, a hopeful look lighting his face.

“Okay, shoot.”

“Have you talked to Jess lately?”

Joe’s eyes widened instantly and infinitesimally but Sam caught the slight change before it was
covered with a quick, easy smile. “Yeah. No, not really. I mean… I saw her in passing earlier this
week. She looks… same as she did.”

“Yeah? How did she look, Joe? Did you give her my last letter?”

“I did. Gave it to her. She said to tell you thank you.”

“Well, don’t hold out. Did she reply? C’mon man, I’m dyin’ here. I… I was actually considered
asking if you could figure out a way to arrange for a conjugal. Ya know, maybe you can just
explain that it’s undercover and she has to play the part. She’s great at acting. Surely Larson would
grant it…”

Joe let out a nervous titter and Sam squinted at the suspicious reaction. He’d known Joe for nearly
six years and Joe didn’t titter, nervously or otherwise. Something not unlike a lead weight settled
somewhere in the vicinity of his gut.

“What is it?”

“What is what?”

“Don’t play dumb with me, Randall! Something’s wrong. Is it Jess? Is she okay?”

“Yeah,” Joe pulled as his collar. “She’s fine, Sam.”

“Then what is it? I deserve to know.”

“Yes – of course you do. I just… I don’t know if you need to know right this second. I mean,
you’re not exactly in the best place right now. You have a job to focus on. Maybe…”

Sam pounded the table with his fist and roared. “Man, this is my life, we’re talking about. Fucking
tell me!”

The outburst caught the attention of the C.O. stationed by the door who instantly bowed up, his
hands already gripping his baton. Sam held his hands up in a show of attempting to reign in his
temper. If they thought he was getting agitated or violent, he would be immediately yanked away
and thrown into solitary for a few hours to cool off. He’d managed to stay out of there for this long
and he wasn’t about to blow the record now. “I’m fine. Sorry.” He turned back to his partner. “Joe,
please. You know whatever I imagine will be far worse at this point than anything you might say.
Don’t make me guess.”

Joe gave a weak nod and shifted uncomfortably on the small stool. “I believe she’s seeing someone
else.”

They stared hard at each other through the glass. “You sure?”
“Yeah. Pretty sure.”

“Know who it is?”

Joe shrugged.

Sam’s nostrils were flaring and if he clenched his teeth any tighter, he’d surely crack them. When he got out… “One week,” he hissed jabbing his finger toward the glass.

Not bothering to say goodbye, Sam slammed the receiver back onto the cradle and walked away radiating anger, his hands balled into tight fists at his side.

When he returned to his pod he stripped, grabbed a towel and walked straight to the showers, not bothering to do much more than snarl when anyone tried to catch his attention. Even Deluca got a ‘fuck off’ for his troubles.

Standing under the ice-cold spray, he stared at the water damaged blue tiles in front of him. Rivulets of water cascaded into his eyes, down his face and body and still he just stared. The only thing his eyes could see was Jessica and some nameless, faceless man…

With an animalistic scream, he punched the hard tile. And again. And again. And again. Until he heard cracking and blood came forth. The crimson stain worked like a stoplight and it was at that point the fight drained out of him. He stumbled backwards until he felt cold tile against his back and he slid down, allowing himself to focus on nothing but the physical pain so that he might be spared momentarily from dealing with the ache in his chest.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean returned from the hospital ward around two. He had been introduced to Doctor Drake, the full-time physician, and had been shown the ins and outs of what he’d be doing during his time there. Simple low-dose pain meds were to be distributed as needed (but no more than two in a four-hour period), he’d get water for the patients and bring them lunch if called for. He was to follow each physician in case they needed someone to fetch and carry and he was to restock first aid cabinets and fill out order sheets for supplies as they ran low.

All in all it seemed like a fairly simple job and he was thinking there were definitely worse tasks he could have been stuck with. Like cleaning toilets and bedpans.

Making his way back into his cell, he took note that nobody was in the shower room. It was rare. With twenty-nine other men there, it seemed like there was a constant trickle of people going in and out of the area. Dean, though not necessarily shy, was still in a fairly exposed state of mind and hadn’t been keen to share the facilities. So at this point – he calculated quickly in his head – he hadn’t showered in two days now and he knew that doing just that would go a long way in making him feel even just a little bit better in his own skin.

Not wasting another second, he stripped and wrapped the towel around his waist. He grabbed the prison issued bar of soap and tried to walk slowly and confidently across the unit and towards the shower room.

Draping the towel over the waist-high wall in front of him, he rounded it and turned the first knob, keeping his hand under the water waiting for it to warm. Really the room was fairly clean. It was probably cleaner and certainly bigger than the crappy motel room bathrooms he’d grown up with. At least here he would be able to turn around and the likelihood of a cockroach pulling a kamikaze
mission by jumping in his hair was slightly lower. Maybe.

He cringed as imaginary insects made phantom tracks along his skin. That experience, which had happened right around the time he’d turned fifteen (while he was jerking off, no less), had apparently scarred him for life.

When the water finally reached it’s hottest possible point, just a few degrees below scalding, he thought it might be hot enough for him and leaned in to wet his hair.

As much as he desired a good long relaxing shower, he figured it would be a year or so before he would be able to indulge himself with that again. No, here it would be a race against time to get his ass out of the line of fire, lest he find himself in a very bad position. Quick, yet thorough.

He scrubbed his hair with the bar of soap and then stuck his head back into the spray until the water ran clear and free of suds. Then he slid the bar over his chest, stomach, back, over and under his arms, feet, legs, ass. With soap still on his hand, he moved it down his abs to his cock, quickly tossing a glance over his shoulder towards the windows before running his fingers down the length of it slowly.

The touch started out perfunctory and yet it felt like the closest thing he’d had to a sexual encounter since before the trial started. For the last few weeks he had been way too caught up in the idea of jail time to worry about getting off and then the kangaroo court had landed him there.

He sighed and leaned his head against the tile in front of him, continuing to stroke and yet knowing he probably shouldn’t.

The soap provided a just enough slip and slide, which allowed him to work his hand firmly over the rapidly swelling flesh, his movements picking up speed.

Usually he thought of gay porn or focused on the memory of a particularly good lay. This time he closed his eyes and saw an orange jumpsuit. Correction - half of an orange jumpsuit.

He had seen Sam in his wife beater the night before, the ultra thin white cotton stretched across his broad, hard chest like a second skin. He didn’t really need much imagination to know what the man would look like if he took it off.

Dean hummed as he imagined Sam walking into the shower room, his jumpsuit pushed down to his waist. His mass of tanned rippling muscle on full display, he smirked at Dean and held his hands out to the side in an open invitation.

Oh, Dean knew exactly what to do with that invite. He would RSVP all over that shit.

He crossed to the taller man and plundered his mouth in a rough kiss, his tongue dipping between the rosy lips. He pulled back just far enough to attack Sam’s neck and chest, his teeth leaving small red lines across the taught skin as he went. Roughly he gripped the uniform where it hung at Sam’s waist and he pulled the taller man flush against him, feeling just how hard they both were, hot flesh pressed together through the rough material. Falling to his knees, he pulled the fabric down as he went, languidly exposing a long…hard… pulsing…

“Ah…” He threw his head back, mouth open and came quick and hard against the shower wall. “Fuck,” he whispered and then chuckled despite himself, high on the rush of release.

Man had he needed that.

Feeling way more relaxed than he had any right to, he shut off the water and turned to grab his
“FUCK!” he yelped as his eyes landed on another person in the room. His body coiled with adrenaline as it filled him and sent him into ‘fight or flight’ mode. His mind assessed the situation rapidly and honed in on the fact that it was Sam – friend, not foe.

“Holy crap! Jesus, Sam! Fuck! Y-You damn near… damn near scared me half to death! I could have killed you.”

His cellmate was seated against the wall and had been hidden by the partition. Apparently Dean had been so caught up in his own thoughts and watching the entrance that he had completely missed the naked giant propped up in the corner.

He was way off his game.

Sam’s eyes were trained on the floor at Dean’s feet but he didn’t say a word.

Dean felt nauseated. Shit. What had he done?

He had just jerked off in front of his pod-mate, that’s what he had just done.

Had he said Sam’s name?

Christ! At this point anything was possible.

What if Sam was disgusted? What if he had said Sam’s name and the other man was disturbed? What if he didn’t want to be in the same pod with Dean anymore?

Then Dean noticed the blood speckling the wet tiles around him.

Forgetting his own state of undress and unease, Dean hastily crossed the room to kneel in front of the man.

“Sam! Sam, you okay?” His hands framed Sam’s face and he tilted it up to look at him, watching his face for reaction. “Sammy, can you hear me?”

Sam nodded but sat quietly, blinking up at Dean, their eyes finally locking.

There was something in Sam’s eyes that struck Dean as being off. It was almost a catatonic look, only he was responding. This wasn’t shock from watching Dean blow his wad. This was something more.

“Okay,” Dean whispered. “It’s okay, man.” Fingers trailing down to his neck, then to his collar and shoulders and down each arm, Dean put gentle pressure on each location trying to work out if anything was broken.

“Hands.”

“What?” Dean had been started by the sound of Sam’s voice. The man typically spoke with an air of authority about him. The weak sound that squeaked out didn’t suit him at all.

“My hands.”

Pulling one hand from where it had been curled towards his back, Dean grimaced when he saw the mass of bloody gashes across his knuckles and what looked very much like possible broken finger or two on his left hand. “What the hell happened, Sammy?” The other hand looked better but only
slightly. On it there was only one or two marks that would likely just form bruises.

Dean straightened from his crouch looking out the clear glass to see if he could see the responsible party. “Who did this, man?”

Sam looked up at with a derisive smirk. “Why? Gonna beat ‘em up, newbie? Gonna go apeshit on some gangbanger?”

“I don’t like people getting hurt. No sense to it.” And he especially was not okay with Sam getting hurt. Maybe it was the fact that they were sharing a pod or maybe it was that he had been so relieved when Sam had opened up to him the night before. Either way he felt a kinship with the man and he latched on to that as something real and positive in the middle of a shitty situation. Dean was loyal to a fault at times and it seemed that Sam was already working his way into the select few that got the distinct honor of having that loyalty.

“Maybe I asked for it.”

“Nah,” Dean knelt in front of him once more. “You might like to put out a lot of bluster, Wesson, but you were more welcoming yesterday than I figured anyone would be. Plus… you talk in your sleep.”

“Bullshit. Do not,” Sam scoffed.

“Do so. Heard you chattering on about some puppy. Was lickin’ your face.” Dean turned and sat against the wall beside Sam. “And you giggled. I swear. And I figure anyone that giggles about some puppy lickin’ their face… well, they can’t be all that bad.”

His words seemed to affect Sam as he watched the other man’s face grow sad and his forehead wrinkle with a deep frown. “My…girlfriend. The dog was what I got her for Christmas last year. I always wanted a dog. We had to get rid of him, though. She was allergic.” Sam murmured, his gaze glazed as if he were seeing the memory replaying before his eyes.

“That’s too bad. Hey, maybe when you get out you can get her one of those hypo-allergenic dogs they breed these days. Weird as hell – I mean, how do they even do something like that? - but maybe it would be a compromise.”

Sam held up his hands and clenched and unclenched them finally checking out the damage for himself. “Don’t think so. Just found out she’s cheating on me.”

Dean stared into his eyes again for a moment, taking in the very real hurt there, and feeling a momentary sense of pain for the other man. “Yeah?” He bumped his shoulder into Sam’s. “Then she’s an idiot.”

“No she isn’t. She’s a doctor. Smart as hell.”

“Book smarts. Doesn’t mean she has any common sense. Dumb as dirt if she screws up and loses a good guy like you.”

Sam snorted. “You don’t even know me. Not really.”

“Yeah, well I’m pretty good at reading people,” Dean replied, smiling when Sam began to snigger. “What? Did I say somethin’ funny?”

“N-No…,” but his laughter only grew, bubbling out of him.
“What?” The laughter was infectious and Dean found himself chuckling alongside Sam.

“It’s just,” he shook his head, “I’m bleeding, my hand is probably broken, we’re talking about hypo-allergenic dogs and my failing relationship… and all the while we’re naked as jaybirds sitting in the floor of a prison shower room. What the hell, man? How am I even here right now?”

They laughed a moment more until Dean sobered, one word reverberating in his head.

_Naked._

They were _both_… naked.

He swallowed thickly. “Well… this is awkward.”

Sam rolled his eyes. “Not like you have anything I’ve never seen. I don’t believe for a moment that you’re some nutjob that’s gonna try and violate me. And, no offense but even if you wanted to, you couldn’t.”

Dean scoffed. “Are you saying I couldn’t take you if I wanted to?”

Sam smiled indulgently, the dark cloud seemingly having lifted at least for the time being. “I think you think you could. And I think you would try. I just don’t think you’d succeed.”

“Easy to say that now. Now that you have gimpy hands. I can’t challenge someone with gimpy hands.”

“They won’t be hurt forever.”

“Fine. Hands heal and we spar.” Looking decidedly amused and distracted from his relationship issues, Sam agreed readily. “Now come on,” Dean stood and quickly donned his towel before tossing Sam’s towel to him, the white cotton landing squarely over his head. He made it a point to look anywhere other than at Sam’s body, though he knew he’d probably kick himself later. This wasn’t the time to sneak a peak. “Let’s get you to the infirmary so they can bandage you up.”

Sam lifted a corner of the towel and nodded at Dean solemnly. “Yeah. And thanks, man.”

Dean returned the nod and retreated towards the door to wait for Sam.

_More to come! Meanwhile, let me know what you think!_
Blood in the Water

Chapter Summary

I just want to add a small non-con warning on this chapter. It is more implied than anything but still worth a mention.

Also I wanted to post the third chapter days ago but it just wouldn't stop. It's long but it moves the story forward as I wanted it to so I really hope you like it and it was worth the short wait!

Chapter 3 Blood in the Water

Guiding Sam gently back to the pod, Dean had helped the other man slip into his uniform, being extremely mindful of his busted hand. Taking the lead, Dean walked him to the nearest guard and explained that Sam had accidentally fallen and scrapped his hand against a brick wall…repeatedly. Sam just stood there quietly, biting his lip against the increasing pain and holding the most injured hand against his chest.

The guard of course was not buying it, especially since there were no brick walls to scrape anything against. But he said nothing since no one else seemed to be stumbling forth with a matching face.

He radioed a request for the side door to be opened and walked Sam in the direction of the hospital ward.

The second the doors closed behind them, Dean felt uneasy. He wished he could have gone with Sam. Which was obviously insane. How could he feel so connected to someone he just met?

Forty-eight hours ago, he didn’t even know of Sam’s existence in the world. Now he was worried about him. He wanted to hug him and make him feel better. He wanted make him believe that he deserved so much better than what his girlfriend had done.

Dean sighed, disgusted with himself.

Here he was trapped in this place for a year and some change, and he was busy acting like a teenager, worrying himself over a crush that he had on his pod-mate. A man who just so happened to be straight and who was in prison for murder. Though according to Sam it was accidental and technically Dean was in for the same reason so casting stones wasn’t really an option but then who was he to judge anyway?

He had also officially sworn off relationships so really it should all be a moot point.

On the outside, he might not have settled down long enough to have a lot of relationships. He
wasn’t really the type. He didn’t like being tied down and he hated having to answer to someone else. But he went thru certain places often enough to have ‘special friends’. Some were civilians; Jordan who tended bar in Nebraska, Seth who worked on an oil rig in Texas, Matt in Memphis was always fun – especially when his twin brother Marshall joined in…

Sometimes his hookups were hunters, like him. Hunters were easy because you could have fun on the fly, bail without warning and usually they thought nothing of it. Until Brian. Brian had been the game changer and if Dean had been smart, he would have sworn off more than relationships after that fuckin’ fiasco. He should have sworn off sex and become a monk, if he was being honest with himself.

But smart decisions weren’t always Dean’s strong suit, as made evident by the fact that he was currently standing in the middle of a prison pod pissing into a metal toilet.

In hopes of steering his mind away from his worry over Sam and the self-loathing that came along with thinking about his ex, Dean walked into the common room where distraction was found in the form of Rebadow, Deluca, and Francois.

“Know how to play cards, kid?” Rebadow had asked with his trademark deadpan lack of inflection.

“I’ve played a hand or two.” He took a seat at the small round table between Deluca and Francois, a French ex-patriot he’d met earlier in the yard. He still wasn’t sure if Francois was his first or last name and the guy spoke mediocre English at best, but he seemed nice enough for someone who, as Deluca had put it, had kidnapped his way through three states.

Only ‘ze rich bourgeois ass-holes’, Francois had assured him. And he never harmed, he just needed the ransom money.

It was fucked up, but in the hodgepodge mix of Unit A, that seemed relatively tame as far as convictions went.

“Straight poker boys and we’re playin’ for candy,” Deluca explained as he shuffled and dealt cards.

“Candy?” Dean looked dubious.

Deluca shrugged. “None of us smoke.”

“Okay, well great! Count me in. Except…I have zero candy.”

“You can play with IOUs this time.”

Dean looked at his cards and wanted to laugh out loud as the poker gods shined down upon him. He wouldn’t dare though; Poker face and all that. He pulled the cards close to his chest and waited for the opening bet to start them off. He would only need the IOUs on the first hand. After that he would be able to play with all of his winnings.

## 211B653 ##

It was quite a while later before Sam returned to Unit A that night.

He looked down at his thickly bandaged hand, a splint on one of his fingers where he’d broken it. He sniffed at the absurdity of it. The damn thing was stretched out straight as a board and looked like it was continuously pointing at something.
How much of a moron was he? Seriously, he had hand-to-hand experience. He knew how to throw a punch. How the hell had he managed to break a finger?

‘Because typically the target isn’t a wall’, he thought making himself feel like even more of a dumbass than he already did.

The worst, or maybe best part, was that Winchester had seen him in the state that he had. He had flown off the deep end because Jessica was cheating on him. Sam was sure he’d looked like a complete child.

Yet, Dean had been amazing. Somehow, even as upset as Sam had been, Dean had calmed him, had even made him laugh – which again, according to Deluca, was apparently some amazing feat. He never realized how little he’d laughed before.

Maybe he had always been more of an uptight sort of guy. He liked order and tended to be more serious minded. Not that he couldn’t enjoy a good joke, it was just that his job was so mentally taxing and … Oh, who was he kidding? Even before the job, Jess had told him to lighten up on far more than one occasion.

Being led through the door of Unit A, he gave the C.O. a nod and headed towards his pod, then b-lining to the tables when he spotted Dean and the old guys.

“Straight Flush, boys! I think you can read that and I think you know exactly what you can do after reading that.”

Sam smirked at Dean’s loud exclamation and watched him pull a sizeable pile of candy to his side of the table. The three other men tossed their cards down and huffed. Francois made a lot of hand gestures as he cursed away in heavily accented French. He got up and pocketed his own much smaller pile of candy before stomping away like he was four.

“Don’t be a sore loser, Fran!” Dean called after him.

Deluca snickered at the nickname and even Rebadow cracked a smile and muttered, “Fran,” under his breath.

“Hey! Look who’s back!” Dean finally noticed Sam approaching and gave him a wide smile. Sam drew in a deep breath. Something about that big grin… It was nice to feel like someone was happy to see him.

Sam waved his left hand in front of him, showing off the evidence of his temper tantrum.

“Nice,” Dean’s nose scrunched up in a sympathetic grimace.

“Hey Wesson, did you happen to see which way Fran went?” Deluca asked, straight-faced.

Without thinking, Sam pointed towards Francois’s pod with his left hand, the rigid digit already extended. He rolled his eyes. “Oh ha-ha.”

The other three cracked up and even Sam couldn’t help but chuckle at the sound of the boisterous laughter. Maybe none of them did a lot of that. Not until recently anyway.

“Alright, I’m out.” Dean tossed a handful of candy back to each of the others then cupped the rest in both hands. “Gentlemen, it’s been a real pleasure.”

“Candy thief,” Deluca called out to their backs, but there was no ire in the words.
“Wow.” Sam watched Dean spread the massive rainbow assortment out on the top bunk. “You may want to hide that as soon as you have a chance. That stuff is about as good in trade as cigarettes.”

Dean frowned. “Yeah. Well, help yourself to any of it. I mean, there’s no way I need to eat all of this.”

Sam shook his head. “No way. Not takin’ any of your stash.”

He got an eye-roll for that. “Here, at least take a Snickers. And don’t ever say I never did anything nice for you,” he said with mock severity.

“Um… well if you’re offering. Mind if I have that little pack of Skittles instead? They were always my favorite growing up.”

Dean smiled warmly and tossed him a pack, which he caught with his good hand.

While Sam sat on his bed reading and munching on the excessively sweet candy, he could hear the occasional crinkle of wrappers as Dean sorted his candy and shoveled the loot into some of his clean socks. The sound reminded him of Halloween nights, digging through the massive amounts of cavity inducing treats and the thought made him wistful.

Before he knew it they were being called for line-up and they were marched to the cafeteria, the two of them sitting alone since the Grumpy Old Men had decided to be semi-sore losers and ignore Dean for the evening. The effect was made slightly less dramatic, however, when Deluca kindly came over to explain this to Dean while in the same breath promising they would sit together at breakfast. The old man had really taken a shine to the new guy.

By the time the guards called for lights-out, Sam had a pretty good running speech in his head. He knew he had to address what had happened earlier. He felt like such an ass for allowing Dean to see him in that state. He hated getting caught with his pants down and this time was the worst because it was literally and figuratively.

Dean, I’m very sorry you had to witness my unfortunate meltdown. It was immature and ill-timed. I’m an adult and I should not have acted in the manner than I did, however, I would like you to know that I do appreciate you coming to my aid and snapping some sense back into me.

The doors slid closed, locking them in for the night.

“Dean,” It was as far as he got in the speech before his mouth got oddly dry and his tongue seemed to twist around itself.

The man was undressing. How was that fair? Sam had a serious apology – slash – ‘thank you’ speech to get through and Winchester was half naked.

Dean looked up from where he was folding his jumpsuit, standing in only a pair of thin boxers. “What’s up Sammy?”

“Sammy?”

He shrugged. “Just suits you.”

It really didn’t. Sam had read everyone in his life the riot act if they’d tried to call him that. He didn’t like the way it made him feel infantilized. Why, then, weren’t his teeth set on edge when it came out of Dean’s mouth? “Okay, but if other people start callin’ me that, it’s on your head.”
“Won’t call you that out there then. Just when it’s only the two of us.”

“Listen, Winchester,” he looked away from the man, his long, smooth, naked torso distracting him more than he thought should be possible. “I just wanted to say I am really sorry about earlier. It was…stupid of me. I was just extremely upset when I heard about Jess and I’ve had stuff on my mind. I’m really glad that… that you were there. So… thank you.”

Dean’s face flushed slightly as he met his eyes. “I’m sorry you had to go through that. But … I’m glad I was there too,” he said sincerely.

“You’re a pretty good guy, Dean Winchester.” Sam put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed gently.

“Back at’cha,” Dean said glancing away shyly.

Man but he was adorable when he did things like that.

“Of course…I could have done without the show beforehand.”

Dean’s eyes snapped up to his and the man turned beet red in five seconds flat. If Sam didn’t know better, he would have thought he was choking. A theory that sounded even more plausible when loud hacking coughs began emanating from Dean.

Taking pity on Dean, he slapped at his back through the violent coughing fit. “How about we call it evenly matched and forget all about it? One embarrassing situation cancelled out by another.”

“Yes. Forget. Good. Forget, yes.” Dean babbled and Sam tried not to laugh at the blatant mortification on his face. “How embarrassing,” Dean muttered to himself.

“You’re so adorable.”

They both froze. Sam wasn’t sure where his brain-to-mouth filter had gone but he was pretty sure it had left the building. “I-I…”

Bouncing back from his shock, Dean gave him a cocky half-smile. “Don’t I know it.”

Sam sighed in relief that his pod-mate seemed to be okay with letting it slide. “We’ll blame that on the pain meds.”

“Sure thing.” Dean nodded and turned towards the sink.

Sam just wanted to get in bed. This day could fuck off already. Tomorrow would be better. Tonight he would force himself to sleep a full eight hours and when he woke up his brain would be back online.

Oddly enough, there was a distinct sound of crinkling as he lay back against his pillow. He frowned. Turning, he picked his pillow up noticing something wasn’t quite right. The shape was off. Cautiously, he put his hand in the case and withdrew packet after miniature packet of Skittles. Twelve in all.

The bright colors swirled and brought back childhood memories. His aunt had been his most favorite person in the world when he was little. While his parents had always been strict about when and what he ate, Aunt Lou had visited at least once a week, sneaking him Skittles and taking him out to dinner and movie dates. It was likely to give his parents a break, but she had been one of the few adults that listened to him and given him much attention. So much like the candy, she had
been vivid Technicolor in a world that had always seemed like so much khaki and grey.

Bright almost childlike laughter filled the pod as he got caught up temporarily, clutching the stash to his chest. It took him a moment longer than it should have to connect the dots.

He looked up to see Dean laughing at his enthusiastic response. Not cruelly or mockingly. It actually seemed like maybe he just enjoyed the idea of making Sam happy. And it had.

Without thinking too hard on it, Sam tore open a packet and crossed to Dean. “Here.”

“No, they’re yours. You eat them.”

“Take half.” He shook four or five little round pieces of sugary goodness into Dean’s upturned palm and then poured the rest into his own before catapulting them into his mouth.

Dean followed suit and they smiled at one another like kids momentarily allowing themselves to forget where they were.

Again, Sam refused to think too hard on what he was doing he just went with the flow. Tomorrow he would be sane and level-headed again, but tonight…

He leaned in and pressed his mouth softly against Dean’s. It started off as a fleeting brush of lips. Warm and friendly. Except he didn’t normally kiss his friends.

He heard Dean hum and pulled back just enough to take in the other man’s reaction. He watched as his eyes slipped closed and a look of pure contentment washed over his face. He watched as his right hand rested on Dean’s shoulder and slowly inched it’s way up until the fingers were spread over the warm skin of his neck. His thumb slowly stroked the firm line of Dean’s jaw.

He opened his lips slightly, taking gently nips at Dean’s and when Sam finally got up the nerve to slip his tongue forward and slide it along the full bottom lip, Dean moaned quietly in the back of his throat and opened his mouth in warm welcome.

The kiss was hesitant and not rushed and Sam smiled, as Dean tasted of Skittles. He knew he would never be able to eat the candy again without remembering that very moment.

Finally drawing apart, Dean fidgeted and casually tried to put his hands down in order to cover the fairly obvious tent in his shorts. Sam was sporting one too – they were a matching set – but thankfully he was still wearing the god-awful orange getup and that covered it somewhat.

“So…should we blame that on the pain meds too?” Dean asked, looking a little shaky but still amused.

“Definitely.”

“What did they give you anyway?”

A shrug. “Tylenol.”

“Like…hardcore morphine-laced Tylenol?”

Sam smirked. “Just two low-dose out of a packet in the first aid kit.”

Dean gaped slightly at him and rubbed the back of his neck. “Maybe you’re allergic or something.”
Still apparently unwilling to believe what had just transpired.

“Not that I know of,” Sam started brushing his teeth as Dean put his foot on the rung to get up on his bunk. “Oh, and Dean...?”

Dean paused and looked up at him. Sam spit, rinsed and then patted his mouth dry with a towel before looking back at him.

“I was just going to say... earlier, in the shower...”

Eye-roll. “I thought we weren’t going to bring that up.”

“Well, I was just going to say... from what I did see in the shower... You have nothing to be embarrassed about. Like, at all.” His eyes zeroed in on Dean’s still fairly impressive and noticeable hard-on before traveling back up to his face.

Dean almost slipped off the rung and had to grip the top bar tightly so he didn’t fall. His face was once more pink but this time there was not a trace of embarrassment to be found in the myriad of expressions that passed over his face. He hopped up and settled in under his thin blanket and Sam undressed and did the same on the bottom bunk.

“G’night Dean.”

“G’night Sammy.”

## 211B653 ##

Dean’s upbringing had not been one overly filled with affection.

His mother walking out on them had so emotionally scarred his father, John, that it rarely seemed to occur to the man that he hadn’t just lost his wife. His son had also lost a mother.

If Dean had cried when he got hurt, John had picked him up and told him to dust himself and to ‘move on’. When Dean got a wild hair and decided that he wanted a real Christmas like the other kids got, his father had told him Santa was a hoax and presents were just a bunch of stuff that made the rich corporations richer, so move on. If he had done something wrong, like the time he had packed a few of the salt rounds incorrectly and it had nearly taken off his dad’s hand, Jon agreed that he should feel guilty but that it didn’t help a damn one of them so...move on.

When he came out to his father, Jon hadn’t spoken to him for a week. Dean finally confronted the man as he stumbled back to the motel half drunk one night. Taking a page from his upbringing, his exact words to the man had been “Dad, I suck cock. Now move on.”

It was just how he was, how he had been raised and therefore a big part of him. Tough. No nonsense.

If it weren’t for Bobby, he probably would have actually believed all of that shit. Luckily for him, Bobby had filled in the gaps and balanced him out. When they visited him or went on hunts together, the man had hugged him, ruffled his hair, taught him how to throw a curveball, gave him cocoa and ice cream, told him accidents happened when he broke things...

Still, no matter how many romantic comedies he’d been forced to watch with Bobby, Dean had never possessed the gene that made him the sappy, lovey-dovey type. No fucking way. He wasn’t a chick. He might prefer fucking men (or being fucked if the circumstances were right), but he was
still a guy. A guy who didn’t go in for all the emotional crap.

Why then, was he in the hospital ward walking past the entry every few minutes, so that he might catch a glimpse of Sam through the small window by the door?

He was fairly sure it was because he wanted him. Obviously. He normally topped but he was pretty damn sure he would take the taller man any way he could get him.

Still that wasn’t it. That wasn’t why his heart was all out of rhythm at the sight of Wesson mopping the damn floor. No, even Dean was honest enough with himself to know that sex wasn’t necessarily the be-all end-all here.

That kiss had shaken him up pretty badly. Literally, his knees had gone shaky and weak. It was all he could do not to jerk off after that. Sam was sure to hear it, being four feet away, and the last thing he wanted was for him to think Dean was a serial public masturbator. He had willed himself soft by thinking of nasty food combinations and how big the bet would have to be for him to eat them and had drifted off to sleep fairly quickly after that.

He figured the moment had passed and when he got up he braced himself for weird Sam or maybe even hostile and quiet Sam, but he got neither. Sam was just…Sam. He acted no different. He didn’t mention the kiss but he wasn’t being awkward either, which was a relief.

Dean tried not to over think things. For all he knew, Sam was hard up and just needed somewhere to stick his dick. It was prison after all. Maybe the ultimate goal was for Sam to make Dean his bitch.

Dean swore under his breath as he realized the thought had made him half hard. Shit. What the hell did that mean?

Moving a cart of cups towards the small water cooler in the corner, he purposefully went the long way around the room so that he passed once more by the window. This time he did a double take. Sam was on his hands and knees looking sideways at the wall. Dean shifted to see if maybe one of the C.O.s might be there. Maybe something weird was happening. He wanted to go out there and check on him but he they were separated by a very large, very locked steel door. He checked to make sure no one was there to question him and he edged closer to the window. Sam was crawling down the hallway, facing away from Dean, and all he could tell was that he seemed to be tracing his finger along the seam where the stone wall met the concrete floor.

“Winchester!” Dr. Drake called out from the small office he shared with the other staff.

Dean startled. “Yes sir?”

“Can I get some help in here?”

Dean pushed the cart to the side and glanced back at the window to see that Sam was gone. He frowned and made a note to ask him about it later before heading back to work.

## 211B653 ##

The warden had come through with Sam’s work transfer. Instead of being the book trolley for some of the more locked down units, Sam was now going to play janitor. It was explained by ‘Crappy’ who had looked happier than a pig in shit when he shoved a mop in Sam’s hand and had told him his first assignment was cleaning up puke outside of the hospital ward.
Sam fought the urge to punch the man as he stood there watching Sam don his gloves and little white face-mask. Sawdust or some sort of kitty litter had already been poured over the mess and Sam had to pick that muck up with a broom before he could clean any further. The whole process left him gagging and yearning for a hot shower or three.

Maybe a bath in hand sanitizer?

Cappy got called away on his radio and Sam finally relaxed, knowing that the other C.O. that was patrolling the hallway wouldn’t be back for a few minutes.

He threw down his cleaning materials and yanked the gloves off all the while his eyes roved over the area hunting for anything that might point to something.

By the time his shift was completed, he’d managed to clean only half of what he should have been able to but he had also combed the entire hallway, the entryway to Unit B, and the library. And still…nothing.

Not a damn thing!

He all but threw the cleaning supplies back in the janitor’s closet, earning him a stern warning glare from the C.O. that had unlocked it.

He was so pissed. With this case. With himself. With the situation.

And then Dean rounded the corner, walking back to Unit A with a little smile playing on his face. He hadn’t noticed Sam but Sam mirrored the smile before he could stop himself, his previous frustration momentarily pushed aside.

He tried not to think too hard about what that meant.

## 211B653 ##

“So what were you doing on clean-up?” Dean finally asked later as he stood in front of their mirror shaving. He didn’t particularly need to shave but it had been three or four days and he’d let the scruffy thing go on long enough.

“They switched me up, remember? Word came down from Stanton yesterday.”

“Yeah. I knew you were reassigned. I’m saying…” he frowned deeply and pulled the razor carefully up and over his chin. “What were you doing earlier? I saw you on your hands and knees looking at something.”

“You spying on me, Winchester?”

Dean glanced at Sam in the mirror and noticed the slight smirk that indicated that Sam was playing around. Or deflecting.

He rolled his lips in and scraped the razor over the patch of skin beneath his nose. “You avoiding the question Wesson?” he asked, rinsing the razor and then splashing his face with clean water. When he turned around he found Sam staring at him with the oddest look on his face.

“What?” He rubbed his hands over his jaw. “Did I miss a spot?”
Sam shook his head.

“What is it?” Being on the receiving end of that stare was making him want ot squirm.

“I’m… sorry?” Sam snorted softly. “Also sorry I keep having to say I’m sorry.”

“Why the hell are you sorry now?”

Sam finally looked away and sank down on his bunk. “Didn’t mean to kiss you last night.”

“No?” Dean was dubious. He had been there. It wasn’t like Sam had tripped and fallen on his lips accidentally.

“Well, okay so I meant to. But I shouldn’t have. It was wrong of me.”

“Wrong how?” And here it came. Dean had been waiting for this.

“I just wasn’t thinking. I mean I don’t know you or your history. You could have kicked my ass. For all I know, you’re straight as an arrow.”

“Is that what you’re worried about? You think you overstepped boundaries?” Dean wanted to laugh. The guy was in a prison and was dancing around the idea of him taking liberties with Dean.

“I know I overstepped boundaries.”

“Alright,” Dean put his razor back on his shelf and dried his hands on his towel, patting his face completely dry as well.

“Alright? That’s all you got?”

He shrugged. “What do you want to do about it? It happened. You’re sorry it happened. So now what?”

“W-Well now nothing. I just won’t kiss you again.”

Dean was not happy with that response. “That’s a damn shame.”

“It is?”

“In case you didn’t notice, I did kiss you back. So…”

“So…maybe not so straight?”

Dean looked at Sam, arms resting on his legs, slouched forward, hair hanging forward into his eyes. He looked a little lost. Feeling bad for him, Dean tried to rationalize. “Maybe you’re right, Sammy. Maybe it was wrong. Maybe… I mean you had just gotten bad news about your girlfriend. You wanted to feel better about that. You had to seek comfort where you could and I was nice to you so you saw me as, like, a safe zone.”

Sam nodded and Dean bit his tongue, turning to head out of the pod. He didn’t like all of these feelings swirling through him.

He didn’t like it, that he might have just been some sort of safety net after a hard and fast fall. He also didn’t like the fact that he gave a shit in the first place. With anyone else he wouldn’t have given another thought about it. With Sam… Well he didn’t know what to think of his feelings for Sam. He wanted to kiss him. He wanted to do a hell of a lot more than kiss, but even the small slow
burn kisses they had shared the night before had made his blood boil as much if not more than the hottest things he’d ever experienced with someone else.

It was more than that though and that’s what scared Dean. He just knew the man made him want to be better. He liked that Sam seemed someone protective of him and he wanted to protect Sam too. He wanted to be Sam’s equal and his confidant. He wanted to be his friend.

“Oh maybe I saw you as a thoughtful, sweet…fucking gorgeous man in front of me,” Sam spoke softly before Dean could reach the door.

He paused. “What?”

“Maybe I just saw something I wanted and took it.”

Dean looked over his shoulder and saw Sam looking right back, a challenge in his eyes.

Moving to the wall across from Sam, Dean leaned against it, crossing his arms in an unconscious attempt to shield himself from whatever might be said next. The ‘but’ that would inevitably come.

“Dean, I don’t… I…”

“Look, Sam,” Dean smiled softly, trying to let the other man off the hook. “I get it okay? You’re a straight guy that kissed a not so straight guy. Only in the magical world of gay porn does that work out without issue.” He sighed.

“Magical world of gay porn?”

Dean looked up to see Sam struggling to hold in a laugh. He didn’t struggle for long. “All I can see is Michael Eisner in mouse ears and Tinkerbell flying in to sprinkle fairy dust while the Magical World of Gay Porn flashes across the screen.”

He shook his head at the giggling man in front of him. “Really? And I’m the gay one here?”

This sobered Sam up. “No. Not necessarily. Look, we don’t know each other. We have vague knowledge of the type of people we are. We even know a little bit of history. But in the end, we don’t have all the pieces of the puzzle. For example, you assume I’m straight because I have…had a girlfriend. Truth is I spent my college years dating both guys and girls. When I met Jess in Senior year, it just felt right.” He cleared his throat. “So don’t go assuming it was all just some whim and I was feeling sad so I kissed the first person to jump in front of me.”

“So you are attracted to me?”

Sam stood and crossed to Dean, his eyes wide and a little confused by the question. “Who wouldn’t be? You’re beautiful.”

Dean could feel his face go warm and he rolled his eyes at himself for blushing. Normally a comment like that would have had him beating his chest like a caveman. But to know that Sam thought he was ‘beautiful’… it made his insides melt. (which also made his teeth grind as he fought the idea that he was turning into a twelve year old girl)

Sam brushed the back of his good hand down Dean’s freshly shaven cheek and Dean briefly closed his eyes instinctively pressing his cheek further into the touch. “You aren’t so bad yourself gigantor.”

When he opened his eyes, Sam was merely a breath away. He tilted his head slightly and it looked
like he was aching to kiss him but at the last second, he bit his lip and pressed their foreheads together. “Dean, I … there’s just so much you don’t know. This wouldn’t be smart. Not the time or place for it. It’s the last thing either of us needs.”

Before Dean could even gather enough brain power to form a response, Sam was already heading out the door. Dean crossed to the door and watched Sam approach a C.O. and then get escorted out without another word.

Dean banged his head gently against the frame of the door, his frustration growing exponentially.

## 211B653 ##

“Checkers.”

Dean looked up to see Deluca standing at the door to his and Sam’s pod. “What?”

“Checkers.”

“What about checkers?”

“It’s a game.”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “I know that.”

“So?”

“So what?”

Deluca huffed as if Dean was being the obtuse one in this conversation. “Come play.”

“Oh. Why didn’t you say so?”

“Did. Said Checkers.”

Dean shook his head and hopped down off the top bunk where he’d been reading. He’d picked up the book Sam had been reading and decided to see what kind of literature his bunk-mate was into. As it turned out he was reading the short stories of Anton Chekhov. It had looked like an extremely dry text (hell, even the name sounded pretentious) but he figured he’d give it a shot for lack of anything better to do. After three stories, he’d found one that spoke to him so much that he read through it twice. He wondered if Sam had read that particular one yet and thought maybe he could talk to him about it when he returned.

“Where’s Rebadow?” Not that he minded being asked to play. It’s just that Deluca and Rebadow were typically joined at the arthritic hips, so to speak.

“Library.”

“Alright,” they sat across from each other at the table. “Want to play for candy?” Dean winked at the man as he saw him gearing up for a comeback. The wind went out of his sails quickly and Deluca laid out the game pieces.

“Hey… Winchester,” Veronica said, sidling up next to the table.

Dean gave a polite welcoming smile to the ‘queen’. “Hey Veronica. How’re things?”
“You know… just trying to keep out of trouble. Some days it’s harder than others. Mind if I sit for a bit?”

Deluca shrugged without even glancing her way, already trying to determine his game strategy.

Dean motioned for her to pull up a chair.

They’d met the day before and he’d really enjoyed talking to the ‘ladies’ of Unit A. There were two of them but only Veronica (previously known as Lucas) liked to talk much. Jo (short for Josh) was the other and she was much more standoffish. He figured in an environment like this, it didn’t pay to be so extremely different. He could only imagine what it must be like to be stuck in this place with a bunch of raving sexually frustrated dudes that didn’t give two shits if you lived or died. Yet they stayed true to themselves and Dean admired them for that.

Veronica had been picked up for prostitution. A lot. Also drugs, but she swore up and down that had been more her pimp than her. She was slight with a complexion that lent itself to an islander or maybe Native American. Shiny black hair had been carefully grown long but kept in a tight knot on top of her head so as not to be used against her if someone should decide to grab it. Today she wore a pair of sweatpants and an off the shoulder belly shirt showing off a flat hairless stomach. Truth be told, with the right makeup and a tweak here and there, he really did look like a woman but Dean knew that must only make things worse for her.

Dean made the first move and watched as Deluca pondered for two or three minutes over his turn. Dean rolled his eyes heavenward. By the third turn, Dean’s leg was shaking. His lack of patience was pretty funny if you thought about it. I mean, what else did he have to do?

“George. Sometime today.” Veronica snapped, she too apparently a little tired of watching the hemming and hawing.

Deluca looked up at both of them and then just looked down once more, his finger pointing in different directions as he worked out possible scenarios in his head.

Dean shook his head and he and Veronica shared twin looks of exasperation.

“So, you and Wesson…”

Dean was finally up to move again and he pushed one of his pieces forward without much thought. Knowing he would have another five minutes to kill, he angled himself towards Veronica and blinked stupidly at her. “What?”

“You and Wesson.”

“Me and Wesson what?”

She sighed and shook her head as if he were being purposefully slow. “You know…” She waggled her overplucked eyebrows and leered suggestively.

“What? No.” He blustered. “No. We’re just sharing a pod. We’re fuckin’ stuck in the same space. That’s all.”

“Seems to me like maybe you two are stuck fuckin’ in the same space.” She said, flipping his words.

“Well you’re wrong.”
“Okay, maybe you’re not doin’ the dirty deed, but you want to.”

“Who died and made you Miss Cleo?”

“Don’t need to be psychic to see that, honey. His eyes are always on you. I mean…always. You’ve been eyein’ him too.”

Dean felt his face go red and was relieved to find that it was once again his turn. He tried to stay focused on his game but watching Deluca play was like watching paint dry only worse. “So what?” he finally asked, not looking at her.

Veronica leaned in closer so as not to be overheard by anyone other than at the table. “Not a damn thing wrong with it – you got good taste. But you better be careful. I like you Winchester. You’re sweet. Don’t treat me or Josh like whores. Don’t treat us like lepers neither. Don’t wanna see you getting into something way over your head.”

He smirked. “I think I can handle myself just fine, but thanks.”

“You know much about him?” Dean’s silence spoke volumes. “Nobody else does either. See he only ever even spoke to the old farts next door –,”

“Hey!” Deluca objected.

“- before you came along.”

“Really?” Dean was a little surprised. Sam had never seemed shy or quiet to him. In the beginning he was standoffish and a little intimidating but that had quickly passed.

“Oh yeah. He tried to stay under the radar, but see we here can all smell something fishy from a mile away. It’s survival 101. He asked questions when he got here. Keeps askin’ questions. Not just me. Only asked me once. But I heard things.”

Dean furrowed his brow. “What kind of questions?”

She glanced around casually to make sure no one could overhear. “About the murders.”

“Your turn Winchester!” Deluca called out, annoyed that he was being made to wait.

Dean pushed a game piece forward barely even bothering to look if it went in the right direction. “What do you mean murders?”

“I mean murders. I know you’re new, but I’m surprised no one told you.” She pulled her feet up into the chair, hugging her knees like she was nervous. “Been seven murders so far.”

“Where?”

“Different places.” She shrugged. “Some near the library. One was near Unit D. Couple near the cafeteria.”

“Did they find the killer?”

“From what I heard, they didn’t even know it was a murder until after several stiffs turn up the same way.”

Dean felt a familiar roll of adrenaline rising through his body. His spidey-senses were tingling.
“What happened to them? How did they die?”

“Nobody knows. No marks, no blood, no nothing. Just like they laid down and stopped livin’.” She frowned, rolling her lips inward.

“Well something had to kill them. Who could do something like that?”

“What.”

“What?” Dean repeated, looking back to Deluca who had paused to look up from the board. His eyes were worried but adamant.

“Not who. It’s a what.”

Veronica scoffed. “No cure for your kind of crazy, man.”

But Dean wasn’t so sure. He thought Deluca hit the nail on the head.

“So what does this have to do with Wesson?”

Veronica shook her head. “Nothin’. I’m just a ole gossip whore, sweetie. I keep my eyes open and my ears to the ground. Sure nobody else noticed but… I heard him askin’. Lots of people. Lots of times. Doesn’t ask outright. Just sort of asks about places or people but I put it together. Figured he might be crazy. One of those people that like hearin’ ‘bout gory shit. Now not so sure.” She touched his arm, where it lay on the table. The touch wasn’t sexual in any way. It was a touch meant to gain attention. A touch that begged you to listen. “Just be careful with Wesson. He has secrets. I’d bet my life on it.”

Dean pulled his eyes away from hers and back to the table, where he was no longer sure whose turn it was. One look at Deluca, who was scratching his head and squinting one eye, his fingers fluttering above the pieces, told him he had a few minutes.

He took a moment to absorb what he’d just learned. He tucked the warning about Sam away for later. That seemed less immediate. What had stuck foremost in his mind had been the murders. Seven so far. No cause determined. If only he knew more. He’d have to ask. Make inquiries. It could be nothing but if it was something then… shit, at least he wouldn’t be completely useless stuck in this place!

A whimper from Veronica had him glancing quickly to her and then following her wide gaze to one of the pods across the way from his own.

He gnashed his teeth. They were at it again. Those evil skinhead pieces of shit!

There were two of them this time. Probably two of the three from his first day but Dean couldn’t be sure. All he knew was that the smaller man in between them was the same man and he still looked like he wanted to die. There was nothing but fear and hopelessness in his eyes. It drew Dean in. He had never been able to stomach that look on people’s faces. He’d seen it so many damn times and it still made him scream on the inside. Monsters did this. Creatures which were beyond the scope of human understanding created this reaction. Two morons on a power-trip should never have that power.

Remembering Sam’s previous warning not to get involved, he hesitated but only for a second. He glanced to pinpoint locations of all the C.O.s, all of whom were conveniently occupied with other things. Noting that, he shot across the room to the pod.
One of the guys had the smaller man pressed forward against the wall, his cheek hard against the stone and his glasses were so askew they were about to fall off his face. The smaller man’s pants were partially pushed down but it didn’t seem like they were doing anything to him just yet in that department. His arms were wrenched behind him and the skinhead at his back held his wrists with one of his beefy hands while the other hand squeezed tightly at his neck.

The second man partially shielded them from sight but even his imposing frame couldn’t hide it all. As Dean neared them their voices began to filter out from the general noise of the unit.

“Scrawny little bitch. What did I tell you about that? Are you supposed to see your family?”

“N-No sir,” he rasped out.

“And are you supposed to call your family?

“No sir.”

“Then why did you get a notice of visitation?”

“I…I can’t stop them from trying to see me.”

“Okay, punk. I’m gonna be nice. I’m gonna let you see them.”

The briefest flash of relief crossed the man’s face but it was gone in an instant.

“But I want you to remind me why I’m being so nice to you. Remind me why I don’t cut you open, empty you out and wear you like a ga’damn coat.”

The second guy laughed.

“Get on your knees punk. You’re gonna make this fuckin’ good and then maybe I’ll let you go see that sweet little wife of yours tomorrow.”

“Hey Smith, can I get in on this?” the second guy asked his buddy.

“Course you can. You’re gonna be nice to Butler too, right?” He flipped the guy and pushed him roughly to his knees.

Was this seriously about to happen? In the open? In the middle of the afternoon? What kind of fucked up system…

Dean slammed hard into the man in the doorway. Butler lost footing due to the surprise of being pushed in the first place but recovered and spun to see Dean standing outside the pod.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. Pardon me. See, I’m just real clumsy is all.”

The man sneered and flexed his impressive muscle mass as he cracked his knuckles. “Why don’t you run along then and trip elsewhere.” He was about to turn back around when Dean’s next words stopped him.

“Elsewhere. Pretty good. A two syllable word. I wasn’t sure you could do it.”

The man glowered at him, likely shocked at being spoken to in any way other than fearfully.

“You tryin’ to start shit, punk?”
“Not at all. Looks like the shit already started. Just tryin’ to end it.”

Butler glanced over his shoulder at Smith, who thankfully seemed to have pulled his attention away from the man on his knees for the moment, and then stared Dean down hard. “Move along. Or I will break you. And then whatever you think is going on here… Well what we do to you will make this seem like child’s play.”

“You don’t scare me. You can talk all you want, but I’m not gonna let this go down. Not here, not now, not like this and not when I’m standing five feet away and can do something about it.”

“I see you’re gonna need to be taught a lesson about minding your own fucking business.”

“How about you worry less about me and just work on climbing on up that evolutionary ladder. Maybe try to be a fuckin’ human you braindead hairless ape.” Butler had started growling at this. “What? Too many big words? No? Oh, I’ve got it. That was offensive to apes. You’re right, it–”

The growl got louder and he shot towards Dean, hands out to grab him. Dean spun at the last minute and landed a kidney shot to the guy’s back flank. Butler stumbled and his friend came out to help him. “What the fuck?” he yelled seeing the punch landed to Butler. The friend stood, sizing Dean up.

“Why don’t we just let this end here.” He glanced around but saw no guards in the vicinity. That was either a good thing (as he could be taken away for that punch) or a really bad thing (as he was about to be fighting two very large men and didn’t want his ass kicked without some sort of intervention). “Nobody needs to get in trouble. Don’t need to waste your time with me. Or him,” Dean tilted his head towards the man that was no longer on his knees but at the door of the pod, looking worried and waiting to see the outcome of the standoff.

“You got shit for brains, boy?”

“Probably.”

Smith stepped forward and swung wide, but Dean ducked out of the way and moved around Smith so that all they had really done was traded places.

The bigger skinhead, Butler, had recovered and joined his friend and now there were two against one.

“C’mon guys. Let’s talk about this.”

Dean found himself in a very bad situation. His back was to the pod so at least no one could sneak up on him but he also now had no route for escape.

Butler moved forward first and before the large man could even raise his fist, Dean connected his foot hard into the man’s groin. Butler hit his knees and clutched his balls.

Smith was right behind him but he was smaller and smarter and he sidestepped Dean’s kick, but it wasn’t expecting the elbow to the face that had followed it up. Dean watched with dark pleasure as blood dribbled slowly out of Smith’s nose. It was short-lived satisfaction.

“Grab ‘em.” Dean hadn’t noticed Butler’s swift recovery and wasn’t expecting to have his arms yanked behind him roughly. He attempted to straighten his arms and try to remove himself from the lock Butler had him in, but the grip was too strong.

Smith got right in his face and he could smell his rank stale tobacco breath. “Dude, brush your
teeth. It smells like a skunk died in there like a week ago.”

Dean hated feeling defenseless and so he resorted to humor. Apparently Smith didn’t care for this part of his personality.

The first punch landed right in his stomach, right below his ribs. The second and third connected with his jaw and eye and had him seeing stars. The next few hits blurred together but he felt them somewhere along his side. He wanted to fold over and hold his aching insides but he was held firmly upright.

“Break it up!” He finally heard one of the guards scream. He blinked his good eye at the two approaching C.O.s and stumbled as he was shoved roughly forward. He felt two sets of hands under his arms, lifting him back up and he saw Veronica and Deluca on each side of him.

The officers were in Smith and Deluca’s faces, asking what the hell they thought they were doing. The two men just stood looking bored and slightly amused until they were eventually hauled away to be put in solitary lockup for the night.

With the two assholes gone, Dean sighed and nodded that Veronica and Deluca could let him go. He could support himself but he was gonna hurt like hell tomorrow.

The guy that had been the focus of the two men’s attention before, looked at Dean from the doorway of his pod. “Name’s Richards. You’re Winchester, right?”

Dean nodded.

“Well Winchester that was the stupidest thing you could have done.” The guy stared blankly and shook his head. “Now they’ll just aim it at you.”

He knew the man was right. Knew that he’d just called a heap of trouble onto himself.

Without another word Richards turned to walk back towards his pod and Dean sniffed. “You’re welcome!” he called sarcastically to the retreating figure.
Breathe in, one, two, three. Out, one, two, three.

Breathe in, one, two, three. Out, one, two, three.

This had been Sam’s mantra for the last half hour as he jogged steadily on the beat-up old treadmill in the corner of the prison gym. He had needed the relief from thinking. About the case, about Dean, about Jess, about his entire life… He’d needed to zone out. At least his brain could still leave this fuckin’ prison.

Not that he couldn’t leave. No, that was probably the biggest joke of all. He could walk away at any time. Work the case from the outside. Instead he had signed himself up for incarceration while he picked his way through every possible scenario he could think of.

He’d gone through multiple methods. He’d questioned possible motives and looked for out of place behaviors. He’d given Joe a laundry list of things to check in to every time he’d visited. But without much to go on in the way of evidence and relying on a bunch of hearsay from convicts…
Well he had started to feel like the whole case may as well have been a never-ending game of CLUE.

_I believe it was Colonel Mustard, in the Library, with a candlestick!_

If only it were that simple. At the end of the game you could see the cards. You would know without a shadow of a doubt who had done the deed, and how. But in the real world, there were no cards. There was no easy tell at the end of the day. There was only educated guesses that hopefully got you somewhere close enough to truth that you might latch on to it and work backwards to find proof.

In this case, there wasn’t even an end to the day. Even now there was still a murderer in their midst. Could be anyone. And they could strike again at any time. A second murder on Sam’s watch was not something he thought he could stomach.

And then there was Dean.

Sam sighed and pressed the stop button on the treadmill.

He hopped off and crossed to one of the weight benches, adding a few pounds on to each end. Being careful of his bandaged hand and ignoring the dull pain that radiated through his finger with the movement, he gripped the bar lightly and pushed out a loud whooshing breath as he pushed it up above his chest and then lowered it again, in constant controlled movement.

That was one benefit he could claim for his time inside. With so much time on his hands and only so many hours in the day when he could dig for information, Sam had worked out quite a bit more than was normally required by the agency. He had found it to be a great stress reliever and he needed stress relief more now than ever.

_Dean._

He seemed to never be far from his mind. He’d only been there four days and yet he had grown so attached to the man that it felt like they’d been sharing space the entire time. Like they’d known another for months, maybe years.

Sam was amazed to find that he enjoyed his company immensely. He was thoughtful and kind and had rare moments of shyness that now seemed so out of place to Sam that he couldn’t help but think they were cute. He was also very strong and hardheaded. Sam knew there was more to Dean, that there was something he wasn’t sharing. But his instincts had served him well his entire life and he knew that if the chips were down, he’d want Dean in his corner. Every time.

The problem was, after the kiss, Sam’s vision seemed clouded with all things Winchester.

He couldn’t seem to stop thinking about him or staring at him. Had to hide most of his smiles. People would start thinking he was looney tunes for smiling that much with seemingly no reason. He kept running his tongue over his lips as if he could still taste the man a full day after kissing him. Worst of all, his mind kept looping on the same set of thoughts. Each one of them having to do with a re-do of that shower scene.

This time, instead of sitting there sulking about his girlfriend and trying to remain invisible, he would have crawled over to Dean, pushed his hand off of his big beautiful cock and sucked him for all he was worth. Right there in the middle of the shower room.

Dean was clouding his mind. Impairing his judgment. Completely, one hundred and ten percent, screwing with his concentration. And the hard truth was that Sam was not going to be there much
longer. He had less than four days now in which to gather as much intel from the inside as possible and then he was gone. What good would it do either of them to get involved?

It was just an infatuation. It would pass, he told himself.

He had to focus. Had to remember what he came there for. He had to regain control, get his shit handled and put this whole thing in his rearview mirror.

So what if he was attracted to the other man? So what if he felt like they’d forged a friendship? So what? It’s not as if anything could ever happen between them. Not really. He was FBI and Dean was currently an inmate who he knew next to nothing about.

They might end up friends, sure. He could leave and maybe every now and then he could call or send him a care package with some candy or cookies. Maybe if Dean made parole, he could take him out for a beer.

And then what?

Nothing. That’s what. The whole situation was completely unprofessional and impossible and… foolish.

No, he would put his foot down. Sam would keep his mouth shut. He would keep his ears and eyes open. He would find ways to get back to the crime scenes, maybe talk to the warden about a little more freedom of movement. He would do his job and he would not allow anyone to steal any more focus away from that.

Sam pushed out another breath and cradled the weights, his shoulders and chest feeling nice and warm. He stood and moved to grab the bar once more only this time curling them from his legs up to this chest, his biceps flexing under the movement.

“Five more minutes, Wesson.” The C.O. alerted him.

He nodded and continued to lift, not even bothering to count out reps. He just let the burn set in and let himself focus on that instead of all that he’d have to face when he got back to Unit A.

If Sam had known exactly what was waiting in Unit A, however, he might never have come back. He might have asked for a transfer right then and there. Hell, he might have asked to leave the damn place completely. As it was, he had no clue what had gone down in his absence so the crackling wave of tension that hit him upon reentry was enough to have him instantly on edge.

“What’s going on?” He asked as he approached the tables. Rebadow was in the middle of a game of solitaire and was studiously ignoring everyone as only he could. Dean was sitting hunched over with his back to Sam, and Deluca looked to be hovering around him reminding Sam of a spastic orange hummingbird. The queens were at the next table with one of their cohorts, which in itself didn’t seem odd except for the fact that they kept glancing over at Dean with varying looks of worry on their faces.

As he reached them, Deluca frowned and quietly said something to Dean, who stiffened a little before shaking his head.

“What? What did I miss?”

Dean sighed and turned around slightly. Sam saw it then. The skin around Dean’s right eye was a mottled bluish-purple with red around the edges. It was a fresh bruise and already he could tell that it was swelling. Dean would be lucky if it didn’t swell shut.
Taking the man’s chin in his good hand, Sam turned his face to get a closer look, only to withdraw the hand quickly at Dean’s hiss of pain. There was another mark, not quite so dark, on the side of his jaw. He stepped back and took in Dean’s appearance. He was slumped forward with an arm wrapped around his middle, looking a bit like he needed a good stiff drink.

“What the hell happened?” he asked Deluca.

“I’m right here,” Dean snapped, annoyed with being talked about as though he weren’t sitting right in front of him.

“Fine,” Sam looked directly at Dean. “What the hell happened?”

Dean scowled. “Nothing,” he said obstinately.

Sam rolled his eyes. “George?” He asked, looking back to Deluca once more.

Deluca gnawed at his thumbnail for a moment, wondering how much or what to tell. He raised his eyebrows and then looked from Sam up to the catwalk that ran along the second floor pods. Sam followed the direction of his glance and felt his blood run cold.

Two large men were standing at the railing, staring openly at Dean in a way that looked so indifferent that Sam knew they were as far from indifferent as they could possibly be. Dean was on their hit list. He could see it in their faint sadistic smiles.

The group of Aryans in Unit A totaled a number of four. There were two on the platform above them and Sam immediately scanned what he could see of the unit for the other two. They were never far away from each other, choosing to roam in packs like the animals they were.

Not seeing Smith or Butler in the unit at all, he didn’t have to guess too hard at who had done this to Dean. The only question now was …

“Why?”

“Was stickin’ up for Richards. Little shit that he is.” Deluca cast an irritated glance at the pod Richards and Smith shared. Sam followed suit, seeing Richards sitting on his bed with a book in his hands as if nothing had happened.

Dean shook his head. “Deluca, I appreciate you trying to help, but don’t. I did what I did and I don’t regret it. Nobody should be subjected to that bullshit.”

Sam clenched his teeth together, his vision blurring with the amount of anger suddenly flowing through him. The closest thing to him was a small round stool next to Dean and he growled, kicking it with all his might. The stool slammed into the table next to them, clanging loudly as the metal collided, causing several people in the immediate vicinity to jump. But it still did nothing to ease the fury that had welled up within him.

Turning and stalking back to the pod, he couldn’t hold in the loud string of curses that left his mouth any more than he could take back what had been done.

He wasn’t sure how, but in the hour he had been gone, Dean had managed to sign his own death warrant.
Dean sighed as he watched Sam storm into their pod. The normally stoic man was swearing and pacing like a lunatic and it confused him and twisted at his gut to see Sam so upset.

“What’s his problem?” Rebadow asked, never even looking up from his game.

Deluca sighed. “You know what his problem is. The man’s worried. With good reason, too.”

Dean ran his fingers through his hair, scratching absently at the back of his scalp, ignoring the pointed look Deluca was giving him. “Well… he shouldn’t be. I’m a big boy. I can take care of myself.”

There was more swearing and sounds of banging coming from their pod.

“Oh great. Wesson’s gone Cuckoo’s Nest.”

Dean shot Deluca a dirty look. “He has not gone Cuckoo’s Nest.”

“Well maybe not the full blown Cuckoo’s Nest but…”

“What does that even mean, Deluca?”

“Ya know… that movie. About the guy in the nut house. Jack Nicholson. It’s a classic.” He said as if that were supposed to explain it.

“‘Mmmm. Juicy Fruit.’” Rebadow said under his breath, quoting from the film.

Dean looked back and forth between the two. “Are we sure he’s the crazy one here?”

The loud thud of something hitting the shatterproof glass of a pod caught their attention.

“Better go calm him down,” Rebadow finally glanced up from his cards. “Guards are gonna get around to checking what all the noise is soon.”

Deluca nodded quickly in agreement. “Don’t want him yanked away to the wacky ward.”

With a grunt of pain, Dean pushed himself off the chair and tried not to walk too stiffly as he moved to the pod. By the time he got there, the cursing and noises had come to a halt.

“Hey,” he said softly from the doorway.

Sam had his arms braced against the side of the bunk and he was facing away from Dean, shaking his head slowly.

“You mad at me?”

It was all he could figure as to why Sam was acting the way he was. He just wasn’t sure why he was mad. Dean had gone against Sam’s advice, sure, but that didn’t seem like enough of an offense. Maybe Sam was upset that he’d now be sharing space with someone who had just gained so many enemies.

Sam turned and sank down onto the bottom bunk, his head still hanging forward. Locks of shiny brown hair hung down like a curtain between them and Dean felt cut off from the other man as much as if it were an actual wall. He wasn’t prepared for how much the idea of that hurt him.
He sighed. “Look, Sam… I get that I screwed up, okay? But I’m not going to apologize for helping someone. It’s what I was raised to do. It’s part of who I am.”

Sam remained silent.

Okay, Dean thought, so maybe this is how things worked in prison and maybe the threat hadn’t been supernatural but no one else was raising a finger and he couldn’t just sit back and watch someone be treated that way.

He just had to make Sam understand.

“Alright gentlemen, five minutes.” The call went out from a passing guard. Five minutes until lights out.

Sam didn’t move.

“Look. I’m sorry if I’m causing trouble for you. I’ll ask…” He let out a sigh. “I’ll ask Stanton to move me to a different pod tomorrow.”

Still nothing.

Thinking the best solution would be to let the other man sleep it off and just speak to him again in the morning after he’d calmed, Dean quickly brushed his teeth and attempted not to groan too loudly as he removed his jumpsuit, his body sore and stiff.

“Lights out!”

The harsh fluorescent lighting that usually lit the unit was knocked out and replaced immediately with a soft ambient glow that was just bright enough to see everything but dark enough to not completely screw you out of sleep.

He moved cautiously around Sam towards the end of the bed as the door slid shut and locked in place.

The snick of the lock seemed to act as something of a starter’s pistol and before Dean knew what was happening, Sam launched himself at Dean and had him pressed against the opposite wall, a forearm lodged firmly against his throat.

“Do you know what you’ve done?” Sam hissed in his face.

Dean coughed, partly from the unexpected situation he found himself in and partly from the forearm that was pressing on his windpipe and strangling him ever so slightly. Something akin to concern flickered in Sam’s eyes and the pressure of the arm was removed and replaced with a firm hand on his chest. He was still being pushed against the wall and he tried hard not to let his instincts take over and push back. He’d had quite enough fighting for one day.

“So, you know what you’ve done?” Sam hissed in his face.

Dean coughed, partly from the unexpected situation he found himself in and partly from the forearm that was pressing on his windpipe and strangling him ever so slightly. Something akin to concern flickered in Sam’s eyes and the pressure of the arm was removed and replaced with a firm hand on his chest. He was still being pushed against the wall and he tried hard not to let his instincts take over and push back. He’d had quite enough fighting for one day.

“Sam,” he finally said softly, in a tone not entirely unlike the tone someone would use on a crazed gunman. “I’m sorry you’re upset. Let’s talk about it, okay?” He had his hands up in a peaceful gesture.

Sam blinked, his nostrils flared, but he didn’t remove his hand. Dean stayed where he was against the wall. “What on earth possessed you to go and do something stupid like that?” he spat.

“Because he needed help.”
“Don’t you get it? They’re gonna come back. They’re gonna keep at it until he sticks up for himself, gets a transfer, gets out… They prey on the weak. And those assholes aren’t the types to just let things go, either. They claimed him and he won’t be saved by anyone other than himself.”

“Well I’m not okay with that, Sam,” he snapped. Gone was the easy tone. Gone was him trying to placate. “I’m not okay sitting back watching some dude get physically and emotionally raped less than fifteen feet from me. I don’t know how anyone could be okay with that!”

Sam looked away and Dean wondered if he’d imagined the look of shame that crossed Sam’s face. “You’re right.” he whispered, the fight seeming to drain out of him. “You’re right.”

Sam’s eyes roved over the bruising on his face once more and his brow furrowed. “Assuming this was the work of two. What’s gonna happen when the numbers are even more unbalanced? Huh?”

“Maybe next time someone will have my back.”

Sam’s eyes slid closed and his emotions seemed to be swinging back and forth between anger and sadness. “I’m not always going to be here, Winchester,” he said, resting his forehead against Dean’s. “And they’re not gonna come gunning for you in the middle of the crowd. They’re going to find you when you’re alone, and vulnerable and…”

And then it hit him. Sam cared. Like,…actually cared. About him.

Dean slid his hands up to Sam’s neck and pulled him forward, the hand that had been pressing against his chest dropping limply to Sam’s side. Dean wrapped his own arms around the taller man and held him as best he could from his awkward position against the wall.

“Dean…actually cared. About him.”

Staring hard and leaning in, Dean could feel the heated wisps of breath across his cheek. His eyes fluttered closed as he anticipated the soft contact of lips upon lips.
But Sam shook his head, his right hand rising to fist the fabric of Dean’s t-shirt sleeve.

“Can’t…”

Dean wanted to be exasperated but the tortured look on Sam’s face stopped him. “Can’t what?” he asked softly, his hands coming up to frame the taller man’s face. He gently forced Sam to look at him and it was as though he could see the dam breaking before his very eyes. “Can’t what?” he repeated.

Sam seemed to give up trying to communicate through words and he leaned in, crowding Dean’s space and his lips slanted hard over his, all at once plundering his mouth. Teeth clicking on impact, tongues fighting for dominance,… Dean knew his lips too would now be bruised the next day.

Sharp pain shot through Dean’s jaw as, without thinking, Sam’s right hand had pressed against it, but he pushed past it, leaning even closer into Sam’s touch.

The kiss was rugged and primal and brutal. Sloppy yet scorching.

Sam pulled back to kiss and lick his way over Dean’s chin, down his neck, pausing to suck roughly against the skin at the base of his throat where his arm had been pressed only minutes ago. Dean’s fingers threaded through Sam’s hair, very much enjoying every second of the attention his body was receiving from the other man.

Sam moved away only long enough to rip Dean’s shirt over his head and then he was back, his fingernails scraping none too gently against the taunted chest and stomach before him. Dean hissed as the blunt nails left pink welts in their wake. It wasn’t enough to break the skin, but it was enough to cause every ounce of his blood to drain away from his brain and towards his lower extremities. He bit back a whine and gritted his teeth, relishing the slight burn that lingered from the smarting marks.

“Sammy.”

The taller man ignored him, his focus now intently on Dean’s left nipple. Teeth bit lightly but firmly down on the nub, holding it in place while his tongue flicked relentlessly over it. Dean grunted at the sensation and his hips jerked forward instinctively seeking friction. The same treatment was given to the right nipple before Sam repositioned and began biting and sucking his way down Dean’s ‘happy trail’.

Sam fell to his knees. He stared at the pair of boring blue standard issue boxers that were heavily tented towards his face and there seemed to be a moment when he might have been thinking better of it. Like maybe Wesson was having second thoughts. Something in his expression hinted at hesitation.

Dean waited for the rejection. He waited for the denial, the anger, the rationalizations, the reasons why it was a bad idea…

They never came.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Sam licked his lips, staring at the site before him as if he were a starving man staring at a Thanksgiving feast. It was all so overwhelming.
He’d been with men before but this felt different. He had given in and all of the pent up aggression, sexual tension, and even a bit of fear crept in to his movements. He wanted Dean and it frightened him to realize just how much.

He leaned in, pressing his face into the side of the cloth-covered bulge and inhaled deeply, taking in the heady scent of sweat, soap and something else that was sweet and spicy and uniquely Dean. He moaned loudly at this, allowing himself the pleasure of exploring.

He turned slightly and nudged at his balls before he pulled them into his mouth through the thin cotton, tonguing and breathing hotly over them. Now it was Dean’s turn to moan and the sound of it alone had Sam’s cock leaking in his own boxers. Long fingers curled and tightened in Sam’s hair and it was all Sam could do to keep himself from accidentally biting the other man as the thrill of the pleasure-pain raced down his spine.

He yanked the boxers down Dean’s legs roughly and that amazing cock sprang free, nearly slapping him in the face. It was the most beautiful site Sam had ever seen and even bigger than he remembered it being. It was thick and flushed and slightly bouncing in time with Dean’s heartbeat. Sam’s mouth watered.

Wrapping his fingers around the base, he squeezed gently, listening with satisfaction to the hitch in breathing that this created. Dean was hard as granite and leaking pre-come so heavily that a drop fell from the tip within seconds of being freed. Sam couldn’t let that happen. He lapped at the head, humming as the salty bitter taste hit his tongue. The taste of Dean.

“So good.” Sam whispered, continuing to lick at the blunt tip as if it were a melting ice cream.

Sam slanted his eyes up at Dean and knew that their eyes, which were normally a contrast of green and hazel, were currently a matching midnight color. Their irises were all but obliterated for the moment by lust-blown pupils. Dean was watching him through a haze of desire and Sam took that in to account, giving him a show as he planted open mouth kisses all the way up the length of his dick. Starting again from the base, he licked several long strips up the underside and returned again to the tip before finally taking the full length, or as much as he could fit, into his mouth.

Dean gasped and his head fell back against the wall, mouth gone slack. “Yeah,” he groaned. “Mmm… Sammy,” he scraped his teeth over his bottom lip and pulled in a breath through his teeth. “Suck me.”

Sam gladly obliged.

Using both his fist and his mouth, he jacked and sucked and licked slow at first and then hard and fast.

Dean moved one hand to the back of Sam’s head, not pushing but just feeling the motion of Sam bobbing back and forth. His other hand scraped uselessly against the stone wall. Sam couldn’t help feeling a little satisfied at the reaction he was drawing from the man.

He wanted to keep it up. He wanted to do this all night. He wanted to be the one to make Dean squirm. To make him come.

Relaxing his throat and humming a bit, Sam pushed forward a little more than he had been, taking Dean’s full length into his mouth, the mushroom head sliding home right into the back of his throat.

“Oh fuck, baby!” He heard Dean gasp.
Sam sputtered and gagged a little but he didn’t think Dean noticed. Dean for his part, had his hands now in his own hair and his face was screwed up so tight it looked as if he were in real pain.

When Dean finally came, Sam smiled around his cock, loving the taste and feel of him exploding hotly in his mouth. He’d never swallowed before but he took every last drop like a pro and almost asked for more.

Dean smiled down at him drowsily and pulled him to his feet before palming Sam’s own weeping cock where it stood heavily against his suit. A fairly impressive wet spot was a telling sign of just how close Sam already was to his own release. It honestly amazed him he hadn’t come already simply from the excitement of sucking Dean off.

As his pod-mate peeled the jump suit down his shoulders and started to drop to his knees in order to reciprocate, Sam stopped him. “You don’t have to. Didn’t do it for that.”

And he hadn’t. He had actually been frustrated and angry and in a way he knew he had kissed him as a way to lash out physically. Sam almost felt bad for that. But somewhere in there, as their eyes had met…

Dean smiled almost shyly at him, which made Sam want to laugh considering what they’d just been doing. “I know you didn’t do it so I’d get you back. But I want to.”

Sam closed his eyes. He craved knowing what it felt like to have Dean’s lips around him. He wanted to feel the heat of his mouth and the feel of his hands gripping at him. But he was already on sensory overload. “Just a little…too much. Right now.”

Dean nodded. He seemed to understand, which was amazing because Sam couldn’t say he completely understood at this point how he was managing to turn down a blowjob.

Instead of dropping to his knees, he simply tugged the suit a little further down to Sam’s waist and Dean reached inside his boxers to grip him firmly.

Sam almost came on the spot. The feel of that hot, large, male hand wrapped around his length… Fuck, it felt so good. So right.

“Jeez Sammy.” Dean pushed his hand all the way down to the base of his cock and stroked upwards. “You’re so fuckin’ big and hard. Feel so good.” He pulled Sam closer with a hand on the back of the neck. Their lips connected automatically, tongues dueling lazily and teeth gently nipping. “Want to suck your cock, Sammy,” he said around a kiss.

Sam whimpered and thrust harder against Dean’s hand.

“I’m gonna do it. Maybe not tonight. But soon. Gonna take that big dick and lick it and kiss it and suck it…every last inch.” He licked Sam’s bottom lip and then pulled it between his teeth, “And do you know what I want you to do then?”

“What?” Sam gasped as Dean shifted and began to bite at his earlobe before soothing it with a lick and a kiss.

“I want you to fuck my mouth,” He whispered directly against Sam’s ear causing him to shiver.

Sam let out a strangled cry, surprise warring with an overload of desire.

Dean moved down to Sam’s neck, his hand rubbing over the head of his cock, getting more precome from where it had gathered at the slit, before continuing his long steady strokes.
“You want to fuck my mouth, Sam? Want to choke me with your dick?” Dean licked up the side of Sam’s neck then came back to his mouth, capturing it in a searing kiss. His strokes became faster and the kisses deeper and harder.

When Sam came a few moments later, his loud cries were captured by Dean’s mouth.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

When Sam awoke the next morning, he could have sworn that he heard birds chirping. Of course that was impossible as he was lying on a bunk in a windowless cell in a prison. Not really a whole lot of bird activity on the inside, to speak of.

The simple fact that he’d had the thought in the first place left him torn between wanting to wretch and wanting to sing.

He felt good, though. Better than he had felt in…months. Maybe even longer.

If he was on the outside, he would have rolled out of bed and went for an early morning jog so as to savor the refreshed feeling he was experiencing, but here that was out of the question. Instead he settled for recounting the events of the night before. At least the good stuff.

Above him, he heard the tell-tale squeak of Winchester rolling over on the top bunk.

He grinned sleepily and put his hands behind his head.

Winchester.

Dean was responsible for how he was feeling. He still remembered being half out of it after coming and Dean had stripped him and put him into bed. It was a shame they couldn’t have slept together, touching and holding one another thru the night.

Maybe one day they could.

He knew it was futile to deny things any longer. After finding out about what had happened… After seeing the looks on those skinheaded fuckers’ faces… His desire to protect was way beyond that of a federal agent. It was beyond that of a friend. No after last night, his feelings were put front and center and under a freakin’ microscope. And no amount of rationalization was going to help him move past the fact that he felt for Winchester way more than he ever should have.

He reached into his pillow and pulled out a folded up bag of Skittles. He emptied three pieces into his hand, refolded the bag, and put it back. One by one he popped them in his mouth and savored the super sweet flavors. As he knew it would, the taste reminded him of their first kiss and he smiled sappily.

Yep. He was definitely gonna make himself sick pretty soon.

How would it ever work? He had no clue. He wasn’t even sure Dean felt the same way although he had a pretty good hunch that Dean was at least on board physically.

As if hearing his thoughts, Dean’s head suddenly appeared over the side of the top bunk. “G’morning,” he mumbled, his voice gravely and deep from sleep. It was sexy as all get out.
Sam gave him a lopsided smile. “‘Mornin’ stud muffin,’” he teased.

Dean grinned cheekily and snickered. “Stud muffin?”

Sam shrugged.

He disappeared from view and swung himself down onto the floor, grunting as his beaten body was jarred in the movement. “If I’m a stud muffin, then what does that make you?”

Sam stared wide-eyed and open mouthed at the man now standing tall in front of him, very naked and sporting a pretty impressive morning wood.

“Horny as fuck?” Sam replied automatically and swallowed thickly.

Dean chuckled and yanked Sam’s covers back to reveal that he was having the same issue.

“So no weirdness?” Sam almost didn’t ask, but he had to know. Before he kept frolicking down this weird Sound of Music path he kept veering towards. If he was going to drown in sap and gushy feelings, he was gonna make damn sure it wasn’t for nothing.

“What? After last night? Nope. No weirdness. You?” Dean propped himself up on one hand while the other traced symbols and patterns over Sam’s chest.

Sam tried to figure out what he was drawing over his skin but he couldn’t make it out. “No.”

Their eyes met and held. “I’m glad.”

Slowly, without the raging fire from the night before but with no less passion, they moved together, their lips meeting and moving gently over one another ignoring the discomfort in favor of being close.

“So no weirdness?” Sam almost didn’t ask, but he had to know. Before he kept frolicking down this weird Sound of Music path he kept veering towards. If he was going to drown in sap and gushy feelings, he was gonna make damn sure it wasn’t for nothing.

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Slowly, without the raging fire from the night before but with no less passion, they moved together, their lips meeting and moving gently over one another. They weren’t fighting for dominance and control any longer. Now it was all about assuring one another that it was okay. That neither of them was freaked out. They were both on the same page.

“We still have to talk about yesterday.” Sam said when they finally parted several minutes later.

Dean groaned. “Way to ruin the mood.”

“Don’t want them to hurt you.” Although they already had. Sam winced at the sight of the swollen eye, though it hadn’t swollen shut so at least that was something.

A heavy sigh. “Sammy… I know you’re trying to help and want to protect me. I’m the new guy and you feel responsible. I appreciate that. What’s done is done, though. Not just going to roll over and let something bad happen. I’ll be smart.”

“But-,”

Dean put a finger over his mouth. “Remember what you said yesterday? We don’t know everything about each other. Okay, so you fucked guys in college.” He shrugged his shoulders. “Well a little trivia about me… I never went to college. But I had a butt-load of on-the-job training. I’ve been in my fair share of tough situations against things…people that are a lot bigger, meaner and tougher than those assholes. I can handle myself. So…stop fretting.” He smirked. “Or you’re gonna start sounding dangerously like a nagging girlfriend.”
“Girlfriend?” Sam frowned, allowing the conversation to shift for now. “Wait a minute. Why did you say girlfriend? Why am I the girlfriend here?”

“Awww. Darlin’… you’re so sensitive.” Dean kissed him on the nose. “Is it that time of the month already?”

“You’re an ass.” Sam pushed at his chest halfheartedly. He tried to glare but he knew that the smile that just wouldn’t seem to leave his face probably ruined any weight the look had carried.

“Yeah… I think what you meant to say was that you like my ass.”

Sam smiled despite himself and reached around to trail his fingers down Dean’s spine and over said ass, palming and massaging the toned muscle. “Not gonna deny that, from what I’ve seen so far. But I think maybe your ass and I still need to get a little better acquainted.”

“Mmmm…” Dean pushed back into the touch and wet his lips with a quick swipe of his tongue. “What time is it? Think we have enough time to maybe…”

“Up and at ‘em boys!” The ultra loud morning C.O. called out. The man was like an evil cock-blocking human alarm clock.

Dean grumbled as the lights flickering back up to the bright fluorescents. “Never mind.”

Sam snorted a laugh. “Are you actually pouting right now?”

Dean rolled out of the small bed and grabbed his boxers, pulling them on quickly before anyone could see bare backside. “Um, no. I don’t pout,” he said adamantly.

“Hey, watch out! You’re gonna trip.”

Dean stopped short at the warning. “Trip?” He looked around his feet for something he might’ve been about to run in to. “What?”

“Yeah, that bottom lip of yours draggin’ on the floor there. Be careful.”

Dean rolled his eyes but Sam laughed as he saw Dean pull his bottom lip quickly between his teeth, ensuring the disappearance of any residual pouty face.

Their easy banter made Sam feel warm and happier than he’d been in a while and he was still smiling as he moved towards the line-up for breakfast.

“Morning Winchester. Mornin’ Chief.” Deluca greeted them with an amused look.

“Chief?”

Dean frowned and backhanded the older man’s shoulder. “No Cuckoo’s Nest references. No.” It sounded like he was scolding a dog or a disobedient child. “And if anyone’s Chief, it’s totally you.”

“Wait, are you guys talking about that old movie?” Sam vaguely remembered sitting through One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest when he was younger. His father had insisted it was a classic but to teenage Sam ‘classic’ just meant ‘not new’ and by default ‘lame’.

Deluca started to say something but Dean grinned tightly and wrapped an arm around his shoulders, placing his hand firmly over the guy’s mouth.
“No no. You know him. Nuttier than squirrel shit.” Dean’s smile fell and he jumped away from Deluca looking disgusted. “Did you just lick me?”

Dean held his hand out to wipe it on Sam’s uniform but he was quick and sidestepped him, grabbing his wrist and holding it at bay. Dean laughed and tried to break his hold, intent on wiping the slobber off on Sam.

“Don’t punish me. He’s the one that licked you!”

“You’re right!” Dean stopped struggling and turned to Deluca wiping his hand down the sleeve of the older man’s jumpsuit.

Deluca scowled and tried to look indignant. Sam wondered if he was already plotting to give them the silent treatment at breakfast.

“Where’s Rebadow?” Sam asked looking around for the other man.

“Feelin sick. Why does everyone ask me that?”

“Because you’re the two amigos,” Dean replied as if it were obvious.

“Our grumpy old men!”

“Butch and Sundance.”

“Bert and Ernie.”

Deluca shook his head, obviously with the feeling that he was dealing with children. “And you two are Bonnie and Clyde, what’s your point?”

Dean and Sam looked shrewdly at one another before pointing at themselves and simultaneously saying “I’m Clyde!”

The moment felt so natural, with Dean laughing beside him. It seemed so easy and relaxed. It was easy to forget where he was and what he needed to be doing. It was easy to picture that they were just hanging out with a friend at the bar. It almost startled him when the C.O. barked at them.

“Alright, move it Wesson, Winchester, Deluca! Let’s go!”

Sam jumped and noticed that the line of men in front of them had already started shuffling forward and out of the Unit towards the cafeteria.

“Shit,” he cursed under his breath. He was not nearly as on guard as he needed to be at that moment. That was bad. Very bad.

With the Aryans’ eyes on Dean and a killer still roaming free… Sam needed to get his head out of Dean’s ass and soon or they were both going to wind up regretting it.

Next up... the boys both get news from outside the prison and the Aryans show that they aren’t going to let things go.

Any feedback is much appreciated!
Chapter Summary

Tension with the Aryans has Sam and Dean on their toes. Meanwhile Sam gets a visitor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“And what has the chef prepared for us today?” Dean had affected an accent that sounded to Sam a little like Julia Child on speed, as they grabbed their trays and moved to sit at one of the long cafeteria tables.

Sam followed Dean who fell into a seat a little ways down from Veronica and directly beside Deluca. “Why…it’s his spec-i-ali-ty! Yes, here we have a delightful combination of….”

Dean surveyed the tray in front of him and his nose wrinkled with disgust.

“Eggs a la Bolt, going for over easy but looking more like over burnt. Flesh of a swine or a strip of dried and shriveled bacon.” Dean cut the impression, returning to his usually deep gravelly voice and sighed. “Then there’s this biscuit that is sure to a southern mama cry and I’m almost positive could be regulated for play in the NHL.” To demonstrate, he raised the biscuit a few inches off the tray and let it fall back down with a dry rock-like thump.

“Well maybe next time you should stay at a Holiday Inn,” Sam replied cheekily, resisting the immature urge to throw his puck-like bread at him.

Deluca snorted. “You don’t know how good you have it. We used to have gruel and water, three times a day."

“Gruel? Gruel? Well, that just sounds…cruel.” Deluca rolled his eyes at Dean’s lame rhyme. “But seriously, how long have you been in prison, dude? Didn’t gruel go out with the 1800s?”

Sam almost choked on the sip of juice he’d just taken.

“Gonna pretend you didn’t say that,” the older man said, trying to look affronted.

“Deluca has been here since they laid the foundation, right Georgie?” Veronica injected, winking exaggeratedly at the man in question.

He glared at her and his lips pursed until there was nothing but a white gash where his mouth used to be. “This place was built in 1938,” he stammered.


“I hadn’t even been born in 1938!”

Sam and Dean chuckled though not loudly as they could see steam beginning to rise off his semi-bald head.
“I hate you all,” Deluca said picking his tray up and going to the end of the table to eat beside some of the men that were noticeably older than him.

“He’s so easy to pick on. Like shooting fish in a barrel.” Veronica moved down a seat to where she was now positioned right in front of Winchester. The queen had really taken to his cell-mate and the attention she gave him didn’t necessarily sit well with Sam. He, for instance, didn’t care for the way her eyes seemed to rake over Dean, head to toe, like he was the tastiest thing on the menu.

He chalked it up to the fact that Dean was genuinely nice to her - which was unusual in this place - and that he was unbelievably hot. He wasn’t sure he could really blame her for being drawn in by either things but that didn’t mean he had to like it.

“I think Deluca secretly enjoys it,” Dean said in a conspiratorial whisper. “I caught him grinnin’ his ass off after I told him he looked like a wrinkled elephant’s nutsack.”

“Why did you tell him that?” Sam asked, genuinely curious.

“He told me my poker face needed work. Them’s fightin’ words.” He said as if it were obvious.

“But you’ve won every game of poker you played with them. How could your poker face possibly need work?”

“Because he makes face like zis,” Francois cut in, sitting on the other side of Sam. Francois made a duck-face that Sam was almost sure was supposed to look like the sultry pout of a model. “Is horrible. Is like cheating.”

“Is not like cheating, Fran, just because I took you for all your fancy French bonbons. Just admit you can’t handle my sexy.”

Francois looked at him with a blank stare. “Oui. I cannot handle indeed. Please no more taunting me with your…sexy.”

Dean threw back his head laughing heartily and Sam bit the inside of his cheek to keep himself in check. He had just stopped himself from saying something about enjoying Dean’s ‘sexy’. Their new-found intimacy was already slightly addictive and Sam was itching to reach out and grab the man’s hand or place an arm around his shoulders. It’s what he would do in a normal relationship but no way was that going to go over well in this crowd. It would only serve to make them both targets in one way or another. Besides, maybe Dean wasn’t really a PDA kind of guy.

Something over his shoulder caught Dean’s attention and Sam watched as the wide smile faded to nothing and was replaced with a look flat indifference. It was as if someone had pulled Dean’s plug and he’d been left staring at a blank screen.

“What’s up?” Sam asked, turning and craning his head until he saw it.

Smith and Butler were back after their night in the hole. They walked in smiling and looking relatively carefree for two men that had just spent the night cut off, naked and curled up on the floor of a small dark room with nothing but a bucket to piss and shit in. They went to the end of the food line and started scanning the crowd. Sam saw it when Butler finally spotted Dean and said something to Smith who immediately glanced in their direction as well.

Dean turned around and shoveled a fork full of the brownish eggs into his mouth mechanically, attempting to ignore the men. Sam knew better. In prison, you didn’t ignore the problem. If you tried to ignore the bully here, then the bully didn’t get bored and walk away. The bully just broke your arms and legs without a struggle.
The table was quiet as they ate and Veronica became Sam’s barometer. He noted that her glance kept flicking towards the line behind them and he knew by her slightly nervous tremble and eyes that were steadily widening, that the men were drawing near.

Sam put down his plastic cutlery and let his hands rest as casually as possible on the table top.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Dean suddenly and violently propelled forward, his chest landing square in what was left of his breakfast.

“Oops! Sorry. Tripped.” Smith said, straightening and continuing on with a smug look of satisfaction on his face.

Dean’s jaw flexed as he stared straight ahead. Sam knew he was gritting his teeth, trying to keep his head and remain calm.

Sam turned in time to see Butler fall sideways as well, his elbow connecting hard with the back of Dean’s skull. “Sorry man! Guess we’re just clumsy today,” he said, righting himself before pushing Dean’s head down, this time with his hand, and smashing his face into the eggs. His carton of juice had also been knocked over and Dean sputtered against the liquid spilling and now coating the side of his face.

Sam had seen enough.

Coiled muscles sprang into action and before he could process the movement in his own brain, Sam found himself right inside Butler’s personal space. The man was roughly the same height as Sam so they were eye to eye. Butler’s eyes betrayed his surprise while Sam knew his own eyes spoke of just how much pain he could bring down on the man in front of him.

“What? You his guard dog now, Wesson?” Butler said spitting a little more with the words than was strictly necessary. Sam ignored the overwhelming urge to wipe his face.

“We didn’t mean any harm.”

The man put his hands up in a ‘hands-off’ gesture and Sam knew immediately the guards were already closing in.

He took a step back reluctantly and growled at the man. “Why don’t you just be on your goose-stepping way then, Adolph?”

“Break it up, gentlemen!” The c.o. said firmly from behind Sam.

Sam didn’t move an inch and the room was completely silent as Butler stepped around him to take his seat with the rest of his group.

“He shouldn’t have done that,” Dean said, his jaw working overtime now. He stared hard at his tray and shook his head slightly. “All that damn jawin’ you did ‘bout me puttin’ a mark on my back? What the hell, man?”

Sam noted that Dean’s accent got much thicker when he was angry.

He sighed and looked around the table, from Veronica to Francois and even down to Deluca. All of them looked at him with a mixture of pride and pity. He knew he should feel worried or something of the sort but all he felt was… right. Dean had been right the night before. He couldn’t stand by and let things happen. He sure as shit wasn’t going to stand by and watch them hurt Dean.

Taking another look around the cafeteria, he noted that everyone had gone back to their lousy food
or their own conversations now that the show was over.

“You said next time maybe someone would have your back,” he leaned in and spoke quietly and directly into Dean’s ear. “Well until I can’t be there, that someone is gonna be me.”

His friend kept his face passive until he was drawn into a conversation by Veronica but underneath the table, Dean’s hand settled warmly on Sam’s thigh.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“Mail!”

Dean glanced up at group of inmates that had arrived with a cart laden with magazines, letters, and parcels of varying shapes and sizes.

There was line forming and he watched intrigued by the expressions on the men’s faces as they walked past. Some were turned away with nothing and more than not these inmates looked miserable or at least a little hurt. Some walked away angry, like they were tired of waiting for whatever they were waiting for. Or maybe they felt forgotten. Some had a look of rapture and Dean imagined maybe they got a sweet letter from a loved one that was still waiting for them, that still remembered them. It was sort of a nice site to see on the faces of such hardened criminals.

Hope.

In all likelihood, though, he admitted that half of those smiles were probably just the result of the arrival of a new skin mag.

The line thinned out and Dean was about to move away when he heard his name called.

“Winchester. Package.”

He looked around as though there might be another Winchester in the unit.

The man looked annoyed that he wasn’t stepping forward more quickly and gave a dramatic sigh as he thrust the package forward in the air with a little more force.

Dean took it and stared at the box as though it might bite him at any moment.

He hadn’t even been there a week yet. What mail could he possibly be getting?

Then he noted the return address.

Clutching the small box to his chest as though it were a precious object, he walked directly into his pod and sat against Wesson’s bunk placing it on the floor beside him with care.

“What did you get?” Sam asked, closing and tossing his book down on his pillow.

Dean shrugged.

“Well are you gonna open it or just stare at it?”

“Stare at it.
“It’s not Christmas. You don’t have to wait to open presents.” He leaned over his shoulder to look at the name. “Bobby Singer. That’s the uncle right? With the salvage yard?”

“Good memory,” Dean said, his fingers skimming the top of the box.

He let out a long-held breath and pulled the tape from the seams. Finally pulling the box open, he laughed heartily at the contents and picked up a folded piece of paper he saw stuck in the corner.

The paper had been torn from a yellow legal pad. The kind Bobby used to brainstorm on. He had about twenty of them scattered haphazardly around his house and cars.

“Sometimes,” he’d say, “it’s just easier to piece together the puzzle when its pieces are right there in front of you.”

Dean couldn’t fault the logic. It had always seemed to work for the man.

Unfolding the letter, he smiled at the familiar script and began to read.

Dean,

*Hope all is well in the big house. I didn’t want you to go thinking we forgot about you on the outside.*

*Heard from your dad today. Said he’s after a skinwalker in Wyoming. Asked if you were okay but I told him to ask you himself. You know your pop. Stubborn as a mule but he’ll come around.*

*Thought you should know your buddy is being sentenced in the next few days. It doesn’t look good for him but you probably already knew that. I know this is not your fault and I believe in you kid. Always.*

*Bobby*

*P.S. Don’t drop the soap.*

Dean folded the letter quickly and shoved it back into the box, not wanting Sam to see it. Not that it mattered much. It wasn’t as if Sam could know all of his stupid mistakes just by seeing a few lines scribbled on notebook paper. It all just made him feel dirty. Hurt. Angry. There were a host of bad feelings and Dean just wanted to ignore them for now and not parade them in front of his…


“So what is it?” Sam asked, his curiosity getting the better of him.

Dean pulled the contents of the small package out and held it up with his index finger.

“Soap on a rope?” Sam asked, amused.

“Very practical.”

Sam fingered the thick braided nylon rope that looped to form a handle above the bar of soap. “Very.”

“Jeez, Sammy. I can hear your dirty thoughts from here.” Dean could see it written on Sam’s face and it was readily recognizable mostly due to the fact that he was having the same dirty thoughts. He was pretty sure.
“Maybe…” Sam paused, color rising in his cheeks. He looked a little shy and the look was a new one on him. Dean kind of liked it. “Maybe later, after work detail…we can try that soap out.”

Dean was all but panting at the suggestion. “W-Won’t someone see us?”

Sam shrugged one shoulder. “Usually it takes a while for everyone to get back. Probably have the showers to ourselves for a few minutes.”

Images of soap slicked everything flooded Dean’s mind and he nodded. “It’s a date.”

“It’s a date.” Sam’s smile was warm and beautiful and Dean couldn’t help but stare longingly into those honeyed hazel eyes. He wanted so badly to touch him. To be with him.

Dean looked up, scanning the area to see if anyone was paying much attention. As usually no one really was. He caught Sam’s chin between his thumb and index finger and leaned up capturing his mouth in a quick but thorough kiss. Just enough to accelerate their heart rates. Enough to leave them both gasping for breath and wanting more.

As they separated, Sam’s teeth trapped his bottom lip and held on for a split second longer than the kiss, making Dean shiver deliciously. The memory of that mouth, those teeth, nipping at his flesh the night before…

He may have moaned. …Just a little.

A knowing grin lit Sam’s face and he sank back against the wall of his bunk, pulling the book back up in front of his face.

Dean licked at the taste of Sam lingering on his lips and sat back against the bunk, smiling like a fool as Sam’s socked foot casually rubbed back and forth across Dean’s shoulder.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

That day Dean spent half of his work detail at the window again.

True, part of his reason was completely for aesthetic purposes. He did enjoy seeing the man bend over while picking something up. And now that he had a frame of reference, he nearly came in his pants when, while scrubbing the floor, Sam was seen to be on his knees.

Part of his reasoning was also curiosity. He still wanted to know why Sam kept acting oddly whenever he got around the area outside of the hospital ward. Dean watched the man picking at spots on the walls. He would stand there staring for long moments. Sometimes, if the guards weren’t around, he would look to be pacing to and from a specific mark, like a man looking for buried treasure.

But unless Sam was a closet schizophrenic (or a really lousy pirate), it didn’t make sense.

He knew now that asking Wesson directly about it was out of the question. Sam had more or less blown him off before. But, despite all that had happened in the past twenty-four hours, Dean still recalled the conversation he’d had with Veronica. The mysterious deaths and Sam’s offhand interrogations… There was definitely something to that.

After breakfast, they had all been allowed out into the yard as usual. Dean had been content to sit
against the fence, enjoying the short span of time that he could breathe the fresh air and feel the natural warmth radiating from the sun. Sam had asked Deluca and Fran to stick with him, to watch his back. Dean completely resented this and said so. He didn’t need babysitters after all.

Sam hadn’t pushed, he had just waited until the guys had started up a lively conversation about the merits of professional versus college football and had slipped away without a word. As if Dean wouldn’t see him. As if Dean wasn’t going to track his every move as well. Sam had stuck his neck out by standing up to Butler and as far as Dean was concerned they needed to have each other’s backs.

So Dean had watched Sam move in and out of the concrete tables. Watched him speak to an older man that had a beard so long he could have entered a ZZ Top look-alike contest. Watched him stop to listen in on a conversation between two men that had to be from another Unit, because he’d never seen them in Unit A. He watched Sam talk animatedly, almost flirting with one of the queens that Dean hadn’t yet met.

He had caught Veronica’s eye and glanced at Sam. She was perceptive, that one. She followed his line of site and watched Sam speaking with a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. They looked deep in conversation and at one point the man shook his head and motioned to his heart. Veronica’s eyes cut back to Dean wearing an expression that very clearly said ‘told you so’.

He had no clue what Sam’s endgame was. He didn’t know if it was just a morbid curiosity or if the man just liked trying to figure things out. Dean questioned for a moment if Sam might be a hunter himself but he dismissed this. He’d seen Sam’s body. There was barely a scratch on him. If he was a hunter, he was new, because hunter’s scars were like the rings of a tree. The older you got, the more you gained.

One thing he knew for sure. If this thing was real and the murders were supernatural, he needed to start his own line of questioning and figure the shit out. He’d had plenty of practice on hunts, after all. It wasn’t like he was an amateur. Sure, he couldn’t fake being a cop or FBI this time out, but he knew how to get people talking.

He glanced out the window just in time to see Sam pushing his mop and rolling bucket towards the door. It looked like he was about to enter the hospital ward. It wasn’t odd – he was supposed to clean in there daily under the outline of his new duties. He had just never made it in there in the three days he’d been there.

Dean scurried across the room to the first aid kit on the far wall that he was supposed to be doing inventory on. He didn’t want Sam to know he’d been spying on him again. He felt like a kid about to get caught doing something wrong by his parents.

The buzzer sounded as the guard recognized someone awaiting entry and buzzed Sam through the locked metal door.

Sam scanned the room quickly, halting as his eyes landed on Dean. He gave him a lopsided smile but forced it off his face as they were surrounded by a row of bed-ridden convicts. Their eyes lingered on one another a little longer, drinking in the view even though they’d seen each other less than an hour before.

“Oh good…cleanup,” the volunteer doctor of the day said shakily, her long wavy blond hair in disarray from the numerous times she’d run her fingers through it.

Dean could tell the woman was new to working on the ward by the skittish way she was acting. She had been glancing at the door since he got there and seemed to be on tender hooks every
moment. He wasn’t sure he’d seen her with a single patient in the hour he’d been there but the beds were nearly all full.

She had acknowledged him with a nervous smile when he’d shown up for work. He’d asked her if she needed any help from him but she had politely declined. He had almost felt sorry for her. She seemed so ridiculously out of place that he wondered if she was on community service or something.

The loud crack of the mop handle hitting the floor had Dean’s eyes darting back to Sam.

The man looked as though he’d seen a ghost, and quite frankly Dean felt that he was an expert at knowing exactly what that face looked like.

He looked back and forth between Sam and the doctor, who was completely failing at looking nonchalance, and pieces fell together quickly before his eyes.

The girlfriend. Sam said she was a doctor.

“Um, I made a mess in the... Spilled some...coffee.” She gestured vaguely towards the staff office, her eyes anywhere but on Sam. “Could you please help me clean that up?”

Sam was in shock but Dean could tell he was trying to play it off as if he weren’t standing eight feet away from his amazingly gorgeous brilliant doctor of a girlfriend.

Dean frowned.

Ex girlfriend?

He wasn’t really clear on that part.

He was clear, however, on the amount of jealousy that was eating at his gut. It was clawing like an actual living thing inside of him and he gripped hard at the item in his hand, throttling and squeezing until it burst. He looked down to see blue gel streaming through his fingers and plopping onto the floor and realized he had busted an ice pack.

“Fuck!” He swore, tossing the thing towards the trash and hustling towards the sink to wash the toxic goop off of his skin.

Glancing back towards the front of the open room, he saw Sam disappearing into the office without a backwards glance, the door closing behind him.


## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“What the fuck are you doing here, Jess?”

The wide-eyed look she gave him made Sam instantly regret his harsh tone.

“Sorry,” he muttered, rubbing at his forehead and looking towards the frosted glass on the office door. He wasn’t sure what he was checking for. He wanted to lie to himself and say he was checking to make sure his cover wasn’t being blown that very second. Truth was he was more worried that Dean could somehow read his mind and know that he had just entered the room with his girlfriend.
Or…ex? He wasn’t so much clear on that point.

“It’s just…” he attempted more gently. And then the memory of being told that she was cheating on him came to mind and ‘gently’ flew out the window once again. “No, what the fuck are you doing here, Jess?”

She frowned and picked at her cuticles. It was her nervous habit and she’d done it ever since he’d known her. Since college. He tried not to focus on that. “Well…Joe told me where to find you. He seemed to think you might need to see me.” Jessica crossed her arms and turned slightly away and he knew she had to be completely out of her comfort zone.

“Jess you shouldn’t be here,” he said tightly.

Her long blond mane hid her face but he could hear her sniffle softly.

He was torn. On the one hand they had been together for seven years. That was a long time. They had been through so much together; senior year of college, his six months of training academy, her med school and internship, moving four times, repetitive separation during missions, sickness, family deaths… He had seen her in every mood imaginable and tears were rare.

It hurt him to see her cry and the fact that she was doing so spoke of how upset she must actually be.

On the other hand he wasn’t entirely certain she still deserved his worry or comfort.

Of course that opened up a whole other can of worms. He had been so upset himself after Joe’s admission that he’d never bothered to confirm with Jess herself that the cheating accusation was true.

He sighed and rubbed his hand down his face. He was being unfair to her. They had seven long years between them. He had to ask her. He owed it to her to give her a chance.

The chance to explain herself? The chance to deny? The chance to apologize – to make it right? He wasn’t sure.

“He said he told you… I was with another man.”

Sam blinked, shocked that she had beaten him to the punch.

“Sam,” she turned back around and crossed the few feet that separated them, reaching up to caress the side of his face. She had done it a million times. The touch was familiar and he found himself leaning in to it, the muscle memory was just that strong. She scratched lightly at his days growth of facial hair and looked up at him with her big blue eyes which were glassy with unshed tears. “Sam he’s wrong. I don’t know why he said that. I’m with you. I…I couldn’t let you go another day thinking I cheated on you.”

A fat teardrop worked its way down her cheek, followed by another and Sam found himself mindlessly reaching to wipe it away. “Why would he say that Jess? Why would Joe accuse you with no evidence?”

She shook her head. “I…I was out with a friend. A man. Maybe it seemed too… I don’t know, too friendly? He saw it that way anyway. It was all misconstrued, Sam. You have to know, I would never hurt you like that!”

“Jessica,” he asked so that she would look him squarely in the eyes. “Did you cheat on me?”
She shook her head and gave him a smile even as the tears continued to roll down her cheeks unchecked. “Never.”

He closed his eyes, bombarded by multiple emotions at once. Confusion was a big one. He decided to let relief stand forefront for now. He reached for her hand and held it in both of his, his thumbs running back and forth of the petite row of knuckles.

She smiled up at him through her tears. It was a dazzling smile but it wasn’t as bright as he remembered it.

“Jess, how did you get Joe to tell you where I was? I’m undercover. It’s dangerous for you to be here.”

She shrugged. “I asked him if he’d spoken to you. He told me…what he’d said last time he saw you. Didn’t like that he upset you.”

Briefly he wondered if she meant that Joe didn’t like it or if she didn’t like it but he didn’t ask her to clarify.

“I thought it might throw you off your game. I got really upset with him. Even punched him.”

“You did?” Sam gave a slight snorting laugh at that. The image of the slender woman wailing on his much larger partner was a little ridiculous.

She grinned and giggled at the sound of his laugh. “Yeah. He made me swear an oath and everything before he would give me a location. I signed a waiver, Sam.” She widened her eyes comically. He squeezed her hand and shook his head. This wasn’t a time for levity. “I know the risk. It’s dangerous and maybe my being here is only making things worse for you. But I couldn’t let you be here another second thinking what he said was true. I just couldn’t.”

Sam searched within himself to see if what she was saying felt true but everything was just a jumble of mixed feelings. The emotion of it all was clouding his logical mind. In the end he reminded himself that Jess had never lied, not about anything of import anyway. He had never had a reason not to trust her before and he knew he would give her the benefit of the doubt on this.

So why didn’t he feel any better?

Pulling her hand towards him, Jessica fell into his chest and her arms wrapped around his neck as they had so many times before. Again, the feel of it all was too familiar. The smell of her coconut shampoo, the weight of her small frame against him, the feel of her fingers combing idly through his hair (even though she didn’t care for it being so long). His arms went around her upper back and he rubbed gently, soothing her because that’s what you did when you cared about someone. And right or wrong, he did care. It was all so…them. It had always been Sam and Jess. Jess and Sam.

Pulling back slightly, he felt her press further against him and rise up on her toes a bit as her lips sought his. The kiss was tentative and tender. It felt comfortable and known and Sam sighed, kissing her back. She tasted of mint and coffee and he wanted so badly to not feel how totally lackluster it all was compared to other kisses he’d had recently.

His brain struggled not to bring the variable of Dean into the mix and it was extremely difficult. His rational side told him that a seven-year relationship was a lot to throw away capriciously. Like it or not, he knew that whatever choice he made regarding his path with Jessica would have to be
independent from whatever he shared with Dean or either choice would be doomed.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean made his way slowly back down the corridors towards Unit A, passing guard after guard as they were stationed at each doorway.

Sam and the doctor had still been in the office when his work detail was up and he’d had no reason to stick around – well, not as far as the guards were concerned.

Briefly he thought about faking an injury. He could slip and fall on the water around Sam’s bucket, which had been left kind of obviously out in the middle of the floor. In the end he chose to slide the evidence of Sam’s absence out of sight and nix the injury scheme.

It wouldn’t have been wise anyway. He wasn’t sure he could have remained there and not wanted to stab something. He had already managed to destroy half of a first aid kit because his lack of concentration had him tearing and dropping things. And after seeing the hazy outline of two people pressed together – he may have even bitten into a large roll of gauze to keep from saying anything.

It was ridiculous. He was a grown man. How was it possible that he was jealous of a woman he didn’t know because of a non-relationship built on four days and a handful of sexually charged moments? There were teenagers that had gone farther than him and Sam. And yet there he was going psycho boyfriend on the innocent medical supplies.

Well, whatever.

Good for Sam.

If the woman was brave enough to face a ward full of prisoners to see the man, she had to be pretty serious about proving herself innocent or at least making things right.

At least he got a good bj out of it.

He didn’t do relationships anyway, right?

The sinking feeling in his stomach didn’t mean anything. Just a little letdown. That’s all.

Nothing he couldn’t move past.

The lights flickered, disrupting his pity party.

Dean paused and looked at the long line of fluorescent bulbs running along the ceiling. The one directly above him was blinking unsteadily, making a quiet pinging and popping noise.

He shrugged it off as a faulty light tube.

As he moved forward, the light above him flickered once more.

Looking up, he noted that it was doing the same thing as the last set of lights. Only when he looked back, the previous bulbs were burning steadily once more.

The hair on his arms stood on end and his scalp prickled.
“Shit,” he whispered, blowing out a long breath. It was of little comfort when no cold vapor formed in front of him. “Okay, then. Not a ghost.”

He moved forward once more and put a little extra pep in his step as the line of lights flickered and tracked his movement.

He might be a hunter but he was an unarmed hunter and being a sitting duck had never really been his thing.

Once he neared the doors leading to Unit A, the lights went down for a full ten seconds and then blinked back to life, the flickering having stopped completely.

His nodded at the c.o. that buzzed him in and hoofed it into the Unit like his pants were on fire.

“Damn!” he swore as he crossed towards his pod. He glanced back at the door and then up at the massive amount of lighting on the high ceiling of the unit. No more flickering.

He was going to have to make a hasty move on this whole unsolved mystery thing. That was definitely not normal and his mind was already spinning with possibilities of what it might have been.

He should call Bobby. He could thank him for the package and pick his brain covertly. Maybe he could come for a visit to check the place out. They couldn’t risk him coming in as an agent with it being a federal facility and all, but Dean could relay enough information to him during visitation. He resolved to make the call when they got phone privileges that evening.

Bobby would definitely have some ideas.

Before he reached his pod, movement caught his eye near the shower room.

“Winchester. Hey, Winchester, c’mere!”

Dean was shocked to see Richards waving to him, beckoning him over a little frantically though he seemed to be trying to hide the fact.

He looked around at the nearly deserted unit. Most of the guys hadn’t come back from work detail yet and those that were there were mostly sequestered in their pods. He couldn’t imagine why the man needed more privacy. Maybe he was looking for advice. Maybe more was going to ask for more help. The man definitely needed to get away from Smith before he got himself seriously hurt. Or dead.

Either way he knew he wouldn’t ignore the man. Couldn’t. He’d already gotten involved.

“What’s up?”

The man just opened the shower room door and moved inside with Dean on his heels.

Dean frowned as Richards, with a pitiful and shameful look on his face, simply turned and high-tailed it right back out of the room.

He scratched his head, wondering if Richards had gotten scared about talking to him. Maybe he had seen Smith come into the unit and didn’t want to be seen with him.

Yes, Dean was truly confused, right up until he heard a low chuckle at his back.

“Well, well… Winchester. Fancy meetin’ you here.”
He didn’t even have to turn around to know that Smith was standing there in all his bigoted glory.

Dean shook his head and sniffed. “Yeah. Crazy right? I was just saying how we don’t see one another nearly enough.”

Dean turned to face the man and a big glob of spit landed on his face.

“Aw, Smith. Be careful.” Dean said brashly as he wiped his cheek against his shoulder. “You start greeting me like that all the time, the others are gonna start getting jealous.”

“You think you’re so cute, don’tcha boy.”

“Why yes, I do.”

“Cocky little fucker too.” The smile on Smith’s face was so shit-eating that Dean thought he could actually smell manure if he tried hard enough.

Dean started backing towards the door. “Look. I could fight you. I could kick your ass. But then where would we be? I kick your ass then one of your friends kicks my ass and then it just becomes a vicious cycle. You did something fucked up and I called you on it. You gave me a few bumps and bruises. Let’s just call it a day.”

“That sounds mighty fair. Yeah, let’s be… friends.” He crossed his big hairy arms and nodded. “Boys?”

Dean turned to make his exit only to find he was too late. Two of Smith’s friends now stood in front of him, blocking his way. Neither of the men were the other guy he’d fought before – Butler. These were their associates. And their friends, now that he was seeing them up close and personal, were a lot bigger than either Butler or Smith.

He smiled tightly. “Okay. Fine. I see how this is gonna go down. Just… let’s make it fair. One-on-one. Me against your toughest clan member.”

“Oh no. See… my little bitch boy out there… He told me a few things about you. Said he saw you and Wesson last night getting’ a might … friendly yourselves.”

Dean did not like where this was going.

“Funny thing about all these glass boxes we live in. Not a helluva lot of privacy. Gotta know when to mind your own fuckin’ business. A lesson, I believe, you have yet to learn.”

The two now behind him, seized his arms roughly.

Dean struggled against the meaty hands at his forearms, wrists and biceps. He struggled and twisted and then froze, his blood turning to ice as he heard a zipper being drawn down slowly.

Though everything in him told him not to, he found himself looking towards the sound. Smith had opened up his uniform and was starting to stroke himself beneath his clothes.

The man grinned cruelly, his eyes never leaving Dean’s as he said simply, “Strip ‘im.”

Chapter End Notes
Dun, dun, duuuuuun... Thoughts?

More to come.
Despite All My Rage

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the attack.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone still hanging in there and continuing to read!!

For those that hated the cliff-hanger... it was not done sadistically. As proof, I doubled my efforts to get CH6 out as quickly as possible. I don't aim for dramatic endings to chapters, it just sometimes happens when the story seems to have a natural ebb and flow.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sam was pretty numb as he made his way through the winding gray passageways towards Unit A.

To say he’d been thrown by Jessica’s sudden appearance would be the understatement of the century.

Very few people could get things over on him. When college friends had thrown him a surprise birthday party, he’d heard a shift in their tones when they were talking in code in front of him and knew something was coming. When Jess had tried to surprise him with a visit while he was at training academy, she had called him from the airport under the guise of just seeing how he was. He had caught the faintest sound of flight jargon on a loud speaker over the phone and had rightly guessed that she was heading his way.

He always tried to act surprised, of course. He didn’t want to ruin anyone’s fun. He just prided himself on being able to read subtle clues. It was one of the things that made him a successful agent.

Seeing Jessica there had been more than a shock. It had been an earthquake in the middle of a relative tornado of a situation.

When he’d looked up to see her standing a mere eight feet away, it had felt surreal. Like he was seeing a mirage. Or maybe it was more a feeling of suddenly being in an alternate universe. One where his world as a prisoner clashed with his home world where he was just an average all-American boyfriend.
She’d finally explained that she had managed to pull some strings through various hospital connections to get a volunteer pass into the prison.

It had taken a while to convince Jess that she needed to leave. She wanted to stay with him and although she was extremely intelligent and did actually grasp the concept of ‘undercover’, her need to reassure and be reassured about their relationship made her unhappy at the prospect of being parted once more.

He’d finally had to be harsh with her, reminding her that he could be seriously compromised if she stayed any longer. If the prisoners found out that a Fed was amongst them, they would kill first and ask questions later. This had been easily smoothed over with a promise to take some time off after the case was over so that maybe they could go away for a while. Figure things out between them.

Of course she was his reality. She was what was waiting for him after he left this place. He had to remember that. Had to focus on that. It was good to have that reminder.

Whereas before he had been struggling with being inside – the lack of freedom, the lack of connection, the constant stress - he had been hanging on for the sake of the case. It was only that morning when he stood toe to toe with Butler that he realized he was now more worried to be leaving. Soon he would have to say goodbye to Dean. He would have to walk away. No matter how much he cared and no matter what fanciful notions he'd started to have about them being together after it was all over. He knew leaving would bring a completely different view of reality.

Seeing Jess had just solidified that fact in his mind.

He still had no idea what to make of the cheating accusation. Deep down he knew it was not outside the realm of possibility. He was gone more than he was there, which made a relationship pretty difficult even at the best of times. If he thought about it, he wasn’t sure he could put it past her. Not that she was a bad person.

No, Jess volunteered at homeless shelters. She made a trip to Africa once a year to offer her medical services to remote villages. Sam knew that he trusted her (as well as Joe) implicitly and maybe, in one way or another, both of them were telling the truth as they saw it. But neither were bad people.

He shook his head as he was buzzed through the doors of Unit A.

As he passed into the common area, a chill swept through him, straight to his bones, unsettling him.

Sam crossed directly to their pod, ignoring an inane taunt from a random passing inmate and an offer from Rebadow for a game of chess. Something told him he needed to see Dean.

He glanced in their pod to see if the man might be there already and felt a tug of disappointed when he didn’t find Dean sitting on his bunk, as he typically would be.

He really didn’t know where he stood with Dean either. He knew the best thing he could do would be to end things. To just let him know that they couldn’t be together. They had only just touched on a physical relationship although Sam felt that it was more than that to both of them. Still, it wasn’t as though they had declared undying love for one another either.

Maybe he was making way more of this than he ever needed to. Maybe what he and Dean shared was just a means to an end. It was comfort in a lonely place. It was solace and softness in a glass and stone world. Maybe that’s all it really was.
The train of thought was cut off abruptly as he saw Deluca speeding his way, desperately trying and failing to look unconcerned.

“Come quick,” he muttered breathlessly, stopping abruptly in front of Sam.

“What is it?”

Deluca grabbed his forearm in a grip that made Sam wonder if the older man secretly worked out when no one was watching. “Winchester.”

“What about him?”

“Aryans. Gotta get him outta there. S’gonna be bad!” He hissed a little frantically.

Sam’s heart fell to his knees and his mouth worked to get words out that would never come.

He wasn’t sure he’d ever been so terrified in his life as he suddenly found himself in that moment, being dragged steadily towards the shower room.

His mind did a macabre dance; images shifting and swirling behind his eyes as time seemed to slow and speed up all at once. Dean lying on the tiled floor battered and broken. Dean lying in a pool of blood, a shank buried in his back. Oh there were so many images…

Sam forced himself to breathe deeply through his nose and push down his nerves. Freaking out would do nothing for either of them if something were actually wrong.

After all, maybe Deluca was overreacting. It had been known to happen.

Upon first glance, there seemed to be no one there.

Deluca opened the door and pushed Sam unceremoniously through it while motioning that he would stay put to keep an eye out for the guards.

“You sure he’s in here?” he looked at Deluca and then turned back to scan the room.

The minute the words left his mouth, there was Dean.

He unfolded himself from where he must have been kneeling before. The man stood tall, one hand tight fisted at his side, the other gripping something in front of him. His body was mostly exposed, covered in splatters of blood. His eyes were narrowed and his teeth bared menacingly as his chest rose and fell with rapid breath.

The picture he created was as magnificent as it was frightening.

Sam approached him slowly, gasping as he started to take in the whole picture.

It took every ounce of control he possessed not to snap but like second nature, his training kicked in.

Assess the situation.

Hidden by the waist-high wall were three people. Two were piled together against the short wall, cuts and bumps on their faces.

Aryans.
Check for possible remaining threats.

Sam was fairly sure they were knocked out and not dead. He stooped to check their pulses just in case. It was slow but steady. Not dead. They might find that they wished they were dead upon waking but he couldn’t find it within himself to give a shit right at that moment.

The third man Sam recognized as Smith, though the discoloration in his face made him less immediately recognizable. Dean was gripping Smith’s hair so tightly that there was a very real possibility that the heavier man was going to loose a large chunk of it. Not that he could feel it, Sam noted, seeing that Smith wasn’t struggling. He’d probably been knocked out for a few minutes.

Smith’s jumpsuit was down around his hips and his chest bore what looked like angry red scratches, most likely from fingernails. The bloody trails ran straight through the Aryan Brotherhood tattoo inked over his heart.

Sam swallowed as he finally allowed his eyes to roam over his friend.

He choked back what might have been a sob, if he were the type to do that kind of thing. Which he wasn’t.

Dean was mostly naked. His boxers were the only piece of clothing left on his body and even that was mostly just the waistband, the rest hanging on in sad little scraps down one side.

Sam couldn’t say if the blood that was on the man was solely his own but he could see a line of scarlet on the side of Dean’s mouth. He also had multiple red and blue marks over various parts of his body from hits received. Most notably, and the thing that made Sam’s blood boil, were the marks that peppered his arms and wrists. Marks that were the exact shape and size of fingers.

He knew what had happened. Could picture it like he’d been there. They had jumped him. They had found him the first moment he’d been alone and they had jumped him. Two men had held him while the third…

Sam couldn’t even think it. If he thought it, then he might just start swinging and the men were all out cold. No, he wanted to see them go down when they were awake and aware enough to feel every second of the drawn out agonizing pain.

Remove any innocents from harm’s way.

“Dean,” he whispered, trying to focus on the moment at hand.

Deluca was right. This was going to be bad, especially if they didn’t get Dean out of there.

Dean’s eyes were unseeing and angry. It was obvious he wasn’t entirely there.

He still had yet to even acknowledge Sam’s presence.

He continued to stare at the man lying in a heap at his feet as if warring with himself. The ferocity of his expression had not changed and Sam could see his mind at work. Could see the wheels turning.

One strong punch downward and Smith would be dead and that would be that.

Based on the scattered bodies, Sam no longer had any questions on Dean’s capabilities. It was obvious that, if Dean had done this alone, that he could certainly take care of himself. But despite
his recent conviction and incarceration, he felt to his bones the truth that Dean was no killer.

Sam eased forward even more cautiously. “Dean…let him go. It’s over,” he said in a hushed tone.

He put a hand out, hoping to reach Dean and break him from his trance. Seeing the movement out of the corner of his eye and acting instinctively, Dean moved to block.

With this movement he let go of Smith’s hair and lunged at Sam, his fists swinging wide and his face a mask of rage.

“Dean!” Sam yelled, crossing his arms and pushing them up so that Dean’s hands had nowhere to go but over his head. Next a knee came towards Sam’s midsection and automatically he blocked with his right hand.

“Shit!” he yelped, momentarily startled by the jolt of pain running through his still bandaged hand.

His agonized cry shook Dean loose from his stupor. “S-Sam?”

Sam recognized that Dean was now back in real-time reality and was no longer a threat. He folded over just a bit, his hand cradled to his chest.

“How are you okay?” Dean asked, placing a hesitant arm around Sam’s hunched shoulders.

Sam laughed breathlessly. “Are you fuckin’ kidding me? You’re asking me how I am right now?” He could feel Dean shaking with fear, anger and sobered instantly. “I’ll be fine. We have to though. Now.”

Dean blinked, seeming a little unsteady on his feet. He stooped to pick up his jumpsuit which was torn and tattered on the floor and then looked dispassionately behind them at the scattered bodies. “Yeah.”

They both halted at the door as Deluca shook a towel at them, his arm being the only part of him inside the room. “Put it on,” he whispered loudly through the door opening.

Sam was grateful that their friend had thought of it. There was no way Dean could leave that room as he was without a whole lot of attention being drawn to him. He wrapped the towel hastily around Dean’s middle and tucked the trashed jumpsuit underneath it as well so as not to give anything away. No need to wave a flag. “Dean, we have to get to our pod unnoticed. Or at least without them suspecting anything. Can you do that?”

Dean nodded, took a deep breath and stood up as straight as he was able, pulling himself together in what seemed like typical Winchester fashion.

Deluca turned and walked towards one of the tables where Rebadow had begun setting up his game of Chess. He began speaking in an overloud voice and Sam knew he was trying to distract attention away from them. The man was a Godsend.

Sam walked out first, Dean trailing slightly behind him and both making certain to keep an unhurried pace.

*Act natural.*

As soon as they made it to the pod, Sam grabbed a suit and tossed it to Dean. Or tried to. The clothing dropped to the floor between them and Dean simply looked down at his hands, flexing his fingers and staring like he’d never seen them before.
Noises outside the door alerted him and he looked up in time to see a C.O. rushing by, speaking into a radio.

Sam’s heart sped up and he knew they were working on borrowed time.

“Dean. Put the damn clothes on. Now!”

This seemed to break through and Dean tossed his towel aside, stepping into the legs of the new suit.

When Dean didn’t move fast enough, Sam began to physically manhandle him, moving his legs and yanking the ugly orange fabric up to his hips. “We can’t give them any reason to suspect it was you. They suspect you and you get dragged off and thrown into the hole. Maybe solitary. Want that?”

Sam tried to meet Dean’s eyes but the man shifted making it impossible. He finally shook his head at Sam’s question.

Dean pulled the jumpsuit the rest of the way on himself. Meanwhile, Sam wet a towel and wiped blood quickly away from the corner of Dean’s mouth and visible skin.

He hated that he didn’t have time to be gentler. Hated that he wasn’t able to stop and soothe his lover with soft touches and calming words. He hated that his slap-dash movements were probably causing Dean discomfort. There was just no time for it. He vowed to make up for it later.

For the time being, however, he quickly shoved Dean onto the bottom bunk before launching himself up onto the top and arranging himself in the most casual position he could manage.

All of fifteen seconds passed before Foster was there, banging on their door frame.

“Winchester. Outside.” The woman barked.

Dean stood and glanced towards Sam who tried to convey a reminder to ‘act natural’ the best he knew how. This was difficult as he was fairly sure Dean’s eyes never made actual contact with his.

He needn’t have worried. Dean had it covered.

He watched in awe as the man’s expression morph seamlessly into one of calm confusion.

“What’s up officer?” he asked as he stood just outside the doorway.

Sam climbed slowly down from the top bunk but stayed inside of the pod, choosing to peer through the glass wall.

“Would you care to explain why I have three severely beaten men sprawled out in the shower room floor?”

Foster was pacing. He’d seen her do it before. It seemed to be her tell for when she knew something should be done but was at a loss as to what that might be.

Dean shook his head slowly, his brow creasing deeply in thought. “No clue. Is everything…are they okay? Who was hurt?”

She gave pause long enough to give him a dubious look. “Smith, Mills, and Thompson. Seems there was an… altercation in the shower.”
His eyes went wide with feigned innocence.

“Someone said they saw you going in there earlier. You wouldn’t happen to have been involved?”

A small amused smirk lifted the corner of his mouth. “I know Smith but the other names don’t ring a bell. And… I don’t make a habit of showering with people I don’t know. I’m a little picky about who sees me naked actually … officer.” There was a slight purr creeping into his last words.

Sam questioned for a moment if Dean was attempting to flirt with Foster.

_Fuck_, Dean was gonna be in the whole by dinner time.

Foster shook her head. Sam thought she looked a little bemused but she didn’t seem nearly as tenacious about getting a confession out of Dean as she had before.

“He’s been in his pod, officer. I was talking to him for like ten minutes. You didn’t see me at the door?” Deluca moved to stand beside the c.o. but still offering enough space between them so that his being there didn’t unnerve her. He smirked at Dean sniffing the air in an exaggeratory manner and cut his eyes to Foster. “Besides he smells like a box of cat turds. No way he’s been anywhere near any showers.”

She spared Deluca a glance. “Stay out of this.”

Sam chewed on his bottom lip. He might have laughed at George’s remark if he didn’t feel the weight of importance that was carried with Foster’s decision.

Doing that much damage to another inmate? Well it happened more than they wanted to admit, but it was still punishable. If you were caught fighting, they threw you in the hole to cool off. If someone got badly injured and they viewed you as a real threat, you could go to solitary.

One was a really uncomfortable but quick visit. The other was days and weeks on end. Solitary had been known to drive people insane. Based on what he’d heard from other inmates, if you were in solitary it was just an easier way for your enemies to get to you when you were completely helpless and trapped.

Foster stopped moving and stood with her hands on her hips. Staring hard at Dean, Sam could see Foster’s eyes moving over him, taking in the marks all over his exposed flesh. Her gaze lingered on the handprints covering his forearm.

It seemed as though she was considering this. Weighing the scenarios in her mind. Maybe, if Sam was reading her correctly, she was even empathizing.

“Well we’ll just see what they say. Ya know, when they wake up.” Finally she leaned forward, pushing up and getting right in his face. Daring him to flinch. “In the meantime, I’ll be watching you.” She said this loudly enough to be overheard by the crowd that had gathered. With nothing more to be said, she turned on her heel and marched steadily back to the tower on the second tier.

With the c.o. gone, Dean returned to sit once more on the bottom bunk. His eyes were focused straight ahead on the wall before him and he blinked slowly, giving nothing away.

Sam felt a little helpless. There were no words to say. He could ask if Dean was alright but it was something of a stupid question. Obviously he wasn’t.

Sam sat beside him and moved to place a hand on his arm but Dean flinched away hard.
“Dean,” he whispered a little taken aback by the reaction.

“Don’t.”

“O-kay.” Sam made a show of clasping his hands in his lap. This was lost on Dean as he had yet to move his eyes away from the stone wall in front of him. Sam worried his bottom lip. “At least tell me if you’re okay, man. Please. I’m going out of my mind here.”

“M’fine.” Dean bit out a little too sharply.

“Did they…? Did he…?” Sam didn’t want to ask. He didn’t really even want to know. But he had to know. He had to know how to take care of Dean. He had to know how bad things were.

Dean squeezed his eyes and shook his head.

Sam let out a breath he hadn’t been aware he’d been holding.

Nodding he looked Dean up and down, scanning again for any other possible injuries he might have missed. “Do you need to see the doc? Maybe we could come up with a reason to-,”

Dean scoffed and rolled his eyes hard. “Why? Want to spend some more time with the girlfriend?” The tone had been scathing and really didn’t sound like his friend at all.

The words, as they finally soaked into Sam’s brain, did terrible things to his insides. His gut clenched and dropped like he was barreling down the tracks of a broken roller coaster.

Dean had indeed figured it out. And somehow in the midst of everything he’d just been through, Dean was upset…about Jess.

Sam couldn’t even begin to wrap his brain around any of it.

“Dean-,”

“Sam. Just don’t.” There was not an ounce of inflection in Dean’s dull voice. Sam’s eyes snapped up to the other man’s face.

He could immediately see the shift in demeanor. Dean wasn’t scared or angry or hurt… At least not where anyone could see. He’d never seen anyone flip the switch quite like Dean did.

He sat glued to the spot as Dean stood and left the pod.

“Hey Fran!” He shouted loudly, his switch flipping once more. He’d slipped once more into a mask of normalcy. “Get your ass over here. We got some cards to play!”

The call had sounded so natural. So playful. So…Dean.

He wondered if the man would ever speak to him again like that; With a smile on his face and a wisecrack on the tip of his tongue.

He wondered where they stood now, even if he hadn’t really known where they stood before. Now he was doubly confused.

Sam stretched out on his bunk, the heels of his hands pressing into his eyes. He felt like he was spinning out of control. If only he could go to sleep and wake up to find that today had all been one long dream.
Dean stood at the mirror brushing his teeth before lights out later that night. His eyes stared unseeingly at his reflection.

He needed sleep.

The day had been so long he wondered if he was really in some sort of Trickster-induced time loop where one day could really be three days meshed together. It sure felt like he’d lived through three days.

He was exhausted.

Dean sighed. The fact that he kept thinking about the fact that he was tired was making him even more tired.

“Lights out!” could be heard echoing in the large open space of the unit.

The door sealed itself shut and the lights switched almost instantaneously from bright to dim.

He found this to be comforting. It wasn’t so dark that he couldn’t be seen, but there was enough shadow that he didn’t have to continue with the front he’d held up all afternoon.

In an effort to show the entire unit (especially the correctional staff) that he was a-okay, he’d decided to teach the old guys how to play Asshole. It was unfortunate to the extreme that they weren’t allowed to include the drinking portion of the card game, but they made due. Rebadow particularly got into the spirit of things and it ended up being a pretty boisterous couple of games.

When chow time had rolled around, Dean had sought out and stuck to Veronica like glue. He thought maybe it was the fact that she hadn’t been involved in any part of what had happened earlier that made him feel like it was okay to talk to her. She wasn’t going to say anything weird or look at him oddly. She didn’t ask if he was alright. She just talked about gossip and useless information, which was exactly what he’d needed.

He’d been a little flustered when he’d noticed Sam heading towards the table and had asked if Veronica would switch up with him before Sam took a seat. She seemed a little curious but shrugged and slid down. Dean had never even looked directly at Sam but he was sure the man was thrown.

Dean just couldn’t do it. Couldn’t handle Sam at that moment. If he did, the façade would have cracked.

After dinner, Dean had joined several people watching some show called CSI.

Dean hadn’t really had a lot of time for television while growing up and it had just never been something he considered on a regular basis. Sure he’d turned a television on. He’d watched plenty of it and could probably tell you the general plot of most of the old shows that were in syndication. Cartoons still remained his favorite thing to watch when he could find them, but it had to be the classic stuff – not the new slick computer generated revamp of the classics.

CSI, after five minutes, had Dean confused as to whether he wanted to toss his cookies or write his congressman about the dumbing down of America. The overdramatized fight scenes also had him a little weirded out. So he did what he did best. He made constant sarcastic comments. He waited for the complaining to begin but the other inmates seemed to appreciate his impromptu Mystery Science Theater moment (because no one really seemed to watch CSI for the plot) and he played to
the willing audience, happy for the laughter surrounding him.

When they’d started the countdown for lights out, Dean had been relieved and had headed to the pod immediately, still blatantly ignoring Sam who was lounging back on his bunk with his long legs crossed at the ankles like he hadn’t a care in the world. At least that’s what he seemed to be going for. His act wasn’t quite as award-winning as Dean’s though.

Now that the lights were out, Dean felt it was safe to finally remove the uniform without too many prying eyes. He tried to remain quiet but it was next to impossible to cover the grunts and groans that escaped his throat as he moved and stretched. Every last inch of his body ached.

His muscles burned and complained. It felt like even his bones were bruised.

Minutes later he was standing stock-still in a puddle of orange, his eyes unable to move from the shredded fabric that still clung to his waist. They hadn’t had time to remove it before and now there it was, forcing him to face reality.

Two things happened at once.

Dean finally allowed everything that had happened that day to seep back into his mind. From the feeling of losing Sam before he’d had him. The odd occurrence in the hall. And finally the closest call he’d ever had with man or monster.

At the same time Sam finally decided that it was time to confront him and had rolled from his bunk and risen to tower slightly over Dean.

“Dean, I need to explain about earlier with Je-…” Sam’s words faded as he got his first glimpse of Dean since lights-out.

Dean wasn’t stupid. He knew he’d been a dick to Sam all afternoon. He’d said that shit about seeing his girlfriend. He’d made it a point to keep distance between them. Hell he hadn’t looked the man in the eye since he’d found him in the shower room. But he couldn’t. He knew if he had, it would have been all over. He would have crashed and burned.

But Sam had told him the possible outcomes should they realize he had hurt those men and he couldn’t let that happen. Never let that happen.

So in the end, he’d done what he had to do and in the process he’d managed to alienate the one person he needed more than anything at that moment.

Now he could feel the man’s eyes on his body. Sam’s shock, his aggravation and worry… it was palpable.

Dean awkwardly fingered the loose scraps of fabric that covered his left hip unsure of what to do.

“Dean?” The question…from that voice… The fear and anguish that he heard in it. He wanted to go to him. Wanted to be held and comforted. But all of the lines were blurred and Dean was left feeling uneasy and unsure.

He finally worked up the courage to look at Sam and there it was.

Everything he’d pushed down all afternoon – since he’d gotten to prison - washed over him like a tsunami, leaving him breathless.

“Sammy,” Dean whispered brokenly.
He knew his distress was being broadcast loud and clear and Sam moved to him immediately, drawing him gently into his arms.

“I’m here, Dean,” Dean heard as well as felt Sam’s whisper against his neck. “It’s gonna be okay.”

And there in his lover’s embrace, he let himself believe that. If only for a short while.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“Sam…about earlier…”

Sam shushed him quietly, “Don’t worry about it. We can talk about it tomorrow.”

Dean shook his head. He knew it needed to be said.

“I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“What? When did you hurt me?”

“When I pulled away. I know it hurt you.”

Sam let out a surprised laugh, though the amount of humor behind it was lacking. “You’re worried about me again? I’m fine Dean. I know you were upset about before… In the hospital.”

Dean sighed a little in frustration. They were on two different trains of thought.

“Sam I shouldn’t have said that. I was just…trying to get a reign on everything… Bottle things up. I couldn’t do that with you right there.”

“I don’t understand…”

Dean shrugged a shoulder. “Had to act like everything was okay. Like I hadn’t just gone Wolverine on the Nazis.” He buried his nose in the crook of Sam’s neck and breathed in, getting the faintest whiff of perfume. Maybe he had just imagined it but it pierced him a little all the same.

“Dean…can you tell me? What happened?”

He stiffened at the request.

The truth of the matter was that not a lot had happened. He’d been attacked, but he’d been attacked in one way or another pretty consistently since the age of fourteen when his dad had taken him on his first real hunt. He’d been expecting to help track and kill but his first time up to bat had been in the role of bait. Specifically Shtriga bait.

It was his reaction to it all that had him more freaked out.

“I-I came back from work detail and…” he focused on the soothing circles being made by Sam’s hands on his lower back. “I saw Richards.”

It was Sam’s turn to stiffen. “Richards?”

“Yeah. Waved me over. Thought maybe he was in trouble again. Or needed something – support, advice,” he shook his head trying not to feel stupid about being duped by the little bastard. “I don’t know. He motioned me into the shower room but then he just took off.”
“That motherfucker!” Sam whispered heatedly. His movements stopped and Dean could feel his hand curl into a fist against his spine.

“Suddenly the three stooges popped up. Smith said Richards saw us together… last night.” Dean picked up his head and rested his chin on Sam’s shoulder. He let his eyes drift to the darkened pod across the way and tried to make out Richards somewhere in there. He half expected the man to have his face pressed against the glass but there was nothing.

“He told me I needed to learn to mind my own business.” Dean laughed mirthlessly at this. Bobby had told him that before he’d ever come. It had been one of the first things Sam had told him as well. “Maybe one day I’ll learn to listen to that advice.”

“Anyway, he had the other two hold me. I tried to get away, especially when I realized what Smith had in mind. I twisted and turned and tried every breakaway technique I knew. It freaked me out that none of it worked.”

Dean began rubbing his hands up and down Sam’s sides as he knew what he was about to say was going to probably freak him out. Call it preemptive comforting.

“They pulled my clothes off and when one of them went to yank my boxers down, I kneed him in the teeth.” He’d been trying to stick his hand in the flap in the front, trying to touch him and after becoming intimate with Dean’s knee instead, the fabric had ripped away in his hands. “The fact that I’d managed to stick it to one of them just made ‘em mad so they just gripped me tighter and Smith smacked me around a little. He started pullin’ himself out. Gettin’ up in my face talking about how he was gonna… well you get the picture.” Dean shuddered.

He had just stared blankly at the man as he went on and on about how he planned to draw it out and hurt Dean as much as possible. He’d bemoaned not having various toys and weapons at his disposal so that he could leave Dean completely incapacitated. He’d checked that the coast was clear and made the men push him Dean onto his knees.

“Stuck himself in my mouth. I would have bit his dick off, I swear, but he is apparently pretty practiced at that whole scene so he pressed his fingers hard into my cheeks so I had no way to bite down.”

Dean wasn’t sure Sam was still breathing so he stopped and pulled back. “Sammy?”

He watched Sam blink and shake his head like he had been in a trance. “I…I’m so sorry, Dean.”

“It’s okay. I don’t have to go on…”

“No!” he said firmly. “I want to know. I need to know or else I’m going to end up filling in the gaps and… Dean, I don’t know what I’m gonna do to them as it is.”

Dean let the words slide off of him and nodded, picking up Sam’s hands and holding them in his own. He examined their fingers, twisting and twining together as he went on. “It didn’t last that long. Guess he mostly just wanted to humiliate me. He had them push me down and he made to … get behind me. It all came a little too close for comfort. And then… well not sure what it was but something happened. The lights flickered hard and the hands loosened on me enough for me work my arms free and crawl to the corner.”

At the time, Dean hadn’t looked the gift horse in the mouth. He had stored it away for future examination. That time wasn’t now but Dean knew that it wasn’t a coincidence that the lights
flickering had been the turning point.

“I stood up and managed to get in a few punches to the two morons that had been holding me down. One of them got ahold of me again but I think I reared back and nailed him on the chin with my head. They were both coming at me and I simply moved in time for them to slam into one another.” There lumbering stupidity had worked out quite well for him.

“Smith, of course, wasn’t so tough when he wasn’t working in a group.” He smiled a little at the memory of Smith actually easing his way towards the door when Dean had finally looked his way again. They had fought just the night before and Smith had certainly had the upper hand but he’d also had someone holding Dean at the time. One on one, apparently, wasn’t Smith’s style.

“I couldn’t let him walk out of there, Sam.” He squeezed his friend’s hands and looked into his eyes, searching for agreement, approval, understanding… He was relieved by the lack of censure he saw there. “I grabbed him. Threw him against the wall. And, Sam, I swear something just came over me. I don’t know if it was instinct or just anger. It was massive though. I beat the shit out of him. I punched him over and over again. I almost couldn’t stop myself. If you hadn’t come in…”

And there it was. A fear realized.

Dean looked at the ceiling and shook his head, his teeth clinched tight. A single tear made a track down his cheek as he closed his eyes.

“I almost killed him, Sammy,” he whispered shakily. “I almost killed him.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

After a while, Sam recognized that the story was finished. That Dean wouldn’t share any more with him that night. It came as something of a relief. He wasn’t sure how much more he could have listened to before he started thinking about ways to make the other men ‘disappear’.

He put a lot of energy towards keeping himself calm for Dean’s sake.

Eventually, he had pulled away long enough to grab a fresh pair of boxers from Dean’s shelf. Without a word, he knelt in front of Dean, removed the tattered remains of his previous shorts and replaced them with the fresh pair. Dean let him and as their eyes met once more, a silent ‘thank you’ was there.

Sam moved to lie down on his bunk and drew Dean down beside him. There was no question that Dean needed this tonight. They both needed it.

The fit was tight but he held the man against his chest, rubbing his back and carding his fingers through the short spikes of hair. Occasionally he would place his lips softly against Dean’s forehead or on the top of his head.

He murmured to Dean about how good and strong and amazing he was. He told him how proud he was of him for holding his own.

He longed to say that he would never leave his side again, but Sam held his tongue. He wouldn’t make promises he couldn’t keep.

Eventually the exhausted man in his arms began to snooze softly, his breathing steady and even.

He had to stop himself from tightening his grip as he stared through the glass at the darkened pod
across the way where Smith was normally housed and where Richards, he was sure, was sleeping like a baby.

Word had filtered through the grapevine before lights out that the three men had all woken up. Smith had a broken collar bone and multiple broken ribs besides the bruising and superficial scratches. The other two had a handful of missing teeth between them and matching concussions. Of course he now knew that this had been the result of their own stupidity. He still gave Dean credit for the knockout. One of them, Mills he thought, also had a fracture in his wrist.

All in all, they had come out lucky as far as Sam was concerned. They deserved so much worse. Sam considered for a moment allowing the men to get better and then hurting them all over again. Smith specifically.

Smith…

In all his years going after bad guys, carrying weapons, training to fight… In all those years, Sam had never grown jaded or immune to the idea of hurting someone. He had always looked for a way around it if possible. Yet where Smith was concerned, the idea of inflicting pain, of making him suffer, made him smile darkly.

In a stark contrast to his line of thought, Sam tenderly picked up the hand that Dean had curled against Sam’s chest and he turned it slowly from side to side, examining the marks. They had gotten darker in the last several hours. Not a single person that saw Dean could have any doubts about what had happened to him. His wrists were the worst. They had to have held him pretty fucking tightly as there were black and blue splotches wrapping completely around them like a bracelet.

He found himself once again amazed at the strength of the man lying beside him.

Sam brought the hand up to his mouth and brushed his lips against the discolored skin.

Dean whimpered softly in his sleep.

With as much honestly and objectivity as he could muster in that moment, Sam examined the situation. He had never felt so affected by anyone before Dean. Jess’s visit had stirred up old feelings. He had been reminded of how good things could be with her. He had been reminded of just how much history they’d shared. It threw him totally to see her there in this place.

His mind in upheaval and Jess wrapped around him, he had almost convinced himself that maybe what he felt for Dean was fleeting. The result of loneliness.

He knew now that he was fooling himself if he thought that were truly the case.

He knew now that he would do anything for the man in his arms. Anything. And he couldn’t say that he’d ever known that feeling before now.

His life sat before him in a timeline and everything before four days ago was now marked as irrevocably P.D.

Pre-Dean.

Dean blinked his eyes open and looked up at Sam groggily. “Cold,” he breathed.

Sam pulled the blanket up and over them and settled back once more with Dean curled up half on top of him.
He placed another series of soft kisses against Dean’s brow.

As he started to slip in and out of sleep, Sam thanked God and every other force in the universe for letting him have this. Dean was there in his arms. There were so many more tragic ways it might have ended but they were both there.

Safe and together.

Chapter End Notes

To be continued in CH7: Lockdown. The boys have time on their hands and nothing other to do but talk. For two men with a whole lot of secrets, something’s bound to come out.

Feedback is always encouraged and appreciated!
Chapter Summary

*Things are starting to fall apart and come together. As always, the truth will out.*

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Time Served
Chapter 7: Lockdown, Part 1

When Dean stirred the next morning, he wanted to die.

Not literally, of course. Maybe it was more accurate to say he wanted to be put into a medically induced short-term coma until everything on his body mended.

He tried to move but found that even picking up his arm took quite a bit more effort that it normally would.

Sam grumbled, protesting the movement, and Dean felt the vibration against his cheek where it rested against Sam’s chest. The long muscular arms tightened where they were wrapped around his shoulders and thrown over his midsection. Dean wondered if that was what it felt like to be in the grip of an anaconda.

“Sam. Can’t breathe.” He rasped, only partially joking.

The other man jolted a little and instantly the arms loosened. The arm over Dean’s ribs fell away completely. “Sorry,” he slurred drowsily.

“Hang on a minute, Stretch. I didn’t mean you had to stop.” Dean raised his head to look down at the man who looked to be still more or less sleeping. He slowly pulled the arm back around him and leaned down to kiss the side of Sam’s mouth.

“Hmmm…. With his eyes still closed, Sam smiled. “S’this a dream?”

“No. If this was a dream, we wouldn’t have morning breath and that kiss would have been ten times hotter.”

Sam cracked an eye open. “I don’t know about you, but I say we risk it.”

Dean’s eyes traced the contours of Sam’s face and grinned. “Such a daredevil.”

“You’ve heard of Evel Knievel… just call me Wicked Wesson.”

Dean snorted but leaned down, his mouth brushing softly against Sam’s. It was tentative at first, both choosing to take small nips and kisses against closed mouths but as they were apt to do, things heated up quickly. Sam ran his tongue hotly along the rim of Dean’s mouth, pulling and sucking on the plump bottom lip sensually. Dean answered back with a slow sweep of his own before drawing away.
It was short and simple in terms of kisses shared but Dean couldn’t recall ever waking up beside someone and wanting so badly to kiss them, so he felt like it was one for the history books all the same.

“See? That was a much more satisfying ‘good morning’.”

“I’ll never doubt you again.”

Sam smiled with something that almost looked like contentment and pulled Dean back into his arms. Dean ignored the soreness pulling in his muscles and went willingly, not wishing to destroy their moment with mundane reality just yet.

He nuzzled and shifted until his entire face was buried against Sam’s neck and then he pulled the blanket back up as far as he could without uncovering Sam’s feet.

“Are we okay?”

It was a long time before Sam said anything and Dean had begun to wonder if he’d fallen back to sleep.

“Well… I mean that’s a big question, but I think… yeah. We’re okay.” The weight of Sam’s tone was heavy and Dean realized Sam had misunderstood.

“No. Well…that’s good that we’re okay. I just meant are we going to get in trouble for sleeping together?”

“Oh! Nah. The guards only bother to say anything if they catch someone actually in the act of… fornication.”

Dean blinked.

“Did you just say fornication?”

“Yes.”

“Like, in a sentence? You used the word fornication?”

“What do you want me to say?”

“I don’t know. Fucking? Screwing? Pressin’ the flesh?”

“Fine. Fucking.”

Dean continued, as if Sam hadn’t spoken. “Doing the nasty? Hiding the salami? Layin’ some pipe? Maybe getting’ a pole polish?”

“You finished?”

“I have more but I think you get the gist.” Dean in fact was feeling just how much Sam got it as Sam’s hard length was currently pressing very insistently into the thigh he had slung over Sam’s hips. “What’s on your mind, Sammy?” he asked, using the weight of his leg to put a little pressure on Sam’s cock.

Sam chuckled but it sounded a little strained. “So now you’re a poet and a tease?”

“Who’s teasing?”
“You. You’re getting me all hot and bothered when there’s no way I’m going to act on it.” Dean shivered as Sam’s left hand ran the length of his arm, the touch whisper-soft. “I may not be an expert but you have to be pretty uncomfortable today.”

Dean knew he was right. There was no way he could do much physically in the state he was in. He moved his leg so as not to torture him any further. He hadn’t meant to frustrate the other man, it had just felt so good being draped over and wrapped up with Sam. Who knew snuggling was so awesome?

Dean tried not to sulk over it.

Sam sighed and reached beneath the blanket, drawing the leg gently back into its previous position. “Maybe I like being teased.” He moved the hand up the leg to Dean’s hip and then over the horizon to his ass, rubbing the cotton-covered flesh gently.

“Hmmm…” Dean closed his eyes and hummed, relaxing under Sam’s ministration.

“Dean…”

“Yeah?”

“Will you…?” Sam stopped and seemed to be contemplating his next words. “Can we…?”

Another pause. “Why don’t we…?”

“This plane gonna leave the hanger any time soon?” Dean interrupted, humor lacing his words.

“What did you do before you came here?”

“What do you mean?”

“Ya know. Job or whatever? I know your uncle Bobby taught you about cars. But you also said you moved around a lot with your dad. How did you make a living?”

Dean pulled his head up enough to study Sam’s face. There was nothing there that hinted at ulterior motives. Nothing that said he suspected anything. How could he?

Sam was one of millions of lucky people that had no idea what all was out there to be afraid of. No, the question seemed sincere. Which meant Sam was just curious. About him.

He gave the man a little knowing smirk. “Are you trying to do the whole ‘getting to know you’ thing, Wesson?”

Sam blushed a little even though there was no reason to. He shrugged. “It just seems odd that I feel so… That we’re here and hardly know anything about one another. Well, outside of the fact that we both know we did something to wind up in prison.”

Dean considered the situation. He knew there was no way in hell he could tell Sam everything. Obviously. The man would think him insane. It was rare, without the presence of actual supernatural proof, for people to believe. In his experience, if you were swimming in ectoplasm after being possessed, you generally became more open minded.

“Odd jobs mostly.” He finally replied. “Yeah I did a lot of car repair on the road. Stay in a place for a few weeks and most small shops let me do pickup work. One month I was a bouncer for a whole in the wall bar in East Texas. That was interesting.”
Understatement. That bar had been a horrible job. Some freakin’ demon-lovin newbie occultist had found a book at a garage sale, of all places, and had managed a spell that acted like a damn demon call. The ugly bastards had flocked there for two straight weeks. It had taken four hunters working in a nearly constant rotation to keep the damage to a minimum until the unbreakable spell fizzled out on it’s own.

Sam chuckled. “A bouncer? Yeah, I guess I could see that.”

“Did some security and protection stuff for a friend of a friend. Some rising country star that was being threatened…” He neglected to mention that the woman in question had been threatened by a ghost haunting her tour bus.

“Wow. So you’re all tough guy then? Protector of the innocent?”

The question seemed rhetorical but Dean mumbled, “I do what I can.”

“At least I know now how you were able to take out those guys yesterday.”

Dean bristled at the hesitation in Sam’s voice. He wasn’t a child. He wasn’t going to break down crying at the mention of the attack.

Okay, so he’d cried a little the day before. But it was the crash after the fight, it was stress and …

Point was he’d taken care of himself for more years than he cared to think of and compared to some of the shit he’d witnessed and even been up against, what happened yesterday was nothing.

Of course, again, Sam didn’t know that.

“Yeah. I’ve been…training to fight since,” Dean paused to consider this.

His mother had left right around the time he’d turned five. It was around the same time that his father had suddenly become extremely interested in the paranormal. He remembered suddenly seeing weapons filtering into the house and being yelled at if he touched them. He recalled seeing pictures of scary creatures in the odd old books his dad would find on his trips.

His father had left him with babysitters probably more often than not, but he knew whenever the man was home, it would be time for ‘lessons’.

They’d started self-defense training at six, hand-to-hand at seven, and John had put Dean’s first shotgun in his hands not even a year after that. And that had been life.

“Since when?”

Dean shook his head, realizing he’d been lost in thought and had neglected to finish his sentence. “Since before I could ride a bike,” he finished vaguely. A little worried that the line of questioning was going to stray into dangerous territory, Dean turned it around. “So what about you? What did you do before entering into this fine correctional institution?”

“Um…” Sam sighed. “Ya know. This and that.”

He smirked. “This and that?” He wondered if Sam was embarrassed by his past. Maybe he’d had a really hum drum life and figured it wasn’t worth mentioning. Or maybe, like Dean, he had secrets.

“Yeah.”

“Smooth,” he quipped sarcastically. “You must be a secret agent with a super detailed story like
that.”

Sam sucked in a breath too quickly and started choking, dislodging Dean from the comfortable little spot at his side. “Sorry,” he wheezed when his breathing was back under control.

Dean arched a brow and pushed himself up, grimacing and grunting against the soreness as he went. “Never seen someone choke on air before.”

“Yeah. I’m gifted.” Sam rolled his eyes. Dean thought it was cute. He’d never seen the other man do that and he wondered if he was picking up the trait from Dean.

“Gooooood morning Unit A!” One of the officers attempted a Robin Williams impression.

Dean and Sam just stared at each other and shook their heads both commiserating over being subjected to such things with no means of escape.

The lights came up and Dean took extra care pushing himself into a standing position, an arm wrapped protectively around his middle. “We’ll finish the ‘getting to know you’ portion of our conversation later.”

He smiled to himself as he began dressing for breakfast. He knew it wasn’t the most conventional thing in the world. Knew that Sam still had a girlfriend. Knew that their situation made everything easier and way more difficult all at once.

He took a moment to watch Sam examine his toothbrush before holding it up to eye level and put a precise amount of toothpaste on the bristles. It seemed a little anal, which wasn’t Dean’s cup of tea, but Sam made up for it when he spotted Dean watching in the mirror. The taller man turned with a mouth full of minty foam and began creeping towards Dean making exaggerated kissy faces.

“Get away from me, ya jackass,” Dean laughed, putting his hands up in front of him, playfully defensive.

Sam’s smile was hidden by the toothbrush and white froth but Dean saw it in his eyes all the same.

He liked Sam. More than liked Sam. And while he had this, whatever it was, he decided he was going to enjoy it.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

The day had started off so well.

Sam had woken up with Dean in his arms. For a moment he had let himself picture them in a bed. Not the bed he’d shared with Jess and not the cramped beanbag of a bunk, but a new bed in a new place that was just theirs. He imagined them to be two guys who were still in the beginning of a relationship because, for all intents and purposes, that’s what they were.

His desire to know more about Dean, to know everything, had overwhelmed him and he couldn’t stop himself from asking.

He was an investigator by trade and, truth be told, it was probably stranger that he hadn’t already asked for Dean’s entire life history down to his blood type and social security number.

As the day had worn on, things had started heading downhill.
In the yard after breakfast, Sam had searched out a man by the name of Rivers. Rivers had been near one of the original scenes of death.

Before they were ruled crime scenes, and every shred of evidence was bagged and filed, there had been two murders that had gone relatively uninvestigated. There was no telling how much evidence they might have lost. It didn’t matter that there was nothing to be found on or near any of the other bodies. It was those two that bothered Sam most.

The unknown could sometimes mess with his head. It became like a scab that he had to obsessively pick at.

So when he’d heard from one of the guards that the man that had the east wing mop-up detail before him was sitting in Unit B, he had asked someone to point him out.

Rivers, it turned out, was a shaky old goat by the best standards. He seemed to have a constant tremor that indicated either a stroke or alcoholism. He was gray-skinned, rail thin, and looked like a good hearty wind could probably blow him over. Sam briefly tried to estimate a probable age range and was pretty sure ‘old as dirt’ wasn’t going to work, categorically speaking. Maybe mid-to-late seventies was more accurate but life had obviously not been kind to the man in any case.

As he shakily held a cigarette to his lips, pulling hard enough to turn the end electric orange, the man squinted at Sam. “Why you wanna know ‘bout that dead man?” he asked with a hard southern drawl.

“It’s just odd, that’s all. I think it’s interesting.” Sometimes Sam played the crazy card, sometimes he played the conspiracy theory card, and sometimes he just plain told them it was none of their business. It all just depended on the personality of the person in front of him. He had to play it their way so they would feel like anything they told him wasn’t extracted so much as offered freely to someone that spoke their language.

Rivers was in for a double homicide, which he’d happily confessed to around fifteen years ago. Sam figured if anyone might appreciate someone being interested in death and killing then it might be him.

“Plus I heard a rumor that it was really a murder,” Sam said conspiratorially.

“That it was.”

“Shit, man!” Sam laid his shock and awe on thick. “Did you see anything? How’d you know?”

“Look…I don’t know why you an’ that other fella are askin’ me this shit. Already told him. You go on an’ ask him’n leave me alone.” He took another long drag on the cigarette, holding it deep in his lungs before blowing it in the direction of Sam’s face.

Sam held his breath and tried not to cough or look like he was getting completely pissed. “What man?” he ground out.

Rivers held his cigarette between his thumb and middle finger and used it to point across the basketball court towards the fence. “That’n. The one that fucked up them white-power pansies.” The old man started to laugh but it turned into a wheezy hacking cough.

Sam stared at where the man had pointed completely unsure what to think. He suddenly felt like he’d been pushed down the rabbit hole or punched in the gut.

Dean was sitting against the fence beside Aguayo having an animated discussion.
The significance of his current conversational companion was not lost on Sam. Aguayo had been one of the first people he’d spoken to after getting to Bolt. He had an entire file on the man locked in his head and knew that he had been present at one of the deaths. It was Aguayo that Sam had hoped would break the case. He had been ruled out as a suspect due to the fact that he had only been in Bolt during the last three murders but he was definitely a witness. He was the only person that had any first hand knowledge that might help them. But Sam had spoken to him numerous times and the man stuck to his story.

He knew nothing. Saw nothing. Was just walking behind some guy going back to Unit B and suddenly the guy was just on the floor. That’s it. End of story.

Sam felt like the man knew more than he was letting on but damned if he’d been able to pull it out of him.

Dean laughed loudly at something the man said and they both nodded. Aquayo punched Dean in the shoulder. Sam was a little proud that Dean didn’t even wince against the friendly strike, but that pride warred with the spark of anger and confusion lighting up his insides.

Sam wasn’t a moron. He hadn’t gotten where he was by not seeing the forest for the trees.

Dean was asking about the deaths.

The question that would eat Sam alive for the rest of the day would be…why?

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Lunch had been another culinary masterpiece composed of dry bread with a single piece of waxy orange cheese between the slices and on the side was mealy apple chunks, already turning brown at the edges, mixed with raisins.

Dean had been taught never to waste food. They’d never had a whole lot of it on the road since any scammed credit cards had to be used sparingly, mostly for gas and motels. He and his dad would take turns hustling pool or picking up odd jobs and that was the money that fed them. Sometimes the jobs were few and far between. Instead of chowing down at diners, they’d had to settle for quick gas station fare or dented mystery cans at the local grocery stores, which were adventures unto themselves. Sometimes it was pickled beets. Sometimes it was sardines. (Fuck had he hated when it was sardines!)

So in the end, Dean had sucked it up and cleaned his plate trying not to think about how amazing a nice thick juicy burger would be.

“Where’s Wesson?” Veronica asked as she settled into the spot beside Deluca and across from Dean.

Dean frowned. “No clue.” It had been troubling him since this morning. When they got back to Unit A after being on the yard for a while, Sam had virtually disappeared.

It was odd to say the least and Dean worried that something might have happened to Sam outside while he had been talking to some of the guys there.

After all, Butler was still roaming around and he knew eventually the ass would try to avenge his friends. He was sure Sam could take care of himself but if anything happened to him, Dean knew he’d blame himself for not having been there to have Sam’s back.
“I saw him leave the yard with one of the hacks,” Rebadow said dully, attempting to cut the crusts off of his bread using a plastic spoon.

Dean frowned at Deluca, who shrugged and they both turned back to Rebadow.

“Do you know why he left?”

Rebadow seemed a little taken aback when he looked up to see Dean, Deluca and Veronica staring at him. “Um…what? No. No, he just went up the guard and asked to see the warden. That’s all I know. Honest.”

“The warden?” Dean shook his head in confusion. Why would Sam have reason to see the warden?

Veronica grimaced and tugged at the hem of her lacy pink tank top. She was fidgeting and it did not escape Dean’s notice.

“Veronica?” Dean asked, knowing she had to have information, a theory, something that she wasn’t saying.

She looked up and smiled a little guiltily.

“Spill,” he said, brooking no argument.

Veronica sighed a little dramatically and rolled her eyes. “It’s nothing okay? I just heard from Jo, who heard from Ronnie, who overheard Clovis sayin’ to Lee-lee that Wesson was…. like, really,” she lowered her voice significantly, “really suspicious, ‘cause he kept askin’ Clovis about weird shit. Clovis doesn’t like it cause he says Wesson’s real nosy. They’re sayin’ he’s…”

He gritted his teeth. It was already on the tip of his tongue to defend his friend, no matter what might be said. “He’s what?”

She shook her head hard, a few tendrils of hair falling out of the tie she was using to hold her hair in place. “It’s stupid. It’s insane. There’s like… no way.”

“Spit it the fuck out, Veronica, or I swear to-,”

“Okay, okay. Fuck, Winchester. Don’t go all terminator on me, hon.” She picked up her tray and put it on a rack to be cleaned by the inmates that had kitchen duty as work detail. Then she glided back to the table, only this time to his side, settling in the seat he’d left open for Sam. “What I tell you… Just don’t hate me, okay? I don’t believe it. I’m just tellin’ you what I heard. Okay?”

She seemed sincerely worried about his reaction and he tried to visibly calm himself. “Okay,” he nodded and smiled softly at her letting her know she could trust him with whatever she might say.

Leaning in, her thin hands clutching at his sleeve, she whispered the words softly into his ear.

In seconds, as the words filtered through his brain, the blood drained from his face and he found that he was having a little trouble breathing.

“Winchester?” Deluca asked around a mouth full of apple, worry forefront in his voice. “You okay?”

Dean ignored him and pulled back to look down at Veronica. “S’bullshit,” he swore, but his face was screwed up in something close to a look of horror.

Veronica swallowed and bit her pink lip-gloss coated lip. Dean knew she was probably waiting for
him to rail at her. To scream that it wasn’t true. To tell her she was dumb and a bitch for saying what she said.

He didn’t. He just stared her straight in the eyes so that she couldn’t mistake just how serious he was in what he was about to say. He leaned in until his mouth was at her cheek. To anyone else it would look like he might be giving her a kiss but he whispered, “I swear on my own life, if you breathe a word of what you just said to anyone else… you will regret it.”

He pulled away and, with great effort, forced his features into a cool indifference.

Veronica moved her hands to her lap and with her eyes trained on the side of his face, she whispered loud enough for him to hear. “I won’t. I swear.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

The warden’s office was nice and cool which was a relief after so long in the stagnant seventy-eight degrees that seemed to be the average temperature of the units.

Sam felt like he had reentered civilization as he’d walked into the lavish room for only the second time since arriving at Bolt. The walls were a warm wine color with the forth wall, behind the highly polished mahogany desk, being a floor to ceiling bookcase. The bookcase was filled with various law texts, old records, and tomes about the history of Bolt and the prison system in general. There was no mistaking that it was indeed an office, but it had a cozy feel. It looked as though it should be dimly lit with a fireplace roaring in the corner and a chaise lounge on which to curl up with a book.

It was a rather sharp contrast to cold, hard bleakness that made up the rest of the facility.

The large picture window across from the desk was the main source of light in the office. Sam stood before it, soaking in the sunshine and the view of the open meadow beside the prison. There was nothing for miles except a few copses of pine trees and it was certainly a sight for sore eyes.

When he got out of there, Sam was going to go camping for a week. He was going to gaze up at the stars and hike mountains. He was going to go on vacation and sit outside on his patio with a beer and buy a ton of amazing food only to eat it all in one sitting and stay up past nine o’clock…

“Detective,” Warden Larson greeted, after entering the room and closing the door firmly behind him. “Were you able to make your call?”

The warden, a middle-aged man with broad shoulders and a definite military way about him, smiled with restrained politeness. “Yes, it’s a lovely day today.” He took a sip from the cup of coffee he’d brought into the office. “So am I overstepping my bounds to ask if you’ve found something?”

Sam looked over his shoulder and the guarded hope he saw in the man’s eyes made him sigh. “I’m sorry, I’m not at liberty to discuss the case.” He said this with a little bit more harness than intended and immediately backtracked. “I will, of course, keep you informed of anything that would directly effect you, your staff or any of the inmates.”

Larson had a sour look on his face now but nodded, leaning a hip against the edge of his desk and crossed his arms. “Detective, I have no doubt that you will do the job you are here to do. I just want the deaths to stop. To be brutally honest, we can’t handle any more bad publicity.” He rubbed both
thumbs against his temples, working to ease an obvious headache. “The governor hates that there is a prison in his state where people are being murdered and we – a building full of supposed gah-damn law enforcement – can’t even figure it out. Can’t stop it.”

Sam turned away from the window and lifted his head, his chin jutting out indicating a confidence he wasn’t sure he truly felt. “Warden Larson, in my entire career, I have gotten every bad guy that I set out to get, whether I knew their identities at the beginning or not. My partner and I are working this from all angles and we will stop whomever it is this time as well.”

The warden sniffed, a tight smile curling the edges of his mouth. “Good to know. Because the death toll has risen by one since you came here. I’d hate to think anymore people had to die because you couldn’t admit you didn’t have a clue.”

The sudden venom in the other man’s voice was hard to miss and equally hard to ignore. The two men stared at one another until Sam finally returned the tight smile and tossed out a brief ‘thank you’ once more before exiting the office.

The guard stationed outside of the warden’s office walked with him towards Unit A and Sam kept the man in his peripheral vision at all times. After the exasperating phone call with Joe followed by words exchanged with Larson, he was feeling anxious. Last thing he needed was to get jumpy and smash the officer’s nose on reflex if the man touched his back accidentally. Maybe anxious wasn’t strong enough. Maybe fucking edgy as hell was getting closer to the truth.

As Joe had so kindly reminded him on the phone, he now had a mere three days.

Three days and they would yank him.

Sam didn’t like the idea of giving up, and he wouldn’t be completely, but he felt like there was more information that he’d yet to glean from being inside. From talking to the inmates. They were an as yet untapped wealth of knowledge. Briefly he wondered what Dean had discovered in speaking to the two men he knew of so far. As much as he, in that moment in time, wanted to be the type of person to bury his head in the sand, he knew he couldn’t dismiss the idea of asking Dean outright.

He was completely baffled by Dean’s actions. It had been what had spurred on his call to Joe in the first place. What cause would he have to be asking about the murders? So far his best theory was that Dean was related to one of the victims. It still seemed unlikely.

One thing Sam knew for certain, though, was that someone in Unit B knew something more than they were saying and fuck him if he wasn’t going to drag it out of someone, one way or another!

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

While Sam was still MIA, Dean was leaning against the doorframe of their pod reading a dog-eared copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He had read the book three times before in his life and it was a familiar text, but it was also one of those novels that felt like a new discovery every time you read it. It rang true and genuine and made Dean believe that the evil of the world could still be overcome by the thoughts and actions of simple people. He had checked it out of the library after lunch, hoping it would give him something to focus on besides the shit storm he felt steadily building around him.

Jeez, were they in it bad.
He’d been given a pass on work detail that day but all it had done was given him too much time to think. Apparently he wasn’t allowed in the hospital ward again until after the three guys that attacked him were released. It seemed that even though not one of the guys spoke up about who had beat the shit out of them, the staff weren’t completely clueless after all. So Stanton had informed him that he should stay in unit and do something productive with his time. Hence the book.

He had tried sitting to read but his nerves were far too frayed to manage that. Even now, as he cradled the paperback open in his hands and soaked in the words, his foot was tapping out SOS in Morse Code. It was completely unconscious yet there it was.

He looked up from the pages as the door to the unit was buzzed open, but his gaze drifted back down immediately as he noted it was only one of the other guys coming back from their work detail. Most of the guys were back already.

*So where the hell was Sam?!!*

“Hey, Winchester. We’re settin’ up a game if you want in,” Deluca said, walking out of the pod next to theirs with a deck of cards.

He shook his head. “Have to sit out every now and then. Give somebody else a shot at winning.”

Deluca chuckled. “Plus if you keep winning…you’re not gonna fit in that suit much longer.”

Dean’s mouth fell open and he stood up straight, looking down at his stomach. He rubbed a hand down his front to check that it was still as flat as it was before. It was. Still, he made a mental note not to plow through his candy stash quite so quickly, just in case. “Well if you would just find something else to play for—”

Quite abruptly, a long, loud, annoying buzzer began sounding, over and over again.

“What the hell is that?” He asked grimacing against the offensive noise.

Before Deluca could answer, one of the guards on the tower barked out “LOCKDOWN!”

It hadn’t been explained to Dean in so many words, but he knew the general idea of a lockdown was to keep prisoners in a completely controlled environment until whatever had caused it was over.

“Lockdown! To your pods! Lockdown!”

He looked around and saw all the prisoners in the common room making their way sluggishly towards their pods so Dean did the same.

Over the course of five minutes, he watched in amazement as the remaining inmates were herded into the unit like cattle.

It took another few minutes but finally he saw Sam’s head bobbing slightly above the others filing in and he let out a long sigh of relief.

“Hey,” he said, smiling at the fact that Sam seemed to be unharmed.

Sam said nothing back, just crossed to the sink and began splashing water over his face.

With everyone in their pods, the doors were closed and sealed.
Dean frowned. It wasn’t nighttime and it wasn’t lights out. They were simply stuck in there little holes so that they would be out of the way. “How long does this usually take?”

Sam toweled his face dry and shrugged, “Sometimes an hour, sometimes more. There have been points were it could go on for days. But that’s usually in the case of a riot breaking out.”

Days?

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.”

“No fuckin’ kidding.” Sam seemed distracted. Frustrated.

Dean felt unsteady not knowing how the new information given to him would effect him. Them. Suddenly, being face to face again with Sam…

He looked at the man in new light and found that even if what Veronica said were true, apparently it didn’t matter. He wasn’t sure that he would, but he still felt that low flutter in his stomach. His first thought was still to kiss him. To hold him.

“Sam…I need… I need to ask you a question and I need you to be honest.”

Sam sighed and threw his towel down on the bed. “I need to ask you something too.”

Dean nodded. “You go ahead.” This did not, of course, make him a chicken. He was obviously just being polite by letting Sam speak first.

Sam crossed over to him until he was close enough that they were surely breathing the same air. The taller man looked into his eyes. Really looked, as though he were searching for something specific that the eyes might betray.

He then took Dean by surprise. He cradled Dean’s face in his large hands and leaned in, kissing him thoroughly. It was a slow burn and Dean thought, as Sam’s tongue swept sweetly across his own, that it felt so much like a last kiss that he wanted to cry.

Sam stayed close, their lips touching but no longer engaged in actually kissing, and Dean moved his hands up Sam’s front until they were resting flat against the other man’s firm chest. Sam in response, oh so gently moved his hands to Dean’s shoulders and trailed them down his back until the fingers splayed possessively over either side of his spine.

Dean closed his eyes. He allowed him to be immersed in the feel of the embrace. He knew there was no way things weren’t about to change. Any moment now.

Sam was the first to back away. His fingers brushed down Dean’s arms and squeezed his hands at the last second before moving out of reach.

“Look, Dean…” He folded his hands as if in prayer. “Why… Why were you talking to Aguayo today?”

Dean bit the inside of his lip. That wasn’t exactly what he was expecting. “I was just talking.”

“About the murder he saw?”

Straight shooter. Dean liked that about Sam. “Yeah. About the murder.”

“Why would you do that? What interest do you have in some murder that happened before you got here?”
As a hunter, Dean was something of a professional liar. You had to be. It was part of the job. He had posed as everything from health inspector to an aid for the president of the United States. He was good at thinking on his feet and could have spun a tale so amazing that even he would start to wonder if it were true.

But something told him… *no lies.*

“I want to figure out what did it.”

“Don’t you mean ‘who’?”

“Nope.” Dean leaned against the bunk, trying to look more relaxed than he felt. “If I meant ‘who’, would have said ‘who’.”

Sam shook his head and mirrored Dean’s stance. They were now face to face on opposite ends of the bed and Dean almost laughed at the literal stand-off.

“I don’t understand. So you think it’s a bug? Like they got sick?”

Dean narrowed his eyes. “No. I don’t.”

“Then what do you think it is?”

“If I knew that, I wouldn’t be talking to Aguayo.”

Sam’s jaw tensed and Dean didn’t like it. This conversation needed to go well. He needed Sam’s cooperation and he wouldn’t get it if he only managed to piss him off.

“Okay…look. I know this is going to sound relatively insane. It’s not something I go around announcing, okay? Most people think we’re nuts or delusional…” He closed his eyes again trying to draw the strength to do this. “Just, keep an open mind, Sammy,” he whispered.

Sam nodded once.

“I’m a hunter.”

He could see the other man mulling the word over in his head. *Hunter.*

“A bounty hunter?”

“Close. And good guess. Most people would have asked if I went after deer or turkey.”

“What’s close to a bounty hunter?”

“Well, that’s the tricky part.” Now or never. “Instead of hunting people, we hunt ghosts. And instead of collecting bounty we get job satisfaction and in some cases alcoholism and debilitating injuries.”

Sam was silent for several long minutes and then his mouth curled up into a dubious smile. “Very funny. Ghosts?” He shook his head. “C’mon Winchester.”

“Well ghosts, ghouls, skinwalkers, vampires, werewolves… the list is a little extensive. Unfortunately. Loch Ness monster isn’t real though. So…plus.”

Sam looked at him again, this time once more scanning his face. Seeing the truth there, he frowned and shook his head, harder this time. “This is insane.”
“Open mind,” Dean reminded him.

“Yeah well I thought I was keeping an open mind about you being some amateur detective. Maybe an unlicensed bounty hunter. Not that you go after Edward and Jacob!”

“Who are Edward and Jacob?”

“Some girly book about vam-;” he held up his hands mid explanation. “You know what? I am not having this discussion.”

“I’d say you’re about halfway down the yellow brick road, dude. No turning back now.”

“So you…you mean to tell me that you think some ghost is offing people here?”

Dean sighed. “Like I said, I don’t know. Pretty sure it’s not a ghost but still not totally convinced. I heard about the murders and…something about the fact that there’s no sign of struggle and no evidence… It has to be something not human. So, I started talking with some of the guys on Unit B. Had a spot of good luck and happened on Aguayo.”

Sam froze. “What did he say?”

Dean felt that his answer was important to the man. Obviously Sam hadn’t gotten that far with the other prisoner. It was an important card to hold in the conversation and Dean felt no shame in using it.

“I’ll tell you. If you answer a few of my questions first.”

“Sure. Yeah.”

He looked Sam up and down, head to toe, wondering if he could see some part of him that would announce who he really was. There was nothing. He was still the same Sam that Dean had been in a cell with for five days. He was still the same man that he’d found broken and bruised in the shower room after he found out his girlfriend was cheating. He was still the same man that had found Dean in exactly the same place and had saved him from doing something he would have regretted the rest of his life.

“Sammy,” he began, hoping to soften the blow. “Are you really a prisoner?”

"Are you really a prisoner?"

Sam chuffed. “Well, if you want to get philosophical, we’re all prisoners.”

Dean blinked at him and he knew he would insult the man’s intelligence if he tried to play it off.

“No.” he finally relented. “I’m not.”

It went against everything he was taught. It went against everything they did, to tell Dean. To voluntarily break his cover. He was fucked, but something in him wouldn’t let him to lie to Dean.

“How did you know?”

“Someone… mentioned that you had been asking a whole lot of questions about the deaths. Honestly it was the first I’d heard of them, but…”
Someone had pinned him. Even though he didn’t normally ask about the specific cases outright, except for the few people that required the direct approach, someone had heard him and clued in on the fact that he was asking about the murders.

He wanted to kick something. He wanted to yell. He knew this would happen. Joe should have been the one inside all along. Sam had failed.

“Sammy,” Dean was in his space before he realized the man had moved. How had that happened? A warm hand slid up the side of his face. “Was it all a lie?”

This effectively threw cold water on his inner turmoil.

He looked at Dean and knew no matter how good an actor he was, there was no way he could have lied about Dean to Dean. “No. Not all of it.” Covering Dean’s hand on his cheek with his own, Sam rested their foreheads together and squeezed his eyes tightly closed.

He melted a little with a feeling of liberation he hadn’t expected, knowing that Dean excepted the truth and hadn’t turned away.

“Glad to hear it,” Dean murmured, his nose moving slowly back and forth against Sam’s. The gesture was oddly intimate and soothed him.

“I’ll…tell you everything.” He whispered. “Just tell me what Aguayo said.”

Dean sighed and smiled, relief shining from his every action. Sam wondered if his own relief was so blatant.

His lover moved away and took a seat on the lower bunk and indicated the space beside him. “Get comfortable, Sammy. We have a lot of ground to cover.”

Chapter End Notes

To be continued in Lockdown, Part II
Lockdown, Part II

Chapter Summary

Sam and Dean trade stories during lockdown.

Chapter Notes

Chapter 8 has been split into two chapters due to length.

Chapters 8 & 9 are conversation heavy but it's all going somewhere. Promise.

------------------------------------------

3:18 pm

Sam sat on the edge of the bed, stiffly. Dean sat to his right, his knees pulled up and his forearms resting on top of them as his right fingers loosely encircled his left wrist. Sam thought they both seemed to be wound a little tight, but it was to be expected. Acceptance of one’s circumstances was one thing but to have the reality of it all coming at you at once was a bit much.

This was especially true in his case as the ‘reality’ he was currently faced with sounded not that far off from the ravings in a psych ward.

“How much do you know?” Sam finally began, breaking the silence.

Dean thought for a moment. “I know that there have been seven deaths so far. No signs of struggle. Nothing to really point to a cause of death, much less murder.”

The weight that came with the truth behind those words had been wrapped around Sam’s neck like an albatross for weeks. Months.

He grimaced. “Unfortunately that’s all accurate. We have little to go on besides the pattern of fatality. The sites are varied but stay within the same three locations. One is just beyond the cafeteria, near Unit D. One is on the other side of Unit C. The last is the corridor between the hospital wing and Unit B.”

Dean’s eyebrows furrowed and he cocked his head questioningly momentarily reminding Sam of a curious puppy. “Is that why you got transferred over to that area for work detail?” The man was quick on the uptake and Sam felt a little thrill run through him. He’d always found intelligence to be a turn-on but he thought that quite possibly Dean’s triple threat combo of strength, sharp wit, and brains might one day be his undoing.

“Correct,” he finally acknowledged.

“Aww…and here I was thinking it was to be closer to me.” Sam glanced over and caught Dean’s teasing grin. He returned the smile and only just managed to stop himself from stretching out on
the bed beside the other man. Not really the time to get distracted.

As a compromise to himself, he twisted towards him, pulling one leg up on the mattress.

“Now…what did Aguayo tell you?”

Dean held up his hands in a pausing gesture. “Okay, before we get into that, I have a few questions of my own.” Sam tensed and Dean met his eyes with a look of quiet fortitude. “Humor me,” he insisted.

Sam rolled his lips in between his teeth and bobbed his head pensively.

What could Dean possibly want to ask? Couldn’t he just tell him what Aguayo said and back away from the whole thing? No. Even in the short time he’d known Dean, the man didn’t back down much. He said what he meant and meant what he said and if he really was a…hunter…then he was likely determined to be in the middle of things.

The thing is, Sam knew he would answer Dean’s questions, every last one, and he’d do it without hesitation. As a man, he was relieved and appreciative to have a lover that could actually talk to him coherently and with no-nonsense about the thing that had been eating at him for the last several months.

His inner agent, however, the part of him that was a staunch defender of the ways and means of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, was stirring. He had been trained not to talk and all that part of him could think was how deep was the shit going to be when his superiors found out he discussed details of a case with a civilian.

No…worse. Dean wasn’t even a civilian. As harsh as it sounded, in the eyes of the US government, Dean was merely a non-voting number. A nameless face in a cage.

Unaware of the inner freak-out that had begun in Sam’s brain, Dean forged on. “Did you review the security tapes of each death? I know they have to exist.”

Sam nodded blankly. “The passageways and common rooms are all under constant surveillance. There are tapes and I’ve seen them multiple times.”

They were going to bury him.

“Awesome! What do they show?”

“Each tape shows the victim proceeding down the corridor and then dropping without noticeable provocation. Typically each occurrence happened after work detail when the prisoners were allowed to return to their unit without escort, hence the lack of witnesses. There was only one instance where another person was present and that was Aguayo.”

He was going to strapped to a desk for the rest of his career.

“Oh-huh. Tell me, was there anything weird about the audio or video?”

The question surprised Sam, especially the tone which seemed to indicate that Dean knew there was something weird. Sam had actually noticed the anomalies after the third tape. How could Dean possibly be privy to that knowledge?

He answered slowly, hesitantly. Suddenly Sam was extremely curious and more than a little nervous about where this conversation was heading. “The audio cuts out on all of them right before
moment of death. Also the video skews into static either before or after the victim falls. It’s only slightly different on each tape, but the duration of the static is exactly three-point-six seconds. Every time.” At Dean’s bemused half-smile, he shrugged. “I like to be precise.”

Dean nodded as if this confirmed something in his mind, though he didn’t see fit to share what that was. “Next question. What do you know about the first time Aguayo was questioned?”

Sam didn’t have to think about it. He had the entire file memorized and could have recited it in his sleep. “The responding officer’s report stated that Aguayo was ‘initially combative and emotionally distressed. Bordering on manic.’ Although later notes mention that he eventually became cooperative once calmed by the prison priest.”

“Right.” Dean said as if that should answer all of Sam’s questions.

He shrugged, at a loss as to what he was supposed to glean from Aguayo’s reaction. “Doesn’t really seem odd. The man had just witnessed someone die.”

“Yeah,” a sardonic snort. “The poor guy. Happen to catch was he was in for?”

Sam’s eyes widened as he recalled the information and considered its bearing on the situation. A part of the puzzle slid right into place.

“Shit,” he whispered.

Dean raised an eyebrow. “Not a whole lot of people go down for false imprisonment, torture, rape and murder in the first and come out bein’ afraid of someone casually dropping dead in front of them.”

“So you think he saw something more?” Dean lifted one shoulder in a half shrug, which Sam took as confirmation. “But if there had been a murderer present, we would have seen them. It would have been on the tapes.” Sam’s eyes darted around the room as if he might see the answer hiding in the dank corners if he looked fast enough. “Unless the… the static… But who could possibly get in and out in three seconds…?” At this point he was merely muttering to himself.

“Well your boys in blue found nothing to indicate a murderer’s presence, right?” Dean scratched idly at his forehead.

There was no denying that so Sam didn’t try.

“And Aguayo is Catholic.”

What did that have to do with anything?

“Yeah?” Sam’s brow creased as he frowned. “I was raised Presbyterian. So?”

“Well, on the whole, Catholics tend to be…” Dean cleared his throat, “a pretty superstitious bunch.”

Finally the point Dean was circling became clear. “And you think because he was so distraught, it points towards him seeing something… otherworldly in the hallway with them?”

“Somethin’ like that, yeah.” The other man gave him an amused smirk, like he thought it was so cute that Sam was starting to catch on. Sam ignored the look.

“And? Did Aguayo back up this theory?”
“He did.”

Sam stared at him but Dean said nothing. He just smiled smugly.

“And?!” he finally broke down in utter exasperation.

Dean gave him a sidelong look. “And what?”

“What did he say?” Sam asked, enunciating each word as even-tempered as he could manage, knowing that any further sign of agitation would just fuel his lover’s obvious need to torture him.

Dean’s answering laugh was breathy and warm and cooled Sam’s annoyance with a speed and efficiency that would have fascinated and been admired by psychologists the world over. “He said there was a woman.”

“A woman?”

“Is there an echo? Yeah. A woman.”

“Did he maybe give you a little more to go on?”

Dean looked like he was biting his tongue to keep from laughing. “She was ‘butt-ugly’.” He held up his hands. “His words not mine.”

“So…we’re looking for – what? – an unattractive female roaming the halls? Is she…,” Sam huffed and rolled his eyes heavenward, still not believing what was about to pass through his lips, “So you’re pretty sure it isn’t a ghost?”

“No.” Green eyes scanned the underside of the top bunk as he considered the situation and possibility once more. “No. Not a ghost.”

Sam pinched the bridge of his nose to try and subdue the headache he felt coming on strong and fast. He didn’t like the idea that he was starting to feel so completely out of his depth with this conversation.

Fine. He’d play Devil’s advocate. He knew how to do that at least. “How can you be so sure?”

Sam watched Dean as he chewed absently on his fully bottom lip, his next words rolling around behind his eyes. Sam wondered if explaining things was difficult for Dean. Like maybe he was secretly wishing for a Nuts-to-Normal translator. “Have you ever been caught by a chill? Like, you go into a room and the temperature drops ten degrees suddenly - no explanation?”

“I don’t know. Maybe.”

“Well typically if a spirit is nearby, that’s one of the first signs. The spirit itself isn’t real. It’s just…energy. So to manifest itself it has to draw on the energy around it. All energy. Including people.”

“Okay, so what has you convinced that wasn’t it? Aguayo mention that it was unseasonably warm or something?”

“I had a little run in with… I dunno, something yesterday. Before the attack.” Dean sighed heavily and unconsciously rubbed his upper arm. Sam worried for a moment that Dean might get upset at his own mention of the events of the day before. He eyed him closely. “Actually before and … during the attack.”
Recognizing the light shudder that passed over Dean’s features, Sam had to remind himself that everything that had happened was still fresh. Dean was still covered in their marks and entrenched in his own mental unrest over what he’d almost done. Sam reached over and slid a hand up the pant leg of Dean’s jumpsuit, splaying his fingers over the other man’s firm calf. He kneaded the tight muscles hoping that the light touch would offer Dean whatever he might need at that moment. Calm, support, solace, affection…

In the back of his mind he still struggled to push back the continuing anger and violence that threatened to bubble to the surface each time he remembered what he’d seen. Remembered the story that was recounted. Each time he took in the painful looking bruising that stood out so starkly against Dean’s fair skin.

*God help those men if they crossed his path again.*

Hoping to bring them both back out of their dark thoughts and into the conversation at hand, Sam nodded decisively. “Okay.”

“Okay what?” Dean seemed fascinated by the slight dancing movement of the pants fabric as Sam’s hand made slow circles. Sam wondered if his lover was also feeling the sweet spark of warmth he was experiencing with the innocent contact.

“Okay. I trust your…professional opinion that it isn’t, in fact, a ghost.” Their eyes met and they shared a lingering smile.

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3:52 pm

“Professional opinion, huh?” Dean let out a surprised bark of a laugh. Sam looked like he had swallowed a railroad spike trying to say the word ghost not five minutes before and now he was calling Dean a professional.

“Sure. The agency brings in specialists all the time. I’ve decided that’s what you’ll be. My supernatural specialist.”

Dean wondered briefly if he was being a total teenage girl for getting a little thrill as Sam said ‘my supernatural specialist’. Emphasis on the ‘my’.

“I’m assuming this is a non-paying gig.”

Sam’s eyebrows shot up playfully. “You assume correctly.”

Dean sighed as melodramatically as he could manage. “Too bad. I was really hoping to finally be able to afford that New York penthouse I’ve had my eye on.”

“Yep. Guess you’ll just have to settle for that whole job satisfaction thing.”

“Alright. I can do that.” Dean resisted the urge for what must have been the tenth time over the past half hour, to reach for Sam. He wanted to touch him and the pads of the fingers moving soothingly against his leg were almost making it worse.

Oh, Dean recognized the signs. He was a freshly turned junkie, hooked on Sam and in need of more. Always more.
“So now that we’ve ruled out ghosts… Did Aguayo say anything more?”

“Ah. Well, I don’t know if I’d go putting all of your eggs in the Aguayo basket.” Dean hadn’t spoken to many other inmates regarding the whole thing, but it seemed as though he had been pointed in just the right direction. Or maybe it was just that he knew the right questions to ask.

“But Aguayo was there. He saw.”

“Yeah, he saw a ‘butt-ugly’ chick that was there one minute and gone the next. And Sammy I know you don’t know a whole lot about this stuff but I gotta tell you that won’t really narrow the list as much as you think it will.”

“So what other basket should we be putting eggs in?”

“Rivers.”

Dean watched and recognized the excitement and curiosity that flickered and sparked to life in Sam’s eyes. He was starting to be able to read the man fairly well considering the short amount of time they’d been together. He knew Sam was already running down the possibilities of what it might mean. Obviously he knew Rivers had a connection to at least one crime scene.

“I spoke to him earlier. He said you talked to him. He’s the reason I saw you talking to Aguayo in the first place. God, Dean, I was going out of my mind trying to figure out what reason you could possibly have to talk to him.”

“Wanna hear something funny? For a while there, after Veronica told me about the deaths and how you were asking all these questions about them, I was wondering if you might even be a hunter, yourself.”

“What convinced you that I wasn’t-,” Sam paused mid-sentence, his eyes near to bulging. “Wait. Did you say…Veronica? Veronica told you I was asking questions?”

There was definitely panic in Sam’s eyes. Dean immediately placed a hand on the other man’s broad shoulder hoping to reassure him. “Yeah. But it’s okay. She won’t say anything else to anyone.”

“How can you possibly know that? Jesus! I knew you said someone had noticed but I thought maybe Deluca or Rebadow. Someone that knows how to keep their fuckin’ mouth shut!” Sam’s normally cool demeanor was slipping and his voice went a little louder with the onset of distress. “Now I’m gonna die because the transvestite prostitute likes to gossip!”

_Not a sentence one hears often._

“You are not going to die.” Dean wanted to roll his eyes but he felt like it might be a tad insensitive, even for him. “Like I said, Veronica won’t say anything.”

“Have you _met_ Veronica?!” he asked sarcastically.

Dean swallowed and spread his fingers, looking at the nails. Studying them as if he’d never seen a cuticle before in his life. “I kinda thruhtder…” he mumbled.

“Say again?”

“I. Thrtended. Her,” he said slowly, finally looking up at the other man from beneath his eyelashes.
The flustered and troubled look on Sam’s face gave way to a slow shy smile and it reminded Dean of a time-lapse video he’d seen once where a thick blanket of fluffy white snow melted away to the lush green grasses and flowers of spring, all in a matter of minutes.

_Sam’s smile was his Spring._

Dean gagged a little after as he processed that last thought. Yep. Totally a teenage girl.

“You threatened someone for me?”

“Yeah,” Dean admitted. “But don’t let it go to your head. I threaten people all the time. Just for fun. I’m a bad ass that way.”

The half-laugh, half-snort that Sam replied with told him that the man obviously didn’t believe that for a second, but Sam didn’t call him out on it.

“Well there’s nothing I can do about it stuck in here at the moment so let’s forget about the fact that my cover might be blown wide open and that I could be shanked the moment I step out that door… Back to Rivers. What did he tell you?”

During the course of Sam’s spiel about getting shanked, he had removed his hand from Dean’s leg who was currently mourning the loss of the touch and heat that accompanied it. To keep himself from launching himself across the taller man’s lap, he slid off the bed and walked to the door.

Scanning the common room, or at least as much as he could see from his vantage point, he took in the men across the way. All of them penned in like zoo animals with no escape. Some were pacing restlessly. Some sat reading or staring off into space. It definitely had a different feel than lights out. At least then everyone knew it was time to settle down and hopefully sleep. The feeling in the air was one of resignation but also tension, knowing something had happened or was still happening.

“Sulfur,” Dean muttered, his attention focused elsewhere.

The guards weren’t pacing like they normally would. With all free movement at a standstill, the three correctional officers left on the unit all stood on the tower, staring at a monitor that he was sure held video feed of whatever was happening to cause the total lockdown.

“Sulfer?” Sam asked to be sure he heard correctly.

Dean turned his back towards the door and nodded. “Sulfur. Sulfur, sulfur, sulfur.”

“You can say the word as many times as you like. It’s not going to magically mean something to me.”

“Sulfur…is the key.”

“So Rivers smelled rotten eggs?”

“Kinda. Did you know he was at cleanup for both the first two deaths? Before they realized it might be a murder scene? They had him mop up the area after they had the bodies moved.”

”Wait a minute. Sulfer was found at several of the crime scenes too. It never showed up on the tox screens on the bodies so… We just all dismissed it.” Dean watched Sam unravel a bit at the knowledge, running his long fingers through his hair several times, as it was his nervous tick. “What does sulfur have to do with it? And I’d appreciate a non-cryptic straightforward answer,
“I’m not sure you’re ready for the answer, Sammy.” At Sam’s narrow-eyed pissy look, Dean relented smartly. “But since you said please. Sulfur indicates the presence of a demon.”

Sam let out an odd strangled sound and closed his eyes for a long minute. “A demon,” he repeated.

“Yup.”

“You’re telling me there are demons?”

“Oh yeah.”

“Not a ghost.”

Dean sighed.

“A demon.”

“That’s what I’m saying. Rivers said he cleaned up and thought it weird that the place was almost spotless ‘cept for a pile of yellowish dust on the ground next to a drain in the floor.”

“The sulfur.”

“Yeah. It’s a sign of demon activity.”

“Kind of a nasty calling card.”

“No kidding. Nothing says ‘I just dropped by’ like the smell of a fart.”

“So on a scale of one-to-‘oh fuck’, how bad is a demon on the monst-o-meter?”

“Monst-o-meter?” Dean chuckled. He liked that. He’d have to share it with Bobby. “Depends on the demon.”

“There are different kinds?”

“Yeah, well they’re all minions of hell but there are hierarchies down there just like there are topside. We have lowlifes and top dogs and everything in between. So do they. The big chink in the chain is that normally demon’s have to possess someone to move around. They would have to be possessing the woman but…” That part definitely didn’t add up for Dean. He’d never seen a demon move around without a meat suit. Never seen one act like a spirit.

He needed to talk to Bobby. Like, yesterday.

“So what you’re telling me is we don’t have any way of knowing what kind of big bad we’re dealing with?”

Dean started to answer and did a double take instead. “We?”

The word had jumped out of Sam’s sentence and all but slapped Dean in the face. The feeling of sharing things with Sam was good in a way that Dean had never expected. But not for a moment had he considered that Sam would be involved in this when it came down to actually facing the bitch.

“Yeah. We.” Sam said firmly.
“Sammy,” Dean started, his voice heavy with hesitance and regret.

“No way are you going to tell me it’s too dangerous.”

Apparently Sam could read him as well.

“Sam, I know you have to be an amazing agent. I know you probably have training I could never dream of. But really…” It would be like a champion chess player going up against a trained knight in actual combat. “You’re out of your league here.”

This did not sit well with his long-limbed lover. “Fuck you! I can handle a demon if I have to. I just need to know what to do. You can teach me!”

“If the tables were turned and this really was some killer. Would you let me go after the killer with you?”

“Of course not, but-”

“How is this any different?”

“It just is!”

“Not a very convincing answer.”

“I’m not going to let you go up against it alone.”

“Sam you have no idea what I’ve managed to face in my life. Alone.”

“Well maybe I don’t like to think about that. Maybe I don’t like the idea of you facing that shit on your own.”

Sam had hopped off the bed and was slowly bearing down on Dean. He stepped backwards, away from the scowling giant in front of him, until his back connected with the frigid wall.

“Sam,” he started weakly, knowing the argument was not one he was going to win. “I don’t want you getting hurt.”

“I don’t want you getting hurt either.” Sam’s intensity drained with the statement and he all but whispered the words as he closed in on Dean, filling his personal space. “I mean, here I am having a conversation about ghosts-,”

“Not a ghost.”

“-and demons. You think if anyone else said that, I would believe a word coming out of their mouths?” He squeezed his eyes closed and when he opened them again, Dean gasped a bit at the sincerity and depth of emotion he saw in the hazel spheres. “I trust you more than I think I have ever trusted anyone.

“That means…a lot.” Dean’s own voice dropping to a low murmur. He swallowed against the sudden closed feeling in his throat. It was no lie. It meant so so very much. Trust wasn’t something Dean had come upon too many times in his life. He trusted Bobby. He used to trust his dad. He trusted some hunters but never completely. And he wasn’t sure anyone had ever really trusted him. Not when it counted.

And then there was Sam. The man that had handed his identity over to Dean without batting an eyelash even though the information in the wrong hands really could get him killed. Sam, the man
that was standing before him, uprooting his entire belief system because Dean said the boogie man was real.

Sam sighed and Dean echoed him. “But I also care about you… I think, more than I’ve cared about anyone in a long time too.”

“Sam…” Dean couldn’t go any farther. He’d apparently never really fully understood the meaning of the phrase ‘choked up’ until that very moment. He wondered if Sam could actually hear the booming staccato beat of his heart as it was pounding in his ears.

When Sam’s lips slanted over his, there was nothing else. He opened to the man automatically now as if his mouth were no longer only his. It now recognized Sam as belonging there as well.

Their tongues tangled and rolled together easily and with abandon and it was all Dean could do to remember to breathe through his nose.

Sam’s fingers which had been spread over his cheeks and jaw, now made their way down to his arms and gingerly gripped his biceps, ever mindful of the areas that he knew to be the most hypersensitive. Dean’s own fingers were twisted in Sam’s uniform front, flexing and itching to get to skin.

“Wanna hold you,” Dean murmured against his mouth. “Wanna touch you.”

It wasn’t really a request or a question. It was a pronouncement.

Dean let the man move him with an easy touch until he was between Sam and the bed. “Lie down,” Sam said quietly before looking over his shoulder at the glass wall and across to the other inmates who they knew could easily see just as well into their pod as Dean and Sam could see into theirs. “If I could get just ten minutes alone in a real room with you…”

“Only ten?” Dean teased, holding out his hand which Sam took and allowed himself to be pulled down beside Dean on the lower bunk.

“Let me rephrase. I would settle for ten minutes. Of course I’m sure that would only make me want more. I have a feeling the more I get of you the more I’m going to want.”

Dean smiled as he nibbled at Sam’s jaw line. “I’m acquainted with that feeling.”

“If I hold up the blanket a little, can you pull your suit off?”

Dean’s dick jumped at the suggestion that he strip. The assumption was that more was to follow so he nodded quickly. Aching muscles or not, he’d power through it.

After several long seconds of struggle to get his legs and arms to cooperate, Dean returned the favor of holding the blanket and together they lay beneath the thin gray cloth, facing one another, naked except for underwear.

Dean held his breath as Sam once more traced several of the bruises along his forearm. “They look bad right? Ugly.”

Sam tore his eyes away from the discolored flesh to look up at Dean. “I don’t see ugly at all. I see how crazy you are.” He said with a smirk. “And how strong. How amazingly strong.”

“You’re strong too, ya know?” Dean reached up and brushed some of the longer strands of Sam’s hair behind his ear, but not before tugging on them playfully. “Coming in here. Pretending to be a
prisoner. Shit! Those guys did this to me because I called one of them out for trying to rape someone.” The fact still rankled and Dean shook his head, not allowing himself to get caught up in the thoughts of how ridiculous it really was. “I can’t even imagine how you’ve managed to keep it together for the past three months, knowing what it would mean if you were found out.”

“I do what I have to do to make things right. So I know I did everything I could to get the bad guy. To make the world just a little bit better.”

The words settled over Dean and he couldn’t help but recognize them as nearly identical to his own thoughts about hunting.

There was something about Sam. The way he questioned. The way he held himself. They seemed so different on the surface and yet so fundamentally the same inside.

“You can help me.”

Sam looked at Dean for a moment and finally seemed to process what Dean was agreeing to. “You’ll teach me, then?”

“Yeah, Sammy. I’ll teach you everything I can.”

“And we’ll send the bitch back to Hell together.”

“Together.” The adoring look in Sam’s eyes was slightly too dopey to be completely sincere so Dean rolled his eyes. “Alright, Samantha. Enough sweet talk.”

“Mmmm…” Sam agreed, rolling them so that he was draped over Dean. “Yes. Less talking.”
Lockdown, Part III

Chapter Summary

continuation of Lockdown, Part II ... Sam and Dean trade stories during lockdown.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time Served
Chapter 9: Lock Down, part III

5:07 pm

Sam was drowning in heat. Sweat beaded at the curve of his spine and he threw his head back as Dean attacked his neck with his teeth, tongue and lips. A sharp bite, then a lick to soothe the stinging flesh and an open mouth kiss to excite. Over and over again. Sam was going insane.

He writhed wildly on top of Dean, riding a very fine line of keeping most of his weight off of the man and not making it so completely obvious to every inmate watching that they were rutting like fiends.

Dean wasn’t making it easy. The man’s hands were latched onto his ass, pulling him forward, closer but never seemingly close enough, as his hips snapped up causing their rock hard dicks to rub together wetly. So perfectly.

God, it was so fucking hot. And hard. And…. 

Sam moved a hand from the bed and gripped Dean’s shoulder, pushing him away from his neck only to swoop down to claim Dean’s mouth roughly.

The slip slide of their members was electric. It was too good. If Sam was able to put together a coherent thought, he would have been thinking about the fact that if this felt amazing, if they were to ever have sex he might literally explode from ‘too good’.

As it were, they had both been reduced to little more than mindless grunts and moans and whimpers and gasps. It was a symphonic work of art to Sam’s ears.

Dean’s hands moved from the possessive grip they’d had on his backside and scratched momentarily up the long length of his back, the raking nails making him shiver and his body lurch. They continued on to card into his hair, gripping the slightly overlong strands tightly. It landed on the –oh fuck yeah, baby!- side of pain and Sam jerked, his hips moving with a mind of their own now, rolling like a piston against the other man.

Dean wrapped his legs around Sam’s waist and his head fell back into the pillow as he let go. Sam followed seconds later. The sight of Dean collapsing back, fucked out, mouth swollen, his skin flushed beneath the pearly streaks across his chest, was more than enough to tip him over the edge.

“Fuck.” Dean finally breathed from where he lay pinned down by Sam’s weight. “Fuck.”
Sam rolled away but only just enough to not be right on top of Dean. He couldn’t quite bear to pull completely away just yet. “That was…”

“Fuck,” they said in unison, chuckling at the absurdity of the moment. At the total ridiculousness of how amazing it felt.

“Feel like a teenager again,” Dean said feeling blindly under the blanket for his underwear, which he located and then promptly used to clean them off.

“No kidding,” He hummed happily, feeling better than he had in days. “At least you’re way better than Sarah French.”

“Sarah French?”

Sam was stunned. He hadn’t actually meant to say that out loud. “First…girlfriend. And I don’t know why I said that. I swear, there’s a compliment somewhere in there.”

Dean shot him a sleepy smile “I’ll take it as a compliment if you tell me what made you think of that.”

That was a tough one. Sam wasn’t really sure. Maybe it was the fact that he really did feel like a teenager sometimes with Dean. Like he was starting anew. Like he was maybe just learning himself all over again.

Of course the obvious answer was what he went with. “She was my first. The whole month we dated she would ask me to come over and watch movies while her parents were out. Liked to ride me, both of us fully clothed, until I came in my pants and then she’d send me home.”

“Lovely,” Dean deadpanned. “Sorry I missed out on that…fascinating rite of passage.”

The words made Sam recall that Dean had mentioned growing up on the road. Nomads. He probably hadn’t had a whole lot of normal in his childhood to speak of. It just made him more curious to find out what things had been like for his lover. “Who was your first?”

“Um…Sam? You really wanna have this conversation? I can still smell your cum, man. Can’t we just lay here and enjoy it?”

“No sorry. You’re dealing with a seriously curious man here. I didn’t become a FED for nothin’.”

“Okay. Okay. But you asked for it.” Dean adjusted his head on the pillow and Sam propped himself up on his fist, his other hand resting comfortably over Dean’s chest. “My first time doing anything…like that, I guess…was with Jackson. It was at a truck stop.”

“What?!” Dean flinched. Sam hadn’t meant to yell, but…what the hell? “What do you mean at a truck stop?”

“I mean…I was cleanin’ up at a truck stop. I was probably fifteen or sixteen. Dad and I were doing a long haul from Georgia to North Dakota and he was passed out in the car catchin’ some sleep before we drove on. The truck stop was one of those nicer ones that had showers and everything…Well, just so happened that another hunter we knew was passing through. One thing led to another and…we jerked each other off in one of the shower stalls.”

Sam’s mind was racing. “H-How old was he?”

“Twenty? I think. Something like that.”
“Jeez.” Sam didn’t even know what to do with that information. From a legal standpoint he was angered. From a personal standpoint he was furious. “How could he do that? You were just a kid.”

Dean sniffed. Obviously he didn’t agree. “No such thing as a kid when you hunt.”

“I could argue that point but I know it’s probably pretty fuckin’ moot.”

“Don’t worry, Sammy.” Dean inclined his head towards Sam and batted his lashes fancifully. “He didn’t hurt lil’ old me. I wanted it. Promise.” He kissed Sam’s chin and Sam knew he should let it go. He didn’t like to dwell over things that were out of his control. It was a waste of energy. However, when he had the resources at hand, he might see about getting the guy’s full name. He knew a guy, who knew a guy…

“So tell me something else,” he said, hoping to move his mind onto another topic altogether safer.

“Like what?”

“I dunno. Just… Tell me what it was like growing up on the road.”

“Oh. Are we doing that whole ‘getting to know you’ thing again?”

The question had been asked in a way that could only be described as a whine. Sam looked around them and then around to Dean mockingly. “You have some other pressing engagement to get to?” When no answer was forthcoming, he nodded. “That’s what I thought.”

Wiggling back into his boxers, Sam jumped up to pee. By the time he was back Dean had thrown the pillow over his face and was fake-snoring loudly as he pretended to sleep. “Dude. Don’t make me sing. I will. I’ll sing Barbie Girl until you can’t take anymore.” Dean stayed still, likely hoping to call his bluff. Sam sucked in enough air for at least three choruses and then was able to belt out only “I’m a Bar-” before Dean’s hand slapped over his mouth.

Suddenly their faces were inches apart. Dean growled. “I’m gonna take my hand away. Okay?” Sam nodded. “And you are not going to sing are you?” Sam shook his head. Dean eased his hand away and huffed. “Is that what FBI teaches you guys these days? Water-boarding, deprivation, and bad 90’s pop songs?”

“Nah, you’re thinking of the CIA.”

Dean tossed the blanket to Sam and made a long slow production of pulling on his jumpsuit, sans-underwear. Sam knew he’d be thinking about that (not so) little detail in the back of his mind the rest of the day. When he was finally settled and sitting with his back against the wall, his feet hanging off the bed, Dean looked straight ahead wearing a look of acquiescence.

“You good?” Sam asked, amused by the relatively childish display. Somehow Dean even made petulance look good.

Dean rolled his eyes heavenward, all for show. “You may proceed.”

He held back a laugh. “Okay. So…how did you start hunting?”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

5:44 pm
Dean sat quietly for a while, wondering where a good place to start might be. In the end, he settled on the beginning.

“My mama left when I was little, but I told you that. My dad… he never said much about her afterwards. Was a little odd, but it was just the way it was. For a long time he’d go on these trips. Never told me where. Just dumped me at the neighbor’s house and she’d take care of me until he got back. Sometimes it would be a few days, sometimes it would be a few weeks. “Eventually he started teaching me things. At first it was how to fight and how to shoot. Not too out of the ordinary so no one said much. But then he started showing me pictures.”

“What kind of pictures?”

Dean recalled clearly the gruesome images in the dusty old books. They had scared the living daylights out of him. The first time his dad had told him about a Rugaru, he didn’t sleep for two days and he watched everyone for signs that they might be turning.

“Creatures. The things he had been off hunting. He told me when I was eight. He was a hunter and he killed the bad things that hurt people.” Dean pulled the pillow onto his lap and fidgeted with the edges. “You imagine a kid going to school spoutin’ that shit? Talking about vampire nests and things that can pull their skin off only to look just like you? Things that represent the darkest evils? That’s what I took to school.

“One day I snuck a hoodoo mojo bag out Dad’s stash for show-and-tell. I barely even understood what it was, only knew that my dad had brought it back from his last trip. Told the kids what I knew and then started telling ‘em about all the bad shit my dad kills. About him bagging a werewolf the month before. About him on the hunt for a ghost.

“I can still hear my third grade teacher now.” He wrinkled his nose at the distasteful memory. ‘Winchester, you march yourself right down to the principal’s office. I will not have you disrupting my class with your horrible sick delusions.’ He hadn’t even know what she meant by ‘delusion’, just knew it was bad and he apparently shouldn’t have them. “They suspended me for a day and I didn’t talk much about dad after that.

“Eventually dad took to the road too much to leave me with the neighbor. Later he told me she threatened to call the cops on him for child abandonment. So from the time I was ten, we were on the road together.”

“That’s really young. So you didn’t have a home after that? What did you do about school?”

Dean smiled at Sam. He sounded so concerned. He wanted to tell Sam not to worry about young Dean. He had grown up okay. So, maybe he hadn’t lead a charmed life. One look at Sam sitting not two feet away from him and he thought maybe he hadn’t headed in such a bad direction.

“We had Bobby’s. Bobby was a hunting buddy of Dad’s. I think he probably taught Dad most everything he knew. Plus the man is like a walking encyclopedia of crazy shit. You need answers, he usually has them or can get them.” Dean was incredibly lucky to have the man in his life. He knew that.

“Sometimes, when the road was too much or if Dad needed a breather…I’d stay with Bobby. He taught me baseball and all that other crap dads are supposed to do with their kids.” Dean was more than aware that he sounded bitter. He just hoped Sam didn’t catch it or at least wouldn’t mention it. Dean was out of luck.
“So Bobby was…more like a dad to you?”

“Well, sure. But it wasn’t a big deal. Don’t get me wrong. My dad was there for other stuff. He taught me how to dig up a body to salt-n-burn without the cops finding evidence.”

He paused. Looking back on the choice of words, that probably wasn’t the smartest thing to admit to a federal agent, but really at this point what did he have to lose?

“Anyway,” he began again, clearing his throat, “Dad taught me almost everything I know about taking down the ‘big bad’. By the time I was nineteen or so, I was taking small jobs by myself. A small time vamp here, a ghost there… He didn’t like it but I knew it had to happen eventually and I was young and cocky. Got tired of living under his thumb.”

He shrugged not really wanting to go on. The rest of the story didn’t exactly make him shine. “So that’s how I grew up.”

Sam’s eyebrows arched up into his hairline. “Wow.”

And really what more could Sam say?

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

6:24 pm

“What are you writing?”

“Who says I’m writing anything?”

Sam looked down at Dean, curled up at his side, his index finger making concentric circles against his chest.

“You’ve done this before. But I can never tell what you’re drawing.”

Dean paused to look up at him mid invisible squiggle. He looked chagrinned like maybe he was a little embarrassed to be called out for the habit.

“It’s protection.”

He went back to tracing symbols and lines across his chest, the light touch tickling every so often.

“What kind of protection?”

“Anasazi symbols. They’re used to ward off… lots of things.”

Sam watched, fascinated by the markings that he couldn’t even see. The intricate patterns that existed in Dean’s mind.

In the center of his chest, he watched Dean create five perfectly straight, interlocking lines.

“Did you just…Did you draw a pentagram on me?”

Dean was apparently done using Sam as a canvas and laid his curled fingers on Sam’s torso, his chin resting on the loose fist. “Yes.” Was his only answer as he stared up at Sam evenly.

“A symbol of the five senses and ‘good’,” Sam recited, “and protection from evil.”
“How did you know?” Dean asked, looking nonplussed by Sam’s knowledge of the mark.

It was true, typically people saw it as a symbol of Devil worship.

“Minored in Linguistics at Stanford. Signs and symbols are kinda my thing.” That was something of an understatement. Sam was a whiz with codes and his symbology classes had been so satisfying, he had almost taken a few of them twice.

Dean chuckled and rolled back onto his side, stretching leisurely out beside Sam. “Nerd,” he muttered affectionately under his breath.

“Nerd-kisser,” Sam shot back, both of them settling in for a snooze.

Even as Sam drifted off, he could feel the warm phantom trails where Dean’s fingertip had slid across the skin of his chest and smiled softly at the knowledge that he was protected.

### 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ###

7:00 pm

“Dean, this is ridiculous.”

“I can’t do it, Sam.”

“Are you seriously going to just sit there and -”

“Not gonna happen!”

“Oh for heaven’s sake, Dean.”

“Look I’ve managed to time it for five fucking days so that you weren’t in here. Today will not be the day I break!”

“It’s natural, Dean. You pee in front of me, no problem. I swear I’m not gonna-,”

“Lalalalala…not listening.”

“Dean just use the damn toilet!”

“Nuh-uh.”

“Okay fine. We’ll just sit here. While you refuse to use the toilet. Even though you totally need to.”

“Fine.”

“Fine.” A pause. “Of course they probably are having a riot or something equally time-consuming and no telling how long it will be before they let us out of here. And…if for some reason lights out comes and we’re still in here… Well, we could be sealed in here until morning.”

“Zip it!” Dean snapped and then looked at the shiny steel toilet like it was spouting dirty ‘yo mama’ jokes.

“I’m just saying. But it’s completely up to you if you can’t handle droppin’ a deuce in front of me. I get it.”
“Thank you.”
“Even though you totally need to take a dump.”
“Yep.”
“And you probably haven’t since… What, yesterday?”
Dean grunted.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

7:14 pm

“Don’t look at me. I’ve been shamed.”
“You have not been shamed. And stop pouting.”
Dean folded his arms and sat cross-legged on the top bunk. “I don’t pout.”
“Dean, everyone goes number two.”
Dean let out a sigh and fell back onto his bunk with a dull thud.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

7:28 pm

“So how ‘bout you? What was little Sammy Wesson’s life like before he became the sasquatch of a man I see before me?”

Sam had, after much coaxing, managed to get Dean back down off the top bunk and they had found an oddly comfortable position sitting back to back on the floor. Sam was a little grateful. He wasn’t so much of a jerk to refuse the man’s question after he’d insisted Dean answer his. But knowing that he wasn’t going to be watched as he spoke made it a little easier to speak freely.

“What do you want to know? I was just your standard suburban kid. Not a lot to tell.”

“How did you end up becoming an agent?”

“Ah. Well… I guess … I guess I should start with my parents.”

“My father was a lawyer and my mother a pediatrician. Both ridiculously successful so suffice it to say, they were both pretty busy and weren’t around much. But when they were there…they were there. Family was important. They raised me to believe that money meant nothing if you didn’t have principles. And love. Mom always threw that in.” Sam smiled, recalling the people that had given him life. As absent as they had been, he had never doubted their love. It was good to have that to hold on to as he went on.

“I always tried to be good. Did anything they asked of me. They were smart. They knew I craved attention and made sure to only give it to me for the positive stuff. So I strived for the good. I got great grades and played every sport I could.”

“Let me guess. Basketball?” Dean interjected.
“Ha! Yeah for a season. Funnily enough I suck at it. I was always partial to football.”

“Football huh? The big jock superstar high school hero? Bet you were quarterback.”

“Don’t like football?” Dean’s tone had been ever so derisive although not hatefully so.

“Eh. I can take it or leave it. Depends on who’s playing.”

“Really? I figured you would enjoy it for the guys if nothing else. Even I remember being a little intrigued in the shower room. Probably what tipped me off to the whole bisexual thing.”

“I can just see it. All those shiny spandex clad asses, stripping down…all sweaty after runnin’ the field,” Dean made a noise that fell somewhere between a sigh and a whimper. “Oh wow. Tell me about the tight pants, Sam…”

Sam actually laughed at Dean’s obviously newly found football kink.

“Later. And as a matter of fact, I was a quarterback. Held the state record at the time for the most completed passes in a season. That was senior year. My girlfriend was even head cheerleader. Social prerequisite and all.”

“You did sound like mister All-American.” Dean said softly, acknowledging the shift that he knew had to be coming.

“Yep. And then came the after-game parties. Drinking, drugs, sex… It was all your standard issue teenage stupidity. We were looking to act older than we were and several of the guys got wrapped up with dealers. Two of the guys on the team, Jake and Jonah, always supplied for the parties. At first it was weed, which didn’t seem like such a big deal, but then they started spreading cocaine, ecstasy, meth…” He shrugged. “I guess I drew the line there and after a pretty big blow up with Callie after the Homecoming game, I walked out of the party and went home alone

“Not even sure how she got home. Just remember her shrieking at me that I was such a loser. I just didn’t see a reason to wreck my life on some teenage whim.

The next day, it was the talk of the town. The cops had busted the entire party. The football season ended early since half the team was either suspended or expelled. Callie never spoke to me again. She did, however spread the rumor that I had something to do with the bust since I left fifteen minutes before they showed. Obviously it was complete bullshit but I have to hand it to her. That lie kind of turned me on to the idea of law.

“After the huge high school scandal the school board brought in an FBI agent to speak to the entire school about drugs. Ugh, it was all ‘rah-rah, just say ‘no’, and this is the before and after picture of a drug-related car crash kind of lecture. The agent that spoke to us asked if we had questions and I decided someone had to speak the truth.

He remembered it well. ‘We’re teenagers.’ He’d said with the bravado that could only come with being seventeen. ‘You think we’re gonna give two craps about any of this? How about you show what meth users look like after five or six years of using. That’ll make some of these princesses around here think twice.’

“You really said that?”

Sam smiled recalling the looks on said princesses’ faces. ‘I did. The agent actually pulled me aside after the assembly was over. I half expected an ass-whoopin’ for being rude but the guy was great. Thanked me for the suggestion and promised to use it for the next presentation. He asked me if I
had ever considered going into law enforcement and the rest, as they say, is history.”

“No.”

“What do you mean ‘no’?”

“That didn’t answer my question.”

“You asked how I became an agent. That’s how I decided to become an agent.”

“Okay, well now that we’re through the wonder years, now maybe I want to hear about collegiate Sam.”

Sam made a one-eighty and grabbed Dean’s middle, pulling him back to sit in the ‘v’ of Sam’s legs. “You’re pushin’ it, Winchester.”

“Humor me.” Dean looked back over his shoulder and allowed Sam to read everything in his eyes. He knew what Dean wanted. Dean wanted to hear it all. Wanted to maybe even know the history he might be up against. Not so much about the agency. Dean was digging about Jess.

Sam wanted to hold Dean. Wanted to touch him, explore that beautiful sculpted body until he knew every inch of it. Wanted to learn his tastes, his likes and dislikes. Wanted to know his plans for when he got out. Wanted to know more about hunting and Dean’s life before prison.

The very last thing he wanted to do was talk to Dean about Jessica.

“You tell me and I’ll tell you what I did to get in here. The real story.”

Sam wrapped his arms around Dean and rested his chin on his shoulder. “You’ll tell me that anyway, if I ask.” Somehow he knew it was true. He didn’t have to bargain to get that information. He realized that they were in too deep not to spill everything. Which is why Sam relented against his better judgement.

“Well, like I said, I went to Stanford. I went in knowing the requirements and qualifications needed for joining the FBI and I had my entire college career mapped out. Major in law and double minor in economics and linguistics. I took summer classes and sometimes doubled up my regular schedule. Managed to knock a five-year degree down to three and a half years.”

“So you basically had no life,” Dean interjected after hearing his collegiate timetable. “I thought you experimented. What happened to all the guys you supposedly were with in college?”

“If you’d be quiet and let me get to it…”

Dean had mimed zipping his lips shut, but it did not go unnoticed by Sam that he did not mime throwing away the key.

“As you can imagine, the work load was enormous. I ended up searching out study groups for the harder courses just to make sure I stayed caught up. That’s where I met Paul.”

“Paul…your first guy?”

Sam nodded and nuzzled at Dean’s neck.

“We flirted after class and stared at one another in study group. One night Paul invited me over for a ‘nightcap’.”
“Who says nightcap? Seriously? I thought that was only in movies.”

“He was a law major. Total douche.” Dean nodded seemingly satisfied with his answer.

“I was all very casual. Only happened the once and it was mostly curiosity on my part. The second and third were both party hookups. Friends of friends. Nothing too deep. No dating. Just quick and dirty.”

“Mmm… Sammy, say that again…”

“What? Quick and dirty?” He purred against Dean’s ear, delighting at the full body shiver that had Dean moaning. He chuckled at the response but squeezed Dean a little tighter as he went on, knowing the next part wouldn’t garner the same reaction.

“I met Jess my last year. She was a senior about to start med school and…” Sam felt Dean tense minutely at the mention of her name, even though he rolled his shoulders attempting to play it off for Sam’s benefit. “Well long story short; She asked me for the time, one thing led to another, we got coffee, we were attracted to one another and boom! Insta-relationship.”

Sam felt like he’d just run a race. He’d probably sounded ridiculous trying to get the words out and over with as fast as possible.

“At the end of senior year, I went on to test directly into the FBI program. It all happened really fast. I pretty much accepted my diploma and flew directly to Virginia to start training a few hours later.”

“How long was training?”

“Six months. It was a long six months, too, but well worth every sleepless night and every bump and bruise.”

“When we graduated, I found out Joe was assigned to be my partner. We had been roommates at the academy so it was kind of perfect.”

And it was. They both had an extreme thirst for knowledge and complimented one another brilliantly. Joe was usually the front man, the ‘bad cop’, the one that shoved himself in the scene. Sam was the ‘nice one’, the one that knew every case backwards and forwards, the one that could crack codes with his eyes closed.

Together, they had busted some pretty big cases wide open and they could be nothing but proud of the agents they had become and he said so to Dean. “Of course,” he added, “That was before all this happened. Joe is usually our go-to for undercover. He just…fits. Anywhere. Everywhere. I’m more the thinker. The analyzer. I insisted I be the one to go inside. And now my cover’s blown.”

He frowned at this. He really had fucked up.

“Okay. Maybe you are…a little on the compromised side. But look at it this way. No one else could have figured out this case. I don’t know Joe, but I sure as fuck doubt I would have been telling him the truth about the whole thing. In fact…if I hadn’t known you were asking questions, if your cover hadn’t been blown at least a little, I might never have known about what was going on. More people might have died.” Dean tilted his head to the side to give Sam better access as he continued to nuzzle. “Also…I wouldn’t have met you and this…wouldn’t be happening.” Whatever this was. “So, I don’t know how much it matters but I think things worked out pretty okay.”
An outrageous smile split Sam’s face in two but was hidden as he quietly continued kissing the patch of skin behind Dean’s ear and back down his neck.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

8:48 pm

“So let me see if I have this right.” Dean began, pacing back and forth in front of where Sam lay sprawled on the bottom bunk, tossing his pillow up and catching it. “You …” Dean pointed at him. “You … Sam Wesson…were responsible for the Oringamo cartel takedown?”

Sam nodded. “Well, Joe was there too…”

Dean looked thoroughly impressed. “Shit, Sam, I don’t even watch the news I heard about that! It was huge!” He shook his head in awe. “I mean, I heard that bust wiped out a third of the east coast drug traffic.”

“That it did. For a while. There always seems to be another boss ready to fill in the gaps. Sucks but I guess it’s job security.”

“How is that…even possible? You can’t be more than – what? – twenty-five.”

“Twenty-eight. What can I say? I’m very driven.” Sam frowned. “How old are you anyway?”

“Twenty-nine.”

“Wow. Always thought you were younger than me.”

“Apparently old and wiser. Now tell me how you managed to jump from being the big bad narc ball-buster to sitting in prison trying to figure out why people are dropping dead?”

“We’ve handled murder cases in the past but we weren’t the lead detectives.”

“Detective,” Dean smiled ruefully. “I still can’t believe it. A Fed under my nose and I didn’t spot it. I must be slipping.”

“What is that a game hunters play? Spot the federal officer?”

“Not really a game. I mean, you guys aren’t usually so well camouflaged. It’s those fancy blue jackets with the gigantic yellow “FBI” on the back that tends to give you away.”

Sam laughed. “Yeah those things are major ugly.” Sam sat up and crossed to the door. Dean had looked a few moments before. The c.o.s were still holding court on the tower and the inmates still locked safely away.

A few SORT team members had passed through at one point, which Sam explained likely meant some sort of violence or upheaval in another unit. The Special Ops Response Team was supposed to be disturbance control but from what he saw they were armed for bear and he figured if they stuck around all the time, maybe they could be a deterrent instead of a control. They had certainly scared the shit out of Dean.

“Looks like we’re in for the night,” Sam commented, crossing towards the sink to brush his teeth. Dean sighed. It wasn’t like they didn’t spend every night in there. It was the idea that they’d been
in the sealed room for nearly six hours and were about to be in for another nine. It was enough to make anyone a little claustrophobic.

Dean took his turn at the sink and by the time lights out was called, they were both already lying in the bottom bunk. Dean was far too happy when Sam had flipped the blanket back assuming Dean would slide in beside him. Neither of them even bothered with the pretense that they wouldn’t want to sleep together.

“Dean,” Sam whispered, his hand coming up to cover Dean’s where it rested warmly against his ribs.

“Yeah Sammy?” Dean asked on the end of a yawn.

“Why didn’t you think I was a hunter?”

Where did he start?

“For one, you’re too clean-cut. There’s some sort of…wholesome look to you.”

“Wholesome?”

“Yeah, I know. Weird right? You seemed like a badass when I met you.”

“And now I’m just…”

“Now you’re like a big stuffed animal. I bet you fold your underwear at home. You do, don’t you?”

“I don’t think I like this conversation anymore.”

“Well you asked. Also you don’t have any scars.”

“How is that a bad thing?”

“Not bad. Just... scars are sort of a hunter’s badge of honor.”

“Maybe that just means I’m awesome and don’t get shot. Or cut. Or…what the hell is that scar on your back from anyway?”

Dean groaned. He was still angry about that one. “Freakin’ skinwalker nailed me with it’s claws before I could take it down.” The damn thing had doubled back and gotten the drop on him.

“Well so maybe skinwalkers don’t get the drop on me. Maybe I’m just that good?”

“Why are you trying to convince me that you might be a secret hunter?”

“Before it was just curiosity. Now I feel like I have to shake this whole stuffed animal image.”

“Sammy?”

“Yeah?”

“Go to sleep.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##
Middle of the freakin’ night

“Dean?” Sam waited a moment but got no response to his loud whisper. “Dean!”

“Hmm?”

“Your turn.”

Dean cracked an eye open and closed it quickly. “The fuck are you talkin’ ‘bout? Sleeping.”

“Well wake up. I’m wide ass awake and going crazy here.”

The other man huffed and puffed and rolled over to get away from Sam’s attempts to rouse him. Unfortunately, he had apparently forgotten where he was and unceremoniously plopped onto the floor, face first.

“Gah-dammit!!” he hissed and then groaned as his body finally felt the full brutal impact of the fall. “Why are you trying to kill me?” he asked, pushing up slowly from the floor.

“You’re the genius that rolled off the bed.”

“Fine. I’ll just hop up on top and go back to-,”

“Aww…come on. Don’t go away mad. I just wanted to talk more.”

Dean sat down on the edge of the bottom bunk and rested his arms on his knees, his fingers rubbing into his scalp tiredly. “And this talking thing… Can’t wait till morning?” When Sam said nothing, Dean whined. “I miss coffee.” A long sigh and then, “What do you want to talk about?

“You told me you’d tell me why you’re in here.”

“Right.”

“If you’d rather not…”

“No. I said I would.” He laid back down on his back next to Sam and rubbed ha hand down his face. “So… I told you I left my dad to go out on my own when I was around twenty or so?” Sam nodded mutely.

“I ended up at a bar in the middle of nowhere a few months after I left dad. That’s where I met Brian. Hit it off, had a few beers but parted ways. Next night, I was tailin’ a vampire and suddenly the bastard is standing in front of me… headless. Brian had been tailing him too without either of us knowin’. We decided to work together and cleared out a pretty damn impressive vamp nest.”

Dean remembered the night vividly. The endorphins were flowing and Dean had actually made the first move. The sex had been off the charts. He’d own up to that. What he said to Sam, however, was “We did it. Then we parted ways and thought no more of it.

“You did it? Like…it?”

“Yah. Or in Sam-speak, we forn-i-ca-ted,” Dean said playfully – or as playfully as he could be at ass-o’clock in middle of the night having been woken up out a pretty freaking awesome dream because his lover wanted to talk even though they’d been talking for six hours straight.

“A month or so later, Brian called my cell asking if I was anywhere near Arizona and wanted a shot at a pair of Vetala. They’re pretty damn nasty so I figured ‘what the hell?’ I’d give him a
hand. Afterwards he asked if I wanted to stick it out with him for a while. He was only a few years older but knew a whole lot about hunting. I figured it couldn’t hurt. Besides my father, Brian was my first and only hunting partner. He was also my first and only real…boyfriend.”

Dean felt Sam tense beneath him at the word and frowned down at the other man. “What?”

“Brian is your ex?”

“Yeah. Why? You jealous?” Dean had meant the question jokingly, but Sam’s face was impassive when he turned to look at him.

“And he has something to do with you being in here?”

“I’m getting there.” Dean closed his eyes thinking of all the stupid things he had done in his life. Brian was probably the stupidest of all the stupid things. “We were a pretty decent team for a while. He taught me cards and we hustled pool together. He would find cases and I did most of the driving. It was all just fine until Iowa.”

“What happened in Iowa?”

“I know right? What could possibly happen in Iowa?” Dean rolled his eyes at himself. “We were heading towards a poltergeist sighting and had stopped halfway to set up in a little motel for some rest. We went out for a few beers and as it turns out the bar we wound up in was a hunter’s bar. I was chatting with some of the guys I’d met along the way and by the time I was ready to go, Brian had disappeared. Finally found him out back screwin’ some girl. Completely random. They’d met that night.

“That…sucks,” was all Sam could say.

“ Weird thing was, I didn’t really care. I mean, I cared because he was my first relationship and I had to be mad on principle. But it was more that I was hurt because I realized I couldn’t trust him. That was really the worst of it. I didn’t even call him on it. I just walked back in the bar and ordered another beer.”

“You didn’t say anything?”

“Well…now that would have been rather hard to do considering that Brian and the girl never came back. They took off that night. In my car. Left me stranded.”

“Dean?” Sam asked after a moment of contemplative silence.

“Yes Sam?”

“Not that that isn’t completely messed up, what he did to you. But what does that have to do with you going to prison?”

“Right. Fast-forward seven years. I’d heard from him sporadically after that night. He offered to send me money for the car but it must have gotten ‘lost in the mail’. Asked for help with cases occasionally, which I gave sparingly. Eventually I ignored texts, muted calls. Then, about four months ago, he shows up at the door of my motel room. I still to this day have no idea how he found me. But there he was. Sucking me back in. He started ranting and raving and going on about this spirit that had gotten the better of him. He seemed pretty freaked out, which wasn’t normal for him so I decided to help. Against my better judgment.

“And…? The murder…?”
“That’s tricky. You see, the spirit he had been going on about was a woman in white. Typically a victim of adultery in her own life who is pushed to suicide and spends her afterlife killing any cheatin’ man she comes across.”

“So is that why he needed your help? Because she went after the unfaithful and he would have been attacked?”

“Oh Sammy. If only I’d met you four months ago,” Dean lamented.

Sam sniffed at this. “I probably would have been arresting you on suspicion of murder.”

“We wasted the spirit. Salt-n-burn their bones, that’s how you get rid of ‘em. Unfortunately she had already claimed another victim before we could get there.”

“What’s the hunter protocol for fleeing the scene of a crime?”

“Again. Where were you four months ago?” Dean reached down and squeezed Sam’s hand in his. “Flee. That would be the operative word. To flee. As it was, Brian suddenly decided to try and have a heart-to-heart over the burning grave. Cops showed up see us desecrating some ‘poor woman’s’ final resting place, see the dead body sporting unexplainable stab wounds in the driveway and immediately we’re arrested. Go figure. Brian was packing multiple weapons, including knives and the Zippo that torched the bones. I had a single shotgun filled with salt rounds so I was only booked as an accomplice. But there it is. Wrong place. Wrong time.”

There was total silence and then…snoring.

Dean punched at the bigger man’s shoulder and Sam laughed, having been faking sleep. “Sorry. I just…I can’t really even process that story, Dean. You have to admit, from the outside it sounds pretty insane.”

“Yeah. But now that you know Casper’s real…?”

“Oh I don’t believe for a second you’re guilty. But I never have.” Sam rolled to his side away from Dean and pulled Dean’s arm over his midsection, their fingers winding together. “Thank you for telling me,” he said turning back just enough to kiss Dean’s mouth chastely.

Dean let out a long breath and watched Sam move so that his head rested on Dean’s outstretched arm. He pulled his other arm tighter around the other man. The trust that Sam had in him was humbling.

His lips pulled up in an unstoppable smile, Dean settled in, not minding in the least that he, Dean Winchester, was actually spooning.

“Get plenty of sleep, Sammy. For tomorrow, we’re hunting demons.”

Chapter End Notes

To be continued in Chapter 10: Speak of the Devil
Chapter Summary

Now that lockdown is over, what can possibly go wrong? All they have to do is kill a demon. ...right?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The first thing Dean became aware of as he blinked into wakefulness was the warm, steady flutter of breath against his skin.

The second thing he noticed was the extra weight bearing down upon his upper legs and stomach. Judging from the furnace-like heat radiating from whatever was pinning him down, he was pretty sure he was dealing with either a giant radioactive octopus or the arms and legs of the person latched firmly to his left side.

For a few seconds, he was thrown back in time. A time when maybe he had accidentally fallen asleep next to the previous night’s conquest having had one too many drinks the night before. But, drunk or not, he never allowed them to get this close. It was far too intimate. Even when he’d been with Brian, he’d never been one for overly affectionate sleeping habits. Sharing a bed was one thing. Being drenched in someone else’s night-sweats and drool crossed a line.

This morning however, Dean merely snuffled sleepily and wrapped his arms around the tall man at his side. He rubbed his cheek against the top of his head and Sam nuzzled further into his neck, mumbling incoherently as he slept on.

Dean must have drifted back to sleep because when he woke up once more, a faint, persistent need to scratch was at the forefront of his mind. The warm breath was still there only now stray tendrils of Sam hair that had made their way onto his cheek accompanied it. How it happened, he couldn’t say. He didn’t feel like they had moved an inch, but there they were. The little bastard hairs lying innocently against his face felt remarkably like a line of marching ants tickling his epidermis. He reached up and tried to flick them away but they managed to move only so far as his mouth. He sputtered and tried to blow them off but this only made the strands wet and at this point he was pretty sure they were spit-glued to his chin and neck.

“Hey Farrah Fawcett,” he jibed, nudging Sam lightly in the ribs. “Dude, move the mane!”

Sam just whimpered a little and sighed before beginning to softly snore.

Dean let out a short huff of defeat. He was being slowly constricted by Sam’s long tentacle-like appendages, his neck was overly moist from hot breath, every inch of skin from his chest to his nose felt itchy, and now…snoring.

He contemplated the courses of action open to him and the obvious one would be to just roll over. Or get out of bed. He took no such action, though. It would mean not touching Sam and… well, he craved the man’s touch like an addict. This kept him rooted to the spot.
And he knew realistically that when those doors opened once more and they were back in the mix of the prison populace, there would be no prolonged touches. No soft kisses that left his knees the consistency of rice pudding. They only had the night for that. And soon they wouldn’t even have that.

As if to thwart the mere idea, Dean turned a fraction of an inch and placed a kiss on the crown of Sam’s head allowing his lips linger there.

The day before, he hadn’t really allowed himself to think too much about what it really meant that Sam was FBI. Obviously it had come as a shock to him. He thought woodchucks flying out of Sam’s nose might have been less surprising. But he had always been a roll-with-the-punches kind of guy and knowing that any thoughts beyond how to kill the monster at hand were currently fruitless.

Yet there he lay, wide awake – no telling what time it was – with nothing more to do than to think about all of the things he would much rather avoid.

The lockdown, as crappy as it had been to be stuck in that room for so many hours, had given them an invaluable amount of time to learn one another. Dean wasn’t sure he knew many people as well as he felt he knew Sam. And he was positive almost no one knew as much about him as Sam now did. It was a little depressing that in his nearly thirty years on this planet, the amount of people that could claim to know much about the real Dean Winchester could be counted on one hand. Perhaps that’s why the idea of Sam walking away was so utterly painful.

If Sam wasn’t really a prisoner, he could leave at any moment. He would leave. Somewhere in the mix of conversation, Sam had even told him he had another two days before his partner pulled him out. For the case, that meant they had to work fast. For them…well…

He kissed Sam’s head again and frowned, closing his eyes.

He didn’t like the idea of letting this go so soon. Especially when he’d only just found it.

The probability of Dean ever finding someone he cared about quite so much was slim.

The probability of Dean ever finding someone else that he would allow to be his very own sleep octopus…was nil.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

It was another hour before Sam began to show signs of stirring. At first it was a miniscule cough. Then it was a sniff. Then there was the shift of his body so that he repositioned himself, not away but somehow almost on top of Dean. Within a few more minutes, Sam’s thick eyelashes tickled Dean’s chest as he felt them flutter open.

"Morning," he whispered. No one could have heard them. It just felt like a moment that called for softly spoken words.

Sam rocked his head so that his chin was now propped against Dean’s sternum and he could look up at him. He blinked a few times and finally gave Dean a slow, lop-sided smile that said he was still partially asleep.

“You drooled on me,” Dean said, attempting to sound annoyed even as he recognized he felt something closer to mildly amused.
The smile turned sheepish as Sam wiped at his mouth with his good hand and muttered “Oops. Sorry.”

Before the taller man could pull away to sit up, Dean threw his right leg over Sam’s hip and pushed off hard enough so that he was finally the one on top. His legs straddled Sam’s and his hands were on either side of the other man’s head.

“Oh no you don’t,” Dean said, scowling playfully down at the man trapped below him. “You drooled on me. Nobody drools on me and gets away with it.”

“I bet you wouldn’t bitch so hard if I was droolin’ on your dick.”

The little pulse Dean felt in his nether regions was ignored for the moment and he made a ‘tsk’-ing sound. “Now, is that any way for an agent to talk? I think you need to be…punished.”

Dean felt a jump in Sam’s cock that hinted at the interest he had in that particular suggestion. Dean filed that knowledge away for possible future use.

*Dominance kink. Check.*

“Are you ready?”

Sam’s eyes were already darkened with lust and he licked his bottom lip as he stared intently at Dean’s mouth. “Mm-hmm.”

Dean almost hated to do it. Almost. But he moved his hands to Sam’s stomach and wriggled his fingers over the flesh frenetically, drawing from Sam the loudest and most hysterical laughter that Dean had heard in ages.

“No! D-Dean… S-S-Stop!” the laughter rolled on and only encouraged Dean as he reveled in the sweet, deep sound. “H-Hate be…being…t-t-ti..ckled!”

Dean moved from his mid-drift to his neck and Sam’s head immediately snapped forward, hoping to trap Dean’s attacking fingers between his chin and his chest. Dean evaded him and Sam was forced to take drastic action.

Grabbing at Dean’s hips, he spread his legs wide, forcing Dean’s legs to spread as well. Being knocked momentarily off balance, Dean collapsed heavily onto the man’s chest, his arms trapped between them. Sam used this to his advantage, rolling them over, off the bed and onto the ground with a heavy “oof!” as he took the full brunt of the fall.

Dean was still on top of him, but the moment had passed and Dean sat back on Sam’s legs. “You okay?” he asked, worried that Sam might have hit his head on the hard concrete floor.

Sam grimaced and Dean’s face unconsciously mirrored the expression in sympathy.

“S’okay. Just…little winded,” Sam half gasped and half whispered. He chuckled a little and Dean felt his gut unclench.

“Why’d you roll off the bed?” he smacked Sam’s bare stomach with the back of his hand, relaxed now that Sam seemed to be okay.

“Why’d you tickle me?” Sam asked right back.

“Because you drooled on me! You slobber, you suffer,” he shrugged. Really the cause and effect
seemed fairly obvious to him. He wasn’t sure how Sam couldn’t see it.

“Alright. Sorry,” Sam relented rolling his eyes. “We can go back to separate bunks if you want.”

Dean didn’t like that suggestion. At all. “I didn’t say that,” he said quickly. “I’ll...deal.”

The look on Sam’s face was as knowing as it was satisfied. “You’ll learn to love it.”

“Yeah? In just two days?”

Dean wanted to kick his own ass the second the words left his mouth. One second to say it, five seconds to think about it and seven seconds to sigh heavily and mutter a hasty apology.

“Dean,” Sam started, trying to grip Dean’s hips to keep him in place. Dean pushed away and stood, brushing invisible dirt from the fronts and backs of his boxers. “C’mon. Don’t...”

Dean wasn’t really sure what would have followed the ‘don’t’. Don’t think about it like that? Don’t be childish? Don’t be upset? Either way, he decided Sam was right. He just wouldn’t.

“Yeah. No, it’s cool,” he shook his shoulders and crossed to the door, bracing his hands against the cool steel frame. “What time is it? Looks like things are coming to life out there. Maybe we’ll get outta this damn room soon.”

He felt heat at his back but kept his eyes trained on the pods across the way, where he could see the other men starting to stir and move about. Long fingers touched his side tentatively and then glided around and over his waist when Sam realized he wasn’t going to pull away again. With a long arm anchoring him back against the taller body, he leaned his head back letting it fall onto Sam’s shoulder.

“Dean,” he murmured, nosing against Dean’s temple before brushing his lips against the skin there. “You won’t be in here forever.”

Sam was right. Dean knew this and his mind acknowledged that. Yet Dean knew how life worked. Look at how much had changed in just one week, after all. “Sam, we didn’t even know one another six days ago.”

“But now we do.”

“I’m just sayin’… a lot can happen in eighteen months. That’s how long I have before I can even be considered for parole. That’s a year and a half. And even then, I’m not guaranteed to get out.”

Sam was silent and the silence didn’t sit well with Dean. He didn’t need this eating at his brain. Or his heart. “Let’s just call it what it is.”

“And what is it?”

“A really great moment. A...nice time that you got to have on a shitty case.”

Sam huffed. “What is it gonna take?”

“To what?”

“Convince you. That I want something more with you.”

“Sam,” Dean laughed a little bitterly. “You have a girlfriend. Remember her?”

There was nothing Sam could say to that, so he stayed silent. He did pull Dean harder against him,
their bodies aligned and touching from top to bottom. It was as if they had been designed to be puzzle pieces, fitting and locking so perfectly against one another.

Finally, his hand rose up to cover the skin above Dean’s heart. “I don’t have all the answers. But I know without a doubt…that we’ll see each other when this is all over. Call it instinct.”

Dean pulled away enough to look over his shoulder. The ache present in Sam’s eyes nearly shattered all of his composure. He didn’t know if he believed Sam, but at this point what would it hurt to go along with it? Anything to erase the fragile look on his lover’s face. “Okay,” he whispered. “We’ll figure it out.”

Sam’s springtime smile reappearing made the lie worth it and Dean turned in Sam’s arms and held him just as Sam had held Dean.

“So, what’s our first order of hunter business?” Sam asked against his neck.

He snorted and rolled his eyes. “So I guess you want to be a hunter now because you know a thing or two?”

“Of course I do. I want to be one of the cool kids!” Sam backed away and raised his arms only to shake his hands wildly. He looked like a deranged cheerleader.

“Well you can start by stopping…whatever,” he waved his finger in Sam’s general direction, “that is.”

Sam grinned and Dean felt the tension of the past few minutes begin to relent, his chest no longer quite so tight.

“So seriously… What should we be doing?”

“I don’t know. Let me think.”

“What do you mean you don’t know? You have to know.”

“Gimme a break! I don’t usually work with so many restrictions. Usually I can get in and out of crime scenes, research police files, talk to people as I please... Here we have this whole bullshit schedule and guards.”

“Wait. How do you do that?”

“What?”

“Get in and out of crime scenes?” The pensive look on Sam’s face was pinched and somewhat cartoonish. “And see police files?”

“So,” Dean scratched his eyebrow. It was his tell, he knew. It was a nervous tick. And Sam apparently knew as well because his eyes narrowed at the movement. “Well, ya see, I sort of… Yeah,” he gave up the pretense and flopped his hands against his sides. “Okay, so I tell them I’m FBI.”

Dean was prepared for a whole onslaught of tirades and lectures. Maybe there was even potential for a threat or two. He was in no way expecting the peel of laughter that filled the room. His eyes shot to Sam who was wide-eyed and snickering. “Seriously?” At Dean’s nod, he smacked his hands against his thighs gleefully. “What are the odds? FBI really? Wonder if we’ve ever worked any of the same cases?”
The fit of laughter was contagious and Dean found himself chuckling right along. “Not always FBI. Sometimes it’s CIA, occasionally health inspector, assistant coroner, sheriff’s deputy, really whatever gets me where I need to be to see what I need to see.”

The laughter eventually faded and Sam’s smile softened as he looked at Dean with something startlingly close to admiration. “You’re amazing, you know that?”

Dean shook his head and his mouth turned down in focused curiosity. “What makes you say that?”

“Well…all of those things are really… really illegal. So either you just get off on the thrill of getting away with it or you’re willing to risk it to keep people safe. I feel pretty sure in saying it’s the latter.”

He swallowed, caught a little off guard by Sam’s assessment of his motives. Again he found himself awed by the way his lover saw him. “You’re wrong.” He looked steadily at Sam for a minute before breaking into a signature cocksure smile. “It’s both.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

In his life, Dean had worked with his father growing up and then Brian and he had stuck it out for a while together. Both men were older than he was and both men had been convinced that this fact alone made them better and more knowledgeable hunters. It didn’t. Try telling them that though.

It was sort of nice, the idea that he might be able to teach someone else. Maybe being able to work through theories without being second-guessed every step of the way.

“So the first thing you need to know about Demons…”

Dean tried not to smile as Sam sat on the bunk in rapt attention. He was fairly sure if the man had one wish at the moment it would be to have something to write with so that he could take copious amounts of notes.

He realized now that the hot tough-guy inmate he’d first met was really just a big-hearted nerd in a hot ass body.

He kinda liked it.

Okay so he totally liked it.

“How to recognize them. Basically, you can’t.”

Sam frowned at the answer.

“Demons are spirits that rise from Hell. They aren’t flesh and blood so they require a…host.”

“So they’re parasitic?”

“Yeah. I guess you could say that. They find a body that they can ride around in for a while. A ‘meat-suit’ they call it.”

“That’s what they call it? So you’ve spoken to one?” Sam seemed intrigued by this idea.

“Are you kidding? You usually can’t get the damn things to shut up.” Dean really hated that about them. They were always so full of themselves and so willing to rattle on and on and on about it.
“So if they’re using a human body, it could be…” Sam looked out the window towards the guard that happened to be passing at that very moment. “It could be virtually anyone.”

“Exactly! Definitely adds to the level of difficulty, that’s for sure.” Dean pursed his lips and tilted his head, trying to run down the Demon 101 list in his mind. It had been a while since he’d been taught anything about what he came up against. Hunting was more of an on-the-job training. “One thing. When they expose themselves, it’s through the eyes. Usually a demon has black eyes.”

“Creepy.”

“Honestly, black eyes are what you hope for. Anything else just indicates something further up the food chain. Black-eyes are nothing but an exorcism away from walkin’ the ole proverbial plank.”

“And the others?”

Dean shook his head. He didn’t think that would be an issue. “Usually a little spell work or maybe something a little more hardcore. Heaven’s fire or something.”

Sam processed the words and shook his head as if he might be able to shake the words back out through his ears. “Exorcism. Heaven’s fire. Sure. Hey, let’s shelve that for the time being, purely because it just sounds… Yeah. What about weaknesses?”

“Salt. Iron. You can trap them in a Devil’s trap. It’s a sigil. You’ll love it.” And Dean thought this was true considering Sam’s ‘thing’ for symbols.

“Draw it for me later?”

Dean nodded.

“Any idea on how we are possibly going to find this thing?”

“Two words. Bobby. Singer.”

“Your ‘uncle’? What can he do?”

“The man’s a walking encyclopedia of evil shit. He’ll know what to do. Hopefully he can smuggle us the stuff for an incantation. Maybe we can get the demon to come to us.”

“Alright. Bobby doesn’t have to sneak anything in, though. If he can get you a list of things we need, I can get Joe to bring them. Less dangerous for you guys that way.”

“Uh-huh.” Obviously Dean had no idea what Sam’s partner was really like, but something told him that if he were asked to get a candle made from the fat of a dead man, he might just start asking questions. Or making arrangements to have them locked up somewhere else. Like a mental facility. He wasn’t going to say that to Sam just yet, of course. He’d just see what Bobby came up with first. “So I’ll make the call when they open the phones before lunch.”

“Okay. In the meantime, is there something we can do?”

Dean looked at Sam out of the corner of his eye. “Not a whole lot to do until they open the damn door.” From their vantage point, they could see the clock on the far wall of the tower. It was just a few minutes past six. If they issue from yesterday, and subsequently the lockdown, was truly over then they would be able to head out to breakfast in half an hour.

“May I suggest something?”
Dean shrugged and was immediately met with a lap full of Sam. The taller man straddled him where he sat on the edge of the bed and Dean’s hands instantly raised to cradle and rub along the wide expanse of his back, touching as much warm flesh as was available to him. “I’m open to suggestion.” he managed to get out, before Sam’s mouth covered his, effectively ceasing any further conversation for quite a while.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

When the buzzer sounded and the tumblers slid back to release the doors at long last, the prisoners of Unit A flooded out of their pods and into the common area with an excitement befitting prisoners of war. They all looked slightly haggard and skittish but obviously very relieved to be freed from their cells.

Sam moved out a little slower than the others, not really having minded the forced confinement. He glanced over his shoulder automatically to see Dean following a few feet behind him.

It was all he could do not to grin like an idiot as he licked his lips and recognized the other man’s sweet unique flavor lingering there. For his part, Dean looked beautifully debauched; his own lips cherry red and kiss-swollen.

He wondered if everyone could tell?

The fact that there were three pods that could see directly into their cell meant the chances were pretty good that a few of the guys knew exactly how intimate they had been during the entire course of lockdown, no matter how many precautions they’d taken. The idea didn’t sit well with him. He was a private person and the thought of the other inmates getting off on what they had experienced together…

Sam shook off the cloak of unease that had begun to settle over him and turned his attention to the issue at hand.

*Demons.*

Apparently they were real. And apparently he was going to have to help take one down.

He looked around the unit at the multitude of faces taking particular interest in their eyes. It could be any one of them. The idea was terrifying. Sure, he’d been in situations before where he’d had to mix with the people they were after yet it had never seemed like such a dire circumstance. He’d never felt so vulnerable to a foe in his entire career.

Once Dean talked to Bobby and they had a direction to take, they would have to be on their toes and take a reactionary approach.

He still had no clue how he was going to bring any of this up to Joe. His partner wasn’t exactly mister open-minded when it came to things too far removed from the box that made up his world. He would cross that bridge when he came to it he supposed.

“Wesson, you with us?”

Sam blinked and turned to find Deluca a few feet away snapping his fingers in Sam’s direction. “W-What? Did I miss something?”

“No. I promise. You did not,” Dean shook his head emphatically. “Deluca, Wesson doesn’t need to hear about your…ass infestation.”
“Well personally I think it’s amazing that you managed to find no less than eight bug bites on your ass, George! Obviously we have a problem and action must be taken! You should mention it to the c.o. over there and see if maybe they’ll fumigate the pod.”

Rebadow spoke with such a sincere zeal, which was not at all like him. Dean and Sam both openly stared at him until Deluca was already on the move towards the guard. Once the other man was out of earshot, Rebadow turned and shrugged. “What? Do you have any idea how many times he made me look at his backside last night? Hearing about it was giving me flashbacks.”

Dean and Sam shared a look of quiet amusement at their neighbor’s expense. Sam watched Deluca pulling his pants down in an attempt to convince the guard that his issue was indeed quite serious. He laughed out loud and Dean, finally seeing what he was laughing at physically turned away from the sight and put a hand up to cover Sam’s eyes as well all the while his whole body shook with his own deep belly laugh.

A little while later, as they slid their trays down onto the table and tucked in to breakfast, Dean nodded to Sam and inclined his head towards the far end of the table.

Since Dean had arrived, Veronica had been a staple in their group, opting to break bread with them instead of her usual band of misfits. Sam was still convinced it was because Veronica was smitten with Dean, but obviously whatever Dean had said to her yesterday trumped her crush on his lover. She was noticeably keeping her distance as today she was seated half a table away.

Sam watched Dean catch her eye and beckon her towards them. A flash of something, maybe fear, passed over her face and she nodded, making a quiet breakaway from Joe and a few of the other queens and guys they hung around.

Veronica was dressed in her shockingly orange prison issue uniform, which was not the norm to say the least. The thing didn’t look like it had been worn once since her arrival. Typically the ‘girls’ of Bolt had a little leeway given in respect to clothing and appearance. Sam couldn’t recall any of them ever looking like they were actually in prison. As she neared, he noticed two bulges forming a small swell of bosom and it took him a few seconds to finally decide that socks must have been stuffed down the front to create breasts. Beyond that and the long hair that sat piled messily upon her head, there was nothing flamboyant about Veronica on this day. She just looked like a long-haired boy with delicate feminine features.

There was no doubt that the queen was wary as Dean indicated the seat beside him and she slowly slid down into it.

“Veronica,” Dean smiled at her tightly and wrapped his arm around her narrow shoulders. “How are you today?”

“G-Good, thanks.”

“G-Good, thanks.”

“Veronica.” Dean spoke to her but looked back at Sam, silently asking him not to say a word. “I need you to do me a favor and tell Wesson here what you told me yesterday.”

Her large eyes flitted back and forth between Sam and Dean as if looking to see if one of them would give her the right answer to this obvious test.

He felt bad that she was in the middle but they had to know what kind of fall-out they were dealing with. How far reaching had the rumors about him gotten?

Finally she shook her head. “What are you talking about?” Her voice sounded clearer now, her fear
dissipating as she worked to ‘sell it’. Prostitutes were actors after all.

“You know. Something about…Wesson, asking questions…?”

The mildly curious, slightly amused expression that hung from her unpainted face might have won her an Oscar. It was just that believable. Sam even began to wonder if Dean might have imagined the conversation.

“I have no clue what you’re talking about.” She smiled and shrugged helplessly. “Oh. Wait.” A vague thoughtful look and an index finger held aloft. “Those morons over there were saying something about him.”

Sam held his breath.

“But I told them they were crazy. Said I knew for a fact they were spoutin’ complete shit ‘cause I got paid to go down on Wesson and what they were sayin he was… Well, anybody like that wouldn’t have done anything like that. Ya know? Illegal an’ all.”

Dean pulled her in tighter and lightly pecked her forehead. “Thanks,” he whispered loud enough for Sam to hear.

Sam released the pent up breath and stopped just short of hugging her himself. He saw Veronica pull back and wink slyly at Dean.

“Course I also told ‘em that I did you right after, Winchester,” she whispered conspiratorially. “Only you were so good…I didn’t even make you pay.” She shrugged, “Had to make it sound legit, didn’t I?”

Sam looked down the table at the group she had just left and sure enough they were all ignoring Sam completely in favor of watching Dean, hunger bright in their eyes.

When they went back to eating, Veronica heading back to her original spot, Dean kept his head down and shoveled oatmeal into his mouth like it was ice cream. “That went way better than expected.” Sam said out of the corner of his mouth. “Think I’m safe?”

Dean put his spoon down and turned to face him. There was a question in his eye, a worry. “Maybe… you should not take the chance.”

“What? Leave?”

“Yeah.”

“No. I think Veronica bought me some time. Even if the rumor spreads, her rumor will spread with it and I’ll be gone before anyone can make out what’s true.”

“Oh c’mon Sam,” Dean bit out. His tone suggested that he knew Sam was being deliberately obtuse. “You know that’s not how it works around here. It’s attack now, ask questions later.”

He was right. So right.

Sam wasn’t stupid and he knew what it meant if he stayed. There was definite danger there. But the thought of leaving now…

“Look, I’ve made up my mind. We’re gonna see what we can do from the inside. When I’m out… If this thing isn’t done, then we’ll have to find a way to work together.” Sam automatically reached
for Dean’s hand but then thought better of it. Glancing around the room, he pulled his hand back into his own lap a little self-consciously. “I can’t leave just yet. Don’t ask me to.”

Dean turned and looked at him for a long while. Sam tried to tell him as much as he could with a stare and Dean seemed to get it. He nodded finally, carding his fingers through his dirty blond bed-head hair.

“I hate oatmeal,” Deluca said, interrupting their silent conversation as he dropped his tray noisily onto the table.

The moment was over.

Dean cleared his throat and turned back to his bowl, shoveling another spoonful into his mouth. “S’not so bad,” he said after swallowing. “The little nuts and raisins make it tolerable.”

Deluca frowned at Sam and then back at Dean who was already on his next heaping spoonful. “They don’t put nuts in. Or raisins.”

A spray of oatmeal landed on the front of Deluca’s suit as Dean did a literal spit-take and stared in horror down at his half-empty bowl. Sam looked at his own bowl and saw a little brown thing in the center. He squinted at it, looking for signs of its possible origin.

“Kidding!”

Sam looked up wide-eyed at Deluca who sat there grinning, even as a few specks of oatmeal clung to his cheek and hair. “You’re a sick dude, you know that?” Sam said, smiling and once again shaking his head and the older man’s antics.

As he scooped up a modest amount of oatmeal for himself, it crossed his mind that he was going to miss moments like this. He was going to miss Deluca and the craziness that seemed to spew forth from his mouth at the most random of times. He glanced over at Dean, who was at that moment sticking his tongue out to Deluca to show him his half masticated food; His own slightly immature brand of revenge.

Yeah, he would miss a lot of things.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean felt like it took forever before they came back in from the yard.

Time always worked that way. The second you watched it, the clock stopped. It was best just to go about things and hope that time would march on accordingly.

That, of course, was easier said than done when you were waiting for a demon to approach you from all sides.

The phones were opened to the inmates twice a day. An hour in the morning, after yard time, and an hour in the evening, right before dinner. Once they were back, Dean immediately crossed to the doors that lead to the phone bank and stood in the short line, Sam by his side.

After the initial operator rigmarole about accepting collect calls, he finally heard the voice he’d been waiting for.

He closed his eyes and bit his lip against the swell of emotions it brought up in him to hear...
Bobby’s gruff, “Dean?”

“Yeah Bobby. S’me.” He could feel Sam’s eyes on him but he didn’t dare look at Sam for fear that he might lose it completely and start sniffling like a child.

“How you doin’ boy?”

“Surviving.” The smile that was on his face now was warm and very real. It felt like a year since he’d spoken to the man, even though it had only been about a week.

“You get the package?”

Dean chuckled despite himself, “Yeah. I got the package; thanks. You’re hilarious,” he deadpanned.

A whiskey-rough laugh flowed through the line. “Anytime. So what’s up? You just wanna hear my dulcet tones or you actually callin’ for a reason?”

Dean glanced at Sam and the smile fell away. Time to get serious. They only had a few minutes.

“Got a reason. One that you are more than familiar with. You…” Dean rubbed at the back of his neck, trying to think of something that Bobby would get. “You remember that girl…in Saginaw?”

“Oh hell. Don’t tell me you got a damn black-eye on your ass.”

Of course Bobby in all his genius glory would get him so easily, even editing his own words as they were both aware of all conversations being recorded. “Appears so.”

“You need me?”

Water welled up in his eyes. Even after a week. Even after having Sam on his side. It warmed him in a way little could to know that Bobby was still there for him, just as he always had been.

“Made a friend here. Just wondering if you’d send me some cologne. Maybe something that would…make me irresistible to her?”

“Uh-huh.” He was sure Bobby was leery about the ‘friend’ he’d supposedly made. “When you hoping to see this…girl?”

“As soon as possible. She’s really caused a stir here. You can probably find her in the papers. She’s made a name for herself.”

“I’ll check it out. I’ll take care of it. Maybe I’ll come down and see you tomorrow. That work?”

“Ask him for a list. We’ll give it to Joe,” Sam whispered.

“Bobby…” Dean hesitated knowing it was pointless. “My friend has a friend that’s coming tomorrow anyway. If it’s easier you can tell me and they can get it.”

“You hit your head or something? I ain’t trustin’ your life to no friend of a damn friend.”

“They have…connections.”

“I don’t care if it’s his high holiness the Dalai Lama and the supplies are raining from the sky. I’ll be there tomorrow.” His voice had gotten progressively louder until Dean had to pull the receiver away from his ear at the end.
“Okay-okay. Calm down. You’ll give yourself a stroke. Look…one more thing,” he began, hoping his sense of urgency would carry through the phone.

“You have…one minute…remaining,” and automated female voice broke in on the line.

“Fuck! Okay. Curveball. This…woman I’m interested in. She’s not like normal girls. She… You remember the ‘old lady’ in Riverton?”

“Wait… Riverton? What’re you getting’ at? You sayin’ you got a spirit too?”

“Not sure. Look we have the traces of first and a witness to the second. Not sure how the hell the two are related. Need you to look into it.”

“I’m on it! Call me back tonight if you can. Maybe I’ll have something by then.”

“Thanks Bo-,

There was a click on the line and the automated voice was suddenly in his ear with a “Your time is up. Thank you.”

He cradled the receiver and looked at Sam. “Tomorrow morning. He’ll be here.”

From the disgruntled look on the taller man’s face, he knew the news didn’t sit well. Sam wanted resolution… like, yesterday.

“Supposed to call back tonight. He’s gonna do some research.”

“Alright. I…I’m gonna make a call.”

Dean looked at the phone and then back to Sam, wondering who he might be reaching out to. Not that it was really his business, of course. “Okay. Want me to hang around?”

“No, that’s okay. I’ll be right out.”

Nodding, Dean walked out of the small room that housed the line of phones on the wall and he didn’t glance back even though he desperately wanted to.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“You have a collect call from an inmate at the… Joseph F Bolt Correctional Facility. If you would like to accept this call…press 1.”

Sam heard a swear and a long drawn out beep that cut through the automated spiel.

“Wesson? That you?”

He smirked at his partner’s question. “Uh, yeah. How many people do you know that would call you from prison anyway?”

“I have a fan club there, what can I say?”

Sam snorted. “I’m sure you do. Listen up. I need you to be aware. I think I injured my leg.” This was their code that he’d been compromised.

“Fuck!”
“What’s wrong?” He heard a female voice ask quietly in the background.

“What’s that?”

“No one. I’m having breakfast with a friend, s’all. How bad is it?”

Sam ignored the wriggling feeling in the back of his mind and focused on what he needed to say to his partner. “I hurt my leg but… I can still walk, okay? I’m fine. I just wanted you to know. just incase it got worse.”

“I can’t leave you there, man. I’m callin it.”

“NO!” he snapped. “No. I have... It’s tolerable. I can handle it for the next two days. Two days.”

“You stubborn shit. I don’t like this, Wesson.”

“My call. Just give me another forty-eight. Okay?”

There was a long pause and Sam began to wonder if Joe had hung up when he finally heard a sigh. “Yeah. Your call, like you said. I’m putting in a call to the warden though. You need eyes on you.”

“Alright.” It was a fair compromise, all things considered. “Thanks, man.”

“Oh. While I have you. I pulled everything I could find on Dean Winchester.”

Sam swallowed hard. He had almost forgotten the phone call he’d made to his partner just the day before. “And?”

“Wesson, I don’t know how you know this dude but… there is some seriously fucked up shit in that file. Like, a lot of it. I don’t know you need the intel if it supposedly doesn’t pertain to the case but you need to watch yourself.”

Sam had a feeling he knew what was in the file. He probably would have had the same opinion not twenty-four hours ago. But sometimes life opens your eyes for you and he knew he was currently on a crash course of ‘fucked up shit’, himself.

“Thanks for checking on it. Maybe… keep the file to yourself until I’m out. Okay?”

“Whatever you say, bro.”

“See ya in forty-eight.”

“Forty-eight.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

With little else to do besides wait for the afternoon call to Bobby, Dean pulled a chair up to the table where Francois and Deluca were playing chess.

Or rather attempting to play chess.

“No, no, no, no! Ugh! Clod!” Francois railed. He slapped Deluca’s hand away from the few pieces Francois had already collected from the other man. “It is not checkers! Is chess! Chess! You do not ‘crown’ in chess!”
“C’mon! I made it all the way back by your horsey! I deserve something.” Deluca stared straight-faced at the Frenchman and Dean looked back and forth between them, waiting for one of them to break.

“Vous avez le cerveau d’un bâton de poisson moisí!” Francois spat loudly and pushed away from the table stomping off once more. Deluca waited until he was a good distance away before turning and smiling a little too proudly at Dean.

“You are in rare form today. You did that on purpose didn’t you? I’ve seen you play chess. You know how.”

“Of course I did it on purpose. Some days I have to drive everyone else bonkers. I figure it helps to keep me from goin’ crazy. Or at least if I do go crazy, it ensures I won’t go down alone!”

Dean threw his head back with laughter. It was as good a philosophy as any, he guessed.

“What are you two laughing about?” Sam asked, sliding into the seat Francois had just left vacant.

“George here has a plan to drive us all nuts so he has someone to talk to when he finally cracks up.”

Deluca nodded happily to confirm Dean’s summation.

“Sound plan,” Sam said easily pulling the chess pieces back onto the board. “Game?”

“Oh.. I’ve never played you Wesson. This should be interesting.” Deluca looked like a kid with a new comic book.

He had seen Deluca excited about playing before. His mind was off of playing pranks and back on strategy and Dean could tell now that this game was going to drag on for a while. “Be back.” He stood and started for their pod. If he was gonna be a spectator, he could at least make himself useful. He’d get Sam’s notebook and start drawing symbols and jotting down useful information for his lover’s education.

After grabbing the book and borrowing a pen from the c.o. on the tower, he turned back towards the table where the game was currently underway if the stern looks of concentration were anything to go by.

Just as he reached his chair the buzzer went off indicating the main door was being opened.

They’d been waiting on the reappearance of Smith and his cronies all morning. They were due to be released from the hospital ward sometime that day and all Dean and Sam needed were to have the great white hate in their faces while they were trying to get things done.

Dean glanced over his shoulder towards the entrance and suddenly life stopped around him. All became slow motion choreography in a ballet entitled I’ve Died and Gone to Hell.

“What the fuck?” he whispered, staring at the man being lead in by Cappy. He had the same bundle in his arms that Dean himself had been carrying on his maiden voyage into Unit A and Dean watched closely as he was lead to the pod directly across from his own.

Apparently someone, maybe Stanton, had decided to make a roommate changeup. Richards was called out and was being introduced to the new guy. Maybe they were planning to move Smith into another unit altogether.
This thought wasn’t even enough to make Dean happy. His only conscious thought was *This has to be a nightmare.*

“Hey, Deluca… Can you do me a favor and… pinch me? Punch me? Somethin’?”

Dean couldn’t tear his eyes away from the man who was making himself at home, not fifteen feet away.

“Sure. You wanna point to somewhere that’s not already black-n-blue first?”

“Dean? What’s wrong?” He heard Sam ask. But he was beyond words.

*Brian Tate was there.*

Brian-fucking-Tate.

Before Dean could consider the idea of crossing the common room, the man looked up and their eyes met. It was a long moment of staring. Apparently Brian was as shocked as he was. But unlike Dean, he had no reason to hesitate. A slow smile crept onto his face and he quickly made his way out of the pod and towards Dean.

There was nothing for him to do. Dean simply stood there like a statue, caught in his own rendition of Dante’s Inferno as Brian reached him and pulled him into his arms.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to everyone for all the awesome feedback! You can’t imagine how much it helps me stay motivated!! :)
Sam and Dean deal with the sudden arrival of Brian Tate.

Sam was on slow boil.

This was actually an improvement from the knee-jerk explosion that he’d experienced upon first sight of the new arrival.

Brian Tate had walked into Unit A, with his underwear model good looks and entitled attitude a mere hour before but it felt like so much longer.

The second he’d touched Dean, Sam had been on his feet. He had gripped the back of the man’s uniform and yanked him clear of his stunned lover forcibly and without a second thought.

Luckily Sam had regained use of his logical brain just in time to step back and diffuse any possible situation that might have brought officers running.

“What the fuck?” Brian had whirled on him, already looking ready to scrap.

“Winchester, you okay?” Sam asked not taking his eyes off of the newcomer.

“Yeah. I’m okay.” Dean had taken a step back and Sam had a feeling if the man could have crossed to him without seeming obvious or in some way weak then he would have. “How are you even here, Brian?”

“Brian.” Sam repeated, beginning to put two and two together. “This is Brian?”

Dean’s ex, the man that had gotten Dean thrown in prison, was standing six feet away looking like he had not a care in the world.

“Ah, so my fame precedes me, then?” The man smirked openly at Sam and turned back to Dean, though Sam noted that he kept him in his peripheral vision all the while. It was smart. Brian didn’t know, for instance, if Sam was psycho or violent. It was definitely the sign of someone that was used to putting his life in harm’s way.

“Sentenced yesterday. I figured someone would have told you. Was supposed to be transported here immediately but I guess there was some lockdown or something and they had to hold me in county lockup for another night.”

“That’s all very interesting. But how are you here? Here? Standing in front of me like…” He looked to Sam for the words.

“Like a ghost?” Sam supplied, admittedly a bit too tongue-in-cheek for the moment.
Dean shot him a look that any other time would have stirred a laugh, but all Sam could think about was how his hand was itching. His fist clenched and unclenched several times as he swallowed down the urge to wrap it around Brian’s neck. To shake him and make him unquestioningly aware of just where he stood where Dean Winchester was concerned.

He was just angry on his friend’s behalf, he told himself. Didn’t stop him from feeling immediately like a fucking Neanderthal.

Brian looked a little harder at Sam after the ghost comment and then back around to Dean. There seemed to be a silent conversation running between them. Questions. Brian was likely wondering if Sam was a hunter. Maybe wondering how much he knew. Dean gave the slightest incline of his head and Brian’s eyebrows shot up in surprise.

“Can we get an introduction?” Deluca asked from where he sat still planted in front of the chessboard.

“No,” Dean growled firmly. “The new guy here was just going back to his pod to get settled. Weren’t you?”

Brian frowned at the harshly spoken words but did an about face and they hadn’t heard another word from him until lunch, when he’d slid into the seat next to Dean’s completely uninvited and began introducing himself to everyone within earshot.

The way Sam saw it the man was either brave or very, very stupid.

“So you and Winchester knew each other on the outside?” Deluca asked around a mouthful of hamburger. “Small world.”

“Oh yeah. Small world.” Dean said flippantly, picking up his own burger between both hands and staring at it as if it might start speaking at any moment. “Brian here is the reason I’m in prison.”

Deluca let out a long low whistle and cut his eyes meaningfully at Rebadow before turning his attention back to Dean. “Want us to hold him while you kick his ass?” he asked in a stage whisper.

Brian suddenly choked on the bite he’d taken only seconds before and Sam shot Deluca a subtle thumbs up. Even Dean let a small smile slip.

“Let me think about it,” Dean finally responded.

“Well, hello there,” Veronica all but purred as she slid into the seat next to Deluca. The seat was directly across from Brian and she seemed unsurprisingly and instantly fixated on the newcomer. “I don’t recognize you and my dear, you have a face I would remember. My name,” she said in the closest approximation of Marilyn Monroe Sam had ever seen her manage, “is Veronica. What’s yours?” Her glitter-coated lips quivered with her exaggerated pout, which Sam knew was meant to look sexy, he just couldn’t see it.

Brian stood, made a dramatic flourish with his hands as he bowed and then leaned across the table to take her hand and brush his lips over the knuckles. “Why hello Veronica. I’m Brian Tate.”

The queen looked ridiculously close to hyperventilating. “I…I like that name. Very masculine. I bet you’re quite… masculine.”

Sam rolled his eyes hard.

“I think I like you,” Brian said winking at the queen.
Veronica giggled like a schoolgirl and fanned herself with her hand.

Dean shook his head at the whole scene and finally bit into the flimsy prison burger.

“Christ!” The bite, still whole having barely been chewed, fell out of his mouth and back onto the tray. Dean grabbed his napkin and began furiously wiping at his tongue.

“Not up to your usual standards eh, De?” Brian slapped a hand onto Dean’s shoulder and left it there, fingers squeezing lightly.

“Please don’t call me that,” Dean bemoaned more quietly than he might have normally.

Brian ignored him. “This man,” he patted Dean’s chest with his other hand, “loves his burgers. Still your favorite right? I tell you, never stand between him and a mushroom and Swiss. Not. Pretty.”

Sam ground his teeth together and watched as Dean sat there looking thoroughly vexed but not making a move to rebuff the other man.

“Hey, De, you remember that one time we went to… oh…what’s the name of that place…?”

“Chedder Jack’s Food Shack,” Dean supplied, his head down and his words mumbled and resigned as if he’d sat through the story a thousand times.

“Yeah! That’s it! Cheddar Jack’s! Over in Arkansas. Well, De here had a tough day and he was pissed and when he’s pissed he’s got the appetite of an elephant. No lie. So he proceeds to order their biggest burger. The…the,” he snapped his fingers as he tried to jog his memory, “Inferno Cheddar Challenge, they called it. Over a pound of beef and like, seven slices of cheddar jack cheese. Only they make their own cheese, see, and they make it with those freakin’ hot ass peppers!”

“Ghost pepper,” Dean supplied, a smile now playing at the edges of his mouth.

“That’s right! Ghost pepper! I remember that now ‘cause we laughed about the name till you nearly peed.”

“Did not nearly pee!” Dean said, a little more volume to his voice now. “I was half drunk. Everything was funny.”

“So did he eat it?” Veronica asked, enthralled by the story. Or maybe it was just the storyteller.

“Shit yeah he did! Every last bite. Sweatin’ like a priest judging a wet t-shirt contest when he was done, but he did it.” Brian casually rubbed at Dean’s back, his hand resting between his shoulder blades.

Sam’s gut twisted. That seemed to be his breaking point. He was about to physically remove the hand when he saw Dean stiffen, reach back and push the arm away without a word.

Brian seemed impervious to Dean’s rejection and he took a sip of his water. “Of course, he also completely disappeared into the bathroom for the next few days.”

Deluca snorted a laugh and Dean cut him a sharp look. “What? It’s funny.”

Sam sat there for a moment, wanting to say something. But what could he say? He wanted to do something but, again, what could he do? He didn’t like the feelings that were bubbling up within
him. He didn’t want to name them. Didn’t want to focus on them.

He especially didn’t want to dwell on the fact that he was on a countdown to ejection. In two days the conversations would go on without him. It would all go on without him.

And now…with Brian Tate in the mix…

He tried to imagine if anything would be said or done differently in his absence but he quickly pushed it away as the thoughts did nothing to ease the upset in his stomach.

“So you two… you…?” Veronica pointed a finger between Dean and Brian. Her eyes were alight with newfound realization.

“We worked together,” Dean finished tightly.

“When we weren’t busy doin’ other things,” Brian amended, waggling his eyebrows at Veronica. The queen looked like she had died and gone to heaven. Sam thought she might even be panting in her excitement. “Oh! You two are just so.. It’s just too much..”

“Too much what, darlin’?” Brian cajoled.

“Too much gorgeousness!” She finally gushed. “I mean, how did you two not spontaneously combust from all the hotness? It was hot right? I bet it was hot,” she pulled her bottom lip between her teeth and Sam could almost see the X-rated scenes she was picturing between the two men.

“I really don’t want to hear this,” Deluca said insistently. Rebadow grunted in agreement.

Brian lowered his voice and leaned towards Veronica. “Well, now that you mention it…” This time Brian’s arm went all the way around Dean’s shoulders. “We didn’t ha-,”

“That’s it,” Sam finally snapped, slamming his hand down on the table. “Get your fucking arm off of him.”

Brian’s head snapped around to meet Sam’s eyes.

Sam didn’t blink. Didn’t move. Just sat there, eyes narrowed and nostrils flaring in indignation. Brian slowly removed his arm from Dean’s shoulders.

“Look pal-”

“Not your pal, asshole,” Sam was quick to interrupt.

“Okay,” Brian glanced at Dean but Dean was too busy focusing on Sam to notice. “I see that perhaps I’ve stepped on some toes here.” He held his hands up, a white flag.

“Wh-Wait… Winchester and…and Wesson?” Sam turned to Veronica, who’s mouth was wide open, her eyes glazed and skipping back and forth between the him, Dean, and Brian like a skipping stone. “You mean.. I was right? Y-You two?” She whimpered and Sam averted his eyes afraid of what he might see if he didn’t.

Rebadow huffed. “Wait, you two are…together?” He shook his head and pinched his nose with his thumb and middle finger.

“Well, duh,” Deluca’s easy reply came with a sassy head wiggle. “Who do you think was makin’ all those noises last night? Me?”
“Whoa! Whoa! Wait a minute,” Dean was suddenly very alert and had a hand up to the grumpy old men. “You heard us?”

Rebadow sighed heavily, the hangdog look that he so often wore pulled slightly harder on his lined face. “Unfortunately.”

“How much?” Sam asked, suddenly feeling the pinch of rising panic. After everything they had spoken about…

Deluca shook his head. “Just lotsa moaning really. I mean, we do share a wall and you two got… pretty loud once or twice.”

Veronica gasped and groaned.

Dean and Sam shared a look of relief and Sam tried not to be overly distracted by the fascinating shade of pink that had suddenly bloomed over Dean’s fair skin.

It was difficult. His fingertips felt magnetized and drawn in. He clasped them together to keep them from wandering.

He licked his lips, which suddenly felt dry.

The quick flick of his tongue drew Dean’s attention to his mouth, his eyes going dark. Seeing this and hearing the soft hitch of his lover’s breath, Sam found himself unconsciously leaning forward into Dean’s space, his interest naturally stirred.

Someone, Sam couldn’t pinpoint whom, cleared their throat loudly causing their moment to come screeching to a halt.

Sam blinked and felt like he was waking from a dream. The world had momentarily gone fuzzy at the edges and now he was thrust back into the loud cacophony of the cafeteria. He felt so self-conscious that he had gotten caught up in Dean that his eyes scanned the large room just to convince himself that everyone wasn’t gawking at them.

“Uh-oh. Don’t look now, but… theeeey’re baaaaaaaack.”

Sam looked at Deluca and followed his line of sight back to the main door of the hall where two of the Aryans that had attacked Dean were joining the food line. Sam’s muscles tensed in preparation for standing but Dean grabbed his forearm before he could move an inch.

“Don’t,” he said quickly.

“Dean…” Sam looked beseechingly back at him, willing him to understand.

There was a natural deep-seated urge within him to protect. A need. The need was always there but where Dean was concerned it was beginning to feel nearly fanatical in nature. Couple that with the guilt he felt over not being there when Dean had been attacked in the first place and it made for a whole slew of negative feelings that he wasn’t really used to dealing with.

Sam channeled all of these feelings - guilt, rage, frustration, and helplessness - into a raw hatred for the men across the room.

“I appreciate it. I do,” Dean’s voice was low and lulling with the huskiness that Sam loved. “Not gonna help a damn thing right now though.”
“What?” Brian looked at everyone in turn and then to the two men in line picking up their food trays. “What did I miss?”

Veronica was the first to answer. “You see the tatted up white boys over there?”

“The ones that look like they need a membership to the hair club for men? Yeah.”

“Now…” Sam saw her point a lengthy red fingernail in Dean’s direction. “You see all those nasty marks covering your boy’s pretty skin?”

“You mean… They did this to you?”

Brian grabbed Dean’s arm and examined it more closely before standing and looking remarkably as though he was about to charge towards the men that were way bigger and meaner and stronger.

Sam actually felt a little appreciation for the man. It wasn’t a lot of appreciation and it was gone relatively quickly so he didn’t start imagining a burgeoning friendship or anything. But still he hated him a tiny bit less for the fact that he would stand up for Dean.

“Sit down, Brian.” Dean’s voice brooked no argument.

“Those… they aren’t going to get away with touching you.”

“Oh, stop acting like you give a damn.”

“Besides,” Deluca snickered. “You get a load of them, new guy? They look like someone took a baseball bat to their ugly mugs.”

“Yeah! No shit! Winchester did that. Him and his badass self,” Veronica hummed.

Brian looked closer at the men and then grinned at Dean. “You did that?” Dean shrugged and Brian lightly patted his cheek. “You always were a good one to have around in a fight.”

“Yeah well…” Dean pulled away from his hand and pushed his tray away. “I got really good at watching my own back when nobody else was there to do it.”

Brian’s face finally fell at this. It was the first time Sam had seen him really drop the façade that he might be untouchable. He looked sad. Maybe a little defeated.

Not that Sam cared. It was just an observation.

“So Winchester,” Veronica broke the tension by reaching out and resting a hand on Dean’s forearm. “You and Wesson…”

Dean glanced at Sam and then back to her, his guard decisively up. “Yeah?”

She leaned forward, a solemn but hopeful look on her face. “Next time…can I watch?”

## 211B653 ##

“How are you doing?”

“What do you mean?”

Dean moved so that he was in perfect step with Sam as they walked down the corridors towards
the hospital ward for work detail. Dean could tell that something was on Sam’s mind and he had a pretty good idea what that something was.

“I mean, your ex just popped in out of the blue. You haven’t said a word about it.” He watched Sam push his hair back from his face. It was a thoughtful habit but it also told on him. Sam was worried.

“What do you want me to say, Sam? It sucks. I don’t want him in my face but despite everything he is harmless.”

Sam scoffed and Dean got the impression that his lover had already formed a pretty firm opinion of his ex, which was not of the favorable variety.

“You don’t have to say it. I know. He’s the reason I’m here. But like I said; wrong place, wrong time. It could have happened to me a million times over with all of the *legally ambiguous* things that I’ve done. It just happened to be when I was helping him. Against my better judgment. And we should have been out of there long before-,” he cut himself off before the rant could build and make him angry again. “You know what? That’s not gonna help. Just know that I’m fine. I’m not gonna kill him or anything.”

“You have no idea just how far off you are from what I’m actually worried about if you think I’m worried about you hurting him.”

Dean wanted to question him further but a flicker in the lights caused him to pause. Wide-eyed, he grasped at Sam’s arm, halting his forward momentum.

“What?” Sam asked as he was drawn up short.

He looked up at the lights, which were flickering directly above them. Sam followed his example and stared up at the long row of blinking bulbs as well.

“Is that…?”

Suddenly the lights flickered hard in both directions until all of the lights in the passageway blinked out.

Dean gripped Sam’s bicep hard and both of them stood silently breathing and waiting for something to happen.

Dean’s senses were on high alert and his eyes widened, trying to pull on any speck of light to help his eyes focus in the inky darkness.

The sound of wind whipping past filled his ears, though not even a soft breeze could be detected. Then…

*Footsteps.*

“What the fuck?” Sam whispered.

*Footsteps running.*

The sound of heavy gusts of wind had increased until Dean began to consider the possibility that there might be a tornado right outside the building. Only he knew that wasn’t the case.

“Sam, you stay with me okay? This thing comes at us in the dark… we’re gonna need to have our
heads on straight.”

“Right. Heads on straight.”

Dean could feel the tension building in the muscles beneath his fingers.

The sound was closing in on them.

And then the lights flickered once more, restoring to full power and all sound ceased. All except the reverberating slap of shoes against the concrete floor.

Dean blinked against the sudden harsh light flooding his vision and looked around for the source of the remaining sound.

“Winchester!” he heard a breathless voice call out.

He and Sam stared at each other and then looked back in time to see Stanton turn the corner behind them. They both slumped in relief and yet Dean remained on high alert and he hoped the look he pinned Sam with had him doing the same.

“Winchester,” Stanton panted and puffed, stopping to put his hands on his thighs, bending at the waist and taking in a long lungful of oxygen. He had obviously run all the way there. He had also obviously not done that much running in quite a while. He held up a finger asking them to give him a moment.

Finally the councilor stood and gave them both a slightly embarrassed smile. “Glad I caught you,” he managed, directing his gaze at Dean.

“What’s up? Am I…in trouble or something?” He couldn’t imagine why he would be, but it wouldn’t be the first time he got nailed undeservedly.


Dean wasn’t touching that question with a ten-foot pole.

“What can we do for you, sir?” Sam asked, coming to the rescue.

Stanton glanced dismissively at Sam, probably wondering what business it could possibly be of his, but he wisely didn’t say so. Instead he focused back on his original target. “Winchester, no work detail today.”

“Really? We saw two of the guys in the cafeteria. They’re out right?”

“They are. Smith is still under the doc’s supervision.” He rolled his eyes. “Supposed to be out this morning but had an…’unfortunate altercation’ with another inmate before he could even make it to the damn door of the hospital ward. Tore his stitches wide open.”

“Stitches?” Dean was a little taken aback as he was faced with the fact that he had lit into his attacker so hard that he’d needed to be sewn up. He didn’t remember it being that bad. But then again, the mad haze of fury he had been in… he was lucky he hadn’t done way more damage.

“Yeah, well he’ll be fine. We would just like you to steer clear of the hospital ward today. Precautionary measure. You understand.”

Dean nodded and Stanton turned to go, instantly spinning right back around in an awkward almost pirouette type movement. “Oh! By the way, I moved Smith to Unit C. I figured they could deal
with his racist ass for a little while. But...watch your back, yeah? It may piss off his buddies, but they’ll get over it. Always do.”

Once he was gone, Dean and Sam both sighed. Pissed off Aryans? What else was new?

They looked up at the lights, which were now burning steadily.

“Dean?”

“Yeah Sammy?”

“What the fuck was that?”

Dean assumed he was speaking about the lights. And the sound. He had no answers. “I don’t know. But I sure as shit hope Bobby’s having better luck than we are.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

With no work detail to be done, Dean had loitered around the crime scenes with Sam for as long as he could. They had looked for anything of demon persuasion but after only a few minutes a guard had passed and questioned Dean’s presence.

There wasn’t much for him to do in the Unit since pretty much everyone else was off doing their assigned duties, so Dean found himself facing the shower room. It felt like it had been days since he’d showered and he supposed it had been.

Entering the room again for the first time after the attack was almost surreal. Dean examined the floor, searching for blood that might have been overlooked and left to mock him. To Dean, it stood to reason that something, which left such a stark impression on his mind, should have left some sort of physical mark on more than just his skin. But the floor and the room as a whole were all clean and just as it had been before.

He moved past the short center wall and for a moment imagined himself there, forced to his knees, Smith looming above him with that twisted gleeful look in his eyes.

He shook his head to rid himself of the image.

Not feeling like drawing the whole process out, Dean broke speed records lathering his hair and entire body with a copious amount of shampoo and then immediately rinsing. The whole shower took a total of three minutes and that included the time necessary for the water to warm up.

There were small tremors working their way through his body. He didn’t like it. He didn’t like the feeling that something could still shake him in such a way. Straight to the core. He’d been in far worse situations. He had vanquished whole nests of vampires, been tortured by demons, even been left for dead by a shape shifter once. Dean had certainly had his fair share of experiences. That other men, and not monsters, could be responsible for affecting him so deeply in this way, was still beyond his understanding.

Dean grabbed the towel he’d thrown over the waist high partition and wrapped it around his hips, tucking the loose end into the top so that it stayed in place.

He was done. He could breathe now. Just a few steps more and he’d be back in his pod.
As was typical of Dean’s recent run of luck, the door squeaked open and Dean found himself once more face to face with Brian Tate.

“Fancy meeting you here,” the other said, laying on his most charming smile.

“What are you doing here?”

“De, you keep asking me that. I’m starting to feel hurt.” The amusement on his face belied his words. “Just met with Stanton. Supposed to start working in the cafeteria tomorrow. Clean up after lunch, I guess.”

Dean stared at him straight-faced and unblinking.

“What about you? How’d you rank not having to get your hands dirty?”

“Not that I owe you any explanations but one of the guys that came after me is still in the med ward. They don’t want me in there working until he’s out.”

“Still in the med… Shit, De! You must have fucked him up somethin’ awful!”

Dean’s eyes dropped to the floor and he scanned it again. He felt the phantom hands gripping his arms roughly as another pushed down on the middle of his back, his face pressed painfully to the cold tile floor.

“What do you want?” Dean said, finally looking back up at Brian.

He wondered if the man could see the haunted look Dean knew must have shown in his eyes. Dammit! He hated that he knew Brian could still read him enough to see it.

Instead of employing sympathy or any other normal human reaction, his ex went for what he was good at. Sex.

Brian’s eyes lowered to the floor and Dean felt completely exposed from his toes all the way to this neck as he was examined from top to bottom. The cornflower blue eyes that he used to know so well rested a little longer on his chest before rising up to his face. “Forgot how amazing you look,” he whispered, taking a step closer. “That body…”

Dean shook his head, side stepping the approach. Those words, said in that place, by that man… it was too much. “Cram it, Tate.” Without sparing him another glance, Dean strode out of the room and immediately to his cell.

How dare he?

It was all Dean could think as he ripped his towel away and threw it at the wall.

How dare Brian be there!

The asshole had done far too much damage to his life as it was. Now he was stuck there with him. Stuck for at least eighteen months with the man that he had sworn he wouldn’t set eyes on again for as long as he lived. The man that had ruined his life.

He gripped the edge of the bed frame and hung his head, taking a few deep cleansing breaths.

Count to ten.

One thing at a time, he told himself.
Dean yanked on a pair of clean boxers and had his uniform pulled up to his hips when a knock on the doorframe drew his attention.

“Are you suicidal?” He wanted to hiss but the words came out sounding more tired than venomous.

Brian took a cautious step inside the pod. “Dean…come on. Don’t hate me. I know we have some things to work out but we were always so good together.”

Dean’s eyes turned traitor and against his will they ran the length of Brian’s uncovered body. He had obviously taken a shower as well, only he hadn’t taken the time to dry off. He’d simple slung a towel around himself just as Dean had done before. Drops of water shown like diamonds against the toned bronze skin. Small rivulets ran from his soaked jet-black hair and made their way down his neck and chest.

Dean swallowed hard.

He had always been a sucker for a gorgeous man and there was no denying Brian was certainly still that.

Brian must have known what he was thinking because the wattage of his smile increased a couple of notches. “We can make the most of this whole nasty situation. Ya know?”

Dean wasn’t sure what triggered it but suddenly his minds eye began comparing and contrasting. He saw the toned arms and chest and abs that used to make him instantly salivate. Now he felt like maybe it wasn’t quite chiseled enough. There needed to be more muscle. More strength beneath the taught flesh.

He looked at the raven hair that he used to run his fingers through and admire and now…it just seemed far too short. And too dark.

The lovely blue eyes that had always seemed so unique, now just seemed ordinary. They didn’t change color with his emotions. They didn’t darken like a storm evoking an image of passion and excitement.

Overall, Brian was the same height as Dean. Maybe an inch shorter. Dean had always liked that about him. That he could look evenly into his eyes before he spun the man around and pushed into him. Only now the single inch that Dean had on the man seemed like a foot. Dean kind of liked the idea of not being the taller one.

No matter what he and Brian had ever had between them and even if it had worked out and he had never left Dean in the lurch… Dean couldn’t imagine after meeting Sam that there ever could have been a real choice between the two men.

Suddenly he wanted nothing more than to see his lover. To see Sam and enjoy all of those wonderful differences that he’d come to adore.

Somehow, as his brain had filled with all things Sam, Brian had managed to close in on him. They now stood mere inches apart.

“Back up,” he immediately sneered.

But Brian shook his head. “You don’t really want that. We’re both hunters. We have a history. And we both know each other in a way that no one else ever could. You don’t want some convict that won’t ever really get it. I’ve missed you, Dean. I want to be with you,” he ended on a whisper.
Hands up between them, he pushed hard against Brian’s chest. His ex stumbled back a few feet and Dean watched in amazement as he continued to fly backwards towards the door until he landed firmly on his ass.

Brian blinked in shock from where he lay sprawled on the ground and then his eyes went up, up, up to take in the rage-filled face of Sam Wesson.

“Out,” Sam ground out through clenched teeth.

Casting a quick glance back and forth between Dean and Sam, Brian stood and tried not to look like he was dashing off in fear. He failed. The exit could have only been classified as a scurry.

The idea that Brian was actually afraid of Sam entertained him to no end. A small chuckle bubbled up and he turned to his lover, thinking to share his amusement. Maybe even thank him for intervening. Not that he’d needed it, of course.

The laughter died in his throat.

Sam stood stock still with a tight jaw and a none-too-pleased look on his face.

“Sammy?”

Sam shook his head and grabbed a towel off of his shelf. “Taking a shower,” he bit out.

Dean frowned and watched him go, wondering exactly what had Sam so upset.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Sam couldn’t say for certain just how long he had stood beneath the steady beating pressure of the shower.

It had been long enough for the water to begin leaning towards dick-shrinkingly cold, he did know that.

He opened his mouth, letting the icy spray fill it up for a moment before spitting it back out against the wall. He turned and made one last pass with his fingers through his long strands of hair to be sure all of the soap had been washed away. Then he turned the knobs to shut the shower down and still he didn’t really want to move.

He didn’t know how to face Dean at the moment. His embarrassment warred with his anger. His mind conjured the image of Brian standing inches away from Dean, who was pinned against the side of the bed. If anyone else had walked it, they would have thought something was about to happen. Perhaps they would have believed they had walked in on an intimate moment between sweethearts.

For a second… a split second… Sam had questioned it himself. His jealousy and fear had blinded him to the truth, as he knew it.

A primal scream had roared within him making his jaw clench in order to keep the sound from escaping his person.

If it wasn’t that, he rationalized, then Brian was surely making unwanted advances.

For the second time that day, he had found himself manhandling Tate away from Dean. Dean had
shoved him and Sam had actually just used the momentum to toss him even farther away.

The man had seemed scared of him.

This caused another troublesome realization within Sam. Normally this would have made Sam feel bad. He wasn’t and had never been the type to use his power or size against someone. He didn’t like to actively intimidate if he could help it. That part of him still existed. But this new part of himself - the part that seemed to have emerged as his relationship with Dean had grown… This part swelled with pride and sadistic joy at the anxious look in Brian’s eyes.

By the time he made his way back to the pod, Dean was laying back on the top bunk. Something he hadn’t really done in days, choosing to make himself at home in Sam’s space.

Dean’s eyes were closed and it looked almost like he might be sleeping, but there was no way. It occurred to him that he hadn’t explained his reaction before. The other man had to be wondering what the hell had gotten in to him.

“Dean?” He called softly, leaning over to kiss an exposed shoulder. Eyelids fluttered and green eyes stared at the ceiling. “I’m sorry.” This apparently confused his lover as his brow creased and his head turned over against the mattress to look directly at Sam.

“Why are you sorry?”

Well that was a great question wasn’t it? Truth was he wasn’t sorry.

He shook his head. “Acted like a fuckin’ caveman,” He finally admitted quietly, his forehead dropping to the bed. Fingers found their way into his hair and he sighed at the light soothing touch. They moved down to his neck and squeezed and kneaded pleasantly.

He heard a hum from Dean and lifted his head just enough to see what had provoked the sound.

Dean was smiling at him. Not in amusement or kindness. This smile was so full of promise and predatory fire that it made Sam’s breath catch.

“I kinda liked it.”

Sam wasn’t sure he’d heard that correctly. “You...liked it? Me being a cave man?”

Dean sat up and jumped down from the top bunk only to dip his fingers into the top of Sam’s towel. Yanking him forward, Dean gripped Sam’s ass and ground against him obscenely. “Feel how much?”

And Sam did feel. Felt every inch of how much Dean appreciated his little display of aggression.

“Fuck…wish we could…” Sam bit the inside of his mouth. He’d never wanted someone so badly.

“Not in so much pain today.” Dean said casually. Turning his head, he dipped to lick and nibble at the base of Sam’s neck. “Could…”

The words left unsaid were only too clear to Sam. It was a giant blinking neon sign complete with an arrow pointing directly to his own stirring cock.

He looked out of the glass wall that faced the common room. People were coming back from work detail in droves now and he knew there was no way he was going to make love with Dean while hidden away in some back corner like a dirty secret. Even if it meant waiting until they were both
on the outside, he would do it if it meant that they could make love like a real couple. Maybe have a real bed. Privacy. Maybe a little wine.

He sighed and regretfully pulled away to get changed.

Eighteen months had never seemed so far away.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“You have a collect call from an inmate at the… Joseph F Bolt Correctional Facility. If you would like to accept this call…press 1.”

There was a thump and a muffled “dammit” and finally a beep that indicated the button had been pressed.

“Bobby?” Dean asked after a few moments of muffled thumps and shuffling.

“Yeah,” he finally heard the gruff voice on the line.

“What are you doing over there man? Everything okay?”

“Everything’s fine. I’m just working on a few things.”

“Hey, Bobby… did you know they were sticking Brian here?” Dean looked over his shoulder at Sam who was leaning against the wall outside with his arms crossed attempting to look casual. “Showed up this morning like out of a fucking nightmare.”

A heavy sigh blew across the line. “Knew they sentenced him. Mentioned it in my letter. Didn’t know where they were sticking him, though.”

“Stuck him in my gah-damn back yard is where they stuck him.”

“Well, to tell you the truth, boy… I think I figured out what you’re up against. It might be a blessing that you have another hunter there with you.”

“You figured it out? That’s great Bobby! What are we dealing with? Some sort of freaky spirit mojo?”

“Worse. From what I can tell from some of the old Grecian texts, it looks like you might be dealing w-”

The lights sputtered out and then… Silence.

Dean looked up and the lights immediately sputtered back to life. It all seemed perfectly fine despite the small pops and ticking sounds from the disturbed bulbs.

“Bobby?” He spoke into the receiver. “Bobby? You there?”

Nothing.

He rapidly struck the button on the cradle several times and then listened once more for a dial tone. The few other prisoners that had been on the phones beside him seemed just as confused and frustrated as he.
“Fuck!” He yelled, slamming the phone onto the cradle. His hands balled into fists and he squeezed them tight, fighting against the urge to plow one hard into the wall.

Slamming out of the door, he began stalking towards Brian’s pod. He was going to talk to the son of a bitch. Maybe Bobby was right. Maybe his being there could serve a purpose after all.

Maybe they could use him as fucking bait.

“Winchester! What the…?”

Dean was brought up short by a large hand on his bicep. He felt the twinge of pain from the bruises beneath Sam’s fingers but he stopped and simply looked at the taller man.

“Where are you going?”

“Gonna talk to Brian.” He saw the conversation as being over and turned back towards his original destination.

“Whoa!” Sam pulled him once more to a halt. “Why do you need to talk to him? What did Bobby say?”

Before Dean could begin to reply, the loud screech of buzzers sounded and they both looked around a bit frantically to see what might be happening.

“Lockdown!” One of the officers yelled. “To your pods!”

The inmates all muttered and grumbled.

“Not again.”

“Hate lockdown.”

“C’mon man! Why we gotta be doin this again?”

They all began their unhurried shuffles to their pods.

“…death outside the hospital…inmate…” Dean heard the words crackle through the nearby c.o.’s radio.

Based on the lack of color suddenly in Sam’s face, his lover had also heard the words.

Dean glanced at the door but it was already locked down since everyone in Unit A was accounted for. There was no way for them to get out. No way for them to see what had happened.

Once again, there was nothing to do but wait.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“What did Bobby say?”

They were firmly locked back in their pod for the second time in as many days. Sam could tell Dean was on a short fuse with the whole thing, especially with the very real possibility of another death on their hands.
Dean was seated on the bottom bunk and had been steadily running a hand over his face for the last few minutes. His eyes looked more tired than they had an hour before.

“I don’t have a damn clue, Sam. The phones went down before he had a chance to say much.”

“The phones went down?”

“Yeah. Lights blinked and the phones went down.” He looked up at the fluorescent bulbs built into the center of the pod’s ceiling as if they too might start giving signs of life. “All because some BITCH HELL HYBRID can’t chill the FUCK OUT!” He alternated between normal voice and a booming yell.

“You think the…whatever it was cut the phones?”

“Of course it did, Sam!” He popped up and began pacing. “Right before it apparently killed someone! Dammit! We should have figured this out! I fucking hate…” He stopped and leaned heavily against the wall next to the door. Dean’s features were a mix of helplessness and self-loathing and it hurt Sam’s heart to see it.

“You hate that we can’t seem to pin the shit down.”

Dean nodded, his head hanging low.

“I understand. I feel exactly the same. Jesus, Dean! I’ve been in here for months going after the same thing you’ve been after for only a few days. You think I don’t understand how frustrated you are right now?”

And he did understand perfectly. He was ready to spit nails. Yet another life was on his hands and he wasn’t sure how much more he could, in good conscience, live with. But somehow Dean’s passionate reaction had tempered his own. As if he recognized Dean’s emotions and worked to balance them.

Like two halves of a whole. Yin and yang.

“So why were you going to Brian?”

“I wasn’t…I wasn’t going to Brian.”

“Yes you were. I saw you.”

“You make it sound wrong. I was simply seeking out another hunter. Bobby thinks whatever this is will take all the help we can get.”

“And you think Tate will help? With the…*Hell hybrid*?” He borrowed Dean’s terminology and tried not to roll his eyes at himself. Oh the things that kept coming out of his mouth these days.

“Yeah, I think he will help.” Dean conceded. “He’s a hunter first before anything else. Besides, Bobby seemed worried and it takes a lot to shake the old man. This isn’t some standard issue demon. We’re gonna need backup, Sam.”

Sam felt his jaw tightening and his teeth grinding once more. He was going to have to see a dentist after he got back to reality. If he ever got back to reality.

“I don’t like it.” He didn’t trust the man, but he really couldn’t tell if his objection was based on instinct or if his very present jealousy was clouding his judgment. “But if he’s willing to help, I
won’t stop him.” Sam moved to stand in front of Dean. “Like you said, he’s a hunter. This is far bigger than my…” he rolled his lips between his teeth to keep himself from saying any more.

“Your what?”

Sam shook his head.

“C’mon Sam. Not really the time to start clammin’ up on me.”

“Fine.” He stared hard into green eyes. “My possessiveness, my jealousy, my resentfulness; take your pick.”

“Possessive…” The frustration and anger seemed to drain out of Dean like so much water down a drain, and was replaced with a look of sheer wonder. “How on Earth, could you be jealous of him?”

“How can I not? He’s had so much of you. Knows you in ways that I don’t yet. He...he’s going to be here when I can’t be any longer.”

Dean flashed him that striking smile that seemed to be reserved just for him and Sam’s heart tripped over itself a little from the beauty in front of him.

“Only want you, Sammy.”

Sam placed a hand on either side of Dean’s neck and pulled him in closer until nose bumped nose and lips rested against lips. “Don’t like it. Don’t like that he touched you. Don’t like that he calls you De. Don’t like that he knows all of your little habits and favorite foods.” Sam licked Dean’s bottom lip and sucked it gently between his own lips. He shuddered and sidled closer so that their bodies pressed together from top to toe.

“Don’t like that he’s been with you.” He growled, low. “That he wants to be with you still.”

“Don’t want him,” Dean exhaled against his mouth. “Only you.”

“I know that. And you know that. Problem is he doesn’t know that.” He pushed Dean against the wall a little more roughly than he meant to.

Dean, his head still braced between Sam’s large paws, stared up at him, his eyes darting all around his face. Sam saw his own desires reflected back at him and he moaned. He captured Dean’s mouth in a searing kiss and then pressing him harder into the wall he gripped the back of Dean’s thighs and lifted. Long legs wrapped easily around his waist.

“Holy shit!” Dean panted against his mouth. His legs gripped Sam tightly and he pulled back to look down. It seemed that he needed visual confirmation that Sam had indeed just picked him up. “Fuck, that’s hot!”

“Just wait. Get’s hotter.” Sam ground his hard as steel cock against Dean’s own. They lined up perfectly from this angle and Dean let out a small whimper at the friction. Sam was holding back his own reaction, knowing that if he didn’t hold himself in check, this was all going to be over far faster than he wanted.

“Hey!” One of the guards banged on the door with his club and both of them startled at the unexpected noise. “Knock it off!” He scowled at them through the glass.

Reluctantly, Sam lowered Dean and they broke apart, neither of them able to take their eyes off of the obvious tenting of their jumpsuits.
“Looks like we just got cock-blocked by a C.O.” Dean snorted, wincing as he adjusted himself.

Sam closed his eyes. He had completely forgotten where they were. He had been so caught up in the idea of being inside of Dean. Now that they had stopped, he took stock of himself. His heart was beating out of his chest. The throbbing ache in his dick was as intense as it was painfully pleasurable. He had never in his life wanted someone like he wanted Dean. He’d thought it before but now his body was very much up to speed with that idea.

“I’m going to read now.” Sam’s voice was strained and broke over a few of the words.

“Oh. Okay.” Dean frowned and grabbed one of the other books from Sam’s small collection.

It was obvious that Sam had erected a wall between them and Sam knew Dean didn’t understand. But it was a means to an end and all Sam had to do was wait for lights out.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean was halfway through the first chapter of his book three hours later when they finally called for lights out. He had read the same three paragraphs over and over for an hour. He still wasn’t completely sure he knew what the book was even about.

His mind had been turned completely to soup since Sam had pressed him up against the wall and started something they couldn’t finish.

Fuck!

It had been so damn hot! He felt himself stir again at the memory, his face flushing with want.

But Sam had thought better of it. Once the guard had interrupted them, he had plopped himself down on his bed and he’d had his nose stuck between the pages of a book ever since.

Dean climbed down from the top bunk and returned Sam’s book to it’s original location, then stripped down to his boxers. He felt a little awkward all of a sudden, like he wasn’t sure what to do. Wasn’t sure how to act.

If only Sam would say something.

The bright lights went down and Dean sighed. Another night of waiting.

He spent several more minutes than was strictly necessary brushing his teeth. Finally he bent over to swish and spit and as he stood he started at the second reflection suddenly in the mirror beside his own.

“Jeez! Tryin’ to give me a heart attack?”

Sam just stared at him intently.

Dean turned and took note that the taller man was standing in the puddle of his uniform with not a stitch of clothing left on his body.

“Sammy?” Dean stared owlishly and Sam moved unnaturally fast, pinning him against the sink. “Uh…Sammy?” He whispered, his voice hoarse with longing.

“Tell me you want it.”
The husky purr of Sam’s command left no question as to what he was talking about.

“Want it,” Dean rasped out. No hesitation.

Sam fell to his knees and pulled on the hem of the boxers, sliding them down over Dean’s hips, knees, claves slowly as their eyes remained locked. Once Dean too was stripped bare, Sam wasted no time and swallowed his engorged length whole. Dean threw his head back and gripped at the small ledge on the sink.

The sensation was one of overwhelming warmth coupled with the maddening suction of Sam’s eager mouth. He could feel Sam’s tongue wriggle back and forth along the underside of his length. It was all he could do not to start thrusting into that perfect wet heat.

“Oh god…your mouth,” he keened.

Sam gripped the base of Dean’s dick as his lips and tongue turned their focus to the tip. Dean knew it was the most sensitive part of his anatomy but when Sam’s tongue dipped languidly into his slit, Dean thought there was a good possibility of this being the shortest blowjob in history. At least his history.

“Sam, need you,” he said feeling a bit frantic and frazzled. Looking down, he groaned at the near pornographic image of Sam tonguing his cock as his hand worked his own shaft in sync.

Sam turned hazy hazel eyes to him and pulled off of his dick with a wet pop. “What do you need, Dean? What do you want?”

The lack of a mouth wrapped around him actually cleared a little bit of blood to flow back to his brain. He knew without a doubt what he wanted. He also knew that it was something not very familiar to either of them.

“I want you to fuck me, Sammy.”

Sam groaned at the words. “Yes,” he hissed, drawing Dean’s cock in one final time before he stood and once more lifted Dean off of his feet.

It wasn’t any less hot the second time.

In fact, it was hotter. “Ah!” he let out with a breathless laugh as the lava like heat of their cocks connecting created an electric tingle that ran up his spine. “Love it that you can do this. So sexy, Sammy.”

The taller man gave no indication as to having heard him and he pressed Dean back against the wall that he had only hours ago been flat against. Only this time they were going the distance. He would make damn sure.

With Sam’s chest pressing against his, the man moved his arms one at a time so that they were now beneath Dean’s legs, his knees draped over the strong bands of muscle and he was spread wide and open to his lover. It was one of the most erotic feelings he’d ever experienced being that exposed and at the mercy of someone he wanted so very badly.

Sam’s hips began to circle and pump instinctively and his rock hard cock slid over and over against Dean’s crack, wetting it with precum. He felt the enthralling slip-slide of it and his head banged against the wall as it fell back.

Sam attacked his neck and then took his mouth in a hard and wet kiss. His urgency was made clear
in the quick tongue fucking Dean’s mouth received and it made his blood boil to know that Sam was going just as mad with want as he was.

But there were things to consider…

“Sam,” he whispered as lips made a wet trail down from his ear to his shoulder. “Sammy… w-wait.”

He didn’t want him to stop. Considered saying screw it and dealing with the fall out when it was all said and done. But somehow he managed to string the thoughts together that Sam would be upset with himself if he hurt Dean. And the worst thing Dean could think of – besides not doing anything at all – was the idea that Sam might regret any part of this.

His words finally filtered into Sam’s lust fogged brain and he pulled back, blinking blearily at Dean. “W-wha… you okay?”

Now that he was being forced to say it, Dean felt his cheeks flame. “Yeah. Yes.” He looked away. “It’s just… I don’t typically bottom.”

It took a second before the light dawned in Sam’s eyes. He rested his forehead against Dean’s and Dean felt him nod. “Christ, Dean. I’m sorry.” They stood there another minute with no other movement except the hammering of their hearts.

Finally Dean couldn’t take it any longer. “Sam, do I need to prep myself?” He would. In fact the idea of spreading wide in front of Sam and fingering himself for the other man’s pleasure had him nearly vibrating out of his skin.

Sam’s eyes widened. “What…I thought that… you still want to…”

Dean had no idea what Sam was saying but he wiggled his hips and grasped and pulled at the man’s length of hair. “Need you to get me ready. Don’t usually…”

He left the rest unsaid and Sam nodded his understanding. Slowly he moved his arms and set Dean on his feet with a controlled gentleness that did not go unnoticed. When he spoke, however, the gentleness was void and back was the wild animalistic side of Sam that was doing amazing things to Dean’s insides.

“Turn and face the wall,” he ordered. “Hands flat.”

Dean complied and Sam used his foot to nudge his stance wider so that he was once more spread open to the other man.

Dean knew that Sam had only been with three other men before and it had been several years ago. He had never elaborated on whether he had topped or bottomed during those encounters. But from the way Sam unabashedly pressed his face between the cheeks of Dean’s ass, his tongue immediately swiping and dipping into his hole, had Dean wondering if Sam had been telling the truth about his own lack of experience.

“Mmmmm…” he hummed as Sam’s tongue circled his opening.

He looked back over his shoulder and down at the man on his knees behind him. Sam sat back and their eyes met. Gazes locked, Sam slid his middle finger into his mouth slowly and Dean shuddered but didn’t turn away from the show. With a barely there kiss to Dean’s hip, Sam rubbed his spit-coated finger against Dean’s opening and then eased it in a few centimeters at a time.
Dean grunted at the intrusion initially but by the time Sam had worked in a second and third he found himself whimpering and whining for more, his forehead pressed against the wall to ground himself.

“Need it… Want you inside.” His voice was shaky but loud enough that Sam heard him and moved to stand.

He heard the man spit. Lube was not a luxury afforded to them there. Neither were condoms.

He felt Sam hesitate, the head of his cock resting against his stretched hole. He wondered if Sam had just considered that.

“Sam…I’m okay. I’m clean.” He had been tested, as all inmates were, before entering Bolt. Sam knew that.

“S’not that. Just…I want to make it good for you. Don’t wanna hurt you.”

“You need me to beg?” Dean looked over his shoulder again, only this time Sam was right there, his face inches away. “I will.”

The lust in Sam’s eyes overtook his momentary lapse into conscious thought and he lined himself up once more, took Dean’s mouth in a plundering kiss and slid his dick home in one hard smooth thrust.

Dean broke free from the kiss with a hiss of pain. “More,” he said before Sam could start actually thinking again. “More.”

Sam’s teeth sank into the back of his shoulder as he began to pump slowly and steadily into Dean. His hips rolled and undulated. Dean gave a throaty moan as closed his eyes, taking in the feeling of Sam’s wide girth filling him up so perfectly.

Sam sucked in air through his teeth and Dean felt one large hand grip his shoulder and the other his hip, anchoring him in place as the length of Sam’s strokes became longer and he began to pound into him in earnest.

The wet sound of balls slapping against skin, cries of ecstasy, the grunts that emanated from Sam as he moved against the barrier of Dean’s tight near-virgin hole. That was the music they made love to.

“Ah…Baby…” He wasn’t sure if he or Sam said the words but he felt them nonetheless.

Dean curled his fingers inward; hating that there was nothing to grip on to. His nails scraped against the stone as he took every inch Sam gave him.

“So good for me.” Hot, wet, open-mouth kisses rained down on the area between his shoulder blades and Dean looked down at his own dick, swollen, angry red, and bouncing with the jostle of Sam’s movements. He was ready to burst. Before he could make a move to start jerking himself, Sam found it. That beautiful little spot. That sensational bundle of nerves.

“Shit! SHIT! Sam, oh! Fuck-fuck-fuck-fuck…” He chanted as Sam continued to hammer against his prostate, claiming him with every pressing stroke. Within minutes, Dean was shooting. He came untouched and so hard that it jolted him causing Sam to momentarily lose his own rhythm.

Both hands now on Dean’s hips, Sam finished strong as he snapped his hips forward twice more, burying himself as far as he could go and coming hard inside.
Everything – every move, every touch – had been perfectly choreographed to scream MINE! And Dean had loved every second of it.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

When Sam finally softened and inevitably slipped out of his lover, Dean turned and nuzzled at his shoulder. Sam held onto him and kissed him hard, one last time. “You’re amazing,” he whispered.

Dean closed his eyes, a look of extreme emotion crossed his face and Sam couldn’t quite name it. He recognized it as being something close to his own feelings as well however. It was nearly overwhelming, this unnamed emotion, and it made Sam want nothing more than to keep Dean right there in the circle of his arms.

“Lay with me,” Dean spoke, his lips against the skin behind Sam’s ear.

Sam thought in that moment that nothing sounded better than lying down next to Dean and he nodded, wholeheartedly on board with the plan. Together they could ride the wave of euphoria in a tangle of limbs and lips.

Dean moved past him and slid beneath the thin blanket on the bottom bunk and Sam stared long and hard at him, trying to memorize every minute detail.

A moment before he moved to follow, a shadow across the way caught his eye. He sought it out and found Brian Tate standing framed by the window of his own pod, arms braced against the sides, staring right at Sam.

He had likely witnessed the entire show but instead of feeling embarrassed Sam’s inner cave man grunted with satisfaction.

With a small salute in Tate’s direction, Sam joined Dean in bed and pulled him right back into his arms.

Chapter End Notes

Okay guys, normally I wouldn’t ask (read: beg) for feedback but if you can see it in your hearts to do that... The story is about to hit the climax and then wind down. I already have most of the epilogue written, I just have a few more chapters to complete between this and that. I would just like any thoughts, comments, reflections. I do this because I enjoy it and I hope you've enjoyed reading it so far. I just don't want to look back after its done and feel like I should have done it differently. SO...yeah. Any words? Send them my way. Thank you!
Those You Leave Behind

Chapter Summary

The boys rally...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time Served
Chapter 12: Those You Leave Behind

“What do you want to do when you get out of here?”

“Hmm?”

Sam and Dean had been laying there in the bunk for maybe half an hour, enjoying the short time they would have together before the buzzer would go off to signal the beginning of the day. Sam’s question had surprised Dean.

His lover had been so quiet all morning that he’d started to wonder if he’d managed to drift back to sleep. Or perhaps he had been musing about the death that they were still waiting to hear details on. He knew it was tearing the man up that yet another life was taken on his watch.

“When you get paroled,” Sam clarified. “What do you think you’ll do?”

Dean shrugged and wrapped his arm tighter around Sam as he lay spooned against him, Dean’s front to Sam’s back. He tried to tell himself that there was no correlation between Sam’s words and his own action, but he’d never been all that great at lying to himself.

The truth was that the idea of a future – any future - scared the crap out of him. Dean had never been a planner, per se. He was more of a fly by the seat of his pants kind of guy. He worked a case and when it was over he looked for another case. He found a way to get money and when that money dried up then he found a way to get more.

Before Sam, the cyclical and somewhat predictable nature of his life had never been in question. Now he felt like the house of cards that was his life had been knocked down and scattered on the wind.

“I guess keep hunting. It’s all I’m really good at.”

“You could work on cars,” Sam suggested after a lengthy pause. One of his hands moved to cover Dean’s where it lay flat against his belly. He threaded their fingers together and looked back over his shoulder so that hazel eyes met green. “You could maybe open your own garage or something.”

Dean smiled at the suggestion and took a moment to imagine it. He could almost feel the grease beneath his nails and the smell the acrid mix of exhaust and motor oil. “Actually, I always thought it would be pretty cool to work on classic cars. Restore them.” He sighed like an old man thinking about his first love. “Remember me telling you about my car?”
“The, and I quote, ‘sleek black steel sex machine’?” Sam chuckled and squeezed his fingers to let him know that he mocked because he cared. “Yeah. I remember.”

Dean didn’t comment on the teasing, however he did nip playfully at Sam’s ear earning him a little yelp in return. “Anyway,” he said, settling back into his point. “My dad bought it completely scrapped out, summer I turned fourteen. I was totally hittin’ the teenage hormones hard so I think it was his way of focusing my crazy. He said we were gonna make it like new. Took a whole lot of hours but when it was done…” His eyes rolled up in pleasure. “Oh man…what a beauty!”

“You obviously have very strong feelings for this car. I feel like I should be jealous.” There was a smile in Sam’s voice. “I’d love to see it.”

The simple statement pricked at Dean’s imagination.

He suddenly saw himself driving down the interstate, windows rolled down and AC/DC blasting through the speakers. He turned to look in the passenger seat and Sam was seated there, his head thrown back in laughter. His arm hanging out of the window and moving in waves against the pressing currents of air as Dean pushed the gas pedal a little harder and they accelerated towards their destination.

The sweet simplistic scene stole his breath away and suddenly he felt his eyes water. He shut his eyelids and took a deep breath to steady himself.

He’d never seen a future in his mind’s eye. He knew that hoping for something like what he imagined was just begging for heartbreak.

“Well, the problem with your whole ‘set up a garage’ idea is that you have to have money,” he finally spoke, thankful that his voice didn’t sound too broken.

“You could do it at Bobby’s.”

It sounded like a casual suggestion but it was delivered almost too casually. Dean frowned and bit his lip in thought. He was starting to get the impression that Sam was pushing towards something. “Look, Sam… I’m a hunter. I hunt. I love the idea of working on cars but that’s not my life.”

There was a long tired sigh from Sam and his head flopped onto the pillow of Dean’s arm. “I know. I just…”

He didn’t finish the sentence. It just hung there in the air between them attempting to drive Dean insane.

“You just what?” He finally broke down, hating that he couldn’t figure out where Sam was going with the conversation.

Sam shimmied and rocked himself until he was rolled over and the two of them were laying face to face. “It’s just that I know that you have trouble believing that I’ll be there at the end of this all.”

Dean closed his eyes and when he opened them, he directed them at the hickey he’d at some point sucked into Sam’s shoulder. How was it that the man could see so clearly through him? Either Dean’s ability to bury his innermost thoughts was slipping or they had such a strong connection that Sam could read him where no one else had ever had the ability. Either way it was worrisome.

“The only thing I can do is actually do it. Be there. Proof through action.”

“Uhhuh… And me opening a garage with Bobby is…what?”
“My idea of holding on to you so you can’t run away? I guess I just want to believe that you’ll still want me after all of this too.”

The idea was almost laughable. That Dean wouldn’t want Sam? Impossible.

“Sammy, you know how some people just get inside you?”

When Sam made no sound, Dean looked at his face to see his eyes wide and his lips drawn in. A sure sign he was trying to keep his mouth shut. “What?”

Sam shook his head. “Sorry, the first response that popped in my head was ‘like I was inside you last night.’ But I know that’s not what you were going for and it was totally a fifteen-year-old-boy response so I’ll just keep my mouth shut. Go on.”

Dean guffawed. “Sammy that’s the first time I’ve heard you ramble.”

He arched his eyebrows a little self-consciously. “How was it?”

“Cute,” Dean admitted with a soft smile for his lover. “But seriously…Sam you’re under my skin. Like no one ever has been. Not sure I could walk away if I wanted to.” He pushed a lock of hair off of Sam’s face and rubbed his thumb along the shell of his ear. “Even if I knew it would save me a whoooooole lot of heartache.”

Sam leaned into his soft touch but kept his eyes on Dean’s face so as not to miss a movement. “So…our problem becomes that you’re a hunter. A hunter who breaks the law on a near constant basis, who never stays in one place for more than a few weeks, who puts his life in danger every time he takes a case…”

“And you’re an agent, who does every single one of those things. Only you do it on the up-and-up.” Dean sniffed. “We’re like a twisted version of spy versus spy.”

Sam snickered at this and leaned forward to place a lingering kiss on Dean’s forehead. “We’ll figure it out. If you mean it and you still want me after everything is said and done… We’ll work something out.”

And Dean believed him as much as he was able to. Of course with his track record, his recent run of bad luck and the fact that Sam had still yet to address the whole ‘I have a girlfriend’ issue… he decided not to voice to Sam that he didn’t plan on holding his breath.

“So tell me,” he began, hoping to move beyond the topic of post-prison life and onto much more agreeable subjects. “Last night…”

“What about it?” Sam obviously knew the direction he was going in because his hand came down to grip Dean’s hip, pulling him forward until their midsections collided. Dean threw a leg over Sam’s thighs, aligning them just so.

“That was quite a show, Sammy.”

“Show?”

“Hmm… The way you claimed my ass for half the unit to see?” Dean shivered at the thought. The idea might have pissed him off if it wasn’t making is dick so ridiculously hard.

To begin with, Dean wasn’t typically one to bottom and he sure as hell didn’t like being made to feel like an object. He’d made it a point, for a lot of years, to never get tied down to people so
possessiveness hadn’t really been an issue for a long time either. But with Sam… Well, he would have worn a collar and crawled around on all fours if it meant Sam gave him that look.

Even now his stomach tightened and his pleasantly sore ass clenched at the memory of it.

“I-I… I didn’t…”

“Sammy,” he put a finger over Sam’s lips, halting the flow of speech. Instead of saying anything more, he pressed his groin forward so that Sam could feel just how okay he was with what had happened.

“I really didn’t mean to do that…specifically. It just sort of happened,” he said, speaking against Dean’s finger.

“I believe you. But if it should ever just sort of happen again… I just wanted you to know that I would be okay. With that.”

Sam gave him a bemused look and rolled over until he was on top but still trapped between Dean’s thighs. “I’ll keep that in mind,” he whispered, his voice dropping an octave. “But next time…let’s work on the romantic side of things. I want to treat you right. Want to stretch you out over silk sheets with candlelight and the whole nine yards.”

Dean scoffed. “Dude. I’m a guy. As long as you bring your nine inches, you can keep the nine yards.”

The blush – there was no other word for the fire engine red that hit Sam’s cheeks – that this statement garnered was nothing short of adorable.

Sam ground himself down into Dean. “Whatever, dude. Don’t act like you don’t want to be treated like a lady.”

Dean rolled his eyes yet couldn’t help but picture the scene.

There were soft wavering flames of candles scattered around the edge of a king-sized bed. He was laying prone in the center intently watching as Sam crawled slowly up his body, kissing every single inch of him leisurely. He was in no rush whatsoever. Sam’s eyes watched his face for reaction as he moved his tongue and lips over Dean’s skin. Dean’s hands fisted in the softest material he’d ever felt as Sam worked him into a frenzy only to back off and begin again. Hours and hours of sweet focused yet unhurried attention…

Dean felt himself begin to perspire. Just a little. “Okay. So…maybe silk sheets would be…acceptable.” He batted his eyelashes prettily.

His lover was trying not to smile too hard but Dean knew that Sam was onto him.

In order to compensate for the concession, Dean dropped his voice to an uber-manly growl. “Of course, I still need to introduce you to the fine art of bottoming. I feel it’s my civic duty, in fact, to show you the…” He cleared his throat. “ins-and-outs of the whole process.”

“Mmm… so you’re offering to be my own personal guide to takin’ it up the ass? How magnanimous of you.” Sam rolled his eyes but it softened the action with an insuppressible grin.

“You know, sarcasm is the lowest form of whit.”

“I do know that. It just seemed like a good time for my whit to slum it.” He shot right back,
chuckling even as he pecked and pulled at Dean’s lips with his own. When he raised back up, the smile slowly faded and morphed into something more sheepish and self-conscious. Dean gave him questioning look. “I… I just never thought I would… Well, you know. It’s just that I’ve always…”

It dawned on Dean what he was talking about.

“Been the fucker and not the fuckee?”

“Eloquent, as always,” Sam snorted. “And yes. But with you, I think I want to try. I think for you… no, with you, I would do just about anything.”

Bodies perfectly still save for the movement of their breath, Dean and Sam stared at one another hard, letting the words settle over them and recognizing them as truth.

Dean was the first to break, driving himself up and latching his lips firmly onto Sam’s. It was a kiss of promise and a kiss of gratitude. A kiss for yesterday and a kiss for tomorrow. And tomorrow’s tomorrow. And as many days as they could get.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“Stop staring.”

Veronica ignored Dean and continued to be unable (or unwilling) to remove her eyes from Sam, whom she had made it a point to sit directly across from during breakfast.

Sam so far had tried not to meet her eyes too often. She gave the impression that she could see through the table as well as Sam’s clothing and the smile on her face said she liked what she saw. It was making him fairly uncomfortable.

“What the hell?” Dean sniffed a laugh. He seeming thoroughly entertained but slightly exasperated by the queen’s newest fixation. “You act like you’ve never seen the man before. Or sex. I know you’ve seen sex before.”

Dean rolled his eyes. It seemed that Veronica had been one of their spectators the night before, much to Sam’s chagrin.

“He’s just… I mean… I just didn’t realize he would be so…” She raised her hands, spreading them out inch by inch until she clenched her fingers into a fist and drew one to her mouth, gnawing on a knuckle to keep form bursting.

For Sam’s part, his face had been on fire since she’d sat down at the table and announced (quite loudly) that he was one ‘magnificent sexy beast’.

Even Brian’s arrival at the table hadn’t been enough to shake her focus, not that he’d been much of a distraction to anyone. He’d come in silently, sat several seats down and besides a few irritable brooding looks sent their way he’d not bothered to interact with them at all.

“I for one am very happy we did not have front row seats to that show. No offense,” Deluca said, nodding to Sam.

“Hear, hear!” Chimed in Rebadow.

“Although we still got the books-on-tape version.” Deluca went on, patting his podmate on the shoulder as the other man hung his head.
“Shit! Sorry, man. Forgot you could hear...” Dean tried to placate them but when Sam looked his way Dean winked at him and gave him a bright smile that said he wasn’t bothered in the least.

The smile warmed his insides but Sam had never been so happy for a meal to be over as he had that one.

The men all filed out of the cafeteria hall and into the yard and Sam followed behind Dean as his lover fisted Brain’s collar and pulled him into one of the more secluded corners.

“What the hell, De?” the black-haired man hissed, brushing at the wrinkles in his jumpsuit once Dean had let go.

Sam had to remind himself once again that if they needed help, Brian was going to be their best option. Provided he agreed to help. He was convinced that Brian would act like a spurned lover and refuse to assist out of spite. Dean believed he was a hunter first and would be more concerned with gankin’ the bitch, as Dean put it. They were about to find out which prediction was correct.

“We’ve got a problem, Brian.”

“Yes? Look you can rest easy. I have no plans to bother you or you’re pet giant so-,”

“Brian, shut up! We have a...problem.” Dean drew a circle in the air between them and mimed cutting his own throat.

“A spir-,” he looked around them quickly to make sure they were far enough out of earshot from the surrounding rabble. “What? Here? How do you know?”

“Lockdown last night? Someone died. Makes eight someone’s who have died in the past three months.”

“What kind of intel are we workin’ with?”

“Two witnesses. One noted the presence of sulfur. The other actually witnessed one of the deaths and he recalled seeing a female spirit.”

“Wait. You said sulfur. Are we talking ghosties or demons here?”

“That would be the million dollar question.” Dean sighed and ran his hand over his jaw. “Bobby’s been working on it. Tried to talk to him last night but the damn thing cut the phones before he could tell me what it was.”

Brian’s eyes widened and a look of worry crossed his face before he could school his features back to a cool nonchalance. “D-Did Bobby say anything? Something that might give you a clue?”

“Just... He was looking at Grecian texts?” Dean threw up his hands in a helpless gesture. “Unless you’ve been reading up on your Greek history lately, we have nothing.”

“On the plus side, Bobby is supposed to be coming to see Dean this morning,” Sam reminded him, wanting to insert himself somewhere into the conversation.

“Okay, Beanstalk. Why are you here?” Brian turned his full attention to Sam.

“I’m here to help.”

“Who are you, man? Are you..?” he gave a dismissive wave as if he wasn’t sure why he was bothering to ask Sam at all and turned back to Dean. “Is he even a hunter?”
“As far as I’m concerned he sure the fuck is.”

“Has he ever actually hunted anything before?”

“Hey, asshole…I’m right here. Try speaking directly to me,” Sam spat at Brian angrily.

“Okay,” Brian’s voice turned sugary sweet and the tone was one that people typically only used on small dogs that wore hair accessories and tiny t-shirts. “Have you ever hunted anything before? Anything at all? Know what to do when a ghost comes at you? Gonna have our backs if this is a demon and we end up flying around the room like our asses are strapped to cables?” His voice returned to normal as he finished with a rather bitchy, “You gonna save us from becoming creature chow?”

Sam wanted to blast the man so hard. He wanted to tell him just how many metaphorical monsters he’d taken down. Hardened criminals. Wanted to tell Brian to shove his attitude and walk away. They didn’t need his help.

But he stayed quiet because when it came down to it, Brian wasn’t wrong.

“Why don’t you back off?” Dean asked, his voice sharp and steely like the blade of a knife.

“You know new hunters only get in the way. A demon is no way to get your feet wet, Dean.”

“Look, Bobby’s due any minute. We don’t even know for sure what this thing is. When we find that out, we can get a game plan together. And you may have a few years on me, Tate, but I’m handling this case, you’re backup and I don’t give a damn if Sam just holds the fucking flashlight. If he wants the opportunity to hunt, he hunts!”

During the tirade, Dean had backed Brian slowly up against the chain-link fence until his ex looked like a bug trapped in an enormous spider’s web.


It was all Sam could do to keep himself from pressing in behind Dean and making another public spectacle of them. Apparently, he had a thing for assertiveness. He wondered how he’d never noticed it before.

It occurred to Sam that Dean had just put himself very much on the line for him. He’d never thought that he might in fact be a hindrance to the hunters. There was the possibility that his lack of experience could put them in danger. Yet he couldn’t find it in himself to back out. Dean believed he could do the job and the last thing he wanted to do was let the man he loved down.

Wait…

What?

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

It all happened so quickly. Looking back Dean was a little awed by how quickly things could be turned upside down. It wasn’t a new concept to him, of course. But on this particular day he could almost see a tangible line splitting time in half. One moment everything was fine and the next moment…
It started in the yard. With Brian on board to back him and Sam up, they started talking strategy. Or as much strategy as one could possibly talk when the thing you were up against was a complete and utter mystery.

“Do you remember that Lernaean Hydra?”

“No,” Dean said, cutting his eyes to his ex. “And neither do you.” He wanted to tell him to sit there and look pretty but he was getting the feeling that they really would need his help. “That was Viktor. Vodka-infused Viktor as I recall. And that story is totally sketchy. He said it was at night in a fresh-water pond. I’m more willing to believe the jerk was drunk and hallucinating and ran his ass into a tree branch.”

“Besides, we’re not really near any water,” Sam pointed out.

Brian pointedly ignored Sam and shook his head at Dean. “I’m not saying that’s what it is. I’m saying maybe we need to think about this whole…Greek thing. Bobby is thorough and I don’t see him mentioning that unless it was important.”

“Yeah but we have no idea what that has to do with any of it. The thing is a ghost or it’s a demon. Until I talk to Bobby, that’s all we have for sure. So how about we focus on that?”

“Okay. So salt.”

Dean looked from Brian to Sam and explained, “Salt is pure. It’ll scatter spirits at least for a little while.”

Brian huffed and muttered. “Welcome to Hunting 101.”

Dean went on as if he hadn’t made a sound. “Wounds demons but not enough to kill ‘em. And neither can cross an unbroken line of it. Pretty damn useful stuff. Gotta get our hands on some.”

“How much? I can probably swing salt,” Sam offered.

“Yeah? How you gonna manage that, Goliath?” Brian smirked. “Forget it. I start working in the cafeteria this afternoon. I’m sure I’ll have access to the pantry. I’ll grab as much as I can.”

Dean had to admit Brian was right. He would have direct access. If Sam were to secure it, that would mean bringing in another person. “Okay. Brian gets the salt. Sam, any ideas as to how we can get iron?”

“Besides the fact that half the prison is made of the stuff? I’ll think about it.”

“Okay. If Bobby’s figured out the what then we’ll know better the how. Until then, we keep our eyes and ears open.”

He looked around, taking note of several groups scattered throughout the yard, heads together chatting. He had a hunch that someone there knew details about the death the night before. With the gossip network in that place, he was surprised he hadn’t already gotten the full report. “Why don’t we spread out and see what we can find out about the latest murder?”

They had all agreed and went in different directions looking for information.

Dean, even though he had seen her only twenty minutes before, b-lined directly for Veronica. She was small and had a tendency to insert herself in just the right places to overhear things most people wouldn’t be able to. She also was fairly well known and viewed as a relative non-threat to
the guys there. Twenty minutes, he figured, was more than enough time for her to get the scoop.

Veronica was perched on a concrete picnic table, arms back behind her and legs kicked out on the bench, her delicate ankles crossed casually. To anyone looking, it seemed like she was simply sunning herself. At first, that was what Dean thought she was doing. As he closed the distance between them, however, he noticed that she was placed strategically a few from two guys from Unit B. Though her eyes were closed, he could see tiny lines on her face that indicated she was concentrating hard on something.

She was eavesdropping.

“Hey, fancy pants,” he joked. Today she was wearing denim cutoffs that had been, something she called, *Bedazzled* with all kinds of sparkly shit and a white button down shirt tied above her belly button. Her hair was usually twisted close to her head but thanks to a few extra hours of lockdown, today it had been meticulously curled and ringlets cascaded down onto the table behind her. The look was her tribute to the great Miss Dolly Parton, or so she had explained at breakfast.

When she hadn’t been ogling Sam, of course.

Veronica blinked her eyes open and turned her face away from the sun to stare at him. “What’s up, lust of my life?”

“Oh. Now I’m the lust of your life? Thought that was Wesson.” He made a show of pouting, knowing it would amuse her. “Yesterday it was Tate.”

“Ah…yes darling but my lust for them is fleeting. *Our* lust is strong and true.”

“I don’t know. Sam I understand, but throwing me over for the new guy was…harsh.”

She shook her head and giggled. “Winchester, you’re nuts. You know you’re my one and only.” She followed this up by winking at one of the burly men passing by at that same second. The guy nodded to her in confirmation of something that Dean was pretty sure, (a) was an agreement to hook up later and (b) he didn’t want to know about. His bet would be the guy was one of Veronica’s Johns. He might have wondered how they paid her but he figured as long as she wasn’t being forced to do it by way of violence or some other control, then he would let it be.

She turned back to him and this time gave him a genuine smile. “So what can I do for you? I know you can’t just be here to see little old me.”

He went for no bullshit. She would be able to spot a lie from a mile away. “The murder yesterday. I need details.”

Her eyes widened infinitesimally and her head jerked back on her neck. “Should I ask why? You and Wesson…” She huffed like she was a little disgusted. “Honey, you know I’m not gonna get up in your business but whatever you two are up to, I just hope you don’t get hurt.”

“Why would I get hurt?”

Her bright pink lips pulled down at the corners and he could see a genuine concern beyond the mask of cosmetics. “Smith. He’s the one that bit the dust last night.”

Dean’s mind whirled at the information. “He was…in the hospital ward yesterday…”

She nodded, confirming. “They hadn’t even gotten around to releasing him, as I heard it. He slipped out and then when they realized he wasn’t there and went to look for him they found him
just outside of the door flat on his face.”

Smith was dead.

What did it mean? Did it mean anything?

“Why did he sneak out? What was he doing?”

Veronica lifted a hand and laid it over her partially exposed flat chest. “Do you want my opinion or do you want the story I heard?”

“Well I heard he was tryin’ to go after the dude that he tussled with in the hospital yesterday. The guy was let out of med ward like an hour before Smith gave them the slip.”

“Okay. That’s what you heard. Now what do you think?”

She shifted her eyes and inched closer to him at the same time motioning for him to lean in. “I think he was coming after you, sweetie.”

“Why? Because I kicked his ass?”

“Yeah exactly because you kicked his ass. Hell yeah. Smith was up the ranks of the Aryan brotherhood. He couldn’t have you showing him up in front of his boys. Word had already spread ‘bout how you laid him up in the hospital. I heard that’s what the fight yesterday was about too. Some bitch called him out on being made to eat boot and he lost his shit.”

Dean rubbed at his forehead with the tips of his fingers. He tried to collect his thoughts as best he could with the drumming ache building behind his eyes.

“Okay. Smith was coming after me.”

“Just my opinion,” she reminded him quickly.

“So…if he was killed…” Dean’s eyes went wide. “They’re gonna think I did it?”

“The people that run the place don’t. But… you may want to watch your back where his flock is concerned. They aren’t really the type to have conversations with you before they shank you. It’s more stab-stab-stab and if they find out later that they were wrong it’s like ‘oops! oh well’.”

“I gotta…need to find Sam.”

He went to turn away and start searching for his lover but she grabbed hold of his sleeve, preventing him from going far. “Don’t get mad when I say this. I think you two are real hot together. But I want you to stay alive. You’re special, Winchester. Wesson… no matter how much I work to kill rumors you know those things have a life of their own. People are still talking. It’s getting around.” She moved her fingers down and squeezed his forearm. “He’s not safe to be around.”

Right now none of them were safe, but he didn’t bother stating the fact.

“Thanks but I’ll take my chances.”

With that being said, he pulled out of her grip and scanned the yard for Sam.
After a few minutes of staring into a field of bright orange in a frustrating ‘Where’s Waldo’ scenario, Dean finally spotted him. He was speaking to an portly man with a snowy white beard near one of the doors that lead back into the cafeteria. Dean headed in that direction.

At this point time began to slow to a crawl. Each second unfurled and played out before Dean like a grotesque slow-motion tragedy.

He neared Sam and his lover’s eyes moved automatically to him as if he had sensed Dean’s eyes upon him. He nodded at whatever the man was saying to him but his eyes followed Dean’s progression across the yard.

A movement out of the corner of his eye struck Dean as odd. Maybe it was a little too jerky. Maybe it was the trajectory of the movement towards Sam. Either way, something told Dean to look. To be on guard.

A young man, maybe nineteen or twenty, with a shock of bright red hair was eyeing Sam openly and moving steadily in his direction. His posture was stiff, one arm tucked in awkwardly at his side. Dean didn’t like the look of the kid one bit. He picked up his pace but he was much farther away than was comforting.

Sam was still completely unaware. His gaze had been briefly drawn back at the older man beside him and he didn’t see the boy approaching but Dean did. It became clearer with each second that this was all wrong.

Conversation at a close, Sam turned back his way and took a step towards Dean.

Apparently the look on Dean’s face, a sure mix of various levels of sheer terror, had him stopping in his tracks. The smile he’d had on his face for Dean slipped away quickly. Even with events in motion, Dean’s brain felt the need to mourn the loss of that smile.

Dean turned his eyes back to the boy and saw something flash in the hand held awkwardly against his side.

His heart lurched and in the blink of an eye he took off at a sprint.

“NO!” he yelled, his feet eating up the distance between them.

The guy narrowed his eyes at Dean’s loud cry and picked up speed as well, knowing the window was closing to get his job done.

By the time Sam registered what was happening, the boy was upon him and Dean inserted himself between Sam and the redhead just in time to feel a sharp, cold sting in his side.

“Dean!” he heard Sam exclaim. The sound seemed muffled.

He fell to the ground upon impact and the guy scrambled off of him. He took off fading easily into the gathering crowd. Dean turned his head. “Sammy,” he gasped. “You…you ‘kay?”

There was no response except for a hard jostling movement. Dean felt Sam being yanked unceremoniously from beneath him. “What are you…? No!” he heard Sam cry out.

Dean was still sprawled out on the patch of grass and he turned his head to see two officers holding tightly to Sam’s arms, pulling him away.

He reached a hand towards his lover’s retreating figure but he couldn’t seem to form words to
protest. He had to though. Had to make them understand that he needed Sam. Needed to know he was okay.

Sam kicked out from their hold and screamed at them to let him go. It was no use. The two men were shorter but stronger as a team. Sam screamed his name and the anguish Dean heard in his voice tore at his guts. The guards ignored his pleas and continued to pull him in the direction that was away. Away. Away from Dean. Away from everything happening.

Dean’s thoughts became foggier and foggier and he snorted thinking it would be funny if he where high.

Was he high? Was this a trip? Did Carrot Top shoot him up with something?

It hadn’t felt like a needle. Had felt like…

He winced but managed to slowly get his hand to the part of his side where he’d felt the sting.

Wet.

He pulled his hand up and spread his fingers wide in front of his face.

Red.

His last conscious thought as he lowered the blood slicked hand to his chest…

Damn.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

The guards all but threw him into the warden’s office not even five minutes after they had pulled him kicking and screaming from where Dean had lay bleeding.

He crumpled onto the ground when they left him alone in the room, his forehead falling onto the plush carpet. For a minute or two, he stayed there in that position, willing himself to pull it together.

He couldn’t afford to lose it.

By the time Warden Larson crossed the threshold, Sam was standing at his wide window once more taking deep steadying breaths.

“What the hell just happened? A man was stabbed! Your men did nothing – just pulled me away and shoved me in here.”

“Yes. A man was stabbed. Not two feet from you, a man was stabbed.” The warden crossed his arms and scowled at Sam. “Detective Randall requested that I have you watched more closely. Said you had fears that you’d been discovered. My men were operating under strict instructions to yank you immediately if anything were to go down.” His scowl began to resemble something closer to a sneer. “You’re welcome.”

He wouldn’t say thank you. Didn’t have it in him at that moment to carry on with niceties.
“W-Winchester?”

“The inmate that was stabbed?”

Sam nodded. The inmate that was stabbed while trying to save Sam.

“He’s been taken to the hospital ward. He’s not going to die, if that’s what you’re asking.”

There were no words for the relief Sam felt at that harshly spoken statement. He closed his eyes and repeated them over and over to himself.

_He’s not going to die. He’s not going to die. He’s not going to die._

“It’s essential that I see him,” he looked up at the man and attempted to maintain his usual air of authority that he’d naturally developed after several years of being the agent in charge. His words were steady even as his mind ran frantically. The need to see Dean with his own two eyes was sitting like a pit in his stomach.

“Detective Wesson, that will not be happening, as it has become _essential_ that you leave the premises.”

“What? Why?”

Larson glared and moved to stand right in Sam’s space. A lone stubby finger poked hard into his chest. “In case you haven’t heard, detective, I am currently under fire for yet another death in my prison. Your sick little playtime is over. From what I understand after I finished screaming at your director… I think you’re done with this case. Which means my hospitality and patience are also at an end.”

“But… wait, you can’t-,”

“Guards!” Larson called and immediately the two correctional officers that had brought him there filed into the room. “This man has served his time here. Please take him to the loading dock. There should be a car showing up shortly to collect him.”

The guards exchanged looks but nodded at the warden, moving to take Sam’s arms once more.

“Warden, wait! There are things you don’t know. We are about to –,”

“Mister Wesson,” He snapped. “I think I’ve given you enough of my time. Perhaps you can pass your theories on to the competent agents that will replace you. Good day.” He dismissed Sam with a curt nod and flick of his wrist.

The guards took that as their cue and marched Sam out of the office.

By the time they made it to the loading dock which was located in the very rear of the compound, a large black SUV with heavily tinted windows was sitting there waiting.

Sam was released and jumped down from the dock as the back door swung open for him. He could already see Joe Randall sitting in the back seat looking at him with concern. His eyes were scanning for anything that might be wrong and widened when he Sam neared and he got a look at the small splatters of blood on his uniform.

“Not mine,” he reassured, sliding onto the bench seat beside him.

“That’s a relief.” Joe nodded to the driver and the SUV’s engine revved as they shot forward.
“Was gonna pull you out last night. I was there investigating the new crime scene until nearly midnight.”

“What stopped you?”

Joe’s face reddened and he rubbed at the back of his neck as he very averted his eyes and gave a nervous laugh. “Um… well when… you seemed to be busy…”

Sam realized what that meant. Half the prison must have seen him and Dean. He frowned and shook his head. He wasn’t going to be embarrassed about it. There was nothing wrong with what they’d done. There couldn’t be.

There were also bigger fish to fry.

“Joe, we can’t be kicked off this case. The warden said-,”

“Yeah. About that. We were pulled this morning. When Larson got in and started going over the reports… He found out you were bangin’ your roomie and blew a frickin’ gasket, Wesson.”

“Christ!” His yell filled the interior of the vehicle and he pounded a fist hard against the seat. “FUCK!” he screamed as he realized he’d hit it with the bandaged hand. The pain was lesser and in a rage he began tearing at the gauze, unwinding it roughly and ripping it away. He took the splint that had held his finger in place for several days now and crushed it in his fist before letting it drop to the floorboard.

“Feel better?”

Sam looked at his partner as if he had three heads. “No.”

“Well look at it this way, it’s not a failure, it’s an opportunity to learn and get shit right on the next case. Right?”

It was bullshit. Joe knew it. He knew it. Pretty, pretty bullshit.

Sam turned to look out of the back window, the prison shrinking as they moved farther and farther away.

Somewhere within those walls, Dean was getting patched up. But Sam wasn’t foolish enough to think any of this was over. Dean was in danger from whoever had tried to attack him and there was still some sort of monster on the loose.

If he were smart, he would turn away. Forget the hunter. Forget the monster. Forget everything and go back to Jess. Wake up each morning for a run and a coffee. Go back to cases that made sense. If he were smart…he would choose normal.

Apparently he no longer did…smart. Or normal.

“Joe, we have to talk.”

“About what?”

“I’m not leaving.”

Joe smiled but it was in confusion. “What do you mean? We have to. Pretty much persona non grata in case you didn’t get the memo.”
“I know what’s killing those men and I’m not going to walk away now. Not when I can help stop it.”

“Wesson, if you know who is killing those men, why haven’t you reported it?”

Sam looked out the back once more but he could no longer see the penitentiary. There was only the two-lane blacktop spreading out behind them now.

“Joe, my friend... We have to talk.”
Inside Out

Chapter Summary

With Dean down and Sam out, what's the next move?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The hotel was like something from an old-school horror movie. Alfred Hitchcock would have fallen all over himself to capture the place on film.

The style might have been described as retro, a throwback to 50s architecture and style, had it ever actually been renovated and made to look that way on purpose. However, Sam was fairly sure he was looking at the original bricks and mortar that had been laid all those years ago when the place was considered modern, clean and inviting.

As it stood now, it was dingy and faded and on the brink of crumbling into nothing more than a pile of rubble. Even the light bulbs that were attached to the perimeter of the STARLIGHT MOTEL sign were blinking and unsure if they should still bother to burn.

Though there were parking spots for cars in front of the rooms, it didn’t really give anything away. There were two plain-Jane cars in the lot and one sketchy rusted out van. None of them really screamed ‘I’m a bad-ass hunter.’

Luckily Sam wasn’t relying on context clues to get him where he needed to be.

The device in his hand began beeping with a more steady frequency as he moved forward. Not far now.

The motel was set up in a single-level “u”-shape. He passed the entire left bank of rooms and followed the wall to the group of doors set farthest from the road.

The device held a steady red light and Sam stopped. He was between two units. 2D and 2E. He frowned and took a small step away glancing back and forth between them. The last thing he wanted was to bang on the wrong one and give the other man the chance to skip out the back way or something.

He moved so that his back was pressed up against the wall and looked at the angles. From one room, you had a view of the entire motel court, save the corners. The other room was lodged in the corner against the line of rooms to the right. There was no way to approach it directly without being seen from the room itself.

That was the one.

Taking a deep breath, Sam raised a fist and knocked far more casually than he felt on the washed out green door.

After a moment, the door was cracked open a few inches and the bearded face of a middle-aged man peered through the miniscule opening.
“Whaddaya want?” The man growled.

Sam got the distinct feeling that he had a gun pointed directly at him and the wrong answer could give him a lot more than just a door in the face. But Dean trusted this man and Sam trusted Dean.

“My name is Sam Wesson. I’m a friend of Dean’s. I was in prison with him.”

“And?”

Jeez, the guy wasn’t going to make things easy.

“He and I were working on a case. Inside. He said you could help.”

The man looked at him with a whole new level of interest. “You a hunter?”

He’d have to tread lightly. “I am a hunter, of sorts. Dean gave me some of the basics. Salt, holy water, Latin… He was teaching me what to do to help with what was going down. With the thing killing prisoners.” Sam put his hands up in front of him to show the other man that he meant no harm. “I also know you were supposed to be there today. See him. They turned you away, didn’t they? I can tell you why.”

After a few rather long seconds of the words hanging in the air between them, Sam heard the telltale metallic click of a gun being un-cocked.

The knowledge did not ease his tension.

Eventually the man’s face disappeared and the door crept open far enough that Sam took it as an indication that he should enter.

“So…Sam Wesson,” Bobby began as Sam crept in cautiously behind him. “I have questions. I’m gonna need you to answer them real quick and real honest, if you know what’s good for you.” He rubbed his hand over his scruffy brown beard and then put out the hand to imply that Sam should sit.

Every ounce of Sam’s training told him not to do that. It put him at a distinct disadvantage with the other man. But the man in front of him wasn’t the bad guy. He wasn’t a suspect. In this case, Sam knew he needed to give trust in order to get it in return.

He perched on the end of the bed and looked back up at the man expectantly.

“You know Dean. You found me. Gonna take a leap and assume he told you who I was?”

Sam nodded in affirmation. “You’re his ‘uncle’ Bobby.”

The words seemed to strike a cord in the older man because Sam caught the flash of teeth as the other man smiled beneath his cover of facial hair. The flash was gone quickly and his scowl slid smoothly back into place as if it had never left his face.

“What happened today? Why did they refuse to let me see him?” As an afterthought and almost as if the question was hard for him to even ponder, Bobby sputtered, “Is…he okay?”

Sam bit the inside of his cheek. The question was one that kept cycling through his brain as well, distracting and eating at him. That was the only excuse he had for answering as he did. “The warden told me that he was going to live.”

The stormy look that his choice of words drew from the man was not one he ever wanted to
provoke again. “WHAT?! What the hell happened, boy? You tell me what happened to Dean Winchester or I will kick your sorry ass so hard you won’t-”

“He got stabbed!” Sam’s words were rushed and harsh as he felt his own brand of pain, recalling what had taken place only hours before. “Okay? He got stabbed saving me.”

“Saving...?” Bobby let out a weary sigh. “Yeah. That sure sounds like him, alright.” The words were laced with affection even though they were just as tainted with sadness. “So who are you, exactly?”

“We shared a cell.”

“So what? Bussom buddies?”

“Lovers.” Sam took a big risk saying the words aloud. He had no clue if Dean was ‘out’ to Bobby but the way he talked about him, like a real father figure, Sam just couldn’t imagine that the man in front of him didn’t know everything there was to know about Dean.

Bobby snorted loudly. “That cliché little shit. Trust him to find a boyfriend in the big house.”

Sam took umbrage to the fact that his tone seemed to be dismissing it as a relationship borne of convenience. “Mr. Singer, I don’t know-,”

“Bobby,” he interjected.

“Fine. Bobby. I don’t know what you think my relationship was with Dean, but I assure you that I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t care a great deal about him.”

He hummed. “Good point. And here’s another good point. How are you here exactly?”

Bobby eyed him suspiciously once more.

Sam felt like he’d taken three steps forward and two steps back. He ran his fingers through his hair and tried to come up with a plausible explanation for that one. Before his eyes could find Bobby’s once more, the man grabbed his arm with one hand and ran a blade over Sam’s palm with the other.

“Shit!” Sam swore, staring at the blood welling up in the cut. He shook his head. “What the hell was that for?”

“Not a shifter,” he muttered to himself. Bobby grabbed a bottle of water from the small table next to the bed. “Sorry. Here let me clean that off.” He sloshed water over the hand and they both watched as the line of crimson was momentarily washed away. “Yer nothin’ too damned if you can stand up to holy water.”

“Wait, what? That was holy water?” Sam was completely confused. “What just happened?”

Suddenly there was an excruciating pain as the man poured a white substance over his hand. Sam gritted his teeth and hissed at the sharp sting.

“Salt hurt?” Bobby stared particularly hard at his eyes. “Christo!”

“Of course the salt hurt! You just poured it in a fresh wound! Jesus!”

Bobby released his hand. “Alright kid. You’re clean,” He stood back and readjusted the ball cap on
his head.

“Of course I am,” Sam ground out.

Bobby shrugged not looking the least bit apologetic. “How about you tell me how you tracked me down. And while you’re at it, why don’t you tell me why your dressed up like you just came from Sunday service.” He waved his hand in Sam’s direction, indicating his clothing.

Sam looked down at the suit. It had been the only piece of clothing he’d come with. His wardrobe for the case had been a gaudy orange jumpsuit. His standard blue suit had been hanging in the closet of Joe’s hotel room since they got there. He’d left off the tie though.

He was good at improvisation. He had to be. He could easily tell the man that these had been the clothes he’d worn to court. Before he was incarcerated. He just wasn’t sure that wouldn’t make things worse.

“I…just…” he looked up at Bobby and swallowed hard. Give trust to get trust. He was about to push that theory to the limits. “Truth is, I’m FBI.”

“Excuse me? I’m sorry, I think I have some stupid in my ear. Did you really just come in here and tell me you’re FBI?”

“Yes. And I found you with this,” he pulled the tracker from his pocket and presented it in the palm of the hand that hadn’t been recently sliced open. “Dean told me about you so I knew your name. Checked the database. You have an ass-load of aliases listed, by the way. Probably the longest list I’ve ever seen. Took a few minutes but I finally cross-referenced those to an off-brand cell phone account where the names were reversed and the bill-to was a P.O. box within a fifty mile radius of Sioux Falls, where I knew to look because Dean mentioned you owned Singer Salvage and there is only one of those owned by a Robert Singer within the continental U.S.”

Bobby stared slack-jawed at him for a moment. “Well that’s… frightening,” he deadpanned.

“I input the phone signal into this little tracker and it got me to within ten feet of the phone itself.”

Sam indicated the phone that was resting on top of the small box television set. Bobby turned and stared at the trusty old flip-phone as if it had purposefully betrayed him.

“Damn.”

Sam stood slowly so as not to spook the older man. “Bobby, I will tell you anything and everything I know. I just…need your help in return.”

“Help with what?”

This gave Sam pause. To him it seemed obvious. “I want to go after whatever this thing is in the prison. It killed again last night. We have to stop it before if does it again.”

“And why should I help you? Why should you be involved at all? You obviously know this thing ain’t your garden variety criminal.”

“No. But I wasn’t lying when I said I care about Dean. I can’t leave him there to handle this thing alone.”

“Not alone. He said his old huntin’ partner was in there.”
He wasn’t in front of a mirror but Sam was fairly certain that the expression on his face was one of utter disgust and loathing.

Bobby chuckled at him. “Yeah. I don’t like him either. Damn, pretty boy.” He walked to the small circular table on the far side of the room and proceeded to pour amber liquid from a bottle, whose label was hidden by a paper bag, into two cheap clear plastic cups. He turned back and thrust one towards Sam.

There was nothing to do but accept the offering.

“Never liked that guy. Oh, don’t get me wrong. He’s a phenomenal hunter. Can spot a demon at a hundred paces. But he’s a cocky sonovabitch if ever I saw one. Real big fan of himself.”

“I got the feeling.” Sam sniffed and lifted the cup to his mouth, not really drinking so much as just letting the liquid hit his lips so that he gave the illusion of drinking. The last thing he needed was to offend this man or get drunk off rotgut. Sam was sure that through Bobby was the best way in to help Dean.

“So you’re really a Fed? And Dean knows this?”

Sam nodded. “Dean knows.”

“Boy don’t have a lot of love for the law. How many bricks did he shit?”

Sam couldn’t help but chuckle at the question. “Let’s just say not quite as many as I did when he told me what he is.”

Bobby looked thoughtfully at Sam until he began to feel like he was under a microscope. He took another half-hearted sip from the cup so as not to fidget or look overly nervous. Finally the older man asked, “You sure you want in on this? Because to do this we’re gonna break… at least fifty laws.”

The question was a good one but one he had an answer to. Sam didn’t even hesitate. “Sir, I became an agent to help people. That’s what this is. Helping people. And sometimes…doing things by the book isn’t the answer.”

“I couldn’t agree more,” a new voice chimed in.

Bobby and Sam looked in the direction of the door, both of them obviously startled by the sudden unexpected appearance of a third person in the room. Bobby turned to look back to Sam. “Friend of yours?”

Sam shook his head, his eyes never leaving the woman framed in the doorway.

She was a lovely woman. Her hair was cropped short and was shockingly white. Not the type of white that came from a bottle of bleach but a natural gray that must have been premature as she couldn’t have been older than forty-five. Her face was heart-shaped and unlined for the most part except for a few superficial laugh lines. The no-nonsense black pantsuit she donned looked rather formal but she toned it down with an easy friendly smile.

“No offense, ma’am but just who the hell are you?”

“No offense taken, Mr. Singer.” The woman said cordially with a deep smoky Southern drawl, ignoring the fact that Bobby looked thoroughly thrown that she knew his name. “I feel that one should always know with whom they are speakin’. Usually makes quite a bit of difference. My
name is Suzanne McKay.”

Hearing the name, Sam found that he could do little more than gasp and stare in utter shock.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean’s brain woke up several minutes before the rest of him.

He became quite aware of the fact that he was in the hospital ward before he was able to open his eyelids. He tried several times with no result.

For a while he just let it go and listened to the noises around him.

There was the constant drip-drip-drip of an IV bag very near his bed.

There was a shuffling sound that he could attribute to one of the long-term patients that had taken to wearing slippers. Dean had on more than one occasion wanted to tell him to pick up his damn feet, which he seemed to not be able to manage to save his life, but the quick little shuffle was actually somewhat soothing to him now in its familiarity.

A doctor was speaking in low tones across the room. He recognized Dr. Drake’s deep baritone but couldn’t place the voice of the person he was speaking with as they were whispering.

He must have been close to the front exam room as he heard the sound of ripping plastic and one of the rigid nurses telling the person on the table to stay still. Likely it was some inmate with a paper cut.

So many of the inmates came up with extremely lame excuses to come to the hospital ward. In his time on work detail there, he’d watched them fake illnesses and seen them come in with self-inflicted wounds. Dean had once even witnessed a prisoner come in after swallowing an entire bar of soap. There had been bubble-filled, Irish Spring scented vomit everywhere.

All he could figure was that it got them out of the mundane schedule they were all kept to. The lifers were the worst. Some of those guys had been in there for twenty or thirty years. A trip to the hospital ward was like a Friday night at the bar to break up the monotony of the week.

Dean tried once more to blink and finally he managed to crack one eyelid open. Then the other.

He groaned as the light suddenly flooding his vision overwhelmed him and brought on a definite ache within his eyeballs.

Closing his eyes again, he took stock of his own body. They had to have given him some sort of heavy pain relief because mostly he just felt numb.

Last thing he remembered…

Waking up with Sam and talking about the future. No…

Breakfast, yard…

Talking to Veronica…

Sam.
Someone was going after Sam!

His breathing became ragged and uneven. “Sam!” he gasped. Though he could barely feel his extremities, he attempted to sit up only to go from feeling barely anything to having a white-hot pain flash through his middle. “Ahh!” He cried out hoarsely.

“Mr. Winchester? Mr. Winchester,” a soft voice came from his left side. He laid back and closed his eyes tightly trying to work through the agony. “You can’t agitate your side. It’s been cleaned but we haven’t been able to stitch it just yet. The blade that they cut you with was tipped with metal shards. We had to open you up a little more to remove as much as we could and then you had a small amount of internal bleeding that had to be staunched. The suture kit is being brought over now.”

The woman’s voice was kind and her words confident. He vaguely recognized the voice and thought perhaps it was one of the nurses although he didn’t remember any of them sounding so nice.

His worry hadn’t been about his own wound however, so the words seemed moot.

“Sam,” he wheezed, flinging a hand over his eyes. He gritted his teeth trying to work down the bile that kept wanting to rise with his agitation.

“Sam? Wesson?” It didn’t seem to surprise her that he was asking but he wasn’t quite focused enough to notice that.

Dean nodded mutely.

“Are you asking if he’s alright?”

“Please,” he pushed out between clenched teeth. He had to know.

The woman’s hand was warm as it touched his bruised forearm and ran down to his hand, squeezing it gently. “He’s alright.”

Dean suddenly wanted to cry. As soon as the thought was there, a few relieved tears were already slowly creeping down from the corners of his eyes and into his ears and hairline.

“I understand we have you to thank for that, Mr. Winchester.”

He shook his head. “Where?”

She seemed to understand what he needed to know. “He’s been moved...to another facility. Right after the attack was made.”

They had taken him away. He recalled that now.

Every bit of tension went out of Dean’s body as he learned that Sam was out.

Out of harm’s way.

This was the last thought before he drifted back into a sweet medically induced oblivion.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##
When Dean finally found his way back to consciousness for a second time, it was with quite a
different experience.

His eyes shot open before his brain really had an opportunity to tell him where he was. He gasped
and pulled for breath long and hard as though he had just broken the surface after being underwater
for three minutes (which was roughly eighteen seconds longer than he could typically hold his
breath).

He looked around the large open room, recognizing that he was in the hospital ward.

Settled in at least that one fact, his eyes rested on the flat white ceiling above him. Slowly but now
with little effort, he wiggled his toes and fingers, flexed his ankles and bent his knees. Everything
seemed to be in working order.

A vague, hazy around the edges memory came to him. The voice from before. The woman had told
him that Sam was okay.

There had also been mention of internal bleeding.

He frowned and shifted, trying to catch a glimpse of his wound. No dice. He wore a hospital gown;
the type that covered the front but left your ass hanging out for the entire world to see. With
controlled movements, he pulled at the thin, stiff cotton until his side was exposed. All he could
see was a thick white bandage adhered to him with surgical tape. It was tinged with a streak of pink
where blood had absorbed into the other side of the gauze.

His brow knotted and he swore under his breath.

“C’mon princess. You’ve shrugged off way worse than that,” a familiar voice taunted. He looked
over to see Brian lounging casually in the bed right next to his. “I even remember you yourself
stitched up the gash you got from that bitch vamp stabbing you in the thigh that one time. Cut the
thread with a Bowie knife and asked where the nearest bar was with barely a flinch. Damn but it
was kinda hot.”

“Uh-huh.”

Dean should have been shocked to see Brian, but he wasn’t. It all seemed pretty par for the course.

“What are you doing in here, man? You get hit too?” Dean rubbed his hand over his jaw, feeling
the small growth of facial hair tickling the skin of his fingers.

He smacked his lips and swallowed, recognizing his growing thirst. He felt pretty dehydrated.

“Here,” Suddenly Brian was there beside him with a plastic cup of water. Dean nodded his head in
thanks as he took it and moved up onto an elbow on his uninjured side to take a sip. Instead of
moving back to the bed he had occupied before, Brian perched on the side of Dean’s. “No. I faked
being sick. All it took was me managing to toss my cookies all over my pod mate’s feet to
convince them to let me see the doc.”

“You made yourself puke on Richards?” Part of Dean wanted to laugh. After all, the little asswipe
had been the one to lure him into the shower room to be attacked. He might have been a victim
himself but he helped make Dean one as well and with that he’d lost a whole lot of Dean’s
sympathy.

Brian nodded. “You hear about Wesson yet?”
“What did you hear?” Dean was fairly sure his ex was about to gloat over the fact that Sam had been taken away but he wanted to hear it from him all the same. Wanted the reconfirmed truth to wash over him.

But there was no gloating.

“The guards, they took him away. I asked around, man. I swear. Tried to figure out where they took him, but nobody seems to know.”

Dean eyed Brian skeptically. The man actually seemed a little frustrated by the fact that he couldn’t find the information he was looking for.

“How do you care? I mean, aren’t you happy he’s gone?”

“Me? Sure as shit. You seem to like havin’ him around though so…”

“So you’re worried about my feelings?”

It was all a bit surprising and Dean wondered if he might be in some sort of Inception-like dream state.

“Dude.” Brian said simply, as if it should be evident. When Dean stared at him blankly, he expounded. “You took a hit for him. I saw it, De. That little redheaded Irish weasel was going straight for him. I fucking freaked when I realized what you were doing. And then you fell…” He pushed his fingers into his thick black hair, his eyes looking a little wild. “Anyway, I figured…you gotta care at least a little. To do something like that.”

It was nearly impossible to keep the smile off of his face. “I care,” he confirmed, feeling the weight of just how vast an understatement the words actually were.

“Plus, I kinda owe you.”

“For what?”

“The car? Cheating on you? Abandoning you? Getting you locked up?”

“You’re right. You owe me. A lot. We’re talking indentured servitude here.”

Brian smiled ruefully and began to say something more but hesitated.

“What?”

“I… Well, I want you to know that I cornered the kid that did it.”

“That one that stabbed me?”

Brian nodded. “Had a nice little chat.” At Dean’s dubious stare, he flashed the same charming smile that usually melted the panties and dropped all the drawers in a fifty foot radius and shrugged. “And maybe smacked him around. A little. Or a lot. Pretty skittish for someone that just hat the balls to try and ‘off’ a guy in the middle of a crowd. Told him I wouldn’t rat him out if he told me why he did it.”

He certainly had Dean’s attention now.

“I don’t want to…” Brian’s smile disappeared and his mouth turned down hard until he looked like he might be about to actually be sick.
“Brian, what is it? What did he tell you?”

“I don’t know if I believe it. But it…” Brian shook his head. He was obviously still having trouble believing what was said. “He said Wesson was a Narc.”

“They think he was here for a drug bust?”

“The kid is one of the Irish.”

Dean had heard rumors that the Irish, alongside the gangsters, controlled the majority of the drug trade within Bolt. “Somebody tipped them off that he was a fed.”

“That’s ridiculous!” Dean scoffed.

“I’m glad to hear you say that,” Brian said, looking more than a little relieved.

Dean didn’t correct Brian’s assumption that he was denying Sam’s profession. Sam was out of the line of fire now and he saw no reason to let his relationship with a federal agent become an issue that kept them from doing what needed to be done.

They still had their own job to do after all.

“Shit! Bobby!” Dean exclaimed. It had finally occurred to him that he must have missed visitation while he’d been knocked out. “What time is it?”

“Maybe four o’clock or so?”

“Okay. We have time.” If Brian went back now, he could just make the window for phone calls. “So Bobby is probably losing his shit on top of the fact that the man has a noggin full of knowledge that he needs to unload our way pronto. You’re gonna have to call him.”

Dean rattled off Bobby’s cell number and, not missing a beat, Brian stood and headed for the nearest C.O. “Hey I’m feeling way better. Doc gave me the all clear.”

The guard looked like he really didn’t give a shit if Brian was on his deathbed or doing cartwheels. He moved to the door and Brian gave a last nod back to Dean before heading out to Unit A.

Brian would call Bobby and then they would have more of an idea of what was happening. They would salt-n-burn the bitch. Preferably before someone else met their maker.

Alone again and feeling drained but still wide-awake, Dean lay there for a few minutes, letting his mind wander.

Unsurprisingly, his mind found it’s way to Sam.

Sam was pulled out of the prison. He was safe. But where was he?

Maybe he was in a hotel room, enjoying all the room service he could handle.

Or maybe after being locked up so long he would refuse to stay cooped up in some sterile room and choose to go out.

A nice medium-rare steak and a glass of red wine. That was the dream meal he’d told Dean he looked forward to most. He didn’t eat a lot of red meat, but it became the Holy Grail when you were denied real honest to goodness food for three months.
Perhaps he hadn’t stuck around at all. It was entirely possible that he had driven the couple of hours it would take him to get to the house he shared with his girlfriend.

They could at that very moment be locked in a passionate embrace.

*Passionate embrace?*

Since when did he start thinking pansy-ass things like that?

He shook his head and sighed.

It was true though, no matter what words and phrases he used. No matter how he tried to soften the blow, he had to face the fact that he might never see Sam again.

Sam had promised that they would be together and Dean believed that Sam believed the words. But in Dean’s experience, reality had a way of screwing with even the best of intentions.

Inside the prison it was the two of them in it together but inside was an illusion.

Outside was reality. And in reality, Sam was someone’s boyfriend. He had friends, a successful career, and a home. Outside was his life. And when he realized that, he would realize that his promises were something more like a hopeful wish from a parallel universe.

Maybe he would send a letter or two. Call once or twice. Dean knew Sam well enough already to know that he would never cut him off completely.

Hell, maybe they would even cross paths one day. Some hunt would take him to the scene of mysterious multiple homicides and across the way in a suit and tie would stand an FBI agent speaking softly to a witness. He would push his chin-length chestnut hair out of his eyes and there would be Sam.

Dean’s heart ached even with the thought of it. He whined in the back of his throat like a small wounded animal.

“Mr. Winchester?” came the voice from before. “Are you in pain? Do we need to give you something? The last dose will have worn off by now.”

He blinked trying to clear the future image from his mind’s eye and turned his head to finally look at the nurse that had given him comfort. Only it wasn’t a nurse. The white coat was a dead giveaway.

The doctor in question was her.

Sam’s Jessica.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“How is it possible?” Sam finally managed to choke out the few words. He shook his head. It couldn’t be. “Special Agent Suzanne McKay?”

The woman arched a finely shaped brow and inclined her head. “The very same, Agent Wesson. I
find that my name travels in front of me quite like an overzealous tit-job.” He couldn’t help but smile at the brashness of her words.

“Ma’am, may I ask why you’re here?” He glanced at Bobby who was currently flicking his gaze back and forth between the woman and the gun that was propped against the wall beside the door. “Especially since last I heard you were supposed to be dead.”

The words caught Bobby’s attention and Sam could imagine the man was already wondering if the woman was a ghost or something. Hopefully he didn’t decide to attempt slicing her open as an alternative to a simple ‘hello’.

“Mr. Wesson, I can assure you that the reports of my death have been grossly exaggerated.” She placed her hands on her hips and shifted so that she stood with even more an air of confidence than she had before. “It’s true I have been off the radar, so to speak. Personal conflict. Yet, here I stand.”

Sam grinned and stared at the woman, still in awe that she was there in the flesh. It felt a little like meeting an actor that you’d admired for years and never thought you’d see in any way other than through the filter of their chosen medium.

“It’s such an honor Agent McKay. Really. I mean… Chechnya, Sarajevo, Algeria! Your counter-terrorism work remains unparalleled! Reading your case studies at the academy is one of the highlights, I assure you.”

His smile was returned with a megawatt version of her own. “I’m sure you can say the same with your stellar career so far. I was extremely impressed when I read about your work on the Oringamo case, for example. Simply inspired.”

“Excuse me. If you two are done with the circle jerk, maybe you can tell us what you’re doing here Agent McKay.” Bobby’s irritated words gave both agents pause.

McKay turned her sweet smile his way and yet there was no mistaking that she was a woman that could single-handedly hold a room in thrall. She was in complete control of their conversation, whether Singer knew it or not.

“Of course. I do apologize. I don’t get to converse with agents very often. At least not of Wesson’s caliber.” She gracefully moved further into the room, pushing the door firmly closed behind her. The small table in the corner had a ratty old dining chair next to it and she sank down onto it, crossing her legs at the ankles and folded her hands in her lap. “I am here because, as I understand it, Agent Wesson requested that his partner – one Agent Joseph Randall – dig into any and all records for Dean Winchester.” She moved an elbow on the table and propped her chin on the top of her hand. “Dean Winchester. Alias De Winchester. AKA ‘Chester, AKA John Bender, AKA Chuck U. Farly, AKA Duncan McLeod, AKA Holden McGroin, AKA Clif Hanger, AKA Peter Parker, AKA… well, you get the picture.”

“Why would Dean Winchester trip any alarms?” Bobby asked. He seemed a little shaken by the idea that Dean was being watched so closely as all that. “He’s in prison.”

“Ah, well, what can I say? As brilliant as the system is, we all suffer under the tyranny of bureaucracy. Seems that this little fact hadn’t been added to the database.”

“So what do you want with Winchester?” Sam tried his damndest not to sound too emotionally invested in the answer to his question.
“Gentlemen, we aren’t yet at a point that I would share that information with you. In due course, perhaps. I will say that Mr. Winchester has certainly made a name for himself over the years.” The way she said this, did not make it sound like a compliment in the least. In fact it was said with more than a little annoyance.

McKay sat back against the wicker backing of the chair and drummed her fingers across the top of the pressboard table. “As for why I am here, I am inclined to assist with anything you may need for the current… situation within the prison.” She looked at both men in turn so that there was no mistaking that she knew more than they might have given her credit for.

“What…” Was all Bobby was able to get out before a knock sounded at the door. He sighed and threw up his hands in defeat. The man was so flustered that he didn’t even pick up the gun beside him; he just yanked the door open with no hesitation. “Oh, you have to be kidding me.”

Sam craned his neck around at the exasperation in Bobby’s voice.

Joe stood at the door, his tie thrown over his shoulder, a file box filled to the brim in his hands and rolled up blueprints clutched between his right arm and his body. “Um, hello.”

“Bobby Singer…this is my partner, Joe Randall,” Sam stepped up and pulled the file box out of Joe’s grasp. “Joe, Bobby.”

Bobby ignored the hand Joe offered and walked directly back to his paper-bag bottle of liquor. “Join the party,” he muttered as he decided to forego cups this time around and pulled a long draw directly from the bottle.

“Get everything?” Sam asked, glancing at the contents of the box.

Joe nodded even though he looked pretty ticked off. “Yes. Planning on telling me what’s going on now? I mean...for the love of…” his voice trailed off as he finally spotted McKay seated in the corner. His eyes flicked back and forth like the pendulum on a grandfather clock. “Who…?”

“Oh, right! Agent Joseph Randall, meet Agent Suzanne McKay.”

Joe sputtered and coughed against his own shock.

Bobby turned his bottle up, draining the contents.

McKay smiled tightly and extended a polite hand in greeting.

Sam prayed silently.

He had a feeling they were going to need all the help they could get.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

She was prettier than he remembered. Her long blond hair was pulled up into a ponytail today. It brushed her neck and shoulders as she moved and he was sure it was as soft as it looked. Her skin was flawless, like porcelain. Her smile was sweet and honest and Dean had no doubt, as much as he wanted to hate her and believe her a villain, that she was just as nice a person as she seemed. Sam had fallen for her after all.

Dean stared up into the chocolate brown eyes and a lone thought suddenly blocked out all others.
“You have to leave!” He rushed out firmly.

She frowned, confusion marring her delicate features. “I’m sorry. I thought you were in pain. I can leave you alone if you like.”

She had misunderstood him.

“No,” he grabbed her wrist before she could move away. She stared down at his hand encircling her arm and then glanced around at the guards that were posted at each of the doors.

The security had definitely been beefed up since the latest unexplained death. Too bad they hadn’t been there when Sam was a minute from being stabbed.

Dean loosened his grip but kept his hand in place so that she wouldn’t pull too far away.

“You need to leave,” he tried again, this time more quietly but also with more authority. “For your safety.”

Her frown quickly turned into an amused smirk. “Oh, don’t you worry about me. I am perfectly safe.” She indicated the large man with a gun at his hip that would kick his ass if she so much as snapped her fingers. “Besides, I’m a big girl. I think I can take care of myself. I wouldn’t have volunteered if I didn’t believe I could handle it.”

Dean shook his head and let his fingers open and slide off of her forearm. He struggled to sit up and when she saw this, she assisted his movements with a soft but efficient touch. Finally seated on the edge of the hospital bed, he gave her a pointed look. “Check my eyes,” he insisted.

She gave him a long hard look and Dean knew she was nervous. She didn’t know him from Adam after all. In her eyes, saving Sam must have bought him quite a bit of favor because even in her clear reluctance, she still moved closer and pulled a pen light from her lab coat pocket. “Alright. I’m just going to check to see if you’re pupil dilation is back to normal,” she began more for the guard’s benefit than anything else. She aimed the beam of light in his left eye and he played along. “You are in danger,” he annunciated slowly.

She replaced the light in her pocket. “Now… Just follow this with your eyes, please.” She held an ink pen aloft and began slowly moving it back and forth across his field of vision. “How am I in danger?” she whispered as her mouth barely moved.

“Wish I knew for sure.” His eyes moved left to right at her instruction.

She walked away abruptly and returned with a blood pressure cuff. “I’m just going to check your blood pressure. Let me just put this around your arm.”

“Sam was attacked because someone heard a rumor about what he is.”

At this revelation she gasped and Dean saw the guard move forward. She waved him off with the excuse that she had thought she saw a spider. “I…I don’t…”

“Yeah. I think you do. We both know what Sam is. The point is that you have a connection to him.”
“No one knows that I…”

“Really? Because a few days ago I saw you go into that office right over there with him. You think I was the only person that noticed that? Never assume. Especially not in this place.”

It was the truth and she knew it. He could see it in her eyes.

“How do I know I can trust you?”

“You can’t know. But Sam trusted me. I…care about him. And I didn’t take a hit for him just so he could turn around and lose you.”

She looked away with a pain in her eyes. Dean wondered if she was thinking of just how close it had been. The thought of the blade finding it’s home in Sam’s gut made his stomach churn almost violently. Finally she turned her gaze and began pumping air into the cuff of his arm as she stared at her watch.

“You care about Sam,” she repeated his words back to him. It wasn’t a question. “Say I trust you. What should I do?”

“Make up a reason to leave early. Now would be good. Ask a guard to escort you out. Go find Sam. And be happy.” After a long moment the only sound between them was the sound of air being let out of the cuff. “Why aren’t you already headed his way, anyway?”

She pursed her lips. “I hadn’t heard what happened until you were brought in, but I called his partner the minute I heard. I spoke to Sam for a moment.”

This made him sit up a little straighter. “You did? Is he okay?”

“Yes. Well, he’s pissed that I lied to him and stayed to volunteer another few days.” A fleeting smile came and went. “He said they were pulled off the case. I think…they are wrapping things up. I would just be in the way.”

“He said that?” It didn’t sound like Sam but…

She shook her head. “No. I just…” She shrugged.

Dean thought it all sounded weak as far as reasoning went. If he hadn’t seen Sam for months and had a chance – any chance – to see him, he would be damned if anything got in his way. Screw the job, screw his partner, screw anything that got between them.

Dean knew it was walking a fine line of wrong and just plain wrong but he had to ask. “Did you cheat on him?”

“What?” she asked loudly, taken aback by the question. She looked as though one more shock might send her round the bend. She roughly yanked against the Velcro of the cuff.

“He heard you cheated. Was really torn up about it.”

Even as she shook her head firmly, there was guilt in her eyes. “Not that it’s any of your business but I have never been unfaithful to Sam.”

“Good. Keep it that way. He’s a great guy.” Dean looked past her shoulder. He couldn’t meet her eyes knowing how completely hypocritical he was being.

He was, after all, still sore from having Sam pound into him so roughly just the night before.
“He deserves to be happy.” He spoke the words softly and with sincerity, but in the end, he wasn’t sure if the words were meant more for Jessica or himself.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

When Bobby finally climbed out of the bottle and Joe got over his shock at seeing the supposedly dead legendary agent sitting before him, the room quieted allowing Sam to move them back on track.

“You said you wanted to help us with the issue in the prison. What do you know if it?”

McKay crossed her legs and hummed lightly as she thought. “I know that whatever is killing those men is not human.”

“Not human?” Joe was incredulous.

“And just how do you know that?” Bobby asked. He seemed more agitated than any of them, which Sam found a little funny. He was the only hunter there in a room full of Feds. There was a good chance the man was already resigning himself to the fact that he’d likely be thrown in the slammer alongside Dean before it was all over with.

“I make it my business to know, Mr. Singer. We cannot all of us remain ignorant when there is a widely unseen threat so large.”

“‘Unseen’ being the operative word there. Where do you get your information? You a hunter?”

She laughed at the question and the sound was like the deep resounding bells of a cathedral. Loud and strong with no trace of disingenuousness. “I leave that up to he brave men and women already fulfilling that role. I merely pay attention. Very close attention.”

“Well if you are so clued in,” the older man began, crossing his arms. There seemed to be a challenge in his eyes. “do you know what we’re up against here?”

“I have my suspicions but I also am sure that you have your own take on things. Why don’t you share your theory?”

“Alright.”

Sam watched Bobby pull out the chair on the opposite side of the table and straddle it backwards as he folded his arms over the back. “Well, we know there was trace elements of sulfur, which indicates demon activity. However,”


Sam looked to Bobby and McKay but they offered no answer. “Joe, remember how I said I knew what killed those men?”

“Yes. I also remember you telling me that you would tell me everything once we found Duck Dynasty over there.” He tipped his head towards Bobby, who looked either offended or confused by the reference. Sam couldn’t tell which.

“You’re right, Joe. And I will. Why don’t you sit down first?”
His partner looked at the only seat left available which was the bed in the center of the room. It was questionable at best so Joe shook his head. “I’ll stand.”

“Alright. Well… Okay,” Sam ran his fingers once more through his hair. He was sure he’d be bald soon if he didn’t find another habit for stressful moments. “There’s no easy way to say this so I’ll just come out with it.” He looked up to meet and hold the other man’s stare. “Monsters are real.”

“Monsters. Are real.” He repeated slowly. “Want to maybe expand on that a little?

“Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, demons… all the crazy shit they write about, they make bad horror movies about… All real.”

Joe looked back and forth and back and forth, his eyes alighting on each of their faces in turn, laughter bubbling up as he went. “Okay. Okay so what is this? Am I on Punk’d?”

“What’s a punked?” Bobby asked.

“You aren’t being punked. It’s not Candid camera. We aren’t going for America’s Funniest Home Videos here. We’re dealing with some serious shit and lives are at stake. So as hard as I know this is going to be, I need you to buckle up and go with it. Because we need your help.”

Joe looked at Sam for a long while. There were a lot of years between them. There was history and secrets. There was a bond that only a close partnership could form, almost like brothers. If you couldn’t trust your partner you were screwed.

“Benefit of the doubt,” Joe finally said after an extremely long silence. He would do what he could for them. Not because he believed what Sam was saying but because he was Sam’s partner and that was what they did.

“Thanks, man.”

“Bobby, you’re back up.”

He rolled his eyes at Sam’s proclamation. “Okay, sulfur equals demons. Now the tough part was figuring out how a spirit fit in the picture. I mean it’s not like they’re teaming up together. So I looked up all the information I could find on the prison.” He shook his head. “Nada. I mean sure, there were plenty of deaths over the years that could leave spooks behind but no women.

“Then I looked into all of the victims histories; hometown, childhood, wrap sheet. The single common thread among them was that they were all guilty of murder.”

Sam shook his head. “That can’t be right. One of the victims was a correctional officer.”

“True. But I had a friend…” he glanced around uncomfortably. “Uh, hack into the prison database. Turns out the guard in question was under a very hush-hush investigation a few years back. He had a lot of suspicious behavior. Worked on the hall where solitary confinement is located. Seems that there was more than one odd death on his watch. I almost thought maybe our mystery monster had hit there too but the photographs and reports of the deaths state that there were very clear signs of struggle. Something not on the current rash of bodies.”

Sam and Joe shared a look.

*How had they missed that?*

“So all of the murder victims were murderers themselves,” Joe reiterated.
“Sounds like they got their comeuppance. Punishment fits the crime, eh?” McKay looked sideways at him. “Like a Trickster, perhaps.”

Sam had no clue what a Trickster was but Bobby still seemed a little stunned by the fact that McKay seemed to be so informed.

He scratched his head beneath the edge of his cap. “I thought that for a while too. But this thing is too clean. No show. In and out and virtually no trace left behind. Maybe if they did a song and dance before they bit it…”

McKay nodded in agreement.

“No, this thing is bigger,” Bobby went on. “This is old school. The demon and ghost combo was the biggest clue.”

“If this is a dream, I am never eating cold pizza before bed again,” Joe swore. Everyone ignored him.

“I remembered something I’d read in a mythological text several years ago. There’s a spirit that visits the guilty bringing vengeance upon them.”

Sam couldn’t stand the suspense. “What is it?”

“I think it’s a damn Fury.”

“Furry?”

“Fu-ry,” Bobby spat at Joe. He turned to Sam with a stern look. “I sure do hope you’re the brains of the operation.”

Joe looked affronted. “Hey, look -”

“Joe-,” Sam started worried that his partner would walk out.

“Agent Randall, do stand down.” The lovely southern twang softened the direct command. She was technically the senior Agent in the room and Joe fell silent. “Mr. Singer, please go on.”

“Fine.” He glared at Joe, daring him to say any more. “According to legends the three Furies are the children of Earth and Sky. However they were sent to the underworld.”

“Hell?” Sam asked. He was beginning to see where this was going. “So…if they are spirits of Hell…”

“Makes ‘em some big deal demons.”

“Demons, plural?” Joe still didn’t exactly looked like he was on board the demon train, but Sam knew his partner liked to be well informed. Especially if he was about to walk into a potentially dangerous situation. “So there’s more than one?”

“Not entirely sure. My guess? We’re dealing with just one. Tisiphone. Of the three sisters, she was the one typically marked as the punisher of murderers.”

“So how is she doing it?” Sam asked, trying to figure out how a demon could kill a man in a matter of seconds and not leave a trace.

So far, McKay had remained relatively silent. She had seemed to be deep in thought for most of
Bobby’s musings. It was at this point, however, that she spoke up, her voice even and matter-of-fact. “Venom.”

Sam saw Bobby smile at her, concurring.

“Poison? But toxicology screens were done on all victims,” Joe pointed out.

“Not just any poison. Specifically venom. Snake venom,” Bobby explained. “Tisiphone was also known for taking her targets’ lives by snakebite. Or driving them insane.”

Sam still wasn’t sure all of the points lined up for him. “But any sort of abnormality in the blood would have been picked up.”

“Sure. ‘Cept we’re talkin’ snakes from Hell. As you might imagine, the typically rules don’t really apply here.”

“Great. So we have the suspect and motive. Now how do we get rid of her?”

Joe smiled at Sam. “Obvious. We bust in with a copy of the Necronomicon and magic the thing back to Hell.”

“Really? Army of Darkness reference? That’s the best you can come up with?” Sam asked shaking his head at his partner, trying not to be amused.

Bobby shrugged. “Actually, he isn’t too far off the mark there, believe it or not.”

The seriousness of his tone wiped the smile right off of Joe’s face. “There’s actually such a thing as a...Necronomicon?”

The man didn’t even bother to answer. He did however begin digging through a deep military surplus duffel bag finally pulling out a large faded volume and holding it aloft.

“What is that?” Sam asked, stepping forward to take a closer look. There were a series of marks and symbols on the cover, the likes of which he’d never seen. He was fascinated and had to stop short of tugging it from Bobby’s hands.

“Papyri Graecae Magicae.” His exclamation was like that of a proud father. “This is an extremely rare copy.”

Sam had never heard of the text, however the reverential way that Bobby held and eyed the tome and the quick intake of breath from McKay told him that it wasn’t exactly something one checked out of a library.

The researcher in him was itching to be let loose on it.

Bobby must have seen the look in his eye and recognized a kindred spirit because he held the book out to Sam with a look of warning. “Rare.”

Sam held back a little squeal of delight and moved to the table, taking Bobby’s vacated seat so that he might start pouring over the heaps of Latin at his fingertips. The paper was a thin paper vellum. He tenderly stroked it and supported it as he turned the page.

On the first page was a poem. The second, he recognized the structure of what looked to be a ritual.

The further he got into the book, the more amazed he became.
He was so engrossed in translation mode that he was startled by the sound of a phone ringing.

“S’the prison,” Bobby muttered, listening to the automated message before pulling the phone away to press the indicated buttons.

Sam was already across the room beside Bobby, hoping against hope that he’d be able to hear even a trace of Dean’s voice flowing out of the cell phone.

The voice he heard, however, was not Dean and he crossed his arms, watching Bobby for signs that anything was wrong.

“Tate? Yeah. What the hell is going on there?”

Bobby listened for a bit, his face growing dark.

“Well, I already heard that little nugget from Sam.” Bobby nodded even though Brian couldn’t see him. “Yeah. Yeah, Sam’s here.” He looked at the other people in the room. “Along with half of the FBI.”

“What? No. Look, Tate, this call ain’t gonna last long enough for me to listen to you yammer so pay attention.” He examined a blueprint that had been spread out on the bed while Sam had been distracted.

“Sam, point out the location of the last death,” he urged.

Sam did as he said and Bobby’s finger traced several different paths before it tapped against one exit in particular.

“North-easterly. One-one. Make it?” He spoke in code, ever mindful of the fact that he was being recorded.

He nodded to the phone again and then hung up without another word.

“Is Dean okay?” Sam asked immediately.

Bobby looked him squarely in the eye as if to reassure him that he was being honest. “Yeah. He’ll be okay. They patched him up and Brian said he talked to him. He’s had worse hits, I’m sure.”

Sam nodded, grateful for the answer. His relief was palpable and yet he knew the wriggling worry in the pit of his stomach wasn’t going to completely let up until he saw Dean for himself. “So we have a plan?” Sam asked tentatively as he watched Bobby lean over the blueprints once more.

“Yup.” After a minute he straightened up and looked at all of them in turn. McKay, Joe, and finally Sam. “This ain’t exactly gonna be…legal.” Some of Bobby’s spitfire from before was lacking. It was one thing to say it to a single rogue agent, Sam supposed, and another thing to admit it in a room full of them.

“And that, Mr. Singer, is where I come in,” McKay spoke up, her voice smooth and sweet like honey but her eyes alight with both fire and ice.

Chapter End Notes
The comments really keep me motivated so thank you to everyone that gives feedback. You're all awesome!!
Rally Point

Chapter Summary

The group rallies at the prison to get the demon to come to them.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bobby’s foot was heavy on the accelerator as his old faded blue Dodge Charger ate up the miles between the motel and the prison. Sam knew time was of the essence and he tried to ignore the break-neck speed, keeping himself busy instead with checking and rechecking part of the stockpile of supplies that sat beside him in the back seat.

Joe had no such distraction. Sam’s partner had his arms splayed wide; one hand was white-knuckling the dashboard while the other hand gripped at the side of the leather seat.

“Slow down! We won’t be any good to anyone if we don’t even make it there.”

Bobby scoffed. “Kid, I been drivin’ since before you were outta diapers.”

“Doesn’t mean you’ve been doing it well!”

Joe’s foot was added to brace against the dash as Bobby whipped around a slow moving pickup truck.

Sam smiled to himself as he loaded shells full of rock salt into the chamber of a sawed off shotgun. “Don’t worry Joe. No way are you gonna die before you get to have your first face-to-face with an ancient demon hell bitch.”

Joe moaned pitifully. “Wesson, I swear I am going to kill you if we get out of this alive. How did I let you talk me into this?”

Sam didn’t bother to answer. He just chuckled and grabbed his notes from the gear bag so that he might scan them one last time. Thanks to the wonders of the internet, he was able to find a huge amount of lore on demons and specifically Tisiphone. Some was utter crap and Bobby helped filter those sites out. The hunter also filled in some of the gaps while lamenting how many ‘damn idjits’ were out there ‘actin like they knew somethin about somethin’.

Still with such limited time to make things happen, he felt vastly unprepared. It felt like cramming for a final exam only with the knowledge that, if you didn’t get all the answers memorized, you might literally die.

“Almost there,” Bobby announced, the car slowing to just below the speed limit.

Sam stashed the notes and did a triple check of his bag.

Salt (of both the Kosher and rock variety). Check.

Extra rounds (not that he hoped they would need them). Check.
Holy water (contained in several recycled soda bottles). Check.

A plastic gallon bag of herbs (questionable enough to land them all in a holding cell if found). Check.

Stake (carved from an Acacia tree and soaked in the salt-rich waters of the Dead Sea). Check.

Oddly enough it had been McKay that had passed the last item on to them, explaining simply that it was something she’d picked up in her travels. It just didn’t seem like the moment to look a gift horse in the mouth.

The beautifully striated wood was long and tapered with one end being thick and rounded while the other end had been whittled down to a tip that, while not particularly sharp, could theoretically pierce skin with enough force behind it.

Sam replaced the stake and pulled at the drawstring of the bag, closing it just as Bobby veered off of the road and onto an overgrown dirt trail that lead only God knew where.

He cut the lights and traveled another hundred feet before shifting to park and killing the engine.

“We’re on foot from here.”

Sam picked up the cheap flashlight that he’d tucked between his knees for just this occasion and flipped the switch. The dim light illuminated the interior of the car enough for them to gather supplies. Once they had retraced the tire tracks back to the road, Sam turned the flashlight off again and slipped it in the bag before shrugging it onto his shoulder.

The waxing quarter moon would have to light the path for the rest of their journey.

He calculated that they had about a mile to go before they would be able to catch a glimpse of his residence for the last three months.

Funny. Even though it had been a case, Sam had spent weeks dreaming of getting out and back to his own life. Then Dean happened and now there he was; Trying his damnedest to break back in.

Yes, life was certainly funny.

“Come on, you two.” Bobby called from his position in front of them. “We got less than half an hour to get to the meet-up point. Ain’t exactly like Tate can stand around with his thumb up his butt waitin’ for us.”

Sam looked back at Joe who seemed to be glaring daggers at the back of Bobby’s head even as he picked up speed.

They weren’t exactly in jogging attire. While Bobby was donning dark jeans and plaid, Sam and Joe were still in dress boots, suit pants and button down shirts.

Sam knew he and his partner were there for one reason and one reason only. They were to run interference and provide distraction. The hunters would take care of the bad guy (or girl, in this case) and the agents would act…agent-y. That’s how Bobby had put it anyway. And because of this, they had to dress the part.

Sam had given in and put his tie on, but he left it loosely knotted and rolled up his shirtsleeves in a small act of suitable rebellion. It had been quite a while since he wore anything but that ugly orange monstrosity and the idea of a uniform of any kind seemed to rub him the wrong way.
“You two remember what to do?”

“Of course,” Joe replied, apparently a little put out that his ability to complete a mission would be questioned. Joe excelled at this kind of thing. Sam was sure he already had every inch of the blueprints memorized for the building and would be able to lead them there and do his job blindfolded if need be.

“You sure Tate’s gonna be able to get us in?” Dean had seemed to think that Brian was a pretty great hunter despite being a less than stellar human being. And at this point, Sam had no qualms admitting that the hunters as a whole were far more capable than he ever could have imagined. That didn’t mean he couldn’t voice a concern.

“He’ll be there,” Bobby replied, not a hint of doubt in his voice.

Sam knew that they were closing in on the point in time where the guards would be calling lights out soon. Everyone and everything would be locked down for the night. Less chance of running in to guards and prisoners alike. They wanted as few people in the crossfire as possible.

He also knew that where they were planning to go was right next to the hospital ward, right where Sam had pointed on the map earlier. That was the spot Bobby had chosen to perform the spell. It could have been coincidence but there had been so many attacks in that specific area, they figured it was likely their best shot to call her down.

Last he knew Dean was in the hospital wing. He’d tried to call and get a status update, not wanting to rely on Brian’s related assurances that he’d seen him and he was fine. None of the prison staff was willing to give over any information. Didn’t matter who he was. If he wasn’t family and wasn’t standing right in front of them to prove the fact, they weren’t going to say a word.

Now the idea that he would be that close to Dean, might even have the chance to see him, had Sam’s legs moving all the more quickly and before he knew it he was out in front leading them onward towards their destination.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean stared at the tall metal door to his left. Behind the door was a hallway that led to the small operating room at the far end of the hospital ward.

Jessica was still in there and all Dean could do was watch the clock.

She had actually heeded his warning, wrapped up what she had left to do, grabbed her belongings and was just about to walk out when an inmate had been rushed in, held upright only by the fact that two very large guards were gripping his arms to keep him that way.

The prisoner had been badly beaten, the blunt end of what looked like a ball-point pen was protruding from his shoulder and the man had been blinded in one eye if the blood streaming from beneath his closed eyelid was any indication. The hoarse screams echoing through the room were chilling and Dean had wondered what the man had done to warrant such an attack.

Upon seeing this, Jessica had immediately tossed her bag and jacket back into the office and headed in the direction they had taken the man, sure that Dr. Drake would need assistance in surgery.

That had been well over an hour ago.
Dean watched the clock and did little else as there was nothing else to do. Finally after what felt
like days but was likely only another half hour or so, medical staff began trickling back into the

“Amazing work, Doctor Moore,” Drake congratulated, a relieved smile on his face.

Surgery must have gone well.

“Thank you. You as well. I still can’t get over how well equipped you are here. So self-
sustaining.”

“Ever think of making the jump? I know you work at that big fancy-schmancy hospital of yours
but we could really use another doc on hand here full time.”

Jessica’s smile was polite and she glanced at Dean before answering, “I don’t think it’s for me. In
fact I’ve been called back. I have to report to the hospital tomorrow morning to cover for one of the
other doctors,” she lied smoothly.

Drake’s face fell. “Drat! I was hoping we’d at least get to keep you the rest of the week. Well,
doctor, it’s been a pleasure working with you. Hopefully you’ll make it back sometime.”

She shook his outstretched hand and thanked him for his kindness. She promised to come back in
the future to finish out the week she had signed on to volunteer.

Dean wished he could fast-forward the entire conversation. His mind was doing little more than
rolling and repeating the word go-go-go-go-go over and over.

As she disappeared to retrieve her things once more, Dr. Drake set straight to checking on the
patients in the ward before he could retire for the day. Dean was first up and after taking a cursory
glance beneath his bandage he was deemed fit to return to his pod.

“Just take it easy,” one of the nicer nurses recommended as she assisted him back into his
jumpsuit. “Try not to make any sudden movements. No touching it - germs are bad. Don’t take the
bandage off. Don’t get it wet.” She continued to rattle off instructions and he tried to listen but after
sitting in the bed for hours on end, needing but unwilling to sleep, knowing nothing of what was
happening outside, he was pretty sure he was already borderline batty.

The guard was called over and he was escorted towards the door that would lead back into the
corridors of the prison proper.

“Mr. Winchester,” he heard Jessica call.

The guard paused and Dean turned to look at her, shocked that she was still there. He thought she’d
already made a break for it.

As if she could read it on his face, she quickly explained. “Just waiting for my escort. He offered to
walk me out.” She glanced over at Drake, who was locking up the office. “I just wanted to thank
you. For everything.” She looked him in the eyes and gave him a soft grin. Her gaze was open and
honest and if it wouldn’t have been so fucking odd, he would have hugged her. Just for being a
connection to Sam, he would have hugged her. For being the person that might ultimately make his
lover happy. For being the person that might give him a richer life.

He wanted to despise her. He really did. But hating her for loving Sam would be like hating the
moon for holding on to the Earth.
In the end, he nodded, tossed out a simple “be safe” and turned back towards the door to be buzzed through alongside the guard.

She would be fine, he decided. There was little that could be done at this point. It was almost time for lights out, which meant the entire prison would be on nighttime lockdown. The doc would see her out safely and she would be on her way to Sam.

With that thought, Dean also suddenly had to face the reality that he was currently headed back to an empty pod. Sans Sam. The realization was like a punch to the gut.

You have only as long as it takes to get back to the unit to mope about this, he told himself firmly. He couldn’t carry on like some pining love-sick fool. There was too much left to do.

We still have a demon-ghost-something to go after. Have to focus. Have to stay sharp.

Just as he thought the words, a large round disc shot out from around the corner closest to Dean. He ducked just in time to feel the current of air the object created against the top of his head. This was followed by a loud ‘gong’ that echoed through the hall as the object slammed into the face of the guard he had only seconds ago been walking beside.

Wide-eyed, he stared at the c.o. sprawled out and unconscious beside where he crouched.

“Nice reflexes.”

Dean looked up to see Brian spinning a medium sized frying pan in his hand, a happy-go-lucky smile on his face.

“You jackass. You could have hit me.”

“You moved.” Brian shrugged and knelt next to the officer to feel along his belt line.

“What are you doing?”

Brian’s eyes lit up and he held a retractable lanyard full of keys up in front of Dean’s face, shaking them so they jingle-jangled like sleigh bells. “C’mon,” Brian said foisting the frying pan into Dean’s hands. He then grabbed the guard beneath his arms from behind so that he could drag him backwards. “Gotta get him in with the other one.”

“Other one?” Dean almost didn’t want to ask.

“The one that was leading me back to the hospital ward after my unfortunate relapse. Stomach bugs are just so unpredictable, ya know?”

“Puke on Richards again?”

Brian looked at him sideways with an evil little grin. “Nah. Just his bed.”

Dean couldn’t help but snicker at the idea of Richards coming in to find his bed covered in a mess of vomit.

“So, what exactly are we up to here?”

He watched as Brian unlocked a door with a second set of keys that he withdrew from his pocket. The door opened to reveal a janitorial closet, stocked with tons of cleaning supplies and one previously knocked out correctional officer. This one was already sporting a large red welt on his temple from where it looked like the pan had caught him with its edge.
“Question,” Dean said absently, helping Brian arrange the second officer in the closet so that they would both fit and would wake up to find themselves in one another’s arms. Too bad they didn’t have time to take a few pieces of clothing off. Really mess with them.

“Yes?”

“You got this from the kitchen right?” He held the frying pan up between them, the width easily being larger than either of their heads. Brian nodded. “How did you sneak it out?”

“Oh right. Like I’m gonna tell you. Man’s gotta have some secrets.” Brian winked.

Letting the frying pan issue go, Dean wiped the prints off of the handle and dumped it in with the guards before they closed and locked them in.

“So what now? Tell me there’s a reason we just committed assault.”

Brian looked back and forth down the passageway and motioned for Dean to stick behind him as they began backtracking the way Dean had come. “Meeting Bobby.”

“Shit! Are you serious? We’re doing it now?”

His ex looked at him over his shoulder before glancing around a corner to check if the coast was clear. “Yeah. He didn’t give have time to give me the whole rundown but no time like the present, right?”

Dean could argue against that. He trusted Bobby with his life but he hated walking into a hunt feeling like he didn’t have all the vital pieces of the puzzle.

“We have to get to the north-east entrance. It’s a service entrance. Shouldn’t be too heavily guarded, especially not right now.”

“How are we supposed to get him in?” Dean looked up seeing a camera tracking their movement. “And… Brian, the security cameras!”

“Dean, this isn’t our first rodeo. You think Bobby came unprepared?”

*Of course.* “Ash?”

“Ash,” Brian confirmed.

Ash was a genius. His claim to fame was that he was a friend of a friend to just about everyone in the hunting community and they all kept him busy. Hacking, reprogramming, inventing, repairing…the man was their very own tech guru. Plus he threw killer parties.

“Remind me to send him a fruit basket when this is over,” Dean said, giving the camera a big ‘thumbs up’.

Dean felt so much better knowing that their every incriminating move wasn’t being live-streamed by the US Government that he stepped away from the wall and walked casually the rest of the way.

He allowed Brian to continue on in front of him, peering around corners and tip-toeing like some deranged sneak thief. Only occasionally did Dean pause to listen for the sound of incoming guards. They seemed to be having amazingly good fortune. So far they hadn’t encountered a single other person. It almost seemed too good to be true.

He could only hope their luck would hold.
Sam looked behind them as he passed through an emergency gate built into the perimeter wall. It wasn’t the main gate that allowed vehicles in and out, but a smaller version that was located far enough away from the main entrance that there was less chance of being seen by the men on the watch-tower.

Bobby’s hacker friend was pretty damn good if he could disable the security of a place like Bolt. Sam and Joe had been given an in-depth view of the security measures in place for the facility when they had begun the case. Sam had poured over schematics looking for any way that a killer could have moved freely without tripping any alarms. It wasn’t something that could be easily breached, he knew. In fact, the warden had boasted that it was impossible.

Apparently the warden was wrong.

He pushed the normally electrified gate door closed behind him and kept to the shadows behind the other two as they crossed the grassy expanse between the tall stone exterior wall and the main building. They were set to enter a service entrance. The door itself had no handle or any other means of being opened from the outside, which is why they needed Brian on the inside.

Bobby checked his watch, as they stood pressed against the wall on either side of the large flat metal door. “Three minutes.”

As they waited all was silent, each of them collecting their thoughts and running over what Bobby had explained about what needed to be done. The three minutes came and went with no sign of Brian. After several more minutes, worried glances were shot and Bobby checked his watch again.

What could have happened?

Sam was about to begin proposing possible plan B’s, when the deep clack of a key turning an overlarge tumbler alerted them to a presence on the other side of the door.

They all pressed back against the wall, not wanting to risk the assumption that it was Brian.

“You planning on huggin’ brick all night or you gonna come in and join the party?”

Brian held the door open as they filed in, Sam bringing up the rear. He turned and scanned the outside area one last time to make sure they weren’t being watched and then pulled the door until it sat flush with the wall once more.

“What the fu…”

Sam breath stuck in his throat. That voice was so much more than what he was hoping to hear. “Dean?”

A quick one-eighty put him directly across from the best sight he’d seen in…well, in hours.

“What’s the fu…”

Sam’s eyes moved quickly, taking in every inch of Dean that he could see. He seemed to be a bit stiff and hunched over, a hand hovering over his side beneath his ribs, he was upright so that was definitely a plus. His skin was paler than usual making his fading bruises stand out as if they were fresh, and dots of perspiration were beading on his forehead. He was obviously in pain but at
present it didn’t seem to faze him.

A brilliant smile grew on Dean’s face, lighting the room around them, and Sam knew that the smile was solely for him.

Forgetting where they were. Forgetting those around them. Sam pushed past Bobby and Joe to get to Dean.

“Nice suit,” his lover tossed out as they finally stood face to face and toe to toe.

“Had to look good for my big hunting debut,” Sam answered with a little more humor than he would have thought he could manage under the circumstances. He just couldn’t stop the giddiness he was feeling at seeing Dean right before him.

“I like it. Hate to tell you but orange was never your color.” Dean reached out and tugged at Sam’s tie, a teasing look in those big grass green eyes.

“No I think you’re the only person on Earth that can make that piece of shit uniform look good.” He sniffed a little laugh.

Behind him he heard Brian grumble but he tuned him out.

He cradled Dean’s face in his hands, stooping a few inches to really look at him. “You okay?” His voice was suddenly quiet and gruff with worry. He looked down at the hand Dean held at his side again and gently placed his own hand several inches lower so as not to brush against or agitate the area.

Dean looked down at the hand on his flank and then up into Sam’s eyes. “Yeah. I’m okay. Just a scratch.”

Sam rolled his eyes. “You know I saw the blood, right?”

He shrugged. “Fine. A bloody scratch.” Dean wrapped his fingers around the wrist of the hand that was still resting against his cheek and squeezed. “Seriously. I’m good. I’ve had a lot worse.”

“That’s what I told him,” Bobby tossed in.

Seeing Bobby over Sam’s shoulder, Dean laughed a little. “Bob-eh,” he said happily in greeting.

“One week in and you already looked like canned shit. What’re they doin’ to you here, kid?”

Sam moved to the side so that Bobby could move in for a quick hug and to check Dean out for himself. He didn’t move far though, unwilling to move out of arm’s length for the time being.

After all, it had only been that morning that he had been pulled away from the man in front of him. The image of Dean on his back on the ground, a crimson stain spreading along his side, was permanently seared into his brain. He had walked out of the prison not knowing if he was really okay or when he would see him again and now Dean was there. Alive and smiling and…all he wanted to do was hold him and the idea of not letting go didn’t seem too insane.

Even as he saw Joe watching him closely, he didn’t budge from his spot beside Dean.

When he had gotten out, Joe had mentioned seeing the two of them together, but it hadn’t been mentioned again. He could only wonder at what his partner must be thinking. They were going to have to talk after everything was over. After Sam had a chance to talk to Jess. Explain things.
“Boys,” Bobby started, addressing Dean and Brian, “I believe you both know Sam here.” He eyed Dean particularly as he said this, then he motioned towards Joe. “That’s his partner, Agent Joe Randall.”

“Agent?” Brian asked, his eyes cutting to Dean.

Bobby scratched at his bearded chin. “Yeah well… I know it’s…unorthodox, but it looks like we’re gonna be backed up by the FBI this time ‘round.”

“FBI? But you said-,” Brian started at Dean, a scowl on his face.

“I said nothing.” Dean cut him off. “You said the Irish thought he was a narc, here on drugs. He wasn’t. He was here trying to get information on the deaths.”

“Wait! Irish? Narc? What’s going on?” Sam asked, recognizing that he’d most certainly missed something.

Dean gave Brian a look that clearly told him to shut his mouth and then turned his attention back to Sam. “You know the Irish are the main drug runners inside. They heard the rumors that you were a fed. They thought you were on narcotics and planned to interrupt their trade.”

“You mean that’s why they…,” he looked down at the hidden wound that he knew was there beneath Dean’s jumpsuit. “Damn it!” He knew there had to be a reason for the attack. His first thought was the Aryans, looking for retribution over the death of their leader. The fact that they had gone after him thinking he was there for a drug bust and that was why Dean had gotten hurt, made him angry.

It had always been a fear in the back of his mind that someone he cared about would be hurt because of who Sam was and what he did. That fear had finally been realized, though thankfully not to a fatal end.

“Bobby, are you frickin’ crazy, man? Feds?” Brian’s voice broke through his musing. “Why did you bring them?”

Joe had watched the conversation with what Sam knew was a stirring annoyance. He finally broke his silence at this. “We know what the damn thing is. Do you?” His question was a sharp whisper that bounced off the concrete walls in an eerie echo.

“Look pal, we don’t have to be here,” Joe continued. “But we want to help. Wesson and I have never bailed on a case and we aren’t walking out now. Now either you stop being a little bitch and zip your trap or sit your ass out because, in case you haven’t heard, we have a …demon…thing to kill.”

Brian closed his mouth and had common sense enough to look embarrassed. He looked away. “Fine. You may be willing to help but this isn’t playtime. Shit’s gonna get serious real fast.”

Bobby put a steadying hand on Brian’s shoulder. “They know the drill, Tate. They’re gonna run interference in case we run up on any issues. What with this being a federal facility and them being federal agents and all… Seemed to make sense.”

“Great,” Dean said sounding impatient. He seemed to be getting antsy just standing around. Sam wondered if the pain was worse than he was letting on. “Now how about someone fill us in so we know what we’re dealing with already.”

“It’s a Fury,” Bobby said simply.
“Thought that was a myth,” Brian said.

Dean snorted. “Isn’t everything, right before we hunt it down and end it?”

“True.”

“Unfortunately, this particular myth is a deity of vengeance. Fortunately, she is said to be considered very fair and really only focuses punishment on those she deems the truly wicked. Murderers,” he clarified. Bobby shifted his own bag from one hand to the other and withdrew one of the salt-loaded rifles, handing it over to Brian. “Now I know we’ve dealt with demons before. You both know the score with these bastards. But this one… she’s gonna take some extra mojo.” He looked long and hard at Dean who looked tired but determined. “You sure you’re up to this?”

Dean pulled the gun out of Brian’s hands and caressed the top of the barrel absently, like he’d handled the thing a million times before. “Just tell us what we need to do.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

The agents lead the way.

Dean didn’t like it but he saw the wisdom in the plan.

It was obvious that both Sam and Joe took their parts seriously as they held hands out behind them, using constant hand signals to wave the hunters forward when they deemed the path clear. They checked around every corner and in every doorway before they’d let the other three progress.

Dean stared at Sam’s back and couldn’t help but be a little astonished at the current turn of events. He had just begun to believe he might never see the other man again. Hell, in his mind, he already had Sam and Jessica falling into bed together right about now. But there he was in front of him, with his hair and his smile and his ass-hugging dress pants.

He couldn’t get ahead of himself, though. Sam was steadfast and Dean knew that about him. He had set out to get a job done and this was Sam doing exactly that. It wasn’t like he was there for Dean.

Still, he couldn’t deny that Sam had seemed worried. And really, what would it hurt to pretend for just a little longer that things might work out? Just until the demon was gone. Just until Sam walked away once more.

A wave of pain caught him off guard and he stumbled for a moment. He closed his eyes and breathed deeply until it eased off a bit. Dean knew he needed rest. Needed more pain meds too. But neither thing was likely to happen any time soon so he pushed the pain down and continued on, picking up his pace to catch up to the others.

“Wait.” Joe stopped and put a hand up, waving them towards the wall. He peeked around a corner and then looked at Sam, nodding his head. Sam nodded back and pointed two fingers towards the right of the hallway that crossed in front of them. He then pointed the two fingers towards the hunters and in a swift sweeping gesture indicated a forward trajectory.

Joe nodded in agreement and then holstered the pistol he’d been carrying in his hand before closing his jacket over it. He then proceeded to walk casually around the corner as if he had every right in the world to be there.
Sam looked back and motioned for them to stay where they were. After a few more minutes he looked back around the corner and then waved them on, Sam leading them forward quickly.

Before Dean knew it, they had arrived at their intended location. It was an alcove located around the corner from the hospital ward that they had chosen to be the spot where they would summon the demon. It was as isolated as they could get and it was located near a spot where repeated possession and murder had taken place. All in all it was perfect for a game of demon-go-byebye.

Immediately, Bobby pulled a can of spray paint out and tossed it Dean’s way. He caught it with one hand but then turned to Sam. “Remember the devil’s trap?”

“Yeah.”

“Want to do it?”

Sam looked at the can of florescent orange paint and shook his head. “This is way too important. What if I get even a line wrong and it doesn’t work?”

Dean doubted that Sam didn’t have every single sigil memorized but he didn’t push. He set about marking the floor. While Brian pulled out a stone mortar and pestle and ceremonial bowls, Bobby laid out ingredients in a row across a white cloth. Dean knew from many hunting trips with Bobby that they would be arranged, exactly two inches apart, in the order they would need to be added into whatever the spell called for. Bobby, for his seeming slovenliness, was as anal as they came.

While the hunters worked on preparation, Sam stood in the only point of entry and kept an eye out for anyone or anything that might disrupt them.

“Finished here,” Bobby finally announced from his spot on the floor.

“Now you have to call the demon?”

Dean nodded in response to Sam’s question. “Bobby’s gonna summon it and the second it appears,” he indicated the devil’s trap he’d painted onto the floor. He’d purposefully made it nearly as big as the alcove itself, leaving them a few feet on all sides to move around if need be. “No way even a Fury is gonna walk out of those lines without our say-so. Don’t care how powerful.”

“So it’ll really be stuck in there? And then he’ll…kill it?”

“If only it were that easy. We’d be out of a job,” Brian piped up as he passed them.

“He’s right. You don’t really kill them. Just send ‘em packing really.” Dean made a diving motion with one of his hands. “Straight back to Hell.”

“One way ticket,” Bobby agreed, removing his cap and tucking the bill into the back pocket of his jeans so that it would be out of the way.

Brian, who had been lighting several candles along the perimeter of the trap, straightened and closed the silver Zippo. “Ready.”

“Ready,” Bobby confirmed. “You may want to stand back.”

Sam immediately took a giant step backwards and Dean stifled a laugh. The man looked as uncertain as Dean had ever seen him as he clutched the shotgun in his hand tightly, his finger massaging the trigger.
Dean didn’t move an inch but nodded to indicate that they were at the ready.

Bobby poured a powdery substance from one of the bowls in a straight line inside the trap and began recited words from memory. The words weren’t Latin. At least not the Latin he knew. Dean wasn’t really sure what they were, but the tone in which they were delivered was commanding and strong.

A wind rose from behind them and pushed Dean forward a bit. He turned to see Sam’s hair whipping softly around his face. “It’s going to be okay,” he said, trying to sound as sure as he felt. “If anything goes south, move out. If what Bobby said about this thing is true, it’s not gonna purposefully go after innocents. Promise me?”

“Not promising to bail on you.”

Dean rolled his eyes to the ceiling but smiled a little at Sam’s words. “Not bail. Just take care of yourself. Need to know you’ll be okay if we have to take this to another level.”

Sam stared at him hard and Dean got the feeling that he may have said something to make his lover angry with him. He began to ask but was cut off as the wind picked up and the lights flickered out.

This time they didn’t come right back on, but they also didn’t stay out. They flickered quickly like a strobe light making any movement seem erratic like some bizarre stop-motion animation.

This carried on for several long seconds and then a bright light flashed all silver and blue around the edges and there she stood in all her glory.

Christ!

Of all the people that could have been chosen for a vessel…

Dean felt sick to his stomach and immediately looked back to check on Sam. “Sammy,” he called out, a warning in his voice.

But Sam was beyond hearing. He was staring wide-eyed and terrified at the woman standing boldly in the middle of the devil’s trap.

“Jess?”

Chapter End Notes

Only two more chapters to go! It's my most hectic time of the year at work and lots of things going on but I'm committed to getting Time Served finished before Season 10 starts. Feedback is encouraged and appreciated as it does wonders in keeping me motivated!!!

Thanks to all that have commented and keep me on my toes! :}


Dancing with a Demon

Chapter Summary

The boys are put to the test as they battle the monster. Some things you can never be prepared for.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Sam, look at me.”

Sam could hear Dean in some obscure corner of his mind. Knew the other man wanted his attention. But he couldn’t seem to shift his gaze from Jessica. The woman that he’d befriended so many years go. Had shared so many years of life with. The woman that he had once planned to marry. Before.

She looked exactly like Jessica save for the eyes. The dark brown of her irises as well as the white had been eradicated and now both eyes were completely filled with a brilliant blue, like glowing Lapis.

Her long blonde hair was hanging down and seemed to be swirling and blowing as if caught in a soft gust of wind even though there was no longer even so much as a draft to speak of.

“Sam!” Dean grabbed his shoulders and turned him forcibly to face him. Sam’s head remained turned towards Jessica until Dean gripped his jaw firmly in one hand and physically forced Sam to look away. “Wesson, focus. I need you here. Here. You with me?”

Slowly he worked to come back to his senses and he kept his eyes locked on Dean’s mouth. He seemed to be saying something more but all Sam could focus on was the fact that Dean’s bottom lip was still slightly busted and bruised from his run in with Smith a few days prior. He held on to this random observation and used the one simple known fact as a grounding point to pull himself out of the surreal trance he had found himself in.

He blinked quickly and nodded his head. He was with Dean.

Dean would know what to do.

“That,” Dean pointed towards Jessica though his other hand on Sam’s jaw wouldn’t allow Sam’s head to move in order to look, “is not Jessica. That is a demon.”

“But… it looks…”

“Demon’s have to possess humans. Remember? Like leeches. The demon is inside. It’s controlling everything Jess does right now.”

“Wearin’ her like a damn winter coat,” Bobby muttered, not really clued in to just who Jess was to Sam.

Sam winced at hearing the harsh words. “Will she…? Is she going to be…?”
“Hopefully. The quicker we get the demon out, the better.” Dean nodded and Sam found himself mirroring the movement. “Okay?”

No hesitation. “Okay.”

“If you two are finished…” Jessica said, sounding distant and rather bored. “Perhaps we can get on with why you’ve called me here.”

Bobby cleared his throat and pursed his lips thoughtfully. “Standard ‘go back to Hell’ speech?”

Dean nodded and Brian grinned cheekily as if he were looking forward to what was about to happen.

“You’ve been killin’ folks and we would like it if you would go back to whence you came.” She simply stared at Bobby, a blank look on her face. “Okay. Lets try this again. We don’t like your kind. So you either scamper off back to Hell or we’ll see to it that you got no choice in the matter. Not that you do anyway. This is all really just a formality.”

Jessica scoffed and roller her eyes. “How witty. You hunters never cease to amaze me. You think just because you live topside, you own it. Do you know how many centuries I’ve walked this earth?”

“Long enough to finally run across us and piss us off,” Dean replied. “First thing’s first. How about you just let the girl go.” It was more a command than a request.

“Ah! Dean Winchester.” Her mouth curled up into a dark smile that spoke of sadistic curiosity. “One would think all those years ridin’ shotgun with your daddy would have taught you not to try and bargain with the likes of me.”

“Never said I wanted to bargain. Just think you should let the girl go before we end you.”

It didn’t even seem to faze Dean that the demon knew who he was. Sam could not claim the same coolness.

“Whaddaya want with her anyhow?” Bobby’s asked from across the room, behind Jessica. “Girl’s innocent.”

Sam looked from Bobby back to Jessica in time to see her raise an eyebrow at this. She placed her hands over her chest and ran them down her ribs then to her hips. “What can I say? I like the body. Been a while since I felt so much like a lady. In case you haven’t noticed, this place is a tower of testosterone. Besides, I find that no one is ever truly innocent. I don’t think anyone in this room can claim innocence. Now can they?”

She looked at each one of them in turn as if she could see into their innermost thoughts. Sam felt a chill run down his spine and the hair on his body prickled in an instinctual warning.

“We all know how this is going to end, Fury.” Brian aimed a gleaming pistol directly at her. This method was a last resort. The bullets were carved with symbols that Bobby had explained would actually trap the demon inside the vessel if it came to that. Sam had understood this. Had even thought it was a good backup in case the thing was more powerful than they were counting on. Now that it was Jess’s body that the demon was possessing, the whole idea and the consequences that would come with this bit of collateral damage, seemed far less acceptable than it had previously. “So you have to ask yourself,” Brian went on. “Do you want to go down the easy way or the hard way?”
“You are adorable. You know that?” She snickered at Brian’s question and then openly leered at him. “I would totally go down the hard way for you, sugar. Even if you are a hunter.” She licked her lips and her eyes raked over him, top to toe, like she was sizing up her prey.

Brian shook his head. “Not my type. I don’t do ancient hags.”

“No? You sure?” She purred. “The way I understand it, you’re pretty non-discriminatory. I mean… all those teen years on the streets, peddling your ass. For the right amount of money I bet you’d be on your knees begging me for it if I asked. Wouldn’t you? Beautiful little whore,” she taunted.

Brian cocked the gun.

“No!” Sam cried out, drawing her attention his way.

“Are you trying to stop me or him? Don’t worry. Brian here isn’t gonna do a thing to me. He’s too busy trying not to remember that one time when he was tied up real tight by this older guy and made to-,”

“Fucking STOP!” Brian screamed frantically, the gun wavering as a tremor ran through his hand.

The words coming out of her mouth seemed so alien. Jessica was one of the kindest people Sam had ever met. The cruel goading was coming from the demon, but he was having a hard time separating the two in his mind.

“C’mon. Jess is in there somewhere. I know it. She would never say these things.”

“Ah, true. She is indeed in this body. But I’m working the controls at present and little Miss Jessica Moore has taken a backseat.” The girl looked down as if deep in thought and then giggled in Sam’s direction. “She says ‘hi’, though.

“You sure do yap a lot.” Dean interrupted before Sam could be drawn into the trap of a conversation about Jessica. “What do you say we just do our thing, send you packing and…that’ll be that?”

“Oh sure. I’ll just stand here while you...” She put her hands on her hips and gave her head a derisive wiggle. “*do your thing*.”

Dean gave her a tight smile. “Mighty obliging of you.”

“What can I say? I have no real qualms with any of you. However, that doesn’t mean I have to make it easy.” She shrugged, clasping her hands in front of her as if in prayer.

Dean sniffed at this. “Would expect no less.”

Sam felt more than saw Dean moving away from him. Likely, he was moving towards Bobby who was on the other side of the trap, toiling furiously now over the large stone mortar and pestle. They weren’t ready. The demon was called but he remembered that there was still another spell to be done to banish it.

Sam and Brian’s next task would be to buy them the time needed to do whatever had to be done.

“Tisiphone, right? That’s your name.”

“The demon that was currently wearing Jessica’s face seemed taken aback. “Very good. You’ve done your homework.”
“That’s right. It’s my understanding that you thrive on punishing the guilty. Vengeance for those that have slain the innocent.” She inclined her head at this. “If that’s the case, then you aren’t needed here,” Sam attempted to reason. “The men you’ve been killing… They are all here, locked away, to be punished for the deeds they’ve done. Vengeance cannot be yours to take a second time.”

She actually looked a little amused by what he was saying. A real smile reached her lips but her expression was still dubious. “Are you serious? You call this punishment? These men took life away from another. Brutality without remorse. They enjoyed every second, you can be sure of it. And here they sit, three square meals a day, television, a gymnasium, healthcare…”

“With no real freedom.”

“Hmm…” The look on her face said that she pitied the mere mortal standing before her. “Freedom is an illusion, Agent Wesson. You of all people should know that.”

He wasn’t sure exactly what she meant by that and he didn’t ask.

“Of course, technically there isn’t a man in this room that can’t say they aren’t a killer. I mean, even the good doctor here has made mistakes with patients.” She shrugged again. “You can hide behind your creeds and oaths and shields all you want. Doesn’t make it any less true.”

“Then can the same not be said of you?” Sam shot back.

There was a long pause. The logic of his question seemed to irritate her. It seemed as though she wasn’t used to being analyzed or her words taken as anything but truth.

“You think you’re so smart. So morally superior. Isn’t that right … Sammy?”

Sam’s eyes went wide with confusion. He frowned at his girlfriend-turned-demon as her eyes now smoldered with a full-on loathing. It was as if a button had been pushed and her mood and tactics shifted in the same span of time that it had taken for her to draw another breath.

“Oh come on. You all speak of innocence, throwing the word around as though you know what it means to be so. Haven’t told Jess here about your little prison romance, have you? You and Dean are smokin’ hot, I will admit. The way you plowed into him. Kissed him. Held him. All the while poor little Jess pined away for you. Even came here of all places to make things right with you. Because you thought she was cheating.” She shook her head gravely yet a smile still pulled at her lips. “Delicious irony.”

Guilt took hold, finding its mark deep within him. He ground his teeth together trying to remember that this was what she wanted. Wanted him to feel this way. Wanted his reaction as payment for questioning her.

“Had plenty of chances. Could have called. Could have gone to her before now. But you never told her what you already knew. That you weren’t coming back. Because you never had any intention of leaving him.” She raised an arm and pointed steadily at Dean. “The drifting hunter turned convict.”

She laughed but the sound wasn’t Jessica’s typical sweet lilt. It was ugly and empty and cruel. “Guess she knows now, huh? Knows everything. I’ve let her see all that I’ve seen and I must say she is not a happy camper in here.”

The idea of Jess inside being tortured by all that he’d done…
“You bitch!” Sam bit out before he could help himself.

This quieted her for a moment and her eyes narrowed into slits as she took him in. “I would think you should be nicer to me, Samuel. After all, I’ve saved you hours of fretting and hemming and hawing and all the other pointless things you humans do when you’re trying to hide things instead of just coming right out with the simply truth. I saved you from a whopping tear-jerker of a breakup scene. You should be thanking me.”

“Fuck you.” Sam whispered, feeling winded by his worry for the girl trapped in her own body and totally off-kilter that it was still that very girl’s voice and face that was saying all of this.

“How? Don’t say it if you don’t mean it. I might just take you up on that offer.” She stuck her tongue out and waggled it at him suggestively.

He swallowed hard, a lump firm in his throat.

He glanced at the hunters, Bobby mixing and mashing while speaking lowly to Dean who added herb after herb in sequence. They still needed more time.

“What do you know?” he asked, hoping to keep her talking. She seemed to be enjoying that. Sticking the knife in and twisting. He could take it. If it stopped the thing and they could save Jess, he would take all the verbal slings and arrows she could throw.

“What do I know? Good question. For one, I know that you’re trying to keep me distracted while the hunters cook up their little chicken soup for the soul.” She glanced back at Bobby and Dean who had gone still at her words. “It’s okay brave boys. I’ll let you. Bigger men than you have tried to rid themselves of me. I’m here until I no longer want to be here. It’s a perk I enjoy, as I am-,”

Her words halted suddenly and she tilted her head to the side as if listening intently. The arrogant demeanor slipped away, replaced with a look of a deep-rooted terror and confusion.

“What the…?” Joe called out as he entered from the corridor. “Jess?”

The demon blinked and when she opened her eyes the blue was gone. She looked like Jess once more. She winked at Sam and then whipped around hurrying to the edge of the red lines on the floor. “Joe! Oh thank God! They’ve gone crazy!” She began sobbing and reaching for him.

“Joe, don’t! Don’t touch her!” Sam snapped out quickly before his partner could move any closer. He could see that the man wanted to move forward but thankfully did not. Instead he halted, heeding Sam’s warning.

“The demon has her,” Brian explained.

“See what I mean?” Jessica asked, her voice pained and full of bewilderment and desperation. “They actually think I-I’m a…demon! What’s going on, Joe?”

Joe shook his head and looked to Sam for help. Sam motioned with his head towards the trap on the floor and he saw it when Joe finally took in the scene and realized what she was treading on. He, at the very least, knew this part of the plan and knew that if it was a demon, there was supposedly no way it might escape the circle of markings.

“Okay, Jess. O-Okay. I can help you. Come on. I’ll get you away from them.” He took a step back beckoning her to walk towards him.

She stood her ground.
“Aren’t you coming?”

“No.” She shook her head urgently. “I can’t leave. And you know why too.”

Joe glanced at the others around the edge of the circle. “Yeah. I think I do.”

“I can’t leave…because I could never leave Sam. It’s always been only him.”

Joe winced as if he had been struck and Sam wondered at the reaction.

As if the demon had heard his thoughts, she looked down her shoulder at Sam gleefully.

“Oh yes. You aren’t the only one that went a little off the rails, Sam darling. Though, I would never cheat on you. I resisted my feelings for – how long has it been now, Joe? – almost a year I think. Isn’t that right? Last Labor Day…when we all went away to that little cabin?”

“No,” Joe breathed.

“Yes,” she countered softly, her expression returning to one of doe-eyed innocence. “You were helping me bring in groceries. You remember, Joe? I dropped one of the bags and a glass jar broke. Pasta sauce, I believe it was. You grabbed my hand right before I could get cut and it was like static electricity when your fingers wrapped around mine. We looked up and our eyes met… and blah, blah, blah…”

The color had drained from Joe’s face as she blinked and the cobalt eyes suddenly reappeared. Her mouth opened wide, her head thrown back in a full body spasm of a laugh. “Oh it’s glorious. Even now I can feel her,” She bit her lip and looked between Sam and Joe. “Can feel her torturing herself over it all. The Lancelot and Guinevere of our little story. All longing glances and self-loathing.” She spit on the ground in disgust.

“See Sammy… they both care about you. Even love you.” She said the words as if they sat like ashes in her mouth. “Didn’t want to hurt you. They’ve been denying their feelings for so long, it’s laughable.”

“It’s not true!” Joe appealed to Sam.

“Isn’t it? You partner there is starting to resent you, Sammy boy. After all, if not for you… he and Jessica might already be together.” She met Sam’s level stare. He would not rise to the bait and she could read that. So she turned her focus back to Joe, a sad yearning look on her face. She reached a hand up and held it vertically in front of her as if she were a mime trapped in an invisible box.

Sam checked on Joe. His partner wasn’t fairing well, to say the least. He looked thoroughly conflicted, even pained, as he stepped farther out of her reach. There was no question as to whether there was truth to what the demon was saying. It was plastered across Joe Randall’s face, plane as day. However, this was neither the time nor place to point that out.

“But Joe…even now, Jess longs to go to Sam. Reassure him. How does that make you feel, Lancelot? That King Arthur always comes first?”

Joe’s face screwed up in rage but he didn’t fly off the handle. Instead he seethed. “Kiss my ass.”

“Ahh…” She tutted. “Perhaps I hit a little too close to home. I mean, Sam here has the girl. He has a great house. He’s gonna be first in line for a promotion since you and I both know the last few cases were all down to his skills as an investigator. You’re little more than a do-boy with a badge. You go in and pretend and Sam does all the work.”
“She’s only trying to wind you up,” Brian reminded them, his gun still trained on Jess. “Wants you to do something stupid. Do not listen to it.”

Sam looked over at Bobby, who seemed near to being finished. Dean, who was handing Bobby a pouch from his bag, looked up in time to meet his eyes and his look confirmed Sam’s estimation of the situation. It was a request for just a few more minutes.

“All I’m doing is speaking the truth. You all know it. For instance, I know that Joe saw Wesson buttering Winchester’s bread.” Sam saw Dean’s head snap up at this news. Sam already knew that Joe had seen them and was keeping his mouth shut, but of course Dean couldn’t have known that. “Watched for several minutes too, just to make sure he was really seeing what he thought he was. Then made the security guard give him the only copy of the surveillance video. Didn’t take the report the guard filled out thought, did you? That report that the warden eventually saw. The very one that got you boys kicked out.”

Well. Sam hadn’t known that part.

Dean didn’t look happy at this information. He looked to Sam for the truth of it and Sam shook his head. Later. They could deal with that later.

“This is bullshit!” he heard Joe rail, finally getting twisted up good and tight, just the way she wanted him to. The sudden saccharine sweet smile on her face was proof enough of her satisfaction.

“So you weren’t going to tell Jess? Weren’t thinking about having the video magically show up in her email?”

“Okay,” Joe held his hands up towards Sam in a pleading gesture and made his way towards his partner slowly, his eyes staying glued to Jessica as if she might start shooting magic bolts of electricity at him or make a break for it. “Okay, Sam. Truth. I thought about it for literally a split second. But I would never do that. To either of you.”

Sam reeled at this. The fact that Joe could even consider such a thing…

Jessica clapped her hands slowly, sarcasm oozing from the action. “Bravo! Congratulations on your breakthrough, Agent Randall, for the truth shall set you free.” The words were delivered with a wide-eyed smile and she threw her hands out to the side as if in praise. After a moment, she followed Joe and planted her feet right in front of the spot where he and Sam now stood side-by-side. “To be fair… he is right. He wouldn’t have done that. But not because he’s just such a loyal friend. It’s because he’s frightened and would rather cling to the status quo than man up and go after what he wants. What he really… really wants.”

“Wonder what would happen if he knew all the secret thoughts Jess has about him,” she continued. “Think he might change his tune?” She fanned herself with her hand. “And, I mean – Wow! Let me tell you. The woman may seem about as exciting as stale toast but she has quite the imagination when she wants to.”

“For instance…did you know she had this one recurring fantasy to be in the middle of you both? I mean…talk about a hot man-wich.”

Sam just stared in awe as the demon began writhing, running her hands over her breasts and palming her crotch in front of them. The verbal poison spewed from her mouth and he was powerless against the mental images she dredged up as she shared what she insisted were Jessica’s fantasies. He finally covered his ears in hopes of blocking the sound of her voice.
Either the hunters had their part sorted or Dean had simply had enough because soon enough his voice came booming. “Knock it off!”

Upon hearing the loudly spoken command, flashing blue eyes turned on him. “Little Winchester. Feeling left out? You want your turn? I have just oodles of dirt on you.”

“Nah. M’good. Full up on crazy bitch for the day, thanks.” Dean replied snarkily. “Bobby you got anything to shut this thing up?”

“I reckon so.” Bobby stood from the mortar and pestle with what Sam recognized as the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* sitting open in his hands.

“So now it’s time to dance, eh? Took you long enough Mr. Singer. Thought I was going to have to come over there and help you with that little pot of potpourri you call a spell.

The next words out of Bobby’s mouth were a deep, rolling Grecian chant.

That precise moment was when the Fury really got angry.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

“You’re a crafty one, Mister Singer. I’ll give you that.” Jessica turned and stalked towards where Dean and Bobby stood against the far wall. “Where’d you get that?” She eyed the aged book in his hands as if she wanted nothing more than to reach out and smack it to the floor.

Bobby never broke the chant and Dean could see that she was working hard not to flinch at the words pouring fluidly from his mouth like a foreign hymn.

“Old magic. Won’t. Work.” She ground out slowly through her teeth, her jaw clenched hard and the blue of her eyes glowing brighter until white shown through the center. It reminded him of halogen headlights set to bright.

“Oh, I don’t know. You’re looking pretty nervous there. I’m thinking this is doing the trick,” Dean gave her a toothy grin.

“Chant all you like. There’s no way you could have-”

“Completed the spell?” He absently fingered the soft leather pouch that hung around his neck by a cord. Bobby had handed it off to him to be used at the appropriate moment. Once the incantation was complete, Dean was to douse the vessel – Dean refused to think of it as Jessica – with the contents.

He realized too late that he should have kept his mouth shut. Upon seeing the square pouch and guessing what was inside, she let out a deafening screech and the force of her rage shot through the space like a lightning bolt. She motioned with her hand and drew to her the flame from one of the candles that lined the circle. She held it in her upturned palm and looked down at the ball, glowing brightly enough to illuminate her features with a golden glow. It was perfect destruction and beauty all wrapped up in one.

Her voice was no longer Jessica’s when she once again spoke, but more an animalistic growl with the extreme sibilance of a snake.

“S-s-s-s-silly hunters-s-s-s.” She turned her hand and the miniature bonfire contained in her palm
was cast forward towards Bobby. Dean watched with mouth agape as the book in his hands began
to crackle beneath the flame already eating at the edges of the fragile paper.

Bobby dropped the book onto the ground with a vicious curse and pulled his hat out, using it to
beat away the embers.

Dean moved to assist but found himself pinned to the wall by an unseen force. He looked to the
demon only to see her hand up towards him and fingers curling gracefully inward. In time with this
slight movement, he felt the leather cord around his neck, the very same cord that held the pouch,
pull and twist until it began squeezing uncomfortably into his flesh. He saw her goal. He knew it
wouldn’t be long before his airway was cut off completely.

“You underes-s-s-stimate me.”

The text was no longer burning and Bobby hunched once more over the smoking volume and set
about chanting once more. She growled and flung her arm wide. Dean could only watch helplessly
as Bobby flew across the room and crashed heavily into the wall. From his vantage point, he could
tell that the impact had been brutal and there had been a distinct cracking sound before Bobby fell
to the floor where he lay limp and unmoving.

“Bobby!” Dean gasped out. He clawed against the cord twined around his throat but his fingers
found no purchase. He didn’t stop. His nails scraped at skin and pushed painfully into the soft
tissue, knowing he had to remove it. Already his lack of oxygen intake was making him feel
panicky and dizzy all at once.

His vision began to both darken and lighten around the edges and he realized that he was likely on
the verge of passing out.

He forced himself to calm down, knowing to panic any more would do little more than speed up
the process.

"Dean!” he heard Sam’s voice, fuzzy and muffled. There were more words but nothing that made
sense.

As his thoughts became muddier and muddier, he hoped that Sam would remember his warning.
Hoped he would be gone when Brian did what he would inevitably have to do. The hunter’s only
options left were shooting, containing, and banishing.

All was slow motion as he watched with detached interest a blurry figure rushing forward towards
him.

The gun went off and a high-pitched wail reverberating in the space until it was piercing his ears.

Almost instantly the cord loosened and Dean pulled in a giant lungful of air as he sank to the
ground no longer held up by her power.

His vision began to clear. He blinked several times until he recognized Joe standing before him,
looking determined as he worked at untwisting the cord that had been choking him. Finally he
pulled it over Dean’s head and thrust the pouch into his hands before turning to stand directly
between Dean and the demon.

The stance was almost like that of an on-edge bodyguard. If Dean didn’t know any better, he’d say
that Joe was protecting him. And as he came back to his senses, he realized that’s exactly what the
man was doing. He was blocking Dean from further injury so that he might be able to do his part
without fear of a second attack.
He glanced at the book, hoping it was reachable and still in one piece after it’s flight across the room but when he did, his eyes landed on Sam, down on one knee, flipping furiously for the right page.

It seemed as though Sam felt his eyes upon him because he looked up quickly, just a quick flick of his eyes, enough to ensure that Dean was still with them, and then he was back to the text.

Sam was good with languages, Dean recalled. If any of them could do it…

They just had to make sure the demon didn’t notice him.

He glanced over Joe’s shoulder to see Jessica bent at the waist. She was obviously wounded, her back tense and rounded. Her head shot up and she glared at Brian with her teeth bared. She looked like a feral dog, cornered and wounded.

“Foolish! You s-s-sh-shall regret that.”

She put her hand up and pulled more flame from the nearest candle. Dean saw where the bullet had found its mark then, as she moved. It was in her chest but on the right side and closer to her shoulder, nowhere near her heart. A dark wet stain was spreading across the blue blouse, the red and blue mixing to make it look like a deep plumb color instead of the crimson he knew it to be.

Still, it was maximum impact with minimal damage.

Brian still held the gun but it was now pointed at the floor. He darted sideways as she launched the flame his way. It narrowly missed him and the demon hissed again. It was becoming apparent that she had definitely been weakened.

“Hey Dean?” Brian called from the entrance to the alcove, where he was now lounging against the wall in a mockingly casual manner.

“Yes, Brian?”

“What do you call it when a demon runs?”

Dean closed his eyes and shook his head, knowing what was coming. “I don’t know, Brian. What?” he asked, playing along.

“Exorcise!”

Joe snorted and Brian’s eyes met Dean’s over the agent’s shoulder. Dean indicated that Brian should begin.

“Exorcizamus te, omnis immundus spiritus…”

The demon chuckled, a hand gripping her arm to keep the side that had received the bullet free from movement. “You…honestly think that will work? Your s-s-silly little Latin s-s-s-sing-song?” She turned away from them and faced Brian where he stood. “Do you know who I am?” Her voice rose until she was shouting. “I am no mere drone! My power is far greater than you realize. If you think…” She turned her head and Dean saw her grimace.

“Maybe it won’t get rid of you. But it’ll annoy the fuck out of you in the meantime.” And with that, he added his own voice to Brian’s. “Omnis satanica potesta…”

The demon pushed fingers into the long blond hair and gripped the roots tight, upset by the
relentless stream of Latin.

As they neared the end of the exorcism ritual, Sam’s voice carried over Dean and Brian. Dean looked at the man, one hand splayed over the right side of the book to hold it in place while his index finger on the other hand slid across the page under each word as he spoke it with a bold passion.

The demon could feel it. Could feel the shift in the chanting and in return came a distinct change in the atmosphere. The temperature dropped as if there were a spirit there with them and soon Dean saw his breath puffing out in front of him as dual voices finished strongly all but yelling “audi nos!”.

Sam carried on and the demon fell to her knees, crawling slowly to the edge of the devil’s trap. “Sam,” it was once again Jessica’s voice, weak and upset.

Seeing her moving towards him, Dean moved to intercept.

He wanted to call out. Wanted to tell him that it was likely a trick. One last attempt. But it wasn’t necessary. Sam just closed his eyes tightly and finished the chant seemingly from memory.

“Sam,” the demon tried again, her voice sounding smaller.

Sam’s eyes opened and found Dean’s automatically, indicating he was finished.

He walked to the edge of the trap, leather pouch at the ready, to do his part. Taking a handful of fine powder, a mixture of herbs and ingredients that he would rather not know the origins of, he sprinkled it over the woman now lying pitifully in the fetal position on the ground.

The mix floated down like a dusting of snow and as it made contact, Jessica’s body turned and heaved upward, her chest bowing and limbs bending unnaturally until all that was touching the ground was the top of her head and the balls of her feet. She screamed and screamed and screamed. Fingernails clawed at the stone until they tore and bled.

There was a loud howling explosion that lit the room like a miniature atomic bomb and then…it was over.

The screaming stopped.

Her body collapsed and a cloud of bluish-black smoke seeped out of her mouth slowly and left nothing but a halo of soot on the ground around Jessica’s prone figure.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

The aftermath was a flurry of activity and confusion.

The silence in the alcove was short lived and the sound of sirens and alarms quickly filled the air. Somewhere between the screaming and the explosion, an alarm had been triggered.

Joe, Brian and Dean grabbed the bags and all helped carry Bobby while Sam gathered Jessica up into his arms. Both were still unconscious and due to that fact, no one seemed to be willing to stop them as they moved through the hallways and exited the same way they had entered.

Streams of prisoners flowed from every doorway, expressions ranging from boredom to confusion
No one seemed to know what was happening but the general consensus seemed to be that there was a fire.

Sam didn’t correct anyone.

Fire truck, ambulance and police sirens all shortly joined in with the amplified buzzers and alarms within the prison creating a cacophonous chorus that filled the night and could surely be heard for miles around.

Jessica’s eyes blinked open once they were outside and she lay cradled against Sam’s chest, but she had yet to say a word. He fell to his knees there, rocking her gently and kissed her forehead like he had done a thousand times before. He didn’t miss the fact that Joe’s eyes were on them from where he stood several feet away and when Joe’s eyes met Sam’s, he shifted and looked to the ground quickly.

The others had lain Bobby down in the grass away from the building. There was no use trying to paste the gates at this point. There was no way they could have moved Bobby that far, especially not knowing how bad his internal injuries might be.

Dean was bent over the man he thought of as a father, his hands gripping one of Bobby’s hands tightly while he spoke in hushed tones to him. “I know you’re gonna be alright,” he said, his voice thick with emotion. “You’re too damn stubborn to let some demon bitch get the best of you. I mean…that fall didn’t even hurt I bet. You melodramatic bastard.” Sam listened and ached for his lover.

Brian waved the paramedics over to see to Bobby and both hunters stayed resolutely in their places beside him until the professionals were forced to shoo them away.

Joe had called another over to examine Jess and the medic immediately called for a stretcher as he began applying pressure to the bullet wound. Sam let go of her reluctantly and watched as they carried her off towards the awaiting ambulance, rapidly checking vitals as they went.

By the time he turned back around, he found that the police had surrounding the remaining group with guns drawn. Purely a precautionary measure, he was sure. A second wave of cops came through the circle and immediately Brian and Dean were placed in handcuffs.

“Wait!” Sam withdrew his badge from his back pocket, as Joe began pulling his from the inside pocket of his jacket. They held them up to the uniformed policemen. “Agents Randall and Wesson of the FBI. These men are in our custody.”

The officer looked at their badges and then around at his colleagues obviously hoping for a second opinion on how to handle the situation.

“No, Agent. They aren’t in your custody.” Sam wanted to groan as he heard the warden’s voice call out from behind one of the men that had Brian roughly by the arm. “Officers, the agents were told to leave the property earlier today. They have no business here and as far as I’m concerned they have no right to be here.”

“What’re you gonna do, warden? Have us arrested?”

The man looked down his nose at them. “Wesson, when I’m done with you, you’ll be lucky if you still have your job,” He scowled and shook his head, looking furious and disgusted all at once. “You’re a menace and a disgrace to your position.”
“Warden Larsen, I respectfully beg to differ,” a warm southern drawl cut in.

Sam looked down, shocked to see McKay suddenly standing at his side. She had promised to run interference after the fact. Still…

Where had she come from?

“And who, might I ask, are you?” the warden questioned, obviously a little thrown by her appearance as well.

She smiled sweetly and brushed a few stray strands of white mane out of her face. His rudeness was offset by her charm and with her presence Sam felt a little more at ease. “I’m Special Agent Suzanne McKay.” She held her own badge up and moved across the circle of police to stand directly before Larsen. “I believe we have a few things to discuss, warden.”

Larsen looked at the badge and then back to her face and eventually nodded. They stepped away and the rest of them stood stiffly, waiting for the outcome.

Not long after, they returned and the warden seemed perplexed. “The prisoners are to be returned to their units.” he glanced towards McKay, who seemed to have moved on to bigger fish, already across the way speaking to someone who looked to be rather official and high up. “They were unofficially assisting the...agents, and at the insistence of the FBI we are to forget of their involvement.”

The warden looked as though he might choke on the words.

Sam looked to Dean with relief only to find that the other man was not looking back. Nor was he looking particularly reassured. He stared at the ground, looking ashen and unsteady on his feet.

Upon closer inspection Sam saw that Dean was panting, his lips white at the edges. He was in pain.

“This man needs medical attention,” Sam alerted them when he realized neither Dean nor Brian were going to be uncuffed. The officer beside Dean nodded mutely and marched him towards the small triage area that had been set up beside the nearest ambulance.

Brian was led away and he nodded to Sam and Joe as he passed, a satisfied smile on his face.

“Well that was interesting,” Joe said tightly once they were alone.

Sam sniffed at the understatement. “No shit. I need a damn drink. Or eight.”

Swiftly they moved together towards the flashing lights of the ambulances. The same direction in which they had taken Bobby and Jessica, and now Dean.

“Agents!” They drew up short as they heard McKay call out to them. She had a hand outstretched as she crossed towards them quickly. “All has been taken care of, I take it?” she asked, finally standing before them, her hands on her hips and a knowing smirk lighting her face.

“It has,” Sam confirmed, immediately knowing that she was speaking about what happened inside the prison. “Thanks to you.” He knew they never would have been able to pull it off without both her assistance obtaining ingredients as well as her interception and handling of the warden. The woman had been a godsend.

“Darlin’, that’s a little like thankin’ the guy that put the wheels on the car when somebody wins at
Daytona. I was just doin’ my job so that you could do yours. But you were the one drivin’ the car, if you’ll pardon the metaphor.”

“What did you tell the police? The agency?” Joe asked, eyeing the men she had been speaking with before. Sam couldn’t quite place who they were. It couldn’t be their replacements. Not that quickly.

“Don’t you worry about that Agent Randall. Everyone has been suitably…” she ran her tongue along her teeth and looked pleased, “placated. They were given a massaged version of the truth, you see. Always easiest.”

They didn’t know what a ‘massaged’ version of this truth could possibly be in this situation but Sam was pretty sure it didn’t involve the word demon. He let it go with a grateful smile and McKay turned on her heel and strode away with a promise that she would be seeing them again.

Sam and Joe didn’t waste another second moving towards the ambulance area after that. Their first stop was Jessica, who was stretched out on a gurney about to be loaded into the ambulance.

She looked so small beneath the gray blanket that they had used to cover her. Even under the thick wool he could see her shivering and it broke his heart. He wanted to go and comfort her. Tell her he was sorry. That he still loved her.

Sam felt Joe stop dead in his tracks beside him and he looked back at his friend. He too was openly watching Jess with a veiled longing in his eyes. A look that Sam now knew must have been there for a while, he had simply been unable to see it. It was now all he could see.

Jess’s brown eyes moved sadly back and forth between the two of them and Sam could stay away no longer. He approached asking the paramedics to give them a moment as he put a hand to her cheek.

“Hey beautiful,” he said smiling down with what he hoped was a reassuring smile.

She looked up at him and tears welled up in both of their eyes. Somehow, without her saying a word, he knew then that she remembered everything. Knew that she had been there even if it wasn’t her. “Sam,” she began weakly.

He shook his head at her placing a finger over her lips to stop her from saying any more. “There will be time enough to talk later;” he assured.

She closed her eyes and nodded. When she opened them again, her eyes looked past him at Joe who had finally worked up the nerve to approach. Sam followed her gaze.

“Joe, why don’t you go with Jess?”

The suggestion earned him two uncertain stares, to which he answered with a soft smile.

He didn’t know what to make of things as they were. He knew he would never forget the things the demon had said. He would never forget the look on Joe’s face, tortured by the idea that Jess might never love him. If Jess truly felt the same, there was no way he could come between them now. Not with that knowledge.

“C’mon, go.” was all he said as they began pushing Jess into the back of the vehicle. She grabbed and squeezed his hand before she was pulled away and he caught a glimpse of a sweet smile. It was a feeble version of the smile that had always drawn him to her but it was beautiful all the same.
Joe clapped him on the shoulder, his expression unreadable.

“Go,” Sam repeated, jerking his head towards the ambulance.

Joe went without another word.

Sam watched the driver close the door between them and then drive through the gates that would take them towards the road into town.

Sam looked around, hoping to find Dean nearby but he wasn’t at the triage and he wasn’t in the remaining ambulance. He turned in a circle, searching the crowd until he finally saw him being lead stumbling back towards Unit A’s location.

“Winchester!” he called out, walking quickly in the man’s direction fast enough that he might as well have been jogging.

The guard who had him by the arm didn’t hear or willfully ignored the call but Dean heard and he looked back, even as he was propelled forward.

Sam stopped, realizing it would do no good to get closer. He wanted to run to him. To kiss him and check to be sure he was okay. Just to touch him for a moment and find solace in his presence.

But Sam knew the inmates. Had been one of them for a while. There were a lot of things that could be overlooked but being friendly with the law wasn’t one of them. Dean already had a hole in his side just based on the rumor that Sam was a narcotics officer. God only knew what they would do to him if they thought Dean was actually a Fed spy or something equally outrageous.

So he held himself back, fighting against every ounce of desire to go to his lover.

He watched from afar as Dean faded into the sea of orange.

Once or twice he thought he spotted Deluca and Veronica and tried to locate Dean near them but he had no luck.

For half an hour he stood there. Stood until the firemen deemed it safe for the prisoners to be returned to their pods. He stood there as the police began heading towards their squad cars. Until the last ambulance pulled away. Until each group began filing back into the building.

Unit A was last to go and as they all walked in a particularly zombie-esque fashion towards the building, a familiar figure brought up the rear. Dean’s eyes were on him; he could see that now. He wondered if the man had been watching him the whole time, waiting to be picked out of the crowd.

A good amount of space separated them but Sam was close enough to see the tired smile on Dean’s face. It was an awesome sight.

Sam couldn’t help but be drawn towards him. Like gravity, what was between them felt like an invisible force binding them together, pulling him in.

Dean walked backwards towards the door, most of the prisoners inside now. He said something but Sam couldn’t make it out.

“What?” he called out to Dean.

Dean raised his voice to be heard. “I said, you did good!”

Dean turned then and disappeared back into the building leaving Sam alone and exhausted but
feeling somehow better than he had in a long, long time.

Chapter End Notes

I hope this is coherent as it was written on very little sleep. I have one more chapter and the epilogue to go! In the home stretch now. Please leave comments and/or feedback if you're able. I really appreciate them all!!!
This is it guys!!! The last two chapters. It's been an amazing journey!

I want to thank EVERYONE for reading and all that posted comments but especially those that posted regular feedback. It was because of you guys that I bothered to continue and you made writing Time Served such a wonderful experience for me and made me feel part of a community when I needed it most.

With that being said, I give you that last two chapters. I hope they meet your expectations!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The morning came all too soon and Sam stretched his arms out to the side and yawned, his eyes still glued firmly shut. He wondered idly in that hazy half-conscious place between sleep and wakefulness how much longer he might have to snooze before the guards came around yelling for them to get up.

Then it occurred to him that his bed was far too comfortable. His pillow was also too fluffy and the room was devoid of any noise that might indicate a second person.

His head popped up, taking in his darkened surroundings before sighing and collapsing back onto the plush pillow with a frown. It was a rare occasion that he was so out of it that he forgot where he was.

He remembered now.

After the events of last night, he had finally left the prison on foot, waving off offers of rides from McKay and several off-duty officers. He had backtracked on the original path taken only a few hours before and retrieved Bobby’s Charger from its spot just beyond the tree line.

By the time he had gotten to the hotel where he knew Joe had been staying, he checked in and took his first private shower in months. It was so luxurious and needed that he had stood there under the spray until his fingers and toes began to prune and the room was so filled with steam that he’d been unable to even see to locate his towel.

Too keyed up with adrenaline to sleep, Sam had decided to go out for food. He pulled his wrinkled suit pants back on with his white undershirt. His dress shirt, he noted, was covered in a fine soot and what was unmistakably blood was brightly pronounced near the collar.
Thankfully he had used his badge as identification for the room, otherwise the hotel clerk probably would have called the cops on him all over again.

He had ventured out into the night once more, well past one in the morning. It was a small town that thrived mainly on jobs from the prison and the local Wal-Mart so nothing was open for business to speak of. He had found an all night liquor store, however, and felt that this was an acceptable substitute for a proper meal considering his current situation. With a fifth of Johnnie Walker Black Label and a questionable microwave burrito from the gas station across the street, he had settled himself back on the bed, binging on bad late-night television until he drank himself to sleep.

Now, he lay there blinking into the darkness, a fuzzy dry feeling in his mouth, a dull but bearable throbbing behind his eyes, and his left arm wrapped around the spare pillow as if it were a person. He tried not to believe that he had done this in his sleep because he was already accustomed to Dean being curled up beside him.

Sam turned over towards the pillow to nuzzle and squeeze it, still denying that it meant anything more than him getting comfortable and enjoying the soft bed.

“Who am I kidding?” he asked the empty room before running a hand over the soft white fabric and sighing again. He already missed Dean so much it felt like a piece of him had been yanked out and taken away. There was no real way to pinpoint it. He just knew it didn’t feel right.

He rolled far enough to see the illuminated clock beside the bed and chuckled at himself. It seemed that his body had woken him up only minutes before the buzzers were set to go off at the prison, releasing the prisoners from nighttime lock up. After so many days there, it must have been engrained in him to get up at that exact time.

He knew Dean would be waking up around this time as well. He wondered if his sleep had been any better than Sam’s had been. He hoped it had as he knew the other man needed it. Sam hadn’t seen the actual wound but he had seen the effect the pain had on his lover and knew that the events of last night couldn’t have helped the healing process.

Visiting hours at Bolt were later in the morning. Sam had already made up his mind that he would go and check on him. He wasn’t going to miss a chance to see him because soon enough Sam was going to have to be debriefed and surely another case would follow. He would be reassigned, called away and after that, his ability to see Dean would be severely limited.

Sam laid back, one arm still clutching the pillow for emotional support, and ran his fingers through his hair before reaching for the phone attached to the clock radio.

“Front desk.”

“This is room…” his nose wrinkled as he tried to recall. “Three Fourteen. Could you possibly get me the number for the nearest hospital?”

He thanked them and redialed.

“Good morning, County Memorial Hospital,” a chipper female voice greeted. “How may I assist you?”

“Yes, I’m calling to check on two patients that I believe were admitted there last night.”

“Yes sir, can you give me the names?”
“The first is Jessica Moore.”

He heard her fingers flying over a keyboard, lightning fast. “Miss Moore is in room two twenty-five. It looks like she is set to be released tomorrow.”

Sam let out a relieved breath. If she was getting out tomorrow, surely things weren’t too bad.

“The second is Robert Singer?”

She typed away furiously, the little clacks of the keyboard sounded like the rapid tap of rain on a tin roof.

“There’s no one here by that name.”

Sam’s brain immediately flooded with thoughts of having to tell Dean that Bobby hadn’t made it. His heart squeezed tightly in his chest and the room went hot. “W-would it be possible to check if he might be in the…the morgue?”

“No. No listings there either. Is it possible he might be listed under another name?”

Sam considered this. The paramedics had immediately rushed Bobby away. He couldn’t be sure the man had identification on him. Joe may not have thought to look for him there with all that had happened. “Can you see if a John Doe was admitted?”

“It does look like there was a man admitted last night, no name. He’s listed as male, approximately mid-fifties. Brought in from the prison.”

Thank God!

“Sounds about right.” It had to be him.

“If you know this patient, admin will want to speak to you to get his information.”

“Okay. Can you tell me his current status? Will I be able to speak to him?”

“Hmm.” She hummed and Sam gnawed at the inside of his lower lip. He’d never liked that sound coming from the medical community. One rarely heard ‘Hmm… looks like you won’t need surgery’ or ‘Hmm… that x-ray is really aesthetically pleasing but we don’t see anything wrong here.’ “It looks like he is currently in surgical recovery and cannot receive calls.”

“Recovery?”

“Yes sir.”

“Recovery from what? What type of surgery?” “I’m sorry sir, I don’t have those details. I can connect you to the nurse’s station. They may be able to give you more information. Or I can connect you to Miss Moore’s room.”

He hesitated for a long moment, weighing his options. If he was honest, he was afraid to speak to Jess. After all that she had been through… After everything he’d heard… He didn’t know what to say. He did know that whatever he said would be better said face-to-face.

The lady on the other end of the line cleared her throat. “Sir? Would you like me to connect you?”

He squeezed the bridge of his nose with his thumb and middle finger. “Connect me to the nurse’s station, if you don’t mind.”
“Not at all sir. Thank you and have a good day!”

After a brief discussion with an obviously sleep-deprived but surprisingly helpful nurse he was assured that Bobby was going to be fine now that they had drained excess fluid off of his brain. The swelling was under control and he was on the mend but he would have a little while until he was back in the swing of things.

Sam hung up the phone and buried his face back in his “Dean” pillow in both relief and in reluctance to move further.

Soon enough he would have to venture out. He needed to get a change of clothes. Needed to contact Joe so that he could get into his room and collect his own personal items that had been left in his partner’s care.

All of that could wait. He would go as he was to the prison, see Dean, go to the hospital, and then after that he would rejoin the outside world as Sam Wesson, Special Agent.

Swinging his legs off the bed, plan in place, he whined childishly when the phone began ringing disturbing his momentum. The only reason he bothered to answer was on the slight chance that it was Joe and he might be able to slip into some of his own fresh clothing sooner rather than later.

“Hello?”

“Well good morning, Agent Wesson,” Agent McKay’s voice poured from the receiver, smooth like the remnants of Johnnie Walker still pumping through his system.

That reminded him…

He looked around the edge of the bed trying to locate the bottle.

“Agent McKay! Good morning. What can I do for you, ma’am?”

He crouched on the floor and looked beneath the bed, spotting the bottle just out of arm’s reach. He tried though. With all his might, he stretched his arm as far as it would go towards the half-full bottle of whisky.

“Actually, Agent, I was callin’ about something I might be able to do for you.”

Sam listened to her go on explaining her intentions and soon he abandoned his quest for the bottle altogether. He sat, kneeling on the floor next to the bed both speechless and a little breathless as well.

“Are you serious?” he finally managed.

She sniffed and clicked her tongue. “Darlin’ I know I seem like a barrel of laughs, but I assure you that one thing I do not joke about is matters of the bureau.”

Sam laughed but it was even to his ears slightly maniacal.

“I’ll take that as a ‘you’ll think about it’.”

“Um…I’m sorry. I just…”

“You’re a bit bowled over. I get it. Well, tell you what. I’m goin’ down to the prison now. If you want to ride along for the show…” She left the invitation open.
“Absolutely!” He agreed quickly

“Good. I’ll be ‘round in half an hour.”

Sam hung up without saying goodbye. Talk about being knocked for a loop.

He was definitely awake now. Awake like he’d just tapped a vein with a triple espresso.

He hopped up, yanking on clothes like there was a fire, and rushed to get out the door. He had to find new clothes immediately. There was no way he was going to stand there looking like a reject from a Frank Capra film.

Looked like Agent Wesson was rejoining the world a little sooner than expected.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Dean’s wake up call that morning was the very loud sound of a fist hammering against the glass wall of the pod. “C’mon Winchester! Move out!”

He groaned and rolled over onto his side searching for the warmth of the body he thought should be next to him. That must have been the sound. Sam was trying to wake him up.

“Five more minutes, Sammy,” He mumbled into the pillow.

Without warning, the blanket was yanked away from him and he turned, blinking against sleep-fogged vision.

One of the guards was standing over him, looking none too pleased. “I think not,” he said, the words clipped. “Been told you have to go to breakfast. No pain pill until you eat.” He rolled his eyes. “But I’m not your fuckin’ mother. So…fair warning. You don’t make it out there in the next thirty seconds you can forget it.”

It was as though the words magically willed the pain to the surface. As soon as the c.o. had mentioned the pain relief, his side had felt like it was being ripped open all over again.

The night before had been pretty brutal. After everything had happened, after the demon had gone down, Bobby was taken care of and he felt pretty sure Jessica would be alright, the pain that he had been pushing down flared right back to life with double force.

Sam had insisted the cop take him to receive medical attention but that was just about all he remembered from the time they’d watched Bobby go with the medics until the time that whatever the paramedic had given him had kicked in. He remembered them having to reclose the wound but even that recollection was sketchy and felt more like part of a dream.

He rolled off of the bottom bunk, almost grateful that the meds they had given him had knocked him out before he could pull his jumpsuit off. He followed the c.o. out of the pod and fell into the back of the line that was already making their way towards the cafeteria.

He got his food and took a seat across from Deluca and Rebadow as per usual. Veronica slid into the seat beside him with Brian moving to sit next to her, an arm draping over her shoulders in a casual friendly gesture.

Dean looked down at the seat on the other side of him that sat vacant and it really hit him again.
Sam’s gone.

He felt the man’s absence like a physical ache. It was a feeling that was foreign to him. Even when his father had left him as a child, it had never made him feel so…left behind.

“How’s the war wound?” Deluca asked, drawing his attention away from the saddest empty seat in the world. He looked up to see the man looking at him with worry in his eyes.

Dean shrugged one shoulder and began picking at his waxy clump of scrambled eggs. “Hurts like a bitch. I’ll be fine. Just wish I had some Wild Turkey.”

“We could all use a little of that.” Deluca’s eyes glazed over and he smacked his lips as if trying to locate the taste of the whiskey somewhere in his sensory memory.

“Nooo,” Dean corrected. “Jack Daniels you drink. Turkey’s for cleaning up after a…work related incident.”

If there was such a thing as a Hunter’s Bible, Dean was sure that would have been on page two. At least. Right after page one which would state ‘only become a hunter if you’re a masochistic idiot and want to spend your life traipsing around the country alone, enjoy being constantly in danger, and are alright with the health problems brought on by a consistent diet of cheap alcohol and even cheaper fast food’.

Brian laughed and speared a greasy hash brown with his plastic fork. “Yeah, buddy! A little Wild Turkey on there and he’d be right as rain in under an hour. The stuff is like magic.”

Veronica shook her head and scoffed at him. “That’s because it soaks into your skin, genius.”

“Well…all I know is it works. Never much cared how.”

They lapsed into silence, all eating or at least picking at their breakfasts for a long while. At least until Deluca could take the silence no longer.

“So what the hell happened to you two last night?”

Dean glanced over at Brian, who frowned and shook his head. “What are you talking about?”

“Yeah. I was in the hospital. Brian too.”

Deluca’s look said that he was in no way stupid and should not be treated as such, but all he said was, “Uh-huh.”

“Anyone ever figure out why we were evacuated?” Veronica asked, leaning in to Brian.

“I heard there was an explosion. But they couldn’t find the source.” Rebadow picked a piece of lint off of his uniform and folded his hands together on top of the table. “Hey! Was it my imagination or did I see Wesson?”

Dean once again glanced at Brian who kept a blank look on his face and then at Veronica who gave him a somewhat knowing look. He turned back to the older man and shrugged. “No idea. Maybe you were hallucinating.”

“Yeah. Maybe that explosion was toxic gas and we were all tripping,” Brian offered helpfully.

Rebadow frowned and looked as if he were actually considering this as a possibility.
Dean lowered his head and worked on finishing his food so that he wouldn’t have to speak any more.

When they moved out into the yard, Brian fell into step beside him and Dean looked at him with a small half smile. “Well, we did it.”

Brian grinned at him and he felt the camaraderie he’d once felt with the other hunter bubbling back up to the surface. “Hell yeah, we did.”

“I just wanted to thank you, man.” Dean stopped and held his hand out. “Couldn’t have done it without you.”

His ex pushed his hand away and pulled Dean into a brotherly hug, clapping him on the back several times. “Glad I could be there. Nothin’ like kicking a little demon ass.”

Dean chuckled, “Just glad we had backup on this one.”

“Yeah. And…I was wrong about Wesson. He’s an alright guy.”

He sniffed at this. “You feeling okay?”

“Of course I’m feeling okay! I’m still riding high on the hunt, De. Jeez! It’s gonna kill me sitting here for…years.”

Dean watched the rollercoaster of Brian’s emotions move from the thrill of the high quickly to the doldrums of reality. “It’s okay. Good behavior and maybe you’ll be out in…what? A couple of years?”

Brian swallowed and frowned. “Try six.”

This was a surprise to Dean. He’d felt his eighteen months was pretty harsh, but then he also knew he was innocent. But six years…

“Shit,” he said simply.

He watched Brian struggle to get his face to pull back into his trademark carefree smile. He almost won. “No kidding.”

“Maybe… Maybe we can talk to Sam. Maybe he has friends that can look into the case. We can appeal!”

Brian nodded and ran his fingers through the back of his shaggy raven hair. “Yeah. Maybe.”

Dean grimaced, hating that this had happened. To both of them. After all the lives they’d saved… That they would be holed up in prison for any amount of time seemed like a cruel joke.

“Winchester!”

Brian and Dean both looked up to see Cappy, who was closing in on them, thumbs stuck through his belt loops.

“Yeah?”

“Come with me,” the c.o. snapped out, obviously unhappy that he had to be the one to play escort.

“Where we goin’?”
“To Hell if you’re not careful.” The snarky response made Dean tense and he looked closely at the man’s eyes. No, it was Cappy. No demon. Just an asshole.

"Lead the way."

Several minutes and a long walk later, Dean found himself in the outer corridor of the warden’s office. He had never been there himself, but the oversized, ostentatious plaque on the door clued him in easily to his location.

The officer knocked at the door and opened it when a female voice called out for them to enter. Cappy waved him in where he was greeted with a surprise.

“Dean,” he heard his name roll softly from the lips of one Sam Wesson. The man himself was standing just inside the door, looking for all intents and purposes, like he was a man on a mission.

Dean licked his lips as he took in the sharply dressed man. His shirt was crisp and bright white and tucked beneath a simple but well-fitted black suit. It was topped off with a skinny green tie that was a remarkably similar shade to Dean’s eyes. He was sure it was a coincidence, but the idea that it might not be made him smile.

Taking in the woman standing stiffly beside what he assumed was the warden’s desk, he refrained from doing the things he was picturing in his mind. Namely pushing the taller man against the wall and stripping him slowly out of that pretty new suit.

“Sam,” he replied in greeting, hoping that his eyes conveyed to him all that he wanted to say. “What are you doing here?” Last he heard, Sam had been kicked out of the prison.

“On business I suppose you could say.”

“Have you heard anything about Bobby? Is he okay?”

Sam’s smile instantly put him at ease. “He’s going to be fine. They had to reduce some swelling in his brain but it’s all taken care of now.” The taller man took a step in his direction, like he couldn’t help himself. “How are you? Are you feeling okay today?”

Dean put a hand up to his side. “Okay. Gave me something so I could sleep last night. It’s better than it was.” His words seemed to soothe the other man and Dean found himself once again amazed that Sam cared for him. Maybe even as much as Dean cared for Sam.

“Agent Wesson, would you mind giving me a moment with Mr. Winchester?”

Sam nodded at the woman and passed close to Dean as he left the room. His hand brushed against Dean’s giving it a quick squeeze. Then he was gone, the door closed behind him, and Dean was left alone with the woman.

He thought he remembered her from the night before. Something about her hair. It was white as if the color had been stripped from it or had never been there in the first place. She felt familiar and yet he immediately had his guard up.

“Dean Winchester.” Her voice dripped with old southern money and charm. It was in the inflection.
She looked him up and down with a begrudging admiration that one might have when encountering a lousy but famous painting in person for the first time. “It is a pleasure to finally meet you in the flesh.”

“You have me at a disadvantage. Obviously you know who I am. Now…who are you?”

Her smile grew wider and she moved to lean back against the front of the warden’s desk. “I’m someone who’s been keeping an eye on you for quite a while.”

Well that wasn’t creepy at all, he thought sarcastically.

“My name is Suzanne McKay. I’m a Special Agent with the FBI.”

That explained why she was there with Sam anyway.

“What can I do for you Agent McKay?” He couldn’t possibly fathom what the FBI could want with him. Unless they were angry that their agents had gotten involved with a monster hunt. Or… unless they wanted to forbid him from being with Sam.

Could they do that?

They couldn't do that. Surely.

“I’ve taken a particular interest in your skills, Mr. Winchester,” she clarified. “And I’m here to make a very singular proposal.”

“A proposal?” He moved closer and she indicated that he could sit in one of the chairs in front of the desk. He held up a hand, declining the unspoken offer. “I barely know you. Surely rushing into marriage can’t be wise,” he joked, in a bid to ease his own growing tension.

Her expression did not change even a little. He felt as if she was studying him. Like he was a species that had never been held in captivity before. It was unnerving.

“Mr. Winchester-,”

“Dean.”

“Alright,” she acquiesced. “Dean. I’ve been followin’ your exploits for a few years now and I must say, you are very good at what you do.”

“I don’t know what you mean, Agent.” The lie flowed easily. It was a skill one didn’t lose.

“Come now. Let’s not waste time bullshittin’, sweety. I don’t have the patience for it nor do I have the time. With that in mind, I’ll not mince words. I think you a remarkable hunter. You have twice as many kills as most of the hunters we’ve been tracking. You have a knack for finding cases and a natural instinct for what you’re hunting and how to take it down. Your average time is three to five days, from finding the case to ending it.”

Dean felt his face growing hot and it wasn’t because he had the warm and fuzzies for the woman in front of him.

“How the hell do you know any of that?” he growled. “You’ve been tracking hunters? Spying on us?”

“I make it my business to know, Dean,” she replied. Her voice still carried a warm, smoothness but her eyes were pure unyielding steel. “There is a threat out there and it’s bigger than any of us really
know. Even you. From the moment I discovered this, I’ve made it a point to know every thing I can about the world that operates in the shadows. Including the people that fight it.”

He felt violated and angry. His hands closed into fists at his sides.

“Fine. You’re a hunter groupie. What does this have to do with me?”

“As I stated before, I have a proposition. I am currently heading up a team for a special project and I want you involved. In fact, you’re at the top of my list. First round draft pick, if you will.”

“What kind of project?”

She reached onto the desk behind her and thrust a file folder in his direction.

“We want to have a controlled group of supernatural specialists in the FBI arsenal.”

He flipped through the file she had given him and scoffed, rolling his eyes in her general direction. “PROJECT HUNTER,” he read, the words in boldface type on the center of the first page. “Really? Come up with that name all by yourself?”

She ignored his sarcasm. “The bureau has given approval to proceed with initial testing. We have to know that this will work before the project moves forward, you understand.”

“So what? I join and you spring me?”

“That’s exactly right.” She pulled the file from his hands and clutched it to her chest. “You have to weigh your options here. You can stay in prison, enjoying an eighteen month vacation from the real world.”

He snorted at the idea that anyone would consider that place a vacation of any sort.

“Or… You get out and start doin’ your job. The thing you’re meant to do.” She paused letting that sink in. “Imagine what it might be like to be able to walk into any part of a crime scene and have carte blanche. All your questions answered, any information required would be at your fingertips. Any weapon you needed would be at your disposal. No more calling in favors. No more fake identification. Your sole objective and concern would be to take out what you have to take out. The details would be taken care of.”

“Sort of like a Supernatural Double-O Seven?”

She gave him a humoring smile. “Somethin’ like that, sure.”

Dean thought about all of the times he had produced a fake badge. More times than he could count. It had gotten him into anywhere he needed to be. Calling in favors was the hunter’s way. It was a community.

The idea of hunting ever being legitimate… It seemed a blasphemy.

On the other hand… it would get him out of there. It would get him doing what he loved. Legally.

It might also allow him to be with Sam.

“What would I have to do?” It never hurt to ask.

She smiled, assuming he meant to accept. “You will train with the FBI and once you’ve done that, you will be given assignments. Cases to work. You would do all that you’ve been doing; only you
would get paid for it as you’d do it on the Government’s time.”

This is where Dean bristled. “So the government chooses my cases, tells me where to go and how to handle it?”

“No. You tell us how to handle it. That’s just it. We want this to become so much bigger. We want to eventually have an entire team of hunters. Want to get control of that ugly monster population and cut down on civilian lives lost. Hunters have done an amazing job for a very long time, but we feel it’s time for the authorities to step in.”

“What’s the catch?”

“No catch. However, this is a one-time offer. You either join and commit to at least five years of service… or you can carry out the rest of your sentence. Here. After this, the deal is off the table.”

He could take the job but from the sound of it, he would be little more than an enslaved puppet for the government. How was that not like being in prison? At least in jail there was the possibility for parole.

There was Sam to consider, but… Would Sam really respect him or, more importantly, would Dean respect himself, if he went against everything he knew? If he pledged his services to a program that was going to mean the possible eradication of the hunting way of life, what would that mean for his friends? His family? He would basically be spitting in the face of every hunter he’d ever known.

“I think you know my answer.”

She stared at him hard and tilted her head with a smile that made him think she knew something he didn’t. “I guess so.”

When he left the office several minutes later, Sam was outside the door waiting. He had his hands clasped behind his back and it was obvious he’d been pacing.

He rushed towards Dean when he saw him emerge. “Well?”

Dean could barely stand to see the hopeful questioning look in his eyes.

“Did you know? What she was going to offer?”

Sam frowned at the brusque tone Dean had used. “I did,” he said cautiously. “Only as of this morning. McKay filled me in on the way here.”

His lover reached for his hand and Dean allowed him take it, though he made no move to return the hold. “Dean,” Sam began beseechingly.

In his head, he knew it wasn’t Sam’s idea. Sam wasn’t forcing him to do anything. “Can’t do it, Sammy,” he murmured.

Sam, he could tell, was trying not to look disappointed. “That’s…too bad. But, that’s okay. I’m sure you have your reasons.”

Dean cut his eyes to the side and nodded before the guard grabbed his arm and led him away. His fingers slid slowly out of Sam’s grasp but he didn’t look back. He didn’t want to see the proof that he’d let his lover down.
Neither of them said goodbye.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##

Sam’s heart was surely going to beat out of his chest.

It seemed silly. He had been with Jessica for seven years and nervousness at the prospect of seeing her was something he hadn’t thought to experience again.

Yet there he was, sweating like he was in a sauna and standing waiting for the elevator that would take him to her floor.

He adjusted his tie just a little so that he still looked smart but so it wasn’t so tight around his neck and smoothed the length of it down with the palm of his hand. He looked down to see that he looked okay and the green hue of the tie caught his eye.

The entire suit had been purchased in the span of fifteen minutes from a small mom and pop clothing store near the hotel. The front desk had pointed him in their direction and he was grateful because he never would have made the place out to be anything but a dirty window store. Yet, as it happened in small towns and big towns alike, sometimes the best places to go were the places that didn’t look like much of anything at all.

The lovely lady that owned and ran the place didn’t have a large selection but she seemed to know just what he wanted and said she kept a small supply of wedding clothing for inmates at Bolt and their lady friends that decide to get married. And he had seen another rack towards the back filled with white dresses in all sorts of lengths and styles.

She had found just the right suit for his build, a little short in the jacket sleeves but it was amazing she had anything that fit him at all considering his height so he took it and was glad for it. The last thing she produced was a rack of ties. Normally he wasn’t too picky about these things. Jess had always bought him ties for work and they had always been the traditional conservative navy, ‘power’ red, or sometimes black even though he thought that looked way too ‘Reservoir Dogs’ for his taste. But the mossy green had stuck out to him. He had been drawn to it so specifically that he snatched it up and threw it on the pile with the rest of the suit without another glance. It wasn’t until he was standing face to face with Dean Winchester that he realized why the color had captured his attention. Damn it if it wasn’t the spot on color of the other man’s eyes.

He instantaneously smiled and then just as quickly frowned at the thought of his lover. The trip to Bolt with Agent McKay hadn’t gone exactly as they’d planned.

The only reason McKay had allowed Sam to be there was because she had hoped he would be the lure to get Dean to participate in her new project. He was shocked by the fact that she had caught on to the nature of their relationship. Obviously the woman didn’t miss a single thing. But neither of them had expected Dean’s reaction.

He didn’t know what he’d expected to happen. Maybe he thought Dean would accept her offer gratefully and jump into Sam’s arms. Dean would be released and by his side again and they would ride off into the sunset.

Instead it seemed that Dean was angry with him. He couldn’t quite reconcile it. Dean had been offered his freedom. He had been given the chance to work at doing the same exact thing that he had been doing before only now it would be on the Government’s payroll. No more hustling pool
or just scraping by. Sam couldn’t understand why that was so bad.

He wished he could ask Bobby. It wasn’t like they were all buddy-buddy but he liked the guy and Bobby loved Dean like a son. Knew him better than most. Bobby could probably tell him why Dean was upset. Sam knew it wasn’t possible though. Even if Bobby was awake, there was no way Sam could say anything about McKay’s plans with Project Hunter. It was top secret and highly classified.

Maybe that was part of the problem. If Dean was working under such secrecy, he would be virtually cut off from the people and life he had known before. The only life he’d really ever known. Sam recalled Dean’s eyes crinkling in the corners happily when he talked about the time several hunters had shown up for the same case and the witnesses became confused with the third health inspector arrival in two days. He remembered the smile that came to his face every time he talked about Bobby or the long stretches of highway that always led him to new sites and experiences.

Could that be part of it? That Dean thought it would mean the end of the life he knew. Sam wasn’t sure but he would be sure to ask in the morning when he visited again. That is, if Dean was still speaking to him.

Before he knew it, Sam was standing in front of the large wooden door emblazoned with the numbers 2-2-5. He knocked quickly, not giving his nerves a chance to talk him out of it.

“Come in,” he heard Jessica’s muffled voice answer.

He stood in the doorway for a moment, drinking in the sight of her. She looked lovely with her wavy blonde hair tamed into a braid. She wore one of the shapeless cotton gowns and was make-up free, but she smiled timidly at him and he thought she’d never looked better in his eyes.

“Hey.”

Sam smiled and returned the greeting. “How are you feeling?”

An eyebrow shot up in a look that asked ‘really?’ . “Worn. Like a rented Halloween costume.”

She smirked and he sniffed a laugh. At least she was joking.

“I brought you these,” he produced a small bouquet of Gerber daisies and crossed the small room to hand them over to her.

“My favorites!” She accepted the flowers with a rueful grin before laying them gently on the rollaway tray beside her. “You always were good at remembering those things.”

He watched the smile slip away and his own smile fell away right behind it. “Jess,” he began but she quickly held up a hand to stop him.

“Sam, don’t. I know what you’re going to say. And just…don’t.”

“Okay,” he agreed quickly. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt her further. He was in no rush to rub salt in any wounds. “Do you…? What do you…? Are there any ill effects?”

“You mean, do I remember last night?” She blew out a long breath between pursed lips. “Every single second.” Her eyes were far away as she recalled whatever part of the experience the words had conjured up. “It just felt like I was watching a bad movie, ya know? A bad movie that I couldn’t walk out of and that starred people I knew. I didn’t believe it at first but what she showed
me… It was all true, wasn’t it?”

He really didn’t want to know but if she could live it, he would handle hearing it. “What did she show you?”

“You. And the other man; the one that saved you. Dean. You were together. I mean like,” she swallowed hard and took a beat. “*together* together.”

Sam pulled his lips between his teeth and nodded minutely.

“Wow. That hurts a little more than I thought it would. Do you care for him?”

Again Sam nodded, unable to form words that would save both of them from the heartache they knew was oncoming. “But I need you to know that I never meant to hurt you.” Until his dying day he knew that would remain a steadfast truth. “It’s a horrible thing to say. It doesn’t do justice to how sorry I am, but I will understand if you can never forgive me.”

She pulled one side of her mouth up in a tight half smile. “Well I can’t say I’m happy about it but, I’ve had a little while to think on it and you know how I feel about these things. Everything happens for a reason.”

He almost laughed. She had always worn the sunny-side mentality well.

‘Everything happens for a reason’ had been a source of contention between them for as long as he could remember. Jess believed that even the bad things happened so as to make room for the good things in life. If she heard that a dog had been hit by a car, she would get misty eyed and then say that perhaps the dog’s owner needed to know that loss so that they might be inspired to work at a shelter and save so many more. When she got stuck in heavy traffic, she would shrug it off secure in her belief that it was likely the universe’s way of keeping someone – possibly even her - from a wreck or getting to their destination at a cosmically bad time. As a doctor, he felt that her thought process was misguided and maybe a little dangerous, but she never let it determine her ability to treat a patient and likewise didn’t share this theory with her patients or their families.

“How did she show you?”

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“Can I ask you something?” She blinked up at him and he took that as permission to proceed. “Is the other thing true? About…you and Joe?”

Jessica pulled her eyes away from his and looked down at her fingers, which were clasped together in her lap. When she looked back up there were tears gathering in her eyes. “I…We never did anything, Sam.”

“I believe you. But you care for him?” he rephrased his original question softly. “As more than a friend?”

“I-I think so,” she whispered, a lone tear slipping out and down her cheek.

She looked so fragile and he knew that she was more worried about his feelings in that moment than she had ever been about her own. He sat on the side of the large hospital bed and pulled her into his arms. “Jess. Please don’t cry. This whole situation…” he gestured randomly with his hand. “It’s all so messed up. But maybe you’re right. Maybe everything happens for a reason. And maybe this was God, the universe…whatever or whomever, making us see that it was time for us to part ways. I wonder if maybe it hadn’t been coming for a long time. Joe is my best friend. You know that.”

She squeezed her eyes shut tight as if his words were knives. Even after everything, she felt guilt about her own feelings.
“But,” he stressed, “that is precisely why I understand why you might fall for him. He’s an amazing guy. I don’t like it. There will always be a part of me that… that will be jealous of any man you’re with. There’s a part of me that wants to punch Joe’s lights out right now but…I gave up the right to be upset the second I cheated on you.”

“You can be upset.” Jess murmured against the front of his shirt as her fingers idly plucked at a button. “We can be mutually upset. And one day maybe we can be mutually happy for one another.”

He squeezed her tighter and she hissed in pain. He had forgotten the bullet wound. “Sorry!” he said quickly loosening his hold. “I don’t deserve you. You were always too good for me.”

“Ha!” She rolled her eyes. “What-ever.”

He laughed, bolstered by such a typical Jess reaction.

“You were. Are. Too good for me.”

Before any more could be said, there was a quick raping on the door and then Sam watched as Joe strode in. His suit was still the one he’d worn the night before. It was wrinkled and there was a heavy shadow across Joe’s face where he hadn’t shaved. Sam was sure the man hadn’t left once since Jess had been admitted.

“Oh,” he paused just inside the room, finally taking in the situation. “Sorry.” He hitched a thumb at the door. “I’ll just go back out. Get coffee and come back later.”

“No, wait!” Sam called out to him before he could round the corner. “It’s okay. If she wants you here…”

He looked at Jess who seemed to only have eyes for Joe at the moment. Yeah. This had been coming for a while, he recognized.

“If you’re sure,” Joe replied warily.

Sam smiled at the man that had been his partner for over five years. It was still the same man that had saved his ass on more than one occasion. Still the man that had served as a sparing partner, a constant ear, a sounding board, a drinking buddy. “I’d say that’s up to her.”

Jess’s eyes sparkled. It was a look that said it all.

Sam stood and moved away as Joe moved forward to take his place. Literally and figuratively.

As he moved towards the door he turned back towards them. “I want you to know I’m happy for you both. And I mean that.”

Joe nodded appreciatively. “And I’m sorry things happened like they did. I should have told you.”

“Maybe.” They would never know now. “We’ll talk later,” he said in way of farewell. Then something stopped him and he turned back around at the door. “Oh, one thing’s been bugging me.”

The two people that had been his family and his whole world for so many years sat patiently on the bed looking back at him and he almost lost it a little, but he pressed on.

“Why did you tell me you thought she was cheating on me?”

Joe actually looked a little embarrassed by the question and he glanced at Jess who rolled her eyes.
She was finally the one to answer. “Because he saw me having lunch with a coworker. Like I told you.”

“I…thought she might be attracted to him. It’s one thing for her to have been with you,” Joe attempted to explain. “It hurt but I could take it. But I didn’t want to watch her fall for someone else.”

“Moron,” Jess said affectionately, wrapping both of her hands around his arm.

“So you wanted me to play interference?”

He shrugged. “Something like that. Sorry, man.”

“Hey, don’t be.” Sam thought about all that had brought them to where they were. So many if’s.

If they hadn’t gotten the case.

If Sam hadn’t been the one to go undercover.

If Dean hadn’t gotten thrown in prison.

If Joe hadn’t said what he did about Jess cheating.

If Dean hadn’t found him in the shower.

If Sam hadn’t made the first move and kissed him.

If Dean hadn’t heard about the deaths.

If Sam hadn’t heard Dean asking about the deaths.

If they hadn’t been honest with one another.

If, if, if, if, if. A web of decisions behind them and it had all led right to this moment. Maybe Jess was really on to something with her theories.

“Get some rest. Both of you.” He patted the doorframe and cast one last reassuring smile their way.

He had planned to stop in and check on Bobby’s progress as well, but the man was still asleep. He filled out some temporary paperwork for the nurses so he could at least ditch the ‘John Doe’ status and told the nurse on duty that he’d be back to check on him tomorrow.

It was only mid-afternoon and already he felt completely exhausted. He decided to grab a bite to eat at one of the local diners and head back to get to bed early. He planned to return to the prison to visit Dean the next morning and he knew he’d have to eventually make his way into the field office to be reamed by his boss for unorthodox behavior or whatever was going to be said or done about the fact that he and Joe had been kicked off of their case. He could only imagine the voicemails on his cell from the man…

Shit!

He realized too late that he hadn’t gotten Joe’s key card from him to get his person belongings.

Oh well. He would just flash his badge and pull the whole ‘need to search a guest’s room’ thing. There was no way he was heading back into the room with Joe and Jess. He might be mostly okay with them being together. Didn’t mean he wanted to wallow in the imagery.
Dean wanted to sleep for a week.

For once, the feeling wasn’t directly due to physical pain of some sort but rather this time it was mental.

He wanted to ignore everything. Wanted to be left alone to wither away in his pod.

Alone.

He rolled his eyes and laid back on the bottom bunk.

Sam’s bunk.

Well, formerly Sam’s bunk. It was his now. When they got around to moving someone else in with him, he would take the bottom. He couldn’t imagine and wouldn’t allow some stranger to sleep in their bed.

He pulled the cover up over him even though it was nowhere near time for lights out. They hadn’t even gone to dinner yet. In fact he had no idea what time it was as he’d been exempt from work duty due to injury. The doc had checked him out, shoved a pain pill in his mouth and he’d been lying there every since. Successfully feeling sorry for himself.

“Hey.”

Deluca was standing in the doorway looking at him questioningly.

“Hey,” his response was flat and obligatory. It was all he could manage.

“Everything okay?”

“Sure. Why?”

“Well, honestly, you look like you should be on suicide watch. If you had a belt, I would be sneaking it out of here right about now.”

Dean scoffed. “Okay so maybe I’m being a little emo, but I’m not that bad.”

Deluca’s mouth pulled down hard at the corners and a “v” formed in his already lined forehead.

“What’s emo?”

“Nothing. Forget it.” Dean didn’t want to play word games with Deluca. He just wanted to be left alone.

It wasn’t in the cards. Deluca only came further in the room and sat cross-legged against the wall across from him.

“What are you doing?” He asked, hating that he was going to even expend the energy it took to be annoyed.

“You need a friend.” Deluca made a show of looking around dramatically. “No one else here. So what’s wrong?”
Dean rubbed at his eyes with his fingers. It was obvious the man wasn’t going to go away. May as well play along. “I… Okay, can this not leave the room please?”

Deluca made a crisscross motion over his heart.

“I guess you could say I got a job offer today.”

“Like…in the library?”

“No. Like, on the outside.” He sat up and sighed. “I wasn’t expecting it. It’s a little insane to be honest.”

“When would it start?”

“Immediately. My ‘get out of jail free’ card.”

“That’s great! So what’s the problem?”

“It… Okay so I’ve lived my life this one way, right?. All my life it’s been this way. I have friends and family out there. It works just fine the way it is.”

“Uh-huh.”

“And this job… It would mean leaving that all behind. Maybe even screw things up for all the people I know. Kinda like when companies outsource factory jobs.”

“So it’s a factory job?”

“No! It’s a government job.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. Oh.”

“And you don’t like what you would be doing?”

“I would be doing what I was doing before. Just…for them.”

“Can I ask; Does Wesson have anything to do with this?”

Dean hesitated but he trusted the old man as crazy as it seemed. “Yeah.”

“But you aren’t going to take it?”

“No.”

“And you’re staying here?”

He confirmed. “Until parole, I guess.”

Deluca nodded at this thoughtfully. “Yeah. Well I can see why you’d choose this palace over getting out, getting handed a job and getting to be with who you want to be with.”

His sarcasm stung but Dean let it roll off of his back.

“No guarantee I would be with him. A lot can happen. Plus I think he’s upset with me now for turning it down.”
“Okay fine. Still, you are dumber than a sock full o’ nickels, boy, if you think sitting on your ass in here for the next…”

“Seventeen months and three weeks,” Dean provided.

“…seventeen months and three weeks is somehow a better choice.”

“I guess that’s my point, Deluca. This is a choice. My choice. Out there… that deal… That’s servitude dressed up in a pretty package. That’s me being somebody’s puppet.”

Deluca chewed at his thumbnail. A sure giveaway that he was upset. “M’not saying sell out. But sometimes the good outweighs the bad. And I don’t know what you’d be doing, but if you’re good enough to get the offer then you’re probably pretty damn good. And I have a feeling that you sitting here and not doing whatever it is that you’d be doing out there is a waste of talent. Am I right?”

Dean shrugged his shoulders and combed his fingers through his hair. He hated that the other man made sense.

“Doesn’t matter. It was a one shot deal.”

“A one shot deal? For the great Dean Winchester? Come on. Who could resist you?”

Dean chuckled and recalled a white-haired woman that had looked at him as though she could see straight through to his grey matter. She could resist him. He was pretty sure she would remain immune to the Winchester charm.

Without another word, obviously feeling he’d done his duty, Deluca got up and left.

Still unwilling to move far, he stretched back out on the bunk and considered the conversation.

He thought about what it might have meant to standardize the hunter’s life. To straight-lace it. Sure he would have been under the watchful eye of Big Brother, but from what she said, he could’ve still been gankin’ the big bad.

He wondered what life might be like if he had said yes. Would he and Sam talk on the phone from halfway across the country? Would they pass like ships in the night, lining up schedules to see one another when they could? Sam said they got down time between cases. Maybe they would have taken a vacation together. Gone on a road trip. Followed Route 66, side by side in the Impala.

Dean recalled the dream he’d had. The vision. Him in the driver’s seat and Sammy riding shotgun.

He rolled over enough to press his face into the pillow, hoping to catch any trace of his lover’s scent. It was faint but it was there and he inhaled deeply, burying his face further.

Something crinkled and rattled as he bunched the pillow up around his face and he reached into the pillowcase, withdrawing two miniature packs of Skittles.

_Sometimes the good outweighs the bad._

Chapter End Notes
* Music credit for this chapter (meaning I listened to it on a loop for several days): "If I Be Wrong" by Wolf Larsen
Sam rubbed at his eyes sleepily as he made his way up the stairwell from Joe’s room location on the first floor to his own on the third.

It was hours past when he had originally planned to return and it felt like his brain and body both were about to shut down on him. He chalked it up to so much happening in the short span of the last week. He probably needed a good lie-in but he doubted lazy mornings were going to be anywhere in his foreseeable future.

After leaving the hospital, Sam had stopped at a diner down the street, which specialized in typical American fare. He’d been craving steak for weeks but after dodging a bullet on the microwaveable burrito the night before, he wasn’t sure it was wise to roll the dice on a t-bone from a place called Bubba’s 24 Hour Diner (where their slogan proudly proclaimed that they ‘go all night’). Instead he settled for a relatively safe hamburger and ate every bit of it sighing with pleasure at each bite. He had really missed flavor accompanying his food.

His plan was to get to sleep early and seeing as how Johnnie Walker probably wasn’t going to be a good sleep aid two nights in a row, he stopped at a drug store to grab some Tylenol PM. While he was there, he spotted a classic car magazine and grabbed it, thinking to give it to Dean the next day. It was a cheap peace offering, sure, but he knew Dean would appreciate the gesture. And he wanted to see that smile again, so badly.

With the seed planted, he picked up a basket and began loading it with odds and ends that he knew the prison would allow an inmate to keep. He grabbed a better quality toothbrush, a travel sized shave gel, a few bags of candy for when he played poker, and several puzzle books, pens, notebooks and even a greeting card that said ‘I miss ewe’ with a little fluffy lamb and sheep on the front. With a few minor “Winchester approved” adjustments, Sam decided he could make that adorable little animal into the most fearsome brain-craving zombie lamb ever imagined.

Upon his return to the hotel, he had immediately flashed his credentials and asked to be allowed into Agent Randall’s room. He used his ‘scary’ voice, which alone didn’t do a whole lot, but then he also squared his shoulders rising up to his full towering height and the young girl behind the desk seemed more than willing to acquiesce to his request.

Initially it was to be a five-minute sweep to get his things and go. Then he’d noticed the laptop. It was the high-powered beast they used on cases. It was loaded down, software upgrades galore and...
encrypted like you wouldn’t believe. They used it for everything from tracking criminals to running bugging equipment.

Sam sighed and opened it up. It had been three months. He figured he should probably check his emails.

Two hours later, he blinked blearily and finally noticed the time.

The door handle rattled and he gathered that had been what finally pulled him from his tedious email daze.

Joe jumped when he realized someone else was in the room and Sam immediately held up his hands. “Don’t shoot,” he deadpanned.

“What did you do? Break in?” Joe looked bemused but not annoyed. Not that there was any reason for him to be.

“Forgot to ask for your key so I just flashed the badge.”

“Gonna crash here?”

“Nah. I got a room last night. Just wanted to grab some fresh clothes,” he pointed at his small leather suitcase sitting at his feet.

“Speaking of fresh,” Joe wafted his shirt and grimaced. “I need a shower. Like, yesterday.”

“I didn’t want to say anything, but I can smell you from here, dude.”

Joe pulled off his shirt and tossed it in Sam’s direction. Sam leaned away from its arcing path like it was a grenade. Or more aptly, a stink bomb.

“I’m gonna go de-rankify myself. Feel free to stick around if you want. We could have a beer.”

The offer was sincere though it was pretty apparent that neither of them felt much like talking or hanging out.

“Thanks but I think I’m gonna head up and hit the sack.”

“Alright. Um, hey, Jess get’s sprung in the afternoon and I promised to drive her home,” Joe rubbed his neck awkwardly.

Sam smiled at his best friend. Awkward was probably going to surround them for a while. “Glad she’s well enough to be discharged. And I’m glad she has you.” He stood and scooped up his bag, heading for the door. “Don’t forget we have a meeting with the boss.” It was one of the most recent text messages on his cell phone. The text had been sent in all capitals and even for his boss, who seemed to be the least technologically inclined person he knew, it was very apparent that the CAPS LOCK wasn’t a mistake. The man was actually text-yelling at them.

Joe winced. “Yeah. I plan on wearing a cup. The man is gonna go straight for castration after this one.”

It was true enough, but they would handle it as a team. They’d been through worse, after all.

Bidding his partner good-night, Sam was finally on his way to his room where a nice comfy bed and fluffy “Dean pillow” awaited him.
He blamed his exhaustion for not seeing it earlier.

He was already at his door with the key card out, when he finally noticed that the door was ajar. It wasn’t cracked open enough to see anything inside, but it wasn’t pulled flush either.

Dropping the bag quietly to the carpeted hallway, he pulled his gun from his shoulder holster and slowly pushed the door open with the toe of his boot.

Thank goodness the hotel believed in WD-40. The door hinges didn’t squeak once to give his presence away and he held his breath as he counted to three and crept forward from the entryway and into the bedroom.

His first thought after taking in the scene before him was that he was in the wrong room. He even moved back to the door and double-checked the room number.

His second thought was that someone else was mistakenly in his room. It made sense.

The shower was going strong inside the closed bathroom. Over every flat surface in the room, large pillar candles had been placed sporadically and looked as though they’d been burning for a little while if the hardened drips of wax down the sides were any indicator.

He moved closer, unsure of how to handle the intruder. He wasn’t worried about being in danger so much as he felt bad for embarrassing someone for staging an obvious seduction scene in the wrong room.

He noticed an ice bucket sitting on the desk. It was the type that usually would have held a bottle of champagne; it’s long neck protruding gracefully from the bed of ice. This one contained ice but instead of champagne this one looked to contain several bottles of cheap domestic beer. Four brown glass bottle necks stuck up haphazardly and he chuckled at the unexpected choice. He hoped for whomever this was, that they had some strong game if they thought beer was going to woo anyone.

The final touch, he noted, was that the bed had been stripped of all generic hotel bedding. He moved closer, his hands still wrapped around his gun.

In place of the floral comforter and plain white sheet set, there was now simply a dove gray fitted sheet. From the slight sheen on the material from the glow of the candlelight, he imagined that it was silk.

Silk sheets…

Candles…

In his head he heard himself say *Want to stretch you out over silk sheets with candlelight and the whole nine yards.*

He lowered the gun minutely and he understood the meaning of the phrase ‘heart in your throat’ as he inched closer to the bed to investigate further.

“Sam?”

He squeezed his eyes closed unable to believe it. Unwilling to get his hopes up.

The shower hadn’t been running for a few minutes now but it had only just caught up to Sam’s mind that this was the case.
He turned around and there he was. Dean was standing, framed by the bathroom doorway and a cloud of steam, wearing nothing but a towel, which was draped loosely around his waist and held there only by the material clutched in his fingers.

The man looked a little unsure, as if Sam might find fault with him being there.

But there was no fault. Indeed, there was very little brain function at all. Sam didn’t say a word. He simply rushed forward and yanked Dean into his arms, kissing them both breathless.

“Oh… God, Dean,” he managed to murmur. He moaned into a particularly deep kiss and nipped at his lovers bottom lip. “Please tell me…” Again. “…you didn’t escape. I’m a…” He moved them to where he could crush Dean to the wall and began attacking the fully exposed and shower-warmed skin at his neck. “I’m an employee of the government. Mmmm… Can’t harbor a fugitive.”

Although the stripe his tongue licked from Dean’s sternum, over his neck, around his Adam’s apple and to his chin didn’t indicate that the proper authorities would be contacted any time soon.

“Oh pu-lease,” Dean gasped out, letting go of the towel and using both hands to pull Sam even closer. Sam placed his hands on Dean’s hips, noting with a little thrill that the towel had disappeared completely. “Like you’re so special working for the government. Apparently those assholes…let anyone join that club these days.” He groaned as Sam’s teeth scraped sensually across his earlobe.

It took a second but the words finally penetrated Sam’s pheromone-addled brain. “Wait…” He pulled back and stared down into Dean’s eyes, searching for the truth of the matter. “You…? I thought you turned it down. McKay said you had one shot.”

The cocky smirk that lit Dean’s face was a revelation. “Something you should know about me, Sammy. I can be very persuasive when I want to be.”

“So you’re out? For real? Am I dreaming?” He had been pretty tired. Maybe he was still in Joe’s room with his face flat on the laptop keyboard.

“You ask that a lot,” Dean pointed out.

Sam paused and brushed his lips against Dean’s in a non-kiss. “What can I say? You make me wonder that a lot.”

He regretfully pulled away but backed up to the desk without removing his eyes from the decadent sight before him; Dean Winchester completely naked, half hard, and sporting a fully body flush from the combination of the hot shower and the scorching kisses.

Sam felt behind his back and held a bottle of beer up for Dean to see. “So this is your seduction attempt?”

“I work with what’s available.”

He twisted the cap off the bottle and took a quick swig drawing in the fact that the abomination to brewing had been purchased with this moment in mind. For him. And them.

He took in the candles and sheets all over again with new eyes.

“It’s perfect.”

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##
After a quick once-over of his wound, Dean assured Sam that he’d emptied half a bottle of Wild Turkey over it and the damn thing would probably be healed inside a week. He allowed Sam to tape him back up and then Dean proceeded to back the man toward the bed with a single goal in mind.

His eyes said it all too, he knew. There would be no sleep any time soon.

Dean loosened the moss green tie, pulled it over Sam’s head and then tossed it over his shoulder.

“So these persuasive powers of yours…” Sam began as the backs of his knees hit the edge of the bed.

“Yeah?”

“Is this where you use them on me?”

Dean chuckled and continued the task of undressing the man in front of him. “Do I need to use them?”

“N-no,” Sam stuttered as Dean’s lips began an assault on the flesh he was slowly uncovering as he unbuttoned the white shirt. “Tota…totally willing p-participant.”

Dean pushed the shirt down Sam’s arms and peeled the fabric away before gripping each end and using it as a means to pull Sam against him.

His lips found Sam’s once more and he reveled in the taste of cheap beer and something that could only be described as the taste of Sam at his purest; sweet with an earthy bite.

The shirt fell away and the pants came next. The sound of him slowly lowering the zipper was one of the most erotic things he’d heard in a long time. That is, until he lowered himself to his knees and took Sam’s hardened length straight away into his mouth. The long heady moan he drew from the man at that moment moved to the top of his erotic sounds list.

He pulled his mouth off of the large cock and rubbed the swollen flesh across his lips, looking up to see Sam staring back, watching him with open-mouthed fascination and ever-growing undisguised longing.

Dean sat back on his heels and gazed openly at the sharp lines and flat planes of Sam’s body. The soft flickering glow of the candlelight danced over his smooth skin. He was brilliance and strength and beauty. And if Dean could keep him, even just a little while longer, he would be able to say he died having what he was sure was the closest thing to perfection that he could find.

He gave Sam’s hips a nudge and the man sat heavily on the bed. Dean moved between his legs, hands pulling at the backs of Sam’s knees until Sam was literally an inch from the edge and then Dean wrapped his arms around Sam’s waist. It was an easy embrace. More intimate than strictly sexual, though he would change that seconds later as he directed Sam to lay back and then hitched those long powerful legs over his shoulders.

The taste was all salt and musk as Dean licked every inch of Sam from asshole to navel and he moaned feeling gloriously empowered by the writhing man beneath him. He tongued his way around Sam’s balls and followed his taint toward his primary objective.

Quickly he realized he needed more room and pressed Sam’s thighs back until the bottom of his
feet rested on Dean’s upper back and his hole was fully exposed and begging for attention.

Dean knew Sam was a virgin to this side of things. Knew that he would need a little extra care and he focused all of his efforts on loosening the man up. He began by licking flat-tongued stripes along the puckered flesh.

Sam keened and squirmed maybe initially uncomfortable with the tables finally being turned on him. Dean needn’t worry about that. Soon enough, the erratic movement and whining noises turned to sheet-gripping cries of ecstasy as Dean began using his tongue to push past the opening in a quick steady rhythm.

“Do you like that?” He withdrew to ask. The question wasn’t the overused dialogue of porn, but rather a legitimate inquiry into his lover’s tastes. They still had so much to learn about one another.

“Y-Yes.” Sam’s voice sounded so small and tortured but sincere all the same.

Dean kissed and sucked on the spot for another minute and then added a figure to the mix.

Sam nearly arched off of the bed as Dean honed in on that special little spot that he knew would drive Sammy crazy.

He removed his tongue and gently inserted a second finger and the cries grew louder, if that were even possible.

Dean stared entranced by his fingers buried deep in Sam’s slicked opening. His pinky and index finger were framing the site like the thing of beauty it was. He couldn’t help himself as he began to hump instinctively against the side of the bed in time with the shallow thrusting of the digits.

What finally broke the spell was the sweet breathless sound of Sam’s whispered plea. “Dean… Please.”

Dean smiled a little unsteadily, blood surging from all points of his body towards his swollen dick. “Okay Sammy.” He placed a kiss against his inner thigh and one last tongue-flick against the now stretched opening which drew a surprised yelp from the recipient then moved to loom over Sam as the man clumsily scrambled further back onto the bed.

There had been many before Sam. Dean wasn’t indiscriminant by any means but he also wasn’t the type to pass up on a good time. But where there had ever been the single-minded goal to chase his own pleasure in the past, the man before him was the future. Sam gave him tunnel vision. He was all Dean could see. All he could hear, feel, taste… touch… All he did, every move he made in this moment was for Sam.

Dean returned to his place between Sam’s thighs and held himself back, resting back on his knees. “Gonna go easy,” he assured him.

Sam didn’t respond. He just continued to stare up into Dean’s face, a humbling look of open trust and adoration on his face.

Dean grabbed lube from the bedside table and covered his length with the watery gel, pumping his fist up and down the length a few times to make sure he was good and slippery. He held his cock, directing the head to the awaiting opening, and then gently pumped his hips back and forth letting himself slide in centimeter by centimeter, a little more with each thrust.

It felt too good. He was drowning in the welcoming heat and friction. Dean fell forward, catching himself on his hands as he hovered now directly above Sam and finally…oh fuck! – finally!
pushed all the way in until he was fully seated.

Sam’s mouth was hanging open as if to scream yet no sound escaped. The corners of his mouth curled up just enough that even as his face was frozen in a mask of agony, Dean knew the pain he felt was sweet. A sting that carried with it the promise of pure pleasure.

He paused allowing Sam time to adjust, but it was only for a few seconds. His lover had other ideas. Those lengthy legs wrapped around his hips and tightened pulling him deeper even though there was really no way for him to move any closer. He took it for the urging that it was intended to be.

Dean didn’t have to be asked twice. He wrapped an arm under Sam’s right leg and lifted it over his elbow so that he had more room to maneuver. His knee moved to brace him as he pulled out and then returned, pumping back into Sam with far less gentleness.

“S’okay, want to …feel you.” Sam’s words were broken and punctuated by long deep moans.

His Sammy wanted to feel him…who was he to deny?

After that thoughts became a little less available. Dean pumped and thrust and rammed. He would stop abruptly and grind his hips in circles, teasing Sam for long arduous minutes before pulling completely out of him and then slamming home one more time and picking up the age-old rhythm once more.

It could have been minutes but Dean was sure it had been hours as his sweat began to drip from his forehead down his chin and onto Sam’s chest. Sam ran his hand down his chest as if to mix and mingle Dean’s perspiration with his own before moving to grip his bouncing erection and begin using their sweat as a means to jerk himself in time with Dean’s movements.

By the end they were both unintelligible. Mindless nonsensical words streamed from Sam’s mouth. Moans and extremely loud cries flowed as Dean pushed into him hard, slamming against his prostate with every strike until Sam was coming and his seed was splattered over his torso. Dean grunted and groaned and felt the warm tingling buildup from the base of his spine driving him onward until he too abruptly stilled and came buried deep inside of his lover.

Not so out of it that he forgot he was dealing with a stab wound, Dean carefully flopped over onto the bed and nuzzled his nose against the clammy skin of Sam’s shoulder. They were silent, their heavy breathing the only noise in the room. Dean thought it was the sweetest kind of silence.

He finally hopped up and cleaned them off with the towel he had previously abandoned, blew out the candles and then pulled a blanket over them both.

Eventually the heavy breathing slowed and their breaths twined together as if it were one. Sam dozed off, obviously pretty freakin’ wrung out, and Dean knew that his light snore that had become so familiar would soon lull him to sleep as well.

Dean rested his head on Sam’s chest and smiled as he felt an arm automatically wrap around him and then a small chaste kiss was sleepily placed on the top of his head. He yawned and closed his eyes, relishing the feeling of being so sated.

There would be plenty of time to talk of the future tomorrow, now that Dean actually believed there might be one.

## 2 1 1 B 6 5 3 ##
Dean jerked to his left and crouched, keeping an ever-watchful eye on his opponent. She was a tricky one. Not easily taken down. As he gazed at her, she stared right back, amusement causing her eyes to sparkle prettily.

“C’mon Winchester. Don’t be a puss.”

Dean scoffed. “Who’s being a puss? I’m just giving you a little break, Briggs.”

“Oh I think it’s you who needs a breather.” She came at him straight and at the last minute ducked perfectly beneath his striking hand, grabbed him around the middle, and twisted her body until they both fell into a heap on the training mat.

“You call that a takedown,” he taunted; rolling until he got his feet easily back under him.

“You were on the floor, weren’t you?” She smirked and hopped gracefully back into a ready stance, legs bent and hands up.

“Getting’ a might cocky there, Lena.” He raised an eyebrow. “That to compensate for that whole not having a dick thing?” He knew the words would provoke.

Six months ago she would have gone ape-shit. Now she simply schooled her features into passivity and did not allow the remark to touch her concentration.

Dean was proud of her. Proud of them all.

Four hunters had entered the program and four hunters would be graduating alongside the regular trainees the next day. There was Briggs and Boudreaux whom he had never heard of and only met upon arrival at the training academy and then there was Brian, whom Dean had convinced McKay would be a boon for the program based on his knowledge of weaponry alone. Then there was him.

Yes, in the supreme irony of ironies, even Dean Winchester was less than twenty-four hours away from getting a badge. From becoming an honest-to-God Agent of the Federal Bureau of fucking Investigation!

Even after so many months of training, he still didn’t know if he believed it. He kept half-expecting to wake up in his bunk at the prison.

They had come so far in the past six months. Besides being forced to take regulation training, they had also worked with their instructors to create a training program that best suited the hunter mindset, should the experiment prove successful and further trainings ever commence.

Their first few days had been trying for both hunters and teachers alike. When they had been gathered at the firing range and told they were to learn the proper technique to discharge firearms, the hunters had laughed in their faces. They had proceeded to show off their various shooting skills complete with a few trick shots from Brian and “Leaky” Boudreaux, the oldest of the hunters there at thirty-three and thirty-six respectively. When they were finished with the admittedly arrogant display, the instructors had ripped the weapons away and the hunters had been forced to sit silently and watch them shoot for the next two hours.
Dean thought they had managed to squeeze in every technique possible, stressing the importance of control without hesitation and ‘respect for gah-damn authority’!

As a form of punishment, instead of going to bed that night, they had been forced to sit in an auditorium and write a ten-page essay about guns being a last resort. Each of the hunters’ papers had gone into examples of lore that completely refuted the ‘guns last’ theory and they all walked out of the theater half asleep but satisfied that they’d successfully one-upped the staff.

After being thwarted at each turn, the instructors had finally found that they got more out of their trainees when the training resembled something closer to organized suggestions.

In the end, they taught the instructors how FBI methods could be altered to fit each foe they might face and in return the instructors tweaked and polished them until the rag-tag group looked and sounded almost like real life agents.

Suddenly a sharp pain radiated through his arm, up into his shoulder, and he realized Briggs had him in a solid arm bar. Her forearm pressed just above his elbow with an unforgiving pressure. Dean tapped out with a rapid succession of strikes against his leg using the hand attached to the arm that was not bowing under the agonizing force.

She released him with another self-satisfied smirk. “Face it Winchester; Man or woman… doesn’t matter. I’m still younger and quicker.” She turned to strut off of the mat.

“Younger by all of two years!” Dean sputtered, following and dropping to sweep her legs out from under her. When she caught herself and stumbled a bit, he put his hip towards her and used her stumbling momentum to flip her over his side. She landed with a slap onto her back, her arm thrown out to control the descent.

“Now what was that you were saying, miss ‘I still haven’t learned not to turn my back on my opponent’?”

She blinked up at him and chuckled ruefully. “Ass-face,” she playfully threw a mock punch towards his groin.

He blocked her fist easily. “Butt breath,” his reply automatic.

“You really should pick on someone your own size.”

Dean’s head whipped up at the sound of the familiar voice.

“Sammy,” he breathed around a smile, his face softening in a way it only did in the other man’s presence.

The second his guard was down Lena spun and used the balls of her feet to push into the back of his knees instantly dropping him to the ground.

She giggled and hopped up, bouncing happily on her toes. “Hey Agent Wesson.”

“Soon-to-be Agent Briggs,” he acknowledged with a wink.

Sam reached a hand out to pull Dean up from the floor, gracefully following through to pull him into his arms and flush against his chest.

“M’all sweaty,” Dean murmured even as he pushed closer to the taller man.
“I like you all sweaty. You should know that.” Sam dipped his head and nosed along Dean’s neck, breathing in the scent that Dean knew must be the none-too-appealing aroma of sweat and garlic. It had been lasagna day in the academy cafeteria.

“I smell,” he protested, his words dying on his lips as he gripped the lapel of Sam’s suit jacket. His hands moved up to the nape of Sam’s neck and he squeezed with just enough force to urge his lover towards him. Their mouths met for the first time in several weeks and it was the sort of ‘hello’ that almost made the time in between worth it.

“I’m just…gonna go now,” Lena announced. Her voice seemed farther away and Dean waved in her direction without looking, his mouth still sealed over Sam’s.

Sam eased away and glanced in the direction of the closing door and then once more down at Dean. “Didn’t mean to stop you guys if you were training.” It wasn’t an apology so much as an observation. He hadn’t meant to, Dean was sure. But he also wasn’t about to leave.

It had been almost a month after all.

“What are you doing here?”

“You think I was gonna miss seeing you graduate? Finally getting your shiny big boy badge?”

Dean shook his head, ignoring the joke as he was still a little stunned that Sam was suddenly right there with him. “But I thought you were on assignment.”

Sam gave a little nervous laugh and moved out of range of Dean’s hands. A move Dean didn’t care for and was immediately a little suspicious of. “Um… I have been. On assignment, that is. It was a sort of assignment anyway. Training, I guess you could say.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah.”

Dean thought it odd that Sam had never mentioned this before. They specifically didn’t talk about what he was working on when they were together. For one, it had been drilled into Dean from day one that you didn’t discuss cases randomly. It just wasn’t done. Usually there was too much at stake to allow information to filter out to the masses even if it was your boyfriend.

*Loose lips sink ships.*

Secondly, when Sam was able to make it to Virginia for a weekend or sporadic nights here and there, the last thing on either of their minds was discussing much of anything. Only in those brief moments were they able to make good on the promises that were softly spoken late at night over the phone. Those were the moments when they could explore one another and continually be amazed at how well they just fit together in the sort of perfection that Dean had never thought physically possible.

Yeah. New specialist on board,” Sam explained. A few of us got to go and study up on some new things. Techniques and such.” Sam looked at him stone-faced as he put his hands behind his back and began pacing. “For example. Did you know that when hunting a Windigo, the most effective weapon is fire? In this case a flare gun could be employed. However if you don’t hit the heart there is a possibility that the creature could inhabit another body.”

During his spiel, Dean’s chin had gradually dropped lower and lower. He stared at Sam in disbelief. “Who exactly is this specialist?”
“Oh just some grumpy old asshole that lives out in the Dakotas.”

“Wait! Bobby? Are you shittin’ me? Wait, does that mean…?”

“What? You think the FBI is gonna trust a bunch of newbs to handle their business? Hunters or not, you have to have a seasoned agent to keep you in line. It’s been decided.”

“So you…you’re gonna hunt?”

Sam gave him a crooked grin. “That okay with you, partner?”

“Partner?!” Dean stuck his tongue between his teeth so that he didn’t swallow it in shock.

Sam looked a little nervous at his reaction. His grin disappeared and he scratched and rubbed at the back of his neck. “Is that bad? I mean it’s not official yet or anything. They asked if we had a preference…”

Dean’s answer was to launch himself at Sam, jumping up to wrap his legs around the taller man’s waist, trusting that he would catch him.

“Gonna take that as you being okay with it,” he laughed, relief pouring through the sound.

Dean drew back enough for his mouth to find Sam’s. His fingers threaded through the long strands of silken hair and he smiled into the kiss.

He was beyond okay with that.

“What about Joe?” he asked dropping back down to his feet and untangling himself from the other man.

“He decided to stay where he was. Got a promotion so he’s a big boss man now. Lets him stay closer to Jess now that they have a little one on the way too, so it’s for the best.”

“Mmm… Awesome,” Dean murmured as he wound his arms around Sam’s neck and moved back in for a little more lip action.

Eventually the sound of the gym door being opened alerted them that they had company and they watched a few of the standard issue trainees enter and start warming up to practice their own self defense on the mat opposite the one Dean and Lena had been using.

They watched with interest as the muscular men circled each other, each waiting for the other to strike.

Dean looked to Sam and then his gaze returned to the men. “Hey… Weren’t we supposed to have a wrestling match once those mitts of yours got better?”

The conversation seemed eons ago. The two of them unconsciously flirting as they sat nude on the shower room floor.

Sam actually snorted, not remembering it quite the same way. “I seemed to recall you misguided thinking you could take me, yeah.”

“Well let’s go.”

Sam raised an eyebrow. “What, here? Now?”
“Here. Now.”

Dean got himself into a ready stance and waved Sam forward but Sam was having none of it. “No way. You have the advantage. You’re in shorts and a t-shirt. I am wearing a suit.”

“C’mon Sammy. I’ll spot you a point. If you’re all you say you are on the mat then a little fabric won’t get in your way.”

Sam rolled his eyes but as was typically the case, he gave into Dean easily. He pulled his shoes off and his coat and shirt, leaving him in nothing but a pair of navy dress pants. His firm chest and sculpted arms were bare for the world to see and Dean stood up straight and let out a heaving sigh.

“Advantage: Wesson,” he declared knowing that body was going to be a distraction. He was just as likely to get confused and lick him in the middle of a move, as he was to actually work to pin him. The man was a walking aphrodisiac.

Sam laughed, knowing exactly where Dean’s mind was going.

“We’ll call it even.” A mischievous glint came to Sam’s eyes and he added, “And winner gets to top.”

Dean snickered as well and nodded in assent, getting into position once more, “Whatever you say…partner.”

Didn’t matter who won or who lost. That was a win-win situation if ever he’d heard one.

THE END…

…. Unless anyone is interested in this…. 