Start Quoting Shakespeare and We're Done

by pyrebi

Summary

In which Dean has the hots for a librarian named Cas, Cas may or may not have the hots for a mechanic named Dean, and Gabriel joins Sam in the peanut gallery in the hopes that he might just get to do a horizontal tango of his own.

Chapter I: In which Dean Winchester is a teenage girl with a librarian fetish.

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The little brass nameplate says Castiel.

That, Dean had decided a while back, is a weird fucking name.

He's been coming to the Shurley Public Library every day after work for a couple of weeks now.
He's eating his way through the whole Vonnegut collection and is gonna start on Palahniuk soon, just as an excuse to be there. It's all Castiel's fault, truth be told. Dean had come into the library once to pick up a hard-to-find automobile digest from the 1950s, and there he'd been. He'd tipped his head back to look up at Dean, pushed those wire frames back to their proper spot on the bridge of his nose, and asked, ``May I help you?'' It'd been all Dean could do to refrain from suggesting just how often the librarian could help him, and in which positions.

The dude behind the desk, you see, is criminally attractive. He looks for all the world like he just stepped out of some ridiculous issue of Playgirl where they fetishize various professions. Like, oh, look at this sexy firefighter, he’s only wearing suspenders while he suggestively angles that firehose. Oh, look at this sexy mechanic, he’s working on a Mustang in an attractively oil-smeared wifebeater. Oh, look at this sexy librarian, decked out in a gunmetal waistcoat, vibrantly blue tie, and wire-rimmed glasses—no wait, this is real life, apparently. Dean sure as hell hadn’t known that people actually dressed like that. Especially at small public libraries. In the middle of July.

Apparently Castiel is a weird fucking dude to go with his weird fucking name.

But, y’know—truth be told—Dean isn’t exactly complaining.

Dean, you see, has had a “sexy librarian” kink since ninth grade, when their school librarian Mrs. Fitzpatrick had retired and Mr. Byler had taken over. Mr. Byler had a penchant for sweater vests and ugly bow-ties, but he was ridiculously nice and his smile had been the best goddamn part of Dean’s day. (This was also when Dean realized he was at the very least bi, which was cool, because less picky equaled more sex, as far as his horny teenage brain could figure.)

So Castiel? Like a wet dream made flesh.

Right, sorry, back to the story of meeting the dude. It’s kind of important to the overall narrative of how Dean has become a creeper of late.

Anyway, when Dean had mentioned the volume he was looking for, Castiel had come out from behind his desk and led Dean to the correct shelf. Then, god help him, Dean had watched as Castiel had shimmied up a ladder to reach the required text, and the dark material of the librarian’s trousers was never gonna be enough to keep Dean from imagining the skin underneath when his ass was only a foot from Dean’s face.

But it was when Castiel came back down the ladder that shit got real. He’d handed the book to Dean carefully, and then he’d smiled. And his smile? Just as gorgeous as Mr. Byler’s, just as exhilarating.

Dean was fourteen again, stuck in study hall for forty-five minutes a day, bored entirely out of his skull. He’d spent most of his time absent-mindedly doodling giant monsters destroying cities on his assignments, little stick-people screaming in terror as they ran away in flames. And Mr. Byler, on his first day, grimaced in a friendly sort of way at the destruction unfolding across Dean’s pre-algebra homework, pulled The Illustrated Man off of a shelf, and handed it to Dean. By the end of study period, Dean’d blown through “The Veldt” with its parent-devouring lions and was pretty sure it was the most awesome thing ever—and, correspondingly, that Mr. Byler was the most awesome librarian ever. The rest of his ninth-grade year boiled down to Ray Bradbury and Mr. Byler, so that Sammy gave him Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles for his birthday and John made a point to shake Mr. Byler’s hand during parent-teacher conferences and thank him for looking after his boy. (That, by the way, was entirely mortifying for Dean.)

Right, anyway.

So the librarian with the weird name had smiled at him, eyes crinkling behind those wire frames as
he handed Dean the automobile digest and asked if it was indeed the correct one.

And just like that, Dean was done. Might as well’ve stuck a fork in him. He’d spent the rest of the evening breaking in his new creeper status and hiding in the stacks, just watching Castiel and trying to come up with another question he might need help with.

He found himself coming back the next day to return the book. Then the day after, apologetically explaining he’d jumped the gun and needed the book again. Then the day after to return it again. Then the next, sheepishly asking for pleasure-reading suggestions. Repeat *ad nauseum,* right up to the current day. He sweats one evening he’s actually gonna talk to the guy, ask him out for a drink or something, but it’s kind of awkward. It’s not like Dean hasn’t done it a million times before (with a pretty high success rate, too), but there’s something about Castiel that reminds him way too much of Mr. Byler for Dean to just tackle this from a “hey wanna sleep with me?” direction. He keeps meaning to, then doubting himself at the last moment and swallowing his words. This means he spends a lot of time just watching Castiel sullenly over the top of whatever book he’s reading that day.

If you think this makes him sound like a thirteen-year-old girl, you're not wrong.

Sam certainly thinks so. When Dean gets home that night, Sam accosts him as soon as he opens the door. “Who is he?” he demands.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Dean replies, trying to feint his way around Sam and get into the kitchen.

“Oh please,” Sam sighs, moving to block his brother again. “You haven’t been home earlier than eight in like two weeks, man. If you’re seeing somebody, you could at least tell me.”

Dean ducks his head and shoves right past. He pops open the fridge and starts poking through leftovers, looking for something that’s a) not Sam’s health food crap and b) mold-free. He comes away with a container of mac and cheese that doesn’t look *too* suspect. Turning to Sam, who is leaning against the doorframe and scowling, he answers honestly, “I’m not seeing anybody, I swear.”

Sam studies him for a long moment, eyes narrowing. Finally he says, “Oh god, this isn’t some sort of unrequited love thing, is it? Are you *pining*? Don’t eat your feelings, Dean, I hear lovesickness goes straight to your thighs.”

“Fuck you very much,” Dean retorts, taking a very pointed bite of cold macaroni. “I am *fine*.” He looks around and spies the tell-tale camo-print box on the counter. “But speaking of unrequited love, how’re things going with you and Mr. Sugar-Coma?”

Sam goes pink. “Shut up. Just—shut up.”

(Their apartment is three buildings away from a gourmet chocolaterie run by a guy who’s absolutely *mad* for Sam. For the past couple of months, boxes of chocolates and other confections have been appearing in their mail. They’re *heavenly,* but Sam’s being a priss about the whole thing.

The problem’s that the chocolatier tends to be something of a prankster, and the first time Dean and Sam had gone into the shop, he’d given Dean an absolutely *lovely* Grand Marnier truffle, but to Sam had given an “experimental” chocolate overstuffed with habanero. Sam had taken it *quite* personally, despite the fact that on their next visit Sam had been plied with a cool coconut crème truffle and the most obvious flirting Dean had ever seen.
At this point, it’s become a standoff. Sam will stop in every now and again at the guy’s behest and needle at him for a while. Sam gets free truffles out of it; the chocolatier gets to feel that he’s making progress, however slow. Nobody gets sex.)

With a stalemate thus reached, they spend the rest of the evening watching television and generally being affectionately unpleasant towards each other.

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Chapter II: In which Dean Winchester tells white lies.

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Dean’s kinda just drifting off, watching Castiel talk to one of his coworkers, a pretty redhead Dean’s pretty sure is named Anna. It’d been a rough day at the garage—one of the know-nothing new hires hadn’t raised some dickwad’s Prius properly and it’d nearly slipped off the lift straight onto Dean. Then Mr. Prius had decided to tear Dean a new asshole about it, even though the fucking car was fine, not even a little scratched paint. Dean had needed to go bash in the windows of a few junkers after that. He’d considered just going straight home after work and chilling out, maybe watching the Indians try to defend their spot as the third-worst team in baseball.

Somehow, instead, he’d ended up at the library again. He’s slumped in one of the huge overstuffed leather wingchairs near adult contemporary fiction, mostly out-of-it, idly studying the other patrons as they come and go, but mostly just watching Castiel go about his job. All his bones feel like jelly and he’s not sure why he doesn’t just leave, make Sam order for Chinese take-out, and spend the rest of the night vegging.

And then suddenly Castiel’s heading his way with a trolley full of books to reshelf and Dean’s just been sitting there staring at him and he doesn’t wanna look like that’s all he’s been doing (the truth of the matter be damned). So he sits up with a lurch and grabs the first book his fingertips graze across, then slouches back and flips it open, hoping he didn’t seem too conspicuous. He doesn’t even look at the words, though. He’s hyper-aware of Castiel wandering down the rows, running his hands over the books, organizing them, straightening them, making sure they’re all even on the shelves. It’s a quiet, careful, methodical order that Dean finds reassuring somehow.

Then suddenly Castiel’s fixing an endcap display not ten feet away and Dean becomes very interested in looking like he’s reading. He’s really just listening to the quiet shh-shh sound of books sliding across wood, however, and the tuneless hum Castiel’s making that’s just at the threshold of Dean’s hearing. His eyes are fixed on a single word in the book in front of him, the word Church.

He wonders absently what he happened to pick up and hopes it won’t become important.

Because that’s the way the world works, though, abruptly Castiel’s pleasantly deep voice says, “Do you like Stephen King?”

Dean lowers the book a little and takes a quick glance around. No, the librarian’s definitely talking to him. Shit. He swallows. “Uh, no, not really.”

Castiel tilts his head a little, a bemused look crossing his face. “So why today’s choice?”

“What?” Dean says, then flips the book closed and looks at the cover. Pet Sematary. By Stephen King. Well then, that’s just fantastic, isn’t it? “Oh. Uh. Well,” he recants quickly, “I’ve, uh, only read a couple of his books, y’know, and I thought maybe I’d...give him another chance?”
Castiel smiles at that and sits down on the arm of an adjacent chair. “I am quite pleased to hear that. Not out of any particular affection for King’s work, of course, but because so many people tend to form concrete opinions of the worth of certain sections of literature and do not often revisit the ones that did not immediately appeal to them. It’s quite refreshing to hear otherwise.”

Dean very nearly swallows his tongue. “Oh yeah, that’s me. Refreshing.”

Castiel chuckles. “The very picture of it, Dean.”

This earns a double-take out of Dean. “Uh. Okay. You know my name. That’s not creepy or anything.”

“Because it’s so hard to remember when I see your library card nearly every day,” Castiel replies dryly. “We tend to take notice of patrons who come in as often as you do.”

Dean feels his neck grow warm. “Yeah, sure. Of course. That totally makes sense. But it, uh, puts me at a disadvantage, see. Because anybody can pronounce Dean, but I can read that name tag all day and still not know how to say your name, dude. Like, cas-teel or...?”

Castiel snorts lightly, his expression making it obvious that he gets this pretty damn often. He pronounces his name and listens to Dean repeat it a few times before nodding. “I was—well, let’s say blessed—with a father who was a professor of medieval studies at the university near my hometown. He determined early on to name his children after apocryphal angels. Oh, don’t give me that pitying oh-I-see nod. I just feel lucky I didn’t end up named Jegudiel.”

This startles a laugh out of Dean. “No way, really? Did one of your poor siblings get shackled with that one?”

“No, thankfully,” Castiel replies. “We never made it around to that particular angel. But as you can imagine, it still wasn’t the most pleasant childhood. We relied rather heavily on nicknames. Which reminds me—you can call me Cas, if you’d like. Less of a mouthful, and you’re still guaranteed a response.”

Dean finds he does like. It’s short, simple, and damn near impossible to fuck up. Plus, that part of him that is secretly a sixth-grade girl is—not surprisingly—pretty giddy to be on a nickname-basis. Or, y’know, even a name-basis at all. Feels like a step in the right direction, away from potential stalkerdom. Which, always cool with Dean.

Shrugging lightly, Castiel—Cas—leans forward and taps the cover of Pet Sematary, giving a small smile when he says, “Well, I am glad you’re giving it another shot. When you finish it, let me know what you thoug—Todd, I know you are not building a fort out of the Encyclopedia Britannica!”

Dean blinks at this total non-sequitur and leans forward in his chair so he can follow the librarian’s line of sight. Down one of the aisles a boy who he vaguely remembers seeing around is hastily picking up a haphazard pile of book stretching across the carpet. Cas is watching with a longsuffering frown.

He glances back at Dean. “His mother works late on Mondays and Wednesdays,” he explains. “And because of some previous trouble with bullies, Todd comes here. He tends to enjoy books in, hm, unconventional methods, as you can see. I like to think of him as my personal archnemesis. I’m sorry, I have to go. There’s no chance that he’s going to put those back on the shelf in the proper order.”

“Yeah, no, of course,” Dean nods.
Castiel heads off to intercept more serious damage to the library’s property. Dean sighs and flips *Pet Sematary* back open, but this time he starts at the beginning.

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*Chapter III: In which Sam Winchester does not die of cyanide poisoning.*

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“Sam!”

For a brief minute, Sam really debates pretending he didn’t hear his name. But, despite what Dean claims, he’s *not* an asshole, so he turns. Gabriel, the chocolatier, is standing in the doorway to his shop, grinning.

“Hey, I’ve already blown through the whole kitchen staff and need an extra set of tastebuds for my latest crime against nature. Can I tempt you?”

Sam frowns. “Calling something a ‘crime against nature’ is not a good way to convince people to eat it.”

“Ehhh,” Gabriel shrugs. “You’ve already survived the Pepper Bomb, how could this be worse?”

“It could kill me,” Sam points out (quite reasonably, he feels).

Gabriel handwaves this comment away. “Why would I want you dead? I like you all alive and stuff. Dead people have a way of becoming unsexy real quick. Now get in here.”

(Gabriel’s shop is called *BOOM*. The inside is kitschy corrugated steel, and a scale B-52 is suspended from the ceiling. Every truffle’s called a bomb, all brittle’s called flak. For Easter, instead of eggs the chocolates are shaped like little pastel-colored hand grenades. It’s one part charming and two parts horrifying in its cheerful adherence to its theme. But *damn* the chocolate is good.)

Sam sets down his briefcase on the countertop, which was made to look like an elaborate map of Europe. Gabriel plunks down a sampler cup of coffee and a truffle on top of it, then steps back and stares expectantly at Sam.

Quite skeptically, Sam picks up the confection. It looks pretty normal, milk chocolate with a white squiggle decorating the top. He sniffs. Smells like normal chocolate, maybe a little nutty. Finally, he sinks his teeth through it. It is *fucking amazing*, and he must’ve made some sort of inappropriate noise, because Gabriel’s grin is both proud and suddenly really turned on.

“Good then?” he asks.

“What *was* that?” Sam asks, sucking the last of the chocolate off his fingers and reaching for the coffee.

“Cyanide Bomb,” Gabriel replies easily. “The secret is to infuse the ganache with plenty of ground nuts to mask that bitter almond smell.”

“Ha ha,” Sam says as he sips his coffee, which is also *fucking amazing*. Damn this place to hell.

“Okay, fine. Spoilsport. It was the new Hazelnut Gianduja Bomb. Thinking I’ll call it the H-Bomb for short. Pretty amazing, though, huh? I am a genius. Tell me I am a genius.”
“You’re a genius,” Sam repeats dryly.

Gabriel splays a hand over his heart, looking stricken. “Sam, sarcasm is unbecoming!”

“Must be why you can’t find a boyfriend,” he retorts, taking a casual swallow of coffee and snagging his briefcase off the counter as he turns to go.

Gabriel just splutters.

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Chapter IV: In which Dean Winchester is some sort of pervert.

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“Dean, oh god,” Cas pants, breath hot and wet against his neck. Dean just grinds harder, hands up under the librarian’s waistcoat, pulling the two of them tighter together so that the layers of cloth between them feel like almost nothing. He sucks greedy kisses along Castiel’s throat, relishing in the smell of old books and soap and male he finds there. He makes a lazy circle with his tongue just above Castiel’s adam’s apple, and grins when the other man moans.

Cas is clutching at his shoulders, scrabbling for any hold as Dean shoves him back against the nonfiction section. Biographies clatter off of a shelf, lie open on the floor as Dean hoists Castiel up to perch there so he can slide between his legs. Cas catches Dean’s mouth with his own, all unexpected passion. His wire-framed glasses crush against Dean’s nose, so obviously those have to go. Dean pulls them off and sets them on a nearby shelf; when he turns back, Castiel’s eyes (so fucking blue, jesus) are dark and positively feral.

He shoves Dean’s overshirt off, throwing it somewhere in the area of the travel guides. Dean smirks and pulls his own tee off, flushing with pleasure when Cas sucks in a pleased breath. Wasting no time, Dean starts working the buttons of the librarian’s waistcoat, desperate to get to some of the skin underneath. That joins Dean’s overshirt, then he goes for Castiel’s tie, the blue (red) fabric smooth under his fingers. (Red fabric.)

Wait.

Pulling off the blue necktie, Dean reaches for…

Dammit. Is it blue or red today? He’s pretty sure it was blue yesterday, but he can’t quite recall if it was actually red today.

God dammit. He’s lost it.

Dean shakes himself awake, the dream still swimming around his head, and peeks around a display to catch a glimpse of Castiel. Red tie, fuck.

He shifts uncomfortably, half-hard and more than a little embarrassed. This isn’t the first time he’s fantasized about having his way with Castiel, but usually it’s in the relative safety of the shower or his bed, and not in the middle of the damn library itself. He is officially a pervert. One of those guys. He is too tired to be here today, the long day at the garage taking its toll. He’s drifting off, with, uh, undesirable results.

Just then Cas finishes helping the old lady who had consumed his attention and spots Dean. He smiles and gives a small wave.
Dean kind of wants to die.

It’s at this point that he decides it’s time to go home, get that Chinese food, and relax. He grabs *Pet Sematary* and heads for the front desk. Just the thought of having a normal conversation with Cas so soon after his brain’s little adventure makes him twitch, though, so he swings over to Anna’s station and presents his selection to her instead.

Cas watches him curiously, then waves once more as Dean heads out.

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Chapter V: *In which Sam Winchester cannot believe he’s related to Dean Winchester.*

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Dean’s sprawled full-length across their couch when Sam gets home, still holding a little camo-print paper cup.

“What are you doing with that?” Sam asks upon entering the living room, nose wrinkling unattractively.

Dean doesn’t look up from the book he’s got propped up on his chest. A book that just happens to be *Pet Sematary.* “Reading it, dipshit.”

“Yeah, *thanks,* Dean. Why are you reading it? You hate Stephen King.”

The frown that’s been haunting Dean’s face all evening only deepens. “Not necessarily true.”

Sam laughs disbelievingly. “No, totally true. You called in sick at the garage the day after reading *Christine,* man. I remember, because I remember thoroughly mocking you for it—poor little Dean, afraid of demon cars. You swore that Stephen King was a hack and you’d never read anything he’d touched again.”

Dean scowls. “A guy’s not allowed to change his mind?”

Sam pauses and stares at his older brother contemplatively, like he’s trying to puzzle something out. Dean really *really* hates that look—it always precedes talking about their feelings or some such shit. He’d got it a hell of a lot after Dad died, when Sam had been convinced Dean was secretly falling apart inside. He hadn’t been. It’d sucked hardcore, and yeah he missed their old man like crazy, but it was something that, with time, he’d gotten over.

Truth be told, though, he’s not really expecting Sam to say softly, “Is he at the library?”

“What?” Dean buhs.

“The guy. Is he at the library?”

Oh *shit.* Dean lets the book flop down open onto his chest, the plastic dustjacket crinkling in protest. “What the hell’re you talking about, Sammy?” he replies, trying for irritated confusion.

Sam whaps at Dean’s legs until Dean draws them up off the last cushion of the couch so Sam can flop down in the opened space. “Please, Dean. You’ve been coming home with a different book like three times a week, and now you’re reading *Stephen King?* Something’s up with you. Either you hit your head on somebody’s undercarriage and this is your concussion manifesting itself or else you
met somebody you’re trying to impress. Because this is what you do, try to chameleon yourself into something you think they’ll like, and frankly I don’t want you to get hurt over th—ow! Ow, ow! Ow, Dean, knock it o—ow!”

Dean keeps kicking him in the shoulder, big heavy blows with the heel of his right foot that, if he’s lucky, might even bruise. “Get off my couch, bitch, and make me dinner. Work was shit and I demand meat so that I might taste the suffering of another creature and be comforted by it.”

Sam scurries to his feet to avoid further injury and shakes his head in disbelief. “You are too weird to comprehend, you know that?”

“I am a mystery to modern man,” Dean agrees. “Now make me chicken.”

“Asshole,” Sam mutters to himself as he drifts off into the kitchen, rubbing his shoulder.

Dean goes back to reading. Now if only he could figure out what the hell a wendigo is supposed to be. Fucking Stephen King.

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Chapter VI: In which Sam Winchester realizes he’s scraping the barrel for company.

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“Sam!” Gabriel grins. “To what do I owe the pleasure of your company?”

Sam thunks down his briefcase on the counter, ignoring the glare from the girl running the register, and frowns. “I need to complain about Dean’s secret-yet-obvious crush on somebody and I just discovered you’re the only person I talk to regularly who isn’t either from the law firm or first and foremost Dean’s friend.”

“Wow, okay, not exactly the reason I woulda hoped for, but beggars/choosers, I guess,” Gabriel grimaces.

Sam quirks an eyebrow. “And the reason you would’ve hoped for is...?”

Gabriel shrugs. “You know, the usual. You realized your life has a me-shaped hole in it and you have come to declare your outright lust for me and we have mutual orgasms out back where it can’t affect my health code rating.”

Sam shakes his head sharply to drive out this image. (And if it’s not quite as repulsive as it really should be, well. He’s not thinking about it.) “Wow, you’ve put way too much thought into that.”

“Eh, man’s gotta have his fantasies. Want to try the monthly specialty? Made with Jameson. I’m calling it the Whiskey Tango Foxtrot.”

“Of course you are. And you know what? I’d love to,” Sam says, folding his arms on the counter and leaning over to look at the chocolates lining the opposite wall.

Gabriel’s smile goes megawatt. “Fantastic! Just for that, I’ll play bartender for you. Spill, kiddo.”

Sam shrugs. “You know my brother Dean, right?”

“Sure sure,” Gabriel nods, twirling a pair of tongs before snagging a truffle from a display. “Bristly hair, bristly attitude? Particularly fond of caramels?”
“Um, yeah, I guess,” Sam frowns. “I’m pretty sure he’s particularly fond of anything with enough butter or salt in it. But anyway. He’s been gone all evening, every evening, for like two weeks now. And he keeps coming home with library books. Different ones, all the time.”

“My god, how scandalous,” Gabriel gasps, sliding the chocolate across to Sam.

“Stuff it, man. That is weird behavior for Dean, okay? I can’t remember the last time he’d been within a hundred yards of a library before this. He tends to just buy the books he wants to read.”

“So he’s joined a book club,” Gabriel shrugs.

“You,” Sam says, “are infuriating. Don’t you see? He’s up to something! And he’s not telling me what!”

“Sam,” Gabriel says, with a surprising amount of seriousness. “Are you pestering your brother because you want to see something that isn’t really there?”

“What? No, shut up, you’re not allowed to be introspective,” Sam frowns, pointing definitively with the truffle he’d just picked up. “That is my job, understand—oh my god that’s really good.”

Gabriel smirks and grabs Sam another Whiskey Tango Foxtrot.

“Ugh, stop feeding me candy,” Sam complains, even though he takes the offered chocolate immediately. “I’m gonna have to work all of this off eventually, you know. I have a desk job.”

“No worries, Sammy,” Gabriel says breezily. “I’ll still love you even if you get a little soft. More cushion for the pushin’ and all.”

Sam gapes a little. “I cannot believe you just said that.”

“Please. What in our acquaintance would lead you to expect anything less from me?”

“Point,” Sam concedes. “But anyway. Can we talk about Dean some more and how he has all the emotional maturity of a gerbil?”

“This is the point where I make a joke about how that’s an insult to gerbils, I’m sure,” Gabriel says, leaning one hip against the counter that separates him from Sam, “but mostly I’m still concerned by why you seem to think Dean’s hiding some epic relationship from you.”

“He hasn’t been out looking for a hookup in over three weeks,” Sam replies with a scowl. “The only other time I’ve seen him so disinterested in at least, like, window-shopping was the month or so a few years back when he had that girlfriend, some journalism major who didn’t like his job. He was pretty shaken up when they split, and I get the feeling that he doesn’t want to draw attention to the fact that he might be long-term interested in somebody else. Just in case, I dunno, it falls through or something.”

“All right, fair enough,” Gabriel shrugs. “So you have legit concerns. But, I mean, if he doesn’t seem unhappy, what’s the big deal?”

“You are the worst commiserater ever, you know that?” Sam sighs. “That’s it, I’m going home to suffer alone.”

“Bawww,” Gabriel snorts with a roll of his eyes. “Poor Sammy. Nobody understands your pain. Break out the eyeliner and the My Chemical Romance shirts, we’re heading back to 2004!”
“Asshole!” Sam yelps, swatting at him. “See if I come here again!”

“Bomb for the road?” Gabriel asks innocently.

“Hell yes,” Sam replies without hesitation.


Chapter VII: In which Dean Winchester opens his mouth and inserts his foot.


It takes Dean two days to finish Pet Sematary. On Thursday, while Dean is still fighting his way through it, Cas is nowhere to be found for most of the evening because he’s running the summer literacy camp’s sleepover night. The few glimpses Dean does get are of a frazzled-looking librarian nearing the end of his rope—tie askew, waistcoat abandoned, and glasses perched precariously atop his head as he runs to Anna’s desk to ask if she knows where he can find any more paper plates. Dean feels for the guy, he really does. But it’s also pretty endearing, god help him.

“So,” Dean says, sidling up to Anna not long after Cas had stormed through looking for extra permanent markers. “Did he draw the short straw?”

“Pretty much,” Anna nods. “Sofie joins him at eight, and a bunch of the moms are staying as chaperones, but right now he’s the last line of defense between this library and twenty-five screaming third-graders.”

“That poor bastard,” Dean grimaces, shaking his head.

“Hey, at least he’s getting time-and-a-half,” Anna shrugs. “And the morning off, once the kids go home.”

“Anna!” Castiel bellows, stalking across the library. “Do you know where the remote controller is for the rec room DVD player? If I don’t get Reading Rainbow on in the next two minutes I face mutiny.”

“Did you try the keybox in Michael’s office?” Anna replies sweetly. “I think he started keeping it there after the first two had to be replaced.”

Cas growls and swings a hard left into the office. Dean and Anna share a yikes expression at the loud clunking that follows, but then Castiel returns triumphant, remote in hand. “Thank you,” he says, then stops short when he sees Dean leaning against Anna’s desk. His gaze flicks between the two of them for a moment, then he nods. “Hello, Dean. Nice to see you. I’m a bit, hm, preoccupied at the moment. I hope your book has been entertaining so far.”

“So far so good,” Dean shrugs.

“Excellent. I am glad to hear it. If you will excuse me, I think Todd is in the process of inspiring the others to riot.” And with that, he vanishes back to rec room.

Luckily, Friday goes better. Dean finishes Pet Sematary on his lunch break, and the library that evening is blessedly kid-free.

And there’s Castiel to watch this time, to Dean’s delight. But it must be laundry day or something, because the librarian’s wearing a green “READ: Let Your Imagination Soar at Your Local Library”
tee and worn-out jeans instead of the usual dress shirt and waistcoat. Dean doesn’t even exactly mind the cripplingly nerdy get-up, though, what with all the forearm action he’s getting today. Still, it doesn’t exactly inspire him to hold his tongue.

“Nice shirt,” Dean says when Cas drifts over to where he’s sitting.

The remark earns him a look of consternation. “It was Wilderness Explorers Day for summer camp. I was not about to go crawling through pine needles in a tie and slacks.” Upon observing Dean’s sheepish expression, Castiel adds with a smirk, “Now don’t you feel like a jerk?”

“You’re a jerk,” Dean mutters.

“I’ve made peace with that possibility,” Cas replies serenely. “How was your book? Did you finish it?”

“Yup,” Dean replies, waving it at him. “I’m sorry to have to report that I still don’t like Stephen King.”

Castiel shrugs. “I thought that might be your reaction. But it’s really not the sort of novel that would really sway one’s opinion, is it? I should’ve insisted you read The Green Mile.”

“Oh, I’ve seen that movie!” Dean says, snapping his fingers as he sits up. After a moment’s reflection, though, he could’ve kicked himself. He’s talking to a fucking librarian. Cas probably hates all films-based-on-books on principle. “Um.”

“It was a good film,” Cas nods.

“Oh thank god,” Dean sighs. “I was afraid you were gonna go all librarian-fu on my ass for a minute there.”

Castiel’s eyebrow creeps upward. “No, I tend to save that for the patrons who won’t pay their late fees. I do have a black belt in librarian-fu, though. Ask me about the Dance of the Nine Reference Cards some day when you don’t mind bleeding a little.”

Dean’s surprised laughter is loud enough that he quickly clamps a hand over his mouth for fear of being shushed.

Cas stares at him, entirely deadpan, until Dean manages to settle. “You were saying what now about The Green Mile?”

This leads to a discussion about the-film-of-the-books in general, which Dean bluffs his way through about half of the time. But he’s managing pretty well before Castiel mentions I Am Legend off-hand, which Dean had really liked. Vampire-zombie things, Will Smith running around being badass, post-apocalyptic destructive mayhem—what wasn’t to like? Unfortunately, Dean takes this small grasp on the conversation to voice how he just doesn’t see how that could be conveyed as effectively in words.

“I really haven’t slept much, Dean, having spent the night on a cot in the rec room,” Castiel frowns. “So I am perfectly willing to believe that I just imagined you telling me that you prefer the film version of I Am Legend to the Richard Matheson novel. The ending?”

“Oh,” Dean stutters.

“Anna,” Cas calls, peering over the audiobook section. “Dean claims to prefer the I Am Legend film to the novel. Please inform him of his error.”
The other librarian peeks around the older gentleman she’s signing up for a computer station. “Well, Will Smith is pretty fine, you have to admit.”

“Ugh,” Cas mutters in disgust. “You two are in league against me.”

Dean taps his fingers together nervously. “Would this be a bad time to admit that I’ve never actually read I Am Legend?”

Castiel tilts his head at Dean for a moment—a motion that, when paired with his glasses and ridiculous fluffy hair, reminds Dean vaguely of an owl—and then stands and walks off. Dean is left to wonder if he just ruined his shot with Cas altogether in a convenient one-two punch.

Before that thought can take too insidious a hold, though, Castiel reappears with a book in hand. “Your next assignment,” he says, holding it out. It is, predictably, Richard Matheson’s I Am Legend.

“Okay then,” Dean shrugs, taking it. “And when I still like the movie better, what’re you gonna do?”

“Despair of you?” Cas offers, but there’s a hint of a smile there as he turns to head back to his desk.

It ends up being one of the best evenings Dean’s had in for-fucking-ever. Castiel and Anna drop by to chat with him every time they leave their desks, and by closing time they’re having an epic debate over the best mainstream novel-to-film adaptation. Dean’s steadfastly holding out on The Lord of the Rings, but Anna had long ago flipped her shit over the nuking of Faramir’s characterization and subsequent relationship with Eowyn and thus claims Dean has no idea what he’s talking about. She throws in her hat for The Godfather and seems to be the iron-clad winner before Castiel reminds her that the novel was pulpy and really only dragged up by the excellence of the film. He goes for Howard’s End, which neither of the others know, so it’s a moot point.

He ends up being the last patron in the joint, and Anna actually locks the front door while Dean’s still hanging around their desks and arguing the relative worth of Fight Club as a book and as a film with Castiel. As a Palahniuk fan, Dean’s pretty passionate about it, and his outbursts have Cas smiling.

They head out the back together after the library’s shut down for the night, and Anna waves as she hops onto her bike and takes off. There are about half a dozen cars still in the lot—mostly of families using the adjacent playground. Dean meanders over to the Impala, Cas in tow, and takes a moment to frown at the vehicle it’s parked next to. It’s a little rattletrap of a Volkswagen Rabbit, 1981 if he had to guess, and it’s the most unappealing shade of orange he’s ever seen.

“Thing looks like it’s about to fall apart,” he whistles, his mechanic’s eye happily pairing up with his inner car snob.

As if fate is conspiring to make him an asshole, though, Cas hmms and replies, “We can’t all have pristinely-kept classic cars, I suppose. But it does get excellent mileage.”

Dean hopes the glare of the setting sun is enough to keep Castiel from noticing the flush of embarrassment that’s currently turning the tips of his ears megawatt pink. “Oh. Um. Yeah. Yeah, I hear that. Running a diesel engine then, I guess?”

Cas stands awkwardly next to the Rabbit and nods. “Yes. I have been meaning to trade it in, you must understand. But it was my first car. I’m afraid I feel rather...attached...to it.”

“No, dude,” Dean backtracks quickly. “I totally get it. This one was my dad’s, y’know. He, uh, he gave it to me when I got out of school. She’s my baby.” He lays one hand against the warm passenger-side door. “Look, man, I’m sorry I knocked your car. It was a dick move. Didn’t mean it.”

“Okay then,” Dean shrugs, taking it. “And when I still like the movie better, what’re you gonna do?”

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Castiel nods, looking stiffly away. The uncomfortable moment stretches on almost unbearably long, so finally Dean blurts, “So, um, Anna! She seems nice.”

A half-smile from Cas. “She’s quite lovely. She gets into trouble sometimes with head staff because she follows her own ideas so often, but she’s one of the best people it is my pleasure to know.”

“Cool,” Dean nods, casting around for something else to talk about. Then a slight worry strikes him, so he says (totally nonchalantly, of course), “So, you and her...?”

That gets him that damn headtilt again. “We are not together, if that is what you’re asking. But she is a very close friend. We did not see eye to eye when I started—I found her tendency to question policy inappropriate. But what can I say? She brought me around to her way of seeing things. I think,” he adds, with a look that Dean can’t quite interpret, “that you will like her too, upon further acquaintance.”

“Um, yeah. Okay,” Dean agrees, not knowing exactly what to make of that. He’d just spent the better part of three hours chatting it up with Anna. He’s kinda already decided that he likes her well enough.

“Have a nice weekend, Dean,” Castiel says at last. “I hope you enjoy I Am Legend.” Then, without waiting for a response, he slides behind the wheel of his Rabbit and takes off.

Dean waves awkwardly from his position, leaning against the Impala, until Cas is out of sight. He then proceeds to whap himself in the forehead with his palm several times.

He is such a dumbass.

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Chapter VIII: In which Sam Winchester notices a trend.

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“Oh hey, look who’s back!” Gabriel calls from across the shop when Sam walks in. “How go things on the Dean front?”

“He came home last night with Leaves of Grass,” Sam says, no small look of horror crossing his face. “My life is officially weird.”

“Oh gross, not that book! One of my least favorites,” Gabriel grimaces.

Sam makes a noncommittal noise, then says, “You’ve read Walt Whitman?”

“Actually, no,” Gabriel shrugs. “I was just trying that whole commiserating thing on for size. They didn’t really cover too much literature in culinary school. I can carve an apple into a swan in under a minute, though. That’s gotta count for something, right?”

Sam makes a noncommittal noise, then says, “It’s just been weird, man. Over the weekend it was I Am Legend, then on Monday a collection of Lovecraft short stories. Which, okay, strange—but he was really into Ray Bradbury when he was a kid, so it’s not a huge leap, right? But last night he came home with Leaves of Grass and Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot. That is not normal Dean fare, I’m sorry. In fact, I’ve never seen somebody willingly read either of those who wasn’t either deeply invested in literature or a total pretentious douche.”
“Kaaay,” Gabriel replies, elongating the word in a way that very clearly says *and your point is?*.

Sam scowls. “So what I’m thinking, right, is that on Monday I’m going to run an errand to the library and see what’s been going on.”

Gabriel shrugs. “I’m always up for subterfuge, don’t get me wrong. But have you tried, y’know, talking to him about it lately?”

“I’m sorry, did I not *show* you the bruises he gave me last week when I asked?” Sam bitches. “I’m not bringing it up again so bluntly. Dean’s a fucking *mule*, Gabe. Both in stubbornness and in the strength of his kicks. No thanks.”

“You called me Gabe,” Gabriel says, a surprised smile taking up residence on his face.

“So? You call me Sammy all the time. Despite me asking you not to,” Sam frowns.

“Nicknames are a sign of affection,” Gabriel explains, peering around Sam at the large group of women that had just entered the shop.

Sam rolls his eyes. “It’s cute how you grasp at straws like that.”

“Ha, and now I’m cute!” Gabriel hands a stack of paperboard boxes to one of his assistants, and Sam can tell he’s getting a bit distracted. It’s a pretty big number of customers at once. “This is a good day so far, I gotta say. But a word to the wise, Sammy—I’m gonna guess that’s a bridal party, so it’s duck-and-cover time.”

Sam steps aside slightly and a middle-aged woman takes his place at the counter. Sam sips at the coffee Gabriel’d set out for him when he’d showed up, just watching the commotion.

It was true, he *had* called the guy Gabe. It’d just seemed like the thing to do, okay? It’s kinda weird, actually, how much he’s grown to enjoy stopping into *BOOM* every day after work. At first it was just under the pretense of talking about Dean to someone who was on his side, but he’s finding he actually—*gasp*—enjoys Gabriel’s company. Which is something he’s never gonna admit, least of all to Gabriel himself, because the guy would just become *insufferable*.

Speaking of whom. As Sam watches, Gabriel manages to charm his way straight into the lady’s good graces. Well, the chocolate probably helps pave the way, but Gabe is laying it on pretty thick. It’s surprising, really, because where his comments needle at Sam, they seem to just endear him to the woman. He’s busy plying her with the almond-based A-Bombs while his staff runs around trying to fill orders from the rest of the group.

“These are *wonderful*,” the woman tells him. “My anniversary is this weekend, and I’m telling my husband these are an absolutely vital gift.”

Gabriel takes a moment to waggle his eyebrows at Sam, which earns him a disbelieving snort. Somehow, through a combination of enthusiasm and free samples, he gets the woman to buy herself a dozen bombs that day anyway, with the promise that she’ll share them with the other ladies.

Sam watches him tear through the rest of the party, charisma going full blast. It’s sight to behold. But the longer Sam observes, the more he notices differences in Gabriel’s attitudes. He’s in full-on shopowner mode now—he’s laughing and joking and selling everything up. It seems strange somehow. Like it’s coming too easily, like it’s a smooth and polished thing. So what does that make his little tête-à-têtes with Sam? Unscripted? Genuine? Sam’s always half-assumed Gabriel is just fucking with him. What if he hasn’t been?
Oh jesus. Oh fuck.

Sam’s just standing out of the way, watching the guy, and for the first time something like actual *affection* is spreading through him. That is *ridiculous*. He cannot believe he’s staring at Gabriel, that obnoxious little bastard, and actually considering...something. Something other than what they’ve been doing for the last little eternity.

Oh man, Dean’s gonna have a shitfit if this actually goes anywhere.

By the time he’s done panicking quietly to himself, the crowd is clutching various ammo containers and camo-boxes; a few are carrying hand grenades full of cocoa mix or rations of flak. Gabriel slumps against the counter as they head en masse for the door.

“Look at you, being all salesmanship guy,” Sam comments after they’ve left.

“What, you thought I stayed in business without a little schmoozing?” Gabriel chuckles. “But it’s just my luck that I fall for the only guy immune to my charm.”

“Is that what you’re calling it now?” Sam muses, leaning back against the counter next to Gabriel and smiling. “Well, I don’t wanna make it too easy for you.”

“Sam,” Gabriel smirks, lacing his fingers behind his head, “if you made this *easy* it’d take away half the fun.”

Sam *hmms* into his coffee.

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*Chapter IX: In which the world is Dean Winchester’s oyster.*

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It’s a particularly warm Friday afternoon, and Dean’s changing the oil on a Camry, spacing a little and thinking about the weekend. It’s been almost two weeks since he and Cas first started talking on a regular basis, and he’s just about made up his mind to ask the guy out for a beer and some nerd-speak. Possibly a little hot-and-heavy action afterward.

Thing of it is, though, Dean thinks he’s actually starting to *like* the guy. He usually tries to avoid that like the plague, the *liking* thing. It hadn’t ended so hot the last couple of times he’d tried it, but god help him if he doesn’t *like* Cas. He’s nice but not too nice and he’s smart and he’s ridiculously hot and he doesn’t think Dean’s some sort of illiterate idiot, which people tend to do when they find out he’s a mechanic with a GED.

And he’s been going out of his way to talk to Dean, draw him into conversations between himself and Anna. Dean’s been having a fantastic time, reading the shit Castiel suggests and then going in the next day and having these big animated conversations about it. Twice now Cas has told him that he brings a unique view to the texts. And not in that bullshit *yes that’s very nice but you’re wrong* way, but in like a legit *wow that’s interesting I never thought of it like that* way. He wouldn’t admit it out loud, but it makes Dean feel kind of awesome. Like he’s *contributing* or something.

Long story short, stumbling upon Cas a month ago when looking for that digest has been one of the best things to happen to Dean in a long time. He figures if he can just ask the guy out and get a yes for an answer, life’ll be as perfect as it can reasonably get.
“Yo, Dean!” one of the guys calls, breaking his train of thought. “Some guy out front wants to see you!”

“Finish this up for me?” Dean asks Bobby, the owner of the garage. It earns him a glare, but Bobby scoots under the Camry anyway.

Dean wanders toward the main doors. Just inside the entrance to the garage is, to his immense surprise, an ugly little orange 1981 VW Rabbit.

“Hey, man!” Dean grins, wiping off his hands on a rag as he leans down to look into the driver-side window. “What’re you doing here?”

“Hello, Dean,” Cas smiles briefly. “It’s my lunch break and I thought perhaps I should stop by for a check-up.”

“Tune-up, you mean?” Dean offers.

“Yes, that,” Cas replies, coloring ever so slightly. Dean turns his head away to hide his smile.

“All right, can do. Hop out and I’ll get ‘er up right away,” Dean says. As soon as Cas is standing off to the side, Dean commandeers one of the lifts. Caleb gives him a dirty look, but whatever.

“Should I...wait somewhere?” Cas asks, looking stiff and out of place in his tie and waistcoat.

“No, dude, it’s fine.” Dean calls. “Just come over here by me. Stay out of the way and you should be a-okay.” Technically Cas should be in the waiting room, but hell if Dean doesn’t wanna keep an eye on him.

Popping the hood before he hoists the car, Dean starts poking through the Rabbit’s guts. It’s not in terrible condition—it’s obvious that Cas tries to maintain it to the best of his ability. But it’s also obvious that Cas is not a car guy. There are half a dozen things that are currently functional but just a few months from trouble. It takes Dean no time to decide to replace the most critical of the problem parts, then plan for a series of upgrades over the next few months. As it is, he’d be a little worried sending Cas away in the car, but he thinks he can patch things up pretty good for now with a minimal amount of trouble.

“Did you start with Leaves of Grass or Waiting for Godot?” Cas asks suddenly.

Dean pulls his head back out from under the hood. “Huh?”

“Oh,” Cas says, shifting awkwardly. “I probably shouldn’t talk to you if you’re working. My apologies.”

“What?” Dean blinks. “No! No, it’s fine. Did I what now? Oh, I started with Leaves of Grass. I’m sorry, man, but I wanted to punch that Walt Whitman dude in the face.”

Cas lets out a startled laugh. “Well, you aren’t the first person I’ve heard with that opinion. I’m sorry Anna insisted you take it.”

“Nah, no harm. She means well, I’m sure. But damn. ‘Song of Myself’? How narcissistic can you get? Was he having sex with his own ego at one point?”

Castiel continues to laugh. “I think that’s one interpretation of that passage, yes.”

“I got a few pages into Waiting for Godot this morning, too. You didn’t tell me it was a play,” Dean
“Did I neglect to mention that? I apologize. Yes, it’s a play,” Castiel replies, voice drifting over to where Dean’s got his head buried in the Volkswagen. “One of the community theatres put on a production of it a few years back. It was...about as good as you’d expect, being a community production.”

Dean chuckles. “Well, I’m not gonna lie to ya, man—it’s pretty opaque so far.”

“Absurdist literature isn’t known for being easy to digest. ‘Oh, is that symbolic or just nonsense?’ I’m pleased that you’re at least trying, though. It’s more than Anna would do for years.”

“I’m gonna love telling her just how much I enjoyed Whitman, then,” Dean laughs.

“Which reminds me,” Castiel says suddenly. “The library is closed to the public today for quarterly reorganizing. There’s no need to swing by this afternoon.”

“Oh. Uh, okay,” Dean nods, slamming the hood shut. He finds himself suddenly wondering what he’s going to do with his evening.

“But,” Cas adds, “we’ll be back open tomorrow. You should stop by in the afternoon, Dean.”

This statement is layered with a significant look that makes Dean jittery just thinking about it. He determines not to read too much into it, but damn if he doesn’t wonder if this is his break.

They spend the rest of the time talking about Slaughterhouse Five, which pretty much makes Dean’s afternoon. He gets Castiel’s car done in near-record time despite the distraction so the guy can get back to work. He manages to fix it up a bit too, which pleases him to no end.

“You’re done,” he declares, lowering the Rabbit back to street-level.

“Excellent,” Cas smiles. “Where should I pay?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Dean shrugs, grabbing a new rag off a shelf. “On the house this time.”

Cas readjusts his glasses nervously. “You really shouldn’t do that. I don’t mind paying.”

“Nah, it’s cool,” Dean waves him off. “Consider it a thanks for keeping me entertained every afternoon.”

“Well, thank you,” Cas says.

“You’d better get back,” Dean says nonchalantly, holding the driver’s side door open for him. “Don’t want you getting in trouble with your boss. So, uh, tomorrow afternoon, right?”

“Yes, tomorrow afternoon. Any time after one,” Cas nods solemnly after he’s backed out of the garage. “Good luck.”

Before Dean can wonder what that’s supposed to mean, Cas has pulled out towards the intersection.

“Kid, I ain’t paying you to make doe-eyes at your boyfriend,” Bobby shouts from the depths of the garage. “Get your ass back in here and fix this Accord before the owner gives me a new breathing hole! I said it’d be done by four!”

Dean spares an extra moment to watch the Rabbit disappear into traffic, then grins to himself and heads back inside.
Chapter X: In which Sam Winchester does not play fair.

“Hello?” Sam calls, having stepped into an apparently empty BOOM that Friday afternoon.

“Gimme two shakes, Sam, I’m in the middle of something here,” Gabriel calls.

“What, too busy for me all the sudden?” Sam grins, wandering over to the window back into the kitchen to find Gabe piping decorative swirls of dark chocolate onto a tray of truffles.

“Never too busy for you, baby,” Gabriel replies easily, not looking up. “But the rest of the staff is off early tonight and if this stuff cools before I’m done it’ll be a pain. And I know how much you love to cause me grief, but since you eat enough of my revenues already, I’m hoping you’ll spare me this inconvenience.”


That makes Gabriel look up, if only for a moment. “Now who’s lying? Three H-Bombs yesterday, a quarter pound of almond flak on Tuesday, and overall enough coffee to sustain a grad student the week before finals. You’ve run up quite the tab around here, Sam—for you, though,” he adds, throwing in a broad wink, “I’ll accept payment in sexual favors.”

“Well thank god for that,” Sam shrugs.

Gabriel glances back up, a look of confusion crossing his face. Sam blinks innocently, though, so he goes back to piping.

“Anyway, it’s your own fault,” Sam says. “You got me accustomed to your ridiculous candy. Now if I don’t stop in I’m all disappointed for the evening.”

“Perhaps it’s because you’re missing your daily bask in my awesomeness?” Gabriel offers, turning the tray to reach the other truffles on it.

“Or maybe I just miss the chocolate.”

“Hey, who’s to say my awesomeness is not synonymous with chocolate?” Gabriel counters, false indignation in every word. “I did create this shop, after all. I have spent every day of the past six years in this kitchen working with any number of fine cacaos and accouterments. I am so steeped in confections at this point that if you kiss me, I probably taste like chocolate.”

Sam frowns at him. “No, I’m sorry, no matter how much time they spend working with it, people do not actually taste like chocolate when you kiss them.”

Gabriel shrugs. “Wanna test that theory? I mean, in the interest of scientific research.”

“Oh, shut up,” Sam says, and skirts around a stack of ammo crates to get to the kitchen door. Gabriel barely has time to drop his piping bag and form a question before Sam’s pulling the shorter man up by the collar of his shirt and kissing him hard. He does not taste like chocolate. He does taste a little like old coffee, though. Sam finds he actually rather likes it despite this, which is something of a surprise. After an initial moment of stiff shock, Gabriel melts thoroughly into him, twisting his hands into Sam’s shirt and holding on for dear life. He nips lightly at Sam’s bottom lip as he pulls away,
then grins like his birthday just came early.

“Easy enough for you?” Sam asks smugly.

“Like breathing,” Gabriel replies, and his smirk is kinda ruined by the way it keeps turning into a dopey smile. “Let’s do that again, because I’ve been waiting way too damn long for this moment to let it be over that quickly.”

Just then, the air-raid siren that Gabriel has hooked up the shop’s entrance gives a quick and blaring wail, followed shortly by a man’s voice going “...Hello?”

Both Gabriel and Sam snap their eyes away from each other and to the door that leads from the kitchen to the main showroom.

“We’re closed!” Gabriel shouts irritably, tightening his grip on Sam’s shirt like he’s afraid Sam is gonna skitter off now that someone else is around. For his part, Sam’s having trouble keeping a lid on his laughter.

“The sign outside said you were open,” the voice calls back, sounding perplexed.

“Weekday hours, we’re only open ‘til six,” Gabriel glares at the door.

A pause, followed by the beep of a cell phone. “…it’s five-thirty.”

Sam stifles snickers as Gabriel makes a strangled nngh sound and thunks his forehead against Sam’s chest. “You planned this!” he mutters accusingly.

“I did not!” Sam laughs indignantly.

The man’s voice, again: “I need to get a gift for my wife. Our anniversary is tomorrow and she demanded chocolates from here. Something about an atomic bomb, I don’t know?”

“Hoisted on your own petard!” Sam cackles. Gabriel continues to beat his head against him and make irritated noises. “Go on—I’ll still be here when you finish keeping yourself in business. Can’t promise you won’t lose some stock if you leave me unattended for too long, though.”

“Stay outta the pistachio flak, that’s special order,” Gabriel grumbles, releasing Sam and smoothing his hair. “I will be right back.”

“Kay,” Sam smirks, snagging a truffle from the nearby tray and popping it into his mouth. It turns out to have a liquid caramel center lightly flavored with some orangey liqueur that is absolutely fucking amazing and Sam makes a surprised little moan and lets his eyes slip half-closed.

Gabriel whines, “That is not playing fair, Sam Winchester.”

“Better hurry,” Sam manages around a mouthful of chocolate.

“Fastest transaction ever,” Gabriel swears.

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Chapter XI: In which Dean Winchester has had better days.

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Saturday morning crawls by. Dean rolls out of bed around eleven to find Sam already gone. He feels like maybe Sam mentioned that he had plans of some sort, but damned if he can remember anything at all from last night except the massive headache he got from *Waiting for Godot*.

He watches ESPN and eats a mixing bowl’s worth of Lucky Charms, resolutely *not* thinking of Cas. He has a handful of errands to run before he can go to the library anyway—a stop at one of the dumps to look for usable junkers, a quick trip to the post office to pick up some specialty parts that just arrived for the Impala, and hell, he’s due for a haircut too.

By the time he eases into a parking spot at the library, he’s been *not thinking* about Cas so much that it’s starting to make him twitchy. It’s not until he gets out of the car, books in hand, that he realizes there’s no ugly little Rabbit in the lot. It makes him uneasy—why would Cas not have his car? But maybe he carpooled. Or something.

He wanders inside, disconcerted. Then, of course, he gets to the front of the library and Castiel’s desk is empty. Everything is neatly put away, the computer is shut down, and there’s a little sign reading *please direct questions and requests to another station* placed over his nameplate.

Dean just kinda stands there listlessly, not sure what to think. For a moment a blind worry seizes him—he fucking *knew* that Rabbit was a deathtrap! What if he’s hurt? Or sick? Or *fired*? Or—

“He’s not here, Romeo,” Anna calls from her desk when she spots Dean.

“Huh?” Dean replies, super-eloquently.

“Cas. He’s not here today. He never works weekends,” she shrugs. “Sorry to disappoint you.”

Dean drifts over to her desk and folds his arms defensively, *Leaves of Grass* and *Waiting for Godot* tucked against his side. “He dropped by the garage yesterday and told me to come in, though.”

“Oh,” Anna says, frowning. “Um. Hold up. Michael would know if there was a schedule change.” She turns around toward the main office and waves an arm. “Hey, Michael! Did Castiel swap shifts for today?”

Michael, the head librarian, appears in the doorway. He leans over to peer at a whiteboard on the wall, then shakes his head. “No, he didn’t. Doesn’t work again until Monday, like usual.”

Anna grimaces. “Sorry, Dean,” she says. “He’s definitely not supposed to be here.”

For one brief, nonsensical moment Dean wonders if this is Castiel’s revenge for insulting the Rabbit. But that’s stupid, because they’d parted on pretty friendly terms, right? And there’d been the *wink-wink-nudge-nudge* look when Cas had mentioned that Dean should come in today. What if—that if Cas had cottoned onto the fact that Dean was into him and this is his way of telling him to back off?

Well, if it is, it’s a pretty crappy way to do it, Dean decides. What bullshit.

“Dean?” Anna says gently. “You okay? You need help with anything? I could look up Castiel’s number if you think it’s important.”

Dean shakes himself. “What? No. No, it’s fine. Here.” He drops his books on Anna’s desk and stalks out of the library.

His pride is wounded, and he’s confused as hell. The longer he’s confused, the angrier he gets. And—unfortunately for everyone around him—the angrier he gets, the more he sulks.
The next three days are not fun. Dean spends the rest of Saturday methodically dismantling a worn-out Oldsmobile lying around the garage, then all of Sunday in bed. When Monday rolls around, he comes home straight after work and is generally unpleasant to be around.

Sam barely sees him at all, except when Dean’s nuking himself some food—or stealing Sam’s. The extent of their conversations (from Dean’s end, at least) are monosyllabic answers and grunts. Dean, basically, is in a grade-A, top-of-the-line funk.

Being a good brother and all, Sam is suitably concerned. Being a younger brother and all, Sam is also way done with Dean’s emo bullshit.

(What? Don’t look at him like that. Concern came first, okay?)

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Chapter XII: In which Dean Winchester does not recall eating his brother’s asparagus.

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“What’s he doing here?” Dean scowls when he broods his way into the living room Tuesday afternoon and sees Gabriel sprawled on their couch, playing Xbox with Sam.

“We’re kinda going out now?” Sam replies, smashing buttons furiously.

“Whoo,” Gabriel adds distractedly, desperately smacking everything on the controller as his character dies painfully at the hands of Sam’s. “Well shit.”

“Bitch,” Sam grins, “you’ve got nothing on Dean. That was like taking candy from a baby.”

“Oh, ha ha, how many times do you think I’ve heard that one in my life?” Gabriel growls, scrolling through the stats screen.

“Fine, would you prefer taking candy from a short dude who blows at Halo?” Sam chortles while Gabriel sneers.

“Shut up, both of you,” Dean snaps. “Can we go back to the part where you’re apparently dating?”

“Would it help if we called it having loud, creative sex together instead of dating?” Gabriel asks, putting down his controller and smiling sweetly up at Dean.

“No, not really,” Dean replies, looking more capable of murder by the minute. “When’d this happen?”

“Uh...Friday?” Sam drawls, scrunching up his nose like he’s thinking about it.

“Wait, so you’ve been...whatevering...the candy-dude for four days already and didn’t think it was a good idea to tell me?” Dean frowns, hackles going up.

“Chill, man,” Sam says, putting down his controller as well. “I did tell you. Friday night. ‘Hey Dean, you’ll never guess what—,’ remember that?”

“No.”

Sam rolls his eyes. “Oh for—I told you about this! Your head was just too far up your own ass to pay attention, I guess. I thought it was weird that you ate my roasted asparagus without complaint.”
Dean’s frown deepens. “I don’t remember that either.”

Gabriel gives Sam a significant look, and Sam shrugs before addressing Dean again, “I dunno, dude, you came into the kitchen with your nose stuck in Waiting for Godot, grunted at me, and stole like half my dinner. You’ve been really out of it, man. I’m worried about you at the garage. I mean, if I was spacey, the most I’d have to worry about is a papercut or maybe stapling myself someplace painful. I’m afraid you’re gonna get a leg electric-sawed off.”

Dean blinks. He still doesn’t remember that actually happening, but it sounds pretty plausible. He actually doesn’t remember much at all between Cas showing up at the garage and realizing he was nowhere to be found the next day except for a lot of absurdist shit like how Estragon complained that Vladimir stank of garlic and wondering if the carrot was really just and carrot and getting the sinking feeling that if Godot never came maybe nobody else ever would either. Forget Stephen King—fucking Samuel Beckett. And maybe he has been in something of a funk since Saturday. Shaking his head to clear out the fog, he mutters, “What? No, I’m fine, Sammy. It’s no big deal. I’m, uh, gonna go lie down for a while until dinner.” He levels a halfhearted glare at Gabriel. “Don’t you goddamn dare make a mess of my couch or so help me I’ll turn you inside out.”

Gabriel raises an eyebrow. “Wouldn’t that just make more of a mess?”

“Yeah, but that one’d be worthwhile,” Dean grumbles, stumbling off to his room.

“Wow,” Gabriel whistles once Dean’s door is safely shut.

“I told you, man. I told you,” Sam says, shaking his head. “Something is up with him. At least on Friday he was happy-distracted. Now he’s just pissy all the time, like he got left on the curb on prom night.”

“You think maybe he did?” Gabriel asks, picking up his controller and cycling through match choices.

Sam shrugs. “I dunno. He’s not talking to me about anything important. Hell, I’ve never even gotten a proper confession outta him that he is interested in somebody.”

“Uh, obviously,” Gabriel snorts.

“Yeah yeah, I know,” Sam says with a wave of his hand as he snags his own controller. “Dean’s pretty transparent. Give me fifteen minutes—I am formulating a battle plan. But, in the meantime! Best to three, loser bottoms tonight?”

“Ugh,” Gabriel groans, slouching back against the couch. “I’m totally fucked.”

“Probably,” Sam grins toothily.

Gabriel stares at him for a long moment, a look of absolute disapproval on his face. “That was just bad.”

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Chapter XIII: In which Dean Winchester is well-fed but deceived.

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“Yo, Dean!”
Dean pretends not to hear anything, just smashes his face deeper into his pillows. It’s murky-dark in his room and just the right temperature and he is quite fine with not getting up until tomorrow, even though he’s vaguely aware that he’s fully clothed and he’ll be sorry in the morning if he sleeps like that.

“Dean, get up. Dinner.”

“What we having?” Dean garbles into his pillow, with the end result that the noise that reaches Sam on the other side of the door sounds nothing like what we having.

Sam, bless him, has been fluent in Deanlish for twenty-six years now, though, so he thumps on his brother’s door again and says, “Burgers. Get up.” He’d open the door and bodily drag Dean out, but one of the unspoken rules of living with each other as adults is that you do not open the door. Strict adherence to this rule earlier in his life would’ve kept Sam from a lot of mental scarring.

Okay, burgers sound pretty good. Dean just hopes they’re not the crappy veggie kind Sam tried to trick him into eating once. That had been one of the worst food-related incidents in Dean’s life, and with their dad raising them pretty much on his own after their mom died, there had been quite a few. John Winchester had excelled in many different areas, but cooking had never been one of them. But burgers, as long as they are made out of meat, are pretty hard to fuck up, in Dean’s opinion. So he rolls out of bed, then groans when his back pops. Fuck this getting older shit.

When he opens the door, Sam grins. “Morning, Sleeping Beauty.”

“Piss off,” Dean grumbles, shoving Sam out of the way and stumbling down the hallway. Okay, wow, it actually smells really good in here. Like real food and not take-out or microwaveable garbage, which instantly makes Dean suspicious. Sam can cook passably—he’d taken some sort of “basics of the kitchen” class as an elective during college—but he only makes shit like burgers or steaks or chicken or other, y’know, appetizing things when he’s either a) buttering Dean up or b) apologizing for something or sometimes c) one and the same.

Dean squints and blinks when he gets to the brightly-lit kitchen and dining area, looking around just in time to see Gabriel pull a cookie sheet full of what, if Dean had to guess, he’d say were sweet potato wedges out of the oven and toss them lightly with some seasonings.

“Hey, Sleeping Beauty,” he smirks, grabbing a spatula and sliding a portion of the potatoes onto a plate next to what has to be the most goddamn gorgeous burger Dean’s ever seen.

The prospect of getting to eat that takes most of the heat out of Dean’s response of, “Too late, asshole, Sam beat you to that one.”

“So tell me,” Gabriel asks, handing a plate to Sam as he walks by before delivering Dean’s himself, “are you always this pleasant or is it just a sleepy thing?”

“What’re you talking about, I’m a ball of sunshine on a cloudy day,” Dean snorts. He lifts the top bun and sniffs. Shit, that’s awesome. “What is this?”

“Bacon bleu burger with cajun sweet potato fries,” Gabriel grins. “Used to be the specialty at the joint I was a pastry chef at before I bailed to start my own shop. Sam said you were a fan of red meat, so I thought it’d be a nice oh hey, I’m fucking your brother introductory meal.”

“Gabriel,” Sam clucks irritably, and crosses his arms over his chest like a scandalized woman.

Dean pauses mid-chew to glare, but only for a second. The food is amazing, everything absolutely beautifully cooked. After another noisy bite, he swallows thickly and looks thoughtful. “Okay,” he
says after a minute. “If this is, like, the modern version of offering a sheep for Sam’s virginity, I am completely and utterly cool with it.”

“Dean!” Sam squawks, ratcheting his scowl up to eleven. Dean just loves how he sounds more indignant now than before, like as the older brother he’s supposed to defend Sam’s honor or something. Whatever, the kid needed to get laid, like, last week. It’s been for-goddamn-ever since Sammy got any action that wasn’t from his own palm. And also, wow, amazing the things beef could do for his mood. Sam better start taking fucking notes, man.

Shrugging, Dean takes another bite of his burger and garbles around it, “Seriously, have your way with him. Just not on any of my stuff.”

“Wow, that went way better than planned,” Gabriel says, pleased surprise coloring his tone. “I didn’t even have to break out the blackberry cobbler.”

Dean shakes his head, slurping at some of the juices trying to escape down his chin (seriously, eating this damn burger is becoming more pornographic by the moment), and warns, “Forget it. When I am done with this, that shit is mine.”

Sam laughs with his mouth full and belatedly tries to cover it with his hand. Gabriel snorts affectionately, like he doesn’t even think it’s all that gross and is more amused by Sam’s apparent shame.

Thank god Dean has meat to distract him from the fucking puppy love going on in their kitchen.

“Where’d all this stuff come from, anyway? I’m like ninety-nine percent sure we didn’t even have Wonderbread four hours ago, let alone these fancy-ass poppyseed buns,” Dean asks, starting to wipe his fingers on his jeans before Sam frowns and hands him a paper towel.

“We went to the grocery while you were passed out,” Sam says, geekboy enthusiasm overtaking his former bitchiness. “Gabe showed me this little local-product market a few blocks over. It’s awesome. Oh man, you should see the fresh produce section, it’s absolutely gorgeous. They have like sixteen different kinds of squash, Dean!”

Dean levels a flat look at Gabriel, who shrugs in a way that Dean is nearly certain means what can I do, squash gets him hot. He whisks Dean’s plate away and replaces it with a smaller one full of cobbler and melting ice cream, then plucks down a cold local lager from the fridge. “Taa-daa, the spoils of our crusade.”

“Okay, man, if you’re trying to get on my good side, you’re doing it right,” Dean sighs around a mouthful of hot cobbler.

Gabriel and Sam exchange significant looks, and Dean’s mind immediately screams trap, traaaaaaaap! and oh fuck, he shoulda known this was too good to be true.

“I’m gonna, uh, go,” Sam says, fluttering his hands a bit. “Do...something. Important. Something important.”

Dean glares after him as Sam fairly flees the room.

Gabriel tsks as he leans around the countertop to watch Sam’s retreat. “Oh, he’s smooth, isn’t he?”

“Super smooth,” Dean agrees. “Okay, man. Let’s just get this over with. You can have his hand if you guys wanna get, like, gay-married—it’s cool. Although I gotta say, I think you’re rushing into it. Four days isn’t enough time to really experience the true essence of Sam. He’ll bitch your ear off the
first time you leave your socks any place but the hamper and he’s gassy as hell if you let him eat anything with beans.”

“Thanks for that,” Gabriel snorts. “But Sam actually wanted me to see if I could get something outta you regarding your attitude of late. I’m not sure how I became the damn confidante for this little drama you boys are putting on, but there it is. At this point I’m already involved, so we’re getting to the root of this so I don’t have to listen to Sam bitch about it anymore.”

“Peachy,” Dean sighs. “He’s got you totally whipped, doesn’t he? It’s been under a week, dude. You don’t have to be doing his dirty work just yet. Wait until you at least get to the freaky stuff.”

“I like you,” Gabriel decides, taking Dean’s plate and putting another huge scoop of cobbler on it before handing it back. “But you’re also a fucking moron.”

“Where’s my second compliment?” Dean asks, stabbing at the cobbler a little more viciously than strictly necessary.

Gabriel’s eyebrows creep up. “Excuse me?”

“You’re supposed to sandwich every negative comment between two nice things. So you like me. Well, that’s just awesome. Where the hell is my you’re also a fucking moron, but so damn handsome ending?”

Gabriel laughs. “The cobbler is your second nice thing, champ. I can take it back if you’d rather have a cheap remark on your looks, though.”

“Fuck off,” Dean growls, taking a large bite.

“Yeah, that’s what I thought.”

They’re just quiet for a minute, Dean inhaling his dessert at the dinette table and Gabriel leaning against the breakfast bar, resting on his elbows. Finally, as Dean’s scooping up the last of the blackberries, Gabriel says, “So this guy you’ve been after, he turn you down?”

Dean feels his shoulders bunch up into a tight little ball of stress, the same knot they’d been in since god-knows-how-long (well, god ain’t the only one, because Dean knows too—since 2:30pm Saturday), the knot he’d thought had been loosening a bit. But despite that, despite his solemn oath to not talk about it, he finds himself shrugging, “Seems so.”

Huh. Sonuvabitch. He hopes Gabriel didn’t, like, roofie the cobbler or something. He squints at his plate, trying to decide if that’s even feasible.


Dean leans back in his chair, laces his fingers behind his head. “Nothing happened.” Oh there we go, he’s remembered how to not talk about it.

“Look, Deano,” Gabriel sighs, “how long did I carry a really blatantly obvious torch for your behemoth of a younger brother before that paid off? I get the fucking unrequited thing. Newsflash: you’re not actually a teenage girl. Stop acting like one and tell me what the hell is up. I’m not gonna go running to Sam with the latest 411 on you the minute we’re done here if you don’t want me to.”

Dean frowns, then repeats, “Nothing happened.” But this time he says it slowly, carefully, almost just to himself. Because it actually means something this time. Nothing happened. He’d gone to the library and Cas hadn’t been there, then he’d left and hadn’t gone back.
“Well thanks for that, but you’re gonna have to be a little more thorough for the uninformed,” Gabriel huffs.

“Uh,” Dean stutters. “Jesus, shit. You are not to repeat this to Sam, you got it, candy-man? I will tell him myself,” he growls, flexing his shoulders. “If I find out you beat me to it, I swear they’ll never find all of your pieces.”

Gabriel rolls his eyes. “Yeah yeah, you’re terrifying. Dish, Winchester.”

Dean sighs, and then pretty much word-vomits everywhere. “Fuck, I don’t know. There’s a guy at the library, and we’ve been talking, and he’s hot as hell, man, you don’t even know. But he also turns out to be really nice, and I start like, I don’t know, stalking him or what the hell ever. And we’ve been talking for like two weeks, and he’s been making reading suggestions to me and then we talk about ‘em like our own mini goddamn book club and I thought maybe we were going somewhere and then he came to the garage and was all like, ‘oh come to the library on Saturday,’ like, meaningful and shit. And I do, but he’s not working—and no, he didn’t take, like, a fucking sick day or whatever, he was never working—and so now I feel like this utter chump. Was he fucking with me? Was that his way of telling me to peace out? I don’t know, dude.”

Gabriel blinks, taking a moment to sort through this pile of drama and profanity to find the vital bits. “So what you’re saying is…you feel stood up, and you don’t know why.”

Dean wrinkles his nose. “I—I guess?”

“And it’s been half a week and you’re avoiding the library because of it, despite the fact that you’ve been there essentially every day for like a month.”

“Yeah, pretty much.”

Gabriel launches a dishtowel at Dean’s head. “What did I say? Fucking moron.”

Dean swats it outta the air and glares. “Hey! I am baring my soul here, you ungrateful bastard.”

“Have you ever, I dunno, considered asking him out? Or you know, expressing your interest in some definite way? Because it sounds to me like you made moon eyes at him for a month and then skedaddled the minute things didn’t go according to plan. You hear that saying, that the course of love never runs smooth?”

“...yeah?” Dean mutters.

Gabriel wings the other dishtowel at his head. “Well you aren’t even on the course! You’re off tromping through hedges and destroying Mrs. Baker’s prize azaleas with your giant unwieldy woe-is-me boots. Jesus!”

Dean is reduced to a rumbling pile of discontent at their dinette table, torn between wanting to separate Gabriel into tiny bits and wanting the earth to open up and swallow him. Neither option comes to fruition, unfortunately.

“Just go talk to him, Deanna,” Gabriel sighs with a wave of his hand. “See what happens. At worst you get a definite no and you send Sam to the library for whatever you need for a while. At best, well.”

Dean sulks.

“Anywho! If that’s all, I am done playing relationship guru for the evening, thanks. Go get non-
fucked-up. I’m gonna go ravish your brother. Or, uh, I guess get ravished. Hm. Well, whatever. Hope you have some headphones.” He punches Dean’s shoulder on the way by, and it takes Dean next to no time to decide to be elsewhere for an hour or two.

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Chapter XIV: In which Dean Winchester learns the importance of communication.

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That’s how Dean finds himself back at the Shurley Public Library the next day after work, feeling for all the world like a dog with its tail between its legs. Sure enough, there’s Cas at his desk, sitting behind his little brass nameplate, stamping due dates on a stack of children’s audio books and handing them to a frazzled-looking mother.

He spots Dean as soon as he’s done, frowning as he stares at him over the top of his glasses. Well that’s not encouraging. Dean’s just debating the merits of full-on fleeing, maybe picking somebody up in a bar that evening and totally expunging Castiel from memory, when the librarian crooks two fingers at him in a get over here motion.

“Dean,” Castiel sighs when he gets within quiet speaking distance, and his voice is exasperated but undoubtedly fond. Which, okay, strange. “Where have you been?”

“Licking my wounds?” Dean shrugs in what he hopes is only a mildly bitter way.

“Licking your wou—what for?” Cas asks, confusion coloring his tone. “It couldn’t have gone that badly. Anna just glared at me when I asked what happened, but Michael said you were barely here at all—that you simply dropped off your books and left.”

Dean scoffs. “Why would I have stuck around, man? You weren’t here.”

“Anna?” Castiel says, giving him a significant look, and oh jesus christ, Dean is just about sick to death of significant looks at this point. He never seems to interpret them correctly.

Tossing up his hands, he sighs deeply. “Okay, you’ve lost me. What about Anna, now?”

Castiel looks a little taken aback. “I was hoping you’d take the opportunity to talk to Anna without my interference.”

Dean purses his lips, thinks about that for a minute. “Nope, still lost. Talk to Anna about what?”

Castiel’s fingers dig into his blotter as he makes a thoroughly frustrated expression. “I don’t know, whatever it is men talk about with women they’re interested in. Ask her out for a beer or something.”

“Waaait,” Dean says, with the sinking feeling that things are finally starting to fall into place. “Wait wait wait. You thought I’d been hanging around for Anna? You sent me here on Saturday to try to hook up with Anna?”

“...yes?” Cas offers.

“Oh hell, and I’m the one who got the speech last night. Look, Anna’s great. Real nice. An all-around awesome girl. But I’m not interested in her.”

“Oh,” Castiel replies, sitting back a little. “I’m sorry, I just assumed—”
“It’s you,” Dean cuts in. “Look, sorry. But it’s you, dumbass. It’s been you this whole time. You’re kinda ridiculously attractive to me, and then I found out I actually like you as a human being and, uh. Shit. This is coming out wrong. Okay, let me try again. Oh, hey there, dude I am interested in. You wanna, like, go grab a beer or something? In a totally non-platonic way?”

Cas lets out a surprised breath and blinks up at Dean. “You’re joking.”

Dean freezes, all that nervous energy turning straight to terror. Okay, so maybe he was wrong. Maybe coming here was a terrible idea. Maybe now would be the perfect time for backtracking. One thing’s for sure, though—he’s going to strangle Gabriel.

“Well, all right,” Cas says, pushing back his chair and standing. “That’s—good. That’s fantastic.” He makes this sound that really wants to be a chuckle but dies about halfway through. “I, um. You’ll have to forgive me, it’s just. I’m really terrible at this. The last person I was interested in turned out to not actually like men, so I’m perhaps overly cautious. Anna did mention her suspicions concerning your attentions, but I suppose I didn’t really give them much credence.” He pauses, his fingers drumming against his blotter. “And, again, I’m sorry—I tend resort to unfortunately stiff language when I’m nervous.”

Dean pinches the bridge of his nose and tries to hone in on just what direction this conversation had bounded off to. He has the sinking suspicion that this is what Gabriel felt like last night, and he can’t believe he’s empathizing with the guy who’s sleeping with his little brother. “So, wait. What’s happening here is that we have this mutual... thing... going on but you were worried that you were having another big gay crush on a straight dude?”

“Something like that?” Cas grimaces. “It’s not like your actions weren’t open to interpretation, though.”

“Forget my actions!” Dean counters, voice getting progressively louder. “I want to go back to the part where we are apparently on the same page, thing-wise!”

“Volume!” Cas shushes him.

Dean instantly clams up. They just kinda look at each other for a minute, separated by Castiel’s desk. Dean feels himself start to grin. Well goddamn. Okay, granted, it coulda worked out better a little earlier on. But everything seems to be headed in a pretty awesome direction after all—a direction that may actually lead to Dean getting to perform obscene acts with Cas’s tie and make a hell of a lot of librarian jokes while doing so.

As if Dean’s grin is infectious, soon enough one begins to appear on Cas as well. “So we’re on the same page?”

Dean barks out a surprised laugh. “Yeah, man, I think so. That’s pretty sweet, I gotta say.”

“Are you guys gonna, like, kiss now?” Todd asks, watching them attentively from one of the computer stations.

“I’m sorry, did you want to play Oregon Trail or not?” Castiel says archly after the moment it takes them both to remember that oh yeah, they’re in public.

“Shutting up,” Todd chirps, sliding in his chair to face his monitor.

“That kid is totally the sort that’d shoot fifteen buffalo knowing he could only carry two hundred pounds of meat back,” Dean snorts.
“Nnn,” Castiel sort-of agrees as he snags the fabric of one of Dean’s sleeves and starts dragging him away. Dean follows happily enough. As they pass Anna’s desk, she mouths oh thank god at Dean, who can’t help but frown at her in return. But before he knows it he’s in some sort of little break room and Cas is slamming the door shut. And then pressing him against it. With a surprising amount of insistence.

“You’re a bit more aggressive than I imagined,” Dean notes mildly. “That’s also pretty sweet.”

Castiel has his hands wrapped around Dean’s biceps and is staring at him contemplatively over the top of his glasses. “I’ll complain to you about American Library Association policies.”

“I don’t know what that entails, but okay,” Dean nods.

Cas frowns lightly. “I may bring up dense literary theory at dinner parties and not realize nobody cares.”

“I can help change the subject,” Dean offers.

“I have an unhealthy obsession with making sure Wikipedia articles are properly cited.”

Dean raises both eyebrows. “Facts are always good.”

At this point Castiel looks like he’s grasping for any reason for this not to work. “I’m not giving up my car.”

“I can deal,” Dean shrugs.

“I am absolutely helpless at book sales,” Cas adds. “I rescue them and keep them in boxes and on shelves and next to my bed. You will possibly drown in books.”

“I come home half the time with my skin and clothes grease-black,” Dean counters. “And smelling like burnt oil. I cuss too much and I have communication issues and I live with my ridiculous brother and he has this brand-new ridiculous boyfriend and it’ll be loud every time you come over.”

Castiel thinks about this for a moment, his thumbs swirling lightly against Dean’s arms. “Fair enough,” he says finally.

And then he kisses him.

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Chapter XV: In which Dean Winchester stars in an epilogue.

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“...and then the only thing left is the dad’s bloody wallet, because the lions ate them,” Dean grins.

“That’s sick,” Todd says appreciatively.

“Your mother’s here,” Castiel states, appearing behind them. He watches Todd jog off before frowning down at Dean, who is sprawled across one of the couches. “Stop fraternizing with the enemy.”

“You can’t fool me,” Dean smirks. “You like him.”
“Nnn,” Cas shrugs.

They’ve been an item for a month and a half now, and it’s been going pretty awesome, if Dean does say so himself. He still spends most of his evenings at the library, but now he gets to go home with the hot librarian at the end of the day. Which, total improvement over how his evenings used to go. And like half the time his baby brother’s obnoxious boyfriend has made some sort of amazing meal and there’s always a ton of leftovers, so he gets to have dinner and hang out with Cas, who—by the way—gets along famously with Sam. They basically nerdgasmed at each other for a full hour the first time they met, which Dean would call a total success, so okay.

Anna had come up to him the day after he and Cas had discovered they were actually into each other and told him that she a) was really happy for them, b) had totally told Cas that it was him Dean was after and not herself, and c) loves Cas more than anyone outside of her own family and that if he doesn’t get treated right, she’ll force-feed Dean his own dick. Somehow he doesn’t doubt that in the least.

He hangs around, engrossed in some book by Neil Gaiman that he’d picked up off of Castiel’s bedside table that morning, while the activity at the library winds down around him. Finally, eight rolls past and Cas locks the front doors. Dean puts down the book while he watches him go through the closing checklist; he bids Michael and Anna good night as they head home. Soon it’s just the two of them in the library.

“Whaddya wanna do tonight?” Dean asks, watching Cas shut down the last of the computers. “We can’t go back to my place, Sam’s called it for the evening. Apparently Gabe managed to, and I quote, ‘beat him at Halo for once,’ which I’m almost positive is code for something I really do not wanna dwell on.”

Castiel grimaces a bit, then hits the main switch. The entire central area of the library is thrown into darkness, with only the glow from the exit signs providing any light. “I have some ideas,” he says, and Dean sees him mostly as a dark shape as he stalks over to the couch.

Suddenly Dean has a lapful of warm, solid librarian. He voices his approval when Cas runs his blunt fingers through his hair, then catches Dean’s mouth with his own. Dean shoves Cas’s glasses to the top of his head, up out of the way, and proceeds to give as good as he’s getting. Before long he’s fiddled open the buttons on that damn waistcoat and has his hands running down the hot stretch of Castiel’s sides, the thin dress shirt feeling like almost nothing.

Cas rocks against him deliciously, and in his last coherent moment Dean thinks back to Mr. Byler and Castiel’s smile and how this whole thing started.

Thank god for that damn librarian kink—that’s all he’s got to say about this whole business.

Works inspired by this one:

Start Quoting Shakespeare and We’re Done (The Apple Pie Life Remix) by Tyleet (tyleet)

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