You're Not The One I Was Looking For

by Hells Bartender (Firebog)

Summary

(read this in the movie announcer voice)

In a world. Where angels. And demons. Secretly coexist with humans. Accidents. Don't always happen accidentally.

Dean Winchester was looking forward to his last year of high school when he found himself invited to a party being thrown by kids from the private school in town. A chance encounter with a pretty girl makes him the target of a jealous would be boyfriend but a cursed rabbit’s foot turns what should have been a lethal encounter into the surprise of a lifetime.
Castiel expected to slip through his last year in private school quietly, like all his previous years of high school, but when he's invited to a house party and runs into a nameless omega his life takes a wild turn. He wakes up the next morning to discover he's half bonded to his soul mate and only has five days left to find them before his time runs out. There's just one problem he doesn't even know their name.

This Fall worlds collide in an epic Cinderella story: You're Not The One I Was Looking For.

(PS. If you're looking for a fic with an epic romance and declarations of undying love: This Is Not The Fic You Were Looking For!)

Notes

When you're looking for something that isn't A/B/O AU, highschool/college/university AU, coffee shop/bookstore/bakery AU, Mpreg, or soul bond/soul mates, and you just can't find it the only logical conclusion is to become one with the dark forces and join them in their hellish crusade.

And so I have downed what probably amounts to about a mickey of maple rye and I am here to write the hell out of this A/B/O/high school/coffee shop/bookstore/bakery/Mpreg/soul bond/soul mates/wing!kink/sex pollen/fuck or die AU fic. Take that fandom. Take. That.
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

"Sorry, Jo."

"Sorry doesn't get me my four hours of sleep back."

Chapter Notes

This fic has gone from a drunk venture about smashing through tropes to a mostly sober venture about smashing through tropes. So fair warning the early chapters are abrupt and a bit dodgy.

I'm editing! Whoo! In the future the above warning will be for posterity only!

This fic is edited. Success.

For a couple of warnings see the bottom of the page.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You're not the one I was lookin' for but—
You're the one for me (you're the one)
I'm not the one you were lookin' for but—
You can't go wrong with me
"What's that on your arm?"

Dean stretched and yawned. "Whaat's whaaat?"

Sam pointed to his arm. "That."

Dean looked down at his left forearm to see a bright blue smudge. He scratched lazily at his stomach with his other hand. He squinted at the smudge. He licked his thumb and rubbed it over the smudge a few times trying to scrub it off. It didn't come off. Must be permanent marker. He shrugged. "I dunno Jo or Charlie probably failed at drawing a dick on me last night."

Sam rolled his eyes and shook his head. Dean grinned because having your friends draw dicks on you while you were drunk was a rite of passage. Sammy would get it one day. He pulled Sam into a headlock and hauled the bony nerd into the kitchen. "Mom and Dad not up yet?"

"They went out grocery shopping like two hours ago." Sam said, shoving Dean off him. "And they're pissed you were out until five in the morning."

Dean made a flippant gesture and scoffed, "I've seen their high school year books. It's Winchester family tradition to live it up in your final year of high school."

"I think Dad's exact words were, grounded for his final year of high school." Sam said, hefting himself up to sit on the counter.

Dean shrugged. "It was worth it."

"Where'd you go anyway? Charlie's?" Sam asked. "She told me she was throwing a party this weekend."

"Yeah. Why didn't you go if she told you about it?" Dean asked. He pulled the fridge open. His stomach grumbled, agitated from a night of drinking. Normally he had an iron stomach but he actually felt a bit sick this morning. Queasy almost. And his skin felt crawly and warm. Whatever. He just needed to get some food into himself. He was a Winchester. He didn't get hangovers. He was probably just hungry.

"Because I'm fourteen."

"So?" Dean spied a box of leftover take-out from the burger joint beside the bookstore. And sweet leaping Jesus was that left over pasta? Yes, it was. Dean took out his prizes and set them on the counter. He opened the take-out container. His eyes rolled back into his head as he groaned. "Clearly the gods of fast food favour me this glorious Saturday morning."

"Afternoon." Sam chipped in.

"Semantics." Dean said as he started in on the half eaten burger. He had half the burger in his mouth before it sunk in what Sam had said. Afternoon. He turned to Sam, mouth full. "Aff'er'oom? Wh'a-im is't?"
Sam checked his watch. "One."

Dean's eyes went wide. He swallowed his mouthful of burger so he could swear. "Shit! I'm late!"

"You're working today?" Sam asked, surprised.

"Yeah. Me and Jo swapped shifts for the rest of the month." Dean shouted over his shoulder as he bolted out of the kitchen and up the stairs. He tore his ratty pajama shirt off and did a quick sniff check of the pits. He could probably get away with just deodorant instead of a shower. He whipped around his room looking for clean clothes. He shoulda done laundry two days ago. Why was past him trying to sabotage him?

He found his jeans and boxers from last night. He picked them up intent on giving them a good sniff to see if he could wear them to work but they didn't even make it half way to his face before he was tossing them aside. They freakin' reeked like sex. And they were covered in a bunch of weird stains and...was that glitter? Whatever, the important part - because it was gross - was that they were crusty as hell.

"Ugh. What the hell did I do?" Dean wiped his hand furiously against his pajama clad leg. "Rob a craft store and come in my pants half a dozen times?"

He settled on a pair of khaki's that he normally wouldn't be caught dead in. Grandma Dee had given them to him for Christmas so Mom wouldn't let him give them away. But today Grandma Dee's old lady fashion choices were a blessing. Never being caught dead in them meant they were clean.

Dressed in his cleanest pair of socks and underwear, beige khakis, and a band shirt with only some holes in it he dashed out of the house. He grabbed his bike and took off to the bookstore already sweating bullets over how he was going to appease Bobby - his boss, Jo's dad - for being late again.

A couple of close calls with cars later and Dean was skidding to a stop outside Singer Salvage: Used bookstore and coffee shop. What it really meant was Bobby, the grumpiest old bastard around, skulked around the bookshelves and eventually disappeared while either Dean, Jo, or Ash manned the coffee kiosk and cash register. Dean rolled his bike inside intent on stashing it in the backroom. He brushed an arm over his forehead and wiped away the sweat from the ride over. He may have worked up a sweat on his bike but his blood still turned to ice when Jo glared at him. Jo was scary when she wanted to be and it looked like she wanted to be today.

"You're late!" Jo snapped.

Dean rolled his bike passed her as quickly as he could. "I know, I know. I'm sorry." He rolled his bike into the back room and shoved it into a cramped corner between a box of books and the lunch table. "I slept in!" He yelled over his shoulder.

"That's what I was supposed to be doing!" Jo shouted back to him. "Then dad was waking me up at ten because someone wasn't here to cover my shift!"

Dean grimaced. There were perks to being the boss's kid, like the near impossibility of getting fired, but it also meant your boss knew when you weren't busy and could drag you out of bed by force. Sure, Bobby was like a second Dad to him but he wouldn't want to work for his Dad for just that reason. He liked his plausible deniability. He jogged back out to the front. "Sorry, Jo."

Jo threw the apron at his face. "Sorry doesn't get me my four hours of sleep back."
Dean grinned. "Come on. It couldn't have been that bad. The rush doesn't start for another hour."

"It was horrible. And it's your fault." Jo said sternly.

"I'll come in tomorrow and cover your morning." Dean offered as he tied the apron on. He went over to the sink to wash his hands and scrub the dick off his arm.

"Slightly less horrible." Jo amended. She made herself a cup of coffee then went around the counter to sit in one of the big comfy chairs at the front of the store.

"What would make you love and adore me again?" Dean asked. He rinsed his arm off. The dick was still there. He scrubbed at his arm again. It wasn't coming off. Jesus, what had they done? Tattooed it on his arm? He scrubbed harder ignoring another wave of that warm queasy feeling in the pit of his stomach. He should have drank a bottle of Pepto Bismol before coming in at this rate. Maybe Winchesters did get hangovers once in a while and today was just his lucky day.

"Your solemn pledge to take all my shifts for the rest of the month." Jo said.

"Not happening. I don't like you that much." Dean joked. He scrubbed a little harder at his arm. He was tempted to grab the scouring pad they used on the coffee pots when Ash forgot to wash them for a couple of days. He turned the water on higher to see if a little water pressure would help. Maybe he could blast it off like one of those sandblaster things.

It didn't help get the marker off but it did help settle the might be sick feeling in his stomach as it cooled him down. He hadn't realized how hot he was from his bike ride over. Maybe he wasn't hungover. Maybe he was just a little bit overheated.

Dean rinsed his arm again. The blurry blue dick was still there. "What the hell did you and Charlie use to draw on me?"

"What?" Jo asked. She sat up and looked over the back of her chair.

"Last night." Dean said. He sighed and gave up trying to scrub the dick off. It was smudged enough that it didn't really look like a dick. Hopefully no one would notice. He shoved both arms under the cold water for a minute then splashed some cold water on his face. The queasy feeling went away as he cooled down. He grabbed a clean tea towel and dried his face. "Whichever of you drew the dick on my arm, it won't come off."

Jo glared over at him. "I dunno. Why don't you ask your new buddies?"

"What?" Dean asked as he dried his arms off. He glanced around the store quickly to make sure there weren't any patrons that might tip off the Health Unit. There was no one. He quickly shoved the tea towel up the back of his shirt to soak up the sweat dripping down his back. He was definitely getting out of shape if the ride to the bookstore was making him break out in a sweat. He tossed the used tea towel into the laundry hamper then dug around under the counter looking for the bottle of Advil Bobby kept stashed there. He could feel a headache coming on. Did people get headaches from overheating? Or was that a hangover thing?

"Those kids from the private school." Jo said. She stood up and headed back to the counter.

"The kids from the private school?" Dean scrunched his eyebrows up trying to think of who Jo could mean as he fought with the child proof cap of the bottle of Advil. He didn't know any kids from the private school. He didn't know anyone that knew anyone from the private school. He grimaced as he fought with the bottle of Advil and gave a self-satisfied ha! when he finally got the lid off. He poured out two tablets into his hand then popped them into his mouth and swallowed.
He stashed the Advil back under the counter then started making sure everything was okay with the till. Not that he didn't trust Jo but it didn't hurt to cover his ass.

Jo leaned on the counter and watched Dean check over the till. "Lester or something like that and his merry band of preppy assholes."

"Lester?" Dean didn't know a Lester. He scratched at his back as he thought over last night. His fingers dragged through beads of sweat. He seriously had to lay off the hamburgers if one little bike ride was getting him this worked up.

Dean scratched at his back again. He was starting to suspect he had pulled on the shirt he had worn to Bela's house earlier in the week. He hadn't wanted to go - Bela was kind of a snob - but Charlie was getting friendly with her so he'd gone for moral support. It had turned out that Bela had a cat that basically bee lined for him when he showed up. It was like it knew he was allergic to cats.

"Yeah. You buddied right up to them. Especially that girl, Ruby, or whatever." Jo said. She narrowed her eyes at Dean. She reached across the counter and plucked at the neck of Dean's t-shirt. "Nice hickey by the way. I can count the teeth. If you and Lisa are on again she's going to be pissed."

Dean clapped a hand to his neck. That actually stung a bit. Shit. He grabbed one of the empty metal coffee pots and held it up. He bent his neck to the side. Oh. Shit. Lisa was going to be pissed. Well, maybe. He was pretty sure they were on again. A new wave of sweat broke out as he contemplated trying to explain to his probably on again girlfriend why he had a hickey. The worst part was that he didn't even really remember that Ruby girl. He couldn't even say it was worth the trouble it was going to cause.

"Get her number at least?" Jo teased.

"I don't even remember much about her." Dean said, tilting the coffee pot this way and that trying to get a better look. Had that chick broken the skin? It looked like it. Jesus. What kind of make out session had he had? "Why didn't you swoop in and save me from myself?"

"What?" Jo sounded surprised.

"What do you mean what?" Dean said. He shoved the coffee pot back down. Looking at the massive hickey wasn't about to make it go away. "What happened to our long standing agreement of bailing each other out from our own stupid screw ups?"

Jo arched an eyebrow at him. "You ditched us."

"What?"

---

"Haven't seen you around here before." Dean said. He gave the other kid a friendly nudge with his elbow. "New to town?"

"Yeah. But you wouldn't have seen me anyway. I go to the private school." The other kid said.

"Saint Chuck's?" Dean was surprised. The kids from the private school never really got off their high horses to come to public school parties.

"Saint Charles." The other kid corrected. He put his hand out. "I'm Alastair."
A girl slid in beside Alastair while he was shaking Alastair's hand. Dean tried to give her a discreet once over out of the corner of his eye. "I'm Dean. And who's this? Your girlfriend?"

"Just a friend. I'm Ruby." Ruby said, sticking her own hand out. She beamed a smile at him like she was proud of introducing herself to him.

Dean laughed and gave her hand a quick shake. "You from Saint Chuck's too?"

"Saint Charles." Ruby said automatically. She flashed another wide smile and waved to the crowd around the kitchen table. "Cool party."

"Yeah." Dean agreed. Charlie's parties were always pretty good. The perfect mix of music, chatting, games, and underage drinking. He gulped when Ruby stepped a little closer to him.

Her hip bumped into his while she moved out of the way of someone coming through with two handfuls of beer bottles. They laughed the awkward laugh of teens at the accidental grind of hips.

Despite the awkward moment Ruby stayed and chatted—Alastair too. A couple more kids from Saint Chuck's showed up. Whoops. Saint Charles. They were actually kinda cool. They weren't nearly as stuck up as everyone said they were. They all seemed to know Ruby. Dean was starting to wonder if maybe Ruby and the Saint Charles kids had crashed Charlie's party. But, whatever, they seemed cool. Plus Ruby smelt really good.

Dean was more than a few beers into his night when he realized that he had an arm wrapped around Ruby - damn did she ever smell good - and had spent the last two hours talking to her about music. It probably wasn't the best idea. Him and Lisa had been talking again and they might be back on. He downed another beer. Might was still just maybe. And Ruby smelt good. And she was pretty. And smiled a lot. And she liked music.

"Hey, you want to come back to my place?" Ruby asked when the conversation lulled for a moment.

"Oh. Hey. Uh, I think I'm back on with my girlfriend." Dean babbled as he untangled himself from Ruby. Okay, so even if it was maybe with Lisa he'd still feel bad if he started making out with some random chick he'd just met. ...even if she did like music and smelt good.

"Me too." Ruby laughed. "I meant, I'm having a party tonight too. We're all going to head back over in a bit. You want to come with us? We don't usually hang out with people from town— the other school. It could be cool. If you came."

"Oh!" Dean laughed at the misunderstanding. He drained the last of his beer and set the bottle on the counter. "Yeah...that ah...that sounds cool."

"Cool." Ruby agreed.

"Cool." Dean nodded. It was cool. He didn't know anybody who had gotten invited to a Saint Chuck's party before. He looked around the room for Jo or Charlie. He saw Jo in the corner. He waved to catch her attention. "Hey, Jo! I'm heading out!"

Jo didn't glance up. "Sure! See you at work tomorrow!"

Dean grinned back at Ruby. This was gonna to be awesome. He was going be the only kid in school who successfully got into a Saint Chuck's party.
So fair warning, this isn't tagged as non-con but it could be depending on how you view the sex pollen trope and the fuck or die trope. This fic doesn't treat them as a touchy feely bonding experience. Neither person consented to the sex pollen or the fuck or die scenario and they aren't happy about it.

I didn't tag this as underage because 16 is the age of consent in Canada and that's where I'm currently sitting (seriously if admitting to drinking a mickey of maple rye didn't tip you off that I'm Canadian I don't know what would). Both Dean and Castiel are 17 soon to turn 18. Your mileage may vary in regards to the age of consent.

If you are concerned about Dean and Castiel's ages at the beginning of this fic in conjunction with the explicit warning this is not written to be porn. (spoilers spoilers spoilers) There are three instances of "sex" when they're 17 and it's all terrible and/or embarrassing. The first two instances are the results of a series of unfortunate events and are more I invite you to discuss the ethics and outcomes of sex in this situation type of sex. The third instance of sex is sort of weird soul mate sex, I guess? They aren't in the same room. It's more comic relief then anything. There are also a few instances of masturbation but again, it's not played up as 'oh wow hot', it's more body horror. Basically the sexual activity in this fic is terrible and embarrassing and if anything would probably make you not want to have sex ever again.

Oh, and that cover picture? It's intentionally bad. I couldn't resist the lens flare just for the trope of it.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

"Cassie, the rumour mill says you got lucky last night." Gabriel said, waggling his eyebrows.

"Cassie is my grandmother's name and how do you even know that?" Castiel asked. He shot Gabriel a stern look. Some days it was questionable who was supposed to be the one in charge at the bakery. "You're not still crashing high school parties are you?"

Chapter Notes

I'm toning down the rut/heat thing just a little bit. It isn't an absolute dire need. Just a really really intense want masquerading as dire need. Basically I needed society to function smoothly, so there's less, oh shit! rape at every corner! that some A/B/O verses go for since we've got a mix of humans and supernatural creatures going on here.

However I promised fuck or die so there is some absolute dire need. Just more of the psychological kind rather than a biological imperative...well I guess death would be biological in nature. Whatever. Take it how you will.

Castiel was thankful that his room was in the basement. He had drank far too much last night and the prospect of confronting daylight hungover on the second day of his rut was not a pleasant one. At least he could put it off for a few more minutes. He sluggishly groped around in the dark and found his dresser. He took out what he hoped were matching socks and pulled them on. Underwear went on next. He had to sit down for a minute before attempting pants and a long sleeved shirt. He rubbed his aching head. Why had he let Anna talk him into going to that house party at Ruby and Lilith's? He knew today was his last day of work before his rut would start to peak.

He yawned. He stretched out his arms and wings and slumped back on his bed. He absently fixed a few stray feathers and sighed. The crawling feeling under his skin that came with his rut didn't seem as bad as it usually was on the second day. Maybe all that graffiti in the alpha bathrooms was right. It wasn't as if the Health teacher would promote having sex during a rut without a mate. She was probably forced to tell students that sex didn't lessen a rut anymore than taking matters into your own hands did.

But he didn't think it was his hangover that was calming his rut down. He had never had sex with a partner during his rut before but last night there had been that omega boy at the party and things had...taken a turn towards the physical. And now he could almost ignore that instinct based drive to mate today. It was still there nattering away at the back of his head about how nice it would be to find warm compliant flesh but it wasn't screaming out demands that sent him running for the bathroom or trying to find a roll of paper towels. Maybe there really was something to having sex during a rut.
Normally his last day of work or school before he just gave up and barricaded himself in his room for a five day masturbatory marathon was borderline horrible but this time it wasn't so bad. For the most part it seemed to be the hangover that was getting him today. He sat back up and stretched his wings a last time before tucking them away in a higher plane— good for blending in with humans and worlds more convenient for putting on shirts.

By the time he had walked to work he was actually feeling quite a bit better. The hangover was almost gone and his rut seemed to be happy to not shoot him full of embarrassing hormones in public. Sex apparently did work. He needed to find a friend with benefits that wouldn't mind having sex during his rut if that was the case. Maybe Balthazar would want to. They'd had sex a few times before at parties but never during Castiel's rut. Though if he was being honest with himself the thought of someone seeing him lose it during his rut was embarrassing. Maybe it would be a good idea to find someone he didn't know as well so he wouldn't have to face them after.

He pushed open the door to the bakery and was immediately greeted by a wolf whistle. He rolled his eyes. Castiel still wasn't sure how Gabriel had become a respectable member of the community just a year out of high school and he was using the word respectable in the loosest sense of the term. He would never understand why Gabriel's grandparents had thought it was a good idea to leave him the bakery when they moved back home. Gabriel might be a beta and technically an adult but he still needed adult supervision.

Gabriel made a few more inappropriate noises while Castiel hung up his coat.

"Cassie, the rumour mill says you got lucky last night." Gabriel said, waggling his eyebrows.

"Cassie is my grandmother's name and how do you even know that?" Castiel asked. He shot Gabriel a stern look. Some days it was questionable who was supposed to be the one in charge at the bakery. "You're not still crashing high school parties are you?"

"Nah, that got old days ago." Gabriel joked, there was more eyebrow waggling. "So...you're not denying you got it on during your rut?"

Castiel sighed. Gabriel may technically be an adult and his boss but they had gone to school together for years. Gabriel would never pass up a chance to hear gossip about him. And if Gabriel was hearing gossip about him already that probably meant everyone knew.

"Does everyone know?" Castiel asked.

"Well, yeah." Gabriel laughed. "We'd put the humans' NSA to shame for knowing other people's business." Gabriel punched him in the shoulder. "Don't worry though, your sexcapades are going to be the least of anyone's worries."

Castiel gave him a puzzled look. Rumours that had to do with who was having sex with whom tended to be the ones that didn't die. The only time those rumours stopped was if something worse happened. "What happened? Did some of those New Traditions lunatics do something?"

"Nope." Gabriel said, grinning.

"Then what?" Castiel asked. At least from the look on Gabriel's face he could be reasonably sure no one had died.

Gabriel held up a finger. "First, Lilith told Meg who told Uriel who told me, so this is one hundred percent a secret, that apparently Ruby invited a human to Lilith's party."
"That's...different." Castiel said. The teachers at school always encouraged betas to mingle with humans so they'd be better prepared to deal with them but no one - and especially not omegas - ever invited them into their homes. But then, Ruby was always trying to be 'progressive'. Castiel shrugged. "It's strange but...we live side by side them. They buy cupcakes from you. I don't see how it's making waves."

"Yeah, but who invites a human to a demon-angel mixer?" Gabriel said. He wrinkled his nose. "And there were omegas there. What if something else happened?"

"Why? What else happened?" Castiel asked.

Gabriel glanced around like someone might have crept into the bakery to listen. He leaned in closer to Castiel. "Alright, this is where it gets juicy. Second, someone broke into Lucifer's safe storage."

Castiel's eyes went wide at that. Lucifer kept any and all magical artifacts or substances that were dangerous or cursed until someone could figure out how to destroy them or neutralize them. Someone breaking in there could only have the worst intentions. "Do they know who did it?"

"Not yet. But—" Gabriel was obviously about to relate one of the more ridiculous rumours out of the rumour mill. "They think the human was in on it."

"What?" Castiel said incredulously. How would a human get pass all the wards in place? Most angels or demons couldn't get in. How did people believe that kind of crap? Whoever had broken in had to have been powerful and probably had decades of magical knowledge. "Does everyone actually think the human stole something?"

"Yep." Gabriel said, grinning. "Scandalous, right?"

"I think the word you're looking for is ludicrous. A human wouldn't be able to get pass Lucifer's wards." Castiel said. He went around the counter and picked up an apron. They had already wasted enough time on ridiculous rumours. They needed to get to work making bread. Saturday was bread baking day because there was inevitably a rush of customers on Sunday looking for it.

"Yeah. Exactly." Gabriel said and if Gabriel were a cat he'd be wiggling in anticipation for the final pounce. "So...?"

"So..." Castiel thought it over. "So everyone thinks someone at the party helped Ruby's human get in."

"Ding ding ding!" Gabriel said, pointing a finger up.

Castiel rolled his eyes. "That sounds like the plot of a terrible movie. Why would a human even want to break into Lucifer's safe storage? That doesn't make sense. I'm starting to doubt there even was a human there. If someone did break into Lucifer's safe storage it'd make more sense to leave the human out of it. They'd probably just get in the way."

Gabriel laughed. "Well, it's all just hearsay for now. Anyway, my bet is that Ally did it. That little creeper's always up to something."

"Alastair isn't so bad." Castiel said, defending his classmate out of habit. Alastair was new to the area. Though honestly, he was a little weird. Castiel heaved one of the large plastic containers of flour onto the table. He peeled the lid off. "He's just a little strange. He's the only alpha in his family. His parents are all betas."

"Ally is bad news." Gabriel insisted. He brought over a large mixing bowl already filled with a
mixture of yeast, sugar, and water. "His family moved out here to the boonies because he got kicked out of his last school for endangering people's identities."

"I'm sure that's just another rumour from the rumour mill." Castiel said as he rolled up his sleeves. He reached in to grab the big scoop out of the flour and froze. There was a bright green mark on his arm. 

"I still think it was him. No one's seen him since last night." Gabriel brought over a second bowl of yeast to find Castiel standing stock still. "You going to just stand there and think bread into existence?"

Castiel stared down at the mark on his arm. Absurdly the first thing that went through his head was a calm, _Oh_. He had found his soul mate and his soul mate's name was a long green illegible smear down his left forearm. That calm fizzled out and died. He slapped his other hand over top of it as if that would make it go away.

"What's...?" Gabriel came around to see what was holding Castiel up. For once he didn't have a snarky comment to make as he caught a glimpse of the green mark under Castiel's hand. Gabriel sucked in a sharp breath. "Oh...holy crap, Cassie."

Holy crap was a good way to explain what Castiel was trying to hide under his hand. A soul mate? People didn't _really_ bond to their soul mates. That was the stuff of romance novels. It was a one in a million shot in the dark that the mate someone chose to bite was actually their _soul_ mate.

_How on earth did he have a soul mate mark? _They didn't just spring up on their own! He needed to have chosen a mate. He needed to have bitten them and left behind a mating mark and they would have had to done the same to him. He hadn't...had...sex with...anyone... Oh no. Had he mated, marked, and bonded his one night stand!? 

"Cassie? Cas?"

No. He couldn't have. That couldn't be it. He couldn't have.

...but who else? _Crap! _He _must_ have. He had mated and bonded a complete stranger! He had a _mate _that was a complete strange! And there was a soul mate mark too, those were supposed to be forever. He couldn't be stuck with a complete stranger forever! _He was only seventeen! _He shot a panicked look at Gabriel. _"They're...a soul mate bond...that's not...that's not _really_ permanent, is it? That's just...that's just made up for bad romance novels, right?"

Gabriel gave the covered soul mate mark a grave look. _"No kiddo, that mark is permanent. You can't back out of a _soul _mate bond."

Castiel sucked in a breath. Can't back out!? He clenched his fingers into the flesh of his arm as if he could tear the green smudge off. He lifted his hand up a little to look at the soul mate mark. _It was still there! _He slapped his hand back down. Maybe it wasn't really a soul mate mark. The mark should be his soul mate's name but this was just a bright green smear across his forearm that looked vaguely like they might be letters. He looked at Gabriel hopefully. _"It should be their name, right? It's maybe not actually a soul mate mark if it's not their name...?"

Gabriel's eyes narrowed. He pulled Castiel's hand away from the mark on his arm. He took in a sharp breath upon seeing the green smudge on Castiel's arm. He yanked Castiel down and pulled at the neck of Castiel's shirt. His eyes went wide. _"Cassie...you done gone screwed this up big time."

"Wha -what?" Castiel asked, afraid. He had _permanently _bonded with someone _and_ screwed it up!!
How much more screwed could he be? "How?"

"You bit them but they didn't mate you." Gabriel said. His voice was unusually level. He sounded almost like the adult he was supposed to be. "Your bond's only half complete."

"Does that mean..." Castiel frowned at the serious tone in Gabriel's voice, but maybe this was a good thing. Maybe it was a smudged mess because his one night stand was his soul mate but they weren't supposed to be mates until later. "Does that mean I can break it?"

Gabriel shook his head. "You can't break it once it's started."

Castiel's hand drifted back over the soul mate mark. He couldn't break it but...he could delay it! He just wouldn't let his one night stand mate him until he was ready; sometime after he was finished school and gone to college and found a real job back home.

"You gotta find them, Castiel." Gabriel said. It was never a good sign when Gabriel used someone's full name. "ASAP. And complete it."

"What? No! I can't, Gabriel. I'm seventeen! I have to go to college first or get a job or...I can't have a mate at seventeen!"

Castiel said. He felt desperately lost. He couldn't have a mate. People didn't have mates at seventeen anymore. His grandmother had, had a mate at seventeen! "I haven't even finished high school! I can't have a mate!"

"Cassie, this isn't something you can just forget about. Whoever it is, they're your soul mate. You have to complete the bond."

"I will. Just not now." Castiel said, clinging to that fleeting hope.

"Cassie. You have to complete it now." Gabriel said seriously. "You tore your soul open to let someone else in. You have to finish it. And soon. If you don't it'll kill you both."

Castiel stared in shock for a moment before yelling something very useful. "What!?"

"Shoulda said that better." Gabriel muttered under his breath. He spread his hands in a calming gesture. "Hey, it's cool man. You'll be fine." Gabriel said, grabbing Castiel's shoulders like he might fall down at any second. "You just gotta find your one night stand and screw again and get them to mate you in the next couple of days. It'll be fine. They're your soul mate, right? They'll want to make sure you're okay. We'll find them before your rut is over."

"I...I can't...I don't even know their name!" Castiel stammered. "How am I supposed to find them!? What am I supposed to do with a mate? I'm seventeen! Gabriel, what if I can't find them!?"

"Cassie. Chill. It's not like your soul mate is going to hide from you." Gabriel said. He started steering Castiel towards a chair in the corner. He pushed Castiel down into the chair gently. "Think about it, there's some other kid out there freaking out too, probably asking everyone around them if they know who you are and like I said, we're worse than the humans' NSA."

"...right. We're worse than the humans' NSA." Castiel repeated quietly. Gabriel was right. There weren't that many other kids around his age at school, fewer still that were omega boys. Whoever it was wouldn't be hard to find. They just had to ask around. He'd be okay. Even if he had a mate - a soul mate - at seventeen. Crap no, he wasn't okay. Oh god, what if he had bitten a demon? His mother was already upset enough as it was when Anna brought Ruby around the house.

"Alright Cassie, tell me what happened and I'll issue a red alert."
Castiel sniffed at the air. There was something unusual lingering in the stale air of the noisy crowded living room. It smelled...outdoorsy and warm and sweet. He looked around the room. He noticed a few other alphas seemed to be doing the same. Castiel rolled his eyes. So there was an omega nearby close to their heat. Some days alpha biology made him want to slap himself. They had come a long way in society, they didn’t need to go into a mating frenzy every so many weeks. The species was getting along just fine not giving in to its baser instincts, better even now that ridiculous displays of dominance between alphas didn’t cut their numbers in half.

He looked around the room for Anna. Anna was a beta, she’d be fine handling an omega in heat. She’d find them somewhere safe while that wave of need passed then get them a taxi home. He wandered out into the hallway and slammed into someone.

Castiel reeled back as his head was flooded with that warm outdoorsy smell. He had found the omega. And they weren’t close to their heat, they were in heat. Why hadn’t anyone stopped them from coming to a house party? This was exactly the sort of situation the Health teacher warned omegas about.

The omega stumbled back and grinned at him. There was an obvious glassy look to the omega’s green eyes. The omega said something and pointed towards the crowded living room but Castiel couldn’t hear them over the thump of the music.

Castiel shook his head. Sending a drunk omega in heat out into a crowded party was an all around bad idea even if they were the tallest omega Castiel had ever seen. "You're in heat!"

The omega looked at him confused and probably yelled back, "What!?"

"You're in heat!" Castiel yelled again trying to overpower the music.

"What!?" The omega probably yelled back again.

"Heat!" Castiel yelled. The omega shrugged and twirled a rabbit's foot key chain on their finger then started to push past Castiel. Castiel grabbed their arm and pulled them down the hallway where it was quieter. The omega grinned at him. Castiel let them go. His hand came away sticky and full of something sparkly. He wiped his hand on his pants. He knew some omegas used body sprays to cover up their scent during heat but this one had gone overboard—and it didn't even seem to be working. "You're in heat."

"You're pretty hot too." The omega said, grinning. They sniffed at the air. "What'd you roll around in? You smell like leather and Christmas!"

Castiel looked at them confused. "What? I didn't...why would anyone roll around in—"

"Hey! You know how big this house is? It's huge!" The omega said, waving a hand towards the other end of the hallway. "Never been in here before and I lived in town my whole life!"

"You don't have to yell." Castiel said, lowering his own voice. "Are you here with someone?"

"Nope." The omega grinned at him and twisted the key chain around in their fingers. "Why? You wanna get me a drink?"

"I think you've had enough. You really should wait for this surge to pass then go home." Castiel said. He thought over Ruby's house. He'd been here often enough since Ruby and Anna had started dating that he knew some of the layout. He thought Ruby's room had an on suite bathroom with a
lock. That would be a safe place for the omega to wait it out until they could call a taxi and get home. "Come on, you can wait in Ruby's bedroom while I phone a cab."

He gestured for the omega to follow him up the stairs but the omega slipped their hand into his and pulled him in tight against them. "What the hell would I want to wait for in Ruby's bedroom?"

Castiel couldn't help the deep breath he took when the omega stopped squeezing him in a bear hug. It was a mistake. He got another heady rush of that sweet warm outdoorsy smell and...there was something else that pricked at his nose. He squirmed out of the omega's grasp. Not only were they the tallest omega he had ever seen, they were the strongest one too.

The omega shoved their head into the crock of Castiel's neck and drew in a long breath. The omega gave a deep laugh and let him go. "Sorry. You're just...you smell really good. Like...I dunno. But I bet if I could bottle it I could sell it on ebay."

"You can sell anything on ebay." Castiel found himself saying. He shook his head trying to get that very omega scent out of his nose. It was disorienting. It didn't help that he was just starting into his own rut. He really should find Anna and let her take care of the omega.

The omega grabbed Castiel's hand and pulled him along up the stairs. "You said there was a bedroom?"
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

He didn't need to sleep. He need the coldest shower on the face of the planet. Luckily they had a crappy hot water heater.

Chapter Notes

Shit...I picked a bad day to update this didn't I? Right before the premiere of season 10. Well go me for fucking that up.

General advisement: This is the last of my pre-written chapters from the weekend. We're now into 100% WIP territory. There's some vague outlines but I won't be updating this on a super frequent basis anymore. And by not frequent I mean not three chapters in four days. Fear not. Most fics I write update once a week. So until I'm gainfully employed once more I'll probably be updating about once a week. Maybe twice if I've been drinking. ...I think that kinda makes me come off as an alcoholic. Let me reword my advisement: Fear not I will update once a week and I am not an alcoholic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"What do you mean what?" Jo asked, mimicking Dean.

"I don't remember ditching you." Dean said. He scratched at his back and frowned. "I don't...I don't exactly..."

What had he done after Charlie's? Now that he thought about it last night didn't...didn't quite make sense. He had some vague recollection about Charlie's kitchen and a dark haired girl - that must have been Ruby - and he was pretty sure he had walked across town...and walked back across town with the sky turning that early pre-dawn blue.

Dean let his hand drop from his back. "I...might have...son of a bitch."

Jo rolled her eyes. "Do we need to borrow dad's pick up truck and return the school statue again?"

Dean wiped away the sweat accumulating in his hairline while he tried to piece together what had gone on between his two trips across town but there was just a blurry mess. He was walking across town with a bunch of people and then he was walking back home alone. Had someone roofied him?

"Dean?"

As creepy as it was that he might have been roofied his stomach chose that moment to give an unsettled heave. That queasy feeling in his stomach and the crawly feeling across his skin had flared up. Sweat dripped down his back.
"Dean...? You okay?"

Dean nodded yes. Sweat dripped from his hair, down his face, and off his nose. He needed to...

"...you're looking pretty red, Dean."

"I'm fine, just ah...need to drink some water. Worked up a sweat coming over here." Dean said. Yeah, water. That was it. Ice cold water. No. That's what he needed: Ice. Dean grabbed a cup off the back shelf and headed for fridge. He pulled the freezer open and scooped a cup full of ice out of the ice bucket. He brought the cup up to his lips and poured out a mouthful of ice. He crunched it up and swallowed and for a brief second that queasy filling in the pit of his stomach eased up. He put the cup of ice to his forehead.

Jo gently turned him around to look at his face. She drew back startled. "You look like you have heatstroke."

"I'm fine. Just hung over." Dean said. He poured some more ice into his mouth and crunched away on it. He filled the cup back up. That queasy filling was getting worse. He glanced over at Jo. "Can you watch the till for a minute?"

Jo nodded. "Gonna go blow chunks?"

"Yeah." Dean said. He hadn't thought that's what he needed to do until Jo had suggested it. But yeah, that queasy filling could definitely be the burger he had eaten this morning trying to escape. He bolted for the bathroom, cup of ice in hand. The queasy feeling in his stomach was starting to feel like a punch to the gut.

He tore the bathroom door open, dashed in, and slammed the door behind him. His stomach roiled. That hamburger from this morning was gonna go. His stomach heaved again then fell as if bottom had dropped out. Freakin' hell that burger was gonna go but he wasn't sure what end it was coming out of. He grabbed the plastic bucket that lead a double life as a waste basket from under the sink, shoved his jeans down, and sat on the toilet with his head in the bucket.

Sweat poured off him. He ate the rest of the ice. When that was gone he leaned over and filled the cup up with cold water from the sink. No matter how much cold water he drank the sweat kept pouring off him. He'd even taken his shirt off and tried to lean against the cold tank of the toilet. Nothing was cooling him down. What the hell kind of hang over was this?

Ten minutes later there was a knock at the door.

"You okay, Dean?"

Dean grimaced into the bucket. He really wanted to say yes. He hated admitting to being hung over or sick and he was pretty sure he was both. His stomach wouldn't settle down, something felt like it was on fire low in his belly, and he was starting to wonder how high a fever he could get before he started getting delirious. He groaned into the bucket when that queasy feeling rolled through him again along with a few stabs of pain.

"Dean?"

"No. I think I'm gonna have to go home." Dean said. He wasn't even gonna pretend he could work today.

"You want me to ask my dad to drive you home?"
"...yeah." Dean didn't think he'd make the bike ride home at this rate.

It was another fifteen minutes before Dean noticed that he was cooling down. He had stopped sweating. He drank a few glasses of water to make sure he hadn't stopped sweating because he was dehydrated. He sat and waited. Nothing happened. There was no new pain, just the dull ache of old pain. The queasy feeling had stopped. His skin still felt weird like it was too tight with a few million bugs trapped under it crawling around but he didn't feel hung over or sick or whatever that had been.

He set the bucket down. He stood up too fast and had to grab onto the paper towel dispenser for a moment while his head spun. He breathed deep a few times before bending down to hitch his pants back up. He pulled his shirt on. All that fabric against his skin felt like sandpaper. Well, he'd just have to grin and bear it until he got home. Bobby wasn't gonna let him ride home naked.

He opened the door of the bathroom to find Jo working the cash and Bobby waiting for him in one of the big comfy chairs. He thought about grabbing his bike for one second then decided that he could just grab it tomorrow when he came in to work.

"You good to go?" Bobby asked, getting up.

"Yeah...think you can break some speed limits?" Dean asked, heading for the door.

Bobby didn't break any speed limits but his house was just a few blocks over. He was home in less than ten minutes.

Dean practically flung himself out of the truck when Bobby pulled up in his driveway. That queasy feeling was coming back and he was starting to sweat again.

"You gonna be okay kid?" Bobby asked.

"Yeah. Just got to sleep it off." Dean said over his shoulder. "Thanks for the ride!"

"No problem."

Dean gave a quick wave goodbye as he opened the door then dashed into the house. He didn't need to sleep. He need the coldest shower on the face of the planet. Luckily they had a crappy hot water heater.

He kicked his shoes off and ran for the bathroom. He pounded up the stairs. "Please, don't let anyone be in there!"

Thankfully it didn't seem like anyone was home. He skidded into the bathroom, slammed the door closed, and tore his clothes off. Sweat was starting to trail down his back again. He turned the shower on, not bothering at all with the hot water tap. He stepped into the shower and breathed a sigh of almost relief. He still felt like he was sweating buckets but the blessedly cold water was washing it away.

He turned his face up into the spray of water and opened his mouth. He drank down mouthful after mouthful of cold water. It helped a little bit. Enough that he wasn't worried about a fever frying his brains.

...enough so that he felt a little bit horny about still being alive?

He glanced down and gave a breathy disbelieving laugh. His dick was hard. His laughter made it sway in a suggestive wave hello. Apparently he had a fetish for burning up with a fever. He trailed...
his fingers up it. "Sorry buddy, not when I might be throwing up any second."

On cue his stomach gave another queasy flop low in his belly. He groaned. What the hell was going on? Had that burger gone bad? Was this food poisoning? He plunked down to the bottom of the tub making sure to sit in the middle of the spray of water. Standing was making him feel worse and the bathtub was one of those old cast iron numbers; pleasantly cold against his skin.

When the worst of the queasiness had passed he leaned against the back of the cold metal of the tub, letting the water hit his chest. He wiped a wet hand over his face. What if this was the side effect of some drug? Maybe he hadn't been roofied. Maybe someone had doped him up with some crazy new party drug and he was having a bad reaction? It'd explain why he couldn't remember much from last night and was sick as a dog.

He pressed his hand to his forehead for a moment trying to force the memories but things were blurry at best. He let his hand fall down to his lap. He noticed the blue smudge of marker on his arm was still there. The damn thing still hadn't come off. He had figured with all the sweating he'd been doing it'd clean his pores out or whatever it was girls were always talking about.

He rubbed at the smudge absently while he tried to remember what had happened in-between going to Ruby's and coming home.

---

*Dean followed Ruby and the other private school kids out the door.*

Alastair shot him a couple of dirty looks over his shoulder. Dean shrugged the first time, not sure what it was all about, but when the kid kept doing it he eventually started smiling and waving back just to egg him on. Dean might have been being a little shit about it.

Alastair worked his way through the group towards Ruby. He shot Dean another dirty look before leaning in close to Ruby's ear and staged whispered so that Dean could hear, "You invited a townie back? Are you sure that's wise?"

"He's cool." Ruby said, taking a half step away from Alastair. "And they're always saying at school that we should make more of an effort to socialize with everyone else in town."

"Yeah but a townie? Really?" Alastair said and it was clear he meant it as an insult. He stepped closer to Ruby. She stepped aside again.

Dean arched an unimpressed eyebrow. Did this Alastair kid really think he couldn't hear him? And did he really not get it when a chick wasn't interested?

He jogged up to them and wedged himself between them. He wrapped an arm around each of them at the waist in a goofy friendly hug that may have been more beer and less clear thinking. He grinned at Ruby. She gave him a thankful smile back. It was obvious she didn't really enjoy Alastair's company. Dean didn't much like him either now that he'd talked to him for more than five minutes. And what kind of name was that anyway? *Alastair*. Who doomed their kid to a name like that?

He broke away from Ruby, pulling Alastair with him.

"Maybe you should give her a little space." Dean suggested.

"Maybe you should go home." Alastair snapped back.
"What? And miss the fun?" Dean said, messing up Alastair's hair. "We can't disappoint Ruby now can we?"

"Ruby doesn't like you, you know." Alastair said, pushing Dean away.

"Dude, I don't think she likes you either. She said she has a girl friend." Dean said, nudging Alastair in the side with his elbow.

Alastair rolled his eyes and muttered something under his breath. "The beta bitch."

Dean didn't quite catch what Alastair said but he didn't think it was friendly. He shrugged at him and joined the rest of the group of kids. "Whatever man. Be a douchey asshole if you want."

Chapter End Notes

I had to get creative for reasons why Dean wouldn't notice the whole slick/heat thing since I figured that would be an instant freak out. So awkward on the toilet scenes and showers that let Dean think it's just part of the excessive sweat.

I don't typically write A/B/O so if I screw something up big time, like way beyond the range of artistic license, comment and tell me. I'll try to fix it.
"Alright, where's your mom?"

Of all things Castiel expected Gabriel to say it wasn't that. "What?"

"Your mom? Where is she?" Gabriel prompted. He rolled his eyes when he saw the confusion on Castiel's face. "So you can tell her what's going on."

"I...I can't tell her." The only thing that Castiel could think of that was more terrifying than having a time limit on finding his soul mate was telling his mother that. "Have you seen her when she's upset?"

Gabriel arched an eyebrow at him. "Cassie, this isn't a silly high school urban legend where you hide your problems and wacky hijinks ensue. This is one of those life or death situations that parents like to know about. Either you tell her or I find your sister and get her to tell your mom."

"She's out of town." Castiel said quickly because getting Anna to tell his mother what was wrong was in fact the one thing more terrifying than simply telling her.

"Riiight." Gabriel gave him an unimpressed look. "Like I'm falling for that."

"No. She really is out of town. My aunt Hester just had a baby. She flew back home to visit." Castiel said. His mother really was several hours away by plane. It was why he had been out so late the night before work; he knew he wouldn't get caught. His stomach twisted into knots. His mother had been right about the follies of staying out late.

Gabriel eyed him suspiciously. "...alright. But you phone her up and tell her to come home. This is kinda important."

Castiel nodded. Gabriel stared at him. Castiel's head tilted off to one side. Gabriel spread his hands wide in a what are you doing? gesture.

"...what?" Castiel shrugged back. His stomach filled with dread. "You mean phone her now?"

"No. Next Tuesday." Gabriel said sarcastically. He rolled his eyes and let his head fall back. He groaned and looked back to Castiel. "Yes. Now. You got your cell phone on you or do you need to use the office phone?"

Castiel looked between his jacket and the "office", which doubled as the pantry. Panic crept into him. If he didn't die from this his mother was going to murder him. She was the second scariest alpha he knew and that wasn't just his biased opinion as her son, his friends thought so too. Only Raphael was worse but she was head of the local council so of course she'd be scary. His mother...
didn't have a reason for it, she was just terrifying.

He went over to his jacket and took out his cell phone.

—and dialed the telephone company's automated answering service.

He turned his back to Gabriel and tried to act suitably terrified about the prospect of talking to his mother. Which wasn't hard because he was terrible at lying and the thought of Gabriel catching him in his lie was enough motivation to look scared.

"Ummm...hi Aunt Hester..." Castiel said. Did he sound frightened enough? Should he pretend to talk to his aunt? "No...no, things are...can you put my mother on the phone? Yes, it...it's...ah...yes, it's an emergency."

He turned around to see Gabriel watching him like a hawk. The automated system for the telephone company asked him to press one for English. He gulped while he pretended to wait. "Can you not look at me like that? This is nerve wracking as it is."

"Sure." Gabriel spun around on the chair. "But I'm staying right here and making sure you tell her."

Castiel gave it a few more seconds then tired his best to be an actor. "Mom? I...no...I'm not alright. I...uh...I bit some one. Yes, *Mated.* I have a s-soul mate. But...but they didn't do me back."

He glanced at Gabriel to see if he looked suspicious. Castiel didn't think those were Gabriel's suspicious shoulders. He kept talking. He wasn't sure how much longer he should go on for. How long would his mother yell about this and threaten bodily harm if he managed to survive? He glanced at the clock. Another few minutes at least.

After some scared apologies for his catastrophic mistakes and general failure as a son - which were met with the Spanish rendition of press one for English - he hung up.

"She's taking the first flight home." He said to Gabriel's back. He hoped the guilt he was feeling wasn't written all over his face when Gabriel turned around. He swallowed down the tight feeling rising up from his chest. He felt *guilty?* He should be more concerned with feeling *terrified.* He had to find his *mate* before his rut was over.

Gabriel turned around. Castiel held his breath waiting for Gabriel to catch him in his lie. Gabriel nodded slowly. "Okay. You go home. I'm gonna go ask around for some intel on your mystery honey bun."

Castiel let out the breath he'd been holding - discreetly - and wrinkled his nose in disgust at Gabriel calling his complete stranger of a soul mate, *'honey bun'.* "Don't call them that. I don't— wait. I'm not going home. I can't sit at home with-" He motioned towards the blurry soul mate mark on his arm. "*this.* I'm coming."

Gabriel eyed him for a moment before shrugging. "Alright hot stuff, get your jacket."

Castiel pulled his sleeves down and grabbed his jacket while Gabriel closed up the bakery for the day. Castiel tried to keep himself calm. They'd find his *soul mate* - he shivered with creeping fear just thinking those words - and everything would be fine. There were only a handful of omegas that could have been at Lilith's party. He already knew it wasn't either of the two omegas in his grade, he would have recognized them. So it had to be someone in the grade below; Anna had mentioned before that there were four omegas in her grade. He didn't think his one night stand was younger than that. Oh god, he *hoped* they weren't younger than that. His stomach churned.
"If you're gonna be sick do it outside. I'm not cleaning the floors in here." Gabriel said, sweeping pass him and to the door. "That's your job." He flipped the open sign around to closed. He looked back at Castiel. His face fell. "Hey, it'll be fine Cassie."

"That you keep saying that makes me think it won't be." Castiel said. His stomach gave another unsettled flop. He pushed the door open and walked out. He waited for Gabriel to lock the bakery up.

Gabriel tossed his keys up in the air, caught them, and pocketed them. He lived a short distance from the bakery, they'd have to walk to his house to get his car. "So can we rule out the omegas in your class? I'd like to think you'd know their names by now if you've been going to school with them for years."

Castiel nodded. There were only eight omegas at school and of the two of them in his grade neither was a boy. "There's only two omegas in my grade and I know it wasn't either of them. There were a lot of people at the party from Anna's grade. It had to be an omega from that grade."

"Okay, so phone up Anna and ask for their names." Gabriel said.

"No." Castiel said a little too adamantly for someone who had supposedly just revealed their newly acquired soul mate to their scary alpha mother. "I...I don't want to...scare her with...if we don't..."

Gabriel gave him a friendly bump to the shoulder. "We're gonna find them."

Castiel let out a long breath and tried to still the panicking butterflies in his stomach. What if they didn't find them before his time was up? "Lilith would probably know the omegas in that grade. Anna told me Ruby has them over every few weeks."

Anna had called the omega get-togethers that Ruby hosted the Monthly Omega Soiree. Ruby had been doing that since she started high school. Lilith would have to know their names by now. The thought didn't quell his stomach. He phoned Lilith as they walked to Gabriel's place and didn't get an answer.

"You're probably not gonna get anyone over there. Major break in last night, remember?" Gabriel said as they approached his car. "They'll have wards up like nobody's business."

Castiel let out an annoyed huff that turned into a whimper by the end. It was always rather inconveniencing when magic overrode technology but today it was going to shave off valuable time that he needed to avoid death.

It must have been a rather loud whimper because Gabriel grabbed his shoulder and squeezed. "Hey, it's gonna be—"

"Fine." Castiel finished. If the dread he was feeling deep in his stomach was anything to go by it wasn't going to be fine. Maybe he should have phoned his mother. She could stare coolly at anything and ooze disappoint until rocks started apologizing. Surely she'd be able to do the same thing to his soul mate mark until it reveal his mate's name.

The drive over to Lilith's house should have been uneventful. It wasn't. Castiel could feel another episode of rut coming on but it didn't feel right. It hurt. The more his hormones insisted that he find his mate right this very minute the worse it felt. Why was his rut suddenly flaring up like this? Only this morning he was praising it for being mild.

Gabriel quietly rolled the windows down as the musky stink of distressed alpha in a heavy rut filled the car.
By the time they pulled up in front of Lilith's house Castiel was doubled over in pain. He'd worked out for himself that the tight feeling in his chest and the dread in his stomach didn't have anything to do with his rut or a hangover. If he had any doubts that not completing the soul mate bond was lethal the ache of pain spiking through him was enough to remove them.

"Wait here. I'll go talk to Lilith. Then I'm driving you home." Gabriel said. Before Castiel could argue he added, "Even humans are gonna be able to smell that something's up with you."

Castiel narrowed his eyes, intent on arguing anyway - this was after all his life in the balance - but another wave of need and pain swept through him. He clenched his eyes shut and crouched over his stomach. Normally the incredibly awkward in public erection would have him mortified but the pain was distinctly more distracting. "Make sure you get all the names and...and don't say it's a soul mate mark. Please? I...this is stressful enough as it is. I don't need every angel and demon in town talking about it."

Gabriel studied him for a moment before nodding and taking off. He trotted up the rather long driveway to Lilith's house.

Castiel sat in the car quietly in pain and contemplating how he could have drank enough to lose control of himself and bite someone—claim them as his mate. He hadn't drank that much. He had been sober enough to see that the omega was caught up in their heat and drunk, not at all capable of distinguishing a good choice from a bad one. How had he thought mating them was a good idea? He shouldn't have been having sex. He distinctly remembered thinking that sex during his rut and the omega's heat would be a very bad idea.

—and then it had seemed like a very good idea.

"Cassie!" Gabriel called out as he came up to the car. Lilith was behind him. Castiel rolled the window down. Lilith slowed to a stop a few feet away and squared her shoulders. She stalked closer to the car.

Gabriel rolled his eyes as Lilith reacted to the blast of alpha scent that wafted out of the car window. "Don't get all top dog on me here. Not like Cassie is about to make a move on your sister. He's already got his omega out there somewhere."

Castiel tugged his jacket closer together at the front and leaned over his unfortunate erection until it was hidden between his body and the car door. As the pain subsided along with the hormonal rush of his rut he had the wherewithal to feel embarrassed.

"Gabriel said the person you're looking for is an omega." Lilith said. She kept a few steps back from the car. Castiel couldn't blame her. An alpha in rut that wasn't family or a lover would smell atrocious to other alphas. Or very threatening. Though he doubted he looked threatening doubled over in the car stinking of distressed alpha searching for their mate.

Lilith wrinkled her nose as another wave of alpha scent hit her. "But from what Gabriel says you said they looked like, it sounds more like the human Ruby invited over last night."

"No. They were an omega. I think an angel. They smelled like one." Castiel said. He sighed as a last wave of pain drained away. If his rut kept up like this he'd be useless trying to find the omega he had mated. "They couldn't have been human."

"You sure?" Gabriel said. He reached out and squeezed Castiel's shoulder. "Now's not the time to be embarrassed about boning a human."
Castiel shook his head. There was no way he'd mistake a human male for an omega. "It couldn't have been that human."

"You're sure?" Lilith asked. She sounded more interested in the prospect of finding the human than helping him not die from an incomplete soul mate bond.

"I'm sure." Castiel snapped. "I wouldn't tell a human what I am just to get sex." He took a deep breath. He knew he was only getting agitated with Lilith because she was an alpha. "They were in heat. They were definitely an omega."

---

Castiel politely pretended not to notice the ever widening wet spot of slick in the omega's jeans as he showed them to Ruby's bedroom. He'd make sure the omega was safe then go find Anna, or maybe Ruby, and let them take care of the omega.

That was the plan anyway but that plan came to a grinding halt when the omega let go of his hand and started running their hands up and down their sides with a seductive smile on their lips. He really...he should...he should go...find Anna...

Castiel took in a sharp breath and watched. The scent of omega in heat and that odd prickle in his nose had him rooted to the spot.

The omega ran their hands over their sides and shivered with pleasure. They let their hands fall away then held them up to look at the sticky sparkly stuff that had stuck to them. The omega laughed and reached out to him. "Look. Craft store herpes. Here, have some."

Castiel jumped in surprise when the omega playfully patted his face and laughed again. Then the omega's face was serious. They scented the air. They grabbed Castiel's shirt. Castiel yelped as he was yanked forward. How was an omega this strong?

The omega buried their nose into the fistful of shirt. "Why do you smell like that?"

"I don't-" Castiel tried to peel the omega's fingers off his shirt to no avail. "Smell like what?"

The omega shoved their face into the crook of Castiel's neck and breathed deep. "Like Christmas came early."

Castiel tried his very best to ignore the way the room was filling up with that alluring sweet outdoorsy smell, like a pine forest after rain or a meadow baking in the sun.

The omega pressed themself up against him. Castiel could feel the slick soaking through the omega's jeans and into his own. The omega rubbed their face against Castiel's. There was something powdery on the omega's skin. It sent a shiver of pins and needles through Castiel.

Castiel pushed the omega away gently as the omega's scenting became a bit more...aggressively sexual. He wiped at his face. Whatever the powdery stuff was it felt slippery like talc. He rubbed it between his fingers. That prickling sensation was in his fingers now. It clicked in that that was the source of the strange prickle in his nose. What was this stuff?

The smell of omega in heat got stronger and...oh no. He shoved a hand over his dick as it started acting interested. That familiar desire started building up. He was going into a full episode of rut. A rut while he was alone in a room with an omega. An omega in heat. A drunk omega in heat. There was no way that this could be a good situation. He needed to leave. Now.
The omega's head tilted up to scent the air. Castiel had an apology on the tip of his tongue but the omega only grinned and licked their lips. Castiel tracked every movement of the omega's tongue. He took in a sharp breath. That was a mistake. The heady smell of omega in heat filled his nose and went straight to his groin. That annoying little buzz of instincts in the back of his head thought this was a very good situation.

"I'm...going to......go." Castiel said, spinning around as his dick hardened. Being an alpha was embarrassing some days. He'd find someone with a phone and then he'd find a bathroom so he could do something about the building pressure in his pants. He started for the door.

A hand grabbed his shoulder and jerked him back. "Hey, where do you think you're going Christmas?"

"I should....really....I should...." Castiel searched desperately for words that weren't related to sex in any way shape or form. He couldn't quite articulate what he should be doing but it wasn't standing around with an erection alone in a room with an omega in heat. That prickling sensation started creeping through his body.

"Should what?" The omega said in a voice far deeper than an omega's voice had any right to be. That deep rumble went straight to Castiel's groin along with that alluring scent. The omega grinned slyly and pressed their hips against Castiel's, the omega's slick dampening Castiel's jeans further.

Castiel let out a whine of pleasure as the omega slowly started grinding their hips against his own. Castiel breathed deep. The sweet omega scent rushed in flooding his nose with the smell of heat making him light headed. "Should really find.....I need to go...."

"Go?" The omega looked shocked and maybe a bit offended. "Go where?"

Castiel opened his mouth to answer but nothing came out. Go where? That was a very good question. Where had he wanted to go? Castiel tried to pull an answer out of his head. "...somewhere?"

The omega leaned back and studied his face. Was the omega taller than him? Castiel thought so, maybe by just an inch or two. A taller and stronger omega? Something about that excited the alpha in him, made him want to prove he could lay a claim...but he wasn't here to do that. He was...well, he had been planning on doing something. Go somewhere.

Castiel was caught off guard when the omega leaned in and kissed him. His heart hammered. That prickling sensation intensified. His head spun as all his senses were filled up with omega in heat.

"Bed. I need to go to bed." Castiel gasped when the omega broke the kiss.

The omega grinned, "Can I come too?"

Castiel nodded. That was the plan wasn't it?

Chapter End Notes

Apparently I've decided that angels and demons are the same species just different races so to speak. World building! ...I want to call it Worlding.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

He spent the night tossing and turning in a bed so full of sweat it was soaking wet to the touch. His skin crawled and his back itched like he had rolled in poison ivy. What the hell was going on with him?

Chapter Notes

Check that out. I banged out a second chapter this weekend while I was bored this afternoon. ...and now you get nothing until next week, mwahaha!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By some blind luck his parents actually believed it when he told them he was just really really hungover and definitely not sick from one of those party drugs teachers always warned kids about. He was grounded until the end of the school instead of forever. Sam hadn't been joking.

He spent the rest of his weekend either on the toilet with a bucket in his lap or sitting in the shower as cold water poured over him trying to put out the fire under his skin. And always curled over in pain and scratching his back raw.

He was still sick as a dog by Sunday night but he was damn certain that he was not going to a hospital. He hated hospitals and he knew they couldn't afford for him to go there and have a bunch of tests done just for a bunch of doctors to say he needed to sleep it off. He could sleep it off on his own without a doctor having to tell him. Whatever it was it was already in him and it hadn't killed him yet. He'd be fine. It just needed to work itself out of his system.

When Monday morning rolled around Dean thought he had slept maybe six hours since Friday night. He stuffed a pillow over his head and groaned at the soft knock at his bedroom door. It had to be Sam. Which meant he had to go to school. Ugh.

"Dean?"

Dean muttered something that he hoped sounded like go away but he'd settle for it sounding like fuck off, Sam. He tried to ignore the impulse to rake his fingers down his back - he felt like he had ants under his skin - and the even weirder impulse to start grinding his dick into the sweat soaked blankets. Seriously, what was wrong with him? He felt like shit but his dick would not settle down.

"Dean, it's seven thirty. We're going to be late for school if we don't leave right now."

Dean rolled over onto his back and hissed in pain. Those ants under his skin had to be fire ants. He let his head lull to the side as he tried to ignore the burning crawly feeling. Shit. It really was 7:30am. He sat up. Sweat dripped down from his hairline and into his eyes. He reached down and grabbed his school bag from the floor. He dug through it, looking for a pen and paper.
"Dean?"

"Hold on a sec, Sammy. I'm naked." He was actually. Clothes felt like sandpaper against his skin and he was too goddamned hot for them anyway. He found a pen and tore a piece of paper out of a notebook. He took a deep breath and did his best to fake a note from Mom.

It took three attempts to get his handwriting looking adequately Mom. He wobbled over to the door as his head spun. He opened the door a crack and shoved his arm out with the note in hand. "I'm still feeling like shit. Give that to my homeroom teacher."

Dean closed the door and slid down to the floor. All this sweating to death was giving him a headache from dehydration, he couldn't drink water fast enough. He dragged his knees up to his chest when he felt the beginnings of another wave of pain starting up deep in his gut. Whenever that deep low pain sprung up it always made him feel like he had to throw up but he never did. Maybe this time he'd just sit in the shower instead. The cold water usually made him feel a little better at least.

"Dean...are you okay?"

Dean let his head thump against the door. "I'm fine. I'm just hungover."

"For three days?"

"Yeah. For three days." Dean wiped the sweat out of his eyes. He hoped Sam would just hurry up and go. Once Sam was gone he'd have the house to himself which meant he could get to the shower without having to put his sandpaper clothes on. "I party hard, Sam."

"...okay."

Dean sighed. That was Sam's worried voice. Sam was totally gonna rat him out to Mom. He got up and poked his head out of his room, careful to keep the family jewels hidden behind the door. "I'm fine, Sam. Well, except for the worst hangover of my life."

Sam stood in the hallway, backpack on and ready for school, clutching the fake Mom note in his hand, and stared at Dean. His eyes flicked over Dean's face. "...okay. But take some aspirin and drink some water you look really flushed."

"Will do." Dean nodded. Sam didn't know the half of it. Flushed was an understatement. Sweat was running down his back in rivulets, eventually dripping down his leg and there was definitely some really horrible butt sweat going on too.

He stuck his hand out from behind the door and half-heartedly shooed Sam down the hall. "Get going, you're going to be late."

Sam hesitated for a moment before sticking the note in his pocket and going.

Dean waited at his bedroom door and felt like he was slowly going up in flames. He was starting to get worried that spontaneous human combustion might actually be real and not an urban legend. The second he heard the front door close he bolted into the bathroom. He yanked the shower curtain closed and turned the cold water on full blast. He hopped in and sighed at the near relief. He still felt like he was on fire with a million ants crawling around under his skin but it felt less like a raging inferno under his skin and more like an intense bonfire...still a million ants though.

He grabbed Mom's funny puffball loofah thing and started rubbing it across his back. He knew scratching at a rash was the worst thing he could do but he couldn't take the sweating, the hot
flashes, and the pain on top of being so freakin' itchy. So scratch it he did.

When the pain had subsided a bit and he had cooled down enough that he didn't think he'd melt at room temperature he got out of the shower. The water bill this month was going to be astronomical. He headed downstairs and filled up every plastic container he could find with water and stacked them in the freezer. He grabbed three ice packs out of the door of the freezer and half a dozen bottles of water from the fridge and carried his haul back upstairs.

He downed two bottles of water before sprawling out in bed on his stomach. He reached back and set one of the ice packs between his shoulders in an attempt at soothing the itch then jammed the other two ice packs into his armpits and tried to get some sleep.

He didn't fall asleep for a split second. Instead two hours later he was lugging himself out of bed to sit in the bathtub with the shower on, letting cold water flow over him. Why the hell couldn't he cool down? What kind of freaky new street drug could someone have dosed him up with? ... and why the hell would anyone want to feel like this?

By noon his plethora of plastic containers filled with water had frozen. He popped the ice blocks into a bathtub filled with cold water then stepped in. He sat down. Finally. Finally he was goddamned Cold.

He took a deep breath and sunk under the icy water. He shivered violently. It was nothing but relief. He came up for air. He sucked in a few deep breaths before he plunged himself back under.

His relief didn't last long but he managed to get a twenty minute cat nap half hung over the side of the bathtub to make sure he didn't drown.

When the ice had melted and the water was tepid he got out, dripping water everywhere. He carried the plastic containers downstairs, rinsed them out, dried them, and put the evidence away. He checked the phone for messages, there was one from the school noting his absence which he promptly deleted, then grabbed the re-frozen ice packs out of the freezer and made his way back upstairs. He collapsed into bed. He just had to wait this out. The mystery drug would work its way out of his system and he'd be fine.

The rest of the day passed in a haze of sweat and pain. He dragged himself downstairs for dinner - his dick, thankfully, had calmed the fuck down for a few minutes - but the thought of eating when his stomach was doing somersaults only made things worse. He did his best to laugh it off; hey, it was just mono or something, everyone caught the flu this time of year, nah, barbecued chicken wasn't really his thing.

No one looked convinced. Dad and Sam kept shooting worried looks at Mom about him and Mom kept looking at him like he had a broken arm or something.

Eventually Mom asked him if he wanted some tomato rice soup. It was the Winchester family code for admitting sickness without having to actually say it. If he admitted to wanting soup Mom and Dad would make him go to the hospital. Dean stabbed a piece of chicken with his fork, stuffed it in his mouth, and nearly threw up. He was fine. He wasn't that sick. He didn't need to go to a hospital.

He crawled back into bed as soon as he thought he had put in enough of an appearance at dinner. He spent the night tossing and turning in a bed so full of sweat it was soaking wet to the touch. His skin crawled and his back itched like he had rolled in poison ivy. What the hell was going on with him?
"Jeez, Ruby. You coulda mentioned you lived here." Dean said when Ruby and her friends took a sharp turn down the longest driveway in town. The house on the hill would put the X-Mansion to shame.

Ruby laughed, "What? This old place?"

Dean laughed along with her while Alastair watched him like a hawk.

It was a four minute walk up to the house from the bottom of the driveway. When they finally reached the door and went in Dean's eyes went wide. The place was huge. The foyer was bigger than his living room! He could hear music thumping away from the hidden depths of the house.

"This place doesn't happen to be bigger on the inside then it is on the outside, does it?" Dean joked.

Ruby looked at him puzzled. "No..."

"...don't tell me you don't know Doctor Who." Dean said.

"Never heard of it." Ruby said, shrugging off her jacket and hanging it up. "What is it? A song?"

Dean put on a mock serious face. "Aw no. I don't know if we can be friends now."

"You'll have to enlighten me." Ruby laughed.

The others - except Alastair - had all dispersed and disappeared into the house. Ruby waved a hand towards one of the long hallways branching off the front room. "Want the grand tour so you don't get lost on the way to the bathroom?"

"Only if I can tell you what you're missing out on when it comes to Doctor Who." Dean said, grinning.

Ruby smiled. "Deal. Come on. We'll start with the west wing."

"It's not forbidden is it?" Dean teased. To his horror Ruby didn't get that either. Well, it just meant he had some serious educating to do tonight. Ruby seemed like a cool chick he couldn't let her go on living in ignorance.

Annoyingly, Alastair tagged along but at least he wasn't being a douche bag anymore. He was following beside Ruby at a respectful distance and even occasionally had a few things to add to the conversation. Dean still got major creeper vibes off him.

They came to a junction in the hallway. Dean could faintly hear music drifting towards them. There was a crash from down the hall. Ruby swore and darted towards the sound leaving Dean with Alastair. Great.

"Sorry! I'll be right back!" Ruby yelled over her shoulder as she dashed down the hall and made a swift 90 degree turn down another hallway.

Dean loitered around in awkward silence in the hallway with Alastair. Five minutes passed. He sighed. How long was Ruby going to be? Maybe he should go see if she needed help.

He was just about to start down the hall when Alastair stuck his hand out. "Sorry about before."
Dean's lip twitched while he tried not to grimace. He grabbed Alastair's hand. It felt like shaking hands with a weasel. "Hey, no problem dude."

"Want the rest of the tour?" Alastair offered. There was another crash from down the hall. "Sounds like she might be awhile."

"Ah..." Dean hesitated. It was weird getting someone else to show you around another person's house, right?

"At least let me show you where the bathrooms are and then we'll head to the party." Alastair pressed.

"...yeah, sure." Dean said. He glanced down the hallway to see if Ruby was coming. She wasn't. He shrugged and followed Alastair. Maybe he wasn't a total douche bag and they just got off to a bad start.

They passed by half a dozen rooms - Alastair occasionally pointed to one and told him about it - before they came to a door with weird symbols carved into it. It reminded Dean of the West-door of Moria. He may have geeked out a bit.

While Dean was engrossed with the symbols on the walls he caught a brief flash of yellowy light by the door. "What was that?"

"What was what?" Alastair asked, pushing the door open.

Dean shook his head. It was probably just a glint of light off the doorknob. He was so busy checking out the door while he followed Alastair through it that he didn't notice what was around him at first. When he finally did look around himself his eyebrows shot up to his hairline. If the outside looked like a door from the Lord of the Rings the inside looked like an alchemist's laboratory.

A soft gasp of amazement escaped Dean, "What...what is—"

Dean wasn't expecting the sudden punch to the gut and he really wasn't expecting Alastair to be able to pack the wallop that he did. He doubled over and gasped for breath. Alastair advanced on him. He knew he should have gone with his first thoughts on Alastair; kid was a grade A douche bag.

Alastair kicked out at him. Dean flung himself backward just in time to avoid a knee to the face. He stumbled back, flinging his arms out to grab onto something. He could tell that if he went down Alastair was gonna do his best to keep him down.

His arm crashed through a series of marked boxes and vials as he tried to stop himself from falling. Boxes fell to the floor and spilled their contents, vials and jars crashed to the ground in sprays of glass, liquid, and powders.

Alastair caught him in chest with a solid punch. How did the scrawny asshole have so much power behind a punch? Dean staggered backwards. His hand darted out and grabbed desperately at the shelves around him. Something metal slid over his finger as his fingers groped at the smooth shelving trying to get a firmer hold. His fingers finally found purchase on the edge of a shelf. He had one brief moment to celebrate his victory before he felt the shelving unit start to tip.

Alastair's eyes flicked over to the shelf. The scrawny little weasel darted out of the way just as the whole thing came crashing down on Dean in a flurry of boxes, glass, liquids, powders, and god knows what else.
Dean just barely managed to get his arms wrapped around his head as the heavy metal shelf fell. It crashed into him. He felt his whole body convulse in a strange detached way, almost like whatever made him him separated from his body for a brief second before slamming back in. Saying it hurt was an understatement. Dean's vision fogged up and slowly started turning black as pain began to creep through him. Oh fuck. What if that shelf had crushed his head or something? What if he was bleeding out?

"I was hoping I'd find something suitably nasty in here for a pathetic creature like you but you so kindly took care of it for me." Alastair laughed. He kicked at the metal shelf. "If you don't die or get compelled into a vegetable, stay away from omegas."

Alastair's footsteps fading away were the last thing Dean heard before the darkness eating away at his vision took him.

Chapter End Notes

But seriously, this is super easy to write because I am following no rules, I have no facts to check, there is no issues about canon compliance. I just pick a bit of trope to write and play with it like a cat mauling a small creature.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Castiel wondered how long Gabriel would keep what was happening a secret. He could almost look forward to Gabriel going to Raphael, since his mother still wasn't home, and telling her what was going on.

Chapter Notes

It totally still counts as Wednesday if I haven't gone to bed yet.

It wasn't hard to hide what was going on from his sister. He usually hid out in his bedroom while he rode out the worst of his rut while Anna avoided the house at all costs. She'd never think it was unusual for him to disappear for the rest of the weekend. He didn't have to worry about school trying to contact his mother or asking Anna where he was since they already knew he'd be away all week while his rut ran its course.

It was only Gabriel that he had to placate. Gabriel kept phoning and texting, asking when his mother was flying home. Castiel was certain that anytime now Gabriel would figure out that he lied but so far vague responses about the earliest flight being Sunday night and that the fake flight was cancelled seemed to be placating him. Castiel didn't need to involve his mother in this. What more could she do than what they were already doing? He would just get into more trouble if she were here.

Monday greeted him with a horrible twisting pain deep in his gut. Tuesday was starting to look like it would pass in the same way. He shucked his shirt and snapped his wings out from the higher plane he so often hid them in out of convenience. He dropped down onto his bed. He curled into a ball and covered himself with his wings as pain rolled through him. It was getting worse.

Gabriel phoned late in the morning to tell him he had talked to seven of the eight omegas at school and none of them were his soul mate. Castiel wondered how long Gabriel would keep what was happening a secret. He could almost look forward to Gabriel going to Raphael, since his mother still wasn't home, and telling her what was going on.

Instead of demanding that they tell Raphael Gabriel told him he doubted the last omega at school was his soul mate but that he'd heard that a few of the traditionalist families that lived outside of town had omega children. If he wasn't in so much pain Castiel would have groaned. Had he really gotten drunk and mated into one of those New Traditions families?

Gabriel told him to hang in there before hanging up on him. Castiel curled back into a ball and shivered with pain.

When the pain subsided hours later he unfurled himself and stretched out on his bed. He gently rubbed at the aching after pains in his stomach and chest. He stared at his other arm trying to make out a name through the smudged green writing. It looked like there was a break close to the
beginning. Could it be two names? Angels never had two names. Demons did sometimes. Was his soul mate a demon?

His phoned chimed. He dug around in the bed for it. When he found it he had five messages from Gabriel.

_might have found them._

_maybe. b ig stress on the maybe._

_but they look like your omega._

_and they've got a mating bite. but no soul mate mark._

_can you meet up at work? they won't go to an alpha's house._

Castiel stared at the second last text. Could that happen? Maybe the soul mate mark wouldn't appear on them until they bit him? Castiel rolled out of bed. The last thing he wanted to do was walk somewhere but if it would stop the pain he'd gladly walk from here to the coast. He tucked his wings back into a higher plane and pulled his shirt back on. He glanced at the clock beside his bed. It was almost 1pm. Tuesday was already more than half over. He didn't think he could last much longer. He hoped Gabriel had found his omega.

The walk to the bakery was excruciating but he set his jaw and kept walking. When he'd finally dragged himself to the bakery he found it locked. No one was there. He leaned against the brick wall and slumped down. Where was Gabriel? Why wouldn't his mate meet him at home? And why did this have to hurt so much? He wrapped an arm around his middle. It felt like someone was driving their fingers into his stomach and twisting.

Gabriel's car screeched to a halt in front of him five minutes later. Castiel's face dropped. He didn't have to ask the omega in the car anything to know it wasn't the one he was looking for. One look and he knew. They were too short and too slight. They were probably tall _for an omega_ but nowhere near as tall as the one he had met that night.

The omega opened the car door and stared at Castiel. Their face dropped. They shook their head and sat back down in the car looking dejected. Castiel knew the feeling. They had both come here hoping to find their mate. At least this omega could just wait out the incomplete mating bond. People would talk but at least they weren't dying.

Gabriel slapped the steering wheel. "Shit."

Castiel didn't bother to agree. It was shit. This whole situation was shit. He hated every last aspect of it but swearing wasn't going to change it.

"I gotta drive Toby here back home." Gabriel said. He cast a worried look at Castiel. "You don't look so good, Cassie."

Castiel didn't feel so good either. He was leaning over his stomach debating on if the pain currently ripping through him merited throwing up on the sidewalk. "I'm fine. I just...need to lie down."

Gabriel took a deep breath, scenting the air. "You don't smell fine."

Castiel glared at him. "Well, obviously I'm not _fine_ Gabriel. I'm—"

Castiel couldn't quite bring himself to say it out loud. If he said it out loud it was real.
"Look, Cassie, I know you want to keep this on the down low but this is getting serious. We're—You're running out of time." Gabriel said.

"And standing here talking about it isn't getting me more time." Castiel said through clenched teeth. This wave of pain was worse than the others. It felt like his inside were being shredded.

Gabriel watched him for a moment before letting out a long breath. "You need me to drive you home?"

"No." Another wave of pain rolled through Castiel. He squeezed his eyes shut and tried to will the pain away. It didn't work. "Yes."

Castiel lurched towards the car and got in. The omega in the front seat shifted uncomfortably, the scent Castiel was putting off reeked of basic animal fear. He didn't smell like a distressed alpha looking for his mate anymore and he knew it. It was starting to look all too possible that this might not end well.

They drove to Castiel's house in silence. Gabriel was going to help Castiel inside but Castiel shook his head. The faster Gabriel went back to searching the faster this would be over. By the time Castiel got in the front door he felt like he might implode or fall apart. He wasn't sure which. Something felt very wrong inside, like his internal organs were tearing themselves apart and crushing in on themselves at the same time.

Castiel staggered into the kitchen. He needed to sit down before he collapsed. This wave of pain wasn't stopping. It just kept getting worse and worse. A sharp pain ripped through his side like a punch to the gut. He doubled over and grabbed onto the table for support.

Through the pain he had entirely missed Anna standing at the fridge. She darted over and put a hand on his back. "Castiel?"

Anna sounded worried. He glanced over. She looked panicked. He must look awful.

"What's wrong?" Anna asked. Her voice was laced with fear.

Castiel desperately clutched at the kitchen table to stay upright as the pain clawed at him. He edged over to a chair and collapsed into it. He bent over and tried to breathe through the pain.

"Castiel?"

Castiel didn't think he could get coherent words out at the moment so instead he rolled his sleeve back and set his arm on the table, the soul mate mark out in the open for all to see.

Anna's eyes went wide. "Is that...? You have a soul mate?"

Castiel nodded.

"Why's the mark...why's it like that?" Anna pointed at the green smudge. She sounded frightened but doing her best to stay calm. She reached out as if to touch it then pulled her hand back. She looked at Castiel, confused and worried. "Is that why you're...?"

Castiel took in a few more deep even breaths. The pain felt like it had peaked and was calming down. Absurdly he was thankful that he wasn't in pain and having embarrassing public erections, at least the pain was good for something.

"Castiel?"
Castiel took in a deep breath and held it for a moment before letting it out. "I mated them but..." He stopped to breathe. Was he really going to tell Anna? He glanced at his arm. He had to now, didn't he? "But it's not done. They didn't bite me back."

Anna shrugged. Castiel wanted to laugh but he thought it wouldn't be worth the pain. Anna didn't know either. Why did no one tell their children about the dangers of finding their soul mate?

"Gabriel says it's...that..." Castiel searched for better words. Gabriel was right. There really wasn't a good way to say it. "Gabriel says it's, uh, killing me."

Anna made a strangled noise.

"But it's fine. I just have to find the omega I mated and finish the bond." Castiel said. He wasn't sure who he was trying to reassure. Himself or Anna? "Gabriel's looking for them right now."

Anna frowned as she processed what he had said. Castiel could see the moment she decided on a course of action. She squared her shoulders. "Where's mom?"

"What?" Castiel asked, confused. He had just told Anna that he needed to find his soul mate because the incomplete bond was killing him and she wanted to know where their mother was?

"Why hasn't mom come home yet?" Anna demanded. "She– she should be _here_. Helping you."

Castiel glanced away. "...I haven't told her."

"What!?" Anna yelped. She turned on her heel and went for the phone on the counter. She snatched it up and started dialling. "I'm phoning her. We– we need her. She'll figure this out."

Castiel hauled himself out of the chair and snatched the phone off Anna. "No."

"Castiel you're in _trouble_." Anna grabbed the phone back. "I'm phoning mom and telling her to come home."

"Anna...I..." Castiel doubled over in pain. The bursts of pain had been coming on faster and closer together all day but this one had come right on the heels of the last wave of pain. He sank to the floor gasping for breath. He had thought that last bout of pain had been the worst but he was wrong. It was this one. He turned a wild-eyed look of pain on Anna. "Phone her."

While Anna phoned their mother Castiel managed to make his way into the living room. The couch seemed like a better place to writhe in pain rather than the kitchen floor.

Distantly through the pain he could hear Anna talking to their mother for a few moments before passing the phone to him. He hadn't realized how terrified he was until he heard his mother's voice telling him that he'd be okay and that she'd be home soon. He mumbled something in response then Anna took the phone back and went into the kitchen.

He was in so much pain, blinding white hot pain. He pulled his legs closer to his chest. It didn't help to lessen the pain. He squeezed his eyes shut as his fears caught up to him. What if he didn't find the omega in time? What if...what if he _died_?

Oh gods, he was going to die because he was a big dumb hormonal alpha in rut that couldn't keep it in his pants or keep his big stupid mouth closed during sex. People would use him as a cautionary tale for generations. Don't take a mate when you're young and drunk or you'll die. Just like Castiel.

---
The omega backed him up to the bed and pressed down on his shoulders until Castiel was sitting on the bed. The omega grinned down at him, running their hands over their own arms and sides again. Castiel reached out and delicately set a hand on the omega's side.

The omega shivered and squirmed like it was too much and not enough. They clapped a hand over Castiel's and brought Castiel's hand to the fly of their jeans. Castiel took the hint and worked the button open and the zipper down. The omega wriggled on the spot, laughing and letting their jeans fall down. They stooped to push their boxers off.

Castiel stared in surprise.

The omega chuckled, "Hey, it's not that impressive."

"Maybe not for a bet—" Castiel was cut short when the omega shuffled forward, straddled his lap, and kissed him again. Slick soaked into his jeans. He breathed in sharply as that distinctly omega smell enveloped him.

Castiel reached down and brushed his fingers over that slick soaked hole. The omega arched his spine back and groaned. Castiel gave a strangled whimper in response. He'd never had sex with an omega before. He didn't know any alphas at school who had— though he did know a few who lied about it.

"Oh...oh, do that again." The omega panted. "Fuck."

Castiel obliged. The omega squirmed in his lap. Castiel's heart picked up a fast rhythm. He had been with betas and alphas but this was nothing like it. He knew omega's had a reputation for being responsive partners but the noises this omega made might give him a heart attack. And the things the omega was saying. He had never heard an omega say fuck. Not once. It wasn't seemly. But it was quite possibly the most arousing thing he had ever heard; fuck uttered in that deep voice wrapped up in that sweet outdoorsy scent.

"Oh fuck." The omega moaned and pushed back on his fingers, pressing them inside. The omega jolted and made a noise that Castiel would remember forever.

Castiel pushed his fingers further into that warm wet heat.

The omega squirmed, grinding down, trying to get Castiel's fingers further inside them. "Oh fuck, that is so fucking good."

The omega started tugging his shirt off over his head then yanked their own off. The omega's hands shot down to Castiel's jeans and had them open and his dick pulled out in seconds flat. The omega shuffled forward a bit to get their knees further on the bed before raising up on their knees and canting their hips upward.

Castiel gasped as the head of his cock pressed against the omega's slick soaked hole then slid in. The omega leaned back and sank down on Castiel's dick gasping and moaning the whole way.

When the omega was seated in Castiel's lap once more they chuckled to themselves, "Huh, that was easier than I thought it'd be."

Castiel didn't know what to say. Castiel was sure anything he said would entirely inadequate at the moment. The omega pheromones he might as well be bathing in at this point had made what should have been a minor episode of the early part of his rut into something more akin to what he felt at the peak of his rut. Only this was a few million times better because instead of his hand he had a
willing partner. A willing omega partner who smelled like divinity come to earth.

Castiel could have waxed poetic internally for quite sometime but then the omega raised up and slid back down. The omega let out a loud moan. Castiel let out a louder one.

"Are you- oh gods- using any-" Castiel managed to get out while the omega found a steady pace. "Birth control? ...oh gods."

The omega looped their arms around his neck and laughed, "Don't worry dude, I'm not getting pregnant anytime soon."

"Good." Castiel said. He could already feel his knot starting to form. This would be over fast—well, the actual sex would be over fast. From the feeling in his groin he suspected they'd be tied together for a while.

"Yep." The omega said. He started humming a song Castiel didn't recognize.

Castiel nodded and ran his hands up the side of the omega. How on earth had this happened? How did he come to have a naked omega on his lap fucking themself on him? He took in a few shaky gasps. Why one earth was he questioning this? He had a naked omega on his lap. What was there to question about that?

It wasn't long before the omega's movements turned short and quick as his knot swelled up preventing those long slides up and down his dick. Each movement up was accompanied by a tug at his knot. It made Castiel's eyes roll back and the omega pant and moan. It wouldn't be much longer. Castiel could feel his orgasm building up with each slap of skin on slick soaked jeans.

"Oh fuck." The omega panted. They grabbed one of Castiel's hands and wrapped it around their dick. Castiel took the hint and started pumping his hand. The omega whined, "Oh. Holy fucking hell. Fuck. Fuck. Oh—fuck!"

Castiel swore right along with the omega when he felt the omega clench tight around his knot as they came. Castiel's hand was coated in come but he barely noticed. That final clench around his knot had pushed him over the edge.

He groaned and wrapped his arms around the omega as he came. He pulled the omega tight against his chest and sank his teeth into the meat of their shoulder. He bit down until he drew blood. Somewhere in the back of his mind he criticized all the textbooks that said that claiming a mate felt like a brief static shock. This felt more like grabbing a live wire. The rest of him was more concerned with rubbing his bare skin over every inch of exposed skin his omega was showing; covering his omega in his scent, making sure that everyone knew that this omega was his mate.

When Castiel was sure his claim wouldn't be easily ignored he flopped backwards on the bed. His omega landed heavily on his chest. The movement tugged at his knot. He whimpered with pleasure as his cock pulsed with a steady flow of come.

His omega nuzzled their face into the side of his neck. Castiel wrapped his arms around them and rubbed his cheek against their head; the short hair pricking at his nose. His omega started to shake. He squeezed tighter. Why were they scared? It took Castiel a moment to realize that his omega was laughing.

"Silver white winters that melt into springs." The omega panted in a laughing singsong manner. "You're definitely one of my favourite things."
Castiel had no idea what his omega was talking about but it didn't matter. They were his. He rubbed his cheek against his omega's head again and made a low appreciative noise deep in his throat. He didn't think he'd ever get enough of that sweet outdoorsy scent.

"Mind if I pass out for a bit?" His omega asked. They pressed their face into the side of Castiel's neck.

"Mmmmhpf." Castiel said and thought that was an adequate response. His omega chuckled and settled down on his chest. Evidently it was an adequate response because a few moments after that his omega was quietly snoring. Castiel squeezed his omega in his arms one last time before drifting off to sleep himself.

—voices outside Ruby's door woke him up. Castiel sat up. He looked around the dark room. Why was he in Ruby's room? ...and why did he stink like sex? ...oh. Oh!

A goofy little smile settled onto Castiel's face. He tucked his dick back into his underwear and did his jeans up. That omega hadn't even slowed down long enough to get his pants off.

He found his shirt in the dark. He pulled it on. He'd skulk over to the bathroom to see if he could wash up a bit. People would politely ignore the scent of rut on someone normally but he absolutely reeked of rut and sex. There was only so much polite society could ignore. Not that a bunch of teenagers were polite society. Still he didn't need everyone at school knowing that he had had a one night stand—with an omega. He'd just slip into the bathroom and wash up. No one would be none the wiser.

He opened Ruby's door to find Uriel and Balthazar standing in the hallway. They glanced in his direction then went back to talking. Castiel was just about to start creeping towards the bathroom when Uriel looked back his way and chuckled.

Balthazar turned to take a second look and sniffed at the air. A slow devious grin appeared on Balthazar's face. "Cassie. You didn't."

Castiel cringed. Everyone was going to know.
"I'm not that sick Sam." Dean lied through his teeth. He felt like he might go up in smoke at any second and absolutely everything hurt.

Tuesday morning rolled around and Dean knew there was not a chance in hell that he could go to school. He hadn't slept since that twenty minutes in the bathtub and he was still pouring sweat. Sweat was actually pouring off of him. Anywhere he sat down or laid down for very long turned into a puddle of gross sticky sweat. To top it all off he was pretty sure he was starting to get a little loopy from dehydration.

When that soft knock on the door came at 7:30am he already had a note ready. He wrapped a sheet around his waist because clothes could go to hell right now and opened the door. He thrust the note out at Sam and tried to look calm and normal but probably looked spaced out and a bit delirious.

Sam startled at the note shoved into his face. His eyes did that huge wide puppy thing where he looked all hurt and concerned. He looked down at the note and frowned. The sad concerned puppy eyes got worse. "Dean...I know you don't like hospitals because of what happened to Mom but if you're sick...Dean, you should really go. You look awful."

"I'm not that sick, Sam." Dean lied through his teeth. He felt like he might go up in smoke at any second and absolutely everything hurt.

Sam kept staring at him. Sam stared at him with his big sad puppy dog eyes out from under his dumb floppy hair. That always got to him and Sam knew it. Sneaky little shit that he was.

Dean sighed, "Look. Let me off the hook for the day and when Mom gets home I'll...I'll go."

"I'm not that sick, Sam." Dean lied through his teeth. He felt like he might go up in smoke at any second and absolutely everything hurt.

Sam's shoulder's relaxed. He nodded and reached out for the note then stopped. He shot Dean a calculated look. "You mean it?"

The thing was, he did. He really did mean it. He hated hospitals, but this wasn't right. The it's a bad reaction to a drug hypothesis had been tossed out the window around 2am. He reached out and tucked the note into Sam's pocket. "Yeah. I swear. I'll haul my ass out of bed and go."

"To the hospital." Sam said sternly.

"To the freakin' hospital." Dean agreed. He'd go but he'd hate every minute of it. He grabbed onto
the door frame and squeezed tight as a dizzy spell hit him. He tried to hold it together so Sam wouldn't notice.

Sam nodded. "Okay."

Dean gave Sam a slap on the shoulder that he regretted as soon as he did. It freakin' hurt. It was like he had been rubbing his hands raw with sandpaper. "Great. Now hurry up. You're gonna be late."

"Try to get some rest, Dean." Sam said over his shoulder as he headed for the stairs.

"Will do, mom." Dean called after him. He didn't even bother to wait for Sam to get out the door before he was making his way to the bathroom leaning against the walls as the ground seemed like it was heaving underneath him. Another hour or two of sitting in a freezing cold shower was just the thing he needed. He held on to the thin hope that this time the fever would break, he'd stop sweating, his skin would stop crawling, the sudden dizziness would go away, and that god awful pain that had been getting worse would stop. That it would all just go away.

It didn't.

The extra long shower had done nothing to help this time. Dean crawled back into his damp bed. He squirmed trying to rub his back against the sheets to scratch that incessant itch but his skin was so sensitive that every movement hurt—and he was getting the spins too. It felt like someone had tossed him into a drum full of broken glass and rolled him down a hill.

He tossed and turned and rolled until he fell right off the bed with a muted thunk. The floor was dry at least. For now. Give it a few minutes and he'd be in a puddle. He rubbed at his face. Why did everything hurt? Why couldn't he cool down? What the hell was going on!?

He flung his arms and legs out spread eagle, trying to cool off. One arm sprawled out under his bed. His fingers brushed against something. He grabbed it and dragged it towards himself. He let his head roll to the side to see what it was. A pair of dirty jeans. He dropped them and groaned. Even the thought of putting on clothes was painful. He rubbed at his face again—what was that smell!?

He pressed his right hand to his nose. Holy fuck. What was that? He breathed deep. What was that?

He turned to look at the dirty jeans. His hand shot out. He snatched the jeans up and shoved them in his face. He huffed in whatever that smell was. The quick breaths made the dizziness worse but that smell...it was...wintry...no...Christmas. Spicy, citrus, evergreens, and...something else. Dear god, it smelt good. It was the first thing he could describe as good since Saturday.

He hauled himself back up into bed, the jeans came with him. He clutched the jeans to his chest. Everything still hurt but...was he maybe just a little bit cooler? A new wave of sweat broke out. Nope. He was just getting his hopes up. He turned onto his side. He flipped onto his back. He rolled back over onto his stomach. Nothing felt right. Every position hurt. His heart was pounding like he had been running all day.

This was stupid. Why was he waiting to go to the hospital? He should just go now. What if he was getting sick the way Mom had, his own immune system eating him alive?

He took in two gasping breaths as pain flared up in his gut. Fuck this. He sat up when the pain was over - ignoring the way the room spun - and started to pull on the dirty jeans. He was going to the
goddamned hospital even if he had to walk there. He'd do anything at this point to make it stop. He
didn't even care that they'd probably want to stick him with needles and put tubes and shit into him.
He hated how sick he felt more than he hated that hospital.

The jeans didn't feel like sandpaper but they didn't feel particularly good either— they just smelt
really good. His dick gave an interested twitch, agreeing that yes, that really was a good smell,
awesome even. He rolled his eyes. His dick could go to hell right along with clothes. He was going
to the hospital, not trying to jerk off again.

He stood up and felt something in his jeans pocket. He frowned down at the bunched up fabric. He
shoved his hand in and pulled out...a rabbit's foot? That was nine kinds of gross that he didn't need
right now. He tossed the rabbit's foot key chain onto his dresser. But something about it had him
staring at it...he remembered something about it. Where had he gotten that? He reached over and
grabbed it. He slid his finger through the metal key ring and let it dangle from his hand. He stared
at it. Where...? He had found it the other night at the party, hadn't he? He wrapped his fingers
around it and squeezed. Rabbit's foots were supposed to be lucky, right? Well, if he was gonna go
to the hospital he'd need all the luck he could get.

He grabbed the first shirt he saw and yanked it on. He headed out his bedroom door and down the
hall at a steady wobble. Less than a minute later he was out the front door; dripping sweat and
barefoot, clutching a rabbit's foot key chain tight in his fist. He swerved down the sidewalk.

It took Dean a while to realize he didn't actually know the way to the hospital - he had always
avoided it like the plague - but it didn't take him long to realize that people were staring at him. He
didn't care. He felt a few hundred degrees too hot, his skin felt like it was peeling off, and
everything under his skin felt like it was being run through a paper shredder. Everyone could go to
hell. He felt like shit. He had every reason to look like shit too.

After circling a nearby strip mall twice Dean decided to cut through the patch of woods behind it.
That should bring him up behind the bookstore. He'd get Bobby to drive him to the hospital. Or if
push came to shove, he'd steal a car and get Jo to drive him there. He didn't think he should be
driving since every step he took made his head spin and he was having trouble focusing his
thoughts.

The patch of woods he was cutting through was divided by a creek. A creek that was always frigid
because it was spring fed. He came to the edge of it. There was a plank of plywood and some logs
five feet away from him that everyone used as a bridge but he stood where he was and stared down
at the cold cold water.

He clambered down the bank, slid the last couple of feet, and splashed into the creek landing on
his ass. He dunked his head under and brought it back up, huffing and puffing for air. The water
was frigid. Thank, god. He wasn't sure if he felt better for it or not. All the pain and dizziness was
blending together. His nerves felt used and abused; everything too sensitive and over stimulated
with pain. He flopped down into the muck of the riverbank, letting his legs float in the water, and
for a couple of blissful seconds he felt warm instead of burning hot.

The buzz of mosquitoes drew his attention to how long he must have laid sprawled in the creek. He
opened his eyes and looked up at the sky. It had been early afternoon when he left, now there were
faint traces of purple in the sky as afternoon gave way to evening. He made himself get up even
though sitting down and living in the creek forever seemed like a good idea. He had somewhere to
be.

He staggered and splashed to the other side of the creek and climbed out. He had to get to the
bookstore because Bobby would...what the hell had he been doing? He shook his head. It didn't
matter. He just knew he had to get there. He needed to get there.

It was dark when he got there and the bookstore was closed. Fuck! He didn't even know why he was trying to get to work. He felt like shit, why the hell would he still come into work? He leaned back against the brick of the building as his head spun. He slid down to the ground. The scrape of brick against his skin set off fiery pain but it was all mixed up with relief as it scratched across his back at the itch that wouldn't go away.

He dropped his head into his hands. He was on the verge of tears. He didn't know why he had come to work. He didn't know why everything hurt. He didn't know why he was so hot. He didn't know why he was so itchy. He didn't know why any of it was happening and he couldn't stop it and— What was that?

A light breeze played against his too sensitive skin. It hurt but he didn't care about that. What he cared about was that smell the wind was blowing his way. What was that? He lurched to his feet and followed the smell. A few storefronts over he stopped. It was that bakery Jo went to sometimes but it wasn't baked goods that he was smelling. He loitered around the front of the closed bakery for a few minutes until the wind picked up again. He tilted his head up and breathed— Christmas! He breathed in again. Christmas...and leather; a few of his favourite things.

He turned into the breeze and started walking; rabbit's foot still clutched tight in his hand.

---

Dean woke up. He wasn't entirely sure where he was but...well, that was okay. It didn't matter where he was because it was pretty awesome here. He shoved the metal shelving unit away from himself. He sat up and looked around. This place was pretty damn cool looking. They should totally film a Harry Potter style dark urban fantasy here. ...whoever they were and wherever here was. But someone should do it. It would be awesome.

He sat and stared at the pools of liquid around himself, some of them soaking into his jeans. He drew a finger through a few puddles and watched as they merged and shimmered. That was freakin' cool. It was like an oil slick and mercury. He fiddled with something in his hand. He looked down to see— oh hey! Neat! A rabbit's foot key chain. That was cool too.

He stood up and brushed himself off. Bits of glass clinked to the floor and puffs of some powdery stuff clouded up the air as he patted down his jeans. He breathed in and got a nose full. He sneezed a few times. He rubbed at his nose. His skin felt weird, like someone was rubbing a balloon over it, making the hair stand on end. He chuckled and ran his hands over his arms. They were sticky with something but the touch to his skin made him shiver because, holy crap, it felt good.

He rubbed his hands over his arms again. Then a few more times. It kept getting better each time he did it. He could stand in the pile of glass and broken boxes for the rest of the night if he just got to rub his arms like this.

Voices from the other side of the door made him look over. Who was that? Hey, wait! Wasn't there a party going on? He spun the rabbit's foot key chain on his finger and made his way to the door. He poked his head out the door and listened. Hell yeah, there was a party going on!

He slipped out the door and darted down the hall following the sound of music. Heh, maybe Julie Andrews was around.

Dean wandered down long halls humming My Favourite Things until he caught a whiff of
something awesome. He followed the smell down a different hallway. The music got louder. He closed his eyes and breathed deep. He took a few steps forward before someone banged into him.

That awesome smell flooded his nose. Dean looked over the source of the smell and grinned. Talk about tall, dark, and handsome, the dude needed to be apart of that song. He pointed towards the party and grinned wider. "Not gonna go back in there and leave me on my own, are ya? I think you might be one of my favourite things."

Chapter End Notes

Oooh, what happened to Mary? What is her tragic back story if she didn't burn alive in demonic fire? Sick mother trope! Add that to the list! Afraid of hospitals trope! Also checked off on the list!

Julie Andrews was Maria in The Sound of Music. My favourites things is a song from that musical.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

What if he found his soul mate but it was too late?

Chapter Notes

What is this? Why do I do this? I don't know. I should just accumulate a buffer. Not post as I write. One day this will bite me in the ass.

On a more serious note, let me level with you folks. This story started off as a 100% drunk (I don't need pants, I'm gonna write fanfiction! drunk) rambling super deadpan joke (even the icon I picked for my Hell's Bartender pseud is a dick joke, okay so is my regular icon when you think about it). I killed myself laughing at my summary for this fic for a good fifteen minutes because I thought, who on earth would read this? But people slowly began reading it and to my surprise liking it and subscribing to it. And now it has more subscribers than I have followers on my tumblr. It is all very bizarre. But! As time has gone on, I have found that I actually rather like this fic and I find it oddly enjoyable to write since I can just let things run wild instead of having to refer back to canon.

Anyway point is we have transcended the drunk deadpan joke and entertained into a new wild frontier of story telling together. So dearest readers, I hope you stick around.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel woke up shivering in dark. He didn't think it had anything to do with the open window. His breaths were shallow and his heart felt like it was barely limping along. The pain in his stomach felt distant but not in a good way, more like he just couldn't feel it anymore because he was too far gone. What if he found his soul mate but it was too late? He touched his arm where the green illegible smudge of his soul mate's name mocked him.

He sat up in the dark living room and pulled a throw blanket around himself. Soft breathing made him look up. Anna was sleeping in the chair across from him with the phone in her lap. He watched his sister, morbidly thinking about how his death would affect her. He hoped she wouldn't take his untimely demise too hard. She was smart and caring and had so much to look forward to.

He tugged the edges of the blanket tighter around himself and laid back down on the couch. He would have stayed right there until morning if a gentle breeze hadn't wafted the overpowering smell of an omega at the peak of an intense heat and in severe distress through the open window. His eyes snapped open. He breathed the scent in. He sat bolt upright. He breathed in again. It was that peculiar sweet outdoorsy warm smell hidden under the scent of omega in distress and...swamp? Ultimately the details didn't matter because it screamed one thing to him: MATE.

He lurched off the couch and scrambled to the door as fast as his aching limbs would let him. His brain had to be playing tricks on him as the incomplete soul mate bond killed him. He must be
hallucinating scents. He flung the front door open and was hit with a blast of heat. A dark figure was standing on the porch. He could hear them breathing hard. This couldn't be real...

He sniffed at the air. His instincts kicked into overdrive screaming at him, MATE! THAT IS MY MATE!

The figure on the porch mumbled something that sounded strangely like...Christmas? Now he knew he had to be hallucinating. Why would his mate show up in the middle of the night smelling like a swamp and talking about human holidays? Maybe he was still sitting curled up in the living room dreaming.

Castiel reached over and turned the porch light on expecting the shadowy apparition on the porch to disappear. Instead he found himself standing face to face with the tallest omega he had ever seen. They were breathing hard, dripping with sweat and slick, covered in dirt and mud, and looking every inch the heat crazed omega with only one thing on their mind— or if the horror novels were right two things, sex and murder.

The omega took a jerky step forward and made a low noise in their throat like a growl. Castiel decided that the omega probably did have one thing on their mind. Murder. His instincts screamed MATE but Castiel was sure he was looking at a serial killer. The omega had their fists clenched tight at their sides and a look in their eyes like they might do more than take a swing at him.

"I...uh..." Castiel searched for something to say to the wild-eyed omega standing in front of him.

He didn't have long to think about it because suddenly the omega lunged forward and pushed him into the house. Castiel's instincts didn't know what to do. He had imagined that when they finally found each other they'd be filled with relief and have the kind of sex romance novels wrote about when soul mates found each other. But instead the omega looked like they were entertaining the idea of possibly killing him before the incomplete bond did.

"Anna! Wait!" Castiel put a hand up to stop her but he was too late. She brought the heavy hardcover book down on the omega's head. Castiel couldn't really blame her. Here was a complete stranger coming into their house uninvited shoving him around. Her instincts weren't floundering in confusion trying to decide whether this omega was a mate or a threat. Castiel darted forward and grabbed the omega. He yanked them back from his sister and shoved them down the hall, keeping himself between Anna and the omega. The quick action made him light headed. He hoped he didn't faint before they had this sorted out.
The omega swore and stumbled back a few steps before catching their footing. They looked around the hall confused then tilted their head up, scenting the air. The omega turned a levelled gaze on him and started stalking towards him.

"Calm down." Castiel said, trying to summon up the voice that his mother used when she was being a *not to be trifled with* alpha mom. It didn't work. He put his hands up defensively and backed up as the omega huffed out angry breaths. The omega cornered him at the end of the hall. How was an *omega* this terrifying? Castiel flattened himself against the wall and tried to reason with them. "I know what you're going through but that's—"

*I don't know what I'm going through." The omega snapped. They grabbed him by the shirt again. "Why would you know?"

Castiel stayed still as the omega aggressively scented him and radiated body heat. He didn't think he could physically restrain the omega if they chose to *actually* attack him. He was so weak from the incomplete bond; better to try and talk to the omega. "You...you don't know?"

"All I know is I've been *sick* all damn weekend and you're the first thing to feel *cold.*" The omega growled. The angry tone was at odds with the gentle way they were now busily rubbing their dirt covered face on his shirt. The omega kept muttering about how cold he was.

Sick? Castiel tilted his head confused. How would anyone mistake this for being sick? They were *dying.* It slowly dawned on Castiel why the omega was so confused and angry, and why they hadn't seemed to know they were going into heat at the party on Friday night. "This is your first heat."

"What? I...yeah, sure." The omega shrugged but didn't let go of his shirt. "I've never had a fever like this before. It's god awful."

"It's not a fever. Not really." Castiel attempted to explain. He started trying to slip out from between the burning hot omega and the wall. He felt like he might collapse soon. His heart was still beating erratically and the omega was right, he did feel cold but he wasn't as glad about that symptom as the omega was. He was beginning to suspect it was his body shutting down. He set his hands on the omega's shoulders, startled by how hot the omega was under his hands, and tried to ease them back. "It's a heat and we made it worse because of the mating bite and the soul mate mark."

"I don't know what the hell you're talking about and I don't *care* what you're talking about. You're the first time I haven't felt like an inferno since the weekend." The omega shoved him back against the wall again and pressed themself against him breathing deep and scenting him. "So just shut up and...I dunno stand still because I'm not letting go."

Castiel was equal parts surprised, worried, and stunned. They didn't know. The omega didn't know about heats or mating. He really had mated into one of those traditional families from outside of town. His mate had probably been home schooled their entire life and their parents probably still believed that omegas shouldn't be educated about heats or mating least they be lured into sex with someone they didn't intend to mate for life. Castiel nearly growled. He'd like to slap the omega's parents for not explaining how mating worked and what heats were. What if his mate had just stayed hidden until their condition turned fatal?

The omega pressed him harder into the wall, heat and sweat pouring off of them. Castiel could see Anna coming down the hall with that book again. This was getting out of hand.

"I can make it stop." Castiel said. He hoped that would calm the omega down before Anna hit them with the book again.
That caught the omega's attention. The omega leaned back and looked him in the eye warily. "Are you serious?"

Castiel nodded and eased the burning hot omega off him.

"How?" The omega demanded tightening their grip on his shirt.

Castiel carefully took hold of the omega's fist, capturing it his own. His heart was pounding, he hoped this calmed the omega down because he wouldn't be able to do much more. He felt faint and exhausted. The omega let him take their hand. They didn't pull away or try to shove him around again. He gave the omega's too hot hand a squeeze. "I'll show you."

"Castiel?" Anna asked hesitantly. She was holding the book up defensively ready to strike if the omega started shoving him again. "Are they...the one?"

Castiel was nearly 100% sure it was the omega he had been looking for from the scent alone but he had to be completely sure. He gently took the omega's arms and turned them over. A blue smudge much like the green one he had was on the omega's arm. "Yes."

The omega looked down to where Castiel was holding their arms then looked back up at him in wide-eyed desperate confusion. Castiel wondered how long the omega had been wandering around boiling to death not knowing what was happening to them.

"Are you...going to be okay alone with them?" Anna asked cautiously.

"I'll be fine, Anna." Castiel assured her and started leading the omega towards the door to the basement where his bedroom was. He hoped he'd be fine. He thought he might pass out at any minute and with how hot the omega was he didn't know how they were still on their feet.

As he opened the door to the basement Anna caught up to him. She put a hand on his shoulder. "Be careful."

Castiel nodded but it didn't matter in the end if the omega was dangerous or not. Not completing the bond was going to kill him. He had to take his chances with this near stranger that had turned up on the porch looking like an axe murderer.

...what if his soul mate really was a serial killer? He glanced sideways at them. Hopefully he'd have some time to recover before they started disposing of bodies.

Castiel clutched at the railing with one hand - worried that he was about to collapse and fall down the stairs - and the omega with the other as they went down the stairs together. He lead the omega down the hall to his room. He ushered the omega into his room and closed the door behind him. The omega didn't seem bothered by the dark. He crossed the room with the omega in tow and turned on his bedside lamp.

He turned and looked at the omega. His soul mate...who had just attacked him in the upstairs hallway. Most of the dirt on the omega's face had rubbed off on his shirt. The omega was flushed red and looking angry again. Still...if the omega was as sheltered as he thought they were most of that anger was probably fear of the unknown. As horrible and exhausted as Castiel felt he still wanted to take the time to ease those fears, this was his soul mate after all. Disjointed scraps of health class came to him, bits and pieces about omegas being natural caretakers. Maybe that would calm the omega; appealing to their basic nature.

Castiel gently eased the omega down to sit on his bed. "Wait here."
The omega blinked at him and looked around like they weren't entirely sure how they had gotten here. Maybe they weren't. The omega seemed more disorientated than weak. How had the omega even found him in their state?

Castiel slipped into the bathroom adjacent to his bedroom and came out a few moments later with a wet washcloth. He tried to wipe some of the swampy smelling muck off the omega's face and out of their hair, hoping that the simple act of trying to take care of them would calm them down.

"That doesn't fucking work." The omega snarled at him and batted his hand away. "I've been trying that all weekend. Nothing fucking cools me down...except you."

"This isn't supposed to cool you down." Castiel explained and tried to wipe some more of the dirt from the omega's face. The omega wasn't having it.

"Then I don't freakin' care about it." The omega ducked away from the wash cloth and reached out, grabbing at him, trying to pull him in closer. Castiel backed away. The omega caught hold of his arm and pulled themself up off the bed. They dragged Castiel back against them. That burning heat was still coming off of them in waves.

"Alright." Castiel said, giving up with the wash cloth. He pushed the omega back down to the bed. So much for niceties. "Do you know how mating works? Anything at all about it? Or soul mates?"

"What?" The omega was watching him carefully still breathing hard and dripping sweat.

"I'll take that as a no." Castiel said. How was he going to explain this?

The omega reached out for his arm and yanked him closer again. "Look, I don't care about...about..."

The omega trailed off as if they had completely forgotten they were talking. Castiel worried that the omega was about to pass out. They were red faced and looked like they were having trouble breathing.

"I just want it to stop." The omega's voice quavered, it sounded like they might burst into tears any moment now. The omega took in two gasping breaths and gave a quick shrug. The murderous look came back. "You said you know how to stop it. So. How. The Hell. Do. I. Stop. It?"

Castiel tugged his arm away from the omega. He looked the omega over. He didn't think they would care for a delicate or tasteful explanation of how mating worked. He pulled his shirt off and tossed it aside. "Sex. We're going to have sex."

Castiel tugged his arm away from the omega. He looked the omega over. He didn't think they would care for a delicate or tasteful explanation of how mating worked. He pulled his shirt off and tossed it aside. "Sex. We're going to have sex."

The omega looked at him confused. Castiel bent down and grabbed the hem of the omega's shirt and pulled it up. The omega didn't seem to care, still busy thinking over what Castiel had said. Castiel dropped the soaking wet t-shirt to the floor.

"When we orgasm, bite me here." Castiel pointed to the crook of his neck. He undid his pants and shoved them aside. "Sex. We're going to have sex."

"...and that'll stop it?" The omega sounded desperate and more than a little wary but didn't look particularly concerned by the sudden nakedness.

"Yes." Castiel said. He leaned down again - remotely registering that the omega was barefoot for some reason - and started undoing the omega's jeans. They were the same jeans the omega had been wearing Friday night; stained with the gods knew what and now soaked with sweat and slick and covered in mud. Had the omega wandered around alone in pain and in heat in these jeans for
days? Why hadn't their family taken care of them? Had he inadvertently gotten the omega kicked out of their house for coming home with a mating bite?

The omega arched an eyebrow at him. Then suddenly laid back on the bed and shoved their pants off. As soon as they were naked they grabbed Castiel and yanked him down to the bed, rolling on top of him and grinding their hips together.

Castiel gasped at all that too hot skin that was suddenly pressed against him. He grabbed onto the omega's shoulders and held them still. "Slow down. Not like this."

The omega groaned and looked defeated. They pressed the palm of their hand to their forehead. "Then how."

Castiel had the sudden worry that their one night stand may very well have been the omega's first time. Had he taken advantage of a drunk virgin omega? Oh please, no. He couldn't have met his soul mate for the first time like that. "Uh...like before."

"...before?" The omega narrowed their eyes at Castiel for a moment before slowly nodding. Then Castiel was yanked upright like a rag doll into a sitting position. The omega straddled his lap, took his dick in hand, and started stroking it.

Castiel took in a shaky breath. The sudden pleasure when he had been in so much pain these last few days was startling.

The omega grabbed his face in their other hand - something soft rubbed against his cheek - and gave him another wild-eyed stare. They blinked the sweat out of their eyes, "You better be right about this, Christmas, cuz otherwise I think I'm gonna burn alive."

Chapter End Notes

Worlding note! Omegas are generally referred to as them/they in this verse. I don't have a reason for this I just think it's an interesting linguistic quirk. Wait! Now I do have a reason! It's a great reason! But If I tell you here it ruins things. So believe me there is a reason. ...actually I think I give it away in the comments anyway.

Just because it's super subtle, I'm poking fun at the phrase "barefoot and pregnant". 
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

He really thought he might be dying.

Chapter Notes

***Warning for dubious consent***

Fuck or die fics are always dubious consent at best but Dean is really not with it in this and it's questionable as to how much he understands what's going on and how much he can actually consent to what's happening.

Then there's the issue from Castiel's point of view. What does he do with someone who is clearly really out of it and probably doesn't get what is going on but if they don't do it they die? What is the greater moral obligation here? Totally informed consent or basic personal safety for himself and Dean?

There really are no good options when it comes to fuck or die.

Essentially I invite you to dissect the morality of this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He felt like he was dying.

He couldn't breathe right and his vision kept getting hazy and shadowy things darted around at the edges of his sight and sparks flicked up before his eyes and sounds would come and go and his skin felt like it was on fire and his thoughts kept wandering away and he was exhausted and everything hurt and the whole thing was damned terrifying.

He really thought he might be dying.

He didn't know where he was or who the boy with him was but mystery boy felt cold and that was enough for Dean. In a world that felt like it was burning him alive the boy under him felt blissfully cold. Dean could have cried at the sheer relief of feeling something cool against his skin but he didn't think there was enough moisture left in his body to do that. He tried to keep his mind focused by concentrating on how cold the boy's skin felt.

"Are you okay?" The boy asked him.

Dean's eyebrows furrowed. Okay? He didn't know where he was and he had agreed to have sex with a complete stranger on the off chance that it would stop him from feeling like he was going to die. Dean heaved in a breath, "No. Do I look okay?"

The boy didn't say anything back. Dean didn't know if he cared or not. The boy slid a hand around
Dean's hip and reached down. Dean jolted as the boy pressed two fingers into his ass causing a shock of pleasure to run through him. With all the pain he had been in he had forgotten that some things didn't hurt. That there were things that actually felt good.

...was he really going to do this? His head was all fuzzy but he was still pretty sure there was something hinky with this whole fuck the pain away plan he had agreed to.

He pushed his worries aside because whether or not something was up the boy really did feel cold. If it took sex to keep mystery boy close and cold against his burning hot skin then that's what he was gonna do. ...and it wasn't like the boy was a complete stranger. He knew him...sorta.

He only had the barest memory of this boy in a different room, of being eager and not in pain. But the smell, he remembered the smell clear as day. It wrapped around him like a safety blanket that he never wanted to let go of. He leaned his head, aching with fever, against the boy's shoulder and closed his eyes. He took in one laboured breath after another, each one filled with that familiar scent. Dear god, mystery boy smelt good.

Dean's thoughts wandered back to trying to describe that smell. There were so many different parts to it but altogether the only words Dean could think to use to describe it were Christmas and leather...where the hell was his leather jacket anyway? He sat up. His brows furrowed. Had he even worn a jacket here? And...what had happened to his shoes? He didn't remember taking them off but how would he have gotten his pants off with his shoes on? ...and why had he been in such a hurry to take his pants off anyway?

"I think you can..." The boy motioned downwards.

Dean looked down to his hand. He had been jerking mystery boy off this whole time? He rolled his shoulders and tried to catch his breath. What did the boy think he could do? He looked back to the dick in his hand...oh right. Like before. He shuffled forward and leaned against the boy's chest. How was he so cold? Dean would gladly lean right there just like this forever. He sighed and breathed in that soothing smell. He even smelt cold.

He felt the boy reaching around him again. Soft skin rubbed against his thigh, then butted up against his ass. What the ever loving hell was....he....doing....were they having sex? He glanced over his shoulder but couldn't really see anything. He looked down between his legs but all he could see was his own dick. He let out a quiet moan as something started to press inside him. He huffed in surprise as it slid a little further in.

"Are you okay?" The boy asked again.

Dean felt himself scowl at the boy but it was like an out of body experience. He knew he was doing it but it was like he was feeling the movement of muscle in his face second hand. "Quit fucking asking me that."

"Okay. You just..." The boy trailed off sounding put off and worried. The boy put a hand to Dean's forehead and frowned. He opened his mouth but closed it and shook his head before going back to trying to ease Dean down on his dick.

Why were they having sex...? Dean frowned, trying to remember. All he had wanted to do was keep mystery boy here in arms reach to cool him down. That didn't mean they should have sex. The answer came back in a brief flash of enlightenment. This was supposed to stop it. They'd have sex and the fire and ants under his skin would go away. He wouldn't be itchy anymore, he wouldn't be pouring sweat. It would stop. It would finally goddamned stop.
...why the hell would sex stop it? And why the hell had he thought that sounded like a good idea? That sounded like a terrible idea. That sounded like something creepers said to girls in dark alleys before they kidnapped them and locked them up in sex dungeons.

The boy let out a soft moan and there was a weird noise like a flag in the wind. Dean jerked backwards as two huge black wings stretched out to either side of him. He stared wide-eyed. **That was not right.** Dean scrambled back.

"Ow!" The boy yelped in pain. The wings puffed and arched up, spreading wide behind the boy. "Fuck!"

Dean sat at the far end of the bed and stared. What the hell was going on? Why did that boy have wings?

The boy rubbed gingerly at his balls. "What're you doing?"

Dean leaned back. The boy definitely had wings. Boys should not have wings. Why did that boy have wings? His heart beat rapidly as adrenalin pumped through him. Why the hell did that boy have wings?

The boy reached out towards him, offering a hand. Dean leaned even further back. He was having no part of Hawkman over there. No thank you. His eyes flicked to the wings still arched high and spread wide. Nope. No way was that right.

The boy looked behind himself then back to Dean. The wings lowered themselves down and drew together. The boy looked at him apologetic and embarrassed. "Sorry. I didn't mean to- " The boy waved at the wings. "You crushed my balls."

Dean didn't even feel a hint of sympathetic pain for squashing mystery boy's balls. Mystery boy had bigger problems than bruised balls. Dean tracked the slight movement of feathers as they settled back against the wings.

The boy studied Dean for a moment. Then the wings pressed even further down before one slowly stretched out towards Dean. Dean's eyes went wider yet. He edged backwards keeping an eye own those feathered monstrosities. His hand reached back to pull himself further away but he felt nothing but air. He tumbled backwards off the bed.

"Are you okay?" The boy sounded panicked. He should be. He had freakin' wings sticking out of his back.

Dean poked his head up over the edge of the bed. Those wings were still there. Was he...was he hallucinating? Were those sparks and shadows more than his vision being screwed up? Was his brain going haywire? He rolled something furry between his fingers, trying to think this whole thing through. He glanced down. He still had that rabbit's foot key chain jammed onto one of his fingers. He closed his fingers around it. He slowly stood up, but stayed where he was. Those wings kept being there.

The boy sat on the bed and studied him. "Are you okay?"

"I said quit freakin' asking me that." Dean snapped. He eyed the wings. They were draped low, flowing off either side of the bed. He climbed back onto the bed, kneeling a good distance away from those wings. The boy didn't move but the wings twitched a little. He cautiously reached out and drew a finger along one long glossy black feather then yanked his hand away. **That was real!**
"You can touch them if you want." The boy said and then the wings were moving towards Dean again and that was **not good at all.** The wings stopped then pulled back and tucked up behind the boy. The boy paused and considered him. The boy's head tilted to one side before he put a hand out again. "Everything will be fine. We just have to do this. Once we do it. You'll feel better."

Dean eyed the wings with suspicion. He hated how he felt right now but...those wings... He swallowed his discomfort. He *really* wanted to feel better and mystery boy seemed pretty confident that...what did they have to do? He hesitantly reached a hand out towards the boy. Did it matter what they had to do if it made him feel better?

"You sure about that?" Dean asked.

"I'm sure," The boy said, taking his hand and drawing him up to his lap.

"Okay." Dean said. He straddled the boy's legs. The boy's dick bumped up against his own. Oh right, they were going to have sex because...why were they having sex?

The boy pulled him forward a bit until his dick was between his legs again. Dean was less concerned about where mystery boy was sticking his dick and *more* concerned about those huge freakin' wings sticking out of him. They couldn't *really* be real could they? He reached out to touch one again. He jerked his hand back. They sure felt real.

The boy touched his forehead and looked concerned. He pressed his lips together in a grimace before dropping his hands down to either side of Dean and pushing down on Dean's hips. Dean startled when something pressed into his butt and nearly flung himself backward again.

The boy dug his fingers into Dean's hips and pushed him down on his dick before he could scramble off the bed again. The boy held him still and looked at him; concerned, worried, and a little bit guilty. "Calm down. It's okay. It'll be okay."

Dean sat still for a moment processing having a dick up his ass. He had never gone all the way with a boy before...except...he had, hadn't he? On Friday night. With *this* boy. Who had wings apparently. He scowled at the wings then at the boy. He leaned forward. "I'm *calm.*"

The boy didn't look like he believed Dean. He touched Dean's forehead and frowned.

Dean wrinkled his nose. He was *so* calm. He'd prove it. He glanced back at the wings, which had drifted upwards again, and reached out and grabbed one.

The boy took in a sharp gasp as his hips bucked up.

Dean groaned and shoved down against the boy's hips. Dean's already heavy breathing came hard and fast as he clutched at the wing. Holy shit. That felt a hell of a lot better than that dildo he had bought mostly on a dare last year.

The two of them sat still and breathed.

The boy huffed, "Are you—"

"Shut up." Dean growled. "I can't breathe and *everything* hurts. Does that sound okay to you?"

"...no." The boy said cautiously then slowly reached a hand out and touched Dean's forehead again. He held his hand there for awhile this time. The frown came back. "You feel hotter."

The touch was so freakin' **cold.** How did this boy have any right to steal all the cold in the world?
Dean leaned into it, one hand still griping a fist full of wing. He took a deep breath, then a second one. He did it twice more just to be on the safe side. He felt better already with just mystery boy's hand on his forehead. Maybe *that* was why sex was supposed to stop it. Nothing more *full contact* than sex.

"I think it's getting worse." The boy ran an icy hand down Dean's side still frowning. Mystery boy looked like he was having some kind of serious argument with himself before he slowly rolled his hips up.

Dean made a funny high pitched noise crossed with a gulp as the boy's dick began to slide in and out of his ass. Dear fucking god, that felt good! He was distantly concerned that they hadn't really done anything before having sex. No lube. No stretching open. ...and *no freakin' condom!* *Shit.* He was gonna be a statistic for the clap or something. He started wriggling back again, intent on getting off the dick he was currently riding, but the boy tightened his grip on Dean's hips with one hand and grabbed Dean's dick with the other. All concerns about condoms and the clap went right out the window.

Holy. Crap. That felt **good!**

The boy stroked him gently before starting up those slow thrusts again. Dean experimentally raised himself up on his knees and slid back down the length of mystery boy's dick. He shivered. That felt **really good.** Why did people complain that anal sex hurt? This was freakin' **awesome.** The pain he had been living with since Saturday was still there and he still felt too hot anywhere the boy wasn't touching but, at least for now, pleasure was gaining some headway on the pain.

The slow roll of hips started to pick up pace. That was...actually that was kinda awesome too. Dean set his hands on the boy's shoulders and let his eyes fall closed. He tried to focus on the good things going on, and not the pain and never ending itch and the fire under his skin that still threatened to consume him.

Something soft and cool brushed against his cheek and then that soft cool feeling was wrapping around him. Dean kept his eyes closed because he was pretty sure if he opened them he'd see those freakin' *wings* again and he just wanted to enjoy being *cool* for a moment.

Dean wasn't sure how long that went on before he realized his breaths were coming in short gasps interjected with soft moans. The boy's steady thrusts had turned short and quick.

"Are you close?" The boy asked.

Dean nodded, not caring about the fuzzy logic for why they were having sex, and kept his eyes closed so he wouldn't have to care about those damn wings either. If he couldn't see them they weren't real.

"Me too." The boy said. He ran a cold hand over Dean's cheek. Dean opened his eyes to find cool blue eyes staring back at him. Even his damn *eyes* looked cold. That wasn't fair. The boy's face was serious. "When we come, remember to bite me."

"Uh huh." Dean said, watching those eyes because if he let his own eyes wander he was going to have to look at those wings. ...why the hell did this boy have wings anyway?

The boy started stroking Dean's dick faster as their own breath started coming quicker along with moans and whimpers that sounded more and more desperate with each stroke and thrust. Dean knew what that meant; he was doing some of his own moaning and groaning.
Dean sucked in a harsh breath. Oh fuck. His hips bucked up into mystery boy's hand as he came.

The boy tensed up and gasped. He slammed his hips up, "Now."

Dean huffed out a moan. Oh fucking hell.

The boy grabbed the back of Dean's head and pressed it into the crook of his neck. "Do it now!"

Dean's eyebrows furrowed. What the hell was mystery boy all mad about?

"Bite me!" The boy pushed at Dean's head.

Bite him? Dean opened his mouth and bit down.

"It has to be harder than that!" The boy sounded panicked. "You have to break the skin!"

Break the skin? That was gross. Dean was about to push away from the boy when there was a sharp piercing pain to the exposed side of his neck. What the hell? The boy pressed his head down and mumbled through his mouthful of Dean's neck and shoulder. The boy bit harder and...was he...was he freakin' crying about not getting chomped on? Dean huffed against the cool skin of the boy's shoulder while his face was pushed against it. ...well....guess he could do it....if it meant that much to mystery boy.

Dean drew in a shaky breath, still riding high from his orgasm, and bit down hard enough to leave a dark bruise. The boy snorted pathetically into his neck and squeezed him tighter. Those wings wrapped around him and pressed against his back. Dean bit a little harder. He could taste a hint of blood in his mouth. He ran his tongue over the flesh in his mouth. Yeah, that was definitely bloo—

Holy fucking hell! He bit down harder. Blood welled up in his mouth. It felt like he had stuck his tongue into an electrical socket but he didn't give two shits about that. A wave of...something flooded through him and that something was cold. Head to toe, everywhere at once COLD. Thank fucking god. He was never letting go. He dug his teeth in.

The boy let out a surprised yelp and cringed. Those wings tensed against Dean for a moment before frantically flapping and buffeting against him. Fingers dug into Dean's hair and tried to pull him back.

Dean clenched his jaw tighter. What if that horrible fire under his skin came back if he let go? The itch hadn't gone away. If anything it was worse now. He got whacked up the side of the head with a wing. Could hallucinations smack a person around? He didn't think so. That itch down his back pulsed with pain. Oh god no. It was coming back. He'd couldn't live through that again. He couldn't. He bit harder. He could feel blood leaking out around his lips.

The boy pulled at Dean's his head and pushed at his chest while he whimpered in pain. "Let go! You can let go!"

He couldn't. Dean just knew that fire was going to come back.

The boy squirmed around in a panic.

Dean bit harder trying to hold on. A wing crashed down hard on Dean's head. The itch down his back flared up in pain.

"Let go!" The boy worked his arm between them and drove his elbow into Dean's gut while smashing a wing hard against Dean's side.
Two things happened in quick succession. What felt like a knife cut down Dean's spine, accompanied by a tearing noise and his own yelp of pain, then a puff of striped feathers rained down around him.

Dean's vision clouded up in response to that last sharp searing pain. He sat back and breathed hard. He could feel himself wavering. Light-headedness was making him sway. He could feel the blood draining out of his face. His head rolled back and he went with it. Arms caught him and pulled him forward. Dean settled against the boy's chest. He breathed hard and blinked in wide-eyed shock as that last bit of tearing pain faded. He still couldn't see right. Everything was black around the edges.

"Are you okay?"

Dean couldn't summon up the strength to respond. The parts of his vision that weren't black started to turn dark and grey.

"You feel cooler."

When that blackness was all he could see he wasn't sure if it was because he was passing out or if someone had turned the light off. Arms squeezed him tight and something soft settled over his aching exhausted body. Dean breathed deep. That new favourite smell of his was still there. He nuzzled his head into the body under him and finally, after days of pain, fell asleep. Blessed cold sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I feel like I promised sexy fun times in the comments of the previous chapters and then gleefully yanked the rug out from under everyone's feet. I really don't think fuck or die should be sexy.

For the occasional update about the progress of this fic or updates about my other currently running fics or if reblogs with little theme are your thing you can follow me at Brains for baby jesus. Won't you buy my brains?
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Soul mates were supposed to compliment a person's soul. How on earth would murder compliment his soul?

Chapter Notes

Want an idea of what Dean's wings look like? Click here. You will not be disappointed by these fluffy grandpa babies.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel woke up when his dick slid out of the omega, along with a flood of come. He groaned softly in disgust. What a lovely way to wake up. His lips twitched with the ghost of a relieved smile. He'd woken up. He had been sure he was going to die last night but he'd woken up and he didn't feel terrible. He was suddenly a lot more thankful to be waking up to a mess of come.

He glanced at the red glow of his alarm clock. It was ten after six in the morning. He had only gotten a couple of hours of sleep in. The omega was still curled up on his chest. He could just barely see the outline of their shape in the dark. He still had his arms wrapped around them, one resting on the small of their back and the other tangled in the feathers of their wings. That sweet outdoorsy omega smell was engulfing him, soothing his fear and panic from the night before with the smell of mate. It was...it was...surprisingly nice lying in the dark with his mate safely wrapped up in his arms even if his mate had looked like a feral serial killer last night...and shoved him around, tried to attack Anna, and then tore into his shoulder and wouldn't let go.

That almost there relieved smile disappeared. What if his soul mate really was a violent criminal? What if that was why they had stayed hidden for days? He wasn't cut out for a life of crime. How could this be his soul mate?

He snorted at how ridiculous that was. The likelihood that his soul mate was actually a vicious killer was preposterous. He may not know much about soul mate bonding but he knew that soul mates were supposed to compliment a person's soul. How on earth would murder compliment his soul? No, his soul mate wasn't a serial killer. They had just been confused, sick, and dying last night. Anyone would be upset and angry about that.

He untangled his hand from their feathers and and ran it through their hair. His mate made a snuffling sound and nuzzled into his chest. Castiel shook in a silent chuckle. How could he think his mate - an omega - was a violent criminal? No, his mate had been confused and scared. They were obviously from one of those traditionalist families that didn't do anything to prepare omegas for growing up and mating.

He dragged his fingers through their hair again and was rewarded with another nuzzle to his chest. He stroked his hand down his mate's neck and slid his fingers along the warm skin of his mate's back. He hesitated just above where his mate's wings met. It was a rather intimate touch but...
well...they had done more intimate things then touching each other's wings and they were mates for life now.

—he had a mate for life!

He had never imagined he'd find a soul mate, an omega soul mate. He'd always thought he'd mate a beta, maybe two in total throughout the course of his life, just like his mother and everyone else in his family. A fling in college maybe with his first beta mate, then they'd mature and part ways and he'd find his life long beta mate. He had never even thought about having an omega mate.

He gulped down the shock - he had a mate! - and let his hand trail down into the junction of their wings. He reveled in the smooth slide of his fingers over clean feathers until they got caught up in fluff. He bit his lip. The aggressive and kind of scary omega currently curled up on his chest still had downy feathers sticking out of their wings. A snicker escaped him. He caught himself and quickly stopped. That was mean. The omega was obviously a late bloomer if this was their first heat and they had clearly been upset and confused last night. He shouldn't laugh. This was his soul mate and they had both just had a brush with death.

Castiel smoothed out a few stray feathers for his mate before the come seeping down onto him started to get too disgusting even for him. He reached over to grab the roll of paper towels he kept beside his bed. He groped in the darkness for them but didn't come up with anything. He turned his lamp on and quickly located the roll of paper towels. He tore a few off the roll and wadded them up. He stuffed them between his and the omega's legs as best he could without disturbing his mate.

"Quit it." The omega rumbled. "That tickles."

So his soul mate was ticklish? A small smile crept onto Castiel's face but he wasn't about to test the discovery. He still felt sore all over, especially the crook of his neck. He had thought the omega— his mate wasn't going to mark him at first but then they had nearly torn a chunk of flesh off his shoulder. He gently touched the mating bite. There were two spots that seemed damp and gummy as if the bleeding was only just now stopping. Well, on the bright side, at least he knew he was mated now.

His mate shifted and yawned. They turned their head upwards opening their eyes. Surprise, then confusion, then panic whipped across his mate's face. His mate rolled off him and right off the bed. Castiel scrambled over to the edge of the bed intent on helping his mate up but got a face full of wings instead. He jerked his head aside narrowly missing the wing equivalent of an elbow to the eye.

"Jesus fucking Christ!" His mate yelped in panic. Wings and arms flapped and waved wildly from the floor beside the bed. Castiel ducked back as an arm and a wing shot up towards him. He leaned back towards the edge slowly. His mate started swivelling this way and that almost like a cat chasing its own tail. His mate gave a low angry growl, "What the ever loving fuck?!"

"Did you break something?" Castiel asked cautiously. He wasn't exactly sure what his mate was simultaneously terrified of and angry at down there on the floor. He may be an alpha but he did clean his room. Usually.

His mate stopped flailing about, sat up, and looked at him with steely green eyes. "Who the fuck are you?"

"Castiel." Castiel said. He was about to ask the same question - but more politely - when he was promptly punched in the nose. It did not help his earlier dismissal of his soul mate being a violent
criminal. Castiel jerked back as his wings flapped forward pushing him away and knocking his mate over. He grabbed the paper towels and shoved a bunch around his nose as blood poured out. He kept a watchful on the omega that kept attacking him.

"Where the fuck am I and what the fuck are these!?” His mate demanded.

Castiel looked his mate - he glanced at his left arm, Dean Winchester apparently - over while they motioned to their wings. One wing stayed still and the other made a strange jerking movement like it was motioning towards something behind it.

"Well!?" His mate grabbed onto the bed and pulled themself up, wings coming down to push them up as well. His mate glared at him. Their feathers puffed up with aggression making his mate look twice as large and angry than they already were. There were trails of dried blood down their face still from last night that made them look all the more murderous. His mate really looked like they might be a violent criminal.

Castiel crept back confused about why his mate was angry this time and not really sure what his mate was going to do next. That was when Castiel realized what he had read off his arm. His soul mate's name. In English. He looked back down. Dean Winchester. It continued to be in English. Dean Winchester; his soul mate's name in simple cursive script...in English. He looked up at his mate. He could just catch a glimpse of his own name in Enochian on their left arm. Why was his name in Enochian like it should be but his mate's name was in English? Those traditionalist families would never give their children human sounding names.

"Hey! I'm talking to you!" His mate- Dean- shouted, still grabbing onto the bed for support but looking like they might crawl over it any second and punch him again.

Castiel shuffled back as far as he could still holding the paper towels to his nose. What was he going to do with a bloodthirsty soul mate? Oh dear gods, what if his soul mate got out of the room and hurt Anna? They had gone after her last night.

His mate suddenly clapped their hands to their ears, their wings folding up in the same motion above their head. "What the hell is that?"

Castiel stared confused. He hadn't done anything to merit covering up their ears. Oh gods, what had he gotten himself into? His mate was violent and possibly crazy. He backed up more.

"Would you fucking quit that!” Dean snapped, wobbling where they stood as if they were about to tip over like a tree being felled. Their feathers started to lay flat and they looked more confused and worried then murderous and angry.

"Quit what?” Castiel asked cautiously. He hadn't done anything but bleed into a handful of paper towel. He gripped the edge of his pillow ready to fling it at his soul mate if they started climbing onto the bed.

"I don't know. But I know it's you. So quit fucking screaming in my head." His mate shot him a dangerous look. "And where the fuck are my clothes?"

It clicked in what his mate must be talking about: the bond. A mating bond was just a general barely there empathetic sense. Textbooks and teachers called it a certain thereness, just enough of a connection that made someone aware that their mate was alive and their general proximity but with soul mates it was supposed to be more. He should be feeling what Dean was feeling. Castiel concentrated trying to search for something he had never felt before but there was nothing. Why couldn't he feel his mate? ...did he even want to feel what his mate was feeling? What if it made
him violent too?

His mate meanwhile had decided to start shuffling their way around the bed, grabbing at the bed like they were stumbling drunk. They worked their way around to where their clothes were, keeping a wary eye on Castiel the whole time, while Castiel kept a wary eye on them too. They reached down and snatched up their clothes. Their right wing bending down and mimicking the action. Dean swatted at the wing. The wing flapped and flicked back throwing Dean off balance.

Castiel watched as his mate tumbled backwards and into his desk. Blood dripped out of the soaked paper towels around his nose. He tore off a few more paper towels to shove around his nose and tossed the bloody ones into the waste basket. His mate was clutching at the desk apparently fighting with their wings while trying to stay upright. Should he...should he help them? Or was his help just going to be met with more physical violence against his person? Maybe...maybe Dean was still sick? They had felt so very hot last night. Maybe something had been damaged, nerves or something like that. He started to get up slowly, ready to fling himself backwards if Dean moved to attack him again.

His mate caught sight of his movements and went stony faced. Dean snatched up a short metal ruler from his desk and held it in front of them like a sword. "You stay the hell away from me, you..." Their eyes flicked up to Castiel's wings. "—You."

Castiel stopped just outside of the reach of Dean's wings and hopefully outside of the reach of that metal ruler. Oh dear gods, his mate really was a serial killer. He took a step back. His mate brought their hand up like they might try to slash him with the ruler. One wing moved forward with it. Dean started shoving at the wing. Their wings started jerking and twitching again. What was happening to his mate?

"What's wrong?" Castiel asked, trying to sound more confident than he felt. Dean snapped another steely eyed glare at him. Castiel put his free hand up in a calming gesture. His eyes flicked to the lamp beside him. Could he snatch the lamp up in time and use it as a weapon if Dean attacked him?

"What's wrong?" Dean asked incredulously. He huffed out a sarcastic laugh. "You say that like it's normal to just drag people to-" His mate looked around the room suddenly surprised and confused again then the stony look was back. They glared at Castiel. "-here and freakin'- assault them."

Castiel blinked in surprise. He hadn't dragged his soul mate anywhere! They had shown up murderous on his front porch last night all on their own! And he hadn't assaulted his soul mate. His soul mate had attacked him. And Anna! His eyes darted to the lamp again. He looked back to Dean. "I didn't—"

"What? You didn't fuck me?" Dean's voice was scathing. Their wings had drawn up and spread wide, quivering with anger. The scent of fear filled the room.

Fear? Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. Was Dean...was all this violence and anger just because Dean was afraid? Castiel wished he could feel his mate through the bond. He'd feel safer knowing if Dean was actually feeling murderous or was simply afraid.

His chest tightened in panic. What if the reason he couldn't feel Dean was because they hadn't completed the bond!? What if they had to repeat last night? He couldn't do that again and he didn't think Dean would survive burning up like that a second time. Dean shifted, holding the ruler higher. Castiel eyed the edge of the metal ruler. He might not survive long enough to worry about it.

"Well!?" His mate demanded. They brandished the ruler. Their wings started flicking and jerking
again but stayed up; spread wide and aggressive. The scent of adrenaline wafted off them.

"We had to." Castiel said quietly while forcing his own wings down to make himself look smaller. Maybe that would calm his mate down and make them less likely to try and stab him with a ruler. He concentrated on trying to sense someone else in his head. He just wanted some brief glimpse. Any insight at all. Something to give him hope that his mate wasn't going to attack him. There was nothing. Something was definitely wrong...and not just with his mate's violence.

"Had to?" Dean scoffed. "I was off my rocker sick!"

"Exactly." Castiel said, keeping his voice steady and even. Omega or not, a steady alpha voice was supposed to calm people down...and the bond was working for Dean! If he stayed calm maybe it would calm Dean down! He forced himself to keep speaking like nothing was wrong. "You were dying. We both were."

"Right, because fucking would sure help with that." Dean said sarcastically. They eased back to lean on the desk as if they still couldn't quite keep their balance. The metal ruler stayed up. "Telling me you thought you were fucking a dying person is really not helping your case any, buddy."

Despite trying to stay calm Castiel had a renewed urge to slap Dean's parents up the side of the head. He was beginning to think that Dean's parents weren't the ultra conservatives outside of town, no it was worse. With a name like Dean Winchester their family was probably full of activists. Dean's family probably didn't tell their children anything about mating, letting them figure it out naturally. Well, that had worked out charmingly for them hadn't it? Raising omegas that attacked people in the middle of the night and tried to slash their soul mates the next morning with rulers.

His mate narrowed their eyes at him. Castiel's hand drifted out towards the lamp just in case—but he did it calmly.

"Why the hell do you have my name tattooed on you?" Dean asked suspiciously. They looked down at the blue soul mate mark on their own arm and narrowed their eyes at it. Castiel could see the intensity of his mate's thoughts pass before their eyes.

"It's not a tattoo." Castiel said. He thought he was doing a good job at staying calm. And was it maybe working on Dean? They didn't look like they were about to stab him with the ruler anymore. If anything Dean looked...frightened. Castiel edged closer. But not too close. "Are you okay?"

His mate's eyes snapped up. "Fuck off."

Castiel backed up a few steps until he bumped into the bed. Dean took a half step forward. He cringed. Dean was going to attack him again. Trying to manipulate the bond wasn't working after all.

Instead of attacking him his mate bent down and snatched up their pants. They tried to pull their pants on in fits and jerks but their wings were constantly bending down and getting in the way. Dean would shove at them making them jerk and flap chaotically. Then go back to trying to work around them before grabbing at them again. The entire fiasco ended up with Dean on the floor, pants pulled on and shirt around their neck, while they frantically tried to push away their wings. There were feathers everywhere and the smell of old sex and adrenaline was being taken over by the horrible bitter scent of omega in distress.

Castiel didn't know what to do. He was seventeen. He didn't know what to do with a mate, let alone
a crazed soul mate that could attack at any minute who probably didn't have a clue about how to act civilly because their parents had never bothered to raise them. Castiel grabbed his lamp and held it up ready to strike if Dean came closer and tried to be prepared for everything.

He wasn't prepared for everything.

A look of horror passed over his mate's face. They stopped fighting with their wings suddenly and seemed to deflate. They pulled their knees to their chest and wrapped their arms around them. Their wings mimicked the movement and curled around them protectively, hiding them from view. A moment later the entire feathery mass was shaking, with the occasional snort and sob escaping between feathers.

Castiel stood frozen for a minute trying to process what he had just witnessed and what he was now seeing. Dean had gone from murderous to distraught without any warning. What did he do now?

His instincts boiled up with an answer and got him moving.

Even if Castiel couldn't feel his mate through the bond, the alpha in him was a-bristle with activity at seeing, hearing, and smelling his mate in distress. He set the lamp down and grabbed the paper towels. He tucked the paper towels under his arm then picked up his glass of water from yesterday off the bedside table. He went to the bathroom, first filling the glass with fresh water and then pausing to look at his nose in the mirror. It didn't look broken and the bleeding had slowed to a minor trickle. He grabbed some toilet paper and shoved it up his nose. He picked up the glass and paper towel then on second thought left the paper towel there and took out toilet paper instead. It was softer.

Castiel walked a wide arc around Dean in case they lashed out with their wings again. He stopped in front of them a few feet away and stood there because as much as his instincts and basic decency wanted him to help his mate he wasn't sure how. He was right when he told Gabriel he couldn't have a mate at seventeen. He had no idea what to do and even less of an idea of what to do with someone that needed help but might try to hurt him.

He set the water and toilet paper down in Dean's reach then went to find his own pants. He didn't feel particularly comfortable naked in front of what essentially amounted to a rather violent stranger even if they were his soul mate.

Pants on, Castiel went back to his mate and cautiously knelt down in front of them; wing's length away for his own safety. He didn't want to get punched in the nose again or have Dean try to tear a piece of his neck off for a second time. He had lost enough blood for one day.

Dean didn't move.

Castiel didn't move.

What was he supposed to do now? Castiel tried to find the empathetic connection that should be there but came up with nothing. Why couldn't he feel his soul mate? What if they hadn't completed the bond in time? What if they had this one short reprieve and the pain came back and killed them? Why was it just one thing going wrong after another? What was he suppos—

"Stop." Dean's voice was quiet and desperate. "I don't know how you're doing that but just...just stop, okay?"

Castiel was about to ask stop what? but then he realized his own fears and confusion must still be getting through to Dean. He took a few deep breaths to calm himself down again. "Sorry."
Why on earth was he apologizing to the omega that had attacked Anna, chewed on him until he was bloody, and punched him in the nose? He touched the toilet paper he had shoved up his nose to check and see if the bleeding had stopped. He sighed. The answer was obvious. This was his soul mate, potential murderer or not.

Dean stayed quiet and shook.

Castiel hesitantly reached out with a wing and gently brushed it down Dean's wings. He could see Dean freeze under his touch. Castiel froze too. Was he going to get punched in the nose again? Dean started taking in slow breaths, their body relaxing. Castiel waited for a few more moments to pass - he really could do without being attacked again - before he brought his wing up and brushed it down Dean's wings once more.

They stayed like that - Dean curled into a ball covered by their wings and Castiel gently stroking Dean's wings - until Castiel's legs fell asleep. He shifted uncomfortably. He didn't want to make any sudden movements or changes to what he was doing in case his mate started getting violent again. He managed to get his feet out from under him, only gently knocking Dean in the head once, and sat down.

A hand snaked out from between the striped feathers of Dean's wings and snatched up the toilet paper. A moment later the sound of a nose being blown and a few more breathy sobs emitted from behind their wings.

Castiel let his wing settle on top of Dean's wings and waited to see if there was going to be more movement. There was. Castiel watched as fingers slipped through the feathers and parted them to show the face of his puffy eyed mate. There was something about that gesture that struck Castiel as strange but he didn't know what.

"I'm dead aren't I?" His mate asked. They took in a shaky breathe and let it out. "I...I wandered around sick and drowned in the creek out behind the MacLind's plaza."

"...what?" Castiel wasn't sure where to even begin answering that.

"I'm dead and this is Hell." Dean said as their fingers curled around their feathers and gripped them tight. "Or Limbo or wherever it is the crazy cat lady next door keeps yelling at me because I like boys too."

Castiel stared blankly. In a very twisted way it almost made sense - except for the cat lady part. He didn't know what a cat lady was - it would explain why everything was going wrong. They had died and they shared an afterlife because they were soul mates. Castiel shook his head. That didn't make sense at all because they hadn't died. They had completed the bond. They were fine. ...sort of. And Hell was a human concept anyway. It made his theory that Dean was actually from those weird activist families all the more likely. The snooty conservatives would never stoop to teach their children about human religions.

Castiel started gently stroking Dean's wings again. "You're not dead and this isn't Hell."

Dean shot him a look that made Castiel yank his wing away. Dean pushed their own wings aside to glare at him, "Yeah? So then explain these." Dean motioned to their wings. They started jerking spasmodically again. Dean yanked at the feather to keep their wings still. "And if this isn't Hell, where the hell am I?"

Castiel didn't know what to say. Explain their wings? How did you explain wings? Or arms? Or a nose? Well, he could tell his mate where they were at least, "You're at fifty-four Vipond Avenue."
This is my room. We're not dead. This isn't Hell."

Dean tensed up and fixed him with a look that said they clearly still thought this was Hell. Then their eyes flicked over Castiel carefully. Dean slumped and looked away.

Castiel cautiously leaned forward and nudged the glass of water towards them. "You should drink some water. You were sweating a lot last night."

Dean leaned forward to take the glass. Their fingers were on the rim when their face turned suspicious. Dean shoved the glass at him, spilling water onto the floor. "You first."

Castiel's eyebrows shot up surprised. Was this... was this his mate's way of being a caring omega? Angrily insisting he drink water first? Well, it was in line with all the other unusually aggressive behaviour. Castiel reached out and took the glass hoping it would placate Dean and that they wouldn't go into another potentially murderous rage. He drank down a few gulps then passed it over to Dean. Despite the attempts on his person he hoped that Dean would drink the rest. His mate really had lost a lot of water last night. There had been a wet spot under them that had nothing to do with sex.

His mate looked at the glass for another suspicious moment before glancing at him defeated and taking a sip which turned into draining the whole glass. Dean set it down when it was empty.

Castiel picked it up and went to the bathroom to refill it. He brought it back and offered it to Dean but Dean wouldn't take it until he drank some first. He took another gulp - he probably needed it anyway - then passed it to Dean.

Dean drained it again but didn't give the glass back this time. Instead they blinked and looked around the room. His mate had that pale look they had had last night right before they had passed out.

"Maybe you should lie down." Castiel suggested.

A shiver went through his mate. They glanced up at the bed behind Castiel. They squeezed their eyes shut and nodded. "Yeah...yeah, I don't...I don't feel well."

Castiel watched his mate try to lurch to their feet but between renewed shaking and the strange stumbling they were doing all Dean managed to do was fall back down. Castiel stood up and offered a hand. Dean looked at his hand and hesitated. Their nose flared as they took a few deep breaths. Castiel stayed still until Dean decided what they were going to do. Sudden movements and surprises seemed to be what made Dean violent.

Dean reached out and grabbed his arm then hoisted themself up off the ground. They wobbled backwards and flung an arm and a wing towards Castiel to hold on. There was panic in Dean's eyes.

"It's okay." Castiel said, hoping - rather selfishly - that Dean would continue to be docile and frightened rather than angry and violent. There was a good chance Dean would manage to tear a piece of him off or break his nose while they were this close together. "I won't let go."

That made Dean glare at him. "I'm not three. I can walk."

"Alright." Castiel said quickly and let go, pulling his arm away. His mate looked like they were ready to punch him again, right up until Dean pitched backwards.

His mate's hand darted out reaching for Castiel. One wing swung forward while the other one shot
up in panic. "I didn't say *let go!*"

Castiel ducked under the wing that had flung forward at this head. Then grabbed Dean's arm and pulled him forward to stop him from falling back. His mate grabbed both of his arms - their wings swept forward and encircled them both - and stood still breathing in a panic, eyes squeezed shut.

Castiel kept a cautious eye on Dean and fought the urge to shake Dean's wings off his own and wrap *Dean* up in *his* wings. He was an alpha. *He* was the one that was supposed to be doing the protective stances. But he was also an alpha with a brain. Dean might get violent again if he tried that.

One of Dean's eyes squinted open. "Can we just...move like this?"

Castiel nodded. The two of them shuffled backwards to the bed until Castiel bumped into it. They turned awkwardly until Dean was able to grope at the bed and climb in. Dean sat there staring at his wings looking stunned, small tremors going through him.

Castiel went back and grabbed the water glass. He filled it up again. He took a sip when Dean gave him another wary look then set it on the bedside table. He watched Dean, hoping his mate might give him a clue as to what he should do next. Dean stared back looking like they were waiting for Castiel to do the very same thing.

"I'm going to go get you something to eat." Castiel finally said.

Dean nodded.

"Stay here. I won't be long." Castiel said before heading for his door. He grabbed a shirt on the way out. He slipped out his bedroom door and closed it behind him. He leaned against the door and shook. His soul mate might be a serial killer, or at least exceedingly mentally unbalanced in some way, and was very possibly 'raised' by some ridiculous activist family. He put his head in his hands. What was he going to do?

"Castiel?"

Castiel's eyes went wide upon hearing the voice that called down the stairs. Relief poured through him. He flicked his wings, hiding them away in a higher plane, and tugged his shirt on. He raced up the stairs. His mother was back. She'd know what to do.

Chapter End Notes

Vipond is a shout out to parts of my hometown and because of that you must all now learn that it's Vi-pond not "Vip-pend". Vi as in "He is *Vying* for first place at the emu races." My hometown is basically made up of street names that everyone mispronounces.

Worlding! I perused A/B/O fics and it is my humble opinion that an alpha would probably need more than a couple of kleenexes to clean up with after anything sex related, thus the paper towels.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

"I'm not the crazy one here."

Chapter Notes

Look! A new chapter after some life delays.

***Warning***
Dean genuinely believes that he's been drugged, sexually assaulted, and kidnapped by a psycho with wings (although objectively that is what happened). So be wary of reading this chapter if those things upset you.

For the occasional update about the progress of this fic or updates about my other currently running fics or for reasons why I am actually a nine-legged semiautomatic groove machine or if reblogs with little theme are your thing you can follow me at Brains for baby jesus.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He was trapped. He was trapped and all he could think about was that he knew that the boy that had kidnapped him was upset. Dean shivered and stared at the door that boy had disappeared through. He knew that the boy was just on the other side feeling afraid and confused. That funny whine at the back of his head had quieted down but...but now he understood it. He didn't know how he understood it but he did. It was that boy - Castiel - but he didn't know why or how it was him. He just knew it was. The same way he just knew that the room smelt like him.

Understanding that whine wasn't really what had him shivering though. It was that he liked it. That was what was making him shake. He liked that weird bubble at the back of his head that wasn't his. He liked the way the room smelled. He had liked it when Wings there had been stroking the feathered monstrosities sticking out of his back. He had liked all of that. He shivered again. That boy with goddamned wings had lured him into a room without any windows while he was sick and had...a tremor went through him. He couldn't complete the thought. He could yell it when he was angry but he couldn't think it when he was alone and had nothing else to think about. He looked around the room trying to distract himself. There really were no windows. Wasn't that a fire hazard?

He tugged his shirt off from around his neck. The goddamned wings sticking out of him flapped around like big dumb birds. He didn't know what he was going to do about clothing if he had freakin' wings forever. Maybe it wouldn't matter. His I'm dead hypothesis still seemed the most likely; even if he knew that freak with wings genuinely believed that they weren't dead. But if he wasn't dead what else explained the extra limbs suddenly sticking out of his back? He huffed in derision, "Yeah, Castiel, explain that one."
He was probably dead. People didn't just sprout wings over night.

His thoughts turned back to his family, that was what had made him finally break down. If he was dead he'd never see them again. What were his parents going to do if he actually was dead? He was pretty sure he had read somewhere that having a kid die broke up marriages all the time. He rubbed at his face. Fuck. What was Sam going to do if Mom and Dad broke up because he was stupid and drowned behind the MacLind's plaza? That pipsqueak needed someone to stick up for him while he got through his lanky, awkward, limbs everywhere phase.

He snorted in surprise when a wave of relief that wasn't his own went through him. Castiel was apparently feeling better. Well, good for him. The winged freak could go ahead and feel great about being a grade A asshole. Dean would just sit here and— he could feel something leaking out of his ass. But it wasn't something he knew exactly what it was. He spotted a roll of paper towels. He snatched them and tore off a bunch. He shoved his hand down his pants and wiped away the evidence. He threw the used paper towels across the room. He could feel the tears welling up in his eyes. He scrubbed at his face furiously and swore until he felt better, "Fuck. What the fuck fucking happened last fucking night? ...fuck!"

He flopped backwards on the bed and crushed a wing underneath himself. It freakin' hurt. He rolled over onto his stomach and tried not to think about what he had just cleaned up. It wasn't as hard to not think about as he thought it'd be. The sheets were distracting. They smelt amazing. He pretended he didn't care why the sheets smelt amazing and shoved his face into them.

A buzz from the floor made him look up. The buzz came again. That was a phone. Were there phones in the afterlife? He didn't think so but who knew? He squirmed over to the edge of the bed and stared at the phone.

...why the hell was he staring at the phone!?

He leaned off the edge of the bed and snatched the phone off the floor. He had his home phone number in and was about to hit call when he realized again that he had freakin' wings! He dropped the phone to the bed like it was a poisonous snake. "Fuck. What the fuck do I say? Hey, Mom, Dad. I was screwing this boy on Friday and I think he drugged me and now he's kidnapped me. Oh, by the way I have wings now."

One wing twitched as he made a dismissive flicking gesture with his hand. He rolled his eyes. He grabbed the wing and yanked it down. Then on second thought grabbed the other one too and sat on the long feathers so that dumb things couldn't start flapping around all over the place again. "Take that you stupid pigeon rejects."

Dean looked around the room he was stuck in. "Fuck. What am I gonna do?" There weren't any windows and as far as he could tell there was only one door that led out. Unless he wanted to try being a sewer rat he didn't think he was getting out through the bathroom. How the hell was he going to get out...of...wait. "Hold on one damn minute."

He could feel Castiel. Castiel was upstairs right now feeling confused and relieved. There wasn't any worried I should hurry up to make sure my prisoner doesn't escape kind of feelings. At least, he was pretty sure those weren't check up on the prisoner feelings. And Castiel hadn't threatened him to not leave the room. He had just said stay here and left him alone. Dean was pretty sure that he hadn't even heard the door lock. Castiel didn't think he'd want to escape.

Castiel was an idiot.

Dean crawled to the end of the bed and stuck his feet on the floor. He breathed in and out a few
times mentally preparing for the sideshow he was about to be a part of. He let out a long breath and stood up. The stupid wings kept throwing him off balance with all their moving around but it was easier this time. He was getting the hang of it. He scowled. He didn't want to get used to walking around with wings. He didn't want wings at all.

It was a long wobble to the door. When he finally got there he had decided his entire life pretty much depended on the door being unlocked. He reached for the doorknob. A wing smashed into the door almost knocking him over but when he turned the knob the door opened. "Ha! You're a shitty kidnapping winged freak, Castiel."

He was about to step out the door when he realized his escape plan was almost as bad as Castiel's kidnapping skills. He wobbled back to the bed and grabbed one of the - awesome smelling - sheets. He pulled it around his shoulders. A dude wearing a sheet was probably a few hundred times less conspicuous than a dude with wings. He was about to start for the door again when he stopped. He went back for that metal ruler. He strode towards the door. Okay, **wobbled** in its general direction.

The door was the hardest part of escaping. He had to grab onto the frame to keep himself upright which meant those stupid freakin' wings stuck out and flapped around and got caught on the door; it hurt a hell of a lot more than he'd have thought it would. In the end he managed to sidestep through the doorway with his arms down straight and the wings dragging on the floor.

The stairs were easier than he thought they'd be; the railing was a life saver. It wasn't until he got to the top of the stairs and had to navigate another door that he ran into problems again. He reached out quickly to grab the door knob but one of the stupid wings swung forward and smashed into the door; knocking him off balance and nearly sending him crashing down the stairs.

Dean just barely managed to catch himself while the wings flapped around like demented seagulls under the sheet. He ended up with a mouthful of feathers while getting tangled up in the sheet. He spat out the ridiculous fluff in his mouth. This whole damn thing was ridiculous. He got himself and those freakin' wings under control and untangled himself from the sheet before trying again. This time he moved his arm slowly. The right wing moved with it, butting against the door. Dean rolled his eyes. "Oh, for fuck's sake."

Before Dean could try again the door swung open. He was not prepared to come face to face with that asshole that had drugged him and— done **that** to him too. His fingers clenched around nothing. A wave of panic went through him. He had dropped the ruler while he was screwing around with the door! All he had at hand was a sheet and that dumb rabbit's foot key chain still jammed on his finger. How was he supposed to fight someone with that?

"Dean." Castiel said. Dean could feel the apprehension Castiel was feeling. Worry popped up next and a bit of fear. Good. That asshole should be afraid. Castiel pulled the door open wider. "You should really try to rest."

"I'm not— What the fuck?" Dean stared at the empty space around Castiel. The space that should have been taken up by those big creepy black wings. His hand shot backwards under the sheet. He grabbed a fistful of feathers before the wing could jerk back too. Goddamn it! Why did he still have wings but psycho kidnapper didn't?

A tall severe looking woman came up behind Castiel. Dean wrinkled his nose against a weird smell. It was like a bug had crawled up there— or a freakin **feather**. A red head that Dean sort of remembered from last night edged up cautiously on Castiel's other side.

The woman looked at him surprised. "...you said they were an omega."
"They are." Castiel said, turning to look at the woman. Dean got dumped on with a whole slew of feelings at once but he recognized what they meant: MOM.

"Yeah, you should have smelt them last night." The red head added still hanging back. The bubble of emotions there almost felt like...Sam?

Dean shook his head trying to ignore all the extra crap going on inside his head. He had enough problems right now, he didn't need Castiel butting into his brain uninvited. "I'm in a bad mood that's what I am."

He especially didn't need to know that Castiel was worried about him and afraid and just a little bit embarrassed.

Castiel motioned to the woman. "This is my mother. Naomi."

Dean wrinkled his nose. He was offhandedly smug about working out the mom part earlier but mostly he didn't give a flying fuck - bad choice in words - about Castiel's mother. He just wanted out of this place and away from boys that thought it was fun to drug people and make them sprout wings.

"And my sister Anna." Castiel waved a hand at the red head beside him.

So that was why she had felt almost like Sam. Well, he didn't give a crap about her either. He was getting the fuck out of here.

Dean grabbed the frame of the door with one hand - a wing shot out - and flung himself forward. That asshole and his sister scattered but their mom stood where she was and caught him as his attempted launch to freedom ended with him falling when the other wing got caught up on the door.

He maneuvered around, shoved away from the woman - it was like pushing off a stone wall - and took a handful of stumbling steps backwards before the momentum and added weight of those stupid wings sent him to the floor. He landed on his ass in a heap of feathers and bed sheet. To say this sucked was an understatement. He couldn't begin to count the ways that this was probably the worst day of his life. If he ever made it home he was going to become one of those recluse poets who just wrote miserable poems about how horrible their lives were.

He swallowed down his recluse poet feelings as the woman and Castiel took a few steps towards him. Dean took a swipe at them. One of the wings darted out to do the same. Maybe they weren't so bad after all. At least the dumb things were on his side.

"I told you something was wrong." Castiel said to his mother as he jumped out of the way of another attack from a wing. "Shouldn't they be calmer once the bond is complete?"

"Yes..." Naomi said, watching Dean. Dean glared at her. The weird smell was still in his nose. He was starting to think it was her. Well, at least he didn't like it. He was damn happy about that. He didn't want to like anything about Castiel. not even his mom. Naomi stepped a bit closer to Dean and crouched down. "You're my son's soul mate. You don't need to be frightened of him or us. We're family now."

"Look lady, I got my own family and I'm not his soul mate. I met him once before on Friday night when he fucking drugged me." Dean said, groping at the wall while he tried to stand up. He didn't like being on the floor with everyone looming over him. He felt even more vulnerable than he already did. "I didn't even know his name until this morning. We're not some chick flick soul
mates."

"I told you. They're violent for an omega and they don't know about mating and soul mates." Castiel added ever so helpfully.

Dean thought about taking another swipe at him. Damn right he didn't know about freakin' mating and he was definitely not Castiel's soul mate.

Castiel turned back to Dean looking surprised. Dean could feel it too. Castiel tilted his head off to one side. "You were drinking. I didn't drug you."

"Right. Sure. It makes it all better that I was just drunk and not drugged up before you fucked me." Dean snapped. A slimy cold feeling coiled up in his gut. Girls got drugged and— that. He was a guy. People didn't do that to guys. This wasn't supposed to happen. He glared at Castiel, keeping an eye on him, as he slid along the wall towards what he hoped was the front door. "Whatever you want to believe, buddy."

Castiel edged closer to Dean. Dean flung his arm out and right on cue a wing shot out with it bashing Castiel in the face. Ha! He could get used to the wings if he could deck Castiel again. Castiel jumped back, a hand to his eye.

Castiel glared at him with the one good eye. "If anything you assaulted me on Friday. I wanted to send you home. You wanted to grope me."

"Oh, definitely. If by grope you mean punch in the nose." Dean said. He turned to look the other way down the hall - trying to ignore Castiel's indignation that was bubbling away in his head - and saw the front door. So close! He slid along the wall a bit faster. "You just keep on feeling so hard done by, you psychotic kidnapping winged freak. I'm going home before you make me sprout a tail or something."

"What?" Castiel asked, confused.

"Don't you start doing that head thing and try to make me think I'm crazy. I know you did this." Dean jerked a thumb at the wings only half covered by the sheet now. "I don't know how and I don't how you got rid of yours but I know you had some too. I'm not crazy."

"Had some of what?" Castiel asked. The confusion in Dean's head was palpable.

"Fine, play dumb." Dean said. He didn't have to prove anything to the asshole that had kidnapped him.

Naomi and Castiel shared a look. Dean watched as they had one of those silent family arguments that was all head twitches and eye movements. Whatever it was concern poured through at the back of Dean's head. Eventually Naomi nodded and the concern eased up. Castiel had won the argument it seemed. They both started towards him, hands up, trying to look calm. The concern faded away to that same steady calm feeling Dean had felt this morning. He wasn't falling for it this time.

"Dean, I think you may need to lay down and rest." Naomi said gently. She slipped past him and put herself between the door and Dean. "You're very confused at the moment but let me assure you we won't let anything happen to you."

Fuck. Dean leaned forward to look around Naomi. Could he make it past her and get to the door? He didn't think so. Not with the dumb wings getting in the way. "I'm not confused."
"Dean. It's fine. You're...you're just confused and tired." Castiel said, getting closer to him. He reached out. "You'll feel better if you just get some rest."

Dean caught the movement out of the corner of his eye and snapped his head towards Castiel. "I'm not confused! And I'm not tired! I'm fucking pissed off about being drugged and kidnapped and assaulted and growing fucking win—"

Dean was about to make his break for freedom when two strong arms wrapped around him trapping the wings and holding his arms down.

"Hey!" Dean was plucked off the floor and carried into another room by Castiel's freakin' mom. Between Castiel and his mom the two of them wrestled him onto a couch and wrapped the sheet around his upper body like a straightjacket. Dean kicked at them. Panic started rising up in his chest. What the hell were these psychos going to do to him? "Let me go! Right now! Or else..."

"This is for your own safety." Naomi said, carefully watching him. "You're clearly disoriented. As soon as you calm down I'll untie you."

"I'm not disoriented." Dean growled. He rolled his eyes when he felt that Castiel bubble in his head disagree on the point. He shot a dirty look at his kidnapper. "Go to hell you sack of shit. I'm not the crazy one here."

"This really is for your own safety, Dean. I wouldn't let anyone wander around confused and sick in the street and I definitely wouldn't let my omega mate do that." Castiel said, still looking all douche baggy and concerned. "You're disoriented. You thought you were dead this morning. I don't want you to hurt yourself or someone else or give us all away."

"Of course I fucking thought I was dead! How else are you gonna explain this nightmare?" Dean snapped. He struggled against the sheet but they had tied it tight. A funny sort of...protective feeling started nudging at his brain. He glowered at Castiel. "You're not fucking protecting me! You're holding me prisoner."

Castiel turned to his mother. "See? I told you, the bond is working for them but I don't feel anything."

"That is very unusual." Naomi frowned. "And I've never met an omega this..."

"Ready to take a swing at you?" The red head offered as she came around the couch carrying a hardcover book.

Dean narrowed his eyes at the book. He remember something about her and that book. Had she...had she hit him with it? Was she in on her brother's plans to kidnap him? Dean looked around at the three strangers keeping him prisoner. Holy crap. Was this some kind of insane human-trafficking mafia family he had landed himself in the middle of?

"Yes." Naomi said. She thought it over. "Maybe it's simply Castiel's instincts seeping in." Naomi reached over and took Castiel's arm in her hand.

Dean watched her eyes flick over the green letters of his own damn name. Why the hell did Castiel have his name tattooed to his arm anyway? And why did he have funny squiggles on his own arm where that dick had been? Had Castiel drugged him and taken him to a tattoo parlour before everything else happened?

Naomi looked up at him. "Dean, who are your parents?"
Dean kept his mouth shut. He wasn't about to tell a crazy mob family who his parents were. He glared up at her.

Naomi turned to Castiel giving him a mom look.

"Mom. Don't..." Castiel trailed off and glanced at Dean. Dean could feel that protective feeling again and a hint of guilt. Castiel took a step over, putting himself between Dean and his mother.

"I won't do anything...significant." Naomi said gently.

That guilt that Castiel was feeling flared up. Dean shot him a suspicious look. What the hell was going on? Castiel turned and met his suspicious look with a look of concern before stepping aside. Okay, really, what the hell was going on?

Naomi moved the coffee table closer and sat down on it in front of Dean. Dean watched her. The guilt in the back of his head was worrying. What the hell was Castiel's mom gonna do that made a kidnapping psycho feel guilty?

"Someone mind telling me what the hell is going on?" Dean asked with more bravado than he felt.

Naomi leaned forward and made eye contact, "Listen to me, Dean."

Chapter End Notes

Oh man! Cliffhanger! What is Naomi doing!?
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Some days Castiel hated being an alpha.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Castiel had seen his mother use persuasion on people before. She had even used it on him a few times, it was why he always checked for cars before crossing the street. He knew she wouldn't do anything to harm his mate but it still made him feel guilty that he kept making decisions like this for his mate.

"Listen to me, Dean." His mother's voice had dropped into the even smooth tone of persuasion.

Dean's eyes focused on his mother sharply. People thought persuasion made a person confused. It didn't. It made them hyper focused on what they were asked to do, trying their hardest to comply with it. It wasn't as dangerous as compulsion, the suggestion wouldn't be an obsession, but if the wrong person happened to have the ability it could still cause serious harm.

His mother kept her eyes steadily on his mate. "Dean, I want you to know that you're safe here."

"Mother! Time frame!" Castiel yelped. She hadn't put a time limit on it. It could take years to undo that. He knew well enough. She had persuaded him to check for cars when he was ten and seven years later he still did it.

His mother shifted ever so slightly in apology. Castiel huffed. He knew she thought she was just looking out for him but this was his mate. He didn't want his soul mate to trust him because they were being told to do so, he wanted them to want to trust him.

"And for the next two hours I want you to stay calm, answer any questions, and only speak the truth." His mother said. She waited for Dean to nod before standing up. "What's your name?"

"Dean Winchester." Dean said. It was a simple check to make sure the persuasion worked; some people were less susceptible to it. Castiel wondered if it meant anything that his mate was susceptible to magic even though the bond wasn't working properly.

"If we untie you are you going to try to leave?" His mother asked.

Dean rolled their eyes. "Well yeah."

His mother frowned. "Don't you feel safe here?"

"Yeah but..." Dean's eyebrows scrunched together. They looked mildly worried. "I'd feel safer at home."

That made his mother nod. Castiel realized she hadn't specified as to how safe Dean would feel here. Well, that was...somewhat better. He didn't want to end up having to live at home for decades because his soul mate was terrified to live anywhere else.
"And where is home Dean?" His mother asked.

"Seven Torian Road." Dean scrunched up their nose. "Why the hell did I tell you that?"

The street name wasn't familiar to Castiel. He didn't know anyone who lived there and it was in the middle of town. Dean couldn't be from one of those activist back to nature families and they swore too much for an omega from a conservative family. Castiel blurted out questions of his own. "What? But then...who's your family?"

Dean opened their mouth then closed it. Their face pulled into a look of concentration. They glanced between Castiel and his mother. They worked their jaw a few times then Dean took in a deep breath before answering, "Mom, Dad, and my brother."

Dean seemed smug with the answer. Castiel rolled his eyes at his own stupidity. Persuasion to tell the truth didn't mean total compliance. Dean couldn't lie but that didn't mean they couldn't evade or mislead.

"What are you parents' names?" His mother asked, the correct question of course.

Dean clenched their jaw shut and squeezed their eyes closed. They let out a defeated breath, "John and Mary Winchester."

John and Mary Winchester? What sort of names were those? Castiel stared at his mate even more confused now than he had been before. Had Dean somehow been raised by humans? Castiel almost laughed at how absurd that sounded. Humans wouldn't take in a child with wings without making some sort of huge public spectacle about it that would attract hunters like a magnet.

"I don't like this." Dean said firmly. Their eyes flicked over to Castiel. "And I really don't want to like anything about you."

Castiel recoiled from the tone of his mate's voice and words. Dean had to mean that. That had to be the truth. That hurt surprisingly more than he would have thought. He was doing his best to forgive his mate for trying to attack him and his mate didn't even like him?

"Good. I hope it keeps hurting." Dean said, placidly commenting on what they must be feeling through the bond.

"I'm beginning to think this is a much longer story than what you told me, Castiel." His mother commented. She rubbed at her temple. She looked back to Dean. "What do you remember happening these past few days, Dean? Not what you think happened. What do you remember happening for certain?"  

"I've been sick for a couple of days. I couldn't cool down. I missed work and school all week so far. Then I tried to go to the hospital. I hate hospitals. And then...I dunno. I ended up here instead and that asshole-" Dean nodded towards Castiel. "-was telling me that if we had sex the fever would stop. Then...well..." Dean's face flushed with a hint of pink. "...that happened and I woke up this morning with these freakin' wings. And now I'm spilling my guts to a bunch of people who are trying to kidnap me."

Castiel looked at Dean surprised. "You go to school?"

"Yeah." Dean shrugged.

Castiel's eyes narrowed at the answer. Dean didn't go to school. Castiel would have remembered a nearly six foot tall omega at school. Dean was lying. Persuasion didn't work on them. Castiel
opened his mouth to say there wasn't any point in this because Dean wasn't telling the truth but his mother held her hand up again. Castiel deflated. Some days having an alpha parent was annoying.

His mother asked another question. "Alright. And what happened on Friday night?"

Dean wrinkled their nose again, like the persuasion was actually working and they didn't like it one bit. If it really was working it was obvious Dean didn't like being persuaded to tell them things but his mother wouldn't have had to use persuasion on them if they would have just calmed down in the first place.

Dean wriggled on the couch uncomfortably and started explaining, "I was at Charlie's place for a bit then this girl showed up...uh...Ruby, I think. She was with a bunch of people from the private school and she invited me to her place. Ruby was showing me around with some creepy kid, then she left because...uh...I don't remember why, but the creepy kid said he'd finish the tour but he was actually a total asshole. He took me to this room with really cool doors and—"

Anna inhaled sharply and slapped her hand to her mouth.

"What?" Castiel asked. Anna looked like she had seen a ghost.

"You're the other person that broke into Lucifer's safe storage! Ruby thought you were a human!" Anna blurted out, looking just as shocked as Castiel felt.

Castiel's eyes went wide. His mate was a criminal. They had broken into a heavily warded storage facility for dangerous goods! How was that supposed to compliment his soul!?

"What?" Dean asked, blinking in confusion.

"There was a break in?" His mother asked, surprised. Anna explained the events of the past few days to their mother. Their mother's face slowly morphed into her stern alpha face. "And Ruby's been protecting them because they're an omega?"

"No." Anna hissed back. "Ruby wouldn't do that."

Castiel sighed. Hi criminal soul mate was tied up on the couch and his mother and Anna were going to have another dating a demon argument. His mother took in a sharp breath but before she could launch into her own argument Anna kept talking.

"Just because they're a fellow omega—" Anna motioned to Dean.

"What's an omega?" Dean interjected.

"—doesn't mean Ruby is going to cover up something dangerous like a break in." Anna said, looking righteously angry. Some days Castiel was surprised Anna wasn't an alpha too. "You always think the worst of them because Ruby's a demon but Ruby didn't know they were an omega too."

"You're all crazy." Dean said as if he was quietly observing the weather. "I'm being kidnapped by crazy people. You know, I thought dying being MacLind's was pretty bad but I think this is worse."

"We're not kidnapping you." Castiel said, though he had to admit that if he had been tied up in a sheet he would probably start to think the same thing but they really hadn't had a choice. "And you didn't die."

Dean nodded towards the door. "Then let me go."
"We can't let you go." Castiel said. Even if this was his soul mate he would have to turn them in for the criminal they were. ...or go on the run with them. Could he do that? Live a life on the run? Never able to go back home?

"Okay, so you're kidnapping me." Dean said as they settled into the couch. "Well if you're keeping me prisoner at least tell me how to get rid of the wings."

Castiel squinted at Dean confused. "What?"

"You don't have wings anymore. How'd you get rid of them? 'Cuz I gotta say these things suck." Dean threw their legs up on the coffee table. "Except when I can smack you in the face with them."

"....you tuck them away in a higher plane." Castiel looked at Dean puzzled. Dean had their wings hidden last night. Why did they suddenly seem to be forgetting? Most kids had started learning how to hide their wings by the time they were five. Maybe the fever Dean had been suffering from last night really had fried their brain.

"A higher plane. Right." Dean nodded looking like they didn't believe a word of what Castiel had said. "So, the devil, demons, and higher planes. I've been kidnapped by a cult. Good to know."

Castiel was about to tell Dean his family wasn't a cult when he realized the argument his mother and Anna were having had stopped. He looked over. Anna had disappeared but his mother was staring at Dean.

His mother carefully studied Dean looking like she was piecing together a complex puzzle. Her question surprised Castiel. "Dean, what did you mean you woke up with wings this morning?"

"I mean I fell asleep without them and woke up with them. I'm not speaking in tongues here am I?" Dean said sarcastically. Calm and truthful for Dean apparently didn't mean polite.

"And you...don't remember having wings before then?" His mother asked. Her eyes flicked over Dean's face rapidly, searching for any hint that the persuasion wasn't working.

"Nope. No freakin' wings." Dean said. They casually scratched an itch on their leg with their foot. "Think I would've have noticed if I'd had them before. I mean, they aren't exactly subtle."

Anna stalked back into the living room with the portable phone. She passed it over to their mother with a look that Castiel recognized as stewing vengeance.

"What species, Dean?" His mother interrupted.

"Human. The not crazy kind." Dean said with a not so subtle implication that they thought everyone else in the room was crazy. Dean nodded at the phone. "Hey, if you're just going to stand there with that, can I phone my parents? I swear I won't go to the cops if you let me go. I just want to go home. You can keep on keepin' on with the crazy if you want, just leave me out of it."

Castiel stared blankly. His soul mate was well and truly crazy. He wheezed out a laugh. Oh gods, his soul mate was crazy and a criminal and he was stuck with them for life!

"What's up with you?" Dean asked, turning to look at him mildly surprised.
"You really are crazy." Castiel said. He backed up and plunked down in the armchair across from Dean. "My soul mate is insane."

"I'm not crazy." Dean said simply, the persuasion to be calm making that statement sound all the more unhinged. "You're the one doing all the kidnapping."

"I didn't kidnap you." Castiel said as he leaned over and rubbed at his forehead. What was he going to do now? His soul mate really was mentally unbalanced. How was he supposed to deal with that at seventeen? How did that compliment his soul?

Dean narrowed their eyes at him and looked like they were reading a book that Castiel couldn't see. Dean was probably picking through the bond. "Then how'd I get here?"

"I don't know. You turned up last night and attacked me in the hallway." Castiel said. What would the local council do with his soul mate? Would they care that Dean was mentally unbalanced when they found out it was them that had broken into Lucifer's safe storage? What if the council wanted to punish Dean for it anyway? Was— was he *actually* going to have to go into hiding with them? He was only seventeen, he couldn't be a professional criminal! He glanced at his soul mate...who was being persuaded to tell the truth. Castiel gulped and asked another question. "You— you haven't killed anyone before have you? Or...you don't plan on killing anyone do you?"

"No and no." Dean rolled their eyes as if they thought the question was ridiculous.

"You tried to stab me with a ruler." Castiel said flatly.

Dean shrugged in a *so what?* manner. "Since we're playing twenty questions, what's an omega? You guys keep calling me that."

"You are. You're an omega." Castiel said, hoping that maybe it would spark some sanity into his soul mate.

"That's a crappy explanation." Dean said.

Castiel shrugged. "I don't know how else to explain it. How do you explain being an alpha? Or a boy?"

"Don't know and having a dick." Dean said absently. Castiel thought they were being sarcastic at first than realized he had directed the question at Dean. Dean had to answer until the persuasion wore off.

"Castiel." His mother set her hand on his shoulder. He jumped. She looked between him and his soul mate. "Why don't you come into the kitchen. Anna will watch them."

Castiel stared up at his mother sadly for a moment then got up and followed her into the kitchen. His mother might know what to do with a confused mate but he doubted she’d know what to do with a crazy one that had broken into a safe storage and tried to steal dangerous artifacts and was a wanted criminal.

She motioned for him to sit down at the table while she set the portable phone back in the charger. "Lucifer will be here shortly."

"Lucifer?" Castiel's eyes flicked between the phone and his mother. He hadn't realized she had been on the phone while he was trying to process his life with an insane criminal soul mate. "We're....we're turning my soul mate in?"
"No. Between what Anna has told me and what your... soul mate has said I don't think your mate was in the safe storage with theft on their mind." His mother took out a box of crackers from the cupboard then glanced back at the shelves and took out a box of cookies too. "But I do suspect that this...situation we're currently in starts there because either your soul mate genuinely believes they're human or they were human up until very recently." His mother picked up both boxes and held them out to him. "The only thing it sounds like Dean has come into contact with in the last few days with magic powerful enough to re-write their memories that extensively...or alter their basic biology in some way is the safe storage."

Castiel stared at his mother dumbfounded. Was his mother suggesting that Dean's story actually made sense? That made even less sense than what Dean was saying! He slowly dragged his eyes down to his hands. He was holding the box of crackers and the box of cookies. That only confused him more. He looked back up at his mother.

His mother motioned towards the living room. "They said they were hungry."

Castiel didn't move.

His mother came closer and cupped his face with her hand. "Castiel, I know this has been a rather...troubling few days for you, but your soul mate, no matter the cause, was clearly terrified before I persuaded them to be calm. They have no idea what's going on or why. I know it's hard but you're going to have to be strong for them. An alpha takes care of their mate."

His mother was right. He was an alpha. He was supposed to help and protect his mate, not call them crazy. He was supposed to take charge. He tried his best to put his own apprehensions aside. His mate needed him to be levelheaded and make decisions while they...well, whatever they were at the moment his mate needed someone to be responsible. He could do that; be the responsible alpha for his mate. He had been doing it earlier this morning. He could do it again.

Castiel looked towards the living room. Some days he hated being an alpha.

Chapter End Notes

Bwahaha, I love that Castiel doesn't catch on to the fact that Naomi is manipulating him to calm the fuck down by "putting him in charge". It's like the alpha equivalent of "Go boil water".

Worlding Note! So, in this world persuasion vs compulsion can be summed up like this: A person persuaded to cross the road right now would still wait for a gap in the cars before crossing the road and would cross safely. A person under compulsion would cross the road blindly that very second with no care for oncoming traffic.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

"So, you guys kidnap a lot of people?"

Chapter Notes

Doth your eyes deceive you? Two updates in one day? Do not fear lovely readers, this isn't an illusion.

I absolutely love how quietly horrifying this chapter came out.

"So, you guys kidnap a lot of people?" Dean asked, looking around the room. It was weird. A couple of minutes ago he just wanted out of this place and okay, he had been pretty freaked out too, but now it was...kinda okay. He still didn't particularly want to hang out with his kidnappers but...it....just wasn't that big of a deal anymore. He'd figure out how to get away and he'd go home and everything would be fine. Even if he did have stupid looking wings sticking out of him.

"Nobody kidnapped you." That red head with the hardcover book said. What had Castiel called her? Anna? Yeah, that was it. Anna: book smasher extraordinaire. "Do you really think you're a human?"

"I don't think I'm a human. I am human." Dean said. He wasn't exactly sure why he kept answering all these questions but he wanted to. It was like scratching an itch. It didn't feel better until he got at it.

A bunch of noise dumped through the back of his head. He scrunched his nose up trying to sort it out. Castiel was getting all worked up again. Why didn't Castiel just chill out? It wasn't like anything bad was going to happen here. A couple of moments later that noise calmed down. That was better.

Castiel came into the living room, looking determined and feeling resolute, and carrying two boxes; cookies and crackers. His mom followed along behind him with a glass of water. Castiel set the cookies and crackers on the coffee table then sat down on the couch beside him. "I'm going to untie you but you have to promise not to try and leave until we get this sorted out."

Dean raised an eyebrow at Castiel and sifted through all the funny feelings in his head that weren't his. He didn't think Castiel was lying. "So, if I promise to stay you'll untie me and I'll get some damn answers?"

"We'll all get some answers." Castiel said as if he was hoping for everything to make sense soon too.

Dean pursed his lips and thought if over. He tapped his fingers along his arm. He shrugged,
"Alright."

Dean shuffled forward on the couch and turned to let Castiel untie the sheet. When it was off he scooted over to the opposite end of the couch from Castiel. The wings twitched and fidgeted but they didn't start flapping around like drunk pigeons anymore—silver linings. He reached for the box of cookies. The right wing jerked up but it didn't try to smash into the table. Maybe he was getting the hang of those things. He dug into the box of cookies. "Gonna tell me what the hell's going on now?"

"I'm not really sure either." Castiel said and Dean could feel that Castiel wasn't just concerned about not knowing he was a little annoyed too. Dean wondered if he was that kid in class that everyone rolled their eyes at when his hand shot up with the answer.

"Hmpf." Dean stuffed a cookie in his mouth. Chocolate chip. They were kinda stale. He nodded at Castiel's arm. "What's up with the tattoo then? I don't remember showing up at a sketchy tattoo parlour that lets messed up minors get tattoos." Dean looked down at the blue squiggly tattoo on his own arm. "And why the hell did I get funny squiggles? Figured I'd have gotten a band logo for my first drunk tattoo."

Castiel studied him. Dean could feel that funny protective feeling swell up again mixed with...something sad, like pity. Castiel's head tilted off to one side contemplatively. "You really do think you're not an angel."

"Dude, the cheesy pick up lines usually go before you sleep with someone." Dean said, peering into the box of cookies. He ran his tongue over his teeth. They felt gross and pasty. He pointed at the glass of water on the table. "You didn't put anything in it?"

"...no? It's just water." Castiel said sounding confused. "...do you want ice?"

"Nope." Dean thought it over. It probably was just water. Castiel might be a psycho but it wasn't like he'd do anything here. He grabbed the glass of water, the wings only moved a little bit, and chugged the whole thing. The fact that he had downed three large glasses of water and still didn't have to pee was making him realize how dehydrated he must have been the last few days. He set the empty glass down. "So if you don't know what's going on either how are we figuring this out?"

"Someone's coming. Hopefully he'll know." Castiel said.

"Oh." Dean shrugged and went back to eating the cookies. As soon as he found out what the hell was going on he was out of here. In the meantime he might as well pig out. Now that he was eating he realized he was actually starving. He'd barely eaten anything in the last couple of days with how sick he'd felt.

"It's Enochian." Castiel said suddenly. He pointed at the blue squiggles on Dean's arm. "You asked why you had squiggles, it's my name in Enochian." Castiel squinted like he was processing something. Dean could feel a strange sort of thing he could only describe as a tick-tick-tick feeling, like one of those old computer printouts getting spit out of a line printer in bad sci-fi movies that magically had the relevant information for the heroes. Castiel squinted harder before he spoke. "I guess...I think the soul mate mark shows up in your first language."

Dean arched an eyebrow at the soul mate thing, everyone kept saying that, but decided he didn't really want to know what that was about because he was definitely not the soul mate of a complete stranger who had kidnapped and assaulted him.

Dean managed to polish off the box of cookies and started in on the crackers before this Someone...
Someone turned out to be three people. A tall blonde dude and a blonde girl that looked his age carrying a wooden case came in first. They smelt weird. Like Castiel's mom. Then another girl walked in. Dean huffed in surprise. "You again." He shook his head. "I gotta say, your party kinda sucked."

The tall blonde dude looked at Ruby. She nodded sharply and blushed furiously as if she had been caught with her hand in the cookie jar. The tall blonde dude looked at him, eyes tracing out the goofy fluffy wings, then back to Ruby. "You're sure they were human?"

"Yeah. Yes. He...they...were human." Ruby said, shrinking down and looking at her shoes.

Ruby turned her head up slowly. She gave Dean an achingly sad regretful look. "I am so sorry."

Dean shrugged. He waved a hand at Castiel and his crazy family. One wing shook a bit but mostly it stayed folded up behind him. "Don't worry about it, we've been playing are you human? all morning."

Ruby's eyebrows shot up and her eyes went wide. Dean ate another cracker. Ruby shot a look at Castiel.

"My mother, uh, calmed them down." Castiel said. Dean glanced over. He could feel a twinge of a lie in that.

"Oh." Ruby said. She shifted on her feet for a moment then looked back to Dean. "I didn't mean sorry for...I...umm...shouldn't have left you alone last weekend."

Dean didn't really know what to make of that so he just shrugged again and chomped on the crackers. Naomi and tall blonde dude huddled in the corner and talked. Ruby went to sit beside Anna. The blonde girl stayed where she was and stared at him, well more at his neck. Her eyes would flick over to Castiel every couple of seconds. Dean glanced over to see what she was looking at. Huh, girl had a thing for necks apparently.

"Dad?" The blonde girl called out. Tall blonde dude looked over. She motioned towards him and Castiel.

Tall blonde dude looked them over again and nodded. "In a minute. I think they're fine for now."

Dean felt embarrassment flare up from Castiel. His kidnapper was so weird, even if he did smell really really good. On the topic of things that smelt really good... Dean pulled at the sheet that was bunched up around his waist. He did the best he could to get it around his shoulders and breathed in deep when he did. Goddamn, did that ever smell good.

That buzz of embarrassment quieted down and Dean could have sworn that he heard Castiel murmur thank you under his breath. Dean cocked an eyebrow at Castiel. He shook his head. So weird.

Tall blonde dude and Naomi broke up the secret meeting. Naomi motioned to tall blonde dude. "Dean, this is Lucifer. He won't hurt you. He's going to try and help us get to the bottom of this."

Dean shot an incredulous look at tall blonde dude. "Your name is Lucifer?"
"Yes." Tall blonde dude apparently didn't think that was weird.

Dean chuckled. "Dude, your parents must have had a cruel sense of humour."

No one in the room seemed as amused as Dean did. Their loss.

Lucifer studied him quietly again before taking a step forward. "I'm going to heal your mating bite for you. It'll feel...different."

"Heal what?" Dean asked.

"Your neck." Lucifer clarified.

Dean put his hand to his neck. In his rush to get out this morning and then realizing that he didn't really need to rush to get out because it was actually kinda okay here he had completely forgotten about the bite on his neck. "What do you mean heal?"

Lucifer stepped closer and put his hand an inch or two away from the bite. Dean could feel the heat coming off his hand then suddenly there was a white glow and— "Oh. That feels weird. Yeah. Different."

Lucifer took his hand away. Dean did his best to crane his head back and look at his neck. His eyes snapped up to watch Lucifer repeat the whole thing on Castiel. Castiel tugged the collar of his shirt aside to show a huge gross bloody mess. ....had he done that? He remembered biting Castiel but he didn't think it had been that hard. Dean bent his head to watch the skin just...magically knit back together. Holy shit. Some of the dried blood flaked off, the skin underneath was scarred but whole. Whoa. That was...that was different.

"So what? You're like...a faith healer named Lucifer?" Dean said. Then shook his head and chuckled at how absurd that sounded. "Dude, you have the most ironic name ever for your job."

"Healing is simply my natural ability, the study of magic is my job." Lucifer said in that over thoughtful tone. He motioned to the wings tucked up behind Dean. "May I touch your wings for a moment?"

There was another eruption of embarrassment and...possessiveness? Really? Dean cast a discerning eye at Castiel. Castiel turned red and looked away. Dean shrugged and turned back to Lucifer. "If it gets me some answers. Sure. Go ahead, dude. But no guarantees you're not getting get dinged in the head." He jerked a thumb at Castiel. "Just ask Castiel here."

Dean munched away on crackers while Lucifer gently tugged at the left wing and straightened it out to its full length. Dean was surprised. It had to be like, eight feet long. Maybe nine or ten.

"Fascinating." Lucifer murmured as he probed along the bones of the wing.

"Thanks." Dean said sarcastically. That got another flash of embarrassment from Castiel and a bit of...jealously? Seriously? Who would be jealous of those things?

"And you didn't have them until this morning?" Lucifer asked, bending the wing at one of the joints.

"Yep." Dean said, shaking the box of crackers to highlight his point.

"No." Castiel retorted.
"No?" Lucifer looked between them then to Naomi. They shared one of those *parent looks* that Dean knew all too well. Lucifer looked back to Castiel. "When did you see them?"

"Last night. Right after..." Castiel trailed off into a cough and turned red again. "They passed out after."

With how embarrassed Castiel felt Dean almost wanted to be embarrassed for him.

Lucifer seemed to understand what the red faced cough meant because he nodded and went back to running his fingers through the feathers.

It was actually kind of relaxing, like when Mom would run her fingers through his hair when he was sick and tell him he'd feel better soon. Dean found himself leaning towards that touch which was right about the time that he noticed the room filling up with a bitter smell and a whole pile of prickly jealousy bubbled up from Castiel. Then there were a whole *lot* of weird smells going on and the room tensed up.

Lucifer eased away from the wings but stooped to grab two feathers that had fallen to the floor. He waved at the blonde girl who was still holding the wooden case. "Lilith?"

Lilith moved forward with the wooden case and opened it up on the coffee table.

Lucifer took out a flat metal dish from the case and set it down on the table. He put a feather on it. "It's not an illusion. The wings aren't dissolving and the stray feathers stay solid. What do you think?"

"A curse maybe?" Lilith suggested.

Lucifer nodded. He looked up at Dean. "Do you happen to remember what you touched on Friday night?"

"Uh..." Dean wracked his brain trying to scratch that itch to answer. He set the box of crackers down in his lap while he thought. "I...I touched a lot of stuff. My jacket, my shoes, doorknobs, the table at Charli—"

"Very good, Dean. That's enough." Naomi interrupted. "Now, when you were..."

"In the room with the cool doors." Anna supplied from across the room.

Naomi gave a thankful nod. "Yes. When you were in the room with the *cool doors*, what did you touch?"

"Oh...I dunno. That...uh...that kid...Lester? No...Ah-Les-Tar? He knocked me into this big shelving unit and it fell on me. So, uh, that shelf and whatever was in it." Dean said. That was the part of the night when things started getting really fuzzy. He didn't remember much about that which was annoying because the itch to answer was still there. He wanted to remember so he could tell them.

"That—that whole...you potentially touched *everything* in that case?" Lucifer looked like he was trying to hide something really nasty from him.

"Yeah." Dean said. From what he remembered he had been less concerned about touching the stuff on the shelves and about a million times more concerned that he was *under it* getting crushed. His fingers clenched up thinking about it. His left hand wrapped around something furry. He glanced down at his hand. He had almost forgotten about that. He held his hand up and let the rabbit's foot key chain dangle from his finger. "Oh, and I touched this too."
Lucifer's eyes went so wide they looked like they might pop out of his head. Lilith literally jumped back crashing into Naomi as she tried to put space between herself and Dean.

Dean barked out a laugh at the over exaggerated reactions. It wasn't until Castiel - who had been startled and confused but now was cautiously apprehensive - started to slowly move away from him and get off the couch that Dean began to wonder if maybe he should be a bit more concerned too.

Dean glanced at the rabbit's foot key chain then to the guarded expressions from Castiel and Naomi and the outright horrified looks on Lilith and Lucifer. He tried to drum up some concern of his own but couldn't find it in him. He shrugged. He stared at the rabbit's foot key chain. "I'm gonna take a stab in the dark here and guess that this thing is worth a lot more trouble than it looks."

Chapter End Notes

"tick-tick-tick feeling like one of those old computer printouts getting spit out of a line printer in bad sci-fi movies that magically had the relevant information for the heroes." Even Dean is trying to illustrate how ridiculous some tropes are.

If you too are on a your way to Jupiter on a mission for love you can follow me here at Brains for baby jesus. Which has almost nothing to do with baby jesus but everything to do with being a nine-legged semiautomatic groove machine!

It just occurred to me that the "Oh no! The Rabbit's Foot!" chapter is chapter 13. I like that. Poetically coincidental.
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

"She's trying to determine if there's any magic actively working on you at the moment." Lucifer explained. He slid a second flat dish out of the case and started picking out vials at seemingly random and pouring a few drops onto the empty dish. "We can't undo anything if we don't know what to undo."

Castiel wasn't sure why Lucifer and Lilith were acting as if a rabbit's foot key chain was a bomb about to go off but he had the feeling he didn't want to find out first hand. He backed away from Dean; torn between trying to protect his soul mate and trying to protect himself. He stopped out of arm's reach of Dean but stayed within Dean's wing reach. He hoped that was a good enough compromise for his instincts.

Dean stroked the fur on the rabbit's foot key chain with a finger. "If I had known everyone would freak out over this I totally would have shown it to you earlier and just walked out of here."

Dean stood up as if to do just that which made Lilith and Lucifer both yell out, "DON'T!"

"Why the hell not?" Dean asked, staying where they were but leaning towards the front door. "I promised to stay if you actually explained something and so far all I know is that I apparently got wasted and got Castiel's name tattooed to my arm and I could have figured out most of that on my own."

"It's cursed." Lucifer said, pointing at the rabbit's foot still hanging from Dean's hand. "It alters probability around the possessor."

Dean looked at the rabbit's foot then up at Lucifer. "Huh?"

"It makes you very very lucky." Lucifer said.

Dean didn't look like they believed that and Castiel couldn't say he believed it either. If Dean was so lucky why had they almost died last night?

"If it's so lucky why did I feel like I was dying for the last couple of days?" Dean asked, mirroring Castiel's thoughts. Castiel wondered if the bond was doing more than just transmitting emotion or if that was just an obvious line of reasoning.

"You're lucky because you didn't die." Lucifer said. He edged closer to Dean and peered at the rabbit's foot. "That case you knocked over, that housed the more dangerous illicit and lethal substances and artifacts. You should be dead."

"I knew it." Dean said under their breath. Castiel suspected they were thinking about the MacLind's plaza again. They started working the key chain off their finger.

"STOP!" Lucifer and Lilith both yelped.

Dean froze with their fingers on the metal loop of the key chain. Dean looked at the rabbit's foot then up at Lucifer. Dean shot Castiel a look as if he could explain any of this any better than Dean
could. Castiel shrugged at them just as confused.

"Did you have it this whole time?" Lucifer asked.

"Yea– no." Dean said. Their eyebrows furrowed. "No. I must have took it off sometime because I didn't find it again until last night."

Lucifer flinched. "Did anyone else hold it?"

"...I don't think so? I found it in my jeans last night." Dean said. They flipped their hand around to hold the rabbit's foot in the palm of their hand.

Lucifer relaxed. Lilith let out a sigh of relief. The two of them exchanged professional looks. Lucifer turned back to Dean and put his hands out in a calming gesture. "Dean, I don't want to alarm you further but you can not under any circumstances let go of that again."

"You just said it was cursed. Why the hell would I want it if it's cursed? It's sure made my life hell the last couple of days." Dean said, staring down at the rabbit's foot.

"It is. But if you put it down. Your luck goes from very good to very bad." Lucifer explained. "That's why it's a cursed object and not a blessed object. The luck comes with a catch."

Castiel watched Dean process the information. He really wished the bond was working for him. Any insight into Dean's thoughts at the moment would be helpful to defuse the situation.

Dean bit their lip. They narrowed their eyes at the rabbit's foot key chain and then gave Lucifer a defiant look. They yanked the key chain off their finger. "I don't think I believe any of that."

Castiel jumped away as Dean tossed the rabbit's foot to the floor and shoved past him. Lucifer and Lilith dashed around the couch to grab Dean. Dean glanced over their shoulder then bolted into the hall. Castiel stared at the rabbit's foot for a moment before dashing after Dean as well. He made it into the hallway in time to see Dean tumble backwards in a flurry of feathers and flailing limbs and crash down the basement stairs.

Castiel's instincts flared to the forefront of his mind. Never in his whole life had they ever been that strong before. But watching his mate in danger and hearing him yelp in fear had Castiel charging to the stairs ready to rescue his mate.

"Dean!" Castiel pushed between Lucifer and Lilith. The alpha in him flared up stronger with the urge to protect his mate at the smell of two unfamiliar alphas. He shoved the instinct aside and thundered down the stairs. He didn't need to protect Dean from Lucifer or Lilith. It would only slow him down from making sure Dean was okay.

Dean sat up at the bottom of the stairs and hissed in pain. They cradled their arm to their chest.

"Are you okay?" Castiel asked. His own chest tightened up with fear.

"Pretty sure I broke my arm. That sound okay to you?" Dean grumbled. Dean didn't sound too upset about falling down the stairs and breaking their arm. Evidently his mother's persuasion was still creating a strong enough urge to stay calm that it trumped non-life threatening pain.

"Let me see it." Lucifer said as he came down the last few steps of the stairs.

Dean didn't offer their arm to Lucifer but they didn't move away either when Lucifer crouched down to look it over. Lucifer ran his hand an inch above Dean's skin but as far as Castiel could tell
didn't heal Dean. He glared at Lucifer. Why wasn't he healing his mate!? 

"It's a simple enough break but I'd rather we got you upstairs first and in contact with the rabbit's foot again before we try to do anything." Lucifer said, helping Dean to stand up.

Castiel squashed the urge to shove Lucifer away from his mate. It was bizarre. He had never felt all alpha territorial towards Lucifer before in his life. But he'd just watched Lucifer touch his mate's wings and go to his mate's aid and now his instincts were sure Lucifer was a threat to keeping his mate. It was absurd. Lucifer wasn't going to steal his mate. He was going to help them.

Still...it would probably be better if he helped Dean up the stairs.

Castiel reached out to help Dean but Dean scowled at touch. Castiel did his best to stamp down on the simplistic alpha instincts thrashing around in his head. He backed away and let Lucifer and Lilith help Dean back to the living room. That alpha instinct crawled and clawed under Castiel's skin. Other alphas were touching his mate. He tried to shake the feeling from his head. Those other alphas were helping his mate. If he wanted to help his mate he'd let Lucifer and Lilith help.

It was with quite a bit of wings crashing and whipping around that Dean made it into the living room. When Dean was finally back to sitting on the couch clutching the rabbit's foot there were feathers everywhere. Castiel had the urge to pick the bits of downy fluff out of Dean's hair but he didn't think Dean would like that.

Lucifer motioned for Dean to hold out their broken arm. Dean hesitated for a moment before easing it away from their chest. It was over in less than a minute. It really had been a simple break.

Dean flexed their arm looking at it in a mix of surprise and suspicion.

"I'm going to phone my colleague to help us out with the rabbit's foot." Lucifer said, standing up and taking his cell phone out of his pocket. He looked over to Castiel's mother. "Is that going to be a problem...?"

Castiel looked at his mother worried that she'd say no. Lucifer's colleague was a demon. He knew his mother had some prejudices against demons but surely she wouldn't put his mate's life in danger over some old fashioned spat. His chest tightened up apprehensively. He watched his mother clench her jaw.

"No. By all means." His mother said. She sounded like her normal self as she spoke. "Whatever will help Dean."

Lucifer nodded. His phone call was quick and short. Apparently Lucifer's colleague didn't need much in the way of persuasion to come quickly. The mention of the rabbit's foot was enough. That was more than a little concerning. Castiel wondered how deadly of a curse the rabbit's foot carried.

Lilith meanwhile had dragged the coffee table away to what Castiel supposed she considered a safe distance from the rabbit's foot. She was busy pulling out glass vials from the wooden case she had brought in and dripping a bead or two of liquid from each vial onto one of Dean's feathers. She frowned each time she watched the liquid roll off the feather. Castiel didn't know what she was looking for but that was why he wasn't studying magic. Watching for slight changes in colour or texture for hours on end seemed incredibly boring.

"Nothing's reacted?" Lucifer asked when his phone call was over.

"Nothing." Lilith said as she poured a drop from another vial onto the feather.
"What're you doing?" Dean asked nervously. They held onto the rabbit's foot two handed.

"She's trying to determine if there's any magic actively working on you at the moment." Lucifer explained. He slid a second flat dish out of the case and started picking out vials at seemingly random and pouring a few drops onto the empty dish. "We can't undo anything if we don't know what to undo."

"Does that mean you're going to get rid of the wings?" Dean asked hopefully.

"We're going to try." Lilith said, looking increasingly frustrated at the feather on the dish.

Castiel tapped his fingers against his leg. If Lucifer undid whatever had happened to Dean would regain their memories? Maybe his soul mate wasn't crazy after all. A sick little bubble of fear rose up in his stomach. But what if Dean was telling the truth? What if they really had been human? What if Lucifer undid the magic and Dean turned into a human?

"Wait! Wait!" Castiel yelped. "What happens if— what if Dean really was a human?"

"Dude. I really am human." Dean said, looking annoyed. "I don't know how many more times I have to tell you that."

"We'll try to make something to counter the effects and return them to their original state." Lilith said absently.

"But..." Castiel wasn't sure how to explain what he was thinking. "But they're my soul mate."

Castiel said. He felt panic rise up in his chest. What if making Dean human again undid Dean's half of the bond? What if it made Dean human but killed him? "What if that breaks the bond?"

Lilith and Lucifer looked up at Castiel surprised. They turned to each other. Castiel could see it hadn't even occurred to them. They had found their puzzle to solve and not much else had mattered.

"Could that happen?" His mother asked.

"It's..." Lucifer hesitated as he thought. "It's possible. Maybe. I've never heard or read of a similar situation before."

"Well I don't want to find out if it's possible!" Castiel yelped. He had already been at death's door once this week. That was more than enough for him.

Lucifer and Lilith both paused what they were doing. They looked at his mother. The three of them looked to Castiel.

"Hey! Hey, don't all take his side. That's not fair!" Dean said, looking agitated. Castiel glanced at the clock. Two hours was almost up. The persuasion would be wearing off. Dean pointed an angry finger at themself. "I didn't ask for this!"

"I didn't either!" Castiel retorted. He had been exceedingly forgiving about being attacked, having a chunk of his neck torn off, and then almost being stabbed and now Dean was going to take a chance that might kill him? How was Dean his soul mate? Soul mates were supposed to care for each other!

"Like hell you didn't! You're the one that drugged me!" Dean spat. They narrowed their eyes in concentration. A wing shot out to smack Castiel up the side of his head.

"I didn't drug you!" Castiel snapped back. He rubbed at his head where Dean's wing had struck. He
stepped out of Dean's wing reach. "Why do you keep saying that?"

Dean took in an angry breath and started to shout just as Castiel did the same.

"Quiet!" His mother demanded in her scary alpha mom voice. The two of them froze mid sentence. His mother fixed him with a withering stare then turned to Dean more gently. "Dean, why do you think Castiel drugged you?"

Dean ran their hands through their hair several times before answering. "Look, I just want to go home."

"Dean. Why?" His mother insisted.

Dean scrubbed a hand over their face and made an enraged animalistic noise deep in their throat. "Because I don't remember half of anything from that night except for him!" Dean pointed an angry finger at Castiel. "I wouldn't cheat on my girlfriend by having sex with a stranger but he showed up and it seemed like a great idea because it was sex with him."

Castiel thought that would be the end of it but Dean sucked in another breath and kept going.

"And then I got sick and no matter what I did I just kept burning up and everyone was worried about me but we can't afford to screw around with hospitals—and I hate hospitals. So I tried to ride it out but I just kept getting worse and I think I might really have been dying and somehow I ended up here with him." Dean stopped to shoot a scowl at Castiel before he continued. "And then he told me some stupid crap about how having sex would stop me from burning alive and I believed it!" Dean laughed darkly. "Because it was him."

"I was freaked out about maybe dying but he said it would be okay and I believed that too. And when I woke up I didn't feel like I was burning alive anymore. I didn't feel like I was dying. Everything smelt great and I felt safe but I wasn't. I had these stupid things—" Dean motioned to their wings as they jerked up and spread wide and aggressive."—and he was underneath me and he wouldn't let me leave. Then I thought I was dead for a little bit but he was there and that was okay because I liked the way he smelt and I liked it when he touched these dumb things—" Dean yanked at the feathers of one wing. "—and I don't want to like him. I don't want to be here with a bunch of weirdos who don't even think I'm human! I don't want these stupid freakin' wings! And I didn't want to tell you any of that because who knows, you're all crazy and might chop me up into little pieces and scatter me across county."

Castiel stood stock still absorbing the anger and fear in Dean's speech. That was how Dean remembered the last few days? That was what had been happening to Dean? He thought back to everything Dean had said this morning and how Dean had been acting. He had thought Dean was just confused or maybe a victim of bad parenting. But either way he had thought Dean was just a very naive and confused angel. It hadn't occurred to him think Dean was anything else.

But why should it have? The situation they were in was unheard of. But Dean kept saying they weren't an angel and his mother, Lucifer, and Ruby all seemed to agree with Dean that Dean was a human. Or at least, might have been one before going to Ruby's house. A human that wouldn't—couldn't know about mating and had been terrified at what had been happening to them.

Castiel looked up and stared at Dean stunned. What if his mate wasn't crazy? What if his mate really had been human? He sucked in a little worried gasp. What did he do about that?

Dean started heaving in one harsh breath after another and trembling as if they were having a panic attack. Castiel frowned. It might actually be a panic attack. His instincts boiled up again; nattering
at him to do something. But what was he supposed to do? He was probably the whole reason his mate was having a panic attack in the first place.

"Don't feel fucking worried about me!" Dean snapped at him between gasps for breath.

"Dean." Lucifer said gently.

"What?" Dean growled.

"This isn't Castiel's fault." Lucifer said.

Dean huffed out a sarcastic laugh, "Gonna tell me it's mine?"

"No. That young alpha— that young man that brought you into the safe storage knew what it was and knew he shouldn't be in there." Lucifer said slowly. He brought his hands up in a placating gesture. "The case that fell on you was filled with a vast array of things that could cause you to act strangely or inebriated or impair your judgement." Lucifer explained. "You couldn't have known what was on the other side of those doors. This isn't your fault. If anyone is to blame it's Alastair for bringing you there and pushing you into the case. We've been looking for Alastair for several days now. We can't find him but that doesn't mean that because we can't find who is to blame that we should blame someone else."

Dean glared at Lucifer then shot an icy look at Castiel. Dean flicked their eyes back to Lucifer. "Fine. Maybe he didn't drug me, maybe it was all that stuff that fell on me but he still fucked me when I didn't know any better."

"I didn't want to though." Castiel said barely above a whisper. He remembered that part clearly. He remembered trying to get Dean somewhere safe so they could ride out their heat and go home. He couldn't have known Dean had no idea what was happening to them. He had tried to be a responsible alpha and acted on what he knew and look where that had gotten him.

Dean gave him another icy look.

Castiel tried to feel as sincere as he could for the bond. "I know you can feel me through the bond, so you know I'm not lying when I say I just wanted to send you home. I wanted to make sure you got home and then...I don't know, you touched me and everything just got...blurry and confusing. But I just wanted to make sure you were okay. That's...that's all I've been trying to do since we met."

Dean's eyes flicked over him rapidly. They snorted angrily and turned away. Their wings fluffed up and crowded around them until Dean was covered by their wings the same way they had been earlier this morning.

"You touched them— well, yes, obviously." Lucifer corrected himself when Castiel's face flushed pink. "Did you happen to notice anything on them? Powders? Liquids? Anything coarse and fine like sand? It's still best to know what they were exposed to even if we wait until later to undo the effects."

Castiel was still staring at Dean. His instincts and emotions were whipping chaotically from guilt to protectiveness. "I, uh, yes. There was something sticky and sparkly and...their jeans were stained with something." Castiel finally managed to pull his eyes away from the lump of feathers that was Dean. "And some kind of powder. It was slippery feeling like talc. It made my fingers prickle." Castiel caught sight of a subtle twitch go through Lucifer at the description of the powder. Castiel tilted his head. "Does that mean something? I didn't touch something that's going to kill me did I?"
Lucifer looked almost...embarrassed? He glanced away and rubbed a hand along the utmost top of a new pink scar that just peeked above his shirt collar. "Ah, no. No you'll be fine. We, ah, I recently discovered what that particular illicit substance does. It starts..."

Castiel waited but it seemed like Lucifer had lost his train of thought. "It starts what?"

"Well, you see, it was sealed and unlabelled when my co-workers seized it from that anti-equal rights group last month. So my colleague and myself were at a loss as to what it was." Lucifer said. Castiel would almost swear he was trying to avoid the subject. Lucifer suddenly returned to picking out vials from the case and adding a drop or two to the second dish. "In retrospect their plans for it must have been rather odious. Drop something like that in a public place?" Lucifer shook his head at the thought. "You see, it drives exposed alphas into a rather single-minded mating frenzy. It's...quite hard to resist. Apparently it does the same to omegas."

Castiel let the information sink in slowly. "...Dean drugged me?"

"I did not!" Dean retorted.

"No. Dean wasn't anymore responsible for their actions than you were." Lucifer said. Then thoughtfully add. "It's a miracle that— no, it was more likely that rabbit's foot. At the very least Dean only ran into you and not— well, it could have been much worse."

Castiel was about to ask how could it get worse? He was seventeen with a mate that was very probably human until recently and hated him. But it slowly dawned on him what Lucifer meant. There were quite a few alphas at that party and just one omega that had been in heat. Castiel shivered. What would have happened if he hadn't stopped Dean in the hallway?

Lucifer's head swivelled around. A second later there was a knock at the front door. "My colleague is here."

Castiel went to the door to let Lucifer's colleague in. He was surprised to see Meg's father holding a large black bag. He hadn't realized that Lucifer's demon colleague was Azazel. Castiel stared at him for a moment, puzzled by his mother's earlier reaction. She must not have known Azazel was Lucifer's new colleague otherwise she would have been more accepting of him; he'd been a friend and co-worker to Castiel's beta mother before she died.

"Can I come in?" Azazel asked, amused.

"Oh. Right." Castiel held the door open wider.

Azazel didn't waste time on pleasantries. He strode in as soon as Castiel was out of the way and went straight to the living room. He looked to Lucifer. "Who has it?"

Lucifer pointed to Dean. Azazel nodded. Lilith cleared a spot on the coffee table for Azazel to work. Lucifer leaned in closer to watch.

"What are you going to do to break the curse?" Castiel asked. The only thing he could think of at the moment to help Dean was to ask the right questions since Dean couldn't ask the right questions because he didn't know to ask.

"Well, that little gem of a curse has been stumping me for the better part of two years." Azazel said, pouring what looked like a jar of blood into a large silver bowl. "I can't break the curse on the object and I haven't been able to lift the curse from living creatures and I haven't figured out a way to destroy it. Honestly, I was beginning to think I should just contact some humans in the right
places and get them to launch it into the sun."

Castiel wasn't sure if that last part was supposed to be a joke.

"The only thing I could think of doing was to bind it to him." Azazel said. He opened a jar and took out a pinch of a nameless herb and then added what looked suspiciously like a tiny fresh heart out of a small animal. He glanced over at Dean then looked to Lucifer. "What's his name?"

"Their name's Dean." Castiel supplied before Lucifer could. All that alpha instinct below the surface didn't like having other alphas answer questions about his mate.

Azazel looked Castiel over and seemed to be contemplating something. He turned to Dean. "Dean, I need a drop of your blood."

Dean's wings ruffled then settled down around their shoulders. "What?"

Azazel took out a small thin lance. "Just a drop."

"Why?" Dean asked suspiciously.

"This is a spell to bind the rabbit's foot to you." Azazel said, pointing to the silver bowl. "It won't lift the curse but it'll make it so that it won't work for anyone else."

"What good is that?" Dean asked. Their wings puffed up around them.

"The spell will make it so that it won't hurt anyone else and if it doesn't work for anyone else people will be less inclined to try and steal it from you." Azazel explained. He reached forward and put out his hand waiting for Dean.

"A spell." Dean scrunched up their nose like they thought that was ridiculous. They touched the side of their neck then glanced over at Castiel. They pursed their lips together for a moment then nodded. Dean reached out and plucked the lance from Azazel's hand. "My mom's diabetic, I'm not afraid of pricking my finger."

Castiel wasn't really sure what being diabetic had to do with the spell but apparently it instilled some confidence into Dean. Maybe it was a human thing?

Dean pressed the lance down on the tip of their finger and watched the blood well up. Azazel motioned for Dean to let the blood drip into the bowl. Dean held their hand out and watched the blood drip down. Azazel snapped his fingers and the contents of the bowl burst into flames.

Dean jumped back. "Whoa!"

"Drop the rabbit's foot into the bowl then reach in and take it out." Azazel instructed.

"What? No. I felt like I was gonna die all week when I didn't have it and I broke my damn arm like fifteen minutes ago when I tossed it on the floor. And I'm not gonna throw it away and then stick my hand in fire!" Dean said. It was starting to surprise Castiel less when Dean was clueless about some aspect he consider a part of everyday life. The flames from a binding spell wouldn't hurt them but Dean wouldn't know that because— because Dean had been a human. It was going to take Castiel some time to wrap his head around that.

"You'll be fine. It will only take a second." Azazel said. Dean leaned away, wary of the silver bowl and its flames. Azazel stuck his hand into the fire and pulled it back out unburnt. "It won't destroy it and it won't hurt you."
Dean studied Azazel's hand for a moment then tentatively reached out and touched the flames. The flames changed from yellow to green. Dean jerked their hand back. "Is it supposed to do that?"

"Yes." Azazel said.

Dean nodded. They held the rabbit's foot above the flames for a moment and breathed deep. They dropped it in. Nothing happened. Dean glanced up at Azazel. Azazel motioned for them to reach into the bowl. Dean bit their lip and stuck their hand into the flames. The flames flared up bright and green and leapt up Dean's arm - much to Dean's obvious dismay - and rushed over them. By the time Dean had jumped back out of fright the flames had swept over them and went out. Dean stood where they were, rabbit's foot in hand, and blinked in shock.

"Are they...okay?" Castiel asked nervously. Maybe this kind of binding spell did hurt people. Human people. Maybe it was fine for angels and demons but not humans.

"He's fine. Just startled." Azazel said. He turned to Dean. "Sorry about leaving that part out kiddo. I didn't think you'd do it if I told you."

The only response Dean had to that was to flick their eyes up and stare at Azazel. Castiel wished again he had some insight into Dean through the bond. Maybe if the bond had been working for him they could have avoided scaring Dean so badly. He frowned. Maybe the bond didn't work properly with...with humans.

"Azazel?" Lucifer touched Azazel's arm and pointed down to the pool of liquid that Lucifer had been pouring onto that second dish. Azazel snapped his fingers and the pool of liquid on the dish caught fire. Lucifer picked up that second feather of Dean's and dropped it into the flame.

Castiel watched as it sizzled and burned bright then exploded with a bang.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Dean, how about we make a deal?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean blinked and squeezed his eyes shut as if that would stop the ringing in his ears. He coughed against the smoke that filled the room. The ringing in his ears dimmed down. He could hear someone opening windows.

Someone laughed. Dean thought it was that guy with the trick fire. Lucifer had called him Azazel.

"Naomi. As unflappable and self-possessed as ever."

"It was just noise and smoke." Naomi said flatly. "I'll see what I can find."

"No no, it's fine. I have some spare clothes in the car. You can never be too sure with magic." Azazel said.

Naomi made a noise in her throat. "Anna?"

"Already going." Anna said. "Come on."

Dean opened his eyes and was shocked that everything was dark. He realized that those wings were wrapped around him again and someone was leaning against him. That someone smelt really good too. Dean made an annoyed noise. He had a feeling he knew who that someone was. Probably the same someone that was currently swamping his head with fear and protectiveness. Dean gave himself a shake to get rid of the Castiel stuff in his head. He gave Castiel a shove. "Get off me."

Dean wriggled out from under Castiel's wings. Castiel just blinked at him in surprise. Dean shivered as those black feathers brushed against his...well...his feathers. At this rate he was beginning to wonder if he'd ever get rid of them.

"Are you okay?" Castiel asked. His shirt hung off him in pieces. Dean guessed that's what happened when wings busted out the back of clothes.

"I'm fine." Dean snapped. That weird itch to answer was still there but it wasn't going away when he answered. He scratched at his arm instead, wondering how something had exploded here of all places. He just wouldn't have expected it to happen here....wait....why wouldn't that happen here? He frowned to himself trying to reason out the why. He shrugged when he couldn't come up with anything better than it just wouldn't.

Dean turned to look at what he expected would be the leftover bits of a coffee table. His eyes went wide. He should have stayed under the wings. Holy crap! Did everybody just have wings and he didn't know about it? Was it some kind of secret adult thing no one had told him about yet? He tripped backwards and landed on the couch. Lucifer had a pair of ginormous bronze wings sticking out of him with the tattered remains of his shirt hanging from his neck. Dean's eyes flicked up to
look behind Lucifer. Azazel was untangling a huge bat-like wing from the scraps of his jacket. Why didn't anyone ever tell him there were a bunch of people in town with wings!? And how the hell did they all hide them?

Azazel worked the wing out of the scraps of fabric and hissed.

"Did you break something?" Lucifer asked.

"Tore some membrane and I think I broke the wrist." Azazel said.

Lucifer moved around and stuck his hand out. Dean watched half stunned by the revelation that apparently there were more people with wings and half fascinated because he figured Lucifer was going to do more of that weird healing thing.

Naomi - the only one in the room with an intact shirt and without wings - made a disapproving mom noise. Castiel glanced over to Lucifer and Azazel and turned red. Dean got a wallop of embarrassment. One of Castiel's wings jerked up to cover himself from the chin down while the other flared out to hide Dean. Dean shoved it away. He didn't like that he liked it brushing against him.

Azazel laughed as one of those great big bronze wings of Lucifer's stretched around and shielded them from view. Dean could just make out Azazel chuckle something lowly, "Bunch of prudes."

A moment later there was that weird flapping whoosh noise and the wings sticking out of Lucifer and Azazel disappeared. It only seemed to make Castiel more embarrassed.

Azazel flashed a grin at Naomi. Naomi narrowed her eyes at him and watched him saunter out of the room with an icy look on her face. Dean heard the front door open then close. She turned to Lucifer and pointed to where the plate had been. "What did that mean?"

"It was supposed to tell us what types of magic had affected Dean in the recent past." Lucifer said, looking down at the lump of ash that used to be that little plate. "Suffice to say quite a few. I've never managed to overload that spell before."

Dean didn't know what half of anyone had been saying meant since he woke up this morning but he didn't like the tone of that. "But you can still fix this right?" He tugged at the wings sticking out of him. "You can get rid of these?"

"Honestly? As far as I know nothing in that case should have been able to do this to you. Considering-" Lucifer motioned towards the lump of ash on the coffee table. ":-my guess is that it was a rather unusual combination of quite a few different substances and spells."

"So...there's some combination of— of stuff that will get rid of these then, right?" Dean asked. He tightened his grip on the feathers he had been tugging at. Why was he getting so freaked out now? Like ten minutes ago he had been fine.

Lucifer looked at him sadly. "I'm sorry, Dean but it will be close to impossible to narrow down what exactly did this to you. I don't even know where to begin. I'll try to help you but...you're lucky to believe alive right now."

"I don't feel lucky." Dean muttered. What the hell was he supposed to do? He just wanted to go home but how the hell was he supposed to explain any of this to his parents? He couldn't just pretend it never happened. People were going to notice the giant stupid wings sticking out of him.

"Naomi...?" Lucifer glanced at Naomi and give her one of those I'm an adult with bad news looks.
He tilted his head towards Dean. Dean was pretty sure he didn't want to be the subject of anymore bad news today.

Naomi turned her head and stared at him. She looked sad. Dean didn't like that. He turned to look at Lucifer, he looked sad and pitying too. Dean really didn't like that either. He could feel the *tick-tick-tick* feeling again as Castiel worked something out. What the hell was going on now? Fuck. Why didn't anyone ever tell him anything?

"No." Castiel said suddenly. "Mom. I promised."

"Castiel, they can't just go back home." Naomi said gently.

"What?" Dean whipped his eyes back to Naomi. *He could so go back home!* Mom and Dad might freak out because was stuck with these stupid wings but he'd figure out how to tell them eventually.

"We have to think about everyone's safety." Lucifer added. Dean was pretty sure he wasn't being included in that *everyone*.

"We aren't keeping my mate prisoner." Castiel said firmly. "We've been trying to tell them all morning that we weren't kidnapping them."

"We aren't going to keep them prisoner. They'll just be...in seclusion for now. At least until they learn to hide their wings and we know that we can trust them."

Dean rolled his eyes when a bunch of Castiel stuff jumped into his head. He didn't need that right now. He was angry enough on his own. He did his best to mentally shove it away. "You can stop talking about me like I'm not here. And what is with the they them thing? I'm a guy."

There was a weird prodding feeling in his head as if Castiel was poking his brain with a finger. Dean turned and glared at him. For a brief second his head gave him the satisfying image of slamming his bedroom window shut on Castiel's hand.

Castiel jumped and went wide eyed. "Did you just do that?"

"Do what?" Dean snapped. Castiel shrank back, his wings flattened down. Dean turned back to Naomi. "Look lady, I'm not getting kidnapped twice in one day. So tough luck for you because I'm leaving."

Dean turned, intent on heading for the door but stopped before he made it past the couch. It was weird. He was pretty sure nobody would try to kidnap him here. But that was dumb because they already had once before. His eyebrows furrowed as he debated with what he knew and what he felt and then decided it was even less likely that anyone would kidnap him at home. He started for the door again.

Naomi darted forward and grabbed his arm before he could get out of the living room. "You'll put everyone in danger if you leave—you'll put Castiel in danger."

He wanted to growl out that he didn't care about putting Castiel in danger but the thing was he did. That idea actually bothered him a lot and he didn't know why. That only served to make him angry. He twisted his arm trying to get out of Naomi's grip but her hand was like a vice. A funny smell started filling up his nose and it took him a moment to realize it was *him* this time. *He* smelt like that; panicky and afraid when he just wanted to be angry. He dug his heels in and tried to stop himself from being dragged back to the couch.
A wave of that protective feeling hit him and a weird smell started to overpower the panicky smell but it seemed to go with the protective feeling and his stupid head liked it, felt relieved by it. Dean snorted and tried to get the smell out of his nose and shake Naomi off his arm. How was she this freakin' strong?

"Mother! You let go of my mate right now!" Castiel barked. His wings arched up high and the feathers flared out.

Dean wrinkled his nose as more of that smell hit him. There was a part of him that thought it would be a great idea to let Castiel hide him behind those black feathered nightmares, let Castiel put himself between him and everyone else. The rest of him thought Castiel was a giant dick.

Naomi calmly looked Castiel over for a moment then dropped Dean's arm. Dean darted away from her and was about to duck around behind Castiel but then realized his head was still being stupid. He didn't like Castiel. He swerved and ended up standing on the other side of the couch as far away from everyone as possible.

The tension in the room shot through the roof. Nobody moved. Dean didn't know what to do. Naomi was standing between him and the door and his stupid head had turned traitor and was screaming at him that he should definitely go to Castiel right now but that was probably the dumbest idea he'd ever had.

It was Lucifer that broke the tension. "Dean, how about we make a deal?"

Dean couldn't help the laugh that erupted from. "Right. Like I'm gonna make a deal with a guy named after the devil."

Lucifer ignored that. "You said your mother was diabetic? I might be able to help her. If I do, would you agree to stay here? Or with another angel or demon family if you want? At least until you learn to blend in?"

"You can't just...you mean like you did..." Dean touched his arm remembering how it had felt as the bone knit back together under his skin. "Like that? That would work?"

Lucifer nodded, "I won't know for sure until I see her, humans don't always respond to magic, but I can try and if I can't there are others who might be able to."

"Are you serious? You're not lying?" Dean asked, though someone who was lying would probably say that they weren't. He tried not to get his hopes up.

"I'm very serious and I'm not lying." Lucifer said.

Everyone was staring at him; nothing new there. He thought it over. He had seen more weird shit in the last couple hours than he had seen in his whole life. Was it really that weird at this point to think that this guy who had goddamn huge wings sometimes and was some type of a faith healer in his spare time could cure Mom? Fuck. What the hell was he gonna do? He really wished that sense of calm hadn't disappeared on him.

Dean bit his lip as he scrambled to figure this out. What if Lucifer was lying and was just helping Naomi to kidnap him again? He didn't think that was too likely because he was here. But what if Lucifer wasn't lying? What if he told Lucifer to screw off and this was Mom's one chance and he screwed it up? What if Lucifer could fix everything with Mom? All he had to do was agree to stay with these winged lunatics. That would be worth it, wouldn't it? It wasn't so bad here. He could stay for a bit if it meant helping Mom.
Dean took a deep breath. "She isn't just diabetic. She has Goodpasture's disease. Can you fix that too?"

"What is that?" Lucifer asked.

"Her immune system went nuts when I was little and attacked her kidneys. So her kidneys are all messed up too." Dean explained. He hated explaining it. He hated talking about it. Today might be the crappiest day of his life but when Mom had gotten sick, that had been the scariest time in his life. He do pretty much anything if his family never had to go through that again.

Lucifer thought it over. "I don't think I can do anything for that."

Dean's shoulders slumped, the wings went with them. He knew all this magic bullshit was too good to be true. Good things never happened to him and his family.

"But I know a few people who might be able to." Lucifer finished.

"For real?" Dean asked. He'd gladly grow three more pairs of wings if it meant someone could cure Mom.

"For real." Lucifer said.

Dean licked his lips nervously. What if they really were crazy kidnappers that wanted to chop him up? He looked between Naomi and Lucifer. He bit his lip. He'd probably be okay here. And it was for Mom. "Alright. I'll— I'll stay." Dean said weakly. He felt like he had sold his soul to the devil but if this was for real, if Mom got cured, it was worth it.

The front door clattered opened. Azazel and a short blonde kid walked into the living room a few seconds later. Azazel tossed a shirt to Lucifer. He sniffed at the air and looked around. "What'd I miss?"

Whatever Lucifer and Azazel started talking about was drowned out by the much louder one sided argument going on between Castiel and the short kid.

"I've been phoning you all morning! I thought you had passed out. Or died!" The short kid gave Castiel a shove in the chest. "You didn't think maybe you should phone your old pal Gabriel and tell him you weren't dead!?"

Castiel backed up. "Gabriel. We've—"

"What? Been too busy running around showing off your mating bite?" The short kid yelled.

"Gabriel!" Naomi shouted over the yelling.

Gabriel looked over as if he was surprised to see anyone else in the room. "Oh, hey. What's up Naomi?" He sniffed at the air. "Holding an alpha convention in your living room?"

Naomi rolled her eyes. "Castiel, go change and find something for Dean to wear and take him—with you."

Castiel nodded and ducked out of the room with Gabriel chasing after him.

Dean looked back to the living room and realized he was alone in the room with three looming adults that were all staring at him and he had basically just agreed to be their prisoner. That afraid smell started wafting off him again. He shifted on his feet nervously. "Do I...have to sign
Lucifer looked at him surprised. Azazel chuckled.

"No, Dean. No blood." Naomi said. She studied him like a bug. Dean shivered. Those wings puffed up again. Naomi blinked and suddenly her face was gentle. "But in light of your agreement, we're going to have to find your mother and...explain a few things to her. How do you think she'll react to....recent developments?"

Dean looked behind himself at the wings. How the hell was he going to tell Mom he had sprouted wings and had agreed to be—a hostage so a dude with the magic touch would cure her? "Uh...I think she'd react just about as well as you could expect someone to?"

Naomi nodded and shared a look with Lucifer. She looked back to Dean. "And where would she be right now?"

"At war—" Dean stopped. It was Wednesday. He had left yesterday without leaving a note after being sick all weekend and he hadn't phoned to tell his parents he wasn't dead. Oh shit. Mom and Dad and Sam would be freaking out wondering what had happened to him! "Uh, probably at home freaking out. Maybe I should phone home first and tell everyone that I'm, uh...." He wasn't sure how to finish that sentence. He definitely wasn't okay with any of this. "That....I'm not dead."

"I think it might be best to do that in person." Naomi said. She glanced at Lucifer again. "You said your home was Seven Torian Road? I'll go get her while you stay here. Where it's safe."

Dean hesitated. He did feel safe here but...

"You should wash up before your mother gets here." Naomi suggested.

Dean glanced down at himself. He was covered in dirt and, was that blood? Shit. It was, wasn't it? And he smelt like a nervous ball of sweat. "Uh...yeah..."

"Lucifer?" Naomi asked. Lucifer nodded. She shot another one of those icy looks at Azazel.

"Right." Azazel said and started packing up his things.

Naomi watched Azazel like a bug until he was out of her sight. Once he was gone she went over to hallway and called up the stairs. "Anna?"

"Yeah?" Anna called back down.

"Can you show Dean where the bathroom is?" Naomi said.

"Yeah." Anna said. There were thumps on the stairs and then Anna: book smasher extraordinaire was in the living room again. She waved at Dean, motioning for him to follow her. "Come on. It's upstairs. I'm sure you don't want to use Castiel's. He doesn't clean anything."

Dean looked between Naomi and Anna. He curled his toes as he fidgeted nervously. Shit. Fuck. Hell. Damn. Had he really agreed to stay here? With these crazy people who all had wings apparently. He thought of Mom. Okay. Yeah. He could do this. If they couldn't fix Mom he was out of here but until then he'd stay. He wouldn't screw this up for Mom. He followed Anna up the stairs.

He was getting better at walking around with those wings sticking out of him but they still jerked around when he moved his arms unless he really thought about it. Anna had to hold them down to
get him through the bathroom door which made her blush furiously but Dean didn't know why because she wasn't the one in nothing but jeans flailing around like a drunk duck.

Anna explained where everything was in the bathroom and left, closing the door behind her.

Dean looked at the shower daunted. How the hell was he supposed to clean up? He didn't think the wings would fit into the shower. After a good ten minutes of struggling to keep those wings out of the way he decided a shower was out of the question. It'd have to be a bath.

He watched the bathtub fill up and fiddled with the rabbit's foot. He had jammed the key ring over his finger again. How was he supposed to wash with the rabbit's foot? He looked around the bathroom and found some dental floss. He pulled out a length and threaded it through the loop of metal where the key ring attached to the rabbit's foot. He tied it up and dropped the loop of dental floss over his neck. The rabbit's foot hung down on his chest. He scowled down at it. "You know, I think this is all your fault."

Then it was bath time. It was quite possibly the hardest bath he had ever taken in his life. By the time he was done there was water and wet feathers everywhere. He did his best to dry the stupid wings off but in the end just gave up. He'd live with the wet feathers.

There was a soft knock at the door. It was Anna. "I've got some clean clothes for you."

"Uh, thanks?" Dean said.

The door opened a crack and jeans and a shirt were thrust through. The door closed again.

Dean pulled the jeans on with a bit of difficulty. He figured out if he leaned back and caught the wings between the wall and himself they didn't move around so much. There wasn't any underwear but he didn't really want to wear someone else's underwear so he wasn't complaining.

It was the shirt he was at loss for. At first he had just thought everyone else had forgotten that he couldn't just zap his wings away like they all could apparently but when he held it up he saw that there was a hole in the back with snap buttons down the middle. He stared at it for a few minutes before he figured out how to put it on.

He pulled the long sleeved shirt on over his head and got his arms through. That part was easy enough. It was the snap buttons he couldn't get. He was pretty sure they had been made by the devil himself. He gave up on the shirt. He had been sitting around shirtless all morning so far anyway. He pulled the shirt off then stepped out of the bathroom.

Apparently he had attracted a crowd.

Chapter End Notes

Worlding note! I figure angels/demons would probably snap their wings out instinctively when they felt their life was at risk. Kind of in the same way you'd instantly look away and shield your eyes against a sudden bright light.

A more serious note: Goodpasture's Disease, I will hope all of you are asking, what on earth is that? It is not a very good time. Goodpasture's disease is an autoimmune disease that attacks the kidneys and/or lungs. It's rather rare and to gloss over technical
terms, is essentially treated by suppressing the immune with huge quantities of prednisone usually. Massive doses of prednisone unfortunately often leave behind the gift of diabetes. So if you survive the original attack, you are often left with damaged/failing kidneys, an immune system that needs to be suppressed leaving you open to other illnesses, diabetes, and a medicine cabinet full of medication to help prevent a relapse. The long term survival rate is low. There is no good prognosis for this and it can't be fixed. Mary Winchester has been living on borrowed time since Dean was little. That is why Dean is willing to trade his freedom for a literal magic cure.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

But Dean hadn't always been an angel. Castiel still couldn't quite make himself believe that entirely. He was trying but it was hard. It would have been easier for him to believe that his mother was actually an omega.

Chapter Notes

There were some technology issues last night, so I missed my Wednesday update (Which at first I thought it was just the AO3 website but then it turned out to be driver issues on my end and I am just terribly sorry AO3 for doubting your connectivity).

"Whoa, they really are that freakishly tall." Gabriel said when Dean came out of the bathroom. Castiel had caught Gabriel up on the situation but Gabriel of course was being himself. "Thought I was seeing things downstairs.

"They're not freakishly tall." Castiel defended. Though Dean was abnormally tall for an omega but...but they hadn't always been one. Castiel still couldn't quite make himself believe that entirely. He was trying but it was hard. It would have been easier for him to believe that his mother was actually an omega. It would have— why wasn't Dean wearing a shirt? It was one thing for family to see a mating bite, but friends?

"And they're right freakin' in front of you." Dean growled. "Seriously. Quit talking like I can't hear you." Dean snapped an annoyed look at Cas. "And you. Quit doing that head thing."

"Sorry." Castiel said. He tried to calm himself down the best he could and waited, hoping that he'd feel Dean through the bond again. Nothing came. The bond had gone quiet again. Maybe it hadn't been Dean after all.

"Do you need help with that?" Ruby offered. They pointed to the shirt he had lent Dean.

"Uh, yeah. I can't get the button snaps." Dean explained.

There was a great deal of shuffling around in the hall while Dean pulled the shirt on and their wings went everywhere. Ruby ducked under Dean's wings and gently pushed the feathers at the base of Dean's wings out of the way to get at the snap the buttons. Dean took in a short breath and jerked their head around to look over their shoulder at Ruby then quickly looked away. Dean looked flustered, almost as if... Oh. Castiel recognized the smell slowly permeating off Dean.

"Ummm." Ruby said, embarrassed. Evidently they knew what that smell was too. They ducked back under Dean's wings and took up a spot on the far side of Anna. "Maybe, umm, someone else should help?" She shot a pointed look at Castiel.

Castiel looked between Dean and Ruby. Dean had turned pink and Ruby was awkwardly avoiding
Dean's eyes. Was Dean...was Dean **actually** attracted to other omegas? Maybe Dean was...still confused about things? It hit Castiel again, of course Dean would be confused about that. They had been human. They wouldn't know **anything** about alphas, betas, and omegas.

The five of them stood awkwardly in the hall. Castiel didn't think Dean would want him to help them with the shirt. He shot his sister a look. Her eyes went wide. She nodded her head subtly towards Ruby. Castiel glanced at Ruby. Right. That would be awkward, Anna helping dress his omega mate while her omega girlfriend was standing right there. Castiel looked back to Dean. Dean scowled at him with that look like they still wanted to stab him with the metal ruler.

Maybe Dean didn't really need to cover up their mating bite - *bites* - or soul mate mark. Dean wouldn't be embarrassed. Dean didn't know what they meant.

"*Here. Let me* do it." Gabriel said, rolling his eyes when no one stepped forward to help Dean. He turned Dean around and quickly snapped the buttons up the back. "Bunch of babies."

Dean turned back around to stare angrily at everyone— though noticeably not at Ruby. They pushed their sleeves up leaving the soul mate mark exposed for everyone to see. Castiel felt himself flush with embarrassment and fought the urge to pull the sleeves back down. It was okay if Anna saw it, but Ruby and Gabriel?

Dean looked at him strangely and shrugged in a *what's your problem?* sort of way. Castiel had a lot of problems at the moment. He could probably make a list as long as he was tall. Or as long as Dean was tall. Dean really was rather tall for an omega.

"Our mom went to go get your mom." Anna said when the silence had gone on too long. "And Ruby's dad said he wanted to ask you a few questions about your mom before she got here."

"Oh." Dean said and rubbed at the arm Lucifer had healed.

There was a bit more awkward shuffling around while Anna and Ruby slipped past Dean and went into her room and closed the door. Their mother was going to be upset about that later; his sister having the omega she was dating alone in her room with her, door closed. Castiel huffed out a quiet sarcastic laugh at himself. He had had an omega alone in his room for less than twelve hours and now he had a mate. Anna was worlds more responsible than him.

Castiel managed to talk Gabriel into leaving as they went down the stairs. He felt bad he hadn't thought to tell Gabriel that he hadn't died but he *had* been rather distracted all morning. First with a mate he thought was either crazy or a killer and now with...this new problem.

Gabriel stopped in the hallway to give Dean a friendly slap on the shoulder. "Hey, don't get too down about this. Being an angel has its perks. I mean, look at me, right?" He turned to Castiel and scowled. "Don't worry about your shifts for the rest of the week."

"What is with the weird pick-up lines today?" Dean muttered under their breath.

Castiel glanced over confused. What did Dean mean by that? Gabriel wouldn't make a pass at them. He and Gabriel were just friends. Not to mention the fact that a beta would never come onto to a mated omega first. ...not that Dean would know that since he used to be human. Castiel sighed. This was harder than he thought it would be. He reminded himself again that Dean didn't know anything about angels and demons or alphas, betas, and omegas or social etiquette when it came to dating.

Gabriel was out the door with one last scowl over his shoulder at him. Castiel wasn't sure if he had
just been fired or if Gabriel was giving him time off to sort out his strange situation. He'd have to phone later. He turned around expecting Dean to be there but Dean was gone. He headed to the living room and found Dean sitting on the couch rubbing at the bridge of their nose.

Castiel hovered near the couch not sure what to do. He didn't know what to do about Dean and from what Dean had said it didn't sound like they knew what to do about him either. "Do you...need anything?"

"A new life," Dean bit out sarcastically then glowered at him. "No. Just...I dunno. Screw off or something— Freakin' hell man, quit doing that head thing. I don't need to know everything you're feeling." They shook their head annoyed and muttered, "This whole day has been like some bad Wings of Desire knock off."

Castiel wasn't really sure what that last part meant but he got that Dean didn't want him there. He retreated to the kitchen leaving Dean to talk with Lucifer and Lilith. Castiel opened a cupboard and stared blankly at the contents. He had barely eaten anything in the last few days and the adrenaline from this morning was draining away leaving him feeling worn out. He stared at the cupboard unthinking for a solid two minutes before giving up and sitting down at the table. He put his elbows on the table and ran his hands through his hair. What was he going to do about Dean?

Had Dean even believed him earlier? They had only seemed more angry when he had told them that he had only been trying to make sure they were okay. How could he prove to Dean that he really had been trying to send them home? That he hadn't meant for any of this to happen. How did he explain to Dean that they had to complete the bond or they'd have died? He tried to imagine what last night must have been like for Dean, not understanding any of what was going on. He shivered. At least he had known. He had had the terror of knowledge but Dean...no wonder Dean thought he had assaulted them. How did he...how did he make that right? He didn't want his mate to think he was one of those alphas. He just wanted to help them.

The answer to that question proved to be elusive. The only thing he could think of doing was to at least help Dean to understand what they were now. He didn't really know how to explain being an angel - you just were one - but he did have his grade nine biology textbook still. Maybe that would help?

Castiel headed downstairs to his room. It still smelt of omega and sex. And Dean. His soul mate who probably hated him. The smell of his mate should have been relaxing but it was tainted with distress, it made the alpha in him agitated with wanting to protect his mate. Castiel headed for his bookcase and tried to ignore the smell. There wasn't any way for him to appease that instinct to protect his mate when he was what had Dean upset.

He found his old biology textbook on the bottom shelf under a stack of novels. He flipped through the pages. Was it basic enough? Would someone who didn't know anything about angels or demons be able to understand anything in this book? At least it wasn't in Enochian— most sciences were nearly impossible to explain in Enochian.

He looked over his other textbooks for something else that might help Dean and realized the rest were in Enochian. He couldn't give Dean a history textbook because Dean wouldn't understand it. He couldn't give Dean a politics textbook or the wing care booklet or a social studies text because they were all in Enochian. The only other textbooks that he had that were in English were more sciences and math and that was because those were human textbooks. And Dean didn't need human textbooks because they had been one.

His eyes drifted over another textbook. It was the short textbook from health class. The one about mating. He pulled it off the shelf. He flipped through it. The chapters that were more about the
social aspects and functions of mating were in Enochian but there were a few chapters in English that explained the biological parts. Maybe it would help?

He stared at an Enochian chapter in the textbook as a new worry sprung up. Dean couldn't speak or understand Enochian. That was fine here where most people preferred to speak English since the local angel and demon community was immersed in humanity. But what if Dean never learned to control their wings? What if they had to move to an entirely angel and demon community where everyone spoke Enochian?

He shoved the new worry aside. That wasn't a pressing problem right now and if it came down to it he'd teach Dean Enochian himself. The thought appeased his alpha instinct; settling down as the new perceived threat to his mate was solved. Well, at least some part of himself was feeling better, even if it was just dumb blind instinct.

Castiel headed upstairs, textbooks in hand. When he got to the living room Lilith was gone but Lucifer was sitting quietly across from Dean trying to look unobtrusive while he watched over Dean. That dumb blind instinct that had been happy a moment ago reared up it's ugly head because another alpha was watching his mate. Castiel did his best to smash it down. He knew people always talked about alpha possessiveness but he hadn't realized it would be this constant battle with his instincts once he had a mate. He pulled his eyes away from Lucifer and looked to Dean. Dean was sitting on the couch and fidgeting nervously, touching the rabbit's foot under their shirt.

Castiel didn't really know what he was doing as he approached the couch but he decided on being straightforward since Dean had seemed to like that last night. He held the textbooks out for Dean. "Here."

Dean flinched like they thought he might hit them with it— probably thanks to Anna. Dean looked at the books skeptically and didn't take them.

"This one is a book from health class." Castiel said but didn't add about mating because that was too embarrassing to say in front of his sister's girlfriend's dad. He held up the other one. "And this one is basic biology. For angels and demons."

Castiel offered the books to Dean again.

Dean hesitated but took them. They glanced between Castiel and the textbooks. They slowly opened the biology textbook. Dean stared at a page that showed the skeletal structure of an angel's wing. Their eyes went wide. They closed the book quietly and set it down on the couch, gingerly pushing it away. Dean murmured under their breath, "...thought it was a pick-up line."

Castiel was about to ask what they thought was a pick-up line when he heard the front door open. He glanced over to the hallway. A blonde woman stepped into the living room a moment later. She stopped in the doorway. She stared at Dean. It had to be Mary Winchester, Dean's mother. They looked too alike for her to be anyone else.

Dean turned their head slowly. They froze when they saw their mother standing there. Castiel could smell the relief come pouring off Dean but it was quickly hidden by apprehension and fear. He hated that smell on his mate.

Dean turned their head slowly. They froze when they saw their mother standing there. Castiel could smell the relief come pouring off Dean but it was quickly hidden by apprehension and fear. He hated that smell on his mate.

Dean stood wide-eyed and terrified but didn't say anything. Castiel wanted to reach out and stroke Dean's wings that were laying flat and submissive against them but he knew that wouldn't calm Dean down. It would only make things worse.

Castiel jumped when Dean's mother suddenly swept across the room and pulled Dean into a hug.
Castiel watched as his mate stiffened in fear then seemed to melt. Dean wrapped their arms around their mother. Their wings came up and around, hiding the two of them from the onlookers in the room. Dean's feathers shook as they took in one broken breath after another.

Castiel's own mother beckoned at him from the doorway. Castiel glanced between his mother and his mate. His mother was right. He was intruding even if it was his mate. He slipped out of the living room and followed his mother into the kitchen. She motioned for him to sit down at the table.

"Have you eaten anything today?" His mother asked of all things.

"No." Castiel said. He glanced back towards the living room. He hadn't thought about what would happen when Dean's human family found out but... "She's taking this well for a human."

His mother made a noncommittal noise as she took out a bowl from the cupboard and a knife from the drawer and started cutting up a pear from the bowl of fruit on the counter.

"Very well." Castiel said, turning back to watch his mother carefully. He felt his heart start to beat faster. He didn't want his mate's whole family magically forced to act calm but he also didn't want to accuse his alpha mother of doing it. She was still a scary alpha mom, after all.

"Dean's her son." His mother said as she finished cutting up the pear.

Castiel's eyebrows furrowed in concern. He bit his lip. "Mom...did you...?"

"I explained certain things to her before we arrived." His mother said. She set the bowl of fruit down on the table in front of him. "I gave her some...forewarning."

Castiel looked back toward the living room again. He closed his eyes and looked away. He didn't want to know if his suspicions were right. He had already let his mother use persuasion on his soul mate. He didn't want to be responsible for telling Dean it had been used on his mother too. Maybe his mother had just explained things to Dean's mother in that way mothers conspired together.

"I think we'll order something for dinner tonight. Nobody is going to want to cook after this." His mother said absently as she went to the drawer where they kept their little brown phone book with the numbers of other angels and demons in town. "And we'll need to get the pullout couch ready in the spare room."

Castiel glanced at his mother in disbelief. Had she not seen what had happened this morning? Dean wouldn't want to stay here. Dean hated them. Castiel shook his head. "Dean won't want to stay here."

"They will." His mother said casually.

Castiel looked away so she wouldn't see him scowl at her as he remember that yes, Dean would want to stay here because she hadn't put a time frame on feeling safe. He was still mad about that even if it had calmed Dean down long enough to figure out what was going on.

His mother, of course, knew without looking exactly what he was thinking. "It was for their own good. Yours too."

Castiel looked down feeling guilty. If he had just known why Dean was so upset this morning he would never have let his mother use persuasion on them without their permission like Dean was some kind of criminal. But then his mother wouldn't have needed to do it anyway if that had been the case. He glanced at his mother and passive aggressively ate a slice of pear she had placed in
front of him. How was his mother this cool and collected about the situation? Sometimes he wondered if his mother had put herself under persuasion to stay calm.

"If you don't want to go to school for the rest of the week you don't have to." His mother said. She took out a pad of paper and started writing phone numbers down.

"Alright." Castiel said curtly. He watched her write phone numbers down trying to not look interested but in the end he caved. "Who are you phoning?"

"The local council. Then I'm cancelling my appointments for the next two weeks." His mother explained. "Since I doubt matters will...resolve themselves anytime soon."

"Oh." Castiel hadn't thought about that once they'd found out that Dean wasn't actually a criminal. But it made sense. The local council registered any and all demons and angels that came into town. Dean was a new angel. They'd want to know he was here. A little ball of worry lodge in his throat. The local council was also responsible for keeping everyone safe. What if they thought a human turned into an angel wasn't safe?

"What do you think..." Castiel licked his lips nervously. "Do you think the council will do anything? Because Dean was human?"

"They'll probably put a watch on Dean's family to make sure they don't...say anything inappropriate." His mother said. Her eyes flicked over the numbers she had written down. "And I'd assume they'd take the usual precautions when humans find out."

"But they won't..." Castiel trailed off as his mind was flooded with possibilities.

In all the commotion this morning he hadn't even thought of what the local council might do. As far as he knew nothing like this had ever happened before. What if they thought Dean was some sort of dangerous magic induced abomination? Or if they thought Dean would tell humans about them? Or... A slew of terrible scenarios flashed in front of Castiel's eyes. He could smell the fear rising off him as his imagination ran wild. His alpha instincts worked him up into an agitated frenzy of fear for his mate.

"They won't do anything to Dean, right?" Castiel asked nervously.

His mother glanced up from the pad of paper. She had her serious alpha mom face on. She tapped the pen on the pad of paper and gave him a steely alpha mom look. "They can try."
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Dean knew what she must be thinking about and it wasn't *I could get better*. Mom was thinking up reasons why he shouldn't stay, everything from this is crazy to nobody threatens my family to look at what happened to you. Mom was going to pass up her one chance because of him. He couldn't let that happen. What happened if she relapsed? What if one of the hundreds of complications caught up with her finally? It'd be his fault because he had been afraid to do this one thing for her.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this update took forever. I've been really sick. What I thought was just a cold was actually a chest cold/sinus infection having an intense steamy romantic fling and I was their playground. I think I mixed some metaphors there. Anyway. Expect slower (read once a week) updates for a little while as I recover and try to juggle the impending birthday/christmas season.

Also, I feel like the quality of this chapter could be better but if I don't post this now you could be waiting weeks before the next update. So let's all just grin and bear it and move along.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mom had her game face on so he did his best to put his on too. Which, okay, maybe he had gotten a little misty eyed there when had Mom hugged him but almost dying and being kidnapped then agreeing to being kidnapped and jeez, he had just had a rough couple of days, okay? Getting a little misty eyed because Mom had swooped in was perfectly reasonable.

At least he didn't have to explain the wing problem he was having. Once him and Mom were sitting down - and he definitely didn't wipe at his eyes with the sleeves of his shirt - Lucifer launched into the *it was magic* story. Dean was just glad Lucifer glossed over the sex parts and didn't start jabbering on about soul mates.

He could see Mom's jaw clench tighter and tighter as Lucifer explained what had happened and then the situation with the rabbit's foot. Then Lucifer got to the part where he had agreed to stay if they helped Mom.

Mom turned and looked at him carefully. "Dean, do you *want* to stay here?"

Lucifer started to speak. "There are a number of things Dean needs to know if—"

"Is your name Dean?" Mom said to Lucifer in her *just try me mister* voice. Lucifer slowly closed his mouth and leaned back in his chair. Dean couldn't help but grin. Mom was the best. Mom turned back to him. "Honey?"
"I..." Dean looked at Mom. Mom who would put anything and everything above herself if it was for her family. No, he didn't want to stay here but if someone could cure Mom then here was where he was staying. But how did he get Mom to agree to it? She'd never leave him here if she thought he was in trouble. He hedged while he tried to think something up. "Mom, I really think this guy might be able to help you."

Mom looked between him and Lucifer. She slowly reached out and stroked her hand down the long line of one of those wings sticking out of him - Dean had been right before, it did feel like when she ran her fingers through his hair when he was sick - and tried to hide the sad look in her eyes.

Dean knew what she must be thinking about and it wasn't I could get better. Mom was thinking up reasons why he shouldn't stay, everything from this is crazy to nobody threatens my family to look at what happened to you. Mom was going to pass up her one chance because of him. He couldn't let that happen. What happened if she relapsed? What if one of the hundreds of complications caught up with her finally? It'd be his fault because he had been afraid to do this one thing for her.

Mom took in a steady breath, "Dean—"

"—and, ya know, I- ah- have to learn how to do that wing hiding trick everyone else can do. Can't walk around half naked forever, right? So, ya know, I should stay anyway." Dean blurted out when Mom started to launch into her argument about how her health didn't matter, that his safety came first. But her health did matter. It mattered a whole damn lot to him! He could stick this out for her. Besides, he'd be safe here and what was a little kidnapping compared to a miracle cure? "I can't just go walking around with these things and if I'm gonna be here anyway..." "Dean." Mom said in her mom voice. He could see his chance for helping Mom slipping through his fingers. She was going to go on the war path and god help anyone who got in her way—wings or no wings.

"Mom. It's okay." Dean tried to sound reassuring even though he was pretty sure that was the biggest lie he had ever told anyone in his whole life. His mind raced for a reason that Mom would believe. Anything. Anything at all. He couldn't let this opportunity get away from them. Everything that happened to Mom after would be his fault if he couldn't get her to just let him stay so Lucifer would do his faith healer act on her.

He wrinkled his nose when he was interrupted from his thoughts by that Castiel feeling pressing closer to him in his head. It felt like Castiel was right behind him. He turned his head to see Castiel standing in the hallway looking at him curiously. Dean glowered at him.

Castiel quickly scurried away when he realized he had been caught staring.

Dean turned back to Mom. Then whipped his head back to look at where Castiel had been standing. His brain lit up with a half formed plan. Mom didn't want him to stay because she thought these were a bunch of strangers who had grabbed her kid off the street while he was sick from some crazy magic accident that made him grow wings. But what if they weren't strangers? What if they were friends who were trying to make sure he was okay? He did his best to not think about how that was exactly what Castiel had said about an hour ago.

"Really Mom, it's okay." Dean said, trying his best to sell his half baked plan. "Castiel's a friend of mine. He—" Shit. This was a terrible plan. "—figured out what was wrong and helped me—" Worst freakin' plan he had ever come up with! "—get through it last night. I'd just be staying a couple of days at a friend's house—" Really? He was calling Castiel a friend now? "—while I get these wings figured out and I figured, hey, if they're offering to help you too, why not?"
"Castiel's your friend?" Mom asked skeptically because she was Mom and it was impossible to pull a fast one on her.

"Yeah. Yeah, I've known Castiel for little awhile now." Dean almost laughed. A little while? How about three days? Two of which he only half remembered. "I mean, obviously I didn't know too much about all this...magic stuff but we, uh, we hung out a bit before..." He motioned to the wings. "But, yeah. Castiel's a friend."

Mom gave him her patent *don't try to play me* look.

"You know what? I'll go get him." He got up and followed the Castiel feeling in his head. He called back over his shoulder. "You can give him the Winchester family interrogation."

Dean staggered up the stairs under the awkward weight of those stupid wings while following his newfound Castiel spidey sense. He found Castiel in a bedroom at the end of the hall fighting with a pullout couch.

Castiel looked up from the couch and froze, which was fine by Dean. Dean went straight after him. Castiel backed up. Dean could feel the fear coming off him. Dean kept stalking closer until he had Castiel cornered. He stuck a finger in Castiel's face - one wing twitched forward like it was thinking about shoving itself into Castiel's face too - and started talking.

"My birthday is January twenty fourth. I love classic rock. Led Zeppelin is where it's at. It's a toss up whether I like Ramble On or Traveling Riverside Blues more. My little brother's name is Sam, he's a giant dork. My girlfriend's name is Lisa, we're always on again off again but right now we're on." Dean paused for a second trying to think of anything else he might need to know. "I absolutely love the broken down sixty-seven impala hidden under the tarps beside the garage and Dad said I could have it when I turn eighteen. I work at the used bookstore downtown."

Castiel's eyebrows went up at that last bit of information but then dropped back down as he stared on in confusion. "...what?"

"You want me to start believing any of that *just trying to make sure you're okay* crap?" Dean asked sternly. This really was the worst plan he had ever thought of.

"Uh, yes?" Castiel sounded like what he really wanted was to slink away from Dean and hide.

"Okay. Then you go down there-" Dean pointed towards the stairs while one of the wings stretched out to point the same way "-and say whatever you have to say to make my mom think you're a friend of mine so she'll be okay with letting me stay here and letting Lucifer try to fix what's wrong with her."

"Oh." Castiel said. He glanced down to Dean's arm where the squiggles were.

Dean's lip twitched in annoyance. "**No.** None of that *soul mate crap* you've all been spouting on about. You just tell her we're friends and that I'll be fine here."

"Oh...kay..." Castiel said warily.

"Okay." Dean nodded sharply. He turned around to head for the door with Castiel in tow. He took two steps then spun around and stuck his finger back in Castiel's face, a wing jerking forward with the same motion. "**I mean it** about the soul mate crap. That'll just freak her out. And don't talk about the, ya know...sex stuff. **Just friends.** Got it?"

"Got it." Castiel nodded quickly as they marched down the hallway to the stairs.
When they got back downstairs into the living room Dean realized he had made two mistakes.

Mistake one: he had left Mom with Lucifer and he had no idea if Lucifer would rat him out.

Mistake two: he hadn't actually bothered to ask Castiel for any info about himself.

Well, he'd just have to take his chances with mistake one and mistake two probably wouldn't come up. Mom wanted to make sure Castiel wasn't a kidnapping psycho...which he was but if he helped Dean to cover this up than maybe he'd downgrade him to just kidnapping.

"Mom, meet Castiel. Cas. My buddy." Dean pulled Castiel into a one arm embrace from the side. His wing stretched out to wrap around Castiel as well. There was a flood of embarrassment from Castiel and a hint of something else that made Dean's heart speed up and goddamn why did Castiel smell so good? He ignored it. He elbowed Castiel towards Mom. "Castiel this is my mom. Mary."

Castiel glanced back at him and gave him a panicked look. He turned back to Mom and stuck out his hand. "It's very nice to meet you."

Mom took Castiel's hand. "It's nice to meet you too."

Dean didn't need a freaky head connection to see how anxious Castiel looked. He plastered a smile on his face when Mom looked over at him. Dear god, he hoped this worked. He didn't think he could live with himself if Mom missed her chance to get better because of him.

"Dean...speaks very highly of you." Castiel said. Dean breathed in relief. At least Castiel was keeping it vague.

"Oh. That's nice. I'm sorry to say Dean hasn't told me much about you." Mom said and she levelled another Mom look over at him. Dean was pretty sure he was screwed. Mom smiled at Castiel then looked back to him. "Or anything really."

Shit. Mistake number two was going to bite him in the ass. She was gonna figure it out and then she definitely wouldn't want him to stay here. Dean's eyes darted around the room for family pictures of Castiel playing baseball or something. He didn't see anything. The living room was practically empty. Who kept their living room devoid of personal things!? His eyes picked up the textbooks Castiel had given him still sitting on the couch. "Cas really likes biology."

This time Dean was flooded with anxiety. Shit! Biology was definitely the wrong thing to say. What the hell did kidnapping psychos with wings do!?

"Well, not biology really." Castiel said slowly. That protective feeling started creeping into Dean's head again. Castiel's hand dropped down to his waist and drifted back. He made a quick please shut up hand motion. "Dean means botany. I'm very good with plants it's my talent. Here, I'll show you."

Dean watched Castiel go over to one of the potted plants in the room. Castiel stroked the leaves a few times and it burst into bloom. That was...kinda cool. Dean's eyebrows drew together. Lucifer healed people, Azazel snapped his fingers and made fire, and apparently Castiel made plants grow. Dd that mean he had some crazy super power too now?

Castiel pinched the flower off and gave it to Mom. Huh. That was smoother than what Dean expected out of the winged weirdo.

"...thank you." Mom said, surprised. She looked the flower over as if it was some kind of puzzle to work out. "So where did you two meet? From what I understand your people don't go to the same
school as everyone else."

Dean felt his face pale. Castiel however just looked on calmly— he felt calm too. How was this asshole so damn calm about this? Mom's life was in the balance and Castiel was calm about it?

"Dean works a few stores down from where I work." Castiel said.

A light went on above Dean's head. He remembered that smell from last night. He hadn't known what it was then but he knew now, it was Castiel. Where had he been...? That bakery Jo liked! "Yeah! I mean, yeah, he works at that bakery down the street."

There was a snap of surprise from Castiel. Dean tried to suppress a smug smile. He could be on the ball too. He turned back to Mom. "Cas here, came in to Bobby's bookstore a few weeks—"

"Do you mean Robert Singer?" Lucifer interrupted.

Dean stared for a moment. "...you know Bobby?"

"I buy— books from him occasionally."

Dean watched Lucifer make a quick exit from the living room. That was really weird. He glanced at Castiel but Castiel was staring after Lucifer like he thought it was weird too. He stared at the doorway. ...had Lucifer just given up on the deal? Was he really going to try and help Mom even if he didn't stay? That sounded too good to be true.

His attention was pulled back to the living room when Mom started asking Castiel questions about wings and why no one else seemed to have them but everyone talked about them as though they were normal.

There was a few awkward minutes where Dean cajoled Castiel into showing Mom the wing hiding trick before Castiel finally shucked his shirt and let everything hang loose.

Castiel turned bright red but did a good job at pretending that he wasn't painfully embarrassed. Dean didn't get it. Were wings naughty bits? Was that why everyone hid them? Had he basically been walking around with his dick hanging out all morning and no one had said anything?

"...do you have Dean's name tattooed to your arm?"

Dean froze. Oh shit. He had completely forgotten about the weird name thing! Castiel was going to blurt out some creepy soul mate talk! And that would just lead to more questions and he'd have to tell Mom what had happened and she'd never let Lucifer near her on principle alone! Fuck! And it'd all be his own stupid fault!

"Permanent marker." Castiel said. Dean breathed out a breath he didn't realize he was holding. Castiel did the hide the wings trick and pulled his shirt back on. That funny sort of I'll protect you smell started filling up Dean's nose. He side-eyed Castiel. Castiel tugged at his shirt adjusting the collar. "Dean thought it was funny but it still hasn't come off yet."

Dean could see Mom thinking it over. Dean tensed up. Was Mom going to believe it?

He was saved by a not so inconspicuous argument in the hallway between Lucifer and Naomi in hushed tones. Whatever it was it was over quickly. Lucifer strode past the doorway a moment later
and headed upstairs while Naomi glided into the living room.

"Mary, I hope Lucifer adequately explained Dean's...accident." Naomi said. She looked between Dean and Castiel for a moment then flicked her eyes back to Mom. "It's been very startling for all of us."

"Startling?" Mom stared right back at Naomi.

Dean could see the anger flash in front of her eyes. Mom was going to tell her off and try to drag him home. Dean glanced up the stairs. He wasn't sure if he should believe Lucifer about helping Mom no matter if he stayed or not. They had all been really creepy about him staying before Mom showed up. What if Lucifer was lying? His name was **Lucifer** after all.

"How would you feel if your son was sick for days and disappeared last night only to turn up with wings and apparently under a **curse**?" Mom asked, her voice scathing. She looked like she might throw a punch. "I don't think you'd use the word **startling**."

"I'm sorry. Startling was a bad choice in words." Naomi said.

Dean's eyebrows went up. What the hell had happened to the scary and intimidating woman from earlier today?

"Perhaps we should talk a bit more. I was thinking we could all have an early dinner and talk."

Naomi said with an apologetic smile that Dean didn't think anyone would fall for. What the hell was going on now? Naomi turned to Castiel. "Why don't you and Dean go order a pizza for us?"

Okay really, what the hell was going on? Dean looked between Mom, who looked like she wanted to knock a few teeth out, and Naomi, who still had that weird smile on her face, and was thoroughly confused. At least he wasn't the only one. He was getting hit with wave after wave of confusion from Castiel too.

Castiel cautiously put his hand on Dean and pushed him gently towards the hall.

"What was all that about?" Dean asked when they were in the kitchen. He sat down at the table. The wings still made him wobble a bit while standing.

Castiel shrugged and pulled out a phone book from a drawer.

Dean's eyebrows came together in annoyed confusion. Why didn't anyone just tell him what was going on? "Did Lucifer mean it?"

"Mean what?" Castiel asked while running his finger down a page in the phone book.

"That he'd try to cure my mom whether I stayed here or not." Dean said. He looked back towards the living room. He narrowed his eyes at the wall. If everyone else had super powers maybe he had x-ray vision now.

"Probably. I don't see why not." Castiel said, his finger coming to a stop on the page. "As far as I know there aren't any rules **specifically** against helping humans. We just have to be careful. Not do anything in public where just anyone could see."

Dean looked back to the living room. Could he really just leave? With Mom? And these people would still help her? What would he do about the wings then? ...he **could** always stay, just to make sure they helped Mom and told him how to hide the wings.
"Do you think two large pizzas is enough for seven people?" Castiel asked.

"Yeah." Dean said, distracted. What was he going to do? He frowned at the wall. "...make one thin crust vegetarian. With less cheese and light on the sauce."

"You're a vegetarian?" Castiel asked sounding surprised.

"No. No, it's for my mom. She shouldn't eat a lot of carbs and protein all at once and cheese and tomatoes aren't..." Dean stopped suddenly aware that he had let himself sink into that protective feeling coming from Castiel. It was making him relax when he should be worried about whatever crazy thing these people were going to do next. He glared over. "Quit freakin' doing that."

"I can't just stop it." Castiel said defensively.

Dean glowered at him. Castiel scowled back before he picked up the phone and started dialling. A bunch of annoyance bubbled up at the back of Dean's head. Well, good. It wasn't like they were buddies now, even with the act in the living room. Castiel owed him big time for everything that had happened.

Just as Dean was deciding that he'd had enough of not being told anything and was going to march back into the living room and demand some answers Lucifer walked into the kitchen.

"Dean." Lucifer said. He sat down at the table across from Dean. "I'm going to take your jeans from that night with me. I may be able to use them to make an assessment of what you were exposed to."

"Okay." Dean tried not to get his hopes up. Lucifer had made it sound like figuring this out anytime soon wasn't likely. He gave Lucifer a suspicious look. "You really mean it back there? That you'll help my mom? Even if I don't stay."

Lucifer nodded. "You're an angel. For the time being at least. Your family should have just as much help as any other angel or demon's family." He gave Dean an earnest look. "But it really would be best if you stayed, Dean."

Dean tried to lean back and cross his arms but the wings got in the way and tried to wrap around him. So much for trying to look cool and collected. He grabbed the wings and sat on the ends again.

"I know this must be difficult for you but much of our safety comes from humans not knowing what we are. If the wrong people see you like this you'd be putting far more than yourself and a handful of lives at risk." Lucifer said in that voice all adults had when they thought you didn't know any better. "You could put your family at risk too if you go home before you learn to hide what you are now."

Dean stared at Lucifer. He had kinda liked the guy at first - okay maybe like was a strong word - because he had been the only one to actually stop and tell him anything but now he was starting to think he was just as bad as Castiel and Naomi. He kept explaining things, sure, but now it seemed kinda threatening. And what was with the whole turn around on helping Mom about? If there was one thing he could agree with it was that the wrong people had already seen him and they were all in this house.

That fear smell started coming off him again and a few moments later he felt Castiel get all agitated and protective. Dean rolled his eyes. He rubbed at his face. This whole day was like a really terrible comedy and he was the centre of every joke.
Dean took in a deep breath and glared over at Lucifer. "You had better not be lying about being able to help my mom."

"I'm not." Lucifer said. "Nor am I lying about the risk you could put everyone else in. There are far more dangers in the world for angels and demons than there are for humans. Not knowing the dangers doesn't make the world a less dangerous place."

Before Dean could ask what vague ominous dangers Lucifer was talking about Lucifer was striding out of the kitchen. Dean threw his head back exasperated and groaned. Great. Just great. So if they weren't all going to jerk him around with helping Mom they were going to hint at some shadowy danger out to get him and his family and everyone else and wouldn't luck have it, it'd be his fault if that happened.

"Lucifer's right." Castiel said. He had taken up a position in front of the sink leaning against the counter. "Not knowing doesn't make you safer. You should stay."

"Who asked you to chime in?" Dean snapped.

"You don't have to be so rude all the time." Castiel shot back. "I helped you with your mother, didn't I?"

Dean laughed. "You're kidding right?"

Castiel just stared back at him.

Dean covered his face with his hands and groaned. He was the one who had woken up in a stranger's house with wings. Why was everyone trying to make him out to be the crazy one? Or the one who was going to put everyone in danger?

He massaged his temples trying to work out what to do. Mom and Naomi came into the kitchen a short while later. Dean didn't know what Naomi could have said to calm Mom down but apparently they had worked out some kind of truce because Mom wasn't knocking Naomi on her ass and heading out the door with him in tow.

Castiel gave an update on the pizza situation before disappearing downstairs. Castiel had gone back to his be a protective douche bag feeling but at least he was doing it somewhere where Dean wouldn't have to smell it too. It was too easy to ease into that and relax when what he needed to do was think.

He had been dead set on staying to help Mom but now he wasn't so sure if he should trust that help was ever going to come through. Then there were those vague threats to his family's safety. How serious were those?

"Do you still want to stay?" Mom asked. She brushed his hair back with her hand. "You don't have to."

All he had wanted to do before was go home and now he wasn't so sure if he should trust that help was ever going to come through. Then there were those vague threats to his family's safety. How serious were those?

"Yeah." Dean said and tried to make it sound like he meant it. "Yeah, I should probably stay for a day or two. You know, just until I figure these out." He jabbed a thumb at the wings.

"Are you sure?" Mom asked. She gave him that sad look that Sam was slowly mastering.
Dean had to try his hardest to resist it. "Yeah."

"Alright..." Mom's eyes darted over the wings. She brushed his hair back again. "At least you have a friend who understands what you're going through."

Dean was about to ask *what friend?* When he caught himself. "Yeah. Yeah, Cas has been...really great to have around."

He was just going to tell record breaking lies all day wasn't he?

Mom had a few more words of encouragement to say while he grinned and tried to look like nothing was wrong. After the first two minutes he couldn't take it anymore. He reminded Mom that dinner would be showing up soon.

Mom checked her watch then asked Naomi where the bathroom was, she preferred to be discreet about taking insulin.

Dean sighed in defeat once Mom was out of the room. Apparently they really were going to try and have a civil conversation over dinner. He wasn't sure how that was going to go. He closed his eyes and let his head loll back.

"Staying is the right choice." Naomi said quietly.

"I'm starting to think it's the only choice." Dean retorted.

"You're staying?"

Dean opened his eyes. Lucifer was back in the kitchen. Those three girls, Ruby, Anna, and Lilith were hanging back in the hallway. They looked apprehensive. He glanced between Lucifer and Naomi. They looked a bit edgy too. "Yeah."

"That's good." Lucifer nodded. "I'll start getting in touch with my other contacts about your mother tonight."

"Thanks." Dean said, but it came out bitter.

Naomi swept forward to give Anna a hug and whisper something to her that Dean couldn't make out. That weird bitter worried smell started stuffing up Dean's nose. He rubbed at it trying to get the smell out.

When Naomi was done whispering to Anna she stepped back to let Lucifer usher the girls down the hall.

"I'll be back shortly." Lucifer said to Naomi. She nodded. There was the sound of shoes and jackets being pulled on then the door creaking open and clicking shut.

Dean zoned out lost in thought until the smell of pizza and Mom nudging him gently snapped him out of it. "Sorry, what?"

"Are you sure you're okay, Dean?" Mom asked.

"Yeah...yeah, I'm just tired." Dean said and that wasn't a lie. He was *exhausted.* "Long day."

Castiel reappeared. He glanced between Mom and him then sat down next to him at the end of the table. He held out a length of leather cord. "Here."
Dean stared. What the hell?

"For the rabbit's foot." Castiel said.

Dean looked down at the rabbit's foot dangling from the dental floss around his neck. He had almost completely forgotten about it. He would have liked to tell Castiel to screw off but he could practically feel Mom staring at the back of his head. He grabbed the leather cord off Castiel. He took the loop of dental floss from around his neck, snapped the floss, and pulled it away from the rabbit's foot. He threaded the leather cord through the loop where the key chain attached. He tied the two ends together then threw it back over his head. The leather cord probably was more sturdy but he was definitely going to find something new to use first thing tomorrow morning—something not from Castiel.

Castiel watched the entire arts and crafts project and felt pleased. Dean shot him a few stealthy glares that he hoped Mom didn't see. Castiel didn't seem to notice either.

Castiel was too busy frowning at an empty seat at the table. "Should I get Anna?"

"Anna asked to spend the night at Lucifer's." Naomi said as she cut into her pizza. Naomi, it turned out, was one of those weirdos who eat their pizza with a knife and fork.

"She's staying at Ruby's?" Castiel asked sounding surprised.

Dean was assaulted with wave after wave of confusion. He couldn't help but wonder what was so weird about that? Girls stayed over at their friend's houses all the time.

Naomi hummed out a yes and focused on her pizza.

Fear started to creep into that confusion that was fretting away at the back of Dean's head. Dean glanced over at Castiel. What had him so worked up?

Mom laid down some rules for his stay while they ate. She was leaving her cell phone with him, if he wanted to go home in the middle of the night well then he'd be going home in the middle of the night, and Mom was coming back first thing tomorrow morning to make sure he was okay.

Naomi nodded and smiled and said he'd get the guest bedroom, while Castiel kept shoving his worried feelings at Dean's head. Dean kicked at him under the table to try and get him to quit it. Castiel gave him a hurt look, it only made Dean's head more muddled.

As dinner wound down Lucifer showed up again. Naomi let him in but he didn't join them in the kitchen. It sounded like he was holing up in the living room.

"It's getting late." Naomi said when she came back in. Dean glanced up at a clock on the kitchen wall. It wasn't even 7:00pm yet. But he was feeling beyond exhausted. Naomi turned to Mom.

"Why don't I drive you home and I can pick up some things for Dean?"

Mom looked between him and Naomi. "You're sure, honey?"

He really wasn't. Dean nodded. "Yeah."

"Alright." Mom said. She put her arms out and gave one of her best you're not getting rid of me without a hug looks.

Dean on the other hand tried to give Mom his best pretending to not be afraid but actually I kinda am look. One of the wings knocked a chair over when he stood up and wrapped his arms around
"You phone me if you want to come home." Mom said sternly.

"I'll be fine, Mom." Dean said, trying to sound annoyed and not worried. He threw in a joke, trying to sound natural. "Tell Sam we're gonna start up a superhero team. He can be my sidekick with the power of being a giant nerd."

Mom smiled and gave him another squeeze. He followed Mom and Naomi to the door. Dean gave Mom a last hug. Those wings flicked out to wrap around her again They weren't so bad when they were pulling Mom in closer and blocking Castiel from view.

Dean watched Mom go out the door with Naomi. He turned away as soon as the door closed. He bumped into Castiel. He shoved him out of his way with a growl, "Screw off."

Castiel stumbled back looking annoyed and...and maybe feeling a little hurt. Well, good. He deserved it. Dean did his best to stomp up the stairs to that guest room that Naomi had mentioned. He figured it was the room he had found Castiel in earlier.

He turned the light on in the room. Someone - from the smell he'd guess Castiel - had finished pulling out the couch and putting sheets on the bed. Those two textbooks Castiel had shoved in his face had been left in the centre of the bed. He shoved the books aside and belly flopped onto the bed since it kinda hurt when the wings got jammed up under him.

He laid on the bed and listened to the voices down stairs. Castiel and Lucifer were talking in low even tones. Dean's eyes drifted closed as the steady pace of conversation...

—The door creaked. Dean's eyes snapped open. He flipped over and sat up. One wing bashed off the wall.

Naomi was standing in the doorway with his backpack. She set it down beside a bookcase. She stood in the doorway and studied him for a moment. "Do you need anything?"

Dean couldn't think of anything that wasn't a sarcastic response so he shrugged instead.

"You should try to get some rest, Dean. We're going to be busy tomorrow. I'll be down the hall if you need something," Naomi said. She slipped out of the room and closed the door, taking her weird smell with her.

Dean sat on the bed and blinked. He glanced out the window. It was dark out. How long had he been out for? He dug Mom's cell phone out of his pocket and checked the time. 10:23pm. He looked around the room. He sighed and flopped backwards onto the bed.

"Ow. Fuck." He shifted onto his side and pulled at one of the wings that was folded under him funny. He narrowed his eyes at it and tried to move it up so it was laying flat out from his side. It jerked and twitched but eventually he had it spread out on the bed beside him. He glowered at it for a moment before throwing his head back—and hitting it off something hard. He reached up and brought his hand back with...a book? Oh, right. Castiel's textbooks. He reached up and grabbed the second one.

He held the two textbooks above him. He set one down on his stomach and opened up the other one. He quirked an eyebrow up at the title. The damn thing was in squiggles. He pawed through the pages. There were pictures of smiling teens and serious adults and a few close-ups of pudgy baby faces. Whatever it was it looked like one of those typically— Whoa! That was a dick! What the hell kind of book had Castiel given him?
He flipped back to the cover, the title still didn't make sense. He flipped back to the dick page. He stared at the page for a moment trying to make sense of the squiggles but they remained incomprehensible gibberish beside a picture of dick standing at attention. He shook his head. What the hell, Castiel? He flipped the page.

The next page had another dick. Someone had definitely not won the genetic lottery there, size didn't mean everything but nature had played a cruel joke on someone. He flipped— what the ever loving fuck!? Holy dear fucking god! What the hell had happened to that guy!?

Dean made a desperate little pained noise of sympathy. The dick in the picture had this huge angry red swollen lump on it. Like the dude in the picture was wickedly allergic to bees and had gotten stung in the worst place possible.

He glanced down at his crotch and thanked the gods of dicks that whatever the fuck was going on in the book was not going on in his pants. All that swelling looked painful.

He tossed the book aside. Screw that. Why the hell had Castiel given him that?

He grabbed the other book off his stomach and started flicking through it. He came to a page with the skeleton of a wing. He turned his head to look at the...his? okay, his wings and then back to the book. He had an ulna and a radius bone now? Wait. Weren't those already bones he had in his arms? He read the next couple of pages about wing bones. Then the chapter started talking about types of feathers which was a lot more boring than stuff about skeletons.

He flipped through the book at random and opened it up to a new chapter. He was pretty sure this chapter was made up. Nothing really made sense. Sure normal people didn't have wings but the more he had read about it the more a wing had sounded just like an arm with feathers. A conjugium glandis on the other hand? He was pretty sure that was made up.

He read over the description. There were supposed to be three. One in the crook of his neck on either side and a third one on the back at the scruff of his neck.

Dean set the book down on his chest and rubbed his hands over the two bite marks that were on either side of his neck. Right where the these glands were supposed to be. His eyebrows drew together. He grabbed the book back up. He flipped the page.

The book got technical and started talking about enzymes and chemical reactions. Dean had to re-read it twice and he still didn't really understand it. He skipped to the next page. What was an empathetic connection? He skimmed a few paragraphs. Two words jumped out at him. Soul mate. People had been talking about soul mates all day. They had kept calling Castiel his soul mate.

He went and re-read the part that mentioned soul mates.

...soul mates were real?

Someone had studied it and put it in a science textbook?

He read to the end of the two paragraphs. It blabbed on about soul mates being rare and special snowflakes. Then Dean's blood ran cold. He stared down at last word on the page, "Permanent?"
Worlding Notes! So, conjugium glandis (literally marriage gland) is my made up science reason for why A/B/O fics have this mating bite connection. Essentially my reasoning is that there's an enzyme in saliva that this gland reacts to that creates a mating bond. The person who was bitten is the one who gets all the "benefits" of the bond. Thus, Dean is able to track down Castiel even though he was horrifically sick and was drawn to his scent while Castiel couldn't find Dean. And since A/B/O fics always seem to have this need to relate it back to sex let's just say that this magical enzyme in saliva is only present during/right after an orgasm. ...which actually leaves the door open for some rather nasty criminal acts in my world now that I think about it.
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

"Would you please stop trying to hit me for ten minutes!?"

Chapter Notes

Short and sweet.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel squinted against the sudden light when his bedside lamp flicked on. A moment later he lurched out of bed when something slapped hard across his face. His wings shot up trying to make him look intimidating to whatever threat was in the room with him. He looked across the bed surprised. "Dean?"

"Permanent." Dean growled at him.

Castiel stared and tried to make sense of what Dean was doing now. He could appreciate the depth of Dean's confusion earlier but why did they have to keep hitting him? They were an omega. He touched at the sting on his face. "Pardon?"

Dean strode around the bed with a book in one hand and a second book held in the crook of their arm. Dean looked like they might be contemplating taking a page from Anna's book and smashing him over the head with it. Castiel hesitated for a second before he scrambled over the bed and away from Dean. He backed up towards the door keeping an eye on Dean.

"Where do you think you're going?" Dean asked sounding inclined towards violence again. Dean shook the book at him. "I want some damn answers about this!"

Castiel stopped when he recognized the books. Dean had read the books he had given them...and now Dean was even more angry? He leaned forward cautiously. "Answers about what exactly?"

Dean marched towards him. Castiel backed up. Dean wrinkled their nose in annoyance. "What's your damn problem?"

"My problem?" Castiel asked in disbelief. "You snuck into my room in the middle of the night and slapped me across the face while I was sleeping."

Dean huffed out an exasperated noise and started moving forward again.

Castiel backed up until he hit the door. Dean stalked up to him until they were a foot apart and shoved the biology textbook in his face. They jabbed their finger at a paragraph at the bottom of the page. Their wings twitched and jerked as they puffed up in anger. Castiel pressed himself against the door and squeezed his eyes shut while he waited for the next blow to come. It didn't. He opened one eye at a time. Dean was glaring at him still. He looked down at the textbook to see
what Dean was pointing at. He read the passage over. "Oh."

"Oh?" Dean snarled back. Dean took a swing at him. Castiel ducked under it and edged away. Dean turned to glower at him. "Oh. That's it? Oh. That's all you have to say about that? Not, sorry I rammed my head into yours? Not, sorry for not mentioning it sooner? Not, sorry I'm a goddamned coward and shoved a book at you so you could find out on your own? Not, sorry for fucking ruining your life?"

"Sorry!" Castiel yelped when Dean flung the book at his chest. He darted away and put the bed between himself and Dean. Dean looked like they might do more than try to punch him. "Would you please stop trying to hit me for ten minutes!?"

Dean made a noise of contempt. Their wings twitched with agitation but they stayed where they were and didn't try to come after him again.

Castiel watched them for a moment before carefully going back to the book. He bent down to scoop up the book grumbling to himself. "...the chances..." He shook his head. "...you shouldn't even be my soul mate..." He smoothed out a few pages that had been crumpled when it landed. "...that damned rabbit's foot..."

Dean's eyes narrowed. They huffed out an angry breath. "So what? Woulda been better that I didn't pick it up and just died or something?"

"I didn't say that." Castiel said. He had been trying to help Dean since they met and all he had gotten out of it was a mate that kept trying to punch him in the nose. "But you can't honestly think I wanted all this to happen."

Dean hmpfed and glowered at him. "You made me do it. I read that part in the book about biting people. You made me bite you. This is your fault."

Castiel dropped the book to the bed and glared over at Dean; the constant accusations finally getting to him. "I told you! You would have died if we didn't finish it! We both would have. So yes, I did everything I could to get you to complete the bond because I didn't think you'd rather be dead than be my soul mate."

"There is not a damn thing in there about dying from it. You just wanted to sink your teeth in and screw with my head for fun." Dean snapped. They chucked the second textbook at Castiel.

Castiel batted the book away before it hit him. It landed on the bed. He glared over at Dean. "I would never force a claim on an omega - on anyone - for fun."

Dean glowered at him. The two of them stood there planted to their respective spots scowling at each other.

This was ridiculous. Dean knew he wasn't lying. Dean's half of the connection was working. Dean had to know he wasn't lying. Castiel grabbed the mating book off the bed and flipped to the English chapters towards the end. He had read up on soul mates since he had suddenly found himself with one; holding onto the slim hope that it wasn't lethal to not finish the bond until he had read it. He found the right chapter and stalked around the bed. He shoved the book in Dean's face. "There. Read that. I'm not lying."

Dean narrowed their eyes at him but took the book. Castiel watched Dean's eyes flick back and forth over the page. ...Dean had green eyes, just like the colour of his soul mate mark. He hadn't really noticed before.
Dean finished reading the page - there wasn't much about soul mate since it was so rare - and looked slowly up at Castiel with a deep seated suspicion in their eyes. "...that still sounds like bullshit."

Castiel let out an exasperated groan. He rolled his eyes. "Yes, of course, I wrote up a textbook and had hundreds of copies professionally printed and given out at schools all so I could lie to a complete stranger on the off chance I ever ran into them at a party they shouldn't have even been at."

Dean blinked in surprise at his scathingly dry tone. They looked back down at the textbook. They looked back at him then to the textbook again. They shifted from one foot to the other. Their wings pressed closer to them, moving forward as if Dean was trying to block the room from view and hide from him. Dean tucked the book under their arm and grabbed a handful of feathers on either wing and tugged them out of the way to study Castiel. They were quite for a long time before finally asking, "So now what?"

Castiel barked out a surprised laugh. He stopped himself before he upset Dean. "I don't know."

Dean seemed to deflate and sink into their wings. Castiel supposed Dean didn't have a clue about what to do next either.

Castiel sat down on his bed, shifting his wings to sit comfortably. He let out a long breath. His body was exhausted from the past few days and he wanted nothing more than to roll into bed and go back to sleep but Dean was standing there smelling like worried mate. He wasn't going to get back to sleep anytime soon.

"Your mother seemed nice." Castiel said for lack of anything better to say.

"Yeah...Mom's...she's great." Dean said, distracted as they shifted on their feet. They sniffed at the air and cast a few longing glances towards the bed. "...you think Lucifer is really gonna help her?"

"Yes." Castiel nodded. "I asked about it after you went upstairs. I thought since you..." Castiel searched for the right words. He didn't want to say because you didn't bother to ask about it because Dean wouldn't have known to ask. He had to keep reminding himself that Dean wasn't a sheltered omega, that Dean was new to being an angel. "...wouldn't know about a lot of things, that I could help."

Dean gave him a look as if they weren't quite sure they believed him but let out a huff of defeat when they seemed to accept it. The worried and upset scents that Dean was giving off were driving the alpha in Castiel mad with the urge to do something. It must have leaked through the bond because Dean rolled their eyes and let out a long annoyed breath. "Dude, you gotta quit doing that."

"I told you before, I can't just stop it." Castiel said. They lapsed into silence. What did he do now? The two of them had come to this strange moment that was part stand off and part truce. Dean worked out what to do next before he did.

"What's an omega?" Dean asked suddenly. "You called me that before. Is that just...I dunno some kind of....you thing. Angel or whatever?"

Castiel's eyebrows went up in surprise. Dean had read about mating but hadn't read about alphas, betas, or omegas? His eyes went wider when he realized that Dean wanted him to explain what an omega was. The only thing that he could think of that was more embarrassingly awkward than explaining what an omega was to his bonded omega mate was describing that to his mother...or possibly Anna's girlfriend.
"You've been doing that all day." Dean murmured under their breath. Their face was taking on a similar pink hue of Castiel's face. "So, it's not a good thing? An omega? Dude, have I been walking around with the angel version of my dick hanging out all day?"

"Uh, no it's...it's...being an omega is fine." Castiel said. His face heated up a bit more watching Dean rub their hand over one of the two the mating bites he had left behind. The alpha in him thought that was definitely something Dean could do more of, the rest of him thought this wasn't the time to be aroused. "People...they...usually cover up mating bites and...I guess soul mate marks too. It's, uh, rather private but not...it's not like...well, you don't have to but most people do."

"Huh?" Dean looked at their hand that they had been rubbing against their neck. They looked back up at Castiel and scented the air. "I meant the wings— my wings."

"Oh!" Castiel said, trying to ignore the way Dean was scenting him. It was yet another reminder that Dean didn't know anything about being an angel. All those times today that Dean had shown off their mating bite or the soul mate mark or insisted that he let their mother see his Dean hadn't been doing that on purpose. Dean hadn't known. "No. Wings are fine. Everyone has them."

"Well I didn't until this morning." Dean scoffed. They tugged at their feathers. "And why did I get stuck with these dumb ones full of fluff anyway?"

Castiel looked Dean's wings over. If the downy feathers weren't interspersed throughout Dean would actually have rather attractive wings, striped feathers were unusual. "I don't know. Maybe because you're a new angel?"

Dean snorted at the answer then glanced over to Castiel's desk. Dean grabbed the chair from the desk and dragged it over to the bed. They flipped it around and straddled the chair, tilting their head up to scent the air again. Castiel stared, his mouth falling open slightly. This was the beginning of a bad porn movie. An omega scenting after a half naked alpha, straddling a piece of furniture, their hair short and showing off mating bites, the back of their neck exposed, and their wings fluttering invitingly.

"Dude, quit it. You're so damned embarrassed it's rubbing off on me." Dean said. They rubbed at the back of their neck which just made the porn analogy all the much more worse. "So what's an omega?"

Castiel settled back on the bed. He took a deep breath. "An omega is..."

Crap. What was an omega? How did he explain that? How did he explain anything about being a certain gender? How would he even explain being an alpha to someone? Castiel tried again. "An omega, uh, well, I'm an alpha and you're an omega and...there are betas too. Anna's a beta...but omegas...they're...you're..."

Dean offered him the textbook they were still holding onto. Castiel took it and looked it over. He skimmed over a few pages in Enochian about omegas and decided that wouldn't make sense to Dean even if he translated it. He grabbed the other textbook still on his bed. He opened it up to the table of contents, found the relevant chapter, and flipped to the part about the anatomy of a male
omega. He passed the book back to Dean.

"Obviously there's more to being an omega than that but..." Castiel shrugged. How was it this impossible to explain something that was all around him? Omegas were just...they just were. "Ruby's an omega too." Castiel offered.

Castiel guessed from Dean's expression that knowing Ruby was an omega too didn't help them understand.

Dean frowned down at the book and started to read. Castiel watched as their eyes went wider and wider then suddenly their lips pulled into a tight line and Dean was glaring at him again.

"I do not have a vagina in my butt." Dean said in a voice that was equal parts agitation and disbelief. Castiel leaned back and got ready to catch the book in case Dean threw it at him again. Dean wrinkled their nose at the book. "I'm a guy, if you hadn't noticed. Boys don't-" Dean jabbed a finger at the diagram in the biology book. "-have that in their butts."

Castiel shifted uncomfortably. "Uh...some boys do...?"

"No. They don't." Dean said and snapped the book shut. They dropped it on the floor. "Butt vaginas—" Dean stopped abruptly as if some one had slapped them in the face. Dean shook their head. "...No."

Castiel was at a loss. They had, had sex. Twice. If that wasn't proof enough of Dean's omega anatomy he wasn't sure what was. "Maybe...maybe we should see if the health teacher from school will, uh, come and explain things better than I can."

Dean snorted. "Yeah. Won't be hard."

Castiel sat and stared back at Dean. He wasn't sure what to do now. His failure of an explanation hadn't helped and Dean didn't sound like they would believe him even if he insisted that the textbook was right. He was about to open his mouth and try anyway when Dean suddenly stood up. They sniffed at the air then reached over and grabbed a pillow off his bed. They started towards the door.

Dean paused half way there, the pillow clutched to their chest and their chin tucked in breathing in what had to be Castiel's scent. Dean fixed two suspicious eyes on him. "Don't think I like you or something now. We're still not friends."

He watched Dean scent his pillow again before stalking out of his bedroom - muttering about 'butt vaginas' under their breath - and yanking the door closed behind them. Dean's actions and words were at such odds with each other that all Castiel could do was take in a deep breath and let it out long and slow. He didn't bother to even begin to try and understand what had just happened.

He shucked his shirt and let out his wings. He stretched them out then flopped down to the bed. He massaged his temples. He had never really imagined what it would be like to have a mate. His most pressing concern up until last weekend was what he was going to do after high school. Before this week he had had a vague assumption that one day he'd have a long term mate but he hadn't really thought about it because that was supposed to be years from now.

If he had thought about it he was sure he'd never have imagined having a mate to be this difficult.

Chapter End Notes
Striped feathers in the bird world are not unusual in any way, shape, or form but angels are not birds.

I'm slowly posting various Worlding notes over on tumblr (tag for this fic is: fic of all tropes). Brains for baby jesus. Won't you buy my brains?
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Ephrath turned the book around. She read the page and looked over the diagram. She looked back up at Dean. "What didn't you understand about it?"

"Uh? All of it? Because it's ridiculous." Dean said. So the health teacher was a part of the weird fringe cult. That was just great.

Chapter Notes

I have a truly terrible announcement. This fic is going on a brief hiatus until the 28th because I am going to be travelling all over the place for the next two weeks as I try to get to six birthdays and three separate Christmas celebrations and I can not reasonably guarantee access to a computer at any point in the coming two weeks.

For updates about whether or not I'll make a miraculous christmas update you can stalk me a bit over at Brains for baby jesus.

Dean woke up with his face smashed into a pillow. A weird feeling made him look over his shoulder. Fuck. He still had wings. It hadn't been some really screwed up dream after all. He mashed his face back into the pillow. Fuck.

Dean laid there for awhile contemplating having wings indefinitely. Lucifer had made it sound like he wouldn't be getting rid of them any time soon. He breathed deep - pretending the pillow didn't smell amazing and like Castiel - and sat up. He scratched at his stomach with his left hand. The left wing twitched but that was it. He was getting better at not looking like a drunk pigeon flailing around every time he moved his arms.

He looked around the room he was in wondering what he should do. Should he stay where he was until someone came and got him? Or should he just head downstairs on his own? Waking up first at a friend's house was awkward, what were you supposed to do when you woke up first in a stranger's house?

His stomach grumbled. That was a good enough reason to creep down the stairs. He stopped by the door when he remembered his bag. He grabbed it and opened it up. Mom had packed him a bunch of clothes. He looked down at the jeans he was wearing then at his bag. It occurred to him he was probably wearing Castiel's stuff. He wrinkled his nose. He pulled out a pair of his own jeans from his backpack along with socks and underwear.

...what the hell had happened to his shoes yesterday?

He kicked off Castiel's jeans and put on his own clothes. The only thing he kept was the shirt because it was obvious he wasn't putting one of his own on without cutting it up.
The stairs weren't so bad this morning. His wings only tripped him up once. Shit, was he really thinking of them as his wings now? He shook his head irritated with himself for getting used to the idea after a day and continued down the stairs.

That Castiel beacon his head picked up on now was telling him that he'd probably find Castiel in the kitchen which was annoying because that was where he had wanted to go. He bit his lip and went anyway. He wasn't going to let Castiel ruin breakfast too.

"Good morning, Dean." Naomi said when he peaked his head around the corner and into the kitchen. "What would you like for breakfast?"

Dean surveyed the kitchen quickly. Castiel had a box of cereal out on the table beside him. He didn't really want...these...angels...or whatever they were cooking for him. What if they cooked up something weird? Like, frog eggs? Or lost children?

"Cereal's fine." Dean said. It came out of a box. It probably wasn't something weird.

Naomi handed him a bowl and a spoon. Dean went over to the table and grabbed the cereal. He sat down as far from Castiel as possible. While he had decided last night that Castiel probably hadn't kidnapped him he had concluded that Castiel probably was crazy because butt vaginas were not real.

"Castiel tells me you'd like the health teacher from school to come by." Naomi said. She placed the milk down beside Dean and sat down at the head of the table.

"Uh,yeah...?" Dean was pretty sure he hadn't actually said that. That Castiel had suggested it but it probably would be a good idea to talk to some one who wasn't crazy and get this whole omega-vagina-in-butt thing sorted out. A health teacher wouldn't tell him something like that. Castiel was probably just being an asshole about it—a butt vagina asshole about it.

...but that didn't explain the textbook.

Okay, it had to be some weird fringe cult thing or something like that.

Naomi nodded. "Good. I phoned her this morning. She said she was available to come around nine."

"Great?" Dean grabbed the cereal and poured himself a bowl. He glanced up at the clock in the kitchen. It was a little after eight. He grimaced. Where the hell was Mom? She had said she'd be back first thing in the morning. Dean tried to put it out of his head but all he could think of was that something had happened before Lucifer got a chance to heal her.

At ten to nine there was a knock on the door. Dean's whole body stiffened. It had to be Mom. Naomi got up to answer the door. Dean followed after her. He poked his head out of the kitchen to look down the hall. It wasn't Mom.

"Ephrath." Naomi said, stepping aside to let a short brunette carrying a bulging red canvas bag in the door. "I'm glad you chose to come considering the circumstances. I trust you'll be discreet until things get settled down."

"You've helped me out of a tough spot before." The woman said, taking off her jacket. "This is hardly repaying the favour—" She froze with her jacket half off. "You did tell the council about them?"

"Immediately." Naomi said.
The woman relaxed and smiled.

Naomi offered to take the woman's red canvas bag. She motioned towards the kitchen. "They're in here."

Dean ducked back in the kitchen when they started down the hall. Castiel looked at him puzzled and leaned around to get a view of the doorway. The woman walked in. Dean got a ping of recognition off Castiel.

"Good morning, Castiel." The woman said pleasantly.

"Good morning. Ephrath." Castiel responded politely.

The woman turned to look at Dean. One eyebrow shot up. She glanced at Naomi then turned back to look at him. She sniffed at him. Then the other eyebrow shot up. "You must be Castiel's omega."

"Dean." Castiel interjected.

Dean glowered at the two of them. He could introduce himself and he wasn't Castiel's omega. "I'm not Castiel's anything."

Ephrath's eyes flicked over him, lingering on his neck. A faintly amused smile flicked crossed her face for a moment before she sat down at the table adjacent to Dean. "Well anyway, good morning, Dean. I'm Ephrath. I'm the health teacher at Saint Charles Private School."

Dean's brain immediately followed that up with 'for gifted youngsters' while he was trying to form an opinion on Ephrath. He was starting to appreciate the irony of the name for the school where all the winged weirdoes went.

She looked him over again. "Naomi tells me you have some questions."

Dean narrowed his eyes at her. He glanced over at Castiel then back to Ephrath. "Not really. I just want someone to start talking sense."

"Dean had some questions about what an omega is and omega anatomy." Castiel said before making a quick exit like a thief in the night. Dean could practically taste the embarrassment poking at his brain. Coward.

Ephrath nodded. Naomi offered her the red canvas bag. She started taking out printouts, glossy pamphlets, and textbooks. He recognized the two textbooks from last night. She spread out the printouts and slid a stapled package towards him. "Let's start at the beginning and work our way over to the anatomy questions."

Dean read over the title page: The Key to Omega Health: Healthy Habits and Cheerfulness. That sounded...what the hell was that? He glanced up at the 'health teacher' if that was what she really was.

"The title is a little funny when translated into English." Ephrath admitted seeing Dean's look. "But I assure you the information is relevant and modern."

He flicked through the stapled together pages and read a line. Each omega has it entirely in their hands to cultivate a bright and cheerful disposition that will make the world a pleasanter place both for themself and others. Dean flipped the pages back and pushed the book across the table to Ephrath. "I think I'm already cheerful enough."
Ephrath narrowed her eyes at Dean.

"Look, I don't really care about this omega stuff. Castiel there-" Dean jerked his thumb over his shoulder towards the Castiel feeling in his head. "-just said some weird stuff last night and those textbooks..." Dean still didn't know what to make of the textbooks.

Ephrath looked surprised. She glanced towards the hallway where Castiel had disappeared to then looked back to Dean. "Castiel is a rather bright student. What did he say?"

Dean curled his toes up in mild embarrassment. It was one thing to talk about sex stuff - even fake sex stuff - to another teenager but Ephrath was like Mom's age. He grabbed the textbook he recognized from last night and flicked it open to the page Castiel had made him read. He tapped his finger on the page. "I mean, come on, that's a joke, right?"

Ephrath turned the book around. She read the page and looked over the diagram. She looked back up at Dean. "What didn't you understand about it?"

"Uh? All of it? Because it's ridiculous." Dean said. So the health teacher was a part of the weird fringe cult. That was just great.

"It's not ridiculous. Male omegas have a fascinating biology." Ephrath said. She turned the book around so Dean could see the diagram and started pointing out things. She pointed to a funny little flappy bit in the diagram. "The epivagina is actually somewhat similar in concept as a reverse epiglottis, we'll say." Ephrath stroked her finger over it a few times. "When stimulated it relaxes and expands effectively closing off the rectum and opening the—"

"Okay! Whoa!" Dean put his hands up as if he could ward off whatever brand of crazy Ephrath had going on. "Look, I did not magically grow a vagina in my butt."

"Pardon?" Ephrath looked at him confused.

"I do not have a vagina in my butt." Dean repeated slower. What the hell were wrong with these people?

Ephrath looked at him strangely. "Of course not. You wouldn't say your lungs are in your stomach because you convey food and air through the same passageway."

Dean shook his head. Was he really arguing with a grown woman about buttginas? "No. I mean, I'm a dude."

"...well, yes." Ephrath said as if he was the one that had completely lost it. "We'll cover secondary gender aspects and anatomy as well."

"No. Look. I don't care about all this. I don't want to know about-" He pointed at the diagram. "-because there are no butt vaginas here." Dean pointed to himself. "No mangina- bagina- whatever it is. Just no."

Ephrath looked at him as if he was the slowest kid in class. "We should really start at the beginning."

Dean didn't think that would help because obviously everyone here was crazy.

She passed over a few printer paper pamphlets that had obviously been hurriedly folded up pretty recently. There were smiling teens on the front covers. "Read those then we'll tackle some bigger questions."
Dean narrowed his eyes at her but opened up the first pamphlet. He started to read. He was into the second pamphlet when he noticed something about how it was written. Every time the pamphlets talked about alphas or betas - whatever those were - it would always be he or she interchangeably but the moment omegas were mentioned it was suddenly they and them.

He glanced up at Ephrath to ask why but he wasn't too sure he'd actually believe anything she said. He looked back down at the pamphlet and frowned. Something about it bugged him. He looked up at Ephrath. "Why aren't omegas called girls or guys?"

"Excuse me?" Ephrath said.

"It's always them." Dean said, holding up the pamphlets. He thought back to yesterday and the way everyone had talked about him as if he weren't in the room. How everyone had always said they this or them that, as if he hadn't been sitting right there. "And yesterday, everyone talked about me like I wasn't there. Everyone kept saying they and them when they talked about me."

Ephrath smiled knowingly. "They and them are the standard English pronouns for omegas."

"...that's...dumb." Dean said, looking at the pamphlets. He didn't like that. He was a guy. He was a he. "I mean, come on, it's pretty obvious I'm a dude."

"Yes and an omega, a different gender, how else would you express that?" Ephrath asked as if the answer was obvious.

Dean wrinkled his nose. Something about that explanation didn't sit well with him either. "...but it's okay to use he or she for alphas and betas. They're different...whatever they are." He shrugged. "I don't get it. Why don't people just use he and she for omegas too?"

"How else would you know if someone is an omega?" Ephrath said.

"Uh...just ask?" Dean said. He didn't really know what an omega was - he definitely wasn't one - but he figured that if someone was one they'd probably know it. The pamphlets made it sound like a pretty big deal to know what omegas and alphas and betas were. "What's so freakin' weird about using he and she for omegas anyway? I mean you told me you think it's normal for guys to have vaginas in their butts. How much weirder is calling a guy he?"

Ephrath's face pulled into an offended look but before she could answer there was amused laughter from the doorway. Dean craned his head over his shoulder to look. It was the dude with the trick fire, Azazel. When had he come in? Dean hadn't heard the door open.

Azazel smiled at him. "Eloquently put Dean."

"Thanks?" Dean shrugged.

"There's no good reason for it." Azazel said, looking at Ephrath. "In English or Enochian."

Ephrath made a huffy noise. "Don't drag a child into your political nonsense."

"It's not nonsense." Azazel retorted.

"I'm not a child." Dean added. He was five months away from being eighteen. He definitely wasn't a child anymore.

Azazel stepped into the kitchen and looked over the books and printouts on the table. His lip twitched up in disgust.
Ephrath made a face that looked like she thought Azazel was a particularly nasty bug.

Azazel scowled at Ephrath then turned to Dean. "You pick out what you want to be called and don't let anyone tell you otherwise."

Ephrath made a noise in her throat. Dean was pretty sure it meant *fuck off*, but, you know, *politely*.

Azazel gave her a snarky sarcastic grin in response. "As much as I enjoy your particular brand of historical humour I think we're going to have to call it a day. Lucifer is bringing a couple of humans over and one of them is an angry hunter."

Ephrath's eyes went wide. She collected up her textbooks and shoved them into the red canvas bag. She motioned towards the stapled together printed booklets and the pamphlets. "I'll just leave these with you. Hopefully they'll clear up the confusion you seem to be experiencing."

Azazel watched Ephrath scurry out of the kitchen with a sly smile on his face.

Dean's face pulled into a look of confusion. He stared at the hallway until he heard the front door slam closed. What the hell was *that* about? He glanced at Azazel. "Is Lucifer bringing my Mom here?"

"Yes, and your employer too." Azazel said. He glanced at the clock on the wall. "They should be here any minute now."

"Bobby?" Dean asked, surprised. Why would Bobby be coming here? Everyone had seemed like they wanted to keep this whole whackadoo angels and demons thing to themselves. Why would Lucifer be bringing Bobby? Was Bobby one of them? No, Azazel had said two *humans*. "It seemed *prudent* to involve him." Azazel said carefully. "Don't want any misunderstandings with the hunter community."


"Not that kind of hunter." Azazel said. He looked Dean over as if he was contemplating if he could handle bad news. He tapped his fingers against his leg. "A hunter of the supernatural."

"Huh?" Dean said because that made about as much sense as Ephrath's goofy biology lesson.

There was a bang in the hallway as the door smashed open. It rattled the clock on the wall in the kitchen. The wings that had been behaving themselves for the most part this morning shot up in surprise making Dean jump and startle. A second later Dean heard the gruff demanding voice of Bobby complaining about being out of bed too early for this.

"Ah. They're here." Azazel commented.

Dean shoved away from the table and bolted out of the chair forgetting about his wings. He nearly toppled over backwards before he managed to fling himself forward and catch the door frame. He shoved his head into the hallway and was greeted with Mom's *I just wanted to know if you were okay* smile. He did his best to march down the hallway. The wings might not be flailing all over the place but they were big and the hallway was narrow and full of people. He didn't have to argue himself into giving Mom a hug in front of everyone because she pulled him into one. Which was kind of embarrassing. Even if he really wanted that hug.

"I know I said I'd be here sooner but-" Mom said as she squeezed him in a tight hug. "-I couldn't
remember how to get here. It was the strangest thing. Naomi sent Lucifer to pick me up."

Bobby made a gruff noise and shot a scowl at Lucifer who was lingering in the doorway.

"It's just a minor protection spell on the house." Lucifer said defensively.

"Better be." Bobby growled.

"Bobby?" Dean stared at Bobby. It was weird seeing him outside of the bookstore.

"I don't know how you managed this boy but half of me isn't even surprised." Bobby said, looking beyond Dean to the wings. He shook his head. "I know you like sticking your nose into trouble but this?"

"Hey, I didn't stick my nose in this on purpose." Dean said. He did his best to make his wings shove aside so Mom could get through the hallway. Naomi was trying to usher everyone into the living room.

Bobby gave Naomi a scowl too then turned back to Dean. "You alright? Other then the fancy new flappers?"

"...yeah? I guess? I mean, I dunno." Dean shrugged. He had wings and a bunch of people kept telling him he had girl parts— *which he definitely didn't have.* "How good is growing wings over night?"

Bobby looked him over and hmpfed in agreement. He limped down the hallway along with Dean.

"You don't seem too shocked by the wings." Dean observed as they came into the living room. He glanced over at the couch. Mom had sat down on the couch with Castiel leaving a space between them for him to sit. Great. He'd have to keep up the friend act.

"Seen weirder things than a snot nosed brat with wings." Bobby said roughly.

Dean shook his head at the snot nosed brat comment. Normally it annoyed him but today it made him feel just that much more at ease to have Bobby tease him like— Wait! Bobby had seen stranger things than kids with wings? "You know about all this?"

"Used to be a hunter." Bobby said, nodding sharply. "Of the supernatural, before you ask. There's nastier things out there than them." Bobby jerked a thumb at Lucifer and Naomi. "Though not by much. Your mom got the Spark Notes version in the car. I'll fill you in later."

Dean was about to ask what the hell was Bobby talking about when a bone chilling fear that wasn't his swept through him. Even though he knew he was safe in the house it was hard to ignore it. He shot a look at Castiel. He'd gone pale and looked like he was ready to bolt. Dean scrunched up his nose as a panicky smell filled it, for once it wasn't coming from him.

Naomi drifted closer to Castiel. Dean snorted as something new filled up the air. It was almost like that smell that went with the protective feeling from Castiel but it was different...it...didn't smell like...whatever, it was different and kind of annoying and bitter. He didn't like it at all.

Lucifer glanced over at Naomi and Castiel and moved a bit closer to them. The smell got stronger but it was even worse when Azazel stepped into the room. Dean didn't like that either. It all seemed to be in response to Castiel being afraid. Something about that got Dean's hackles up. He didn't want everyone to smell like that around Cas. *He* totally could but everyone else could screw off.
"Everything okay?" Azazel asked, giving Bobby the hairy eyeball.

Dean looked over at Bobby - that fear was still trying to claw into him - and realized that Bobby was covering his nose. He glanced at Mom. She had her lips pressed together tightly looking like she wanted to do the same thing but thought it was rude.

"We're fine." Bobby said. He motioned towards Naomi then Azazel. "Let me guess mom and dad?"

Dean couldn't help the abrupt laugh that burst out of him at the look on Naomi's face. As annoyed as he was about everyone stinking up the room around Castiel that look was priceless.

"Half right." Azazel said. "I'm just a friend of the family."

From the look on Naomi's face Dean was gonna guess that family friend was stretching it.

Bobby didn't look impressed by the information. "Right, well, you all mind knocking it off? I didn't come armed."

At the word armed Dean got another burst of fear from Castiel. Naomi stared holes through Bobby, Azazel and Lucifer looked between each other and didn't move, and that smell got worse. It was really starting to aggravate him.

Bobby watched the three of them and after a few seconds groaned. He fixed his best grumpy Bobby stare on Dean. "You managed to get yourself mixed up with a bunch of alphas on top of everything?" Bobby shook his head. "That's...that's..." He shook his head again. "Impressive."

Dean shrugged. He didn't know what the hell alphas were - except that Castiel said he was one - all he knew was that he really did not like the way everyone was standing near Cas stinking up the room. They didn't get to smell like that around Cas. Cas wasn't theirs. Cas was his. It didn't matter that he didn't like him and thought he could go stick a pine cone up his butt, Cas was his.

"Alright." Dean said sharply. He'd had enough of this. Everyone could knock it off just like Bobby said. He pointed at Lucifer. "You get Bobby up to speed." He marched across the room to Castiel. Naomi gave him a stern look. With a little effort he shoved a wing out between Naomi and Castiel and gave her her own stern look. "I'm going up stairs. You tell me when Bobby's caught up." He turned to Castiel and gave him a poke in the chest. "And you are coming with me." He shot a quick look over his shoulder at everyone else in the room just daring anyone to try and stop him.

That fear in Dean's head took a back seat to surprise. Dean motioned for Castiel to get up. "Come on, up."

Behind him Lucifer started talking to Naomi. "It's fine Naomi. Castiel will be fine with them."

Dean snapped his head around, "Him. I'm a guy."

That got a quiet approving chuckle from Azazel and a confused look from Mom.

Castiel got up from the couch. Dean stuck his wing out further and gently buffered Castiel with it, pushing him towards the hallway and the stairs. Dean didn't relax until he had pushed Castiel into the spare bedroom and shoved the door closed. He glared at the closed door. Why did everyone think they could smell like that around Cas?

At the thought of Cas he turned around. Castiel was sitting on the bed. Dean approved. The bed smelt like him and he'd rather have Cas smell like him instead of everyone downstairs. He looked
Castiel over. There was a part of him that really really wanted to just roll around on Castiel and rub his face against him all to get that god awful smell off him.

Castiel stared back at him and suddenly all that surprise and fear was embarrassment, guilt, and just a little bit of appreciation.

Dean rolled his eyes. It wasn't like he had done it for Castiel. It was just...Cas was his....and everyone down there should know better then to...

Dean jerked his head back in surprise. He looked around the room as if it would offer up an explanation for what had just happened. Why had he been so mad at everyone? And Castiel wasn't his. He didn't want anything to do with Castiel.

He backed up from Castiel and eyed him suspiciously. Had Castiel done that somehow? Made him all...weird about him? He thought over what had happened. It only made him mad thinking about it. Castiel had shoved a bunch of fear into his head and then everyone had started smelling...well, he hadn't liked how they smelt and...and...and Cas was his damn it! Dean's eyes went wide. Okay, that needed to stop.

"Thanks." Castiel said quietly.

Dean's eyes flicked up to Castiel confused. "For what?"

Check it out, I made cover art.

You’re Not The One I Was Looking For

Yes, I added in lens flare just for the trope.

Chapter End Notes

Brief retcon announcement for those who've been here for awhile: I swapped a throw
away line about Castiel's dad to his "beta mom" because I figured if we have omega guys with butt vaginas we are gonna have alpha gals with dicks because why the hell not?

First Worlding! note
So I made up another science/medical word. "Epivagina" which came about after some digging around and finding out that "epi" means on or to cover. Interestingly vagina means sheath, so quite literally it would mean "on the sheath" or "covering the sheath". Also, I totally mixed greek and latin there. Mwahaha! But yeah, in this world the "epivagina" is a muscle/flesh/whatever that separates the reproductive tract from the rectum in male omegas preventing all sorts of nasty infections that may have otherwise arisen from jamming a dick up through fecal matter and into the reproductive tract. I'm gonna say the two systems just share the same external orifice but otherwise are completely separate and that omega "slick" has some natural anti-bacterial properties. I did briefly consider male omegas having a cloaca but then I realized someone would have to explain to Dean what a cloaca was and I thought that might be too much for poor Dean to handle. So I made something up. ....it occurs to me that I have basically just set up male omegas to be wicked constipated while in heat. I may have thought way too much about this.

Second Worlding! note
I've decided that while alphas don't usually get all "alpha protective" of other people's children normally, they will when the threat is from an outside source. Instinct basically opted for an if/then condition of If there is a predator in the area then social hierarchy goes out the window. I think it makes sense for an a/b/o verse. Alphas always seem to be presented as rather mate/mating obsessed so the regular state of things with other alphas being the competition would keep them at odds with other alphas but if there was an outside threat threatening the potential mating pool it would be in their best interests to work together. Basically this was a part of my "I need society to function." that I mentioned back in the notes of chapter two. Also, yes, humans can smell extreme scents coming off angels/demons but it has to be intense. Kinda like, you'd know if a skunk was upset with you even if you couldn't normally smell the skunk.

References
I quoted “Ontario Public School Health Book” printed in 1925 with some obvious changes to make it relevant to this fic. It’s a bit of sneaky Canadiana. I really enjoy inserting Canada stuff into Supernatural fics. I get a twisted pleasure from it. Anyway the actual quote is "We have it entirely in our hands to cultivate a bright and cheerful disposition that will make the world a pleasanter place both for ourselves and others."

This same book has a chapter about Tuberculosis that’s called “Fresh Air and Sunshine.” They clearly took their own advice about maintaining a cheerful disposition. There's also a chapter just called “Cheerfulness”. It’s a whole chapter about why you should be cheerful and smile.
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

He clarified, "A hunter of the supernatural."

Dean rolled their eyes. "Why does everyone think that explains it?"

Chapter Notes

It's alive!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"For, uh, downstairs." Castiel said. He could feel the heat of embarrassment creeping up his neck. All day all he had wanted was some insight into Dean - okay, maybe he had wanted some assurances too that Dean wasn't a serial killer - and for a few brief seconds he had gotten it and this time he was sure it was Dean. The bond had flared up loud and bright in his head. It was startling. He knew his mom would protect him no matter what but to know and actually feel that coming from an almost complete stranger that was suddenly his soul mate...

It was overwhelming. He felt too young for this sort of thing.

Felt? He was only seventeen, he was too young for this sort of thing.

He clenched his hands into fists at his sides. His mother's advice about being a responsible alpha that took care of his mate slipped back into his thoughts. Complaining he was too young wasn't going to change anything. He had a mate now. A soul mate. Forever. And he had frozen in fear when he had realized there really was a murderer in the room. He should have been protecting Dean form the hunter. Dean probably didn't even realize what that human downstairs really was. Hunters lied even to other humans about what they did— hunters knew what they did was wrong.

And Dean was an omega, a tall scary omega that liked to hit things but still an omega. Gender equality was nice on paper but it didn't erase the fact that he was an alpha. He was stronger than Dean, he had a talent. Even if it was old fashioned he should have been the one to put himself between his mate and danger.

"Quit it." Dean grumbled. Their wings twitched with agitation. "I didn't want—"

The bond flashed into life for a few brief seconds than went silent again but those few brief seconds were filled up with the same stay away from my family or else feeling. Castiel tried to focus and make himself more susceptible to the bond though he wasn't sure how to do that exactly. He tried to mentally listen but the connection between them stayed silent.

Dean's eyes narrowed. "What're you doing?"

Castiel jumped as if he had been caught red handed. Could Dean feel him trying to coax the bond
to work both ways?

Before Castiel could explain what he was trying to do a noise from downstairs made Dean snap his head around to stare at the door. They snorted, annoyed. Dean smelt almost...jealous? Castiel furrowed his eyebrows. What did Dean have to be jealous about?

Dean turned back to Castiel and jabbed a thumb over their shoulder. "What had you all worked up down there anyway?"

"Your employer is a hunter." Castiel explained. He couldn't believe he had been working down the street from a hunter all this time. Dean stared at him. Castiel could tell Dean didn't understand what he meant. He clarified, "A hunter of the supernatural."

Dean rolled their eyes. "Why does everyone think that explains it?"

Castiel nodded to himself. He had been right to think Dean didn't understand anything about what that man in the living room did in his spare time. "Hunters kill people. People like us. They're vicious killers." Castiel realized that what he had said sounded rather overdramatic - though this was exactly the sort of situation that called for it - so he added, "But don't worry. Even a highly skilled hunter can't take on three adult alphas alone and unarmed."

Dean stared at him for a moment before blinking and looking away.

"We're safe— your mother too." Castiel said. He wasn't sure what the expression on Dean's face meant but he thought reassurance of their safety would probably be the best for both of them. And honestly, he should really listen to his own advice. As terrifying as it was to have a hunter in his living room he should have known that his mother wouldn't let anything happen.

Dean still had the strange expression on his face. Castiel leaned forward. "Dean?"

Dean didn't move.

"Dean?" Castiel said again. Had he scared his mate with talk of hunters? He sniffed at the air. Dean didn't smell afraid. He reached out cautiously to touch Dean's arm. "We'll be fine, I just over reacted before."

Dean startled when he touched their arm. They looked down to where Castiel's fingers had made contact. Castiel's eyes followed Dean's gaze. He yanked his hand away. He had put his hand over their soul mate mark. He flushed red again. He might as well have just grabbed their ass, it probably would have been less embarrassing.

Dean's eyebrows furrowed. They studied Castiel for a moment before scoffing. "Well, no shit you over reacted. It's not like anything would happen here."

Castiel's mind blanked out then started back up. Crap! Crap, he had forgotten all about that! No wonder Dean didn't smell afraid. They couldn't. Not here. Not unless Dean was actively forcing himself to be afraid.

"What?" Dean asked suspiciously. "What're you ticking away at now?"

"Uh..." Castiel shifted uncomfortably.

How did he tell his soul mate that he had let his mother use persuasion on them without their permission like they were a criminal? Absurdly pieces of his law and politics class came to him. Dean was his omega mate and it could easily be said they had been incapacitated at the time.
Castiel had been well within his rights to make that decision for Dean. He looked Dean over. He doubted Dean would agree with that bit of law.

"Well?" Dean demanded.

"...my mother used persuasion on you." Castiel said. He tried to feel less guilty about not telling Dean that he had let his mother do it. Things had gotten out of hand by that point. His mother probably would have done it anyway for Dean's own safety and the safety of everyone living in town. It really had been the only option at the time.

Dean shrugged at him as if he had spoken gibberish.

"Oh. Right." Castiel said. Dean wouldn't know what persuasion was because they had been human before. Castiel shook his head at that. It was still hard for him to believe it. Human? Dean had wings. He shoved his own issues aside.

"Persuasion is..." Castiel was going to say a talent but Dean wouldn't know anything about talents except what he'd shown him downstairs. "It's magic. It, uh..."

Dean let out a breathy laugh at his expense. "Dude, you suck at explaining things."

Castiel's brow furrowed with annoyance. He was usually good at explaining things. Dean just asked him questions that were hard to explain because the answer was just something everyone knew. It was like asking what did purple look like? He tried to form a better answer; something a human would understand.

"Persuasion is like..." Castiel knew there was a word for it. He squinted at the air in front of him until he had it. "Hypnosis— except it works."

"...hypnosis." Dean repeated as if they were debating on believing him.

"Yes." Castiel said. It was actually a rather good analogy when he thought about it. He didn't read or watch a lot of human entertainment but he had seen a few human tv shows that used it and it seemed like it was trying to achieve the same thing as persuasion.

"Hypnosis." Dean said and this time they sounded like they didn't believe it at all

"It's why you calmed down yesterday and why you feel safe here." Castiel explained.

Dean's eyes focused at some imaginary point between them. "...and got all itchy."

"Itchy?" Castiel asked, baffled. Persuasion didn't leave you itchy unless persuaded to do so. Maybe it did for people who had been human not long ago? What would persuasion feel like to a human?

Dean didn't explain. They stood statue still. The only movement was their eyes flicking back and forth. Was Dean taking this well because they were genuinely taking it well or was it because of his mother's persuasion? Castiel had expected more punching.

Dean's eyes snapped up to him. "Bullshit. That wouldn't happen h— holy fuck." Their eyes went wide. "That's it, isn't it? Your mom hypno'd me to think your house is some...Fortress of Solitude."

"What?" Castiel asked, confused.

Dean didn't answer again. They squeezed their eyes shut and took in a deep breath. They screwed up their face. Castiel watched not really sure what his soul mate was doing now. He was starting to
think Dean was strange even for a human.

A few moments later a long breath blasted out of Dean. Dean opened one eye then the other and looked around the room suspiciously. "...it's...it's not permanent like—" Dean gestured to their wings then pointed at his arm where the soul mate mark was. "I'm not stuck thinking..."

So it was the persuasion making them relaxed. It was probably for the better. Castiel had had enough bloody noses this week.

"I'll wear off eventually." Castiel said. He tried to make himself feel reassuring and confident for the bond. "The more you think about it the less it'll work."

Dean seemed to deflate at the news. They started moving closer to where Castiel sat. Castiel scrambled down the bed in case there was going to be more punching. Dean shot him an exasperated look but didn't say anything. They sat down and let out a long sigh. They put their head in their hands and sat quietly.

Castiel didn't dare move. What was Dean going to do? Yesterday Dean had been terrified and confused, last night they had been enraged and thrown books at him, and this morning they had acted like a mate.

Dean let out another sigh. They rubbed their hands over their face and looked up at the ceiling for a moment before flopping backwards onto the bed. They fidgeted around until their wings were straight out on either side of them. Castiel's heart jumped into his throat when Dean brushed the feathers of one wing against his lower back and just...just left it there. Just left Castiel sitting between long secondary feathers with downy coverts brushing against his back where his shirt had been pushed up by their wing's movement.

Dean shifted. Their feathers rubbed against his back. Castiel felt himself go warm all over for reasons other than embarrassment. Which was actually really embarrassing. Even if Dean didn't know anything about angels or demons Dean had to know that rubbing someone's lower back usually meant something. Even human's didn't just go around touching other humans there as far as he knew.

"Dude, could you cut it out for ten seconds?" Dean asked sounding thoroughly irritated. "I've got Castiel radio playing full blast in my head and it's starting to give me a headache like Bonham is trying to play his Moby Dick solo on my skull."


Dean gave him a puzzled look. Their eyes flicked to their wing. Dean looked at it confused but shrugged. A few seconds went by where Dean narrowed their eyes at the wing and then their wing moved up to lay straight above them and off the bed. It looked uncomfortable.

"Bobby wouldn't hurt anyone." Dean said abruptly.

Bobby? Castiel was about to ask what Dean meant but apparently they were getting better at understanding what came through the soul mate bond.

"My employer." Dean said in a bad imitation of what Castiel thought was probably supposed to be him. "Bobby gets upset about people swatting flies. I don't know what kind of crazy all you people are on but Bobby wouldn't hurt someone and he definitely wouldn't kill someone. So...I dunno. Chill out."
Castiel didn't believe that at all. Hunters were all murderers. Dean was just naive because they didn't know any better.

Dean made a throaty noise. "Don't believe me if you don't want to but I think what I'm saying is a hell of a lot less crazy than wings and butt vaginas and magic."

To Castiel's surprise that was followed by a laugh. Dean scrubbed their hands over their face "You know what? That's it. I give up for today. I don't care anymore. This sucks." Dean announced. "This sucks giant hairy sweaty balls. Today's quota for suckage has been filled."

Castiel wrinkled his nose at Dean's description.

Dean sat up. Their wings fluttered and readjusted behind them. Dean looked Castiel straight in the eye. "And you know what sucks the most? I'm pretty sure I believe you when you say you didn't even mean to do this."

"What?" Castiel was caught off guard by those green eyes staring into him.

Dean tapped the side of their head. "You're either embarrassed about everything." Dean shook their head and laughed under their breath. "Like, I don't even know how you would plan all this without having a panic attack and keeling over just thinking about all the pending embarrassment." Dean rubbed at their forehead and laughed sarcastically again. "Or you're a bit of an asshole."

Castiel scowled. As if Dean had been presenting a better first impression? He was about to tell Dean as much when Dean huffed out another laugh. "Yeah right." Dean smirked. "Definitely not an asshole."

"Stop guessing at what I'm going to say." Castiel said, annoyed. "And I wasn't going to say that anyway but I'm not."

Dean snorted.

Castiel narrowed his eyes at Dean. "I was going to say you haven't made the best first impression either. You showed up on my doorstep and attacked me and my sister."

Dean shrugged and flopped back down to the bed stretching their wings out to the sides. "What can I say? I'm a real winner." Dean shoved their arm up into the air and rolled their sleeve back to show Castiel's name in delicate blue Enochian. Dean looked it over. "Guess you're real glad you're stuck with me— permanently."

"Unfortunately." Castiel said dryly, thinking back to the other night when Dean had turned up on his porch looking ready for murder. He edged away from Dean's wing again as it brushed against him. The wing seemed to follow after him. He felt his face flush again.

"All the damn time." Dean commented.

Castiel glowered. "I wouldn't be so embarrassed all the time if you weren't always showing off your mating bite and or the soul mate mark."

"Dude, their just scars and some squiggles. I've got a lot of scars and if I got into a marker fight with Jo again I could have a bunch more squiggles." Dean said. They shook their head. Their wings twitched sending their feathers sliding across Castiel.
Castiel lurched off the bed when the feathers dragged across his back and caught up on his shirt. Dean had to be doing it on purpose. The scenting last night? Rubbing at their neck? And now touching him like that? What sort of game was Dean at playing? Was Dean just trying to provoke a response so they could try to punch him again? "Stop it."

"Stop what?" Dean propped themself up on their elbows.

Castiel's eyes travelled up the long line of Dean sprawled out on the bed with their wings pressed down, flat and submissive but still open and inviting. It didn't help at all. Castiel could feel that warm spike of arousal in his gut. He could smell it starting to seep off him. Dean tilted their head up and scented the air. Dean had to know what they were doing. Dean seemed to understand almost everything that came through the bond so he had to know what kind of reaction this was all getting.

Castiel shivered. "That."

"I'm not doing anything." Dean said, staring at him looking innocent and puzzled. It had to be an act.

"Yes, you are."

"No, I'm not."

Castiel narrowed his eyes at Dean. Dean who had barged into his room last night to throw books at him but had hauled him upstairs smelling like a protective mate, who punched him in the nose but kept rubbing his back with their wing.

"Whatever dude." Dean rolled their eyes and sank back down to the bed. "Let's just pile on another heap of crazy."

Castiel stood by the door and watched Dean warily. Maybe Dean wasn't doing it on purpose. But then why had they kept touching his lower back like that?

They came to a strange standoff. Dean sprawled out idly on the bed while Castiel hovered by the door trying to make sense of how he had gone from worried about a hunter in his living room to resolving to be a better alpha for Dean to eyeing his omega mate like they were up to something.

They both turned to stare at the door fifteen minutes later when his mother knocked softly and came in.

"Raphael is here." His mother said without any warning.

Castiel stared at a loss for words. The head of the local council had shown up at his house? That was nearly as bad as having a hunter in the living room. He shot a nervous look at Dean. Dean was watching him carefully, obviously aware of what he was feeling. Dean was nearly everything an omega mate shouldn't be. But they were still his soul mate and he was their alpha. He was supposed to take care of them.

Castiel looked back to his mother. "Is- nothing...everything's okay, right?"

"Everything is fine, Castiel." His mother said in that calm voice she used when everything wasn't fine. She shifted her gaze to Dean. "She'd like to speak to Dean privately."

Dean narrowed an eye at his mother suspiciously but slowly rose from the bed. They shot another look at Castiel. "Who's Raphael? Wait let me guess, she wears a red bandana."
His mother glanced at Castiel for an explanation. Castiel shrugged. Dean was strange. His mother looked back to his mate. "No. She's the head of the local council. It's her job to assess danger to the community."

Dean stilled at the explanation obviously concluding that they were the danger in question. "What's she want with me?"

"She just wants to see how you're adjusting." His mother said.

Dean didn't look like they believed that at all. Castiel didn't believe it either.

His mother motioned towards the hallway. "She's waiting for you downstairs."

Downstairs. Where everyone else was except for himself and his mother. Raphael didn't want to speak to Dean privately she wanted to speak to Dean without himself or his mother present. A shock of fear went through Castiel. Did the council think he had forced a claim on Dean? Oh god, what if Dean started talking like they had last night? No one would believe that he - an alpha in rut - had unintentionally bitten an omega in heat. What would the council do to him? He was almost legally an adult. Would they punish him as an adult for forcing a claim on an omega?

Dean peered at the door then slowly turned to look at him. They studied him carefully before giving a little shrug and heading for the door. "Okay."

Castiel waited until he was sure Dean was downstairs. He couldn't stop Dean from feeling how he felt through the bond but that didn't mean he wanted them to see him lose it again.

A brief tremor went through him. His mother pulled him into a hug and made shushing noises.

"I'm terrible at being a mate and an alpha." Castiel whimpered.

His mother assured him that he wasn't, that he just needed time to learn, and that no one was perfect at being a mate or an alpha.

When he had calmed down his mother started to explain what had happened after he had left the living room. Lucifer had just started explaining what he thought must have happened to Dean when Raphael had shown up and demanded a detailed recounting of what had gone on the last week and was rather mad by the end of it.

"Is she here because I..." Castiel turned red. Maybe Dean was right, maybe he was embarrassed about nearly everything. It was just hard to blurt out claimed a mate without their consent even if it had been out of his control at that point. He hadn't really had much time to think about the implications of that night, staying alive had taken precedent. He found a point on the floor to stare at. "What happened...I wouldn't have done it if I had been me."

"I know." His mother said softly and thankfully let the subject drop because Castiel was sure that was about as much as he could talk about it right now. His mother silently studied him for a moment before motioning for him to sit down on the bed. She sat down beside him and put on her understanding alpha mom face. "She came primarily because this situation is unprecedented, not specifically to see about how you and Dean became mated."

"You said she was angry." Castiel said. As far as he knew Raphael didn't get angry about threats to the community, she got rid of them. The only thing he could think of that would make her angry was what he had done. Even if Lucifer had said he was under the effects of a spell.

"Ah. Yes. She is. But not what's happened between you and Dean." His mother said. "That has
more to do with Lucifer striking a deal to help a human indefinitely.”

Castiel twitched. "She's not going to tell him not to is she? I told Dean not to worry about it."

As far as he knew there weren't anyway laws that said angels or demons couldn't help humans it was just custom that they didn't very often. Angels and demons were often in hiding among humans and the few humans that did know about them tended to be hunters and who would help a hunter? But from the little he had seen of her Mary Winchester seemed like a person deserving of help. And she was Dean's mother. Like Lucifer had said, an angel's family deserved help.

"No. He's spoken about it in front of witnesses. It's too late for her to stop him." His mother said.

Castiel relaxed. He wasn't being accused of forcing a claim on an omega and Dean's mother would get help. The fact that his soul mate didn't particularly like him was far less distressing than either of— "Why is there a hunter downstairs?"

His mother let out a quiet breathy laugh at the sudden change in topic then her face turned serious. "Dean works for the man. Lucifer knows him. He says he's reasonable for a hunter. Lucifer thought it might afford Dean some protection."

"From hunters?" Castiel asked. That seemed outlandish. The best protection from hunters was being very far away from them and if that failed blending in with humans as best as you could. It was what always kept them safe. It was why they all had to be careful to never show their wings in public or get caught using their talent in an obvious way. A hunter could see and then they'd all be in danger.

"From angels and demons that might not view Dean as harmless." His mother said in a quiet sad voice. She had an expression on her face that Castiel hadn't seen before but that voice, he recognized that. That was the tone of voice that she used when talking about his beta mom.

Castiel started to ask what she meant but his mother began talking about ways they could teach Dean to control and hide his wings. It didn't surprise him. His mother rarely let the conversation lead to his beta mom. He let the question go and instead told his mother that Dean was actually getting better at controlling their wings.

Chapter End Notes

So Castiel has mostly fessed up to the persuasion but I figure that's rather in character because Castiel tends to be a shady little secret keeper when he wants to be.

Worlding Note! Verbal agreements in front of witnesses are binding. Because I said so.
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Dean sat in the living room alone for a few moments picking at the fluffy feathers on his wings. It was strange. Except for when he had been sleeping upstairs there was always someone hovering over him here. He stopped and looked around the living room. He shrugged and nodded to himself. Time to be a snoop.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean had figured with a name like Raphael he had just misheard Castiel and his mom when they said she's waiting for you downstairs. But no, Raphael was totally a chick. A really scary one in a suit. She had this way of looming over him even when she was sitting down. He kinda hated it. He'd had enough of people trying to mess with him the last two days.

She'd ask him a question like, had he ever met Alastair before? Or what had he seen in the that crazy Harry Potter room? And he'd say he didn't know anything about anything then she'd rapid fire a bunch of...Russian? Or whatever it was to Lucifer and then look at Bobby annoyed because apparently Bobby spoke angel. Go figure.

The conversation went on like that for awhile - if you could call the creepy angel Q&A a conversation - before Raphael gave a sharp nod at Lucifer. Lucifer got up and disappeared upstairs.

Then Raphael turned to Dean and gave him the hairy eyeball. "Considering your unique situation I would assume you'd prefer to be in a more familiar environment."

"Huh?" Dean asked. He had kinda zoned out after the last spat of angel-Russian-whatever.

"Do ya wanna go home?" Bobby responded before Raphael could. If Dean got the hairy eyeball Bobby got the dagger eyes.

"Well, yeah." Dean said. He was still wary about going home in case Lucifer backed out on the fix Mom deal. "But..." He shrugged. "It's okay here too..."

Was it though? Castiel had said he was being magicked into thinking it was okay here. His forehead furrowed as he tried to remember what he had thought about this place before Naomi had done whatever she had done. He knew he had been frightened but had he been afraid of being in the house or was it because he thought he was dying? It was kinda hazy in his mind.

Raphael nodded ever so slightly. "Once I've made arrangements for adequate-" She gave Bobby another dagger eyed look. "-protection you may return home. However you must stay in seclusion until you've-" She tapped her fingers like a centipede on her lap. "-adjusted."

"You mean until I can do the fancy disappearing wing act?" Dean said. Man, all she needed was a cat and she'd be a Bond villain.

Raphael did the creepy Mr. Burns finger tap in her lap again. "And learned enough so as not to be a danger to others."
"Or yourself." Bobby added.

Raphael looked like she didn't particularly care about that part.

Dean looked between the two of them then dragged his eyes back to Raphael. "And Lucifer will still help my mom?"

Raphael shifted ever so slightly but Dean imagined if she really had wings like all the other weirdoes he had met the last two days they'd probably be looming up behind her. Dean's own wings started moving like they were going to close up around him again. He grabbed the longest feathers and sat on them even if it did kinda hurt how they bent out when he did that.

"Yes." Raphael said sternly.

Out of the corner of his eye Dean saw Azazel smirk subtly. Raphael must have seen it too because her eyes snapped over to him. Azazel shrugged innocently. Dean had to hand it to the guy, he really had a pair staring down someone that looked like they could give the Queen of the Damned a run for her money.

"Though your mother's problems are far beyond his ability to heal. It will take years and the efforts of several different specialists." Raphael said, still staring holes through Azazel.

"I'm not a stranger to specialists or waiting." Mom joked trying to lighten the mood. She did a quick glance between Raphael and Azazel then looked back to Raphael. "How does it work exactly? Lucifer explained some of it but I'd need to know when I should stop taking certain medications. Are there...real doctors too?"

Raphael's jaw clenched by a fraction of an inch. She turned to Mom. "Naturally talented Healers as well as doctors. Some of which will likely be both. I'll arrange for someone to meet with you to explain how we'll proceed."

That Castiel feeling in his head started doing weird things again and getting closer. He turned to look at the doorway and a few seconds later Lucifer strode in, then Castiel poked his head around the corner. Castiel stood there like maybe Dean wouldn't see him if he couldn't see all of him until Naomi shepherded him into the room.

Raphael's eyes snapped over to Castiel. Castiel froze. Dean could appreciate the second hand fear. Castiel hadn't been wrong to be a little freaked knowing who was sitting in the living room.

"Dean will be going home in a day or two." Raphael said. "You-" Her eyes flicked over to Naomi for a second then back to Castiel. "-are going to be responsible for helping them learn to control themself. Once Dean has achieved that-" She paused for a moment and looked at Mom. She just barely narrowed her eyes then looked at Dean. "-myself and your mother will arrange for you to attend certain classes at our school."

Castiel said something that sounded like yes but could have just been a unintelligible squeak and Dean just sort of shrugged because he didn't really like the idea of going to more school but he wasn't going to say that to Raphael's face. He'd just tell Mom later that he didn't want to go and tell her about how they were crazy there anyway if Ephrath was anything to go by.

Raphael nodded to herself. She turned to Mom. "I think a visit to the rest of your family is in order."

Mom twitched but otherwise kept her cool. "Umm, yes. That would probably...be in order."
Dean wondered how much Dad and Sam knew. His eyebrows drew together. Why hadn't Dad come either time? How much did they know? Did they even know? Had Naomi done the magic thing on them to make them want to stay at home or had Naomi just explained it all away and swore Mom to secrecy?

Raphael stared at Mom. Mom stared at Raphael. Raphael stared at Mom. Mom's eyebrows went up. "Oh. You mean now?"

"Preferably. I have a very busy schedule." Raphael said sounding very put out at having to fit them into her schedule.

Mom looked to Bobby. Bobby made one of his grumpy noises. Then they asked Dean if he was okay if they both went with Raphael to get Dad and Sam ready for welcoming the winged freak home. Okay, maybe they didn't say that last part but Dean was pretty sure Dad wasn't going to take it well when he actually saw the stupid fluff filled wings he had suddenly grown.

Dean told them he'd be fine. He wasn't sure if he actually thought that or if it was Naomi again but he felt like he'd be fine which was kinda the same, right?

Mom hugged him again before she left. Bobby did too, which was weird, but then Bobby leaned in close and asked if he was really okay. Dean nodded and whispered, yeah. Bobby straightened out and said he'd start looking into his secret stash of books - because apparently Bobby had one of those - to see if there was anything that would help get rid of the wings. They headed out the door behind Raphael.

Then it was just him and...a bunch of angels. Right. Because that was what his life had come to.

Dean turned around to look at the four people staring at him.

"What?" Dean asked. His wings went up with his shoulders in a shrug. One of those dumb looking fluff feathers fell out and drifted down in front of him. He swatted it away from his nose. He grimaced. Was he shedding? Did wings shed?

The three adults started talking in angel— wait. He touched his arm where the squiggles were. It was probably...what had Castiel called it? Anoch? Antioch? Something like that.

Castiel made a noise and got all embarrassed feeling again. Dean rolled his eyes and let his hand drop away. Castiel was either going to have to figure out how to stop doing the head thing or else grow a thicker skin.

He watched the adults talk for a few more moments - Lucifer and Azazel kept doing the awkward casually-drifting-closer-together-but-totally-not-on-purpose thing, which was weird - before shoving past them and back into the living room.

He sat down in the middle of the couch and let his wings kinda spread out and flop down. He rolled his shoulders. Apparently growing wings made your back sore or maybe just carrying them around all day did it. He worked his arm, trying to make his shoulder pop but couldn't quite do it. He looked over at his wing and narrowed his eyes at it until he got it up and moving. He tried to do the same shoulder rolling motion with one wing but it mostly meant he just waved it around and jammed the feathers up on the back of the couch.

He heard the front door open and closed. Then a trickle of amusement tickled at the back of his head. He stretched his wing out and turned to the side so it could reach its full length. "I know you're there."
"Sorry." Castiel said, coming into the living room. "I wasn't spying. I...what are you doing?"

"Back hurts." Dean said. He shifted around and grabbed the back of the couch so he could stretch both wings out wide and immediately regretted it. He had been ignoring that particular feeling in his head since all this head stuff had started because it was...well...it was embarrassing. If Castiel got to be embarrassed about everything he got to be embarrassed about this. It was one thing to get the look from someone but it was kinda weird to feel it when someone thought he was being...provocative. He pulled his wings back together and turned back around. He leaned back into the couch and tried to act natural.

Dean nodded his head to the hallway. "What's the pow-wow in the hallway about?"

Castiel looked over and did some funny squint type thing like he needed classes. Dean huffed out a quiet laugh at Castiel's expense.

"They're discussing how they'll get you home without humans seeing your wings." Castiel said. Then Castiel made a long exasperated noise and rolled his eyes. "They're probably going to ask Gabriel to come and do something."

"Gabriel...? That was the little dude from yesterday right?" Dean asked. "What's he do? Make people invisible or something?"

Castiel looked at him surprised. "Yeah. In a manner of speaking."

"What? Really?" Dean's eyes went wide. What the hell? "I was joking."

"Gabriel can create minor temporary illusions." Castiel said like it was no big deal. "It's far more useful than it sounds though he usually abuses his talent. He's actually rather good at it for a beta."

Dean's eyebrows shot up. Holy crap. Everyone really did have some kind of super power. "So how do I figure out my super power?"

"What?" Castiel asked.

"You can do that plant thing. Short dude makes people invisible." Dean explained. He spread his hands wide and looked down himself. "So...? How do I do it?"

Castiel looked at him puzzled. "Do what?"

Dean huffed out an annoyed sigh. "The magic thing. You know, snap your fingers and make fire."

Dean watched as Castiel stared intently at him and that tick-tick-tick feeling went haywire for a moment. Man, that was going to suck if he was stuck with Castiel's weird typewriter thinking in his head forever.

"You mean a talent?" Castiel said like he didn't believe him.

"Sure." Dean shrugged. "Whatever you want to call it."

"You're an omega." Castiel said like that explained everything.

Dean looked at him unimpressed. First, off he wasn't an omega because omegas had some weird stuff going on down stairs and he didn't. Second, what the hell did that even mean? "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Omegas don't have talents." Castiel explained. "It's carried on the alpha gene."
Dean's shoulders slumped. He was missing out on super powers? What the hell was this crap? A butt vagina that he didn't have anyway didn't make up for super powers. Before Dean could complain about how not fair that was Naomi came into the living room.

Naomi looked between the two of them then settled her eyes on Dean. "Myself and Castiel were discussing ways to help you learn to hide your wings. Most people learn naturally over time as children but I think you'd rather learn more immediately?"

"Ah, yeah. Immediate would be good." Dean said. The sooner the better.

Naomi nodded and excused herself to go change. Castiel did the same. Dean wondered briefly about why they'd need to change but figured if there were any demonstrations about to go on then they probably didn't want to rip up shirts or go topless. Which yeah, go change, because it was weird enough being around Castiel. He didn't want to see Castiel's mom topless.

Dean sat in the living room alone for a few moments picking at the fluffy feathers on his wings. It was strange. Except for when he had been sleeping upstairs there was always someone hovering over him here. He stopped and looked around the living room. He shrugged and nodded to himself. Time to be a snoop.

It only took Dean one circuit of the living room to find out that it was hard being a snoop in a room with practically nothing in it. There was the furniture and a couple of plants and that was it basically. There wasn't even a tv! How had he not noticed that before?

Dean was checking out the bookcase - almost all the books were in the squiggly letters - when a polite cough made him turn around. Naomi was standing in the doorway with great big slate grey wings folded up behind her. Dean jammed the book he was holding back onto the shelf and stepped away like he had been caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

Castiel's head popped up over Naomi's shoulder. Naomi stepped aside and stretched a wing out - the underside was nearly snow white - behind Castiel and nudged him forward. The movement seemed natural and fluid. Not at all like what he had been doing. Naomi didn't even have to look where she was moving her wing. She just moved it. Dean couldn't even move his on purpose unless he was staring at them first.

Castiel stepped closer. Dean kept an eye on his wings. He remembered those things from the other night when he had been all screwed up with fever. Sure, he had seen them after but seeing them that first time had still made the biggest impression. He remembered being afraid of them. Which was a good thing, right? If he remembered being afraid did that mean he was wearing out that persuasion magic stuff Castiel had talked about?

Castiel sat down and motioned for Dean to sit too. Dean sat warily at the opposite end of the couch. He wasn't sure what Castiel was up. The Castiel feeling in his head was pretty calm at the moment.

"So how are we staring the wing lesson?" Dean asked.

"I thought I'd explain what you're doing first. How and where your wings go when you hide them. Then maybe we could try it?" Castiel said. Dean nodded. Then Castiel launched into a lecture that made magic and higher planes and multiple dimensions sound boring.

When Castiel started talking about the math of different dimensions – the math for crying out loud! – Dean came to two conclusions: one, Castiel was a huge nerd and Sam would probably get along with him and two, math class was boring even when he wasn't in school. Dean waved a dismissive
hand at Castiel trying to get him to stop because seriously *math*. "Dude, maybe we could just move onto the practical stuff?"

Castiel looked and felt a bit annoyed about not getting to finish math lecture. "Alright."

Castiel stood up. His wings arched up a bit behind him, then there was a flapping noise and some wind and they were gone. A few seconds later they burst back into sight, one stray black feather falling to the ground. "Like that. You try."

Dean stood up and...and what the hell was he supposed to do exactly? He squeezed his eyes shut and tried to mimic the movements Castiel had done but he couldn't get his wings to move the way he wanted them too.

"Like this." Naomi said. She did the same wing movement but instead of her wings just disappearing they seemed to fade out to shadows and dissipate.

That didn't make it any easier.

Naomi and Castiel started telling him to *reach out with his wings and push against this plane* but they might as well have been telling him to go bench press an elephant. He couldn't do it. He didn't feel any other *higher plane* to shove his wings into. He was just shoving his wings at the air behind him like a jackass.

Castiel was flicking his wings in and out of existence to show how *easy* it was when Dean finally got fed up with the whole thing and sunk back down on the couch. "I'm gonna be stuck like this."

"Most angels and demons learn through years of trial and error as infants and children." Naomi said gently. "You've only been doing this for..." Her eyes flicked up to a clock on the wall. "-three hours."

"I couldn't do it until I was eight and I couldn't keep them there for any practical amount of time until I was nearly twelve." Castiel offered.

Dean stared at Castiel. He knew Castiel was trying to be helpful - he could feel it - but that was probably the worst thing he could say right now. "So I'm gonna be stuck with these for twelve years."

"I'm sure you'll learn much faster than that." Naomi said. She hid her wings away. "Children aren't as developed mentally and much of shifting your wings through one dimension and the next is a mental task."

"Or maybe I can't stick my wings into the eighth dimension because humans just can't do it. I'm not really an angel." Dean said flatly. He was going to be stuck like this forever or at least until Bobby or Lucifer or someone figured out how to turn him back.

"You can do it." Castiel said firmly and not in the *trying to be encouraging* way. It was more of a *I've seen you do it before* way.

"What do you mean?" Dean asked suspiciously. Had he done the wing trick while he was messed up and sick?

"You used the bond. Earlier. I felt it for a few moments." Castiel explained. "Mating bonds and soul mate bonds work on the same principles...well, that's what I've read since..." Castiel motioned between the two of them. "So you *can* access higher planes. You just need to practice."
Dean stared at Castiel blankly before blinking and turning away. What the hell? He was accessing higher planes and he hadn't noticed it?

"I was joking about heaping the crazy on." Dean muttered.

Naomi looked at Dean strangely then suggested they all take a break. She did the wing flick and whoosh then her wings were gone. Castiel did the same. Dean watched enviously.

He spent the rest of the day watching Naomi and Castiel make their wings appear and disappear while he stood there and screwed up his face like he was constipated. It sucked. He was sure he was going to be stuck like this forever.

Around nine that night he told them he was tired out; mostly so he wouldn't have to stand there like an idiot not shoving his wings into a different dimension or whatever. He trudged up the stairs to the spare room they had given him. He closed the door then face planted onto the bed. This sucked majorly.

He was going to be stuck with wings. Castiel said he had used that next dimension already but he hadn't. He hadn't felt himself doing anything different today. He had been worked up about the weird smells around Cas but he hadn't done any dimension hopping.

He rolled over and sat up. His eyebrows came together. Someone had brought those loony tunes print outs up to his room and left them on top of his backpack. He snatched them off his bag and tossed them aside. As if he was going to read any of that.

Dean spent most of the night trying to work out the best way to sleep with wings sticking out of him and occasionally spitting out those dumb fluffy feathers that were still falling out.

The next morning was a lot less eventful than the previous one and Dean was quite happy about that. He had had enough excitement to last him a life time. He just wanted to go home, figure out how to hide his wings so he didn't look like a freak, and get on with his life. But after a morning of not being able to hide his wings he was beginning to suspect he was asking for too much.

Dean was frowning at a sandwich thinking about what Castiel said when Castiel started staring at him.

"Are you okay?" Castiel asked. His head cocked to the side. "You said your mother couldn't eat a lot of things, we haven't been feeding you things you're allergic to have we?"

"What? No. I don't have allergies— except for cats. And that's not my mom's problem anyway." Dean said absently, still staring at his sandwich. He glanced up at Castiel. "You said you couldn't make you wings disappear until you were eight."

"I was a late bloomer." Castiel said and went and got all embarrassed again. Dean ignored it.

"But you had wings before that. Before you could hide them." Dean said. Castiel nodded. It didn't add up. If Castiel had wings before he could hide them then why didn't people ever see kids running around with wings? "How come no one knows about you guys then? I mean, I'd noticed an eight year old with wings."

"Oh." Castiel nodded sagely. "There are a few remote places where we have our own towns without humans. Families with young children usually stay there. It's safer than living out in the middle of nowhere." Castiel waved towards the window.

Dean glanced out the window. He turned back to Castiel and gave him a disbelieving look. "Dude,
there's thirty two thousand people living here. This isn't the middle of nowhere."

"Thirty two thousands humans." Castiel said through bites of sandwich.

Dean stared at Castiel for a moment before looking back down at his sandwich. ...what if he couldn't figure out this wing thing and he had to go live with these freaks?

"Most of my family lives in Malprg." Castiel continued. "There isn't really a lot of space there and my aunt Hester wanted to start a family so we moved here once Anna was old enough to tuck her wings away reliably."

"Huh?" Dean said. He hadn't really been paying attention. He was more caught up in his own thoughts.

"Malprg." Castiel said. "It's where my family lives. My hometown."

"Oh." Dean said. He stuffed the rest of his sandwich in his mouth.

Dean was busy trying to swallow way too much sandwich when the front door opened. Castiel did that goofy squinting thing again. Dean turned to look where Castiel was squinting. There was clattering in the hallway.

"Gabriel." Castiel said like it was a combination of good news and a death sentence. Dean wasn't sure how he managed to put all that in one word.

The short dude from the other day popped his head around the corner. He grinned at Castiel. "Hey Cassie, enjoying your leisure time?"

"...maybe." Castiel said warily. "Is it permanent leisure time?"

"Hey, if I fired you, who would do all the work?" Gabriel said brightly. "Someone's gotta do my job. And I like making alphas clean up." He winked at Dean before strutting into the kitchen. He snatched the other half of Castiel's sandwich off his plate. He pulled out the chair beside Castiel and plunked down. He eyed Dean while he devoured the sandwich.

"What?" Dean asked defensively.

"Nothing." Gabriel smirked then shot a look at Castiel. Castiel rolled his eyes. Gabriel chuckled. Dean looked between the two of them annoyed.

"So, heard you got the shake down from Raphael yesterday." Gabriel said to Castiel. He nodded at Dean. "And now I've been elected to get them home without the townies wising up."

Dean scrunched up his nose thoroughly annoyed now. "I read that stuff yesterday that they give out in your wackadoo school. Don't freakin' call me a them. I'm sitting right here. I'm a guy. I'm not just a...whatever it is. I'm not that."

Gabriel's eyebrows shot up surprised then came back down to give a wicked grin at Castiel. "You're soul mate's an activist."

"My soul mate isn't an activist." Castiel said hotly. "They're just—"

"He." Dean snapped. "He's just whatever you were going to say."

Gabriel snickered and shot another look at Castiel. Castiel gave him a shove. Dean glared at the both of them.
"Gabriel. How nice of you to join us." Naomi said dryly as she walked into the kitchen. "My offer still stands. I'd gladly teach you some manners under persuasion for free."

Gabriel grinned up at her. "Nah, I couldn't take up all your time. I know you're busy. Besides, people like my unique brand of charm."

"Oh yeah, people come from miles around to be charmed by Gabriel." Castiel said sarcastically.


Dean's eyebrows shot up. What the hell? Gabriel could make people break out? How was that—oh. Right. Castiel said he could make minor illusions.

Castiel shook his head like magically having zits appear was normal for him. Maybe it was.

Naomi stood there looking thoroughly unimpressed. "Well, if you're quite done I think we should start getting Dean ready."

"Whatever you say Naomi." Gabriel said cheerfully. He stood up and went around the table to Dean. Dean eyed him warily. He didn't need a face full of acne on top of wings. Gabriel gave him a wounded look. "Aw, come on. I'm practically your brother-in-law don't give me the shifty eyes. I promise I won't give you a pizza face."

"What're you gonna do?" Dean asked. He shot a look at Castiel. Castiel gave him an it's alright look and a bunch of self inflated confidence poured through at the back of his head.

"Temporary disappearing act." Gabriel said, reaching out towards his wings. "I gotta touch them though." Gabriel glanced over at Castiel. "That okay?"

"You can make them go away?" Dean asked. What if he could just get Gabriel to magic his wings away? Then he wouldn't have to waste time trying to find higher planes of existence.

"They'll still be there. People just won't be able to see them." Gabriel explained.

"So they won't be gone." Dean said.

"Nope. It's more like throwing a sheet over them." Gabriel said. He wiggled his fingers. "So...?"

"Uh, yeah. Okay?" Dean said. Goddamn it. Why couldn't someone just magic them away? Magic had got him into this mess why couldn't it get him out of it?

Gabriel ran his hands over Dean's wings. It didn't feel weird. Well, it did because Gabriel was running his hands over wings but there was no magic is happening feeling. Whatever that would feel like. Dean looked behind himself shocked to see that the wings were gone.

"Okay, stand up and walk around so I can see if I missed anything." Gabriel said after a few minutes.

Dean got up and moved around. It was another half hour before Gabriel was satisfied. Dean couldn't stop looking at nothing. They were gone. His wings weren't there but if he reached behind himself he could feel them and if focused he could move them—which Gabriel told him not to do because it would make the illusion weaker.

"You've got probably about half an hour before it starts fading away." Gabriel said. He glanced
over at Naomi. "That going to be long enough? Or should I come with?"

"No." Naomi said quickly. She didn't sound like she particularly enjoyed the idea of having Gabriel around longer than he needed to be. "That will be long enough."

"What?" Dean asked, surprised. "You mean I'm going home? Now? Isn't that...what?"

"Raphael phoned this morning and said everything was ready." Naomi said. "She did tell you that you could go home in a day or two."

That Bond villain had actually meant it? Literally? Dean stared at a loss for words. He had only been here a couple of days but it seemed like months and now he was just going home?

"You should probably step on it." Gabriel said to him. "Illusions on living moving things don't last very long."

Dean hurried away from the table and up the stairs for his stuff. He was going home. He was packed and half way down the stairs when he realized he was going home and he'd have to face Dad and Sam. What were they going to say? What if...oh, fuck. He was going home and he was a huge winged freak.

"Dean? Are you ready?" Naomi called from the front door.

Dean shook himself. Mom had probably already told them. It...it wouldn't be that bad, right? He headed for the front door. Gabriel was gone but Naomi and Castiel were standing there in jackets and shoes. Dean looked down at his own sock feet. His Mom had brought him clothes but hadn't brought him a jacket or shoes. Not that he could have put the jacket on anyway but... what the hell had happened with his jacket and shoes anyway? Had he walked over here barefoot and without a jacket?

"I, uh..." Dean pointed down to his feet.

Naomi looked over at Castiel. Castiel shrugged. "They didn't have any when they showed up the other night." Castiel looked to Dean. "Your mother didn't leave you any?"

"No...I think she must have figured I'd have enough common sense not to run around barefoot at night in September." Dean said. He should have had enough common sense to not get tangled up in this angel magic crap either but look where he was now.

"Oh." Castiel said. He went over to a closet off the hall and dug around inside until he pulled out two winter boots. "I think these will fit you."

Dean took the boots and shoved them on. They were tight but they'd do.

Castiel nodded and picked up a bag from the floor.

"What's that?" Dean asked as they started out the door. Dean cast a look over his shoulder to see if his wings were still invisible.

"Some shirts." Castiel said. "I thought...well, I thought you might want something to wear until you learn to hide your wings."

"Oh, uh, yeah. Thanks." Dean said. He felt weird about wearing Cas's clothes but...what else was he going to wear? He wasn't going to start cutting up his band shirts.
Getting into the car was awkward. In the end Dean had to back in and sort of fold himself into the backseat. He couldn't get a seat belt on with the way his wings were all mashed behind him. He hoped they didn't get pulled over.

Naomi drove them over to his house. Dean felt like his heart was going to pound out of his chest. What if Dad and Sam thought he was a freak? Well he was, he had wings! But what were they going to say? What had Mom told them?

Dean had worked himself up to a near panic by the time they pulled into the driveway. The sight of home should have been relaxing but it just made everything worse. It all came rushing back to him. Everything from that really hazy sex to waking up and freaking out to having wings to having Castiel shoved into his head to cursed rabbit's feet to people telling him he had grown girl parts to now. Holy fuck. His family was going to freak out! He couldn't go back home! He should have just stayed at Castiel's house. At least there he wouldn't have to deal with his family seeing how much of a freak he was.

Dean was in the process of having himself a merry little panic attack - because holy fuck! The last couple of days were crazy! This was crazy! Everything was crazy! - when Castiel suddenly spoke up.

"You live here?"

Chapter End Notes

No more persuasion safety net for Dean!

Queen of the Damned: Dean's referencing the book not the movie because Dean works at a used bookstore and is a huge nerd.
The eighth dimension comment is referencing Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension. Which is a delightfully crazy movie that I recommend.

Ha! The magical cure trope doesn't get a free pass. The magical cure will take years! And be aided by science! Take that magic!

So the town name Castiel gives, Malprg, was picked for two reasons. One it is not the Enochian word for Heaven because every damn fic has angels living in heaven/paradise/eden etc and two because later on Dean will get to snicker at the town name and draw flaming dicks with wings. Malprg: a through thrusting fire. Which I think in the context of the call it's from is basically supposed to mean fiery sword? I dunno it's about the moon "...in whose hands the sun is as a sword, and the moon as a through thrusting fire which measureth your garments..."

Malprg is pronounced as "mah-el-peh-rah-geh" and as some people have pointed out in the comments it's hilariously close to "Mpreg" which was completely accidental but I love it! So it definitely stays.
Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Dean stood perfectly still and stared at three people standing across from them; Dean's mother, and the other two must be Dean's father and brother if family resemblance was anything to go by.

Chapter Notes

It's short but it said what it needed to.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel stared at his mate's home. The house was tiny and worn; paint peeling off in a few places and cracks in the cement steps going up to the door. The garage looked like someone had slapped it together on a drunken dare. The front yard had a garden that had been given up to the weeds. There were two beaten up bikes chained to a dying tree beside the house and to complete the picture Castiel was rather sure there was a derelict vehicle wedged between the house and the garage hidden away under a bright orange tarp.

His eyes flicked over to the neighbours' houses. They weren't any better. If anything Dean's home was a beacon of homeowner upkeep in comparison.

When Dean had said 7 Torian Road Castiel had assumed Dean meant Torian Road South. It wasn't far from where he lived or from downtown where they both worked. Torian Road North on the other hand went down to the old munitions factory. In fact if he leaned to the side a bit he could see what was left of that dilapidated and abandoned factory looming in the distance.

"You live here?" Castiel blurted out without thinking.

"Yeah." Dean said, keeping their eyes fixed on the front door.

Dean smelt panicky. Castiel wasn't sure if that was because he was seeing the state of their home or if Dean was, for some reason, afraid to go in.

"Are you okay?" Castiel asked when that panic smell got stronger. It agitated the alpha in him; it desperately wanted to find whatever it was making his mate panic and tear it apart. Castiel shoved the instinct-dumb urge down. That wasn't going to help anyone.

"Yeah. Yeah. I'm fine. Peachy. This is great." Dean said in a flurry of words. "I'm just gonna... go inside."

Dean didn't move. Castiel glanced at his mother. His mother gave a subtle shrug back before taking the bag of shirts from him and getting out of the car. Castiel followed suit. He got out and went around to Dean's door and opened it. He offered a hand to help Dean out. They stared at him wide eyed for a moment before taking his hand. It took some effort but together they managed to get
Dean and their wings out of the car all in one piece. Dean reached back in for their backpack and held it against their chest.

Castiel peered at the space he knew Dean's wings must be in. If he squinted he could just start making out the shape and pattern of their feathers. The illusion was going to fade soon.

"We have to go inside now, Dean." His mother said in her gentle but I'm still in charge alpha mom voice. She had noticed the fading illusion too.

Dean shook their head in agreement but didn't move. His mother started urging him forward. Dean took a few steps closer then suddenly their jaw clenched and they lifted their head. Dean marched towards their home like they were determined to face death with an air of dignity.

Castiel followed behind Dean, cautious of their still mostly invisible wings and careful not to step on the cracks in the cement steps in case they crumbled away under his feet. Dean pushed the door open and went in. Castiel hesitated for a moment feeling like he should knock. His mother patted his back encouraging him inside of the small entrance way.

Dean set their backpack down and kicked off the boots Castiel had lent them. They set them aside on a plastic mat. They disappeared around the corner.

Castiel toed his own shoes off and set them down beside the boots. He followed Dean around the corner into a small living room. Castiel doubted his mother could stretch her wings out all the way in the tiny room and even if the room was big enough there were things everywhere to knock over.

The panicked worried smell of his mate flooded Castiel's nose. Castiel pulled his eyes away from the things in the room to watch Dean.

Dean stood perfectly still and stared at three people standing across from them; Dean's mother, and the other two must be Dean's father and brother if family resemblance was anything to go by.

Mary had a shocked look on her face and was staring at the space where Dean's wings were. Dean's father and brother looked between themselves confused.

"What happened? Are they gone?" Mary asked anxiously.

Dean looked away. "No. They're still there. One of them just made them invisible for the ride over. I've still got, ya know...wings."

Dean's father glanced at Mary as if he was waiting for her to tell him that the last few days were a very elaborate joke.

"Invisible?" Dean's brother asked. Dean had said his name was Sam, hadn't they?

"Yeah." Dean said. They shifted back and forth on their feet and kept their distance from their family. Castiel had thought Dean would have gone directly to them. Dean had been quick to pull Mary into a hug and wrap their wings around her but they seemed almost afraid of the rest of their family.

"How?" Sam asked in disbelief. "Does it make them see through or is it bending light around them? Is it magic? Is it like an invisibility cloak?"

Dean huffed out a laugh. "I think it's magic."

The strange stand off broke. Dean padded across the room to their family. They pulled Mary into
another hug. A few pictures and knickknacks on a side table fell over. Castiel could just make out Dean's wings moving to wrap around Mary as they knocked things over.

"Oh. I think I can see them." Sam said. He reached out as if to touch them then pulled his hand back looking embarrassed.

Castiel edged towards a chair on the far side of the room. He felt like he was intruding on the family reunion. He glanced around the living room again. There were family photos strewn about on the walls, on shelves, on tables. There were a few jackets laid over a chair and a knitted blanket and a quilt on the couch. Several small statuettes littered a side table—Castiel wasn't sure if they were religious in nature or purely decorative. One wall appeared to be dedicated to various awards for human life milestones.

It wasn't messy or worn down the way the outside of the house looked. It simply looked very...lived in. It was all very human. It made it easier for Castiel to believe that Dean had in fact been human not long ago. This house was clearly not built or furnished for an angel.

Castiel only started paying attention to the conversation again when his mother started to speak.

"Castiel can come after school Monday to Friday to help Dean learn how to control their wings." His mother said. "I can come with him Tuesdays and Thursdays. If Dean needs more help we can arrange for something on the weekend but Castiel does have school work he'll need to catch up on if he's here on weeknights."

Damn. Castiel hadn't even thought of that. He knew he would have to help Dean to learn and adjust - he was their alpha mate after all - but he hadn't thought it would mean giving up his weekends to do homework. When was he going to have time for his job?

His mother and Dean's parents started discussing the spells that had been placed on the house yesterday. The normal ones to keep nosy humans away and a few more complex ones that would make any room look empty if someone looked through the windows. It may have been fascinating to Dean's human family but Castiel found it all rather boring. He'd only heard it a few hundred times before.

Castiel was mid-yawn when Mary asked if he'd like a tour of the house.

"Alright?" Castiel said. He wasn't sure how much of a tour he'd get. The living room took up one whole half of the house. How much more could there be?

"Dean. Why don't you show Castiel around." Mary said in a tone that Castiel knew all too well. It was the not a question type of question. At least he had that in common with his soul mate.

Dean let out a long suffering sigh but shot their mother a thankful look. Dean must have found it just as boring. They motioned for Castiel to follow them out of the room. Castiel got up and followed behind them. Dean's wings were obviously visible now but still with a smoky transparency to them.

"Kitchen." Dean said as they stepped into the only other large room on the main floor of the house. It was a tight fit with a table taking up most of the free space. Dean opened up a door beside the refrigerator and flicked a light on. "Basement."

Castiel leaned around Dean and peered into the basement. It was dark and musty smelling, not at all like the warm dry basement where his own room was.

They didn't go downstairs. Instead Dean turned the light off and closed the door. They headed back
to the hallway. The hallway wasn't very wide to begin with but half of it was taken up by a staircase making it rather narrow. Dean's wings pressed back and stretched out hitting him in the face. Castiel rubbed at his nose. Dean was managing to hit him in the nose even when they didn't mean to.

"Sorry, dude." Dean said not sounding sorry at all. They motioned to a door to their left. "Downstairs bathroom." They motioned to a door to their right. "Pantry." They pointed to the backdoor. "Backyard."

Castiel was surprised at how far the back the yard went. Everything else about Dean’s home was small.

The two of them shuffled around in the tiny space and headed back down the hall to the stairs. Castiel thought they were going to bypass the upstairs since that must be where everyone's bedrooms were but Dean slipped into the living room for a moment and came back with their backpack and the bag of shirts then started up the narrow stairs.

"Mom and Dad's room, Sam's room, bathroom - we just put it in last year - and my room." Dean said, then promptly stepped into their room and closed the door in Castiel's face. Castiel stood their surprised and confused. The door swung back open a minute later. Dean had changed into a different shirt.

"Been wearing the same shirt for days." Dean explained. "Couldn't really change into one of mine 'cause-" They jabbed their thumb over their shoulder at their now completely visible wings. "- kinda got in the way."

"Oh." Castiel tried to stuff down the embarrassment he felt since Dean had said it was annoying. He hadn't thought to give Dean another shirt after that first one, not until today when Dean was going home.

Castiel peered into Dean's room. It was a mess quite frankly.

"Is there a- uh...angel clothing store or something in town?" Dean asked, stepping aside to let Castiel into their room. “Somewhere I can get my own stuff?"

Castiel wrinkled his nose. Dean's room smelt horrible. The scent of sick omega mate permeated everything. Dean must have stayed in here for days for it to smell this strongly.

"Not here. There's one on the coast in Addington." Castiel said. Breathing through his mouth didn’t help. Now he could taste the smell of sick omega mate. It didn’t taste any better.

Dean must have noticed the smell too because they sniffed at the air and went over to open up their window.

Castiel couldn’t help but chuckle softly in amusement when Dean turned around. The back of Dean's shirt was done up crooked.

"What?" Dean asked, turning back.

"Nothing." Castiel said. He wasn't about to get lured into a situation where he was offering to take an omega's clothes off with his and their parents downstairs.

"Addington..." Dean frowned. "That's like eight hours away."

Castiel nodded. "We don't go there often. Hopefully you'll learn how to tuck your wings away
sooner rather than later so you won't need to buy new clothes."

Castiel stood there awkwardly wondering what he should do. Dean was being unusually civil. Even after Dean had ‘given up’ they hadn’t been friendly exactly, just less argumentative about simple facts of life.

"You can sit down, man." Dean said, motioning towards the bed. They picked up their backpack and emptied it onto the bed. They shot Castiel a stern look. They motioned to the posters that lined the walls behind the bed. “But don’t rip the posters. I’ve put Nair in shampoo for less.”

Castiel stepped closer but he took one whiff of the bed and decided against it. It didn't just smell like sick omega mate it smelt like omega in heat and slick too. He'd let the room air out first.

Dean started picking through the clothes on their bed, putting clean clothing away and tossing worn clothing to the floor. Dean caught him watching.

"It's not usually this bad. Was kinda distracted the last few days." Dean said. They shoved a last stray sock into the top drawer of their dresser then kicked all the dirty clothes into a pile at the foot of the bed.

"Oh." Castiel said. He wasn't sure he believed that. He looked around the room taking in the posters on the wall and the books scattered across the room. The room was small. Everything in the house was small. Castiel doubted he could stretch his wings wide in Dean's room. Dean might be able to but omega's had smaller wings.

The rumble of a deeper male voice drifted up the stairs. Dean looked towards the door. Their face pulled together in concern. They smelt worried again. Dean shook their head and started taking the borrowed shirts out of the bag.

"Is everything alright?" Castiel asked curiously. What would upset Dean about being home? That’s all Dean had wanted to do at first. "You were upset outside."

"I wasn't upset." Dean retorted. "...I may have been concerned."

"About what?" Castiel asked. His mate might dislike him much of the time but that was no reason to not care about them and besides, it soothed his alpha instincts to ask.

"About nothing." Dean said dismissively.

Castiel studied Dean as they went back to putting things away and shoving dirty clothes around on the floor. What would make someone upset to come home? The strange standoff in the living room seemed all the more ominous. Would his mate be okay here? Would humans do something to an angel even if that angel was their own child? That alpha instinct reared up again worrying about his mate; wanting to protect them.

"Jesus Cas, I can't ignore my problems if you're just going to sit there and worry about them for me." Dean said, annoyed. They threw a shirt into their dresser. It would have been more dramatic if it hadn’t landed softly on top without a noise.

"Sorry. I didn't— what problems?" Castiel asked.

"Uhh, beyond suddenly growing wings and hanging around you every weeknight for the foreseeable future?" Dean said sarcastically.

"Oh. Right." Castiel stood quietly and tried to not worry about his mate. The room didn't help. It
still smelt like sick omega mate which made the alpha in him all the more worried which only served to make Dean more agitated which made him worried. Repeat to infinity.

"Oh my god. Fucking quit it." Dean snapped after fifteen minutes of the worried feedback loop.

Castiel sighed. He knew their brief moment of civility wouldn't last.

"I'm not trying to annoy you." Castiel said, trying to make himself calm for Dean. "I just—"

"Want to make sure you're okay." Dean said in that terrible imitation of his voice again. "Well I am. I'm home. So cut it out."

"Fine." Castiel gave an aggravated huff.

Dean rolled their eyes and mimicked him again. “Fine.”

He narrowed his eyes at Dean in annoyance but was ignored for his efforts. He clenched his jaw and turned on his heel. He'd rather sit downstairs and be bored.

He went down the stairs lightly and joined his mother in the living room. She was still telling Mary and Dean’s father about how to maintain the spells on the house. Sam stared at him as he sat down. He seemed to want to ask something but would open his mouth to speak then apparently think better of it and snap it shut again. Castiel gave an amused snort. If only Dean put half as much forethought into their words.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to people in the comments I have discovered where my quote was from. It was not from Jurassic Park but from The Princess Bride "I wasn't sacred, I may have been concerned." was the princess/eels/grandson/grandpa part. Go team work!

Dean’s family live in "wartime housing" which in Canada means a small house usually in an industrial area that was built towards the end of WWII. Some have aged well, some have not. If you're interested here is an 18 minute documentary about it "Wartime housing".

Sam’s a fourteen year old boy who just found out magic is real. Also, Sam and Dean are 3 years apart in my fic instead of 4. Deal with it. :P
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Dean took in another deep breath. Okay so he had wings. Big deal. Mom hadn't cared about it. She had just been worried about him disappearing. He could still put Sam in his place for having goofy hair. And Dad— What did Dad think? Dad had barely said anything since he came home.

Chapter Notes

Are you a fancy lady that can talk and talk? Well you can find me here Brains for baby jesus to do some talking.

...that was a terrible nod to Blue Oyster Cult. Please forgive me. I've just listened to the song this fic is named for way too many times at this point.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dean made himself busy upstairs until he heard Naomi's car start up and pull out of the driveway. He scooped up his pile of dirty laundry - nearly falling over as the weight of his wings shifted - and started downstairs. He poked his head into the living room for a moment. Mom and Dad were talking quietly about what had gone on the last few days.

Sam caught his eye and jutted his chin at the pile of laundry in Dean's arms. Dean nodded towards the kitchen. Sam slipped away from the conversation.

Dean didn't say anything as Sam caught up to him. He kicked open the door to the basement and headed downstairs. Sam flicked on the basement light behind him.

Dean ducked under the furnace vents, doing his best to keep his wings out of cobwebs and dust, and made his way over to the washing machine. He dumped his clothes on the floor and started checking the pockets of his jeans before putting them into the washer.

Sam hoisted himself up on the dryer. "OCD much?"

"I don't have OCD." Dean said, checking the pockets of another pair of jeans.

"How many times have you checked the pockets for paper?" Sam asked.

Dean shot him a look. He grabbed the next pair of jeans and tossed them in without checking. Then snorted angrily and pulled them back out to check the pockets.

Sam snickered.

"You're dumb for not checking your pockets for kleenex. It's not OCD." Dean said. He threw the jeans in when he was done checking them.
"Sure Dean." Sam said in that sarcastic placating tone he had developed in the last three years. Why were baby brothers so annoying?

"It's not. I know people with it and I don't have it." Dean threw a bunch of socks into the washing machine. It wasn't an obsessive compulsion he just needed to be in control of something. It's what he did when Mom was really sick. It made him feel less helpless to be able to take control of some small piece of his life. Other kids broke stuff. They couldn't afford to replace things so he cleaned. "And it's not a joke."

Sam sighed and let it drop. "Lisa's been asking about you."

Dean jerked upright. Did Lisa find out somehow he had accidentally cheated on her? Did everyone in school know he had gone all the way with some guy he had met at a party? He didn't think Naomi or the even scarier Raphael would let it get out he had wings but the sex had come before the wings. Shit. Jo knew. She had seen that little love bite Castiel had left behind. What if Jo had said something to Lisa? Sure Jo was his friend and not really Lisa's, but she was a girl. Girls talked. "What'd she say?"

"Just wanted to know if you were okay." Sam said with a shrug. "You missed school all week, remember? And once Naomi showed up and told us what had...uh..." Sam gestured to the wings. 

"...yeah, well, we told everyone you were sick and wouldn't be in class for awhile."

Dean nodded in relief. His life hadn't fallen completely apart. He shoved his shirts into the washer and started measuring out laundry soap.

Sam fidgeted on the dryer.

"What?" Dean asked, pouring the cap full of laundry soap in. He closed the lid and turned the machine on. At least he'd have something clean to wear instead of rolling around in sweat drenched clothes. He wrinkled his nose. He'd have to wash his sheets next. They reeked. They had that bitter sick smell.

"Can I touch one?" Sam asked, nodding at the wings. His eyes went wide. "That's not...weird or anything? Touching someone's wings?"

"I...uh..." Dean trailed off. Was it weird? People had touched them the last couple of days and it had seemed normal. Except for when Ruby had been touching them where they joined at his back. That had been weird. His brain hadn't known what to do about that. "I don't think so? Mom touched them. I think it's like touching someone's hair or arms."

"So like, it's weird if a stranger does it but it's okay if family or a friend does it?" Sam said. He shifted around like he was getting ready to snap his arm out to touch one. Knowing Sam he probably was.

"Yeah. Just...not down at the base." Dean said. He grabbed one of his wings and pulled it forward so Sam could touch it.

"Why?" Sam asked. He looked at the wing cautiously.

"Uh, touching here is like touching my arm." Dean said, thinking about the less crazy parts of those textbooks Castiel had lent him. He stroked a hand down the length of his wing. It felt strange. He hadn't really touched them much since he got them. He jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "The base is more like shoving your hand in my crotch. It'd be kinda weird."

Sam made a grossed out face but he still looked over at Dean's wing. "...you're sure?"
Dean stretched the wing out in response.

Sam reached out to the wing and ran his fingers through the feathers. He snapped his eyes up to Dean as if to say, *holy shit they really are real!* He looked back to Dean's wing and did it a second time. "What's that feel like?"

Dean grinned. His hand shot out to Sam's goofy girl hair and messed it up. "Like this."

"Hey!" Sam ducked away and batted at Dean's hand.

Dean smirked and reached out to do it again. Sam hopped off the dryer and tried to make a getaway but Dean caught him and pulled him into a head lock. He mashed his hand into Sam's head and messed his hair up even more. Really, it was Sam's fault. If he would just cut his hair— "Ow!"

Dean let go and jumped back. Sam had grabbed a fist full of feathers and yanked them. His wings shot back and knocked the liquid laundry detergent off the washer. There was a mad scramble to catch the bottle before it fell and spilled everywhere. It ended with them both on the floor laughing.

Dean let out a laugh and took another swat at Sam's head just because. Sam kicked at him grinning. Dean chuckled because Sam had lousy aim. He took in a deep breath and let it out when the rough housing was over. He hadn't realized how worried he had been that his family was going to disown him for being some kind of winged freak but here was Sam getting into a dumb scuffle with him on the floor in the basement like nothing had changed.

Dean took in another deep breath. Okay, so he had wings. Big deal. Mom hadn't cared about it. She had just been worried about him disappearing. He could still put Sam in his place for having goofy hair. And Dad—

Dean's eyes swept up to the ceiling where the living room would be. What *did* Dad think? Dad had barely said anything since he came home.

Sam glanced up at the ceiling too. He frowned.

"What's Dad think about all this?" Dean asked, trying to sound like it was no big deal. His dumb wings betrayed him though and started pressing in closer like he was trying to hide. He really had to get control of those things.

"I think he's..." Sam paused. His forehead wrinkled while he searched for what to say. "I think he's kinda taking it like when you told Mom and Dad you're bi."

"Oh." Dean said, keeping his voice neutral. His wings pressed closer against his sides.

"He's not, you know, *mad* about it." Sam said. His eyes flicked up to the ceiling again. "He just doesn't know what to think."

Dean nodded. All things considered he had it pretty good at home. He knew other kids that had come out and gotten bad reactions or been laughed at. Mom and Sam had never made a big deal about it but they had acknowledged it and never made it sound like it was weird. Dad just never said anything. Even when he had dated Benny briefly for a few months last year and brought him home for family dinners. Dad had been nice to Benny but he hadn't said anything about him being his boyfriend. Nothing had really changed once he had told Dad. Dad still talked to him about cars and showed him how to fix things, but they didn't talk about *that*. Mom said he was okay with it but Dean wasn't so sure because well, they never did talk about it.
Dean sighed. He wasn't sure how Dad was going to be able to ignore the freakin' wings sticking out of him. It was a hell of lot more obvious than occasionally checking out a guy's butt.

He tried to spend the rest of the day hiding out in the basement with Sam under the pretense of important laundry to be done but Mom eventually made him come up stairs and eat dinner.

Dinner was awkward. Mom and Sam kept asking him questions about what had happened and telling them they'd figure something out - he didn't know what or how and neither did they - but Dad sort of...talked around the conversation unless Mom dragged him into it.

It was horrible. Castiel would have died of embarrassment three times over.

Dad obviously didn't want to talk about it and he didn't want to start getting into the details either. A whole lot of those details involved his sex life and some boy he had just met. Maybe he'd get Sam all bugged out about it later if it came up but Mom and Dad? He didn't want to start telling Mom and Dad about losing...what the hell did he call it? Butt virginity? Jesus, why was his damn butt mixed up in all this magic and angels crap anyway?

At least Mom didn't get too worked up after dinner when he told her he just wanted to hide out in his room for the rest of the night and go to bed early.

He spent the night tossing and turning. His single bed hadn't ever really been a problem before but with the way his wings stuck out at all angles he had ended up sleeping hanging half off the damn thing. The only upside was that he had realized that all that Castiel stuff in his head had died down to something tolerable sometime last night. He didn't know if that was because Castiel was just calmer without him around or if being further away from him made a difference but he'd take it either way. A weird buzz at the back of his head when he woke up was way better than constantly feeling every little thing Castiel felt.

He pulled on boxers and pajama pants and stuck his head out into the hallway. He listened carefully. He could hear Mom snoring but he didn't hear the coffee machine going so it wasn't likely Dad was up yet either. He grabbed one of the shirts Castiel had lent him and darted down the hall to the bathroom. He didn't want to have to explain what the blue squiggles on his arm were or where he had gotten the two huge bites marks on his neck.

He closed the bathroom door softly and locked it. His eyes flicked up the full length mirror on the back of the door and moved over his reflection. There he was with funny blue squiggles on his arm, a rabbit's foot hanging from a leather cord nestled on his chest, a bite mark in the crook of his neck on either side, and two huge freakin' wings sticking up behind him. What the hell.

He focused on the reflection of his left wing until it moved up and stretched. His wing bumped against the ceiling. He stretched the other one up as far as it could go before hitting the ceiling. He looked himself over. He didn't look scary the way everyone else at Castiel's house had. He had stripy feathers with bits of down sticking out. Everyone else had managed to make feathers look sleek or scary... except Azazel, he'd had bat like wings. Why had Azazel's wings been different?

Dean shrugged. He didn't care and he didn't want to know.

He brought his wings down suddenly. There was a whoosh of air that made the shower curtain flap. His eyebrows went up. Could angels fly? He hadn't thought about that before. He stared at his wings. He shook his head. "Yeah, right. No way I'm going to let some feathers put me up in the air. Planes are bad enough and those aren't freakin' magic."

He stripped down and turned the water on. He glanced behind himself into the mirror again while
he waited for the water to warm up. He narrowed his eyes at his butt. It was totally and completely normal. Nothing weird had suddenly happened to it. That creepy weirdo Ephrath was nuts. His butt was perfectly fine. He snorted out a chuckle at himself because yeah, it was pretty damn fine if he did say so himself.

He stepped into the shower and did his best to negotiate his wings into the small space. He was determined to actually have a shower instead of being defeated by his wings again and having to take a bath like he was four.

He ended up having to stand at an angle with his wings sticking out past the shower curtain. He flung the rabbit's foot around to the other side so it fell down his back. It bounced between his wings right on top of that place where they joined. He shivered as a chill went down his spine. The good kind of chill.

He chewed on his lip debating on if it'd be too weird then shrugged. What the hell, right? He might as well figure out the nitty-gritty details of his wings if he was going to have them for awhile.

Tentatively he reached an arm behind his back. His fingers grazed the space between his wings. He shivered again. His brain was telling him someone was touching his nipples or maybe nibbling at his ear. It was like his brain didn't know how to process what he was feeling so it just went haywire and jammed a bunch of pleasure buttons. He was definitely okay with jamming all the pleasure buttons.

He pressed his fingers down a bit harder experimentally and, oh, okay that felt nice. His shoulders slumped and he tried to lean into his own touch. God damn, that felt good. His dick gave an interested twitch. He yanked his hand away when he realized what he had been doing. "What the fuck?"

Was he getting turned on by touching those freakin' monstrosities? No fucking way.

He grabbed the soap and started scrubbing at himself. He wasn't getting turned on by touching those dumb stripy fluff-filled things that had caused him crap tons of trouble since they just freakin' appeared out of thin air.

He did his best to scrub himself down and wash his hair then shot a betrayed look at his wings. What did he do with them anyway? Did wings need to be washed? Did feathers need to be washed? Why hadn't anyone mentioned some of the important stuff the other day instead of giving imaginary biology lessons?

He settled for sticking them under the spray of water for a few minutes before he turned the shower off. Then it was the wet feathers and fluff everywhere comedy hour again while he tried to reach around and pat them dry with a towel.

When it was all said and done he was standing in a puddle of water staring down at his soaking wet pajamas and the shirt he brought with him; his feathers sticking up every which way.

"There has to be an easier way to do this." Dean said. At least his boxers had avoided the flood waters. He yanked his boxers on then picked up his wet clothes. He grimaced at them. He looked at his arm with the squiggles then back to the shirt. Fuck. He'd have to make a run for it again.

He poked his head out the bathroom door. He could hear Mom snoring down the hall and after a few moments of careful listening he could hear the coffee maker going too. Dad was up. Okay, that probably meant he was downstairs. He could just dash down the hall to his room and no one would be any wiser about bites and magic squiggles.
He opened the bathroom door the rest of the way and darted down the hall to his room. He slipped in and closed the door behind him. He leaned back against the door - and damp feathers - and closed his eyes in relief. He had totally made it. He'd just have to be careful that Mom didn't see. She had seen the blue squiggles the other day. She'd only believe that they were permanent marker for so long. The longer the better. He was definitely not explaining how they had gotten there.

"Did you get a tattoo?"

"Ah!" Dean yelped and dropped the wet clothes to the floor.

Sam laughed and threw one of his pillows at him.

Dean scowled. He picked the pillow up off the floor and threw it back at Sam's head. "I told you to stay out of my room."

Sam rolled his eyes. "You were taking forever in the bathroom."

"We didn't stick in a second bathroom for fun you know." Dean said. He went to his dresser and grabbed a dry shirt he was borrowing from Castiel. He pulled it on and started trying to do up the back. It was practically impossible with his wings in the way. "And aren't you supposed to be in school anyway?"

"It's Saturday." Sam said. He pulled his back pack up onto Dean's bed and started unzipping it. "And that's why I was waiting for you. Mom made me pick up all your school work from the week."

Dean's nose wrinkled in disgust. He'd had a million degree fever and sprouted wings and Mom was still thinking about homework? Ugh. What was wrong with parents?

"So you got a tattoo. Does Mom know?" Sam asked as he pulled out a stack of papers from his bag.

"No." Dean said sharply as he fiddled with the buttons up the back of the shirt. Damp feathers kept getting in the way.

Sam's eyebrows shot up. "Dad let you get it?"

"Nobody let me get it." Dean said. He fumbled a button through a hole but when he ran his fingers over it he could tell it wasn't the right one. Goddamn it. Who had made these things? The devil himself?

"You got it on your own? Tattoo artists aren't supposed to tattoo people under eighteen without adult permission." Sam lectured.

"First off, like I'd tell you were I was getting tattoos from. You'd just rat them out." Dean said. He narrowed his eyes at a thumb tack on the wall as he concentrated on the buttons of his shirt.

"I would not." Sam retorted.

"Second, I didn't actually get it." Dean said. He gave a frustrated snort at the buttons and finally just did them up any way they'd go. Screw it being the right way. Why didn't these dumb shirts just have Velcro up the back anyway? "It just showed up when everything started, ya know, getting weird."

"It's a magic tattoo?" Sam said. His eyes went bright. "Does it do anything?"
"Yeah it tells me when dopey haired little brothers ask a bunch of annoying questions." Dean said, grinning. That got the pillow thrown at his head again. He ducked down. It bounced off his wings instead. He grabbed the pillow off the floor. Sam leaned back and put his hands up, getting ready for another pillow attack but Dean tossed it on the bed and grabbed the stack of papers from Sam instead. He leafed through them. "Augh, why couldn't you have just forgotten the history homework? And math? Come on Sam, you're killing me here. I'm sick remember?"

There wasn't any snarky response from Sam. Dean's eyes shot up. Sam was looking at him like he had just announced that his birthday had been cancelled.

"What?"

"You were really sick, Dean." Sam said quietly. "You looked terrible everyone was really worried about you and then you disappeared and no one could find you. You didn't leave a note to say you'd gone to your friend's house."

Dean's eyes went wide. Those last couple of days were hazy and disjointed and he didn't remember much between leaving home and showing up on Castiel's door. He knew everyone must have been worried about him taking off but he hadn't realized they had been worried before that. He had thought he had done a good job at hiding how bad off he had been.

Dean rubbed at the back of his neck. He kind of felt like an asshole. He should have just admitted to being sick instead of getting everyone all worried...but what if he had? Mom and Dad would have forced him to go to a hospital and then he'd have sprouted wings in the ER. Then what? He would have probably been whisked away to some Area 51 for winged freaks.

Sam made a disgusted noise. "It's not your fault you were sick, Dean."

But it was. If he hadn't ditched Charlie's party and went with Ruby and her squad of winged weirdoes he wouldn't have gotten sick and none of this would have happened.

"We were just really worried about you." Sam said earnestly. "I'm glad you didn't-" Sam shrugged. "-you know...die or anything."

Dean didn't know what to say to that, that wouldn't sound dumb and mushy. He nodded awkwardly and went over to grab his wet clothes off the floor. He tossed them over this desk chair to dry.

"Five dollars." Sam said suddenly.

"What?" Dean asked, confused.

"Five dollars and I won't tell Mom and Dad about the tattoo." Sam said, grinning.

Dean raised an eyebrow. "How about you don't say anything and I don't come into your room in the middle of the night and give you a haircut?"

Sam made a face that was way too serious for a 14 year old kid. "You wouldn't."

"I would." Dean said.

Sam stared him down for a moment before groaning, "Fine. I won't tell them."

"Good choice, Sammy." Dean said, gloating. He probably wouldn't have done it. Well, probably but Sam didn't need to know that. He looked down to the papers still in his hand. He tossed them on his desk. He turned back to look at Sam. "Thanks for, uh, pretending not to be freaked out by all
Sam looked at him puzzled. "I'm not freaking out."

"What?" Dean asked, confused. He had wings! He had a cursed rabbit's foot hanging around his neck! There was a whole secret cult of crazy winged people in town! And apparently an entire printing industry in on some screwball biology joke!

"I'm not freaking out." Sam repeated.

Dean looked at him disgusted. "Why not? This is all pretty freak out worthy."

"I dunno. It's just...magic is real." Sam said firmly. He got that I'm a giant nerd and proud of it look in his eyes. "Don't you think that's cool?"

Chapter End Notes

Sam's OCD comment: I'm aware that it's ableist but Sam at 14 was not a beacon of understanding and political correctness (and of course there's also Dean's use of the word dumb).

(I've got to re-watch the episode After School Special (4.13) to see how the Dirk-Sam interaction played out because I was rather certain there were implications that something was going on with Dirk in the flashbacks and that Sam started up the Dirk the Jerk nickname. It's been awhile since I've watched that episode so perhaps Sam knew less than I gave him credit for. (as pointed out in the comments) My original commentary -> In the series Sam at 14 gets into a fight with a kid that just lost his mom to cancer and bestows the nickname "Dirk the Jerk" on him. I'm fairly certain no one knew about the cancer issue but I thought there was some implications that Dirk's home life was troubled in some way, did a teacher not comment on this to Sam in the flashback?)

And Dean's comments about girl hair and girl's conspiring makes me chuckle. Oh, Dean, just wait until you realize you're on the wrong side of sexism now.

I just had another one of those moments where I realize that a lot of people subscribe to this. So hello people that subscribe but do not comment (that wasn't a guilt trip to try and make you comment I just thought I'd say hello since you keep coming back and reading this. Your silence does not bother me).
Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

That kind of story was exactly why he didn't bother to listen to rumours.

Chapter Notes

Despite life events I present to you a new chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was surreal. He went to school this morning and he had a soul mate. He sat through his morning classes and he had a soul mate. He was eating lunch at school and he had a soul mate. He hadn't really realized that life would just go on now that he had a soul mate. It was like none of it had happened. If he didn't push his sleeves up he wouldn't even know the soul mate mark was there. If he didn't touch the side of his neck and feel the ridges of a scar he wouldn't know the mating bite was there either.

Anna had warned him when she came home Sunday night - after their mother told them that under no circumstances were they supposed to tell anyone that Dean had been human - that everyone knew he had a mate but so far no one had said anything to him. People had looked at him but they hadn't said anything, everyone was keeping their distance for now. Castiel hoped he could keep it a secret that his mate was his soul mate.

He was halfway through his sandwich when Meg dragged the chair beside him out form the table and sat down. She helped herself to the other half of his sandwich. She took a bite and grinned at him. She had been doing that ever since they had gotten bored over the summer and fooled around with each other. Castiel had never understood why alphas had to show friendship to other alphas by giving each other a hard time.

"So, mated, huh?" Meg said. Meg leaned over to look at his neck where his shirt collar didn't quite hide the mating bite. "Well, he's got an impressive set of chompers but I guess he would, from what I've heard he's huge for an omega."

"They're not huge they're just...tall." Castiel said defensively.

Meg grinned. "Do big hairy omegas bother you?"

"No." Castiel said quickly. He didn't have a problem with omegas that looked a bit more beta, or alpha even, but Dean didn't look like that anyway. Dean was just...tall because Dean hadn't always been an omega. Dean couldn't help how tall they were any more than anyone else could.

"Sure." Meg laughed.

Castiel glowered at her.
She rolled her eyes. "Whatever. At least you're the new chump for the rumour mill. I was seriously considering moving back home if something didn't happen soon to get everyone's nose out of my family's beeswax."

Castiel looked at her confused. "What?"

Meg stared at him for a moment like she couldn't quite believe what she was hearing. "What do you do for fun? Stick your head in the sand? You work with Gabriel."

"So?" Castiel said. What did Gabriel have to do with it?

"So…" Meg said as if he would suddenly know whatever it was she was hinting at.

Castiel shrugged. He generally tried to avoid gossip, most of it was ridiculous anyway.

Meg burst out in laughter. "You got hit with it too and you didn't even notice?" She wiped tears of laughter away from her eyes. "Oooh boy, okay, I want to live in your fantasy world where we're not worse gossips than humans."

"Notice what?" Castiel asked, annoyed that she wouldn't just tell him.

"The little workplace accident going on between my dad and their dad." Meg pointed over at Ruby who was sitting across the cafeteria with Anna. She chuckled at Castiel. "Come on, my dad was at your place tons last week. You had to have noticed."

Castiel shrugged at her. He had no idea what on earth what she was talking about. Azazel and Lucifer had looked perfectly fine. Neither of them had been injured and besides Lucifer would have just healed any injuries.

Meg let out an amused huff. "Someone needs to sit you down and have the tying the knot discussion with you. How'd you even end up with a mate?" She shook her head with mock pity and disappointment. "My dad and their dad got doused with the same powdery stuff that made you all me alpha, mate now."

Castiel stared for a moment before turning red. If that mystery powder had made it seem like a good idea to mate Dean... Lucifer's comment about recently discovering what that powder did suddenly made a lot more sense. Why hadn't Anna bothered to mention that? She was dating Ruby. She must have known.

"Now he gets it." Meg said. She stuffed the last of the sandwich into her mouth and swallowed it down before continuing. "It's actually kind of gross. They're pining. I never knew my dad could be worse than a beta swooning over some hot alpha-omega couple. I mean, coraxo, just get it over with and get Lucifer to mate my mom too. Screw workplace professionalism." She grabbed his bottle of orange juice and drank half of it. "Anyway, congrats on the soul mate."

Castiel's face paled. He checked to see if his shirt sleeve had ridden up. It hadn't.

He had been desperately trying to keep that a secret. It was one thing to make a mistake about mating at seventeen. A plain old mating bond would fade over time. He could have looked back on that years later and laughed. He was an alpha, lots of alpha's had a few faded scars from mating the wrong person when they were young. But a soul mate? That was a forever sort of mistake. He was stuck with Dean; who seemed indifferent to him one minute and hated him the next.

"How'd you know..." He leaned in to whisper. "How'd you know that? That we're more than just mates?"
Meg's face took on a serious tone. She motioned for him to lean in closer. "Because you work with Gabriel."

Castiel stared at her trying to process that.

Meg laughed and pat his cheek. "See you in class, lover boy."

Castiel sat through the rest of lunch quietly resolving to murder Gabriel the next chance he got. He had asked him to keep quiet about the soul mate part. He hoped Meg was just teasing him and that she had actually learned about it from her father.

His afternoon classes went by with the same silent looks from people but no one mentioned him having a mate let alone a soul mate. Slowly the looks turned from curious to sad and for some reason a few people were scowling at him. By the time school was over Castiel was starting to worry something terrible had happened to one of his family members and no one wanted to be the one to tell him or that he had somehow managed to get every teacher to assign extra homework to everyone but him.

He waited for Anna on the front steps to walk home together. Her last class always finished a bit late.

When Anna finally burst through the front doors she was doing a good impression of their mother. Anna really should have been born an alpha, or at least a beta with a talent. She looked ready to find herself a large book and start smacking people with it—good thing Dean wasn't around. Her eyes narrowed when she saw him waiting for her to walk home from school together.

"What happened?" Castiel asked cautiously.

"You need to take a picture of your mate with today's newspaper." Anna said. She gave an angry snort of annoyance. "First a bunch of people were asking me if you had mated Ruby." Anna glowered over her shoulder at the school. "But those people were arguing with a bunch of people who thought it was someone else but that it was so tragic because Meg's mom had kidnapped them to make them into some kind of, I don't know...super omega equal rights activist!" She made a sound of disgust at that. "And Balthazar for some reason thinks Raphael forbid you from ever seeing your omega again." Anna shook her head in disbelief. "And then all I was getting was condolences because someone started up a rumour that your mate had died in an awful magic accident that either involved those anti-equal rights criminals that got caught last month or some sort of awful human medical experiment."

Castiel stared at her in silence for a moment before bursting out in laughter. As much as he didn't want everyone talking about his soul mate seeing Anna so flustered was hilarious and that kind of story was exactly why he didn't bother to listen to rumours. Who could believe any of that?

"I'm glad you think it's funny." Anna said indignantly. "Everyone thinks you either forced a claim on Ruby or that your mate's some kind of criminal omega rights activist or that you're a widower."

"Except for Balthazar." Castiel couldn't help saying.

Anna glared at him.

"I'm sorry." Castiel said quickly. He rubbed his forehead trying to take it all in. He had been sure the day couldn't get any worse but evidently the gods of fate and fortune had it out for him. "That explains why no one would talk to me today except Meg."

Anna made a noise of contempt. "Yeah. They just all wanted to talk to me instead because I sure
liked having everyone ask if you had forced a claim on my girlfriend."

Castiel sighed as he realized just how much the situation had spiraled out of control. This was worse than people just knowing he had a soul mate. Now Anna and Ruby were being dragged into it. What was he going to do?

He frowned when he thought over what Anna had said. Why did people think he'd force a claim on Ruby? He'd never do that to anyone. He hunched his shoulders together. Except he had. He hadn't meant to, he knew it wasn't really his fault. Meg had said even her father and Lucifer hadn't been able to resist whatever that powdery stuff had been. But he was still the one that bit first and started the entire problem. He was still the one that had needed to make the choice between mating Dean when Dean didn't know where they were or what was going on or letting them both die. He hadn't wanted to make a decision like that. No one would. What had happened and the ramifications had been slowly sinking in the last two days now that he didn't have Dean to distract him.

Anna elbowed him gently. "Hey."

"Sorry, what?" Castiel said, realizing Anna had been talking still.

"Are you going to your mate's house right away?" Anna asked.

Castiel blinked in surprise. He had completely forgotten about going to Dean's house to help them with their wings. "Uh, yes? I mean, I thought I'd put my things away and eat first but..."

Anna nodded. She patted her schoolbag at her side. "Ruby gave me some things to give to you to bring over for Dean. They thought they might want them."

"Things?" Castiel asked, curious.

"Omega stuff." Anna said, looking like she had been practicing not being embarrassed by whatever the 'omega stuff' was. "And they told me to tell you to tell Dean that they're still really sorry about what happened and that if Dean needs anything or someone to talk to they'll be there for them."

"I'll, uh, tell them." Castiel said. He wasn't sure what Dean would say about that and he was rather certain that whatever the 'omega stuff' was Dean probably wouldn't like it. They had been rather adamant that they weren't an omega.

They walked in silence for a few blocks before Castiel's worries finally made him ask about Ruby. "Why do people think I forced a claim on Ruby?"

Anna stopped and arched an eyebrow at him. "Because you picked their bed to screw on."

Castiel felt his face heat up. He had, hadn't he? Oh god, what had he been thinking? His sister's omega's bed? His eyebrows furrowed at the memory of that sweet outdoorsy smell. He frowned. He had been thinking about how good the omega in heat in his lap had smelled and not much else. He should have known something was wrong as soon as his thoughts started to drift.

"I was going to tell you off about it after your rut but..." Anna went quiet. She didn't have to finish her thought. Castiel knew what it was, *but then you almost died and nearly got your soul mate killed with you.*

This past week had not at all been a good start to meeting his soul mate.

"What am I going to do about all this?" Castiel asked, not really expecting an answer.
"Well, you'll have to start telling people what really happened or the rumours will just get worse," Anna said. She spread her hands in an unsure gesture. "I don't know what you should do about Dean. Try to get to know them, I guess? They _are_ your soul mate."

Castiel spent most of the rest of their walk home telling Anna to tell Ruby he was sorry for dragging them into all this and dreading having to start telling people he was mated forever at seventeen. Maybe Gabriel was right to tell people what had happened. At least that way people wouldn't come up with their own strange version of events and drag everyone down with him.

When they got home their mother was waiting for him. She had made a quick dinner for him and had a bag full of...he looked inside and stared at the contents puzzled. It almost looked like some of the textbooks and pamphlets handed out in health class but on loose sheets of paper and in English. It took him a moment to realize that was exactly what they were.

Except for the hard biology portions about anatomy he had never actually read anything about alphas, betas, and omegas in English before. It looked strangely foreign in English.

"Dean left that behind on Friday." His mother said.

"Oh." Castiel said. He could guess why as he glanced over a pamphlet with smiling omegas on the front and a full page of a male omega's reproductive organs on the back.

He ate dinner as slowly as possible, not at all looking forward to spending the evening with his soul mate every night for the foreseeable future. When he couldn't put it off any longer he finally went downstairs and changed into one of the few shirts he had left that would do up at the back and let him bring his wings out.

His mother was waiting for him in the hall with the car keys. She passed them over. "Do you have your cell phone?"

"Yes." Castiel said, putting his hand to his pocket.

His mother nodded. "Good. Phone if you get into trouble. I'll be there as soon as I can. Raphael has people watching the house. All you need to do is get outside if something happens."

Castiel's eyebrows came together confused. Trouble? Dean could be unusually aggressive for an omega but now that they weren't dying or terrified Castiel only had to remember to duck once in a while.

"Dean's family seem trustworthy but they _are_ humans and no one has found Alastair yet." His mother explained. Castiel's eyes must have widened because she smiled softly and tried to fix his hair. "Don't worry. It's mostly a precaution."

That didn't ease his worries at all. In fact that only made them worse. He wasn't about to spend the evening with his soul mate that didn't particularly like him. He was about to spend the evening with his soul mate that didn't particularly like him _in a house full of humans_ while some one that had broken into the safe storage was still at large.

He spent the drive to Dean's home trying to put aside everything he was worried about and ended up worrying about not worrying because Dean didn't like it. He had tried to keep himself as calm as possible for Dean's sake today but he was sure he was going to get snapped at by Dean for being obnoxious through the bond.

When he got there he sat in his mother's car and stared at Dean's home. It was just as run down looking as it had looked when he was last there. He was fairly certain the tree at the side of their
house was actually worse. He narrowed his eyes at the tree. It wouldn't be very hard to do something about it...and maybe the front garden.

Five minutes later Castiel had decided that it really wouldn't take much effort to clean up the front of his mate's house and that he was terrible for putting off going inside. He took a deep breath, grabbed the bag of reading material and the bag of 'omega stuff', and got out of the car. He marched himself up to the front door and knocked. Dean's father answered the door.

"Uh, hello?" Castiel said as Dean's father looked him over silently.

Dean's father gave a subtle nod of his head and held the door open wider, stepping aside. "Dean's in the living room."

Castiel stepped in. He jumped when the door closed behind him. He turned to watch Dean's father jog down the driveway. He frowned, wondering if he had done something to upset Dean's father. He set the two bags down and took off his shoes and jacket. He was still thinking it over when he stepped into the living room.

"What's your problem?" Dean asked.

Castiel looked up to see Dean sprawled upside down on the couch, one leg thrown over the back and the other thrown over the arm and their wings spread out on the floor. He glanced over his shoulder towards the front door. "Your father seemed..."

Dean raised their arm up and made a dismissive swatting gesture. "He's just late for work and on nights."

"Oh, I thought I might have done something." Castiel said. He startled when Sam's head shot up from the other side of the coffee table.

"So do you have wings too?" Sam asked. "Your mom showed us her wings when she explained everything. Is it magic? How you disappear them? You can't destroy matter, right? So do you...scatter the atoms that make them up? Is it like a Star Trek teleporter?"

"Uh..." Castiel's eyes went wide at all the questions.

Dean grabbed a pillow off the couch and threw it at Sam's head. "Could you stop being a huge nerd for ten minutes?"

"I'm not the one who owns every Star Trek movie. Even the one where they go camping and find god." Sam said, grinning. He ducked when another pillow came his way. Cas was beginning to see a trend. Dean threw things at everyone.

"Shut up." Dean said as they twisted around to sit upright on the couch. "And they didn't find god. That was the whole point of the climax."

Castiel looked between the two of them. He had heard of Star Trek and had a general idea that it was about space travel but he had no idea what it had to do with camping and finding some human god.

Dean grumbled at Sam then stood up. "Okay, so let's get this disaster rolling."

"Uh..." Castiel glanced at Sam.

Dean's eyebrows furrowed together. They titled their head like they were listening to something
they couldn't quite hear. "What?"

Castiel glanced over again.

"What? Sam?" Dean's eyebrows went up.

Castiel shrugged. It wasn't his place to tell someone to get out of their own living room but while Dean might be comfortable letting more of their human family see that they weren't human it had been ingrained in him from a very young age that you never ever let humans know you weren't one of them. He had assumed Dean's family would give them some privacy. He wouldn't have minded as much if it was their mother, Mary, she had seen before and was old enough to keep a secret. Sam looked too young to be keeping secrets like that.

"Don't worry about Sam." Dean made another dismissive gesture. "He's...sort of cool. Actually no." Dean turned to Sam. "He's a giant dweeb." They turned back to Castiel. "But he's cool to hang out for now."

"For now?" Sam said, sitting up from where he had been stretched out on the floor. "Last I checked it was a free living room. And I have homework. Where else am I supposed to do it?"

"In your room on your desk like a normal person." Dean said. They shook their head.

"I like to spread out." Sam said.

The two of them bickered for a few minutes before Dean turned back to Castiel and asked to get started again. He glanced at Sam - who was very clearly distracted from his homework - then back to his mate. He shifted uncomfortably. If his mate trusted their brother to keep their wings a secret... He tugged his wings onto this plane. They burst out. He tensed waiting for Sam to dash out of the room to tell every human in a one mile radius that there was an angel in his living room but, of course, nothing happened.

"His wings are bigger than yours." Sam said, staring at Castiel's wings.

"No they're not." Dean retorted.

Castiel was about to say that, yes they were because Dean was an omega and omegas naturally had shorter wings when Dean turned a sharp look on him. He knew enough about Dean to know they wanted him to stay quiet and he suspected that they would be even less inclined to hear the reason since it was because it had to do with being an omega.

Someone was going to have to get Dean to accept what they were or their next heat was going to be quite a surprise. Maybe he'd suggest Dean talk to Ruby after all. It might be easier for Dean to hear it coming from another omega rather than an alpha or a beta.

He started trying to talk Dean through shifting their wings into a higher plane, showing them how to do it as he explained.

They practiced for the next four hours. Well, he practiced for four hours. Dean complained. Sam showed more interest in learning how Dean's wings worked than Dean did.

"I can't fuc—" Dean shot a look upstairs. Castiel could hear Mary moving around. Dean pursed his lips like he'd been caught doing something he shouldn't have. "I can't freakin' do it."

"You're not even trying." Castiel said, exasperated. Dean had sat down and sulked on the couch after the first two hours and from the looks Castiel was getting he thought Dean placed their failure
at hiding their wings squarely on him which was actually rather annoying. He was trying to help Dean. That was the only thing he ever did but Dean just kept getting angrier and angrier with him for it.

"I am too." Dean said and crossed their arms. "I can't feel anything to push my wings into. I'm just shoving my wings back and looking like a drunk pigeon flapping their wings around."

Sam snickered. Dean reached over with one of their wings and gave Sam a knock on the head. Castiel huffed in annoyance but at least Dean was actually using their wings now instead of stumbling around with them and denying that they were attached to them.

Dean turned back to Castiel at the noise he made and looked him over. They narrowed their eyes at him. "You ever think it's just because you're a sucky teacher?"

Castiel gave a long suffering sigh. He glanced at the clock. Had it been long enough? Could he go home now? He looked out the window and wondered where Raphael's people were watching the house from. They'd report back anything strange happening but he was sure they'd tell Raphael if he wasn't coming or if he was leaving too early too. He stayed for another hour before he gave up. Dean wasn't even pretending to try anymore and they were getting more and more grouchy about everything he said.

"It's getting late." Castiel said. "I think we've tried enough for tonight."

"Yeah. Sure." Dean said. "Great class, teach."

Castiel narrowed his eyes at Dean. He took a deep breath and went and got his coat instead of saying anything. He shoved his shoes on and thoroughly did not look forward to coming back tomorrow to have his soul mate complain and scowl while they weren't even trying to learn and then blame it all on him. He might have mated Dean but he hadn't made him an angel. It wasn't his fault Dean had to learn anything about wings.

Chapter End Notes

The Star Trek movie Dean and Sam are talking about is Star Trek: Final Frontier.

Seemingly random spelling mistake: coraxo. Not a spelling mistake but exciting Enochian!

So hilariously "slutty omegas" is probably the most likely thing out of the a/b/o verse because of the large quantities of sperm an alpha is producing/alpha strategies to ensure their sperm wins the competition (the knot thing). It all has to do with "paternity dilution" and the lowering of infanticide. Females that have as many mates as possible in a short period of time are ensuring that males can't determine paternity and aren't inclined to kill offspring because they can't be sure the offspring is theirs. So kudos a/b/o verse you hit the nail on the head with that one.

This makes my decision to make alphas protective of any children make much more sense because no alpha would know with 100% certainty that the offspring was theirs.

If you're interested in reading about promiscuous females and sperm competition this is an interesting article: Females protect offspring from infanticide by forcing males to
compete through sperm instead of violence
Dean tried to shove all that Castiel stuff out of his head. He had known when Castiel was heading over. He could feel it. The closer Castiel had gotten the better he could point out exactly where he was and tell exactly what he was feeling.

And of course Castiel had been worried. That was all that guy did, worry about everything or get embarrassed about everything. Dean was already in a bad mood from not being able to sleep all weekend - his bed was too freakin' small for six limbs - then Castiel had shown up and sat in the driveway thinking at him. It was like Castiel knew Dean found it annoying so he did more. Having Castiel's head shoved back into his own hadn't done anything for his sunny disposition.

"Hey, Castiel forgot some stuff." Sam said.

Dean craned his head around to look. He narrowed his eyes at the bags Sam was holding. He shrugged at it. It wasn't his prob— Wait. Hold on one damn minute. No fucking way. Castiel hadn't brought that crap here, had he? He darted up off the couch towards Sam.

"Yeah, looks like he did." Dean said. He grabbed the bags off Sam. "Don't be nosy."

Sam gave him a dirty look. "I wasn't being nosy."

Dean glowered at him. He opened the bag and looked inside. His eyes went wide. Shit. Yes. Castiel had brought that bag of crazy with him. He didn't even want to look in the other bag. He felt his wings twitch at his discomfort. Well, at least him and the wings agreed on that.

"Now who's being nosy?" Sam said, smirking.

Dean scrunched the bag closed and hmpfed at Sam. "I thought you had homework?"

"You do too." Sam shot back. "Mom's not going to let you get away with not doing it."

"Yeah, you're right." Dean said, making a getaway. He darted up the stairs as fast as he could with the wings on the pretext of homework. He slipped into his room and shoved the door closed. Fuck, that was close. He didn't need Sam seeing that stuff. He'd never live it down even if it was all bullshit.

He picked up the bags and went over to his dresser. He yanked open the bottom drawer and took out some clothes. He shoved the bags in and put the clothes on top. He closed the drawer and breathed easier. He'd have to figure out how to get rid of them but for now that was probably a good hiding spot.

There was a knock at the door. Mom. She stuck her head in. "How'd it go?"
Dean shrugged because it went *horrible* but he wasn't going to just tell Mom she was probably going to be stuck with a shut-in winged freak for a son forever. "Okay."

Mom smiled at him softly. "From what Naomi told us, it'll take some time to learn. Don't worry. You'll get it."

"Yeah..." Dean looked away. What if it took years? He was going to turn into the cat lady that lived next door. He glanced back up at Mom and felt like an asshole. He had wings. So fucking what? Mom had dealt with way more than he ever had and she didn't sit around feeling sorry for herself.

"Yeah." He said, trying to drum up some confidence.

"Why don't you come down and help make dinner with me and Sam?" Mom said.

Dean knew Mom was trying to make him feel better - including him even though he was a winged freak - because his wings were more of a hazard in the kitchen than a help. "Yeah, okay."

He helped with dinner, only knocking over a few things, and tried not to think about how much he sucked at the whole *shoving his wings into a higher dimension* thing. Castiel had made it look easy and had kept giving him these looks like he was the slowest kid in class and had felt all prickly and annoyed most of the night. But no matter how many times Castiel said it was easy and to just do it, he couldn't. He couldn't visualize some freaky higher plane of existence and he couldn't shove his wings into it.

He was pretty sure Mom wasn't buying his *everything is okay* smile over dinner. No, he knew she wasn't. But she didn't say anything. He knew that wouldn't last forever. Mom might give him space to work things out on his own for a little while but she wouldn't let it slide forever. She'd want to talk about it eventually if he couldn't figure it all out for himself.

After dinner he volunited Sam to help him move his bed and dresser. A weekend of trying to curl up on his bed with wings sticking out everywhere wasn't making it easy to sleep. They moved his dresser to the end of his bed and pulled the bed over to the middle of the room and away from the wall. He was hoping that way he could lay on his back or stomach and let his wings flop off the sides. Maybe he'd actually get some sleep tonight.

It wasn't long after that Mom and Sam went to bed, they both had places to be tomorrow while he had to sit around the house, so he stayed up and watched *Star Trek: The Final Frontier* because it wasn't as goofy as Sam tried to make it out to be.

Close to midnight he gave up trying to keep his eyes open and crawled upstairs to bed. He shoved his pants and socks off and fought with the buttons on the shirt - seriously, had angels never heard of Velcro? - before slipping into bed in his boxers. He squirmed around and shoved his wings this way and that until he found the perfect position where his wings weren't cramped up and he could stretch out; flat on his back, arms, legs, and wings all sprawled off the bed and half on a pillow because sleeping on the weird wing-joint-crotch thing with all the feathers was awkward and a little uncomfortable once his weight settled on it. When he finally got everything just right he yanked the covers up to his chin and passed out.

He woke up three hours later breathing heavy and trying to roll his hips up against the blankets. He huffed out a quiet laugh in the dark. With everything that had happened the last week he hadn't really been all that interested in doing any self-lovin' and rubbing one out in a stranger's house was creepy anyway.
But now? Well, it was the middle of the night and he was at home. No one was going to burst into
his room and start talking about magic or wings or something. He reached out blindly for his box
of kleenex on the bedside table and dropped it down beside his hips.

He ran his hand down the flat of his stomach and under the waist band of his boxers. He slid his
fingers over the head of his dick, sucking in a sharp breath at the feel of it. He pulled his hand back
out to slide his boxers down and kick them off. He arched his back trying to position himself back
in the centre of the bed. The corner of the pillow underneath him rubbed into that spot between his
wings. He froze.

That had felt really good.

He stared up at the ceiling not really sure what to do. What if the only reason he was all hot and
bothered was because he had been grinding his wings on the pillow? What the hell then?

He took a few slow long breaths. The cord of the rabbit's foot felt like it was going to choke him.
He tugged it around to lay on his chest so it wasn't strangling him to death. He took a few more
deep breaths. It didn't help.

Okay...so...he had a hard on maybe because he had been kind of rubbing the wing version of his
crotch against something. That...that...that was really freakin' weird.

He licked his lips and stared at the ceiling.

He was still pretty freakin' horny.

He curled his toes a few times and tried not to think about it.

He shifted a little in bed. Pleasure zinged through him as the pillow rubbed up between his wings.
He stopped. He bit at his lip. It wasn't that weird, right? He arched his back and then flattened out.
That felt even better. ...okay...maybe...he could do that for just a bit?

He rolled his shoulders and rubbed his back along the pillow. The rustle of sheets and feathers
sounded deafening. Someone had to hear that. He stopped. He drummed his fingers on his
stomach, tapping out the beat to a Led Zeppelin song.

Fuck it. Who the hell would know? He'd just deny everything.

He wrapped his hand around his dick and rubbed his back along the pillows.

Holy fuck.

That was fucking awesome.

It felt like someone had let a match down his spin— the sexy kind of match.

He shimmied down the bed trying to get the pillow to hit exactly the right spot again.

The bed creaked. His heart stopped. Someone would definitely hear that. The walls were paper
thin. When beds started rocking everyone could hear it.

...well, he didn't need to grind down on the bed. He had hands. He could put them to use.

He grabbed the kleenex box and sat up. He set the kleenex back on his nightstand. He reached up
and over his shoulder but couldn't quite get at the spot that felt really good. He tried coming in
from below. If he bent his arm just right and pressed his wings down he could just skim his fingers
He rubbed his fingers in small circles and let out a hiss. It felt a lot like playing with his nipples. Well, at least that was what his brain was still trying to tell him. His brain was just as confused about this as he was because that was definitely not his nipple.

He stopped and blinked at the darkness as he came to a startling conclusion.

"Fucking hell." Dean whispered under his breath. "Wings totally are like walking around with your dick hanging out."

No wonder angels were weird about wings. That explained why Castiel was all moody and awkward about whipping his wings out in front of Sam. Was it like flashing someone? He hadn't cared too much when he had been flashing Mom back at his place. He wrinkled his nose. What kind of creeper was Castiel? Who didn't care that much about flashing someone's mom?

He shrugged. He had more important things to do at the moment than think about Castiel.

He bent his arm and pressed harder against that spot then grabbed his dick and stroked his hand down it. He breathed out like he'd been punched in the gut. Yeah, that had felt really freakin' good.

He closed his eyes and tried to lean against the hand between his wings. His heart started to race as he moved his other hand faster; coming all the way up and over the head of his dick every third stroke before plunging back down. He pressed his fingers into the muscle between his wings and barely managed to cut off a moan. Jesus fucking Christ, at least those stupid wings were good for something.

He bit at his bottom lip and willed himself not to make any noise. He pumped his hand faster. Fuck, he was gonna need those kleenexes. He was just about to stop and grab a couple when he felt something weird. It was almost like he had a finger up his butt and was pressing down. He slowed his hand down. His eyebrows drew together as that sensation built up.

What the hell?

Without warning he suddenly found himself sitting in a wet spot.

He scrambled off the bed. What the fuck? He hadn't come. His dick was still hard. He sniffed at the air. Had he just had the all time most embarrassing accident in the middle of jerking off? It didn't smell like it, so what the ever loving fu—

Something dripped down the inside of his leg.

What the hell?

Without warning he suddenly found himself sitting in a wet spot.

He reached out for his beside lamp and clicked it on. He looked down at his legs. There wasn't any blood but there was something clear and wet dripping down his thighs. He reached down and wiped some of it off. He brought his hand up to look. More of it dripped down his leg. He wiped it up with his other hand. He stared at his hands, both covered in some kind of clear...gooey stuff. It almost...it almost looked like...

He brought one hand closer to his face and leaned in to sniff. Holy fuck. That smelt like girl.

He was pretty sure his heart fucking stopped. Why the hell was he covered in— girl juices!?

He frantically grabbed at the kleenex and wiped it off his hands. He grabbed a handful more and
started wiping it off his legs. He stared at the wet spot on his bed. What the fuck did he do about that?

He let out a surprised yelp when he felt more of the- the- stuff drip down his leg. Where the hell was it comin— No.

No. It was definitely— no. That was not real. That Ephrath chick was crazy.

More of it leaked down his leg. He trembled. He grabbed a handful of kleenex and shoved it between his legs then darted around to the end of his bed to his dresser as quietly as he could. He pulled open the bottom drawer, wincing when it squeaked. He took the clothes out and pulled out the bags Castiel had brought.

He dumped the bag with all the paper onto the floor and pawed through it looking for the pages about sex. It was crazy. Whatever the pages were going to say it was going to be crazy talk because butt vaginas weren't a real thing and he didn't have one and oh fucking hell that stuff had leaked through the kleenex!

He gathered up some pages that had those made up biology drawings on them and scrambled back over to the kleenex box before it got everywhere.

By the time he had finished reading through the first page - which had been totally useless and just went on about how wonderful it was to be an omega - he had stopped leaking stuff out of his butt. He breathed easier and glanced over the rest of the pages he had grabbed. None of them were really all that useful.

He pulled his boxers back on covering up the offending region. He went back to the papers scattered on his floor in front of his dresser. He stared down at them. He crouched down beside them and poked through them until he found a stapled together booklet about omega reproductive health. Fucking hell, no.

He squeezed his eyes closed then plunked down to the floor to read. He really didn't like what he read. His wings wrapped around him when he got to the part about epivaginas opening when aroused and relaxing internal anal sphincters and vaginal lubrication. He dropped the page like it was a poisonous snake when he got to the part about hormones and testicles.

He stared at the page. That was goddamned enough of that for tonight. He gathered the pages up and stuffed them back into the bag. He put it back in the bottom drawer. He grabbed the other bag and paused. What the hell was in the other bag?

He swallowed hard. He dumped second bag out on the floor.

He stared puzzled. There was the weirdest looking dildo he had ever seen in a clear plastic box, a sheet of yellow paper with the title Heat Meals and a phone number scrawled on the bottom, two of those meal replacement drinks, a bunch of Trojan Magnum condoms - he preferred Durex -, and...a package of...panty liners? What the hell?

A really god awful sinking feeling hit his stomach.

What if butt vaginas got periods?

His eyes scanned back to the yellow piece of paper. He looked back to the phone number at the bottom of the page. There was a short note before it, I'm really sorry about everything! You can phone me on my cell whenever you want if you have any questions! It's what fellow omegas are there for! ~ Ruby
He grabbed his clothes and pulled them on. He screwed around with the buttons on the back of the shirt for ten seconds before swearing and leaving it undone. He snatched the yellow paper off the floor and crept downstairs to make a phone call. He didn't care that it was the middle of the night. She had said he could phone whenever he wanted and he wanted to phone right the fuck now before he freaked right the fuck out.

Dean tiptoed into the kitchen avoiding the squeaky spots on the floor and grabbed the phone off the wall hook. He dialed the number and cursed the fact they had never replaced the rotary phone that originally came with the house and the fact that Ruby's number had a lot of nines in it. He was sure someone was going to wake up to the sound of the wheel clacking.

He fidgeted on the spot and did the cliché pick up. pick up. pick up. chant under his breath as the phone rang. He was ready to start swearing about having to dial again when a groggy voice answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"Ruby?" Dean whispered.

"Who is this?"

"Dean." Dean said.

"Dean...oh! Dean!"

"Keep it down." Dean whispered, annoyed. Jesus, it was the middle of the night, she was going to wake someone up!

"Are you okay?" Ruby asked still sounding a bit sleep muddled.

"Yeah. I mean, no- I mean...I don't know." Dean said. He wasn't even sure what had happened exactly and he didn't really want to talk to a girl about jacking off. "I, uh, I was...I was reading some stuff."

He almost snorted in derisive laughter loud enough to wake the whole house right there. Reading some stuff? Awesome code for jerking it.

"Okay...?" Ruby said, obviously confused.

"Yeah. And...and what's the deal with...with..." Dean gulped. He couldn't say it out loud. "Never mind. Sorry for waking you up."

"Wait! Dean!" Ruby called out.

"Shh! You're going to wake everyone up." Dean hissed into the phone. He was sure of it. In fact everyone was probably already up just waiting for him to say something embarrassing over the phone.

"Sorry." Ruby whispered. "But what's wrong?"

Dean took a deep brief and then held it because what the hell did he say? He couldn't just say, oh hey, so this weird stuff leaked out of my butt and by the way do butt vaginas bleed once a month? He let his breath out in a burst and asked a different question, "Why did you give me panty liners?"

There was silence on the other side of the phone.
"Ruby?" Dean asked. Had she gotten cut off?

"They're for slick." Ruby said.

"Slick?" Dean asked. What the hell was slick? Was that some whacky angel code for period?

"Ummm...I think the medical term is vaginal lubrication but no one says that but doctors and nurses and health teachers." Ruby said sounding embarrassed.

Dean's mind raced. He had read about that. What had those pages said? It happened when an omega was aroused?

"It's really embarrassing to leave wet spots behind if you start getting turned on in class." Ruby said.

Dean connected the dots. His face paled. What if that stuff gushed out of him in class! What if he finally figured out that higher plane bullshit and then went to school and a huge puddle of girl juices leaked out of his butt!

"You still there?" Ruby asked.

"Yeah." Dean said. Fuck, he could never go to school again. His eyes went wide. He could never rub one out again! Not unless he was willing to sit in a puddle of- of- that stuff.

"Is that why you phoned?" Ruby asked gently. "Everything else is okay?"

"Uh...do omegas get periods?" Dean blurted out.

"Periods?" Ruby said, confused. "...oh! Right. Periods. Sorry, I'm still half asleep."

Dean rubbed at his forehead. "Well?"

"No. Beta girls do and alpha girls get them sometimes." Ruby said informatively. "We get heats. I sent a page with food suggestions for heats on it. The stuff teachers and old people recommend is awful. You might as well be eating gruel with iron shavings in it."

"What the hell are heats?" Dean asked.

"Oh...ummm...I thought Ephrath had talked to you." Ruby said.

Dean huffed and didn't say, yeah, about crazy things. He let out a long sigh. "Let's pretend she didn't."

"Oh...okay. Well, heats are...omegas get them once every eight to twelve weeks." Ruby explained. "They're when you're...ummm...they're when you can conceive."

"Conceive?" Dean asked, confused.

"When you can get pregnant." Ruby said.

Dean hung up on her. The whole lot of them were crazy. As soon as he could leave the house he was taking both those bags of junk out back and burning them.
The next few chapters will be doing some fast forwarding through time! Yay!

Vague Worlding! Notes and thoughts: I was perusing various a/b/o fics and there seems to be a general theme of male omega = small penis/testicles and considering the far greater quantities of estrogen a male omega would need (in comparison to any dude that does not have ovaries) to maintain ovaries that seem to be functioning at 200% (like breathe on an omega and they get knocked up) unless the point of the fic is the opposite) then it seems like a male omega hitting puberty probably wouldn't be making much in the way of testosterone and would be making a hell of a lot more estrogen and related hormones which are not particularly conducive to being particularly well endowed. Plus high testosterone makes for a more difficult pregnancy so if omegas are these super breeders they probably don't have exceedingly high levels of it. This is my round about way of saying male omegas probably do have smaller dicks/testicles.

And I would think that male omegas would have to go through a cycle of testosterone/estrogen production, like the closer they are to their heat the more "female" hormones would have to take over and a pregnancy would have to kick that up a level even more, especially in fics that have male omegas developing breasts of a sort during/after pregnancy. So, I'd think that male omegas that are pregnant quite a lot of the time probably wouldn't have the best sperm count due to the massive dose of estrogen maintaining a pregnancy would need. And maybe male omegas that do produce larger amounts of testosterone wouldn't be going into heat as often, or maybe erratically, and be less likely to carry a pregnancy to full term or conceive in the first place.

Which leads me to birth control. Since hormonal birth control (henceforth referred to as HBC (no, not the Hudson's Bay Company)) is tricking the body into thinking it's pregnant I'd think for male omegas the extra estrogen would be much more obvious since they'd need just as large a dose as female omegas to get their bodies to believe they're pregnant (a bit more boob in women isn't massively noticeable a bit more boob on a guy probably would be). And I wonder what the long term exposure to estrogen would do to a male omega's testicles (which is weird to wonder). Do they eventually become sterile in that regard? Are they already producing enough estrogen that they can't conceive that way anyway? Maybe there should be two kinds of HBC for omegas, continuous use (which would be a pill every single day and no off days because an off day wouldn't mean withdrawal bleeding it would mean going into heat) and an intermittent use pill only taken during a heat? One that doesn't function to prevent ovulation but acts more like a morning after pill, antiprogestrone without the side effects perhaps? Because this is fiction and once in awhile I like to be nice about things.

And "heat suppressants" as a secondary drug is odd since it would function the same way as HBC. An omega is going into heat because they're body is preparing to become pregnant. Stopping the heat means stopping ovulation which in turn means stopping pregnancy. So why is there "heat suppressants" and HBC? HBC would act as a "heat suppressant" because an omega that's pregnant won't go into heat.

I spent way to much time thinking about that.
Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Castiel slouched down in his desk and wished his talent was the ability to disappear.

Chapter Notes

I'm not exactly happy with this chapter but I figured ya'll would rather have it now rather than wait for me to re-write it three more times over the course of two or three more weeks. So it's short and I feel kind of *meh* about it. I'll write a longer chapter next update to make up for it.

Castiel waited for Anna at the steps again. Anna didn't look any happier than she had yesterday.

"You have to tell people." Anna said, angrily brushing past him.

"I know." Castiel hung his head and followed after her.

It was getting worse at school but he still hadn't summoned up the courage to tell people yet. Mostly because he didn't know what to say if he wasn't supposed to tell people Dean had been human.

He'd asked his mother last night what he was supposed to say when people asked why they had never seen Dean before and she had said it might be better if he avoided answering the question until Raphael decided what to do. It didn't help him at all.

They walked in silence. Castiel was sure he could feel the chill coming off Anna. He really did need to sort out the mess at school even if he wasn't allowed to explain it all exactly.

"...Dean phoned Ruby last night." Anna said suddenly.

Castiel looked over in surprise. "What? Why?"

Anna's eyebrows furrowed as if she couldn't quite explain. "Ruby said they were...upset."

Castiel sighed. That wasn't new. "Dean's always mad at me."

"Not mad." Anna said. "Ruby said they seemed more..." She shook her head. "I don't know...they think maybe Dean needs someone to talk to— an omega someone."

Castiel wondered if Dean would be any more reasonable with a fellow omega than they had been with him. Some omegas were anxious around alphas. He had always thought it was a leftover product of the past that some omegas were like that but maybe it was instinctive. Dean wouldn't know anything about the history of omegas so they couldn't be concerned about that. Maybe it was natural for omegas to be wary of alphas and Dean just had a very strange way of showing that.
When they reached home dinner was quick. He put his school things away while his mother finished up some work. She was coming with him tonight. Maybe she'd be better at teaching Dean what to do with their wings.

Three hours later it became plainly clear that she wasn't.

His mother wasn't any more successful at teaching Dean than he was but at least Dean pretended to be trying longer this time. They spent the evening trying to coax Dean into reaching for a different plane with their wings but Dean would just shove their wings back and give his mother a sour look.

He didn't get a chance to ask Dean why they had phoned Ruby. He didn't think Dean would like it if he brought that up in front of his mother and their mother and if Dean wasn't actively angry with him he wasn't inclined to change that. It could wait.

He asked the next day when Sam finally left the room but all Dean did was turn his nose up at him and pretend to accidentally shove him with their wings. Castiel didn't bother to bring it up again.

On Thursday he went to school with every intention of telling people that he was mated and that Ruby wasn't his mate but the act of doing it rather than working himself up to it was considerably more nerve wracking. He'd do it tomorrow. He'd definitely do it tomorrow.

Anna wouldn't talk to him on the walk home. There were a growing number of people who were bothering her and Ruby. The gist of the problem being that everyone thought if Ruby wasn't mated they wouldn't have anything to hide, so they should gladly wear their hair up and a shirt with a wide neckline in order to show their unmarked neck, like some slick omega waiting for a knot.

It was ridiculous of course, they weren't all living in some semi-feudal society of the past. Ruby shouldn't have to prove to anyone they weren't mated. But if Ruby shouldn't have to prove they weren't mated than he shouldn't have to prove that he was. The whole thing had him agitated. Why couldn't people just stay out of his business? It was hard enough having to deal with Dean every night. He didn't need to spend his days trying to squash rumours. He was starting to understand why Meg had seriously been considering just packing up and leaving town. It'd be a lot easier.

That night at Dean's house he had meant to ask if he could take a picture of Dean with his phone just to lay all the rumours to rest but he was agitated and worked up about the day which meant Dean was privy to that which just made Dean angry with him for, as he put it, invading his personal space.

It didn't help that Dean was already irritated with him before he even got there but what was new about that?

His mother suggested they leave early which was fine by him.

His mother started the car and pulled out of Dean's driveway. She drove down the street a short ways and stopped the car.

"What exactly is going on?" His mother asked sternly.

"Nothing." Castiel said sharply. Nothing he couldn't handle now. He had quietly picked up a stray feather of Dean's before they left. He hadn't got a picture so a feather would have to do. At least then everyone would know his mate was an angel and not a demon and people would stop bothering Ruby. They'd just bother him.

"So you've chosen to act like a prickly acerbic young alpha because you thought we'd better enjoy your company?" His mother said in an alpha mom tone that made Castiel shrink into the seat.

Castiel looked down into his lap as his face heated up. "No."
His mother waited silently for him to come up with a better answer. Castiel sighed. "I haven't told anyone at school yet."

"I thought you started telling people on Tuesday." His mother said.

"I was going to. I..." Castiel trailed off. He was going to and then he had lost his nerve. "...but if I tell people...it's...it's real."

His mother reached over and touched his cheek gently. "Castiel, I know you didn't plan for any of this to happen but it's very real whether or not you tell people."

"I know." Castiel said plaintively. "But I don't know what to say and everyone at school thinks I forced Ruby to be my mate and Anna's mad with me and Dean's always mad at me and I don't know why. It's not like they have to go to school and have everyone stare at them and think they'd claim a mate against their will. Dean's at home with people trying to help them."

His mother's face went blank for a moment. "That at least explains Anna's behaviour." His mother said quietly. She pressed two fingers to her forehead and closed her eyes which for his mother might as well have been screaming in frustration. "I'll need to phone Lucifer...and the school."

"The school?" Castiel said, mortified. If his mother phoned the school then the staff would either pretend to not be centering him out and tell everyone during class to put an end to the rumours or worse, they'd send a newsletter home.

"It's clearly gotten out of hand." His mother said.

"I'll tell people. Tomorrow." Castiel said quickly.

"Yes. You will." His mother said. Castiel breathed in relief until his mother added, "And I'm still phoning and having a chat with your teachers for failing to notice the severity of the situation."

Castiel sunk down in his seat and wondered how mad Dean must be with him right now for flooding them with fear and general misery.

Castiel didn't sleep much that night. It left him ample time to think over all the ways he could tell people about Dean and all the ways he could blurt it out like an idiot and be the laughing stock of the school for his last year— or the ways he could screw it up and have people think he had been in control of his actions when he had mated Dean.

He had worked himself up into a nervous mess by the time he got to school the next morning. He had decided to tell people at lunch, that way he'd only have to sit through half the day having people ask him awkward questions about his mate that mostly hated him.

He dragged himself into his first class and sat down at his desk. Dean's feather felt like it was burning a hole through his pocket, the mating bite felt like it was throbbing with every heartbeat, and he could swear someone was carving Dean's name into his arm with a knife using the soul mate mark as a guide.

The teacher came in, sweeping through the room carrying a bundle of paper. Castiel's heart stopped. His face went cold. No. No, they wouldn't hand out a newsletter at the start of the day. They never handed out a letter home at the start. They were irresponsible teenagers that lost everything! It couldn't be a letter home.

The teacher set her things down on her desk. Castiel held his breath hoping she'd put the papers
down and then start teaching.

Fortune hated him. She moved a few things around on her desk then turned around to the class and started handing out the letters.

Castiel slouched down in his desk and wished his talent was the ability to disappear as the class slowly went silent and turned to stare at him.

For some reason the teacher gave him a letter too, as if he wasn't acutely aware that he had a mate. He looked down at the newsletter. His stomach dropped. In precise formal Enochian he was congratulated for finding his soul mate and offered condolences for the unfortunate circumstances with which they had met.

The teacher started talking about harmful rumours and the repercussions for spreading them. Meg had it right. Leaving was the only option.

Castiel skipped the rest of school that day.

He would have liked to skip school indefinitely after that but his mother wasn't going to let that slide more than once. She told him the story Raphael had made up to hide what Dean had been then told him that he had to go to school the next day and tell everyone that Dean was homeschooled by beta separatists that were still conflicted over rejoining society.

He spent the next two weeks at school fending off questions about why his soul mate had a name like Dean and why didn't this Dean go to school with them? Castiel would mutter something about separatists and how they interacted more with humans than demons or angels. Then people would ask if they could see his soul mate mark. At least he knew how to answer that question. He'd tell them off for being crass. It wasn't polite to ask. It didn't matter that it was a one in a million chance to find a soul mate it was still rude to just ask to see something as private as a soul mate mark.

And if he wasn't at school trying to make people believe his terrible answers than he was at Dean's house getting glared at by his omega mate.

The only time he didn't feel like he was under attack was on the weekend when he could barricade himself into his room and do all the homework he hadn't been doing all week. He was actually looking forward to doing homework these days.

Another Monday rolled around. He spent the day trying to avoid questions about Dean and had accepted that he'd spend the night dealing with a pushy omega that didn't want to be in the same room as him.

He was almost to Dean's house when he nearly crashed the car. Everything had seemed fine then suddenly his head was full of chaotic noise. He stopped the car and waited to see if it would happen again. When he had sat still for fifteen minutes and hadn't passed out or died from an aneurysm he cautiously started the car moving forward again. He added another problem to his list: sudden debilitating migraines.

He drove the rest of the way to Dean's house without incident and parked the car in the driveway. He walked up to the house, knocked, and went in. Mary had told him to just knock and come in last week.

"Castiel." Mary said sounding cheerful. "You just missed it."

Castiel shrugged out of his jacket and hung it up. He stepped into the Winchester living room to find Mary and John holding out a sheet and Dean standing in front with their back to them. He
stared at the scene confused.

Sam bounced up beside him. "We were thinking, you and your mom keep saying to push your wings into an alternate reality or whatever it is and Dean's been whining that he's just shoving his wings back into nothing."

"I have not been whining." Dean retorted.

Sam gave Dean a look which implied that was far from the truth. He turned back to Castiel. "Anyway, we thought maybe if he could actually push against something it might help."

"Yeah, it's a lot better than all that visualize this, try to feel that, crap." Dean said. He pushed his wings back against the sheet and looked like they were concentrating.

"...and it worked?" Castiel asked since no one had actually said it worked. Either it had worked or humans had strange pastimes that involved displaying sheets in their living rooms.

"Obviously." Dean said and jerked his wings back.

For a split second Dean's wings disappeared and Castiel was hit with another burst of noise in his head but this time it wasn't so chaotic. This time it was clear what it was: Dean. The connection was gone just as fast as it came. Dean's wings burst back onto this plane.

He had gotten flashes and hints through the soul mate bond before but never so much all at once. Those first times had just been surges of anger or protectiveness; base instinct, protect my mate, those sorts of feelings. They had been overwhelming at the time but this felt more...complete.

He sat on the couch and watched as Dean tried over and over to hide his wings. Each time Dean managed it for a few seconds the connection would spring to life and each time it would feel clearer and stronger.

"What're you—looking at?" Dean asked as his wings disappeared again.

Castiel glanced at Dean's family. Had Dean still not told them about the soul mate bond? Dean scowled at him but through the bond all Castiel felt was apprehension and anxiety. Castiel almost smirked. Dean complained about him being worried all the time?

Dean's wings reappeared and the connection cut out. Dean gave him a stony look. If Castiel hadn't gotten that brief flash of insight he'd think Dean was particularly angry with him.

Dean narrowed his eyes at him. "What?"

"Nothing." Castiel said. "You're doing very well."

Dean looked at him suspiciously but didn't say anything. He went back to concentrating on his wings.

The night wasn't exactly pleasant but at least Castiel wasn't under attack from all sides. Dean kept acting mad but every time the soul mate bond flicked on all Castiel felt was anxious wariness directed at him with a hint of determination for hiding his wings.

When he left Dean's home that night he had the odd sensation of knowing exactly where Dean was in the back of his head. The soul mate bond didn't seem to be working unless Dean had his wings hidden but at least the regular mating bond had started working properly.
He didn't know why Dean thought it was so annoying. It made the alpha in him relax to know exactly where his mate was. It was calming if it was anything. At the very least it was nice to know his soul mate didn't actually hate him.
Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

If he wanted to bike over to Bobby's store he could. He could ride his bike clear across town or go jump in the creek naked if he wanted to because he didn't have any goddamned wings sticking out of him. Okay, maybe jumping into the creek in the late fall wasn't the best thing to do with his newly regained freedom.

Chapter Notes

Extra long chapter to make up for not posting in awhile.

....I was actually in the process of posting this last night and I legitimately fell asleep at the computer. I am turning into my mother. "I'm not asleep, I'm just doing this with my eyes closed."

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Another couple weeks of practicing hiding his feathered monstrosities and memorizing the approved version of Raphael's cover story for when he met other angels - apparently saying my parents are actually winged freaks that were smart enough to stay away from other winged freaks wasn't good enough - and house arrest was almost officially lifted. Dean thought he might be going stir crazy. He had just spent nearly two months inside with nothing but his family, Castiel and his mom, and occasionally Bobby for company. Two freakin' months!

All he had to do to escape home was sit around with his wings stashed away in the 8th dimension for the next twelve hours while Castiel got weird, Naomi tried to act pleasant, and Raphael watched him like a hawk while she told him to repeat the official cover story. As if he'd ever have anything to do with angels ever again once he got rid of his wings.

Raphael was creepy as all hell and always looked like she might be thinking about trying to squash him like a bug. Even Naomi was giving her edgy little sideways looks. Dean had taken to thinking of Raphael as The Grand Poobah Angel. He was pretty damn sure she might actually squash him like a bug if he asked her about furry blue hats with horns so he made what he thought was a very wise decision and kept his damn mouth shut.

It was really hard.

Especially when she whipped out an ancient looking book and explained in that creepy cold voice of hers that it was the official roaster of all angels and demons under her care. Once Dean signed it he'd be an official member of their wacky cult and apparently not joining up wasn't an option if he ever wanted to go outside again.

Dean really really wanted to crack a joke about joining the Loyal Order of the Water Buffalo.

Bobby showed up close to the end of his twelve hour final countdown looking royally pissed and
started going on about magical contracts. Raphael actually looked ruffled for all of ten seconds when he showed up. Apparently the existence of the book that looked like it had come out of the Lord of the Rings prop department was supposed to be kept on the down low.

Bobby and Raphael had it out in that funny sounding language which Castiel said wasn't funny sounding it was *Enochian*.

Dean lounged on the couch ignoring how damn itchy his back felt and trying to appreciate the fact that he could lean back on the couch without wings in the way while Bobby jabbed an angry finger at the book and Raphael narrowed her eyes.

"Why is Mr. Singer so upset about this?" Castiel leaned over and whispered.

Dean shrugged and ignored all the worried and excited anticipation buzzing around in his head from Castiel right along with the itch he couldn't scratch.

"It's just a precaution." Castiel added.

"A precaution for what?" Dean asked. It sure wasn't a precaution against dying of boredom. He started flicking at the rabbit's foot laying on his chest.

"It'll let Raphael find you in case you're abducted by hunters." Castiel said seriously.

"Hunters. Right." Dean was still on the fence about that. Bobby was a retired hunter - Ellen too apparently but not Jo or Ash - and if Bobby was a hunter well then hunters couldn't be all that bad but every time Castiel talked about them there was a spark of genuine fear. It wasn't as bad as that time Castiel had first met Bobby but it was still there. Whenever Castiel was there when Bobby was over there was a distinct wariness about him and Castiel would edge closer like he was waiting to throw himself in front of a bullet.

Dean didn't know what to think about it all because he didn't think Bobby would hurt a fly but over the last couple of weeks Bobby had been telling him about hunting monsters between trying to figure out ways to break the rabbit's foot curse or change him back into a regular old human *without* wings. Bobby mentioned once that he had *tracked* an angel before but hadn't said what had happened once he found it and he made that grumpy Bobby face when Dean asked about it.

It all left Dean feeling weird about it. Angels were douchebags for the most part but he hadn't met any that looked like they needed to be put down like a rabid dog.

It actually left him feeling *really* weird that there was this whole community of people flying under the radar that hunted things that looked and talked like humans. But Bobby said he only ever went after the ones that went after people so Dean figured it sort of balanced itself out. Eye for an eye, right?

Raphael and Bobby broke off from the argument. Bobby pointed at him and nodded towards the kitchen where his family had been banished to when they each got home. Dean sighed and got up. He followed Bobby into the kitchen. Castiel got all worried and looked like he was torn between following him to make sure Bobby didn't do anything and staying back so he could be further away from Bobby. Dean rolled his eyes at the whole thing.

Bobby shot a last scowl into the living room before he started drawing symbols all over the walls. Mom gave a disgruntled squawk as she watched her walls get drawn on.

"Just chalk." Bobby said, holding it up. He kept drawing. He made a last symbol over the door and then there was an odd static blast wave that made everyone jump.
"What was that?" Sam asked.

"Some wards against eavesdroppers." Bobby said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"So it was magic?" Sam asked. It made Dean roll his eyes again. Sam thought all this angels and magic crap was great. Well, he wasn't the one with wings and a curse. Sam gave him a dirty look. "You win at everything."

Dean couldn't help but smirk. Alright, so the rabbit's foot had its benefits. He had beat Sam at every card, board, and video game they had since he had gotten cooped up. He was going to have to go to Vegas once he was old enough.

"Don't go sticking your nose into that." Bobby said gruffly. "That kind of magic comes at a cost."

Sam slouched down in his chair and looked around the room as if he were the one that was so hard done by.

Bobby shook his head and muttered about youth before going on. "That book Raphael wants you to sign up in, it's harmless on its own but it could be dangerous."

"Dangerous?" Dad asked. He sat up straighter and squared his shoulders. He looked towards the living room where they were having an impromptu angel party.

"Well, whoever has the book can find anyone whose name is in it." Bobby said. He scratched at his beard and frowned to himself. "...actually makes a lot of sense...more always showed up if you caught one." Bobby went quiet thinking it over. He shook his head to get himself back on track. "...I was gonna say they could just keep themselves out of your business but..."

"But what?" Mom asked.

Bobby looked over at Dean and chewed on his lip. "Well, Dean has a knack for getting into trouble."

"Hey!" Dean said defensively. Mom and Dad both shot him a look. Dean sighed. "Alright, so maybe I know how to have fun."

Sam snorted. Dean reached over and messed up his hair for that.

"And now that he's gone and put his foot in it." Bobby shrugged. "It might actually be the one good idea those giant turkeys have had."

"...you think it's a good idea if Raphael can stalk me?" Dean asked in disbelief.

"There are a lot of things out there that might try to snatch a human, less that might try to grab an angel but now you've got other folks to worry about." Bobby said. He motioned to himself. "Not every hunter is as understanding. If you ever got yourself into trouble we'd be able to find you."

"Why does everyone think I'm gonna get into trouble?" Dean asked.

"Because you sprouted wings overnight and got cursed." Bobby said flatly.

Dean sighed. He hated it when Bobby was right.

Mom, Dad, and Bobby talked a bit more about whether it was a good idea. Dad was skeptical, Mom was leaning towards yes. Dean had been all for it at first because it would mean he could finally get the hell out of the house but now he was a bit concerned. Magic hadn't really worked out
all that well for him so far. That made him glance over at Sam: the magic nerd. He narrowed his eyes at a scrap of paper that Sam was keeping out of view of Mom, Dad, and Bobby.

Sam looked up at him and spooked like he had been caught red handed then he shrugged and went back at it. Dean leaned a bit closer to see what he was getting up to. His eyebrows shot up. People thought he was the one that got into trouble? Sam was the one that was writing down magical symbols at the kitchen table.

Sam wrote down the last one then shoved the paper into his pocket. He looked at Dean innocently. Right. So freakin' innocent.

"Dean?" Mom asked.

"Yeah?" Dean turned away from Sam with a final I am going to blackmail you so hard look.

"Do you want to do this?" Mom asked him seriously.

Dean opened his mouth to say no but then closed it and glanced over at the living room. The whole time they'd been in the kitchen Castiel had been feeling all concerned about him and Castiel got weird about hunters and Bobby said not every hunter was as cool as him. He pressed his lips together in thought. The kind of fear Castiel had for hunters wasn't something like oh no, a spider! it was more like oh no, an axe murderer is at my door! and Raphael had made it sound like he had to sign the book if he ever wanted to see the light of day again.

"Yeah, I'll do it." Dean said. He really wanted to get the hell out of the house at least once more before he died.

"You sure?" Bobby asked. "You can't undo it as far as I can tell."

Dean grabbed the leather thong attached to the rabbit's foot and gave it a twirl. "Yeah, can't turn out too bad, can it? I'm lucky, aren't I?"

Bobby gave him an exasperated look before turning around and wiping a few of the symbols off the wall. There wasn't a static wave this time. He motioned for Dean to head into the living room. "Alright."

Dean started into the other room. Bobby didn't follow him and neither did his family. Raphael was touchy about people - humans - seeing how this magic book worked. It was probably a good idea. If she wasn't careful Sam would be copying the whole thing down in one of his notebooks.

"You've agreed to sign and join the community officially?" Raphael asked.

"Uh, yeah." Dean shrugged. "Looks like it."

There was a ping of satisfaction from Castiel at that. Well, great, at least Castiel was happy about it.

Raphael opened the book up to the first page and took out a regular ball point pen. Dean almost laughed but Naomi sent him a dark look. Raphael wrote out his name in exact perfect letters and asked him if she had spelt his name right. Dean Winchester. Looked good to him. He nodded. Raphael took out what looked like some kind of over the top ornate knitting needle but with a nasty looking point to the end.

Raphael held out her other hand. Dean's eyes went wide. No one had said anything about getting skewered!
"It's alright." Castiel said. "Everyone does it."

"Great. Everyone does it." Dean said. He held his hand out to Raphael. "Let's all go jump off a bridge next."

Raphael gave him a hard look, Naomi raised one eyebrow a fraction of an inch, and Castiel felt like he was going to crawl under the couch and die. Dean rolled his eyes. It was their super secret magic ceremony, not his. He wasn't gonna act like this wasn't something straight out of one of Sam's fantasy books.

Dean winced when Raphael jabbed the killer knitting needle into his finger without warning. She squeezed his finger over the book. A drop of blood hit the page. It didn't even surprise Dean that the blood drop fizzled and went up in smoke. He was starting to expect blood to catch fire when angels were around.

Raphael frowned. She squeezed out another drop of blood. The same thing happened. Raphael frowned harder, which was impressive.

"Maybe they're not completely an angel?" Naomi said cautiously.

Raphael turned his hand over and dragged the edge of the needle over the back of his hand.

"Son of bitch!" Dean yelped. He tried to jerk his hand away but Raphael had a grip like a goddamned vice.

Blood splattered onto the page. It didn't fizzle and smoke, it went up in flames. Everyone jumped back. Smoke filled the room. The fire alarm went off. Raphael laughed. Dean was sure Raphael laughing was probably the scariest part.

The fire alarm turned off. Dad darted into the living room looking for the source of the smoke with a box of baking soda in hand to put out flames.

"Why the hell does all this magic crap end up with fire and smoke?" Dean asked, cradling his hand to himself. It was still dripping blood.

Dad stared at Raphael and sputtered out a bunch of words, the only intelligible ones being, fire, burning my house down, and what?

"Your house and family are fine, Mr. Winchester." Raphael said calmly. She picked up the book which was apparently fire proof because there wasn't a burn mark on it. She flipped through the pages until she stopped. She ran her finger over the page then stopped and tapped. She held out the book to Dean.

Dean looked over, careful to keep his hand away in case it started another fire, and read what Raphael was pointing at. It was his name. There were some squiggles underneath it and a line went over to another bunch of squiggles that Dean recognized as Castiel's name only because he had to look at the damn thing every day. There were squiggles under Castiel's name too. He stepped in front of the book to block Dad's view and hoped no one would comment about his name having a line connecting it to another name. He had a suspicion this had to do with all that soul mate and mated crap they had gone on about at first.

Mom was suddenly there trying to put a paper towel to his hand while Bobby tried to calm Dad down, explaining that blood was usually the cost of magic because angels were sadists and couldn't just use hair or fingernail clippings or something.
When everyone was finally calmed down and the house had been aired out Raphael took out a black box from her leather bag. She set it down on the coffee table in front of Dean. Dean eyed it suspiciously. Everything these angels had given him had been something weird, like messed up biology textbooks and screwed up looking dildos.

Oh god no. What if it was another screwed up looking dildo? What if that was the official welcome to the cult gift?

Raphael coldly motioned for him to open the box. Dean squeezed his eyes closed and opened it. No one was laughing or gasping in shock. He opened one eye and looked down. It was a cellphone. It looked exactly like Castiel's phone.

"...huh?" Dean said because after magic books, smoke, and fire Raphael was...giving him...a cellphone?

"You may use it for personal purposes if you'd like but its first and foremost function is to allow you to call for help if you are ever in danger." Raphael said as if she were giving a funeral speech. It made Naomi press her lips together and very pointedly not look at Raphael.

Dean stared at it. It made a twisted sort of sense. He could phone if something happened and the book would find him. That was...actually kind of crafty, using magic and technology together like that. It seemed like something Sam would dream up.

"The cost is absorbed by the Netaab." Raphael said.

Dean looked up and stared at her confused. Mom was right there with him and asked what the hell that was supposed to mean—but with less swearing.

It turned out that, whatever Raphael had called it, was basically city council for angels and that it paid for everyone's cellphone bill out of some wonky angel tax that he didn't have to pay until he was out of school.

Dean stared at the cellphone. He ran his fingers along the rabbit's foot. He really was damn lucky with this thing. He'd just gotten a free no strings attached cellphone. Well, except for the wings and cursed part. But he was definitely starting to think the rabbit's foot was less a curse and more a blessing.

He was totally going to clean up in Vegas when he was old enough.

"I've arranged for private two hour lessons for you Mondays to Wednesdays after school so can better understand your...new heritage." Raphael said as if she enjoyed the idea about as much as Dean enjoyed the idea about school after school.

"I, uh, I think I'm good in the angel heritage department." Dean said. There was no way he wanted private lessons with some weirdo from Saint Charles. There was a buzz of sarcasm at the back of his head, like Castiel was saying, yeah right. Dean shot him a shut the hell up look.

Raphael looked between Dean and Castiel. She narrowed her eyes fractionally. "I can arrange to have the material sent here along with a reliable teacher."

Dean was sure his face went as white as a ghost. Materials? Materials? That was probably going to be more creepy butt drawings! The rabbit's foot made him lucky but he wasn't that lucky.

"No!" Dean yelped. He coughed and cleared his throat. "I mean, no. I'll go there. Can't get anything done with Sam tromping around like an elephant."
Mom looked at him funny. Raphael did her Bond villain impression again.

"An orderly environment is better for learning." Raphael said, glancing around the living room. Mom's funny look morphed into her it's rude to murder guests but I'd like to look. Raphael tapped her fingers like a millipede in her lap. "You'll get a text with the classroom and time and a list of any materials you might need to bring. Transportation will be arranged if you can't get there on your own."

"Great." Dean said. Dear god, he hoped these private lessons weren't with that nutty biology woman. He was totally going to skip out on them if it was...maybe he'd skip out on them anyway. What were they going to do? It wasn't like he'd care if they suspended him for skipping. He didn't want to go.

Raphael switched topics from things Dean definitely did not want to talk about to going over the secret society of secrets lecture which Dean had gotten a few times now. He didn't know why everyone kept telling him that he couldn't tell anyone - anyone human - that he had sprouted wings. Because why would he? He didn't want everyone at school to know he had wings that looked like they were out of some eight year old's Disney princess fantasy.

Once everyone agreed again that no one should talk about any of this angel stuff to anyone currently outside the living room Raphael was out the door with a chilly I will see you soon that sounded less like a goodbye and more like a threat.

Mom asked Naomi and Castiel to stay for dinner but Naomi declined which meant that he got some peace and quiet from Castiel nattering on in his head and a whole weekend free to do whatever the hell he wanted.

Whatever the hell he wanted ended up being getting up early on a Saturday and going to hang out at work because he was cool like that. Plus, no freakin' wings!

If he wanted to bike over to Bobby's store he could. He could ride his bike clear across town or go jump in the creek naked if he wanted to because he didn't have any goddamned wings sticking out of him. Okay, maybe jumping into the creek in the late fall wasn't the best thing to do with his newly regained freedom.

So it was off to work to harass Jo and Ash, and Bobby if he was there. When he got there he grinned wide. At least he was cooler than the goofy looking blonde behind the counter.

"Hey, Jo. Long time, no see." He said, flashing a shit eating grin at the severely put out look on her face when he walked through the door.

The expression on Jo's face screamed Ellen in so many ways it was actually a little scary—a lot scary. Ellen could be very scary.

"You've been sick for weeks and now it's just-" Jo coughed and lowered her voice. "Oh, hey Jo."

Dean shrugged and rolled his bike past her, heading for the backroom.

"Employees only." Jo said, sticking her foot out.

"I'm still an employee." Dean said, kicking her foot out of the way. "I've just been sick."

He guided his bike into the back room and grabbed a rope of licorice out of the jar that Jo kept hidden back there. He bit onto the end of it while he closed the door.
"You look pretty good now." Jo said as she made a grab to swipe the licorice off him.

Dean jumped aside and ducked out from behind the counter. "It was a miraculous recovery but Jo-" He said solemnly. "-it was dire. I was wasting away. I wrote out my will. You get my music and movies."

Jo chucked an empty paper coffee cup at him. "Asshole. I knew you were sick that day. Nobody gets that hung over."

"Have you seen your brother before?" Dean shot back. He snatch up the coffee cup and threw it back at her. She caught it and set it down and smiled innocently. Dean narrowed his eyes at her for a moment before he spun around. "Ellen! I mean— ma'am."

"Don't ma'am me. I'm not your mother," Ellen said and dragged him into a hug. She kept her voice down as she whispered. "Don't go getting all mucked up in anymore magic stuff, you hear?" She let him go. "And you don't even call your mother that. Well, you better not, neither of us are that old."

Dean knew better than to make a crack about Ellen's age, women were touchy about that kind of thing.

He spent the next couple of hours listening to Jo alternate between being stoked that he could work weekends again, weird and gushy and girly that he was better now, and being pissed off at him for having the gall to get sick and make her worried. There were some really unfortunate costumers in between all that.

It was all normal.

He didn't have to worry about wings or gross stuff coming out of his butt. Everything was normal because it was normal. Well, his back was really itchy but he could ignore the way that his wings were itching to get out because without them flapping all over the place leaving behind bits of fluff everything looked nice and perfectly normal. It was like an advertisement out of a Martha Stewart magazine, just with more snarky teenagers serving coffee and used books.

Sometime around noon he started picking up Castiel radio again but as long as Castiel stayed out of his life he'd stay out of his— not that he wanted to be in Castiel's life anyway. He'd had enough of that bundle of nerves after two months.

He was well into his second cup of free coffee - free because he was a delight to be around and drew the customers in even if Jo didn't believe it - when the door opened and his name was called out.

"Dean?"

Dean snapped his head around. It was Lisa. She had phoned a couple times while he was sick. He had played up the super contagious card to keep her from coming over and visiting. Dean felt his heart start to race, he hadn't seen Lisa in two months. Were they on again? Were they off again? What did girls think it meant when boys got sick and ditched them for two months? He hoped that if they were off again that they were at least still friends. He hated it when the girlfriend parts messed up the friend parts.

Jo cracked up laughing when the door swung closed and knocked Lisa in the ass. Dean shot her a murderous look. Jo grinned back at him. Dean looked back to Lisa, nervous. Lisa smiled at him in that way. They were on again.

Dean totally did not do the dramatic movie moment with Lisa, sweeping her into a hug and laying a
big wet one on her. He didn't. Jo was just making gagging sounds because she liked doing it.

"I take it you're not contagious anymore." Lisa said as she sat down in one of the comfy chairs.

"Better hope so." Jo muttered. "Or you're gonna be on your ass sick after that."

"Yep. Officially better." Dean said, grinning. "Wanna go make out behind the bookstore?"

"Hmmmm...with the dumpsters and stray cats?" Lisa said. She gave it some serious thought. "Sounds like a great time but I have to get home to wash my hair."

"Or could I interest you in Dean's last free coffee of the day instead?" Jo asked.

"Make it tea and we have a deal." Lisa said, grinning.

"Deal." Jo said. She had a large tea steeping in one of the ceramic mugs in a few seconds. She passed it over the counter to Lisa with an exaggerated flirtatious wink that made Lisa throw her head back and laugh.

"Don't put the moves on my girlfriend." Dean said in mock defense.

Jo shook her head sadly, "I can't help it if I'm just that good."

Dean was mid-laugh when he realized that the distant buzz of Castiel was getting stronger and clearer. He flicked his eyes towards the door. How the hell did Castiel know where he was? He'd said that the whole mind meld thing didn't work for him. Maybe he was just going past the store? It could just be coincidence.

His eyes went wide when he remembered that Castiel didn't work far from the Bobby's store. What if Castiel had seen him go into the bookstore and was coming to...to say crazy angel stuff in front of Lisa and Jo?

"You alright? You look like someone walked over your grave." Lisa said. She pressed a hand to his forehead. "You don't feel like you're having a second bought of whatever you had."

Dean opened his mouth to say something but it dropped open and nothing came out when Castiel walked into the bookstore looking sternly wary of it. Dean let his head roll back as he groaned, "Oh no."

"What?" Lisa asked.

"Nothing." Dean turned away and pulled the collar of his jacket up as if that would actually manage to hide him form view. Oh god, what if Castiel started blathering on about being soul mates in front of Lisa? Raphael had just told everyone to shut up about the wings and angels. She hadn't actually said that they should keep quiet on the soul mate thing too. But they definitely should. In fact they should all just completely deny the existence of that.

Dean let out a defeated huff when Castiel marched over with a box. Dean could feel him getting closer without having to look and he could feel all the anxiety building up and that weird feeling that happened sometimes that Dean thought meant Castiel was thinking about him. It kind of had a girlfriend feeling about it, like Castiel was checking him out, but he was definitely not Castiel's girlfriend.

"These are the cookies from yesterday." Castiel said. He held the box out. Dean glowered at it. Castiel put the box on the counter. "They're perfectly edible but we just made more and had to
make room."

"Uh, hi?" Lisa said. She gave Dean a confused side-eye look. "...Dean?"

"This is Castiel." Dean said through gritted teeth.

Why the hell was Castiel here? Dean would have liked to let it go at that but he realized Jo and Lisa were staring at him while Castiel looked at the tiny amount of distance between him and Lisa. Disapproval rang through Dean's mind. Castiel's eyes flicked down to his arm to where those blue squiggles spelled out Castiel's name under his sleeve. Another bubble of disapproval erupted. So Castiel disapproved, did he?

Dean grinned. He wrapped an arm around Lisa's waist, "Castiel, this is Lisa. My girlfriend."

Castiel's eyes went wide. He let out one small surprised, "Oh."

"Hi." Lisa stuck out her hand and beamed a thousand dollar smile at him.

Dean raised an eyebrow daring Castiel to both be rude and polite. He wasn't sure which he wanted more, Castiel squirming in concealed disapproval or Castiel being rude so he got the chance to tell him off.

Castiel put out his hand to shake. Lisa took it cheerfully.

Dean's head erupted in emotions. It freakin' hurt. His hand shot up to his forehead. "Fuck."

"Are you alright?" Castiel asked just as Lisa did.

"Yeah. I'm fine." Dean said. He waved them both away. "Just...bit my tongue."

"I'm Jo by the way." Jo said, sticking her hand out across the counter. "Haven't seen you at school before. New?"

"I go to the private school." Castiel said.

"Oh. Saint Chucks." Jo said knowingly.

"Saint Charles." Castiel corrected. He looked between Dean and Lisa.

Dean got hit with a wave of...jealousy? Seriously? It wasn't like they were even friends. Where did Castiel get off on being jealous? He was just some guy he knew...and happened to have his name tattooed to his arm.

"So..." Jo said, eyeing the box Castiel had set down on the counter. "...are these up for grabs?"

Castiel glanced at Dean. Dean gave him an annoyed look. It wasn't as if they were his cookies. He hadn't asked Castiel to show up with cookies and start thinking at him and being jealous about Lisa.

Dean waved at the box. "Yeah, sure. Go ahead. I'm not really a big fan of cookies anyway. Eat'em all."

"Dean." Lisa scolded. She turned to Castiel. Dean got another hit of jealousy. Lisa smiled. "So how do you know Dean?"

Castiel told Lisa the same story he had told Mom. Lisa smiled and nodded. Jo was stoked to learn
she had an in for free cookies at her favourite bakery in town. Castiel was perfectly pleasant to everyone even though Dean knew he had been all weird and possessive not even ten minutes ago. Jo and Lisa ate it up. Dean tried not to look like he hated every minute of it.

Castiel excused himself after a few more minutes claiming he had to get back work. He gave him the squinty eyes on his way out. Dean did it right back at him.

"He seems nice." Lisa said. "A little off beat, but nice."

"And hot." Jo said, still watching the door like he might come back. "That's the kind of friend you should be making, Dean. Hot friends that bring cookies."

Dean snorted in annoyance.

His carefree weekend of do whatever he wanted without wings was pretty much ruined after that. He'd been trying to get away from Castiel and then the dude had the nerve to show up in a completely open to the public store during business hours and be nice to his girlfriend and friend and bring cookies. Ugh.

These angel weirdoes didn't know a damn thing about privacy.

He spent Sunday morning waiting for Mom and Dad to go out grocery shopping. The moment they were out the door he grabbed the two bags of crazy - minus the box of condoms, the panty liners, and the meal replacement drinks because someone could actually use those - and took them outside. He dug a shallow grave, dumped everything in, poured the lighter fluid he had bought yesterday over it, and set the whole thing on fire.

"Are you doing magic?"

Dean did not let out a shriek. He turned around and shot Sam an angry scowl. "Don't do that!"

"It's not my fault you're going deaf at seventeen." Sam said sarcastically. "You shouldn't listen to music so loud."

Dean snorted and turned away. Sam didn't know what he was talking about. Louder meant it was better.

"So?" Sam prompted. He pointed down to the fire. "Is it magic?"

"Yeah. It's a disappearing act." Dean said. He watched the flames lick up and thanked god that none of the weird diagrams had been on top when Sam came out.

"...so what is it then?" Sam asked after a few moments of silence. "Oh, did you and Lisa break up again?"

"What? No." Dean spluttered. Why the hell did Sam think that?

"Oh. So you're not burning months of sappy love letters from Lisa?" Sam said, smirking.

Dean took a swipe at his head. Sam ducked away and darted into the house. Dean flipped him off. He'd go deal with the little brat later. He had a fire to watch in the meantime, an immensely satisfying fire.

When the fire had burnt itself out Dean buried the remains. He dragged a patio stone over the patch of freshly turned dirt and stomped it down. He looked at the spot; satisfied that no one would
ever have to look at the horror show in those pages ever again.

Then it was Monday. The big day. He was officially about to re-enter the real world for the first time since the whole ridiculous wing thing had happened.

His alarm went off for the first time in weeks. He groped around in the dark for it until his fingers mashed at the buttons on top. It turned off. He pressed his face back into the pillows and fell asleep.

The light flicked on as Mom knocked at his door. "Dean, it's time to get up."

Dean groaned something that was supposed to mean that he was definitely getting up in just a second, just as soon as he dissolved into his mattress never to be seen again. It would be an awesome way to depart the land of the living: death by being warm and comfortable.

"Dean." Mom said in her mom voice.

"I'm up." Dean grumbled. He stretched out his wings. He rubbed at his face and yawned.

"I've got time to drop you and Sam off at school if you want a ride." Mom said. She rapped her knuckles on the door frame again. "And don't forget you're supposed to go up to Saint Charles after school."

Dean groaned. He was so skipping out on that.

"It's a good idea. Better to be prepared than land in hot water not knowing anything." Mom chided. She tapped her fingers on the door frame. "You've got five minutes to get up."

Dean sat up and blinked. Mom nodded and headed downstairs. He contemplated flopping back down to the bed but decided he didn't want to know what would happen if he slept past those five minutes. He yawned again then started to drag his teeth over his tongue to get rid of what felt like one of those fluffy feathers in his mouth. He wiped his tongue off on his hand and looked. Yep. Yet another bit of fluff. He wiped his hand on the side of the bed grimacing at it. His wings were dumb looking to begin with and the last two months hadn't exactly made them look any better but whipping them out and hiding them over and over was giving them a scruffy look and there was feather dust everywhere.

But who cared? He could get rid of them so they could look as scruffy as they wanted if he didn't have to see them.

He concentrated for a moment. His wings disappeared except for a few stray feathers, fluff, and dust. Dean brushed them off his bed to the floor. He was gonna have to vacuum again.

He got dressed and absently scratched at his back where that weird wing crotch part would be if it wasn't hidden. It didn't feel all...tingly and nipples when he didn't have wings. It felt more...relaxing without them there, like he was getting a really good back rub every time he scratched.

It felt surreal to eat breakfast and pack his schoolbag up and fight Sam for the front seat before going to school. Somewhere along the way he had stopped thinking he'd wake up from the nightmare of having wings and a cursed rabbit's foot to thinking he'd wake up from a dream where he was going to school and everything was perfectly normal.

His first class of the day was spent writing a multiple choice test for an early midterm in his history class that he'd only half studied for; turned out not having to write quizzes or tests for two months
right after getting off summer break wasn't the best for study habits. He thought he knew about half the answers. The other half he had no clue. He filled out the other half of the scantron card at random and called it a day. Besides, his history teacher said if he bombed it he could take another go at it next week since it was his first day back in school.

English was up next which meant trouble.

"Dean!" Charlie burst out of her chair and tackled him to the ground. She let out a surprised squeak when Benny grabbed her by the back of her hoodie and hauled her back up to her feet.

"Easy, Charlie." Benny said as she tried to squirm out of his grip. "Don't want to break him on his first day back."

"You don't have to defend my honour." Dean said, getting up from the floor. "I can take her."

Charlie stopped squirming. She looked to Benny. Benny looked at her. They burst out laughing.

"Yeah, yeah. Laugh at the guy that was seriously ill." Dean said with an over dramatic eye roll. He dropped his books and binders down at their table. He shoved Charlie's stuff to the other side and stuck his tongue out at her when she protested.

Dean was surprised when Bela slipped into the chair beside Charlie. It wasn't like Bela and Charlie didn't like each other but he rarely saw them hang out. They'd always been friends of friends to each other. What the hell had happened while he was gone?

"They've been working on a project for their computer class together." Benny said, sitting down beside Dean.

Dean glanced across the table where Bela was showing Charlie something on her phone. Charlie's eyebrows fixed together in deep concentration. He hadn't even known Bela was into any of that computer stuff Charlie was into.

Before he could ask what project Charlie and Bela were working on the English teacher walked in and started on about how great it was that he had recovered and was rejoining the class and what did he think about Catcher in the Rye?

His immediate thought was, oh god, kill me now, but Sam had read it and liked it so he launched into one of Sam's reasons about why the book was meaningful even to kids today and how it was a literary classic.

It was during the group discussion towards the end of class that Dean started to notice a weird smell prickling at his nose. He leaned closer to Benny - discreetly - and sniffed. It was Benny. He smelt... good.

He knew Benny smelt good, he'd found that out first hand when they had gotten up close and personal last year, but normally it didn't waft off him like it was now.

"Dean?" Charlie waved a hand in front of his face. "You still with us?"

"Uh, yeah." Dean said. He looked down at the notes he had made for the class and then back to Charlie, Benny, and Bela. "Yeah, everyone's a phony and I'm gonna quote the word fuck in an essay and not get in trouble for it."

Charlie and Benny laughed. Bela looked annoyed. The bell rang for lunch.
Charlie tried to persuade him into spending lunch sneaking into one of the computer labs but he had already made plans to do some sneaking around with Lisa. Charlie pouted at him but he assured her she would get him all to herself in math after lunch. Apparently that was enough to get him out of trouble with the little sister he never wanted and make him an honorary member of Project Red Scare, whatever that was. Charlie said she'd explain later. Being under home arrest for two months had really put him out of the loop.

He made for his locker after that; Benny took off to bug Jo and Charlie and Bela disappeared to work on The Project.

Lisa sidled up to his locker just as he was shoving his books away. She grinned at him, "Wanna make out under the bleachers?"

"Damn, I wish we had bleachers." Dean laughed. He closed his locker and spun the lock.

"Don't worry, I've got another place in mind." Lisa said deviously. She grabbed his hand and started pulling him along.

Dean followed because when Lisa had a plan it was usually and good one with some making out invo— what if his butt started leaking girl juices? Dean stopped dead.

Lisa jerked backwards at the sudden stop. She turned around frowning but it dissolved into worry. "You okay? You look like you might throw up."

Dean bit the inside of his cheek. He had flat out stopped touching himself since the incident but he'd woken up a few mornings after a sexy dream, grinding into the mattress since then to find himself all...wet down there. He'd been doing a lot of laundry lately but there was no way in hell he was wearing panty liners in bed— or ever.

"Dean?"

Dean's eyes focused back on Lisa. Nothing gross had happened at the bookstore and he had kissed her then and they had been cuddled right up against each other most of the day. He gave himself a shake. It probably only happened if he touched his dick. If it happened with just kissing then all those times Mom had planted one of her embarrassing Mom kisses on his forehead should have been a hell of a lot more embarrassing. Making out was probably okay. This angel crap couldn't have ruined that much of his sex life.

"I'm good. Let's go." Dean said. He squeezed her hand. She looked him over and didn't move. Dean put on his best carefree smile. "Really. I just remembered Halloween's coming up and I don't have anything to wear. Being cut off from the outside world makes you forget the important things."

Lisa gave him an amused look and shook her head. "Come on."

Lisa led him down the hallway and around the corner. She stopped and looked around, obviously checking that no one was watching them. She opened a door to their left. She slipped in and pulled Dean in after her.

It was pitch black and smelt like bleach.

Lisa turned the light on. She had a grin on a mile wide. "I know you have a thing for clichés. So, how 'bout it? Me, you, this cozy janitor's closet, and eighteen minutes before the cleaning staff is done their lunch break."
"Eighteen minutes?" Dean laughed. "That's weirdly specific."

"I may have been planning this for awhile." Lisa said, stepping closer.

He watched her curiously as she dug into her pocket and pulled out— oh no.

She arched an eyebrow at him holding the condom up.

Dean gulped. Okay, this had gone from dry make out session to wet dick touching and not the good kind of wet. He rubbed at his neck as his face turned red. "Can we, uh...maybe just make out?"

Lisa chuckled for a moment before her eyes went wide. "Oh. You're serious."

"Yeah." Dean said, taking a step back. He took in a deep breath - Lisa smelt good too - and tried to look...he didn't know. Having regular sex was like a third of the whole point of having a girlfriend. How the hell did he turn down sex? He never turned down sex. Sex was awesome. Except now his butt leaked just when he jacked off. It would probably be a million times worse if he actually had real sex.

Lisa narrowed her eyes at him. "You're not going to puke on me are you? Or ahh...Sam said everything was coming out both ends."

"No." Dean said. He was going to kill Sam. "I, uh, I don't...I don't wanna over do it on my first day back. Figure I should ease back into things, ya know?"

Lisa looked him over warily, as if she wasn't too sure about the not throwing up part, before she nodded and tucked the condom back into her pocket. She stepped in closer and threw her arms around his neck. "Alright."

Dean took in a deep breath - why did Lisa smell so good today? - because Lisa was a force to be reckoned with when they got down to serious make out time. He didn't know how she breathed half the time when they were at it. He had asked once and she had said it had to do with wind playing instruments but he didn't really get how that crossed over to making out.

He was tense at first, sure his butt would turn traitor, but when nothing happened he slipped his arms around her waist and started to kiss back. He was hit with that awesome making out rush. Everything felt tingly and warm and definitely not wet. He redoubled his efforts. He sucked at her lips and slid his tongue in. She ground her hips against him. He scooted his hips back. He wasn't taking any chances with the whole dick touching problem.

Her hands dragged down his chest and slipped under his shirt. Great idea! He moved his hands up to do the same and grinned to himself through the kiss when he got a handful of boob. He had missed boobs the last two months.

He swiped his thumb over Lisa's nipple and thanked god that she didn't wear bras with padded cups. It was just a thin little layer of lace between him and that nipple and the sounds she made when he rubbed one was like winning the lottery.

Lisa let out a soft moan and started kissing down the side of his neck. She paused to suck a hickie just below his ear. He whimpered and leaned his shoulders back against the door. He tilted his head back as she moved down his neck, her teeth grazing over his skin, then suddenly she bit down low on his neck.

Dean's head thrashed back and knocked off the door with a bang. He let out a sound like he had just came in his pants and, holy crap, maybe he had. There was a brief second where they were both
surprised by what happened then Lisa bit down again. Dean groaned and felt his knees go weak. He was about to just give up and let gravity take him to the floor in a heap when he felt that now familiar pressure building up in his butt.

His eyes popped open in terror. He reached beside himself for the doorknob. He turned it and went tumbling out the door. He tripped and fell on his ass.

Lisa caught herself on the door frame and laughed. She shot a look down each way in the hall and motioned for him to get up. "I can't believe that just happened. Hurry up and get back in here."

Dean clench his butt as tight as he could and scrambled to his feet. He darted down the hallway to the bathroom calling over his shoulder. "Sorry! Think I'm gonna be sick!"

He made it into the bathroom just as he felt the stuff start leaking out of his butt. He dashed into a stall and locked the door. He undid his jeans and shoved them down just as some of the stuff gushed out of him. It dripped down his thighs and soaked into his boxers. Dean scrambled to get his shoes off so he could save his jeans.

More of it flooded out. He yelped. He reached for the toilet paper than realized he could just plunk his ass down on the toilet. He did just that.

He sat there and waited for it to stop but he could feel it building up. He put his head in his hands and stopped clenching. It gushed out. He his stomach flipped in disgust. This was the worst.

When it finally stopped he wadded up a bunch of toilet paper and shoved it between the cheeks of his ass. If it happened again hopefully that would be enough to soak up anything until he got to a bathroom. He ended up abandoning his damp boxers to the trash.

He slinked into math ten minutes late but the teacher didn't write him up for it when he said he was still having some stomach issues.

The rest of his day was spent in a state of nervous fear. What if it started pouring out of him again? Why the hell had it happened anyway? He hadn't touched his dick. What the hell was the deal with his neck?

He would have been more than glad to get the hell out of class when the last bell of the day rang except in the last fifteen minutes all he was feeling was Castiel. As if he was at the school. And he felt all agitated and worried because of fucking course, the dude was never not worked up about something. That was so not what he needed right now. He just wanted to go home and shower.

He stomped out of the school and marched towards the Castiel homing beacon. It was one thing to show up at the bookstore. He could excuse the fact that they worked around the corner from each other and that maybe once in awhile they might bump into each other but his high school and Castiel's school were on opposite ends of town. Why the hell was Castiel here?

He was ready to snap at Castiel and ask him what exactly did he think he was doing? When he rounded the corner of the building and found Sam, Jo, and Charlie standing around in the parking lot talking to freakin' Castiel. He glared at him. What was he trying to do? Weasel his way into his group of friends?

Castiel looked up slowly and stared at him as he stalked over. He waited for Dean to come right up to them before saying anything. "Hello, Dean."

"Hey, Cas." Dean hissed. He didn't want to have to deal with Castiel today on top of his butt leaking all over his boxers but here he was. "What're you doing here?"
Castiel stared at him like he was growing an extra head. He sniffed at the air. He tensed up. Dean got hit with a wave of something that was definitely not nervous worried Castiel. It screamed WANT. Right Now! The sexy kind of want right now and it was definitely aimed at him. Great. He really needed to know that on top of everything else at the moment.

Castiel breathed deeply and looked like he was trying to relax but failing at it. "I'm here to pick you up for..."

Dean's eyes widened. He was supposed to go up to Saint Charles tonight. Shit. He had forgot he was going to skip out on that. The whole butt thing had put it completely out of his head. He willed Castiel not to say anything weird. Castiel glanced around at the others. The silence went on.

Dean realized that someone had to say something. He just had no idea what and it totally didn't help that he was slowly noticing that if Lisa and Benny smelt good today, Castiel smelt great.

"Chess club." Sam blurted out. "It's really great of you to come pick Dean up for chess club."

"Yeah. Chess club." Castiel said, looking relieved but Dean could feel him pushing down the sexy feelings.

Jo looked at Dean in surprise. "You play chess?"

"Uh...yeah. I'm learning." Dean said, distracted by Castiel's weird feeling porn.

"I have the best Dr. Who chess set you have ever seen." Charlie said, excited. "Come over tonight and I'll teach you a few tricks."

"Definitely." Dean said. Fuck. He just wanted to go home and scrubbed himself down and get rid of the tacky feeling on his legs. "Sounds awesome."

"You too." Charlie said, eyeing Castiel with a dangerous gleam to her eye. "You should come to my Halloween party on Friday. We could have an epic chess battle."

"Maybe." Castiel said, shrugging. He turned around and took a white cardboard box off the top of the car. He held it out to Dean. "We made donuts yesterday."

"...okay?" Dean said, confused. Castiel was thinking sexy thoughts at him and...holding out donuts?

Castiel thrust the box closer.

Dean shrugged and spread his hands. He didn't get it. He looked down at the box. He looked up at Castiel and narrowed his eyes. Was this like the cookie thing? He thought he'd just show up and wedge himself into his good graces with food? Dean pursed his lips. "I don't really like donuts."

Jo looked horrified at his statement. "You love donuts."

"No, I don't." Dean said. He did. He just didn't like these donuts.

Castiel opened his mouth to say something but stopped and looked up. His eyes narrowed. Dean felt jealousy flare up briefly before getting buried in a possessive feeling.

Dean turned his head over his shoulder to look. Lisa and Benny were coming over.

Benny gave him a gentle rub on the back. "Heard you were sick again."
"Oh, yeah, thought I might be." Dean said. He smiled and bumped his shoulder into Benny's side in a friendly gesture. "I'm good though."

"You sure?" Lisa asked. She snaked her arm around his waist and pulled him closer to herself and away from Benny. It had been a bit of an odd dynamic between Lisa and Benny ever since he had dated Benny for that short time last year. Lisa hooked her fingers into one of Dean's belt loops. "Like you said, don't want to over do it."

"I'm good." Dean insisted.

"You sure?" Lisa stroked her hand over his neck, grinning, obviously teasing him about what had happened before he had launched himself out of the janitor's closet.

He jumped when jealously scorched through him, the porny stuff burning away. He snapped his head around to stare at Castiel. He didn't look like he was two steps away from unleashing his inner fight club but he sure as fuck felt like it. Dean yanked Lisa closer to himself and glared at Castiel. If he thought he was going to pick a fight with his girlfriend, well, he had to get through him first.

"Sam." Jo groaned. "What did you eat?"

Sam sniffed at the air and wrinkled his nose. "Ugh. That wasn't me."

Everyone started to wrinkle their noses and back away complaining about the smell. Dean looked at the others confused. He didn't smell anything gross but from the way everyone was reacting it was like Sam had just eaten half a pot of chili by himself. He just smelt the spicy citrus that Castiel was giving off and maybe...the trees or something nearby and like...the leather seats in the car.

The you wanna go? Let's go! stuff from Castiel faded away as he got hit with a wave of embarrassment and regret before the weirdo shoved the box of donuts at Sam and scrambled to open the car door and get his jacket off all at once.

Dean stood there and looked between Castiel and the others. What the hell had just happened? Castiel had basically been feeding him a live porn channel right into his brain and then he'd nearly flipped his shit at Lisa and Benny and now he was freaking out in the car and everyone else seemed to be none the wiser about it.

"See you later, Dean!" Sam called out as the others made their get away with the donuts he definitely hated.

He could hear Charlie and Sam start to explain 'chess club' to Benny and Lisa and Jo practically having an orgasm about the donuts. He stood there for a moment longer debating on whether he should just take off with the others. In the end his fear of Ephrath showing up at his house with some new crazy biology pamphlet got him in the car even if Castiel was heaping on an extra does of angel weirdness today.

He went around to the other side of the car and got in. He was blasted with that citrus and spice smell all mixed up with pine tree and leather, it kinda reminded him of Christmas and the impala. Dean took in a deep breath through his nose. As mad as he was about Castiel thinking about trying to pick a fight with Lisa that smell was like a hot shower and Led Zeppelin rolled into one but it wasn't like he wanted to roll around in it or anything...or wrap himself up in it...or smother his face in it...

Castiel had no right to smell that good after being such a freak.

Castiel moved around in the driver's seat and piled his jacket up in his lap. That low level you're
kinda hot feeling Dean got off Castiel sometimes wasn't exactly low level at the moment. Dean quirked an eyebrow up. He glanced down to Castiel's lap...was he hiding a boner under there?

"I'm sorry." Castiel said sounding like he had just been utterly defeated in battle. "My rut came on early."

"Your what?" Dean shook his head confused.

"My rut." Castiel said. He breathed deeply a few times before starting the car. Whatever was in the air he didn't seem to like it. His lips pulled back to bare his teeth. He put the car into drive. "Like your heat."

"Yeah, I don't do that." Dean said. No freakin' way was he ever doing that again.

Either Castiel didn't hear him or he didn't care. He kept sniffing and snorting and the you're hot feeling kept getting pushed aside for a possessive feeling that Dean didn't like at all.

Castiel pulled out of the school parking lot and onto the street. "...who was the boy with Lisa?"

Dean didn't like the way Castiel said Lisa. He glanced over at him. "What? You mean Benny?"

"Benny." Castiel said lowly. Dean swore he growled.

Dean glared over. Castiel might smell great but he didn't smell that great. "Watch it. I know what you're thinking and if I ever hear about you being nasty to either of them don't think I won't come find you one dark and lonely night."

The Castiel stuff in his head flipped from angrily possessive to miserable.

"I'm sorry." Castiel said again. "I've just...I've never had a mate during a rut before— obviously. It wasn't this bad earlier. I even went to school today. I'm just...it's not the same. It wasn't this bad earlier. I don't even want..."

Dean watched Castiel shake his head and snort at nothing and listened to him babble about ruts. He could feel Castiel getting more and more wound up as he talked. It was getting to the point where Dean was worried they were going to have a head on collision if Castiel didn't calm the fuck down. He never should have gotten in the car with this weirdo.

"Dude. Cas. Calm down before we crash or something." Dean said. He reached out and grabbed Castiel's shoulder. It was supposed to be a calming gesture but Castiel slammed the brakes on and snapped his head over. He locked eyes with him. His chest heaved up and down.

Dean felt pinned down even though he was the one grabbing Castiel. Castiel kept staring, but it was more like Staring.

Dean let go of his shoulder and edged back in his seat. If that WANT. Right Now! feeling had been screaming before it was deafening now and it had a streak of violence running down the middle of it that was kind of freaking him out. What the hell had happened to kind of bitchy worried Castiel?

He reached behind himself for the door handle. He didn't blink or turn his eyes away. He kept his eyes locked on what his brain was sure was some kind of wild animal sitting next to him. He had his hand on the door handle entirely ready to tumble out backwards for a second time today but this time into traffic.

Castiel's nose twitched. He leaned in closer and tensed like he was getting ready for something.
Dean started pulling up on the handle. His heart started to pound.

A car behind them honked. That seemed to snap Castiel out of it. The WANT feeling collapsed in on itself. Castiel shivered and squeezed his eyes shut. He threw the car into park. "Do you have a license?"

"...yeah?" Dean wasn't sure what Castiel was getting at.

"Good." Castiel nodded. "You can drive."

Dean blinked at the empty driver's seat. Castiel had just gotten out of the car in the middle of the road. He jumped when the back door opened and Castiel slid in. He watched Castiel scooch across the seat and buckle himself in on the passenger side.

"Dean? The car." Castiel said politely as if he hadn't just had some kind of freaky break down where he seriously considered mauling him.

The honking behind them turned into shouting. Dean crawled over into the driver's seat. He closed the driver's side door and buckled up. He got the car going. He had no idea what to do but figured driving them to the private school across town was probably a no go at this point. He didn't exactly like Castiel and whatever the hell had just gone down was creepy as fuck but he could feel the dude sitting in the backseat on a hairpin edge of panic.

Dean decided the best thing he could do was take him home. Castiel didn't say anything the whole drive over. When he stopped at Castiel's house he just calmly undid his seat belt and walked up to his front door like everything was fine even though Dean was getting front row seats about how not fine everything was. Everything was falling apart and he really didn't like that.

Dean gritted his teeth. Even if Castiel was a total pain in the ass and a bit of an asshole sometimes he couldn't just leave him alone while he was feeling all epic breakdown. All the weirdness in the car was probably some kind misunderstanding anyway and just...Jesus, how could anyone keep it together feeling like that?

He twisted his hands around the stirring wheel. He needed to do something. Cas was all worked up and he didn't like it and...he just had to...he had to do something. His eyebrows knit together in confusion. Why the hell did he want to help so badly?

That cellphone Raphael had given him rang. Dean stared down at his pants pocket and let it ring twice more before he took it out. He answered it. "Uh...hello?"

"I'm sorry." Castiel said. What Dean was feeling from him did a lot more to explain just how sorry Castiel felt than how Castiel sounded over the phone. "You should go without me. I phoned my mother, you can borrow the car."

"You, uh, want me to...come in?" Dean offered instead. He really really wanted to go in there and make sure Cas was okay.

"No." Castiel said firmly. "You should...please just go."

"Uh...okay?" Dean said.

Castiel gave a huff of approval and hung up. Dean sat there for a few minutes trying to work out what the hell had just happened. He didn't want to be here, he didn't really want to hang around Castiel for the next couple of hours, but when he looked up at the house and felt all that twisty pain going on in Castiel he just...he really wanted to stay.
He sat there long enough that Castiel phoned a second time and told him to hurry up or he'd be late. "Right. I'm...just gonna...go then."

Dean surprised himself by actually driving over to Saint Charles— *it'd probably make Cas feel better if he didn't miss it because of what happened.* He parked the car and checked his phone for the text telling him where and when that he knew must have been sent. He found it. He read it over. He was just barely on time. He looked up at the private school. He scowled at it. This was stupid. He should just skip out on this *and go check up on Cas*— No. Castiel wasn't his problem. The dude could be creepy and weird on his own.

...but then why was he so sure he needed to go check up on him?

Dean fidgeted in the seat for the better part of five minutes before someone approached the car and knocked on the window. Dean leaned forward to see who it was. He swore. It was that Ephrath chick. Great.

She motioned for him to roll the window down. Begrudgingly he did.

"You're late. I was starting to get worried." Ephrath said. She crouched down and looked into the car. "Where's Castiel?"

"Back at his house." Dean said. "He got, uh, I don't think he was feeling too hot."

She sniffed at the air and frowned. "Did he go into rut?"

"Uh, yeah? I think that's what he said." Dean said. He looked over at his schoolbag and back up to the building in front of him. He looked at the crazy health teacher. He sighed. Well, he was already here and his least favourite weirdo knew it. He grabbed his bag and rolled up the window. He got out.

Ephrath was still frowning to herself but she stuck an arm out and made to use it to herd Dean inside. Dean ducked away. He could walk without someone guiding his every step, thank you very much.

"We had a recent history lesson planned for today but if Castiel started his rut then we should probably go over heats again just so there aren't any surprises." Ephrath said as she led the way inside.

"Great." Dean said sarcastically. "Looking forward to it."

He wasn't. He really *really* wasn't. He was looking forward to it even less when he walked into the health teacher's classroom and saw all the posters on the wall. Oh god. This was going to be horrible. Why hadn't he just skipped out on this?

Ephrath spent the next two hours telling him about *urges* and *bodily functions* and about a million other things he didn't want to know and then started telling him that as an omega his dick was basically useless. Which was when they had some serious disagreements. The last half an hour was spent with him telling Ephrath off, his dick *wasn't* a giant clitoris and no his balls weren't weird shrivelled up things the size of grapes, and her trying to do that condescending teacher calm talk where they think it's funny how wrong the students are but have to be polite.

When the two hours were up Dean gladly tromped out of the classroom only stopping when Ephrath insisted on giving him a stapled together booklet for his parents called *What to expect during your child's: First Heat.*
Dean took one look at that and stuffed it so far into his bag he was sure it was going to come out the bottom. No fucking way was he ever giving that to Mom or Dad.

He drove Naomi's car back to Castiel's house - stopping at a gas station to throw out the booklet - and was surprised to see Mom waiting for him in the driveway. He parked the car and got out. He jogged up to the front door and knocked. Anna answered it. She took the keys. Dean didn't ask how Castiel was, he knew he was still feeling all miserable and kind of shitty. Which, good. He should feel bad for nearly crashing them and acting weird in the car. What had that all been about anyway?

He jogged back down the driveway and got into Mom's car and buckled up before his brain started thinking about how he should stay and make sure Castiel was alright.

"Everything okay?" Mom asked. "Naomi seemed...slightly less rigidly formal over the phone."

Dean shrugged. "Cas was just sick or stressed out or something."

Mom asked a few more questions about it but Dean just shrugged a lot. He didn't really know what the hell the thing in the car was all about or why Cas was all freaked out about it but it made his gut flop around uncomfortably and he just really didn't want to think about it anymore.

Mom let it drop.

Tuesday was a hell of a lot better. His butt didn't leak anywhere and some guy named Levanael drove him over to Saints Charles instead of Castiel and all his...emotions. Even his two hours of extra school was better. No more Ephrath. Now it was just two hours of boring modern history from a woman named Zdxg. Dean had no idea how to say her name even after she wrote it out on the board phonetically. She kind of reminded him of Naomi. He couldn't place his thumb on why - she looked nothing like her - but she did.

Wednesday was even better because not only was there no butt leaking, it turned out he had nearly aced the test he had written on Monday. He had gotten every single question he had guessed at right. He thought it probably had something to do with the rabbit's foot. There was a quiz on Friday he was going to test the theory on. It wasn't worth much so it didn't matter if he bombed it. Levanael drove him over to Saint Charles again. He got another boring history lesson about equal rights. As if that hadn't been a thing for the last 40 years.

Thursday had a bit of a hitch when Lisa wanted to make out again but he managed to slip away and hide during lunch. But on the bright side, no more crazy angel stuff that night.

Friday was the best because Friday. Plus, it was Halloween and Charlie finally told him what Project Red Scare was; her and Bela were reprogramming some video game he had never heard of before. Benny seemed to think it was all a bad idea but he didn't break Charlie's code of absolute silence and secrecy with threats of dragons if you blabbed.

Charlie's Halloween party was awesome just like he thought it would be except for the forty minutes she insisted on kicking his ass at chess three times in a row. His chess club alibi was pretty weak. He was going to have to figure something else out or actually learn how to play chess. The only part that ruined the night was that he kept having to dodge Lisa. It was like the more he avoided her the more persistent she got about doing more than making out, which if his butt didn't leak gross stuff out of it he'd be all up for but no, the whole angel thing had to ruin his sex life. The worst part about that was that he'd basically spent the week thinking about naked grandpas in an effort to keep his dick from getting hard. He didn't know what the hell that was about but he was still definitely not touching his dick if it meant his butt started leaking.
He gave up on the whole not touching his dick torture in the shower that night while he washed off the Halloween makeup. He blasted the water on as hot as he could stand it so he wouldn't notice anything warm running down his legs and just went to town—the normal way. No wing touching. No touching his neck to see if he could duplicate what Lisa had done. Just a regular old date with his right hand. Twice.

Sunday he had his first shift back at work after begging Bobby all day Saturday to let him come in.

Jo and Ash were in when he got there so Bobby probably didn't need him but he was thankful that under Bobby's crotchety old bastard exterior he was actually a huge softie...or else Bobby really did think he'd get into trouble if he had two seconds of spare time.

Benny dropped in and loitered and charmed the pants off a gaggle of little old ladies that regularly stopped in for coffee after church. They ended up buying him tea - they thought teenagers were too young for coffee - and he talked them into buying a bunch of books on everything from crochet patterns to how to do paper tole.

Ash rung the purchases up while Dean cleaned tables and Jo supervised. The moment the little old lady brigade was out the door Jo was slapping Benny on the back.

"You should take Dean's job." Jo said, grinning. "Those ladies come in here ever week and buy one coffee a piece and have never. Until today. Bought. A single. Book."

"Aw. I couldn't do that." Benny drawled. He jerked his thumb at Dean. "Who'd keep him in line?"

"You're right." Jo said. She smirked over at Dean. "Besides, Dean looks better in an apron."

"You know it, bitch." Dean said happily. He balanced all the coffee mugs on a tray and brought them around to the other side of the counter to wash. He nearly dumped the whole thing on the floor when he realized that his very own Castiel radar system was picking up an incoming object.

"Great." He muttered. He busied himself with the coffee mugs. He cringed when he heard the bell on the door. He turned around to watch. Jo and Benny both said hi. Everyone else was met with silence except for Dean who got to feel the whole range of everything from fear at being near Bobby to pulsing jealousy. It was just how he wanted his Sunday to go.

"...hello." Castiel said at last. He kept his eyes fixed on Benny like he was trying to stare him down.

Dean hadn't really forgiven Castiel for being all weird about Benny and Lisa and then the thing in the car. No, instead he had just decided it had never happened, the same way he had decided that as long as his wings were hidden those had never happened either, because all the stuff after what'd happened in the car confused the hell out of him. But now with Castiel staring holes through Benny and feeling all disapproving and jealous and possessive Dean had decided he did remember it and he wasn't all too happy about it.

Castiel peeled his eyes away from Benny and made his way to the counter Dean was behind. He held out a box and stared at Dean.

"What?" Dean said. Really? Castiel was going to do this whole box of baked goods thing again? Well, he wasn't going to play along with someone who disapproved of Benny or any of his other friends for whatever weird angel reason and thought he'd act all possessive boyfriend when he wasn't even a friend. He shoved his sleeves up - more disapproval - and shrugged at him. "Gonna order something or just stand there?"
"I wanted to apologize for the other day." Castiel said. He held the box closer to Dean. "Here. Mini cheesecakes. I made them."

Dean stared at the box. He rolled his eyes. He had his hands halfway up to take the box when Castiel side-eyed Benny and felt smug about himself. Dean scowled and crossed his arms. "I'm lactose intolerant."

Castiel jerked his head back in surprise. He stared at Dean for a moment. That tick-tick-tick feeling raced around Dean's head. Castiel's squinted at him. "No, you're not."

"Yes, I am." Dean retorted. No way did Castiel get to come into his store and pretend to be sorry when all he was trying to do was be a dick to one of his friends.

"No, you—" Castiel snapped his mouth shut and set the box on the counter. He gave Dean a calculated look. He looked between Dean and Benny. He narrowed his eyes at Benny. He gave an annoyed huff and turned on his heel and stalked out of the bookstore.

Jo, Benny, and Ash looked at him baffled. Dean glared at the empty doorway.

"You're lactose intolerant?" Jo asked. She looked between the door and the box on the counter. "Since when?"

"Since ten minutes ago." Dean said. He shoved the box towards Jo. "You guys want these things?"

Ash and Jo hesitated for one brief second before pouncing on them. Benny stayed where he was looking at the door and Dean. He shuffled closer once Jo and Ash had devoured half a cheese cake each.

"You okay?" Benny asked.

"Yeah." Dean said, wiping up the graham cracker crumbs Jo and Ash had left behind.

Benny looked him over. He leaned back on the counter instead of pressing the point. "I get the drift your new friend doesn't really like me."

"He's not really a new friend." Dean said. Not exactly new, not exactly a friend. "Just...this guy I know."

"...that you know?" Benny asked, raising an eyebrow.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Not like that."

Except, yeah. Exactly like that. He just hadn't meant to. Or wanted to. Now Castiel was getting all jealous and weird about his friends and girlfriend and ex-boyfriend. All those fears he'd had before right after everything had happened came rushing back. What if Castiel had been lying? That whole creepy stare down in the car had felt a lot like some predator waiting to pounce on him. What if that was how Castiel had been when they had done it? That hadn't looked like someone trying to help him. That had looked like - and felt like - someone that wanted to bang him six ways to Sunday and didn't give a fuck they were in the middle of the street.

Benny gave him a cut the bullshit look.

"I'm fine." Dean repeated. He was. Sure maybe the whole first time for gay sex thing hadn't really gone the way he had thought it would go but he'd spent a lot of time with Castiel since then and he seemed...okay... If being a bit of a dick half the time was okay. The whole thing in the car on
Monday was— something had obviously been wrong. That wasn't Castiel. He wrinkled his nose. Why the hell was he making excuses for this guy?

He angrily started washing coffee mugs. Castiel could screw off. He'd been a bit of an asshole before and now he was getting possessive and creepy. He didn't even really have to talk to him anymore. He had learned how to hide his wings on his own. He hadn't needed Castiel then and he didn't need him around now being a dick to Benny.

Castiel marched in an hour later. He shot a blatant glare over at Benny and shoved a box at Dean. "I'm sorry. Cupcakes. They're lactose free."

Dean glowered at him. It was obvious Castiel wasn't sorry from the way he glared at Benny. Dean pushed the box back at Castiel. "I'm allergic to soy."

Castiel's fingers clenched on the box. "They're soy free."

"I have a gluten intolerance." Dean said.

"They're gluten free." Castiel said. He opened the box and offered them up.

Dean looked down at the box. "And a peanut allergy."

"The bakery is a peanut free environment." Castiel said firmly. He shot another look over at Benny and thrust the box out at Dean again.

Dean scowled at the jealous feeling pouring off Castiel. He narrowed his eyes at him. "I can't have tree nuts either."

"There are no nuts." Castiel said. He pushed the box closer to Dean's chest. Dean got a distinct possessive feeling off him, like Castiel thought he was marking his territory with a bunch of damn cupcakes.

Dean took a step back and crossed his arms. No one peed on Dean Winchester. "I don't eat processed sugar."

"They're made with maple syrup." Castiel retorted.

Dean looked them over. "I can't have chocolate."

"They're carob." Castiel said.

"Or eggs." Dean said.

"They're vegan." Castiel bit out.

Dean glanced down at the cupcakes and threw up his hands. "What the hell are they even made out of then?"

Ash coughed in the back somewhere like he was trying to cover up a laugh. Benny and Jo were just out right staring. Castiel whipped his head around to glare at them like he could feel it. Dean felt him bristle with jealousy and that possessive feeling again.

"Jo, I'm taking my break." Dean growled and took the damn box from Castiel. He nodded at him sharply to follow him and led him out the back door. He grabbed the wooden wedge they used as a door stopper and shoved it into the crack between the door and the frame to keep the door open. The door didn't open from the outside. He motioned for Castiel to follow him into the alley. "Okay,
what the hell is your problem with Benny?"

"I don't have a problem with Benny." Castiel retorted like a five year old.

"Right." Dean scoffed. "So you were just giving him the stink eye and feeling like you owned me because you don't got any problems."

Castiel's eyes widened. He stared for a moment then let out a long breath like he was a deflating balloon. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. I thought the last day of my rut would be okay but apparently it isn't."

Dean opened his mouth to chew him out but his hotline into Castiel's emotional drama made him close his mouth and pinch the bridge of his nose. As fucking weird as Castiel had been all week he could tell the guy was genuinely sorry. "Dude, what the hell has been up with you all week? You weren't exactly normal before but now you're all...I dunno. Weirder."

Castiel's face flushed in embarrassment. Dean got a mental dose of that too.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Whatever it is, it's got nothing on what that Ephrath chick has to say about dicks."

Castiel stared at him puzzled. He slowly looked away and found something very interesting on the ground to stare at. "You...on Monday...you smelt like...I was in rut and you smelt like you'd been...aroused recently and...well...I could smell Lisa and Benny on you, Lisa more so, and then...she touched your mating bite—and in the car you touched mine—and...it was all a mess after that."

"...okay, like half of that made sense." Dean said. He didn't how the hell Castiel could smell Lisa and Benny on him or that he'd been making out and the mating bite thing. Well, actually that part made the most sense. When Lisa had bitten at the top of one of the scars on his neck he'd nearly come right there and then. Maybe some of the stuff in the car had been his fault. Maybe he'd kind of...done the angel equivalent of grabbing Castiel's dick while he was all riled up...and...and he just wanted Cas to stop feeling so hung up over everything!

"I'm sorry I can't explain it better." Castiel said sadly. "It...it all took me by surprise. It was such a mild rut until I saw Lisa touching you."

"Dude, she does that. She's my girlfriend. You didn't freak out about it before." Dean said.

"I wasn't in rut when I met her the first time." Castiel explained.

"Right." Dean said. He'd given up on any of this angel stuff making sense weeks ago. "So...is this like...you do this a lot?"

"Every ten weeks." Castiel said. He frowned to himself. "Except this time it was early...but it's over and I'm sorry I frightened you in the car."

"You didn't frighten me in the car." Dean said automatically. Castiel looked at him blankly but he couldn't hide that I know what's going on feeling. Dean fiddled with the box of cupcakes. "...maybe a little...but whatever. Look, just...chill out around Benny and Lisa and everyone else if you're gonna keep popping up like this."

Castiel looked and felt relieved. Dean nodded to himself. That was all he freakin' wanted right now, for Cas to just stop being a big ball of anxiety and be okay.

Castiel looked down at his feet. "...if you're alright with it I can...I can pick you up again on
Monday?"

"Uh...well..." Dean said. They stood there. Castiel stared down at his feet. Dean looked between Castiel and the box of cupcakes. He coughed at the awkwardness of the moment then made it worse by giving Castiel a pat on the back and dodging back inside and calling over his shoulder. "Yeah. Sure. See you Monday."

Dean pulled out the wooden wedge. The door closed behind him locking Castiel out in the alley. Dean stood there surrounded by used books holding a box of everything free cupcakes wondering what the hell had just happened. Castiel had been weird - weirder than usual - then creepy as hell, then freaked right out, then he had come into Bobby's store acting all jealous wannabe boyfriend and tried to give him cheesecake and cupcakes and Dean was giving him pats on the back and saying he'd see him on Monday?

What the hell was up with him?

Chapter End Notes

I feel like Dean, coming from a lower income family, would basically have a mild stroke over someone just throwing out perfectly good food and essential items, thus the condoms, meal replacement drinks, and panty liners are saved from the fire. Well, I know I would have a mild stroke over someone just throwing out perfectly good household items. ...I may have once fished a still wrapped pork roast the size of my head out of the garbage because who just throws out a perfectly good pork roast?

I am going with a school that has a September to January term and then a February to June term because there are a crap ton of different school systems out there and that so happens to be the one I'm familiar with. Also, four subjects per term. Because I want to. So two morning classes and two afternoon classes some undescribed amount of time because it doesn't ultimately matter how long.

Yes, Dean is cheating at the scantron testing via cursed object.

I made a few Flintstones references at the beginning. I have no idea if people still watch that. There was also a quick Buckaroo Banzai mention because I will quote the hell out of that movie every chance I get.

Wordling!

Netaab is Enochian. It means "of government" but I'm gonna use it to mean "Creepy elder council"

The book and the cellphones are my version of angel radio and an angel's ability to locate people like everyone has been fitted with radio collars.

If it hasn't come across so far, I'm making angel/demon society a bit more on the communal side. I think to be living among humans (and hunters) they'd have to be rather tight knit anyway but a lot of that idea comes from how angels are portrayed in the series as kind of topically hive mind-ish.

I rather enjoy the idea that when alphas get really possessive of something they stink
to most everyone around them. It makes me laugh. But I think it makes sense since so many a/b/o fics comment on the sense of smell, I figure they'd have a strong "back off this is mine" odour considering they're a species that can tell a lot by scent alone.
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

Castiel turned around to see Dean eyeing a caramel topped brownie in a way no one should ever look at food.

Chapter Notes

There, we get a long chapter for Castiel. I feel like Castiel kept getting short chapters before.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel had never come so close to actually hurting someone as he had in the car last Monday with Dean. If Dean's fear hadn't broken through all that base alpha instinct— he didn't want to think about what he might have done. He had nearly proven every terrible rumour about him at school right. The worst part was that Dean had wanted to help him after. They should have been outright disgusted with him for acting that way, like a...like some...archaic alpha who just treated omegas as playthings.

He'd spent most of the rest of the week at home despite his rut being the mildest it had ever been. If it hadn't been for his alpha outburst in the car Castiel would have been grateful for it. But what had happened had shook him to the bone. What if he really was as terrible as Dean had first thought he was? What if there was a reason all those rumours had spread at school?

His mother had tried to tell him that all alphas had some urges like that but what made him a good alpha was choosing not to act on them. Ephrath was the closest thing the community had to a therapist and she had come to their home every day after school to try and explain how it wasn't his fault at all, biologically he was hardwired to be possessive of anyone that bore his mating bite and seek out his mate during a rut and that it was probably a stronger drive with a soul mate.

Castiel thought it was all crap. He hadn't chosen to not act on his instincts he had been startled by Dean's fears. If the soul mate bond hadn't been working he would have tried to take Dean right there in the car. It was his fault. Biology didn't excuse what he'd almost done. He should have realized what was going on as soon as Dean showed up smelling like someone else and sex. And if he didn't realize it then it should have been blindly apparent from his reaction to the way Lisa and Benny acted so familiar with Dean's body and the way Dean had smelt; like they liked it. He'd had every chance to prevent something from happening but he hadn't done anything until his mate was trying to escape the car in fear.

And even when his rut was mostly over, he had acted like such an ass on Sunday that he was amazed that Dean had agreed to go anywhere with him ever again.

Once the soul mate bond had started working for him and he had realized Dean didn't really hate him, they were just afraid, he'd planned out everything he'd do to convince Dean that he'd be a good mate for them and then he had nearly ruined it all because he was a hormonal alpha in rut
only capable of one thought at a time.

How was he supposed to convince Dean they were mates if he had just ruined absolutely every reason to even be friends? Friends, let alone mates, didn't corner omegas in cars or try to alienate their friends.

He didn't know how he was going to make it up to Dean but he'd do everything he could which was why he was putting up with Gabriel as he picked through the dessert squares for the best ones.

"Gotta love watching alphas go crazy with instinct trying to feed their mates." Gabriel snickered. He pulled out a tray of brownies and let Castiel pick out a few.

"I'm not giving in to instinct." Castiel said as he arranged the desserts in the cardboard box. He wasn't letting his instincts control him. Instinct had nearly pushed him into doing something horrible to Dean.

Gabriel snorted in amusement as he put the tray back. "Cassie, that is exactly what you're doing. You can't go hunt down some wild animal so you're giving them a mountain of sugar instead."

Castiel scowled at him. Cassie was his grandmother's name and he wasn't giving in to instinct ever again. He turned back to the tray and picked out the best looking date squares. He had no idea what Dean liked despite having spent the last two months with them. Even being privy to Dean's emotions hadn't helped him get to know them any better. He knew more about Sam and Mary than he did Dean.

"Well if they aren't impressed by your catch this time, don't come storming back here to make spite cupcakes and scare the customers off again. That's what home is for." Gabriel said. He waved away the money Castiel tried to offer him. "The hours of entertainment you're providing is more than enough. Well, that and you get clean up duty this weekend."

Castiel cocked an eyebrow at him. He always had clean up duty anyway.

"What?" Gabriel said, looking mock offended. "I can't root for the soul mates to get together? I just wanna help."

"Please don't help me. I've already done enough to screw this up." Castiel closed up the box and collected his things. "...and don't do anything...beta."

"Aw, come on Cassie." Gabriel said with an over dramatic sigh. "An alpha who finds his soul mate and they're an omega? Every beta's dream couple. I would totally be a great beta to your alpha. Watch."

Gabriel's eyebrows came together. He flicked his hand. The mess on the counter vanished. Castiel swiped his hand through the illusion and wiped the crumbs off the counter to the floor. Gabriel flicked his hand again, the floor looked clean and freshly mopped.

"I hope you don't do that when the health inspector comes." Castiel said, though he knew he didn't. Gabriel, despite having a talent, lived up to everything people said about betas being clean and orderly.

"Nope. I get you to clean." Gabriel said, smirking. "I'm very progressive. Your activist omega would be proud."

"I'm going." Castiel said flatly and headed for the door.
"We could build a fantastic home for them!" Gabriel shouted after him gleefully. "I'd even let you take all the credit!"

Castiel shook his head. Gabriel might be more naturally inclined to manage a business but how he managed to do it was beyond Castiel. Even biology had to have its limits.

He walked to the car, unlocked it, and got in. He had a five minute drive to try and think up yet another way to apologize. He knew a box of dessert squares wasn't enough to make up for what he'd done but it was the only thing he could think to start with. It...it made the alpha in him settle down because it was instinct to provide for his mate.

He nearly tossed the box out the window but instead he stared at it sadly. He didn't know what else to do. And everyone liked dessert, it wasn't...it wasn't just his instincts motivating him. It was a reasonable thing to give Dean.

He tried not to be nervous for Dean's sake while he waited in the parking lot— in the car where he couldn't smell anyone. His school got out earlier than Dean's but his detour to the bakery had taken longer than he had expected and he only had to wait a few minutes before Dean was coming up to his mother's car busily stuffing a chocolate bar into their— his mouth.

Dean tapped on the window. Castiel pushed the button to bring it down.

"You all...you today?" Dean asked warily. Castiel could feel the apprehension licking at the edges of his mind as if Dean was preparing for a fight. Dean was tall and probably strong for a human, that made him abnormally tall and strong for an omega, but that didn't mean they— he could have defended himself from an alpha in rut. His mate shouldn't have to worry about whether he was safe with him.

Castiel looked up at him. He didn't need to try and feel apologetic. He did, on a deep abiding level. "Yes, I'm sorry about last week."

Dean shrugged but the apprehension didn't let up. He walked around to the passenger side and opened the door. He stared down at the white box from the bakery. He shrugged again before tossing his backpack into the foot well then picked up the box and sat down. He set the box in his lap while he pulled at his seatbelt.

"And I'm sorry about how I acted on Sunday." Castiel said. He should have just phoned Dean instead of going in person while he was still in rut. He should have known better instead of screwing up again. "I'm sorry I—"

"Dude, are you secretly from Canada or something?" Dean asked as he clicked the seatbelt into place.

"...no?" Castiel said. Canada? He'd told Dean where he was from.

Dean rolled his eyes and felt annoyed and...amused? He turned his attention to the box in his lap and flicked the lid open. Castiel took in a sharp breath. Every time he had given something to Dean these past few days it had been met with anger. He hoped this time Dean would like what he brought.

Dean groaned and seemed to buzz with wanton need.

Castiel's eyebrows shot up into his hairline.

"Dude. I forgot lunch today. I've been starving all afternoon. All I've eaten is a kitkat I stole off
Ash." Dean said. He picked up a rhubarb square and had it half way to his mouth when he stopped. "...you're doing your weird baked goods thing again, right? I can eat these?"

Castiel nodded.

"Cool. Didn't want to steal grandma's basket of baked goods." Dean said. He stuffed half of the square into his mouth and groaned again. Contentment oozed out of Dean as he chewed. He shoved the second half in his mouth. "...yuf m'ke terrif'bul rrrrrrrdng 'ood."

"What?" Castiel asked, confused.

Dean swallowed. "You'd make a terrible red riding hood."

"Red riding hood?" Castiel asked, only more confused.

Dean arched an eyebrow at him. "How do you not know little red riding hood?"

Castiel shrugged. "I haven't seen a lot of English movies."

"Right, you're all about the Ewokian or whatever." Dean said, picking out another dessert.

"Enochian." Castiel corrected.

Dean shrugged and turned his attention back to the dessert in his hands and ignored Castiel for the rest of the drive. The apprehension had vanished and was replaced by simple satisfaction. Castiel wasn't going to complain about instincts in this case. If Dean's omega instincts were going to enjoy eating the food he had provided for him then who was Castiel to stop him?

By the time they reached Saint Charles Dean had devoured everything in the box. It was impressive.

Castiel walked with Dean to the classroom and was going to leave and go to the library when Zdxg motioned for him to come in.

"I'm sure your mate would enjoy the company." Zdxg said.

From how Dean felt it didn't seem like he'd enjoy his company so much as enjoy his mutual suffering - history was dry even for him - but he was trying to make it up to Dean so he'd stay and suffer with him.

Castiel followed Dean in and sat down at a desk two spaces away from Dean. Zdxg didn't say anything but she did pause for a moment to stare. Everyone knew he had a soul mate but they didn't know that they didn't particularly get along.

And that he had almost ruined everything last week.

To his surprise Zdxg hadn't started teaching Dean history from the earliest dates to the more recent ones, but was instead talking about the last fifteen years. That wasn't history. That was...life. He was older than most of the things that Zdxg was talking about.

After an hour Dean threw his head back and let out a long sigh of exasperation.

"Am I boring you?" Zdxg asked.

Dean rolled his head back up. From the way Dean felt Castiel was sure he was going to say yes.
"No, Miss Zod." Dean said.

Miss Zod was as close to Zdxg Dean could get to pronouncing and Zdxg seemed to find it amusing that Dean tacked a human honorific onto her name.

"You seem like you're bored." Zdxg said. That merited a sarcastic feeling from Dean. She moved around from the whiteboard and sat down on her desk. "If you can sum up today's lesson we'll go to the gym and play a game."

Dean looked at her suspiciously. Castiel did as well. Zdxg never just gave up on a lesson.

"...what sort of game?" Dean asked warily.

"Whatever game you want." Zdxg said. "If you can sum up the lesson."

Castiel could feel the general boredom give way to a flurry of emotions. Dean was obviously weighing the pros and cons of whatever unseen trap Zdxg had set.

It all dissolved into stubborn determination. Dean fold his arms across his chest. "Angels—and, uh, demons I guess, used to be dicks to anyone who couldn't just do magic then someone thought it'd be a good idea to pass some laws and now everyone who can do magic is just a dick to people who can't do magic behind their backs."

Castiel's mouth dropped open. Dean glanced over at him and shrugged. Castiel snapped his mouth shut and looked over at Zdxg. Who was an alpha. Like himself. Who - as Dean put it - could do magic.

Zdxg stared at Dean for what Castiel thought felt like a very long time. She narrowed her eyes slightly and started packing Dean's books up from where she sat on her desk.

"Holy shit!" Dean yelped and shoved away from the desk as his binder snapped shut and slipped into his bag.

Zdxg was telekinetic.

Dean tensed up ready to defend himself which made Castiel tense up ready to come to Dean's aid which was ridiculous because it was only Zdxg. The last of Dean's things dropped into his backpack. The backpack zipped closed.

Zdxg slid off her desk and plucked Dean's bag out of the air. She offered it to him. "What game did you have in mind?"

They ended up playing something called horse which turned out to just be basketball. It was the strangest game of anything Castiel had ever played. His soul mate seemed on edge but smug with himself while his history teacher watched his soul mate intently as if they were formulating some lengthy speech in response to Dean's answer but it never came.

The next two days went much the same except on Wednesday he discovered that if he told Dean he could have as many cookies as he wanted Dean would just eat all of them. Dean didn't seem anymore friendly towards him despite the cookies but at least he wasn't as wary of him by Wednesday night. Castiel thought that was at least a good start on apologizing.

School all week was mostly what he expected. He had gotten used to the rumours that were circulating around him. The particularly harmful ones had mostly stopped and the one's that hadn't at least didn't involve Ruby anymore. He was still worried that they might actually have merit, that
maybe some part of him really was that horrible, but his mother kept insisting that thinking about doing something wrong wasn't the same as actually doing it. But he hadn't thought about doing it, he had wanted to do it in that moment. The whole situation had him hopelessly confused but he did know he still felt like he needed to make it up to Dean. Nobody should be afraid of a mate.

He didn't feel Dean go to work on Saturday but he was there on Sunday. The mating bond had its benefits even if most of them were wasted for the time being.

He spent Sunday morning in the bakery making donuts because Dean's friends seemed to have liked them from what he remembered and one small personal sized pie for Dean specifically. He was going to make a larger one that Dean could take home with him but from what he had seen the Winchester family generally didn't eat things like that for Mary's sake. He still didn't quite understand the nature of Mary's illness but humans did tend to be more fragile so he didn't want to intrude and ask and remind them of it while they waited for Raphael and Lucifer to work out a plan to help her.

Gabriel on the other hand spent Sunday morning snickering at him about trying to be an impressive alpha showing off his skills as a provider.

At 11am Castiel boxed the donuts and pie and let himself breathe. He stared down at the two boxes stacked on top of each other and frowned. It slowly crept into his brain that he was going through an awful lot of trouble to apologize to someone that was routinely sarcastic and rude to him for no apparent reason except that he could be.

But even if Dean was rude that didn't mean what he had nearly done in the car was excusable and Dean was his soul mate, rude or not. He still needed to make things right.

"Want me to make everything look snazzy?" Gabriel asked. He raised his hand and wiggled his fingers.

"No." Castiel said. He picked up the boxes and nestled them to his chest protectively. He didn't trust Gabriel's sense of style one bit. He grabbed his jacket and managed to pull it on without putting the boxes down.

"You got forty minutes before the lunch rush." Gabriel said more seriously. "Don't be late."

"I won't." Castiel said. He didn't plan on getting locked out in the alley again and having to walk all the way around the block to get back to work.

He walked over to the bookstore Dean worked in. A bookstore owned by a known murderer but Raphael seemed to be content to leave him be. Maybe Dean was right. Maybe Mr. Singer wasn't as dangerous as other hunters. He did his best to compose himself before he went in but he doubted he did a very good job of it if the expression on Dean's face was anything to go by when he walked in the door.

He glanced around the bookstore and took in his surroundings. Most of Dean's friends appeared to be there— and Mr. Singer.

"Hello." Mr. Singer said roughly and watched him with sharp eyes.

"Hello." Castiel recoiled and leaned towards Dean instinctively trying to protect him. That was an instinct he wasn't sure he should deny. Not as dangerous still made Mr. Singer dangerous.

"Joining the party I'm apparently throwing?" Mr. Singer asked. He waved his hands at the group of
Dean's friends.

Castiel hesitated. He shot a look at Dean who was watching him passively behind the counter. Dean felt like he was waiting for something. Castiel slowly moved the smaller box off the larger one and worked the larger box open. "I...brought donuts?"

"Sweet!" A red haired girl jumped up from a chair - if he remembered right her name was Charlie - and snagged three donuts out of the box. She stuff one in her mouth and took the other two for...herself apparently.

Castiel glanced over at Dean. Dean was still watching him. He looked over at Benny and Lisa and then back to Dean. He took a breath to steady himself and went over to Lisa and Benny and offered them donuts. He stomped down on the jealousy that tried to claw its way out of him when he caught Dean's scent all over Lisa, and Benny too to a lesser degree.

Benny gave him a look. Castiel didn't know what it meant. Benny glanced over at Dean then back to Castiel. He took a donut. "Thanks."

Lisa picked one out too. "They smell great."

"You're welcome." Castiel said. "And thank you. I made them this morning."

"You made these?" Lisa asked, surprised. She took a bite and closed her eyes. "I knew you made those cookies but-" She turned to Dean. "-jeez way to hold out on me, Dean, hoarding Castiel to yourself."

Castiel offered the box to the other girl sitting beside Charlie. She didn't take one but he did find out her name was Bela. He offered some to Jo next, and a boy whose name he didn't know and no one told him but he had a lot of hair. He set the box of donuts down on the table they were all seated around.

There was a hum of approval in the back of his head from Dean. Castiel breathed in relief and glanced over at Dean. He hadn't been sure if Dean would want him around his friends again. He turned back to watch Dean's friends for a moment. They all seemed to be enjoying the donuts, at least he had done that right.

He tried not to watch Lisa in particular but it was hard. Lisa was Dean's human girlfriend. He was Dean's mate. But Dean put more weight into his relationship with Lisa than he did with...well, they could have a relationship. Probably. If they didn't argue so much with each other and if he didn't let his inner alpha corner Dean in vehicles.

And what if Dean wanted them to be like most other alpha and omega mates? But instead of a beta he preferred a human to mate with them? Castiel wrinkled his nose. A human as a mate? He glanced over at Dean then back to Lisa. Dean didn't want any human as a mate, he wanted this human as a mate. What did he do about that?

Most alphas who had omega mates had beta mates too but he'd grown up in a family where alphas just had beta mates and didn't bother to look for an omega. There weren't any omegas in his family. He knew Meg's parents were an alpha-omega couple without a beta mate but they were strange anyway. Meg's mother was one step away from being an extremist and her father encouraged it. The closest comparison he had of a normal omega was Ruby and they weren't anything like Dean. He didn't really know what to expect from an omega mate and his mate seemed to prefer the company of others over his own.
Castiel let out a sad sigh. It had been so much easier when Dean had let him be in his company, when Dean didn't have a choice but—

Castiel's thoughts ground to a halt. Dean not having a choice was exactly what he was trying to apologize for, he had nearly taken away Dean's choice in the car. His fingers flexed on the smaller box. If Dean wanted to pick another mate for them then Dean could pick another mate for them. Even a human mate. Lisa even already seemed supportive of him being around Dean. Maybe they had already discussed it.

He turned around and stepped over to the counter. Dean was standing on the other side eating licorice. Dean smelt like Lisa.

Castiel held out the smaller box. He shivered. It felt so very much like last Sunday.

Dean hesitated for a moment before sticking the licorice in his mouth and taking the box. He opened the box up, looked it over, and set it aside. He went back to chewing on the licorice.

Castiel's stomach dropped. "You don't like pie."

"It's okay." Dean said between bites of licorice and shrugging. He looked down at the box and then back up at Castiel. "My mom makes pie sometimes but it's easy on the kidneys and low sugar kind of pie."

"Oh." Castiel said. He should have brought more of the dessert squares. Dean had devoured those, or cookies.

"Jesus. You'd think I dishonoured you and your cow." Dean said, rolling his eyes. Castiel was about to ask what cow? But Dean opened the box back up and popped the pie out of the tin. He bit into it. Castiel felt a buzz of excitement from Dean but Dean kept his face perfectly blank.

Dean ate it in three bites then shrugged at Castiel. "Like I said, it's okay."

Castiel stared at him. Dean had thoroughly enjoyed it but all he'd say was that it was okay?

"Hey, Castiel." Charlie appeared at his elbow. "You didn't make it to the Halloween party."

"I was, uh...busy." Castiel said. He had been busy trying to exam what type of alpha he actually was.

"Oh." Charlie shrugged. "We're gonna do bad horror movie night next weekend."

Castiel cocked his head to the side as Charlie stood there and looked at him like he was supposed to respond to that.

"You want to come?" Charlie said, looking at him as if he were the confusing one.

"Uh..." Castiel hesitated. He could feel a tumult of emotions roiling through Dean but the strongest one seemed to be more apprehension aimed at him. "I think I'm busy that weekend."

He felt Dean's apprehension relax into relief.

He spent the rest of his lunch break trying to understand half of what Charlie was talking about and watching Dean and his friends eat the donuts he'd made and wondering why Dean wouldn't admit to liking the pie. Dean didn't seem angry with him but he could feel him watching him like Dean was ready to intervene in case he started acting like an alpha in rut again. Dean didn't seem angry
but it was clear he didn't trust him.

He left with ten minutes to spare in case the lunch rush started early. Dean's low level suspicion of him was making him feel guilty which only seemed to make Dean more suspicious of him.

That night instead of doing his homework he stared at his textbook and tried to imagine having two mates, one of which was a human. He knew sometimes betas took human mates for a short while, especially the ones that left to go to human colleges, but he'd never heard of an omega wanting a human mate. Humans just couldn't fulfill certain needs for omegas and there were certain experiences humans simply couldn't provide for an alpha either. And humans couldn't ever properly mate someone.

When he realized he had been staring at the same sentence in his textbook for the last half an hour he snapped his book closed and went upstairs.

He stuck his head into the living room to find his mother reading a book and Anna sprawled on the floor with her wings out texting on her phone. He checked to make sure the curtains were closed out of habit. They were. Obviously they would be if his mother was in the room.

He shifted on his feet uncomfortably. He had come upstairs looking for his mother intending to ask if humans could even be good unofficial mates to angels and demons but Anna was there and...

"Did you need something?" His mother asked.

Castiel jumped. "Uh..."

He glanced down at Anna. He couldn't ask about human mates in front of his sister.

"Did you and mom ever think about finding another mate?" Castiel blurted out instead, which was only slightly less embarrassing.

His mother put her book down. Castiel's face turned red. Anna lifted up a wing to look at him in surprise.

"Giving up on Dean?" Anna asked. Her wings ruffled in surprise.

"No. I, uh, I was just wondering." Castiel said lamely. "Since...well, it's unusual for an alpha-omega couple to be on their own and...since no one in our family ever mates with an omega..." Castiel shrugged. He really didn't have a plan for this conversation. He shook his head at himself. "I don't know."

"...to answer your question, no. We felt we were enough for each other...not enough." His mother paused for a moment and seemed to think something over. She got that sad look in her eye whenever she thought about his beta mom. "We completed each other. We didn't need another mate to feel whole."

"But alphas and omegas...?" Castiel asked.

"Traditionally...it's considered...more...felicitous for an alpha-omega couple to have a beta mate as well. Betas are more...level headed. Which can be...practical in many circumstances." His mother said carefully. It was the kind of careful she used when she was trying to put old concepts into a more modern light. "But you don't need to look for another mate." Her eyebrow twitched slightly and as an afterthought she added, "Or a beta mate specifically."

"Yeah." Anna added. "It's a lot more normal these days."
"...for beta-omega couples too." Anna said in a far too casual manner.

His mother raised one eyebrow a fraction of an inch but Anna was making it a point to pour over her phone again and pretend she didn't notice. Castiel thought it might be a good time to go back downstairs before his mother and Anna started arguing. It was one thing to stir up their mother's old people prejudice about angels dating demons, it was something else to suggest she wanted to mate Ruby without an alpha.

Monday morning he was surprised to get a text from Dean. His heart picked up pace. It was the first time Dean had contacted him. Maybe following his instinct to provide was a good idea.

He checked the text message. His shoulders slumped as he read it. Dean had a dentist appointment that afternoon. He'd have to pick him up from home rather than school.

The rest of the day dragged on. Dean probably texted Lisa just to talk.

Castiel walked home with Anna, dropped his things off, then got the keys to the car. He wasn't particularly looking forward to being stuck in a classroom for a few more hours but at least Dean would be there. Maybe he could try striking up an actual conversation this time instead of staring at him while he ate.

He sat in the Winchester driveway for a few moments and stared at their dying tree. It had bothered him every time he came to the Winchester home. He could probably help it.

He got out of car and walked up the driveway, staring at the dying tree the whole time. He knocked and went in. He could feel Dean clearly. He seemed...exceedingly frustrated about something. Castiel didn't know what because he wasn't in the house yet and he was usually what made Dean frustrated.

Mary was home. She greeted him warmly then motioned to the stairs. "Dean's in the shower still."

"Oh." Castiel said. He wondered what was so frustrating about being in the shower. He started to take his coat off but stopped. He'd probably have a few minutes and there wasn't anyone watching the house anymore. No one would know if he did something about the tree. "Do you mind if I fix your tree while I wait?"

Mary looked at him confused. "...fix my tree?"

"Yeah." Castiel said. He pointed towards where the tree would be outside. "At the side of the house. It has canker rot."

Mary's eyes darted over him quickly. "Does fixing the tree have to do with your...way with plants?"

"Yes." Castiel said.

Mary narrowed her eyes, thinking, the way Dean did. Or rather, Dean narrowed his eyes the way Mary did.

"Alright." Mary said. "As long as it won't grow into the neighbour's roof. We already have enough problems with Mrs. Trites."

Castiel nodded and started putting his boots back on. From what he gathered about the neighbour she had too many cats and seemed to have had some kind of altercation with Dean a year or so
Sam bounded around the corner and came to a sliding stop beside him. "Are you going to use magic? To fix the tree?"

"Uh, yeah. In a way." Castiel said. He finished tying his boots up. "It's my talent."

"Talent?" Sam asked as he jammed his feet into boots that were clearly too big for him and not his. Castiel headed out the door. Sam followed him. Sam had always been eager to learn anything that had to do with angels and demons. "What's a talent?"

Castiel looked around for prying ears. The street was empty. He turned back to Sam and used a low voice that hopefully wouldn't carry. "Magic that comes naturally to some. I can do things with plants."

Sam’s eyebrows furrowed in thought while they walked to the side of the house. "...does Dean have one?"

"No." Castiel said. He put his hand on the tree and focused. They weren't supposed to do magic in public places where humans could see but as long as it wasn't flashy and could be explained away as something else most people bent the rule.

Castiel frowned at the tree. From what he could tell the tree had been diseased for years. There wasn't much he could do. Maybe when he was older, if the tree survived long enough, he could fix it completely but right now he could only really encourage it to purge the disease so it wouldn't get worse.

"What're you going to do?" Sam asked.

"Encourage the tree to purge the fungal disease it has." Castiel said, trying to concentrate.

Sam watched intently. Castiel stepped back. Sam looked the tree over. "...nothing happened."

"Nothing that you can see, but it's working." Castiel said.

Sam studied the tree carefully before they went back in. Castiel thought he'd be full of questions still but instead he was quiet. He pulled a small notepad out of his back pocket and wrote something down before dashing upstairs.

"Dean's just getting his things together." Mary said.

Castiel startled. He had been staring at the point where the mating bond was telling him Dean would be. Dean seemed content. Whatever had been irritating him in the shower couldn't have been that serious. He turned red when he realized he was thinking about Dean in the shower in front of Dean's mother. That content feeling from Dean vanished and was replaced by the familiar annoyance Castiel knew was meant for him.

A series of emotions rolled through him. Castiel could practically see Dean rolling his eyes at him for feeling embarrassed.

"You can go upstairs if you want." Mary said.

Castiel hesitated. Dean probably wouldn't like it if he just barged in but...how much more annoyed with him could Dean be?
He went up the stairs. He was just about to knock on Dean's door when it was flung open. Dean stood there in the doorway. He smelt fresh and clean but very much so like omega and his hair was wet and messy while his skin was still flushed pink from the shower. It all had the look of omega in heat. Which was going to happen to Dean soon. Then Dean would look like this for a week. And smell even better. He wasn't sure he trusted himself to be around Dean during his heat.

"What? No cookies?" Dean said, pointing down to Castiel's empty hands.

Castiel looked down at his hands. He looked back up at Dean. He felt his face flush. This was either the start of a fairy tale where the alpha strove to fulfill the omega's every whim to satisfy them before becoming mates or it was the start of a terrible porn video and the next line would be I've got something else to fill you up with.

"Dude, you would never master Kolinahr." Dean said, rolling his eyes. He stepped away from the door but left it open in invitation. He grabbed his backpack from the floor and started rummaging through it.

Castiel was going to ask what Kolinahr was but when he saw the state of Dean's room he was surprised into silence. He hadn't been in Dean's room in weeks and in that time it had become a dusty mess of feathers. It was bad even for an omega.

Castiel watched as Dean absently brushed away downy feathers and blew feather dust off things. If Dean's room looked like this...

"Dean, are you, uh..." Castiel started. Grooming wasn't something people just talked about with anyone. The topic was almost strictly family with room for close friends. But...well, they were mates. That probably made it okay. "Are you grooming your wings?"

A blast of frustration flared out from Dean. He shrugged. "Yeah, I guess."

Castiel cringed from the frustration Dean was directing at his wings. He thought over what he had felt earlier from Dean and what Dean was feeling now. It didn't bode well for the state of Dean's wings.

"Can..." Castiel's face flushed again. It wasn't as if seeing someone else's wings was particularly personal and it wasn't as if he hadn't seen Dean's wings before but the way Dean kept them hidden whenever he could made it feel like he was asking Dean to drop his pants. "...can I see them?"

Dean's face was still but Castiel could feel the flurry of emotions ranging from everything from embarrassment to disgust and finally settling on relief. "Close the door."

Castiel turned and closed the door. He heard the sound of wings bursting out before he turned around. When he did turn around he couldn't help the way his eyes went straight to the mating bites he had left behind on Dean's neck and the soul mate mark on Dean's arm.

Dean coughed trying to get his attention. Castiel looked up, eyes sliding over the rabbit's foot dangling on Dean's bare chest before landing on Dean's wings. His eyes went wide. Dean's wings were a mess.

"That bad, huh?" Dean said. He shrugged nonchalantly but embarrassment flared out from him. He reached out to flick a loose wet down feather from his wing.

Castiel had never seen anyone's wings this unkempt. He clamped down on the urge to reach out and start rearranging feathers and straightening out the mess. "How have you been taking care of them?"
"Uh, well, I shove them into the shower every couple of days." Dean said. He picked at his left wing. "And...I guess I shake'em out when there's a lot of this fluffy shit sticking out."

Castiel's eye twitched. "You what? That— that's it?"

Dean shrugged. His wings pressed in close against him. "What else are you supposed to do with 'em?"

"A lot." Castiel said. He stared at Dean in near disbelief. "Have you...has no one told you how to take care of them?"

"Mostly people just try to tell me freaky biology stuff." Dean said. His wings pressed even closer to him and discomfort rolled off him in waves. "Or about how you guys have been dicks to each other."

"Why haven't you asked someone?" Castiel asked.

Dean gave him an unimpressed look. A flick of anger lashed out through the bond. "Ask who?"

A wave of distrust rocked through Castiel. Dean had a point. It was family that answered those sorts of questions and Dean's family were humans. Who would Dean ask? He wouldn't want to bring up grooming his wings to someone he didn't really know. Why should he expect Dean to? Castiel's shoulders slumped. He was a terrible alpha. He had cornered his mate in the car and he hadn't even noticed that his mate had been struggling to groom their wings until they were this disarrayed mess.

He could do better.

"I can show you how." Castiel offered. "After your lesson tonight, we can go to my house and I'll show you."

Dean pursed his lips. Wariness oozed from him. "Your house still makes me...weird."

Castiel's eyebrows drew together puzzled. Then he remembered. His mother hadn't put a time frame on her persuasion that Dean would feel safe at his house. "We can do it here. But I'll need to stop at home to get some things."

"Uh..." Dean shifted on his feet and picked another wet down feather from his wing. Castiel felt a coil of arousal reach out from Dean along with a dose of fear. Dean's face turned pink. "Alright. Just...no funny business with them."

Castiel was going to say that even in the closest of families grooming etiquette meant only mates groomed where Dean must be thinking about once an angel was old enough to groom their wings on their own then remembered they were mates. But they were mates that barely knew each other.

Castiel promised, no funny business. Relief poured out from Dean before he promptly told him to get out while he changed because now he had wet feathers stuck to his clothes.

Castiel went back downstairs and waited. He could feel Dean second guessing himself the entire time.

Dean tromped down the stairs a few minutes later with a binder under his arm and a pen tucked behind his ear. "You ready?"

Castiel nodded and followed Dean to the door. Mary came over to see them off.
Dean zipped up his sweater and pulled his boots on.

"You're not taking your coat?" Mary asked.

"I'm good." Dean said, plucking at the sweater he wore.

"At least take a scarf. It's the middle of November." Mary said. She took a knitted scarf off a hook on the wall and held it out. Dean sighed and took it, muttering about not needing to be bundle up like a kid. Mary smiled at him amused. "I'll have to ask grandma Dee to make you the matching hat for Christmas. Then I can really bundle you up."

"As long as it's not more beige khakis." Dean said, wrinkling his nose.

Mary snorted with laughter. Castiel looked between the two of them not sure why it was funny. Mary gave them each a hug before they headed out the door.

Castiel got into the car. Dean opened the door and stuck his head in. He looked at the seat, then the dashboard, then down to the foot well. He let out a disappointed sigh and sat down. He pulled the door closed then sniffed at the air. He made another disappointed sigh before pulling his seatbelt on.

"What's wrong?" Castiel asked. Even without the soul mate bond telling him Dean was disappointed it was obvious.

"Nothing." Dean said. He shifted in his seat and sniffed at the air again. "You've just been— never mind."

"What?" Castiel pressed. What had he done?

Dean shrugged and didn't say anything. Castiel waited but Dean kept quiet. Castiel sighed and started the car. Castiel had just pulled out of the driveway when Dean spoke up.

"You seriously didn't bring anything this time?" Dean asked.

Castiel kept his eyes on the road but his eyebrows furrowed together in confusion. "Didn't bring anything?"

"I dunno, man. You started it." Dean said. He took the pen from behind his ear and started flicking it between his fingers. "I just...I've had a wicked craving for those rhubarb things you brought the other week."

"Oh. I didn't think..." Castiel hadn't thought bringing Dean baked goods had been helping as much as he'd have liked it to so he hadn't brought any today. "We can stop at the bakery on the way to school."

Dean made an indignant sound. "Dude, no, it's fine."

"It's alright." Castiel insisted.

"Really. It's cool. I'm good. I shouldn't be wasting money on junk food anyway." Dean said.

"It's not a problem and Gabriel's been giving me everything for free as long as I do all the clean up duties." Castiel said. If food was the way into Dean's good graces he wasn't going to wreck his chances. "And it's barely out of the way."

Dean grumbled but Castiel could feel that content feeling ripple in the back of his head. Castiel
rather liked that. They were going to the bakery.

It took a few minutes for Castiel to find a parking spot downtown and they ended up having to walk a good distance and they were probably going to be late but Castiel couldn't care less. Even though Dean seemed to have a scowl permanently etched to his face and was complaining about being late to a class he didn't even want to go to all Castiel could feel from him was anticipation. Castiel hadn't realized how well the baked goods had been working in his favour.

Castiel pushed the door to the bakery open for Dean. Dean gave him a strange look and seemed amused but didn't say anything.

Castiel was feeling rather pleased with himself right up until he saw the look on Gabriel's face. He didn't know what Gabriel was going to do but he doubted he'd like it. Some days he couldn't quite remember why he was friends with him.

"Cassie." Gabriel said, grinning. He waggled his eyebrows at him before turning to Dean. "Hey, Deano. Long time, no see."

"...Gabriel, right?" Dean said.

Gabriel nodded. He studied Dean for a moment before reaching over and taking out a tray of coconut cream bars. "Try one."

Dean watched Gabriel carefully like he wasn't quite sure if Gabriel was being friendly or was up to something. Castiel could have told him he was most definitely up to something because it was Gabriel. He was always up to something.

Dean narrowed his eyes in suspicion but picked up one of the coconut cream bars and took a bite big enough to eat half of it. Dean groaned in unapologetic pleasure that echoed the pulse of emotion coming from him. He chewed quickly and swallowed. He shoved the other half into his mouth and proceeded to lick his fingers clean.

Castiel eyes widened. The entire display made the alpha in him ripple with smugness - he had made those coconut cream bars yesterday - that went, embarrassingly enough, straight to his dick. Castiel ducked around the counter and tried to distract himself from his mate who was getting far too engrossed in coconut cream bars than what was appropriate for public.

He grabbed one of the flattened boxes and started folding the sides up to take shape. Gabriel kept pulling out trays and telling Dean which desserts Castiel had made. It really didn't seem to matter to Dean as long as Gabriel was offering them for free but it was doing terrible things to Castiel to listen to Dean eat.

When he had the box put together he turned around to see Dean eyeing a caramel topped brownie in a way no one should ever look at food. Castiel kept his eyes down and started picking out desserts.

There weren't any rhubarb squares. The alpha in him panicked. He needed rhubarb squares. Now.

He glanced behind himself at the pies. There was a strawberry rhubarb pie. Would that be close enough? He glanced back at Gabriel...who was unabashedly flirting with his mate. He paused. He looked at the box of desserts he had packed up which Gabriel was letting him have for free. He looked back to Dean who didn't seem to be objecting to Gabriel's flirting.

Was Gabriel trying to date them?
He watched Gabriel. Gabriel was doing everything a beta trying to flirt with an alpha-omega couple would do. He had found something the omega liked and was complimenting their alpha's skills as a provider; made all the more blatant since it was food. He looked at the box of desserts. The desserts that Gabriel was providing freely, supporting him in his pursuit of an omega, helping him to ingratiate himself.

Gabriel had joked about it but he hadn't actually said he wasn't trying to date them.

Castiel's forehead furrowed in thought. He didn't think of Gabriel that way and he hadn't thought Gabriel thought of him that way. But...he didn't find it...objectionable...and he wasn't jealous. Not like he was with Lisa and Benny. He frowned to himself. Why was he jealous of Lisa then?

Lisa had been doing nearly the same thing. She had complimented the food he made and told Dean as much. But they didn't talk outside of the few times that he had run into her with Dean. Maybe that was it? Maybe he had to get to know Lisa better. Maybe that was all he needed to do to feel more comfortable with the idea of a human mate.

And if he got to know Lisa maybe she could help him with Dean.

...though he didn't often see humans with more than one mate. What if Lisa knew even less than he did about having two mates? At least he had seen other people's parents.

"If you keep making that face it'll get stuck like that." Gabriel said.

Castiel blinked and realized that Dean and Gabriel were both smirking at him. He glanced at the clock on the wall. They were officially late. He grabbed his wallet and took out ten dollars. He shoved it into the tip jar. If Gabriel was trying to date them he didn't want to lead him on.

"It's on the house." Gabriel said, reaching for the tip jar.

"I'm taking a pie too." Castiel said. He slid the tip jar further away from Gabriel then took the strawberry rhubarb pie from the shelf. He stacked the other box on top of it and took a plastic fork from a drawer. He slipped around the counter. He nodded towards the clock. "We're late."

Dean glanced over. He sighed. "Yeah."

Gabriel shouted after them that Dean was welcome back any time. Castiel hoped he really was just being friendly. He could already feel the pre-emptive dread of having to explain to Gabriel - his friend and employer - that he wasn't interested.

Dean ate the entire box of desserts on the car ride over to the school and polished off the pie - which was better than the rhubarb squares if the sounds Dean made were anything to go by - during an introductory lesson on Enochian.

On the way home Dean stared at the empty box forlornly despite the mildly queasy feeling Castiel was getting from him. Castiel didn't need a textbook to tell him what was going on with Dean. His body was getting ready to go into heat. It was the middle of November but Dean was only wearing a sweater - he'd taken the scarf off - and he was consuming a quite frankly impressive amount of food but felt a little sick. Increased temperature, increased appetite, slight nausea from the hormone fluctuation; the textbook definition of an upcoming heat.

"You, uh, might want to— see about things soon." Castiel said, trying to broach the topic of heats as tactfully as he could. "I think you're— uh...heat will probably be next week."

"Sure. Whatever." Dean said. He pursed his lips together and turned away. The conversation was
over before it had begun.

Castiel hoped Dean had come around to the idea because it was going to happen whether he wanted it to or not.

Castiel stopped at his house to get the things they'd need, and a shirt that he could wear with his wings out, and to tell his mother where he'd be. He was about to tell her that he was going to help Dean to groom his wings then realized how many times he had heard adults say that when he was little and how the adults always seemed to come back looking messier than before. He squeaked out something about helping Dean learn Enochian and dashed from the house.

How had he never put that together before? It wasn't like he was naive. He'd had sex before. He knew full well what it was like when someone touched the space between his wings and what it did to him. He was blushing furiously by the time he got to the car. He had heard his own mothers use that excuse hundreds of times before his beta mother had died.

"What's up with you?" Dean asked when he got into the car.

"Nothing," Castiel said. If Dean didn't want to talk about his upcoming heat then he didn't have to talk about how he had just realized his parents - his grandparents! - did a lot more than groom each other's wings when they were 'helping' each other.

It wasn't long before they were at Dean's home, changed into more appropriate clothing, standing in the damp basement with their wings out, Dean having kicked Sam out as an unwelcome observer.

The basement was really the only room big enough for two angels to have their wings out that didn't have carpet. It could get rather dusty and one glance at the ragged look of Dean's wings made Castiel suspect they should have found a spray bottle to keep the dust down in the air.

Castiel slipped the grooming tool over his middle and index finger and his thumb. He showed Dean how to put the other one he had brought on. He brought his fingers and thumb together and made a stroking motion with his hand a few times before he brought his wing forward and ran his fingers through his feathers. "Like that. Don't pull at them but be firm."

"Yeah. I figured the don't pull part out," Dean muttered. He stretched a wing out and around and grabbed it with his other hand before plunging his fingers into the feathers and yanking them through. "What is this thing anyway?"

"It's an avini zien," Castiel said. He ran his fingers through his feathers in long strokes brushing the powdered down along each feather.

"In English?" Dean asked.

"It...it sounds a little strange in English," Castiel said. He thought about how he could translate it any way other than literally but he couldn't come up with anything that sounded better. There just wasn't an English equivalent. Probably because humans didn't need a word for a feather grooming tool. "Stone of my hands."

Dean snorted in amusement. "Yeah. A little strange."

Castiel did a whole wing and moved on to the other one while Dean struggled with his first one still. The growing frustration Dean was feeling was starting to make Castiel frustrated for him. He kept trying to encourage Dean and correct him but Dean kept complaining that it was dumb and that he shouldn't have to do it anyway.
"You have to work it under at the top." Castiel said as he watched Dean. "Press harder there." He sighed when Dean jabbed at his wing and flinched. "Not like that. Firm."

"I am being firm." Dean said, annoyed.

"No, you're practically pulling feathers out and you're not even getting at the powder down feathers underneath." Castiel said. He brought his wing forward and held it up at eye level. He parted the covert feathers to show Dean the powder down feathers beneath. "You have to get underneath to these otherwise you're not doing much of anything."

Dean rolled his eyes and started digging at his wing again while muttering about it being harder than it looked.

"It's not that hard." Castiel said.

"Sure. For you. You've been doing this for how many years?" Dean scoffed. "I've been doing this for twenty minutes."

Castiel watched Dean yank at his feathers for a few minutes more before offering to help. "I can do some for you. So you know what it's supposed to feel like." He reached out for the end of Dean's wing. "Here."

"No." Dean growled angrily. He batted Castiel's hand away. "I can do it."

Castiel was suddenly awash in fear from Dean. His eyes widened. Dean for all intents and purposes looked ready to try and punch him in the nose again but the feelings coming off Dean were full of apprehension, anxiety, and fear. But the fear...the fear felt like a more subdued version of what had happened in the car. What had he done to scare Dean like that again? Castiel backed up so he wasn't crowding Dean. The fear lessened. He folded his wings back and kept them close to his body. Dean relaxed a little bit more.

"I'm not some two year old that can't— can't brush his own feathers." Dean muttered.

Castiel could still feel mild anxiety creeping into his mind from Dean and smell the slight hint of fear in the air. Dean worked his fingers into the shoulder of his wing and this time slid the grooming tool down slowly without yanking.

Dean scowled at Castiel. "See? I can do it. I just wanted someone to tell me how, not do it for me. I can take care of myself."

Chapter End Notes

I couldn't help that Canada joke. It was so cheesy.

Also, it's chocolate bar and you can't make me change it.

Zdxg- My guess is it would be pronounced either "Zu-deeks-juh" or "Zod-ks-juh" or "Zod-dee-ks-juh". What a delightfully terrible mouthful.

So my subversion of the wing trope is: powder down feathers instead of a uropygial gland. And while it allows me to cover the grooming trope I also think no one would really think to mention how to take care of wings. I think it would just be assumed the
same way everyone just *knows* you've got to wash and brush your hair. Sort of a, well *of course* you have to groom wings. You brush your teeth don't you? It would be such a basic skill for an angel Dean's age that no one would really think that he wouldn't know. I mean if you met someone that was newly an adult human who always wore a hat your first thought wouldn't be I bet they don't know how to brush their hair. You'd think, oh, they like hats. Whereas heats and ruts what be something a good chunk of the population would actually remember going through for the first time (can anyone say they honestly remember the first time they combed their hair?)

Avini zien - Literally "millstone of my hands". I figure it's some kind of artificial beak-like device that would mimic the way a bird grooms its feathers.

This fic has made me realize that the anglicized bastard Enochian Supernatural uses much of the time sounds a hell of a lot better than what it's apparently "supposed" to be. Compare: Rit Zien. Supernatural says "rit zin" but evidently it's supposed to be "ree-tah zod-ee-eh-en".

Worlding! Note

Before anyone asks, no this isn't going to be a Dean/Cas/Lisa fic. Or a Dean/Cas/Gabriel fic. Or a Dean/Cas/Someone fic. I just think that it's weird that a lot of a/b/o fics don't have triads as the normal relationship in their verse. There's the whole pack trope or the alpha with a few omegas trope or the alpha/beta with omega breeder trope but there doesn't seem to be a lot of genuine three people in a relationship where all members are equally involved. So for my world it's socially acceptable to be an alpha with a beta mate (and to a lesser degree a beta with a beta mate) but the relationship that's perceived as the best is an alpha-beta-omega triad.

And now I present this worlds relationship stereotypes! Alpha-beta-omega: A stable long lasting family who will likely continue to renew their mating bonds. Alpha-beta couples: calm and level headed sometimes described as passionless because there isn't an omega around to keep things interesting. Alpha-omega couples are sort of the crazy wild high strung couple that everyone *knows* needs a calming beta influence. Beta-omega couples are viewed as doomed unless the beta can attracted an alpha mate because everyone *knows* that omegas *need* a knot at that time of the month. It's more acceptable to be a alpha-omega couple than a beta-omega couple. A beta-beta-omega triad is sort of the you two must be amazing in bed to keep an omega around. An alpha-alpha-omega triad along with an alpha-omega-omega triad are just considered sex freaks. All beta triads are the boring people who live down the street and always bring salads to pot lucks. An alpha with two betas mates is that guy who looks into the camera. A beta with a human mate is basically the set up for every beta tragic love story where the human dies/leaves/cheats and some selfless alpha-omega couple swoop in and provide the brokenhearted beta with a proper loving home. Omega-omega is met with a general O.o from most people and the idea that an all omega triad might exist makes most people ?????. An alpha couple is stereotyped as being super competitive. An all alpha triad? Someone's probably getting murdered over a board game.

I think there's probably a lot of ridiculous contrived romcoms in this universe about alpha-omega couples being all raging hormones and trying to get a straight laced beta to loosen up while the beta tries to frantically clean up after all the alpha's and omega's crazy sex marathon.
Beta: *picks up broken dishes* I am not dating you two to clean your house. *sweeps spilled uncooked rice off the floor* You're wasting perfectly good food.
Alpha and omega: *general whining and complaining about how cleaning can wait* Come have sex with us.
Beta: Do you two ever have anything else on your minds?
Alpha and omega: *look at each other and grin* Not at this time of the month.
*horrible recorded laugh track*
Alpha and omega: *promptly carry off beta to have sex*
One cut scene later and the beta has somehow persuaded the alpha and omega to help clean the house, general insinuation is that they're surprisingly good in bed for a beta.

Now I want to write the plots to terrible a/b/o sitcoms.
Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

Tuesday came bright and early and gross. It was like clockwork.

Chapter Notes

Warning: There's some throwing up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dean crouched down and furiously shoved the vacuum under his bed. He had spent the better part of three hours tonight trying to use that ridiculous feather comb thing on his dumb scraggly wings that had just kept getting feathers and dust everywhere and on top of all that Castiel had kept flip-flopping between being annoyingly worried about him to being all weird and turned on while watching him comb his wings.

He was damn sure he had said, no funny business.

He yanked the vacuum out and started on the rest of his room. He had just wanted to know what to do about the feathered monstrosities that were making him vacuum four times a week. There had been no freakin' way he was asking any of the weirdos at Saint Charles, they'd probably just want to go on about his butt or something, so that had pretty much just left Castiel and he wouldn't have ever asked him anyway if he hadn't brought it up.

And then Castiel had gotten all, here just let me grope your wings, as if he didn't know what he was trying to pull.

The vacuum sucked up a sock. It whined loud. Dean growled in frustration and pulled the plug from the wall. He grabbed the vacuum and turned it on its end and started trying to tug the sock out. It came out with a rip. Dean set the vacuum down with a thud. He balled up the sock and threw it across the room.

Then his butt started leaking again.

And because he was such a girl he started crying about it. It was a great way to end an already screwed up day.

"Fuck." He snorted and rubbed at his eyes. He shoved his pants and underwear off and grabbed a wad of kleenex from the box beside his bed. He shoved the kleenex between his butt cheeks before that stuff could get all over the place.

He grabbed his garbage pail and put it down beside the bed because he just knew he was gonna have to swap out kleenex a few times; more tears rolled down his face at that. He let his wings out. Dust flicked off them. So he cried about that too— he had just vacuumed. He turned the light off then crawled into bed. He laid out on his stomach and let his wings settle over him like a blanket.
A dumb fluffy dust filled blanket.

"Fuck."

The whole day had been so screwed up.

He'd felt sick from the moment he got up. But then he couldn't stop eating, because that made sense. He'd spent all morning dodging Lisa and Benny because they smelt good and that was definitely not good because now his butt leaked everywhere. Then his stupid butt had thought the dentist smelt really good and nearly leaked all over the place before he had bolted for the bathroom. By the time he'd gotten home the situation in his pants was getting hard and wet and that was just wrong on so many different levels he didn't know where to begin.

The worst part was that it hadn't stopped. He'd just gotten harder and wetter until he had finally gotten into the shower to do something about it. Because he couldn't just jerk off like a normal person, oh no, that'd be too easy. Now his butt leaked when he touched his dick and he couldn't even come like a normal person. He'd had to touch that spot between his wings to finally get off. Which had only made the whole mess of feathers look even worse. He had tried to do something about them but had only messed them up even more.

Cas had shown up after - which at first he had thought good, because Cas kept bringing food and he was starving again - but he had acted all, oh what? You don't just know how to take care of huge freakin' wings?

Obviously he didn't or he wouldn't have been standing in a pile of dust and wet feathers getting turned on again because who the fuck knew why at that point? He was getting horny at the dentist's for Christ's sake.

At least Castiel had stopped in at the bakery so he could stuff his face and had brought a pie with them so he had something to do while a different teacher tried to get him to learn Edwardian or whatever it was called. The whole thing had dragged on forever.

Then Castiel started talking about all that heat crap that everyone else kept talking about, as if he really wanted to hear any more about that, but it was hard not to hear at least some of it when everyone was always talking about it. So maybe he didn't want to know a damn thing about it but he kind of did.

And he didn't like what he knew.

Cas was probably right, it was gonna happen next week. It was gonna happen again. He was gonna feel like that again. He growled into his pillow, mad at the whole stupid thing. He hadn't signed up to feel like he was dying every couple of months.

He woke up the next morning ten minutes before his alarm went off - with kleenex shoved between his butt cheeks and feathers in his mouth - and felt like he was going to be sick. He turned his alarm clock off. He hung his head off the side of his bed and into his garbage pail and waited to see if he was gonna upchuck that half a bakery he'd eaten yesterday.

He didn't. But he sure as hell felt like he might.

He groaned and rolled out of bed. He rubbed at his face. His eyes felt puffy and raw, like he had been crying.

Because he had been crying.
What the hell had that been about last night? He turned to look at the sock on the other side of the room that had started the whole thing. He stared at it puzzled. It was just a sock. It wasn't even one of his favourite socks. Sure yesterday had sucked but it wasn't like he needed to cry about it. He wrinkled his nose and snorted in disgust.

He picked the handful of kleenexes out of his butt and tossed them in the garbage then pulled some boxers on. He got as far as the bathroom before his butt started leaking again.

"For fuck's sake." He let out an enraged snarl and started digging around under the bathroom sink as that stuff dripped down his legs.

He found the panty liners stashed behind the tile cleaner. He grabbed one from the box and had it half open when he looked down at his boxers - damp with that stuff - and wondered how the hell panty liners even worked. He looked at the pad in his hand then down at his boxers again...how was that supposed to actually go on...or in...or whatever?

Girl underwear. Girl underwear kind of hugged everything. He had some boxer briefs that would probably work.

He stood up intent on getting some boxer briefs and had his hand on the bathroom doorknob when he stopped. He looked at the half opened pad in his hand. A shiver of revulsion went through him. Nope. He was not wearing freakin' panty liners to school.

Fuck that.

He shoved the pad back in the box and stuffed it behind the tile cleaner. He wiped his legs down, got all his business done in the bathroom, then folded up some toilet paper and wedged it between his butt cheeks.

He spent the morning at school dodging Lisa and trying to stay away from Benny in class.

He hid out with Charlie and Bela at lunch in the computer lab while they worked on their project. He was starting to get the drift that whatever they were doing for this 'project' it was maybe borderline illegal.

"So it's vampires in a hospital?" Dean asked, eyeing the cup of pudding that Charlie wasn't even eating. Bela nodded, Charlie hummed. Dean shrugged. "I don't get it. Why would vampires attack a hospital? Wouldn't sick people taste weird? And not have...I dunno, enough nutrients in their blood?"

"It's just a game Dean." Bela said, not looking up from her computer.

"I dunno...maybe he's right." Charlie said thoughtfully. She grabbed her pudding cup and pealed the lid off and Dean was definitely not watering at the mouth watching her eat it.

"I am not re-writing the story again." Bela said in a voice that brokered no arguments. "The vampires are after the patients. You're there to save them. That's it."

"What if they were there to steal the blood supply?" Charlie mused.

"That'd make more sense." Dean said, watching Charlie scoop out another spoonful of pudding. "It'd be from healthy people, lots of iron and B-twelve in the blood."

"They're vampires nothing about this game makes sense." Bela said.
The door to the computer lab banged open. The three of them jumped and scrambled to hide their lunches—which were definitely not allowed in the computer lab.

Jo stomped in.

She pointed an angry fingered at Dean and did her best Ellen impression. Dean recoiled into his chair.

"You." Jo said. She stomped closer to Dean. "Go talk to Lisa."

Dean's eyes widened. That was exactly what he was trying to avoid doing. "What? I—"

"No." Jo said. She loomed over him. "Go. Talk. To Lisa." She raised one angry eyebrow at him when he didn't move. "I'm not getting caught up in another one of your whiny soap opera breakups with her."

Dean tried to think of a good excuse that didn't involve, *hey, so I grew some wings and now my butt leaks when I talk to you.* He ended up muttering something lame about lunch being almost over. Jo gave him a look that screamed, *do it or I'll kick your ass.*

Dean sighed and gathered up his things. He gave Charlie and Bela a pleading look.

Bela shrugged.

Charlie bit her lip. "...you probably *should* talk to her. You *have* been kinda blowing her off a lot lately."

Every one of them were traitors.

He followed Jo out into the hallway. They spent the last ten minutes of lunch trying to find Lisa but luckily he was saved by the bell.

The only good part about school that day was that he got his math midterm back and he had aced it. Multiple choice, thank you rabbit’s foot.

Fifteen minutes before school was over he could feel Castiel in the parking lot. His stomach growled. It was kind of pathetic that he was starting to get a pavlovian response to Castiel showing up.

Cas brought apple turnovers which definitely made the day look better until he started asking questions about Lisa. It was like the whole damn world wanted his butt to leak all over the place.

"How's Lisa?" Castiel asked.

Dean kept his eyes on the turnover he was making fast work of. He shrugged. "Okay, I guess."

"You guess?" Castiel asked and felt all concerned and stuff, which, where the hell did he get off being concerned? He'd been all weird and jealous and creepy before. He didn't get to be concerned just because he smelt great.

Dean shoved half the apple turnover into his mouth so he wouldn't have to answer. By the time he had finished almost choking on the turnover Castiel had the let the topic drop. The rest of the ride over to Saint Charles was silent except for Dean's chewing.

Dean was totally not looking forward to another day of learning some language he was never gonna use - Klingon would have been more useful - but he would rather have sat through *that* than
another 'health' lecture from the Grand Marshal of the Crazy Parade.

He just knew Castiel was the one who had tipped her off. He hunkered down in his seat and shoved the box of apple turnovers across the table to Castiel. He could keep his stupid baked goods.

Halfway through for what passed as learning at Saint Charles he dragged the box back over to himself and ate the rest of the turnovers. spitefully. They were spite turnovers now. He glared at Castiel when he felt a bubble of amusement at the back of his head.

At the end of the newest episode of the Twilight Zone - they had talked about ruts too which as far as he could tell meant having your dick swell up until it looked like you needed some Benadryl, an EpiPen, and a trip to the hospital before your dick fell off - Ephrath gave him a bunch of stuff for his parents again, which, no. No fucking way he was going to tell his parents about freakin' butt vaginas and messed up dicks. Sam would probably find out and never shut up about it. He stuffed the papers into the bottom of his backpack. He'd throw them out at school tomorrow.

The only good part about all this heat bullshit was that no one expected him to show up to the loony tunes lessons next week while he was dying and the week after that Saint Charles was doing exams which meant everyone was gonna be too busy to try to teach him weird stuff. Two weeks without angels or demons or whatever they wanted to call themselves. So there was that to look forward to.

He managed to dodge Lisa on Wednesday but couldn't escape Benny and ended up spending half of English in the bathroom to wait for his butt to stop leaking.

Castiel brought banana bread with him after school and instead of another mortifying 'health' lecture they went back to learning How to Speak Squiggles 101. It sounded like a show for five year olds. Ephrath dropped in at the end of it to ask him if there was anything he wanted to talk about. There definitely wasn't.

"She's only trying to help." Castiel said as they walked out to the car.

Dean snorted. "Right. Hearing about butt vaginas and weird fucking dicks, that's really helpful."

There was a pop of annoyance at the back of Dean's head that made him roll his eyes. Castiel was an alpha - at least that was what he had said - so he probably had one of those weird fucking dicks.

Dean stopped. He blinked and looked at Castiel. Castiel probably had one of those weird dicks.

...ugh! Dean wrinkled his nose. He'd had sex with that? How had he not noticed that? Ugh! No. Twice! He'd had sex with that twice! He clenched his butt cheeks together. What was wrong with these people? Hadn't anyone told them dicks weren't supposed to look like that?

Castiel kept feeling all annoyed and offended.

Dean shoved all thoughts of weird dicks out of his head and waved dismissively. "Hey, if you like having your dick go nuts every couple of weeks, fine, but this— this heat bullshit I'm apparently stuck with? It sucks. All this crap everyone keeps telling me about how wonderful it is to be a— ya know...omega, it's bullshit. There is nothing good about this."

"It's not that bad." Castiel said sounding less annoyed than Dean knew he was.

Dean opened the car door and got in. He waited for Castiel to get in beside him before glaring over at him. "Have you ever done one of these heat things?"
"Obviously not. I'm an alpha. I get ruts." Castiel said, getting the car started.

"Well, until your butt starts dripping stuff out of it shut up about how not bad it is." Dean said. He folded his arms across his bag and jerked around to look out the window. Castiel stewed about it all. Good for him.

Thursday morning he threw up and four hours later Lisa broke up with him. Great day all around.

Friday morning he threw up again and tried to apologize to Lisa for ditching her all the time except for when she visited at work and he couldn't get away. She forgave him and they got back together and then he ditched her again to throw up. He went to the office and called home after that. Dad was on night shifts and not happy about being woken up. He grumbled a bit but said he'd be over in fifteen minutes to pick him up from school.

He had no idea if the whole getting back together with Lisa thing was still official or if almost throwing up on someone kind of put the kibosh on that.

Dad came fifteen minutes later, just like he said he would. He signed him out of school and drove him home.

"...you okay?" Dad asked. He glanced over at Dean then back to the road.

"Lunch just didn't agree with me." Dean said. He hugged his backpack to himself.

"...you sure it was just lunch?" Dad said.

"Yeah." Dean said. His stomach growled.

Dad shuffled his fingers over the steering wheel. "...you want me to make that soup your mother makes?"

Dean nodded. He was freakin' starving.

He threw up again on Saturday morning. He phoned up Bobby and told him he couldn't come in to work that weekend because of the whole toilet tango that was going on. Bobby told him to quit eating things on dares. Mom fussed over him the whole day making him eat crackers and soup and drink water.

His butt kept getting ideas of its own but it wasn't as big of a deal since he wasn't at school.

Sunday he woke up in damp crusty sheets and nearly missed the garbage pail when he threw up. He groaned and glanced at his clock. Exactly ten to seven, right on time.

He stripped his bed down, changed his pants, and did some laundry.

And really really wished he had cleared things up with Lisa and that his butt would stop leaking because, holy crap, he needed to get laid. It was the most awkward Sunday morning breakfast he had ever had with Mom.

He hid out in the basement for the rest of the day and tried to comb his wings.

He was still throwing up on Monday so Mom let him stay home from school. He was starting to think maybe the whole heat thing wasn't that bad. It was still gross and he didn't like it but...but he didn't feel like he was gonna die. He wasn't sitting in the bathtub with the cold water practically steaming off his skin or ice packs jammed into his armpits.
Those were so not good ways to measure if something was good or not.

Mom phoned around noon to check up on him. He had thrown up again but otherwise he was fine, except that he really wanted to get laid...and maybe eat an entire large pizza.

Tuesday came bright and early and gross. It was like clockwork. Ten minutes to seven and his stomach decided it was time for a fire sale, everything must go!

And his sheets were gross again. He was gonna have to start putting down towels or plastic or something before he ruined his mattress. As it was he stripped his bed, stuffed the gross sheets into a corner, and put clean sheets on while he seriously considered throwing up again.

He was really starting to get sick of this shit. Pun not intended.

Mom let him stay home again but told him if he was still sick tomorrow he was going to the doctor's. There was no freakin' way he was going to a doctor. He hated doctors. Besides, what the hell could a doctor do for this angel crap anyway?

He ended up sitting on the couch trying to ignore how their was damp toilet paper folded up between his butt cheeks while he ate a box of honeycombs and cried his way through The Princess Bride. Which was weird. Really weird.

Everything was good until Westley had tumbled down the hill yelling, as you wish. Then the waterworks turned on and by the end of it he was sitting on the couch crying about how awesome a friend Fezzik would be, always there to help even when you're a mess, while stuffing his face with cereal.

In short, what the fuck?

He made his way up to his room, snorting and eating honeycombs. He dug around in his backpack and pulled out the pages Ephrath had given him for his parents. He'd forgotten to toss them and they had gotten smashed down to the bottom of his bag. It was probably a bunch of crap but...well...

He flicked through the pages, reading a word here and there - most of it did sound like crap - until he got to the page about symptoms.

Pre-Heat symptoms: nausea, increased appetite, increased body temperature, loose bowel movements. Dean raised his eyebrow at that last one, just say the shits. Well, check off everything except for loose bowel movements. He could practically hear the snooty soccer mom voice.

Heat symptoms: increased libido, increased body temperature, loss of appetite, mood swings, restlessness. He read the symptoms over a second time. Well, he definitely had the increased body temperature and increased libido if the way his butt kept leaking meant anything. Loss of appetite was a no go, he'd eat his own weight in food right now if he could. He wasn't sure about the restlessness part. He was kind of agitated because he wanted to get laid as of yesterday, that was restlessness, right? The mood swings though. That explained crying about a sock and The Princess Bride.

He shook his head. It was bad enough that his butt leaked but now this heat bullshit meant he was going to break out into tears about nothing?

"I better not start crying about the mashed potatoes touching the peas at Thanksgiving dinner."

Dean muttered to himself.
His eyes flicked down the page to Post-Heat symptoms: fatigue, mild dehydration, some omegas may begin molting. He grimaced. Molting? He was already shedding feathers and dust everywhere. It could get worse than that?

There was a bit more underneath that reminded him, well, *his parents*, to make sure he drank plenty of water and still eat during the whole *heat* thing. Yeah, no problem there, he was gonna eat them out of house and home.

He flicked to the next page. There was some crap he kept hearing from everyone about *heats* being every eight to twelve weeks and wasn't that just great? Dean rolled his eyes at the cheery tone. He scanned further down the page and stopped at the part that said heats *normally* lasted three to five days - as if there was anything *normal* about them - but could last seven to eight days when there was a history of twins in the family.

He figured the whole heat crap shoot probably started on Sunday. He counted the days off on his fingers. At the latest it should be over by Thursday. He could deal with that. Hell, it could be over tomorrow.

He glanced down at the lump under his shirt. "Well, Bugs, let's see how lucky you are."

The rabbit's foot wasn't *that* lucky. It was still going on when he got up on Wednesday so he spent a really awkward day at school where he had to get to a bathroom every half an hour or else leave a puddle behind. Panty liners had started to look like an attractive idea by lunch time but there was no way in hell he was going to go up to a girl and ask for a freakin' panty liner.

Lisa didn't talk to him the whole day. They were probably still broken up. Great. Now he had to figure out how to say sorry for ditching you all the time and sorry for almost throwing up on you. He didn't think flowers were gonna cut it. He'd work something out with Charlie and Jo once his butt calmed the fuck down.

Thanksgiving he flipped out on the carrots he was cutting up and was sent to his room until he had calmed down and had a good long reflective think about swearing in front of his parents. He hadn't been sent to his room in years. It wasn't fair. It wasn't even really his fault. All this heat stuff was screwing with his head. But he couldn't exactly say that because then he'd have to explain butt vaginas to his parents and just *no*. There was no way he was doing that.

Thursday was supposed to be the last day but it wasn't. Apparently twins ran somewhere in the family. Which meant he might have to deal with all this bullshit until freakin' Sunday.

It was still going strong on Sunday. He was still throwing up at least once a day and having to be careful to hide the fact or else he'd have to do some explaining he really didn't want to do. He was still horny and hungry and agitated. And his nipples hurt, which was new and horrible. Every time the leather cord from the rabbit's foot swung across them he winced. He had tried wearing it backwards but the spot on his shoulders where his wings would meet hurt too. The cord was even starting to bug his neck.

Monday morning he woke up at twenty to seven, dragged himself into the bathroom, turned the shower on for cover noise, and just waited. Ten minutes later he was puking his guts out.

"For fu—" He glanced up at the door. He could hear his mother moving around and getting ready for work. "For..." He muttered for a few minutes, threw up again as quietly as he could, then hung his head. He really couldn't think of a better way to express the situation that didn't involve swearing. "Fuck. It's supposed to be over."
Monday sucked all around.

Tuesday he nearly came in his pants when Benny clapped his hand high enough up on his back to hit his neck. He spent a really horrible half an hour in the school bathroom after that trying to get off because his dick would not calm down but he couldn't because he couldn't get off without letting his stupid wings out and touching that spot. If that kept up he was probably gonna cry about it.

He ended up having to skulk around the teacher's bathroom until someone came out so he could slip in before the door locked. The teacher's bathroom was just a room with a sink, a toilet, a sign - the length of a moment depends upon which side of the door you're on -, and thankfully a deadbolt on the door.

Dean locked the door and stripped down in a whirlwind of clothes. He let his wings out in the tiny space and quickly worked out that if he leaned back against the paper towel dispenser it hit all the right spots. He did a frantically paced five finger shuffle and felt like his heart was gonna stop when he finally came.

He slumped down to the floor and covered himself with his wings. He breathed heavy. Why hadn't it stopped yet?

It still hadn't stopped by Friday. It hadn't gotten worse but it hadn't stopped either. So even if he had been off on counting by a day or two there was no fucking way this was normal. Something had to be wrong. That magic crap that had turned him into a freak had screwed something up.

He spent half the night tossing and turning and the other half eating pretzels dipped in a jar of crunchy peanut butter while he read all the pages Ephrath had given him top to bottom.

On the last crinkled page in the last paragraph there was a line about abnormal heats. If a heat lasted longer than ten days he should contact a Cnoqvol. His had been going on for fourteen. Fuck. He knew something was wrong.

He glared down at the rabbit's foot on his chest. "You're supposed to be lucky, you furry piece of shit."

He read the last line over again. "Snock-vol...? K-no-quwa-vol...?"

Chapter End Notes

FYI: Pretzels dipped in crunchy peanut butter is actually rather tasty. Well, I think it is.

If you hadn't noticed in earlier chapters the whole soul mate direct line to your emotions thing has a bit of a proximity range to it. Why? Well I could say something like it needs time to develop or that soul mates aren't supposed to live separately, etc etc, but really, it is strictly for plot reasons.

Personal Anecdote: On the topic of pregnant people and crying, I know someone who while pregnant had terrible wicked mood swings and at one point found themselves crying about the movie American Pie because it was. just. so. sad. They described the movie as "He just wants to find his true love. Why is it so hard to find love?" They
were dead set that American Pie was the greatest tragic love story ever told. Coincidentally, my grandmother insisted on seeing American Pie with me in theaters. I didn't even want to go. But she insisted. We had to go. So yeah. Pregnant people crying about American Pie and my grandmother using her grandchildren as cover for liking terrible over sexualized teen comedies.

Workding! Note

In my world, the longer an omega is in heat the more they're ovulating. Thus a long heat likely means two eggs were released, one after the other, and thus the comment about twins running in families can be a reason for longer heats.

Is this a spoiler? I don't think so but I guess it could be. I mean I think at this point everyone knows what's up with Dean.

So....what is going on with Dean? A biological drive for paternity dilution. The slutty omega trope actually has some merits to it. Go figure. Alphas appear to have a variety of strategies to ensure their sperm win the conception competition. Which implies very heavy competition for mates. And their trope filled level of aggression would likely imply somewhere in their evolutionary tree infanticide was probably a somewhat normal aspect of the genetic competition. In some species to combat high rates of infanticide females mate with as many males as possible thus making it hard or impossible for any one male to know whether the offspring is theirs. Essentially, being slutty saves lives.

So in my little world pregnant omegas get all the fun of early pregnancy and enter into a sort of false heat when their heat normally would have happened in an effort to mask who the father is. Which I think culturally will have the ramification of whoever's mating bite a pregnant individual bears that will legally be the father(s).
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

Dean was right.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Castiel was in the middle of setting loaves of bread on cooling racks when he felt Dean steadily getting closer. Dean hadn't phoned or texted him in the last two weeks and he hadn't been sure of what sort of response he'd get if he took the first step so he had waited and hoped and nothing had happened. Anna thought he should have just phoned or stopped by but he thought it would probably make matters worse if Dean hung up on him or told him he wasn't invited into the house. He'd rather be ignored than outright rejected.

"The little omega's going to work today?" Gabriel asked.

Castiel blinked. He realized he had been staring at the wall for the last five minutes waiting for Dean to draw nearer. He nodded and sighed and went back to turning loaves out of pans.

"Take some of the shortbread cookies over to them. I bet they'd like those." Gabriel said. He moved the cool loaves of bread to a board to take out to the front.

"Him." Castiel said absently.

"Who?" Gabriel said over his shoulder as he stepped out into the front.

"Dean." Castiel said, raising his voice so it would carry to the front. "Dean prefers he. He gets mad when you say them."

Gabriel came back in with an amused look on his face. "They're an omega. That's like calling you a she."

Castiel shook his head and didn't argue the point. Gabriel could suffer the consequences if he ever said them to Dean these days.

He went about his morning routine at work feeling a little anxious about Dean going to work today. He'd be so close, just down the street. Maybe he would bring shortbread cookies over. He was thinking about shortbread cookies and nervously spooning batter into a muffin tin when he realized he was nervously spooning batter into a muffin tin. He didn't have any reason to be nervous. He was just making muffins. He had finished all his exams. He thought he done rather well too. But there was a quiet creeping anxiety moving through him.

He frowned to himself and tried to sort his thoughts out. It slowly became clear to him that it wasn't him who was feeling anxious and nervous. It was Dean. Those feelings had slowly been building up in the back of his head for the last fifteen minutes as Dean got closer.

What was going on with his mate?
He stared in the direction the mating bond told him Dean was coming from and felt all that anxiety get closer.

"Honestly Cassie, you don't make a good door or a window." Gabriel said, pushing him out of the way.

"Sorry." Castiel said, too distracted to bother correcting Gabriel about his name. He stepped aside and tried to dole out more batter while that anxiety built up into dread.

And it kept getting worse the closer Dean got. His own instincts started to add to it. He could feel them crawling under his skin asking their instinct dumb questions, mate? Danger?

A wave of icy fear crashed into him. He dropped the spoon onto the table and nearly dumped the bowl of batter on the floor as he shoved it away from himself. He spun on his heel and made for his coat, shoving Gabriel out of his way. Instinct or not, something was wrong with Dean and he needed to find out what—and if his instincts had their way, tear it apart.

"Whoa, hey, Castiel." Gabriel said, dancing aside when Castiel shot him a murderous look.

"I'll be back." Castiel said, not slowing down to pull his jacket on. He walked out the door and let the mating bond direct him. His alpha instincts roiled under his skin, something was wrong with his mate. He had to find him.

He found Dean two streets over. The wind picked up, blowing Dean's scent at him. All he could smell was distressed mate and slick. What was Dean doing wandering around in the middle of his heat?

They came to a stop in front of each other. Dean looked terrible, like he hadn't slept all night.

Before Castiel could ask what Dean was doing out on his own Dean asked his own question.

"What's a snockvol?" Dean asked sounding far calmer than what Castiel was feeling from him.

Castiel's mouth fell open to answer but he shrugged confused when he realized he had no idea what Dean was talking about. What was a snockvol? His alpha instincts leapt at the word. Maybe a snockvol was what had Dean so distressed? How could he get rid of it? Was it some kind of creature? A curse? How was he supposed to help Dean if he didn't know what a snockvol was?

Dean reached into the pocket of his sweater and pulled out a folded sheet of paper. He unfolded it and held it up. He tapped his finger on the paper. "That."

Castiel frowned down at the paper. "A cnoqvol?"

"Yeah." Dean said. "That."

"It's..." Castiel's mind went blank for a moment. He couldn't think of the English word. That hadn't happened in years but the fear bleeding out of Dean and the smell of distress on his mate was making it hard to think. "It's...uh...a doctor. A cnoqvol is a doctor."

Dean nodded as if to say, that's what I thought. He folded the paper back up. "I need to go to one."

"What? Why? What's wrong?" Castiel asked, his own panic adding to Dean's fear.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Dude, don't. I don't need you freaking out in my head." He shoved the paper back into his pocket. "I...this heat thing hasn't stopped."
Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. He had thought Dean would go into heat the week before exams but obviously it had come later than anyone had thought it would. "Dean, it usually lasts for a few days."

"Yeah. But..." Dean said. He shifted on his feet and rubbed at his arm. "It's been two weeks and it hasn't stopped."

Castiel's eyes went wide. "It what? Dean, why didn't you tell anyone?"

Dean glared. "Just tell me where to find one of these ka-knock-els."

"I'll take you there." Castiel said firmly. He started walking, motioning for Dean to follow him.

His own fear and worry was a compliment to his mate's. Dean had been in heat for two weeks? How was he even still standing? Why hadn't he said anything to anyone? He should have checked up on him. He should have known something was wrong. What was the point of the soul mate bond if he wasn't close enough to tell when his mate was in trouble? He should have at least driven past Dean's house to make sure he was okay.

"Just tell me where to go." Dean growled from behind him.

Castiel waved his hand in a come along gesture. "It's fine. I'll take you there. Gabriel will understand." Castiel said. He couldn't leave his mate alone while he was ill. Anyone would understand that.

For a brief moment anger surged over the fear from Dean. Dean grabbed his arm and stopped him. "I don't need someone holding my hand. I can go by myself. So just tell me."

Castiel narrowed his eyes at Dean. His alpha instincts flared up. There was no way he was letting Dean walk there on his own. He needed to protect Dean. "This is really serious, Dean. You can't just go alone. You could collapse in the middle of the street at this point." Castiel gave a little shake when he realized they shouldn't be walking at all. He patted his pockets for his phone. He didn't have it. He must have left it at the bakery. He looked to Dean. "Do you have your phone with you?"

"...yeah." Dean said suspiciously.

Castiel put his hand out. "Let me see it."

Dean eased back and eyed him warily. He put his hand over a rectangular bulge in his jeans. "...no."

"Dean, you shouldn't have been out here on your own in the first place. You're ill." Castiel said, taking a step closer to Dean. "Let me just phone someone and—"

"No. " Dean snapped. Castiel reached for the pocket that must have Dean's phone in it. Dean jumped back. "Fuck off. Either tell me where it is or— or—"

"Or what?" Castiel said. Why was Dean so against getting help? Why wouldn't Dean just let him protect him?

Dean glared at him. He glared back. The whole thing was ridiculous. He was getting wound up from all the fear from Dean rolling around in his head and his instincts were torn between helping Dean and attacking whatever was causing his mate so much distress but there wasn't anything tangible to take his alpha frustrations out on.
"Just...please, Dean. Just let me help you." Castiel said. His shoulders slumped. That was always what he was trying to do and it always seemed to make matters worse. Maybe that was why Dean didn't want his help. He kept letting his instincts drive him and making matters worse.

Dean clenched his jaw and fidgeted on the spot and felt torn between fear and anger and relief. "Fine. Lead the way, Shackleton."

Castiel didn't bother to ask who Shackleton was. His own relief added to the mix over the bond. His alpha instincts settled down. He might not have solved the problem but at least Dean was letting him help. He started walking again. It wasn't far to the local doctor's house. The walk shouldn't be too stressful on Dean. He just hoped prolonged heats were something Zachariah could fix.

Zachariah was only a beta but he was the only person in the area whose talent was healing and had medical training. Castiel cast a nervous glance over at Dean. What if Zachariah's ability to heal wasn't strong enough? Talents weren't always as strong in betas. The only other person in town who could heal was Lucifer and he hadn't honed the skill with medical training. What sort of alpha wasted a talent like that? What if his mate needed an alpha's strength of ability to heal?

Castiel's stomach twisted in knots. He was worried Dean would need more than just a beta to help him but he could feel a low level possessive anger bubbling up at the thought of a strange alpha helping his mate. Dean snapped him out of his internal debate when he cleared his throat and felt even more anxious.

"How, uh, how much is this gonna cost?" Dean asked nervously.

"How much will what cost?" Castiel asked.

"This kah— this angel doctor guy." Dean said. His fears were almost paralyzing. "It isn't...I'm gonna guess this isn't covered under my mom's insurance and we can't...I can't..."

It took Castiel a moment to put together what Dean was asking. "It doesn't cost anything."

Dean gave him a skeptical look. "It always costs something."

"Well, yes but..." Castiel started. He wasn't sure what Dean would be expecting. He tried to work out what he knew about human medical systems in the area. It wasn't much. Dean got more anxious in the meantime. Castiel tried to maintain his own calm for Dean's sake. "You don't pay right now. It's...it's more like...community insurance, I guess? You don't have to pay anything until you're out of school, then it's just included in the tithe."

That didn't seem to make Dean feel any better. If anything he felt worse...and suspicious. How was he making this worse?

"He's not a human doctor. He's like Lucifer but with medical training as well." Castiel tried to explain.

Dean looked at him strangely again but didn't say anymore.

They reached Zachariah's house a few minutes later. Dean still smelt and felt like fear and anxiety with the scent of slick over top of everything. Castiel was sure even humans could probably smell Dean at this point.

He turned up the walkway and went to the door. He knocked and waited and hoped he didn't have to wrestle the phone off Dean. If Zachariah wasn't home they were going to phone him and tell him...
it was an emergency. Castiel didn't care if it was his instincts goading him to do it. Prolonged heats were dangerous. Even an omega that looked like Dean wasn't built to withstand that.

Dean let out a disbelieving huff. "This screwy angel doctor works out of a townhouse on Cassels?"

Castiel could only shrug. It was odd that Zachriah lived in a small townhouse that barely had room to let a beta stretch out their wings but this wasn't exactly the time to be questioning Zachariah's choices in property.

The door opened. Zachariah's face went from extreme annoyance to surprise and settled somewhere around mild annoyance with a dash of professional curiosity. He waved them in and led them to his living room which also served as a waiting room. Castiel had only been here a handful of times and most of those had been when his mother was here to assist with something.

"So this is them." Zachariah muttered under his breath. His eyes flicked over Dean quickly. He sniffed at the air. He turned to Castiel. "What's wrong with them?"

Castiel opened his mouth to answer but a sharp feeling from Dean made him snap it shut.

"This heat thing-" Dean waved down himself. "-it won't stop."

Zachariah glanced at Dean then looked back at Castiel. Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. What did Zachariah want from him? It was Dean that was ill. Why wasn't he just helping his mate? Castiel shrugged at him and looked to Dean.

"How long has it been?" Zachariah asked, finally dragging his eyes over to Dean.

"Fourteen days." Dean said.

Zachariah looked Dean over again. He muttered something to himself. He motioned for Dean to follow him into a different room. He stopped when Castiel didn't follow. He turned back to Castiel. "...are you coming with your mate?"

"No." Dean said through clenched teeth. "He is not coming."

Zachariah waited for Castiel to respond.

Castiel looked between Dean and Zachariah. Zachariah had a look on his face that seemed to imply he was being an unsupportive mate if he stayed in the waiting/living room but the look on Dean's face made him sit down in the nearest chair.

"No. I'll...I'll stay out here." Castiel said.

Zachariah raised an eyebrow at him but turned away. He led Dean into the other room and closed the door behind him. Castiel sat and waited and clenched his fingers into the legs of his pants to keep himself from getting up and bursting into the other room. Dean's fears weren't lessening. If anything they were getting worse. Zachariah wasn't supposed to make Dean feel worse. He was supposed to help his mate. Castiel was sure if he went over to the door he'd probably be able to taste the fear in the air.

He jumped nearly a foot off the chair when anger ripped through him and a second later the door slammed open.

"Yeah, well, fuck off!" Dean shouted into the other room. His face was bright red with anger. "And there is nothing fucking wrong with my dick!"
"Dean?" Castiel asked. He wasn't sure if he should be trying to calm Dean down or be equally angry at Zachariah. His instincts were all for attacking the thing upsetting his mate. Dean shoved him out of the way and marched for the front door before he could make a decision. Castiel glared at Zachariah standing in the doorway.

"I feel sorry for you having to deal with them." Zachariah said, shaking his head in disgust.

"What did you do to him?" Castiel growled. Dean was unreasonable about...well, about most things but he didn't usually stomp out of rooms yelling at people—anymore.

Zachariah sniffed at him. "I don't discuss patients. You can see yourself out." Zachariah slammed his office door closed.

Castiel grabbed his jacket and started after Dean. Even if he didn't have the mating bond guiding his way he would have been able to track Dean by the scent of anger, fear, and slick.

He was surprised how far Dean had gotten. It felt like he was probably halfway down the next street over making his way back downtown. He picked up his pace nearly to a jog. He caught sight of Dean coming out of the grocery store while he waited for a traffic light to change. Dean kept moving down the street and disappeared around the corner.

Castiel lost sight of him but he didn't need to see Dean to know where he was going. He was sure he was going to Mr. Singer's bookstore. He cut through an alley and across a parking lot and managed to come out onto the main street just soon enough to see Dean go inside the bookstore. He followed him inside.

"Hey, Castiel." Jo said. She glanced over at the employee bathroom and looked back to him worried.

"Hello." Castiel said. He winced when Dean's nervousness sky rocketed. What was going on? "Did Dean say anything when he came in?"

"No." Jo said. She glanced at the bathroom again. "Just said he needed the bathroom."

"Can I...?" Castiel pointed towards the bathroom door on the other side of the counter.

Jo looked over her shoulder worried. "...yeah, I guess. He's been a bit of a moody asshole lately though. So..." She shrugged but she waved Castiel around the counter.

Castiel knocked on the bathroom door. "Dean?"

There wasn't any sound from the other side of the door but Castiel could feel Dean. He could feel his mate's anxiety and fear coiling up tighter.

He knocked again. The silence from the other side of the door kept up. Did Dean think if he just stayed quiet he'd think he wasn't in there? He hadn't exactly told Dean the bond was working for him but it had to be obvious that he knew where his mate was.

He knocked on the door again. There was silence. He sighed. "Dean, I know you're in there."

"Good for you." Dean said. His voice sounded strange like he might burst out in laughter but all Castiel could feel was anxiety washed fear.

"Are you alright?" Castiel asked.
"Yeah. I'm great." Dean said and this time he did laugh a little. It wasn't the kind of laugh that bolstered one's image of sanity. "I'm throwing a party in here, I'm just that fucking great."

"Dean...?" Castiel asked. Dean didn't respond. Castiel waited. He waited too long. He was ready to break down the door and find out what had put his mate under so much distress and then kill it when the door flung open. Dean grabbed him by the front of the jacket and dragged him into the dimly lit bathroom. The door slammed shut behind him.

"You better not be hooking up in there Dean!" Jo shouted.

"Go to hell, Jo!" Dean jokingly shouted back. As if Dean was in any mood at all to joke.

"You first!" Jo retorted.

Castiel's eyes adjusted to the dim light in the bathroom. Dean was standing in a pile of foil, boxes, and papers looking worn out and shaking his head. Castiel stared at him perplexed.

"Dean...what's...?"

Dean waved a shaky hand towards the toilet.

Castiel turned to look. His eyes moved up from the toilet bowl to the tank...where eight different pregnancy tests sat. He leaned closer. His heart started pounding. That couldn't—

"Two lines or a plus sign mean...or ya know, it just says it." Dean said. His voice trembled as much as he did.

Castiel backed up as if he could escape but Dean was standing between him and the door.

"So...yeah..." Dean muttered. Dean ran his hands through his hair. "...is...I mean...I can't...I'm a guy."

Castiel stared in wide-eyed terror.

"You said you were using birth control!" Castiel hissed. He had asked! He had asked if Dean was using any birth control and Dean had said he was!

"Why the fuck would I be on the pill? I'm a guy." Dean snapped back. His eyes narrowed on Castiel like he might punch him in the nose again but he was rooted to the spot with fear.

"Obviously you weren't on the pill, you were in heat." Castiel retorted. He had asked! A shiver went through him. He had asked! This wasn't supposed to be happening. "Why weren't you using a diaphragm or a- a- whatever the other one is called?"

Dean clenched his jaw and glared at him, "Because. I. Am. A. Guy."

"You're an omega." Castiel growled.

Dean clenched his jaw. "Quit fucking calling me that!"

Castiel did not at all condone hitting mates but he really would have liked to slap Dean and shove him towards the positive pregnancy tests and ask him if he'd still like to deny he was an omega.
Why couldn't Dean just accept what he was and—

The blood drained from Castiel's face. He had asked Dean. He had thought he was asking an omega if they were using birth control. But he had asked Dean, newly an angel and omega Dean, if he was using birth control. Dean had laughed and said he wasn't getting pregnant. Because Dean thought he was still human. They hadn't used anything. He had knotted an omega completely and totally unprotected. And the second time! He had been better off than Dean had been but not by much. He hadn't even thought about using a condom the second time.

There was a knock at the door. Jo's voice came through sounding deeply concerned. "You two okay in there?"

"Yeah, Jo. We're fine." Dean huffed out in a sarcastic laugh. He gathered up the pregnancy tests and everything from the floor. He stuffed it into a plastic grocery bag.

"Where're you going?" Castiel asked when Dean had his hand on the doorknob.

"Home." Dean said. He spun on his heal and stuck a finger in Castiel's face. "And don't you fucking dare tell that fucking psycho Ephrath anything. You shut up about this. I need to think."

Dean yanked the door open and strode out.

Castiel dashed after him. His thoughts were still warring between an angry, he had asked! and a rational, Dean wouldn't have known.

"Dean, I'm sorry. I...I should have..." Castiel started but stopped. This wasn't his fault. He had been drugged just as much as Dean had been. "We didn't know. How could we?"

"Would you just fuck off?" Dean growled. He marched to the back of the bookstore and kicked the back door open. Castiel followed him out. Dean opened up a dumpster and tossed the plastic bag full of pregnancy tests - positive pregnancy tests - inside.

Castiel came up behind him. Dean was going about everything with an air of calculated icy anger but inside Castiel could feel him falling to pieces. "Dean, you're my mate. I'm not—"

Dean turned around and took a swing at him. "I am not your mate! You're not my boyfriend! You're not even my friend! I barely fucking know you!"

Castiel stood in the alley in shock and stared at Dean as he marched away.

What was he supposed to do about this?

Castiel went back to the bakery and got his phone. He told Gabriel he wasn't feeling well and had to go. His entire mind was filled up with one thought: Dean was pregnant.

He felt his chest start to tighten. Dean was pregnant. His mate was pregnant. He had just finished writing his exams and his mate was pregnant. There was an omega that was his mate that was pregnant.

He couldn't afford this.

They'd need to move back home. They'd need everything. They'd need everything for a baby and a house. How was he going to finish school? How could he possibly continue his studies and provide for a mate and a baby? Of course his family would help where they could but there was only so much he could ask of them. He couldn't ask them to support his mate and child. He doubted his mother could even if she wanted to.
He couldn't afford this and he wasn't ready to do it. He was terrible at being an alpha. He couldn't support himself let alone a mate.

What if he somehow managed to find a job so he could afford this and there wasn't any housing available on Malprg on such short notice? Who would take them in? His aunt Hester and her mate didn't have any room— they had just had another baby. His cousin? Hannah might have room for one more person in her apartment but three? His grandparents? Dean would never get along with them. His grandmother? ...maybe. She might take them in. It would be a tight fit but she might.

Castiel looked down at his phone surprised. It was ringing. He looked around himself. He was in his room. He didn't even remember the walk home. He answered his phone with a shaky. 
"...hello?"

Dean didn't bother with pleasantries. Castiel had to agree, who cared at a time like this?

"...it's not...I mean...I can't." Dean said. He let out a soft laugh. "I can't. This is crazy. This...I can't be...that doesn't...no...I can't."

"You can." Castiel said. His heart started to hammer in his chest. Dean could and was pregnant. His mate was pregnant. He couldn't do this. If he wasn't old enough to have a mate then he was definitely not old enough to have a pregnant mate.

Dean gave an angry snort into the phone. "You can't stick your dick up someone's ass and get them pregnant."

"I didn't—" Castiel started. The incredulity of the statement had him at a loss for words. He breathed deeply and tried again. "It wasn't...Dean, have you not been listening to anything anyone has been telling you about omegas?"


Castiel wished he was close enough to feel Dean's state through the bond. Dean sounded like he was alright - in total and utter denial but alright - but Dean had looked and sounded like he was in control since he tossed the pregnancy tests into the garbage and Castiel knew he wasn't alright then. He should have gone after him then instead of running away.

Dean laughed coldly into the phone. "People don't have wings and you can't get pregnant from gay sex." Dean scoffed. "It doesn't work like that. We're guys, Cas. You don't get pregnant from unprotected anal sex, you get, I dunno, the clap or whatever."

"Dean, I have wings. So do you." Castiel said, trying to stay calm this time entirely for his own sake. He thought if he started getting worked up at this point he'd probably just give up and be an insensible mess. "We— we had sex. Twice." He stopped to breath. "And it was not anal sex."

"Fuck off." Dean growled. "I may not have done it before then but I sure as hell know when something is going up my ass."

Castiel's eyes bugged out of his head. "...you were a virgin?"

He had gotten a virgin omega pregnant. He had gotten a virgin omega pregnant and mated them. A virgin omega that had only been an omega for a few hours to a week at most. How exactly had his life come to this?

Dean made a disgruntled noise. "No."
Castiel opened his mouth to argue but stopped. It had never occurred to him that an omega would want to be the one to put it in...but Dean wasn't always an omega and he had a girlfriend who was human and not an alpha. Dean was probably—

A snort from the phone snapped him out of his thoughts. Was Dean crying?

"...fuck...what the fuck...why can't anything..." Dean muttered. There was another snort.

"Dean...?"

The call cut off. Castiel's chest tightened up. His mate was somewhere - alone probably - and he was crying. His mate was crying and alone and pregnant. Castiel didn't care in the slightest when his alpha instincts took over and got him moving.

From what he could tell through the bond Dean hadn't gone home. He felt like he was somewhere in the woods on the edge of town. Castiel grabbed his school bag, dumped the contents on the floor, and started grabbing things from around the house. A sweater because Dean hadn't had a jacket again. Food because he hadn't seen Dean not hungry in the past month— that made more sense now. He debated on water or juice or milk and ended up filling up water bottles with each. Tissues because he didn't know what else to do for a crying mate that didn't want to be his mate.

He pulled his boots back on, briefly wondered where his mother and Anna were, then headed out the door.

He found Dean nearly two hours later. He was where he thought he'd be, in the woods on the edge of town. He came to a stop at the bottom of an old tree and looked up. There was a tree fort half way up the tree. Dean was up there. All the feelings in the back of his head flowing in from Dean were a confused angry fear filled mess.

Castiel started up the odd assortment of things that had been nailed into the tree to make a ladder. The entire thing creaked and groaned under his weight. There were exposed rusting nails, rotting boards, and splinters of wood everywhere. It probably wasn't somewhere a pregnant omega should be.

Castiel stepped onto the floorboards of the tree fort. It let out a terrifying creak that made him grab onto a branch in case the floor gave out.

A sad snort of a laugh came from Dean. Castiel looked over to the far side of the little tree fort. Dean was sitting on the floor with his knees tucked up against his chest. His eyes were puffy and red.

"It won't break." Dean said. "We patched underneath this summer."

Castiel gave a sharp nod and let go of the branch. He stepped forward, wincing at every sound from under his feet, and sat down across from Dean. He opened his bag up and single-mindedly started taking care of his mate. He passed Dean the sweater first. Dean snorted and sniffled but took the sweater and tugged it on. Castiel couldn't help but notice the wet patch of slick that had soaked into Dean's jeans. He should have thought to bring something for that too.

Dean pulled the hood of the sweater up and sniffed at the fabric probably picking up Castiel's scent. He pulled his knees back up to his chest and stared at Castiel.

Castiel took out everything else from his bag and offered it to Dean one by one. He watched Dean polish off half a carton of chocolate chip cookies with the water bottle full of milk, two chocolate bars, the juice, a bag of carrots, and a sandwich. In that order. He didn't say anything.
Dean took a gulp of water. He set the water bottle down on the floor beside him. He kept his eyes on it. "...what the fuck do I do about this?"

That was a good question.

"Uh..." Castiel said ever so helpfully.

"I hate this." Dean said. He wiped at his nose with a sweater covered hand. "I wish I had never met Ruby." He made a wounded noise. "Ever since I did it's just been one weird messed up thing after another and everyone thinks I should just be okay with that." Dean still hadn't taken his eyes from the water bottle. "I hate this and I don't want to do it anymore."

Castiel didn't have a good response to that. He desperately wanted to wrap his pregnant omega mate up in his wings but Dean would probably try to punch him in the nose again if he did that.

"I can't be...but you're all messed up with your wings and weird dicks and weird vaginas and weird butts." Dean muttered. He reached out and flicked the water bottle. "...what if...ya know...what if that doctor guy wasn't lying and all the...the tests..." Dean shook his head. "That's all— I can't. I don't...I don't want to be like this. This— it can't be happening. I can't keep dealing with this."

If Castiel didn't know what to say before he definitely didn't know what to say now.

He wished he could go back in time. Having a soul mate was supposed to be this rare wonderful thing and so far all it had done was wreck their lives. Soul mates were supposed to be happy, content, and in love. They were miserable, afraid of what they were or might become, and angry with each other much of the time. How could they possibly be soul mates?

In all the fairy tales it didn't matter how someone mated their soul mate they always fell in love after. It could be after a long drawn out romance, it could be a reward for saving a village, it could be completely by accident but as soon as the bond formed they were always in love.

This wasn't a fairy tale and they were definitely not in love.

Dean was right. They barely knew each other. He was only sitting in this horribly unsafe tree fort because his instincts had screamed at him to go help his mate. So here he was sitting in a tree fort, worried that he might fall through the floor, with someone who had his bite on his neck, his name on his arm, and his child in a womb he refused to believe he had, and neither of them knew what to do about it.

They were terrible at being soul mates. Dean didn't want to be an omega and he wasn't very good at being an alpha. If they couldn't handle things that were supposed to be simple and easy how were they supposed to handle being responsible for another person's life?

"It...it doesn't have to happen." Castiel said slowly. "You don't..." He bit at his lip. "...you don't have to have it."

Dean finally looked up at him. He had a puzzled look on his face. "Dude, if...if it's real...that's what you gotta do with them. They gotta come out eventually."

Castiel hesitated for a moment not sure if just saying it would be better or if he should try to explain around it. Dean didn't really like long explanations.

He'd just say it.

Castiel took in a deep breath, "I meant, you could have an abortion."
All the emotions bleeding into the back of his head from Dean abruptly stopped.

"...what?" Dean said carefully, like the idea might bite him.

"An abortion." Castiel repeated more firmly. "You could have one."

Dean snatched up the water bottle and threw it at him. "Fuck off."

A wave of protective anger crashed into Castiel. It felt like that time Dean had stood up to everyone in his living room and tried to protect him. Except this time it wasn't for him. He was on the receiving end of the *anger* instead of the protective feeling. Dean wasn't trying to protect *him* as he pulled his legs tight against his stomach.

"You don't get to just make stupid choices and then just...*abort* it." Dean said. He yanked the sweater closer around his face and sniffed at it again.

"You didn't." Castiel said carefully, that was Dean's *I like to hit things* look. "You didn't make a stupid choice. This isn't your fault."

Castiel hoped keeping his voice calm would calm Dean down - he doubted the tree fort would withstand a scuffle - because he *wasn't* going to let his mate make a decision like this out of their own omega instincts. Castiel set the water bottle aside and looked for anything else that might be used as a projectile and moved it away from Dean.

"Neither of us *chose* to do this." Castiel said. "Someone else made the choice for us. My instincts made me come here. Your instincts are probably telling you to protect, uh, *it* no matter the cost but you don't have to listen to them. You shouldn't." Castiel said firmly. "If you really don't want to...*do* this then you shouldn't have to."

"You can't do that to *family*." Dean growled out. He hunched over his knees protectively and glared at Castiel as if daring him to just *try* and take it away from him. "It's probably not even real anyway."

"Dean, it's very real. Whether or not you believe it." Castiel said. He couldn't believe he was quoting his mother. "If Zachariah told you you're pregnant and eight different tests came up positive, it's real."

Dean made a disgusted noise in his throat at the mention of Zachariah. He squirmed on the spot and looked down his nose at his knees. "Well, I don't want it to be."

"Well, I didn't want to believe my soul mate used to be human." Castiel retorted. "But that doesn't change the fact that you were."

Dean didn't have anything to say about that. Castiel didn't really have any idea what to do next. They sat and stared at each other. He reached behind himself for the water bottle and drank some. He offered the rest to Dean. Dean drained the bottle. Then they were back to sitting silently in a questionably constructed tree fort.

Dean finally broke the silence. "...if it's...*real*...how long do I have to decide?"

"I don't know." Castiel said. He pulled his phone out and did a search to see how long humans could wait. It probably wouldn't be much longer than that. He read over a few different websites. "...probably only two or three weeks and then after that doctors won't usually do it. But I don't know for sure. Angels are different from humans."
"Yeah." Dean said. "Kinda noticed that."

They fell silent again. Castiel shivered against the cold. Dean probably shouldn't be out in this weather. He might think he feels warm but it couldn't be good for him.

Dean opened his mouth. Fear exploded at the back of Castiel's head. Dean's mouth snapped shut. He hugged his legs tighter to himself. "...I wanna see it."

"...what?" Castiel asked, confused.

"I wanna go to a real doctor and I wanna see it. I want proof." Dean said slowly. His eyes had gone wide as if he couldn't believe what he was saying. "I want...an ultrasound or an x-ray or whatever it is real doctors do."

"When you say real doctors..." Castiel started. What if Dean tried to go to a human hospital? He'd put everyone in danger. "Dean, you can't go to a human doctor about this."

"I'm not going back to that asshat Zachariah." Dean spat. Anger flashed across the bond. "How's he even a doctor anyway? He's running his practice out of a fucking house in one of those crappy new subdivisions."

"There's a medical centre in Addington." Castiel said. He had been there twice before. It was the closest thing angels and demons had to a hospital in the area. It was an 8 hour drive but it was that or Malprg and that was an 8 hour drive and then 8 to 12 hours on a ferry depending on the weather.

"And there's real doctors there?" Dean asked suspiciously.

"Yes. They'll be angels and demons but they are professionals." Castiel said. He doubted Dean wanted to hear that as a species they wholeheartedly took advantage of human education systems when it was convenient but that some people with certain talents were too useful to pass up just because they hadn't gone to a human medical school. It wasn't as if they let people perform surgery without training but if an alpha - or a beta with a talent - could mend broken bones or remove pain without the need for anesthetic they wouldn't waste the gift.

Dean looked away. Castiel tried to understand what the mess of emotions coming from Dean meant other than that he was extremely upset.

"Fine. Let's go there." Dean said.

"You can't just go." Castiel said, trying to be gentle. "You need to make an appointment."

Dean stared blankly at him for a moment before his face clouded over in anger. "...how? I don't know where this place is. I don't even know what it's called. I don't know fucking anything."

"Oh. Right." Castiel said. He didn't know the number either but he knew that the medical centre was masquerading as some kind of financial consulting company. He picked up his phone again. It didn't take long to find the website. If it was actually a financial consulting company it would have been a terrible website but Castiel suspected that once they were given a 'members' name and password for the login it would probably be rather informative.

He asked Dean if he wanted to phone now. Dean shook his head. Castiel gauged the swirl of fear in his mind from Dean and thought it wasn't so much that Dean didn't want to phone now but rather that he wanted to phone never.
"Do you... want me to phone?" Castiel offered.

Dean nodded yes.

Castiel tapped in the number and let it ring. A receptionist answered the phone. It took him a few moments to say the right things before the receptionist dropped the financial consulting mask and started to talk to him in Enochian about possible appointment times.

Because that was what he was doing; sitting in a tree fort with his pregnant omega mate scheduling an appointment with an obstetrician.

Dean was right again, this couldn't possibly be real.

Chapter End Notes

Who the hell is Shackleton? Dean is referring to Earnest Shackleton who led an epic failure of an Antarctic expedition in 1914 where surprisingly almost everyone lived despite, getting stuck in ice for nearly a year, the ship sinking, getting stranded on an uninhabited island, having to sail across the southern ocean in a life boat, trek over mountains, and then arrange a rescue party for the remaining crew. I thought it was a hilariously bad history joke and rather reflective of their situation.

Don't question the 8 pregnancy tests. Dean really had to pee.

Cnoqvol - "kah-noh-koo-oh-el" servants of mercy.

Enochian continues to be ridiculous to say. I highly encourage you to just say it however you think it sounds better.

Entertaining note on Enochian, John Dee is the guy who wrote it but this other guy, Edward Kelley was the medium for it, and apparently they had a bit of a love hate relationship because Dee was always, "let's call up angels!" and Kelley was always, "But I want to turn things into gold!" (they were alchemists). But at any rate they tromped around Europe together, pissed off the Catholic church because they started to try and preform necromancy (Kelley was threatened with defenestration) but they both managed to talk their way out of any serious repercussions. They tromped around Europe some more then Kelley declared that the angels wanted them to share everything and by everything apparently he meant wives. So Kelley slept with Dee's wife Jane (incidentally Kelley's wife was also named Jane) and then Dee and Kelley had a falling out because, hey, maybe these angels are actually pulling a fast one on us with all this wife swapping, and then nine months later Jane Dee gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. whoops.

Also whenever I dig stuff up about it, it's always "Dee's Angels" or "Dee's Celestial Speech" "Dee's etc etc", and it always without fail makes me picture a truck stop waitress whose name is Dee who is just trying to get through her shift but angels keep showing up to talk to her and get her advice, and she's like, *sighs* "Did you try sharing?" And the angels are all impressed and go off to do whatever zany Heaven thing they have to do and Dee is left standing there shaking her head as she pours coffee for incredibly confused costumers. Somehow I want to fit Dee the waitress into this fic.
Chapter 31

Chapter Summary

Cas asked him if next Saturday at 9am was good. Dean said yes even though none of it was good. It was all a huge fucking nightmare.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cas asked him a bunch of questions and then repeated his answers in Edosian or whatever it was called. Well, he thought he was repeating the answers. It seemed to take a lot longer. For all he knew Castiel could be telling whoever was on the other end of the phone that he was the biggest wuss ever sitting in a tree fort he built with Jo when they were thirteen trying not to cry.

Cas asked him if next Saturday at 9am was good. Dean said yes even though none of it was good. It was all a huge fucking nightmare.

Then the phone call was over and they just sort of sat there.

Castiel shifted around and felt all awkward. "You should go home."

Dean shrugged. "Yeah, probably."

"I'll walk you home." Castiel said.

He'd walk him home? He wasn't delicate. He was just...freaking out a little bit. Dean hunkered into the sweater and glared out from under the hood. "I don't need you to walk me home."

"I know you don't need me to walk you home." Castiel said gently and felt all protective and calm and stuff. Asshole. Castiel sighed. "I'd just...feel better if I could."

Dean hugged his knees closer to himself. His wet jeans pinched his skin. He really did need to go home and do something about the Niagara falls that his butt had turned into. He curled his toes in his shoes. He didn't want Castiel to walk him home...but Cas smelt good and...well...

"Fine. Just...I dunno...don't act...weird or anything." Dean said. He pushed up from the floor of the tree fort and headed for the ladder.

He climbed down - acutely aware of the way his wet jeans clung to him - and didn't wait for Castiel. He started towards one of the little streams that cut through the woods. He could hear Castiel jogging after him. He made it to the stream before Castiel caught up to him. He waded into the frigid water up to his thighs and splashed more of it up his legs until he was soaking from the waist down.

"Dean!" Castiel splashed in after him and grabbed his arm. He started hauling him out. Cas was a lot stronger than he looked. "What are you doing?"

Dean shook Castiel's hand from his arm and glowered at him. "I'm not walking home looking like I pissed myself. Rather look like I fell in the creek."
Castiel's face went blank and his brain started doing the type writer thing. He looked down at his own legs then up and down Dean's legs.

Dean swore when he felt warmth leak out of his butt. It just highlighted how freakin' cold the water was. So now he still had stuff leaking out of his butt and his legs were freezing. Great. He turned away and started walking home. He should have just stayed there in the first place, none of this would have happened if he had just stayed in bed.

Castiel trailed behind him and felt all protective boyfriend at him, which he wasn't, but that weird feeling under his skin calmed down. It was dumb. He shouldn't feel better with Castiel around he should hate the guy. If that douchbag fake doctor wasn't a lying asshole, well, then his little problem was Castiel's fault. If Castiel had just kept it in his pants none of this would be happening.

He took the long way home so he could sneak through the back door. He didn't want Mom or Dad to see him and start asking questions. When he got up to the back door he turned around to tell Castiel to piss off and go home but he was standing there with chattering teeth and shivering.

Dean sighed. He held the door open. "Come on," He waved Cas in. "You can borrow some of my pants. I mean, I've still got a ton of your clothes anyway. It's fair, right?"

Castiel nodded and stepped inside. "Thank you."

Dean shook his head and closed the door behind him. He grabbed Cas by the arm and made him stand still for a minute so he could listen to the house. It was quiet. So either Dad was changing over to night shifts, Mom was asleep on the couch, and Sam had his forehead pressed to a book and he'd have to navigate a family minefield of questions or he had lucked out and everyone was out. He hoped the rabbit's foot was working.

He motioned for Castiel to follow him down the hall. He popped his head cautiously into the living room. Mom wasn't there. Score! They had probably all gone out grocery shopping or something. He headed upstairs.

Castiel made a hissy noise when he opened the door to his room and felt the weirdest mix of sad and aroused Dean had ever felt.

"Dude, you've got some weird fetishes if this gets you going." Dean motioned to his room. The bed smelt weird from all the stuff that had been leaking out of him, there were feathers everywhere again, and snotty kleenexes scattered around the floor.

Castiel's face flushed red and that oh so familiar rush of embarrassment whipped through him. Dean sighed and grabbed a pair of pants for Cas. He shoved him out the door and pointed him towards the bathroom.

Dean closed his bedroom door and peeled his jeans off him. He grabbed one of the towels on his bed that he had been using to soak up that stuff while he slept and dried his legs and butt off. He jammed a bunch of kleenexes between his butt cheeks then pulled on boxers and sweat pants.

He flopped back on the bed. He rolled his eyes when Cas got all weird and embarrassed for some reason in the bathroom. He pinched at the bridge of his nose. He wasn't really in the mood to have Cas's head in his and have to deal with all the squirrely guy's problems on top of his own.

Castiel loitered like a creep outside his door before asking if he could come in.

Dean groaned and wiped at his face. "Look, great for you for walking me home and all but you got dry pants so..."
Castiel felt all embarrassed again but opened the door and came in uninvited. He had his phone out. "The receptionist gave us—*you*a login name and password."

Dean waited for Cas to go somewhere with that. He didn't. Dean shrugged at him. "So...?"

"So, there's some forms they want you to fill out and things they want you to read before the appointment." Castiel said. He stepped closer and fiddled with his phone. "I asked for what they had in English but the receptionist said it was mostly generic forms online so they can't just send you an English version."

Dean shrugged again. "Meaning...?"

"It's in Enochian." Castiel said.

Dean stared for a moment trying to process that. Of fucking course it was in Enochian. He was—
he had an angel problem and he was going to see angel doctors and those weirdos spoke Enochian.

"Unless you want someone else to go over it with you?" Castiel offered. He moved to sit down on the bed but at the last second made a frantic effort to abort the mission and ended up sliding off the side of the bed and thumping down to the floor. He tried to act cool about it and failed. "I know you don't like Ephrath but she'd be able to answer any questions you have."

No goddamn way was he talking to Ephrath about this. She'd probably have some new and horrifying pamphlet. He sat up and motioned for Cas to just get it over with. "No. It's fine. You can play babel fish."

First he had to explain Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and then it was way too personal questions time. Dean swore Castiel to silence on pain of death if he blabbed.

It turned out most of the forms were family history type stuff - except for the part about medically relevant curses - that he couldn't answer anyway because his parents were normal and didn't have wings or other weird parts. Castiel kept shooting him little frowns whenever he mentioned it but screw him. It wasn't as if he was the one that had just grown a bunch of extra parts overnight.

Castiel sighed and put it down in the forms that his parents were betas that were healthy as horses.

They finished up the forms. Cas wrote out a password and user name for him and told him the receptionist was sending him some info about what he had to do for his appointment. Dean didn't like the sound of that. It was probably going to be something weird.

Then Castiel sat on his floor like a bump on a log.

"What?" Dean asked when it was obvious Castiel wasn't going to take off and get out anytime soon. "There some other form?"

"No..." Castiel said. He dragged his lips through his teeth. "It's just...I can feel you too."

Dean stared for a moment before he blinked and his brain started working again. "...what?"

"For a few weeks now...the, uh, the soul mate bond has been working for me. The mating bond too." Castiel said, feeling guilty as hell. Which, good. He should be. Castiel winced, probably getting a whopping dose of anger. "Sorry, I didn't know how to tell you and then I just...*didn't.*"

Dean grit his teeth. So Castiel got into his pants and got him— started up this whole problem of his and now he was getting into his head too? Dean was all ready to tell Castiel off for being in *his*...
head but Castiel stared up at him and looked all defeated by guilt and that warm feeling rippled under his skin so Dean just rolled his eyes and flopped backwards on his bed. "Fuck."

"Sorry." Castiel repeated. He stood up and stared at him. It was like Cas needed to make this more awkward. Castiel coughed politely. "I, uh, know you're hungry again. Do you want something? Before I go? You should probably eat. Being in heat for this long— well, I guess it's not really a heat." Castiel frowned to himself and eventually shrugged. "But it's got to take a lot of energy to be in heat in a way and pregnant."

"Oh my god." Dean sat up and scowled at him. "Don't say it."

Castiel looked confused. "Don't say what?"

Dean motioned chaotically trying to figure out how to mean that without saying it.

"...that you're pregnant?" Castiel asked. He shrugged at Dean and made one of his patent pending looks of bewilderment with equal amounts of pompous asshole. Dean really hated that look.

"I mean it. Shut up." Dean said. How did Castiel not get it?

He couldn't just go around saying he was...he was a guy. Guys didn't get...that.

Castiel shook his head. "Dean. It's real. Not saying that you're pregnant isn't going to make it not real. You're pregnant and we have—"

There was a squeak from the door that made Dean's blood run cold. He shot off his bed and flung his door open just in time to see Sam bolt into his room. He dashed after him and slammed into the empty air in front of Sam's door like it was made of bricks. His nose didn't like being smashed into solid air. It started bleeding. Then because his nose bleeding all over the place wasn't good enough his wings snapped out and tried to burst out of the t-shirt and sweaters he was wearing. But instead of busting out and shredding his clothes they just smashed together all bound up.

It really freakin' hurt.

A lot.

Holy shit.

His eyes went wide in pain. He grabbed at the sweaters but couldn't pull them up over his wings. It felt like something was gonna snap if he didn't get the sweaters off him right that fucking instant. He grabbed at his clothes again and tugged. He couldn't get them off! Fuck. Something was gonna snap! He could feel it. He was gonna snap a bone right in half! It was-

Cas yanked the back of Dean's shirt up. His wings busted out and, from what he could hear and feel probably caught Cas right in the face. Dean would have laughed if his wings didn't hurt so much.

He breathed hard and let the pain fade. He gave his wings a shake. "Ow."

He stretched one out and winced. He stretched the other out and winced more. Fuck, had he broken them? He didn't even want wings and he'd gone and broken them.

Movement in Sam's doorway made him look up. Sam was mouthing something at him on the other side of his door. Then Sam snapped his mouth shut and reached for something beside his door. Music blasted out of Sam's room. That sneaky little shit. If he didn't kill Sam right now, Bobby was gonna kill him later.
Sam cautiously stepped forward. "Dean...? You alri—"

Dean launched himself at Sam, wings and all, pain forgotten. They went crashing to the floor. Dean growled something about Sam being a sneaky sneaking sneak who had better learn to quit sneaking or he was gonna figure out a way to get him good. So Sam grabbed a fistful of feathers and yanked. Dean gasped in pain then let out a surprised yelp when Castiel grabbed the sweaters bunched up around his neck and hauled him off Sam.

Then Castiel freakin' tossed him aside. Tossed him! Like Gimli! Dean started to gather himself back up intent on expressing just how not cool that was but Castiel spun around and shot him a murderously look and started to smell funky. Dean decided that maybe he liked sitting in the corner on top of Sam's laundry. He grabbed one of Sam's shirts - because screw Sam - and held it up to his bloody nose.

Castiel rounded on Sam. "How did you do that?"

Dean gave an indignant squawk. Who cared how Sam had done the trick with the door, they needed to find out how much Sam had heard!

Sam backed up and glanced at the door. Dean scrambled up and put himself in the doorway. No way was Sam getting out of the room unless he wanted to jump from a second story window.

"I've...been reading about the symbols Bobby used...and making some adjustments?" Sam shrugged at Castiel with his, what? I'm totally innocent, I definitely didn't do that look. Which meant Sam was a guilty bastard and everyone knew it.

"You've been tampering with protective sigils?" Castiel asked as if that was the important matter.

Dean shoved Castiel aside and pointed a finger at Sam. "What'd you hear?"

"Nothing?" Sam squeaked out. So probably everything. Sam glanced down at his feet and shrugged again. "...just...ummm..." He reached over to his desk and held out a very familiar set of crumpled papers. "You...ummm...dropped these this morning?"

Dean snatched the papers off Sam mortified. Sam started edging towards his desk and reached out again to close a book. Dean's eyes went wide when he caught the title of the chapter: How to tell when your pet cat is in heat. Holy freakin' hell no! Sam was not reading about fucking heats. And he wasn't a goddamned cat!

"Are...I mean...I may have read your papers..." Sam looked between Dean and Castiel. "...but...can you really be...?"

Dean gave an emphatic No, just as Castiel sighed and said a weary, yes.

Dean glared at Castiel. Castiel looked back defensively. Sam stood there with his mouth hanging open because he was a dweeb.

"You have to tell Mom and Dad." Sam said.

"No!" Dean snapped. He swiveled his head around so he could glare at both of them. "Nobody is saying anything! We're all going to pretend this isn't happening because I said so!" Dean felt the hair stand up on the back of his with anger when Castiel felt all sad and pitying at him. Dean turned his glare back on him. "And you quit doing that! I know damn it! I just don't want to talk about it!"
That at least shut everyone up.

And then the tears started up again.

"For fuck's sake." Dean muttered as he wiped at his eyes around the bloody shirt he was holding to his nose.

"What's wrong?" Castiel asked. He sounded panicked but Dean could feel that weird wild feeling that he had been getting from Cas all morning.

Dean waved him away. "Nothing. I mean, not nothing but...I dunno. It just keeps happening." He tried not to snort and make the nosebleed worse. "I cried about a sock the other week. It's stupid. It just happens."

He ignored the way Sam and Cas exchanged worried looks. Then Castiel's phone rang and he didn't have to deal with Sam and Cas looking all worried about him. Castiel looked at his phone. Surprise hit the back of Dean's head where that Castiel bubble lived.

"It's my mother." Castiel said. From what Dean could tell Cas's mom didn't phone him all too often. Castiel answered the phone and stepped out of Sam's room.

That just left Dean standing there with a bloody nose and tear trails down his cheeks with his brother. He was never gonna live this down.

He didn't really know how to get out of the situation. What did he say? What the hell did he say?

Sam fidgeted around on the spot and opened and closed his mouth a few times and made that noise he always made when he was going to start asking questions. Dean really didn't want to hear what sort of questions Sam might have.

"I'm going." Dean said.

Just as Sam pointed at his stomach and said, "Is it going to be an egg?"

"What? No, it's not an egg!" Dean said immediately. What the fuck was wrong with everyone? Why couldn't anyone talk about normal things anymore? An egg? An egg? That was fucking ridiculous...holy shit. What if it was an egg? Angels had wings. Like birds. What if he was going to lay a goddamned egg!?

"I mean, angels have wings and birds have wings..." Sam said. Apparently Winchester reasoning was genetic. "...and you have wings so...you know?"

Dean's wings wrapped around him awkwardly pushing the sweaters into his neck. He didn't care. He stood there frozen to the spot. An egg!? What if it was an egg!? Castiel bolt back in looking ready for a fight and looked utterly and completely at a loss when he realized no one had moved. "...Dean?"

A tremor rocked through him. Dean consciously thought about moving his wings back behind himself. He hadn't had to do that in awhile. He took a steadying breath and turned a blank faced look on Castiel. "Do angels lay eggs?"

"What?" Castiel asked, bewildered.

"Like monotremes." Sam added helpfully.
"Like monotremes." Dean repeated

"What're monotremes?" Castiel asked.

"Uh..." Dean said because what the hell was a monotreme? He looked to Sam. "What the hell are monotremes?"

"Egg laying mammals." Sam said in his imparting wisdom tone. "Like the platypus."

Dean looked back at Castiel and said, "Platypuses." As if Castiel wasn't standing right there.

"...you want to know if angels lay eggs like platypuses?" Cas repeated carefully as if Dean and Sam were the crazy ones.

"Yeah." Dean said. Holy shit. An egg!? There was a vague trickle of amusement at the back of his head. Dean scowled at Castiel. "Shut up."

"I didn't say anything." Castiel said defensively. Dean grumbled low in his throat. Sure, Cas didn't say anything but he sure as hell was thinking about it. Castiel shook his head as if he couldn't believe he was having the conversation. "No, Dean. Angels do not lay eggs like platypuses."

"No eggs? At all?" Dean asked again, just in case Castiel said something horrible like, but they do lay them like ostriches.

"No eggs." Castiel repeated. "Angels don't lay eggs. Neither do demons."

"Good." Dean said. No eggs. Thank you, Jesus. He turned to Sam. "No eggs."

Sam looked like he might actually regret finding out that Dean wasn't a complete freak but he was a smart kid and knew that if he wanted to stay alive he'd shut up about it.

"Are you alright?" Castiel asked cautiously.

Dean shook his head. What the hell kind of question was that? He had just seriously considered whether there was a fucking egg inside of him because his life had turned into some kind of terrible fantasy parody movie while he wasn't looking.

"Maybe you should sit down." Castiel suggested.

"Yeah." Sam agreed. "You look a little pale."

Dean rolled his eyes but sat down on Sam's bed because standing was for suckers. "I'm bleeding all over your dumb purple dog shirt. Of course I look pale."

"My dog shirt!?" Sam yelped. He grabbed the shirt off Dean and shoved a box of kleenex at him.

Dean grabbed a few and shoved them up his nose. He sure was sticking a lot of tissues into himself lately. He rolled his eyes again when Castiel felt worried about him.

"I'm just concerned about your wings." Castiel said. So that soul mate radio really was working for him. Dean made a throaty disapproving sound. Castiel reached out towards Dean's wings then yanked his hand back embarrassed. "Can I...?" Castiel gulped. "Can I make sure they're okay?"

Dean's wings rustled on their own. He clenched his butt tight. He could feel another wave of that stuff coming on. He sure as hell didn't want Castiel touching his wings but his wings and butt were on board hoping it would be a luxury cruise. He felt a bit of that stuff drip out of his butt. Castiel
sniffed at the air and got all embarrassed again - that was normal - but he got freakin' turned on too. Castiel sniffed again. Dean's eyes went wide. Could Castiel actually smell it? Could people smell it? Had he been walking around smelling like girl juices for weeks and no one had told him!? Fuck his fucking life.

"We could move to your room?" Castiel offered.

Dean squirmed on the spot. He didn't want Castiel touching his wings but it had really hurt when they got all mashed up under his clothes and there was no way he was going back to that raging douchebag Zachariah again— there was nothing wrong with his dick, thank you very much. He didn't need medication to make it look normal. It was normal.

He muttered something that sounded like okay then said he needed to hit the head first. He threatened Sam with death if he said anything about his problem then bolted for the bathroom just as more of the stuff leaked out of his butt and started soaking into the kleenexes.

Actually sitting down on the toilet with wings was hard but he'd gotten the ins and outs of it worked out when he couldn't hide his feathered monstrosities. There was a lot of leaning forward and awkward positions involved. He sat and waited for his butt to stop leaking then stuffed a whole bunch of toilet paper between his butt cheeks and briefly wondered if shoving a tampon up his butt would work. He almost started digging around in the cupboard under the sink but then realized he'd have a tampon up his butt and there was just no way he was doing that. The only upside was that his nose stopped bleeding.

He crept into his room like he was guilty of something. Sam was in there with Castiel. Castiel was asking about Sam's stunt with Bobby's doodles. Sam was failing at hiding a smug look on his face. They both turned when Dean stepped into his room.

"Sorry about the...egg thing...I umm...I promise I won't say anything about it until you do." Sam said to the floor before high tailing it out of there. Dean wanted to go with him.

The promise didn't make Dean feel any better. He still had to deal with the what of the promise. He glanced at Castiel. He still had to deal with potentially broken wings too.

Dean closed the door behind Sam and turned back to Castiel. He really really didn't want Castiel to touch his wings. He'd gotten all too familiar with how it felt over the last week. He took a step forward and then stopped when his heart started to race. He wrinkled his nose, disgusted with himself. Castiel had seen him naked. They had done a hell of a lot more than touch each other in that spot. Castiel had stuck his weird fucking dick up his ass for crying out loud! A little bit of wing touching was nothing.

It should be nothing.

...it didn't feel like nothing.

"I can...get my mom to do it instead?" Castiel said quietly.

"No." Dean said, mortified. Having some boy he had screwed touch him in funny places was bad enough. Having that same boy's mom do it was out of the question. He shucked the sweaters and t-shirt and tossed them on the bed. He stepped forward before he could over think the situation— he had a girl problem and messed up wings. "Just do it."

"Sorry." Castiel said. He motioned for Dean to turn around. Dean shivered when Castiel dug his fingers into the ridge of his wing and started feeling around. "I just didn't think you'd want to go
"Damn right I don't." Dean snapped. Seriously. Fuck that guy and the horse he rode in on.

Castiel didn't say anything but Dean knew he was curious. No fucking way was he satisfying that curiosity.

"...how come they didn't just rip the shirts?" Dean asked, trying to keep his mind off how Castiel's fingers felt on his wings.

Castiel felt embarrassed at him. Dean couldn't even be bothered to care anymore, Castiel made a few awkward noises and then just blurted out, "You don't have the muscle mass." He went quiet and felt even more embarrassed as his fingers slid along his wing. "It, uh, you should use your wings more often. They don't feel—" Castiel's brain delivered a 50 pound package of Bad idea! Abort Abort! to his head via express mail. "Exercising your wings is important."

It was obvious Castiel didn't want to keep up that line of conversation and from the way he was feeling with Cas's fingers on his wings Dean agreed. Less talk about wings was a good thing.

Castiel hesitated when he got to that spot. Dean tensed. Castiel took a deep breath. Then Castiel's fingers were digging into the base of one wing, quick and rough and mechanical, and holy sweet jesus it felt good.

Of course his butt started to leak and just because his body was a traitor his dick perked up too. He shivered. Castiel made a strangled noise and yanked his fingers away. Dean froze. For one brief second all those intense WANT. Right Now! feelings from a few weeks ago flashed through his head. Dean breathed slowly when nothing happened. The last time Castiel had felt like that he'd been thinking ditching from a car into oncoming traffic was a good idea, this time his skin was buzzing and he was half way on board with it.

Dean turned around slowly. He didn't really understand what he was getting from Cas's head at the moment; a jumble of excited buzzing emotions. He didn't really understand what the hell he was feeling either. Weird dicks and that creepy possessive feeling weren't exactly his idea of a good time but there was something running under his skin that thought Yeah! Do that! That's hot! Do him! Do him! Do him! He gulped and didn't know what to do and from the look on Cas's face he didn't know what to do either.

So they stood there like idiots.

He had half a hard on and stuff leaking down his leg and his wings kept twitching, aching to be touched, while Castiel looked ready to throw himself out the window.

Dean rubbed a hand over his face. This was like the teacher's bathroom all over again. He breathed deeply - which just made the Do him! Do him Do him! idea seem like an even better idea - and picked a spot on Castiel's shoulder to talk to.

"Look, just make sure I didn't break anything on the other one and go." Dean said. He needed Castiel out of his room like yesterday because the pants situation was only going to get worse. "Okay?"

Castiel nodded. Dean turned around. He could totally get through this without coming in his pants. Castiel let out a barely audible whine of defeat then plunged his fingers into Dean's feathers. It only made the whole leaking butt situation worse and Castiel kept making desperate noises like he was having his finger nails pulled out.
Castiel worked his way to the end of the other wing then yanked his fingers away. "You're fine. I have to go." Castiel gasped out. He grabbed his jacket off the floor and dashed for the door with a last, "Remember to check your account."

Dean almost hadn't made it through that whole playing doctor fiasco so he didn't waste any time now that he was alone. He slammed his door closed and shoved his pants down and off. He grabbed his dick and gave it a few strokes as he crossed his room to his bed. He shoved a pillow behind the headboard so it wouldn't bang if he got into it and he was pretty sure he was going to be really fucking into it.

He sprawled out on the bed and squirmed around, still pumping his dick, until he found just the right spot where the blankets bunched up between his wings. He gasped. It wasn't as good as someone actually touching them but who fucking cared right now? Not him.

"Fuck." Dean whispered under his breath. He pumped his hand faster and didn't care about the stuff practically gushing out of his butt. His free hand shot up to that spot on his neck Lisa and Benny had touched that felt like lightning. He squeezed. His hips thrashed up. "Fuck!"

"Oh fuck." Dean squeezed that spot on his neck again. "Oh fuck." He pumped his hand faster and thrust his hips up to meet it. "O-oh fuck!" His eyes slammed shut. He took in a deep breath. He had a moment to realize this was gonna be loud before he was coming and groaning and writhing like he was in a bad porn movie.

He gasped for air. His hands fell away from his dick and neck. He opened one eye and turned a puzzled look on the wall. Sam was banging on it from the other side. He thumped the wall back and yelled out, "What?"

Sam banged on the wall again. There was a muffled response, "You are so gross."

Dean snorted. Sam didn't know the half of it. He was laying in a wet spot that took up most of the bed. He was gonna have to change the sheets again. He let out a long satisfied sigh. Even the sheets being gross wasn't ruining his orgasm high.

He got his legs under the blankets and flopped over onto his stomach. He grabbed that sweater Cas lent him and shoved it under his head because it smelt good. He sighed again. The whole day had been one huge train wreck and was weird as hell but he wasn't gonna even think about that right now. Nope. He was gonna have an awesome post sex nap and when he got up it'd probably all turn out to be some wacky dream or something.

Chapter End Notes

The exchange about monotremes: I was originally going to go with echidna's as a bit of a joke on Dean's whole "alpha's and their weird dicks" but I figured Dean and Castiel wouldn't likely know what an echidna is so I went with platypus. Happily platypuses also have weird bifurcated penises so I still get to have my animal anatomy joke.

Nosy up to no good little witch Sam makes me chuckle.

How far do you think Cas made it with a front row seat to Dean's brain? ;) I think I need to add second hand orgasm to the ever increasing list of tags.
Also, it may interest you to know that I was previously tossing around the idea of a sequel to this to cover all the college/first time on your own tropes/heat tropes/etc etc but I am tossing it around no longer. This is officially going to be a Trilogy in Four Parts! Because all the cool movies do the last installment in two parts. And we are just that cool over here :p

The Second Installment shall be called Love Attack.

So please leave trope suggestions for: Heats, ruts, young Dean tropes, young Cas tropes, terrible erotica tropes, cheesy porno tropes, sex toy tropes, college tropes, roommate tropes, sex tropes, omega tropes, alpha tropes, angel tropes, wing kink tropes, a/b/o tropes, young couple tropes, etc etc. You can scream your suggestions into the void here in the comments or over here: Brains for Baby Jesus. Which has nothing to do with Baby Jesus and everything to do with being a nine-legged semiautomatic groove machine!

Love Attack: Coming Soon* **

* Soon is a relative word.
** Also that was a pun.
Chapter 32

Chapter Summary

Omegas were supposed to be light and nimble. Castiel snorted with dry humour. Omegas were also supposed to be polite and willing to please.

Chapter Notes

What did I do? Fall off the face of the planet? Well, here is an extra long post in apology.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel made it as far as the bottom of the stairs when he knew he'd never make it home. He barrelled into the bathroom on the main floor and shoved the door closed. He breathed hard. He could feel it. Dean was masturbating. It was like an electric shock right up his spine. His mate was touching himself right now. Right after he'd had his hands all over Dean's wings. And the slick! Dear gods around him! He swore he could still smell Dean from downstairs.

His eyes shot up to the ceiling to stare wide eyed. There was a rhythmic squeak-squeak! Bang! Squeak-squeak! Bang! From above him. Where Dean was. Where his mate was. Who was masturbating. Right now. He nearly doubled over as fiery intense pleasure that wasn't his own crashed into him.

He heard a muffled noise from above that sounded like, oh fuck! He let out a whimper as another wave of pleasure rolled through him.

Squeak-squeak! Bang!

He tried to stifle a groan as that desperate fiery feeling rocked through him. He grabbed the edge of the bathroom sink determined to not get off on Dean's second hand feelings. He wouldn't betray the shaky trust he was slowly building with Dean. Especially when Dean had been utterly distraught for most of the day.

Squeak-squeak! Bang!

Dean probably didn't even know how strong the bond was this close. He was probably so wrapped up in what he was doing he didn't realize what he was doing to him.

Squeak-squeak! Bang!

Dean was up there touching himself, probably thinking about the way he had just touched him, and didn't...and...he had no idea...and....and...

Squeak-squeak! Bang!

"Fuck." Castiel gasped out. He scrambled to undo his belt and open up his borrowed jeans with
frantic fingers. "Coraxo."

He shoved his jeans and underwear down to his ankles. He hissed when his dick sprang out, knot already forming. There was another muffled oh fuck! from above that came with another blast of pleasure. He wrapped his fingers below his knot and tugged forward as he pumped his other hand around the rest of his dick.

Squeak-squeak! Bang!

Dean's feelings rushed through him, hot and electric. There was one more oh fuck! A whine left Castiel's throat. Dean was going to come. He was going to come. They were both going to come—

His eyes sprang open when he realized he was about to get off in the Winchesters' downstairs bathroom and he'd be stuck there until his knot went down and his dick stopped pumping out come and he couldn't remember if the door was locked. This was not a well thought out plan.

Then it was too late to care about plans.

"Oadriax!" Castiel gasped. His knot pulsed and widened that last bit that would have locked him into his mate— into Dean. He squeezed his hand around it. The feeling of Dean's orgasm tore through him as his own hit. He barely had the presence of mind to lean over the sink while come poured out of him. He braced himself against the counter with shaky arms and let out his breath in loud huffs. His legs shook. His heart was still pounding.

He breathed hard and tried to keep himself upright. That had been the most intense orgasm he had ever had on his own...technically on his own. His eyes flicked up. The squeaking and banging had stopped. He was being lulled by a content feeling spreading through him from Dean.

He squinted at the ceiling. Was Dean sleeping? How could he sleep after they had done that together? He didn't think Dean would be so... He had thought Dean would be mad again, that Dean would rush downstairs and demand that he leave that very second, but instead all he felt from Dean was the easy content feeling of satisfactory sex and peaceful sleep. It was actually rather relaxing. No doubt that part was his alpha instincts satisfied that his omega mate was sated and at rest.

He snorted annoyed. His instincts might be pleased about the situation but he wasn't. His dick was slowly pumping come into the sink and he had no idea when Dean's parents might be home to wonder why he had locked himself into their bathroom.

Oh dear gods he hoped he had locked himself into the bathroom. He looked over his shoulder. He couldn't tell if the door was locked. He leaned back as far as he could without moving his dick out of the sink. He just managed to wrap his fingers around the doorknob and turn. It didn't budge. He let out a sigh of relief. He had locked the door. No one would walk in. He wouldn't have to explain this. Now all he had to worry about was Dean's parents coming home and wondering why he was taking so long in their bathroom.

He leaned back over the counter. He bit his lip and closed his eyes. Each pulse of come sent an aftershock of pleasure through him. As inconvenient as it was it still felt good— amazing.

He was letting himself sink into Dean's relaxed feeling when his phone rang. He opened one eye and glanced down. It kept ringing. He bit at his lip, trying to decide if it would be more embarrassing to answer his phone while he came or to let it ring until it attracted attention and someone knocked on the door and asked him what he was doing in the bathroom.

He decided on answering the phone. It might be awkward if Dean knocked on the door but it
would be out right horrible if Dean's little brother asked him what he was doing in the bathroom.

He shuffled around and just managed to hook his finger into a belt loop if he leaned all the way back and kicked up with his foot. He dragged his pants up and got his phone. He frowned. It was his mother again. He turned the sound off for incoming calls and set the phone aside. There was nothing on the planet that would make him answer the phone and speak to his mother while he was coming.

His phone beeped. He had a text message. It beeped again. He tapped his fingers on the sink. When he got a third message he finally broke and checked it. What if it was important?

He read the messages over. They were all from his mother. The first asking him to return her call, the second asking if Dean was with him, and the third asking him to call again.

It was strange. She had phoned earlier to ask where he was. He'd lied and said he was at work. He couldn't get away with lying face to face but he was sure he could do it over the phone.

He texted back to say that yes Dean was with him and almost texted a second time to say that he was still at work so he couldn't phone but then realized she might be there right now. Maybe that was why she was phoning. She had stopped by the bakery and found out he wasn't there. He texted back again. A cryptic, Sorry busy I'll phone soon then turned his phone off.

He was probably going to get in trouble later for not returning her call but given the choice of getting in trouble for not responding and having to explain to his mother that he had just gotten himself off to his mate's orgasm second-hand through the soul mate bond and was currently coming into the Winchester's bathroom sink? Well, he'd pick getting in trouble.

Fifteen minutes later his knot had gone down and he had finally stopped coming. As he cleaned himself up he idly wondered if what had just happened counted as sex with his soul mate or if it was just very strange - and intense - masturbation.

Some of Dean's unnatural luck must have rubbed off on him because when he poked his head out of the bathroom Dean was still asleep as far as he could tell and no one appeared to be on the lower floor of the house. He crept out of the Winchester home and thanked whatever god was patron of covertly coming in someone's bathroom and sneaking out before getting caught.

He wasn't in trouble when he got home. His mother just asked him again where he had been. He told her he had visited Dean after work, which wasn't a lie exactly. Thankfully his mother didn't push for more. It was strange but he didn't question it if it meant he could skulk downstairs to his room and pretend today hadn't happened.

He was terrible at pretending.

Dean was pregnant. There was no way all those pregnancy tests and Zachariah could be wrong. His mate was pregnant and he worked part time at a bakery and hadn't finished high school.

He peeled off his shirt and let his wings out. He flopped face down on the bed and groaned. His mate was pregnant. Fuck.

Sunday he spent the whole day worrying about how he was going to keep the fact that Dean was pregnant from the teachers at school. If they didn't immediately connect the way Dean still smelled like he was in heat with being pregnant at the very least they would insist he go to Zachariah again to deal with an extended heat. They would know. One sniff and they would all know there was something wrong with his mate.
There was also the small issue of needing a car to get to Dean's appointment and a place to stay while they were there. It was another wonderful moment that pointed out to him he was too young for this. He didn't own a car and no hotel in their right mind was going to rent a room to two underage guests without their parents.

He shoved that problem out of his head because first he needed to figure out how to keep Dean out of school and away from other angels and demons. He knew he should probably tell someone what was happening but Dean would be mad at him for telling and they'd probably get in trouble on top of being in trouble.

On Sunday Gabriel teased him about taking off the day before to be with his mate in heat. Castiel wanted to snap at him that it wasn't a joke but then he'd have to explain why it wasn't something to joke about. So he let Gabriel tease him while he came up with a plan to keep Dean's problem a secret.

In the end the best he could come up with was trying to talk the teachers into letting Dean stay home under the guise of teaching him Enochian. The semester was over. No one would want to go in to school just to give a few hours worth of a history lesson to someone who hated it anyway.

He'd tell everyone Dean wanted to learn conversational Enochian and that their trip to Addington was partly to help Dean adjust to their culture as well as to buy him some clothes of his own. It sounded perfect in his head. He hoped it sounded as good when he phoned up Zdxg and asked her if it was okay.

He looked up Zdxg's number after work and phoned. He explained his idea. He was hit with another stroke of luck because Zdxg made a pleased noise into the phone and asked if he wanted to sign out a school laptop, a dvd drive, and an assortment of movies for the winter break. Castiel breathed in relief and said yes. Zdxg told him she'd drop the laptop and movies off at his house on Monday morning.

Castiel phoned Dean up after to tell him his plan and that he'd meet him at his house after he was done school on Monday. Dean sounded better than he had on Saturday. Hopefully he'd be better still on Monday. Castiel wasn't sure if he could deal with the near panic and the at odds arousal that had come through the bond on Saturday yet again.

His next phone call was to his cousin Rachel in Addington. His luck finally ran out. Rachel normally went back to Malprg over the winter for work but this year the Malprg council had said they didn't need her so she was at home. She was still more than willing to let him and Dean stay with her for the weekend but now he'd need to explain why Dean had been in heat for weeks on end and why they hadn't rushed him to the medical centre in Addington a week ago.

He was about to ask her if she could keep a secret when he realized that she wouldn't know Dean had apparently been in heat for weeks. They could just tell her Dean had suddenly gone into heat on the drive there. She would probably make a few jokes about him travelling with his mate while he was in heat but she wouldn't think Dean was pregnant.

With that worked out all he had left to do was ask his mother to borrow the car all weekend. That turned out less than satisfactory. Oh, he could borrow the car all weekend but that meant he wouldn't be able to borrow it all week and there were extra chores for him around the house. Apparently his mother had spent the last week saving up laundry for him to do judging by the pile of sheets in the laundry room.

It meant after a day of doing laundry he had to drag a huge ancient laptop, a grocery bag full of movies and cookies, and a dvd drive across town on foot in ankle deep snow.
When he got to the Winchester house his shoulder was aching from the constant tug of the laptop bag and his socks had worked their way off in his boots. He knocked on the front door and went in.

Mary's head popped around the corner of the entrance way while he fished a sock out of his boot.

"Castiel." Mary said, surprised. "I didn't see the car pull in."

"I walked." Castiel said. He pulled the first sock back on. "My mother needed the car."

"That's a good long walk in this weather." Mary commented. "You're getting a ride home?"

Castiel shook his head. "No. I'm walking home."

Castiel drew the other sock out of his other boot. Mary made a concerned noise that made Castiel glance up. She looked worried about him.

"I'll be fine." Castiel said. "It's not far."

"I'll see if John can drive you home before he goes to work." Mary said.

Castiel froze. There was a flash of curious surprise from Dean in his head. Castiel opened his mouth and uttered an eloquent. "Oh. Oh, no. That..." That was a horrible idea. He didn't want to be trapped in a car with either of Dean's parents at the moment. Castiel licked his lips nervously.

"That's fine. I like it...walking."

He pulled his other sock on and grabbed the bags he had brought then quickly changed the subject. "Dean's upstairs?"

He knew Dean was upstairs - and hungry - but if Dean hadn't told his family about being an omega than he probably hadn't told them about the soul mate bond. Blurtting that out to his mother probably wouldn't encourage Dean to trust him.

Mary nodded. She was still looking at him with concern. He wasn't really sure how to assure her that walking home alone would be a few million times less stressful than getting a ride from his pregnant mate's parents. He ended up smiling awkwardly and backing down the hall to the stairs before turning around and dashing up them.

He could smell Dean before he got to the top of the stairs. There wasn't as much panic to his scent as there had been on Sunday but it was still there underneath the smell of slick and sex. This was going to be a long night.

He breathed deep - which was a mistake - and knocked on Dean's bedroom door. Dean didn't answer. Castiel rolled his eyes. It wasn't as if Dean could hide from him. He knew Dean was just on the other side of the door, mildly curious, annoyed - though he wouldn't need the soul mate bond to tell him that - and more than a little nervous. He knocked again. Dean still didn't answer.

Castiel huffed in annoyance. He opened the door to find Dean sitting on his bed and Sam sitting on Dean's desk.

"Dude, you ever heard of knocking?" Dean snapped. Sam kicked him. Dean took a swing at Sam. Sam nodded his head towards the door. Castiel could feel a dawning realization hit Dean.

Castiel looked between the two of them then turned around. There were symbols in chalk around Dean's door. They didn't look quite the sam as the one's that had been around Sam's door. He looked back at Sam. "You really shouldn't be tampering with protective sigils. It's dangerous."
"Oh, quit being a suck up." Dean said. He got up and pushed Sam off his desk and towards the door. "It's not like Bobby's gonna nail your ass to the wall when he catches on."

"It doesn't have anything to do with Bobby." Castiel said. He dropped his things onto Dean's bed. "Magic is dangerous."

"Don't I know it." Dean said sarcastically. He picked the rabbit's foot off his chest and let it drop back down. He turned and poked a finger into Sam's chest. "Like we talked about."

"Yeah." Sam said before ducking out Dean's room with a quick, hey Cas, bye Cas.

Dean closed the door behind Sam. He turned around and looked Castiel up and down. Castiel wanted to ask what Dean meant by like we talked about but doubted that was something that Dean wanted to talk to him about.

Dean tilted his head back sniffed at the air.

The smell of fresh slick started to creep into Castiel's nose. He coughed and snorted trying to get the scent out of his nose. He spun around and started digging through the bag he had brought. He found the box of cookies; ginger snaps and spice cookies. He had meant to bring the cookies as moral support for Dean but if presenting his mate with food calmed his alpha instincts down too, well, he wouldn't argue with that.

He turned and held the box of cookies out to Dean. Dean licked his lips. The smell of slick flooded the room as a tendril of lust snapped out from Dean. Castiel let out a gasp as his instincts reared their ugly head and sent a spike of wanton hunger straight through him. His omega felt like that because of him.

For a moment neither of them moved.

Then Dean's face turned bright red and Castiel understood why extreme embarrassment was actually rather annoying to feel second-hand.

Dean angled his head down and snatched the box of cookies off Castiel. He set them down on his desk and fussed with the box as he opened them. "So, Enochian, huh? Gonna teach me more than my ABCs?"

"I'm going to try." Castiel said. He wasn't sure how successful he'd be. Zdxg had been trying for weeks and Dean mostly just rolled his eyes. "I brought movies from school." Castiel pointed to the bag. "Zdxg thought they'd help and they'll be more interesting than staring at a blackboard."

Dean looked at the bag. "Movies for homework." He nodded approvingly. "I think that's the only good idea any of your teachers have had."

Castiel didn't mention that the teachers had had plenty of good ideas, Dean just didn't like them. He started setting up the laptop and dvd drive. "There won't be any English subtitles." He unravelled the charger for the laptop. The batteries were all going on the school laptops. "I was thinking I'd translate as it was spoken and we could pause it every so often to go over it."

There was a snap of surprise from Dean. "You're actually gonna try and teach me Enochian?" Dean asked. "I figured we'd just turn it on and go over whatever weird stuff the, uh, medical centre is sending me."

Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. "If you don't make any progress people will be suspicious."
Dean’s face pulled into a reflection of Castiel's. "...and then they start asking questions."

"Right." Castiel said. He looked into the bag with the movies. He held it out to Dean. "Pick one."

Dean quirked an eyebrow at him but reached into the bag and pulled a movie out. He looked over the plastic and paper sleeve and the taped on description and picture. "This is some sketchy off the street piracy stuff." He turned the dvd around in his hand. "...so this is actually in Enochian? And like...with angel actors and stuff? Or is this creepy back alley porno?"

"It's Enochian. Angels and demons. We don't really have Hollywood level productions." Castiel said. He took the movie from Dean's hand. He read over the description. He slipped the dvd out of the sleeve and opened the dvd drive. "This one is about a beta without a talent who thinks he won't ever be with anyone."

Dean wrinkled his nose. "It's a love story."

"I think it's supposed to be a comedy." Castiel said. The dvd drive creaked shut. Castiel pulled out the chair at Dean's desk and set the laptop down while it thought about working. He motioned for Dean to sit on the bed. He knelt in front of the laptop and got the moving going. He sat back on the floor. He wasn't about to sit on a bed that smelt like slick with an omega. The title came up in Enochian. "The Mating Rituals of Talentless Betas."

They got halfway through the movie before Dean had had enough and quite frankly so had he. Dean had needed to stop the movie every fifteen minutes to go to the bathroom to deal with slick and he hadn't realized he'd have to translate the movie and defend why it made sense or why it was funny — Dean didn't get anything.

"I still don't get it." Dean said for the sixth time. "Are they gonna set him up on some blind date or something?"

"He's probably going to end up with them." Castiel said, closing the movie program and taking the movie out of the dvd drive. "It's cliché but I never said it wouldn't be."

"With who?" Dean said.

"The couple across the street." Castiel said. He slid the dvd back into the sleeve.

Dean shook his head. "I don't get it. So they're like...swingers or something?" He picked up the dvd and looked at the picture on it and frowned. "Dude, what sort of movies does your school give out?"

"Swingers?" Castiel asked.

"You know." Dean said. Castiel shrugged because he didn't know. Dean rolled his eyes then motioned wildly. "Couples who wife swap or-" Dean shrugged. "-pick up, uh, extras. For fun."

Castiel thought it over. "Fifalz."

"What?" Dean said. He made a face at the unfamiliar Enochian word.

"Fifalz. Swingers." Castiel said. It wasn't exactly what Dean had described but it was close. He didn't know of anyone who would trade their mate with someone else but he had heard of people who dated couples without ever intending to mate them. "They aren't swingers. They're looking for the right beta to complete their relationship."
Confusion washed through him from Dean. Castiel clamped down on the embarrassed feeling boiling up in his chest. This was exactly what he had been worrying about for weeks. "Most alphas that are with omegas usually have a beta mate too. It makes the relationship more stable."

He watched Dean think it over and tried to tell from the swirl of emotions coming through the bond if this would be a good time to bring up Lisa and how he'd be supportive of Dean's relationship with her if that's what he wanted.

Dean narrowed his eyes at Castiel. "Is this more of your weird dick stuff?"

Castiel sighed and looked to the ceiling for help. At least Dean was feeling better today.

"Not my fault you've got a weird dick." Dean retorted at Castiel's non-answer.

"I don't have a weird dick." Castiel said. He took out his phone and set about tethering it to the laptop. He got the internet up and running then typed in the address of the medical centre. "Do you care if I log you in?"

"Is it all going to be in Enochian?" Dean asked. He grabbed the almost empty box of cookies and took out two more. He shoved one entirely into his mouth.

"Yes." Castiel said.

Dean waved his hand. "Then go ahead. You'll just have to read it to me anyway."

Castiel typed in Dean's name and password. He clicked on the inbox. There were half a dozen emails. He clicked on the earliest one. It was just a basic welcome and thank you for joining. Dean snorted and muttered about not wanting a cheery greeting for going to a hospital. Castiel moved on to the next one.

"There are some forms they want you to print out, fill in, and bring with you." Castiel said. He scrolled through them. "I think there's one for me too."

"More forms?" Dean groaned. "We already played twenty questions."

Castiel read through them quickly. "I think they're more specific to, uh, your problem."

Dean sniffed at that disapprovingly and ate another cookie.

"Alright. This one is about what they plan on doing on Saturday." Castiel said. His eyes flicked down the page. It was mostly in Enochian but there was the occasional medical term that didn't translate well that was in English. They popped out of the page at him. "There's a specialist who's going to confirm if—" Castiel left it to Dean to fill in the blank. It seemed like as long as he didn't say pregnant Dean was going to stay calm. "And then they'll do the ultrasounds. And they've booked you for a physical exam and blood work after."

Dean didn't acknowledge that but from the way the bond shuddered Castiel knew he was listening.

Castiel clicked on the next one. "This one is about what to do for the ultrasounds." He read carefully. "You're not supposed to eat before the ultrasound."

Dean made a noise like he thought that might kill him.

"But you...need to drink a litre of water?" Castiel said. He wasn't sure how that made sense. Wouldn't it better if there wasn't anything getting in the way? He read it a second time just to make
"That's like...thirty-ish ounces right?" Dean asked.

"I think so." Castiel said absently. He had definitely read it right. He sat back and narrowed his eyes at the email. "It's for the abdominal ultrasound. But it says you can use the bathroom before the transvaginal ultrasound."

Suspicion ripped through the bond. Castiel cringed in pain and put a hand to his forehead. He glanced over at Dean annoyed. Did Dean realize how harsh his feelings were half the time?

"What the hell is a transvaginal ultrasound?" Dean asked warily.

Castiel shrugged. He wasn't a doctor. "It just says it's more effective on male omegas because of how your reproductive organs are arranged." He clicked back to the inbox. "They sent a pdf about it." Castiel clicked the link. The file opened up. It looked like they had stolen an online pamphlet off a human website. "It's in English."

Dean motioned for the laptop. Castiel passed it over. Dean went from suspicious to horrified. He made a strangled noise.

"What?" Castiel asked. Dean had it all wrong. Second-hand embarrassment wasn't bad. It was second-hand suspicion.

"No goddamned way." Dean said. He shoved the laptop back at Castiel.

"What's wrong?" Castiel asked again.

"Read it for yourself." Dean said, disgusted.

Castiel read through it. It didn't take him long to understand why Dean was upset. Dean very thoroughly did not believe he had a vagina up his butt as Dean so eloquently put it. No doubt the prospect of an ultrasound technician inserting a medical device into it wasn't going to make Dean happy. He sighed. Dean really needed to get over that. He was pregnant. How else did Dean think people got pregnant? Where did he think the baby was going to come out if he stayed pregnant?

"Don't get all mentally eye-rolly with me." Dean said. He squirmed on the bed. "I don't have— I mean— it's probably not— I'm not gonna let some..." He flailed his arms at the laptop and wrinkled his nose. "I dunno...shady angel doctor stick a lubed up probe up my butt. This isn't the X-Files."

"They're not sticking it up your butt." Castiel said and left it at that. He wasn't about to get into an argument about omega anatomy. "And they're not shady. They're trained professionals. This is normal." It was probably normal. Honestly, Castiel had no idea if a transvaginal ultrasound was normal but Dean needed to keep a level head about all this so he thought it would be better if he at least acted like it was normal.

"Right." Dean snorted. "Normal."

Castiel sighed. He could tell the night wasn't going to get any better after that.

Close to 8pm Castiel decided the Enochian lesson had gone on long enough. He asked Dean if he could just leave the laptop and dvds behind since he'd be back every day that week. Dean said he could but didn't seem to be pleased about it; as if the movies had personally offended him. Castiel didn't ask why. He had begun to realize that anything Dean didn't understand was apparently offensive to him.
He was pulling on his boots at the front door when Dean's father appeared beside him.

"Mary said you needed a ride." John said.

"Uh. No. It's okay." Castiel said. He quickly tied his boots up and pulled his jacket on.

"It's been snowing all night." John added.

Castiel looked out the window. There was snow on the ground a foot deep and it was still snowing. "It's okay. Really. I like the snow."

John looked out the window then looked at Castiel. His eyes flicked over him. A subtle shrug went through him. "Alright." John slipped past him and headed out the door.

Castiel watched him for a moment before he buttoned up his jacket and stepped outside too. He wasn't sure what to make of John Winchester. Dean either talked highly of him or went silent. Sam was occasionally frustrated with him or annoyed. Mary didn't talk to him about her husband very often but then he wasn't sure if that was because he was a teenager or if she didn't have anything to say about John.

He watched John's vehicle pull out of the driveway and head down the snow covered road until it disappeared around the corner. The light sound of snow falling filled his ears. He sighed and started walking. A ride home would have been nice except for the part where he'd be trapped with one of his pregnant mate's parents.

The rest of the week went by about the same. He tried to translate movies - words and meaning - and tried to teach Dean Enochian while Dean ate, disappeared into the bathroom, and argued about how the movie didn't make sense. They still hadn't gotten past that first movie.

On Friday he picked Dean up after school. It was snowing again. Castiel was sure it was only snowing to spite him. Their eight hour drive was probably going to be closer to ten hours in this weather.

Castiel couldn't see Dean through the snow fall but he could feel him getting closer. He wasn't surprised when the passenger door was flung open. Dean brushed the snow off his shoulders then slipped into the passenger seat.

"Still hasn't freakin' stopped." Dean muttered. He worked his backpack off and tossed it into the backseat.

Castiel didn't have to ask what Dean meant. He could smell the slick and feel the edgy arousal through the bond. Truly, the gods hated him. He was about to spend ten hours trapped in the car with that smell. At least it wasn't as bad as it had been on Saturday.

"Yeah. Nice to see you too." Dean said. He must have gotten a heaping dose of dismay from Castiel. Dean pulled his seat belt on. "My stuff is in my bag. Don't need to go home for anything. And I printed out the forms. Figure we can do them in the car."

Castiel nodded and started the car. "And you told your parents where we're going?"

Dean turned and looked at him with an expression that suggested he had said something exceedingly stupid. "No. I'm just gonna take off and hope they don't notice and freak out." He shook his head in exasperation. "Yeah, I told them."

They drove in silence while Castiel navigated through the rush of traffic and snow. It wasn't until
they had gotten out of town that Castiel spoke up.

"How's Lisa?" Castiel asked.

A spike of emotion drove through the bond. Castiel wasn't sure what it meant. There were too many things at once.

Dean shrugged. "Good. I guess." He rapped his fingers on the door. "Why?" Dean asked. A coil of suspicion flicked out from him. "You wanna act weird and growl at her again?"

"No." Castiel said. He tried to feel apologetic towards the bond. "I just...." He shook his head. "Never mind."

They lapsed into silence again. Castiel turned the radio on. He felt a rumble of annoyance as light jazz filled the car.

"You can change it if you want." Castiel said, motioning to the radio.

Dean's hand shot forward. He fiddled with the buttons until he had it tuned to the local classic rock station.

"So why the hell are you so lucky?" Dean asked abruptly.

"What?" Castiel asked, utterly confused. Lucky? How was he lucky? He was stuck in a car for the rest of the night with an omega who smelled like sex who didn't want to be mated to him but was pregnant with his child. That wasn't lucky.

"You're done school." Dean clarified. "Do you guys start early or something?"

"Oh. No. We start the same time you do." Castiel said. He watched the road carefully. He wasn't sure if the snow was getting worse or if the highway just made it seem like that. "But we end earlier. Our school is set up to mimic a human college. It helps people, betas mostly, transition into them."

"Betas." Dean repeated. "Like the guy from the swinger movie."

Castiel huffed out a quiet laugh. They had finished the movie last night. "Yes. Like the guy from the movie. Or my sister. Or Gabriel. Well. Maybe not Gabriel. I don't think he'd be suited to living low key among humans. He needs to show off to someone."

The conversation fell flat again. Dean's stomach rumbled.

"There's a box of donuts on the floor in the back." Castiel said.

The bond lit up with pleased omega. Dean turned and reached for the box. Castiel's own instincts rippled happily below the surface. It was pathetic the moment he realized Dean was happy with what he had provided his alpha instincts strutted like a peacock.

Dean sat back with the box. He opened it up and stuffed half a donut into his mouth.

Dean made a satisfied noise that satisfied Castiel far more than he thought was polite. This car trip was going to be the death of him.

"—movie was still weird." Dean said through a mouthful of donut. "I mean, come on. How many people are just okay with their partner getting the angel equivalent of a hand job from someone else in their living room?"
"It wasn't just someone." Castiel said. They had had this argument more than once by now. "They were dating him— trying to date him. He just didn't realize it until then."

"Whatever." Dean made a flicking motion with his hand. "Romcoms are dumb anyway."

They chatted on and off about the movie for two hours before nausea started creeping through the bond and Castiel had to stop so Dean could throw up the donuts in a gas station bathroom and then buy an absurd amount of junk food.

Castiel watched him tear open a bag of chips when they got back in the car. "Are you sure you should be eating that right after?"

Dean shrugged dismissively. "Doesn't matter if I eat or not. Or what I eat. It happens anyway." He crunched away on a chip.

"You've been throwing up a lot?" Castiel asked. Was Dean getting sick from stress?

"Yeah." Dean said between licking the seasoning from his fingers. "Ten to seven every morning like freakin' clockwork for the last three weeks and lately a couple times during the day too."

Castiel squinted at the snow covered road. Dean wasn't getting sick from stress. That was an early symptom of pregnancy. How had Dean missed that? He fought the urge to glance sideways at Dean. He needed to keep his eyes on the road. Dean had been throwing up for weeks but couldn't stop eating, that was the epitome of pregnancy symptoms. Even with the unusual heat he was having how hadn't Dean— Dean still thought he was human.

"What?" Dean asked.

Castiel glanced over. It was a mistake. Dean's thumb was pressed to his lips. His tongue darted out to lick the seasoning from his thumb.

"You were getting all high and mighty and annoyed there and then—" Dean snapped the fingers of his free hand while still flicking his tongue over his fingers.

Castiel shivered and looked away. He tried to not think about how his blood was rushing south and instead tried to focus on how Dean wouldn't have thought about pregnancy symptoms because Dean had been human and didn't think he could get pregnant. It wasn't Dean's fault they were in this situation. It wasn't Dean's fault that he was getting hard from watching him lick his fingers.

Dean snickered and slowly licked his finger from knuckle to tip.

Castiel scowled at the road ahead of them as he realized Dean did realize what he was doing. Castiel stopped trying to not think about it and summoned up the memory of every dvd of porn Gabriel had ever given him and how hard he had come last week in the Winchester's bathroom. He let all that pent up lust race across the bond.

Dean gasped and let out a strangled squeak. The scent of slick filled the car. Maybe his revenge hadn't been very well planned out. The scent of his mate's slick was only making it more difficult to keep himself focused on the road.

"Okay. Okay." Dean said, embarrassed. Castiel could feel the undercurrent of arousal still creeping through the bond. "I was just screwing with you. I'll knock it off."

"Thank you." Castiel said primly.
Dean coughed and shifted uncomfortably. "...we gotta stop again."

"What?" Castiel asked. "Why?"

"'cuz I'm gonna soak the seat if we don't stop soon." Dean said with bravado but Castiel could feel the embarrassed discomfort.

Castiel sighed. "Alright."

He took the next turn off the highway and stopped at a McDonalds. Dean disappeared into the bathroom. Castiel lined up a the counter. He felt obligated to buy something if Dean was using the bathroom. He was just about to open his mouth to order a small fries when a wave of lust crashed through him.

He hissed at the cashier as a second burst of pleasure hit him. He craned his head over his shoulder and stared at the bathroom door in horror. The pleasure suddenly stopped and was replaced by that electric feeling of dawning realization.

The cashier prompted him for his order.

Castiel stared at him. For a moment he was completely at a loss as to what he was doing or why he was here. All he knew was that he had just avoided quite possibly the most embarrassing situation of his life: coming in public apparently over McDonald's fine cuisine. He pulled his thoughts together and cleared his throat. "Small fry. That's all."

Dean crept out of the bathroom minutes after. Castiel passed him the small fry as they walked out.

"Dude. Can you...?" Dean motioned back towards the bathroom.

"Yes." Castiel said.

Dean stopped in his tracks. Castiel could feel his thoughts racing. Dean's eyes went wide. "Did you — I mean— uh, the other day...?"

Castiel stared at him not sure if he wanted to laugh or die of embarrassment. "You didn't notice?"

"I was kind of busy." Dean said. He grabbed three fries and shoved them into his mouth. He started walking again. "...you can't feel it all the time, right? Just when we're close?"

"As far as I've noticed." Castiel said. He got into the car. He bit at his lip as he waited for Dean to plunk down into the passenger seat and put his seatbelt on. "You haven't, uh, noticed anything before either?"

"No." Dean said quickly. "Well, unless you've been jerking off non-stop for the last couple of weeks."

"I've been at work." Castiel said.

"Didn't know you added a personal touch to the cream filling." Dean said seriously.

Castiel's face contorted in disgust. He turned a scowl on Dean. "That's disgusting."

Dean grinned at him as he ate the French fries.

They stopped a little after 8pm to eat dinner at a small diner Dean had pointed out. The snow still hadn't let up. Castiel thought it was getting worse the closer they got to the coast. Sitting down for
half an hour and not staring at snow felt like an immeasurable relief. Even if they were using the
downtime to fill out medical forms.

Dean spelled out a word through bites of hamburger.

Castiel listened as he gulped down coffee. "Emergency contact."

Dean nodded as he chewed. He frowned down at the form and tapped the table with his pen. He
swallowed the mouthful of hamburger and stared down at the form. He sat up. He tapped the pen.
He pulled his lips into a pout and tapped the pen again.

"What?" Castiel asked. He set down his empty cup of coffee. He was going to need more.

Dean rubbed his hand over his mouth. "Look, I don't want my parents getting a weird phone call
about magic butt vaginas and—" He motioned to his stomach. "Ya know?"

"Oh...kay?" Castiel said, not really sure where Dean was going with this.

"Can I...?" Dean tapped the pen onto the form. Castiel stared confused. Dean groaned and rolled
his eyes. "Can I put your name down?"

Castiel's eyes went wide. A surprised Oh! escaped him. He nodded. "Of course." His alpha
instincts preened under the trust Dean was giving him.

Dean turned pink and kept his eyes steadily focused on the form. "And they won't...I dunno...it still
counts even though you're under eighteen?"

"We're—" Castiel stopped himself from saying soul mates since it usually made Dean mad and
they still had hours on the road together. He held his sleeve covered arm up, forearm out, showing
where the soul mate mark would be. "They won't say no."

"Okay." Dean said. An uncomfortable feeling rolled off Dean through the bond. Dean bent his
head and went back to filling out the form. He stopped suddenly. "Dude. What's your last name?"

"I don't have one." Castiel said. He bit into his chicken sandwich. Dean was staring at him like he
had just claimed to live on the moon. He swallowed. "Angels don't usually. Neither do most
demons."

Dean stared at him in disbelief. He gave a full body shake and gave Castiel an incredulous look.
"How the hell do you tell each other apart?"

"Descent lines or where you're from. Some people have a...aldi cnila..." He thought the words over
and tried to find ones in English that meant about the same. "A clan or tribe." Castiel said. He cast
a sad glance down at his very empty coffee mug.

"So what?" Dean said sounding offended by the concept. He waved his hand dramatically at
Castiel. "There's only one Castiel son of Naomi and—" Dean stopped suddenly.

"What?" Castiel asked. All he could feel from Dean was guilt.

"Nothing." Dean said quickly. "I, uh...so what do I put here?" He tapped his pen at the emergency
contact box.

Castiel's had tilted in confusion. He reached across the table and drew the form towards himself.
He read over what was needed for the emergency contact. He motioned for the pen and filled it
out. He pushed the form back across the table to Dean.

Dean stared at the two lines of information. He shook his head. "That's just...impractical. Dude. Last names. Get with the...I dunno, the fourteen hundreds." He took a bite of hamburger Castiel thought was too big to actually fit in his mouth.

"Most people have an alias if we go out." Castiel said. "We're the Mays on paper as far as humans are concerned."

Dean's eyebrows shot up. "Thf' ffm~" He stopped and worked his jaw. "That's some shady secret crime family stuff right there."

Castiel shrugged. "It's safer for us that way."

"Sounds like a porn name." Dean said. He shook his head and went back to the form. He spelt out the words on the next line.

Castiel helped him fill out the rest of the form while he filled out his own. The doctors wanted a list of any unusual medical concerns that might run in his family that could jeopardize the pregnancy or Dean's health. There was one question in particular about talents manifesting extremely early that he puzzled over for a few moments before he realized that an infant with the ability to start fires might be hazardous to everyone's health.

They finished their meals and then gathered up their paperwork and paid. There was a small mountain of snow forming on the car when they went back out. Castiel sighed and took out the snow brush. At least it wasn't ice. He cleared off the driver's side then moved around to do the passenger side but Dean snatched the brush from his hands and told him to warm the car up.

Castiel hesitated. He didn't think it was particular healthy for pregnant omegas to be shoving snow off a car at 9 o'clock at night in a sweater and a scarf but Dean was almost done by the time Castiel actually had a sentence formed to voice his opinion on the matter.

"Dude. Come on." Dean said, motioning for him to get in the car. "I'm not clearing it off a second time." He opened the passenger door, knocked the loose snow out of the brush, and tossed it onto the floor in the backseat before getting in.

They stopped four more times for Dean to throw up. Castiel was starting to wonder if the reason why Dean was hungry all the time was because he couldn't keep anything down. Dean assured him it was probably just the car ride. He wasn't usually that bad. Castiel decided that not only was Dean wrong about second hand embarrassment, he was wrong too about suspicion being the worst thing to feel through the bond. It was nausea. The last time Dean threw up Castiel was sure he was going to throw up too.

At midnight Castiel snatched a bag of peanut M&Ms from Dean and put them in the back. Dean was feeling nauseous again and Castiel didn't want to find out if he actually would empathetically throw up. Besides, Dean was supposed to fast for at least eight hours before the ultrasound.

Dean scowled at him and started reaching behind his seat for the M&Ms.

"It's midnight. You're supposed to fast for the ultrasound." Castiel said. He batted Dean's hands away from reaching behind them.

"Fine." Dean huffed and sat back down. He reached out and started fiddling with the radio. He flopped back in the seat and started fidgeting with his seatbelt. He breathed in sharply like he was
Castiel glanced over quickly then back to the road. He could feel the edge of Dean's curiosity through the bond along with a guilty feeling. "What?"

"Fucking bond." Dean muttered. He waved his hand dismissively. "It's nothing. Don't worry about it."

The car was silent but the tension over the bond rose. Castiel added his own curiosity to the bond. What did Dean possibly have to feel guilty about? The more Castiel wondered the guiltier Dean felt.

Dean sighed in defeat. "...is it okay if I ask where's your dad?"

Guilt tore through the bond. Castiel cringed.

"I mean, you don't have to say if you don't want to." Dean added.

Castiel huffed out an amused laugh. "I don't have a father."

"Oh. So he's out of the picture now." Dean said. The guilty feeling eased up.

"No." Castiel shook his head. "I don't have a father."

"You gotta—" Dean paused. The bond flared in surprise. "Is your mom gay?"

"I..." Castiel thought the word over. He wasn't a complete shut-in. He knew what Dean meant. He knew what the word meant to humans. He just wasn't sure if it applied to his moms. "I have— had two moms but I don't think they would have been gay the way you mean it. My mother, Naomi, she's an alpha and Hadrianiel was my beta mom. It's not the same for us; angels and demons. They're both women but alpha-beta couples aren't gay like what you mean." Castiel paused then carefully added. "Or alpha-omega couples."

Castiel could feel Dean thinking it over. The bond swirled with emotion. It settled on a confused feeling.

Dean shifted in his seat like it was pressing in around him. "So...like...we had straight sex?" Dean asked as if the question might bite him.

"I...guess you could call it that?" Castiel said. It wasn't the same but it was close. An unsettled feeling slunk through the bond from Dean. "Are you alright? Do I have to pull over again?"

"No. I'm good." Dean said, but if the bond was anything to go by Dean wasn't good. Dean shrugged. "It's just...I dunno." He paused and moved his hand in abortive gestures that didn't explain anything. He rubbed at the back of his neck. "...it's weird man."

Dean was quiet and unsettled for the rest of the drive to Addington.

It was 1:45am when they finally arrived and Castiel had never been happier to see Rachel's tiny two bedroom apartment before. Castiel knocked on the door. Rachel opened the door blinking and yawning.

Rachel started talking through her yawn. "It took—" She cut herself off and sniffed. She glanced quickly at Dean then to Castiel. "Must have been an interesting drive."

Castiel stared blankly at her. He was too tired for riddles. Then it clicked in. Dean still smelt like
omega in the throes of an intense heat. The low level nausea and Dean's unexplained uneasiness for
the last two hours had distracted Castiel from the scent of omega in heat.

"Not really." Dean said. "Lot of snow and that was about it."

Castiel glanced sideways. He didn't think Dean understood what Rachel meant. He looked back to
Rachel. She waved them in.

"I set up the pull-out couch in the spare room." Rachel said. She looked the door behind them.
"You don't need me for anything?"

"I know where everything is." Castiel assured her. "Go to bed. We'll catch up tomorrow."

Rachel wandered down the hall to her room, shucking her shirt and letting her wings out as she did.
Dean shuffled on the spot and felt sick again. Castiel groaned. He pointed to a door off the
hallway. "The bathroom is that way."

Dean bolted for the bathroom. Castiel sat down on the couch and waited for the wave of nausea to
pass. Dean came out of the bathroom a few minutes later with a toothbrush in his mouth. That
wasn't a bad idea. Castiel dug through his bag for his own toothbrush.

He ambled into the bathroom with his toothbrush in hand. He stared at his tired reflection in the
mirror. Driving had been exhausting and it showed.

He was glad to finally wash up and change into his pajamas. He waited for Dean to do the same
before showing him to Rachel's guest room. It was actually more of a home office but it was just
big enough to accommodate most angel's or demon's wingspan.

"Uh...Cas?" Dean said skeptically.

"Hmm?" Castiel said through a yawn.

Dean pointed at the bed.

Castiel rolled his head over to look. He stared. He looked back to Dean. He thought the situation
over and finally understood. There was only one bed. There were two people. He grabbed a pillow
off the bed and flopped onto the floor with a groan.

"You...uh...want a blanket?" Dean asked.

"No." Castiel said. He squirmed out of his shirt and rolled onto his stomach. He let his wings out.

Dean yelped in fear. Castiel sat bolt upright. His wings arched behind him and flared out. His alpha
instincts flaring up demanding to know was making his pregnant mate scared.

"Don't do that." Dean hissed. He pointed an angry finger at Castiel's wings. "Warn a guy first."

Castiel looked over his shoulder and realized Dean had been surprised by his wings. He rolled his
eyes and settled back down on the floor. He pulled the pillow to his face and was nearly asleep
when his eyes popped open.

"How're your wings?" Castiel asked. He hadn't seen them since Dean had nearly broken them when
they got caught up in his sweater.

"Fine." Dean said. There was a sliding feeling in the bond that Castiel had come to recognize as
Dean lying.
"You should get someone to look at them while we're at the medical centre." Castiel said, ignoring Dean's fine. "They want to do a physical exam after anyway."

"Whatever." Dean said. He closed the door and turned off the lights. Quiet footfalls padded over to the bed. Castiel heard the bed shift and then the unmistakable sound of someone bringing their wings out.

Then the unsettled feeling was back. Wonderful. It felt like it was sinking down from the bed and settling in Castiel's stomach. Castiel groaned. He just wanted to sleep. "What?"

"Nothing." Dean retorted.


"Are you gay?" Dean blurted out. "Or bi? Like me."

Castiel huffed into his pillow. He bunched his wings around his head. "No. Neither."

Dean let out a sharp laugh. "So what? You think you're straight?"

"I think I'm not human and don't have any intention of sleeping with humans," Castiel groused. Dean was still worked up about that? Castiel's eyes flicked open and went wide. Lisa. He was supposed to be accepting that Dean wanted to mate with a human! He sat bolt upright and started to backtrack but came up short. Dean was leaning over the edge of the bed looking down at him; Dean's face inches apart from his own.

"I...uh..." Castiel uttered so very eloquently. Dean was right there. The heat smell hadn't been bothering him so much in the last few hours but now he was practically breathing Dean in. Castiel's face flushed. He backed up until he was leaning against the wall. He wrapped his wings around himself. "I mean...humans are...uhh...a lot of betas mate with humans. Well. Not a lot. But it isn't uncommon. I think. For betas. I'm not sure about alphas and omegas."

Castiel was sure Dean was staring at him in the dark. Probably wondering what planet he was from.

"...what the hell are you talking about?" Dean asked, bewildered.

"I don't know." Castiel said, defeated. "What are we talking about?"

Dean took in a deep breath. "Okay. Look. I'm bisexual. I've had to fight a lot of people over that." Dean said firmly but the bond felt nervous. "And all this omega and alpha stuff is...weird. Everything is damn weird with you guys. But...uh...I'm not straight."

"Alright?" Castiel wasn't sure what he was supposed to say.

"Alright." Dean repeated. The bed creaked as Dean shuffled back to the middle of the mattress. "Just...uh...wanted to clear that up."

That had cleared up precisely nothing. Castiel was more confused now than he had been not knowing what had Dean feeling unsettled. Castiel waited to see if Dean was going to elaborate on that but he seemed to have decided that one confusing conversation before bed was good enough. Castiel settled back down to the floor and covered himself up with his wings and tried to fall asleep.
Dean stepped on him the next morning at ten to seven as he bolted from the bed to the bathroom. Castiel groaned in pain and with Dean's second hand nausea. He sat up and rubbed his leg where Dean had crushed it.

Omegas were supposed to be light and nimble. Castiel snorted with dry humour. Omegas were also supposed to be polite and willing to please.

Castiel groaned as the sick feeling grew stronger. He pushed himself up onto the bed and sprawled out as he fought the urge to throw up along with Dean. He stared at the clock on the wall. At least they were up on time.

The door opened twenty minutes later. Dean grumbled and found a t-shirt. He pulled it on and flopped face first across the bottom of the bed.

"Get your feet out of my face." Dean growled.

Castiel pulled his knees up to his chest and wrapped his wings around himself until he was a black ball of feathers. "We have to be there fifteen minutes early."

Dean groaned.

"And it's a fifteen minute walk from here."

There was another unintelligible noise.

"Or we could drive." Castiel offered. He didn't really want to sit in the car again. They had another all day drive to look forward to tomorrow.

"Or we could shut the fuck up and let me sleep for another half an hour." Dean snarled.

That was by far the most appealing idea either of them had had this morning but Castiel sighed and pushed himself up. If he fell back to sleep now he'd never wake up. He swung his feet out of the bed and got himself standing. He regretted every moment of it.

He stretched and tucked his wings away then grabbed his bag and headed to the bathroom to get dressed. When he was ready for the day - in concept - he made his way to the kitchen and filled up two glasses of water. He brought them back to the spare room, that already smelt of heat, and set them down on a side table.

He turned, meaning to wake Dean up, but stood and stared instead. He was hit with a visceral urge to find every blanket, pillow, towel - anything soft - in the apartment and pile them up around Dean.

He rolled his eyes at his instincts. Dean might appreciate being given food but he highly doubted Dean would be impressed by or appreciate having an alpha build him a nest.

His instincts however thought it might be worthwhile to at least try. Dean hadn't immediately accepted the baked goods either. He might come around to the idea of a nicely built nest.

Castiel woke him up instead, which was about as pleasant as he thought it'd be. He pushed at Dean's shoulder and was immediately met with a growl and an arm reaching out to swat at him and a leg jerking out violently trying to kick him.

"We have to get going and you need to drink that water before we go." Castiel said. He debated on getting the broom from Rachel's kitchen to poke Dean with from a safe distance.
Dean sat up, his hair matted down on the side of his head. The bond rumbled with displeasure. He squinted at Castiel. He looked at the clock. "Where's this water?"

Castiel pointed to the side table. Dean rolled his whole head over to look. He scuttled closer and grabbed the first glass. He started chugging it back.

"Remember, Raphael doesn't want you telling people your parents are human." Castiel said. He wasn't sure if Dean remembered what he was supposed to say about his family. He hadn't heard Dean recite Raphael's story since the day he'd been written into the Raphael's book. "Your parents are betas without talents that cut off all ties."

Dean narrowed his eyes over the rim of the glass. Disdain rumbled over the bond. He put the glass down. He grabbed the second one. He glared as he drank the second glass of water.

Castiel decided that it was best to leave Dean alone until he had woken up more.

Rachel still wasn't up yet so he busied himself with making sure they had filled out all the forms properly.

At twenty after eight Dean was standing in the living room ready to go. The bond was alive with hunger and anxiety and a low level arousal that Dean was obviously trying to ignore. Castiel was thankful that at least Dean wasn't feeling nauseous again.

Castiel led the way to the medical centre, taking a back way that hopefully meant they wouldn't be seen. He knew enough people in Addington that it was entirely possible that if anyone saw them everyone back home would know in under twenty minutes that he was taking Dean to see an obstetrician.

The anxiety from Dean grew steadily the closer they got and spiked when they went into the building. Dean looked around wildly as if he expected someone to pick a fight with them. It made Castiel's alpha instincts prickle with anger. Who exactly thought they were going to pick a fight with his mate?

Castiel forced his instincts aside and read the signs. The obstetrician was on the third floor, Dr. Arizith— probably a demon with a name like that.

A wave of nausea hit Castiel.

"Cas." Dean hissed.

Castiel pointed down the hall at the omega bathrooms. Dean ran. Castiel looked around for the alpha bathrooms just in case and positioned himself near a garbage can if he couldn't make it in time. If nothing else hopefully this trip to the doctor's would get Dean some anti-nausea medication.

What was Dean even throwing up? He hadn't had anything but water this morning.

Dean emerged from the bathroom a few minutes later with a disgusted expression on his face. That expression didn't get any better as they walked up the stairs and down the hall and stopped outside of Dr. Arizith's office.

They stood outside the door.

"Remember, Raphael—"
"I know." Dean snapped.

Anxiety and fear roiled through the bond and added to the queasy feeling. The heat smell was almost entirely covered by the smell of fear. Dean pushed open the door and went in. Castiel stepped in behind him only to come up short when Dean suddenly stopped. Dean was looking around the room, the anxiety turned to dread. Castiel looked around at the other patients; all in various stages of pregnancy and all much older than them.

Some of the other patients had turned to look at them, probably wondering what two teenagers were doing there.

The receptionist asked in Enochian if they had an appointment.

"Uh...?" Dean said. Panic filled the bond. He shot a sideways glance towards Castiel; a silent plead for help.

Castiel responded in English for Dean's sake. "Yes. Nine o'clock. We're early."

"Dean and Castiel." The receptionist said in English. "Did you fill out the forms?"

Castiel nodded and offered the receptionist a neatly folded form. Dean pulled a crumpled bunch of papers from his pocket and tossed them onto the desk.

The receptionist flattened the papers out and looked them over. She smiled approvingly. "Alright. We're just getting ready for you. Take a seat. It won't be very long."

Castiel sat down. Dean sat one chair away from him and looked around the room nervously. The jittery tension pulsing through the bond was putting Castiel's instincts on edge. He tried to distance himself from the feeling, mentally pulling away, but the more he pulled away the more tightly that panicky apprehension seemed to coil around him.

"Shit." Dean muttered and then added something that sounded like, "I can't do this." before dropping his head into his hands and shaking.

"Are you—" Castiel stopped himself before he could actually ask, are you okay? Of course Dean wasn't okay. Everyone in the room knew Dean wasn't okay from his scent alone. Castiel searched for something better. "Uh...is there anything I can do?"

"Yeah. Whatever it is you're doing, quit it." Dean said. He ran his fingers through his hair and sat up. He tapped his head then dramatically motioned to Castiel. "You're giving me a headache."

Castiel shrugged in confusion. He wasn't doing anything. Dean's anxiety wrapped tighter around him. He tried harder to mentally pull away. Maybe his own anxiety was bothering Dean.

"Seriously, dude. Quit doing that." Dean snapped.

Castiel's eyebrows shot up. He gave a mental tug at the bond. Dean glared at him. Castiel shrunk down in his seat under Dean's gaze. "Sorry. I didn't realize you could feel that."

"Yeah. Well. Knock it off." Dean said.

Castiel let the bond sink back into place. The nervous feeling seemed to uncoil. It was still there but it didn't feel like it was trying to dig its way into him.

"Dean?" The receptionist asked clearly from across the room. "We're ready for you now." She
motioned to a door to her left. "Room two."

A swell of confidence burst across the bond. Dean breathed deep and stood up. He took three steps forward. The confidence collapsed into crippling fear. Dean jammed his hands into his pockets and kept going.

Castiel watched him disappear behind the door. He wrapped his fingers around the armrests of the chair tight enough to turn his knuckles white. Every basic instinct screamed at him to go to his mate – his pregnant terrified mate – and utterly destroy whatever it was making him afraid.

The receptionist coughed politely. Castiel's eyes snapped over to her.

"Do you need to wait outside?" The receptionist asked pointedly. It was less a question and more a threat.

"No. No, I'll be fine." Castiel said. He knew he must reek of agitated alpha. He breathed deeply, in and out, and tried to relax. The receptionist sprayed the room down with something that smelt overpoweringly of catmint. It seemed to cover up the smell of alpha.

Castiel twisted in his seat and clenched his jaw. The bond raged. One moment it was near panic the next it was flooded with embarrassment. And Dean thought he was the one that was going to get a headache. He was going through emotional second-hand whiplash courtesy of the soul mate bond and Dean.

He was about to give up on torturing himself by sitting in the waiting room - if he went outside maybe it would be far enough away to dull the bond - when it suddenly blanked out. All that was left was a steady sense of where Dean was.

He was on his feet and moving toward the door Dean had disappeared through before he knew he was standing.

The receptionist slid out of her chair and stepped in front of him, blocking his way. Castiel's jaw clenched harder. The receptionist didn't move except to harden her glare at him.

There was a commotion from behind the door. It opened up. A technician poked her head out. Her eyes flicked between the receptionist and Castiel. She sniffed at the overwhelming smell of alpha. "You're Dean's mate?"

"Yes." Castiel grit out between his teeth. What had happened to Dean? His mate.

The technician nodded. She set a hand on the receptionist and eased her aside. The receptionist didn't move except to harden her glare at him.

"They're fine." The technician said. "They fainted."

Chapter End Notes

Coraxo - The thunders of judgement and wrath. I'm using it to mean something similar to "I'm going to hell."
Oadriax - the lower heavens. I've decided this is the sort of dirty word for anyone's genitals in Enochian but it's sort of like holy fuck! or something along the lines of I'm gonna come! in this context.

Fifalz - literally weed out but I'm using it more along the lines of "a weed among the flowers." Sort of a jab at unmated people who try to get with mated triads or just sleep around a lot with mated couples but don't plan to follow through.

Aldi cnila - gathering of blood.

Worlding! Notes

I feel super bad for fictional alpha kids that have wet dreams. It would be disgusting amounts of semen everywhere. Alpha kids would probably be super against having sleepovers when they're going through puberty. What the hell would they do about a wet dream then? Basically just sit there and be like, well fuck, guess I'm going to leak come everywhere for the next fifteen minutes, thanks genetics for ruining yet another sleeping bag.

I've decided that it would great if alphas took that whole "provider hunter master of the house" and channeled it into building a nest and finding food for their mate. Basically alphas should totally be a combination of bower birds and shrikes because that would be the best. Now all I can picture are these huge hulking alphas that run around trying to make the shiniest softest nest and keep trying to give dead mice and crickets to their mates. Come into my nest, look how soft and pretty it is! Here! Eat these grasshoppers they're nutritional! Please have my babies.

Yes, I meant catmint and not catnip (though catnip is sometimes called catmint). I'm not talking about Nepeta cataria but rather some other Nepeta spp. cultivar whose name I am not 100% sure of but I think it's Nepeta × faassenii. Which smells somewhat spicy/lemony/skunky. It's a weird smell.

Hilarious note: On Wikipedia John Dee is the example for swinging in the 16th century. Conversing with angels apparently makes you kinky.

And, guess what? Those terrible romcoms and sitcoms are going to be a series of one shots over here Bad Television: Contrived Sitcoms and Cheesy Romcoms. The movie they watched is the first chapter. I'm writing them as supernatural AU fics so just imagine the names are different when Dean and Castiel talk about the movies.
Chapter 33

Chapter Summary

Castiel sat there and was all...sensible about it. That was completely unacceptable. Dean would just have to freak out for the both of them.

Chapter Notes

See the end notes for a pregnancy specific warning (it's a spoiler for this chapter).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dean woke up to soft yellow light from a lamp gently lighting the room. He was dressed in a hospital gown but he had a blanket wrapped around him. He was curled up on a hospital bed with pillows surrounding him. It was all probably supposed to be comforting. It wasn't. It really really wasn't. Because his fingers were still doing a death grip on a glossy printout with a freakin' chestbuster that was goddamned inside of him!

And honestly, nothing said holy fucking shit! like playing host to a chestbuster. Holy fucking shit!

That overprotective feeling from Cas washed through him. Normally he'd eye roll and tell Castiel to piss off but right now? Fuck it. He'd take it. There was a freakin' chestbuster alien baby in him!

Holy fucking shit!

The door opened. Castiel stuck his head in the room. "Dean, are you alright?"

"Chestbuster, Cas. In me. Right now. For real. I thought. It couldn't." Dean babbled. Maybe he would try out three word sentences next. "How the hell—" He thrust the glossy printout at Castiel. "It's a creepy little xenomorph wannbe!" He flailed his arms. "And it's in me!"

Castiel frowned down at the picture and didn't seem to understand the gravity of the situation. Chestbuster. Inside. Right now.

The doctor stepped into the room. Well, he said he was a doctor. But who knew? Maybe he was some kind of android made to make sure he didn't do anything to the freakin' alien baby inside of him!

The doctor closed the door and sat down on a stool. He looked between Dean and Castiel then back to Dean. "Do you want your mate here?"

"There is a creepy little alien parasite in me." Dean blurted. How was everyone so freakin' calm about that? He was sure the ultrasound was going to show him something he wasn't gonna like but not an alien parasite baby.
The doctor's eyebrows puzzled together. He took the printout from Castiel and looked it over. He passed the printout back to Castiel. He looked at Dean calmly. "I can assure you this is what most babies look like this early on."

"Oh. Great." Dean said, his voice pitching higher with panic. "So I've got a normal little alien parasite in me." Dean yanked the blanket around him tighter. "I shoulda stayed at Charlie's house." He bemoaned. He grabbed at the rabbit's foot hanging from his neck. He glared down at it. "You. You're supposed to be lucky! This isn't lucky!"

The doctor leaned back to speak to Castiel. "I take it this wasn't a planned pregnancy?"

"You think?" Dean snapped before Castiel could answer. "There's a creepy looking alien parasite baby in me! Who plans that!?'"

The doctor nodded passively. "Maybe it would be better if you take some time to yourself and make a second appointment for a later date."

Dean's eyes went wide. "What? No! No, now is good. Let's talk options here."

"We live a day away and have to borrow a car to get here. We can't exactly come whenever we feel like it." Castiel added because apparently being sensible was what he was doing today instead of freaking out about parasite alien babies.

That was completely unacceptable. Dean would just have to freak out for the both of them.

"Yeah. So options." Dean slapped his thigh. "Lay'em on me."

The doctor looked like he thought that was a bad idea but Dean thought it was probably the best idea ever. He needed options here. He had a creepy little parasite creature inside of him!

"There's the obvious, you can proceed with the pregnancy." The doctor said.

"Nope. No goddamned way." Dean said, throwing up his arms. "I don't want an alien parasite baby. It'll probably try to eat the cat. And I don't even have a cat!"

The doctor nodded at Dean's sage wisdom. "Alright." The doctor said carefully. "In that case, you're getting to the far end but it's still possible for you to terminate the pregnancy if—"

"You stay the fuck away from me!" Dean jerked his legs up putting them between his stomach and the asshole who thought he'd try to take the creepy little parasite away from him. Fuck that guy!

He let out a wordless snarl at the doctor. He reached out and grabbed Castiel's arm. He yanked him backwards trying to pull him onto the hospital bed. It would definitely be better if he could keep Cas away from that creep of a doctor too.

The doctor spread his hands in a show of innocence which was probably - definitely - 100% bullshit. "Dean, you're obviously under quite a bit of stress today and your instincts aren't helping. Do you really want to make this decision today?"

"Yes." Dean clutched Castiel's arm tighter. He definitely did not want a creepy chestbuster alien inside of him! Except he was also definitely gonna stab anyone who looked sideways at his stomach and even thought about taking it away from him. Even while freaking out for the both of them Dean could see some conflicts with those two trains of thought.

The doctor's eyes flicked over him rapidly; assessing. "Alright. We have a beta on staff who can
help you calm down."

No he definitely couldn't. There was a chestbuster alien in him!

Holy fucking shit!

The doctor - possible android who would try to kill them all - told him to stay in the room and wait. Dean thought using that time to quietly contemplate all the reasons that this was freakin' horrifying! was a great idea.

"Do you mind letting go of my arm?" Castiel asked.

Dean's eyes flicked down. Cas still had the printout in his hand. He let go of Castiel in favour of snatching up the printout. He looked it over again. That thing was inside him! He had watched the ultrasound tech look for it. It was in him. Right now. He let out a desperate whimper and shoved the picture under his thigh so he wouldn't have to look at it.

The only good thing that had happened in the last twenty minutes was that a nurse had given him a little green pill that had stopped him from leaking out his butt and wanting to throw up everywhere. Then the ultrasound tech had completely ruined that by telling him he was pregnant then showing him the little parasitic alien baby he was carrying and congratulating him. Congratulating! Like people wanted alien babies!

Dean shot a look over at Castiel to see if he was on board with the freak out plan. He wasn't. Castiel was calmly screwing around on his phone. The bastard.

"What're you doing?" Dean snapped. Who just messed around on the phone after news like this?

Castiel held his phone out. "It really is a normal ultrasound."

Dean looked over the ultrasound pictures Cas had brought up on his phone. There were tons of little creepy alien baby pictures. Alright, so alien parasite baby was normal. For women. He was a guy. How the hell was it going to come out? Dean's face went white. Oh jesus. What if— Nope. No. He wasn't going there.

"Chestbuster, Cas. In me." Dean reiterated in case Cas hadn't heard him the first time.

Castiel looked at him confused. He bent back down to his phone and started typing. Dean could feel a shock of surprise from Castiel when he found whatever it was he was looking for. He looked back up to Dean and felt all calm and in control at him. Dean grabbed on to that like his life depended on it but the harder he grabbed on the more he could feel an underlying nervous meltdown coming from Castiel and that was just not helping the alien baby situation.

"Dean. It's not going to burst out of your chest and kill you." Cas said as if he knew anything about pregnant dudes or aliens. Pregnancy and alien babies was like 50% of all space horror and space horror never ended well. Jesus christ, he was going to end up like Kane! Splattering everyone at lunch when it burst out of him!

"Cas." He grabbed the photo out from under his leg. He shoved it in Castiel's face. "That is in me. Right now."

"Uh...yes." Castiel said firmly. "You mentioned that."
"Right now." Dean repeated. He motioned wildly to his stomach. "Here. In me."

"Maybe you should lie down?" Castiel suggested. It was a stupid suggestion.

The doctor came back carrying a stack of papers and with a woman in tow. Another surge of overprotective boyfriend walloped him. He glanced over at Cas. What if he just... Dean reached out and tugged Castiel closer. It would definitely be a lot better if Cas would just get over here and maybe build up a pillow wall between them and everyone else then he wouldn't have to deal with things he had been decidedly not dealing with all week.

"This is Avanael." The doctor said.

"You can call me Ava." The woman added. She moved closer. "I'm going to help you calm down."

"Great." Dean said. She definitely had her work cut out for her.

"How?" Castiel asked because he apparently cared about the details.

"Ava can compel people." The doctor said.

A shock of violence zapped out from Cas. It felt like he was getting his hackles up and was potentially considering ripping out the woman's throat. Now who was overreacting?

"He's not a criminal." Castiel said, disgusted.

"We set strict time frames on it." The doctor said. "Compulsion is a safe and effective method when used responsibly."

Dean looked between the three of them. Why the hell were they getting upset by this compelling crap? He had an alien baby in him! "I don't care. Let's do this. Calm is good. Right? I like that. Let's do that."

Castiel positioned himself between Dean and Ava then turned around to Dean. "It's dangerous. Whatever she says is permanent."

Dean's face drew together in confusion. "What?"

"Compulsion. She can compel you to do anything and you'll do it. No matter how dangerous it might be you'd do it unquestioningly." Castiel said. That protective feeling started curling around Dean.

"As I said. It's used in a responsible manner." The doctor said.

"I set time limits. I've never had a bad outcome." Ava added. "Everyone comes out of it at the set time."

Dean tried to pull his head together and figure out what the hell everyone was talking about instead of alien baby inside of him! He held his hands up. "Hold on. Didn't your mom already do that to me?"

"That was persuasion. It's not permanent and you wouldn't do anything you knew was wrong or dangerous." Castiel said. He shot a dark look at Ava. "It's safe."

Dean thought it over. "Fuck off." He said shortly to Castiel. He motioned for Ava to come closer. "Let's do this."
Calm would definitely be better, though he wasn't sure how this woman thought she could just magically calm him down because, hello, *parasite chestbuster in his gut!*

Ava leaned down until she was eye level with Dean. "*Listen to me, Dean.*"

That actually sounded like a great idea. Dean snapped his eyes up to listen intently.

"For the next four hours you're going to be calm and do the following: you won't listen to your instincts, you won't listen to Castiel's instincts or anything else you might feel through your bond." Ava said, which also sounded like a great idea. She kept talking, "You won't do anything to hurt yourself or others, you'll remove yourself from life threatening situations if they arise and alert others about the situation. That is what you'll do for the next four hours. You'll be calm for the next four hours."

"Right. Sure." Dean agreed because it really did sound like a great idea. "So does this stay calm thing start now or...?" He looked over at Castiel who was pretty freakin' pissed off at the moment but who cared? "I don't get it. Was that it?"

Ava smiled and blinked rapidly like she was trying to clear something out of her eyes. "That was it." She put her hand out. "It was nice to meet you, Dean."

"Uh. Yeah." Dean said and shook her hand. How was that it? He had figured there'd be smoke or flashing lights or something from the way Cas had felt about it. All this magic stuff usually set something on fire.

The doctor thanked Ava as she left then looked back to Dean. "Now, do you want your mate here while you make your decision?"

"He's not really my mate or boyfriend or whatever." Dean said. He waved a hand at the bites on his neck. "These were kind of an accident and apparently this-" Dean slapped his hand down on the blue writing on his arm. "-makes it permanent. Which nobody bothered to tell me. I had to read about it on my own." He added with a look at Cas. "It all kinda sounds like bullshit to me honestly." There was a snap of hurt from Cas. Dean shrugged. "Well, it's not like we sat down one day and said, hey let's screw up our lives."

Castiel's shoulders stiffened. "Do you want me to sit in the waiting room?" Castiel asked coolly.

Dean thought it over. What he really wanted was to not be in a weirdo angel hospital and apparently pregnant but he wasn't about to get that. "Yeah. Yeah, I think so."

Castiel stared like he had dropped a flaming paper bag of dog shit in front of him. Castiel stepped backwards then slowly turned around. Dean watched him go out the door and waited for his internal Cas Compass to tell him that Castiel was out in the waiting room. The stuff in his head coming from Cas was shaky and hurt and mad and afraid. That would have had him wound up like no tomorrow normally but right now it was breezing right past him. That *be calm* stuff was kinda nice.

Dean turned to the doctor. "So this is that calm thing, huh?"

"Yes." The doctor said. "Do you feel alright otherwise?"

Dean nodded. He looked the doctor over. He looked normal enough, just on the younger side of middle aged with plain simple brown hair and eyes. Nothing weird going on. But then again Cas looked normal enough and he had wings. The doctor probably had wings too. That whole saying about not judging a book by its cover had a whole new meaning when people could just sprout
Dean slowly realized that he was thinking of the doctor as the doctor. This wasn't Doctor Who. He should probably find out the dude's name. He was pretty sure the doctor had mentioned his name earlier but he had been a bit more concerned about we want to stick a for real probe up your butt and then the whole chestbusting alien baby thing. Cas had probably told him the doctor's name a few times but Cas had told him a bunch of weird stuff about coming here.

"Uh, what's your name again?" Dean asked. "Kinda didn't catch it earlier."

"Dr. Arizith." The doctor said. "But if you'd like you can call me Dr. Riz."

Dean nodded. "Okay." He glanced down to the printout still in his hand. "So...what the hell do I do?"

"I can't tell you what to do. I can only tell you your options." Dr. Riz said. He started shuffling through the papers he was holding. "And again, sorry about our lack of English version forms and literature. There aren't a lot of second generation separatists." He held out the papers in his hands. "This is in English. Don't mind the notes on the side."

Dean took the pages. "Notes?" There were squiggles in the margins—Enochian.

"We've been trying to write better demon and angel specific health care guides." Dr. Riz said. He waved a hand around the room. "We buy modern equipment and build buildings but we're about thirty years behind on actual care."

Dean squinted at him. "Cas said you were a real doctor."

Dr. Riz smiled good-naturedly at his suspicion. "I am. We can go to my office and you can see my diploma if you'd like."

Dean licked his lips and tapped his fingers on his lap. "Yeah."

Dr. Riz stood and picked up the papers on the counter. He motioned for him to follow. Dean grabbed the printout from his lap then wrapped the blanket around himself and followed along behind him. Dr. Riz's office was a few doors down the hall. He held the door open for Dean. Dean stepped in. It didn't look weird. It looked like a doctor's office.

Dr. Riz pointed out his diploma on the wall. Dean read it over carefully. It all seemed real, at least he thought it did. He didn't have a lot of practice in ferreting out fake doctors but the guy looked more legit than that other doctor—Zachariah. He nodded in approval. "Okay. Cool. Good."

Dr. Riz laughed softly. "I think you're the first person to actually take any sort of comfort from that. Most people want to know if my talent is healing."

Dean wrinkled his nose. Great. Another person that was gonna tell him his junk was weird.

"You're like, Cas." Dean said. Dr. Riz gave him a puzzled look. Dean let out a defeated sigh. "An alpha."

"Oh. No. I'm a beta." Dr. Riz said. He waved a hand at the chair beside Dean. He tossed the papers down on his desk and sat down on the other side. "Is that a problem?"

"Nope." Dean said. A few less weird dicks in the world was fine by him. He looked back down at the papers he was holding. He held them up. "So these are...what? What to expect while you're..."
expecting and how to ditch the stowaway?"

"About that, yes. Worded a bit more formally." Dr. Riz said. "Do you want to read them alone?"

Dean pursed his lips and glanced over the pages in his hand. He caught things like *life decisions* and *choosing what's right for you*. He rolled his eyes. That sounded like some cheesy motivational slogan that Ephrath would say.

"Dean?"

Dean looked up. Dr. Riz was staring at him. "Uh, no...? I don't know...maybe?" He wiped his hand over his face and groaned. Oh sure he was *calm* but that didn't make any of this better. "Look, dude. A couple of months ago I got roofied and date raped-" Dr. Riz let out a hiss at that. "-and cursed and practically *married* and apparently knocked up in about a week. I don't wanna read *any* of this." He tossed the papers on the desk. "I don't want to keep it and I don't want to get rid of it. I just want my old life back."

Dr. Riz didn't say anything. He waited quietly.

Dean bit at his lips. He knew he wasn't going to get normal. He leaned back in the chair. What the hell was he going to tell his parents? Oh hey, by the way your *son's* pregnant. And school! He couldn't go to *school*. He'd be a dude and *pregnant*. Guys in black suits would probably turn up and take him off to area 51.

Dean shifted in the chair and picked a point on Dr. Riz's desk to stare at. "If I, uh, don't want it-" Another wave of that *stab anything* feeling went through him but whatever it was that Ava did it passed right by him. "-do you...I dunno...have to...*take it out*? Or is there, like, a...pill or something?"

"Pills at this stage." Dr. Riz said. "If that's what you decide you'll need to do it sooner rather than later and we recommend you do it here at the centre."

Dean nodded. "And if I keep it? Then what?"

"Then we make another appointment for you to come back next month and we start monitoring your pregnancy." Dr. Riz said. He watched Dean for a moment then added. "If you want to keep the pregnancy but you don't think you're ready to raise a child we do have adoption options you may wish to consider."

Dean made a noise that was supposed to mean, *all those options suck*. He shoved the blanket off his shoulders. What the hell was he supposed to do? He didn't want a creepy alien baby in him but he didn't think he liked the idea of getting rid of it either. He looked down at the printout. Maybe it didn't *quite* look like an alien but...it definitely looked *weird*. His eyes drifted to his stomach. He gave it a poke. It was squishier than he thought it had been before, but then he *had* spent the last couple of weeks eating anything that was remotely edible. He grimaced at everything else he had done between September and now.

"I drank." Dean said. He set the printout down in his lap. "And I ate a bunch of tuna. You're not supposed to eat fish, right?"

"How much?" Dr. Riz asked.

"I dunno...three sandwiches?" Dean guessed.

"How much did you *drink*?" Dr. Riz clarified.
"Oh." Dean thought it over. It had been Charlie's Halloween party. He had been toning it down since the last time he gotten drunk he had ended up cursed and stuck with Cas. "Two beers, I think?"

Dr. Riz smiled reassuringly. "You should be fine just don't make it a habit."

Dean drummed his fingers on the desk. Great. The parasite should be fine. Yeah, that was exactly what he wanted to hear. He grabbed the papers off the desk and shuffled through them, skimming paragraphs and avoiding pictures. There weren't any of those scare tactic abortion pictures but he really didn't want to look at pictures of women smiling down at their stomachs with creepy cutaway diagrams showing what a fetus looked like either. He knew what a fetus looked like. He had his own damn picture.

He dropped the papers into his lap. He frowned down at his stomach. "People are gonna notice a pregnant guy."

Dr. Riz nodded. "Male omegas tend to go home—to a community that's mostly demons and angels several months before the due date. I've never heard of a male omega that stayed a separatist once they'd conceived."

"So I'd have to quit school." Dean said. He'd be a teen mom drop out.

"You're in school?" Dr. Riz asked, surprised. "...with humans?"

Dean nodded. Dr. Riz stared at him like maybe he was telling a joke he didn't quite get.

"Yeah. With, uh, humans." Dean said. "Regular people school."

Dr. Riz cleared his throat. He looked like he wasn't sure if he was surprised or uncomfortable. He motioned for Dean to continue. "When do you finish school?"

"In June." Dean said. Freakin' hell. If he didn't do something about this he'd have already popped out a kid by June.

Dr. Riz leaned forward onto his desk and flipped through a calendar. "You're rather unique." Dr. Riz mused. "I've never seen beta parents let an omega child go to a human school." He paused and looked up. "And you are still going to a human school now that you're mated?"

"Uh, yeah. Like I said. I go to the, uh, human school." Dean said. This compulsion to stay calm thing was making him a shitty liar.

Dr. Riz hummed in acknowledgement and fussed with the calendar. "It's close but you might be able to do it."

"Close?" Dean wasn't sure how confident he was in this guy's skills as a doctor if he couldn't count.

Dr. Riz looked up at him puzzled then his eyebrows shot up. "Oh!" He flipped the calendar around. "Angels usually bake in the oven for close to twelve months." He tapped his finger on the last two weeks of August. "Right now I'd guess you were due around here."

"Twelve months." Dean said. That was the important part there. Were angels whales or something? "But that's a year."

"Yes." Dr. Riz said. He set the calendar down. "I'd suggest you ask Raphael to let you attend classes at..." His eyebrows furrowed.
"Saint Chuck's." Dean supplied.

"Saint Chuck's? Really?" Dr. Riz looked amused. "Raphael let—" He shook his head. "Never mind. I highly recommend you start going to the school run by your local council instead of the human school you've been going to." He schooled his features back into something more formal. "And if you decide to go forth with the pregnancy I would recommend not waiting to move to an entirely angel and demon community later than the end of June. I would also highly recommend to start applying for housing before the year is out if you plan on keeping the child."

"What?" Dean was completely lost. He was still trying to catch up to the twelve months pregnant part. "What housing?"

"Housing." Dr. Riz repeated as if Dean would understand this time. Dean shrugged. This time Dr. Riz looked anything but amused. He looked horrified and a little disgusted. "No one's told you?"

"Told me what?" Dean asked.

"Demon and angel communities generally have limited space. It's not like one family finding a new home among humans. We can't congregate in the open just anywhere." Dr. Riz said seriously. "It's dangerous. Has no one warned you about hunters?"

Dean rolled his eyes. "Yeah. I think it's crap. I know one. He's fine."

Dr. Riz's eyes popped open wide. "I would strongly suggest keeping what you are a secret from him and cutting off contact long before you start to show— if you continue the pregnancy.

"He knows." Dean said. "I told you. He's fine." He waved his hand dismissively. "I work for him. He's probably just gonna smack me up the side of the head and ask what kind of fool idjit gets knocked up."

An abrupt laugh escaped Dr. Riz's throat. He studied Dean carefully. Dean stared back at him. Dr. Riz's eyes went wide. "You're not joking," Dr. Riz looked horrified. "Have you told Raphael about this hunter?"

Dean shrugged. "They know about each other."

"And Raphael hasn't— taken any preventative measures?" Dr. Riz asked carefully.

"Like what?" Dean asked, confused. Why did everyone think Bobby was some kind of monster? "Look, dude, I'm not here to talk about Bobby and Raphael. What the hell is this housing crap about?"

"And I thought Raphael was conservative." Dr. Riz murmured. "Taking in hunters and separatists." He spun around in his office chair and opened a cabinet behind him. He took out a booklet and spun around. He dropped the booklet on the desk. "Housing." He flipped the booklet open. It was in Enochian. "There's only so many homes in any community. Space is limited. Younger families and the elderly usually stay there where it's safe while adults or families with older children move into our communities among humans."

Dean took one look at the page that Dr. Riz had the booklet open to and crossed his arms. "I'm not moving."

Dr. Riz looked at him with pity. "You have to move if you decide to continue the pregnancy."

"No, I don't." Dean retorted. "And quit saying continue the pregnancy. I get it. I've got a picture."
He waved the printout. "You don't have to keep reminding me."

"Dean." Dr. Riz said seriously. "You can not stay among humans with a baby."

Dean's eyebrows drew together in angry confusion. "Why the hell not?" His parents and Bobby hadn't suffocated in him his sleep yet, they wouldn't do something to a baby. If he even kept it.

"Humans will notice a baby with wings." Dr. Riz explained firmly. "Even separatists go home when they start a family."

Dean stared. Wings. The parasite was going to have wings. Because Cas had wings and he had wings so of course it was going to have wings too. "It's gonna have wings?"

Dr. Riz stared at him as if he thought he was joking. Dean shrugged at him. He wasn't joking about alien babies with wings. Dr. Riz sighed. "Yes and it takes several years for children to learn to hide them and several more to hide them reliably."

"Wings." Dean repeated. He looked at the printout and squinted down at it. Were those wavy lines wings? "Angel spawn have wings?" He breathed deep and rolled his head back. He was going to freak out about that later. He just knew it. As soon as the calm wore off he was going to freak out about having a winged alien baby inside him.

Dr. Riz pawed through a drawer and took out a folded up poster. He flattened it out and turned it around to show Dean. Dean leaned over to look. There were two chubby babies staring at him. One had tiny white fluffy wings sticking out of their back. Dean wrinkled his nose. The fluff reminded him of his own stupid wings. The other baby had red leathery wings which kind of made the kid look like some kind of dragon baby. Why the hell hadn't he gotten cool wings like that?

Dean sighed and muttered to himself. "Of course they have freakin' wings."

Dr. Riz glanced at the clock. "I have another appointment in five minutes. Will you be okay on your own for a bit?"

"Yeah." Dean said. He pulled the blanket back up over his shoulders. "Cool as a cucumber still."

Dr. Riz nodded. "If you have any problems just stop anyone in scrubs and they'll help you."

"Great." Dean gave Dr. Riz a salute. Then Dr. Riz left and he was sitting alone in the doctor's office with a huge poster of winged babies in front of him and a bunch of papers in his lap about how great being a parent could be and how sometimes people weren't ready to be one.

In short, everything sucked.

Dean slouched down in the seat and pressed one hand over his stomach while he held onto the printout with the other. He stared at the printout. Him and Cas had made a creepy little winged parasite and apparently that was normal. His hand on his stomach slid up to grab the rabbit's foot. He had a sneaking suspicion that this was all its fault. People who actually wanted alien babies would probably be overjoyed they'd gotten knocked up by the second try.

He reached out and grabbed the booklet under the poster. He flipped through it. It looked like someone had printed it off, cut the pages themselves, and then stapled it together. He looked around the room at all the diagrams, pamphlets, and models. Everything was a weird mix of do it yourself and professional. What kind of doctors did angels have if they had to cut paper for booklets?
He drummed his fingers over his stomach. Everything still sucked but he needed to figure out what he was going to do. If he just made a decision he could probably reduce the suckage quota by at least half.

He could get rid of it. He didn't want to be on that teen mom reality TV show. He hadn't signed up for this and he definitely didn't want it now that he had it. He didn't know what the hell he'd do with a kid and he didn't know a damn thing about angel alien babies. He probably should just ask for those pills and get it over with and never tell anyone that it had ever happened and then never have anal sex ever again.

...but Mom hadn't signed up for Sam. Sure she had been older than he was but what if she had decided she didn't want Sam? Who would he torment if Sam wasn't around?

He looked down at his stomach. What if he got rid of it but it would have turned out okay? Dr. Riz had said angels did adoptions. What if he got rid of someone's little brother before they even knew it?

But Mom hadn't put Sam up for adoption either and Sam was kinda cool— for a whiny baby brother. And he had helped out a lot with Sam when Mom had been sick. So...maybe he knew a little about what to do with a kid.

But he definitely didn't know what to do about an angel alien baby.

He let out an explosive sigh. Even if it was a creepy little alien chest busting parasite he couldn't just call it quits. It wasn't its fault that some seriously screwed up stuff had been happening to him.

He tapped his fingers on his stomach and re-read the papers Dr. Riz had given to him until Dr. Riz came back carrying Dean's clothes.

Dr. Riz set Dean's clothes on his desk as he sat down. "Still feeling okay?"

"Yeah." Dean sat up. He tossed all the papers onto the desk covering up the poster of the babies with wings. "...I don't think I want to get rid of it." Dean said carefully. "It's not its fault I'm some sort of magnet for weird shit. But...I dunno." Dean shrugged. Shit had he really said that? That he didn't want to get rid of it? He couldn't keep a kid. "I don't know if I want to do this. The whole...having a kid thing." He pointed to the covered up poster. "Do I have to decide now if I want to Juno the little parasite?"

"Juno?" Dr. Riz asked, confused.

"Put it up for adoption." Dean explained.

"No. You can wait to decide but you should proceed as if you're keeping it." Dr. Riz said. He dug through the pile of things on his desk until he came out with the booklet again. He offered it to Dean. "You can always cancel your application to move but you'll be lucky to find a home on short notice if you choose to keep it."

Dean took the booklet back. He'd get Cas to read it over later.

Dr. Riz looked at the clock on the wall. "Hmmm...you've missed your other appointments but I'm sure they can squeeze you in. If you're sure about continuing the pregnancy we really do need to make sure there aren't any underlying problems that might complicate it."

"Do I really got to do those today?" Dean asked. He knew this calm thing wasn't going to last and he'd rather start freaking out in the privacy of a complete stranger's apartment rather than out in
public or in the middle of having someone stick a needle into his arm. "I mean, I gotta come back soon anyway. You said I'd need to make another appointment with you."

Dr. Riz studied him carefully before nodding. "You have had a lot of...excitement today. But do please make sure you go to them next time."

"Scout's honour." Dean said. Dr. Riz gave him a puzzled look. "I'll do it." Dean clarified. "So, I guess I need to make another appointment with you too?"

"Yes. Jael at the front desk handles that." Dr. Riz said. He flicked through the calendar on his desk. "Don't make the appointment later than the end of January. If you can come back sooner to get the physical and blood work done I recommend it." He waited for Dean to nod. He glanced at the clock again. "You'll be under compulsion for another hour and forty minutes. I recommend that you stay in the centre until it's over."

Dean swivelled around in the chair to look at the clock. He had an hour and forty minutes left of not freaking out. He was pretty sure as soon as that was up he'd be having a complete meltdown. He looked back to Dr. Riz. "Just recommend? Or I can't leave?"

"Strongly recommend." Dr. Riz said. He leaned forward with a serious look. "We can't let you leave on your own. If you insist on leaving we need to know you'll be with someone who will watch over you."

"Cas will do it." Dean said without hesitating. Cas would do it. He wasn't blind, Castiel had been practically falling over himself to help him get to this appointment. "I wanna eat lunch before I start to freak out and— hey, whatever the nurse gave me to stop all that...the stuff from leaking out of me and made me stop throwing up, can I get that somewhere or is that like a hospital only restricted narcotic type of thing?"

Dr. Riz took out a notepad. "I can't prescribe you what we give to our patients but I can prescribe you an anti-nausea medication." He scrawled across the page then tore it off and gave it to Dean. "Keep your receipt. Your council should reimburse you considering your situation." He put the notepad away. "I'll need to meet with your— with Castiel before you go to confirm that he understands how to safely monitor you until the compulsion ends." He set his hands on the desk getting ready to push himself up. "Do you have any other questions?"

Dean opened his mouth to say no but a thought occurred to him. Dr. Riz seemed to be about a thousand times more with it than Ephrath. Dean was pretty sure that despite being one of them he was probably a real doctor too. "Uh, maybe?"

Dr. Riz sat back down and motioned for him to continue.

Dean didn't know how to ask what he wanted to ask. It was kinda hard to say, so everyone keeps telling me my dick is weird and I think they're all freaks but it's starting to make me worried that something is wrong with my junk and not sound like a complete tool. "You said you're, uh, a beta?"

Dr. Riz nodded. Dean thought that was probably a good. At least the doctor wouldn't get all huffy about alpha dicks being weird. From what Dean could tell beta dudes had normal dicks— like his.

"But you have other, uh, dude patients, right?" Dean asked. This whole compulsion thing was crazy. He should be worked up from just thinking about asking what he wanted to ask.

"I can't talk about other patients." Dr. Riz said seriously.

"Yeah. But you saw my junk and I was..." Dean took a deep breath. He really should just blurt it
out while he still could. He'd never muster up the courage to ask again. "People keep telling me my
dick's weird or showing me creepy diagrams with guys who didn't have any luck in the size
department and telling me I should look like that and I don't. I'm normal. But I'm starting to get
worried. It's not gonna shrink or something is it? With being a, uh, an omega and—" Dean pointed
at his stomach. "It's gonna be fine, right?"

Dr. Riz rubbed vigorously at his nose, hiding an amused smile with his hand. He coughed and
cleared his throat. He settled his arms in front of him on the desk. "Your penis isn't strange. Male
omegas don't tend to be as...well endowed as alphas but most do fall into the range of average. It's
mostly a social misconstruction that male omegas have micro penises."

"Hmpf." Dean folded his arms and nodded smugly. "Knew that health teacher at Saint Chuck's was
crazy."

"Ah, the health teacher." Dr. Riz said knowingly. He gave Dean a pitying look. "The Key to
Omega Health: Healthy Habits and Cheerfulness?"

Dean groaned. He had almost completely forgotten about that book that Ephrath had tried to make
him read. "Yeah. There were others but that was the worst."

"That book is twenty years outdated." Dr. Riz started digging through a filing cabinet behind his
desk and muttered something that sounded suspiciously like, no wonder they fainted. He turned
around with another do-it-yourself stapled together booklet. "It hasn't been approved yet but I think
this might be more helpful to you."

He offered Dean the booklet. Dean took it and flipped the pages.

"Most communities don't have very good sexual education programs, sometimes outright harmful
ones. It's only been in the last handful of years that we've been trying to take a more progressive
approach." Dr. Riz explained. "I'm not sure what your parents told you but you're not the first
omega who's come here confused about why their heat wouldn't stop. I highly recommend that you
sign up for some of the educational workshops the centre hosts...there are support groups you
might be interested in too. I'll email you a list of classes you might be interested in." Dr. Riz said.
He stopped and studied Dean carefully. "Has anyone ever shown you how to put a condom on?"

"I know how to put a condom on." Dean said, pointing to his crotch.

"On an alpha." Dr. Riz clarified. Dean got the feeling that Dr. Riz was implying that pregnant
teenager probably meant couldn't put on a condom.

"Wouldn't it...just go on?" Dean said. He almost tried to picture one of those weird alpha dicks but
then thought better of it. He didn't need to start digging up more things to freak out about once the
calm wore off. "It's a dick. A weird looking dick but..." Dean shrugged. "What's not to get?"

"Wait just a moment." Dr. Riz said as he got up and swept from the room.

Dean watched him leave. He wondered if this was Dr. Riz's way of keeping him at the hospital
until the calmness wore off. He shrugged and decided he might as well get dressed instead of
sitting around in a hospital gown and wrapped up in a blanket. He was gonna ditch this place soon
one way or another.

Dr. Riz came back in a few minutes later carrying what should have been a horrifying 3D model
and a handful of condoms but Dean just stared at it coolly.

Dean watched calmly as Dr. Riz proceeded to tear open a condom and start rolling it over the
creepy fake alpha dick. At least it didn't have weird plastic fake balls bouncing around. He knew he should be incredibly grossed out having some complete stranger haul out a freaky looking model of a dick and roll a condom over it like it was totally normal but all he could do was think that Cas would probably die of embarrassment right about now and wonder if he could make it through lunch before he started freaking out.

"Usually for an alpha you'll need a larger condom." Dr. Riz said casually, like he handled weird dicks all the time. "It doesn't go over the glands at the base of the penis. Male omegas in particular have to be careful. The friction of the bulbus glandis against the exterior sphincter-" He started jerking off the model with his hand because that was totally cool and normal. He pressed and tugged at the condom. "- can and does tear it or pull it off. We don't recommend letting an alpha lock into you even with a condom properly used since there's no guarantee that semen won't leak out. Human condoms just aren't fabricated with alphas in mind." He pointed to a spot an inch from the bottom of the condom. "Your mate can keep about that much in but don't go past the end of the condom and make sure he holds onto it, there's been some reports of condoms sliding off as it fills."

Dean stared at the model with the condom and - calmly - came to the conclusion that there was no freakin' way he was ever letting a guy stick a dick up his butt ever again if alien babies were what he got out of it. "Yeah...that's not really..." Dean didn't know what it was. Jesus christ, alpha dicks were freakin' weird.

Dr. Riz gave him another careful studying look. "...should I have the same discussion with your mate?" Dr. Riz hesitated before adding, "...perhaps more forcefully?"

Dean choked back a laugh. Castiel would probably drop dead from embarrassment watching Dr. Riz jerk off a model of his weird fucking dick. It would serve him right for knocking him up with a creepy little alien baby. Dean nodded solemnly. "Yeah. Definitely."

Chapter End Notes

Warning: because of the various pressures on Dean at the moment, Dean continuing the pregnancy could be viewed as a forced pregnancy.

Worlding!

In my fic it's canon: a/b/o people have really shitty sex education. That's why they're all like, condoms?

Also, I tried to figure out what would be going on with an alpha dick and a condom. I really thought the bad dragon forums would supply the answer because they have some weird shaped dildos and wacky lube applicators. Sadly they did not. So I just took a wild guess about the rather large quantity of semen alpha's produce and the friction of a knot being jammed into someone and how a human condom would react. If I get really bored one day I might buy some condoms, a length of rubber tubing, and...I dunno try to figure out how to hollow out a cucumber and see what happens when you introduce like 200ml of fluid into a condom suddenly. Because I am a scientist.

Compelling is not persuasion. I think Castiel explained it aptly.
Chapter 34

Chapter Summary

Castiel's eyes flicked over to the desk where there was a life sized model of a female alpha's penis with a condom over it.

...what did Dr. Arizith do in his spare time?

Chapter Notes

Two chapters in a couple of days? Whaat?

***warning for some discussions/mentions of rape***

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel sat in a chair opposite the door and stared at it as if he could see through it if only he tried hard enough. He couldn't tell what Dean might decide. Everything that came through the bond was a steady calm. Once in a while he'd feel some mild dislike or amusement - he honestly couldn't see how any of this was amusing - but mostly it was just an easy calm. Which only served to make his blood boil.

Dr. Arizith had put Dean - his mate - under compulsion like he was some kind of dangerous criminal. He couldn't believe a doctor would let one of his patients agree to that when they were obviously too distressed to make decisions. What kind of doctor didn't care about the safety of their patients?

Castiel straightened up in his seat when he felt Dean get closer to the door. His chest tightened up. What had Dean decided? Was he going to keep it? Was he going to have an abortion? Castiel's heart hammered in his chest. What if Dean didn't want it? What if the omega that was carrying his child didn't want it? His heart thumped faster. What if he did want? What on earth was he going to do? He'd have to support his mate and his child. No matter what Dean did Castiel was sure it would probably end in him having a heart attack.

Castiel launched himself out of his seat when Dean walked through the door carrying an armful of papers. Dr. Arizith intercepted him before he could get to Dean.

"Castiel." Dr. Arizith said through an icy forced smile. "Dean would like to leave before the end of the time limit on the compulsion. There's a few things we need to go over just to make sure you'll be an adequate guardian while Dean is still affected by it."

Castiel looked around Dr. Arizith to his mate. "Dean?"

Dean waved towards the door. "Dude, go on. I wanna eat something in the next hour and twenty minutes."
Castiel looked back to Dr. Arizith. "Alright."

Dr. Arizith had another forced smile for him. "Lovely." He pushed the door open and motioned for Castiel to go through first. "This way."

Castiel went through the door. He could still smell hints of Dean in the hallway. Dr. Arizith brushed past him and led him to an office. He let Castiel in first and closed the door behind them. Castiel's eyes went first to the blanket that Dean had been wrapped up in. It still smelled like panicking omega. It made his instincts grate against his nerves. His mate had been panicking and he hadn't been able to do anything about it. His eyes flicked up to the desk where there was a life sized model of a female alpha's penis with a condom over it. Castiel stared at a loss for words.

...what did Dr. Arizith do in his spare time?

Dr. Arizith cleared his throat behind him. Castiel turned around to find him leaning against the door with his arms crossed and a stern look on his face. Castiel's nose twitched as the scent of anger started to fill the room. He felt the hair on the back of his neck raise. What was going on?

"I take it you were the one who wrote up Dean's medical history?" Dr. Arizith said with an icy air. He managed to loom over Castiel— which was impressive for a beta.

"I think I'd rather stand." Castiel said. His instincts were crawling under his skin sensing danger. He didn't want to sit. He wanted to go back out to Dean and make sure his mate was okay.

Dr. Arizith stepped forward. He set his hand on Castiel's shoulder. A shock of pain zipped through Castiel. Dr. Arizith pushed him down into the chair. "Sit. We're going to have a chat."

Even with his instincts sounding the alarm Casitel had never expected that. He stared in wide-eyed shock at what Dr. Arizith had just done. He hadn't known before if Dr. Arizith had a talent or not but he had just found out. The doctor's talent was causing or removing pleasure and pain and he had just intentionally caused him pain. Dear gods, what had this doctor done to Dean while he was alone with him? He had let Dean be compelled. What if Dr. Arizith had used his talent on Dean to make him decide? Dean was calm now but what would he say once the four hours were up? He should have stayed with Dean and made sure nothing happened while he was vulnerable. They were never coming back to this doctor.

"I'm aware that Raphael has more traditional views concerning omegas but if you ever move outside her control I will personally see to it that any council you ever live under will know how you came to be mated to Dean." Dr. Arizith said in a too calm voice. He leaned forward. "And trust me, even with most councils being made up of alphas they would love to make a modern example of you, a dangerous outsider in their community."

Castiel tried to process what Dr. Arizith was saying. How Dean came to be mated? Traditional views? Dangerous outsider? It slowly dawned on him why Dr. Arizith was threatening him. He clenched his jaw and dug his fingers into his legs. This again. "I didn't force Dean to be my mate. Dean was in heat and I was in rut—"

"If you finish that sentence with, and things got out of control I will call Avanael back in here and"
have her compel you to never speak a lie again." Dr. Arizith growled. "Dean is astonishingly sheltered and you took advantaged of that. I see enough of you alphas thinking you can get away with murder by virtue of your sex. Don't think I'll let you get away without something to show for it just because I'm a beta."

Castiel jerked back as though he'd been slapped. Now Dr. Arizith was threatening him with compulsion too? Who did this doctor think he was? And accusing him of forcing Dean to be his mate? That was exactly like what everyone had been gossiping about at school except Dr. Arizith thought he could do it to his face. He glared across the desk at the doctor. "Not that it's your business but things did get out of control as we were both drugged against our will the night we met." Castiel snorted in anger. "And Dean was the one who unintentionally drugged me."

Dr. Arizith narrowed his eyes at him. He watched Castiel closely. Castiel glared back. Dr. Arizith eased back in his chair but the icy look didn't leave his eyes. "For your sake you had better hope I never find out differently."

"You won't." Castiel snapped. Dr. Arizith was lucky he wasn't going to report him for threatening to use compulsion on him. He was just going to collect Dean and never come back to this practice again. The medical centre had other obstetricians. "Or do you want to drag that beta up here and compel me to tell you otherwise?" He'd had more than enough of everyone thinking he was a rapist who went around claiming omegas against their will. "If you're done threatening me, we'll be going now. I know how to handle people under compulsion. I don't need a lesson in it."

Dr. Arizith stared back unimpressed. "Not quite. Dean - your mate - asked me to show you how to put a condom on and how to correctly use it." He motioned to the model on the desk. "They seemed to be under the impression you didn't know how to do it and considering the circumstances I'm inclined to agree."

"I know how to put a condom on." Castiel said flatly.

"Then this will be a quick refresher." Dr. Arizith said with a cold smile.

Castiel watched him peel the condom off the model and open up a new one. Dr. Arizith started explaining how to put it on and how to use it. Castiel's lips pressed into a thin line. He didn't, in fact, know how to use one properly. He had just read the instructions on the packaging, which obviously wouldn't have had an alpha in mind when they were written. He would have been embarrassed but he was still riled up. Between Dean being terrified then kicking him out to Dr. Arizith threatening to cause trouble for him because he thought he was a rapist that went around claiming omegas against their will he just didn't have the wherewithal to care that Dr. Arizith was right about his knowledge of condoms.

A few minutes later he was leaving the doctor's office with his pockets stuffed full of condoms that Dr. Arizith insisted he take even though he had told the doctor that he and Dean weren't currently having sex. Besides it wasn't as if Dean could get more pregnant.

"You ready?" Dean asked once Castiel had slipped out of the back rooms. "Because I'm starving."

"Yeah. Let's go." Castiel strode forward. He shot a dark look over his shoulder at the receptionist.

Dean grabbed a plastic bag full of papers off the counter of the front desk and fell into step beside him. "You know anywhere in town that does good waffles? I could really go for waffles with a mountain of ice cream on top. And maybe strawberries. Or strawberry syrup." He stopped suddenly as he stepped into the hall. "Almost forgot. I have to get this." Dean held out a piece of paper. "Where do we go for that?"
Castiel took it and read it over, or tried to at least. He couldn't read the scrawl but he recognized it as a prescription. Castiel took in a shaky breath. What if this was a prescription for something that would cause an abortion? Castiel's eyebrows furrowed together. He felt...twisty about that. "What is it?"

"Prescription. Supposed to make me stop puking my guts out all the time." Dean said. He took the paper back and tucked it into his pocket. "You know, I didn't have to pay for this either." Dean jerked his thumb over his shoulder at Dr. Arizith's office. "It's crazy." He started down the hall. "And Dr. Riz said that I can get reimbursed for this stuff." He patted his pocket.

Castiel wasn't sure if anti-nausea medication meant Dean was going to keep the baby but he doubted he could take finding out right now. Dr. Arizith's chat still had his blood racing with adrenaline. He'd ask when they got back to Rachel's house. "I think I saw a sign that said a pharmacy was downstairs."

"Great." Dean nodded sharply. "Let's buy some drugs then stuff our faces with waffles." He shuffled the plastic bag to his other hand. "Hey, our cover story for this little trip is clothes shopping, right?"

"Yes."

"Right. So we should probably do some of that in the next hour because this--" Dean pointed to his head. "-ain't gonna last according to Dr. Riz." He scratched at his neck and casually added. "I think I'm probably going to completely lose my shit as soon as this wears off." He shrugged. "Just so you know."

Castiel's head rolled back. He was going to have front row seats to Dean's inner turmoil. Add his own to that and they'd be an utter mess for the rest of the day. Thank the gods they'd had the wherewithal to plan on staying for the whole weekend. He'd never be able to drive the car home after this.

"So, you enjoy the private show?" Dean asked, amused. He laughed to himself and shook his head. "I think watching a guy my dad's age jerk off a plastic dick is going to be burned into my brain forever."

"Yeah. Hilarious." Castiel said stiffly as they reached the stairs. "In the future maybe don't go around telling people I'm a rapist that claimed you against your will."

Dean made a noncommittal noise and shrugged. "Well, if the shoe fits."

Castiel's heart froze in his chest. That's what Dean thought? "If the shoe fits?" Castiel repeated in disbelief. He had spent weeks beating himself up over his instincts just making him think about jumping Dean without express consent and Dean thought he could do it willingly? His fingers clenched into fists. His instincts still had him wound up waiting for a fight. "You were the one that slathered my face in that stuff that led to this whole—"

Castiel cut himself off. Dean was under compulsion. Dean was pregnant and under compulsion. Dean wouldn't say these things if he wasn't under compulsion.

...but he must think them if he was saying them. Castiel shook his head trying to empty the thought out. He was still wound up from Dr. Arizith. He shouldn't take it out on Dean no matter what he thought.

"I kinda remember that." Dean said as they went down the stairs. "You smelt like Christmas and I
just..." Dean searched for the word. "I dunno." He shrugged. "You were there and you smelt good and that's what I wanted." He stopped and thought it over. "Maybe that first time *was* my fault but you were the one that bit me. Second time was totally your fault."

"We really shouldn't talk about this now." Castiel said.

He knew Dean wouldn't actually want to talk about any of this. He'd only be mad that Castiel took advantage of the compulsion keeping him calm...and maybe he didn't want to talk about his mate accusing him of raping him. It wasn't fair. He had only been trying to help Dean and now everyone kept accusing him of horrible things. He hadn't been in his right mind that first time. He was a victim as much as Dean was. And he had only done it the second time because they would have died otherwise. Didn't saving Dean count for anything?

Castiel let out a long sigh. "Let's just get your prescription and then we'll go clothes shopping and get breakfast."

The wait at the pharmacy wasn't long but Dean filled the silence up by talking about his mother and the cost of the medications she took. Castiel was surprised. He hadn't realized just how expensive Mary's illness was. Dean said it costs *thousands* of dollars a month. Castiel didn't know how Dean's family afforded that. From what he had gathered they didn't have internet at home not by choice but rather because they couldn't afford it. If they couldn't afford that he didn't know how they were paying thousands of dollars each month. It suddenly made sense why the only thing that had made Dean stay that first day they had been mated was an offer to help Mary.

"It's not like we pay it all ourselves." Dean said, seeing the look on Castiel's face. "There's a couple of charities that help out and insurance covers some of it and my grandparents help too."

"You never mentioned that before." Castiel said. No doubt the compulsion was interfering with Dean's sense of privacy. "I'm not sure you really want to talk about this."

"Well, yeah. Because it sucks. Who wants to talk about that?" Dean said as he paid for his prescription. "But right now? I can fill up my quota for shitty things to talk about and not care."

"Yes, but you will care in the near future." Castiel explained. That was why compulsion was dangerous. Even simple commands like *stay calm* with a set deadline could have lasting effects. "Don't say anything now that you wouldn't normally say."

Dean shrugged.

Castiel's phone chimed. He dug it out of his pocket and checked it. His mother had sent him a text asking how everything was and what their plans were for the day. He frowned down at his phone. Ever since they had found out Dean was pregnant his mother had been asking where he was more and more often. Did she know somehow? What if Zachariah had told her Dean was pregnant? He texted her back saying they were going to eat lunch and gave her the name of a restaurant that served all day breakfast — Dean wanted waffles after all — to stop her from worrying.

They walked over to one of the few hidden stores in Addington that sold clothes for angels and demons. Dean said it was a let down; it looked like a human store except that the tops and jackets all had holes in them for wings and the changing rooms were bigger.

Castiel studiously watched the time. "Dean, we should really head back to Rachel's apartment before the compulsion is meant to end." He still wasn't sure he trusted that it *would* end. He was starting to wonder how Dr. Arizith had ever become a doctor.
"Yeah, but...waffles." Dean said while holding up a shirt meant for a beta. It was cut far too low in the back for what was modest for an omega and no alpha would be caught dead trying to look that desperate. Dean ran his hand over the sleeve and grimaced at the feel of the fabric. He put it back. "Seriously, Cas. Waffles. Before I start puking again."

"We don't have enough time. We still need to walk back to the apartment." Castiel said. He steered Dean towards the plainer unisex clothing. That was what he mostly owned - he didn't see the need to advertise he was an alpha when it was obvious to anyone with a nose - and Dean had seemed comfortable wearing that.

Dean's stomach growled. Dean looked down at it then up at Castiel. "Dude. You can't argue with that. Waffles. It's a biological necessity."

They really didn't have time to go to a restaurant. It had taken too long to walk from the pharmacy to the store. Dean's imposed calm state hadn't made him be in a hurry to get anywhere.

"I'll make you waffles." Castiel said.

Dean gave him a wary look. "Waffles. Not pancakes."

"I can make waffles." Castiel assured him. "I make you donuts and cookies all the time."

Dean rolled his head back and forth with indecision. He grabbed a blue shirt off the rack. "Alright. But there better be strawberries. And ice cream. And syrup."

"We'll stop at the grocery store on the way back." Castiel said. He watched Dean look at the price tag of the shirt then put it back. Castiel wondered just how tight money was in the Winchester family, none of them talked about it. "I'll buy what we need for waffles."

"I'll chip in." Dean said.

"I don't mind."

Dean looked him over then shrugged. "Better be good syrup."

They walked to the grocery store soon after, each with a small bag of clothes. Castiel encouraged Dean to pick whatever he wanted but Dean kept to the basics only adding a jug of orange juice.

Castiel's phone rang just as they left the grocery store and stepped into a heavy snow fall. Castiel sighed. He hoped it would stop snowing before tomorrow. He didn't particularly look forward to spending another eight hour drive in a blizzard. He shuffled the bags around trying to reach his phone. Dean reached over and took the bags from him. Castiel blinked in surprise.

"Uh, thanks." Castiel wasn't sure but he was fairly certainly that pregnant people weren't supposed to lift heavy things. Did a package of flour and a jug of orange juice count as heavy?

His phone rang again. Castiel grabbed it out of his pocket. "Hello?"

It was his mother again. She asked how their meal was and whether they were still out. Castiel squinted at the phone. What was his mother doing? She never checked up on him like this. He told her they had decided to make waffles at Rachel's apartment and were just on their way home, no they weren't going to stay out in the snow storm. He made a face at that. His mother never phoned to make sure he had the common sense to stay out of a snow storm.

"Is everything alright?" Castiel asked. If there was something wrong he didn't know why his
mother didn't just say it. She told him everything was fine and that she loved him before hanging up.

"What?" Dean asked. "You look like someone pissed in your cornflakes."

Castiel shook his head. He put his phone away. "My mother's just acting...strange." He reached out to take the bags back from Dean.

"I got them." Dean said. He took a step back and heaved the bags closer to himself. "And moms are supposed to be strange. Why else would she put up with you?"

Castiel stared for a moment then realized Dean was joking. He let out a breathy laugh. "Well, at least she has Anael."

Dean shot him a confused look. "Who?"

"Anna. Her name is actually Anael but Anna sounds more human." Castiel explained. He didn't realize that Dean didn't even know his sister's real name. He had known Dean for four months and now Dean was pregnant and he hadn't even told him his sister's name. He felt cold inside when he realized he hadn't told Dean his beta mother's name either. "My beta mother, her name was Hadraniel but everyone called her Adrian once we moved." Castiel blurted out. "Except for her mother. She called her Hady."

"Oh." Dean said. "Okay." Dean shrugged clearly not knowing what to do with the information or caring much about it while under compulsion.

"We should really hurry up." Castiel said. As strange as it was for his mother to call she was right about not getting caught out in a snow storm.

"Yeah. I got— what? A half hour left?" Dean asked.

"About that." Castiel said. He doubted Dean was going to be in any state to eat waffles by the time they were done.

They reached Rachel's apartment with fifteen minutes to spare. Castiel was torn between hurrying to make waffles - his alpha instincts definitely agreed with feeding his mate - or getting ready to deal with the onslaught of emotion that would come when the four hours were over.

"I don't think it was either us." Dean said. He passed the bags to Castiel so he could brush snow off his jacket.

Castiel leaned around into the living room and set the bags on the floor. He stamped his boots to get the snow off. "What?"

"The whole..." Dean waved his hand at the wall and wiggled his fingers. Castiel had no idea what that was supposed to mean. Dean sighed. "The whole date rape thing. I was thinking about it on the way back and I think it was that Alastair kid's fault. I wouldn't have been wandering around Ruby's house all messed up covered in that glitter gunk if he hadn't pushed me into all that stuff and you wouldn't have done this." Dean pointed to his neck. He narrowed his eyes at Castiel. "You wouldn't have, right?"

"I wouldn't have even if you begged me to." Castiel agreed.

Dean gave an amused snort. "You think you're hot shit, don't you?"
Castiel huffed out a sigh and gave Dean a dry look. He shook his head when all Dean did was smirk at him. "Do you want waffles still?"

"If you think you can make'em before I lose it." Dean said. He peeled his jacket off and hung it up.

They dragged the plastic bags of groceries into the kitchen leaving the rest in the living room. Dean immediately went for the vanilla ice cream. Castiel started looking for mixing bowls and measuring cups. He had found a large metal bowl that would work when Dean cleared his throat.

"I'm gonna have it."

Castiel dropped the bowl to the floor. An unnameable mix of fear, dread, and relief poured through him while his instincts reared up overjoyed. His mate was safe, his child was safe, and he was going to feed both of them. Maybe later he could persuade Dean to come around to the idea of building a nest together and groom his wings for him since he probably wasn't doing it on his own. The rest of him however was far more concerned about how they had nothing between the two of them, that they'd need to move, they'd need to find new jobs, and they hadn't even finished high school yet!

Castiel picked the bowl up and turned around slowly. Dean was sitting at the kitchen table eating ice cream as if he hadn't just said he was going to have their baby. He put the bowl down on the table.

Dean tapped the spoon against the bowl and looked at the clock. He shrugged and muttered, "Might as well." He spooned another mouthful of ice cream into his mouth. "Don't know if I want to keep it though. Dr. Riz said angels do adoptions. That's probably a good idea. I mean, come on. Nobody in their right mind would give a baby to some kid that works at a bookstore and slings coffee."

Castiel's mind froze. His instincts recoiled into a sickening knot in his stomach. Dean was going to have it but wanted to give it away? His mate wanted to give his child away to complete strangers? "I'll help you. If you want to keep it. Whatever I can do, I'll do it." Castiel's stomach roiled. Dean wanted to give it away? "But if you don't want it. I'll keep it."

His mind screamed that if he thought it would be hard with Dean's help that he wouldn't stand a chance as a single parent but his instincts were on a roll. His child wasn't going to be given up to some strange alpha.

Dean stared passively. "Dude, that sounds so weird when you say it like that. It's a kid, not a pet." Dean scooped out another spoonful of ice cream. "And how the hell are you going to be a single dad? You work at a bakery downtown. You can't afford a kid any more than I can."

"I'll make it work." Castiel insisted. His instincts boiled with panic and anger and crawled under his skin. His child was in danger and it wasn't even born yet.

"Right. You'll make it work." Dean rolled his eyes. "No way am I putting a kid up for adoption so another kid can have it." Dean shook his head. "No way, man. Someone who's got a head on their shoulders and a mortgage gets the kid."

Castiel sucked in a sharp angry breath. His instincts didn't know where to direct the urge to attack when it was his mate that was the one putting his child in danger. "We're mated. You can't stop me." Any children Dean had were his children. No one would stop him from keeping his own children, even his mate. He'd like to see them try just so he'd have something to tear into.
"Seriously?" Dean pointed the spoon at him. "That's how you want to play this? That mated bullshit?"

"Being mates isn't bullshit." Castiel hissed. It was supposed to be a commitment that his mate clearly didn't care for. "And I'm not going to let—" Castiel grabbed his head and swore as wild fear crashed into him. He heard the spoon clatter to the table and a gasp from Dean. The four hours was over.

"Fuck. Fuck, what the hell was I thinking? I can't have a kid!" Dean's voice sounded like his chest was caught in a vice. Terror shot across the bond. "Oh, fuck." Dean whispered. "How the fuck does it come out?" That was followed by dread. "Cas, how the fuck does it come out?"

Dean pushed away from the table and started patting his sides down frantically. "Where is it!?"

Castiel's eyes watered with pain. His instincts that had been ready to attack something a moment before were scattering in panic. There was danger somewhere but they didn't know where and his mate was clearly in trouble but he couldn't move, the pain in his head was incapacitating. Dean hadn't felt this distressed at the medical centre.

Dean was still frantically checking his pockets and sputtering out the words, "Where is it!?!"

Castiel didn't know how Dean could move if he was under the same stress as he was. He stumbled around to the other side of the table. He grabbed Dean's arms and held him still. "Calm down, Dean." Castiel took a deep breath and tried to feel calm over all the chaos in his head from Dean. "What're you looking for?"

"My phone!" Dean yelped.

"Why?" Castiel asked, baffled.

"Because we gotta go back!" Dean's voice took on that higher pitched frenetic tone it had at the medical centre. "We gotta go back! I can't do this! I'm a guy! What the hell was I thinking? It doesn't matter if my mom did it. She was married and had a house and another kid and she's a woman! I'm gonna be eighteen and on that where are they now? pregnant teen show on MTV! Or guys in black suits are gonna come drag me off to Area Fifty-One!" Dean started to trembled. "You were right, I shouldn't have let them do that compunction thing!"

"What? What tv show—" Castiel shook his head completely confused. "Dean, what're you talking about?" He couldn't put the words together in his head. There was too much Dean racing around to let him think straight.

"I made the wrong choice!" Dean pushed him aside and darted out to the living room.

Castiel followed after him. The mess of fear and confusion wasn't getting any better but he was getting used to it. He found Dean pulling at his jacket looking for his phone.

Dean let out a surprised squawk when he found it. He started madly trying to pull up the contact list but his fingers trembled across the screen. The phone clattered to the floor. Dean snatched it back up to try again. It fell from his fingers again. A miserable whine trailed out of Dean. Castiel was overwhelmed with the desire for home. Dean just wanted to go home and there was no way they could. Neither of them could drive like this. They were stuck in Rachel's apartment until Dean calmed down.

Castiel picked up Dean's phone and gave it back to him. Dean clutched it to his chest and looked at Castiel as if he had been sentenced to death. Castiel didn't know what to do but his instincts
apparently had a plan because he found himself gently taking Dean's arm, picking up the bags they had left in the living room, and leading Dean into the office that doubled as the spare bedroom.

He guided Dean over to the bed and got him to sit down. Castiel picked up Dean's bag of clothes and picked out a t-shirt from it and found Dean's pajama bottoms on the floor.

Dean watched him quietly. It was at odds with the flurry of panic and fear, and the ache for home that was coming across the bond.

Castiel snapped the tags off the shirt. He held it out to Dean. "Put that on and let your wings out."

"Why?" Dean stared at the shirt but wouldn't take it.

"You'll feel better." Castiel held it closer. He had always felt better with his wings wrapped around himself when he was little.

Dean shook his head but took the shirt. "No, I won't."

"You will." Castiel said. He set the pajama bottoms beside Dean. "Change into those. I'll be back in a minute. I'm just going to get some things then I'll help you phone the medical centre."

Dean made a helpless noise and clutched at the shirt.

Castiel hurried from the room. He stopped first in the kitchen to put away the eggs, milk, and ice cream. The living room was the next stop. He grabbed the throw pillows and a blanket that was thrown over the back of the couch. He stopped at the linen closet next and emptied it out of everything bigger than a hand towel. He hauled it all back to the spare bedroom.

Dean was sitting on the bed. He had changed and let his wings out. They looked as frazzled as Dean felt.

Castiel shook out three sheets. He stepped up on the bed with them and reached up to the ceiling fan. He tied one end of each sheet around three of the blades on the fan then draped them around the bed like a closed canopy. It wasn't what Dean wanted but it was as close to home as Castiel could offer; a nest built by his mate.

Castiel could feel his own instincts calm down. He had built his distressed mate a nest, clearly that was a good thing. Fear, panic, and homesickness still rolled through the bond like an unstoppable train but it didn't feel as chaotic.

He grabbed the rest of the blankets and pillows and pulled back the canopy sheets to shove them onto the bed. He pulled his shirt off and let his wings out. He put on one of the new shirts he had bought and changed his pants for his own pajama bottoms then slipped inside the nest. He crawled across the bed and sat in front of Dean. He batted at the sheets draping down around them and managed to work his wings forward to encircle Dean.

Then he stopped because he had absolutely no idea what he was doing. He had been running on autopilot for the last few minutes, letting his instincts move him without worry. Now that he had built a nest, got his mate into it, and had his wings around him his instincts were sure everything was fine.

It wasn't.

"I should have said I don't want it." Dean said. He picked at a thread on his pants and wouldn't look up. "Why the hell would I want..." He shivered and drew his knees up to his chest. He wrapped his
arms around them. That protective feeling slammed through the fear. Dean edged closer to him. "I don't think that thing that woman did worked properly. Every time I say I don't want it I feel like I wanna stab the next person who looks cross-eyed at my stomach. That...that must be what I was feeling when I said I'd have it."

"Compulsion doesn't work like that." Castiel said gently. He may not have been happy about that doctor allowing Dean to be compelled but the beta woman had set very clear instructions for Dean. "If she told you not to listen to your instincts and be calm then that's what you did."

"I couldn't have." Dean insisted. "No one in their right mind would actually want an alien baby."

"It's not an alien baby." Castiel said. "It's an angel."

Dean gave him a disgruntled look. "Yeah, a winged freak like you."

Castiel refrained from mentioning that Dean was currently tucked beneath his own dappled wings.

Dean snatched up his phone and started trying to call the medical centre again. He muttered and swore until he finally managed to pick the right contact. Castiel swore he could hear Dean's heart beat faster as the phone rang. Dean shoved the phone at Castiel. "It's in Enochian."

Castiel took the phone and caught the end of a message saying that the line was busy. "It's busy. Do you want to leave a message?"

Dean looked at the phone terrified. "Yes. No. I don't know."

Castiel left a message asking the doctor to phone Dean back. They really needed to switch doctors if his receptionist couldn't even answer the phone. Castiel gave the phone back to Dean. It rung almost as soon as he did.

Dean yelped and dropped it. It rung again. Dean stared down at it and didn't move. Fear crept through the bond. Castiel picked it up and answered it. "Hello?"

It was Dr. Arizith. He made a throaty noise of disapproval then icily asked for him to put Dean on the phone.

Castiel passed the phone over. "It's the doctor."

Dean took the phone. Castiel couldn't hear what Dr. Arizith was saying. All he could hear were the uh huhs and I don't knows from Dean.

A sick feeling started coiling out from Dean. Castiel wasn't sure if it was nerves or if the medication Dean had been given was wearing off. He told Dean he'd be right back. He slipped out of the nest and looked for the prescription Dean had bought earlier. He found it in the bag full of pamphlets and papers from the doctor's office. He opened it up and read the instructions. It was a pill that needed to be taken with water.

He left to fill a glass of water, taking note of every change in the mating bond. By the time he returned to the spare bedroom the bond had evened out to steady quivering fear. He pulled the sheet back and crawled into the nest. Dean had dragged the plastic bag full of paper onto the bed and was reading a package of papers that had been stapled together into a booklet.

"I got the anti-nausea pills and some water." Castiel said. He held them out.

Dean waved them away. He flipped the pages of the booklet and stopped at a page that had Omega
written in Enochian across the top. Dean narrowed his eyes at it. He ran his fingers over the Enochian letters. "This is the part about omegas, right?"

Castiel nodded.

Dean closed up the booklet and stuffed it back in the bag.

"What did the doctor say?" Castiel asked.

Dean shrugged. "Said I should take tonight to think about it and go back tomorrow if I changed my mind." His wings pulled tight around him. He shook. He buried his head in his feathers until Castiel couldn't see his face. From the rhythmic heaves of Dean's shoulders Castiel thought he was crying. Dean let out a wet dejected snort. "This sucks."

Chapter End Notes

So two updates close together. But....I'm getting new windows and going to yet another wedding this coming weekend so there definitely won't be another update this week.

Also, I love writing Castiel's hilariously hypocritical musing on proper mind control etiquette. 'What a terrible doctor! Who would do that?' Well, your mother. Who also put the mind whammie on Dean when he was freaking out.

Rambling!

I'm in favour of female alphas having an external penis rather than the retract-o-penis. But because this is weird a/b/o stuff and male omegas didn't develop an independent vaginal opening I'm apparently okay with female alphas having internal testicles. I don't know. Probably because while researching how female alphas are often portrayed no one ever mentions testicles which leads me to believe they're internal. This is interesting because that means female alpha sperm survives at a higher temperature than male sperm. Does that mean they'd be more successfully impregnating an omega since heats are often portrayed as quite literally hot?
Chapter 35

Chapter Summary

Dean yanked at the blanket over top of him and pulled it over his head, careful to not think too hard about how it didn't feel like 100% cotton or the way it readjusted itself once he let go and seemed to rise and fall to the rhythm of someone else breathing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Dean groaned and kept his eyes closed. He wanted to know who the asshole was that thought it'd be fun to run him over with a truck.

He groaned again when he realized that asshole was him. He was the asshole that had spent all afternoon crying like a girl until he had curled up into a ball and passed out before he could start feeling any more feelings.

He felt wet warmth roll down his cheeks again. Ugh. Even girls didn't cry this much.

He yanked at the blanket over top of him and pulled it over his head, careful to not think too hard about how it didn't feel like 100% cotton or the way it readjusted itself once he let go and seemed to rise and fall to the rhythm of someone else breathing.

Dean buried his face in the pillow and tried to go back to sleep before his head got anymore bright ideas about having another emotional meltdown.

And he would have gladly stayed in bed for the rest of his life too except his stomach started aching from being empty and he was sleeping in a wet spot because his butt had started leaking again. Just great.

Dean sat up alone in the dark. He didn't know what time it was but he thought it was late. He reached out and pushed the sheets aside to let in some fresh air. He didn't know what the hell had possessed Castiel to build a pillow fort in the middle of him losing his shit but he wasn't going to question it. Something about it made that grating feeling in the back of his head calm down.

A weird feeling slipped into his head. It reminded him of Mom stroking his hair when he had the flu and asking if he was okay but there was something else to it that Dean didn't know what it was supposed to mean and he really didn't want to think too hard about it right now. He shook his head. He wasn't okay and he really needed some new pants.

He got up and found a pair of dry pants and boxers. He did that disappearing act with his wings then headed for the bathroom. The hallway was lit by the glow of light from the kitchen. He could hear Cas and his cousin Rachel arguing in low whispers in the kitchen. It sounded weird in Enochian, like they were spelling every word they said. Dean didn't understand a word of it.

He cleaned himself up and changed in the bathroom. The argument in the kitchen rumbled up louder. It wasn't shouting but it definitely wasn't the low hushed whispering anymore either. He couldn't tell what was going on with Cas mostly because it was impossible to tell which soul
wracking fear was his and which was Castiel's.

There was a squeal of a chair being pushed across the floor suddenly then angry footfalls down the hall. It wasn't Cas. The Cas Compass still pointed towards the kitchen which was kind of annoying. He really wanted to creep into Rachel's kitchen and find something to eat without anyone seeing how red his eyes were from crying.

He waited to see if Castiel was going to leave too. His stomach gave another angry grumble.

"Fuck it."

He opened the bathroom door. He looked both ways but didn't see Rachel. He skulked to the kitchen doorway and froze. Castiel was sitting at the table; topless but with his wings hunched over his shoulders. Dean could just see his name in green on Castiel's forearm. Dean fuck up that was pregnant Winchester. It hadn't washed off. He looked at his own arm where a bunch of squiggles apparently spelled out Castiel's name in Enochian. That hadn't washed off either. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other when his eyes swept up to the angry circular scar on Castiel's neck. Dean had two of them on his own neck but neither of them looked like Castiel had tried to take a chunk out of him. He must have really sunk his teeth into Cas to leave a scar like that.

Castiel shuffled something in front of him. Dean leaned further into the kitchen to see what Castiel was doing. All that stuff Dr. Riz had given him was spread out on the table in front of Castiel. Castiel was reading it. Reading it out in the open for anyone to see.

Fuck. Did that mean Rachel knew? Was that what they had been arguing about? Was he going to go home to some sort of angel congratulations on your little alien monster party?

He startled when Castiel stood up without saying a word. He went over to the microwave and punched in some buttons and hit start. He got out a plate, a spoon, a fork, and a knife while the microwave ran. He kept his back to Dean while he waited for the last twenty seconds. The microwave beeped. Dean couldn't see what was inside the microwave while Cas messed around with it but he could smell a sweet sugary scent wafting out of it that made his stomach all the more adamant about eating.

Castiel turned around with a plate full of waffles. He walked across the kitchen and set it down across the table from where he had been sitting. He turned back around and went to the fridge. He took out a bottle of syrup, a bowl of cut strawberries, and lastly poured a glass of orange juice. He balanced it all in one arm while he got out the ice cream from the freezer. He carried it all over to the table and set it down around the plate then sat back down in his chair. He pulled a page with a diagram of some weird omega thing closer to himself and leaned over it.

Dean watched the whole thing silently. He wasn't sure what to do.

"I know you're hungry." Castiel said without looking up. He pointed at the food. "So eat."

Dean hesitated. He didn't really want to eat with someone else around but...his stomach growled again and got the better of him. He kept his eyes on the plate as he walked around the table. He didn't want to catch Cas's eye. He sat down and felt like a puddle of worn out emotional goo. His stomach rumbled—a hungry puddle of worn out emotional goo.

His hands started moving on their own, splashing syrup across the waffles and dumping strawberries everywhere. It was like some kind of freaky food autopilot. He was half way through his second waffle when he came out of it; stomach satisfied. He stopped to spoon out some ice cream onto his plate. It was rock hard. He muttered angrily when the spoon bent in half. He bent it
back into shape and settled for scraping along the edges where the ice cream was starting to melt. He spooned it onto his strawberries and stared at his plate.

Cas had made him waffles.

Cas had made him waffles and cut up strawberries and he'd kinda called him one of those creepy assholes who date raped people.

Dean pushed a guilt trip strawberry through guilt trip syrup and guilt trip ice cream. "Sorry about, uh, ya know...the thing at Ruby's. I don't really think you..." He shrugged at the guilt trip strawberry. "Ya know?"

Castiel didn't look up from what he was reading. "You obviously did. Or still do. If you were saying it under compulsion. You weren't compelled to tell the truth but being forced to remain calm will remove inhibitions and fears. I really didn't mean for that to happen but..." His wings gave a quick dismissive flick. "You're right. It did. So I'm sorry it happened."

"Oh. Uh...thanks?" Dean didn't really have much better to say than that. He remembered thinking about what had happened in that calm cool impersonal way this morning. He remembered thinking that yeah, maybe if he didn't look too hard at what had happened it looked like it was Castiel's fault - and he really didn't like thinking too hard about what had happened - but when he did think about what had happened it all hinged on that Alastair kid being a douche wad.

He glanced up to watch Castiel frown down at a new page.

"Why're you reading all that?" Dean asked. He didn't want to read it, even if he knew he had to, so he couldn't see why someone who didn't have to read it thought it would be a great late night read.

"Because you're pregnant." Castiel said as if that explained it all.

Dean grimaced. Pregnant. He looked back down to his plate. "Does your cousin know?"

"Yes." Castiel said. He sat back in his chair, wings rearranging to let him lean, and sighed. He kept his eyes glued to the page in front of him. He rubbed at his forehead. "It was just a little hard to keep it a secret this afternoon."

"Yeah." Dean felt his face start to flush red. His epic emotional meltdown was probably damn hard to explain otherwise. "Yeah, guess it would have been."

Castiel pointed down to the paper in front of him. "This one says your heat— well, it's not really a heat." Castiel shook his head and muttered something. "It'll stop in another week probably. If you keep it."

"Oh." Dean was torn. At least he knew feeling like he needed to jerk off every thirty seconds would stop but he had to go one more week like this? He dragged his spoon through melting ice cream. How was he supposed to hide it for another week? And what if Rachel told people why he was like that? "...is she gonna tell people? Rachel, I mean."

Castiel's whole body heaved in another sigh. "I don't know."

What the hell was gonna happen to him if Rachel blabbed? Would Raphael whisk him away to one of those places Dr. Riz had talked about? What if he never saw his family again?

"What'll happen? If she does tell people?" Dean asked. There was a snap of anger in his head. Castiel glared over at him.
"How should I know?" Castiel retorted. The anger drained away to regret. Castiel rested his elbows on the table and stuck his head in his hands. He rubbed at his forehead again, pressing out the lines of worry. "I don't know that either. This isn't exactly..." He spread a wing out and gave it one quick shake. "Normal." The wing slumped to the ground. "And I'm not exactly an expert on pregnant mates." He paused; one eye open to look between his fingers at Dean.

Dean figured Cas was probably waiting for him to flip out on the word pregnant or mates, or maybe both. Dean didn't think he could handle another freak out tonight. He shrugged and went back to eating his melting ice cream and strawberries.

He tried to ignore Castiel staring at him from across the table. Cas made it a futile effort by opening his mouth.

"Are you going to have it?"

Dean's fingers clenched around the spoon. He shrugged at his plate. He was doing that a lot. Shrugging. Like not knowing the answer would make it any better.

"You know, not making a decision is making the decision to have it." Castiel said like he was all with it and in control even though Dean knew for a fact that Castiel was in as much shock as he was.

"I know that." Dean grumbled. He looked around the table for a distraction. He grabbed the tub of ice cream and started fretting with the lid making sure it was sealed just right. He got up and stuffed it into the freezer. He sat back down. He still hadn't made a decision. "...if I have it and put it up for adoption..." Dean's stomach churned. The thought of someone else keeping his creepy alien baby made his blood boil. "Are you really gonna try to take it?"

"No." Castiel said quietly but a scowl went across his face as soon as he said it and there was that same I'll cut a bitch feeling Dean kept getting. Castiel hung his head. "Yes. Probably."

Dean made a stabbing motion with his hand. "I've been getting that too."

Castiel's wings slumped down with his shoulders. "I know and it's the worst thing either of us could be listening to right now." He rubbed at his forehead. "You haven't even decided if you want to have it and I'm getting worked up over the prospect of someone else taking it away."

Dean looked down at his stomach. There was a creepy alien baby in him and Cas actually wanted it. Hell, he wanted it half the time even though he knew that was the worst idea in the history of bad ideas. What the hell was he going to do with a winged— "Dude, did you know angels have wings before they're born?"

Castiel looked up at him with an odd expression. "...yes." His eyebrows knitted together in confusion. "What did you think they'd have?"

"I dunno." Dean poked his stomach. "Thought it'd be...normal."

"Normal?" Cas stared at him perplexed. He flicked his wings. "What do you mean normal?"

"No wings." Dean said. What would creepy alien baby wings look like inside someone anyway? Were there feathers? Ugh. What if there were feathers and they were all slimy? He wrinkled his nose in disgust. "Figured they'd grow in later or something."

Cas stared at him. "Grow in? Later?"
Dean shrugged.

Through all the fear and worry there was a trickle of amusement from Cas. His wings puffed up. He smirked over at Dean. "That's like saying humans grow in arms later."

Dean rolled his eyes. "Asshole. I've been one of you for four months. How was I supposed to know that? Maybe they're like lizard tails or something." He scooped up a strawberry in his spoon and turned his nose up at Castiel. He shoved the spoon against the side of his cheek smearing ice cream and strawberry juice across his face. That was the exact opposite of the haughty effect he was going for.

Cas snorted but kept his damn mouth shut.

Dean wiped the ice cream and strawberry off his face then put his attention back on his waffles instead of talking about stuff that was just going to wind him up again. Cas got the hint and went back to reading all that weird angel pregnancy stuff.

When he finished off the plate of waffles there was the equivalent of a pleased hum in his head from Castiel. Dean eyed him suspiciously. Castiel kept his nose in the stapled together booklet he was reading. Dean made a mental note to corner Cas in the car on the drive home and make him explain why the hell he always seemed to get all warm and fuzzy when he watched him eat. Did Cas have some kind of food fetish? Was he unwittingly playing along with it?

Dean cleared his dishes away from the table and rinsed them off in the sink. He piled everything neatly off to the side. He turned around and watched Castiel's wings as he read. Cas was sitting there at the kitchen table with his wings out like they were totally normal and not freaky mutant monstrosities. They'd shift and twitch like someone trying to get their arms more comfortable and sometimes Cas would reach up and scratch one like it was no big deal he had wings.

Dean shook his head. Wings were freakin' weird and Cas was weird too. He pointed his thumb over his shoulder. "I'm going back to bed. I gotta sleep if I'm gonna get this worked out tomorrow."

Castiel didn't look up from the booklet. There was a swirl of weird Cas emotions in his head before it settled back down to good ol' fear. "If—if that's what you want." Castiel pushed the papers away from himself. "Good night."

"Yeah, right." Dean muttered. He figured he was about to go toss and turn and worry about being pregnant for the next eight hours and call it sleep. That was as far from a good night as he could get without setting off some fire alarms.

He headed back down the hall to the bedroom. He flicked the light on and stared at the blanket fort Cas had built. For one hot minute he thought about taking it down but his stomach flopped and he thought he might be sick. He turned off the light. He kicked his pants off and peeled off his shirt. He crawled into the blanket fort in his boxers.

All the twisty fear that had been balling up in his chest relaxed. He breathed deep and sighed. His eyebrows furrowed. He sniffed at the air. It smelt really good inside the blanket fort. He sniffed again. It was...sort of like spice cookies and oranges. He sniffed again. And maybe a hint of pine.

"Huh." Dean settled down on his stomach and popped his wings out. He still got back pains if he slept with them invisible or disappeared or whatever it was they did when they were gone. He buried his face in the pillows and breathed deep. He mumbled into the pillow as he fell asleep. "Gotta get Mom to start buying this laundry detergent."
He was surprised when he woke up at seven the next morning because that meant he had *actually slept* instead of rolling around all night freaking out that he was goddamned *pregnant*.

"Fuck."

He was goddamned pregnant.

Like a girl.

He had seen the ultrasound. He couldn't even say they were faking it because he had *watched* the technician do it. Now *that* had been the most embarrassing thing in his life. A complete stranger had stuck an actual lubed up probe up his butt. Thank god Sam would never know because he'd never live it down otherwise.

He rolled over onto his back and squished his wings. He swore again. "Fuck." He squirmed around until the feathers weren't twisted up. He breathed deep and let out a long sigh. He *really* wished he wasn't pregnant. What was he even supposed to do about that? Guys didn't get pregnant.

He snorted and laughed darkly. "Yeah. Except when all this weird fucking angel stuff happens."

He stared at a fold in the blankets above him.

Pregnant.

He was *pregnant*.

Right now there was a weird winged freak growing inside him because he was a winged freak and Cas was a winged freak.

He gingerly slid his hands down to press on his stomach. He had fuzzy memories of what Mom's stomach had felt like when she had been pregnant with Sam. His stomach didn't feel like that. His stomach felt like he needed to lay off the cookies and donuts that Cas kept feeding him.

Seriously, Cas had a food fetish.

He chuckled to himself bitterly. He'd gotten himself angel-married to a guy with wings and a food fetish. How was that his life? Bobby was right. He was an idjit.

Dean pushed back one of the blankets that draped down from the ceiling fan and stuck his head out. Castiel wasn't sleeping on the floor. He thought about Cas for a moment until the Cas Compass pointed towards the living room. The steady hum in his head made him guess Cas probably wasn't awake yet.

He sunk back into the blanket fort and absently picked at the fluff on his wings. He was pregnant.

But Cas and Dr. Riz said he didn't have to be.

He could go back to the medical centre and say, *I don't want to do this*, and he wouldn't have to. He could be normal. Well, as normal as a guy with wings could be.

Or he could tell Cas he wanted to go home.

Then he'd have to tell his parents their *son* was pregnant. Jesus christ. He'd have to tell his parents!

Maybe he could just invest in some really baggy sweaters. They didn't *have* to know. Probably. How hard could it be to hide a few extra pounds? Babies only weighed like ten pounds. He could
hide an extra ten pounds. They wouldn't have to know. He could just keep the whole pregnancy thing on the down low and then sneak back to the angel hospital and play out the end of Juno without anyone knowing.

But Cas would know.

And Rachel.

Shit. What if Rachel blabbed to Cas's mom? No way would Naomi not tell his mom he was pregnant. What if Rachel told Naomi that he was pregnant and had an abortion? Fuck. He couldn't win.

He pressed his hands into his stomach. His stomach rumbled. Even with the late night snack he was already hungry. Well, he hadn't really eaten anything since the day before and—

He stuck his head out to look at the clock. It was almost eight and he hadn't done the toilet tango yet. Those anti-nausea pills must have really worked. That was something. His butt cheeks still felt damp from all that stuff but at least he wasn't puking his guts out.

He swung his legs out of bed, hid his wings, and got up. If he wasn't puking his guts out he was going to take advantage of that. He'd shower then scarf down as much food as he could. Then he'd figure out what to do about the parasite. He grabbed his stuff and carried it down the hall.

He crept down the hall and poked his head into the living room. Castiel was sleeping sprawled out on the couch; one wing and an arm hanging off the side and the other wing stuck awkwardly up to drape over the back of the couch. Dean felt the tension drain from his body. He hadn't even realized he had been tense but seeing where Cas was made that ball of tension unravel.

He retreated back down the hall to the bathroom. He locked the bathroom door behind him then turned the shower on. He stripped down then spent five minutes looking at himself sideways in the mirror; sucking his gut in and poking at it. He really didn't look pregnant.

What did a pregnant guy even look like?

He snorted out a laugh at his reflection. What did a pregnant guy look like? He was looking right at one.

He shook his head. That wasn't the plan. He was going to shower then eat and then he'd think about pregnant guys.

He grabbed his soap and shampoo and got in the shower. He was tempted to do something about the low key heat pooling in his gut but then Cas would have a front row seat to his jerk off session and that was just a whole new weird and creepy that he didn't need.

He felt better once he had scrubbed himself down; no more sweat and tears or weird stuff from his butt making him feel greasy. He was just Dean. Clean Dean who was definitely not going to think about pregnant dudes until he had eaten two bowls of cereal.

Another weird feeling started thrumming through his head. It was sad-angry-relieved. He didn't know how someone could be all three at once but Cas was doing a great job of it. It was making him feel all agitated and unsettled and like maybe he'd puke after all. What the hell was Cas all worked up about?

When he got out of the shower he could hear those same low voices arguing again. The sad-angry-relieved feeling had gotten stronger. Dean ignored it all and pulled his boxers on.
The voices got louder. There was a crash in the living room. Dean dropped his shirt to the floor. There was another crash. He flung the bathroom door open and was hit with a gross sweaty musky smell.

"Ugh." He recoiled from the smell. He put a hand over his nose and dashed down the hall. What the hell was going on?

Dean slid to a stop in the living room. Castiel and Rachel were arguing in Enochian. Castiel snapped something angry at Rachel. Rachel growled - a real literal growl - and spat something back at Castiel before taking her damn top off!

Dean's eyes went wide in shocked surprise because boobs. What girl just whipped her shirt off in the middle of the living room and let the girls air out? And in front of a bunch of guys? One of which was her cousin!

Rachel tossed her sweater aside. Her wings snapped out in a ruffle of feathers. They were the same grey and white as Naomi's. One of those grey and white wings shot forward and clipped Castiel in the jaw. Rachel snarled out something in Enochian. Dean thought he caught the word Oreo but he doubted they were talking about cookies.

Castiel caught his balance and sucker punched her in the stomach. Dean could feel Castiel puff up in indignation. "Oreo?" Cas growled. Or whatever it really was Enochian. He stalked closer to his cousin and took a swing at her.

Dean snapped himself out of it. Cas was beating up a girl. Dean launched himself across the living room at Cas; his wings bursting out. Castiel turned around at the last minute and stepped aside sending Dean crashing into Rachel. Dean tried to throw himself backwards instead of falling head long into a topless girl while he was in his boxers but the wings had thrown him off balance. He was gonna go head first into a topless girl like some bad sketch comedy.

He let out an insulted squawk. For crying out loud, this wasn't some kind of crappy sitcom! This was his life!

Two arms caught him at those wing-elbow things. What the hell were those called? Then two huge wings swept forward and wrapped around him. For a split second his whole body was caught up in a warm glow-y feeling from Cas. Then he was sputtering and thrashing because Cas was an asshole who beat up girls and was getting all touchy with his wings and none of that was cool.

Rachel said something in Enochian that sounded like a joke. Castiel snapped out something angry back at her. Rachel laughed.

"What the hell, dude!" Dean yelped. He shoved away from Cas. His wings got all ridiculous and puffy and kept wanting to arch up behind him. Bits of fluff drifted down around him and made the whole damn living room into a giant snow globe.

Rachel snickered. One of Castiel's wings shot out and knocked her in the head. He kept the other wing extended out in front of her. Rachel made a show of pushing the feathers out of the way and leering at Dean.

"What're you doing?" Castiel asked him.

"You don't hit girls!" Dean growled. He felt his wings puff up even more and climb higher over his head. "You had two moms! How did you not learn that!?"

Castiel blinked in surprise. Dean got walloped by buzzing confusion. Castiel looked over his
shoulder and wing at Rachel. He looked back at Dean. The buzzing died down and turned into that tick-tick-tick of realization. "We weren't fighting. We were just...joking around."

Rachel muttered something behind Cas that made him jerk his elbow back. Rachel let out an, oof! when that elbow hit her in the stomach again. Rachel kicked his leg. Castiel spun around to grapple with her. They hit the floor; wings, legs, and arms everywhere.

Dean felt his chest tighten up. Jesus! What the hell was wrong with Cas? He was gonna have to do something about this but what? There were wings everywhere! How was he supposed to yank Castiel off Rachel with all those damn wings getting in the way? He took a deep breath. He'd just have to— fuck. He'd just have to wing it.

Castiel snapped his head around. He rolled away from his cousin - whose boobs were bouncing everywhere! - and jumped up. His wings dropped down and pressed close to himself. Rachel snickered at that too. Castiel didn't say anything to her but Dean felt the burst of annoyance. Castiel bowed his head. "I'm sorry. We didn't mean to distress you."

"I'm not distressed." Dean said flatly. Dean got a yeah right feeling from Cas. Dean clenched his jaw. He wasn't distressed. He was pissed. He was gonna have a kid that was half this idiot?

"Dean. Really. This isn't like what you think it is. It's not...it's..." Castiel's eyebrow's furrowed. He reached down and offered his hand to his still topless cousin. She took his hand. Castiel pulled her up. "Rachel's an alpha too."

Rachel turned her hand over palm up. It caught fire. Dean jumped. Rachel smiled. She closed her hand and the fire went out. She started talking in Enochian again but stopped herself. She sighed. "Sorry. Castiel tells me you don't know any Enochian." She reached behind her back and did something to her wings, her boobs bouncing along as she worked her arm.

Dean kept his eyes 100% fixed on Rachel's face because he was a gentleman. He felt his butt get wet. He clenched and hoped it wasn't too much. He hadn't shoved any folded up toilet paper between his butt cheeks yet.

"I was just helping Cas through some issues." Rachel said. Her nose flared. Her eyes darted down to Dean's crotch. She smirked then quickly schooled her features into a neutral expression. She said something to Castiel in Enochian that made Castiel turn red then switched back to English. "You have very lovely wings, Dean."

Castiel was a weird mix of pride and embarrassment. Dean could agree with the embarrassment. Castiel's cousin was standing around topless complimenting his feathered monstrosities. Dean felt his face turn red.

Castiel stepped forward, his wings flaring out, and started trying to herd Dean back into the hallway. "We should really get dressed and ready to go. I read that it'll take about four hours for everything. We'll take the car over. I read you shouldn't be doing anything strenuous after."

"What?" Dean asked as he backed up. He planted his feet when he realized what Cas meant.

"Dude. I don't...I haven't...I don't know what I'm doing. I haven't decided yet."

Castiel froze. "I thought...you said...you said you wanted to get this worked out."

"What?" Dean stared at him confused. "I meant I needed to work out what to do."

"Oh." Castiel said. "I thought you meant..." Castiel's head exploded in feelings that Dean really didn't want. "I thought you had decided not to have it."
Dean put a protective hand over his stomach. He backed up a step. "I...uh..." He turned tail and made for the spare bedroom because *fuck*. Cas thought he didn't want it and Cas seemed okay with that and that fucking *hurt*. Which was stupid because not having it was probably a good idea.

Except.

Ex-fucking-cept.

"Dean?"

Dean crawled back into the blanket fort. He tucked his wings around himself. Castiel stuck his head in. Dean buried his head in his feathers.

"Dean?"

"Dude." Dean said. His voice wavered. "...I'm not going back there today."

Everything in his head from Cas flat lined for a moment then it went insane and Cas clambered into the blanket fort with him.

Dean was shaking and he was pretty sure he was crying again. "I think that's probably the stupidest thing I've ever decided to do." Dean said through the tremors. "And I've decided *twice*. Fuck. I'm an idiot."

Castiel leaned out of the blanket fort and pulled his bag closer. He dug through it and came out with one of those wing-comb thingers. He held it up. "My beta mom used to do it to calm Anna down if she had a nightmare. I won't touch anywhere *sensitive.*"

It took Dean a moment to realize what Cas meant. The shaking didn't stop. He'd never admit it out loud but he really just wanted his mom to tuck him into bed and maybe make soup for him and sing him to sleep. He was pregnant and keeping it and he just wanted his mom to make it better. Shit. He was completely screwed.

Dean carefully stretched one wing out towards Castiel.

Castiel set the fingers of his empty hand on it lightly. He started working the comb in with his other hand. He didn't say anything. He just quietly worked the comb through the feathers.

Dean closed his eyes and tried to remember to do that whole breathing thing. He felt the tremors going through him slow and eventually stop. The bastard was right, having someone comb out his feathers was calming.

Castiel only did up to the first bend in his wing before he asked for the other one. Dean reached the other wing out. Cas worked the comb through it. Then Cas was done and Dean was sitting with both of his wings sticking out front of him bracketing Castiel. That was kinda weird.

Dean squirmed around and shuffled the blankets overhead until he had his wings behind him again.

"Are you sure?" Castiel asked.

Dean stared down at his feet. "Not really."

It had really punched him in the gut to hear Cas planning out the whole *Dean gets an abortion* day. It felt bad enough when *he* thought about not having it but hearing *Cas* planning out not having it was like something had crawled inside him and died. It was probably more of that stupid instinct
thing that Dr. Riz and Ava had helped him get rid of yesterday.

"I...uh..." Dean tried to come up with something better than that but came out with, "...it's...I..."

Great. So, he didn't know Enochian and apparently he was losing his ability to speak English too. Wonderful. Maybe it was a sign that he needed to start learning Klingon.

Klingons do not hide in bed— or pillow forts.

"I'm pretty sure." Dean amended. He crossed his arms across his stomach and curled over them. "I mean, I feel like shit whenever I think about not having it." He squirmed back further into the blankets. "And yesterday when I was all...chill I decided to, uh, have it. So...

Which was insane. He was a guy! And he was still a kid! And he thought being pregnant and having an alien baby was the right choice!? Jesus christ, when had he hopped on the crazy train? He needed to phone up Dr. Riz and sign him up for that angel adoption thing because maybe he could do the whole pregnancy thing — and that was a huge fucking maybe — but he could definitely not do the dad thing at eighteen.

He snapped his eyes up. Cas wanted to do the whole dad thing at eighteen, or at least he said he did. Now who was making huge freakin' mistakes?

"If...look, I don't..." Dean heaved in a breath and tried to start again. "I'm gonna have it." He cringed. "But if I don't want it after...you really gonna try to take it?"

Dean got all sorts of swirly sick feelings from Castiel. Dean scrunched up his face, turned out the anti-nausea pills didn't work on second hand nausea.

"I..." Castiel bit his lip. He tensed up. Dread passed over his face and through the bond. "I think so?" Castiel looked like he might throw up. He put his hand to his stomach like maybe that might was being hyperbolic. "I don't think I could...let it go."

Castiel stared at him in shock as soon as the words were out of his mouth. Dean felt like they had just both gotten the bright idea to jump off a bridge, possibly into oncoming traffic. Was there a hallmark card for this? Congratulations on having a kid dumped on you because the mom — other dad? — couldn't handle it?

Dean was about to say, okay, but maybe keeping the kid was a really bad freakin' idea. But Cas beat him to the punch.

"I know it'll be hard." Cas let out a nervous laugh. It was one of those, oh wow, this is insane, I might be insane, holy crap I might have really lost it laughs. His eyes went wide. He put his head to his stomach like maybe that might was being hyperbolic. "I don't think I could...let it go."

"I know it'll be hard." Cas let out a nervous laugh. It was one of those, oh wow, this is insane, I might be insane, holy crap I might have really lost it laughs. His eyes went wide. He put his head to his stomach like maybe that might was being hyperbolic. "I don't think I could...let it go."

"Not being a Klingon, that's for sure." Dean muttered.

Castiel lifted his arm up. "What?"

Dean shook his head. "Never mind."

Dean stuck his head out of the blanket fort and snatched up his phone. He stared down at it. He should probably phone up Dr. Riz's office and tell him what he had decided, right?

Maybe?
Probably.

He brought up the number. His finger hovered over the call button. He dropped his phone down to
the bed.

Or he could just be chicken shit and not call.

"I won't make you help if you don't want it." Castiel said into his arm.

"What?" Dean asked, confused.

Castiel sat up. He looked like he needed to take a ten year nap. His wings bunched behind his back.
"If you don't want it, I won't ask you to help." He looked down into his lap. "I know this is...it's a
huge decision and I'm making it sitting around in my pajamas inside a nest I slapped together last
night but..." He sighed long and loud and muttered something in Enochian. "You obviously don't
want to be a parent and I won't make you."

Dean stared. Castiel was gonna try to do the single parent thing and he wasn't even going to try to
hit him up for child support? He blinked and looked to the side, anywhere but Cas. He still didn't
get how Cas thought he could do the single parent thing.

He definitely couldn't do the whole dad thing. But...

"I, uh..." Dean rubbed at the back of his neck. His face turned pink. "I could be the cool uncle. If
you want help." Dean nodded to himself. He definitely couldn't do the parent thing, kudos to Cas if
he thought he could, but he could do the cool uncle thing. He could babysit and make sure they
watched the good Star Trek movies then send them home. "I mean, I could help sometimes. Free
babysitting. Everyone wants that, right?"

Chapter End Notes

Worlding!

Rachel was insulting Castiel with the word orri not oreo as Dean thought he heard. Orri means 'the barren stone' which I'm using as a sexist sort of insult in this case somewhat in line with the word spinster. But instead of meaning an unmarried woman who's older than most unmarried women it's more, an unmated omega who won't be mated now because they're too old to carry children.

I figure that would be super insulting in a/b/o worlds, calling someone an old unmated post menopause omega.

...I actually really enjoy trying to come up with appropriately terrible cursing for this fic. I think a/b/o worlds would have a lot of unique swearing. We've already got 'knothead' and I've seen 'knot-slut' a few times but I think we're sorely lacking in omega specific sexist slurs. My guess is that the really truly insulting terms for omegas would probably all revolve around being infertile or childless.

Clothing and angels/demons: I figure angels/demons are more inclined to be okay with going topless because unless they're in special clothes they'll need to take their shirt off to get their wings out. But that it's okay for an alpha to go topless, somewhat okay for
a beta to go topless, and least okay for an omega to go topless. My reasoning on that is, an omega doesn't need to be busting their wings out and trying to look big and scary, that's the alpha's job. So it's socially acceptable for more aggressive betas/betas with talents to go topless because they're fulfilling an 'alpha' role.

When it comes to mating bites and clothes, I think they'd have some sort of special 'necklace' type thing to cover that up in public if they're topless since it's considered more private. So going topless and showing a lot of unmarked neck is their way to socially show that they are 100% available.

Plus, clothes make things more suggestive. A topless beta isn't really sexualized, but a beta with a shirt cut really low in the back showing off where their wings would be is considering flaunting it because they're drawing attention to an erogenous zone. Which, Castiel commented on previously when Dean picked up the 'beta shirt' that was cut low in the back.

Regrets!

I regret not re-writing some of the beginning when I still could and making the gender division of pronouns: he pronouns used for alphas/occasionally betas with talents as an honorific, she pronoun for betas, and they pronouns for omegas.
Chapter 36

Chapter Summary

"Right. I've got to consider fashion in all this." Castiel said dryly. "And here I was worrying about things like money and food."

Chapter Notes

It's short and rambling (there is a minor segue into grilled banana bread sandwiches because I recently found out those are a thing that exists and I am both in awe and disgusted) but I figured something is better than nothing.

For this chapter I learned what those cardboard advertisements that are folded up into pyramids at restaurants are called: table-tents.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel shouldered his bag at the door and thanked Rachel again for helping him with all those directionless writhing instincts that had boiled over this morning.

He had thought Dean had made up his mind last night and wanted the abortion after all. He had woken up with a ball of mindless alpha anger for whatever it was that wanted to hurt his child except there was nothing to aim it at. Rachel had smelt it on him - that sharp agitated alpha smell - and had picked a fight with him before he did something stupid. Though maybe that had been stupid too. It had upset Dean.

"You won't tell anyone?" Castiel asked nervously, lingering in Rachel's doorway. His breath came out in white puffs. The temperature had dropped further overnight. "Please? I really need some time to figure out what I'm going to say to my mother."

"I'll even act surprised when Anna phones me." Rachel said. She leaned around him to watch Dean brush snow from the car below.

Castiel craned his head around, following her gaze. He watched Dean brush the snow away from the car; dressed only in a warm sweater and a scarf. Dean had insisted on doing something useful. Castiel thought he was simply looking for something to keep his mind off things and hadn't argued that maybe a pregnant omega that was under a lot of stress shouldn't be exerting themselves. He thought it would probably be worse if Dean didn't have something to do.

"You think it'll have their wings?" Rachel said thoughtfully.

Castiel blinked in surprise. Would the baby that he was going to take care of by himself grow up to have Dean's wings? He cleared his throat. "I— I hadn't thought about it."

"If it does you'll be the most glamorous part of the family."

"Right. I've got to consider fashion in all this." Castiel said dryly. "And here I was worrying about things like money and food."

Castiel looked back to Dean. His eyebrows furrowed. What if the baby did grow up to look more like Dean? His face contorted in worry. Would it be good or bad if the baby looked like Dean and Dean didn't really want anything to do with it? What if the baby grew up to resent what it looked like if it looked like the person that didn't want them? How was he going to deal with that? How would he deal with that by himself?

He jumped when Rachel elbowed him again. He turned around and glared only to be elbowed a third time.

"Your mother isn't going to let her first grandchild starve." Rachel said seriously.

Castiel's chest tightened. For an entire thirty seconds he had forgotten about his now dire need of a way to support himself and a baby. What was he going to do? Rachel was right. He knew his mother would help where she could but he couldn't ask his mother for everything. She'd never be able to afford that much on top of the normal cost of living.

"And I always visit Aunt Hester right after spring. I'm sure Aunt Hester will be done with a lot of that baby stuff by the time you need it. I can bring some of it back for you." Rachel grabbed his arm and gave it a reassuring squeeze. "We'll all try to help. You know that."

Castiel nodded sharply and tried to make himself believe that it would be enough and that he wasn't making a huge mistake. He was an alpha. He had to try to take care of his family even if it was going to be hard.

"CAS!" Dean yelled from the car. "YOU COMIN'?"

Castiel sighed and turned to Rachel. "We really do need to get on the road."

"Right." Rachel nodded. "Drive safe. And don't worry too much."

"I think I'll get the drive safe part at least." Castiel admitted. He doubted he'd be able to stop worrying. By the time he was 18 he'd be a lone alpha with a baby.

Rachel punched him in the shoulder. "At least try to stop worrying."

Castiel moved to return the friendly cuff to the shoulder but stopped. He glanced over at Dean and decided for the sake of his pregnant mate he wouldn't punch back. Dean had been genuinely upset about his roughhousing with Rachel.

Maybe he'd try to explain on the trip home. Rachel had a talent and she was an alpha. If anything Rachel probably had the upper hand. Her talent was far more dangerous than his.

He let out a long sigh. The trip home. He hoped Dean's anti-nausea medication was still working. He wasn't looking forward to an all day road trip that included Dean's second had nausea.

"I'll try." Castiel said, starting towards Dean. "I'll text you when we get back." He called over his shoulder.

"You better." Rachel called after him before disappearing behind the door to her apartment.

As Castiel walked to the car his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. Someone had stopped to talk to Dean and Dean was talking to him like he knew him. He came to a stop beside Dean. He breathed
in deep. Whoever it was they were an alpha. His instincts bubbled angrily below his skin. Why was a strange alpha talking to his pregnant mate?

"Dean?" Castiel asked. He kept his eyes on Dean but nodded towards the strange alpha.

Dean looked at him confused. His eyes flicked back and forth between Castiel and the other alpha. The bond didn't feel worried. Castiel was sure Dean actually knew this alpha. Why did Dean know an alpha in another town? How did Dean know an alpha in another town?

"Oh." Dean said like he had figured something out. "I just figured you knew each other."

Castiel felt the skin prickle on the back of his neck. Had this strange alpha just passing by smelt Dean and tried to hit on him? Or something worse? Castiel had heard stories about religious traditionalist cults that kidnapped lone pregnant omegas and forced them to take a mate. He had thought they were just stories but what if there was some truth behind them? What if this strange alpha was trying to kidnap Dean and force him to mate?

He felt a rush of possessiveness as his instincts reminded him that Dean already had an alpha mate and he certainly didn't need another one.

Dean looked at him like he was being ridiculous. He motioned to the other alpha. "This is Lev. Uh, Levanael. He drove me over to Saint Chuck's while you were...uh...not feeling too hot."

It took Castiel a minute to understand what Dean meant. When it finally clicked into place it felt like something cold had flopped into his stomach. Dean meant that time in the car where he had almost lost control and done something terrible to Dean.

"Oh." Castiel said, feeling like an asshole. This alpha had helped his mate when he couldn't. He stuck his hand out. "Hello."

The other alpha took his hand and shook it. "Dean was just telling me that you two had been shopping yesterday."

"Uh...yeah...shopping?" Castiel said awkwardly. He definitely hadn't spent yesterday morning at the medical centre with Dean and the rest of the day curled around him trying to calm him down. He was really going to have to practice his cover story or else his mother was going to know what they had really been doing as soon as he walked in the door.

"Yeah." Dean said sounding far more confident about the lie. "You'd think clothes with holes in them would cost less."

Lev laughed. Castiel narrowed his eyes at him. Maybe Lev had helped his mate but he wasn't sure how he felt about him laughing at his mate's jokes.

Dean quirked an eyebrow at him. An unimpressed feeling flickered across the bond. Dean shook his head and rolled his eyes.

"Well, good to see you again, man." Dean said, giving Lev a wave. He pulled the car door open and knocked the snow off one of his boots. "But we gotta get going. Long drive and all that."

"I'm heading home too actually." Lev said. He motioned towards the highway. "Maybe we'll see each other on the road."

Dean shrugged. "Yeah, maybe." He slid into the car keeping the remaining snow-covered boot stuck out. "Well, see ya 'round, Lev." He knocked the snow off his boot and pulled the car door
Lev said a perfectly pleasant and friendly goodbye to Castiel then headed down the street. Castiel's skin crawled with the urge to chase after him and make sure he knew that Dean wasn't interested in other alphas.

Instead Castiel stood stock still and watched him go. He had grown accustomed to Dean talking to humans and making humans laugh but it made his skin prickle with crawling instinctual anger to watch Dean talking to angels and making alphas laugh. He wrinkled his nose. Old alphas. Lev looked old enough to be Dean's father. Dean was making alphas old enough to be his father laugh.

Castiel shook his head at himself. Was he really getting himself this worked up over someone that old? Dean didn't even want a mate. Why would Dean want an old alpha for a mate?

His head snapped back up to the rapidly disappearing figure of Lev. Some omegas liked older alphas. Older alphas could be better more established providers. An older alpha had practice taking care of mates and babies. He didn't have any experience in either of those things!

The passenger door popped open. "Cas, come on." Dean said, annoyed. "Quit standing there being a jealous freak or give me the keys so I can turn the car on and warm her up. It's freezing."

Castiel snorted as Lev disappeared around the corner of a building. Older alphas lacked stamina. How would someone that old be able to keep up with a young omega and a family? His inner alpha chuffed up, pleased at his logic.

He gave another satisfied snort at his conclusion and threw Dean the keys before going around to the trunk to stow his bag away. The passenger door closed and the car rumbled to life. Castiel opened up the trunk and tossed his bag in beside the plastic bag of information Dean had been given and the bag of clothes they had bought.

When he got into the driver's seat Dean had already turned on the radio and picked out a station. Castiel buckled up and put the car into drive. He sighed as it started to snow again. He really wasn't looking forward to another ten hour drive in a snow storm. Hopefully it wouldn't be as bad as it had been on Friday night.

Two hours into the drive Castiel had decided it was significantly better the second time. Dean wasn't nauseous and the false heat he was going through didn't seem to be as bad. The snow had even lightened up. Castiel was starting to think they might actually make it home in eight hours.

Then Dean pulled out his phone and nervous tremors shook through the bond.

"What?" Castiel asked. Had Dean gotten a text message with bad news? Was Dr. Arizith telling Dean to go back to the medical centre? What if there was something wrong with the baby?

"...I should probably call Dr. Riz and tell him we're not coming." Dean said in a voice that made it sound like he was contemplating phoning his executioner. "...right?"

Castiel's immediate thought was an angry, no. He'd be quite happy to never have contact with that beta again. If he wasn't worried about his mother finding out that Dean was pregnant before he got a chance to tell her he would have lodged a complaint through Raphael. People weren't supposed to go around using dangerous talents on others without permission, especially doctors.

Dean flinched, no doubt getting doused with Castiel's anger.

"Dude, what gives?" Dean asked, baffled.
Castiel clenched his jaw. It wasn't Dean's fault that Dr. Arizith had accused him of forcing Dean to be his mate. He should calm himself down instead of pushing his anger onto Dean. It probably wasn't good for the baby either.

"Yes." Castiel said stiffly, ignoring Dean's second question. "You should probably call him and tell him we won't be back."

Dean arched an eyebrow at him but Castiel stared at the road ahead of them and focused on the monotony of it instead of Dr. Arizith and his terrible practice. When he got home he'd look up other doctors and suggest them to Dean.

"...yeah." Dean agreed hesitantly. He looked at his phone. Guilt slunk through the bond. Castiel wondered why. Was Dean still regretting his decision to keep the baby? Dean pulled up the phone number for Dr. Arizith and hit call. "...uh...yeah...I don't speak...yeah, it's Dean."

Dean listened silently. Castiel could make out the sound of the receptionist's voice but couldn't understand the words. He could, however, tell exactly how Dean felt about whatever the receptionist was saying and nearly had to pull over as Dean's emotions swirled through his head bouncing between fear and guilt.

"Yeah." Dean said tersely. "No.....it's not.....yeah, I decided."

Castiel felt his stomach turn with anger. Did they think he had coerced Dean into keeping the baby? He wouldn't put it past them.

Dean flinched again. He shot an annoyed look at Castiel and moved his mouth away from the phone. "Dude. Knock it off. You're making me get all-" Dean wiggled his hand in the air. "-so chill out."

Castiel nodded. He tried to focus on all the material he had been studying for his exams and not on the one sided conversation in the car.

Dean talked and listened for a few more minutes before he hung up the phone and let out a long defeated breath. He shot Castiel a curious look. "So what's the deal?"

"What's what deal?" Castiel asked, still mentally going over a thoroughly boring history lesson.

Dean arched an eyebrow at him. He studied Castiel carefully. He looked at his phone. More guilt crept through the bond. "Fuck. Sorry, dude. I guess I made it sound really bad to Dr. Riz." He looked at his phone again. "Makes sense now why he wanted to know so bad if I had decided to keep it." He looked back up at Castiel. "What'd he say to you?"

Castiel shrugged and kept his eyes forward. "Nothing important."

"Right." Dean scoffed. "That's why you're all wound up." Dean shook his head. "Whatever. Next time we go I'll tell him what happened."

"Thanks." Castiel said. He clenched the steering wheel. "...or maybe we could go to a different doctor next time?"

Embarrassment crashed into Castiel. He nearly slammed on the brakes.

Dean turned bright red. He snapped his head away and fidgeted in the passenger seat. He muttered at the window. "Dude, I already had one doctor stick something up my butt and get way too familiar with the family jewels. I really don't wanna make it two."
Castiel opened his mouth to try and persuade Dean otherwise but just as quickly closed it. What would people think if he started pressuring Dean to switch doctors? He couldn't win. Every one kept assuming terrible things about him and there was no way to defend himself. He sighed. "Okay."

Castiel spent the rest of the morning watching Dean press his hands against his stomach until Castiel was sure his ribs must be sticking out and listening to Dean make soft noises while the bond hummed away with the sensation of deep thoughts and slowly building hunger.

They stopped for gas in the early afternoon. Dean spotted a restaurant across the street that promised the best grilled banana bread sandwiches! It sounded utterly disgusting to Castiel but Dean was adamant that it would be awesome. Castiel doubted it but he was sure there would be something else on the menu and he was more than ready to take a break from driving.

Castiel drove them across the street. Dean was out the door before Castiel had put the car into park. That slowly building hunger had only gotten stronger during the drive. Castiel made a mental note to buy snacks before they got back on the road. Driving with Dean's hunger in the background of his mind had been distracting.

Really, he should have known better. From what he had read last night the energy an omega used up in early pregnancy was astronomical. They had all the symptoms of early pregnancy an alpha or a beta would have on top of an extreme heat—a false heat.

Castiel frowned at the steering wheel as he took the keys out. He'd never heard of false heats being a symptom of pregnancy in omegas before last night but the literature Dr. Arizith had given Dean said an extreme heat like Dean's was fairly common. He wasn't sure if that was because he didn't actually know any adult omegas well enough to ask about it or if he should be worried about Dr. Arizith's quality as a doctor. If it was so common why didn't they learn about it in health class?

He'd asked Ephrath when school started back up.

He hurried inside before Dean ordered him a grilled banana bread sandwich. He spotted Dean in a corner seat talking to a waitress. He strode over and slid into the booth across from Dean.

"Seriously? You can get bacon on it?" Dean said. The bond lit up with anticipation.

"Yep." The waitress said. She tapped her pen to her notepad.

"Bacon." Dean said firmly.

Castiel's lips pulled back in disgust. Bacon and banana bread?

The waitress turned to Castiel. "And you?"

Castiel glanced at the one page menu. "...uh...grilled cheese? And water. Thank you."

"Okay." The waitress wrote it down. "Shouldn't be too long."

Dean watched her walk away. Castiel watched Dean start pressing at his stomach again.

"What're you doing?" Castiel asked.

Dean snapped his head around. "Huh?"

Castiel pointed to Dean's hands, still pressing at his stomach. "Are you sure you should be doing
that?"

Dean looked down and gave a start of surprise as if he hadn't realized he was doing it. He tore his hands from his stomach and looked away. "...I dunno."

A minute later Dean was doing it again. This time he caught himself. He jerked his hands away again and let out an explosive sigh.

"Can—" Castiel cut himself off because not only did it feel embarrassingly intimate to ask his mate if he could feel their child but they were surrounded by humans. What if someone overheard?

"What?" Dean asked. He shuffled around on his seat. Castiel thought he might be sitting on his hands.

"Nothing." Castiel shook his head. Dean narrowed his eyes at him. The bond turned suspicious. Castiel picked up the table-tent advertisement for the grilled banana bread sandwich. "So what is this exactly?"

Apparently it was two slices of banana bread, a sliced banana, peanut butter, chocolate chips, and bacon all grilled together. It sounded disgusting and when lunch came Castiel found that it looked disgusting too. He regretted the similarities between his grilled cheese and the oozing sandwich that Dean had ordered and was more than thankful that Dean wasn't hungry enough to want to order a second one for the road.

Once Dean had devoured his disgusting mess that passed as a sandwich and the grilled cheese after Castiel's sudden but entirely reasonable loss of appetite they paid up and made a trip to the convenience store beside the restaurant to get snacks. Well, for Dean to get snacks. Castiel was amazed that he was still hungry. He knew pregnant omegas ate more and he had seen Dean eat a whole pie but he was still impressed by the sheer amount Dean could consume in one sitting. It was borderline obscene.

They were back on the road shortly after along with two bags of chips, four chocolate bars, and a large sized bag of M&Ms.

Dean had been busy with the bag of M&Ms, making exaggerated noises about how good they were and how he'd share if Castiel asked nicely, when Castiel noticed that it had suddenly gone quiet.

Even the bond was quiet; nothing but a steady background hum.

Castiel glanced over. Dean was pressing at his stomach again. Castiel dragged his lip through his teeth. Would it be less embarrassing to ask now? Probably not.

"Can you feel it?" Castiel asked.

"...feel what?" Dean asked, distracted.

"The, uh..." Castiel's face went pink. "The baby."

The steady background hum spiked in surprise. Dean looked down at his hands. He made a grumbling noise. He pulled his hands away from his stomach and looked intently into the bag of M&Ms. "...no, probably feel lunch more than I can feel it."

"Oh." Castiel said. He pointed his elbow towards Dean's hands; keeping his own hands on the wheel. "Then why do you keep doing that? Does it feel...strange? Does it hurt?"

"No." Dean tossed back a handful of M&Ms. "I dunno." He crunched on the M&Ms and shrugged.
"Subconscious freak out?" Dean suggested. "I think I'm in, like...emotional shock or something at this point. Probably just waiting for the worst possible time totally lose it again."

Castiel's eyebrows shot up. He snapped his head around to stare at Dean. Was Dean going to be okay when he dropped him off at home? What if he wasn't? Would Dean's parents know what to do for a distraught pregnant omega? Would they know what to do for his mate?

Castiel's instincts reared up as he thought about how distressed his pregnant omega mate had been yesterday. What if he wasn't there and that happened again?

"The road, Cas!" Dean yelped.

Castiel twisted his head back and straightened the vehicle out before it went off the road. His instincts were still chattering in the background. He needed to be there for his mate. He needed to protect his mate. What if his mate wasn't okay once he got home? How would he protect his mate if he wasn't there? Why wouldn't his mate come home with him? He could build another nest. His mate liked the first nest he had built but he could build a better one. And this one would smell like him instead of some other alpha's house.

"Jesus." Dean hissed. He glared over at Castiel. "And you're worried about me manhandling it?" He picked spilled M&Ms off his lap and dropped them back in the bag. "You're gonna kill us all with driving like that."

"Sorry. I didn't—" Castiel tried to push all the intrusive thoughts about building a nest aside. He couldn't quite do it. He shivered. His instincts had nearly put them off the road. How did anyone ever drive with their mate in the car?

"What the hell is all that?" Dean fluttered his fingers at his head. "Feels like an electrical storm." Dean sat bolt upright in his seat. Worry and fear pricked along the bond into Castiel's head. Dean clutched tight the bag of M&Ms. "Dude, you're not having a stroke are you? Anything feel numb? Can you see right?"

"No, no. I'm fine." Castiel said, still mentally ranking which blankets in the linen closet would be the best for building a suitable nest for a pregnant omega. "My instincts got away from me. They're...this has been a long weekend."

The prickle of worry and fear in Castiel's head disappeared.

Dean settled back into the passenger seat. He snorted and laughed bitterly. "Gonna be a long nine months—or however long it's supposed to be." Dean shook his head. "Angels are so damn weird."

Castiel rolled his eyes. "We're not weird."

"Right." Dean snorted. "You just think swingers are normal."

Castiel sighed. "They weren't swingers."

Castiel spent the rest of the drive trying to get Dean to understand basic social norms and failing miserably at the task. Some people were hopeless and it seemed, unfortunately, his mate was one of them. Dean just couldn't quite grasp the concept that an alpha and a beta were fine on their own - if a bit boring if his own family was anything to go by - but an alpha and omega without a beta were courting disaster.

He tried not to think about what it would mean being a lone alpha with a baby.
Chapter End Notes

Castiel and Rachel's aunt would not be done with a lot of the baby stuff but this is two alphas talking about child rearing so I figure they'd be a bit clueless about the growth of children.

Worlding!

Update on the clothing issue: I think stoles instead of shirts would be a big part of traditional dress. Maybe fringed in feathers? Wouldn't it be simply scandalous for an unmated person to wear an article of clothing made from someone else's feathers? My word! Are they wearing a scarf with *four* different kinds of feathers in the fringe? Strumpet!

I was all happy with Castiel's mysterious hometown being accessible only by ferry but I re-read a few earlier parts and I realize now I made it accessible by plane too. Which means I have unintentionally made floatplane pilot a reasonable profession for angels/demons. This pleases me.

Pregnancy/false heats, paternity dilution, and mating: My hypothesis is that in a world with very aggressive breeding partners it would be in a lone omega's best interests to mate with as many potential partners as possible to ensure their offspring's survival and care. Whereas an omega living with their partner(s) would be better off to try and keep the partner(s) they've already invested in. So, an unmated pregnant omega living alone would have the most extreme false heat while a pregnant omega living with their mated partner(s) would experience the lightest false heat.

I figure it's probably determined both by pheromones and by stress responses. An omega in a strongly bonded stable group would experience a light false heat because their body is being consistently exposed to the same set of familiar pheromones and is in a relatively calm and pleasant environment. While an omega without a strongly bonded stable group or just in an unstable group situation would either be exposed to foreign/no pheromones, under stress because of lack of support, or both. So potentially an omega mated to like five alphas could still go into an intense false heat if they were generally neglected. I imagine it as a fail-safe of a sorts for pregnant omegas, their bodies essentially saying: leave this terrible situation, here I'll even make you super attractive to everyone else.

Which gives some interesting social ramifications. What do the neighbours think when a seemingly happy mated omega goes into an extreme false heat? Do they think it was just a fluke? Or do they report the omega's mate(s) as potential abusers? Alternatively what do people think of an unmated pregnant omega that has a rather mild false heat? Do they think the omega just generally has their shit together and isn't stressed? Or do they gossip and wonder who they're secretly dating?

Also, I really enjoy how this bit of worlding science now makes their world that much more insidious. It's common for omegas to display extreme false heats in early pregnancy?
Chapter 37

Chapter Summary

Dean shoved the newest pile of stuff he didn't want to read under his bed then flopped face down on his mattress. After that road trip he felt like he needed to sleep for a week. The last 48 hours felt like 400 and they didn't feel real now that he was safe in his own bed.

Chapter Notes

Warning for one brief mention of being worried about the possibility of self harm.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dean shoved the newest pile of stuff he didn't want to read under his bed then flopped face down on his mattress. After that road trip he felt like he needed to sleep for a week. He felt raw from the inside out. The last 48 hours felt like 400 and they didn't feel real now that he was safe in his own bed. There was no way he was really pregnant. That ultrasound wasn't really burning a hole in his back pocket. He didn't really have a little bottle of pills to help with morning sickness.

He rolled over onto his back. He poked at the pudge that had been developing on his gut. He tried to knead it away. That pudge couldn't really be a kid. It was probably weeks of pie and cookies.

"Right, because pie and cookies have legs and wings." He groaned out a defeated noise. "What the ever loving fu—"

A knock at the door was quickly followed by Mom's voice. "Can I come in?"

Dean's heart launched into his throat. "In a sec!" Dean scrambled off the bed and checked to make sure that nothing incriminating had been left out. His face paled when he remembered the ultrasound. He grabbed it from his pocket and shoved it into his sock drawer. He tugged his shirt half off. "Okay."

He made a show of pulling his shirt back on as Mom opened the door to his room. He'd rather look like Mom had caught him naked instead of hiding ultrasounds.

Mom closed the door behind her and gave him The Look.

Dean gulped. "I didn't do it. I wasn't even here all weekend."

Mom's eyebrows puzzled together for a moment before she smiled softly and shook her head. "Why do you boys always think you're in trouble? Guilty conscience?"

"Nope." Dean plastered on a fake grin. Maybe he wasn't in trouble but Mom never did The Look before a talk about him getting free dvds and ice cream.

Mom stood in front of his door and stared at him. The Look turned into the Bad News face.
Dean's heart started to thump. He sucked in a breath. "Nobody died, did they?"

Mom's face contorted into a weird mix of guilt and worry. She shook her head. "Nobody died.

Dean's eyes went wide. He felt his face pale and he swore his heart had ground to a halt. "Are you getting sick again?"

"No. Everyone's fine. I'm fine." Mom said quickly.

Dean clutched at his chest as his heart started back up. He'd been freaking out all weekend, he wasn't up for Mom being weird tonight. He needed some nice and normal and not whatever it was Mom wanted to talk about.

"Actually, Raphael came over on Friday and gave me a folder about how they want to help me." Mom's face was carefully neutral, like she didn't want anyone to get their hopes up. "I need to make some appointments to get started." Mom frowned, thinking. "There's some kind of specialist I'll need to see. A...a snockvol."

"A cnoqvol." Dean said before he could stop himself. He tried not to look guilty. He scratched at the back of his neck, didn't look Mom in the eye, and shuffled his feet. He was the epitome of innocence. "Uh, Castiel mentioned it before. They're, uh, magic healing doctors."

Mom stared at him with her carefully neutral face for a moment before letting out a surprised snort of laughter that she quickly cut off. Dean couldn't blame her. If he hadn't felt his arm magically heal up he wouldn't have thought it was possible either.

Dean chuckled nervously. He definitely hadn't been to a magic healing doctor this weekend to find out if he was knocked up. "Yeah, sounds pretty ridiculous. But Cas says they're good at their job."

Mom sighed. "Everything since September has sounded a bit fantastical but..." Her face suddenly took on the Serious Mom Business look. She took two steps forward then stopped and stared again. She breathed deep and let it out. "...I don't really know where to start."

Dean wanted to retort with the beginning usually works but he didn't think sassing Mom while she looked like that was remotely close to a good idea. Not to mention if this was something serious he was probably just going to melt to the floor and cry at this point. He couldn't deal with being pregnant and some other kind of family disaster. He had reached his emotional quota for being able to deal with life this weekend.

Mom sat down on his bed and patted the space next to her. That couldn't be good. Dean sat down beside her and tensed up. He could feel his wings aching to burst out of thin air and wrap around him. If everyone was fine why did Mom look so serious? Had someone at school figured out he'd been using the rabbit's foot to cheat on scantron tests? Had someone figured out he'd been drinking underage? What the hell was going on?

"Mom, you're kinda freaking me out." Dean said. He rubbed at the back of his neck anxiously.

"Sorry." Mom said. She breathed deep again and then pulled her hand from behind her back. Dean hadn't realized she had been hiding something. She smoothed out several sheets of paper on her lap. "With everything that's happened I was hoping you'd open up about it on your own terms."

"Open up about what?" Dean's eyes flicked down to Mom's lap. A cold wave of dread settled over him as the blood drained from his face. Mom had one of Ephrath's crazy pamphlets. Oh fuck. How the hell had she gotten that pamphlet?
Sam.

Sam must have ratted him out.

"I've been talking to Naomi and other— angels." Mom stopped to look blankly up at the wall and shake her head. Dean was right there with her. How were angels real? Mom smoothed out the papers again. "And what it...uh...." Mom's face turned pink. She spit out the rest of the sentence in a rush. "Means to be a boy and an omega."

Dean stared at Mom. Those last eight words didn't quite make sense in his head. Very slowly and very carefully he went over what Mom had said.

Mom had been talking to Naomi? And other angels? Okay. Mom talked to Naomi whenever she was around. That made sense. Mom would probably talk to other angels if she happened to meet some other Raphael approved angels. Mom was polite after all.

He glanced down at the papers in her lap. Papers that didn't look wrinkled and crunched. They didn't look like they had been stuffed into his backpack for weeks. Sam probably hadn't taken out the papers in his bag and ironed them out like a freak then given them to Mom. Okay, so Sam was off the hook.

But where had the papers in Mom's lap come from? They looked fresh and new, like someone had given them to Mom. Which meant someone had probably given them to Mom for Mom to read.

A truly terrible thought sunk into Dean's head: Mom knew.

...holy shit.

His eyes went wide. Mom knew about all that freaky omega stuff! Jesus Christ! Did Mom know he was pregnant!? Was that what this was!? Was this the my kid got pregnant talk!? Dean sat frozen to the spot while his heart hammered. Mom knew!

"Raphael had an angel named Ephrahth phone me the other week and said you'd probably have a-" Mom cleared her throat. "-heat soon." She carefully picked up the first page. "I don't want you to be surprised or shocked if it happens."

Mom proceeded to tell him about how his attempts to eat the entire house, his frequent trips to the bathroom, and his tendency to go out without a coat on were all symptoms of an upcoming heat. Then to his undying horror she started talking about having urges.

It slowly dawned on Dean that Mom didn't know he was pregnant but that she did know every embarrassing detail about him growing a vagina in his butt and what it meant to be in heat. Mom knew he had been jerking off nonstop. His stomach flipped. He was never going to get another boner again. Jesus Christ, this was too freakin' much for one weekend. He eyed his blankets and wondered if Mom would notice if he just crawled under them and died.

"Sweetie, you okay?" Mom asked when she finished talking.

Dean realized he had been staring with his mouth open for the last ten minutes. He closed it. Then opened and closed it again. He was doing a good impression of a fish gasping for air but that was about it.

Mom rubbed his shoulder. "It's okay. We'll get through this."

Dean stared blankly as Mom rubbed his shoulder. Mom knew he was an omega. Mom knew about
weird anatomy drawings. Mom knew about all that heat stuff.

Mom knew.

Dean didn't think his stomach could drop any further than it already had but it was definitely on an express elevator down to Hell because if Mom knew...

"Does Dad know?" Dean asked, dread crawling up his spine.

Nothing had been the same between him and Dad ever since he had said he liked guys too. Sure Dad still talked to him. They still did the usual guy stuff together - sometimes - but Dad had been weird around him once he told him. And ever since all this angel stuff went down Dad had barely talked to him. Would Dad even look at him now that he wasn't even a normal guy anymore?

Mom squeezed his shoulder. "Yes. But we didn't tell Sam. We weren't sure you'd want him to know."

A shiver went through Dean. Dad knew. He wasn't sure if he wanted to throw up or cry. If the last week was anything to go by, probably both.

"How's Dad...uh...?" Dean bit his lip. If Dad knew that meant Dad had probably known when he had picked him up from school the other week. When Dad had asked you sure it was just lunch? He was probably really asking, you sure your butt vagina's not acting up and leaking all over the place? Because I heard you have one of those now. That was probably why he'd barely seen Dad in the last three weeks.

Mom did her covering up for Dad smile. "He's...taking it better than I thought." Mom gave him a hug. "Don't worry about him. He still loves you. He's just crap at showing it."

Dean huffed out a sad laugh against Mom's shoulder. That was exactly what Mom had said after he'd told them he was bisexual and again when he'd brought home his first boyfriend. Dean wasn't sure he believed it. He wanted to but...

Mom pat his back and let him go. She gave him a sympathetic look. "If you have one of these heats this week, tell me. I won't make you go to school."

Dean nodded, still in shock that Mom and Dad knew.

"And..." Mom shifted on the spot like what she was about to say could be more horrifying than her knowing about butt vaginas and heats and urges. "I know you've been spending a lot of time with Castiel but maybe you should ask him to wait to see you again until this heat is over. I don't want either of you to get hurt or do something you might regret. Castiel seems like a nice boy but...I'm not sure if he thinks the two of you are dating." She paused and leaned closer. "Are you?"

"Am I what?" Dean asked, still caught up trying to process Mom knows about his weird angel head
condition and have it make sense. Did Dad know that too?

Mom arched an eyebrow at him and gave him that Mom look that meant, *don't think you can pull the wool over my eyes.*

Dean's eyes flicked back and forth while he caught up on the conversation. He wrinkled his nose. "*No. Cas is...*" Dean shrugged. "*He's a friend.*"

Mom kept *looking* at him.

"*We're just friends,*" Dean insisted. "*Sorta. I mean...*" What did you call someone that had a direct link to your head and had knocked you up? Fuck, he shouldn't even *be* knocked up. He was a guy!

Dean shrugged. "*He's alright. When he brings donuts at least.*"

Mom snorted. "*Well, he knows how to get on your good side.*"

Ten minutes later Mom left and Dean had a neat stack of papers on his desk all about the joys of being an omega. A neat stack of papers that *his mother* had left because Mom *knew.*

He flopped face first onto his bed and swore. Mom knew about butt vaginas and heats *and urges.* He mocked gagged into his pillow. Mom had said *urges.*

He shook and swore again. Mom and Dad knew about butt vaginas and heats and Dad had stopped talking to him because of it.

He kicked his pants off then tugged his shirt over his head. He burrowed under his blankets in his boxers then let his wings burst out. Maybe he could just hide out under his blankets and wings for the rest of his life.

That night he did his best to shove everything out of his head and get some sleep. It didn't work. He was up half the night. As soon as he closed his eyes he'd see that freakin' *ultrasound* or the look on Mom's face when she had said *omega.*

His anti-nausea medication didn't really work all that well the next morning. He had a sinking feeling it was probably because the medication didn't work when the reason you wanted to throw up was because your parents knew you were a freak and you hadn't told them yet just how big of a freak you were.

Or maybe because Mom had more or less told him it was okay to lock himself in the bathroom and have urges all over the place. Freakin' hell, he was never going to live that down and he was the only person who knew about it.

He was actually looking forward to school Monday morning because sitting through boring classes for stuff he'd never use outside of high school was nice and normal and he could really use some nice and normal.

Jo and Charlie cornered him before class and told him not to freak out but him and Lisa were officially over. Dean had figured that but it still felt like a punch to the gut. Lisa never even *talked* to him when they were broken up. It was always like losing a girlfriend and a friend all at once.

He moped through the school day and then told Mom that night that he thought *It* was happening. He didn't even feel bad about lying. His girlfriend had officially broken up with him, he was pregnant, and Mom and Dad knew about butt vaginas. He deserved a week off where he wasn't puking or freaking out.
Mom didn't even give him the *are you faking it* interrogation. She told him she'd phone the school tomorrow and tell them he was going to be absent for the rest of the week. He was going to have to blame things on *heats* and *omega stuff* more often if Mom was just going to believe whatever he said.

He spent the rest of the week lounging around in his pajamas, definitely not jerking off in the shower twice a day, watching *normal* dvds on the laptop that Castiel had left behind, and trying not to think about the ultrasound stuffed into his sock drawer or that Mom and Dad knew. He deserved a goddamned break. A couple of days to himself wasn't *that* much to ask for, was it?

If it wasn't for Mom trying to talk to him about *urges* again and having to tell Sam to shut up about the whole pregnancy thing — he'd tell Mom and Dad when he figured out what to say — it would have been a pretty great week over all. It still got a B- as far as he was concerned because no one had shown up and tried to tell him his dick was weird and he hadn't had to sit in a doctor's office and let someone stick a probe up his butt. Jesus, his standards were getting low.

By Friday he was hinting that he was getting better so Mom would let him go to work on Saturday. He had to promise to wear his jacket and bundle up even though he really didn't need it but Mom finally agreed that he could go.

When Saturday morning rolled around Mom was standing at the door waiting to wrap him up in a scarf and pull a huge knitted hat over his head before he could escape out the door. He felt like a marshmallow walking to work.

A marshmallow that was pregnant.

He spent the walk to work sweating and doing his favourite new hobby, trying to figure out what the hell he was going to do.

Because what the hell *was* he going to do? Mom and Dad knew about angel stuff as disturbing as *that* was but they didn't know just how messed up everything had gotten. What were they going to think when he told them he hadn't just gotten himself a vagina up his butt but that he had a stowaway too? Mom had looked freaked out talking about butt vaginas and heats. There was no way *Dad* would be able to handle pregnant dudes if Mom could barely handle butt vaginas. What if it was finally too much? What if they told him they couldn't deal with all the creepy angel stuff anymore? What would he do then?

Maybe he could visit a sick aunt until next fall and never have to tell anyone about the alien spawn. He could just have it, or whatever, somewhere quiet and then give it to Cas. Cas could figure out how to explain his sudden baby acquisition on his own.

He'd worked himself into an impressive spiral of misery by the time he had gotten to work; Mom and Dad were going to kick him out because he was a gross sweaty pregnant marshmallow.

"Don't look so happy." Jo teased when he walked in the door.

Dean gave a halfhearted smirk. "Sorry, I was just thinking about your face."

Jo stuck her tongue out at him. "Just for that you can go get the extra box of Dr. Seuss books from spider city and set up the display."

Dean opened his mouth to argue about how *he* had gone downstairs to get books the *last time* but he let out a long sigh instead. He might as well go be a gross pregnant freak downstairs in the gross spider ridden basement. They could be gross together.
He tromped downstairs without complaint. He grimaced when he got to the bottom of the stairs. Maybe he wasn't *that* gross. He ducked under spiderwebs as he looked for the stack of boxes that had the extra kids' books. He found it in the corner, covered in cobwebs. He read through the labels until he found the box marked *Dr. Seuss* in Ash's scrawl.

It was at the bottom of the stack.

Dean sighed. Of course it was at the bottom of the stack. So much for lucky rabbit's feet.

Fifteen minutes later he was hauling a dusty spiderweb covered box upstairs grumbling about how it wasn't *his* turn to get attacked by giant mutant spiders. It almost made him feel normal again.

Jo pointed him towards a table she had set up while he had been risking his life against giant spiders downstairs. He dropped the box of books down beside the table and got to work setting up the display. Kids' books sold like hotcakes at Christmas.

He was trying to prop up *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* between *Fox in Socks* and the *Lorax* when a stray thought wandered into his head, would Cas read Dr. Seuss books to the alien spawn? Maybe Cas would read Enochian kids' books to it. ...were there Enochian kids' books? Did those exist? So far all he knew about books in Enochian was that they liked to show pictures of creepy anatomy.

He stared down at the grinch looking devious. Did he really care if Cas read it Dr. Seuss? It wasn't like it was going to be *his* kid. He didn't want it. And he definitely didn't want his parents thinking he was more messed up than he already was. He was giving the kid to Cas. That was the kind of thing *Cas* would have to care about.

He fiddled around with the book until it stood up on its own. He grabbed the next book, *Green Eggs and Ham*. He ran his fingers down the spine. Maybe reading Dr. Seuss books was something he'd have to do when he was offering up his services as a free babysitter. That wouldn't be weird, right? Mom and Dad could probably handle that: Dean the babysitter reading Dr. Seuss books. He had babysat Sam and read Dr. Seuss books before.

"Oh my god." Jo grumbled from behind the counter.

"What?" Dean asked, still holding onto *Green Eggs and Ham*.

Jo rolled her eyes. "We didn't think you'd be coming in today. Ash is just lazing around at home. He can be here in ten minutes. You can go home and drown yourself in Star Trek re-runs and ice cream if you want. You don't have to be here longingly caressing Dr. Seuss books and scaring off the customers."

"What?" Dean asked, confused. What the hell was Jo getting at? And he was *not* longingly caressing Dr. Seuss books. He was trying to figure out what level of weird his parents wouldn't freak out about.

"Every time." Jo sighed. She gave him a long suffering look. "It's not the end of—"

Before Jo could say more a couple walked in and headed to the counter for coffee.

Dean shrugged and went back to setting up the display. He was finishing up when the couple finally left, coffees in hand, and Jo sidled up beside him.

Jo watched him like a science experiment. She chewed at her lip. "So...how're you feeling?"
"Hungry. Why?" Dean said. It wasn't anything new. He had been hungry for weeks no matter how much he ate. "You offering to buy lunch?" He held up Green Eggs and Ham. "I'll go for anything but this if it's free."

"But you're feeling good otherwise?" Jo pressed. The teasing tone from earlier was completely gone. "You're not thinking about doing anything...extreme?"

Dean's eyebrows furrowed as he studied her face and saw concern, worry, and I might phone your mom. It finally clicked in what Jo really meant. "Jesus, Jo. I'm not thinking about hurting myself."

"Well, you can't blame me for being worried!" Jo retorted. She cast a quick glance around the store for customers - the coast was clear - before continuing. "You've been acting weird all year! And then you find out that Lisa officially broke it off and you don't come to school all week!" She pointed an angry finger at him. "Boys do stupid things when they think their love life is over."

"Oh my god. Don't call it my love life." Dean said. He shoved Green Eggs and Ham back onto the table. "You sound like your mother." He grumbled. Why did Jo have to go and add to his already crappy morning by bringing up Lisa? He was pregnant and his parents would probably freak out when they found out if they weren't freaking out about all that omega stuff already. He didn't need to think about how his girlfriend had broken up with him too. He grabbed the empty box from the floor and tried to elbow past Jo so he could stash the box behind the counter.

Jo stayed in his way and crossed her arms. She took up her no bullshit stance, which was actually Ellen's no bullshit stance. "Okay, what is going on with you lately? You keep disappearing for days and weeks and won't see anyone. You don't really talk to anyone anymore and you keep ditching your friends all the time."

Dean shrugged. "I'm not trying to ditch you guys. I'm...just...busy." He almost laughed. Right, busy freaking out about how he was cursed and had wings and how someone else's feelings had been jammed into his head. Oh, and had he mentioned he still had to tell his parents that their son was pregnant?

Jo snorted. "Let me guess, you're busy with Castiel." She stopped and blinked as if something had just occurred to her. Her eyebrows shot up. She made a quiet gasping sound. "Were you cheating on Lisa? So help me god Dean Winchester if you were cheating on Lisa with Castiel I will pummel your ass."

"No." Dean said hotly. His stomach roiled. Except he had. Kinda. He hadn't meant to. He clenched his jaw. No, the thing with Castiel didn't count. He hadn't been in his right head. He hadn't cheated on Lisa. He wouldn't willingly cheat on anyone. He glared at Jo. "Me and Cas are just friends."

Jo arched an eyebrow at him and didn't budge.

Dean shoved past her and stuffed the box behind the counter. Jo was supposed to be his friend, not Lisa's. She should be asking Lisa if she had been cheating on him. And who knew, maybe she had. It wasn't like he had been around at all for the last four months.

He spent the rest of his shift being the surliest coffee slinger to grace the planet and feeling like an asshole. He knew Lisa wouldn't have actually cheated on him and he knew Jo had no idea what was going on with him but it wasn't like he could tell either of them why he kept ditching them all the time. Raphael had made it clear that bad things happened to people who spilled the angel secret and Bobby and Ellen had made it clear that Jo and Ash were comfortably ignorant about angels and had better stay that way. All he could say was that he was hanging out with Cas all the time instead of his girlfriend. No wonder Jo thought he had been cheating. What else was she going to
While they were closing up Jo told him that Ash was coming in to work on Sunday. Dean got the hint and muttered something about not feeling good anyway.

It was probably a good thing he didn't go back to work on Sunday because he spent Saturday night staring at the ultrasound and trying to work out a way to tell his parents about it that didn't end with Mom crying and Dad never talking to him again. It turned out that agonizing over how his life was ruined wasn't a great way to get a good night's sleep. He felt like he had a hangover when he woke up Sunday morning and he hadn't even gotten it the fun way.

He dragged himself around the house for the rest of the day on Sunday. That night he tried reading some of the stuff that Dr. Riz had given to him, hoping it might help him figure out how to tell his parents. It didn't help at all. It just made him wonder if he had made a mistake. That maybe he should have gone back and gotten an abortion after all because he really couldn't do this. If he couldn't even tell his parents he was pregnant how was he supposed to deal with actually being pregnant?

He got fed up with it after an hour and hid all the stuff from Dr. Riz back under his bed. He tugged off his shirt and let his wings out. He shoved the blankets and pillows around on his bed until they were a lump in the middle then tried to burrow into them. He curled up and settled his wings on top of him. It helped more than reading about guys getting pregnant but not by much.

Chapter End Notes

I actually had about another 1000 words for this chapter but I could not make it fit with Dean's emotional crash so it got chopped. It will move to later. So do not fear, the thing I mentioned on my tumblr about Dean meeting other angels will still appear eventually.
Chapter 38

Chapter Summary

"Hey, quit brooding into the middle distance."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Castiel's rut was the mildest it had ever been. He avoided Dean like he was a hunter. The last time he'd thought everything would be fine because his rut was mild he'd nearly attacked Dean in the car. He had slumped down to his bed in relief when Dean had phoned up earlier in the week to say he was busy with school and family and didn't have time to 'listen to more Ewokian' until after Christmas.

After that Castiel phoned Gabriel up and told him he'd need the week off because his rut was terrible. Gabriel might put up with him being grouchy from a mild rut but he'd never let him through the front door of the bakery if he smelt like an alpha in the throes of an extreme rut. An alpha in an intense rut would never pass human health codes.

Castiel didn't care that he was missing out on a week's worth of pay if it meant he wouldn't run into Dean by accident. He shivered to think of what might happen if somehow he ended up alone with Dean while he was in rut.

He managed to spend nearly the whole week in his room in the basement. He barely saw anyone. His mother, like usual, left him alone while he was in rut and Anna found something to do outside of the house to avoid the alpha in rut smell. A few of his friends called but he firmly told them he couldn't go out— much to their amusement.

It left a lot of time to think about how screwed he was.

There was no way his instincts were going to let him give up his mate's child. The whole week was filled with dreams about either building Dean nests that other omegas would be jealous of or fighting alphas that wanted his pregnant mate for their own. When he thought about giving away his mate's child he felt sick and when he thought about letting some other alpha raise his mate's child his blood boiled.

He couldn't trust himself to be around his own mate because of his instincts. What would happen if Dean gave away their child? Would his instincts drive him to attack some unsuspecting family? He'd always thought he was better than his instincts but the last few months made him wonder if he had been fooling himself. Why hadn't anyone told him what it was like to be a mated alpha?

And controlling his instincts was only half his problem. Eventually he'd have to tell his mother that his mate was pregnant and they hadn't even finished high school. He was going to be the new Damaris at school, seducing innocent omegas and getting them pregnant. But it would be worse. No one would care that he'd been drugged. He was an alpha. He knew better than a beta what happened when omegas had unprotected sex during a heat.

Maybe Dean had it right. Maybe they could just not tell anyone. At least not until they had
graduated. Would that be possible? How big would Dean get? Castiel had never actually seen a pregnant male omega before and he'd only seen *one* pregnant female omega before that trip to the medical centre.

By the end of his rut Castiel had only managed to conclude that he was screwed and sooner or later everyone was going to know.

On Monday morning a frazzled sounding Gabriel phoned him and told him that if he still wanted his job he had to come in and deal with the Christmas rush. A twisting unsettled feeling in his gut made Castiel try to talk him out of it. What if he ran into Dean and his rut wasn't *really* over? But Gabriel just scoffed at him and told him his rut was over so he'd better be coming in.

Castiel wasn't sure if Gabriel knew that because they'd been friends for years, because an employer tended to notice when his employees took time off, or if somehow Gabriel was hitting on him. Either way he found himself trudging through the snow to the bakery half an hour later.

It was barely after 10am when he pushed open the door to the bakery and there was already a small group of people huddled in the corner waiting for orders while humans mobbed the counter making Gabriel run back and forth as they decided on cookies.

Gabriel's face was full of dread when the bell above the door rang. Castiel could see the moment he realized he wasn't another customer.

"Manual labour." Gabriel pointed at him. "In the back. Now." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "Bake list is on the counter."

Castiel nodded and started for the back without a word. When Gabriel started referring to him as the manual labour it usually meant he was at the end of his rope.

"And get the tree out!" Gabriel shouted after him.

Castiel changed course and headed for the supply closet in the back where Gabriel stashed a small waist high fir tree for much of the year. Most of Gabriel's seasonal decoration illusions usually passed without notice but people tended to touch plants and notice when they could put their hands through them. There was only so much even Gabriel could get away with before he attracted the ire of Raphael.

Castiel frowned down at the tree. The few needles left on it were rusty brown. He hauled it over to the sink and doused it in water. He set his fingers close to the base of the tree and focused. He coaxed the first hints of life back into the little fir. He did what he could then washed his hands and got to work filling out orders. The tree would probably take a couple of hours to start looking presentable again.

By noon Castiel had every oven in use and every pan and cookie sheet filled with cookies or bread; waiting, baking, or cooling. He checked on the fir tree again. He brushed his fingers along the sad looking twigs and tried to encourage the needles to sprout. Then Gabriel yelled at him that they were out of gingerbread cookies again.

By the end of the day Castiel was sure they'd supplied baked goods for half the town.

"Every year." Gabriel muttered as he closed up. "Every year. They know. It doesn't change." He pulled his jacket on. "Why do they do this to me?"

Castiel shrugged. He may have lived among humans for nearly ten years now but he honestly had no idea why they collectively seemed to forget that their Christmas holiday was on the same day
every year.

"I put out order forms." Gabriel grumbled. He turned the lights out. "But do they fill them out? No. Of course not." He started towards the door. "Should just get your mother to persuade the whole town to better remember important dates."

Castiel gave a halfhearted snort of amusement. Gabriel would be like this until next week when the holiday season was finally over.

"You want a ride home?" Gabriel offered. He smiled slyly. "Or to Dean's place?"

A jolt of fear crept up Castiel’s spine. If he went to Dean's house he’d probably end up alone with Dean in Dean's room where everything smelt like Dean. What would happen then? He shook his head. "Home."

Gabriel locked the bakery door. "In that case, I expect you to be well rested for the madness tomorrow."

Castiel sighed. Tomorrow would probably be exactly like today. It would only get worse as the holiday season marched on. He dreaded Christmas day. They were the only bakery in town open on Christmas day and everyone knew it.

Gabriel chattered on about humans and their holidays and contemplated just closing for Christmas like every other store in town. Gabriel was deep into a conversation with himself about profits versus losses when he pulled into Castiel's driveway.

"Remember. Bright and early." Gabriel said. "I want to get as much done as possible before we open."

Castiel told him he'd remember. And even if he didn't Gabriel would no doubt come to his house and kidnap him. Gabriel didn't linger in the driveway. He gave Castiel a quick wave, followed by an angry pointing finger and mouthing the word *early*, before taking off. Castiel waved back then headed inside.

As soon as he was in the door he could hear his mother and Anna in the kitchen having a heated discussion about Ruby. Castiel took his time kicking his boots off and shedding his jacket. He knew better than to barge in on one of *those* discussions. He waited until an icy silence had descended in the kitchen before poking his head around the corner.

Anna picked up a stack of plates and cutlery and started setting the table. Plates and cutlery rattled and clanged. His mother was chopping up vegetables like she wished her talent was setting things on fire.

Castiel decided that maybe he wasn't really that hungry.

"You can borrow the car tonight." His mother said.

Castiel cringed. He didn't know how his mother did that. She had her back to him. How did she know he was standing right there? He steeled himself and walked into the kitchen. "The car?"

"To see Dean." His mother explained. She dropped a pile of cucumbers into a salad bowl.

"Oh." Castiel edged towards the table and sat down. "Dean's busy with family. His grandparents are visiting."
His mother nodded. Anna threw a spoon down beside Castiel's plate. Castiel reached out to straighten it up but the angry look Anna shot at him made him take his hand back. His mother turned around, salad bowl in hand, and frowned at the slipshod table setting. His mother looked over at Anna. Anna smiled back. His mother clenched her jaw and put the salad down. She motioned for Anna to sit. Castiel was starting to wonder if maybe he should have walked home. It would have given them more time to finish whatever argument they were having.

"How is Dean?" His mother asked. "I haven't seen him in sometime."

Castiel tensed. Pregnant. Dean was pregnant. That was how he was. Castiel picked up the salad bowl and shovelled some salad onto his plate. "Fine. Just...busy. With Christmas."

His mother nodded. "Yes, I imagine the Winchesters would be."

Castiel stuffed his mouth full of salad and hoped that would be the end of the conversation. He'd take Anna and their mother arguing over having to explain Dean was pregnant.

The rest of the week went about the same. Gabriel complained and his mother and Anna argued about Ruby while he made an unreasonable amount of cookies and tried to figure out how he was going to tell people Dean was pregnant.

The slower pace at the bakery after Christmas didn't bring any sudden revelations on how he'd manage to be a responsible single alpha parent. It just left more time for his stomach to twist into knots as he worried about what he'd do. It had been two and a half weeks since they knew without a doubt that Dean was pregnant and his best plan was still, don't tell anyone until school is over. He still didn't know what he was going to say, how he'd afford to take care of a baby on his own, or what he'd do about moving. Mindlessly making brownies on autopilot wasn't helping. He really needed to go to Dean's house and get all the literature Dean had been given about taking care of babies and how to get an apartment somewhere safe for a child to grow up. Dean wouldn't need those anyway. That was probably the best place to start. He'd read up on what he'd need to do and work out a plan to get there. He'd go after work. Today. It wouldn't be that bad. His stomach twisted up. It would probably be worse.

Gabriel snapped his fingers in front of him. "Hey, quit brooding into the middle distance."

Castiel blinked. He looked around, surprised to see he'd wandered out to the front of the bakery with a tray full of lemon squares and had come to a stop in front of the display case.

"So are you taking up a career as a living statue?" Gabriel asked.

Castiel gave himself a little shake and got himself moving again. He slid the tray of lemon squares into the display case. "Sorry. I was just..."

Castiel's stomach gave an unpleasant flop. The twisty feeling turned into a wave of nauseating misery. Dean walked through the door. He smelt terrible.

"Holy crap." Gabriel hissed. He grabbed a cherry muffin out of the display case and thrust it at Castiel. "Do something before he—" Gabriel waved at the baked goods in the display case. He rubbed at his nose. "You can use the office. I don't care how. Just clean up after."

Castiel opened his mouth to argue that he wasn't about to put Gabriel's office to that kind of use but tasting the scent in the air made him snap his mouth close and wrinkle his nose. Gabriel was right. Dean couldn't stay out here. All the baked goods would end up taking on the sour taste of miserable dejected omega.
He grabbed the half empty tray of rhubarb squares. He didn't think one cherry muffin was going to be enough. He cast a glance over his shoulder at Dean and nodded towards Gabriel's office in the back. Dean followed him past the counter. Castiel could hear Gabriel already spraying down the front of the bakery with air fresheners.

The miserable sour smell filled up Gabriel's office in seconds. He offered Dean the cherry muffin. All his alpha instincts screamed yes! feeding his mate was very helpful!

Dean stared at it and chewed his lip. He glanced down at his stomach. Castiel wasn't sure if he was tasting the misery in the air or through the bond. Dean sighed. He took the muffin. He sat down on Gabriel's desk. He took a bite and chewed methodically.

"I'm not busy tonight." Dean said through a mouthful of cherry muffin. "...I mean...ya know, if you want to come over and try to explain why threesomes aren't weird."

Castiel nodded. "I was planning on coming anyway."

A sad little spark of hope flickered across the bond then died.

Dean nodded but didn't add anything else. Castiel watched him eat, his mind a flurry of equally useless thoughts. His instincts were still nattering on that his mate wasn't happy with one muffin so he should get more. And find somewhere soft and comfortable for him. Preferably very far away from other alphas. While the rest of him desperately wanted to ask Dean if he was okay, which was ridiculous. It was obvious to anyone with a nose that Dean was far from okay.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Jesus. Just ask whatever it is you want to ask."

"Are you okay?" Castiel blurted.

Dean huffed out a sarcastic laugh. "What do you think?"

Castiel didn't bother to answer. He fidgeted on the spot. What was he supposed to do? What did someone do when their mate felt like they wanted to crawl into a hole and never come out?

"Uh...so...did you just come by to tell me you're not busy?" Castiel asked.

Another wave of misery crashed into him, this time with a subtle hint of loneliness. It didn't feel any better than misery alone.

Dean stared at him. He licked muffin crumbs from his lips. "No. I'm early for work and you were here, so I just figured..." Dean shrugged. He finished the last of the muffin. "Might as well swing by instead of texting from down the street."

"Oh." Castiel said because he didn't know what else to say. "I see."

Dean grabbed a rhubarb square and ate it in silence. He checked his watched. He picked up another square. "...you know that our moms talk?"

Castiel made a surprised little huff. He didn't know what to do or what Dean was doing but he hadn't expected that.

"Yeah." Castiel said. Had Dean really not noticed them talking every time his mother had been at the Winchester house?

"I mean when we're not around." Dean explained. "They talk. To each other." He waved his hand
between them. "About us."

"What?" Castiel racked his brain trying to think if his mother had ever mentioned talking to Mary Winchester outside of trying to help Dean learn to hide his wings. He couldn't think of anything. Fear sunk into him. If his mother talked to Mary without him knowing what else didn't he know about? What if Rachel had told his mother everything and the tension in the house wasn't really about Ruby? What if the arguing the last week was about all the problems he was going to cause because he got Dean pregnant?

"Yeah. That's what I thought." Dean said. He frowned and rubbed at his forehead. "Dude, chill out. If anyone is up shit creek without a paddle it's me." He checked his watch. He grabbed two more rhubarb squares then hopped off Gabriel's desk. "I gotta go. You finish at six, right?"

Castiel nodded.

"I finish at five." Dean said. "But Bobby doesn't usually leave until later. So I'll just hang out and read or something. Just come over and knock when you're ready." He glanced at the rhubarb squares. He dug a ten dollar bill from his pocket and slapped it down onto Gabriel's desk. "And bring some more of those."

It took Castiel nearly a full minute to realize what Dean was getting at. He wanted him to meet him at the bookstore after work so they could walk to Dean's place together. Castiel didn't know if he should be glad that his mate finally wanted him around or if he should be worried about why Dean didn't want to be alone.

Dean didn't wait for him to answer. He brushed past him and disappeared out the door with a quick, see ya later, over his shoulder. A few seconds later the front door opened and closed. The horrible feeling in the pit of Castiel's stomach eased up.

Gabriel poked his head into his office. He sniffed at the air and made a face. "At least you didn't have sex on my desk."

Castiel glared at him.

Gabriel put his hands up but came forward anyway and grabbed the tray of rhubarb squares. He frowned at it. He looked up at Castiel. "They okay? From what I've seen I should be worried about them eating the tray the desserts come on."

"...no...but...I don't really know." Castiel shook his head. He took the tray from Gabriel and carried it out to the front.

Gabriel gave his office a quick spray down before following. He stopped at the cash register and studied Castiel closely. He gave a dramatic sigh and rolled his eyes. "Fiiine. You can take an extra long lunch when it comes around and make off with all of yesterdays cookies so you can go all alpha-provider on your mate."

"Thanks. But I don't know if—" Castiel's whole body seized in fear. His heart started pounding in his chest. He looked around wildly, trying to find the danger.

The bakery was empty except for Gabriel and himself. He stilled as it clicked into place what he was feeling. It was Dean. Dean was terrified.

His mate was terrified.

Castiel dashed around the counter. He yanked off a piece of the fir tree in the corner then ran out
the door before he knew what he was doing.

Chapter End Notes

Worlding Notes!

I figured that a) there had to be that legendary kid at school who had knocked someone up and b) there's probably misinformed myths that betas can't get omegas pregnant.

On the topic of myths, auto-fertilization came up in the comments of my fake science meta and what do you want to bet there are urban legends in a/b/o about female alphas and male omegas impregnating themselves and having the ultimate incest babies. I bet you every male omega who strives to be a single parent probably has that whispered about them (terrible omegas that are having babies without alphas! the horror!). Female alphas probably only notionally have that said about them because they're alphas and they're scary (and there was an alpha in involved so...).

For people who are interested to know why it took two months to update!

3/4 of my family had/will have their birthdays between December to February (I think we're at about 30+ birthdays in 3 months now). I had a job contract and was an Import Government Official last month. Which is hilarious as I write cracky fanfics. I helped people to vote and generally told them how much I love democracy. My self and my partner are getting a prenuptial agreement in order and reading up on the Ontario Family Law Act because that's our kind of romance.

What have you been doing? I hope you answer with, writing Hell's Bartender female alpha/male omega stories. Suitable alternatives would be au worlds where omegas are logically the ruling class and alphas are segregated from the population because they are hyper-violent possessive assholes, fics predominately from beta point of views about beta hardships, and fics about omega/omega or omega/beta.

However if you did none of the above I will also gladly take your thoughts on this: if in an a/b/o au women wear makeup and some women are alphas that means alphas wear makeup. If alphas wear makeup and some alphas are men do men wear make up? Do you think it's socially acceptable for anyone in an a/b/o world to wear makeup? Do alphas wear it and peacock around? Do they eschew it for being frivolous? Do omegas wear it to hide old mating bites? Maybe omegas avoid it because they don't really need it. They can attract mates better with scents. Maybe only betas wear makeup because they don't have a "natural" way to attract mates. Maybe betas avoid makeup because only alphas and omegas (the hypersexed freaks) wear it and any beta who wears it is obviously a slut.

Thoughts?
The hair on the back of his neck stood up. If this was a horror movie the werewolf would jump up from the other side of the counter and eat him.

Dean shuffled out and leaned around to see the other side of the counter. Of course there wasn't a werewolf. Not that he actually thought there would be a werewolf. But it didn't hurt to check.

Hey, look, I'm back on schedule!

Dean stuffed another rhubarb square into his mouth because why the hell not? He was gonna get fat anyway. He might as well enjoy getting there. He chomped on the rhubarb square mechanically and kicked at the snow as he walked over to the bookstore.

He knocked his boots clean of snow against the last step then pulled the door open and went in. He shoved his last rhubarb square into his mouth and almost gagged. The bookstore smelt awful, like something had died in it over Christmas. He took a step forward and got hit with another waft of the smell. His stomach heaved in an all too familiar way. He bolted for the bathroom.

He couldn't complain about the anti-nausea meds. He had only thrown up a handful of times since he'd started taking them. But the smell in the bookstore was rancid. Anyone would throw up for that.

He grabbed some toilet paper, cleaned himself up, then went to the sink to swish water around in his mouth. He should probably go to the dentist and make sure his teeth weren't being eaten away by stomach acid with all the throwing up he'd been doing. He bared his teeth at the tiny mirror above the sink. They looked okay as far as he could tell.

A thump from out in the store made him pause. There was another thump. Dean sighed. Jo hadn't come out and said it but Dean was pretty sure she was still mad about the whole Cas thing. She was probably buried under a pile of books because she didn't want to ask him for help.

"Jo?" Dean called. "You okay?"

The bookstore was quiet. Dean frowned. He stepped out of the bathroom. The bookstore stayed silent except for the sounds of the coffee machine. He looked around. The hair on the back of his neck stood up. If this was a horror movie the werewolf would jump up from the other side of the counter and eat him.

Dean shuffled out and leaned around to see the other side of the counter. Of course there wasn't a
werewolf. Not that he actually thought there would be a werewolf. But it didn't hurt to check. Besides, maybe there was a rabid raccoon in the store and that's why it smelled like death warmed over. Raccoons could be dangerous.

"Jo?" Dean called again. "...Bobby?"

Nobody answered. Crap. What if Jo really was buried under a pile of books and Bobby had had a heart attack trying to move them? Dean darted out past the counter looking for the scene of the accident. It was probably down the last row of shelves were all the nonfiction was stacked haphazardly because no one ever went there.

Dean slammed to a stop in front of the classic literature and scifi aisle. Books were scattered all over the floor and in the middle of them was a body. A really still not moving kind of body. The kind of body that looked like it wasn't going to be doing anymore moving if the pool of blood was anything to go by.

Dean's eyes caught a flicker of movement further up the aisle. He looked up. There was another body slumped against the bookshelf in front of the K scifi authors. It twitched. Dean stared. It almost looked like that guy, Levanael. Except for the part where there was a knife sticking out of him and a bloody silver dagger in his hand.

Dean backed up. Bobby and Jo were probably fine. They probably saw the classic literature and scifi aisle and took off and phoned the cops and he had just wandered in before the cops got here. He should probably leave. Right now. That sounded like a really good idea. Yep. Leaving. That was a great idea.

He took another step back and bumped into something. Ice cold fear shot through him. There was something big and warm standing right behind him and it smelt awful.

Jesus Christ. Werewolves were real and he was going to get eaten!

Dean bolted forward. He tripped through the books on the floor and jumped over the bodies. He skidded to a stop at the end of the aisle. He didn't hear the sounds of a werewolf crashing down the aisle to eat him.

He spun around to see a woman built like a tank standing at the end of the aisle watching him. She sniffed at the air. She narrowed her eyes at him. She said something in Enochian. Even if he could understand it Dean didn't think it would explain away why she was in Bobby's bookstore with two bodies.

Dean's eyes flicked between her and the two bodies on the floor. Levanael was an angel. And as far as he knew only angels and demons and Bobby spoke Enochian. The tank woman definitely wasn't Bobby so she was probably an angel or a demon. Why the hell were there angels in Bobby's store stabbing each other?

The woman spoke again.

"Look, lady." Dean said. He put his hands up defensively. "I don't know what's going on but I didn't...I didn't see anything. Okay? They probably just stabbed each other, right? We should—hey!"

A huge arm had wrapped around Dean's chest and yanked him backwards. Dean struggled and squirmed against it. He shoved at the arm across his chest. It was like trying to push over an elephant. The arm heaved him up off his feet. Dean yelped.
A deep male voice rumbled out of the chest behind him. The woman spoke again. The man said something back then started yanking at the collar of Dean's jacket with his free hand. The man got his fingers into the top of Dean's shirt and pulled until it ripped. He tugged at Dean's jacket and torn shirt. He leaned in close, puffs of warm breath buffeted against the side of Dean's neck.

Dean froze in fear. His body tensed, readying for pain. What if this guy really was a werewolf and he was going to eat him?

The man pulled back and said something to the woman again.

Rage boiled up in Dean's gut. Why the hell did crazy angel stuff keep happening to him? What had he ever done to deserve this kind of bullshit? And who the hell were these two assholes that they thought they could come into his bookstore and start stabbing people? Dean kicked out. He didn't know what the hell these two assholes were doing but he didn't want any part of it. He landed a heel into the guy's thigh and elbowed him in the kidneys.

The dude holding him started losing his grip. Dean felt his toes touch the ground. He squirmed harder and thrashed his head back. He hoped he had crushed the asshole's nose. Dean heard feet pound towards them. His body lurched as something barrelled into the side of his attacker. They both went down, shelves rattling as they hit the floor. Dean shoved the guy's arm off and rolled away. He scrambled to his feet just in time to watch Cas snarl and shove a piece of Christmas tree into the guy's face.

Dean would have been happier to smash the guy over the head with something but then the piece of Christmas tree sprouted three extra branches with nasty looking thorns and wrapped around the dude's head. That was way better than smashing the guy over the head.

The guy screamed and clawed at his face, tugging at the branches but only digging the thorns in deeper. One of the guy's hands shot out and grabbed Cas's arm. Cas's wings tore out of the back of his shirt as he made a sound like he'd broken every bone in his body.

Dean doubled over in pain. He groped along the shelf for that hardcover addition of the Count of Monte Cristo that had never sold. He grabbed it and slammed it down onto the guy's head. There was a crunch. The pain stopped.

Dean spun around, anger still boiling away in his veins because there was still that tank woman in the bookstore and this was his bookstore and she had no right to be here. He heard crashing coming from the front of the store. He darted up the aisle; Count of Monte Cristo in hand, jumping over bodies and books.

The tank woman was grappling with Levanael as he tried to shove another nasty looking silver dagger into her chest. Dean stalked over and rammed the corner of the hardcover book into the fleshy part above the tank woman's hip. She growled and jerked away from Levanael. She reached for Dean, murder on her face, then froze. She stared at Dean like she couldn't quite comprehend the situation. Dean shoved the book into her side again with a growl of vicious satisfaction.

Levanael took the opportunity to smash the tank woman on the head with the butt of his dagger. She dropped to the floor and groaned. Levanael kicked her in the side twice before crouching down and grabbing her head to thump it off the floor. He took out a long strip of leather with funny looking symbols all over it and tied the woman's hands together.

Dean wanted to give her another taste of the Count of Monte Cristo. Or maybe just try to tear her apart with his bare hands. That could be good too. His imagination supplied him with the feeling of bones crunching underfoot and blood running down his hands. He grit his teeth. That would
probably be really really good. And well he was at it maybe he'd tear up this fake Levanael dude because there was no way that Levanael could be tying up the tank woman and bleeding out in the classic literature and scifi aisle at the same time.

A black wing slid around Dean's side and tried to pull him back. Dean shoved it away and started stalking towards the extra Levanael.

Levanael put his hands up. "Hey, whoa. It's alright."

Dean's fingers tightened around the Count of Monte Cristo. He jerked the thumb of his free hand over his shoulder. "Funny because you're back there with a knife in you." He didn't know what was going on, he didn't know how there could be two Levanaels, but he didn't like it and it really needed to stop happening in his bookstore. And if it didn't stop happening on it's own he was going to make it stop.

Levanael's face turned blank. His eyes flicked up the aisle. He looked over his shoulder at the door. "Fuck it."

Dean's vision went funny, like he'd looked at the sun too long. He blinked at the weird sparkling after spots where Levanael had been.

"Gabriel?" Cas said incredulously from behind Dean.

"Yeah." Gabriel took out his phone and punched in a number. He jogged over to the door and locked it. "I put up a screen. Nobody can see inside. Don't open the door for anyone. Stay here and don't move. The others will be here in a minute." He slipped past Dean and Castiel and jogged down the scifi and classic literature aisle. "And calm down. You're riling Dean up."

Dean sucked in an angry breath. Gabriel? Gabriel. Where did Gabriel get off ordering people around like he owned the place? Dean's skin prickled with indignation. And what did he think he was doing running around pretending to be other people? He started stomping after Gabriel.

Castiel caught Dean's arm. Dean spun around; teeth bared and ready to shove the Count of Monte Cristo into Castiel's stomach. Cas shouldn't be in his bookstore with weird freakshow wings sticking out of his back! Dean filled his lungs, readying to give Castiel an epic telling off for barging into his bookstore and being a freak, but it came out in a series of confused whines as the anger dropped away.

He shivered as all that burning desire to tear into someone drained away into confusion and concern. He let Cas guide him over to the couch and push him down to the seat cushions. Cas sat down beside him. He wrapped a wing around him and started feeling all possessive boyfriend at him. Dean turned around meaning to tell him to knock it off— he wasn't his boyfriend or his mate or any of that crap. But that would take energy and effort and now that he had decided against smashing Gabriel with the Count of Monte Cristo he kind of just wanted to curl up on the couch and sleep for three weeks. And Cas smelt kinda good. And the store still smelt rancid. And Cas's wings were warm and soft and smelt like him. And okay, maybe Cas could just sit there for a minute with his wings all up in his business.

Five minutes later Gabriel was bounding up to the front of the bookstore with his phone in hand. He unlocked the door and let in two guys that Dean was pretty sure had been watching his house months ago when he had been under house arrest, that asshat of a doctor, Castiel's mom, and Raphael. They all smelt awful.

Dean shoved his face into Cas's wing and breathed deep. He didn't care that it probably looked
really weird. He'd rather breathe in Cas's spicy pine-citrus Christmas smell and not throw up. He was already feeling sick about the fact that there were bodies in the bookstore. He didn't need weird smells making him feel sick too. He was probably completely losing it as it was. He had just jumped into the middle of a knife fight without even thinking about it and he had seriously wanted to literally tear someone limb from limb. That was messed up. And oh Jesus! He had smashed that guy on the head with a book and something had crunched. What the hell was wrong with him?

Castiel's wing squeezed tighter around him. Dean shivered. Had he just killed that guy?

Dean distantly registered Raphael speaking. The two dudes took off into the bookstore, Zachariah followed Gabriel down the classic literature and scifi aisle, and Naomi talked quietly in Enochian to Raphael while Raphael stared at Cas. Dean didn't like that last part. And he really didn't like the fear creeping into him from Cas. Were they getting charged with murder? What did angels do with people charged with murder? Was there angel prison? Oh fuck. He couldn't go to angel prison while he was pregnant!

Castiel's wings suddenly disappeared. Dean jumped at the sound. Every part of his body felt keyed up and tense. They were going to angel prison. He had crunched someone's head and he was going to go to angel prison. Cas was probably going to go too and then their kid would be an orphan.

Naomi stepped over the tank woman carefully and stopped in front of Dean. She reached out. She picked at the torn collar of Dean's shirt. She gave him a serious mom look. "Were they going to bite you?"

Dean stared at her. What the hell kind of question was that? "Uh...I dunno?"

A weird desperate feeling flared up from Cas. Dean shot him a sideways glance. He looked back to Naomi, staring down at him earnestly. He tried to ignore the prickly sensation of knowing Raphael was staring holes through him. What the hell was going on? Didn't anyone care that there were bodies lying around the bookstore? Who cared whether some guy had tried to bite him or not? He had killed him.

He looked back to Cas. Cas was staring at him like he was trying to will him to answer. ...maybe this was their alibi or just cause or whatever it was called. Maybe if he said yes he wouldn't make their kid an orphan.

"I mean, yeah. Yeah, totally." Dean said. The desperate feeling from Cas eased back. Dean felt sick. He had killed someone and now he was trying to get away with it.

Thumping and cursing made everyone tense. The two dudes came clunking up the basement stairs with a really pissed off looking Bobby between them.

Bobby took one look around and groaned. "Balls."

Dean let out a breath he hadn't realized he was holding. Bobby was okay. And if Bobby wasn't ripping around threatening everyone than Jo was probably okay too. Maybe she hadn't even come in today.

Raphael rapid fired a bunch of stuff in Enochian that got everyone moving again. The two dudes helped Bobby over to the front counter then left to manhandle the bodies littering the bookstore. Dean turned around just in time to catch a worried look pass between Cas and his mom before Naomi marched over to Bobby.

"Dude, what's going on?" Dean whispered. "Is this...are we being...I dunno...arrested?"
Castiel opened his mouth to answer but before he could get a word out Raphael was calling him over.

"Castiel." Raphael said. Her voice had that short clipped tone Dean's teachers used when they were just about to send him to the office. She motioned for Castiel to stand and follow her. She didn't wait to see if he did. She stopped in front of Naomi and Bobby. Naomi fell silent. Bobby put on his grumpy bastard face.

"Mr. Singer, is there somewhere I can speak privately?" Raphael asked.

Bobby pointed towards the backroom. Raphael nodded. It was surreal watching her pick her way around the counter like a queen to disappear into the cramped backroom where he stashed his bike. Castiel followed her in oozing dread like it was going out of style. They were going to be arrested.

The couch sank down beside Dean. He nearly flung himself off the couch in a panic. Now that he wasn't all ready to smash some heads in his body felt all jittery and drained. He tensed up as a new terrible smell started assaulting his nose. It was coming from the woman now sitting beside him. It sort of smelt familiar, like maybe under all that rancid garbage smell it might be something good.

"Chill, Deano. Kali's one of ours." Gabriel said. He reached out and tugged up the woman's shirt until he could see her stomach. He frowned at the blood smeared there. "One of our stupid ones, taking on three alphas on her own."

Kali looked at him dryly. "Says the beta who tried to take out an alpha with strength as her talent." She snorted and pushed Gabriel's hand away. She smoothed out her shirt. "You're lucky she didn't want to kill you."

"I'm not lucky. I'm good." Gabriel retorted. He smirked. That smirked disappeared fast when Kali gave him severely unimpressed look. He backed away. "I'll go check to make sure no one can see in."

Kali watched Gabriel disappear out the front door. Dean stared at the red splotch on her shirt. It was exactly where Levanael had been stabbed. He craned his head around to look down the aisle behind him. There was only Zachariah crouching over the body in the pool of blood. Levanael was missing. He looked back to Kali. He squinted suspiciously.

"You can do that thing Gabriel does." Dean said. "You were the other Levanael." He motioned to the aisle behind them.

Kali sighed. "Yes. And you're very lucky I was today." Her eyes flicked down Dean's shirt where the rabbit's foot hung against his chest.

Dean squirmed down the couch away from her. She smelt weird and the way she stared was making him nervous. It didn't help that Cas was leaking dread like a sieve and that he was probably going to end up having a kid in angel prison.

"How much trouble am I in?" Dean asked from the other side of the couch.

Kali studied him closely for a moment before shrugging.

Dean was going to press for more but that dread from Castiel crested and crashed.
Important News!

Okay, sort of important news. I am going to do the thing that I swore I would never do. Edit the first half of this fic. So over the next couple of weeks the early chapters will get cleaned up, added to, etc etc. If you want an original drunk version of the fic download it now. You've got until Sunday night eastern standard time to do it.

Less Important News!

I am participating in SPN Coldest Hits. Which is a contest to write extremely cracky fics that won't get hits, kudos, or comments. So if you see me posting under my new pseud "Trisor" don't click on it! Instead go to the SPN Coldest Hits Collection page and leave kudos and comments over all the other authors' works. And don't feel bad, playing dirty is part of the game.
Chapter 40

Chapter Summary

The last time someone had shown their wings in public the council had brought someone in to compel them to never show their wings again.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean's fears played along the edges of his own instincts making the urge to go back out into the bookstore stronger with each passing minute. Castiel tried to shove down his alpha instincts to protect his mate and instead focus on Raphael and how much trouble he was in.

He had used obvious magic that couldn't be explained away where anyone could see and he'd shown his wings in public. Anyone could have walked through the door or looked in the window and seen him. He had gotten so caught up with the instinct to protect his pregnant mate he hadn't bothered to think of anyone else. He had put everyone in danger. Everyone's safety depended on their existence being a closely kept secret and he'd shown it off to anyone that wanted to look. The last time someone had shown their wings in public the council had brought someone in to compel them to never show their wings again.

Castiel blinked. He realized Raphael had asked him a question. "Uh..."

Raphael loomed over him.

"I'm...sorry?" Castiel ventured. "All I could feel was Dean's fear and..." Castiel didn't know how she did it but he watched Raphael's face harden with even more displeasure. He jerked his head down and stared at his feet. No amount of explaining away was going to take back what he'd done. "It won't happen again. I swear." He risked a side long glance at Raphael.

She raised an eyebrow at him. "It shouldn't have happened at all. You're an alpha. You have a mate. Ten years ago that would have been enough to consider you an adult." Raphael said coldly. "As it stands these days, you won't be one for another handful of months. Do you think this would be acceptable a few months from now?"

Castiel swallowed hard. "...no."

Was she going to treat him like an adult anyway? He had the urge to let his wings back out and hug them to himself one last time. Being compelled to never show his wings again would be like cutting his arms off.

Raphael leaned back against a desk covered in books and papers. She crossed her arms. She tapped her fingers in waves across her bicep. She watched him squirm under her gaze. "Do you know what happened to the last alpha that showed their wings in a public place where humans could see?"

Castiel shook his head yes. This was it. Raphael was going to tell him he'd be compelled into never using his wings again. He wouldn't even be able to see them again. At least the last time he'd gotten to use them it was to wrap his mate up.
A crash from out in the bookstore made them both snap their heads around. All Castiel could feel was his mate and terror. *Some other alphas* were out there making his mate afraid! He shot towards the door.

Raphael's hand whipped out like a snake and caught his arm. She jerked him backwards and shoved him down into a plastic folding chair hard enough to make it squeak. "Sit. Down."

Castiel vibrated with the urge to go to his mate. Dean was out there *alone*. With *other alphas*. What if one of them bit Dean and claimed it was a real mating bond? Everyone would believe it. People always believed it when alphas said it. Then *some other alpha* would have shared custody of *his* child.

There was another crash. Dean started yelling. He pushed up from the chair. He wasn't going to let a bunch of *other alphas* raise— his body jerked back down into the chair. An invisible force weighed him down to the spot. He tensed his legs and arms, trying to push against it. He couldn't get out of the chair. He glared at Raphael. She flicked her hand. The weight on top of him pushed down harder. She was using her talent to *make* him sit.

She shot him an icy look before opening the door, stepping out, and closing the door behind her. Castiel strained his ears to listen. Raphael asked something in that cool voice of hers. His mother answered back. There was a tense silence only broken by Dean swearing. Castiel tensed against the weight pressing on him when he heard footsteps coming towards the door.

The door swung open. Castiel huffed in relief when Dean poked his head inside. Castiel's mother guided him forward; firm grip on Dean's shoulder. Raphael followed in behind her. He scowled at Raphael then flicked his eyes back to Dean. Dean was breathing hard and seemed dazed but otherwise was fine. The tension flowed out of Castiel's body. His mate was okay.

"You see?" His mother said. "It wouldn't have worked. Instinct overrides persuasion. He just needed to see that Dean's alright."

Raphael gave his mother a cold look. "And when this happens while Dean's at the human school?"

Castiel was surprised to see his mother's face turn red with anger. If his mother had made that look at him he would have tried to slink away to his room and never come out.

"But you're quite alright with sending him there while you use him as bait?" His mother hissed.

Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. Bait? Bait for what?

His mother glared at Raphael and pointed an angry finger at Castiel. "And you can let him up. He's fine."

Raphael's eyes swept up and down his mother. She flicked her hand. The weight pushing down on Castiel disappeared. Raphael turned and reached for the doorknob. "Take them home, Naomi. Before I decide to deal with you all right here."

Castiel flinched at the tone of Raphael's voice. His stomach turned when Raphael marched through the door without a backwards glance and closed it behind her. He looked up at his mother. The angry red colour was draining from her face. Her eyebrows knitted together in worry.

"Will you be alright while I bring the car around back?" His mother asked without looking at him.

Castiel glanced up at Dean, he had moved over to sit on the desk. Dean was shaking and the things that flooded the bond were a whirling confused mess but there weren't any strange alphas in the
tiny room and if they did try to get in they'd have to go through him first.

"Yes."

His mother nodded. "Don't leave this room until I come back." She disappeared out the door. It clicked closed behind her.

Castiel looked back to Dean. He wanted to take his wings out and hide him away in them but Raphael was just on the other side of the door. She could walk in any minute and see. Castiel doubted that would end well.

"You okay?" Dean asked.

Castiel blinked in surprise. He should be asking Dean if he was okay. Dean's face was startlingly pale and his hands were shaking.

"Yeah." Castiel said.

Dean let out an explosive huff. "Good." He ran a trembling hand through his hair. "You felt like you were gonna die."

Castiel's face flushed red in embarrassment. Dean had felt all his fear over losing his wings. He was probably still poisoning Dean's mind with his own fears. He tried to force himself to calm down again. Dean was right here and nothing would happen to him. He didn't have to make Dean a nervous wreck.

Dean shivered. He looked down at his hands. "Dude, I tried to punch your mom."

Castiel stared while his brain tried to sort through the words Dean had just said. "What?"

"I dunno, man. I— you were freaked out. So I was gonna come make sure you were okay." Dean waved a hand at the room. "But they wouldn't let me and then..." He squeezed his eyes shut and shivered. "Then I really wanted to— to hurt someone. A lot. Really badly."

It clicked in what Dean must have been feeling. Castiel reached out to put a comforting hand on Dean's knee. Dean flinched away. A surge of nervous fear shoved through the bond. Castiel jerked his hand back.

"Sorry. That, uh, that wasn't you." Castiel said to a lump on Dean's chest. Castiel was sure it was the rabbit's foot hidden under Dean's shirt. How had this been lucky?

Dean scoffed in disgust. "Right. Just boys being boys or whatever other shit they say about assholes who can't figure out their problems without—" A tremor shook through Dean. Castiel could feel it go right through the bond. "Jesus Christ, I think I killed that guy."

A sick feeling rippled into Castiel. Dean leaned over the desk, grabbed a plastic garbage pail from the floor, and then dry heaved into it.

Castiel waited for Dean's shoulders to stop heaving. He was a terrible mate and an even more terrible soul mate. He had let all that alpha instinct of his pour out of him into Dean and Dean had tried to attack alphas without any thought to his own safety. Omegas weren't built to deal with alpha instincts. And they certainly weren't built to fight alphas.

"I didn't mean it like that." Castiel said when Dean looked up from the pail. "I meant, what you were feeling was from me. You were feeling like an alpha that was—" Castiel wasn't sure how to
finish the sentence without upsetting Dean more. Dean didn't like being reminded that they were mates or that he was an omega or that he was pregnant. "You were feeling an alpha's instincts. And, uh, you didn't know how to handle it."

Dean stared at him. Castiel could feel him sort through all the chaos in his head. He wished he could crawl through the bond and see what it all meant.

"And I don't think you killed that alpha." Castiel said. It took a lot more to kill an adult alpha. Castiel doubted even his stunt with the fir tree had done much to that alpha that Zachariah couldn't heal. "I think you just broke his nose and knocked him unconscious." Castiel huffed out a quiet laugh and touched his own nose. "You break a lot of alpha noses."

Dean opened his mouth to say something but a knock on the door interrupted him.

Castiel's mother opened the door a crack. "Will you be fine to walk through the store?"

"Yes." Castiel said. The scent of other alphas was still heavy in the store but as long as he could see that Dean was safe he didn't think it would matter. He stood up. He waited for Dean to slide off the desk before stepping out into the rest of the bookstore.

His mother reached out and tucked him in close to her with one arm. She reached out with the other and did the same to Dean. She shot a possessive look at everyone else in the bookstore.

"You taking him back to your place?" Mr. Singer asked.

"Yes." His mother said. "Just until we know more about why those three were here."

Mr. Singer nodded. "I'll phone the Winchesters and tell them what happened and where to find Dean." He clapped a hand to Dean's shoulder. Dean looked up at him like he didn't recognize him. Mr. Singer gave his shoulder a squeeze. "Stay with Naomi until we sort this out. I'll make sure your family's fine."

Dean made a strange whimper that sounded a bit like, okay. Mr. Singer let his hand drop. He nodded curtly at Dean then went over to where Raphael was talking to the big alpha that Gabriel had tied up.

Castiel's mother started maneuvering them towards the back door. She ushered them out to the alley and into the car.

Castiel helped Dean into the backseat before going around and getting in on the other side. He resisted the urge to slide into the middle and sit as close to Dean as possible.

His mother got into the front. She didn't start the car. She turned around in her seat. "Do either of you know why there were three strange alphas in Mr. Singer's bookstore?"

Dean shook his head. Castiel said, no.

His mother breathed deep in relief, as if she had thought that maybe they'd meant for this to happen. She looked to Dean. "Did one of those alphas really try to bite you?"

Dean gave her a puzzled look. "...maybe?" He put a hand to the side of his neck where one of Castiel's mating bites peaked through his torn shirt. "He ripped my shirt collar and shoved his face really close." He gave a little disbelieving laugh. "I—I thought he was a werewolf or something. I thought he was going to eat me."
His mother turned to him. "And you saw that?"

Castiel nodded.

"Alright." His mother said. "We can use that."

"The guy that, uh, tried to eat me or whatever." Dean said. He fidgeted in his seat and picked at the seatbelt. "He's not...he's not dead, is he?"

"I don't believe so." His mother said. Her eyes flickered across Dean's face. She gave a small sympathetic smile. "Zachariah was attending to him still. A dead man doesn't need a doctor."

"Oh." Dean said. He plucked at his seatbelt again. "Okay."

The drive home was tense and silent. Castiel was sure that if someone other than his family were in the car they'd be gagging on all the protective alpha scents that covered up the smell of distressed omega.

When they reached home his mother got out first and made sure there was no one lying in wait for them between the car and the front door.

Dean let out a long sigh the moment he walked into the house. The worry and distress that had been feeding through the bond eased up. Castiel wasn't sure if he should feel guilty or revealed. Dean was still under his mother's persuasion to feel safe in the house.

Anna's head poked around the corner at the top of the stairs. "What's going on?"

Before Castiel could answer his mother set her hand on Dean's shoulder and gently pushed him towards Anna.

"Could you put the spare room together for Dean?" His mother asked in that tone of hers that brokered no arguments. "I think he's rather tired."

Anna stared at their mother puzzled. She shot a quick look at Castiel then frowned. She waved for Dean to follow her up the stairs. "Yeah, sure. Come on, Dean."

There was a quick burst of anger in the bond - Castiel thought it was probably over being near ordered to bed - but it quickly faded into guilty relief. Dean nodded, kicked his shoes off, and climbed up the stairs. Castiel's instincts chattered in the background that he should follow Dean upstairs and make sure no one would steal his pregnant mate.

"Castiel?"

Castiel blinked. His mother was standing in front of him. She was wearing her stern concerned look. She gestured towards the kitchen. Castiel followed her in. She motioned for him to sit down at the table. He sat down. She sat across from him.

"Raphael will talk to you again." His mother said. "When she does remind her that you and Dean are soul mates. You feel his fears far more than most mates. And then tell her that was the first time Dean's ever been in any real physical danger since you were mated and that you don't know anything about Gabriel or Kali."

Castiel nodded. It wasn't anything but the truth anyway.

His mother's eyes flicked up and down him. Very calmly she asked, "Have you been feeling
"unusually angry lately?"

"No?" Castiel said. He stared at her confused until all those dreams he'd had during his rut came to mind and how agitated he'd been when Dean had talked to another alpha. "...yes."

"How long has this been going on for?" His mother asked.

Castiel started to say a few weeks but stopped. He'd been irrationally angry when he saw Dean talking to Lisa and Benny and that had been months ago. He still swallowed down a pit of angry jealousy every time Dean talked about Benny and he'd only started to relax about Lisa once he started thinking of her as another mate that Dean wanted.

"A while. A few months." Castiel said. A little ball of panic nestled into his chest when his mother flinched ever so slightly. His mother never flinched over anything. She was either cool and collected or a scary alpha mom. She didn't flinch. Castiel gulped. "That's bad, isn't it?"

"Not necessarily." His mother hedged. She folded her hands on the table. "There have always been roles for alphas that are...more aggressive." She eased back in her chair. "But it's very likely you're still settling into your soul mate bond. You just have to learn to keep tighter control of your instincts."

Castiel nodded, distracted. Dean was getting upset again. His instincts started buzzing away with the desire to go upstairs and see why his mate was getting upset again. What was Anna doing that would upset his mate? What if his mate needed him? Not just anyone. He really should go upstairs to check on his mate.

"—grandmother."

Castiel's eyes snapped up to look at his mother. "Huh?"

His mother studied him carefully. Her eyes flicked over in the direction of the stairs. She looked back to Castiel. The slightest hint of a frown played on her lips.

"I was saying, once this is cleared up maybe it would be best if you went home to Malprg." His mother said. "There's more than enough room for you to stay with your grandmother."

Icy fear snaked through Castiel's chest before he even understood why it made his hair stand on end. The bond prickled with curious apprehension and worry. Then Castiel's head caught up with his instincts. If he left his mate would be alone and who knew what Dean would decide to do with the baby if no one was there to help.

"I can't go." Castiel said, voice barely above a whisper.

"It would be for the best." His mother said in her understanding but stern tone. "You need to learn to control your instincts somewhere safe."

Castiel opened his mouth to speak, closed it, then tried again. All that came out was a confused sound. He couldn't leave. And it wasn't only his instincts insisting on it. Dean was terrible at being an omega. Castiel couldn't imagine him being better at being a pregnant omega once he started to show. And Dean didn't know how to speak or read Enochian! How was Dean supposed to talk to doctors or fill out forms? And what would happen if Dean had another breakdown? Dean needed help. And who else would help but his mate? Even if Dean didn't think they were mates.

"Dean has to come with me."
His mother gave him a concerned look. She glanced towards the stairs then back to Castiel. She pressed her hands flat on the table. "Eventually." She shook her head slightly and amended, "If Dean wants to."

"But I think for now it may be better for both of you to spend some time apart." She shifted in her chair and straightened her back. "I've been inquiring about the effects of soul mates on each other. It happens rarely but some times when soul mates find each other at a younger age there's some cinxir gah—" His mother paused. Her eyes flicked back and forth like she was reading a book. She sighed like she couldn't quite find what she wanted. "Personality merger. Considering Dean's actions today I'd wager to guess Dean, being an omega, is more susceptible to it."

"It's not—" Castiel stopped himself. He didn't know anything about it. Maybe it could be happening. He didn't think so. Dean disagreed with him on practically everything. One day where Dean had been overwhelmed by Castiel's instincts to protect his pregnant mate couldn't negate every other day since he met Dean, could it? And it hadn't just overwhelmed Dean. It had overwhelmed him too. If anything Dean had seemed more capable of coherent thought than he had. Dean hadn't lost control and let his wings out in public for no good reason.

"It wouldn't be very long," His mother said. "A year or so should be long enough for you to learn better control and Dean to learn to better defend his mind."

Castiel's throat seized up with emotion. A year? He couldn't leave his pregnant mate for a year! He had responsibilities. To his mate and his future child. And where would Dean end up when he started to show if people tried to separate them? Dean could end up on the other side of the country alone, miserable, and pregnant. What would happen to his child if he wasn't there when Dean had it?

"No." Castiel said flatly.

His mother looked at him surprised. Her face sharpened like she was going to reprimand him for arguing with her but then her face softened into a sad look. "We'll talk again tomorrow when your instincts have settled down."

Castiel shook his head. "No. I can't...I can't go."

A sick feeling boiled up in Castiel's stomach. He couldn't go. It was that simple. He couldn't leave his mate and unborn child behind. He was an alpha, they were his responsibility. But no one was going to take a simple I can't go as an answer. They'd all think he was just being unreasonable because of his instincts. The only way his mother would let him stay would be to tell her why he had to stay or why Dean had to come with him. And he couldn't say that either because that was terrifying.

Castiel squirmed in his seat. He couldn't leave his pregnant mate but he couldn't tell his mother he'd gotten his mate pregnant before he'd finished high school either.

He glanced up to see his mother watching him carefully. He jerked his eyes back down. What would be worse? Being separated from his mate and maybe losing his child? Or the wrath of an alpha mom?

He squeezed his eyes shut. He breathed deep. He sat up straight, because an alpha should stand tall when meeting their imminent despise, and did his best to look his mother in the eyes.

His breath caught in his throat. He mumbled out a quick, "I can't leave because Dean's pregnant." It wasn't at all what he'd meant it to sound like. He'd wanted to sound like an alpha confident in their
choice. Not like he was eight and in trouble for sticking gum into Anna's feathers.

His mother's face hardened. "This won't go away with lies."

After every reaction he had imagined his mother having he had never thought she'd think he was lying. He licked his lips, confused and nervous. He tried again.

"I'm not lying. Dean's—" Castiel's voice cracked with fear. "Dean's pregnant." He cringed. It sounded so much worse when he said it out loud.

His mother stared at him. Her face slowly shifted from cold disappointment to sick realization. "...that weekend at your cousin's apartment." His mother shook her head. "Dean's scent never changed. You may have made some...poorly thought out choices but Dean's scent never changed."

Castiel grimaced. He had never thought he'd have to tell his mother the timeline of his sex life. "It wasn't, uh, that wasn't when it happened." Castiel said lamely. His face turned red. "Dean's been pregnant since September. When we mated. We didn't know until recently."

His mother stared at him. Very slowly she brought her hand up to rub at her forehead. She looked skywards like maybe the gods would make more sense than her ridiculous alpha child who'd gotten mated and then got his mate pregnant before he was eighteen.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the update gap, RL continues to take precedence. This fic is now edited up to Chapter 11. Yes I stopped there for now just so I could say I've edited up to 11. This fic is now completely edited!

General chapter commentary: Casual sexism! I really love writing casual sexism alphas/betas have towards omegas. I don't know why. I'm twisted apparently. Malprg continues to make me laugh. I'm super glad I picked that Enochian word above all others for the name of Castiel's hometown. The personality merger thing has been something I've wondered about for a while. If you're soul bonded in such a way that you feel the other person's emotions what else is going on as your emotional responses merge? I would love to read a fic where people are terrified of finding their soul mate because when you do your personalities merge and you lose your sense of self, literally becoming your relationship.

Apparently I am here for the Dark and Gritty Soul Mate Reboots.

Wordling!

I figure in the past there was probably a portion of alphas who had rage problems who were encouraged to be warriors and that in an alpha-centric society that they'd have a high social standing because, wow, look at those big strong alphas being all butch and murderery! But now, living among humans and keeping their existence on the down low, it's probably the equivalent of being sent to juvenile detention/jail. Because what do you do with alphas that can't keep their cool in public? Sequestering them seems like the best practice. And it's probably something people don't talk about much because alphas are supposed to be in control, not controlled by their emotions.
If you would like to help out some of my fake science in regards to a/b/o you may be interested in filling out one or both of these surveys, Fandom Self Identifies and Who's Queer?. The first survey is attempting to delve into how we interact with a/b/o as a fandom. The second survey is looking at which a/b/o relationships fandom would label as same sex couples. The results for both surveys will eventually be posted at ABO Studies on tumblr.
"What happened?" Anna asked as she industriously spread the sheets over the pullout couch.

Dean stared at her for a solid five minutes before shrugging. He didn't have a damn clue what had happened. He'd been ready to spend a day moping around at work and then suddenly he was bashing people over the head with books— just like Anna.

A hysterical little laugh escaped him at the thought. Anna had tried to smash his head in with a book.

He felt his face pale. His stomach felt cold. It wasn't that funny. He'd smashed some guy in the head with a book, rammed that same book into some woman's side, and then later tried to punch Castiel's mom.

What the hell was wrong with him?

"You okay?" Anna asked. She took a half step backwards. "You look like you're going to be sick."

"I'm fine." Dean said. He was also a lying liar who lied. He wasn't fine. He was freaking out and pregnant. It was like he was in some kind of bizarre psychological thriller. None of that shit could be real. "I'm just...kinda tired. Like your mom said."

Anna made a face at him that made it clear she didn't believe a damn word he'd said. She huffed and strode past him into the hall.

Dean wasn't sure if he wanted her to stay or go.

She came back a few moments later with a stack of blankets and pillows and a navy blue sweater. She set the sweater down on a side table then carefully arranged the pillows and blankets on the bed; a hint of pink creeping up her neck.

"There." Anna motioned to the pile of blankets and pillows. There was a space in the middle of the pile that looked suspiciously like it would fit Dean. "Do you need anything else?"

Dean shook his head.

Anna's eyes flicked away. That pink flush crept up onto her face. "...do you want me to stay?"

Dean almost said yes - Anna smelt a little bit like Castiel - but that would be super weird and creepy. It was already weird enough that he kinda wanted to go downstairs, get Cas, bring him up here, and shove him into the pile of blankets so everything would smell like him.
"Okay." Anna said. She hesitated a moment. Dean kept his mouth shut. Anna's shoulders slumped in relief. "If you need anything I'm just down the hall."

"Great." Dean said.

He stepped out of the way so Anna could escape all his weirdness. She breezed past and closed the door behind her. Dean breathed in deep. He could still smell her; faint spice and citrus. The smell wasn't right. He wrinkled his nose. He had a sneaking suspicion about what would smell right.

He sniffed at the air again. He leaned closer to the bedside table where the sweater sat in a lump. The sweater smelt right.

"Fuck." Dean muttered. He didn't want any weird smells to smell right. He sat down on the edge of the bed. He rubbed his hands over his face. The morning's events flashed behind his eyes. "Fuck, I didn't sign up for this."

Before he could think too hard about what had happened - or whatever it was that was freaking Castiel out downstairs - he shrugged out of his jacket and peeled his torn shirt off. There weren't any mirrors in Naomi's spare room but there was a framed picture on the wall. He went over to it and peered into the glass.

He couldn't make out the fine details in the reflection but he could see the two ugly bite mark scars Castiel had left behind and the cord of the rabbit's foot around his neck.

Dean pressed his hand over the side of his neck where that guy had shoved his face. He shivered. That guy had picked him up in one arm. Sure, maybe he was still just a teenager, but he wasn't exactly scrawny. He was bulking up more every year. There was no way that dude should have been able to pick him up with one arm and hold him still the way he had. That had to be magic stuff.

And Cas. He'd seen Castiel make flowers bloom and the tree beside his house was doing a lot better now but Cas had jammed a piece of Christmas tree into that guy's face and made it grow into a monster vine with spikes.

He'd known that angels and demons had all this magic stuff going on but he'd never thought about how dangerous they could be outside of setting shit on fire. He would have laughed yesterday if someone told him goofy plant magic could be dangerous.

He sat down on the bed. He screwed his face up and popped his wings out. They made a whoosh noise that didn't freak him out anymore. Bits of fluff and feathers drifted down in the air around him, that didn't freak him out anymore either.

When the hell had he stopped being freaked out by having wings?

A little shiver went through him. He had a sneaking feeling it was probably around the time he had been given an ultrasound photo of his kid that was currently taking up residence in his gut. Because wings were freaky shit but alien babies were terrifying.

So was getting manhandled by complete strangers that wanted to eat him or whatever.

He crawled into the Dean sized space Anna had made on the bed. He dragged his bottom lip through his teeth as he stared at the sweater. He swore at himself and reached for the sweater. He dragged it into the circle of blankets and pillows and curled up on his side with it. It smelt like spice cookies and oranges and Christmas trees and snow.
It smelt *right*.

He didn't want it to smell right.

He stuffed the sweater under the pillows and blankets, smothering the smell in the scent of fabric softener.

He shifted around and settled his wings on top of himself. He squished his stomach with both hands and shuddered. There was a creepy little alien baby in his gut and it was going to be one of the things that had wanted to chomp on him in a bookstore. He was going to have a freakin' *monsters* baby. What the hell had he been thinking keeping it? What if it grew up and had super powers like Cas and thought it was a great idea to stab people in bookstores?

This was some goddamned *Rosemary's Baby* bullshit.

He rolled onto his stomach and buried his face in the pillows and blankets. He shuffled his wings up to cover his head. He tried not to think too hard about how it could have been Jo or Ash or Bobby or Ellen stabbed in the bookstore, or how he'd wanted to tear someone apart, or how he'd decided to stay freakin' *pregnant* with something that might try to hurt someone one day.

Or how when he breathed deep he could still smell that spicy citrus scent bleeding through the blankets and pillows.

Or how he wanted to shove his nose into the sweater and maybe rub his face on it because that was freakin' *weird*.

A bunch of agitated concern started butting into his head. Dean rolled his eyes. It was like Castiel was standing beside him, poking him in the temple, asking *hey, you okay? How about now? Now? Are you okay yet? How about now?*

He thought hard about that first day he'd really met Cas and had punched him in the nose. The feeling in his head backed off for ten seconds before it started up again. Dean huffed into the blankets. Couldn't a guy wallow in pity on his own?

He was doing his best to ignore Castiel's problems - he had more than enough of his own to worry about - when he heard the front door open. The constant concerned prodding at his head suddenly stopped. Dean could hear voices in the hall downstairs. He was pretty sure one of them was Raphael.

Dean groaned and shoved his head under the pillows. Sure, there was no more concerned prodding but now Cas was kinda afraid again while feeling all overprotective boyfriend at him.

"*Jesus.*" Dean complained. He squashed the pillow over his head, trying to block out all the Castiel stuff. It didn't work. Dean grumbled, "*It's not like anything is gonna happen here. Calm your shit down.*"

He spent the next hour muttering at Castiel for being an overprotective freak and definitely *not* fondling that sweater and rubbing his face on it.

An hour later, after an entire *circus* of weird feelings had launched through his head, his own personal Cas Compass started pointing straight ahead.

He shuffled his wings around until he was covered head to toe. He didn't really know what to say or do about the guy that had *knocked him up* and gotten him involved in all this weird angel stuff. Maybe if he looked like a ball of sleeping feathers Cas would go away and they wouldn't ever have
to talk about any of it ever again.

And maybe Bobby would start collecting Barbie dolls.

The door squeaked open. He listened to Castiel creep in. Dean tried his best to pretend to be asleep. The door squeaked closed. Dean hoped that his Cas Compass was malfunctioning but he could practically feel Cas staring at him. And who knew, maybe that was the wacky soul mate bond. Maybe the skin crawling feeling was how Cas felt when he knew he was being a creeper watching somebody pretend to sleep.

Castiel sighed quietly. A rush of relief flooded Dean's head followed by all those warm fuzzy feelings that Cas got when he was watching him eat. God, Cas was weird.

A hand stroked along the arch of Dean's wing. Dean let out a surprised squawk and flung himself upright.

"Sorry!" Castiel yelped and yanked his hand away. Castiel's face turned bright red. Then came the inevitable flood of embarrassment.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Just stop." He groused. "I know it was weird. You know it was weird. And we know each other thought it was weird. Let's just get over it."

Castiel stared at him for a moment then nodded. His eyes flicked down to Dean's lap. Dean looked down to see the sweater clutched in his hand. He felt his own face turn red. He shoved the sweater under the pillows.

A pleased feeling thrummed through his head. Dean wasn't about to touch that with a ten foot pole. It was weird enough that he had been snuggling with Cas's sweater. He didn't need Castiel feeling pleased about it.

Castiel cleared his throat. He squared his shoulders and made a face that Dean figured was supposed to be the serious adult business face Naomi made but it mostly just looked like Cas had eaten a bug.

"Neither of us are in serious trouble." Castiel said. Guilt started trickling into Dean's head. Castiel looked down at his feet. "Well, you weren't in any trouble to begin with. This was my fault. I should have known better and...uh..." Castiel said something in Enochian that Dean was pretty sure was a swearword. Cas let out a dissatisfied huff. "I had this worked out before I came up here."

Castiel shuffled his feet and licked his lips. He glanced up at Dean. "That alpha you hit is fine by the way. Raphael talked to him after we left."

"Oh." Dean felt something in his chest loosen. He hadn't killed anyone. He grimaced. He had still crunched some dude's nose with a book and liked it. That was fucked up.

Castiel sat down on the end of the bed completely uninvited. Dean was torn between kicking him off and dragging him into the circle of pillows.

"I told my mom." Castiel said as if that made complete sense.

"...told her what?" Dean asked.

Castiel felt guilty at him then looked him in the eye.

Dean's mouth dropped open. "You told her!? Our moms talk!"
Castiel cringed. "Well, I had to tell her some time."

"And you thought now was a great time to do that?" Dean spat. Jesus. What if Naomi told his mom? What if Naomi was on the phone right now telling his mom that her son was a pregnant freak?

"My mother promised not to say anything until you tell your parents." Castiel said.

"And that's gonna be never." Dean retorted.

Castiel started feeling all sad and protective of him. And then guilty. But more like Guilty. Really, really Guilty.

"What'd you do?" Dean accused.

"I, uh, it's just that..." Castiel fidgeted on the spot. "It's just...well...those alphas that attacked you did it because they'd heard a rumour that a pregnant omega without a mate was— there are these traditionalist families that live outside of town, they're incredibly backward. It's actually..." Castiel put his face in his hands. "I really wish I remembered what it was I was going to say. This made a lot more sense in the kitchen."

Dean tried to ignore the dread creeping up his spine. There were rumours about a pregnant omega and those people from the bookstore had come looking for him.

People were talking about him. People knew.

Oh god. How did everyone keep knowing about all this stuff? He never told anyone!

Castiel breathed deep and started again. "The alphas that attacked you thought you didn't have mates and, well, they're traditionalists. Sort of. So if an omega is pregnant they think they need the proper mates. And—"

"How'd they know?" Dean glared at Cas. What if Castiel had been going around telling people this whole time? "Rumours don't just start up on their own. Somebody had to have said something."

Castiel eased back and put his hands up. "I didn't say anything!" He watched Dean carefully. He slowly lowered his hands. "I don't think my cousin said anything either. I...uh...well...I think it might have been you."

Dean laughed. Right. Like he'd just go around telling people he was a freak. The only person that knew was Sam and that was because Sam was a nosy little shit picking up stuff in the hallways and reading it and then asking questions about eggs.

"I'm not blabbing this shit all over town." Dean scoffed. "I'm not even telling my parents."

Castiel frowned at the last part but was smart and didn't say a damn word about it. He didn't have to tell his parents anything. He could just go visit a sick aunt they'd never heard of before for a few months and then come home like nothing had happened and be really surprised that Castiel suddenly had a baby to take care of.

It could totally work.

"Not here, no." Castiel said carefully. "But when you were compelled you weren't too concerned about who knew what. I think maybe while I was— talking to your doctor." There was a burst of anger in Dean's head. "That you might have told the receptionist or someone else in the waiting
room that I wasn't really your mate."

Dean stared at him incredulously. "That hospital is a day away."

"Angels and demons are notoriously bad gossips." Castiel said with an air of authority. Then he felt all Guilty again. "...so you need to tell your parents soon."

"Why?" Dean asked hotly. "You gonna gossip with my mom?"

"No." Castiel said. "It's only...well...Raphael had already talked to those other alphas and then I had to tell her they were right about the, uh, pregnant part. Because an alpha with a pregnant mate is expected to act a little more...unpredictable."

Dean's mouth dropped open. Was Cas saying he'd just used the baby card to get out of going to angel jail?

"So...you..." Castiel scratched at the back of his neck and looked away. "Raphael knows and my mother said..."

It was like someone had poured a bucket of ice down his back. Dean didn't have words for how messed up all this was. He had an alien baby in his gut that might turn out to be a monster and some angel was going to tell his parents about it. How could any of that be real? It couldn't. He was trapped in a horror movie. This was a horror movie. He was starring in his very own horror movie, Dean's Alien Nightmare: The Curse of Pregnancy and Wings.

"No." Dean found himself saying. "No one is telling my parents anything."

"I'm not telling my parents that their oldest son is pregnant!" Dean snapped. Fuck, he was so fucked. His hand snaked under the pillows and clutched that sweater. He was so totally fucked. He was pregnant and if he didn't figure out how to stop Raphael from telling his parents they'd know he was pregnant. The second horror movie he was going to star in would be, Alien Nightmare 2: Mutant Freak.

A bubble of fear lodged in his throat. What if Raphael told his parents and it was too much? He was already their weird bisexual son and then he'd gone and gotten cursed and wings. Now he was pregnant too. What if it was too much and they kicked him out? He shivered with fear. Dad already barely talked to him, what if being pregnant was the final nail in the coffin and Dad just told him to leave and take all his weird ass problems with him? Where would he go? He knew Bobby and Ellen would have taken him in if Dad had been mad about the bisexual thing but being pregnant? They didn't want Jo or Ash to know about angels and being a pregnant boy would probably raise some questions. Jesus Christ, the final part of the trilogy was going to be called, Alien Nightmare 3: The Alley Pregnancy Tapes.

"Dean?"

Dean glanced up. Castiel was watching him carefully. Dean shuddered. He wondered what Cas
even saw. Some other sad sorry kid? Or a pregnant freak with wings?

"I can't tell them." Dean said.

"Dean..." Cas said sadly.

Dean shook his head as concern washed through him. He didn't want Castiel to be concerned about him. He wanted his old life back. He didn't want to star in his very own horror movie trilogy.

"You don't get it. I can't tell them." Dean said desperately. He dragged the sweater out from under the pillows and dropped it into his lap. He balled his hands up in it. "I can't tell them that..." He clenched his jaw. He glared at Cas. "I'm fucking pregnant. How the hell are they supposed to deal with that? Huh, Cas? What the hell are my regular normal human parents supposed to do when I tell them I'm pregnant? I can't tell them that."

Castiel shuffled closer. "I-- I could tell them for you." A little spasm of giddy fear ripped through Dean. Cas gulped. "I'm going to be the one keeping it. I'll tell them."

Dean turned away. He hunched his wings around himself and hid. "You don't even understand how fucked up this all is." Dean muttered. "I'm not...I'm not me anymore. I'm some freak with wings and an alien baby. What if you sprouted a lizard tail and started laying eggs? How do you think your mother would handle that?"

"I don't know." Castiel said. At least it wasn't some bullshit answer like, parents love their children no matter what. Castiel made a soft little anxious noise. Dean was walloped with confusion.

Dean put a hand to his forehead and sighed. "Fuck. Are you confused because this is a great big steaming pile of bullshit or are you confused because you really don't get how fucking messed up this is?"

Chapter End Notes

All that waiting for a short chapter. Blah, right?
Chapter 42

Chapter Summary

Castiel didn't think Dean would take it as a reassurance to hear that some boys got pregnant the same way some alphas got pregnant.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I think I get it?" Castiel said, unsure of himself.

At least he thought he knew what Dean meant. It wasn't so much that Dean was pregnant. Well, it was that. But it wasn't because Dean was pregnant and young it was because he was pregnant at all. Human boys didn't get pregnant.

It was hard to make his head stop saying but Dean's an omega!

He didn't think Dean would take it as a reassurance to hear that some boys got pregnant the same way some alphas got pregnant.

His brain felt like it was going to melt. This was all too much to deal with at once. An hour ago he had been sure that he was going to be given one of the worse punishments Raphael handed out. Now he had to try and understand Dean and everything his mother and Raphael had told him in the last hour. He was still trying to wrap his head around the concept of not being punished. He barely had any room left in his head for trying to understand his strange soul mate.

Dean sighed at him and tucked his wings away. Castiel swallowed down a surprised noise when Dean pulled on his sweater instead of putting his own shirt back on. Castiel stamped down on his pleased alpha instincts that Dean was covering himself in Castiel's scent. Dean's shirt was torn, it probably didn't mean anything that Dean was wearing his used sweater instead.

— but where did he even get it?

Dean rubbed his forehead with his fingers. A tumult of feelings raced through the bond. Castiel couldn't make sense of any of them, just when he thought he'd figured one out it was gone and replaced by another.

"...if you don't want me to tell them either I could ask my mother to tell your parents." Castiel offered. "She'd probably be better at explaining so that they understand."

Dean closed his eyes. A dejected feeling erupted through the bond. "You really don't get this." Dean picked at the sleeve of the sweater. "I don't know what my parents will do when they find out. My mom will probably try to tough it out but my dad's not the best at dealing with different stuff."

It took Castiel's brain a few moments to piece together what Dean was saying. "You think they'll be mad at you."

"I think I might get kicked out of the house." Dean said flatly. His even tone was belied by the
absolute misery that took over the bond and the tears welling up in his eyes. "I mean, it's not for
sure but my dad...he's barely been around since all this stuff happened. I know he must be freaked
out by it all. Pregnant son might be the last straw."

"You can stay here." Castiel blurted without thinking. His mother would agree. Probably. She had
to. Dean was his mate. They were family. And Dean and the baby would be safer with two alphas
in the house.

He felt a pang of guilt for not telling Dean what he had learned in the last hour about Alastair but
he really didn't think now was the time to tell Dean that Raphael had been waiting to see if Alastair
came back and attacked him again. His mate was safe for the time being, Gabriel and Kali were
still watching out for suspicious people. Dean didn't need the added stress right now.

Dean stared at him for a long moment before shaking his head. "Look, can you just give me some
time to think about this."

Castiel nodded. He settled into his spot on the bed.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Alone. I meant give me some time alone."

"Oh. Right." Castiel stood awkwardly. He hurried over to the door. "I'll be downstairs if you need
m— anything."

"Yeah. Sure." Dean waved him out. He surreptitiously wiped at his eyes.

Castiel's alpha instincts flared up. He had to do something. His mate was upset!

Castiel shivered and closed the door behind himself. The soul mate bond made it feel like Dean
was standing right beside him, even if the bond was a swirling mess right now. He leaned back
against the door, trying not to give into the urge to fling the door open and demand to know what
he should tear apart first to make Dean feel better.

He breathed deep and slow. Dean was fine. Even if Dean was alone in the guestroom he couldn't
really leave Dean completely alone when they were this close together. The bond made it
impossible.

His body relaxed against the door. He wasn't really leaving Dean alone.

Castiel grimaced at the wall opposite him. He felt bad for not being able to give his mate the
privacy he wanted but he couldn't help the calm relief of satisfying base instinct.

He forced himself to go back downstairs instead of taking up guard in the hallway. Dean would
know and get more upset.

Castiel found his mother in the living room sitting in her usual chair. He sat down on the couch
across from her. He slumped back. He felt like a wreck. He had gone through so many extremes in
such a short time. He desperately wanted to curl up in bed and go to sleep.

His instincts immediately volunteered the suggestion that what he really wanted was to curl up
around his mate.

"Did you tell them?" His mother asked. It struck Castiel that even she sounded tired.

"Some of it." Castiel drew his feet up onto the couch. He stared down at his knees. He sighed as his
speech came back to him. It really had been a lot better than what he had said to Dean. "I told him
it wasn't safe to keep going to the human school and that he needed to tell his parents about the, uh, the baby."

He felt his face flush with nerves. The baby. His mate was having a baby and he was going to take care of it!

"And I told him that Raphael is going to explain things to his parents in a couple of days when she's finished sorting out those alphas. He wants some time to think it all over."

His mother nodded. "And Alastair?"

Castiel's jaw clenched with anger. Raphael had used his mate as bait to catch a criminal and no one had told him about it. He knew it wasn't really his mother's fault. Raphael had forbidden her from telling anyone. He only knew because Raphael had decided that keeping Dean's alpha in the dark about the situation was causing more trouble than good. Alastair was just as likely to come back whether or not he and Dean knew to be worried about it.

"I don't think he'd be able to handle that right now." Castiel said, looking up to glare at his mother. She gave him a sad pained look that made him hang his head in shame for being angry with her. "Sorry."

His mother was in trouble with Raphael for telling him that Dean was being used and taking actions to keep Dean safe. He should be thankful that she had dared to skirt around Raphael's orders at all.

"It's fine. I knew you'd be angry when you found out." His mother waved her hand in polite dismissal. "And I knew the risk I was taking putting safe guards in place once Raphael removed the guard on Dean's house."

"What's Raphael going to do?" Castiel asked nervously. What if he got out of being punished but his mother didn't? He'd be responsible for a baby, his mate, and his sister! He'd never be able to do it!

His mother shook her head. "Don't worry. I never explicitly told you until Raphael gave permission. And Gabriel and Kali still don't know why I asked them to follow you and Dean."

Castiel thought that was pressing things a bit thin but didn't argue. He couldn't think right now about what would happen if his mother really was in serious trouble. He had other things to worry about. Like where his mate was going to live.

"Dean's worried his parents might kick him out." Castiel cringed as he said it. What parents could kick out a pregnant omega?

His mother flinched in surprise. "Mary wouldn't turn Dean out."

Castiel wondered just how much his mother and Mary talked that she would say that with such conviction.

"Dean thinks his dad might. He's..." Castiel hunched his shoulders together. Dean's fears crept through him. "He's really frightened about being kicked out. I told him he could stay here if anything happened. Is that...is that okay?"

His mother looked at him like he had suggested they eat broken glass. "Of course they can stay here. Dean's always welcome."
Castiel breathed in relief. Dean could stay. Where he could watch over him and keep him safe and build a nest for him and make sure he was covered in his scent and— Castiel sighed at his instincts.

"Mom? Castiel?" Anna poked her head around the corner into the living room. The sharp scent of worried beta wafted into the living room. "What's going on?"

Their mother motioned for Anna to come sit down with them. Castiel made room for her on the couch. He stared at Anna. He'd have to tell Anna that Dean was pregnant. He'd have to keep telling people he was going to take care of a baby on his own.

"There was a bit of an incident this morning." Their mother said. Castiel nearly laughed at the understatement. His mother shot him a look that told him plainly to stay quiet. "Several alphas came looking for Dean. But it's fine. Castiel intervened with Gabriel's help."

Anna looked at their mother puzzled. "Why would alphas be looking for Dean?"

His mother looked to him. Anna followed her gaze. Castiel squirmed under the combined weight of their eyes.

Castiel shrunk into himself. He picked a point on Anna's arm and stared. "They thought Dean was pregnant and without a mate."

"What?" Anna asked, confused. Her eyes flicked between Castiel and their mother.

Castiel could see his mother narrow her eyes at him out of the corner of his eye. Castiel gulped. Their mother was right. He had to tell Anna. He was an alpha. He was going to be an alpha with a baby. He had to start taking responsibility.

"But he's not. Without a mate." Castiel said. He couldn't quite bring himself to say Dean's pregnant anymore. He hoped that was enough. Anna was a smart beta.

Anna stared at him. Her eyes slowly got wider and wider. Her mouth dropped open. "But Dean's scent never—" Anna clapped a hand over her mouth. "That night when Dean came here! They were already— Vonpho!"

"Anael!" Their mother gasped. Anna almost never swore and definitely never did it in front of their mother.

"I hit a pregnant omega!" Anna whimpered.

His mother looked at Castiel for an answer. Castiel shrugged. He didn't know what Anna was talking about either. He doubted Anna had hit Dean while making up the pullout couch. He would have felt it through the bond and besides, Anna would never hit an omega.

Anna's face paled. "That night Dean came here. They looked like they were attacking Castiel and— and I hit them. With a book." Anna gasped out the word book like it physically hurt her. "And if their scent never changed then that means Dean must have already been pregnant and I hit them! I hit a pregnant omega!"

Anna lurched across the couch. She wrapped her arms around Castiel and squeezed him tight. "I'm sorry! I don't know what I was thinking hitting an omega at all. They were just so wild looking and I was worried about you. You looked terrible and mom wasn't there."

Castiel awkwardly pat Anna's shoulder. He never really knew what to do when betas got upset
about something. Betas were usually the ones to calm people down and make them feel better.

"I, uh, don't think Dean minds that much about the book." Castiel said. He hadn't really thought about Anna's reaction to finding out she was going to be an aunt but if he had he'd never thought it would be this. "But maybe don't mention that right now?"

He couldn't imagine a scenario right now where Anna apologized for hitting Dean with a book that wouldn't make Dean more upset about the alpha he had hit with a book this morning.

Anna shook her head against his chest then started rambling about things she must have heard from Ruby about abuse against omegas and swore up and down that as soon as Castiel thought Dean was feeling better she'd apologize. She didn't want to be that kind of beta.

Their mother came over and gently pried Anna off him. After hearing her reasoning Castiel could more than sympathize with Anna's horrified reaction. He'd gone into a downward spiral of despair when he had almost assaulted Dean in the car. He shivered. That day was so much worse in retrospect. What if he hadn't stopped himself? He would have assaulted a pregnant omega in the car. He didn't want to ever be that kind of alpha either.

He watched his mother wrap an arm around Anna and steer her into the kitchen, softly giving Anna a list of chores to keep her busy and her mind off things she couldn't change.

He wandered how his mother knew to do that. He just took it for granted these days that she knew how to do it but she was an alpha mom. Alpha parents enforced rules. Beta parents were the ones that were supposed to comfort you and stop you from working yourself up. But he didn't have a beta mom anymore, his alpha mom did it all.

His child wasn't going to have a beta parent either. He'd have to be the one to figure out what to do to calm a child down and comfort them after.

A few minutes later his mother came back out with a blanket and told him to try and get some rest while Dean thought about what he'd do.

Castiel took the blanket but he didn't know how he was supposed to get any rest at all while his mate was in a state of turmoil.

His mother reached out and tried to fix his hair. "You're not going to do this alone."

Something tight and terrified uncoiled in his chest and relaxed. How did his alpha mom learn how to do that? How was he going to learn how to do that?

His mother made sure he wrapped himself up in the blanket before returning to the kitchen to check up on Anna.

He was blankly staring at the ceiling while lying back on the couch when he felt Dean coming down the stairs. The bond was still a mess. He sat up and rubbed at his face; trying to get his brain working again. He was Dean's alpha mate and he was going to be the alpha and beta parent to a child. He'd figure out how to make Dean feel better and not just give into his instincts as an alpha and call it a job well done.

Castiel sat up. "Did you decide what you're going to do?"

Dean came to a stop at the foot of the couch. "I don't want you or your mom to tell my parents."
"Okay." Castiel nodded. "What are you going to do then?" He half expected Dean to say he'd rather just let Raphael spring the news on his parents while he hid.

"...I dunno." Dean shrugged. "Can't we just try doing nothing again? That's been working out for us. Mostly."

Castiel sighed. The bond was more than enough evidence that Dean half meant what he said. That was still half too much.

"It could work." Dean grumbled. He sat down on the other side of the couch. He put his head in his hands and talked to his lap. "Five months ago the biggest thing I was worried about was how many times me and Lisa would break up and get back together. Now I'm not even human."

An odd jolt went through the bond. Dean looked over at Castiel, shock on his face. "Dude, no one in this house is human. I've talked to one human person since I left the house."

Castiel huffed in laughter before he could stop himself. Had Dean honestly forgotten Castiel and his family weren't human? He wiped the smile from his face. He forgot all the time that Dean hadn't always been an omega.

Dean glowered at him.

"Sorry. It's just, I do the same thing sometimes. But the other way obviously." Castiel pushed the blanket off himself. He tossed it over the back of the couch.

Dean shrugged at him and eyed the blanket. Castiel could feel a curl of need creeping through under the stress in the bond. His own eyes flicked to the blanket. He didn't think Dean would let him give it to him.

Dean looked away from the blanket. He clutched two fistfuls of jeans. Castiel could feel nervous panic rising up through the bond making his own chest tighten.

"Okay. So. I guess..." Dean stopped and breathed in and out. The panicky feeling didn't lessen. "I —" A tremor went through Dean. "I guess I'm gonna have to tell them. Because it'd be shitty to find out from a ninja turtle."

"...huh?"

Dean rolled his eyes. "I don't want Raphael to tell them."

Castiel nodded. He thought that was probably a good idea considering what Raphael had kept secret from them. He knew logically Raphael had been trying to protect the greatest number of people — one lone alpha criminal could be incredibly dangerous even somewhere safer — but it still made his alpha instincts surge with anger. *His mate* had been in danger and she had told everyone to keep it from him so that she stood a better chance at catching Alastair.

Dean arched an eyebrow at him. "What?"

"Nothing." Castiel said quickly. He still didn't think now was the time to tell Dean that Raphael thought Alastair might seek him out. "I mean with everything that's happened today...it's probably better if you tell them."

Dean licked his lips and gave him a look like he wanted to ask something but he shook his head instead. "Yeah, I don't think we're her favourite people right now."
Castiel's mother slipped into the room. She looked between Castiel and Dean. The slightest bit of concern showing through on her face.

"Castiel said you were worried about what might happen at home." His mother said. "I just want you to know that no matter what, you're welcome to stay here."

She reached out to give him a reassuring pat like she would for Castiel or Anna but Dean pulled back. A queasy feeling rolled through the bond. Dean wrinkled his nose. Castiel's mother let her hand drop. Castiel turned to look at Dean, confused by his mate yet again.

"Yeah. Thanks." Dean said. He rubbed at his nose and snorted like he was trying to get a bad smell out of his sinuses.

Castiel's mother frowned. She studied Dean for a moment before stepping back and taking up her spot in the chair again. "Mr. Singer phoned a short time ago. He said your family is fine and he doesn't think anyone is looking for them. From what Raphael learned so far from the alphas in the bookstore this morning I'm inclined to agree with him."

Castiel held his breath. Was his mother going to tell Dean about Alastair even though he thought it would be a bad idea right now? He was Dean's alpha. He should know better what would be too much for Dean than someone else. But this was his alpha mom, she probably knew better what he should do than he did.

Dean shot a suspicious look at him, no doubt feeling Castiel's worry and guilt through the bond.

"If you'd like to go home now I—we can drive you over." His mother said. "Or you can take some more time, until you're feeling better."

Dean flinched. He sucked in a terrified breath. Castiel cringed as the bond swirled into another chaotic mess. Dean swallowed hard. He drew himself up and squared his shoulders, head held high. He looked like a confident alpha— except for the part where he was shaking.

"Can you do that thing?" Dean asked. "Put the mind whammy on me so I won't care?"

Castiel's mother looked at him sadly. "I don't think that's a good idea. You might say things you don't really want to say to your parents."

Dean bit his lip. He nodded. "Yeah." He glanced sideways at Castiel. "Yeah, that could...that could happen. I guess." He looked away and muttered, "Not like I want to tell them about this."

Dean fidgeted. The bond was one spasm of feelings after another. He sighed. "Did Bobby say if my mom was at home?"

Castiel's mother nodded.

Dean shivered. "Okay. I...I'll go home now." He huffed out a nervous laugh. "Might as well rip the bandaid off sooner rather than later."

"Are you sure, Dean?" Castiel's mother asked.

Giddy fear raced through the bond. Dean gave another nervous little laugh. "No." He choked back a pained noise and shook. He looked away. "Fuck." He breathed deep and tensed up. He let the breath out and looked back to them. "Look, I just want to get this over with."

Castiel's mother nodded and stood up. "Alright. I'll start the car."
Dean watched her go then turned and looked at Castiel. His eyes flicked over him. He let out a long sigh and shook his head. The front door opened and closed. Dean wiped his hand over his face.

Castiel stood up. "We should get our boots on." He said, breaking the silence.

Dean shook his head again. "No. You're not coming. I don't want you—" Dean twisted his hand beside his head like he was cranking a lid off a jar. "In my head while I'm doing this."

Castiel felt his instincts claw wildly at nothing. Dean didn't want him to come with him? But he had to. His mate was upset and he should be there!

"Yeah. Like that." Dean said. He pushed up off the couch.

"But what if you're right about your dad?" Castiel asked. He flinched as terror shot through the bond followed by a slithery desperate feeling.

Dean shrugged as if he wasn't barely holding himself together. "Then I'll phone, pack my stuff, and wait in the driveway for your mom."

Chapter End Notes

omg, you know what the next chapter is, right? ;)

Enochian: Vonpho - wrath.
Chapter 43

Chapter Summary

He didn't want any more weird angel stuff to happen and the more angels that were around the weirder it got. He just wanted to tell his mother that he was a freak by himself then pack up what he could and run away forever before Dad found out.

Dean was pretty sure no amount of anti-nausea pills were going to stop him from throwing up. His stomach felt like it was going to tear up with nerves. Some crazy people had tried to eat him, Raphael was going to pull him out of real school, and he had to tell his parents that that their son was pregnant. He wasn't usually a nervous puker but at a time like this? Well hell, the situation merited some nervous puking.

And just because today was his lucky day, he was trapped in the car with Castiel's mom and she smelt horrible. The smell alone was enough to have his stomach heaving. He wished he'd thought to yank out a bunch of feathers from Cas so he could shove them up his nose.

Dean rolled the window down and stuck his head out. At least if he threw up it would be outside.

"Do you need me to stop?" Naomi asked.

Dean waved his hand vaguely in her direction and hoped that was answer enough. He just wanted to get this over with. The sooner, the better.

Oh god. The sooner, the better? He was going to tell his parents he was pregnant!

Dean felt bile rise up his throat but nothing made it out. He spit out the window and breathed hard. Fuck everything.

It was all too soon when Naomi pulled into his driveway. Dean would have taken throwing up in Naomi's car for the rest of his life if it meant he didn't have to tell his parents.

"Dean?"

Dean kept his head out the window. He stared down at the snow on the driveway. He knew his mom was inside but he hadn't asked if Dad was home too. If he didn't look up it would be like Schrodinger's cat; maybe Dad's truck was in the driveway, maybe it wasn't.

"Do you want me to come in?" Naomi asked in one of those over-gentle mom voices that moms got when they knew you were freaking out.

Dean shook his head. He shivered. Had he seen the side of Dad's truck? Was Dad home? Was he going to have to tell Mom and Dad?

"Is there a truck in the driveway?" Dean asked. He squeezed his eyes shut and clutched at the door of the car.

"...no."
Dean breathed a sigh of relief. Okay. Dad wasn't home. He could tell Mom about...about... He
shivered again. "Fuck."

"Are you sure you don't want me to come in?" Naomi asked again. "Or I could wait out here in the
driveway."

Dean shook his head. "No."

He didn't want any more weird angel stuff to happen and the more angels that were around the
weirder it got. He just wanted to tell his mother that he was a freak by himself then pack up what
he could and run away forever before Dad found out.

He reached blindly for the door handle. His throat clenched up. Fuck, he was pregnant and he had
to tell Mom.

The car door popped open. Dean tumbled forward. Naomi caught his jacket before he fell. Dean
wriggled out of her grip and scrambled out the door.

"I'll— I'll phone. If I need someone." Dean stammered. "To pick me up. That's why I'll phone."

Naomi looked at him like he was a sad wet kitten. "Dean, I don't mind coming in if you're worried
about your parents' reactions."

Dean shook his head. "No. No, it's..." He shook his head more. He didn't know what it was.
"It's...it's...no."

He shoved the car door closed before Naomi could say more.

Except the window was still open.

"Even if things go well, if you don't feel comfortable at home you can stay with us." Naomi said,
like that was a good option.

Dean didn't know what to say so he started shaking his head again. What the hell was he doing?
Why didn't he just say no thanks and go in and get this over with? He glanced over his shoulder.
His heart launched into his throat. Oh right. Because it was horrible and terrifying and he was
pregnant.

He squeezed his eyes shut and spun on his heel. He started up to the house, tripping in the snow
but refusing to open his eyes until his boots had knocked into the front step.

He stared at the front door.

...what if he just made a run for it?

He could run out to the highway and hitchhike across the country to somewhere where none of this
angel crap was going on.

It was perfect.

Well, except for the part where he'd still be a pregnant freak with wings.

He wiped his hand over his face and whimpered. He was even less cut out to be a pregnant freak
hitchhiking across the country.

Dean bit his lip and didn't move. The door was right there. He had to go in and tell Mom that he
was pregnant. Dean fidgeted on the spot. He let out a groan then made himself run up the front step and yank the door open before he could think about it anymore. He shoved the door closed behind him and made himself jump when it slammed shut.

"Sam!" Mom yelled from the kitchen. "What did I say about slamming doors!"

Dean gulped. Great. He was already pissing off Mom, now he'd just go stroll into the kitchen and tell her he was pregnant and ask her to pass it along to Dad while he wasn't around.

He heard Mom give an annoyed huff. The floorboards started to creak. She was coming over! She'd see him standing in front of the door like a deer in the headlights! She'd know something was up!

"Sorry!" Dean squeaked out. He kicked his boots off and flung his jacket into the corner.

"Dean?" Mom said, surprised. "Bobby phoned and said you might be late coming home tonight. Something about new inventory?"

"What? I mean— Nope!" Dean yelped. "We finished early!" He didn't have a clue what kind of lies Bobby must have told Mom so she wouldn't come racing over to the bookstore and he didn't want to find out.

He rushed down the hall and headed for the stairs. He just needed to chill out in his room for a bit first and then he'd tell Mom. Yeah. That was it. Build up some confidence. Get himself ready. Then go ruin his life.

Mom caught his arm before he hit the first step. "Dean? Are you okay?"

Dean jumped a foot in the air. He started shaking his head again. God, why couldn't he just stop doing that? He had to look like one of those bobble head dolls people put on their dashboard. "Yeah. Yeah. I'm fine. Everything is great. Why do you ask?"

Mom stared at him with that who do you think you're fooling? look.

"I'm fine." Dean repeated. He managed to get his head to stop bobbling around. "Actually, everything is great."

"Uh huh." Mom said. She didn't believe him at all. She let go of his arm. "Dean, you know you can talk to me about...umm...changes you might be feeling since your— heat." Mom's face turned red. "We could read over some things about—" She cleared her throat. "Adult relationships together."

Dean's mouth dropped open. Oh god, no. He was not having an embarrassing the birds and the bees talk with his mom. He knew how the damn birds and bees worked! He was freakin' pregnant!

He worked his mouth, trying to say an adamant no! But nothing came out. He felt his eyes start to burn with tears. Fuck. He muttered something about being fine and dashed up the stairs before Mom could see him cry.

He darted into his room and slammed the door closed.

He was so fucked. He gave it five minutes before Mom came upstairs to see what he'd gotten himself into.

He paced the tiny open space in his room. He tugged his shirt off. His wings burst into existence. Feathers and dust went everywhere. Fuck. Now he'd have to tell Mom everything in five minutes.
and vacuum after.

He wrapped his wings around himself. His eyes flicked up to the window. Maybe he could jump out? He was on the second floor of the house but his wings had to be good for something other than bashing Castiel in the nose, right? He could jump out the window and— glide or whatever, then try out that plan where he hitchhiked across the country.

Mom knocked on the door. Fuck. It wasn't even two minutes. He must have looked like he murdered someone and was freaking out about going to prison.

He screwed his eyes up and made his wings disappear again. He pulled his shirt back on. He opened the door. Mom was doing that thing where she was mad and worried at the same time. Mad, because he was an idiot and thought she wouldn't find out about whatever it was he had done, and worried because her son was an idiot and always managed to get into trouble.

Mom stepped into his room. She caught his shoulders before he could try out the jump out the window and flee plan. She steered him towards his bed and made him sit down with her.

"Dean, you know that I try not to pry into your personal life because I know what it's like to be a teenager with parents who don't let you have any privacy." Mom said gently. She didn't let go of his shoulders. "But I'm not blind. Ever since you had— a heat you've been acting strange."

A horrible little whimper crawled out of Dean's throat. He could feel the tears start up again. Fuck, he was gonna cry.

Mom squeezed his shoulders and pulled him into a hug. Dean choked back a sob. He hated all the crying he'd been doing since all of this crap happened. He felt like such a girl.

"It's okay." Mom soothed. She made soft shushing sounds and rubbed his back. "It's okay."

Dean snorted and sobbed out a broken, "It's not."

And then it all started pouring out. How messed up it was that he had wings and that he didn't know how to take care of them, how he had a damn butt vagina that kept leaking everywhere, how Dad barely talked to him at all anymore, and how he was pretty sure all his friends hated him because he couldn't tell them why he kept ditching them all the time.

It all came out except that one thing he was actually supposed to be telling her.

Mom rubbed his back, hummed Beatles songs, and told him everything would be okay.

It totally wasn't going to be okay but if he could pretend he wasn't pregnant for a month then he could pretend everything was fine for the next ten minutes.

He wasn't sure how long he was busy being such a girl about everything but eventually he pulled away and wiped his nose on the back of his hand. He sniffled. His eyes felt all gross and puffy.

Mom let him go. "Feel better?"

"No." Dean said, dejected. He felt empty inside except for the all-consuming dread— and the baby.

"Why not?" Mom asked, softly. She reached behind herself and grabbed a tissue from the box beside Dean's bed. She passed it over to him.
Dean grabbed it and blew his nose. It gave him a few seconds to pretend maybe he really didn't need to say anything. Maybe Mom already knew. She was practically psychic. She had known about butt vaginas and heats and urges. Dean looked at her and waited for her to start telling him about how she already knew everything and that Dad was totally okay with it and that they knew what to do about it.

Mom didn't say anything.

Dean heaved in a few breaths. His heart started to race. He had to tell Mom or else Raphael would and that would go over even worse. Dean shivered at the thought of how much worse this could all be then shoved off the bed and went to his dresser.

He dug through his sock drawer for the ultrasound. He gulped when his fingers brushed the edge of the paper. He squeezed his eyes shut, grabbed it, and turned around. He shoved it towards Mom, eyes still closed.

He felt Mom take it from his hand.

"Dean...this is an ultrasound."

Dean nodded but couldn't open his eyes. His shoulders hunched together. His toes curled up in fear. He bit his lip. What if this was the last straw for Mom? What if everything had finally gotten too weird for her and she told him to leave because he was a weirdness magnet and she didn't want anything to happen to Sam?

Mom cleared her throat anxiously. "...how far along is Lisa?"

Dean frowned down at his feet. What did Lisa have to do with any of this? They had broken up again. He hadn't talked to her since before Christmas. He was pretty sure she hated him now just like everyone else. He slowly opened his eyes and looked up. "Lisa...?"

Mom held up the ultrasound.

Dean stared at her confused.

Mom looked down at the ultrasound. She frowned. "There's no name or date. Are you sure this is hers? Where was this done? Did she give this to you? Or were you there when it was taken?"

"Was I..." Dean almost laughed. Had he been there? He sure as hell wished he hadn't been there.

"Dean...?" Mom reached out and touched his arm.

Dean stepped back out of her reach. He worked his mouth. He couldn't say it. He couldn't say he'd been there because it was his ultrasound. He glanced at the window and seriously considered jumping out of it again.

He gulped down the fear rising in his throat. His hands drifted up to his stomach and squished the extra weight he'd packed on. "It's—" His voice cracked with nerves. "It's not Lisa's ultrasound. It's..." He squeezed his stomach again and hoped that was enough.

Mom's eyes flicked between his stomach and his face. She looked at the ultrasound. Her eyebrows shot up. She breathed in a sharp little gasp. She didn't say anything. She just kept staring at the ultrasound as her face paled.

Dean backed up until he hit his desk. He wanted to run away and hide. This was it. His family had
finally had enough of all the weird shit that kept happening to him and Mom was going to tell him to leave.

"It's your ultrasound." Mom said slowly. She glanced up at him. Dean nodded. Mom gave another little gasp. She looked down at the ultrasound again. She breathed deep. Her forehead wrinkled. "Was it Benny or Castiel?"

"Cas."

Mom clenched her jaw. She straightened herself up like she was getting ready to fight. "Did he make you do this?"

Dean had the word, yes, on the tip of his tongue. If Cas hadn't talked him into a corner he wouldn't have ever come home to spew all this horrible crap at Mom. He stopped himself before the word left his mouth. He blinked in surprise. Mom wasn't asking if Cas had made him come home and spill his guts, Mom was asking if Cas had forced him to get pregnant.

Mom made a noise like she'd been punched in the gut. She looked like she might cry. She stood up and gathered him into a hug. She squeezed him until he couldn't breathe. "You can tell me. I won't be mad."

Dean squirmed out of her embrace. "No. No, he didn't make me. It was an accident."

Mom didn't look like she believed him.

"It was an accident." Dean repeated. He looked away. He might have wings and be pregnant but he couldn't look at Mom and talk about sex. "It was that night. We were both, uh, drunk and I didn't know what had happened to me. I didn't know I could—" He swallowed down a sob. "I didn't know."

Mom stared at him. Dean hadn't ever seen the look on Mom's face before. He guessed it was a whole new look specially made for finding out that your son hadn't known he was knocked up.

"You're grounded." Mom said.

Dean's mouth dropped open. "What?"

"Stay in your room." Mom slipped the ultrasound photo into her pocket.

Dean watched in shock as she strode out of his room and closed the door behind herself. He felt himself start tilting to the side like he might collapse. He reached blindly for his bed and sat down before he tipped over. He had told Mom and she had grounded him? She was supposed to fix it all! Or freak out!

His door creaked open. Sam's head poked into the room.

"What's going on?" Sam asked.

Dean shrugged. He honestly had no idea. Was he being kicked out? Was Mom mad at him? Was she grounding him for the rest of his stupid life? Or was she just waiting to tell him to get out?

Sam looked over his shoulder towards the stairs then back to Dean. "Mom looked like somebody died and like she's going to murder someone."

They both flinched when Mom started yelling downstairs; the words pregnant and deceitful bitch
ringing loud and clear all the way upstairs. Dean swallowed hard. Mom had to be on the phone. She was phoning Dad and they were already screaming at each other about how fucked up this was. He was going to break up his parents' marriage and then Sam was going to be shunted back and forth between homes until he left for college and end going broke because he had to pay thousands of dollars worth of therapy bills for the rest of his life.

Sam looked sick. "You finally told Mom."

Dean nodded. He stood up and grabbed his backpack. He dumped the contents onto the floor. He pulled his dresser open and started packing. He'd leave. If he wasn't here than Mom and Dad wouldn't fight over him. Sam would get to finish growing up with a normal family.

"What're you doing?" Sam asked nervously. He glanced over his shoulder again. Mom wasn't yelling anymore but the angry sound of her voice was still drifting up the stairs.

"I'm leaving." Dean said. He grabbed a fistful of socks and shoved them into his bag. "Before Dad gets home."

Sam disappeared from the doorway without a word. Dean didn't let himself think about it and kept packing. He thought about taking that bag of crazy pamphlets and books with him but he figured some angel weirdo would probably fall all over themselves to give him new ones. He pulled on a sweater then shouldered his bag.

He ran into Sam in the hallway. The stupid idiot was wearing his own bulging backpack and had an armful of books.

"You're not coming with me." Dean said. He wasn't going to drag Sam into all this angel crap.

Sam scrunched his face up. "Try and stop me."

Dean shook his head. He wasn't going to let Sam go down with him. "You're not coming."

Sam snorted at him. "Are we taking a bus somewhere? I've got money saved up."

Dean's hands balled into fists. "Sam. You're not—"

The front door opened and closed. Dean felt the blood rush from his face. Dad was home. He shoved Sam aside and dashed for the stairs. He'd bolt out the door before Mom and Dad started arguing.

He froze at the top of the stairs. It wasn't Dad's voice that started calmly speaking to Mom, it was Naomi's. Dean strained his ears to listen. He couldn't quite make out what Naomi was saying but he could still hear Mom. Mom was ripping Naomi a new one for not telling her what had happened.

Dean didn't know if that was good or bad. Had Mom been on the phone with Naomi? Was Mom not actually angry at him? Did she ground him because she thought he was going to go out and...and get more pregnant?

Naomi cut Mom off with another calm murmur that Dean couldn't make out. There was silence. Then Mom called out for him.

Dean hesitated. Was Mom going to tell him to get out? To go with Naomi and never come back? He clutched at the straps of his backpack.
Mom called for him again. "Dean, I know you're there."

Dean bit his lip and made himself go down the rest of the stairs. He poked his head around the corner into the living room. He cringed at the smell in the room and shrunk back when he saw Mom's face. Mom looked angry.

"Are you alright?" Naomi asked.

Dean didn't know how to answer that. He hadn't been alright since August. He wasn't physically hurt or anything but he was definitely not alright. He stepped into the living room. Naomi's eyes flicked over the shoulder straps of his backpack. She shot an *I told you so* look at Mom. Mom glared at her, fit to kill.

"Dean?" Naomi pushed for an answer.

Dean looked between the two of them then slowly shook his head. He was freakin' pregnant and Mom was mad and Sam was going to run away from home and Dad could walk in at any second. He wasn't alright. He was going to ruin his whole family. He should have gotten the abortion and never said anything about it.

He must have looked about as terrible as he felt because Mom rushed over and gathered him into a hug and started telling him she was sorry for making him upset.

Mom squeezed him tight. "Do you want to stay here?"

Dean buried his face in Mom's shoulder and tried not to cry. "I don't know."

Mom gave him another squeeze. "Do you want to go with Naomi?"

"I don't know." Dean repeated. He didn't have a damn clue what he wanted except for everything to be normal again. He wanted Mom to just *fix it*.

"Okay." Mom said. She rubbed his back. "Let's sit down and try this again."

Dean let her guide him to the couch even though the smell in living room was going to make him a bundle of sick nerves. He sat down and shucked his bag from his shoulders. Mom sat down beside him. Naomi took the chair across from them. Dean looked between Mom and Naomi. They looked back at him and waited. Dean ducked his head and stared down at the couch. What were they waiting for? They both knew about how messed up he was.

Mom broke the silence first. "You're not grounded. I shouldn't have said that. I was just worried and wanted to make sure I knew where you were."

"Oh." Dean curled his toes and hunched his shoulders. That was probably good but it didn't make him feel any better. He just wanted Mom to come up with a plan; wanted someone else to be in charge of all this crap.

"I just wasn't expec—" Mom cut herself off from saying *expecting*. Dean cringed anyway. Mom winced and started again. "I didn't think something like this would happen. I was told it was *possible* but I didn't think you would ever..."

"Yeah." Dean agreed. He didn't think he'd *ever* either. "It's kinda messed up."

Mom waited for him to continue but he really didn't have anything else to say. It was messed up, end of story.
Mom turned to Naomi. "...will it be...like you."

Naomi tilted her head in thought. "I would think so. Both our sons are angels."

"It is." Dean said. Mom and Naomi both looked at him in surprise. Dean motioned for the ultrasound photo in Mom's pocket. She passed it over. Dean took it and pointed out the squiggly bits that were baby wings. "It's got wings."

There was squeak of surprise from the hall. Dean looked up just in time to see some of Sam's floppy hair disappear around the corner. Dean just knew the little nerd was probably tearing upstairs to find a book about wings.

"It's got wings." Mom repeated under her breath. She sounded just as baffled to hear it as he had.

Dean jumped when Naomi leaned across the space between the couch and the chair and reached for the ultrasound photo. Dean wanted to jerk it away from her and hide it.

"May I?" Naomi asked, fingers brushing the edge of the photo.

"Uh...okay..." Dean made himself hand the photo over to Naomi.

Naomi's eyes flicked over the ultrasound. A barely there smile ghosted across her usually calm and cool face. She handed the ultrasound back to Dean like it was something fragile and delicate. Dean set it down on the couch beside him instead of shoving it into his pocket, out of sight and out of mind like he wanted it to be. Naomi acting like the ultrasound was all precious and stuff made him feel weird.

He turned back to Mom to find her staring at him like he was an alien. He looked down at his knees and picked at the side of his jeans.

"So...uh...this is all...really weird." Dean mumbled. He knew this would be too weird for Mom. He had finally filled the weird quota. He had busted right through it. "...what do you think Dad...?" He curled his fingers into the sides of his jeans. "I mean, what do I do about...this?" Dean squished his stomach again and looked up at Mom, hoping she'd have an answer.

Mom's face was twisted up with emotions. She glanced over at Naomi then back to him. The room was so quiet Dean was sure everyone could hear his heart pounding.

Mom's forehead wrinkled with worry. She licked her lips and dragged her teeth over them. Mom looked nervous. Hell, Mom looked scared. Dean felt his heart pound harder. Mom wasn't supposed to be nervous and scared! Mom had kept her game face on when she had been practically dying. Mom was an adult. She was supposed to know what to do!

"It might be better if you— and Sam weren't here when I explain this to your father." Mom finally said. "He might not..." Mom's face screwed up in worry. "He might not think before he speaks."

That horrible smell coming off Naomi got worse. Mom's nose scrunched up. She glanced over at Naomi but didn't say anything. Dean wanted to gag. Why the hell did everyone stink lately?

"I can take Dean and Sam home with me." Naomi offered, but it sounded less like an offer and more like a final decision.

Mom shot her another dark look. "I'll phone Bobby and Ellen and ask if you and Sam can stay for dinner. They'll understand."
Dean blanched. Mom couldn't tell *Bobby and Ellen!* If Bobby and Ellen knew he was pregnant then— well, then Bobby and Ellen would *know* and that just couldn't happen. It was bad enough Mom knew.

"Mom, *please* don't tell Bobby and Ellen." Dean begged. Everything couldn't go back to the way it was if people *knew* about it.

"They're hunters. Are you sure that's wise?" Naomi asked Mom.

Mom gave Naomi a look that screamed, *none of your fucking business.* She turned a soft empathetic look on him. "Dean? Where do you want to go?"

Dean looked between Mom and Naomi. He didn't want to go with Naomi and have Cas in his head again and he didn't want to have to explain to Bobby and Ellen what was happening. He wanted to sink into the couch and disappear. Mom wasn't figuring out how to fix any of this. It was still all horrible.

"I..." He tried to shrink into himself. "I don't...can't we just..." He felt his eyes start to burn.

Oh god no. He was going to *cry* again.

He sucked in a deep breath. "I wanna go to Charlie's house."

Surprised flicked over Mom's face.

Naomi frowned. "Does he know about us?"

Dean wiped at his eyes before anyone could see the evidence. He shook his head. "Charlie's a girl. She's a friend from school. She doesn't know anything about any of *this.*"

"Are you sure, honey?" Mom asked gently. "Earlier it sounded like maybe you're having a rough patch with your friends right now."

Dean swallowed down the lump in his throat. Mom was right. Would Charlie even want him to come over?

"I'll tell her..." Dean glanced over at Naomi. He felt his face go hot. He quickly looked away and muttered to his knees. "I'll tell her it's, uh, because of the whole *bi* thing. We've got a code word for if it's an emergency."

He tensed up, waiting for someone to say something. He felt like an idiot. He was *pregnant* and he was worried someone was going to say something about him being bisexual? If Castiel was telling the truth Naomi was gay and Mom might think it was a little unusual but she had always supported him. Nobody was going to say anything about it. It still made his chest clench up with worry; he'd just come out again.

"Oh." Mom said with the barest hint of sadness.

Dean felt his stomach turn over. Mom hadn't even batted an eye when he had brought home his first boyfriend and he'd just admitted that he had made up a code word for *my parents are being assholes because I'm not straight.* He might as well have just told Mom that he thought she was huge liar and didn't trust anything she said.

"I mean, *Charlie* has one." Dean quickly added. "Because she wasn't...it's not..."
Mom set a hand on his knee and stopped him before he dug himself further into a hole. "It's okay, Dean. Go phone Charlie."

Dean looked between Mom and Naomi again. They both gave him their own version of the Mom Look. He pushed off the couch. He snatched up the ultrasound picture and stuffed it into his pocket as he fled the living room. He went to the kitchen to use the home phone.

He had to phone twice but Charlie picked up on the second call. He didn't even bother saying hi.

"You want to watch The Breakfast Club?" Dean asked.

There was a long pause. His heart launched into his throat. What if Charlie just hung up on him? What if everyone really did think he was an asshole who had been ditching them to hang out with rich private school kids and had been cheating on Lisa?

Charlie cleared her throat and asked him if this was a John Bender kind of thing.

"No, it's not that...I just really..." Dean didn't know how to explain it. He didn't think Dad was going to do something. Dad had never raised a hand against him in his whole life. He just couldn't man up to whatever it was Dad was going to say—or not say. "I just really want to watch The Breakfast Club."

Charlie went silent again.

Dean was sure she was going to say no.

Charlie said okay and asked him if she needed to send her mom to come get him.

Dean breathed in relief. "No, it's fine. I can get over there on my own."

Charlie asked him a few more thinly veiled questions then told him she'd have ice cream and video games waiting for him. Dean told her thanks then hung up and realized he forgot to tell her Sam was coming too. He stared at the phone, not sure if he should phone back or just show up with Sam.

Mom stepped into the kitchen. "Is everything okay with Charlie?"

"Yeah." Dean said. At least it was okay for someone today.

Mom smiled at him as if everything was suddenly completely okay between him and his friends. "I'll drive you and Sam over."

Sam poked his head into the kitchen. "We're going to hang out with Charlie?"

"Yeah." Dean said. At least it was okay for someone today.

Mom smiled at him as if everything was suddenly completely okay between him and his friends. "I'll drive you and Sam over."

Sam poked his head into the kitchen. "We're going to hang out with Charlie?"

Dean half-heartedly thought about telling Sam off for eavesdropping and suppressed the urge to flip out about how they weren't hanging out they were taking cover from the huge disaster he had dragged into the house and this was probably going to be too weird for Dad and then Mom and Dad would split up and Sam would grow up being pulled back and forth between two parents that always fought because he was a giant freak that had gotten pregnant.

Or something like that. Not that he had thought about it.

"Yeah." Dean pushed past him and went for his coat and boots.

Naomi was waiting for him at the door. "Are you sure you don't want to come with me?"
Dean nodded but he wasn't sure at all. He wasn't sure about anything anymore.

"Do you have your phone?" Naomi asked.

Dean pat his pants pocket in answer.

Naomi looked at him sadly. "And you know you can't say anything to your friend?"

"Yeah." Dean said. It made him feel cold and a little gross. He had to lie his way into Charlie's house so he could have somewhere to mope while Mom and Dad talked over how messed up he was.

Mom came around the corner, shepherding Sam along in front of her. She shot Naomi a suspicious look. Naomi stared back passively. Mom narrowed her eyes.

"I'll phone later to see how Dean's doing." Naomi said in that too pleasant voice Moms use to tell each other fuck you too.

Mom snorted, "Great." She nudged Dean towards his coat. "Get your jacket, Dean."

Dean pulled his coat and boots on while Naomi let herself out. He glanced back into the living room once he had his boots on. Should he grab his bag? What if Dad didn't want him to come back and Mom couldn't talk him out of it?

Mom ushered him and Sam out the door before he could make up his mind.

The car ride to Charlie's house was horrible. Mom turned the radio onto some mindless pop station and pretended like everything was fine, Sam stared at him like he was a science project, and he realized he still had the ultrasound shoved into his pocket.

He managed to talk Mom into not following them inside Charlie's house but she still waited at the end of the driveway and watched to make sure that they went in as if she had put together his entire run away and hitchhike across the country plan.

Charlie's mom looked surprised to see Sam but she still smiled and told them Charlie was up in her room.

Dean dragged himself to Charlie's room at a snail's pace. He didn't know what the hell he had been thinking saying that he wanted to come here. He was pregnant. He couldn't talk to Charlie about being pregnant without breaking some kind of scary angel code of silence. Not that he even wanted to talk about it.

"Do I need to invent a teleporter to get you down the hall?"

Dean jumped a foot in the air. "Jesus, Charlie!" He spun around to scowl at Charlie. "Warn a guy before you sneak up on him!"

"If I warned you, it wouldn't be sneaking." Charlie chuckled at him. She pushed past him and led the way down the hall to her room. "I was thinking classic beat'em up game but I don't have a third controller. I guess me and Sam can team up and swap the controller. Or I've got that Nintendo sixty-four emulator working. We could play Zelda: Ocarina of Time and scream helpful advice at whoever has the controller."

"Sure." Dean said, following Charlie into her room.
"That wasn't a yes or no question, it was a one or the other question." Charlie said absently while she started plugging cables into her computer. "Sam? Any preference?"

"Uh...beat'em up?" Sam said. He shot a look at Dean.

Dean shrugged. Video game choices were the least of his worries.

"Okay. Mortal Kombat it is." Charlie tossed a controller at Dean.

They were six rounds in when Sam left for the bathroom. Dean half wished he could think of a good reason to leave too. He knew as soon as Sam stood up that Charlie was going to grill him for answers that he either didn't have or couldn't say.

"So what's the dealio?" Charlie asked as she wiped the floor with his character. "I mean, you brought Sam. That's kind of a big red sign that things aren't okay at home." Her whole body twitched. "Oh, did Sam...?"

Dean looked over at Charlie confused. She promptly killed his character. It clicked into place what Charlie was asking. "No. Sam's straight. I guess. I dunno. He really likes his books. Does that count?"

Charlie didn't laugh at his crappy teasing. She just turned and watched him, waiting for a real answer. He stayed quiet. Charlie leaned in closer and made her eyes go wide. He leaned away. Charlie leaned closer and somehow managed to make her eyes go even wider. It was creepy and unnerving and she knew it. The only way she'd stop is if he spilled his guts.

Dean wanted to take the ultrasound out of his pocket and shove it in her face and scream, how's that for a goddamned dealio!?

Instead he found a really cool spot on Charlie's Dr. Who bedspread and stared at it until his eyes were burning. "...there's been stuff going on at home and it kinda blew up today. My mom's going to talk to my dad about it but she thinks he might say some stuff she doesn't want us to hear."

He could feel Charlie studying him. She settled back down to her side of the bed. "Okay." She picked a new character. "But just so you know, I asked, you can stay here tonight if you want."

"...thanks." Dean muttered to the really cool spot on the Dr. Who bedspread.

For once Sam barging in was a good thing. Dean didn't have to think of stuff to fill up the awkward silence in the room.

"So who won?" Sam asked, sitting down beside Dean.

"Isn't it obvious?" Charlie retorted.

They played Mortal Kombat all afternoon. Charlie disappeared for a few minutes to help with dinner but Dean was pretty sure she was reporting back to her mom about what was going on with him and Sam.

The darker it got outside the more he worried. Why was it taking so long for Mom to tell Dad? What were they talking about? What was he going to go home to? Would he even be allowed to go home? What if he had to take Naomi up on her offer and live with them?

It was a little after ten at night when Mom came to pick them up. Charlie's mom dragged her into the kitchen under the pretext of tea but Dean just knew they were having one of those mom to mom
talks. It made him want to crawl into a hole and bury himself. Everyone kept talking about him like he wasn't there. And he didn't even get anything out of it. The adults kept talking but he still had his creepy alien baby problem.

Half an hour later Mom told them it was time to go home. Dean shivered in relief. He had been half sure that Mom and Dad wouldn't want him to come home. He tried not to let that cool relief get the better of him. Maybe Mom and Dad were letting him come home but that didn't mean everything was going to be okay.

The car ride home was horrible. Mom didn't turn the radio onto a crappy pop station, Sam stared out the window and didn't look at him, and he still had the ultrasound shoved into his pocket. He wished everyone was still pretending everything was fine.

There weren't any lights on at home when Mom pulled into the driveway. Sam didn't waste any time stampeding right into the problem.

"Where's Dad?" Sam asked.

Mom flinched. She made a big production of taking the key out of the ignition and stuffing it into her purse. "We thought it might be better if he stayed somewhere else and took a few days to himself."

Dean stared at the house in dread. He really was destroying his parents' marriage. They were going to split up.

"Don't split up. I'll leave. I'll go live with Cas's family." Dean blurted. "Naomi said it was fine."

Mom made a surprised noise that turned into a cough. She turned around in her seat and gave him one of her best Understanding Mom looks. "Oh sweetie, we're not splitting up and don't ever think you have to leave."

"But Dad—"

"You're father just has to work some things out for himself." Mom said firmly. She turned around and pushed the car door open. "Come on, it's late and we've all had a long day. I think it's time for bed."

Sam yawned wide, "It's n-n-not even mid- midnight."

"We'll make some hot chocolate first." Mom said.

Dean watched them get out of the car. He was pregnant, Dad wasn't going to come home for a couple of days, and Mom and Sam were talking about hot chocolate. He wanted to cry again and he didn't even care if Sam saw.
Chapter 44

Chapter Summary

Castiel was eternally grateful to whatever gods had smiled upon him. Now if he could just manage to not talk to anyone for the rest of the school year...

Castiel paced the kitchen. Mary was supposed to drop Dean off any minute now.

"You're going to make a rut in the floor." Anna snipped. She wasn't at all happy about being ready for school two hours early on their first day back.

Castiel sat down at the table beside Anna and tried not to think about Dean.

He had only seen Dean twice since the attack had happened — there had been some kind of falling out between his mother and Dean's parents that he didn't exactly understand — and both times the soul mate bond had felt like a black bottomless pit. He had texted and phoned Dean a few times in between trying to find out what was wrong but Dean would just tell him that he was fine and then either stop answering texts or hang up on him. It took a lot to stop himself from sneaking out to loiter in front of Dean's house to check up on him.

Anna grabbed his leg and pushed it down. "Stop."

Castiel realized he had been bouncing his leg under the table. "Sorry."

Anna gave him a cold haughty look, huffed, then pushed away from the table. "I'm taking a nap. Tell me when we're leaving."

She strode out of the kitchen for the living room grumbling about being awake so early in the morning. She really should have been born an alpha. She was the crankiest beta Castiel knew before seven in the morning.

His mother came into the kitchen. She looked him over and sighed. "Why don't you check to see if you have everything?"

"I have everything." Castiel snapped. He recoiled from his own voice. He made a desperate noise then dropped his head to the table and covered it with his arms. He groaned. "What if I can't handle it? What if you're right and I can't control myself when my— when Dean's around other alphas?"

"That's why we're going in early." His mother reminded him. "To make sure you'll both be safe."

Castiel groaned again. He was going to make everything worse. He just knew it.

Mary dropped Dean off fifteen minutes later. It was the worst fifteen minutes Castiel had, had all week. The soul mate bond had come to life only to fill him up with a downward spiral of fear, anxiety, and hopelessness. He tried to make himself be confident for Dean's sake.

It didn't work at all.

His mother and Mary had a tense icy discussion at the door about how Raphael wouldn't let Mary
into the school and the *repercussions* if she tried to sneak in anyway. Dean pointedly ignored the whole argument by angrily staring at the coat rack.

When they had all finally marched their way to his mother's car Mary stopped to pull Dean into a tight hug and whisper something in his ear. Dean tried to squirm out of her grip.

"I *know.*" Dean said like he had heard whatever Mary had whispered a thousand times before.

Mary looked at him sadly. "We'll do something special tonight."

"Like I want to commemorate *this.*" Dean grumbled. He jerked his shoulder up, bouncing his backpack higher up onto his shoulder, then gave Mary another quick hug. "I'll see you later."

Mary let him go, saying goodbye and that she loved him. Dean ducked his head and turned red. He murmured something back then hurried to the car. The soul mate bond was a mess of embarrassment, relief, and fear.

Castiel slid into the backseat of the car and closed the door. Dean yanked open the other rear door and threw himself in hard enough to rock the car.

"Okay, let's get the horror show rolling." Dean said, closing the door. He buckled up his seat belt. Anna grunted in agreement from the front seat. Castiel was surprised that his mother didn't try to disagree with either of them.

He spent the short car ride to school debating with himself over whether the subtle sense of calm creeping into him was real, his instincts being satisfied that his mate was safe, or if he was imagining it. Maybe he had just gotten used to the sinking feeling in the bond and couldn't tell the difference anymore.

Dean let out a long drawn out sigh when they arrived. The soul mate bond sunk in defeat. Dean muttered to himself and shook his head. He pushed the car door open, letting in a blast of frigid winter air.

"Don't forget your scarf, Dean." His mother reached into the back seat and picked it up. She held it out to Dean. "Pregnancy will make you think you're warmer than you are."

A spike of anxiety drove through the bond. Castiel winced. Did his mother really need to bring that up now?

"Right." Dean said through gritted teeth. He grabbed the scarf then shoved himself out of the car.

Castiel tried to give his mother a dark look for upsetting his mate but she just gave him a stern alpha mom look in response and told him to put his gloves on.

They marched up to the front entrance through the light layer of snow that had yet to be plowed. Raphael and the principal were waiting for them just inside. The soul mate bond lurched like Dean might be sick. Castiel wondered if Dean had forgotten his medication this morning or if it was just nerves. He felt like he might be sick too; either he was going to attack some other alpha for being too close to Dean or he was facing down the rest of the school year where everyone *knew* he had a pregnant mate.

They stamped their boots and brushed the snow off themselves while the principal made her introductions.
"It's nice to meet you, Dean." The principal said. She held her hand out. "I'm Lemuel. I'm in charge of our school here."

There was a nauseous heave across the soul mate bond. Dean looked at Lemuel grimly but took her hand. "Hi."

Lemuel started talking about Dean's school records and how they'd transition him into the new semester since Saint Charlies was already done the first semester. Dean didn't look or feel remotely happy to find out that he'd only need to do half the work left from his first semester and not have to take the exams.

Raphael interrupted with a patient hand gesture. Lemuel gave a shallow bow that was little more than a nod of her head.

"Of course." Lemuel said. She turned to Castiel. "But first we'll see to you."

Castiel's stomach flipped without any help from the soul mate bond.

"This way." Lemuel started down the hall. They followed after her. She stopped in front of an empty classroom and opened the door.

Castiel tensed. He could smell other alphas nearby. It didn't make him angry, it made him nervous. What if he really couldn't handle Dean being around other alphas?

His mother had explained what happened to alphas that couldn't control themselves. They almost all ended up being sent home, banned from leaving the community without written permission, and trained as soldiers so they could channel the aggression somewhere useful. He shivered at the thought. He wasn't cut out to be one of those scar covered alphas that tracked down hunters and criminals.

Lemuel stopped everyone outside of the classroom. She motioned for Castiel to continue inside. "Take a seat at the far end of the classroom."

Castiel did as told. He tried to keep himself calm and collected. He didn't know if the prickly feeling running under his skin was his instincts going awry or a mess of his own and Dean's anxiety.

"We're going to start easy. Alphas that you logically know wouldn't be competitors for your mate." Lemuel said. She ushered Dean into the classroom and left him standing opposite Castiel. She leaned out of the classroom and knocked on the neighbouring door.

A moment passed then a few of the teachers filed into the room, all alphas. They stood close to Dean and asked him a few questions. Castiel watched and felt sick but he was mostly sure the sick feeling was from Dean.

When he didn't attack anyone Lemuel sent the teachers away. She smiled encouragingly then held the door open for a group of alpha students. Meg and Uriel were there along with three alphas he didn't really know much about beyond their names.

He watched them talk to Dean. He didn't like the way they eyed Dean up but his instincts didn't rear their ugly head and make him want to fight anyone.

Lemuel ushered them out a few minutes later when she was satisfied that Castiel had behaved himself.
"I think he'll be fine." Lemuel said to Raphael. "You can't expect an alpha to watch someone attack their mate and not fight back. We've all been there. It's—"

The soul mate bond shuddered. Dean darted towards the garbage can, Castiel shoved away from the desk he was sitting at and leaned over trying not to be sick as the echo of Dean's nausea ripped through him. He nearly didn't keep his breakfast down when Dean started throwing up.

His mother and Lemuel jumped forward to help Dean. Dean shoved them away and threw up again.

Castiel breathed deep and made himself get up and go to Dean. He grabbed the box of tissues from the teacher's desk and dragged a chair over. He pushed the chair behind Dean and offered the tissues when he was done throwing up.

Dean took a tissue and quickly wiped his mouth. He tossed the tissue into the garbage then dug through his bag. He brought out a lime green water bottle. He unscrewed the top, took a sip, and swished the water around before spitting into the garbage can.

"Did you take your anti-nausea medication this morning?" Castiel asked. He hoped the answer was no and that a simple pill would fix this. He couldn't imagine having to spend the whole day feeling like this and actually be expected to concentrate on his classes.

"Yeah." Dean took another sip from his water bottle. "It's not that." He waved his hand at the adults huddled nearby. "It's them."

Castiel looked over, confused. "What?"

"The last month every time I'm around you people you all just stink. It's like skunk and rotting garbage. It's not so bad if it's just your mom or Raphael but a whole bunch of you...?" Dean grimaced like he might throw up again. "I think I'm allergic to angels."

"I smell like rotting garbage?" Castiel sniffed at himself. He had showered this morning. His next rut was weeks away. He didn't smell.

"Not you." Dean said. He waved his hand at the adults again. "Them." He took another sip of water. "You and Anna smell good...and Gabriel smells okay, I guess. But everyone else smells like they took a bath in a garbage dump."

Castiel worked his jaw trying to find an answer. He looked at his mother. She frowned at him then asked Lemuel if Ephrath was in yet. Lemuel said yes and left to get her.

"Oh, great." Dean groaned. "Her again."

Castiel sighed. He was never going to understand Dean's irrational dislike for Ephrath. She had kept all their secrets and never treated Dean differently for having been human. She might teach an embarrassing subject but that wasn't a reason to not like her.

They didn't have to wait long for Lemuel to return with Ephrath. Ephrath smiled and greeted Dean warmly when she saw him. Dean sighed and rolled his eyes. Ephrath went on like he had politely returned her greeting.

"Lemuel was telling me other people's scents are bothering you." Ephrath said. She pulled a chair over to sit in front of Dean. "But that you said you aren't bothered by Anael or Gabriel's scent?"

"Who's Anael?" Dean asked, confused.
Anna coughed, trying to politely give Dean a hint. Castiel knew he had to be feeding Dean a huge dose of embarrassment through the bond.

Ephrath blinked in surprise. "Anna."

"Oh. Right." Dean glanced over at Anna and shrugged in a poor excuse of an apology. He looked back to Ephrath. "They smell okay. What's that got to do with it?"

"We'll see in a minute." Ephrath said. She leaned closer. "Do I smell bad to you?"

Dean sniffed the air. "No."

Ephrath turned to Lemuel. "Can you find a beta and an omega student to come here for a moment?"

Lemuel stuck her head into the hall. She pointed and called out names.

A beta Castiel recognized from his classes stepped into the room followed by an omega that Castiel only knew because they went everywhere with his classmate. The two of them looked around curiously. They spotted Dean then exchanged conspiratorial looks with each other. They subtly tried to scent the air. Castiel wanted to bury his head in his hands. It was bad enough that a bunch of alphas at school knew Dean was here now everyone else was going to know too.

Ephrath waved his peers closer. "This is Eldiris and Saphir." She said to Dean. "Do their scents bother you?"

Eldiris stifled a surprised noise. A light blush spread across Saphir's face. Ephrath might be an okay teacher but she forgot sometimes that not everyone went around talking about private things like this in front of just anyone.

Dean shook his head. "No. They smell okay." He shot Castiel an angry look no doubt for being embarrassed that his mate was rating other people's scents.

Ephrath thanked Eldiris and Saphir and sent them on their way. She looked Dean over and nodded to herself. "I think your pregnancy is making you sensitive to unfamiliar alpha scents."

Dean grimaced at the word pregnancy but hid the anxiety Castiel felt through the bond exceedingly well.

"I wouldn't recommend putting Dean into classes with alphas right away." Ephrath said. She stood up and went to join Lemuel, Raphael, and Castiel's mother. "They need to finish off their previous semester's course work and get a bit more proficient in Enochian before they start regular classes anyway."

Lemuel nodded in agreement. "They can do their work in my office."

"Great, I get pulled from real school to sit in detention." Dean grumbled.

"Dean's right." Ephrath said. Dean stared at her as if she had just announced that she was going to parade through the school in her underwear. "They shouldn't be punished for something they can't help."

Lemuel nodded, thinking it over. "...we can move the other omegas into one class. None of them are in the HES classes. But I'll have to ask the parents first." Lemuel looked at her watch. "Castiel, Anael, you need to hurry up. Classes are about to start."
"But Dean..." Castiel had imagined all the ways that having Dean at school with him could go wrong but he hadn't imagined that they'd be split up.

His mother put a hand on his back and nudged him towards the door with Anna. "They'll be fine."

Dean muttered he under his breath.

His mother stopped him and Anna outside the door. "I'll be here this afternoon to pick you up." The hall started emptying out. "Now hurry up to your classes or you'll be late."

Anna nodded and took off down the hall. Castiel tried to lean around his mother to make sure Dean was okay.

"Dean will be fine." His mother assured him. She turned him around and pointed him down the hall. "You can visit them at your lunch break."

Castiel gulped down the anxious feeling rising in his throat and made himself walk to his first class. Dean would be fine. He was surrounded by angels and demons that would keep him safe. He didn't have to rely on a hunter for protection.

Castiel slipped into his first class just as the teacher was about to start. He sat down at the back. Nobody said asked him anything but after a few of his fellow students took quick glances back at him Castiel could feel the current of gossip spreading in the room. Everyone already knew.

He sunk down at his desk and hoped the rumours weren't as bad as last time.

He dragged himself through his morning classes wishing he could disappear. Knowing that everyone was talking about him and Dean was bad enough but having the steady hum of angry anxiety in the back of his head from Dean made it all the worse.

At lunch he made sure to make a quick exit from his class before anyone could start asking him questions.

He let the mating bond guide him to Dean. He found him in an empty office near the secretary that Lemuel used to meet with parents. The secretary interrogated him before letting him through to see Dean. It eased Castiel's nerves to know someone was watching over his mate.

He stepped into the office. Dean was hunched over a textbook, his lunch scattered across a desk. Dean didn't look up. "What do you want?"

Castiel held up his lunch bag. "I thought you might want some company for lunch."

Dean gave him a dry look, snorted at him, then went back to the textbook he was reading.

Castiel frowned at the top of Dean's head. This was like when they first met and Dean didn't want anything to do with him. He shuffled on the spot. He didn't know what to do.

Dean suddenly sat up straight and let his head tilt back. "Oh my god. Are you seriously going to just stand there and feel sad at me for an hour?" He snapped his head forward and glared at Castiel. "Don't you have friends or something?"

"Uh, yeah." Castiel didn't think it would be a good idea to bring up that he was avoiding them because everyone was talking about them. "I'll just...go eat with them..."

"Good." Dean grumbled. "You go do that." He hunched back over the textbook and pointedly
ignored Castiel.

Castiel backed out of the office and tried not to look too guilty when he fled past the secretary. He skulked through the halls looking for somewhere he could eat alone. He ended up hiding out in an empty classroom.

His afternoon classes weren't much better but he did manage to sneak away a few minutes before the end of his last class so he wouldn't have to deal with people in the hall.

His mother was already waiting with Dean when he reached the tiny office. They waited a few minutes for Anna and then they had to walk through the school to get to the parking lot. Castiel tried to make his mother see reason about how they should wait a few minutes before taking Dean through a hallway filled with alphas but she insisted that the halls were empty enough and most of the students were betas.

Even though he'd feel it second hand Castiel hoped Dean throw up again so they could wait for everyone to leave before going out into the hall.

Dean didn't. Castiel's mother ushered them out into the hallway before Castiel could think of a better argument.

The halls fell suspiciously quiet everywhere they went. Castiel knew he had to be beet red. His mother was practically parading his mate down the hall.

Dean leaned close. It sent a thrill down Castiel's spine.

"Dude, what did you tell people about me?" Dean whispered.

"Nothing." Castiel said.

"Then why is everyone staring?" Dean retorted.

Before Castiel could insist that he hadn't told anyone anything about Dean he was knocked sideways and yanked into a loose headlock.

"Because no one's actually seen soul mates before." Meg said. She needleed Castiel's side and messed up his hair before letting him go.

Castiel shoved her back and glowered at her as he fixed his hair.

Meg laughed at his finger combing. "That's never gonna help that mess."

Dean snorted in amusement. Castiel didn't know what he thought was so funny, Dean's wings were an even bigger mess.

Meg fell into step beside them. "You weren't at lunch."

"I was busy." Castiel wasn't going to admit to anyone that he was hiding.

"Sure." Meg scoffed. She needleed his side again and danced back before he could do the same to her. "Tomorrow, Cassie. Or else you owe me a whole sandwich." She took off down the hall before he could argue.

Dean sniffed disdainfully at him. "So you had a girlfriend this whole time?"

"What?" Castiel was sure he must have heard wrong.
Anna snorted and stuffed a hand over her mouth to stop herself from laughing. His mother snapped her head around to stare at him. Castiel glanced up at his mother, puzzled. He knew she wasn't very inclined towards them dating demons but was she actually upset he was friends with some?

Dean jerked his thumb over his shoulder in the direction Meg had gone.

"Meg?" Castiel craned his head around just to make sure that really had been Meg. He caught sight of her joining a group of betas at the end of the hall. "Meg's a friend."

Dean gave another disdainful sniff. "Right."

"I'm not dating Meg. She's an alpha." Castiel explained. Had Dean not realized that this morning?

His mother relaxed. Castiel wondered if it was because he wasn't dating a demon or if it was because he wasn't dating another alpha. He wrinkled his nose. He couldn't begin to imagine the kind of disaster an alpha-alpha-omega relationship would turn into.

Dean shook his head. "Sure. Whatever."

They made it to the car without anyone else stopping them. Castiel was eternally grateful to whatever gods had smiled upon him. Now if he could just manage to not talk to anyone for the rest of the school year...

His mother tried to make light conversation with them about their day on the ride to Dean's house. It fell flat. Castiel didn't want to talk about his day, he knew Dean didn't want to talk to anyone, and apparently Anna wasn't particularly happy either.

When they reached Dean's house Dean got out of the car with a sharp, "Thanks, see you tomorrow."

The car door slammed shut. He watched Dean stomp up to the house. He wished he knew what to do about his soul mate.

"Is Dean safe with their family?"

"Huh?" Castiel looked over at his mother. He hoped Dean was safe with his family. Raphael still wouldn't put anyone on the street to watch over Dean's house even after the attack at the bookstore.

"Can you tell if Dean is afraid to be home?" His mother clarified.

"Oh." Castiel turned his attention to the house. He squinted at the second floor where the soul mate bond seemed loudest.

There was exhaustion, anxiety, anger, and fear all crawling their way out of the black bottomless pit of the bond. Dean wasn't okay but Castiel didn't think his family was hurting him.

"I think he's fine with his family." Castiel said. He frowned at the window. "...but I think..." Castiel shook his head. "I don't know. He's been really...upset for a while. Lonely, I think."

His mother started the car. Castiel caught a glimpse of Mary Winchester glaring out the window at them before his mother pulled out of the driveway.

"Maybe you should do something nice for them." His mother suggested. She glanced at Anna. "Help them to make some new friends? It isn't good for a pregnant omega to feel lonely."

A tiny seed of jealously sprouted in his gut but he knew he really couldn't do much to help Dean
make friends. Almost all his friends at school were alphas and too many alphas around Dean made
him sick. But almost all of Anna's friends were betas. Polite well-mannered betas. The kind of
friends omegas should have.

He spent the night making cookies because it was the only thing he could think of that Dean
wouldn't outright reject from him and vetting Anna's friends as potential friends for Dean. They
settled on Brin. She was a beta dating another beta so Castiel didn't have to worry about some other
alpha trying to cause trouble by pressuring Brin to try and seduce Dean — Anna thought he was
being ridiculous but she didn't know alphas — and her brother was an omega so she knew how to
behave herself around omegas.

He packed the cookies up and gave them to Anna to give to Dean tomorrow at lunch in the hopes
that Dean wouldn't kick her and her friend out before Brin had a chance to talk to him.

He tossed and turned all night. Dean hadn't really seemed happy since he met him and tolerated
him at best these days. What if that was how his mate was always going to be?

The soul mate bond didn't feel any better the next day. Castiel was sure his own dread and
anticipation didn't help. He spent his morning classes trying to ignore the way everyone was still
staring at him and being distracted by Dean's sullen despair.

He tried to hide again at lunch but Meg caught him and dragged him to the cafeteria to eat.

"No one is going to stop talking if you disappear for an hour every day." Meg told him. She pulled
out a chair at an empty corner table and pushed him into it. "Everyone already thinks you spent
yesterday boning Dean on Lemuel's desk."

Castiel groaned. "I'm the new Damaris." He slumped down into the seat and covered his head. He
knew if he looked up half the cafeteria would be blatantly staring at him while the other half tried
to take covert glances at him.

Meg punched his arm. "You're not the new Damaris."

Castiel groaned again. He was. He was the new idiot that had gotten an omega pregnant and hadn't
realized for months.

"Damaris was a beta. And he got caught with Arie doing it in the alpha locker room. You aren't the
new Damaris." Meg reasoned. She grabbed Castiel's lunch bag and started digging through it for
his sandwich. "It's not like you were actually boning Dean yesterday...you weren't, were you?"

Castiel turned his head to the side and glared at her. "No."

Meg shrugged at him. "Well, there ya go." She unwrapped his sandwich and took a bite.

Castiel buried his head back in his arms. The table shuddered as the empty chairs across from him
were pulled out. He looked up. Two betas giggled at him. He knew one of them, Del was a friend
of Balthazar's, but the other he only recognized in passing. He thought his name might be Lara.

Castiel glanced over at Meg. She was friends with a lot of betas. She must know them. Meg
shrugged at him. She didn't know what they wanted either.

"Are you dating Gabriel?" Del asked, grinning.

Castiel jerked in surprise. "No."
Del turned to Lara. "I told you."

Lara huffed. He looked Castiel over. "But you spend all that time with him."

"I– I work for him." Castiel sputtered.

Del grinned. She leaned in closer. "Oh. You like taking orders from betas?"

Castiel felt his face warm up. "No."

They shared a look between each other then giggled and ran back to their friends. Castiel watched them join a group of betas on the other side of the cafeteria. Del and Lara started talking. The group went silent. Del and Lara finished talking. The entire group turned and stared at him. Del said something. The group broke into giggles.

Castiel heaved a sigh and buried his head in his arms again. "...this is worse than being the new Damaris."
Chapter 45

Chapter Summary

It was like sitting in the middle of a bunch of pod people.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

His day started with an email from Dr. Riz's office saying that his appointment for the 17th had been cancelled and moved to the 24th.

Dean sighed at his phone. "Happy Birthday to me."

He still hadn't told his mom that he'd need a ride to his appointment or that his doctor lived a day away and now he had to tell her that his birthday party was going to be someone sticking things up his butt and jamming needles into his arm.

He rubbed his forehead and tried not to think too much about how his birthday would have sucked anyway. Who would he have hung out with? Charlie, if he could trick her into feeling sorry for him again?

"Five minutes, Dean!" Mom called from downstairs.

Dean heaved himself out of his desk chair and grabbed his backpack. It was extra heavy today; loaded down with all the raising your very own alien baby pamphlets Dr. Riz had given him. He figured Cas probably needed those since he'd be the one doing the actual raising part.

He thumped down the stairs. Mom and Sam were already waiting at the door. Dean fidgeted with the strap of his backpack. He was sure Mom had x-ray vision and that Sam had somehow nerded his way into figuring out what he had in his backpack.

He still hadn't really had the whole, giving it up conversation with Mom yet. He didn't know if she would take it better or worse than the your son is pregnant conversation. Maybe it would be a good thing. He could give the alien spawn to Cas and then they could go back to how things were.

But Mom was still mad at Naomi so maybe Mom wouldn't want him to give it to Cas and his family because that included Naomi. Dean tried not to grimace. What if Mom wanted him to keep it?

"Ready to go?" Mom asked. She grabbed a scarf and a hat and started bundling him up.

"Yeah." Dean didn't put up a fight. Mom had always nagged him about putting a hat and scarf on but now that she knew he was pregnant she wouldn't let him out the front door until he was wearing practically every scarf they owned. She was more concerned about the baby then she was about him. Maybe she wanted to keep it.

He hunched his shoulders together and tried not to think about how weird it would be if his mom adopted his kid. What if they ended up being some weird Jack Nicholson family and his kid grew
up thinking that he was his brother? He really needed to tell Mom that it was gonna be Cas's kid.

"You okay?" Mom asked. She looped the scarf around his neck a third time.

"Yeah. I'm fine." Dean said, loosening the scarf Mom was trying to suffocate him with.

Mom hummed to herself and readjusted the scarf.

Once Mom was satisfied that he was going to boil alive she hurried them out to the car. She'd drop him off first at Castiel's house then swing down to the real school and drop Sam off— Sam had admitted that it was awesome at first because he didn't have to walk through the snow but that now he realized how much it sucked because everyone got to watch Mom fuss over him before school.

Mom spent the trip over to Cas's place asking icy questions about Naomi and trying to sound like she wasn't still upset and angry that Raphael had overruled her about him staying in regular school.

She gave a dissatisfied snort when she pulled into Castiel's driveway and glared at the front door. She had done that every day for the last week and a half. Maybe Mom would be on board with giving the baby away because it was Naomi's grandchild.

"See you tonight." Dean said, getting out of the car.

Mom frowned at his backpack. "You shouldn't—" She sucked in a sharp little gasp. Her eyes dropped down to his stomach. She had been doing that since he had told her about being pregnant.

Mom's eyes flicked back up. "You shouldn't carry heavy things. Are they giving you a lot of textbooks? They should know better."

"I'm fine. Bye, Mom." Dean shoved the door closed before she could go on. He didn't need more people telling him how to be pregnant. He already had Ephrath's daily attempts to weasel her way into it.

He trudge up to Castiel's front door. Anna opened it before he got there. He gave Mom a wave goodbye without looking back then went in. He felt his shoulders relax and the tense spot in his lower back unwind. He didn't feel good but he did feel less worse. He knew it was fake. He knew that it was whatever Naomi had done to him back in the fall, but it still felt better than any other part of his day.

And at least while he was at Castiel's house nobody treated him like he was going to fall apart if they spoke too loudly and then try to give him pregnancy advice.

"My mom's going to be ready in a minute." Anna told him.

"Great." Dean said. It came out sounding kind of mean. A lot mean if the way Anna winced was anything to go by. He rubbed at the back of his neck. "Sorry. Mornings, ya know?"

Anna huffed out a quiet empathetic laugh. She wasn't a morning person either. She could be out right terrifying if she woke up on the wrong side of the bed.

"Yeah. So. I'm just gonna..." Dean pointed towards the basement stairs; Castiel radar was pinging from Cas's room. He didn't really want to dump a bunch of weirdo angel pamphlets in the hall in front of Anna.

Pink started creeping into Anna's cheeks. She motioned wildly to the stairs. "Yeah. Yes. Of course."
Dean closed his eyes and sighed. Ever since Anna had found out he was pregnant every time he so much as looked at the basement stairs Anna started blushing. "Thanks."

Anna turned pinker then made up a reason why she needed to go to the other side of the house. Dean didn't want to know if extreme embarrassment ran in the family or if she thought he was going to have a quickie with Cas and didn't want to have the slightest chance of hearing her brother get off.

He dragged his backpack down the stairs. All the Castiel stuff in his head started screaming stop! Stop! Dean sighed and came to a stop outside of Castiel's door. He could hear Cas scrambling around his room and muttering to himself about wings and shirts. Then the door yanked open and Cas was standing in front of him like he had gotten dressed in a tornado.

"Dean." Cas said. His eyes flicked up and down Dean looking for something wrong.

Dean ignored all the concerned feelings Cas was putting off and shoved past him. He went to Castiel's bed — Castiel felt weird about it — and dropped his backpack down on it. He opened up his backpack. He pulled out the plastic shopping bag he had shoved all the angel stuff into.

"Here." Dean thrust the bag at Cas.

Castiel took the bag and squinted at it. "...what is it?"

"I went through all that stuff I got from the doctor." Dean said. He was sure he was making a face like he had swallowed a bug. "That's all the stuff for..." Dean felt his face heat up. He coughed and cleared his throat. "For after. You know, for raising it."

Castiel made a wheezing sound and nearly dropped the bag to the floor. Dean took the bag back and put it on Castiel's bed. Castiel eyed it like it had bitten him.

"You're not a nervous puker, are you?" Dean asked.

Castiel looked up at him and stared. His eyes flicked back and forth like he hadn't understood a word Dean had said. "...no?"

"Good. I took my pill this morning." Dean said, zipping up his backpack. "It totally wouldn't be fair if I still had to feel like I'm throwing up."

Castiel went back to staring at the plastic bag on his bed. "...that's...I didn't realize there was so much for after."

Dean shrugged at him. It wasn't his problem anymore.

He watched Cas get the rest of his stuff ready for school and definitely didn't take his sweater off and mush it up in Castiel's blankets for a little bit so it would smell like him. Naomi called them up a few minutes later and then it was off to winged-weirdo school.

Everybody stared at him in the hallways. Cas swore he hadn't told anyone about the whole teen mom thing. Dean only believed him because he was pretty sure the culprit was Ephrath.

A couple of kids walked by— not bothering to try and hide that they were staring at him. They smelt like dogs that had rolled around in something dead. Dean tried to snort the smell out of his nose then pulled his sweater up to cover half his face. His sinuses filled up with pine, citrus, and cinnamon. It made Cas feel all fuzzy at him. Dean rolled his eyes. Castiel had some really weird fetishes that he really didn't need to know about.
The fuzzy feeling was blasted away by red hot embarrassment as Meg sidled up beside Cas.

Dean still wasn't sure what to think about Meg. Cas was adamant that she wasn't his girlfriend but whenever she was around Castiel sent him an extra dose of friend vibes all mixed up with an electric prickle that Dean was pretty sure meant that either Cas really wanted to do the horizontal tango with her or that they had already done it. Dean didn't know who Cas was trying to fool. It felt exactly the same way he felt about Lisa when they were dating.

"Gonna join us for lunch today, Dean?" Meg asked. She gave Cas a teasing look. "You can steal the other half of Castiel's sandwich."

Dean kept his nose inside his sweater. "Sorry. Can't." He didn't want to get into the middle of whatever was going on with Meg and Cas. What if it turned out to be a weird angel threesome thing? "I already told Anna and her friend I'd eat with them."

He left out the part where he was pretty sure that Anna and her friend only ate with him because Castiel was trying to not so subtly check up on him.

"Maybe later." Dean said.

Meg made a face at Cas. Cas shrugged at her. Meg rolled her eyes.

Yeah, definitely dating.

They turned the corner. Dean breathed in relief as the administration office came into view. He never thought he'd be happy about what basically amounted to an in-school suspension but it was the only place in the school that didn't always smell like roadkill.

"And here's my stop." Dean said. He broke off from Cas and Meg and shoved the door open to the administration office. He let his sweater drop from his face.

He barely stopped himself from groaning when the smell hit him. Ephrath and Lemuel were waiting for him— he still couldn't get over that he was supposed to call the principal by her first name and not Mrs. Whatever Her Last Name Was.

"Good morning, Dean." Ephrath said.

"Yeah. Thanks." Dean gave her a look that he hoped conveyed how not good a morning he was going to have with Ephrath in it.

"How are your assignments coming?" Lemuel asked, taking a step back when Dean wrinkled his nose at her.

The only silver lining to his shit storm of a life was that Lemuel wasn't going to make him take his exams. He just had to do a couple of his assignments for his real classes and hand them in to her by the end of the month.

Dean shrugged. "Okay."

"Zdxg told me you're still having trouble with Enochian." Lemuel said.

"Uh. Yeah. A little." Dean still couldn't tell one squiggle from another when Miss Zod wrote out anything in Enochian letters.

"Well, don't worry. It's easy once you get the basics." Ephrath said. She gave him one of those
hang in there smiles that didn't really motivate but did creep everyone out. "And I've got some good news for you."

Dean bit his tongue to stop himself from retorting with a sarcastic, I doubt it.

"The other parents agreed," Ephrath said. "You're going to get some classmates today."

Dean did his best to not look completely disgusted. "Oh...that's..."

That was probably going to suck.

Lemuel stepped forward. She put a hand on Dean's shoulder and started escorting him out of the administration office. Ephrath trailed behind them, probably shooting creepy hang in there smiles at everyone in the halls.

"Iczhi will be your teacher for most of the week except Monday and Thursday afternoons." Lemuel said. "Those days you'll go back to the office for Enochian lessons with Zdxg."

She stopped him in front of a classroom door. She opened it up and waved him in. The sweaty garbage dump smell gave way to...warm bread, sugar cookies, and salt. It made him kinda hungry and half wish Castiel had given him a huge box of baked goods from the bakery this morning.

"Dean!" Ruby was up and across the room before Dean could say freaky dildo. "I'm so glad you finally started coming to school!"

"Oh no." Dean backed up and bumped into Lemuel.

"I see you know Ruby," Lemuel said. She pushed him towards Ruby.

Ruby grabbed his hand and pulled him over to the centre of the classroom. She started pointing at people. "That's Saph, Bea, and Gale. Dani and Tara—they're twins. And Noah and Izzy."

Dean had a second to puzzle over the last two people Ruby had pointed out. Either Ruby had mixed up the names or Noah was a girl and Izzy was a boy.

"Everyone, this is Dean." Ruby said brightly.

There were a few half-hearted waves. The only person that looked genuinely happy to see him was the boy Ruby had called Izzy. Everyone else just looked like they'd had enough of Ruby too. At least now he knew Ruby was some kind of Stepford wife that had taken Ephrath's guide to Omega Cheerfulness to heart and it wasn't just him.

"Oh!" Ruby flailed herself around and pointed to a teacher sitting at his desk. "And Iczhi!"

Dean silently mouthed the teacher's name. There was no way he was ever going to be able to pronounce that. He really hoped the teacher wouldn't get mad at being called Mr. Ick for the rest of the year.

"Thank you for the introduction, Ruby." Mr. Ick said. He motioned for Ruby to take her seat. "Dean, you can sit wherever you like."

Dean picked a desk as far from Ruby as possible. The girl Ruby had called Saph chuckled when Ruby made a little dejected noise. The girl he was pretty sure was Bea shot an angry look at Saph and shuffled closer to Ruby. Saph stuck her tongue out.

Lemuel gave a short speech about how great it was that they had the opportunity to make new
friends – everyone but Ruby looked like they thought it was a joke – then handed the classroom over to Mr. Ick.

Mr. Ick thanked Lemuel and kept a forced pleasant smile on his face until Lemuel and Ephrath had left. As soon as they were out the door Mr. Ick snorted and muttered something in Enochian that made a couple of the other kids snicker but made Saph stick her nose up. Ruby looked like she wanted to bury her head in the sand and never come up.

The teacher turned and wrote out a schedule on the chalkboard. He started in Enochian, muttered again, then erased it with his sleeve and wrote it in English. The morning was cut into blocks of time for math 10, math 11, math 12, and self-directed studies. The afternoon was a smudge that Dean thought might say history and then more self-directed studies.

Mr. Ick tossed the chalk down and picked up a sheet of paper from his desk. He squinted at it then shrugged and started writing out equations on the chalkboard.

It took Dean almost fifteen minutes to realize that the teacher wasn't going over lessons 10 to 12 but that there were kids from the tenth to twelfth grade in the classroom and he was teaching three different classes.

Dean had been in split grades before but three different grades in one class? How the hell was that supposed to work? This wasn't some old-timey one room school house.

But Mr. Ick didn't seem to care. He just motored through all the lessons, sometimes dropping into Enochian to answer questions, then sat down at his desk and declared it self-directed study time.

Dean watched as the other kids flipped open textbooks and got to work without so much as passing a single note while Mr. Ick picked up a book and started reading. Dean wasn't sure what to make of it. If this had been a class at his real school everyone would be talking and trying to get up to no good because there was a new teacher. But instead, everyone was quietly working. It was like sitting in the middle of a bunch of pod people.

Dean shook his head and opened up his own textbooks. He wasn't being a well behaved teacher's pet, he just didn't want to talk to anymore angels than he had to.

Fifteen minutes before lunch Mr. Ick shuffled some papers on his desk then stood up. "I have to photocopy some things for this afternoon. Is everyone good for now?"

Everyone in the room droned out some version of yes. Dean was sure they were actually robots. They had spent the whole morning being unnaturally quiet. Nobody had even laughed when Bea moved her chair and it had squeaked on the floor like a fart.

"Good." Mr. Ick said. He gathered up his papers and left.

Dean waited for something to happen. Angel kids couldn't be that perfect. He looked over his shoulders and craned his head around trying to figure out who would get into trouble first.

Nobody did anything to goof off. They just kept working like Mr. Ick, the principal, and their moms were personally watching them.

Dean planted his elbows onto the table and rubbed at his eyes. They really were robot pod people. No wonder no one knew about angels and stuff. Except for those crazy ones at the bookstore they were all so well behaved they probably thanked google for finding the answer for them.

The quiet scratching of pens on paper was interrupted by Ruby gasping in over dramatic surprise.
Dean look over. She had one hand to her chest and the other to her mouth. Dean shook his head. She *had* to be faking it. Nobody really gasped like that.

He followed Ruby's wide-eyed gaze to see Anna sticking her head into the classroom. She waved at him but had a huge smile for Ruby.

Ruby looked like she was going to have a heart attack. "*You're supposed to be in class!*" She hissed.

Anna shrugged. "It's only ten minutes before lunch. And I saw Iczhi going out the back to go flirt with Elazar."

"What about your class?" Ruby retorted.

Anna grinned. "Nobody will miss me and Ceph will grab my stuff."

The girl beside Ruby slowly reach over and pushed Ruby's open pencil case to the floor. Pens and pencils went everywhere.

"Oops." Bea smiled in mock innocence. "Sorry."

Ruby glared at her then turned to Anna with puppy eyes to rival Sam.

Anna sighed but crouched down and started picking up Ruby's stuff. Tara, Dani, and Izzy giggled between themselves. Bea looked on smug. Saph rolled her eyes. Gale and Noah both actually kicked Ruby's pens *further away.*

What a bunch of assholes.

They were perfect little pod people until they started picking on someone? Dean huffed in disgust. Maybe Ruby gave freaky dildos to people and had ruined his life but that didn't mean people had to be dicks to *Anna.*

Dean picked up a pencil that had rolled his way. He got up and gave it to Anna. "Here."

The room went dead silent. Anna's eyes went wide. Ruby made a noise like she really was having that heart attack after all. Anna snatched the pencil out of his hand.

"Thanks." She said, quickly bending back down to grab a pen near Ruby.

There was more giggling and some whispers from the other kids. Dean's eyebrows furrowed. He had the distinct feeling he was missing out on something. He retreated to his desk and tried to ignore the whispering that had started up by hiding behind his textbook. Why were angels so weird?

Ruby started up a way too animated conversation about some inane sitcom he'd never heard of. She managed to drag everyone into it, with constant reminders to include Dean by speaking in English. He only got out of it by virtue of not having a damn clue what she was talking about.

The bell for lunch rang without Mr. Ick coming back. Dean wondered what kind of school this was where the teachers just took off when they felt like it.

He debated on trying to run back to the office so he could eat his lunch in peace but that meant he'd have to go out into the halls while all the other kids were out there. He wrinkled his nose at the memory of the smell then pulled out his lunch. He'd rather eat with the dick pod people, at least
they smelt good.

He sighed at his lunch. He had a thermos of soup which wasn't bad but instead of good snacks – chocolate covered marshmallow granola bars were the best – he had a plastic container full of fruits and vegetables because Mom said it was better for the baby.

He didn't see why he couldn't just have both.

He sighed at his lunch again. He rolled up his sleeves and readied to do battle with the raw broccoli. Maybe if he just shoved it all into his face at once and chewed really fast it wouldn't be so bad.

He had the first piece of broccoli at his lips when he realized everyone was staring at him.

Dean put the broccoli down. "What?"

They all looked between each other, a mix of mortification and sick fascination.

Dean decided he'd rather go eat with the secretary.

He started packing up his lunch just when Saph broke the silence.

"What was it like?" Saph blurted out.

Dean snapped his head over to stare. His eyes raked over Saph. Saph who had long hair braided back, was wearing low cut girl jeans, and one of those tops that gathered at the front and tried to make an A cup look like a B cup according to Jo.

But Saph's voice definitely sounded like a guy's voice.

"Wh-what?" Dean's eyes landed on Saph's throat...where there was bump that looked an awful lot like an Adam's apple. "What was what like?"

Saph turned bright red but drew up in her – his? – seat. "Mating."

Dean blinked. That was definitely a guy's voice. He did another double take. Was that top trying to make nothing look like an A cup? How had he not noticed?

"Mating?" Dean repeated.

Everyone looked down at his arm— except Anna. Anna looked like she wanted to crawl under the desk and die.

Dean looked down at his arm where those blue squiggles still lived. He mostly forgot about them. At school – real school – nobody cared. But they were supposed to be a part of the whole mating thing angels did and now he was at an angel school and—

The other kids started rapid firing questions.

"Did his knot hurt?" Bea asked.

"Is it true about how much—" Izzy squeaked out a word in Enochian. "—there is? My cousin said alphas make a mess."

"Do you really get tied together when an alpha comes?" Gale asked skeptically.
Dani looked scandalized. "Knots can't be *that* big." She turned to Dean. "Are they?"

Dean was torn between running from the classroom and shouting, *what the fuck is wrong with you people!?*

Anna cleared her throat and sat up straight. "Dean doesn't like to talk about it."

Ruby choked back an embarrassed noise. The others stared at Anna like she had just shouted *penis!* at the top of her lungs.

That settled it. He was running. Dean yanked his sleeves down and packed up his stuff. No goddamned way was he staying here. Nope. He was leaving. Forever.

He jammed his work into his backpack. He'd just go back to the little office he had been banished too and never have to talk to anymore weirdo angels. He shoved away from the desk and started for the door.

Ruby tried to catch his arm. "Dean. Wait."

Dean slid away from her and ran the rest of the way to the door. He sucked in a deep breath before he darted into the hall. The rotting garbage dump smell still hit his nose like a freight train. He gagged but didn't slow down. If he stopped to be sick it would only take longer to get to the office.

He dashed down the hall, dodging people that stopped to stare, and flung the secretary's office door open with a gasp of relief.

"Dean?" The secretary looked him over with concern. "Is everything alright?"

"Yeah." Dean panted. "Peachy."

He didn't ask if he could go into the back room that had been his prison cell. He just walked in and shoved the door closed behind him. Maybe angel kids were creepy pod people but he wasn't. And he wasn't going to sit in a class with a bunch of them asking creepy questions.

Lemuel came after lunch and tried to do that understanding friend thing adults all seemed to think would trick kids into spilling their guts. Dean told her he felt sick. Lemuel nodded gravely and told him they'd move his class to a different spot in the school tomorrow and that he could stay in the office for the rest of the day.

He managed to pull the same trick twice more and spend the rest of the week in the office while Lemuel tried to figure out where she could move the pod people class to. Dean tried to tell her it was fine. He'd be the weird kid that sat in the office for the rest of the year and like it but Lemuel insisted that it wasn't good for a pregnant omega to be alone all the time.

Dean wanted to bury himself under his stack of textbooks.

Friday after school Dean carefully considered how much it would piss Mom off if he tried to convince her again that she should let him go back to work for Bobby despite the whole minor stabbing incident. Sure, it kinda freaked him out that there had been a bloody fight there but now that he was stuck at angel school it was the only place actual human people would talk to him that wasn't home.

He knew Mom was going to say no. Mom practically *growled* about Bobby being irresponsible every time he brought it up and then hugged him a bunch and told him it was too dangerous.
It wasn't like he had gotten stabbed. And Raphael had said no one had died so it wasn't really that bad.

His stomach did a little flip. He grimaced. No one had died but it still made him feel sick to think about how easily he had really hurt someone, even if they had grabbed him first.

Maybe Mom was right for the wrong reasons.

On Saturday he finally sucked it up and phoned Charlie to ask if she wanted to hang out. He was torn between feeling guilty that he was phoning her at all and feeling guilty that he wanted to phone her and try to make her feel sorry for him so she'd come over.

Nobody answered at Charlie's house.

Dean heaved a sigh and tossed his phone onto the bed. Was Charlie just not home? Or did she look at the caller ID and not answer?

He debated on phoning Jo and Ash but he was pretty sure Jo was still angry with him and if Jo was angry with him Ash wouldn't answer the phone either. He thought about phoning Benny but even since they had dated last year they didn't usually hang out alone together. Benny would probably think it was weird or that he was trying to ask him on a date since he was single again.

He wished Lisa hadn't called it quits before Christmas. If they were still dating he could phone her and ask her to come over and watch Stargate reruns with him. They could argue about whether O'Neil and Carter were friends or more than friends— they were totally just friends. But Lisa never wanted to stay friends when they weren't dating. It sucked.

Actually his whole life sucked. Did he really only have five friends?

He flopped down on his bed and grabbed his pillow. He smashed it over his face and groaned into it. He only had five friends and he had freaked them all out. He'd have to hang out with his little brother for the rest of his life.

He sulked around his room all morning until his stomach started rolling around inside him like maybe it would just get up and walk away and feed itself.

Dean made himself go downstairs to eat lunch before his stomach decided it didn't want to hang out with him anymore either.

Mom was on the phone in the kitchen. She smiled at him and waved towards the oven. He looked over and sniffed at the air. He didn't smell anything. He went to the stove and opened the oven door. Mom had a huge pan of mac and cheese inside waiting to be cooked. He turned the oven on then grabbed chocolate syrup out of the cupboard and went to the fridge for the milk. Mom hadn't banned chocolate milk from his diet yet. He was going to take full advantage of that.

He made up his chocolate milk then looked over his shoulder to make sure Mom wouldn't notice him squeezing out more chocolate syrup onto the spoon and licking it off.

He was on his second glass of chocolate milk – and sixth spoonful of chocolate syrup – when Mom hung up the phone.

"That was Raphael." Mom said.

Dean winced. He closed his eyes and sighed. Someone had probably ratted him out for skipping the pod people classes. Mom might hate the angel school but she'd still be pissed off that he was
"She says she's finally arranged for snock—cnoqvols...cnoqvoli?" Mom frowned at the word. She shook her. "She's arranged for some angel specialist doctors to see me."

Dean dropped his spoon into his chocolate milk. His eyes went wide. His mouth fell open. He had been so wrapped up in the whole pregnancy debacle that he'd forgotten that Naomi and Lucifer had promised to help Mom.

"That's awesome!" Dean sprung up from the table and wrapped Mom up in a hug. If just some average angel could fix his broken bones then a specialist had to be able to help Mom. "When do you go?"

Mom squeezed him back and let go. "They want me to meet them in a hotel in Addington on the twentieth. Raphael said to plan for three days plus driving time."

Dean blinked in surprise. "That's next week. Are you going to be able to get the time off?"

"I'm going to phone in sick Tuesday to Thursday and it's not my Friday to work." Mom said. She went over to the oven and checked on the mac and cheese. She hesitated by the oven door. "I'll be gone most of the week. You and Sam will need someone at home...maybe your father has had enough time to think things over...?"

Dean stared at her in confusion. The way Mom was talking it was like it was up to him whether Dad came home or not. "Uh, okay?"

Mom nodded like she was taking orders in the middle of a battle. She went over to the sink and started running the water to do a load of dishes. The happy atmosphere in the kitchen cooled. He could tell Mom was still happy that she might get a magical cure for all her health problems but she was frowning down at the sink like she was trying to figure out family finances for the next month.

It hit Dean what Mom was probably worried about.

"They don't charge people to see their doctors. They didn't charge me for anything except for the puke pills. And they said I could get reimbursed for that." Dean told her. He chewed on his lip and looked down at his feet. It was now or never. "And, uh, I...I've gotta go to a doctor's appointment in Addington too. On the twenty-fourth. It's for the, uh, the baby."

Mom flinched at the word baby. She put her game face on and looked over at him. "That's good. I was worried about whether you could see any doctors for prenatal care." She glanced over at the calendar on the wall. She pursed her lips at it. "I'll try to be home early on Friday so that we're not up all night driving back to the coast for your appointment on Saturday."

Dean frowned at her words. He looked over at the calendar and put it together. Mom would be finishing up her appointments just as he was going to his. A little ball of guilt dug its way into his stomach. He couldn't let Mom go to a bunch of appointments then drive eight hours home just to get him and then drive eight hours back for his appointment.

Regular appointments with her usual doctors tired her out enough as it was. Sixteen hours of driving after a bunch of doctors poked and prodded her would lay her out flat on her ass.

He bit his lip. He couldn't just tell her not to do it. Mom would give him a Mom look and tell him that she wasn't going to let him miss a doctor's appointment.
"It's okay I got it covered." Dean said.

"You do?" Mom said, surprised.

Dean's shoulders tensed as he tried not to give into the urge to let his eyes slide away from Mom. What the hell was he thinking? *I got it covered?* Of course Mom was going to ask how he had it covered. He scrambled for an answer that wasn't *I just do*.

"Yeah, Cas is driving me." Dean said, hoping it didn't sound desperate or fake.

His fingers twitched like they wanted to grab his glass of milk so he could chug it back. He bit his lip and didn't look away from Mom. Totally innocent people who made well thought out plans to get to doctor's appointments didn't chug back huge glasses of chocolate milk so they didn't have to make eye contact.

"I thought you were working that Friday so I asked Cas if he could drive me over again." Dean said, amazed that his brain had pulled out a reasonable lie on short notice.

"Oh." Mom didn't look particularly happy about Castiel driving him anywhere. "Where did you plan on staying?"

"Rachel's apartment. She's Castiel's cousin. She's cool." Dean said automatically.

Mom stared at him and didn't say anything. She totally didn't believe his story. His hand swept up and ran through his hair before he could stop the nervous gesture.

"Hmmm." Mom said. She turned off the tap and picked up a dishcloth.

"Yeah." Dean said. He edged towards the hall. "It's kinda cold in here. I'm gonna go grab a sweater."

Mom nodded in exaggerated casualness. "Lunch will be ready in a few minutes. Tell Sam."

Dean tried to act natural as he left the kitchen instead of running like his life depended on it. As soon as he was out of Mom's sight he dashed up the stairs, careful not to step on the creaky spots. He dove for his phone and madly dialled Castiel's number. Castiel picked up on the second ring.

"Dean?" Castiel sounded worried. "Is everything okay?"

"Dude, my mom is going to phone your mom in two seconds." Dean hissed into the phone. "Go find your mom before she answers the phone and tell her that we need to borrow her car next weekend for an appointment with Dr. Riz and that we've been planning to stay with your cousin for weeks."

"Oh...okay..."

"Just hurry up and do it." Dean snapped.

Dean listened to Castiel thunder up the stairs. There was a moment of silence. Then Castiel and Naomi were yammering back and forth in a mix of English and Enochian. Dean's heart leapt into his throat when he could hear a phone ring on Castiel's end.

Dean held his breath.

"Your mother just phone." Castiel informed him.
"And?" Dean asked.

"My mom agreed to let us borrow the car." Castiel said, still sounding worried.

Dean threw himself backwards onto his bed. "Thank god."

There was a beat of silence before Castiel asked, "Is everything alright at home?"

"What?" Dean scratched at his eyebrow as relief and confusion twisted up in his head. "Yeah. I mean, as good as it can be when you're knocked up, right?"

"Oh...you sounded a bit upset."

"I just don't want my mom driving for sixteen hours straight. She'll say she can do it but she'll be a wreck after." Dean said. He explained the phone call Mom got and how he maybe hadn't mentioned the fact that his next appointment was coming up.

Castiel said a lot of oh's and okays and didn't sound like he got it all. Dean didn't bother to try and make him understand. He was used to people not believing how much driving and doctors' appointments tired out Mom. No one ever believed she was that sick because she never let them see her on days where she needed a six hour nap because grocery shopping had wiped her out.

"Look, I gotta go before she figures out I was lying. We'll hash out the details on Monday." Dean wiped a hand over his face. Mom would know. She always knew. He grabbed his sweater from the back of his chair anyway. "Oh, and dude, you can tell Anna and her friend to stop checking up on me."

"They weren't— it isn't..."

"Uh, huh. Sure." Dean didn't need to have the freaky mind meld thing going on to know that was exactly what Castiel had put them up to. "Talk to you later."

He hung up on Cas before he got another talk about pregnant omegas needing to make best friends forever with everybody in spitting range.

Chapter End Notes

You have no idea how much it pained me to say twelfth grade and not grade twelve.

Dean's reference to Jack Nicholson: the actor was raised to believe his grandmother was his mother and his mother and aunt were his sisters.
Chapter 46

Chapter Summary

Most of it wasn't even his fault but Dean blamed him for it all anyway. As if Castiel wanted a miserable soul mate who hated him. He was just so...tired of it all.

Chapter Notes

I'm like a periodic comet.

warning: some brief discussion of diabetes. Mary takes insulin. It's not graphic but it is described (by a person who's completely clueless as to what's going on so it's super vague).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Castiel looked up from the pamphlet he was reading. He stared at the ceiling of his room. That constant pull in his head that wanted him to go to his mate settled and relaxed. Dean was here.

He scribbled down a reminder to find out more about short notice housing options in the notebook he was quickly filling up with parenting information then rubbed at his forehead. There was so much he needed to do and learn. And on top of all that he had to figure how to afford it all.

He wanted to believe his mother when she said that they'd work it out but fear and doubt picked away at him. He wasn't even eighteen yet and he was planning for a baby. How could they possibly work it out?

He grabbed his backpack from the floor and shoved the notebook inside. He looked back up at the ceiling, the mating bond pinpointing exactly where Dean was upstairs, and sighed.

He wished he could look forward to spending eight to ten hours in a car with his soul mate but once the urge to go to his mate had been satisfied all that left was Dean in his head and the miserable feelings he brought with him.

The horrible bottomless pit that Dean always pushed into his head had tempered down in the last week to something that felt less soul crushing. Though less soul crushing didn't make it good. It was still as dejected and miserable as ever. It was just less draining to deal now.

Castiel didn't know what to do about it. He'd tried to find a friend for Dean but Dean didn't want to be friends with her. Or anyone else for that matter. From what Anna said Dean didn't even try to make friends with the other omegas. As far as he could tell Dean wanted to feel miserable.

Which meant he got to feel miserable too.

Castiel sighed, resigned to his fate, and grabbed his bag before trudging upstairs to meet Dean. He could hear his mother and Dean talking in the living room. He thought about loitering in the hall
and eavesdropping but shook his head at himself. Dean would know he was there.

"Anna tells me that Lemuel finally found a good classroom for you." His mother said.

Dean shrugged. "Yeah. I guess."

From what Castiel had heard at school Lemuel had moved the omegas three times the past week because Dean had complained about feeling sick. Except Castiel knew that Dean hadn't felt particularly sick the last week. He just wanted to be left alone.

Castiel had debated on telling Lemuel that Dean didn't want to have classmates and that no matter which classroom he was in it wouldn't matter but he'd kept the information to himself. He agreed with his mother and Ephrath, it wasn't good for Dean to be alone. He tried not to feel guilty about it. He knew it wasn't what Dean wanted but he wasn't sure if Dean really knew what he wanted either.

Dean caught sight of Castiel standing in the doorway. He grabbed his backpack off the floor and heaved it over his shoulder. "We ate dinner at home, so I'm good to go if you are."

Castiel wasn't so sure about Dean's use of the word good but at least he wasn't actively trying to be miserable today.

Castiel tried to say a quick goodbye to his mother but was instead dragged into a bone crushing hug that didn't let up. He should have expected it. This would be the first time he was really leaving home since that entire fiasco with those other alphas had happened. His mother had assured him for the last two days that he would be fine, that Kali was already there making sure everything was safe for him, Dean, and Dean's mother. He had thought maybe his mother was picking up on his own fears but now he wasn't so sure. It was unsettling to think that his alpha mom might still be afraid.

A spike of red hot anger and frigid jealousy ripped into him making him flinch. He squirmed out of his mother's arms to look at Dean. Dean was pointedly staring at the hallway, jaw clenched hard enough Castiel was sure he'd hear Dean's teeth crack soon.

Castiel glanced between his mother and Dean but it didn't give him the slightest idea about why Dean was angry. He sighed to himself. Sitting in the car with an angry Dean wouldn't be much better than a miserable one.

"Ready?" Dean asked, not looking over.

"Yeah." Castiel said. He gave his mother a quick hug and assured her he'd phone when they got to the city.

At the front door he watched Dean pull on his jacket like he was trying to punch someone then stomp out the door. Castiel gave him a few seconds head start in case that someone Dean wanted to punch was him.

They managed to get into the car without any violent altercations. Castiel was willing to call it a miracle.

As soon as Castiel started the car Dean leaned over and turned the radio on. He fiddled with the settings for a moment until the sounds of classic rock were blaring in the car. It was loud enough that Castiel could feel his chest vibrating.

Dean shot a glare at him, along with a stab of challenge across the soul mate bond. Castiel wasn't
going to fall for it. He'd rather have a headache than spend hours arguing about the radio with Dean. He sighed in resignation and wished he had ear plugs.

They were four hours on the road when the faint feeling of hunger started trickling through the bond.

"There's a box for you in the backseat!" Castiel yelled over the music.

Dean looked over at him and shrugged.

Castiel reached over and turned the radio off. His ears ached in the silence. Warm relief came across the bond. Castiel fought back the indignant huff that wanted out. Had Dean honestly just been too stubborn to turn the radio off the entire time?

He bit his tongue. The radio was off, he could hear again, and they weren't arguing. He wasn't going to complain.

"I made you something." Castiel said, waving towards the backseat. "It's in the back. Don't flip the box over."

Dean shot a suspicious look at him before swivelling around and reaching for the box in the back. He muttered about getting fat then heaved himself forward to grab the box. When he finally snatched up the box he flung himself back down in his seat with an exaggerated huff.

"Gonna be a million pounds with all the apple turnovers and stuff you keep giving me." Dean grumbled. The angry ton was belied by a pleased feeling across the bond. He flipped the lid of the box open and stared. The pleased feeling went flat and was replaced by lurking suspicion.

Castiel took a quick glance over to make sure the giant chocolate chip cookie hadn't broken. It looked fine. Even the scrawling Happy Birthday splashed across it in yellow icing was still intact.

He could feel Dean working his way through suspicion to anger. It was baffling. He knew Dean liked chocolate chip cookies. He knew humans celebrated their day of birth— even if Dean wasn't human anymore he was raised as one. What was wrong with the cookie?

Maybe a cookie was offensive? Maybe birthday cake really had to be cake? He didn't think so. He'd seen humans buy just about everything at the bakery when they were celebrating birthdays.

"I know cake is more traditional for, uh, humans. But I thought it might be too messy for the car." Castiel said, grasping wildly at anything that might slow Dean's anger. "I didn't think you'd want to have to stop more than we had to."

Dean glared down at the cookie then slowly looked up at him. "How the hell did you know it was my birthday?"

Castiel squinted in confusion at the road ahead of them. "You told me?"

"I told you." Dean repeated. The suspicion died away completely and was replaced by spikey anger. "You mean Ephrath told you."

"What? No." Castiel shot a confused look at Dean. Why did he think Ephrath had told him?

"Well, I sure as shit didn't tell you." Dean snapped. He flipped the lid of the box closed then fidgeted in the seat as if he didn't know what to do with the box.
Castiel took a long deep breath. The soul mate bond made it clear that Dean wasn't being purposefully contrary just to make his life harder but it really didn't help. He was seriously starting to wonder why soul mates were considered the height of romance.

"Yes, you did." Castiel said. He hoped he wasn't filling the bond up with a sense of I told you so. He couldn't see Dean being pleased by that. "Right before I met your mother."

Suspicion popped back up in the bond. He could feel Dean thinking it over. Castiel didn't know how Dean could have forgotten. There was nothing that Castiel had forgotten about the day after they had been mated. It was the first time he had really met Dean and not a heat crazed omega.

Dean licked his lips and shrugged. Embarrassment scratched its way through the bond. Dean flipped the box back open. He eyes flicked between Castiel and the cookie. He made a disgruntled noise then reached into the box and broke a piece of cookie off. He snapped the piece in half. He stuffed half of it into his mouth and held out the other half for Castiel.

Castiel blushed red hot as his alpha instincts slammed into overdrive. His mate liked the food he had brought and was sharing it with him! Castiel grabbed the offered piece of cookie. He tried to shove it into his mouth and missed. It smashed into his jaw and crumbled into three pieces before falling into his lap. His alpha instincts wailed out in protest. He had to eat the cookie!

Castiel swore and picked pieces of cookie off his lap.

The first piece he popped into his mouth made his alpha instincts rumble with satisfaction but did nothing to stop the red hot blush that had flooded his face. He quickly grabbed a second piece off his lap while his instincts nattered on about how wonderful it was that his mate was pleased with him and eating the things that he provided.

He wanted to sink into the seat and die from embarrassment. Except his instincts thought that was a bad idea because then how would they be able to make their mate happy?

Dean snorted in amusement. He shook his head and broke off another piece of cookie.

Castiel was sure that all those romance novels about soul mates had to be written by someone who had never had any because not one ever mentioned dying from soul crushing embarrassment when their instincts flared to life.

"So...is Saph a guy or a girl?" Dean asked through a mouthful of cookie.

"Saph?" Castiel didn't think he knew anyone named Saph. He puzzled over the name for a moment before it clicked in. "Oh, you mean Sadie's brother."

"Brother." Dean said, breaking off another piece of cookie. "So Saph is a guy." He popped the piece of cookie into his mouth. "Is Saph...always a guy?"

"Uh, yeah?" Castiel glanced over, confused. His alpha instincts bubbled away in the background. He shoved them aside. This was the first time Dean had ever willingly brought someone from school up and hadn't complained about them. "Why?"

"What do you mean why?" Dean asked, incredulous. He picked at his shirt, bunching it up at the top. "He dresses like a girl half the time."

Castiel's eyebrows furrowed. He wasn't sure what the bunched up shirt was supposed to mean but
he hadn't ever heard of anyone mentioning Sadie's brother dressing strangely. They dressed like any other omega as far as Castiel knew.

"This is a weird angel thing, isn't it?" Dean said. "Like when everyone in class saw your name in squiggles on my arm."

Castiel made a choking noise. "You showed them your soul mate mark?"

"Jesus, you'd think I whipped my dick out in class from the way everyone acts." Dean muttered.

Castiel was at a loss as to what to say. He had told Dean that mating bites and soul mate marks were usually considered private but Dean still didn't seem to care. Castiel tried to wrap his head around just showing everyone in one of his classes his mating bite or soul mate mark.

"I didn't do it on purpose." Dean grumbled. Exasperation seeped into the bond. "It just sorta...happened. Then they all got weird about it."

Castiel wondered if that was the reason Dean wasn't making friends with the other omegas. Maybe he just didn't realize how uncomfortable he was making everyone. He'd have to ask Anna to ask Ruby if that was the case.

"Hey, so, Sam told me palm trees are more closely related to grass than actual trees." Dean said, waving his hands in the air. "Weird, right? They've got tree right in their name. Should be palm grass."

If he wasn't driving Castiel would have turned and stared at his soul mate in utter confusion.

"What?"

"Palm grass." Dean repeated.

The repetition didn't make any more sense than it had the first time.

Dean let out an exaggerated sigh. "I'm trying to change the topic, dude. I can feel you thinking about all that angel stuff and I don't want to talk about it." He broke off another piece of cookie and shoved it at Castiel. "I don't bring up your weirdo food fetish, so let's not talk about all the creepy angel stuff. Okay?"

Castiel thought they probably should talk about 'angel stuff' before Dean did something he didn't mean to do but his instincts were still happily buzzing away about how his mate was sharing food with him.

"...okay." Castiel said, taking the piece of cookie.

The rest of the trip was filled with Dean's explanations about why Led Zeppelin was the pinnacle of classic rock. Castiel didn't understand any of Dean's reasoning but it was probably the most pleasant eight hours he had spent with Dean in— well, ever.

There was something to be said for avoidance.

Castiel was barely awake when he dragged himself into Rachel's apartment at two in the morning. He had dropped Dean off at his mother's hotel room first and then checked in with Kali. After hours of driving it had all been too much, too late at night. He had just wanted to crawl into bed and pass out. But instead, Mary had wanted to question him about the drive over and Kali had wanted to go over in detail everything that she had seen since Mary had arrived.
He was more than thankful that Dean's appointment wasn't until the afternoon. He was going to sleep all morning.

He locked the door to Rachel's apartment behind him. He stumbled through her dark apartment into the guest room and flopped onto the couch without pulling it out into a bed. He managed to work up enough energy to kick his jeans off and pull off his shirt to let his wings out. He fell asleep thanking the gods that he didn't have to drive home tomorrow.

He was rudely awakened before noon by Rachel shoving at his wings. He groaned and stretched one wing out, trying to knock her up the side of the head. Rachel laughed and danced backwards out of the way. He hid under his wings. He wasn't getting up.

Just when he thought she'd given up the scent of burning feathers curled into his nose. He lurched upright and flailed his wings. Rachel laughed and jumped backed, closing her hand around the fire in her palm.

"Oh, you're up." Rachel teased. "Good."

Castiel scowled at her as he folded his wing around in front of him. He combed his fingers through his feathers. Two loose ones fell away, singed at the edges.

"If you had any plants." Castiel threatened. He'd gladly grow a vine to tangle up in her wings. It was too early to be awake.

He arranged his wings to cover up his mating bite and soul mate mark. Rachel was family and had seen them before but if she was going to wake him up at unreasonable hours he wasn't too sure how strongly he felt about her being family. He glowered over at her and settled his wings more firmly against himself to prove the point.

Rachel grinned at him and shoved him over on the couch. She sat down beside him. "Where's Dean?"

"He stayed with his mother last night." Castiel said, absently running his fingers through his feathers. "She's going to drive him home after his appointment."

Rachel nodded. She gave Castiel a side long look and arched an eyebrow at him. Castiel shrugged at her. Rachel huffed but didn't push for more information.

It made him wonder just how much Rachel knew about Dean. She knew Dean's name had appeared in English on his arm but what else did she know? With everything that had happened in the last few weeks he still hadn't specifically told her about how Dean hadn't always been an angel. He wasn't sure if he was allowed to. Raphael wanted it kept quiet. But if Rachel was fishing for gossip, something must be getting around.

He wasn't sure if he should be worried that Raphael might blame him for telling people. Or if he should feel smug in finally knowing something before everyone else.

"I wrote to Aunt Hester asking about baby stuff." Rachel said. She chuckled to herself. "She wrote back to say you could take it all. But then I got a second letter from Inias saying that they still needed a lot of things but they could share some things and that Aunt Hester doesn't know anything about children and should have mated a second beta to make his life easier. I think I got Aunt Hester in trouble."

Castiel's wings puffed up in surprise. He settled them back down. "Inias actually said that?"
Despite having a talent his aunt's mate was one of the quietest most soft spoken betas he knew. He couldn't imagine Inias even implying that Aunt Hester wasn't capable of taking care of her family.

"No." Rachel snorted. "Could you imagine?" She shook her head and laughed to herself. "You have to read between the lines. But I think he's getting a bit...frazzled by Aunt Hester deciding she can do everything a beta would do. I don't think he expected her to be as hands on after the baby was born."

Rachel chattered on about family gossip from back home but all Castiel could think about was that he'd have to do everything a beta would do once the baby was born. The list of things he had to figure out started running through his head again.

A shove to his side pulled him out of his thoughts.

"Huh?"

"I said, are you going with Dean to the appointment?" Rachel asked, annoyed. She had clearly asked him a few times before shoving him.

"Yeah." Castiel said. As soon as the word was out of his mouth he frowned. He had assumed he'd be going since Dean still didn't know enough Enochian to even read basic signs. But Dean hadn't actually asked him to come. Maybe Dean wanted to go on his own.

A worse thought occurred to him. What if Dean tried to bring Mary to the medical centre? He knew Raphael had arranged for Mary to meet with healers and doctors at the hotel to keep a human out of the medical centre – to keep it safe – but did Dean know that?

"...maybe I should double check." Castiel said, reaching for his phone.

Rachel smiled and shook her head. She stood up. She bumped her wing into Castiel's head. Castiel swatted at her. Rachel grinned and did it again before dodging backwards.

"I've got to head out. Pottery doesn't fire itself." She said, opening and closing her palm, creating and snuffing out a tiny flame. "There's leftovers in the fridge if you want something other than cereal."

Castiel waved absently at her as he punched in Dean's phone number.

It rang twice before Dean picked up. Dean answered with a snappish, what?

Castiel's eyebrows furrowed together. "I, uh, just wanted to know if you wanted me to come with you to the medical centre."

Dean grumbled out a few choppy sentences that amounted to a coldly angry yes then hung up on him.

Castiel sighed in defeat. He flopped down on the couch and groaned. He hadn't even been near Dean for hours and somehow Dean was mad at it him again.

He tossed and turned for an hour before deciding that it was impossible to go back to sleep. It didn't make sense. Dean was supposed to be his soul mate. He had thought they were starting to get along better after last night. Now Dean hated him again. His soul mate wasn't supposed to hate him.
He moped through breakfast. He dragged his feet as he dressed. When it was finally time for him to go pick up Dean he stood in front of the door and sighed sadly. He didn't want to go. In the last months if Dean wasn't angry with him then he was feeling generally miserable. It was exhausting. And most of it wasn't even his fault but Dean blamed him for it all anyway. As if Castiel wanted a miserable soul mate who hated him. He was just so...tired of it all.

He forced himself to step out the door. He didn't want to go but he had to. He was an alpha. Dean might hate him again but Dean was still his mate and carrying his child. He had to go. Whether he wanted to or not. A good alpha would go.

He drove to the hotel, letting the mating bond direct him. The closer he got the more of Dean's anger filtered through to him. By the time he was in the elevator going up to Dean's room he was sure Dean was going to start yelling at him the moment he knocked on the door.

As luck would have it Mary answered the door instead. She looked exhausted but she smiled and waved him in.

She motioned to the closed bathroom door. "He's still in the shower."

Castiel nodded for Mary's benefit. He'd known as soon as he walked in where Dean was but he doubted Mary understood the finer points of being mated or having a soul mate. And besides, it would have been rude to retort with, I know that.

They chatted quietly while he waited. He tried not to be too distracted by the way Dean's anger was freezing him from the inside out but he was sure he probably only heard one word out of three as Mary spoke.

His attention snapped back when Mary fell silent. She pursed her lips and looked at the clock. She glanced over her shoulder at the bathroom. She pulled her purse into her lap and started rummaging through it.

"I just worry. He's not talking to any of his friends anymore." She grimaced at something in her bag. "There's so much he can't tell any of them." She frowned again. She looked over her shoulder at the bathroom. "Is he making friends at the other school?"

Castiel hesitated. If he said no Dean would definitely be more angry with him. But maybe this was one of those things that was better if parents knew about it. Dean not talking to anyone couldn't be healthy for him or the baby.

Mary glanced at the bathroom again. She sighed. She took out a little black case from her bag and held it up. "I need to take some insulin. I don't mind if you're here but you might want to leave if needles bother you."

Castiel felt his eyebrows puzzle together. What did Mary mean, she needed to take some insulin? Who was she taking it from? And what did needles have to do with it? As far as he knew Mary didn't practice any type of witchcraft. Maybe it was something one of the specialist healers had recommended she start doing.

"Uh, I'll be fine?" Castiel said.

Mary nodded as she opened up the case. Castiel watched her take out what looked like a big permanent marker. She fiddled with it for a moment then pulled up her shirt to bare her stomach and pushed the marker against her skin.

Castiel stared at her, confused. It wasn't like any magic he'd seen before, if it was magic at all. It
had to be a human thing.

Mary glanced up at him and chuckled. "You look like you didn't study for a test." She put the black marker away and waved her hand at her stomach. "I'm diabetic."

"Dean mentioned that." Castiel said. Dean had explained it to him once before. He still didn't really understand what it meant beyond it being an illness that human's got. He pointed to the black case. "What— do you mind if I ask what that...was?"

"It's an insulin pen." Mary said. She took the black marker out of the case and pulled the cap off. She showed him a tiny needle inside and started explaining about insulin and blood sugar highs and lows.

Castiel sat and listened and didn't understand any of it beyond high and low blood sugar being bad.

He knew enough basic biology to know that humans and angels and demons weren't that different when it came to their bodies needing sugars to keep them alive. He just couldn't grasp the idea of a person's body not doing something it needed to do to stay alive. If an angel or a demon was sick like that they'd go to a doctor and have the problem fixed. Or if it was from some type of magic they'd find someone who could remove curses and spells.

He wondered what the point of human doctors were if they couldn't actually fix the problems humans had.

Before he could ask the bathroom door flung open. The cold anger Dean had been freezing him with lashed out across the bond. Dean stalked out of the bathroom, dressed and ready to go. Dean picked a point on the opposite wall to glare at.

"You ready?" Dean asked flatly.

"Yeah." Castiel stood up. He glanced at the marker— pen still in Mary's hand. Was there something he was supposed to say about it? It wasn't magic but it still seemed like it was a part of a ritual.

Mary put the cap back onto the pen. She put it back into the case and turned to face Dean. "Don't forget to ask about what we talked about."

Dean clenched his jaw but nodded. He motioned for Castiel to hurry up.

Castiel looked between Mary, the pen, and Dean. No one seemed to be waiting for him to say anything. Maybe it wasn't as ritualistic as it had seemed.

"...uh, bye." Castiel waited a second to see if he needed to say more but Mary didn't seem to be expecting something else and Dean was just as angry as he'd been since he got there.

"Come on, dude." Dean said. "We're gonna be late." He yanked the hotel door open and strode out into the hall.

Castiel hurried after him. Dean was already at the elevator by the time Castiel caught up.

Dean jabbed the call button and stared at the elevator doors like they had personally insulted him. Castiel edged sideways and let Dean have his space.

The elevator doors slid open. Dean stomped inside. Castiel grimaced. Trapping himself in a tiny room with Dean while he was this angry with him didn't seem like a good idea but he couldn't
figure out how to say he'd take the stairs without seeming like he was afraid his mate.

In the back of his head his instincts loudly lamented the situation. They didn't know what to do either. They were torn between slinking away to lick the wounds to his pride then try to figure out how to make his mate like him again. Or staying as close as possible because his mate was clearly upset and needed to be protected from other people that might upset him further.

The doors started to close. Castiel jumped forward before they could shut in his face. He took up a position as far from Dean as possible. His instincts didn't think it made for a good compromise. He was both too close and too far away from Dean.

They rode down one floor in stony silence before Dean groaned in exasperation. "Stop being all..." He twisted his hand by his head.

"Sorry." Castiel said quickly. He tried to calm his instincts down.

Dean rolled his eyes. "Look—" He stopped himself and shook his head. He shoved his hands into his pockets. The cold anger peeled back. The barest hint of apology crept through the bond. "I'm not mad at you. Okay?"

Castiel's eyebrows shot up. His instincts made him freeze. Dean's words felt like a trap.

"There's just been...some stuff going on at home." Dean said. He kicked at the floor. He shot a half-hearted angry look at Castiel. "So knock it off. Not every thing is about you."

His instincts buzzed back into action. What if his mother had been right to worry about Dean at home? Dean's family was human. Humans were dangerous. More so when they knew about angels and demons. What if Dean was in danger at home?

"Oh my god." Dean complained. "Can I get five minutes to myself without someone worrying about precious fragile Dean?"

It only made Castiel more worried that other people were worried about Dean. His instincts agreed. It was definitely bad that other people were worried about his mate. He must be a terrible alpha if people were that worried.

Dean leaned back against the wall of the elevator and thumped his head off it. "Quit it. Seriously. It's just stupid family shit. My dad had that rusty old car towed this week while we were at school even though he said I could have it when I turned eighteen."

Castiel's mind ground to a halt. A car. Dean had been that upset and angry over an old rusting car. Even his instincts seemed confused over the notion.

The elevator stopped. The doors slid open. Castiel didn't move.

Dean snapped his fingers in Castiel's face. "Dude, come on. If we're late you know they're gonna make us wait forever. Doctors love an excuse to make people wait."

"Yeah. Yes. But— a car?" Castiel blurted. "That's...I don't..."

Dean sighed. "You remember yesterday? The whole, let's not talk about it thing?"

"...yeah."

"Great." Dean said. The elevator doors started to close. He stuck his hand out and pushed them
back open. He motioned for Castiel to hurry and get off the elevator. "So let's do some more of that."

Castiel stared at Dean. He knew ignoring problems was a terrible idea. It was exactly the kind of idea that his mother and his teachers said always led to more trouble.

But...Dean seemed to get into more trouble whether or not he ignored his problems. Would it really be so bad if his mate wasn't miserable on top of that?

"Okay." Castiel said, stepping out of the elevator. He picked something to talk about that was as far from cars, school, and pregnancy as he could think of. "My cousin Rachel once accidentally burned down a barn when she was eight."

Chapter End Notes

FYI, updates will likely be slow for a while yet but hopefully not so painfully slow as they were.

Why might you ask? Well, because science is really cool so I'm making my own alien spawn (Dean would be horrified, I'm sure). So. Yeah. There's going to be a smaller me sometime in April. Which makes it sound like I'm reproducing via parthenogenesis but I am unfortunately not a lizard. It would be cool though. If I were I'd name all my clones after things I was allergic to just for the irony.

On a story related note. It was entirely on a whim that I decided that Rachel takes full advantage of her fire talent by being a living fuel source for a kiln. So now we've got two hilarious job opportunities for angels and demons: living fuel and float plane pilot. Well, beyond shadowy government, teachers, admins, and medical professionals.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!