What Have I Learnt So Far

by Yana

Summary

When you get the chance of travelling back to fix an error, you will also want to make everything better. But time is a cruel mistress. If something is destined to happen, it will happen. And no matter what you do, you can’t change it.

By taking Gavin to the present, Abaddon caused a ripple effect that would erase Sam and
Dean from existence and bring back the Leviathans to the world. Even if they succeed to stop it, there are still many problems to be solved. Humans have to face their demons, angels have to accept their true selves and demons have to find their (happy) endings.

The story follows the events of two timelines. One about the future with the threat of the ripple and one about the past where even the knowledge of the future can’t stop everything.

Notes

I wrote a meta thingy this summer about the impact of Gavin's presence in the present in the Spn timeline and my imagination went wild and this fic happened. You can read it here: http://yana125.tumblr.com/post/89491342498/gavin-and-the-leviathans-or-abaddons-last-evil-deed At the moment I'm done with chapter 12 (13 with this prologue) and I'm just reaching the end of Act One. I hope I can update at least once a week. The chapters, apart from a few ones, will have the same format. Each one will have three parts, pre-time travel/post-time travel/pre-time travel or post-time travel/pre-time travel/post-time travel.

The title is a line from "Father Time" by Stratovarius.

Un-beta'd and English is not my first language so I'm sorry for any mistakes! I hope you will like it!
Prologue

The sound of their footsteps echoed in the long corridor. It bounced back and forth between the stone walls, making it louder with each round. But it was just a tiny whisper compared to what was coming from behind them. A threatening rumble of thunder and earthquake, opening its dark mouth, showing the sharp fangs that hungered for their flesh and blood. It was a wild predator following its prey with determination.

“Just a little more, Cas!” Sam called back to the angel and tightened his grip around the other’s wrist. Cas didn’t have much Grace left. It leaked out from his body as if he was bleeding from a thousand wounds and he barely had the energy to stand. But Sam couldn’t leave him behind and let the last living member of his family die. He would keep him alive no matter what.

“Sam…” Cas breathed out and a series of coughs shook him. “I can’t…”

“We’re almost there! Don’t give up!”

It was a race against time. Not only because of Cas’ health. Time was actually chasing the two through the long hallway of the dungeon. But their destination was not far ahead. He could see it already.

“Don’t give up…” Sam repeated mainly to himself. He tightened his jaw and blinked back the burn in his eyes. He had to do this. This was their only chance. He only hoped they would arrive in time before the ripple reached them and nobody’s death was meaningless.

They almost fell into the chamber at the end of the corridor. After the darkness, the light was nearly blinding. Sam had to cover his eyes with his free hand until he got adjusted to the brightness. Then he took a look around.

The chamber was a big dome built of rock. In the cracks diamonds were shining, illuminating the room. As Sam focused on the wall he recognized shapes. People, places, objects, and those tiny shapes moved. The lines readjusted, taking a new form, and all of it travelled clockwise round the chamber.

The hand he was holding slipped from his own and gripped his shoulder.

“Sam…”

The man, still mesmerized by the place, directed his attention to Cas. The angel’s face was paler than usual and he was round-eyed with shock. But there was something else in his gaze too. Something Sam only saw when…

Sam quickly turned forward.

At the center of the chamber stood a throne on a tall pulpit. Just like the shapes on the wall, the decoration was moving around too. At the foot of the platform flowers were growing, blooming, dying, then a new started to grow again from the ashes of the previous one, all happening in mere seconds. It was fascinating but what drew away Sam’s attention was the figure sitting on the stone throne.

The man looked like a very morbid Santa. He had a long beard and hair, reaching the foot of the podium and beyond. The closer the threads were to his head the darker shade of brown they had, and the color changed to snow white at the end. His stern eyes were changing colors, shifting from
brown to green, to grey, to blue. He appeared grandfatherly, but what made this outlook morbid was the scythe in the man’s right hand. In the other he was holding an hourglass. A broken one.

And before this man, at the foot of the platform with his back turned to them stood…

“Dean!”

The older Winchester turned around and when he saw the two a wide grin appeared on his face. His eyes were two dark pits of emptiness.

“Sam! Cas!” he greeted them. “It’s good you arrived just in time to see me leaving.”

Sam stepped forward, unsure if it would be safe to get any closer to the one he once called his brother.

“Don’t do this, Dean! Not like this!”

“Why not?” Dean spread his arms. His leather jacket parted from his body, revealing the First Blade tucked into his belt. “I know what happens. I go back a few months, stop Abaddon and turn the events however I want.”

“But Dean, what about the…”

“The Mark?” Dean pulled up his sleeve. The Mark of Cain was glowing with an angry shade of red. “I need it, Sammy. I’m stronger than ever. I can do anything.”

Cas stepped away from Sam and started walking towards Dean with shaky, unsteady legs. Sam tried to pull him back but the angel shrugged the hand off his shoulder.

“Please, Dean.” Cas’s voice was low and weak, raspy in a sick way. With every exhale a puff of grayish Grace left him. “The Mark corrupted your mind. You seriously think it holds any benefits?”

Dean smiled at that.

“Sorry to disappoint you, angel. I’m happy how I am.”

Sam saw Cas’ shoulders dropping as his hopes faded but he advanced forward with determination. It ached his heart to be witness to the angel, as stubborn as ever, still wanting to save Dean, still hoping he could do something. But Sam feared it was already in vain. Dean just watched his best friend with those emotionless black orbs, showing a toothy grin. The Dean he knew would never look at a visibly ill Cas like this. He would run to him, order him to rest, scold him for not taking a better care of himself, but he would do it to hide his worry, because Dean Winchester was not a softie. He would never…

Cas started coughing again. The grey puffs came out from his mouth with every cough. After a few steps he had to stop as the shaking of his whole body became too violent to move any further. Then the angel took a deep breath forcefully and his form bended forward.

He would fall, Sam thought and was about to run to his friend when he heard the yell.

“CAS!”

And in a blink of an eye Dean was already there, kneeling on the ground with Cas in his arms. The previous smug expression was nowhere to be seen.
“Cas!” Dean gently slapped the angel’s face a few times in an attempt to wake him up. It was useless. Cas didn’t open his eyes. “Cas!”

Sam snapped out of his surprise and ran to the two. He knelt next to them and looked down at Cas. The angel was shaking, his skin was covered with cold sweat and glowing Grace was leaking out through his eyes, running down his face like tears.

“Dean…” Sam fixed his gaze on his brother. “You know if you keep the Mark, Cas will die, don’t you?”

Dean locked eyes with Sam who was glad to finally meet the familiar greens again. His emotional reaction to Cas’ pain was so honest, so heartbreaking, Sam didn’t understand how a supposedly demon could act like this. He reminded himself to ask about it later when they got out of this mess.

“We have to go back where he didn’t steal the Grace yet” he continued. “But you have to give up the Mark. Can you do it? Can you do it for Cas?”

Dean turned back to the panting angel and just stared at him. With the hand he had on the other’s face he lightly brushed Cas’ cheeks. Dean’s lips trembled as if he wanted to say something but he couldn’t find the words. Meanwhile the noise of the ripple got louder. They were running out of time.

“Dean!”

“Okay! Okay!” Dean growled at him. He pulled the unconscious angel closer to his chest and buried his face into his dark messy hair. “Do it.”

Sam wanted to hug his brother so much but he didn’t have time. If… No. When they get back, he would have plenty opportunity for that.

So the younger Winchester stood up and stepped to the throne. The man sitting there looked down at him.

“Sam Winchester. Are you certain all of you are ready to carry through?”

Sam frowned with confusion. Did the man know what he wanted to do? How? But he wasn’t here to ask questions.

“Yes” Sam nodded with determination.

“Turning back time is not natural.” The man placed the broken hourglass on the armrest. “It’s against the law of the universe. But.” With his now empty left hand the man picked out three threads of hair from his beard. All had a lighter shade of brown, one a bit longer. Two were entwined somewhere lightly, somewhere closer, but the third one, the slightly longer, was virtually inseparable from one of the two. “There’s a way to send back your soul. But the price is your time.”

“We will pay it. This mess is our fault. It’s the least we can do.”

A surprisingly happy smile appeared on the man’s face and it softened the threatening appearance he had with the sythe.

“You’re a good man, Sam Winchester. Both God and Death speaks highly of you.”

Sam was… flattered. He knew Death respected him on his own way. More than a year ago he
himself came to reap him. But God too? The God who left Heaven and the angels alone which then resulted a series of messed up situations? Where was he? Was he watching them now, curious if they succeed or not?

He didn’t have more time to think about it. The man stood up. One hand still held the three threads in a tight but gentle grip while he raised the scythe in the other.

“Time for time, a year for a year! This shall be the price!” And with that the man sliced down the end of the three threads.

Just in time. The ripple entered the chamber. Sam turned around and locked eyes with Dean who still held the unconscious Cas tight to himself then everything faded to black.
They both knew there was something awry when Bobby entered the library in slippers.

Castiel was observing the spine of the books on the bookcases. The printed documents were in alphabetic order, sorted according to the period of time of their creation. It fascinated him how many books the Men of Letters could collect. They had dictionaries on different languages from different time periods, the oldest one from Mesopotamia, translating Sumerian to Hebrew. He also found maps in one storage room. The paper was so old it almost melted from his touch. He wished to read all the documents but deep down he knew he wouldn’t have much time and every minute he had he would spend looking for a cure for Dean. That was his top priority. When – because he was always hoping – they turn Dean back to a human and if – because he was a realist regarding himself – he was still alive at that time, he would just then take a look at those books as entertainment. He was certain Dean would look at him with bewilderment because who wants to read a dusty dozen thousand pages long codex for fun?

His eyes crinkled at the happy fantasy. He missed Dean. He still remembered their last conversation a few months earlier. Dean had told him he believed him and he had smiled. The last smile he showed the angel, his last human smile. Castiel treasured that moment with great value. Dean’s last human smile was his. This thought kept him moving forward because even though the Mark had been already taking him over completely and he had talked to Sam harshly, that smile was still true. Even now he was hoping that somehow he would be able to bring out the true Dean from the Knight of Hell.

That was the moment when Bobby walked in and muttered a shocked ‘Balls…’ under his breath. Castiel looked at him over the bookcase with wide eyes because it was not possible. Bobby Singer had died about three years ago and the man standing at the top of the stairs was not a ghost.

But it wasn’t just the angel who was taken aback by the sight. Sam, who was sitting at one of the tables surrounded by books and a laptop, locked rounded eyes with Bobby, then both man raised their guns and pointed at the other. Sam’s chair tumbled over with a loud noise.

“The hell are you and how did you get in here in Sam’s body?!” the older and very not-dead hunter growled.

“I can ask you the same question!” Sam snapped back. “Cas! Who is he!”

“Cas?” Bobby frowned at that, momentarily stopping him from glaring angrily. “It’s Emmanuel.”

This woke Castiel from his shock. Emmanuel had been his name when he didn’t remember who he was. But Emmanuel ceased to exist the moment he used his angelic powers again. Dean found him and he remembered who he was. Why would Bobby call him by this name then?

And that was when he realized that it really was Bobby, not just an illusion. And his soul was still bound by Crowley’s deal which wasn’t possible. Bobby was about four years older than he had seen him the last time. When he had failed to send back all the souls to Purgatory. And at that time the deal had already been altered. This Bobby had a little more than five years left.

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“Sam” he started as he walked closer to the two men. “It’s him.”

Sam was so surprised he forgot he should keep his attention on Bobby and looked at Castiel.

“But it’s impossible! Dick killed him!”
“No” Bobby joined the debate. “Dick killed you, Dean and the Charlie girl.”

The two men and the angel exchanged looks. Bobby slowly lowered his gun along with Sam and it was Castiel who finally broke the silence.

“I think it’s a ripple effect.” When both men looked at him questioningly he continued. “Something changed in the past and now the present is catching up to that change.”

“Like when Balthazar unsunk the Titanic?” Sam asked.

“Yes.”

“But we didn’t notice it. Not until everything went back to normal.”

“That was because the ripple reached you.” Castiel fought back the nausea when he remembered that he had intentionally let the ripple alter the Winchester’s life all because of a meaningless and stupid war. “Now it didn’t. Yet.”

“So?” Bobby asked. “What happened in the past that screwed up the space-time continuum?”

*Back to the Future.* Yes. It was a fitting reference. A similar thing happened to Marty McFly. The Grays Sport Almanac from the future caused the ripple in that situation which then created a Biff controlled dark present.

“Bobby still has the original deal with Crowley” Castiel stated.

“But that’s not possible.” Sam brushed his hair behind his ear edgily. “Crowley changed the deal when we threatened him with his bones.”

“No, he didn’t” Bobby cut in, correcting Sam again. “I couldn’t summon his son.”

Sam’s eyes widened then he closed his eyes and exhaled a big breath.

“Gavin. I told Crowley to send him back but no! He had to take him away and let him go heaven knows where!”

“We have to find Gavin and return him back to his time” Castiel suggested.

Sam sighed and looked at the angel. By only looking at his expression Castiel knew what he would say before he opened his mouth to speak.

“We have to summon Dean.”

With a heavy heart Castiel agreed that it would be their best option. Dean would easily find Gavin then they would be able to send him back. But seeing Dean as a demon for the first time… He wasn’t looking forward to it.

“Sum…” Bobby looked at one then the other. “The hell’s going on, Sam?”

Castiel gazed down at the floor while Sam explained everything with a low voice which he tried to ignore as much as he could. He didn’t want to hear it again. Purgatory, the Fall, the Mark of Cain. He wanted all of this to be a bad dream but it wasn’t. He recalled the picture of a smiling Dean again and it somewhat eased the pain.

“That idjit!” Bobby yelled as soon as Sam ended the story, yanking Castiel forcefully back to reality. ”Summon that brat! I’ll kick that Mark out of his system!”
Castiel unintentionally smiled at that. If only that would be enough… If only Bobby could turn Dean back to normal…

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For a long moment that lasted for a thousand years everything was empty. He didn’t see or hear anything and his mind was a blank canvas, longing for the painter’s brush to bring some color into its world. But when that moment finally passed he started sensing again. A familiar voice called him from the distance. He reached out for it, pulled himself closer with great effort until finally his vision was back again.

“Are you listening? I said it was a perfect excuse to bail out on research.”

That voice… Dean looked down and just blinked for a while because what he saw was not possible.

Kevin Tran, the always annoyed prophet of the Lord, was looking up at him with arched brows and narrowed eyes. And he was alive. At first Dean thought it was Hell. Psychological torture. Alistair had loved to use it back in the days. Convincing him that what he was looking at was true then he twisted it out of itself, causing the greatest emotional pains he had ever experienced. Maybe Crowley dropped him here? He wouldn’t be surprised after what he had done…

But then he saw Sam’s reaction. That big giant had tears in his eyes as he pulled the dumbfounded teen into a bone-cracking hug.

“I’m so glad you’re alive…” he said.

“Me too?” Kevin patted Sam’s back while he looked up at Dean questioningly but the man’s vision was blurred too. Dean quickly turned away, pulled up his sleeve on his right arm and looked at it. Nothing. The Mark of Cain wasn’t there. They did it. They really did it.

The relief that washed over Dean was so overwhelming he had to lean against the railing not to fall on his knees. He pulled a hand down his face. He wasn’t a demon. He wasn’t a monster. He was a human. He so wanted to run down the stairs and hug both Sam and Kevin but his feet rooted into the floor. He didn’t deserve the comfort. He didn’t deserve their closeness. Kevin died because of him in that timeline. It was his fault Sam became a killer. And Cas…

Dean’s heart skipped a beat because if it was the day and the case he thought it was then the angel – or now again former angel – was in danger. He had to get there as soon as possible.

“Dean?”

The hunter looked down over his shoulder. Sam let go of Kevin, he just had an arm around the boy’s shoulder – who still blinked at them questioningly, – and was looking up at his brother. Dean couldn’t look him in the eye. He turned away with shame.

“I’m me if that’s what you want to know…” he said. From the corner of his eye he saw Sam brushing away a tear and smiling.

“Yeah, I see that. We did it.”
Dean nodded but didn’t say anything. He so wanted to apologize for everything he had done but he didn’t find the courage. He tried to form the words in his head but they ran away like scared little mice. Yeah. He was a coward as always. Nothing new.

“I’ll call Cas” Sam said and reached for his pocket. “I’ll ask him where he is exactly and we can…”

“I know where he is” Dean said quickly. “I’m going there.”

Sam frowned at him then he smiled smugly.

“So that’s why you left in the first place and not because of the case. You wanted to see Cas.”

Dean bit on his tongue. Yes, he had wanted to see Cas. Because of the remorse he had. He still remembered clearly the former angel’s eyes when he had told him he couldn’t stay. He remembered the sadness and disappointment he had seen in those blue orbs. And he remembered the look on his face when Dean had left him that morning at the Gas’n’Sip.

But now he would make everything better. He would take Cas where he belonged. He would bring Cas home.

But before that he had to save him.

“Look” he started. “I’m going to Idaho now. I’ll be back tomorrow with him. Meanwhile tell Kevin and Gadreel everything.”

Kevin frowned when he heard the unfamiliar name.

“Gadreel? Who is it?”

Like he was just waiting for this moment, Sam’s eyes glowed up with a flash of blue. His body straightened, making him taller. Noticing the change, Kevin quickly stepped away.

“Dean.” The angel looked up at him.

“Hey, Gadreel” Dean nodded to the angel. “Good to see you alive too.”

Kevin looked from him to the angel with wide eyes. He was quickly losing the thread of the conversation. Not like he had any idea what the two Winchesters had talked about.

“I’m confused” Gadreel voiced his uncertainty. “Sam is aware of my presence but I’m positive you never told him about me. And you also called me by my name.”

Dean impatiently looked at his watch. He didn’t have time for this. He had to hurry before Cas got himself into trouble. Because he would for sure.

“Look, man. Sam will tell you everything. I’ll be back tomorrow or the day after.”

And with that Dean left the bunker in a hurry. In his rush he didn’t notice – or maybe he didn’t care to acknowledge – the dull pain in his ribcage and the numb feeling in his skull.
Sometimes Sam summoned Dean. He tried to convince him to stop the crazy demonic lifestyle and help them find the cure. Dean just laughed at Sam at those times who in the end quickly let him go because he threatened to make the ceiling collapse on him. The debris from the demonstration was still on the floor.

Summoning the eldest Winchester brother always required a lot of time. As a Knight of Hell he could easily resist his calls. It mainly depended on his current mood which now was surprisingly good considering that Sam just finished the first line of the spell when Dean appeared. From the corner of his eyes Sam noticed Cas tensing up in one of the dark corners of the room.

“Hey there, Sammy! What…”

But he couldn’t finish because Bobby stepped closer to him, almost entering the devil’s trap. Sam stopped him in the last moment.

“You idjit!” the older hunter yelled. “Can’t you Winchesters just sit down and think before you jump into the unknown!? How could you sell yourself to something made by Lucifer himself!? Didn’t you learn your lesson last time when you sold your soul!? And don’t you dare telling me that you had no other choice because I’ll kick your sorry ass back to Hell! There’s always an other choice, you brat! Why do you always have to sacrifice yourself, Dean!? Last time Cas saved you but what if there’s no way out of this!? Idjit!”

Finishing his rant, Bobby shrugged off Sam’s hands and turned his back to the brothers. The sudden encounter with the Winchester’s dead father figure left even the demonized Dean mute. He gaped for a few moments with wide black eyes before he said anything coherent.

“Why’s Bobby not in Heaven?” he asked.

“Remember Gavin?” Sam continued after Dean nodded. “His presence in our present caused a ripple effect. Bobby couldn’t summon him, we couldn’t change the deal and Bobby didn’t die when Dick shot him.”

Dean looked at Bobby questioningly who just turned back towards them again.

“Crowley saved me” he explained. “He said he didn’t want the fun to end so early.”

“That’s good then, isn’t it?” Dean asked. “Bobby’s alive.”

“No, because in that timeline you, Sam and Charlie are dead” Cas joined the conversation as he emerged from the shadows. “And I’m still Emmanuel.”

Dean looked at Cas. He just noticed that he was there too. Sam knew that the two hadn’t met in a long time. Their last meeting was when they had locked Dean into the dungeon after he had almost killed Gadreel. For a moment it seemed like Dean would tell the angel something but that moment quickly passed and he turned back to Bobby again.

“So? How’s your world?”

“Honestly? A living hell. The Leviathans have both the tablet and the prophet so we can’t kill them. The whole world is a set table for those bastards. Luckily your grandpa Henry dropped in a couple years ago and showed me this bunker. I gathered everyone I could. Garth and some other hunters. I also found Emmanuel and moved him here with his wife, Daphne.”

Sam noticed that after hearing the name Dean chewed on the inside of his mouth. He never knew the details of how Dean had found Cas. He didn’t even know he had lived a human life with a
woman until Bobby told him. And he certainly didn’t know how Cas remembered again in the end. Sam was sure Dean had a big part in that because the Cas in Bobby’s timeline still thought he was Emmanuel.

“And you summoned me because?” Dean asked after a while.

“We would like to ask you to find Gavin” Cas answered and stepped a little closer. His foot almost touched the edge of the devil’s trap. Sam was ready to pull him back if he tried to get any closer to Dean. “We have to send him back to the past to repair the damage it caused in the flow of time.”

Dean glanced at the angel and Sam was sure he saw something flickering in those black pits before he looked at Sam with a toothy grin.

“Sorry, Sammy. I already killed Gavin. Now could you please let me on my way before I bury you alive?”

Sam let Dean disappeared, who left a deep silence behind him.
Chapter 3

Still very un-beta'd. If you find any mistakes (grammar, logical, etc.) feel free to point them out!

“I was just wondering if there's any chance you're... free tomorrow night?”

Castiel looked up. A nice middle aged woman was looking at him with a warm smile. The woman was familiar. He knew he had seen her somewhere but he couldn’t place her anywhere for a moment. But he was sure they had talked sometime in the past. But where?

Then he noticed his surroundings. It was a store. The shelves were packed with snacks, drinks and other things humans would find necessary to buy. And the cloths he was wearing: jeans, white shirt and a blue vest. He was back in the Gas’n’Sip… And that woman was…

“Nora?”

The woman smiled at him warmly.

“Yes, Steve?”

He was back. He was really back in the Gas’n’Sip. They did it. They managed to get back before the ripple could reach them. Castiel took a deep breath and tried to feel the stolen Grace inside him but there was nothing. He was human again. It was fantastic. Being human was fantastic.

But what about Sam? And Dean? If Dean came along with them he was a human too, right? Or the Mark of Cain was so strong even time couldn’t erase it? Had it grabbed his soul and followed him here? He wanted to call him but… would he want to talk with him? The meeting previous their last one wasn’t the best. They both did and said things and Castiel regretted everything. If Dean was still a demon he was sure he wouldn’t feel it. Demons, especially powerful demons who lacked any traces of humanity, would never feel regret. They would never feel any human emotions.

“Steve?”

Castiel blinked and he was back in reality again. Nora watched him carefully, like a mother would look at her child. How foolish of him when he hadn’t noticed the signs. But he had been human only for a few weeks back then. No wonder he hadn’t recognized the purely friendly way she had been looking at him. Like now.

“I’m alright, Nora. Thank you for your concern.”

Nora nodded.

“Alright. But if there’s anything, know that you can tell me, okay?”

“Okay.”

“So I was asking, are you free tomorrow night?”
Castiel recalled that night. How Ephraim had attacked him, how much danger Castiel had put little Tanya in… No. He couldn’t do that again. And now that he was thinking about it… He knew where Ephraim would strike next. He would kill that poor high school student. What if he would get there before him? What if he could save the girl from a meaningless death?

“I’m sorry, Nora” he apologized. “I’m…meeting a friend.”

“Oh.” Nora tried to keep the cheerfulness on her face but it was clearly seen she was really out of options. “Do you know anyone as reliable as you to look after a baby? You were my only hope.”

“Looking after a baby is not as difficult as helping the rebels.” When he saw Nora’s questioning eyes he quickly added. “You just said something similar to a line from… Never mind.”

Nora showed him a little confused smile and she was about to look away but then Castiel, remembering something very important, quickly leaped after her and took Nora’s hand. The woman looked back at him with raised brows.

“I heard about a virus around the area” he said. “It causes high body temperature. Maybe you should get your daughter checked by the doctor.”

The woman’s eyes widened then a worried expression appeared on her face. He didn’t want to scare Nora but it was the truth. Maybe if the doctor catches that sickness in an early stage, Tanya wouldn’t have a fever.

“Thank you, Steve.” She squeezed his arm with gratefulness then added with a wink. “And have fun with your friend.”

Nora walked away and took her phone out from her pocket. Castiel assumed she was about to call the doctor.

The once again former angel took his cell into his hand too. He still didn’t decide what he should do. He didn’t want to call Dean. He was still uncertain about him. And he feared nothing had changed. For a while it would be better to stay in oblivion, as cowardly as it sounded. Should he call Sam instead? No. Informing him about Dean would be his first thing to do. He was in this alone. Tomorrow when he wakes up, he would go to that school and wait for Ephraim.

Tomorrow may be his last day but he would face it bravely.

* * *

Bobby remembered the grief when he had seen Dick swallowing down the boys. His boys, the idjits, who always ran into a fight to save others and each other and forgot about themselves in the process. Like on that day. Their hands were full as usual. Get the thing Dick had dug up the whole world for, save the Charlie girl, get out in one piece. They knew it was a suicide mission. The Leviathans were too big for them. They had no chance against them.

When the boys died Bobby ran away. What else could he do? If the Winchesters couldn’t survive a date with those bastards then all he could do was run and tell the tale. He stole a car since the Impala was already surrounded by Dick’s goons and while he was driving away he called everyone he could.
From one of them he heard about a man called Emmanuel who could heal others. It sounded good because every team needed a healer. At least that was what Dean had told him one summer well over two decades ago when John had left the boys at his house. Sam had been already sleeping and Dean had had the opportunity to be himself. He had had a pack of cards hidden somewhere in his backpack and he had been eager to finally talk with someone about something he liked very much. And Bobby had patiently listened, sometimes asked something and had basically just been there for the boy, providing him something he could call a childhood.

When Bobby arrived to the house he was surprised to meet none other than Castiel. The very alive angel didn’t remember him but at least he could convince him and his wife to go with him. After a few demons attacked them Cas… Emmanuel saw that they weren’t safe in their home.

For years they hid in Gordon’s cabin. It was small for them but safe at least. But then none other than Henry Winchester dropped in from the past. There were some arguing, and ‘who the hell are you?’s and ‘where’s John?’ when Abaddon came out from the closet too. In the end Abaddon was eaten by the Leviathans and Henry, with his last breath, told them where the Men of Letters bunker was.

The bunker was nothing he had ever expected. It had the biggest supernatural archive he had ever seen with tools and weapons and documents. It was a real treasure box. Compared to that, the Campbells’ library was just a tiny shelf. They also had room for everyone and the most important: food stock for a lifetime. They didn’t have to live in fear of eating something that would turn them into Leviathan supper.

For the next few years everything was fine. They sometimes left the building for a small amount of time to have a look around but they did nothing that would lure the black goo bastards’ attention to them. They were reading day and night, trying to find a way to kill those dicks without any success. But one day Bobby woke up and instead of his hunters he found a very alive Sam in the library. There were pointing guns, yells, ‘you’re supposed to be dead!’s from both sides. The usual when someone who was not supposed to be there was there in your library. And finding out that the one who was supposed to be dead in the one’s world who was supposed to be dead in your world was no good news. Especially when the supposed to be dead Sam and the supposed to be amnesiac Cas wanted to fix the timeline problem.

“This is one timeline and yours is an other” Emma… Cas explained. “But since our timeline had a change in its past, it began to merge into the one closest to it. Namely yours. After we fix that change you won’t die but return to your own and we return to ours.”

At least he didn’t have to fear that he would be erased from existence. Not that his timeline was better than the boy’s. No. Different kind of bad but very bad. But at least Sam and Dean were alive. One very broken and one very demon. And Cas remembered. Poor bastard.

Since they had found out that Dean already killed Gavin they agreed that they still had a chance to stop this. It would be not Gavin who would be sent back in time but one of them who would then stop Abaddon before she could kidnap the guy. They found the spell Henry used to travel forward and with Cas’ knowledge of the boys’ family tree they now knew that a Campbell lived in London around that time. They just had to gather the ingredients: angel feather, tears of a dragon and a pinch of the sands of time.

But they had one problem.

“Nothing” Sam panted after he hurried back from the storage, showing them two empty bottles. “Everything’s gone and there are burn marks on the floor.”
“It’s not possible.” Cas stood up and made his way towards the storage, maybe to check it himself. “I was in the storage yesterday and everything was there.”

The identity of the one who had burnt the ingredients troubled them but they still had other options. They knew a lot of places where a hunter could buy the components they needed. But no matter who they called, they got the same answer:

“I woke up to see everything I had was burnt. I don’t know who or what did it. Sorry, I can’t help you.”

Not even Bobby’s foreign contacts could help them. It seemed to be some kind of epidemic that affected only the stuffs that could be used in spells. And the cause of that was a big question mark.

So not having any other options, they turned all their attention to research. They had to find an other way before the boys would cease to exist. They hoped that the Men of Letters had a codex or lexicon somewhere about that. They just had to find it.

“Too bad we killed Cronus” Sam sighed and closed an other large book written in Latin. “We could have used his watch. Aren’t there any other time deities?”

“There are, but Cronus was the most powerful of them all. He was the only pagan deity who could have helped us” the angel explained and exhaled slowly. “If only the angels got their wings back… We could ask Hannah to send us back.”

“Did they find anything upstairs?”

Cas shook his head and turned back to his own book.

Bobby watched the angel for a while. It was strange to see him acting like the angel he was and not just a human who somehow had angelic powers. Well, that wasn’t entirely correct. The last time he had seen him he still had that stick up his ass but now he was acting more like a human. The way he talked, the gestures. He was losing his holy rigidness.

“Hey, Cas” Bobby spoke all of a sudden. The angel looked up at him. “Can I ask you something?”

“Yes, Bobby, go on.”

“How did you get back your memories?”

Sam glanced up curiously. In this sudden attention that was turned towards him, Cas inclined his head nervously.

“Sam’s wall broke and the hospital was surrounded by demons. We were running out of time and Dean and Meg wasn’t enough. So I killed those demons and then I remembered.”

Bobby frowned. Emmanuel had killed some demons with his celestial mojo but he had never remembered. Maybe it had something to do with… Dean?

Sam’s face confirmed it. The boy looked back at his book with a bittersweet smile on his face. So Emmanuel didn’t remember anything yet because he had never met Dean. With a sigh Bobby continued reading too. The angel would never meet the hunter and still…

He remembered when one morning, a few weeks after they had moved into the bunker, Emmanuel had sat down at the other side of the table with a bottle of beer in his hand.
“Isn’t it a little early for that?” Bobby had asked with one raised brow. “And you never drink alcohol.”

“Do you know a man with green eyes?” Emmanuel had asked like he hadn’t heard the earlier question.

“A man with green eyes?” Bobby had frowned. “Why?”

Emmanuel had sighed and looked down at the tabletop. His fingers had been stroking the neck of the bottle non-stop, maybe to ease his nerves.

“I had… a dream” he had finally answered.

“A dream? But you don’t sleep.”

“But now I did” the amnesiac angel had said with frustration. “I was sitting in my armchair and my eyes closed and… There was this man…”

“What happened?”

“Nothing really” Emmanuel had replied with an honest voice. “We just… stared at each other… Who was that man, Bobby? Do you know him? Was he from my past?”

Now Bobby knew it had been a good decision to not answer that question. This Cas, the one who remembered, was clearly broken by the fact that Dean was elsewhere. Evidently it didn’t bother him that the hunter was a demon, he just missed him being there. What if he had answered that question and Emmanuel had started remembering again? What if he had started to ask about Dean’s whereabouts and Bobby had to tell him that the man had been dead for years? The peaceful oblivion was better than a mourning awareness in his opinion.

And his suspicions were good too. There had always been something more than friendship since day one.

Hearing Sam’s sudden inhale Bobby looked up at the younger hunter.

“I think I found something. Get this…” Sam pushed the book to the center of the desk and all three of them leaned above it.

“I… I don’t understand…” the young prophet paced up and down in the library. Sam followed him with his eyes and so did Gadreel. “Abaddon changed the past and that caused a ripple effect and you travelled back in time to fix everything.”

“Yes” Sam nodded.

“And!” The prophet finally stopped and looked at the hunter. “There’s an angel named Gadreel in you who saved you from certain death without your knowledge who then killed me but it’s okay! He’s a good guy! Metatron just tricked him!”

Gadreel could detect the doubt in the young man’s voice without trouble. Gadreel himself would be doubtful too if not for Sam’s memories. At first he had been scared. Dean knew his name and
that meant he was aware of his past too. But then Sam had reached out towards him and had given him access to his memories. To Gadreel’s memories too from the future. It was… a strange experience to have recollections from a period that already happened but would not happen again. He was thankful for that though. Metatron had taken advantage of his weakness, his fondness of humanity to control him for his evil deeds. Sam reassured him that once Castiel was back he would surely tell him more. Gadreel wanted to apologize too. He should have trusted the Winchesters more.

Feeling his turmoil, Sam sent him a wave of comfort. He trusted him even though his actions had been questionable. He was a kind man.

“Kevin, you’re safe…” Sam started but Kevin held up his hand and sent the man an angry glare.

“Did you say it last time too before the angel killed me?! Dean lied to us all! When did he tell you that an angel had taken over your body? After I was already dead?”

Sam bit his lower lip. Gadreel felt the meat hurting between his upper and lower teeth so he quickly healed it. Sam’s body was still in pain, just the angel’s Grace locked it away from the man to feel it so Sam wouldn’t have noticed if he sunk his teeth too deep into his skin.

“Dean was desperate. I was dying. Cas lost his Grace so he didn’t have any other choice.” Though he was defending him, deep down it was still bitter to think about his brother’s betrayal. “And Gadreel was scared. He was locked in Heaven’s jail for a crime he didn’t commit knowingly. The other angels didn’t know that and Metatron threatened him with his true identity.”

Kevin laughed without any positive emotions in his voice.

“Yeah, that’s great and everything but it doesn’t change the fact that I was murdered!”

After saying it the young prophet stormed away. Sam watched the doorway where he made his leave then the man sighed.

“You know, I understand how he feels. I’ve been through this too.’

“You told him everything he had to know’ Gadreel told him. ‘Now he needs time on his own.’

Sam smiled at that.

‘Time. We needed time too and now we have it. We have less than a year to stop Abaddon. But we know a lot about the future. We can stop this before it starts happening.’

The man’s confidence affected him too. With the knowledge of the future he knew what he had or shouldn’t do.

But time was a cruel mistress. If something was destined to happen, it would happen.

“How long would it take to heal me?’ Sam asked.

‘A week at least. Now that you’re aware of my presence I can work more freely.’

Sam nodded and stood up. Gadreel sensed that the man was hungry and would look for some fruit in the kitchen. Then Sam froze.

‘It’s awkward.’

‘What is, Sam?’ Gadreel asked with curiosity.
‘I know what you think. I can… sense it? And it’s awkward.’

‘I apologize. I started acting too freely in your body.”

‘It’s okay just… tune it down a little. And uh…’

‘I can lock myself away in the back of your mind when you ask.’

‘Oh… Thanks, man.’

Gadreel did as he was asked. This experience was new for the angel. His first vessel Thomas, who worked as a bartender, had been dormant the whole time he had occupied his body. But now Sam controlled his own body and Gadreel was just a... passenger. He didn’t know how he should act in a situation like that, especially now that he didn’t have to hide from Sam.

‘Was there a way?’ Sam asked. He was already sitting at the table in the kitchen with an apple in his hand. Gadreel didn’t have to ask what Sam wanted to know because he soon continued. ‘To cure Dean.’

If Gadreel was in control, he would have lowered his gaze.

‘I was imprisoned at that time. I was not informed well about the Mark of Cain. But if the other angels don’t know of a cure, then there’s none.’

Sam sighed and put down the apple. He lost his appetite.

‘Then I’m glad we could come back here.’
Dean had to stop for the night. He got unused to tiredness in the past few months. In one moment he was driving in the dark but in the next he woke to the horn of a van. Luckily he had time to return the car to the right side of the road so he survived the almost frontal crash without any harm. He quickly parked the Impala in the shadows of a few trees and bushes, rubbed his aching head and killed the engine. He didn’t want to sleep in a motel. The familiarity of his car provided some safety.

He just now realized how much he missed his Baby. As a demon he could appear anywhere around the world, he had just needed to think about it, so why would he sit in a car? Slow, frustrating, monotone. But now he regretted those thoughts because that had been one of the many proofs that he hadn’t been a human. The Impala was always his home, his shelter, and he had left it behind for the ‘fun’. But now he was here again, alone with his beloved Baby and her soothing rumble.

The man sighed and pulled his jacket around himself tightly. Solitude. He had always valued the times when he was on his own with only his thoughts and could be who he was deep inside. For his Dad he had to be the perfect little soldier, for Sam he had to be the substitute parent, for the chicks he had to be the womanizer, for the hunter community he had to be the hunter who could do anything as good as them no matter ‘how pretty his face is for a hunter’ was. But in times like this he didn’t need to act. He could be the scared little boy who he truly was, longing for his mother’s warm hug who he had lost too early.

But now he was scared to be alone. He feared that when he was sleeping the Mark of Cain would wake up and he would find himself in the middle of a bloodbath surrounded by torn bodies and the smell of death in the morning. And in his hand there would be the First Blade, dripping the blood of some unlucky innocents who just happened to be around him at the wrong time.

Dean gripped the jacket tighter, nearly tearing the fabric under his fingers. Now he didn’t want to be alone. He needed somebody’s closeness. Someone familiar who would chase his fears away. But there was nobody. He was in the middle of nowhere, Sam and Kevin far behind him, Cas far ahead. He had to survive the night on his own.

And the dream was darker than he expected. Not because of the blood, no. He was in the chamber again. He stood at the foot of the throne, looking up at the man with the long beard who too looked at him, his eyes of many colors sparkling with anger.

“Dean Winchester!” he roared like a thunder. “It’s your fault that time broke in this world! Why would you think I’ll let you back?”

Dean became smaller with each word until he felt like a little kid scolded by some fearsome authority figure.

“I did it for them” he said with a weak voice. “All of it.”
“There’s no excuse for that! Time is so broken, it’s beyond repair! This whole universe will cease to exist and it’s all because of you! You filthy demon!”

And the ceiling started falling down in big portions. Dean covered his head with his arms but he knew it wouldn’t save him from the falling rocks.

“Dean.”

The voice was a whisper compared to the rumble of the destroying chamber but Dean heard it clearly. He turned and saw him. He stood there like the world wasn’t breaking into pieces around him. Dean wasn’t sure if he noticed the chaos. The hunter saw the disappointment in his eyes and it hurt more than anything.

“What have you done?” he asked and shook his head in disappointment.

Then a dozen of rocks fell on him.

“NO!” Dean screamed and tried to make his way there as fast as he could among the falling parts of the chamber. “NO!”

He tried to call out his name but he felt something hitting his shoulder and everything became dark.

Dean woke in cold sweat laying on the front bench of the Impala. One shaky hand gripping the wheel, the other the seat tightly. A few long moments had to pass until he realized where he was and what he had seen was just a dream. A dream that deeply shook him. And the last part… God, he wanted to forget that…

As soon as Dean pulled himself together he raised to a sitting position. He felt dizzy after the sudden movement but he didn’t pay much attention to that when he took a look at his surroundings. The sun was already up. Not so high above the horizon but higher than he wanted to. It meant he was late. And it was confirmed when he looked at his phone. Eight AM. And he still had six hours ahead of him.

Dean quickly started the engine and was back on the road in no time. The rumbling of his stomach was an annoying noise for the rest of the journey.

* *

“Father Time” Sam announced with a proud voice. They had been researching for days now and finally finding a single page about a god related to time who was not Cronus felt great. Those long hours finally paid off.

“I’ve never heard of him…” Cas said. He was visibly confused by this fact. As an angel he was supposed to know about pagan gods, especially if they were the rulers of time.

“Isn’t that a storybook you’re holding?” Bobby asked with a raised brow. “Or an issue of the Smurfs?”

“Every story has some truth in it” Sam explained, defending his find with great determination. “What if Father Time exists too? We have to find out.”
“And from whom?” The older hunter shook his head. “When the angels don’t know about something it…”

“Doesn’t mean anything” Cas finished the sentence. “We had always thought Purgatory was a legend then I consumed all the souls and later I spent a year there.”

In Sam’s opinion it confirmed that Bobby’s argument was invalid. He looked at the older man with a challenging face who threw up his hands.

“We can look into that but don’t come to me crying when it turns out to be just a cartoon figure.”

That was when they summoned Crowley.

They all agreed – wryly though – that if the King of Hell knew about Purgatory, he would know something about Father Time too. But what they didn’t calculate in was that the demon was not in his best moods.

“What do you want you filthy Winchesters!?” he started, completely forgetting about his usual ‘Hello boys’.

“What is it?” Sam asked curiously to which Crowley laughed without any feeling in it.

“I don’t know. Ask your brother. He killed my son after all!”

Sam closed his eyes. So Dean did kill Gavin. He hoped that his brother had lied a few days before but now the demon confirmed it. Dean was more lost then they had thought.

“I’m sorry for your loss” Cas said as sincerely as possible. And Sam knew he wasn’t lying. He and Sam too had lost too many to not be sympathetic, even though they both disliked the demon.

“Yeah, I can imagine. What do you want?”

“It’s uh…” Sam started but didn’t know how to continue to not make the demon angrier. But there wasn’t a better way to say the truth. “It’s about the ripple effect in our timeline.”

“And?”

Sam looked at Cas begging. He couldn’t say it without starting skirting around it. Cas sent him a brief smile then turned to Crowley. By then the smile completely disappeared from his face, his features hardened like stone.

“Abaddon changed the past by taking Gavin to the present. This single thing caused a ripple effect that will soon catch up to us.”

This momentarily effaced the demon’s anger.

“What kind of change?”

“Leviathans” Bobby answered. He chose this moment to enter the dungeon. “They took over the world.”

Crowley looked at the older hunter with honest surprise.

“Bobby Singer. From an other timeline I suppose. Missed me?”

“No” Bobby grunted. “Your other self is still alive unfortunately.”
Crowley just smiled at the insult like it was a compliment then turned back to Sam and Cas.

“You know how to kill the Leviathans. You did last time with some unforeseen results but you did it.” Crowley narrowed his eyes. “There’s something you don’t like about this other timeline.”

Sam sighed. They had decided earlier that they would tell everything, no lies. Those just made everything complicated in the long run.

“As you can see Bobby is alive.”

“I wouldn’t have noticed, thank you.”

“Dean and I were killed by Dick in his timeline. But in our timeline where Bobby died, he saved us as a ghost.”

Crowley’s eyes were literally twinkling by hearing those news.

“And you want my help because?”

Sam inhaled deeply.

“We want to find Father Time. We want him to send us back so we can stop Abaddon before she takes Gavin here.”

For a long while there was silence then the demon started laughing. Sam glanced at Cas but the angel just glared at Crowley like he wanted to shoot daggers through his meat suit.

“And you want to change this beautiful timeline? I just have to stab Dick then everything turns back to normal. And as much as I wanted to kill you myself, I accept this offer of Lady Fortune.”

“We’re still unsure if Bobby would remember us when the two timelines merge together” the angel explained. “That means you would neither remember the way to stop the Leviathans.”

A muscle around the demon’s mouth twitched. He didn’t speak for a long moment.

“So. I find you this Father Time. Why would it be good for me?”

Sam swallowed hard. They should have thought about something earlier.

“You won’t die?” he said but he knew it wasn’t very convincing.

“Not enough.” Of course not. “If this Father Time exists and he can send you back in time you take me with you.”

“No” said Cas immediately.

Crowley smiled at him like an adult would smile at a child who said something very silly.

“Then your two lovely hunter boys will die. Or you don’t want to see your precious Dean ever again?”

At the mention of Dean’s name Cas’ face turned dark and a killing instinct shined up in his eyes. Fortunately he was weaker than an average human so Sam alone could stop him before he stepped inside the devil’s trap. Crowley was just watching with an amused face.

Sam quickly took Cas out of the dungeon. When he was sure the demon wouldn’t hear them he
turned to the angel.

“Cas, I know you’re angry for what he did with Dean but we have no other choice.” He tried to force as much calmness into his voice as possible and luckily it worked on the angel. Cas took a deep breath and shook his head.

“You know we can’t trust Crowley” Cas said. “He may not lie, but he would definitely hold back important information. Like that the Mark would…”

Cas exhaled a shaky breath and turned his back to Sam. The hunter waited patiently until the angel collected himself and spoke again.

“Less than a year ago I promised him that when he betrayed us, I’d be the one to carve out his heart. And look where we are now.” Cas turned back and looked into Sam’s eyes. The angel’s gaze was sad and desperate. “We can’t trust him.”

Sam couldn’t agree more. But they didn’t have any other option.

* 

It was past one pm when he arrived to the Gas’n’Sip. He had broken the speed limit countless times to gain those precious minutes but he still feared he was too late. He wanted to believe that Cas, knowing that Dean would arrive that day, stayed where he was for Dean to pick him up. But knowing the angel he would surely not wait for him and get into something.

Dean quickly got out of the Impala and stormed into the store. Some of the customers looked up at him with disapproving looks but then soon turned back to shopping. Dean didn’t pay attention to them. He hurriedly made his way to the cashier who was happened to be not Cas but a woman with long blonde hair. Nora, if he remembered correctly, Cas’ boss with whom the former angel had the not-date.

“Can I help you, sir?” she asked with a wide smile.

“I’m looking for C-Steve” he quickly corrected himself. “Is he here?”

Maybe he was on a break, he thought. It was lunchtime after all. Or his shift hadn’t started yet. Maybe he was somewhere back in the storeroom sitting on his sleeping bag aaaand he didn’t want to remember that. It was his fault after all. He was the one who had sent him away.

The smile on the woman’s face immediately faded and it confirmed Dean’s fear.

“No, he isn’t” Nora answered. “He was supposed to open the store but it was still closed when I arrived.” The woman then tilted her head. “Are you Steve’s friend? The one he would meet today?”

Dean blinked then nodded.

“Uh, yeah… I-ah… I couldn’t call him. He’s not picking up his phone. So I thought I’ll check if he’s okay.”

“He didn’t pick up either when I called…” Nora casted down her eyes with worry and folded her
arms before her chest. “He’s never late, he never missed a day… And he was acting strange yesterday. All of a sudden he just… turned off then he seemed very confused. Like when you reboot a frozen computer after an error.” The woman looked back at him. “Do you know where he can be? As his… friend you must know him better.”

Dean rapidly went through all the possibilities. Maybe he was on a bus to Kansas. Or he went to gather his army again. But he would have called Sam who then would have called him. And he was out of any ideas. He hoped Cas was alright. That guy from the Rit Zein was around here somewhere and…

The man’s eyes widened and he panicked because he should be at the school by now.

“I think I know where he is, thanks” he said hurriedly, his body swaying a little, and was already at the door when Nora called after him.

“Would you tell him that the doctor saw Tanya yesterday? Her throat was red. And I could hire a reliable babysitter.”

Dean nodded and for a moment a warm feeling washed over him because that dorky little guy always helped others whenever he could. And it would put him in danger soon.

But Nora was still not finished.

“Have a good night you two!” Then she winked at him then looked at the man who stepped to the desk.

Dean almost turned back and asked what the hell was Nora talking about and why was she winking at him like she knew something he didn’t but he quickly made up his mind and went outside. He didn’t remember exactly when the girl was killed and the school was in the neighbor town. He couldn’t waste any time.

He got into the Impala and drove out of the town. Unfortunately, the traffic was very heavy in the other one. It appeared an accident had happened right in the middle of it and of course it had to be the only road leading to the school. Dean wasn’t sure if there had been a traffic jam the last time but he didn’t care about it much. He parked his car as soon as he could and continued on foot.

His body didn’t appreciate the speed of his running. His stomach was growling, demanding some kind of food after a day without any. The well known but quickly forgotten needs and sensations annoyed him. As a demon he didn’t have to worry about those things. He just… was. And did… things.

Dean pushed away those thoughts because he was already out of breath and reminiscing was not helping at all. He crossed the street, almost got himself hit by a car but after fifteen minutes without stopping he finally saw the school. As he got closer he noticed the school bus that had been painted pink after that angel guy had murdered that poor girl.

The girl who was now running towards him with eyes widened by fear.

“Hey!” He grabbed the girl when she was passing by him and turned her towards him. “Where’s the guy?”

The girl blinked.

“How do you…”
“Where’s the guy!” he repeated harsher and he would have regretted it immediately if he wasn’t in a hurry.

“He… He walked to the woods with an other guy from the Gas’n’Sip…”

Before the girl could finish she was already released and Dean was running into the woods. Sticks were breaking under his feet and the scarp was covered with fallen leaves. He almost slipped a few times but didn’t stop. He was so close. He had to be there in time. He had to… He couldn’t let that dick kill Cas, not now when they got a chance to correct every mistake they had done. To correct every mistake he had done.

That was when he saw them. About two or three hundred meters ahead of him stood the Rit Zein angel with his back to him, assumably facing Cas, who then slowly raised his hand towards the others head…

What followed was a big blur.

His body chose that specific moment to give up and stop functioning. He was barely aware that he yelled, then he hit the ground painfully and there was a bright flash of light. His mind shut down immediately.
Now Krissy’s dead father was in the bunker too.

Poor Lee didn’t take it well. He immediately wanted to call Krissy after he found out his daughter was elsewhere. Bobby talked with him for hours, convincing him that he shouldn’t do that. In the end Lee locked himself in one of the rooms – which in the other timeline was probably his – and was just rarely seen.

Sam sighed and rubbed his nape. It was still just their dead allies coming back but it wouldn’t take long for the first Leviathans to show up as well. And Sam didn’t want to wait for it to finally happen.

“I’m not sure if this Father Time exists” said Hannah frowning at him. The angel was a frequent visitor of the bunker, especially after this whole ripple in time thing. “We have no information about him in Heaven.”

“Cas said you hadn’t known about Purgatory and…”

“We knew about Purgatory, we just didn’t know if it was real” the angel corrected him then shook her head. “Castiel relies too much on his emotions in this matter.”

“Can you blame him?”

“I’m sorry Sam. There may be no way to fix this.”

And Hannah was honestly sorry, he saw that in her eyes. Just like him, Cas and Bobby, she was researching upstairs with some other angels regarding the Father Time question, while the others were looking for the ingredients of the spell. With no luck. It was in everyone’s best interest to repair time before it was too late.

“Let’s hear what Crowley had found out, okay?”

Hannah made a face at that but nodded eventually. They made their way to the dungeon where Cas was already waiting for them. Or rather just for Sam. He was a little surprised to see the other angel too.

“Castiel!” Hannah greeted him with a smile.

“It’s good to see you, Hannah.” Cas showed her a smile too. Smaller, but it was still a smile. Ever since what had happened to Dean, Sam never saw him genuinely happy, just these little short lived ones appeared on the angel’s face which was becoming paler with every day. “Did you find anything?”

When Hannah shook her head Castiel sighed.
“I dislike that we have to depend on that demon” he told Sam. “And I still don’t agree that we should take him with us.”

“Do we have any other choice?” Sam asked.

As always, silence was the answer to this question. Sam was getting used to it by now.

It took a while for Crowley to appear. He smoothed his suit, swiping off some invisible dust, and just then looked up at them.

“Oh, hello there boys and girl” he greeted them as if he just noticed their presence. “How lovely of you to summon me on this fine day.”

“What did you find?” Sam cut in before the King of Hell could continue this nonsense.

Crowley raised a brow.

“Impatient as ever. A true Winchester trait.” Then he turned to Hannah. “I’m warning you now, lady. They’d have a bad influence on you if you’re not careful enough. You may also get yourself killed, probably in the near future. Regarding what happened to the majority of their female companions.”

The angel hardened her features but didn’t respond.

“Answer the question, Crowley” Cas growled at the demon as his blade appeared in his hand.

Sam quickly stepped between the two and fixed a warning gaze on his friend.

“Calm. Down. We won’t gain anything if we kill each other. We have to work together.” Then he added with a lower voice in the illusion that the demon wouldn’t hear him. “Remember. We’re doing this for Dean too. If we don’t stop the ripple he will die.”

He didn’t like to use Dean on Cas but desperate times called for desperate actions. And it worked because after looking away from Sam Cas’ angel blade sled back to its place.

“I apologize.”

Sam patted him on the shoulder then turned back to Crowley who watched the show in front of him with an amused look on his face.

“So? Any news?”

“Not much” Crowley said. “Honestly, it would be easier to find Doctor Who then this Father Time guy.”

Cas folded his arms.

“I don’t know if any incarnations of the Doctor came here around this time of the year. But I’m unsure about Mr Capaldi.”

Crowley blinked at Cas, like he had been looking at him after Cas had taken Sam’s madness.

“When did you see any of the episodes, feathers? I don’t think you would watch anything without your boyfriend.”

The self-restraint was short-lived. The blade was again in Cas’ hand and he was about to attack the
demon when Sam and Hannah stopped him in the last moment. The hunter and the angel grabbed the other angel on both sides who struggled to free himself from their hands.

“I’ll kill you, Crowley, do you hear me! I’LL KILL YOU, YOU SON OF A BITCH!”

“Hannah, take him outside” Sam asked and the angel did as she was told. Cas fought against her grip like a wild animal while shouting and cursing Crowley but Hannah who was still a powerful angel even without her wings easily dragged the other outside.

After they left silence fell on the room until Cas’ voice wasn’t heard anymore.

“You should put a leash on the angel, Moose. Your training methods failed miserably. But what should I expect from a Winchester?”

“Stop provoking him and he’ll just glare at you.”

Crowley chuckled.

“I can’t help it. It comes naturally.”

Sam rubbed the bridge of his nose. He felt a headache kicking in and it wasn’t even noon yet.

“Just tell me what you found out and go.”

“As I already told you, I didn’t find out much. Some of the lower European gods say that they saw him about a century ago but nothing after that.”

Sam quickly glanced up.

“So that means…”

“He exists, yes” Crowley nodded.

Sam sighed in relief. Father Time was real. They can ask for his help. He can help them.

“So? Where is he?”

Crowley shrugged.

“No idea.”

Just like Cas, for a moment Sam considered jumping on the bastard too with a blade in his hand. Was Crowley playing with him? Lets him hope then takes that hope away?

“What do you mean you don’t know?!?”

“Are you sitting on your ears or what? I told you, nobody had seen him in a century.”

Sam started pacing up and down in the room. There must be a way to find him. Anything.

“Maybe there’s a tracking spell somewhere. Or we can summon him.”

“Good luck with that then” said the demon. “And now if you excuse me.”

Sam dismissed the demon who left him alone with his thoughts.
Kevin couldn’t believe it. He shouldn’t have come here. He should have looked for his mother instead and maybe save her life. But no, he had stayed and translated that stupid tablet for the fucking Winchesters and his mother was probably dead by now. He should be miles away from here because maybe it was safer outside than staying here with that angel who had killed him in another time! It was crazy, it was stupid, it was not possible. It was not the Back to the Future trilogy where he just had to hop into the DeLorean and go to an other year.

The boy turned in his bed for the hundredth time during that night. He tried to sleep, he really did, but his brain just couldn’t shut down. What if that Gadreel guy takes the controller from Sam and kills him in his sleep? What if Dean comes back as a raging demon and he kills him? What if Metatron gets inside? What if Crowley escapes? Too many questions, too many worries. He was surrounded by uncertainty and horrors.

He so wanted to be back in his old life. He wanted to be with his mother, he wanted to study together with Channing, he wanted to worry about nothing but his grades. He wanted to go back to school and study, he wanted to become somebody and not just a prophet who barely saw the sunlight in months. And maybe he would never see it because Metatron was apparently after him and the tablet.

Kevin turned to his stomach and buried his face into the pillow. He felt so small and Sam and Dean didn’t help with it, they just made everything worse. Especially Dean. He wanted to appear like some kind of parental figure and just ordered and forbid and never listened to him. He didn’t mean that he didn’t appreciate his concern but he was not a kid. He had ended being a kid the moment he had become a prophet. A prophet who couldn’t translate that damn tablet!

Anger flared up inside him. Kevin kneeled up and threw away the first thing he could grab. That happened to be his pillow which hit the door with an anticlimactic light thump. Of course it didn’t release the steam that just boiled more inside him with every angry pant. The teen untangled himself from the blanket, that he successfully managed to twist around his legs while he had been turning left and right in the bed, and got out off his room.

He made his way to the library and the farthest table in the room where all of his translations were scattered around. He tuned on the little lamp, sat down and rubbed both sides of his face. Elamite. Dear effing everything, Elamite. How the hell would he translate this to English? A dead language? He had already looked around the bunker twice, accidently found a computer room and a huge dining room but there were no Elamite to English for Dummies. There was nothing about the Elamite language just that dusty codex from triple x BC.

Sam had told them that in that other time they had already asked Crowley but he hadn’t been much help. He had said that there was no counter spell but of course Sam didn’t trust him and neither did Kevin. Sam had also suggested that he should ask Gadreel, he was an angel after all and angels knew many languages, if not every, but Kevin had refused without a second thought. He wondered why.

So, what was next? No matter how hard he looked at the tablet the symbols merged together and soon he saw nothing but a big blur. Maybe he should write it down in an other language. Some Arabic or Mesopotamian language. Then translate those to Sumerian maybe? He was sure there would be some Sumerian dictionaries back in one of the storage rooms.

Kevin was about to stand up when a human shaped form emerged from the shadows. The teen
shrieked in a very unmanly way and fell on the floor along with the chair. That hurt.

“Are you alright, Kevin Tran?”

Kevin looked up with wide eyes. His vision was blurred by the pain he felt around his right side but he still saw Sam looking down at him in a very un-Sam-ish way.

It was the angel.

He wanted to kill him.

Gadreel tilted his head to the side.

“Are you hurt?”

Kevin quickly shook his head because no, he was not hurt, go away, go away!

Gadreel crouched down and lifted his hand over his stomach. Kevin shut his eyes tight. That was it. He was going to die by the hands of the angel who Sam and Dean shouldn’t have trusted. He just hoped that he would meet his mother and Channing up in Heaven. If he would get to Heaven.

But death didn’t come. On the contrary, the pain eased and was gone in a portion of a second. Kevin opened his eyes and looked at the angel with confusion who watched him with great concern.

“I apologize for frightening you like this” he explained. “Sam told me that while he is dormant I should take a look at your translation. I saw that the Demon King wasn’t a great help previously.”

Kevin just blinked for ten whole seconds before he could say anything.

“You’re not going to kill me?”

Gadreel looked away uncomfortably.

“I am sincerely sorry for what happened in that other future. My actions were desperate and I shouldn’t have trusted Metatron. With the knowledge of that future I know now what I should avoid and who I should trust. I understand your fear and once again I apologize for frightening you.”

That was… kinda weird. He was sitting on a floor with a chair and the angel who killed him in another time was apologizing to him for something he didn’t do yet. And hopefully wouldn’t. Every molecule of his body screamed to run away but he heard one tiny voice in his head: Dean ‘overprotective big brother’ Winchester had left him and Sam with Gadreel. Maybe he had done that because he had been running for Cas, and if there wasn’t something in the subtext his name wasn’t Kevin Tran, but Dean wasn’t that mindless to leave them with a murderer. Hopefully. Maybe he should trust Gadreel? Maybe he should give him a chance and just then judge?

Kevin carefully stood up and pulled up the chair too.

“So… Sam told you to help me?”

Gadreel was back on his feet too, towering over the prophet. Kevin swallowed but tried not to look too scared.

“Yes. He told me you have troubles with the translation. You could only use a dead language which you still don’t understand.”
Kevin took the paper and handed it to Gadreel.

“I used Elamite. Do you understand it?”

Gadreel looked down at the paper he held between his fingers and frowned deeply.

“Yes. I understand.”

“Good!” Kevin felt the positive energies spreading through him. Maybe they’d have a counter spell by tomorrow. “What does it say?”

“I can’t tell you.”

Kevin’s eyes widened.

“What? Why not?”

Gadreel looked into his eyes.

“I know what it says but I can’t tell you it in your language. There is no connection between any spoken language and this one. But I can help you translating it from one language to an other until I can tell you what it says in English.”

Again, Kevin could just blink because wow. That sounded awesome.

“Okay, let’s do it then!” Kevin sat down and after Gadreel took a seat on the other side of the table they jumped right into it.

Time was flying by quickly and they made a really slow progress. Gadreel was not in full strength so he couldn’t do all the translations in head. He had to write down everything on a paper. And he could neither do that fast. Sometimes he had to stop to rest a little and continued after a few minutes.

While he was doing that with the small portion Kevin had previously translated, the prophet tried to translate the rest of the tablet too. Pain was hammering his brain but he ignored it. He was too excited to stop now. Symbol by symbol, word by word, he wrote the Enochian into Elamite.

Around six in the morning Gadreel put down his pen. He just finished writing the text in Kassite, an other dead language but according to him it was steadily leading them to a more translatable one.

“This is all I could do for now” he said with a tried voice. “I must keep some of my energy to heal Sam and myself.”

Kevin nodded and rubbed his eyes. He translated two lines so far.

“Yeah, let’s take a break. I need some sleep too. Tonight at the same time?”

The angel nodded with agreement and his eyes shined up blue. Sam’s face took on a Sam-like expression after the light faded. Sam looked around, a little disoriented, then his eyes settled on Kevin, clearly surprised to see him across the table.

“Hey, Kevin?” He curled up his fingers slightly, tracing the lines of the tabletop. “What’s up?”

“Lot’s of translation. Good night.”
And with that Kevin left the confused Sam in the library.

Hannah was quickly annoyed by Castiel’s struggling and constant yelling. Not that it wasn’t understandable. In his place Hannah would have done the same. She remembered what Tessa had said, how she had reacted and that Dean Winchester had taken her out of the room. At first in her anger she hadn’t even realized that the human managed to take her outside without any trouble. She later learnt it had been the power he gained from the Mark of Cain which was now controlling him. And this made Castiel to be the desperate mess he was now.

Hannah never understood this feeling Castiel felt towards the human. She hadn’t spent that much time among humans like the other angel so everything regarding emotions was a mystery for her. Of course she had her fatal flaw every angel seemed to have in common: pride. Tessa had hurt her pride when she called her unworthy. Partly that was what had led her to join Metatron. She had wanted to prove that she was worthy, more than Castiel who had thrown away everything for one human. Now she knew she had been wrong. She should have believed Castiel and should have stayed by his side. Maybe things would have turned out better. Or worse. She had no idea.

Now it was time to redeem herself. She wanted to help in every possible way. Finding a way to fix time, finding a way to save Castiel’s life, and even a way to save the Righteous Man from the Mark. When she wasn’t looking for traces of Father Time, she looked up everything related to Cain. There were some scrolls telling legends about the circumstances of Abel’s death and Cain’s sin but nothing factual. She had never told Castiel about her failure. She didn’t want to disappoint him.

“Release me, Hannah!” Castiel shouted with desperation. The struggling made him weaker and soon Hannah found herself holding the angel’s whole weight. But his voice didn’t waver. “I’ll kill that bastard!”

“As tempting as it sounds, you are in no condition to overpower a demon. Even a human can hold you down with ease.”

“I don’t care! Let me go! It’s all his fault!”

Castiel’s yells lured Bobby Singer to them. The elder hunter frowned at the angel as soon as he appeared behind the next corner.

“What the devil is up with you, son?” Hannah was surprised by the appellation. Son? Castiel was eons older than the hunter’s soul. He should be the one calling Bobby ‘son’.

Castiel stopped struggling and bowed his head.

“I’m sorry for bothering you, Bobby.”

Hannah was so surprised by this sudden change in the angel’s behavior that her grip weakened. Castiel lived with this opportunity. He shrugged off Hannah’s hands and quickly made his way towards his room. The angel and the hunter both looked after him.

“What’s up with that idjit?” Bobby asked.
Idjit. Hannah didn’t know what that word meant. She had heard the man using it many times, mainly referring to the Winchesters and Castiel. It sounded like ‘idiot’ but the way he used it didn’t indicate he considered them simpletons. The human way of thinking was a mystery to her too. They sometimes used insults in a non offensive way.

“Crowley mentioned Dean back in the dungeon” she informed him.

“That again?” Bobby sighed and shook his head. “Great. All we need now is a PMSing heartbroken celestial human. I’ll talk with him when he calms down.”

The way Bobby spoke confused Hannah but she didn’t voice it. She would figure it out sooner or later. She was already spending quite long periods of time in the Men of Letters bunker for the past month. The angels found a way to open new portals all around the globe and one of them was almost right next to this facility. It was originally opened for Castiel who was shuttling between Heaven and Earth, mainly spending time on Earth, but Hannah made a good use of that portal too. She couldn’t tell what drew her here. Maybe it was the guilt that she had left Castiel in a critical time for an accusation that wasn’t entirely true. Stealing an other angel’s Grace was a sin but once again Castiel had had to do it for one human. Not that it annulled his actions, but she tried to be understanding.

“Will he be alright?” she asked instead. “This way he would burn out faster.”

“Honestly, I have no idea.” Bobby scratched the top of his head under his hat. “He clearly has troubles dealing with the emotions and he didn’t have the best teachers. Maybe he’s digging his own grave intentionally.”

Hannah felt something strange in her chest. It was like her vessel’s heart was squeezed by a strong hand. It was uncomfortable and she used her Grace to ease the feeling. The hunter’s last sentence reminded her to something Castiel had said not long ago.

I just want to be an angel.

He had said that after they locked Metatron away. Hannah remembered the unshed tears she had seen in the angel’s eyes and the way his gaze seemed to focus on something invisible to everyone else. The thought that Dean Winchester was dead had shaken Castiel so much he had wanted to become an emotionless angel again. Then he had found out that Dean became a demon and he was quickly lost in the sea of desperation.

Hannah wasn’t sure she wanted to feel anything. Emotions seemed to be painful, something that would sour life in the long term. It would just lead to despair and agony. She needed nothing of that. The loss of her wings was enough for her. She didn’t want to deal with those too.

“Where’s Cas?”

Hannah turned around. Sam walked to them, stopping next to the angel. He looked more tired than when she had left with Castiel.

She found Sam a very impressive human. He was tall, towering over everyone around him and still he had a gentle vibe she had only sensed around children. Sometimes she wondered, how could he be the true vessel of Lucifer? How could this nice and warm hearted man be the Devil? They called him the ‘Boy King’ but he was everything but a king. He didn’t hunger for power unlike other humans. She sensed his soul longed for a normal and simple life but the circumstances never let him go.
“He retreated to his room” she answered.

“He’s sulking” Bobby added.

Sam bit his lower lip and folded his arms before his chest. He fixed his gaze on the floor for a while then looked back up at them.

“Father Time exists.”

Hannah’s eyes widened after she heard the news. It was not possible. If there wasn’t any information in Heaven then there was no way he existed.

“Where is he?” the older man asked.

“That’s the problem. Crowley couldn’t find out. Everyone he asked hadn’t seen him in a century.”

Hannah folded her arms too. There was something unsettling in this. How come somebody knew about him but the angels didn’t? Every form of existence had its own section in the archives. She herself went through all the books and scrolls at least ten times and he was never mentioned. Maybe for a long angels hadn’t been present in history before the first seal was broken but they had been watching over humanity and pagan gods for centuries. Who was this Father Time then?

“We might need a tracking spell” Hannah said after a while, looking up at the younger Winchester. The unfamiliar feeling of curiosity grew inside her. She wanted to find out who that time god was. “I can bring you a few by tomorrow but I’m not sure they would work.”

Sam showed her a wide grateful smile that lit up his tired face. Hannah had a sudden urge to smile back but she stopped herself before her lips could curl up.

“That would be great, thank you.”

Hannah nodded and made her way to the exit. A mysterious humming in her Grace followed her back to Heaven.

Chapter End Notes

I had fun writing Kevin. And I love writing Hannah. We know little about her so I’m fleshing her out my own way. Expect more from her in later chapters.
He didn’t open the store. He knew Nora would be worried. She would probably call him all day, so with a heavy heart he turned off his phone. He was grateful for the woman’s kindness who had employed him even though he only had a fake ID. She didn’t know anything about him and gave him a job anyway. Castiel would have prayed for a good life for her if there had been anyone who was listening. He had given up hoping a long time ago that God would listen to him.

Castiel packed his things and took a bus to the school. Apart from him, just a few people were on the streets. It was still early in the morning but he wanted to be there before anyone else could see him wandering around the school. He didn’t want to appear suspicious. Humans distrusted everyone who didn’t act normal, he had learnt that. What if they’d call the police and he’d be taken into custody? Who would save the girl then? Castiel couldn’t risk it.

So as soon as he arrived he walked down to the forest and waited in the cover of a tree. The early autumn air was still chilling in the morning and nothing provided safety from it just his long bottom-up shirt and vest. He felt cold, more because his skin was covered with sweat from the walk. He missed thermoception along with other human senses. It made him feel more alive, whole and complete, like his eons of existence had one single purpose.

To become a human in the end.

Humanity fascinated him. All the senses, emotions, motivations and instincts. The different combinations of those made every individual unique on their own way. Some shone brighter, some were darker, but every human was a piece of art. He grew to treasure his time as a human even though how much struggle it had brought to him. Starting with the fear of uselessness, being not needed by those who were dear to him. That had been why Dean’s words had broken him back in the bunker. Finally when he had arrived to a place he could one time call his home, he had been sent away. The reason as he had later learnt was understandable but it hadn’t stopped him from feeling pain.

But everything would be better now. He, they would change many things that would lead them to a better future.

The waiting was tiring. He hadn’t eaten much in the morning and felt thirstier with every passing hour. Around ten he had to sit down because his legs started aching after standing for too long. People passed by the school on foot and by car. The bells were ringing, signing the start and the end of classes then finally, after many hours of waiting, a girl walked behind the school bus, talking on her phone with teary eyes.

“I’ve been destroyed. Socially and romantically … totaled.”
The girl leaned against the bus. And Ephraim appeared on the other side. Castiel quickly stood up.

“I know. I'm just so embarrassed, Jace. I could just die.”

The Rit Zein raised his hand to touch the girl’s shoulder.

“Stop!” Castiel shouted and made his way up the slope.

The girl turned to him with confusion then noticed the angel behind her and quickly stepped away from him. She was just gaping as she looked at the angel and the former angel.

“Castiel.” The angel’s eyes lit up with fascination. Castiel knew the reason of that. Ephraim had told him that he had heard the pain he had been feeling. He could just wonder how loud his pain was now.

“Leave her alone, Ephraim. She’s just a teenager with everyday problems. It’s normal for humans.”

“You remember my name?” the angel smiled at him. “I’m honored. And why would it be normal to feel such enormous pain? She herself said that she wanted to die. All I want to do is help to end her misery.”

By the look on her face Castiel was sure the girl just realized that her life was in grave danger. She took one more step backwards and was about to run away but Ephraim stopped her with one glance.

“Ephraim” Castiel carefully walked between him and the teen protectively, eyes never leaving the other’s. “I know it’s your first time on Earth and there are many things you don’t understand. This is one of them. Humans feel physical and emotional pain and both ease by time.”

The angel frowned at him.

“A pain like this? To ease? I gave the mercy of death to angels who were in less pain than these humans. How can they recover when our brothers and sisters couldn’t?”

Castiel narrowed his eyes.

“You’re underestimating them.”

“Or maybe you value them too much. Your time among them weakened you, Castiel. I used to think highly of you but now you’re nothing. You’re just a human.”

Castiel straightened himself, still having the shadow of the proud and powerful leader of his garrison he used to be.

“And I’m proud to be one of them.”

Ephraim studied his face for a while then looked over his shoulder at the girl. Castiel felt the teen shaking with fear behind him.

“And as a human you think you stand a chance against me?” The angel took a step closer. “Against all of us? I hear what they’re saying, Castiel. They’re angry at you for what you and Metatron did. Do you want them to kill you slow or would you like me to finish it as quick as possible? This life is not for you, you know that. Your whole being is shaking with pain and fear.” Ephraim’s features softened. “Let me help you. I promise it will be over soon.”

Castiel’s jaw tightened. He would have agreed with Ephraim if it was their first time to talk and if
it wasn’t Castiel’s first time to be a human. But he had a year of knowledge in his hands. A knowledge he would make good use of this second time.

But Ephraim didn’t have to know that. He could use the angel’s ignorance against him and to save the girl. So Castiel lowered his gaze and his shoulders fell.

“I… understand what you say… I’m small compared to this world. I feel so lost…”

It wasn’t far from the truth so he didn’t have to fake the honesty in his voice. And it was good enough for Ephraim to swallow the bait. The angel’s whole being radiated excitement by hearing his words.

“I… accept your offer” Castiel continued but quickly added. “But not here in front of everyone. And you let her live.”

The girl behind her tensed. Castiel wanted to turn around and reassure her that everything would be alright but he didn’t want to blow his act. He fixed his eyes on Ephraim’s shoes, waiting for the angel to finally answer. The seconds passed in an agonizing pace until…

“As you wish” the other said. “Do you think the woods will be acceptable or would you prefer an other place?”

Castiel stopped himself before he could sigh with relief.

“The woods sounds good.”

Ephraim nodded and made his way down the slope. Castiel looked at the pale girl and smiled reassuringly.

“Run when we’re out of sight.”

He didn’t wait for the teen to answer. He followed Ephraim down, occasionally stepping on leaves that crunched under his feet. The angel stopped at the edge of the wood, waiting for Castiel to catch up.

“After you.”

Castiel didn’t look at Ephraim as he stepped into the woods. His brain worked all the way inside, trying to come up with a good way to convince the angel that he couldn’t just kill anyone with a bad day. He didn’t want to kill him. He was still determined not to kill any of his siblings. Bloodshed would not lead to anything good.

“You know, Castiel…” Ephraim started after a while. “Yesterday something strange happened. I was following the screams of your soul when all of a sudden it… changed. When I first heard it, it was crying in pain of abandonment but since yesterday it has a completely different tune. Like you had just lost someone you loved. Your soul is mourning.”

Castiel’s heart skipped a beat then started hammering his ribcage with double the force, meanwhile his brain froze with pain. Like you had just lost someone you loved. He still didn’t know yet if Dean made it through and if he did was he himself again. There were still too many questions, too many uncertainties and he just realized how hopeless and heartbroken he felt. The Dean in the chamber hadn’t been the Dean he used to know. The broken but strong and kind man who he come to l…

Ephraim chuckled at his reaction.
“This is what I’m talking about. This pain is unbearable even for you, Castiel. I always admired you for your strength but this pain would break you down too.”

The angel’s voice was just a noise in the background compared to Castiel’s thoughts. What if Dean was still a demon? He had said it himself that he would turn the events the way he wanted. That he liked being the way he was. What if they unleashed a greater enemy to the world than before?

Castiel stopped and bowed his head down. What if he came here alone? What if he didn’t come to live but to die? Maybe he should have died on that night a year ago by Ephraim’s hands? What if Father Time had sent him back here so the angel could finally kill him? He had done so much bad in the past years. He killed his siblings, caused the Fall and ruined Heaven. He deserved to die.

“Will this be a good place, Castiel?”

Castiel closed his eyes to fight back the tears that threatened to fall. Maybe it would be better to die as a human. His soul would go to Hell where he would pay for his crimes. The demons would love to torture the former angel who had caused so much trouble for them.

“Yes” he whispered and turned around. “It’s peaceful here. I like it.”

Ephraim nodded and raised his hand.

“It will be over soon.”

Castiel took one last breath and waited for the death. The final death.

“CAS!”

The former angel’s eyes widened and his soul started singing with hope and warmth. That voice… His voice…

Ephraim turned around curiously so Castiel could see that behind him it was really Dean Winchester running towards them. Dean had a worried look on his face and his eyes – God, his eyes – they were green and bright just like he remembered. Faintly he remembered that not that long ago he had heard him yell his name but maybe it had been only a dream.

But he soon realized Dean was not alright. His eyes were unfocused, his movements erratic and the hunter’s body fell forward.

“DEAN!” he yelled as the man hit the ground.

Ephraim watched the unmoving form for a while then turned back to Castiel. His hand continued moving towards his forehead.

“Stop!” Castiel said authoritatively and tried to step out of reach but Ephraim just shook his head as he grabbed the former angel’s arm.

“There’s no way back now.”

Castiel acted so fast he just realized what he was doing when his angel blade was already buried deep inside Ephraim’s stomach. The angel cried out as his being burnt out from the vessel with a flare. Castiel had to shut his eyes. The light was burning his human vision.

Ephraim’s lifeless vessel fell on the ground with the blade still in it but he didn’t bother to remove it. Castiel was by Dean’s side in a leap.
“Dean?” Castiel placed a hand carefully on the hunter’s shoulder and gently shook it. Dean didn’t react to that.

The former angel collected the man into his arms to have a closer look at him. Dean was pale with a hint of grey. His breathing was shallow and forced while cold sweat was running down his face. He seemed to be… exhausted.

A demon would never be exhausted.

Castiel took a deep breath and rolled up the sleeve on the man’s right arm with fear. He was scared that he would see that ugly mark marring the other’s skin. What would he do if it was still there? Lock Dean into a devil’s trap? That didn’t work the last time.

He almost sobbed out loud in relief when he saw nothing. Dean’s skin was untouched by the cursed Mark. Castiel pulled the man’s body closer to his chest and hugged him. He buried his face into his short hair and thanked Father Time for helping him. Helping him get back the Dean he missed so much.

“Is he okay?”

Castiel was startled by the voice. His head shot up in fear that an other angel approached him when he wasn’t paying attention but he was greeted by the sight of the girl he just saved.

“I… don’t know… I’ve never seen humans in this kind of state…”

The girl didn’t seem to be surprised by the way he talked. Maybe she had seen everything that had happened with Ephraim. The teen just nodded and kneeled down on Dean’s other side. She carefully put a hand on his neck, the other on his wrist and waited.

“His heartbeat seems weak but fast.” She then placed both hands on Dean’s jaw and opened his mouth. After looking inside she closed it. “Dehydration. I think your friend didn’t eat or drink for like a week.”

Castiel was amazed by the girl who just took a few looks at Dean and immediately knew what his problem was.

“How…”

“I was working with the medics this summer during some festivals, you know. Had to think about something else than my parents. Anyway, many fainted because they didn’t eat or drink in the heat. How can I help you?”

The former angel frowned.

“Why…” but before he could ask the question the girl cut in yet again.

“Dude, you saved my life. That’s the least I can do.”

The honesty and the gratitude in the girl’s voice which was maybe a little childish amazed Castiel. Humans were so different and most of them still acted the same way when someone else helped them.

“I don’t know what to do” he admitted. “When I was an angel, I just put my fingers on his forehead and he was physically healthy again. But without my powers I can’t do anything to help him.”
The girl studied his face for a while.

“Well, you can help him by taking him to the nurse office. He needs an infusion and he would be back on his feet in no time.”

The girl helped Castiel stand up with Dean. He put the man’s arm around his neck and carefully walked with him out of the woods. The girl walked next to him, leading the way.

“I’m Susie by the way” she said after a while. “Susie White.”

“Castiel. It is good to meet you, Susie.”

* *

The night found Castiel sitting on the roof of the bunker. He came across this place not so long ago and grew to like it immediately. It provided him the privacy he needed to think through everything. Or to just stare down at the small town of Lebanon above the trees. The humans down there lived so peacefully, not knowing what took place in the bunker in the meantime.

Castiel sighed and rubbed his closed eyes. He knew he shouldn’t let Crowley play with him like this. He should stay calm and focus on the task ahead. But every time the demon mentioned Dean something just… snapped in him. He wanted to punch that smug smile off Crowley’s face, stab a thousand holes into his stomach and burn him into tiny crispy pieces.

These thoughts of course didn’t help calm his anger. Castiel took a fistful of his hair and gripped it tight. He had to bury those emotions as deep as he could so they wouldn’t stand in his way. He had always wondered why Sam and Dean but mainly Dean would do that. Emotions were wonderful, they made the human life colorful. Now he could truly relate to the Winchesters. Emotions in times like these stood in the way. They would just distract him from his mission, namely finding Father Time and helping Dean. He had spent a lot of time in Heaven’s archives looking through books and scrolls but nothing. The Mark was only burnt into Cain’s arm before Dean. There was no known way to cure the man.

Once again these thought didn’t help him in his misery, just made it worse. He had to stop thinking altogether. If only he was an angel completely. Then he would easily shut out the emotions.

“There you are!”

Castiel looked behind him and saw Bobby climbing out to the roof.

“Damn those ladders” the man muttered under his breath before he stood up. “Thought you were in your room, son.”

The angel turned away slowly, drawing his knees closer to his chest.

“I prefer to be alone right now.” He liked Bobby a lot and was happy to see him again after years but he didn’t want any company.

“Don’t think so.” Bobby sat down next to him, his knees cracking in the process. “Sulking won’t solve anything.”
“Then what would? I’m a useless not-so-angel who can die any second now.”

“You’re not useless.”

“Yes, I am!” Castiel finally looked Bobby in the eyes. “I should be finding evidences of Father Time’s existence! I should be helping cure Dean! But instead I fall into Crowley’s trap over and over again!”

Castiel turned away and hid his face behind his legs. His whole inside was shaking and the stolen Grace was burning every cell of it.

“I just… I want to do something good before I die. I want to die with the thought that I finally managed to do something right. I want to go to Hell knowing that I saved those who are important to me.”

He didn’t expect Bobby smack the back of his head. Castiel looked up again, one hand rubbing his aching head. Bobby was watching him with a frown, the fatherly kind with he always looked at Sam and Dean.

“Are you out of your mind, boy? Hell? Why would you go to Hell?”

“Because all I ever did was ruining everything around me” Castiel said as it was a matter of fact. Which it really was. “My siblings died by my hands and those who are still alive lost their home because of me. I corrupt everything I touch.”

Bobby smacked him again. Castiel should have been able to protect his head but his reflexes were slower than they should be.

“You’re acting like Dean, you know that?” Bobby asked with an angry but caring tone. “He always sees his mistakes but never the things he did right. You’re doing that too. Yes, you killed angels. Yes, unintentionally, but the angels fell because of you. But you pulled that idjit out of Hell. You saved him and his brother many times. You turned against your siblings when you knew they were wrong. You fought for good even though sometimes you didn’t chose the best way of doing that. And now you’re not caring about your health until you help others first. You are good, Castiel. And you don’t deserve to go to Hell.”

Castiel watched Bobby for a while. The older man’s eyes shone with honesty like he truly understood what the angel was going through. But he didn’t believe what Bobby just told him was true. Castiel knew his past mistakes were too great to deserve anything better than an eternity in the Pit.

“Thank you for telling me this, Bobby.” Castiel turned back to the view. The sun was almost under the horizon now, painting the sky with different shades of orange. “I’d like to be alone right now.”

The hunter sighed and carefully got up. He made his way back to the ladder but Castiel heard him stopping before he started climbing down.

“By the way, when you’re done with your hissy, come down. It appears Father Time is alive and kicking somewhere.”

Castiel followed the hunter five minutes later with hope building up inside him.
“And then I heard that scream, you know that ‘help me’ kind of and I ran into the forest and I saw
this guy on the ground and the other holding him, and I checked and he was totally dried out and I
thought maybe the nurse could help him so I brought him here with the other guy…”

He just woke up but he wanted to go back to unconsciousness immediately. The nonstop chirping
hurt his ears. It was worse than an angel’s true voice. And that really hurt.

Dean rubbed the bridge of his nose and opened his eyes to have a look at his surroundings. He
seemed to be in a nurse office and he was laying on one of the beds. There was a needle in his left
hand. The line from it was leading up to an IV bag that was hanged on a pole. To his right a white
curtain was drawn, blocking the view to that side of the room. The voice was coming from behind
it. It was a girl. Mainly she spoke but he could hear that others were there too, trying to ask
questions but the girl didn’t let them speak.

“Then the other guy said he had to find the guy’s bag and the guy is now sleeping and
everything…”

Bag and guy and other guy? Dean frowned as he tried to find some meaning behind those words.
One of the guys was him, he had been the one who was sleeping. But who was the other guy? And
he didn’t have any bags. Dean forced his still numb brain to recall what had led to him laying with
a needle in his hand when the picture of the Rit Zein guy and Cas flashed before his eyes.

“Ca-Ugh!” Dean was about to sit up but the sudden pain in his head pulled him back on the pillow.
His vision blurred but he couldn’t care less about it. He had to find Cas. He was in danger.

He saw the blur of a head appearing next to the curtain then it disappeared.

“Shoo you all! You’re waking him up! Out of here!”

Dean heard many footsteps, a closing door then someone carefully approaching him in the silence.

“You okay, Dean?”

Dean looked up, surprised that the girl knew his name. And he was more surprised when he saw
that the girl was very familiar.

“You’re from earlier.”

“Susie White” she introduced herself, then put her hands on her hips. “Why didn’t you drink or eat?
You got hypoglycemia and you were about to have a seizure when we arrived. You’re lucky that
the nurse acted just in time.”

Hypowhat? Dean blinked at the girl and looked around. She was acting rather calm despite that she
just scolded him. If she was calm that meant everything was alright, right?

“Where’s Cas?” he asked, looking back at her.

Susie narrowed her eyes then returned back to their normal size, brows shooting up slightly.

“Oh! You mean Castiel!” The teen pointed at the door with her thumb. “He just left an hour ago.
Said he had to burry the body and find your car.”

A heavy sigh of relief left Dean and he ooked at the ceiling. Cas was okay. Cas was alive. He’s
“So!” Susie sat on the chair next to his bed and looked at him expectantly.

Dean raised a brow as he glance at her.

“So?”

“What happened to you? You look healthy to me. Why would you show the symptoms of dehydration and low blood sugar?”

“Didn’t you get a ‘C’ on a quiz? How do you know things like that?”

“One ‘C’ doesn’t mean…” she started huffily but then her eyes widened. “How do you know about my grades?”

Dean turned back to the ceiling and put an arm – his right one – over his eyes.

“Long story.”

“Short?”

“I’m not talking to you.”

“Why not?”

“Because you’re a kid.”

“I’m not a kid! I’m almost seventeen!”

“That still counts as kid. I’m not talking to a kid.”

“Then I’ll talk.”

Dean groaned. He really didn’t have the energy and patience for this.

“Can you just… shut up for ten minutes or more? Or can you just leave me alone?”

“Sorry, can’t leave you. Castiel asked me to stay and ‘watch over’ you.”

The man sighed. Great. He got stuck with an annoying teen instead of Cas. Or maybe that would be worse. The part after the rescuing was still unplanned. He didn’t know how to act, what to say, especially after… Anyway, he was glad the former – or still? – angel went back to bury the Rit Zein guy’s body.

“Wait a minute…” Dean moved his arm away and looked at the girl again questioningly. “You’re not freaking out that Cas is digging a hole for a dead guy right now?”

The girl shrugged and looked away, the corner of her mouth tilting down.

“Well, yeah, it’s kinda out of a horror movie, but that guy wanted to kill me and Castiel saved my life. So the least I can do is to not shriek my throat sore.”

He could tell from her body language that it wasn’t the whole truth. Her fingers were fluttering in her lap. To some may say it was because of boredom but he had seen it too many times on targets of some supernatural monster who wanted to appear strong that he couldn’t ignore it. So Dean
sighed and closed her eyes.

“You should let the steam out” he said. “It won’t work in the long run.”

He heard Susie stopped breathing for a moment.

“Crying won’t solve anything” she muttered.

“Your parents are divorcing, you had a breakup, your grades are dropping and you got almost killed. Crying won’t solve any of it but you would feel better.”

A long silence followed his words so Dean opened his eyes curiously. Susie was watching him with rounded orbs.

“How…” she started with a weak voice then coughed before she spoke again. “How do you know those things?”

Dean shrugged.

“You wouldn’t believe me if I told you.”

The girl knitted her brows.

“An angel wanted to kill me. I think I’ll believe whatever you say.”

Dean carefully folded his fingers over his stomach not to accidentally remove the needle in his hand and fixed his gaze on the ceiling once again.

_Talk to somebody._

Dean sighed as he remembered the words. He knew it was true. He had to drop his philosophy of ‘no chick flick moments’, but he didn’t want to talk about his problems with a kid he just met. For the talking he needed someone who he really trusted.

“Cas, my brother and I travelled back from the future” he said finally.

From the corner of his eye he could see the shock written all over Susie’s face. He was sure she didn’t believe him. Who would believe this? Someone travels back from a fucked-up future like Arnold Schwarzenegger saying ‘Come with me if you wanna live’? Nah, that was crazy even for him. And he was the one travelling back.

“And I…” the girl started. Her breathing sped up a little. “And I was killed? That guy killed me? That’s why Castiel was hiding in the forest? He knew what would happen?”

Dean nodded and turned to see the girl’s reaction to this information.

Susie watched him for a while, face pale, eyes wider than humanly possible. She blinked a few times then looked away. At the floor, the curtain, back at the floor, the ceiling, then she started laughing. It wasn’t a desperate, maniac laughter but a sincerely happy one.

“And I was psyched out by a little break up?” she asked mainly from herself. “I was supposed to die today and my biggest problem was that jerk?”

Susie rubbed the wetness out from her eyes but she just smudged it over her face. She showed Dean a big, toothy grin.
“I think I just got a second chance. I should revalue my life at this point, don’t you think? You know, rearranging my priorities and stuff.”

Dean was out of words because how could she be so calm about this? She was just a hysterical teenage girl like all the others. She should be throwing the medical books lined up neatly on the shelves out the window and not talk about second chances and the meaning of life and shit like that. She should be freaked out and not be freaking calm!

Or Dean just wanted to project his own frustration on the girl. After all, he was the one who wanted to run away and never look back because his actions came with a responsibility. He killed Gavin in the first place. He messed up time like this. It was all his fault. And look at that! A teenage girl handled this more maturely than him. As soon as he had arrived here, he went into self-destruct mode. He should grow up halfway through his third ‘x’.

The door opened almost without a sound. Susie somehow noticed it even though she was still laughing loudly. She stood up and walked out from the cover of the curtain. Her grin just widened more.

“Hey there! Look, he’s up!”

Silence then quick footsteps were heard. And then there he was with his blue Gas’n’Sip vest and unruly dark locks and soul-staring blue eyes.

“Dean.”

Dean swallowed.

“Cas.”

In that moment Dean wished that he could be with the annoyingly chirping Susie one more hour. He was absolutely not ready for this conversation.

Chapter End Notes

Dean's (not so) out of nowhere hypoglycemia will be explained. I don't like when writers don't explain everything in their books so that won't happen in this story. If it does, feel free to tell me :)


Waking up at *that* table in the morning affected Sam’s whole day. He wandered aimlessly from one room to another while he had no one to talk to. Kevin was actively sleeping and Gadreel was dormant somewhere in the back of his head. He sensed the angel’s low energy, it affected him too. He felt weaker and a dull pain pulsed in his arms. He couldn’t imagine how much it would have hurt without the angel’s Grace.

Around three in the afternoon he almost didn’t hear his phone ringing, he was so deep in his thoughts. But one glance at the screen woke him quickly.

“Cas! You okay?”

“Thank you for your concern, I am” he heard the angel’s voice. “And you?”

“Fine, I guess” he said. “Gadreel’s still healing me. What about Dean? Is he there?”

After a few long silent moments Sam started worrying.

“Cas, what happened?”

“Dean fainted, he’s in the nurse office of a high school right now” Cas answered with his usual monotone voice after exhaling a deep breath but Sam could sense he was forcing himself to be calm. “He’s showing symptoms of dehydration and low blood sugar.”

Sam sighed and rubbed his forehead. With his brother’s way of eating he always wondered when something like this would happen. But instead of low sugar he expected a high level of that.

“Do you think this whole travelling back in time caused it?”

“I’m not sure. I feel perfectly fine and apart from the after effects of the trial I suppose you’re fine too, right?”

Sam smiled half-heartedly.

“Yeah, I am.”

“I just wanted to inform you about Dean. Hopefully we’ll be back at the bunker tomorrow.”

“Okay, we’ll be waiting. Take care!”

Cas hummed in agreement and ended the call. Sam put down his phone and looked around him. He sat at the table again. After rubbing his eyes like he just woke from a stressful sleep he stood up and made his way to his room.

‘You’re troubled’ sounded Gadreel’s voice in his head.
Sam stopped just before he walked down the stairs. He wanted to deny it, saying that he was fine like he had told Cas but he couldn’t. The angel would immediately now that he was lying.

‘Yeah, I’m a little troubled. How are you?’

‘I’m still exhausted but I woke up to your uneasiness.’

Sam made a face at that. He wanted to talk about something else but the angel didn’t seem to understand that.

‘I’m sorry for that.’

‘There’s no need to apologize.’ The angel was silent for a moment. ‘May I ask… why are you mourning?’

Sam’s heart skipped a beat. First he slowly walked down the stairs before answering.

‘You’re in my head. You can look into my memories if you want to know.’

Which he didn’t want. His memories… that memory was private. He didn’t want anyone to see it. He himself didn’t want to see it but when he was sleeping he relived those minutes again and again in an agonizingly slow pace. And once again he was too slow and couldn’t reach out in time.

‘I don’t want to look into them’ Gadreel said. ‘Maybe I looked into some after I possessed your body but now I regret doing such a thing. Memories are private parts of a human mind. You trust me now and I don’t want to lose it by doing anything that makes you uncomfortable.’

Sam smiled as he walked down the corridor. On his way to his room he looked into Kevin’s. The teen was spread out on his bed, laying on his stomach and snoring like an old engine. Sam carefully closed his door and soon entered his own.

‘May I ask who you lost?’ the angel asked when Sam sat down on his bed with a book in his hand.

Sam put the book on his lap and stared at it. Gadreel was curious. Every angel was when they came across something they didn’t understand. Somehow it was in their nature to always ask. And it was in his nature to answer and the other’s satisfied smile following that made his lips curl up too. But he wasn’t smiling now. It was bitter to think about it when just a day had passed.

“Someone who once told me to not blame myself if anything bad happens” he said with a low voice. Sam didn’t realize he spoke out loud until something clenched his throat tight. Somehow saying it made everything more real and unchangeable. He quickly cleared his throat.

‘Yet you blame yourself.’

Sam chuckled sadly.

“Yeah. Because it was my fault in the first place.”

They both were silent for a long moment.

‘Thank you for telling me. Even though you didn’t share everything, I still feel honored. I’ll retreat now.’

“Yeah, you do that.”

Sam pulled a hand down his face and took a deep breath. He didn’t open the book that afternoon.
As promised, Hannah returned with dozens of books and scrolls in the morning. She put them on the farthest table of the library and put her hands on her hips. Previously she just folded her arms before her chest but more human gestures appeared in her collection now she spent so much time in the bunker. Sam found it amusing but didn’t let it show on his face.

“I’ll look through the Enochians, the rest is yours.”

Sam took a few dictionaries from one of the storage rooms in the basement and took a seat opposite to the angel. The only noise in that part of the bunker was the turning of papers as they sled on the other. It went on for almost six hours. Sam sometimes stood up to use the bathroom or take some food and drink from the kitchen but apart from that he read and translated nonstop.

It was around three in the afternoon when Hannah finally broke the silence.

“How’s Castiel?” she asked without looking up. “I haven’t seen him since yesterday.”

Sam sighed and leaned back in his chair while rubbing his eyes. He needed a break from the books. The lines started to blur together so he was glad Hannah started a conversation.

“He’s more hopeful now we know Father Time is real but I think he’s getting worse” Sam answered honestly. “He tries to hide it but you have to be blind to not see how sick he gets with each day. I don’t think he has much time left.”

Hannah slowly looked down at her lap.

“I wish I could help” the angel said with a low voice. “I tried to look for Castiel’s Grace countless times but Metatron hid it well. And he hasn’t said anything yet. I doubt he would.”

Sam placed his forearms on the tabletop and leaned on them.

“Hannah, you did everything you could.”

Hannah exhaled a long breath and shook her head.

“Maybe I should have tried more. It was my fault we got to this in the first place. I should have trusted Castiel more.”

Sam acted without thinking. The years he had spent with hunting came with many actions that he now did instinctively. Like giving comfort to those who needed. So in one moment he was still leaning on his forearms but in the next his hand was already on Hannah’s.

“Hannah” he started and squeezed her hand a little. “Anything that happened was not your fault. You’re a greater help than I can ask for. Thank you.”

Hannah locked eyes with him for a long moment. She tilted her head slightly then looked down at their touching hands with thoughtful eyes. Sam looked down too. Hannah didn’t have small hands but his were still bigger than hers. His palm completely covered her from the fingertips to the wrist and a little beyond it. Her skin was soft and white, almost like snow next to his light tan.

After a while Sam felt Hannah’s hand tensing. He looked up. The angel’s expression was hard and
her eyes were narrowed slightly. Sam quickly pulled back his hand.

“I’m sorry” he blurted out. “I didn’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

He shouldn’t have done that. Hannah was an angel and angels didn’t touch anyone just like that. Only if they healed or fought or flew with someone else. For them giving comfort was probably through talking or something if not a completely foreign act.

Luckily Hannah didn’t seem to be angry. She looked just a bit confused.

“It’s alright, Sam” she reassured him, eyes still fixed on her hand. “It was just… strange.”

Sam nodded and quickly turned back to the book opened before him. He had better things to do then worry about the personal space of an angel. Which was pretty funny now that he was thinking about it. Cas used to stand so close to Dean it had made him uncomfortable who had been just watching. The memory of Dean’s face at those times almost made him smile. Almost. If it wasn’t that painful to think about it. They had lost Dean and they were losing Cas now too. He wanted nothing more than return back to those times when things were more normal.

As he was thinking about it he felt he was being watched. Sam frowned and slowly glanced up. Hannah didn’t move an inch, just her eyes travelled higher. She was now watching him.

“What is it?” he asked.

“How are you?” she said without answering his question.

Sam blinked.

“Sorry?”

Hannah clenched then relaxed her left hand, the one he had touched.

“Everyone is concerned about the ripple, Dean and Castiel. Yes, those things are our top priorities, but nobody seems to be concerned about you. Dean is your brother and Castiel is your friend. I can tell by just looking at you that you barely sleep at night. And your soul cries in agony when you think about them which you always do. So please, answer honestly. How are you?”

Sam’s lips parted slightly. Truth to be told, nobody seemed to care about him that much nowadays. Not that he needed the attention. As Hannah worded, the ripple, Dean and Cas were their top priorities. He himself didn’t really think about himself or anything else. But now, somehow it was… nice that someone asked about his well-being. It made him feel like he… mattered.

Sam chuckled half-heartedly and leaned back with his arms folded before his chest.

“Honestly?” Sam looked to his left to collect his thoughts. “Not good. I worry too much and want to do too many things at once. I just… I can’t just sit and do nothing. I always have to do research because what if I run out of time? What if it would be my fault that we couldn’t stop this?”

Hannah tilted her head the other side.

“I can’t say anything to this that wouldn’t make me sound a hypocrite.”

Sam laughed at that. Really laughed. He pinched the bridge of his nose and was shaking with laughter. He needed that for a long time now. He didn’t remember the last time he had laughed that good, that genuinely. Years ago maybe when Jess was still alive. With this laugh he felt more
alive. More human.

When he finally regained control over his behavior he coughed and looked up at the confused Hannah.

“Did I say something funny?” she asked and he could swear he heard resentfulness in her voice.

“I’m sorry” he apologized quickly. “But this whole situation is so ridiculous. It’s like the worst joke of the universe. I’m sorry if I offended you.”

He and Hannah stared at each other for a while. The angel’s face was hard like stone and Sam was sure she would soon stand up and leave with the books and never return but to his surprise her visage softened. And to his even greater surprise Hannah’s lips curled up slightly. It wasn’t like the smiles she gave to her siblings. It was warmer than that.

“There’s no need to apologize. I must say, we really are a pair of hopelessly lamentable individuals.”

Sam’s smile was quickly back on his face too. He was about to say something when out of nowhere a woman appeared in the library. Both he and Hannah looked at the confused lady who looked around then fixed her eyes on them.

“I’m sorry. Do you know where I can find Emmanuel?”

Sam and Hannah turned back to each other. This was getting complicated real quick.

* 

“Okay! It’s getting hot in here!”

Castiel blinked and looked at Susie with confusion. Susie frowned at him like she didn’t understand his silent question.

“Dean was right. I’m a kid. I’m too young to see stuff like that. Call me when it’s safe to come back.”

With that the teen left the nurse office. The silence that she left behind was sparking with the tension in the air. Castiel waited until his breathing normalized and just then turned back to the man lying on the bed.

When he wasn’t looking Dean turned to his side, showing his back to him. His whole body was tense and his breathing was irregular. Castiel understood that he shouldn’t bother Dean now when he wanted to be left alone with his thoughts. So the former angel took a seat on the chair next to the bed and waited.

Seeing Dean again as himself was uplifting. It was his main goal to travel back in time. And they did it. The Mark of Cain wasn’t controlling him and he wasn’t a demon anymore. Just thinking about it spread warmth through his body. It was a feeling he hadn’t felt in a long time. From his perspective it had been more than a year ago. He had been brought back to life and taken to the bunker. What had followed after was a slide down a mountainside in flames, but he still remembered the feeling before that fondly. He was glad it was back once again and that maybe,
finally, it would stay.

After a few long minutes Dean’s muscles relaxed at last. Castiel looked up, waiting patiently until the man spoke.

“You’re so stupid, you know.” Dean’s voice was hoarse but Castiel mindfully ignored it. He sounded angry too but it wasn’t the dominant emotion. “Running into death like this. What were you thinking?”

Castiel watched Dean’s back with a soft smile on his face.

“I’m sorry for making you worried.”

Dean stiffened again.

“Was not.”

They stayed silent again for a few minutes but unlike the previous one it was more comfortable. Castiel relaxed more into the chair and looked around curiously. All the medical equipments were fascinating. He admired humans for their creativity too. Inventing so many things in so little time seemed so impossible but they managed to do so. It saddened him how most of his sibling treated them. They called them ‘mud monkeys’ and underestimated their intelligence. In a way they were their siblings, the creations of their Father too. Like in Tolkien’s works. The Elves were the immortal children of Eru Ilúvatar, connected to this world till the end of it. And Men, the Secondborn bear the Gift of Men, which allowed them to shape their own future, not bounded by fate, and after their death they could leave behind this world.

In times like this he was wryly glad that Metatron gave him the knowledge of every book, movie and series he had known. With that now he could understand the references and see parallels like the one he had just thought about.

“So…” Dean started speaking again. “You buried the body.”

“I took it deeper into the woods and buried it, yes” Castiel answered.

“Where did you get a shovel?”

“From your car. I took the keys from your pocket and drove here.”

At this Dean finally turned to look at him. His eyes were narrower as he watched him.

“You drove Baby?”

“I was careful, Dean” Castiel reassured him. He knew the man didn’t allow anyone sit behind the wheel of his beloved car just his brother on some occasions. “Trust me.”

His last two words effected Dean in a strange way. He bit his lower lip and thoughtfully looked away. Then after a while he finally turned on his back and started watching the ceiling. He was finally opening up.

“Then what now?” he asked. “Didn’t you cause an other ripple by saving Susie? What if she was supposed to die?”

“No, she wasn’t. She was not destined to die yet. She will live for sixty more years, mother of three, grandmother of seven.”
The two men quickly turned to the source of the voice. At the foot of the bed stood a brunette in a white dress suit looking at them with a little smile on her face. She had a rod in her hand with little lines carved into it. Castiel’s eyes widened as soon as he realized who she was, stopping just before he could take his blade.

“Lachesis…”

Dean frowned at Castiel.

“Gesundheit?”

“She’s one of the Fates” Castiel explained quickly before the goddess could be offended by Dean’s word. “She decides how much time for life is to be allowed for every living being.”

Lachesis smiled at him.

“Castiel, I’m disappointed in you. You just wanted to throw away your second chance? Just like that?” She shook her head disapprovingly. “Bad little angel.”

Castiel felt Dean’s questioning eyes on him but he couldn’t find the courage to look at him.

“And you too, Dean.” Now the Fate looked at the hunter. “What is it with you Winchesters and always wanting to sacrifice yourselves? This one would have been the most meaningless of them all.”

It was now the former angel’s turn to look at Dean questioningly who stubbornly avoided eye contact. What was Lachesis talking about? What had Dean wanted to do?

“What is a Fate doing here?” Dean asked, clearly in an attempt to turn the conversation to another direction.

Lachesis just smiled at that.

“Father Time informed me about your journey here. He told me about the ripple and the bargain Sam made with him. A year for a year. He must be very fond of you if he let you back with this little price. Normally he would have asked for ten or more years for one. Or even a lifetime of your souls.”

Castiel’s eyes widened.

“Wait… You know Father Time?”

Lachesis rolled her eyes and spun her rod in her hand like a majorette would their baton.

“Of course I know him. He’s the embodiment of time. My boss basically. And!” she added before Castiel had time to even think about the question. “Neither I nor my sisters would have told you anything. Where’s the work in that? But I must say you were surprisingly creative.”

Castiel sighed. He had to agree with Lachesis. Their search was basically a quest they had to struggle with. And also he didn’t think Atropos would have helped them. He was sure she was still angry at him.

“So you’re here because?” Dean asked again. He tried to sit up but fell back immediately on the pillow. The Fate looked Dean in the eyes who after a short time looked away uncomfortably.

“Take it easy, Dean” she said. “Your soul is still disoriented. Those few months as a demon and
now suddenly being a human again weakened your whole being. Rest and don’t even think about hunting for a while.”

Lachesis then took a few threads from her pocket. Some were entwined loosely, some tightly.

“I’m just here to wish you luck” she started as she was observing the threads. “The task ahead leads you to a rocky road with many difficulties. And as much as I sympathize with you, which I shouldn’t, I can’t prevent the things that are waiting for you. I can only warn you to be prepared.”

Castiel looked at Dean who just turned his head towards him. Before they arrived to the chamber he and Sam knew that it won’t be easy once they were back in the past. He didn’t know how many things they had changed already with just arriving here. They had to wait and find out.

Lashesis woke him from his thoughts as the Fate tapped her rod to the floor.

“I must go now. I hope you can prevent the disaster. But remember. There are some things that are destined to happen. And no matter what you do, you can’t change them.”

Right after she disappeared the door opened and the nurse stepped in. As soon as she saw Dean a gentle smile spread across her face.

“Oh! You’re awake! Good. Mind if I make some routine examinations?”

Dean was taken aback a little but nodded. The woman stepped closer and took a small lamp from one of her pockets. She turned the light on before Dean’s eyes and moved it away and back a few times.

“I don’t know if your friend informed you yet but you almost had a seizure caused by a long period of low sugar level in your blood. Did you have any problems with it previously in your life?”

The man shook his head. He looked at Castiel uncomfortably who understood what he wanted without a word.

“I’ll wait outside.”

When he was on the corridor, Castiel leaned against the wall and closed his eyes. Lachesis’ warning was still echoing in his head but he tried to lock it out with a mantra of ‘everything will be fine’.

Chapter End Notes

I love parallels.

I may change the twice a week updates to once a week in the near future. I wrote most of the fic in August when I was still on vacation but we opened the daycare in September again so I'm a little tired when I get home from work. I don't want to catch up to myself with the updates.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

I caught a cold last week and I barely had the energy to go to work so that’s why there wasn’t a new chapter. But here it is now!

As usual, very un-beta’d.

The nurse was annoying as hell. She asked a lot of questions he didn’t want to answer to and it took her more than half an hour to finally leave him alone.

“I suggest you to not drive for at least three days” she said as she wrote a prescription. “Rest plenty, drink three liters of water daily. Have three meals or six small meals a day. I’ll give you a list of foods you can eat for at least a month before you can try other foods. I wrote a prescription of the medicines you should take. It would help normalizing and keeping your blood sugar level. And keep a package of grape sugar in your pocket so if you feel dizzy again you can eat one immediately.”

Dean sat through the lecturing with an annoyed face. He was at the point that if the woman doesn’t stop talking in the next few minutes, he would leave without a word. The needle was out of his hand for ten minutes now so nothing kept him here anymore. Not that it would have stopped him.

“Also, you can’t smoke or drink any kind of alcohol or caffeine for the next month.”

At that Dean just gaped for at least ten seconds.

“What?!?”

“You heard me.” The nurse frowned at him. “We want to stabilize your sugar level. Alcohol and smoke would just ruin it.”

The nurse handed him the prescription, a paper he didn’t bother to look at and a long list of foods which he curiously read through. Mainly rabbit food. Amazing.

“Can I eat pie?” he asked after he got to the end of the list.

“No. Pie and any other pastries have a high glycemic index.”

“But…”

“No pie for a month.” The nurse ended the argument with a glare and he was sure she would hit the table with her fist if there weren’t any medical equipments placed on it. “Now off you go. Take care of yourself.”

As Dean left the office he swore he could hear the nurse muttering about how stupidly stubborn he was but he resisted to turn back and say something about nurses. He was glad that he could finally leave. He wanted to get back to the bunker as soon as possible and start planning. At this time Abaddon and some very crazy angels like Bartholomew were still alive and Metatron was not rotting in jail. They had to be careful to not attract too much attention.
Outside he found Cas talking with Susie. As soon as he closed the door behind him the former angel looked up at him. His eyes were filled with relief and Dean had to look away. This felt so wrong. Cas shouldn’t be worried about him. He had been a demon, for fuck’s sake! And he had done things even to Cas so he didn’t deserve that look.

“Is everything alright?” the former angel asked and stepped closer.

“Yeah” Dean said and tried to put the papers into his pocket. “A nice long sleep and everything will be fine.”

He didn’t convince Cas of course. The former angel didn’t stop until he was barely an inch away from him and looked into his eyes, not letting him to look away.

“Dean.”

And damn it, he was using that demanding voice again and he couldn’t help just stare back and wait. He realized too late that while he was busy looking Cas took the papers from his hand. He stepped away and took a look at those.

“You can’t drive” Cas informed him after he read the paper Dean didn’t look at.

“Yeah, right, not gonna happen” Dean said huffily.

“I’ll drive us home.” Cas folded the papers and put them into his pocket. Dean made a face that was definitely not a bitch face.

But then one word, the last one, hit him like a truck. Home. That was what he had said. They were going home. There won’t be any kicking out and sleepless nights because of it and finally, fucking finally, everybody he considered a member of his family would be under the same roof. At this thought something fluttered inside him and he quickly tried to stop it with a cough. He knew what that meant but he couldn’t let it take him over yet. Not until they got back and he made sure everything would stay that way.

They walked out the school and the first thing he saw was his Baby waiting at the side of the road just for them. He had the urge to rush there and check if everything was okay with her but Cas had asked Dean to trust him. And no matter how peeved Dean was, he trusted him. And he also decided to let him drive. Cas wouldn’t let him anyway.

Before they got in the car they turned to Susie. The girl followed them outside, watching their every movement with some glint in her eyes which made Dean annoyed and uncomfortable at the same time.

“Thank you” Cas said with a small smile on his face.

“No, thank you” the girl corrected him. “You saved my life after all.”

Cas took a pen and a slip of paper from his other pocket and wrote down something quickly before handing it to Susie.

“If there’s anything wrong, call me.”

Susie grinned at it then turned to Dean.

“Be careful with your second chance.”
Dean nodded then waved as he turned around and sat on the passenger seat. Cas soon followed him and started the engine.

“Why did you give her your number?” Dean found himself asking. He crossed his arms over his chest and leaned against the window as Cas turned the car around. They were heading toward the main road.

“I’m concerned about her safety” Cas answered simply. “Lachesis said she would have a long life but regarding our history with destiny and what had happened to those we met on the way, I’m worried about her wellbeing.”

Dean watched Cas for a while. He seemed to be relaxed and drove the Impala with ease. Dean noticed some of his movements were similar to his. Maybe he had learnt driving by just watching him. And he also noticed that under the calm mask Cas tensed when he said the Fate’s name. Dean knew what Lachesis was talking about when she mentioned his meaningless sacrifice. But what about Cas? What was that throwing away his second chance supposed to mean? He had to ask about it later.

**Talk to somebody.**

Dean shut his eyes tight. Yeah, not right now. First he had to sleep and somehow smuggle some not so healthy food into his system. He could eat a dozen pies right now.

They stopped at the Gas’n’Sip because Cas had to get his stuff and he couldn’t leave without properly saying goodbye to Nora. Dean stayed in the car and watched the two. He could clearly see Nora’s confused face, Cas explaining something, then Nora looked outside right at him and turned back to Cas with a knowing smile. Dean sighed with frustration and decided looking at the passing cars was more interesting.

It took about twenty minutes for Cas to finally get back. He dropped his bag on the backseat then sat behind the wheel again. Dean was about to remark not so kindly how slow he was when Cas put a plastic bag on his lap. Dean put his hands on it quickly because it threatened to roll down his legs.

“What is it?” he asked but didn’t wait for the answer. He was already looking through the contents of the bag. He found a lot of apple, a few bottles of mineral water, a yogurt, oat bran bread, a package of grape sugar…

“I thought you might get hungry on the way back” Cas shrugged and with a switch of the key the engine awoke.

…and…

“M&Ms?” Dean pulled out the little package and looked at the former angel with raised brows.

“You can eat candy sparingly.”

Dean didn’t find the courage to say anything because goddamnit, he didn’t deserve this. He didn’t deserve anything. Especially not this.

For many hours the only sound that broke the silence was the soft music in the radio.
“You might wanna sit down.”

“I’m not sitting down, Bobby! Where’s Emmanuel? And who are these people?”

“Daphne…”

“Don’t ‘Daphne’ me, Lee!”

Sam shifted uncomfortably at the doorway. So this was Daphne, the wife of the amnesiac Cas. She seemed to be a kind woman, even though she was anxious right now. But her reaction was understandable. Everyone would be confused in a situation like that. And she was worried about her husband too. He was glad Cas had been found by her and not by someone else.

“Daph, you sit down in this instant.” Bobby pushed the woman on the couch which gained a glare. They were in the room that functioned as the bunker’s living room. There was a TV and a bunch of game consoles around it, a sad reminder that a teenage boy used to live here. “I’ll tell you everything but first you have to shut your cakehole.”

Daphne straightened herself and her glare became more intense.

“Bobby Singer. If you don’t bring Emmanuel here in this instant, I’ll do something that I may or may not regret later.”

Sam had to admit Daphne had some guts to talk to Bobby like that. Dean would say she was kicking ass.

“I’ll call Castiel” Hannah announced loudly so Bobby could hear her over Daphne and Lee’s conversation.

“You do that, sister.” Bobby nodded and turned back to the woman.

Hannah frowned at the ‘sister’ part and Sam was about to explain what Bobby had meant but the angel already turned around and left. Sam watched her until she disappeared at the corner then looked back at Daphne.

“Daphne, what you’re going to hear will perhaps freak you out but everything will be fine” Lee said as calmly as possible.

“Why would I freak out?” Daphne asked. “There’s nothing wrong, right?” The woman looked up at Bobby. “Right, Bobby?”

Bobby rubbed the back of his head. And somehow it just made everything worse. Daphne’s eyes widened and she started panicking, misunderstanding the older hunter’s body language.

“Oh, my dear Lord! The Leviathans? It’s the Leviathans, isn’t it? They found us? How?” She then covered her mouth with her hands. “Oh, God! Where’s Emmanuel? Is he safe?”

“Everyone is fine.” Bobby put his hand on the woman’s shoulder. “We’re just in an other timeline.”

Before Daphne could ask more about it Cas arrived followed by Hannah. The woman locked eyes with the confused angel then bolted towards him.

“Emmanuel!” She hugged Cas tightly around his neck. “I was so worried! I thought something
“happened to you!” She stepped away but didn’t release the angel. “But what are these cloths? And why is your hair so unkempt? And what’s with the look?”

Sam saw Cas tensing up. The angel took both of Daphne’s hands and gently took them off his shoulder.

“I’m sorry, Daphne” he said. “I’m not Emmanuel. My name is Castiel.”

Daphne frowned in confusion.

“What…?”

“As I tried to tell you” Bobby spoke up and the woman turned towards him, “we’re in an other timeline. Here Emmanuel got back his memories.”

Daphne paled at this. She slowly looked back at Cas, studied his face for a while then freed her hands from the angel’s grip.

“I… I need some time…”

The woman left in a hurry, bumping into both Cas and Hannah on the way out. Hannah frowned angrily at the woman but Cas just stood at the same spot as if he was frozen in time. Sam stepped forward and put a hand on his shoulder.

“Hey. You okay?”

Cas shook his head.

“I… should have expected this at one point. It was… very unpleasant.”

“She’ll come around” Bobby patted his other shoulder on the way out as he passed the angel. Lee followed him close behind thus Sam and the two angels were left in the small room.

The tension vibrating from the angel was unbearable even for him. It was like standing next to a nuclear reactor minutes before the explosion. Sam realized he still had a hand on Cas’ shoulder so he squeezed it reassuringly.

“We’ll fix it, okay? Everything will be fine.”

From the corner of his eye he saw Hannah frowning at his optimism but she didn’t say anything. Sam glanced at her then back at Cas.

“You should rest, Cas” he said.

“I’m fine” the angel insisted but then Hannah, mimicking Sam, put a hand on his other shoulder.

“Sam is right, Castiel. We still have much to do. We need you at full strength.”

Maybe it wasn’t the best thing to say but Sam had to agree that it was the nicest of them all. Cas stiffened again under their touch then stepped away from them.

“I’ll be in my room then if you need me.”

Sam and Hannah stayed silent until they didn’t hear Cas’ steps anymore. The man sighed and rubbed his forehead.
“Now he feels useless.”

“Castiel is not useless.” Hannah was visibly offended by his words. “He’s a good leader and…”

“Woa, I never doubted that!” Sam threw his hands up in defense. “Cas just has some issues with his self-esteem.”

Hannah tilted her head and frowned at him.

“Why?”

Sam sighed and motioned for Hannah to follow him. The hunter and the angel sat down on the couch where Daphne had sat previously. Sam leaned on his knees and watched the floor while he was speaking.

“I don’t know how much you know but Cas caused a lot of trouble in the past. He… broke the wall in my mind that Death created after I got out from the Cage, he became ‘God’, killed many angels, then the Leviathans escaped from his body. Then later his Grace was the last component of the spell that casted the angels out from Heaven. And now he blames himself for what had happened to Dean.”

“Castiel made many mistakes” Hannah agreed. “But it’s praiseworthy how much he tries to correct them.”

Sam snorted.

“Yeah. But in the meantime he’s running to his death.”

For a long while they sat on the couch in silence. Sam shut his eyes and tried to lock everything out of his mind. He needed some sleep. Some dreamless sleep. He wanted to forget about the mess they were in. But with Dean gone it was his responsibility to hold everything and everyone together. He had to go back to the table and look for anything that would help them. As much as he wanted to leave everything behind, he couldn’t do that. The others were counting on him.

He suddenly felt a hand on his forearm. Sam opened his eyes and looked up at an awkward Hannah.

“Am I doing it right?” she asked.

“Doing what?” Sam asked back.

“Comforting you. You did it in the library and here too so I thought…” Her voice steadily trailed off and uncertainty appeared on the angel’s face.

Sam smiled at her thankfully.

“You’re doing it right” he reassured her. Then he took a deep breath and looked at the door. “Let’s get back to work, shall we?”

The sometimes comfortable, sometimes uncomfortable silence lasted until they stopped for the
night at a motel somewhere in Wyoming. Castiel checked into a motel while Dean waited in the car. For the whole ride Dean was uncharacteristically silent. Even when he was not in his best mood he would talk at least a few times but now the man had been deep in his thoughts and Castiel feared what was going on in the hunter’s head.

Once back at the car they took their bags and entered their room. They got a room with two beds. Dean immediately dropped his things on the one closest to the door.

“Do you wanna hit the shower first?” he asked while avoiding eye contact. Castiel felt concern growing in him. He learnt to read Dean’s habits well to know something troubled him.

“Yes if you don’t mind” he said instead of asking. Dean wouldn’t give him a straight answer anyway.

“Nah. Go on.”

And he did. It felt good finally taking off his sweaty and muddy clothes and just stand under the warm water that washed the dirt off his skin. The water also eased his nerves. He shouldn’t worry that much. They were heading to the bunker, they knew what would happen in the future. Everything was fine.

He dried himself and put on the clothes Dean gave him. They were not his size but he didn’t complain. It was good to finally wear something that was not his Gas’n’Sip uniform. After quickly brushing his teeth he stepped out from the bathroom and was about to tell Dean that he could take a shower too but his voice lost somewhere in his throat.

Dean was sitting at the edge of the bed, leaning on his knees with his face covered by his hands. His thumbs were massaging his temples. His breathing was slow but with every inhale his shoulders raised high.

Castiel carefully stepped closer.

“Dean?”

He was about to touch Dean’s shoulder when the man’s words stopped him.

“What was the Fate talking about?”

Castiel froze. He knew exactly what Dean wanted to know but talking about it… No. He didn’t want to tell him how his will to live had shaken because of his uncertainty. He himself didn’t understand what had come over him at that moment. Maybe it had had something to do with the emotions he just started to feel again as a human.

His silence made Dean impatient. The man stood up and though the height difference wasn’t that much between them he towered over the former angel.

“What was the Fate talking about?” he repeated. “What was throwing away your second chance supposed to mean?”

Castiel stood his ground. He looked into the other’s eyes and straightened himself.

“It doesn’t matter now.”

It only made Dean angrier.
“It does! Did you want to kill yourself or what?”

Castiel had to look away. He couldn’t keep the eye contact because he feared Dean would see the pain in his gaze.

“Damn it, Cas…” Dean rubbed a hand over his face and walked to the other side of the room. He stayed there for a while, showing his back to him, then turned back. “When? Why?”

Castiel sighed. There was nothing to hide anymore anyway so he might tell everything.

“I was about to let Ephraim kill me.”

The color drained out from Dean’s face. Castiel feared that he might faint again and was about to search for the grape sugar but Dean started talking again.

“What?! he asked loudly. “You just travelled back in time! What the hell?! What were you thinking?!”

“I thought it was a punishment.” Castiel tried to keep his voice as calm as possible but was failing. “I thought Father Time sent me back to die by the hands of Ephraim.”

Dean shook his head in disbelief.

“Are you crazy?! Why would he do that! The dude did what we wanted with a smile!”

“How was I supposed to know that?!” Castiel yelled back. He was now out of patience too. “I was unconscious!”

“Why didn’t you call me then?!”

“I thought you were still a demon!”

“And that means you have to die?! The fuck’s with you, Cas?!”

Castiel stepped closer to the hunter. His vision turned to an angry red and his throat was aching from the yelling.

“I came here with the sole purpose of turning you back to human! But the things you said in the chamber… You can’t imagine how it made me feel! With the last drop of my burning Grace I was searching for a cure! But what you said destroyed the only reason I was still living! I wanted to die because I didn’t deserve to live after failing you so many times! With curing you, I wanted to redeem myself for every mistake I had done in the past! For lying, hurting your brother, working behind your back, not telling everything, not trusting you, leaving you! I wanted to do something good just this once so I could die in peace!”

Something burned Castiel’s eyes. He rubbed them angrily to ease the feeling but he froze as soon as he realized that his hand was wet along with his face. Castiel quickly swept it away with the sleeve of his shirt.

“Cas…” Dean started with a low voice but the former angel cut in.

“And what about you, Dean? What was Lachesis talking about?”

Dean watched him for a while then looked away.

“That was in the past” he said with a low voice. “None of your concern.”
Castiel, as some would say nowadays, was so done with Dean. A painful laughter broke out from him and he brushed his fingers through his hair.

“Oh, really? You can worry about me but I can’t worry about you. Is it set in stone somewhere, saying nobody can care about Dean Winchester because he doesn’t deserve it but he can sacrifice himself for everyone? What did you want to do this time, Dean?!”

He knew his acting was hysterical. But he couldn’t help it. All those negative thought and emotions broke through the dam he had securely built around them and there was no way to stop it.

Dean’s anger was back again. He must have hit a sore spot in him because his eyes showed a deep pain in them.

“I said it was not your business!”

“I told you why I wanted to die! It’s your turn now!”

The hunter snorted at that.

“Really?! You want to know?! Are you that concerned now?! What about last time?! Were you concerned?!”

Now it hit a sore spot in Castiel. He didn’t want to remember that night.

“I told you that you didn’t leave me any other choice” he whispered. “You were holding us back and Sam wasn’t able to do it.”

A shadow of hurt passed over Dean's features.

“And you were?”

Castiel’s muscles tensed. He couldn’t say anything to that. Dean waited for an answer he couldn’t give.

Dean shook his head and turned away, showing his back to Castiel once again.

“Then what?”

Castiel lowered his gaze to the floor. It was old, the color was faded in a lot of places but it was surprisingly clean.

“I would have killed myself” he said with a low voice.

The silence was choking him. The tension that radiated from both him and Dean filled the air. The hunter took a shaky breath and made his was to the bathroom.

“You know what?” Dean’s voice was forced to be calm. He could hear it shaking slightly. “I’m gonna go and have a nice long shower. Then I’ll have a nice long sleep. And tomorrow we’ll have a nice long ride home.”

The door closed behind him almost without a sound – which in the former angel’s opinion was worse than slamming it – and when the water finally started running Castiel was already under the blanket, curling his body into a ball as he tried to calm down his painfully beating heart in his chest.

Neither of them had a nice long sleep.
Kevin and Gadreel worked all night. When Sam woke up he was sitting at that desk again with a sheet of paper before him. The text was written in an other dead language and was still unfinished. On the other side the young prophet was sleeping, using the tablet as a pillow. Sam smiled at him then glanced at the clock. It was four thirty in the morning.

‘You finished earlier today’ he said to the angel.

‘I learnt from the previous night that I shouldn’t use up the majority of my energy’ the angel explained. ‘I couldn’t hold back all of the physical pain that your body is currently experiencing. And the Prophet was tired too. Both physically and emotionally. He has restless sleeps and can’t gain back his whole strength.’

Sam watched Kevin for a while before asking:

‘Can you ease it a little? Just enough that he can sleep properly?’

‘I may try.’

Sam felt himself drifting away from his body. He was still aware what was going on around him and he felt everything but he wasn’t the one in charge. It was a strange experience. Like he was just a passenger in his own body. He saw himself standing up, going around the table and gently putting two fingers on Kevin’s forehead. Warmth rushed down his arm to his fingertips and the teen visibly eased by it. His hand moved away and then he was in control again.

‘He would now have a long, dreamless rest’ Gadreel said.

Sam smiled gratefully.

‘Thanks.’

The day passed in silence. Sam walked up and down the bunker, not sure what he was supposed to do. He took a pillow from Kevin’s room and put it under the teen’s head. Went to the kitchen and made a salad which he didn’t eat right away. Back to Kevin’s room, took a blanket, tucked him in. Kitchen again, ate the salad. Checked on Kevin, passed by the dungeon, listened if Crowley was making any sounds, back to the library.

The nothing made him tired. He wanted Dean and Cas to arrive that day. Not that he didn’t like the company of Kevin and Gadreel but both of them knocked themselves out for the day. And being alone meant Sam was alone with his thoughts and memories. And he didn’t want to remember that.

So he wandered further back in his memories. The things he had said to Dean that probably had had a big part in him becoming a demon. He had been angry. Who wouldn’t? Dean had tricked him
to say yes to an angel without him knowing what was going on. And he had killed Kevin. Now the boy was alive but the thought was still haunting him. What the hell had Dean been thinking? Why had he let that happen in the first place?

‘I can show you.’

Sam opened his eyes. He stared at the ceiling of his room before he answered.

‘What?’

‘I’m sorry for listening. You were thinking loud and the stress in your body was effecting me.”

‘I’m sorry.’

‘Don’t be. I’m concerned about the peace of your soul. You carry many burdens and hold many grudges but I can help. I’ll show you my memories of that day so you can look at the events from an other perspective.’

Sam thought about it for just a second. He was too curious to come up with any counter-arguments. And he really wanted to know what had led Dean to that fateful decision.

‘Okay. Show me.’

The ceiling and the walls opened around him like it was the skin of an orange and a greater force was peeling it. Everything became brighter and he feared the building was going to collapse on him but he was standing in a parking garage the next moment. Outside the sun was shining and he heard the siren of an ambulance along with the traffic of the city. He was walking, wandering deeper into the garage where he soon saw the Impala and a man holding Dean down. He started walking faster towards them. Sam wanted to run, to get to Dean as soon as possible because that man clearly wanted to kill him, but his legs didn’t move as he wanted.

“If you lie to me, Dean Winchester, I will rip your throat out” the man said. “Where is Castiel?”

“Who’s asking?” he heard Dean.

“Try every angel who was ejected from their home.”

“Oh. Oh, well, in that case, I have no clue.”

The man hit Dean against the truck twice then raised his blade but Sam grabbed his arm. No, he realized. It wasn’t Sam. It was Gadreel and he was watching his memories right now.

Gadreel and the angel talked then the other hit Gadreel. They fought and after Dean stabbed the angel everything became black.

In the next moment a ring of holy fire surrounded him. Gadreel rose to his knees and watched Dean approaching the flames. Dean’s face was collected but Sam knew his brother enough to read him perfectly. Dean was tired, dark shadows under his eyes indicated that, and his eyes restlessly focused on every part of the angel’s borrowed face.

Also, when he started to look harder, he noticed the background was blazing around Dean. It reached out towards two separate directions, above and to his right, and it retreated quickly like it got burnt but it didn’t stop it to reach out again.

‘I prevent you to see true forms because even the memory of them can hurt you’ Gadreel, not the
memory but the real Gadreel, explained. ‘That means you won’t be able to see human souls but Dean’s too bright to be dulled completely.’

So that was Dean’s soul, so strong and so bright even an angel couldn’t make it be unseen. No wonder Cas was so drawn to it he didn’t care about personal space no matter how many times Dean had warned him.

“You want to help?” Dean asked. “Start with a name.”

Sam heard Gadreel’s thoughts. He was unsure if he should use his real name. He didn’t know where Cas was and he would recognize him immediately. And that meant his secret would come to light. So he said the name of the angel who died not far from where he had landed.

“Ezekiel.”

“All right, Ezekiel. How do I know you're not hunting me or Castiel like the other angels?”

“Oh, I'm sure there are many angels who are. Many more are on their way here, most likely.”

Dean was visibly confused by that. He blinked a few times nervously.

“How do you know that?”

“You put out an open prayer like that...”

“I must really be desperate.” Dean’s face clearly showed that he didn’t think this whole thing through and it surprised Sam. Dean Winchester, who didn’t believe in God and only prayed to Cas, prayed to other angels?

Gadreel felt sorry for the man standing before him and he got to his feet slowly.

“Believe it or not, some of us still do believe in our mission. And that means we believe in Castiel… and you.”

Dean was silent for a moment.

“You said you were hurt during the fall.”

“I was. Entangling with my brother back there did me no favors. But what strength I have left, I offer to you.”

The hunter looked away and everywhere but at the angel. It hurt Sam to see Dean so helpless but still wanting to do something. Soon Dean put out the fire and led Gadreel to Sam’s hospital room.

He looked awful, he had to admit. His skin was pale and red at the same time, making a sick combination of the two colors. Gadreel put a hand on his chest and Sam felt his own irregular and weak heartbeat.

“You still able to cure things? After the fall?” Dean was standing next to him with his arms crossed. He was restlessly shifting from one leg to the other, his soul reaching out towards his brother.

“Yes, I should be, but... he’s so weak.”

Dean’s phone rang not long after that. He took it from his pocket and answered the call.
“Who is this?” It was an unknown number apparently. And thanks to Gadreel’s better ears he heard and recognized the voice of the caller.

“Dean.”

He also could hear the single loud beat of Dean’s heart when he heard Cas’ voice. He quickly excused himself and went outside. Gadreel turned towards the door and after one glance at Sam he walked to it and listened, focusing on Dean’s conversation, blocking out the noises of the hospital.

“Cas, what the hell's going on?” Dean kept his voice low but the worry was still heard in it.

“Metatron tricked me. It wasn’t angel trials. It was a spell. I wanted you to know that.”

“Oh, that’s great, but we’ve got ourselves a problem.”

“What's wrong?” Even this far and through a phone the concern in the former angel’s voice was easily detectable.

“Sam. He’s…” Dean’s voice trailed off a bit before he continued. “They say he’s dying.”

Hearing this, Cas went silent too.

“What happened?”

“I don't know” Dean answered hastily. “I mean, first he was okay, and then he wasn't. And I… Have you heard my prayers? I've been praying to you all night.”

All night? Sam wanted to close his eyes and take a deep breath. How desperate Dean had been? After Gadreel had left his body he started to remember the ride away from the church. How cold his body had felt, Dean talking nonstop, begging him to stay awake, the angels falling. Then reality had merged with his dying dream and he met Death and suddenly he had been back in the car again. He could just imagine what Dean had gone through. Sam had been dying, Cas hadn’t been answering…

“Dean, Metatron… He…” Cas paused. “He took my Grace.”

“What?”

“Don’t worry about me. What are you doing for Sam?”

“Uh, everything I can.” Dean started stuttering a little. “There's actually another angel in there working on him right now.”

“What other angel?” Cas was in his usual protective mode, regarding everything and everyone that approached the brothers as a potential threat.

“Um, his name is Ezekiel. He’s cool.” Then he added uncertainly “I mean, I think he is.”

Gadreel tensed at this. He knew if Cas was aware of Ezekiel’s death, he would tell Dean immediately. And that would mean he had to flee, no matter how much he wanted to help Sam and make up for his mistakes. But Cas’ voice softened.

“Ezekiel. Yes. He's a good soldier. He should be able to help until I get there.”

“Wait, no, no, no” Dean protested. “No, hey, that's not an option.”
“It might be a few days, but…” Cas continued but couldn’t finish because Dean quickly cut in.

“Hey, Cas, listen to me. There are angels out there, okay? And they… they're looking for you, and they're pissed.”

Overprotective as ever. Sam wanted to smile at that if it wasn’t so sad at the same time. He knew Dean wanted to go where Cas was but he couldn’t leave him alone in the hospital. Sam painfully realized that Dean hadn’t lied back in the church. He would always choose him above everything, even his own desires and happiness. He decided that they’ll have a talk about it and he won’t let Dean get away.

“Not all of them, Dean. Some are just looking for direction. Some are just lost.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I met one” Cas explained. “I think I can help her, Dean.”

“No, Cas, I know you want to help, okay? I do, but helping angels is what got you in trouble in the first place. Now, I'm begging you for once, look out for yourself. Until we figure out what the hell is going on, trust nobody.”

“And do what? Just abandon them all?”

“Damn it, Cas. You hearing yourself? There's a war on, and it's on you. There's thousands of them out th…” Dean must have realized this was leading nowhere so he changed the direction of their conversation. He hardened his voice when he continued. “You said you lost your Grace, right? That means you're human. That means you bleed and you eat and you sleep and all the things you never had to worry about before.”

“I'm fine, Dean.”

The hospital trembled and Gadreel quickly stepped back and went to the window. He didn’t saw anything outside yet. Dean came back who then drew protecting sigils on the walls and left again. Outside windows shattered and screams were heard and in the room Gadreel did everything he could to heal Sam but he couldn’t. The monitor was beeping loudly when Dean entered. Blood covered his face and cloths.

“What the hell's happening?” He looked scared when he shifted his gaze between Sam, the monitor and the angel.

“This just started. And the warding.” Dean looked at the walls with wide eyes as Gadreel continued. “I'm afraid I'm weaker than I thought.”

Dean took a red marker and started ruining the symbols with desperation.

“I am sorry, Dean.”

Dean started arguing with Gadreel until the angel finally said that there may be an other way.

“We're out of options here, man!” Dean’s voice was breaking. “Good or bad, let me hear them!”

“I cannot promise, but there is a chance I can fix your brother from the inside.”

“From the inside. So, what, you gonna open him up?” Sam wanted to bury his face into his palms. God, Dean… When Gadreel shook his head Dean’s eyes widened. “What, possession? You want
“to possess Sam?”
“I told you.”
“No way.”
“Understood. It's your call.”
“No, it's Sam's call.” Dean went to the other side of the bed. “There's no way in hell he'd say yes to being possessed by anything.”
“He would rather die.”

The corner of Dean's mouth curled up sadly then back. He watched Sam's dying body with desperation, his soul twisted in agony.

Gadreel stood up on his shaky legs and waved towards the heart monitor. The beeping stopped immediately and Dean's head jerked up. His eyes were wide, begging for Gadreel to do something, scared that his brother would die and he couldn’t do anything to prevent it.

“I'll leave you two alone, then.”

Gadreel slowly made his way to the door. Sam felt that his Grace was screaming in pain which was only doubled by the warding. He was at the exit when he heard the desperate voice.

“Wait.”

Gadreel turned around and Dean looked at him too. Eyes filled with unshed tears.

“If I consider this, and I mean just consider it, I need something, man. You got to prove to me how bad he is.”

Gadreel was amazed by Dean’s devotion towards Sam. His will to fight for the last trace of hope was admirable. Sam felt his pain when he remembered his own brother, Lucifer, and his evil trick that had led to the fall of the Garden and his imprisonment. Gadreel longed for a brother like Dean who would do anything to save him.

The angel showed Dean what was going on in Sam’s head, talked about their agreement and the rest was Sam’s own memory.

Sam opened his eyes. He was back in his room and according to the clock next to his bed he spent just a few minutes laying there. The man sat up and rubbed his eyes.

‘Your brother is a good man’ Gadreel said. ‘He would do anything for you and this was the best of the bad options. If I had left, he would have made a deal again, I’m sure.’

Sam continued rubbing his eyes. He was not prepared for something like this. He thought… He thought Dean had just let the angel possess him. But knowing that he had prayed for a whole night to Cas before praying to other angels, not caring that they may come and kill him…

Now Sam understood him because he was there too once, not so long ago. He had been about to do something he would have regretted later but everything he had wanted to see was Dean being himself again. And he was worse than Dean. Oh, much worse than him.

“Does this make me a bad person?” he asked out loud and pushed the memories of one certain day towards Gadreel.
'No’ Gadreel told him sincerely. ‘You wanted to help.’

Yeah. And the end justifies the means. But not in every case.

#

He hadn’t been in this room before. Not when its resident was still here and not even after he left. He always tried to avoid this room because it was too painful to know he wasn’t there anymore and seeing the blood dried on the blanket made him sick. But Castiel had no other place to go. The roof only reminded him the Heaven and flying and his uselessness. Not if Dean’s room didn’t but he longed for something familiar.

Castiel stepped into the room and closed the door behind him. Dean’s living quarter looked… nice. Unlike Sam’s room, this one felt like a place someone could call a home. The weapons on the wall were carefully arranged, one of them being the blade Dean wielded in Purgatory. There weren’t a day he hadn’t thought staying in Purgatory would have been better for all of them. There wouldn’t have been any spells to banish angels from Heaven, no war between his siblings. He would gladly go back if that would make everything better.

As he stepped closer to the wall he saw a single photo on the bedside table. The angel took it into his hands.

On the picture he saw Dean as a young child and his mother. They both smiled happily at the camera and it clenched Castiel’s heart. He had never seen Dean smile like this. The horrors of the world hadn’t reached that boy on the photo yet and Castiel wished they hadn’t covered his life in darkness. Some would say it was all part of the Plan with that big capital ‘p’ and it was for the greater good. Killing a four years-old boy’s mother was the evilest thing anyone could do. It ruined Dean for a lifetime.

Castiel put the photo back to its original place and sat down on the bed. The so called memory foam sunk under his weight. He knew that when Sam had been sleeping Dean would retreat here and pray to him. He still remembered those desperate words, asking for his whereabouts, his wellbeing and begging that Castiel would look after Sam when the trials had been killing the younger Winchester.

He leaned on his knees and buried his face into his palms. If only Naomi hadn’t been controlling him… Things would have been much different. He would have rushed to Dean before he could finish the first sentence of his prayer and be there and stay and never leave. Now he was here. But Dean wasn’t there.

He wanted to punch something, anything because he was desperate and useless. Dean had asked him to look out for Sam and the opposite was happening. Sam was shaking under the responsibility and he wasn’t helping him at all, just made everything worse. It was funny that he was supposed to be the fearless commander of the angel army and now he was sitting here, shaking with anger and pain and sadness.

The stolen Grace was carving him from the inside, burning everything it touched. Day by day Castiel felt himself fading away and he still couldn’t reach any of his goals. The main goal was finding a cure for Dean. He needed this Grace to go back to Heaven and search in the library. He needed this Grace because he had more chance to accomplish something as an angel than a human.
Castiel sighed and rubbed his eyes. He didn’t know what to be anymore. An angel, strong and emotionless. Or a human, weak but free. Sometimes he wondered what would have happened if he hadn’t taken Theo’s Grace. What if he hadn’t left the Gas’n’Sip. Would he still be working there as Steve? And maybe one day, when Gadreel left Sam’s body, he would have gone back to the bunker. And Dean would be there too to teach him everything a human needed to know.

But these were just dreams. Painful dreams that hurt more than the Grace in his body because he knew they would never come true. He should stop thinking about them in the first place but somehow these dreams fueled him. They made him keep going even though he could barely stand on his legs. And it was his duty to do something for him, even if it meant he would die in the process.

With that Castiel stood up and put on the mask of the emotionless angel. He had to go back to Heaven. There were still books and scrolls in the archives he hadn’t read. What if the answer was hidden in one of them? He wouldn’t find out if he just sat here ‘sulking’.

Castiel went to the door and opened it.

And he found himself face to face with Daphne.

The woman paled when she saw him. She stepped back and looked away nervously.

“I… I’m sorry. I didn’t know it was your room here too.”

Castiel shook his head.

“No, it’s… it was one of my friend's.” Then he realized what the woman had said. “Here too?”

Daphne bit her lower lip.

“In my… timeline it was y-Emmanuel’s room. When he felt like it, he retreated here to be alone with his thoughts.”

Castiel looked back at the room. He didn’t know if it was just a coincidence or a nasty joke of the universe.

“I’m sorry, I have to go now” he said quickly and walked past the woman but after a few steps he heard her hesitant voice.

“Castiel?”

The angel stopped and looked back at her. Daphne was timidly rubbing her hands together but now, finally, looked him in the eyes.

“Can we talk? Some other time?”

Castiel watched the woman for a while. He was grateful she had found him that day. He wondered what happened to her in his timeline. Was she possessed by an angel since she was a devoted Christian? He should have visited her. Inform her that he was alright. Was she still waiting for her Emmanuel to return?

“Of course.”

He turned away and left in a hurry. He felt shameful for not thinking about her for years.
They woke… well, got up around six in the morning. They quickly dressed, Cas waited until Dean ate and swallowed the pills and soon they were on the road again.

He didn’t want the previous night to be like that. He should have been more sympathetic, understand what Cas was going through because he was going through some serious shit too. But damn… The thought that Cas had almost died when he had been there already… That he had almost died again… Just when he had been saved from that poisonous Grace…

Dean sometimes glanced at Cas during the ride back to the bunker. The former angel fixed his eyes on the road, never looking at anything that wasn’t necessary during driving. Namely Dean. If he was still angry he didn’t show it. But this ‘I won’t acknowledge your prescience’ was killing him. He had longed for a time like this like in the old days when it had been just him driving and Cas riding shotgun. And now that it finally happened they were angry at each other.

Dean knew he should apologize sooner or later. He caused this whole mess after all, it was his job to clean it up. If only he weren’t a coward. The ‘talk to somebody’ was echoing in his head ever since they came back but he still didn’t find the courage to do so. He knew he was a failure, not being able to follow this single advice.

He dozed off somewhere in Nebraska, the one night without sleeping hadn’t done good for his system. He should have stayed awake, he thought later, because he was dreaming again.

Someone was chasing him in a city of ruins. It was like a warzone. There were big holes on the buildings and the streets were littered with ashes and garbage. It looked horribly similar to a Kansas City filled with croats. Dean tried to find a hiding place but whenever he was about to open a door it was locked or a bullet hit the wood an inch away from his hand. So he kept running.

He didn’t know who was after him but they were determined to catch up with him. He heard the footsteps following him wherever he went. The owner wasn’t running like him but it was getting louder and louder.

He soon found himself in an alley. A dead end to be exact and wherever Dean looked he couldn’t find a way out. Then a shadow appeared on the wall before him. Dean spun around to see who he was facing but the light coming from that direction blinded him.

“There you are.”

Dean’s heart stopped beating. He knew that voice too well. He heard it when the man had come back from the local bar, reeking of alcohol, saying and doing thing Dean didn’t want to remember. Dean smelled it now too, it filled the alley that became narrower and taller than when he had entered.

“Dad…” he choked out because something was gripping his throat tight. He couldn’t breath, he couldn’t move. And his father was just getting closer.

“Dad?” John asked. “I don’t remember I ever had a monster like you as a son.”

Dean turned to his right and looked into the mirror. His eyes where two dark pits.

“Dad, please…”
“You know what I do with the monsters like you?” John stopped and raised his gun. It was the Colt. “I kill them.”

“Dean!”

Dean opened his eyes and found Cas gripping both of his shoulders tight. And he was gripping his arm in return. It was around noon and they were parking next to a gas station. By the smell Dean could tell that Cas filled the tank not long ago.

“It’s okay.” The former angel’s voice was soothing as he spoke. “Calm your breath. You’re safe.”

Just when his friend pointed out he realized that he was breathing rapidly. The world started to become a big blur and his head felt dizzy because of that. He was hyperventilating. He did as told and tried to calm down. He didn’t want to faint again like so many chicks in those cheesy movies so he took one slow deep breath and exhaled with the same pace. This lasted for a few minutes and Cas didn’t stop holding him.

Neither did he. Knowing that Cas was there calmed him. He was like the air after a dive deep under the sea. He needed it to live. He needed Cas to go on.

When his breathing was steady, Cas pulled out a bottle of water from the plastic bag Dean had dropped on the backseat when they had left the motel and opened it for him.

“Drink.” He offered the bottle to Dean while he reached over him to open the door on the other side.

Dean inhaled the cool air that entered the car. He just realized how much he needed it. It was quiet warm in the car and the stale air was suffocating. Maybe it had a lot to do with his dream. Or he just wanted to project his own problems on something else.

He drank the water slowly, always just a sip at once. His hands were shaking so much Cas had to help him holding it before he spilt it on himself. When he half emptied it he gave it back to Cas who screwed the cap back on it and put it back in the bag. Then the former angel leaned closer to him, examining his face thoughtfully.

“You’re still pale. Do you want to walk a little?”

Normally Dean would have been annoyed by this. Cas was treating him like a kid. But nothing was normal so he soon found himself walking on shaky legs towards a bench under the shadow of a tall tree. The former angel walked right next to him, ready to catch him when needed.

Once sitting under the tree, Dean leaned back and watched the treetop. Some of the leaves were still green but most of it had a nice orange and red color. The sunlight shone through them and as they moved in the breeze the light twinkled. The man took a deep breath and closed his eyes. Why couldn’t anything be this peaceful? Just sitting outdoors and not giving a shit about the world.

He felt Cas sitting next to him. He couldn’t believe how lucky he was to have a friend like him. The other day was not one of his proudest moments, not to mention everything he had done as a demon, and the former angel was still here, caring about him. This was the last push he needed so he took a deep breath and braced himself.

“Sorry.” When he didn’t get an answer he added. “For yesterday. And for everything that happened since you first came here.”

He opened his eyes and looked at Cas who just stared at him.
“I…” he continued. “I did a lot of stupid things. Like treating you like shit many times. And knowing that you always came back feels kinda bad, you know? I shouldn’t have done those things to my best friend.”

Cas’ eyes softened at that and turned away almost sheepishly.

“I’m glad you still consider me a friend. A best friend. Even after the things I did.”

Dean shook his head. They were back to square one, ‘let’s blame ourselves for everything while thinking we don’t deserve anything’. He had stood there a lot of times, even now too, but he had to admit that he couldn’t stay there forever. He had to get over it and move on. And Cas had to do that too.

“We were different people in the past” Dean said thoughtfully. “No use going back and blaming yourself for those things. Just… Let it go.”

Cas’ chuckle came out of nowhere. Dean watched him with confusion.

“What?”

“Let it go, Frozen. And you more or less quoted Lewis Carroll. *It’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then*. It’s from chapter ten when Alice…”

“Woa, woa, woa!” Dean sat up properly and looked at the former angel with wide eyes. “Okay Steve Rogers, when did you start understanding any of my references?”

Cas’ muscles around his mouth twitched like he wanted to grimace.

“Since Metatron put his knowledge of pop culture into my head. And I don’t think I was ever frozen in ice.”

Dean laughed at that. Really laughed. He hadn’t laughed like this since he had taken Cas to the brothel. Damn, that was a long time ago. Maybe the Apocalypse was at their doorstep but everything seemed happier and better back then. They hadn’t been that broken yet.

“So” he said when he finally stopped laughing. “I can’t annoy you with references anymore because you understand everything?”

“It appears” Cas nodded, a smile playing on his lips too.

“Don’t worry then” Dean patted the former angel’s shoulder and winked. “I’ll find an other way.”

For the next ten minutes they watched the cars and people passing by in silence. And in that short time Dean felt like a normal person. Not a hunter, or a former demon, or the vessel of some junkless archangel, just a normal guy whose biggest problem was the bills and taxes. It was like the apple pie life he always teased Sam with. But he knew that wasn’t for him. He already tried it and it lasted for only a year before he went back hunting. Hunting was the lifestyle he grew up in. No matter how much he wanted to have a normal life he would never have one because he didn’t know how to do it. There was no ‘Normal Life for Dummies’ in the bookstore he could read.

Soon Cas cleared his throat. Dean was expecting this since they got out from the car. He was surprised Cas waited this long.

“You had a nightmare” he stated and Dean just nodded. “And you were calling for your father.”
Dean sighed. His first instinct was to deny everything and rush the former angel to continue their ride back to the bunker. But he meant what he had said. They were different people in the past. He was a different person in the past. Past Dean would have run away from emotions and sweep the problems under the rug. But present Dean went through a lot, did a lot, and still got a second chance. And there was Susie. A whiny teenager with hormonal outbursts who revalued her life and warned him to be careful with his own second chance. God, he was turning into a softie.

“I was begging” he admitted. “He wanted to hunt me down because I was a demon.”

“You’re not a demon, Dean.”

“Yeah, I know. I’m just in the process of getting over it. Would take some time, I guess.”

Cas put a hand on his shoulder and looked into his eyes.

“I’ll help you, Dean. If you let me.”

Dean watched him silently for a while. From a certain point of view they went through the same thing. Cas had played ‘God’, Dean had been a demon, and both of them had been taken over by the power those things had provided. And now that he thought about it, the same thing had happened to Sam too with that whole demon blood thing.

He wasn’t alone.

“Thanks, man” he said with a smile then stretched. “Time to get back on the road! Sam’s waiting for us.”
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Are you ready for Season 10? Because I'm not.

Un-beta'd.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Commander?”

Castiel looked up. He was sitting at a desk surrounded by the tallest bookshelves a human could just dream about. The archives of Heaven had the biggest amount of written documents, the earliest from the dawn of time when angels were still young. So Castiel was hoping to find something here. There must be a way to erase the Mark of Cain. And he would find it.

He already spent there two days when the other angel walked to him.

“I’m not your commander, Benjamin” he said and turned a page in the book before him.

But it seemed Benjamin didn’t hear that comment. He nervously pulled the sleeve of his red coat as he continued.

“Sir, Crowley wants to speak with you.”

Castiel’s hand curled into a ball. He tried to keep his breathing as calm as possible.

“Why?” he asked with a low voice. He didn’t want the other angel to hear how angry he became just hearing the demon’s name, but he knew the shake in his voice gave away his emotions.

“He didn’t tell. He’s waiting for you and he wouldn’t leave.”

Castiel took a deep breath. When Crowley wanted to speak it usually meant he was planning something in the background. He had to learn it the hard way but now he could tell – hopefully – when the King of Hell was playing with them. Now he probably wanted Castiel to take part willingly or unwillingly in his plan. But that would not happen. Maybe he would listen to what he wanted to say but he would never join him. Never again.

So the angel stood up. Every movement was a torture which just grew in the past days. Being on Earth was bearable but in Heaven the Host wanted to reject him like a human body would reject a transplanted organ. He didn’t show his pain but whenever Hannah was around he could feel the worried looks she was giving him.

He left Heaven in a few minutes. It was nighttime, the stars decorated the dark canvas of the sky. In the distance he could see black clouds approaching. It would be raining in a few hours.

“Hello there, Cas. You look awful.”

Castiel turned to the source of the voice. Crowley stood a few feet behind him, hands in his pockets and a smirk playing on his lips.
“What do you want?”

“Come on, feathers. This is how you greet an old ally? I’m hurt!”

Castiel wanted nothing more than stab a blade into the demon’s heart but he knew he didn’t have a chance. He was weaker than a human baby. He even had troubles with standing, so fighting was not an option.

“I regret the day I followed you to Hell” he growled.

“And what else could you have done? Pull your precious Righteous Man out the apple pie life?” Crowley shook his head. “You were hopeless back then, Castiel. Just like now. But! I’m here to ease some things.”

“I’m not interested in anything you say.” Castiel turned back to the portal. “I just came to tell you are not welcomed here.”

He shouldn’t have come here. He should have known Crowley would just play with him, bruise his heart and soul more with his words. He had better to do than to listen to the demon.

“Dean is growing more violent.”

Castiel stopped. He could feel the victorious smile appearing on Crowley’s face.

“Until now he was killing demons and monsters but as I heard some angels became his victims too recently. Don’t you think it’s time to put an end to this rampage of his?”

Castiel swallowed hard. He hadn’t heard about dead angels yet. Crowley was probably lying. Using his weakness against him.

“I don’t believe you” he said with a tight voice.

“Oh? Really? Then don’t run to me crying when you hear the news.”

The angel’s muscles tensed. The thought that Dean started killing his siblings rooted into his mind and no matter how much he wanted to pull it out it just hung on stronger. Because it wasn’t true. Dean had said it himself according to Sam. He wasn’t interested in humans or angels. This had given them some hope. It had meant that deep down Dean was still Dean. But if what Crowley had said was true…

Behind him he heard Crowley pulling something out from his pocket then it landed behind him.

“A gift if you change your mind.” Castiel heard him taking a step to the other direction then stopped. “Just an advice. If you end this now and go back he’ll be the same again. Not a demon, but a human. But I’m just talking to myself, don’t mind me.”

After a few moments when Castiel turned around the demon was nowhere. He then looked down and saw something wrapped into some expensive textile. The angel sighed and picked it up. Just by touching it he knew what it was and didn’t want to think about what the demon was suggesting by it.

He was soon back in Heaven and he found himself surrounded by angels. Each one of them had horror and fear written all over their faces.

“What is it?” he asked and turned to Benjamin who stood a few steps away from him. “What
happened?"
The angel uncomfortably shifted from one leg to the other.

“We have… news, sir. Very bad news.”

Castiel felt the panic rising in him. No. It can’t be. It was not true. Crowley had been lying. It was not true.

“What news?”

Benjamin fixed his gaze on the floor then slowly looked up at him. The compassion in his eyes felt like a stab of a knife. Not to mention his words:

“Dean Winchester, sir. He killed two angels a few hours ago.”

*

Kevin woke to a door opening then closing. He forced his eyes open and found himself at the table with a pillow under his head and a blanket covering his back. Despite the place he had been sleeping he felt himself well rested. In fact, he hadn’t slept that well in a long time. The teen sat up and stretched. He expected that his back would ache like hell but nothing. That was not natural. And anything not natural around the Winchesters was connected to something supernatural.

“Sorry. Did I wake you?”

Kevin looked up and saw Sam entering the library.

“No.” Kevin turned to the closest clock. “Six?”

“PM” Sam nodded. “I thought you would need a long sleep so I asked Gadreel to help.”

The boy rubbed his eyes and yawned.

“Thanks.” He stood up and was about to go to the kitchen when he noticed that everything was still very quite. “Dean?”

“Just called” Sam answered and followed Kevin. “They’ll be here in twenty minutes.”

“I’ll grab some food then we can go to the garage.”

A few minutes later Sam and Kevin were waiting patiently for the Impala to roll to its place next to the other cars. Kevin finished his sandwich with one last big bite, savoring it like he hadn’t eaten in weeks. Maybe he hadn’t. Without any windows the days in the bunker were merging together and he just realized what day it was when the next episode of his favorite series was up on the torrent sites. He missed the sunlight and the smell of the fresh air, but now that they were sure that Metatron wanted him dead he couldn’t spend any time outside.

On the bright side he was finally making progress with the tablet. He translated half of the next line and Gadreel was doing good too. The thought that maybe next week or the one after that they would read the final English version made him optimistic and he was eager to continue. And that Gadreel guy wasn’t that bad. He was an angel and every angel had that awkwardness but he was
friendly and didn’t want to kill him. Always a plus.

The garage door opened with a squeak and the Impala rolled in. It soon parked down at its place and Dean and Cas got out.

“You were driving?” Sam asked with honest shock.

“Dean is not allowed to drive for two more days” Cas answered as he took his bag from the backseat.

“Hey!” Dean looked at him huffily. “Just one more day!”

“I don’t count the day you fainted a complete day” the former angel said then turned back to Sam. “And he can only eat foods with low glycemic load.”

Kevin frowned at that.

“You have blood sugar problems?”

Dean shrugged. He avoided the teen’s eyes as much as he could.

“Some Fate chick told me my soul’s a mess after everything.”

Meanwhile Cas walked to Sam and shared a friendly hug.

“Good to see you’re not falling apart” Sam said and as he moved away he patted the former angel’s shoulder.

“I’m glad for that too.” Cas smiled too but it quickly faded. “I’m sorry for your loss.”

Kevin was looking from one to the other. What was Cas talking about? What did Sam lose? Sam’s jaw tightened, nodded then cleared his throat. Before Dean could notice any of this he quickly turned the conversation to an other direction.

“So Dean. Rabbit food?”

“Believe it or not, no.” Dean took his bag too and started walking towards Sam. “I can eat chocolate.”

Sam chuckled. He started approaching the other too.

“But no beer I guess.”

“Yeah.”

“And no coffee.”

“Yep.”

“And no pie.”

“For a month! Can you believe that?”

The brothers stopped. They watched each other for a while then Sam hugged Dean tightly. The other man returned it eagerly.

“I’m proud of you, you know that, right?” Sam asked with a low voice.
Dean shut his eyes tight and clenched his hands, gripping Sam’s shirt like his life was depending on it.

“Yeah, I guess.”

They stayed like this for almost a minute when Sam broke the silence. Dean was still hugging him tightly.

“Cas? What happened to my chick flick allergic big brother?”

Cas shook his head with a big happy smile on his face.

“I honestly have no idea.”

“Second chances, man!” Dean stepped away but was still holding Sam by his arms. “Not an everyday miracle.”

Sam turned to Cas, silently asking what the hell had happened to Dean, but the former angel just shrugged and turned to Kevin with a small smile. In Kevin’s opinion he was smiling more than he had ever seen him. Apart from the time when he had been insane, but that didn’t count.

“It’s good to see you again, Kevin” he said and squeezed his shoulder.

“Yeah. Likewise.”

The tension quickly reached its peak in the garage. Kevin turned to Dean who stubbornly fixed his eyes on the ground. Sam gently nudged him and the man slowly walked to him. Kevin took a deep breath. The moment he had expected to happen was finally here. He had gone through many scenarios in the past couple of days. All of them ended with him punching Dean in the face or kicking him somewhere sensitive. He was now about to see which one would be the lucky winner.

“Look, Kevin…” Dean started as soon as he stopped before him. “Sam probably told you everything already and I know you’re mad. I’m not going to look for excuses. I fucked up and you died because of me. I understand if you’ll never forgive me. I’d rather live in a time where you’re angry but alive than one where you’re dead. Just… know that I’m really sorry.”

Kevin was famous of holding grudges. Especially when he was angry at the Winchesters. Mainly Dean. His overprotectiveness was like shades. It blocked out the person and their needs and he just saw a thing he had to protect no matter what. And it was annoying in the long run. No wonder Sam sometimes was so done with him. Kevin was too but he didn’t have the patience Sam had.

But… was it really that surprising? The Winchesters had grown up in a twisted life full of danger. Was it really that surprising that Dean wanted to protect them even from the lightest breeze? And now the man stood before him, his eyes filled with pain because he had one job and he fucked up real bad. And even though Kevin was alive here, Dean still remembered the time he had mourned him. And maybe he was still mourning that dead Kevin.

So Kevin sighed and hugged Dean. He couldn’t just call him names and hurt him because he would later regret it. Like Dean had said it was a second chance. Everyone deserved one. Except the intentionally evil ones.

“You’re lucky you weren’t here in the last couple of days” he said. “I might have kicked you in the balls.”

He felt Dean tensing up. The man hesitantly raised his forearms and put them around him, patting
him gently on the back.

“I still deserve it.”

Kevin soon stepped away.

“But don’t think I’m not angry. It would take a long time to make it up.”

Dean smiled at the ground, putting his hands on his hips.

“Never expected it to pass quickly.”

Kevin nodded and looked at the others. Sam was watching the ground too and maybe, just maybe, his eyes were shining more then before. And then there was Cas who openly watched Dean with so much adoration Kevin almost got sick. Damn those two… Things escalated in that one year.

“So?” he said to break the tension and the silence. “What’s the plan?”

Dean pulled a hand down his face and the ‘I’m a hunter, not an emotionally conflicted giant baby’ mask was back on his face.

“We’ll think about it. But before that we’re saving your mom.”

Kevin blinked. Then blinked again. He saw Dean’s lips moving, he heard him speaking, but the voice didn’t form into words and his brain didn’t understand the meaning.

“What…?”

The world was spinning around him. He wanted it to stop because he was getting dizzy. He felt it in his stomach. It suddenly felt like stone which moved up towards his chest, pushing out every air from his lungs.

Then Sam stepped closer and put a hand on Kevin’s shoulder.

“She’s alive, Kevin. And we know where she is.”

Kevin would never admit that he cried like a baby after hearing this.

*

“No, it’s not true.”

“Sam…”

“It’s. Not. True!”

Hannah stood her ground as Sam stepped threateningly close to her, eyes locked in a hard stare. Hannah had just arrived from Heaven with the news. She had come here as soon as she heard it and as expected Sam didn’t want to believe her.

“Two of my siblings died by the First Blade” she repeated with a serious tone. “Only one person wields it.”
Sam closed his eyes and turned away. Hannah was new to human interactions and comforting methods but she knew that now was not the time for that. She had to wait patiently. Humans were complex creatures. Their thought process was nothing like an angel’s. They rarely used logic and relied on their emotions more than necessary. Right now Sam couldn’t believe that Dean had killed angels because of their bond.

“But…” Sam finally turned back to her. “He’d said he wasn’t interested in angels. And wasn’t he just hunting demons and monsters? What’s going on?”

Sam almost collapsed on the chair next to him. He leaned on his knees and put his forehead into his palms. He was deeply shaken and perplexed.

“What happened to him?” Sam asked from no one in particular. “Even as a demon he had some morals. Never hurt the innocents. But those angels didn’t do anything, right? They didn’t hurt anyone.”

“They were on a search for the ingredients” Hannah answered. “They were in the wild and didn’t interact with anyone.”

The truth just pulled Sam deeper into his sadness. She saw his shoulders dropping and his breath trembled a little.

“Damn it, Dean” he said with a low voice. “Damn it.”

Hannah chose that moment to step closer to the man. She carefully put a hand between his shoulder blades and started rubbing gentle circles there. She had seen it one time in a park. She had just possessed her vessel after the Fall and she had been immediately on the road, looking for answers. One day she had decided to watch the humans around her and she had seen two of them sitting on a bench. They had been two female. One of them had been crying while the other had rubbed her back. Hannah had watched them with growing interest. The not crying female had been talking to the other who then had stopped crying after a while. She hadn’t seen what came after that because Bartholomew’s followers had found her and she had had to flee.

Hannah had never joined any of the forming groups after the Fall. Those of her siblings who had led the angels had never been her favorites. Bartholomew, Malachite and a few others had always been rougher and had done more questionable things without an order than the rest of them. So Hannah had always kept her distance until she had met with others like her. Then they had been killed and Castiel had come.

She had always been a little angel in Heaven and she had been always fighting on his side, like in the war against Raphael, but they had never met in person. She had just heard stories about him and his orders had been given to her by Rachel. Finally meeting him had been a dream come true. She had admired him and would have followed him anywhere. Then the bombing had happened…

She was so deep in her thoughts that it startled her when something touched her belly. Hannah looked down and she was surprised to see Sam leaning against her. He seemed more relaxed than before and his breathing was even again.

“Thank you” Sam said with a low voice.

“For what?” Hannah asked with confusion. She wasn’t really doing anything. She had just brought the worst news to him. He should be angry, not thankful.

“For being here” the man answered. “It means a lot.”
Hannah’s hand stopped on the man’s back. She didn’t understand how just being there would mean anything. And why would Sam be grateful for that? Humans were strange creatures. Illogical.

But hearing this somehow felt warm. Vibrating. Her Grace sighed and felt lighter than before. The humming was back again too and it made her think about actions she had never considered before. Like brushing the man’s hair, feeling it with her fingertips. Or touching his neck, the small part of the skin that was visible above his collar. Or just softening the circles she had been rubbing on his back.

Her fingers moved without her letting them. An instinct, maybe something deeply hidden in her vessel’s mind, woke up at her thoughts. The fingers curled in slowly, nails gently scratching the shirt and the skin under it. Her fingers touched then she spread them again. Under her touch Sam shuddered then relaxed and sighed, clearly enjoying what Hannah was doing. But… What was she doing?

That was the moment when she woke from her mysterious daze. Her hand froze and her eyes widened. What was she doing? Because she had no idea. Her vessel was doing unexplainable things on its own and it was effecting her Grace too. And losing control over herself scared her. Castiel had once told her how an angel named Naomi had controlled him and other angels too. What if she was under someone else’s influence? What if… What if Metatron found a crack in his jail and was using her for his own goals? What if he wanted her to let him out so he could continue where he had left off?

Sam slowly moved away from her but her hand never left his back, like it was glued to it. He looked up and locked eyes with her. Hannah sensed some kind of malfunction in her vessel’s temperature. It started to rise. It had never happened before.

“Hannah…”

Hannah didn’t let him to finish. She quickly stepped away and made her way to the exit. No matter how many times he called her name as she rushed up the stair she knew she shouldn’t be here. If Metatron had something to do with it then she was a threat. And she didn’t want to hurt Sam and the others.

She heard Bobby asking about the shouting and as she opened the door she nearly collided with Castiel but she didn’t stop when he asked what had happened. She had to get back to Heaven and interrogate the Scribe of God.

Chapter End Notes

I love this chapter for many reasons. I had a great time writing it :)

Benjamin is this angel according to IMDb
http://www.thewinchesterfamilybusiness.com/images/SeasonNine/StairwayToHeaven/SPN_0430.jpg
I don't know what to think about Season 10 yet (not the best season premier so far). I'll watch and see. Also I may borrow some ideas but I won't (intentionally) copy whole plotlines.

Un-beta'd.

Now instead of Dean, Kevin was angry at Sam.

“Why couldn’t you tell me earlier that my mother was still alive?!”

“You slept all day and you worked with Gadreel at night” Sam said on his defense but he just gained a glare from the teen.

“We talked a lot the day you ‘arrived’! You had the perfect opportunity to inform me!”

“You stormed away as soon as I finished.”

The young prophet made an angry huff and stormed away once again. He hadn’t met him many times but Castiel found him highly irritable. And moody. In the garage he had been crying in happiness but as soon as they entered the library he started yelling at Sam.

“He’ll come around” Dean patted Sam on his shoulder. “So? When are we going?”

“If by ‘we’ you mean me and Cas, then first thing tomorrow. You stay.”

Dean frowned at Sam.

“You are not in full strength yet, Dean” Castiel explained. “We just walked up from the garage but you’re already pale and can faint any moment. Lachesis told us you were not ready for a hunt.”

Dean finally processed what the two of them were talking about. His acting and face was a split image of Kevin’s.

“What?! I’m not a sissy! Maybe there ain’t enough sugar in my system but it’s nothing I can’t handle!”

Sam sighed.

“You’re swaying, Dean.”

“No, I’m not!” the other man declared stubbornly and to prove his point straightened himself. But the only thing he could prove was that he couldn’t stand for long without a support. Castiel was quick to grab his arm when Dean dangerously swayed to his right.

“I’m not saying you’re weak” he explained. “But you’re not capable of a rescue mission right now. We don’t want you to get hurt.”
“I’m not a baby.”

Dean shrugged off Castiel’s hand and walked away. Not as fast as Kevin, but if not for his dizziness, he would have. A big sigh escaped Sam as he watched Dean leaving.

“As protective of his pride as ever.” Then he smiled. “But at least he’s back.”

Castiel smiled too. This moody, strong but gentle and sensitive Dean was the Dean he had missed so much. It was good to see him act like he should and to see his real eyes and not the bottomless pools of darkness and violence.

“And you’re back too” Sam added with a knowing smile. “Good to see you’re not moping anymore.”

Castiel got a little offended by this but he knew Sam was just teasing him in a friendly manner. It’d been a long time since any of them could do that.

“Was not” he said with a smirk to which Sam just laughed.

“You totally were.” Then he turned more serious. “So we’re saving Ms. Tran. It won’t be easy.”

The two of them moved to the closest table and sat down. Castiel put his arms on the table and folded his fingers.

“Are you well?” he asked. “Let’s not be a hypocrite. None of us is at their full strength but we can both agree that Dean is out of energy the most.”

The corner of Sam’s mouth twitched down at that.

“Yeah. Let’s not sound like a hypocrite.” Sam was silent for a few moments before he continued. “I’m still healing and Gadreel too. Maybe I can fight more powerfully than before but I get tired quick. Gadreel’s out of breath after a night of just sitting here and translating. A fight would probably knock us out fast.”

“And I’m not an angel anymore.” Then Castiel added. “Again. Maybe I have my angel blade but I don’t have the strength I used to have. I have to get used to my powerlessness again.”

Sam rested his chin in his palm.

“If we can’t rely on our strength we have to be clever. Using tricks and traps is our only option.”

“Like in Home Alone?” the former angel asked and tilted his head. In that movie the main character, Kevin, used simple tools found around his house to defeat the robbers.

Sam chuckled at that.

“No. If it was Home Alone then the demons would use tricks on us. It would be more like… The A-team. Or MacGyver.”

Castiel nodded, understanding Sam’s correction.

“Then what do you suggest? I highly doubt we can build anything useful from tape and toothpicks.”

Sam was about to start laughing when suddenly Dean reentered the library. He had two plates in his hands and he put one before Sam and the other before Castiel. Each plate had a sandwich on it.
Sam looked at him with a frown.

“What is this?”

“Food” Dean simply said and sat down next to Castiel. Just like Sam, the former angel stared at Dean with confusion, who looked back and forth between them. “What? You’re hungry, Cas’ hungry, I’m hungry.” With that he took a pack of peanuts out from his pocket.

Castiel watched the package with narrowed eyes.

“Are you allowed to eat that?” Then he remembered the other man’s unsteady walking. “Have you eaten grape sugar and drunk water?”

“Yes, yes and yes. Hey!” Dean said, turning back to Sam. “Off with that grin on your face! We have serious planning to do!”

Sam rubbed his face around his mouth but the smile was still there behind his palm.

“So.” Dean chewed on the peanut lazily. “Ms. Tran.”

“Dean…” Castiel started but the man quickly put up a hand.

“I know, I know. I won’t go. But I was there too. I can help planning at least.”

Castiel didn’t understand how his friend’s behavior regarding his situation changed and by the face he was making neither did Sam, but he didn’t really care. It was good to see the three of them together after so many months. Or maybe years. It had been a long time since they were in good terms with one another and did what they were best at: helping others.

They stayed there for about two hours until the plan was ready. It was far from perfect but they had no other choice. Maybe Ms. Tran would be alive for at least half a year but they couldn’t wait any longer. They had to reunite this family which was torn apart by both angels and demons. And as the Winchesters had so many times showed him: family was the most important thing in the world. Castiel considered the Winchesters his true family who considered Kevin as a member of their family so it was natural he would help the young prophet any possible way he could.

*

“Hannah!”

The corridor echoed with Sam’s yelling. Bobby shook his head because damn these kids and yelling this late at night. Some people wanted to sleep. Like poor Daphne who just calmed down after two days and finally shut her eyes for more than ten minutes.

“Hannah, wait!”

Sam was running towards the stairs when he entered the main area. The boy looked confused and maybe there was a tint of pink on his cheeks.

“What is up with you? Why are you yelling?” Bobby asked.

The younger man froze and was about to answer but Cas walked to the railing of the balcony.
Leaning over it, he looked at Sam questioningly.

“What happened with Hannah?”

Sam sighed and shook his head.

“Nothing” he said. It was painfully obvious that he was lying. He forced out that one word like somebody was pulling out his tooth but Bobby didn’t want to point that out. “Dean?”

Cas’ shoulders tightened.

“Dean.”

Bobby looked from one and the other with narrowed eyes. They both had the kind of face that told him something was not right.

“Dean?”

Cas looked down at his feet and he started walking down the stairs. Sam’s jaws tightened slightly but he was the one to finally enlighten him.

“After he chased me around the bunker…”

“Wait, what?!” Bobby couldn’t believe his ears. “Your brother turned demon played hide and seek with you? Did he want to kill you or something?”

“No.” Sam shook his head. “He just… I don’t know. Wanted to have some fun or something. The point is, after that he said that he wouldn’t kill humans or angels.”

Bobby looked at the boy like he didn’t know him. And right now he didn’t know him. He thought that Sam was the brightest out of the two. Not if Dean didn’t have his shining moments of intelligence or Sam didn’t do anything stupid, but this was the rock-bottom.

“And you believed him?” When Cas stopped next to Sam he added: “Both of you believed him? Damn it, guys! He’s a demon! Demons always lie!”

“It gave us hope that Dean was still in there!” Sam argued desperately. “Which demon would say anything like that?”

“The ones who are lying!” Bobby yelled back in a sudden flare of anger, completely forgetting about poor Daphne.

Cas looked down at the floor with an emotionless face and Sam turned his back to him. God, these idjits were so lost. They were two little kittens lost in the dark looking for the third one. Bobby sighed and rubbed his jaw. He didn’t know when this timeline thing would get back to normal but he would try to fix the boys until that.

“So” he started after a long uncomfortable silence. “What do we do with Dean?”

Cas pursed his lips together like he didn’t want the words that were forming in his head escape. Just by that Bobby knew he was up to something.

“Any suggestions, Cas?”

The angel’s head shot up and he locked eyes with the man. Cas’ eyes were wide and desperate.
“No” he said. His adam’s apple moved up and down visibly.

Bobby frowned at him, giving a silent warning to the angel that it would be wiser to talk now on his free will before Bobby forced him. Cas watched him for a while then sighed and glanced down.

“If we can go back in time Dean would be the same again” he said.

“And?” Sam turned back to them, the dark circles under his eyes were more outstanding on his pale face. “Our problem is the present Dean. What do we do with him?”

“Anything.”

Bobby and Sam both watched the angel in silence. The older hunter tried to find the meaning behind Cas’ word and he found only one. Was the angel really suggesting what he was thinking?

“Wait…” Sam brushed back his hair in a way to calm himself down but his fingers were still trembling. “Are you saying that we should…”

Cas looked up at Sam.

“Capture him? Kill him?” Cas took a shaky breath. “Yes.”

Sam punched Cas in the face.

The Winchester boy’s fist collided with the angel’s nose, followed by a loud crack and a painful groan. Everything happened in a few seconds and when Bobby realized what was happening Cas was already on the floor, bleeding.

“DON’T YOU DARE THINKING ABOUT THAT!” Sam roared. “DON’T YOU DARE THINKING ABOUT KILLING HIM OR I’LL KILL YOU!”

Cas looked up at Sam.

“Do we have any other choice?” he asked with a low voice.

Sam’s face turned red in anger and moved towards Cas. Bobby quickly grabbed Sam by the arm before he could take one step closer to the injured angel.

“Sam” Bobby warned him. “Go to your room. Cool yourself down.”

“Bo…” Sam was about to protest but he cut in.

“Go. To. Your. Room. Now.”

Sam glared at him then without looking at Cas he stormed away. Bobby didn’t watch him leaving. He lowered himself to one knee and looked at the angel.

“I deserved that” Cas said before Bobby could ask how he was.

“No, you didn’t.” Bobby raised Cas’ head and examined his nose. “Yeah. Broken. Can you heal it?”

Cas didn’t move for a while then slowly shook his head. Bobby sighed and pulled up the angel. He had to keep his grip around his arm as they walked to the library because Cas was swaying. He had never thought he would ever see an angel with a concussion.
“That would hurt” Bobby said after Cas sat down and took his nose between his palms. The angel closed his eyes and just hissed when Bobby put it back to its place.

The Men of Letters had a lot of medkits around the bunker. One of them was in the library. Bobby put it on the table and took some gauze out of it and carefully stuffed it into the angel’s nose.

“I’ll bring some ice” he said and was about to walk away when Cas started speaking.

“I’ll have to do it, Bobby” he said with a weak voice. “I’m the only one who can do it.”

Bobby turned back to the table. He pulled out a chair and sat down, watching the broken angel who fixed his gaze on his hands.

“Are you sure?” he asked. “Would you be able to kill him?”

Cas trembled after hearing the question. Bobby could have sworn he saw tears in the angel’s eyes but they were gone after a blink. Cas’ features showed no emotions. He was the angel without any feelings once again.

“Yes” he answered with a monotone voice. “If I have to.”

Bobby sighed and stood up. He didn’t move for a while then without really thinking about it put a hand on the angel’s head and ruffled the dark hair.

“Don’t push yourself too hard, boy” he said softly. “Dean needs you alive.”

With that the hunter walked away and respectfully shut his ears when he heard a sob behind him.

*

“Do you have everything?”

“Yes, Dean, for the hundredth time, we packed everything.”

Dean didn’t pout when he looked at Sam. No. Dean Winchester never pouted. He just glared huffily.

“I was just asking.”

“You don’t have to worry, Dean.” Cas walked next to him out of nowhere and put a hand on his shoulder. “We’re ready.”

Dean nodded but he was still uncertain. Not that Sam and Cas wasn’t capable of hunting on their own, but Sam was still ill and Cas was a human. He wanted to go with them just to make sure they’d be okay but he would just rush into danger. And he really wasn’t for that.

The other day when he had been stomping back to his room he had almost tripped over his own leg, losing balance caused by dizziness. And that had never happened before. He had had to admit that the others were right. He had to wait to get better before he’d go hunting again.

“Don’t come back without my Mom” Kevin warned them who had finally come out of his room around noon to see Sam and Cas leave.
“We’ll be back with her tomorrow” Sam nodded. The previous night they had agreed to rescue Ms. Tran after sunset. They would be able to use the dark to their advantage.

Cas looked at Dean before he got in the Impala. Sam was driving now who had had to swear that he would switch with Cas if he felt dizzy or something. Sam had dramatically rolled his eyes after that.

“Don’t forget to…” the former angel started but Dean didn’t let him finish.

“Yeah, I’ll eat properly and drink and swallow the pills. Now shoo before I get into that car too!”

Cas smiled and got in the car and in a minute Dean and Kevin were standing alone in the silent garage.

“So?” Dean asked as he turned to the teen. “What are your plans for today?”

“Translating.” And with that Kevin walked away.

Dean sighed and rubbed his forehead. Yeah, Kevin was still angry, just like he had said. But he didn’t mind it. He was alive and that was enough for Dean.

The hunter watched the garage door for a while and left too. It was good to be back in the bunker. He missed this place. It was the home he always longed for, a place he could return to after a long hunt and where he could rest peacefully. Just like with the Impala, he just realized how much he missed it too.

As he was wandering around the corridors he stopped at a door. He remembered that one and he felt nausea as he recalled to events related to that. He had broken out from there with an axe. Then he had chased Sam around the place, almost killing him in the process. He shivered when the maniac laughter rang in his ears. He didn’t know what he had been thinking that day. The demon inside him had wanted to have some fun. Dean had very different ideas about fun. And threatening his brother’s life was not one of them.

He quickly left the door behind him, promising that he would never return back there. But he probably would walk by it many times. That was the only corridor leading to the garage.

The day went on in silence. Dean checked on Kevin a few times but when the prophet very pointedly asked him to leave him alone the hunter didn’t approach the library again. He instead lay on his bed, happy that his memory foam was still remembering him – which was not a surprise really since to the mattress he just left for a few days – but no matter how many songs he had listened to he was restless.

Just like the previous night. When they had finished planning Dean couldn’t sleep for hours. His brain had been working nonstop. He was troubled and he knew exactly why but he still couldn’t convince himself to do what he had to do. Doing that would not be easy. He was finally back, human again, he didn’t want a reminder who he had been for the past few months.

But ignoring it wouldn’t solve anything. He had to get through that then he could rest properly. Hopefully.

Dean stood up and left his room. His legs were heavy and he had to force himself to make every single step. He soon arrived to his destination. He felt sick just thinking about it but he steeled himself and opened the door.

The room was dark and chilling, just like he remembered. The only source of light was a single
light bulb hanging from the ceiling that he turned on with a switch outside. The air was sickeningly dry. The Men of Letters couldn’t let any wetness ruin the devil’s trap on the floor. He had had a nasty and painful experience with one like that.

And there he was. Sick at first and second glance but under his skin he was still the same son of a bitch Dean despised so much. His gaze lit up with excitement as his eyes settled on the man. Dean walked to the edge of the devil’s trap and waited. It didn’t take a lot of time for the other to start speaking.

“Dean Winchester” Crowley started. “It’s been a while. Did you miss me?”

Dean kept his mouth shut, his face stern and just watched the demon as an even wider grin appeared on his face.

“Back to basics again, I see. The scowling squirrel who tries to appear strong and serious while he’s just a scared little boy in the big dark world. Tell me, Dean.” Crowley put his arms on the table and leaned forward a little, the shadows grew around his eyes. They were twinkling like two little lamps in the darkest night, leading the wanderers to certain death. “How does it feel to be back in your former club? Is humanity treating you well?”

Dean’s breath was shaking slightly when he inhaled. He so knew that it had been Crowley. Who else would have been?

“How did you do it?” he asked, not paying attention to the insults. “How did you convince him to send you back too?”

Crowley arched a brow, smirk still on his face, spreading his arms as much as he could.

“Would a magician explain their tricks? Of course not, silly. But let’s talk about you instead of me. Do you miss it? The blood on your hands and the desire to kill burning inside you?”

Dean felt a new wave of nausea washing over his body. His hands felt uncomfortably wet and warm despite the temperature and the dryness in the dungeon. His nostrils trembled as he felt the smell of the red liquid that wasn’t there, still he saw it from the corners of his eyes, flowing into the room through the cracks on the wall. It soon surrounded his body and the fear petrified him because he would surely drown. The blood will enter his body through his nose and mouth, filling him up and explode him from the inside.

He quickly blinked a few times and broke the illusion.

“I’m a human, Crowley” he said, forcing his voice not to shake and reveal his true feelings. He stepped closer and put his palms on the table. “But let’s talk about you instead. How did you get back?”

Crowley acted like he didn’t hear the question.

“Really? Human? Are you sure? Once you tasted what it is to be like a demon, you’ll always want it.”

Dean huffed angrily, fixing a raging gaze on the demon.

“I’m sure” he answered.

The smirk turned to a toothy grin.
“Yes? Then don’t come to me crying when feathers tries to kill you.” He chuckled when he saw Dean’s face darkening. “Oh, sorry. Did I hit a nerve, darling?”

Dean leaned over the table. He closed his fingers around Crowley’s throat who didn’t need air but the human blood was once again working in his system. The demon’s eyes widened as he started choking. Dean’s face twisted with anger.

“Don’t call me that ever again” he whispered.

Crowley just smiled.

“Look at you.” His words sounded forced as they left his tightened throat. “Rage and violence. It appears your little time travel didn’t erase everything.”

Dean let go of Crowley’s neck and turned away fast. His head ached in waves. The pain was light then unbearable then light again. His vision blurred and his limbs felt weak. It was a bad decision to see Crowley. He shouldn’t have come here.

Crowley coughed a few times after Dean released him then chuckled. His words were like poisoned knives cutting into his flesh.

“Come on, Dean, don’t be shy. Admit that you miss being a demon, free from the problems of humanity.”

Cold ran down Dean’s back. Yeah, he should have stayed in his room, listening to rock or maybe continuing Game of Thrones. One hour of blood and sex. On a second thought that may not be so wise. His stomach agreed with that.

“Will you tell it to Sam and Cas?” asked the demon suddenly.

Dean quickly made his way to the door. He wanted to leave as soon as possible and lock this bastard in here for all eternity. But this just encouraged him to go on.

“Of course you won’t. You’re still depending on me, Dean. You’re my little angry dog. And you’ll always be. You will always come back and sit on my lap waiting for my orders. Or you were hoping to sit on someone else’s? On a former angel’s lap maybe?”

Dean shut the door behind him but Crowley continued, now louder to be heard outside the room.

“Dream as much as you like, Dean! You know I’m right!”

He wanted to throw up. His inside was twisting painfully and he feared he would faint again if he didn’t get away from the dungeon as soon as possible. His legs were shaking as he was stumbling down the corridor towards his room. He was breathing fast and he knew he had to calm down before he hyperventilated. He wasn’t weak. He was not weak.

He was not a demon.

He was not a monster.

Arriving to his room, he was surprised by the ringing of his phone. Did something happen to Sam and Cas? Were they in trouble? Forgetting about his own existential crisis, he was at the nightstand in a leap, looking at the screen of the phone with a frown. Unknown number.

“Who is it?” He asked.
“Hey there, D-Dawg!” came the familiar voice from the other side. It was Sonny.

Chapter End Notes

This is the end of Act One. Starting with the next chapter every third or fourth chapter is going to be from a special point of view.

Also, no chapters next week. I'm five chapters ahead but I don't want to catch up to myself so I decided to take a short break. See you on October 20th :)

Welcome everyone to Act Two where everything is happy and sunshine. Or not. We'll see.

From now on there will be chapters from a special point of view. They won't be long, around 1200-2000 words.

Un-beta’d.

I wake up in a new world.

When I open my eyes, everything looks so different, no matter how many times I saw it already. I see every little detail of the ceiling above me. My other senses start to work too. Smells and noises from the farthest parts of the bunker make their way to my nose and ears. I know that Sam is in the library, drinking some cheap alcohol, his breathing is shaky.

But I also know that I’m not alone in the room. Darkness lurks in the corner but it doesn’t scare me. Why would I be scared? I feel strong, stronger than before, I would kill it in a second.

Which is… strange. Everything is a bit hazy but I have the memory of Metatron stabbing me in the lungs. Wasn’t I supposed to die, drowning in my own blood? A stab in the chest is hard to survive. But why am I alive then? There is a faint numbness in my chest but nothing hurts. Not even my shoulders that started aching about two years ago when I use them too much. I feel surprisingly light and full.

“So you’re awake. Finally.”

I groan internally and close my eyes because I know this voice too well.

“What do you want, Crowley?”

The demon to my right chuckles.

“I’m here to offer you a job” he starts. “You know how Hell is now that Abaddon is gone. Everyone runs around like headless chickens. I thought maybe you might help me bring back order.”

I shook my head.

“And why do you think I’ll help you?”

He doesn’t answer but I feel the smirk on his ugly face. I turn his way but what I see is nothing I expected.

“Holy shit!”
I sit up, propping myself with my hands behind me. Crowley looks nothing like the Crowley I know. He’s indescribably ugly. That’s his true form he’s hiding under the meat? But why am I seeing him? That’s not possible. It only happened once, when I had one day left before…

I quickly look down at myself. Blood dried on the front of my shirt and the hole in it indicates that it’s my blood. Through the hole I see an other hole on my chest just under my heart. The numbness comes from that spot. Also I hold the Blade in my right. It doesn’t feel like a stranger anymore. I feel my being joined with it in harmony, both wanting the same thing. Blood.

Crowley’s next chuckle wakes me from my thoughts.

“You like what you see? I must say you look better than most of us. You’re a human with a lot of black but you’re still one of us.”

“Us?” I ask, hand gripping the bed-sheet behind me, anger boiling in me. “What are you talking about?”

The demon snaps his fingers and I’m not in my room anymore. I stand in the middle of an office surrounded by kitschy furniture. I don’t see any windows, just the flames in the fireplace provide any light. I know I’ve never been in this room before but it still feels familiar. The heavy scent of sulfur stings my nose. Or would sting if I wasn’t immune to it somehow. I know I can smell it, my brain registers it but I still don’t… feel it. It makes me confused.

“Where am I?” I ask from the demon who’s sitting behind a big desk.

“In Hell, of course” he answers. “Don’t you recognize it? You’ve spent quite a long time here. And you will in the future.”

I clench my fingers around the Blade that I always forget I’m still holding. It feels like it became a part of my body, like an extension of my arm.

“I’m not gonna stay here. Forty years were enough, thank you.”

The corner of Crowley’s mouth tilts up to a half smile.

“You sure? Don’t you want to see yourself first and then decide?”

Crowley points behind me. I don’t want to turn my back to him but my curiosity wins over my common sense. I look behind me. There’s a full-body mirror a few steps away. I see myself standing there in bloody cloths, whitening knuckles gripping the hilt of the First Blade and black eyes.

It has to take a moment for me to realize that the black eyes belong to me.

I know that normally I would freak out because I’ve seen this before. I already saw myself with black eyes yelling at me that no matter what I do, I’m gonna die and become this.

A demon.

A monster.

But I’m not freaking out. The moment I saw my reflection I accepted it and moved on. What else should I do? Cry until someone has pity on me and turn everything back to normal? I knew what was coming for a long time now. I felt the change in my very being. And here’s the result. I don’t see any true forms in the mirror but looking down at my hands I suppose I didn’t become a real
demon. I seem like a human but my right arm is in flames, mainly around the Mark.

I look up again and I see Crowley’s reflection. He’s leaning on his elbows, watching me with expectation.

“Am I dead?” I ask.

“No, the Mark didn’t let you die” he answers. “But Metatron stabbed you so you’re neither alive. You just… exist.”

Existing. All my life, I was just going where the road led, following my father’s orders even after his death. I gave up my dreams, if they ever existed to begin with, for my little brother who never understood or knew about the sacrifices I made for him. I endured the pain of a punch, the breakdown of my emotions, I never complained but shut my mouth and rejoiced that he wouldn’t get hurt.

I never lived. I only existed.

When I thought everything would be fine, when I finally found a place I could call home again and people I could call my family it went down like a roller coaster and I still didn’t hit rock bottom. Or did I? Is this the bottom of that drop? Is this the end of it, where I finally admit to myself that everything I called living in the past years was just going with the flow? While everyone around me lived and I stayed the same excuse of a human? Lived if they were lucky. John died, Sam died, Cas died, Bobby died, Kevin died. All because I wasn’t strong enough and couldn’t protect them.

I never forgave myself for that. No. *Dean* never forgave himself. *Dean* was a weak, broken, scared, whiny little bitch who couldn’t do anything. *Dean* was an idiot who thought he could save everyone then cried when he failed. *Dean* was a little brat who thought he could be the hero the world needed. *Dean* was stupid to think anyone could love him. *Dean* was a softie to dream about that so called apple pie life.

But *I* am strong. *I* will show that weakling what I’m capable of. *I* will do what he was always afraid of. *I* will be the one the world needs. *I* will break everything that stands in my way. *I* will go beyond my limits and do whatever I want because there’s nobody that can tell me what to do. *I* am my own man. For the first time in decades *I will live.*

“Now that you seem to be over your little crisis, we can talk about business” Crowley says behind me. I see him in the mirror leaning back in his chair, looking at me with that smile I always wanted to punch off his face. “I want you to scare Abaddon’s followers. Kill a few, show the rest what their disobedience will lead to.”

I feel my lips curling up because damn, that idiot thinks I will follow his orders. But guess what? I won’t.

I slowly, and maybe a bit theatrically, turn around and look that ugly son of a bitch in the eyes.

“Who said you can boss me?” My voice is barely a whisper and I give a little bit of menace into it. And, to give it more emphasis, I lazily wave with the Blade in my hand.

Maybe Crowley already saw this coming because his smile stays the same even when he locks his eyes with me.

“I’m not you boss, Dean” he explains. “I’m just giving you the opportunity to be who you want to be. I know you’re eager to avenge everything that happened to you. Why not starting with the ones
who made your life a misery down here? A lot of Alistair’s students were on Abaddon’s side. Don’t you want to show them what real torture is?”

I think about it for a moment, recalling with ease everything that happened to me here, all the physical and emotional tortures that I had to go through, everything that I will gain with this, but it really just takes a moment to finally decide that…

“Okay” I say. “Where are they?”

And I swear to myself that when I finish with this, Crowley will be the next one on my list because that satisfied face is annoying as hell.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter comes on Wednesday because I won't be at home on the long weekend (it's a long weekend in Hungary, at least).
Here's the Wednesday update :) Starting tomorrow I won't be at home for the long weekend so I'll post the next chapter now. I know I can set a date for the publication but I want to see the next chapter here myself.

This is the longest chapter so far and I had a good time writing it. Especially the past part.

Un-beta'd.

“So this is it?” Cas asked as they looked at the building of Castle Storage. As last time, the only source providing some light was the facility’s name made from neon lights, illuminating the entrance with red and blue. “Looks like an ordinary storage building.”

“Best place to hide some captives” Sam nodded and turned to Cas. “You ready?”

Cas sighed as he watched the building. He wasn’t ready. Neither of them was. But not just Ms. Tran needed them. There was Candy too and all those who were captured by Crowley for some reason. They had to help them before it was too late.

“Do you want to go through the plan again or…”

“Sam” Cas silenced him.

Sam nodded, understanding what Cas meant. Ready or not ready, they would do it.

Their plan was simple. Cas would go in through the main entrance since he was a human and the demon wouldn’t recognize him. Meanwhile Sam would find an other way in. He would try to hack the security cameras and with the help of Gadreel try to get everyone out before the demon notices anything. If it does, they had one last demon bomb that would kill their enemy. But they only wanted to use it when there was no other option. There were still many demons loyal to Crowley. Luring them here would cause lots of trouble.

But there was one problem and Gadreel pointed it out after he took control over Sam’s body without any warning. The Winchester didn’t have time to react and when he was about to protest he was already pushed out of the way.

“Castiel” the angel spoke. “There’s Enochian warding on the wall. Does an angel work with this Crowley?”

“No” Cas answered.

“Then how come he knows these symbols?”

Now that an angel mentioned it, it was really strange. How would the demon know anything Enochian? Lucifer, Abaddon, Azazel and the other fallen angels probably never forgot their mother
– father? – tongue but Sam didn’t think they gave the knowledge to other demons. Especially to the ones who were against Lucifer.

But they were talking about Crowley. He just knows everything. And Cas agreed with him too.

“Crowley is one who knows much and shares little. Maybe he looked into one of our siblings’ head. He has the devices for that.”

Gadreel nodded thoughtfully.

“Yes, I know it from Sam’s memories. And it just adds to my concern.” The angel turned back to the building. “Our plan needs to be changed. Sam can’t cross the warding with me.”

“And you can’t leave him yet” Cas nodded and looked at the storage too. “So you cause a diversion, luring out the demon while I free the prisoners?”

That was not wise, Sam thought. They weren’t strong enough to last long against a demon. They had to try and alter the plan a little, still playing safe. If they alert Metatron’s or Abaddon’s attention, they would be in big trouble. Their knowledge of the future was their only advantage. If they lose it…

Gadreel looked at the rear-view mirror like he was looking Sam in the eyes.

“I understand your concern” he started. Sam saw Cas looking at the angel with a brief surprise but he seemed to understand the situation in a blink. “I don’t know how Metatron had found us in Wyoming in the first place. Maybe he’s keeping an eye on us all. But human lives are at stake now. My Father told us to love humans more than him and I love them. I would risk my life to help them.”

Sam felt he had to explain himself because Gadreel clearly misunderstood something but the angel was faster than him.

“I know you would do anything to help innocents. But you can’t get inside with me and Castiel can’t do it alone. There’s no other way.”

Sam sighed mentally. He had to agree with Gadreel. Their plan was flushed down the toilet.

‘Dean’s so gonna kill us…’

Gadreel frowned at that.

“Why would your brother take your life?”

Cas smiled sadly at that. Maybe Gadreel’s comment reminded him to someone from the past. Or maybe he thought about moments when that had almost happened.

“That’s a figure of speech” the former angel explained. “It means Dean will be very angry.”

“So angry he would kill his own brother?” Gadreel asked, still confused, to which Cas just shook his head.

They changed the plan in a few seconds. As soon as they finished, Cas got out of the car and took cover in the shadows. Sam did the same in a minute but headed towards the entrance.

‘Do you know how many demons are in there?’ Sam asked. He eyed the plastic curtain warily.
'No. The warding prevents me from knowing about the inside of the building.'

Sam sighed and stopped a few meters from the door. He had a good look at the receptionist’s desk and behind that stood the demon with the thick glasses. He was typing something, not paying attention to the intruders.

“Let’s do this” Sam whispered.

He felt the angelic Grace flowing through his arms. His fingertips tingled, sparks flew only visible on an other plain. His body was heating up quickly but Gadreel made sure it didn’t hurt him. Sam was powerful like when he had been high on demon blood or when Lucifer was in his body but this was so different. It felt right. Blessed. Gadreel’s Grace was pure unlike the former archangel’s which was tainted with bitterness and darkness.

“Hey!” Sam yelled. The demon inside – Del – looked up. Sam locked eyes with him and as he waved to the side with his hand the neon sign flew off the wall, crashing into the side of the closest car. The windows broke immediately and the alarm squeaked lifelessly.

The demon with the hipster glasses glared at him with his widened eyes when he realized an angel was at his doorstep. Del pulled out his phone and was about to dial a number but Gadreel reached out with Sam’s arm and a stone flew rapidly towards the demon which then hit a hole through the phone.

‘Nice’ Sam complimented the angel’s quick reaction.

Del opened his hand and the phone with the hole in it fell on the floor. He then warily walked to the door but he didn’t step outside.

“What do you want, angel?” he asked. “There’s nothing for you here.”

“I beg to differ.” Sam folded his arms before his chest. “I know for a fact that three innocents are held prisoners inside. One of them is my friend.”

The demon tensed but he was relaxed again in a surprisingly short time. One corner of his mouth curled up as he looked past Sam’s shoulder. The hunter felt a chill running up his spine. Something or more things were approaching him with a lazy pace. He heard something touching the concrete. Something very familiar to dog paws.

Then he heard the growl.

‘Hellhound’ Gadreel confirmed his suspicions.

Sam turned on his heels and came to face with the beast. He had never seen a hellhound this real before. The special glasses showed only a silhouette. With Gadreel’s Grace now he saw the hound’s ebony fur, blacker then the night behind it. Its eyes were glowing red and its fangs were dripping acid-like saliva. He still remembered how it burnt when it had touched his skin. The air boiled around its body.

“Juliet?” Sam guessed. The beast’s eyes narrowed. Maybe it didn’t like the fact that Sam knew its name.

They should have known Crowley wouldn’t leave the storage with his precious hostages to a single minion. Maybe this was Crowley’s most kept buildings before he had been searching then getting his hands on the First Blade. He wondered what the explanation of that could be. Linda was the mother of a prophet. Candy was the not-so-secret lover of some important person. Then there was
the third prisoner, Joseph or something like that. He wondered why Crowley kept him here.

Juliet wasted no time. The hound leaped forward and Sam just escaped the encounter with its claws because Gadreel moved his body away. The beast landed a few meters away from Sam with a thud, sled a little towards the entrance then looked at him again.

Gadreel pulled out an angel blade from the jacket and raised it in defense.

‘You didn’t sense it earlier, did you?’ Sam asked as he moved away to let Gadreel take control.

‘No. It just arrived.’

While the angel kept his eyes on the hellhound, Sam looked around the area. He hoped Cas was inside and not injured or worse by the dog. The latter seemed unlikely since there wasn’t any blood on the dog and thanks to Gadreel his senses worked much better and he didn’t smell anything.

The hound jumped at them again. Gadreel stepped out of its way, the hellish aura burning Sam’s soul even through a celestial barrier. This continued for a few more rounds until Gadreel tried to block a frontal attack with the blade but he fell backwards as the beast collided with him and its weight pinned him down the ground. The blade slipped from his hand in the process. The angel gripped its neck, straining the muscles of his arms to keep the clashing jaws away from his face.

Sam had to realize that this hellhound was stronger than the one he had wrestled with. It towered over him like an elephant, its muscles were like stone, and the weight that pressed on his chest was unbearable. He had to fight to inhale, even though he shouldn’t have to breathe with the angel in him.

And that was the moment he felt that Gadreel was getting weaker. His arms holding back the hound were shaking uncontrollably now. It would give in to the raw power in no time.

‘Can you burn it up?’ Sam asked as he tried to come up with a plan that would end with them staying alive and the beast dead.

‘I’m not strong enough’ Gadreel explained. ‘If I kill the hound with my Grace, your soul will burn with it. I can’t protect your soul from it.’

Okay, bad idea.

Sam recalled how he had killed the other hound. He had been in a similar situation. One hand keeping the beast away, blade in the other. He looked to his right. The blade was not far from him. He could reach out and grab it. But for that he had to hold back Juliet with one hand.

‘I have a plan’ he started then added ‘I think.’

‘I’m listening, though I suggest you to share it quickly.’

The saliva of the hound dripped on his face, urging him to explain everything in the short version.

‘Gather your Grace in my left arm. Hold it back and I’ll get the blade.’

Sam knew Gadreel would shake his head if he could.

‘I don’t think this plan would work out well.’

‘We have no other options’ Sam insisted. ‘We can’t stay like this forever.’
This seemed to be a good argument. Sam felt his left arm weakening while the other got stronger than before. He also felt the weight on his chest growing drastically, pressing the air out of his lunges. He soon saw sparks in his vision and his throat burnt in the force he tried to inhale.

Sam moved his right hand away from the hound’s neck and reached out towards the blade. He felt the cold metal with his fingertips. He tried to pinch it between his index and middle finger and he had to try many times before finally he could pull it closer. The hunter gripped the handle and, as forcefully as he could, stabbed the hound in the neck.

The blade entered the skin, the meat, crossing the throttle, then reappeared on the other side. The red eyes and the beast’s opened mouth flickered with yellow as the hellhound howled in pain then its whole dead weight fell on Sam.

The body was suffocating him. His chest couldn’t expand to let the air enter his lungs. He was in pain, the same pain he felt during the trials. Gadreel was unconscious somewhere in the back of his mind. Sam tried to push the now invisible hound off of himself but the burn in his limbs stopped him. He groaned out in pain, hoping that this day would end soon and they could go back to the bunker.

He heard footsteps approaching him. Sam looked up to see Del hovering above him with gloat.

“I didn’t like the dog anyway” he said. “It smelled and dribbled everywhere. Not to mention what came out of its backside. I thought about killing it myself but then Crowley would have killed me too. Thanks for doing it for me.”

Del pulled the angel blade out of the hound’s invisible form. He observed it for a while, looking at the dark goo dripping down its edge. He then glanced down at Sam.

“Now, as my gratitude, I’ll kill you.”

The demon raised the weapon above his head to then strike down but it fell out of his hand as his face shined up with a yellow light just like the hound’s moments earlier. The demon’s body followed the blade to the ground, revealing non other than Linda Tran with an other blade in her tight grip. The short Asian woman glared at the lifeless meat suit like she wanted to set it on fire by just one look. Sam was sure she could do it.

“Sam!” Cas was by Sam’s side too followed by a woman and a man. “Are you alright?”

“No” he answered honestly, out of breath. “Can’t breathe. Hellhound.”

Cas waved his arm above Sam until he found the body and got a grip on the fur. With the help of the other three, the former angel pulled the dead beast off Sam’s body who finally could take a long, deep breath. His chest still felt like a pancake but he would live.

As Sam was still laying there Ms. Tran kneeled down next to him.

“Sam.” The woman leaned closer and looked deep into the man’s eyes. Her gaze was hard despite how long she had been in that cell. “Where’s my son?”

Sam chuckled with honest happiness. Maybe he even had tears in his eyes too but he was exhausted to notice them or care to wipe them away.

“With us” he said the words he had wanted to say the last time they had met. “He’s safe.”

Ms. Tran’s tears of joy were the best sight he could wish for in that moment.
Every angel stepped out of her way as she stormed through Heaven like a menacing cloud of fury, threatening everyone with an injury who was too close to her. Hannah rarely let her anger out like this. She was always collected and only her glares and frowns showed her dislike, but now when her strange behavior was probably caused by an other angel’s control she couldn’t hold her emotions at bay.

She dismissed her siblings who were guarding the cell. They watched their sister with questioning eyes but they didn’t dare to ask. Hannah didn’t pay attention to them as they left the corridor and closed the door behind them loudly. Her eyes were fixed on the angel behind the bars.

Metatron was sitting on the bench. He still had the same cloths on when he had been captured. He was reading a book, by the cover it seemed to be a French novel, and he turned a page lazily, not bothering to acknowledge Hannah’s presence.

“What are you doing to me?” she asked after a short while. Her patience was less than usual. She wanted answers immediately.

Metatron smirked and looked at her innocently.

“Excuse me?”

“What are you doing to me?” she repeated with anger. “Why does my vessel react the way it does without me meaning it? Are you controlling me? Like Naomi controlled Castiel?”


Hannah took the bars in her hands to lessen her rage. Metatron’s attitude annoyed her more than anything ever before.

“Like you don’t know” she snarled. “My vessel produces higher temperature and it makes movements I’m not conscious of. My thoughts are wandering away meanwhile I’m not aware of my surroundings. Not to mention my Grace. It’s humming because you’re taking control of me, isn’t it?”

The other angel watched her thoughtfully then burst into laughter. He put his book aside and leaned on his knees with his upper body rocking as he laughed. Hannah gripped the metal tighter.

“What is so funny?” she asked angrily.

“Oh, my dear Hannah.” Metatron wiped his tears away. “You started falling.”

This immediately swept away her rancor. Hannah felt cold spreading out in her vessel and her brain becoming numb. Falling was the greatest fear of an angel. Falling meant God disowning their children, not loving them anymore and casting them out of Heaven. Falling meant following Lucifer into the depths of Hell, where their Grace would twist out of itself, rotten by brimstone, melted by acid, burnt and frostbitten at the same time.

“What…” she managed to say. No, she was not falling. She was still loyal to God and she looked after humans. She was not like Lucifer who hated them out of jealously. She was not like Abaddon,
Alistair, Azazel and many others among the third of her siblings who sided with Lucifer and left Heaven with him. She was not a villain of Heaven and humanity. She. Was. Not.

She had given Castiel a blade to kill Dean. To give justice. Then she had left him alone and joined Metatron against him.

Hannah stiffened. Maybe she really was a villain. Metatron was a villain of Heaven and humanity and Hannah had joined him. This made her one too. She should have known better. Someone who had taken away their home was not reliable. She had trusted him more than the angel who had brought peace among them, lead them when they had been lost, provided them a purpose they hadn’t found in this foreign world.

But to her surprise Metatron didn’t explain her falling with those things.

“You know. You started to spend so much time with humans and so little time in Heaven that your Grace slowly started to convert itself into something else. A soul.”

Hannah blinked without really thinking about it. She recognized this as the human way of showing confusion. Her Grace was turning into a soul? How was that possible?

“But my siblings and I spent a year with the humans and I never experienced it before” she reasoned. It couldn’t be true. Metatron was lying again. He wanted to confuse Hannah so she would let her guard down and he would make an escape. But Hannah was not that easy to confuse. She was focused on her task ahead, namely eliminating the confusion in her vessel. She would get this done and return to the humans where she would continue researching with Sam. Sam would definitely ask about her previous behavior which she would explain as a malfunction. A simple, easily solved malfunction. And Sam would smile at her and they would settle down at the table farthest from the entrance of the library and bury themselves into books and scrolls. They would act like how they always acted in their partnership without Hannah worrying that she would lose control and hurt Sam. She didn’t want to hurt him. Or anyone else.

Metatron leaned forward. A knowing smile formed on his face like he was seeing into her head.

“That, Hannah, was because you’ve never grown attached to a human before.”

The vessel’s heart skipped a beat then started hammering so fast Hannah thought she would fell on the floor if she wasn’t gripping the bars. The temperature grew in her chest and her face and she felt swirling motions inside her belly despite she knew all of the organs were not moved from their anatomical places. Then came the… scratching? Tickling? She couldn’t explain the origins of that one. Was something inside her vessel? Was there… a Leviathan inside her?

Hannah was panicking now. What if the Leviathans had already appeared in this timeline? What if one of them had invaded Hannah’s vessel without her noticing it? She had taken the enemy into the bunker! She was careless! She was a threat to Sam and the others’ life!

She was pulled out of her thoughts when Metatron stood up and started walking towards the bars.

“You know how humans are so flawed creatures” he explained. “When a pure angel gets too close to them, the human corrupts the angel’s Grace. Like how our dear Castiel’s Grace was corrupted. And that’s why he was perfect.”

Hannah frowned.

“Perfect for what?”
Metatron stopped a step away from her and smirked.

“Tell me, Hannah. Who corrupted your Grace?”

The angel in the female vessel was deeply offended by Metatron’s assumption.

“My Grace is not corrupted” she said, partly to herself. She started doubting her words and it was all Metatron’s fault.

The other angel shook his head.

“You know it’s true. I see your Grace shivering like Castiel’s when he was talking or thinking about his little slice of humanity. And I think you know as well as I know that he’s in love.”

Love. She knew the concept of love. It was an emotion one felt for another. For example the angels loved God who then asked them to love humanity. But what humans described as love was more complicated, confusing even. There were so many ways to love, so many layers she didn’t bother to look into it deeper. She had never wanted to be associated with humans. She watched over them but getting in touch with them was never her intention.

“What do you mean to tell me?” she asked.

Metatron chuckled.

“You’re in denial, I see. Or perhaps you didn’t realize the meaning of your emotions yet.” He leaned closer, his face inches from Hannah’s, his eyes staring into hers deeply, looking for answers. “I ask you again. Who corrupted your Grace?”

“My Grace is not corrupted.” Hannah swallowed hard. She felt dizzy. All these confusing questions… Shouldn’t she be the one interrogating Metatron? Why was he asking her then?

Metatron leaned away and crossed his arms.

“Let’s approach this from an other direction. Something happened to you and your vessel recently that you can’t explain, correct?” He waited to continue until Hannah nodded. “What happened is that you felt a combination of unexplainable sensations you have never experienced before. My question is, which one of the fine humans is making you feel the way you do? Who has an effect like this on an angel?”

Hannah looked away, thinking. There weren’t many humans she knew. Most of them lived in the bunker and she didn’t spend much time with any of them except…

Her vessel’s heart beat stronger and the humming was back again. There was one human she could say she was close to. One human that confused her but made her curious and… exited? Was that the right description? She was at a loss for words to tell exactly what she experienced whenever she was in his company.

She looked up when Metatron chuckled.

“I see you figured it out. So? Who is it?”

Hannah put on an emotionless mask on her face and stepped away, letting go of the bars. Metatron’s brows moved higher in disappointment.

“Come on, Hannah!” he whined. “Share some details! I’m carving for a good story! The last one
didn’t end as I had planned!”

She narrowed her eyes. Metatron and his so called masterpiece. The very thing that caused all the trouble, all the betrayal, all the pain. A remarkable hunter is swallowed by darkness, and the best angel of them all is just a shadow of himself. Never in her life would she give Metatron the satisfaction of knowing her ‘story’.

“I know there’s a special place in Hell waiting just for you” she whispered. “And when you get there, I hope you would suffer for all the pain you had caused for others.”

Metatron’s delightful expression was quickly overshadowed by rage. He hit the bars with his palm, startling Hannah, then locked them in a tight grip. The metallic sound echoed in the corridor.

“You think I deserve to go to Hell?” he hissed through his teeth. “I deserve to suffer for all the pain I had caused?” Then he continued with a loud voice. "I was the Scribe of God! I was chosen to be His right hand man, not those filthy archangels, one worse than the other! I was the only one who respected God after He had left! I was the only one who could protect His words from those arrogant angels! I had to leave my home because of them! Because they were a bunch of idiots who ruined Heaven! Who has to suffer in Hell is not me but them! I wanted to make everything right! Let only those in Heaven who deserved to be here! You were one of them Hannah. You had great potential, right hand angel material, but you changed alliances as soon as the ship started sinking. Twice! You’re a shameless opportunist who always joins the side that’s closest to the finish line. You know what the trope is called? Heel-Face Revolving Door. Who will you join next time? The brand new Knight of Hell?”

Although Metatron’s words deeply shook her – because she was not changing sides out of selfish reasons and the accusation hurt her, – the last sentence stood out like a demon among angels.

“How do you know about it?”

The half smirk was back on Metatron’s face.

“I wrote the story after all.” The angel motioned around with his arm like he was playing in a Greek drama, performing an important speech. “The human in Dean Winchester dies by the hands of the new God who then kills the heartbroken Castiel with the same blade. Of course the Mark of Cain brings Dean back to life as a Knight, that would have been in the second book, who then goes on a rampage on Earth. But fear not! God, kind and just, descends from Heaven and locks away the beast where it belongs.” Metatron paused and clenched his fist. “Into the Cage.”

Hannah narrowed her eyes. What Metatron had said was interesting, she should tell Castiel and Sam as soon as possible, but there was still something that didn’t feel right.

“You have a spy among us, don’t you?”

Metatron’s eyes twinkled with mischief.

“Why would you think that? I’m just a prisoner in Heaven’s jail. I have no power to have a spy. You all betrayed me, remember?”

Hannah leaned a little closer and spoke with a lowered voice.

“I don’t believe you.”

Metatron laughed.
“You know what? Maybe you were right. What if I’m controlling you and you report to me from
time to time but you never remember it? That’s not uncommon. Naomi had reprogrammed almost
every angel at one point.”

She shouldn’t have come here, she knew that now. Metatron just ignited the spark of doubt inside
her. She should have asked someone else but she had been blinded by anger. She had relied on her
emotions too much. Now she finally understood Castiel’s actions. Emotions were an untamable
force. She wasn’t sure if anyone could keep it in bay.

Hannah casted one last look at Metatron and turned to leave. She heard enough. She had enough
with the lies.

“Goodbye Hannah!” she heard. “I’m sure we will see each other again someday. Only time can
tell.”

The door of the corridor closed with a loud bang behind her.

*

Castiel took Candy and Jerome to the closest hospital. Their wounds were mainly bruises but the
lack of sunlight, fresh air and physical activity weakened them to a level that as soon as they had
pulled the hellhound off Sam the two of them collapsed in exhaustion. Linda Tran refused to go
with them. She wanted to see her son as soon as possible and a visit to the hospital just delayed the
meeting.

He had found them rather quickly and with ease. He opened the back door in a short time thanks to
– again unfortunately – Metatron’s knowledge of lock picking. He wondered sometimes if the
scribe knew what he had given to Castiel. But thinking about the way he had made him confess
everything to the angels he doubted it.

The three humans were in three separate storages. Their circumstances were horrible. The dirt and
smell was alone a torture, not to mention the chains. Castiel quickly set them free and took them
outside. When he saw that the demon was about to kill Sam he pulled out his angel blade from his
jacket but Linda took it from him and the next thing he knew was that the short Asian woman
already killed it. He had to admit that Kevin’s mother was a remarkably fast human.

Linda stayed with Sam at the storage building while Castiel drove away with Candy and Jerome in
the Impala.

“I don’t know why I was captured” said the man. “The guy with the British accent, the one you
called Crowley. He sometimes came to see me. Never asked anything, just mocked me and my
wife.”

“How long have you been there?” the former angel asked as he looked at the man next to him.

“A… year, I think? I lost my sense of time quickly.”

A year. Looking back a year from this date it appeared to be the time when he had returned to the
Winchesters. Crowley had captured Kevin and other future prophets. Maybe one of Jerome’s
offspring would be a prophet. All angels knew the name of those chosen humans but he was not an
angel anymore and that knowledge left him with his Grace.
“Thank you.” Candy smiled at him before she turned away and walked to the hospital entrance with Jerome on their unsteady legs.

Castiel smiled too. Maybe he wasn’t as useless as he had thought the last time. He was capable of helping others without his Grace. Maybe he was thinking like this because being a human was not a new experience for him. He knew his limits and potentials. He knew his needs and emotions. And he honestly liked it. It was a shame most of the angels – poor Ephraim included – underestimated them. Their Father had told them to love these supposedly flawed creatures. And he loved them. He loved being with them and being one of them. The other angels should realize that being flawed made the humans the most perfect creations of God.

The former angel quickly drove back to the storage facility and picked up Sam and Linda.

“I’m fine Cas, really” said Sam as Cas helped him to get on the backseat. As soon as he lay down he fell asleep.

Linda turned on the front seat to look at the sleeping man.

“He looks sick to me” she said as she observed him. “Is he alright? And Kevin? And Dean? What happened to you in the past few months?”

After closing the door, Castiel rounded the car and got in behind the wheel.

“It was more than a few months.” Castiel ignited the car and drove away from the storage. The dead meat suit of the demon bumped to the side of the trunk when he turned on the road. “Our souls were sent back in time.”

From the corner of his eye he saw Ms. Tran’s eyes widening.

“What?”

“A demon, Abaddon, changed the past. Because of this, an old friend of the Winchesters didn’t die and his ghost didn’t save him when Dick Roman attacked them. Kevin and the leviathan tablet were both in Dick’s hands thus nobody knew how to defeat them. We found a powerful time deity, Father Time, who sent us back here. That’s how we knew where you were.”

The woman nodded.

“I figured Crowley wouldn’t say anything, but travelling back in time? I assume you found me much later in that future.”

“Candy’s ghost helped Sam and Dean after Kevin…”

Castiel stopped talking but he already drew Linda’s attention at him.

“Kevin? After what?”

The former angel bit his lower lip. He didn’t want to talk about this without any of the Winchesters. It was their story to tell, not his. Both brothers had their own part in the prophet’s death.

“Castiel” the woman said with a low voice. “If you’re not telling me what happened to my son in this instant, I’m going to beat it out of you.”

Yes, Linda Tran was a strong woman if it was about her son. Thanks to his knowledge of different
stories – which came in handy more than he wanted – he knew that protecting their child can make the gentlest woman a fierce warrior. And he certainly didn’t desire to be the target of this mother’s wrath.

“I’ll start from the beginning and please, no matter how much you want to cut in, don’t. It’s… difficult to talk about for the three of us.”

Linda nodded in acceptance and Castiel was thankful she didn’t say anything until he finished.

Castiel started with the trials and chronologically went on until he got to the part where the other Ms. Tran left with Kevin’s ghost. He made sure he explained the emotional struggle that lead to and followed the tragic death of Kevin. He didn’t want the woman to think that Dean or Sam were not capable to take care of her son.

After he finished, Linda was silent for a long while. He respectfully didn’t look her way when she swept away a tear.

“So…” she said finally and glanced at Sam’s sleeping form. “The angel in Sam killed my son.”

Castiel nodded.

“You must know that Gadreel was misled by Metatron. He is a good soldier who sacrificed himself for a good cause.”

Linda looked back at the former angel.

“You don’t mind if I keep an eye on him, do you?”

Castiel shook his head and they continued their journey through Kansas in silence.

Dawn greeted them in Lebanon. The first rays of light washed the area in a light yellow and pink. The air was chilly as they got out of the Impala and walked to the main entrance.

“Welcome to the bunker, Ms. Tran” Sam said with a smile as he turned the key in the lock and opened the door.

Sam and Castiel followed the woman inside who looked around with wonder. The Men of Letters bunker was truly a remarkable place. He remembered the first time he had been here. He had just healed from his wounds and spent the night with looking around in the library. And the telescope was a wonderful piece of work. He had never had the opportunity to look through it and watch the stars but now that he was here he’ll definitely find the time for that.

Ms. Tran walked down the stairs but froze halfway down. Her eyes were fixed on the library. Castiel had to bend forward a bit to see into the room. Kevin was sleeping peacefully at one of the tables with his notes surrounding him. The former angel saw the tears forming in the woman’s eyes as she rushed down the stairs and entered the library. Sam and Castiel stopped at the doorway and watched in silence.

Linda carefully pulled out the chair next to the prophet and took a seat. For a while nothing happened. She observed his son, probably looking for signs that would suggest harm, then raised one shaking hand and brushed the teen’s head.

“Kevin?”

Kevin stirred and groaned something under his breath.
“Kevin” Ms. Tran tried again.

The boy’s lids cracked open slightly. His eyes were first on the tabletop then he glanced up. He watched Linda for a while, his mind still between wake and sleep.

Ms. Tran smiled gently.

“Good morning” she said.

Kevin’s eyes rounded. He sat up with his mother’s hand still on his head and just stared at the woman with disbelief.

“Mom?”

Linda made a sound that was a combination of a sob and a chuckle and pulled Kevin into a tight hug. Kevin returned the gesture and mother and son cried together in relief that they were finally together again after so many months.

Sam gripped Castiel’s elbow and pulled him away.

“Let’s give them some privacy.”

Castiel glanced one last time at the two then followed Sam down the corridor leading to the dorms. Being back at the place he came to call his home was uplifting. Especially after their successful mission of travelling back in time and turning Dean back to a human. They were extremely lucky to prevail against all obstacles. They had been in a hopeless situation in the hands of certain death but they surmount to their destiny. They had come out victorious.

He knew he shouldn’t be that optimistic. Lachesis said there were things that were destined to happen. He could only hope that when they face one of those, they would know what to do this time around.

“Go, have some sleep” Sam said as they reached a crossing. Castiel’s room was to the left while Sam was to the right. “I was thinking I’ll go tell Dean that we’re back but he’ll be grumpy if I wake him up this early in the morning.”

Castiel acknowledged that by a nod.

“Then I’ll see you around noon.”

The familiar corridor leading him to his room felt warm and safe. A protective barrier around him locking out the cruel world. Metatron nor the other angels could reach him here. He was a human at home with his family. He was where he belonged from the beginning if only he had trusted Dean with the tablet.

But it was no time to think about possible outcomes of the past when they were changing one. No matter how much it hurt to think about his past mistakes, he had to look forward to a better future. His mind should be occupied by that.

His hand was on the door handle when he heard the yell.

“CAS!”

Castiel ran as fast as he could. He knew he shouldn’t be that optimistic. The Winchesters were his family. If there was anything to go wrong, it eventually would.
He was out of breath when he met with Sam who was also running.

“Gadreel just woke up” he explained between heavy breaths. “He said Dean’s not here.”

Sam didn’t have to tell anything else, the former angel was already on his way towards the eldest brother’s room. What had happened while they weren’t here? Where had Dean gone? Had something happened to him? Had it been the Mark?

He almost broke inside the room as he entered. The room was the same as he had seen it the last time but there wasn’t any dried blood on the sheets this time. Instead there was a piece of paper placed in the middle of the bed. Castiel cautiously stepped closer and took the paper in his hand. With Dean’s handwriting the following was written on it:

_Sorry. Sonny called. Couldn’t wait for you. Had to go._

_Dean_

Sam took the letter from Castiel’s hand and shook his head as he finished reading it.

“Damn it, Dean…”

Chapter End Notes

I love hating Metatron. He’s such a great character to write and like and dislike at the same time. The way he uses words as a weapon is interesting. And Hannah. After 10x03 I like the way they're going with her. She has great potential. But if they kill her off...
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Shall I keep saying that it's un-beta'd or just inform you when it's beta'd?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“But you just arrived!” Kevin said as he followed Sam and Cas up the stairs. “Dean can look after himself for a few more hours.”

“No, he can’t” Cas answered. Sam was busy calling Dean for the hundredth time in the last few minutes. “Dean’s soul is troubled and it affects his body. He should rest for a few more days before he goes hunting alone.”

They stepped outside the front door. The autumn morning was chilly and Kevin wrapped his arms around his torso. He should have put on a jacket or something. But it had been so long he was outside the bunker. He completely forgot about the seasons and the change of the weather.

“Dean is stubborn as hell” the teen pointed out. “You can’t tell him what to do. He doesn’t care about his health.”

“From now on I’ll make sure he would” the former angel declared with so much determination Kevin suddenly felt sorry for Dean. If Dean was stubborn, Cas was the personification of stubbornness. If Cas could order Dean to be the passenger in his own car, he could do anything with the hunter. Kevin made a mental note to annoy Dean with his apparent submissiveness.

Sam huffed angrily and pocketed his phone.

“That idiot…” Then he turned to Cas. “I drive, you rest. We turn shifts in five or six hours. Dean can’t drive for more than twenty hours all alone. We’ll catch up with him in Indiana or Ohio.”

Cas nodded and after a wave towards Kevin he got in the Impala.

“Dean won’t come back unless we help Timmy first so see you in a few days” Sam said after he opened the door but stopped before he got in.

“Yeah, I figured. Take care.”

He and Sam were both surprised by this. Kevin had never said anything like this, not out loud at least. Whenever he parted with the Winchesters he was angry at them because of something stupid. But now he felt somewhat peaceful. Maybe getting back his mother was the reason of that.

Sam showed him his ‘I’m honestly flattered’ smile and waved to Kevin.

“You too. And show your Mom around.”

Kevin rushed back to the bunker as soon as the Impala was out of sight. He rubbed his arms in an attempt to warm up his cold skin then went back to his mother who was still sitting in the library.

“They can’t rest a bit, can they?” Linda shook her head. “Always running somewhere.”
“It’s their job.” Kevin shrugged and sat down. Sam and Cas storming through the bunker with their packed bags a few minutes earlier interrupted their reunion. Seriously, couldn’t they all just stay and relax a little? They had just travelled back in time and less than twelve hours was the longest time when all of them were in the bunker. They should take it easy, especially Dean and Cas. Sam at least had a few days to rest but those two? They were like hyperactive spiders running up and down the walls. As soon as they arrived they were on their way to somewhere else. Kevin would lock them in their rooms when they got back, he decided.

“So?” Linda asked softly. “How are you?”

The teen glanced at her warily.

“How much do you know?”

“Castiel told me everything from the angel’s fall to their time travel. But it was his side of the story. I want to hear yours.”

So she knew about his ‘death that hopefully won’t happen this time around’. Sam had told him how his mother had found out about his death and their meeting. He couldn’t imagine how she had felt. He hoped she wouldn’t have to face that again. Or. Whatever. He knew what he meant.

“I’m fine, I guess” he answered after a while. “I was translating the demon tablet for Crowley for a while. Two of his goons impersonated Sam and Dean. Poorly. I quickly figured out it weren’t them. Then that Metatron guy saved me and now he wants to kill me because of the angel tablet. I think there’s something on it he doesn’t want us to find out. Probably a way to reopen Heaven. I’m translating that right now with Gadreel. He’s a great guy, by the way. Doesn’t want to kill me or anything. Since I can’t go outside I’m stuck in here so I started playing a lot of video games. The wi-fi is great and nobody can track us here so I torrent a lot.” Kevin finished with a shrug. “Dean annoys me a lot but I guess I’m fine.”

Linda smiled at him gently then brushed Kevin’s hair with her fingers.

“I’d say you need a haircut and shaving but it suits you.”

Kevin chuckled, leaning into the touch of his mother. God, he missed her so much.

“I’ll show you around, okay?”

“But first a shower.” The woman stood up. “And some new cloths. I was in that storage for months. Maybe a first aid kit would come in handy.”

Kevin was quickly on his feet.

“Right. I’ll show you the bathroom” he jabbered. “I can give you a shirt and trousers. And I’ll tidy one of the bedrooms. Or you can sleep in my room. I’ll sleep on the floor or the couch. I don’t mind. I can borrow Dean’s memory foam. He won’t mind. Or if he will, I tell him to…”

Linda put her hands on Kevin’s shoulders.

“Kevin. Relax. I’m here. I’m not going anywhere.”

The teen took a deep breath and nodded. Yes. His mother was here. She was alive. And he was here and he was alive. Everything was alright.

“Okay.”
He was about to show the way to the bathroom when his body suddenly moved towards his mother and hugged her tightly like he feared she would disappear. Linda just stood there for a moment then hugged him back. Kevin felt tears threatening to fall again.

“I’m so happy you’re here” he whispered into her shoulder.

“Me too.” She brushed the back of his head. “But now a shower. I don’t want you to get any infections.”

Kevin chuckled again and rubbed his eyes as he led his mother out the library. Staying inside the bunker was getting better and better.

*

Sam decided it was a bad idea to punch Cas. With his fading Grace he was still an angel. And angels were solid like a marble statue. Powerful waves of pain ran through his arm from his knuckles to his shoulder without easing and an hour after the punch he couldn’t move his fingers. He broke his hand. Great. He couldn’t imagine what he missed from his life but now he knew.

But punching Cas was the first thing to come to his mind after what he had said. Capturing or killing Dean? It didn’t matter? What the hell was up with Cas?! Had he heard what he was saying? Cas from all people had suggested to kill Dean? Was he out of his mind? Was his Grace clouding his mind or something?

Sam rubbed the back of his neck with his healthy hand. He had to calm down and think through everything with a clear head. A lot of thing had happened in a very short time so he had to sort them out before he took actions again.

First Dean killing angels which was then connected to Cas suggesting to kill him. Sam still remembered Dean standing at the shattered door saying he was not interested in killing humans and angels. He had been in Dean’s trail for months, following the dead bodies of demons and monsters and there weren’t any angels or humans. The humans were just wounded but nothing fatal. And according to the locals, those people had deserved to be beaten so yeah. Sam had been hoping that Dean had still had a part of his original self, the helping innocents one.

Then what had made him kill those angels? According to Hannah – and he really wanted to believe her – they had been just looking for the ingredients of the spell. So what had happened? Had they attacked Dean first who had just defended himself? Or had they said something?

Sam shook his head. Antagonizing the angels wouldn’t solve anything. After so many years of disagreements and fights they finally worked together with them for a shared goal. With a good leadership they were good guys. Cas had guided them well and Hannah was great too.

Then there’s the second thing.

Hannah.

He didn’t know what to think. The angel had started acting more human recently, apparently growing interested in ways of comforting others. He had thought maybe she was curious, trying to work out how humans worked, learning how to react properly in certain situations. And he had to admit she had done a pretty good job so far. He had really needed that back in the library. Both.
Knowing that someone stood next to him, gave him support and cared about his wellbeing meant a lot to him, he hadn’t lied. It had felt reassuring that Hannah, who he had grown to regard as a close friend, was that someone. Even though they had had a rocky start back in the Angel HQ they had grown to respect the other.

But he didn’t know why she had left in such a hurry. Had he done or said something wrong? He recalled those few minutes many times and he couldn’t point out the exact moment when it turned the way it had done. Hannah had looked scared. Like something horrible had happened. But there had been nothing horrible. Apart from the news she had given him. Then what?

He remembered the way she had scratched his back gently. It felt… nice. Almost intimate. It had reminded him to better times with Jess and Amelia. For a moment he had thought he had had a normal life with a normal family and a normal job and a normal everything. He forgot about Hell and Heaven and Time and even his demonic brother. His soul had finally relaxed, letting go the weight of the world on his shoulders. For a short moment he had found the peace he was always seeking.

And for a moment he had thought that maybe, **maybe**, there was something going on. A spark of something more than their growing friendship, a mutual interest in the other. Maybe Hannah’s reaction hadn’t been mere fear but surprise too. She was an angel after all. Human emotions were new for her.

But what if he just construed his imagination into this? What if he just misunderstood the angel’s reaction? He tried to recall how Cas had acted the first time he had encountered emotions for the first time and he had to realize that he didn’t know. No matter how hard he had tried to become friends with the angel, Sam had been always the abomination then the soulless shell of a man. If there had been anything happening, Dean had been the one to witness it.

Sam rubbed his face and it played as a painful reminder that he should worry about other things right now. He had to focus. Dean was his priority, not a certain angel in a female body.

He had to find a solution because what Cas had suggested was insane. They couldn’t kill Dean and hope that in the past everything would be the same. No. Dean wouldn’t be the same. Everything he had learnt and went through would be for nothing. What if they go back to the day when the angels fell? Dean would make the same mistakes again. Or what if they go back further? The day when Dad was on a hunting trip and he hadn't been home in a few days? Those ten years of growing would be garbage. They had to cure Dean first and take him back with them.

*But what if there wasn’t any cure?*

Sam sighed in frustration. This thought had crossed his mind many times. He was angry when doubt woke in him. There **was** a cure. He was sure about that. He would find it and he would help Dean. He would never give up on his brother.

*Where is it then?*

This question again… He didn’t know the answer yet and he wanted to kick something so much. He knew Cas had been up in Heaven just to look for the cure. With no luck. Cain was the first one to bear the Mark and he gave it only to Dean. Cain was probably still a demon. He figured the Mark of Cain was a powerful binding spell. The bearer was forced to obey its desire and the orders of its master.

He had learnt in the past years that every spell had a counter spell. Everything could be broken, they just needed the right ingredients. Ingredients that may or may not be burnt in that mysterious incident. So a counter spell was not an option.
Sam suddenly froze. There was an other way. This one solution always hung before him but he tried to ignore it. He didn’t want to remember, he tried to forget its existence for years but it always came back in the darkness of the nights. But now it made its reappearance in his daily life. The very thing he was afraid of may be the only way to help his brother.

And he would do it.

He would do it even if it would mean he would be lost forever. Or for a timeline.

Sam stood up, wrapped a spare bandage around his hand tightly and left his room to look for the things that would help him. He also needed a summoning spell.

* 

He sneaked out the bunker a little after nightfall and stole a car from the farthest and most abandoned park from the bunker. The cars in the garage were antiques, that would have drawn too much attention to him. And they were slow. He needed something faster to get to Hurleyville.

Well, there was something faster than those automobiles but he didn’t trust himself that much to go with Dorothy’s motorcycle. Dorothy would definitely kill him if there was just one scratch on it when she got back from Oz.

So he opted for a not so old but not too new Ford. New cars belonged to rich people and the police will be after the rich people’s car in no time. He quickly hot-wired it and was on the road in a few minutes.

He had slept a little before he left the bunker. He had everything he would need in a backpack. The list of foods he could eat, the pills, a lot of water and the pack of grape sugar Cas had brought him. The latter was in his pocket. He also packed salt and a shotgun but he hoped he wouldn’t have to use any of those. Timmy had convinced his mother that he would be alright so he hoped the same would happen now too. He knew he should be careful. This would be the first time he met Timmy in this timeline. He didn’t want to scare away the kid or anger Mama Ghost.

He just passed Springfield when his phone started ringing. It was around five in the morning, the sun just started to appear on the East. Dean glanced at the screen but put away his phone as soon as he saw his brother’s name on it. He was really sorry for not waiting for them to get back but he had to get to Sonny’s as soon as possible. He had to save Ruth before she got killed. He had to stop the ghost before she chopped off that boy’s fingers.

And anyway. He wasn’t a baby. He could go on this simple hunt on his own. It wasn’t even a real hunt. He just had to convince Timmy to tell his mother he would be good on his own, she wouldn’t have to protect him anymore. He wouldn’t have to wrestle with werewolves or vampires. He wouldn’t faint or anything. There was still one day before he could have sat behind the wheel but he was good. That nurse didn’t know him. He was Dean Winchester who could drive his Baby even in his sleep. He could do this.

He crossed the state line when he decided it was time to stop for a while. He parked the Impala and glanced around. It was a rest area in the middle of grassy fields reaching beyond the horizon. Dean thought about the diners he had been to longingly as he ate an apple. A month without pie or burgers… It was a torture. But if he didn’t want to faint again he had to take a better care of himself. He had to admit he hadn’t had the healthiest life so far. Hunting meant stress and running
and sleep deprivation but he should have compensated it somehow like eating healthy or find time to relax. Like Sam did. With rabbit food and morning jogs he balanced out the bad. And what Dean did? Drank himself to oblivion, ate junk food, avoided physical activities if he could. It was a wonder he hadn’t gain a few pounds yet. Or got a heart attack.

Second chances. It was a foreign concept for the Winchesters. No matter how many times they came back to life, it was always part of a greater plan. Dean’s first second chance after he had come back from Hell was orchestrated by Heaven, the next second chance with Lisa had had a bitter end, and while coming back from Purgatory had left him feeling empty but ready for a new lifestyle had been a road leading to his rough demonic change. Yes, maybe Purgatory had cleared up some misty parts in his self-understanding, it had made him embrace his more brutal side. A side of him which he despised now with a passion.

Dean had to chuckle at that. Back on the familiar and well-beaten tack of self-hatred. His life wouldn’t be complete without it. He honestly couldn’t tell why the Angels had thought he was Righteous, capital ‘r’. He was a good for nothing son of a wonderful human being called Mary. She wouldn’t be proud to see what he had become and what he had done. And let’s not mention John. The dream he had the other day was still vivid in his mind and a freezing wave ran down his spine. He was getting over the demon phase. Yeah. He wanted to skip to the end of the process if it was possible. He would be grateful if he could have some dreamless nights. Or some peaceful ones like him fishing or something.

His phone rang again in his pocket. Dean took it into his hands but put it back immediately after he turned it off. He could deal with Sam’s calls but not Cas’.

Dean dropped the remaining of the apple into the closest trash bin and continued his journey through Indiana. The traffic grew then lessened as he reached and left Indianapolis. The sun travelled higher on the bright blue sky which was just covered by a few clouds here and there. As he drove, Dean found his mind wandering back to second chances but now he tried to focus on the bright side.

He could do so much good with his knowledge of the future. Hopefully the list already started with the rescue of Ms. Tran and would continue in Hurleyville. And there were all those innocents that had died in the past year. He could be there in time to prevent their death. That was his job after all, saving people.

And there was himself. He had always thought thinking about himself was selfish when he could look after others instead but he had to realize it was natural. Normal people cared about themselves and others at the same time without feeling any guilt. He wasn’t normal of course with the life he was living but still… He could try, no? He could do something good to himself too. He had once successfully stopped drinking so much before shit had happened again, he could do that again. He could eat various foods, not just junk. He could try relaxing, give a chance to peaceful activities. He could expand his collection of books he had hidden under the backseat of the Impala and now in the depths of his wardrobe. He could put some shelves on the walls and put those books on it. He was sure Sam already knew about those but never mentioned it, probably waiting for Dean to admit that yeah, he was a nerd all along. And Sam would just show him his ‘you’re such a big kid’ kind of smile and return to his laptop, sipping some kind of an herbal tea.

He could try doing things he had never had the opportunity to do before. He could discover new things he would like, new hobbies. He could try to have a life like every normal person.

And he should definitely try things he was too afraid of to do in the past.

Dean felt heat crawling up the back of his neck and he didn’t try to fight it back. Instead, he let the
corners of his mouth to curl up into a small smile. Yeah. The thing he had ignored for a long while now. The thing others thought he hadn’t known about. The thing that would have made his mother smile and hug him lovingly, saying she was happy for him. The thing that would have made his father furious, yelling he hadn’t raised him that way, beating him until he promised to forget about all of it.

He swallowed to fight back the sudden nausea. He saw John again, pointing the Colt at him. His knuckles turned white as his grip tightened around the wheel.

*It’s not real. Not real. He’s dead. Not real.*

Dream or not, he was sure his father would have killed him in the very moment he found out who he had become in every aspect. He had ordered him to kill Sam after all. He had beaten him prior his time in the boy’s home. Werewolf, yeah.

But John Winchester was no more and Dean was stripping off everything he had put on him layer by layer. Every bad habit, every sick way of thinking, every prejudice. Dean finally saw the road ahead of him towards somebody he could call himself. After everything he had gone through he was finally becoming his own self.

Tomorrow looked brighter.

After two hours since his stop at the rest area Dean felt his head growing lighter. He tried drinking water bottle after bottle, eating grape sugar, but neither could stop the uncomfortable feeling in his skull. He had to stop. He couldn’t drive like this.

He turned down the highway and parked in the woods. Pulling down the window, he let in the fresh air and he inhaled it with greed. He was alright. He just needed a few minutes and he could hit the road again.

Dean turned back on his phone. He had countless missed calls and text messages from Sam and Cas. Dean sighed and dropped the phone on the passenger seat. He didn’t bother to read any of the texts. They were probably coming after him, sooner or later they would catch up to him and scold him in person. He would deserve it because yes, it was foolish of him to run away like that, he knew it. He should have waited for them, Sam would have understood and the three of them would be on the road.

Dean closed his eyes and rested his head against the door, breathing the cool air in. The three of them. Team Free Will, as he had named it back during the Apocalypse. It felt good to be together again, plotting against evil, fighting for good. Not without dark secrets, because he had his owns and Sam and Cas had theirs but he wouldn’t let those stain their bond. It was a promise.

He thought about the bunker and the life they could, no, *would* have there. The three of them, Kevin and his mother, Charlie and Dorothy when they return. They would be one happy family, a family Dean always longed for. Jody, Krissy and Garth would visit them time to time, they would have meals together and movie nights and everyone would be smiling. He would smile too, truly smile, and cherish every moment he could spend with those who are the most important to him.

And he would try *things*. He would definitely try *things*.

Something warm and gentle touched his forehead and he leaned into it. He just realized moments later that it was a hand out of nowhere.

“He’s cold” a deep gravelly voice said he found very familiar.
Dean opened his eyes. He was surprised to see he was surrounded by the darkness of the night. He heard crickets and owls, dulling the sound of the light traffic back on the highway. And he saw the owner of the hand, leaning closer to look into his eyes.

“Cas?” Dean asked.

The former angel’s features were like stone, unshakeable, but his eyes moved restlessly, examining every part of the man’s face.

“Are you feeling well, Dean? Did something happen?”

“No, I…” Dean looked around again. He now noticed the Impala parking a few feet away from his stolen Ford, headlights giving some light to see, and Sam was looking at him through the rolled down window with a concerned frown. He just realized that Cas was sitting next to him. “I just felt uncertain. I stopped for a while.”

“That while was more than nine hours” Sam commented. “You almost gave us a heart attack when we turned on your GPS and saw that you didn’t move for hours. We thought something happened to you.”

“Sorry” he said and he meant it. He knew he had made a bad decision and he was looking forward to the scolding.

But instead Sam just shook his head and smiled a little.

“Next time wait for us, okay?”

Dean nodded and was about to answer when Cas brushed his hand up his forehead and rested it on top of his head. His fingers curled up slightly and his features softened.

“Never do this again” the former angel said with a low voice.

The realization how worried his brother and best friend had been hit him hard. He should have thought about it earlier. Both Sam and Cas had gone through some rocky months when he had been a demon and Cas himself had said he had been the only reason he hadn’t given up living. With his little running away he had probably reopened some healing wounds.

As regret grew inside him, Dean closed his eyes and focused on the fingers caressing his head, recalling the peacefulness of his daydream which was probably a dream.

“Okay.”

Chapter End Notes

Sammy no. And, as you can probably tell, I don't like John. Worst father ever *hugs
Dean*
“So, darling. How was your time in Hell?”

I hate it when he calls me ‘darling’. He treats me like I’m a bitch and he’s a mistress. No. I’m gonna kill him the moment he thinks he can own and have me in any way. But I hide this from him. First I want to know what Crowley plans. Until that I’ll play along in this game of his.

I’m working with him for two months now. I travelled around Hell and Earth countless times, looking for demons I had to kill. The job was satisfying. I can kill some sons of bitches and feed the Mark with the blood of my victims.

Working with Crowley is something I’ve never thought I would do. I still remember the anger I felt when I found out Cas was plotting with the demon behind out backs. But, as I already decided, Dean was weak. He didn’t understand the possibilities a partnership like this meant. And when he did, he only just scratched the surface. An information here, a little manipulation there. Dean never saw when Crowley was using him. I on the other hand do.

Crowley is like a mentor. He teaches me how to be a demon, how to use my power. Like zapping from one place to an other. It took a week to finally master it and it was frustrating as hell, but once I learnt it, I couldn’t stop using it. I don’t need a car anymore to travel around. I just have to think about it and in the next moment I’m there. No more countless hours sitting in a stinking car, locked together with those who hated me or were disappointed at me.

I know I can’t trust him. There’s always something in that bastard’s head, some shady plans evolving in the shadows. I’m cautious. Looking at everything with a critical eye, searching for hidden meanings in the demon’s words. He hasn’t said anything yet, not that he wouldn’t. Sooner or later Crowley will make a mistake, maybe accidentally say something that will help me find out his true intentions. I have to be patient.

“Nothing really” I answer. “I scared Abbandon’s followers.”

Well, I killed them all to be exact. And some others too. Bystanders who were too curious to fear their own life or simply felt safe because they rooted for Crowley. They learnt their lesson. Not that they would be smarter in the future but oh well. The world has less trash.

Crowley arches a brow.

“Oh, really?” he asks. “And what about those who were my followers?”

How the hell should I know who follows him? They all look like the same to me, ugly twisted beasts with black eyes! I want to retort but shrug instead.

“They were in my way.”
Crowley’s not happy and I love seeing the barely restrained anger on his face. He clearly wants to stay ‘friends’ with me for whatever plans he has and an argument would ruin it. I want to laugh out loud but I hold myself back.

“I told you to scare them” Crowley said, scratching the armrest in frustration, trying to take his anger out on something. I’m sure there are deep nicks in the wood already. “What part of it you didn’t understand?”

Forget the ‘hold myself back’ part and the whole thing with being patient. I can’t stand the way he talks to me, like I’m an idiot who can’t understand a simple sentence. I’m boiling with rage and I feel my forearm burning impatiently, demanding me to take actions.

“And what part of ‘you’re not my boss’ you didn’t understand?” I ask back cheekily. “I do what I want.”

Crowley hit the table with his fist.

“No, you don’t!” he yelled. “There won’t be any order in Hell if you kill every demon!”

His sudden outburst is a surprise. I hit a sore spot, I guess. Maybe if I hit it again…

“Who cares?” I shrug. “I don’t. And you should neither. Hell is the capital of chaos.”

Crowley’s face doesn’t show anything but his ugly true form tightens, concentrating its being to its core. I watch this curiously but before I can figure out what was happening it ends quickly. Damn it.

The demon stands up and looks into my eyes.

“You can’t gain anything without order” he explains.

Order. I hate that word. Too many memories of the bad kind. Order means following Dad’s every word without questions. Order means if I do something wrong, I’ll be punished. Order means a cell I can’t escape from because if I do, someone else will get hurt.

So I straighten myself and look the son of a bitch in the eyes.

“Yeah? Watch me.”

And with that I leave Hell.

Chapter End Notes

Are you ready for NaNoWriMo? Cause I'm not.
“What do you mean a hellhound attacked you!?” Dean leaned forward, putting his elbows on the back-rest. “How?!”

Gadreel sensed Sam tensing up and Castiel’s grip around the wheel tightened.

They were on the road for ten minutes now, continuing the journey to Hurleyville. Gadreel was informed by Sam that Dean had spent a long period of time living there in his youth. Sam had received two explanations from two different sources, one from his father and one from his brother, and the angel could detect the man’s uncertainty regarding the truth and the desire to find out more.

“We… had to change the plan” Sam said and turned to look at his brother who started at him for ten seconds then blinked a few times until he could speak again.

“Come again?” Dean leaned back against the backseat slowly.

“The storage house was warded against angels” Castiel explained. “Sam couldn’t go inside so he lured the demon outside while I freed the hostages.”

“You did what!?” Dean yelled at Sam. His voice was deafening in the small interior of the car. At least that was what Sam thought. “We agreed to not get into unnecessary fights! Then you go and risk your life!”

“We didn’t have a choice!” Sam yelled back. A sudden anger flared up in him. Gadreel felt an old lesion surfacing and its roots reached back far into the past. “We had to save Ms. Tran and the others!”

“With you putting yourself in danger!?” The older man huffed. “Very good plan, Sam! You could’ve died!”

“Would you rather put Cas in danger!?”

This seemed to dumbfound Dean. He casted a short gaze at the former angel then back at Sam.

“Leave Cas out of it.”

“No, I won’t! Stop putting me before everything!”

Castiel inhaled a long breath, shifting uncomfortably in the seat but his face remained emotionless. Dean frowned.

“The hell are you talking about?”

The younger Winchester turned his back to his brother and rolled his eyes.

“You know it damn well!”

“No, I don’t! Would you mind sharing with the class!?”

"Chapter 16"
Sam’s anger was about to erupt and Gadreel tried to soothe it but he couldn’t manage to ease it entirely.

“You don’t do what you want to do because you still think you have to hold my hand! I appreciate your worry but I’m not a kid, Dean! I can take care of myself! I don’t need you to protect me all the time!”

In the mirror Gadreel could see Dean staring at the back of his brother’s head. There was something in his gaze that reminded the angel to a cracked window. Still dividing the inside and the outside but the forces of nature and humans already frayed it. Either the wind or a careless human could break it if one didn’t take care of that crack.

Dean was about to say something when Castiel cut in.

“As much as I missed your bickering, I suggest you to stop before we get into an accident. I can’t drive like this.”

Sam turned to look out the window. Darkness covered the land around them, only the headlights and a few billboards giving some light. Gadreel drew back, waiting patiently for Sam to calm down and collect his thoughts. He found the brothers’ arguments pointless. The protection of one’s own kin was praiseworthy and Dean did everything to protect Sam. Gadreel had thought that showing Sam his memories would make him understand. It seemed he had been wrong.

Sam soon sighed and glanced back at Dean.

“Look, I’m sorry I…”

“No” Dean said quickly, rubbing the back of his neck. “You’re right. You’re all grown up and everything. I shouldn’t forget that. Sorry.”

The silence that followed was called by humans as ‘awkward’. The two men and the former angel didn’t look at the other, they all casted their gazes to different directions. It lasted only a few minutes until Sam spoke again.

“I’m serious, Dean” he started with a sincere tone. “You should do what you really want to do.”

Sam turned to look at his brother again. Dean sat with his arms folded before his chest, fixing his eyes one the window to his left. Sam sighed then continued.

“You know what I’m talking about, right? Second chances, as you said. Live with this opportunity and be a little selfish.”

Gadreel didn’t understand Sam’s words but no matter how curious he was he didn’t look into the man’s thoughts. He waited patiently until they name the subject of their conversation.

But instead Dean stretched, moved behind the driver’s seat and tried to find the most comfortable sleeping position.

“Tired. Good night.” And he closed his eyes. Surprisingly, he almost immediately fell asleep.

Sam shook his head and turned back ahead.

‘You should rest too’ Gadreel said. ‘You’re still exhausted from our fight with the hellhound and the drive here.’
‘I’m not tired’ Sam insisted.

Sometimes Gadreel found Sam incredibly stubborn. It seemed to be a Winchester family trait. But Sam needed sleep so with a heavy heart Gadreel used the same method he used on Kevin the other day.

‘I’m sorry, Sam. Please, rest.’

Before Sam could put up any resistance the angel sent a calming wave through his soul and the man drifted into a peaceful slumber. Sam’s eyes glowed blue and Gadreel was in charge of the body.

Castiel acknowledged his presence with a nod.

“Brother.”

Gadreel nodded too as he watched the road. This late at night just a few cars passed them by, people probably hurrying home after work to spend time with their family.

“We didn’t have the chance to talk yet” Gadreel noted.

“I apologize. A lot happened in the past few days.”

“I understand.” The angel paused, downcasting his eyes. “But I should be the one to apologize. I threatened Dean with his brother to send you away. I was afraid that you might sell me out to the other angels. And when I, the other me, met Metatron who promised a new start in a new Heaven… That me should’ve been more careful. Not so naïve. My love for humanity was used against me. Again. I have no intentions to justify myself, the mistake was made by me, but I honestly believed Lucifer meant no harm when I let him inside the Garden. He was always a good brother. He looked after us unlike the other archangels. He used to be my favorite brother. His betrayal hurts more than anything. I should have trusted you and the Winchesters instead of those whose promises there were good to be true.”

When the silence between them stretched out too long Gadreel glanced up warily. He was expecting to find anger on his brother’s face but instead he found thoughtful eyes watching the road.

“Yeah” Castiel said finally. “Our love for humanity caused a lot of trouble to both of us.” He cleared his throat before he continued. “I already forgave you. You helped us reclaim Heaven. You redeemed yourself.”

Castiel’s words reassured him but didn’t lessen his guilt. It wasn’t him who sacrificed himself to save Heaven from Metatron. He shouldn’t be eased by something that never happened.

But he hadn’t betrayed the Winchesters yet. He hadn’t killed Kevin yet. He hadn’t worked for Metatron yet. And he wouldn’t. He had been already thinking about it but he had to remind himself. He would learn from the mistakes of the other timeline. He would be an ally of the Winchesters and Castiel, and he would help them any possible way he can.

Now he had an other problem. His curiosity.

“Brother, if you don’t mind, would you tell me about the time you came from? I only know it from Sam’s perspective and I’m curious to know your story.”

Maybe his request was too personal. Maybe Castiel didn’t want to recall his memories of the past.
Gadreel was about to apologize when Castiel pulled over and stopped the engine. Dean moved in his sleep, probably felt they weren’t on the move anymore, but didn’t wake up.

“It would take too long to tell everything and to understand what had happened last year you have to know about everything that took place since I set foot on the human world. So instead of talking I suggest you a faster way.”

Gadreel frowned.

“You want me to look into your head.” When Castiel nodded he continued. “Are you sure you want me to see everything?”

Castiel smiled at him sadly.

“I’m done with lying. I don’t want to hide anything anymore. Please, brother.”

Gadreel watched Castiel for a while then nodded. He raised his hand and placed two fingers on the other’s head. The angel closed his eyes and watched.

For Castiel the past years had been eventful. The Apocalypse, the civil war, the Leviathan, Purgatory, the Fall, the ripple. Castiel had gone through a lot, experienced a lot. But one thing stood out the most. One human that seemed to be the center of everything. Every motivation, every goal, every reason, every pain and happiness.

Gadreel opened his eyes and moved away. Castiel seemed a bit shaken, he went through everything once again in a short period of time while Gadreel watched, but he held himself together as best as he could.

“I respect you for your strength, Castiel” Gadreel said finally. “After everything that happened you’re still here.”

The former angel rubbed the bridge of his nose and chuckled dryly.

“After everything I did I’ve played many times with the thought that I should just end my life.”

“Cas…?”

Dean’s sudden question startled both of them and they turned to look at the man. Gadreel could feel fear radiating from the former angel, afraid that Dean had might heard him talking about suicide.

“Yes, Dean?” Castiel asked with a tight voice, hiding everything with a blank expression.

“Why did we stop?” He rubbed his eyes and yawned. “Did something happen?”

Castiel’s face softened and the corners of his mouth tilted up.

“No, Dean. Everything’s good. Go back to sleep.”

He didn’t have to say twice. Dean shifted a little and he was snoring lightly in a short time. Castiel watched for a while with warm eyes then turned back ahead and started the car.

“Castiel?” Gadreel asked when the other drove back to the road.

“Yes?”
“Earlier you didn’t mean the entirety of humanity.”

There was a light in Castiel’s eyes Gadreel couldn’t explain. It was a human look, so distant from an angel’s but Castiel was not an angel for a long time now. And it didn’t have any connections to the loss of his Grace.

*

Castiel didn’t move as he waited for Bobby to return with the ice. His nose was throbbing but he welcomed the pain that had nothing to do with his burning Grace. It rarely happened, almost never recently, so he concentrated on it, feeling every wave of pain that originated from his bleeding nose.

He wasn’t angry at Sam. He knew his words had made him upset. He was neither happy about his suggestion but they had no other choice. Those angels were looking for the ingredients of the time travel spell Henry Winchester had used. If they didn’t find Father Time, that spell would be their only chance. He didn’t know yet why but Dean was holding them back. Did he find it entertaining to watch them suffer?

_He’s a demon._

Castiel wiped the wetness off his cheeks. Demons found satisfaction in chaos. Maybe that was what made Dean do what he had done. He wanted to see the chaos the ripple had caused. He wasn’t the Dean he knew. He wasn’t the man he had raised from the Pit. He was a Knight of Hell he had to stop before he caused any more trouble for them.

“Let me see.”

Castiel jerked his head up. He didn’t notice when Daphne walked up to him. She was wearing a gown above her nightdress indicating that she had been about to sleep or had been already asleep. She had an ice pack in her hand that she carefully touched to his nose. The ice burnt his skin and he closed his eyes. He welcomed that pain too.

“What happened?” Daphne asked. “Bobby only said your nose needed something cold. How did you get an injury like that?”

Castiel was surprised how normal Daphne acted around him. Last time they had met she couldn’t look into his eyes but now here she was, taking care of him.

“I made Sam angry” he answered.

Daphne frowned.

“It doesn’t empower him to hit you.”

The angel looked away with a sad half smile.

“I deserved it.”

For a while they were silent. Daphne from time to time took the ice pack from his nose to examine it, seeing if the swelling lessened. After a while she put the pack on the table and sat down.
“Why did you two fight?” she asked. “Bobby told me you’re friends. Why would friends hurt each other?”

Castiel looked down at his hands on his lap. Daphne asked a good question. Why would they hurt each other? They were in a situation where they needed to work together. Arguments and different opinions had already stood in their way to succeed. Why couldn’t they learn from the past already? Learn from all the mistakes they had made and work out their problems in a more efficient way? Their actions followed the same old pattern over and over again, like it was a trap they couldn’t escape, a cycle they couldn’t break. And why did they hurt each other every damn time? He didn’t know the answer. He couldn’t give any explanations to Daphne.

The woman waited patiently but maybe seeing how lost he was she asked something else.

“What made him angry?”

Castiel’s hands curled up, crinkling the fabric of his pants under them.

“Sam’s brother became a demon.” He forced himself to say it, like it was a seal that made Dean’s transformation permanent. “He’s standing in our way, holding us back. I suggested we should capture him or…”

Or kill him, he finished it in thought. It was painful to even think about it.

Daphne tilted her head.

“The man called Dean? The one with the green eyes?”

Castiel looked up at her questioningly.

“How do you know it?”

Daphne broke eye contact with him, her expression turned hurt.

“Emmanuel… He had dreams. He rarely slept but when he did he always saw this man with green eyes. He never told me about this, Bobby did. He asked me to don’t bother him because it would just make things complicated. At first I didn’t understand what he meant but today he explained everything.” Daphne leaned a little closer, looking back into his eyes with a searching gaze. “This man held the key to unlock Emmanuel’s memories. He died never meeting him again and still he saw him in his sleep. I remember his face when I saw him in the morning after a dream. I saw the pain in his eyes. He moved like he had to force himself to go on. I knew something was eating his heart out. Like he was lovesick. Which was very strange of him because apart from a gentle protectiveness he never showed me any deeper emotions.”

Daphne said many things that felt like a stab to Castiel’s heart, starting with the dreams. How Emmanuel could see Dean in his sleep while he as Emmanuel hadn’t remembered anything until he had met Dean was a mystery. Maybe living in the bunker with Bobby and the other hunters had resurfaced some memories. That seemed to be the only explanation.

But he couldn’t think about himself right now when Daphne just revealed the saddest aspect of her marriage.

“After three years you never…?” He didn’t finish the sentence. He let Daphne fill in the blanks.

“I kissed him once on the lips” Daphne answered with the saddest smile the angel had ever seen. “We never made love. He cares about me, he tells me many times, but he never said he loved me.”
Castiel looked away shamefully.

“I’m sorry on his behalf. Emmanuel is still more like an angel than a human. He doesn’t know the things I’ve learnt so far. How to interact with humans and how to deal with emotions.”

Daphne shook her head.

“Don’t be. It has nothing to do with his angelhood. You would be surprised to see how similar you two act.” The woman looked down, rubbing her hands together. “Our marriage was never out of love to begin with. He needed an identity and becoming my husband was the best way to do that. My duty was not a union with him. I had to take care of him until the time comes when he returns to his own life. Besides, Even if I hoped that one day we would love each other like every other couple, I knew his heart would never truly belong to me.”

Daphne looked up with serious eyes.

“I’ve never told him this but I had a dream the day before I found him.”

“A dream?”

“I dreamt that I walked on the riverbank and a voice from above told me to go there the following day. It was like a suggestion from Heaven. Like the Lord Himself was speaking to me. And the very next day I found him.”

Castiel doubted this. Why would God tell Daphne to pick up a sorry excuse of an angel? But now thinking about it… Why would God give back his life over and over again no matter how many mistakes he had made? Why would He resurrect him and not Anna, Gabriel, Rachel, Balthazar or Samandriel? They deserved to live more than him. What made him so special in the eyes of his Father?

Daphne probably saw the struggle on his face because in the next moment her hands were on his.

“God has a purpose with all of us, Castiel” she said. “We have to fulfill our unfinished duties before we can leave this world. It may be small or grand, it doesn’t matter. My duty was to find you and take care of you before you could continue your journey.”

“And what is this road leading me to?” Castiel asked. “I’m walking on it for years now and I still can’t see the end.”

Daphne smiled at him gently.

“Only time can tell.” She then sighed and picked up the ice pack. “Can you do it? The topic of your argument with Sam, I mean.”

Castiel closed his eyes and welcomed the burning cold once again. He was glad Daphne didn’t mention exactly what he had to do. He didn’t want to hear it. He didn’t want to think about it.

“I’ll do what I have to.”

He felt Daphne’s eyes on him, expecting him to answer but she didn’t say anything. Castiel let out a long exhale and put his fingers around the object in his pocket. He was going to do it today. He couldn’t wait one more day. His doubts would just grow.
The boy’s home was a nice house surrounded by many green. It felt like a peaceful place where boys would be taken care of no matter the reason they got there. And by looking at Dean and the nostalgic gaze he regarded the building with, Castiel was sure the man loved spending time here. He decided he liked seeing that expression on Dean’s face. It meant that the memories he recalled hadn’t left a scar on him.

Sam parked the car and stopped the engine. When they got out he slammed the door hard and he didn’t care what angry remarks Dean was sending his way as the eldest of the two brothers quickly searched the car for any damage. Castiel rushed to his side.

“Don’t be angry at him, Sam” Castiel said once he fell in step with the man. “He meant good.”

“By forcing me to sleep?” Sam huffed.

“You needed to rest.”

Sam looked away angrily. He also made a face that Dean usually called a ‘bitch face’.

Dean caught up and the three of them walked to the front door. Castiel observed the area, the green field that lay before the house, the building itself… and the boy that watched them from the second floor window who quickly stepped away when the former angel noticed him.

“Remember, this is the first time we’re here” Sam warned them, mainly Dean, now less angry than before. “Timmy doesn’t know us yet. Don’t say anything that would scare him away.”

“We should act as we do on any other case” Castiel agreed, turning his attention away from the window. “Investigate.”

Dean shook his head.

“No. That would take too long. I’ll go and talk with Timmy while you two try to stay out of trouble.”

Both Castiel and Sam looked at Dean like he was mad.

“Dude, you can’t just tell the kid to send the ghost of his mother away! You’ll freak him out!”

Dean stopped and looked at Sam. Castiel prepared himself for a new argument between the brothers which once again he couldn’t understand. Why they couldn’t just talk about their disagreements calmly was beyond him.

“I’m not gonna scare him!” Dean shot back. “But don’t expect me to sit back and watch Mama Ghost killing more people!”

“So it’s a ghost then.”

Castiel turned to the door. A man about the same height as his human body walked out casually with his hands in his pockets. He watched Dean with a huge smile under his thick mustache.

“Hey, D-Dawg.”

Dean grinned like he didn’t just argue with Sam. He walked up the stairs and hugged the man on
the porch.

“Good to see you, Sonny!”

They patted the other’s back and stepped apart.

“You must be Sam.” Sonny walked down the stairs and shook hands with the younger Winchester.

“Hey, Sonny.” Sam smiled at the man too but Castiel could see that he didn’t regard his disagreement with Dean unfinished.

“And I don’t think I know who you are.” Sonny then turned to Castiel.

Now facing him, the former angel could observe the features of the man in a more throughout way. Age left deep wrinkles on his face but his eyes were lit with a warm youthful light. Even without his Grace Castiel could tell that Sonny had a strong soul that even though had been scared during his life was still righteous. Just like Dean’s.

“I’m Castiel.” The former angel extended his right and shook hands with the man. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“Castiel?” Sonny repeated. “That’s one strange name.” Than added “No offence. You’re a hunter too?”

“None taken. And…” Castiel hesitated for a moment. Was he a hunter? The last time he had suggested that he would become one it had been followed by the disapproving looks of the Winchesters. There’s still room for improvement, Dean had said back in the Gas’n’Sip which was probably a friendlier version of a ‘no’.

He hadn’t thought this innocent question would trigger his doubt of his identity again. He was not an angel anymore but was he a human? He had a better understanding in regards of a life as a human but was he considered one? If not then who was he? What did the Winchesters see him as? A sorry excuse of an existence, part of nothing, drifting where life carried him?

“Yeah, he is.”

Castiel looked up with wide eyes. Dean was watching him from the top of the stairs, smiling at him kindly, almost apologetically.

“He’s a damn good one” the man added, smile growing.

The praise warmed up Castiel to the core of his being. Had Dean ever told him something like that? Saying that he was good at something without a teasing tone? Not that Castiel had minded those. Jokes or not, it was good to know that Dean cared about him and complimented his skills even though he was not that experienced in the human way of hunting.

Castiel beamed as he turned back to Sonny.

“I’m a hunter” he announced proudly, not caring that the man looked at him then at the boys questioningly. All his problems and negative thoughts were carried away by this simple but significant statement.

They entered the house following Sonny. Castiel looked around curiously. He wondered how Dean had lived here, with what he had spent his days, if he had any friends. Had he been happy and smiled carelessly like on the photo with his mother?
Sonny led them to the living room. The three of them sat down on the sofa and the older man turned to a woman. She looked up at them from cleaning a table.

“Hey, Ruth, would you, uh, please go check on the boys, make sure their morning chores are getting done?” Sonny asked.

The woman called Ruth nodded but Castiel could easily see that she would rather stay and listen to their conversation. Sonny waited until the door closed behind her then he sat down slowly, not breaking eye contact with Dean.

“What’s going on?” he asked.

The former angel felt Dean tensing up.

“What are you talking about?” he asked, not playing the dumb very convincing and on his other side Castiel saw Sam shifting uncomfortably in his seat.

Sonny was neither buying it.

“How do you know who Timmy is and that the ghost is his mother?”

Dean looked at the two of them, asking for help with his eyes and Castiel decided there was nothing better than the truth. Sonny was a friend. Dean trusted him. Then he trusted him too.

“Sam and Dean already solved this case. We were sent back in time to stop a ripple effect.”

The brothers looked at him in horror and Sonny observed him too with narrowed eyes.

“Dean?” he asked.

The man was silent for a long moment, weighting their options, then sighed and nodded.

“Yeah, what Cas said.”

Sonny watched Dean like he expected the moment when they would jump up and confess with a smile that it was just a joke. But when he realized that moment would never come he took a deep breath.

“Okay.” He placed his hands on his knees, leaning on them slightly. “I never believed any of this mumbo-jumbo stuff you boys are into. But that tractor just ran over Jack. Why would time travel be impossible?”

Dean visibly relaxed when Sonny finished.

“Thanks for not thinking we’re insane.”

“I’ll still have to wrap my head around it but no problem.” Sonny cleared his throat. “So! Timmy’s mom.”

They were back in business mode in no time.

“She stayed to look after her son” Sam explained. “Everyone who doesn’t treat Timmy well would die.”

“How do you stop her?”
“Last time we burnt his action figure but she’s connected to Timmy himself” Dean said. “We told Timmy to convince his mother that he could take care of himself.”

Castiel turned to Dean.

“I don’t know what happened before that moment, but now it won’t be the same. I’m also unsure how we’ll solve it this time around.”

“I just need to talk with him” Dean told them. “I tell him to man up and let his mother go.”

Sam shook his head.

“That won’t happen. Maybe you know him but you’re a stranger to Timmy. You’ll just scare him.”

Dean looked at him, offended.

“Have some faith in me, will ya?”

Sonny stood up.

“Dean’s good with kids. There won’t be a problem.”

Castiel had had very few encounters with children, one of them little more than two. She had been at ease around him but it didn’t mean every child was the same. But Dean could befriend any one of them, he was sure of that.

“Oh kay.” Dean stood up too. “Timmy was in the barn the last time I was here. Maybe he’s hiding there now too.”

Dean left the house, leaving them in a long moment of silence.

“Time travel” Sonny shook his head. “Still hard to believe.”

“Yeah, tell me about it” Sam agreed.

Castiel looked at him.

“I sent you back twice in the past. Time travel is not impossible, you just need the right amount of power.”

Seeing Sonny’s questioning expression Castiel continued.

“I used to be an angel.”

Sonny sat back.

“An angel?”

Castiel nodded.

“Used to be?”

“An other angel called Metatron used my Grace for a spell that closed the Gates of Heaven and the angels fell. He caused a lot of trouble and pain ever since.”

Castiel felt cold running down his spine. For a brief moment he was chained in the armchair again, Metatron approaching him, telling him Dean was dead…
Sonny frowned.

“Ain’t angels supposed to be the good guys? Making miracles and everything?”

Castiel laughed with bitterness.

“The true purpose of angels ceased to exist the moment my Father left us on our own.”

“Where did he go?” the man asked.

“I don’t know, but I don’t really care. He left His family behind for whatever reason. But I don’t see Him as my father anymore as I don’t regard the angels my family. My family is here with the Winchesters.”

There was a light in Sonny’s eyes Castiel couldn’t put anywhere. He watched the former angel without blinking for a long moment then he all of a sudden patted him on his shoulder and grinned at him.

“Dean’s family is my family. Feel free to wander around until he deals with this ghost.”

Sam thanked Sonny as they stood up. Castiel was about to leave through the entrance when Sam stopped him.

“Cas” he called back.

The former angel walked next to the hunter who motioned his head towards the wall on the side of the stairs. Castiel observed it. There were photos and awards of boys who had lived here, winners of sport events. Castiel didn’t understand what Sam wanted him to see but then he noticed a familiar name. His eyes widened in surprise.

“He was the county champion” Sam explained and sighed sadly. “He lived the best months of his life here. If not for me…”

“Sam” Castiel stopped him before he could finish. “You’re his brother. He would do anything for you.”

“Cas, back in the church he said he would never put anything before me. He gave up a better life for me.”

Castiel turned fully towards the other man.

“I know you want Dean to move on and live the peaceful and happy life he deserves. But it’s a two edged blade. When he finally moves on, would you be able to let him go?”

Sam pressed his lips together and turned away. Castiel knew his words caused the right effect. Both Wicesters needed to realize their codependency was unhealthy. Yes, Dean had raised Sam, no wonder he was so protective. And no wonder Dean provided the stability Sam needed in his life. They were the only family left for them, of course they would fight for the other with tooth and nail. But they had to work out a better way for that. They had to realize following their dreams and desires wouldn’t mean they gave up their family.

A scream was heard from outside. Sam and Castiel shared a brief look with each other then ran out the door. The former angel’s heart was beating in his throat in fear that something horrible had happened.
Chapter End Notes

Should've said it earlier: I love foreshadowing.
Chapter Notes

Updated the relationships tags because I think it's kinda obvious by now :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Her conversation with Metatron shook her. Her uncertainty regarding her trustworthiness was frustrating. If she could still do it, she would spread out her wings and fly to the farthest part of the universe. But now she was hiding in the woods behind the Men of Letters bunker, sitting at the foot of a tall tree. Not very graceful but she had to think it through.

Was she working for Metatron without her knowing it? Was she spying on Castiel and the Winchesters then report everything to the scribe? If so, what had she already told him? Did he know about the ripple and Father Time? Was he already planning something that would stop them restoring time? Would she just lose total control over herself and do whatever Metatron ordered her?

Many and more questions like these followed each other in her head ever since she left that corridor. She almost ran against Benjamin and accidentally left Heaven through the gate next to the Men of Letters bunker. She realized her mistake too late when she couldn’t turn back anymore – because what would her siblings think? – and hurried to the woods.

She had been sitting there for about an hour now, drawn back into herself, meditating through her process of thinking. There had to be a way to find out whether she was under someone’s influence or not. There had to be signs, like the uncomfortable and frustrating yet soothing sensations in her vessel and Grace. Which was definitely not what Metatron had claimed it to be. That was absurd. She was not falling and her Grace was not corrupted by a human. No way it was real.

Yet, somewhere deep down in her being, she had this thought. A small and gentle but strong voice told her that it was true. She was not under any foreign influence. She was falling from angelhood. Her Grace was developing a human soul. She was growing attached to a certain human.

Hannah pulled her knees closer to her chest and put her chin on top of them. She didn’t know what to do. Should she go back to Heaven and never leave again or return to the bunker like nothing had happened? But Sam would question her and she didn’t want that. She didn’t want to meet him right now when she had more questions than answers. But sooner or later she had to go back. Later preferably.

The angel focused on the sounds of nature. The song of the birds, the rustling leaves as animals ran from one tree to the other. They were the creatures Hannah always loved. Simple, not driven by any sins. For a long time Hannah didn’t understand what Castiel had seen in humans. She had always looked at them like they would stab her every time she had turned her back to them.

“They are flawed, yes” Castiel had said one time. Maybe a few days after she had found him in that dirty motel room. “But that’s why they stand out from God’s other children, angels included. They have different personalities and hobbies. They feel differently, dream differently, love differently.” Castiel had sighed. “Angels would never understand it, maybe if they fall.”
Hannah rubbed the back of her neck. Why had she gone to Metatron in the first place? She should have asked Castiel instead. She was sure he knew what she was going through because the same had happened and still was happening to him. He would give her some advices.

Hannah stayed there for ten more minutes then stood up. She wiped the dirt off her jeans and started walking back to the bunker. She was an angel. A fearless warrior of Heaven. She could face anything. Human emotions shouldn’t make her a coward. She would stand tall and look it into the eyes. Even though just the thought made her Grace tremble.

She was almost at the edge of the woods when she heard a car leaving the garage. The car had a familiar rumble and the driver had an easily recognizable soul.

Sam.

Hannah wanted to sigh with relief because when she would seek Castiel’s help Sam wouldn’t be there. But instead she frowned. Sam’s soul was troubled. It shivered in both anger and fear and a dark depressing thought surrounded it. The angel quickened her steps. Sam was far away when she walked down the steps leading to the front door but maybe Castiel could answer her.

After she knocked Bobby opened the door.

“So, you’re back” he greeted her with a nod and stepped away. “You left Sam a bit crestfallen.”

Hannah bit her lip and entered. But stopped immediately when she felt something was very wrong. The bunker didn’t feel like it supposed to be. It was filled with a depressing aura, the same that radiated from Sam, and not just him but Castiel was missing too.

“Where’s Sam and Castiel?” she asked.

Bobby looked back at her from the staircase.

“Cas left a few hours ago. Didn’t know Sam left too.”

Hannah didn’t know why but she felt like she would start panicking in any moment. There was something in the air. A tension that would snap in any moment and would lead to something horrible. She hadn’t felt like this since… the Apocalypse…

“Where did they go?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. Both of them were upset after their fight…”

Hannah frowned.

“Fight? What fight?” Because frankly, what disagreement would cause a fight between the two of them? They were the calmest individuals Hannah had ever known. They would talk about their disagreements and come to a conclusion by it.

“They argued whether they should just capture or kill Dean. Cas suggested both but Sam didn’t agree.”

Oh. That explained everything. Almost everything.

“What did Sam say?”

“Nothing really. He hit Cas.”
Hannah drew back to her thoughts. Sam would never hurt his brother, not until he tried everything possible to cure him. But she had looked through the archives twice already and there was nothing. Lucifer had given it to Cain who had given it to Dean. There was no cure.

Unless…

“Oh no…” Hannah put a hand on her mouth.

Bobby was already down the stairs and was talking to Lee Chambers when she spoke. The two men looked up at her curiously.

“What is it?” Bobby asked.

“I know what he wants to do. Sam wants to open the Cage.”

Bobby looked confused just for a second then his eyes widened.

“Balls…” he breathed out.

“What?” Lee looked from the hunter to the angel then back. “What Cage?”

“Lucifer is locked into the Cage” Bobby explained. “And Sam thinks he can help Dean.”

“The Mark came from Lucifer” Hannah continued. “He gave it to Cain who then became his Knight. Following that logic he’s the only one who can take it back.”

That was the meaning of that ill feeling. The universe knew what Sam Winchester was about to do. It was screaming in fear, calling for someone who would prevent it before it was too late to do anything.

“That idjit…” Bobby muttered under his mustache and pushed his hat higher. “So? What do we do now?”

Hannah rubbed her palms into her jeans. Her skin suddenly started sweating but she didn’t have the time to think about it.

“I… I may try detecting Sam’s soul” she suggested. “It would take some time but…”

“No need” Lee interrupted her. “I met him when he was about to leave. I know where he went. I can take you there.”

“With what?” Bobby asked. “One of the antic cars?”

The other man furrowed his brows.

“If you were paying attention, you would know that our cars already appeared. So?” Lee looked back at her. “You coming?”

Hannah nodded and rushed down the stairs. She followed Lee to the garage and tried not to worry too much. She was failing of course.
Dean opened the metal door. Rays of light entered the dark barn through little windows to his right. There was the tractor too, surrounded by the metallic smell of blood. Dean shivered as it entered his nose but he tried to ignore it.

He walked inside carefully. He was not afraid of Timmy of course, he was a good kid just scared. His mother on the other hand... Protective, yeah, just very scary and deadly. He had to be careful, not to seem a threat. Just one wrong word and Mama Ghost would be after him.

“Hello?”

His voice echoed in the barn as he entered deeper. Timmy had to be here somewhere. Behind an other metallic door, he remembered.

“Hello?” he called out again. “Timmy?”

He hoped the kid would come out after hearing his name but nothing. No movement, no noises. Dean sighed and looked at his watch. Today was the day they had come here a year ago. He had come to the barn, looked for some evidence and met Timmy. Then where was he?

Dean stood there for a seconds, waiting patiently for the boy to come out of hiding. Then he decided to go further. That was how he had found Timmy the last time. Maybe he would ran into him just like that...

“Who are you?”

Dean turned to his left. Little Timmy peeked out a door, looking at him cautiously but with curiosity. Dean’s features softened at the sight of the boy. He crouched down and smiled at him.

“Hey. I’m Dean. I’m Sonny’s friend.”

Hearing this, Timmy relaxed a bit and stepped out the room. Dean saw the action figure he was holding between his fingers, relaxing then clenching his hand around the toy. Dean could easily read the meaning of those tiny movements. Anxiety. He had to deal with it himself.

“Nice to meet you, Timmy.” Dean held out his right hand.

The boy looked at his hand then took two of his fingers carefully.

“Hi...” he said shyly and quickly pulled away.

Dean leaned his head lower so he could look into the boy’s eyes.

“Let’s try it again. If you're gonna be a man, you got to learn how to shake like one, okay? Give me your best Kung Fu grip.”

Timmy looked up at him. Dean reached out towards him and nodded encouragingly. The boy nodded too then gripped his hand.

“Don’t look away. Look straight in my eyes so I know you mean business. Then shake as hard as you can.”

Timmy did what he told and Dean’s smile grew.

“Good.”

The boy pulled away again but not as quick as previously and his face lit up with happiness. Kid
needed more compliments in his life.

“Why are you playing here, Timmy?” he asked. “Aren’t you scared? Jack died here.”

Timmy shifted on his legs.

“No, I…” he started hesitantly. “I like it here. It’s safe.”

“Safe from what?”

“The other boys.” He looked away like it was a shame to be afraid of someone or something. “They’re making fun of me. Hurt me. I hide in here. They can’t find me. They’re too afraid to enter since Mr. Jack died.”

Dean sighed.

“You know you can’t run away from problems all the time, right? You have to face them. Like you have to face the bullies. You have to stand up for yourself.”

Timmy tilted his head. He was so innocent, too good to this cruel world. In a way Dean saw himself in him. A scared little boy facing the darkness all alone.

“How? They won’t stop.”

“Remember what I said?” Dean asked. “About looking into my eyes?” He waited until Timmy nodded and just then continued. “You do that with them too. You stand tall, look them in the eye and don’t let them scare you. Those guys are cowards. Show them how strong you can be and they’ll stop.”

Timmy shook his head, disbelieving.

“But I’m not strong.”

“Dean Winchester?”

Dean froze. No. No, no, no. She shouldn’t be here today.

The man stood up, slowly turned around and found Robin standing a few feet away with her guitar case in her hand. The woman looked at him like she just saw a ghost of the past which was not that far from the truth.

“I saw you coming inside and I had to see if it was really you and…” Robin swallowed hard. “It’s you…”

Dean swallowed too. He didn’t want to run into Robin. Ever. He thought everything would be better if Robin thought he was a jerk who had dumped her. Or better. Forget about him altogether and live her life like he never existed. He didn’t deserve the forgiveness she had given him the last time.

“What are you doing here?” Robin pressed her lips together, her eyes shot daggers at him through the mist of sadness. “After you left me you just come back like this? Is this supposed to be some kind of a joke?”

Dean looked behind him quickly. Timmy watched them with his big eyes, probably not understanding why his guitar teacher was so upset. He just saw that Dean made Robin sad. Would Mama Ghost think he was a threat?
“Robin, look, this is not the right time…” he started but she didn’t let him finish.

“The right time?” she laughed. “And when is that? After another twenty years?”

Dean quickly stepped closer, grabbed her wrist and he looked deep into her eyes. She had to understand. She had to!

“I had my reason to leave and I’ll answer every question you ask me but not here” he said with a low voice so just she would hear it. “It’s dangerous right now.”

“Dangerous?” Robin pulled her hand out of his grip. “It’s just a barn, Dean! If you’re so afraid to tell me the truth then just say that!”

Dean rubbed a hand down his face. Damn, he didn’t want to get angry at her because she had the right to call him everything but it was not the right time and place. Why couldn’t she understand it?!

He had to make drastic actions, he knew that, which would probably anger the ghost but he had to make sure Robin was out of harm’s way.

“Out.”

Dean grabbed Robin’s arm once again and pulled her towards the exit. Robin struggled to escape from his hand.

“Let me go!” she yelled. “I swear to God, Dean, I’ll hit you!”

“I’m saving your life!” he shouted back, out of patience.

“From what?!”

It was the moment something hit Dean. He faintly heard Robin screaming then he hit the closest column which was made out of metal.

Dean groaned in pain as he landed on the ground. He was laying on his side. His back hurt like a bitch. He couldn’t move. He didn’t feel his legs. Dean feared his spine was injured – which had never happened before even though he had been in countless situations like that – and he could do nothing to stop that damn ghost.

“Timmy!” he called out. “Timmy, stop your mom!”

He saw movement to his left. Dean turned there and saw Robin pushing herself up on her arms. When she looked around and locked eyes with him the color drained from her face. Was he looking that bad?

“Go” Dean breathed out and motioned with his head towards the door. Robin nodded and carefully crawled that way but she was pulled back forcefully. The ghost caused a mini tornado inside the barn. The hooks hanging from chains swayed dangerously and other tools were picked up by it. A hammer flew by Robin’s head and she barely escaped the collision.

“Son of a… Timmy!” he said, louder this time to be heard in the roaring wind. “I know you’re scared! I’m sorry I scared you! I don’t want to hurt you! I want to help!”

He didn’t expect to see the boy above him so soon. Timmy looked down at him, tears steaming down his pale face.
“I can’t stop her” he said with a weak voice.

“Of course you can” he said. “She’s just afraid you’d get hurt if she’s not with you. But you have to understand. You have to let her go.”

“Why?” he asked. “She’s my Mom. I don’t want her to leave me.”

Dean shook his head.

“I know it’s hard. I’ve been there many times. But it’s the best for her. She can still go to Heaven now. But the more you wait, the more she suffers, the worth she becomes and she can’t go upstairs anymore.” Dean had to stop for a moment. It was no easy giving a speech with the pain in his back especially when his chest started to feel so numb. “Your mom deserves to go to Heaven. She sacrificed her life to save you. But for that you have to let her go.”

Timmy sobbed then quickly rubbed his eyes. Dean knew he understood it. He was a clever kid. With a guardian like Sonny he could be anything.

“What should I do?” he asked.

“Tell her you’ll be fine. That she doesn’t have to worry about you. You’re strong and you can protect yourself.”

Timmy nodded but before he could say anything the barn opened and Sam and Cas rushed inside.

“Dean!” Sam called out when he saw his brother on the ground. He ducked as a screwdriver passed him by.

“Stay there!” Dean yelled at them. Sam didn’t move but Cas didn’t listen to him. “Damn it, Cas! Stay there!”

Cas didn’t stop. He didn’t care what Dean was yelling, didn’t care that hooks and other tools could hit him, he just kept walking and was already halfway to him when a nasty looking figure blocked his way.

Timmy’s mom in all her ghostly ugliness.

The former angel stopped and looked up at the ghost, daring her to do anything. Dean knew Cas was brave but it was borderline insane and suicidal. The ghost observed Cas for a while then raised her hand towards the former angel.

Dean’s blood froze in panic. He saw Sam’s eyes glowing up blue as Gadreel took control. He saw Robin’s mouth falling open to a scream as she looked at the ghost. And he saw Cas just standing there like he wasn’t a human but an angel, ready to smite the monster who dared to hurt them.

“Mom!”

Mama Ghost stopped and turned around. Timmy walked behind her. His face was grey like ash but he stood tall and looked his mother in the eyes.

Cas lived with the opportunity and hurried to Dean’s side. He lowered himself on his knees.

“Where did you get hurt?” he asked with his usual monotone tone like he wasn’t just facing a ghost earlier. There was also some tightness in his voice but Dean ignored it in his anger.

“You’re stupid, you know that? Stop risking your life, damn it! You’re human again!”
Cas peeked over his shoulder and looked down at him seriously.

“Then stop putting yourself in danger. Where did you get hurt.”

Dean huffed in frustration.

“My back.”

Meanwhile the former angel carefully pulled up all those layers of clothing Dean watched the scene happening a few feet away from them.

“Mom, don’t hurt them!” Timmy continued. “They didn’t do anything!”

Mama Ghost tilted her head, looking at Timmy questioningly. She reached out towards him, offering a hug, to what Timmy just shook his head.

“I’ll be okay, Mom, I promise. You don’t have to protect me anymore. You can go to Heaven.”

The ghost seemed unaffected for a while then the scary appearance turned to a more human one and the storm stopped immediately. She looked worried but Dean was sure she would not attack them anymore.

Timmy smiled at her with teary eyes.

“I’ll be okay, Mom” he repeated. “I love you too.”

The ghost of the woman showed her son a bright toothy smile then disappeared as her body turned into a glowing mist.

Dean sighed.

“That was easy” he said.

“I’d like to disagree but I don’t know how it went last time” said Cas as he finally could have a better look at his back. Dean saw Cas moving, maybe he touched his back but didn’t feel a damn thing.

“Much worse” Dean admitted then looked around. “Robin?”

“She’s okay” Sam answered as he pulled up the woman. Robin looked a little disorientated but seemed uninjured. Dean sighed in relief.

“It looks bad” Cas said, referring to his back. “But Gadreel can heal you.”

But Dean shook his head.

“Sam needs healing now. I can wait.”

“Oh, shut up, Dean.” Sam walked to him, showing Dean one of the best bitch faces of his collection. He crouched down and put a hand above his injured back.

Dean felt bones cracking back to their original place and the pain was gone in a moment. He tried wiggling his big toe experimentally. Success.

“Thanks” Dean muttered as his brother and best friend helped him stand up. Despite the angelic healing, he still felt a little dizzy. His ears were ringing with a high pitch but he tried to ignore it.
This was the moment when Sonny peeked inside. They must have been a great sight by the look on his face. A kid in the middle of the room hugging an action figure like his life depended on it, a dizzy woman with a guitar case at her feet still trying to find balance and two men helping a third standing. Also tools all over the place.

“So?” he asked.

“So!” Dean grinned at him. “No more ghosts. No more dead people. All thanks to Timmy here.”

The boy’s ears turned red hearing this. He looked at Dean with a shy smile who smiled back at him.

War, Famine, Pestilence.

All three rings were in one box hidden deep in the Men of Letters bunker. Sam and Dean had agreed to hide it there in arms length to keep an eye on them. They didn’t want anyone to try opening the Cage again.

Sam sighed.

He wanted to do exactly that now.

He wouldn’t do it if there was any other way, really. But there wasn’t. There were two ways to break a spell. Find a counter spell which didn’t exist, or the spell caster breaks it, either by them or by killing them. Lucifer couldn’t be killed by anything, not even the Colt. So there was just one option.

Sam would say yes to the Devil once again.

After taking the rings, Sam first went to Dean’s room. He opened the door, switched on the light and just stared like he had done it so many times in the past months. He missed his brother so much with all of his stupid habits and overprotective behavior. He just now started to appreciate it when he was not there anymore, just a bloody spot on the sheets. But he would bring back Dean even if that meant he – or at least this version of himself – would never see his brother again.

Fortunately he didn’t run into anyone on his way to the garage. He didn’t want them to ask questions he couldn’t answer or woke the doubt in him. His hands were already shaking as he opened the Impala’s door with one hand.

Once sitting inside, Sam took a deep breath and let it out slowly. His stomach was tumbling inside him, threatening to reveal that day’s food. He didn’t want to go. He wanted to stay and curl up into a ball in his room but he couldn’t be a coward now. Now that he could maybe save Dean.

Sam jumped when somebody knocked on the window. He looked up and saw Lee watching him curiously. Sam quickly rolled down the window.

“Hey, Lee…” He forced a smile on his face. “What are you doing here?”

The man motioned behind him.
“I was just checking out some things” he explained. “ Noticed that some things suddenly appeared in my room and decided to have a look around. Turns out our cars from our timeline are here.”

Sam looked past him and really. He saw Bobby’s old car and some others he was sure was not from the Men of Letters’ collection.

“It seems the ripple not only effects people but objects too.” Lee turned back to Sam. “And you? Where are you going?”

Sam put his healthy hand into his pocket and closed his fingers around the rings.

“To Lawrence” he answered. Why should he lie about that? If everything would go as he had planned, it wouldn’t matter anymore. “I have a few things to do.”

Lee nodded, not suspecting anything.

“Don’t be away for too long. We don’t know when the Leviathans will appear.”

Sam nodded and started the car.

“I’ll be careful.”

Sam left the garage – probably for the last time – and drove for almost four hours without stopping. On his way to Lawrence he was deep in his thoughts, going over the plan again and again.

He needed demon blood. A lot of demon blood, so when Lucifer says he would only take back the Mark if he could possess him then he would drink it. A crossroad demon would be fine for a start then he could look for others. He hadn’t heard about demons for a long time, maybe now that Abaddon was out of the picture her followers were hiding while Crowley’s were taking over Hell.

The cemetery was as abandoned as it was before. Dry grass, tombstones covered in plants, dying trees. Even the air felt foul, smelling it made him sick and as the wind blew it chilled him to the bone. He was shaking, not because the weather was turning cold as the end of fall approached. He was nervous as hell and he couldn’t help it.

He was about to undo his greatest sacrifice. Dean would probably punch him if he was himself and knew what he was about to do. Sam smiled sadly. After he was cured – because Dean would be cured – Dean would be upset and try to find a way to free him from Lucifer. Sam hoped Cas would stop him and take him back in time. Maybe that Sam wouldn’t be him but he didn’t care. The only thing he wanted was his brother to be a human again. He didn’t care about himself.

Sam cleared his throat.

“Death, sir?” he said out loud. “I would like to borrow your ring for a while if it’s possible. It’s-uh… important.”

Sam looked around and waited, rocking on his heels. He didn’t have any spells to summon Death and he had no time to find a fulgurite. And honestly, he didn’t want to anger Death when he was the only one who could help him in this.

“Wise choice.”

Sam turned around. Death was standing behind him like a statue, looking straight into his soul. The man swallowed hard as he respectfully straightened himself.
Death didn’t move for a while then he cocked his head.

“But what you’re about to do is stupid, even for a Winchester” he said. “I expected better from you.”

Sam looked away.

“I have no other choice. We know nothing about the Mark. There’s no other way to save my brother.”

“Or maybe you didn’t look hard enough.”

Sam raised his head, eyes wide. Did Death just…

“Even if I knew a way to erase the Mark I wouldn’t tell you.” Death leaned on his cane with both hands. “I may know a lot but it is not my role to give you a cure.” A grimace of loathing appeared on his face. “Abaddon and Metatron both caused damage in time. The angels shouldn’t have fallen, Gavin MacLeod shouldn’t have brought here. And now that Dean killed him, time is beyond repair. The natural order is broken, the world is in chaos.”

“Does…” Sam started uncertainly. “Does Father Time exist?” Then he quickly added. “I’m not asking for his whereabouts. I just… I can’t trust Crowley. He manipulated us so many times in the past. It’s because of him that Dean…” Sam took a shaky breath. “Please, tell me. Does he even exist?”

Death was once again still like a rock and his face was unreadable. A cold breeze flew by and Sam had to pull his jacket tighter around him. The silence stretched out long and he started gathering some courage to interrupt it when Death finally spoke again.

“Yes. He exists.”

Sam let out a sigh of relief. Death is a reliable source of information. Good.

Good.

Then Death put his cane under one arm and pulled the ring off his finger.

“Here” he said reaching out towards Sam.

Sam could only gape for a moment in surprise, shifting his gaze back and forth between the ring and Death’s eyes.

“But… But you said it’s stupid…”

“It’s a test” Death cut in. He lifted his brows in a quick movement then tilted his head the other side. “Take the ring and open the Cage. Let Lucifer out and let the world burn. Save your brother if you can. Or don’t open the Cage.”

Sam fixed his eyes on the ring. He didn’t know what kind of test Death was talking about. Was he curious to know what he would do now? And why? What would his choice mean? That he was a coward to turn his back to his plan? Or brave to sacrifice himself? Or stupid for the same reason?

He stepped closer to Death and reached out, palm facing the sky. Death dropped the ring into his hand and leaned on his cane once again.

“The choice is yours.” He looked deep into Sam’s eyes and disappeared.
Sam slowly closed his fingers around the cold metal that almost burnt his skin. The choice was his. But what should he do? Death hadn’t agreed with him but then why had he given him his ring? Nothing made sense and he found himself confused and uncertain.

Opening the Cage meant Lucifer would be free again. Nothing guaranteed that he would help him cure Dean. But if Sam made a deal that he would only say yes when Lucifer took back the Mark of Cain then maybe he would do it. Lucifer wanted Sam. He would do anything to get him. And maybe he could save Adam too. Two brothers’ lives for his own was a good deal. But there was Michael too. But maybe Michael could help them restore time. He could send back Dean and Cas to stop Abaddon. But why would he do that? Michael had blown up Cas the last time. And he was still probably angry at Dean for not saying yes to him. Or saying yes then running away.

Leaving the Cage locked meant no possible cure for Dean. Dean would stay a demon controlled by the Mark, sinking into darkness deeper and deeper. There may be an other way to help him but the ripple was getting closer and there was no way he would leave his brother behind. Cured or not, he would take him with them.

Sam sighed and took the other three rings from his pocket which immediately reacted to the fourth one. The three metallic bands moved, getting attached to Death’s ring.

The key was ready.

Now he just had to place it into the lock.

The wind blowing through the cemetery got colder. The trees moaned painfully as the powerful motion of air bended them from one side to the other. Not the best omens, he had to admit. It was like nature warned him that this was a one way journey. If he decided to step on this road, there would be no turning back.

But he had to do it. For Dean. Dean had sacrificed so much for him, his own life included. It was only fair that Sam would do the same for him. He should be dead for years now. He should have died in Cold Oak.

He finally decided.

He would die now.

Sam closed his eyes and mentally said goodbye to everyone he could.

He opened his mouth to say the incantation that was burnt into his mind.

And that was when a rock hit his head and everything turned black.

Chapter End Notes

Today I decided to write the very end of this gigantic fic of mine. Oh boy.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

Warning! This chapter contains a very twisted minded demon Dean! He's an unrespectful jerk and thinks in a way the normal Dean would never do. The chapter may be short but it was a torture to write.

I also changed the rating to M.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I didn’t go back yet and I’m not planning to. I didn’t like it downstairs. It smelled. Crowley sent a few of his goons after me but I cut them down with ease. He must have realized that he wouldn’t gain anything with me killing his men so I haven’t seen any of them in a while.

I wandered around a little. Sightseeing, you cold say. Killed some vampires and werewolves on the way. The Mark was pleased and still is. I can hear it humming lightly in the back of my mind like a bellyful kid after dessert. And when the Mark is happy I’m happy too. We have an effect on each other, positive and negative. We’re in very positive right now.

The bar I’m in right now is great. Every bar in general is great. I figured out soon after I left Hell that I can drink as much as I want without worrying about the consequences. My stomach is like a black hole, everything disappears in it without a trace. And the view is worth mentioning too. The waitress behind the counter is in my league. Straight blond hair reaching the middle of her back, round butt and boobs, nice lips, eyes sparkling. Yep, my league.

“What’s your name?” I ask and show her a toothy grin that would charm off every women’s panties.

She seems surprised at first. She stops cleaning the counter for a while to watch me but then a small smile appears on her face.

“Ann Marie.”

“Ann Marie” I repeat, tasting the name. “Sounds nice.”

The smile grows.

“And you?” she asks. “You’re not from around here. It’s a small town and I know everyone.”

“Dean.” I raise the bottle to my lips and drink. “Dean Winchester.”

Ann Marie puts away the sponge-cloth and turns to an other man at the counter to refill his glass. Looking back at me she tilts her head.

“Well Dean, Dean Winchester. What brought you here to our middle of nowhere town?”

I lean on my forearms, getting more comfortable and casual.

“Just going here and there, nothing serious. I’m living the best time of my life.”
And I’m serious. I’m **living. Finally. Living.** Three months or four passed since Metatron killed me but I don’t really care about time. It means nothing to me. Days pass by, the world around me changes but I stay the same. I robbed a store? Who cares! Cops can’t get me. I bet some guys almost to death? They deserved it. I can go wherever I want and can do whatever I want. The world is my playground.

And this lovely lady will be my toy for a while.

“When will your shift end?” A corner of my mouth curls up in mischief.

A shadow passes through Ann Marie’s face and the smile melts off.

“Aren’t you a little indiscreet?” she asks. “Asking out a girl like this? I don’t even know you. And I’m not into one night stands.”

A challenge. I just realize how much I missed it. Now that I can kill anyone and anything with the First Blade fights became too easy. Soon they’ll get boring. But if I can’t have a challenge in those then I’ll have with women.

I lean closer to her.

“Then let’s get to know each other.”

I spend a week or two in that bar. Get a motel room so it won’t be suspicious that I’m just popping up out of nowhere. Every day I sit at the counter talking with the woman or sing karaoke. Some say I’m bad. Well, they mysteriously have a broken nose the next day I see them. Wonder what happened to them.

“My boyfriend hit me once” Ann Marie admits one night. There aren’t many people in the bar so she can sit with me at a table. She nervously rubs her finger on the surface of the table and doesn’t look into my eyes. “It started as a simple argument but… Things got dirty quickly. I ran away and here I am.”

Pf. Boring. Getting beaten is nothing new to me. Not she was the one who grew up with an insane father who never cared about me because Sammy this and Sammy that. Who slapped me the moment when I disobeyed. We can talk when she had a childhood like that.

But I shut my mouth and look at her sympathetically because that’s how I get my prize. Making annoyed comments would just ruin everything.

And I get it in a day. After a few drinks I bang her all night long, taking, taking and taking. She moans, enjoying herself, but my priority is not giving her pleasure. I won so it’s mine. I don’t care if she’s not done when I am, I don’t care if I’m too rough and my fingers sink into her skin too much that she almost bleeds. I feel great and that’s it.

Some other benefit of the demonic life is that there’s a great amount of stamina on the south. After the sixth or seventh round when she’s already so exhausted she doesn’t even know where she is I’m still going, thrusting into her nonstop.

The next morning I casually walk out of the motel where she’s still unconscious. I can just imagine her face in the morning when she realizes she has to pay for the room. And the alcohol I drank in the bar is still unpaid. I don’t have money, not if I would pay anyway. Money is nothing for me when I can get anything I want without it.

I look around one last time. I stayed here for more than two weeks, time to move on. Maybe
somewhere cloudy and rainy. I had enough with sunshine for a while.

That’s when I feel the sudden pull.

It startles me at first. I look around, one hand on the hilt of the Blade, to see who wants their life to end today but I see nobody. The pull is now stronger and I fight back successfully. Maybe somebody tries to summon me? I was never summoned before but it fells like one. I concentrate a little and detect the source of the force.

The bunker.

Something moves in me that unsettles me for a moment but push it away as a smirk forms on my face. So Sammy wants to see his dear big brother? Then he will see his big brother.

Chapter End Notes

Also: NaNoWriMo is great for this fic. I’m currently writing Chapter 26 :)
Chapter 19

I suck at writing action but I like to think I can write feels. I hope I succeeded.

Solving the case this quick felt great. Sam remembered that last time Ruth had died and the kid’s fingers had been chopped off. Now both were alive and uninjured, living their lives in sweet oblivion.

A successful case always made him feel happier, knowing that they saved innocent lives. That… was rare nowadays. There was always something going wrong and even if everyone survived there was that bad taste in his mouth because something was not right again between him and Dean and it poisoned the happiness.

Now maybe things would change for the better. As he watched Dean and Cas talking to Timmy from afar he had a feeling that the second chance Dean had been talking about meant so much more than simply making better decisions and saving people. They had a second chance to have a better relationship between the two of them. Accepting who they were and who the other was. Actually talking about problems and not just waiting for the tension to erupt. Listening to the other and not force their opinions on each other. Letting go.

Sam sighed. Cas was right. The problem wasn’t only in Dean but in Sam too. It wasn’t just Dean who hadn’t been able to accept Sam’s death. Sam could neither accept that Dean had become a demon and he himself had almost opened the Cage.

The man rubbed the bridge of his nose. He felt a headache forming right behind the bone.

“So, you had a rough year.”

Sam looked at Sonny who just stopped next to him.

“Yeah.” Sam turned away from him and watched Dean who must have told a joke because Timmy was chucled and Cas smiled. “We’re through a lot. But we made it.”

Sonny nodded and both of them were silent for a long moment. Robin walked out of the house, heading towards Dean. When the man saw her he said something to Cas and walked to her. As they started talking Sam turned back to Sonny.

“Can I ask something?”

“Go ahead.”

“When Dean came here… Did you notice anything? Anything strange?”

Sonny watched him for a while then turned away. He rubbed the tip of his nose, his mustache scratched under his finger.

“His arms were injured” he answered finally. “Red marks from wrist to elbow. He said it was a
werewolf."

Sam felt the blood draining from his face. Werewolves never went for the arm, always the heart. Even if Dean had injured himself in a fight with one, there would have been scars not marks. And what werewolf? Hadn’t been John hunting a rugaru?

He rubbed his face around his mouth and fixed his gaze on the grass. Dean had lost the food money. He had been sent here. John had said that Dean had been lost on a hunt. But if Dean had played a card game, had stolen from a market and had been arrested, when had he met a werewolf?

“There weren’t any wolves, were they?”

Sam glanced up. Sonny smiled at him sadly then sighed and shook his head.

“I knew there was something off with his story. Not just because I didn’t believe in this stuff back then. When I asked if it had been the deputy, he laughed. But when I asked about his old man… No sound, blank grin and pain in his eyes.”

Sam turned away shamefully. Cold nails scratched his inside and he feared he would throw up in any second.

“I should have been me who looked after him. If I knew… I wouldn’t have left without him…”

Sonny placed a hand on his shoulder.

“It wasn’t your fault.”

“It was” Sam looked into the man’s eyes with desperation. “He was happy here. Then he left because of me.”

“Sam.” Sonny’s deep raspy voice turned very serious. “Yes, Dean was sad to leave but the moment he looked out the window and saw you… He had a great time here but there was always something missing from him. Like the last piece of a puzzle. And that puzzle piece was you, Sam. Dean was a kid back then and every kid needs his family. Even though what his father did, he couldn’t stay because you were his family. He was not ready to let go of you.”

Sam took a deep breath and rubbed his eyes quickly.

“That’s the problem” he said. “We still can’t let go.”

Sonny frowned.

“Why would it be a problem?”

Sam snorted.

“Because we are the Winchesters. We sacrifice ourselves and everything for the other.”

Suddenly Sonny hit the back of his head gently but it was enough for Sam to get startled and stop talking.

“Letting go doesn’t mean you have to leave each other. You are family and family sticks together. What you have to do is to let yourselves be who you really are. If that means that you live in different states then live in different states. There’s the phone and you have a car. You can move on with your lives and still be a family. You just have to be ready for it.”
Sam sighed and looked back at Dean. Robin rubbed the man’s arm and turned away. Dean watched her for a while then walked back to Cas where he said goodbye to Timmy who left too. Cas said something to which Dean laughed and the hunter and the former angel started walking back towards Sam.

Sonny gave a friendly pat on his shoulder.

“You’ll figure it out.”

Sam nodded and sent the man a thankful smile.

“So?” Dean asked, rubbing his hands together. “I don’t know how you two feel but I’m hungry and tired. We can go home tomorrow.”

Sam chuckled softly at that. The bunker. The place he had never really considered his home. He had never wanted to settle down there. Unlike Dean, he just considered that building a place where he could sleep. Or a workplace. But not home. Maybe he thought that because he never knew what home meant. They had been always on the move, never stayed anywhere for longer than two months. It had been difficult to get used to Stanford.

But now… Now something was changing. Things were changing for the better.

“Sammy?” Dean waved a hand in front of his face. “Earth to Sammy! You there?”

Sam blinked a few times then smiled.

“Yeah, I’m here.”

They said goodbye to Sonny. Sam thanked the man’s advice and sat behind the wheel.

“Shotgun!” Dean declared and was inside the car in a blink. Sam laughed at how childish his big brother could be and Cas sat on the backseat without any protests and a small smile.

In the diner they all ordered a food that was on Dean’s list too out of sympathy to which Dean immediately said he didn’t need it but Sam saw that nervous press of his lips that said otherwise. They talked about nothings. They laughed a lot. They had fun like never before. And for a moment it was too good to be true, because what if it was just a dream and he was still in that other timeline? What if in the next minute he would wake up in his room and forget about all of this?

If it was just a dream, it was a good dream. If it was reality…

It was great.

They slept in which had rarely happened. Sam woke well rested and as he stretched his arms he couldn’t help but laugh at a grumpy Cas who demanded caffeine and an annoyed Dean who told him to be patient.

Around noon they were finally ready to hit the road. They put their bags in the trunk then, giving in to a sudden thought, Sam turned to Dean.

“You wanna drive?”

Dean looked at him like he couldn’t decide if he was joking or not. From him Dean looked questioningly to Cas who shrugged.

“The nurse said three days. The third day was yesterday.”
The grin was big on Dean’s face and the delight in his eyes made Sam smile too.

“But you tell me when you start feeling dizzy” Sam warned him as he handed him the keys and Dean accepted it with an eye-roll.

It had been a long time since they sat in the Impala like this. Dean driving, Sam next to him, Cas behind them. Just like in the old times when life had been still hard as hell but they could rely on the other. They had been through every kinds of separation possible, including death, but they were still here and together again.

Dean drove like he was high. The grin on his face couldn’t be wiped off by anything. Sam hadn’t seen his brother like this in a long time. Or ever. Dean’s genuine happiness was so rare he sometimes doubted it existed.

“Dean?” Cas asked all of a sudden.

Dean looked at the rear-view mirror. Frowning a little at the former angel’s low voice.

“Yeah?”

“Can we make a small detour?”

“To where?”

“Colorado.”

Dean snorted dryly, one brow lifted higher.

“Yeah. That’s a very small detour.”

Sam looked behind him to see Cas’ reaction to Dean’s remark. He was surprised to see nothing that indicated any resentfulness.

“I have an unfinished business” Cas explained. “I can’t move on until I’m done with it.”

Unfinished business? It was Sam’s turn to frown. What kind of unfinished business was Cas talking about?

“And where exactly do you want to go in Colorado” Dean asked looking back at the road.

Cas gave the address and Dean grew silent. Sam was wrong. That one thing could wipe off his grin. An uncharacteristically solemn expression appeared on Dean’s face and Sam at first feared his blood pressure was down again. He was about to suggest to switch placed when his brother finally spoke again.

“Okay” Dean said with a low voice. “Colorado then.”

He went to Heaven, just to leave it somewhere else. He didn’t care how many angels approached him, asking questions about his injury, their further plans or what they should do to the Knight of Hell. With a heavy heart he realized Dean Winchester was no longer called the Righteous Man in
Heaven.

“Commander” Benjamin joined him as he walked to an other portal down to Earth. “May I suggest…”

“I’m sorry, I’m busy right now” Castiel said without looking at the angel and walked through the portal.

Down on Earth again he began walking. He wasn’t far from the place he intended to go to. Just outside the town he where landed. The angels guarding the portal nodded towards him but he ignored them. He walked nonstop, not caring about his surroundings. His mind was focused on his mission and the building he saw after half an hour he left the town.

If Dean were here he would call Castiel a sentimental fool. But the angel thought this place was symbolic. This was where everything had begun.

And where everything would end.

He stopped at the door of the barn that was still broken, a reminder of how he had entered through it. Memories of a better time flowed into his mind and though it hurt like a bitch – as Dean would say – he didn’t stop them. He drew those images closer to him, using them as a pillar of strength he could lean on.

Everything would end today.

The inside hadn’t changed in the past years. Same run down building with walls that would collapse any time soon. The ground was still littered with the pieces of the light bulbs he had broken and nobody cared to change them yet. There were still sigils everywhere he looked. Some of them were still useful, but he had to make new ones.

With the paint spray he had taken from the bunker, he started repainting the warding on the wall of the door and continued clockwise. He worked fast without mistakes but he had to stop sometimes until his hand stopped shaking.

The last one was the trap. He carved that one in the middle of the barn’s floor.

He was ready.

He didn’t need any ingredients for the summoning. During his long research in Heaven he had come across an ancient summoning spell. By the description it seemed to be strong, forcing the demon to come and stay more effectively than other spells. There was just one requirement. The summoner, an angel, had to use a portion of their Grace.

Castiel didn’t have much left. It could bring his last day closer.

He didn’t care.

Castiel looked around once again, checking if he had made any mistakes, then took his angel blade and cut his hand deep. He hissed as the metal touched his Grace but he didn’t stop until there was a long open wound along his palm, showing the glowing essence inside it.

The incantation was long. It took almost ten minutes to finish it and he barely stopped himself from screaming in pain when a little part of the Grace inside him left and entered the trap. The large outer circle flared up and blue flames began to dance in it. It looked like a circle of flaming holy oil but in a different color.
Finishing the summoning spell, Castiel put his hand into his pocket, locking his right hand fingers around a cold object and waited.

The spell was strong. Dean showed up almost instantly. He was leaning forward with arms tightly around his chest and gasped for air.

“Son of a bitch…” he said forcefully.

Dean stood with his back to him so Castiel could watch him for a while. He imagined Dean was still himself. And he honestly acted like that. His mannerism, the way he talked. Castiel’s heart ached as he thought about it because it wasn’t Dean.

It was a demon.

There was nothing left of the Righteous Man, just the Knight of Hell.

He couldn’t see souls and true forms anymore but he still remembered the twisted shadow of a soul he had seen in the bunker that used to be so bright. Brighter and more radiant than anything.

Castiel bit his lower lip, chewing on it. Now he could pretend that there was no demon, no Mark, no supernatural.

Just Dean.

“Hello Dean” he said with a low voice. It had been so long… When had been the last time he said it? Months or years ago? Everything seemed so distant, like it had happened in an other lifetime, or maybe in a dream that had faded away as soon as he woke up in the morning.

Dean stopped moving when he heard Castiel. Then he slowly turned around and Castiel saw the bottomless pits that were his eyes. He couldn’t pretend anymore.

“Castiel.”

The angel winced. The demon’s voice was monotone, but it still hurt. He closed his eyes for a moment to gather some hidden strength than looked back at Dean.

“You look horrible” the demon said, observing his face. “You ran into a clean window or something.”

Castiel decided he wouldn’t react to any insults. He wouldn’t give that satisfaction to the other. And Dean seemed to understand that he wouldn’t gain anything by it.

“What is this supposed to mean?” Dean asked, pointing at the flames around him.

“A trap” Castiel explained. “I used my Grace for it to be more effective than the trap in the bunker.”

Dean watched him motionless for a while then slowly shook his head.

“You’re stupid, angel” he said. “Using up what little you have? You have a death wish or what?”

Yes, he has, Castiel wanted to say but he didn’t. Couldn’t. Instead he said:

“I wanted to talk to you, Dean. Why did you kill those angels?”

Dean laughed with emptiness.
“That’s why you summoned me? To ask why I killed?” Dean pulled up his right sleeve and showed him his bare forearm. “I have the bloody Mark of Cain. The mark of a killer. Is that a good enough reason for you?”

Castiel felt his inside, his human inside, twisting at the sight. The Mark was pulsing with an angry red color, sending waves of fear and despair through the angel’s very being. He wanted to step into the trap, reach out and erase the Mark that poisoned his friend. If only that would be that simple…

“Those angels did nothing to deserve to die” the angel said. “Why did you kill them?”

Dean shook his head, clearly annoyed that Castiel repeated the same question.

“Honestly?” Castiel doubted he would be honest but he listened. “They were annoying as hell. And now I can really say hell is annoying. I asked them nicely to leave but they didn’t. I told them I would hurt them if they didn’t leave and they didn’t. I warned them they wouldn’t like what I’d do to them. And they didn’t.”

Castiel swallowed hard. If a simple reason like ‘they were at the wrong place at the wrong time’ was the only one then he didn’t have a choice. He didn’t know what he expected from this encounter. That Dean would tell how sorry he was then ask for help? And Castiel would help and everything would be as normal as it could be? Dean was a demon, he had to remind himself for the millionth time. Demons were creatures of chaos and death. And even if Dean would want to stop the killing, the Mark wouldn’t let him.

Dean Winchester was no more.

The demon in the trap turned to have a look around.

“You’re a sentimental fool, you know that?” Castiel swallowed back a little sob. “The barn where we met? Really?” Dean shook his head. He was now showing the angel his back. “Remember that I stabbed you in the heart? And you just looked at me with that ‘I can’t believe you were that foolish to do it, I’m an angel of the Lord, you ass’ look. Ha! Good old times. You came in like a wrecking ball through that door. Now I don’t think you can lift a feather.”

Castiel’s heart ached more with every word. He remembered everything like it was yesterday. The first time he had seen the Righteous Man in person, not just his soul. Good old times.

And for the sake of those good old times he pulled out to object from his pocket and pointed it at Dean.

“Dean” he called out with a stern voice he forced not to sound too weak or shake. The safety clicked and waited.

He saw Dean’s body freezing as he heard the click. For a moment none of them moved then Dean looked back at him. The black eyes first met his then his gaze moved lower to look at the gun in his hands.

“The Colt?” he asked, one brow jumping up then down. “Seriously, Cas? You’re pointing the Colt at me?”

Castiel’s breathing hitched. He didn’t want to do it. He didn’t want to shoot Dean. He didn’t…

“You leave me no other choice” he said calmly but in reality he had to force out those words. He had the sudden urge to throw up.
Dean didn’t seem to hear his words, nor see his reaction. His eyes were fixed on the gun like he was hypnotized by the sight.

“Where did you find it?” he asked. He sounded surprised and his voice seemed weaker. “I lost it after I shot Lucifer.”

“An unlikely ally gave me” Castiel answered.

Dean’s eyes shot up to his. The angel saw the anger slowly twisting his face.

“Crowley? Crowley gave it to you?”

Castiel nodded. Dean’s lips parted in shock.

“You went to Crowley?! After everything he had done to you?!”

It was Castiel’s turn to sound surprised. Did he mishear it or did he sound… disappointed? Desperate? No, he was just hearing things because in the next moment the demon started laughing like a maniac.

“Are you that stupid?” he asked between two snorts. “After everything you still ask for help from him?”

Castiel felt deeply offended by this. Who was this demon to say things like that?

“He came to me” he informed Dean. “At first I didn’t want to use it because I believed in you, Dean. After everything you did I still believed in you!” he repeated and he couldn’t stop the pain to be heard in his voice. “I hoped that a part of the human that I knew and admired was still there hidden somewhere! I worked day and night without rest to find a cure for you!” Castiel shook his head and whispered “I believed in you…”

Dean watched him in silence. His face was unreadable and emotionless. It was similar to the look his of siblings when they possessed a vessel for the first time. Not knowing how to express thoughts and emotions with only their features they kept their face stoic.

Dean snorted again.

“You have to know by now that you shouldn’t believe in me. Or believe in Dean. Dean was a bad influence on you. You fell because of him. You lost your family because of him. You should be glad that a jerk like him is no more.”

Castiel was shocked to hear Dean talking about himself like it was an other person. The demon seemed to see this written all over his face because he stepped closer to the ring of blue flames with a smirk.

“What is it, angel? You don’t like the way I talk about him? That sorry excuse of a human?”

The demon was mocking him. The angel felt rage growing inside him.

“Shut up” he said under his breath. His hands holding the Colt shook in anger. But the demon didn’t listen to him.

“You called him Righteous up in Heaven, right? The one who started then would end the Apocalypse. What a loser. He started it but couldn’t end it. He just let Lucifer beat him to near death and Sam was the one who really stopped it.”
“Shut up.” He couldn’t stand how the demon talked about Dean. Dean was the bravest man he had ever met. He had sacrificed so much for everyone, especially for his brother, and he hadn’t asked for anything in return. He had stayed silent and endured the pain.

“He was a sorry excuse of a man!” the demon shouted at him. His voice turned unhuman. It sounded like a beast howling at him.

“Shut up!” Castiel shouted back, his finger shaking on the trigger.

The demon stepped closer.

“Then shoot me, you son of a…!”

The demon’s eyes widened and looked down. Castiel frowned and followed his gaze.

The demon had taken one step closer to him.

He was outside of the trap.

With a wave of panic that washed through him the angel realized that the trap couldn’t hold back a Knight of Hell.

And with this sudden change of event he quickly snapped out of his rage. The finger that almost shot the gun moved away from the trigger and the determination that he would kill the demon was gone. He just stood there, looking at the demon’s shoes and lowered his gun.

The shoes moved closer quickly, leaving the trap completely. A strong hand grabbed his wrist and pulled up his hands. Castiel’s head jerked up to see the demon placing the Colt right above his heart.

“Do it” the demon said.

“No…” he whispered and stepped backwards but the demon followed him.

“You looked so determined earlier” the demon continued as they still walked away from the blue flames. “What changed? You afraid to hurt the meat?”

Castiel saw his vision blurring as he kept looking into the black eyes, unable to look away.

“Yes…” he breathed out with a higher pitch than usual.

The demon smirked.

“Sorry, angel, Dean’s not home right now. Do you want to leave a message?”

Castiel’s back hit the wall and the demon moved so close to him that he felt his breath on his skin. The Colt trapped between them pushed into his chest painfully. Castiel closed his eyes and let the tears fall freely. He was weak. He couldn’t do it. He couldn’t kill this demon. He couldn’t kill Dean.

“Yes” he answered. “I know you’re still there… You’re still there somewhere and I know you can hear me. Please, Dean, you have to stop this. I know how strong you are. I saw your soul in Hell. No matter how tainted your soul was, it still shined brighter than anything I had ever seen in my long life. I know you’re stronger than the Mark. You can fight it. You can defeat it.”

The demon didn’t say anything and Castiel was about to open his eyes to see the other’s face but a
hand was placed upon his eyes and the only thing he saw was darkness.

Castiel felt the fear of his approaching death filling him. He started shivering like the leaves in the autumn breeze before they fell on the ground. The demon’s other hand let go of his wrist and he didn’t have to see to know that he was reaching for the First Blade. The angel swallowed and waited for the inevitable.

But it never came. He didn’t feel the Blade touching his skin and sinking into his body. He didn’t feel leaving this world behind, again and for the last time. Nothing happened.

“You know, angel” he heard the demon saying. “I want to kill you. Really want to kill you. You’re annoying and this whining just makes it worse. But I won’t. And you know why? With this little plan of yours your Grace is almost nothing. I can see it dying inside you and it burns you up. You have little more than a week left. Why giving you the mercy of death when you can die slowly, knowing that you couldn’t do anything to stop me.”

The words were worse than any blade. He felt his heart breaking into pieces and he sobbed out in agony because everything the demon just said was true.

The body against him suddenly disappeared and he fell on the ground, shaking as he cried.

*  

“Cas?”

Castiel looked up. Dean was watching him, turning around on the front bench.

“You okay, buddy?”

Castiel nodded and looked around. They weren’t on the move anymore. The Impala parked at the side of the road and on the other side of the street there was a familiar house. They arrived.

The former angel took a deep breath. He never imagined he would see this house again. The house that he had called home for months, where a kind woman welcomed him and took care of him.

“You don’t have to wait for me” he said, turning back to the brothers. “Go, have some rest. I’ll call when…”

“No” Dean cut in. “We wait here.”

Castiel smiled at the man thankfully. Knowing that his friends would be just on the opposite side of the road while he was inside gave him strength to get out the car and walk to the front door.

He stopped at the bottom of the stairs. This was where he had seen Dean again. He hadn’t remembered him at that time yet but he remembered he couldn’t shake off the feeling that he had known that man. The pain on his face had ached him and he hadn’t been able to tell why. The only thing he had known was that he had to help the man to save his brother. He had to follow him wherever he went.

For that he had to leave the woman who was probably still waiting for him. He felt shame washing through him at the thought. He should have visited her earlier but there had been always something
He sighed and looked behind him. Sam nodded and Dean showed him a thumbs up with a smile. Castiel took a deep breath and walked up to the door.

He knocked loudly for the woman to hear it even if she was upstairs. The seconds ticked by and nothing happened yet.

Maybe she moved away, Castiel thought and was about to walk away when the door finally opened.

“Yes? How can I…”

Castiel looked at the woman who looked at him like she just saw a ghost. Daphne Allen didn’t change much. Her face was rounder than the last time he had seen her but everything stayed the same. Same brown hair, same kind green eyes.

“Emmanuel?” she breathed out, not believing what she saw was real.

Castiel smiled apologetically.

“It’s Castiel now. It’s good to see you, Daphne.”

Daphne leaped forward and hugged him. After a moment of hesitation, Castiel embraced back.

“You disappeared without a trace” she said. “I was waiting for you but when you never came… I thought you were dead.” Daphne moved away. She left her hands on his shoulders, gripping the fabric like she feared he would disappear again. “What happened? Where were you?”

Castiel sighed.

“It’s a long story.”

“Come inside then” she invited him in.

One of Daphne’s hands left his shoulder, the other slid down to his wrist and she pulled him through the front door.

“Would you like a coffee? A tea?” she offered.

“No, thank you.” Castiel smiled at her and looked around.

Like Daphne, neither the interior of the house changed. There were just a few new additions to the decoration, mainly framed photos in the living-room, showing Daphne with a man, hugging. Castiel watched the photos for a while then sat down on the sofa opposite to Daphne.

“So? Castiel?” she asked.

“Yes” he nodded. “I got my memories back a day after I left.”

Daphne frowned. Curiosity was written all over her face.

“How? What triggered it?”

Castiel bit his lip and looked out the window. He couldn’t see the Impala from here but he knew it was still there.
“Remember I had the power to heal and see demons?” When Daphne nodded he continued. “I don’t know how to tell this. It may sound crazy but it’s the truth.” Castiel took a deep breath. “I’m… I used to be an angel.”

He watched Daphne’s face carefully, looking for the signs of disbelief. This wasn’t the Daphne from the other timeline who lived in the bunker in fear of the leviathans. She was a normal human, not knowing anything about the supernatural outside in the world.

But to his surprise, Daphne looked like she finally had the answer for her every question.

“I always knew you were special” she said. “You had powers no other human had. You never slept, never needed food.” Daphne shook her had with a proud smile. “An angel. I helped an angel.”

Castiel smiled back at her, glad that she accepted his words.

“The man who came for me, Dean, he’s my friend” he continued. He needed to explain everything. Daphne deserved to know the truth. “I saved his soul from Hell and I became his guardian. It was his presence that gave back my memories.” His smile faltered. “I’m sorry I never visited you. I had to help Sam, Dean’s brother, then we fought the leviathans, I went to Purgatory then the angels fell…”

Daphne nodded thoughtfully.

“The night of the meteor shower. One of them visited me not long ago.”

Castiel looked at her with wide eyes. An angel visited Daphne. One of his siblings wanted her as a vessel. Had she said yes? Was an angel in her now? Was he talking to an angel? Who was it? Friend or foe? What would he do if she attacked him? Would he hurt Daphne?

Daphne smiled at his panic.

“I told the angel to leave. It was not the right time to give myself to any of them. My life is… changing.”

Daphne looked past Castiel who turned around. There were the photos on the shelf. He just noticed one of them had been taken on a wedding. Daphne’s wedding.

“You’re married” he said, looking back at the woman who avoided his eyes.

“After months without hearing you, I gave up hope to ever see you again. I arranged a funeral with an empty coffin and went to a group for widows. I couldn’t stay at home all day. All alone. I needed a place where people understood me. That’s where I met David. Slowly we got closer and we got married four months ago.”

Castiel smiled sadly.

“Congratulation. And I’m sorry you had to go through so much sadness.”

Daphne stood up and took a seat next to him.

“Don’t be.” She took his hand into hers and looked deep into his eyes. “Meeting you had a great impact on my life. And it’s thanks to you I met my husband and…” Daphne looked down with a blush. “And that I’m blessed with a new life.”
Castiel frowned at this and looked down at their hands. That was when he noticed another change. The way how round Daphne’s belly was under her shirt that he didn’t see when she was standing.

“You’re expecting a child.”

Daphne nodded, blushing deeper.

“I’m three months pregnant.” She looked back at Castiel with a big smile. “David doesn’t know yet.”

Castiel felt honored that Daphne shared her secret with him. She deserved to be happy after what she had done for him. Saving a stranger who had been washed out by the water to the shore. He hoped God blessed her and her family.

“I’m happy for you, Daphne” he said. “I hope you’re going to have a wonderful life with your family.”

The woman chuckled.

“I hope so.” Then she looked at him seriously. “And you, Castiel? Are you happy?”

The former angel looked towards the window with a smile.

“Yes. Yes, I’m happy.”

They said goodbye at the door soon after. Castiel gave her his phone number, telling her to call if something dangerous threatened her and her family’s life. She nodded and promised to send photos of the child once she gave birth in spring.

Castiel walked to the Impala, but before he got in he looked back. Daphne still stood in the doorway. She waved to him and Castiel waved back.

One unfinished business done, a few more to go.

“So?” Dean asked once he was sitting inside. “How did it go?”

Castiel showed him a bright smile.

“Great. It went great.”

Chapter End Notes

The Colt part is where I started NaNoWriMo this year :) I’m at 27300 words (the fic has 97634 words, oh my Chuck, this never happened before) and I haven’t written in 3 days. My afternoon shifts in the daycare are tiring.

The ‘covering eyes’ moment was inspired by this beautiful artwork by Euclase
http://euclase.deviantart.com/art/Mercy-485632954?q=gallery%3Aeuclase%2F12012864&qo=6
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

This weekend the fic reached 100k words. That never happened before.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dean parked the Impala right outside the bunker. He got out, stretched and sighed happily.

“Home, sweet home” he said and looked at the others who got out the car too. Finally, *fucking finally*, everyone was at home and nobody would be sent away. Cas would stay and now Ms. Tran was here too so hopefully Kevin would help more and he was alive and would be until he got old. Dean was happier than ever.

They walked down the stairs to the door and Sam opened it with the key. When they were inside however, Dean immediately knew that something changed. Something was different than when he had left.

They were living here for almost three years now which was enough time to grow familiar to the place. They knew the air always smelled old and dusty, dim light illuminated the rooms and corridors, the old computers buzzed like bees in a jar.

But now, as he walked further inside after days of absence, everything seemed… nicer. Clean and tidy like every normal household in the world and not a hiding place warded against everything living and dead.

“No dirty shoes in the building!” a female voice warned them from below. The three stepped closer to the rail and looked down. Next to the map table stood Linda Tran with her hands on her hips, daring them to not listen to her. She was wearing some ill fitting cloths, probably Kevin’s. The jeans were rolled up and the shirt hung on her shoulders in a funny way. But the woman wasn’t in a funny mode. “I just cleaned the hallway.”

“You cleaned the bunker?” Sam asked with disbelief.

“Of course I did! Everything was so dirty I can’t believe you didn’t get sick yet. Have you ever heard about the vacuum cleaner and the mop?”

Of course Dean did. He tidied his room weekly. Sometimes other parts of the bunker too, but not everything. Mainly the rooms they usually used, like the bathroom, the kitchen and the library. He wasn’t sure about Sam and Kevin though. They didn’t seem to be fans of cleaning. Sam washed the dishes after himself but he had never seen him dusting of shelves or anything. And Kevin…

Speaking of Kevin, the teen entered the room from the right with a bucket and a mop in his hands. He looked annoyed as hell. Dean could tell his mother ordered him to help which was definitely not the program Kevin had planned for the day.

“Get your shoes off at the door” Linda said. “I brought you slippers. And every weekend there will be cleaning in this man cave, and hunting is not an excuse.”
Dean snorted at the face Sam made. After the three of them got rid of their shoes and walked down the stairs – which was uncomfortable with just socks on their feet, – the small woman handed them a shopping bag. Fortunately, the slippers weren’t embarrassing and fit their feet perfectly.

“Thank you” Dean told the woman who was watching him intensely. That was when he realized that oh. Oh. Ms. Tran was here. And she probably knew about the other timeline. And she probably knew about the circumstances of her son’s death. Dean swallowed hard and the smile that was forming on his face disappeared. “Ms. Tran, I…”

“Dean Winchester” she started and Dean felt himself becoming smaller. He braced himself for the mother’s rage. “If you ever again think that you could redeem yourself by giving up your humanity, I’ll kick you into an other timeline then kick you again.”

Dean blinked a few times. He was not expecting this.

“Uh… Okay?”

“I’m serious.” And she really was. There was no joking or anger in her voice, just damn seriousness. She crossed her arms and continued. “Yes, I was angry when I heard about that angel incident and Kevin’s death. But running away and doing something that you thought would make everything good but then didn’t? I thought you were smarter than that.”

Dean looked down at his feet with shame. He found it very interesting that instead of a pair of boots he saw his socks. He almost felt vulnerable.

“I’m sorry” he said and looked at the woman. “It would never happen again. And Kevin’s staying alive, I’ll make sure.”

Satisfied with his answer, Linda nodded and turned to Sam.

“You, young man, go and tidy your room right now.”

“What?!” Sam gaped. “But we just got back. We smell and we’re tired.”

“No, you won’t sleep in that room of junkyard.”

“But what about Dean and Cas?!” Sam huffed, pointing at the two he mentioned.

Linda just crossed her arms before her chest.

“Dean’s room is surprisingly clean and I was informed that Castiel slept there maybe twice.”

Dean tried to hold back the laughter. He honestly did. But he just burst out when he saw the look on Sam’s face. His little brother made a bitch face at him and punched his arm but it didn’t stop him from laughing.

Home, sweet home.

* 

Sam woke to pain in his head. Groaning, he raised his hand to his head to investigate the cause of the aching. He had a bump. But how did he get it?
He tried to recall the events of that day. He had had a fight with Cas. He had taken the rings. Death had given him his ring. He had started the incantation. Something had hit his head… Someone had thrown something at him that had knocked him out? But who? And why?

Sam sat up and looked around. He was still in the cemetery and by the position of the sun not much time had passed. He confirmed it after he looked at his watch. He was out for about ten minutes. Sam looked around the ground to take the rings into his hand but… He didn’t see them anywhere.

Sam jumped up and looked around the grass everywhere but he just saw a rock that had probably knocked him out. The rings were nowhere to be seen.

Someone had taken the rings.

Sam buried the fingers of his healthy hand into his hair. Someone took the rings. Probably the one who knocked him out. Was it a demon? What if the rings, the key to the Cage, were in the hands of a demon? What if they open it? Apocalypse number two?

With a cold feeling in his chest he realized that he had wanted to do the same in desperation. He had been about to let Lucifer out when the rock hit him.

What had he almost done?

“Sam!”

Sam looked up when he heard his name and his heart skipped a beat. Hannah was approaching him with long steps. Lee was standing next to his car, watching them.

“Samuel Winchester, I hope you didn’t want to open the Cage and the universe just misunderstood your actions.”

Sam swallowed nervously. Hannah was clearly angry. Her eyes were narrowed, her fists clenched. There were many things Sam didn’t want to face, and the angry angel was one of them.

Hannah stopped a few steps away from him, looking up at him as she patiently waited for his answer. But Sam would give her one that would definitely disappoint her.

“I’m sorry…” he mumbled as he looked away.

He felt Hannah’s eyes on him then the angel sighed and took his right hand between hers. Sam looked down at their touching hands. Hannah held his with her left while the right brushed over his knuckles gently. He felt bones moving and for a moment he felt immense pain then it ended in a nanosecond. Hannah healed his hand.

“I know you’re desperate” she said, fixing her eyes on their hands. “There are sayings like, desperate times call for desperate measures, or the end justifies the means. I understand why you want to do it.” She brushed her thumb over his now healed knuckles. “But please. Don’t.”

Sam’s heart squeezed. He never expected Hannah to be worried about him like that. She had asked about his wellbeing and comforted him when needed, but this… This was something more. It was Hannah, an angel, very new to this human thing called emotions, was truly worried about him as a person. He didn’t know how to feel about this. He was overwhelmed by gratitude and shame at the same time.

With a sigh Sam placed his other hand on hers. He felt Hannah tensing but she didn’t pull away
and he had no intention to let her go any time soon. He didn’t want her to run away again without a word so he tightened his grip a bit.

“I’m sorry” he repeated.

Hannah sighed and the tension he didn’t notice was in her shoulders ever since he knew her left her body. She looked more relaxed than ever.

They would have stood there in silence if not for Lee coughing in the background. The hunter and the angel looked at him.

“I go back if it’s okay” he said, stepping backwards to the car’s door. “I tell Bobby that the Devil stays in the basement. You two just go ahead and have a moment or something.”

Sam felt heat crawling up his neck.

“Uh-O… Okay.” He coughed nervously. “Go. We’ll be back soon.”

He could see even from this far that Lee arched a brow but the man didn’t say anything as he sat into the car. Sam watched the man driving away then looked back at the angel whose gaze returned to their hands. She observed it thoughtfully. Sam smiled a little at that and squeezed her hand. That snapped the angel out of her thoughts and jerked her head up.

“Thank you for your concern” he said. “It means a lot.”

The corners of Hannah’s lips curled up too but then it was gone as the angel switched back to business mode.

“Where’s the key?” she asked. “I can’t sense it anywhere.”

They let go of each others hand – which Sam already started missing – and Sam brushed back his hair.

“I don’t know” he answered. “Someone knocked me out.”

“I see” the angel nodded and reached up to touch Sam’s forehead. The headache was gone too. “Who would want the key?”

Sam shook his head.

“I don’t know. A demon, maybe? Can you, you know, look around the area? Maybe you can sense who was here?”

Hannah frowned at that a little and Sam suddenly feared that the angel didn’t like him ordering her around but then she looked around with the same frown. Sam sighed in relief. She was just concentrating. Good.

“I can’t tell” Hannah said after a while. “This cemetery radiates much strong energy. I feel Death the strongest. Michael, Lucifer.” Momentarily surprise appeared on her face. “And even God. These dull out the other presences. I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s good” he reassured her quickly.

Hannah observed his face for a while.

“Bobby said you and Castiel had a fight.”
Sam looked away.

“Yeah, we had a disagreement.” Sam sighed. “I know I overreacted. Cas is going through some shit too. His Grace, Dean… I shouldn’t have hit him.”

“You two can apologize to each other when we find Castiel.”

Sam turned back to her with a frown.

“What do you mean?”

“He wasn’t in the Men of Letters bunker when I arrived. Bobby said he had left a few hours previously.”

Sam quickly pulled his phone out his pocket and called the angel. He didn’t pick up.

“Damn it…” His fingers moved on the screen like something was chasing him and when he finished he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. “What the…”

“What is it?” Hannah asked, walking to his side and peeking at the phone. “What is this location?”

“Cas is there. A day away from here. How did he get there?”

“Maybe he made a shortcut through Heaven.” Hannah crossed her arms. “I didn’t notice him… Maybe the prison walls prevented it…”

Sam looked at her questioningly.

“Prison?”

Hannah’s eyes widened in fear and all color drained from her face. He didn’t know angels could pale but it appeared they could.

“We’ll talk about it later, okay?” he said quickly because he was sure that the angel would run away again.

Hannah relaxed and nodded.

“So…” she started with a low voice. “We’re going for Castiel.”

“Yeah, come on.”

Sam hoped Cas was okay. He felt guilty for this and everything that almost happened. Cas was his friend. His ally. They had to work together, not fight. Sam’s grip around the wheel tightened as he drove out of the cemetery and wished he would get there in time before anything happened to Cas.

*

Dean had a long and relaxing sleep in his room. Finally. Knowing that everything was fine around him and his family was soothing. He didn’t have nightmares – neither normal dreams but he didn’t miss them, – he didn’t have headaches, didn’t feel dizzy. Once or twice his ears rang when he turned too quickly or leaned too low but it quickly passed. He felt great.
He emerged from his room around seven pm. He went to the kitchen, swallowed a pill, grabbed some food he could eat then walked to the library. As expected, he found Kevin and Sam, or maybe Gadreel, still working on the translations.

“How is it going?” he asked, sitting down next to his brother.

“Slow but at least we have some progress” the giant beside him said who Dean identified as Gadreel. “I can’t translate as quick as I did days ago. Neither Sam nor I could rest properly.”

Dean shifted in his seat. That was partly if not mainly his fault.

“But I finally feel like I’m accomplishing something” the teen said, looking up from the tablet. Dean was surprised to see that he was actually smiling. The last time he saw him like this was when he had been translating the demon tablet. “I’m finished with the fifth line and starting the next one right now.”

Dean smiled back at Kevin.

“Good to hear, kid. You’re doing great.”

Kevin’s smile grew a little and he looked back at his work. The bubble of happiness inside Dean grew. He felt great.

“Where’s Cas?” he asked, looking around. “Still sleeping?”

Like he was just waiting for this, the former angel stepped inside the library with a steaming mug in his hand. He looked so grumpy Dean couldn’t help but chuckle at that.

“Not a morning person?” he asked teasingly.

Cas growled at him with annoyance, mumbling something that sounded like ‘it’s not morning, Dean’, and took a seat opposite to him. Kevin looked up at him warily but when he saw that Cas wouldn’t growl at him too he continued his work.

Gadreel then straightened himself.

“Now that all of you are here, Sam wants to speak to you.”

The angel’s eyes flared up with blue and Sam blinked at them.

“Did you two sleep well?” he asked.

Dean nodded with a smile and Cas just stared at him. Sam bit back a smile then leaned on his elbows.

“We have to talk.”

Dean raised a brow.

“About?”

His question gained an annoyed look from Sam.

“I don’t know. Maybe Metatron and Abaddon? They are out there again.”

Oh, right. He forgot about them… The moment he had killed Abaddon felt like it had happened
decades or centuries ago. And when Metatron had stabbed him…

Dean absently rubbed his chest.

“So. What do we know?”

“Metatron was keeping an eye on us, I think” Cas said, looking more awake than before. “He knew about Gadreel in Sam.”

Sam closed his eyes for a moment.

“Remember the angelic massacre in that road house? Gadreel met him after that, outside the bar in Wyoming.”

“That, or he was keeping an eye on just you.” Dean pointed at the former angel. “He wanted you to lead an army against him, right? Maybe he didn’t know about Gadreel until we met you there.”

Cas shook his head.

“That was after I took Theo’s Grace” he explained. “When he took mine he told me to settle down, have a wife and babies, and when I return to Heaven, tell him my story.”

Dean raised a brow.

“Wife?”

His throat felt dry saying this and an uncomfortable feeling crawled its way up in it. From the corner of his eye he saw Sam watching them and even Kevin stopped writing to peek at the two.

“I think Metatron underestimated me” Cas said, not noticing or completely ignoring the tension in the room. “He probably didn’t expect I would in a way or an other continue my fight against him.”

Dean cleared his throat.

“Okay, so then. Abaddon?”

“She’s probably taking over Hell” Sam answered, still shifting his gaze between his brother and the former angel. After the third round Dean sent him a warning glare and Sam cleared his throat too. “She was looking for Crowley until she found out we had him here.”

Oh, yeah. Crowley. He was still in chains in the dungeon. He wanted to forget about him too.

“Not to mention the other angels” Cas added. “Bartholomew and Malachi are fighting against each other. And at the same time looking for me.”

“That’s a lot of shit we’re in” Kevin commented as he pushed away his notes, then added. “You three again.”

Kevin was right. There were not only good things in travelling back in time. They had to do a lot of things again, like kicking those bastards once more.

“So it’s the three of us against the world again” Dean summed up, leaning back in his chair with crossed arms.

Sam shook his head.
“No, Dean. We need others too.”

“Why?” he asked honestly. “It was always just us.”

Sam made a face at that. Dean couldn’t call it a bitch face because he saw too much sadness in his brother’s eyes.

“Dean. Last time it was the three of us, but not together. It was the three of us going on our own separate ways and we fucked it up. Big time.” Dean was about to say something but Sam didn’t let him. “We all had a part in that fuck up, not just you, so don’t say anything at all.”

Dean bit his lip to stop arguing back. He knew it was mainly his fault that those things had happened. Sam possessed by an angel and becoming a killer, Kevin dead, Cas burning out… It was all his fault.

Then he saw Cas turning away. The former angel tried to put a mask on his face but Dean still saw the pain in his friend’s eyes. Dean looked at his hand. Cas blamed himself for his death. Because he couldn’t break the angel tablet in time.

Dean sighed and continued the conversation.

“So… It’s the three of us, Kevin, Gadreel and Ms. Tran.”

Kevin looked at him like he just sentenced him to death.

“I don’t want to fight.”

“You won’t” Dean reassured him. “Metatron wants you dead, so we keep you out of trouble as much as we can. You’re the brain part of the team.”

“Good.” Kevin nodded a few times. “Good.”

“I suggest Charlie and Dorothy” Dean continued turning back to Sam. “They made a kickass team.”

“They’re in Oz” Sam reminded him.

Cas looked back at them with interest in his eyes.

“You have a key to Oz?” he asked.

“Yes” Dean said. “You know, Dorothy…”

“The one who walked on the yellow brick road with her dog and three companions.”

“Yes, that one, but not really.” Sam shifted a little as he went into ‘I’ll explain this to you because it’s interesting and I wanna share it’ mode. “You see, Dorothy is the daughter of the writer who was a Man of Letters. He wrote the books after Dorothy disappeared.”

Cas bowed his head up and down slowly as he thought about this new information.

“Charlie went with her to Oz” Dean said. “And when they get back, they can join us. Who else?”

“Hannah.”

Dean looked at Cas to argue with him because the lady angel hadn’t been very friendly to them but
he had to realize it wasn’t the former angel who spoke. Dean turned his head slowly to his brother who fixed his gaze on the tabletop.

“Hannah?” Dean asked back. “The angel chick who told Cas to kill me? Yeah, that would be a nice addition to our little resistance.”

To his surprise his words offended his little brother.

“You know, Dean, things changed while you were away killing demons and angels.”

The silence that settled in the room stung his ears. The air he haled into his lungs burnt everything it touched. Dean felt blood draining out from his face and limbs and he feared he would fall on the ground if he wasn’t sitting already. He felt everyone looking at him and it scared him. He didn’t want to be in the spotlight of their pity. He didn’t need it. He was okay.

If only his forearm wasn’t itching.

Sam quickly realized what he had said and looked at Dean apologetically.

“Dean, I’m…”

But Dean held up his hand, silencing him.

“No, you’re right. I don’t know about a lot of things that happened here. So Hannah?”

“And Muriel” Cas added, eyes still fixed on Dean. Under his stare Dean felt himself becoming smaller. “I’ll pray to both of them, explaining our situation and asking them to meet me. Maybe next week or the week after.”

Dean nodded and scratched his forearm because he couldn’t stand the itching anymore.

“Krissy and her friends?” Dean suggested quickly because he wanted to move on from everything involving him.

“I’m not so sure.” Sam still looked like a kicked puppy but he tried to tone it down. “They’re still in school. Maybe we should just warn them. And Garth and Jody too. Their lives are pretty normal even with the supernatural side.”

“Wait…” Kevin spoke again. “You know where Garth is?”

“He became a werewolf and joined a peaceful pack” Sam explained.

Kevin just blinked for a while.

“Wow. Okay.”

“Speaking of Garth.” Sam looked back at Dean. “Remember that girl? The one from the video who turned into a werewolf? We should tell Garth to look for her.”

Dean nodded in agreement. She would have a great time with Garth and his family once she was found.

“Any more suggestions?” Cas asked. “We don’t have many allies but we should value every one of them.”

Dean looked around his memories. They needed more people. It wasn’t just the three of them.
anymore but they were still just a small group compared to the demons and the angels. If only Bobby, Ellen, Jo and Rufus and hell, even Meg hadn’t died. Or if Benny was here. Not to mention the friendly angels, Gabriel, Anna and Balthazar. And Alfie too.

And that was it. They didn’t have more friends. The other hunters hated them or didn’t want to have anything to do with the Winchesters. He couldn’t argue with them. They were like magnets. Wherever they went, shit happened.

There had to be someone else…

There had to…

A face appeared before his eyes.

There was one.

“Tessa.”

“Tessa?” Sam looked at him, disbelieving. “But she wanted to blow up herself in the middle of a theater.”

“Metatron was controlling her” Dean said. “I know Tessa. She wouldn’t do anything that would disturb the balance of life and death or what is that.”

“The circle of life” Cas helped him out.

Sam didn’t look convinced.

“If you knew that, why did you kill her?”

Dean felt like cold water was running down his spine. He saw Tessa’s face as she had talked about the souls stuck in the Veil, insanity taking over her, and the moment she had died. By the First Blade.

Dean shoved away this memory.

“I didn’t kill her. She ran into the Blade.”

Sam sighed.

“Dean I know you didn’t want to kill her, but…”

Dean felt anger erupting inside him. He hit the table with his fist which startled everyone around him. Cas almost dropped his mug.

“Screw you, Sam! Give Gadreel the joystick!”

“Dean…” Sam started protesting, but Dean had enough.

“Now!”

Sam just watched him for a while then his eyes flashed up with blue. The angel tilted his head.

“How may I help you, Dean?”

“Can you look into my head?” he asked.
“Dean…” Cas started with a warning and worried tone but Dean pointed at him. 

“You shut up too! I’m not a China doll you have to be careful with!”

He hurt Cas, he knew that by the look the other gave him, but he turned away. What he didn’t see wasn’t there.

“So? Can you look into my head or not?”

“I can” Gadreel nodded.

“Awesome. Look at the time when I was interrogating Tessa. But just that time.”

“As you wish.”

Gadreel placed two fingers on his forehead. Dean closed his eyes and the memories of that distant day flashed before him. Tessa sitting at the other side of the desk, offending Hannah. Hannah taken outside by him. Back in the room. Tessa talking about the souls in the Veil and then suddenly impaling herself on the Blade.

When Gadreel finally released him he wanted to throw up. He had done everything in the past few days to not remember the blood he had spilled and now seeing this moment again made his head spin. The ring in his ears was painfully loud and high, and his forearm burnt.

“The reaper Tessa committed suicide” Gadreel announced and with a blue flash he gave back the control to Sam again.

The silence was heavier than before. Dean forced his legs to stop shaking as he slowly stood up, avoiding eye contact with everyone.

“Happy now?”

And with that he was out of the library. He didn’t care that the others called out to him, asking him to stop and go back. He ran. Yes, Dean Winchester ran away from emotions and his family. Typical way to deal with problems. But he wanted to be alone for a long, long time. Forever maybe.

Chapter End Notes

See writers? That's it. Just mention that they'll call Garth about it and we can fill in the blanks.

The chapter after the next would be very depressing. But before that...
I blink away the green of my eyes and I appear in the dungeon. The place has a familiar vibe. This is where Sam and Cas locked me when I tried to kill Gadreel. I’m in a Devil’s Trap and outside it stands Sam. He looks terrible. Face crumpled, dark shadows under his eyes, hair longer and messy. Like a caveman.

“Hey, Sammy!” I wave with a huge grin. “It’s been a while. How are you?”

Sam’s face darkens.

“Who are you and how did you get into my brother’s body?”

I roll my eyes – which is unnecessary since he doesn’t see it but it makes me feel better so shut up.

“Of course you think I’m not myself” I sigh. “Which is true in a way so let’s correct it. Of course you think I’m possessed. A human turning into a demon? Yeah, impossible. But guess what! It’s not. I’m me.” I pull up my right sleeve to show the Mark. “See this nasty here? Brought me back like this.”

Sam tenses as he sees the Mark of Cain. I’m not blaming him. He opens then closes his mouth like an overgrown goldfish before he could say anything.

“Dean?” he asks hesitantly.

“Surprise!” I lift my arms up in the air. “I would throw confetti at you if I knew how to summon it. Crowley didn’t tell me how to do that. Should have asked before I ditched him.”

Sam frowns at that.

“Crowley? You were with Crowley?”

“Yeah, for a while.” I sway my head. “He tried to make me his lapdog or something. You know, going here and there, killing some demons. Hell stuff.”

Sam bits his lower lip. Is he about to cry? Yes, he is. I don’t know why he wants to. In relief that he sees his brother or in grief that I’m a demon? Whatever be the case, I don’t wanna see any crying.

“I…” Sam starts and rubs his eyes quickly. “I thought you were dead. When I saw your body was gone I…” Sam takes a deep breath. “How do we fix this?”

I rub my ears.

“I’m sorry, I think I misheard something. I thought you said you wanted to fix this.”

“Because I said it” Sam nods. “Dean, we know how to cure demons. I can help you.”

I snort because it’s so funny. Sammy thinks I want to be cured? Cute.

But at the same time I feel a sudden ache around my chest. I push back the feeling quickly.
“And what? Finish the trials and kill yourself?”

It looks like Sam didn’t think about this yet. Pf. The fool.

“I can get blood from somewhere else” Sam says. “We can do it, Dean.”

“We? You think I want to be cured?” I start laughing and continue until my stomach would hurt normally. “There’s nothing to fix here, Sam. I love the way I am. I can zap from one place to another in a blink, I can eat and drink as much as I want, I don’t have to sleep, and I’m stronger than anyone. I don’t want to be cured.”

Sam looks like a kicked puppy. I wanna kick him too. Or I already did.

“You don’t mean it” he says, wanting to believe his words.

“Yes, I do.” I grin and start stepping around the trap. “You must remember the days when you were high on demon blood. Remember the power? The hunger you felt for blood?” I chuckle darkly. “I feel that now. I’m the most powerful being here. No one can kill me.”

“Dean, I know how it feels like. That’s why I’m asking you to let me cure you. Once you’re back to normal you’ll see…”

Enough is enough. This ‘I feel the good in you’ talk annoys me.

“Are you deaf or what?!” I yell suddenly. Sam jumps back. “I don’t want to be fixed!”

And with that I step outside the trap.

I look down at my leg, not believing what I see. Are Devil’s Traps completely ineffective on me? Good to know.

I raise my head and look at Sam who looks back at me with wide eyes.

“Here’s Johnny!” I say and take a step towards him. Sam leaves the dungeon in hurry. I shook my head and follow him.

It feels nostalgic to walk these corridors again. That’s the way to my room and that corridor leads to the garage. I have to admit I miss this place. I liked living here. Maybe I should move here and make it my home base? I get rid of Sam and some other things and make it my personal mansion. That sounds good.

I hear a noise to my right and turn there with a smirk. I take the Blade in my hand and walk down the corridor.

“Come out, come out, wherever you are!” I yell with a sweet tone. “Come on, Sammy! Let’s have some fun! Some brotherly bonding! We have a lot to catch up to! How long it had been? Three months?”

I don’t expect Sam to splash holy water on my face the next corner. It’s the first time I experience the burn of my skin and I groan as the liquid melts my skin. Damn it!

But I still have the presence of mind to dodge the big ox. He tries to cuff my hand but I hit it from his hand. The metal lands on the floor with a loud noise that echoes in the empty corridor. While I’m still trying to rub the water off my face Sam runs away.

“Nice try, Sammy!” I shout after him. “You have to wake up earlier to capture me like that!”
Once the holy water is not burning my face anymore I wait until the Mark heals me and continue with more determination to catch the bastard. How dare he attack me like that! He’s gonna pay for it!

I hear his breaths. He’s muttering something in the distance. Maybe he’s praying? I snort. No use. There’s nobody up there to listen to him. Metatron hates us all. Why would he listen to Sam from all people?

A door stands in my way. I put the Blade in my other hand and hit the door with my fist. The wood screams every time I punch it and soon it gives in to my power. The pieces fall on the ground and I climb through the hole.

I don’t think I have ever walked in this corridor before. It’s long and unlike the others it tilts down. Where the hell is it leading to? Sam’s heartbeat sounds louder here so I start walking down but I don’t have to look for him. He stands right there at the other end, watching me with a serious face. I smile.

“What is it Sammy? Tired of running around?”

He clenches his fists around Ruby’s knife. Is he serious? Ruby’s knife against a Knight of Hell? Ridiculous.

“It’s over, Dean” he says. “Stop this or I’ll force you to.”

I open my mouth to insult him but I stop breathing.

I feel something.

Something familiar approaching me.

It’s walking down the corridor.

Getting closer to me.

Reaching out towards me.

And I’m reaching out towards it.

I long for it.

I want to be closer to it.

He wants to be closer to it.

Dean’s soul sighs in relief.

It shakes off the darkness and waits for the other to get there.

NO!

I mentally shake myself. My breath hitches and I grip the Blade like my life depends on it. I’m shaking. Cold sweat beads on the back of my neck. The hell is going on. The hell is going on. THE HELL IS GOING ON!!!!

Cas.
It’s Cas. Cas is here. Cas is in the bunker. Cas is walking towards me. Cas is walking towards Dean.

But how? Metatron locked him in Heaven with Gadreel. He’s imprisoned. Then how the hell is he here? How did he get out? What’s going on? Why didn’t I know about this?

Why didn’t Crowley tell me anything?

I look at Sam. He didn’t notice anything that happened inside me in the last few seconds. Good.

No, not good.

I wanted to hurt Sam! I wanted to hurt my own brother! What the hell, what the hell…

The Mark sends sharp waves of pain through my arm. I swallow down a hiss. I don’t know what’s happening but I have to get out of here. Fast.

I smirk at him. Act natural, act natural…

“Yeah, it’s over.” It surprises Sam a little but I continue before he starts hoping too much. “I had enough with this running around. You’re no fun. I’m not interested in humans and angels anyway. I only kill demons and monsters.”

I hear the footsteps behind me and I quickly zap away before the angel could see me. Or before I could see him.

Chapter End Notes

Dun-dun-DUUNNNN! Or not. I don't know if it was a what-a-twist.
“Dean!” Sam jumped up as Dean left the library. “Dean, come back! I’m sorry!”

But the man didn’t turn back. His footsteps grew more silent with each second until none of them heard it anymore.

Castiel watched the doorway. All along he thought Dean had killed Tessa. The Mark was a powerful influence. He thought it had told Dean to kill the reaper and make him lie about it. But now… Now they found out the truth the painful way.

From the corner of his eye he saw Sam pulling a hand down his face.

“I…” he started. “I go after him…”

Sam ran out the door Dean did previously.

Castiel turned back to the table and looked at the mug of coffee before him. The dark liquid was cooling down but he lost his interest in it. He just watched the dark surface and his reflection in it.

He didn’t show it, but Dean was going through a difficult time. He was still dealing with the aftermath of his demonic times. He had seen him scratching his forearm many times in the past few days. Castiel wasn’t sure if Dean noticed it at all. It was like the movement came absently to him from a deep instinct and it scared Castiel. What if they were still not out of that hole? What if Dean’s soul was somehow still attached to the Mark, even though it wasn’t burnt into his skin now?

What if his fear would turn out to be true? What if Dean was still a demon?

Castiel leaned his forehead into one hand while he rubbed the back of his neck with the other. Lachesis told them some things would happen no matter what. What if this was one of them? What if, no matter how hard he tried to prevent it, Dean would eventually turn into a demon again? He couldn’t let that happen. He couldn’t!

Somebody patted him on the back. Castiel glanced up and realized that Kevin was still sitting there. The young prophet showed him a sympathetic smile.

“It will be alright” he said. “You went through a lot of shit. You have to work it out.”

Castiel looked away.

“The brothers still hold many grudges under the surface” he agreed. “I hope they’ll talk.”

Kevin made a disbelieving noise.

“Talk?” he shook his head. “I don’t know, man. Neither of them is into the touchy-feely stuff.”

Castiel sighed. Kevin was right. The Winchesters never talked about emotions just when it was too late. But there was some progress with Dean. When they had been coming home from Idaho he talked. Honestly talked. He had learnt from his past experiences and tried to change for the better. The former angel hoped that everything would be alright, and even if there was still some demonic
instinct hiding in the back of his mind, Dean would ask for help. Both Sam and Castiel had gone through this in the past. They would be there for Dean, no matter what.

But before that they had to close some lose ends. They had to get over those past argument, grudges and misunderstandings. It would be a long process, but Castiel could already see the end of the dark tunnel.

“Can you help me?” Kevin asked suddenly. “Gadreel is a great help but I wouldn’t mind more people working on the translation too.”

Castiel righted himself and he took a breath.

“Of course. Give me a paper.”

It was good to see Kevin acting so dutiful. He remembered the time when he had to scare the poor teen to do his job. Kevin was the only prophet on the world. They needed his help. And he also needed their help so Castiel would do anything he could to be in aid of him.

Kevin did as asked. He handed Castiel an empty sheet, a pen and an other paper with different symbols. Castiel took the pen and readied himself to write but he petrified. He just sat there and watched the symbols like they were the greatest horror of the world.

“Cas?” Kevin leaned forward a little to see the former angel’s face. “You okay?”

Castiel’s hand trembled.

“I…” He took a shaky breath. “I can’t read it…”

He squint his eyes, leaned closer a little and though the symbols looked sharper at the edges he still couldn’t understand a thing. How could that be? He was supposed to know every language of the universe. This was a simple ancient language. He should easily translate it.

Only he shouldn’t. He wasn’t an angel anymore. He was a human. His human brain wouldn’t be able to contain that enormous knowledge he used to possess. Just like the names of the future prophets, he had forgotten this language and who knew what else.

But of course he remembered every story known by Metatron. Because that was so important.

In this sudden flare of anger towards the Scribe of God Castiel stabbed the pen into the table. The pen broke, he scratched the surface of the table, hurt his hand, and scared the teen next to him.

“Woa, man! Easy!”

Castiel panted. He threw away the other half of the pen and buried his face into his palm.

He felt so useless…

* *

As he fell on the ground, his body started shaking with sobs. He couldn’t do it. He couldn’t stop the demon. He would die without doing anything useful.
He was useless.

Castiel’s crying was cut by a series of coughs. His body trembled with each one and when he looked into his palm he saw an ill grey, liquid like material. It was the stolen Grace. He was going to die.

Castiel leaned against the wall and hit the back of his head against it. He felt weak. Exhausted. He wasn’t sure he would be able to return to the bunker. Going up to Heaven would immediately kill him at this point and without a car he wouldn’t be able to walk all the way back to Lebanon. Not that he could drive like this. He couldn’t move a muscle. Every part of his body was sore and the cough spasms were irregular. He would stay here. Until someone came for him. If someone came for him.

There was little chance for that. Nobody knew where he went. The angels would not bother him and he doubted Sam cared at all. After what he had suggested he was lucky to get away with only a broken nose.

The angel closed his eyes. He could stay here for that one last week. It was a nice place to die. It held a special place in his heart. The place where he had met Dean in person. How wonderful it was to look at his soul on Earth. It brightened the barn, making it the most beautiful place he had ever seen. And he had seen wonderful places since the dawn of time. But those places stood no chance against the places lit up by the Righteous Man’s soul.

Castiel coughed and smiled. Yes. It was a nice place to die.

He was aware that his phone rang somewhere in the distance, but he had no power to reach into his pocket. He wanted to sleep. It had been a long day, no, years. He was tired. He needed a long, eternal rest.

He knew he drifted into the land of dreams when something warm touched his face.

“Cas?”


He opened his eyes and looked into the greens.

“Dean.” He showed him a weak smile.

“Hey, buddy.” A quick smile formed on the man’s face. “You must hang in there, you hear me?”

Castiel shook his head.

“I don’t want to.”

Dean frowned at him angrily.

“Of course you want to” he declared.

The angel took a shaky breath.

“I failed you, Dean.” Dean was about to cut in but he continued. “I failed you many times. I didn’t trust you when I should have. I thought I’d do good if I don’t disturb you and your normal life but in the end I betrayed you. I hurt your brother. I hurt you. And I killed you.”

“Cas…”
“I couldn’t destroy the tablet in time. When Metatron told me that he…” Castiel’s vision blurred. “You died because of me. You became a demon because of me. I failed you. I just want to die, Dean.”

Dean looked at him in silence for a long while, then raised his other hand too, cupping his face.

“You listen to me, you son of a bitch” he started with a stern voice. “Yes, you fucked up many times. Yes, I was angry at you many times. But don’t you ever wish to die because of these, you hear me? You always wanted good. And it was not your fault I died.”

“But…” he started to protest, but Dean cut in.

“No buts! I already forgave you for everything.”

Castiel blinked.

“But I don’t de…”

“Deserve forgiveness?” Dean smiled. “Neither do I, but you always forgive me.”

Dean brushed his thumbs over his cheekbones and Castiel leaned into the touch. What a nice dream. Was it his dying dream maybe? If it was, he never wanted it to end. He wanted to stay here with Dean forever, just looking into each other’s eyes.

Castiel’s vision blurred again but he didn’t feel wetness this time. The power drained out of his body and he felt his head dropping.

“Cas?” He heard panic in the voice. “Fuck…! Cas! Wake up, damn it! Stay with me!”

*I’ll stay with you*, he wanted to say but he couldn’t form the words. Dean’s voice started drifting away and no matter how he tried to reach out for it, it only resulted to drift him away farther. He felt himself becoming weightless.

Then he felt something soft against his back.

A familiar smell entered his nose.

Something warm and soft touched his head but it was gone in a moment.

He heard a door opening.

He felt cold air touching his legs.

“Cas?!?”

*He should have known Dean wouldn’t be in his room. That was too obvious, everyone could find him there. His second guess was the garage but since the Impala was outside he decided against the idea to go there. The Impala was neither an option since he hadn’t heard the front door opening and closing.*
‘Where is he?’ he asked the angel who he tried to ignore for a few days now, and only talked to him when it was necessary.

Gadreel didn’t answer right away.

‘The roof’ he informed him finally then added. ‘I’m sorry for using my power on you without your permission.’

Sam sighed and rubbed the back of his neck.

‘It’s okay, just… never do that again.’

He felt Gadreel reassuring him he wouldn’t and the angel moved to the back of his mind.

Sam sighed again. To be honest Gadreel had scared him the other day. The angel had taken control of his body without asking but at those times Sam was still conscious and had a say in everything. At that time however…

When he had woken up, Sam had a rush of panic. Had he done something? Had he killed someone when he was out? Sam still had dreams about killing Kevin. And this incident made them more intense.

He shook himself back to the present. He had to remind himself that Gadreel had good intentions. He wasn’t under anyone’s influence and didn’t want to kill them. He was a friend who helped them.

He would think about it later but first things first. He had to apologize to Dean.

He hurt him. Twice. The first time because of a rush of emotions then because of some misunderstanding. Or maybe distrust. He remembered Dean acting weirder, more violent those days. The way he had beheaded that vampire… The things he had said to him after they left the Angel HQ… Dean hadn’t been himself. Or… He had just ignored his silent pleas for help?

Pain struck him like a lightning bolt, because holy shit, it was his fault… It was all his damn fault! What he had said in the kitchen after the case in Canyon Valley had turned everything from bearable to the worst. Dean had thought Sam wouldn’t save him if he was dying. God damn it! God damn it!

Sam had to stop to regulate his breath. He hadn’t meant it that way, really. What he had wanted Dean to understand was that he would never do anything to Dean that Dean wouldn’t agree with. Sam hadn’t agreed to the whole angelic possession. He had been so angry at Dean because it had lead to Kevin’s death. Then came the bridge and the Mark of Cain… Then that conversation and everything had gone downhill.

Sam rubbed his face. There were so many things to be fixed he feared he couldn’t do it. Maybe everything was so broken he couldn’t do anything.

But he had to try, so with a new found determination he went to the ladder leading up to his destination.

He had never been on the roof before. He knew Cas had been there a few times prior to their time travel. He had never known when Cas was there so he had never wanted to disturb the angel’s alone times.

He didn’t know what drew both Dean and Cas to this part of the bunker. It was mostly empty, just
a huge metal box was there which, according to the noise it made, was responsible for the
ventilation in the building. But the view was beautiful. Sam could see the little town of Lebanon
over the trees and the endless fields around it. It was beautiful.

Dean sat next to the box, close to the edge. Too close in Sam’s opinion. He looked so vulnerable
with his legs pulled up to his chest, arms around it, and chin on knees. He was rocking himself
slightly forward and back and maybe he hummed something, Sam couldn’t tell, because when he
took one step towards him, it stopped.

Sam didn’t say anything as he walked there and sat down next to Dean. He was close to him, their
arms touching. Sam wanted to make sure Dean knew he was there for him but still… It felt like
they were thousands of miles away from each other. Again.

Damn it.

Sam sighed. Then sighed again. He tried to open his mouth, say what he wanted to say to make
everything better but he couldn’t. He wasn’t ready for this talk. Dean neither. They were too
troubled right now, it would just end like every other serious conversation they had had. Arguing,
more misunderstanding, parting ways. Sam didn’t want that. He had enough with those times when
they walked different paths only to meet at the end and realize they fucked everything up again.

Next to him Dean suddenly started shaking and Sam was shocked to realize that his brother was
trying hard not to crying. Dean Winchester rarely cried. Just when he bottled up too much and
couldn’t hold it back anymore. He hadn’t seen him like this since… No. It wasn’t him who had
seen the last time. It was Gardeel who had seen Dean slowly breaking down when he couldn’t do
anything for Sam. In those memories he had only seen the aftermath but he was sure the night prior
to that had been rough for him. Sam had been dying and Cas hadn’t answered his prayers.

“I’m not a monster…” Dean buried his face into his knees and moved his arms higher to hide
himself.

The sight broke Sam’s heart. He placed and arm around Dean’s shoulder and squeezed his arm.

Dean cowered smaller.

“I’m not a monster…”

“I know” Sam muttered with guilt.

“I’m not a monster, Sammy…”

Sam pulled his shaking brother to his chest and hugged him as tight as he could without hurting
him. Physically at least. He already made a pretty big emotional damage, he didn’t want to make it
even worse.

“I’m sorry, Dean” he whispered. His eyes stung so he shut them tight.

“I’m not a monster…”

“I’m so sorry…”

Chapter End Notes
Next time two characters will be added to the list :)
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

Maybe Hannah won't be in canon anymore but she'll still be an important POV character in my fic. I'll miss you canon! Hannah! You had so much potential.

There will be gore in this chapter. Not much but expect more in the future.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He could see their eyes on him. All of them watched him with concern and he just wanted to go to his room and hide there for a week or two. After that emotional breakdown on the roof, Sam acted so careful around him that Dean sometimes considered smacking him at the back of his head and kindly ask him to cut this crap. He wasn’t made of fucking porcelain. He could handle some shit. He always did.

He wanted to laugh at that because he always handled everything poorly.

Like the nightmares. He hated those with a passion. Every time he woke up he felt so vulnerable, because what if those monsters were real and were in his room and right under his bed waiting for him to get out of bed and grab his ankle and yank him into the shadows. He knew these were foolish childish fears but fuck… He met monsters every day since he had been four. Of course he was afraid of them!

In the past few days he was dealing with nightmares. He didn’t remember them in the morning but he always woke up in cold sweat and damp sheets tangled around his body. One time he fell off the bed, almost losing a tooth when he hit his face into the bedside table. There was an uneasy feeling settled in his stomach each morning but at least he didn’t remember anything.

But then there were the hallucinations.

It began with little nothings. Creepy things that freaked the hell out of him, but nothing was compared to the later ones.

One time he walked from his room to the library, he noticed a shadow moving on the wall. Dean didn’t stop, curious of what that thing could be. He grabbed his gun as he approached it. Getting closer he noticed the shadow was human shaped and moved… just like him? Frowning, Dean walked towards it and when he lined up with the shadow, glowing red eyes appeared on its head and a loud laughter echoed in the corridor. Dropping his gun, Dean jumped against the opposite wall so hard his shoulder – that always ached in cold weather, damn it! – hurt for a day after that.

An other time he heard whispers. The number of the habitants of the bunker had grown so he at first didn’t pay attention to the voices. Maybe Sam and Cas were talking or something. But the longer he listened the sooner he realized the voices were inhuman snarling and snickering mixing together into an orchestra of horror. Every time he heard it – and that happened too often for his taste – Dean hurried back to his room, made a salt line in the doorway, sat on his bed – yes, he sat on his bed and did not hide under his blanket – and listened to music so loud his ears ached for hours.
But what won the prize was the one he experienced a week after the roof breakdown.

Dean stripped his clothes and stood under the hot steam of water. Apart from his room, the shower was the only place where he could truly be alone. Nobody disturbed him here so he could think and do what he wanted. And also it was a good escape from those creepy things. He didn’t see or hear things here. He was safe.

Familiar metallic smell entered his nose. His stomach twisted and in the sudden fear that he would pass out and would drown in his meal he had an hour ago he leaned against the shower wall and looked down.

The water was red beneath him.

Dean’s eyes widened and he raised one hand to eye level. Then the other too because he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. His palms were covered with dried blood, black under his nails, which was dissolved by the hot water.

*_Where did this blood come from?*_ Dean asked himself when something warm and definitely not water dropped on his face.

He looked up and screamed.

Different body parts were hanging from the ceiling, each dripping blood from the cut veins. Some looked fresher, some looked rotten, and together they created the very thing Dean feared at that time. Blood, violence, death.

There were also heads, cut from the bodies and damaged different ways. One didn’t have a scalp, one was piled like an orange, one lacked any skin under the cheekbones so he could see every tooth that wasn’t missing. What the heads had in common was the way their mouth opened to a silent scream. Or maybe it wasn’t so silent. Dean could swear he heard pleads, voices begging for mercy.

Dean stepped back in an attempt to run away from here as far as possible. On his way out however he slipped and he couldn’t grab anything but the shower curtain that he tore off the rod when he fell. He hit his head. Bad. The throbbing made his eyes water up and he groaned as he tried to sit up without success.

“Dean!” Sam almost fell into the bathroom. The cold air entered from the corridor and Dean started shivering.

Damn it. He didn’t want Sam to see him like this weak and miserable.

“I’m okay” he said with an unsteady voice. His elbows gave up again under the weight.

Sam, thankfully, didn’t say a thing as he wrapped him in a bunch of warm towels. It was somewhat funny how now he was the one to be taken care of like this. It had been Dean who always treated Sam this way. Drying him when he had been a kid, warming him up when he had felt cold… It was his role to be the caretaker, not Sam’s.

“Come on.” Sam pulled him up and walked him to the closest bench.

Dean sat down, rubbing his aching head, and looked back at the shower. No blood, no bodies. Damn hallucination! Did he have ghost sickness or something? But he didn’t get scared of everything, just these visions or what they were.
Sam carefully examined his head and when he didn’t see any serious bruises he sat down next to Dean.

“You’re not okay” he said.

Dean sighed. Second chances, honesty, no lies, no fuck ups.

“I’m not okay” he admitted to his feet that bounced up and down and were steadily getting a bluish shade as they were getting cold. Looking Sam in the eyes was more difficult than any time before. His brother didn’t know many things and Dean was too troubled to share anything. He was not ready to talk. Not before he figured out what the hell was going on with him.

“And you’re not ready to talk. Yet.”

He saw Sam turning to him hopefully. They needed this conversation soon. But not this soon.

“Yet” Dean agreed with a nod.

Later when he finally emerged from the bathroom he went to the library. Those hallucinations only happened when he was alone. Maybe if he spent his wake time with the others, then he would have to only deal with the nights alone. He hoped.

But spending time with the others meant they watched him like he would collapse in any second. He appreciated the worry, really. He just didn’t want it. He didn’t deserve it anyway so why would they bother. In true Dean Winchester style he did what he always did when he didn’t want anyone to know there was something wrong. He acted like nothing was wrong. He made jokes, he made Sam roll his eyes and Kevin to crack a smile, he was annoying as hell, giving everyone a hard time to concentrate on their work.

Cas of course watched him like a hawk. Dean couldn’t fool anyone in the room but Cas was the only one who didn’t play along. The former angel sat on the opposite side of the table, the table closest to the entrance where Sam had sent Dean when he had almost spilled his coffee on Kevin’s papers. He was reading some ancient book that had many different symbols on the front but sometimes he glanced up to see the hunter.

After the sixth time Dean turned away from his laptop and looked at the former angel.

“Watcha doin’?” he asked.

Cas turned a page and looked at the next one. Too close in Dean’s opinion but maybe it was just a strange habit of his friend.

“I try measuring the damage” Cas answered.

Dean frowned.

“Damage? What damage?”

“Last time I was human I remembered mostly everything from my knowledge. This time however things changed. Last week I tried to remember the name of every prophet but couldn’t. I didn’t pay much attention to it, it was not the most important part of the information I possessed. But recently I found out I couldn’t remember how to speak an ancient language. I’m now trying to find out which one I still remember.”

“Any luck yet?”
“No.”

“But how is that possible?” Dean asked. “What changed since last time?”

That was a stupid way to ask because a lot had happened. Luckily, Cas understood how he meant the question.

“It’s because Metatron put his knowledge into my head” Cas explained. “That information was given to me when he had the power of the angel tablet so it’s permanent. It then needed space in my human brain so it erased a part of my memory which was apparently hundreds of languages.”

Dean scratched the surface of the table lightly. Cas had a great poker face as he spoke but Dean could tell when he forced himself to be calm and not give into sadness. His lips were pressed together as he continued reading – or not really reading, just looking for something he could still understand. His fingers were tense around the book, just like his shoulders.

Dean let out the steam with a sigh.

“I’m sorry.”

Cas looked up at him, smiling sadly but thankfully. Dean wondered how he could still smile with so much honesty. He had went through hell, both literally and figuratively, and now he was sitting opposite to Dean, living a human life like it was the most natural thing to do.

The moment was interrupted by boots stomping up the stairs.

“Sup bitches? Guess who’s back in Kansas!”

Dean’s head jerked up then he jumped up and leaped there as soon as he recognized the comer. She had shorter hair but everything else was the same.

“Charlie!” He hugged and lifted the sister he never thought he’d have. Damn, he missed her so much. “Good to see you!”

Charlie shrieked as he lifted her but that soon turned into a gleeful laughter.

“Good to see my boys too!”

Dean put Charlie down and it was Sam’s turn to hug the young woman.

“You just arrived?” he asked as he stepped back, motioning towards her dusty cloths.

“Yeah, finally!” Charlie put her hands on her hips and glared at the brothers. “Did you ward the Batcave against peaceful travelers from other dimensions?”

Dean looked at Sam who was as puzzled as him.

“What?” Dean voiced their confusion.

“We tried to open the door for months now” Dorothy explained as she showed up too with a small black dog following her. She nodded to the brothers then continued. “It was locked.”

For months? In this time Charlie was away for what? Two or three months? That was a rather short time for a revolution to win.

“Maybe…” Cas spoke up and everyone turned towards him. “Maybe the ripple isolated our
Dean saw Dorothy opening her mouth, maybe to ask about the meaning of what Cas just said, but she was interrupted by Charlie’s loud gasp.

“Oh my Edlund! You’re Castiel!” Charlie passed by the brothers, took Cas’ hand and shook it. “Hi! I’m Charlie Bradbury. Huge fan. I’ve read a lot about you. Both canon and fanon.”

Cas blinked at her for a few times before he could say anything.

“Nice to meet you.” He then looked up at Dean, pleading, and with a light chuckle the man came to his rescue.

“Okay kid. You’ll have time for fangirling later.”

Charlie pouted at him but let go of Cas.

“So, Dorothy” Sam started. “This is Cas and Kevin. Guys she’s Dorothy. Charlie, that’s our prophet Kevin and you know about Cas, I guess.”

After some quick greetings, they sat around a table and Dorothy could finally speak up.

“What kind of ripple were you talking about?”

“Abaddon, a demon, caused a ripple in time” Sam explained. “She brought someone from the past to the present which then started to change the timeline. Leviathans were back and the three of us” he pointed at Dean and Charlie, “were dead.”

“But we’re not dead” Charlie stated.

Dean nodded thoughtfully.

“We pulled a Marty McFly.”

Charlie’s jaw dropped.

“You travelled back in time?! What year is it?!’

“2013” Sam answered. “November.”

“What?! Then Frozen didn’t come out yet?!”

Dorothy frowned at Charlie who mouthed ‘a movie’ to her. The woman nodded.

“No” Dean answered. “But I can tell you it was…”

Charlie covered his mouth with her hand quickly. Dean looked at her questioningly.

“No more words, handmaiden! I forbid any spoilers to leave your mouth!”

Kevin started snickering at him – probably because of the handmaiden part, – and Cas tilted his head in confusion.

“I don’t understand… Why would Dean spoil anything? Words don’t have any effect on foods.”

And with that Charlie’s all attention was on Cas again and she just talked and talked and Dean just smirked as the former angel tried to find a way out of this situation.
Sam leaned closer to Dean.

“Seriously? You saw Frozen?”

Dean shifted in his seat.

“What? It was leaked out on the net right after the premier. I was curious.”

And Sam didn’t have to know he actually liked it. A lot.

His brother raised a brow at that but didn’t comment. Instead, Charlie turned back to him with a huge grin.

“Bet you’re a closet Brony.”

Embarrassed as hell was not even close how he felt at that moment. And it was hard to tell if he was embarrassed because he was called a Brony or that he knew what a Brony was.

But it was nice to have these people around him. He felt so much stronger. Soon the incident in the shower became nothing more than a floating thought.

* *

There was tension in the Impala, a lot, and Sam had to take a few deep breaths to keep calm and focus on the task ahead. Still, he usually found himself glancing to his right, only to see Hannah stubbornly looking at her lap.

What was he expecting exactly? It hadn’t been even twelve hours since that… that something in the library. He had no idea what the angel was thinking, he had no idea what he was thinking. He had to realize they wouldn’t get back into that friendship they formed during countless hours of research. Something had changed today, he could only hope it would turn out right.

They were driving for half an hour now. Sam considered turning on the radio so something would break the silence but he didn’t get there because all of a sudden Hannah grabbed the seat with one hand and put the other on her mouth and turned to Sam like she was scared to death by something.

“Stop” she said with urgency.

Sam looked at her questioningly.

“What? Why?”

Hannah’s face darkened.

“Samuel Winchester, you stop this car in this instant or I’ll smite you!”

And Sam did. Under the angry glare Hannah’s face was sickeningly pale, grayish and greenish where her hand didn’t cover it. As soon as the car stopped Hannah jumped out and made her way to the closest tree. Setting a hand on it, she bent forward and her body trembled.

Sam was out of the Impala too when he saw something was wrong with Hannah. He rushed to her side and put a hand on the small of her back.
“Hannah, is everything…” he started but the angel gave him the answer he needed.

Hannah retched, her stomach getting rid of everything she had eaten or not eaten. He skin was covered with cold sweat, lips trembled, and a mixture of bile and snot was running from her nose.

“It’s okay” Sam quickly gathered her long hair in one hand while with the other he drew gentle circles on her back. “Let it all out.”

It took a few minutes for Hannah’s body to relax and for her to stop throwing up. She then lifted her watery eyes to Sam.

“This was unpleasant” she said with a weak voice.

“What happened?” Sam asked. He was curious what had caused this to the angel.

“I…” Hannah looked away as she started. “I don’t really know. The motion of the car and the smell of gas somehow made me dizzy. My head was buzzing and my mouth watered up. There was also this… tension in my throat that curled its way up. From my vessel’s memories I knew I was about to vomit. I’m sorry for my behavior. I didn’t want it to happen inside the car.”

Sam smiled at the angel’s foresight then became serious again.

“Motion sickness?” Sam guessed to which the angel made a questioning face. “Your eyes see the unmoving interior of the car but your vestibular system knows that you’re not still. The hypothesis for the cause is that when the brain receives those opposing messages it thinks there’s some kind of neurotoxin in the body that causes hallucinations. That’s why people feel sick. The trick against it is that you keep looking at the landscape. This won’t mess up anything in you.”

Sam offered a tissue to the angel who blew her nose. Hannah squinted her nose afterwards and sneezed a few times.

“You know much about this” she said and blew her nose again.

Sam stiffened.

“Yeah. I knew someone who had motion sickness.” And that someone was Jess but he didn’t want to talk about it so he quickly changed the subject. “I’ve never heard of an angel who had it.”

In his opinion it was too human to effect an angel. It horribly reminded him to Cas when he had been falling. He had been drunk after consuming everything in a liquor store, slept in the car…

“Or is there something?” he asked carefully. “Is something happening to you?”

Hannah took an other tissue from Sam’s hand and looked away as she wiped the corners of her mouth. After a long period of silence Sam walked to her other side to look into her eyes.

“Hannah?”

The angel looked like a startled doe. Her round blue eyes locked with Sam’s in panic. Sam put his hand on her shoulder. Hannah shivered under his touch.

“What’s wrong?” Sam used his gentle voice. He talked to victims and relatives like this, reassuring them to share their pain and suspicions, he would listen to them. He didn’t know though if it was effective on Hannah. She was an angel after all.

To his greatest surprise Hannah glanced away nervously and muttered something under her breath.
“Sorry, I didn’t hear it.” Sam leaned closer and down a little to catch Hannah’s eyes.

“I…” she started, staring into his eyes. “I started falling.”

Sam’s grip tightened a little on her shoulder.

“But why?” he asked. “What’s going on?”

Hannah gaped for a long moment and Sam could see a light blush forming on her face.

“I…”

The angel’s behavior changed all of a sudden. The shyness was gone as Hannah looked at the Impala like nothing had happened in the last few minutes and she had always been a fearless warrior of Heaven.

“Someone’s in the car.”

They both took their angel blades in their hand as they made their way to the car. Sam got there first and when he peeked inside the Impala he lowered his weapon.

“Cas?”

Sam opened the door and yes. The angel was laying there with his feet to the opened door. His nose was dark blue and the rest of his face was as grey as ash.

Sam quickly went to the other side and opened the door there too to get closer to his friend.

“Cas?” He carefully shook him. “Cas? You hear me?”

Cas’ eyes opened to a slit. His gaze was unfocused like he just woke from a sleep. He was much paler than earlier that day and his breathing was labored too.

“Cas.” Sam leaned over him so Cas could see him. “You okay?”

He didn’t expect Cas to start crying. His body trembled with every sob and tears steamed down his face uncontrollably. Sam jumped away from him, almost hitting his head into the car.

“I’m sorry, Sam! I’m so sorry!”

Sam looked at Hannah questioningly who leaned down on the other side. She shrugged.

“What happened?” he asked, turning back to Cas. “Why are you sorry?”

“I couldn’t do it!” he cried. “I couldn’t do it!”

That was when he noticed something in Cas’ hand. A very familiar gun.

“The Colt? Cas, what…”

But then he realized what was going on. The Colt. Cas as a sobbing mess. And he couldn’t do it. *He couldn’t kill Dean.*

“I’m sorry!” It didn’t seem the angel, an angel who felt so deep, would run out of tears any time soon. He raised his left and hid his eyes with his forearm.

He should be angry at him right now. Cas had tried to kill Dean. The very thing Sam wanted to
avoid at all cost. He had even hit Cas. And Cas had tried to do it anyway.

But he wasn’t better. Moreover, Cas was the best of the two of them. Cas wanted to stop Dean, even if it hurt him. He had known what he had to do. But Sam? He wanted to unleash the Devil itself to this world. Cas had tried what was right and Sam had almost let the world burn.

“It’s okay, Cas” he put a hand on the angel’s shoulder and squeezed it. “It’s okay.”

Twenty minutes later they were on their way back to Lebanon. Cas curled up on the backseat with his back to them. Hannah sat next to him, putting a reassuring hand on his shoulder. Sam locked eyes with her for a moment in the mirror then looked back at the road.

*

When you go to an other dimension to fight alongside the revolution against flying monkeys and witches, you’d think you wouldn’t be surprised by anything. Guess what? You would.

It took a little more than half a year to win and give the people of Oz the freedom they had dreamed about for so long. The next few months were spent with rebuilding from almost zero. But they were so happy and optimistic that they didn’t give up and in the end they succeeded.

Charlie loved their unshakeable faith in themselves. Even in the darkest times they never gave up hope and went forward without looking back. For some reason it reminded her to the Winchesters. Not because the boys were similar to these people, quite the opposite. She wanted to share her experiences with them. They needed to know that no matter what had happened, they could move on.

That was when she decided it was time to go home.

“You ready?” Dorothy asked, taking the key of Oz out of her pocket.

Charlie looked at her companion. They had been through a lot, saved each other countless times from certain death.

“Yes.” Charlie nodded with a big smile. She was ready to go back. But she would return to Oz one day. That was a promise she would keep till the end.

But the portal didn’t open.

Dorothy turned the key many times but there were no magical passages to the Batcave. Like in Stargate when the Gate didn’t work and SG-1 had to find a solution or an other way to get home.

“I don’t understand…” Dorothy looked at the key, frowning. “It should work. It always worked.”

“Maybe the problem is on the other side?” Charlie guesses. “Nothing happened on our side that would effect the portal, right?”

“That must be it…” The woman looked at the closed door thoughtfully. “We’ll try again tomorrow.”

And they did for the next two months. The daily tries became once a week then once every two weeks. They had no idea what had happened and nobody in Oz could help them, not even Glinda.
As time passed Charlie steadily lost hope that she would see her favorite boys again.

Then one day, after a half hearted experiment, the door finally opened and she saw the familiar sight of the bunker’s garage. Charlie ran to the library without looking back.

And that was how she got back. Almost a year later, but not really.

“So, no Game of Thrones or Attack on Titan catching-up for me…” Charlie sighed as she got to the end of her dash. Which was almost a thousand pages and getting to the end of it caused her a horrible headache but she didn’t want to miss anything.

She also watched the first few episodes of the new season of her TV shows, read some new books, like House of Hades, and damn it Rick Riordan that troll! She also watched Frozen – which was indeed leaked out on the net a few days after she got back, - the new Thor, Catching Fire, and damn, those movies were great!

This all took about a week and a half. She was locked inside her new room and nobody could make her leave it. Okay, maybe the promise of some not so healthy and very missed food could lure her out of her tiny kingdom below ground level but apart from that she spent most of her time catching up.

When she finally emerged from her room she looked like a zombie. Dark circles under her eyes caused by sleep deprivation, pale skin, messy hair. Dorothy sent her a disapproving look when she saw her on her way outside with Toto.

“Would you be able to defend yourself if someone attacks you?” she asked with a raised brow to which Charlie just waved. She had spent months being ready to fight at any moment. She needed to relax. If sitting in front of her laptop 24/7 was relaxing in any way.

She enjoyed her time in the bunker. Not just because she could be with the Winchesters, but Castiel was an adorable guy, Kevin the best rival she ever had in video gaming, and Linda was just plain awesome. Her family was getting bigger and she loved it.

And since she loved her family, she quickly noticed something was not right.

Everyone looked like they tried to hide their problems and failed at it. Sam was a combination of a lovesick and a kicked puppy. Cas was acting very human – which to be seen after the books was a great shock – and hid his frustration poorly. Not to mention Dean. He acted too happy to be truly happy.

So she chose him to have a little chit-chat. You know, like queen to a handmaiden.

She quickly found Dean. He was in the garage taking care of her tiny car. A few days ago she had decided to stay in the bunker. She wanted to help the boys in this mess they were in so she had asked Sam to give her a ride to her old apartment where she had packed everything important into her car and the Impala and moved to the bunker.

“I’ll take a look at your car” Dean had said as soon as she parked in the garage. “Something doesn’t sound right.”

Dean was now showing his back to her, leaning down to examine every part of the engine. A sly smile appeared on the woman’s face as she stepped closer without a sound.

“So, what’s up?” she asked, poking the man’s back.
Dean almost jumped out of his skin when she touched him. As soon as he saw her, Dean shook his head and wiped his hand with a ragged cloth.

“I’ll put a bell on you too, I swear” he muttered under his nose.

“Sorry!” Charlie pulled up her shoulders and sent him an apologetic smile. “You have to work on your stealth if you want to win a revolution.”

He nodded in agreement.

“Yeah, but you don’t have to go all Assassin’s Creed in here.” Dean took some tools out the toolbox and turned back to the car. “How are you, by the way? You didn’t tell much about your time in Oz.”

Charlie shrugged.

“I fought a lot. My larping skills made it better but I still had to learn many things.” She moved to Dean’s side to see his face. “But how are you?”

Dean looked up, confused.

“Me?”

“Don’t play dumb.” Charlie shook her head. “I know you. I see there’s something bothering you.”

Charlie didn’t expect Dean to say anything. She knew he would brush her off, saying she was just seeing things. She was honestly surprised when Dean put down the tools and sat down on the floor with his back against the car. Charlie quickly joined him, waiting patiently for him to start.

Dean started at the floor for a while before he spoke up.

“Remember when the Wicked Witch killed you and you came back?”

Charlie nodded. Of course she remembered. The pain, the weird dream, Dorothy telling her that the witch had killed her. And Dean acting strange when she had questioned it.

“I-uh…” Dean took a deep breath. “Remember the angels, and Sam’s trials?”

“Dean.” She looked into his eyes with seriousness. “You don’t have to force yourself. If you don’t want to tell me…”

“Yeah, I…” he interrupted her. “I want to tell you. You have to know what happened if you want to understand what’s going on.”

And then he started speaking, only taking breaks when he took a breath or searched for the best words. Charlie listened in disbelief. Dean would do anything for Sam to keep him alive, but tricking him? She had to admit, this was the best of the worst but still… And the angel – who was still in Sam – killed Kevin. Then some kind of a killer’s mark, then everything bad… Dean getting killed didn’t surprise her – which was saying something – but him returning as a demon? Then the time travel back here?

“Wow…” she said when Dean got to the end of the story. She had to wrap her head around it.

“That’s a lot of mess…”

Dean snorted.
“Yeah. Just the usual.”

“No, Dean, it’s not the usual.” Charlie looked deep into his eyes, not letting him to look away, because what she wanted to say was important. “Ever since I met you and read the books, I know that you always do what’s right. When everyone around you does something stupid, like Sam drinking demon blood, you are always there to tell them they were making a mistake. You are always the voice of reason, you see the shades of grey but still know what’s right and what’s wrong. But now you let an angel possess Sam and willingly accepted something created by Lucifer.”

“I had no choice!” he blurted out in defense and rubbed his right arm. “Only a Knight of Hell can kill a Knight of Hell. What was I supposed to do?!”

“Everyone told you the only way to stop Lucifer was to say yes to Michael” Charlie explained with a calm voice. “And what did you do? You found an other way.” She placed a hand on his shoulder. “Dean, I know you were desperate. You wanted to pay for your crimes but it was the worst you could do. You’re a Winchester for crying out loud. I know you think self-sacrifice is the Winchester way, but you can certainly find a better way, you just have to look.”

Dean watched her for a long while then bowed his head.

“I was so stupid…” he said and rubbed his forehead.

Charlie smiled sadly and squeezed his shoulder.

“You were stupid, yeah, but you wanted to do good. I, for one, won’t judge you. We all do mistakes. Like Harry when he ran to the Ministry of Magic to save Sirius. He wanted to save his godfather but unintentionally caused his death. Yes, he blamed himself but he stood up and continued fighting for the right cause.” Charlie leaned a little closer. “And you have to do the same. You have to learn from this and go on.”

Dean froze under her hand for a while then got rid of the tension with a sigh. He put an arm around Charlie’s shoulder and pulled her into a side hug.

“Glad you’re back, kiddo.”

Charlie grinned.

“Me too. A queen has to be there for her troubled handmaiden, you know.”

She felt Dean’s chest shaking with a silent chuckle.

“And the handmaiden is utterly pleased with that, your Highness.”

Charlie heard footsteps approaching and soon Sam appeared in the doorway. The man let a small smile appear on his face at the sight then seriousness took over again.

“Jody called” he said.

Dean shifted a little.

“The chastity group thing?”

Charlie frowned and sat up straight.

“Chastity group?” she asked but the two men were too focused on the other to hear her.
“I’m going” Sam said. “It’s an easy case now, there won’t be any problems.”

“No” Dean protested. “I’ll go with you. If Ves…”

“No, Dean” Sam argued. “I know your health is better and I’d be happy if you could come along but no. You’re still not ready and I know you know that too.”

Dean swallowed hard and nodded.

“Okay, so… You take Cas and…”

“No” Charlie spoke up. “I’ll go with Dorothy. You two can stay, we can handle this.”

Because yeah, the two of them were a pretty good team and she could kick any ass. A chastity group thing was an easy challenge.

“Okay” Sam agreed. “But I have to go. I must talk with Jody.”

Dean frowned at his brother.

“Why?”

“I’ll… I’ll tell you later” Sam said and turned his back to them.

Dean looked at Charlie as soon as Sam was out.

“You serious about this?” he asked. “Because it’s a…”

“Spoilers, handmaiden” she warned him. “And yes, I’m dead serious. Last time I was just a hunter in training. Now they consider me a hero in Oz. I want to help you guys any way I can. We’ll stop Abaddon and Metatron. Just trust me.”

Dean watched her for a while then smiled softly.

“I trust you.”

Charlie grinned and raised her fist.

“So? Brohoof, Rainbow Dash?”

Dean shook his head as he laughed and looked away. But he hit his fist against hers.

“Yeah, brohoof, Pinky Pie.”

Charlie stood up with a big smile and left. She loved when a headcanon turned out to be true.

Chapter End Notes

In chronological order:

- Big yey for Charlie and Dorothy! I'm a bit afraid of writing from Charlie's POV... I hope I didn't mess it up.
- Frozen did leak out on the net right after the premier *coughIgotittoocough*.
- Headcanon: Dean liked Frozen because he could relate to Elsa. I've seen a lot of Supernatural/Frozen crossovers where Dean was Anna just because Cas could be Kristoff then. But no. If Dean is Elsa, then Sam is Anna. And Ruby is Hans. And Elsa's uncontrollable power is the Mark of Cain.
- Headcanon: Dean used to watch MLP as a 'nothing on tv, let's watch some cartoons to waste some time'. Now it's kind of a guilty pleasure. I've watched two episodes maybe so if the parallels are off, tell me.
- Motion sickness is horrible. I can relate to you, Hannah.
- I once had to go through a 100 or more pages of my dash because I was away for a few days. My head hurt like hell for a day.
- "Self-sacrifice is the Winchester way" is from the amazing 'Supernatural: a Parody' by eyemoonvideo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipQRqtMuL7w&list=UU4sKHgjMQuqlEKSNCFrxihw It has a part 2 and a part 3.
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

I won NaNoWriMo with 52750 words :) I'm halfway through chapter 33.

This will be a short but information heavy chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now I know I should have stayed away from that place. It didn’t do any good for me. The annoying humming is still in my ears and not even blood can make it stop.

Because I tried to make it stop. I found a vampire nest and beheaded everyone that attacked me or tried to run away. The floor and the walls were all painted with red and blood pooled around my feet but the strange feeling stayed.

I have no idea what’s happening to me and there’s nobody I can talk to. Who can a human turned demon talk to anyway? There’s nobody who would understand me.

Except…

So I go to the only place where maybe I’ll find answers. The house where I found Cain. He’ll know what’s going on. He was there too, right? It’s not like he could figure out everything in the first minutes of his demon life.

I step into the house and look around. The building is empty and I curse Cain for not being there. He told me to kill him. Then where is he?

I sit on the couch for a while, trying to figure out what to do next. I have to stay away from the bunker. And I have to stay away from them. And him. Just thinking about it makes the hum stronger. I have to do something that would make me forget. I have to do something that would make me focus on something else. Something bloody. Something violent and entertaining.

That’s why I return to Hell. I appear in Crowley’s office who sits behind his desk like he was expecting me. Maybe he knew I would go back. Maybe it was all in his twisted plan.

“So, you returned.” Crowley watches me with a smirk. “Had fun?”

I snarl at him but don’t say anything. He would just make a joke out of my words.

“You seem a bit shaken” he comments, standing up, observing me under his furrowed brows. “Did something happen?”

“None of your business” I growl. “Who should I kill next?”

Crowley shakes his head as he steps closer to me.

“It’s my concern, Dean. You’re my partner in crime. But.” he places a finger on my lips when he sees I’m about to interrupt him. I make a step backwards. “I respect your wish. Back to business then?” He leans forward like he wants to share a secret. He’s too damn close in my opinion. His
voice is low when he continues. “There are some unwanted individuals I want you to get rid of. Good friends of Abaddon. Might cause some problem in the future.”

I nod. Crowley still wants to wipe out his potential enemies. I can understand him. I would do the same.

“What kind of friends are they?” I ask curiously. I want to know who I’m about to face.

Crowley shrugs and puts a paper into the breast pocket of my button up.

“They shared the same fate. Brothers in arms, you might say. Off you go.”

I know he’s hiding something. He’s always hiding something. He never shares everything, always holding back the most important information. As I leave Hell I decide to investigate a little. I open the paper and look at the three names on it: Asmodeus, Belzebub and Mammon. The names sound familiar. Maybe I’ve come across them during some research but I don’t know where. Maybe when we were looking up Abaddon. If they were friends then maybe they were mentioned there.

I sigh. The bunker’s library would be the ideal place to investigate. The warding can’t stop me so I can enter whenever I want. But do I want to go there? Do I want to meet them? Just thinking about it feels like I’m breaking apart.

No. I need an other place.

The Campbell Family Library looks to be the only option I have. I knew them the least from the other potential candidates – namely Bobby and Garth, – also they had Samuel Colt’s journal. They must have something about these guys.

I appear there in a blink. I can cross the warding with ease as I step into the house and go to the library. I look at the books one by one. They’re mainly about monsters, like vampires and werewolves, maybe some are about ghosts, but nothing else. I’m about to give up and prepare myself to go to the bunker when I notice a symbol on the wall. The symbol of the Men of Letters.

I step closer to the wall and as soon as I’m standing there I see a handle in the shadows. I grab it, pull it to the left and the hidden door rolls away.

I find at least a hundred books behind the door. All of them are dusty. It would tickle my nose if I were still a human. On one of the shelves I see a bracelet. It’s silver and has a pentagram charm, a Christian cross, a Men of Letters crest and many others on it. I don’t have to think for long to know where I saw it already. Mom wore a bracelet like this.

I narrow my eyes. Did the Campbells know the Men of Letters? Were they allies or something? Or was that just because of the angels and their big plans to make John Winchester and Mary Campbell fall in love and create the vessels of Michael and Lucifer? The world may never know.

I leave the bracelet there and look for a book that may help me. I take a big black one and sit down with it.

Good choice. After five minutes I find the chapter that I was looking for.

Like Abaddon, Alistair and Azazel, the book says, Asmodeus, Belzebub and Mammon were angels of the Host, part of the ones created by God, until they followed Lucifer down to Hell with one third of their siblings.

I frown. Alistair an angel? Yeah, he was very angelic when he tortured me. Not to mention his
smile.

I shudder and continue picking out the interesting parts.

*Those fallen angels can be differentiated by the color of their eyes.*

No, Abaddon had black eyes, Lilith had white and Crowley has red. Maybe when the book was written the writer didn’t know about this.

*They posses greater power than usual demons since they still have their Grace. Holy water may not cause any harm to them.*

That’s why holy water didn’t affect Azazel. Alistair was affected but Ruby’s knife didn’t kill him. Will the First Blade kill those three then? Probably, since the Knights of Hell can’t be killed by anything but the Blade. Maybe it can kill Lucifer too.

*The strongest of them all are Lucifer, Sariel, Belzebub, Abaddon, Mammon, Belphegor and Asmodeus. They are the leaders of Hell. Among them Abaddon and Belphegor were also called the Knights of Hell, commanders of Lucifer’s elite soldiers with Cain.*

That means Belphegor is already dead. The only knight Cain couldn’t kill was Abaddon.

So Crowley wants me to kill these angels turned demons. No wonder. They are Lucifer’s friends. They probably don’t want a crossroad demon like Crowley to rule Hell. I wonder why I haven’t heard about them before…

Now then. Lucifer is in the cage. Abaddon and Belphegor are dead. I’m gonna kill Belzebub, Mammon and Asmodeus. What about Sariel?

I turn a few pages and I come across an other chapter.

*Under the Throne of God there are seven heavens, ruled by the seven archangels. Michael, Lucifer, Sariel, Samael, Gabriel, Raziel and Raphael. … Sariel was one of the few angels of death, follower of Death itself, commander of reapers. … Sariel followed Lucifer down to Hell.*

Great. An archangel of death turned demon. And it seems Crowley doesn’t know anything about the guy.

Also. Same like Sariel, I have never heard of Samael and Raziel. The book says Samael was an angel of death too and Raziel was the Archangel of Mysteries. No ‘where they are now’ epilogue for them. Why weren’t they there during the Apocalypse? I have to ask Ca…

The sharp pain in my head is a reminder that I shouldn’t think about anything related to who I used to be. I have to forget about Dean and the life he lived. I have to focus on this task. I have to kill those three demons.

I zap away, leaving the hidden door open.

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Chapter End Notes

I'm working from many sources (mainly Wikipedia, but I read a few Hungarian sites too) to create my own (head)canon.
Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

I'm so not ready for the mid-season finale...

Sam, Charlie and Dorothy left a few minutes after Dean woke up the next morning. He rubbed his eyes, said good luck with a yawn he could barely held back and went to the kitchen to drink some tea. He really missed coffee but he couldn’t drink any until the end of January and it was killing him.

Kevin and Linda were already there, the latter making breakfast. Kevin sat at the table with a toast in one hand and a piece of paper in the other. Toto was laying in a basket of soft pillows Charlie had found in a wardrobe near the laundry room (“You seriously never looked around here?” Charlie asked, rubbing her face against the soft material that lacked any layers of dust.), and watched everyone moving around with his big brown eyes. At first they had all feared what Ms. Tran would say about the four-legged addition to their little and strange family but the woman had said it was okay but there would be consequences if there was any mess.

“Morning” Dean said. After pouring some hot water in a mug and putting a teabag in it he sat down next to the young prophet.

“Good morning, Dean” Ms. Tran said and showed him the pan. “A minute and it’s ready.”

“It’s okay.” Dean waved and looked at Kevin’s note. “What is it?” he asked. “Still the angel tablet?”

Kevin nodded.

“I’m almost done with it. Just a few lines are missing.” The teen put down the paper and looked at him. “What do you think? Do you wanna play some videogames? Mass Effect or something?”

Dean smiled. It was great to be in good terms with Kevin again, who looked more relaxed than ever now that his mother was there as well. He was a great kid. It was a shame he had been dragged into this dangerous life.

“And his partner in crime, who had no idea about it yet, entered the kitchen at that moment. Dean tried to hide his smile. In the past few weeks he discovered that Cas was not a morning person. He could he slept in, no matter how early he went to bed. His hair was untamable every morning, and had the grumpiest mood ever. He had a big mug he filled with the strongest coffee possible and sat on the other side of the table.

“Morning, Cas” he greeted him cheerfully. The smell of coffee almost tempted him into throwing his diet out the window and drink a gallon of it.

Cas leaned on his elbow and opened one eye to a slit.
“Hello, Dean” he murmured under his nose. “Sam and the others already left?”

“Yeah, a few minutes ago” Dean answered.

Cas looked at the closest clock, rubbed his eyes and narrowed them to see what time it was. He groaned then, not understanding how he could be up so early. It was just eight.

When the four of them all sat at the table, eating the wonderful breakfast Ms. Tran made, Dean looked back at Cas.

“Do you have any plans for today?”

The former angel, more awaken than previously, shook his head.

“But I suppose you do.”

Dean nodded.

“If you’re okay with it, we can get some shelves.”

“Shelves?” Cas asked back curiously. “Why?”

“To put books on them.” Dean’s grin reached his ears. He already imagined it. He would put some shelves above his bed. His oldest books would be put on the top ones, the newest on the lowers. Maybe he would get some decorations too. And he should buy some frames for the photos they had taken from their old home. And they should make new ones.

Yes, Dean nodded. Good idea.

“You seem to get very happy by the thought of shelves” Cas commented.

Dean turned back to his food with a smile.

“You’ll see why.”

Dean quickly washed the dishes and, with Cas in toe, he looked around the bunker. They searched from the bottom to the top until they found a storage room filled with old furniture. There were lots of different kinds of bookcases and Dean grabbed a few shelves that would match his room. He encouraged Cas to take some for his room too. After taking the toolbox from the garage – and not noticing the door he had broken, Dean and Cas went to the former angel’s room first.

Cas’ room was simple. He didn’t have anything on the walls yet and his wardrobe was still too empty in Dean’s opinion. They had bought some cloths on their way from Colorado back to the bunker but it didn’t mean they wouldn’t go again in the near future. Cas showed him where he wanted the shelves and Dean put them up on the wall. He had done it many times in the past, it was no big deal.

Finishing with Cas’ room they went to Dean’s and after they put those shelves up too Dean took a deep breath. He didn’t know why but he felt nervous and excited at the same time.

“Okay…” Dean sighed again and looked at Cas. “I wanna show you something.”

Cas followed him to the closet with a confused frown. Dean just smiled at that. He opened the door and knelt down.

“There they are.”
Dean pulled out an old heavy cardboard box from the cover of the hanging cloths. It had holes here and there and he had had to fix it with tape on the edges but it survived everything. Now it was done serving.

“What is this?” Cas asked, sitting down next to Dean.

“My uh… nerdiness.”

Dean opened the box. The feeling of nostalgia washed over him as he saw the old books with the weather-beaten covers and broken spines. Old sci-fi’s and fantasies from various writers he had read a million times each. The Frank Herbert Dune books, some Asimov novels, Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, the first three Harry Potters, Star Wars, Kurt Vonnegut, and many more.

Cas reached into the box and pulled out a Verne book. Opening it, he frowned.

“You should have returned this book to a small library in Georgia in ’91.”

Dean shrugged.

“Whoops.” Then he became hesitant. “I… I had to take them. Dad never liked reading fiction. Thought it was a waste of time, we could do research instead. But Mom loved books. She had a bookcase in the living-room for contemporary books. Guess they were the farthest from anything related to hunting. I was seven when I went to the library at school to make my homework and I found a whole section of fiction. I spent a lot of time there, just reading. When we had to move the librarian gave me some older editions as a parting gift. I hid them under the backseat when Dad didn’t see. I hid a few in a forest one time and just collected them after we found the bunker.”

He felt Cas’ intense gaze on him. He was too embarrassed to look up so he fixed his eyes in the box, counting the books.

“Later I took some library books and bought a few used ones” he continued. “I got some children books too and gave them to Sammy. He never asked where those came from and I never told him. I just…” he paused. “I just wanted him to know the tales Mom used to read me. That, of course, never bothered Dad. Sam was a kid, he always told me. He needed protection and peace. But I always had to be an adult. And adults never read stupid fairy tales in their free time, right?”

Dean cleared his throat and stood up, looking at the shelves on the wall.

“But he was wrong” he started talking again, rubbing his forearm. “He was so wrong.”

A hand on his stopped him. Dean looked into the blue eyes of the fallen angel who fixed his gaze on him, not letting him turn away.

Things… A simple look, an innocent touch, a warm feeling. Just things. Things that could have been and could be. Countless possibilities.

“You’re a kind man, Dean.”

From all the things this was the least to expect. Dean turned away doubtfully.

“Yeah, right.”

“I’m serious” Cas insisted. The grip got tighter on his hand. “Every time you put your brother’s needs before everything and forget about your own. Your altruism is one of your most admirable traits.”
Dean chuckled dryly.

“And that’s why Sam is always angry at me.”

“You just act like every eldest sibling.” Cas pulled away and dropped his gaze. “If only it was true for eldest siblings.”

The sudden change of tone was a surprise for Dean.

“You mean the archangels?” he asked. “Michael and the others?”

“God created them first so they could guide and watch over us younger angels” Cas explained. “While they did their job, their actions were various. It shouldn’t have happened but each of us had a sibling we liked the most, regarding those different behaviors and habits.” Cas paused before he continued. “I had one too. With this sibling of mine I watched over humanity for many years. But one day ze was nowhere to be found and I was left alone.”

Dean watched Cas for a while.

“Let me guess. Gabriel?”

Cas smiled.

“No.”

“Then who…”?

“Where do we put these books?”

Oh. That must be a sore memory. Dean looked down at the books and cleared his throat.

“I-uh think we should categorize them according to their genre.”

Cas’ only answer was a nod.

They worked in silence. Dean glanced at the former angel a few times, looking for some kind of answer in his expression. But as always, Cas’ face lacked any emotions like every time he hid something. Dean could figure out that the memories of that sibling were painful. But as curious he was, he couldn’t ask. Hurting Cas more? No way. He could only wonder who that sibling was. The one who followed Lucifer or one of the two he knew nothing about?

Bobby couldn’t believe how stupid these boys were. As soon as they returned Hannah told him everything. Bobby ordered the two idjits to sit down in the library and now he was pacing before them with anger and frustration.

“Were you out of your minds?!” he yelled at them. “You almost killed yourselves!”

Sam avoided his eyes and nervously played with his sleeve. Cas on the other hand was leaning on the table, burying his face in his forearms. He occasionally took a shaky breath. Hannah stood behind them with folded arms like a bodyguard, watching them with sadness. Her body was tense;
Bobby guessed she was ready to jump in, whatever happened. A desk away from them sat Lee, watching the four of them with curious eyes.

“You, Sam.” The older man pointed at the younger hunter. “You almost opened the Cage! We already have to deal with the Leviathans! We don’t need the Devil too!”

“I’m sorry…” Sam muttered under his breath. Both his gaze and arms dropped to his lap.

“Yeah, I’m sure you’re sorry. Can you imagine how worried I was when I heard what you were about to do?”

Sam shut his eyes.

“I’m sorry…”

Bobby took a deep breath and rubbed his face in an attempt to calm down. He turned to Cas then.

“And you. Are you crazy? Going against a demon on your own?”

Cas didn’t answer, just started trembling a little. Hannah reached out and brushed his back. Maybe she did some angelic mojo stuff because Cas immediately relaxed.

Bobby shook his head. He pulled out a chair and sit down, facing the two boys.

“Why do you Winchesters always want to kill yourselves? Isn’t there a better way to solve problems?”

Sam finally looked up.

“I don’t know, Bobby” he said. “I don’t know what to do.”

Bobby removed his hat and scratched his forehead. He had been in desperate times. Hell, he was in one right now with at least thirty other people who didn’t show up here yet. But none of them had ever thought about running to their deaths. They knew they were the only hope this muddy globe had left, they couldn’t afford any suicide missions. But these boys… Sam and Dean had been taught badly by an incompetent father and they had unintentionally taught that to Castiel. Damn it, John…

“Go to sleep, okay?” Bobby looked back at them. “Rest and we’ll see what we can do tomorrow, okay?”

Sam nodded and stood up. With Hannah he helped Cas to get up and the two of them took him out of the library.

“Idjits…” Bobby breathed out with a sigh. He needed something strong.

“We should learn from them” Lee said suddenly. Bobby looked up at him as the man continued. “Good or not, at least they do something.”

Bobby blinked at his friend with disbelief.

“Seriously?” he asked. “You think we should follow their example and run into our death all the time?”

Lee shook his head.
“I didn’t mean that.”

The man stood up and walked to the other side of the desk where Bobby sat, and leaned on it, looking into the older man’s eyes with seriousness.

“When they have a plan, they carry it out. But look at us.” Lee stood up and spread his arms. “We’re holed up in this place, waiting for a miracle that would never happen. A few years ago you would have done the same as those two, but this freaking bunker has everything we need for survival. But while we’re inside, humanity is going extinct.” Lee shook his head, looking away with grief in his eyes. “Today when I was driving outside… I felt so free. I didn’t have to fear that a Leviathan would jump at me out of nowhere. I saw people, normal people, walking and driving.” He turned back to Bobby. “I don’t care if going against the Leviathans is suicide. I would gladly die fighting for a world where Krissy can be free. Or you don’t want a world where Lucy can live peacefully?”

Bobby rested his forehead in his palm.

“Of course I want it.”

He heard Lee walking next to him and he felt the other man patting his shoulder.

“Then let’s make a plan when everything’s back in order.”

When Lee left, Bobby rubbed his face. What Lee said was true. Too true. They took safety for granted. There was a big storage room packed with food. The water was cleaned by some kind of magic because after flushing down the toilet, it came back cleaner than anything Bobby had seen. He didn’t know what the Men of Letters had expected when they had built this place, but they were prepared for everything.

They were safe here. So they became lazy.

“What is it, Grumpy?” a voice asked. “You gonna shoot yourself or what?”

Bobby looked to his left and groaned.

“And I was wondering why it was so damn quite.”

*

The sun was high on the sky when they got to Hartford. Sam parked the Impala at the diner next to the crime scene. Jody was waiting for them next to her pickup, walking to the back of the car as it stopped.

Sam sighed. He was so not ready for this conversation.

Jody smiled at Sam when they got out of the car, but it soon turned into a frown when she noticed the two unknown women.

“Hey, Jody.” Sam stepped to her and hugged her.

“Hey, Sam.” Jody stepped back and looked at Charlie and Dorothy again. “You replaced Dean with the ladies?”
Sam chuckled.

“Jody, they are Charlie and Dorothy. It’s a little complicated to explain but they’re going to solve this case.”

Jody’s lips parted as she watched Sam under her raised brows with disbelief.

“Okay?” She turned to the two women but glanced back at Sam a few times. “Hi, I’m Jody Mills, sheriff of Sioux Falls, wants nothing to do with the wackadoo stuff but it always just happens.”

“And now that the angels fell there will be more of that stuff.” Charlie nodded in agreement.

Jody’s head jerked back towards Sam.

“Angels?”

Oh, yeah. Jody didn’t know about it yet. Sam didn’t know how many times he had to tell that and the story of their time travel yet but he guessed it would be around a dozen.

“Yeah, they exist too.”

Excitement appeared on the sheriff’s face.

“Cool.”

Sam shook his head.

“Actually not.”

“So you two are hunters too?” Jody asked from Dorothy.

“More or less” the woman answered. “Charlie and I were in Oz to fight a revolution. We came back last week.”

Sam could easily point out the moment when Jody’s mind was about to explode with the new information. Her eyes rounded, she blinked a few times then turned back to Sam slowly.

“Oz? Really?” When Sam sent her an apologetic smile she shook her head. “What’s next? You gonna tell me that Doctor Who exists?”

“Well…” Sam started and explained their situation in a shortened version. When he got to the end, Jody’s eyes were so wide he feared they would fall out.

“Wow, that’s…” She tried to find the best word. “Wow. So you already know how this case ends and you still want the girls to solve it on their own?”

“I asked him to let us do it alone” Charlie explained. “Missing people from the same chastity group? Sounds interesting.”

After a few long minutes of Sam begging and swearing that nobody would get killed, Jody finally agreed that the two women could solve the case. Dorothy seemed a bit offended by the lack of faith and the overexcited Charlie made a great contrast to her grumpiness. Jody quickly explained what had happened the other night and then they entered the diner where they met Slim.

Sam watched the conversation from an other desk, sipping his coffee lazily. Even though the case sounded ridiculous, Charlie and Dorothy acted seriously as Slim explained how the mysterious
figure lifted the car in the air. Sam smiled and took an other sip.

‘I feel the presence of a pagan god in this town’ Gadreel said.

‘Yeah, it’s Vesta’ Sam agreed.

‘Are you sure it’s wise to let your friends face a deity like her alone?’

‘Have a little faith in them. They won a revolution, remember?’

‘I had no intentions of belittling their capability’ the angel reassured him. ‘But it’s an altered timeline. Remember Hurleyville? The woman called Robin should have not been there on that day.’

Sam put down his cup and looked over the other table in time to see Slim leaving and the three woman putting their heads together.

‘What do you think?’ he asked, fearing the answer.

‘I don’t know yet’ Gadreel answered with honesty. ‘But something is moving in the shadows. I can feel it approaching. We can only wait and see.’

Great, Sam thought and turned the cup on the table a few times. Uneasiness settled in him. Maybe this whole knowledge of the future wasn’t a triumph card after all.

“Earth to Sasquatch!”

Sam looked up at Charlie. She grinned down at him.

“Dorothy and I are going to the church. Wanna come?”

Sam shook his head.

“No, thanks. I have other plans.”

Charlie nodded with understanding, took the Impala’s keys, then left the diner with her friend.

Then Jody stepped to Sam with a questioning gaze.

“What kind of plans?”

Sam sighed.

“It’s nothing” he lied. “Just some research stuff.”

Jody nodded. Sam felt awful lying to her.

Chapter End Notes

I have this thought about the bunker that, you know, it's a bunker, like those fallout shelters made during the Cold War, protecting against radiation and having everything needed for survival. Jenkins said in 'Slumber Party' that the bunker "is the last true beacon of light in a world gone topsy-turvy". The bunker is full of mysteries and there are just a few things we know about (like the computer that's powered by magical stuff and what about those files, Charlie!?). I hope that place wasn't just introduced for the
sole reason of having a home base and a fix set.
And shelves and mysteries and who is that?
“Can you look after him for a while?”

Hannah looked up at Sam. His gaze was distant, not focusing on anything particular. His bright soul turned grayish and it moved sluggishly around its meat suit, curling up so it won’t be seen in its misery.

Hannah swallowed. She didn’t want to leave Sam alone when he was so desperate. She wanted to comfort him like in the library. She wanted to reassure him that she was here for him now too but this time she would not run away. She would do anything to make him feel better.

The angel raised her hand. She wanted to place it on his shoulder. She wanted to light up his soul. She wanted to make him feel better. She wanted to see him smile and at peace.

But before she could touch his arm she dropped her hand. No. What Sam needed now was solitude to think everything through. As much as she wanted to be with him she had to respect his wish and give him time. She shouldn’t bother him with her possible downfall as an angel and emotions she still couldn’t understand.

“I’ll look after him” she nodded.

Sam flexed his jaw and relaxed it as he looked down at her hand then into her eyes.

“Okay.” Sam’s voice was low, trying to sound as casual as possible. As he left the room, Hannah couldn’t shake the feeling that she did something wrong. Did she hurt Sam? How? Had she said something offending? Had she done something she shouldn’t have?

Hannah sighed and turned to the bed. She had to focus on the task ahead, namely watching over Castiel.

The angel was lying on his bed, curled up like a fetus in the mother’s womb, but his vessel was tense. Sam only saw this, but as an angel she could see more. Castiel’s Grace was torn. A big portion of it was missing, like it was forcefully taken away from him, and the wound on its former place leaked. When the angel coughed that leaking matter left him in the form of a grayish slime or in gray puff. Other parts of his Grace were burning, injuring the vessel from the inside, leaving bleeding wounds on the organs that the angel could just barely heal, if he even tried healing himself.

Castiel was dying.
She already knew this. Maybe from the moment they had first met, after Gadreel had killed her siblings. At that time she hadn’t known what was happening to the angel. She had thought that his Grace had been injured during the fall. After she had found out what had really happened she was angry. How could their commander do something like that? Taking the Grace of an other angel? Hannah sighed and closed her eyes. She still considered that day the biggest mistake of her life.

Castiel was a great angel, no matter what mistakes he had made in the past. He had sacrificed so much. This was not what he deserved.

Hannah stepped closer and sat down next to Castiel. She placed her hand on his shoulder but the other moved away from it as if her touch burnt his skin.

“Don’t” he muttered.

Hannah frowned in confusion.

“I want to heal your vessel” she explained. “You have to stay alive. We didn’t find Father Time yet.”

Castiel dug his fingers into his hair and gripped it tightly like he wanted to rip it out.

“I just want to die.”

Hannah took his arms and gently, but firmly, pulled them away so she could look at the angel in the eyes. As the light reached his face Castiel looked up with his painful gaze.

“Why are you saying this?” she asked. “You can’t give up now.”

Castiel shut his eyes.

“Yes, I can. Leave me Hannah. I want to be alone.”

He tried to free his arms from her grip but she didn’t let him.

“I won’t leave you. Not now. I know you’re desperate now but…”

“You don’t understand!” Castiel yelled all of a sudden and Hannah released his arm as she moved away from him a little. “You don’t understand anything! You’re just an angel!”

Castiel turned on his other side and curled up again.

Hannah watched him with wide eyes. What he said… That she was just an angel… It hurt her. She didn’t know why, but this statement filled her with excessive sadness. She was just an angel, which meant she had no emotions.

She turned her back to Castiel and placed her hands in her lap. If she didn’t have emotions why did it hurt so much looking at Castiel? Why did it ache her Grace like nothing ever before? Why was there a knot in her vessel’s throat and why was it harder to breathe even though she knew nothing blocked the way of air to the lungs? Why did her hands start shaking? Why did her eyes sting? Why did her vision blur? Why were her cheeks wet?

Hannah raised her trembling hand, wiped her face and looked at her palm with bewilderment. Water. Why was water on her face? She snuffled and it immediately brought back a memory. Her time in the park. The woman on the bench, sobs rocking her body, tears rolling down her pale cheeks.
Was she crying?

How was that possible? Angels never cried. The only angel she had ever seen crying was Castiel and he was more a human than an angel.

Unless…

Metatron was right…

She was falling…

Her Grace was developing a soul…

She started feeling like a human…

She was getting closer to a human…

She didn’t know how long she was sitting there, shocked by this realization. The more she thought about it the more real it felt. Deep inside her warmth bloomed which was soothing and painful at the same time. The mixed feeling confused her. How could something be so right yet so wrong at the same time? What part of it reflected reality? Or was both of it true?

Hannah looked behind her. Did Castiel feel the same way? Did different forces of emotions conflict inside him, effecting his actions and way of thinking? Was it why he had made that hasty decision regarding Dean and why he wanted to die so much now?

Was it because of these conflicting feelings that she hadn’t acted like herself before? Why her mind had wandered away while she hadn’t noticed her surroundings? Why her vessel had acted so strange, doing things she couldn’t explain?

_I see your Grace shivering like Castiel’s when he was talking or thinking about his little slice of humanity. And I think you know as well as I know that he’s in love._

Hannah took a shaky breath. Emotions were so confusing. _Love_ was so confusing. There was the love she felt for God, just like every angel. There was the love she felt for humanity, because God had asked them to love them more than Him. There was love for Castiel, a deep bond between brother and sister. And there was _love_.

She placed her hand on Castiel’s shoulder and now she didn’t leave him time to move away. She healed his vessel and tried to put a barrier around his leaking Grace too. She couldn’t do much. She just slowed it down a bit. She could only hope it would be enough until they find Father Time.

Hannah turned away before Castiel could see her face. She didn’t want him to see her like this. She had to be strong so she could support him.

“Why?” he asked. His voice was so broken it made Hannah feel sorrow. “Why did you heal me? I told you to leave me.”

Her eyes welled up in tears again. It seemed accepting the fact that she had human emotions opened up a carefully sealed gate inside her.

“Because I… I can’t let you die, Castiel” she said. “You’re my… favorite brother…”

She heard Castiel catching his breath behind her. Hannah quickly wiped her eyes but no matter what she did the tears always returned. The thought of losing Castiel, her dear brother, caused both
emotional and physical pain. Her chest was tight and the feeling moved higher in her throat. She identified the forceful wave of emotion that made her cry more and more as mourning. She already mourned for Castiel because she knew she couldn’t do anything for him.

Just a miracle could help him now. A miracle she couldn’t make.

The angel felt a hand on hers. The grip was weak but reassuring and she gripped back tightly, fearing it would be gone if she wasn’t holding on to it.

“Emotions are so confusing” she admitted.

“I agree” Castiel answered. “But they are wonderful, don’t you think?”

Hannah nodded in agreement and let out a desperate laugh, because she couldn’t tell if it was funny or bitter. In the end she decided the universe had a bad sense of humor.

*

This Bonnie Fuschau annoyed the hell out of her. Her voice was annoying and her toothy grin was annoying. Not just that but the way she looked at her and Charlie creeped her out. She had seen more horrible creatures in her life but somehow this woman stood above all.

“We hope you enjoyed the tour. Any questions before we get you girls registered?”

Yes. Are you the monster we are looking for? Dorothy asked in her mind. Because something was up with this woman and she had a feeling it had something to do with the missing people. Maybe it was the toothy grin that almost blinded her, or maybe the sweet silk-like voice that snaked around her throat, she couldn’t tell, but something was off, she was sure of that.

“Actually yeah, Bonnie” Charlie started then quickly added with worry. “Can I call you Bonnie?”

Bonnie’s smile grew and Dorothy thought her lips would rip apart soon.

“Of course!”

“Okay” Charlie smiled too. “We would really like to join. We are new into this relationship but none of us feel…” She paused then looked at Dorothy. “How do we say it, Dory?”

Hearing the nickname, Dorothy let a small smile appear on her face.

“Pure.”

“Thank you!” Charlie turned back to Bonnie. “We don’t feel pure enough for this. We heard about this group then decided to give it a try but…” Her voice trailed off and worry appeared on her face. Award winning performance in Dorothy’s opinion. “We heard about the members who went missing. Personally, I’m very scared…”

There it was. Bonnie’s features tensed. Not too much, but enough for Dorothy to notice it. Bonnie glanced at her then back at Charlie. She put on the mask of a grieving leader of the group, putting her hand above her heart.

“Let me assure you, with our increased security, Good Faith has never been safer. And those
people who have gone missing, well, they are front and center in our prayers.”

“And may God bring them back to us.” Dorothy showed Bonnie an equally ridiculous smile. From the corner of her eye she saw Charlie sending her a warning gaze but she just kept smiling until they signed their ‘Purity pledge’.

Once outside and before the group meeting, Charlie pulled Dorothy closer to her by putting her arm around her waist. They walked on the sidewalk around the building.

“That was a little overacted, don’t you think?” she asked with a hushed voice.

Dorothy quickly looked around. People were walking around the church but nobody seemed to pay attention to them so she returned the side hug.

“Bonnie is our suspect” she said, turning back to Charlie. “Did you see how she reacted when you mentioned the missing people?”

“But why would she do that? Why would it be good for her? Is she, I don’t know, some kind of a virgin blood sucker?”

Dorothy nodded. Charlie wasn’t far from the truth.

“Think about it. Everyone in the group signed that they are virgins or made a new vow of chastity. And who did we give that clipboard to? Bonnie. Whatever happens here, it’s connected to her.”

Charlie put her free hand on her hip and looked at the ground. While she was thinking Dorothy looked around again. The world changed so much in the past decades. Charlie had warned her that outside the bunker nothing would be the same but she had never imagined this. Technology evolved into something she had only read in a few sci-fi books. Or more. Or less. It depended on how you looked at it. The cars couldn’t fly but they were nice, at least.

“Okay” Charlie spoke up. “We check out this group, ask about the missing members then find out who we are facing.”

Satisfied with the plan, Dorothy nodded and they returned to the building.

The group meeting was a torture.

Dorothy never liked these kind of things. Sitting around with strangers and talking about emotions? No. She would gladly talk about self defense or battle strategies but not emotions. After a prayer and silencing a woman called Tammy who was about to read a horrible poem, Suzy looked at the two of them.

“Why don’t we hear from our new friends?” Suzy smiled at Charlie. “Charlie, what brought you here to reclaim your virginity?”

Dorothy glanced at her friend who just paused for a short second before she said:

“The storms of life. It was tossing me around like a piece of garbage. People treated me badly and I…” Charlie let out a shaky breath then took Dorothy’s hand. “But with Dory I think I can start all over again. I just have to be pure before I can move on.”

An ‘aw’ broke out from the group. Dorothy’s lips curled up but she wasn’t smiling.

“And you Dorothy?” Suzy asked. “What made you reclaim your virginity?”
“A wicked witch” she deadpanned.

The group went silent. She saw some attempts of a smile but most of the people couldn’t put her answer anywhere. At that she really did smile.

The meeting was boring. Dorothy soon found herself not hearing what the others were saying. Instead she kept an eye on Bonnie. She still had that strange smile on her face and when she noticed Dorothy’s watchful eye she fluttered her lashes and looked her straight in the eyes, challenging.

After the meeting Charlie went to talk with the group counselor.

“I think I know who she is” she explained with an excited tone and left.

Dorothy sighed and looked around. Bonnie was scolding a woman at the table with her back to Dorothy. She decided it wouldn’t be wise to talk to her right now so she turned around and started talking to the first person she saw.

“Tammy, right?”

The woman looked at her, surprised at first then a huge grin appeared on her face.

“Yes. And Dorothy?”

She nodded.

“Can I ask you a few questions?”

“Of course!”

Dorothy looked back at Bonnie and led Tammy to the other corner of the room.

“I want to ask you about the missing members.” Tammy’s eyes lit up with excitement and she was about to start ranting but Dorothy held up a hand to silence her. “Did they break their vow?”

The woman looked displeased not getting the chance to gossip but she answered the question. All victims had. Dorothy thanked her help then looked for Charlie with her eyes. When their gaze connected the younger woman quickly said goodbye to a nervous Suzy and went to Dorothy.

“So?” she asked.

Bonnie was still far away so she could give an answer.

“All victims broke their chastity vow” she explained with a low voice. “And adding it to the information we already know, like the blue flame, I’m certain that we’re facing Vesta. The people she took are under ground level, probably in a basement.”

Charlie grinned at her proudly.

“I like your brain.”

Dorothy showed her a pleased smirk. As a female hunter, she had to prove her capability. She had to know everything she could face one day and show the men who wore the trousers.

“How do we stop her? And how do we find the vics?” Charlie’s eyes brightened as she got an idea. “Do I have to do the dirty with Suzy?”
“No.”

“But she’s Carmelita! Casa Erotica porn star.”

Dorothy frowned.

“You are not laying with a pornographic actor.”

Charlie smirked with mischief.

“Will we do the dirty?”

“No. We have to stay focused.”

Charlie pouted at that and Dorothy had to hold back a laugh.

“You’re no fun.”

They decided to sit outside the park. It was a warm November afternoon, they could stay there without fearing to catch a cold. Charlie was looking up information of Vesta with the help of her laptop which she found in less than two minutes.

“We need an oak stake stained in the blood of a virgin.” Charlie looked up at Dorothy. “Where do we get a virgin? A real virgin? Because I think our blood’s not gonna work.”

Dorothy shrugged.

“Tammy?”

Charlie nodded in agreement.

“Yeah… Someone who names her poem like that must be a virgin.”

They waited until they were sure Bonnie was back in her office then reentered the building. As suspected, Tammy was still there. When she noticed them she eyed Dorothy warily.

“Can I help you?” she asked.

“Actually, yes!” Charlie beamed. “We need your blood.”

Tammy’s eyes widened. She looked from the serious Dorothy to the grinning Charlie.

“You serious?” She gaped for a moment. “But… Pagans use blood. Are you pagans?”

Charlie’s grin quickly dropped.

“We have no time for this.”

She grabbed Tammy’s wrist, turned it so her palm was up, took a knife from her jacket and cut a long wound on the hand. Tammy was too shocked to scream and just realized what was going on when Charlie already wiped off the blood with a cloth.

“Wha… Wha…” She tried to say something, anything, but failed.

“Sorry” Dorothy told her when Charlie was already on her way out. “She’s a little upset. I didn’t let her spend the night with some modern Louise Willy.”
Leaving the confused Tammy and her bleeding palm behind, they quickly got some oak branches
then waited in Dean’s Impala, which Charlie for some reason named the ‘Batmobile’. Dorothy had
no idea how the car had any relations to flying mammals but she didn’t question it. She would find
it out sooner or later. The sun was almost down when Bonnie, no, Vesta finally left the building.
The goddess looked around and once she was in her car she drove away. Charlie followed her.

“Is she going to the vics?” Charlie asked doubtfully. They were leaving the town now and the
distance between houses got bigger. “Or did she notice us?”

“I doubt that” Dorothy answered thoughtfully. “She would have attacked us by now. She’s going to
sacrifice someone, I think.”

Her fingers tightened around the steering wheel as Charlie kept looking at the car far ahead of
them. The sun set down behind the horizon, coloring the sky to a dark shade of orange decorated
by black clouds. Soon everything they saw from Vesta’s car was two lamps.

They parked the car not far from an old abandoned farm. Dorothy took the stakes as she got out and
handed one to Charlie.

“I go from the front, you from the back” she said. “Be careful. A goddess is as powerful as a witch,
if not more.”

Charlie spun the stake in her hand, showing Dorothy her trademark grin.

“Can I have a good luck kiss?”

Dorothy rolled her eyes but smiled as she leaned closer to peck the other’s forehead. Charlie was
about to protest but Dorothy cut in.

“Stay focused.”

Charlie shook her head and she turned around. As she walked away she muttered:

“Man… Staying focused when you leave me hanging like that? Not fair.”

Dorothy let a small smile linger on her face but she soon shook herself back to her hunter mindset.
Pagan deities were dangerous. They were bitter since Christianity took over the majority of the
globe. No more followers and sacrifices.

According to a theory a Man of Letters had back in the 1800’s, pagan deities were ancient tulpas.
Very powerful tulpas who couldn’t be erased easily. That man had thought that the sacrifices gave
them the energy to evolve from ordinary tulpas to the gods and goddesses they were today.

Dorothy carefully opened the door but she couldn’t prevent it from creaking loudly. With light
steps she entered the barn that was only lit by a streetlamp outside. Without a good sight, her other
senses heightened.

That was why she heard the light ‘woosh’ behind her. That was why she could turn around in time
to stop a flaming hand from reaching her body with the stake.

“I knew you were trouble” Vesta hissed at her. “I should have killed you right there in the office.”

Dorothy smirked.

“And you think you can kill me now? Silly Vesta. You’re underestimating me.”
Vesta snarled and pushed her backwards toward the wall. Dorothy stood her ground and pushed back but the goddess was much stronger than her. Her arms started shaking from strain and splinters dug deep into her palm.

“You think you can defeat me?” Vesta asked. “Maybe you bear the blessing of a witch on your forehead but it won’t save you from me. I can kill you and your companion.”

Dorothy caught movement behind Vesta but she kept her focus on her face.

“Speaking of which” the goddess continued. “Where is she? She seemed weaker than you. Is she hiding somewhere?”

“Nope. Behind you.”

It took Vesta by surprise. She turned around to look at Charlie who already struck down with her stake. Dorothy did the same as soon as the goddess stopped paying attention to her and stabbed the deity in the lower back the same time as Charlie’s stake entered the goddess’ chest. Vesta’s mouth opened to a scream but the only thing that left her mouth was blue flames. It covered the entirety of her face which was still burning when her body hit the ground.

Dorothy exhaled a long breath and from the dead goddess she looked at Charlie who was so pleased with herself her eyes were twinkling like stars in the light of the blue flames.

“So?” she asked. “Where’s my kiss?”

Dorothy laughed.

“We still have to find the victims.”

* *

Sam rubbed his eyes with the heel of his hands. God, he was exhausted. Not in the physical way. It was like all positive emotions drained out of him and what was left pulled him down into a bottomless pit. Or to the Cage itself, back to Lucifer’s cruel games and activities.

Sam shivered at the thought. And it was just a thought. What would have happened if he opened the Cage for real? He didn’t understand what he had been thinking at that moment. Lucifer would help him? Really? Was he mad or something? Where had that thought even come from? How could he think it would be a good idea? He should have dropped it immediately…

But he hadn’t and if not for that rock they would be in a bigger mess than ever by now.

Sometimes Sam wondered if he was good at all. He was Lucifer’s true vessel, the yellow eyed demon had fed him with demon blood, he had later started to drink it because he had thought it was for the greater good. When it, in reality, was not.

He had let himself to be misled so many times. By Meg, Ruby… Even by himself. Why was it that no matter how many times he had faced anything related to Lucifer, his reasonable self all of a sudden shut down? Was it because of the demon blood? Did it somehow alter him, triggering some kind of a hidden order inside him whenever Lucifer was involved in something? He couldn’t explain how else he would not listen to Dean when he had said to stop swallowing demon blood.
Or how he would open the Cage.

Sam sighed and leaned on his knees. No wonder Dean was the Righteous Man and he was just the Boy King, even though they were brothers. He would never escape from the shadow of the fallen archangel. It would haunt him for the rest of his life. He would make bad decision after bad decision, no matter how good his intentions were supposed to be.

He was the prisoner of this deadly circle.

And then he heard a kid laughing.

Sam frowned. He stood up and walked to his door, standing there quietly as he listened. Did he really hear it? There shouldn’t be any kids in the bunker. Was he dreaming then? When little footsteps were heard from the corridor too, the man opened the door and looked outside.

There she was. A girl, little more than two years old, was running up and down the corridor. Her long curly brown hair was floating behind her, bouncing up and down with each step. She didn’t have any toys, the running itself entertained her. Her laughter was a melody of wind bells, her smile made the empty corridor much brighter.

The door creaked quietly when Sam opened it, but it was enough for the girl to notice. She stopped and looked at Sam questioningly with her brown eyes.

Sam left his room carefully, not wanting to scare the girl. But it didn’t seem she would run away in fear. She watched him with curiosity.

“Hey, little girl.” Sam crouched down when he was just a step away from her. “Where did you come from?”

The girl blinked and started talking. With her mouth closed. So it was more like a not understandable way of communication. And Sam was lost. He had very little experience with children and most of them were older than the girl. And all of them could talk.

She stepped closer and raised her hand. Sam waited patiently to see what she would do, holding himself back from moving even just slightly. The girls little fingers closed around a mop of hair and she carefully moved it up and down. She did all of this with a solemn face then all of a sudden she broke into giggling, having more and more fun with his hair.

Sam smiled at that.

“I’m glad you’re having fun” he said. “But I still don’t know where you came from.”

“Lucy?”

The girl and Sam looked up. At the end of the corridor stood Bobby. He was stunned, the kind of abashment Sam had never seen on his face.

The girl’s her eye lit up with happiness at the sight of the man.

“Da!” she shrieked and ran to Bobby. The older hunter picked her up and hugged her tightly.

“Man, I missed you kid.”

The girl, Lucy, cupped Bobby’s face when she leaned away a little, looked deeply into his eyes and started explaining something on her sealed-lips way. Her face was beyond serious and Sam
couldn’t help but smile as he stood up.

“Yeah, pumpkin” Bobby nodded. Maybe he understood every sound.

Sam cleared his throat and Bobby looked at him like he just noticed the younger Winchester was there too.

“So. Da?”

Bobby shifted on his feet uncomfortably, avoiding Sam’s eyes.

“Yeah, I guess.”

“I thought you never wanted a kid.”

“It happened.”

The happiness Sam felt at that moment warmed up his soul and pushed every negative thought out of the way. Bobby deserved to be happy. He had always been there for Dean and him when their father wasn’t; he listened to them, understood them, scolded them then reassured them that nothing was lost yet. Bobby was a great father and he deserved to have a family.

Lucy patted Bobby’s shoulder to draw the man’s attention back to her.

“Ma?” she asked.

Bobby sighed sadly.

“I’m sorry. She’s not here yet.”

Sam observed the girl one more time then smiled at Bobby.

“Let me guess. Jody?”

When the older hunter’s face turned crimson red Sam wanted to laugh. An embarrassed Bobby was a rare sight.

Lucy, probably hating that their eyes were not on her, started whining so loud it hurt Sam’s ear. She had no tears in her eyes, of course.

“She’s stubborn as hell” Bobby explained, loud enough for Sam to hear.

“Yeah, I can imagine.”

“Just Becky can deal with her.”

“Yeah, figures.” Then the words gained meaning in Sam’s head. “Wait, what?”

A loud gasp then a scream was heard behind Sam. The man, covering his ears, turned around and saw none other than Becky Rosen. She looked older. Much older than the last time he had seen her. Her hair was short, it was a very boyish cut, and even her cloths looked more hunter-like than the way she usually dressed. But what stayed was the glint in her eyes when she looked at him that never promised any good.

“Sam!” she beamed and walked to him.
I hope I wrote Dorothy well. I read The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (for the first time) for this chapter, but I think I should read the rest of the books too. If only they were translated to Hungarian...

The "pagan dietied are ancient tulpas" is based on a line Sam said back in 1x17 - Hell House, "Kinda makes you wonder. Of all the thing we hunted, how many existed just cuz people believed in them."

There is a girl in my daycare who only spoke with her mouth closed. She'll be 3 in January and she just started speaking properly. And she's stubborn as hell, like the rest of my girls, so there's only silence in the room when they're sleeping XD
Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

The last episode left me so empty... In a good way, of course, because it was a great episode. And January 20th is sooo far away... =_= I'd like to watch a good episode on my birthday week. Oooo, and Metatron will be back! Can't wait.

I hit the wall. Hard. My back aches as I try to stand up. Which is not possible. I shouldn’t feel physical pain, not from this tossing around. The Mark should prevent me feeling anything. It should heal me in an instant and get me back on my feet again. But it doesn’t. I’m still struggling to stand when I look at the demon before me.

Asmodeus was the easiest to find from the three. I didn’t have to look for long; I found the demon in an ordinary strip bar. She – because the son of a bitch possessed a pretty brunette – smiles at me with her meat suit, but with her true form, those three ugly heads, she snarls at me, showing sharp teeth.

“And you killed Abaddon?” she asks. Her voice is high as if she’s cooing a baby. “I expected more from a Knight of Hell. A little challenge, you know? A little workout, some fun time, perhaps.”

I stand up, ignoring the pain in my back. She knew immediately who I was when I entered the bar. She sat at the table on the far side of the bar in her glitter covered red dress surrounded by men and women. Meeting my eyes, she stood up, walked to me, swaying her hips a way everyone’s eyes were fixed on her, following her every move in daze.

“Winchester, right? Wanna go outside?” she asked, fluttering her long lashes at me.

Asmodeus is the demon of lust but she had no effect on me. Maybe as a demon other demonic powers don’t work on me. Like how I could move even tough Abaddon pinned me against the wall.

I stepped away the door and returned her smile.

“Ladies first.”

As soon as we were behind the building she tossed me against the wall and now here I am, hitting the building for the tenth time already. I feel the metallic taste of blood in my mouth and I spit the red liquid to the side.

“Yeah?” I wipe the corner of my mouth. The Mark finally started to heal my wounds but the blood is still there. “What if I’m just pretending to be weaker than you?”

Asmodeus throws back her head and laughs.

“Oh my! You’re too cute! Pretending to be weaker? Really?” She looks back at me, still laughing. “You are weaker.”

My fingers tighten around the Blade.
I have to admit what Asmodeus said was true. I am weak. Weaker than weeks ago. Every fight I have makes me wearier. I have to zap to a quiet place, usually a forest, and rest. It started not too long ago. Right after I left the bunker, to be exact.

Asmodeus takes a few steps closer to me. Her grin is wide as she watches me with amusement.

“Maybe the Mark on your arm made you a demon, but you’re not a demon, Dean.” She’s just a step away from me now, entering my personal space. I take a step back, because how dare she do that, but she follows me. And she reaches out to brush my face. I wanna throw up as her true form makes contact with me. I remember sweaty hands and breaths reeking with alcohol. “Your soul is only overshadowed by the Mark. You are just a human dressed as a demon for a Halloween party.”

I feel anger as I hear her words. She thinks I’m just some demon wannabe? I’m a freaking Knight of Hell! I’ll kill her!

The Mark on my arm flares up with a new intensity I haven’t felt in a long time. I feel the strength again. It flows through me like the blood in my veins. The First Blade is hot in my hands and it hungers for some blood. Some demon blood to be exact.

Asmodeus notices the change. She quickly glances down at my arm then back at me. Her true form draws back a little, maybe she gets ready to smoke out in any moment.

“You’re working for Crowley, right?” she asks casually. “How does he treat you? Does he give you everything you need?”

Oh, the good old ‘I think you’re stronger than me, why don’t you join me then?’ conversation. I was already looking forward to that actually, waiting for somebody to finally say it. There are bigger players than Crowley, like Asmodeus and her friends. I’m a Knight of Hell; invincible, unstoppable. Which demon wouldn’t want a guy like me in their army? Not that I want to join any of them. I’m only working with Crowley because that guy knows something big and I want to find that out. And because he gives me these fine missions that would end with my opponents blood on my hands.

But Asmodeus doesn’t have to know that I know what she plans.

“Why do you ask?” I like thinking I can play the dumb well. I have the face for that, for one. Who would think a male with a pretty face has a brain? And the more I try to act the more convincing I am. It wouldn’t be the first time I fool someone with this strategy.

She has a wicked grin on her face when she brushes my cheek with her fingers. I want to chop them off right there but I hold myself back. Just a little longer.

“Abaddon died, Belphegor died… We are two demons short” she explains. “Don’t you think a Knight of Hell like you would be a good addition to our group?” Her fingers slide down to my lips. “Have you ever thought about ruling Hell? Changing it the way you want, making it better? Stepping on Crowley’s corpses, wiping your shoes on his skin?”

It sounds nice, I have to admit. Tempting. Maybe I should consider this. Getting rid of Crowley is on my list, ranking high. Maybe I should join her? We can kill Crowley easily and take over Hell side by side…

NO.

I shake myself mentally and the haze I didn’t notice lifts from my eyes. What the hell? I thought
Asmodeus has no effect on me… Then what the hell was that supposed to mean? Did I really consider turning my back to Crowley? He’s not the best ally I can ask for, but at least I know him. I only met Asmodeus a few minutes ago and already thought about joining her. Where did this come from?

I have no time to think about it. I have to finish her once and for all before this thing happens again.

Asmodeus is still busy touching my face so she doesn’t notice it when I aim at her with the Blade.

“You know what I want?” I ask. “Your head on a plate.”

With that I stab the Blade into her stomach.

Asmodeus screams. Her eyes and mouth lights up and glowing cracks appear on her face. The same happened with Abaddon. For a moment I see her before me. I see the blood as I stab her again and again and again.

Then Sammy tells me to stop.

I pull away so quickly I almost stumble. Asmodeus’ empty meat falls on the ground, blood pools around the corpse. I breathe heavily as I look down at it. Something is not right with me. Something is happening to me and I have no idea what it is. Maybe I should ask Crowley. He would know, right? Crowley knows a lot of stuff. Maybe he knows something about this.

I’m about to zap downstairs when I feel a powerful pull. It’s like the one last time but somehow it feels different. It’s coming from the bunker again. A part of me wants nothing to do with that place. I have to keep myself away from there, remember? But then I find myself blinking away the green, putting away the still bloody blade and I allow the power to pull me away.

I’m in the bunker again. And I’m facing Sam again.

“What do you want?” I ask, annoyed. “Last time wasn’t enough?”

I take a step closer to scare him a little, but there’s something blocking my way. I look down.

Around the original trap there’s some knew symbols on the wet floor.

“I made some research and found this.” Sam holds up a book. “Japanese Nara period Oni binding symbols. Tested a few times before I summoned you. It seems to work with you too.”

I roll my eyes in frustration.

“What do you want?” I repeat the question.

Sam sighs. He puts down the book on the table next to him.

“I’m going to cure you” he says with so much determination, for a moment I wonder if he can really do it. Can he cure me? Can he turn me back to a human? Can I be again who I used to be? Just a hunter who burns bones, beheads vampires, kills demons, werewolves, wendigos and other nasty creatures to save innocent lives?

The Mark sends a sharp pain through my arm and I snarl at it.

“I told you already!” I bark out as the pain reaches my throat. Or maybe the Mark, I’m not sure. “I don’t want to be fixed!”

Sam’s expression doesn’t change. He keeps looking at me like I didn’t say anything.
“I can do it, Dean. I have the blood, a priest sanctified it. I washed the floor with holy water too.”

Holy water? There’s holy water on the floor? I steal a glance down, not that Sam would notice where I’m looking. Yes, the floor is wet and a lot of water is pooling around my feet, I saw that already. But I don’t feel it. It doesn’t burn my skin or anything. It’s just water.

*What the hell…?*

“Let me help you, Dean” Sam pleads, taking a step towards me. “We can fix it.”

I look at the table again. There are a bunch of O type blood bags, stolen from some hospital probably. I wonder what the priest had thought when Sam asked him to make it holy blood. And what about those who needed that blood? O is the universal blood type, it can be given to anyone. What if there’s a big accident and nobody knows the poor casualties’ blood types but can’t give them any because Sammy stole it to give it to a demon. Yeah, great.

Wait, what?

My stomach is twisting. I was thinking about normal people who need the blood more than me? I thought about their wellbeing? Is that a twinge of conscience?

For the second time this day I don’t know what’s going on with me. I feel the Mark complaining, telling me to give it blood but somehow I… *I don’t care.* For the first time I don’t want what the Mark wants. It can go to hell, seriously. It annoys me.

Just like Sam. He keeps talking and talking about how he’s going to cure me and how good it will be and how happy we will be…

I feel the frustration growing in me. The Mark’s voice from the inside, Sam’s voice from the outside… The two soon mix together into one bizarre noise and my brain wants to explode.

“Release me…” I mutter.

“No, Dean” Sam answers. “I’m doing this now.”

“Release me…” I repeat. I clench my fists and my body shakes with anger.

“Dean…”

*I SAID RELEASE ME!*

The dungeon trembles. Sam grabs the table to steady himself but jumps away quickly when a part of the ceiling falls on it, tearing open the blood bags. The blood spreads out on the table and drips on the floor from all four sides.

I exhale a heavy breath as I have a look at the damage. The ceiling, the blood, Sam…

He watches me with caution. He moves his hand behind him and pulls out Ruby’s knife. He holds it up and looks me in the eyes. I see sadness in them. And fear.

My brother is afraid of me.

“Release me” I say it again, trying to sound calmer but it still comes out menacing.

Sam watches me for a moment longer then carefully steps to the table, fishes the book out of the stones and starts an incantation.
I don’t look at him when I disappear.
They were sitting in the motel room for a long while now. The silence was uncomfortable, for Sam at least. Jody was sitting at the other side of the table, typing something furiously.

“I have a lot of work to do” she had said when they entered the room. “Do you mind if I continue it while we wait for the girls?”

“No, of course not” Sam had answered and pulled out his own laptop from his bag.

He decided to look for any news related to angels, mainly Buddy Boyle. They hadn’t paid much attention to him and his videos. They should have. The falling out Sam had had with Dean was not an excuse. Humans had been and were still saying yes to angels and they didn’t know what they were signing up to. They had to do something about this Bartholomew soon.

“I didn’t know you were into this stuff.”

Sam jumped. He didn’t notice when Jody walked next to him. He also didn’t notice it was already dark outside and the lights in the room were turned on. She had a steaming cup in each hands, one was put next to Sam’s laptop. The woman leaned on the table on her free hand to get a closer look on the screen.

“Reverend Buddy Boyle… He has that podcast. It’s all over the internet.”

“He’s working for an angel called Bartholomew” Sam explained. “They’re manipulating people to say yes to angels.”

Jody glanced at Sam.

“By the way you said it, it doesn’t sound like a happy engagement.”

“Because it’s not.” Sam waited for Jody to sit down again and then continued. “Angels have to possess a vessel so they can walk among us without burning out our eyes. They seek out true believers who first have to say yes before the angels can take over their bodies. The people lose the ability to control their body. There are angels who respect their vessels and take good care of them, but most of them get carried away, greedy, and don’t inform the vessels about anything. It’s a… complicated situation.”

“So, angels are nothing better than demons?” Jody asked, taking a sip from her cup.

Sam swayed his head.

“A lot of them, yeah. But it’s mainly because they are so distant from humanity. Maybe they watch over us, but they have no idea about how we work. Some on them refers to us as ‘mud monkeys’. Fortunately not all of them are like this. Cas, for example. He saved Dean from Hell and he’s a friend and ally of ours ever since. And there’s Gadreel too who’s now healing me.”

And there was one other but Sam tried not to think about her.

Jody’s eyes widened.
“Wait a minute.” She put down her cup, maybe preventing it from falling out of her grip. “You mean to tell me that an angel is inside you now?”

Sam rubbed his hands together.

“Yeah, it’s a long story… I was dying and Dean tricked me to say yes.”

Jody showed him a soft smile.

“I assure you, he just wanted to save you.”

“Yeah. I know that.”

Jody watched him for a while, maybe she had some hidden ability to see his too slowly fading uneasiness regarding the subject no matter how much he didn’t show it, then clapped her palms together.

“So. What are your plans with this Bart?”

Sam shifted in his seat.

“We-uh… didn’t talk about it yet…” he admitted, to what Jody frowned.

“You travelled back, what? Two weeks ago? And you didn’t talk about it yet.”

“We started but…” Sam sighed and shook his head. “It’s complicated.”

Jody snorted at that.

“What isn’t with you Winchesters?”

Silence fell on the room again which was only broken by their fingers clapping the keyboards. Sam’s uneasiness grew with every passing minute. Should he tell her? Wasn’t it better for her to not know anything about the little girl she could have had? And how should he break the news? ‘Hey Jody, you know what? You had a kid with Bobby. It sucks that he’s already dead.’

Sam rubbed his forehead.

“Spit it out.”

The hunter looked up at Jody.

“What?”

Jody turned away from her laptop and leaned back in her chair while she folded her arms.

“I see you want to tell something. It’s better getting over it fast than wait until the last moment.”

She was right, of course. He shouldn’t delay it any longer. So with a sigh Sam shut his laptop and fixed his eyes on it.

“Where we came from, our time was merging with an other timeline” he started carefully. “In that timeline Dean, Charlie and I died and Bobby was still alive.”

At the mention of the old hunter’s name Jody tensed a little.

“The Leviathans took over the world and Bobby gathered as much people as he could.” Sam
glanced up. “You were one of them.”

He couldn’t read her face, it was like something carved out of marble. She didn’t say anything so he continued.

“They hid in the bunker where we live now and…” Sam licked his lower lip. “And…”

He couldn’t finish. Sam heard the Impala parking right at the door and soon Charlie and Dorothy entered. They both had a satisfied look on their faces, Charlie grinning like crazy.

“We killed Vesta” she announced with pride and raised her chin.

“We also took her captives to the local hospital” Dorothy added and looked at Sam. “We may go as soon as you’re ready.”

Sam nodded and muttered a quick ‘right’ under his breath as he stood up, gathering his belongings fast. Jody did the same while watching him carefully. He made her curious. Maybe he shouldn’t have said anything at all because now he doubted he would have the courage to start this conversation again.

They packed their things in the car. Sam turned to Jody before he sat behind the wheel of the Impala, saying a quick goodbye, but the woman’s stern gaze stopped him.

“Don’t think you can escape” she said. “Sooner or later you will tell me.”

Sam swallowed.

“Okay” he said.

Jody smiled at him.

“Then see ya.” She patted the man’s arm. “Bring Dean too next time. And introduce me to that Cas.”

Sam nodded and was about to turn to the car when a voice called out for them.

“Excuse me.”

Sam, Jody, Charlie and Dorothy all turned to the source of the voice. It was a girl with long dark hair and blue eyes, looking like she had been walking for days in the wild. But despite the dirt that covered her face, Sam could easily recognize her.

Annie.

The girl stepped closer.

“Are you hunters?” she asked.

“Why?” Dorothy asked, clearly not trusting the girl. She was about to pull out a knife from her jacket but Sam raised his arm in front of her. Dorothy frowned at him but followed the silent request and lowered her hand.

“Why?” Sam repeated.

Annie watched Dorothy cautiously then turned to Sam.
“My family was attacked by demons” she answered. “Can you help me?”

Something that was moving in the shadows, Sam recalled Gadreel’s words.

‘Is this what you felt?’ he asked. ‘Demons?’

‘Probably’ the angel said. ‘But it’s something bigger than an ordinary demon.’

Sam sighed. They needed backup.

Castiel fell asleep. She had witnessed it so many times by now but it still worried her. Would the angel wake up in a few hours, or stay in the land of unconsciousness forever? While on the road looking for angels, Hannah had spent many hours watching over him while Castiel slept. He was vulnerable in that state. She didn’t understand how humans could fall asleep, knowing that anything could happen to them in the meantime. But Castiel was safe here. Nothing threatened his life within these walls.

That was why she decided to leave his side. She had work to do, anyway. They hadn’t find Father Time yet. The books and scrolls from Heaven were still in the library. Maybe she should bring some more…

She turned to the left at the next corner and she ran into a solid body. The collision was a surprise. She felt her inside jump like she was scared and she closed her eyes.

“Oh! I’m sorry!”

Hannah looked up. Sam stood before her, looking down at her with worry and she noticed his temperature rose a bit. And seeing him being this close… Her Grace was getting hot as well like the surface of a star. It spread through her vessel, but at the same time she shivered. Opposite sensing again.

“It’s okay” Hannah reassured him quickly.

She didn’t want to step away. Staying this close to the man felt nice. For a moment she didn’t worry about anything and her grief became smaller. But she had to. Someone stood behind Sam, she noticed. Looking past him, she saw a blonde woman watching Hannah with questioning eyes.

Sam cleared his throat.

“Hannah, this is Becky. Becky, this is Hannah.”

“Hi!” Becky waved with a wide but uncomfortable grin on her face.

Hannah narrowed her eyes. Becky’s soul was shining, she had no bad intentions, but there was that grabbing motion it made towards Sam. It felt greedy and lustful as she reached out to it with her Grace then quickly pulled back when she sensed these. And Sam’s soul was pulling away from it too.

Hannah decided she didn’t like Becky at all. She straightened her back more and raised her chin to show the woman she stood above her. She even narrowed her eyes to add to the picture.
Sam paled a little then he looked at Becky apologetically.

“Becky, I think the others are in the library.”

Becky looked at one and the other then nodded.

“Oh. Okay. Yeah. Of course. See you around, I guess.”

The woman left in a hurry, but Hannah felt her still watching them.

Becky’s footsteps already faded into nothing but none of them said anything. Hannah fixed her gaze on a spot right around Sam’s elbow and she saw Sam turning away too.

“Who was she?” Hannah asked finally.

Sam shifted on his feet.

“Becky Rosen. She’s a very… enthusiastic fan of the Supernatural books.”

Hannah nodded and looked the way Becky left. She decided to keep an eye on the woman.

“How is he?” Sam asked.

“Not good” Hannah gave him an honest answer as she turned back but still avoided his eyes. Why showing it in a better light when both of them knew how ill Castiel was? “I tried to heal him as much as I could but the damage is too great.”

“You did everything you could.”

Had she? Could have she done more if only she wasn’t falling? What if she could have healed Castiel properly if her Grace was still pure and not corrupted? She would never know.

“Hey…” Sam leaned lower so he could look into Hannah’s eyes. “What is it? Is something wrong?”

Hannah shook her head.

“There’s nothing.”

Sam sighed and put a hand on her shoulder. Hannah’s head snapped up. Sam’s hazel eyes were watching her carefully.

“You said you were falling” he said. “That’s something.”

Hannah had to fight with all her might to look away. She was not ready for this. How could she tell Sam that probably… that probably he was the cause of it? He would just blame himself and she couldn’t allow that to happen.

“Please…” she begged. “Not now…”

They stayed like this for a while then Sam squeezed her shoulder before he let her go.

“Okay” he said. “But know that keeping it in yourself would only cause trouble in the long run. The Winchesters are experts in that.”

Hannah nodded and took a step backwards. With this distance between them she finally felt safe to
look back at him.

“I’m returning back to Heaven for a while” she announced. “I’m bringing some other books and scrolls from the archive.”

But she wouldn’t go to Heaven just for the documents. Now that she knew exactly what was going on inside her, she felt it was time to look for the spy. She was certain someone was reporting to Metatron. And the one who worked behind their backs would pay for it.

Sam nodded a few times.

“Okay” he told her but there was something in his voice that indicated he didn’t approve it. “Stay safe.”

Hannah’s heart jumped after hearing this. That was new. Sam had never said anything like this to her. She felt joy washing over her Grace and her face lit up.

“I’ll be back soon” she said with a smile and turned to leave. She felt lighter than ever and she decided maybe feeling human emotions wasn’t that bad. Of course there were all the negative emotions like grief but feeling that joy was worth the price.

* 

Packing the books on the shelves one by one felt relaxing. Movements were methodical, he didn’t have to focus much on what he was doing. His mind could wander miles and light-years away while his body was still present in the now.

Castiel found himself thinking about the past, his life in Heaven, the first period of his existence. He remembered the way the light had embraced him when he was still a fledgling, the way his older siblings surrounded him and the other young ones. He remembered the safety and peace, the love and warmth. He remembered how great the seven archangels had been. He remembered how different they had been.

Castiel had a favorite sibling, yes. Just like every one of his siblings. Those who were rational and thought duty was above all followed Michael everywhere he went. The ones seeking knowledge spent their time with Lucifer. Castiel loved the archangels but one stood out from them. Or maybe… one who drew back to the shadows, never looking for a way to be in the center of attention. And Castiel, kind of a black sheep too, always found himself in her company.

But he couldn’t recall her name… Not even the gender ze had indentified with like almost all of their siblings.

Truth to be told, it was on the tip of his tongue but once he was about to say it out loud it was gone in a whirl of nothingness. Naomi had told him once that she had altered his mind countless times. What if this, a simple name, was one of the many things she had erased.

But why?

Castiel rubbed his forehead after he placed the last book to its place. There were still so many things he didn’t know about. Mainly about himself and it frustrated him. He could just imagine what he had done in the past he couldn’t remember. All the things that had required a
reprogramming afterwards. And maybe he would never know because what Metatron had done to him. Maybe there were parts of his memory that were gone too, he only didn’t know about it yet. It felt like walking in the mist. He didn’t know what was behind or ahead of him. He just wandered aimlessly, hoping that nothing bad would happen, that his path would be safe.

But he had to put his own problems aside.

“We’re done, I guess.”

The former angel’s gaze wandered to his right. Dean stepped back to admire their work. His eyes were shining with a kind of happiness that Castiel had never seen before. It was like there were no demons, no monsters, no angels out there, just a normal life with normal people and normal things that would make a man happy. Like putting shelves on the wall and showing the world who he really was. A surge of pride woke in Castiel. Dean was always so secure, he rarely let anyone see the real him. He had come a long way and Castiel felt honored to be there and witness it.

“You think it’s okay?” Dean asked, unsure all of a sudden. “Shouldn’t we, I don’t know… take off a few?”

Dean looked over at him from the other side of the bed and seemed a little taken aback that the former angel was already watching him.

“No” Castiel answered. “It’s perfect.”

Dean licked his lower lip quickly then showed him a grin.

“Thank you, man” he said. “For helping.”

Castiel smiled.

“Anytime.”

They looked at each other for a long while. At this moment, Castiel also forgot about the world and all those horrors. There was no Metatron, no Abaddon, no war and no Mark. There was just the here and the now and he was glad they both survived to be present.

Dean broke the eye contact after a few moments. He looked down at his feet and rubbed the back of his neck.

“So? What do you think? Should we find something for your room too?”

Castiel opened his mouth to say it was not necessary when Dean’s phone started ringing. The man muttered something not understandable under his breath while he hastily pulled the phone out of his pocket.

“Yeah, Sa…” Dean couldn’t finish. Castiel could hear that Sam was talking nonstop on the other side. “Whoa, whoa, slow down! What?” Dean furrowed his brows. “What?! … Okay. Okay. We’ll be there as soon as possible. Don’t do anything stu…” Dean moved the phone away from his ear to look at the screen then back. “Sam? Damn it!”

Castiel watched Dean curiously as he pocketed his phone with barely restrained anger.

“What happened?” he asked.

“Charlie and Dorothy killed Vesta but they can’t come back yet because something came up” he
explained. He looked back at the former angel who knew immediately that the peaceful moment was over. For just now, he hoped. “We had a vampire case around the area that should happen next year. It looks like demons attacked the vampires.”

Castiel frowned.

“Why would demons attack vampires?”

“I don’t know but that’s not what bothers me. There weren’t any demons last time.”

The former angel now understood the hunter’s concern. There was an other alteration in time. And who knew how many others were still there.

“Let’s go.” Dean pulled out a button-up and a jacket from his closet. “Sam needs backup.”

Castiel nodded and followed the man outside.

Chapter End Notes

I was surprised that Annie was called Alex in 10x08. I thought she would leave that name behind because her crazy Mama Vampire gave it to her.

There will be an announcement after the next chapter : )
Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

There was almost no update today because I had a horrible headache (for not drinking enough water the other day, again) and I didn't want to share an unedited chapter. But here it is! :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dean would kill him for sure.

Not just because he had put down the phone before Dean could warn him with his own kind of ‘mom voice’. Not just because he did exactly the opposite of what Dean had been about to ask him. He gave the Impala’s keys to Charlie. Willingly. Earlier in the diner he had let Charlie pinch it but now he let her drive the car. Charlie was family but Sam wasn’t sure Dean would allow her behind the wheel of his precious Baby.

Sam shifted, adjusting his legs while sitting on the frontbench of Jody’s pickup. The sheriff was driving and between them sat Annie. No. Alex. She was still Alex. And Sam didn’t trust her. She was still loyal to the vampire nest that had abducted her years ago. This whole story about the demon attack could be a trap. He had to keep an eye on her.

But also he wanted Annie to bond with Jody. Back in the time he came from, Annie had saved Jody’s life and Jody had adopted her. Sam and her had talked a few times on the phone and Jody had told him they were okay and Annie was getting better. And Sam could hear in Jody’s voice how happy she had been because she wasn’t alone anymore and Annie had a normal family too.

And everything vanished thanks to that damn ripple.

“You okay there, Sam?” Jody asked, glancing down at the man’s legs that couldn’t find a comfortable position.

“Yeah, I’m okay” Sam answered quickly.

Jody had looked at him questioningly when he had suggested he would go with them in her pickup but she hadn’t asked anything. Sam was thankful for that. He didn’t want to explain this too and cause more trouble for the woman.

“So, Alex” Jody addressed the girl while looking back at the road. “You’re living with vampires.”

Annie flexed her jaw and didn’t say anything so Jody continued.

“I don’t understand why you would willingly live with monsters, let alone asking hunters to save them. There might be friendly monsters” here she looked at Sam who confirmed it with a nod, “but you had to come from somewhere. You’re not a vampire.”

The girl clenched her fists on her lap.

“They’re my family.”
“But not your real family” Jody pointed out. “Not by blood. Where are your parents? I don’t think they willingly gave you to vampires. Were you kid…”

“I love my family!” Annie snapped at the woman. “And I’m going to save them!”

Jody watched Annie for a while then turned her attention back to driving.

“I’m just saying” she said finally, “that your case is not unusual. Unfortunately. Hostages can develop positive feeling towards their captors, no matter what happens to them. Like those nasty marks on your neck.”

Annie paled all of a sudden and adjusted the collar of her jacket.

“I fed them. My choice” Annie explained. Her voice was shaking slightly. “My brothers brought me food when I was hungry. So when they struck out on a hunt, I fed them. They’re my family.” Annie took a deep breath. “I have to save them.”

The rest of their journey was spent in silence until they finally pulled off the road at the old house the vampires lived. It was past midnight already. The air was freezing, acting like the messenger of the winter. Charlie zipped up her jacket as soon as she got out the Impala.

“That’s a big change after the warmth in Oz” she commented with chattering teeth.

Sam opened the truck of the Impala and handed out holy water and angel blades.

“They probably noticed we’re here” he said. “Maybe they called backup or we’re outnumbered already.” Sam also took a little bag from the corner and gave everyone an amulet. “This will protect you from demonic possession.”

He was about to give one to Dorothy too but the woman showed him her wrist. There was a silver bracelet with a pentagram charm, a Christian cross, a Men of Letters crest and many others on it.

“I already have one.”

Charlie’s eyes lit up with excitement when she saw it.

“Can I have one too?”

“Of course.” Dorothy nodded and pulled down her sleeve. “There’s a box of it back at the base.”

After making sure everyone had the amulet in their neck Sam was about to shut the truck but after a second thought he took a machete too. Annie watched him with horror as he put the weapon in his jacket.

“I won’t let you hurt them” she hissed.

Sam smiled at her sadly, knowing well that Annie’s vampire family meant harm.

“I won’t hurt them if they won’t hurt me either” he promised. Annie was visibly not satisfied with the answer but she nodded.

They were silent as they approached the building. Sam didn’t see any movement but it didn’t mean there was nobody inside or around the area. Demons were sly bastards. They could hide anywhere, waiting for them to not pay attention for one moment and jump at them unexpectedly.

When they got closer Sam looked at Dorothy and motioned to the left. The woman nodded, took
Charlie’s hand and guided the other to the left side of the house. Sam, Jody and Annie went to the right.

Sam could see the two females were nervous, both because of different reasons. Jody’s last encounter with a demon had almost ended with her death. And Annie… He could see her struggling. She probably had mixed feelings about this whole situation. In a few months she would have run away from the nest. She had maybe played with that thought for a long while before she had done anything.

The silence of the night was broken by a distant painful groan. Sam stopped moving and waited. They just reached the edge of the trees, a good hiding place to see any threat. But the threat could also take cover among the trees so he quickly scanned the area before he motioned for Jody and Annie to hide.

Just in time. Hearing the noise, the front door opened and a group of men and women rushed outside and headed towards the left side of the house. Sam didn’t recognize any of them as vampires so he assumed they were demons.

‘Yes, they are’ Gadreel confirmed after hours of silence. He sounded exhausted. ‘There are thirty of them, ten still inside.’

‘Are you okay?’ Sam asked with concern.

‘No. There are sigils on the wall and all around the area.’ With every word Gadreel’s voice grew more distant. ‘It’s stronger then the warding on the storage building. Demons shouldn’t know anything like this.’

Sam recalled what the angel had said: Does an angel work with this Crowley? He just now started to feel the weight of that question, the threat it held. Because only an angel should know Enochian. Only an angel should know about those sigils.

But what if that angel had fallen and became a demon.

“Oh, shit…” Sam said it out loud but was cut off before he could say anything because three of those twenty demons outside found them.

“Look out!” Jody pulled Annie away from harm’s way only to be hit by a demon. Annie screamed but didn’t let panic to get hold of her. She grabbed the blade tight and cut everything that came too close to her.

Sam fought too with everything he could. He felt Gadreel drifting farther away, making way to the pain of his wounds caused by the trials. It was getting more intense with every passing second. His body was burning from the inside and he couldn’t concentrate. His reflexes were slower, his movements were shaky and powerless. He luckily managed to stab one of his attackers who approached him from the front, but a second one appeared out of nowhere and hit his head.

Before everything turned to black he heard someone shouting his name.

He had a dreamless sleep fortunately. Or unfortunately. He couldn’t decide if he wanted to see
Dean in a dream again or not. As comforting as it would have been, waking up to find out it wasn’t real would have hurt. Just the thought of it made him feel a thousand pains.

No matter how he had declined Hannah’s offer, he was thankful she had healed him as much as she could. He felt himself more solid. He didn’t know how long he would be able to hold himself together, but hopefully long enough for them to find a way out of this mess.

Castiel sighed and sunk deeper into the pillow. He didn’t remember the last time he had slept in his bed. When he had came here weeks ago to find out Dean had left, Sam showed him this room. It was furnished, a few cloths were in the wardrobe, and the bed was made. Sam said it had always been his, Dean had worked on it when he hadn’t been looking for the angel. Castiel remembered the tightness in his throat when he had heard it, and he felt it now too when he thought about it. If circumstances had been different…

The door opened slowly. Castiel opened his eyes but didn’t move his head to see who entered. He heard footsteps approaching. A female. They were too soft to be a man’s. Probably Hannah came back. Castiel shut his eyes and pretended to be asleep. He didn’t want to talk. Hannah would understand.

“I knew it was you.”

Castiel’s eyes opened wide. He knew this voice. The deep purr of a feline, caressing, but under the silkiness it hid something dark, some shady thoughts.

“You didn’t feel like Emmanuel and after Bobby explained everything…”

The mattress dripped as she sat then lay down.

“How’s my unicorn?”

Castiel turned. Meg was laying there, watching him with a never resting gaze, always focusing on a different part of his face but always coming back to his eyes.

“Sorry to break it to you, but you don’t look all too well.”

Castiel chuckled halfheartedly.

“Yeah, I noticed.”

At that Meg smirked in approval.

“I like your attitude. Refreshing.”

Castiel studied the demon’s face. Or her meat suit. He couldn’t see her true face, so he could focus on the mask she was wearing. Her wavy long hair was dark brown, not blonde like when they had found her all beaten up. She looked healthy, as healthy as a demon could look, and there was a naughty light in her eyes he had seen every time she had looked at him.

“What are you doing in the bunker?” he asked finally.

“We’re all fighting against the Leviathans. No, let me correct this. We’re all hiding from them. We have to stick together if we want to survive. The enemy of my enemy is my friend, they say. Humans, demons and monsters working together. Can you believe it?”

Castiel shook his head. When they had been in a situation like this, their group was small. Two
hunters, a demon and a crazy angel. Maybe Crowley and the Alpha Vampire had their own little part but they were smaller than what Bobby had gathered.

“It’s like in the Lord of the Rings” he sighed then added when he saw Meg’s questioning look “Men, Elves, Dwarves and Hobbits had to put away their differences and work together to defeat the forces of Sauron. You did that too.”

The demon raised a brow.

“Dean made you watch the movies?”

Castiel’s heart skipped a beat and an icy feeling spread through his body.

“No.” He looked away and pushed his head deeper into the pillow. “We never got there.”

The smugness disappeared from her face and it made Meg uncharacteristically thoughtful.

“What happened to him?”

Castiel wanted to laugh at that because everyone assumed when he was upset it was related to Dean. And they were always right.

“He has the Mark of Cain.”

Meg frowned at that.

“The Mark of Cain?”

Castiel nodded and suddenly a spark of hope ignited inside his chest. Maybe… maybe Meg knew how to erase it. She was Lucifer’s follower after all. She must have known something about the Knights of Hell and Cain.

“Do you…?” he started but he was interrupted by Meg sitting up.

“No” she answered to the unfinished question and fixed her gaze on the opposite wall. “I’m sorry.”

She meant it, he knew it. Meg was not like other demons. She was, just like him, corrupted by humanity, only she stood on the opposite end of the spectrum.

Castiel sighed and sat up too, slowly.

“Sam wanted to open the Cage” he said once he was comfortably seated next to the demon. “He thought Lucifer might take it back.”

Meg shook her head and snorted.

“What a stupid boy he is.” Despite her words, her voice indicated friendly admiration.

Castiel turned to look at her.

“I missed you.”

She glanced at him and smirked.

“Why? Don’t I follow you everywhere you go like a shadow?”

The angel held her gaze.
“We freed you from Crowley. You showed us the way to Lucifer’s crypt and the angel tablet only to be killed by him.”

Meg nodded and looked down at her hands on her lap.

“Well. Sticking with you Winchesters is not a life insurance.” Castiel opened his mouth but Meg silenced him with a held up finger. “You are as much a Winchester as Sam and Dean. Because really. Running into your own death to save your family? That’s very Winchester to me.”

Meg gently bumped her fist against Castiel’s shoulder and jumped off the bed.

“Now come on. Father Time won’t be found if you’re sulking all day.”

As he watched Meg walking to the door, Castiel felt a smile growing on his face.

* 

“God fucking damn it…”

Dean and Cas were on the road for more than three hours now, making their way up South towards O’Neill, Nevada. Fortunately, nobody was on the road at this ungodly hour so he could step on the gas as hard as he could.

Unfortunately… Charlie’s car was perfect for riding around the town, going to work, going shopping, going back home. But not for speeding on the highway. It was much slower than the Impala, and he had to force the little car to go on. The cooling system already gave up so they had to roll down the windows and turn the heating on maximum. Cas covered his ears to protect them from the wind rushing into the car. Dean’s hands were full so he endured the throbbing of his eardrums.

And on top of that, it was a small car. Perfect for smaller people like Charlie, but felt like a coffin for Dean and Cas. Dean hit his knees against the steering wheel every time he moved his legs, and Cas positioned his own in an uncomfortable angle.

It was a hell of a drive and both of them wanted to get to the end of it as soon as possible.

They arrive sometime around midnight to the field with the abandoned building. They parked right next to the Impala and as soon as Dean got out the car he stretched. Damn, his knees and back would ache for days for sure.

“Dean” Cas warned him. His angel blade was already in his hand, casting a silvery light on the former angel’s frowning face in the shadows.

He didn’t have to say what was going on. One look at his friend and Dean knew they were in deep trouble.

In the distance he could make out people moving. A lot of them. And most of them didn’t sound to be friendly by the snarling noises they made.

“Let’s go!”

The two of them started running towards the fight. Dean heard a girl screaming then painful
groaning from the other side of the house. The closer they got, the more Dean could see. He recognized Charlie and Dorothy fighting to the left against at least fifteen demons, every stab followed by a painful scream and an orange light. To the right, there was Sam and Annie, Jody on the ground and…

“SAM!” he yelled and started running faster, not caring about his aching knees. A demon hit Sam. Sam was on the ground. The demon took Sam’s blade and raised his arm to stab him. An angel blade that could now burn out his brother from his body.

“SON OF A BITCH!” Dean jumped against the demon, knocking it off its legs.

They both fell on the ground. The demon hissed at him angrily and aimed at his stomach but Dean was faster. He stabbed the bastard in the head which lit up with a yellowish light as the demon died.

But Dean didn’t stop. He pulled the blade out and stabbed again. Then again. Again, again and again, until everything he could see was red, red and red everywhere on the ground, on the demon’s meat suit, on his blade, on his hand. He yelled out animalistic sounds, letting anger take over his body and mind, letting bloodlust awake inside him, losing the purpose of killing the demon in the storm of rage.

“Dean!”

Someone grabbed his wrist firmly, keeping it above his head, not letting it strike down again. Dean snarled at the figure above him because how dare anyone stop him, but as soon as he recognized the other the angry bubble that surrounded him burst, leaving him nothing but the cold feeling of regret.

“It’s okay, Dean.” Cas crouched down next to him, slowly lowering his hands, looking into his eyes without blinking. His voice was steady and reassuring, but it didn’t feel right. It was like somebody was choking the former angel. “It’s okay. It’s over.” Cas looked past Dean then back at the man. “I’ll go help Charlie and Dorothy. You stay here with the others, okay?” When Dean didn’t respond he took his head between his hands and leaned closer, looking deeper into the hunter’s eyes. “You hear me, Dean?”

Dean nodded. Even if he wanted to say something, anything, he couldn’t. It was like his teeth were glued together, he couldn’t open his mouth. His mind was a blank canvas as he stared into nothing then his eyes travelled down to his hands.

His hands were covered with something deep red and warm. He was wearing red gloves, right? What else could be on his hands that was so warm? It was almost December. The weather outside was cold, it would start snowing anytime. It was natural to put on gloves, right? Because if his skin was exposed to the cold for long, it would get dry and tear open to little annoying wounds, and it would sting every time he washed his hands, and would have to cover them with that moisturizing cream that smelled so bad it would exorcize even Lucifer out of any body.

But if those were gloves, why did he smell metal? Why did his hands feel so wet? Why was that thing dripping on his knees, soaking his jeans? Why did he feel his inside twisting and what was that sudden urge to vomit? His ears were ringing and he heard the whispers getting closer, snickering at his misery, and he wanted to hide somewhere, preferably under his blanket and put his headphones on and listen to something loud until he couldn’t hear anything for days.

Hands entered his vision. They touched his hands, grabbed them, and those were so clean compared to his own ones, he feared he would taint them and drag the owner down this deep rabbit
hole.

“It’s okay, Dean.”

Dean looked up. Sam watched him with his soft and sad eyes. His big hands closed around his tightly, squeezing them, not caring if he got bloody too.

“It’s okay.”

Dean took a shaky breath and shook his head. It was not okay. *He* was not okay.

Chapter End Notes

The same thing happened to my family. We were on our way down to Lake Balaton when the engine got overheated. My father remembered how racecar drivers would cool their cars so he turned on the heating and we rolled down all the windows. And it happened this summer so you can imagine how hot it was inside the car.

And the announcement:
There won't be a chapter next Monday. Instead there won't be one or two updates but EIGHT. From Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve a chapter every day. That's my gift for you :) I'm four chapters ahead right now and hopefully I can write at least seven more before the end of the year. So be aware! The story's heading towards Act Three, or the part where shit hits the fan.
Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas everyone! :) Here's the first instalment of the Winter Holidays Special. Though the angst might reach horribly painful levels by the end of the year, I wish you a great break from school and/or work :)

Damn it…

I fly across the room at hit the wall hard. I groan in pain as I try to pull myself together. Come on, Winchester! You’re a freaking demon! You can do better than that!

Except I can’t. Not since Sam summoned me in the bunker the first then the second time that was followed by many others. All the damn time he told me that he could fix this, that we could fix this. But I don’t want to be fixed, damn it! Why can’t he understand? I’m happy the way I am. This is the new me. This is the real me.

I groan again as I stand up. Yeah. I’m happy the way I am.

A few days after Sam first summoned me I went down to Crowley. After just one glance the demon could tell something was not normal. As a human turned demon can be normal.

“You seem… more shaken” he echoed his words from a few weeks previously. “What happened this time?”

“What’s happening to me?” I asked, not caring how desperate I sounded. “Holy water and traps don’t effect me anymore. Why?”

Crowley’s frown melted to something cautious but he quickly ruled his expression. This didn’t escape my attention though.

“You know something!” I hit the table with my palms, almost breaking the furniture, but it didn’t faze him. “I’m a demon, aren’t I? Then why is this keep happening?!!”

The demon watched me for a while then, to my annoyance, started examining his nails.

“Not a problem to be concerned about” he said, turning his hand, looking at his fingers. “It’s just a phase. Your humanity and demon part is still struggling for dominance. Something must have triggered it and your soul didn’t settle down yet in favor of any sides of the two. It will pass soon.”

I dug my nails into the table to calm my nerves then pulled away. My desire to kill was my demonic side, the one that had made me think about those who needed the blood more than I did was my humanity. And the trigger was Sam and…

The Mark sent a sharp pain up my arm and I bit my tongue to fight back a moan. Crowley didn’t have to know how bad it was. He would just call me weak which I wasn’t. I was a Knight of Hell. I was strong, stronger than anyone. I would kill anyone who dared to stand in my way, be it a demon, an angel, a monster or a human. I would spit on their corpses and kick them until everything under their skin was mashed.
“Is that all?” Crowley asked me. “This is all you starting to panic about?”

I frowned at him.

“I didn’t panic.”

Crowley rolled his eyes.

“Sure you didn’t.” He finally looked back at me, straight into my eyes. “How’s the job going?”

Glad that the subject finally changes – though I had been the one to bring it up in the first place, – I put on a more professional façade.

“Asmodeus is dead. I’m still looking for the others.”

Crowley nodded in approval.

“Good. Good.” He motioned with his hand as a dismissal. “Keep going.”

For a moment I considered bringing up the Sariel thing. That demon used to be an angel too. Why wasn’t the name on the list then? But I didn’t voice my question. Maybe another time. Now I needed some blood to fight down the struggle in me and finally have some peace.

Finding Mammon was a bit of a challenge. Demon of greed, I thought he would probably be in a five star hotel surrounded by expensive food and fancy furniture. Or some exotic island drinking a cocktail with those paper umbrellas. But nope. Son of a bitch possessed a bank manager.

“What is it, Winchester?” he asks mockingly. He brushes down his perfectly made tie like it was moved from its place. “Giving up already?”

I snarl and charge at him. Yeah, good plan. I get tossed against the closest desk, flying over it and landing on a chair that breaks under my weight.

There’s a tap after every step he makes towards me on the marble floor. The demon approaches me casually, probably thinking he won’t have any more trouble with me.

“You’re weak” the demon says. “I don’t know how you killed Asmodeus. She let you, probably.”

I clench my fist around the hilt of the Blade. The Mark pulses angrily, because how dare this son of a bitch call me weak? I’m not weak. I’m a Knight of Hell. I killed Abaddon. I killed Asmodeus. I can kill this bastard Mammon too.

I’m still on the floor when Mammon steps next to me, hovering above me like a vulture, waiting for its dinner to finally die before it could eat it.

“You’re as pathetic as Cain” he says. “A human playing with powers that were meant for demons? Humans are weak, only dirt on my shoes.”

Mammon kicks my side and maybe he added some demonic energy into it because I feel like my torso is about to explode. I yell in both surprise and pain, roll to my side and pull my knees up to my chest. Damn, that hurts!

“I never understood Lucifer” he continues and walks around me to see my face. “Why did he give something so powerful to a human? He hated you. You stole God’s attention. He had less time for us because all He thought about were you, muddy creatures.” A smirk appeared on his face. “But now, looking down at you, I think I finally understand.”
Mammon raises his leg and places his foot on my head. I scream, because it burns. My brain is boiling and my eyes want to pop out.

“Abel was meant to be Lucifer’s vessel.” Mammon raises his voice so I could hear him. “He was always following him, whispering promises to Abel’s ear. And Abel listened to him. He got his soul but he never possessed him. He gave the Mark to Cain instead, making him the first killer. And you know why? Cain was Michael’s vessel. Their battle was supposed to happen around that time, but Lucifer tainted Cain. He made him a Knight of Hell, and you know why?” Mammon increases the pressure on my head. “Because he wanted to mock God’s work. He wanted to show him no matter how pure a soul is, everyone can be corrupted. Even Michael’s vessel can turn into a killer. And now look at you.” A wicked smile appears on his face. “Michael’s true vessel, the Righteous Man, the second owner of the Mark made by Lucifer. The biggest failure of God’s creation.”

Something moves in me under the pain. I can’t detect where it came from but I know it’s not the Mark. It doesn’t originate from my arm; it’s from a deeper place, somewhere that kept hiding until now. It warms up everything it touches and gives me a power I never knew I had. Or I just didn’t notice because it always came to me so naturally, and just as a demon I can see how great it is.

I gather the power it gives me in my right arm. The Mark shrieks in fear, losing its hold on me and, after so long, I feel myself alive and free. My connection with the Mark broke and I don’t miss it as it moves back into the shadows, running away like a coward.

Mammon notices the change. His face, his ugly real face, darkens with horror and anger. But I don’t leave him time to act. I raise the first blade and stab it through his leg.

The demon screams in pain. He steps away, trying to escape from the weapon that can kill anything but I don’t let him. I’m quickly on my feet and shove the Blade deep into his stomach. Mammon dies the way Abaddon and Asmodeus did, but now I don’t feel bad. I know it was the right thing to do. Mammon was an angel turned demon. He was a follower of Lucifer, an enemy of humanity and Heaven. He deserved to die and the others too.

A wipe the blood off the Blade with the late demon’s suit and look around. The office needs a renovation. Broken furniture and decoration littering the floor everywhere. It’s unbelievable nobody heard the fight outside. It’s two in the afternoon, some would think everyone wants to speak with their boss.

But if nobody wants to come inside, I can take a look, can’t I? Maybe Mammon has something useful around here. I can zap away the moment someone approaches the office door.

I open the drawers, open the lockers, look at every book on the shelves but I find nothing. Boring papers and books.

I’m about to zap out when I notice something. The parquetry is worn next to one of the bookcases. I step closer and examine it. Yes. Something is constantly sliding on the floor there. And that something must be the bookcase.

I look at the furniture, grab its side and move it away experimentally. As expected, it slides away, revealing a vault door behind it. Luckily, there are no access panels, just a handle that I have to turn and the door opens.

Inside, there’s a poorly furnished room. Bed, sink, toilet, that’s it. But what I see apart from that surprises me.
A young man is sitting on the bed. He pulled his knees up, embracing his legs with his arms tightly. His hair is unkempt, greasy, and his clothes haven’t seen a washing machine in weeks. The guy looks at me with curious eyes.

“I know you…?” he says, unsure.

I nod, also unsure.

“Yeah, we met once.”

Gavin tilts his head to the right.

“Did my father send you?”

Oh crap. What did I get into?
Chapter 31

The nest had been wiped out. As soon as Annie saw the bloody remains of her vampire family she turned around and buried her face into Jody’s shoulder, holding onto her as the sobs rocked her body uncontrollably. Jody hugged her tight, soothing her the best way she could.

Sam had no idea why demons would attack a small nest like this. Vampires were smart. They tried to stay in the shadows, draw little to no attention to themselves, and if someone noticed them, they moved to find an other place to hide.

But what bothered him the most was that they should have stayed alive for a few more months. He didn’t have a clue why these demons had appeared, what they had wanted, and who had sent them. Had their time travel altered everything that much? Had they caused it by saving Linda? Had they drawn the demons’ attention to themselves? But how had they known this place?

Sam walked out the house following Jody and Annie. He moved slowly. His body was still in pain. He had no idea why it was so intense, even with Gadreel blocked out, but he noticed the pain was greater the closer he was to the house. He remembered the angel mentioning warding. It was understandable that it effected Gadreel, but why him too?

Charlie and Dorothy were standing next to the burning bodies of the dead demons, waiting for them. The two of them were amazing. They had fought against an army of demons, still tired from their last hunt, and their only wounds were a few scratches. Charlie had grown to be a remarkable hunter in Oz.

“Any clues?” Dorothy asked, eyes still fixed on the building, searching for anything strange or out of ordinary.

“Nothing.” Sam shook his head, looking back too. “This was not supposed to happen.”

Jody stopped next to him but before she addressed Sam she turned to Annie.

“Sit in the car” she said with warmth. “I’ll take you to my house.” Then added “If it’s okay.”

Annie nodded. Tears were still running down her cheeks but she didn’t cry. Sam saw relief in her eyes and he could understand why. In a horrible way, but her life here finally ended. Now it was time for healing.

When Annie was out of earshot, Jody looked at Sam.

“You know her, right?”

Sam nodded. The four of them turned their backs to the house and the fire and started walking towards their cars.

“We met her in early 2014. She ran away from the nest and was brought to the Sioux Falls police station. One of the vampires found her who you then killed and took Annie to your family cabin.”

“Wait, Annie?” the woman asked. “Isn’t she Alex?”

“The female vampire changed her name because she had a daughter named Alex. So, you went there but the vampires found you and took her away.” Sam looked down at Jody and smiled. “You saved her then adopted her.”
Jody raised her brows.

“I adopted her?”

The sheriff looked at her now visible car. Annie just climbed in.

“I…” Jody swallowed. “I don’t think I’m ready to adopt her. You know, after Owen…” She raised her hand to her chest and grabbed her shirt right above her heart. Sam saw her flexing her jaw a few times, taking deep breaths. She closed her eyes for a long time then glanced at Sam. “What if something happens to her?”

“I don’t know” he answered with honesty. “But you two met in this time too, like it was meant to be. No matter what we change, there are some fix points that are meant to happen.”

Sam saw that Jody was still unsure but she nodded anyway. They stopped at their cars. Charlie walked to hers, looking at the little car in horror when she saw the steaming engine.

“And what about him?” Jody motioned to the Impala. “Will he be okay?”

An uneasy feeling settled in Sam’s stomach.

“I hope.”

Jody nodded and hugged the man.

“Take care you guys. If there’s anything, you know my number.”

In a minute Jody turned with her pickup and was on her way back to Sioux Falls. Sam tied the Impala and Charlie’s car with a tow-rope and in ten minutes they were on the road to Lebanon.

“Will he be okay?” Sam echoed Jody’s question as he looked into the rear view mirror.

Cas sighed on the backseat and looked down at his lap. Dean was sleeping a dreamless sleep. They had given him a sleeping pill earlier which he swallowed without protesting. That never happened unless the eldest Winchester brother had serious problems. It was a red alert sign Sam couldn’t help but notice.

“I don’t know…” Cas answered. “I thought… I thought it was over. No Mark, no darkness looming over him.” He raised two fingers to Dean’s forehead but nothing happened. The former angel sighed and his hand slid down the sleeping man’s face. “I was wrong…”

Sam looked back at the road. He couldn’t look at the expression on Cas’ face. The pain and the sadness that was so similar to the one he had when they had thought Dean was dead. At that time he could neither watch the broken being behind the empty eyes, who had lost every will to live, who had tried everything but failed.

He couldn’t let that happen again. He couldn’t let the forces of darkness tear his family into pieces. He would protect his brother, he would protect his friends.

Sam’s fingers tightened around the wheel.

“You know we can’t force him to talk.” He waited if Cas would say anything then continued. “But we have to make sure he knows that no matter what, we will be there for him.”

“That’s not a question.” He heard Cas’ answer. His voice sounded strong and when Sam looked at his reflection he saw determination in his eyes. “I’m going to protect Dean.”
“Hannah?” Benjamin frowned at her as soon as she stepped out the portal. “You seem… happier?”
Hannah smiled.
“I am.”
“Did something happen?” Benjamin’s eyes widened. “Did you find Father Time? Can he stop the ripple?”
The angel stopped and looked at her brother.
“No, it’s…” she started, flustered. “Personal.”
Benjamin watched her, not understanding what she meant. Hannah waved and continued her way to the archives.
“I’m looking for more books and scrolls” she told Benjamin who followed her. “I’m taking them to the Men of Letters bunker.”
“Hannah, you already took too many of them” he informed her, matter-of-fact. “Our collection is not for humans to look at.”
Hannah stopped and turned around. Benjamin almost ran into her, who then took a step backwards.
“Stopping the ripple is not only Heaven’s best interest.” Hannah’s low whisper didn’t promise anything good. “The humans want to do that too. And if that means I have to take every written document down to them, then I will. I and every one of us will work with them to find a way out of it. If you don’t like it, I won’t judge you. But don’t stand in my way.”
That came out harsher than she meant. She flexed her jaw and watched Benjamin’s reaction. The angel looked shocked at first but when it passed he shook his head and looked… disappointed?
“What happened to you, Hannah?”
Benjamin left her after that and even when she was picking out books she was still thinking about his words. She felt sadness. Benjamin didn’t feel the emotions she did. He didn’t understand what she was going through, what was going on inside her. Nobody did.
But now she could understand Castiel. More than ever. All the struggle he had gone through, not knowing what was happening to him, doing all of the thinking and the sorting out alone. She was lucky. There was someone she could ask and she should as soon as she got back to the bunker.
But there was something she had to do before that.
“Oh! I knew you’d come back!” Metatron’s grin was wide as he watched Hannah stepping closer. “But this soon? You want to report something?”
Hannah held up her head confidently.
“I’m not your agent. Who is it?”

The angel shook his head.

“You’re no fun, Hannah. You don’t understand the concept of pranking.”

Hannah pressed her lips together, barely holding back an angry yell.

“You think playing jokes with me is entertaining?”

“I don’t think, I know.” Metatron chuckled. “You’re too rigid. All business all the time. What would your human say?”

Hannah felt her inside tightening up.

“I don’t have a human.”

“Of course you don’t.” he swayed his head. “Then who’s the cause of your corruption? Poor fallen Castiel? I doubt that.”

She had to admit, there was a time when she had played with that thought. When there had been none just the two of them in Castiel’s car, she had noticed the way she was drawn to him, how protective she was, how stubborn to not leave his side. Now she knew those were fraternal feelings, how every sister and brother felt for each other.

“I respect Castiel as a brother and as a commander” she answered. “And I advise you to talk about him respectfully too. He defeated you with your own knowledge after all.”

Hannah felt proud to see Metatron’s face darkening following that. She knew how much it hurt the scribe’s pride.

“I would never respect that piece of misery” he said. The angel stood up, walked up to the rails, closing the bars in a tight grip. “But why do you do? He ruined your home after all and I’m not talking about the Fall. He started a war with Raphael. He killed him and other angels who didn’t bow for him. He should rot here too and not be outside living what is left from his life.” Metatron stepped back. He put a hand on his chin and looked at the ceiling. “But now that I think about it… Maybe it’s a better punishment. He has the freedom to help Dean, but he doesn’t know what to do. Even when the right equipment is in his hands, he just stands there and does nothing.”

Hannah hit the bars with her fists.


Metatron just watched her, unfazed by her anger. He even dared to yawn.

“You’re boring.” He turned around and walked back to the other end of the cell where he took a seat. “You can’t ask anything, just repeat this again and again. You can’t give me the right question.”

Hannah’s Grace boiled in anger. She wanted to go inside the cell and strangle the breath out of the angel. But she had to let Metatron talk. He’d make a mistake soon. He’d make a mistake.

“What’s the right question?” she asked in the end.

Metatron laughed, pointing at her like she was a mischievous child.
“Not that one, I can tell you.”

Hannah thought about it for a while.

“Why do you hate Castiel so much?”

Metatron shook his head.

“I don’t hate him, I’m just disappointed in him. I had great plans for him, you know? First his life as a human, finding a wife, making babies. Then he took Theo’s Grace. After that I offered him a place next to my throne. Then he turned everything upside down. Castiel’s a troublemaker. He always was. No wonder he always followed that black sheep of an archangel all the time.”

Wha…

“Who are you talking about?” she asked with a frown. What archangel was Metatron talking about? Gabriel maybe? But Gabriel was never a black sheep…

Metatron frowned too, looking confused for the first time.

“You mean you don’t remember…?” The angel looked down and folded his arms. “Interesting… Well, that might be because you’re not from the Host…”

“What do you mean I’m not from the Host?!” Hannah asked, offended. Did Metatron just question her angelhood?!

“Hush! I’m thinking!” Metatron waved to her but didn’t look at Hannah. “I wonder if Castiel remembers. I have to ask him the next time he comes here.”

Hannah clenched her fists.

“Castiel would never come to you.”

Metatron chuckled and finally glanced up at her.

“You think? When he’s desperate enough he would come. Especially when it’s about his family. And I don’t mean you and Heaven.”

Hannah decided that was enough. She turned away from Metatron who reassured her he would be there the next time she visited him.

*

One moment he was still asleep then in the next his eyes snapped open and he was fully awake. His room. He was in his room. But how did he get here? Wasn’t he fighting demons back in O’Neill? That one jumped at Sammy and…

Sharp pain shot through his head. Dean winced and rubbed his forehead. Damn, it hurt like a bitch…

“She’s here.”
Dean moved away his hand. Cas was sitting on a chair to his right, offering a glass of water to him.

“Sam told me you might be thirsty when you wake up.”

Dean pushed himself up to a sitting position and rubbed his eyes with the heels of his palms.

“Thanks, man.” He took the glass and drank. His throat was dry like a desert and he swallowed every nip with greed. When he emptied the glass he wiped his mouth and looked back at Cas. “How long was I out?”

“Just a few hours” the former angel informed him. “It’s nine in the morning.”

Dean nodded and put the glass on the nightstand. He was waiting for the inevitable. The ‘How are you?’ question. Back in O’Neill, that few moments when reality had slipped out of his grip… When he had lost control… Like when he had killed Abaddon. Even though she was already dead, he still stabbed and stabbed and stabbed…

“I’m scared, Cas…” he found himself saying with a low voice. “What if it comes back?”

He heard Cas sighing then a hand settled on his forearm, his right forearm, right where the Mark used to pulse and send angry demands to him. Cas’ hand was warm, his grip firm but gentle. It was something he could hold onto. A stable point in his life that would never leave him.

“Then we defeat it.” Just like his hand, Cas’ voice was firm, warm and gentle too. From his arm Dean looked up at the former angel’s eyes and saw unshakable determination. “You’re not alone, Dean. Sam is here. Kevin and Ms. Tran. Charlie and Dorothy.” Cas paused for a moment. “Me. We’re all here, standing by your side. No matter what comes, we will face it together.”

Dean took a shaky breath and looked back at the hand that still held his forearm. For a moment he thought about the handprint on his left shoulder. How it had ached for a week, how stubborn it had been to only disappear when Cas had healed him back in the cemetery. He would rather still have that on his shoulder then even the thought of the Mark of Cain, because that handprint came from a friend. A friend who had pulled him out of the bottomless pits of Hell, away from the burning fire and ice, away from blood and brimstone.

Cas managed to pull him out of this madness twice already.

But Dean doubted he could do it again.

“Thanks” he said anyway because what else could he say to it? Cas was a stubborn son of a bitch. Dean would definitely lose the argument if he said he was good on his own. His past him would have said that, but why would his present self? Admitting that he needed his family in times like these was not a weakness.

Cas nodded and after a last squeeze he pulled back. Dean immediately missed his touch.

“Gadreel said there were Enochian symbols on the wall of the vampire nest” Cas told him. “He drew them down but neither he nor I could translate them.”

Dean looked at him with a frown.

“You mean that part too…”

“Was erased?” Cas finished his sentence. He looked down at his lap, folding and unfolding his fingers. “That might be the case, yes. But I’m unsure. Gadreel said they were similar to the
Enochian used in Heaven but there were so many alterations he couldn’t tell what they said.” Cas looked up at Dean. “Sam decided to ask Crowley.”

“No” Dean disagreed immediately. He didn’t trust Crowley. He couldn’t trust Crowley. He couldn’t go back to him every damn time he was unsure about something. He couldn’t be the lapdog he had called him. “He would lie anyway.”

Cas’ face softened and Dean knew he agreed with him. They had been both fallen into the trap of Crowley’s manipulation. They had both come out of that as losers. But…

“We have no other choice” Cas said, visibly disgusted that he had to admit that. “I don’t understand it. Gadreel doesn’t understand it. And we can’t give it to Kevin to translate it because it’s not the Word of God. Crowley is our only choice. Years ago, when he gave you…” Cas flexed his jaw.

“When he gave you the Colt, I saw strong angel warding protecting his house. He may know something about these symbols.”

Dean rubbed his forehead. Cas was right. Crowley knew things. Like how to come back in time with them. That bastard was hiding so many things, Dean wondered when his ugly head would explode.

“Okay” he said finally. “Okay. But I go with you.”

The two of them stared at each other for a long while, arguing silently if it was acceptable or not for Dean to be there too, but in the end the former angel sighed and nodded.

“Are you sure?” Sam asked once they were standing outside the dungeon.

“Dude, I’m not a baby” Dean argued, halfheartedly, because he appreciated Sam’s concern. “I’m okay. Let’s get this over with.”

They opened the hidden door behind the bookcase. The cold, dry air hit Dean and for a moment he thought blood would flow into the room again but as Sam stood at his side and Cas on the other he forgot about the scary image.

“Squirrel, Moose and Feathers.” Crowley said after Sam turned on the light. “What a nice little company you are. What can I do for you? You usually come to me like this when you mean business.”

They walked inside and stopped at the desk in a line. It was like they were three disobedient students who stood before their principal. Well, Crowley would make one nasty principal.

“What are these symbols, Crowley?” Sam pulled out a paper from his pocket and placed it on the desk. Dean looked down at it. Cas was right. It looked similar to Enochian, but even he could see that the symbols were off. They were too… rough? He didn’t find a better word.

Crowley glanced at the paper then back at them.

“Ask Feathers there” he said. “He should know.”

Cas looked away to which Crowley frowned.

“Unless…” Crowley’s eyes widened slightly in disbelief. “You don’t have any feathers.”

Dean frowned. Did Crowley really not know that Cas was a human after the Fall? Now that he thought about it… Crowley hadn’t seen Cas as a human. He had already stolen that Grace when
Crowley saw him again. Maybe he hadn’t notice it wasn’t his?  

Or was he just a good actor? He didn’t want the other two to find out he had come back in time too, probably, which was understandable. He wanted to have an advantage against them.  

Which then brought up a more pressing question. Why was Dean covering for him? Why hadn’t he told the others about Crowley? Why would he do any good for the demon?  

The same why he hadn’t told them anything specific about his time as a demon. The things he had done… They wouldn’t understand. They would only accuse him for being lazy and stupid for not looking for an other way. For not asking for help from them. They wouldn’t understand the struggle he had gone through. They wouldn’t understand that everything he had done was for them, and only them.  

Crowley blinked a few times like he just realized where he was then looked back at Sam.  

“Why would I help you, anyway?” he asked. “You locked me in this bloody dungeon, chained me to this chair, and never visit me. I want to go outside before I translate anything for you.”  

Dean sighed. He pulled a keychain out of his pocket and walked closer. Crowley watched his every movement like a hawk and Dean wanted to become smaller and hide under the table. He couldn’t stand Crowley’s stare. It reminded him too much to his time as a demon, when he had stood in his office, waiting for his next job.  

Dean opened the lock that held Crowley’s neck in place then stepped away.  

“Just answer the question, Crowley.”  

The demon moved his head around, locked eyes with Dean for a moment, then Crowley sighed tiredly and looked back at the paper, now being able to lean closer.  

“As you can tell, these are not simple Enochian symbols” he started. “There are little changes here and there. For example this.” Crowley pointed at a symbol. “This one specifies the species you don’t want to get inside. But add this one into the mix” he moved his finger to a line, “and you have a warding against all creatures.”  

Both Sam and Cas moved closer to the desk to look at the part where Crowley was pointing.  

“There is no warding against all creatures” Cas stated. “You can’t ward against humans.”  

“Well, this symbol doesn’t. For humans you have this one.” Crowley showed them an other symbol. “It’s an ancient one, should be buried in the sand of time. It resurfaces the greatest pains the human had to experience the last time, making him weary and vulnerable.”  

Sam rubbed his chin.  

“Then I think I relived the pain the trials had caused.” He looked at Cas. “You?”  

“When…” the former angel started but he shook his head. “Only Charlie and Dorothy weren’t affected by it.”  

“Probably because of their time in Oz?” Sam guessed. “Dorothy is blessed by the Witch of the North. Maybe Charlie too.”  

“But we can’t go to Oz and ask to be blessed” Cas pointed out. “We have to find an other way
Dean didn’t listen to their conversation anymore. He sank deeper and deeper in his dark thoughts. The greatest pains the human had to experience… When he had stabbed and stabbed and stabbed he hadn’t felt pain. His mind had become blank but he hadn’t felt pain.

Did that mean… he wasn’t human?

It seemed his greatest fear since they travelled back was true. He was still a demon.

Crowley glanced up at him. Sam and Cas were still talking so they didn’t notice anything from it.

“It doesn’t have to be physical pain” the demon said and Dean couldn’t tell how he knew what he was thinking about. Crowley’s voice was low and if Dean didn’t know him he would think he spoke with a reassuring tone. “It can also be emotional. Or spiritual.”

Dean almost threw up right there and then. The emptiness he felt after he had stabbed and stabbed the demon. After he had stabbed and stabbed Abaddon and Asmodeus. When Sam had told him they could fix everything. When he heard the whispers, saw the blood, felt the fear, felt the loneliness. When… When...

He understood it now. It hadn’t been his body that felt the pain. It had been his soul. And now that he knew what was going on inside him, he felt this pain growing. He felt the fear swallowing him, locking him inside a dark place where light never reached him. Was his humanity and demon side still fighting each other for dominance? But he didn’t have the Mark. There were no ugly things on his forearm.

“Dean?”

Dean looked up. He hadn’t noticed he was inhaling rapidly. He hadn’t noticed his hands were shaking. And looking at Sam and Cas, standing on the other side of the table, he just noticed that he was still standing at Crowley’s side like a faithful dog, waiting for the next order.

He left the dungeon in a hurry. No, that’s not correct. He ran out, just like last time when his problems and fears resurfaced. And just like last time, the others called his name but he didn’t turn back. He didn’t stop when he almost ran into Ms. Tran, almost fell over Toto, didn’t turn back when Dorothy scolded him, didn’t notice Charlie’s concerned look. He ran to his room, locked the door behind him and hid under the blanket.

God, he was such a coward… If there was a competition for ‘World’s Most Emotionally Incompetent Person’ he would win it without a doubt. He couldn’t deal with emotions, especially fears that scared the living shit out of him.

The demon was still inside him, he knew it. Mark of Cain or not, it was still there, waiting for the right moment. The moment when he would be too weak to hold it back. If he even had the power to hold it back, which he certainly didn’t have.

Dean cowered under the blanket. He couldn’t face it. He couldn’t fight the darkness that spread inside him. It was too strong for him. Sooner or later, probably sooner, it would take over his body and… and that was it. Demon Dean, back in business, terrorizing humans, killing everyone and everything that was too close to him.

What would John say? Dean wanted to laugh. Probably nothing. He would shoot him or chop down his head because Dean was a monster, and monsters had to be destroyed. He had never been a good son, anyway. Not ever since he had let that Shtriga hurt Sam. He gripped the bed-sheet
under him as he remembered every time his father had said or done something, as he remembered how it had hurt. He felt like John was there now, standing in his room, looking down at him, mind taken by hurt and vengeance. Dean mourned the father he never had. Because the father he wanted would have understood. He would have supported him and stood beside him.

Sometimes Dean wondered what would have changed if Henry had never travelled forward in time. If Abaddon had never attacked the Men of Letters. If John had had a father, if he had become a Man of Letters too. If Azazel had never approached Mary. If Mary and John had met under other circumstances. Would things be different now? Or would had they been still part of Heaven’s greatest Plan with that capital ‘p’? Freaking too many ‘what if’s…

Dean opened his eyes. He was laying properly on his bed. Head on the pillow, back and legs under the blanket, hands beside his head. He didn’t remember falling asleep… He didn’t remember climbing out the blanket…

He turned to his left. He was laying on the right side of the bed on his stomach. Then there was an empty space beside him, and on the chair sat Cas, one hand around his chest, the other holding his bowed down head. His eyes were closed and his breath even.

Dean let a small smile appear on his face. Creepy son of a bitch. He had told him many times not to watch him when he was sleeping. But the sight of his friend and the thought that he had been there for who knows how long lulled him. He sighed and watched the former angel until his eyes closed again.
Watching Dean sleep, making sure he was okay, came naturally for him. He had done it many times, either visible or invisible, but never as a human.

Their journey back to the bunker from O’Neill took a long time, almost five hours. Sam couldn’t drive faster with Charlie’s car tied to the Impala. Castiel had to hold back an angry yell because he wanted Dean to get back to the safety of the bunker as soon as possible. But arguing with Sam wouldn’t solve anything, it never had, so he stayed silent and gently stroked Dean’s hair.

Watching him as a human, touching him as a human, was new. Both of them were so vulnerable, so fragile, one wrong step or wrong turn and they would be dust in the wind. It didn’t matter that it was his second time as a human. There were still things he didn’t know existed. Like how protective he felt towards the other man.

Not that he hadn’t been protective as an angel, but it felt different as a human. Humans didn’t possess the power of an angel but they could release a hidden strength when the ones they cared the most about were in danger. Like when he had killed Ephraim back in Idaho. He hadn’t thought about anything but getting to Dean when he had stabbed the angel. Or when the ghost had threatened Dean’s life in Hurleyville. He hadn’t thought about the consequences, that maybe he could die in the process. No. He had had to get to Dean.

But there were times when he couldn’t do anything. When the danger wasn’t an outside force he could fight against. He could only sit and watch while the man he cared the most about was in pain.

And after reliving the greatest pain he had ever felt…

He was so useless. He couldn’t help Dean. He couldn’t ease his pain. He couldn’t *mojo* it away. And even if he had his Grace he couldn’t do anything because Dean had died because of him. He hadn’t broken that damn tablet in time and Metatron had killed Dean. *He* had killed Dean. Dean had turned into a demon because of *him*.

Castiel woke up with a start and took a quick look around. He was still in Dean’s room, sitting on the chair. The lamp on the farthest bedside table was on so he could see that the owner of the room was not sleeping. He wasn’t in the room. Castiel would have started to panic if not for the neatly made bed and the blanket around him.

The former angel sighed and folded the blanket which he then placed on the bed. According to his watch it was six in the morning. He didn’t know when he had fallen asleep or when Dean had left without him noticing it. Humans were so vulnerable while sleeping…

After he closed the door behind him he walked down the corridor towards the kitchen. He felt hungry. He didn’t remember when he had eaten the last time. The previous day? The day before that? His stomach informed him with a loud rumble that it had been too long since he had any proper meal. Castiel accepted his human body’s needs and continued his way to the kitchen.

Where, to his surprise, he found both Sam and Dean.

“Dean?” Sam asked, looking at his brother like he just grew a second head. “You sure you’re
“Of course I’m okay” Dean said with a big grin on his face. Castiel was shocked to see that it was genuine. He leaned over the table and patted Sam on his shoulder. “Second chances, man! That means I have to take care of myself too, right?”

Sam smiled but frowned too.

“Yeah, but you and physical activity? Outside hunting?”

Castiel stepped inside the kitchen, drawing both men’s attention to him.

“Hey there, Cas!” Dean greeted him happily.

“Hello, Dean. Sam. What’s going on?”

Dean sat up straight and looked at him with pride.

“I’m going running with Sammy.”

Castiel looked at Sam, seeking confirmation. The younger Winchester nodded in disbelief.

“Yeah, pretty much the same reaction.”

Dean huffed and continued eating his oatmeal. Castiel smiled at that and joined them after he made his own breakfast. Peanut butter and grape jelly, his favorite. One of the things he missed the most from his human life.

“By the way, Cas” Dean asked after a few minutes. “You wanna come?”

Castiel glanced at him, bread halfway to his mouth.

“Where?” he asked, puzzled.

Dean rolled his eyes.

“Running. You wanna come?”

“I don’t…”

“Come on!”

That was how he found himself outside of the bunker with his cheeks and hands exposed to the cold morning air. He and Dean ran next to each other, both of them exhausted after five minutes of steady jogging. Sam was way ahead of them, sometimes looking back to say something encouraging.

“Try not to spit out your lungs!”

“Bitch!” Dean yelled back angrily to which Sam only answered with laughter.

Despite how physically exhausting it was to run for half an hour or more, Castiel felt himself fresher. He had to realize he had never run as an angel, and only once as a human. Physical activity as an entertainment was relaxing. It gave him time to think while his body was working. He should continue doing this every morning. If he could wake up early.
And Dean looked okay too. The shadow seemed to pass away and the man could finally act normal again. No. Finally be himself. Because he had never seen Dean like this. This genuinely happy, open and honest. It was like the last day hadn’t left any scars on him. Or if it did, Dean managed to work it out himself. But the how was a mystery.

A week passed in a blink. Castiel became friends with Charlie who made him play some video games with her and Kevin. It took a while for him to learn how to use the controller but he managed.

“Left! Left!” Charlie shouted. She bounced up and down on the couch next to him in excitement. “The other left!”

“Up!” Kevin joined her and pointed at the screen. “Go there! Go there!”

Castiel followed the orders with unshakable calmness. The two other were more experienced than him in this area so he trusted them to lead him and his character to victory. He found out that he liked games more where his decisions had an impact on the outcome. It was interesting to see where his choices would lead.

If not playing, he helped Charlie and Kevin whenever he could. He organized Kevin’s notes and assisted Charlie when she continued downloading information from the Men of Letters computers.

“I don’t know how they did it back in the days.” Charlie’s eyes were shining as she brushed the old machines with her fingertips. “When did Abaddon destroy the order? In the fifties? This beauty here is more advanced than it should be. Look at those power sources! Maybe aliens helped building it, I don’t know.”

He also talked a lot with Dorothy, who provided a lot of information about Oz. Castiel always listened to her with his full attention and only snapped out of his concentration when Dean jokingly ruffled his head and called him a ‘nerd’.

He tried to wake up every morning and run with the brothers. Charlie and Dorothy joined them too with Toto. He and Dean still couldn’t keep up with Sam, the two women and the small dog but it wasn’t a race. They were both now in a good shape, why would they overwork their bodies?

And then there was Dean’s constant press that he should decorate his room. Castiel never thought it was necessary. He wasn’t brave to voice it, especially to Dean, but he feared that one day he would have to leave the bunker again. Last time when he had just started getting comfortable with the thought that he would live under the same roof with his friends, he had had to leave. What if it would happen again? What if he was destined to wander from state to state, always alone, never settling down? Some things had to happen, Lachesis had said. What if it was one of them?

“Come on! Just a few pics!” Dean looked at him, pleading, and the former angel couldn’t help but give in. He let Dean drag him and the others around, taking photos of everyone. And once the finished products were finally in his hands and he saw everyone’s smiling faces, the fears were carried away by the wind of relief. Nobody in the bunker would send him away and if it was in his power he wouldn’t let any outside force take him away.

When that week of peaceful normalcy ended, the week when Castiel got used to the simple domesticity of life, he found himself in Denver, Colorado.

“You sure they’ll be here?” Dean asked, looking back at him from the driver’s seat. “What if they don’t show up? Or maybe they show up but it’s a trap?”
Sam shook his head and looked away.

“T٠ trust both of them” Castiel reassured him. “They are good angels and would be great allies.”

Dean watched him for a while, maybe looking for any signs of doubt in his voice, then sighed and looked ahead.

“Okay. We’ll be around the area. There’s a simple salt and burn so anything goes wrong, you call and we’ll be there. Understood?”

Castiel smiled and on his way out the car he patted Dean’s shoulder.

“Understood.”

There was a small restaurant near the lake where he had told the two angels he would wait for them. He walked inside, sat down, ordered a coffee and waited.

He couldn’t shake off the feeling that he should have prayed to the angels earlier. But so many things had happened, they all needed to rest. But he couldn’t wait longer. Outside everything was in motion. Metatron, Abaddon, Bartholomew, Malachi, and that mysterious figure who used those altered Enochian symbols. They had to make their move too. Quickly. Before it was too late and they couldn’t do anything to stop the storm approaching.

The door opened and two figures entered, one after the other. First a blonde in a uniform, then a brunette. They both stopped when they noticed him. Castiel took a deep breath then stood up to greet them.

“Hannah. Muriel. It’s good to see you both.”

He was still thinking about the smile Hannah gave him when he entered the library. She was so moody. Changing fast and unpredictable like the weather. Sometimes gloomy and stormy, sometimes sunny and warm. He couldn’t keep up with her swings. But he wasn’t complaining. She was… How should he say it…? She was… a puzzle. First he had to find out how she worked. She was an exciting challenge.

Sam smiled at that. Maybe there was a storm coming but he couldn’t help looking at the small but significant bright side. And this was definitely a bright side.

Sam didn’t expect to find a crowd in the library. He saw familiar faces, mainly hunters he had met once or twice like Irv and Tamara, but there were some he didn’t know.

“There you are.” Lee put a hand on Sam’s arm and led him back to the corridor before anyone could see him. He glanced around then turned to the younger hunter. “They just popped up out of nowhere, one after the other. Bobby explained everything a few minutes ago but most of them aren’t happy to see you alive.”

Sam made a face. Yeah, he figured they wouldn’t. They didn’t have a great reputation in the hunting community, especially since the Apocalypse. Everyone would rather not work with the Winchesters because wherever they went, bad luck followed them like a faithful dog.
“But I don’t think any of them wants to kill you” Lee reassured him and patted his shoulder. “Just thought I’d warn you before you start wandering around to have some small talk with the guests.”

Sam nodded with a small smile.

“So. They all appeared now?”

“In a minute or two, yes.” Lee sighed and shook his head. “I have a feeling you’re running out of time. At first how was it? One person a week? Now look at this. That ripple is getting closer.”

Sam sighed and dug his fingers through his hair. The past two days had led them off the right track. They had all got distracted, lost focus, and now danger was closer than ever. Once Hannah was back, he would bury himself into books again and wouldn’t stand up until he found something useful.

“There’s a big crowd out there.”

Sam turned to his left and saw Cas approaching him. A relieved smile appeared on the man’s face as he saw his friend back on his feet again. He looked better than a few hours ago, all thanks to Hannah, he was sure. The angel was still pale but healthier. He wasn’t sure how long it would last but they would make every minute worth.

“Yes, it looks like.” Sam stepped towards the angel and hugged him when he got close enough. “I’m sorry, man. I shouldn’t have hit you.”

Cas patted Sam’s back and stepped away.

“I should be the one to apologize.” Cas looked down shamefully. “You told me ki… doing that was not an option. And still, I tried.”

It was Sam’s turn to look away.

“Actually, I almost did something horrible, so you were the better from the two of us.”

“What do you mean?” the angel asked with confusion, squinting questioningly at the man.

Sam sighed.

“I almost opened the Cage because I thought Lucifer would help Dean.” Sam snorted. “What a stupid idea, right?”

Cas was so silent, Sam feared he would be the one now to be punched. And he would deserve it. He still couldn’t wrap his head around how stupid that idea was in retrospect. But instead of the expected punch, Cas placed his hand on Sam’s shoulder and squeezed it.

“Once I told Dean this and now I’m telling you too.” Cas’ voice hardened, maybe it reminded him to times when things had been more simple and not that twisted. Times when Dean had been still the Dean they knew and loved. “You did it for the right reason and that’s all that matters.”

The younger Winchester brother shook his head in disbelief. Not just the opening the Cage plan, but where the hell the fighting with Cas had come from? The angel was a great friend and he respected him for not holding any grudges against him.

“You have too many irons in that fire, don’t you think, Clarence?”

Sam’s head jerked up and his mouth fell open.
“Meg?!” He looked at the demon behind Cas with wide eyes. “What are you doing here?!”

The demon rolled her eyes, clearly not the first time she heard that question that day.

“Is it so unbelievable that I help you hunters?” she asked with one raised brow. She folded her arms, looking up at Sam challengingly. “The Leviathans are Hell’s problem too. They could swallow a Knight of Hell without breaking a sweat. I don’t know what you think, but in my opinion it’s a good reason to work together.”

Sam eyed Meg warily. Yeah, they had worked together in the past. Meg had died in the process. But that had been the Meg they knew, the one who had looked after Cas. This Meg on the other hand had a different history. Sam didn’t know if he should trust her or not.

Lee, like he could read his mind, patted Sam on the back.

“Trust Bobby, okay? He wouldn’t let anyone in without a good reason.” Lee turned to Meg, smiling at her. “She helped us a lot. Hell, maybe we would be dead by now without her.”

Meg showed the hunter a grin, swaying her hips a little.

“Now, Lee” she purred. “You know how to flatter a girl.”

Sam decided he didn’t want to know the details.

“And I trust her too” Cas said, oblivious to the – In Sam’s opinion – awkward tension or just ignored it.

Sam sighed.

“Okay, okay.” He shook his head and turned back to the library door. “So? We go out there and face a bunch of friendly and unfriendly hunters?”

And that was what they did. Following Lee and Meg’s lead Sam and Cas stepped into the library. Heads turned towards them, preying eyes watching every move they made. Sam felt uncomfortable standing in the spotlight of their attention. He could almost feel their anger directed towards him and he would have crumbled by it if not for their limited time to find anything helpful.

“Over here” Bobby called out to them from the map table. Sam walked as casual as possible but he still stepped faster to leave the crowd of hunters as soon as possible. Bobby sat there with Lucy on his lap. To his right was Becky and opposite to him sat a blonde woman who rubbed her knee as she looked at Meg with a frown.

“Thought we got rid of you” she said, the pain she felt clearly detectable in her voice.

“Good to see you too, Tara.” And with a smug smile the demon took the seat next to the woman. Tara growled and turned to Bobby who held up a hand in a calming manner.

“Don’t start it again you two, okay?” he asked them. “There’s no time for stupid arguments.” He then turned to Sam and Cas. “And you two sit down too.”

Sam and the angel walked to the other side of the table. Sam took a chair from one of the computers and made sure he was not on Becky’s other side. He feared Becky would make a scene but instead the woman watched Cas with slightly narrowed eyes.

“So?” Lee sat down at the far end of the table. “What’s the plan?”
Bobby rubbed his forehead.

“We don’t have a plan. Yet. I just started filling in Tara. She appeared about a minute ago.”

“Regarding the number of hunters in the library, this is alarming” Cas commented. He leaned on his forearm on the tabletop and folded his fingers. “The ripple is getting closer to the present. And the closer it gets, the faster the changes are.”

“How much time we have left?” Sam asked. “A week maybe?”

“At this rate, yes.” The angel nodded. “We are already at the Enchantment Under The Sea dance and Linda McFly is no longer on the photo.”

Becky’s eyes widened comically.

“You’re not supposed to know that!” she protested. “You’re not supposed to make references!” She then frowned, glancing questioningly at Sam then back at the angel. “Or… Did Dean make you watch the movies?”

“My question exactly.” Meg leaned on her elbow to have a better look at Cas.

Sam saw Cas tensing up next to him. Meeting Dean still had an effect on him. Sam wanted both females to leave Cas alone, he wasn’t in the mood to answer their questions – a question he wanted an answer to but not now, – and he was about to tell them that when someone banged on the bunker’s door.

Silence fell on the bunker. Every eye turned to the door, everyone waited for the reveal of the arriver.

“I’ll get it.” Sam stood and rushed up the stairs. It was still his timeline, more or less, so it was naturally his job to answer the door. Maybe it was Hannah, but he soon dismissed the idea. She would knock. Firmly, but knock. This banging was urgent. Somebody wanted to get inside as soon as possible.

Sam took Ruby’s knife in his hand and took a deep breath as he put his hand on the handle. He slowly opened the door to a crack and peeked out.

“Garth?” Sam opened the door properly and frowned. “What happened?”

Garth’s eyes were red, welling up with tears, and his face was wet from both crying and sweating. He breathed heavily, on the brick of sobbing again.

“Sam…” he whimpered. “Beth…”

Garth’s body shook as he started crying. Sam put a hand on his shoulders to prevent the smaller man from falling.

“What happened?” Sam asked then repeated. “What happened to Beth?”

Garth looked up at him.

“They killed her… The Leviathans killed her…”

Sam felt coldness running down his spine. Marty McFly started disappearing too.
The ‘salt and burn around the area’ was up right next to Summit Cove. According to stories from hikers there was a man covered in blood in the forest wandering around and scaring everyone who saw him. Poor guy must had had an accident while walking up the mountain and without any help coming he had died.

It was a simple salt and burn. Perfect for Dean in Sam’s opinion.

It had been horrible to watch his brother breaking down by the sight of blood on his hands. It had been Dean’s first time killing anything that bled since their time travel. One month was not enough for the eldest Winchester to move on. His time as a demon left a great scar on him and Sam couldn’t do anything but support him any way possible. So he decided to take it easy. They didn’t have to jump right into the heavy stuff. They could start with small things, like normal ghosts. They could move to other monsters later.

It took more than two hours to get there. It was snowing and they couldn’t go faster. None of the brothers wanted to slip and drive into a tree or something.

“We’re not gonna go to the mountains in winter” Dean stated, gripping the steering wheel with his glove covered hands. “Ever.”

Sam couldn’t agree more.

A relieved sigh broke out from Sam when they finally parked the Impala at a diner. Deciding that they needed more information about the man – and after that snowy road they had to eat something – they headed inside the building to have a quick meal.

“You can eat anything you want, you know” Sam said, looking at Dean over the menu. His brother was observing the menu with narrowed eyes for a minute now, occasionally glancing at his food list. “I won’t tell Cas.”

Dean shook his head.

“Nah. I have to wait two more months.” Then he looked up at him with a grin. “But I wouldn’t mind some unhealthy food on my birthday.”

Sam couldn’t help but chuckle at that. He didn’t remember when they had celebrated Dean’s birthday the last time. Maybe never? Dean had always made sure to give some gift to Sam in May but whenever he had promised to give something greater to Dean his brother just waved his hand dismissingly.

“Don’t sweat it” he had said. “I don’t like surprises.”

No matter how much he had tried to ignore his brother’s words he could never give him anything. There had always been something that made them forget about that day in January. A hunt, running from monsters and demons and angels, escaping certain death, having an argument. Last time, a week or two before Dean’s birthday, they had had that fateful conversation after the case in Canyon Valley. Sam’s smile faltered. Next time will be better. Much better.

“Hey!” The waitress stepped to them with a wide smile on her face. “Can I bring you boys something?”
“I’ll have a Caesar salad” Sam said and turned to Dean.

He didn’t expect the look on his face.

Dean watched the waitress with wide eyes. Sam could see his face becoming whiter with every passing second and the man’s grip on his list tightened. Dean looked like he just saw something horrible.

The waitress – Ann Marie, Sam read her nametag, – shifted uncomfortably, casting down her eyes at the pad in her hand.

“Can I… help you?” she asked.

Dean didn’t seem to be able to answer in the near future so Sam quickly took the list from his hand and after a quick glance at it he turned back to Ann Marie with a friendly smile.

“He’ll have the same as me, thanks.”

The woman nodded and quickly left.

Once they got their food from an other waiter, the two brothers ate in silence. Sam watched Dean carefully, trying to find out what had just happened. Dean ate without making any remarks to the ‘rabbit food’ he got and that worried Sam. Did he know that woman? Had she been one of his one night stands? But then she would have reacted the same way, no? She would have remembered him.

Dean didn’t say anything and Sam didn’t ask. Yet. He would soon.

Leaving the diner, they walked back to the Impala. They found out very little from the waiter they had paid for their meal. He had said the man had been in that diner the morning before he went hiking. He had said they had seen him go west through the forest towards the reservoir. Nobody had seen him since. Maybe he had drowned, who knew.

They could go by car for a while. Sam was driving now; Dean stubbornly avoided his eyes every time the younger Winchester glanced at him.

“You know her?” Sam asked finally. “The waitress.”

“Don’t wanna talk about it” was Dean’s answer.

Sam sighed and reached out towards Gadreel.

‘Can you leave us for a moment?’ he told him and without any answer the angel moved away, distancing himself from any of Sam’s senses.

Sam parked the car next to the forest but didn’t make any move to step out to the cold December air.

“Look” he started after a deep breath. “I know you’ve been through a lot and I respected your wish to not talk about anything but I’m worried. You have nightmares, you have panic attacks and lock yourself into your room.” Sam turned to his brother who still showed him the back of his head. “We have to talk.”

Without saying anything Dean took the key, opened the door and got out the car. Sam followed him, frustrated.
“So, we’re back to this.” He stepped next to Dean who opened the truck to take out shotguns, bullets filled with salt and a bag of everything they needed to find and burn the body.

“Back to what?” Dean spoke finally and handed Sam a shotgun.

Sam huffed as he took the weapon.

“Denying that we have problems and wait for it to snap any minute.”

Dean looked at him, pleading.

“Sam…”

But Sam was relentless. He would not leave this place until he and Dean had The Talk. Capital letters.

“No, Dean, we have to talk about it. We stayed silent for far too long. We’re going to talk and I don’t care if it’s chick-flick.”

They just stood there at the edge of the forest at the side of the road. They were alone in the area, nobody was as crazy as them to drive around on the snow covered roads. They were silent but the tension in the air felt like buzzing in Sam’s ears. Dean rubbed his forearm and looked everywhere but at Sam whose legs were freezing rapidly but he was determined.

“Okay, I’ll go first then” he said and after putting back the shotgun he shoved his hands into the warmth of his pockets. Bless Ms. Tran for forcing them to wear something warmer than their old jackets. “You know you were always my hero. I always looked up at you because you were there for me when I needed somebody. You always encouraged me to be myself, to do what I liked, to study, to never give up.” Sam sighed. “You told me these but you always did the opposite.”

Dean folded his arms and lowered his head so his face under his nose got covered by his scarf. The material became wet from his breath.

“I know very little about what happened to you while I lived my peaceful childhood” Sam continued. “I was told to read the books because I would understand you more.”

Sam saw Dean’s eyes widening slightly in panic so he quickly added:

“But I didn’t. And you know why? Because I wanted to hear it from you. I wanted to hear it from you first and not read it in some crappy paperback. Because you are my brother and I respect you and your secrets.”

Dean finally glanced up at him and took a deep breath.

“Is Gadreel…” he started but Sam answered before he could finish.

“I asked him to not listen.”

Dean watched him for a while then cast down his eyes, lazily kicking the snow with the outsole of his boot.

“What do you want to know?”

Dean’s voice was muffled by his scarf so it took Sam a moment to realize that yes, Dean had really said what he had heard. He suddenly didn’t know what to ask first. He gaped for a few moments then finally pulled himself together.
“Who was that waitress?”

Dean paused for a moment then continued kicking the snow.

“I met her as a demon” he said. “Didn’t treat her well.”

Sam nodded and looked away. Should have guessed.

“Is that all?”

He looked back at his brother. Should he press his luck? Should he ask about the thing that bothered him since Hurleyville?

Sam swallowed.

“Did Dad…” he started and by just mentioning their father Dean froze. Sam had to clear his throat before he could continue. “Did Dad do something to you?”

For a long minute there were just the sounds of nature. The pines moved in the wind, they moaned as their trunks bended. Sam could also hear the surface of the reservoir ruffling not so far below them. But nor him or Dean moved or made any sound. They were perfectly still, like two statues, standing next to the road until a car ran into them or a tree fell on them.

But then Dean took a deep breath, breaking the silence between them.

“Do you remember the psychic kid?” he asked. “The boy who moved things?”

Sam frowned. He didn’t expect that.

“Max?” He tried to not sound too disappointed but still couldn’t figure out why Dean would ask about that boy.

“Yeah.” Dean was silent for a moment. He glanced at Sam then quickly looked away. “Do you… Do you remember what you said after we left?”

Sam tried to recall that day. It was hazy. It happened years ago and many things had happened since. Max had killed his father, his uncle and tried to kill his stepmother. The two men had been beating him because of his birth mother’s death. And Sam had said… What had he said exactly? Something related to them… Oh yeah! That they had been lucky that their father hadn’t been like that.

Sam nodded, though a little confused why Dean had brought this up in the first place.

Dean shifted, looking up at Sam then down again. His arms tightened around him, his fingers dug into his puffy coat. If his arms were uncovered, he would be bleeding by now.

“And do you remember what I said after that back in the motel? Why you were different from Max?”

Sam frowned. He didn’t understand what this conversation was supposed to mean. He thought Dean opened up to him. But he still tried to remember that conversation because maybe Dean wanted Sam to figure it out himself. Maybe he didn’t want to say it out loud. So he sighed and recalled that day. Why was he different from Max? He had asked if it had been because of their father. Then he had pointed out that he hadn’t been there with them. Then Dean had said… Dean had said that no, it had been him…
Sam took a sharp breath and looked at his brother. No, no, no, no…

“Dean…?”

Was Dean really suggesting what he thought he did? That Sam’s childhood would have been like Max’s if not for Dean who… who…

Dean looked up and smiled but it was so forced it was a torture for Sam to watch.

“I’m sorry I’m so overprotective all the time” Dean said. “But I’m protecting you since I was four. Old habits die hard.”

Sam wanted to slap some sense into his brother.

“Why are you apologizing? Dad, he…” Sam rubbed his face. “Oh God, Dean… I’m so sorry… If I knew…”

Dean stepped to him, alarmed.

“I didn’t tell you so you…” But Sam cut in before he could finish.

“The bruises on your arm when you went to Sonny’s. It was him. And you came back… because of me… You left the place you loved because of me…”

And now thousands of memories flooded his mind. Every shrug, smirk and remark Dean had made since he could remember. Every movement, every change of manner, every word he had said when their father had been present. Every time Dean had been angry and sad. Every story he had told Sam about his injuries. Now knowing the facts everything he hadn’t understand made sense now.

“Sam!” Dean grabbed Sam’s shoulder and shook him a little. “I didn’t tell you this so you could blame yourself! It was not your fault! It was my decision!”

“Yeah, the decision that Dad had beaten into you!” Sam felt Dean’s hand tensing on his shoulder and he gripped Dean’s arms in return. “Why did you come back to us? You loved living there!”

“And leave you with that son of a bitch!?” Dean burst out suddenly. Sam was taken aback. Dean had never talked about their father like that. “Let him ruin everything I taught you since you were a baby!?! Maybe Dad beat into me that I have to protect you from the supernatural at all cost but it was me who decided that you were my responsibility!” Dean blinked back the wetness from his eyes and his hand moved to Sam’s face. A small smile appeared on his face as he continued with a softer voice. “I was your brother, your father and your mother at the same time. It was not John who told me to do this. It was my own decision. I wanted to look after you. I wanted to raise you. I wanted to sacrifice myself for you.”

Dean swallowed.

“Back in the church… We stepped closer to something better. You wanted to die but you changed your mind. I was so damn scared when Naomi told me you would die when you finish the trials. Then you let it go. You didn’t finish it and I was so damn happy.” Dean blinked a few times. “But when the docs told me you were dying… When Gadreel showed me what you told Death…” He blinked again but he couldn’t hold back a single tear that rolled down his face. “I was terrified. You didn’t finish the trials then you wanted to die? I couldn’t let it happen, man… I couldn’t…”

Sam pulled Dean into a hug. He hugged his brother so tight he almost squeezed his soul out of him but he didn’t care. They both needed this. Sam because he was grateful he had a brother like Dean
and didn’t know how he deserved him, and Dean because that idiot had to finally realize he was not alone and Sam would always be there for him.

“I know” Sam said after he trusted his voice to not break. “I know you tried everything before you let Gadreel to possess me. I know you prayed Cas a whole night and that you did everything so Gadreel could heal me.” Sam grabbed Dean’s coat tight. “It’s my fault you went to look for the Mark. And it’s because I wasn’t clear that you thought I wouldn’t save your life. I would save your life, I would fight for your life. I was still angry at you because you had saved me in a way I would never agree to and I meant to say that. I’m sorry I didn’t phrase it clearly. I’m so sorry.”

Sam’s eyes stung as the cold air touched his wet eyes so he shut them tight. Saying these out loud was so… uplifting. He had felt his soul getting lighter by every word and now it was like he was floating. They should do it more often.

He didn’t know how long they stood there. He didn’t know when Dean hugged him back. He was freezing but the only thing he cared about was that he found out what he had wanted to know for so long and that he finally apologized for his stupidity. Nothing else mattered in that moment.

It was Dean who put an end to this emotion heavy time.

“Stop crying, you big ox.” He gently patted his little brother’s back. “Your eyes gonna freeze.”

Sam chuckled and let Dean step away who turned away quickly so Sam wouldn’t see his face. Sam guessed his eyes would freeze too.

“So!” Dean clapped his hands. “Where’s that ghost of ours?”

Sam took his phone from his pocket and the shotgun from the truck.

“Most of the hikers said they saw the man up Swan Mountain, halfway to the top.”

Dean bounced on his feet, maybe trying to warm up his legs for the hike, and watched the trees.

“You think we need a shovel?”

Sam shrugged.

“Wouldn’t hurt if we take one.”

So Dean gave Sam one and closed the truck.

“Let’s go then.”

They crossed the road, jumped across the ditch and made their way up the slippery mountainside.

They moved from tree to tree, sometimes Sam had to hit the shovel into the frozen ground so he could pull himself higher. Normally he would complain silently by now but he was too… positive for that. After clearing some things, his relationship with his brother was on the right track again. Some more conversations like that and they could finally move past the misunderstandings and disagreements. He knew he couldn’t push Dean too much but it was a start. The first push. Everything would be better after that.

Dean stopped at a tree when they were halfway up the mountain and took his EMF meter to detect where the ghost was. Sam walked to the tree next to his and looked around.

Then he felt Gadreel rushing back to his mind.
'Sam! Someone’s…!'”

But he couldn’t finish. And unknown force grabbed the angel and ripped him away. Sam tried to reach out towards him but he was too far away already. And as soon as Gadreel was gone a burning wave of pain spread through Sam’s body and he couldn’t help but fall on his knees and hope that a tree would stop him from rolling down to the road.

Chapter End Notes

I tried to look up the weather and the road conditions of Colorado in December 2013 but didn't find anything specific about that area so I decided the roads were slippery on that day.

I really don't like John. Really really don't like him. And I hope the boys will have The Talk in the show too because they /need/ to talk. A lot.

Yeah, and it's always poor Sammy who gets knocked out...

This is the chapter where I finished NaNoWriMo :)
Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

For those who have a hard time because of the anon hate: You are stronger then them. Don't let them have control over you. Keep going. Find peace with those who care about you and focus on the good. I was never bullied, never had depression, but I despise those who spread hate. I hope those who send messages like those would be bitten back by karma. Bitten twice as hard as the damage they made.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I took Gavin with me.


“Did my father send you?” he asks me hopefully, looking up from his burger which he eats eagerly. We’re in Rufus’ cabin. I thought this would be the safest place for the kid until I figure out what to do with him. I repainted a few symbols so there won’t be a problem.

“I was sent to kill the demon” I tell him. “I didn’t know you were there.”

Gavin swallows the food and looks away with sorrowful eyes.

“I thought he would look for me.” The boy sighs. “So it was really a goodbye, for ever.”

I scratch the tabletop and try not to see Gavin’s expression. Being let down by a parent, a father, is no news to me. The bitter taste of realization that you are not as important to him as you long to be. That no matter what you do, you would never be the son they would love no matter what.

“Maybe he didn’t know you were there” I say, because maybe I’m right. Maybe Crowley didn’t know about Mammon capturing his son. “He would have sent help. He took you away after all before we could send you back in time.”

Gavin looks at me with doubt.

“That demon mocked me every day how unimportant I was to my father because he never answered his messages.”

I wince at the bitterness in the kid’s voice. Damn. I have nothing to say to that.

The only thing I can do is to stand up, walk to the cabinet and pull out a bottle of whiskey and the glasses.

“You know what?” I begin as I fill both glasses. “Let’s forget about unworthy fathers. They can all go to hell and fuck themselves, I don’t care.”

I put a glass in front of Gavin and take a seat again, downing mine with one breath. I let out a long sigh when I finish. Alcohol. The best medicine to everything. But still, it’s super ineffective.
I look across the table. The kid didn’t touch his whiskey yet, instead he watches me with curious eyes.

“Do you hate your father?” he asks.

Did I hate him? Do I hate him? I look at the bottom of my empty glass and turn it right and left, watching as one remaining drop of my drink rolls around the side. Good question. In the past I never hated him, even if he vented on me when he drank too much. Which happened an awfully lot of times. As a kid I never complained. Moreover, I was glad he hit me instead of Sam. I gladly became a punch bag for a few minutes if it meant Sam was safe. And what could I do, honestly? He was my father. Kids look up to their fathers, no matter what they do to them. John Winchester was a figure I had to follow, someone I had to shape myself into. I had to do everything he said and the way he told me. No questions, no original thoughts. John Winchester says you jump into the well, you ask how many times.

But growing up I realized how wrong this was. I looked up at a man who broke my individuality into pieces and shaped me into a sorry excuse of a human who has nothing. An unworthy life on the surface of Earth, taking the precious place and air away from those who deserves it more.

“No” I say because even though thinking about everything he had done, I still can’t think about him with hate. “It’s complicated.”

“It’s not for me.” Gavin takes a sip from his drink and squints as the alcohol burns his throat. “My father used to beat me. I hated him.”

Saying that, Gavin finishes his drink with a few long gulps then puts the glass down loudly.

“Another!”

I pour him more then more then more. We finish the first bottle, then the second, then many other kinds of alcohols. Gavin is a wreck after countless glasses, he sways dangerously on his chair and there’s not one time when he almost falls off. He talks about his home, his friends, how much he loved his mother and how much he cried when an illness took her away. He tells me how he hated his father because he spoke so badly about her all the time and how he punished him when he dared to argue with him. Gavin starts crying when he speaks about how he found his father’s corpse. Torn into bits, blood everywhere.

“I shouldn’t have felt so good…” he whimpers and lays his head on the table. “He was a bad father and I was glad when he was finally gone. So why does it feel so bad now?”

I watch the kid as he falls into a dreamless slumber then rub the bridge of my nose. Do I still idealize my father because he died for me? Does it erase all the bad he did?

These are the questions I should answer one day. But not today.

In the next few days I look for Beelzebub without any luck. Maybe he – or she? – heard about the other two’s death and hides somewhere. I hope I can take him or her or whatever out quickly and move on with this. Preferably move on to kill that son of a bitch Crowley.

Gavin is a great kid, by the way. He’s still clueless about a lot of things and it’s always funny to see him watching TV with wide eyes, like when he watched The Fellowship of the Ring and wondered loudly how an old man could tame a flaming demon.

About five days after I killed Mammon, I feel someone summoning me. Sam. I’m in a surprisingly good mood and I don’t mind my brother calling me to the bunker. Without disturbing Gavin’s
'watching the great screen of sorcery’ time, I appear in the dungeon of my old home with a wide smile. And black eyes, of course. I always made sure Sam saw me with black eyes, so he would give up on me in time. That time hasn’t come yet.

“Hey there, Sammy!” I greet him. “What…”

But before I can finish a man hurries towards me who Sam stops just in time before he can enter the Devil’s Trap. A very familiar man with a very familiar hat and a very familiar voice.

“You idjit!” he yells.

I feel my heart skipping a beat.

Bobby…?


“Can’t you Winchesters just sit down and think before you jump into the unknown!?” Bobby continues shouting. “How could you sell yourself to something made by Lucifer himself!? Didn’t you learn your lesson last time when you sold your soul!? And don’t you dare telling me that you had no other choice because I’ll kick your sorry ass back to Hell! There’s always an other choice, you brat! Why do you always have to sacrifice yourself, Dean!? Last time Cas saved you but what if there’s no way out of this!? Idjit!”

Bobby shrugs off Sam’s hands and turns away but the only thing I see is that Bobby is here. Bobby is alive and not dead and his words hit their mark so perfectly that I could only gape and stop my eyes turning back to their original color just in time.

“Why’s Bobby not in Heaven?” I ask, glancing at Sam.

“Remember Gavin?” he asks.

Of course I remember him. I left him watching some cartoons in Rufus’ cabin. But instead of saying this I simply nod.

“His presence in our present caused a ripple effect.” Sam continues. My head hurts as I try to wrap my head around it. “Bobby couldn’t summon him, we couldn’t change the deal and Bobby didn’t die when Dick shot him.”

Bobby turns around so now I look at him, waiting for an answer.

“Crowley saved me” he says. “He said he didn’t want the fun to end so early.”

Crowley always had this creepy fascination towards Bobby. Maybe he saved him because of this? Then why didn’t he save him here? But I’m not gonna complain now.

“That’s good, isn’t it?” I ask. “Bobby’s alive.”

*Bobby’s alive.* It’s so good to say out loud. I remember the grief every time I looked at his flask, the moments when I thought he helped us – then it turned out he really did. I remember the moment in the hospital when he opened his eyes, fighting for every breath just to write a few numbers on Sam’s palm. When his eyes locked with mine and the smile he had on his face when he said ‘idjits’. The hope that everything would be fine and the horror to realize those were false dreams.
I want to step out the trap. I want to go to him and hug him and tell him everything I did since he passed away, confess my crimes I did against everyone, especially my own family. I want him to be honest with me, tell his opinion without filtering it, then hug me back without a word because actions spoke louder than words and that hug would tell me everything I needed to know. That the man who was not my father by blood but was better than one still loved me.

“No, because in that timeline you, Sam and Charlie are dead. And I’m still Emmanuel.”

I turn to the source of the voice. I didn’t notice there was someone else in here and only realize who it is when my eyes lock with blue ones.

Cas is here.

The panic I felt the last time we almost met awakes in me. Cas is really here, not locked up in Heaven by Metatron. And now I can see the angel himself behind the meat. Cas is terrifying. I feel my soul shiver as I look at the celestial being. But he’s also amazing and the shiver is not only out of fear. I can’t imagine how a great creature like him would stay with unworthy humans like the one I used to be.

But I notice some changes. He doesn’t feel that strong like last time and I think an angel should be brighter than that. There are grayish spots all around him, and I can see them getting darker shade by shade. The stolen Grace. It’s killing him. Didn’t he find his own Grace yet? What was he waiting for, wasting time in a place like this talking to a damn demon? He should be up in Heaven and heal, not here while dying. I want to shout at him because he’s such an idiot but I turn to Bobby instead.

“So? How’s your world?”

“Honestly? A living hell” he answers. “The Leviathans have both the tablet and the prophet so we can’t kill them. The whole world is a set table for those bastards. Luckily your grandpa Henry dropped in a couple years ago and showed me this bunker. I gathered everyone I could. Garth and some other hunters. I also found Emmanuel and I moved him here with his wife, Daphne.”

I chew the inside of my mouth. So Cas in Bobby’s time doesn’t remember anything. Well, why would he? It seems I died here before he could get back his memories. But why the two would be connected, I don’t know.

And Kevin is alive too? The Leviathans would need him to translate the tablet, he’s the only one who can read it so he should be still alive. Thinking about the young prophet hurts and it burns my lungs. Kevin died because of me here but there he’s still alive.

Kevin’s alive. Bobby’s alive.

“And you summoned me because?” I ask, directing my question towards Sam but Cas answers instead.

“We would like to ask you to find Gavin.” Cas walks a little closer. He stops a breath away from the trap and somehow I wish him to step inside. “We have to send him back to the past to repair the damage it caused in the flow of time.”

Repair the damage? Make Bobby and Kevin dead again? Let the stolen Grace burn Cas out? No. I couldn’t let it happen. The only damage to fix here is my own timeline. Letting this ripple do its job would repair the damages I made.

A timeline where Bobby and Kevin are alive. Where Cas is still an angel who doesn’t remember
anything, me included. Sam is dead but I’m sure he’s up in Heaven with Jessica. That’s where he belongs, not this rotten place to live an awful life.

And I’m dead too. Back in my place. Down in Hell.

Perfect.

But for that I have to make sure nobody can stop that ripple. And that means one thing.

I glance at Cas one last time, silently saying goodbye to my best friend I never deserved. The angel I corrupted. The angel I hurt so many times and treated like shit. The angel I…

I don’t finish the thought. Instead I look at Sam, dear Sammy who has the biggest heart in the whole damn world, and grin.

“Sorry, Sammy” I say. “I already killed Gavin. Now could you please let me on my way before I bury you alive.”

From the corner of my eye I see Cas’ eyes widening but I fix my eyes on Sam who after the first shock says the words that would free me from the trap. Cas opens his mouth to say something but I’m already miles away before he can say anything.

Appearing in the middle of a grass field I fall on my knees and let my feelings surface. I’m breathing heavily, my body is shaking but I don’t stop it. I made the right decision. I can do this. I can do something good for the last time.

Sacrificing Gavin is for the best.

Chapter End Notes

And this is the end of Act 2. Normally I would take a break now, but it’s not New Year’s Eve yet. That break has to wait for a bit. Until then I try not to catch up to myself.
Elisa Connors used to work as a nurse in a hospital. She loved her job. Taking care of people always felt to be her duty from a young age. Helping the old, guiding the young, supporting those in need. Working in a hospital was a dream come true. Of course she returned home exhausted after a long day and she always felt sorry for those who couldn’t be saved. Like that poor boy who had a heart attack due to an electric shock. She didn’t know what happened to him after he left the hospital. He just wanted to go back to his little brother. Sometimes she found herself thinking about them, but why, she didn’t know.

Elisa got married at the age of twenty and had a daughter named Agnes. For five years they lived happily until the divorce. Her husband turned out to be having more affairs than he could count and when Elise found out she left. She took Agnes with her to Fitchburg, Wisconsin to start a new life.

A life that ended a week ago.

The woman sat on the couch that night. Her face was damp but her eyes were dry. She ran out of tears to shed. She sunk into a grief so deep that crying was not possible anymore. She only existed in the dark room surrounded by silence and emptiness. There was nothing to live for anymore.

Agnes was ten when she died. The school bus got into an accident on its way a few mornings ago. A truck ran into it after the driver fell asleep and didn’t stop at the red light. The bus was filled with children. Four were still alive today. Her daughter was not one of them.

She was alive for one more day, life support kept her with her mother for one last day before her body gave up and the girl passed away. Elisa lost her will to live. Her life was centered around her little girl and losing her left her with no purpose to live.

Elisa buried her face into her hands and prayed for Heaven that her dear Agnes was up there where angels watched over her. But she also begged to be taken to her, to be with her daughter in the afterlife. Agnes was so young and innocent. She needed her mother and Elisa needed her daughter.

‘I heard you.’

Elisa opened her eyes and looked around. The room bathed in a bright light she couldn’t tell where it came from. But she could look into it without squinting which was impossible.

“Who is it?”

‘I’m an angel’ the voice said. ‘I came when I heard your prayer.’

An angel? Was it really happening? Was she dreaming? Elisa pinched her arm and when she felt the sharp pain that shot through her she knew she was still awake.
“Is Agnes…” she started, uncertain and afraid of the answer. “Is my daughter in Heaven?”

‘Yes’ came the answer.

Elisa sighed and a smile appeared on her face. The first after man long days.

“Good” she said. “Good.” The woman rubbed her eyes and looked into the light again. “Can I… Can I go to her?”

Suicide passed her mind many times since Agnes’ death but she couldn’t carry out her plan. There was always somebody with her, looking after her so she wouldn’t do anything stupid. Elisa endured it without a word but now that an angel visited her for some reason she couldn’t help but ask. An angel could grant her wish, right?

‘Yes’ the angel said. ‘But before that I have to ask for something.’

Elisa sat up.

“What is it?”

‘Heaven is still functioning properly but the angels fell’ the voice explained. ‘I have to find a way back to my home but for walking among you humans and try to find a solution to the problem, I need a vessel. After you say yes to me, I will possess your body. Then I can help your soul ascend to Heaven where you would meet your daughter.’

Angels fell? Elisa frowned. How could there be a Heaven without angels?

“Are you sure?” Elisa asked. “Will I really meet my daughter?”

‘Certainly.’

Elisa looked around the room. Pictures in silver frames were placed above the fireplace. Her daughter’s smiling face looked back at her and Elisa didn’t have to think long.

“Yes.” She looked up at the ceiling. “Yes.”

The sudden burning came as a surprise. It felt like her body was burning from the inside as the being entered it. Her inside was lava she was drowning in. Elisa felt her consciousness drifting away to an unknown place, far from this plain of existence.

‘Thank you, Elisa. Be happy in Heaven with your daughter.’

With a sigh Elisa’s soul left her body.

And as Elisa left, Hannah took over.

Literally falling into this unknown way of living left Hannah in uncertainty. She had never walked among humans in her existence so she had no idea how to act. Not that she wanted to adapt the life Elisa had left behind. No. Hannah had a mission to fulfill. She had to find a way back to her home.

She left the house during the night. On foot, since her wings burnt during her fall and she didn’t know how to function the machines the humans used as a way of transportation. She was not pleased with walking; she was frustrated she couldn’t reach the speed she had flown with for centuries. How it never irritated the humans, she couldn’t understand.

As the sun rose and a new day started Hannah realized her attempt to reach any place where she
could find anything was hopeless. She barely walked twenty miles during the night, only passed three towns on her way. She needed a faster way of transportation. Something that could fly, preferably. She had seen many flying machines passing above her during the night but how she could get on one was a mystery. So she decided a rolling machine – automobile? was that the name? – would be enough for now. The question was where she could find one?

Many automobiles – yes, that was the name – had passed her after dawn. But none of those had stopped when she asked for help. After a few tries Hannah stopped and looked after the passing automobile with confusion. Why wouldn’t they stop? She recalled her words she had spoken a few times and couldn’t find anything wrong. She should have watched humanity more, she realized. She was utterly lost.

“Hey!”

Hannah looked to her left. An automobile stood next to her and a human, a female, watched her.

“You need a ride?” she asked.

Hannah tilted her head. Was the human referring to her sitting into the machine? The only ‘ride’, noun and verb alike, she knew about was meant as ‘ride on a horse’. Maybe the word was connected to automobiles too.

“Yes, I need a ride” she nodded furiously. That was exactly what she needed. This human would take her closer to her destination, though she had no idea where it was.

“Get in then.” The female got inside the automobile and slammed the door closed.

Hannah stepped closer and examined the handle. She had observed how humans open these doors during her walk. She only had to mimic their movements. And with that she succeeded. With a proud smile on her face she sat inside and slammed the door too, but she made extra care not to ruin it.

“Where are you going?” the female asked, turning the wheel in front of her. She stepped on one of the pedals under it and the machine started moving. Hannah watched it with fascination. She had always thought humans were not that fascinating, a waste of time for the angels who always observed them, but now she had to admit they were quite intelligent if they could build something like this.

“What is your destination?” she asked back when she finally managed to tear her attention away from the machine.

The female shrugged.

“Chicago.”

Hannah observed the female’s soul. She found it unsettled and by the mention of ‘Chicago’ her soul shivered.

“You are not pleased to go there” the angel stated.

The human glanced at her then back at the road.

“I’m not” she admitted. “Family gathering. I can imagine better ways to spend my summer. And you?” she asked, looking back briefly at Hannah. “What’s so urgent that you started walking instead of getting on a bus?”
‘Bus’. Was that an other way of transportation? Was that the name of the flying machines?

“I’m looking for my family” Hannah answered. “Something… unexpected and horrible had happened to our home and now my siblings are scattered around the globe. I want to find a solution to our situation.”

The female’s soul pulsed with curiosity but the human didn’t ask anything.

For a long while none of them spoke. Hannah turned her attention towards the towns and nature they were passing, watching humans interacting, walking. Living. They were like ants busying themselves around the anthill. Those creatures she liked to watch a lot. She admired their hard working nature and their devotion to their queen.

“I’m Nicole, by the way” the human said after half an hour.

“Hannah.” She nodded as she introduced herself.

Nicole shifted on her seat.

“So, Hannah…” she started. “What did you mean by ‘scattered around the globe’? It sounds like you and your siblings fell from the sky.”

Hannah looked at the female. She didn’t notice anything special with her soul, she was an ordinary human. Then how did she know what happened? Maybe she wasn’t the first angel she had met.

“That is correct” she answered. “We were banished from Heaven and fell on Earth.”

Nicole turned to her very slowly.

“You’re kidding me, right?”

Hannah looked into the human’s eyes.

“I kid you not.”

Nicole stepped on one of the pedals and the car stopped. Hannah looked around, wondering if they had arrived but there were no settlements around them.

“You mean to tell me…” Nicole started and Hannah looked back at her. “You mean to tell me that you’re an angel?”

Hannah nodded.

“You are correct once again.”

The human’s eyes widened. She opened and closed her mouth for a few times, looked at the road then back at Hannah.

“You’re joking.”

“I can assure you that I have no intention to make any jokes. To tell you the truth, I don’t know how to do it.”

Nicole watched her for a while then turned towards her with her upper body.

“Prove it.”
Hannah tilted her head.

“Prove what?”

“Prove that you’re an angel. Like… show me your wings.”

Hannah’s Grace moved uncomfortably.

“I lost my wings during the Fall. And even if I still had them, I wouldn’t show them to you. My wings used to exist in an other plain, and laying your eyes upon them would injure you.”

Nicole rolled her eyes.

“Then do something. A miracle or anything.”

Hannah squinted. The human’s lack of belief was strange. Almost offending. But just almost. Humans were famous of their free will that God gifted them. They chose what they wanted to do with their lives, including what they believed.

The angel observed the human.

“You hurt your elbow” she said.

Nicole frowned, looking down at her arm.

“Uh-yeah… In an accident…”

Before Nicole could finish, Hannah reached out and placed to fingers on the human’s forehead. Nicole blinked questioningly and when Hannah moved away she looked at her arm in disbelief.

“Wha…” she started. “What?”

“I healed if for you” Hannah announced. “It won’t make any trouble for you in the future.”

Nicole jumped out of the automobile, paced around it for several minutes, muttering to herself while she rubbed her forehead. Hannah watched her patiently until the human sat back next to her.


“Yes.” Hannah nodded.

“You fell from the sky” she continued. “And you’re looking for your siblings.”

The angel nodded again. Nicole watched her for a while then sighed and shook her head.

“The hell am I getting into…”

Their journey to the place called ‘Chicago’ passed in silence. Hannah could sense that Nicole’s soul was uneasy, it moved back nervously from the outside. She probably scared the human. It wasn’t an everyday occasion to meet an angel. Hannah was aware that a lot of humans didn’t know about the creatures that walked among them.

Nicole shifted again and glanced at Hannah.

“And-uh… Why did you fall?”
Hannah fixed her gaze on the road ahead. She heard her siblings crying in fear, screaming in anger. Each of them repeated the same two names.

Metatron.

Castiel.

The same Castiel that was now sitting across the table.

She had met Muriel outside Denver, having a quick conversation about Castiel’s intentions but neither of them could come up with an explanation. All Heaven knew about Castiel’s ties to the Winchesters, maybe they had set a trap for them? But getting closer to the diner, they hadn’t seen anything out of ordinary. No suspicious human was around so they decided to enter the building.

And there they were. Hannah and Muriel on one side, Castiel on the other. The angel… No. Former angel had informed them about the ripple and how he and the Winchesters had been sent back in time. He had also told them about Metatron and the game he had played with all of them in that other future. Hannah had her doubts regarding the reliability of Castiel. He was a human now. And humans lied.

“I’m glad both of you came.” Castiel smiled at them. “You are two of the only angels I can trust right now.”

Muriel folded her fingers and leaned on the table.

“But I…” She glanced at Hannah. “We don’t know if we can trust you. The last time we heard about you, you killed hundreds of our kind, then for the rest of us you brought this.” Here Muriel motioned at the diner and the humans sitting around. “Is it really a good idea to meet with you? We don’t know if what you told us was true at all.”

Hannah folded her arms and watched Castiel. Muriel perfectly voiced her doubts and distrust. It was Castiel’s turn to explain himself. If he could.

But Castiel’s smile just widened, like he had expected this.

“Please, look and see.” He leaned forward. “I have nothing to hide.”

Hannah and Muriel exchanged glances.

“We would notice if he changed anything” was everything the other angel said before she raised her hand but didn’t touch the human’s forehead yet.

Hannah looked back at Castiel.

Back in Chicago, Nicole had asked her to wait in the car, then had returned with a bag.

“Okay” she sighed. “Here’s some money for the bus, a phone and maps. My number is in the phone so if you have any trouble, you can call me. Normal people sleep at night, so make sure to pretend to sleep on the bus and check into a motel when you can.”

Hannah tilted her head, watching the human with wonder.

“Why do you help me?” she asked.

Nicole snorted.
“Honestly? I still think I’m just hallucinating all of this. But if it’s reality, at least I did something good, no?”

Hannah stepped forward and placed a hand on the female’s shoulder.

“I can assure you, no matter what your grandparents say, you are worthy. Your soul, though bitter, still shines bright.”

She felt the human’s body tensing under her touch.

“You can see souls?”

Hannah nodded.

“I can see many things at once that your simple eyes cannot detect.”

Nicole watched her for a while then sighed.

“Then you mustn’t trust humans.”

The angel tilted her head.

“What do you mean? I should neither trust you? But you helped me.”

Nicole shook her head. Hannah could feel the disappointment radiating from her soul.

“You can’t trust humans. They’re selfish and lie all the time. And you look so naïve, they would try to use you and lure you into something horrible.”

Hannah felt offended by this. She raised her chin and narrowed her eyes.

“I’m a centuries old celestial being. I’m a soldier of Heaven. I can protect myself.”

The human smiled at that.

“I hope so.”

Hannah didn’t know if she could trust Castiel and his memories, but Muriel was right. They would notice the changes. Not if a human like him could do anything to alter those. So in the end she reached out too and as Castiel closed his eyes the two angels touched his temples.

An eons old life flashed before her eyes. For a long time it was just moments from Heaven then suddenly she found herself in Hell, flying away with a bright light protected by strong hands, then she was on Earth and she saw mostly two faces, mainly only one. She felt the peace, the happiness, the sadness and the pain. She lived through every war, every mistake, every death, every parting and reunion. She saw Raphael’s death, she felt the Leviathans taking over, she shivered when an angel leaned down with a strange device in her hand, she felt the pain when Metatron took out the Grace, the last component he needed for the spell, and when a very human life began. She saw the struggle, the greatest sin an angel could do, the journey to stop a war between angels.

Then she saw herself joining Castiel, following his every order, learning about the stolen Grace, leaving him and joining Metatron, realizing her mistake, Gadreel sacrificing himself, watching Castiel struggling with both emotional and physical pain. And she saw herself changing, softening, drifting away from the angel she always was, and in the end…

Hannah moved away quickly like she was burnt. Her Grace pulsed uneasily, struggling with the
images she had seen. She wanted to convince herself that all of this was a lie, Castiel was just playing with her mind. But there was nothing wrong with it. Those were Castiel’s true memories, no alterations.

“I…”

Hannah turned to her right. Muriel was shaken, her eyes wide and her lips trembling.

“I died…?”

Castiel looked down at his hands. He looked exhausted by sharing his memories with two angels at the same time but he managed to hold himself up, not letting his head to drop on the tabletop.

“Yes” he answered. “That is one of the many things I regret. Dragging you into this without the proper knowledge.”

A flare of anger awakened inside Hannah.

“And now?” she hissed. “You think you can prevent every death because you know what the next year would bring us? What happened would happen again, Castiel. No matter what you change.”

The human looked at her with pain in his eyes. For a long moment he just watched Hannah in silence.

“Nothing is set in stone” he said, holding her gaze. “Michael and Lucifer were supposed to have their battle years ago, but now both of them are in the Cage. It is up to us how we shape our future and not because a divine power said so.”

Hannah grabbed the edge of the table. She felt the wood breaking under her fingers.

“And look what happened. A civil war, the Leviathans, the Fall. All because you thought you can make everything better. All because you hungered for power.”

Hurt flashed up in the human’s gaze.

“I never wanted power” he said, offended. “I never wanted to lead you. You don’t need a leader. I only meant to guide you for a while, but I was dragged into a meaningless war.” He took a deep breath. “I know everything that happened was my fault. I’m still paying back for it. But don’t think my actions were out of selfishness. I always wanted good for all of you.”

Hannah shook her head.

“No, Castiel. Maybe our well-being concerned you, but we were never the driving force of your actions and you know that too.”

Castiel’s body tensed slightly and dropped his gaze. An angel that once had been like a role model for her was now only a human. Hannah watched him with pity as she continued.

“Your human feelings weakened you. You stayed so long here that you lost the purpose of your existence. We are soldiers and we are meant to follow God’s orders, not mingle with the mortals. That Hannah you showed me? She was weak too. You poisoned her mind with human thoughts and look what happened to her.”

Hannah stood up and looked at Castiel one last time.

“Unlike you, I know what I have to do. I’ll return to Heaven because that’s where I and all of us
belong.” Hannah glanced at Muriel and turned to leave. “Let’s go.”

But after a few steps she stopped and looked back. Muriel was still sitting at the table with her eyes fixed on the wood.

“Muriel?”

The angel trembled and turned to look at her.

“I stay, Hannah.”

Hannah couldn’t believe what she heard. Muriel had seen it too. She had seen what siding with Castiel would bring for her.

“You will only bring death upon yourself” she warned her, hoping that the other angel would come to her senses.

But her words had no use. Muriel shook her head and smiled at Hannah.

“Maybe I’ll die today or tomorrow or next year. But isn’t it time to put away our grudges and fears and finally do what is right? I fear that Malachi will find me and kill me of course, but I want to do something good before that.” Muriel’s eyes were pleading now. “You saw what I saw. You know how we can take back Heaven.”

Hannah shook her head and left the two of them without a word. If Muriel was that blind to see the dangers that Castiel would drag them into, fine. She had tried to talk her out of it, her consciousness is clear. But she was not like her. She couldn’t trust Castiel. She couldn’t trust a human.

* *

Lucy appearing in the bunker was like the sun shining after a long storm. Her existence gave everyone hope that maybe they could change this twisted world back to normal, that there was a new life awaiting after the nightmare.

When Bobby had first held his daughter in his arms he thought it was a dream. Because how could a miracle happen in a time like this? How could an innocent soul like hers come to this world? Bobby had never wanted to be a father. He never wanted to turn into his own father, and after Sam and Dean died he didn’t think he deserved to be one. But looking down at Lucy who smiled up at him with so much happiness and love he couldn’t believe he had almost missed this out of him life.

And after losing her son, it was a good way to heal for Jody too. She loved the little girl with all her heart and the two of them raised her peacefully. As peaceful as they could in the world they lived in.

The world that was slowly merging with this one.

Sam helped Garth down the stairs. Poor boy was a wreck. His breath was quick and cried uncontrollably. Bobby gave Lucy to Becky and rushed to the men with Cas and Lee.

“What happened, Garth?” Bobby asked.

Maybe he made a mistake, he thought later. Because as soon as Garth looked at him the man’s eyes
widened and his breath hitched.

“Bobby?” he asked with disbelief then turned to the other hunter. “Lee? You’re alive? But… But…”

Garth fainted after that. He was lucky Sam already held his arms otherwise he would have hit his head hard into the staircase.

“I’ll take him to a spare room” Sam said as he put one of Garth’s arms around his neck. Cas did the same with the other. “I’ll explain everything to him when he wakes up. I’ll call you.”

But before he walked away, Sam leaned closer to Bobby.

“The Leviathans are here” he hushed.

Bobby pulled a hand down his face as he watched Sam and Cas leaving with the unconscious Garth. If those boys wanted to fix their timeline they had to do it fast.

“What do we do now, Bobby?”

The old hunter turned around. Tamara stood at the top of the stairs of the library, looking at him with other hunters behind her.

“Help them, of course” Bobby answered like it was the most natural thing to do.

Tamara snorted and shook her head in disbelief. Some hunters sent Bobby disapproving looks, while others started whispering among themselves.

“Yeah, that’s what you did all the time. Help the Winchesters start a new war one after the other.”

Bobby took a deep breath to calm himself down. He glanced at Becky who understood his silent request and quickly left the area with Lucy in her arms. When the two of them were out of sight he looked back at the hunters in the library.

“You don’t want to help them? Fine. I respect your decision. I only ask you to leave them alone. They won’t bother you.”

“I’m not living under the same roof with a Winchester!” a male voice said. Some others nodded in agreement.

Meg chuckled at the table.

“Nobody stops you if you wanna leave, Paul.”

Paul stepped forward angrily.

“No one asked you, demon!”

“Shut up, Paul!” Lee was about to make a step towards the other man but Bobby put a hand on his shoulder to stop him. “The Winchesters stopped the Apocalypse. We would be in a bigger shit without them.”

“Oh, really?” a female hunter laughed. “Because I think it’s already a big shit. And who caused it? The Winchesters of course!”

“They make trouble everywhere they go!”
“Having them here is like a death wish!”

The situation was getting out of hand quickly. Everyone was cutting into the other’s words and those who stayed calmer and tried to reason with the others were soon silenced. Bobby rubbed his forehead in frustration. He knew that once the others would show up the peacefulness they had until now would be gone, but this? This was beyond everything he expected.

“Okay, enough!” Bobby shouted, out of patience. Luckily he was still in charge of this whole place so once he raised his voice silence fell on the library. Bobby sighed and looked at everyone of them. “I know you don’t like those boys. But you have to remember that they died while they tried to help us, help you. They got the tablet but Dick killed them before they could do anything. These boys” Bobby pointed to the door where Sam and Cas left “are facing something that can erase them from existence. They sacrificed so much for everyone. Why can’t you give them a break?”

Heavy silence fell on the rooms. Everyone, including Tamara, avoided Bobby’s eyes after his speech. The first noise was Tara standing up and looking at the hunters.

“Okay. Everyone has a lot to process. Let’s get some rest and we can figure out everything in the morning, okay? Okay.”

Without a word the crowed of hunters walked away in little groups to different directions. Tamara sent one last look towards Bobby then left too.

“Well” Lee started, folding his arms. “I was wondering when we start bickering like five-year-olds.”

* 

Castiel didn’t expect this. Of course he knew Hannah would be different. They weren’t supposed to meet until next year and until that Hannah would go through many things and she would learn more while traveling with Castiel. The Hannah he knew was rigid but could be friendly and would look at everything new with wonder.

This Hannah however was colder than he expected. She didn’t hide the distrust towards him, even though he showed her every moment of his life. He had nothing to hide from those who he considered his friends and allies.

Her words were harsh but rang with the truth. Castiel was weaker. Human feelings were a burden that dragged him down. There was one reason he had done everything. For an angel like this Hannah these things were unacceptable. A soldier had to be strong, follow orders without questions, never letting themselves get distracted by unnecessary thoughts. Hannah was one of these angels, he supposed, though he had never met her in Heaven. He didn’t know when Hannah had been created, if she was created at all.

But Castiel hadn’t been that kind of an angel. He had always questioned orders and hadn’t run into battles blindly. Especially after he had met Dean. And to be honest, he didn’t miss being an angel. Of course he missed his ability to heal others but having all those feelings and senses… It was a part of him and he would miss those. He had already experienced losing them. He preferred to be a human. And Hannah, this Hannah, wouldn’t understand the significance of it until she experienced it.
He was glad that at least Muriel stayed. She would be a great addition to their team.

“What now, Castiel?” she asked a few minutes after Hannah left.

“Now I call my friends” Castiel said as he reached into his pocket. “They are in the area, dealing with a ghost. They will be here soon to pick us up.”

He took his phone out of his pocket with a heavy heart. He didn’t know how to break the news to Sam. He had seen how much he looked forward to this meeting. It would be saddening to see him when he would find out that the angel didn’t want to join them.

Before he could make the call the phone started ringing. Susie. Castiel frowned as he answered the call.

“Hello, Susie. Everything alright?”

Somebody chuckled on the other side who was definitely not the teenage girl.

“Hello, Castiel.”

This calm voice was familiar. He had only heard it once but he still remembered the time when he had been in chains and tortured by the angel.

Fear and anger awoke in Castiel.

“Where’s Susie, Malachi?” His voice was shaking by the emotions he felt.

Muriel looked up at him with wide eyes. The former angel held up a finger before she could ask anything.

“She’s here, don’t worry” came the answer. “She’s taking a nap right now. Maybe you should pick her up. I don’t know if she can go home like this.”

Castiel’s grip tightened around the phone. If he were still an angel, it would be in pieces by now.

“What have you done to her?” he hissed.

“Nothing. Yet. And it would stay like this if you hurry and get here soon. I’ll text you the address.”

Malachi put down the phone. Castiel lowered his hand and stared at his with wide eyes, his dry lips parted slightly.

“Castiel?”

He didn’t look up at Muriel. A cold shiver ran down his spine as he received the text message with the location he had to go to. Susie was in trouble because of him. He didn’t know how Malachi had found her but that didn’t matter right now. It was his fault that the angel had taken her. He had to save her.

Castiel stood up and after putting down some money on the table he made his way to the door.

“Castiel, wait!” He heard Muriel standing up too and following him.

“Do you have a car?” the former angel asked once they were outside. He checked him phone quickly. Colorado Springs. They could be there in an hour if they were lucky.
“I left it on the other side of the city” Muriel answered. She stepped in front of Castiel and looked into his eyes. “What happened?”

Castiel paced, his patience running short. He didn’t have any time to explain. Susie would die soon.

“I’ll tell you everything later, we just…”

Castiel’s eyes shifted to the road and that was where he saw it. Saw her. A beige Lincoln Continental, his Lincoln Continental, the one that Dean had called the ‘pimp mobile’, was on the other side of the street, attached to a wrecker, on its way to the junkyard.

Muriel, Malachi, his car. If the universe was a person, it had a bad taste of humor. Was somebody trying to make fun of him? Or was this a cosmic sign? Were these clues leading him on a path? But where would it take him?

Castiel looked around and crossed the road. Muriel followed him faithfully. Maybe she shouldn’t. The last time she had met Malachi, Theo had killed her.

“Can you repair it?” the former angel asked. He looked around to see where the driver was then quickly detached his car from the wrecker.

Muriel blinked at him.

“I… I think?”

“Please, do it.”

The angel nodded and touched the hood of the car. Castiel heard parts of the engine moving, then Muriel nodded.

Castiel smiled at her.

“Thank you. Please, wait here. My friends will be here soon.”

“What about you? Where are you going?”

Castiel hurried to the driver’s side of the car.

“My friend got captured by Malachi. I have to save her.”

The former angel got inside the car. Just like last time, the key was hidden above the visor. He was about to start the car when the other door opened and Muriel sat inside.

“Muriel…” he started with a shake of his head but the angel cut in.

“I can’t let you go alone” she said. “You don’t have your Grace. You have no chance against Malachi and his followers.”

Castiel opened his mouth to protest but the angel didn’t let him speak again.

“I’m going with you.” And to put some emphasis on her word she slammed the door.

The former angel sighed and started the car. He couldn’t waste any more time for arguing. Susie was in danger.

There was a quick, floating thought that he should text Dean but he dismissed it. He didn’t know
what Dean was doing right now. He didn’t want to interrupt him while hunting. He would call him. Later.

Chapter End Notes

Remember the nurse from 1x12? And the mother from 1x18? Both were played by Erica Carroll, so why not make those two characters the same character and Hannah's vessel? And Hannah’s vessel met both Sam and Dean. Interesting.

Very clueless Hannah. I have my reasons.

I'm still struggling to not catch up to myself. I'm writing the ending of tommorow's chapter right now... I don't want to catch up... TT_TT
Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning: attempted rape in the third part of the chapter. I just spoiled what almost happened there but I don't want any of you to read it without a warning. I put a (an?) - to the parts that might be triggery.

Fortunately, the roads were dry and the traffic was light, so they entered Colorado Springs almost forty minutes after taking the car. Castiel sped down I-25 like a madman, passing slower cars without stepping on the break. Next to him Muriel held on to the seat, her eyes wide with fear that they might crash. But Castiel didn’t slow down. He couldn’t. Susie’s chances to survive lessened with every passing minute.

Soon after entering the city, they arrived to the address Malachi had sent Castiel. It was an old car service. The sign next to the entrance gate informed them that the building was under construction and it was dangerous to go inside. Perfect hiding place for anything supernatural, like abandoned storages, empty farms and old cabins up in the mountains.

“You can still change your mind.” Castiel turned to Muriel. The angel watched the building nervously then looking at Castiel she shook her head.

“No. I meant it. I’m going with you.”

Castiel nodded.

With their angel blades in their hands the two of them entered the building. Most of the windows were covered so the only source of light was the door behind them. The air was heavy with the smell of oil and exhaust fumes, but there were no cars inside. And no angels, though the smell of ozone, tightly connected to angels, was sensible.

“Do you know where they are?” he asked Muriel with a low voice, his eyes observing the dark corners of the room.

“Below us” Muriel answered. She walked behind Castiel, covering his back. “There has to be a staircase somewhere.”

The deeper they walked inside the darker it became. With the opened door and being out of use for quite some time, the service was cold. Castiel’s cheeks were freezing, his fingers numb even with gloves on. Everything was silent. Too silent in his opinion. Not even the noises of the city were heard. Someone was watching them, he could feel it, the eyes following their every movement.

They soon found the staircase, leading down to the pitch black darkness of the basement.

“It’s a trap” Muriel said, looking back at Castiel. “Malachi is waiting for us.”

Castiel’s eyes didn’t leave the darkness. He swallowed hard, beads of sweat formed on the back of his neck. Of course it was a trap. He knew it from the beginning. But he couldn’t think about his own life now when Susie was in danger. Poor girl was in danger because he knew her. Trap or not, he had to risk his life for her safety.
“Let’s go.”

They descended on the steps, allowing the darkness to swallow them. Castiel made every move as careful as possible. Without his eyes, he only could rely on his hearing and his hand touching the wall. He let Muriel walk ahead him, with her Grace the lack of light was nothing for her. Castiel followed her like a shadow.

They soon reached the end of the staircase. They didn’t say anything. Muriel only touched his left shoulder and he knew where to go. The silence was a heavy weight on his eardrums. Without any sound, his ears soon started ringing, and he cursed it for not letting him focus. With it he couldn’t hear the little noises that would tell him if somebody was following them.

“Don’t move!” Muriel yelled.

Castiel heard a metallic object cutting through the air, flying by in inch from his ear. The object soon hit its target. It was a male. His eyes and mouth lit up as the angel burnt out of the vessel. In this momentarily light Castiel could see that they were in a narrow corridor and where this angel came others were coming too.

The light faded and Castiel felt Muriel rushing by him, going for her blade for certain.

“They are coming from both ways!” the angel informed him. “Get ready!”

Castiel turned his back where he heard Muriel’s voice then raised his blade, ready to fight. The angels didn’t move silently. Maybe now, that they were detected, they didn’t feel the need to hide themselves. They probably didn’t know Muriel had come too and they had originally planned to attack Castiel in the shadows. Which raised a question. Was Muriel warded against angels too?

But Castiel didn’t have time to think about it. An other flash of Grace lit the corridor and he saw four angels charging at him. Castiel memorized their height and position, and when the corridor turned dark again, he could easily block the first attack.

He tried to focus on sounds and the way the air moved around him. With his coat on him the latter was almost impossible but he managed. He didn’t injure anyone yet but neither could the attackers injure him. That week spent with running every morning paid off well. Even with a human’s strength he could keep up with the angels surrounding him. But he was getting tired quickly and his limbs started aching.

There was an other flash of Grace and it happened at the right time. Without it Castiel wouldn’t have noticed the blade above him. He quickly jumped out of the way and waited for the next attack.

“Enough!”

Castiel held back his breath as he waited. The sound of the fight died, overtaken by silence once again. And then the lights were on, blinding the former angel with the brightness. Castiel covered his eyes, though he knew it was the worst thing he could do. He had to defend himself. He couldn’t let his attackers get him. That was what a soldier would think. But he wasn’t a soldier for a long time now. His human instincts dominated his every movement, like shielding his eyes from the light.

“It’s nice you came here so fast, Castiel” a voice said. “We were eager to meet you.”

A collective laughter was the answer to that. Castiel moved his hand away, his eyes still had to adjust to the light but he could see the one who spoke earlier.
“Malachi.”

The angel smiled at Castiel. It lacked the kindness, promising a lifetimes long nightmare. This sadistic behavior reminded Castiel to Alistair. Even while captured he had used his words to injure and torture his captors. If he were created, Malachi would have followed Alistair to Hell and joined him in torturing.

Malachi was to his left, angels behind him, bodies at his feet. Castiel gazed at the dead and his heart fell.

“No…”

Among the fallen angels laid Muriel. A wound was on her chest and the blood pooled around her body. Her wide eyes were empty, staring into the nothing.

“She was a fool to come.” Malachi stepped over Muriel’s vessel and made her way towards Castiel. “She warded herself last week. We lost track of her but I’m glad we could put an end to this.”

Castiel tore his eyes away from his comrade and looked into Malachi’s.

“Where’s Susie?”

“Safe for now.” The angel stopped a step away from him. “Her fate depends on you.”

Other angels walked to them, in one of them Castiel recognized Theo. Two grabbed Castiel by the arms. He didn’t try to fight against their grip and he let them take his blade. He was outnumbered. He had no chance against them all alone.

With Malachi on the lead the angels took Castiel down the corridor.

“We have a lot to talk about, you and I.” Malachi glanced back at him. “I suppose you know what I want.”

Castiel watched the back of Malachi’s head. In that other timeline the angel had captured him only because he had been with Muriel. How Malachi had found out about Susie, he had no idea. Something was not right with this timeline. First the strange Enochian symbols, now this.

They soon entered an old storage room. One single light bulb provided the light to see but it was enough for Castiel to recognize the human tied to a chair.

“Susie!”

Theo hit Castiel in the ribs and he groaned out in pain. But the sounds woke Susie. The girl looked up at him, eyes shining with tears of pain and fear.

“Castiel?”

She was alive but not unharmed. She had many bruises on her face and there was blood on the corner of her mouth. Her cloths torn here and there and a big cut crossed her arms.

“Everything will be fine, Susie, I promise…”

An other punch silenced him. He doubled over from pain and lack of oxygen in his lungs. Only Theo and the other angel prevented him from falling on the ground.
Malachi motioned with his head and the two angels took him to the wall to the right where they chained Castiel by his wrists. The cold metal cut into his skin through the gloves.

“Leave… her… alone…” he breathed out. “She’s… innocent…”

Malachi turned to Castiel. A twisted smile appeared on his face as he took his blade into his hand.

“No.”

And with a quick movement, the angel blade sunk into the girl’s stomach.

Castiel couldn’t yell or say anything in shock. Susie’s eyes widened. Her mouth opened to a silent gasp and her body trembled as the blade left her. Her breathing became quicker as she glanced down at the wound that steadily soaked her cloths with blood.

“I avoided the vital organs.” The angel wiped the blade with Susie’s jeans before he put it away. “But she will bleed out in two or three hours.”

Castiel clenched his fists. He was shaking with anger and his vision became red with furry as he raised his eyes from the girl to Malachi.

“Why did you stab her?! he yelled. “I came, didn’t I?! Heal her and let her go!”

Malachi laughed at him.

“You know, Castiel, I just want to make sure you’ll tell me the truth.” The angel stepped closer and leaned into Castiel’s personal space. The former angel tried to move away but the wall prevented him. “Let’s play a game, shall we? I leave you two here for two hours. You watch your human friend bleeding to her death. And when I come back and ask you some questions, you’ll tell me the truth. If I’m satisfied with your answers, the girl can leave healthy. If not?” Malachi shrugged and grinned. “I don’t think I have to tell.”

Malachi and the other angels left the room. Theo stayed behind, glancing at the former angel with narrowed eyes then followed the others. The door closed loudly after him.

Castiel inhaled a deep breath and looked at Susie. The girl was whimpering silently, still under the shock of having a fatal wound. He had to help her. Had to save her. He only had one chance. Something he would rather not do, but he couldn’t think about himself right now. Susie’s wellbeing was above his fears.

Still, he started thinking about other options. Maybe if Sam and Dean returned to the diner and didn’t see him, they would look for him. His phone was still in his pocket, battery charged, sound turned off. They would find him by it. But what if that would be too late?

Or maybe… He could try something else.

Castiel closed his eyes and concentrated. He recalled a familiar face in his mind and focused on it.

‘Hannah, please listen to my prayer. Malachi captured me and one of my friends. We’re in Colorado Springs in an old car service. I’m not asking you to help me but please, save her. She’s innocent. She has nothing to do with this war. I’m begging you, help her. Or… Or I might do something I would regret for my whole life… Again…’
Castiel found the tension in the bunker unsettling. Maybe the hunters didn’t voice their disagreement with Sam staying in the bunker, but the angel had eyes. He could see the unfriendly glances they sent the younger Winchester when he wasn’t looking. Sam noticed it too, of course, but he chose to ignore it. Castiel respected his patience regarding the situation. Unlike him, the angel took matters in hand. Whenever he saw someone looking at Sam in any way but normal or friendly, he openly glared back, showing them the anger of the angel he still was. Every time this happened the hunters looked away or left the room. This went on for two days until everyone learnt the ‘don’t mess with the angel’ lesson.

He and Sam spent their time mostly in the library. The books and scrolls that Hannah had previously brought were already read by him twice already up in Heaven. He didn’t know if reading them a third time would have any positive results. But every time he started doubting himself he told himself that maybe he had left out something. A side note, a hidden message, anything.

And now Meg was helping them too. The demon at first only eyed the papers curiously, before she experimentally touched one of them.

“You can’t be too careful” she explained. “What if its holiness burns me? I wouldn’t like that.”

Sam at the beginning had been against Meg’s help but he had to realize they were out of options. The more people looked the sooner they would find anything.

But after two days there was still nothing.

“Does this guy even exist?” Meg asked the question they were too afraid to say out loud.

“Of course he does” Sam said without his eyes leaving the page. “Death told me.”

Meg rolled her eyes.

“Why would Death tell the truth?”

Sam made a face as he turned to look at her.

“Because maybe this ripple is effecting the balance in life and death.”

“The circle of life” Castiel corrected him but neither of them seemed to hear him.

“If you ask me, I don’t think we can trust Death” Meg said and crossed her arms.

Sam mimicked her posture.

“I didn’t ask you. And Death is trustworthy. Or you don’t like him because he helped us lock Lucifer back in the Cage?”

Meg threw her head back and laughed. The sound gained a disapproving glare from Tara and scared Daphne who just passed through the main area. She left in a haste.

While Sam and Meg continued throwing insults at each other, Castiel turned his attention back to the text, but his mind wandered away.
He thought about the dream again, the one he had in the barn. When he had met Dean in his dream. When Dean had told him he had forgiven him for everything. It had been a nice dream. Saddening, but nice. He hadn’t dreamed since he became an angel again, but getting closer to his death had given him the chance to see the Dean he knew again. There hadn’t been any black in his eyes, any menace and mock in his voice. He had been simply Dean.

Castiel sometimes found himself thinking about that at random times of the day, just like now. If he couldn’t dream while sleeping he decided to dream while awake. The image was still vivid in his head but he knew it would soon lose its colors and soon fade away. Times like that Castiel wished he was dying again.

The angel quickly shook himself mentally. No. He shouldn’t think about things like that. Hannah hadn’t wasted her Grace on him so he could long for near death experiences. He had to make good use of every minute he could spend alive.

There was just one thing that still bothered him. How had he gotten into the Impala?

Meg’s whistle interrupted his thoughts.

“Look at that.”

Castiel looked at her. The demon arched a brow, head turning to the direction of the library’s entrance. Sam looked up at her too but soon his eyes wandered away and a strange expression appeared on his face.

“Hey, Hannah.”

At the other side of the room stood Hannah with Tara at her side. She had new books and scrolls in her hands.

“I let her in” Tara informed them as she turned to leave. “She was knocking for quite some time.”

Sam quickly stood up and walked to them. Arriving there, he took the documents from the angel.

“I’m sorry” the man apologized quickly. “We were deep in researching. We didn’t hear you.”

Hannah folded her fingers and smiled up at Sam.

“No problem. It’s important and needs a lot of attention.” She glanced away for a short moment. “I should be the one to apologize. I told you I would be back soon.”

Sam shook his head.

“It’s okay. Really. You must have a lot of work to do.”

From the corner of his eye Castiel saw Meg leaning on the table to get closer to him. The angel turned his head to the demon, who had a smirk on her face.

“Say, Cas. Is there something I should know?”

Castiel frowned.

“Know what?”

Meg held up one finger and pointed at Sam and Hannah’s direction. Castiel looked back and frowned. He didn’t know what Meg was referring to. Maybe she just wanted to tease Sam after
their argument.

Hannah looked away from Sam to greet Castiel but then her eyes settled on the demon. The angel’s body tensed. Her arms fell to her side and she glared at Meg, ready to attack her any time.

Sam was quick to stop the storm before it happened.

“Hannah, this is Meg. An ally. Meg, this is Hannah.”

A grin spread on Meg’s face as she wave.

“Hey there, Bright Eyes” she said with tease. Castiel let out an exhausted sigh.

Hannah eyed the demon for a long while before she turned back to Sam.

“You have very unusual allies” she commented, disapproval easily detectable in her voice.

Meg laughed.

“Oh, we were more than allies, right Sammy? We shared a body once, remember?” Meg made a low sound which sounded very much like a moan and she moved her shoulders lazily, rolling them back and forth. “Good old times.”

“Meg.” Castiel sent a warning glance at the demon who in return just shrugged.

Hannah’s jaw tightened and Sam rubbed the back of his neck.

“Okay, uh…” Sam started but Hannah quickly cut in.

“I have to talk to Castiel for a moment.” Then she added, looking at the angel, ignoring Sam’s heavy sigh. “In private.”

Castiel nodded and stood up. At Meg’s low ‘too much iron’ comment he just rolled his eyes.

The two angels had to make a long walk around the bunker until they found an abandoned area. Which unfortunately happened to be the dungeon. Castiel flexed and relaxed his fingers, then turned to Hannah.

“There are a lot more hunters in the building” Hannah commented. “And I was informed about Leviathans detected in the country. The ripple is getting closer.”

Castiel nodded but then frowned. Hannah was avoiding the subject she wanted to talk about. She shifted on her legs uncomfortably, avoiding Castiel’s eyes.

“Hannah…”

“I was talking with Metatron” the angel confessed suddenly, eyes widened with panic as she looked back at Castiel. “Twice already.”

Castiel’s eyes rounded with disbelief.

“You what?!” he bursted out. “Hannah, you know well that…”

“Just hear me out!” She held up her hands in defense. “First I went to Metatron because I thought he somehow controlled me. I remembered what you had told me about Naomi so I feared he was doing the same with me. During our conversations I heard some information from him he normally
shouldn’t know about.” Hannah paused to lick her lips. “Like the Colt incident between you and Dean.”

Castiel felt his blood turning into an icy river in his veins. His throat became so dry suddenly that at first he couldn’t make any sound.

“No…”

Hannah leaned a little closer and looked deeply into Castiel’s eyes.

“We have a spy among us, Castiel.” As she said it only her lips moved, her jaw was tightly shut like this would keep this conversation between the two of them, protecting it from the curious ears.

Castiel ran his fingers through his hair. He couldn’t believe it! After Metatron had confessed everything in his office to every angel to be heard on the angel radio, there was still someone who supported him from the shadows? But who?

“I thought our double agent situation was solved by the end of the suicide bombers.”

The corner of Hannah’s mouth twitched at the mention of that event.

“We don’t know how many angels were reprogrammed by Metatron” Hannah said. “There can be sleeping agents out there. And remember the angel? Ezra? We still don’t know who killed him.”

It was unsettling. Even locked into Heaven’s prison could not stop Metatron’s influence. No wonder he was so calm in his cell. Having a spy outside who reported him from time to time gave him an advantage. He could only imagine what damage the scribe had made since his imprisonment.

“We have to find the spy” Castiel decided. “If he knows about everything, Metatron may try to stop us fixing the timeline.”

“I spent the last two Earth days in Heaven” Hannah said. “I observed the behavior of every angel I could and kept an eye on the prison entrance but nothing.” She tilted her head. “But why would Metatron want to stop us? The ripple would erase him too.”

Castiel thought about it for a while, trying to find logic in it, and just then answered.

“Maybe he thinks that if he didn’t succeed, his alter ego in the other timeline will. The only difference between this timeline and that is that Bobby Singer couldn’t summon Gavin MacLeod. Metatron’s desire for vengeance is the same. This Metatron is willing to sacrifice himself so the other would fulfill his revenge.”

Hannah bit her lower lip and looked away. She looked frustrated and… terrified? It was a rare sight to see fear on an angel’s face. And he was sure he had never seen it on Hannah’s face. Thinking about it, he had rarely seen Hannah show any emotions apart from those that every angel did, like anger, pride and admiration. But in the last few weeks Hannah had gone through a great change of character. She smiled more and even cried. Castiel hadn’t seen it but he could hear in her voice.

Castiel ducked his head, trying to make eye contact with his sister.

“Hannah?” When the angel looked at him, he continued. “Why did you think Metatron was controlling you?”
Hannah shut her eyes tight. She took a few deep breaths then opened her mouth to speak.

“I…”

“Oh, you are not Emmanuel. And this is not my timeline, I suppose.”

Castiel and Hannah quickly turned to the owner of the voice. It was a short woman with dark skin, looking at them both warmly. She stepped closer to Castiel and he was so surprised by the woman’s sudden appearance and her words that he didn’t move away when she put a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

“Oh, dear” she said, sadness taking over her features. “Your heart is bleeding with grief. Your pain is so great you can barely stand.” The woman pulled Castiel down into a hug. “And don’t you ever think about it. Dean would want you to go on.”

The angel felt blood running out of his face. He felt Hannah’s questioning eyes on him and when the woman finally let him go he couldn’t meet her eyes.

“Can you please show me where Bobby Singer is?” the woman asked. “I have a word with him.”

*

Shortly after departing from Nicole, Hannah found out how true her words had been.

Following the female’s advice, Hannah went to the ‘bus station’ and found out that the ‘bus’ was not the flying machine she had previously seen. The flying machines were ‘planes’. She should have known, really. Humanity’s first successful attempt of aviation had been conversed between angels for a long time in Heaven. Even Hannah had heard about it, though she tried to distance herself from anything related to humans and rather watched the whales migrating.

Arriving to the station, she looked at the large schedule, informing humans about the departure of buses and their destination. She read the city names with narrowed eyes, trying to find out where she should go next, where her lost siblings were, where they could return to Heaven.

She reached out with her Grace and listened to her siblings’ voices, trying to hear any useful information. But the only things she heard were painful screams and angry threats, promises that Castiel would die a painful death once the angels found him.

Hannah frowned at that. She was wondering about it for a while now. Why would the angels want to see Castiel dead? He had fought against Raphael and killed thousands of angels afterwards, yes, she knew about that. She had been terrified, fearing the moment when Castiel would find her too. But she also knew Castiel had always wanted to do good. And anyway, nobody had heard from Castiel in a long time. It was possible that he was already dead.

After further listening, she heard the piece of information she needed. Apparently Castiel was alive and sided with Metatron, the former Scribe of God, to cast all angels out of Heaven. Hannah had never met Metatron. She wasn’t sure that she had ever heard about him.

And that was when she heard the prayer.

‘This is Dean Winchester... And I need your help.’
Hannah turned away from the schedule, looking to the direction where the prayer was coming from. Dean Winchester’s name was known to every angel. He was the Righteous Man, Michael’s true vessel. He was also the one who had stopped the Apocalypse with his brother and Castiel. But she had never heard him pray.

‘The deal is this. Linwood Memorial Hospital. Randolph, New York. The first one who can help me gets my help in return and you know that ain’t nothin’. Hell, it’s no secret that we haven’t always seen eye to eye. But you know that I am good for my word. And, uh, I wouldn’t be asking if I wasn’t needing, so...’

The prayer ended as sudden as it had started. Hannah considered her options. She could wander around aimlessly until she found something useful, or she could go to the Winchester and ask for help. Angels in Heaven were always whispering about the Winchesters. According to them, the Winchesters were madmen who always caused trouble wherever they went. But, although humans were not her favorite creatures, Hannah considered them to be good humans. They saved many lives, they had to be good, right? It felt only natural to try help Dean Winchester.

Hannah looked around. An empty bus arrived to the station and after the door opened a male got off. Hannah assumed he was the one functioning it. The angel walked to him.

“Excuse me” she started. The man looked up at her. “I need to go to Randolph, New York.”

The human shook his head.

“There’s no bus going there.”

Hannah tilted her head.

“Do you know any other way I can get there?”

The male shrugged.

“Try renting a car.”

With that the human left Hannah alone. The angel watched him walking away, thinking about his words. Where could she acquire a ‘car’ – was that an other name of the ‘automobile’? – and how would she function it? She had no knowledge about those machines.

Hannah sat down on a bench and took one of the maps Nicole had put inside it. She looked up where ‘Chicago’ and ‘Randolph, New York’ was then made some calculations. According to the speed of Nicole’s automobile – or should she call it a ‘car’ now? – and the distance between the two settlements it would take seven hours and thirty-five minutes to get there. But for that she needed a car – yes, she would call it ‘car’ from now on, – because on foot it would take one hundred sixty-three hours, almost seven days.

As she was thinking about possible ways to get to Randolph, New York, she walked out the station, back to the street. Maybe she should call Nicole? She showed her how to use the phone. She could ask for help from her. But she didn’t call her. Hannah knew Nicole had a lot of burden to carry, she couldn’t put more on her.

Not having a better option she started heading east. Maybe one of the cars was going to that direction and the humans would be willing to take her there. But if she didn’t succeed in an hour, she wouldn’t go. There surely were angels closer to that area. Maybe the first one already arrived.

-“Are you looking for something?”
Hannah turned to the source of the voice. A male stood a few steps away from her. He had a bright smile on his face while he leaned against a car. Maybe she could go to the Winchester.

“I want to go to Randolph, New York” she informed the human.

-The male’s smile grew.

“Well, if it isn’t your lucky day. I’m just about to drive there. I can take you too.”

Hannah smiled back – it seemed to be a friendly gesture among humans, Nicole smiled at her too. This was indeed her lucky day. First Nicole, now this male was helping her too. Maybe she could make it to Dean Winchester in time.

“That would be highly appreciated.”

-The male nodded and opened the car for her. Hannah sat inside and soon the car was on the road.

Hannah watched the cars around her. There were so many. Too many in her opinion. Those chemicals the machines produced… They were killing the plants in the city. She could see how pale the leaves were on the trees next to the road. How dry and yellow the grass was. And apart from a few birds, she didn’t see any animals. It was horrible how humans treated the nature around them. Maybe if there weren’t any humans, everything would be better and God’s creation could be beautiful again.

No. Those thoughts were like Lucifers. And Lucifer had been banished from Heaven. She shouldn’t share thoughts with an outcast.

-Hannah turned her attention towards the human. He was driving the car easily, his expression calm, but what caught the angel’s attention was his soul. It was heavy, moving lazily and reaching out towards her. Hannah experimentally reached out towards it too with her Grace then quickly pulled back. The human’s soul felt ill, rotten. And now that she paid more attention to it, she noticed how darker it was compared to Nicole’s. What a fool she was! She had been too busy with the thought that she could go to Randolph, New York, that she hadn’t noticed the human’s soul.

-“I changed my mind” she said. “I’d like to look for an other mean of transportation.”

-The male just smiled at her.

-“We’ll be there soon.”

Hannah looked around and when she noticed the sun’s position she turned back to the human, anger waking up inside her.

-“Randolph, New York is to the east. We’re heading to the west. Stop the car.”

-The human reached out and put a hand on her thigh, squeezing it.

-“Don’t worry, honey, you’re in good hands.”

Hannah had enough. Her angel blade appeared in her right hand and with a quick motion she placed the tip to the human’s throat, sinking it slightly into the skin, just barely not drawing blood.

“You stop the car this instant” she demanded.

The male quickly pulled back his hand and turned the car to the side of the road. He stopped the machine but Hannah still had her blade against his throat.
“I’m sorry, I’m sorry” he said with a shaking voice. “I didn’t mean to…”

“I don’t care what you meant” Hannah cut in. “And you would neither.”

Hannah placed two fingers to the man’s temple and wiped his memories. It was drastic, she knew that, but the human deserved it. His soul was so rotten she was surprised it wasn’t a demon. But he would be. With a soul like this he wouldn’t go to Heaven.

The male blinked at her but before he could say anything Hannah was already out of the car, walking back towards the city. She couldn’t believe how blind she had been. Nicole had warned her that she mustn’t trust humans. And how true her words turned out to be. And now, looking at the humans, she started to realize how grey their souls were. Every bright light was tainted with many sins. How could those beautiful bright souls turn into these things? What had happened to them?

She couldn’t trust them. She couldn’t trust any of them. They weren’t righteous people who were worthy of God’s love. They were more like the twisted demons, hiding in the depths of Hell.

Hannah took her phone and called Nicole. Nicole was the only human she could trust. The only human she would ever trust.

So once an angel or not, she could neither trust Castiel. He was human, and humans were selfish and always lied. Muriel was blind to see it.

Hannah was sitting on a bench for almost an hour now. The park was small, the trees and the grass was covered in snow, the little pond in the middle frozen. She watched the little birds looking for food, jumping in the snow. Their black feathers were in contrast with the whiteness around them. Beautiful. Peaceful. Why couldn’t everything be like this?

Seeing Castiel’s memories, she now knew how much danger he would drag her and other angels into. And she saw that he had lied. Even as an angel he had lied. It seemed once an angel turned into a human, they would always be a human. How could she trust him like this?

At least she now knew about Metatron’s plan. How he wanted to get his hands on the angel tablet and make himself a god. She could use that piece of information. She just had to make her own plan.

From the birds Hannah looked up and settled on the two humans on the other side of the pond. They were two females, sitting on a bench just like her. She had seen them once, she realized. The two females back in Chicago she had watched after a week of the Fall. The one crying and the other one rubbing her back.

Now both of them were smiling. They had big green and red bags in her hands, laughing at something one of them said. Their souls were pure and bright, shining like two lamps in the dark.

It was a shame there were so few humans with souls like theirs. If there were more, the world would be a better place. Much better.

‘Hannah, please listen to my prayer.’

Hannah turned her head towards the south and frowned. It was Castiel.

‘Malachi captured me and one of my friends. We’re in Colorado Springs in an old car service. I’m not asking you to help me but please, save her. She’s innocent. She has nothing to do with this war. I’m begging you, help her. Or… Or I might do something I would regret for my whole life…’
Again…’

Hannah’s fingers curled up into a ball. Castiel’s voice was painful, desperate. He was hopeless. What happened to him? What happened after she had left the restaurant? How did Malachi capture him and his friend?

*She’s innocent.*

Hannah stood up, eyes still looking to the direction where Castiel’s prayer came from. She could feel many angels at the same place. There must be where Castiel and his friend were captured.

For a moment she thought about ignoring him. Castiel was asking for trouble. But the innocent… What if she was the few humans who still had a bright soul? Would she let her die too?

Hannah left the park in a hurry. She needed a car.
I’m laying on my side in the grass for a few minutes now. I’m miserable, I know it. If others could see me now, they would laugh their asses off, I’m sure. But I can’t pull myself together. I can’t stand up and go back to the cabin and…

I turn on my back and watch the sky. I know my logic is flawed. Killing an innocent guy for a selfish reason? I wanna throw up on myself. I would do it if not for the fact that I’m still a demon and my stomach is still like a black hole.

I rub my eyes with the balls of my hands. I can do it. I have to do it. For everyone who died because of me after I came back from Purgatory. I have to do it for Kevin. Kevin was still alive in that timeline, I know it. I have to do it for him. I have to!

But for that I have to kill Gavin because if Sam and Cas send him back, Kevin stays dead. And Bobby stays dead too.

Poor kid…

Poor, poor kid…

No. Kevin alive. Bobby alive. That’s what I have to focus on. Sam in Heaven. Cas doesn’t remember anything. Killing Gavin would make everything better. He should be dead, anyway. Dying in a ship wreck or something. He shouldn’t be alive.

And the best reason why I have to do this:

I will be dead.

As dead as anyone can be, or even more. Dead, like I should have been for countless years now. Why the hell did Dad sell my soul for me? Why, why, why? He should have let me die, let Tessa take me away to wherever I belonged. Which was Hell of course even at that time. I don’t know why I went to Heaven with Sam when Roy and Walt killed us.

Sam.

If only I could say goodbye to him properly. If only I could apologize for everything I did to him.

And Cas.

It’s better if he doesn’t remember me. I dragged him into so much bullshit, I can’t believe he didn’t turn his back to us, to me, yet. With him it’s better this way. He would only try talking me out of it.

It’s better this way.

Everything will be better.

I stand up before I can change my mind and zap back to the cabin. Everything is how I left it. Gavin is still watching cartoons, Dora the Explorer from all. He stares at it, mesmerized by the colorful animation and the annoying voices and noises.
He hears when I enter and looks up with a smile before he turns back to the TV, gluing his eyes back on the screen.

“I don’t understand” he says. “Does she hear me when I answer her question? If so, why can’t I talk with her?”

I want him to stop speaking. It would just make everything harder. I already feel doubt working its way up from the corner of my mind where I locked it.

“It’s just a show for kids, Gavin” I answer as I walk closer to him. “You can’t talk to the TV.”

I’m now behind the couch. In the TV Dora chirps without stopping. I almost snort when I imagine her looking at Gavin and ask ‘Can you find the killer? That’s right! He’s behind you!’

“Then why does she ask questions?” Gavin tilts his head. “I don’t understand…”

I take the First Blade into my hand, raise it and wait. Or I froze, I don’t know… Why is Gavin this naïve? This… good? Why couldn’t Crowley’s kid be a dick? A demon spawn? An evil son of a bitch? That I would kill without hesitation. But this kid?

I shut my eyes tight.

“There are many things we don’t understand” I say. “Like, are we alone? Are there aliens? Why are we alive? Why we have to die? Why can’t everything be more simple?”

I hear Gavin chuckling.

“Good questions!”

I take a deep breath and tighten my grip on the Blade.

“I’m so sorry…”

I strike down.

The Blade hits something solid.

It slices through it like it was only butter.

I stop my arm.

Silence.

Then a light thud on the furniture.

I turn around and just then open my eyes. Dora is still chirping happily in the background while the smell of blood enters my nostrils.

I did it.

I killed Gavin.

Everything will be fine now.

No need to panic.

No need to feel bad.
No need to shake like it’s freezing cold.

Damn it…

I drop the Blade and fell on my knees. I dug my fingers into my hair and grip it like I want to tear it out. I killed an innocent kid whose only crime was to be the only one who could fix time. And I killed him. I killed him.

I feel the Mark snickering at me. It knows I can’t hold onto the humanity I gained back in the last few days. It knows it can take over me any time soon. It likes the blood that’s still warm on the Blade and it wants more.

But I won’t give into it. I won’t give it the satisfaction to be in charge again. I am the master of my own body, not that piece of crap! Once this timeline gets erased I and the Mark on my arm will case to exist. It will happen in a few days or weeks. I can’t wait. I’m a bigger threat than the Leviathans. At least the Leviathans can be destroyed. Me on the other hand…

I take a few deep breaths to calm myself down. Everything will be fine now. Sam and Cas won’t be able to stop this thing. Bobby alive, Kevin alive, Sammy in Heaven with Jessica, Cas without memories. Nobody can stop it now. They’ll sit in the bunker and wait for it to happen…

I open my eyes as a thought comes up in my mind.

What if Sam and Cas go back in time to stop Abaddon take Gavin?

Damn it…

I stand up and start pacing while I try not to look at the couch. There are many possible ways to go back in time. No, I correct myself. Just two that I know about, not counting Cronos. Angels can go back in time for one. But for that they would need wings, right? Without wings you can’t fly through time. Let’s hope they can’t.

The other possible way is to use a spell. The spell Henry Winchester used. He needed some ingredients for that but I don’t remember which ones. There must be a book in the bunker with it. And the bunker has a great supply of spell ingredients.

I stop and rub my forehead. If I want to make sure that nothing can stop this ripple effect, then I have to go to the bunker and destroy everything I can. I can go through any warding easily. I can get into the bunker too.
I appear right in the storage room. This is the only one I know about, hopefully the others too. I have to hurry. If I could come up with the time travel idea in a relatively short time, the others would too.

I look around the room. The shelves were packed with countless jars and boxes, who knows what’s inside them. I have no idea what I’m looking for so I pick up everything and pour their contents into a pile on the floor. From time to time I stop and listen. I hear three hearts beating in the library. They are probably looking for the spell.

When I finish I just stand there and look at the mountain of powder, bone and dry plant. Crowley thought you how to ignite fire so the only thing I have to do is snap my fingers and watch it burn.

A tower of flame erupts from the pile. The room bathes in an orange light then it’s gone, leaving a black mark on the floor.

I pull a hand down my face. Okay, the bunker’s supplies are gone, but there are shops where hunters can buy ingredients. Henry wanted to buy some in one. Now I have to go to every one of those shops and destroy everything. I have to do it if I don’t want Sam to stop this.

Speaking of Sam, I can hear him walking on the corridor towards the storage room. I can’t let him see me here. So I brace myself and zap away with the thought that what I do is the right thing to do. Even if I feel it’s not true.

Chapter End Notes

I may or may not watch Alan Wake gameplay instead of writing. That game is so effed up! But don't worry, there will be a new chapter tomorrow : )
Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

Oh my Chuck, I did it. It was hell of a writing sprint.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Damn the cold. Damn the mountainside. Damn the trees.

Dean was out of breath when he finally made his way halfway up the mountain. He took a deep breath and exhaled, air visible as it left his mouth. His coat was too warm for this. He appreciated Ms. Tran’s care, but he had survived without a winter coat for three decades. He could survive without it for the rest of his life.

Dean took the EMF meter from his pocket and turned it on. Nothing yet, just the usual normal sounds when there weren’t any ghosts nearby. Were they at the right place? Swan Mountain, west side. That must be it. Then where was the man?

Behind him he heard Sam walking up too, hitting the shovel into the ground.

Their conversation was… How to say it… Something he hadn’t wanted to discuss. Ever. He was still in shock how much Sam had figured out on his own. He had always tried to hide everything, always twisted the stories so the younger Winchester would never find out what had really happened. But it seemed he had underestimated Sam. Sam was a smart kid. He should have known that sooner or later he would ask. He preferred the ‘never’ option.

He hadn’t told Sam everything, of course. How would he? Sam found out about the beatings, okay. That one part he could tell him. But John Winchester had done those things because Dean had deserved it. Or at least he liked to believe it. Losing food money. Getting hurt because he hadn’t paid attention. Letting the monster escape. Letting Sam hurt in any way. Dean had deserved to be punished.

But Sam didn’t have to know about other things. For example how he had gotten money when John was gone for more than a month, when there was nothing left to eat and Sam was still hungry, when he had to pay for the motel room, when Sam started growing like a mushroom and his jeans became too short.

Or when they had been looking for their father and the cops had arrested them and Dean ‘told the sheriff Sam had been a dumbass pledge and that they had been hazing him’. He still remembered the relief when the cops had run out of the station. Sam had started to get suspicious.

Sam caught up with Dean and stopped at the tree next to his. As he looked around Dean glanced at him. There were a lot of things, much worse things Sam didn’t know. And that had to stay like this. He didn’t want to see the disappointment in Sam’s eyes.

Nobody would belittle you.

Dean shut his eyes tight. Not the best moment to think about that conversation.

All of a sudden Sam’s eyes and mouth started shining. Something bright left his body then his back
sled sideways on the tree’s trunk and Sam fell on his knees.

“Sam!”

Dean was quickly by his side, catching him just in time before his brother could roll down the mountainside. Dean grabbed his arm with one hand, with the other he raised his head.

“Sam? Sam!”

Sam didn’t answer. His eyes were closed, moving under the eyelids like he had a bad dream. His breathing was forced, he had to fight for the air to entered his lungs.

“Sam!”

Dean was in panic mode. What the hell was going on? What happened to Sam? What was that light? Didn’t matter now. He had to get Sam out of here. Screw the ghost! An other hunter could deal with it. Sam was more important.

He was about to lift Sam by his arm when he heard a stick breaking. Dean looked up.

On the mountainside, higher than them, stood a woman in the shadow of a tree. She was small and thin, so fragile that a light breeze could break her in two. Her cloths were black, the swirling motives were shining in the sunlight. Her hair was neither blond nor brown, it was pale and dead.

Dean knew he hadn’t seen this woman before but those eyes… The cold way she looked at him… He felt claws digging deep into his skin, dragging him down into the darkest pits of Hell.

A shiver ran down his spine. He had met her before. Didn’t know where, didn’t know when, but they had met. And that meeting was something he didn’t want to remember.

“You look scared” the woman said with a blank voice and tilted her head. “Why are you so scared, Dean? You know the day of your death is approaching. I can smell it on your soul. You shouldn’t be afraid of it. You have experienced it many times in the past.”

Dean tightened his grip on Sam’s wrist, ready to flee in any moment.

“Who are you?” he asked. “What happened to Sam?”

The woman took a step closer and Dean made one down, dragging Sam’s unconscious body with him. She observed him for a while then showed Dean her palm. It had a cut on it that was still bleeding. Behind her on the tree there was a sigil. Enochian. The wrong kind.

“I simply banished the one who didn’t belong there” she explained. “That body is not Gadreel’s to use.”

What…?

“He’s in pain” she continued and walked closer. “I can help him.”

Dean was petrified as he watched the woman closing the distance between them but when she reached out to touch Sam’s forehead, Dean quickly snapped out of his stupor and made more steps down the mountain. His foot slipped a little but he could still hold himself and Sam up.

“Stay away from him!” he barked at the woman. He cursed himself for bringing neither an angel blade nor Ruby’s knife. One of those should work on this woman. If not killing her, then to keep her away.
The woman stopped. She pulled her hand back, holding it to her chest with the other, and she cast down her eyes. She looked… hurt? She bit her lower lip and glanced back at Dean.

“I only want to help” she said with a low voice.

Dean tried to back away from the woman but he almost fell under Sam’s weight.

“Look, lady. I don’t want any of your help, got it?”

A soft smile appeared on the woman’s face.

“Oh, Dean” she said kindly. “I don’t want to help you. Not in this form. You killed my siblings. But I can change it. You can be the champion you were meant to be. You only need a little… push.”

With a quick motion, so fast that Dean had no chance to dodge, the woman touched his forehead.

Dean’s body was numb. For a short moment he forgot who he was and where he was. There were just the cold eyes and the ringing in his ears.

And that was enough for him to lose his balance and with Sam still leaning on him he fell.

They rolled down the side of the mountain. Dean quickly woke from his daze and pulled Sam close to him. One hand protected his head, while the other arm held him securely against him, not letting him slip away. Dean felt rocks stabbing his back, sticks scratching his face, and once a tree grazed the top of his head. He lost his hat in that encounter.

Their way down the mountain ended with them falling into the ditch. The world was spinning around Dean and every part of his body hurt. But panic mode meant he didn’t care about any of this. As soon as they fell into the ditch, he was on his feet, dragging Sam with him. From time to time he looked back and around but the woman was nowhere to be seen.

Not good. Not good at all.

After Sam was on the passenger seat and Dean himself got on the Impala too he stepped on the accelerator. He didn’t turn around, just continued their way down on the road to Breckenridge.

Damn it… Who the hell was that woman? What did she want? What did she do to him? And on top of that she was the third person who called him a ‘champion’. Why was everybody saying that?

Next to him Sam stirred and woke with a groan. Dean sent him a worried look then looked back at the road.

“You okay?”

Sam rubbed his temples.

“I don’t know… It feels like I just went through a meat grinder. What happened?” He looked at Dean then added. “And what happened to your face?”

Dean’s grip tightened around the steering wheel.

“Some chick was a bit offended that Gadreel was in your body. She banished him. And guess what. She used Enochian symbols.”

From the corner of his eye Dean saw Sam frowning.
“The altered ones?” After Dean nodded, he continued. “You think she’s connected to the demons who wiped out the vampire nest?”

“I don’t know and I don’t care right now. All I want to do is to pick Cas up, with or without angels, and get back to the bunker as quick as possible.” Dean looked at Sam. “You feel okay to call him?”

Sam rubbed his head again but nodded.

While he made the call, Dean kept his eyes on the road but he couldn’t stop thinking about the woman. He couldn’t shake off the feeling that he knew her. There was something familiar about her; the way she stared at him and how she talked. But the question was still the same. Where and when? He would remember a creepy woman like her.

“He doesn’t pick up.”

Dean almost drove off the road when he heard Sam saying it.

“Hey!” Sam yelped and grabbed the dashboard. “Watch out!”

But Dean didn’t hear him.

“What?! What do you mean he doesn’t pick up?!”

A thousand scenarios played down before him. Each involved those bastard angels setting a trap for Cas who naively walked into it. Or what if that woman got her hands on him?

“Calm down” Sam warned him. “According to the GPS, he’s in Colorado Springs.”

“The hell is he doing there…” Dean muttered, mainly for himself, and sped up a little. Whatever happened, they had to get there. Fast.

* *

Sam was not surprised to see Missouri Moseley in the bunker. And was neither surprised when the woman glared at him with her hands on her hips.

“Sam Winchester. How dare you not visit me for years when I told you and your brother to do so!”

Sam had nothing to say. They really should have visited the psychic a long time ago. But Sam knew well that Dean hadn’t wanted to go back to Lawrence ever. The memory of losing their mother and the fire had still affected Dean, and Sam respected his brother’s silent plea when they had left the town.

On the other hand he should have called Missouri.

The woman’s eyes softened.

“Damn straight, you should have.” She nodded and took a seat at the map table.

Everyone gathered around the woman, even the hunters from the other timeline, and waited with held back breaths what the psychic would say.
“As you can see, the ripple is like flower petals.” She placed together her hands by the wrists and imitated the petals with her fingers. “When the sun is setting down, the flower senses the change and closes its petals.” Missouri closed her fingers. Now her two hands made the shape of a closed tulip. “If the petals are the ripple, then the light is the change in time.”

Cas and Hannah nodded, clearly knowing what the psychic was talking about, but Sam frowned at it.

“It’s a little hard to understand.”

Missouri raised a brow at this, looking at the man with disapproval. Then to his surprise Becky spoke up.

“Then imagine the ripple as Pac-Man and time as a pack dot.” Becky placed her wrists together, just like Missouri, but unlike the older woman she kept her fingers straight, like she wanted to clap. “Pac-Man closes his mouth and eats the dot.” Becky closed her hands slowly. “But not everything at once.” She parted her hands and clapped properly. Then again touched one wrist to the other. “The closer the change is, the quicker the ripple can erase that timeline. But one change causes many alterations as time goes by and erasing the timeline takes more time but the alterations are more significant.” Again she slowly started to close her hands, her palms coming into contact from the balls of her hands and up to her fingers. “The wider the gap is, the more time you have to change back everything. But if the ripple arrives to the present and it closes around you” Becky’s hands closed properly, “you have no more chance.”

Sam blinked at Becky for a few times. Was she always that smart under the layers of crazy fangirling? He was positively disappointed at her.

Missouri folded her arms and turned to Becky with a frown.

“That’s what I said.”

“No, you didn’t. You should have changed the flower to a carnivorous plant eating a bug.”

Before an argument could start between the two women Bobby cut in.

“Okay, we know how the ripple works. But how do we stop it?”

Missouri folded her fingers and put her hand on the table.

“Well, that Father Time you’re looking for exists. I could feel his presence the moment I appeared here.”

“And where is he?” asked Sam.

Missouri spread out her arms.

“ Everywhere.”

Everyone in the room looked around, expecting to see the deity materializing in the bunker. But nothing happened. Sam turned back to the psychic.

“More precisely?”

Missouri stared at him so intensely that Sam had to look away and he held up his hands as he backed away.
The meeting ended and Sam couldn’t help but give way to the disappointment it had caused. He had thought that Missouri would give them some answers. Well, she did, but not the ones Sam was looking for. They didn’t make any progress.

Sam sat down at his usual place in the library and took one of the new books in his hands. He had to read more. Keep going. He couldn’t stop now, no matter how tired he was or how much his head ached. There had to be a way to find this deity.

“You should sleep.”

Sam raised his head. He found himself looking into Hannah’s blue eyes. She sat on the opposite side of the table and watched him with a kind smile on her face.

“I’m fine” Sam answered but by the way Hannah’s eyes narrowed he knew the angel didn’t believe him.

“When was the last time you slept properly?” she asked.

Sam sighed and brushed his hair behind his ear.

“I don’t remember.”

Hannah nodded and stood up.

“Come” she said and held out her hand towards Sam.

Sam watched the hand. The time, the only time, he had held Hannah’s hand resurfaced in his mind. The soft white skin. How good it felt in his hand. The memory warmed up his cheeks and giving in to a strong impulse he stood up too and took the angels hand.

He let Hannah lead him away from the library, down the corridor and to the dorms. She knew exactly where she had to go and Sam wondered how she knew where his room was. He was sure she had never been there. Cas’ room was the other way.

On their way she never let his hand go, neither did him. It felt right. Their hands fit together perfectly, gripping the other firmly but gently. Sam decided he wanted to do this more.

Entering the room, Hannah looked around. Sam did the same. His room was… plain. A bed, a wardrobe, a TV. Nothing more. He hadn’t felt the need to nestle in like Dean had. This place was just a place where he slept and worked. Nothing more.

Hannah turned around and looked at him.

“Do you trust me?” she asked with a serious voice.

Did he trust her? This was the angel who had given a blade to Castiel and told him to kill Dean. The angel who had joined Metatron afterwards.

“Yes” he answered without hesitation. “I trust you.”

Hannah smiled at him.

“Lay down.”

Sam watched Hannah as she sat down next to him on the bed. She nervously rubbed her hands together and when she spoke again her voice was low and shy.
“I’ll use my Grace to help you sleep. Not for too long” she added quickly when Sam was about to protest. “We’re running out of time, I understand that you have to give up your time to recharge for research purposes. You will sleep for a few hours, dreamless and undisturbed, so your body could rest. Will you allow me to help?”

The way Hannah talked was like a lullaby. Soothing and warm. He felt comfortable in her company, and he couldn’t say that many times in his life. In a way she reminded him to Sarah. Kind, intelligent, stubborn. And the calming aura surrounding her that in Sarah’s case had eased the pain Jessica’s loss left behind.

Sam nodded, but just before Hannah could touch his forehead he grabbed her wrist gently.

“Will you tell me why you’re falling?” he asked the question that bothered him for days now.

Hannah watched him for a while, barely blinking, then she let out a long breath.

“I’m getting too close to a human.”

Before Sam could say anything Hannah put her fingers on his forehead. The world darkened before his eyes and he drifted into a peaceful and safe oblivion. He had the best sleep of his life.

*

Castiel always considered himself patient. Dealing with the Winchesters, especially Dean took a lot of patience and even he could get a rise out of him. So normally two hours of waiting was nothing.

But when an innocent was bleeding out just a few steps away from him, he couldn’t help but struggle with the waiting.

At first he tried to free his hands from the chains. Once again, his human instincts awoke and his reasonable soldier side stayed silent. With human strength he couldn’t escape from the handcuffs. He didn’t think his angelic powers would have helped now.

After fifteen minutes of meaningless chain rattling he gave up.

Susie was still in shock. She watched her still bleeding wound, mesmerized by the way the red liquid soaked her jeans.

“Are you alright, Susie?” Castiel tried asking but the girl didn’t seem to hear him. He gave up asking questions.

After an hour he felt his phone buzzing in his pocket. He prayed that it was one of the Winchesters and just the thought of it gave him hope. Help was on the way. They would find them. They would save Susie.

One and a half hours later the girl finally moved. She opened and closed her mouth, like she was trying to say something. Her blood was already pooling around her feet.

“Susie?” the former angel called her. “Susie, don’t give up. My friends will be here soon.”

Susie raised her head. Her face was white, eyes lifeless. Castiel wasn’t sure she knew where she was.
“When I was volunteering to help the medics this summer” she started with a low voice, like she was about to fall asleep, “I read a lot of books, you know? I want to be a doctor one day so I have to learn a lot. You know what was really interesting? Blood loss. Five liters of blood circulates inside our body and the more you lose the less chance you have to survive.” She looked down again at her wound. “One liter of blood, twenty percent of total blood volume. Full pulse, heart rate elevated, blood pressure and respiratory rate are normal. A liter and a half blood, thirty percent of total blood volume. Anxiousness and confusion. Weakening pulse, blood pressure decreased, respiration rate thirty breaths per minute and increasing. Two liters of blood, forty percent of total blood volume. Very confused and lethargic. Pulse is very weak, heart rate above one hundred twenty beats per minute, breathing fast and shallow. Good chance to die at this point. Two and a half liters of blood, fifty percent of total blood volume. Unconsciousness. Pulse is absent, heart rate is one hundred forty beats per minute or higher, blood pressure very, very weak, breathing very fast and shallow. No chance to survive.” Susie laughed weakly. “I think I lost two liters.”

Castiel’s chest tightened at the sight. He had no idea how Malachi found her, but it seemed even meeting Castiel once can bring bad luck to anyone. Like poor Muriel who came willingly, even though she had known she may walk into her death. Castiel was a death omen. He only brought pain and grief to everyone.

“I’m so sorry, Susie…” he whispered and dropped his head. “I’m so sorry…”

The two hours of waiting was coming to an end. Malachi would be back soon, expecting answers. About Metatron probably, but he wasn’t sure anymore. It became clear by now that this timeline was not heading the way they had expected. There was a major change that led this timeline to another pass. Their knowledge of the future may turn out to be useless.

Castiel heard footsteps approaching. The former angel straightened himself, ready to face anything. The door soon opened but instead of Malachi, Theo stepped inside who carefully closed the door behind him.

No.

No, no, no.


Theo walked closer to him.

“He will be here soon” the angel said. “But first I wanted to talk to you.”

Please, no, Castiel begged. He didn’t want this to happen again. Not again. Not again. It must be something he could change, right? Something he didn’t have to go through again.

“Yes?”

Theo shifted his weight on his feet.

“I have to talk to Metatron. I know you are allies.”

Castiel frowned. This conversation hadn’t started like this the last time. Theo had asked him to talk to Metatron and now Theo wanted to talk to him?

“About what?” Castiel asked, eyes narrowed.

“Metatron can help us” Theo explained. “He can stop this madness.”
“What are you talking about?”

Theo looked around, clearly worried that someone could hear him, then turned back to Castiel, eyes rounded.

“About a month ago a woman appeared” he started. “We didn’t know where she came from or who she was, but... she kindly asked Malachi to follow her for a greater purpose. Malachi refused. The woman just stared at him and then touched his forehead. Since that Malachi does everything she says. She told us to capture the girl and lure you here.”

A woman? Who could that be? Who could possess such power to control an angel?

“Is she an other angel?” he asked. “A demon? Or a witch?”

“I don’t know” Theo shook his head. “She’s not human because I could see her true form under her vessel, but it was so twisted I couldn’t tell what it was. So? Will you help me talk to Metatron? He can stop this woman, I know it.”

Castiel tried to remember to any deity who could have a greater power than an angel. Pagan gods were strong but not that strong. Lucifer could easily kill some of them. This mysterious woman was a danger to them all. She hadn’t been in the other timeline so they knew nothing about her. But it seemed she knew about him, which was alarming.

“Do you know what Malachi wants to know from me?” he asked.

Theo shook his head again.

Castiel sighed. He had to get out of here. He couldn’t wait for Sam and Dean to arrive. He had to free himself and take Susie out of here as soon as possible.

But for that he had to do it.

He had to do it again.

“Okay” he nodded finally. His throat clenched as he talked. “First I need you to unchain me. I can’t contact him like this.”

Theo quickly took the key from his pocket and opened the cuffs. Finally free, Castiel rubbed his aching wrists.

His heart beat faster with every second. Just thinking about it made him sick. He felt something building up in him which he identified as fear. He was scared to death of what he was about to do but he had no other choice. Susie was dying and he had to get away with her fast.

He cleared his throat then cleared again and many more times. His teeth chattered and he feared he would bite his tongue if he tried to speak.

“The only thing I need now is...” he started finally but the voices from the corridor interrupted him. He heard scared screams and angry yells and someone was shouting not far away.

“What the...” Theo took his angel blade out of his jacket but he couldn’t finish his sentence. The moment Castiel’s eyes fell upon the weapon he took it from the confused angel and sliced.
Dead had turned tricks. It's a half confirmed fanon-canon (?). And this is my headcanon for 1x07 because no way in hell Dean could get Sam out of there with talking. And Dean and the sheriff's conversations were off.

Blood loss things quoted from this powerpoint http://adventuresintimeandspace.tumblr.com/post/80934935904/heresome-scientific-facts-about-blood-loss Great example of the 'I swear I'm a writer' tag. Kudos for mentioning Cas.

And this chapter is the end of the eight days Winter Holidays Special. I successfully caught up to myself which I didn't want to happen but oh well... And now I take a break. Let's say next chapter comes... on January 8th? I try to get at least three or four chapters ahead.

I want to wish a happy new year to all of my readers! Or, as we say in Hungary, boldog új évet! :)

Chapter End Notes
Okay, so last week there wasn't any new chapters. I'm sorry about that. I didn't finish this chapter by Thursday because I started reading Hobbit fanfics like there was no tomorrow *coughbagginshieldcough* So yeah... I'll pull myself together now, I promise.

Being in his body alone again felt scary all of a sudden. His body was only his again but somehow it felt too empty. He became good friends with Gadreel. The angel helped him a lot and was a really good company. Sam was sincerely worried about him. Where was he now? Back in his previous vessel? Was he injured? Or worse?

Sam rubbed his head again in hopes that it would stop the ache. He felt like last time when he had expelled Gadreel. The injuries the trials had made were still there, it seemed. And now he felt guilty, not knowing what state the angel was in when he had been banished from his body. Gadreel had used most of his Grace to heal Sam and help Kevin, and maybe he barely had the power to heal himself.

“Is this it?”

Sam looked up. They stopped at an old car service. The place seemed abandoned, the sign said it was under construction.

“Yeah, according to the GPS” Sam nodded and put away his phone.

Dean took a few deep breaths and watched the building, his eyes scanning every millimeter of the place. He was nervous and he could barely hide it. On their way here Sam didn’t hear his voice just when he asked for directions.

“He wouldn’t come here without a reason” Dean muttered under his breath. “And he would answer his phone if everything was alright.”

Sam nodded in agreement.

“He’s in trouble.”

Dean breathed out a ‘damn it’ as he got out of the car. Sam followed him to the truck.

“Not leaving without this ever again” Dean said after he opened the truck and took an angel blade in his hand. Before he took a second one he glanced up at Sam. “You okay to come?”

Sam sighed and shook his head.

“No, but I won’t let you go inside alone. We don’t know what’s going on.”

Dean watched him for a while. Sam could see the struggle he went through, about to give in to his overprotective instincts, but then he handed the blade to Sam.
“Don’t get into unnecessary fights, got it?”

Sam nodded and took the blade. He hoped there wouldn’t be any fights. Dean’s breakdown was just a week ago. He needed time, adjusting, like Sam had planned.

But it seemed, as always, that plans were easily destroyed by outside forces.

Inside it was dark and chilly. Every breath Sam took was like ice scratching his lungs. As he said earlier, he was okay. Standing up and walking felt like the greatest challenge of his life. His head was like a beehive, his arms and legs weak, and he had to force himself not to see his meal again. He couldn’t be in worse shape before a possible fight.

But Cas was in trouble. They had to find him.

Dean came to a halt at a door. Looking inside, Sam saw a staircase leading down to the basement, where he could see the faint light of lamps.

“I go first” Dean said. Sam didn’t argue. Even though he saw how difficult it was for his brother to move, from the two of them he was in a better shape.

Dean raised the angel blade and made his way down. He took one step at a time, pausing to hear any noises. He was down the corridor in a few moments and after he looked around he turned back to Sam and drew a small circle above his head. Angels.

As Dean walked away to the left, Sam slowly made his way down too. He had to lean against the wall with one hand so he wouldn’t lose his balance and fell down the stairs. Which was a valid fear since his sight blurred at the edges.

And even in a state like this, he knew that somebody was creeping behind him. He could feel the tension that leaned on his back, the soft motion of air and the light metallic sound that sliced it slowly.

He would never forget how that sounded.

With a quick motion, Sam turned on his heels and stabbed his attacker on the stomach. It was an angel in a male vessel who was about to strike down with his own blade when Sam stopped him. His eyes and mouth lit up and in the bluish light Sam noticed that not just his blade was responsible for the death of the angel. A few inches above his the tip of another blade was seen, coming out through the body’s chest. Sam yanked out his blade and stepped to the side so the lifeless body could fall down the stairs. He raised his blade to defend himself against the mysterious owner of the second one when he froze.

Even in the dim light he could clearly see the piercing blue eyes that used to watch him with wonder.

“Hannah…?” Sam’s throat was tight, he could barely say her name. It had been so long. Now seeing her again felt uplifting but painful too because he knew it was not that Hannah. That Hannah hadn’t come with him.

An uneasy knot settled in his stomach when the angel made her way down closer to him. She stopped two steps higher then him, coming to eyelevel with him. She narrowed her eyes and tilted her head, watching him like she was staring into his soul. Maybe she did.

He realized too late that the angel raised her hand and put two fingers on his forehead. Sudden warmth washed through his body and in the next moment the pain was gone.
“Sam Winchester, I presume” she said when her hand was back by her side again.

Sam only nodded, still in daze.

“Castiel prayed to me two hours ago” Hannah informed him. “Said that he and a friend of his were taken by Malachi.”

Malachi? Hearing the name of an enemy angel snapped Sam back to reality. Cas was in danger with someone else. Malachi had an army of angel probably all around the basement. Dean was alone.

Sam turned his back to Hannah and rushed down the stairs. The angel followed him. Getting down, Sam looked around and saw a female body on the floor with an angel blade next to her.

“Muriel.” Hannah stepped closer and shook her head. “You shouldn’t have come.”

“Do you know where they are?” he asked quickly. They had no time to mourn now.

Hannah raised her head, watched both ways with a frown then pointed to the left.

“I feel humans that way. One of them has weak vital signs.”

Sam nodded and the two of them hurried that way.

Where the hell was Dean? He couldn’t be too far ahead of them. Sam hadn’t stayed that long on the stairs. But his brother was nowhere to be seen and he started panicking. What if something happened to him? Attacked from behind like Sam? Killed or injured or captured? He should see him by now but every corner he turned following Hannah’s instruction presented him with a new empty corridor.

That was when he heard the screaming and shouting in the distance, the latter too familiar.

“Dean!” he yelled and started running, following the sound of the fight. In his mind he saw his brother in blood again as he had died in his arms. Sam tried to push away the thought but it always made its way back to his mind.

He turned two more corners then stopped so fast he almost stumbled. Hannah grunted behind him as she almost ran into him.

The corridor was littered with bodies. Males and females everywhere, laying in unnatural poses, soaking in their own blood mixed with the others’. At the end of the corridor was an opened door. It was too far to see exactly who was there but he was certain that was his brother’s back.

Sam made his way closer, stepping over pools of blood and bodies until he finally entered the room.

Dean was kneeling with his back to the door, hugging Cas who’s face below his nose was buried into the hunter’s shoulder. Between them in Cas’s arms was a girl Sam didn’t know.

“I’m so sorry…” Cas chanted like a mantra. “I’m so sorry…”

“It’s okay” Dean replied. “It’s okay.”

Sam frowned at them questioningly until Hannah stepped inside and walked into the room. When the angel kneeled down he noticed that someone else was in the room too. A tall man laid next to the wall. Hannah hovered a hand above her.
“It’s Theo” she said and looked up at Sam. “He’s human.”

Theo…

“I’m so sorry, Dean…” Sam turned back to them as Cas said. “I had no choice… I’m so sorry…”

Dean tightened his grip around Cas.

“It’s okay.”

That was the moment when Sam noticed the line of blood on Theo’s neck without a wound. And that was when he saw his friend’s sad but almost empty eyes and heard his blank voice. He expressed his emotions poorly, almost lacking any.

He was an angel again with a stolen Grace.

Sam turned away and closed his eyes tight to distance himself from the scene but he couldn’t shut out the whispered apologies.

He failed his friend. He couldn’t keep his promise.

*

After the hunters left, Castiel sat down at the table. Maybe Hannah had healed him but the stolen Grace was still burning his insides. He knew he didn’t have much time left. His legs could barely hold him up and he found his hands shaking from time to time. The possibility that he wouldn’t survive this hung above him like a blade, waiting for the right moment to strike down. He had given up now to make it anyway. He failed Dean and everyone else. His top priority now was to help Sam carry out this plan of theirs and the rest didn’t matter.

“I told you to not think about it” Missouri warned him, glancing at him through her lashes.

Castiel shifted under the gaze of the psychic. She had powerful mental powers, so powerful that neither an angel could block it out. He suspected it had something to do with his burning Grace.

“I can’t not think about it” he admitted. “I feel my life wasting away.”

Missouri shook her head and smiled at him warmly. Some would say it was motherly but Castiel had no idea about that. He had no mother after all and had never met his Father. The Father he had been looking for so long without ever succeeding.

“You have to believe in yourself more” the woman said. “You have to keep fighting.”

Castiel sighed and rubbed his forehead.

“I learnt that simply believing would never work out for me. I believed in the great plans of Heaven, I believed in my superiors, and what good did it bring for me?”

Missouri shook her head again.

“They have to believe in you more” she leaned on the table and looked deep into the angel’s eyes, “the mind is a curious machine. If you repeat saying the same
thing, like everything is bad, your mind would believe it, no matter how false that statement is. If you don’t believe in yourself, don’t be surprised when nothing works the way it should.”

Castiel frowned. There were still things he didn’t understand about humanity. He hadn’t had a long time to fully embrace it. Sometimes he found himself longing for it. Being human had been a struggle but it held many wonders, things he only appreciated after he had lost it. He wanted to be a human again. He wanted to be free, do what he wanted, be who he wanted to be. If only the world allowed him to be.

“The more confident you are in yourself, the healthier your mind is” Missouri continued. “You just have to believe in yourself. And the ones who believe in you.”

He looked down at his hands in his lap. The ones who believed in him? More like the ones who used to believe in him. The ones he had betrayed so many times. He lost their trust more than once and he doubted he ever gained it back. He had only sunk deeper.

The smack on the back of his head was unexpected and he thought at first that it was Bobby sneaking up behind him but when he looked up he saw Missouri looking down at him disapprovingly.

“Pull yourself together!” she said. “As I said earlier, Dean would want you to go on. And if you die here, he would only blame himself, you know it.”

Castiel shook his head.

“He won’t” he said the words, trying to tone down the pain in his voice. “He’s a demon. And a demon wouldn’t care if an angel wanted to die or not.” Castiel swallowed. “Dean doesn’t care.”

Missouri watched him for a long while then placed a hand on his shoulder and squeezed it.

“I hope you’re wrong.”

With a last light brush on his arm the woman left the angel alone at the table.

The hours passed slowly. Time was a heavy weight, pulling Castiel down by his arms. He moved with difficulties, had to reread sentences at least ten times before he finally understood the meaning. The words swirled before his eyes and soon he found himself dizzy. The angel rubbed his temples, trying to fight back the ache.

To rest his body and mind a little, his eyes moved to his right.

Bobby’s daughter was a lovely girl. Maybe her stubborn nature was hard to deal with but her sparkling eyes could melt the coldest hearts, he was sure of that. Now she was sitting at the next table with Becky, drawing something with great determination and so energetic movements that the crayon most of the times sled off the paper and left colorful lines on the tabletop. She didn’t seem to mind though, neither did the woman next to her who was writing something in her spiral notebook. Lucy had great fun creating something with only moving her hands using the right tools; so simple yet so innocent.

Castiel relaxed into his chair and just watched. He envied the little girl. She had no idea about the world around her, she was oblivious of the horrors that threatened her life too. She spent her days doing what gave her joy, looking at the bright side all the time. If only his life was so simple like hers.

After a few minutes Lucy noticed he was watching her. She put down her crayon, got off the chair
with her drawing in her hand and ran to Castiel. The angel frowned at the little girl who as soon as arrived to his side looked up with her big eyes and handed him the paper.

Castiel took the paper a little confused then took a look at it. Swirls and lines of many colors decorated the paper. There seemed to be no plan or thought put into it, nor anything recognizable in the drawing. Lucy just went with the flow, leaving her mark everywhere she could. It was… inspirational. No matter what one did, it would leave something behind, little or big. And in this case the result was a beautiful artwork. And the girl gave it to him.

“Thank you” Castiel said with a smile on his face, that didn’t feel like he had to force his muscles to move. Lucy laughed happily and returned to Becky.

The angel touched the paper thoughtfully. Leaving a mark. What kind of mark would he leave when his time ended here? Would it be good or bad? Would people think about him as a failure or a friend? Would be there someone to keep a piece of him, something he had left behind with them all the time, carrying it everywhere they went? Hoping that one day they could give it back to him?

“Should I tell Emmanuel?”

Castiel quickly blinked a few times before he looked to his left. He hadn’t heard Daphne approaching him and now he was surprised to see her sitting next to him. He hoped she hadn’t been watching him for too long.

“Should you tell what?” he asked. His voice felt too thick for his liking.

Daphne raised her eyes at him from her hands. Her fingers nervously scratched the fabric of her trousers.

“I was thinking about this since our last talk but I never found the right moment to ask. Should I tell him that he’s Castiel, an Angel of the Lord? Should I tell him who he really is?”

Castiel sighed and dropped his gaze.

The day when his memories had returned burnt into his head. Every flashing image had been a stab and the pain just grew ever since. He knew Dean didn’t forgive his betrayal yet. And he would never do now. The forgiveness the man had given him in his dream was only that. A dream. His heart longed for it more than anything but it was not real. He didn’t think he deserved even that. He neither forgave himself yet. And he would never do.

“No” he answered with a low voice. “He wouldn’t be able to live with the thought that the world around him became a living Hell because of his foolish blindness.”

Daphne frowned at him.

“Doesn’t he deserve to know the truth?”

“It’s not about deserving it or not.” The angel shook his head. “It’s a matter of sparing him from the pain. If you truly care about him, you won’t tell him.”

The woman watched him for a long while, gaze turning softer and sad.

“Do you regret remembering?”

Castiel put Lucy’s gift on the table. He didn’t want to crumple it as his fingers curled into a tight ball.
“No” he answered finally.

Daphne turned in her chair to face him properly. She put one hand on the table, the other on the back of her chair and leaned a little closer.

“Then why don’t you want him to remember? He wants to remember, I know it. It pains me to see him every morning after a dream. He desperately wants to get his memories back so he would know why he sees…”

“If he starts remembering, he will only make countless mistakes” Castiel interrupted her before she could finish. He didn’t want to hear about Emmanuel’s dreams again. “He will want to redeem himself and by that make everything worse. Just look at me.” Castiel put a hand on his chest. “I broke Heaven. I caused pain for my family.” He grabbed his shirt, hand shaking. “I even thought about killing myself. Do you want Emmanuel to think about this too? He was given the chance for a clean start. Don’t take it away from him.”

Daphne sighed and put a hand on his shoulder.

“I won’t tell him” she promised. “But sooner or later he will remember. I’m certain it is not his destiny, not your destiny to not remember who you are and what your mission is in this world.”

Castiel shook his head.

“I don’t have a mission. I came off the line with a crack in my chassis.” He winced as he quoted Naomi. “It’s a mistake that I’m still alive.”

Daphne smiled at that.

“You don’t have any cracks. You’re unique among your kind. And I’m sure it was not a mistake when God created you this way.”

It seemed nothing could change Daphne’s opinion about him. She stuck to her word, no matter what.

“Why do you believe in me?” he asked, sincerely wanting an answer.

The woman’s smile widened.

“Because if I believe in you enough, you would finally start believing in yourself too.”

The angel frowned at this. This sounded awfully similar to an other conversation he had earlier that day.

“Did Missouri tell you to say this? So I would do what she told me?”

“No, we didn’t talk about it.” She shook her head. “But if the both of us think you should be more confident in yourself, doesn’t it mean it’s true?”

Before Castiel could say anything to this a rumble was heard. He jumped up from the chair and looked around in alarm. It was like a roaring animal and it sounded to be close. Too close.

“What is it?” Daphne asked, concerned.

“Do you…” Castiel’s eyes observed every part of the library before they settled on the woman. “Do you hear that rumble?” When Daphne shook her head he turned to Becky who too looked at him questioningly. “Is that just me?”
He saw the confusion on the women’s face slowly turning into something else. Castiel quickly rubbed his ears. Maybe he was just imagining it. He had long days and weeks. He was tired. The stolen Grace was killing him. But the rumble was still there, growing louder with every passing second.

“What is this sound?”

Sam entered the library with Hannah following him. They both looked startled by the mysterious roaring.

“You hear it too?” Castiel asked, relaxing slightly that it wasn’t only him.

“It’s coming from outside” Hannah said as she rushed through the library and made her way to the front door. Sam and Castiel joined her, followed by the confused Daphne and Becky.

The sight outside took his breath.

In the distance they saw a tall and long wall of storm clouds. Inside it lightning flashed, one following the other, roaring and moaning as it happened. It was like the Nothing in The Neverending Story that erased Fantasia. Now it would erase them.

“Is that the ripple?” Sam asked, eyes wide.

Castiel nodded.

“We have to hurry if we want to stop it.”

They didn’t say anything but all three of them thought about the same question. How?

Dean walked down the stairs. The December air was colder after nightfall and he missed his hat. His ears froze the moment he stepped out the hospital.

“How is she?” Cas asked, pacing at the end of the stairs until he saw Dean coming out.

“She’s good” Dean answered. He stopped next to his friend. “Just woke up. She asked me to tell you it wasn’t your fault.”

The tension in Cas’s shoulders left and he looked down at his feet.

“She was on her way home when the angels took her” he continued. “They didn’t tell her anything, nor asked.”

“And she’s not angry at me?” Cas asked, still not believing Dean’s words.

“She’s a good kid.” Dean ducked his head so he could look the other in the eyes. “She knows she shouldn’t blame you. You saved her after all.”

And at what cost…

Cas shook his head but didn’t say anything. It would take time for Cas to believe it.
Dean sighed and looked around. The Impala and the Continental parked next to each other. Sam sat on his car’s hood, while Hannah stood next to Cas’. He had to admit, he had been shocked to see the angel in the basement. He had been and was still expecting her to order Cas to kill him. And the cold glares she was sending his way just made his suspicions grow. He didn’t trust her a bit. But Cas did, and for his friend he would not say a word. It didn’t mean he wouldn’t keep an eye on her.

Dean turned back to Cas. He was no longer a former angel. Once again he had a stolen Grace inside his system; a ticking bomb that burnt his life away. An angel once again facing his inevitable death.

Cas loved being a human, he knew it. He had seen him exploring the human way of living and Dean had never seen him this relaxed ever. Maybe there were many dangers and threats outside but he enjoyed being a human. And finally Dean was there to teach him and lead him. He was on his way to correct his mistakes, to make his friend forget about last time. But some kind of Fate thought stealing that damn Grace was inevitable. That it was a fix point in the angel’s destiny he couldn’t change. Did that mean… he was destined to die too?

Dean swallowed and tried to push away the thought.

“How are you?” he asked in the end. He needed to know how Cas felt. He had to know so he could help him. Hopefully.

Cas looked at him, showing him a small smile.

“If I say fine, you wouldn’t believe me.”

Dean smiled too but it melted off his face quickly.

“I’m sorry.”

Cas tilted his head.

“For what?”

“For not getting there earlier. I should have gotten there faster. Should have rushed through the basement. Should have finished those bastards quicker.”

The angel shook his head slowly, eyes never leaving Dean’s.

“Why do you always want to blame yourself for things you couldn’t have changed?”

Dean shrugged, a grin playing on his lips that felt more like a grimace.

“That’s the way I roll, I guess.”

Speaking of rolling, he just realized how much the cuts and bruises on his face hurt. Not to mention his back and shoulders. Killing those angels had done no good to his aching bones.

Cas must have guessed what he was thinking about because in the next moment his hand was already touching Dean’s face.

“Don’t…” Dean protested but it was already too late. The pain left his body and he was sure his face was as healthy as ever. “Don’t waste your Grace.”

“I don’t consider healing you as a way to waste my power.” The angel frowned at him
disapprovingly but his features quickly softened. “What happened to you two? How did you get hurt? And where’s Gadreel?”

Dean saw the eyes of that woman again and he almost couldn’t fight back the shiver that threatened to shake his whole body.

“I’ll tell you everything when we get back home, okay?” he asked, almost pleaded. He didn’t want to talk about it right now. Thinking about it was more than enough. They’ll get back to their warm and comfortable bunker and then talk about it.

Cas stared at him without blinking. Dean knew Cas would normally never drop it but now it was everything but normal. He agreed with a small nod and Dean was thankful for that.

The two went back to their cars. Dean eyed the Continental, taking a note of every detail that should be fixed in the future. He should take a look at the engines after they get back. He didn’t trust that car without him fixing everything he could.

“You ready to go?” he asked Sam. His little brother nodded and got off the hood.

Cas exchanged a few words with Hannah who then nodded and made her way to the passenger side but before she could got inside the car, Sam turned to her.

“You should look out the window all the time. Don’t look down.”

Dean stared at his brother, freezing with one leg already inside the Impala. Sam blinked a few times, looked everywhere but at any of them, then muttered ‘forget it’ under his breath and sat inside. Dean turned to Cas questioningly in hopes that maybe he could explain Sam’s strange behavior but the angel was as lost as him. Hannah too blinked a few times then got inside the Continental.

“You okay?” Dean asked after half an hour of silence. Sam sat with his head against the window, eyes closed. Dean knew he wasn’t sleeping. Sam would be snoring by now. “Not dizzy or anything?”

“Hannah healed me” Sam answered with a low voice. He opened one eye, peeking at Dean. “And you?”

Dean turned back to the road and shrugged.

“Cas healed me.”

He still felt Sam’s eyes on him after a minute so he sighed and glanced back.

“What?”

“Who was that woman in the forest?” Sam asked. “And if she’s connected to those demons, why would she bother killing those vamps? And why did she let us leave?”

The last question was something that crossed Dean’s mind many times that day since the forest. That woman was powerful. She could banish Gadreel from Sam’s body with an altered Enochian sigil. Why would she let them go?

He felt the cold fingers touching his forehead again and he had to tighten his grip around the steering wheel. What kind of push had she been talking about? And what had that been about him being a champion? He was no champion.
On their way back to the bunker he thought about the woman and Cas’ stolen Grace but never about what had happened between the two. Namely killing all those angels. But if he had done so, he would have realized that the thought of that butchery didn’t scare him. Quite the opposite.

He enjoyed every moment of it.
This chapter was a nightmare to write. Writers block is not a good friend. I hope it finally ended and there won't be any more delays.

Visiting every damn shop that sells hunter stuffs is tiresome. I start with the ones in the States because those would be the ones the others call first. After finishing with the last one I go to Canada, then Mexico, and after I finish with South-America too I got to Europe, Asia and Australia. I visit the Antarctica too, just in case.

I’m exhausted when I finally get back to the cabin. But I did it. I finally did it. There’s nothing that can stop that ripple now. I just have to sit down and wait until it happens. Or maybe lay down. I feel a dull pain in my bones as I move, more annoying than painful. There’s a tension right behind my eyes that I only felt before I took that damn Mark, when I didn’t sleep for a week at least.

Sleeping was never my friend. The wall I built up around my darkest thoughts and memories crumbled and flooded my mind at its weakest. Alcohol helped, if only there weren’t any headaches in the morning, but sometimes it wasn’t enough. Those times, after days without sleeping properly, I took a pill and fell unconscious for a few hours. I tried to avoid this as many times as I could. Maybe sleeping pills were good for giving me a dreamless night, but it also prevented me to be aware of my surroundings. With a pill I wouldn’t hear if somebody sneaked inside the room to kill me. I only took pills when I was sure it was safe. For example when Sam decided to do research all night, sitting at the motel table with his laptop open. Those times I swallowed the pill in the bathroom then went to sleep knowing that my brother was there guarding me, even though he didn’t know about it. Those nights sleeping was comforting. I felt safe. I could trust Sam, unlike my father.

Maybe the Mark is losing its influence, I don’t know. But if my body wanted to rest, then it will rest. I can do whatever I wanted now. It’s only a matter of some time now before I go back to Hell. Why not spending the rest of my last hours or days with something good?

But first I have to do something with Gavin’s body. Poor kid deserves something better than laying headless in an old cabin, slowly decaying. I think a hunter’s burial would be perfect. Simple and quick. So as soon as I enter the cabin I make my way to the couch.

Only Gavin’s body is not there.

I pause for a moment. I remember I left it there. Where is it now? Did I deal with it already and I just didn’t remember? I quickly recall the events of the last hours. No. I was running around the world and never returned here. Then what happened?

I walk closer to the couch. The furniture is spotless even though there should be a lot of blood. It’s like nothing happened here.

With the First Blade in my hand I look around. Someone or something was here. Maybe it’s still here. I have to be careful. Maybe Beelzebub found me and the demon’s here to avenge Abaddon, Asmodeus and Mammon. Or someone else. Maybe I walked into a trap the moment I entered the
building.

I leave the living room and look around the floor. Nothing peculiar yet. Then I make my way upstairs. Two rooms to the left, one to the right and a bathroom. All empty, years of dust covering each. There’s nothing in the house but I still can’t shake off the feeling that I’m being watched. Every movement I make is followed by a thousand curious eyes that makes my hair stand up on the back of my neck. Maybe I should look for an other hiding place. This place gives me the…

“Hello, Dean.”

I almost fall off the last step but I can stop myself in the last moment by grabbing the wall. The familiar greeting said by the worst voice imaginable stabs a spot somewhere in my chest that screams in agony. I also feel a wave of fear washing through me even though I know I’m the strongest from the two of us.

Crowley stands at the couch, looking at me with an unreadable expression. I have no idea how he got inside the cabin with all the warding inside and outside. But what bothers me the most is how casual he is. Hands in his pockets, leaning against the couch like it’s a usual Saturday afternoon or something. Ever since I became a demon he tried to act like a friend, someone who was my equal but still made sure I knew who the boss was. Now? Everything is off. The way he just stands there staring at me and the way he talked lacked the usual mockery.

“Crowley.” I nod and step closer as relaxed as possible. It’s hard because all of my cells want to get as far as possible from the demon.

Crowley watches me without blinking and coldness runs down my spine. I’m scared. Honestly scared of what might happen in any moment.

“How’s your mission going?” he asks.

I shrug.

“Good, I guess. Asmodeus and Mammon are down. Still looking for Beelzebub.”

Crowley raises a brow.

“Oh, really?” He steps away from the couch and I fight back the urge to flee. “How did it go?”

*Pull yourself together*, I tell myself. I’m stronger than Crowley. I know it and Crowley knows it too. Still, seeing the King of Hell acting like this, looking at me with this cold rage makes me doubt my actual strength.

“Fine, actually. They had no chance against me.”

A small smile appears on Crowley’s face that creeps the hell out of me.

“Weren’t there any… troubles?”

“What troubles?” Was he referring to what happened in the bunker? How would he know about it? Or that I could fight back the Mark’s control? Or maybe… “What kind of troubles exactly?”

Crowley tilts his head, very unnatural for a demon.

“I don’t know.” He pauses for a moment then in the next I’m pinned against the wall by his hand around my throat. I gasp for air as Crowley leans closer to me and snarls, “Like finding my son and
killing him!”

I grab Crowley’s arm with both of my hands and try to push him away but I can’t. I can hear the Mark snickering at me while it shuts away all of its power so I can’t use it. I want to curse it but I don’t have enough air in my lungs to think properly. The only thing I can do is fight for some oxygen and listen to what Crowley says.

“I was looking for him. I searched three plains of existence to find him when I heard he was gone. Then when I hear he was found do you know what I saw?” Crowley’s fingers tighten. “Him laying in his own blood with his head a few feet away from him! How did it happen, Dean?! Can you tell me?!”

I open my mouth to say something, anything, but the only sound I can make is a breathless gasp. Crowley’s eyes glow with righteous fury.

“You know what, Dean?” he asks. “I don’t care how useful you are. I don’t care that you’re basically immortal. I’m going to kill you slow and you’ll beg for a fast death.”

In that exact moment the cabin shakes. Crowley takes a shocked look around and for a split second his fingers loosen up around my neck. But that short period of time is enough for me to zap away.

I wasn’t thinking about a place, I just wanted to get away from the demon and that’s how I find myself in a forest. I land on my knees and I take a few deep and loud breaths until my body calms down. Nothing can kill a Knight of Hell, but if someone can that would be Crowley. And he almost did.

I rub my neck as I sit down properly, leaning my back against a tree. Crowley was looking for Gavin. Poor kid died – because of me – thinking that his father didn’t care about him. I should have known Mammon would only tell this to turn Gavin against Crowley and use him. I really should have known. But it doesn’t change the fact that I killed him. And now Crowley is after me too and regarding how the Mark reacted I don’t think I can kill him before he kills me.

But everything will be better, I tell myself. The ripple will be here soon and this horrible timeline will be erased. Everything will be better.

Days pass without me noticing it. It’s night, then day, then night again. Am I here for a week now? A month? I’m not sure. Time lost all meaning to me here as I shut myself away from everything. My mind is blank. I try not to think about anything because I fear I would do something that only makes everything worse. By worse I mean changing my mind. There wasn’t one moment when I found myself thinking that maybe I should go back to the bunker and tell the others everything, from the beginning to the end. But then I imagined how they would look at me and I dismissed the thought. I have to finish what I started and I can’t let them find out anything.

“Here!”

I look up. It’s been days since I heard any human sounds. Was someone hiking here? Here, a short distance from me? Are they crazy?

To my right I see two males wandering among the trees. They’re angels. I can see their Grace shining through their vessels. Not as impressive as an other angel’s, I must say.

“I knew we would find one here” the angel spoke again. “This is the place where Zachariah raised Adam Milligan. He left some feathers behind.”

The information petrifies me. First of all Adam, my half brother who was possessed by Michael
because of me. It’s been so long since Sam jumped into the Cage, dragging Michal and with that Adam along. I almost forgot about that poor kid. I never considered him family but he was family by blood. I should have done something after Sam got his soul back. A sorry excuse but a lot happened since. And now poor Adam stays in the Cage.

Secondly. Angel feathers. Hearing it I remember that it’s one of the ingredients needed for the spell. And these angels found some. Here. From all places. How funny fate can be sometimes. Only I’m not laughing.

I stand up and sneak behind the angels so they won’t spot me. They crouch, picking up feathers from the ground. They are brown. Don’t angels have white wings? Or was that only how humans imagined them?

“We shall take this back to Castiel as soon as possible” the other angel says. “Come, Noriel. He’s in Heaven right now, looking for a cure.”

“I don’t think he would find anything, Abiel.” Noriel shakes his head as he stand up. “Lucifer’s curse can’t be erased.”

What…?

I shut out the feeling that rushes through me. I should have known that he wanted to cure me like Sam, but hearing that he is looking for a solution from an other angel… That Cas is working on saving me instead of himself…

Son of a bitch…

I rub my forehead. Always taking care of others, not looking after himself. Stupid, stupid, stupid… I’m a hypocrite, I know, shut up.

But why does he still care about me? Why does he still want to cure me? Our last meeting didn’t convince him that I’m beyond saving? That I’m already a lost cause? Why does he still hope that there can be anything that can cure me?

Why does he still believe in me?

“Maybe this will lift up his spirit” Abiel says the optimistic statement as he turns to leave with the other angel.

No. I can’t let them leave. If they find the other ingredients, they will go back and stop Abaddon. Then everything I did would be for nothing.

I take a deep breath then step out from my hiding place.

“What two angels do in this forest?” I ask them as mocking as I can.

Noriel and Abiel turn quickly. They both have their blades in their hands, ready to defend themselves.

“That’s the eldest Winchester” Abiel says when he recognizes me. “The Knight of Hell.”

Them calling me this hits hard. I know what I am. A demon, a killer, a monster. But angels used to call me something else. That, though I hated much, still felt somewhat right. It gave me hope that maybe I wasn’t a lost cause because why would angels risk their lives for someone not worthy?
Those days were over it seemed.

“What are you doing here, demon?” Noriel places his free hand on his pocket as if he feels my intention. Maybe he does. I don’t know how reading minds work for angels.

“I asked first.”

Noriel straightens his back and raises his chin.

“None of your business.”

I snort. Good old angels. Acting all high and mighty.

“Let me guess. A ripple is about to erase everything in this timeline and you’re looking for the components of a spell that can send someone back in time to stop it before happening.”

The face the angels make is priceless. Abiel’s jaw drops, his eyes wide, while Noriel looks like he’s barely holding back a retch.

“How… How do you know about it?” Noriel asks.

I shrug.

“I have my resources. Here’s the thing.” I pull the Blade from my belt. The Mark jumps in excitement that I’m about to give it blood again but I mentally kick it in the ass. I have no intentions of killing the angels. “I can’t let you take those feathers. So I ask you to give those to me then leave.”

Noriel’s hand clenches over his pocket protectively.

“No.”

I sigh. Why do angels have to be so stubborn?

“Do as I say when I’m still nice” I warn him and wave the Blade in my hand. “You don’t want to meet the pointy end of this.”

Abiel finally closes his mouth and looks at Noriel. The other angel is still tense, grabbing his pocket to the point that he almost tears the fabric.

“No.”

And with that Noriel jumps at me, angel blade raised high to stab me. I move away, my mind going blank for a short moment, but it’s long enough for me to flip to give momentum to my attack and burry the Blade deep into the angel’s stomach.

A bluish white light erupts from the angel as he burns out of his vessel, one last scream of pain passing his lips before the lifeless body falls on the ground.

I take a deep breath. Then an other. And a few more. I didn’t want to kill him. I didn’t. I wanted them to leave, to leave me alone and leave the feathers here. Why couldn’t they understand? And look what happened! He attacked me and my killer instincts took over. And now the Mark is laughing at me, sending sharp waves of pain through my body, glowing and burning and I can’t help but grab my arm and try to fight it back. I could fight it back once, I can do it again.

That’s when Abiel attacks me too. Living with the opportunity that I’m not paying attention to
him, the angel got behind my back and stabs my shoulder. I groan in pain. The angel blade can’t
kill me but it still hurts like hell. I feel warm blood running down my arm, soaking the fabric of my
jacket.

I snarl. How dare this dick with wings sneak behind me? How dare he injure me?

Without thinking I swing my blade and behead the angel. The place where his head should be
lights up and, as the head rolls away, the body hits the ground next to the other one.

And that’s when I finally snap out of my mindless rage to find myself in a nightmare.

Shit.

Shit, shit, shit, shit.

I didn’t want it to end like this. I didn’t want to kill angels. I told Sam that I wasn’t interested in
killing humans and angels because Sam was a human and Cas was an angel. Now in about a week
I killed a human and two angels.

What if they were Sam and Cas…?

Gasping for air I quickly take the angel feathers from Noriel’s pocket and zap away, and hopefully
find myself somewhere where I can finally be alone and wait for the end in silence without
anything coming up again.
He was not at full strength yet. He was always the kind of angel who put others’ needs before his own, so in the last couple of months his top priority had been to heal Sam, then helping Kevin in the last month. Doing these drained him out. He had little power to heal himself so he didn’t really bother. Sooner or later he would get there too.

He never expected someone would banish him with such force.

The spell felt old but new at the same time. Just like the warding that protected the vampires’ house. He couldn’t do anything but give in to the force that tore him away from Sam and sent him miles away.

He was unconscious for a few days, he wasn’t sure. But when he finally woke, he was surprised to see where fate had taken him.

The town where Thomas lived.

His previous vessel had left the comfort of his parents’ house to try himself in the world. He had started working at a bar and though the payment was never satisfying Thomas never turned back. Gadreel never understood why the human said yes. He had a good life, why throwing it away to let an angel wander among humans? And there was also the possibility that the human soul would die along with the angel. And according to Castiel’s memories that had already happened once. He would rather stay like this and not risk the vessel’s life but with this unknown enemy was a great threat. He was not the strongest angel of Heaven but he felt it as his duty to return to the Winchesters’ side and fight with them.

With that decided, he made his way to Thomas’ home. It was already past midnight, the man should be at home by now. Gadreel moved carefully. Everything hurt and burnt as he made his way through the sleeping town and for a while he feared he wouldn’t make it. That he would die like Ezekiel died after the fall, too injured to heal himself. But Gadreel was determined. He had a mission and he would fulfill it.

Luckily, Thomas was at home, sleeping comfortably in his bed. Gadreel stopped at his bedside and watched the man. Now what? Thomas couldn’t look at him like this, it would only injure him. His only choice was to enter his dream, but that required a great amount of his power. If anything went wrong, he would die. But he had to try.

The angel touched the human’s soul and entered is dream. Gadreel found himself in the bar. It was a rainy day and many people entered to find shelter until the sun was shining again. Thomas was busy with the glasses, refilling them with hasty movements. Gadreel felt the dream shifting slightly towards a nightmare, Thomas probably feared that he would fail at his job. The angel walked to one of the empty chairs and sat down.
Thomas quickly noticed him. He frowned at the angel.

“Gadreel?”

Gadreel nodded.

“Good evening, Thomas.”

“Evening?” Thomas glanced at his watch. “It’s barely past noon.”

“You’re dreaming” the angel explained. “I’m here to talk to you about a pressing matter.”

Thomas hesitated for a moment. He looked at the empty glasses and the impatient crowd waiting for their drinks then walked to the angel.

“An other angel business? Like the last one when you left me in a hospital miles away from here?”

The angel cast down his eyes. After he had entered Sam’s body he left Thomas in the hospital without him knowing what was happening to him. He had kept Thomas’ consciousness dormant. At that time he hadn’t known the importance of the human’s own thoughts and wishes. Though he always liked humans, he only used Thomas as a container.

“I apologize for that” he said.

Thomas sighed and rubbed his shoulder.

“It’s okay. Took me time to get back but at least I had my wallet. Why are you back? What happened?”

Gadreel explained everything from the time travel to his banishment. Thomas leaned on the counter, listening to the angel’s every word without interrupting him. When Gadreel got to the end, the man nodded.

“Well, that’s complicated. Do you know who it was?”

Gadreel shook his head.

“No, but it was familiar. Like I already met this someone in the past but I can’t tell when and where. And I’d like to find it out.”

“And for that you need a vessel” Thomas guessed.

“I must tell you that accepting an angel into your body comes with dangers. Maybe one day I’ll be stabbed with a blade and your soul will burn away with me. I’d like you to consider this before you decide.”

Thomas looked down. He flexed and relaxed his jaw for a few times.

“If this unknown force, Metatron and Abaddon aren’t stopped, the world might end.”

“That’s a possibility.”

Thomas sighed and looked up.

“Okay then, I guess” he answered. “I don’t want to live or die knowing I didn’t help. My family can die in this too. I have to protect them.”
Gadreel nodded. He admired humans’ devotion to their families. It gave them the power to fight in any situation.

“Excuse me!” said a voice next to Gadreel. The angel turned there and froze.

Metatron was sitting next to him.

But he wasn’t real. This Metatron was part of Thomas’ dream. Just a figure wearing the angel’s face.

“I’m still waiting for my brandy” the scribe complained, not paying attention to the shocked Gadreel next to him.

“What is it?” Thomas asked.

“Do you know this man?” Gadreel said instead of answering.

“Yes, he came to the bar a few times. Why?”

Gadreel turned to the human. Metatron knew about Thomas? But how? In that other timeline Gadreel had told him about his former vessel but he hadn’t met Metatron here yet. And still, Metatron visited this bar from time to time where Thomas worked.

“You’re being watched” he said.

Thomas paled a little.

“Watched? By who? And why?”

“By Metatron and I don’t know why. He shouldn’t know about you.”

Thomas looked at the scribe.

“So this was the guy who tricked you. And maybe he’s trying to do the same to me too.”

“Did he say anything strange?” Gadreel asked. “Or did he ask suspicious questions?”

“Not really. He just comes here to have a drink then leaves.”

The angel nodded.

“Then we have to find out what he wants.”

Thomas nodded too.

“Let’s do it.”

* 

“So this storm is surrounding us?” Becky asked as they were walking down the stairs. Sam, Cas and Hannah had been on the roof to have a better view of the ripple. Every direction they looked they saw a brown stormy wall in the distance, the north side of it closer to them.
“Yes, and it’s getting closer.” Sam nodded. Ha was miserably hopeless. The ripple they had been trying to stop so much was now at their doorstep, knocking impatiently. He didn’t think they ever had a chance at all against it.

Becky was waiting for the three of them at the end of the stairs. She put a hand on her chin, rubbing it between her thumb and index finger.

“So it’s a circle that’s closing around us…” She frowned. Sam could almost hear the gears working in her head.

Sam wanted to tell her that there was no use. They failed. They will be erased from time in a few hours or days. There was nothing to stop it now.

Sam looked up at the angels.

Cas stared ahead with unfocused eyes. Sam didn’t know what would happen to him. Would he suddenly turn into Emmanuel? Or would it be a slow process and Cas would have to live through every second of losing himself?

Then he glanced at Hannah. She looked relaxed but Sam could see the little changes of her behavior. The slight frown, the way the corners of her lips tilted down.

Sam swallowed. Not just they will be erased but the things they had done and accomplished. They would fade into nothing and nobody would remember them. And everything that would have been was now just a dream that would never come true.

Hannah’s eyes met his like she came to the same conclusion. For them, who they were right now, there was no future. Everything that was about to happen and change would never come.

It was now or never.

“Hannah, can we…”

“I have an idea!” Becky yelled all of a sudden, holding up one finger.

Sam jumped at the sudden outburst and looked at the younger woman.

“What idea?” Cas asked. Sam couldn’t not notice hope in his voice.

“The ripple erases the time that’s not valid anymore. What if the last place it will affect is where Father Time is since he’s a time deity? It’s a bit farfetched, I know, but what can we do? We’re running out of time so we have to try anything we can.”

Sam’s heart skipped a beat then sped up. He turned to the angels, silently asking for a confirmation.

“It’s a closing circle.” Hannah nodded. “There must be an explanation why it happens this way.”

“Now we have to find the center of it” Cas agreed.

“I’ll go to Heaven then. I can find the exact location from there.”

“I’ll go with you.”

Hannah frowned at him.
“No, Castiel. A trip to Heaven with your burning Grace would…”

“I have to do something before we go to Father Time” Cas cut in.

Hannah watched him for a while with narrowed eyes then shook her head.

“You’re too stubborn and I’m not so patient to argue. Let’s go then.”

Hannah looked at Sam, tilting her head a little. Sam smiled and shook his head.

“Go. I’ll talk to you later.”

Hannah returned the smile and after one final nod towards them the two angels left Sam and Becky on the corridor.

“Come on!” Becky slapped Sam’s back cheerfully. “I’ll make you a sandwich. You must be hungry after this much excitement.”

That spot on Sam’s back went numb. He tried to make the blood circulate there again by moving his shoulders. He was sure it would leave a mark.

He didn’t want to, but he agreed to walk to the kitchen with Becky. Since her appearance he tried his best not to be left alone with her. He still remembered the days when the fangirl had drugged him with some kind of love potion and made him marry her. He feared that this Becky would try something too.

“So, Sam” Becky started, holding her hands behind her back.

“Sam. I know how ships work. I’m a shipper since I can remember, be it canon or crack.”

Becky arched a brow and suddenly she looked way too serious.

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“Sam. I know how ships work. I’m a shipper since I can remember, be it canon or crack.”

Sam had no idea what the hell she meant but he let her talk.

“So when I see or read about two characters who stare at each other with so much longing it physically hurts, I start to pay attention. Like with Destiel.”

“What?” Sam blurted out.

“Destiel. You know, Dean and Cas.” Becky’s eyes widened with horror. “Don’t tell me you didn’t
notice!"

“Of course I noticed” Sam huffed. He experienced it first hand. He noticed it alright.

Becky rubbed her palms together and muttered something under her breath that sounded like ‘Sam knows’ but he wasn’t sure. Then she quickly returned to her seriousness.

“And I noticed how you look at her and how she looks at you.” Becky sighed and shook her head. “The Winchesters and their angels with blue eyes. So many parallels.”

Sam shifted uncomfortably on his feet.

“Becky, I’m not…”

“Hush! I know you Sam. You don’t want to bring anyone into this life of yours because you fear what would happen to them. Just like Dean. But you have the better advantage in this case. Hannah is in a female vessel so there is no denial or inner struggle between what was beaten into you and what you desire. Well, my personal headcanon is that you’re polysexual, so there wouldn’t…”

Sam frowned.

“What are you talking about?”

Becky looked away.

“You see, in ‘I Know What You Did Last Summer’ your Crossroad Demon appeared as a male so…”

“No, not that one” Sam cut in quickly. “What did you mean by the ‘what was beaten into you’ part?”

Becky’s lips parted and she looked up at him with wide eyes.

“Oh…” She swallowed. “You didn’t know…”

“Didn’t know what?”

“I-uh… I thought you already read the books” she jabbered. “You know, curious of what happened to the other, what he was thinking…”

“Becky” he warned her, out of patience. “What are you talking about?”

Becky grew silent for a moment, so out of character for her, then sighed and shook her head.

“I won’t say anything. You have to read it. But…” She paused for a moment to chew her lower lip. “But if Dean is really a demon then he might be happy he’s not feeling anything.”

Becky quickly excused herself and continued her way towards the kitchen. Sam stood there for a long time, staring at the nothing in front of him. And as he stood there he heard his brother’s broken voice as he said:

*I wish I couldn't feel anything, Sammy. I wish I couldn't feel a damn thing.*
He lit a candle for Muriel. The little flame flickered slightly as the air moved in the bunker. He watched the small light source but he didn’t see. His thoughts wandered far away from the dark library.

He knew there would be things he couldn’t change, but he still hoped. He hoped that the good would stay and the bad would be changed. Not that there had been that much good during that one year to begin with.

Muriel died once again because of him. She died knowing that the same thing could happen to her and she still followed him.

Castiel rubbed his forehead. Why were angels following him so blindly? He was just one of them, the same as them, nothing more. Why did they still do as he said? He was not a leader. He was a soldier following orders, not the one giving them.

No. He was not an angel. Not anymore. Being an angel meant he had no emotions, no free will. Being an angel meant he had to follow orders of a higher power. But he wasn’t an angel.

He liked to think that he was a human, a creature with a variety of emotions and senses. A creature who felt the world around it, tasted foods and got tired. And dreamed. He liked being a human and he wanted to spend the rest of his life as one.

Only fate didn’t let him.

He could already feel the stolen Grace burning his body. He had power, not as much as he used to have, but he could use it to defend others and heal them. For now. He knew the time would come when every movement was a torture. His days were numbered.

Castiel sighed. He should have known better to hope that he could have a peaceful life. His death was inevitable. He was destined to burn away.

“Cas?”

The no longer former angel looked up.

Having his Grace back came with a lot of negativities, but compared to those this positive one meant a lot to him.

The darkness of the library was erased by this one brightness. The same brightness that lit up the deepest pit of Hell. The brightness that no other person possessed.

“What are you doing in the dark?” Dean asked, standing at the entrance.

*It’s no longer dark*, he wanted to say but he held himself back. How would that sound?

“I lit a candle for Muriel” he said instead.

Dean rubbed the back of his neck.

“It wasn’t your fault. You know that, right?”

Castiel nodded curtly.

“What?”
The hunter watched him for a while, visibly not pleased that Castiel tried to change the subject.

“"In his room. I came to tell you that we can start the interrogation.”

Castiel nodded and stood.

He hadn’t killed Theo this time. The angel’s death had been a heavy burden on his shoulders and after they had returned here he saw his death many times in his nightmares. He couldn’t let it happen again. He had to find an other way to relive this year and this was the only good way he could think of. If he had to take his Grace at least he could keep him alive. One less meaningless death on his long list.

They had cleared out a room before they took Theo from the Impala’s truck. The former angel tried to fight them but he soon realized he had no chance against two angels and four humans. They returned little after three in the morning so Kevin and Linda were still in bed. Charlie and Dorothy were had been up, waiting for them in the garage.

“Take this filth away!” the shout was heard as soon as they turned at a corner. Arriving to Theo’s room, Castiel found the former angel sitting on a chair with his hands tied behind him. They couldn’t let Theo move freely in the room. He knew sigils that would banish Castiel and Hannah. They couldn’t risk it.

Theo moved his head away whenever Sam tried to feed him with some soup.

“You’re a human and humans need to eat” Sam explained patiently.

“I’m not a human you scum!” Theo shouted. “I’m an angel!” They his eyes found Castiel’s. “Give it back! Give me my Grace!”

Before Castiel’s shoulders could tense Dean quickly rubbed one.

“Dick or not, we don’t want you to die” he said. “Tell us what you know so we can all go to sleep.”

Theo’s response was a great amount of saliva on the floor.

“Great” Dorothy snorted. “Do angels have any manners? No offence” she added when Hannah sent her a glare from the other side of the room.

Castiel stepped closer and looked at the former angel.

“You told me a woman came to Malachi. Describe her.”

Theo stared at Castiel with a rage that made the temperature drop in the room. But Castiel stood his ground. Anger couldn’t scare him.

They stayed like this for at least a minute until Theo turned away.

“I’m not telling you anything.”

Castiel nodded.

“Then you leave me no other choice.” And with that he raised his hand.

“Castiel” Hannah warned him but Castiel didn’t listen to her.

As he placed his hand on Theo’s head, his Grace made connection with the former angel’s mind.
He quickly looked for the memory of that meeting and watched it.

The woman looked average. She was short, thin, had a pale colored hair and wore black cloths. But the relatively normal outside hid a twisted inside. Castiel had never seen anything like this. Her true form was a combination of light and dark, coexisting within the same being. He couldn’t tell what she was exactly but she was powerful. Just like Theo had said, Malachi refused her offer then the woman simply touched his forehead. Castiel saw Malachi’s Grace slowing down, sinking a little.

Satisfied with what he found out, Castiel stepped away.

Sharing memories was the best way to exchange information in a short time. But as the name said, it meant willingly giving their own memories to the other. Angels never used this method for interrogation. It caused pain for both parties.

When Castiel stepped away, he would have fallen on the floor if not for Sam who caught him just in time.

“The hell was that, Cas?!” Dean rushed to his side and quickly checked if he had any visible injuries.

“I’m okay.” Castiel straightened himself. He was not okay, of course. He felt a part of his stolen Grace burning away in a second. But Dean didn’t have to know about it. “I know how this woman looks like. Not just her physical form but her true one too.”

Castiel touched the Winchesters’ foreheads and gave them an image of the woman’s vessel.

“She appears to be a powerful foe.” The angel walked to Charlie and Dorothy and did the same. “We don’t know what we’re facing yet, so we have to be careful.” Lastly he walked to Hannah.

“You can still leave. None of us would judge you.”

Hannah shook her head.

“No, I stay.”

Hannah didn’t continue with an explanation. Castiel couldn’t decide which was better. This or Hannah telling him she considered him a leader.

But in the end he nodded and gave the mental image to her too. He could only hope that this Hannah’s fate would be better.

“You bastard…” Theo hissed, his face twisted with pain. “Fear the day when I get my Grace back!”

Before Castiel could respond to it and Theo could say anything more threats Charlie took the soup from Sam and shoved a spoonful of it in the former angel’s open mouth. Theo immediately started coughing.

“What is this filth?!”

“Food” Charlie answered with a dangerous smile. “And if you don’t want to starve to death like a human, you’ll eat it.”

Theo eyed the plate warily. Castiel could tell he was disgusted by the food. For an angel who never ate – and if they did they tasted molecules – it was a strange experience. The coughing had happened to him too but he had forced his first human meal down his throat because he knew
humans needed it. But Theo wasn’t the kind of angel who spent much time among humans. He didn’t understand many things about them. He felt sorry for him. He would soon face other human functions too. Very uncomfortable ones.

In the end Theo opened his mouth and swallowed the food Charlie gave him without a word.

“Okay, that’s settled” Dean said quickly. “I go to sleep.”

Castiel turned to look at Dean but he was already out of the room. The angel looked at Sam questioningly but the man wore the same surprised expression as him.

Castiel couldn’t help but worry. He could once again see Dean’s soul and maybe it shined brighter than ever. But he saw the fear, he saw how his soul embraced itself in an attempt of protecting itself. He had to keep his eyes on him, now more than ever.

Chapter End Notes

I want to give Becky a new start. I imagine that the Leviathan Apocalypse would mature her and let her show her potential to be a good character.

Polysexual Sam was inspired by this art http://bluesilktie.tumblr.com/post/89824320089/at-last-i-finished-sam-done-in-the-polysexual Then I did some research and that was how I found the Crossroad Demon thing so I decided to use it.

There may or may not be a chapter on the weekend. I'll see what I can do.
Chapter 41

Chapter Notes

Today is my birthday, so, like every good hobbit, I give you a new chapter as a present :) Though I wouldn't be a good hobbit. I hate gardening and don't really know how to take care of plants.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

His mother didn’t let him translate at night. She said night was for sleeping and the day for working. So with a groan Kevin had to start readjusting his body to sleeping at night. His inner clock was a mess for days and his time for translating shortened. Sam and Gadreel agreed to share their time of the control over the body but it wasn’t enough. The motivation he had had weeks ago now shifted to a block. A translator’s block. His attention wandered away from the tablet more often than acceptable and he translated less by each day. He had to force himself to keep doing his job because they needed to know what was written on the tablets and there were just a few lines left.

But his messed up sleeping schedule made nothing better.

It took him a week to finally get used to night sleeping again. The earlier days resulted many grumpy mornings, but after his big mug of coffee he snarled less. Charlie gave him a few tips how to make it a bit easier like what he should drink before sleeping and what to eat in the morning. He was thankful for her help. She was like a cool big sis who took care of him and whom he could play a lot of video games. They played Pokémon X and Y and he finally managed to finish Alan Wake. Charlie helped him find all of the pages and pointed out and explained every reference they came across. Charlie was a smart gamer so he didn’t mind her talking a lot.

Slowly his inner clock adjusted to his old new schedule and the mornings weren’t that bad anymore.

One morning however Kevin woke to screaming. Startled by the sound, Kevin jumped out of the bed and immediately fell on the floor. As usual, the covers twisted around him legs. Snapping out of his sleepy daze by the pain in his shoulder, Kevin sat up and rubbed his face with both of his palms. He didn’t know where it came from, ha wasn’t sure it was real or a dream, but it gave him a bad start. A headache kicked in as soon as he opened his eyes so he wasn’t in his best moods in that morning.

Kevin stood up and walked to the sink to wash his face. The cold water helped to ease the pain a little but he needed some caffeine in his system to function properly. So with one final yawn he left his room to get some breakfast.

The other night they had gotten a text from Sam. They had been a few hours away from the bunker and would be there around three of four in the morning. Kevin had wanted to wait for them but Linda would have heard none of it. She had ordered him to go to bed and Kevin had done as she said while muttering under his breath. So Kevin expected to see one of the Winchesters or Cas in the kitchen.

He just stepped out of his room when he heard a voice calling him.
“Kevin Tran.”

Kevin turned around. Behind him stood a woman he hadn’t seen before. She had brown hair and blue eyes and she stared at him without blinking. Humans never looked at each other like that.

Cold ran down Kevin’s spine. It was an angel. Somehow she got inside. Metatron sent her and now she was after him. She wanted to kill him and take the angel tablet. If not Gadreel, then an other angel would murder him.

“Dean!” he yelled and started running towards the man’s room. Calling the eldest Winchester’s name for help came surprisingly naturally to him though he still had some hard feelings towards him. But his brain just kinda shut down and went into survival mode. And surviving meant calling for help. “Dean!”

He turned on the corridor where Dean’s room was and ran into something solid. He almost fell back but someone caught his arms.

“Kevin? What happened?”

Kevin looked up at Cas. He didn’t know what he was doing here so early in the morning when his room was in the other direction but right now there were more urgent matters in his head.

“Cas! An angel! She’s here to kill me!”

Cas looked to his left with alarm but he soon relaxed. He smiled at Kevin and patted his shoulders before he let him go.

“Don’t worry” he said. “It’s Hannah. She’s a friend.”

Kevin looked the way he came from. The angel – Hannah – walked towards them and stopped a few feet away. He couldn’t help but shudder.

“It’s nice to meet the Prophet of the Lord.” Hannah nodded towards him with a small smile that was maybe meant as friendly but came out so forced the teen made a step away from her so Cas was standing between them. Not that a former angel would have a chance against an angel.

Hannah didn’t seem to care about his behavior because her attention quickly shifted to Cas.

“Castiel.” The angel’s voice was disapproving. “You should be more careful with your Grace. It would burn out sooner then expected.”

Kevin looked at Cas with wide eyes. His Grace? Was he an angel again? Burn out? Had he…

Cas looked at the ceiling and sighed.

“I won’t burn out so soon, Hannah. And if I have to use the Grace, I will.”

“You should have a better decision whether to use it or not. Your judgment is clearly overshadowed, and you waste it for unnecessary things.”

Kevin felt the air charging up around the form… around the angel as he glared angrily at the other.

“I use my Grace however I want and those things are never unnecessary.”

Hannah nodded curtly.
“Very well. I’ll return to Theo’s room then.”

With that the angel turned around and left. Kevin kept his eyes on her until she was gone and just then looked back at Cas.

“So” he started. “You’re an angel again.”

Cas glanced at Kevin then down the floor.

“Unfortunately some things can’t be changed.” The angel straightened himself. “I’ll tell you everything on our way to the kitchen.”

“That would be helpful” Kevin agreed.

He was about to follow the angel when he stopped and looked back at the corridor. It was awfully quite there.

“I wonder why Dean didn’t rush out of his room by now” he said. “Being the overprotective mother hen, he would come to your rescue even in his sleep.”

Cas slowed down a little before he answered without turning back.

“Dean is sleeping deeply right now. Let’s not disturb his rest.”

Kevin looked at the leaving angel then back at the corridor, meanwhile gaping like a fish and pointing at the two directions like an idiot. Cas would only know what Dean was doing if he had been in his room. Did he want to know what had happened? Definitely not, but he would probably find out anyway. He should look for a spell that would bleach his mind.

When they entered the kitchen Kevin already heard most of the story from Cas. Muriel dead, Malachi dead, Gadreel banished, plus the mysterious supernatural lady. And now the angel from Castiel took his Grace was in the bunker.

“So what are we gonna do?” Kevin asked as he poured some coffee into his mug. From the corner of his eye he saw Cas looking at the dark liquid with so much sadness the teen quickly changed his mind and put down the mug without taking a sip. He also decided he would eat breakfast later. He could wait.

“I don’t know yet” the angel answered. “I would like to hear what happened to Sam and Dean on Swan Mountain first and then make some new plans.”

Kevin looked at the clock.

“They’ll be asleep for a while. Until then, would you help me translate? Maybe you can understand the Elamite.”

Cas’ eyes lit up.

“Yes. I would like to. As an angel I can read and understand it now.” He turned to leave but quickly looked back. “Don’t forget your breakfast. I can sense you’re hungry and your brain needs the energy.”

So with a plate and a mug in his hands Kevin sat down at his table in the library. He took the Elamite text from the bottom of a tower of other papers and handed it to Cas.

“I’m not finished with the whole yet. There are a few more lines on the tablet I have to figure out
but I’ll finish with it soon.”

Kevin took a bite of his breakfast and chewed it with closed eyes. He just realized how hungry he was. Being scared to death by an unknown angel made him forget about how much he needed to eat. Now he was looking forward to the day with optimism. He would translate the rest of the tablet to Elamite and Cas would tell them what was on it. Maybe they would reopen Heaven soon, the angels would get back their wings and defeat Metatron. That would be great.

They were sitting in silence for a while now. Kevin started wondering why Cas hadn’t said anything yet so he opened his eyes and looked at the angel. What he saw was not what he expected.

The paper was on the table and Cas stared at it with wide eyes. He was leaning on his elbows, fingers grabbing his hair like he wanted to tear it out.

“Cas?” Kevin asked, concerned. “You okay?”

Cas shook his head.

“I… I can’t read it…” Cas shut his eyes tight. “I don’t understand it…”

Kevin put down his sandwich, he suddenly didn’t feel hungry.

“What? But…” He blinked for a few times, not knowing what to say. “I thought…”

“I thought becoming an angel again would help regain my knowledge I lost” Cas cut in. “I thought I could be useful again.” He brushed his hair back while he lowered his head to the tabletop. “But I’m as useless as I was.”

Kevin watched the angel helplessly. What should he say now? Don’t worry? It would be alright? He shifted uncomfortably in his seat and waited in silence. He wanted to tell Cas that he wasn’t useless. He helped a lot, be it a small or a big help. None of them would call him useless. But the angel had so little self-confidence that he wouldn’t believe him or anyone of them.

Cas inhaled a long breath then sat up.

“I’m sorry. I don’t want to burden you with my problems. I go and call Hannah.”

“No!” Kevin said quickly when the angel was about to stand up. When Cas looked back at him questioningly, he continued. “I don’t trust her.”

Cas frowned.

“You can trust her. She’s an ally.”

“Yeah, maybe. But what if something happens and she turns her back to us.” Like asking Cas again to kill Dean, he added mentally. “I want to know her first before I let her take any of my notes into her hands.”

Maybe he offended Cas by not trusting his sister but Kevin had to be careful. Anything could happen. But fortunately Cas showed him an understanding smile.

“As you wish. Hannah can act a little cold but she’s a good and caring angel. You’ll see.”

Kevin sighed in relief and nodded. He hoped Cas was right and they didn’t let the enemy inside their home.
“Castiel, I’m serious. Go back to the bunker.”

No matter how many times she asked, Castiel just shook his head and walked forward without stopping. Hannah could see every step was a torture for him so she stayed close to him to catch her brother the moment his legs give up. But somehow Castiel kept going, like he had a hidden source of power. Maybe it wasn’t his Grace but something unknown to angels.

Maybe it was his soul.

Metatron had said Hannah was getting closer to a human and that her Grace was developing a soul. Maybe the same had happened to Castiel. Maybe spending so much time with the Winchesters created a human soul next to his angelic Grace.

Was that so common? An angel spends time among humans and suddenly has a soul? Did the other angels know about this? She certainly hadn’t heard about it before Metatron told her. She had to ask her siblings if any of them knew about it.

Angels watched over humanity for many centuries without interacting with them. They had a place in Heaven where they could sit and watch. Heaven was not above the sky like humans would think, it was in an other plain. But they could look down at Earth like they were among the clouds.

The room was filled with angels when they arrived. They were all looking down, whispering among themselves, searching for answers.

“Castiel. Hannah.”

Benjamin stepped next to them. The two angels greeted him with a nod.

“What news do you have?” Castiel asked.

“The ripple appeared in this time not long ago” Benjamin explained. “Europe, Asia and Australia are already in an other timeline. All connection broke with those areas.”

“What about Heaven?” Hannah said. “The ripple will affect it too. Are there any changes yet?”

“There are.” Benjamin nodded and took a notebook in his hands. “About a million new souls appeared and their numbers are rising rapidly. Some of the angels have wings again and possess no memories of the Fall.”

Hannah bit her lower lip. It would be her time soon. She would forget about everything that happened in this timeline like her other siblings.

“We have a plan” she said. “We think Father Time is at the center of the circle.”

Benjamin frowned.

“How would you know that? We still don’t know if he really exists.”

Hannah flexed her jaw before she could say anything offending. Benjamin’s lack of faith annoyed her. He should look for a solution just like them, not sit back and wait for the end.
“We don’t have much time.” Castiel stepped between them. Hannah noticed how sweaty his forehead was. His breath was shallow like he had a fever. “And any other options. We should check…”

Before he could finish, Castiel’s voice faded and he fell forward. Hannah and Benjamin quickly grabbed him by his arms to keep him standing.

“I told you to go back” Hannah said, but her words found deaf ears. Castiel was unconscious.

“His Grace is burning rapidly.” Benjamin looked at Castiel. “Heaven is rejecting him.”

She had known it would happen and Castiel too. But he was too stubborn to listen to reasons.

“Benjamin, take him back to the bunker” she told the angel. “I can’t leave yet.”

For a moment it seemed Benjamin would protest but in the end he nodded. He took Castiel from her and walked away with him. Hannah watched them for a while but she quickly turned her attention back to her mission. Time passed slower in Heaven then down on Earth but she still had to hurry. The faster she found the information she needed, the better.

With one last deep breath she made her way towards the view of the human world, breaking her way through the crowd of angels.

Sam woke many times during his sleep. He had dreams. Countless dreams he couldn’t remember. Maybe they were nightmares because he could swear he heard screaming at one point. It was around noon when he finally decided to get out of bed. He took a quick shower, got some food from the kitchen and made his way towards the library.

Most of the habitants of the bunker were already there. Cas sat at the table, his eyes fixed on the wood. Next to him Kevin worked on the angel tablet, time to time rubbing his forehead. At the next table were Charlie and Dorothy, talking, while Toto chewed something under Dorothy’s chair. Ms. Tran read a book in one of the armchairs and Hannah walked from bookcase to bookcase, reading the titles.

Sam swallowed hard. It was painful to see her here again and knowing it was not her. This was a new Hannah. Or should he say the old Hannah, the one she used to be before they had met. He knew nothing about this Hannah. He should have asked when he still had the opportunity. Ask her to tell stories about herself, what had happened to her after the Fall, what had been her life in Heaven before that. He didn’t know if this Hannah would answer any of his questions.

He was watching her for too long because in the next moment Hannah was looking back at him. Her blue eyes were narrowed, thoughtful, and he had to look away before he said or did anything stupid. Like back in Colorado Springs.

He quickly made his way to the table where Cas and Kevin were and sat down.

“Morning sunshine!” Charlie smiled at him. Sam returned her smile.

“How are you feeling?” Cas asked, looking up at him from the table. Despite being just recharged,
Cas looked awful. He had circles under his eyes and looked too tired for an angel.

“Fine” Sam said. “How about you?”

Cas shifted.

“I… met with some difficulties but I’m fine too.”

Sam saw Hannah sent a disapproving look towards her brother. But he just nodded and didn’t dwell on it. Cas clearly didn’t want to talk about it.

“Mornin’…”

Dean stepped into the library. If Cas looked awful, he looked terrible. Messy hair, grayish skin, tired eyes. He fell on the chair next to Sam, opposite to Cas. The angel leaned forward, putting his forearms on the table.

“Dean” he said. He didn’t add anything but his tone maybe held some hidden message because Dean just made a powerless wave with his hand, rubbing the bridge of his nose with the other. Sam and Kevin shared a questioning look.

“Now that everyone is here” Hannah said, breaking the silence that settled on the library, “I’d like to hear how Gadreel was banished.”

The angel turned to them with her arms folded before her chest and looked at Sam and Dean like a strict teacher would.

“They just woke up, Hannah” said Cas. “Give them a little time.”

Hannah raised her chin.

“Time is what we lack” she declared. “Abaddon is taking over Hell. Metatron wants the angel tablet. And now there’s someone who can control angels and the one who banished Gadreel from his vessel.”

It didn’t sting. No. The pain erupted like a volcano inside him. Vessel. He was just a vessel. Not Sam, not Winchester, not even ‘human’. Just a vessel.

Sam scratched the table, wood getting under his nails. He shouldn’t have been so excited to see her again. The Hannah he knew was lost forever, and this Hannah would never be her.

“They are the same.”

Sam looked up. Dean was still rubbing his face, now with two hands.

“What do you mean?” Cas asked.

Dean looked at the angel between his fingers.

“The one who controlled Malachi. She kicked Gadreel out of Sam.”

Sam felt the temperature dropping in the room. Kevin put down his pen, Ms. Tran closed her book. Even Toto stopped chewing. Every eye was fixed on Dean.

“What happened exactly?” Cas asked, silencing Hannah with a raised hand before she could say anything.
“I turned on the EMF to look for our ghost when Sam screamed.” Dean put down his hands on his lap as he talked. “I caught him in the last moment. That was when the chick showed up. There was some messed up Enuchian symbols behind her, I guess that was what she used. She walked closer, I got up, she said she… banished what didn’t belong there or something like that and that I killed her siblings, then she reached out and…”

Cas’ eyes widened in horror.

“She didn’t touch you, did she?”

“No, she didn’t” Dean shook his head. “I stepped away before she could.” He grimaced. “Then we rolled down the mountain side.”

Cas let out a long breath and leaned back in his chair.

“Killed her siblings?” Dorothy asked. “What did she mean by that?”

Dean shook his head.

“I don’t know.”

“You’ve killed a lot of monsters” Charlie said. “She can be anyone’s sister.”

“No” Sam disagreed. “She used Enochian symbols. Altered ones, like at the vampire nest. Just two types of supernatural beings can use it. Angels and demons.”

“But how could demons use Enochian?” Cas questioned. “The only demon who can is Crowley but he’s in the dungeon.”

“And” Hannah added, “if she’s the one who is responsible for the destruction of that nest and if she really was an angel, which I doubt, why would demons follow her?”

Too many questions. And they didn’t get any closer to the answers.

“Let’s get back to this later.” Dean put her palms on the table and stood up. “Charlie, do you have a moment? I need you to find a number.”

Charlie raised from her seat too, one brow arched.

“If you want to know the lottery numbers, I can’t help.”

Dean smiled at that.

“No, I want you to find a phone number.”

The two left the library as they started talking to each other with lowered voices. One by one everyone turned back to what they had done previously. Sam ate his lunch in silence, but the food didn’t feel as good as it should be. Something unsettling grew inside his stomach, like something was missing. Something very important.

Chapter End Notes

I was brushing my teeth when an idea came to my mind which I really liked so I added
a few lines about it here. What am I talking about? You will find out in the chapter after the next one. Also I should stop adding new subplots. It's getting messy.
Chapter 42

Chapter Notes

Thank you for those 1000 hits!!!! I don't know how and why I deserved it, but thank you! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

My shoulder hurts like hell where that angel stabbed me. It’s burning, every movement is a torture, and it doesn’t seem to get better anytime soon. It doesn’t seem the wound will get better anytime soon.

The Mark doesn’t heal me as fast as it used to. It takes its time, not rushing anything, meanwhile enjoying every minute of my pain. It’s punishing me for disobeying it, for refusing to give it the blood it demanded. But it also rewards me in some twisted way for the two angels’ deaths. I see images of bloodshed from the past and I push those away but I can still hear the scream and cries in the distance. If I wasn’t insane yet, I’m going to be one now.

Now I’m hiding in an old mill somewhere in Europe. I have no idea where European monsters usually hide, but right now this will do. If there’s a werewolf hiding somewhere I’ll… I’ll just leave in peace. But I hope this will be my last hiding place until the ripple happens.

I lean against the wall after I sit down and just wait. With the never ending screaming in my ears it’s difficult to focus on nothing but I try. I try not to think about Gavin and the two angels. I try not to imagine their faces turning into Sam and Cas’. I try not to imagine Sam’s head rolling on the floor and Cas coming to an end with a flash of light.

I shake my head and try to focus on something else. Earlier I zapped to a store and took some knew cloths and bandages. Also a sewing kit to seal the wound. It’s the best activity to draw my attention away from everything around and inside me. The wound is on the back of my shoulder so I can’t see it properly. I have to use a mirror so I have to coordinate my hand carefully. I can also use only one hand. Perfect way to not think about anything but the task ahead.

But it doesn’t last for the rest of my time in this time. As soon as I finish, I’m back on that roller coaster again, going down down down, sinking into horrible images and sounds.

The waiting is killing me. I can feel that something horrible is about to happen somewhere far, though I don’t know what it is. I can’t tell how I know it, it’s just… there, like the shiver running down your back when someone is watching you and you don’t know where they are.

“Dean Winchester.”

I jump up, the stitches straining painfully in my skin. It was a man’s voice that called me. I can’t see where he is and I can’t find him by hearing. It seems it comes from everywhere, surrounding me like a cage.

“Yeah, that’s my name” I say, covering my nervousness with cockiness. “Who’s asking?”

But I don’t get an answer. Why would I? Dean Winchester doesn’t need answers to his questions.
“I heard a lot about you. Descendent of Cain, the first killer. Son of John Winchester, who chased Azazel for years. Brother of Lucifer’s true vessel. The Righteous Man, Michael’s vessel, Knight of Hell. I expected more from someone with so many titles. But look at you. Such great names for someone miserable like you who pretends to be a demon.”

Asmodeus said something like that too.

“Show yourself!” I call out into the darkness of the mill and put my hand behind me to take the Blade.

I hear a deep chuckle.

“Be careful with that. You’ll cut yourself.”

I spin around and take a step away. The guy’s too close to me, invading my personal space. He’s taller than Sam which means he’s more than a head higher than me. I rarely meet men who tower over me like this but when I do my throat tightens. The predatory glint in his eyes doesn’t help at all. Especially when the fly-like eyes of his true form are looking at me too. It reminds me too much to that night in New York.

“I think I can handle it, thank you.” I smirk at him. “You should be careful. I’ll stab you.”

The demon returns the smirk then sinks his hand inside his pocket.

“Oh the smell of old fears.” He takes a chocolate bar in his hand, opens it and takes a deep breath. “Delicious.”

I reach for the Blade again.

“Who are you?” I repeat my question.

He shrugs.

“Just your average angel turned demon. You were looking for me but I decided to find you first.”

Beelzebub…

He’s the Demon of Gluttony, the strongest after Lucifer. I’m not prepared for him. The Mark of Cain is against me so it won’t heal me properly and give me power during a fight. Beelzebub should have been the first one on my list but who knew I would get to this? Now I have no chance against him.

But why would I fight? The ripple will erase me, I’ll die anyway. I can let Beelzebub kill me.

And that’s why I let my hand fall back to my side without the Blade.

“You killed three of my siblings, you know” Beelzebub says, his mouth is full with chocolate. He’s like a very twisted version of Gabriel. “And that’s a bad thing.”

I stay silent, waiting for him to continue. And it doesn’t take long, he only swallows the candy before he talks again.

“You know, since Lucifer is back in the Cage and Sariel so incompetent to lead us, I looked after the rest of us. I never hungered for power like Abaddon, so taking over Hell was never my intention. But when you go around, slaughtering them like pigs…” He sighs and shakes his head. “Dean, Dean. You’re in trouble.”
Before I can react, my lungs become flat all of a sudden. I gasp for air but not even a little amount gets inside me. I grab for my chest and start choking.

“I’ll give you a long and slow torture” he explains. “I can’t kill you obviously, so I’m going to enjoy every moment of our existence.” He steps closer and grabs my chin, holding it tight. “I have plans with you, Dean. Big plans. Ones that even Alistair would envy.”

I deserve it... I had it coming... I deserve it...

*The ripple will be here soon... Just a few days... I can do it...*

I deserve it... I deserve it...

No matter how I try, I can’t fight back my panic. Maybe it has something to do with my lack of air. Memories of those thirty years of torture are too vivid. I can’t turn it off. I see, I hear, I feel. I feel every freaking moment of every kind of torture and I shiver and I want to cry.

Damn it...

I don’t want to go to Hell...

Please...

I don’t want to go back...

And then, faster than a thought, my lungs are filled with air again. I gasp for air and lean forward with my arms tight around my chest. I welcome every new breath with a little prayer towards any force that gave my air back.

“Son of a bitch...” I force out the words and continue panting. Beelzebub is not here anymore. He’s gone. Don’t know how, don’t know why, don’t care. What matters is that I’m still alive, still on Earth, not in Hell.

“Hello Dean.”

I freeze and my heart stops beating for a moment. I open my eyes and take in my surroundings. I stand with blue flames around me inside a barn. *The barn.* And the owner of the voice is none other than the first angel I met right here many years ago.

Damn it...

Chapter End Notes

New York -> 10.09

So, remember when I said I’m adding a new subplot? Yeah, I have to reorganize the outline of the future chapters. *sigh* Why do I make my life so difficult? New subplot means new character POV next chapter.
“She’s the best thing that ever happened to me” he sighed with his eyes still fixed on his phone. “Isn’t she wonderful?”

No, she wasn’t. She was an abomination from Hell who casted an evil spell on his best friend. He hated her for that. How dare she steal his friend? His only friend?

“Ed?”

Ed Zeddmore looked up at Harry Spangler from his coffee.

“What?”

“You’re too quite. You would tease me by now. You okay?”

Ed simply nodded.

“It’s nothing.”

Harry nodded and glued his gaze back to the screen, his irises not far from taking the shape of a heart.

Normally Harry wouldn’t leave it like this. He would ask him until Ed finally answered. But Harry’s mind was so occupied by that chick – Sara? Sandy? – that he had no time caring about his best friend.

Ed hated that girl. Really hated her. From his loyal friend who followed him everywhere she made… this. He couldn’t let it continue. He had to put an end to this. But how?

The Ghost Facers split up a few years ago. Maggie moved to an other state focusing on roller derby and Kenny started a startup company. They wanted a normal life, they said.

“It was good while it lasted” Maggie had told him one afternoon. “But hunting ghosts won’t pay the bills. I have to become more responsible. Maybe you should move on too and leave the paranormal to those Winchesters you dislike so much.”

But moving on was not an option. He liked this. He was a professional paranormal investigator. He couldn’t turn his back to it. And getting popular on the internet was not bad either. People were still visiting their site, sharing ghost stories with each other. If only there wasn’t that annoying fan of those stupid ‘Supernatural’ books, calling them fakes. Ed hated that person.

He was pulled out of his thoughts by the ringing of Harry’s phone. The man picked it up with a huge idiotic grin on his face.

“Hey, honey!” he said with a voice that hurt Ed’s ears. He quickly excused himself before he threw up but he didn’t receive any answers from his friend. The tension in his body grew.

Stepping out of the diner, Ed took a deep breath from the cool winter air. They came to Texas because Ed had heard a story of some killings and while the case was turning out to be huge he just wanted to spend some time with Harry. Now that this chick – Kate? Clara? – showed up they spent
less time together. But how good it had been when they traveled from state to state, looking for
ghosts! Those had been the best years of his life. He wanted to get it back, to be on the road with
Harry again, the old Harry, not this stranger.

He had to find with something big. Something that would make Harry forget about that girl.
Something new… Something popular on the net…

Slenderman.

Yes. Everyone knew who Slenderman was. There were dozens of gameplays on YouTube,
hundreds of photos with the creature in the background. They could find the real Slenderman and
kill it. No. That was stupid. Slenderman was just a creepy pasta, nothing more. It was not real.

Or maybe… he could come up with something similar? Up until now every ghost they had met
was real. He had honestly never faked anything. But when losing his friend was on the line… He
needed something creepy. Similar to Slenderman but not the same. And the name… Thinman?
Yes. Thinman was good. He could post some stories on their site under a fake name. He would
then show it to Harry and be on the road in no time. Good.

His phone started vibrating in his pocket. Ed couldn’t help but hope that it was Harry, finally
noticing that he wasn’t in the diner. But when he looked at his phone he didn’t see Harry’s name. It
was an unknown number. Ed frowned as he picked it up.

“Hello?”

“I hope you didn’t tell your idiot friend about that Thinman thing yet.”

He froze. This voice was Dean Winchester’s. And apparently he somehow knew about his idea
that just popped up in his head.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about” he snorted as he continued walking. “And how did you
get my number?”

“Of course you don’t.” Ed could swear he heard the Winchester’s smirk. “Harry got a girlfriend
and you’re jealous because she stole him from you.”

Ed stopped again and looked around so he could spot the Winchester.

“Are you stalking me?” Because there couldn’t be an other explanation to this.

“Why would I? I have better things to do.”

“Then how do you know?”

“I have my ways.” The man paused for a moment. “But it’s not important. Do you really want him
to hate you? Because if you do this, if you lie to him, he will hate you.”

“He won’t…”

“He will, I know. Lies are nasty things. You will just lose his trust.”

Ed chewed on his tongue. He wanted to say something. Something that would silence the
Winchester for a lifetime. But he couldn’t say anything because he knew he was right. He was just
thinking about a fake case to separate Harry from his girlfriend.

“Let him be” the Winchester continued after a while. “The honeymoon phase will end one day and
he would be the same again, girlfriend or no girlfriend. Maybe you will be his best man on his wedding and the godfather of his kid. Bear with it, okay? Because if you go with that plan of yours, you can say goodbye to all of that.”

Ed sat down on the closest bench.

“How did you know? What I was thinking?”

The Winchester laughed lightly.

“Would you believe me if I told you that I came from the future?”

Ed snorted.

“No.”

For a moment both of them were silent then Ed heard the other sighing.

“Take care, okay? Don’t lose your best friend because of a lie.”

Ed knew the other man was about to put down his phone. He was about to do that too but somehow he found his mouth opening as a single word left it.

“Why?”

The Winchester paused.

“Why?” he asked back.

“Why do you care?” he asked. “We were never friends. And now you call me and tell me not to do something if I want to keep my friend. Why?”

For a moment he thought the Winchester put down his phone but Ed could still hear him breathing on the other side. This lasted for a long while and Ed was surprised he was so patient. Normally he would just say ‘never mind’ then end this weird conversation. But no. He stayed the way he was and just waited until the Winchester finally took a deep breath.

“Because I’ve been there. And I’m still paying the price. You don’t want that.”

Oh. He didn’t want the same to happen to him. This was actually… nice of him? Strange.

“Then… thank you for warning me, I guess.”

“Yeah.” He cleared his throat. “One more thing. You might want to stay away from anything monster, demon and angel related. We still don’t know what, but something is happening on the supernatural front.”

“Now you mentioned it…” Ed pulled out a notebook from his pocket. Harry never understood why kept a pen and paper with him when his phone could do almost anything. But Ed could organize everything better when he wrote it down. Just like this one thing. “I keep my eyes on strange news and I found something strange about two days ago. Groups of people were brutally killed all around the States and maybe in other countries too in the past month. We’re in Texas now, checking out one if those killings and guess what? They were djinns.”

He could hear the Winchester pushing a chair then a door closing. By the way he breathed Ed guessed he was walking.
“How do you know they were djinns?”

Ed straightened his back proudly.

“Believe it or not, I read many books about the paranormal. I know how they look like.”

“Okay, give me a sec. Sam!”

“What is it?” Ed heard the other Winchester’s voice.

“Can you look up cases where a group of people died in the last few weeks?”

“What’s going on, Dean?” an other voice was heard, a very deep one that somehow sounded familiar to Ed.

“Ed says a group of djinns were killed in Texas.”

“Ed?” the younger Winchester asked with disbelief. “You mean Ghostfacers Ed? You called him?”

Ed fought back a snort when he heard the Winchester muttering something under his breath.

“So the killings, Sammy? What about them?”

After some typing he got the answer.

“Wow… Get this. There had been at least two of these in every state, and European and Asian country.”

“Why wasn’t it in the news if it’s that huge?” a new voice asked, sounding younger than the others.

“Maybe because of how strange the victims are?” Ed guessed.

“Wait, I’m putting you on speaker… Okay, say it again.”

“So-uh… Hi everyone?” Ed cleared his throat. “Maybe it wasn’t in the new because of how strange the victims are. The djinns I checked? I read a report that said one of them was still alive when the police arrived. It attacked one of the officers, eyes glowing blue, but fortunately an other officer killed him just in time.”

“With ordinary bullets?” the older Winchester asked.

“Maybe it was already so weak anything could have killed it. And Ed might be right. I just checked the FBI files about the investigations. It appears wendigos and shapeshifters were also found.”

“Awesome.” Then he directed his words back to Ed. “Stay out of this. Go home, become friends with Harry’s girlfriend or something, but don’t get into this. Something big is out there, killing those monsters.”

Ed looked down at his left forearm where a long scar was hidden under his coat. A reminder that his carelessness almost coasted a life.

“I can’t promise anything” and before any of the Winchesters could say anything he put down his phone.
Cas and Hannah were away for a few hours now. The rumble grew louder with each passing one and Sam could do nothing but walk up and down in the library. He ignored the strange looks the hunters gave him, he was too worried to care. What if the ripple was working in Heaven differently? What if it already reached the two angels? But then Emmanuel would be here too, right? Cas and Hannah were still safe right?

“Sit down already.” Meg grabbed his arm and pulled him down on the chair next to her. Sam unwillingly but let her do it. “Now. Tell me, how do you plan to stop the ripple?”

Sam felt his stomach lifting up then dropping.

“Uh…”

“Because you must have a plan, right?” Meg continued. “I mean, you can’t just look for someone who maybe doesn’t exist without a plan.”

Sam slowly turned to look at Meg and he didn’t have to say anything. Apparently everything was written on his face because Meg’s eyes widened with shock.

“You don’t have a plan!” The demon raised her eyes towards the ceiling. “I can’t believe it.”

“We’re desperate, Meg” Sam said.

“Being desperate doesn’t mean you have to be a mindless idiot.” Meg looked back at him. “You don’t even know how time can be fixed. Will this Father Time just snap his fingers and everything will be happy and sunshine? Or you’ll have to travel back in time, not knowing if you can ever return to the present? Have you ever thought about that?”

Honestly? No. Sam’s mind was so fixed on finding this guy that he forgot to think about the how. Meg was right. They were just running into the blue, not knowing what was waiting for them. Maybe they should stop sometimes and think everything through. It wouldn’t hurt.

“And, you still don’t know if he really exists or not.”

Agreeing with Meg? No, nope, never.

“I already told you. Death said he exists.” When Meg rolled her eyes he continued, his voice angrier. “Just because you hate Death…”

“I don’t hate Death” Meg cut in. “I only said I don’t think we can trust him. Death and God are big guys and we are just ants in their eyes. Why would Death help us? There are countless worlds out there. Why would he care about this one?”

Because every life matters, Sam wanted to say. Because Death cared about the souls. Because Death came to take Sam himself and not an other reaper. Death cared.

But he couldn’t say anything because he was interrupted by a loud knock.

Sam quickly got up and walked up the stairs to answer the door. With a gun ready in his hand, he carefully opened it. And he immediately lowered it when he saw the comers.
“Cas?!”

Cas was held by another angel. Without that he would be surely on the ground, limbs laying in
different directions, like a ragdoll’s. His breathing was shallow and… Was that smoke coming out
of him?

“Spending time in Heaven only made the process faster” the angel explained. “He started breathing
Grace out a minute ago.”

So that smoke was his burning Grace…

“Come in!” Sam stepped out of the way and after closing the door behind them he quickly stepped
to Cas’ other side to help carrying him. He knew the other angel didn’t need his aid, but he wanted
Cas to feel he was there to support him.

“Sweet cherry pie…” Meg waited for them at the end of the stairs. “He went to Heaven like this?”

“Heaven rejected him” the angel said, eyeing the demon suspiciously. “Hannah asked me to bring
him back.”

The three of them, followed by the eyes of many hunters, walked to the library where they sat Cas
down in an armchair. Cas’ eyes were open but he didn’t seem to be aware of his surroundings. He
looked here and there, like he was following something, and his lips moved as if he was talking.
But the only sound he made was his fight for every breath.

Sam’s heart was breaking to see his friend like this. They were so focused on Dean and the ripple
that hey had forgotten about Cas’ Grace. Sam shouldn’t have forgotten of his friend. He felt shame
burning inside him. Dean would punch him for not taking care of Cas properly.

“I’m on my way back then” the angel announced.

Sam nodded and left Cas with Meg to go with the angel to the door.

“Well, thank you…”

“Benjamin.”

Benjamin reached out with his right hand. Sam raised a brow but shook it. Angels rarely used any
human gestures.

“I’m looking forward to our next meeting.”

“Uh.yeah. Me too?”

Benjamin nodded and walked out of the bunker. Sam closed the door and went back to his friend’s
side. And if someone guessed he wanted to make up for all those times he ignored the angel by
sitting by his side without moving, he wouldn’t deny it.

* 

Name: Dorothy Ann Baum
Born: April 3rd, 1890

Age: 8

Status: Missing

Accompanied Man of Letters Lyman Frank Baum on his journey to Oz without his knowledge.

Dorothy held back a breath and closed the file. She found a box with her name on it in one of the storage rooms for unsolved cases. She was just looking for some information about that mysterious woman. Instead she found this and here she was now, reading her father’s long reports of his missing daughter.

She never had a good relationship with her father. He was a man of his carrier and not even his family could distract him. Not even his only daughter.

But then he wrote those books about her adventures. And he disapproved her becoming a hunter when the Witch followed her here. Was it because, like all Men of Letters, he hated hunters and didn’t respect women? Or maybe because he was worried about her?

Dorothy felt a knot in her stomach. She would never know. The thought was sickening. They had parted in such an ugly way. They fought then she stormed away and she never saw him again in his life. Her father died thinking she hated him.

“Hey!”

Dorothy looked up. Charlie stood right outside the room.

“Hey.” Dorothy forced a smile on her face but by the way Charlie’s eyes hardened she knew she failed.

“What’s up?” She stepped inside and sat down opposite to Dorothy. “Did something happen?”

She didn’t answer, just pushed the folder across the table. Charlie opened it with a frown then her face softened.

“Oh, Dori…”

The other woman fixed her gaze on the wood.

“Do you think he knew? Do you think my father knew I loved him?”

Charlie reached out and put a hand on hers.

“Of course he knew” she said. “Every parent knows their children love them, even if they don’t say it.”

Dorothy sighed and moved her hand so they can lock fingers. She didn’t look up but she could feel Charlie’s warm gaze on her.

“He was searching for me” she said after a long silence, motioning with her head towards the file. “For years he was looking for a way to get back to Oz and bring me back. He never gave up. And when I finally got back, I was angry at him and left. But now looking at those reports… He was just trying to protect me…”
With her free hand she opened another folder. There was a photo of her father, old, tired, broken. The lively glint of his eyes was gone forever.

“Hey.”

Dorothy looked at Charlie. Her vision was a little misty so she rubbed her eyes.

“We do stupid things” the younger woman said. “We all do. But we can’t let those drag us down. Your father knew how dutiful you are, the same as he was. He knew that you were out there, searching for the Wicked Witch, hunting her down. He died knowing you were a hero, protecting the innocents.”

Dorothy let out a long breath.

“Celeste…”

Charlie smiled at her. Dorothy only called her by her real name on special occasions. Emotional ones mainly.

“Come on!” She squeezed Dorothy’s hand one last time and stood up. “Let’s put these away. Dwelling in the past would only dull the view of the future.”

Charlie knew the feeling, her words came from her heart. Her never ending optimism never ceased to amaze her. Even though she still blamed herself for her parents’ death, she only looked forward.

Together they put the folders in the box which then was placed on its original place.

“So?” Charlie turned to her. “What were you doing down here?”

Dorothy let her eyes wander around the room.

“This storage room contains the reports of those cases that occurred before this place was built” she explained. “I thought maybe there was something about that woman Dean and Castiel talked about.”

Charlie’s eyes narrowed.

“I don’t understand… How do you know so much of this place? It was finished a few months before you locked yourself with the Witch.”

Dorothy turned back to her with a smile.

“I was here a few times when it was under construction. I was asked to help by one of the Men Of Letters.”

Dorothy saw the curious glint in Charlie’s eyes.

“But why? No offence, but you were just a hunter. Why would a Man of Letters ask for your help?”

That question had crossed her mind many times. Why had they wanted her help? But James hadn’t been like any Men of Letters she knew. He had been young for a leader. Nobody had ever doubted his talent but the older members had always frowned at his way of leadership. He had wanted to reform the order, adapting more methods and welcoming new members. Like hunters and friendly monsters. Like her.
“James said my knowledge of Oz might be helpful” she answered. “The building is protected against everything supernatural. He wanted to make sure that it includes creatures from other dimensions too.”

“James?” Charlie asked.

“The late leader of the Men of Letters. James…”

“There you are!”

Both women looked up. Dean stood at the door.

“We got some news. You might be interested.”

Chapter End Notes

Surprise POV character Ed Zeddmore. I didn't want him to be a POV character originally, just to have an earlier version of the phone conversation but then my muse told me I should give him more screen time and there it is now. A new subplot. And I like Ed, okay? Especially in the Ghostfacers Web Series. He's a good guy. Not a bad Dean mirror like in #thinman.

I messed a little with the timeline in the Dorothy part. I don't know what Robbie Thompson thought when he wrote Slumber Party. I really want to know what he's thinking.

Ohoho. So many things are going on here.
Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

The last episode had the best ending. Ever. Shake it off, Dean!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So it happened elsewhere too” Dorothy said as Sam and Dean finished explaining everything and crossed her arms.

They were back in the library again. Everyone was where they had been when Charlie left, except for her and Dorothy. The two of them were leaning against the table behind them. And Dean, of course. He stood next to the chair he was previously sitting on. He still looked like he finished a marathon of a twelve movies series in one night, and Charlie almost walked to him to push him down on the chair before he fell. But she stopped herself because Dean was in his ‘I’m a serious hunter’ mode and he wouldn’t be very grateful of her shattering that image. Maybe later.

“And we can assume that demons committed every murder.” Hannah looked at Cas. “But I still don’t understand why. Monsters and demons always kept the distance from each other, they never got into confrontations. Why now? What changed?”

“Don’t know, don’t care” Dean answered instead of the angel and leaned on the table with both palms and looked at everyone. This gained a disapproving glare from Hannah. “But there are monsters out there who are friends to us. We can’t let these demons kill them.”

“Yes, thank you, ma’am. Bye.” Sam put his phone on the table and looked up. “Garth is not answering. I called the local police station but they hadn’t seen Reverend Meyers in a week.” His expression turned pained. “Maybe he’s already…”

“Or maybe he’s hiding with his pack” Dean cut in before Sam could finish. “Garth is smart. He knows when things get dangerous.”

Charlie had never imagined that a phone call to one of the Ghostfacers would give them the lead they needed. She cursed herself for not noticing the pattern herself earlier. But living in a facility like the bunker could make people forget about the world around them. She was still decoding the information she had downloaded from that piece of art – she still couldn’t stop fangirling whenever she looked at it. And the code the Men of Letters used was hard to break. But she was getting there. Hopefully.

“So?” Kevin asked, looking at the brothers with both fear and hope. “Will you go and find Garth?”

Sam and Dean turned to each other.

“We know more friendly monsters” Dean said.

“And we can’t let anything happen to them” Sam agreed then looked back at the others. “There is one more person we know who means no threat and know where we can find her. She’s a pishtaco named Maritza. She owns a spa in Minnesota, uses her power to help people lose weight. There is also a werewolf named Kate, but we don’t know where she is.”
Charlie grabbed her tablet from the table behind her and quickly looked up what a pishtaco was. Peruvian parasitic fat-sucking creature. Nice.

“This means we are splitting up” she made the conclusion.

Dean opened his mouth, maybe to protest against Charlie’s idea that they would all go, but Cas silenced him with a single look. It was amazing how easily the angel could shepherd Dean and keep him on the track of reason. She wondered when this change happened. According to the books it was always Dean who went forward into the unknown and Cas who followed him like a faithful puppy. And when did Dean start listening to others? He was too stubborn for that.

“I’m going to find Garth” Dean said instead.

“And I’m going with you” Cas told him. The two of them looked at each other for a while and it was nothing like Charlie had read about. Not even like the ones she had seen since she came back from Oz. Dean and Cas were looking at the other like they were hiding a painful secret.

“I would like to join you too, Castiel” Hannah spoke up, still looking at Dean like he was the most evil creature of the universe, breaking the staring contest of the two. “You may need my help.”

Chalie saw Dean slowly clenching his fists as he glared at the angel. Cas looked at Hannah with an unreadable expression while Sam took Dean by the arm and pulled him down on the chair who also looked at the angel with unreadable eyes. Then Cas glanced at Sam and looked down at the table, while Dean looked between his brother and his friend with confusion, while Hannah watched Sam with narrowed eyes who too dropped his gaze down.

Oh, man. This was some Brazilian soap opera lever drama madness. The tension was almost suffocating and by Kevin’s reaction – inching away from the four as far as he could without being noticed – she wasn’t alone. And after a quick glance at Ms. Tran and Dorothy she saw the same confusion on their faces. She made a mental note to interrogate one of the three guys. Hannah wouldn’t answer her questions, she was sure.

“Then I’m going to Canyon Valley” Sam said after a while. “Stillwater and Grantsburg are not far from the other so we can go together and split up just there.”

“But someone has to stay with Theo” Cas pointed out. Then quickly added when he noticed Linda slowly rising from her armchair. “Not that I’m doubting your and your son’s capability of taking care of our… guest. But Theo was an angel. He can still be dangerous.”

“I’ll stay” Dorothy spoke next to Charlie. “I have to look into some files and I’d like to ask for some help.” Then she looked at Ms. Tran.

The woman’s face softened a bit and nodded.

“Oh course.”

Charlie watched Dorothy for a while. She was still shaken by her father’s reports. She didn’t show if there was anything wrong, but Charlie could feel the tension radiating from her body. She also stood closer to her than usual and she only did that when she felt vulnerable. Charlie didn’t want to leave her like that. She wanted to stay and talk it through with her but there were times when she had to put others before her wishes. And now innocent lives were in danger.

“Then I’ll go with you, Sam” she smiled at the younger Winchester. “This fat-sucking creature sounds fun.”
“It’s not.” Dean frowned at her. “Maritza’s brother is crazy, you should be careful.” Dean then looked at Sam. “You really think we have to split up? You said the towns were close. We can go together.”

But Sam shook his head.

“And risk losing one of them if the demons attack them both? No.”

With that being settled – though by the look on Dean’s face the argument was still not finished – Sam stood up.

“We should go as soon as possible” he said. “We shouldn’t waste more time. We can take the Impala and the Continental.”

“Okay, but you’re driving Cas’ car.” Dean stood up too and after stretching him arms he made his way to the closest doorway.

In no more than half an hour everyone gathered in the garage. Bags in trucks, weapons checked, they were ready to go. Next to the Impala Linda talked to – scolded? – Dean who waited patiently until the woman finished. Further from them Cas and Hannah were arguing with low voices. Charlie only knew they were arguing because Cas rolled his eyes so many times he would soon get dizzy for sure.

“Stay safe, Red, okay?”

Charlie smiled at Dorothy before pulling her into a tight hug.

“You too” she muttered into her shoulder. Dorothy squeezed her then stepped away, letting her sit in the Continental when Dean told them it was time to go.

The first hour of their journey went quietly. Charlie watched the Impala ahead of them, leading the way across Nebraska. Next to her Sam held the steering wheel in a tight grip, maybe not even realizing how white his fingers became. Charlie tried to keep quite, really. But after that one hour she found herself unable to keep her mouth shut any longer.

“So Sam…” she began, glancing at the younger Winchester.

“Yes?” Charlie’s lips curled up slightly when she heard the uneasiness in the man’s voice.

“I have some questions.”

Sam chuckled, looking at her for a moment.

“Should I be afraid?” he asked.

“It depends. What’s going on between you four?”

Sam frowned. He glanced at Charlie with confusion then back at the road.

“Us four?”

“You, Dean, Cas and Hannah” she answered. “That moment back in the library? It raised some questions. I don’t think you know what happened to Dean and what that glaring contest between Cas and Hannah meant. I’ll ask Dean later. But you.” Charlie looking properly at the man. “What’s going on with you?”
Sam shifted in his seat.

“What do you mean?”

“I remember how excited you were to go to Denver.” She raised her hand before Sam could say anything. “Believe me, you were. You were restless, always walking around the bunker, never stopping, sitting down only when Gadreel helped Kevin. And then you came back and do nothing but sulk in the library.”

Sam’s fingers tightened a little more around the steering wheel. If he continued like this, he would break it.

“And angel was banished from me. No wonder I don’t feel well.”

Charlie shook her head.

“No, it’s not that. Maybe it adds to it, but your main problem is not this.” Charlie took a deep breath and continued with a lower voice, eyes softening. “You knew her, right? You knew Hannah before you came back.”

She saw Sam flexing his jaw and his nostrils flared as his breathing became deeper and quicker. He didn’t say anything and Charlie knew her guess was right.

“Did something happen?” she asked.

For a long while an uncomfortable silence fell on the two of them, only broken by the rumble of the car. Charlie looked away, giving Sam as much privacy as she could. Maybe she shouldn’t have asked. She knew the only thing she accomplished by her curiosity was a reopened wound for Sam. She should have stayed silent.

“She didn't make it.”

Charlie closed her eyes. She felt a lump forming in her throat.

“I’m so sorry…” she whispered.

Neither of them spoke until the first rest three hours later.

* 

Angels never ran. Their wings could take them anywhere in a matter of seconds, why would they use their vessel’s legs to move faster? But ever since they had lost their wings, Hannah found herself walking faster, eager to reach her destination in the shortest time possible. It was frustrating how slow her human legs were but without her wings she had to get used to it.

And now she was running as soon as she stepped out of the portal to the entrance of the bunker. Her movements were a bit stiff, she only knew how to run because of the memories of her vessel. But knowing how to do it and doing it were two different things. She could only hope she wouldn’t trip on her own legs.

She reached the door successfully and knocked loudly with urgency. She heard someone walking up the stairs and the door opened. Hannah didn’t even wait for it to open properly.
“I have the location” she said in a hurry. “I know where he is.”

And before she could properly step inside she was closed in a strong embrace and lifted by two strong arms. Hannah put her hands on wide shoulders to keep her balance.

“You’re amazing, Hannah” she heard Sam’s voice next to her ear.

The praise heated up her cheeks and when Sam put her down and looked at her with those bright hazel eyes, Hannah felt the strange fluttering feeling in her stomach again. She learnt to welcome the feeling.

“I just located the center of a circle” she said. “It was nothing.”

“No, you are amazing” the man insisted.

Hannah watched his face, the shining eyes and the wide grin that reflected the gratitude his soul radiated perfectly and also the warmth that she felt coming from him whenever she was around. And it was directed to her. He had never honored anyone with that kind of warmth, only her. It was only hers.

And she just now noticed that his hands were still on her waist and her were still gripping his shoulders. It wasn’t a comforting touch. It had more in it. It was warmer and safer than the touch on her hand a few weeks earlier. How far it was now! Like it had happened months ago. And how far they had gotten. She had learnt human gestures and words. She had learnt the meaning of the emotions whirling inside her. The angel she used to be was now only a shadow from her past. She was sure she wouldn’t be able to turn her back to this now. She couldn’t turn her back to who she became. And most of it was thanks to him.

“Hey, Romeo!” A very unpleasant voice interrupted her thoughts. Glancing down she saw the demon Meg watching them from below. “If you stop the balcony scene with Juliet, you should come down. The ripple won’t wait for you to finish.”

Hannah had no idea who Romeo and Juliet were but regarding Sam’s taking a dark shade of red suggested it was an insult. He let go of Hannah and she did the same, but as soon as the connection broke she already wanted it back. She didn’t understand how a simple physical touch could be so… addicting. It was nothing like the touch of that man who she had met a day after possessing her vessel. That single bad experience determined her later opinion of humanity. But there weren’t just bad humans, like there weren’t just good angels. This was something she had learnt too.

“Shut up, Meg” Sam growled. Hannah followed him down to the map table. The demon waited for them there and soon Bobby, Lee, Becky and Missouri joined them too.

“Here” Hannah said and pointed at the map. “Arkansas, south to Fannie and north to Lake Ouachita. In the area between Forest Service Road 7492 and J13C there’s a hill. A cave entrance in on the north side.”

Maybe earlier she said it was nothing – which it really had been – but in reality she’s really proud of herself for knowing the exact location. And the way Sam’s eyes lit up with hope was a prize she highly appreciated.

“So” Bobby spoke first. “How much time do you have before this ripple gets here?”

“Five hours so you must hurry” Hannah answered and looked at Sam. “You have to go now before it’s too late.”
A shadow of fear crossed Sam’s face and he turned to Hannah with grief – *grief?* – in his eyes.

“You’re not coming?” he asked with a weak voice.

Hearing it Hannah’s heart skipped a beat and she felt a painful burn in her chest as he watched the hope fading from Sam’s eyes. She had honestly never thought about going to Father Time too. She had done everything so Sam and Castiel could get to him. But going with them?

And it seemed like the world was about to collapse around Sam at the thought of her not coming with them. His soul reached out towards her, pleading that she would change her mind, that she would go with them, go with *him*, and her soul was breaking with the sadness she felt. She inhaled a deep breath and reached out with her Grace to soothe Sam’s soul.

“Of course I’m coming” she said and as soon as those words left her lips Sam let out a heavy sigh. And Hannah’s tiny little new soul sighed in relief too and warmed her body up.

Becky cleared her throat on the other side of the table and Missouri next to her watched the two of them with a warm smile that made Hannah flushed all of a sudden.

“So you’re taking Cas and Garth with you too?” Becky asked.

Sam rubbed his jaw. Hannah could understand his struggle. Castiel was in no shape of making the journey to Father Time. Maybe he would die on their way there, they didn’t know. Hannah couldn’t help but shiver at the thought of her brother’s possible death.

“Yes” Sam nodded in the end. “I go and get Garth. Can you…” He turned to Hannah, motioning with his head towards the library where she could feel Castiel’s fading presence.

“Of course” she said with a sad smile and made her way to the library.

Daphne was sitting next to the armchair where Castiel was seated. The woman looked up at her, eyes glistening with unshed tears.

“Can you heal him?” she asked.

Just by standing next to Castiel Hannah could tell he had little chance to survive one more day. While Heaven recharged every angel that returned there, Castiel’s stolen Grace just made everything worse. She was sure he knew it too when he had entered the portal. She didn’t know what he had been thinking and she really hoped it wasn’t about intentionally hurting himself.

*Your heart is bleeding with grief. Your pain is so great you can barely stand. And don’t you ever think about it. Dean would want you to go on.*

Hannah closed her eyes and exhaled a long breath. Yes. He had wanted to intentionally hurt himself.

“All I can do is minimal” she said finally, putting a hand on Castiel’s shoulder. She let her Grace flow through his vessel, healing everything she could. “No matter how many times I fix the body, I can’t stop the Grace burning him out.”

Castiel gasped for air as he woke and looked around with wide eyes, searching for something. Then his gaze settled on the two of them and he sunk back in the armchair. Hannah could see sadness and disappointment in his eyes.

“We have to go soon” Hannah said, stopping the silence before it could stretch any longer. “We
only have a few hours before we get erased.”

Behind her she heard footsteps approaching. Turning around, she saw Sam walking in, pulling a hand down his face.

“Garth just fainted because he thought I was a ghost” he explained. “So I guess he’s not our Garth anymore.” He sighed and looked at the two angels. “We have to go. Now. Before you two turn into your alter egos. You ready to go?” he addressed his question to Castiel.

Castiel didn’t look at Sam. He had an unfixed gaze and just nodded. Hannah put her hand back on Castiel’s shoulder and squeezed it. She would do anything to help him reach their destination alive. Maybe... even if it meant to give up her own Grace. It wouldn’t last longer than this stolen Grace, but maybe her willingly giving it up wouldn’t kill him in the end. And if it meant Castiel would survive this, she would gladly sacrifice her Grace. She would do anything for her family.

*

He stood in darkness. Which was impossible because he could perfectly see himself when he looked down, like he was in a well lit room. He was alone, but he was not so sure. Everywhere he looked he only saw the blackness. And the silence... It was so loud it hurt his ears. Which was – once again – impossible. Silence was supposed to be... silent. Not some noise that almost burst his eardrums. He rubbed his ears and made a few steps forward. He couldn’t tell if he was moving at all. He couldn’t feel anything under his feet and without anything he could fix his gaze on... It was possible he was only pedaling in nothing.

You won’t tell them.

Dean stopped and tried to spot the owner of the voice.

“Who is it!” he yelled.

You won’t tell them anything.

“Hey!” He was getting angry. “Show yourself!”

“Look at you.”

Dean spun around. There was a mirror behind him. No. It was a window. He saw a room behind it with wooden walls. It was so familiar with that table in the middle.

And there he was. On the other side stood Dean, arms folded in front of his chest, looking at him with a smug smirk. He also had black, bottomless eyes.

Dean felt cold running up his spine, snaking around his shoulders. No. It wasn’t a feeling. It was two cold arms that trapped him in an embrace he didn’t want.

Watch. This is what you want.

The other Dean turned away and looked at someone in the room. A Tall figure that stepped out of the shadows.

Sam.
“Look at you, Sammy” the other Dean said. “You came to kill me? With that?”

Dean looked at Sam’s hand which he just raised. He pointed the Colt at the other Dean. Dean’s throat dried at the sight of the gun.

“You leave me no choice, Dean” his brother said. “It’s either this or the demon cure.”

The other Dean laughed with his head thrown back and he raised his empty hand, showing his palm to Sam.

“Oh, Sammy.” He shook his head. “You really think you can come out as a winner?”

In the next moment Sam was thrown back against the wall by an invisible force. Dean wanted to rush there, see if his brother was alright but he couldn’t move. The arms were still around him.

The other Dean stepped to Sam, towering over him menacingly, meanwhile grinning like a maniac.

“You were so wrong, Sammy.”

Sam looked up but couldn’t get up in time. The other Dean already had his foot on Sam’s neck.

“Don’t do this” Sam whispered to him, pleading, but the other Dean only shook his head.

“I already did it.”

Then suddenly Dean was on the other side of the window, just in time to feel and hear Sam’s neck breaking under his foot.

He felt Sam’s throat breaking into pieces. The man’s eyes widened and he opened his mouth in a final attempt to get some air into his lungs but life quickly faded from his gaze that was still fixed on Dean.

Dean wanted to scream, crying for his dead brother and plead to make this nightmare stop. But instead his lips curled up and a sick laughter broke out of him. He turned to the window and saw himself. The real himself who hit the glass, who screamed and then stared with wide eyes when he realized he was seeing himself from the outside.

The demon – because he would never consider that monster himself – looked at the opening door and came face to an other version of himself. That Dean was very different and not in a bad way. His eyes were so… innocent. Big and still shining with hopes and dreams no matter how many horrible things had happened to him. His face was smoother, there were less wrinkles between his brows.

Young Dean stopped a few steps away from him. After a painful glance at Sam’s lifeless body he looked the demon in the eyes and shook his head.

“Oh, man, something is broken in you.”

“Really?” the demon asked. “Have you looked into the mirror recently?” Dean felt his arm lifting up then the demon threw the First Blade right into young Dean’s heart. “I think something is broken in you.”

The younger man’s eyes widened with shock and made an attempt to say something but instead he choked on his own blood and fell on the floor.

This was not happening. This was not happening. Dean repeated it to himself and tried to wake up
because it **had to be a dream.** But the vision just went on with the demon kicking both bodies with so much enjoyment Dean wanted to throw up.

The door then opened again behind the demon.

“So, our fearless leader?”

No.

No. No. No. No.

The demon turned around. Cas, broken, drunk and drugged Cas, stood a few steps away, eyes shining with a maniac light. He was an angel, Dean could tell. An angel who feasted on his siblings’ Grace.

Dean felt a world breaking inside of him. He killed Sam. He killed himself. And now he let Cas become this.

No, he reminded himself. It was the demon. The demon killed Sam. The demon killed Dean. The demon let this happen to Cas. He would never let it come to this.

But the demon was a part of him. The demon was still a part of him. He could sometimes feel it somewhere deep inside him when he was alone and down. He had felt it in the shadow on the wall that scared the shit out of him. He had felt it in the whispers that followed him everywhere. He had felt it in the visions that left him shaken.

The demon was still inside him.

The Mark was still affecting him.

He wanted to scream and run and hide. This was too much. He couldn’t make it through. He would break under the weight of everything. He could hear the Mark laughing at him and he wanted to tear out his eardrums so he could finally have some silence. Some peace. But it was a hopeless dream. He was Dean Winchester. He would never find true peace.

All of a sudden Cas stepped to him and with a swift motion pinned him against the wall by his wrists. Dean’s lips parted in surprise at the warm but firm touch on him.

“Wake up” Cas said.

“Wha…”

“Wake up, Dean” Cas repeated. “I’m sorry for holding you down but you’re hurting yourself. Wake up. Please.”

Dean blinked. Then blinked again. As the warmth spread through his body, everything changed around him. Instead of the solid wall, he felt a soft pillow under his head. Instead of a cabin room, he saw his own in the bunker. And instead of a high Cas standing in front of him, the real Cas was above him, knees next to his hips, hands pinning him down in the bed.

“Cas…?” he asked but he decided it was a bad idea. His throat hurt like hell. It was painful to talk. And… were his cheeks wet?

Cas sighed with relief, body quickly relaxing.

“It’s okay, Dean.” He let go of his wrists and cupped his cheeks instead. “It’s okay now. Sleep.
Rest. Nothing will disturb you.”

And before he could react he was already unconscious again. But now, fortunately, he didn’t dream anything.

He could feel the questioning eyes on him after he woke up but he tried to ignore them. He wanted to keep everything that happened for himself. Maybe between him and Cas. But it was too good to happen, right?

He didn’t know why he called Ed. Maybe because he didn’t want the guy to end up like him? Or it was only an impulse. But it gave them the lead they needed. And now he was sitting in the Impala with the most uncomfortable company ever.

Hannah hated him, he knew it. He could feel her stare at him, sending daggers with her eyes towards him. Not if the feeling wasn’t mutual. The angel chick was someone he was sure he would never trust. She had ordered Cas to kill him, for crying out loud! She had joined Metatron! The woman meant trouble.

But Cas trusted her. And Sam too for some unknown reason. And he couldn’t do anything but bear with it. He had been the demon after all. He was the one who didn’t know what had happened while he was running around, having fun with his Blade.

At least Cas was a reassuring presence next to him. Dean’s mind was still occupied by the moments after he woke up, and knowing that the angel was still there with him gave him the strength to go on and not let anything to drag him down. Not by a stupid angel chick, not by a stupid dream.

“You still sure we have to split up?” he asked. They were in Stillwater, Minnesota. Sam and Charlie were staying while Dean, Cas and Hannah continued their way up north.

Sam rolled his eyes and buried his hand in his pockets. It was a cold and they were standing in snow that reached their ankles.

“Yes, Dean. If anything comes up, I’ll call you.” Then he added. “And you’ll call me too.”

“Yeah, yeah, of course.” Dean waved and turned back to his car. “Take care.”

“You too.”

Sitting back inside the car and couldn’t shake off the feeling that something big, something horribly big would happen soon.

Chapter End Notes

Up until now everything was planned out. I had some notes to every chapter and a clear vision of what would happen. But from now on for a little while I have nothing. Even in my outline it was written as "X goes here", "Y goes there", "something happens here", "something happens there". So now I let the story write itself for a while until the good stuff happens. And by good I mean not good.
Chapter 45

Chapter Notes

As you can see I can’t post two chapters a week. So from now on for an unknown amount of time there will be only Monday updates. I’m still feeling positively about how good I’m doing. I’ve never wrote anything this long, not to mention posting it weekly.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hello Dean.”

I make my eyes pitch black before I turn around. In the past it came naturally, without an effort. Having dark eyes felt great. It meant I had a power none could stop. But now I have to concentrate. A lot. Keeping it makes me tired. I know that the moment I stop focusing on it, the blackness would fade and Cas would find out that I’m…

I almost lose it right at the moment I see him.

“Castiel” I say, trying to lock out any emotions from my voice.

Cas looks bad. Very bad. His true form is less bright than last time and the spots that used to be grey are now black. I can smell ash in the air as the Grace burns not only Cas’ true form but the body as well. And speaking of the body, he has a purple bruise all over his nose like he was punched. With a pang in my chest I realize Cas no longer has the power to heal himself. But what is he doing here? He should be in the bunker resting! Why did he summon me?

He summoned me… He unknowingly saved me from Beelzebub. He saved me again…

My eyes almost turn green as I think about this. It seems it’s too human for a demon to feel sympathy. I have to… I don’t know. Act like a demon. Demons insult people. They are mean to everyone and want bad things to happen. But I don’t want to do any of that to Cas…

“You look horrible” I say finally. “You ran into a clean window or something?”

Cas doesn’t react in any way, he keeps his face emotionless. Which I don’t know if is good or bad. Maybe leans towards good because I don’t see the pain in his eyes anymore that flashed through them the moment I turned around.

“What is this supposed to mean?” I ask, pointing at the flames around me. I’ve never seen anything like this. The fire is blue and has a unique kind of power radiating from it. The demon side of me tries to move away, while my human side wants to get closer.

“A trap” Cas explains. “I used my Grace for it to be more effective than the trap in the bunker.”

I look up at him. Is he kidding? No, he’s not. I can see the part where a small portion of the Grace was ripped out, his power quickly pouring away through the hole.

“You’re stupid, angel” I say as I shake my head. “Using up what little you have? You have a death wish or what?”
“I wanted to talk to you, Dean” he says instead of answering. “Why did you kill those angels?”

I make a hollow laugh. Of course Heaven found out about the two angels I killed. And of course Cas found out too.

“That’s why you summoned me? To ask why I killed?” I pull up his right sleeve. The Mark is burning red on my forearm. It’s angry at Cas for being here, being too close to me, distracting me from what’s important. For example killing. I hold it back as much as I could. “I have the bloody Mark of Cain. The mark of a killer. Is that a good enough reason for you?”

Cas’ face turns whiter as he looks at my arm with slightly wider eyes.

“Those angels did nothing to deserve to die.” He looks up at me. “Why did you kill them?”

Why? Why did I kill them? I shake my head and make a face. They didn’t deserve to die. They were just doing their fucking job, looking for a way to fix this mess. And what did I do? I killed them both. I didn’t want to but I killed them because I lost my mind.

But of course I can’t say that. It’s too late for honesty. It’s too late to apologize and beg for help and forgiveness. I went down a one-way road and there is no turning back now.

“Honestly? They were annoying as hell. And now I can really say hell is annoying. I asked them nicely to leave but they didn’t. I told them I would hurt them if they didn’t leave and they didn’t. I warned them they wouldn’t like what I’d do to them. And they didn’t.”

I see Cas’ adam’s apple bob as he swallows. His face remains emotionless but his eyes… I can see the deep sadness reflecting in them so I quickly turn to have a look around before I do or say something stupid.

“You’re a sentimental fool, you know that? The barn where we met? Really?” I tell him. I try not to sound too sentimental. And it’s a good thing I turned away. I can feel the blackness slipping away from my eyes.

This place. This was the beginning of something new. Good thing do happen, Dean, Cas told me that night and while I still doubt that, meeting Cas was the best thing. Maybe we had arguments and there was that thing with Crowley but I already forgave him. I always forgive him because he’s my best friend, my family, one of the most important people in my life.

“Remember that I stabbed you in the heart?” I smile as I recall that memory. “And you just looked at me with that ‘I can’t believe you were that foolish to do it, I’m an angel of the lord, you ass’ look.” I chuckle. “Good old times. You came in like a wrecking ball through that door. Now I don’t think you can lift a feather.”

The last sentence saddens me and the smile melts from my face. Cas used to be so strong. I must say he sometimes scared the shit out of me with his unearthly gaze that stared straight at my soul, blue pits that lacked any emotion but hid a being greater than anything I had met before. But I changed him both for the better and the worse. For the better, because Cas is not that dick with a stick up his ass anymore. He had his own thoughts and emotions. For the worse because… he lost so much because of me. He’s dying right now because of me… Hester was right. Cas was lost the moment he pulled me out of Hell.

I lick my lips. Maybe I should… Maybe I should drop the act. Tell everything to Cas then Sam and come up with a solution. Together. Just the three of us like in the old days. We stopped the Apocalypse, right? We can stop this too.
“Dean” I hear Cas saying then a click.

The click of a gun.

I freeze when at the sound. Is Cas pointing a gun at me?

I blink back the blackness and turn around. I see Cas’ sad but determined blue eyes never leaving mine. Then my eyes travel lower at his hand, seeing a familiar weapon in it.

“The Colt?” I ask. “Seriously, Cas? You’re pointing the Colt at me?”

The Colt. The gun that can kill anything but Lucifer and some other guys. Is a Knight of Hell one of those guys? Can the Colt kill me?

Cas says something but I don’t hear it, my attention is too fixed on the gun. Why hadn’t I thought about it? Instead of the First Blade I should have looked for the Colt. Maybe it could have killed Abaddon and then Metatron and now we wouldn’t be in this mess. I dropped it in a cemetery years ago but I think we…

Wait a minute.

“Where did you find it?” I ask. “I lost it after I shot Lucifer.”

“An unlikely ally gave me” Castiel answers.

I look up at Cas. Unlikely ally? Metatron? Cas would never work with Metatron again. I don’t know how Cas managed to get out of captivity but I guess Metatron is in prison now. And he would never help Cas unless he lets him out. But Cas would never let him out. I can’t think of any unlikely allies. He can’t possible mean…

“Crowley?” Saying his name, I feel the Mark rejoicing as my anger grows. “Crowley gave it to you?”

*Please Cas, tell me I’m wrong. Please, tell me you didn’t go to Crowley again. Tell me I’m only paranoid and you didn’t side with that bastard again.*

But Cas nods and my lips part slightly.

“You went to Crowley?!” A yell breaks out of me. I’m still desperate for it to be false. “After everything he had done to you?!” *After everything he had done to all of us?*

How could he… How could he go to Crowley?! *Crowley* from all person?! Didn’t he learn his lesson? Don’t trust the demon who gives you great offers but never tells you about the small letter part on the second page of the contract?!

But who am I to judge him? I made the same thing just like him. Crowley approached me when I was at my lowest and used it for his advantage. Did he do this in Cas’ case too? How exactly did that alliance begin?

Cas’ surprised face kicks me out of my thoughts back to reality. I’m losing my act. Again. So with a heavy heart I laugh out loud as a maniac while I try not to throw up on myself.

“Are you that stupid?” I ask. “After everything you still ask for help from him?”

Cas frowns angrily.
“He came to me. At first I didn’t want to use it because I believed in you, Dean. After everything you did I still believed in you!” The frown softens on his face. “I hoped that a part of the human that I knew and admired was still there hidden somewhere! I worked day and night without rest to find a cure for you!” Castiel shakes his head and adds with a low voice “I believed in you…”

Every word is like a stab, worse than anything I had to experience. Cas didn’t give up on me. Not after he first saw me as a demon in the dungeon, not ever. This idiot believed in me and looked for a cure even though he was dying. He believed in me after everything I did to him, after everything he had to go through.

But he believed in Dean. And I’m not that Dean anymore. He doesn’t believe in me.

“You have to know by now that you shouldn’t believe in me” I tell him after a snort. “Or believe in Dean. Dean was a bad influence on you. You fell because of him. You lost your family because of him. You should be glad that a jerk like him is no more.”

Cas’ eyes round as I finish. I see something flicker in his gaze and his true form grows darker, but not because of the burning Grace. It’s anger. He got offended by my words. He took it more personally then I would ever take. And he’s still pointing the Colt at me, hands turning white as the grip tightened around it.

What exactly does Cas want with the Colt? Threaten to shoot me if I don’t do what he says? Kill me?

Cas killing me. Actually, this sounds… nice. Killed by someone I trust the most. This would be better than going out with a fight. Cas is someone I would always entrust with my life. Why not my own death? If the options are waiting silently for the ripple to catch me and tortured by a demon, I choose this third option. It’s more peaceful this way.

The one who gave me back my life will take it away. We come to a full circle.

But as for now he won’t do it. I have to push Cas to his limit and kick him beyond it. And there’s only one way I can do it.

I put a smirk on my face and step closer to the blue flames.

“What is it, angel? You don’t like the way I talk about him? That sorry excuse of a human?”

The hand that holds the Colt shakes.

“You called him Righteous up in Heaven, right?” I continue without paying him any attention. “The one who started then would end the Apocalypse. What a loser. He started it but couldn’t end it. He just let Lucifer beat him to near death and Sam was the one who really stopped it.”

“Shut up.”

But I can’t stop now I started. I’m shouting out the anger I felt towards myself in the last few years. And the anger gives the Mark the power it needs to rise again. It feeds on the rage but I don’t care anymore. It would end soon anyway.

“He was a sorry excuse of a man!” The voice is not mine anymore. It’s a beast’s that’s an inch away from freedom.
“Shut up!” Cas’ finger shakes on the trigger.

“Then shoot me, you son of a…!” I take a step closer when I say it.

And the anger is gone.

My body, soul and mind are so calm I’m surprised that this feeling even exists. It’s like a horrendous storm turned into a sunny afternoon without everything in-between. The Mark is silent. But not in the way it was silent in the past when I still could feel its presence. No. It’s so silent like it’s not even there.

What the Hell…

I look down. The foot I stepped forward with is now outside the circle of blue flames. The fire is licking the back of my leg but I feel nothing but a gentle brush. There’s no heat, no burning.

What exactly does this trap do?

I look up at Cas, maybe to see if he knew about this or to ask what was going on, but then I see him lowering the gun and complete desperation takes over his face.

No.

No, no, no. This has to end here. Has to end now. Has to end by him.

I quickly step to Cas and with a strong grip around his wrist I pull it back up and place the end of the Colt above my heart.

“Do it” I tell him.

“No…” Cas tries to escape by stepping backward but I follow him.

“You looked so determined earlier. What changed? You afraid to hurt the meat?”

The angel’s eyes tear up as he continues looking into my eyes.

“Yes…” he breathes out, his voice sounding unusually high.

My lips curl up into a small, painful smile. Cas shouldn’t look like this. Not this broken. He should be strong and fearless. It’s hard to see him but I don’t turn away. If the last thing I see is him, I’ll have a good death.

“Sorry, angel, Dean’s not home right now. Do you want to leave a message?”

Cas’ back hits the wall and I press so close to him that I can feel the heat of his body radiating towards me. The Colt is trapped between us and it pushes into my skin. Normally it would leave a mark. Cas closes his eyes and the tears roll down his face.

“Yes” he answers. “I know you’re still there… You’re still there somewhere and I know you can hear me. Please, Dean, you have to stop this. I know how strong you are. I saw your soul in Hell. No matter how tainted your soul was, it still shined brighter than anything I had ever seen in my long life. I know you’re stronger than the Mark. You can fight it. You can defeat it.”

My breath catches. What he said is crazy. I don’t have a bright soul. I’m a miserable piece of shit, I can’t be anything he claims me to be. But at the same time a strange feeling grows on me. I haven’t felt it in a very long time, but when it gets to the surface it spreads out in my body and soul and I
welcome it with open arms. It warms me up from the deepest part to the skin.

I’m touched by Cas’ words.

Cas is about to open his eyes but I quickly cover them with my free hand. I know there are too many emotions on my face and I can’t handle right now him finding out what’s really going on.

He’s shaking like a leaf between me and the wall. I let go of his wrist and reach out towards his face but I stop before I can touch. I take an inaudible deep breath. He thinks I’m going to kill him. He’s afraid of me, like Sam was afraid of me back in the dungeon. I scare away everyone who’s important to me. But now he maybe, finally, gives up on me and spends the rest of his life not worrying about me but taking care of himself. I can only hope that Sam would look after him.

“You know, angel” I say finally, getting ready to tell him one last lie that would stop him from summoning me again. “I want to kill you. Really want to kill you. You’re annoying and this whining just makes it worse. But I won’t. And you know why? With this little plan of yours your Grace is almost nothing. I can see it dying inside you and it burns you up. You have little more than a week left. Why giving you the mercy of death when you can die slowly, knowing that you couldn’t do anything to stop me.”

Cas sobs out and I feel the tears against my palm. I look away quickly. I don’t want to see the two wet lines on his cheeks or the trembling lips. But I can’t shut out the whimpers he makes and it hurts more than anything.

Something snaps in me. It’s like somebody turned a switch off and the filter that surrounded the barn cased to exist. I can feel a great power coming to this world and though I had never felt it as a human, as a demon I can tell what it is.

Lucifer.

Someone’s about to open the Cage.

I look at Cas, shaken and still sobbing. I have to leave him here. He has enough mojo to survive this Grace Devil’s trap so he will be fine. Yes, he will be fine.

I zap away quickly. I have to stop whoever wants to set Lucifer free. If Lucifer is out, he will go after Sam immediately. I can’t let that happen.

Chapter End Notes

I can't tell you how much I hated writing this chapter... I should have written Dean's part when I wrote it from Cas' POV...

Regarding last week:
- After me the show is (supposedly) making referances to games (http://yana125.tumblr.com/post/110729354428/half-life-3-confirmed-okay-unfortunately-not). Though which game I've been referancing from the begining, I won't tell.
- Hinton pissed me off (and other fanfiction writers) so much I can't tell you guys. She can go and do something inappropriate to write down to a body part that is inappropriate to write down. She buried herself in my eyes.
And this leads to the question of the week:
Should I try writing a casefic? I have two ideas, both of them in the early stages of development. Should I show this woman I can write an episode if I want to? I would appreciate your opinion.
“Is this the house?” Castiel asked when the car stopped. The house looked normal. It was dark, but now with his once again angelic power he could see that the garden was well kept and the walls and windows were clean. Nothing indicated that a pack of werewolves were living there. To be exact nothing indicated that anyone lived there. He didn’t feel anyone inside the house. And also, unlike the other houses in the area, there weren’t any Christmas lights decorating it.

“Yeah” Dean nodded and turned the key to shut the engine. “You two stay here. I’ll have a look around.”

“No” the angel said firmly. He wouldn’t let Dean go alone anywhere. He could still see how shaken his soul was after that night, and letting Dean wander around on his own was out of option.

He didn’t know what he had dreamt about. Castiel heard him screaming at an early hour in the morning and his first thought was that something attacked Dean so he ran to his room. He found Dean tossing himself around his bed, arms hitting to every possible direction, legs kicking, sweat and tears mixing on his face. His voice was hoarse from screaming but he didn’t stop.

A nightmare, Castiel thought and walked to Dean’s side. A very intense one. Dean hadn’t had a nightmare like this since Castiel raised him from Hell. The angel had been able to stop most of them, at first experimentally, then for the sake of his friend’s mental health. A nightmare could cause a lot of damage. Most of the time Dean had drank himself to oblivion and sometimes Castiel could sense hypnotics in his system that made him sleep. Those nights had been soundless.

But now Dean couldn’t use any of those two. He was still on a diet – which he followed with remarkable faith – and he still had his medicines. It only left Castiel to help him.

Castiel caught Dean’s wrists before he could hit himself, but some unknown strength awoke in his body. Not even an angel’s physical strength was enough to hold him down. When Dean almost kicked him, Castiel had no other option but to climb on the bed. He placed his knees on both sides of Dean’s hips and with his feet behind him he pushed down the man’s legs. His fingers were still locked around his wrists.

“Dean” he called him. “Dean!”

No reaction. Dean continued screaming and tossing his body.

Castiel tightened his jaw. He gathered a great amount of Grace in his palms and pushed it inside Dean’s body. What he didn’t expect was the force that took more and more from him.

Castiel gasped in surprise. He was getting weaker with every passing second and for a moment he almost fainted. But he didn’t stop. He couldn’t stop. First he had to stop the nightmare, he couldn’t care about his stolen Grace.

“Wake up” he said.

Dean turned his head towards him but didn’t open his eyes yet.

“Wake up, Dean. I’m sorry for holding you down but you’re hurting yourself. Wake up. Please.”
The next few seconds lasted for a lifetime until finally Dean’s eyelids parted and Castiel could see…

Castiel panicked because for a moment he could swear he saw demonic black eyes but when he looked again Dean’s irises were green. He was just seeing things, he told himself. He was just too scared of this thing to happen again.

Dean blinked a few times, at first disoriented after his nightmare but his eyes soon focused on him. “Cas…?” he asked, uncertain, confused, then made a painful grimace as his voice trailed off.

Castiel sighed in relief. The nightmare was over. Everything Dean needed now was a good rest. A dreamless one.

“It’s okay, Dean.” He let go of Dean’s wrists and placed his hands on the man’s cheeks. “It’s okay now. Sleep. Rest. Nothing will disturb you.”

Dean opened his mouth to say something but he already sunk back to a comfortable unconsciousness.

The angel didn’t move for a long while, making sure that Dean was indeed sleeping peacefully. The man’s breathing was slow and even, his features softer than during the nightmare. Castiel brushed away the wetness under Dean’s eyes with his thumbs, then moved to sit down next to his right. If not for still being sleepy, Dean would have kicked him off himself. He had been invading Dean’s personal space in a very inappropriate way.

Seated at the edge of the bed, Castiel looked down at his hands, shaking slightly after using the stolen Grace. He was exhausted. Dean somehow took a great amount of Grace from him and he had no idea how. The man’s body absorbed the Grace like a sponge would water, but unlike the sponge that would stay wet, the Grace in Dean was undetectable. Like a black hole had consumed it. He had to find an answer to this. If something was going on with Dean – be it either good or bad – he had to know.

Castiel had planned to stay by Dean’s side until he woke up but Kevin’s yells pulled him up to his feet and he left the room.

Dean turned to him, his lips a thin line. “I don’t need a babysitter, Cas” he said.

“You’re not a baby, Dean” Castiel reassured him. “But I won’t let you out of my sight. Understood?”

The hunter glared at him for a while. Castiel saw the tension building in his body, readying himself to shoot back a remark, but to his surprise Dean only sighed and gave him a quick nod as he turned to open the door.

“Whatsoever” he muttered.

“I’ll accompany you” Hannah was heard from the backseat. Glancing at her, Castiel saw the look the other angel was shooting at Dean who didn’t even bother to argue as he got out of the car.

Hannah knew what had happened. Of course she knew. She had certainly heard his and Dean’s conversation back in Colorado Springs at the hospital so she could easily guess what Castiel had used his stolen Grace for. And could detect how much was missing.
“I told you” he started. “You can trust Dean.”

Hannah narrowed her eyes and looked at him.

“I saw the slaughter he made” she said. “Not just here, but in your memories too. Dean Winchester is a ruthless killer. You are just so blinded by your emotions to see the truth.”

Castiel swallowed hard, pushing down the not so friendly remark he felt on the tip of his tongue. Hannah didn’t understand. Hannah didn’t know who Dean really was. How bright his soul shone even at the darkest times. She didn’t know anything.

But could he blame her? How long had she been here among humans? A few months? Every angel would be like this. Even him on some level. His case was different from hers only because he was broken. He had never thought like the other angels, always questioned everything, always had second thoughts.

“And now you’re wasting your Grace for him.” Hannah shook her head. “He’s not worth it.”

Castiel couldn’t stop himself now. A deep line appeared between his brows.

“He’s worth e…”

“You’re not coming?”

The angels turned to the opened door. Dean was leaning down, looking at them with raised brows, watching one then the other carefully.

“You can stay in the car, if you want” he said. His eyes stayed on Castiel for a long time, shooting a quick glance towards Hannah.

“No. We’re going with you.” Castiel quickly got out of the car. Hannah followed him right away, and Castiel felt the sharp glare he was getting from her on the back of his head.

The house was cold after Dean picked the lock and they could enter. A thin layer of dust covered the furniture and the empty dishes of a meal were still in the sink, smelling awful. The habitants left long ago. In a hurry.

“We split up” Dean said, turning on his flashlight. “I look around upstairs, you two here.”

Before Castiel could argue with that Dean was already halfway up the stairs, moving quick and silent. With a tired sigh Castiel made his way to the living room.

Just like from the outside, the inside looked normal too. If he didn’t know it was the home of a werewolf pack, he would have thought an average family lived here. Books and framed photos were placed on the shelves, showing happy, smiling faces. Castiel walked closer to one of them, a photo of a young man and woman in a tight embrace, grinning with joy at the camera. He took it into his hands.

The man must be Garth, he thought. He had never met him, but the brothers and Kevin had told him a lot about him. A thin man who looked nothing like a hunter and he still managed and did a surprisingly good job. Dean had complained that he was too happy and carefree in his opinion but nothing in the man’s voice had said he disliked him. He was annoying but likeable.

“Nothing” Hannah said as she entered the room. When Castiel looked at her, he saw the barely hidden annoyance on her face. She turned her eyes to Castiel and looked deep into his. “We should
be elsewhere.”
Castiel put the photo back to its place and turned fully to the other angel.

“Where?” he asked but he knew the answer before Hannah could say it.

“Out there. Looking for our lost siblings. Planning our attack against Metatron.” Hannah took a step closer, her voice urgent. “We have to do something, Castiel. You know what Metatron’s plan is. We know how we can get back to Heaven. We’re wasting our time here.”

Castiel felt a sharp pain in his chest. He watched his sister, remembering the Hannah he had known. The Hannah who had learnt to like humans, the one who had emotions. The Hannah who had wasted her time and Grace healing an angel who would burn out anyway. The Hannah who couldn’t let him die because he was her favorite brother.

He knew this Hannah cared for him too. Not as much as the other Hannah, but she did. But this Hannah was also an angel. Too much an angel for caring about the smaller things. Well, a human’s life wasn’t a small thing, but in the eyes of an angel it was. It always was, no matter that their purpose was to look after God’s creations. Only those who had spent a great amount of time on Earth could understand the significance of every breath a living creature could take. Every emotion a human could feel.

“We are not” he said. “That woman is as much our enemy as Metatron. Or Abaddon. We need to stop her too before she could get our other siblings under her control.”

Hannah folded her arms and turned her head away but glanced back at him.

“I still think we could make better progress somewhere else.” She motioned around with a hand. “This is not a place where we’ll find answers.”

Footsteps were heard from the stairs and soon Dean appeared at the door.

“Did you find anything?” he asked.

“No. You?”

Dean shook his head.

“The only thing I can tell is they were not attacked. They left in a hurry but on their own.”

A soft noise from the kitchen drew all three’s attention there. There was a soft click then the back door opened. Dean took a gun in his hands and signed to them to hide. The angels’ blades appeared in their hands and while Hannah stepped behind a bookcase, Castiel quickly walked the wall next to the door without a sound. Dean did the same on the other side.

Someone stepped inside the house. They moved in a haste, making noises in the kitchen. Then everything stilled. Castiel could hear a long sniff in the air and the comer now made more calculated steps. The angel felt the tension of their body as they came closer to the living room and stopped right at the door, outside Castiel’s view.

Then everything happened too fast. A hand grabbed his arm, an other Dean’s, and they were thrown across the room.

Castiel’s back hit the wall. Everything was spinning around him and he didn’t even notice when he fell on the floor. Before him he saw Hannah jumping out of her hiding place, launching at their
attacker, a young woman.

“Stop!”

Dean ran into his view, hitting away Hannah’s hand before she could stab the woman. He then spun around, facing the attacker, hands held up high.

“Beth, we are friends” he said rapidly. “We’re Garth’s friends.”

Castiel’s vision cleared after a few blinks. He could see now that the woman, Beth, had sharp teeth and unhuman eyes. A werewolf. And the name… Wasn’t that the name of Garth’s significant other?

Beth panted heavily, anger twisting her features, but after a long moment her teeth took a more human look along with her eyes. She moved her gaze around the three of them, then it settled on Dean.

“His friends?”

“I’m Dean” the man said. “Dean Winchester. I’m a hunter, just like Garth was.” He pointed with his thumb behind him. “They are Cas and Hannah. We came because we were worried about Garth. He hadn’t answered our calls.”

The young woman still looked unconvinced. Dean sighed and continued.

“I know this will sound crazy, but I know you. You weren’t bitten. You were born as a werewolf. Second generation. Your pack doesn’t eat human hearts. You wear silver around your neck as a reminder of that you’re different.”

Beth’s eyes rounded slightly.

“How do you…” she started but Dean cut in.

“I told you it’s crazy.” He risked lowering his hands and when Beth didn’t react, he put them down. “I’ll tell you everything later, I swear, but we have to know what happened. Where’s Garth?”

Beth picked at the hem of her sleeve, casting her eyes down, looking around, then back at Dean.

“Garth is with the rest of my family.”

Dean let out a breath in relief.

“Why did you run away?”

Beth looked at Dean like he was crazy.

“Didn’t you hear? Demons and angels are attacking monsters.”

Until that moment Hannah stood with her back to them, her Grace boiling with anger, but hearing Beth’s words, she turned back to them with a frown.

“Angels?” she asked. “Angels are attacking monsters too?”

Beth nodded.
“Angels killed an other pack of werewolves a few states away a week ago. They were my father’s friends. When he heard it and found out that other packs were killed too, he decided it was better for us to leave. Garth has a safe house near the lake.”

Dean nodded.

“Okay, then we…” Dean looked behind him and his eyes rounded. “Cas?”

Castiel blinked a few times. He tilted his head as Dean rushed to his side.

“Yes?”

“Man, you okay?” Dean crouched down. His brows knitted into a concerned frown as he took Castiel’s head between his hands and gently moved it so he could look at the back of it. “You hit your head this hard?”

Now that Dean mentioned it, he still felt dizzy. The room wasn’t spinning anymore but the edge of his vision waved like the surface of a pond. The back of his head ached with a dull pain and it eased slowly. Too slow.

“I’m fine” he said and let himself be pulled up. “Really” he added when Dean’s eyes showed disbelief.

“I’m sorry.” Beth stepped closer to them, grabbing the hand that had thrown Castiel away. “I though you were here to kill me.”

Castiel smiled and shook his head, which he immediately regretted. Without thinking, he reached for Dean’s arm to steady himself and when he realized it he couldn’t pull back quick enough. Dean saw his movement and grabbed him by the shoulder.

“You’re not fine” he said and lowered his voice. “What is it? Your mojo doesn’t work?”

Castiel swallowed so little that Dean wouldn’t notice it. From the corner of his eye he saw Hannah watching him, eyes narrowed to a thin line.

“I still need time to adjust” he lied and showed Dean a reassuring smile. “This happened the last time too, don’t worry. I can handle it.”

Dean was still not convinced. Moreover, he looked personally offended.

“You knew this would happen and you came anyway? Are you out of your mind?”

Castiel sighed and put a hand on Dean’s shoulder.

“It will pass soon, believe me.”

The man watched him for a while, staring at him so intensely without blinking like he wanted to change Castiel’s mind without words. After a short while it made the angel uncomfortable, and he wondered if he had had the same stare in the early days of his time here on Earth. He should apologize to Dean for that.

But he stood Dean’s stare and after a while the man looked away in defeat.

“You stubborn son of a bitch…” he muttered then turned to Beth, one hand still on Castiel’s shoulder. “So? Can you take us to Garth?”
When he entered Garth’s room and the younger man screamed and fainted, he knew he was the Garth from an alternate timeline. It would have been better if he could come with them. Garth was a good hunter. A strange but good hunter. He would have been a great help, because Cas…

Cas was still staring in front of himself with unfocused eyes. Hannah and Daphne talked to him but he never replied. Sam wasn’t sure if Cas knew what was going on around him.

But he couldn’t leave him behind. No. His conscience didn’t let him. And Dean would kill him. So no. Even if he had to carry him, he would take Cas with him to Father Time, and nothing would stop him.

“We have to go” Sam said with a packed duffle bag on his shoulder. He didn’t know what he would need so he had just thrown some things in it. “You ready?”

Hannah nodded and moved to help Cas up when Bobby stepped to him.

“Aren’t you forgetting about something?” he asked.

Sam turned to him with questioning eyes.

“About what?”

“Crowley.”

No, he didn’t forget about him but he really wanted to. He didn’t want the demon to come with them. He would just make things worse and Sam was sure he was up to something. Crowley always had a plan that would turn the events to his favor.

“No” he said firmly. “He’s no coming with us.”

To his surprise Bobby looked angry.

“Summon Crowley and take him with you.”

For a moment Sam didn’t recognize Bobby. Was he now friends with the King of Hell? Didn’t he remember the deal? Or when Crowley had plotted with Cas behind their backs?

Maybe his questions were written all over his face because Bobby sighed and shook his head.

“Believe it or not, he can be a good ally in times like these.”

So Sam went to the dungeon to summon the demon. Only he didn’t appear. This situation reminded him to an other unanswered summoning and he quickly gave up. He didn’t need a reminder of the day when he had been calling Crowley for hours without any luck to later find out that he had taken Dean with him.

“No Crowley, let’s go” Sam said as he rushed back to the library.

But before he could take his bag and support Cas, he stopped. He would soon leave this place behind with all of those who he would never see again. Unfortunately he got used to the thought
that they were here with him even though he had known well this time would come. The time to say goodbye.

“Bobby…” he started but Bobby already pulled him into a tight hug. Sam returned it desperately.

“It was good to see you again, son” he head Bobby saying it next to his ear. “You're doing great. And you’ll do great. Good luck, you idjit.”

Sam let out a shaky breath and nodded. Bobby took a step back and smiled at him while squeezing his shoulders.

“I’ll miss you, kid” he said.

“I’ll miss you too.”

Bobby let him go and turned away quickly, stepping to Cas.

“Don’t give up, okay?” Bobby ruffled the angel’s hair and to Sam’s surprise Cas looked up at the man and showed him a weak smile.

“I’ll try.”

Bobby shook his head.

“Don’t try. Do or…”

“Do or do not” Cas cut in. “There is no try. I know.”

Bobby grinned down at him and ruffled his hair again before he turned to Hannah.

“Take care of them, okay?”

Hannah nodded dutifully.

Many gathered around them. Friends mainly but those too who Sam had never spoken with. Hunters who he had thought hated them. But all of them said their goodbyes in a professional way. Sam suspected they acted like this only out of good manners, but he didn’t say anything.

He got a hug from Tara, a very long hug from Becky but she kept her hands on his shoulders and he was thankful for that, he shook hands with Lee and many others, and he got a kiss on his cheeks from Meg.

“For good luck” she shrugged and went to Cas.

“Sam Winchester!”

Sam turned to Missouri who looked at the man with narrowed eyes. For a moment she kept her serious face but soon a gently glint appeared in her eyes.

“You better visit me in that timeline of yours!”

Sam chuckled and hugged the woman.

“I promise.”

Missouri, pleased with the answer, stepped away from him and went to Hannah.
“Sweetheart!” She took both of Hannah’s hands in hers. “I know why you are still confused. But believe me, you’ll figure it out soon.”

Hannah looked like she would fly away immediately if she still had her wings but now she had to stand there in the middle of a crowd with Missouri grabbing her hands and leaning away as little as possible not to offend the woman. Sam couldn’t help but chuckle at her discomfort.

Which then earned a glare from Missouri.

“Don’t you dare laugh at her, boy!” she scolded him. “You are as confused as her, if not more!”

That quickly made Sam stop.

When Meg finally hushed her last parting words to Cas who squeezed her hand gently, they were finally ready to go. There was just one thing left.

“In our timeline we got the tablet and Kevin translated it before he got captured” he told everyone. “You need the bone of a righteous mortal, wash it with the blood of a fallen angel, the King of Hell and an Alpha, then stab Dick. Cut the head of the snake and every other Leviathan will return to Purgatory. I don’t know if you’ll remember it after the ripple passes the bunker but I thought…”

Eyes lit up with hope all around him. The thought that their lives could be normal again lifted their souls and Sam’s voice lost on its way up to his lips. He couldn’t imagine what these people went through and he hoped he would never find it out.

Tamara stepped out of the silent crowd and placed a hand on Sam’s shoulder.

“Thank you” she said with a low voice. “Thank you.”

Sam could only nod. His throat felt tight.

“It’s time, Sam” Hannah told him. Sam just nodded again.

With Sam on Cas’ one side and Hannah on the other, the three of them walked up the stairs. Bobby followed them up to the front door, giving them one last hug. Even Hannah who looked taken aback by it.

“Good luck.”

They watched as Bobby closed the door. Sam heard Cas gasp next to him, so he pulled him higher on his shoulder.

Sam and Hannah helped Cas sit inside the Impala. Sam was about to go to the other side when Hannah took his hand.

“I have to go up to Heaven.”

He frowned. He probably misheard it because he could swear he heard Hannah talking about going back to Heaven. But one look at the angel and he knew she really wanted to go.

“But why?” he asked, sounding too whiny for his ears. “Hannah, we don’t have time, we have to…”

“I know how I can find out the identity of the spy” she cut in.

Sam shook his head.
“Can’t it wait until we fix this?”

“No” Hannah said with a tone that suggested her decision was not up to debate. “We don’t know where Father Time will send us back. We don’t know if we can return here. And if we return we don’t know how many changes would be there. But the spy will still remain and I can’t wait. I have to do this before it’s too late.”

Hannah’s stubborn determination was admirable. Sometimes annoying but admirable. No matter how long Sam would try to convince her otherwise, she would go to Heaven no matter what.

Without really thinking about it, Sam stepped closer to Hannah and hugged her. She wasn’t short, higher than an average woman, so her nose could brush his shoulder when he pulled her closer. For a long, agonizing moment Sam thought he had done something wrong, and he shouldn’t have done this and maybe he should step away and apologize but then he felt Hannah placing her hands on his back. He couldn’t help but smile into her hair.

“We will meet there, right?” he asked. “At the entrance of the cave.”

“Yes” Hannah nodded.

Sam wanted to stay like this longer, enjoying the closeness of the other but the rumble in the background reminded him that they had other things to do first. But then… He would see.

They stepped away from each other the same moment. Hannah showed him the brightest smile he had ever seen on her face and with a quick ‘good luck’ she dashed away to the woods where the portal was. Sam watched her back with a smile then went to the driver’s side of the Impala. He had work to do.

* 

She didn’t make it.

She didn’t make it.

She didn’t make it.

Sam rubbed his forehead for the millionth time in the last ten minutes. He hoped it would stop the painful thought in his head but he should have known better. Once the thought settled in his mind, there was no way it would go away.

He felt Charlie’s concerned eyes on him and the regret that radiated from her. He didn’t blame her. She was curious, of course. And she wanted to help, because talking about problems is the first step to recovery, like his talk with Dean. But this one… This would take a long time before he could put it behind him, if he could ever put it behind him. Because it was an almost. And always the almost hurt the most.

“Closed?” Charlie asked the guard who stood in their way at the entrance. “But me and my cousin had an appointment for today.”

The guard raised a brow at that.
“This late at night?” he asked suspiciously.

“We are good friends of Maritza” Sam said. “She told us to come today right after we arrive even at night and here we are. But where is she? She didn’t call us in a while.”

The guard shook his head.

“Boss left a few days ago with her husband. Haven’t heard of them since.”

They thanked the guard for his help then sat back inside the Continental.

“Now what?” Charlie asked. “We call Dean?”

“No, not yet” Sam said and drove away from the main entrance. “First we look around inside.”

An excited grin appeared on Charlie’s face.

“Oh, I like sneaking inside buildings!”

Which, as it turned out an hour later, was a total waste of time.

There was nothing in the spa. Empty rooms, empty shelves and computers in the offices. And there were no leads that would give them some answers.

“Can we call Dean now?” Charlie was exhausted. Her eyes were closed and she leaned against the window as Sam drove away from the spa. “Maybe he knows something.”

Sam didn’t answer. He pulled out his phone from his pocket and speed dialed Dean. He didn’t have to wait for him to pick it up.

“Yeah, what’s up?”

Sam put him on speaker then handed the phone to Charlie.

“Nothing” he said. “Maritza is gone with Larry.”

“Her crazy brother?” Dean asked.

“Nothing either. It’s like the ground swallowed them or something. The guard said they left a few days ago. We went inside the spa and it was empty.”

“Maybe they are hiding somewhere” he heard Cas’ voice. “Just like Garth and his pack.”

“We met Beth” Dean explained. “She’s leading us to one of Garth’s safe houses. According to her not only demons are slaying monsters but angels too.”

“This needs more investigation.”

Sam’s hands tightened around the steering wheel.

“There’s nothing to investigate” Dean argued. “Malachi was controlled by that chick. Other angels can be too.”

“It doesn’t mean anything” Hannah shot back.

“Well, it does in my book.”
“Stop it, both of you!” Cas warned them. “The enemy is not among us that we have to fight. We have to work together and for that you both must put aside your disagreements.”

Sam heard Hannah huffing while Dean said:

“Then tell her to stop looking at me like I’m a piece of shit! It’s driving me crazy!”

“I don’t think it is possible for you to be fecal matte…”

“Jesus Christ! Stop talking!”

“You know what?” Charlie cut in quickly before the argument could continue. “Text us where you are going and we’ll see you there.” She put down the phone and a heavy sigh left her lips. “I swear I almost went Kindergarten Cop on them. That was horrible. Poor Cas.”

Sam chuckled. Dean getting frustrated because of an angel’s limited knowledge of human expressions was never not funny. Even when that angel was someone who wasn’t really that someone.

This thought sobered him. He should focus on the task ahead. Finding friendly monsters. Saving them from demons and angels.

“Woa…”

Sam quickly turned to Charlie. The woman had a hand on her forehead, rubbing it, while she had a confused look on her face.

“What is it?” Sam asked, concerned.

“I don’t know, it just…” Charlie looked up. “Can you turn to the left there?”

Sam nodded and did as Charlie asked.

Then he felt it too. His whole body was burning with the familiar pain of the trials, blurring his vision. He had to stop the car and he didn’t care he was in the middle of the road.

“You meant this pain?” he asked, putting his arms around himself, closing his body in a tight hug. The area around his nose and eyes prickled and he feared his nose would bleed soon.

“No, it’s like a… like a pressure. Not painful. Just like…”

“At the vampire nest” Sam finished her sentence and looked at Charlie. “They’re here.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m not in charge of the fic right now. The characters can live a little before everything goes to hell.
Chapter 47

Chapter Notes

Oh, hey there everyone! Long time no see. I have no excuses, I was lazy to write. But now it's CampNaNo time and I'm back into writing because, guess what? New subplot. So expect it to turn really mad really soon.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Charlie worried for Sam. She had no idea how much pain he had to go through as they got closer to the house. (On foot, because they didn’t want to draw attention to themselves. Every creature in existence knew that a black Impala meant a Winchester or two. It was a miracle they could still do their job.) She felt bad for only feeling that pressure on her forehead which she normally wouldn’t even notice, while Sam gritted his teeth, barely keeping his breathing even.

“You sure you want to come?” she asked. “I can handle it.”

Sam shook his head.

“I can’t let you go on your own. Dorothy will kill me if something happens to you.”

With a sigh Charlie had to agree. But Dorothy would understand it. Sam could barely stand on his feet. Cruel to say, but in a state like that he would only hold her back. She wouldn’t be able to defend him and save any potential victims at the same time.

Dorothy had left her behind in the Emerald City once. She had injured a leg not long after they arrived. Dorothy had told her to rest so she could join the fight on another day and Charlie had agreed. She wouldn’t have been any help with a wound. But Sam? Sam was stubborn as hell. No matter how injured he was, he would go on, disregarding his pain. And what else was she expecting from a Winchester?

Nobody was sleeping in the neighborhood. In every house the lights were on and Charlie could clearly hear the painful moans and the cries of children. The sound broke her heart. Why did the demons – and now angels – use this kind of warding against humans? Shouldn’t they cast a sleeping spell on everyone for example? Not that she wanted to sleep or anything, but wouldn’t that be more logical? Then they could be as loud as they wanted.

Maybe it wasn’t even a warding. There had to be something else in it. It was strange how the humans lived through the greatest pain of their lives.

What would be her greatest pain? When Dick had broken her arm? When the Wicked Witch killed her?

When she had lost her parents?

The thought made her shudder which Sam noticed right away.

“You okay?”

Charlie nodded quickly.
“Yes. Yes, I’m okay. Just a thought, that’s all.”

She shook herself mentally, chasing away any thoughts regarding her greatest pain. Sam shouldn’t worry for her. She had to be strong and unshakeable so she wouldn’t draw his attention away from what was important. Like saving people.

This brought up a new question:

Why wasn’t she and Dorothy affected?

She was blessed by the Good Witch back in Oz, yes. But magic from Oz only protected against magic from Oz. That was why the Wicked Witch had used Sam and Dean to kill Dorothy. Maybe… Maybe there was something from Oz in this ‘warding’? She had to find out.

They arrived to an ordinary house with standard Christmas decoration. The front door was open and she saw human figures moving behind the curtains. Hiding behind a nearby car, they watched the house.

“What do you think?” Charlie asked. “Should we go in or wait outside?”

Sam shut his eyes tight and took a few breaths. That was enough for Charlie to know what the answer was.

“Right. You stay here and I’ll take a look.”

“No!” Sam grabbed her arm when she was about to stand up. “It’s too dangerous to go alone.”

She extended her hand, expecting Sam to give her something she could take with herself, but when the only thing she got was a confused frown she shook her head and waved it off. It seemed Sam hadn’t played Zelda as a kid. He missed out a lot.

“One way or an other we have to stop them” she pointed out. “Preferably while they’re still inside and didn’t kill whoever it is yet.”

Sam opened his mouth but he didn’t get the chance to say anything. Two women and a man stepped out the house. Charlie and Sam crouched down behind the car and carefully peeked across the windows.

“I don’t like this” one of the women complained. “Why are we following her orders? We have better to do than killing monsters.”

“I would rather look for Castiel too” the other woman agreed. “But we can’t say no to Bartholomew’s orders. You remember what happened last time.”

Castiel? Bartholomew? Charlie turned to Sam and asked without a sound:

“Angels?”

Sam nodded then both of them turned back to the house.

“You ready, Josiah?” the first angel asked.

Charlie looked for the third angel then she noticed that he was kneeling next to the flowerbed under the window. Standing up he showed the other angels something Charlie couldn’t see from that far.
“Yes. Let’s go. We have to find the other one.”

Josiah put away whatever it was inside his pocket and the two angels moved away from the house. Luckily for Charlie and Sam, once they reached the sidewalk, they walked to the opposite direction where they got inside the car. Sam grabbed Charlie’s arm and pulled her to the back of the car. With their breaths held back, they waited. Charlie heard the engine coming to life and the car drove away, once again luckily for them, to the farthest end of the street. They stayed there until they couldn’t hear the car anymore, then Charlie let out a long breath.

“Demons are one thing, but angels?” She brushed the sweat off her brows. “They can burn us to crisps.”

“It stopped” Sam said all of a sudden. Charlie looked at him with confusion so he added: “The pain.”

Charlie frowned as they stood up. Once they were next to the flowerbed, she looked down at the little hole in the ground.

“You think whatever that Josiah dug out has something to do with it?” she asked.

“Maybe. I don’t know.” Sam turned to the front door. “Let’s take a look inside.”

The inside was messy. Broken furniture everywhere, glass on the floor and, the cherry on top of this all, a guy in the middle of the living room with two black holes where his eyes were supposed to be. But what made the corpse more grotesque was the tube-like tongue that hung out of his mouth.

“Did he walk out of Alien, or was this the pishtaco we were looking for?”

“One of them” Sam answered, looking down at the body with flexed jaws. “He’s Maritza’s brother. And now the angels are looking for her. I’ll park closer with the car” he said then and turned to Charlie. “We can’t leave the body here for the authorities to find it.”

Charlie wanted to protest. The authorities had already found many monster corpses, this one wouldn’t change anything. But before she could say anything, Sam already left the house.

“Great…” she sighed and looked back at the body.

She didn’t know what she had expected when she heard about these fat sucking creatures. Nice? Yeah. It was everything but nice.

Charlie felt her phone buzzing in her pocket. After a quick look at the screen she picked it up.

“Yeah, Dory, what…”

“Charlie!” the other woman cut in before she could finish. “I think we found something!”

* * *

Why had he wanted to go to Heaven? The answer was simple. He had wanted to talk with Metatron one last time.
He wanted to ask why his Grace had been used for the spell. Why it had been him who he had chosen for as the villain in his story. How he could reopen Heaven. How he could cure Dean.

Metatron knew the answers. He didn’t know how he knew it, he just felt it was the truth. The scribe was in some ways similar to Crowley. He possessed a great amount of information and he never let it slip from his hands, he kept it for himself. He wouldn’t give it away to anyone willingly. But Castiel knew a way that didn’t require Metatron’s permission.

It was too late for him, he knew that. His Grace was burning away rapidly, why not doing something helpful while it lasted? Why not try and give some useful information to Sam so he could change the future for the better? That would be his mark he left behind.

But he was weaker than he thought. Just a few minutes in Heaven drained him completely and the next moment he opened his eyes he was back in the bunker again.

And while he was out, as humans would say, he saw fever dreams, as humans called it. He saw images of people he couldn’t save. Important people who were dying and he couldn’t reach in time. He saw him looking at him, saying a last goodbye as he turned around and burnt away in the flames of Hell.

Castiel was giving up. Every part of his body that Hannah healed was bleeding again and ached with more pain than before. He wouldn’t make it. He couldn’t leave his mark. He was useless. He couldn’t even stand on his own as Sam and Hannah took him to the front door of the bunker.

Bobby told him to not give up but that was something he couldn’t promise. He was like a dry leaf in the autumn wind.

“Why are you giving up?” Meg had asked with a low voice when she leaned closer. He couldn’t hide it from her. As a demon she could see his true form falling into pieces, so there had been no reason to try denying it.

“I cannot be saved” he had answered.

“With this attitude, yeah.” Meg had shaken her head. “I’d kick your butt if you weren’t so pathetic.”

Castiel had smiled a little but it had taken too much energy to keep it on his face.

Meg had leaned even closer and put a hand on his.

“I know my words are not as influential as others’. If I asked you to don’t give up, you wouldn’t do it for me. I’m not as important.” When he had wanted to protest, Meg had silenced him with a look. “So I’m asking you to do it for that idiot.”

Castiel had looked away.

“He’s not himself anymore.”

“You sure?”

He had looked back at the demon, eyes wide. Meg had smiled at him.

“Don’t give up, okay?” she had said. “There’s so much more you have to experience.”

Castiel had squeezed her hand and when he stood outside with Sam and Hannah at his sides he looked back inside the bunker, searching for Meg’s eyes. He wanted to believe her. He wanted to
believe that Dean was not lost yet, that there was still hope to save him.

But instead of the demon, his eyes fell upon a girl. Long blonde hair, piercing blue eyes. She stood next to another girl around her age, looking up at him like she had just seen a ghost and for her he really was one. Castiel gasped when he recognized her.

Claire.

Claire Novak was in the bunker.

He had to go back. Castiel had to go back and apologize because he had forgotten about her and her mother. He hadn’t taken care of them. He had only stolen Jimmy’s body and left his family behind. And now look at her! The world was falling down around her and she had to live under the same roof with his alter ego who didn’t remember her. He would apologize in Emmanuel’s stead too.

But he couldn’t open his mouth to say anything. When he gathered enough energy, the door was already closed and in the next moment he was sitting in the Impala, Sam driving it towards Arkansas and Father Time.

There were so many things he had done or hadn’t done yet and he regretted it with all his heart. Forgetting about Claire and Daphne. Siding with Crowley while lying to the Winchesters instead of asking for help. Taking Theo’s Grace. Leaving the Winchesters when they needed him the most. Not breaking the tablet in time.

Castiel took a deep breath.

“Sam?” he said with a weak voice.

From the corner of his eye he saw Sam jumping a little. They were sitting in the car for two hours now without saying anything, only Castiel’s coughs to break the silence, and it seemed Sam didn’t expect him to speak.

“Yeah? What is it, Cas?”

“Sam, if I don’t survive this…” he started but Sam quickly cut in.

“Don’t say that!” Sam’s fingers tightened around the steering wheel. “You’ll survive!”

“Let me finish!” The angel coughed a little then continued. “If I don’t survive this, please, don’t let my other self go to Crowley. Don’t let me abandon you two. Don’t let me take Theo’s Grace. Don’t let me forget about Claire and Daphne and who I really am.” Castiel bit his bottom lip then licked it. “Don’t let me go down that path again.”

Sam was silent for a long while. He tightened his jaw, eyes fixed on the road then he finally looked at him, eyes heavy with sadness.

“I promise” he said and added with a hard voice when he turned back to the road. “But you’ll survive this, Cas. You will live. You can do it. Even if I have to carry you on my back.”

Castiel had nothing to say to that. Sam was a great friend, too bad he only realized it a few years after they had met. Heaven had told him Sam Winchester was an abomination. Lucifer’s vessel who drank demon blood. But in reality Sam was one of the kindest and most loyal friends he ever had. He deserved so much better than he got from life.

The angel smiled weakly at his friend then leaned his head against the window. It wouldn’t cool
him down, the burning Grace was like an inferno inside his body, but the familiarity soothed him. If it really was the last few hours or minutes of his life, it was the best place to be he could wish for. The Winchesters regarded the Impala their home. Dean had said Castiel was family. It was natural to call the car his home too.

If only all of his family members were here.

* *

An hour later they turned down the main road and their way led deeper inside the woods. It was past midnight when they arrived. Dean drove carefully, keeping an eye on both the road and Bess’ car. They stopped a few minutes later at a rather big and great looking cabin with two floors. How Garth could get one of these, he had no idea. Well, he shouldn’t be surprised, he guessed. The guy owned a boat too.

“Everyone’s inside” Bess said after she sniffed. “Come.”

Dean followed Bess without hesitation. He knew her. She was good. But the angels behind him were wary. Dean could tell without looking back that they were exchanging glances and watched Bess and the house with narrowed eyes. Dean could just barely stop himself from rolling his eyes.

Bess didn’t have to knock, the door already opened and Garth stepped outside – careful not to break the salt line, – pulling the young woman into a tight embrace.

“I was so worried about you, babe” the man said and stepped back a little to look into Bess’ eyes. “There were new attacks in the state.”

Bess let out a long breath and touched her forehead to Garth’s.

“Sorry for making you worried.” Then, after standing like this for a few more seconds, she stepped away so Garth could look at them. “I brought you some friends.”

Seeing the shock on Garth’s face made Dean grin.

“Hey, Garth. Long time no see.”

Garth gaped for a while until he could finally say ‘balls’, then he leaped forward and hugged Dean. Dean patted the guy’s back.

“What are you doing here?” Garth asked, eyes still wide. “How did you find me?”

“I’ll tell you everything inside” Dean said then turned around, looking at the angels. “Garth, they are Cas and Hannah.”

“Oh!” Garth stepped forward, grabbing Cas’ hand before the angel could raise it and shook it. “I heard a lot about you from Kevin.” Then he turned back to Dean, lowering his voice. “He talked about the tension between you two.” And he winked. He winked!

Dean didn’t make any comments, he was already so done with it. But he decided to kick a certain Prophet of the Lord’s ass as soon as he got back home.

Garth then stepped away from the confused Cas and shook Hannah’s hand too.
“I don’t know you but nice to meet you! Dean’s friends are my friends.”

Being friends with Hannah was far from the truth but Dean didn’t say anything. He barely fought back a laugh at the look on Hannah’s face so he quickly turned back to the house. Bess invited him inside with a smile on her face. She acted friendlier now that Garth confirmed that he knew Dean. Dean smiled back at her and stepped over the line of salt.

All the residents of the cabin were in the living room area of the building. There was Reverend Jim Myers, his wife Joy – Dean narrowed his eyes as he saw her – and, to his surprise, Maritza and her husband.

“Dad” Bess said, stepping next to him. “He’s Dean, Garth’s friend.”

“My brother is looking for you two” Dean pointed at Maritza, ignoring a werewolf family for a moment. “How did you get here?”

Maritza shared a confused look with Larry then turned back to Dean.

“Looking for us?” she asked.

“Monsters are killed all around the globe” Cas answered as he entered with Garth. “We decided to find those we know and worth saving.”

After a few steps, Cas stopped and turned back to look at Hannah. The angel stood outside the door, frowning at Cas. Dean noticed the sudden tension in Cas’ shoulders.

“I’ll wait outside” Hannah announced suddenly. “I’ll report if anything happens.”

With that she turned to walk away. Dean sent a questioning look towards Cas when he faced him again, but he just shook his head.

Dean wanted to ask so many questions. Cas started acting strange again. He had a feeling that the ‘still getting used to the Grace’ thing was a lie. Yes, he had to admit he didn’t know how his previous re-mojoing had gone, but an angel getting hit by a werewolf so hard it almost knocked him out? He was a human and he had only gotten an aching shoulder. Or… Was he really a human? Images of his nightmare flashed before his eyes and he had to take a deep breath to calm himself. He would thing about it later.

Reverend Jim standing up pulled him out of his thoughts. The man searched Dean’s face with narrowed eyes.

“What do you mean by those you knew?”

“It’s better to sit down for that, sir” Dean said and after everyone was seated, and after he pushed away his previous thoughts, he began the story.

He was expecting the disbelief. Eyes widened with shock or narrowed upon hearing the crazy story of their time travel.

“You expect us to believe this?” Joy spat out the words. “You’re a hunter and those two are angels. All you do is kill our kind. Why should we trust you?”


“That doesn’t change anything!” she started. “They’re all the same! Every one of them wants our
“Death!”

“Joy…” Reverend Jim tried to cut in, but Dean was faster. He had enough with the woman.

“And what do you think? What would be better? Ragnarök?”

Joy Myers paled as the word left his lips. She stared at him with wide eyes, then after a quick glance at her pack in the room she looked down. The reverend exhaled a long breath, looking away from his wife. Dean just now noticed the distance between them and the cold atmosphere between the two.

“You know about it” he said. He didn’t have to tell him exactly what he meant, the reverend simply nodded. Both Garth and Bess looked at the three of them with confusion.

“Back to your first question” the man began. “We met Maritza and Larry on our way here.”

“Where’s your brother?” Dean asked, looking at the pishtaco and her husband.

Maritza’s hand tightened around Larry’s. Larry’s lips curled to a sad smile and he brushed the woman’s hand with his thumb. The simple gesture calmed the woman a little.

“He didn’t want to come” she answered. “I heard about the angels in the area, told him to leave with us, but he refused. He said he didn’t want to run like a coward.” Maritza took a shaky breath and shook her head. “I should have stayed. Alonso is hotheaded and reckless. I should have stayed with him and keep him safe.”

It hit something painful inside Dean. Something related to his own big brother instincts and the many occasions he had failed to protect Sam. He could relate to what Maritza felt.

His phone buzzed inside his pocket. He quickly pulled it out and as he stepped out of the conversation, Cas joined in.

“All of one’s own life is a basic instinct” the angel told her with a calm voice. “It doesn’t make you an unworthy sister.”

Dean got a text message from Sam. He opened it.

“It still feels awful” Maritza said. “What if something happens to him? I would never forgive myself.”

*Found Maritza’s brother. Angels killed him. Didn’t find her.*

Dean held back his breath for a moment before he wrote a reply.

*She’s here with Garth’s pack. She’s having a big sis breakdown right now for leaving her brother.*

While he waited for Sam’s answer he watched Maritza and her husband. Larry put an arm around her and pulled her closer to his chest. The woman took a shaky breath then leaned her head on his shoulder.

She was still hoping to see her brother again. She didn’t know he was already dead. He could tell her that he ran away and nobody had seen him. She would live with the thought that Alonso was still alive somewhere. Maybe she would look for him. Search for a brother who was already in Purgatory.

His phone buzzed again as Sam’s next message arrived.
A sad smile was on his face when he sent:

Exactly.

Dean put away his phone and put his hands on his legs, leaning closer a little.

“Maritza.”

The woman looked up and, before Dean could say anything, she buried her face into Larry’s shirt and started crying. Dean leaned back against the backrest. Maybe his eyes betrayed him. Maybe Maritza could sense his thoughts somehow.

“I’m sorry” he said and looked away.

He knew the pain Maritza felt. He experienced it too many times in his life. Holding his brother in his arms, hearing as his last breath leaving his body. Watching as he jumped. Seeing him giving up.

Hearing his neck breaking under his foot.

Dean’s nails dug into his thighs and Larry led Maritza out of the room. He could hear her sobs even after they walked up the stairs and he tried not to throw up at the thought of his nightmare.

Chapter End Notes

I'm one and a half chapters ahead so new chapter on next Monday.
The cemetery didn’t change at all. Same dry grass, same dead trees, same old tombstones. Even the foul air is exactly like those years ago when I drove here to stop those two dicks from starting their fight. As a human I only felt how heavy the atmosphere was, now however, as a demon, I can see the air boiling. I see the sparks of tension, everything living and dead hiding in fear of what will happen.

Who the hell wants to open the Cage? And why?

“Wise choice.”

I spin around as I hear the familiar voice. It came from the other side of the crypt where I’m standing. I make my way around it, careful, not to be detected.

“But what you’re about to do is stupid, even for a Winchester. I expected better from you.”

I petrify as soon as I see the owner of the voice, Death, and the one who he’s talking to.

Sam.

What the hell is Sam doing here from all places with Death?

“I have no other choice” Sam says as he looks away. “We know nothing about the Mark. There’s no other way to save my brother.”

My heart skips a beat. Sam didn’t give up on me yet. He’s still looking for a way to cure me. He, just like Cas, still believes that I can still be saved.

While Sam is looking somewhere else, Death’s eyes meet mine. A cold shiver runs down my spine under his glare. Death observes my face then my right forearm and one of his brows arches slightly.

“Or maybe you didn’t look hard enough” he says and looks back at Sam before he notices he was looking somewhere else. “Even if I knew a way to erase the Mark, I wouldn’t tell you. I know a lot but it is not my role to give you a cure.”

Because this is a little planet in a little solar system, I remember him saying it. Which means there are things bigger out there and our problems are nothing compared to those. Still, it’s strange how many times Death shows up to help us. He could have ignored me when I asked him to save Sam’s soul from the Cage. He could have left it there after I failed my short reaper career. Only he didn’t. And now he came here too.

“Abaddon and Metatron both caused damage in time” Death continues. A grimace appears on his face as he says those names. “The angels shouldn’t have fallen, Gavin MacLeod shouldn’t have
been brought here. And now that Dean killed him, time is beyond repair. The natural order is broken, the world is in chaos.”

I almost snort out loud. One more thing on the list of things Dean Winchester ruined, right under the life of his brother, an Angel of the Lord, and many innocent people. I mentally pat my back and kick myself.

“Does… Does Father Time exist?” Sam asks then adds: “I’m not asking for his whereabouts. I just… I can’t trust Crowley. He manipulated us so many times in the past. It’s because of him that Dean…” Sam pauses to take a breath. “Please, tell me. Does he even exist?”

Father Time? Who the hell is Father Time? I recall every book I had ever read but I have nothing. The only ‘Father Time’ I know are songs, like the one from the Bill & Ted soundtrack. Is it a real guy then? And Sam is looking for him? And now Sam is working with Crowley too? But at least he’s smart enough to doubt him.

After a long silence Death finally gives his answer:

“Yes. He exists.”

Sam sighs and I see his shoulders relaxing. But then Death puts his cane under his arm and pulls off his ring, offering it to Sam.

“Here.”

My eyes widen. What? What is going on here? Why is Death giving his ring to Sam?

“But…” Sam starts. “But you said it’s stupid…”

“It’s a test” Death interrupts him. “Take the ring and open the Cage. Let Lucifer out and let the world burn. Save your brother if you can. Or don’t open the Cage.”

My blood runs cold in my veins. Open the Cage? Let out Lucifer? Save me? Don’t tell me… Sam wants to ask Lucifer to remove the Mark?! No, that’s insane. Sam would never do this. How could he! He didn’t jump into the Cage to now undo it! He can’t do it! This is insane!

But here he is, stepping closer to Death who drops his ring in his open palm.

“The choice is yours” he says and disappears.

Son of a bitch…

Sam stands there for a long time, looking at Death’s ring in his hand. He won’t do it. He can’t possibly consider doing it. He can’t be that stupid! Lucifer would never help us! He can’t open the Cage!

But Sam takes the three other rings from his pocket, forming the key of the Cage. The wind becomes stronger and the tension in the air grows. Sam’s hair is flying as he closes his eyes and opens his mouth to begin the incantation.

Whatever you do, you will always end up here. Whatever choices you make, whatever details you alter, we will always end up… here.

Goddammit!

I quickly pick up a rock and throw it. The rock rapidly flies through the air, knocking out Sam as it
hits his head. His gigantic form falls on the ground, dropping the key in the process.

I’m panting heavily as I stand still in the position after I threw the rock, eyes fixed on Sam’s unconscious form. I begin running towards him as soon as the wind calms down and when I arrive to his side I crouch down to inspect the wound. Just a bump. Good. He won’t be awake for a few minutes.

I look around on the ground and once I see the key I pick it up. I quickly detach the rings and keep them in separate hands. Better to keep them away from the other. The Devil’s not sleeping.

“Congratulations, Dean.”

I spin around, hands raised ready to defend myself. But I quickly put them down when I see who I’m facing.

“You passed the test” Death said, his voice – as usual – lacking any kind of emotion. “I knew I can trust you.”

Test? I passed the test?

“What was this all about?” I ask, motioning towards Sam’s unconscious body. “Why did you let him try open the Cage?”

Death smirks at that which makes his creepy face creepier. The emotionless face suits him better.

“I let him on purpose. I had to see your reaction.”

“Why?” I don’t understand anything. Death helped us capture Lucifer when he gave me his ring. And now he gave it to Sam for the opposite.

“I had to see if there is still hope for you” Death explains. He takes a pack of bagel chips out of his pocket and turns the opened top towards me. When I shake my head, he continues. “The Mark of Cain is from Lucifer. He is its master. It follows his orders. I have to tell you, there was a high risk of you failing it. Normally, you would have let Sam open the Cage, but I think something happened to you.” Death looks down at my forearm. “Something related to an angel.”

I look down at my forearm too. I don’t feel or hear the Mark but when I pull up my sleeve it’s still glowing like fire.

“Cas used his Grace for a trap. But I could step out of it. You know what happened?”

Death observes the Mark with narrowed, thoughtful eyes while he eats a chip. I feel uneasy under his calculating glare and I hold back my breath until he finally looks into my eyes. Not that it’s any better, mind you.

“It seems to be trapped” he says finally.

“Trapped?” I ask back.

“It’s kind of a cage. A part of the angel’s Grace is inside you, surrounding the Mark. The Mark of Cain is a binding spell. If you distance it from the host, it has no power over it.”

I look down at the Mark again.

“So you’re telling me, if not for Cas’ Grace, I would have let Sam free Lucifer?”
I swallow down the fear. I don’t want to think about the mess that almost happened.

“I don’t know” Death answers. “There are many seemingly inconsequential things that influence the world around us. Maybe you would have done the same without Castiel’s Grace, maybe not. There are many possible outcomes of one event, each leading to a different timeline. Like how you changed the timeline so the future you had seen never happened.”

The future where Lucifer had Sam, nine out of ten people was a croat, and I was a jerk who let his men – including Cas – die.

“Lucifer told me that no matter what I do, we would always end up there” I say.

“I believe you are too stubborn to allow it to happen.” Death motioned towards Sam. “Just like now. From time and time again you will face a turning point like this. There are not many with this great significance, but there is a fifty percent chance of coming out of it as a winner.”

“Or a loser” I nod, understanding his words. “So… I’m… okay now. The Mark doesn’t control me. But what about Sam? Did he truly believe he could save me like this?”

Death eats an other chip and doesn’t say anything while he chews it. Maybe he’s giving himself some time to think out a cryptic answer or something. Aaand he probably knows what I’m thinking because he frowns at me. I swallow hard and wait for him to speak again.

“Sam Winchester is a curious case, but he’s not my concern.” He looks deep into my eyes. “It’s you.”

My brows furrow.

“Me.”

“You are, how should I say, interesting. Just like your brother, too many things at once, but your situation is more related to me.”

I have no idea what he’s talking about. Interesting? Too many things at once? But instead of asking these questions out loud I simply shake my head.

“Let me guess. You won’t tell me anything because it’s not your job.”

“Or maybe” he says, “it’s not the right time and place.” He puts the pack of chips back inside his pocket. “You are a champion who still has a long journey ahead of him. The next time we meet, maybe you’ll be ready to talk.”

“Yeah, next time” I mutter. “Everything will be erased from this timeline before that can happen.”

Death raises his cane, looking at the golden head closer.

“Who said this timeline will be erased?”

I look at him with confusion.

“But you said…”

“I said time is beyond repair” he cuts in, turning his eyes to meet mine. “It doesn’t necessarily mean that it will be gone once the ripple arrives. All you have to do is to go back before the events leading to it started and prevent it from happening again.”
“But I killed…” I start but Death interrupts me again.

“Yes, killing Gavin MacLeod was an unfortunate mistake, but I didn’t expect any better from you. You tend to make stupid and unnecessary decisions in the name of a greater good. Which in this situation was very uncalled for. You made everything more complicated but maybe it’s better this way.”

I search Death’s face but he is as unreadable as ever. Still…

“I have a feeling you want to give me a job or something.”

Death puts down his cane and smirks.

“We’ll get to that later. First you need to find Father Time.”

“Who is this guy, anyway?” I ask. Death is in a chatty mood it seems. Why not live with the opportunity and ask him some questions while I can? “He’s a time deity like Chronos?”

“Yes and no. He’s infinity. He’s everywhere but nowhere.”

Meaning it’s not his job to tell, I have to find out myself. Okay. I have to find Father Time. How do I do it? Sam is looking for him and he doesn’t know anything yet.

But… Do I really want to find him? And if I do, would he help me? I was the one who made this mess after all. He’s probably angry at me for it. Maybe… I can ask for some punishment in return. I help repair time then I go to Hell maybe? I don’t want to go back there at all but where else will I be sent once I’m permanently dead? There’s no place for me in Heaven…

My thoughts are interrupted by Death, extending his hand towards me.

“The rings, please?”

Rings? Oh, yeah. The rings. They are still in my hands. First I raise my left then my right, dropping the rings into Death’s open palms. He puts his own on while he pockets the others.

“Any more questions while I’m in a chatty mood?” he asks with one raised brow.

I swallow. Damn it. He really can read my mind.

What should I ask? He won’t tell me anything that would bring me closer to anything, like how can I get rid of the Mark, where’s Cas’ Grace, where’s Cain and where’s Father Time. So I ask the next thing that bothers me for a long time now.

“Crowley wants me to kill three of the Leaders of Hell” I start. “Lucifer is in the Cage, Cain killed Belphegor, I killed Abaddon, Mammon and Asmodeus, and Beelzebub is still out there. Those three were the ones on my list. But Crowley didn’t say anything about the seventh one. And since the guy was your follower, you can tell me who Sariel…”

As soon as I say the name I know I made a mistake. The air around me stops and the sky suddenly darkens. Death’s body doesn’t change but somehow he becomes bigger, towering over me like a giant, casting a dark shadow on me. His face twists with barely restrained anger and his voice, while it’s only a whisper, still hurts my ears.

“Don’t you ever say that name again in my presence” he warns me. “I don’t ever want to hear that name. I would celebrate the day when ze dies and I can reap zir.”
I feel my soul pulling itself smaller and I can’t help but tremble. Good job, Dean. You made Death angry. This Sariel guy must be one nasty bastard if Death hates him – *zir?* what was that? – that much.

Death soon lets out a long breath and everything around us turns back to normal.

“The only thing you have to know about *zir* that *ze* betrayed me. Satisfied?”

I nod quickly. I don’t want him to get angry again.

Death nods too then turns to leave. But before he disappears he looks back at me.

“I think you should hurry back to the angel” he says. “His time is ending soon.”

My heart stops then starts beating again with double the force. No. It can’t be. Cas still had enough mojo left to stay alive. He’s okay. He *is* okay.

Death is still watching me.

“Don’t believe me? Then go and find out yourself.”

He doesn’t have to tell me twice.

Chapter End Notes

The plot! It’s the plot! Long time no see plot. How are you? About seven more chapters and we’ll get to the end of Act Three. The 'Act finale' and the following few chapters are waiting for their moment for months now and the only thing I can tell is that I’m a horrible person.
“So, you’re a Winchester.”

Dean looked up. Reverend Jim walked to him and sat down next to him. It was Dean’s turn to watch the backdoor. In the cold, December air he could see his own breath, and he was glad he wore his warm coat. The marks of his tumble down the hill were still on it and he missed his hat but it could have been worse.

“Yes, sir” Dean nodded.

“And you’re a hunter.”

Dean shifted in his seat uncomfortably. What did the man want to talk about? The countless werewolves he had killed in his life? That would be a nice conversation.

“Yes” he said finally, looking away.

“Interesting” the reverend said. “The only Winchester I knew was a Man of Letters.”

Dean jerked his head up.

“Wait…” he asked with disbelief. “You knew Henry? Henry Winchester?”

The man shook his head.

“No. It was James. James Winchester. He was a great man. He helped my family when I was bitten at a young age. Thanks to him I can hold back the beast in me.”

Wow… How small the world was. Well, he should have known the Men of Letters had met people like Jim Myers and his family, but now talking to the man who had known one of his ancestors…

“But I haven’t seen him since I was a boy” the reverend continued. “You’re his… great-grandson, right? What happened to him?”

Dean sighed and looked above the trees. It was a starry night. The morning would be cold.

“I never knew my grandparents, nor my great-grandparents” he told him. “It was just me, my brother and my parents at the beginning, now it’s just me and Sammy. But I know what probably happened to James.” Dean looked back at the man. “A demon named Abaddon killed almost every Men of Letters. We’re after this demon.”
And who knew who else, he added to himself. Because maybe the other Leaders of Hell didn’t show themselves, but they were still out there, hiding in the shadows.

Reverend Jim sighed.

“This explains the hunters.”

Dean frowned.

“The hunters?” he asked.

“All my respect to them but compared to the Men of Letters, they were a bunch of cavemen. No offense” the man quickly added. “They followed no rules, and did what they wanted. But they could work together if they needed to. James told me stories about them during the treats. To draw my attention from the pain.”

Dean wanted to ask what he meant by ‘treats’. What kind of treats had he gone through to finally be able to control the wolf in him? But he didn’t want to interrupt him nor bring back bad memories. Maybe later.

“But then James stopped coming and the hunters were so… lost. The Men of Letters provided them the lore they needed for a hunt. I think the Campbells established some kind of a library.”

Dean’s eyes widened.

“My mother was Mary. Mary Campbell.”

“Mary?” The man frowned and rubbed his chin. “Mary, Mary…”

“Samuel and Deanna Campbell?”

“Oh, I knew Deanna. Though she was a Driscoll when we met. Lovely lady.” A smile appeared on his face. “Now that I look at you… You look a lot like her. You were named after her, right?”

Dean didn’t know why, but he felt a blush forming on his face (Thank God it was dark!). He had met Deanna only once, but he hadn’t had the time to get to know her better. John, in his melancholic drunk moments, had always told him how much he looked like his mother. And Mary looked like Deanna. It was natural he looked similar to his grandmother. It was a shame he didn’t have the chance to have a grandmother. Or a normal family to begin with.

“And how did you meet her?” He was curious now. How did this man know so much about both sides of his family?

The reverend smiled at him.

“Met her when I was in my twenties” he explained. “I was reckless, adventurous. I left home to join a pack on the other side of the States. I thought everyone was like me. That they never ate human hearts. But I was wrong. They caught a woman the previous day. They wanted me to eat her heart to become one of them.” The man sighed. “Instead I turned against them. I fought, defended the woman, then hunters arrived. The whole pack was killed and it was my time to die when the woman stopped them. She told them I had been the one who protected her. One of the hunters, I think it was her boyfriend, didn’t like the idea of spearing my life, but didn’t argue with her. That’s how I met Deanna.”

The man turned to Dean.
“We rarely met after that but I considered us good friends. Hunters never came after me and I think it was thanks to her. She was a great woman. And I think you inherited a lot from her.”

Dean frowned.

“Why do you think that? You only met me today.”

“You came here to help us” Reverend Jim explained. “Most of the hunters see us as a threat. They shoot first and never ask questions. But you’re here to save our life. We are monsters but you see the human in us.”

Dean dropped his eyes. He felt shame burning his chest.

“I… wasn’t always like this…” he confessed. “My father taught me to kill everything supernatural and for a long time I followed this idea. Just only recently I started thinking first then taking actions.”

Dean rubbed his arm. If John could see him now. Seeing him having a heart-to-heart with a werewolf – no, a lycanthrope – from all people. He would yell at him, tell him to shoot the monster in the heart with silver bullets and burn the body.

But John was not here. He was dead. He would never tell him what to do or not do. Dean was his own person. He could do whatever he found right.

“That means you’re growing up” the reverend said.

Dean looked up at him.

“I’m a grown-up.” Even though he sometimes acted childish and annoyed Sam to hell.

Reverend Jim shook his head.

“I’m not talking about your physical structure. I meant your mental and emotional growth. Many believe that once we reach twenty, we can’t grow further, we already became adults. On the contrary, it’s only the beginning. Until that time our parents took care of us, we followed their guidance, and after we move away from home, we’re on our own. It’s time to see and learn who we really are. For some people this growth takes a few years, for some it takes more than a decade. It depends on the person and their experiences. In the end, everyone becomes their own person.”

Dean laughed silently and shook his head.

“So. Up until recently I wasn’t an adult.”

“You were an adult. An adult for a long time now. Just not your own person yet.”

Dean froze.

“How do you…?”

The man shrugged.

“I’ve met teenagers who had to grow up too fast but their mental and emotional growth was delayed because of that. Unfortunately, there are a lot of them out there. It’s part of my job to help everyone, including them if they let me.”

Dean looked down and rubbed his palms slowly.
“What do you say? What should I do?”

The reverend patted his shoulder.

“By asking you already made the first step. Next is to act like yourself and talk to those who are close to you.”

A sad smile appeared on Dean’s face.

“You know, sir, you’re not the only one who said this to me. Someone told me to talk to others, that they won’t belittle me.”

The man smiled too.

“Maybe because it’s the truth.”

Dean took a deep breath and stood up. He would do just like that, he decided. He would talk about the fears that haunted him since the nightmare. And the best person for this kind of conversation was right on the other side of the house.

But before he left, he looked back at the man.

“Can I ask you something?”

“Of course.”

“If you know what your wife was up to, why do you let her stay? The time where I came from, she tried to kill your daughter.”

Reverend Jim let out a long sigh and looked back at the trees.

“What she did in that timeline didn’t happen here. I found out about her plans when her cousins died.” The man scratched his jaw. “I let her stay because I didn’t want her to die. Maybe I will never forgive her but I value every life. Everyone deserves a chance to live.”

If more people had that philosophy like the reverend, Dean thought, the world would be a better place.

He thanked the man for his help and walked around the building.

*

She was a living inferno, making her way through the crowd of angels. All of them were perplexed, watching as one by one every one of them turned into someone else, an alter ego from a different timeline.

But they parted when they saw her coming. Her Grace pushed them out of the way as she walked across Heaven. None of them was brave enough to approach her, just one.

“Hannah!”

“Not now, Benjamin.”
Benjamin grabbed her arm, stopping her.

“But Hannah!”

Hannah turned. She glared at the angel who quickly released her.

“But! Now!”

Benjamin watched her with wide eyes, like a scared doe. But he soon blinked it away. He clenched his jaw and watched Hannah with a squint.

“So be it.”

With that the angel turned away. Hannah didn’t think much about his behavior. She continued her way to her destination with unshakable determination. She was running out of time but she still had enough to gain an advantage. An advantage that would turn the tide in their favor. And if it meant that she would commit something that should be punished by exile, she wouldn’t back off. She would do good for her family by this. She would happily live in exile knowing that her siblings were safe in Heaven.

“Back so soon?” Metatron asked with a wide grin on his face. “Did you miss me that much?”

Hannah didn’t listen to him. Passing Metatron’s cell, she sent a powerful wave of Grace towards the guards. The angels let out a startled cry before they hit the wall at the end of the corridor and passed out. She took the key from one of them then walked back to the cell.

Metatron whistled.

“Look at that!” he laughed. “Like a fierce Amazon. Did you watch Xena recently? You forgot her trademark yell.”

Hannah opened the door and stepped inside. Metatron stood up, maybe he thought Hannah would let him out.

He thought wrong.

Before Metatron could step closer to her, Hannah grabbed his head and slammed it into the wall. Metatron made a painful noise.

“If you don’t tell me willingly” she growled, “I’ll take it with force.”

Then Hannah let her Grace invade the other angel’s mind.

It was painful. Her whole being trembled and burnt and she almost pulled back. But then she remembered Castiel. How great was his pain. Was it like this? Or greater? She couldn’t turn back because it hurt. If Castiel could go on with a constant pain, she could bear this short time.

She looked at every little information, everything she needed to know, everything that was important for the others.

Why Castiel’s Grace?

Where’s Castiel’s Grace?

How to reopen Heaven?
How to cure Dean Winchester?
Who’s the traitor?

What she found was more than she expected.

And so horrible.

She stepped back, eyes wide with shock. Words and pictures whirled in her head, many appearing before her eyes and ringing in her ears at the same time.

Metatron sled down the wall to the floor. Blood covered the grimace that was still on his face but he grinned widely, his features turning grotesque.

“How do you like it?” he asked. “All those information. It must be a headache to keep them in mind.”

“You…” Hannah started but couldn’t say anything else. Too much. It was too much. And not because of the amount of the information. It was because of the kind of the information that made her speechless.

She knew where Castiel’s Grace was and why it had been used. She knew how to reopen Heaven and how to cure Dean.

She knew who the traitor was.

“Why?” she whispered. “Why would anyone betray their family?”

Metatron chuckled.

“You ask this? You from all people?” He shook his head. “Oh, Hannah. You did the same too.”

Hannah took a step back.

“No. I would never betray my family.”

“Really?” Metatron asked. “You chose to stay with the Winchesters instead of your siblings. You left Castiel once for this. Aren’t you a hypocrite?”

Hannah’s back hit the opposite wall. No. It couldn’t be. Why would any of her siblings think that she was a traitor? She had done the best she could so both Heaven and Earth could be saved. She had done everything to help everyone and she would continue doing that.

She covered her mouth with her hand. So this is how Castiel felt when she and the other angels had
turned their backs to him. How he had felt when his siblings joined Metatron’s side even though he had only meant good for everyone. A strong wave of regret washed over her vessel.

This was what it meant to be an angel with a soul? Struggling with emotions and cursed with the knowledge that their family would never understand them? That they would turn their backs to them once they start acting less like an angel and more like a human?

“As beautiful as the sight of you falling apart looks, I would hurry if I were you” Metatron said. “If you don’t want your human in shining armor to die.”

Hannah swallowed and lowered her hand.

“I can save him in time” she said. There was no need to deny it anymore. Metatron knew who had corrupted her Grace. He knew everything. “Time passes faster here than on Earth.”

Metatron smirked.

“You think?”

A quake shook Heaven. Hannah looked at the ceiling from where dust fell down.

“What was that?” she asked.

Metatron slowly stood, leaning against the wall for support. He wiped his face, looking at his bloody hand instead of her as he answered.

“That, my lass, was the ripple.”

Hannah took a step closer to Metatron, barely holding back herself from hitting the other angel’s head against the wall again.

“No. It shouldn’t be here yet.”

Metatron smiled at her like she was a fledgling who was still too young to understand the world around her.

“Why not? Ripples are curious things, Hannah. They can throw the order off balance easily. Time is the greatest force of the world. Not even Heaven has a chance against it.”

An other tremble shook Heaven. Hannah placed a hand on the wall before she fell.

“You should hurry” Metatron repeated. “Asstiel and the Winchester need the information to set things right. If they’re still alive.”

Hannah left the cell in a hurry. She slammed the door behind her and towards the portal. She didn’t know how much time she had left. Opening a new portal near Father Time’s location would take a few minutes.

*They are alive. They are still alive.* She repeated it like a prayer in her head as she left the prison.
“Why do I have to be the one to teach him how to use the toilet?!”

Kevin was outraged. This was not in his nonexistent job description. He was a teenaged Prophet of the Lord, not a potty trainer for crying out loud!

“Stop whining and get this over with!” his mother told him. “You help him or you will wash his pants!”

So, in the end he had no other choice. With Dorothy just outside the door with a gun in her hand, he taught a former angel how to use the freaking toilet. This was definitely the most bizarre and most embarrassing experience of his life. Not to mention that Theo cursed his whole family, spit on him, and almost… Nope. Not gonna think about that. Not gonna think about that.

Kevin was done. So done with his life. Fuck the tablets, fuck the angels, fuck everything. He wanted to turn his back to everything for at least a day and do nothing but play videogames. But he couldn’t because his mother insisted that they all help Dorothy.

The storage room had many rows of shelves, all packed with boxes. One of the boxes was already on the table. With Dorothy’s name listed on the side. Kevin decided he would leave that box to her.

“What is this room?” Linda asked, looking at the labels.

“It’s a storage for unsolved cases” Dorothy explained. “The Men of Letters kept every document, categorized it according to the nature of the case. This one is for missing people.”

Kevin turned to her.

“You think we can find something here?”

Dorothy shrugged.

“I don’t know. Every storage room in this corridor has unsolved cases. I came here because it was the first one.”

The woman sat down and pulled the box closer to her, making room for the others. Linda chose the closest box to her and took a seat with it.

Kevin took his time to take one. He should have chosen one like his mother but a little voice in his head told him that he should look around first. He read the labels on every box, searching for something that would catch his eyes. He felt he was getting closer to something. An invisible force was pulling him, urging him to get there faster. Then he was halted by an undetectable wall.

Kevin looked up. The tag on the shelf informed him that he was at the ‘Lez–Lif’ section. His eyes quickly wandered through every box until finally they settled on one name.

*Liddell, Alice*

Alice Liddell? As ‘Alice in Wonderland’ Alice Liddell?

Kevin took the box from the shelf and sat down with it at the table. He opened it and quickly pulled out the folder with the name on it. It was thick. Thicker than the others. Looking inside, he
found out why. Next to the official document there was a little book. A black journal with a red ribbon around it. Kevin put down the journal on the table and read the document first.

**Name: Alice Liddell**

**Born: May 4th, 1856**

**Age: 20**

**Status: Missing**

At the age of seven Liddell found a way to an other dimension which she called Wonderland. Six months later she once again visited an other dimension which she named the Land Behind the Looking-Glass. Upon hearing about her second visit to a different dimension, Man of Letters Charles Lutwidge Dodgson approached her in 1864. Eight years old Liddell gave him a book, a description of her experiences in both realms. Dodgson continued his research regarding Liddell’s ability to travel to other dimensions. He found that while her physical body didn’t go anywhere, her soul and mind left our world to an other, which suggested she had high psychic powers, such as astral projection.

On December 5th, 1864, the Liddell household burnt down in a mysterious fire. Liddell’s parents and infant sister died, while Liddell survived with serious burns. Police reports said the fire started in the library by a still-lit oil lamp. The Men of Letters investigation led by Dodgson found traces of sulfur in Elisabeth Liddell’s nursery, confirming demon activity in the house. After a thorough research of the area’s weather report and mysterious deaths of cattle indicated a powerful demon’s presence.

After recovering from her injuries a year later, Liddell was transferred to Rutledge Asylum in London. During her years of mental recovery, Liddell showed signs of insanity, acted aggressive towards her doctor and nurses. Once she attempted suicide. She tried to cut her wrists with a spoon.

After ten years of silence, Liddell spoke again on October 14th, 1874. Meeting with Dodgson again, she told him that she tried to escape to Wonderland from the memories, but couldn’t enter it. The only way she could go was ‘down’, as she worded, but that place scared her. Liddell also told Dodgson that her ‘sister’, a woman called ‘Elle’ who she had mentioned several times in her book, visited her from time to time. According to Liddell, the woman’s presence helped her heal.

Not believing her recovery, Dr. Angus Bumby insisted that she stayed in the Asylum longer, to find out if her mental illness is really gone. Respecting the doctor’s wishes, the Men of Letters didn’t get involved in Liddell’s case for years.

Two years later during a visit to the Asylum, Dodgson found out that Liddell was not there anymore. After interrogating the staff, he discovered that nobody remembered Liddell, though her documents were still there. The only other sign that Liddell had been a resident of the Asylum was her journal she had started writing after her recovery. According to the journal, Elle never visited her again, but an other woman did. The woman claimed to be Liddell’s dead sister, Elisabeth Liddell. Liddell documented each visit until her last entry on December 5th, 1876, saying the woman would come for her the night.
Dodgson lead the investigation to find the missing woman, but it ended without any success.

Dodgson later left the Men of Letters and after some rewriting published Liddell’s book as Lewis Carroll.

Wow.

Just wow.

So not just Dorothy but Alice was a real person. And Lewis Carrol was a Man of Letters, just like L. Frank Baum. Kevin had a feeling he would never look at a fantasy book the same way ever again. Who was next? C. S. Lewis? Tolkien? Rowling?

Attached to the document there were some photos. The years didn’t make any good for them. The edges were torn, the paper yellow, but he could still clearly see the people on them.

The first one was a photo of the Liddell family. Father, mother and two girls. The older was Alice. Her dark hair was tied up with a ribbon. In the mother’s arm was the second girl, maybe a week old. Kevin turned the photo. One the backside somebody wrote: ‘The Liddell Family – June 20th, 1864’. Almost six months before the fire.

Kevin frowned. So… The same had happened to the Liddells like to the Winchesters? A demon visited a six months old baby then burnt down the house? What was that demon called? Azazel? Had he given demon blood to Alice’s sister too like to Sam? The report says Elisabeth had died in the fire, but Alice said the woman had been her sister. Woman. That doesn’t sound correct. If Elisabeth had survived, she should had been twelve. That was far from being a woman.

He looked at the next photo taken after the fire, Alice was laying in a bed in bandages. On the third one Alice’s head was shaved and wore a straitjacket. It was horrible to see her like this. But then the fourth one was friendlier. According to the date on the back, it was made a year after Alice’s recovery. She was sitting at a desk, surrounded by books, a journal opened under her hand.

The journal.

Kevin put the photos back in the folder with the document, then opened the journal on the first page.

October 20th, 1874

Bumby didn’t let Charles take me with him. He says I’m still recovering. Nonsense. I feel absolutely fine, thank you for asking. I wanted to go with Charles. He told me so many good things about the Men of Letters. I want to learn more about my skills. I want to find out who I am and why do I possess such abilities. I want to go back to Wonderland, see what happened to my friends. I haven’t seen them in a decade. Are they fine? Are they still alive? Charles said time may work differently in other dimensions. Maybe only a day passed in Wonderland. Maybe a century.

I told Charles I would escape from this place so I could go with him. It wouldn’t be that hard. I only need some rope. But he said it would be unwise. I should stay and make a full recovery before I can go with him. I couldn’t convince him that I was fine. The doctor has to say it.

But he won’t, I know he won’t. Bumby asks questions about Wonderland all the time and I answer
him honestly. Why should I lie about it? Mother always told me to tell the truth. Lies only lead to hardship and I certainly need nothing of that. I had enough. But Bumby doesn’t believe it. I heard him talking to a nurse. He said he would play along with my silly story because it was his job. What an awful man, honestly! Charles said the average man didn’t know anything about the things we do. For people like Bumby my story was just that. A story. My imagination manifesting in words. I wonder if I should start lying so the doctor would leave me alone.

Charles left an hour ago. He said he would visit me soon. I hope so. This place is driving me crazy. I can’t go outside, I can’t talk to anyone. Elle only visits once a month or two months. She said she didn’t want her siblings to find out where she was. It would put me in danger. It’s forbidden to leave her home, I suppose, wherever that might be. I don’t know where she comes from. I only feel a gentle breeze and she’s suddenly in my room. Maybe I should ask her to take me with her. I’m fine already, I can leave this place.

A breeze and she was suddenly there? It sounded like an angel. But why would an angel visit her?

Kevin turned a few pages until he found something interesting again.

December 11th, 1874

I haven’t seen Elle in three months. I hope nothing bad happened to her. I would never forgive myself if she got into trouble because of me. I haven’t seen Charles either but he’s not like Elle. He can’t appear out of nowhere. He has a lot of work to do, I’m not the only one he has to take care of.

I’m worried about Elle… The nightmares are back again. Wonderland is turning into black goo around me and it swallows my friends, my family, Charles and Elle. I’m screaming, I want to help them, but I can’t move. It’s like some other force is controlling my body. I just stand there and a sick smile spreads on my face. I wake up every time in a cold sweat and I call out for Elle but she doesn’t come. I’m scared. I don’t want to fall back to sickness again.

The nurse, someone new, I suppose, I only met her once, said I should talk about it to someone. My journal won’t give me advices. I told her I didn’t want to talk to Bumby. He knows I don’t tell him the truth. He acts colder than before. He said I didn’t deserve to be healed. The nurse told me she would listen to me. Bumby doesn’t have to know about anything.

Kevin turned a few pages again.

March 22nd, 1875

Lisa woke me up this morning. I had a dream again. I killed my baby sister. I had a knife back in Wonderland. I had to protect myself somehow, right? Wonderland is not only wonderful. You don’t know when the Queen of Hearts sends out her soldiers. Not to mention the Crow behind the looking-glass. And the knife that protected me and many others was now the tool that took my sister’s life.

Lisa thinks I feel guilty for her death. That I survived but my sister didn’t. Perhaps she’s right. I should have run for Lizzie and take her with me outside but Father said he would go for her and
Mother. I only survived because I jumped out of the window. No, not jumped. Something pushed me out of the house before the fire could burn me more. Why did it save me and not my sister? She was only an infant! She deserved to have a longer life than six months!

I want to talk to Charles. I want to talk to Elle. Where are they? Why did they leave me alone? The voices are getting louder.

Was she getting insane again? But hadn’t she told Carrol that she was fine? Kevin shook his head. If that ‘fine’ was a Winchester kind of ‘fine’, she was not fine at all.

June 2nd, 1875

Lisa said it would be better with time. I only have to wait. But it’s getting worse with each day. I’m not only seeing things when I’m sleeping. I saw a shadow today. It followed me down the corridor then screamed at me. Bumby found me under the dining table and gave me something. I was asleep for hours and only woke up minutes ago.

I’m scared. I’m so scared.

August 13th, 1875

I tried to go to Wonderland again, but I couldn’t. It was… blocked. Just like during those ten years.

But I met the Cat. He said he had found a way to get in contact with my mind. Said we were still linked together. He told me something got inside me. An unknown force is leading me away from the right path.

I don’t know what to think. The Cat always guided me. He helped me get through Wonderland, showed me the right way. He wouldn’t lie to me. But if there is an unknown force inside me, I would notice it, right?

I have a suspicion that I’m forgetting something. Something important.

The next few entries are about the same things. Alice blaming herself for her sister’s death, her nightmares getting worse, not knowing where Carrol and Elle was, Bumby being a dick, Lisa supporting her. All the entries are short, straight to the point. Where was the mysterious woman then? According to Alice’s file, she had documented every one of their meetings but there was nothing.

Kevin stopped turning the pages. The entry he saw was not like the others. Alice’s writing was beautiful through the journal, but this entry was written in a hurry. Kevin started reading it.

December 5th, 1876

Oh, God, it’s Lisa. It’s Lisa! She came to my room today. She had promised me last night that she would take me outside the Asylum. She found a way out for me. I was happy, of course. Spending
two years here was like hell. I thought she came to take me, but she sat down and told me that she is Elisabeth. My sister. I laughed at her, because that was impossible. Elisabeth died in a fire and she should be only twelve now. Then Lisa touched my forehead and I saw it. I saw that night. How a yellow-eyes demon came for Elisabeth to make her drink his blood and how my mother burnt on the ceiling and how the demon took my sister with him! She showed me how she took Elisabeth’s body once she was old enough to say ‘yes’ to her. I tried to hit away her hand but she just laughed at me. She told me how annoying her sibling had been to always be around me and not letting madness to take over my mind. I don’t know who she meant by it. Elle? Elle is Lisa’s sister? Is this what she was talking about? Her siblings finding out where she was? I don’t know! I’m so scared! Lisa just left a few minutes ago so she could finish a spell or something, she would come back for me this night! She said I’m essential for her plan! She told me that only a corrupted soul can go to Hell and with my ability I can free Lucifer!

“Kevin, you’re okay?” asked Linda. Kevin didn’t notice he had gasped.

He quickly shushed his mother and continued reading.

She told me her sibling’s closeness healed my soul so she warded the Asylum so she couldn’t enter. She said my pain, my mental pain was needed, because my pain would lead me to madness and the corruption of my soul. I trusted her! I trusted this damn bitch! She was the one the Cat was talking about! Please Charles! Please Elle! Find this journal! I don’t know where she will take me! Please find this! I don’t want Lucifer to be free! I’ll hide this journal. You two know me the best, you will know where to look for it! I don’t know what will happen to me but know that you two were my family! I love you both!

The last lines were blurred by tear drops.

“Oh God…”

Kevin covered his mouth with both of his hands. When he looked up, Linda and Dorothy were watching him, expecting an explanation. He looked back at the journal and took a deep breath.

“We’re in trouble.”

Chapter End Notes

I don't know how the casting directors do it, but Jensen and Allison Hossack (the actress who played Deanna) do look like they are related. Who made a deal with a crossroad demon to choose actors like this?

James Winchester's name came from here:

Last time I read the Wizard of Oz for the Dorothy chapter, now I read Alice's
Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass for this one (the reason why I had to rewrite some things). I also watched the gameplay of American McGee's Alice and Alice: Madness Returns, which heavily influenced the chapter as you can see. At first I didn't want to make it a big thing, just a little note that Alice was real just like Dorothy and Carroll was a Man of Letters but then BAMM. I realized I can do something with it.

Also, it seems Robbie and I were thinking the same. Angels turned humans' adventures with toilets. Yeah.
Chapter 50

Chapter Notes

50 chapters. I've never thought one day I will write something this long. Now look at this! And it's still not finished.

Because of the thing that happened in the last episode, I decided to give someone a bigger role. Not that the role wasn't big already, but I want to make it bigger. I promise I won't do the thing to that someone.

Also the extended promo of the next episode... That's gonna hurt.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel could cross the angel warding.

That should be impossible, even for him, whose Grace was burning out. Because it was burning out. He could feel the first signs. His palms were itching like millions of ants were marching under his skin. Sharp claws scratched his lungs, and he tried his best to keep from coughing. He didn’t want the others to worry about him. Especially Dean. Castiel had taken Theo’s Grace a few days ago and he was already running out of it. Dean would question it, he would want answers, then Castiel…

Then Castiel would have to tell him that Dean had somehow taken that stolen Grace.

The angel ran a hand down his face. No. Dean should never find out. Castiel wouldn’t be able to live with the thought that Dean once again blamed himself for something he hadn’t committed intentionally. He was glad about Hannah’s actions. Dean still sent him a questioning look, but it could have been worse. He should thank her later.

“Hey, Cas!”

The angel’s breath hitched.

“Hello, Dean.”

Dean came from the back of the building and sat down next to him. Castiel feared he would ask about his behavior right away. But his expression was too peaceful. He slowly let out the tension with a long breath.

“You look better” he commented. And he really did. The paleness he had since the nightmare was gone from his face and his eyes looked brighter. Even his soul seemed calmer.

“Yeah.” A small smile appeared on Dean’s face. “Guess what? Reverend Jim knew my maternal grandmother and my paternal great grandfather.”

Castiel mirrored his smile.

“And the information he provided brightened your mood.”
Dean folded his fingers between his knees.

“You know, I know nothing about my family. I had no idea my mother was a hunter until you sent me back. Then there are the Men of Letters.” He sighed. “I reached a point where I wouldn’t be surprised if something gets found out about the three of us.”

Castiel turned away with shame but he still saw the sudden solemn look on the man’s face. Here it was. Dean would now ask him about the Grace.

“Cas?” Dean’s voice was so low, he almost couldn’t hear it.

The angel closed his eyes.

“Yes, Dean?”

For a moment he didn’t say anything then Dean sighed.

“If I…” he paused. “If I ever go dark side…”

Castiel jerked his head up.

“You won’t” he said with a strong voice but he wanted to scream. He saw Dean with black eyes again and he felt bile coming up his throat. Dean won’t be a demon again. No. He wouldn’t allow it. Not even Death himself could stop him protecting the man.

“Cas, let me…” Dean started but Castiel cut in by grabbing Dean’s right arm. What if the Mark of Cain was back? What if he failed to notice it? Failed to notice the signs? Failed to protect him?

“Cas, wha…?!” Dean tried to pull away but the angel didn’t let him. He shoved the many layers of cloths up to his elbow and looked.

He froze.

Nothing.

The skin was healthy.

Untouched.

Unmarked.

A trembling breath broke out of him and he let Dean’s arm fall from his grip.

“Don’t scare me like that again…” he whispered, casting down his eyes. He felt stupid now. Dean’s soul was bright. A little uneasy but bright as always. The Mark of Cain was a dark and angry spot. There were no dark spots on Dean’s soul. But he had to see. He had to see it with his own human eyes.

He heard Dean sigh and the sound of his cloths as they were pulled down.

“Cas, I… I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to…” He sighed again. “Damn it… I didn’t want to…”

Castiel shook his head. Something stung his eyes, so he quickly rubbed them.

An awkward silence grew between them. Dean didn’t say anything and Castiel couldn’t. It took a while until he trusted his voice again.
“Go on.”

“It’s not important, I…”

“Go on.”

Dean waited for a moment before he spoke again.

“If… that happens, and I want you to join me and feed on angelic Grace like a bloody vampire, kick my ass.”

What?

Castiel looked up. Dean avoided his eyes, but he couldn’t hide the sadness and panic he felt.

“Is it…” the angel started. “Is it about your nightmare?”

Dean’s body tensed. For a moment he reached for his forearm then he rubbed his jaw instead. He opened his mouth then closed again. He was forcing himself to say something.

“You don’t have to tell me anything you don’t want to” he reassured him.

Dean shook his head.

“No. I have to talk. Not talking means grudges and arguments. I need nothing of those anymore.”

Castiel couldn’t help but feel amazed. The way Dean talked and acted since their time travel, it showed a great growth of the man. He admitted to like things he had denied in the past. He, who once was against talking, now wanted to do exactly that. The only thing Castiel could do was to encourage and support him.

“Whenever you’re ready” he said. “I’m listening.”

If only he could be able to talk about his own fears and problems.

Dean showed him a thankful smile.

“You remember Zachariah?” Dean asked.

Castiel’s mouth twitched.

“Yes, I remember.”

Dean nodded and, with his eyes fixed on the ground, he started from the beginning. He told him about the future where Lucifer took Sam’s body, where Dean was a ruthless leader and Castiel was broken and always under the influence of drugs.

Don’t ever change, Dean had said on that day and now the words got a meaning.

Dean then told him about the nightmare. How the Mark was controlling him, how he killed Sam and his own younger self and how he couldn’t stop that, how Castiel lived on stolen Grace.

“If I ever go down that path” Dean said, shaking his head, a hand grabbing his right forearm, “don’t let me pull you down too. Lock me into a cell and throw the key away, just don’t let me do those horrible things.”
A soft, sad smile appeared on Castiel’s face. He raised his hand hesitantly then placed it on Dean’s hand. When the man trembled, he squeezed it reassuringly.

“You won’t go down that path, Dean” he told him. “You’re not going to accept the Mark from Cain again, you’re not going to become a demon ever again. We’re here to change things, to make everything better, to never do the same mistakes again.”

It was something Castiel had already failed. Maybe Dean thought about the same thing because he raised a finger and brushed Castiel’s palm.

Dean closed his eyes and lowered his head.

“I know, I just…” He sighed. “I’m just scared, Cas. I can’t shake off the feeling that there’s something else. Like… I’m forgetting about something. Something vital.” He glanced at him. “What if it’s important? What if forgetting it means everything will turn bad again?”

Castiel tightened his grip on Dean’s hand a little, like he was afraid the man would be swept away by his worries.

“We’ll figure out what it is” he reassured him.

Dean opened his mouth to say something but his phone started ringing. Castiel moved away as he answered the phone.

“Yeah, Sam, wha…” Dean quickly moved his phone away from his ear. “Hey! Don’t yell and not at the same time! I don’t wanna be deaf, thank you!” He tapped the screen and lowered the phone. “So. What?”

“Dean, it’s Lucifer!” Sam’s voice was heard. “They want to free Lucifer!”

Castiel’s blood froze in his veins. He stared up at Dean with wide eyes who returned his stunned look.

“What do you mean they want to free Lucifer?” Dean asked. “How do you know?”

“Kevin found Alice Liddell’s journal” Charlie explained. “Alice in Wonderland Alice Liddell’s. She had the ability to travel to other dimensions. She was the only survivor of a house fire that, guess what, happened on the night her sister turned six months old.”

Dean’s hand trembled. Castiel looked up at Dean’s pale face, worried. The man flexed his jaw.

This was the moment when Hannah arrived next to them. She had been patrolling around the woods and probably heard the phone conversation before her arrival because she looked as disturbed as Castiel felt to be.

“She got into an asylum” Sam continued, “and a nurse called Lisa turned out to be some creature possessing the body of Alice’s sister. She said she needed Alice’s pain because it would lead to madness then to the corruption of her soul. And with that, she would be able to free Lucifer.”

“Alice went missing and only her journal was left behind” Charlie finished.

“But why did this Lisa leave it behind?” Dean asked. “It was an evidence against her. Wouldn’t it have been wiser to take it too? Erasing all the leads?”

“Was anything tied around the journal?” Castiel asked. “A ribbon, perhaps?”
“Yeah, there was a ribbon tied around the journal” Sam answered, a little surprised.

“That must be it then” Castiel nodded. “It might be enchanted, acting as a warding against evil.”

“But what kind of evil?” Dean questioned. “That Lisa chick wanted Alice to free Lucifer. Was she a demon?”

“And is that Lisa our mysterious supernatural femme fatale?” Charlie joined in. “Is she back? And if she took Alice to let the Devil out of his cage, why didn’t the Apocalypse start a century ago?”

“What I want to know” Hannah crossed her arms, “is what is she exactly? If she’s a demon, she shouldn’t be able to control angels.”

Castiel noticed from the corner of his eyes Dean shifting in his seat. The angel looked at him, frowning at the reaction. He observed the man’s eyes, trying to find something, anything in his expression, but whatever it was, it was gone the moment Castiel turned to him.

“What about fallen angels?” Dean looked up at Hannah, directing his words towards her. He was avoiding Castiel’s eyes and the angel couldn’t help but think that Dean was hiding something. “Can a fallen angel, the turned-into-a-demon kind, control both angels and demons?”

Hannah furrowed her brows as she thought about it.

“It depends how powerful they had been as an angel” she answered.

“What about the Leaders of Hell? The ones who are still free and alive? Abaddon, Mammon, Asmodeus, Beelzebub and Sariel.”

Hearing those names, a cold shiver run through Castiel’s being. Even Hannah’s manner changed. She almost looked frightened. Those fallen angels… The shame of Heaven.

“Who are they?” Sam’s voice broke the silence. “I only heard about Abaddon.”

“If it’s not Ghost Rider, I don’t know either.”

Castiel took a deep breath.

“Sariel, Beelzebub, Abaddon, Mammon, Belphegor and Asmodeus were the six most powerful angels that followed Lucifer” he explained. “They ruled Hell together until Lucifer was locked inside the Cage. Without their leader they went on separate ways, hiding mostly, blending in with humans.”

“Never heard of that… How do you know about them, Dean?”

Dean swallowed hard then licked his lower lip.

“When I was…” Dean paused for a moment. “When I was a demon, Crowley gave me this mission. I had to kill Mammon, Asmodeus and Beelzebub. I killed the first two, but Beelzebub almost got me. It was… It was a miracle that I escaped.”

Castiel saw Dean’s eyes moving towards him but he quickly looked back at Hannah.

“What if one of those three is behind this? Maybe they had an other vessel around this time.”

“No.” Hannah shook her head. “They used to be powerful but simple angels. A ripple would affect them too. They shouldn’t remember anything.”
“What about the Titanic, Cas?” Sam asked. “Balthazar unsunk it but you two remembered everything.”

“What?!” Charlie gasped. “The Titanic didn’t sink?!”

Castiel’s throat tightened. He didn’t want to remember that year. The year when he betrayed his friends, worked behind their backs with the King of Hell and made unspeakable deeds in the name of free will and a better Heaven.

“At that time I was more than a simple angel” he spoke only when the tight feeling loosened. “And Balthazar was the one who changed the past.”

“I don’t remember that timeline just like the one you three came from” Hannah added. “And neither our other siblings do.”

“But someone does.” Dean looked at them, both of them, needing an answer. “Someone was not affected by the ripple and now makes these changes.”

“There are beings who are not affected by time, like myself.”

The three of them jumped to a fight stance, ready to attack whoever approached them. Castiel’s blade was already in his hand.

Death watched them with his usual neutral face, a half eaten doughnut in one hand.

The last time Castiel had seen Death was when the Winchesters bound him so he could reap the angel. Castiel forced down the lump in his throat. It seemed this night he would be reminded of the greatest mistake of his life many times.


Death looked down at the phone.

“Celeste Middleton. I’m Death.”

“What?! Oh my God! I mean, oh my Death, I mean… I shut up now…”

After taking a bite from the doughnut, chewing then swallowing it, Death looked back at the three of them.

“There is also God” he continued, “the Fates, and every time deity.” Death’s eyes darkened. “Also archangels. No matter how tainted their Grace is.”

Archangels.

Realization hit Castiel.

“You mean it’s Sa…” Castiel started but couldn’t finish. Dean covered his mouth with his hand.

The angel frowned at the man, silently asking him what had gotten into him. At that, Dean must have noticed their current state because he quickly stepped away like he was burnt.

“Don’t say the name” Dean warned him with a small voice and looked back at Death, shoulders tensed.

Yes, Castiel decided. Dean was definitely hiding something. He made a mental note to question
him after they would get back to the bunker. Like Dean had said, not talking lead to grudges and arguments. Dean needed to talk. They all needed to talk.

“So it’s zir?” Castiel asked. “Ze wants to free Lucifer?”

From Dean, Death’s eyes turned to him, his gaze was like daggers stabbing through his mind. Death rarely got involved in human affairs. He had every reason to not answer his question but Castiel still hoped that maybe he would.

Death watched him for a long while then, when Castiel was about to apologize for the question, he nodded.

“Yes.”

Encouraged by this, Hannah stepped closer.

“I don’t understand… Ze fell with Lucifer, but ze’s been gone for centuries now.”

Castiel turned to Dean.

“Ze was never a… fan of direct confrontation” he explained. “Ze always avoided the spot light, watching everything from afar.”

Castiel had just a few memories of Sariel. Ze had been very distant from everyone, he had only met zir a few times when… when… When exactly?

“Well, this fallen archangel is very involved now” Sam commented. “Ze orders angels and demons to kill monsters and collects, what, pain? Madness?”

Pain caused madness, madness caused corruption. Corrupting a soul required a lot of effort, especially if it was a Righteous Soul. And it couldn’t be any person. This person had to be someone who had the ability to travel through dimensions. But who was that person? Who possessed the same powers Alice Liddell had?

“You should be careful” Death said, looking at Dean. “Your brother and your friend are followed by three angels.”

And with that, Death was gone, leaving a long silence behind him. Did he just… warn them about an approaching threat? Why would he?

“Sam!” Dean stared at his phone. “Where are you?”

“Just passed New Richmond, Wisconsin. A few hours away from you.”

“How do they know who we are?” Charlie asked. “And how do they know we’re here?”

“Don’t know, don’t care yet. We gotta come up with something so they won’t find Garth and the others.”

After a quick planning they said their goodbyes to Garth and made them promise they would stay inside until they called them. The younger man gave his new number to Dean and after agreeing that Dean would call them as soon as they find out something, they were on their way to the meeting place. Castiel was driving while Dean took a short rest on the backseat. He didn’t have to try convincing him for long, Dean gave in almost immediately. He needed to sleep.

“I still don’t believe it’s Sariel” Hannah said after Dean fell asleep. “Yes, ze had fallen but ze had
never been a problem as a demon. Ze wasn’t there with Lucifer when Michael cast him into the Cage unlike the others. What changed?”

Castiel shook his head. He had no idea.

*

Cas would die soon.

Sam didn’t want to think about it. He didn’t want to acknowledge it. Cas would survive, travel back with him and Hannah, and stop this thing. They would find a solution to his burning Grace. They would live.

But what he saw stood against everything he hoped for.

Cas coughed up more and more Grace, his hair was damp of sweat, his breathing shallow and rapid. At this rate, he didn’t have much time left. But he would never change what he had said. Cas would live. Sam would carry him on his back and Cas would do it. Because it was Cas. The Cas he knew would never give up that easily.

But those words… Those things Sam had had to promise… Cas had made mistakes in the past. Mistakes that still haunted him and couldn’t forgive. Maybe they had already forgiven him but Cas couldn’t. Sam could relate to him. He had done things in the past too. Horrible things. And he had paid the price for all of them. He was still paying. He had lost so many people who were important to him, and that list now included his brother too.

But he wouldn’t let Cas be the next one. No. He wouldn’t let it happen.

The sound of a horn was heard behind them. Sam looked at the reflection in the rearview mirror. A van. Where did it come from? He didn’t notice it following them.

“What is it?” Cas asked with a faint voice.

Sam narrowed his eyes, glancing between the mirror and the road ahead. The van honked again, getting closer to them.

“I don’t know” he answered. “I think it wants us to stop.”

In the next moment the van sped up and it knocked the back of the Impala. Sam and Cas’ heads jerked forward.

“Damn it!” Sam looked behind then back ahead. He sped up too, making some distance between the Impala and the van.

Cas coughed as he turned around, watching the vehicle behind them.

“It’s a leviathan” he informed him.

“Great” Sam muttered. He had hoped they wouldn’t meet with any of them. “How do we get rid of it?”

Next to him Cas stayed silent, then said:
“Give me your gun.”
Sam looked at him with wide eyes.

“What?” he asked back.

“You heard me. Give me your gun.”
Sam had no idea what the angel was thinking but he had to trust him. Cas was a soldier after all, he had used to be the leader of a garrison up in Heaven. It had been his job to come up with plans and lead the angels under his leadership.

So Sam took the gun from the back of his jeans and handed it to Cas. The angel took it, checked if it had enough bullets then rolled down the window.

That was when Sam noticed something odd. He didn’t hear Cas coughing in a while.

“Cas” he started but didn’t have to finish. The angel knew what he was about to say.

“I gathered my remaining Grace to steady my body” he explained. “I can’t let my hands shake at the most critical moment.”

“But Cas, it could ki…”

“My top priority is to see you to Father Time in safety.”

Sam opened his mouth to protest but Cas was already climbing out the window, sitting on the door and Sam wanted to pull him back because it was NOT an action movie where a single bullet could stop a van.

Cas leaned down and looked back at him, again, like he was reading his mind.

“I know what angle the bullet has to hit the vehicle to stop it, don’t worry.” And his face was out of sight again as he retook his previous position.

Sam couldn’t do anything but trust Cas and drove as careful as he could. He didn’t want Cas to fall out. But he stepped on the gas too. If Cas was about to do what Sam was thinking about, they needed more distance.

Then it happened.

Sam heard the gun, a loud pop, and in the next moment the van made a narrow turn and went off the road where it turned on its side in the grass. Sam watched the scene behind him with awe.

“Man! That was…”

He turned to look at Cas. Just in time to see him falling backwards.

“Cas!”

Sam reached out with one hand, grabbing the angel by his trench coat, while with the other he safely stopped the car. With that done he grabbed Cas with his other hand too and pulled him in.

“Cas!” he called him but the angel was already unconscious, coughing up more of the burning Grace. His now grey face was covered with cold sweat and he shivered like it was a cold winter night in Alaska. But he still held the gun firmly in his hand.
“Damn it…”

Sam took the gun from Cas and positioned him on the passenger seat comfortably. He also took an old blanket from the backseat and covered the angel with it. He stepped on the gas and hoped that there won’t be any more delays. Cas wouldn’t survive a stunt like that again.

*

Thomas left his workplace. The owner of the bar was interested in his reasons, because why would a young man who lived alone suddenly leave his job. Thomas said he had far greater things to do than standing behind the counter.

Gadreel hadn’t asked him to do it. The human had decided to leave everything behind on his own for a mission he had nothing to do with. Thomas deserved to go to Heaven when his time came. Which hopefully would come at an old age.

‘So?’ Thomas asked. ‘Where are we going?’

‘Kansas’ Gadreel answered. ‘The Winchesters are there.’

Thomas packed everything he needed, locked his apartment and he was quickly on his way to the bus station.

‘So…’ Thomas started. ‘This Metatron… He’s after those Winchesters now?’

‘Probably’ Gadreel answered. ‘His main target is Castiel, but I don’t know if this is the case while he is human. Only with Grace was Castiel a threat for him. But he wants the angel tablet, I’m certain about that. The Prophet Kevin Tran must be protected at all cost.’

Thomas pulled his bag higher on his shoulder. Following that, he took his phone into his hand and looked up the bus schedule.

‘Okay. I can’t drive, so first we have to get to Dallas. From there it takes about a day to get to Kansas City.’ He put away his phone. ‘You sure you don’t want to call them?’

‘I’m sure. I can’t distract them right now.’

‘Really? Are you not worried about them? Or that they are worried about you? Maybe they think that you’re dead or something.’

Gadreel had to agree with the man. He didn’t know how many days had passed since he had been banished. From the distance he could feel Sam faintly, he knew he was alive so he hadn’t felt the need to contact with them. He decided he would eventually do that, but not now.

‘We will call them in Dallas’ he answered.

Gadreel felt Thomas was about to protest but the man stayed silent. Or at least he didn’t direct his thoughts towards the angel, and he respectfully stayed away from the human’s personal thoughts.

It took a few hours to get to Dallas. There was an accident, blocking the highway and the bus could only pass by slowly. As he watched the damaged cars, Gadreel wondered if the Fates were trying to slow them down, if something was waiting for them in the city.
They missed their bus by ten minutes.

‘When will the next bus part?’ he asked Thomas.

‘I don’t know’ the man answered and looked around. He found a timetable not so far from them and he made his way there.

Maybe he should call the Winchesters now, Gadreel thought. Just to make sure they are unharmed and inform them about their delayed arrival. Maybe Thomas had been right and he should ask them to come here for them. It would be safer, waiting for the brothers in a warded motel room.

Gadreel couldn’t help feeling that something was brewing around them. Something horrible that would turn the events against them, and to their enemies’ favor. That accident was not an unfortunate event. Since passing that location on the highway, he had this unexplainable feeling. That area had had a strange vibe, nothing human related, like that accident was not caused by a human but something else. Like it had been planned. Like someone had orchestrated everything around them.

Gadreel knew only one person who was capable to something like that. Someone who used the elements of storytelling in real life.

No. He didn’t know that someone personally. He only saw the memories.

‘We have to hide’ Gadreel told Thomas urgently and pushed him away, taking control over the body. He felt the man’s confusion.

‘What’s going on?’ he asked.

Gadreel looked around then made his way out the bus station. Just when he located the closest motel did he answer.

‘We are being followed’ he explained. ‘Someone caused that accident on purpose so we would miss the next bus. Someone doesn’t want us to go to the Winchesters.’

Thomas was silent for a moment.

‘Then what now?’

‘We go to a motel. Ward it against angels and call the Winchesters. I’m in no shape to fight and I don’t want you to get hurt. Calling them here is the safest thing we can do.’

“Oh, how noble!”

Gadreel had no time to turn around. He was grabbed from behind and he could do nothing but curl around Thomas’ soul protectively before everything turned black.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Gadreel... I shouldn't knock him out all the time...
Chapter 51

Chapter Notes

The season finale... happened? I don't know what to say about it. It didn't really feel like a season finale, more like a two-parter around the middle of the season? Maybe I don't think so much about it because I was more excited about the Hillywood parody. It definitely came at the right time. The mirror scene was good and the Fan Fiction 'Carry on' at the begining, but I remember thinking about five minutes before the end that 'Oh. It will be the canon now.' But I'm still positive about this whole thing. Darkness. Yeah. Looks like the smoke monster from Lost and the curse from OUAT (Both made by the same people, hah! Conspiracy theories, go!). It still has potential. Anything can be good with a good writer. (I'm not saying that Robbie Thompson should be the headwriter/show runner/the only writer with Berens/etc, but Robbie Thompson should be the headwriter/show runner/the only writer with Berens/etc.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I think you should hurry back to the angel. His time is ending soon.

No.

It’s not true.

Death was lying.

Cas is not dying.

He’s still alive.

He’s on his way back to the bunker.

He’s alive.

He will live.

I appear right outside the barn. Through the open door I see the trap still burning with blue flames. The building is silent until it’s broken by the ringing of a phone and coughing. I take a few steps towards the barn when I see it.

Behind the blue flames a figure is sitting on the floor.

“No…” I whisper and hurry inside.

It’s him. He’s sitting there with his back against the wall, cheeks wet, skin pale, palms smudged by something grey. His breathing is shallow and rapid, like he’s barely living.

Suddenly, I’m back in April’s apartment again. I see a bloody Cas with an angel blade sticking out of his bare chest. I feel the pain that spread through my body at that moment, the pain of arriving too late and not being able to save him. Not being able to find him in time and take him to safety.
I crouch down and look at him. Really look at him. His dark bangs, the stubble dusting his jaw and cheeks, the dry lips, the circles under his eyes and the crinkles at the corners. I look at them, burning everything into my memories because maybe this is the last time I see them. This may be the last time I see him.

My hand trembles as I reach out. Damn it… If I wasn’t a coward… If it wasn’t always the wrong place and the wrong time… There could have been things. Wonderful things. But it was too late now. Thinking about those things only make my lungs burn as I try to breathe.

I touch his face. It’s burning like he has a fever, or maybe a volcano under his skin, molten lava flowing everywhere and destroying everything on its way. I see his true form, grey and ill looking to the core, moving, reaching out towards my hand. I swallow hard. Maybe I’m not too late this time. Maybe there’s still something I can do for him.

“Cas?” I ask hesitantly.

A sigh brakes out of him, then his lashes flutter and his eyes crack open. The blues are shining in the light of the flames.

“Dean” he says and smiles weakly.

Relief and happiness wash over me. When I found him in Purgatory, when Gadreel brought him back. Every time I thought I would never see him anymore, hearing his deep and rough voice again filled me with a warm feeling around my chest.

“Hey, buddy.” I smile too. “You must hang in there, you hear me?”

I wonder when Cas will notice that I’m not acting like a demon. That, unlike my previous words, I don’t want him to die. But instead of being surprised by my behavior, he just shakes his head.

“I failed you, Dean.”

I frown. No, he didn’t fail me. What the hell is he talking about? I open my mouth to ask, but he talks again before I can say anything.

“I failed you many times. I didn’t trust you when I should have. I thought I’d do good if I don’t disturb you and your normal life but in the end I betrayed you. I hurt your brother. I hurt you. And I killed you.”

My mouth falls open. He’s talking about the year I spent with Lisa and Ben. Was he there? Did he see me living with them?

I was there. Where were you?

Realization hits me. He was there. He was there, but he didn’t ask for help because I lived a normal life. He didn’t want to drag me away from the ‘apple pie life’ I was living and pretending to like. That’s why he teamed up with Crowley, that then led to that horrible end. Damn, that fool…

Hurting Sam. Breaking his wall. Hurting me. Hurting Sam, leaving me, plotting behind me.

He still feels guilty because all of that? I thought we already put that and everything else behind our backs and moved on. Cas redeemed himself already in my eyes. He shouldn’t feel guilty.

But killing me? I don’t understand what that’s supposed to mean. Why would he be responsibly for my death?
“Cas…” I start but Cas cuts in again.

“I couldn’t destroy the tablet in time. When Metatron told me that he…” Cas’ eyes start shining more. “You died because of me. You became a demon because of me. I failed you. I just want to die, Dean.”

I remember the quake that shook the building where Metatron stabbed me. My chest aches a bit, but I ignore it. Was that when Cas broke the tablet? I remember Sam taking an angel blade into his hand and stepping towards Metatron but the bastard already vanished. Was that their plan? Cutting Metatron off his power source then kill him?

And Cas blames himself for this. He blames himself for my death and me turning into a demon. And he wants to die because of this.

Because of me.

Because he thinks everything was his fault.

Why can’t Cas understand that not everything bad happened because of him? That me and Sam fucked it up too, so many times I lost count? I’ve thought about giving up, the last time wasn’t long ago, but Cas shouldn’t give up. He has to fight and go on. Because he’s Cas. And I won’t be able to live with the thought that his death was because of me.

I raise my other hand too and cup his face.

“You listen to me, you son of a bitch” I tell him, hardening my voice to keep it from shaking. “Yes, you fucked up many times. Yes, I was angry at you many times. But don’t you ever wish to die because of these, you hear me? You always wanted good. And it was not your fault I died.”

“But…” Cas starts but I quickly cut in.

“No buts! I already forgave you for everything.”

Castiel blinks, seems surprised by my words.

“But I don’t de…”

“Deserve forgiveness?” I say and smile. “Neither do I, but you always forgive me.”

I brush a thumb along Cas’ cheekbone and he moves his head towards it. He stares into my eyes without blinking, his gaze softening. My smile widens a bit and I continue caressing his cheek. Everything will be alright now.

Then his eyes become defocused and his whole body goes limp.

My heart drops to the cold ground.

“Cas?” I call him. I can feel panic rising in me, because Cas doesn’t respond. His head would fall forward if not for my hands still on his face.

No, no, no! It can’t be! Not this again! He can’t die now! He can’t!

“Fuck…” I shake him gently at first, then with desperation. “Cas! Wake up, damn it! Stay with me!”

He mumbles something under his breath I can’t hear then he does completely still.
“Cas?” My voice breaks. “Cas!”

I don’t think he hears me anymore. His true form is rapidly losing its brightness as he drifts further from this world. I have to do something. But what? Can demons heal? Without a deal?

I lean him back against the wall and place my palms on his chest, concentrating on the image of Cas’ true form in a much brighter way. Which is quite impossible. Even in its unhealthy condition I can’t really understand what I’m seeing exactly, but I try my best.

“Come on…” Beads of sweat run down my brows. I gather every ounce of my energy into my palms and push it inside him.

But nothing. The only thing I feel is how faint his heart beats.

“Please, don’t do this to me” I plead, but my words find deaf ears.

I don’t know how much time I spend there, trying to bring Cas back to consciousness. After countless minutes I have to acknowledge that no matter how I want to, a demon can’t heal. Maybe an angel…

But how will I find an angel willing to help me? I killed two of them, Cas wanted to kill me because of that. I’m in Heaven’s Most Wanted. Not that I wasn’t on the list already, but maybe I’m number one right now.

No. I have to find someone who will ask an angel to help Cas for me.

And there’s just one person who can help that I trust.

“Come on, man” I say and collect Cas into my arms. “Help is on its way.”

I stand up with ease. The angel’s weight is like a feather’s. Nothing for me.

“Hang on” I tell him even though he can’t hear me. It’s mainly for keeping myself calm. “I zapped with a passenger only once. And poor Gavin threw up.” I laugh but it quickly fades. “Poor kid… But I think you can handle it. You know how it feels. You flew around all the time when you had wings.”

I feel an ache in my chest then look up. It’s the same wall where I saw the shadow of Cas’ wings all those years ago. I squeeze Cas’ shoulder then zap away.

I’m in the cemetery again, looking around to see where Sam is. I don’t really care if he finds out everything. Cas is more important than that idiotic plan of mine.

But I can’t see him anywhere. He must have left not long after I went back to the barn.

Damn it…

I readjust Cas in my arms and close my eyes. Sam can’t be far from here. I wasn’t away for that long. Hopefully.

I let my senses free. I feel every soul around the area. When I don’t find Sam, I widen the circle around me until I finally feel him. But he’s not moving. He’s staying at the same spot with someone. He’s not in the car.

I let out a long breath and look down at Cas.
“You’ll be safe soon.”

I appear on the backseat of the Impala, Cas laying there with his head on my lap. I would stop and look around, see if Sam took care of Baby in my absence but I have more important things to do. Namely saving my best friend’s life.

I look out the window and duck quickly. Sam is standing not so far from the car with an angel. I don’t know who the hell it is, but that doesn’t matter now. Sam is with an angel, stands next to that angel with ease so it must be a friend. Perfect. Then Sam can ask for help.

I glance down at Cas and realize that when I ducked down I came uncomfortably close to his face.

I stare at him for a long while, wondering if this will be the moment when he finally opens his eyes. What will happen? Will he stare back at me like he always does? Like he’s staring into my soul? Will he push me away and attack me? Will he grab my arm when I try to flee? Will he pull me closer?

I shake my head and chuckle softly. What a sap I am. Sam would make fun of me in an other situation at a better time.

Giving into my inner ‘sap’ I press my face – definitely not my mouth – against Cas’ forehead and murmur against his skin.

“Keep fighting.”

I zap away quickly. Now that I know that Cas is safe, I can give into some other things too. Namely my anger towards a certain demon.

Chapter End Notes

I was rereading some earlier chapters so I won't make continuity errors (if I ever make/made, tell me!), and read a sentence and I realized I foreshadowed something I had no intention foreshadowing back then. The mind works in mysterious ways :D
Hey! Long time no new chapter! Writers block sucks. I'm one and a half chapter ahead right now, let's hope I can make this number grow.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Dean?”

Dean opened his eyes. At first he was disoriented, but when his eyes met Castiel’s, he calmed a little.

“We’re here” Castiel continued and got out of the car.

Hannah followed him. Their plan, in her opinion, was insane. They would make a circle of holy oil around the area and trick the angels to enter it. The plan also involved digging and some additional things. Nobody would fall into a trap like that. She didn’t know what those Winchesters had in their heads, but she hoped Castiel was smarter than that.

But no. He had agreed to it with little to no resistance. Those Winchesters had a bad influence on her brother. They could talk him into anything and then they were surprised when nothing happened according to plan. The brothers were a pair of madman, especially Dean.

Hannah didn’t know what Castiel saw in him. Yes, she had to admit that his soul was brighter than the brightest star of the universe, but that had little to do with what his mind or what his actions suggested. And Righteous Man or not, Dean was not a good man. Castiel was so obsessed with the image of a perfect Dean, that he didn’t see the truth. Just one glimpse into Castiel’s memories and she knew she had to be careful with the human.

On top of that, Dean’s soul was stealing Castiel’s Grace. She could see how little he had compared to the amount he had had in Colorado Springs. And he could cross the warding. That was not possible, not even with the smallest amount of Grace. She didn’t know what Dean’s soul was doing to Castiel, but she had to put an end to it. She had to separate the two.

Which would be impossible. Dean’s soul and Castiel’s true form were tangled together so tightly, not even God could separate them. They clung to the other like they couldn’t exist on their own. It was a strong bond, one she had only heard about but never had the chance to see. How it had been created, why it was there, she couldn’t tell. Maybe it was even older than her, but it was not possible. No bond could exist for that long.

“So?” Dean asked, looking around in the clearing. “Where do we start?”

First Castiel carved a warding into Hannah’s skin, so the two of them could be hidden until the last moment. Then they continued with the trap itself. Hannah showed her disapproval to Dean every time the man turned her way, who in return made a face and rolled his eyes. But all three of them worked hard, and when they finished, they could only wait until Sam called them.

Hannah thought back to the time at Nicole’s home. How she had helped her to understand the
human world. She had also thought her how important it was to never trust anyone until you knew them better.

“It doesn’t matter how nice they act at first glance” she had explained. “They could be anyone under the mask you see. A thief, a mass murderer. Every human is rotten to the core.”

When Hannah had asked why Nicole trusted her, the woman had shrugged.

“You seemed lost. I feel connected to you, I guess.”

One night Hannah had taken the liberty and looked into Nicole’s memories. She had had bad experiences with humans, mainly man. She had still had fears, even three years after the last one, so Hannah had let her Grace wash over Nicole and had erased those negative emotions. After that day Nicole had been happier and Hannah had been glad to see the change in her behavior.

One day she had heard Castiel’s prayer.

“How long do you have to leave?” Nicole had asked as they waited for the bus.

“It is my duty to help my siblings. If Castiel knows a way how to find our way back to Heaven, I’d like to hear it in person, then decide what to do.”

Nicole had sighed.

“Sooner or later you would have left anyway. Take care! You know my number. Call whenever you want.”

Hannah missed Nicole. A lot. She had felt connected to her from the first moment they met. Her soul was familiar like they had known each other for a long time, which was, once again, impossible. This was the first time Hannah was among humans. She hadn’t been here before the Fall.

The hours passed by slowly. Dean paced around the clearing, impatient, stopping time to time to look at the empty road leading there. Castiel watched him, following his every movement with his eyes, his Grace reaching out to calm the man’s soul. Which in return reached back to take and take more bits of the angel’s Grace.

Hannah tightened her jaw and looked away. She needed to talk to Castiel. If it continued like this, there wouldn’t be anything left of Castiel in a little more than a week. She was unsure if the angel would die as the last of his Grace burnt out or something else, but she had to protect her brother. And if that meant separating him from his friend, then so be it. Castiel’s life was more important than a bond.

The silence of the forest was broken by the ringing of Dean’s phone. The man read the text, then signaled to the two angels to hide. Hannah followed Castiel back to the woods, taking cover behind the trees.

In less than five minutes Hannah heard Castiel’s car arriving. Two doors opened then slammed shut.

“Too long” Dean commented.

“How’s it ready?” Sam asked, ignoring Dean’s words.

“Yeah. Waiting for the grand finale.”
“What I don’t understand” Charlie started “is how they knew we were there. They can’t tell by the soul who the person is by name, right?”

“Save this question for later when we can all talk” Dean told her, clearly referring to the angels hiding in the woods.

The minutes passed. Five. Then ten. But nothing changed. They didn’t hear any cars and neither Hannah or Castiel could sense angels approaching.

“Were they really following us?” Sam asked after a long silence.

“Death told us” Dean reasoned.

“Why would Death tell us? We are nothing in his eyes. Just some small, annoying life forms.”

There was a pause.

“You don’t trust Death?” Dean asked, audibly taken aback by his brother’s words.

“It’s not that I trust him or not” Sam explained. “But isn’t it strange that he comes here and tells us we were followed? Just think about it. If the whole world is a play of chess, we’re only the dust in the air. We’re unimportant in the big game. I start to understand what Meg meant.”

“Meg?”

“In the other timeline. She lived in the bunker.”

“Huh…” Dean was silent for a moment. “And you trust a demon more than Death himself.”

“Dean, it’s not about trust!” Sam sounded irritated now. “Why would Death warn us about something like this? I understand, more or less, why he appeared when I…” Sam stopped to take a deep breath, but Dean finished his sentence before he could.

“When you wanted to open the Cage. Yeah, that was a bigger thing. But he also helped us figure out who’s behind…” A pause. “What?”

Hannah peeked out from behind the tree. Sam stared at his brother with wide eyes.

“How do you know?”

“Know what?” Dean asked back.

“That I almost opened the Cage.”

It was a passing, but noticeable reaction. A muscle on Dean’s face twitched, he blinked twice rapidly, and he was about to shift the weight on his feet but changed his mind before he did anything.

“I heard about it” he said finally.

“From who?”

“Does it really matter?”

“Yes, it does!” Sam stepped closer, an angry line appeared between his brows. At the same moment Charlie took a step back, watching the brothers warily. “Because someone took the rings!
You know, the key to the Cage!”

Dean huffed and turned away.

“That’s not our problem anymore.”

If Sam had been angry, now he was furious.

“Not our problem?!” he yelled. “Fuck you, Dean! What about Bobby and the others?! They were hiding from the Leviathans! What if someone lets Lucifer and Michael out?!”

“Guys, that’s enough…” Charlie stepped between the two but they ignored her.

“Like you cared” Dean murmured but it was easily head by a human’s ears too.

From the corner of her eye Hannah saw Castiel jumping out of their hiding place and start running towards the two men.

“Castiel!” Hannah called out but he didn’t hear it.

Sam pushed Charlie out of the way and took a step towards Dean who looked surprisingly calm.

Hannah moved too to stop the fight brewing between the brothers when three figures entered the clearing from the other side. Everything happened so fast, and everyone was so focused on the brothers that they didn’t notice them.

Just Hannah. And she also saw the angel blades in their hands.

“Look out!” she yelled.

Charlie was the first to react. She took a blade from her belt and hit away the angel blade that moved to stab her. This woke the Winchesters and Castiel too. All three took their weapons in their hands.

“Josiah?” Castiel asked, surprised.

Named angel, the one in the male vessel, stopped. His companions did the same. The other two had female vessels, and while Hannah didn’t know one of them, the other one was familiar. Ariel, she remembered her name. She had met her a few times in Heaven.

“Well” Josiah started. His lips curled up to a quick smile. “It’s a surprise but also an honor that the great Castiel knows me by name.”

“How did you find us without me and Castiel noticing it?” Hannah asked, turning everyone’s attention back to what was important at the moment.

“You are not the only ones who can ward themselves” Ariel answered.

“And how did you know it was us in the first place?” Charlie positioned her blade higher, ready for the next attack.

“We knew exactly the number of souls around us” Josiah said. “And of course we noticed one of them was not affected.” He turned his eyes towards Charlie. “Blessed by a white witch. Her power radiates from you, even through the charms you have around your wrist.”

Charlie clenched her jaw.
“Why do you collect pain?” Sam asked. “What does Sariel want to do with it?”

Josiah and Ariel’s eyes widened. The third angel looked between them questioningly.

“Sariel?” Ariel asked.

“That creature is Sariel?” Josiah added.

Hannah glanced at Castiel and shared a look with him.

“You neither knew about zir” Castiel said and lowered his blade. Dean frowned at the decision but didn’t say anything.

Josiah shook his head.

“Bartholomew gave us the order to kill monsters and use this.” He took a stone from his pocket and showed it to them. It was black with runes carved into it. Hannah had never seen anything like this before, but she noticed Charlie’s small gasp. “The creature… Sariel gave it to Bartholomew.”

Castiel reached towards the stone. He almost took it when the third angel jumped at him. Hannah, Dean, Josiah and Ariel moved at the same time. The two angels pulled the third away, while Hannah did the same with Castiel. Dean tried to attack the angel, but Castiel grabbed his arm to stop him. Sam and Charlie jumped between the two groups, with their backs to Hannah and the others, facing the three other angels.

“No bloodshed, Dean” Castiel reminded him.

“What was this, Clara!” Josiah questioned her. “Why did you attack him?”

“He’s Castiel!” Clara growled. “He and Metatron banished us from our home! We can’t trust him!”

Ariel took Clara’s face between her palms and turned the angel’s head towards her.

“Clara, you’re a young angel, right? You’ve just heard about Sariel, but you don’t know zir as much as we do.” Ariel’s gaze turned desperate. “Ze’s dangerous, Clara. And she controls Bartholomew and through him all of us. I’d rather follow Castiel than Sariel.” She turned to Josiah, the question clear in her eyes. The angel nodded and put away his blade.

Sam and Charlie lowered their weapons too, but Hannah and Dean stayed ready to defend everyone.

“Dean, Hannah” Castiel looked at them. “Please. No more killing.”

Hannah glanced at Dean who did the same. They disliked each other, that wasn’t a secret. But at that moment she knew they agreed in one thing. They couldn’t trust the three angels, not yet. Hannah had no idea who Clara was, knew almost nothing about Ariel, but she had seen Josiah in Castiel’s memories. Josiah had sided with Metatron in secret. Who could tell if he would do the same again.

Hannah and Dean both lowered their blades.

“Okay, so, your enemy is my enemy?” Dean pointed at the angels. “We take you back to the bunker and keep an eye on you. Then decide if we can trust you or not. But first you give us your blades.”

Castiel frowned at this, but said nothing. Josiah and Ariel gave him their blades right away, but
Clara hesitated. She looked at her siblings, then at the humans and only parted from her weapon when Ariel nudged her.

“I’ll go with Cas’ car” Sam offered, not looking at Dean. “Two of you can come with me and Hannah can watch.”

Hannah turned to the younger Winchester. It wasn’t the first time she noticed how odd his behavior became around her. Since the first time they had met, Sam’s soul cried out every time he saw her. It tried to reach out towards Hannah but moved back before it touched her Grace.

They had known each other. Sam and the other Hannah. She had seen it in Castiel’s memories. But nothing indicated that they had been close. Maybe the way the other Hannah had…

“Okay, uh…” Dean’s voice interrupted her thoughts. “Then Cas and Charlie come with me with one angel.”

“We have a vehicle” Josiah informed them.

“Yeah, and let’s assume Sariel knows about it” Dean told him. “You come with us.”

Ariel and Clara sat in the back of the car as they rode back to Lebanon. The silence was uncomfortable, filled with tension, and Hannah had to endure the pain and hurt radiating from Sam’s soul that was caused by his brother’s words. And only his brother’s words.

* * *

Hannah ran towards the portal. She felt a tingling on the back of her neck. It was chasing her. The ripple. All around her angels were changing. Many of her siblings had wings again, looking at the fallen with confusion.

Mainly at her. Because it seemed she was the only one in Heaven who was not affected yet.

She wondered how that was possible. Maybe because she hadn’t spent all her time in Heaven and only the ripple down on Earth would erase her? Was it because her Grace was corrupted?

She would have thought about it more if not for the sight that welcomed her. Or more likely the sight that didn’t welcome her.

The portal was gone.

After the angels had retaken Heaven they studied the portal. They found out that only a being as powerful as God could create the first one but others could be easily opened by any angel. That was how they gathered every one of their fallen siblings around the globe. They opened the portals and they returned home.

But now, without the main portal, there was no possible way for her to open one. There was no way for her to get down to Earth.

Hannah slammed her clenched fist into the wall. Damn it! It was Metatron’s fault. He had kept her in the prison on purpose so she would be locked here. She had to find an other way. Sam and Castiel were in danger. If she could get there in time, they would both die.
“Hannah?”

The angel turned around. There stood one of her siblings, looking at her with concern.

“Is everything alright?” ze asked. “Where are your wings?”

Wings. Hannah looked at her sibling. Ze didn’t have a vessel. Zir true for was strong, healthy, and had wings.

An idea came to her mind.

“Samandriel!” she gripped zir arm. “Send me down to Earth.”

Samandriel’s eyes widened in horror.

“Earth? You can’t go down. Nobody can go down. The Leviathan…”

Hannah’s face darkened.

“Send me down. Now.”

Samandriel’s true for trembled but ze did as Hannah said. Ze placed two fingers against Hannah’s forehead and in the next moment she was on Earth again. And she was not too far from where she was supposed to be. Perfect.

Hannah started running almost immediately, the rumble of the ripple urging her to go as fast as she could.

* 

It was like Purgatory. The forest was grey and silent around him. It was peaceful. Familiar. Calming. He missed Purgatory. Somehow it had had a good effect on him. After Hell, after everything, Purgatory had been a balm to his wounds, easing and healing.

But it wasn’t Purgatory. He didn’t hear the sounds of monsters lurking in the shadows. This place was something else.

“Yes, it’s a dream.”

Dean turned around. Tessa was standing there, watching him with her usual calm expression.

Dean felt a stab of pain. For a moment he was in angel headquarters again, locked in the interrogation room, Tessa running into the Blade.

Tessa showed him a sad smile like she knew what he was thinking about.

“Because I know” she said and looked around. “Your thoughts are everywhere.”

Dean took a hesitant step towards the reaper.

“Tessa, I… I’m so sorry… I…”

Tessa closed the distance between them and put a reassuring hand on Dean’s shoulder.
“You weren’t yourself, and I wasn’t myself. My death was not your fault.”

Dean bowed his head.

“I still feel bad about it.”

Tessa squeezed his shoulder then let it go.

“Why are you here?” Dean asked. “I thought angels can’t dream walk without wings.” He paused.

“Are reapers angels?”

“They are. And I didn’t walk into your dream. I summoned you into mine.”

Dean frowned.

“That possible?”

“You’re here, aren’t you?” She motioned at their surroundings.

Dean looked around again. He had no idea angels had dreams too.

“It’s just a place I imagined in my meditative state” the reaper explained.

“Stop reading my mind” Dean snapped at her, but more in nervousness than in anger. There were things in his mind he didn’t want anyone to know about unless he willingly told them.

“I told you. Your thoughts are everywhere. I can’t ignore them.”

Dean sighed. At least she sounded apologetic.

“Okay. What do you want? You don’t just summon anyone for the sake of summoning.”

“True. I wanted to talk to you. Death sent me.”

Dean frowned at her.

“Death? We just met an hour ago.”

“He couldn’t speak to you with everyone hearing.”

“And why isn’t he here instead of you? Don’t get me wrong, I’m glad to see you alive and everything, but why am I not talking to the big guy if he wants to talk with me?”

“Because he can’t interfere with Life that much. He can give a hint here and there, but the amount of time he can do it is limited. Hence I’m here, since I know some things.”

“Like?”

Tessa’s lips became thinner.

“Sariel has an eye on you.”

Dean felt his inside turning into ice. He was on Swan Mountain again, the woman with the pale skin and the empty eyes looking at him, reaching out to touch his forehead…

Dean shivered.
“Why?” he asked. “What does she want with me?”

“You killed her siblings” Tessa explained. “Apart from that, I’m not sure. The only thing I’m certain about is that you’re in danger.”

Dean sighed. Yeah, the Leaders of Hell. He should have guessed.

“Do you know her?” he asked. “I mean, she used to be an Archangel of Death, you’re working for Death…”

Tessa crossed her arms and looked away with a troubled expression. Maybe he should have stayed quite, Dean guessed. He had no idea about these angelic family relations. See his conversation with Cas after they had finished with the shelves. He had unintentionally made Cas sad and now Tessa was sad too. Dean Winchester, breaker of angel hearts. Wonderful title.

Tessa smiled but didn’t make any comments about his thoughts.

“There used to be seven archangels created by God at the dawn of time” she started. “But not all of them served under God. Two of them, Sariel and Samael, got their orders from Death too. Death is the personification of a primal force, like Life and Time. This world is too small for him to pay too much attention to it, so he named Sariel and Samael as the guardians of death here, and the leaders of the reapers. I was under Sariel’s command, until…” Tessa paused for a moment, eyes dropping to the ground. “Until ze followed Lucifer.”

She sighed then looked back at Dean.

“I looked up at her, you know? Ze was a wonderful sibling, always taking care of us, always listening to us. Nothing indicated that one day ze would follow Lucifer to Hell.”

The betrayal by one’s own family hurts the most, Dean knew that. Be it turning their backs to the family or doing something bad for them behind their backs, it hurt.

He didn’t notice when Tessa stepped closer and put both of her hands on his shoulders.

“But it’s not about me now. It’s about you” she told him, looking into his eyes without blinking. “Stay close to Castiel. Let him and Sam protect you. Let them keep you safe.”

Dean frowned, angry at Tessa. What did she think he was? A fucking princess? And Tessa smiled at that, because of course she heard his thoughts, damn this place!

“It’s important that you’re--”

And that was when Cas woke him up. He couldn’t finish talking with Tessa, he had a fight with Sam, and they wasted all of their holy oil to now take those angels back to the bunker because the shared enemy made them allies. Just fucking great.

On top of that, both Cas and Charlie were angry at him because of that little comment that had snapped Sam.

“Why do you Winchesters always have to argue about stupid things?” Charlie shook her head. She watched Dean with narrowed eyes from the passenger seat. “Can’t you just, I don’t know, talk like normal people, and not start a fist fight every ten minutes?”

Dean barely stopped himself from rolling his eyes. He kept it for himself that he would still say the same thing. Sam hadn’t cared that he would free the Devil by opening the Cage. The only thing he
had been thinking about was curing Dean and he hadn’t cared about Bobby. Dean so wanted to kick Sam’s butt for that.

But he had to stay silent if he didn’t want to make Charlie and the angel behind him angrier. Why reason with them? He knew he was guilty for some stupid things too, like erasing his own timeline, but he had had a good reason and the result hadn’t involved letting freaking Lucifer out.

What had Death called Sam? A ‘curious case’? What had he meant by that? And why would he send Tessa to warn him? What did Sariel want with him apart from the obvious revenge for killing her crazy siblings? What had she meant back on Swan Mountain?

Too many questions, damn it… It was like wandering through darkness without any light. He didn’t like uncertainty. It meant he couldn’t prepare himself for anything because anything could happen. And he couldn’t be prepared for everything. That was humanly impossible.

Maybe he should…

He felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Is everything alright?”

Dean looked at the rearview mirror and his eyes met Cas’. He didn’t look angry anymore. He saw concern in his eyes as he watched him carefully, finger digging deep but gently into his arm.

Dean turned his attention back on the road.

“Yeah. I’m fine.”

Which in the ‘Winchester to English’ dictionary meant: ‘I’m not fine. Something’s wrong with me but I’m a coward to talk about my feelings. Also I don’t deserve your care so just leave me in my misery. I don’t want to pull you into this too. You have better things to deal with than my problems.’ Or something along the lines.

Cas knew that. He squeezed Dean’s shoulder before he pulled back.

“We’ll talk.”

Dean sighed. Lately, he had been talking a lot. More than in his entire life and it was tiring. But he knew talking was important. They had stayed silent for too long.

Maybe… Maybe he should talk about the last weeks of his demon career. He had kept it a secret for far too long. He should had told them earlier. Maybe it was not too late for that.

Chapter End Notes

Dean/Tessa is my broship. They could be a kickass team. But guess what? She’s dead too. Not gonna happen here.
Chapter 53

Chapter Notes

Look at that! What is this? A new chapter? No way!

I'm not gonna lie. I didn't want to write during the summer. It was hot as hell for so long and all my energy was used up to stay alive. Then came September and the new kids in the daycare. But, after almost exactly three months later, I'm back. I have no idea for how long before I disappear again, but I'll try and keep the one chapter a week. Also I'm glad I didn't publish this chapter earlier, because I added something to it I hadn't thought about before. So enjoy! (My thoughts about the new season will be after the chapter.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I’m furious when I appear in the office I know too damn well by now. The disgusting style Crowley is so obsessed with, the armchair, the mirror. Every part of it is just oil to my anger.

I missed my own anger. After so many months feeling only what the Mark of Cain generated, I welcome it warmly. This anger is righteous. This anger has a meaning, not only a thirst for blood. It’s anger caused by the fact that this piece of shit used my best friend again.

“Hello, Squirrel.” Crowley sits behind his desk, looking at a black box in his hand smaller than his palm. The kind that’s usually for keeping jewelry in it. “Fancy seeing you here.”

“Cut the crap, Crowley!” I step closer and hit the table with my fists. The wood cracks, and I stay there, leaning on it, making the table shriek under the pressure. “I have no time for your stupid small talks! You know why I’m here!”

Crowley closes the box loud before I can see what’s inside it. Something important is in there? Some dirty little secret? Who knows? Certainly not me, and I have no plans to find it out. I don’t have time for that.

“I guess your date with our dear angel didn’t go well.” The creeper checks me out quickly, then returns his gaze back to mine. “Or not according to plan at least.”

“Not according to plan?! I yell. “Like Cas killing me?! That was the plan?! You really wanted him to kill me?!”

Crowley is calm, dangerously calm when he stands up. He sinks the box into one of his pockets before he answers.

“No. I wanted him to take you on your honeymoon.” Then he yells: “Of course I wanted him to kill you, you bloody ox! Why else would I give him the damn Colt?!”

I’m shaking with anger now. This bastard used Cas not for the first time for his own good, for one of his dirty plans.

“Why?” I ask. “Did you see him? He can barely stand on his legs! He’s… He’s halfway into his grave!”
It hurts saying that Cas can die any moment. Saying it means that it can’t be stopped, no matter what, Cas will die, because that idiot wanted to save me. Again.

“Why did you drag Cas into this?!” I continue, my voice getting louder. “If you had the Colt and you wanted me to be dead so much, why didn’t you shoot me already?! Why did you give him the Colt when he’s so ill?!”

Crowley leans on the table on both hands, mirroring me, and looks into my eyes. We’re almost just an inch away from each other. I can smell the sulfur on his skin, and see the flames of hell in his eyes.

“And what do you think?” he asks. His voice is calm, but there’s an edge in it I had never heard from him. Like he has a grudge against me. “Whose fault is that exactly?”

The color runs out of my face, my eyes widen. Crowley smirks, but it quickly turns into an angry frown.

“Just think about it. Why did Castiel turn against Heaven? Why did he die – how many times? – three times? Why did he leave his angel army? Why did he take that other angel’s Grace? Why is he dying because of it?” Crowley raises a brow. “So, who’s fault is it?”

I take a step back, but I can’t turn away. Crowley locked my gaze with his.

“So the real question is” the demon continues, rounding the table, “why do you keep doing this to him? Because, correct me if I’m wrong, me and the whole damn world thought that the two of you were the dream teamiest dream team to ever dream team. And one would think that you two would do anything to prevent any bad to happen to the other one. But guess what? You’re a failure!”

As soon as Crowley is close enough to me, he tosses me against the wall behind me. I fall against it and some decoration dugs into my back.

“You want to know why I gave Castiel the Colt?!” he shouts. “Because if he kills you, your soul would escape easier from your body! Then I would take your soul before one of those reapers can snatch it away, then take it to Hell! It would have taken only a few centuries for you to be pure again, you could have been sent back to the cycle! And if something went wrong, I would have given you my…”

Crowley pauses for a moment. Which is a mistake. See, if he didn’t pause, I wouldn’t have noticed anything. But now that he pauses, I notice it.

Crowley gets over this quickly and continues with renewed enthusiasm. He even tosses me once more, the decoration now bruising my spine.

“You could have ended it all, Dean! You could have made everything better but you messed it up! You were my ace! You were my champion! I trusted you and you failed me! You failed Sam, you failed Cas, you failed everything!”

That’s enough! I don’t know what kind of game Crowley was playing, but I won’t let him toss me around like a rag doll! I pull up my leg and kick the demon away. He only takes a few steps back but it’s enough for me to not feel cornered.

“The hell are you talking about?!” I howl back.

“Exactly!” he shouts. “Now get out!”
“No! I stay and you tell me everything! Why are you bothering Cas! What were you planning with me!”

“What I was planning with you? I tell you what I am planning with you! If you don’t get out of here in ten seconds, then help me God, I’ll cut you into tiny little pieces, and I won’t care what divine force is still keeping you in the game!”

We stare at each other without blinking. I know Crowley would do it. And normally I would tear off his arm before he could grab a knife. Well, ‘normally’ in this situation means the Mark of Cain is cooperating. But it isn’t. Not to mention, the Grace from Cas’ trap is keeping it away from me. So I have no chance against Crowley.

Before the ten seconds pass I’m out off Hell, appearing in a cave entrance high in some rocky mountain. I have no idea how I came up with this place but now that I’m here I don’t really care. The place is far away from any civilization as long as I can tell. The cave is unapproachable from every directions and the area deep under it is a forest with some exotic trees. Maybe I’m in the middle of a jungle.

Still, even though everything is peaceful, uneasiness settles in my chest as I look down then turn and walk deeper into the cave. There’s an uncomfortable flutter behind my ribs, like my lungs are shivering in cold. But I don’t feel cold, nothing related to temperature actually, and it’s still like it’s freezing inside.

Looking at the walls, it’s surprising to find sigils hewed into the stone. Some of them I recognize easily, I used to use them when I was just a simple human, hiding from angels and demons during the Apocalypse and after that. But there are also unfamiliar symbols, some the combination of two different kinds. I wonder who made these and why. Were they hiding? From what? And when? Moss grew in the deep lines so it can’t be recent. The one who made these is probably dead already.

Reaching the end of the cave, I find a somewhat hidden corner. Light can’t reach it, meaning it can’t be seen from the entrance. I don’t know if Crowley or Beelzebub would look for me here with all the warding, but better be safe than sorry. Sitting down here, leaning against the wall, I feel safer than in the past weeks. This corner is comfortable. A peaceful spot in the dark. It calms my raging mind, slows my racing heart, and peace settles inside me. This place is oddly familiar, like I’ve been here before, but I know for sure that it’s not possible. I would remember.

As I sit there, I close my eyes. I could sleep now. I don’t miss nightmares at all, but sleeping is so human. And I miss being a human, a lot. Maybe it sucked, but it was simple. Simpler than being a demon, fighting back a fucking mark from the Devil, and seeing the looks your family gives you when they see you like this. I so what to be a human again…

Human me had a family. I had Sam. I had Cas. I had Charlie and Jody. I used to have Bobby and Kevin. But I lost everything because of my own stupidity. And here I am! A sulking demon who fucked up everything that can be fucked up and more. What would Dad say now? Nothing, probably. He would kill me without a second thought.

I lose my sense of time inside the cave as I sink deep into my thoughts, counting every mistake I made since I can remember, so I’m startled when I suddenly hear a roar that doesn’t seem to end. I stand up fast and rush to the entrance. In the distance I see a wall of dark cloud reaching towards the sky. The wall is everywhere I look, and probably continues beyond the horizon.

This must be the one and only ripple that will erase my old timeline. The one that, because of me, is unstoppable. There’s no way to turn it back. It will destroy everything I know and leave the
Leviathan timeline behind. I sigh. Yeah. I should probably let it erase me.

But Death said I need to find Father Time. Death has a job for me, but first I have to meet that guy. Meaning I should probably not let the ripple erase me. But how will I find someone who’s everywhere but nowhere?

I have no other choice but go back to the place I wanted to avoid so much. I have to go back to the bunker and see if Sam found anything.

Chapter End Notes

I have high hopes for the new season. These two episodes just felt... better than the last season. Promising.

Chapter 54

Chapter Notes

I'm planning to build a shrine dedicated to Robbie Thompson. Who's with me?
(Meaning that 'Baby' was awesome and I'll worship Robbie Thompson till the end of
time. And the Sam-Dean talk in the Impala about something more! If you're reading
this Robbie, knock three times!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hope! I’m out of here!” Kevin said as soon as Cas introduced the three new angels. He threw his
hands up, rushed to the desk on the far side of the library, gathered his papers and left through the
door leading to his room. Sam guessed they wouldn’t see him for a while. He would probably
barricade himself in there for a day.

“And who are they exactly?” Dorothy asked, eying the angels with suspicion as she stood next to
Charlie with an arm around her waist.

“Friends” Cas said.

“According to Cas” Dean muttered to Dorothy as he passed her, but for an angel’s ears it was loud
enough. Cas sent him a disapproving look when he turned to look back at him. But what Dean had
said was enough for Dorothy to not trust their guests at all. Sam saw her hold tighten around
Charlie and her eyes never left the angels.

They settled around the middle table of the library, pulling some chairs there so everyone could sit
down. But not everyone did. While Cas sat down with Josiah, Ariel and Clara – all three observed
the interior of the bunker with great interest, - Hannah remained standing behind them, close to the
door towards the dorms, ready to attack anyone who seemed to be a threat. And when Sam, Charlie
and Dorothy took a seat too, Dean leaned against the table closest to the entrance, keeping an eye
on the newcomers. It was strange to see that despite how much they didn’t like each other, Dean
and Hannah still seemed to find some agreement in this situation.

Sam sat the farthest from Dean. He was still angry at him. The way he had said it… That he hadn’t
cared for Bobby and the others… It was not true! He had told them how to get rid of the
Leviathans! He had cared! It was just…

Sam rubbed his forehead. He just hadn’t known why that horrible idea had come to his mind. He
had known and still knew that freeing Lucifer was bad. Then that had happened. That had been his
own idea. Nobody had told him what to do. And he had agreed to do it on his own. Gadreel had
told him that it didn’t make him a bad person. But he didn’t feel good. Good people wouldn’t
sacrifice the whole world for one person. That was selfish. No. Good people would sacrifice
themselves for the whole world, including that one person.

Like he had done when he had jumped into the Cage.

He rubbed his forehead again. His one greatest act was the only one. The one with what he had
tried to redeem himself for the crimes he had done with the demon blood in his system. There had
almost been a second one, closing the Gates of Hell. But Dean had stopped him. Because Dean
hadn’t wanted him to die. And he had let an angel inside his body without him knowing it.

Sam knew the circumstances. He knew Dean had only wanted good. He hadn’t known back then how bad a turn everything would make. That was the only time he remembered Dean acting selfish. Apart from that? Selfless, selfless, selfless. Even in their childhood. He wondered how many things he still didn’t know about. How many times had Dean given up something so Sam’s life would be peaceful?

Sam glanced up. ‘Like you cared.’ No wonder Dean had said that after that argument. That one sided argument. How many times had Sam done something he wanted while he didn’t consider what the people around him thought? Like when he went to Stanford and left Dean with John. He had thought about it as a good memory, it had been even a part of his shared Heaven with his brother, but after what Dean had said…

Sam was confused. Were all his good memories a result of his selfishness? Did he even have truly good memories? Was he a good person?

In the car to Sonny’s, Sam had told Dean to be a little selfish, do what he really wanted, to be with the one he wanted to be with. That had been his main reason with that speech. And if Dean needed to be a little selfish, then Sam needed to be a little selfless. Or a lot. He didn’t know anymore.

“So?” Dorothy asked. Sam turned his attention back to the others. “What did you find out?”

“The one we are looking for is a former archangel named Sariel” Cas explained. “Ze followed Lucifer to Hell.”

“Sorry, but I keep hearing it from you guys.” Dean cut in, looking at everyone. “What the hell is a ‘ze’?”

Charlie made a face at that.

“Seriously? Non-gender specific pronouns? Come on!”

Dean raised his hands in defense.

“Hey, I’m not at home with these things! Can we call it a ‘she’? She’s in a chick anyway.”

“What if ze doesn’t identify with a gender?” Charlie retorted angrily. “What about those who are trans or non-binary? What will you call them? Would you like to insult them by using the wrong pronoun?”

Sam coughed loudly, putting an end to the argument.

“So, Sariel.” He stood up, took a pad of post-its from a shelf, and sat back with a black marker in his hand. He started writing. “Alice’s nurse, the one who claimed to be her young sister, is a former archangel named Sariel. What do we know about her?”

“Former Archangel of Death” Cas said.

“One of the seven Leaders of Hell” Dean added.

“Apparently controls both angels and demons” Hannah muttered. She still had a hard time accepting this.

“Who is this Alice?” Josiah asked.
“Alice Liddell from Alice in Wonderland?” Sam asked, hoping that maybe one of the angels knew something. But nothing. “Well, Alice in Wonderland is a children’s book. Our prophet” he motioned towards the door where Kevin left, “found out that it was more or less based on a true story. Alice had the ability to travel to other dimensions.” Thinking about it for a moment, Sam wrote down a few things from that too and stuck the notes on the tabletop. He treated it like every case. And writing down the information could help solving the mystery. He should put the notes on the wall later. “And by corrupting Alice’s soul, Sariel wanted her to free Lucifer.”

“By going inside the Cage?” Ariel crossed her arms. “That would require greater power than an angel’s. Was this Alice really a human?”

“Some can possess extraordinary gifts” Cas explained.

“Yes, but going inside something highly warded?”

“That’s not our problem now” Dean stepped in. “Sariel thinks ze” he glanced at Charlie there, “can get someone inside there and let the Devil out. Possible or not, Sariel thinks it is. What we need to do is stop the other angels and demons from gathering pain.”

“How do they do that anyway?” Dorothy asked. “Pain is not something they can just absorb.”

Josiah took the stone from his coat and put it on middle of the table.

“These were given to us” he explained. “We have to bury it in the center of the area where we want to use it, then we paint the warding on the wall above it. Without the stone, the warding doesn’t work.”

“Did it affect you?” Sam asked.

“No.” Ariel took off a necklace Sam just noticed all three of them wore and put it next to the stone Josiah placed there. The stone on the necklace was much smaller than the other. It had the same color but with a simple red line crossing it.

Dorothy took the stones between her thumbs and index fingers and turned her hands to look at both of them from every direction. She looked at Charlie then.

“These are from Oz” she said.

“I knew the bigger one felt familiar” Charlie nodded.

“Wait…” Dean stepped away from the table he was leaning against and looked down at the two women. “Oz? How did Sariel go to Oz?”

“Eye of a tornado?” Dorothy shrugged. “And if Sariel is really a former archangel, ze has the power to travel to other dimensions, right?” She turned to the angels, who all nodded in agreement. Just Hannah didn’t.

“Sariel went to Hell” she pointed it out. “Maybe Death said that a ripple wouldn’t affect zir, but moving across dimensions… A demon can’t do it.”

“Except, Sariel wasn’t a demon.”

Everyone looked up as one person. Kevin reentered the library, followed by Ms. Tran. Kevin had an annoyed face when he stopped next to Dean – the side where Dorothy sat, - while Linda sat
next to Sam.

“We won’t miss any meeting” the woman explained.

“What do you mean?” Ariel asked the teen.

Kevin moved slightly closer to Dean, probably using him as a human shield, then answered. He had a black book in his hand that he put on the table next to the notes. Sam took it in his hands and looked inside it, turning a few pages.

“Alice wrote in her diary that Sariel needed to wait until Elisabeth was old enough to say yes to her. And only angels need the vessel’s consent, demons don’t.”

“Why did she have to wait?” Sam looked up from the diary and turned to Cas. “You possessed Claire once. And that Esther had or has a child vessel too.”

Cas shifted in his seat.

“For me, that was an emergency. But normally I wouldn’t possess a child’s body.”

The four angels around him shook their heads.

“A child’s soul is so pure and so young, still not fully bonded with its vessel” Ariel explained, “it can be heavily altered by the angel or demon possessing it.”

“But Sariel wouldn’t try to spare a kid, I think. Maybe ze needed an adult body?” Charlie suggested. “You know, nobody takes a child seriously.”

They decided they wouldn’t open debates about these small things, but agreed that Charlie was probably right.

“We need to stop Sariel” Castiel said. “Let’s assume ze can find somebody with the same ability as Alice who can enter the Cage, so we must prevent zir from gathering pain.”

“We can help” Josiah volunteered. Ariel nodded. Clara too, after some hesitation. “We know the places where our brothers and sisters are working. We try to convince them that what they do is wrong and turn them to our side.”

“If they find out that they are following a traitor like Sariel, they will join us quickly” Ariel said.

“And if we find demons on our way” Josiah continued, “we’ll stop them.”

Cas smiled at them.

“Thank you, brother. Sisters. I’m grateful.” He stood up. “It’s getting late. I’ll show you rooms where you can rest, then tomorrow you can go.” There, he looked at Dean, challenging him. But Dean just shrugged. “We’ll find you a vehicle in the morning.”

The three angels protested, said that they didn’t need to rest, but Cas heard none of that. With Cas leading the way, the angels left the library followed by seven pairs of eyes, some reflecting distrust.

Dean sighed.

“I still don’t think we can trust them” he muttered. “That Sariel can make you her… zir – zir? – goon with a touch. What if ze finds them? Or. What if they’re already under zir control?”
Hannah folded her arms.

“Sadly, but I must agree with you” she said. Dean snorted. “They changed their minds too fast.”

“That Clara chick seems to be the smartest from the three” Dean added. “She doesn’t trust us.”

“I only know Ariel and her intentions were always true. But I’m not sure what changed in her after the Fall.”

“And I know all of them” Cas said, returning to the library. “All three worked with me against Metatron. They can be trusted.”

“Cas” Sam turned to him, voice calm. “Josiah joined Metatron. We don’t know the circumstances but at some point he started working against you. And” he continued when Cas wanted to cut in, “you still don’t know who killed Ezra. Josiah wasn’t there when he died.”

Cas sighed and sat down. He rubbed his forehead with both of his hands.

“I know, Sam… I just… I want to believe that the same thing won’t happen again. That Metatron won’t turn them against us.”

Dean sat down next to the angel and put a hand on his shoulder.

“That won’t happen again” he said reassuringly. “First of all, he doesn’t have the angel tablet. It’s still here in the bunker and the greatest prophet of all time is translating it.”

Sam saw Kevin straightening himself from the corner of his eye.

“Second of all” Dean continued, “we know what Metatron wants. He wants to play God and turn the angels against you. But, and that’s the most important thing, he doesn’t know that we know. We are a hundred steps ahead of him. We can stop him before he can do anything and then deal with Sariel. What do you think?”

Cas was still leaning into his palm when he turned to look at Dean, but Sam could see a little smile on his face.

“Thank you, Dean” he said.

Dean patted his friend’s shoulder with a smile.

“No problem, man.”

Sam let them have their moment then cleared his throat.

“Now that we know exactly what the angels and demons are doing, we should call everyone we can.”

“Right.” Dean pulled away from Cas and leaned back in his chair. Cas raised his head too. “So we call Jody, Garth, Ed too. Who else?”

“Artemis and Kali?” Sam suggested.

“You think gods want to help us?” Dean asked skeptically.

“They live here too” Sam said. “The religion that created them binds them to this place. They have to save it if they want to survive.”
“You want to threaten gods?” Linda asked with a raised brow.

“It wouldn’t be the first” Sam shrugged then turned to Dean. “And I’ll call Aaron.”

“Who?” Dean asked, maybe a little too fast. He was blinking rapidly and his lips were pressed together. He knew exactly who Sam was talking about.

“The guy with the golem.” Then, thinking about it, Sam added with a smirk. “Your ‘gay thing’.”

Dean’s eyes widened comically.

“What…”

“Your what?” Cas and Charlie asked at the same time. Charlie’s eyes were twinkling with a mischievous light while Cas watched Dean with a blank expression. Dean paled a little.

“Uh… Guy started flirting with me. But it wasn’t serious.”

Charlie arched a brow.

“Did you want it to be?”

Dean turned red like a tomato.

“Charlie!”

“So” Sam spoke again. “Should I call him, or do you want to?”

Dean stood up quickly, face a few shades darker.

“Fuck you… Do whatever you want…” he muttered and walked away. Sam guessed he didn’t want to run away but it sure as hell looked like that.

“Aww, Sam!” Charlie punched his arm gently. A smile was hiding in the corner of her mouth. “Don’t do that! You know how sensitive he is!”

Sam shook his head with a grin. When his eyes met Cas’ questioning gaze, he waved his hand. He hoped Cas knew he was just messing with Dean. After that comment and the growing regret he felt it was the least he could do.

“Okay guys.” He stood up and stretched his arms. “Let’s rest now. It was a long few days. We need to sleep before we do anything useful.”

All of them nodded. Charlie and Dorothy stayed at the table but the others made their way towards their rooms. Sam said goodnight to Cas at the corner then continued his way towards his room. He decided to read Alice’s diary before he went to bed but a hand on his arm stopped him. Sam looked back.

And his heart skipped a few beats.

Hannah stood there, looking up at him with her wide blue eyes.

“I would like to ask a few questions.”

Sam stepped away quickly, freeing his arm from the angel’s grip.
“Not now.”

He quickly turned his back to her and rushed away. On their way back to the bunker he had successfully locked away the memory. Even though she sat not so far from him, he managed to forget everything that had happened. He hadn’t looked at her in the car, nor in the library for too long and he had been good. But now she approached him and wanted to talk to him. He couldn’t do it… *He couldn’t do it…*

Sam locked the door behind him and once he was in bed, he watched the ceiling for a very long time, if not all night.

*'

He already missed those idjits. It was good to see them again after all those years. Sam had grown a lot. Well, not in height but in spirit. All the hardship made him stronger. And Cas. Cas showed more emotions than he had remembered. He understood humans more. And he was certain he had more human in him than angel. Good. That was good.

He wanted them to stay a little longer. Just until Jody appeared too. She missed the boys just like him. He could only imagine their reunion. Jody scolding them for being stupid, hugging them tightly then scolding some more. The thought made him smile but it quickly faded.

The thought of Dean being a demon saddened him. He had never thought Dean would turn into something like that. It was Dean, for crying out loud! *Righteous Man* and *Michael Sword* and so on! He was not a demon! And still… The hunter turned into the thing he hunted. Like Gordon Walker.

Bobby sighed and rubbed his eyes as he walked down the corridor towards one of the many storage rooms. He had to take a look at the food supplies and the water cleaning system and the wards and…

“Bobby?”

Bobby turned on his heels and pulled a gun out of his belt. He pointed it at the figure standing in the middle of the corridor a few steps away from him. He had his hands up and his head was bowed.

“What the hell are you doing here, Dean?” he asked between his teeth. “If you’re looking for Sam and Cas, they’re not here.”

“I… I know… I saw them…” Dean sighed and looked up. “I… wanted to talk with you…”

Bobby frowned. Why would a demon want to talk with him?

Then he noticed it. Dean’s eyes. They were green. And the honest sadness in them…

He lowered his gun.

“Dean?” He couldn’t believe it. Was Dean a human again? What happened? How?

Dean smiled and put down his hands.
“Yeah… I’m myself. Still a demon, but I have control over it.”

Bobby stepped closer.

“How?”

“Honestly? I have no idea. Death said the trap Cas made out of Grace has a role in it but I started feeling… things before that. I have no idea. But I’m not here to talk about this.”

Bobby saw Dean hesitating so he showed him a gentle, fatherly smile.

“I’m listening, son.”

Dean’s lips trembled but he quickly steeled himself. He took a deep breath.

“I… I’ve been thinking for the last few days. About the world and time and stuff like that and I realized I fucked up big time.”

Bobby frowned.

“Well yeah, you killed Gavin. That pretty much doomed your own timeline.”

“Yes, but…” Dean paused. “I only killed him after I told you he was already dead.”

“The hell are you…” but he couldn’t finish because after Dean said that, his words came unstoppable.

“You see, I was hunting down angels turned demons for Crowley because they were Abaddon’s buddies and he wanted them out of the way and there was one guy who kept Gavin in a vault and I took him to Rufus’ cabin and I liked the guy then you summoned me and told me about this ripple and I thought at that time that it was a good idea so I killed that poor kid and burnt everything in the storage room and…”

Bobby was right in front of Dean with a leap and put both of his hands on the other’s shoulders. That shut Dean up who closed his mouth tight, lips becoming a thin line.

“Slow down” he said with a calm voice. “You’re freaking out and I only understood half of this.” He waited until Dean’s breathing was normal before he continued. “So. You thought the ripple was good. Why?”

Dean watched him, his jaw clenching, then looked away with shame on his face.

“Because I thought it would be better this way” he muttered. He talked slower, more understandable now. “In the last few years I made so many mistakes. I failed everyone close to me, I ruined everyone’s life.” He gripped his right forearm tight with a shaky hand. “I thought this ripple would erase those things. It would make a world where you and Kevin are alive, Cas doesn’t remember me and Heaven, Sam is upstairs with Jess, and…” He took a shaky breath as he closed his eyes. “And I’m where I truly belong. Hell.”

Coldness ran down Bobby’s back. That stupid, stupid boy…

“Dean, do you even know what you’re talking about? You wanted to sacrifice yourself again? Boy, you’re not a bad person. When will you finally realize that?”

Dean looked up at the older man.
“Bobby, you don’t know what I did…”

“I killed my father” Bobby cut in because he didn’t want to hear it. He had enough with those idjit Winchesters and their penance they thought they deserved. “I killed my wife, twice. Rufus and his wife died because of me. I didn’t take you two away from your stupid father. I made a deal so my legs would work again. I was sure I’ll go to Hell but you know what happened in your timeline? I went to Heaven because according to some Heavenly trials I didn’t belong downstairs. All my actions were selfish and I still went to Heaven. But you, Dean.” His grip tightened on Dean’s shoulders. “You always gave and gave selflessly. If you weren’t, you would have run away after turning eighteen, gone to MIT or some other fancy school where you could have learnt Engineering and had a family with a dozen kids. But instead you raised Sam to be the man who he is today and didn’t care what you really wanted. You sacrificed yourself for him and others countless times. You are better than all of us. Why do you think you don’t deserve Heaven?”

Dean looked at him like he just told him the greatest secret of the universe. And maybe he really did. A secret that wasn’t really a secret to anyone at all, just to Dean Winchester. Bobby was sure if he could Dean would have had tears in his eyes, but now he just hugged Bobby tightly which the older man eagerly returned.

“Damn, I missed you so much…” Dean muttered and buried his face into his shoulder.

Bobby sighed and put a hand on the boy’s head. The Winchesters were still kids who needed someone to hold their hands, to be the voice of reason when they were uncertain or were about to do something stupid. But after his death in their time they had nobody and that was how everything turned upside down. A lot of things had happened that could have been avoided.

“Listen to me” he started. “Sam and Cas are going to Father Time. You go with them and when you get back…”

“Bobby…”

“Shut your cakehole, son, and listen to me. When you get back, stop running into your doom without thinking and forget what your father had beaten into you.” He regretted his choice of words the moment he felt Dean tensing. This confirmed Bobby’s suspicion but he didn’t say anything, just tightened his hug, showing Dean how sorry he was for not doing anything about it in the past. “Always listen to reason, think about everything a hundred times before you decide anything because there might be an other way. Talk to somebody, don’t bottle up anything. There are many people who care about you with Sam and Cas on the lead. Pick one and talk. Don’t be afraid of your feelings. Admitting that you’re sad, scared, hurt or weak makes you stronger. Nobody would belittle you, you already proved many times what a great man you are.” Bobby was silent for a while then added “And for God’s sake, do all of us a favor and talk with Cas. You were hiding in that closet for far too long. You both deserve happiness.”

At that Dean chuckled a little then stepped away, mood lighter than before.

“Yeah, I’ll… think about that one.”

Bobby shook his head but smiled. Dean would get there eventually, he was sure of that.

“Let’s get you to a map and I’ll show you where Sam and Cas went.” Bobby turned and walked to one of the storage rooms. The Men of Letters seemed to like collecting different kinds of documents. There were rooms dedicated to one theme, like maps for example. They had maps from different time periods from different places of the world, maybe even from other dimensions. Jody recognized Narnia on one of them, but maybe that had been just some kind of mistake when the
Men of Letters were collecting those. But if Dorothy was real then who knew?

“So, tell me, Bobby” he heard Dean saying. “How did you find the bunker?”

“Your grandfather Henry gave us the key before poor fella died.” Bobby shook his head. Henry was a good man, he could tell. Unfortunately, Abaddon had killed him before the leviathans could eat that demon bitch.

“But how could he end up here?” Dean asked. “Me and Sam were dead, weren’t we?”

Bobby stopped and he heard Dean doing the same. He had no idea if their timelines were the same before the other Bobby died and how much different it became after that. Cas had said that their timeline was merging with the closest to theirs or something but there could be a lot of differences.

“You see” he turned to look at him, “you had a thing with an Amazon and had a daughter who…”

Dean eyes widened.

“Emma?” The younger man blinked a few times. “You mean Emma’s alive here?”

Bobby frowned and nodded. Sam, Dean and him had been on that Amazon case. Then Emma had showed up to kill Dean and before Sam could have ended her Bobby had stopped him. Which later had turned out to be the best decision of all. Emma had turned out to be a nice kid, and Dean had liked her a lot and vice versa. It was a shame it had ended so soon. Bobby knew Emma was still mourning her father, lighting a candle every night for him.

Dean sighed and nodded too.

“Good” he said. “Good.” A pause. “So, where’s this map?”

By this reaction, Bobby knew something had happened to that Emma in Dean’s timeline. Poor kid… If anyone deserved to have a child, it was Dean. But he didn’t say anything, no matter how much he wanted to talk about it, tell Dean how many great things Emma inherited from him, how a wonderful young lady she was turning to be. They didn’t have time for that now.

“Here” Bobby said when he put a giant map of the United States on the table in the middle of the room. “Arkansas. That’s the center of the ripple surrounded area. There’s a cave on the north side of this hill.”

Dean stared at the spot Bobby was pointing at. He had an odd look on his face as he sunk deep into his thoughts.

“You okay?” Bobby asked.

“Yeah” Dean said quickly then looked up. “What will happen to you now?”

The older man smiled. Always worrying about others, that was who Dean Winchester was. How could that thing on his arm turn him into a demon?

“Sam told us how to defeat the Leviathans. I think we will try and defeat them. If we still remember it after the ripple passes here.”

Like he was waiting for this answer, Dean nodded.

“Okay. There are two things. Crowley’s real name in Fergus MacLeod. He was buried in Canisbay, Scotland. You can find his bones there. When you get them and make a deal with
Crowley, be sure to have Ca– Emmanuel with you. He will know if Crowley didn’t change certain parts of the deal.”

Bobby’s heart jumped. The deal. His ten years. They were almost up. He wouldn’t see Lucy growing up. But this… Maybe he would have a chance to live for more than a few years and be with his family.

But he can’t think about that. Not yet.

“Okay, Canisbay, Fergus MacLeod. What’s the second thing?”

“I don’t know what will happen when you stab Dick” Dean continued. “When I did it, that bastard dragged Cas and me back to Purgatory with him. If the same happens to whoever does the honor, look for a guy named Benny. He’s a vampire, but a great friend. He will show the way out if you take him with you.”

A vampire? A great friend? Bobby had his suspicions.

“Can I trust him?”

“Yes” Dean said it with so much determination Bobby had to believe it. Huh. Dean being friends with a vampire was something Bobby had never imagined.

But something was still there, hanging in the air. Bobby could feel the tension radiating from Dean, no matter how calm he tried to appear.

“That wasn’t all, right?”

The mask broke. Dean was startled like a deer caught in the headlights. He shook his head slowly and looked away. It took a few moments before he spoke.

“Don’t mention me to Emmanuel” Dean answered with a low voice. “It’s better for him if he doesn’t remember me.”

Bobby was so stunned he didn’t even think about kicking that damn boy in the ass. But he so deserved it.

“You idjit…” he started. “He…”

“Now, look at that” a voice cut in before he could finish. “The Righteous Man all in black. What a sight.”

Both man turned to the door. Meg stood there with Daphne by her side, who gaped as she stared at Dean with wide eyes. She probably recognized him.

“Now you are someone I didn’t miss” Dean said, the earlier gentleness gone from his voice. “You look uglier than I imagined.”

Meg snorted.

“Charming as always. I felt Castiel’s borrowed Grace, thought he came back for something. But I guess it’s not the case.”

Dean huffed and turned back to Bobby, putting a hand on his shoulder.

“I have to go. The ripple’s here in a minute.”
Bobby nodded with a heavy heart and put a hand on Dean’s shoulder too.

“Take care, son. And know that I’m proud of you. No matter what.”

Dean smiled at that and stepped away. He was getting ready to disappear when Meg walked to him.

“Here’s the deal, Winchester” she said. The demon stood straight, looking into Dean’s eyes hard. “He became a mess because of you so you have a lot to make up for. You will look out for him there or I’ll find a way to break you.”

Dean and Meg watched the other for a while, and Bobby feared that they would start a fistfight but suddenly Dean’s lips curled up to a sad smile.

“And you will look out for him here or I’ll find a way to break you.”

Meg smirked.

“Naturally.”

Dean nodded and after one last look towards Bobby he was gone.

But his spot was not empty for long.

As soon as Dean was gone, Emmanuel stood that exact same place, looking confused. His sudden appearance startled Meg too.

“Manny boy” she said. “I’m giving you a bell for your birthday.”

Emmanuel frowned.

“I don’t know when my birthday is.” Then he blinked a few times, turning around, looking for something. “I felt… something familiar in here… Something…” He then stopped, shaking his head. “Maybe it was just you. You were gone for so long, I thought something bad happened to you. Is everyone alright? You too, Daphne?” he asked, looking behind Meg. “What happened?”

Bobby took a deep breath.

“We have a lot to discuss.”

A lot indeed, because he remembered. The ripple passed and he remembered everything. They had to get ready because soon they would fight for their freedom.

They had a chance for a better life. They had to live with this opportunity.

* *

She turned the stone in her hand a few times, looking at it like it would suddenly start telling her all the mysteries it hid. A stone from Oz that absorbed pain. She knew she had heard something about this in the past but she wasn’t sure. She had to find the answers.

“I’m going back to Oz” Dorothy declared and looked up. “I’ll ask the Wizard what he knows.”
Charlie nodded.

“Okay, I’m coming with you” and she was about to stand up but Dorothy pulled her back on the chair.

“No. You stay here.” Charlie opened her mouth to protest but Dorothy quickly continued. “You are needed here more than in Oz. I’ll be away for only a few days.”

“But what if something happens to you?” Charlie argued. “Who will save your nice and round back if I’m not there?”

Dorothy couldn’t help but smile at that.

“Oh, I won’t be alone. I’m taking Toto with me.”

Charlie rolled her eyes at that to what Dorothy laughed.

“Red” he said with a low voice and turned fully towards the other woman. “I’m serious. There’s peace in Oz but this right here? Anything could happen tomorrow or the day after. We can’t both leave them in the time of need, you must understand that.”

Charlie watched her for a few moments, then sighed, giving in.

“Oh, go, do your research, send me a postcard once in a while.”

Dorothy smiled and leaned closer to give a peck on Charlie’s lips. The younger woman stopped talking, then raised a brow, taking on her ‘seductive face’ as she usually called it.

“Now that is something I need more of.”

Dorothy stood and patted her head.

“Not until I come back.”

“Oh, come on! You leave me hanging here again?!”

They went back to their room and quickly packed everything Dorothy needed for the journey. She put away a knife and a gun too, but she hoped she wouldn’t need to use those.

She told nobody she was leaving. Most of them were probably already asleep, why waking them up for a quick goodbye? A low whistle and Toto was by her side, wagging his tail. Dorothy took a deep breath and turned the key in the lock of the door on the corridor close to their room.

It was nightfall in Oz. The Emerald City glittered in the red light of the setting sun that colored the land in that warm color everywhere she looked.

“Give a hug to Arokh for me” Charlie said as she waved.

Dorothy smiled at her.

“I’ll be back soon” she told Charlie then turned to step on the yellow brick road.

Chapter End Notes
I wanted to post this chapter earlier but then I realized I never explained how Henry found his way to the future if the Winchesters were dead. So I decided that Emma lives. Why did you have to kill her, Sammy? Why?

There's a season 10 deleted scene with Sam and Charlie where Charlie says she had a dragon in Oz. So I named the dragon Arokh, after the badass dragon from the game called Drakan: Order of the Flame.

Also, this was the last time we saw Bobby and the others in this fic.

Edit: Oh! And this fic now has more than 200k words! Yey! ^.^
Chapter 55

Chapter Notes

And here, the reason you'll call me a hypocrite.

Also this chapter is a very important part of the fic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“She left?”

“She’ll be back soon, Dean. She’ll ask the Wizard about the stone. Maybe he knows something that can help us.”

“It would help knowing how Sariel got those.”

“Cas said sh– ze was not a fan of direct things, but who knows what ze did behind everyone’s back.”

“Ze’s like Father from Fullmetal Alchemist then. Nobody knew he was there, orchestrating everything from the shadows, building a transmutation circle as big as the country.”

“Fullmetal what?”

“Oh, Dean. You missed out a lot if you don’t know what it is. I’ll make an account for you on Crunchyroll, unless you already have one, which won’t surprise me at all if you do have. I’m sure you’ll like it. You could learn a lot from the Elrics, both of you. Mostly about how to maintain a healthy and not codependent relationship with your brother.”

“Ouch, Charlie. That really hurt.

“I don’t know if I should laugh or be horrified that you know memes from the last decade.”

“Cas! Good morning.”

Castiel blinked a few times before he could focus on the faces at the table. After Sam’s greeting, Dean and Charlie turned to look at him, both smiling.

“Hey, Cas!” Dean said. “I was just telling Charlie that she shouldn’t bite anyone’s fingers.”

The young woman hit the man’s arm gently.

They continued bantering, laughing. Castiel tried to focus on the words, hear and understand them, but all his ears picked up were only noises.

He hadn’t had a good night.

He had been sleeping during the night.

Which was impossible. He still had enough of the stolen Grace to not have any human needs, he knew that from experience. And still, here he was, exhausted from sleeping too much, dehydrated
and hungry. He had woken to the pressure in his bladder and fortunately, despite his dizziness, his mind had been quick and nothing uncomfortable and embarrassing had happened. And fortunately nobody had noticed him. After washing his hands, he had drunk as much as he could without getting sick and made his way to the kitchen to eat something. He didn’t expect the others to be there this early.

“Cas?”

Castiel blinked again and focused on the faces. They looked at him with confusion, Dean with a barely hidden worry too. That was something he didn’t want to happen. He didn’t want Dean to find out that he somehow took a large portion of the stolen Grace and now the Grace he still had was failing him. He knew the hunter. He would find a way to connect those two and blame himself for it.

“Let me see your head” Dean said and before he could protest the man was already there. He took Castiel’s head and gently forced him to bow. Castiel felt fingers brushing through his hair and he almost couldn’t stop a shiver that was about to run down his spine.

“I’m fine, Dean” he told him, sounding as convincing as he could.

“Yeah, and I don’t believe you.” Dean let go of his head so Castiel could look up at him. He met a frustrated gaze. “What’s up with you, man? First a werewolf knocks you out and now you can barely stand? What the hell is going on with you?”

“Nothing is going on with me” the angel argued. “This happened last time too when I took Theo’s Grace. It will pass.”

Dean pressed him lips together as he glared at Castiel.

“Then get rid of it. If it only causes problems then take it out. You can be a human until we find where Metatron put your own Grace.”

Castiel’s eye twitched. If his Grace was still out there somewhere and hadn’t been destroyed in the spell…

“That’s not that simple” he said.

“And why is that?”

Castiel sighed.

“This Grace already merged with my very being. Removing it can cause not reparable damages in me. It can only be replaced by an other Grace.”

The anger was washed away by the horror that appeared in its place on Dean’s face. His lips parted slightly as he stared at Castiel with pain in his eyes.

“Replace as… taking other angels’ Grace?”

Hearing that, something clenched Castiel’s inside. Dean’s nightmare. In which Castiel lived on stolen Grace.

“Yes, but it won’t happen” he reassured him quickly. “If any Grace would replace it, it would be my own.”
A corner of Dean’s mouth tilted down.

“Which means if we don’t find your Grace in time, you’ll burn out.”

Castiel blinked. And blinked again. Was he… burning out? The Grace was definitely fading from him but did it damage him in the mean time? Castiel looked inside him, every corner of his form, but he found no wounds. The Grace was getting smaller with each day, and it did hurt, but he was still himself. His soul was untouched.

“I won’t burn out” he said, or more likely blurted out in his surprise. Why hadn’t he noticed this yet? Theo’s Grace was fading from his body and in the process it was…

He felt a light touch on his back and as he took a deep breath his hunger lessened and the dizziness passed when an other Grace washed over him. It was not the first time this Grace healed him but the first time in this new timeline and he was glad to know the owner of it was still among them.

“Josiah, Ariel and Clara are ready to part” Hannah informed him. She also gave him a meaningful look which he ignored for now. They would talk about this.

At Hannah’s appearance Dean’s face closed off and walked back to the table. Sam and Charlie watched him with questioning eyes, but the older Winchester didn’t look at them.

“I’ll help get them a car” Sam offered. “We’ll drive to the third or fourth town from here then…”

Sam’s phone started ringing at that moment. He took it out of his pocket, looked at it with a frown then picked it up.

“Hello, who is it?” Silence, then his eyes widened. “Gadreel! Where are you?”

All eyes turned to Sam. They hadn’t heard from Gadreel since Sariel banished him from Sam. Castiel had tried to pray to him a few times but he never answered.

“Where are you?” Sam asked. “Okay, okay, we’ll be there, just be careful!” Sam put down his phone which made a sound. Castiel recognized it as the sound informing about the battery and its need to get recharged. “So Gadreel was attacked” he explained. “He’s in his old vessel now, hiding in a motel. He said someone was after him.”

“Sariel?” Dean asked.

“He couldn’t tell” his brother answered and stood up. “Let’s find a car for the angels and go find Gadreel.” He stopped after a few steps and looked back. “Dean?”

Castiel turned to Dean too. He remained seated at the table. At the sudden attention, Dean blinked a few times then looked back at his meal.

“I… think I’ll stay now.” His voice was strangely uncertain. “Don’t get me wrong, I don’t want anything bad to happen to Gadreel either, but I just…”

Sam walked to him and put a hand on his shoulder before Dean could finish.

“That’s okay. Take some time out, you deserve some rest.”

Dean smiled up at his brother.

“Be careful.” Then he looked at Castiel. “Both of you.”
Castiel nodded then walked out of the kitchen with Sam.

“Meanwhile, we can start watching FMA” he heard Charlie’s excited voice.

“Yeah, maybe later” Dean chuckled.

Castiel was glad Dean took care of himself and admitted when he needed to gain back his energy. It didn’t stop him to worry about him, but it made easier to believe that he would get better soon. Wounds would heal, the nightmares would pass, and when they defeat this darkness looming above them, they all would finally have some time to rest. Castiel was uncertain in what form he would be at that time, but one thing was sure. He would be with the Winchesters, no matter what.

*

Sam paced up and down next to the Impala. They arrived fifteen minutes ago. They had found the entrance of the cave easily, it wasn’t even hidden. The question was: Was Father Time really here? Sam wanted to go inside and check but he feared once he went inside he couldn’t come out.

And Hannah was still not there.

Sam looked around again. Apart from the rumble and the approaching form of the ripple in the background, everything was calm, like the animals living in the forest didn’t feel anything. Or they had already fled.

And no Hannah. She had said she would open a portal here, but Sam hadn’t seen anything reminding him to a portal.

Sam looked at his watch. If he was right, they had half an hour before the ripple would get to them. They had lost twenty minutes when Sam decided that a painkiller would help Cas. Only then he had found out that the Impala ran out of those and had to buy some in the closest town. Cas had been conscious at that time and told Sam to not worry about him. But Sam hadn’t listened. He couldn’t just sit there while his friend had been in pain.

They were twenty minutes late and Hannah still hadn’t arrived yet.

The minutes ticked by with a horrible speed. Twenty-five minutes… Twenty… Fifteen… Ten…

“Sam…”

The Impala’s door on the passenger side was open. Cas’ legs were outside while he leaned against the seat with his side, had pressed to the frame of the car. He had woken up about an hour ago, breathing in the cool November air that did nothing to stop his skin from heating up.

“Yeah, Cas?” Sam asked, turning to him.

“I think…” He coughed. He couldn’t say more than a few words without having to stop to catch his breath. “We should go.”

“No” Sam looked at his watch. Nine minutes. “She can be here in any second.”

Cas closed his eyes for a moment.
“We don’t know… how deep… the cave is… It can be… miles long… We don’t have… time…”

Sam searched the surrounding area again, looking for the angel, but nothing. Only the ripple got closer and louder.

Where was she? She had promised to be there, so they could go back together. Was she delayed? Had something happened up there? Should he wait for her, risking missing the chance to fix this mess, or leave?

“Damn it…”

His throat was tight when he helped Cas out of the Impala and the two of them made their way towards the entrance of the cave.

What if the ripple already reached her up in Heaven? What if she wasn’t the Hannah he knew anymore? What if she didn’t remember anything like Garth? What if he would never see her again?

Step by step they got closer to the cave. Cas was limping, almost tripping in his own legs as he coughed and fought for air.

“Sam!”

Sam stopped right before entering and turned around. Hannah was running towards them.

He felt a great weight lifting from his shoulders.

“Hannah!”

He had to go there and hug her and make sure that it was real. He helped Cas lean against the wall then rushed towards her, huge smile on his face.

But then he saw her expression. He saw the horror that settled on her face and the panic in her eyes. Something was wrong.

“Hannah?” He stopped, waiting for her to get to him.

Hannah stopped too, a few steps away from him, panting.

“I know where Castiel’s Grace is and I know how to cure Dean.”

Sam’s eyes widened.

“How…”

“I’ll tell you later.” She looked around quickly, then moved forward to Sam, grabbed his hand and pulled him towards the cave. “We have to go.”

But Sam didn’t move. He needed answers. Like what Hannah had been doing in Heaven and how had she found these out.

“What’s going on?” he asked. “What happened?”

The angel’s hold tightened, but not too much to hurt.

“There’s a traitor” she explained. “An agent who reports to Metatron and follows his orders.” She swallowed. “You’re not safe.”
What?

Sam was shocked. Hadn’t that whole thing been solved? There weren’t any suicide bombers, Metatron was behind bars. And still, someone was following the scribe’s orders?

“Who?”

“We don’t have time…”

“Who is it?”

Hannah took a deep breath.

“It’s…”

A metallic sound was heard.

Hannah’s eyes widened as she looked past Sam.

Sam felt her squeezing his hand then she yanked him to the side.

Sam blinked.

Everything happened in a fraction of a second. He only had time to see that something shiny flew towards them.

He realized too late what it was.

He reached out too late to pull her with him.

Hannah’s eyes locked with his as they widened and the last amount of air was pushed out of her lungs.

Light erupted from her eyes and through her parted lips.

“NO!”

Hannah fell towards the ground. Sam grabbed her and hugged her against his chest as he fell on his knees. He felt something burning him deep down, but that pain was nothing compared to this.

“No, no, no, no, no… Hannah?”

He brushed her hair once. Twice. He settled his hand on her nape, rubbing it, trying to wake her up.

“Hannah?”

He didn’t want to look down. He didn’t want to see the angel blade sticking out of her chest. He didn’t want to see her dead.

Sam shut his eyes, but they were still burning.

Dead…

Sam pulled her closer to his chest, buried his face into her hair, rocking her lifeless body. It was so damn similar to when Dean had died in his arms. Once again, he could do nothing when someone important to him was taken away by an angel blade through the heart…
Damn it! Why did this keep happening again and again? Why did everyone he loved… Why did they… Damn it! Shit!

The ripple growled around him, mocking him for his misery. Sam took a few deep breaths. He knew he had to go. He had to go to Father Time and try to fix everything. But it was so damn hard to move! It was so fucking hard to lower her body on the ground and leave! He knew he couldn’t take her. Not anymore.

Sam shuddered as he took a deep breath and looked to his left. Cas was still there, leaning against the wall, staring towards him with wide eyes, shaking his head like he couldn’t believe what had happened.

Sam turned back to Hannah and finally looked at her face. Her eyes were still open, blank as she stared into nothing. Sam lifted a shaking hand, closed her eyes and as his fingers brushed down her now cold face, he placed a kiss on her forehead. As he slowly lowered her to the ground, he made a promise. He would find the one who had done this. And when he found them, they would wish they were never born.

And he would kill Metatron. He would kill Metatron for what he had done to Dean and Hannah and Cas and Kevin and everyone he had hurt in any way. That damn scribe would find death by Sam’s hands and Sam would celebrate the day the angel vanished from this world.

The ripple was already towering above them when he stood up, rubbed his eyes and ran back to Cas. This was his top priority now. Get to Father Time with Cas. He already lost Dean. He already lost Hannah. He wouldn’t let Cas die too. They would both survive this.

So he took Cas’ hand as soon as he got to him and started running, pulling Cas with him, not caring when the angel protested.

*

An hour after the three angels had finally left the bunker, Dean changed his cloths to his running gear and started stretching just under the entrance balcony. He had come to like running, okay? Running had always meant escaping from a blood thirsty werewolf or rushing to save some innocents from a crazy ghost. Now, when he didn’t have to get anywhere, he found running… relaxing. He could think at those times. Not that he couldn’t think in his room, but running was something else. Fresh air, the pleasant burn in his muscles, and maybe he slept better at night.

“You’re going out even in this cold?”

Dean turned to Kevin halfway up the stairs who stood at the entrance of the library. He had a mug of steaming coffee in his hands and wore a sweater bigger than his size.

“It’s not that cold.”

“Yes, it is” the teen argued. “It’s freezing and everything I want is to cover myself with a dozen blankets and play videogames.”

Dean smiled at him.

“Then do it.”
Kevin sighed.

“I can’t. There are still a few symbols left on the tablet. I want to finish it today.”

Kevin was almost done with the angel tablet. Pride filled Dean at that thought. Their prophet was the best indeed.

“You know what?” he asked and continued walking up the stairs. “When I get back, I’ll make a big meal, and after you finish the tablet, we’ll celebrate it. Heck, I’ll even play one of those videogames with you.”

At that Kevin’s face lit up, like he was a kid who saw the presents under the tree on Christmas Morning.

And with that Dean realized he should buy some presents too, because Christmas would be there soon and when was the last time he had a real Christmas in a real home with a family? Before his mom had died when he had been three. He made a mental note to start some preparations. It was December already. He had to buy a tree and get some decorations and make a lot of food and he should tell Jody too to come over… He shouldn’t be excited by the thought only, but he was. It would be great.

“Really?” he asked with awe.

“Yeah, really” Dean chuckled. “What was the one you talked about the last time? Massive Effect?”

“Mass Effect” Kevin corrected him. “You’ll like it, I’m sure. You can create your own unique character and build connections and decide the fate of the galaxy and all. Though the ending was a bit anticlimactic but the rest of it is wonderful.”

Dean nodded along.

“Yeah, I’m sure of that. So good luck, man!”

It was a bit cold outside, he had to admit. His shoulder started aching after the first five minutes – damn cold! – but he decided to ignore it for the moment. It felt good to be outside on his own. He liked Sam and Cas’ company, but sometimes he just needed a little alone time. And why not while doing something healthy?

Damn, if his younger self could see him now…

He sometimes wondered how different his life would be if there hadn’t been any supernatural creatures running around. If there hadn’t been angels and demons and God and Plans and a destiny he never wanted. When that djinn had captured him, he had seen a world like that. His mother alive, Jess alive, hot girlfriend… But that was it. His relationship with Sam was horrible and his life… Now he wondered… Had that been only a world he had thought he deserved and were only capable of, and the djinn thought that was what he wanted? Bobby had said he would have gone to MIT if he weren’t so selfless. Was he, or now maybe, had he been really MIT material? Ash had gone to MIT, and he had been an… interesting person. But he had been a great help with the Yellow Eyes case. Dean was good with cars, he had rebuilt Baby countless times. And Frank had taught him one or two tricks and he had learnt those fast. And he had built an EMF from a walkman. And when he had stayed at Sonny’s he loved going to school and loved learning new things. And… And…

Dean slowed down and stopped, staring at the ground ahead of him, which was white in the morning frost.
What if he…

What if he got a degree?

He knew he was old and he would stand out among those twenty something kids but still… What if he went back to school? He hadn’t finished the last year of high school. But there were schools for adults, right? They could get a high school diploma at an older age then go to university or whatever. What if he… What if he went to one of those? Then finish it and continue studying then finish studying and get a job? An honest job?

He felt a flutter of excitement in his stomach. Jesus… Why did he feel this way? Those were just thoughts. There were no guarantee that he could finish school. Any kind of school. He wasn’t… He wasn’t that good at studying…

There was a small voice in his head – that reminded him too much to Bobby’s – that scolded him for these thoughts. That he shouldn’t belittle himself that much. That he was good enough and more for anything he put his mind on. That it hadn’t been his fault he couldn’t finish school when he was a teen.

Dean pulled a hand down his face and sighed, hand stopping on his mouth. He’d… He would think about it. Really. But not now. There was just too many things on their list. Sariel, Metatron, and Cas’ Grace. And when everything settled, when there were no monsters they had to run after, then maybe… maybe…

He didn’t know what was going on with him. He had so many positive thoughts regarding the future. He would call it foolish dreams, only he started believe that those things were possible. He felt healthier than ever. There were still the occasional nightmares but they weren’t as horrible after the one where he was trapped behind that mirror. He had had that fight with Sam but it seemed everything was back to normal this morning. Charlie was here and they would watch anime together and a hidden part of his brain cheered for that. Kevin didn’t act grumpy around him, instead, he looked happy that they would play videogames together.

And then there was Cas.

He didn’t want to think too much about anything regarding the two of them. It was good right now. They were both in the bunker, Cas wasn’t away all the time for angel business and Dean wasn’t running around with the First Blade in his hand having demonic fun. But Cas was dying again and he was hiding something, and it hurt a bit that Cas hadn’t said anything yet. Didn’t he trust him? He could help. He would find a way. Cas just needed to say a word and he would be there for him.

Him not talking was an other story. He was scared what the others would say about his past decisions. Would they hate him? Try to understand him? Turn their backs to him? He should tell them soon, tell them what he knew and had done. They were his family. They would listen to him, right? He feared for the worst but he couldn’t keep the truth from them any longer.

Dean rubbed the bridge of his nose and continued running. He was going to talk after Sam and Cas got back. And he wouldn’t hide anymore like a coward.

He had no idea how long he had been running already. The sun was getting higher and higher and he only stopped again when he noticed the unfamiliar view around him. He hadn’t been here before, not on foot or by car. The field around him was empty, Lebanon a long way behind him. But he continued his way ahead anyway. He had a feeling that something was there. It felt familiar. It was calling out for him to get there faster, and Dean ran without thinking.
He soon found himself at the metal door of a tall old building. It looked about a century old, made by hard stone. It was nothing special, except there was a familiar symbol above the door. The star shaped symbol of the Man of Letters.

Dean had no idea the Man of Letters had any other buildings, and now he found this so close to the bunker. What the hell was this? Why was it here? Was it some hidden storage building? There was only one way to find out.

Luckily and surprisingly, the door was open. Dean cautiously stepped inside and cursed himself for not bringing a gun at least. But who would have thought he would find a place like this? He had been just going for a run, not for exploring. And what a thing he found! The building, or more likely a tower, looked just like the inside of the bunker, maybe not that rich in decoration. The black and white tile on the wall and the grey floor-tile were the same, just dustier. It seemed nobody had been here in a long time.

Once inside, the call became louder, urging him to go and find the source. Dean quickly found the stairs and went up and up and up until he found himself on the top floor.

And there it was.

A bluish light trapped in a bottle.

Dean stopped breathing for a moment.

Cas’ Grace.

What was it doing here of all places, this close to them? Why hadn’t Cas felt it yet? Why did Dean feel it? And how did he know what it was? No time for questions. He had to take it back to the bunker as soon as possible and call Cas…

The moment he took a step towards the Grace, an invisible force grabbed him and shoved him against the wall to his left. He heard the bones on his shoulder and upper arm crack, and just by the sound he could tell that he broke them. If not the sound, the pain that shot through his arm was a big clue.

He fell on the ground with a groan, rolling on his back he put a hand on his aching shoulder and tried to stop the tears of pain that threatened to spill.

“Look at that” a voice was heard from the other side of the room. “I’ve never imagined you would be that stupid to walk right into my trap. You should have known the moment you saw Castiel’s Grace, but no. It seems the Winchesters are not as smart as they claim to be.”

Dean glared at the owner of the voice.

Metatron.

The angel watched him with an amused smile on his face like he was watching something enjoyable.

“You bastard…” Dean grunted through his teeth and stood up slowly. He had a hard time keeping his balance with the pain in his shoulder and arm. “The hell are you doing here…”

Metatron’s smile widened.

“I’m here to find some answers. You see, I was keeping an eye on that little ’Team Free Will’ of
yours since the Fall. You acted just like I imagined until one certain day.” Metatron pointed at Dean. “The day when you rushed to save Castiel’s hide. I was surprised. It was so out of character for you to bring Cas back when you were the one who sent him away. So I kept a closer eye on you, as close as I could get, then you know who appeared? Sariel.” The angel shook his head. “Sariel, Sariel… The last time I saw zir, ze was a bright little thing, showing up only when it was necessary. You could imagine how surprised I was when ze banished Gadreel from Sam. And all the mess out there ze makes… And I just know it’s connected to you Winchesters. It’s always you.”

Dean stopped listening for a while now. He watched Metatron but he only paid attention to the bottle containing Cas’ Grace. He had to get it first then deal with Metatron. He just needed to get closer…

“So I decided to find Gadreel, get some information out of him, and lure you out of your bunker.”

Dean blinked and stared at Metatron.

“You…” he started but couldn’t finish. It seemed Metatron loved listening to his own voice a bit too much.

“I got Sam’s number from Gadreel’s mind, which was the most I would willingly take for the pain that has to be endured, and called him.” Then he continued with the voice Gadreel had when he was in his other vessel. “It wasn’t that hard to do. Poor Sammy. First Zachariah tricks him to think you hated him, and now I did the same.”

Dean frowned.

“Zachariah did what?”

Metatron huffed like he couldn’t believe what Dean said.

“Seriously? You didn’t know? You hadn’t read the books about you?” He shook his head. “Then you must be clueless about so many events. But back to the present! First I wanted to capture Castiel, but he left with Sam and other three angels. I decided against my first plan then waited for a while. And look what I found! The eldest Winchester boy walking out without anything to protect himself! And the way you blindly followed your dear angel’s Grace… It must be my lucky day.”

Dean clenched his jaw and focused on the Grace again without looking at it. It was not that far from him. His injury would keep him from snatching it away fast, but he had to try it. Just a well executed jump there and it would be in his hand. Then what? He had no weapons. Maybe he could get Metatron’s blade. It was somewhere hidden in his right sleeve. If he grabbed the Grace, Metatron would try to get it back, then in the scuffle he would take it from him.

Then Metatron arched a brow and the angel blade sled into his grip.

“Don’t even think about it, Dean” he warned him. “The moment you move towards Castiel’s Grace, I’ll cut off your leg. You wouldn’t need it anyway for the talk we will have.”

Dean was about to say something back when a sudden pain shot through his body. Dean groaned out loud and put his hand on his chest, the broken arm hanging limply at his side. Metatron watched him with surprise.

“What is it?” he asked with honest curiosity. “Your soul is turning out of itself.”
Dean breathed heavily. He had no idea what was happening to him. There was this… this strange burning in his chest and it grew stronger with each second.

Metatron looked down at his blade then back at Dean.

“Now that I’m thinking about it. Something is not right with your soul. It’s older than it’s supposed to be. By a year to be exact.” Then his eyes shined up with understanding. “You’re from the future, aren’t you? You somehow found a way to travel back.”

The angel stepped forward and Dean’s pain doubled. He couldn’t stand anymore. His knees hit the ground hard, his upper body bent forward.

“It’s not the first time you met my blade” Metatron stated, filling up the blanks in the story. “Your soul came into connection with it already. Did I stab you…” he touched the tip of the blade to Dean’s chest, “here?”

Dean screamed. His lungs were about to burst into a thousand pieces. He wanted to die. God, he wanted to die so much just to stop this pain. He couldn’t breathe, he felt little needles stabbing his brain and when all power left his body he fell on his side. On his left side, on his broken arm, but the pain there was nothing compared to this greater one.

He was like a fish washed out of the water, struggling for its life in the dry sand. He was fighting to get some air into his lungs but they were like those cheep balloons he couldn’t blow up no matter how much he tried, because the air leaked out through those tiny holes that covered the plastic. His chest was burning like a forest fire in the Californian heat. Wild and unstoppable.

“Oh.” A wide smile grew on Metatron’s face. “I think I found your kryptonite.”

He so wanted to wipe that expression off the angel’s face but the only thing he could do was shaking like he was electrocuted. Because of that he couldn’t move away when Metatron leaned closer and looked deeply into his eyes. His irises were blue, but unlike Cas’, his were cold and menacing.

“I’m very curious about your story, Dean. It seems very interesting by just looking at you. Would you mind to share some details with me?”

Dean tried to tell ‘son of a bitch, I’m not telling you anything’ with his eyes, only to get a laughter from the angel as an answer.

“Oh, Dean. That was a rhetorical question. I don’t need your permission to look into your head. And the pain as the prize is worth the information I will get. Let’s watch together what happened to you, shall we?”

Yes, Dean would actually admit that he whimpered when Metatron reached out with his free hand to touch his forehead. He didn’t want to see that little more than one year ever again. Living it through one time was more than enough, he didn’t want to see it again. He wanted to beg for mercy but even if he could say a word, Metatron wouldn’t give him any.

And for minutes that felt like centuries Dean screamed in agonizing pain.
Yes, I killed Hannah. Killing Spn ladies for the manpain since 2005. I'm sorry. I loved writing this Hannah so much, I wasn't looking forward to this part :( But I had to do this, because this part will have a major role in something important in the future. You'll see.

Supernatural and Fullmetal Alchemist are so similar on so many levels! Imagine if Arakawa created Spn. What a badass story that would be! Give me all the SpnFMA's! I'm planning to combine the two in a way, but I'm not telling you any details now. I also have this headcanon thing, though I don't know if it's a headcanon or just a way of thinking. For Winchester brothers parallels I think about Fullmetal Alchemist. For Destiel parallels I think about Bleach. I made (a not very good) gif set for the latter: http://yana125.tumblr.com/post/99682500273 I think I'll remake it soon...

I'm so sorry, Dean! TT_TT You were just getting to a better place and I do this to you... Also read this because Dean is hella fucking smart (I even have a tag for this on my blog): http://dwarven-beard-spores.tumblr.com/post/132757112546/its-fairly-well-established-in-canon-that-sam-is

And why is this an important chapter? Not just because the flashbacks about how Sam and Cas got to Father Time end here.

The last third of the chapter, the part starting with Metatron taking his blade in his hand, was written more than a year (!) ago, before the first chapter was published. Every time I write, I start with the most important parts of the story, and this was one of the many. Because this one event will lead to the landslide that is Act Four. But before that, Act Three has one last chapter yet.

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