Who's afraid of the dark?

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Who's afraid of the dark?

by lukinha_jesus

Summary

It should have been just another birthday, but it wasn't. When Sam disappears mysteriously, John, Dean and Bobby team up to start a desperate search for him. Meanwhile, Sam wakes up in a strange, cold room, where no one talks to him, although he knows he's being watched. He's just a boy, and when things go terribly wrong, can Dean help him survive the darkness that creeps through his skin and nestles in his bones? This is a story of great darkness and pain, but also of great love and comfort.
Chapter 1

“Open it,” John urged. “C’mon Sam, open up.” He urged excitedly.

Sam unwrapped the box before him quickly. He looked from Dean to his father. “What is it?”

“Just open it already,” Dean said.

Sam’s attention went back to the box and he opened the last layer of wrapping paper.

“Go ahead, take off the lid and look inside,” his father insisted.

Sam looked at him, curiosity all over his face, and did as John asked.

What he saw was a brand new 9mm gun, shiny and dangerous.

“Happy fourteenth birthday, son. Do you like it?”

Sam stared at the weapon and arched his eyebrows. He picked it up from the box tentatively. “I guess…”

“Go ahead, there’s no ammo in it,” John watched as Sam studied the gun closely. “Dean will teach you how to clean and use it safely. From now on you two should add shooting practice to your training.”

Dean stared at his little brother and the way he looked at the gun.

“Thanks, dad,” Sam smiled. He supposed he was one of the few fourteen year old boys who got that kind of birthday present. But then again, not many fourteen year old kids had a hunter as a parent.

“Good. Now put it away and finish your breakfast. The school bus will be here soon.”

“Aw, dad. Can I not go to school today? Maybe I could stay home with Dean and watch TV. It is my birthday.” Sam tried.

“Funny. Not happening, kid. Dean said he won’t be home today. But he’ll pick you up after school, so wait for him, alright?”

“Where are you going?” Sam asked his brother.

Dean got up from the table with a smug grin on his face.

“Just out to do some stuff,” Dean replied mysteriously.
“What kind of stuff?” Sam asked, insistently. It was his birthday, after all. Why would Dean go out?

“Hey, finish up your breakfast,” Dean smiled and walked past Sam, slapping the back of his head playfully.

“Hey! Dad!” Sam protested. “Did you see that?”

“Dean, don’t tease your brother,” John said, checking his diary. “Hm, excuse me. I have to go make a call. Can you guys clean it up here?” He asked, getting up from the table.

“Yes, dad,” Sam said.

“Sure,” Dean agreed.

They followed John out of the kitchen with their eyes.

“Where are you going, like, for real?” Sam asked again.

“Chill out, dude. I’m gonna meet someone, that’s all,” Dean shrugged lightly and took his and John’s cereal bowl out of the table and put them in the sink. “We’re still gonna watch movies and eat ourselves stupid tonight,” Dean reassured him, and managed to get a smile out of his brother.

Dean started washing the dishes and looked at Sam from the corner of his eye. “You didn’t like the gun so much, did you?” He asked, a knowing smile on his face.

Sam shrugged.

“It’s okay. The kind of gift I’d expect from dad.”

“Well, it does mean dad thinks you’re ready for responsibility, so that’s a good sign,” Dean said.

“I suppose,” Sam said, using his spoon to toy absently with his cereal.

“Although I bet it’s not as good as what I got you,” Dean said casually, finishing up the dishes.

“What did you get me?” Sam jumped up from the chair, breakfast forgotten, and walked closer to his brother.

“Ah, you know… Just something you can use later.”

“Where is it? Let me see!”

“I’ll give it to you tonight,” Dean said, fully aware that Sam was not one to wait patiently for things.

“Oh, no way! Let me see it now!” Sam tugged at Dean’s jacket.

“Hey, hey! Just quit it, okay,” Dean pushed him away gently.

Sam looked at Dean expectantly. His young eyes were all admiration and curiosity. If he could, he would spend all day on the sofa watching movies and cartoons with Dean. He loved to spend time with his brother, and he felt a twinge of jealousy at having to share Dean with one of the many girls
he was always going out with. Sometimes Sam feared that Dean thought he was a nuisance and would much rather spend time in more pleasant company. Like he was too cool to hang out with his little brother.

“Here,” Dean picked up his backpack off the floor and put it on the table. “First there’s this, for you to have at lunchtime,” Dean handed Sam a couple of candy bars.

“Oh, I love those!” Sam took the candy quickly.

“I know. Happy birthday. May you eat all the junk food you can handle and feel sick to your stomach tomorrow,” Dean grinned. “Wait, there’s more.”

“What is it?” Sam went closer, trying to look from behind Dean to what his brother picked up in his bag.

Dean took a quick, sly look around to make sure John wasn’t nearby. “Here,” he said, pushing a magazine into Sam’s hands. “This one is for you, so you’ll stop sneaking mine away.” Dean said seriously, but not without amusement.

Sam took the magazine and looked at the cover, and his young cheeks blushed red at what he saw.

“Dean…” Sam felt the heat coming off his face and looked at his brother shyly.

“What?” Dean laughed. “You’re old enough to have a gun but not to have your own porn?”

Sam didn’t know what to say. He looked at the magazine cover again. “How did you know I stole yours? I always put them back.”

“Sam, a big brother always knows. There, you have your own now. That will do for a while,” Dean winked. “Just put it away now. And if Dad finds out…”

“I know, I won’t say you gave me.”

“Good boy. He’ll probably think it’s one of his anyway,” Dean said.

“Boys?” John spoke from the living room, causing Dean to eye Sam meaningfully so the boy would hide the magazine in his own backpack. “I have to leave now. See you at night for a movie and some popcorn?”

“Yes, dad!” Sam said.

“Good. See you later then. And Dean, don’t forget to pick up your brother.”

“I won’t. Bye, dad!”

John left the house and they heard the noise of a door slamming shut.

“Now c’mon, Sam. The bus will be here at any minute.”

Sam was on his way to take his cereal bowl to the sink when Dean stopped him. “Finish getting dressed and put your present away. I got this.”
“Why are you being so nice? Just because it’s my birthday?”

“Yes, so don’t get used to it. Tomorrow I’ll make you clean up my room, bitch,” Dean teased and Sam laughed. “So enjoy it for today.”

Dean watched as Sam left the kitchen carrying the box with the gun.

They met again in the living room, ready to leave.

“Dean, do we have to practice wrestling when I come back?”

“You know Dad’s schedule.”

“I do. But… today, really? Can’t we just hang around being normal for a change?”

“And how else are you going to get strong?”

Sam sighed, an annoyed look on his face. A look Dean was getting used to seeing now that Sam was becoming a teenager. Little by little that sweet boy was becoming willful and stubborn, but to Dean he would always be his baby brother.

“I said we should… not we have to,” Dean winked at him and Sam grinned.

“You rock, Dean. I knew you wouldn’t be a pain in the ass.”

“Hey, watch the language!” Dean frowned.

“What? You say shit all the time.”

“Well, I can.”

“The fuck you can,” Sam provoked.

“Hey,” Dean went closer and locked Sam’s neck into a headlock, only to mess with his perfectly arranged hair. “You don’t talk to me like that you little prick,” Dean messed his hair all over, knowing that would piss Sam off. He knew how careful his brother was about fixing his hair.

“Hey, get off!” Sam fought Dean.

They heard the sound of the school bus honking and pulled away, Sam a little breathless and flushed from trying to fight Dean.

“See, that’s why you need wrestling, to try and beat me.”

“I could beat you if I wanted,” Sam narrowed his eyes defiantly and picked up his backpack.

“Yeah, right. I think you’ll have to eat a lot more pizza to be able to do that.”

Sam walked to the door and turned around. He looked Dean in the eyes and gave him the middle finger. “Enjoy your date, asshole,” he laughed.

“Who said it’s a date?” Dean laughed too, smiling from ear to ear.
“Please. I know you.”

“Alright, smartass. Go now, the bus is waiting. I’ll pick you up at two, okay?”

“Yes.”

“And Sam?”

The boy stopped by the door.

“We can do whatever you want when you return.”

Sam smiled a true and happy smile.

“Thanks.”

“Happy birthday. Now go.”

Sam turned around and left.

Dean stayed behind and watched him go. He didn’t know then, but he would not see his brother again for the next three months. And Dean couldn’t possibly know, of course, that when he did see Sam again his insides would turn.

~ * ~

As the man walked in the facility, he was guided by two other men, supposedly guards, who accompanied him all the way and showed him where to go.

At the end of a white, clean and well lit corridor the other man was waiting for him – and this other man was not human.

“Leave us,” the second man – who wasn’t a man at all – instructed the guards. His eyes were as black as coal, and he was a demon.

The man watched as the two other people turned around and left, using the same long corridor that had just taken him there.

“Have you thought about my offer? Are you here to say yes?” The demon smiled coldly.

“My mother’s deal is over. She gets to keep her soul. And no demons on my ass for the rest of my life.”

“That’s the offer, indeed,” the demon nodded.

“Plus a hundred thousand, cash.”

“As you wish.”

“And…” The man thought for a while. “You promised that he won’t remember.”
The demon looked at the tall, strong man before him and nodded again. “I did. He won’t.”

“So that’s part of the deal. No one will ever know it was me. No one will ever know what we’ve done.”

“No one except my master, of course.”

“And you’re not gonna tell me who that is?”

“Trust me, the less you know, the better,” the demon said. “Do we have a deal?”

The man pondered a few more seconds. But the truth was that he was there, and he needed to save his mother as much as he needed the money. And, the man in front of him promised, they would leave no marks when this was over. That was, if you could trust the word of a demon.

“We have a deal,” he reached out his hand.

The demon looked at the hand and smiled a knowing, almost arrogant smile. He shook the man’s hand and stared deeply into his eyes.

“What is expected of me?”

“Nothing you haven’t been doing for many years already. You’ll come when I ask, you’ll follow my instructions, execute them, and walk out. You are never to utter a word or do anything I haven’t strictly asked of you.”

The man nodded. He had taken orders before. He was good at that. He supposed that was another reason why he had been chosen.

“All right. When do I start?”

The demon smiled a vacant, mysterious smile.

“Soon. Meanwhile, come with me. I need to show you around.”

~ * ~

“Shit,” Dean checked his wrist clock and looked at the girl beside him in bed. “I gotta go.”

“Why? Stay a little longer,” She smiled, rolling over on bed until she was partially atop him.

“I gotta pick up my little brother at school,” Dean said, getting up and putting on his clothes.

“Oh,” the girl arched an eyebrow, not very pleased. “How old is he?”

“Fourteen, today,” Dean smiled.

“And he can’t go home by himself?”

Dean looked at her with what was probably a dirty look, because the girl shrugged and started to get
dressed as well. “Just saying. Maybe you could stay more, you know. We could do that again,” she tried, seductively.

“Sorry, not today. I promised him we were gonna spend time together,” Dean finished putting on his shirt and was ready to leave.

“It sounds like it’ll be a boring day then,” she grinned.

Dean frowned. Suddenly he just wanted to get out of there. “You’re wrong. My little brother, he’s awesome. Sam’s the smartest kid I know,” Dean spoke proudly, picking up his wallet and keys and going for the door.

“Sorry, I was just trying to joke. See you!” She called after him.

“See ya,” Dean let himself out and started making his way towards Sam’s school. It was only a few blocks away and he was there in fifteen minutes.

Dean waited outside when the students started to leave, at exactly two o’clock. He waited and looked for Sam, relaxed at first, and increasingly more apprehensive as time passed by, the students all started to leave and Dean saw no sign of his brother.

Little did he know this was just the beginning of his worries.

~ * ~

“Why are we leaving early?” Sam asked when Dean came to his school and picked him up one hour before class was over.

“Dad’s orders,” Dean said curtly, walking with Sam out of the school and onto the next street.

Sam shrugged and kept on walking beside his brother. Far from him to complain about leaving school early. Sam liked to study, but school often got in the way. It didn’t help that they were always moving and he could never make friends for too long.

They crossed the first street and Sam stole a glance at Dean. He seemed way too serious for someone who had just been fooling around – at least that was what Sam thought. He had been prepared for a cheerful, boasting Dean to come pick him up.

As they moved, a tall, blond girl came in their direction. She was wearing a short skirt and blouse, and they could see her pretty belly button ring when she got closer to ask the time.

“A quarter past one,” Dean replied politely and they kept going.

Sam frowned. Even he, a fourteen year old, had noticed the girl’s large boobs. The fact that Dean hadn’t tried to flirt with her and made any wisecrack about it when she was gone was weird, to say the least.

“Dean, are you alright?” Sam laughed.

“I’m fine, why?” Dean asked, serious and concerned.
“Uh, nothing…” Sam shook his head. What was up with his brother? He seemed so different.

Sam was still thinking about it when another pretty girl passed them by, and once again Dean didn’t even bother looking at her.

Suddenly an alarm went off in Sam’s brain and he narrowed his eyes, looking more closely at Dean. They had been so cheerful this morning, Dean had been nice to him, for a change. Then what the hell was wrong? Why did he look so unlike himself?

The hunter Sam was training to be took over his thoughts and Sam looked suspiciously at his brother. He worried his silver key ring absently, and his heart picked up the rhythm.

They came to a stop before a busy avenue, where they waited for the light to turn green for them. Deciding to take a shot and see whether something was really wrong, Sam lifted his arm and offered his hand.

Dean looked down at the boy and the hand being offered. “What?” He asked.

“The hand, Dean. To cross the street,” Sam said innocently, as if that was the most natural thing ever. Except that it wasn’t. Dean hadn’t held his hand to cross the street since he was five or six years old, and there was no way in hell his brother would give him his hand without laughing and asking Sam what the fuck was wrong with him, teasing him endlessly about being a baby.

“Right.”

The answer startled him and made all alarms of danger go off at the same time in his brain. Instead of the teasing he was expecting, Dean reached out his hand and grabbed Sam’s.

Sam’s eyes widened and he thought fast. He pressed his silver key ring to Dean’s hand with his free one, holding on tightly to Dean’s fingers so he couldn’t retreat his hand.

“Hey!” Dean groaned, and to his despair Sam saw the silver had burned the skin lightly.

“Who are you? Get away from me!” Sam stepped back, and that was when he saw the man’s eyes flash a weird light, and that was also when he turned tail and started running.

“Come back here!” The man pretending to be Dean started to chase after him but Sam was light and fast. He put a good distance between them and started running blindly away from him. As he looked over his shoulder to check how far the man was, he failed to notice the other man who appeared right in front of him, blocking his way.

“Hm!” Sam bumped into this man’s chest at full speed.

“That’s what I always say. If you want something done right, you have got to do it yourself,” the man said and before Sam knew it he was being pulled by the waist and thrown into a white van parked on the street.

“No! Let me go! No!!” Sam fought against the man’s grip, but it all happened too fast, and suddenly he found himself inside a strange vehicle with a strange man looking at him.

Sam let his backpack fall off his shoulder and charged at the man. “Where are you taking me?! Let me go, now! Let me go!” He tried to fight the man, he was scared and nervous, and in his haste to try
and hit his attacker Sam didn’t see the man reaching into his pocket and pulling something out of it.
“Let me go! Right now! Take me back!!” Sam yelled, but just like Dean had easily grabbed him this
morning in a playful way, the man grabbed hold of him now, slipping an arm under his chin and
holding Sam tight as the boy kicked and squirmed.

Sam barely felt the small tingling feeling of a needle piercing his neck. It was quick and painless, and
soon his limbs did not obey him anymore, and his eyelids were heavy and tired.

The demon loosened his grip on Sam as the boy started to relax.

In a few seconds Sam’s vision became blurry and his mind started to drift.

He closed his eyes and was welcomed by a silent, dark oblivion that seemed to embrace him.

I confess I'm very nervous about starting this, because I have a lot of plans for it... so any form of
couragement would be very appreciated, thanks. :)

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Chapter 2

Sam woke up many hours later in a place he had definitely never been before. The first thing that he saw when he opened his eyes was the intense, cold light coming from the high, white ceiling. He had to blink a few times in order to adjust to how bright the place was.

The next thing he realized was that he was lying down, on some place soft, and he had no idea how he had ended up there. Sam’s hands touched around his body tentatively to try and understand what was happening. ‘I’m in bed’, he thought after feeling around a little bit. ‘But where?’

Little by little his memories started to come back, and the faster they played themselves in his brain, the faster his heart beat and made him fight against the remaining drowsiness he felt.

“Where am I?” He murmured, narrowing his eyes and sitting up on the bed. When he did so he winced. His head felt heavy and painful. Probably a side effect of the drug he had been given. ‘Someone drugged me,’ was his next thought. He remembered that he was picked up in school by a man who looked like his brother, but who definitely wasn’t Dean. Then he remembered running away from that man, only to end up being abruptly stopped by another, who had pulled him into a vehicle parked on the street.

Sam took a deep breath and frowned. What the hell was going on? Who had taken him? Where was he? Did Dean and his father know that he was missing? It was his damn birthday, he was supposed to be home now, watching TV and eating himself stupid with Dean.

Sam looked around and for a moment was completely disoriented. “Where the fuck are my clothes?” He asked himself out loud, looking weirdly at the white, pajama like pants and shirt he was wearing. He touched the fabric as if it could bite him, and felt how soft and thin it was. ‘What’s going on here?’ He thought, looking at his bare feet.

Sam stood up, despite the weakness in his legs, and took a look around the room he would come to learn very well in the next weeks.

He found himself in a very clean, tidy white room. There were bright, cold lights everywhere, making it feel like daylight. Sam had no idea what time it was. He didn’t know how long he had been unconscious, and inside that room, without a clock, he wouldn’t even be able to tell if it was still his birthday.

There was one single bed, the one he had waken up on, and on the far corner there was a toilet, toilet paper and a sink. Under the sink there seemed to be a pile of white rags, neatly organized. Sam frowned and studied the place suspiciously. What the fuck was that room? And how long did they plan on keeping him there? Like hell he would need to use any of that, there was no way, he thought, he would stay in there long enough to. His dad and brother were probably on their way to rescue him from whoever had abducted him.
Sam walked around with unsure steps, scanning the room carefully, wondering if there was anything in there he could use to try and escape.

Another thing that called his immediate attention was the presence of a large, pitch black window on one of the walls. Sam went closer to it in order to test if he could see anything through the glass.

He put his forehead really close to the window, and made a tunnel for his vision with the help of his hands, but there was absolutely nothing but darkness beyond that black window. Sam wondered if that was the kind of glass they used when victim’s had to identify suspects, one of those that only someone standing on the other side would be able to see him, while he would be completely unaware of being watched.

His heart skipped a beat at the weird thought. He moved away from the window and looked at the door through which they had obviously taken him in. It was the only way in or out of the place, Sam assumed, and he hadn’t noticed it before because the door was just as white as everything else in that place. If he didn’t know better, judging from what he saw around him and his weird clothes, Sam would say he was in a bizarre sort of hospital room. Everything looked tidy and super clean, and so white it hurt the eyes.

He went closer to the door and put his two hands flat against it. ‘Fuck,’ he frowned. There was no handle on his side of the door. Sam tried pushing it, but the door seemed heavy, and as the lack of a handle indicated, whoever had put him there obviously didn’t want him to get out – the door didn’t move an inch under his effort.

Sam gave up and ran a hand through his hair. Suddenly he realized he felt hungry, on top of scared. All he wanted was to close his eyes and wake up home, in his own bed, like what he saw now was nothing but a fucked up dream.

He walked backwards to the center of the room and looked up at the ceiling again.

“What the…?” He focused his eyes and wrinkled his forehead. There was a camera in a high corner of the room, pointed straight at him. Sam figured it was on because there was a tiny red light flashing on top of it.

With his heart racing, he walked closer to where the camera was and waved his arms. “Hey!” He screamed. “I know you can see me! I know you’re there! Let me go!” He protested. “My dad is probably looking for me by now, and he’ll kill you when he finds me. So let me go now!” He yelled, anger rising and making his chest expand.

Sam moved and realized that the camera followed him, which only drove him even madder. “Why don’t you stop being such a coward and come here, face to face?” Sam challenged. He shouted out more obscenities for a few more minutes before he gave up and paced around the room some more. His stomach rumbled and his headache was getting worse.

He didn’t know how much time had passed when he went back to the bed – the only comfortable spot in the room – and sat down again, sighing and pulling his knees against his chest.

~ * ~

The demon observed him through the dark window in the room. It was, as Sam had imagined, exactly the kind of glass that allowed him to watch without being watched. And for the next hours he
watched Sam intently. Watched as he woke up and started to explore the room – his room, for the near future. He watched as Sam’s look changed from puzzled to scared, from that to confused and then angry, and at last, as he sat back on the bed, to quiet and suspicious contemplation.

Although he was a demon, and it was in his nature to cause evil, he wasn’t exactly looking forward to the task at hand. He wasn’t excited or happy about carrying it out, he was simply worried, like the perfectionist he was, that everything would go down exactly as planned.

He looked at the boy sat quietly on the bed, probably scared and intimidated by the room’s brightness and coldness, and he could tell there was something so absolutely special about him. Little did the boy know, but the future held big plans for him. He just needed to go through this trial, as the master had required, and then one day he would be able to fulfil the prophecy.

The demon could not speak to the man behind the upcoming events. In fact, the one behind the kidnapping of the Winchester boy was no man at all. It would take the name of someone of great power and influence to be able to find that secluded, hidden and large place where they could conduct the ‘experiment’. It was a shame that Lucifer was now in a cage and unable to see how well the plan would unfold.

It didn’t matter, though, the demon thought and sighed. All that mattered was that it would get done correctly.

“You asked for me?”

The demon turned around and saw the man he had hired.

“Yes. The boy has arrived.”

The man stepped closer, approaching him until he was able to look through the same window at the boy sitting on the bed.

The man took a deep, steady breath. There was no coming back once he signed that deal. There was no room for regrets. Now was the time he kept his part of the deal and did whatever he was asked to.

“When do you want me to start?”

“Tomorrow night. Let’s give him some time to get used to the place first. Confusion and lack of information are part of the plan, after all.”

The man nodded. “I’ll be here when you need me.”

“I hope so. Here,” he gave a piece of paper to the man. “Here’s what you’ll do. Be prepared.”

The man reached out his hand and accepted the piece of paper. He didn’t unfold it just then. He had a feeling he knew what he was going to see written there, and he was in no hurry to read it.

There would be time later.

Until tomorrow night, there would be plenty of time to read that.

~ * ~
When all the students were gone and the school doors were closed, Dean started to feel a gust of panic rising inside him.

Where the hell was Sam? Had he gone home alone? Did he leave early?

Dean walked around the surrounding blocks, his senses alert and his chest heavy with worry. He walked for over half an hour in the nearby area, and even talked to some teenagers who looked like they could be Sam’s classmates, but nobody knew anything about him, and Sam was nowhere to be seen.

“Fuck,” Dean cursed silently after an hour of waiting and useless search. He decided there was nothing he could do now before going home. Dean didn’t think Sam would be there, but he had to accept the fact that it was a possibility. Maybe Sam had felt sick during class and the principal had sent him home.

Maybe he had decided to skip class and go home despite what dad had told him – Dean knew he had done his share of skipping class, either to hang around or hook up with girls, but that didn’t seem like something Sam would do.

Dean started making his way faster towards home. ‘I swear, if the little brat has been there all along, I’ll fucking kick his ass,’ Dean promised himself. He was angry at the thought that Sam had disobeyed and made him worry for nothing, but the truth was, Dean was scared for him, and he didn’t like that feeling at all. Anger seemed like a much safer feeling to hang on to.

“Sam?” He unlocked the door and called, as soon as he stepped inside. The locked door didn’t mean much. John had always taught them to lock themselves in whenever they were alone, so that didn’t prove Sam wasn’t in. “Sammy, can you hear me?” Dean walked further in and called again.

They had been staying in this nice rented house for the last four months, which was a reasonably decent amount of time when it came to Winchesters staying in the same place. Dean looked around the kitchen and living room, calling Sam’s name a couple more times before he made his way upstairs.

“Sam?” He entered his brother’s room, and when he saw everything perfectly organized, the bed neatly made with the box Sam had received his present in that morning, Dean’s heart sank. There was no sign whatsoever that Sam had been home. “Dammit,” he took his hand to his face and rubbed at his chin and cheek as his brain worked furiously. What could have happened?

Had Sam left school with one of his friends? That was unlikely. Dean knew Sam didn’t have many friends, and he also knew that after everything John had taught them Sam wouldn’t dare disappear like that without talking to him or dad first.

“Dad,” Dean thought aloud.

He went quickly to their father’s room. The door was closed but not locked. Dean entered the place where there was a double bed and a locked wardrobe, where John had been keeping great part of his weapons and ammo.

But that was not what Dean was looking for now. He went straight to the nightstand beside the bed and opened the first drawer. Inside he looked for a notepad with a few telephone numbers written down. He chose the one he wanted – whenever possible John circled the latest phone number where
he could be found at before leaving. Dean didn’t think he had gone hunting today, but he knew his father wouldn’t be home until evening. He needed to talk to him as soon as possible. Dean dreaded the thought, but they might be wasting precious time when it came to finding out what had happened to Sam and where he was now.

Dean dialed the number and waited. “C’mon,” he urged. “Pick up, pick up, pick up,” he chanted, but to no avail. After a couple more tries he gave up and looked around John’s room.

“When are you, Sam? Damn, kid, it’s you fucking birthday, where the hell would you go?” Dean asked the questions out loud, and hearing them only made his worry intensify. Indeed, it was Sam’s birthday. Dean knew there was nothing Sam wanted more than to come back home and hang out all afternoon. So why wasn’t he there now?

Dean sighed, frustrated, and thought about what he should do next. It was clear Sam wasn’t in the house, so the most logical option was to go out and keep looking for him. Before he left, though, Dean picked up a pencil and a piece of paper and left a note on top of Sam’s pillow.

If you get home and read this, please stay where you are. I’m out looking for you and I will be home soon.

Dean re-read the message a few times. He fought the urge to write some curse words, some angry, worried sick words, and decided to keep it simple. He didn’t want to scare Sam away if he happened to return home feeling guilty for his disappearance.

After another quick search through all the rooms of the house, Dean picked up a jacket and left again. It was the middle of the afternoon and the sun was still shining bright, but soon it would begin to set and it was likely to get cold.

John Winchester’s older son raked nervous fingers through his short hair and slammed the door behind himself. He knew that the more time passed, the less hope he would have of finding Sam today. But he also knew that staying home doing nothing but waiting was not an option, so he ventured outside once again, not sure where to go, just knowing he had to keep moving.

~ * ~

When John got home it was past eight in the night. He let himself in and was met by the darkness of the place. As a hunter, he immediately sensed something was off and tried to sharpen his hearing to try and figure out if there was somebody home.

“Sam? Dean?” He called. “Why are all the lights out? Where are you?” He asked, advancing slowly into the living room. He reached out his hand and flicked the light switch. The living room was perfectly tidied up, just as he had last seen it this morning before he had left.

That was very unusual. Considering that he was arriving home a little later than he had promised Sam, he’d expected to find his two sons sprawled on the sofas, having junk food and watching TV, as were the plans for the night. “Sam? Dean?” he called again, and his hand went instinctively to the gun he was carrying around his waist.

He stopped right on his tracks when he heard the noise of someone trying to enter through the front door. John turned around and raised his gun, ready to shoot whoever showed up.
“Dean?” John lowered his gun and frowned when his oldest son walked in, looking serious and agitated. “What happened? Where were you?” He asked, studying Dean and quickly taking in every worried wrinkle in his youthful face. “Where’s Sam?” He added when he realized Dean was walking in alone.

Dean shut the door and stood still. He didn’t know how to break the news to his father. Hell, he didn’t know how to break the news to himself.

John watched, perplex, as Dean stood before him, breathing hard and looking lost. “Dean, did something happen? Where’s your brother?” He asked again, and suddenly his mouth was very dry.

Dean took a deep breath, that failed miserably to calm him down. When he spoke his voice was shaky and scared.

“Sammy’s gone, dad.”

-----------------------------------------

tbc....
Chapter 3

“What do you mean Sammy’s gone?” John frowned. He stepped forward and his eyes pierced Dean’s for answers.

“I went to pick him up after school, but he never showed up. I searched everywhere around school, then I came home, then I called you,” Dean said. “I tried calling you three times.”

John’s breath grew faster as he tried to process the information Dean gave him.

“I… I got so wrapped up in research I couldn’t really check for any calls this afternoon,” John said slowly. “But that isn’t possible, Dean. Are you sure he isn’t at a classmates’ house? Maybe he didn’t go to class, maybe he thought he would do something different for his birthday?” Even to his own ears John’s voice sounded full of doubt.

“Dad, I’ve been through all these options, alright? I don’t think Sam would’ve gone anywhere without checking with you or telling me first. He was looking forward to tonight. I can’t believe he would have simply made other plans.”

John frowned and ran a hand through his hair. His heart started to pick up speed as he tried to come up with some rational and logical explanation.

“Have you talked to someone at school?”

“No. By the time I realized he was really gone the school was closed. I was outside looking for him.”

“We should talk to someone at school,” John said.

“Do you have the principal’s number? His teacher’s?” Dean asked.

John thought for a minute. “I might have it…somewhere… I’m sure they gave me a number when I enrolled him…”

Dean followed John upstairs and watched, frustrated, as his father went through drawer after drawer for someone’s number who could give him information.

“Dammit. I only have the school number,” John concluded after twenty minutes and many sheets of paper all over the floor. “It’ll be closed now.”

Dean’s heart seemed to shrink and tighten with every lost hope of finding Sam. He had a terribly bad feeling about the whole thing, and it was difficult as hell trying to think of something intelligent to do.

“We can go to his school first thing tomorrow morning. Meanwhile, what do you think we should
“Do?” Dean asked.

John looked into his son’s worried, edgy eyes and knew he had to keep calm and think. “I’ll go outside and search for him.”

“Okay. I’ll go with you.”

“No,” John put a hand on Dean’s arm. “Somebody needs to stay home in case he shows up.”

“You can stay, I need to go there again. I won’t be able to sit here waiting,” Dean said, and in his green eyes John saw his unspoken fear.

“Dean… You’ve been outside until just now. It’s my turn now. I need to do this,” John stressed. “Besides, I bet you haven’t eaten anything all day, so stay home, eat something and rest. We’ll need all the strength we can get to see through this.”

Dean shook his head a little and thought of saying something, but John was right. He doubted he would be able to eat, let alone rest, but he figured his father would be unable to stand still right now, and he was right in that someone did need to stay home in case Sam came back.

“Dad…” Dean looked at his father’s bed and all the sheets of paper on it and on the floor. He looked at John when he started moving towards his locked wardrobe and opened it up to look at his weapons. “Do you think… do you think this might have something to do with our job? I don’t know, with the things we hunt?”

John put a few weapons on the bed and studied them. Dean’s question forced him to look inside a room whose door he dreaded opening.

“I hope not, son.”

~ * ~

Sam didn’t know how much time had passed, but he knew he didn’t like that place one bit. The silence in the room was just maddening, that and the aseptic look of everything in it. By now Sam had expected that someone would have come talk to him, to explain what was going on, what they wanted. Maybe then he would be able to fight his way out of that place, or gather some information that might help him plan his escape.

Inside that room, Sam would soon learn, there was no time. There was no day or night, and he only knew that hours had passed since he had been brought there because he was hungry and needed to pee.

Sam started eyeing the toilet with more sympathy than anger, and eventually, when he felt his bladder would get the best of him, he stood up and used it. When he was done he turned to the sink and stared at it for a while. He hated not knowing what was going on. Why couldn’t he go back in time and never go to school that day?

Sam tried the faucet and water came out of it, so he washed his hands with a small bar of soap and drank some water before closing it. He got on his knees and picked up one of the white rags. It looked clean and soft. He dried his hands with it and put it back on the pile.
Who the fuck would go to the trouble of putting him in such a place? How long was he expected to be there? What had they done to his clothes?

Sam started walking around the room again, maybe he had missed some important detail about the place.

He tried to sharpen his ears but there was no sound except for a faint, indistinct humming of technology running. He placed his hands flat against the white walls and looked for cracks or anything. He was pretty desperate, he knew that. But for now he tried to keep his shit together.

“What the fuck are these?” Sam approached his face to look at some small metal rings on the wall, a little above his head. They were painted white, same as the wall, and that was probably the reason why Sam hadn’t noticed them before. He hooked a finger on those rings and tried pulling. He didn’t know what he had expected would happen, but nothing in the room moved or changed in the slightest when he did that.

He looked down at the white floor and saw the same metal rings existed on the wall, just above his feet. He crouched in order to inspect the things more carefully. He once again tried pulling, twisting, pushing… Nothing happened.

“Hey!” Sam got up and screamed. “Where the hell am I? Won’t you even tell me?” He looked at the camera on the ceiling and talked angrily to it, as if it could talk back. “I’m not staying in this sick weird place, you hear that?! You can’t keep me here!” He yelled.

“Fuck you!” He gave the finger to the camera and felt himself on the verge of tears.

It took him a moment of stillness to regain his self control before anything happened. He would not cry, no matter what. He wouldn’t give those perverts watching him the satisfaction.

Boiling with raging anger and confusion, Sam went back to the bed. His stomach complained loudly, demanding food. It could not understand what had happened, why wasn’t it being fed like it should?

Eventually, though, his hunger turned into some sort of sickness, and he felt that he wouldn’t be able to eat a thing, ever again. Why couldn’t they have let him keep his fucking watch? It was not like he could have used that to escape, Sam thought bitterly. He really wanted to know how long he had been there, and if his dad and Dean were any close to finding him now.

With these thoughts filling his mind and his empty stomach resigned to being ignored, the bright lights of the room started to matter less and less, and eventually weariness and fear mingled and defeated him.

Sam fell asleep alone, in a strange and hostile place, in a day he could only think of as the worst birthday ever.

~ * ~

It was two in the morning when Dean heard the noise of someone coming in. He was sat on the sofa, a lamp lit by his side, the rest of the living room was dark, almost like the night outside.

John entered and shut the door behind himself. Dean didn’t have to ask anything. His father was
alone.

For a moment Dean thought he would lose his shit. He stood up and sucked in his breath, and his eyes felt hot and moist.

John swallowed his own fear and walked up to Dean.

“Nothing?” Dean asked, and his throat hurt when he spoke, because he was trying hard not to cry.

John put a hand on his shoulder and squeezed. “We’ll take it up tomorrow.”

“No, dad! Sam’s out there! We need to go back now! He might be hungry or cold or scared! We can’t just stay here not knowing where he is!” Dean had sat in that living room for hours, and he was unwilling to keep doing that until morning.

“Dean… Dean, listen to me!” John squeezed his son’s shoulders. There were tears welling up in Dean’s eyes, but he was so angry that John doubted he had even realized that. “We need to get some rest, okay? We need to sleep three, four hours if we can, because we’re gonna have to be ready to look for Sam all day tomorrow. Going back outside now is useless. You know that.”

Dean blinked and felt fat tears roll down his face. He wiped them angrily and straightened himself.

“I can’t sleep.”

“You have to. You and I. We’re gonna eat something, take a shower and get some sleep. And then tomorrow, first thing we’ll go to Sam’s school and find out what we can. Alright?”

“Dad-“

“These are orders, Dean. Go get yourself clean and eat something. I expect you to be in bed in an hour.”

John’s voice was firm and commanding. He was scared shitless inside, but he needed to be strong. He needed to think clearly, and clearly, there was nothing productive they could still do that night.

Dean swallowed back the lump in his throat, nodded curtly and left.

John sighed and watched his son disappear upstairs. He raked his fingers through his hair and sat down heavily on the couch.

“Where are you, boy?” John whispered, his heart tight and heavy with worry.

Dean did as he was told – or at least he tried to. He showered quickly and made himself a sandwich, which he pretty much swallowed down without any pleasure. When he was done, however, and it was time to get some rest, Dean didn’t think it would be that easy.

He lay in bed and stared at the ceiling in the dark. They were supposed to be having fun tonight. First the movie and the junk food, then, as Dean had imagined would happen, Sam and he would break his father’s rule for sleeping before midnight and would have stayed awake, talking and laughing quietly probably until sunrise.

They didn’t always have a perfect relationship, far from that. More often than not Sam would be
pissed at him for overdoing his teasing, or for – as Sam would say – learning to be as bossy as their
dad. But that wouldn’t have happened tonight. Tonight it was Sam’s birthday, and it was supposed
to have been fun.

The more he tried not to think of anything, the more the thoughts vomited themselves in his brain and
made it impossible to find sleep.

Eventually, a little before sunrise, Dean Winchester could shut his eyes and sleep for a couple of
hours.

~ * ~

The moment the school opened its doors, before the first student had arrived, John and Dean were
there. They were led inside by the caretaker, who had opened the school doors, and were taken to
the principal’s office, where they needed to wait for another fifteen excruciating minutes.

“Oh, hello,” a well dressed woman met them there and sat across her table from them. She wore
glasses and her hair was up, which gave her a serious, busy look. “Mr. Winchester, the caretaker told
me. Is that right, sir?”

“Yes. This is my oldest son. My youngest is-“

“Sam Winchester, I know,” she smiled. “How can I be of any help?”

“Well, yesterday my son Dean was supposed to pick Sam up after school, but Sam was not among
the students who left the place. Since then he and I have looked everywhere for him but we’ve had
no success. We would like to know if something unusual happened yesterday. Did Sam not come to
class? Dean tells me he saw him getting into the bus.”

The woman frowned, deciding the situation was indeed grave. “Well, if you give me a minute, I’ll
ask one of his teachers to come here.”

John nodded and they waited a bit more as the woman talked on a phone and asked someone else to
join them.

“Mr. Winchester, this is Mrs. Sanders, Sam’s biology teacher. She was teaching the last period
yesterday.”

“Hello, Mrs. Sanders.”

“Can you tell us if Sam was in class yesterday?” The principal asked.

“Well, yes… He was in class, and I don’t understand why you ask.”

“His father says he hasn’t been home since yesterday.”

“Why don’t you ask the other one?” She nodded towards Dean, who frowned.

“What do you mean?” The principal seemed confused.
“You are his brother, aren’t you?”

“Yes?” Dean looked lost.

“I know, because Sam said so. You picked him up earlier yesterday, remember? You said you were going to do something, because it was his birthday, so I let him go.”

For a moment no one said anything in the room. Dean’s heart felt cold and seemed to drop in his chest. John’s brain worked furiously with the new piece of information. He looked at his older son and saw the confusion all over Dean’s face.

“Are you sure, ma’am?” John asked. “Are you saying that you saw this young man right here walk out with Sam yesterday?”

“Of course I’m sure,” and then she eyed Dean with a frown. “Do you not remember?”

Dean’s lips parted, but no one would ever know what he was about to say. By then John had already started moving. He pulled Dean up from the chair where he was seated and started dragging him out of there.

“I’m sorry, ladies. I’ll talk to my son outside. Hopefully this has been nothing but a misunderstanding.” John smiled hurriedly and pulled Dean out right behind him, despite the puzzled looks of the two women who probably had more questions.

Once they were safely outdoors, John and Dean stared at each other.

“Dad, I swear I didn’t come close to this school before the bell rang! She must be going crazy, I didn’t-“

“I know, Dean,” John cut him off.

“You know?” Dean frowned.

“Yes,” John swallowed hard.

“So what do you think happened there?”

John looked his son in the eyes. Things were getting more complicated and definitely more scary by the hour.

“You know the things I hunt?”

“Yes…” Dean’s heart raced.

“Have you read about shapeshifters?”

It took Dean a while to process what his father was saying. “They….they can change into anyone… Anyone at all. If it was a shapeshifter who picked Sam up he wouldn’t have been able to tell it wasn’t me.”

“The thing is, shapeshifters need to touch someone in order to be able to copy them. Have you met someone these last few days? Someone weird?”
Dean searched his mind.

“What were you doing last morning?”

“I… I was with a girl,” Dean confessed. “I don’t recall talking to anyone out of the ordinary…”

“Anything, Dean. Even a casual bump on the street would be enough for a shifter to copy your DNA.”

Dean’s chest went cold.

“What? What is it?” John asked, seeing the way a thought seemed to have clouded Dean’s green eyes.

“Yesterday morning, when I was leaving home, I did bump into someone on the street. I remember apologizing but the guy never even turned around. I called him asshole in my mind and kept going. I didn’t think…” Dean started to panic. “Dad, I never thought.”

“Of course you didn’t,” John soothed him. “How could you?”

“So what? Does that mean a shifter’s got Sam? Why would he do that? Are you working on something related to shifters?”

“No!” John said quickly. “No, not remotely.”

Dean’s breath was coming in short, rushed gasps. He rubbed his palms against his tired face and shook his head.

“So Sam’s disappearance has something to do with monsters. Great!” Dean felt once again that familiar feeling of fear and desperation threatening to take over.

“Dean, calm down. We have our first clue. We need to keep our heads focused, alright?”

“So what do we do now?” Dean wanted to know.

John licked his dry lips and pondered for a while.

“C’mon. We’re going home. I need to make a phone call.”

“What?” Dean’s forehead wrinkled as his father tugged at him to move along. “Wait, why? Who are you gonna call?” Dean fretted.

“Someone who will do everything to help us.”

Dean thought for a moment before he nodded slowly.

“Are you calling uncle Bobby?”

“You’re damn right I am, kid.
tbc...
Sam woke up in that strange, parallel-universe like room without the slightest idea of what time it was. He knew he had fallen asleep, but he didn’t know for how long. The moment he opened his eyes that annoyingly bright white light flooded his sight and made him frown.

Tired, he had fallen asleep in a weird position, and his right foot was numb. He sat up in bed and stomped his foot to fight the feeling, and when he did so he noticed something different in the room.

A tray with food was sitting just by the door. In it there was food – rice and vegetables and meat, and a toothbrush with toothpaste on it.

Sam stood up and walked towards it. It looked as if it had been slipped into the room from underneath the door. Sam hadn’t noticed before that there was a gap between the floor and the door, so now he pushed the tray aside and pressed his cheek to the white floor, wondering if he could see something from there.

Sam squeezed himself as best he could, but his hand would only slip halfway under the door, and his eyes couldn’t see farther than the same white floor outside the door.

Frustrated and angry, Sam rose to his feet and looked at the camera again.

“’I’m not eating your fucking food!’” Sam kicked the tray of food and made a mess on the shining floor. The sight of rice and vegetables all over that whiteness cheered him up a bit. “’You hear me?! I’m not gonna eat your fucking food, so you might as well just let me go!’” Sam challenged.

He stared at the camera as if it was the devil himself, but again nothing happened. No sound, no voice, nothing. It was like Sam was inside a bubble.

Angry and frustrated, he went closer to the dark glassed window and started hitting it with his palms. “Can you see me? Do you see me? I know you do! I’m not eating your fucking food! Let me go now! Let me fucking go!” Sam closed his hands into fists and hit the glass as hard as he could, but nothing happened. It was way too thick to be damaged.

Tired and hungry, Sam sat down on a corner of the room and ran his fingers through his hair. He looked at the food sprawled on the floor and his stomach growled. ‘Shut up,’ he chastised it mentally. ‘’I’m not gonna eat in here. I can eat when I’m home,’ he thought. And right now Sam needed to hang on to that thought, as it was the only thing he had.

~ * ~

The demon watched the boy silently. He saw when Sam kicked the food and heard when he started to yell at the camera.
“You will eat the food, Sam. You just don’t know it yet,” he spoke softly, to no one except himself.

It was all about time and patience, and he had made sure to have both available. He was aware that John Winchester was a terrific hunter, but even he would have trouble following any lead to Sam. This plan had been carefully thought out since Sam was a baby, and executed – perhaps not as brilliantly since the shifter had let Sam realize he wasn’t his brother, but decently enough.

“I’m here.”

The demon turned around and looked at the man.

“Good. Have you read my instructions?”

“Yes.”

“Do you have any questions?”

“No,” the man said, firmly.

“Fine. Take this,” he gave a pair of weird glasses to the man.

“What are those for?”

“You’ll need them. To see in the dark.”

The man took the glasses and nodded.

“Go get ready. You’ll go in soon.”

~ * ~

Dean watched as Bobby and John paced around the living room. Bobby had arrived in the night of the second day of Sam’s disappearance. Since then John and he had talked about plans, strategies, possibilities and doubts as Dean sat there and listened.

The truth was that knowing there was something supernatural involved in Sam’s abduction didn’t make it any easier to solve the problem. It just served to make everyone more tense and scared about what might have happened.

As each hour closed by without Sam being back home Dean thought he would lose his mind. There were moments when he thought he just couldn’t do it. Having Bobby there, however, did help him a little.

Dean knew that Bobby was a badass hunter, and together with his father they would have to figure out a way to find Sam. There was some solace – and Dean clung to it desperately, – in the thought that if someone could find Sam, that someone was his father and Bobby, working together.

“Let’s put the word out for other hunters. If they catch a shifter we’ll interrogate the bastard. I don’t care if we have to kill every last one of them, but we’ll find the one who took Sam,” Bobby was saying.
Suddenly his father sat heavily on the sofa beside him and buried his face in his hands.

“John?” Bobby frowned.

“How?”

Dean and Bobby exchanged a meaningful look when they saw John’s shoulders move up and down as he cried into his hands.

“Dad, we’ll find him,” Dean spoke, barely able to hold back his own tears. Dean knew he shouldn’t cry. He couldn’t think, for one second, that Sam wasn’t okay or that he wouldn’t be found. Hope was what had been feeding him for the past couple of days, and Dean needed to hang on to it like it was a drug.

“We’ll find him, John. You know we will,” Bobby spoke too.

“I made him go to school,” John raised his head and wiped his tears, his lips quivered as he spoke. “He didn’t want to go. It was his damn birthday. I could’ve just let him stay.”

“Dad, you couldn’t know,” Dean squeezed his father’s shoulder.

“I made him go and now he’s gone,” John shook his head disapprovingly.

“John, shut up already. It’s not your fault,” Bobby said. “Keep acting like that and it’ll take us twice as long to figure this out. C’mon, keep your shit together. Isn’t that what you always say? Go sleep some. I’m here now, and we’ll get the boy back.”

Dean watched as John listened to Bobby and nodded. He straightened his face and wiped the last tears off his eyes. It seemed like his dad too needed some sort of reassurance.

“You’re right. I’m sorry. I’ll go get some sleep,” John stood up, nodded towards his son and his friend, and went upstairs to either find sleep or pretend he did.

“What about you?” Bobby sat down beside Dean when they were alone.

“What about me?” Dean asked, startled.

“How are you holding up?”

Bobby placed a warm, comforting hand on Dean’s thigh. His look was so knowing and so loving that suddenly Dean felt his resolution about tears crumble.

“I’m scared, Bobby,” Dean confessed, and his voice sounded hoarse with the ghost of tears. “I’m afraid they’ll hurt him.”

“Sam’s a strong boy, Dean. He’ll hang in there until we get to him.”

Dean nodded. “He is,” he agreed.

“Now go get some sleep too. Tomorrow we start again.”
“Thanks for being here, Bobby,” Dean swallowed back his tears and regained composure.

“Dean… there’s nothing I wouldn’t do for you boys. It’s as personal to me as it is for you and John.”

Dean smiled. He loved Bobby for saying that, for meaning that.

“Now go ahead, you need to rest.”

Dean nodded and stood up to leave as well, following in the same way his father had gone a few minutes earlier.

Alone in the living room Bobby sighed and thought deeply.

“Where are you Sam?” The question danced in his mind and in his heart, and the hope of answering it was what gave him strength now.

~ * ~

Sam had used the toilet a couple of times already. He didn’t know if it was day or night outside, and he didn’t know why dad and Dean hadn’t found him yet. All he knew was that he was getting apprehensive that maybe his dad wouldn’t have any good leads to follow.

“He’ll find a way,” Sam spoke softly, toying with his toes. “Dad always does,” he tried to convince himself.

It was boring not having anything to do. Sam knew he had spent hours looking around, alternating from angry, scared, frustrated, hungry and angry again. The food was still exactly where he had kicked it, and the plastic tray too.

The room was so bright, so full of that white light that when darkness came Sam found himself completely blind.

‘What?’ Sam frowned and stayed still. ‘What happened?!’ His brain tried to understand the new environment. Suddenly all light had gone out of the room leaving him swimming in complete, total darkness.

His eyes had been so adjusted to the intense light that Sam found himself unable to see the palm of his hand a few inches of his face.

“What?” He got up from the bed slowly and called out. “Hey, is anyone out there? What happened?” Sam’s ears picked up a thud. At first he thought it was his own heartbeats drumming in his ears, but as the seconds passed by Sam realized those were footsteps. “Are you coming to let me out?” Sam asked, but no one answered. The footsteps, however, got louder and closer.

Sam was up, somewhere in the middle of the pitch black room, when he heard the noise of a door unlocking.

“I’m here! Help me! I’m right here! I just can’t see anything!” Sam spoke from the spot where he stood. He stepped forward tentatively. It was so dark in there his brain refused to walk with confident steps.
Sam heard the noise of the door closing, and suddenly there was another breathing pattern there in the dark with him, indicating he wasn’t alone.

“Who’s there?”

The footsteps got closer, but because it was so dark in there Sam couldn’t tell exactly how distant the other person was until Sam sensed someone standing right before him. He couldn’t see much, but it felt like someone tall and strong. “Dad?” Sam tried, hopelessly. If that was his father, why hadn’t he said anything?

Sam swallowed hard. “Who are you?” He asked again. This time all the hairs went up in the back of his neck and Sam took a step backwards.

“Tell me! Who are-“

The man’s first punch hit Sam in the chin and caused him to bite his tongue and stumble backwards. The next punch hit him in the stomach, and caused all air to escape his lungs.

Sam fell to the floor, unprepared for what had just happened. The taste of blood filled his mouth because of his bitten tongue, and his stomach seemed afire from the blow.

The man went closer when the boy fell.

Sam hadn’t had time to wrap his mind around what had just happened when he felt strong hands lifting him back up. ‘It’s a man’, he thought. ‘And he’s strong.’

Sam put his hands before his face instinctively for protection, both from the dark and from the man in front of him.

The next punch hit his cheekbone and caused Sam’s head to explode with pain. He stumbled backwards again, but a strong hand kept him from falling.

“Who are you?!” Sam screamed, his breathing was now a messy panting, and his heart beat desperately fast in his chest. “What do you want from me?”

A hard slap across his face elicited a painful moan from him, and at last Sam’s brain seemed to understand he was in serious danger. He didn’t know who or why, but someone was attacking him, and he had to fight back.

The man watched, from his obvious advantage in height and strength, as the boy tried to punch back, fighting blindly in the dark room. Dark to him, anyway. The man saw his struggles and attempts at fighting back, which were sad, if not simply pathetic. He punched him again, on the nose this time, and let him go when Sam fell.

Sam landed on all fours, his nose bleeding profusely. He couldn’t see, but he felt hot liquid pouring from it, and he had to start breathing through his mouth because his nostrils were filled with warm blood.

The pain was crazy. He blinked several times to try and pull back from the blow, but that was when he was kicked hard on the side and landed flat on his belly on the floor, which, Sam thought vaguely, was probably not very white right now.
“Who are you? There must be something wrong! I haven’t done anything!” Sam said, because he knew he was obviously too hurt and much smaller than his invisible opponent to overpower him physically.

The man didn’t say a word.

When Sam lay on his side to try and get up, he felt a looming body next to his, and then pain exploded in his body once again.

The man punched his ribcage a couple of times and Sam gasped, blood coming out of his mouth in a desperate attempt to let the air come in.

Sam curled in a ball on the floor and shut his eyes. He knew he had to get up and fight, like he was taught to do, like Dean would do, but the pain was like poison, and it was advancing quickly in his system. Soon he couldn’t think clearly, let alone rationally.

The man watched, from a standing position, as the boy groaned on the floor. There was a lot of blood pooling around his face, blood which looked pitch black from behind his night vision glasses.

He circled him and stopped behind his back.

Sam wondered what would happen to him. If the man kept this up he could easily kill him. Would he die just like that? Alone? Without the slightest idea of what was happening to him?

“Arrghh!!” Sam screamed

The man kicked him exactly where his kidney was, and the pain was so fierce that it caused Sam to black out instantly.

As he stopped moving, the man watched him curiously. He leaned down and took his wrist. There was a fast and steady pulse. There should be one, otherwise the demon would probably kill him.

Deciding he had done his job for the time being, the man turned around and sighed. ‘No regrets,’ he thought firmly in his mind as he walked out of the room.

~ * ~

“So how was that?” The demon met the man halfway down the corridor.

“It got done, didn’t it?”

“Yes, I saw it. You followed the instructions, indeed.”

“Can I go now?”

“Yes, for now you can,” he nodded.

The man made as if he would walk past him.
“It’ll get easier, you know. With time,” the demon offered.

“Not, it won’t,” the man said, staring intently into the demon’s eyes. “But it will get done,” he promised before he walked out of the place.

The demon watched as the man disappeared in the end of the hallway. He turned around and went back to the place where he had been before, watching the scene unfold inside the room.

He turned all lights back on and through the dark, thick glass of the window he could see inside. He studied the mess the man had left behind – an unconscious boy, lying flat on his stomach.

From where he stood it might even be said that Sam was simply asleep after some strenuous physical activity.

That, of course, if one failed to see the boy’s head resting in a red pillow of his own blood.

------------------------------------------------------------

tbc....
When Sam came back to his senses it took him a long while to understand what he was doing on the floor, in a puddle of something wet. The first thing he understood was the pain, and that told him a lot. His nose was throbbing, and so was his lower back. When he tried to sit up, his chest ached and he felt lightheaded for a moment.

‘What the fuck has just happened?’ He thought, as he swallowed some saliva down his dry throat and opened his eyes.

He was still in that white, weird room he had been brought to not so long ago. His white pajama like clothes had blood stains all over them, and the white floor was painted in different patterns of red. It looked almost beautiful, the way his blood challenged the cleanness of it all, as if it was mocking it.

‘He hit me too hard in the head,’ Sam shrugged off the weird thoughts and sat up. He winced when he did so, but he managed to. He took a hand to his nose and his face contorted in a grimace of pain.

‘Now what the hell have I gotten myself into?’ He tried to remember what had happened and understand why he had taken such a beating. Where was that man now? Was he the one watching him from behind the camera?

“Aw,” he groaned when he tried touching his nose again. It felt weird. Perhaps he had broken it.

~ * ~

“I think his nose is broken,” the doctor said.

The demon looked at him. “Do you need to go check on him?”

“I need to put it back in place and make sure he hasn’t broken anything else.”

“Alright, doc. You can go in, but you know the drill,” the demon said slowly, looking him intently in the eyes.

“Don’t speak more than what you absolutely have to, do what you need to do as quickly as you can and get out. I got it.”

“Good. I like someone who can follow rules.”

“Can I go in now?”

“Of course.”
The doctor sighed and walked past the demon, towards the corridor that lead to the door to the boy’s room.

Now, how the doctor had gotten himself into this mess perhaps he wouldn’t be able to explain in details. Everything had just sort of started happening, and when he realized he was in too deep.

The doctor was a great, acknowledged professional in his field. He had treated famous athletes and had made himself a nice living, with a loving wife and beautiful daughter. It had all started when his beautiful dream life started to crumble, a year ago, when his little girl was diagnosed with cancer – leukemia.

It was even worse being a doctor himself, because he could see beyond all those exams and doctor appointments, he could see the hopelessness in the situation, and the grief it caused his wife to know the inevitable would end up catching up with them.

That was when he started drinking. It had started as a drink or two to let the tension go after a hard day of work. But as his daughter’s cancer progressed, he had turned into a miserable alcoholic who could barely handle going home to the despair he would see in his wife’s eyes.

That was when darkness found him. At first it was just a few whispered words of advice from a friend. Before he knew it, he was selling his soul to restore his daughter’s health. But before a deal got signed with one of those creatures he could barely convince himself were real, the demon whom he worked for now had shown up, revising the deal.

The doctor wouldn’t have to sell his soul. All he had to do was work for the demon for a few weeks, do exactly what he asked, treating a secret patient who the doctor could know absolutely nothing about.

It seemed like something worthwhile. He wouldn’t die in the end, and his baby girl would be able to live normally again. Hopefully his wife would forgive him for his weakness and all would be well again.

At least that was what he hoped, and right now he had no reason to think it wouldn’t be as he imagined. All he had to do was come in whenever the demon called him, and take care of the boy’s injuries. The demon wanted him to go in, treat any serious physical trauma and give him constant updates on the boy’s health. The problem, and the doctor tried not to think of it, was that the so called physical traumas seemed to be inflicted by the very man – demon – who was hiring him to treat the boy.

There were a few very poignant questions in the doctor’s confused mind, but he knew better than to go ahead and ask them. The demon himself had made it clear – you go in, check on him, do what you have to do. You don’t ask questions that are not medically relevant. You don’t ask the boy anything that’s not medically relevant. You just don’t.

So now, as he unlocked the door and let himself in, he tried to keep those instructions clear in his mind. That boy was a mystery he wouldn’t dare understand. He was unlike any patient he had ever had or might ever have. And his and his daughter’s lives depended on his treating of him.

~ * ~

Sam’s heart skipped a beat when he heard the noise of the door opening. ‘Oh God, he’s back,’ he
thought, a taste of panic in his mouth. ‘He came back to kill me,’ Sam’s eyes were huge and alert, and he closed his fists tightly, ready to fight for all he was worth to save his life.

He was puzzled, to say the least, when the door opened to let in a man dressed in white, carrying a black briefcase. He was wearing a surgical mask and cap, and glasses, which made it difficult to see much of his face.

“Who... who are you?” Sam asked. He didn’t feel afraid anymore. That man didn’t look harmful at all. In fact, he looked tense and afraid himself.

The doctor approached him and crouched on the floor beside him, laying his briefcase there. He shut down his thoughts and feelings and reached out his hand to touch Sam’s nose.

Sam recoiled instantly, avoiding any kind of contact.

“That’s okay. I need to check if it’s broken.”

“Are you a doctor?” Sam asked, and this time he let the man touch him.

The doctor nodded, not trusting his voice to speak. What had that boy done? He looked like such a good, scared kid. What could he have possibly done to make the demon want to hurt him this bad?

“This may hurt a little, so hang in there,” he whispered softly.

Sam frowned, not sure what he meant, but he quickly found out.

“Arrgh!” He groaned and there was an audible snapping sound of something going back to place.

“There. It’s fixed. It’s gonna hurt for a while though.”

“Why are they doing this to me?” Sam’s hand closed around the doctor’s wrist before he retreated his arm.

The doctor looked into the boy’s hazel, desperate eyes and said nothing.

“What’s going on? Why am I here? Can you get me out?”

The doctor knew that behind that black glass the demon was watching them intently, and the demon could listen to everything they spoke. One wrong word now and his daughter’s cure would be unreachable.

“Raise your arm,” the doctor said at last, ignoring Sam’s questions.

Sam looked confused and lost. He did what was being asked of him, raising his arm and moving it around until the doctor was satisfied. He hissed at the pain it caused in his chest when he did so.

“Alright. That’s fine.”

The doctor looked into the boy’s confused eyes. ‘I’m so sorry,’ he thought. He then picked up his briefcase, got up and ready to leave.

“Hey! Where are you going? Don’t go! Come back here!” Sam got up and tried to follow the doctor,
but the injuries made him slow, and the man could exit the room before Sam was near the door.

Sam watched the white door close again. He felt the pain screaming in his body and the silence he was now found in.

“What the fuck is going on here?!” He screamed. “I demand an answer! You have got to tell me!” Sam’s breath came in short, angry gasps. He looked at the food still spread on the floor, and his blood where he had been lying.

He didn’t know much about the place, but Sam was quickly realizing that he needed to get out of there fast.

~ * ~

“So?” The demon asked when the doctor came out of the room.

“I fixed his nose.”

“I saw that. Good.”

“I also checked if he hadn’t broken anything else.”

“And?”

“He hasn’t. He’ll probably have nasty bruises, but the way he can move his arms, I would say nothing’s broken.”

“That’s great news. You are dismissed now.”

The demon smiled.

“Here,” the doctor started to write down a prescription. “These are some pain killers to give him for three to four days,” he ripped the paper from his notepad and handed it to the demon.

The demon looked at the written words as if they meant something he couldn’t quite understand. He frowned and studied the prescription. Then, he simply raised the paper to his eyes and shredded it to pieces, letting them pool by his feet.

“As I said, you are dismissed.”

The doctor swallowed hard and nodded, and then made as if he would turn around and leave. Before that, though, he looked into the demon’s eyes and his lips parted, as if he had something important he had to speak.

“I’m sorry, are you going to say something?” The demon dared him, always with an ironic smile in his face.

The doctor closed his mouth and shook his head. “No. Nothing. I… I’ll be waiting for your next call.”
“The school called,” Dean said, putting down the receiver. “They want to know if we found Sam.”

“What did you say?” John asked.

“I told them that not yet.”

“I need to stop by the school. I’ll let them know we found him.”

“What? But we didn’t! The more people looking—“ Dean started.

“Dean, listen. If they think Sam’s gone they’ll bring the police into this. And we both know the police don’t know jack about what has possibly happened to Sam. Can you picture us saying the word shapeshifter in a police station?”

Dean looked lost.

“Imagine if they actually come here and start searching the house, what would happen if they found out my weapons and started asking questions?”

“Your dad is right, Dean,” Bobby added. “We need to tell them Sam is back. We can’t afford to have the police on us. They would only slow us down.”

“Fine,” Dean caved. “But how will we explain the fact that Sam will no longer be going to school?”

“We need to move.”

“Dad, are you crazy? What if Sam comes back? What if he shows up and finds out we’re no longer here?”

Bobby and John exchanged a meaningful look.

“What?” Dean asked, when he saw the look being shared between the two older hunters.

“Dean,” John walked closer to his son and placed a hand on his shoulder. “Sit down.”

“What’s going on?” Dean looked from his father to Bobby, needing answers. “Bobby?”

“Sam’s not coming home, Dean,” Bobby said.

“You don’t know that!” Dean’s brow creased and he shot back immediately.

“Dean, we have to accept that Sam’s disappearance is very complicated. We need to find him. Bobby and I were talking… who ever took Sam will not simply release him back home. We’ll have to go after them to get him back.”

“You can’t be sure,” Dean insisted.

“You’re right,” Bobby agreed. “And that’s why John has talked to a hunter who lives fifteen miles
from here and she promised she’ll keep her eyes open for any sign that Sam has returned to this house.”

Dean listened to Bobby and then looked at his father.

“Yes, Bobby is telling the truth. We have someone on the lookout in case Sam comes back. But right now we gotta go, Dean.”

“Where to?” He asked, having mixed feelings about the whole thing. A part of him was still in denial, and didn’t want to leave the house. He still believed his little brother would be back for that movie they would watch on the sofa, eating junk food for his birthday… But the more practical and reasonable part of him agreed with his father and Bobby. They needed to move. They needed to go get Sam.

“Our first stop is at a friend of Bobby’s who happens to be a very good hacker. He’ll try and get into the police system and see if he can help us on anything the cameras might have captured that day.”

Dean nodded.

“Good,” he said. That sounded like a plan. “Good,” he repeated.

“Now c’mon. Go pack your things and meet us here in ten.”

Dean nodded and went upstairs to his room. He opened a bag and threw his not so many clothes inside of it. He also packed a few of his personal items before he walked into Sam’s room.

His chest burned a little at the feeling of being in there. He stood still for a moment, but quickly shrugged off his thoughts. They didn’t have any time to waste, so Dean picked up Sam’s clothes and put them inside another bag. He took the box with Sam’s fourteenth birthday present in it and packed it as well.

Dean stood at the door then, wondering if he had packed everything they needed. For a moment he even dared feeling hopeful.

“We’re coming for you, Sammy,” he spoke into the empty room. “You just hang in there as best as you can.”

Dean took a deep breath and turned off the lights, going downstairs to meet his father and Bobby and together be on their way to bringing Sam home.

~ * ~

Sam decided he didn’t like to look at his own blood on the floor. His father had always taught Dean and him to clean up after themselves, and well, Sam was neat. His room was always more organized than Dean’s, and sometimes he would end up folding and putting away everybody’s clothes and stuff at home because he was simply better at that. He was patient, and had a keen eye for details.

So yeah, the sight of his blood annoyed him.

Sam went to the sink and picked up a couple of white rags from beside it. He let the water run and
drank some of it before he let the rags soak. Then he closed the faucet and crouched before his drying blood. He cleaned it as best as he could, just to ensure he didn’t have to stare at that glaring contrast of red and white whenever he opened his eyes.

When he was done he threw the stained rags to the side and while he was at it, he decided he would give the food tray a destiny as well. He picked up what he could of the food and put it back inside the tray, then he slipped the thing under the door, outside his room. That was something else he couldn’t stand looking at anymore. He was still hungry and now he was also sore. The less things reminding him of both feelings, the better.

Sam looked at his blood stained clothes and sighed. Then he lifted the loose white shirt and checked his own body. It had probably been less than an hour, but he could see the bruises forming already. There was a huge one around his ribcage and another one near his hipbone. He couldn’t look, but he imagined there would be another nasty bruise on his lower back, because it felt very sensitive to his touch.

There were no mirrors in the room, but Sam touched his face tentatively to try and catalogue the damage. His eyes had not been affected, but his cheekbone throbbed, and so did his temple. The area around his chin felt painful too, and Sam supposed that in a few more hours he would not be something pretty to look at.

He went back to the bed and sat down on it, pulling his knees up and falling quietly into thought.

Why had he been beaten like that? Who was behind taking him to that place? And why did a doctor come see him after the beating? Was that a mistake? Did that man do to him something that he shouldn’t have? They were trying to feed him and make him sort of comfortable, Sam thought. There was the food tray, and the toilet and the sink with water. So why the beating? That didn’t make any sense.

‘I just wish I knew how long I’ve been here,’ Sam thought. And then, quickly. ‘No, I wish I knew how much longer I will have to be here,’ he corrected himself.

“Where are you, Dean?” Sam let his guard down and thought of his brother. “Why haven’t you and Dad come?” He whispered very softly to himself, as he studied his toes absently.

His heart was tight with worry that his father and brother wouldn’t be able to track him down. Sam had no idea where he was. He didn’t remember how long the ride had been, he hadn’t seen a single detail of it on the way to that place. Sam didn’t know what that place was, and he was there. How did he suppose his father and Dean, who weren’t even there, would be able to find him?

‘I don’t care how. They will find me,’ he thought, stubbornly.

Sam’s stomach reminded him once again of being mistreated and demanded some attention. He tried to move to find a more comfortable position and many corners of his body complained of piercing pain.

‘Just please… make it quick, guys,’ Sam thought, staring at the white brightness of that room he had already come to hate.
Chapter 6

Sam woke up to the same haunting bright lights in the room where he was being held captive. He didn’t remember falling asleep, but he supposed he had been out for quite a few hours.

“Hm,” he moaned softly when he sat up in bed. Moving reminded him of what had happened when the lights had all gone out. Sam lifted his white, blood splattered shirt and checked the angry bruises on his skin. At least his nose didn’t hurt so much anymore.

As he blinked the rest of sleepiness away, Sam felt his stomach painfully empty, and he didn’t think he could go on a hunger strike for much longer.

His eyes went instinctively to the door and he saw it – there was another tray with more food on it.

‘No,’ he thought. ‘I’m not going to eat it. They will have to release me then.’ Sam stayed where he was, sat on the bed, toying with a loose thread on the fabric of his clothing, until suddenly he could no longer.

His stomach hurt. What if that man came back to beat him again? It wouldn’t help him to be found weak and starved. If there was another attack he needed to be strong to fight it. Not that Sam actually thought he could fight someone much larger than him, but he had to try, right?

‘Dean would eat,’ Sam thought. ‘He would eat and work out until he was strong enough to beat the shit out of whoever entered the room next,’ Sam thought, and this gave him hope. He could do that. He could try and do some training, some push ups and sits up, try and strengthen his body so he could fight back. Wasn’t it what innocent people usually did in movies where they were sent to prison?

But first, he had to eat.

Sam got up from the bed and walked towards the food tray. He didn’t want to look at the camera. He didn’t like the idea that someone watching him was pleased that he had just yielded.

He took the food to bed and looked at it. There was no fork or knife – they were smart enough not to provide anything he could use as a weapon. There was a plastic spoon and again a toothbrush with toothpaste on it. “How considerate,” Sam said sarcastically. “You beat the shit out of me but you want me to take care of my oral hygiene,” he mumbled.

The smell of food was too much to resist. His stomach made a loud, rumbling noise and Sam fought no longer. He started to eat fast at first, as if a huge and empty hole was sucking it all in inside him, and then more slowly as he started to feel satiated.

Sam ate the rice, the beans and the vegetables, and the chicken he ate with his hands, because the spoon was useless for that. When he was done he shut his eyes for a moment and licked his lips. His
stomach – at least that part – was happy for the moment.

It took him a while longer to move again, but when he did he went to the sink, brushed his teeth and drank some water. When he was done he used the toilet and washed his hands. Sam then stared at the empty tray of food and sighed.

He took it and slipped back outside from under the door. He didn’t know when he would be offered the next meal, but he was done with the whole not eating thing. ‘I’ll get strong enough, and then the next time one of them walks in, I’m leaving,’ he promised himself. And then he would go home to Dean and his father.

Sam enjoyed this new thought. It sounded like a plan. ‘I should work out,’ he told himself, promising to start as soon as he didn’t feel so full of food.

~ * ~

The man read the instructions and looked at the demon.

“Okay,” he said.

The demon watched him approvingly and started to hand him the things he would need.

“There.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes.”

“When should I go in?”

“How about right now?” The demon challenged him.

“Fine,” the man replied. He wouldn’t show remorse or have second thoughts. He held firmly what had been given to him and started making his way towards the boy’s room.

~ * ~

Sam lay down on the white floor ready to start his training with some sit ups. The first he did, however, caused him to wince with pain in his torso and was very effective in changing his mind about the workout.

He frowned and touched his bruises through his clothes softly. ‘Maybe I should start with something else,’ he thought, rubbing gently at the pained spots.

 Darkness came without any warning and once again Sam found himself blinded by the total absence of light.

‘Oh, no,’ his mind immediately sent off an alert to the rest of his body causing his pupils to dilate and
his heart to race. Sam sat up and blinked quickly in his new found disorientation.

The sound of his own breathing was loud in his ears, but soon it was not the only sound he heard.

There were footsteps coming in his direction.

“Oh, God, no…” he whispered, getting up and trying desperately to see anything in the absolute darkness.

Sam heard the noise of the door opening and someone stepping inside the room with him.

“Stay away from me!” Sam’s first instinct was to shout out. ‘Dammit’, he then thought, thinking that he had just made it clear, with his voice, his location inside the room. ‘How stupid am I? I should’ve just kept quiet’, he chastised himself.

Little did he know that quiet or not, the man with him inside the room had glasses that allowed him to see in the dark, and allowed him to know exactly where the boy was standing, looking around himself worriedly.

Sam heard the footsteps walking towards him and started moving away from the sound. ‘Fuck!’ He thought, as he didn’t know where to run to. He couldn’t see a thing in the total darkness which surrounded him, and besides, where would he go?

‘I’ll have to fight’, he told himself, breathing faster now and feeling his adrenaline levels go up quickly.

The man was smooth and made very little noise. He was standing right in front of the boy, but Sam didn’t have the slightest idea, because for him everything was darkness.

The punch came out of nowhere and hit him hard across the face. Sam groaned and stumbled, and his confusion was all it took for the man to overpower him.

“Get away from me!” Sam screamed when he felt arms and hands all over him, holding his wrists until there was a click and Sam felt something cold against his skin. “What are you doing? Let me go!” Sam struggled blindly, punching and kicking in the air as someone much stronger dragged him across the room.

Scared at what was going on, Sam was suddenly shoved hard against a wall and he gasped, his cheek forcefully pressed against one of the cold surfaces of the room by a large hand on his head.

Sam moved frantically, trying to somehow twist away from the grip the man had on him, but he was just a fourteen year old boy, and not a seasoned fighter like the person manhandling him now.

The man shoved Sam hard against the wall, pushing the boy’s stomach flat against it so his back was turned to him. Then, as the man could see very well inside the place, he took one of the cuffs he had just put on the boy and locked it to one of the tiny metal rings on the wall, soon doing the same to the boy’s other wrist.

“What are you doing?!” Sam shouted. He tried pulling his arms only to realize he had been handcuffed to the wall. ‘Those fucking metal rings’, Sam thought, miserably. ‘That’s what they are for.’
“Hm!” Sam pulled with all the strength he could summon; he pulled until the metal of the handcuffs bit into his skin and drew blood, but he found himself firmly tied to the wall, his back to the aggressor.

The man studied what he had done so far. ‘Good job’, he told himself. He had thought that perhaps he would have difficulty finding the metal rings to cuff the boy to, but those glasses sure made everything easier. Now on to the next part then.

The man pulled a whip from his waist and ran it over his fingers before holding it firmly by the handle. He then brought it up, high above his head, and down again, whipping Sam’s back and causing the boy to scream at the unexpected pain.

‘What was that?!’ Sam’s mind screamed. He shuddered all over and on his back, even though he was wearing clothes, he felt pain that was at the same time burning hot and icy cold.

The man brought the whip up and down again, hitting a different spot across Sam’s back, causing a series of tiny black dots to begin forming on the boy’s clothes. The man supposed those dots would be red, if only the lights were on.

“Arhhh!!!” Sam cried out when he was hit again. He gasped and pressed against the wall even further, as if he could recoil from the pain.

The man lashed at his back again and again. Not hard enough to make the session too quick, but painfully enough to make it impossible for Sam to think of anything that wasn’t the pain spreading quickly.

Again and again he brought down the whip, and suddenly the boy’s clothes had equal parts of white and black.

“STOP!” Sam screamed. He gritted his teeth hard, so hard it hurt, and squeezed his eyes to try and endure the lancinating pain on his back. Questions of why that was being done to him were far from his mind right now. There was nothing Sam could think of, nothing except for ‘I’ve never felt so much pain in my life’. “Hmmarrgghh!” He let out a rising moan and a clipped, ragged breathing as the whipping continued. ‘Oh God, it hurts so much!’ He thought, his face wrinkled in a mask of pain, his knees giving under his weight, leaving the handcuffs to keep him standing, causing even more injury around his wrists.

“Stop, stop!” He groaned, twisting blindly in the handcuffs, arching his back as far away from the man behind him as possible.

The man did not listen to him. He kept bringing the whip down until more skin broke and until there was a wet sound every time it hit the boy’s back.

Sam bit hard on his bottom lip and tasted blood. He thought he had just wet his pants too, but he wasn’t sure. He pressed hard against the wall and shuddered, it felt like his back screamed.

And then, when Sam thought he couldn’t take it anymore, the whipping stopped. The man’s arm fell by his side and he started to walk out of the room.

Sam heard his footsteps going away and his body went limp, once again relying on the handcuffs to keep him standing. His lips quivered and his jaw was still tense from gritting his teeth. Though his eyes were tightly squeezed shut, Sam felt they were moist underneath his eyelids.
He didn’t know how long the man was out. Sam didn’t want to open his eyes; he didn’t dare move at all. But when he heard his footsteps coming back Sam gasped and felt panic clouding every last rational thought in his brain.

‘Please, no more’, he thought. ‘No more.’

The man did something that Sam didn’t see with his eyes shut in the dark. Then he did approach him again to unlock his handcuffs. Sam was petrified as the man removed him from his hanging position.

The handcuffs were removed from his wrists and Sam dared open his eyes. He couldn’t see anything in the darkness around him, but he felt the man’s presence close enough that he could smell him. Sam’s nose captured a faint trace of citrus, and he tried to imagine how close the man was based on that, since his eyes weren’t useful at all. His back was throbbing and Sam felt blood running down his back and pooling around the waistband of his pajama pants.

He stood very still, shaking in the dark as the footsteps went away and the door was once again locked.

The moment that happened the lights were turned back on, and the brightness of the white room caused Sam to narrow his eyes, sensitive to clarity after being so blinded.

Sam looked around himself. There was a clean change of clothes in the middle of the room. The same white pajama like clothes, neatly folded, in the center of the place. Sam assumed that was what the man had brought inside when he had left briefly.

With his hands hardly obeying the commands of his brain, Sam started to lift his blood soaked shirt off his body and cringed when the fabric stuck to his broken, bleeding cuts.

“Hmmm”. There was only hot white pain in his mind, and for a moment Sam felt vertiginous, as if he would pass out. He stopped, breathed in and out deeply for a few minutes and then resumed his movements, groaning at the pain but not stopping until the shirt was off his body.

Gasping for air and weak after the strain, Sam looked at the shirt he had just taken off.

The back of it was red instead of white.

He let it fall on the floor and stared at it intently.

The pain in his back still took over every attempt at forming a reasonable thought, and Sam could only look at the clothing on the floor with astonished disbelief.

He took shaky fingers to his back and tried touching it tentatively.

“Ahh!” He gasped, wincing at the pain.

Sam went down on his knees slowly and pressed his forehead to the floor. It hurt so much right now that he couldn’t think of anything else to do.

He stayed in that fetal position for a long time, feeling the piercing pain of his open cuts bleeding and burning, and then a ridiculous thought occurred to him.
‘I’ll definitely have to put off my sit ups,’ Sam thought dumbly and then laughed. His lips, almost touching the white floor, parted to let out a stupid little laugh that escalated until he was actually shaking with it.

Sam didn’t think it was even possible to hurt until you laughed, but he learned that today. And that wasn’t the last thing he would learn in that place.

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tbc...
Chapter 7

Sam stood by the sink with some of the white rags he could find in there. He realized that the dirty ones were gone, and the ones he picked up now were clean and had probably been left there by the man.

_The man._

Sam shuddered at the memory. Who was he? Did he plan all this or was he just following orders?

‘Don’t think of him,’ Sam’s brain begged, and he quickly brought his attention back to what he was doing. He let the water run from the faucet and soak the rags, then Sam picked up the bar of soap and cleaned his chest and arms as best as he could.

He didn’t know how long he had already been in there, but Sam thought he could use the closest to a bath as he could get. Washing away the dried and the fresh blood on his skin gave him something to do, to busy his mind with, and keeping his mind focused on cleaning himself helped him stop concentrating on the lacerating pain on his back.

Sam used the rags to rinse his skin and looked down at his loose pants. He didn’t care if someone was watching. This was about him and something he could do for himself instead of dwelling in self pity. He let the pants pool around his feet and carefully – because moving hurt a lot – he cleaned the rest of his body too.

‘Now comes the difficult part,’ Sam thought. He took one of the dry rags, wet it some in the sink and sat down. He braced himself for the pain when he let the rag touch the skin of his back softly.

Sam hissed at the contact and shut his eyes. The pain was so fierce that his stomach hurt too, but he kept going. He arranged the rag so as to cover his back and let it stick to his bloody, broken skin, in order to clean it a little.

After the first initial shock from the painful contact, Sam realized that the wet, cold rag was actually comforting against his back. He crossed his arms on top of his knees and let his head hang between them, feeling the water ease some of the stinging sensation of the cuts.

He stayed in that position for a long time, and then he repeated the procedure of getting the rag wet again and placing it gently against his skin. It was a painful process, but it paid off.

Sam stared at his wrists. The skin around them was raw, but the pain was like a scratch when compared to his back. ‘I will not beg,’ Sam thought suddenly, an angry, violent thought that caused his young pretty face to look older.
“Do you hear me?” Sam screamed at the room from his sitting position. “I will NOT beg!” He yelled, his lips twitching with fury. They wouldn’t have that satisfaction. ‘I can beg and I can cry all I want in my mind, but you will not hear it, you assholes,’ he thought, removing the wet rag from his back and standing up to get dressed again with the clean clothes that had been left there before.

~ * ~

The demon watched as Sam did all that. He smiled at the boy’s fierceness. He could see why Sam was the one, and why the experiment was necessary. The boy was a hunter, he was strong in mind and spirit, and in a few more years he would be in body too. It was necessary to have a quick, easy access to the core of his soul, to the center of all that was fragile, so Lucifer could find in him the perfect, willing vessel one day.

“You do not beg now, Sam, but you will,” the demon spoke to himself. “Before this is over you will beg, and you will cry. I will have you broken, shattered,” the demon said softly. “And when I’m satisfied that darkness has been planted in your heart, I will make sure you don’t remember a thing until the time is right.”

~ * ~

When Sam woke up in bed he had a stiff neck from sleeping on his belly. He had fallen asleep out of sheer exhaustion, because for a long time the pain had been so fierce that Sam had simply sat on the bed, managing it.

Eventually, though, he had fallen into sweet, painless oblivion, despite the brightness of the room and the open cuts on his back.

Right now, as Sam opened his eyes to his strange reality, pain was the first feeling to pay him a visit. He had been fine while he was asleep, but now the intensity of the lashes on his back came back to remind him of the man and of the darkness.

Sam sat on the bed slowly, and when he did so he realized that his shirt had stuck to his skin because of the bleeding which probably happened during his sleep.

“Fuck,” Sam cursed, trying to pull the shirt out of his skin, but wincing as the fabric remained stuck to his skin because of the blood.

Sam frowned and kept his eyes only half opened. It hurt like hell, but he had to remove the shirt. The longer he kept it on the harder it would be to take it off later. He should’ve known this would happen.

Sam groaned and managed to remove the clothing. He shivered when it was finally out. As he put the garment before his eyes, Sam could have an idea of what his back looked like judging from the pattern of red lashes across the fabric.

Sam looked at the door and saw there was food.

He was in so much pain that he didn’t even feel hungry, but he remembered his plan about working out, getting stronger and fighting his way out of there and forced himself to get up and walk towards it. The plan hadn’t changed. Nothing had changed. His second meeting with darkness had served only to show him how much he did, in fact, need to do something to get out.
“So, what do you make of that?” The demon asked the doctor as the latter observed Sam’s wounds from behind the black glass.

“They look… painful,” the doctor swallowed hard.

“How long will it be until those cuts stop bleeding?”

“That depends… the more he moves the longer it will take.”

“How long until they heal?” The demon insisted.

“Looking from here I would say about 10 days, maybe more.”

“I can’t wait for ten days.”

“Well then, perhaps you shouldn’t have had him whipped like that’, the doctor thought but dared not speak.

“Can you make it heal faster?”

“I can use some balm with medicine in it. It’s good to throw in some antibiotics for him to put on the cuts to prevent an infection.”

The demon nodded approvingly.

“Fine. You’ll go in and give him something he can put on the cuts to make them close faster,” the demon announced.

“Why don’t you heal them?” The doctor said before he could stop himself, but when the demon focused piercing, black eyes on him he regretted having said anything. “I mean… you… you can heal it, right? You are going to heal my little girl…” he tried. “What are some cuts compared to cancer?”

The demon smiled. “Yes, I could heal them. I could touch him and erase all those marks from him. But I’m not going to do that,” the demon said. ‘Not now, anyway’. The time would come for him to erase Sam’s memories and do away with his scars, but that was not now. For now the boy suffered, simple as that.

The doctor nodded, feeling foolish about his question. There was obviously some kind of wicked experiment going on there. They were torturing the boy but at the same time they needed to make sure he suffered no permanent damage. For a moment the doctor wondered whether that experiment would end with the boy’s death. The thought startled him and he shrugged it away quickly. ‘It’s none of my business,’ he reminded himself.

“Get this medicine ready, then. You’re going in.”

The doctor nodded again.

One hour later he was holding a small container with a paste inside. The demon didn’t have to know
that he had added a good dose of painkillers in the mix. Not only would those cuts heal faster and fade smoothly without glaring scars, but it also contained enough anesthetic to make the boy certainly more comfortable than he was now.

“Are you ready?” The demon stood by the door to the room, studying the doctor.

“Yes.”

“Let me see it,” the demon ordered. “No, not the medicine.”

The doctor took in a deep breath and lifted an object from one of his pockets. It was a taser.

“You know you have to use it in case he tries to get out, right?”

“I know.”

“Fine. I was just checking.” The demon narrowed his eyes and smiled, and then he let the doctor in.

~ * ~

Sam’s heart skipped a beat when the door opened and he saw the doctor walking towards him. His first thought was of relief. That man didn’t come in to inflict pain, that much Sam had understood by now. He looked curiously at the small container the man held in one of his hands.

The doctor stood right before the boy sat on the bed.

“You’re here again,” Sam stated, and it sounded very accusing.

“Turn around. Let me see that.”

Sam stood up and did what had been asked slowly, offering his back for the doctor to see. ‘What if he’s the same man that comes in when it’s dark?’ He thought briefly, but quickly dismissed the thought. Although Sam couldn’t see a thing in the dark, he imagined the man who hurt him was taller and larger than the doctor. And the last time he had come Sam had definitely smelled a peculiar citrus scent which the doctor didn’t have.

The doctor opened the container and put some of paste on his fingertips. He then touched the cuts gently, spreading the medicine over them.

Even the softest touch was cruel on his broken skin, but Sam sucked it all up and kept still. He fought every shuddering rake of pain and sighed deeply, allowing the doctor to finish what he was doing.

“You can turn around.”

Sam obeyed and looked him in the eyes.

“Use this twice a day,” the doctor instructed.

“I don’t know when a day ends and the other begins,” Sam said. His sharp assessment of his own misery took the doctor by surprise and in his eyes Sam could see that he felt sorry for him. “Take me
out of here. Let me go with you,” Sam tried to touch the doctor but he stepped back quickly.

“Stay away from me,” the doctor said.

“Just let me out, you know what they're doing to me!”

His words were very painful to hear, but as the boy tried to reach out and touch him the doctor needed to act. He took the taser off his pocket and raised it so the boy could see it. “Stay away,” he repeated. He didn’t want to use that, so he thought he should let him know that he might have if he didn’t back off.

Sam got the message. He knew what the gadget was for, and he retreated his hands.

“Here,” the doctor stepped back and put the medicine on the floor. He then started walking, still backwards, towards the door until he could let himself out.

Sam looked at the container and picked it up. He was already feeling a great relief from the pain due to whatever it was that that paste contained.

‘The doctor is a weak link,’ Sam observed, shrewdly. ‘I can totally take him up in a fight,’ Sam thought silently. If he could launch a successful attack at the doctor and get the taser away from him then perhaps he would have a chance of actually getting away from there.

For the next hours Sam was left alone with his hopes and plans. If his dad and Dean hadn’t been able to find him yet, then perhaps things were worse than he imagined. He had to do something to help himself escape. Preferably before the next episode of darkness.

He shuddered and looked at the bright lights, glad to have them on.

~ * ~

Outside the demon waited for the doctor to leave the room with the same deep, knowing look.

“What is it? Have I done something wrong?” The doctor asked, his heart beating fast. The truth was, he was scared shitless of that…creature.

“Relax doctor. I was just thinking about the medicine you made?”

“What about it?” The doctor asked, his pulse racing with fear. Would he get busted? Could the demon know that he had added anesthetic to the mix of ingredients? Guilt made his heartbeats pound in his ears.

“You should make more of it. You know, for the next time,”” the demon watched the man intently for his reaction. Would he crack? Would he say something, maybe refuse to do it?

The doctor chewed on his bottom lip. The sight of the boy’s fresh cuts would probably sleep with him tonight. And maybe nights after that. But he just nodded and agreed.

“Alright.”

The demon watched as the doctor walked away, his head down.
“Humans,” he scoffed and smiled, and then turned his attention back to the boy inside the room.

~ * ~

Greg Harrison was a friend of Bobby’s who was extremely good at computers. He was the one the three hunters had turned to in order to see if he could obtain street footage from the day Sam had disappeared.

Today Greg had spent all of his day and great part of the night trying to hack into the cameras so they could have a clue as to what might have happened to John Winchester’s boy.

“Nothing?” Dean went closer to the guy working behind the computer screen and asked.

Greg raised his eyes to look at him, evidently bothered by the question, and went back to work without saying anything.

“Let him work, Dean.” Bobby said from behind Dean’s back. “Greg is good, he’ll get it done.”

“I know, it’s just… It’s been almost a week, Bobby, and we still have nothing. I can’t stand just sitting here without actually doing something.”

“We are doing something. Your father is outside right now driving around the area, going farther every hour, searching for a suspicious looking place. And we’re here, waiting for Greg to get access to what the cameras saw that day.”

Dean sighed. He had slept no more than twenty hours since Sam had been gone. He was exhausted, and yet, as he laid his head on the pillow every night, an urgent feeling of restlessness would not let him sleep.

“Why don’t you go eat something? Greg will let us know-”

“Guys!” Greg cut Bobby off abruptly. “I got it! I’m in! I can access the cameras!” He cheered.

Dean’s heart beat fast with joy. Finally a piece of good news.

Bobby’s face lit up as well. “That’s great! What can you see there?”

“Hey, calm down. I just cracked the code and got inside. We’ll probably have to sit through hours of footage to see something relevant. If we see something at all. You have to be prepared for the cameras not having been at the right angle,” Greg warned.

“The cameras were at the right angle. Now move, I’m gonna start watching it,” Dean went close to Greg again and motioned for him to leave so Dean could take his place.

“All yours, man. I need to rest.”

“We’ll take turns watching it,” Bobby said, as Dean was already clicking play and studying the images on the screen.

“Right,” Dean said.
“I’ll call John, tell him to come back,” Bobby announced.

“Yeah, you do that,” Dean wasn’t even listening anymore. Bobby and his dad could do whatever they wanted, but no one would be able to get him out of that seat before he had found something important on Sam.

____________________________________________________

tbc....
Chapter 8

Sam didn’t know how much time had passed. He had eaten several meals, and the doctor’s salve to put on his back wounds was pretty much over. Now, he didn’t know whether he had used it twice a day, because he couldn’t tell, but if he had to bet Sam would say he had been in that room for over a week.

Right now he had pulled his shirt up in order the apply the rest of the doctor’s blessed medicine on his back. That thing had definitely helped with the pain.

He was spreading the content on his fingertips and then carefully moving on to his cuts when the lights went off.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat and he froze on the spot where he stood, his heart developing a frantic, erratic rhythm and his hands going cold. ‘No…’ Sam thought, his eyes already dreading the darkness and his legs feeling like stone. He didn’t want to be afraid, he didn’t want to feel like that, but it seemed like Sam’s body had its own ideas and decided to shake, disobeying the commands of his mind.

Soon, Sam heard footsteps walking in the room, and with them the sound of something big being dragged across the floor.

‘What is he going to do now?’ Sam bit down on his bottom lip to keep his ragged breathing from making any noise, but his heart was drumming so fast that he feared the man would be able to hear him.

The man.

How come he never said anything?

Sam stepped backwards carefully not to make any noise. He knew every inch of that room by now, and he knew there was no escape, but fear knew no reason, and it dictated his moving to try and stay out of reach.

The man, who wore once again the night vision glasses, could see all that. He saw the way the boy was at first petrified in the same place. He saw the way he tried not to make any noise, and he also saw it when he started to walk slowly backwards, arms spread out so he wouldn’t bump into anything.

The man narrowed his eyes and let go of the furniture that he had been dragging inside the room. He started to walk towards the boy.

Sam heard the footsteps coming and he looked around himself desperately to try and catch a glimpse
of movement, of any fucking sign that the man was close so he could prepare himself for the attack. But the darkness was absolute. It felt as if he had been thrown into an ocean of pitch black clouds. The darkness was so complete it felt thick around him.

Without the help of his vision, Sam’s other senses sharpened to try and perceive his environment. Without his eyes, Sam had to rely on his ears and nose to give him some kind of information.

The smell of what appeared to be some kind of citrus cologne or aftershave hit him before the man did.

Sam was able to feel the blow coming and he moved back instinctively, receiving a much softer version of the original punch.

‘You’re getting smarter,’ the man thought, not without some amusement. ‘But that won’t help you.’

Sam could barely understand what had happened or why he was suddenly sat on his ass on the floor. The man had been swift and precise when hooking a leg behind Sam’s and causing him to fall down.

“No!” Sam groaned and reached out his arms to fight when the man straddled him. Fear was something irrational, and that was exactly how he felt now as he scratched at the man on top of him, digging his nails into the skin of his arms forcefully, hoping he was drawing blood.

The man hissed at the pain from the boy’s scratches and used both arms on Sam’s shoulders to try and keep him down, something that didn’t seem to deter the boy.

Sam grabbed at one of the arms he felt beside his head and bit down hard on it, like an aloof and dangerous animal fighting for its life.

“Grrghh!” The man groaned and slapped Sam hard across the face, causing him to let go. For a moment the man wanted to curse and say something, but he quickly remembered the demon’s instruction _Never say a word!_ and swallowed down the pain.

He tugged at the boy’s longish hair forcefully and pulled his head as far back as it would go with him lying on the floor. Sam writhed under the heavier weight, trying to struggle away from his attacker.

“No!!” Sam felt the man’s other hand close around his throat and squeeze. “Hmm!” He grabbed at the man’s hand with both of his, his hair was still being painfully pulled at, and tried to stop the choking. It was the first time Sam could actually touch the man’s hand, and when trying to open those fingers with both of his Sam realized just how much bigger his opponent really was. The large hand squeezing shut his air passage was probably as big as both of his own hands.

The man added more pressure, he tightened his hand around the boy’s neck until Sam couldn’t scream, and until he slowly stopped fighting and started to relax.

‘I’m gonna die,’ Sam’s eyelids felt heavy. ‘He won’t stop until I die,’ he thought vaguely. Soon the lack of oxygen got the best of him. There was darkness all around him, but in a moment that darkness was inside his head too, behind his closed eyelids, inside his very brain.

Sam lost consciousness and his body became limp on the floor of that dark room.

~ * ~
Dean, Bobby, John and Greg had already sat through hours of footage without any success. There were many cameras on the streets, and Greg had been unable to select the ones nearest to the school, so for the past couple of days they had all taken turns watching endless hours of cars driving on different streets which all looked pretty much the same.

Even Dean had grown tired of that and decided to get some sleep. He didn’t want his tired mind to play tricks and make him not see an important detail, so when he thought he was of no use anymore, he asked Bobby to take his place in front of one of the two computers they had.

John watched video after video, as if he would never get tired. He knew they were fighting against time now. The longer they went without any hints on where Sam was, the colder the trail got, and the hardest it would be to follow it. He tried bravely to convince himself that it was alright, that Sam was okay and that they would get to him before something really bad happened. But John had been in the business a lot longer than Dean, he had seen things that Dean didn’t dream existed, and John was scared for his son.

When Dean and Greg were taking a break and it was up to John and Bobby to watch the footage, the two seasoned hunters exchanged silent, meaningful glances.

“We’ll find him,” Bobby eventually said, in a whispy voice so as not to wake the two young men sleeping in the living room sofas. “We will John.”

John Winchester nodded quickly. He had such a strong connection with Bobby that his friend obviously read in his mind the fear of conducting a fruitless search for Sam.

Bobby saw the way John nodded quickly, but he also saw the doubt and the fear in his eyes, and those feelings made his own heart felt tight and heavy.

“I know what you think,” Bobby lowered his voice even more, to something barely audible. “He’s alive John.”

“It’s been over a week and no one got in touch to ask for a ransom?”

“He’s alive,” Bobby repeated, sternly.

“I won’t stop until I find him,” John said, the ‘dead or alive’ end of that sentence remained a secret in the subtext between them. “That’s for sure.”

“Sam’s okay,” Bobby said, trying very hard to believe that too. “He’s a fighter, John.”

“He is,” John nodded.

“He’ll hang in there and wait for us.”

The two men looked intently at each other and then turned their attention back to the footage of the streets.

~ * ~
When Sam came to it was still dark in the room. He blinked uselessly, because his eyes could not hope to adjust to such a complete, utter darkness. He gasped and tried to move, quickly realizing he was unable to.

Sam was sat in a chair somewhere in the dark room, and there was a tight rope around his body tying him firmly to the chair. He thought that he was sitting on the thing the man had been dragging across the room before.

‘He didn’t kill me,’ Sam then thought, remembering how it had felt the man’s hand around his throat before he passed out. ‘Not yet, anyway,’ Sam frowned and twisted against the bindings, trying to see if he could loosen them up.

He squirmed and groaned for several minutes, and then he started thinking that he was alone in there. The slap came out of nowhere, but it was loud and split Sam’s upper lip. It caused his heart to fall back into that frantic rhythm from before and his chest to heave up and down as much as the rope would allow it. Mercifully, his injured back was against the chair, and not being painfully squeezed by the raw rope as were his arms and chest.

Sam captured that same citric acid smell near him and shut his eyes, preparing for another blow.

It didn’t come.

Instead of punching or slapping, the man knelt beside Sam and took one of the boy’s hands in his.

“What are you doing?” Sam asked the darkness when he felt larger, rough fingers touching his own. The apparently soft touch was extremely suspicious and it made all hairs go up in the back of Sam’s neck in alert. As the man’s fingers started touching, analyzing his own, Sam’s started panting, bracing himself for something which would not feel good.

The man took his index finger and pulled a jackknife from his pocket. He selected a sharp, pointed tool and stuck it hard under Sam’s nail, into his flesh.

“Arghh!!” Sam jumped in the chair. His eyes squeezed shut and he tensed. “What the fuck are you doing?!” He yelled, trying to retreat his hand but being unable to fight the strong grip the man had on it.

Sam bit down on his bottom lip when the feeling returned. The man was drawing a sharp, piercing object into his fingertip, under his nail and into his flesh. Sam had no idea that was such a painful spot. He gritted his teeth and groaned quietly, but when the man pulled the nail off his finger with a different tool Sam screamed.

He gasped and curled his toes, his body taut with tension. ‘No, no… don’t,’ Sam thought as the man started choosing another finger. ‘Don’t-‘

“Ahhh!” Sam screamed again when another fingernail was pulled off his finger, leaving raw, bleeding skin exposed. Sam shuddered. It was such a small part of his body, but the two fingertips were throbbing so fucking much Sam couldn’t even think straight.

When the man took his thumb, Sam squeezed his eyes shut. ‘I’m not gonna cry. Not gonna cry. Not gonna,’ he told himself over and over.
He didn’t cry, but he screamed when the man grabbed at his thumb forcefully and pulled until the bone snapped and broke.

“Hmmm!” Sam groaned, and when he pulled his hand away he was surprised to find the man let it go. Sam kept very still, bound to the chair and breathing erratically. The pain wasn’t as bad as the whipping, but the throbbing was strong enough to make him sick.

‘*I’m being tortured. Just like a war prisoner or something,*’ Sam thought in the meantime he had to catch his breath. The question was, ‘*Why?!*’.

Sam heard the man moving in the dark until he settled on his other side. Sam grimaced and bit back a broken sound of despair when the man took his right hand.

Sam didn’t know, but outside the room there was a demon watching every twist of his face with the help of the camera’s black and white image, and cataloguing every sound of pain that came out of his lips. And there were many more to follow. The man pulled off three more nails in his right hand then took his pinky and ring finger in a tight grip and twisted, again only stopping when he felt the bones cracking.

Sam screamed. And then, out of all the pain he felt, he still found it in him to defy the man. “Great,” Sam said. “So I can’t do my homework now. Congratulations,” Sam narrowed his eyes and grinned. He could not see the man, but by now he thought the man could see him. He might have something that allowed him to see in the dark, how else would he always find him so easily in that pitch black room?

The man shook his head. ‘*Tough kid,*’ he thought sadly. ‘*Worse for you, boy. The longer you take to crack, the longer you’re gonna need me and this place,*’ the man thought as he selected a sharp blade from his pocket knife.

When he started cutting – small, superficial cuts on his arms and legs – Sam stopped grinning, but he bit back a lot of the moaning and groaning bravely, enduring the pain in a way he knew would make his dad proud.

He didn’t know how long it went on, but eventually it stopped.

Sam felt the ropes being removed from him, but he knew he wouldn’t be able to fight. His hands were both useless, the man had made sure of that. And apparently this same man wasn’t done. He grabbed a fistful of Sam’s hair and pressed a cold blade to his cheek.

Sam parted his lips and let a quivering breath escape at the feeling. He didn’t move, he didn’t struggle. He simply stayed there, wondering what the man would do.

When he started cutting a small, superficial cut on his cheekbone, Sam shut his eyes, but he didn’t make a sound. Only then the man considered the job done for the moment.

Sam was left to hear the sound of his footsteps going away, as well as the dragging of the chair, until the door slammed shut and he was alone.

The brightness of the lights invaded his eyes and everything was white and clear in a second. Sam closed his eyes to try and shield his pupils from the clarity; he shut them to try and shield his brain from the sight of fresh injuries.
“Dean! Dean!” John called.

Bobby stared, interested, as John woke his son up.

“Yeah?” Dean rubbed his sleepy face and looked at his father.

“I think I found the tapes of the area near the school.”

Dean was up and beside John in a heartbeat. “Let me see,” he said, staring at the computer screen.

Bobby watched them look at it with expectant silence.

“Yeah, you got it. I know these streets. It’s near the school, alright.”

John smiled, hopeful, and his heart felt lighter for a moment.

“Greg! Wake up!” Bobby called.

“Hm, why?” The hacker mumbled sleepily.

“Because we’re gonna need as many pairs of eyes as we can get to watch out for every detail.”

So for the next hours the four men stood in front of the computers, watching the footage of the day Sam had disappeared.

‘Please,’ Dean thought. ‘C’mon, give us something,’ Dean thought feverishly in silence. He wasn’t used to praying, but in the hollowness their lives had become without Sam, Dean thought he might very well end up finding a whisper of faith tangling with his hope.

-----------------------------------------------------------------

tbc....
Chapter 9

The sun was rising when Dean screamed in his standing position over his father’s shoulder.

“Stop!”

Everyone in the room seemed startled, including John, whose heart fluttered in his chest at the image he saw on the screen.

“That’s you!” Greg said, as he approached Dean and John to look at the footage as well.

Dean’s jaw tightened at what they could see there – a man, who looked exactly like himself, walking beside Sam on the sidewalk near school.

“That’s a shapeshifter,” Bobby said. “Can you see his eyes?” He asked, referring to the light shining on them.

“Now how can I make this move slowly?”

“Get up, let me take your seat,” Greg told John and they switched positions in front of the screen.

For the next tense minutes they watched as Sam walked beside the shifter. The image was extremely poor, but they distinctly saw the moment Sam reached out his arm as if he was waiting for fake Dean to take his hand and cross the street.

“What is he doing?” Bobby frowned.

“He knew there was something wrong,” Dean smiled, full of pride for his little brother. His heart ached at the sight of Sam in the video, in those precious moments before he disappeared.

They watched, baffled, as in the next seconds the shifter took Sam’s hand only to jump, startled, as the boy recoiled from him, turned tail and left.

John’s heart was racing. He didn’t know why, or what had happened, but Dean had been right – Sam did sense something was wrong and that wasn’t his brother.

“I don’t understand,” John said. “It looks like he escaped,” he said as they watched Sam disappear from the screen while the shifter still tried to understand what had happened.

“Where did he go? Where’s he?” Dean asked, frantically.

“He turned onto another street. We need to find another camera that might have seen him. I don’t think we’ll get anything else from this one,” Greg said.
“Okay, so we’ve confirmed that a shifter who looked just like you picked Sam up at school,” Bobby said. “How fast can you find the camera that filmed the street Sam seems to have run towards?” he asked.

“I don’t know…” Greg shook his head and started typing. “Give me a few minutes, it’s probably here, just a few clicks away….”

Dean, John and Bobby waited expectantly, their bodies tense and their thoughts edgy and worried as Greg typed away on the keyboard.

~ * ~

“Look at his hands, do you see the broken fingers?” The demon asked.

“I do,” the doctor replied.

“Go in, fix them, get out.”

The doctor nodded. He knew better than to ask any questions, so he made sure he had his taser in the pocket of his white coat before he unlocked the door and let himself in.

Sam had been sitting on the bed, staring at his broken fingers and the cuts on his arms. He had tried to close his hands into fists, but five of his ten fingers were swollen and bruised, and he couldn’t move them without it being too painful.

He didn’t know how long the man had been gone when the door opened suddenly and the doctor walked in.

Sam watched as the man dressed in a lab coat walked towards him and sat beside him on the bed.

“Hands,” the doctor said, curtly.

Sam offered his hands without a word. He watched as the doctor took one of his broken fingers carefully, studied it for a few seconds, and then pulled it hard until the bone went back to place.

Sam hissed at the pain, but he didn’t retreat his hand. Instead, he offered his second broken finger and waited for the doctor to do some of the same.

When the last broken finger had been painfully snapped back in place, Sam felt slightly lightheaded with pain, but something inside his chest started to get restless and to whisper feverishly into his mind.

‘I need to escape. I need to escape now. I don’t think I can handle another dark moment with that man. What is he capable of doing next?’ Sam thought. He let his eyes trail off as the doctor checked his hands until they landed on the taser inside the big pocket of the doctor’s white coat.

Sam’s heart drummed approvingly. ‘I can reach that,’ his mind said. ‘But my fingers… they’re broken…’ Another part of his brain argued, all the while his heart rhythm kept increasing in frequency. ‘Well, maybe next time I won’t have any fingers to try,’ he reasoned, and the dark, terrible
thought didn’t sound like something very unlikely to happen. Sam had no idea what they had in store for him.

His eyes were once again fixed on the taser in the doctor’s pocket, and Sam could hear his blood rushing in his ears, urging him further. There was a long, deep second of utter silence before he moved swiftly.

“Hey, what?!” The doctor didn’t understand what was going on. In a moment he was checking the boy’s fingers to see if there was anything else that needed fixing, in the other he was being pushed against the bed, the boy practically atop of him, punching his face and searching his pocket.

Sam cried at the pain in his hand when he hit the doctor; he didn’t want to do that, but it was his life he was thinking of now, and he had to do whatever he could to save it. So as the doctor groaned and took his hands to his injured nose, Sam took advantage of his position and took the taser from his pocket.

‘I got it!’ His mind beamed. Sam panted, his lips curving with disbelief at the sight of what he had just done.

When the doctor understood what had just happened, he tried moving and desperately get the taser back. ‘Fuck! Fuck, fuck! I’m so fucking!’ he thought, making a go for the device.

“Stay away!” Sam screamed, pointing the taser at him and standing up, away from the doctor. “Stay away or I’ll use it on you!” He threatened.

The doctor stopped on the spot and stared at the boy. ‘Crap’, he thought, wondering if the demon could see the mess he had just caused. “Listen, boy. You don’t understand. Please, just give it back to me, or you’ll get us both in trouble.”

“Shut up and open the door!” Sam yelled, pointing the taser at the doctor as if it were a firearm – like the one he had gotten for his birthday, ages ago, it seemed. “Stand up and open it!” Sam commanded.

“You don’t understand, I can’t do it!” The doctor pleaded, raising both if his hands.

“DO IT!” Sam screamed, his breath coming in short, angry gasps, his body shaking with the discharge of adrenaline. “You have a key, I saw it!

The doctor stood up, still waving his hands and shaking his head. “He’s gonna kill us!”

“I’m gonna kill you!” Sam growled, he was all animal and all instinct for survival. He turned on the taser light, and the tiny dot spurred the doctor into action.

His heart raced and he tried to move as far from the taser as possible. He fumbled in his pocket for his key and let out a whimper when Sam put the taser a few inches of his face.

“Quick! Do it!” Sam screamed. He could hardly believe he had done it! He would escape! He would get out of there! “Open the damn door, c’mom!”

He had the taser raised high and aimed at the doctor’s fretful face when the door slammed open.

Both Sam and the doctor looked at it immediately to see a tall, thin man dressed in a black suit walk
in and look at the scene.

“Please! I’m sorry! I didn’t know he was going to do that! I couldn’t stop him!” The doctor started a series of pitiful sounding apologies while Sam stared, baffled, at the man looking at them.

“Who are you!?” Sam finally yelled. He changed his target and pointed the taser in the new man’s direction.

The demon looked intently at Sam through slitting eyes.

‘Oh my God… It’s a demon! He put me in the van and drugged me!’ Sam had time to see those eyes were black, and had time to gasp, startled, at the memory, before he was sent flying in the air until his back slammed against the wall and the taser fell off his hand.

“Hm!” Sam groaned when he hit the wall with a thud, his head exploding with pain from the impact as his body pooled on the white floor. ‘What the fuck has just happened?!’ He thought, rubbing at his temples and looking at everything around him.

He saw the doctor quickly walking out of the room under the at the same time burning and yet oddly cold look of the tall, thin man. Sam then saw the demon give him a last, lingering look with his pitch black eyes before opening his hand and have the taser fly towards it.

“What…?” Sam frowned at what had just happened. In a last, desperate attempt at doing something, he got up and started running, headlong, towards the man.

The demon raised his hand once again, and once again Sam was thrown hard against the wall, falling heavily on the floor.

When he looked up and at the man’s face, Sam was almost sure he saw the faint hint of a smile in there. But before Sam could think of anything else the man was gone, and the door was shut again.

Alone in the bright room, his back to the wall, Sam braced his knees and rocked himself slowly. What the bloody hell had he just seen?

A demon… there was a demon in there… there was a demon, and he was probably the one behind the camera watching him… and if he wasn’t the one actually hurting him – not big enough to be the same person – he was definitely the one behind the torture.

Sam’s eyes were wide and his hands throbbed. His back was hurting again after the impact against the wall, but Sam didn’t care. He kept his knees close to his chin and stared at nothing in particular. He couldn’t understand what had just happened. He had been so close to actually leaving that place. He had overpowered the doctor and taken his taser, and he was going to get him to open the door… and then… then…

A demon, Sam thought again, and he shuddered.

And then, for the first time since he had woken up in that strange nightmare of a room, Sam understood his situation.

‘I’m not getting out,’ he thought calmly, with cold, painful acceptance.

He still didn’t know where he was and who was behind all that, but Sam was beginning to
understand it was much bigger than what he had possibly imagined. He knew that a demon had killed his mother. And although as a young hunter he didn’t know much about those creatures, Sam thought he knew enough to understand he was hopeless.

Suddenly, he thought of all his plans to eat and work out, and get stronger so he could fight his way out of there and back to Dean and to his father. And suddenly Sam felt darkness creep into his hopes and taint them with something as cold as steel, something that poisoned his blood and made something else take the place of his hopes and plans.

Sam understood that he depended solely on his dad and Dean finding him. Until then, he would have to face darkness over and over again, and the pain that awaited him there, and the screaming that eventually he wouldn’t be able to silence.

Something else took the place of what Sam had been trying to cling to, and he worried his bottom lip and stared at the white floor, overwhelmed with this feeling his mind was helpless to welcome. It wasn’t a new feeling, but it was stronger now, and it was terribly real too.

Alone in some kind of sick experiment where he didn’t even know if he would make it through the next period of darkness, Sam Winchester felt scared.

~ * ~

“There, look!” John’s voice was loud and his eyes were extremely alert. They all turned their attention to the sight of Sam stumbling upon a tall a man and stepping backwards.

In the next frame, though, the man was almost too fast to be seen. He covered Sam’s mouth with his hand and they both disappeared inside a white van whose driver could not be seen.

“There’s a car! He’s putting Sam inside the white van!” Dean screamed “Can you get that license number?”

Greg was clicking frantically on his keyboard, but he shook his head. “Sorry. I can’t see it from the camera’s angle.”

Dean’s heart was drumming in his chest. He wanted to get into that footage and kill the man laying hands on his brother.

They had been looking for clues on Sam, but as Greg replayed the scene when a man took Sam by surprise and disappeared with him inside a vehicle, John, Bobby and Dean found themselves speechless.

“That man,” John swallowed hard and found his voice. “Can you give us a closer look at his face?” He asked the hacker.

Greg immediately tried to do as asked, enhancing the man’s face on the frame as he held the boy. The image was extremely poor, but he started to open different programs to try and improve it.

No one said a word as Greg worked, trying to do something that would make it possible for them to see the face of Sam’s kidnapper with higher definition.
“I think… I think that’s it guys, I can’t make it better than this,” Greg clicked on the file and opened it, showing a picture of the man’s face in close up, the resolution slightly better than that of the footage they had been watching.

“Son of a bitch,” Bobby’s eyes widened at what they could see there.

“His eyes…” Greg said. “His eyes-“

“Are black,” John finished for him, his voice conveying a calmness he didn’t feel inside.

“Dad…” Dean felt his mouth was dry. His throat was dry, his vessels were dry. “Was Sam taken by a… a demon?”

Bobby stared at his friend as John licked his lips and fought to keep control.

“I’m afraid so, son.”

The first thought Dean had was of their mother burning in the ceiling of Sam’s nursery room when he was a kid. The second… the second thought was too dark and painful, and Dean didn’t dare let it in.

“We need to find Sam. Fast,” Dean said. “I’ll go get the weapons ready so we can go and start interrogating demons,” Dean stated and turned around to leave the room and do as he said.

Neither Bobby nor John said anything to stop him.

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tbc...
Chapter 10

Sam was finishing up his food when darkness came. Like a lab rat, trained to give the same response to a certain stimulus, Sam’s heart raced and his breathing hitched. He put the tray aside on the bed where he had been sitting and stood up. He could hear those footsteps getting near the room and the door being opened. “No…” he whispered frantically, looking around at the frustrating and thick nothing that seemed to drown him.

Sam then felt at the bed he was and hid underneath the covers quickly. He had never done that before, and he had no reason to think it would work, but he didn’t know what else to do.

The man saw it from a small distance and walked towards the bed.

Sam heard his footsteps getting near, the stomps as loud as his heartbeats, his blood running hot and thick in his veins, causing all of his senses to stay alert, to be prepared.

There was silence for a few seconds, and Sam dared hope – he did, he was just a boy! – that the man wouldn’t find him, that he would go away. But then he felt a pair of strong hands pull the covers off him and drag him away from his hiding place.

“NO!” He screamed and started a desperate struggle. “Let me go!!” Sam clawed at the floor, trying to hold on to something as he felt himself be dragged across the room.

When the man turned him around to see his face, the boy attacked him again. Sam was all frantic moving and twisting, and one of his arms was quick and he managed to hit the man’s head. That was when Sam felt the big, thick glasses.

He frowned, in the dark, as he slapped hard at his attacker’s face, hearing the noise of an object flying off his face.

‘Dammit,’ the man thought, for a moment completely blinded by the darkness.

‘He wears some kind of weird glasses; that’s how he can find me,’ Sam thought quickly, his heart beating fast when he felt the man move away from him, probably looking for whatever it was that he had lost in the struggle.

Sam was about to attempt getting on his feet and running – madly, blindly away – when a bolt of pain so strange and so intense took his body and his brain and he screamed.

The man found his glasses and used a taser against the boy he could see again.

“Arghh!” Sam screamed as his body danced for a couple of seconds that weird, painfully sadistic dance the man made him.
He lost control of his muscles and fell on his knees, his body shaking and tingling after the discharge of electricity. Sam panted loudly as his body was overwhelmed by tremors that took control of him and made his body disobey.

The man walked closer to him, and Sam didn’t see anything he had in his hands, but he felt another jolt of electrical discharge hit him in the back and screamed, falling on the floor and squirming as if he was seizing.

The man put the taser in a pocket and chose a stun baton next. Tasers had a great effect, but they could be dangerous. This other weapon, however, would give him a lot more time to work.

The darkness made it impossible for Sam to know where pain would strike him next, but it always did, one electrical discharge after the other, one more painful than the other, until he couldn’t think, until there were tears in his eyes because it hurt so much, until all of his muscles cramped and his lungs burned with difficulty to draw in breath.

‘No more!’ He thought, and opened his mouth to voice it. His lips parted but he couldn’t form words. His jaw was tense and his muscles tight. Nothing in his body listened to his commands. His mind was like a prisoner inside a suffering body that could not help. ‘No more!’ He thought hard, painfully, desperately.

But the man didn’t listen to his thoughts.

And the man didn’t stop.

~ * ~

Sam had been gone for twenty days.

As Greg was left alone to try and dig up as much as he could from the footage they had seen, John, Bobby and Dean had ventured outside in a quest to try and find anything at all they could on Sam’s whereabouts.

At home the hacker tried to chase license plates for white vans, tried to track down car owners and got in touch whenever he found something that might be remotely relevant.

On the streets, the three hunters ran into dead end after dead end. They had been following leads on demons hoping to catch one and bring it in for interrogation. They finally captured the first black eyed beast after Sam had been gone for almost a month.

After chasing the demon for a couple of days, John Winchester had captured him with the help of a devil’s trap, and Bobby helped him put the demon in his basement, tied up to a chair, a devil’s trap securely drawn on the floor, and questions waiting to be answered.

“I’m going down too,” Dean said. He wanted to see the demon, he wanted to know what he had to say.

“No,” John was emphatic. “That’s for Bobby and I.”
“Bullshit!” Dean challenged his father. “I’m supposed to be a hunter, ain’t I? Why can’t I go and watch? It’s my brother these assholes got!”

Bobby stared at the scene and didn’t say a word. He understood Dean’s anger and his frustration. When this had begun they couldn’t have imagined that after twenty days they would still have no idea where Sam was. He knew Dean could barely keep his shit together at the thought of what might be happening to his brother, but he also understood why John was doing that.

Torture was never something easy.

It shouldn’t be easy. Not even for the one doing the torture. If it was easy, than something was definitely wrong with you. He couldn’t blame John for wanting to spare Dean from watching it. Maybe the day would come when Dean himself would be the one torturing monsters to get answers out of them, and Bobby had no doubt that the boy would be good at it, but if John thought that that could wait a few more years, Bobby would back him up.

“You’re not going down there, Dean!” John used his stern, I’m-your-fucking-father face, and Dean’s lips twitched with anger but he swallowed his next words. “You go upstairs and see if you can call Maisie. Ask her if there’s any news on Sam, if maybe he tried to go back home.”

“You know there’s no news,” Dean spoke quietly, staring at the floor.

“I don’t care. You’ll do as I say.”

Dean watched, anger and frustration twitching his handsome features, as John turned his back on him and started to walk towards the stairs.

He noticed Bobby offered a soft, comforting look to him, but Dean didn’t want to look back. He kept his eyes on the floor, shaking with anger and desolation as his father and Bobby disappeared down the basement to torture the demon and ask him questions.

Dean did as he was told, calling his father’s friend to see if there was any news on Sam. Of course there wasn’t. She would have called if something had come up. So, not knowing what to do and with his mind full of worries, Dean threw himself on his bed in Bobby’s house and stared at the ceiling.

Soon he could hear the screaming coming from Bobby’s basement. The basement muffled a lot of it, but definitely not all.

Dean heard the demon’s blasphemies and angry threats, and he heard when those threats started to turn into something more painful like a plea, a lament.

Suddenly in his mind Dean thought of Sam, tied to a chair, being tortured by a demon, screaming the same loud, despair-filled screams, and he shuddered.

Dean covered his ears with the pillow and squeezed his eyes shut, hoping to muffle down the demon’s screaming, hoping to get rid of the horrific image of Sam screaming too.

~ * ~
The doctor watched the boy from behind the black glassed window.

Ever since the incident when he lost the taser for the boy, the demon had never let him in again while Sam was awake. He kept the doctor outside, studying the boy, analysing his health, writing reports on his activities, and when he was needed inside the room the demon would have the doctor dose Sam’s food with sleeping pills so he would black out in order to be examined by him.

Sam hadn’t seen the doctor again, but he knew the opposite wasn’t true. He had been beaten badly, cut, broken, and suddenly woken up fixed, or beside a small container with something to apply on his wounds.

Sam didn’t know how long he had been in that room, but it was much, much longer than he felt he could handle. He grew hopeless by the hour, and the torture was becoming so punishing on his body and mind that Sam felt himself cracking. He didn’t know how much more of that he could bear. He didn’t know how much more darkness he could handle without going fucking mad and losing his shit.

~ * ~

Right now Sam was asleep, his mind drifting to somewhere where he was free, and where there was no pain. He often dreamed of home. He dreamed of coming home from school on his birthday and of everything he had hoped to have that day. He dreamed of him and Dean sat on the sofa, throwing popcorn at each other, laughing and joking, and then of his father arriving late and joining them, and then telling them it was time to go to bed. In Sam’s dream they never listened to him. They kept on talking and laughing, and Sam basked on Dean’s attention, and the fact that he would be so nice to him because it was his birthday.

‘I miss you’, Sam thought suddenly into the dream, and that was the thought which caused him to wake up.

He moaned softly as the dream began to fade and opened his heavy eyelids.

For a moment Sam was very confused. He thought he had woken up home, in his bed. It was so dark in there. Had it not been a dream? Was Dean there with him?

But then Sam heard the footsteps and reality hit him as hard as any of the punches he had already received in there.

“No,” Sam sat on the bed, in the middle of the dark room, and his chest heaved up and down. He was disoriented and scared after having woken up into darkness, inside the chamber of horrors as he had come to think of the room lately. “No, it can’t be! NO!” He screamed when the door was opened.

Sam stood up and started to walk around in the dark. Eventually, in his tentative and blind steps, he ended up tripping on his food tray and fell hard on the floor. Sam was picked up by the man’s strong hands and beaten a couple of times, hard, so he wouldn’t offer too much resistance.

Sam felt his left eye immediately swell and he didn’t think he could open it.

The man grabbed a fist full of his hair and started dragging him somewhere. Sam’s hands tried to
fight against his stronger ones and the painful grip on his head, but to no avail. He was breathing fast, trying so hard not to let fear destroy everything he had inside, and then he heard the sound of water running.

‘I’m by the sink. What is he going to do?’ He thought when he could hear the sound of something being filled with water.

He found out soon enough, to his despair.

The man grabbed him by the hair and dunk his head all the way into a bucket filled with water.

Sam had not expected that and he didn’t have much air in his lungs. Being shoved inside a water filled place caused him to panic and buckle against the strong arms forcing his head down.

Sam thrashed against the man’s grip, which only caused water to enter his nose and panic to rise with every one of the many bubbles escaping his mouth.

It seemed like forever before he was pulled out of the water and he drew a long, desperate breath, his chest moving up and down with long, deep in takes of air. He barely had time to recover, though, because soon his head was being once again forced into the water bucket.

Sam tried not to panic, he knew that would only make things worse, but he could no longer be rational about any of that. He buckled and thrashed, shaking and shoving, giving the man hell to try and keep him in place.

There was water in his nose and in his throat, and pretty soon in his lungs too, and then Sam stopped struggling, and little by little it wasn’t so bad anymore, and he could even relax and go back to sleep, and perhaps he might even dream that he was back home, on the sofa with Dean, watching a movie, having junk food.

When the man pulled his head out of the water, Sam coughed desperately, water coming out of his mouth to let air in. He felt dizzy and weak from the lack of oxygen, and had little time to prepare for another immersion of his head into water.

It went on and on until his limbs were weak and he offered no more resistance. He drifted between consciousness and blackness, blackness around him, blackness creeping inside him too.

Then it was no longer the water, it was the beating. There were punches and kicks, a particularly strong one aimed at his stomach that made him fall down and fold into himself, a hostage to the pain his body couldn’t be shielded against, a boy who could no longer keep his promises of being strong and of believing.

Sam’s hand went towards his stomach and he winced, his breathing clipped with pain. He felt nausea rise from the pain burning inside him and soon he was vomiting the contents of an angry, injured stomach.

The beating stopped at last.

Sam knew the man was gone when the lights were back on.

He was wet and shaking hard, and he could barely move enough not to lie on his own vomit. He tried to stand up but it hurt too much, so he gave up and curled into a ball.
Then, bruised, beaten and scared, Sam did something he had not done before.

The fourteen year old son of John Winchester felt tears well up in his eyes. Unlike those that came out of sheer pain during the peaks of torture, these tears had his broken heart and desperate fears in them, and these tears turned into something else, they turned into silent, albeit unstoppable, sobbing.

‘Dean...’ Sam thought, and the image of his smiling brother in his mind caused a new wave of tears to take him and rock him against that cold floor. ‘Please… please come find me…’

~ * ~

The demon watched from his standing position behind the glass.

He had observed the torture carefully, and now he studied its aftermath.

“Finally,” he whispered, and even let himself smile softly. After forty days of captivity and torture, he had at last seen the boy crack and cry.

That was far from enough, and they still had a long way to go. Sam had cracked, and he needed to break. But there was finally some real progress there.

Sam was not yet utterly broken, neither was his soul forever scarred, but as the demon stood there cataloguing the boy’s silent crying, he knew it had started to happen.

“We’ll get there,” he promised himself as he walked away from the window.

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 tbc...
Some day in the near future – near if you were an immortal – the boy Sam Winchester would serve as Lucifer’s vessel. Few knew that in heaven, and even fewer – perhaps none except for Lucifer himself and the demon watching Sam, knew that in hell.

One day Lucifer would be set free from his cage, and Sam would help him fulfill the prophecy and take over this entire planet. A new era would then start, with Lucifer as king, and no more demons being confined to hell. They would walk the earth freely, they wouldn’t need to hide anymore.

And he, the demon thought, would certainly have a special place beside his king when Lucifer rose again to power. Because he was there now, executing the plan Lucifer himself could not since he was locked up in his cage.

A long time ago, so long humanity could hardly remember it, the demon and Lucifer had been together. They had shared a deep connection, a bond that could not be broken by cages or time. The demon could listen to Lucifer in his dreams, and sometimes when he was awake too.

It was not very often – certainly less than he would have hoped for – but Lucifer was still there in his mind, and there was still a link between them that allowed for communication. If demons could love, he supposed that what Lucifer and he had was strong enough to be seen as that. And there was nothing he wouldn’t do for his lover, his master, his king. Including torture a young innocent boy to prepare him for his glorious future as Lucifer’s vessel.

The plan was simple; its execution not so much.

As the son of a brilliant hunter, Sam Winchester would grow up to be an extremely talented hunter himself. And, as everything seemed to be when it came to heavenly subjects, that was nothing if not ironic. Lucifer, the fallen angel, God’s favorite who was now the rejected son. Sam, the perfect vessel, who would enable Lucifer to take back his power and rule over the world, was being raised to hunt and kill the very kind he would one day need to submit to.

Hence, the need to have a plan.

The boy needed to be easily accessed by Lucifer. Because of Sam’s breeding and character, there was not a chance he would willingly say yes to Lucifer, who was still and angel and thus would need permission to take his body. It would take a lot of convincing and maybe more time than they would have to force Sam to say yes. So what the demon did now, with the help of the man and the doctor, and the guards outside the facility, was to make sure Lucifer would have an easy way to access Sam when time came.

The torture was part of a plan to slowly break the boy’s strong will. Sam was fierce and stubborn, and deep inside the demon felt proud of him. He showed all the qualities Lucifer’s vessel needed to have. And breaking him could never be something easy – as it proved not to be.
It had begun when Sam was a baby, when he received demon blood from Azazel. That had established the boy’s link with darkness. Sam was here now as, one could see it, a confirmation of his betrothal to darkness and to Lucifer.

The idea was to create trauma so deep that nothing, and no one, would ever be able to heal. The torture was there to cause pain, physical, definitely, but psychological too, the kind of pain that could not be cured with drugs or bandages. Sam was there to learn that when darkness came he was vulnerable, he was as good as naked, his soul bare, his core exposed to pain and suffering. The darkness was there in every session of torture, because it was important that Sam feel utterly lost and scared. He needed to be unaware of where pain was coming from, who was inflicting it, and when it would stop. It was essential that he associate darkness with despair, with fear, with lack of control and panic, because that made him vulnerable; that made him easy to manipulate.

The plan consisted in planting darkness in Sam’s heart, so when Lucifer needed him, he would be able to use all of that vulnerability to get inside Sam’s mind. But in order for this to happen, Sam needed to break. He had already cried, which showed the demon he was getting results, but he was definitely tough, and the demon wondered how long it would take to break him completely – he wanted to shatter his hopes, to scar his body and inflict pain in every way possible. The demon wanted that darkness caused Sam to lose control of himself and be wrapped in panic and hopelessness. He wanted that Sam had nothing left, nothing but fear and pain in his soul, and that his broken body was useless to help him. He wanted that in his heart Sam didn’t believe in himself, in anyone else, so that when time came he could see Lucifer as his savior, as the one who would bring him light when he needed it so badly.

That was why the lights were there – they meant safety, they meant Sam could breathe calmly and trust.

Everything had its reasons to be. The man was there because he was almost a professional torturer. He wanted something and was easily convinced to work for it. Besides, the man was good at following rules. He got in there and executed what the demon asked of him without ever uttering a word. It was important that he never said anything. Not only was it good for the man, who feared he might eventually be exposed for his actions, it was also good for the plan. The less people talking to Sam and the more lonely and confused he felt, the better, of course.

Then there was the doctor. That was a weak link in the chain. The demon knew that the doctor pitied the boy. But the doctor was human, and like all humans he was selfish. He needed something – a cure for his daughter – and was willing to play along so long as he ended up getting what he needed. That was fine too. And despite his weakness, so far he had done exactly as told too, checking up on Sam’s health, making sure the boy was alright.

Now, that might seem like a contradiction, but the plan never meant to kill Sam. That would be useless considering his great role to be played in the future. Neither did the plan hope to cause any permanent physical damage to the boy. It was essential that Sam leave the room – because he would eventually be released – as physically fine as he had walked in there.

The doctor was there to make sure his wounds wouldn’t be extremely grave; he made it possible for Sam to endure the pain of being tortured without bearing any significant or deadly injury.

The boy obviously didn’t know, but before the demon let him go, after he had hit rock bottom and poured all of his weakness and hopelessness on that white floor, he would heal Sam from all signs of his physical abuse. Then, he would erase his memory of the time he will have spent inside the room.
That was also part of the plan.

The boy could not walk out of there knowing what had happened to him. He could not leave the place with the memories of pain and torture being inflicted upon him. That was not the idea. If Sam was to leave the room with all the trauma they were carving in his brain, then there was no way he would be fit to be Lucifer’s vessel some day. If Sam left the room remembering all the darkness and the attacks, he would never grow up to be the strong hunter they needed him to be – his family, the angels, the demons… the fucking world depended on Sam growing up to be the strong, brave hunter he would one day become.

No, there was no way the boy would remember any of the torture, the way the man hurt his body, scarred his flesh… The way the doctor tended to his wounds… all that would be erased from his brain when the demon was satisfied his objectives had been achieved. Then, he would clean Sam’s mind of all memories starting from the day of his fourteenth birthday, and heal his body of any remaining scars the beatings might have left behind.

They did not want to leave memories; they did not want to leave scars.

The plan was much, much more subtle than that.

The plan was all about darkness – the sheer lack of any light, and how it would stick in Sam’s deep subconscious and nestle there, in a place no one would be able to see or remove. Lucifer and he needed that darkness and all the frailty it evoked to be hidden under layers and layers of good thoughts and memories, deep inside in a place so profoundly rooted that Sam would never even know it was there.

That was, until the moment was right, of course.

The idea was to plant the seed of darkness in Sam’s unconsciousness, and leave it there for the years to come, healing the boy, saving him from the memory of all the terrible things that were done and would yet be done to him. And then, when Lucifer was finally to walk this earth again, he would be able to access the core of Sam’s fears and vulnerability using darkness as a trigger.

They were going to trap this darkness and fear in a box in Sam’s mind, safely away from his other thoughts, the ones he had before coming there, the ones he would still have when he was out. And then only Lucifer would have a key to open this Pandora box when he needed Sam to be his vessel.

If the boy tried to deny his master, then the plan would make sure Lucifer had a secret door to Sam’s mind, to his soul. The fear of darkness would enable Lucifer to get in touch with the boy inside the man Sam would become, and would enable him to see the fears, the despair, the hopelessness of the boy. And then, when time came, Lucifer would be able to reach out his hand and offer safety, and gain entrance to his vessel to fulfill the prophecy and take over the earth.

It was beautiful, actually.

If you were a demon, he supposed.

Knowing that the boy’s memories of his time in the white room would be erased, helped him convince the man to do his job. There was nothing he wouldn’t do, no line he wouldn’t cross, because he could always tell his conscience that – in the end – the boy he tortured wouldn’t remember a thing.
Of course it had not been easy planning everything so far.

John Winchester was a very smart man, difficult to fool, and so was his older son, Dean. But the plan had been thought out so carefully and for so long that there were no loose ends. Everything, starting from the place where they were hidden to the people working for him, would make it impossible to trace them there. And he supposed that by now John Winchester was going crazy, trying hard to obtain information on his lost son.

The demon was at ease thinking about it. No other demon except for himself knew about Sam being Lucifer’s vessel, and no one, except for his two guards, knew about the plan taking action in that place. He had both the man and the doctor checked thoroughly before having them join the plan, and so far everything was going smoothly.

Even for the boy hanging from a pair of cuffs inside the dark room, even though he couldn’t tell, things were running exactly as they should.

The demon smiled and watched as the man used the flame to burn different parts of Sam’s body.

~ * ~

Inside the room there was nothing but loud screaming. Sam hung from the handcuffs and twisted blindly against them every time that flame touched a part of his naked skin. He was being burned slowly, and the pain was unbelievable.

“AAAAHHHH!!” Sam howled when fire licked his skin again, and again and again until it broke and melt, and even the deepest layer of skin was burnt.

There were tears running down his eyes and he screamed, he didn’t care anymore. He couldn’t be strong. That kind of pain did not allow him to be strong.

The man unlocked the cuffs, turned him around and started to work on his back. He burned patches of skin, until the smell of burned flesh was almost more than he, the man, could handle. He hoped the demon would keep his word and tend to the boy after the session, because, as he let the fire burn away skin until there was fat tissue exposed, he supposed he would need more than a doctor’s help.

“NOOOOO!!” Sam groaned, he panted and cried, and he didn’t care if he sounded weak, because he didn’t care about anything else except the pain making everything else fade away. “PLEASE!!!!” He begged. “PLEASE STOP!!” He cried out, choking on his own tears.

The man crouched and took the fire down with him as he burned large pieces of skin around Sam’s thighs and legs, and because his ankles were also cuffed to the wall, there was nothing Sam could do.

“ARRHHH!!” He cried miserably. ‘Please kill me!’ He thought, a desperate, unstoppable thought. ‘I can’t, I can’t, I can’t!’

Sam was shaking with pain, his body on the brink of falling shut, unconscious, because it couldn’t take it anymore. And then, like it had begun, it was over. He was uncuffed from the wall and left on the floor. And when the door slammed shut, the lights were on again, and Sam could look at himself.
He was wearing nothing but underwear, and all over his arms and chest, and legs too, there were burns, the skin had fallen off and in other places where there was still skin, there were large blisters forming.

The pain was agonizing. Sam couldn’t touch anything on himself because he feared he would black out at any moment now.

When the door was once again opened, Sam lifted tear-filled eyes to it and stared as the demon walked in.

Sam didn’t know if he would hurt him more, he honestly couldn’t bring himself to care. He was so in so much pain that nothing else mattered, and he just shut his eyes and groaned as his skin felt afire and hurt.

The demon walked closer to him and studied his wounds. Fire was part of the torture, and it needed to be done. Sam had begged today, something which he hadn’t done before. He was strong, but there was only so much pain a human body could stand. And Sam’s was almost at its limit.

Almost.

But in order to find that limit they couldn’t sit and wait for his burns to heal. That would take too long, and time was precious. So the demon reached out his hand and touched the boy’s forehead.

Sam recoiled slightly, but not much. He kept his eyes squeezed shut and chewed on his bottom lip, managing the lancinating pain he was drowning into.

The demon and Lucifer had been so much more than master and servant. In the beginning of times, they had been each other’s everything. They had bonded in every way known to two creatures. And the depth of their connection had made some part of Lucifer’s angel blood run along with his demon’s one, corrupting the evilness of his blood with some of the grace of the fallen angel. So indeed, when he reached out his hand and touched Sam, he could, like magic, erase his burns and heal his skin.

He did that quickly, but it took a lot of effort and he felt tired when he was done.

Sam shuddered under the touch. And then, he could hardly believe it, the pain was gone. He opened his eyes, lost and confused, and he could no longer see the ugly, painful burns on himself. It was like they had never happened.

“What did you do?” He asked, a quivering voice, his hazel eyes so young and so desperate they could easily break a human heart. Lucky for him, he was a demon.

The demon didn’t reply. He stared at the boy for a while longer before turning around to exit the room.

Sam never followed him. He didn’t get up – despite no longer being in terrible pain – and he didn’t try to catch the demon and escape.

He was learning fast how useless it was to try.

He was realizing that there was nothing he could do, nowhere he could run to, nothing to shield him
from the darkness and the pain he would invariably find there.

That was good, the demon thought, because that was the plan.

Sam watched as the demon walked out and he was left alone. He studied his arms and legs for signs of the burns, but he found none. The demon had indeed healed him. Sam wondered why, but he knew he would get no answer. He never got any answers.

So he stood up and went to the sink. He drank water, then picked up one of the rags and washed his body with it, as he had done many times before. Then, he stuck his head under the faucet and washed his hair with soap. When he finished, he tossed the rags away and picked up the white, loose clothes he was so familiar with.

Sam got dressed and ran his fingers through his wet hair. It was longer now. It made Sam wonder how long he had been in there. Definitely more than a month, judging from how much bigger his hair was.

He was still thinking about it when all the lights went out and the room was once again swimming in darkness.

“No….” he mumbled. “No, it can’t be… NOOO!!!” Sam started shaking and his heart stared racing all over again. “You have got to be kidding me! He’s just left!” Sam screamed.

But they weren’t kidding. There were footsteps coming back, and there was the thick blindness of being unable to defend himself.

“NO!!” Sam felt tremors raking his body when he started to cry. He felt so scared and so desperate he couldn’t move. “No more! Enough! NO MORE!” Sam felt panic rising in his throat and clouding his thoughts. Then, he smelled a faint scent of citrus near him and knew what was coming. “NOOOOOOO!” He screamed at the top of his lungs and into the darkness, but no one came.

No one except the man.

~ * ~

Dean woke up in his bed in the middle of the night, perspiring and sweaty, his heart beating loud. Everything was dark around him – it was still the middle of the night and there was no one else in the room.

He had just had a nightmare about Sam.

He didn’t know what it was; he couldn’t remember it. But Dean could still feel how painful it had been, and his frantic heartbeats had trouble letting go of the feeling.

It had been forty five days since he had last seen Sam.

Dean turned his head and buried it into the softness of the pillow. Alone, in the dark, thinking of his little brother, Dean Winchester cried desperate tears into the pillow, into the night.
Dean watched as his father and Bobby made their way up the stairs from the basement and let themselves sit heavily on Bobby’s sofa.

“So?” Dean asked, despite the hopelessness on their faces.

Bobby shook his head slowly. John simply stared into the distance, his face harsh and his eyes clouded.

Dean gasped and his mouth twitched. He sighed deeply and raked a hand through his hair. “How many demons has it been? Twenty? More?”

“More,” John answered.

“How come they know nothing about Sam?” Dean asked, exasperated.

John and Bobby didn’t reply. They sat still in heavy, painful silence.

“No, seriously?” Dean insisted. He knew his father and Bobby must have been torturing the hell out of those demons, so why hadn’t there been any results yet?

“Dean, we don’t know. We’ve been trying,” John spoke, at last. “I have other hunters, friends, trying too. No demon captured so far has a clue about what might be going on or why Sam was taken.”

“And demons talk under torture, Dean. They don’t give a shit about honor when things start to get ugly for them,” Bobby added.

Dean looked at them and sighed. He felt a lot of turmoil boiling inside of him, something he couldn’t stop anymore.

“Sammy’s been gone for two months, dad,” he said, and he could feel how his words had an effect on the two other hunters in the room. “And we haven’t been able to find out a single piece of information? Seriously?” He asked, angrily.

“Dean, we are trying!” John said, firmly.

“So tell me, you’re the seasoned hunters here, do you think Sam’s still alive?” Dean stared intently into his father’s eyes, daring him to answer that.

“Of course he is!” Bobby said quickly, and then looked at John, who didn’t answer right away.

Dean’s father stared his son in the eyes for a long moment. He wished he could ease the suffering
Dean felt, but he could hardly manage his own.

“John?” Bobby felt his chest tight at what he saw in his friend’s eyes when he got up and started to walk towards his son.

“I think,” John began, “that if Sam was dead we would’ve heard something about it by now. But I also think that we need to prepare ourselves for this possibility, Dean.”

“NO!” Dean lost his mind. “He’s alive, there is no other option!” He screamed.

It hurt Bobby in his flesh to see how much pain father and son were in, so much they could hardly help each other anymore.

“Dean! We will not stop looking, never!” John said.

“That’s not what you have to say, you need to say that we’ll find him, and he’ll be alive!” Dean yelled at his father angrily.

“Dean…” John tried.

“He’s alive, I know he is!” Dean was descending into chaos, screaming and puffing like he might break down at any second.

“Dean,” John went closer.

“You think he’s dead, you think Sammy’s-“

“No, I don’t,” John cut him off.

“You do!” Dean accused. “You….” His voice faltered, his erratic breathing took over and the suppressed tears made his throat swell.

“Shhh, it’s okay,” John pulled Dean tightly against himself and Dean let go, allowing himself to be hugged and comforted, accepting the fact that he was a mess, unable to think rationally for the time being. “We will find Sam,” John said, holding Dean firmly. “And he’ll be alright.”

John pulled Dean away so he could look into his eyes. Dean’s face was red and wet, and he rubbed a hand roughly at his eyes and nodded.

“Yeah… he will be.”

Bobby swallowed hard and stared at his hands. He too felt on the verge of crying. But what use were they if they sat and cried instead of being strong and carrying on?

“Right?” John put a hand at the back of his son’s neck and pressed his forehead to Dean’s, urging him to agree. “We’ll find him.”

“Yes,” Dean nodded.

“And the next demon we catch, you’ll come with us to interrogate the bastard.”

Dean nodded again and pulled away from the hug. He dried his last tears and nodded vehemently.
“I will.”

~ * ~

Sam was on all fours in the middle of the bright room. The man had just left.

Alone, he shut his eyes in pain and wrinkled his forehead. He tried to get back on his feet, but it seemed like too hard a task.

Then, there was the coughing. Another intense wave assaulted his body – he had been repeatedly beaten in the stomach and lower belly, and every time he coughed his body throbbed with pain.

As the coughing raked him, blood tainted the whiteness of the floor, blood that came from his insides as he spit it out over and over.

Sam tasted the copper in his mouth and his mind was confused from the beating. He tried looking at his blood on the floor, imagining it formed different, beautiful patterns of splatter. He was even about to figure out one of the interesting shapes when another wave of coughing took him over and Sam expelled more blood from his mouth.

The demon and the doctor watched from behind the glass as the boy coughed a copious amount of bright red blood on the floor.

“That’s not good. That’s not good at all,” the doctor said, apprehensively. “You see the color of that blood? Some large vessel must have burst. He might have some serious internal damage. I need to check on him to rule out an hemorrhage.”

“Could it not be just from something in his mouth? A broken tooth or a bitten tongue?”

“It could… but I need to check. Because if that blood’s coming from a ruptured organ he might die in a couple of hours, maybe less.”

The demon listened carefully.

“I need to take him to a hospital.”

“That won’t be necessary,” the demon said.

“But the boy!…” The doctor protested. “He might die. I thought you didn’t want him to die.”

The demon smiled knowingly. “Just watch me.”

He said, mystery in his black eyes, and walked towards the door to the room, letting himself in.

The doctor watched from behind the dark glass as the demon walked closer to the boy – who barely reacted at all at his presence, except for turning his head and looking the demon into the eyes.

The doctor watched as the demon crouched before the boy and studied him, slitting his black eyes. And then he watched as he touched the boy’s chest and frowned in concentration.
The doctor felt his mouth go dry as a faint light went from the demon’s fingertips to the boy, and in the next moment there was no more coughing, and the boy’s breathing was visibly calmer and easier.

He saw as the demon got up, gave the lost, confused boy a last lingering look and left the room again, joining him to watch from behind the window.

“Did you just heal him?” The doctor asked.

“I did, indeed,” The demon nodded.

“If you can do that, then why do you need me?” The doctor couldn’t stop his question. “That’s so much more than I could possibly…”

“I only do that when things go too far. As you said, the boy is not supposed to have life threatening injuries. But, accidents on the job happen, and I’m here to correct them.”

The doctor nodded slowly, staring at the demon like he was every bit as weird as he truly was.

“Besides,” the demon added. “This way you can see that I’m not lying when I say I will heal your daughter, and this will keep you working nicely and with your mouth shut.”

“I never doubted,” The doctor began.

“Good,” the demon interrupted him. “You can go now. You’re dismissed for the day.”

The doctor nodded again and made as if he would turn around to leave but changed his mind. “I have a question.”

The demon looked at him with unreadable, yet patient eyes.

“Until when do you think this… this thing, will go on?”

The doctor watched as the demon’s lips curved just so very lightly in what resembled a smile.

“Soon, doctor. We’re almost done.”

~ * ~

The next time there was a black eyed demon tied to a chair, on a devil’s trap, in Bobby’s basement, screaming with pain and cursing and yelling, Dean was there, right beside his father and Bobby, cataloguing each useless answer to their desperate questions.

Dean was there as the days passed, the nights passed, the three of them found little, disturbed sleep and made no progress at all. He was there when Bobby called Greg, his hacker friend, who was also empty handed when it came to obtaining information about Sam.

It was not possible that his brother had vanished into thin air!

And from watching so much, Dean learned too. He learned his first lessons on torture, as a hunter
and as a man. He learned to inflict pain, to watch pain, to study it, to push further. He learned how to ask questions and decide when he was convinced of the answer.

It wasn’t easy, but the anger he felt inside fueled his actions, and Dean kept going.

Now, at the end of another frustrating day, Dean entered Bobby’s house after a walk outdoors and heard the loud argument between his dad and Bobby.

“This is not going anywhere!” Bobby was arguing, his voice dangerously close to a yell.

The two men were in the kitchen, and for a moment Dean stood in a dark corner, just listening.

“So what do you suggest? Give up?” John asked angrily.

“Of course not!” Bobby retorted.

“What then? ‘Cause I’m open to suggestions here.”

And then Dean realized that they had been drinking. His father, particularly. John’s voice sounded slurred and angry. Dean had hardly ever seen his father drunk. He supposed he only did that on those moments when his memories of their mom were too painful and he caved in.

“I don’t know, John! But we have to think of something,” Bobby said. He sounded slightly altered too, but not half as much as his father. “Think about it. Is there anyone who would want to harm you using Sam?”

“You have got to be kidding me!” John puffed and shrugged, an outrageous little laugh escaping his lips. “Bobby, all the fucking monsters fucking hate me and would love to get their hands on my son for revenge. But, no, I can’t think of anyone I was hunting before all this… there’s nothing!”

“There’s got to be something! Someone out there wants Sam for some reason!”

“And I will kill them when I put my hands on them! Kill them!” John screamed and Dean shut his eyes when he heard the noise of a glass being thrown and shattering against a wall.

Then, what Dean heard next was a much more frightening sound.

“John? John…” Bobby’s voice softened.

John Winchester leaned against the kitchen cabinet and cried. Not only were there tears, there were also sobs which raked his body and caused him to sound every bit as desperate as he felt.

“John…” Bobby shut his eyes and sighed deeply, then he placed a warm hand on John’s back and rubbed up and down. “We’ll find him. He’s alright.”

“Stop saying that! You don’t know that!” John cried out angrily, his nose was running and together with his tears it made his face a mess. “My boy, Bobby… I can’t find my little boy… What would-“ the sobs made it difficult to speak. “What would Mary say?”

And then there was a long series of crying and indistinguishable, murmured words, but Dean couldn’t stand listening to any of it anymore.
He made his way quickly to his room, where he shut the door and threw himself on the bed. Dean picked up a calendar that rested on the nightstand and started counting – as if he didn’t already know it by heart.

Seventy-two.

Seventy-two days had passed since Sam’s birthday.

Dean put down the calendar and made a decision in his mind.

“Tomorrow I will go out and I will discover something,” he promised himself. “Tomorrow I will not go to sleep without something, anything.”

And his thought was so strong and Dean trusted it so hard that he fell asleep easily that night, resting his body and mind for the next day, and the information Dean was confident he would uncover.

~ * ~

Sam kept eating the food delivered to him every now and then. He still didn’t know how often that was, but he thought it was just once a day, because he was always hungry when he saw it. His thoughts of going on a hunger strike or toughening up in hopes of escaping were long gone.

He ate because he was too weak to reject the food and too battered to deny his body one of the two only solaces it had – eating and sleeping.

So Sam ate and slept, and he slept a lot. He spent a lot of his time sleeping, either because it hurt too much being awake, or because he simply couldn’t bear the idea of being up and having to face his reality.

When he dreamed, he was usually free, safe at home, somewhere else where there was no pain and no fear.

But sometimes, as it happened right now, those dreams started to turn on him, and what was supposed to be a sweet escape from his current condition ended up being an extended version of the hell he lived in.

Sam woke up sweaty and scared. The room was bright, all the lights were on and that caused him to relax slowly.

The idea of waking up to darkness haunted him, and whenever he opened his eyes now he always feared there would be no lights there to show him he was okay.

But now the lights were on and Sam could breath calmly.

He sat up on the bed and looked around. Sometimes Sam honestly didn’t know which was worse – the torture itself or the fear, the anticipation he went through.

Like now, for instance. He knew that at any given moment the lights would go out and the man would come, and he would do to him something that words could not describe – he would cause Sam to voice new sounds of torment and his body to bend under higher levels of pain.
Sam couldn’t look at himself, but if he had a mirror he might not recognize the boy staring back him. And not only because his hair was longer and he had lost a lot of weight, but because his eyes – once bright and vivid – now looked aloof and fearful, like he was a wounded animal always on the watch for the next threat.

The lights went all out the same way they always did – out of nowhere. A second ago there was brightness and the promise of safety, and now the darkness that wrapped itself all over him and challenged his sanity.

“No!” Sam yelled, getting up. “Hey!! Stop it! No more!” Sam’s heart raced and he felt himself shaking.

The fact that he could not even control his own body was humiliating and added to Sam’s despair. His breathing was so loud it sounded as if he had just run a marathon, and his limbs turned to jelly, his knees barely able to hold him up.

In the dark, Sam had stopped acting like a hunter a long time ago. And now he was beginning to stop acting like a boy to act like prey.

‘No, no…. ’ he thought over and over, squeezing his eyes shut and feeling warm wetness run down his cheeks.

And then, surprisingly, the lights were all back on.

‘What?’ Sam thought, looking around himself. The lights were really, really back. Sam could hardly believe it. It had never happened before.

His breathing immediately calmed down and he was even able to relax some of the tension in his shoulders. Sam looked around the white room and believed that he was indeed alone and safe. ‘Thank god…” he thought.

~ * ~

Outside the room, the demon watched the result of his little experiment. In order to see how strong the effect of darkness was in the boy, he had just done what he did – turned off the lights and watched as Sam started to panic.

Even though the man didn’t show up, the boy reacted just as intensely to the dark – tachycardia, heavy, loud panting, skittish behavior.

That was fantastic news.

And to celebrate how close he was to success, he turned all the lights off again, except that this time there were footsteps approaching the boy’s room, and this time the door opened to let the man in.

“NOOOOO!!!!” The frightened screaming of the boy as he clawed at the dark walls echoed in the room.

But the demon was not in the mood to watch right now. He trusted the man would do a good job, so
he turned around and walked away.

“NOOO, please!!!!”

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tbc...
Chapter 13

The demon handed a piece of paper to the man and watched him as he unfolded it in order to read its contents.

The man’s eyes looked at the words written there and he felt his fingers go cold quickly and his chest tighten at what he could read.

“Is there a problem?” The demon asked, and the challenge was clear in his voice.

‘Yes, there is a problem’, the man wanted to say. ‘What the fuck is wrong with you?’ He wanted to scream. But he had made a deal, and there was no turning back. Specially not now, not after everything he had already done. “You said he won’t remember…” he spoke.

“I did. Does that put your conscience at ease?”

‘Hardly,’ the man thought honestly, but wouldn’t dare speak it. He kept staring at the next order written on that piece of paper and felt it had become difficult to swallow.

“Are you not going to do it?” The demon frowned.

“I will do it,” the man said, staring directly into the demon’s black eyes. There was nothing but contempt in his eyes, but he would follow his orders to the end.

“Good. I wouldn’t have expected any less of you.”

“Just let me know when.”

“Sure. Go home and get ready. I’ll call you,” the demon nodded.

The man kept the paper between his fingers, and it felt like the paper burned them. He turned around and started walking away, holding the information tightly against his sweaty skin, and as the words slowly blurred from the sweating, it seemed like they were entering through his skin and falling into his blood. The words, the man thought, screamed in his circulation.
They screamed of choices that could not be unmade.

~ * ~

When Dean woke up that morning, both his father and Bobby were asleep. It was still dark outside – the sun wouldn’t rise for another half an hour at least – but Dean thought that alcohol had a role to play in the hunters’ heavy sleep.

He went to the kitchen and picked a piece of paper and a pen to write down a note. On it, Dean explained that he was leaving to try and discover something new about Sam. He wrote that three people doing exactly the same thing seemed like a waste of time, and that he needed to try doing something else. Whatever the hell something else was, not even Dean knew.

He also said that he would start by going back to the house where they had been living when Sam disappeared, and told them not to worry because he would call to let them know how he was doing.

Then, deciding the note was good enough, the youngest hunter in the house picked up his backpack, packed with weapons, food, water and money, and left Bobby’s house to try and get closer to his brother.

When John Winchester woke up, hours later, and found the note, he looked at his friend Bobby and sighed.

“Great. Now I have two missing sons,” he said sarcastically and winced at the headache weighing on him.

“Dean’s not missing,” Bobby said. “Let him be. He needs to feel like he’s trying his hardest. It might be he’ll find something.”


The two hunters exchanged a long look in which there were equal doses of despair and hope mingled together.

As for Dean Winchester, a bus ticket and four hours later, he found himself back on the streets where he and Sam had been used to walking on before all that had happened.

It was not yet lunchtime, and Dean decided he would take a look around before deciding to stop for lunch.

He started with their house, which was now closed and for rent once again. Dean didn’t think of breaking and entering – he knew that would have been a waste of time and energy, but he circled it a couple of times, very carefully, his eyes lingering here and there, his brain cradling the hope that he would magically see something they had overlooked before, something that would lead them to Sam.

‘Sam,’ Dean thought and his heart swelled in his chest. Being so near the house where he had last seen his brother was very painful. Dean felt as if he could almost hear Sam’s voice as they had breakfast on the morning of his birthday. And if he closed his eyes, he could easily see Sam’s hazel, boyish eyes as he asked Dean to skip their afternoon hunting lesson.
'Not now,' Dean chided himself. ‘I didn’t come here to mourn,’ he forced the reprimand upon himself and kept going.

An hour after noon, Dean stopped on a bench and ate the sandwich he had brought along. He drank some water and made his way to his next stop – Sam’s school.

Dean walked around the school and observed until it was time for the kids to get out. He saw a lot of them rushing out of the building and onto the streets, some taking the school bus, others being picked up by their parents, and some even walking home alone or in pairs.

He honestly didn’t know what he expected to see there, but Dean felt drawn to that place, the last Sam had been seen at, and he couldn’t help wandering off to the streets where they had seen Sam try and escape from a man in the footage they had watched.

Dean was on the very street where Sam had bumped into a tall, strange man over two months ago, a moment before he disappeared into a white van. His heart raced as he walked on the sidewalk, picturing how confused and then scared Sam must have felt that day. Dean was so concentrated on that moment in the past that although he had not lived, was a moment that lived in his brain, that he didn’t realize someone had been calling him.

“Hey, Dean! Are you deaf?”

He turned around at the sound of that voice and his eyes focused on a girl he had bedded not so long ago, on the very morning of the day Sam had been kidnapped.

“I called you before,” she opened a pleased smile and approached him.

‘Great’, Dean thought, sarcastically. That was all he wanted…having to deal with a previous hook up when he was busy trying to track down Sam.

“So what’s up, handsome?” She touched his arm and squeezed, and Dean was about to step back when she retreated her hand. “I miss you.”

“Yeah, well, you know… been kinda busy,” Dean started. He wondered what the fastest way to dismiss her would be without sounding like a total jerk.

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“I figured,” she looked adoringly at him. “But are we still set up for tomorrow night?” She bit on her bottom lip invitingly.

Dean sighed. “Listen, er…” What was her name again?

“We could try and top last Saturday,” she licked her lips and grinned.

Dean frowned and stared at her.

“Excuse me?”

“You know…” She giggled. “Four times in a night…” She raised her fingers, showing him the number four. “I bet we could top that.” Then she stepped towards him and grabbed at his jacket.

Dean stepped back, causing her to wrinkle her forehead. “What’s wrong?” She asked.
“I’m sorry,” Dean shook his head as if a weird thought was trying to mess with him. “Did you just say last week?” He had no idea what she was talking about. Last week he had been with his father, chasing, catching, torturing demons in Bobby’s basement.

“What’s the matter with you?” She asked, and she still smiled despite the frown. “Yeah, last week, and the week before that… Tomorrow my parents will travel again, as I told you on Tuesday. You said you’d come, has something happened?”

Dean felt like his heart stopped for a fraction of second, only to resume beating in a fast, alert rhythm that made his blood pump faster. “So, um… you’ve been enjoying these… these moments we got together?” Dean narrowed his eyes and studied her.

“Of course I have!” She smiled widely, the frown gone. “But you already know that,” she touched his arms again. “So, can I wait for you?”

Dean’s brain was working furiously. The girl was obviously certain that they had been sleeping together for the past weeks. That could only mean one thing – the shifter had been taking advantage of his looks to hook up with her. Son a bitch!

“Um, yeah! Yeah, totally!” Dean immediately changed his attitude, offering her a smile and a naughty little wink. “Just… what time should I be there again? I’m sorry, babe, I’ve had a lot on my mind lately…” he took her hands and charmed any worries away.

The girl’s eyes glowed when he touched her. “You can arrive after midday. I’ll be alone by then.”

“Perfect,” Dean said and kissed her hands. His heart was racing at the thought of actually running into the shifter who had tried to take Sam. He might not be the one who actually threw Sam into the vehicle, but Dean was certain he knew something, and after his intensive training in torturing to obtain answers, he figured he would be able to do a decent job. Now, he didn’t want to feel overeager or too hopeful – what if the girl was delusional and made all that up? Dean didn’t know her enough to tell. But if the shifter had indeed been paying her visits, then capturing him would be the closest to finding Sam they had been since this had all started. “I can hardly wait,” he smiled and watched as she turned around and walked away.

~ * ~

As soon as she was gone, Dean started to think of a plan. His first move, though, was to call Bobby’s house and let them know he was fine.

“Bobby?”

“Dean? How are you? And where are you?” Bobby asked. “Hey John! It’s Dean!” He covered the phone and yelled.

“I’m fine, Bobby. I came back to the place where Sam disappeared. I’ve been to our home and to the school.”

“Good,” Bobby said. He didn’t think they had left anything useful to be found in there, but he didn’t want to discourage Dean. “Have you uncovered anything?”
Dean thought of the girl and her meetings with the shifter who looked just like him. He thought of getting his hands on a man who took Sam from school and was definitely involved with his disappearance – his heart picked up a rhythm again.

“No. Not yet,” he said. As much as he was excited with the perspective of getting information on Sam, Dean didn’t want them to get their hopes up. Everything had been so hard, and they were so on edge, that getting all hopeful for something that turned out to be nothing would crush them even further. So Dean decided it would be better to see for himself what was there to be discovered, and if he had any success with it, then he would fill his father and Bobby in on the lead.

“Hang on, your dad wants to speak to you.”

Dean listened as his father picked up the phone.

“Dean? Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, dad. Sorry I left without talking to you first. I had to.”

“I know. It’s okay, Dean. Where are you now?”

“Our last home. I’ve been walking around the places where Sam was last seen.”

“Have you had any luck so far?”

Dean took a deep breath. “No, dad. But I’m feeling luckier.”

“That’s great. You go and find something, Dean. I know you can. I trust you, son.” John’s voice was pregnant with emotion, even over the phone Dean could tell that.

“Thanks, dad. I’ll let you know how it goes. You and Bobby keep busting those black eyed sons of bitches too.”

“You bet. Bye, Dean.”

“Bye,” Dean hung up and sighed. Now on to the next part of his plan.

Because Dean knew the town fairly well, he decided to take a walk in order to check if certain houses were still for sale. He would need an empty, private place where he could take the shifter to if he indeed were able to capture him. Besides, the girl had talked about tomorrow, which meant that pretty soon he would need a place to crash for the night in order to be well rested to execute his plan for the following afternoon.

So Dean walked around for a couple of hours until he found a house which had been empty since their time living there, and was fairly distant from downtown. Dean broke and entered, just to make sure the house had a basement. When he realized it did, he made up his mind about where to question the shifter if he happened to see him.

For now, Dean opened his backpack and fixed himself a snack. As he ate, he pulled the weapons he had brought with him out of his bag in order to study them. Lucky for him, he had brought plenty of silver.
He knew it would be difficult to find sleep because he was so anxious with the possibility of making progress tomorrow, but Dean disciplined his mind into obeying. He rested his head on his backpack, inside that empty, darkening house, and closed his eyes. He needed to be up with the sun tomorrow, and if all went well, the next time he closed his eyes he would be a step closer to finding Sam.

~ * ~

Sam opened his eyes to darkness. The lack of light was like a lack of air to his lungs. The room was as black as the demon’s eyes, and lying on his bed, Sam’s brain went quickly from sleepy to alert.

‘No…not again, not again, he won’t come,’ he repeated in his mind over and over, squeezing his eyes shut and trying desperately to believe it.

But there were footsteps, and the door opened to let the man in.

Sam’s heart slammed against his chest and he gasped. He wanted out of that sick, sick game! He couldn’t stand it anymore! He thought he was strong, but now he didn’t know anything except that he couldn’t keep doing that.

Sam moved in the dark and got under the bed. He remembered doing that a few nights when he was very little and had a nightmare. And he remembered fondly how Dean would crouch and find him there, shaking beneath the bed, and pull him out softly, telling him it was okay and he could go back to sleep.

So now Sam shut his eyes and prayed that Dean would be there, finding him under the bed, telling him it was just a nightmare and it would all go away.

Yet, instead of softness, Sam felt rough hands grabbing around his ankles and moving him from under the bed.

“NO!” He screamed, already squirming when he felt the man drag him across the floor.

As he clawed at the floor uselessly, his belly flat against the coldness of it, Sam felt his body tight with anticipation, wondering what kind of pain would be inflicted upon him this time. He thought he had already gone through pretty much all kinds of torture known to man, but when he felt his pajamas pants being tugged at and pulled until he felt the waistband around his naked thighs, Sam’s eyes darted right open in the darkness, and he felt as if everything inside his body stopped for a moment.

The man tried to be quick about it. He could see, with his glasses, the boy beneath him lying perfectly still. So he started to work on his buckle as he straddled him, pinning him to the floor.

The small noise of a buckle opening was loud in that dark, silent room. And not only that, it was frightening.

Suddenly, Sam felt all of his senses descent into chaos as panic took over.

“What are you doing? Get off me! GET OFF ME!” He yelled, and he started to twist and squirm on the floor for all he was worth, hoping to throw the man off of him.
It would have been too easy if the boy didn’t move, but by now he had probably understood what he was about to do, because he started to thrash and struggle, and even though he had lost weight and was weaker than when he had arrived, the adrenaline guiding his movements made him strong and difficult to restrain.

“Get away!” Sam groaned, his breath puffing against the floor, his heart drumming against it.

His moves were so frantic that the man was forced to act. He pulled Sam’s arms and held both of his hands behind his back, as if he would handcuff him.

“Leave me alone!” Sam cried out, writhing and gasping. He tried so hard to escape the grip the man had on him that he felt his right shoulder snap and a scream of pain tore from his throat.

The man was pretty sure he had just dislocated the boy’s shoulder. The pain was enough to make his struggles considerably less powerful, so he took the advantage to tie his hands with a raw piece of rope before he pressed his right hand against the back of the boy’s head, pushing it against the floor so he couldn’t fight.

Sam was gasping for air, it seemed like his heart was beating in his throat. He opened his eyes so wide, and yet there was nothing but darkness, darkness and the smell of citric fruit coming from the man on top of him. His breathing was so erratic that it became loud, but not as loud as his scream when the man pushed into him.

“STOP!!” He yelled. “STOP!!” He bucked and thrashed anew, squirming desperately when he couldn’t seem to escape from under the man. ‘Why is he doing that? Why?? No, no, no, no NO!!!!’

The man just kept going, doing his job.

“PLEASE!!” Sam begged. “PLEASE! DON’T!” Sam screamed and felt the heat of his tears, and tasted the salt of his condition.

But then, as the man didn’t stop, as he picked up speed and started shattering Sam’s resistance, Sam’s brain went crazy. It felt everything at the same time, the pain, the searing, the burning inside him and on his shoulder, the humiliation, the helplessness, and his brain decided it couldn’t handle, it didn’t want to handle it.

Sam shut down his mind and his eyes as a shield against the darkness creeping inside him and spreading through his veins.

As the man did to him something in the dark room which would bring him a step closer to the end of this trial, he shook violently but swallowed his pleas and his screams.

‘This is not happening,’ Sam told himself. ‘None of this is real. I’m not here. This isn’t happening,’ he promised himself feverishly and tried to block everything.

It was done and over before Sam had opened his eyes again.

And when the lights came back on and their brightness seemed to knock on his eyelids, demanding entrance, Sam didn’t let it in.

There was no point in opening his eyes, he thought. There was not enough light in the room to cast away the shadow growing in his heart.
Chapter 14

At nine in the morning, Dean was already circling the girl’s house, waiting for the shifter. He knew she had said midday, but he couldn’t risk not running into the shifter, so he had woken up before seven, eaten something and headed to the place where he was now – outside the girl’s house, keeping a low profile at the same time he kept an eye out for anyone looking like himself.

The plan was to catch fake Dean off guard, and for that Dean hoped the silver dagger he had brought along would be helpful.

John Winchester’s son waited most part of the morning, looking at the people coming and going, keeping his eyes very open and his hearing sharp. His heart beat fast throughout the entire waiting. Every time he saw a young man with short brown hair coming near the girl’s house, his heart’s rhythm faltered and adrenaline pumped in his veins. Dean knew he was nervous as hell, but he tried hard to keep himself steady and cold – today he needed to be the great hunter he was being raised to be.

It was around eleven thirty when Dean spotted him.

The shapeshifter was wearing jeans and a black leather jacket – clothes Dean was likely to be found in. At first Dean froze on the spot at how weird it felt. It was eerie looking at someone who looked exactly like himself. Then, his heart slammed in his chest and he thought of that man picking up Sam at school, walking with him by his side, trying to kidnap him. ‘Son of a fucking bitch,’ Dean thought coldly and hid behind a tree. He felt the blade sharp against his palm, and kept it hidden with his long sleeved shirt.

Every step the shifter took in his direction seemed to be met with a loud thud of his heart.

The moment the shifter walked past the tree, Dean acted. He moved swiftly and smoothly, and in a heartbeat he was right beside the shifter, walking side by side with him, his right arm going discreetly underneath the shifter’s jacket to put the silver blade closer to his skin.

“What-“ The shifter never had time to finish.

“Shut up and keep moving or I’ll stick this silver dagger in your back. Now, it might not cause your heart any damage, but I swear it’s gonna hurt like hell.”

The shifter looked at the man beside him and his eyes widened in shock. That was the one he had copied many weeks ago when he had been in charge of delivering the boy… How come he had found him? The shifter thought he and his father had left town.

“So, how are you brother?” Dean said loudly and smiley, but he forced the shifter to walk with him, threatening him with the silver. A few people stopped on their tracks to look at the twins walking so
closely together, and they thought it was a sign of brotherly affection. Of course they didn’t know one of the alleged twins was ready to stab the other right then and there if he decided to run.

“I have done nothing wrong, please… you have to let me go,” the shifter said quickly, but he kept walking as he was told. He could feel the tip of the dagger piercing him through his shirt, and the silver felt burning hot against his skin.

“Why don’t you let me be the judge of that, uh?” Dean arched his eyebrows.

‘Fuck!’ The shifter thought. ‘A thousand times fucking fuck! I knew I shouldn’t have stayed…’ he cursed himself for his weakness.

The fact was that a few weeks ago, as he stayed behind to keep an eye out for the young man with him now and his father – orders from the demon – he had run into the girl he was about to visit now. Emma had looked so pretty, and so sickly in love with him… It had been a while since the last time he had bedded a human girl, and when Dean and his father left town to look for the boy, the shifter decided there would be no harm in taking advantage of a little easy sex. It had been good, and he had grown fond of the girl.

But now, dammit! If the demon dreamed that the boy’s brother had captured him, he would be so fucked!

“Where are we going?” He asked after they had walked for about five minutes.

“You shut up and keep smiling. I’ll let you know when we get there.”

~ * ~

They walked for twenty minutes. Emma waited for a lover that didn’t show up on time. She even looked for him around the block, but in all likelihood, Dean had just stood her up.

She would have had a blissful surprise if she could see two of her loving Dean together, at the same time.

A blissful time, however, was not in Dean’s plans for the shifter in front of him. Dean had removed the shifter’s clothing from his waist up and tied him to a chair in the basement of the house, and he now studied the silver dagger he had brought along. It was far from an ideal tool, but it would have to do.

“Do you really need to tie me up? If you wanna talk, we can talk. I’m not going anywhere,” the shifter said.

“Yeah, sorry about that. I have trust issues,” Dean said. He walked closer to the shifter and pressed the sharp blade to his cheek, trying to ignore the fact that his cheek looked exactly like his own.

“Now, I’ll ask this slowly, so you have time to think of the answer. Where is my brother?”

The shifter swallowed hard. He didn’t know the answer to that. The demon would have never told him where he would take the boy. Now the shifter thought he had been terribly smart to keep it a secret.
“I don’t know,” he said.

Dean pushed the blade until it broke skin, and at the same time he cut into the shifter’s cheek and blood poured out, the skin got scorched too.

“Ahh!” The shifter winced. “I don’t know! I don’t!”

Dean cut him a little bit more before stepping back and looking at him.

He sighed and tried again.

“Where is my brother?”

“I don’t know, I swear!”

And then Dean lost his patience. For the next ten minutes or so he punched the shifter’s face and stomach, slapped him and cut patterns on his forearms.

“ARGH! STOP!” The shifter cried. The distress made him change back into his usual shape. “I don’t know where he is, I don’t!!”

Dean knew, because he had learned from the best, that one could handle torture for hours. So even though he was dying to get something useful out of the shifter, he was in no hurry at all.

An hour later, Dean was still cutting into the shifter’s flesh — small cuts, nothing life threatening, — and beating him every now and then. Dean didn’t think it would take him long to crack. He was already crying before Dean was tired in the slightest.

“I swear I don’t know! The demon never told me!”

Dean stopped in the middle of a cut. “Which demon?” He knew there was a demon, and now the shifter was finally beginning to sound useful.

“Look!” The shifter gasped and panted. His left eye was swollen shut and every burning cut made with the silver dagger hurt like hell. He wasn’t cut out to handle that kind of thing. “There was a demon, alright? And he hired me to do something. He paid cash. I don’t know who he is and I don’t know his name. And damn, I don’t know what the fuck he wanted with your brother, I swear!”

Dean narrowed his eyes and studied the shifter. He thought he was saying the truth now, but there was still so much more he could give.

“What did he hire you to do?” Dean asked.

The shifter licked his dry lips and swallowed. He breathed fast, his chest moving against the tight ropes keeping him on the chair.

“I asked you a question!” Dean drove the tip of the blade into the shifter’s chest and twisted it around, until a loud cry of pain was muffled by the basement’s walls.

“He…” the shifter panted heavily. “He hired me to take Sam to his vehicle,” he said. “But it didn’t go as planned.”
“My brother found out you were not me. How?” Dean asked, because he was curious.

“I don’t know man, I swear! All I remember is that he offered me his hand to cross the street, but when I was about to take it he used silver on me and ran away.”

Dean frowned. If Sam did that he was probably trying to confirm something. But what had caused him to be suspicious in the first place? ‘Well,’ Dean thought. ‘That’s besides the point for now. Soon I’ll ask Sam himself,’ he promised.

“Where did this vehicle take Sam?”

“I don’t know, I told you that already!”

Dean started cutting again. This time the cuts were deeper, and the screaming was louder. Another half an hour went by with Dean beating, punishing, cutting, torturing, putting Bobby’s and John’s teachings to good use. If his dad saw him now, he would be so proud at how fast Dean had learned to inflict pain without mercy.

“PLEASE!” The shifter begged. He was bleeding, beaten and tired. Not to mention thirsty and sick to his stomach. “Enough! Please…”

‘Begging is good,’ Dean thought. That was a new level of cracking.

“You still haven’t told me what the plan was.”

“I told you! I had to get your brother into a vehicle.”

“That’s not what we saw in the footage. In the video it shows you and Sam walking in the opposite direction. When my brother escaped from you there was another man, your demon, and he put Sam into the van.”

“As I said, things didn’t go as planned.”

“So tell me, how should they have happened?”

Dean pulled another chair from a corner of the room and put it in front of the shifter. He sat on it and rested his chin on his arms, on the chair’s back.

The shifter sighed and looked at the bloody dagger in the hunter’s hand. Screw the demon and his fucking money. So what if the demon would kill him for speaking? The hunter might very well kill him if he didn’t. He’d rather take his chances.

“I was supposed to take Sam across the street to a coffee place, because it was his birthday. We would order something to eat and drink, and my job was to fill his drink with some pills.”

Dean listened carefully.

“What kind of pills?”

“Sedatives, I think. The demon told me the boy was smart, and he should be slightly drugged when he was brought to the vehicle. The plan was to make him take some pills in the coffee shop, and when they started to work, I’d take him to the parked van without objections.”
Dean’s throat tightened. Sam was indeed smart. Unfortunately, a fourteen year old boy was no match for a shifter, a demon, and whatever the hell was also involved in this.

“Why did the demon want my brother?”

“He never told me.”

“C’mon, he must have said something. What was he going to do to my brother? Why did he take him?”

“I don’t know that! I don’t! My job was just to take him and put him in the van, and I couldn’t even do that right because he tried to escape. But the demon paid me nonetheless, because he wanted to make sure I kept quiet and vanished.”

“Except you didn’t vanish.”

“No.”

“Why?”

“I ran into Emma, alright? She seemed like a nice girl. She threw herself at me. I was interested, you were no longer in town. I figured it was a win win situation. She wanted you, I wanted sex.”

Dean pondered for a while. That was new information, indeed. But nothing that brought him any closer to finding out where Sam was. Dean couldn’t get so close to information without getting something useful out of it!

“Where did they take my brother?”

“DAMMIT! I DON’T KNOW!”

“Where did they take Sam?!” Dean kicked his chair loudly away and stood up. With the dagger threateningly high in his hand he approached the shifter with death in his eyes.

“I don’t know! Please don’t kill me! I have done nothing wrong! I didn’t kill your brother, I have no idea why the demon wanted him!”

The worst, Dean thought, was that the shifter was probably speaking the truth. Knowing that, though, didn’t serve to make Dean any less angry. His frustration rose and he started beating again, and cutting again, and unleashing all of the rage and fear he had been feeling these last couple of months.

“Please!...” The shifter started crying. “Please, I swear…”

“You must remember something! C’mon! Think!” Dean ordered.

And the shifter did. He tried and tried but the demon had never told him where they were taking the boy. And even if he had, the shifter hadn’t cared less about it, so he doubted he would be able to remember it now.

He shook his head and shrunk in the chair when the hunter hit him again.
“Give me something you mother fucker!” Dean groaned, and out of nowhere, like a crazy impulse, he put the dagger on the shifter’s crotch and smiled.

“NO! WAIT!” The shifter screamed. He was sweating cold. “I really don’t know where he is, I don’t… But…”

“Oh, I like this but,” Dean nodded.

“I still have the pills.”

“What pills?”

“The ones I was supposed to give your brother. I still have them. They’re in my jacket pocket.”

Dean frowned and moved the dagger just an inch away from the shifter’s crotch. “Why did you keep the pills?” He asked.

“I don’t know what’s up with those, man. I know they’re supposed to heavily sedate a human, but they work crazy shit on a shifter. I took one a night I was tired, because I thought I would sleep. Instead, it made me high as a kite. Since then I’ve been stashing them carefully. And I liked to take one before Emma and I fucked.”

Dean paced around. What the fuck would he do with some fucking pills? That was not the information he wanted. Not what he needed to find Sam!

Yet, having nothing else to lose, Dean moved away from the shifter and walked towards the leather jacket resting on the floor.

“Here?”

“Yeah, right pocket,” the shifter instructed him.

Dean did as he said, unzipped the pocket and found a prescription bottle filled with tiny, white pills. Dean shook the bottle and the pills rattled inside.

“Who gave you these pills? Did you buy them?”

“No. They’re controlled drugs. The demon himself gave them to me.”

Dean studied the label on the bottle.

_Phenobarbital Tablets_ – it read.

And then, in small letters, in a corner of the label, there was a name. Dean stared at it intently.

_Dr. R. Pawnson._

“Who is this doctor Pawson?”

“I have no idea.”
Dean looked into the shifter’s eyes, his fingers closed tightly around the prescription bottle.

Dr. R. Pawson, the name echoed in his mind.

Who was he? Did he know anything about Sam?

Dr. R. Pawson…

~ * ~

Doctor Robert Pawson looked at the demon and waited for his orders. He didn’t know what had been done to the boy inside the room, but he didn’t like his lost look one bit.

“What should I be checking for? He seems…” Fine was not the word. “Unharmed.” He chose.

“His shoulder. I have reason to believe it was dislocated. Check it, and put it back if it is. Then come out here.”

Okay. Where is my taser?”

“You won’t be needing one.”

The doctor frowned. He had never walked into the room again while the boy was conscious. They had always put something in his food to drug him before the doctor could check him ever since the taser incident.

“How do you know that?” The doctor frowned.

“You could say it’s an educated guess,” the demon smiled mysteriously.

When doctor Robert entered the room, the boy was sitting quietly on the bed. His bare feet touched the white floor, and he hardly moved at all as his eyes stared at his knees.

When he got closer, he realized the boy wasn’t exactly still. He was shaking – not badly, but enough to make him worry about his mental health. The boy never looked him in the eyes, he simply didn’t acknowledge his presence at all. When Dr. Robert made him lift his left shoulder, the boy complied without a sound or emotion, his eyes still lost somewhere only he could see. When he made him lift the other one, though, Sam winced in pain and the shaking intensified.

“I’ll need to put your shoulder back in place. It will hurt.” The doctor said, as if Sam wasn’t already used to hurt. As if hurt wasn’t the reality of his everyday inside that place.

Still, the boy screamed when his shoulder gave in and snapped back under the doctor’s strong pulling.

“How are you feeling?” The doctor asked. He was often made to write reports on the boy’s health. He seemed physically okay, but what about his mind? He looked so… so broken… there was such a grave apathy on his face… That did not resemble at all the boy who had attacked him and tried to escape. That boy had the fight beaten out of him; that boy was hopeless.
Sam never replied. He stood up slowly and walked towards the sink. He opened the faucet, and when the water was running he leaned in and drank it.

On the place where he had been sitting before, on the white sheet covering the bed, the doctor saw a small red spot – the same bloody color of red that was on the back of the boy’s pajamas.

Feeling vertiginously sick and on the verge of a break down, the doctor got up and left the room as quickly as he could. When he met the demon outside he was shaking probably as much as the boy.

“You fixed his shoulder. He didn’t attack you,” the demon smiled.

“No. I don’t think he’s alright. I mean, physically yes, he will be. But… there’s something wrong with him.”

“I know,” the demon said.

And then it took a lot of courage for him to say his next words.

“Look… I have no idea what you’re going for with this place and this kid, and I promised I wouldn’t interfere. But you hired me to watch his health, and I can tell this whole thing has been having a hazardous impact on his mental health. Whatever you are doing to this boy, you need to stop. You’re breaking him from the inside.”

The demon studied the doctor and almost felt like hugging him. ‘Exactly!’, he thought, ‘breaking him from the inside’. What a beautiful metaphor.

“Thanks, doctor, your work is done for now.”

He knew he was being dismissed. And he also knew that his cowardice might cost the life of an innocent boy. But by now he was in too deep to jump out.

So doctor Robert turned around and left, because the boy bleeding in the white room was beyond any help he could give.

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tbc...
Dean looked at the shapeshifter, begging for his life, tied to a chair before him. He took the silver dagger, approached the monster, and drove it into his heart, hearing the shifter’s last dying scream before everything was silent around him.

Dean was eighteen years old, and that was the first time he killed one of the monsters he would be hunting in his life. John had taught him well – there was no mercy for monsters, you could not let them fool you. The shifter might not seem like such an evil being, but he had helped take Sam away, and for that alone he deserved to die.

Still, Dean had a problem on his hands. The information he had obtained from the shifter was not immediately helpful. He had a bottle with prescription drugs and the name of a doctor, but nothing that told him where to find Sam. That doctor’s name might not even mean anything. Alone in that basement, Dean couldn’t know.

So his next move was to clean up after his mess and make sure he left nothing that could be traced back to him in that basement. The shifter’s body wouldn’t probably be discovered for a few days.

Dean picked up his stuff and left the house when it was already night and dark. He walked to the nearest pay phone and dialed Greg’s number.

“Greg here.”

“Hi. It’s Dean.”

“Oh, hey. Any news?”

“Maybe. Greg, I need you to run a name on your computer and dig up everything you can on someone. Do you think you can do that?”

“Piece of cake. Who’s that?”


“Ok, got it,” Greg wrote the name down. “What kind of information are you interested in, exactly?”

“Anything you can find. I want to know where he works, who he lives with, who he talks to, where he goes… Everything you can, Greg. And please, this is important… how soon can you do it?”

“If you want a complete report on him you might wanna give me a couple of days.”
Dean didn’t want to give him a couple of hours, but he realized there was nothing he could do. “Fine. I’ll meet up with you the day after tomorrow then.”

“Alright. I’ll get started on this doctor.”

“Greg… do your best,” it wasn’t an order as much as it was a plea, and Greg heard that.

“Always,” he promised and hung up.

Dean put down the receiver and looked around. He didn’t know what to do. He had told Greg he would meet him in a couple of days, but what was he supposed to do until then? What was he supposed to do tonight? He had no place to stay, his clothes were dirty and bloodied, and he felt a mess inside. Torturing and killing his first creature hadn’t been difficult to do, although it had taken its toll on his nerves.

That, combined with still not knowing where Sam was, was like a heavy weight on his shoulders, one that Dean could hardly deal with right now.

He started roaming the streets, backpack on, trying to figure out what to do, when suddenly he realized he was on Emma’s doorsteps. Dean reached out his hand and rang the bell before he could stop himself.

“Dean?” She looked shocked to see him standing there. His clothes were torn and there were blood stains on them. “What happened to you?”

Dean moved his lips but he could not speak at first. His mouth was dry and his throat seemed scratched. When he finally spoke, he could hardly recognize his own voice.

“Can I… Can I stay for the night?”

“Of course, come in.” She pulled him in and shut the door, then she studied him carefully, head to toe. “I thought you weren’t coming anymore. What happened to you?”

“I… I had trouble. I’m alright now.”

“Jesus, Dean! Did you get into a fight?”

“You could say that.”

“Shouldn’t we go to the police?”

“No. Emma… listen,” Dean took her wrist softly. “I’m so fucking tired from the day I had. Can I just… take a shower, sleep on your couch? I promise I’ll be gone tomorrow first thing.”

“Dean, don’t be stupid…” She pulled him into a hug, and Dean didn’t move. He allowed himself to feel her body pressed against his and shut his eyes for a moment.

“C’mon, let’s get you out of these dirty clothes. I’ll wash them now so you can wear them tomorrow. You can take a shower upstairs. There are some clean towels in the bathroom, use them.”

“Thank you,” Dean said.
He let her help him out of his clothes and watched when she left carrying a pile of them to another room. Dean went upstairs and took a shower. He felt grateful for the feeling of warm, clean water on his skin. His muscles were sore from the torturing – like he had exercised all day. It was a weird feeling having killed someone. But now there was so much going on in his head that lucky for him, Dean didn’t have much time to allocate to the shifter. There was Sam, and Greg, and Doctor R. Pawson…names that kept swirling around with his thoughts, making his brain work nonstop to try and find answers.

When he left the shower with a towel wrapped around his waist, he ran into Emma in her bedroom – a place he remembered being a few times before.

“Oh, there you are. You look much better,” Emma smiled and walked in his direction.

“Maybe… maybe I should sleep on the couch,” he spoke, his voice was hoarse and low, and everything about that night felt weird and confusing.

“Don’t be silly… You can sleep with me,” she leaned in and kissed his lips.

At first Dean didn’t respond. She kissed his jawline and neck, and let her body brush against his naked one. Dean shut his eyes and breathed in her sweet girly perfume. He didn’t want to do that, not rationally, but then his body stopped listening, and before he knew it he was kissing her back, his body hardening under her touch, his breathing becoming labored and needy.

Emma moaned softly when the towel pooled by Dean’s feet and his hands got rid of her clothes. He wrapped his strong arms around her and took her to bed, getting on top of her and finding his way inside her willing body with harsh, greedy thrusts that she welcomed eagerly.

Dean shut his mind to all his fear and anger, to all the despair that had been eating at him. For a few minutes, he let himself give in to the animal, to the instinct, to the hunger. He let his body be fed, be pleased; he let the flesh take over and numb the pain in his heart.

He took her harder, his thrusts punishing and yet sweet, a mix that drove Emma insane, and that made sure their rubbing against each other couldn’t last much,

“Oh, Dean! Dean…” She moaned, her fingernails biting into the skin of his back, digging into his strong shoulder blades.

“That good? Hm?”

“Yeah! You feel so… so…”

“Different?” Dean thought of the shifter taking her, pretending to be him.

“Yes!” She cried, arching into his frantic thrusts.

“Do you like it?”

“Hell yes! I love it!”

Dean buried his head into her neck and found, for a few seconds, release from the hurting that lived inside him ever since Sam had disappeared.
When they collapsed, exhausted and pleased, he was so tired from his busy day inflicting pain and thinking over and over of his little brother that his brain gave him a break and gave in to oblivion.

Dean slept beside the girl as if in a coma. There were no dreams, no pain and no fear for a few hours. There was only so much the human body could handle before it needed a break, or before it simply crumbled and gave up.

~ * ~

Sam spent the hours staring at the wall, barely moving. He knew there were tremors rocking him often, but he couldn’t seem to control them. There was a lot that Sam couldn’t control now, so he just put all of his energy into pretending he wasn’t in that room.

When the lights went out and darkness embraced him like a familiar, haunting nightmare, Sam screamed so loud that he startled himself.

“NO!!! NO!!!! NO MORE, NO MORE, NO MORE!!!!” He started to walk around the room blindly and messily, bumping into things he didn’t know what were in the dark, slamming his fists against one of the walls when he found it. “PLEASE DON’T!!!! PLEASE!!! I’ll do anything!!!” he cried unabashedly. He had nothing else to lose. Nothing. No one was coming for him. They didn’t know where he was. There was no way out of there, and Sam could not take it anymore. “Just don’t do it again, don’t!”

Sam felt glass against his palms and started to slam his hands against the dark window, hitting it hard, uselessly, pathetically. To the demon watching him through the glass, it looked like at last Sam had broken. He looked absolutely frightened, desperate and lost. The boy’s body was raked by sobs and he choked on his own tears.

When there were footsteps inside the room, coming in his direction, Sam started clawing at the glass, his face a mask of panic, his chest tight with a fast, difficult breathing. When the man took hold of him, Sam was hyperventilating, and he felt slightly lightheaded from it.

“NO! PLEASE!!!” He begged, trying to fight the man who threw him on the floor and dragged him. “Please, kill me, just kill me, I can’t take it anymore,” Sam cried, and another wave of sobs took him, and he felt dangerously close to losing his sanity.

Sam felt handcuffs being locked around his wrists, and as he fought the feeling of the metal against his skin, the man used his strength to overpower him. Sam groaned and his face contorted when the man broke his wrist in an attempt at handcuffing him to the wall.

Sam was lying on the floor and handcuffed to the metal rings that usually restrained his feet. His arms were stretched towards the wall, his back against the cold floor, and then he felt the man so close to him, close enough to make his nostrils fill with that sick citric smell Sam had come to fear and despise.

The man pulled the loose pajama pants down. The boy had grown so thin that they came off easily.

“Don’t!” Sam choked. “Please, don’t!” There was a trembling breath escaping his lips every now and then, and when the man covered his small, battered body and inflicted pain and shame, thrusting darkness into Sam’s very core, he screamed loudly and squirmed, trying to fight him away.
The man was settled between Sam’s forcefully spread thighs, and he did what he had to as quick as he could. That didn’t bring him any pleasure, so he had to concentrate hard to be able to make it quick.

Sam opened his eyes but he saw nothing. There was only dark, dark and an even darker shadow moving on top of him, taking from him all his hope and all his joy. Sam thrashed and screamed when the pain became unbearable. He was still freshly injured from the man’s last visit, and his body was raw, and his skin tore up with the violence of the abuse.

Sam shuddered and squeezed his eyes shut. He thought of home. He thought of his room. He thought of his brother and father and school. He hung on to anything that could take him out of there, because if Sam allowed his mind to process the damage being inflicted now, he didn’t think he could make it. ‘I’m not here, I’m not here, I’m not-‘, “Arghhhhh!” Sam screamed and cried fresh, salty tears. It was so difficult blocking the pain!

He kicked and tried to twist away again, and as the man held him down forcefully, Sam felt a sharp, piercing pain in his thigh that caused him to stop moving immediately.

Unable to fight, Sam shielded himself, and what was left of his heart, in a small corner of his mind, and hid in there until it was over. He locked the door and tried to keep the pain at bay, and he could not stop the tears whenever that failed.

The man finished his job, untied the boy and left the room.

The moment the door slammed shut and the lights were all back on, bright and punishing, they made Sam see what was left of his dignity.

He looked between his legs and his breathing rose in an erratic crescendo of panic. Sam reached out for the pajama pants to wipe himself clean of the mess. It made him sick just looking at it.

Then, in a wild and desperate need to feel clean, Sam forced himself to stand up and limped his way towards the faucet. He couldn’t put his weight on his left leg, his thigh hurt too much. And he couldn’t use his right hand, because his swollen wrist was broken and throbbing. Sam did what he could to clean himself with the white rags; he let water soak them and rubbed his skin until it was red and raw.

All the while he kept shuddering; Sam didn’t think he would ever be able to stop shaking.

He tossed the bloody, sweaty rags aside and stood in a corner of the room, breathing fast and feeling broken.

The demon saw when the boy fell to his knees and curled up on the floor, his young body rocking with sobs.

He would be alright, the demon thought. The boy didn’t know, but he wouldn’t remember any of those things done to him when he walked out of there, and that day was coming.

But for now, Sam had to learn not to resist darkness, but embrace it and accept his own helplessness. And then, with that secret carved in his soul, he would be ready to serve Lucifer and be the boy who helped change the world forever.
Dean was on the bus making his way back to Bobby’s house. He was coming from Greg’s house, after talking to the hacker for a few hours and leaving his house with a pile of papers neatly organized into a folder.

Doctor Robert Pawson was someone easy to track, according to Greg. He was a remarkable traumatologist who had tended to some famous athletes and made himself a small little fortune and fame. Greg not only discovered the hospital where he worked at, the address where he lived, but he also dug up personal information on him.

Doctor Robert’s daughter was dying of leukemia. He had started drinking a few months ago, and seemed to be having marital problems. Greg was able to hack into the doctor’s hospital email account and read the messages on his inbox. It seemed that home wasn’t the only place where the doctor was finding trouble lately. Greg printed emails in which doctor Robert’s boss called his attention about his leaving work early, arriving late, or simply not coming without a good reason. It seemed like for the past couple of months the role model, admired and serious traumatologist had been very careless about his work hours. It felt as if he had somewhere else he had been going to, somewhere the doctor didn’t mention anywhere in his messages.

When Dean walked in he saw his father and Bobby talking on the table, writing down notes and frowning, probably planning another hunt to catch another demon.

“Dean!” Bobby saw him first and got up to meet him.

“Hey Bobby,” Dean’s voice sounded weary, and he let his backpack fall with a thud on the floor.

“Son!” John got up as well and walked towards him.

In his eyes, Dean could see the expectant question, the curiosity, the hope for answers. “Did you find anything?” He asked.

Dean licked his lips and threw Greg’s folder on the table.

“I don’t know where Sam is,” he said, and could see the shadow that crossed his father’s eyes. Before John could turn around, though, Dean grabbed his arm and made him look into his eyes again. “But I know someone who might.”

---------------------------------------------

tbc...
The man walked out of the room and the demon was waiting for him.

“Yes?” The demon asked, when he saw the anxiety in the man’s face.

“Please,” the man began, and his voice sounded raspy. “No more rape. I’ll do everything else.”

The demon narrowed his eyes and studied him intently. “Are you saying that you will no longer do what I order?”

“No. If you order me, I’ll do it,” the man said, despite how hard it was. “But I’m begging, no more of that.” The man was not a rapist. He took no pleasure in hurting the boy in any form, let alone like that. He knew, however, that after everything he had done, and even though he hadn't sold his soul, he had already bought his ticket to hell.

“There will be no more of that.”

The man sighed, relieved. “Good. I’ll be going now, then. When you need me again-“

“I need you now.”

“What? I’ve just come back from there, you can’t be serious? You saw the way he was…” The man argued.

“I did. I’ve never been so close. That’s why you’re going back in now,” the demon said, and he turned around to take something and place it on the man’s hand.

The man looked at the metal bar and his heart raced.

“Now?” He insisted.

“This is the last time you go in. You do this, and consider your part of our deal fulfilled.”

Well, that was good news. The man closed his fingers around the metal bar and looked deeply into the demon’s eyes.

“Do you mean it? I do this now, and when it’s done I can walk out never to come back?”

“I mean it.”

“Fine,” the man agreed. “I’ll go back in then.”
Sam was still curled up on the floor when it became all dark once again. His body responded as it had learned well to do – tachycardia, tachypnea, high blood pressure and the shaking, the shaking he could not control.

But other than that, Sam didn’t move. He didn’t get up and try to fight, neither did he get up and try to run. Sam didn’t have it in him to resist anymore. He felt broken and useless. He didn’t want to try, he didn’t think he could get up if he tried.

He lay on the floor listening to the footsteps coming back and he cried. Quietly at first, a hopeless, clipped sound of despair. Then, when the man hit him with something cold and heavy, making light explode in his brain despite the darkness within, Sam cried louder, he groaned and curled up further in himself.

The man knew he could not hit the boy in the head with that bar, or else he might kill him. So he stuck with less dangerous places, and as he brought the metal bar down several times, and heard the cries of pain from a boy who did not move, who did not fight back, the man understood what the demon had meant, and he understood the objective of the whole thing had been reached.

All air escaped Sam’s lungs when the man hit his ribcage twice. Sam screamed and choked, and every breath he took after that blow hurt like piercing needles tearing at him from inside. He started to breathe shallowly and faster, and he shut his eyes tightly to try and shield his mind against that cruelty.

The man put down the bar and hit the boy with his bar hands a couple of times, as if he could get lost in inflicting pain and not think about the meaning of it all. He used the knife he always carried in his pocket too, and cut once, deeply, near his hipbone, looking at the glass window, imagining the approving look of the demon. Then he picked up the bar again and brought it down on the boy’s legs and feet, breaking bone and bruising the more tender tissue. The bar also came down on his arms and back, and Sam didn’t know where it hit him last before he blacked out and his mind was set free from the torture.

The man stopped hitting when the boy stopped crying. How much was good enough for a demon? He supposed that having the boy pass out would do the trick, so he stopped everything and turned around to leave.

‘Never more,’ he promised himself. He wanted to spend the rest of his life without so much as pinching another human being.

And although he would like to make sure the demon would erase the boy’s memory, the man knew he would never, ever step foot into that place again once he saw himself outside.

He left the room one last time and the lights were all turned on.

The beating was over, but not the suffering.

Sam was unconscious on the white floor, and would be for a long time.
“What do you mean you know someone who might?” John’s eyes clung to his son’s like they were water in the desert, and Dean made them sit down again to listen to his past couple of days.

He told them about the girl he had been seeing and how the shifter had taken advantage of his looks to hook up with her. He told them of his plan to run into the shifter and his success, and Dean also let them know how he had obtained the information he now possessed; then he told them about torturing the shifter until he said something useful.

Bobby and John listened to him carefully, their eyes filling with something Dean hadn’t seen in them for a long time – hope.

“I don’t know if this doctor knows where Sam is, but he prescribed the pills that would be used to drug Sam, so he might know something.”

“That’s the best lead we’ve had since it all started,” John admitted. “I’m so proud of you.”

“Don’t…” Dean shook his head quickly. “You can be proud if this information leads to Sam. For now we have to think of what to do,” he said.

“He’s right,” Bobby said. “Greg gave you information on him, right? Do we know where he works?”

“Yes. It’s not that far from here. I think a three-hour drive will take us there,” Dean said.

“Great, we leave now,” John announced.

Dean and Bobby nodded, and in less than fifteen minutes they were in the Impala, packed with weapons and hopes, making their way towards the hospital where Dr. Robert worked.

~ * ~

Doctor Robert parked his car and walked into the hospital hall, unaware that he was being watched.

“Is that him?” John asked, looking at the doctor through binoculars.

“Let me see,” Dean asked for the object in order to study the man as well. They had already seen many doctors come and go, but that one had arrived in a car which had the license plate Greg had uncovered. “He looks a lot like the picture Greg got from him. He’s our guy.”

“Let me,” Bobby took the binoculars from Dean and looked as well, a moment before the doctor disappeared inside the hospital.

“What now? We wait for him to come out and beat the shit out of him until he speaks?” Dean asked, his heart beating fast.

“No,” John said. “We do nothing for now.”

“What? But dad, we can’t wait anymore… We have waited too long! We need to talk to him today,”
Dean protested.

“Dean…” John began. “That doctor might be our only chance to get to Sam. Besides, he's a human, not a monster. We’re not going to torture him unless that becomes absolutely necessary.”

“So what are we going to do?” Dean asked.

Bobby looked into John’s eyes and he could read his friend’s thoughts. “We’re going to tail him,” Bobby said.

“Exactly,” John agreed. “We’ll follow this doctor for a couple of days, twenty four hours, and if Greg is right and he’s been skipping work to go somewhere else, then he’ll end up leading us to Sam.” John paused. “Listen, son… we don’t know where Sam is. We don’t know how well guarded the place is. All we know is that who ever took him is smart, very smart to stay under our radar. So we need all the surprise element we can get.”

Dean didn’t know if he liked the plan. He voted for busting the doctor as soon as he left the hospital building, asking him to take them where Sam was, torturing him if he didn’t tell them, and finding Sam before the night fell.

But he did see his father’s point. By now who ever had taken Sam never expected to be caught. Arriving by surprise could definitely help them out.

“Alright. But we’re not losing sight of him, right?”

“No,” John agreed. “He leaves the hospital, we follow him.”

“Okay,” Dean nodded and sighed. He licked his lips and started waiting.

Never in his life had time gone by so slowly.

~ * ~

Sam didn’t seem to know what the concept of time meant anymore. In fact, it meant next to nothing to him, in his current situation.

He didn’t know how long ago the man’s last visit had been, but Sam knew he had been unable to move ever since.

He had no idea when his last meal had been. Two, three days ago? Sam didn’t know, but it had been a while. His stomach was empty and it hurt, but not as much as everything else in his body. In comparison to the pain in his bones and in his heart, his stomach meant nothing. So Sam didn’t even move to see whether there was food.

There wasn’t, but he wouldn’t know.

His mouth was dry and made his mouth taste weird. His saliva had grown thick, and Sam’s throat was so dry it hurt to swallow. He also didn’t know how long it had been since he had last drunk water. But when he raised his eyes once to look at the sink, his brain decided it was not worth the effort, and Sam had simply laid his head down again and given up.
He could not move. He didn’t feel like using the toilet because he hadn’t put anything in his stomach for such a long time. But when he did feel the need to pee he realized he was weaker than he thought.

Sam tried to get up but everything hurt too much, and his broken bones – his ribs especially – made sure he was a slave to the hurting taking over his body. Sam urinated where he was, on the floor, lying flat on his stomach, unable to help himself, to save himself. He felt the warm liquid running between his legs and he cried, he cried because he was ashamed, and because he was broken. He cried because he had been taught to be strong, he had been raised by the toughest of hunters – his dad – and he had disappointed him. He cried because his brother would have been strong, Dean would have escaped, but not he. Not Sam.

Sam cried because he had failed, because he couldn’t fight back, he couldn’t make his family proud, and hell, he couldn’t even find his dignity right now.

Whatever the demon had done to him, it had taken everything away. Sam felt nothing but pain and a hollowness that ate at him, that bit off pieces of his heart and left him in nothing but darkness.

Luckily, the pain eating at him was also merciful enough to make him drift in and out of consciousness. There were moments when Sam could just shut his eyes and pretend none of that was real. He could pretend he was home, he was himself again; Sam could close his eyes and dream that he could still love something in his life.

Reality, however, always won; the pain would wake him up and rub it in his face that he was still alive, and when he thought he could feel nothing anymore, the pain taught him that he could suffer, that there was no limit to how hurting he could feel.

In those rare moments when he felt a bit stronger, Sam cried louder, and the tears would eventually turn into sobs, and the sobs would rake him and add to the shaking he could not control anymore.

Sometimes it hurt so much that he felt nauseated, and when Sam felt he wouldn’t be able to hold back the sickness, it took all he had to move a little and empty the liquid content of his stomach away from where he rested his head. His body was giving up, and he couldn’t do anything to stop it.

Sam felt helpless; he felt shattered. Every breath put him in agonizing pain.

It wasn’t long before he started to contemplate the idea of dying with more relief than fear.

~ * ~

The demon watched the boy lying unmoving on the floor.

Sam hadn’t been fed for the last four days, and the demon had not seen him drink water since the man’s last visit, which was two days ago.

Now, he had an idea of how long the human body could go without food and water, but even though Sam had demon blood running in his veins, he didn’t want to take chances. The experiment was now in it’s final hours, and he needed the doctor there to tell him when to end it.
The demon thought that no longer than tomorrow, perhaps two days if Sam could handle it, it would be over. He would have accomplished his part of the plan and prepared Sam’s soul with enough darkness to welcome the angel Lucifer when he rose from hell.

He who said demons did not feel joy, lied. The demon was delighted, ecstatic, even, with the success of his plan, despite the weakness he felt after having put so much into healing the boy. It wasn’t over yet, sure. But they were so close now he could taste it.

As he had imagined, the boy didn’t fight the man in his last visit. Sam knew he had lost, he knew he was defeated. His young body had been pushed to all its limits and beyond, and he would never know how proud the demon was of him. He had known it would be difficult, but Sam had still been quite a beautiful challenge.

The demon picked up his phone and called the doctor.

“Hello?” Doctor Robert answered.

“I need you to come here and help me finish the experiment,” he said.

“It’s four in the morning. Do you need me right now?”

“Yes. Right now,” the demon looked at the boy sprawled on the white floor, bleeding and hurting. Sam was dying, but he would not let that happen.

“Okay, I’m coming.”

The demon hung up the phone and kept watching the boy – his boy – the one who would give him and Lucifer power to walk this earth without ever having to hide again.

“Don’t worry my sweet, sweet boy. Soon I’ll wipe all those memories away, and you won’t remember a thing,” the demon whispered softly, as one might to a child.

The demon hardly drank alcohol, but now he felt like celebrating. He opened a bottle of old Scotch and appreciated it slowly, waiting for the doctor, watching the triumphant result of his plan in the sight of the boy lying broken on the floor.

~ * ~

They had followed the doctor for two whole days without getting any closer to knowing where Sam was, or even if the doctor was up to something suspicious. But on the second night of their watch, parked in the dark outside the doctor’s house, their luck seemed to turn.

“He’s up!” Dean whispered inside the Impala when he saw the lights come on in what was probably the doctor’s bedroom.

Bobby jumped startled and rubbed his sleepy eyes.

“I know,” John said. He too had been awake, despite it being Dean’s turn to keep watch, John couldn’t bring himself to close his eyes.
The three of them watched when the doctor showed up after a few minutes, got into his car and left. It was still night, and they doubted he was going to the hospital.

So when the doctor was safely distant, John started the car and they started moving. When it became clear that the doctor was not going to the hospital, when he took another road, one that lead somewhere outside the city and into the country, the three men in the car didn’t have any sleepiness left in them – they were all wide eyes and sharp ears, every sense alert and ready.

They followed the doctor silently and safely for two whole hours. During this time, they hardly said a word. They were too tense to talk.

When at last the doctor slowed down his car and parked in front of a large, isolated white building, John parked the Impala too, still hidden from view, and they were silent for a moment.

The three hunters stared at the white building in the light of the rising sun. Every one in the car seemed to feel the shudder caused by the silent, looming structure before their eyes.

Then, suddenly, Dean’s heart raced and drummed loudly in his chest.

“Sam’s here,” he said, breaking the silence. “I know it.”

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*tbc....*
Doctor Robert never heard anything, no footsteps, no engine running, nothing. He just felt the coldness of the gun pressed under his jaw and the warmth of the body wrapping itself behind him.

He gasped, but before he could say a word his attacker was speaking.

“Don’t move or I’ll shoot,” John said, as Dean and Bobby watched from a distance, guns in hand as well.

The doctor raised his hands up slowly in surrender, his heart slamming against his chest.

“Please…” He whispered.

“What is this place you’re going to enter?” John asked.

“I… I don’t know,” the doctor confessed.

“What are you going to do in there?”

The doctor felt the coldness in the man’s voice, and even though he could not see his face, he knew he was talking to a killer.

“I… I came here to treat a patient.”

“What kind of patient?” John groaned and pressed the gun up against the man’s jaw harder, making the doctor wince. If he shot there would be brains all over the ground, and he needed the doctor to believe that.

“A… a boy… I don’t know his name, I swear!”

John’s heart fell in his chest and he started to sweat. He couldn’t see, but a few feet away both Dean and Bobby stood perfectly still and tense.

“So listen, I’m that boy’s father,” John’s voice seemed to crack just a little bit, and he shut his eyes briefly. “Is he alive?”

Dean held on to his senses as he waited for the doctor to reply.

“I think so. He was when I came here five days ago,” the doctor said. ‘The boy’s father!’ He thought. So the boy did have a family that was looking for him, and now they had finally found him! How they had tracked him down, though, doctor Robert had no idea. He couldn't help himself when he felt a twinge of relief at the man’s words. He hated what was being done to the boy, and the thought that his father had finally come to the rescue was comforting, even though he was terribly
scared of him right now.

“You’re gonna take us to him. I’m here to get my son, and you’ll help me,” John stated.

“Fine,” the doctor said. “Look… I have no idea what’s going on in there. There’s a… hell, you won’t believe me, but I swear there’s a creature in there, a…”

“Demon? Black eyes?”

“Yes! You know!” The doctor widened his eyes.

“Yes. What about him?”

“He makes me come here and check on the boy… on your son. I have no idea why he brought him here, or what he’s trying to do, he never told me anything! All I know is that if I do what he says he promised he will cure my daughter from cancer. I never meant to cause any harm…”

“I don’t care why you got into this. I don’t give a shit if you’re sorry. Just tell me how many people are in there and how we can enter,” John cut to the point.

“There aren’t many people. There’s the demon, who seems to be in charge, and two other demons who stand guard. Sometimes there’s only one of them, I think the other may leave to get stuff for the one in charge.”

“Were you going to walk in?”

“Yes.”

“How about your car? Can you go in driving your car?”

“Yes, I can.”

“So that’s what you’re going to do. We’ll all hide in your car and you’ll get us inside.”

The doctor nodded slowly, still very much aware of the gun pointed at him.

When John beckoned them closer, Bobby and Dean got into the car, squeezing themselves to fit into the trunk. John hid too, his gun never once losing its target. As he adjusted himself as best as he could on the floor of the car, he pressed the gun to the upholstery of the driver’s seat. He might not kill the doctor if he shot now, but he could put him in a wheelchair for life. Either way, he didn’t think the doctor would be willing to take his chances.

~ * ~

There was only one demon guarding the entrance to the building when the doctor drove past the fence and into the garage. He lowered the window on his side and greeted the demon, who waved him further in without a single word. By now they had a routine, and the demon had no reason to think there was anything different about this day.

Once they were safely inside, out of the demon’s sight, the doctor parked the car and everyone came
Dean, Bobby and John were packing guns and bottles of holy water. They had the words to an exorcism on the tip of their tongues, and the doctor watched as they planned their next move.

“Are you sure there’s only two demons in the building?” John asked him, narrowing his eyes.

“The third one might arrive at any moment. But there’s never been anyone else, that I have seen,” the doctor and the man had never met. One never knew about the existence of the other. The demon liked to keep everyone as in the dark as he possibly could, as Sam could easily tell.

“Where’s my son?”

“He’s in a room upstairs. I don’t have the key, I think only the demon does.”

“Dean, you come with me. The doctor’s gonna take us to this demon and we’ll get Sam.”

Dean nodded.

“Bobby, can you take care of the one we just drove past?”

“I got it,” Bobby nodded too, and turned around to leave the group and face the demon who had unknowingly let them in.

John and Dean followed their hostage upstairs. The doctor had access to everything in the building, except the boy’s room. They walked into an elevator which had a camera inside. The demon might have seen that there was a threat on the way, if only he hadn’t been so busy watching the boy bleeding on the white floor of his special room.

When he heard a knock on the door, the demon turned around to welcome the doctor.

“Finally,” he said. “I thought—” His words died in his mouth when he saw the two men who walked in with the doctor. ‘John and Dean Winchester. No,’ he frowned. ‘That was not possible!’

“I’m so sorry! I don’t know how they found me, but I had to bring them here or else they would kill me!” The doctor apologized.

“You fool!” The demon groaned, his black eyes flashing with fury. “You shouldn’t have let them in! They’ll ruin it!”

“What have you done to my son?” John echoed him, and they both stared intently at the demon.

“You cannot have the boy now!”

“That’s what you think, asshole. We’re here to take Sammy,” Dean's eyes glowed as he defied him.

“I’m afraid I can’t let you. If you take him now you might very well kill him,” the demon studied the angry determination in both the father and the son’s faces. How could he make them understand that they just couldn’t take Sam now? That he would give them Sam back in a few more days? If they took the boy now, broken and abused, there was no way Sam would recover! He would never grow
to be the brave, fearless hunter he needed to be!

“Go away, now!” The demon groaned. He was still intoxicated after the alcohol he had consumed, and he cursed the drink for making his thoughts slow. He wished he was stronger, but lately he had put so much of his energy into fixing Sam’s injuries that he didn’t have much left in him to send the other Winchesters flying against the wall. And when John splashed holy water on him, the demon screamed and felt his skin sizzling. Having some angel blood made him more resistant to holy water, but after putting all his faint grace into healing Sam, he was extremely vulnerable to it, like any other demon.

John took advantage of this and attacked the demon. They engaged into heavy fighting as Dean and the doctor watched, Dean keeping his gun firmly pressed to the doctor’s temple.

John hit the demon several times in the head – he was tall and thin, and physically no match for John unless he started using his powers. Then, as he searched the demon quickly, he found a set of keys rattling in his pocket. He took them and threw them at his son.

“What, you take the doctor and go find Sam, I’ll deal with this bastard.”

Dean didn’t need to hear it twice. When the demon started to show his wrath and prepare to attack, Dean tugged at the doctor and made him move, the gun always pressed to his head. “Take me to my brother,” he ordered, and the doctor was more than happy to comply and leave the demon’s presence as soon as possible.

~ * ~

“Where is it?” Dean pushed the keys into the doctor’s hand and pointed the gun at him. “Take me to him.”

“This way,” the doctor said, and Dean started following him down a long, narrow corridor.

Neither Dean nor John had realized that in the room where they were before, talking to the demon who had kidnapped Sam, there was a window to the place where the boy was being kept. Of course, with Sam lying on the floor, unmoving, it would have been hard to notice, specially with all the adrenaline buzzing in their ears and making them focus on the imminent threat the demon represented.

Now, as the doctor turned the right key into the lock and a heavy, white door opened before him, Dean’s heart was nearly coming out of his mouth.

The first thing he did was narrow his eyes because of the brightness of the place. The white lights were so intense that his pupils contracted immediately, and for a moment Dean couldn’t see. He slowly lowered his arm with the gun, but the doctor didn’t move on his side. He just watched as Dean stepped into the room, and he heard the gasp that escaped the young man’s lips when his eyes found the boy lying on the floor.

“What!” Dean choked. He started to walk, but soon he was running towards his brother. Dean lost his gun in the process of crouching down to touch him.

Sam was still curled up on the floor. Dean put a hand on his shoulder and moved him so he could see
his face. For a moment, Dean felt as if his heart had frozen in his chest. ‘Oh my god, he’s dead,’ he thought, in horror, at the sight of so many bruises and so much blood.

“Sammy?” Dean’s voice cracked and his insides turned at the sight of his brother. One of Sam’s eyes was black and swollen, he looked at least ten pounds thinner, and there was blood all over the white pajamas he was wearing. ‘Sam, can you hear me?’ Dean cradled his brother’s head on his lap and took his shaky forefingers to his neck, trying to feel a pulse.

“I can help, I’m a doctor-“

“Stay away from him!” Dean screamed and looked at the doctor angrily, his free hand quickly finding the gun and raising it again.

“Fine! I’m here,” the doctor said and raised his hands in surrender once again.

Dean turned his attention back to Sam. He could feel a pulse – faint, but steady – against his fingertips, so he cupped his cheek and called softly again. “Sammy? It’s me, Dean.”

~ * ~

Sam was dreaming. But there were no images in his dream. There was only blackness, only nothingness. And pain, of course. He felt as if he was swimming in an ocean of pain; he could see the water, and it felt like he was drowning in a pool of his own hurting.

He thought he heard someone call his name, but he was under the water, it was hard to make out words.

Sam felt a soft hand against his cheek, and the warm touch caused him to try and open his eyes.

As his eyelids fluttered open, Sam was blinded by the brightness of the room. For a moment he saw nothing but light, but then he saw a face right above his own, and he felt arms trying to wrap themselves around him.

“Sammy?” Dean’s heart ached when Sam opened his eyes.

Sam’s lips parted and his eyes widened. ‘Dean!’ He thought, and he shuddered uncontrollably at what he saw. ‘Dean, Dean, Dean!’ His mind screamed what his lips were too weak to voice.

Sam’s mouth opened and closed. It was too dry and everything hurt just to try. But he wanted to speak, he needed to.

Dean saw the way Sam’s lips parted and quivered, and he lowered his head to put his ear closer to Sam’s mouth.

It took everything Sam had to speak, and when he did his voice sounded slurred and heavy, and the words sounded raspy and frail.

“You came,” Sam didn’t know how, but he managed to smile.

“Yes, yes! I’m here,” Dean said quickly, holding on to Sam gently as not to hurt him.
‘Save me’, Sam didn’t know whether he had said or just thought the words, but suddenly he was too weak, and the pain was too strong. He wanted to look at Dean, he needed to believe that he was real, but he could not fight against the blackness that took him over once again.

Slowly, his eyes fell shut and Sam went back to dreaming of nothingness, of pain and of darkness.

~ * ~

John stared at the demon and started to speak the words to an exorcism.

“No!” The demon groaned and shook his head. He could not summon his strength to fight the hunter, because doing that meant not having any left to heal Sam, which could very well mean the boy’s death, and the definite end to Lucifer’s plans.

How could this be happening? Why did he drink a whole damn bottle of Scotch? He was so confused… Where were his guards? He was so close, so close… they couldn’t take it from him now!

“Exorcizamus te, omnis immundus spiritus….”

“No!!” The demon shouted. “You have no idea what you’re doing! Take Sam away now and you’ll be condemning him to eternal darkness!”

John didn’t listen to those words – they were poison. All he knew was that his boy was in there somewhere, probably very hurt and needing help, and the sooner he got rid of that monster, the better.

“Omnis satanica potestas, omnis incursio,” he spoke faster now, throwing splashes of holy water at the demon. He wondered why the demon, if he was so powerful, hadn’t already thrown him against a wall. He wondered where that weakness came from, but he wondered very briefly, because he was too focused on sending him back to hell.

“DON’T!” The demon groaned. “You can’t stop this now, you can’t!!! If you take Sam away he will perish! You fool! You stupid, human scum!” The demon thought of disappointing Lucifer, his master, his everything, and he screamed not only in pain but also in heartbreak. He had to make a quick decision on whether or not to fight – if he chose to fight the hunter he would have no energy left to save Sam, and Sam was dying. If Sam died because of him, the demon cringed at what Lucifer would do to him when he escaped his cage. Besides, the whole bottle of alcohol he had drunk made his thinking, as well as his reflexes, terribly slow.

John said the words feverishly, and at last, the demon could handle it no more. He had planned everything so carefully, he had been so smart as not to leave any traces… how had that come to happen? How had he been found? It didn’t make any sense! How could he lose Sam and the plan when it was all so close to success? And worse, how could he lose the boy now, when he obviously wouldn’t be able to survive with all the darkness he had been through, and would thus become useless to Lucifer when he rose?

Suddenly, all those questions vanished. The body he possessed could no longer hold him inside and the demon was forced to leave, vanishing into black smoke that quickly faded away.
When John finished, he was breathless. He took a moment to catch his breath and make sure the
demon had indeed been exorcised, and then, at last he realized there was a window in there.

He walked towards it and looked inside, and when he did it, his throat felt tight and his eyes seemed
hard.

He could see Sam’s head resting on Dean's lap as his older son tried to talk to him. John could see
the blood, the bruises… he could see the pain. The person Dean was now talking to hardly looked
like the healthy teenager John had last seen. For several seconds, he could only stand there and look
at just how badly they had hurt his son.

Then, as if something else caught his attention, John looked at the doctor staring at the scene, and his
heart filled with irrational, red hot anger. He didn’t care who that man was, he had known about his
boy, he had been there as they beat Sam, and he was responsible for it too.

And everyone responsible for hurting Sam would pay.

~ * ~

“Sammy?” Dean gasped when Sam drifted back into unconsciousness in his arms.

Then there was a loud noise and he recoiled, pulling Sam’s body closer to his.

John shot the glass window, and the loud noise echoed in the white room. At last, there was no more
mystery. People inside the room and outside the room could interact visually.

Dean looked at his father and the vacant, pained look in his face as he stared at them.

John jumped the broken window and found himself inside the bright white room too. He looked at
Sam – from up close his injuries looked even more offensive – and at the doctor watching
everything. Without so much as a moment of doubt, John raised his gun towards him.

“No, wait!” Doctor Robert pleaded. “I didn’t do that to him! I never hurt him! I’m a doctor, I can
help you! Let me help!” He begged.

John slitted his eyes and studied the man in a white lab coat.

“You,” he said, “are never touching my son again.”

John shot twice, and Doctor Robert fell with a thud on the floor, bleeding on that white floor that
seemed always thirsty for red blood.

Bobby heard the shots and arrived at the scene a moment later, after having finally dealt with the
demon standing guard. He ran down the same hallway that Dean had used before, and stepped over
the doctor’s dead body to look at John, Dean and Sam.

John looked into his eyes and Bobby nodded. It was a silent question about the guard, and yes,
Bobby had taken care of him.

Then John rushed towards Dean and Sam and crouched before his oldest son to look at Sam.
“Son?” John touched Sam’s face and tried talking to him. He looked so brutally abused that it hurt just staring at him. And yet, John’s heart was bursting with joy for finally, finally finding him!

“He’s alive, but his pulse is weak. We need to take him to an ER now!” Dean knew they were in the middle of nowhere, about to start a battle against time to save Sam’s life.

John nodded quickly. He wished he had seen Sam open his eyes, he wished he had heard his son say something, but Sam was passed out in Dean’s arms, and they had no time to waste.

“Let’s go then!” Bobby hurried them. “Before the other demon comes back.” He stole a quick look at Sam and his heart ached. Of course they had thought that Sam was having a hard time, and they had obviously thought that maybe he was being very hurt… But nothing compared to the sight of John’s youngest son lying limp and broken in his brother’s arms.

John nodded towards Dean, who picked Sam up from the floor in order to leave.

When Dean pulled him against his chest, he felt the thick smell of blood and urine in his nostrils. Sam felt so light in his arms that it was painful.

The movement caused Sam to stir and a feeble moan of pain escaped his lips.

“Shh… it’s okay now;” Dean whispered to him. “You’re safe.”

Sam didn’t open his eyes, but he relaxed into unconsciousness and let himself be carried out of that bright, terrible room.

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tbc...
“Let’s go, before the other demon comes back.” John said and they started moving.

Dean clutched Sam as tightly as he could to his own body to avoid hurting him any further, and then he followed his father and Bobby outside the building and into the Impala.

John sat behind the wheel and Bobby took the seat next to him. Dean laid Sam gently as possible on the backseat. He took off his jacket and tried to improvise a pillow where Sam’s head could rest. He then sat and pulled Sam’s legs on top of his, all the while looking at his brother’s bruised and unconscious face.

“John, where will we take him?” Bobby asked urgently, as soon as the car started moving.

“To a hospital, of course!” Dean answered quickly.

“It’s not that simple, Dean,” Bobby frowned. “What will we say? That a demon hurt Sam? They will call social service and the police the minute they examine your brother,” Bobby explained, “and we won’t be able to see him.”

“Bobby’s right,” John said, causing Dean’s worry to grow. “But maybe there’s someone who can help.”

“Who are you calling?” Bobby asked when he saw John pick up his cell phone and dial.

“I know a doctor who works in a hospital in the city. His parents are hunters, and we worked together once. Michael hates hunting and everything related to it, but I believe he will help. I’ll see if he can send an ambulance to meet us on the way.”

“Good,” Bobby nodded and then stole a glance towards the backseat, where Sam breathed with difficulty and Dean stared at him with worry that was thick enough to fill the car.

“Yes, Michael? Listen, it’s John Winchester here. I need a favor.”

As his father talked to someone to try and get an ambulance to come their way, Dean studied his brother’s injuries as much as he could without actually touching him.

In the process of getting Sam in the backseat, his pajama shirt had lifted and exposed part of Sam’s naked torso. On it, Dean could see angry bruises in all stages of coloring. There was also a cut on Sam’s hip bone that had apparently bled a lot, and Dean couldn’t tell whether or not it was still bleeding because Sam’s clothing was a mess of fresh and dried blood.

“Hmmm!” Sam suddenly voiced a loud, disoriented moan and shuddered.
“Hang in there son, help’s on the way,” John ended the call with his heart aching with worry, and he tried looking through the rearview mirror, but he could not see his boy’s face. So, instead, he just stepped further into the accelerator and drove dangerously faster.

Bobby looked over his shoulder at Sam’s painful frown and Dean’s worried sick face. “How is he?” He asked, knowing the answer was bad, but unable to help his own concern.

“I don’t know…” Dean whispered, looking at Sam as he struggled with something invisible, his eyes squeezed shut and his broken face expressing all the hurting his body was drowning into. “We need to get help fast.”

Sam gasped and choked, and another intense shudder raked him before he lost consciousness once again.

During what felt like a long ride towards help, Sam drifted in and out of consciousness a few times, moaning and shaking on the occasions he felt more lucid.

Sometimes he could even open his eyes, but it was hard to tell whether he was actually seeing something.

“Sam?” Dean called, his hand covering his brother’s, his eyes desperately trying to give him strength.

There was no recognition in Sam’s eyes, there was only pain in there, pain that broke Dean’s heart, pain that came in loud, scared gasps and low, muffled moans, and that caused everyone in the car to get goosebumps.

When Sam’s lips quivered as if he might say something, Dean squeezed his hand and got closer.

“Shh, don’t try to speak. It’s alright, Sam. We’re going to a hospital,” he said, watching him intently.

Sam felt everything inside him hurt and tighten, and he turned his head the moment he could not control the urge to throw up.

Dean tried to help him as best he could, holding his hair as rippling waves of pain and nausea took control of Sam’s body. There was nothing in his stomach, so on the Impala’s floor Sam vomited bile until he blacked out again, out of sheer exhaustion.

“What’s going on?” John asked worriedly.

“Sam’s throwing up,” Bobby said, looking at Dean trying to help his brother. “He’s hanging in there. Will the ambulance meet us?”

“Michael said it’s on the way.”

“C’mon, Sam… just a bit more…” Dean whispered, and he looked at Sam as if the concern seeping from his eyes could wrap Sam with care and heal him.

~ * ~
It was roughly an hour of driving before they heard the sirens and spotted the ambulance heading towards the Impala.

John brought the car to a quick stop, and soon there was the hurried talking of the nurses pulling Sam out of the car and onto the stretcher.

Dean watched, somewhat paralyzed with shock, as an oxygen mask was immediately put over Sam’s face while they pushed the stretcher into the ambulance.

“Who’s coming with us? A family member can come inside,” one of the female nurses said.

John looked at Dean and they held the eye lock for a moment. They both wanted to be there, but Dean knew his father was desperate to look at Sam and spend some time with him. Dean had already felt Sam’s weak pulse against his body, and his father hadn’t even had a chance to look into his eyes, so Dean nodded towards him.

“You go, dad. Bobby and I will drive right behind you.”

John nodded. He knew how much Dean wanted to be with Sam – hell, being with Sam was the very thing Dean had been doing since he could remember – and he was glad for the chance to follow Sam in the ambulance.

John got inside the vehicle as Dean and Bobby went back into the Impala. Soon they were all heading towards the hospital, although the ambulance carrying Sam made it there much faster than the Impala could possibly without any sirens.

~ * ~

Inside the ambulance, John sat beside Sam and stared as the two nurses listened to the doctor and started first aid care. He saw as one of them got Sam’s vein in order to start him on an I.V. drip, according to the doctor’s commands.

“Where’s doctor Michael?” John asked. He had thought that maybe his friend would have come in the ambulance.

“He’s at the hospital, waiting for the patient,” the other doctor replied.

“Is my son going to be alright?” John asked as he looked at his boy and all the hospital gear being used on him. One of the other nurses put a probe on Sam’s finger and turned on the cardiac monitor so they could listen to the rhythm of Sam’s heartbeats.

“Sir, please… I must ask you to stay calm. He’s in good hands now. We’re doing everything we can to save him.”

John nodded. He didn’t want to be inconvenient, far from him to disturb the work of the medical staff, but every time he looked at Sam he seemed to find a new injury in his young body, and it broke his father’s heart that he was unable to prevent all those injuries from happening.

John took Sam’s hand in his and squeezed gently.
‘I’m so sorry,’ he thought, worrying his bottom lip. “Please be alright,” he whispered quietly.

Sam groaned weakly and tried to move.

“Take it easy, don’t move,” the female nurse said softly and put a hand on Sam’s chest.

John’s eyes looked worriedly from her face to Sam’s, and for a moment he could see Sam’s hazel eyes opening to look at them through the pain and confusion that consumed him.

John gasped at the sight and squeezed Sam’s hand tighter.

“Please sir,” the male nurse tugged at Sam’s hand and John let go, nodding quickly.

“Hmm,” Sam groaned and was taken by tremors, but it didn’t last long. There was a mild painkiller in the drip, and soon he drifted into unconsciousness once again.

“Hang in there kid, we’re almost there,” the female nurse spoke softly to him.

During every mile they covered on the way to the hospital, John’s heart beat steadily fast with worry.

~ * ~

When the ambulance arrived and the doors burst open, doctor Michael was there to receive Sam into the emergency room. He took one look at the boy’s injuries and started talking to the other doctor on his team.

“I’m gonna need five milligrams of morphine, now!” He lifted Sam’s pajamas and checked out his bruised ribcage. There was something obviously broken there, and he needed to make sure it was not about to pierce into his lungs. “Prepare the X-ray room. I need to know just how bad he is on the inside.”

John listened to all that, his eyes wide and his heart swollen in his chest.

“Micheal… please,” he began. "My boy…how bad is it? He's gonna make it, isn't he?"

Doctor Michael looked at John Winchester briefly. "I can’t tell you anything right now, John. But hang in there, let me do my job, and I’ll be back to talk to you as soon as I can.”

“Okay. Thank you.” John swallowed hard and nodded a last time at the doctor before he disappeared with Sam on a stretcher inside another room, followed by more people in white lab coats.

~ * ~

In the exam room, the doctor stripped Sam naked in order to assess all of his injuries. Doctor Camille, a member of his staff, gasped at the extent of the boy’s wounds.

“Dear God, Mike… what has happened to this boy?” She frowned.
Michael thought of the kind of life John led – hunting monsters, saving people – the kind of life he had desperately run away from. He supposed something had gone terribly wrong for John to come looking for his help.

“I have no idea…”

“Hmm!” Sam groaned and started to grow restless. The doctor hadn’t injected the morphine yet, and the pain was buzzing loud in Sam’s ears. “Hmm!” He groaned again and tried to move.

“Shh, take it easy. You’re in a hospital. Can you hear me?”

Sam had one of those flashes of lucidity. He looked at the doctor and focused on his face, and he tried to understand his words.

“What happened to you, son?” The doctor tried to talk to him.

“I…” Sam tried, but speaking hurt so much with his dry throat. “…he tortured me,” Sam managed to voice.

“He? Who?” The doctor leaned over him.

“Ahh!” Sam screamed with pain and his whole body started to shake uncontrollably.

“Hand me the morphine, Camille.”

“Here you go.”

Doctor Michael injected Sam with the powerful drug and soon the boy was drifting into peaceful, pain free sleep.

“Mike… Did you hear what he just said? ‘He tortured me’. Shouldn’t we be calling social work? The police? I mean, who did that to him?”

“Not his father, Camille, this much I can assure you. My family knows him. John would kill for any of his kids. Something else must have happened. And we’re not reporting this to anyone. Tell the nurses this case should not be discussed with anyone outside the staff. We’re not bringing the authorities into this,” Michael had seen his father worry about it way too many times to know by now how it worked in the hunting world.

The woman studied Sam’s bruises and the visible fractures. “Are you sure? You do know we are supposed to report it. What about our boss?”

“I’ll deal with him. And I’m sure.”

“Michael, this could get us in trouble. Is it worth lying for the boy’s father? I mean, he might not have hurt him, but he certainly didn’t take good care of him or else he wouldn’t be here in such a state.”

“Camille, you don’t know the kind of life John Winchester leads. I’m sure he tried everything he could to prevent this. And yes, it is worth it. I owe it to him.”

“Why?” She insisted, the sight of the boy so broken was extremely unsettling.
“Because,” Michael took a deep breath. “If it weren’t for John Winchester I would have grown up an orphan. So yes, Camille. I owe him big time. That’s why we’re gonna take care of his son without asking questions he can’t answer, and that’s why you’ll help me make sure the nurses obey.”

“I, I didn’t know, Mike…”

“Right. Now please help me move him.”

Camille fell shut and helped him. As they placed Sam on a table to perform several X-rays, the doctor studied a cut on the boy’s hipbone. It wasn’t deep, but it was in a very bad place, one that would never allow it to close if he didn’t do some stitches.

There were so many things to do that it was hard deciding where to start, but the doctor settled for the X-ray of his ribs. The most life threatening injury seemed to be the possibility of a broken rib perforating a lung.

Luckily for his patient, that was not the case. Although Sam had two broken ribs and a third one that was just cracked, his lungs were fine.

The doctor then stitched the cut on his hipbone and studied his other injuries. There were broken toes and a broken wrist too. But other than those he didn’t think there was anything else that was broken. There might be a lot of damage to soft tissue, as he confirmed later with the ultrasound. There was a torn ligament in his left thigh, and if he didn’t rest and wasn’t careful enough, then surgery would be necessary to fix it. His shoulder had a recent lesion, but it seemed okay now.

Clinically, though, the boy was still at risk. He was obviously underweight and dehydrated, and the doctor soon started him on antibiotics to fight any ongoing infection.

“Please,” he called two of the nurses about two hours later.

“Yes, doctor?” One of them asked.

“Give him a bath. I’m sure he’s going to feel better. Just be very careful with him, he’s extremely injured, specially in his ribcage.”

“Sure, doctor.”

The nurses took Sam away and a moment later they were letting his body under warm, cleaning water from one of the hospital’s bathtubs. They scrubbed Sam’s skin clean of blood, urine and vomit, and they washed his greasy hair with shampoo until it smelled good and felt soft again.

Sam slept through everything. After the doctor injected him with the drug he was completely unaware of what was being done to him, and he would be like that, in that sort of drug induced coma, for at least a few more hours.

~ * ~

When Dean and Bobby arrived at the hospital, John had been in the waiting area for about half an hour.
“Where is he?” Dean asked.

“Inside, with the doctors,” John pointed towards a set of double doors.

“And how is he?” Bobby asked.

“I don’t know. No one has come here to tell me anything yet. The doctor just told me to wait.”

So that was exactly what the three of them did. For the next few hours they waited without any piece of information, biting nails and checking clocks, exchanging a few worried words every now and then and looking desperately at each person who exited through those doors dressed in white.

They tried talking to some of them, but they would just shake their heads and say they didn’t have any information on the boy admitted a few hours earlier.

Dean still had Sam’s dried blood on his own clothes, but he refused to leave until they heard anything from Sam.

It was the end of the day, the sun was setting and it was getting dark outside, when doctor Michael came back to talk to them in the waiting area.

The three men rose to meet the doctor.

“How is he?” They asked, practically in unison.

Doctor Michael sighed and seemed to ponder for a moment.

“Sam is alive,” he said, seeing the impact those words had on the worried expressions of the three men listening carefully to him. “We believe he’s not in imminent danger, but the next forty eight hours will be crucial to tell that. Until then, unfortunately, anything could happen, and we just need to keep watch.”

John nodded.

“Do you have any idea of what happened to him?” Michael asked, looking at Sam’s medical file and frowning.

Dean swallowed hard as his father answered. “We don’t know, Mike. We are still very much in the dark.”

“Before we gave him something for the pain, he spoke to us.”

“What did he say?” John asked.

“He said, ‘he tortured me’.”

Dean flinched at that, and he saw that Bobby did too. It felt as if someone had grabbed his heart and squeezed it until it hurt.

“We don’t know who had him, or why. He was gone for three months, and when we found him this morning I called you immediately,” John explained.
“Well,” the doctor said, "you might want to sit, because the list of injuries is long.”

Neither men sat.

“Sam’s got two broken ribs, another cracked one, a cut on his hipbone that required stitches. There’s a ligament in his thigh that requires absolute rest for a few days if we want to avoid surgery. He has three broken toes, a broken wrist, a sprained ankle and a black eye.”

Every word felt like it punished them physically.

“He’s severely dehydrated and malnourished. We started him on an I.V. drip, and he has a nasogastric tube so we can feed him while he’s under heavy medication.”

“Can we see him?” Dean asked.

Michael sighed.

“He’ll spend the night under my personal observation, you should probably go home and rest, you certainly had a busy day,” he said, looking at them, particularly at Dean’s bloody clothes. “But I suppose I could let family members see him briefly.”

“Bobby’s family,” Dean said quickly.

“That’s alright, kid. You and John go in today. I’ll see him soon,” Bobby soothed Dean.

“But guys,” the doctor spoke again. “It’s five minutes, and then I’ll need to ask you to leave. He needs all the rest he can get, and as soon as he’s a bit stronger I’ll let you spend the night.”

“Alright,” John agreed. Anything was better than not seeing Sam at all.

“I have to warn you, though, he’s heavily sedated for the pain. You won’t be able to talk to him and he won’t even know you are there.”

“No problem,” John said as Dean and him stepped forward to be taken to Sam.

“Alright,” the doctor sighed. “Follow me.”

Dean and John looked at Bobby, who nodded at them. “I’ll be waiting here,” he smiled. Then the two Winchesters followed the doctor down one of the hospital corridors.

“He has an oxygen mask on. Don’t be scared. It’s not mechanical ventilation. Sam is perfectly able to breathe on his own, we just want to make sure he has enough oxygen since his breathing is very shallow because of the injuries in his ribcage. He’s attached to the cardiac monitor and the I.V drip, and the feeding tube I told you before. Most of this is just temporary, until we can watch him and make sure he’s not at risk.”

Dean and John walked into Sam’s room slowly and tentatively. The sight of Sam, unconscious, lying on a hospital bed with tubes coming out or going into him was shocking, and it tugged at the strings of their hearts.

“I’ll give you two a moment,” doctor Michael said before turning around to leave.
They walked closer to Sam’s bed and studied him.

“They gave him a bath,” Dean smiled, already holding back tears. He let his fingers touch Sam’s forearm softly.

John didn’t say anything. He raked a hand through Sam’s hair and touched the back of his hand to his cheek.

“I’m proud of you,” John said, looking at Dean.

“What?”

“You said I could be proud of you later if the information you got led us to Sam. So, I am proud,” John said again.

And that was it for Dean. The sight of his brother lying so helplessly in a hospital bed after being brutalized for three painful months as they couldn’t possibly rescue him was more than he could handle and he felt the warm, stingy tears filling his eyes and running down his face.

“It’s alright now, Dean. We found him. We saved him,” John pulled Dean into a hug and the older Winchester boy let himself go. He buried his face into his father’s shoulder like he hadn’t done in so many years, and cried tears of sorrow and of relief.

“They tortured him, dad,” Dean choked. “What if he’s not alright? What if he’s never alright again?”

“Then we’ll be there for him, and we’ll make sure he gets back on his feet.”

Little did John know how difficult it would prove to be.

Right now it didn’t matter, though. Sam would sleep safely tonight, and for now they just clung to that.

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tbc....
In the hospital where Sam was, the lights were always kept on, even during the night, so there was no darkness in the patient rooms. Yet, as Sam woke up a few hours later when the sedative started to wear off, he didn’t know where he was. He saw the white room around himself, the bed with white sheets, and couldn’t stop his thoughts – 'I’m back in the room. He found me and took me back’.

Sam grew restless at first, and that escalated quickly to a state of panic and frantic moving. He tore the feeding tube off himself, choking and coughing until it was out, and his heart rate beeped so fast that it immediately caused nurses to enter his room.

When they saw the boy writhing on the bed, the two nurses tried to restrain him. But for all his malnourished, weak body, Sam was terribly strong to be kept still.

“You’re gonna hurt yourself, please stop!” One of them said, but to no avail.

Sam’s breath was short and his thoughts were a blurry mess. He tore the I.V. drip off his vein and caused blood to gush out of it.

The more the nurses tried to contain him, the more Sam thrashed and fought them, determined to escape that room or die trying.

“Doctor? Doctor, please! Do something!” One of the nurses said when she saw doctor Michael, the boy’s doctor, stick his head inside the room.

Doctor Michael immediately approached the bed and assessed what was going on rapidly.

“Sam?” He called. “Sam, it’s okay… you’re in the hospital now,” he tried.

The boy didn’t seem to hear him at all. Sam was squirming against the hands keeping him in bed and had begun to sweat profusely in his attempt to escape. He was bleeding from his torn venous access and if he kept it up he might cause his weak, battered body, some severe, permanent injuries. Doctor Michael needed to act.

The doctor took a syringe and a sedative, and in a few more seconds he was forced to pierce Sam’s arm in order to inject the intramuscular medication.

The nurses helped him hold Sam down as he gave him the drug.

“Girls, you can go now. Thank you,” the doctor told them.

“Are you sure doctor?”

“Yes,” he nodded.
The two nurses left and doctor Michael stayed behind, resting a hand against Sam’s forehead as the medication started its calming effect.

Sam was shaking badly, and his breathing was still erratic. His outburst had looked a lot like a panic attack. John Winchester didn’t know what had happened to his son in the last three months, and the only words Sam had been able to speak when he arrived were about being tortured.

Doctor Michael could treat all his injuries until he was perfectly healthy – physically at least. But as a doctor, he didn’t think that would be enough. In fact, he had a feeling that healing Sam’s external injuries would be the easy part of healing him. God knows what he had been exposed to in the time he was missing.

“Sam? It’s alright, boy… you can relax… Your family has found you, remember? You were brought here yesterday. My name’s Michael, and I’ll be taking care of you for the next few days,” he explained softly, and he felt the boy relax slowly on the bed. Normally, doctor Michael wouldn’t get too attached to his patients, but he loved kids, and there was something so broken about that boy that just tug at his heart and made him want to help him so bad.

Sam began to feel sleepy and his limbs felt soft. ‘I’m not in the room’, he thought, and allowed himself to be maneuvered back into a comfortable position on top of two fat pillows.

The doctor finished adjusting him and studied the damage the boy had done during his episode. The feeding tube had been ripped off. The doctor sighed and stared at it. He decided not to put another. They had feed him for the night, and he decided he would try and make Sam eat something in the morning. If he collaborated, then there was no need for that.

The I.V. drip though, that was important. The doctor cleaned the blood that had stained part of the sheets and took Sam’s vein again in order to put him back on the drip. He was still dehydrated, and there was medication in that drip.

The doctor thought of how badly the boy was hurt on the outside, and how much more he probably was on the inside.

“I’m gonna keep you sedated for a while, Sam. It’s good for the pain, and it will help you sleep,” he said softly, even though the boy’s eyes had already fallen shut.

~ * ~

In the middle of the night, Sam woke up. He had no idea what time it was, but the lights in the hospital were dim. Sam felt slightly drugged, but he blinked a few times and tried to sit up.

“Good, you’re awake,” doctor Michael said softly, pulling a chair to sit closer to the bed in order to talk to him. There was a medical stand beside the headboard of Sam’s bed with a few bottles of medication, and now there was also a white cardboard box with something written on it, something the doctor stared intently at.

After Sam’s panic attack, the doctor couldn’t help but wonder about what had happened to him, and the truth was, no one knew. No one but Sam knew exactly what had happened for the past three months, and a lot could have happened.
“We need to talk about something now that we’ve stabilized you,” he began, and removed the oxygen mask Sam had been breathing into. “But first I would like to tell you about doctor-patient confidentiality. Have you heard about it? Seen it in a movie, perhaps?”

Sam nodded slowly. His eyelids seemed heavy.

“So you know that anything you tell me that you don’t wish to share with anyone else will be a secret, right? This means that you can tell me something you don’t want to tell your family, and I will not tell them either.”

Sam frowned. He didn’t like where that was going – his quickened heartbeats attested to that.

“So…” The doctor stared intently at the boy, and he tried to be as gentle as possible. “During the time you were away, you were badly hurt, right?”

Sam nodded again. He felt absolutely no desire to speak.

The doctor sighed. Sam was fourteen years old. He was a minor, but not a child, so he decided to be straightforward.

“Did you suffer any kind of sexual abuse?”

Sam tensed on the spot. His blood seemed to drop a few degrees and his breathing became loud, despite his resonating silence.

“Because if you did, then you need help to deal with it. You know that, right? You’re a smart kid. And we need help so we can help you. You see this here? The doctor pointed at the cardboard box. “This is a sexual assault evidence collection kit. It’s a big name, but it’s actually very simple. All we need to do is examine you to collect some samples, and then maybe we’ll be able to track down whoever hurt you.”

Sam’s stomach hurt. He was so tense that even his throat seemed to close up, and breathing was difficult. He felt himself sweating, even though he felt cold, and his body started to shake visibly.

“If you’re uncomfortable with me doing the exam, there’s my friend, doctor Camille. She’s very nice, you’ll really like her,” he smiled.

‘No,’ Sam thought. ‘I’m not going back there,’ he thought feverishly, shutting his eyes and panting.

His reaction told the doctor more than the rape kit could, and he tried to hide the sadness he felt.

“Hmm? What do you say, Sam? It’ll only take a few minutes, and it won’t hurt.”

Sam opened his eyes and looked intently at the doctor. There was something fierce in Sam’s eyes, something strong and mildly frightening. The doctor had already seen denial, but hardly combined with so much anger.

Sam pushed the cardboard box off the stand swiftly. It fell on the floor with a thud, and there wasn’t a drop of regret in the boy’s eyes. He looked at the doctor defiantly.

“Sam…” Doctor Michael stared at the box on the floor. “I can’t make you do it, but I strongly
recommend that you…”

“Hmm,” Sam groaned and tried to move. He tugged at the probe on his finger and the I.V. drip, and would have gotten out of the bed if it weren’t for the doctor getting up and stopping him quickly.

“Hey, hey…. Don’t try to move, you’re too weak, Sam, you’ll end up falling. I won’t say anything else, alright? You can stay there. It’s okay.” It took a moment to convince Sam to lie back down, but eventually he complied.

Doctor Michael sighed sadly, picked up the rape kit and looked at the boy who turned on his side and gave his back to him.

He decided he would speak to his father when he came back in the morning.

~ * ~

When it was time for breakfast, the doctor dismissed the nurses after they failed to feed Sam, and sat on the boy’s bed to try and get him to eat his food.

“Good morning, Sam. How are you feeling? A little better?” He smiled, picking up the bowl and the spoon. He tried to act as if nothing had happened during the night. He wanted to try and put the boy at ease so he would eat.

Sam stared at him through silent, aloof eyes. He seemed to be studying the doctor and evaluating whether or not he was a threat.

“Your father and brother will come visit you soon. In fact, they wanted to be here now, but I told them they should get some rest as you did too. I’ll tell them they can stay here with you, but first you need to eat something,” he explained.

Sam merely studied him, showing no reaction at all. Partly because of the drug in his system. His thoughts were slow and clouded, and Sam felt it was difficult to focus on a single thought or on a single movement. He looked at the doctor and listened to his words, but he still didn’t feel like speaking.

He understood he was now in a real hospital, with a real doctor, and no longer in the bright room where he had been held captive. He had a vague memory, which could very well be a dream, of Dean leaning over him and telling him he was safe.

Sam wanted to feel joy, but his heart was still unable to go to the trouble of such an emotion. He did feel relieved, though. Just knowing that there would be no more darkness, no more pain and humiliation in the dark, was enough for now.

‘I was never there,’ Sam thought, with so much strength that it took him by surprise. ‘Nothing happened,’ he thought silently, approvingly.

“C’mon, Sam. I need you to eat something so you can leave this room and go somewhere more comfortable, where a family member will keep you company,” the doctor offered him a spoon of the food.
Sam’s right wrist was broken and there was a cast around it, and his left arm was receiving the drip. It would be better if he didn’t try to move much. Even because he was under medication for pain that caused his muscles to relax, and holding a spoon towards his own mouth might not be as easy a task as it was for everyone else at the moment.

Sam saw the spoon before his mouth but didn’t move. He didn’t feel hungry. He didn’t feel anything, in fact. He still felt pain, though. But it was like a fading echo of the intense pain he had been used to. Sam didn’t know for sure, but he imagined they were giving him something strong for it.

“C’mon, Sam… if you don’t eat something I’ll be forced to put that tube through your nose and down your esophagus again. You don’t want that, do you? Just a little bit, fella…” The doctor pushed the spoon against Sam’s lips but the boy turned his face.

Sam didn’t want to speak, or eat, or listen to the doctor anymore. He wanted to sleep and forget, and nothing more.

The doctor sighed and gave up after a while, promising himself to try again later.

~ * ~

When John, Dean and Bobby arrived for visitation, doctor Michael met them to give them news on how Sam was doing.

“So, how did he spend the night, Mike?” John asked.

“He’s doing fine,” the doctor started. “He’s stable and I believe this afternoon we’ll transfer him to a regular room, then you can be with him. There’s only a problem…”

“What?” John asked, quickly.

“I can’t get him to eat,” the doctor confessed. “He woke up in the middle of the night, I guess he was confused as to where he was, and he ended up removing the feeding tube. I haven’t put it back, because I’m trying to get him to eat on his own, but it’s been difficult. Besides, I’m keeping him on a heavy sedative both for the pain and to keep him calm.”

“We’ll try and get him to eat,” John promised.

“Good. You can go in.”

“I’ll just wait here, guys,” Bobby said.

“Erm…” Doctor Michael pondered for a minute. “You have fifteen minutes to be with him, then I’ll ask you to leave so the nurses can do their job… you can go in too,” he said, nodding towards Bobby.

The hunter widened his eyes. “Me? I can go too?”

“Yes. It’s okay. Go,” the doctor said.
Bobby was more than happy to obey. So the three of them walked into Sam’s room for a short, yet much needed visit.

“Dear Lord…” Bobby whispered faintly at the sight of him.

The black eye was very shocking. It made Sam’s beautiful boyish face look weird and pained. His right eye was closed tight and swollen, but his left one opened when he heard them coming.

“Sam…” John called softly.

Dean looked at his brother and realized Sam was looking back at him. His heart beat faster in his chest.

“Hey Sam…” Bobby smiled, approaching the bed.

Sam looked at the three men there to see him. They were his family, the three of them, and he loved them. For the past three months Sam would have given anything to see them, to talk to them, to touch them… and yet, now that they were there, Sam felt strangely quiet and uneasy. Looking into their eyes was like looking into a mirror – Sam could see his injuries, his brokenness reflected in them, and he didn’t like it.

The worry in their faces reminded Sam of what he had been through in the bright room, and right now Sam was using what little strength he still had to try and erase everything he had seen and felt there.

The look in Bobby’s and his father’s eyes took him straight back to the white room, feeling helpless, feeling like a victim. Dean’s eyes were also worried, but there was something else in them, there was a kind of strength that made it easier to look at him. Or perhaps Sam was just not afraid to see himself in the mirror of Dean’s eyes. Dean had been there for him since he was a baby, in ways his own father hadn’t, and even though they had grown into the tough, and sometimes teasing, dynamic of their relationship, Sam supposed no one else had seen him as vulnerable and scared as Dean had while he was growing up.

“Did you sleep well?” John was asking.

Sam didn’t reply. He didn’t feel like talking. He didn’t trust his voice, and he didn’t trust himself to be strong enough to engage into conversation.

He just wanted to be quiet and build the strong wall he wanted to put between himself and his past in the bright room, in the darkness. After the doctor’s questions from before Sam realized how important it was to protect himself from those memories.

Dean sensed there was something broken in Sam, and it wasn’t only bones or skin. There was something so absolutely withdrawn about his brother that Dean avoided looking him in the eyes. It felt like Sam was silently screaming to be left alone, and Dean didn’t feel comfortable pushing him with questions.

A while later, after realizing his questions would go unanswered, John tried to sit by the bed and spoon feed his son. He had the same result as doctor Michael did that morning. He tried, but Sam neither spoke, nor opened his mouth.

His son just stared, at him or at nothing in particular, and waited, silently, for something they couldn’t
understand.

“Guys… time’s up,” the doctor showed up by the door and announced. “The nurses need to come in and change the sheets.”

Those fifteen minutes had gone by really fast, and they couldn’t wait until they were able to stay with him all the time.

Bobby and John sighed and turned around to leave.

Dean approached the doctor and spoke to him. “Can I… stay a bit longer, try and make him eat?”

The doctor looked at John and at the food, untouched, on top of Sam’s tray. He didn’t think the brother would have any more success than the father had, but if he thought he could do it, the doctor was happy to let him try.

“Yeah, no problem. I’ll ask the nurses to wait a little.”

Bobby and John looked at Dean a last time and said they would be waiting outside. The doctor left with them, leaving Dean alone in the room with Sam.

~ * ~

“John? I need to speak to you in private for a moment,” the doctor said.

“Sure,” John looked at Bobby and then at doctor Michael, then he followed the latter into an empty office.

“Please, close the door,” doctor Michael said, and sat behind his desk. “Take a seat,” he instructed.

John looked wary when he complied. “What is it, Mike?”

“John…this night when Sam woke up I tried talking to him. He wouldn’t speak to me, but I wanted to know what was done to him in the place where he was. Now, it’s important that you understand that macroscopically speaking, there was no evidence of your son suffering sexual abuse, but that doesn’t mean we can rule it out.”

John frowned and shook his head lightly.

“Pardon me? Are you saying that my son was abused?”

“No, I didn’t say that. I’m saying that since we don’t know what happened to him, we should probably do some exams to confirm. There could be tearing inside that was not visible when the nurses gave him a bath, and if a sexual assault happened a few days ago, there wouldn’t be any bleeding.”

“So you haven’t seen anything that actually indicated my son was raped?”

“No…but as I said, this doesn’t mean…”
“Has my son said anything?” John cut him off. “Did Sam say that something happened?”

“No,” the doctor said again. “Sam didn’t say anything. Although he made it clear that he didn’t want to do the exams. That’s why I’m talking to you, because as his father you can ask for a rape kit to be done.”

“And why would I do such a thing to my boy? You saw no evidence when you examined him, and he didn’t say anything happened to him. Why would I force him to do something he obviously doesn’t want to? I won’t put my son through such a humiliating situation if there’s no need to.”

“As I said, we don’t know whether or not-“

“Michael… Please. My son was beaten up badly, I can see that. But he wasn’t raped, so take it easy, okay? Nothing happened, or else you would have seen it, or he would have said something.”

The doctor could suddenly see a lot of his father in the boy he was treating. John’s denial of the mere suspicion of sexual abuse was just as intense as the boy’s.

“Well, it is your call. We will not do the test unless Sam allows it, or unless you ask us to.”

“No, no test, Michael, please. My boy has been through enough as it is. There’s absolutely no need to traumatize him further with these ideas of abuse.”

Michael nodded, albeit it reluctantly.

“Alright, John… As I said, it’s your call.”

~ * ~

When they were all gone, Dean took in a deep breath and sighed. The room felt immediately lighter without so many people worrying over Sam. He took his time looking at the door, until they were really gone, before he turned around and walked towards Sam’s bed.

Sam watched, his heart beating fast, as Dean sat on his bed and picked up the bowl with food. It felt different when Dean did that. His father hadn’t done fatherly stuff to him in ages, since Sam could remember. But not that many years ago Sam could see Dean doing exactly what he did now to him, pushing a spoon of food towards his mouth when he was sick.

“You gotta eat,” Dean spoke softly. “You need your strength back, Sammy.”

Sam looked at the spoon and at Dean. He wanted to pick the damn thing up by himself, but his right wrist was useless, and he felt so weak that he didn’t think he could take the spoon to his mouth without spilling everything.

“Open up,” Dean commanded gently.

Sam stared at him, still silent as a rock, but his eyes spoke volumes. Dean could see he felt ashamed of his helplessness, and he could confirm it in the way Sam’s cheeks blushed, afire, when Dean insisted. The boy turned his head and breathed faster.
“Listen…” Dean started. “It’s not so bad,” he said, taking the spoon to his mouth and trying the food.

The movement startled Sam, and caused him to look back at Dean, and at what he was doing.

“In fact, it’s almost good,” Dean nodded approvingly, taking another mouthful of it.

Sam’s lips twitched in something that resembled, though faintly, a smile, and his cheeks lost some of the heat.

“C’mon, Sammy… it’s just food. Just open up, let it in, swallow it,” Dean’s eyes were warm, and his voice was trusting.

He tried pushing the spoon towards Sam again, and before Sam himself knew what he was doing, his lips were parting and he was doing as Dean said – open up, let it in, swallow it.

“There you go,” Dean said approvingly but without making a big deal out of it. “Now we repeat this movement a hundred times and it’s done.”

Sam’s lips didn’t move, but there was a smile inside him. He tried to let it out, but it was like his body didn’t know how to smile anymore. The thought saddened him, and he took the next spoon of food quietly.

When the doctor opened the door to see if the brother had been successful, he smiled appreciatively and closed the door again, careful not to make a sound, after the sight of big brother feeding younger brother on the bed. He felt glad that there was someone Sam could trust; he would need that.

When Dean finished feeding Sam the last spoon of food, he put it aside and studied his brother.

“How do you feel? Like, for real?” He tried.

Sam looked deeply into his brother’s eyes. He didn’t look away like he might have done had someone else asked him that. He didn’t let his eyes stray as if he hadn’t heard anything. Nonetheless, he could not find it in himself to answer that. It was all so fresh, so vivid… Every time he blinked he had to be careful not to find himself in the bright room again, waiting for the man to come and…

‘No. I was never there,’ he thought firmly, denying his thoughts any access to the memories screaming in the back of his mind.

So no, he could not talk about how he felt.

He could not talk at all, not now, perhaps not ever.

Dean sighed softly and nodded. He respected Sam’s silence. He couldn’t possibly understand where it was coming from, and right now he couldn’t help him either, but Dean knew he had to give him time. There was nothing to be accomplished by insisting on something Sam wasn’t ready to do.

“I’ll see you soon. But if I’m not here, you eat that next bowl of food, okay?” He patted Sam’s knee lightly and left the room.

Sam followed him with his eyes, attentive and silent, and went back to his lonely contemplation of nothing when he was alone again.
tbc....
Later that day as the doctor had promised, Sam was transferred to another room, one where his father and brother, and Bobby too, could spend the day with him, although only one was allowed to spend the night.

Sam was still mildly sedated for the pain, particularly in his ribcage, and to avoid any kind of distress. He insisted on managing the spoon whenever his food came over, with a shaky left hand, but all by himself. The nurses helped him go to the bathroom when he pushed a button, and with that set, Sam didn’t feel the need to speak at all.

As soon as the three hunters were allowed into his room, Sam shrunk quietly and stared at the window a few feet away from his bed. It was sunny outside, and Sam stared thoughtfully at the piece of blue sky he could see from bed. How long had it been since he had last seen the sky?

“Hey, son…” John smiled at him and walked closer to the bed.

Sam showed no reaction. He turned his attention to his legs, covered by a light blue sheet, and said nothing. He didn’t want to look his father in the eyes. He still couldn’t stand the reflected sight of the broken boy his father was seeing.

Bobby and Dean stood away from the bed and watched as John tried, in vain, to interact with his son.

“We’ve missed you,” John said, and squeezed Sam’s hand on the bed. He couldn’t help thinking of doctor Michael’s words when he had talked to him about examining Sam. He was glad for the doctor’s help and everything, but he was being a fool. In John’s head, there was just no way something like that had happened to his son.

Sam looked at his father’s larger hand above his own but did nothing. He didn’t squeeze back, neither did he retreat his hand. It was like he just didn’t care.

There was so much going on in John’s mind now. As a hunter, there were questions that needed answers, there was a beast in him still thirsty for revenge, for the blood of whoever had touched his son, but he tried to take it easy and hold back, because Sam was obviously too fragile to speak about what had happened to him.

“Hey kid,” Bobby said from behind John. Sam looked him in the eyes. “We’re gonna spend the day with you, that alright?” He asked.

Sam didn’t feel like replying. He turned his attention back to the sheet covering his legs and fell into
his quiet, withdrawn attitude.

Dean seemed to be drawn to that behavior, because he started mirroring it unconsciously. He pulled a chair and sat down, not getting close to the bed, not asking questions, just being there, next to Sam.

He didn’t know what was going through his brother’s head right now, but Sam didn’t need to speak to tell them how hurt he was. The injuries in his body spoke volumes of what he had been through during the past months.

Eventually, John gave up trying to start a conversation and he and Bobby sat down too, making difficult small talk about anything they could think of.

When, around midday, one of the nurses came in with a remote control and turned on a small TV on a high corner of the room, it was a relief for the tension inside the room. John and Bobby finally had something to focus on, something that wasn’t the boy lying in bed, who was Sam, and yet felt like a stranger, someone who did not want to interact with them.

Dean wasn’t as bothered by Sam’s silence as his father and Bobby obviously were. He picked up a magazine from the hospital and leafed through it. They had been stressed and worried sick for the past few weeks. Now Sam was there, and no one would hurt him again. He might as well take advantage of the moment to calm down a little.

Sam stared at the television too. Sometimes he was actually paying attention to what was going on in there, but most of the time he was simply staring as his mind drifted elsewhere.

Sam was quiet because he was putting so much energy into shutting many doors in his mind; he didn’t have anything left to talk about. He felt himself building a wall, brick by brick, so very slowly, between the bright room and himself. Sam never wanted to go back there, not even in his dreams. He wanted to erase that, delete the memory, like it had never happened. He unknowingly wanted to do what the demon couldn’t finish, which was to live as if none of that had ever happened.

The doctor, the demon, the man.

Sam shuddered and shut his eyes.

Nothing. There was nothing there. He wanted to look back and see nothing, he wanted his mind to be blank. So, as Bobby and John watched TV, and Dean read something in his room, Sam started building this frail wall, promising himself it would one day be thick and strong enough to keep the darkness away.

~ * ~

In the evening, before leaving for his house, doctor Michael stopped by to see if everything was alright and to remind the family that only one of them could spend the night.

John, Bobby and Dean stood up and followed the doctor outside to talk. He let them know that Sam was responding well to the medication and that although some of his injuries would take several weeks to heal, he was doing well and might be leaving the hospital by the end of the week.

“Michael?” John asked.
“Yes?”

“Has… something happened to Sam’s vocal chords?”


“Because he won’t say a thing,” John explained.

“Well, there’s no damage to his voice. In fact, I told you he spoke to me when he got here.”

“He spoke to me too when we found him,” Dean said. “Actually, it was just a couple of words, but…”

“His voice is fine. What isn’t fine is his mind, John,” doctor Michael said.

“What do you mean?”

“You told me you don’t know what happened to him, but judging from the wounds we saw, we can have an idea.”

John nodded, feeling his chest tight with pain.

“Whatever has happened to your kid during this time, I don’t think a few days in the hospital will be enough to heal him. Your son is in shock, John.”

Bobby listened to the conversation carefully. He agreed with the doctor. He remembered the last time he saw Sam before all that happened. He was growing into a teenager, and he was often moody and rebellious, but around him, Sam had always been sweet and lively, and the boy lying on that bed now didn’t even look like that kid anymore.

“What can we do to help him?” John asked, concern evident in his voice.

“I don’t know… only time will tell. But I do strongly recommend that you get your son some therapy as soon as he leaves here. He will need someone he can talk to, a professional who can make him open up and help him through this.”

John nodded quickly.

Dean listened to that, and although he understood the doctor meant well, he could not see Sam willingly going to a shrink and pouring his heart out. No, that was not happening. It was not the way they were raised to be – tough, keeping it all inside, never showing weakness. There was no way Sam would sit on a chair and open up to a stranger.

“I have to go now,” the doctor was saying. “And so do two of you. You can take turns to see who spends the night with him. There’s that small sofa in the room, it turns into a fairly decent bed. The hospital provides a pillow and blanket in the room.”

“Thank you, Mike. For everything,” John shook hands with him and the doctor nodded before turning around to leave.

“I’ll stay,” Dean said.
John looked at him. They all wanted to be with Sam, but he wouldn’t say he wasn’t relieved that Dean offered to stay tonight. The sight of his son so withdrawn and so broken was very painful to see. Every minute of Sam’s silence killed John a little bit inside, and as much as he wanted to be there for his boy, a part of him just wanted to be as far away as possible from the reminder of how badly he had failed his son.

“Okay. We’ll see you tomorrow morning,” Bobby said, nodding towards John so they would leave. Although Bobby couldn’t tell exactly what was going through his friend’s head, he sensed John could use a break from the sight of Sam’s injuries.

“Go eat something, Dean. We’ll see you early tomorrow,” John said and patted Dean on the shoulder.

Dean saw them leave and sighed, heading towards the hospital cafeteria. He ordered something quick to eat and half an hour later he was ready to go back into Sam’s room.

~ * ~

When Dean returned, and they were alone, he waited a few minutes before approaching Sam’s bed and looking at him closely. Sam made no sign of acknowledging his presence, and he didn’t move an inch when Dean rested his hand on the bed, beside his covered right thigh.

“Look,” Dean said. “I know you don’t want to speak, and I won’t make you. But I don’t want to stay here unless that’s what you want too. So if you want to be left alone you have to find a way to let me know, and I won’t bother you. I can go somewhere else to spend the night…and come back in the morning.”

Dean watched Sam for any reaction, but there was none. It hurt him saying those things, because he truly wanted to stay there, right beside his bed, and yet, he didn’t want to be in the room if that made Sam uncomfortable, or if he felt he needed time alone.

Sam listened to his brother, and though his face didn’t show anything, his emotions were a mess inside him. He had waited so long for Dean, to see him, to hear him… His closeness felt really good, but how could he tell him that? Sam felt petrified to his very core. It was like all of his ability to show emotion had been frozen, and he didn’t know how to tell Dean that his presence was soothing, and that even though he didn’t want to say anything, he liked knowing Dean was there with him.

“Alright,” Dean nodded, a bitter taste in his mouth. He sighed and was about to turn around and leave, taking Sam’s lack of reaction as a sign to go, when he felt the soft and warm weight of Sam’s smaller hand on top of his, on the bed.

Dean’s eyes immediately fell on their hands, and he stared for a moment at Sam’s fingers resting on top of his own. Then, he raised his eyes to Sam’s face, but his brother’s eyes were still distant and unclear. That was as much of a response as Dean would get from him tonight, but it was enough to warm his chest and make him feel like his heart was swelling.

“I’ll stay then,” he spoke softly, his voice slightly hoarse with veiled emotions. He squeezed Sam’s hand gently before letting it go.
Dean prepared the sofa with the blanket and pillow the doctor had said he could use—there was a cabinet in the room where Dean had found them—and then he put the remote control on Sam’s bed, by his hand.

“You decide when you want to turn it off,” Dean said, and went back to the sofa.

Sam turned the TV off about an hour later, but there was still plenty of clarity in the room. Though the light was softer at night, it was constantly on, and Sam liked that.

He didn’t have trouble sleeping because his I.V. drip contained enough painkillers and sedatives to make him close his eyes and drift into unconsciousness. Sam turned on his side and rested his cheek against the softness of the pillow. He fell asleep knowing Dean was right there, a few feet away, and knowing no harm could possibly come to him tonight.

~ * ~

Dean didn’t fall asleep as easily. After Sam shut his eyes and his breathing became slower and deeper, it still took him a couple of hours to be able to relax and try to sleep too. Before that, he spent the time watching over his brother’s sleep, wondering what was going on in Sam’s mind now, and how he could help him get over what had happened to him.

Dean didn’t know why Sam had been taken, and maybe Sam himself didn’t either. He had an idea of how much pain he had been through, but that was just a pale idea, and he was sure that it was much worse than what he could imagine.

He didn’t think a psychiatrist would be able to help Sam now, he didn’t think anyone would be able to make him talk about something he didn’t want to. Dean figured that patience would be a key element to help his brother trust again, and he was willing to do whatever it took to see him as happy as he had been the morning of his birthday, before any of that had happened.

When Dean eventually fell asleep, he was unconscious for no longer than two hours when a subtle change in Sam’s breathing woke him up.

Dean blinked a few times and didn’t know where he was at first. Soon, however, he saw the hospital bed and his brother on it, and he remembered where and why he was in that room.

He stood up from the sofa and walked towards the bed.

Sam was lying on his side, still asleep, but instead of a calm, deep breathing, the air escaped his lungs faster, and his chest seemed to heave up and down with a little more difficulty.

Dean watched him for a few minutes. There were tiny tremors taking Sam’s body every now and then, and his short breath was becoming slightly audible. Dean figured he was probably dreaming. And it was probably unpleasant.

He put a hand on Sam’s forehead instinctively, like he often did when Sam was a kid and looked sick. There was no fever, but Sam’s skin was warm against his palm.

Dean let his hand go from Sam’s forehead to his check and then neck, and let it settle softly on top of his left shoulder, where he squeezed.
Slowly, Sam’s breathing pattern fell back into a calmer, deeper rhythm, and Dean thought his body seemed to relax too.

“I’ll take care of you, Sammy,” he whispered softly.

Dean still stood by the bed for a while longer to make sure Sam was indeed deep asleep. When he was satisfied that his brother was no longer dreaming something unpleasant, Dean returned to the improvised bed and tried to sleep a bit more.

~ * ~

When the sun rose, Bobby and John were back in the hospital to spend another awkward day watching TV as Sam remained in absolute silence. The nurses came to change the sheets and help Sam take a shower. Dean, Bobby and John were then asked to leave the room.

They were allowed to return when Sam had already been helped into clean clothes. They had been unable to see his naked body and the different stages of fading bruises on it, but they could see his arms and his black eye, which was slightly less swollen today, and it told them just how difficult it was for Sam to move at all.

Sam ate what was brought to him quietly. He slept a great part of the day, in part because of the drugs in his system, but also because he liked the feeling of not having to worry about anyone looking at him and wondering about him.

But in the middle of the afternoon, his silence seemed to start getting to John, and he started pacing near his bed, circling it with visible restlessness.

“Are you feeling stronger today?” He asked, already knowing Sam would not reply.

Dean and Bobby watched him when he went closer to Sam’s bed.

“Sam… what’s going on, son?” He softened his voice and took Sam’s hand.

Even from a distance, Dean could see the way Sam stiffened at the touch.

“You need to talk to us… we’ve looked for you for so long, and now we’ve finally found you. We want to help you.”

Bobby watched Sam’s face, but there was nothing there, except, perhaps, for a feeling of discomfort.

“What did they do to you in there?”

Sam’s breath shortened immediately and his heart beat faster. Despite the sedative in his vessels, his blood pressure spiked and the rapid sound of his breathing in and out of his nose could be heard.

“You have to trust us. We want to see you get better. You just need to tell us what they did to you in that room.”

Sam gasped and shuddered as a feeling of uneasiness grew inside him.
“Dad…” Dean started. ‘Dammit, dad, not now!’ He screamed in his mind.

“It’s okay, Dean,” John looked at him. “Sam knows we want to help. But he needs to speak, he needs to tell me what happened to him while he was there,” John meant no harm. In his mind he just thought he was being a good father, being there for his son, urging him to talk so he could be helped, so John could either rest assured that Sam had been avenged, or hunt down who ever had escaped. He was a busy, practical man, and it was incredibly difficult to sit and wait for something to happen. “Right Sam? What did the demon do to you?” He was all genuine concern, but his words triggered something else in Sam.

The boy gasped and retreated his hand quickly. He widened his eyes and his throat was dry. ‘What happened to me? What happened to me?!’ He thought hurriedly, his heart slamming against his chest and his breathing turning into panting. ‘They all happened to me! The doctor, the demon, the man.’ Sam shook uncontrollably on the bed and looked at his father with something that was a mix of fear and anger.

“John, not now,” Bobby went behind his friend and put a hand on his shoulder.

“But…” John looked at Sam. He realized he seemed uncomfortable with the questions, but he would certainly feel better once he let it all out so John could help him by doing something.

“Dad, no,” Dean said firmly. “There will be time for that later,” he begged into his father’s eyes with a stern look, one that was so intense it caused John to nod and shrug off his thoughts.

“Alright. It’s okay. We don’t need to talk about this now,” he smiled at his youngest son.

‘We don’t need to talk about this ever!’ Sam screamed in his mind and shut down in himself. It was a while before he was breathing regularly and his heart didn’t feel like it was beating in his throat. He didn’t look at anyone else in the room, he couldn’t stand the idea of making eye contact.

Sam wasn’t angry with his father or anything. He knew exactly why he was doing that – he knew his father was a hands-on kind of helper. But there was no way Sam would start speaking about the bright room. He was too busy building his wall, brick by brick, to block any memories from that place. He didn’t want to go there. Period.

When evening came and they had to decide who stayed in the room, Sam hoped with all his heart it would be Dean again.

They had agreed that tonight someone else would stay with Sam, but after John’s frustrating attempt at talking to Sam, they decided it would be better if he gave him some space.

“How sure you can handle another night? Aren’t you tried?” Bobby asked Dean.

“I’m fine,” he promised. And he was. He wanted to be the one there with Sam, and even though Sam hadn’t said a word, he knew he was the one Sam wanted to have there too.

“Okay, then. You stay again, but tomorrow night it’s either me or John.”

“Right,” John nodded.

“Sure,” Dean agreed.
He had a feeling he knew why he was being allowed to stay again. John loved his kids, and of course they knew that. But he was never very good at the whole loving parent role. He wanted to help Sam, but he lacked the soft skills to do so. And helping Sam was pretty much what Dean had been doing all their childhood, so it came as no surprise how much easier it was to him connecting with his brother.

“Let me just...say goodnight.”

John walked towards Sam’s bed and put a hand on top of his head.

“Night Sam,” he said softly. “We love you very much.”

Sam didn’t say anything. He watched silently as his father left with Bobby and Dean stayed, preparing the sofa for another night by his side.

Without saying a word, but after a meaningful exchange of looks, the two brothers drifted off to sleep, learning how to be around each other in silence and trying to find their way back to intimacy despite the distance Sam had been using as a shield.

In the middle of this night, it was Sam who woke up.

He had no idea what time it was, but the hospital was extremely quiet. The faint light was on and Dean was sound asleep on the sofa.

When his eyes found him, Sam relaxed.

For as much time as the medication allowed him, Sam stayed awake and stared at Dean. It felt good knowing he was there, even though they didn’t speak, and even though Dean didn’t know what had happened to him.

For so long Sam had hoped to wake up to the sight of his brother there, and now he finally had it.

Sam let himself be pulled back into sleep, and he tried to take with him the safe image of Dean sleeping near his bed. This way he could make sure there would still be some light when he closed his eyes.

----------------------------------------------------------------

tbc...
Chapter 21

On his fourth day at the hospital, Sam’s health had definitely shown signs of improving. The swelling around his right eye was pretty much gone, although the skin around it was still very bruised. The doctor came to check on him that morning and made him get on a weight scale. Sam had approvingly gained three pounds. It was very little compared to what he still needed to put on, but it was something. The doctor took him off the I.V. drip and changed all his medication to be taken orally. Sam was on antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and painkillers that kept him mildly sedated and relaxed.

The doctor scheduled another X-ray for that afternoon, because he wanted to see how his fractures were coming along, particularly the broken ribs. Sam had trouble walking because of a series of combined wounds, such as the pain in his ribcage, the injured ligament in his thigh, the cut near his hipbone and the two broken toes, so even though the doctor encouraged him to walk a few steps every day, he was not supposed to spend too much time on his feet. Like he would have strength to do it, Sam thought. If he tried to walk for longer than five minutes at a time he felt lightheaded and dizzy, and had to go back to the bed.

The doctor confessed he was amazed that there was no trauma at all to his head. Little did he know, Sam thought, that the plan was never to kill him. They kept safely away from his head. With it, Sam thought bitterly, they preferred to fuck up mentally, from within.

It was another uneventful day in the hospital, with Sam eating his food quietly, watching television silently and simply staring at nothing in particular. In the afternoon, when the nurses came to take him to the X-ray room, Dean, Bobby and John were left alone in Sam’s room for a while.

John’s cell phone started ringing and he picked up the call, speaking low, serious words for a moment.

“Seriously?” Dean whispered to Bobby as they watched his father talk. “Is he talking about business now?”

“You know your father. But he isn’t going anywhere, Dean,” Bobby assured him.

And indeed, John ended the call and stared at the phone for a while.

“Monsters?” Dean arched an eyebrow.

John looked at him, as if he had been found doing something wrong. “Erm, yeah… it seems so. I told them to try another hunter. I’m not leaving Sam.”

Dean nodded approvingly. He was glad his father was doing the right thing, but deep inside he couldn’t help but wonder how long it would last. How long until John Winchester just couldn’t stand hanging around playing daddy and took off on another hunt. It was a business, yes, but it was also his life and what moved his father.
“Actually, Dean… what do you say we take some time off, lay off hunting, and just be with Sam?” John asked.

“That sounds great,” Dean agreed. In fact, that sounded like the only thing they could possibly do after everything.

“I was talking to your father last night, why don’t you come over, stay at my place for a while? That old house is big enough for all of us,” Bobby offered.

“We don’t want to bother you anymore than what we already have,” John said, looking intently at his friend.

“Bollocks! You know you could never bother me. I’ll enjoy having you there,” Bobby said, looking at Dean expectantly.

“I like it. I think it’s a good idea,” he said.

Bobby smiled, pleased, and John was forced to cave in. “Alright then. As soon as the doctor says Sam can leave we’re going to spend some time with Bobby.”

It would be like a vacation, except for the part where they could look forward to a lot of hurting instead of joy, Dean thought sadly.

“Good news,” the doctor said when they returned from the X-ray room. “Everything is healing nicely,” he looked at John. “I believe Sam will be able to leave the hospital in a couple of days. I still want to see another X-ray before I can discharge him, and it’ll be good to leave the cast around his wrist a bit longer.”

John nodded. “Thank you, Mike.”

Sam went back to the bed without saying a word. He listened to them talk as if it wasn’t about himself they discussed.

“Sam…” Bobby went closer to him. “When you left we were talking about where we’re going when you’re released. Would you like to come to my place?” He asked softly, looking deeply into Sam’s eyes.

There was so much concern, so much sincere affection in Bobby’s eyes that Sam couldn’t just look away. He nodded shyly and went quickly back to staring at his hands, unwilling to give anything else as a response.

The small, subtle nod meant a lot to Bobby. He smiled and sighed, and for the first time he had hope that things could eventually go back to what they used to be.

~ * ~

That night, as they had agreed before, John was the one who stayed in the room with Sam. Bobby drove Dean back to the motel where they had been staying, and they ordered some take out food and talked before going to bed.
“How bad do you think it is, truly?” Bobby asked Dean, opening a beer and helping himself.

Dean eagerly accepted a bottle when Bobby offered him one.

“It’s bad, Bobby.”

“Did he talk to you when you were alone?”

“No,” Dean said.

“Why do you think he isn’t talking?”

“I think he isn’t ready to talk,” Dean said, and that was an honest answer. “Think about it... we have hundreds of questions we would like an answer to, and all of them would cause him to remember whatever the fucking hell happened to him in that weird room. I know I wouldn’t like to remember any of that shit if I had been tortured.”

“I guess you’re right... I just wish we could make him feel safe now.”

Dean nodded. He wished the same.

“I don’t think it’ll be easy.”

Bobby took another bite of his food and stared at Dean. He was quickly leaving his boyhood behind to become a man, and even though he was still so young there was a hardened look in his face, one that made him look more like his father, and yet, beneath that tough look there was tenderness Dean couldn’t possibly hide from those who knew him well.

“You do know you’re the one he’ll open up to, when and if he feels like it,” Bobby said suddenly and Dean stopped in the middle of taking the beer to his lips.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“Please, Dean... We know your father. We know John loves you kids with all his heart. But can you actually see Sam pouring the contents of his heart out to him?” Bobby asked truthfully.

Dean pondered for a moment. He knew what Bobby meant. He felt the same way about it.

“Dad and Sam aren’t exactly the kind of people who talk easily to each other. Ever since Sam found out about the business it’s like part of him resents dad,” Dean shrugged. “It’s not getting easier now that he’s a teenager.”

“I know. I often talked to Sam when you guys came visit me. I know he loves John, that goes without saying. But I also know that he trusts you more than anyone.”

“He thinks I’m the stupid older brother,” Dean smiled.

“He thinks you’re God,” Bobby smiled back, but with seriousness in his eyes.

Dean’s heart twitched at that. The thought that Sam was proud of him always caused his chest to feel bigger, as if it needed to accommodate a swelling heart.
“But Bobby… how can I help him? We have no idea what happened to him in there. I think they broke him pretty badly, and not only physically. I don’t know if I can help at all…”

“You’ll figure it out,” Bobby soothed him. “Sam’s silence, for example. It’s been bothering your father and it’s been bothering me too. It gets on our nerves that we can’t seem to get through to him, to check on him… We rescued him but his silence keeps screaming at us that it was too late. You, on the other hand, don’t seem bothered by said silence.”

Dean took another bite of his burger and reflected on that. He didn’t, really. Of course he wanted to talk to his brother, but only if Sam felt like talking.

“So you see… you don’t have to think too much about it, Dean. Just follow your gut. I think it’ll show you how to help Sam.”

“I hope you’re right, Bobby,” Dean said, taking another sip from his beer and another bite off his burger.

~ * ~

John looked at his son and the way he stared at the television. He took advantage of Sam’s eyes being focused on something else to study his body carefully, or the parts he could see anyway. John looked at the fading bruises on his arms, the cast around his broken wrist and the ugly, glaring bruise around his eye.

If John could, he would switch places with his son and be the one lying on that bed. There was nothing he cared more in the world than taking good care of the two sons Mary had given him. He knew he was doing a reasonably good job, because even though he had often been absent, the boys were growing up to be strong, decent, trustworthy kids he could count on.

Dean was going to be an incredible hunter. Give him time and he would be better than John himself, he thought. It was hardly fair that at such a young age Dean had already tortured and killed his first monster, but little in their lives was fair at all. And Sam, well, he was different from his brother, that much could not be denied. He was willful and smart, and though Sam had a loving, caring heart, John could look him in the eyes and see tough times for them in the future. Dean was fierce, but he was obedient. Sam, not so much. Many times John had felt that Sam listened to his brother more than he listened to his father.

And the truth was, John felt unable to blame him. Because of his hunting life he had been forced to leave the boys alone more often than he would have liked to, and he knew that Dean had pretty much raised Sam with a little help from him. Perhaps it had been too much responsibility to put on the child Dean was when Mary had died, but they had made it so far, and John was glad for the bond his two boys shared. It pained him that Sam wouldn’t open up to him, but he clung to the hope that Dean might be able to get him out of his shell and back into the world. Because, John thought, Sam was pretty much still living in that white room where he was found, isolated from everyone and in a world of pain and hurting.

The noise of the television being turned off, and the silence that followed, pulled John out of his reverie. He saw Sam getting ready to sleep, but before that he stood up from the sofa and walked towards his bed.
“Son?” He called softly.

Sam looked into his eyes. There was nothing in his eyes except for quiet contemplation.

“Do you like doctor Michael? He’s been a nice doctor, hasn’t he?”

Sam blinked a few times. He liked doctor Michael. He was nice to him.

“I was talking to him before, and he told me that maybe it would be a good idea if you had someone you could talk to when you get out of here,” he explained. Even though Sam didn’t speak, John knew he was paying attention and understanding what he meant. “What do you think of the idea, hm? I could talk to a few friends, find someone really good who can help you feel better.”

Sam swallowed hard and took a deep breath. It didn’t matter that his father’s words were soft and meant well. They caused a feeling of uneasiness to spread inside him. The more he talked, the more Sam felt his own silence weighing on him, killing his voice, making him focus hard on the wall he had to build.

“I just want you to consider the idea, okay? Just think about it,” John said, and watched when Sam’s eyes strayed and he looked away. “Good night, son,” he leaned over to plant a kiss on the top of Sam’s head and then he went back to the sofa where he would sleep.

Sam turned around, on his other side, and pretended he was asleep for a while. His heart was beating a little faster, and his mind knew the answer he did not voice. ‘I’m not talking to anyone. I’m not going back there. I’m not,’ Sam promised himself, over and over, until eventually he was no longer pretending, and sleep finally found him and set his mind free.

~ * ~

On the following day, Dean arrived in the morning with something for him.

“Here. I think you’ll like it,” he gave Sam a book he had bought for him on the way to the hospital.

Sam took the book and stared at the cover.

“I know you like geek stuff, so I thought, what’s better than this?”

_The Lord of the Rings_. Sam’s lips curved slightly. He had already read that book, but nice try, he thought.

“Oh, no, wait, that’s for me,” Dean quickly took the book off Sam’s hand. “You’ve read that already, right? _This_ one is for you,” he said, pulling a second, thinner book from his backpack.

Sam frowned, curiosity all over his face as he accepted Dean’s second book.

_The Silmarillion_.

Sam had been wanting to read that book for a while now. He could not believe Dean had bought it. Although Sam had probably mentioned one too many times that he wanted to read it, he could hardly believe Dean remembered the title. Sam would have never thought that his brother was paying
attention to his teenage ranting about Tolkien’s fantasy world.

“You like it?” Dean asked, but he knew the answer already. Sam smiled. It was brief, and in a second it wasn’t there anymore, but Dean saw it, and it made his heart feel lighter.

Sam looked at him and held the book tightly. Then he turned his attention to it and opened the cover to read the first page.

Dean walked slowly away from the bed and gave him room to read.

John and Bobby exchanged a quick look of appreciation, and Bobby looked at Dean fondly, believing every word he had said to the boy the previous night about him being able to help Sam.

All they needed now was time.

~ * ~

The days went by within the same hospital routine Sam had fallen used to. He woke up in silence, ate in silence, and now he read the book Dean had gotten him in silence too. He went to the bathroom alone when he needed, and he even wondered why they didn’t have mirrors in there. Sam was growing curious as to what he truly looked liked. He knew his hair was long enough to tangle between his fingers when he raked a hand through it.

The nurses came every now and then to make sure he had what he needed, and the doctor came once a day to talk to his father and check on him.

There was not much to do except wait for his bones to heal, and the bruises to fade. By now they were pretty much gone. The nurses still changed the bandage around his stitches and Sam was not allowed to move much, but he felt stronger and less sleepy. He supposed they were slowly taking him out of the pain medication which caused him to feel drowsy.

During the time Sam spent in the hospital, Sam’s nights were pretty much dreamless. If he did dream, he could hardly ever remember anything about it. The medication he was on caused him to have blank nights where he seemed to simply turn off for a few hours and then turn back on. That didn’t mean, though, that there weren’t times he woke up in the middle of the night, sweaty and breathing fast, feeling his heart rate accelerated, but Sam could never remember what he had dreamed, thanks to the drugs still working on him.

His eyes darted open in the middle of the night and the faint hospital light told him where he was. Sam felt his fingers were cold and he swallowed hard.

Bobby was the one sleeping with him tonight, and he was awake when Sam woke up seemingly restless.

“It’s alright,” he whispered. “Go back to sleep.”

Sam took a deep breath and closed his eyes again. It was good being able to open his eyes to a familiar face watching over him. He liked it better when it was Dean, but it still felt good seeing his father or Bobby there, showing him they weren’t just a dream, a wish, a lost hope… Sam was actually out of the nightmare he had lived, at least when his eyes were open and the lights were on.
When the day came for him to be released from the hospital, the doctor filled two prescription bottles with pills and handed them to Sam.

“Your X-ray looks good. Those ribs are still mending, though, and you’ll have to be very careful. No exercise whatsoever for at least a month. Then you can start with something light if you wish. I took off the cast, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be careful with that wrist. Try not to force it too much. It’d be nice to start with slow, gentle movements. The stitches in your hipbone need to stay for a few more days, but your father assured me that you can have them removed at home,” he said.

“Yes,” Sam thought. They were, what one could say, familiarized with stitches.

“The pills in this bottle,” the doctor continued, showing one of them to Sam, “are for pain. You’re gonna take one a day, for four more days. And after that you only take another if you feel pain. This other one,” he showed him another very similar bottle, but with a different label, “has pills to help you sleep. You don’t need to take them if you feel you can sleep easily. But in case you have trouble, take one before bed.” The doctor explained. He didn’t say what trouble was, but he supposed Sam knew very well what he meant. ‘If the memories become too painful, take one and you’ll sleep them off,’ was what he was really saying.

Sam took the bottles and thanked the doctor with his eyes. He was still insecure about speaking. And the longer he remained in silence, the more comfortable it felt. He didn’t have to give explanations about how he felt, and pretty soon people had stopped asking with hopes of getting answers.

“You can get dressed, but I think you’ll need help.”

Sam looked at some of his clothes lying on the sofa. His father had brought him jeans, a T-shirt, underwear, socks, tennis shoes and a jacket. Props to him, for not forgetting anything, Sam thought.

“I can help,” Dean said and waited for everyone else to exit the room and leave Sam and him alone.

Sam looked at Dean and didn’t offer any resistance when Dean reached out his hands to help him out of bed.

Sam was wearing the hospital gown, which was opened on his back, and didn’t exactly cover him much. Nevertheless, when he unlaced the gown and let it pool by his ankles, Dean had to bite down on his inner bottom lip to stop himself from sucking in a shocked breath.

The bruises looked yellowish by now, but they were everywhere. And around Sam’s ribcage there was a huge one, and Dean could see how his brother winced when he tried to move.

“Here,” Dean took the underwear first. He stood before Sam and instructed him to place both hands on his shoulders. Dean then leaned until Sam didn’t have to lift his foot too high to be able to dress the garment.

Dean stole a quick glance at the cut on his hipbone before doing the same with the pants, helping Sam put each foot inside of it, and then letting him finish pulling it up and buttoning it himself.

Dean picked the T-shirt next and held it in front of Sam.
“Hm,” Sam groaned and a frown of pain took his face when he raised both arms.

“Easy, buddy,” Dean said softly. “Take your time.”

Sam felt the soft fabric of the T-shirt slide down over his naked torso and lowered his arms again. Then he sat on the sofa and Dean put on his socks and tied his shoes. The jacket came last, and then Sam was ready to go.

“Are you okay?” Dean looked deeply into his eyes and asked.

Sam sighed and nodded. He wasn’t okay. He would never be okay. But he knew what Dean meant, and he didn’t want to disappoint.

~ * ~

Outside the room, John was explaining to the doctor where he would go for a while, and it was pretty far from the hospital. Doctor Michael said he would not be able to come in an emergency – it was a four-hour drive to Bobby’s house – but he gave John the phone number of good doctors who lived in South Dakota, and could help if there was something urgent. Then, after the proper thank yous and goodbyes were exchanged, the doctor promised to go visit Sam soon, and wished them a safe trip.

“John?”

“Yes?”

“Just think about what I said. Sam’s seen a lot. He’ll need someone who understands that, someone who can help his mind get better.”

John nodded. “I’m thinking about it, doctor. I’ll talk to him.”

This moment Sam and Dean left the room, Sam walking on his own, and Dean very close in case he needed help.

“Goodbye then. I’ll see you in about ten days to see how things are going.”

“Thank you,” Bobby said this time.

“Bye Sam,” the doctor looked at him a last time and turned around to leave.

“The Impala’s parked right outside. Are you fine to walk up to there? We’ll take the elevator,” John said.

Sam was fine to walk to the hospital entrance. He didn’t even need Dean’s help to go down the few stairs in front of the hospital.

It was the middle of the morning and the clarity of the sun was punishing in his eyes, but Sam welcomed it. He stopped for a moment and felt the warmth of the sun tingling on his skin. It was a good feeling, and he shut his eyes.
Suddenly, a loud horn was heard honking from a car and it pulled Sam out of his thoughts, startling him. His heart raced and he shuddered at the loud, unexpected sound, and before he knew it his hand had instinctively closed tight around Dean’s arm.

“It’s alright,” Dean murmured. “Let’s get into the car.”

Sam’s eyes were wide open and scared. After having spent three months in almost absolute silence, he looked around at everyone moving at such a hectic pace and wondered if he would ever be able to feel as normal as those people walking before his eyes.

Dean opened the Impala’s door to let Sam in. As Sam waited for a moment, studying the car, Dean became very much aware of his brother’s firm grip on him.

Dean looked at Sam’s fingers closed around his arm and thought of Bobby’s words.

Perhaps, he thought, feeling hopeful, give it time and he might indeed be able to help Sam.

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tbc...
Chapter 22

Sam was quiet during the trip to Bobby’s home. He looked out of the window, from the Impala’s backseat, and listened to the classic rock songs playing on the radio. It felt all too familiar, but Sam couldn’t bring himself to relax. It was like every minute he was wary, afraid they might bring up the topic of his kidnapping and start asking questions he didn’t want to answer.

Dean looked at him every now and then, with the corner of his eye, and that made Sam able to relax a little. Dean didn’t look at him with a demanding question in his eyes, there was only silent patience in his look, and Sam needed that, he was drawn to that.

His body felt better than it had in weeks. There was no throbbing, no burning sensation. The pain only came if he tried to move, or if he drew a deeper breath – then his ribcage would protest and cause him to wince. The rest of his injuries didn’t seem so bad.

They arrived at Bobby’s place in the early afternoon. As soon as he was out of the Impala, Sam stared at the familiar salvage yard. Looking at those wrecked cars, it was impossible not to think of how many times Dean and he used to play hide and seek in there when they were kids.

Sam began to feel glad for the idea of coming to Bobby’s place. He had good memories of being there, and he hoped they would help him feel normal again.

“C’mon guys,” Bobby invited them in, opening the front door. “It’s the usual mess, but I know you won’t mind.”

They followed Bobby into the living room where bookcases decorated the walls, carrying tons of old books. Sam limped a little and walked with evident difficulty. He tried hard not to show how much it hurt moving because he could feel the way his father looked at him, studying his reactions carefully. Sam ignored the looks and kept going, fighting the more persistent wounds and following the group when they walked into the kitchen.

“I’m hungry,” Dean said. “Do you have anything to eat?”

“Dean…” John frowned.

“It’s true, though. We’ve only had breakfast.”

Usually, Sam would have cracked a joke about how his brother was always hungry, but right now Sam just listened to them in silence.

“I’m sure I have plenty of canned goods, but no gourmet meal to feed you lot.”

“We don’t need a gourmet meal,” John reassured his friend.
“Although, we could do with a pizza, don’t you think we deserve it?” Dean looked into his father’s eyes. Canned food was fine for hunters, but after everything they had been through, he thought Sam could do with something better. Besides, he still needed to put on the weight he had lost, and eating canned food was not the way.

John understood what Dean told him with his eyes, and nodded in agreement.

“Tell you what, I’ll drive to town and get us plenty of good food then. I’ll be back in a few.”

“Do you want me to come?” Bobby asked him.

“Stay with the boys,” John said. “I won’t be long.”

Bobby nodded and they watched as John turned around to leave. They heard the Impala’s engine running when Bobby was leading them upstairs.

Sam fell behind. Bobby went first, then Dean, and Sam went up the stairs after them. They had already slept over Bobby’s many times, but it still amazed Sam how big and beautiful the old hunter’s house was on the second story. Bobby always kept it neat, although he spent most of his time downstairs.

As they walked, Bobby opened the windows to let the sun in.

“Here’s the big bedroom. There’s a bathroom inside too. You’ll be sleeping here, Sam.”

Sam looked at the large double bed and then looked worriedly at Bobby. That was his bedroom. Bobby didn’t have to give him his own bedroom. Sam shook his head quickly.

“What? Don’t you like it?”

Sam looked thoughtful and unwilling to speak. Dean tried to help him.

“I think he doesn’t want to be in your room, Bobby,” he said, and Sam nodded gratefully.

“Bullshit,” Bobby said quickly. “This is the most comfortable bedroom, and the bathroom is really near, so if you need to use it during the night you won’t have to walk a lot with those injuries you got.”

Sam lowered his eyes to the floor. He was thankful for Bobby’s concern, but again, he didn’t find it in him to say anything. He felt Dean’s hand on his shoulder, squeezing softly, and felt a little better within his silence.

“I’ll be sleeping in the bedroom you guys usually share when you come here,” Bobby explained. “Now here,” he motioned for them to follow him. “There’s this room with some boxes lying around. We could move those boxes to the basement, pile them up, and then put a large mattress on the floor. You can sleep in here, Dean.”

“Good,” Dean said. “I’ll clean the place up later then, thanks Bobby.”

“Don’t mention it. And your dad will sleep downstairs, in the living room. It’s good having someone there, near the entrance.”
Dean nodded. Indeed, it would be good having someone there guarding the way in, because after what had happened to Sam, he doubted they would be feeling safe any time soon.

~ * ~

When John arrived with the food, they sat together in Bobby’s living room and ate pizza and drank cokes. John and Bobby sat on the red sofa, Sam and Dean sat on a rug on the floor.

“I’m gonna fix you guys a TV, I promise,” Bobby said cheerfully, eating a big slice of pizza. “I never have time to watch it, but since we’ll be here for a while I’ll manage to get one.”

“Thanks, Bobby. You’re awesome,” Dean said over a mouthful of food.

Sam watched them talk and interact as he ate pizza too. He didn’t say anything, but the feeling of that greasy, salty and delicious pizza in his mouth felt like heaven. He would have eaten a lot more if his stomach had allowed him, but it was still recovering from a long period of hunger, and it was definitely smaller than it used to be. So Sam finished his second slice and washed it down with coke.

He realized, once again, that his father stole concerned glances at him. Sam felt shy under the analysis of those eyes, so he tried to avoid them.

John even bought them chocolate pie for dessert, and Sam helped himself to a small piece. When they finished eating, it was almost evening and the sun would be setting soon.

“I’ll go prepare the room for the night, Bobby,” Dean announced after a while. He got up and started walking, and then he realized Sam had gotten up as well. Dean looked at his younger brother, and it broke his heart how lost Sam felt. Bobby’s house was the closest to home they had ever had since the death of their mother, and yet, Sam could not feel comfortable in there. “You wanna come up too?” He asked.

Sam nodded shortly. He followed Dean upstairs and left Bobby and John talking to themselves. Sam watched as Dean started to lift and move boxes he would later carry to the basement.

“I’m afraid you can’t help me lift any of this heavy stuff. Why don’t you go read a little in your room? Is the book good?”

Sam nodded. That didn’t sound bad.

He went to the room he would be sleeping in and opened the travel bag Dean had left there before. There were his clothes inside, the book and the prescription bottles the doctor had given him. Sam read the labels and chose one. He took a pill for the pain, as the doctor had instructed, and then he stared at the sleeping pills. ‘Maybe later,’ he thought, and picked up the book instead.

From where he was lying on the bed, Sam could see Dean moving the boxes out of his room and then disappearing downstairs towards the basement. He watched his brother do that for the next hour, and when the sun started to set and night began to fall, Sam got up, turned the lights on in his room and stared at the sleeping pills. He knew he would feel like something of a coward if he took one, so Sam just decided to go back to his reading and hope that soon it would make him feel sleepy enough.
It was around nine pm when John and Bobby met them upstairs.

“Dean,” John called his son.

By now Dean’s room was pretty much ready. He had removed the boxes, cleaned up the place and settled the comfortable mattress on the floor. He still had to organize the sheets and pillow, though.

“Yes?”

“Bobby and I are going out,” John said.

“Why? Where?” Dean frowned. “Are you going to hunt?”

“Yes. I mean, no,” John shook his head quickly. “We’re going to patrol the area around the house tonight. We want to make sure no one followed us here,” he said. “After what happened, we can not take chances. We’ll spend the night making sure everything is clear.”

Dean nodded. He agreed with that, it seemed like a smart thing to do. “Alright,” he said.

“Will you and Sam be fine by yourselves? We’ll be back by morning.”

“Yes, of course. I’ll be here if he needs anything.”

“Good,” John placed a hand on his son’s shoulder. “We’re heading out now. You two take care then.”

“No problem.”

John walked towards Sam’s room and looked at his younger son. “Bobby and I are going to patrol the area. Dean will be with you,” he said.

‘I heard it,’ Sam thought, but didn’t say anything.

“We’ll be back before you get up in the morning,” he offered Sam a smile which he didn’t mirror and turned around to leave.

Dean heard the noise of the door slamming shut and went back to organizing his bedroom. Every now and then he looked at Sam, lying on the bed reading his book, but since his brother was quiet and focused on his reading, Dean thought it was better not to disturb him.

He took his own book, the big Lord of The Rings one, which he had started reading in the hospital, and lay down on his bed, reading a few pages.

Dean didn’t know what time it was when his eyes started to feel heavy and he could no longer control the yawning. He put the book beside the bed and got up to brush his teeth and use the bathroom.

When he was in the hallway, he took a look at Sam’s room, and found his brother asleep on the bed, the book forgotten by his side. Slowly and quietly, Dean walked towards the bed and put the book on a nightstand beside it. Then, very softly so as not to wake him, Dean took off Sam’s tennis shoes and pulled a sheet over him. Sam looked peaceful in his sleep, and Dean didn’t want to disturb him any longer, so he walked back to the door, looked at Sam one last time and turned off the lights.
He then went to the bathroom to get ready for bed and took a quick shower before changing into a white, cotton tank top and boxers. When he was done, Dean went back to his room and lay down again. The shower had washed away some of his sleepiness, so he was on his way to picking up the book and reading a few more pages when he heard the screaming.

~ * ~

There was something outside his mind, something that whispered softly against his shut eyes, something that urged him to open his eyes and see, and feel what was there. Sam didn’t know why he sensed something was wrong, it was like his very skin could perceive the lack of light, and he opened his eyes to find himself in absolute darkness.

‘No,’ for a few seconds he was so paralyzed by shock that he could not move. He felt frozen in place as his heart started a crazy, arrhythmic beating and his breathing hitched to something close to panting. ‘I’m back,’ he thought, and when the shaking started, so did the screaming.

“NOOOOO!!” Sam tugged at the sheet over him frantically and sat up. His ribcage screamed in protest, but Sam didn’t care about the pain. Darkness was all around him, and he knew what happened when darkness came, he had learned the lesson very well. “NOOO!!! NOT AGAIN!! NO MORE!” He yelled, getting up and nearly tripping on the covers. His leg hurt, his ribs hurt, but his adrenaline was high and panic took over.

When Sam heard the hurried footsteps walking towards his room, he lost his mind and his panting turned into hyperventilation, and the shaking was so bad he crouched in a corner of the room and waited.

“STAY AWAY FROM ME! DON’T TOUCH ME! STAY AWAY!” Sam cried, and felt his eyes were moist and his throat was dry. The footsteps were near now, they were inside the room with him, and the man was back to hurt him more…

~ * ~

Dean’s heart nearly flew off his chest when he heard the shrieking, painful scream coming from Sam’s room. It was all he could do not to throw the book in the air and rush towards it with his heartbeats drumming loudly.

He arrived at the door to Sam’s room and entered, but it was dark and he didn’t know what was going on. Was there someone else there with Sam? How had they gotten in?

“STAY AWAY FROM ME! DON’T TOUCH ME! STAY AWAY!”

“Sam?” Dean turned on the lights and found his brother. And what he saw broke his heart into a million pieces.

Sam was crouching in a corner of the room, shaking and breathing rapidly. His eyes were wildly scared and he didn’t seem to be aware of what was happening right now. Sam appeared to be lost in a nightmare of fright and hurt, and he stared at nowhere in particular, rocking himself as shudder
after shudder took control of him.

“Sam, it’s alright. Nobody’s here. What happened?” Dean walked towards him and crouched before him, refraining from touching his brother and perhaps startling him further.

Sam blinked a few times and suddenly he became aware of the brightness in the room once again. Dean’s voice cut through a haze of fear and Sam found his brother’s concerned eyes looking intently at him.

“He always came in the dark,” Sam blurted, looking desperately into Dean’s eyes.

Dean reached out his hands to touch him, and Sam grabbed both of his brother’s arms and squeezed.

“Who did?” Dean asked.

“The man,” Sam said, and shuddered again. “He came and tortured me when the lights went out.”

Dean felt as if he had been stabbed in the heart. He swallowed hard and felt his jaw muscles become tense. Who was this man? There was no man other than the doctor when they had busted into Sam’s captivity to rescue him. Did the doctor torture Sam? Dean had a hard time picturing it. Was Sam referring to the demon, then? He could have thought he was a man. But what if there was someone else? What if they hadn’t caught the one who had actually hurt Sam all this time?

There were so many questions in his mind now, but Dean forced himself to let them go, because Sam was there now, scared and reaching out to him, and being there for him was more important than anything.

So Dean held back the thousand questions he had about what Sam had just said and focused on making him feel better instead.

“There’s no one here now, no one but you and me,” Dean reassured him.

Sam stared into Dean’s green eyes for a moment, his breathing slowly coming down from dangerously close to hyperventilation to something like panting.

Dean squeezed Sam’s arms the same way Sam squeezed his, and they stayed like that for a while, looking at each other, Dean trying to make Sam understand he was safe as he slowly calmed down and started breathing normally.

When Sam started coming back to his senses, he looked down at the floor, ashamed for his outburst. He let go of Dean’s arms and shrunk in his body, afraid to look at his brother after the way he had just acted.

“C’mon, let’s get you back to bed, huh?” Dean offered his hands to help Sam up.

Feeling tired and emotionally drained after the screaming and the fear, Sam accepted the help and winced when he tried to get up. His still injured ribs punished him for his swift moving.

“Hm,” he moaned and frowned, stopping for a moment to process the pain.

“Easy, Sam… yeah, go slow,” Dean helped him sit on the bed and sat there beside him. “Do you feel better? Want me to bring you a glass of water?”
Sam nodded sheepishly and stared at the sheets. He didn’t raise his eyes when Dean left to go to the kitchen; he crossed his legs and waited, barely moving at all.

On his way downstairs to get Sam water, Dean’s heart was tight in his chest because of the scene he had just witnessed. He was glad that Sam had talked to him, but terrified with the idea of how badly they had hurt Sam’s body and mind in that bright room.

Dean was back five minutes later, and he handed Sam the water which he drank carefully, before putting the glass on the nightstand next to the book.

“Thanks,” he murmured.

“How are you feeling?”

“I’m okay,” Sam said, becoming suddenly aware that they were actually talking.

“Sam… I’m so sorry I turned off the lights,” Dean’s eyes were all concern.

“You didn’t know.”

“I didn’t,” Dean agreed. “But I do now.”

Sam still had difficulty staring at his brother. He felt vulnerable after having just lost control like that.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Dean asked, with calm and honesty.

Sam shook his head vehemently and a flash of fright crossed his eyes before he could blink it away. ‘The wall… Build the wall, don’t go back!’

“Okay. We are not going to talk about it, then,” Dean said.

Sam nodded, grateful.

“Did you take one of the sleeping pills the doc gave you?”

Sam shook his head.

“Would you like to take one now?”

“Yes.”

“Here,” Dean handed the prescription bottle to him and watched as Sam took one. It felt so weird that the little brother he had known all his life looked so broken and so sad… Dean had never seen Sam so uneasy and so afraid. He wished there was something he could do to go back in time and prevent him from ever being taken away. ‘What have they done to you?’ Dean thought, feeling his throat tight.

Sam looked helplessly around at the room and waited. He didn’t have to say anything for Dean to understand he was scared of being alone.

“Do you think you can go back to sleep now?”
“Don’t think so…” Sam whispered.

Dean bit on his bottom lip and thought quickly. “So do you mind if I get my book and read here with you for a while? I was gonna read in my own room, but if you’re not sleeping now…”

“Yeah, that’s fine,” Sam took the offer gladly.

Dean nodded, his heart a bit lighter for the response. He went back to his room and in a moment he was lying on the same bed as Sam, both brothers reading books about Tolkien’s fantasy world. After everything they had been through, the books were a much needed and welcomed distraction from the harsh reality their lives had become.

“Damn, Sam… those hobbits walk, I’ll tell you,” Dean said casually.

Sam chuckled, the sound small and soft, but it made Dean’s chest swell appreciatively.

“You have just started. Wait and see,” Sam said, amused.

“Where are you going?” Dean asked.

“Bathroom,” Sam said, getting up slowly, shutting his eyes at the pain of moving.

“Need help?”

“Nah, I’m good.”

Dean watched him disappear into the bathroom and return a few minutes later. Sam climbed back on bed and they read for over an hour. It was usually difficult for Dean to focus for so long on reading – he would often get the urge to get up and do something else – but he stayed right where he was until he sensed the medicine was kicking in and Sam was feeling sleepy.

Dean watched when eventually Sam put the book on the nightstand and turned on his side, his back to Dean. Unwilling to disturb him, Dean didn’t move for at least another half an hour. Then, he put his book aside and looked at Sam.

He felt so much at the same time that it was difficult to understand it. Sometimes Dean’s life was so focused on taking care of Sam that he couldn’t find himself in the warm, loving concern he felt for his brother.

He looked at Sam’s brown hair, longer than he could remember, covering his ear and part of his neck, and couldn’t fight back the need to touch him.

Dean reached out his hand and let his fingers run through Sam’s soft hair. It felt good touching him. After so many nights of wondering how he was, it was comforting having Sam right there, within the reach of his fingers.

He opened and closed his fingers gently, letting them rake Sam’s head and slide through his hair. Then, suddenly, a memory came up in his brain and caused him to stop.

_They were getting ready for school and John ruffled Sam’s hair playfully._
“Dad, don’t!” Sam frowned and tried pushing his dad’s hand away.

“What? Can’t I play around with you?”

“Not with my hair, no,” Sam said, with all the annoyance his teenage years could summon.

“Oh really? Not the hair, huh?” John said, and then he messed Sam’s hair up all over, deliberately, causing Sam to groan and move until he was out of reach.

For John it was just a joke, a father and son moment, but Dean remembered the dirty look in Sam’s eyes. It was his hair, and he felt disrespected.

Dean retreated his hand quickly.

“Don’t,” Sam said, startling Dean, who thought he was asleep.

“What?” Dean asked.

“Don’t stop. It feels good.”

It took Dean a moment to let Sam’s words sink in. Tentatively, Dean let his hand go back to what it was doing, his fingers tangling in Sam’s hair and caressing him. He heard a soft little sound of pleasure escape his brother’s lips before there was nothing but the sound of his peaceful, sleeping breath.

Dean kept the soft raking of his fingers for a while longer before he too felt sleepy. When he could no longer fight the urge to shut his eyes, Dean nestled under the sheets and looked at the back of Sam’s head. It was never his intention to go back to his own room tonight.

With the lights on, Dean found sleep beside his brother that night.

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*tbc...*
When John and Bobby returned home, Sam and Dean were still asleep. They had found no sign of danger in the large area they had patrolled around Bobby’s house. There was no reason to believe Bobby’s place was unsafe, and the two hunters got back home satisfied with their search.

They made their way upstairs to check on the boys before they could find rest themselves. As John walked towards Sam’s room, Bobby went to the bathroom to relieve himself. When he walked out, he found John standing by the half opened door to Sam’s room.

Bobby walked towards his friend and looked inside. He saw the two brothers sleeping on the double bed, each one facing one side of the room, the same blanket covering them both up to the waist.

Bobby smiled with his eyes and stared for a moment. His heart beat appreciatively fast at the sight. Bobby didn’t know what had happened last night, but he was pleased to find Sam and Dean so close. He had no idea what Sam had been through, but Bobby truly hoped Dean would be able to reach out to him.

Bobby looked into John’s eyes, and he could tell his friend was emotional. Having Sam back after all that time, and yet being unable to talk to him was so overwhelming… At least there was someone in Sam’s life who seemed able to get to him.

“I’m glad Dean’s there for him,” John whispered softly. He turned around and walked away softly, so as not to wake them up. “I hope he can help him.”

“Give them time,” Bobby said softly, looking into John’s eyes.

John Winchester nodded and sighed. He walked past Bobby and towards the stairs, ready to find a comfortable place downstairs where he could get some sleep. Bobby made his way to his own bed and they both collapsed for the next hours.

~ * ~

The two brothers woke up a little after John and Bobby went to bed. The noise of them walking in had caused their sleep to become lighter, and an hour after the two older hunters came back home, they were opening their eyes to a new day.

Sam woke up and found Dean lying a few inches from him, looking at him through sleepy eyes.

“Morning,” Dean said.
“Morning,” Sam replied, his voice a little throaty.

“Could you get some sleep?”

Sam nodded. He didn’t remember falling asleep, but he had. After the pill he took and Dean’s hand on his hair, Sam didn’t remember much else.

“Are you hungry?” Dean asked.

“A little, yeah.”

“I’ll get up and bring us something to eat in bed.”

Sam watched him get up and leave the room. He found himself marvelling at how good it was being able to reach out for food whenever he felt hungry. Even at the hospital he had to eat on schedule.

When Dean returned, he was carrying two bowls of cereal which they ate in bed.

“Dad and Bobby are asleep,” Dean said, in between spoons of food.

Sam nodded silently.

“I assume everything is safe around here.”

‘Good’, Sam thought, but didn’t say anything. It felt good talking to Dean, but he didn’t feel very chatty.

They finished breakfast and put the two bowls aside, on the nightstand. As Sam reached out to place his bowl there, he winced at the pain in his ribs.

“How’s that feeling?” Dean’s eyes were serious and concerned.

“It hurts a little,” Sam lied. It hurt a fucking lot, but he could handle it. He had handled much, much worse in the bright room. ‘Don’t’, he thought, quickly. ‘Don’t go there,’ he told himself and closed his eyes to see the wall he was trying to build between himself and his past.

Sam then opened his eyes and looked at the bed and at the room.

“I want to take a bath. I didn’t take one yesterday,” this was also good. Sam could hardly believe how good it felt being able to actually clean himself with a real bath or shower.

Dean nodded. “Do you want some help?”

Sam wished he didn’t. “Please,” he nodded.

“Alright then.”

Dean stood up once again and helped Sam do the same. As Sam chose clean clothes from his bag, Dean prepared the water in the bathroom. When he was done he entered the room again and walked towards his brother.

Sam had stripped off his pants and kicked off his shoes. He lifted his arms so Dean could help him
His heart beat fast when Dean helped him out of it. A small little shudder raked his body and Sam felt tension creeping into him. He knew how awful his bruises still looked, specially the one on his ribcage, and he was extremely self conscious about it.

Dean put the T-shirt aside and walked behind Sam to put a hand on his shoulder. He couldn’t help letting his eyes trail down the skin of his brother’s back. And his eyes couldn’t help but linger on the many fading, and yet visible scars they found there. Cuts, burns, bruises… Most of those marks were barely even there. One might not be able to see them from a distance, but from where Dean stood, right behind Sam, they seemed to scream on his skin, telling a story of horror that caused Dean’s chest to tighten.

He traced some of those scars with his fingertips, the touch feathery and caring.

Sam shivered, and goosebumps broke all over his arms and thighs.

“Is it… is it too ugly?” He asked.

“No,” Dean said. He wanted to say that Sam was beautiful, that he had always been the most beautiful boy, and that he would always be so for Dean. But his voice was nowhere to be found, and Dean swallowed hard and silenced his thoughts.

He walked with Sam into the bathroom, helped him out of his underwear and into the bathtub. He knelt beside him and washed his hair as Sam washed himself with soap. The moment reminded them of a closeness they had shared many years ago, when they were just kids left to take care of each other while their father was out there, saving the world.

It had been a long time since Sam had last felt Dean’s fingers raking his hair to wash it with shampoo. Dean was much younger than Sam was now when that had last happened.

It felt different now, but it felt good.

Sam shut his eyes and relished the touch. Dean’s hands didn’t hurt him, neither were they too soft. He knew exactly how much pressure to put behind his touch, and it was comforting that someone knew him well enough to touch him like that.

Dean’s heart kept beating fast as he rinsed Sam’s hair. He loved touching his brother, taking care of him. It made him feel useful, it gave his life purpose knowing that Sam needed him, and that he could be there for him. It was just a small little moment, but the thought that Sam wouldn’t want anyone else to see him like that, and help him in such a way, made Dean feel a warm, liquid pride running in his veins.

When it was over, Dean helped Sam out of the bathtub and handed him a towel, which he used to dry himself. After helping Sam into his clean clothes, the two of them went back to bed and sat down.

“Thanks,” Sam said.

Dean smiled and nodded. He liked to look at Sam now and feel how calm he was. It helped him forget the painful image of his brother frightened and shaking last night.
When John woke up, he went upstairs to take a look at his kids. He found them sat on the bed reading books, and his heart skipped a beat when he heard the sound of Sam’s voice. John walked closer to the room and stood by the door, watching for a moment.

“You sure there’s action in this book?”

“Lots of,” Sam nodded, a half smile on his face. “Just keep going.”

John’s heart swelled in his chest at the sound of his youngest son’s voice. He was so caught up in the moment that it startled him when Bobby placed a hand on his shoulder and caused him to turn around.

“Morning boys,” Bobby said from behind John, letting them know they were being watched.

“Morning,” Dean said.

“Morning,” Sam said too.

Bobby knew what John was feeling at the sound of Sam’s voice. He felt some of the same right now. And he also felt how badly his friend wanted to talk to his son.

“Dean? Can you come down here a moment? I’d like to see if we can fix a TV I found in the basement. I’m pretty sure we can make it work if you lend me a hand.”

“Alright,” Dean nodded. He too sensed that his father wanted to be alone with Sam, so he took Bobby’s offer and left the room with him, leaving father and son to themselves.

Sam watched his father walk in further into the room and come sit on the bed.

“So,” John started. “Did you sleep well?”

Sam studied his father for a moment. It wasn’t that he didn’t want him there, it was just that John was such a strong presence, he was so brave and so damn badass… Sam couldn’t help seeing his own weakness when he looked at his father, and the thought of having broken down in the white room made him want to cower to a secret and lonely place in himself.

“I did,” he said softly. He forced himself to speak despite the uneasiness he felt.

John nodded. The sound of Sam’s voice was filling his veins and making him warm. It felt so good hearing it, John could hardly refrain from squeezing Sam tightly in a hug.

‘Please don’t make a big deal out of it,’ Sam thought, studying the way his father was looking at him, clearly happy that he was being spoken to. He didn’t want to be reminded of why he wasn’t talking.

“Good, son. Are you glad we’re here with Bobby, then?”

“I am,” Sam nodded. “I like it here.”
John smiled.

“Can I get you something from downstairs? We’re gonna have something quick for lunch, do you want a sandwich?”

Sam’s stomach growled approvingly at the idea. It was quickly learning how good it was to have access to food, good food, whenever he wanted.

“Yes, thanks.”

John nodded and stood up. “I’ll be right back with it, then.”

Sam watched him go and picked up his book once again.

~ * ~

Downstairs, John ran into Dean and Bobby staring at a TV set in the middle of the living room, there was a toolbox opened right by Bobby’s foot.

“He talked to me,” John approached them and spoke softly, so as not to be heard by Sam upstairs.

Bobby and Dean looked at him, happy for him.

“Did he talk to you last night?” John asked Dean.

“Yes,” Dean said. He knew his father was happy, partly because he hadn’t seen the fear struck look in his son’s eyes the way Dean had the night before.

“I’m so glad he’s finally talking… that’s a good sign,” John went on. “I mean, there’s so much we don’t know yet!” He grew agitated, but his voice was still down. “We still don’t know who took him and why…”

“Dad…”

“We don’t know what was done to him, and if there were more people involved…”

“Dad,” Dean said again. “I don’t think now is the time to talk to him yet.”

That seemed to pull John out of his reverie and he looked at his son.

“Right… it may be a little soon, but you gotta admit there’s a lot we need to know, Dean.”

“I know,” Dean said, and he couldn’t help thinking of Sam’s blurted words to him last night. ‘The man. He came and tortured me when the lights went out.’ “But I don’t think he’s ready to talk.”

There was silence from the three men for a moment before Dean went on.

“Last night, when you were gone…” Dean lowered his voice. “Sam had a…nightmare, I suppose.”
Bobby’s jaw tensed at the picture in his mind.

“I’ve never seen him like that before… He was so… so scared,” Dean shut his eyes briefly. “We need to know what happened to him, but we won’t unless we give him time.”

John nodded slowly.

“Right… That’s why you slept with him, then?”

Dean nodded.

“Good,” John whispered. “Alright, I won’t say anything. I’ll go make him lunch then.”

Bobby and Dean nodded before going back to work on the television as John disappeared into the kitchen.

~ * ~

Half an hour later, John was walking into Sam’s room again and handing his son a plate with a sandwich on it.

“Thanks,” Sam said and put it on the nightstand for the moment. He watched as his father sat on the bed again.

“Sam…” John didn’t want to upset his son, but how could he not say anything to him after all they had been through? “I just want you to know that we did our best to find you. And I’m so sorry we couldn’t get to you sooner,” he spoke with all his heart.

Sam tensed, head to toe, even his breathing seemed to freeze inside of him. It took a lot of focus to speak again.

“I know, dad. It’s okay.” The beatings, the whipping, the burning, the hunger, the confusion, the pain, the pain, the… Sam wanted to scream. He shut his eyes for a moment and fought hard to see nothing but the wall in his mind.

“I’m not gonna make you talk about it if you’re not ready to…”

“I’m not,” Sam cut him off.

“But I do want to say that I’m so proud of you, Sam…” John felt his eyes sting. He couldn’t help it. When he thought of the three painfully long months away from his son, it was impossible to control the joy of being with him now. “And I want to thank you for hanging in there… I mean, god knows what happened to you there, but you handled it, son… You stayed alive. You waited for us.”

Sam stared at the bedspread and his breathing was fast. His hazel eyes were wide and lost.

“I’m so proud of you…” John opened his arms.

Sam looked at his father and accepted the hug. He leaned into the embrace and let his father hug him tightly. He supposed they both needed that.
John placed a hand at the back of Sam’s neck and pressed him into his shoulder, squeezing as tight as he could without it being too much for Sam’s recovering body.

Sam shut his eyes and breathed in his father’s familiar scent. He was glad they were together again. And he didn’t want to talk about how long it had taken for this to happen.

When John let him go in order to look into his eyes, he had recomposed himself.

“Sam, there’s still doctor Michael’s advice, you know. Maybe you could talk to someone, someone who could truly help you. A professional.”

Sam squinted his eyes briefly and looked away.

“I get it that it’s too soon now, but the sooner you are able to get past it, the better.”

“You don’t understand,” Sam thought.

“Do you understand?”

“Yes,” Sam said. “But I don’t want to talk to anyone now.” ‘I don’t want to talk to anyone ever,’ Sam finished in his mind.

“Promise you’ll think about it, though?”

Sam nodded. “Yeah,” he said, fully aware there was no way ever he would go to a shrink and tell him what had happened to him in the dark.

“Okay, then. Go eat your sandwich,” John smiled, ruffled Sam’s hair and left the room.

Sam looked at the sandwich on the plate, waiting for him. Suddenly he didn’t feel hungry anymore.

Sam pulled his knees up and rested his chin on top of them. He stayed like that for a long time, looking into the distance, checking the wall in his mind for any possible damage and rebuilding every little brick that threatened to fall out and let the past in.

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Chapter 24

When night began to fall, Sam looked at the sky through the window in his room with growing despair. He had already turned on the lights in his bedroom, but what if something happened? What if someone turned them off again? Sam knew Dean wouldn’t, but maybe his father or Bobby would ‘kindly’ turn off the lights if he fell asleep. Sam couldn’t risk that. Just the thought of waking up to darkness caused his stomach to turn and his breathing to hitch.

He couldn’t just ask Dean to sleep with him again, now could he? He was fourteen years old, and not four anymore. What would Dean think if he said he couldn’t sleep alone because he was afraid of the dark?

Sam’s chest tightened with shame and fear and he chewed on his bottom lip, his eyes studying the darkening sky with wariness.

He would not sleep tonight. He would try his best to stay awake for as long as he could, and when he saw the sun rising in the horizon, then he would lie down and shut his eyes.

Sam went to bed and took his book. He would read until he felt sleepy, then he would find something else to do in order to keep himself awake.

~ * ~

After his father and Bobby went to bed, Dean was still awake in his room, staring at the ceiling, lost in thought. He could hear Bobby snoring from one of the other rooms upstairs, and he could see the light coming from Sam’s bedroom.

Dean had just come back from another visit to the bathroom he faked in order to walk by Sam’s room and take a quick peek inside. He saw his brother was still awake, reading silently in bed.

Dean wondered if Sam was having trouble sleeping like last night. He wondered if his brother perhaps wanted his company again to fall asleep. But what if he didn’t? What if offering to sleep beside him again actually offended Sam? Dean didn’t know, but maybe his brother would feel mad that Dean would even offer to sleep with him again, implying that he couldn’t be by himself.

What Dean really wanted was to be there with him, making sure Sam would fall asleep without trouble. The fear of causing Sam to feel uneasy or upset, though, took the best of him, and Dean settled for staying awake as long as he could, ready to rush into his brother’s room if he needed help.

It was fair to say that neither brother slept that night. Dean left this room once again at four a.m. and walked by the door to Sam’s. He went closer this time and looked inside.
“Is it that good?” He whispered, nodding at the book.

“Yes,” Sam smiled. He knew Dean’s eyes were searching him for something he wasn’t saying, but Sam lowered his eyes again and focused on the book. He was almost making it, he thought. Just a couple more hours.

Dean went back to his room and when the sun rose he indeed needed to use the bathroom. He got up, relieved himself, and when he peeked inside his brother’s room he found Sam asleep, the book forgotten by his right hand, his hair messily sprawled over the pillow.

‘Finally,’ Dean thought, and went back to his own bed to find some sleep too.

~ * ~

Dean watched his father intently when his cell phone started to ring. He saw the frown on his father’s face and imagined the decisions he was making as he looked at the cell. Then, Dean saw his father reject the call and look at him. ’Good,’ Dean thought approvingly, knowing their dad had just turned his back on another hunt in order to stay with them. And then Dean wondered just for how much longer John Winchester would be able to keep doing that.

“Bobby and I will go out, pick up some stuff at the market. Wanna come?” He looked at Dean and at Sam, who was sat on the red sofa, watching television.

“No, thanks,” Sam replied quickly. He had no desire, whatsoever, to leave the house.

“I’ll stay too.”

“Alright. We’ll be right back,” John said and turned around to meet Bobby, who was already waiting in the car.

“So, you wanna do something?” Dean asked casually, studying his brother. “Watch a movie or…” He let the sentence hang.

“Nah, thanks… I think I’ll sleep a little.”

Dean nodded.

“Had trouble sleeping last night, then?” He asked, and his eyes told Sam they could see right through him.

Nonetheless, Sam pretended not to hear the true question behind Dean’s look and just got up to go upstairs.

“A little. But it’s alright,” he said.

Dean nodded and watched him move towards the stairs with difficulty. Slowly, Sam made his way to the second story and to his bed. He lay down on it and closed his eyes, ready to sleep as much as he could and prepare for another sleepless night.
Sam repeated this course of action for three more days. He found as much sleep as he could in the morning and afternoon, passing on any activity that was going on at the moment, so he could be fully awake when night came.

He spent the last three nights reading or simply lying awake, only giving in to how sleepy he felt when the safety of the rising sun cast its light in the horizon.

Today, however, Sam hadn’t been able to sleep much in the afternoon. His father and Bobby had sat down to watch TV, something which they obviously hardly ever did, and together they had laughed and talked, loud enough to make it extremely hard to sleep.

So, now that they seemed to be all asleep in the house and Sam sat on his bed, fighting a battle against the heaviness of his eyelids, the younger Winchester felt a taste of fear in the back of his mouth at the thought of being unable to stay awake in the dark of night.

Sam had put the book down and was concentrating on not closing his eyes when Dean knocked softly on the door and entered.

“Hey,” Sam looked at him through sleep filled eyes.

“Not reading so much tonight?” Dean sat on the edge of the bed and studied Sam very slow and softly.

Sam shrugged. “I’m trying.”

“Sam,” Dean started. “I know what you’re doing.”

“What do you mean?” Sam frowned and his heart beat faster.

“I see what you’re trying to do, sleeping during the day and trying to stay awake at night.”

Sam’s heart skipped a beat and he felt immediately vulnerable under Dean’s knowing gaze.

“Are you trying to avoid sleeping in the dark?”

Sam thought he would get angry. A part of him wanted to get angry. How dare Dean accuse him of such a childish fear? Sam knew he was no longer a hostage, there was nothing to fear. So why couldn’t he control his fright of darkness? But then, instead of anger, Sam felt himself breaking a little.

“I can’t sleep if it’s dark. I hate what they did to me. I just can’t,” Sam confessed, and he looked at his hands, which to his horror, were shaking slightly.

“What if the lights are on?”

“What if someone turns them off?” Sam knew that neither his father nor Bobby knew about his panic of the dark.
Dean nodded. He understood Sam. It must feel awful feeling unable to control a strong, undesirable reaction from his body.

“What if I sleep with you? Do you think it would help?” Dean asked gently, putting as much honesty in the question so as to hopefully not offend Sam or anything.

Sam looked into Dean’s green eyes for a moment. Then, he felt something inside of him melting into a pool of gratitude. Dean was so cool, he was so fucking great, he could perfectly well laugh it off, tell him it was no big deal, or maybe even tease him a little about it. But then, of course Dean wouldn’t do that, because Dean had pretty much raised him, and although Dean had put him through plenty of teasing, he had always been there when Sam was truly scared, and he had never denied him comfort when Sam sought his help.

“I don’t know if it would help,” Sam answered, honestly. “But I’d like to try,” he finished softly.

Dean didn’t show in his face how much it cheered him up to hear that. Instead, he nodded solemnly and stared at Sam again.

“Alright. I’ll get my things, and I’ll sleep here for as long as you want, okay?”

Sam nodded quickly. He waited for Dean to get up, pick some of his stuff, and come back into the room. He then moved to the side as Dean nestled a few inches away in bed, looking into his eyes from a small distance.

“Are you sure you won’t mind the lights being on?”

“I won’t,” Dean reassured him. “Now get some sleep.”

Sam half smiled his thank you and turned on his side, his back to Dean.

They were not touching, and Dean was not speaking to him. Yet, as Sam shut his eyes to let himself fall into oblivion, he felt safer with his brother’s presence so close than he could with all the lights in the house on.

~ * ~

From then on, Sam and Dean started to share the same room at night. Neither John nor Bobby said anything about it, and for the next four nights they had slept on the same bed and Sam hadn’t had trouble sleeping.

The lights in their room was kept on through the night, although why they were on was not mentioned to the other two people sleeping under the same roof. They probably thought they had both fallen asleep and forgotten to turn them off, and that was why, when John went upstairs to check on them, he reached over and flicked the light switch off before turning around and going back downstairs.

The room had been in utter darkness for about fifteen minutes when Sam’s heart started racing and demanding that his brain wake up and pay attention – there was danger around.

Sam blinked a few times and opened his sleepy eyes slowly. When darkness slipped through the slit
in his eyes and gave his brain the message that there were no lights in the room, Sam’s muscles went painfully taut for a moment before he started shaking.

Sam gasped long and hard, the sound as loud as a word, and his stomach grew painfully tight. ‘It’s dark, it’s dark, he’ll come,’ his brain vomited the words in his consciousness and Sam could not seem to hang on to anything rational.

He gasped again and shuddered, and when Dean woke up beside him, Sam was panting and shaking violently.

“Sam?” Dean was hit by the darkness in the room and he immediately understood what was going on.

Sam’s breath was loud and clipped and the tension creeping into his muscles made him curl into himself.

“Sam, it’s okay… it’s okay, I’m here with you, we’re in Bobby’s house,” Dean turned around in bed and touched his brother’s shoulder.

“Hhhm!” Sam groaned. He shut his eyes and tried to listen to Dean, but the panic was thick, and it filled his throat and made breathing difficult. Sam’s shudders became more intense and difficult to tame, and soon he was shaking so badly he seemed to be seizing.

“I’ll get up and turn on the lights…”

“No!” Sam cried. “No, don’t, don’t go….” Sam panted, his heart was slamming against his chest so hard he thought it might stop at any moment. He was so struck by fear and the images spilling themselves in his brain that he felt petrified. If Dean removed the hand on his shoulder, the one thing keeping him from losing his sanity, Sam didn’t think he could pull through. “Don’t!” Sam gasped.

_The man always came in the dark… he always found him, under the bed, under the covers… there was no hiding…_

“I’ll be quick-“

“Don’t! Please!” Sam’s body was raked by tremors and sweat broke on his skin.

The sounds escaping his mouth were not loud enough to wake the others up, but they were painful and desperate, and Dean did the only thing he thought might help – he snuggled closer and cuddled his brother, using the warmth of his body to try and make him understand he was safe.

“It’s okay, I won’t. I won’t move, I’m gonna stay right here… Do you feel me?” Dean slid an arm between the mattress and Sam’s neck, letting it feel like a pillow to his head, and the other arm he used to snake around Sam’s torso and pull him closer against his body.

_It’s dark. He will find a way to come. And he will hurt you. He will hurt you until you break down and cry._
Sam gasped a desperate, pained cloud of breath and his fingers found Dean’s arm around his body. Sam dug his nails painfully into the skin of that arm, clutching to it as if it were an island in an ocean.

“Yeah, you hold on to me. Can you feel it, Sammy? We’re here, together. There’s no one who can hurt you,” Dean felt the despair in Sam’s mind in the way his little brother dug into the skin of his arm, his grip bruising and painfully tight, but Dean didn’t care. The pain of Sam’s nails breaking into his skin out of sheer fear was nothing compared to whatever it was he had been exposed to before.

“I can’t!” Sam whimpered and panted. He felt miserable because the fear controlled everything inside him, and even though he could feel Dean was there with him, he could not stop his body’s aggressive response to darkness.

“Yes, you can,” Dean whispered into his ear. “You can do it, Sammy.”

_The footsteps. The door that would open. The darkness all around him, and the blow that would always find him._

Sam squeezed his eyes shut and he shook so hard that Dean, all wrapped around his smaller body, could barely keep him still.

“I can’t control it, I can’t-“ Sam started to hyperventilate and twist within Dean’s embrace. Panic was rising in his mind, crumbling his safety wall, making him descend into chaos.

“You can, I’m right here,” Dean squeezed him tighter. 

_There would be pain so great Sam would forget who he was. His blood would always be black, so black in the dark, painting the floor, the walls…and the man wouldn’t stop. The man would, he would._

“No! No!!” Sam started to squirm and struggle against the hold on him, he fought the arms around him as if his life depended on it.

“Easy, Sam… easy…” Dean squeezed further, and he knew he might be hurting Sam. But he also knew that if he didn’t try that, Sam might not be able to stop and would end up hurting himself.

Sam writhed and shook, he shook until there was a thin layer of sweat covering his forehead.

“You can do it, Sam. I know you can. You can handle the dark, you know why? Because you’re not alone. I’m right here with you.”

“I can’t control it! I can’t stop!” Sam cried, hopelessly.

“You can!” Dean whispered, his voice strong and his arms even stronger around his body. “Listen to my voice, Sammy. You can do it. You’re stronger than this.”

Sam’s breath was a mess, and his fingers still dug painfully into Dean’s forearm.

“Now shut your eyes, Sam. Shut your eyes and keep them closed. Just listen to my voice.”
Sam complied. He squeezed his eyes shut and tried to hang on to the sound of Dean’s voice.

“Just listen to me,” Dean whispered in his ear, and he thought that for a moment the shaking had eased a little. “Remember that time we went camping with dad near the beach? Remember how he tried to teach us to make s’mores?”

Sam kept his eyes squeezed shut, but his ears listened to every word.

“We almost set the tent on fire when Dad left us alone,” Dean smiled, remembering the story. He felt Sam go taut, his body tense and rigid in his arms.

They remained in silence for a moment before the shaking took Sam over again.

“Dean-“ Sam’s panting grew louder and he moved as if he would start struggling again.

“Listen to me,” Dean tightened his hold on him to prevent a new wave of thrashing. “Remember that time you dressed as batman and jumped out of the roof? Remember how you broke your arm and I had to rush you to the ER in my handlebars?”

Sam was listening. Despite his fear, despite the threatening image of the man coming to get him as a shadow in the darkness, Sam realized he was listening to Dean, and his body was slowly starting to obey him again.

“Everyone knows batman can’t fly, Sammy…” Dean kept on going. “But what about that one time we visited the canyons with dad? The mule I rode kept farting all the way down, remember that?”

Little by little, as the stories kept rolling out of Dean’s lips, Sam’s muscles began to relax. His eyes were always shut tightly, and as Dean told one funny childhood story after the other, so fast that Sam’s mind didn’t have time to think of anything else, Sam’s hands gave up the punishing grip on Dean’s arms and just rested there, holding lightly to it.

“And then there was that time when we…” Dean came up with a lot of old stories, and never for a moment did he loosen his grip on Sam. On the contrary, as Sam slowly relaxed into his embrace, Dean kept his arms just as tightly wrapped around him as he could.

He kept speaking for almost an hour, until he realized Sam’s breathing was regular, easy and deep. Dean spoke until Sam’s limbs were soft and he relaxed against his body.

When he realized Sam had fallen asleep, Dean also realized how tense his own muscles were, and how warm their bodies had grown so close together under the covers. He stopped talking and took a deep breath. He felt drained, and yet pleased. It was still very dark in the room, and Sam had made it.

Despite the darkness, despite the fear threatening to take everything away from him, Sam had been able to handle it.

Dean kissed the back of his brother’s head and nestled his head against the back of his neck, falling asleep a few moments later.

It was a small little victory in a war full of many battles ahead, but tonight they had won.

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The next morning, Sam woke up with Dean still holding him close. It made him think of the previous night and how dark it had been, and Sam could hardly believe he had been able to sleep in the darkness of the room.

He turned around slowly within the embrace and looked at Dean’s sleeping face. After everything he had suffered in the white room, it seemed surreal waking up to his brother’s face and warmth next to him. Sam’s heart felt hot in his chest, and it beat faster when Dean opened his eyes and looked at him.

“Morning,” Sam smiled, somewhat shy at their closeness.

Dean smiled.

“Morning.”

“Thank you for last night.”

“You don’t have to thank me. I’m here to help you. Big brother, remember?” Dean felt his chest warm with love.

Sam nodded.

“But Sam… we’ll have to tell dad and Bobby about the darkness thing. They only turned off the lights because they didn’t know, like I didn’t know that first night we were here.”

Sam tensed a little under the covers. He tried to move away instinctively, but Dean’s arms were gentle, yet firm, and they kept him there so they could look into each other’s eyes.

It broke Dean’s heart the way Sam stiffened in his arms and his breathing picked up speed. The broken look in his young face was so much more than Dean could handle.

“We’ll just tell them to keep the lights on, and if dad asks why, I’ll tell him they hurt you in the dark. He’ll understand. Okay?”

Sam nodded. He hoped Dean couldn’t feel the shudder that raked him head to toe. Yet, in a moment all anguished thoughts fled Sam’s mind because Dean leaned over and planted a kiss on his forehead. Sam felt his heart burn in a good feeling, and he couldn’t help the way he inhaled deeply when Dean’s scent filled his nostrils. It was a mix of vanilla and something that was pure Dean. Sam shut his eyes and relished the scent, and in a moment it was gone.

“Let’s get up?”

Chapter 25
“Yes,” Sam said softly, barely trusting his voice. He didn’t know what he would do if Dean wasn’t there, helping him. Good for him, he didn’t have to worry about that possibility.

~ * ~

In the afternoon, John reminded Sam that they could remove the stitches he still had near his hipbone.

He handed Dean a pair of nail scissors and let him do the job.

“Go ahead, you need to practice your first aid skills anyway,” John said, casually.

Dean took the scissors and Sam lifted his T-shirt a little, lowering the waistband of his jeans so Dean had access to his stitches.

It didn’t really hurt, although there was some discomfort in the act. Sam watched as Dean did the job as quickly and neatly as possible. It was over in less than a minute.

Dean traced the faint scar softly, his fingertip following the crescent moon-like line.

They locked eyed for a moment and Dean nodded for Sam to let go of his T-shirt and pull up the waistband of his jeans.

“So, what are the plans for today?” John asked, watching them from a distance. He wasn’t used to staying home and playing dad for so long, and there was an itch urging him to do something.

“Not much,” Dean said casually, sitting on the sofa right next to Sam.

“Well, you could go back to your training, right Dean? How long has it been?”

Dean narrowed his eyes just a little. He didn’t think his father was wrong. He knew John was just trying to do what he thought was right – teach them to give their best, and to train hard until they were as strong as they could.

“A long time. I’ll go back to it,” Dean said.

“Good. And Sam will too, as soon as the doctor says he’s fine to handle physical exercises. I’m sure he can’t wait to start, right Sam?”

Sam looked into his father’s eyes briefly before looking away. He didn’t know how he felt about hunting. He didn’t know if he wanted to go back to training and getting stronger. What good had it done him anyway? What good was this life of danger and suffering?

“Dad… I think that’s gonna be a while,” Dean said.

“I didn’t say it was now, Dean. But in a month or two I’m sure he’ll be back to the training routine.”

Bobby watched the scene from a corner of the living room. He could almost read Dean’s wary thoughts and Sam's uneasiness. Sometimes John was so wrapped up in his quest for revenge that he
failed to notice the more subtle nuances of his children.

Sam lowered his eyes to his legs and didn’t say anything. He was glad when his father’s phone started ringing and changed the focus of the conversation.

“Hey… I know,” John said, lowering his voice and walking away under Bobby’s attentive look. “I told you I can’t. It’ll have to wait. My son…” John whispered, and then he moved further away so as not to be heard.

Dean patted Sam’s knee lightly and stood up. He followed his father outside to the porch and waited for his phone call to end.

“Hunters?” He asked.

“Yeah. They think a pretty heavy group of vampires is nesting nearby. They want Bobby and I to investigate it.”

“You can go,” Dean said.

“No. I will stay here, with you and Sam…”

Dean heard the the fragile resolution in his father’s voice.

“It’s okay, dad. You and Bobby can go. I can stay with Sam. We’ll be fine. And I’ll go back to training tomorrow, alright?”

John couldn’t help thinking that Dean looked and sounded so much more mature than before Sam’s disappearance. It was clear how much the whole thing had weighed on him.

“After all, it’s my job to watch him, isn’t it? I won’t lose sight of him.”

“I know you won’t. Even because it’s not like he’s going anywhere. It’s difficult enough to get him to leave his room.”

Dean heard the twinge of frustration in his father’s voice.

“Dad… you don’t know what happened to him.”

“Well, neither do you. Or has he spoken to you? Has he told you anything?”

Dean shook his head. “He hasn’t. But I’ve seen him haunted by the memories of that place. He has trouble sleeping. I think Sam’s got severe PTSD, and it won’t help if we try and force him to do stuff he’s not ready for.” Dean knew that talking was not the same as seeing. If his father had seen the look of sheer fright in Sam’s eyes, then he would understand just how deeply traumatized his son had been.

“I’m not forcing him, Dean… I just want to see him getting better, doing stuff, getting stronger… He knows now why he needs to! Besides, doctor Michael said Sam should see a therapist, but I can’t convince him to go. Maybe you could try if he talks to you more.”

“I’ll try,” Dean promised. “But meanwhile, you and uncle Bobby should know that the more lights we keep on in the house at night, the better.”

“Sam is.”

John’s smile faded and he turned serious.

“What?”

“Look, he didn’t really speak to me about that place. But we know that he was tortured. We saw the way he was when we found him.”

“Yes,” John’s voice sounded hoarse.

“He told me that he was tortured in the dark.”

John didn’t say anything for a long moment.

“He said there was a man, and that this man came when it was dark to torture him. I helped Sam take a bath a few times, and you wouldn’t believe the scars all over his body. They are not very glaring, but they are many.”

“I… I turned the lights off in the room you were sleeping last night. I didn’t know…”

“I know. I didn’t either, and I turned them off the first night we were here. So please tell Bobby not to. Sam cannot control the way he responds to darkness, and it’s painful to see his reaction.”

John nodded slowly. He was a seasoned hunter, he had seen a lot in the many years he was out hunting monsters. Darkness was an effective way of scaring prisoners, darkness combined with torture was one of the worst ways to break someone. The thought of his boy being brutalized in total darkness made conflicting feelings of anger, guilt and pain rise in his chest. He wished he could have prevented all that… if only he could go back in time. That was not the way it was supposed to have gone. He should have been the one in the room, not his youngest boy.

“Alright. I’ll tell Bobby.”

Dean nodded and turned around to leave, knowing his father would be deep in thoughts he could not control.

~ * ~

“Are you sure you’ll be alright?” Bobby asked as John and him stood ready to leave the house and go hunting.

“Yes, we’ll be fine,” Dean said. He had known that day was coming. Less than two weeks since they had been in Bobby’s house and already his father was going away to hunt monsters.

“If you need anything, call us and we’ll come flying back,” Bobby said, seriously.

Dean smiled.
“Right. Take care of my old man,” he said.

“Always.”

Dean watched them go and made his way back upstairs to the room he had been sharing with Sam.

He found his brother already asleep, curled up in one side of the bed. Dean still walked around each room of the house, from the basement back to their room, before he decided it was okay for him to go to sleep as well. Then he took off his jeans and plaid shirt, and slipped in bed with Sam, his back to his brother as he nestled his head on the pillow. It wasn’t easy falling asleep with the lights on, but Dean was willing to get used to it.

~ * ~

There was nothing but darkness. Sam was sitting in a corner of the room, and he heard the noise of the door opening.

‘He’s coming,’ he thought. The footsteps were there, becoming louder.

His heart started drumming in his chest and Sam cowered from the sound of the man approaching him.

‘Please, go away!’ He thought, shrinking in his smaller body.

There were strong hands pulling him from his sitting position and dragging him across the floor, and then there was pain exploding in his head.

“No!” Sam groaned.

He started struggling, but he felt weirdly weak and slow. He felt the weight of the man’s body on top of him and the smell of citrus filled his nostrils, causing him to writhe and fight anew.

“Stay away! Don’t touch me!” Sam was hit another time, and then he heard the clicking sound of metal snapping around his wrists. “No!! NO!!” He panicked.

The man never said a word, but sometimes, in his nightmares, he laughed. Like he did now. The man laughed when he picked up a lighter and started burning his skin. The man laughed when Sam screamed, when he squirmed and arched painfully away from the fire licking at his skin.

“NOOO!! NOOO!! PLEASE!!”

“Shhh… It’s alright.” Dean turned on his side and pulled Sam to his chest. He had felt the agitated moving next to him on the bed, and then heard the pleas filled with despair.

Sam was being rocked by tremors. His eyes darted open and the first thing he saw was Dean’s white undershirt coming towards his face. Then, he didn’t see anything else as he buried his nose into Dean’s chest.

“Shhh… it was just a nightmare… It’s okay,” Dean pulled Sam tightly against his body and ran a
soothing hand up and down his back, feeling the tremors taking his brother’s body.

“When will I leave that place?” A murmur full of anguish got muffled against Dean’s chest, as Sam hid his head there.

“You have left that place, Sam.”

“No, I haven’t.”

The powerful reply rendered Dean speechless. He pulled Sam tightly against himself and held him there, Sam’s head nestled under his chin as he slowly left behind another vivid nightmare.

~ * ~

The doctor came to visit Sam by the end of the week. He was greeted with warm smiles and welcomed into Bobby’s house in no time, where he was offered coffee and cookies. Lately, it seemed like they had a lot of good food around.

Sam had been sitting in bed, watching as Dean finished his workout with some push ups. Dean was wearing jeans and no shirt, and there was a thin layer of sweat covering his chest when he rose to his feet. Sam stared at him for a moment before the doctor walked into the room.

“Hey there, Sam,” doctor Michael greeted him.

“Hi,” Sam looked at him, but didn’t move.

“Hey, doc,” Dean wiped his sweaty hands on a towel and then reached out his arm to shake the doctor’s hand.

“Hello, Dean. How are things?”

“Going,” Dean said.

“I came here to take a look at Sam,” he said warmly, walking towards the bed with his black briefcase in hand.

For a moment Sam’s mind played tricks with him. He could almost see another doctor, coming towards him in a bright room, to check on his fresh injuries.

“I’ll give you two some space,” Dean said.

“No. Stay,” Sam said, quickly.

Dean looked into his brother’s eyes worriedly, because he had heard the hint of fear in his voice. Dean didn’t need to know where that fear was coming from to comply. He went and stood in a corner of the room as the doctor started to examine Sam.

He checked his temperature, blood pressure and the healing of his wounds. He helped Sam out of his T-shirt and touched his ribcage in different points of pressure, cataloguing Sam’s reactions to the touching.
Sometimes Sam winced, visibly in pain, when the doctor touched a certain spot in his ribs. But other than that he seemed fine.

“I have good news, young man. You’re almost as good as new. I’d say that in three more weeks you’re free to do just about anything you want. And meanwhile, you can go for walks and do some swimming… it’d be good to help you recover. You know, nothing too heavy.”

Sam nodded. He didn’t feel like leaving his bedroom, though. So nice try, he thought.

“Thanks,” he said softly.

When the examination was over, Dean and Sam followed the doctor downstairs, where he joined Bobby and John for a sip of whiskey – it wouldn’t hurt to drink a little, after all his work was done – and they talked for another half an hour.

It was still day outside when doctor Michael invited Sam for a walk.

“Now?” Sam asked.

“Yes… come and take a walk with me, will you? I’d like to speak to you alone.”

Sam watched as the doctor stepped outside and waited for him to follow. And then, as Sam looked at Bobby’s yard and all the cars parked everywhere, Sam realized he hadn’t been outdoors since they had arrived.

“C’mon,” doctor Michael motioned for Sam to follow him, but the boy was stuck by the door, unable to move forward.

Sam could feel his father’s eyes on his back, and Dean’s, and Bobby’s… they were all watching him to see whether he would step out or not. Sam looked at the ground and the sky, still blue, and felt his stomach tighten with nervousness. He didn’t want to leave the house.

“It’s okay,” Sam felt Dean’s hand on his shoulder, and it was the push he needed to step forward and out of the house.

Doctor Michael had noticed Sam’s hesitation, and it made him deeply apprehensive about those wounds he could not see, let alone heal.

The rest of the people in the house gave them privacy as Sam and the doctor walked between the cars for a while.

“Do you know how to fix these?” The doctor asked, pointing at the vehicles.

“Not really,” Sam replied. “My brother’s the one you want if you have car trouble.”

“You like him, don’t you?” The doctor smiled.

“He’s my brother,” Sam shrugged. “He looks after me.”

The doctor nodded and they walked a bit longer before he finally got around to speaking what he truly wanted.
“Sam… I’m gonna ask you something, please be honest with me, okay?” The doctor looked intently into those young, hazel eyes, that simply stared back at him. “When you arrived at the hospital you were severely injured…but you managed to babble a few words. I don’t suppose you remember that.”

Sam shook his head. He didn’t.

“Well, you told me that he tortured you.”

Sam stiffened and his heart rate increased.

“We then found all sorts of injuries all over your body, bruises, broken bones, cuts… But there’s something I wanted to check for, and you wouldn’t let me. And then I asked your father, and he thought it would just upset you, and that there was no need to. Remember?”

They were alone in Bobby’s salvage yard when the doctor looked into his eyes. Sam was already tense and his chest felt tight. “Sam, this man who tortured you, did he force you to have sex with him?”

There was a second of icy-hot fear, striking his mind like lightening, but then there was the wall, brick by brick, so beautiful the wall he had built, and Sam barely listened to a word of what came next.

The doctor studied the way the boy’s eyes became clearly distant and ready to avoid his at any cost.

“Because if he did, even if it’s too late to exam you and learn something about this man’s identity, we can still help you,” he explained.

Sam didn’t move or say a word.

“Sam?”

“What’s the point? It would be too late to know who he was, wouldn’t it?” And then Sam gave him a weird smile, as if the boy they were speaking about was not himself at all.

“It would, for the test. But not to get help. If this happened to you, then you need to talk to someone about it,” the doctor tried, his heart aching for that kid he barely knew but whose broken, battered image still haunted him in dreams.

“I think I’ll go back in now,” Sam smiled that weird, detached smile. He focused on the wall he had been building, and just how great it felt having that between himself and the bright room.

“Sam…” the doctor grabbed his wrist gently. “I just want to help.”

Sam looked at the doctor’s hand on his wrist and tensed. He swallowed hard and fought the urge to run away. That was when the shaking started. ‘Why are you doing this? Why are you saying all this stuff?!’ His mind screamed a moment before Sam released himself, turned around and nearly ran back to Bobby’s house.

“Sam, wait!” The doctor tried following him, but Sam was fast. When he walked into the house he found the boy pretty much hiding behind his older brother, who looked at him with a question in his displeased face.
“I think my brother’s done talking to you. Thanks for the visit. Bye, doc,” Dean didn’t know what had happened between the doctor and Sam, but he had seen the distress in his brother’s eyes and accepted his silent cry for help when he rushed into the house and put Dean as a shield between the doctor and himself.

“But…” The doctor looked into Sam’s eyes, but they were completely withdrawn. There was nothing to get out of him anymore and his father was nowhere to be seen.

Doctor Michael wished he could speak to him, tell him his doubts about what Sam had endured, but how could he tell a father something so grave based on nothing but intuition? If Sam didn’t tell them, they would never know.

“Alright. You take care, Sam. I’ll be back next month,” the doctor smiled, admitting defeat, and turned around to leave.

He would make sure to call John Winchester as soon as he was back home, and stress once again the importance of taking Sam to a therapist.

It was hardly enough to heal his physical injuries if Sam was broken from the inside.

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tbc....
Chapter 26

The same day the doctor paid them a visit, John’s cell phone seemed very insistent on ringing. Around evening it started ringing again, and when John picked it up he was ready for another heated talk with some hunter when doctor Michael’s voice took him by surprise.

“Doctor? Yeah, it’s John here. Is everything okay?”

“Everything is fine, yes… But can you talk to me for a few minutes?”

“Yeah, sure…” John walked out of the house and around the yard in order to have more privacy. “Is everything alright with Sam?”

“Physically, yes,” the doctor replied immediately. “I was hoping to talk to you when I was there before, but you were nowhere to be seen and I’m afraid my visit had to be cut short.”

John hadn’t seen the doctor leave, indeed. Bobby and he had been in the kitchen discussing the vampire nest they were about to hunt.

“I’m sorry I didn’t see you out, something came up. But you said before that my son was fine, that his wounds were healing nicely…” John was confused. Why was the doctor calling if Sam was visibly getting better?

“I know, and he is… He’s doing much better, physically.”

“Why do you insist on saying that?”

“Because, John, I think your son needs professional help. I told you this before, and I just called to tell you again. Sam is not behaving like a regular fourteen year old boy, he went through something really terrible, and I believe it would be good for him to talk about it.”

“Well, neither of my boys has ever behaved like regular kids. You know I’m a hunter, you can imagine the kind of childhood they had.”

“Indeed,” doctor Michael understood how difficult it must be for John to help his son. Teenagers could be difficult. Teenagers who had been raised to be tough at all costs, could be much more. And stubborn teenagers who had been through god knows what, that much more. “But it’s not just the unusual childhood, John. Sam is clearly suffering with what happened to him. I’ve been around kids who went through extremely painful, stressful situations, and they have the same look in their eyes.”

John swallowed hard. Dammit, what could he do? Drag Sam to a therapist, strap him down a chair and force him to talk? That was not the way it should happen. Of course he was trying.

“Well, doctor, I tried talking to him. I mentioned this therapist you suggested to him more than once
… But he’s not interested. What do you suggest I do?”

Doctor Michael wondered if John’s attitude would be different if he believed his son had been sexually abused. But without having tested Sam to confirm it, how could he convince someone who was just as deeply in denial as the victim himself? And what if that hadn’t happened? Sam had not really admitted to anything. He just shut down completely when the doctor brought up the subject, which was very telling, but not proof.

“Try harder. I know you think he’s fine, and his body responded beautifully to the treatment… But you, more than me, know that there’s more than meets the eye.”

John sighed again. He wished he could take Sam to a psychotherapist, he truly did. No one more than himself wanted to see his son fine again.

“Is this about that nonsense of abuse? I told you, Mike, my son wasn’t raped. I would know if it had happened. Trust me, you’ve bee watching too much TV.”

Doctor Michael sighed into his phone.

“With or without abuse, he needs to see someone about what happened, ” he insisted.

“Alright, doctor. I’ll try, thanks. Goodbye,” John hung up the phone, unwilling to continue that fruitless conversation. He was the father, and he supposed he could make Sam go see a professional, but only Sam could decide to talk, so what was the point?

Besides, John thought, maybe the doctor was overreacting a little. For sure Sam was more withdrawn than he used to be, and he was obviously hesitant about leaving the house and venturing outside, but that was understandable after having been kidnapped.

Besides, Dean said that he had been having trouble sleeping, but that was to be expected too, wasn’t it? Sam had been tortured, physically and psychologically – especially with the darkness involved in the process – so it was natural that he reacted the way he did.

John was optimistic, however, that give it some time and Sam would be back to himself. Perhaps some part of him clung to a feeling of denial, promising himself that no matter how terrible, Sam had left the bright room unscarred.

Little did he know that he would change his mind before the sun rose again.

~ * ~

The doctor’s talk had messed with Sam’s thoughts and feelings. It took him a lot to analyze the wall in his brain, to make sure there was no serious damage, to be able to trust it again. He didn’t give a second thought to the doctor’s words – Sam was careful to delete them from his brain – but his heart kept racing and he noticed his fingers were slightly shaky when he had his dinner.

Unwilling to be among others any longer, Sam had excused himself and gone to bed earlier. He took one of the sleeping pills and didn’t wait for Dean to join him. With the lights turned on in his room, Sam fell asleep quickly, hoping to have forgotten his conversation with the doctor by the time he opened his eyes again.
Later, when Dean finished up some chores and went upstairs to join Sam, he found his father watching him from the door.

“He’s asleep,” John said.

Dean nodded. He didn’t know what had happened between the doctor and Sam, but he sensed the doctor had said something Sam didn’t like. “I see. I’ll go to bed too.”

“Dean,” John started. “Why don’t you sleep in your own room tonight? I know you’ve been helping him, but maybe it’s time Sam trusts himself to pull through the night on his own.”

Dean stopped on his tracks and considered his father’s words. He also considered the painful image of Sam when he was struck by nightmares and looked for him in the middle of the night.

“Think about it. When he wakes up he’ll know that he can do it; he can go to sleep and be fine on his own. Don’t you think it would do him good? Improve his self-esteem?”

“I guess…” Dean said, albeit unsure.

“Let’s try, see if he’ll sleep well tonight. He’s already deep asleep.”

“Okay. Just keep the lights on.”

“Right.”

Dean said goodnight to his father and went to sleep in his own improvised room. John went back downstairs and had a hunting conference with Bobby to plan when and how they would go about trying to find the vampire nest.

The two hunters worked in the silence of the night, and of the sleeping house, well into the late night. The peacefulness was only disturbed at around three a.m. by the terrifying sound of screaming.

~ * ~

Because they were awake, John and Bobby arrived first in Sam’s room. The sight that met them left them speechless and frozen on the spot for several moments.

“NOOOO!!” Sam had torn the covers off himself and convulsed in bed, groaning and thrashing violently.

“Oh my god, what’s happening?” John’s lips parted and he rushed to the bed.

“Is he having a nightmare?” Bobby asked. It seemed like a nightmare, but he had never seen anything like that. Sam’s eyes were wide open and he squirmed as if an electrical current traveled his body. The sounds that escaped his lips were at times low and muffled, at others loud and strident.

“What’s going on?” Dean arrived at the scene a moment later. He had been deep asleep when the sound of screaming pulled him out of unconsciousness. When he arrived in Sam’s room, he saw his father sat on Sam’s bed, holding Sam’s arms down and speaking to him.
“Sam! It’s okay, son. It’s just a dream, you’re okay,” John tried to push Sam back into bed to stop his frantic moving, but the boy was strong and desperate, and Sam fought against his father’s grip with a strength one would not think possible.

“Hmmmmnnnooooo!” Sam whimpered and cried out, his body shaking badly, his hands fighting aimlessly before his face trying to hit his father and shove him away.

Sam ended up hitting his father lightly in the face, and when he was pushed back on the bed, the shaking was absurdly intense, and there was a string of painful moaning that escaped his lips, burning his throat.

“I think he’s seizing!” John panicked. “Quick! Call the doctor! Maybe he’s still in town!”

Bobby made as if he would turn around to do as told but Dean stopped him.

“I don’t think he’s seizing, dad… It seems like he’s having a night terror,” he said, his heart painfully tight in his chest. “His eyes are open, but I don’t think he’s seeing anything…”

John looked into his son’s eyes. There was a look of panic there, but indeed, he didn’t seem to be seeing anything. Nevertheless, Sam’s body was reacting so strongly to it – the shaking, the crying, the fighting – that John still thought his son might be having a seizure.

“Sam?!” He tried again. “Sam! It’s dad! Look at me! You’re fine! Just wake up!” John held Sam’s arms with enough strength to bruise in a desperate attempt at making him stop writhing. He tried to force Sam down on the bed, but was met by a wave of renewed struggles and a series of groaning and whining that shocked everyone in the room.

“NOOO!!! NOOO!!!! Let me go!!! Let me go!!!!” Sam struggled against the arms keeping him, he used his fists, he twisted blindly against the person holding him down, his panic rising to higher levels the harder he felt himself be kept.

“Call the doctor!” John insisted. “We need to make him stop!”

Sam’s breathing was reduced to a heavy, painfully difficult sequence of gasps, and soon his voice was hoarse from the screaming that did not stop.

“NOOO!!!” Sam convulsed against the strong grip on both of his wrists, he was sweaty and tired, but somewhere no one else could see, there was a horror show happening, and this urged him on.

“I’ll get the phone,” Bobby rushed out of the room.

“Look, his lips are getting blue, he can’t breathe!” John exclaimed, and fear grabbed at his heart. “C’mon, Sam, take it easy, kid! Calm down!” The more John screamed at him and used strength to try and stop Sam’s flailing, the more the boy struggled, the harder he cried out, the more painfully scratchy his panting became.

“Let me try,” Dean said, walking towards the bed and motioning for his father to give him his place.

“Dean, you won’t make it. I’m trying to stop him, it’s impossible. He’ll choke if we can’t get the doctor here fast enough!”
“Please, dad,” Dean urged his father out of the bed, and John complied because he didn’t know what else to do.

“NOOOOO!!! STAY AWAY!!!” Sam’s loud cry dissolved into sobs that made him shake harder, sobs that took all of his chest in a painful dance of grief.

Dean sat on the bed and tried to touch Sam. He got the same response as his father. Sam thrashed on the bed, he closed his fists and started punching, and his body shook with feverish despair. “DON’T!!! DON’T!” Sam cried, and then he took a painful intake of breath. His lips were indeed blue, indicating his body was dangerously deprived of oxygen.

So Dean did the only thing he could think of doing. Instead of pushing Sam down onto the bed, instead of trying to stop his convulsive movements, Dean pulled Sam to himself and pressed his brother’s head tightly to his chest, wrapping his arms around his shaking, squirming body as tightly as humanly possible, keeping Sam pressed against him in an smothering embrace that didn’t give his brother any room to move away.

At first the crying got louder and more desperate. Sam’s broken voice hurt everyone in the room like a knife cutting through skin, and the boy screamed and sobbed against Dean’s tear soaked shirt, using an absurd amount of strength to try and break free from the embrace, but Dean didn’t let go. The more Sam struggled to move away, the tighter and closer Dean held him. And instead of shouting commands of calm down and take it easy, as his father had, Dean took a deep breath and tried to keep his energy as serene as possible within the dire situation.

When Bobby walked into the room again, carrying the phone and the doctor’s business card, John raised a hand, silently asking him to hold on a little as they watched the scene on the bed unfold.

Sam’s breathing was loud and they could see him shaking in his brother’s arms. For a moment it felt like they were all holding their breaths inside the room.

Behind Sam’s look of fear, the horror took place, the shame, the hurting, the bleeding…the things the man did to him that Sam wouldn’t dare tell anyone, not even himself. And there was always that citrus smell indicating how close the man was, in front of him, behind him, on top of him, inside of him.

Sam struggled anew within the arms holding him, but he was exhausted, so his protests ended in a long series of defeated whimpering.

He felt a shudder travel his body and took a deep breath, his body was about to collapse from lack of oxygen. And when Sam took a deep breath there was a vanilla scent in his nostrils, and another scent that went straight to his brain.

The sense of smell is the most primitive of human senses. Because it’s intimately related to the amygdala, which processes emotions, and to the hippocampus, responsible for memory, it is possible to respond intensely to different smells even before they ascend to the cortex and create awareness.

Hence, something in Sam’s brain understood the smell as something safe, and something gave his body the signal that it was okay to stop fighting, that he could just let go so long as that vanilla, warm scent was close to him.

Dean felt Sam’s muscles relax against his body. It took some long, painfully tense minutes, but little by little Sam started to relax and fell silent, all sounds of pain and of struggle dying in his throat as he
closed his eyes and let himself fall against the body cradling him.

“Thank God…” Bobby whispered.

He seemed to get the words out of John’s chest. John looked at his two kids on the bed; he looked at the way Dean had managed to calm Sam’s frenetic struggling into a quiet, silent sleeping, and he sighed deeply with relief.

“I guess we won’t be calling the doctor,” John said, and raked a hand through his sweaty hair.

Dean didn’t say anything. He focused on maintaining his energy calm and rocking Sam softly, and he didn’t dare loosen the embrace for one moment. He buried his nose into his brother’s sweaty hair and shut his eyes, feeling his own heart beating against Sam’s erratic heartbeats.

“Do you think he’ll be okay?” John asked.

“Yes,” Dean murmured softly. “Just let us be.”

John nodded.

“Alright. We’ll be downstairs if you need anything.”

Dean just nodded, all his attention was back at Sam.

“C’mon,” Bobby tugged at John’s arm and made him leave.

“Don’t turn off the lights,” Dean asked before they were gone.

~ * ~

In the living room, both hunters were drinking a dose of coffee spiked with whiskey. They were sat on the sofa, their bodies tense and their minds still having difficulty to wrap around what they had just seen.

“The doctor called,” John said, at last.

“Doctor Michael?”

“He called today, after he left.”

“Why?” Bobby asked.

“He called to ask me to take Sam to a therapist. He told me that his physical injuries were healing fine, but that he looked like he needed help with his trauma.”

Bobby nodded slowly. “I guess he’s right.”

“How can I make him go to a therapist, Bobby? The kid won’t go! Besides…” John swallowed hard. “I didn’t know just how bad… Dammit, I fucking had no idea it was so bad…” John confessed and took another sip of his drink.
“I know. I didn’t either.”

“And then, how come I can’t make my own kid calm down after a terrible nightmare? I’m his father! How come his brother is the one upstairs now, comforting him?”

Bobby heard the bitter hint of jealousy in John’s voice. Of course it hurt him seeing how much closer to Sam Dean was.

“John… There’s nothing you can do.”

“I mean, I’m his dad! He should turn to me when he’s in trouble, right?” John begged.

“Listen, you raised them to take care of themselves, you raised them to be independent, to fend for themselves… You worked a lot during their childhood, to keep them safe, to try and avenge the death of their mother… And it was you who made Dean responsible for his little brother. You made it his job to look after Sam, remember?”

“Of course…”

“So don’t complain now if that’s exactly what he did. Dean took care of Sam, and he did that during all those nights and days you were out hunting. I don’t say this as something bad, John…you did what you thought you had to do. I know how it feels. But Dean was there changing Sam’s diapers, and teaching him to walk and talk, he was there to play with him, to feed him, to help him with his homework… Those two share a bond you cannot try to have. And I don’t think that’s a reason to feel bad. On the contrary, you should be proud to have a son as dedicated as Dean who took care of Sam so well.”

John nodded and swallowed another sip of burning coffee down his tighten throat.

“Dean was there for Sam everyday, seeing that adorable baby grow into a willful teenager. You can’t possibly try and have the same connection with Sam as Dean has, because he was there, teaching, teasing, comforting him much more than you. It was his job, John.”

“Is that supposed to make me feel better?” John laughed humorlessly. “The fact that I wasn’t there for my son?”

“No. You had your reasons not to be there, and you made sure they were well taken care of. I think you should be proud that you’ve managed to have two kids who love each other so much. You should be proud that Dean has made it his personal quest to watch out for Sam. Think about it. One day you and I will be gone, my friend… And they will carry on, and because of you, Dean will always watch over his little brother. No matter what happens, how old they grow or how different they become, you can be sure that your oldest will give his life to protect your youngest. That, John, that’s reason to be proud, not anything else.”

’Specially not jealous,’ John thought, understanding what Bobby meant. “You’re right,” he said.

They drank and talked more, but the images John had seen tonight of his son’s deepest wounds haunted him more than the supernatural itself, and John could not find sleep that night.

~ * ~
In Sam’s room, Dean was still cradling Sam in his arms. His brother’s breathing was now peaceful and easy, and Sam slept deeply against his chest.

Dean’s position, however, was highly uncomfortable, and he didn’t think he could keep it for much longer – his back was killing him.

So, slow and gently, Dean moved them until he could rest his back against a pillow he put between himself and the headboard. When he was reasonably more comfortable, Dean made sure Sam was still sound asleep in his arms and pulled a sheet over their bodies.

“Slept tight, Sammy… it's okay now,” he said softly, caressing his hair.

Dean’s fingers were all soft, reassuring touching, and his lips were all kind, whispery words of affection. But his eyes betrayed the calmness he tried to convey. Dean’s eyes were haunted by the brutal image of his brother’s broken, bloody body on the white floor of the room on the day he was found.

What had happened to him? Would they ever know?

Dean wiped at a few tears and looked down at Sam’s sleeping face.

“You need to let me help you,” he whispered. “Please, Sammy.”

It was not long before Dean’s eyes shut as tightly as Sam’s, and together the brothers slept through what was left of the night.

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tbc...
When Sam woke up he felt strangely tired and little bit sore. He yawned and stretched, and it took him a while to realise Dean was looking intently at him.

“Hey,” Sam smiled at him.

“Hey. How are you feeling?” Dean asked lightly.

Sam shrugged. “I’m good. You?”

Sam’s face looked so fresh and innocent that Dean was sure he had no memory of what had happened last night.

“I’m good too. Wanna go downstairs and have breakfast?” Well, if Sam didn’t remember, Dean wouldn’t be the one bringing it up.

“Yeah, okay.” Sam nodded and got up and dressed. He barely noticed the faint, fresh bruises on his arms.

The two brothers went to the kitchen and met Bobby and John already having their breakfast. Neither had found much sleep that night, and the kitchen fell silent when Sam walked in.

Sam looked at the two of them, nodded in acknowledgment and started to fix himself a bowl of cereal.

“How are you, Sam?” Bobby asked and smiled a soft, curious smile.

Sam looked at him and shrugged. “I’m okay. You?”

Bobby narrowed his eyes and studied him for a moment, before smiling again. “I’m fine.”

“Good,” Sam said, frowning a little. He picked up the cereal box and helped himself to some of it. Then he added milk and grabbed a spoon.

As Dean fixed himself some of the same, Sam walked out of the kitchen and into the living room, where he turned on the TV and sat on the sofa to appreciate his breakfast. His father followed him to the living room and Sam realized he was being carefully studied.

Puzzled, Sam looked into his father’s eyes and frowned again.

“Are you alright, son?”
‘Okay, what the fuck is going on?’ Sam thought, frustrated. “Yeah, I’m fine. Why is everyone asking?” Sam filled his mouth with cereal and started chewing.

Soon, Bobby and Dean were in the living room as well, and they all looked at him with different kinds of weird glances.

“I mean it, guys. What’s wrong?” Sam asked.

Dean sighed, put his bowl of cereal aside and joined Sam on the sofa. “Bobby, don’t you and dad have something to do outside? You know, to prepare for the big hunt?”

Bobby took the hint and grabbed John’s arm.

“Right. John, c’mon.”

John still hesitated a few seconds before letting Bobby guide him outside the house. Sam watched them leave, knowing Dean had deliberately asked them for privacy. Inadvertently, Sam’s heart started a faster rhythm.

“Is everything okay?” He asked his brother.

“Sam… Last night you had an…episode,” Dean explained.

“Episode? Of what?”

“Well, you were very distressed in your sleep.”

“Did I have a nightmare?” Sam tensed. “Oh god, did I wake everyone up?”

Dean stared into Sam’s young eyes. It was so unfair to put so much weight on a boy’s shoulders.

“I think you had a night terror. Do you know the difference?”

Sam wrinkled his forehead and thought for a moment. “Is it like a nightmare, only worse?”

Dean nodded.

“How much worse?” Sam wanted to know, his cereal forgotten, his stomach definitely not in the mood anymore.

“A damn lot,” Dean admitted.

Sam immediately chewed on his bottom lip and stared at his hands on his lap. He felt embarrassed by something he didn’t even understand completely.

“Do you remember something about it?” Dean asked.

“No,” Sam shook his head. “I did wake up feeling a bit tired and sore… But I just thought I’d fallen asleep in a weird position.”

Dean nodded again.
“What did I do?” Sam asked, hesitation and fear mingling in his eyes. Dean knew he didn’t really want to know the answer.

“You were scared. But it’s over now. In the end you could go back to sleep.” Dean thought of Sam’s smaller body cuddled to his and felt all warm inside.

Sam looked worried and lost, and Dean couldn’t help his next question. “Sam, yesterday when doctor Michael came to visit, and you two went to talk outside…”

“Yes?” Sam asked, wary.

“He said something to you that you didn’t like, am I right?”

“Yes,” Sam agreed.

“What did he say? Or what did he ask that made you come rushing back inside?” Dean asked, he was all tension and hope that Sam might crack a little and let him in his torments so he could help.

Sam loved Dean. He truly did. But right now, as he saw his brother’s face, all Sam could see before his eyes was the wall he had been working very hard to build. He didn’t know what the doctor had asked, because he had erased it from his brain, because it had been poison, and Sam would not allow it to ruin his beautiful wall.

“I don’t remember.”

Dean didn’t think Sam was telling the truth, but his brother was suddenly fidgety and nervous, and his body language screamed a clear signal that that door was shut, and if Dean insisted Sam would run away, same as he did with the doctor. ‘Alright,’ Dean thought silently. It was still not the moment. He wished so bad Sam could open up to him about what he went through, but one look at Sam’s dilated pupils and heaving chest told Dean that he would not get that kind of information now.

“Sam… I know dad has talked to you about this already, but maybe you should listen to him.”

“About what?”

“About seeing someone. I’m sure there’s gonna be a doctor you trust, and that you can talk to… and then they will truly help you recover…”

Sam was shaking his head before Dean was even halfway through his talk.

“No…”

“But Sam… Maybe someone with experience can really help you…”

“Dean-“ Sam looked into his brother’s caring green eyes. “I’m not talking to a shrink,” he stated.

“What about me? Will you ever talk to me?”

Sam wasn’t ready for that question. He trusted Dean enough to tell him everything, but he didn’t feel ready to see himself so vulnerable in front of his brother No, Sam thought. He wasn’t ready to go back to the bright room.
“Maybe,” Sam said, honestly. “But I really don’t know.”

Dean nodded and swallowed hard. He appreciated the honesty, but his heart fell at that.

“Can we please talk of something else?” Sam’s eyes were begging into his, and Dean knew there was no point in insisting.

“Of course,” he smiled, and for a moment they sat there in silence, watching TV, their breakfast forgotten.

~ * ~

It was about four p.m. when John found Sam in the house and announced he wanted his company to go run some errands.

“Me?” Sam sounded surprised.

“Yes. I would like to spend some time with you, talk a little bit. Get ready, we’re leaving in ten.”

“Dad, I don’t wanna go…” Sam tried, and some part of the boy he was before all that had happened still feared a confrontation with his father.

“C’mon, Sam. We’ll be back in a couple of hours, tops. Get ready.”

John’s words, as always, were more of an order than an invitation.

Sam got dressed to go out and left Bobby’s house in a dreadful mood. He sat beside his father on the Impala as John drove to the city.

They made a quick stop at the supermarket, packed more food into the car, and then John drove around with Sam for a while, watching the sun set from the Impala’s seat, a beautiful, colorful sky as the horizon was painted in red, yellow and blue.

“Did Dean tell you what happened to you last night?” John asked casually.

“Yes,” Sam replied, looking out of the window at the setting sun.

John nodded and didn’t say anything for the next minute or so. When he spoke again he chose his words carefully. “I suppose you don’t remember any of it?”

“I don’t.”

“Well, I can tell you that it got us all very scared. I almost had Bobby call the doctor, because I thought you were seizing.”

Sam’s stomach tensed and he wished he could hide himself into the upholstery of the car. He felt ashamed to even think of that scene.

“Dean was able to calm you down.”
Sam nodded, because his jaw was tense and he didn’t think he was capable of words.

“Doctor Michael called yesterday, after he left the house. He tried to stress again the importance of having you talk to a therapist, Sam.”

‘Here we go again,’ Sam thought, tense.

“Hm?” John cast a few side glances at his son as he kept his main focus on the road. “What do you say?”

“No, dad,” Sam looked at the last rays of sun being sucked up by the darkening sky.

John was frustrated to his very core. He wanted to shake some sense into his son, but after having seen just how sensitive Sam was about what had happened to him, John didn’t want to cause him further distress.

“Please, Sam… We all think you could benefit from talking to someone…”

“Dad…” Sam licked at his dry lips. “I was kept in a weird, bright room for three months. I was beaten and else in the dark by someone I don’t know, for a reason I don’t know,” Sam blurted. “Do you seriously want me to sit and tell someone about the worst days of my life? Making me go through that again, is that the way to make me feel better? Because I don’t think so.”

John was speechless. The thing was, he agreed with his son. And in Sam’s place, he doubted he could be convinced to see a shrink.

“So please… can we just drop it?” Sam begged, looking at his father.

John tightened his jaw and his chest was heavy with worry. The last light was fading and the night was taking over.

“Yes, Sam, we can.”

“Thank you.”

For the next ten minutes they drove in absolute silence. They might not have exchanged another word hadn’t it been for sudden noise of something bursting and the way the Impala lost its way for a moment.

“What was that?” Sam asked, startled.

“Dammit,” John cursed. “I think we might have a fucking flat tire.”

“Do we have a spare?”

“Yes,” Just pulled over and stopped the car. “There’s a spare in the trunk, but it’ll take fifteen to twenty minutes to change it.”

“Okay,” Sam said, watching as his father cursed some more and left the car, walking towards the trunk.

For the next few minutes Sam watched, from the car, as his father worked on the flat tire. The light
was all gone by now, and the sky was dark. In the middle of the road where they were now, there weren’t any other cars driving by; there was a hill to their right side, and a bunch of trees to their left. Away from the city lights, the darkness was complete, and it embraced the Impala, making Sam tense despite himself.

“Sam? Can you come out here and hold this flashlight for me?”

Sam froze for a moment. The light inside the car was on, and outside it was completely dark. There were clouds covering the stars, and there was no moon to reflect light down on them.

“Okay,” Sam swallowed hard and left the car. The moment he stepped into the darkness his breath caught. Sam looked down at his fingers and although he couldn’t be sure in the darkness around him, he believed they were shaking.

He walked around the vehicle and held the flashlight so his father could work faster on the front tire that was right below the driver’s seat.

John put on the spare as quickly as he could, and in ten more minutes he was done. But when he got up from his crouching position and looked at his son, he grew immediately worried.

“Sam?”

Sam’s breathing was coming in short gasps and he was looking around himself with wide, fearful eyes. He was behaving like someone who was being hunted by something.

“Sam…. What’s going on? What are you feeling?”

Sam could barely hear his father’s voice. Darkness did that to him. It caused fear so thick to invade his mind that it made Sam deaf and blind to everything else. He knew he was being talked to, but all Sam’s brain could focus on was how dark it was, and how dangerous it was to be in the dark.

“Hm…” He moaned faintly and shook his head hard, as if trying to get rid of a bad thought.

“Sam, what is it?” John looked around the same way Sam was doing, but there was nothing near them. Nothing except for the sheer darkness of the night. “Is it the dark? Does it make you afraid?”

Sam’s response was a loud, clipped gasp and faster heartbeats which made his blood pump faster through his veins. The shaking was increasing so much that Sam dropped the flashlight without even realizing it.

John thought that perhaps he could look a little inside his son’s trauma and help him. “You said they beat you in the dark. You said they beat you and else… what else have they done to you?”

Sam’s pupils were fully dilated, his blood pumped fast in his veins and he perspired despite the chilly night.

“What have they done to you, son? You can tell me,” John reached out a hand and touched son’s arm.

The touch was like fire and it spurred Sam into action.

“No!” He babbled incoherently and stepped back.
“Okay, it’s okay… Let’s just go home then, right? You don’t need to be afraid of the dark, nothing’s gonna happen to you anymore.”

But when John tried to reach out for him it was too late. Sam turned tail and started running headlong into the wooded area beside them.

“Sam?!” John screamed. “Where are you going? Come back!”

But Sam didn’t hear anything else. There was only the dark around him, and a large man standing before him, a man large enough to hurt him badly, and Sam’s brain was incapable of processing a rational response, so it screamed at his body that it should run as fast as it could, as far away as possible, because the large man was coming for him in the dark, and there would be consequences if he was caught.

“Dammit!” John was running after Sam a heartbeat later. It was really dark, and there between those trees where Sam had just fled to it was even darker. As a hunter, all John’s senses were alert. Running impetuously into the woods in the middle of the night was not something one should do. There were things in the dark. And Bobby and he had been hunting a vampire nest just a few miles away. What if one of those blood sucking creatures had ventured this far, looking for a meal?

John started running after his son as quickly as he possibly could, calling his name in hopes of slowing him down. “Sam!! Come back!”

Sam was panting and even though he was running fast, he could feel how shaky his thighs felt. But Sam was running for his life, so he didn't stop. There was a curtain of darkness covering his eyes, and it set off all sorts of physiological responses in his body that Sam couldn’t possibly control. Besides, there was a man chasing him, a man who wanted to catch him, and if that man caught him, if Sam let himself be caught in the dark…

“No!” He cried, despair twisting his young features as he ran past trees and fallen branches, hoping to get away.

John finally caught up with him after about five long minutes of intense running. He grabbed Sam by the collar of his T-shirt and quickly snaked an arm around his torso to prevent Sam from tearing the T-shirt up and escaping.

“NOOOO!” Sam shrieked, the sound painfully loud in the middle of the dark nothing where they were. "NOOO!"

“Shh! It’s alright! It’s dad, Sam. Calm down. Let’s go back to the car.”

“NOOOO!” Sam didn’t hear anything. He felt large hands all over him, pulling him close, trying to drag him away. Those hands were as large as his torturer’s, and just as strong.

Sam thrashed violently against his father’s grip, screaming and kicking and giving him hell to try and contain him.

“Sam! Stop! It’s alright!” John tried really hard, but who would have guessed that a fourteen year old would be so hard to hold down?

“LET ME GO!” Sam groaned, and when panic rose and drowned every last drop of reason he had
inside, Sam started to attack the man keeping him with punches and scratching and whatever the hell he could. In front of him, in the dark, Sam didn’t see his father at all. He saw a large man, who pursued him in the dark, and who tried to take him somewhere against his will. Of course this man would torture him, that’s what happened in the dark!

“Shit!” John cursed when Sam managed to scratch his face and draw blood. He would be attacked again if he didn’t do something quickly, so John grabbed at Sam’s hair and pulled his head back so he would stop fighting.

“HMMM!!” Sam cried at the pain, and for a moment his panic attack got so strong, his breathing so short and so clipped, his shaking so severe, that Sam’s brain decided it would no longer fight that battle.

John didn’t understand when Sam suddenly stopped struggling. But then he saw his son’s eyes roll in the back of his head and had to hold him before Sam fell to the ground.

“Sam?”

John held Sam tightly when he went limp and passed out in his arms.

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tbc...
“Sam? Samuel?” John crouched on the ground with Sam half lying on his lap, his eyes shut and his body light. John slapped his face softly a few times, but there was no response from his son.

John looked around themselves at the dark woods closing in on them, and decided they needed to get out of there quickly. He didn’t know what could be hiding there in the dark, so John picked up his son’s unresponsive body in his arms and carried him all the way back to the Impala still parked on the empty road.

John opened the back door and laid Sam down carefully on the backseat, trying to put him in a comfortable position. He tried to be rational about the situation, but the truth was that John’s heart was beating erratically, and heavy concern was eating at his brain.

John went around the car quickly to pick up the flashlight Sam had dropped, and went back to the car to check on his son.

“Sam?” He called again, softly, but his youngest son was deeply unconscious.

With his chest tight with worry, John hovered above his son and pressed his thumb tightly to the central space between Sam’s upper lip and nose – an acupuncture point to bring an unconscious person to.

Indeed, after a few seconds of pressure, Sam opened his eyes and moaned faintly with confusion.

“Thank god…” John whispered, slightly calmer.

“What?” Sam blinked and looked around himself. When he tried to sit up, though, his father’s large hand on his chest kept him.

“Don’t. Lie down,” he said.

“What happened?” Sam looked into his father’s eyes studying him intently. “Why am I lying in the backseat?”

“Don’t you remember what happened outside?”

Sam narrowed his eyes and went silent for a moment. Then, he frowned and brought a hand to his head – it was throbbing.

“I have a headache,” he said, and winced.

“What’s the last thing you remember?” The idea that his son had been so terribly damaged broke his
father’s heart, and – John couldn’t deny – it broke his hunter’s heart too. He had tried so hard to make them strong, to teach them to kill any evil that might come their way, and then he had been unable to stop it when they took his son and broke his spirit.

“We were driving home and there was a flat tire. What is that on your face?” Sam frowned and asked suddenly, trying to reach out his hand and touch the scratches on his father’s cheek. Did something try to attack them?

“Nevermind, I’ll tell you later,” John grabbed Sam’s fingers and put them on top of the boy’s chest. “Keep going, what happened then?” He insisted, it seemed important to know just how badly messed up Sam’s mind was.

Sam looked at his father and then at nothing in particular, trying to focus. “We stopped. You were changing the tire…then you asked me to go outside with a flashlight.” Sam didn’t remember much else after that. His heart started racing and Sam kept thinking of the strong brick wall he had been building in his thoughts.

“Did I…” Sam took a deep breath that seemed to make his insides icy. “Did I black out?”

John nodded, and it hurt him when Sam immediately looked away, embarrassed.

‘Why did I pass out?’ Sam asked himself intently. ‘What the hell happened?’ He looked at his father again. “Why?”

“I don’t know… what did you feel when you went outside to hold the flashlight for me, do you remember?”

Sam thought about it. He tried to sit up but once again his dad forced him to stay down. “I… it was dark,” Sam said in a small voice.

“And how did it make you feel? Uncomfortable?”

“Yeah.”

“Scared?”

That was his father, and he was asking him if he was afraid of the dark like a little kid. Sam’s heart tightened in his chest. His father didn’t know why he was afraid, it was not like he could help it!

“Yeah,” Sam pretty much whispered the answer.

John nodded gravely, still watching over his son. He took a deep breath and looked around the Impala for a moment, just to make sure they were alone and safe. Everything was quiet. Bobby and Dean were probably worried about what was taking them so long. If John picked up his phone now he knew there would be a number of calls from Bobby.

“Dean told me that you were hurt in the dark,” John said.

Sam nodded slowly.

“Is that why you started running?”
“I ran?” Sam seemed confused. Maybe it was his head, it hurt so much.

“You grew anxious outside the car, and when I tried to reach out and touch you, you just ran headlong into the woods. I had to go after you.”

Sam blinked and then shut his eyes. He had blurred images of running, and of being chased, and of a man coming for him, a man who would catch him and then...

Sam’s breathing got fast and his eyes got wider.

“It felt like you were running away for your life,” John said.

Sam had confusing images in his brain of darkness and of someone running after him, someone large enough to torture him, to shame him, to make him wish he was dead.

“It felt like you were scared of me,” John confessed.

Sam was breathing loudly and fast now, and his head throbbed. “I didn’t know it was you. I… I don’t know what happened. It was just dark and I…”

“Shh… relax…” John said quickly, sensing the way Sam was growing increasingly agitated and nervous. “You passed out when I caught you. You scared me, Sam. You fought me so much I almost couldn’t keep you.”

Sam looked again at the fresh scratches on his father’s face. “Did I do that?” Sam nodded at the wound.

“Don’t worry about it,” John smiled. “You know I’ve had much worse.”

“Sorry.”

“It’s alright.”

John looked at his son and had one of those moments when he missed his wife so much it killed him inside. Mary would know what to do. Mary would know what to say to him now. Mary, he thought bitterly, would have never let it happen in the first place.

“Listen, son… I don’t know what that demon did to hurt you in the dark-“

“The demon didn’t hurt me,” Sam cut him off abruptly.

“What?”

Sam shrugged and spoke as if he was almost indifferent to the fact. “The demon never hurt me. He healed me sometimes. You know, so I could be hurt again.”

John widened his eyes and frowned. He shook his head as if a weird thought occurred to him.

“Then who hurt you?”

“The man did.”
“The man?” John studied him.

Sam nodded.

“There was a man?”

‘Yes, dad. There was a man. Pretty much as tall as you, as strong as you, who used to chase me and try to catch me in the dark, pretty much as you have just done,’ Sam thought, but resigned himself to nodding once again.

“Was it the doctor?”

“No,” Sam shook his head. “The doctor fixed my wounds. He tried to help,” Sam thought of the balm to his wounds. He shuddered on the backseat of the Impala.

“Sam,” John said. “I shot this doctor the day we found you.”

“I don’t care,” Sam said, brokenly. He truly didn’t. He had no room for sympathy for anyone involved with the bright room and what was done to him there.

“But there was no man in there. There were a couple of demons, and the doctor, and that’s all…”

“There was a man,” Sam said.

The idea that they had left behind the place where Sam had been kept without punishing the monster who had actually tortured him was so terrible that it took John a while to wrap his mind around it.

“There was a man who tortured you, and who wasn’t there when we broke in…”

“He’s still out there,” Sam said, slowly. ‘He’s still in the dark,’ he thought, and fear grabbed at his heart, making him shudder visibly.

“He will never get near you,” John said, his face stern and his voice serious, when he saw the shadow of fear that darkened his son’s eyes. “Do you hear me? Never.”

Sam wanted to believe his father, but he was starting to shake, and his head was hurting a lot.

“Can we go home now?” All he wanted was to go back to his room and have Dean join him for the night.

“Sure. Just stay where you are, alright? Try and relax. We’ll be there soon.”

Sam nodded and watched as his father shut the door and opened another to slide behind the wheel.

“Are you okay? How’s the head?” John asked, looking at him through the rearview mirror.

“It’s okay,” Sam lied. He saw his father start the car to take them back to Bobby’s house. Sam fell silent, but he was relieved to be inside the car, where his father kept the light on all the dark way back to Bobby’s place.

~ * ~
When they arrived, John helped Sam out of the car and into the house.

“What happened?” Dean rushed towards them and his eyes went straight from his father’s to Sam’s quickly.

“Nothing happened. We’re fine,” John reassured them, and looked into Bobby’s eyes, trying to calm him too.

“What took you so long?” Bobby asked.

Dean had already rushed to Sam.

“Are you alright?” He asked, studying him carefully.

“My head hurts. I think I’ll take something and go to bed,” Sam said.

“I’ll help you,” Dean offered.

“Nothing, Bobby. Just… Sam and I were talking, then we had a flat tire, but it’s alright now,” John said.

“What about those scratches you got?” Bobby insisted.

“I said it’s alright now,” John said again, and eyed his friend.

Bobby didn’t push it. He sensed John didn’t want to talk further about it now. So Bobby looked at Sam and how pale he seemed, and how weak his body appeared to be as Dean went with him upstairs.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Dean asked again when they were alone. He searched in the top drawer of the nightstand for an aspirin which he offered Sam.

“I’m fine. I just… I passed out on dad,” Sam sat on the bed, took the aspirin and kicked off his shoes.

Dean widened his eyes, his forehead wrinkled with worry, and sat before his brother.

“Why? What happened?”

Sam shrugged and swallowed hard.

“We had a flat tire when we were coming home. So dad was changing it, and he asked me to hold a flashlight,” Sam looked at his hands. It seemed like his throat was tighter than usual, but he didn’t want to cry, so he spoke slowly and with a touch of indifference he forced upon himself. “It was dark on the road, Dean…”

Sam wouldn’t have to say anything else. Alone, in the middle of the dark, how could he not lose control after everything he had been through?

“I don’t remember much. Dad said I started running into the woods and he went after me.” Sam tried to push those blurred images of running desperately away from a man in the dark and throw them to
the other side of his safety wall. “I don’t know why I couldn’t stop, I couldn’t be reasonable…”

“Sam…”

“He said he caught up with me, grabbed hold of me, and basically I freaked out and went unconscious.”

Dean watched as Sam looked at the bedspread, avoiding eye contact.

“Sam… eventually, you’ll have to talk to me about it. I want to help you.”

“I know,” Sam said, and he almost teared up. It took every fiber of his being to swallow down the need for comfort he felt clawing at his chest. “Not tonight.”

“No, not tonight. You’ll tell me when. Promise?”

Sam nodded, still not looking into Dean’s eyes.

“How about you take one of the sleeping pills now and try to get some rest?” Dean offered Sam the prescription bottle.

Sam took it and thanked him.

“I’ll go downstairs for a moment, I still have some stuff I was helping Bobby do.”

“Ohkay,” Sam said and took the sleeping pill. “Dean?”

“Yeah?” He was already up and about to leave.

“Will you come back later? When you finish with Bobby?” Sam asked, and he looked into his older brother’s eyes. “I don’t want to wake anyone up tonight.”

Dean’s heart seemed to crack at the painful plea in Sam’s voice, but he still managed to nod and smile briefly. He didn’t trust his voice to speak without cracking as his heart had.

~ * ~

Downstairs, the three hunters sat in Bobby’s living room to listen to John’s account of the evening and early night. They listened as John described his version of the story, which had a lot more details than Sam’s – who was left with blurred, indistinct memories of what had happened.

John told them of the sheer fright in Sam’s eyes, the way he had run as if from the devil himself, and the panic that caused him to descend into chaos and launch at his own father as if he was someone who could hurt him terribly.

At this point in the story Bobby got up, poured them all a nice dose of whisky, and sat back down so they could numb some of the shock with alcohol.

“But that’s not all,” John said. “Sam said there was a man. He said that the demon wasn’t the one who hurt him. He said that a man did, and it wasn’t the doctor.”
“Yes, he said some of the same to me.”

“He what?!” John asked.

“Shhh! Guys! Don’t wake him up,” Bobby reminded them reprovingly.

“How come you didn’t tell me?”

“I told you a man tortured him. But at first I didn’t know if he really meant that there was a man who hurt him, or if he thought the demon was a man.”

“You should’ve told me right away when you realized there was another man.”

“What difference would it have made?” Dean looked defiantly into his father’s eyes. It wasn’t the first time, and it wouldn’t be last they argued because of Sam. Jealously, authority and love were all fierce feelings bubbling in the relationship between them.

“Guys, please… what’s the point?” Bobby said. “What did he tell you, John?”

John took a deep breath before he started talking again. “I said I didn't know what the demon had done to hurt him in the dark and he cut me off. He said the demon never hurt him, on the contrary, Sam told me the demon healed him sometimes, so he could be hurt again.”

Dean’s stomach turned at that and he fought a feeling of nausea by drinking a large sip of his booze.

“Then he said there was a man… a man who wasn’t there when we found him. This means that the monster who actually tortured my son—”

“Is still out there walking,” Dean finished for him.

“Exactly,” John said.

“We have to find him,” Bobby said.

“I know! But we have no idea who this man might be. And it was so hard finding Sam,” John pondered.

“I don’t care. As long as this man lives, we’ll have to keep looking,” Dean said and they all agreed.

For the next hour or so they discussed their feverish plans of revenge. They had no idea where to start, where to look, or if Sam’s aggressor was still in the country. But they all agreed they needed to look, they needed to find him, they needed to question him, slow and painfully, to learn just how badly Sam’s soul had been damaged.

It was past midnight when Dean excused himself and went upstairs.

He was tired of talking about bloodthirsty revenge and hunting schemes. For now, all he wanted was to make sure Sam was alright.

He changed into sleeping shorts and walked towards the double bed in the well lit room. Sam was lying on his side, deep asleep. His longish, brown hair was sprawled on the white pillow, and he
seemed peaceful.

Dean got in bed smoothly, trying not to disturb his brother. He got himself under the same blanket Sam was and stared at the back of his neck for a moment.

It wasn’t long before Sam moved, turned towards him and snuggled closer. Even in his sleep, Sam was drawn to the warmth of Dean’s body lying next to his, and he moved closer until his cheek and right hand were touching Dean’s chest.

Dean’s heart rate picked up and he looked down at Sam, nestling against his body, unconsciously seeking protection.

Dean let his shaky fingers rest on top of Sam’s head and right there, in that same position, without moving an inch, he shut his eyes and found sleep too.

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tbc....
The next couple of weeks went by uneventful in Bobby’s house. Sam and Dean shared a bedroom during the night, and save for a few nightmares from which Sam had woken up scared and sweaty, he had not had trouble with night terrors again.

As John and Bobby closed in on the vampire nest they had been investigating, the two brothers spent their days watching TV, eating or just hanging out. Dean went back to his intensive training routine – exercises, shooting practice, reading about supernatural creatures, everything. Sam’s training consisted of reading. When he finished the book Dean had given him, he agreed to start reading about monsters again, but he still hesitated when it came to going back to the kind of training he had before.

When the day was warm and sunny, Sam even ventured outside the house and watched as Dean worked out or shot beer bottles from a distance. During one of those training sessions, Dean tried to teach him how to shoot.

“C’mon,” he said. “Go get your gun, I’ll teach you how to use it.”

“Nah, it’s okay.”

“C’mon, Sam. It’ll be fun.”

Sam sighed. He didn’t think it would be fun, but he didn’t want to disappoint Dean, who was visibly having fun shooting the bottles. Sam gave in and got up from the stairs where he had been sitting. He went up to his bedroom and found the box with the gun he had gotten for his birthday.

For a moment, alone in the room with the gun, Sam felt his stomach ache at the memories. The last time he had touched that box had been a lifetime ago, before darkness had happened in his life. Sam stared at the gun inside the box for a long moment before he snapped out of his thoughts and met Dean outside.

As his brother taught him how to open, load and fire a gun, Sam paid careful attention. Not because he was really interested in that, but because Dean was so focused on making him understand, that Sam wanted to impress him by learning fast.

After a couple of hours of learning and shooting, Sam realized, to his surprise, that he was better than he expected at it.

“See?” Dean marveled at the broken bottles. “You did better than me on my first time.”
“Bullshit,” Sam said, but he felt proud inside. He, doing better than Dean? He hoped his cheeks weren’t red.

By the time they went back inside the house, John and Bobby were waiting for them with dinner on the table. Dean remembered thinking that these last few days had been as close as they had ever had from a family routine since their mom had died.

“I heard you were practicing,” John said, looking at his two kids.

“Yeah, Sammy kicked some ass with those bottles,” Dean said, knowing his little brother was trying not to smile a silly, content smile of pride.

“I saw that,” John said. He had watched them for a while, he and Bobby, and he could hardly hide how happy he felt. Not only was Sam outside the house, he was also training with Dean. “Way to go, Sam. Keep at it and you’ll be a great shooter.”

“Just make sure you practice shooting together,” Bobby said. “You can never be too careful around guns. Even when you’re a hunter.”

Sam and Dean nodded.

When they finished dinner, Sam asked if his help was needed with the dishes. When his father dismissed him, the youngest Winchester went to the living room to watch TV. When Dean made as if he would follow, though, John asked him to stay.

“Yes? I can do the dishes in a moment,” Dean said.

“It’s not about the dishes. It’s about the job,” John studied him intently.

“What about it?” Dean looked from his father to Bobby, who was watching him too.

“Bobby and I need you to do something for us.”

Dean looked at them and frowned.

“You know that vampire nest we’ve been hunting?” Bobby asked.

“Sure.”

“We need you to go somewhere for a couple of days and ask some questions,” John explained.

“What? Why me?”

“We need to make sure they don’t suspect us. And it’s a small town, it’s likely they’re starting to pay us more attention than they should,” John said. “We need you to go, because they haven’t seen you there, and you could uncover some useful information.”

Dean sighed and ran a hand through his hair.

“You want me gone for a couple of days?” He asked.

He didn’t have to say more, because Bobby had already known that Dean would react that way. Of
course he didn’t want to leave Sam’s side.

“Tops,” John nodded.

“What about Sam? I can’t leave him for two days,” Dean said, more to himself, as if he was thinking aloud.

“Dean…” John started.

“No, I mean it,” Dean said, in a low but firm voice. “I don’t want to leave him. Can’t you get somebody else?”

“No,” John said sternly. “I’m not bringing more hunters into this, or else it’ll be a mess. It has got to be you.”

“But what about him?” Dean said, thinking of his brother watching TV, thinking of the nights in which Sam clung to him because of his nightmares. It broke his heart having to leave him, even if just for a couple of days.

“He’ll be fine, Dean,” Bobby reassured him.

“Of course he will. Dean, I’ll take good care of my son,” John said, slightly frustrated. “Sam’s tough, he will be okay.”

“Besides…” Bobby said, looking into Dean’s eyes. “John and I agree that you need some time ‘off’, Dean.”

“What do you mean?”

“You need to get away a little, son,” John said. “You’ve been looking after Sam day and night for the past month, and we can see how tired you are.”

“I’m not tired,” Dean argued. But the truth was, he felt tired, indeed. He had bags under his eyes, because it didn’t matter how much he tried, sleeping in a bright room was not the same as sleeping in the dark. Besides, he was constantly on edge about Sam. Was he alright? Would he have a nightmare? Was he feeling pain? Was he scared? Did he need him close? Did he want some space? Dean couldn’t lie that spending every moment of every day and night caring and worrying about Sam was hard on his nerves, but he wouldn’t change it for the world. It was his job to look after Sam, and after what had happened, he just had to be there for him, there was no other way… It pained his heart to see Sam suffering so closely, but it would shatter his heart if he couldn’t be there for him.

“Just take a break, that’s all we’re saying,” Bobby said.

“I’ll give you some extra cash. Hit a bar, have some drinks. I don’t care, just have fun.”

Dean widened his eyes at his father’s words. He could not remember John Winchester having ever told him to ‘just have fun’. That alone was enough reason to be dumbstruck.

“Dad, I…” Dean’s protest died on his lips when Sam walked into the kitchen after having heard part of the conversation.
“They’re right,” he said. “You should go.”

Bobby and John stared at Sam as he looked at his older brother calmly.

Dean felt his heart skip a beat at the look in Sam’s eyes. He seemed to truly agree with the older hunters.

“Sam…”

“I’ll be okay,” Sam smiled briefly. Of course he wanted to be with Dean all the time, and the idea of not having him for a couple of nights was a little scary, but Sam understood that his brother needed some time to himself. Sam knew Dean needed to relax. He might not be able to explain why, but he sensed the tension between them – the constant feeling that at any moment he would lose his mind and Dean would have to pick up the pieces of his broken psyche. The thought that his brother would have a moment to enjoy himself, chat a few girls up and just sleep a full night in the dark gave Sam’s heart some relief – he always dreaded the thought that he was a burden for Dean.

Besides, despite the fear that flashed inside his brain like a red light, Sam was also looking forward to the challenge – could he sleep for two nights on his own, without any drama? He wanted to believe he could, and now would be a good moment to test it. With the help of doctor Michael’s sleeping pills, of course.

“Are you sure? I mean, there must be someone else that can go in my place…” Dean tried again.

“Dean, it’s fine. You go do that and come back in a couple of days. I won’t go anywhere,” Sam looked at his brother, and it was as if he felt Dean’s fear of losing him again.

His words had the desired effect, because when Dean searched Sam’s eyes and saw nothing but truth in them, he relaxed.

“Alright,” he sighed. “When do I leave?”

~ * ~

On the first night Dean spent on his own in weeks, he used the time to do the job his father and Bobby expected of him. He took a bus to his destination, checked into a different motel than Bobby and John had, and started questioning people and visiting places according to the instructions he was given.

When night came, Dean allowed himself to have a few drinks in the local bar – just to chill out, he told himself. He talked to some of the locals and watched around, but pretty soon he was drunk enough to start enjoying being in a bar and forgetting the constant weight of the worry he carried in his heart.

Dean flirted with the waitress all night long, and it wasn’t long before she told him the time she was leaving, making it clear she was interested in him.

Dean thought of turning around and going back to the motel, he thought of Sam and what was going on with him right now, but he also thought of his father’s words for him to have some fun, for him to relax… Bobby had even said, as he was leaving, that relaxing was essential to make sure he was
alright to help Sam…

So when the beautiful, dark haired girl met him behind the bar, Dean had barely enough reason to hold back. As she kissed him hotly and they made out passionately, Dean did something which he would eventually grow quite good at doing – he shut his mind to his problems and gave in to his urges.

Before the night was over, Dean took her back to his motel room and took her relentlessly on the bed he had rented for the night.

As he moved on top of her, entering her fiercely, over and over, kneading her thighs, running his palms over her hot, silky skin, Dean realized just how much tension he had been holding within. It was like caring for Sam demanded every fiber of his attention, of his love, of his mind… Making sure Sam was alright consumed his every thought. Sleeping next to his brother caused his heart to beat faster every night, because Dean feared something would happen to him, because he wanted desperately to make him feel good, to protect him… And the stress of living on the edge had its effects on him.

Dean pushed into the girl with demanding thrusts that released all his tension, all his worry, all his need into the girl beneath him. It was weird, but there were moments during the sex in which the thought of sleeping next to Sam, and of holding him in his arms to prevent nightmares, invaded his thoughts, and caused his heart to beat erratically, and caused his movements to grow harder and greedier.

Dean buried his head into her neck and thrust faster when she shuddered, coming in his arms. When his own orgasm hit, he felt free, he felt light and good.

And yet, Sam’s face was not far away. It seemed to be preying on his thoughts, tempting him to let it in.

Before the girl left, at three a.m, Dean took her once again, burying deep inside her the edginess he felt, and finding warm comfort that was almost exactly what he needed.

When she left and he found himself alone, lying in the motel room, in the middle of the dark, Dean wondered how Sam had spent his day and if he was alright now. He made a silent prayer that he could sleep easy tonight.

Then, in the total darkness around him, Dean fell asleep quickly and gave in to oblivion for the many hours that followed.

~ * ~

In Bobby’s house, Sam got ready to sleep at around midnight. He took a sleeping pill from the prescription bottle and settled in bed with a book about witches.

As he read a few chapters, he started to grow sleepy and tired. It wasn’t long before the drug kicked in and Sam fell asleep with the book forgotten by his side.

At around two in the night, before Bobby went to his own room, he stopped by to check on him, and it was with relief that he found Sam deep asleep, undisturbed in bed.
Bobby walked away from the bright room where John’s youngest son slept and found his own bed. Like Dean, he made a silent prayer that Sam would get through the night alright.

~ * ~

Sam woke up in the early morning feeling thirsty. The first thing he felt was Dean’s absence by his side. Then, as he remembered the previous day, Sam started to feel hopeful about having slept a whole night without any incidents.

When he went downstairs to meet his father and Bobby for breakfast, their lack of weird comments and looks reassured Sam that it had been a peaceful night.

“Hey, Sam? What do you say we go somewhere this afternoon? I have a friend who lives nearby, and it’s her son’s birthday today. She said we should drop by,” John said. Melanie was a beautiful single mom with whom John had been with a few times before when he came to hunt with Bobby. “She has a son, he’s one year older than you.”

“I don’t know, Dad…” Sam received the invitation with uneasiness.

“C’mon, it’ll be fun. She has a swimming pool,” John smiled. “Didn’t doctor Michael say that swimming would be good for you? You know, to start getting back into exercising?”

Sam thought about protesting, but his father’s eyes were shining with the idea. It wasn’t an invitation as much as it was an order, sugar-coated to sound like an invitation.

“Ohkay,” Sam shrugged.

“Great.” John studied his son. Sam might think that it would be boring, but John knew it would do him good leaving Bobby's place and interacting with other kids his age. Besides, he knew his son liked to swim, so what could go wrong? He would see Melanie, maybe sneak upstairs with her if everything went well, and Sam would have some fun socializing with other kids. It would do him good, specially since he hadn’t been going to school.

As he thought about it, John made a mental note to talk to Sam about resuming his studies.

“Will you come too?” Sam asked Bobby.

“No, kid. I have some stuff to do around here, so I’ll take the afternoon to run some errands.”

Sam nodded, visibly disappointed.

“I’ll be here when you return. And Dean will be back tomorrow,” Bobby said, trying to cheer him up.

Sam looked at his breakfast and wished he could make time move forward until tomorrow.

They left Bobby’s place at around two p.m., and it was a short drive up to John’s friend.

Sam was introduced to Melanie, an attractive, kind-hearted woman who smiled warmly at him and
welcomed him into her beautiful garden. She introduced Sam to her son and some of his friends, and told him to make himself at home – help himself to the food and games the kids were playing.

Sam thanked her politely and watched as his father took off beside her towards the interior of the house. He didn’t have to be an expert to know his father liked that woman, and that she probably liked him too.

It would be a terribly boring afternoon, Sam thought, sitting on the garden and looking at the people around. He had been sitting alone for half an hour when he was approached by someone.

“Hey.”

Sam looked up, shielded his eyes from the sun with his right hand, and saw the birthday boy – Daniel.

“Hi.”

“Why are you sitting here? Come inside, we’re playing video games.”

Sam appreciated the boy trying to be nice to him, but he had always felt a little bit like a misfit because of the life they led as hunters, and now, after everything he had been through… Sam found it all the harder to connect with other people.

“Thanks, I’m okay…” He said softly, hoping he would be left alone.

“No, seriously. Come with me. I got a new game, you’ll like it,” Daniel reached out his hand, and before Sam knew it, he found himself accepting the hand and getting up.

Despite all his wariness, Sam realized he actually liked Daniel, and his friends weren’t so bad. After a couple of hours playing video games, Sam completely forgot the shadow that roamed his thoughts and gave in to the loud cheering and laughing coming from the group of boys. They accepted him as one of them – no weird looks or unnerving questions – and against all odds Sam realized he was having fun.

He ate the food that was offered and sang happy birthday with the other kids. And when they all moved the fun to the swimming pool, in the end of the afternoon, Sam joined them readily and jumped inside, taking part in the ball game that was going on.

John watched from a distance, sitting under a tree with Melanie by his side, and he congratulated himself on the idea of bringing Sam there. He knew that it was his fault that his son didn’t have many friends – they had to move all the time, it was part of the job. So it felt good to actually see his son being a regular fourteen year old, even if just for an afternoon.

All was going well, and it might have been a smooth, pleasant afternoon, if it weren’t for a small incident that happened a little before evening, an incident that changed the mood of the day.

In the pool, as the boys enjoyed themselves, their games grew a bit rough, and soon there was horseplay going on in the water, with boys pulling at each other’s hair and shorts, teasing and joking.

It had all been alright, until the moment Daniel – who had grown close to Sam after a really good afternoon together – made a wrong move.
In the middle of the fun, the birthday boy pushed Sam’s head underneath the water, and held it there for a few seconds. It was a silly, common kind of game. But what it triggered in Sam was far from playful behavior.

When Sam felt himself being pushed under the water, a hand on his hair forcing him down, the unexpected fright of being unable to breathe and the burning in his lungs from trying to make do with little oxygen, it caused images to spill themselves into his brain and he grew painfully nervous under the water.

*The sound of water filling a bucket.*

*A large hand forcing his head under the water, keeping it there as Sam fought and panicked.*

*Water filling his nose until everything went black and the burning in his lungs started to fade to nothing.*

John had been wrapped up in a charming conversation with Melanie when he heard the screaming.

“Oh, my god, what happened?!” Melanie rose to her feet and stared at the pool. When she saw her son holding his bleeding nose and coming out of the pool, she rushed towards him, John following right behind.

“What happened here?” John asked, studying the hectic scene that had just been established. He immediately found Sam’s eyes, who looked guilty and shy.

“He punched Daniel!” One of the boys accused, pointing at Sam. “We were just playing, Daniel pushed him under the water and he punched him!”

“Sweet Jesus!” Melanie helped her son out of the pool and immediately tended to his nose. “What is wrong with your son?!” She groaned, not measuring her words at the sight of her son’s nose gushing blood.

Sam shrunk and left the pool too. He could feel the other kids looking at him; he could feel his father looking at him. All he wanted was to disappear. He could barely move as everyone freaked out around him.

“Stay here,” his father told him, as if Sam was thinking of going anywhere, and then he followed Melanie into the house as she tried to help her son.

“Melanie, I’m so sorry,” John was saying. “Here, let me take a look. I’m good at first aid.”

Reluctantly, she allowed John to take a look at her son’s nose, and after a small cry of pain, John put it back in place and asked her to bring some ice. “He’ll be fine,” he said, as Daniel stared at him with a confused, hurt look.

“What was that all about?” Melanie asked.

John sighed. He started thinking that maybe bringing Sam had been a terrible idea. “I… I don’t know.”
Melanie stared at him as if he had grown a third eye or something.

“Melanie… my son went missing for three months. Sam was kidnapped, and when we found him last month, he was in pretty bad shape. He had to stay in the hospital for over a week, and the truth is, we still don’t know what happened to him during this time. He won’t talk.”

“Jesus, John…” Melanie softened. “Three months? Was he beaten or…” she couldn’t finish.

“Yes,” John swallowed hard. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you. I thought that seeing other boys would be a good idea.”

“John, you need to get him help. I feel bad for him, but he’s obviously troubled.”

John felt as uncomfortable as Sam, and suddenly all he wanted was to leave.

“I know. I’m trying.”

In less than five minutes, John came back for Sam and they were in the Impala, driving back to Bobby’s house.

As John looked at the road ahead from behind the wheel, Sam sat absolutely quiet by his side, staring straight ahead, his body visibly tense.

“Sam… can I ask what happened there?”

“I’m sorry,” Sam felt awful. “Daniel was really nice to me, I didn’t mean to-“

“It’s alright. I already apologized. I think his mother understood.”

Sam felt himself shuddering. He tried to cling to the wall he had built in his mind to try and prevent the shuddering from turning into shaking.

“What happened there?” John asked again.

“He pushed my head into the water,” Sam said.

“I understand that is not nice, but-“

“The man did that too,” Sam cut him off. “It was one of the things he did often.”

John tensed behind the wheel and tried to control his breathing.

“The man? The one who tortured you?”

“He’d force my head under the water until I passed out.”

John’s fingers tightened around the wheel until his knuckles turned white. Just how much pain had Sam been through? Just how much damage had been done to his boy? Would he ever know?

“I’m sorry,” Sam said again. “I didn’t mean to.”

“It’s alright. Don’t worry about it.” John looked at him and patted Sam’s knee lightly, offering him a
warm a smile that tried to hide his frantic thoughts.

That night, after Sam went to bed, John talked to Bobby for long hours. They talked about Sam and the time he went missing. They talked about this man Sam mentioned, this man who had done all the torture. And when John was done talking, he went upstairs to check on his son.

Amazingly, Sam slept through another night. Unlike his father, who pulled up a chair and sat inside Sam’s room, watching as his boy found scarce solace to his pain in the bright light permeating his dreams.

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tbc...
As time passed by, the time John and Bobby spent outside hunting started to grow, leaving Sam and Dean with lots of time to be by themselves in Bobby’s house. Sometimes John and Bobby would be gone for an entire day, as would be the case today.

Dean knew that there was more than just the vampire nest they had been hunting. He knew that his father was also trying to obtain information on a certain man who had spent three months of his life torturing his son. It would be like trying to find a needle in a haystack, but Dean knew his dad was trying to probe and see if any piece of information would surface now that the demon was no longer in charge.

When they were left alone for the day, Sam watched as Dean started his training early in the morning. He even tried to work out a little too – Sam tried to do some sit ups and push ups, but he got tired very easily, and soon he settled for watching Dean work hard.

When it was a little after one in the afternoon, Dean got up, took a shower and said he would take care of lunch.

“If you’re gonna make lunch, does that mean we’ll have mac and cheese, like the good old times?” Sam teased, knowing mac and cheese was pretty much all Dean came up with when he was in the kitchen.

“Hey, I don’t remember you complaining about my awesome mac and cheese with double cheese and barbecue sauce,” he smacked the back of Sam’s head lightly and yet teasingly, like he used to do as a big brother.

“Hey!” Sam protested, a smile on his face. “Cut it out.”

Dean looked at him with the corner of his eye and set about making them lunch. It felt good being able to tease Sam and get a smile out of him. He supposed they still had a long way to go, but it felt good knowing they had the big brother little brother dynamic to cling to.

When lunch was ready, Dean fixed him and Sam a plate full of food and they both left the kitchen towards the living room.

“So what will it be today? Movie? Cartoon? Gotta take advantage of all those channels,” Dean asked, picking up his plate and the remote control. He sat on a corner of the living room, on an old rocking chair, and turned on the TV.

“Whatever. Find us something good,” Sam said, settling on the sofa, a few feet away from Dean, and right in front of the TV.
Dean flipped through the channels until their attention was caught by an action scene happening on
the screen. Two men were fighting on top of moving train, punches being thrown and curses flying
as they tried to overpower one another.

“That good?”

“Yeah,” Sam agreed. “I’ll go get us some coke,” he said and got up.

“Great.”

Sam came back holding two glasses, and he offered his brother one before going back to the sofa
and sitting down. He adjusted his plate and the glass on top of a wooden stool that he used as a table
while Dean held his own plate in hands and placed his glass on the floor.

For the next ten minutes they ate and watched the movie in silence, eating the lunch Dean had made
them, until an interesting scene came up on TV.

Sam watched as a man was now cornering a woman in what looked like an abandoned house in the
woods. He watched, unblinking, as the man made his intentions clear, only to be rejected by the girl.
And then Sam watched as the man grew rough and they started fighting.

Sam’s heart raced and he stopped his arm in the middle of taking more food into his mouth.

He watched attentively as the man on the screen got on top of a woman and hit her, trying to stop her
from struggling. Sam’s heart started a crazy rhythm and his blood rushed hotter and faster at the same
time his fingers grew cold.

‘No,’ he thought. ‘No…no…’

On TV, the woman screamed and scratched at a man who took off her clothing and pushed inside
her, muffling her desperate screams and pressing her down with the violent weight of his body.

Suddenly, there was a crack in the wall he had built so carefully. Before Sam knew it, a few bricks
were bursting and crumbling, and even though Sam tried hard not to, he found himself hopelessly
looking through that hole in his mind, into the darkness lying ahead.

The man pulled his pajama pants down and unbuckled his pants.

‘No…’ Sam’s breathing hitched and he started shaking.

He pressed him to the floor with his heavy body as Sam’s arms hung beside his head, handcuffed to
the wall.

Sam rose from the sofa in a heartbeat, knocking down his plate of mac and cheese and coke in one
swift movement. He stood in the middle of the room, his eyes glued to the television as the bad guy
in the movie raped a woman to the sound of her begging him to stop.

Then the man pushed inside him, hurting him so much that a scream left his throat, and Sam shut his
eyes at the pain spreading inside of him with every thrust, trying desperately to pretend he wasn’t
there, he wasn’t in the dark, he wasn’t being-

“Sam?” Dean asked, startled, as he watched his brother knock over his food and get up as quick as
lightening, only to stand before the TV looking intently at the movie.

Dean noticed the way Sam was shaking and his breathing was erratic, and although he couldn’t tell for sure, it was almost as if the smell of fear was thick in the room. Dean looked at the TV again, and what was happening on the screen, and suddenly his world started spinning.

In the movie, there was a brutal scene of sexual violence happening, and in Bobby’s living room, his brother was staring intently at it, shaking and breathing shallowly.

“Sam…?” Dean asked again, his voice deeper and weaker as a slow, painful realization started to sink in.

Sam looked into his brother’s eyes like a deer looking into the eyes of a hunter. From the TV, the loud pleas of the victim echoed in their ears as the man forced her, and when their eyes met and locked, Sam bit back a sound of despair – ‘He knows’, he thought desperately, and in Dean’s green eyes he could see when it happened, the moment Dean put the pieces of the puzzle together, the moment it dawned on him that the violence they saw on TV was all over Sam’s mind, carved into his memory.

‘Oh God no,’ Dean thought, and his stomach turned, and his heart raced. ‘No… no, it isn’t true, it isn’t…’ Thoughts of intense denial filled his brain quickly as he stared at his brother.

In Dean’s eyes his thoughts showed, crystal clear, and when Sam saw the truth of what had happened to him reflected in his brother’s shocked look, he could not bear it.

Sam turned tail and started running.

“Sam, wait!” Dean stood up quickly, but it was too late.

Sam was running out of the house, out of Bobby’s yard and headlong into the woods around the place.

“Sam! Oh, fuck!” Dean knocked his glass of coke in the process of starting to run after his brother. “Come back here!”

But even as he heard his brother calling him, Sam was running faster. Dean’s voice was more than he could handle, and the look in his eyes telling him that he knew his shameful secret was too much for him. Sam didn’t think he could ever face his brother again knowing that Dean knew what the man had done to him, just how far it had gone, and how helpless Sam had been. So he ran.

Sam ran desperately into the woods, he ran from the painful realization of what had been done to him, he ran from Dean as much as he ran from his memories, and he ran for all he was worth because there was a hole in the wall he had built, and there was darkness seeping through it, and if he wasn’t fast enough then maybe that darkness would end catching up with him.

Dean cursed his full stomach for slowing him down. It was all he could do to run fast enough so he wouldn’t lose sight of his brother. For someone who hadn’t been training, Sam was fast as hell.

‘Dammit, Sam, just stop!’ Dean thought feverishly in his mind, following Sam into the woods, trying to run faster so his younger brother wouldn’t disappear. As he ran, Dean tried not to think of what had just happened, he tried not to think of the look of fright and desolation in Sam’s eyes as a man committed rape in the movie they were watching. Dean fought his thoughts not to dwell over what
that meant, but it was a useless fight.

‘It can’t be true… no… No, it can’t…’ Dean thought over and over, running as fast as he could, and if he could he would run faster to escape the knowledge that crept into his mind – not only had Sammy been tortured, he had been sexually abused in the dark too.

Sam ran so fast that the tears couldn’t cling to his eyes. They flew off his face as he picked up even more speed, running blindly towards a destination he didn’t know and didn’t care. He was escaping, he was running from having the one person he loved the most and who cared about him find out that he had been weak, that he hadn’t had what it takes to fight back.

When the tears and the shaking started to take their toll on his light body, Sam grew careless about the path he was running through. He tripped on a tree branch on the ground, which sent him flying a few feet ahead until he landed flat on his belly, his jeans ripped open around his left knee, where he started bleeding.

Dean heard the noise of someone falling in the middle of the trees and kept his pace. He was already breathless and tired, and he didn’t think he could run much longer, but he quickly realized he wouldn’t have to.

“Sam?” He questioned softly.

Sam had sat in the middle of the ground and pulled his knees up so he could hold them close and bury his head between his arms. He didn’t move when he heard Dean’s voice. He kept his head firmly stuck between his arms, staring at his T-shirt and embracing his knees. He breathed fast but made no sound or movement.

Dean looked at him, all shut into himself, shielded from Dean’s eyes and questions, assuming a pose of evident denial and unwillingness to talk. Dean could almost touch the thick wall Sam had just put between himself and the rest of the world as he sat there, in the middle of the woods, his knee bleeding through his torn jeans.

Still catching his breath, Dean moved slowly in front of Sam, without saying a word. He crouched at first, studying Sam’s injured knee. Then, after staring at his unmoving brother for a few minutes, Dean sat down before him on the ground, without saying a word.

Sam could tell Dean was there, sitting in front of him, and he didn’t know why he wasn’t talking, or why he hadn’t touched him, but he was glad for the silence. Right now there was so much going on in his mind that Sam couldn’t bear the sound of a single question. If Dean pushed, his mind would break, and Sam was terrified of having to look further into the dark window in his precious wall.

The younger Winchester sat there for a long time, his head always buried between his arms, his breathing slowly going back to normal, his knees tightly pulled close to his chest. His knee stung, but he barely cared about it.

Dean just sat there and waited. He didn’t know what the right thing to do was in that situation. Should he try and make Sam talk? He didn’t think that would work. Sam’s body language was screaming that he wanted to be left alone. Who was Dean to force him to talk about something that terrified him? Besides… could Dean handle what Sam had to say? The older boy wasn’t sure whether he could listen to the truth that had been right there in the wide, fearful eyes staring at the television.
Maybe a part of him had wondered about it, but Dean had always shut the thought down so hard, and cursed himself strongly for merely having such a terrible idea. And now… now how could he pretend he didn’t know? How could he act as if he hadn’t seen the look of panic in Sam’s eyes as the woman in the movie begged the man not to rape her?

His little brother… his Sammy… who could be so cruel, and why?

In the end, silence seemed to soothe both brothers, and wrap them nicely in a bubble where there were no questions, just quiet sitting together and waiting.

They were in the woods for a long time. Hours, Dean judged, looking at the sky. Sam never moved from his position. He never raised his eyes, he never said anything. Dean never insisted. He sat in silence with his brother and respected the turmoil of thoughts and feelings that Sam tried to process.

When the sun was about to set, though, Dean knew they had to go.

“Look,” he said, “It’ll be dark soon. What do you say we go back inside, hm?” Dean watched Sam for any reaction, but there was none.

Dean waited for another fifteen minutes in utter silence before trying again.

“If I promise not to ask you anything, will you come back home?”

Slowly, Sam started to stir. Dean held his breath when Sam raised his head and looked into his eyes. His brother’s eyes were red and puffy, and they looked glassy and defensive. “You promise?” He asked, studying Dean.

There were a lot of questions in his mind, but one in particular. If the man had really done to him what it certainly looked like he had, what could he do to help his brother?

“I promise,” Dean forced himself to say. He would not force Sam to speak about his captivity when he clearly could not handle it. “We’ll go back, clean up the mess of mac and cheese off the floor, and do whatever you want. Not a word about this afternoon.”

Then Dean got to his feet and reached out his hand to help Sam. It took a small moment of pondering before Sam accepted the hand and rose as well.

“How’s your knee?” Dean nodded towards it.

“It’s okay,” Sam shrugged.

Dean nodded and put a hand on Sam’s shoulder. He wanted to pull his brother into a tight embrace, but something about Sam’s attitude made him choose not to.

The two brothers headed back to Bobby’s house in silence as the sun began to set in the horizon.

~ * ~

Despite agreeing to go back inside, there was an undeniably awkward atmosphere between them. Sam avoided Dean’s worried looks at all costs, and he didn’t like the idea that night was coming and
soon it would be time to sleep.

Dean tried to respect Sam’s space as much as he could, but he was worried, and he couldn’t deny that. He followed Sam around the house with his eyes, and when Sam disappeared into the kitchen for a long time, Dean went after him to see if he needed anything.

“Are you okay?” He asked when he found Sam sitting on a chair, drinking from a mug.

“I’m fine,” he replied, taking another sip and frowning slightly.

Dean looked at that frown and then looked at the open kitchen cabinet. He knew what was inside that cabinet.

“Are you drinking Bobby’s booze?”

“Are you going to stop me?” Sam looked up at Dean with the same defiance in his eyes he usually saved for their dad.

Dean thought of something to say, but in the end he just shrugged and turned around to leave.

“Suit yourself,” he whispered.

Dean left the kitchen hating the fact that he could not help Sam, that he had shut down completely and obviously didn’t welcome any closeness. But he didn’t think that pushing would get him results, so he just let him be.

Sam drank until he was positively drunk. He did that because he had often seen and heard about people who drank too much and blacked out. Well, after the breach in his safety wall, Sam didn’t think he would be able to sleep, so blacking out sounded like a good idea.

When he went upstairs to his room, satisfied he was drunk enough, he shut the door and threw himself on the bed in the brightness of the room. The shut door made it clear he didn’t want to be disturbed.

Dean understood that. At midnight, when he saw Sam shut himself in his room without a word, he made his way to the room Bobby wouldn’t be using tonight—since it was the other room upstairs with a real bed in it— and tried to find some sleep.

Alone and drunk, Sam didn’t think he could handle Dean’s presence after the darkness his brother had seen in his eyes. It hurt him, physically, the thought of being unable to hide from his brother’s caring look, but the truth was that Sam could not speak to him. Going back to that dark room and facing its dark secrets was not an option.

Sam shut the door because Dean’s warmth and comfort came at the cost of facing his vulnerability. Then, with the alcohol running fast in his veins, Sam shut his eyes and prayed for oblivion.

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tbc...
In the nightmare, he was running from the man in the middle of the dark woods. Sam looked over his shoulder and saw the large shadow coming for him, ready to seize him and hurt him.

Sam ran for all he was worth, but his legs felt heavy and slow. ‘Please, no...’ he shut his eyes and cried. ‘Just leave me alone!’ Sam screamed at the man chasing him and getting closer. He ran down a hill, towards more trees, stepping over rocks and tree branches, and suddenly he tripped and lost control of his body.

Sam landed flat on his stomach and cried out. He could hear the footsteps getting near, and his body prepared itself for the pain he would be unable to escape from.

When Sam felt a pair of strong hands grabbing his shoulders, his stomach turned and everything spun out of control before his eyes. ‘No!!’ He struggled. The man held him fiercely, and Sam felt confused and dizzy… His stomach was hurting badly, and the urge to empty it grew powerfully strong.

Sam’s eyes darted open and were met with the brightness of his bedroom. He didn’t have time to dwell over the nightmare, though. He got up and rushed to the bathroom, slamming the door shut and kneeling before the toilet, where he paid the price for all the alcohol he had consumed.

Sam’s stomach turned over, and it felt like he couldn’t stop throwing up. He held on to the toilet as the bathroom seemed to spin around him.

~ * ~

In the middle of the night, Dean was woken by the insistent noise of the toilet being flushed. He listened for a while longer before getting up and knocking on Sam’s door, calling after him.

The sound of sickness was loud and clear, and when no one answered, Dean pushed the door open.

“Sam?” His brother was not in bed and nowhere to be seen. Dean looked at the bathroom door, which was closed. There was light coming from it, so Dean approached the bathroom. “Are you in there?”

“Go away!” Sam yelled, angrily.

Inside the bathroom, Sam was sitting on the floor, his head close to the toilet because he could not control the nausea he was feeling. Before long, there was another wave of sickness and Sam
contorted painfully on the floor, holding on to the toilet as he threw up some more liquid.

“Dude, are you sure you don’t want some help?” Dean asked, his chest tight with worry.

“I’m fine. Just go back to your room.”

Sam wasn’t fine. He was sweating cold and he felt dizzy, but he was too proud to admit he had gone too far with the drinking and needed help. The sickness mingled with the thoughts stirring in his brain, and they weakened him to the point where Sam could barely stand up again.

“You sure?”

“Just leave me alone, Dean!” Sam groaned, angrily. He hated his helplessness, hated it! Why couldn’t he leave it all behind and move on?! Why couldn’t he shut the door to that fucking bright room and just be normal again? Why couldn’t he be strong enough not to need anyone looking after him, checking on him?

“Fine,” Dean muttered and turned around. He left Sam’s room and went back to Bobby’s, where he had been sleeping. What could he do? Kick the door down to offer help that wasn’t welcomed? He had known Sam since he was born, and unlike his father, he knew when it was time to step back and give Sam room to think.

Dean lay in bed in the dark and picked up a music player. He put the headphones over his ears and started listening to some rock and roll. If Sam wanted to empty his stomach all night without his help, fine. But he didn’t want to stay up and listen to his agony.

Dean listened to the lyrics and stared at the ceiling in the dark, feeling strangely sad.

~ * ~

Alone in the bathroom, Sam vomited yet again, until his stomach hurt. When he was done, he got up with difficulty, flushed the toilet and washed his mouth and face in the sink. Before he knew it, though, he was crying into the sink, his body giving in under the strain. He was just exhausted from trying to shield his mind from painful memories and feeling sick because of alcohol.

When Sam opened the bathroom door and walked into his room, he didn’t like the feeling of being alone. His room was suddenly a hostile place that reeked of the fear he had felt in yet another nightmare.

Sam scoped the room and then stared at the bed. He thought of the movie this afternoon, and the hole in his wall. It felt like darkness reached out its arms through this hole in his brain and tried to embrace him.

The man moved on top of him faster and...

“No,” Sam shook his head violently. “No more,” he begged his brain. “Please stop!” He frowned and shut his eyes, trying hard to close that hole and stop darkness from coming.

Sam looked at the bathroom and then at the door, and walked towards it feeling sick and lost. “Dean?” He called when he opened the door and stared at the dim lit corridor.
No one replied. Outside his bedroom, there was only silence.

Sam looked at his bed and at the shadows lying ahead in the corridor. His room was the only place with the lights on, and it cast a little light in what would otherwise be just darkness in the house. He realized he didn’t want to sleep alone. He knew that the moment he put his head in the pillow he would think of the man, and he would remember the things he did to him in the room, and Sam couldn’t bear it.

“Dean, where are you?” He called softly into the night.

As he got no reply, Sam stepped tentatively out of his room and towards Dean’s. The light his bedroom shed in the corridor was enough for him to see the way. He walked into the room where Dean used to sleep before they started sharing a bed, but again there was no reply when he called his brother’s name.

As he walked further in, Sam bumped into the mattress on the floor, crouched and felt around. Dean wasn’t there. Sam’s heart started to race and his breathing became a mess when he got up again, left the room, and advanced in the dark. Bobby’s room was farther away down the corridor, and the more Sam walked towards it, the darker it became until he was at the door to Bobby’s room.

“Dean?” He called.

Because Dean had his headphones on, he didn’t hear the call at first.

Sam stood by the door, shaking, unable to step inside the room. The light from his bedroom was not enough to shine this far, and as Sam looked inside the room he could not tell whether his brother was there or not. All his stubbornness was now regret and fear – he didn’t want to be alone. “Dean, please… I’m sorry…” He tried again.

Then, as there was no reply, nothing but darkness and silence, Sam tried louder. “DEAN!”

Dean took off the headphones and frowned in the dark. “Sam?” He asked.

“I’m sorry for before,” Sam said, relieved to hear his brother’s voice. “Can you sleep with me? Please?” Sam hated the way every word tasted like fear in his mouth.

Dean could hear Sam’s heavy breathing even from the distance separating them.

“No.”

“No?” Sam’s heart raced and shrank.

“No. I’m not going there. You come here, Sammy. Come and sleep with me,” Dean didn’t know where that had just come from, but the words were out of his mouth before he had given them any thought.

“But it’s dark… I’ll turn on the lights, then…”

“No, there’s no need to. You can do it. Just come here. C’mon, I’m right here.”

Sam was frozen in place for a long while. He didn’t think he could do it. Dean was asking him to
step into the dark, how could he?

“Dean, please…”

“C’mon, Sam. You know you can do it. Here,” Dean repeated, just as firmly.

Sam shut his eyes and took a step forward. He realized his legs were shaky as he walked further into the dark room.

Dean could see him move tentatively. It was dark in the room, but not so dark that he couldn’t see Sam approaching the bed.

Sam felt his legs touch the bed and a small sigh escaped his lips. “Dean?”

“Yes, here,” Dean reached out his hands and Sam took them. The moment he felt Dean’s warm fingers on his, some knots of sheer tension relaxed within him, and Sam crawled in bed beside him.

“I’m sorry for before,” he said, his heart still racing, his body still shuddering.

“It’s alright. You don’t have to apologize.” Dean adjusted his body behind Sam’s protectively and pulled at his brother’s chest softly to bring him closer to his warmth. It was a much smaller bed, but they both knew that was not the only reason why Dean wrapped his arms tightly around him.

After all his anguished thoughts and fears, Sam felt he could relax in the embrace. He felt Dean’s breath tickling the back of his neck and he felt he could shut his eyes and not be afraid of the dark.

Sam thought about the afternoon and his running away, and how embarrassed he had been since then to look into his brother’s eyes.

“Dean…” Sam could smell his brother, so safe and so close, filling his brain with ease. “I really don’t want to talk about this afternoon. I can’t.”

“Shh… it’s okay. I know.”

“Dean…” Sam started again.

“Yeah?”

“Please don’t tell dad.” Sam’s voice was a soft plea, and he held his breath when he spoke, because he knew how much admission those words bore.

Dean tensed. He closed his eyes and his heart ached. It was true, wasn’t it? Sam had been abused… Dean pulled Sam against himself tightly, squeezing his smaller body.

“I won’t tell,” Dean said, but he went on before Sam could relax. “But only if you promise you will do it.”

Dean could feel Sam tense against his chest.

“Dean, no… please, no… I can’t… can’t look at him if he knows…” Sam’s voice was so small that Dean could barely hear him.
“But Sam, it’s dad…”

“No, Dean, no…please, I can’t, can’t look in his eyes, please-“

“Sam, you do know that you’ll have to tell him eventually, right?” Dean tried again, because he knew how serious it was.

“No, Dean, no! He can’t know. Please don’t make me…” Sam thought of his father’s look when he found out that he had been abused, and he started to shake. Dean could tell by his fast breathing and trembling limbs that if he insisted, he would end up triggering a panic attack.

“Shh…” Dean tightened his arms around his brother’s body when he felt him stiffening and losing control. “It’s okay. We don’t have to think about it now, alright? We’re just going to sleep. And I’m here for you whenever you need to talk. You know that, right? I’m here for you, Sammy.”

There was a long moment of silence before Sam at last relaxed within the embrace.

“Dean?”

“Yeah?”

“Will you tell them about the alcohol?”

“If you can promise me you won’t do that again until you’re old enough to, then I won’t.”

“I promise,” Sam nodded, moving his head against the soft pillow.

“Then it’s alright. If Bobby asks anything, which I doubt he will, I’ll say I drank it.”

“Thanks.”

“No go to sleep, Sam.”

Sam closed his eyes and gave in to how tired he felt. He was almost dreaming when his lips moved again.

“Dean? I love you.”

Dean’s heart seemed to leak something warm and thick in his veins.

“I love you too.”

Dean kissed the back of his brother’s head and squeezed him before he too found sleep, holding Sam in the darkness of the room.

~ * ~

Harry Dunn knew the plan had backfired. The world of hunters was a small one, and just a few days after his last visit to the boy, the man became aware of how messily things had ended.
Not only had the demon been unable to wipe the boy’s memory – as promised – he had also failed to tell him the name of the boy he had been torturing.

John Winchester was a well known, badass hunter. Any other hunter in the country had heard of him, or worked with him in a few cases. Not only was John Winchester a damn good hunter, he had also been a friend.

Thus, when the man learned that the boy he had beaten, burned, cut and abused for three months was no one other than his friend’s youngest son, it was understandable that the earth beneath his feet seemed to disappear.

Harry and John had hunted together in a number of occasions, sometimes with that other hunter – Bobby Singer. Together, they had hunted all sorts of monsters, and during their last case together, which had been about five years ago, John had saved Harry from becoming a werewolf. The fact that he had repaid him by physically punishing his kid was unbelievable, and it made everything inside his chest feel cold with tension and regret.

The man, Harry, had gotten himself into this mess mainly because of the deal his mother had signed. But he couldn’t lie that he had also craved the money. He had been a hunter for a long time now, and the truth was that he was sick and tired of this life. His mother signing a deal with a demon to save him from trouble had been the last straw, and Harry had promised himself he would quit the life.

When he had the opportunity to save his mom at the same time he would be making real money, it was hard not to take it. The deal was to follow orders and torture someone – as if he hadn’t been a professional torturer as a hunter; as if he hadn’t been good at following orders when he was a soldier, many years ago.

At first, Harry didn’t know he would be torturing a kid. But by the time he found out, he had already dreamed too big with the money, and made great plans to flee the country and retire from the hunting life. When he signed the deal with the demon who captured the boy it was too late, and even when things started to get out of control – for fuck’s sake, the demon had turned him into a damn rapist! – he had been unable to turn away from the deal.

His old mom was saved, that was true, and he had some real cash, that was also true, but at what cost?

His plans to retire and leave the country seemed like too distant a dream now.

The demon had promised him that the boy’s memories would be wiped. There would be no way in hell that anything could trace back to him. But things had gone wrong, and the boy remembered everything, and this boy was Sam Winchester, the son of one of the meanest hunters out there. And an old friend.

For sure it had always been dark, so dark that there was no way the boy could recognize him, but could he be certain of that? Could Harry really trust darkness to have blinded Sam to the point where they could be looking into each other’s eyes without any sign of recognition lighting up the boy’s face?

Harry didn’t know.

What he did know, was that John Winchester was now aware that the demon had not tortured his son. Word had it, among hunters, that he was looking for a certain man who had hurt his son during
three painfully long months under the command of a demon. Harry had heard it from other hunters that John was seething, that he was making this man his top priority, and that finding him to get revenge had become as important to John as his personal quest to avenge the death of his wife.

A thousand times fucking fuck! How could that have happened?

The demon had had everything under control, how could he have fucked up like that? How could he have underestimated John Winchester, specially when he teamed up with Bobby and John's older son, who everyone said was growing up to be just as fierce as the father?

What was Harry supposed to do now? If by any chance John found out that he had been the one in charge of his son’s torture, then he knew their friendship wouldn’t mean a thing. He was aware that a slow, painful death would be waiting for him in John’s hands.

How could he go anywhere in this world with the fear of not knowing whether or not the boy remembered his face? No, he was not supposed to remember, but what if…? Harry couldn’t live on what ifs… He couldn’t spend the rest of his life looking over his shoulder, wondering if John Winchester had finally pieced things together and was coming for him.

He didn’t think it would be easy – but Harry knew it wasn’t impossible. If John questioned around enough he might end up knowing about his mother’s deal. He knew that a desperate man would do the unthinkable to try and save someone he loved. Then, if he investigated further, he might grow curious as to what Harry Dunn had been up to in the months his son was missing. He hadn’t hunted, he hadn’t worked, no one had seen him. And ever since his son had been found, no one had heard of him, it was as if he had vanished into thin air. It was as if if felt guilty or something…

The man sighed deeply and considered his options. If he tried to apologize to his friend he believed that, with some luck, it would get him a quick death, instead of an agonizing one. He supposed he could still run away, leave the country, but his mother’s health had taken a turn for the worse – how ironic that he had pretty much sold his soul to save someone with so little time left on this earth – and he didn’t want to abandon her.

How could he spend his days wondering if today would be the day John would come knocking on his door, asking questions about his past, about his son? Could he pretend he didn’t know? Could he act shocked? Could he offer comfort?

With guilt eating at him and the memories that sometimes didn’t let him sleep, Harry doubted he would be able to pull off an innocent attitude. The whole thing with the boy made him wish the demon had wiped his memories, at least. It was one thing being in that surreal white room, following orders. It was a different thing being back in the real world, having to live everyday with the memory of hurting and breaking a young boy who had done absolutely nothing wrong.

The more he thought about his options, the more Harry realized there was only one thing he could do. He needed to be sure the boy, Sam, didn’t know who he was. He needed to come face to face with the kid and see nothing in his eyes, no sign of recognition, no fear, no anger, nothing. If he could do that, then he would be able to go about his life with ease, and if John came looking for him, he would be able to deny everything. Without Sam’s confirmation, there was no way John would kill a man based on assumptions.

Of course, there was another possible outcome. Maybe the boy would recognize him. ‘That’s ridiculous,’ the man told himself. ‘It was always so fucking dark in there, he never saw me, he never heard my voice! He just can’t know who I am,’ he tried to reason with himself.
Nevertheless, he could not rule out that possibility. And if Sam recognized him, if the boy showed any signs of knowing who he was and what he had done, then there was only one thing Harry had left to do.

There was no way he would have gone through all that torture for nothing. He had earned his money, he had done something terrible, true, but he had earned his right to use that money and enjoy the rest of his life. Neither the demon’s mess nor John Winchester would stop him from enjoying his prize.

So there really was no choice. If Sam looked into his eyes and knew who he was, the man would know, because the boy would certainly be unable to hold back his reaction. He might scream or cry, or try to run… But after everything he had put the boy through, he knew that if Sam knew he was looking into the eyes of his aggressor he would lose control.

And if that happened, if Sam lost control, if Sam’s eyes accused him of all the evil things he had done to him, then Harry would be left with no choice.

The man toyed with the bullets and the gun resting on the table before him.

He would look for the boy so he could move on with his life. Best-case scenario, Sam wouldn’t remember, wouldn’t react, and he would come back home ready to lie and pretend, and who knows, maybe even offer to help John track down this monster who had hurt his son.

But if Sam looked at him like the boy who had desperately feared the man who came in the dark, then Harry would be left with no choice.

He would then finish that stupid plan once and for all.

The man started loading the bullets carefully into the gun.

*Sam, John, Bobby, Dean.*

And when he was done, there would be no witnesses left to accuse him of anything.

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tbc...
They had been living in Bobby’s house for almost two months now. Sam had expressed no desire to go back to school, although he did sort of miss his studies. Because John was reluctant to leave his friend’s house he agreed that Sam would be home schooled for a while, until they decided it was time to move on.

The truth was that John wasn’t ready to leave Bobby’s place. Sam was extremely unstable – there were good days and bad days, and there were bad nights more often than not – and John wasn’t sure whether he was ready to deal with being alone with his kids. Knowing Bobby was there for him, and to help the boys too, was comforting, and John relied strongly on that.

Besides, he couldn’t deny that it had been fun to go out hunting with Bobby. And it felt good knowing that his kids were safe in Bobby’s house, and not in some cheap roadside motel. He didn’t know how much longer that situation would last, but as long as Sam started studying again and Dean kept training hard, John supposed there was no harm in letting things be.

“Boys, tonight Bobby and I will head out to hunt down the vampire nest. Don’t expect us home early this morning. We’ll call if anything happens.”

“Alright,” Dean nodded, cleaning the kitchen table as Sam did the dishes.

“When you’re done, come upstairs. I wanna show you something,” Bobby told them.

Dean and Sam finished their chores and followed Bobby upstairs. The older man took a key off his set and gave Dean. “You see this locked door? Open it,” he instructed.

Besides the rooms and the bathroom upstairs, there was a small door, usually locked, to which Bobby gave Dean a key now.

“What’s inside it?” The older brother asked.

“Nothing you’re gonna need, but just in case.”

Dean opened the door and Sam and he looked inside a small pantry filled with shelves of canned goods.

“What’s all that for? Are you preparing for war?” Sam asked.

“You’ll not need this, there’s plenty of food in the fridge. But in case your father and I don’t come back…”
“Shut up, Bobby,” Dean said quickly.

“Nothing’s gonna happen to you guys,” Sam added.

Bobby nodded and smiled. “You’re right. We’ll kick those vamp asses. But still, it’s good that you know if anything happens there are guns in my basement, and food upstairs.”

“Thanks, Bobby. But Sam and I won’t be needing any of that. Isn’t that right, Sam?”

“Yes.”

“Good. You two take good care of each other then. John and I are leaving in a few minutes.”

The boys watched as their father and Bobby packed a few last things and headed out a little after lunch time.

“So, what do you want to do?” Dean asked.

“I don’t know. I have some homework to do,” Sam confessed.

“C’mon. We’re alone, Sam. You don’t have to do school stuff.”

“I actually like doing school stuff.”

Dean made a face and Sam laughed at him.

“Nerd.”

“Shut up,” Sam smiled. “Speaking of it, have you finished the book?”

“What book?”


“Oh, you mean that book in which nothing happens except for people walking, walking, then walking some more? No, I haven’t.”

“It’s a great book.”

“Maybe. But not as great as the beating I’ll give you when we practice some wrestling,” Dean grabbed hold of his brother and ruffled his hair playfully.

“Dean! No!” Sam cried out and tried to push him away. He was smiling, but he tensed a little as Dean held him firmly. “I don’t want to train wrestling,” Sam said, pushing Dean’s arms off.

“Why not? Afraid I may let you win? No way, I’ll be hard on you, I promise,” Dean smiled and tried to grab him again.

“No,” Sam stepped back, and sounded more serious this time. “I don’t… I don’t want to start training,” Sam confessed. “Not yet.”

Dean’s smile slowly faded and he nodded.
“It’s okay. I just thought it could be fun.”

“I know. But I’ll just watch you train, alright?”

“Yeah,” Dean nodded again and got ready to begin his training.

Sam sighed and sat down on the porch stairs to watch as Dean started by working out. Sam liked to watch his brother training, but he wasn’t sure about engaging in some of the same himself. Every time he worked out, or wrestled, he thought he would think of his failure to escape the bright room. What was the point of making his body strong when there were demons out there, that could so easily overpower him? Sam was afraid of training, because that implied in having to trust that he could win. And as of late, Sam didn’t trust himself to fall asleep on his own.

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When night came, they had dinner while watching cartoons, and they watched TV until after midnight. When Sam could no longer keep his eyes open, he agreed to go to bed. Dean turned off the TV and waited in bed as Sam took a quick shower. He leafed through the Lord of Rings without much interest, but decided to put it away and rest.

Sam walked out of the bathroom wearing comfortable pants and a black t-shirt. His hair was still wet from the shower, and it looked funny because he was just too tired to comb it.

“Let’s sleep?” Sam’s question dissolved into a loud yawn.

“Yeah. Turn off the lights,” Dean said.

Sam blinked a couple of times and stared at Dean, lying on the bed, looking at him.

“Dean…”

“What? Turn off the lights and come here,” Dean patted the bed.

Sam felt his chest tighten a little and his heart grow a bit heavy.

“Why are you asking this?”

“Because you can do it. You know you can. We have already slept with the lights off, remember?” Dean didn’t want to push Sam, but he knew his brother was stronger than he believed himself to be. Sam could handle some darkness – at least when they were together he could – and Dean thought it was good for his confidence in himself that he was able to sleep through the night despite the lights being out.

“But…” Sam looked at his brother with a look that tug at Dean’s heart. “I never turned the lights off myself,” Sam explained. Indeed, all the times they had fallen asleep with the lights off were accidents. Either someone had turned them off inadvertently, or Sam had walked into Dean’s already dark room in the middle of the night.

“Right. So tonight you’ll do it on your own. You’ll choose to turn off the lights because you can
“I don’t think I can.”

“Of course you can. I’m right here. You know there’s no one else in the house, don’t you?” Dean asked.

“Yes…”

“So all you have to do is cling to this knowledge in the few seconds it takes you to walk from there to bed. When you’re here, you know you’re safe.”

Sam wished Dean wasn’t doing that. He didn’t want to turn off the lights. He didn’t want to leave himself open to the fear that would creep slowly through the cracks in his wall.

“Dean…”

“Do it, Sam. Turn off the lights and come here with me,” Dean lifted the sheets invitingly.

Sam took a deep breath, trying to steady his heartbeats. Then, in a swift movement, he turned off the lights and widened his eyes. His breath came a little faster and his steps were a little shaky, but he walked towards the bed until he was on top of it, nestling under the sheets right next to Dean.

“See? Here you are,” Dean whispered softly. He found Sam’s face and ran the back of his fingers across his cheek. “It’s not that dark, is it? If you wait a little, you can see me here.”

Sam nodded. He could. After a few moments his eyes adjusted to the darkness, and not only did he feel Dean’s fingers grazing his cheek, he also saw his eyes looking deeply into his own.

“It wasn’t like this in the room. My eyes could never adapt to the dark. It was impossible to see a thing.”

Dean’s heart tightened and he ran his fingers through Sam’s hair.

“You’re not there anymore. You’re here with me. I won’t let anyone hurt you again, do you understand?” Dean tugged at his hair gently.

Sam nodded, his head resting on the soft pillow.

“Do you think I’m weak? That I should have gotten over it by now?”

“No,” Dean answered quickly. “I don’t know what you went through, but I know for sure that weakness had nothing to do with it. You’re only here now because you were so strong. And we’ll get through this, it doesn’t matter how long it takes.”

‘I wasn’t strong,’ Sam thought. Dean didn’t know about all the crying, the begging, the sobbing…he felt ashamed, and he was glad Dean hadn’t seen him break down. Sam bit on his bottom lip. He felt his eyes burning, and then his throat swelled and he felt like he could not utter a word if he tried.

“Hey, what’s wrong? Are you okay?”

Sam nodded. He didn’t want to speak. He turned around and pressed his back against Dean’s body,
silently asking his brother to do what they had grown used to. Dean wrapped his arms around Sam and pulled him closer. He slipped an arm between Sam’s neck and the mattress, and felt his brother rest his cheek against it. Dean felt the tip of his nose touch the back of Sam’s neck, and he breathed in the smell of shampoo.

“What?” He asked when Sam stirred in his arms.

“I got goosebumps,” Sam smiled softly.

“What? Because of this?” Dean grazed the tip of his nose against Sam’s neck and breathed on him.

“Don’t!” Sam stiffened and shivered. Goosebumps broke all over his skin, including his legs and arms. He chuckled.

“Good night, Sammy,” Dean smiled. He could hardly believe he had just heard Sam chuckle in the middle of the dark. It was a small little step, but one that caused Dean to feel happy all over.

“Night, Dean.”

~ * ~

John and Bobby didn’t return until the following afternoon. Sam was upstairs doing homework and Dean was cleaning the living room when they arrived, with a friend.

Dean stopped what he was doing when he saw the three men walking in his direction. They were speaking loudly, and Dean had no idea who the third man was. When they got closer and Dean realized Bobby was limping, he rushed to meet them.

“Dean!” His father greeted him.

“Bobby, are you alright?” Dean looked at the blood stain in the hunter’s jeans.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” Bobby reassured him quickly.

“What happened to you?”

“Is everything alright here? Dean, this is Harry, Harry, this is my oldest son.”

“Nice to meet you, Dean,” Harry reached out his hand and shook hands with Dean Winchester.

“Nice meeting you,” Dean said, still puzzled and staring at Bobby with a frown.

“Bobby’s okay. We just had a little mishap last night, right?” John looked at Bobby.

“Right. Fucking vamps,” Bobby groaned, limping towards the sofa, where he sat down. “We were closing in on them when suddenly we realized they had brought in more vamps. About ten more. By the time we became aware of that, we were cornered and outnumbered.”

“We decided to leave quickly and come back with a different plan. Bobby hurt himself in the process of leaving fast.”
“I tripped on a fucking rock and had a stick go into my leg,” Bobby explained.

“Damn it, Bobby…”

“He’s fine now,” Harry said. “He just needs to rest.”

“We ran into Harry last night, after Bobby got hurt. He helped us get out of there and tend to Bobby’s wound,” John explained.

Dean looked at Harry and then at the bloody bandage wrapped around Bobby’s thigh.

“Are you sure you’re gonna be okay?”

“Yeah, it’s just a scratch,” Bobby said. “Please pour me a dose of something strong kid, I need it.”

Dean headed towards the shelf where Bobby kept some of his bottles and chose one.

“So that’s it? The vampires got away?” Dean fixed Bobby a drink.

“I’ll have one too, Dean,” Harry asked.

“Not for me,” John said. “And no, those bastards won’t get away. Harry and I are going back there tonight, and we’ll put an end to that.”

“I take it you two know each other from hunting then?” Dean asked.

“Yes. Harry and I hunted a few witches and a werewolf a few years ago,” John said. “Then he caught word of this big nest we’re hunting and decided to come check it out as well.”

“So you’re going back tonight to finish it off?” Dean asked, he picked up a chair from the kitchen and sat in the living room right across from Bobby and Harry on the sofa, and his father on the rocking chair in a corner.

“We are,” John said.

“Good stuff,” Harry sipped his drink and made a funny face.

“What do you mean?” Dean asked.

“Bobby can’t come,” John said. “We need all the extra help we can to finish this off.”

“I’ll hunt them too?” Dean felt a twinge of excitement at the idea of hunting a vampire nest.

“Yes. In fact, we’ve just come back to leave Bobby and pick you up.”

“What about Sam?”

“I’ll be with him, don’t worry. You go and help your dad kill every last one of those bastards.”

Dean thought for a moment. The idea of leaving Sam was never easy on him, but he thought his brother would be okay with Bobby for a night, and besides, his father needed help. A vampire nest
wasn’t something one came across every hunt, and Dean was curious.

“Fine,” Dean shrugged. “Bobby, do you need anything?”

“No, I’m fine,” Bobby groaned. He pulled a center table closer and rested his foot on top of it. “Motherfucker.”

Dean watched the three hunters and listened to their report about their night for a few more minutes.

“What about your other son? If I remember well, you have two, right?” Harry asked. The first part of his plan had worked out well. He had run into John and Bobby as they hunted the vampire nest. Many hunters knew about this by now, because it had become a big thing, so Harry knew exactly the time and place to find the boy’s father.

The whole incident with Bobby had not been planned, though. Harry was indeed there to help John and Bobby hunt the vampires and destroy the nest. All he wanted was that when it was over he was invited to Bobby’s place for a drink, and then he would meet Sam and move on to the second part of his plan. Would Sam recognize him? If not, he would help John finish off this nest and then sweet freedom was on its way. If he did, though… Harry felt the gun around his waist – its coldness was soothing. With Bobby injured and Dean unknowing, if Sam showed any signs of knowing who he was and what he had done, there would be really just John to cause trouble, and the rest would be easy to deal with.

“Right. Dean, where’s Sam?”

“In his room, doing homework.”

“Go tell him to come down here, I want him to meet Harry.”

“No need to, here I am.”

Sam walked into the living room and looked at the people sat in there, talking and having drinks. He had heard a different voice when his father arrived with Bobby, and soon he realized they had a visitor. Despite his unwillingness to come down and interact, Sam had grown curious when they started to talk about Bobby getting hurt, so he forced himself to come downstairs and see what had happened to him.

“How are you, uncle Bobby?” Sam asked, looking at the bandage around his thigh.

“I’ll survive,” Bobby groaned and grinned.

The man watched him carefully. He watched as Sam unknowingly talked to Bobby about his injury. The man, Harry, watched intently, however discreetly, the boy he had beaten, tortured and raped for three months of their lives. His heart beat faster and his fingers felt for the gun softly as he waited for Sam to look in his direction.

“Sam, this is my friend Harry. We hunted together a few times. Harry, this is my youngest,” John introduced them.

Sam looked at his father’s friend without any particular interest.

“Hi,” he said, from a distance.
“Hi, Sam. He’s big, John. You’re getting old.”

“We both are,” they chuckled.

The man studied Sam curiously, but the boy didn’t seem to pay him any heed.

In fact, Sam didn’t look twice at him before he was back to talking to his uncle Bobby and listening to him talk about their night.

Harry took his first deep breath and allowed himself to feel a little bit more relaxed. There was no recognition in Sam’s eyes, but the kid had only looked at him very briefly, and not very closely. That was not enough to rule out the possibility of Sam recognizing him.

“Sam? Would you do an old man a favor? Since you’re still standing, can you pour me another dose of Whiskey?” Harry raised his empty glass and smiled.

Sam looked into his eyes. “Sure,” he said, and walked towards the bottle.

Again, Harry thought, there seemed to be nothing the boy’s eyes that indicated any fear or any memories from what they had been through.

Sam walked towards his father’s friend until he was close enough to pour him the drink. Standing over the man, Sam leaned down and started to fill his glass up. When he was standing so close to the man, something happened.

The strong smell of citric fruit filled Sam’s nostrils and hit him like lightening cutting through a stormy sky.

The familiar, yet terrifying scent, caused every door in his memory to burst open. For a second, Sam’s heartbeats stopped and the ground seemed to vanish beneath his feet.

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tbc...
Chapter 33

Although there had never been a face to the shadow that attacked him in the dark, the same smell had been a constant. When he was beaten, dragged, restrained and taken, the same acidic smell of citrus filled Sam’s nostrils with recognition and his brain with irrational fear.

It seemed to happen in less than a second. It was like time froze and everything happened in excruciatingly slow motion.

‘The man,’ Sam thought when his brain filled with memories.

At the same time this happened, though, Sam’s eyes went from the glass he filled to the shiny handle of a gun at the man’s waist, and then Sam let his eyes meet blue, observing eyes that searched deeply into his.

Sam made a decision in a split second, before he could think anything through. He held on as fiercely as he could while fear galloped through his thoughts, ignoring the frantic heartbeats that slammed against his chest and tried to weaken his legs. ‘If I do anything, he’ll kill us all,’ the thought cut through his fear sharply, and Sam hang on to it desperately. Not because he had thought it out rationally, or because he was even sure that he was right, but because the glimpse of the gun and the look in the man’s eyes represented a threat so powerful that Sam threw his senses at this assumption before he could drown in the pool of his own fright.

“Is that good enough, sir?” Sam asked, as lightly as humanly possible when all he had within was turmoil, and waited patiently for an answer.

The man had been holding his breath. He studied the boy looking straight into his eyes, holding a bottle of whiskey. Moment of truth, he thought. ‘Do you know who I am, kid?’ He let the question dance in his eyes for a moment, searching so deeply into Sam’s hazel eyes that the boy would have to crack.

Sam didn’t.

“No, thanks. That’s fine,” the man smiled, still looking intently into Sam’s eyes.

Sam pulled off the plug on his emotions and focused on the gun at the man’s waist. One wrong expression and, unless Sam was being completely delusional and irrational – which was a very real possibility and he knew that – one wrong move or word and the man would use that gun to kill everyone in that room.

Sam mirrored the smile and turned around to put the bottle back on the shelf. He could feel his heartbeats with his every step, and for a moment he felt slightly dizzy and his vision seemed to darken around the corners.
‘Pass out now and he’ll kill Dean. And dad. And Bobby. And me,’ Sam struggled with his thoughts fiercely. ‘I don’t care if he kills me, but he won’t hurt my family.’ He felt as if he could speak to his fears, and against all odds, the fears seemed to listen to him.

Sam turned around and sat down on the floor, in front of Bobby and the man, next to Dean and his father. He relaxed his shoulders and had a blank look that was as close to peaceful as he could manage.

The man was once again talking to Bobby and John, but he cast a few glances in Sam’s direction every now and then. Could it be that the boy hadn’t recognized him? Would he be so lucky as to escape without punishment from everything he had done? Would it be so easy? By now Harry was breathing with ease, his suspicion falling to a minimum level as Sam interacted in the conversation, looking at everyone equally, his body language not expressing any sign of distress.

‘What if he’s faking?’ The man thought. ‘He could be, couldn’t he? He could be just waiting for the right moment, as soon as I leave, to tell his father who I am.’ ‘Sorry, come again?’ He smiled. His thoughts were getting in the way of his conversation. Harry replied to something John asked and then welcomed his thoughts once again. ‘There’s no way he’s faking it. You saw him lose control. You saw him go batshit crazy when you walked into the room. You heard him scream and cry and beg, and there’s no way he would keep his composure if he thought he was face to face with the man who tortured him.’

“Do you want some cookies?” Dean offered Sam.

“Yes, sure,” Sam took two cookies and got up to offer them around. Bobby, his dad and the man accepted them, and then Sam went back to his sitting position to munch on them.

He tried to act completely unaware of the glances the man cast in his direction. When he happened to see one of those looks directed at him, Sam smiled lightly and looked away as if nothing unusual was happening there.

‘Please go away,’ he thought feverishly. ‘Just go away!’ He thought as he finished his cookies. Sam’s eyes met Dean’s and he smiled, and for a second he saw a question in his brother’s eyes, which caused Sam to look away quickly. ‘Please don’t ask me how I am, please Dean!’ Sam thought desperately.

The fact that Dean looked at him and let his eyes linger for a bit longer, and that he kept checking on him every now and then just proved how well his brother knew him. Sam was acting completely normal. He was smiling, he engaged in conversation, he asked questions and laughed when someone cracked a joke. And that was the very reason why Dean grew slightly suspicious. Sam wasn’t feeling that well, why was he acting it?

‘I gotta leave this room before Dean asks me if I’m fine. I can’t be here much longer. I can’t believe I’m here with the man…’ Sam looked at his hands and chewed on his nails, avoiding Dean’s and the man’s looks. ‘Maybe I’m going crazy, he thought. ‘I never saw his face. Maybe this is just a friend of dad’s and I’m losing it.’ Sam raised his eyes and stole a glance at the man.

Everything went icy cold inside of him and for a terrifying second Sam thought he would lose control. His heart slammed so loudly against his chest that Sam feared everyone would soon stop talking and ask what that sound was. Sam didn’t know whether or not that was the man, but right now he was in no condition of thinking too much about it. All his strength was focused on not losing it, on playing it cool.
“Are you ready to come?” John got up and asked Dean.

“Where are you going?” Sam asked, perhaps a bit too fast.

“Sam… I’ll go with dad and Harry hunt this vampire nest since Bobby can’t. They need help. I’ll be back tomorrow, okay?” He looked into his brother’s eyes.

Not only was Sam possibly in the presence of his aggressor, but now Dean told him he wouldn’t be there tonight? It took everything he had to keep playing that game, and Sam was already exhausted.

“Okay….” He murmured softly, his eyes visibly worried. He could feel himself cracking.

“Bobby will be here, alright? You’ll be fine,” Dean said. He looked at Sam and his eyes had a silent question.

“Sure, Dean. It’s okay,” he forced himself to smile, but suddenly it was too hard to keep doing that.

“Dad, I’ll go up and finish my homework. Good luck tonight.”

“Right. We’ll see you tomorrow. Take good care of Bobby,” John said.

“I will,” Sam said. “Bye,” he waved, looking everyone in the room a last time, including the man, and going upstairs towards his room.

“Nice kid you got there,” Harry said when Sam was gone.

“He is,” John agreed. He didn’t know whether or not his friend knew about what had happened to his son, but it was always something difficult to talk about. “He and Dean, they’re very close.”

Dean looked at his father and the man, but his heart had just followed Sam upstairs. He would make sure to check on him once more before they left.

“I can see that. It’s great,” Harry said.

“You do me a favor and kill every last one of those sons of bitches,” Bobby said.

“We will,” Harry said and patted Bobby’s shoulder lightly. “Let’s?”

“Yeah, just give me a minute, I’ll go get my stuff,” Dean said.

“Hurry up, we’ll be in the car,” John told him.

~ * ~

Sam closed the door to his room and sat on the bed. He covered his face with both of his hands and breathed in and out deeply for a while. Then, he let his fingers run through his hair and tugged at it, still breathing with a certain difficulty.

“Damn it…” He whispered. His thoughts were wild and fast, and he could barely hold on to his senses.
“Sam?”

The knock on the door startled him. Sam was edgy and fearful when Dean walked in.

“Hey.”

“Hey,” Sam replied.

“Is everything alright?”

Sam thought of Dean in the same car as the man who had tortured him. He couldn’t tell his brother. What if that man, Harry, was not the man who had hurt him? For sure the smell of citric fruit was not a privilege of one single person. If that was an aftershave, it was likely that hundreds of men shared the same taste for the scent and smelled the same. Sam knew that if he said anything, his brother would freak out, and so would his dad, and Sam knew they would end up killing Harry.

Now, if that Harry was indeed the man who haunted his dreams, then Sam wouldn’t care less about seeing him dead. But what if he wasn’t? What if Harry was just an unlucky man who happened to have a taste for the smell of acidic fruit? Should he die on account of that?

“I’m fine,” Sam assured him. He couldn’t make Dean suspicious about anything. He didn’t want Dean mentioning anything about him not being fine during the trip. “I have a bit of a headache, but it’ll go away. I’ll take a pill.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“Okay then. I’m heading out.”

“Take care,” Sam looked at him, and for a moment nothing mattered, nothing but what he felt for his brother. “Kill the vamps and come back home, okay?”

“You know I will,” Dean smiled. He went closer and put a hand on the back of Sam’s neck. From his standing position, he leaned over and planted a kiss on top of his head.

Sam’s heart filled with light and for a moment his heart beat within a different feeling, a feeling that was equally hot, but amazingly good. Dean shut his eyes for a moment and relished the closeness. It felt like his very skin was at peace when they were this close.

“Bye, Sammy.” Dean broke the embrace against his will.

“Bye,” Sam watched him go and in a few minutes heard the noise of the door slamming shut downstairs. He went to the window and could see the Impala driving away with three people inside of it.

“Sam?!?” Bobby yelled at him from downstairs.

“Yes?!?” He answered from his room.

“Are you alright?”
“Yes! Are you?”

“I’m fine. I’ll try to take a shower, if you need anything just let me know.”

“Do you need help, uncle?”

“No, I got this. Do your homework.”

“Okay.”

Sam sat back on the bed and listened as Bobby started moving downstairs.

He looked around himself at the room he had been sleeping in and sighed. It seemed like he had done such a powerful job at repressing his thoughts and fears that they had given up for the moment. Sam sat in silence, and there was nothing in his mind for a long while. He stared at nothing in particular for an entire hour, without realizing how much time had passed by.

The truth was that he was in shock. How do you behave if you think you’re face to face with your worst fear? Sam didn’t know what had just happened today, and he had no idea of what he should do.

When he managed to shrug off his stupor, he paced around the room and started thinking again.

Harry sure was tall enough and large enough to fit the idea of the man Sam had in his mind. But if he was the same man who had tortured him, why the hell would he have come back? Why would he come looking for him?

Sam thought of the gun he had seen on his waist. Had he come to finish what the demon couldn’t? Had he come to take him back?

Sam shuddered uncontrollably and sat on the floor, pulling his knees up. ‘He’ll have to kill me first,’ Sam thought at the idea of going back to the bright room.

But what if he was there to make sure Sam didn’t remember his face? It was a possibility, wasn’t it? When his dad, Bobby and Dean had burst into the bright room and rescued him, they had messed up the demon’s plans, and Sam had no idea how that had affected the man. What if he was there now to make sure he could carry on with his life without having to worry about the boy he beat recognizing him on the streets?

“What if Harry is nobody and I’m just losing my fucking mind?” Sam asked himself in a low, angry voice. He had never seen the man, not even once, and he had never heard his voice… there was no way Sam could identify the man who had abused him not even if he tried. For all he knew he could have lunch beside the same man and not know it was him.

However, there was the whiff he caught. Sam didn’t even have to think about it. He knew what he had smelled because it had triggered all sorts of irrational and immediate responses in his body. And Sam knew that he was afraid of that smell; he knew that smell had hurt him badly. And then again, Harry was physically built to easily overpower a boy. And he was a hunter, which increased the chances of him knowing a demon.

“I need a break,” Sam shook his head and decided to leave his room.
He went downstairs and met Bobby in the kitchen.


“Yes, thanks,” Sam accepted one and sat next to Bobby at the table. “How’s your leg?” He asked after a few bites.

“It’ll heal,” Bobby said casually, eating and drinking a beer. “I’ve had worse.”

‘So have I,’ Sam thought, but didn’t say anything.

Bobby watched Sam eat for a while. His heart filled with concern whenever he thought of just how much that kid had been through and how badly he suffered in silence.

“You’ve been quiet all day. Are you worried about Dean and John?”

Sam thought about it quickly. “Yes,” he accepted the excuse gladly. He was worried, but that was not what had caused him to keep to himself all day.

“They’ll be fine, you know that. Besides, Harry’s strong like a bull, and he’s on our side.”

Sam felt the next bite of bread scratch down his dry throat as he swallowed with difficulty. He drank his juice to try and make it go down. He was visibly tense and uneasy as all his thoughts from before started to come back once again.

“Bobby… I’ll go to bed. Do you mind?”

“Of course not. But it’s early, don’t you wanna watch a movie or something?”

“Not really. I still need to take a shower and I want to read some stuff,” he said, vaguely.

“Alright. I’ll be downstairs a while longer, if you need anything.”

“Thanks. Goodnight,” Sam smiled briefly and stood up.

“Night, kid.”

In his bedroom, Sam took a shower quickly and then looked for the sleeping pills. When he found the prescription bottle empty, his heart sank and he frowned. “I can’t believe it…”

Sam sat on the bed and stared at the empty bottle. He looked around at his bright bedroom and felt Dean’s absence hurt him.

Eventually, Sam lay down and closed his eyes. He tried to keep all thoughts of the man, of Harry, out of his mind. Sam tried to shut all the doors that had burst open after his visit. He tried to take some of the brightness in his room inside his mind as he waited for sleep to find him.

~ * ~
John, Harry and Dean were carrying their weapons and heading towards the vampire nest located in the middle of the woods. It was early in the night and the Impala had been parked a few miles behind. It was a twenty minute walk through trees and fallen branches to get to the where the vampires were hiding.

They were still far when John’s cell phone started to vibrate in his pocket.

“Not now,” John thought, frowning.

“What is it?” Dean asked, following right behind his father with Harry by his side.

“My phone,” he said.

“Who is it?”

“I don’t know,” John said and then pulled his phone out. “It’s Bobby.”

John and Dean exchanged a meaningful look.

“Pick it up, maybe it’s about Sam,” Dean’s heart was already beating faster.

“Hey Bobby, what’s up?”

Dean and Harry waited as John listened. When John’s forehead showed creases of worry, Dean could hardly breathe under the tension he felt.

“Right,” John said, “He’s coming,” and ended the call.

“What is it? It’s Sam, isn’t it?” Dean’s eyes were wide.

“Yes,” John said, his voice hoarse. “He’s having an…episode. Bobby doesn’t know what to do. He wants you to go back as fast as you can.”

Dean’s heart shrunk and ached in his chest. He looked at his father with a question in his eyes while Harry observed them.

“Here,” John handed Dean the Impala keys. “Go back as fast as possible.”

Dean nodded. “Will you be alright?”

“Yeah, Harry and I can handle it, right?”

“Sure,” Harry nodded, feeling the tension in the group.

“Just try and help him,” John said.

“I will. Bye, guys. Good hunt.”

Dean turned around and started making his way back to the car as fast as his legs would take him. In his mind, images of Sam screaming in his sleep urged him on and didn’t let him look back.

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tbc...
Harry watched John as he took a moment to regain composure.

“Is everything alright with your son?” He asked, feeling tense with the question.

“Not really.”

“You said he was having an episode… Does he have seizures?”

“Night terrors,” John explained. “I don’t know if you know this, I know some hunters are aware of it, but my son went missing for three months, Harry.”

“I… I heard someone say something, but I confess I didn’t pay it much attention. I thought it was gossip.”

“Well, Sam was kidnapped by a demon, and when we found him he was…” John looked at the woods around them and seemed to look for the right words. “He was broken.”

Harry swallowed hard. His heart rate picked up.

“That bad, huh?”

“Yeah. I don’t know what they did to him, but I know he was tortured. And not just physically, because he’s come back different. Sometimes he can’t sleep because of the nightmares.”

“Jesus, John… who would do that to a kid?” Harry played his part, because there was no other option.

“I don’t know. But I’ll kill them slowly when I find out.”

Harry nodded. He couldn’t help but worry about what was happening to the boy. A night terror, just after his visit? Was it just a coincidence, or did Sam, on some level, realize that the one talking to him was the man he had grown to fear? Harry had left Bobby Singer’s house with the feeling that he could carry on with his life, that the boy had no memory of him. But now he sensed he might have to go back there. It could be that the boy’s nightmare was just a coincidence – John had just said that those were frequent. But what if it meant something else? What if there was indeed some recognition going on in the boy’s mind?

He would have to go back there tomorrow and find out.

“John, are you okay to go on? Do you want me to handle this on my own?”

“No way. That would be certain death. I’m good. Just give me a moment.”
“Sure. Take your time,” Harry squeezed his friend’s shoulder and waited for him to start moving again.

~ * ~

“Sam!” Bobby tried again, sitting on the bed and touching the boy moving desperately on top of it.

“No!!” Sam groaned. He was kicking and thrashing, and when Bobby tried to restrain his frantic movements – like he had seen Dean do a few weeks back – Sam threw him off violently and screamed louder.

If Bobby didn’t know better, he would say that he was seeing a scene straight from a horror movie. Sam seemed possessed. He moved wildly and the most pained and terrible sounds of despair escaped his lips. His eyes were wide open and his face and neck were covered in a thin layer of sweat. When Bobby touched him, it felt as if Sam’s skin was burning under his fingertips.

‘Please, Dean…’ he thought. ‘Make it quick.’

“HMMMM!!” Sam groaned and shook in bed, fighting the monsters that had all been hiding in corners of his brain before the doors to his memories burst open.

Everything he had fought so bravely to suppress during the day came haunting him now, taking him over and forcing him to face the fear and the shame that hid in the dark.

It was hot. The fire licked at his skin and Sam screamed because the pain was unbelievable. He twisted against the handcuffs and tried to shrink away from the flame, but he couldn’t.

The man was right there, burning different parts of his skin, burning until the room smelled of cooked flesh and Sam felt sick, and until pain was the only thing that mattered in his life.

“NOOOO!!! PLEASE! STOP!!!” Sam screamed. The fire burned his thighs and Sam pulled at the handcuffs, tightening his throat around desperate sounds of horrific pain. “NOOO!!” He sobbed.

It was hot, so hot, and it hurt so much… he just wanted it to stop, he just wanted the man to go away...

~ * ~

It took Dean one hour and a half to drive back to Bobby’s house. The fact that he had made it there without killing himself on the road was a miracle in itself, because he had stepped hard on the Impala’s accelerator and demanded everything from the car’s engine. But at last he was there, and as soon as he parked he jumped out of the car and into the house.

Dean could hear the screaming from the living room.

“Bobby?” He called.
“I’m here! Upstairs!” Bobby screamed back.

Dean flew up the stairs and entered the room where his brother was struggling convulsively with an enemy no one else could see.

“Sam?” Dean walked past Bobby and got closer to the bed.

“I’m sorry I called you back, but I didn’t know what else to do. I can’t drive with my leg like this, and doctor Michael lives too far away.”

“You did the right thing, Bobby,” Dean assured him.

“NOOO!! PLEASE!! NO MORE NO MORE!!!” Sam screamed violently and fought the hands that tried to touch him.

Dean watched, his heart breaking, as Sam’s fear escalated higher than Dean had seen so far. His brother kicked and squirmed, and soon his hair was wet, as well as his clothes. Sam was sweating profusely, and when Dean touched him his concern grew. “Does he have a fever?” He asked Bobby.

“I think so. He’s burning up. But I don’t understand… it’s just a dream, isn’t it?”

They both looked at Sam when he cried a piercingly loud cry of pain and agony.

“It’s not just a dream, Bobby. In Sam’s mind it’s real. And right now he’s back in that room where he was tortured.”

“How can we wake him up? I tried Dean, but he just won’t listen to me.”

“Sam?” Dean called. “Sam, wake up. Its me, Dean… wake up.”

_The fire licked at his skin and Sam growled. He choked on his sobs and panted loudly. Every breath made a terrible sound of pain and the heat was suffocating._

“NOO! NO MORE! No more, please… please… please…” Sam shook, and this time Dean really thought he might be seizing.

“Bobby, can you fill the bathtub quickly? Let’s give him a bath.”

“Good idea,” Bobby said and left, limping, to do exactly as Dean said.

Dean still tried to hold Sam against his chest to calm him, but his brother was fighting and moving frantically. It made Dean have to use more force than he would have liked to in order to pull Sam out of the bed and into his arms. When he lifted his thrashing brother up, Dean saw the sheets were soaked with sweat and urine. What kind of sick person would torture a kid and shatter his self control so badly? Sam hadn’t wet the bed since he was a little boy. Whatever they had done to him in three months, they had managed to break through every shield Sam had tried to use to protect himself.

Dean rushed into the bathroom and looked at the bathtub filled with water. Bobby gave him room and he laid Sam in the bathtub gently, with his pajamas on and everything, being careful to keep his
head out of the water.

Sam hissed and gasped with shock when he felt the cold water all over his body. He grabbed at the arms holding him and dug his nails into soft skin, much like a terrified cat that tried to claw its way out of the water.

“Shhh, it’s okay, Sammy… it’s okay… wake up.”

Sam shuddered badly under the water and heard the familiar voice speaking to him. Suddenly, the hot, suffocating pain was gone, and instead of heat, Sam felt the chilling coldness of the water covering his body. He blinked a few times and looked around, his chest heaving up and down with painfully difficult breathing. It took him a moment to realize Dean was so close to him, holding him into the bathtub.

“What happened? Why am I here?” Sam asked, his eyes huge and questioning.

“Shhh… take it easy…” Dean spoke as softly as he could, despite his own distress. “It’s alright… just relax.”

Sam was still holding tightly to both of Dean’s arms, and then he realized Bobby was in there as well.

“What’s going on? Why aren’t you hunting with dad?”

Dean looked into his brother’s eyes but didn’t say anything.

“Relax, son… It’s okay now. I called Dean back because I wanted his help to help you,” Bobby explained.

“Did I… did I have a nightmare again?” Sam closed his eyes, but he couldn’t remember anything. He felt his heart beating fast, and the exhaustion in his body as if he had just run a marathon, but he couldn’t recall anything, except, perhaps, for a feeling of intense heat.

“You had a night terror,” Dean explained. He softly made Sam let go of one of his arms and started using it to splash some water down his neck and hair.

Sam’s breathing was slowly returning to normal, and the more time he spent in the bathtub, the colder he began to feel. He started to shiver, and soon his skin was no longer hot.

“I’m cold, Dean,” he murmured, shaking and pulling his knees up to himself. “I want to leave this tub.”

“Alright. Bobby? Can you give us a moment?”

“Sure,” Bobby left the bathroom and gave them privacy.

Dean helped Sam to his feet inside the bathtub, and then he helped his brother remove the soaked pajamas. When Sam was naked, goosebumps broke all over his skin and he shuddered. “I’m cold,” he said, his lips slightly blue.

“That’s good. You were burning up. We thought you had a fever,” Dean took a towel and offered him so he could wrap it around himself.
Sam accepted it eagerly. He dried his skin and then wrapped the towel around his body to try and warm up.

Dean put a hand on his forehead and sighed. “You’re okay now.”

“I’m sorry I made you come back.”

“Don’t be. I wasn’t thrilled about going and leaving you alone in the first place.”

“Are you alright, guys?” Bobby asked from the bedroom.

“Yes!” Dean said.

He helped Sam out of the bathtub and got a hand towel to help Sam dry off his hair. They walked back into the bedroom with Sam still wrapped around the towel that covered his nakedness.

“I think we got this, Bobby. You can go back to sleep.”

Bobby studied them and looked at Dean. He knew he was asking to be alone with Sam. His brother was probably uneasy about the whole thing, and the less people looking at him with concern, the better. “Alright. I’ll go back to sleep. If you need anything, don’t hesitate to call me.”

“Okay. Is your leg alright?” Dean asked.

“Yeah, it’s fine,” Bobby said. ‘Much better than Sam’s mind, anyway.’ He thought sadly before walking out of the room.

Sam stood in silence for a moment. Then, when they were alone, he walked towards the dresser and chose dry clothes for himself. He let the towel pool by his feet and got dressed quickly.

Dean studied him silently. What was behind tonight’s episode? Of course Sam was traumatized and suffering from PTSD, but what if something had triggered the night terror they had just witnessed? Besides, he had thought Sam looked different this afternoon, before he had left.

“Oh, crap,” Sam was about to climb back in bed when he saw what had happened there. ‘I cannot believe I wet the bed,’ Sam sighed deeply and shut his eyes, and he felt the heat come back to him and go up from his throat to his cheeks – everything was afire with shame.

Dean looked at the scene and at what was going on, and was quickly beside Sam, putting a hand on his shoulder.

“Hey, don’t worry about it.”

“Don’t.” Sam moved away from the touch and kept his eyes squeezed shut. He felt so ashamed he could dig a hole and crawl in there forever. He covered his face with his hands and stood there, trying to process all that burning shame.

“As if I’ve never seen you do that before,” Dean said lightly, a smile on his face. He tugged at Sam’s wrist and made him uncover his face. There were tears in Sam’s eyes, tears he fought bravely to stop. “In fact, I’ve seen much worse when I helped change your diapers. There was this one time-”
"Oh, shut up," Sam chuckled nervously, the sound muffled by the tightness of his throat. He pushed Dean away playfully and rubbed at his eyes to wipe his tears.

"C’mon, let’s sleep in my room."

Dean grabbed Sam’s arm and walked with him out of the bedroom. He turned off the lights there and turned them on in his room.

They nestled in the narrow mattress in silence, and Sam was glad Dean hadn’t suggested that they turn off the lights.

“C’mere,” Dean lay on his back and beckoned Sam closer. He felt warm when Sam’s head rested between his arm and chest, his hand touching Dean's ribcage.

It felt good being this close. It felt right.

“About today…something happened, right? I knew you were different when I left before.”

Sam didn’t reply, he just snuggled closer. He thought of their father’s friend – Harry – and the possibility that he was the man who beat him, cut him, burned him, rap–.

“Hm…” Sam shut his eyes and let his fingers squeeze around Dean’s cotton shirt.

“Am I right? Did something happen?”

“Yes,” Sam nodded.

“And are you ready to tell me what it was?”

“No,” Sam said. He couldn’t. He wasn’t sure Harry was the man. What if the scent Sam had smelled was nothing but a smell he would have to grow used to finding in different men throughout his life? It was just a damn aftershave… if Sam said anything, his father would end up killing a man because of his choice of fragrance.

“I need some time to think,” Sam thought. Maybe he would never see that Harry again, of maybe he would see him tomorrow.

Sam found himself hoping that he would see him again. Not knowing whether or not his father was friends with the man who had beaten him was too terrible, and Sam felt like he needed to know. He had no idea how he could be sure Harry was his abuser if he had never seen his face, but Sam told himself that he would look into his eyes again, and then he would be sure. After all, his body wouldn’t have just gone crazy and fallen into another panic attack just out of nowhere, right? There had to be something going on with that man who had paid them a visit today.

“Fine,” Dean said. “But promise you’ll tell me what it is soon. I want to help you.”

“I know,” Sam said. “Will dad be okay?” He changed the subject.

“Yeah, he will. Harry will help him.”

Sam nodded. It was the answer he expected.
“Do you think they’ll come back here tomorrow?”

“Probably, why?”

“Nothing, just wondering.”

“You should try to get some sleep.”

Sam nodded. He turned on his side, his back to his brother. He sighed and relaxed when Dean’s familiar touch was there, behind him, wrapping him up in a feeling of safety.

“Thanks for coming back, Dean.”

“I will always come back for you.”

Sam smiled and relished his quickened heartbeats. Dean’s words could fight all thoughts of the man away, and Sam welcomed the blissful feeling of home he felt in the embrace.

They had always been close – their father’s lifestyle had made sure that happened – but after Sam had come back, they had been closer. Sam didn’t know what was happening with his feelings, but the thought of falling asleep without Dean’s arms around him made him feel a hollowness inside that hurt as bad as his most painful memories.

Memories which Dean could make him forget about with his touch.

“Night, Sammy,” Dean couldn’t help himself when he breathed into Sam’s hair. His brother’s scent put him at ease, despite clearly increasing the rhythm of his heartbeats. He supposed that was not the kind of behavior one would expect from two brothers, but few things about their lives fit into what was expected.

“Night, Dean.”

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tbc...
John came back home a little after midday, after having successfully hunted down the vampire nest with his friend Harry. Together, the two hunters had killed twenty four vampires, and made sure the town was once again a safe place to live.

Because Harry wanted to be on the safe side, and see the boy once more before he could believe he was free to move on, he accepted the offer gladly when John invited him back to Bobby’s house to celebrate a successful hunt with some food and drinks.

Sam was upstairs when he heard the sound of conversation downstairs. He heard Bobby’s voice and his father’s voice, and it wasn’t long before he heard the other man’s voice too. Alone in the room as Dean showered, Sam shuddered and closed his eyes.

‘I can do it,’ he thought, and wanted badly to believe it. ‘I’ll go downstairs and face him, and I’ll see whether or not I’m going crazy’. After a whole night since Sam had first seen the man he thought could be his torturer, it seemed more likely that he was imagining things than that said man had actually come back to knock on his door.

As Sam pondered the situation, he could almost convince himself that he had jumped to conclusions based on nothing but a smell, and that today he would probably clear out the impression that his dad’s friend was a monster.

“Sam?” His father’s voice brought him out of his thoughts quickly, and Sam looked at his dad by the door. “Where’s Dean?”

“Shower.”

John nodded.

“How was the hunt?” Sam asked quickly, because he knew his father looked proud.

“It was great. We’ll talk about it over lunch. Harry is here. You and Dean should come down as quickly as possible and we’ll eat.”

“Okay,” Sam said.

Then, instead of turning around, John stepped further into the room and studied his son.

“And how are you? Could you sleep well after…” John looked for words.

“Yes. I could,” Sam helped him. He knew his father was just trying to express his concern, but it felt awkward, for both of them. Sam didn’t want to talk about it, and John didn’t know how to talk about
“Good. So get ready and come join us downstairs.”

“We will.”

Sam watched his father turn around and leave. He swallowed hard and stayed seated on the bed, patiently waiting for Dean to leave the bathroom.

When he saw his brother, Sam’s heart felt a bit lighter. ‘It’ll be alright,’ he thought. ‘Dean will be there. Nothing will happen.’

“Was that dad? Did they kill the vampires?” Dean asked.

“I think so. He seemed happy. He wants us to go downstairs so he can tell us about the hunt.”

“Cool.”

Sam watched as Dean used a towel to dry his wet hair. He let his eyes trail down his brother’s chest for a moment before he spoke again. “Dad’s friend is also here.”

“Harry?”

“Yes,” Sam said. ‘Harry, or the man who came in the dark to torture me in many creative ways.’ Sam tensed a little, and chided himself mentally. He needed to act naturally. Yesterday he had probably overreacted. He was going downstairs now to clear that erroneous impression and let the whole thing rest. Last night had shown him that he could not give his memories much room to swirl around in his brain, because they could easily overpower him.

Dean finished getting dressed and stood before his brother, who was still sitting in bed.

“Are you feeling better?”

Sam nodded. He was feeling anxious, but he couldn’t tell his brother why. Hopefully, as soon as he realized there was no logical reason to suspect his father’s friend, he could tell Dean that there was nothing wrong, nothing but his fears playing tricks with his head.

~ * ~

They went downstairs to have lunch together. Bobby was in the kitchen, standing up despite his injured leg, and the smell of cooked meat filled the air.

Sam watched as Dean joined everyone in the living room and they soon started talking about the previous night. Sam didn’t immediately go to the living room. When he found himself downstairs, he realized he needed a bit more time before he looked into those blue eyes again. He went to the kitchen instead, to ask if Bobby needed help.

“Thanks, kid. You could see if they want something to drink in there. The meat is almost done, then we can eat outside. It’s a fine day.”
“Okay,” Sam took a deep breath and stepped into the living room. He did his very best to keep all his doubts and crazy emotions under control, and he believed he did a pretty good job.

Sam saw the man seated beside his father on the red sofa and didn’t feel anything strange. It was just a man. Tall, yes, and large – his shoulders were broad, his hands were big. He could be a match for the man in the dark, physically, but that didn’t mean anything.

“Hey there,” Harry greeted the boy when he walked into the living room.

“Hi,” Sam said and smiled briefly, before doing as Bobby asked and fixing everyone something to drink.

The man watched, appreciatively, as the boy went about the chore assigned to him and then sat on the floor, on top of a cushion, just as his brother was doing beside him. Again, there was no recognition in his eyes, no accusation, nothing to make Harry tense about his past.

When the food was ready, Harry stood up to help Bobby take it outside, where they could eat while sitting on stools or chairs, or even the porch stairs. As Harry helped serve everyone, he realized he felt relaxed. The hunt yesterday had been a success. He had a few scratches and bruises, but nothing serious. He had helped John rid the world of some evil vampires, and now he had come back to make sure that the boy he had been paid to torture paid him absolutely no heed. Sam couldn’t be faking, the man thought. If he had any suspicions about who he was, he would have told someone – he would have told his brother when he returned home last night. John said they were close, right?

So if Sam hadn’t said anything, and if there was no suspicious look or weird behavior coming from him, what reason was there to worry?

Harry enjoyed his lunch with everybody else, remembering moments from last night’s hunt or cracking jokes.

Sam was seated right beside Dean on the porch stairs, and he forced himself to eat some food. The truth was, his stomach was tight and he didn’t feel hungry at all, but he supposed that not eating would have been suspicious.

All was going well during lunch. Sam was almost positively sure that there was no reason to suspect his father’s friend, even though he was a hunter, even though he had access to demons, and even though he was physically built to be the very one who had hurt him.

Sam might have kept that doubt for a long time in his mind if he hadn’t offered to take everyone’s plates inside, into the kitchen. He was carrying a small pile of plates when he stopped in front of Harry, so the man could place his on top of the pile.

“Thanks,” he said, looking into Sam’s eyes.

“No problem,” Sam said and turned around to walk away.

“Wait. I finished my drink, could you take the glass as well?” The man grabbed him by the arm, closing his fingers around Sam’s arm tightly and pulling.

Sam froze where he was and by a miracle the plates didn’t fall off his hands. The man’s touch on his skin was terrible, it was so, so horribly familiar that Sam’s heart raced and his limbs weakened. It was just a touch, but a firm one, one that forced Sam to turn around again and look into blue,
“Yes, sir,” Sam said quickly. He cast a glance at the man’s fingers closed around his arm, a little above his elbow, and felt all the hairs rise on the back of his neck. He took the glass and looked at the pile of plates he carried.

“That’s too much, isn’t it? Let me give you a hand.”

Sam watched when Harry stood up and, to his horror, took some of the plates and followed him inside the house.

Dean hadn’t really seen anything because his father had been telling a story, demanding his attention. So he didn’t see the look of fright Sam cast in his direction when he walked past him and into the kitchen.

Sam quickly swallowed down his frantic heartbeats when he walked towards the sink and laid the plates there. He felt the man looming right behind him, and for a moment his chest brushed against Sam’s back.

The smell of citric fruit hit Sam like a truck, and he grasped the edge of the sink firmly to keep his hands from shaking. ‘It’s him! It’s him, it’s him!’ His mind screamed. ‘I know it is, I know!’ Sam was stiff, head to toe, when the man reached out his right arm and put the rest of the dishes in the sink as well.

“There. Isn’t it better when there’s help?”

Sam forced himself to turn around and look into his eyes.

“Yes, thanks,” he said. He didn’t know how he was doing that. How could he still stand up? How could he speak? Everything he felt inside was irrational fear. All he wanted was to start running and not look back, but the image of the gun at the man’s hip yesterday was still vivid, and Sam clung to that so he could convince his fears to wait a moment.

The man was standing just a few inches from him, and they were alone in the kitchen. Sam thought of the darkness and of the sound the door made every time it opened. He thought of the footsteps coming in his direction, finding him no matter where he hid.

“Are you okay boy? Your father was really worried last night when your uncle Bobby called,” Harry said. Now was the time. Put a little pressure, see if Sam would crack.

“I’m fine, thanks,” Sam replied. His voice sounded weird to his own ears, but he didn’t think it was anything revealing.

“John said that you were gone for three months… he said you went through hell. I’m so sorry to hear that.”

Sam looked down at his feet. He supposed that feeling uncomfortable was more than reasonable, and nothing that would raise suspicions. The man could not hear his frantic heartbeats, or the whimpering inside his mind as his fears struggled against the chains Sam tried to use to restrain them.

“I… I don’t like to talk about that,” Sam said, and looked into the man’s eyes.
“I understand. It must be tough trying to sleep in the dark when you have such terrible memories.”

‘Who said anything about the dark?’ Sam felt as if his heart would beat out of his chest and there was an explosion of tension inside him. Did his father say that he was hurt in the dark? Would his father have said that to anyone? Or was the man testing him? Was Harry deliberately saying that he was the man in the dark to see whether or not Sam would react?

Sam’s head was spinning. He didn’t think he could do it anymore. He was breaking, his self control shattering.

“My brother helps,” he said quickly, realizing that his breathing was no longer regular.

“I’m sure he does.”

The man placed a hand on his shoulder and squeezed, and once again, his touch sent shock waves down Sam’s spine, and an urgent feeling of fright and repulsion spread inside him.

“But you’ll be fine, you’re a tough boy.”

The smell of citrus was so strong that if Sam shut his eyes he knew he would find himself tied up in the dark room, with Harry in there, ready for a new kind of torture.

‘He won’t win,’ Sam thought desperately, and tried to think of as much light as possible to look up into the man’s eyes and smile. “Thanks.” Sam smiled a beautiful, carefree smile, a smile that took everything he had, a smile that was only possible because Sam thought of Dean and how good he made him feel; how safe he could feel in the dark. He could do that. He could turn off the lights for a moment, because Dean’s arms were there, waiting for him. He could smile to the man now, because Dean’s safety was right there, he just needed a few seconds of bravery.

“Is everything alright here?” Bobby asked, joining them in the kitchen.

“Yes. You can leave this, uncle Bobby. I’ll wash everything.” Sam offered quickly.

“Thanks, Sam. C’mon, Harry, John is asking for you back there so he can keep telling the story.”

Harry grinned. “Right, let’s go.”

Harry looked at Sam for a lingering moment and smiled. Sam smiled back with as much ease as he could summon. Then, he slowly turned around and turned on the tap to start doing the dishes.

Harry left the kitchen with Bobby, and Sam’s knees nearly buckled with relief. But it was not over yet, and he would need to muster more bravery to walk through this darkness before he could be in Dean’s arms again.

~ * ~

Bobby went to his room as soon as Harry was gone. His leg injury was throbbing, and he had to lie down. John left with Harry, deciding he would drive his friend to a nearby city, where they would say their goodbyes and part ways.
When Dean walked into the house, after saying goodbye to Harry, it was silent and he didn’t see anyone. He went upstairs and asked Bobby if he was alright when he saw him lying down in bed.

“I’m fine. I just need to put this bitch up a bit,” he nodded towards his leg on top of some pillows.

Dean nodded.

“Have you seen Sam?”

“No. But he’s probably in his room.”

Dean walked into the room where they usually slept together and found Sam sat on the bed, perfectly still. He looked grave and pale, and Dean’s heart skipped a beat the moment he laid eyes on him. There was something terribly unsettling in Sam’s eyes. They seemed lost, so Dean walked towards his brother and touched him.

Sam gasped when he felt Dean’s touch. It was as if he hadn’t seen him walk in.

“Sam? What’s wrong? And please don’t tell me nothing, because I won’t believe it.”

Sam looked into his brother’s eyes. Dean’s presence was the safety he needed in the darkness of his memories. He just didn’t think he could speak without unchaining his fears and starting chaos in his memories.

“Where is dad?” He asked, tentatively.

“He went out to drive Harry somewhere. He’ll be back soon, why?” Dean was growing more worried by the second. There was a vacant look in Sam’s eyes. It was almost as if his brother was in shock. His responses seemed slow and his pupils were dilated.

“Why Sam?”

“Do you remember when I told you that the demon never actually hurt me?”

Now it was Dean’s turn to look confused and to take a moment to reply.

“Yes…”

“I told you there was a man.”

“Right,” Dean agreed. “You said that a man tortured you in the dark,” Dean sat down on the bed and looked intently into his brother’s eyes. His heart was slamming against his chest, as if it somehow knew what was coming.

“I think Harry’s that man.”

Dean felt as if Sam had just spoken a language that he couldn’t comprehend. He stared at his brother dumbly for a few seconds, and then, little by little, his forehead creased with confusion and he shook his head quickly, as if nothing made sense.

“What?”
“You have to believe me,” Sam said. “I think Harry is the man who came in the dark.”

“Why, why would you think that?” For a moment Dean thought Sam was joking, but when Dean understood that the shock Sam seemed to be in was caused by fright, he listened carefully.

“I…” Sam felt his lips quiver, his breathing become clipped and erratic, and for a moment he thought he couldn’t do it.

“Easy, take a deep breath. You can do it. Just tell me what you’re thinking,” Dean squeezed both of Sam’s arms and his warm touch had the healing power of calming Sam down.

“I never saw his face,” Sam said, the words coming out with a pained effort through his dry lips and tight throat. “I never heard his voice,” Sam explained. “But…” He thought of Harry so near him in the kitchen, touching him, asking him about sleeping in the dark. “There was always a smell, Dean. The man in the dark smelled of citric fruit. I always knew when he was near because I could smell it so strongly.”

Dean’s lips parted and he focused all of his attention on Sam’s every word.

“Did you smell it too? On Harry?”

“Yes… yes, I did,” Dean admitted. “But Sam… you do know that the same fragrance can be the choice of more people, right?”

Sam made a pained face. Yes, he knew that! He had already gone over that a thousand times in his mind.

“That’s why I didn’t say anything yesterday. I wanted to look at him again. I wanted to be sure.”

“And are you now?”

Sam bit on his bottom lip. He knew the weight of his words. He knew a man’s life was at stake.

“I feel he is the man, Dean. When he grabbed my arm…” Sam trailed off and shut his eyes. “And when he followed me into the kitchen and stood right behind me… I couldn’t close my eyes without feeling I was back in the room. And he is about the height and size of the man who beat me.”

Dean ran a nervous hand through his hair. The idea of the same man who had tortured and abused his brother having been alone with him in Bobby’s kitchen was too much.

“Sam, this is a serious accusation. Harry’s dad’s friend!” Dean was torn between not wanting to believe the information, and thus forcing himself to doubt whether his brother, with all his broken psyche, could accuse someone based on nothing but a smell – someone he had never seen, as he said it himself, – and the feeling of maybe having been face to face with the one who caused Sam all his torment, and contemplating the possibility of getting revenge.

“I know. And when we were alone in the kitchen he asked me how I was, you know, because of last night. And he said he could imagine how hard it was to sleep in the dark after everything.”

Dean’s heart raced.

“Did he say that? Did he mention the dark?”
Sam nodded. “Did dad tell him?”

“I don’t think so, no…”

“Then how does he know?”

Dean stood up. He couldn’t stay seated anymore. His thoughts were racing and he felt terribly agitated. “You do know that we’ll have to tell dad about this, right? He can’t think that Harry is his friend if he’s actually the one who did all that to you.”

“I know,” Sam said. He didn’t care if his father knew about it. On the contrary, he wanted him to. It was not fair that the same man who tortured him got to play hunting buddies with his dad.

“But Sam, if he is the man who tortured you, why did he come back? Why come back here and risk being recognized by you?”

“Did you see he was packing a gun when he came here yesterday?”

“Yes… But all hunters usually do.”

“I know. But when I looked at him and caught whiff of that citric smell, I looked at the gun on his hip. I know I can be imagining things, Dean, but what if he came back to make sure I don’t know who he is? Dad knows that a man was responsible for hurting me, and he’s probably been trying to hunt him down ever since I told him. What if Harry’s afraid dad will eventually track this person down and realize it was him? Maybe he doesn’t want to live in doubt. Maybe he came here to see whether he could trust me not to know his face. And when I saw that gun, I swear I had a chill. I had a feeling that he would shoot everyone in the house if I reacted to his presence.”

Dean thought about that. It made sense. Of course it made sense, but at the same time, it was the craziest thing he had ever heard. How dare a man hurt another’s son so badly and then come knocking on his door to play friends? Sam had a point, though. If Harry was afraid that their father might end up hunting him down, then he knew he was in for a slow, painful death. Perhaps his visit had a political motive, perhaps Sam was right and Harry had shown up to make sure he could go unpunished for his sins if the boy who suffered in his hands could not identify him.

“So you believe me?” Sam asked, feeling hopeful.

Dean thought of Sam’s night terror. There was obviously something weird going on. He knew that the lack of a sense, such as sight, could enhance other senses, in Sam’s case, his sense of smell. What if he could indeed recognize his aggressor based on that? His night terror could have been the effect of Sam convincing himself he was in the presence of the man who tortured him, but what if it had been his subconscious telling him that he was right, that he did know that man, that it was the same man who came in the dark?

“I believe you think he’s the man, and I believe we must not let him go without questioning him,” if they could bring Harry back, Dean was sure that his dad, Bobby and he could come up with a few interesting ways to make him talk. “Sam…” Dean looked into his brother’s eyes. “If Harry is the same man who hurt you, if you were suspicious since yesterday…how could you be near him? How
could you face him? Just how on earth could you talk to him and pretend nothing was going on? How did you not lose it when you smelled the same smell you did when you were in the dark?”

Sam licked at his lips and his hazel eyes looked so young and so tired, and yet, so intriguing that they drew Dean in intently with their depth.

“I thought of you telling me I could make it. Just a few seconds in the dark and you would be there,” Sam confessed, and then he felt suddenly shy.

Dean felt his chest grow warm. Sam’s words meant so much that Dean could hardly control his emotions, and he definitely lost his words. He sat in front of Sam again, pulled him into a hug and shut his eyes.

He held his brother in silence, and it was a long while before they moved again.

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_tbc..._
When John returned home, less than an hour later, he found both of his sons and Bobby waiting for him in the living room.

“Hey,” he acknowledged them with a nod and walked further in.

“Sit down, John. Sam has something to tell us,” Bobby said. He was sitting on the red sofa with his injured leg resting on a chair.

He had heard the news from Sam’s mouth a few minutes earlier, and he was still having a hard time to wrap his mind around the idea that Harry was the evil man who tortured his friend's son.

“Yes?” John looked at his youngest.

“You’d better sit down.” Bobby insisted.

John frowned and looked from his friend to Sam. He sat down beside Bobby on the sofa and stared at Sam and Dean standing before them.

Sam took a deep breath and cast a glance at his brother. Dean nodded at him with reassurance, urging him on.

“What is it, Sam?” John asked.

Sam felt his heart racing. What if his dad didn’t believe him? Bobby had had a hard time picturing Harry as the one who hurt him, why would it be any different with his father?

“It’s okay. Just tell him what you told us,” Dean said softly, watching with a breaking heart the tension that consumed Sam’s body.

“I… I never saw the man who hurt me in the dark. It was pitch black in the room, and I couldn’t possibly see his face. I never heard his voice either. But every time he came in, I could smell the same scent on him,” Sam explained. He needed to be strong, he just had to get it out. If Harry was the one who did all that to him, then it was only fair he got punished. “He smelled like citric fruit.”

John looked intently at his son, as if Sam was giving him pieces of a puzzle he was supposed to piece together.

“He smelled just like your friend Harry, dad.”

Sam looked at his father as he processed the information. For a reasonable, understandable amount of time, everyone was silent in the room, and everyone looked at John as his frown deepened and he blinked a few times, seemingly confused.
“Do you think Harry is the man who tortured you?” John was too sharp to beat around the bush. He went straight to the heart of the matter, and Bobby would never fail to admire him for that.

“Yes,” Sam said, forcing himself not to look away from his father’s questioning eyes.

Everyone waited, holding their breaths, to listen to what John had to say. Bobby and Dean were equally tense when John started to speak again.

“Is there any other reason why you think Harry’s the one, besides the smell?”

Sam chewed on the inside of his bottom lip. ‘Yes,’ he thought ‘my gut tells me.’

“He is as tall and large as I imagine the man was,” Sam said, trying to be rational about it.

“I know you want to see whoever hurt you get what he deserves, and trust me when I say so do I, but Sam… Harry is a hunter. Why would he torture a kid?”

Sam’s heart fell. He should have expected that.

“I know this sounds crazy,” Bobby intervened. “But if you think about it, as a hunter, it would make it easier for him to know a demon, right? Maybe if there was something he wanted he could be persuaded to make a deal? Besides, it wouldn’t be the first time a hunter snapped, you know.”

John considered that. His first instinct was of denial. How could he have been face to face with the one who beat his son up, how could he have hunted with this man without noticing a thing? But still… he couldn’t deny that it made sense. Whoever hurt Sam had to be in touch with the supernatural, they had to know what demons were and he must have seen some advantage in working for them.

“Did you tell him that Sam had trouble sleeping in the dark?” Dean asked.

“No, why?” John looked at him.

“Because he followed Sam into Bobby’s kitchen, he was alone with him, and he told him that it must be very difficult to sleep in the dark after everything.”

Sam bit down hard on his bottom lip and watched his father intently.

John’s heart seemed to have been thrown into an icy kind of fire, and it burned hotly and painfully in his chest.

“Why would he come back?” John asked slowly, his denial waveriing.

“To kill everyone if I recognized him,” Sam answered. He knew it might sound ridiculous, but it was what he felt, and he had nothing else to say.

“Sam saw Harry’s gun yesterday at the same time he smelled the familiar scent. He had a feeling Harry was here to make sure he could live his life without worrying about Sam ever pointing you in his direction,” Dean said.

“Hunters do know you’re looking for a man, don’t they?” Bobby asked. “What if he decided to
show up, make sure he was not a suspect, or maybe even kill everyone if he figured he was?”

John thought about all that. Could he have really shared lunch with a man who tortured his son and not known it?

“Look, maybe it’s not him,” Dean said. “But don’t you think it’s worth checking and knowing for sure? We can make him talk, dad. If we don’t go after him now and at least rule this out we’ll never forgive ourselves. I’d much rather sleep thinking I owe a good man an apology than thinking I let the man who hurt Sammy walk away after fooling us all.”

John listened to Dean’s words and shut his eyes briefly. They made sense. They were so sensible that they caused him to run a hand through his hair and sigh long and deeply, lost in his own thoughts.

“Oh John?” Bobby studied his friend.

John got up from the sofa and walked towards Sam. The boy felt his heart racing when his father stopped right in front of him and searched his eyes.

“Do you know how serious this accusation is?”

“I do, sir,” Sam was so nervous that the ‘sir’ slipped out of his lips.

“If Harry is the man who hurt you for three months, you know what I will do to him, right?”

Sam nodded.

“Do you care?”

“I don’t,” he said.

John nodded slowly, gravely. Everyone in the room seemed stiff with a high level of attention and expectation.

“I’m gonna ask this again. Do you really think he is the man in the dark, Sam?” John knew he was being hard on his son, but a man’s life was at stake. Because if Harry was indeed the person Sam thought he was, then right now he was living his last few hours on this earth.

Sam thought of the smell that filled his nostrils, and the glances the man had cast in his direction, observing him, studying him, waiting for him to show any reaction. Sam thought of the large hand around his arm, and he thought of large hands around his shoulders, his thighs, his hips…in the dark. He shuddered.

“I do.”

John nodded again. He swallowed hard and looked at the pairs of eyes on him, waiting for his decision.

“I’ll go find him.”

Dean sighed with relief. He realized he had been holding his breath.
“I’ll go with you,” Bobby said.

“No,” John said. “No one is coming with me. If Harry hurt my son, then came into this house believing he would just walk away, he’s in for a surprise. And this is fucking personal. You two stay here with Sam.”

“Will you bring him here?” Sam hated the way his voice sounded slightly high pitched and scared.

“Maybe. If he doesn’t tell me what I need to know, I might have to show him Bobby’s basement,” John looked into his son’s eyes. He knew Sam didn’t like the idea of seeing Harry again, but he also knew his son was focused on catching him and giving him what he deserved. “Is that alright, Sam? That I bring him here and have a chat downstairs?”

Sam nodded quickly. He felt Dean’s warm hand on his shoulder, trying to soothe and give strength, and he relaxed a little. It would be alright as long as everyone knew who Harry was – not a friend.

John felt the familiar tingle of a hunt spreading in his veins. But this time, the prey was nothing supernatural. He left Bobby’s house and got into the car quickly, and he realized that despite part of him not believing Harry was such man, he found himself hoping Sam was right.

Because if Harry was the one who tortured his son for three months, then John would finally have someone to question, someone who could tell him what his son had been through.

And before John was done with him, Harry would tell him everything.

~ * ~

In Bobby’s house, two hours went slowly by. The three people inside looked at each other nervously, wondering where John was, if he would be able to catch Harry, if he would bring him there again.

“Screw this, I need a drink,” Bobby got up and limped towards the shelf with bottles.

“Are you okay?” Dean asked softly.

Sam nodded, a bit too fast. He was extremely tense, and his shaky limbs were enough proof of that, but it was still the middle of the afternoon and the sun was high in the sky, causing him to manage his anxiety. Sam supposed that seeing someone who was possibly the man who hurt him in the light of day was a lot less frightening than it might be at night. For now, all he hoped was that this would be over before night fell.

“I’m fine…” He said quietly.

Dean wished he could say something to make Sam feel better, but right now he was on edge himself, and he could hardly control his thoughts and feelings. They had called his father’s cell phone twice, but of course John hadn’t picked up or called back.

They would still wait another half an hour before John was back. They heard the noise of the Impala arriving, and Sam jumped, startled. His heart raced when his father walked in pushing Harry – who was handcuffed – before him.
Dean was behind him in a heartbeat, and Sam was glad for the warmth of his body so close, even though they weren’t touching. Bobby was sitting in his office, behind his desk, when he saw the two men walk in. He stood up too and walked closer.

“As you can see, it took a little persuading to get Harry to come back, but here he is,” John said, and shoved him hard.

Harry’s eyes locked with Sam’s for a short, yet terribly long moment. ‘Son of a fucking bitch. How could you do that? How could you hide it so well?’

Sam felt his fingertips go cold, and he instinctively leaned back against Dean’s chest, feeling safer when his back touched his brother’s chest lightly.

“I still don’t know what’s going on, John,” Harry said. “I swear you’re not making any sense!” He knew that the odds were not in his favor, but he had to try, right?

“What did he say?” Bobby asked.

“He said he doesn’t know what I was talking about. He said he never made any deal with a demon, let alone to hurt a kid. He said he is not the one who hurt Sam,” John said, seemingly emotionless. Inside, though, he was feeling hectic. “But you see, when I went after him, he tried to run away. So, you know, I just grew curious. And now we’re going downstairs to have a chat,” John explained.

“I’m going too,” Dean said. That was personal. That was the man who had hurt his baby brother, who had broken him. If his dad was going to get revenge, Dean would be there to witness it. “Is that okay?” He put a hand on Sam’s shoulder and made him turn around to look into his eyes.

Sam hardly trusted his voice. They couldn’t understand it, but Sam felt the hatred in Harry’s eyes, he felt the accusation, the fury for being caught, and picturing that same violence being used against him in the dark was overwhelming. “Yes,” he nodded.

“I need to go,” Dean said.

“I know,” Sam agreed.

“C’mon, let’s talk.” John shoved Harry hard once again and he stumbled forward. He kept pushing him towards the stairs that led to Bobby’s basement, and Dean followed right behind him.

“Dean?” Sam stopped his brother on his way. “Make sure he’s the one before…you know.”

Dean nodded gravely. “We will,” he said and followed his father downstairs.

“I’m going too…” Bobby said, and was on his way to follow them down when he felt Sam’s fingers closing around his arm.

“Please don’t. Stay with me,” Sam knew he was safe with his father and Dean in control of the situation. He knew there was no way Harry would escape his fate, if he was indeed the man in the dark… But Sam didn’t like the idea of being alone as he waited. The sun was near the horizon, and in a couple more hours darkness would be there. It would be better if he wasn’t alone.

Bobby looked into Sam’s pleading eyes and all his desire to go downstairs vanished. All his thirst for
blood and revenge was nothing compared to the ache in his heart at the helplessness Sam felt.

“Yes. Sure,” he nodded. “Do you want to go upstairs so you don’t hear anything?”

“No,” Sam shook his head. “It’s fine here. Just… let’s watch TV, okay?”

“Right,” Bobby sat on the red sofa and Sam sat beside him. They had been watching TV for no longer than fifteen minutes when the screaming began.

~ * ~

John tied Harry up tightly to a chair while Dean set aside a few useful tools they might need. The prisoner looked at the torture devices they were planning on using and his heart raced. ‘Damn if it isn’t terribly ironic,’ he thought. After torturing the boy for three months, Harry could only imagine what they had in store for him. He knew he would resist as much as he could, but Harry was also aware that it didn’t matter what he did, if John was certain he was the same man who beat his kid up, he would not walk out of there alive.

“So, Harry… You know this could go the easy way, or the hard way,” John began.

“Or the very hard way,” Dean looked at some long pliers, and seemed to test whether they were functioning well.

“John, I don’t know what’s going on, man… yesterday we were hunting together, saving each other’s lives, for heaven’s sake! And now you bring me here to torture me? What the fuck is wrong?”

“You tortured my son for three months. Why? Who was the demon you worked for, what did he want with my son?”

Harry forced a laughter. “Jesus, John! What the hell? I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Harry knew he was sweating. And he knew that as a hunter, John could probably smell the fear behind his denial.

“Dad, I don’t know about you, but I don’t plan on spending the entire night in here,” Dean said, handing the pliers to his father. “So how about we get started?”

John took the pliers and studied them; he also felt the heavy, cold weight of the gun at his hip.

“If you don’t know what I’m talking about, why did you try to run away when I went after you today?”

“What? I didn’t know it was you at first…”

“Liar. Why did you run?”

“John, I…” Harry searched desperately for words. “I didn’t know what you wanted, I was confused… You know, I didn’t think of what I was doing.”

“Wrong answer,” John went closer to him and placed the pliers around his pinky finger. “I think
we’ll start with this one, it’ll bleed less."

“No, please! You’re crazy, John! I didn’t do anything! I don’t know who hurt your son, I swear!”

John pondered for a few seconds.

“I’m not convinced,” Dean said, watching from a distance.

“Neither am I. You’ll have to do better than this,” John closed the pliers with all his strength, chopping a finger off and causing Harry to howl with pain and twist blindly against the ropes keeping him in place.

“Jesus fucking Christ!!! What the fuck?!!!” He screamed. “I didn’t do anything, John, I didn’t!”

John put the pliers around his ring finger. Harry looked at the all the blood gushing out and felt the pain cutting through his brain like a blade, making it impossible to think straight, making it difficult to hold on to his lies.

“Maybe you should try another,” Dean suggested.

“Maybe you’re right,” John closed the pliers around another finger, and another scream was followed by more blood gushing out of the wounds and pooling by the chair Harry was sat on.

“NOO!! DAMMIT!!!” He groaned, shaking with pain. He knew that if he confessed to torturing Sam he would be dead, but he wondered how much of not being dead he could handle. Despite being a hunter and being used to pain, and hell, despite the fact that he was good at inflicting it, Harry wasn’t cut out to handle torture, and he could feel his will failing him.

“Dad, try this. Maybe he’ll feel more talkative,” Dean handed his father a saw, and watched when Harry’s eyes bulged out of his face.

After the way Harry had tried to run from him this afternoon, John had little to no doubt that he was the man Sam believed him to be. That’s why he accepted the saw and didn’t hesitate to press it to Harry’s wrist.

“I think this would be faster, thanks. Taking one finger at a time would keep us in here for too long. Let’s get rid of the hand then,” John started adding pressure to the saw when Harry shut his eyes and screamed.

“No, please!! Wait! Wait! Don’t! Alright, alright, I’ll talk!”

John stopped right where he was, and Dean’s breath caught in his throat.

“Please, don’t….“ Harry babbled, looking at the saw in John’s hand.

When John took a step backwards, Harry sighed with relief. He felt dizzy from the blood loss and the adrenaline buzzing in his ears.

“Here,” Dean threw a rag at his father, who used it to add pressure to what was left of Harry’s two fingers. They didn’t want him passing out from bleeding too much.

“What were you going to tell us?” John stood perfectly still in front of him.
“First of all, you have got to understand that it was not my fault. I never meant for any of that to happen. I just needed to get my mother out of the deal she had made with a fucking demon… And then there was the money, he offered me a lot of money, and I didn’t want to hunt anymore… I was tired, man…” Harry sighed heavily, and his eyes seemed lost. “The demon got in touch with me, said he had a job for me, that if I did it he would pay me good money and cancel my mother’s deal. He was the one who looked for me. He knew I’d do anything to save my mom, and he knew I wanted money so I could retire.”

As Harry started to speak, Dean stood a little behind his father, realizing that he was indeed staring at the man who had been causing Sam’s night terrors. Dean thought of everything Bobby kept in his basement to torture demons and monsters, and he could hardly wait until they had used everything on the man speaking now.

“Keep talking,” John urged when Harry started moaning with pain. “Your life depends on it.”

‘My life’s over,’ Harry thought vaguely. He had known that the moment he was brought back to that house. But maybe he could try and make his death a quick one, instead of a slow, painfully hard one.

“So the demon hired me, I didn’t know what for until he took me to the place where you found your son and started giving me instructions. I didn’t know I would have to torture a kid, I swear! Let alone your son! John, you have got to believe me, I had no fucking idea who the boy was, I didn’t know it was your son and-“

John shut him up with a hard punch to the face.

“You tortured a kid, Harry. You tortured a kid. Why? Why did the demon want Sam?”

“I don’t know! He never told me anything other than my commands. It was part of the deal that I never asked questions. I got in when it was dark, did what he asked me to and walked out. I was supposed to hurt him, but not kill him. The demon made it clear that Sam’s life was extremely important, so I could never inflict life threatening injuries on him.”

“You son of a fucking bitch,” Dean lost control. He walked towards Harry and started beating him up badly, blindly, unleashing his anger, punching until his knuckles were raw.

John watched him and let him take his anger out on their prisoner for a moment. He was lost in thought about what Harry had just said. He didn’t know what the demon wanted with Sam, and John believed that the demon wouldn’t have told someone he was giving orders to about his plans. So he still wouldn’t know why Sam was taken, and it killed him.

“That’s enough, Dean.”

“You got in and beat a fucking kid, you asshole! You tortured my little brother!”

“Dean!” John pulled him back.

“He was not supposed to remember!” Harry blurted, his face a bloody mess. He licked around his teeth and felt the throbbing pain in a few gaps. Some teeth had been broken, and the pain was unbelievable.

“What do you mean?” Dean narrowed his eyes and stepped back.
“You two think you saved him?” Harry asked angrily, spitting a couple of teeth out. “Well, you didn’t! You took him from there before the demon could see his plan through. I don’t know what he wanted with the boy, but I know he would have wiped his memories of being there.”

“He would have what?” John asked.

“I don’t fucking know why the hell the demon would go to the trouble of having a kid beaten up so badly only to erase his memories in the end, but he would, alright? And I was counting on it. And Sam was probably counting on it too. If you had waited a few more days you would have probably had him back without the trauma he has.”

“The trauma you inflicted!” Dean groaned.

John took this information and put it together with what Harry had already said. He didn’t know why Sam had been taken, but he knew the plan was not to kill him, but to hurt him badly and then wipe his memories. Why? He knew Harry wouldn’t have the answer to that, but there was something else he would be able to tell.

“What have you done to my son?” John asked, his voice was so low that at first Harry didn’t understand him.

“What?”

“You said you went in, you did what the demon asked, and you came out. What did you do when you were in?”

Dean’s heart was beating in his throat. He looked at the intense way his father studied the man and knew there was death in his look.

Harry took a deep breath and stared back at John. He looked at the pliers, covered with his blood, and the saw hanging from John’s left hand. He looked at the shelves of terrifying objects behind Dean. If he told them what he had done to Sam, they would torture him through the entire night, and Harry could only imagine the kinds of things they would do to him. The thought alone caused him to shudder.

Then, he looked at the gun at John’s waist, and figured that if he was going to die, he might as well try and make it quick. If only he could get John angry enough to use that gun.

“The things I did to him? Do you really want to know?” Harry’s face changed from pained and scared to malicious and teasing.

“Oh, I want to know everything,” John said.

“Well,” Harry licked his lips slowly, making a show of it, knowing it was driving John mad with anger. He tasted his own blood and cast another quick glance at the gun John was packing. “First I beat him, John. I beat him up more often than I could possibly count. I broke bones and caused each and every one of those bruises you must have found on him.”

Dean’s upper lip twitched. He didn’t know why Harry was speaking like that, but Dean was once again thinking of the long night they would have ahead, paying him back for what he did to Sam.
“Then I cut him, of course. Big cuts, small cuts, deep ones, you name it. I pulled nails off his fingers while he was tied to a chair, pretty much like I am now.” Harry knew he was giving them ideas, but he was betting his last hopes on making John see red.

“Go on,” John spoke, and Dean barely recognized his father’s voice.

“I often handcuffed him to a wall and whipped him bloody, same as they did to runaway slaves when they were caught,” Harry studied the effect his words had on John. “Sometimes I pushed his head into a bucket full of water until he passed out, and when he woke up, I did it again.”

Dean shut his eyes and felt his heart die with pain. Hearing that was worse than any torture they could ever inflict on him.

“I electrocuted him a few times, and there were times I burned him. I burned him until skin came off, until the smell made me sick, you know. Like barbecue. But I suppose the demon healed him after that. He had to step in sometimes, when things went too far. He fixed Sam so I could break him again.”

“You son of a-“ Dean groaned.

“But there’s more,” Harry cut him off. “You know, John… you have a brave kid there, your Sam. He really took everything like the son of a great hunter should. But of course, all that bravery had to end eventually. In fact, it was nowhere to be seen when I raped him.”

John didn’t move. He didn’t blink. He didn’t breathe.

“What? He didn’t say anything?” Harry grinned. “I raped him, yes. Not that I wanted to, but orders are orders, specially when a demon is the one giving them. So I did it. I raped him more than once, you know.”

“I strongly suggest that we examine him for-“

“Don’t be a fool, Mike. My son wasn’t raped.”

“And you know what, John? Your son screamed like a little girl when I fucked him-“

John pulled the gun so fast that Dean never saw it coming. He shot once, the noise loud within the basement walls, and Harry didn’t even realize what had happened before he was dying with a bullet in his head.

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tbc...
“Dad!” Dean screamed.

John barely heard him as he let the saw fall off his hand. He looked intently at the man bending forward on the chair and the blood that started dripping on the floor.

Dean knew that Harry had gotten exactly what he was hoping for. He provoked John’s anger until his father couldn’t handle it anymore. He made John end his life quickly, saving him from an entire night of torture. Dean felt robbed of all the revenge he wanted to take on Harry, but he also felt relieved knowing that Sam’s abuser was no longer alive.

“Did you know that?” John turned his head and looked Dean in the eyes.

“What?” Dean felt his heart racing. There was a weird look in his father’s eyes, one that was so pained that it bordered on irrationality.

“Did you know about the sexual abuse?” All John could hear was the doctor’s voice playing over and over in his mind, and the sound of his own dismissive arguments, telling Michael no such thing had happened to his boy.

Dean swallowed hard. He thought of the day they had been watching TV, when Sam suddenly saw something he couldn’t stand and ran into the woods. He thought of his silence, his edginess… Dean thought of him begging him not to tell their father anything.

“Dean!” John insisted. He felt anger rising in him, a kind of anger that very effectively took the place of any weakness that threatened to surface.

“He never really told me anything…”

“Damnit!” John saw the answer all over Dean’s face. He didn’t even have to say anything else, because it was there, in his guilty eyes, in his anguished face.

“He didn’t say anything, dad… I kind of inferred.”

“What do you mean?” John was now thinking that perhaps Harry had played him, maybe he had just said that so he would lose his fucking mind and shoot him, as he had done. However, the distress in Dean’s face was making it difficult to cling to this false hope.

“We were watching a movie once, you and Bobby were out hunting, and there was this scene on the TV, a guy was trying to rape a woman. Sam got up and stared at the TV as if he was petrified. When I called his name he started running away, and I could only catch up when he tripped and fell, a few
miles into the woods.”

“Did you ask him about it?”

“No. He didn’t say anything, and I didn’t make him,” and Dean didn’t regret it. He would not force Sam to tell him about something that hurt him so much.

“You should have told me! Why didn’t you tell me?”

“He begged me not to. That night he made me promise not to tell you.”

“Why would he do that? I’m his father, I should know if he was raped,” John gasped and ran a hand through his hair. He put his gun away and realised his hand was shaky. “Is it true, then? Did he confirm it?” John insisted.

“Sam never confirmed anything, dad. And I never insisted.”

“So maybe Harry was lying,” he was reluctant to let the idea go.

Dean looked at his father, watching his level of distress rise.

“I guess there’s only way to know. I’ll ask Sam.”

“Dad, no!”

Dean watched, in horror, as his father turned around and started going quickly up the basement stairs towards the living room. Before John Winchester was out of his sight, Dean could already anticipate the disastrous result of his intentions.

~ * ~

Sam and Bobby had heard the shot a few minutes ago, and Sam’s heart had skipped a beat, because he knew what that meant. ‘It means the man is gone,’ he thought. And it also meant that he had been right, that the man who had hurt him in the dark had come back, and had been alone with him in Bobby’s kitchen. The man in the dark, smelling of citrus, the man who had done all those horrible things to him had come back in the light of day, but it was over now.

Sam was standing in the middle of the living room when John emerged from the basement and walked towards him with long, firm strides. Dean was following after him, but he had fallen behind.

Sam looked at Dean’s worried face and then at his father coming in his direction and seemed confused. Had something gone wrong? Had Harry tried to escape?

“Sam,” John stood right in front of him and grabbed both of Sam’s shoulders firmly, with his fingers closing tightly around them. He forced Sam to look into his eyes, and Sam complied, after another stolen, puzzled glance in Dean’s direction.

“What?” He asked.

“You need to tell me something, alright? Harry tortured you in the dark,” John stated.
“Yes…” Sam nodded and frowned a little, but he wasn’t prepared for what came next.

“And did he rape you too?”

Sam looked into his father’s eyes and stiffened from head to toe. His hazel eyes were wide and unblinking, and even the air seemed to have gone still in his lungs.

When Sam didn’t show any response at all, John went down on one knee, to be more easily on eye level with his son, then he let his hands slide down to hold Sam’s arms above his elbows and repeated the question.

“Were you raped in that room, Sam?”

Sam’s bottom lip quivered as if he would speak, but no sound came out. He looked at Dean and at Bobby, who had gotten up from the sofa and approached the scene. He wouldn’t have known just how frightened his eyes were, or just how desperately helpless he looked.

‘Raped?’ Bobby thought, looking at John and at Sam’s visibly distressed expression. ‘God no. Please…no,’ he thought, aghast.

Sam saw the look in Bobby’s eyes, the shock, the pity, and he saw the look in Dean’s eyes, the same realization he had seen on the day of the movie with the assault. There was sorrow in Dean’s eyes, and urgent worry too, and again the same realization that was sinking in Bobby’s mind, and that his father forced him to acknowledge.

“Sam! You need to tell me! Did he or did he not sexually abuse you?” All John could think of were the doctor’s words about the rape kit. And John could hardly handle the guilt growing and eating at everything inside him, making the answer to that question stupidly, irrationally important right now. If there was a chance that Harry’s words were lies, then John would take it gladly.

Sam felt the shaking start. Despite any control he had over his body, he felt the goosebumps breaking on his skin, and the tremors that rocked him.

He shut his eyes and tried to break free of his dad’s grip on him.

“No! You’re not going anywhere until you look me in the eyes and tell me!”

Sam gasped and his face twisted into a panicked, desperate expression. Again he tried to struggle free from his father’s strong grip, but John’s fingers only tightened around his arms and squeezed.

“Dad!!” Dean yelled. “Let it go!”

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes pleadingly, and it broke Dean’s heart.

“Please, dad…” Dean tried again.

"Stay out of this, Dean," John said, unblinking. "I’m your father, Sam! You need to tell me! I need to know if that happened to you! C’mon!” ‘I need to know just how badly I’ve failed,’ it was like John thought. The more he insisted on the question, the more he welcomed the punishment the most likely answer would inflict upon himself.
“Hmm,” Sam groaned and squirmed, now clearly struggling hard to get away.

“NO! Look at me! Look at me!” John shook his son until Sam focused him with fearful eyes. There was wetness gathering in his eyes, but John wouldn’t let go. “Did the man rape you in the dark? Tell me!”

It felt like another blow. Sam felt pain spreading inside of him. He shut his eyes tightly and tried to find his wall, but the bricks were falling down, and darkness was pouring out from his unconsciousness.

The man hovered on top of him and Sam heard the sound of him unbuckling his belt. He went absolutely still for a moment, all his senses alert, and then Sam felt his pajama pants being pulled down, and the realization of what was about to happen hit him like a truck.

“Let me go!!” Sam screamed. He pushed at his father and tried to hit him, scratch him, shove him away, anything to make him loosen his grip.

“Sam! SAM!! STOP!”

“John…” Even Bobby was breathing faster. John was unknowingly breaking his son. He understood John’s desperation to know whether or not something so terrible had happened to Sam, but at what cost?

“Just tell me, yes or no? It’s not that hard, you can do it!” A part of John didn’t even know why that was so important anymore, but the more Sam writhed against his grip, and the more he tried to fight him, the more John found himself insisting.

“Get away from me! Get away!” Sam sobbed. He looked at Dean and Bobby, and at the wall in his mind crumbling down. Dean knew. Bobby knew. Now his father knew. His father knew that the man had been inside him, dominating him, hurting him in ways he could never heal from.

Shame was eating at him. His father’s fierce, searching eyes were burning him hotly with humiliation, and Sam closed his eyes again, trying to hang on to his safety wall, but he couldn’t find it. There was a hole in it, a big hole through which Sam could see a boy screaming, begging, sobbing in the dark, and a man moving on top of him, spreading his legs, pushing his way inside.

“Just tell me, son. Please, just tell me. I need to know,” ‘because I didn’t let the doctor examine you, Sam, and we could’ve caught Harry before,’ John thought. “I need to know. Did Harry force you?” He insisted.

Sam felt the bruising grip on his arms and when he opened his eyes they were wet, and his vision was blurred. His wall had shattered to pieces. He could see the man, and the man was robbing him from himself, stealing away his dignity and soiling his self-esteem.

Sam couldn’t speak. The clipped sound of his breathing and the sobs raking him were too powerful, and there was nothing coming out of his lips that wasn’t sheer helplessness.

John looked into Sam’s eyes, really looked into them. ‘It’s true,’ he understood. The sadness, the distress in his son’s eyes were a screaming answer to his question. Yes, Sam had had everything
taken from him, and no, he could not deal with it.

“Why don’t you just tell me? I’m your father, Sam. I’m here to help you. You have got to trust me,” John softened his voice, but not his grip.

Dean and Bobby exchanged worried looks as they watched the scene unfold, neither daring to intervene.

“I want to help you. But for this you need to tell me exactly what happened to you in there. If you were raped, I need to know. I’m your family, Sam. You need to let me help. That’s what family’s for, to help.”

Sam felt all his helplessness erupt into a storm of rage, and when he spoke it was a different boy looking through his eyes.


John frowned.

“Where was family in the three months I was in that damn room?! Uh? Tell me, dad. Tell me where the hell my family was when I woke up for three months to a different kind of sick torture. Where was family?!?” Sam growled.

“Sam…” it was John’s turn to widen his eyes, and his grip on his son loosened.

Sam felt that and broke free from the hands holding him. He stared into his father’s eyes with rage that was wild and raw, and unleashing it was his only defense against the loss of his wall.

“NO!” Sam screamed. His chest was heaving up and down and his breath was a series of loud, breathless panting. “Everyone has a story of just how fucking heroic you are, because you saved them, or you saved someone they loved…” He was shaking with the violence of his words. He felt them come to his mouth with a strength he didn’t know he possessed. “You save everyone!” Sam said the words like they were an accusation. “So why didn’t you save me?!”

Sam wiped furiously at his tears, not breaking eye contact with his father.

John stared his son, and not a single word came to his mouth.

“Why dad? Why didn’t you save me?” Sam repeated the question to a speechless, petrified John Winchester who just watched as his son turned around and stormed up the stairs towards his room, where he slammed the door shut heavily.

For long minutes, no one spoke in the living room. Bobby, John and Dean stared at each other, and stared at John in particular.

John Winchester was sat on the floor, his eyes staring at some point ahead in the distance, and he let his head fall against his right hand. Dean had never seen his father so shaken before. It was like Sam’s words had gone to his heart and broken it, and for the first time since Dean could remember, he saw his father weak and unable to process a blow.

“I’ll go after him,” he said, and started making his way upstairs too.
No one said anything, but Bobby looked meaningfully at Dean before he reached out for John.

~ * ~

Sam slammed the door shut and stood against it for a while. He was still shaking, and when he shut his eyes all sorts of memories were vomited from his subconscious into his mind. The wall had been defeated, and in the darkness of his closed eyes Sam had to see himself crying and begging for the large man on top of him to stop.

“No…” Sam shook his head vehemently. “I can’t… I can’t deal with it, I can’t…” he mumbled over and over. He shut his eyes again and he could feel the man pounding into him, his fingers digging into his hipbones, his sweat covering him, his scent causing him to feel sick.

Sam felt another sob escape his throat. He felt weak and battered, and unable to keep going. It was one thing that Dean knew. But now Bobby did too, and so did his father. How could he possibly look them in the eyes again? How could he look at his father being the boy who got raped on the white floor of a dark room?

“No…” Sam gritted his teeth.

He looked around himself and rushed towards his bed, falling to his knees in front of it. Then, he reached out his arms and pulled a wooden box from underneath it.

Sam opened the lid and contemplated his fourteen year old birthday present inside.

The gun rested peacefully inside the box, and Sam knew how to use it. And he knew that if he used it, then he wouldn’t have to explain anything. He wouldn’t have to admit anything. He wouldn’t need to look anyone in the eyes and have them know his shame, his secret… If he used the gun, Sam didn’t have to be the boy that was tortured and raped anymore.

Because if he used the gun he had gotten for his birthday, then he could be free.

~ * ~

“Sam?” Dean knocked twice, softly, before walking in.

He had barely stepped inside the room when he stopped on his tracks and his heart nearly escaped his mouth.

Sam turned around quickly when he heard Dean enter his room, but he didn’t lower the gun.

“Sam…put it down,” Dean tried to stay calm, but the sight of his brother pressing the gun tightly to his temple gave him tachycardia, and it was all Dean could do not to make any abrupt movement towards him that might scare him into pulling the trigger. “You know you don’t want to do that,” he spoke softly and gently, and tried to get to Sam underneath the intense wave of panic he felt.

“I don’t,” Sam confessed.
“Then please… give me this gun. Please, Sammy… there’s no need for it,” Dean reached out his hand slowly, his palm up, and Sam let his arm relax. He placed the gun on top of Dean’s palm and let go.

Dean shut his eyes for a moment and breathed in deeply with relief. He put the gun back inside the box and out of reach, under the bed.

“I’m sorry,” Sam cried. “I didn’t mean to. I don’t want to,” he tried to explain. “But it’s just… it got too much, you know? I didn’t think I could-“

“Shhh…. It’s alright. Come here,” Dean pulled him towards himself and let Sam bury his head against his chest. He stood there in silence for a moment, his hand at the back of Sam’s head as he pressed him gently against his body.

Sam sobbed. He let his fingers hold on tightly to Dean’s T-shirt and cried into the soft fabric.

When he felt he had regained a bit of control, he pulled away and looked up at his brother with tear streaked cheeks.

“Don’t tell him. Please don’t. He won’t understand,” he begged urgently.

“I won’t.”

~ * ~

“I didn’t let the doctor test him, Bobby,” John said. His voice was slow and it sounded defeated. “He wanted to. Michael talked to me in private, he said we should run a rape kit on Sam. I didn’t let him do it.”

“You didn’t know,” Bobby offered.

“I didn’t know? Or I didn’t want to know?”

“Either way, it doesn’t matter now. You need to go upstairs and talk to him, John. You need to apologize.”

“I fucked up with him, didn’t I?”

“Yes, you did,” Bobby admitted.

“I don’t know what got to me, I just felt like I needed to know, I couldn’t stop myself…”

“It doesn’t matter. Just go upstairs and talk to him. You two need that.”

~ * ~

“Are you gonna take the gun away?” Sam took a deep breath and looked questioningly at Dean.
“No,” Dean replied calmly. “Because I believe that you won’t do that again. Can I trust you?”

“Yes!” Sam wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his plaid shirt. “I won’t, Dean, I swear.”

“Then I’m not taking the gun. I believe you.”

Sam didn’t know why Dean was doing that, but he loved him so much for it he couldn’t even understand the feeling.

“Just promise me that if you ever feel like doing that again you’ll come to me and we’ll talk about it.”

Sam nodded.

“Promise me that if you ever feel the same level of despair you’ll let me know so I can help.”

“Yes, I promise.”

“Good,” Dean went closer and raked a hand through Sam’s hair before resting it gently on the back of his neck. Dean didn’t know where his calmness was coming from, but he was terribly glad for it. “And please forgive, dad. He didn’t mean to be an ass. You know that’s the way he is, Sam. I think he was in shock.”

Sam nodded and rubbed at his eyes again.

“And… I can only imagine how hard it was… But Sam, we tried everything we could to find you. Dad and Bobby… they were tireless. They did everything they could—”

“I know,” Sam nodded again. “I… I don’t know why I said all that. I know he tried everything.” ‘But everything just wasn’t enough,’ Sam thought sadly, thinking of his broken wall.

“Please talk to him. Even if you don’t want to, can you do it for me?”

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes. ‘I would do anything for you,’ he thought.

“Sam? Can I come in?” John knocked on the door.

“Yes.”

Dean looked at his father when he walked in, and he looked at Sam once more before leaving the room and giving them both privacy.

Sam was obviously withdrawn and wary when he sat down on the bed beside his father.

“First off, I think I owe you an apology. I’m sorry for pushing. I didn’t want to make you feel that way. I just thought of myself and how badly I wanted to know. That was selfish. Please forgive me.”

Sam couldn’t remember having heard his father ask him for forgiveness before.

“It’s alright,” he said. “I didn’t mean to say those things either. I’m sorry. I know you guys tried everything you could to find me.”

“And everyday I wonder if we tried hard enough,” John confessed. “Trust me. I will never forgive
myself for what they did to you.”

“I just want to put that behind me,” Sam said.

“Sam… I know you don’t want to talk about it, and definitely not the way I was trying to make you do… But please, son… You gotta let someone help you. You need to talk to someone who can. I don’t know what to do, I obviously can’t seem to do the right thing here… Promise me you’ll see someone? It’ll be someone you like, and feel comfortable with. But tell me you’ll agree to see a therapist as doctor Michael suggested.”

Sam looked at his father and sighed.

“Alright,” he said.

“Alright?” John asked, surprised. He didn’t think Sam would agree so fast. “Really?”

“Yes. Maybe you’re right.” Sam still had no desire to speak to anyone, but he was willing to cave in. ‘For Dean,’ he thought.


Sam nodded, and felt his father hugging him tightly. John kissed the top of his head and got up to leave.

As he stood by the door, Harry’s words hit him hard. Cut, whipped, beaten, raped. John looked at his son and thought of everything Sam had been through.

“It’s gonna be alright,” John said before he left the room, and his voice sounded broken and thick with emotion.

Downstairs, when Bobby asked him how it had gone, John repeated that it was going to be alright.

“He agreed to get therapy,” he said.

“That’s great news,” Bobby felt hopeful.

“Bobby?”

“Yes?”

“I don’t care how long it takes, but I will find out what happened to Sam. I will discover why they wanted him, and I will kill the demon who planned everything. It’s what I will do, that and killing the bastard who took Mary.”

Bobby studied his friend. John looked weary, but he also looked absolutely serious.

“Now help me get rid of the body in the basement.”

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tbc...
The days that followed the man being killed in Bobby’s basement and John’s realization of what he had done to Sam, had not been easy on the youngest Winchester. Since Sam had agreed to therapy, he was waiting for his father to settle the matter. He knew John had gotten in touch with doctor Michael and was trying to find him a good doctor.

Meanwhile, the nights had been tough. Ever since the confrontation with his father, in which Sam was forced to look into his past, the night terrors had come back. Without the integrity of the wall Sam had built, it was harder to fall asleep, and Sam didn’t think he would have slept at all if it weren’t for Dean being there.

Sam didn’t remember the time when he was really young, but when Dean woke up in the middle of the night because of Sam’s screaming and twisting in bed, he wondered if his brother had taken care of him with the same soothing patience that could calm him down and put him back to sleep.

For the next few nights, John was forced to sleep with the sound of the lines he had crossed. Sam’s nightmares were haunting. They had been getting better, but since the day he had tried to force Sam to tell him about the past, they had definitely taken a turn for the worse. He supposed it was understandable. Sam spent all his time trying to forget, and that day John had made him remember the things done to him.

John wondered how therapy could help him, if whenever Sam was forced to go back to the room where he was found it ended up unleashing all sorts of fears and panicked reactions from him.

They had to try though, right? Michael thought they should, and honestly, John didn’t know what else to do.

How long would they stay there, living with Bobby? How long before Sam was better so they could take the road and keep doing the job? John knew Sam needed time, but how much more time? If he didn’t talk about his problems, would he be able to overcome them?

The fact that his son had said yes to therapy was a light at the end of the tunnel. John had high hopes about it. A professional would know how to make him speak without causing him to have heartbreaking night terrors. A professional would get him back on track, so they would be able to move on.

John made a few phone calls after talking to doctor Michael, and ended up finding a doctor who lived near enough. Her name was Dakota M. Reece, and her specialization was dealing with people who suffered post traumatic stress disorder. According to Michael, she had treated many soldiers, and a few hunters too. Although she wasn’t involved in the world of hunting, she was aware of its existence, and had already helped patients suffering the effects of the supernatural – survivors of stressful encounters with the occult.
John called her and was able to schedule an appointment for Sam for the next Thursday. He wrote down the address on a corner of his journal and hung up the phone feeling good about it.

Even now, as Sam’s screams could be heard from the room upstairs, John closed his eyes and hung on to the good feeling of having found someone who could help Sam. Tomorrow Sam would go see doctor Reece, and things would start to get better.

John listened to the screams for a couple of minutes, and then it was quiet. He supposed Dean had succeed in calming him down once again.

Pretty soon, John thought, none of that would be necessary.

~ * ~

“NOO!!” Sam thrashed. He kicked the sheets off his overheated body and moaned.

Dean woke up and opened his eyes. It was dark in the room, but not too much. They had left a light on in the hallway, so there was some clarity in the room.

“NOO! Not again! Please!!” Sam struggled with the man overpowering him in his dream. He panted loudly, and the smell of citrus filled his nostrils.

“Sam? It’s alright… Shhh…” Dean tried to hold him but Sam fought him and screamed louder.

“GET OFF OF ME!” He kicked and squirmed. Behind his closed eyelids there was only darkness. He felt someone trying to hold him still and that triggered another wave of writhing and groaning.

“HMM!” Sam tried to break free. He dreamed of the sound of a belt unbuckling, and the anticipation of what was going to happen drove him wild.

“Sam, wake up. You’re with me, Sammy. Wake up,” Dean whispered, trying to hold him close.

“NO!!” Sam groaned and struggled. He whimpered and cried, and used all of his strength to push the man off of him.

Dean tightened his grip on Sam’s wrists. He pressed both of his brother’s wrists to bed forcefully, on each side of his head, and moved so he was lying partially on top of him. He felt the way Sam tried to kick him off, and pressed himself hard against him to try and stop his movements.

“Let me go!” Sam screamed. “Let me go!” He groaned, rabidly.

“Shhh, it’s me, Sammy. Open your eyes.” Dean pressed his forehead to Sam’s and let his body weigh on top of Sam’s smaller one. “Open your eyes.”

Sam’s struggles died down and were replaced by severe shaking. His limbs relaxed against the firm grip on them and he shuddered, opening his eyes in the dark and seeing Dean on top of him, the tip of their noses touching, and his eyes so close they seemed to see inside Sam’s thoughts.

“Dean?” Sam’s voice sounded hoarse from the screaming. “It happened again?” He asked. He felt sweaty and tired, and his breathing slowly returned to a deeper, calmer pattern.
“Yes. It’s okay now. Shhh….” Dean let go of his wrists and framed his face. He let his fingers touch Sam’s cheeks and neck, and then he wiped the sweat off his forehead. “Do you want me to turn on the lights?”

Sam shook his head. He bit on his bottom lip hard, until it hurt, because he didn’t want to cry. He had probably already woken Bobby and his dad up. He didn’t want to have the lights turned on as well.

“No, it’s okay,” he choked, and shut his eyes. He remembered the dream and it caused him to feel uneasy.

Dean moved and lay down beside him. Sam immediately turned on his side to welcome Dean’s body wrapping around his. They snuggled closer in bed, Dean’s arms holding him tightly, safely, so Sam could relax in the embrace. Even though Sam preferred the light, it was good to have this kind of intimacy in the dark. He felt less ashamed and more free to enjoy the fact that Dean was spooning with him in bed when he didn’t have to face it in the bright light. Darkness could also hold secrets that weren’t bad at all.

“I know he’s dead. But I just…”

“I understand. You don’t need to explain it to me, alright? I get it,” Dean reassured him.

Sam nodded. “Thanks.”

He rested his head against Dean’s arm and closed his eyes. He was so tired from his struggling that he fell asleep again before long.

Dean stayed awake a bit longer. He felt his chest pressed to Sam’s back and realized that he had trouble falling asleep because his heart beat so fast, and because it felt so warm. The feeling of Sam sleeping in his arms, and the warmth of his body pressed against his were getting to Dean.

He knew their closeness helped Sam sleep better, but this same closeness was having the opposite effect on him.

Dean stayed awake, breathing into Sam’s scent, studying his breathing pattern, and all the while his heart was racing. And if he pulled Sam closer or felt him stir within his embrace, the same heart would burst with something hot and liquid that spread inside of him quickly, in a feeling that was probably the best thing Dean had ever felt.

~ * ~

Sam had been quiet all the drive to the doctor’s office. His father tried to start conversation a couple of times, but Sam’s less than enthusiastic responses quickly made him give up. It didn’t really matter, John was still hopeful about taking Sam to someone who could help him.

They arrived early at doctor Reece’s office, and John waited with Sam for fifteen minutes in a waiting room. Sam looked at his hands and tried to ignore his fast heartbeats.

‘I’m not talking about the past. I’m not talking,’ he said over and over in his mind, so ardently that it caused his adrenaline level to rise, and his hands to feel cold. Of course he couldn’t tell his father he
had changed his mind, specially not after his father had already scheduled everything with the doctor. How could he say that he had just agreed because he had felt cornered, and because he had tried to do the right thing for Dean?

Sam avoided eye contact with his father because he knew his dad was happy about the whole thing, and it killed him. Sam did not think a therapist would be able to help, especially because he wouldn’t be saying anything about what happened to him.

“Samuel Winchester?” Doctor Reece opened the door and called his name.

Sam and John looked at her and got up.

“Hi, I’m doctor Reece,” she shook hands with John.

“I’m John Winchester. We talked on the phone.”

“And this is Samuel,” she looked at him and smiled. “Nice to meet you.”

Sam looked at her briefly before looking away. She looked sweet and patient, like a therapist should, Sam supposed. But he still felt uneasy and his heart was still racing.

John poked Sam lightly so he would reach out his hand and shake the doctor’s. He complied and went quickly back to staring at the floor.

“Is it okay if I call you Sam? Let’s go in? I would like to talk to you and get to know you,” she pointed her arm towards her open office.

Sam nodded and walked quickly inside. If he had to go, then the sooner it was over, the better.

“You can pick him up in an hour,” she instructed John.

“Right. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

Sam walked into a neatly decorated room, with a dark red rug on the floor, a window whose blinds were shut, a tall bookcase in a corner and a lilac sofa right in front of a black chair.

Sam sat on the sofa and heard when the doctor followed him inside and closed the door.

He looked at his hands and realized they were shaky. Before the doctor could notice it, though, Sam made sure to place them on his lap, unmoving. As she sat on the black chair in front of him Sam watched her, his eyes huge and wary.

“How are you, Sam?” Doctor Reece asked, looking at the fourteen year old boy who was obviously uncomfortable in front of her.

Sam didn’t want to answer. He was afraid of saying a word. It was like the fact of being a professional therapist, specialized in making people talk, was a threat to him. What if he said he was fine and she managed to get everything out of him? What if Sam started to speak and couldn’t stop anymore? What would be left of him if he went back to the bright room and turned off the lights?
The doctor waited for a reply that never came.

With the help of her years of experience, she tried to gather as much information as she could about that boy while keeping a smile on her face that still welcomed him into the room. He looked withdrawn and ready to leave. There was no trust in his eyes, and his body language made it clear that he didn’t feel okay being there.

“Sam, I would like you to know that the only reason why you’re here is because maybe I can help you. Your father thinks I can, and I would like it if you would give me a chance to show that it’s possible. He said that you went through something very difficult some time ago… Is that right?”

Sam stiffened and his lips twirled. He began to worry his bottom lip and try to manage his faster breathing.

“Do you want to tell me about it?”

Sam looked her in the eyes, and the doctor could see that his silence was just as thick as a physical barrier, and that getting inside his thoughts and feelings would not be easy at all.

She waited, but Sam didn’t say anything. She watched, casually, as Sam’s fingers tightened until his knuckles turned white, and she also noticed the way they trembled every now and then.

John Winchester said Sam had agreed to therapy. Now she wondered if he had really. And she also wondered what had happened to him. His dad hadn’t been very specific about his kidnapping, but she knew there must have been violence involved, because he had said Sam was taken to a hospital when he was found.

She had dealt with PTSD before, but most of her patients were adults. She had experience with children and teenagers too, but most of the time their problems were not too serious and they just needed someone to talk to.

“Sam? Do you think we could start by talking about something else, then? About school? About your friends or the things you like to do?”

Sam narrowed his eyes and turned them away. ‘School? Friends? Things I like to do? Right’. That woman knew nothing about him, and there was no way she would know about the bright room.

Sam stared at the sofa for a long while, and then looked at the clock on the wall. He hoped time would pass fast, because in his opinion being there was obviously useless.

Doctor Reece tried to talk to him again, asking a few question in between long moments of silence. She studied the boy who had completely shut himself down and would not open up; she understood his unwillingness to speak, maintain eye contact, or even be there. And when she realized he would not speak to her today, she settled for studying his behavior – the slightly quickened breathing, the fidgety hands, the straying, wary looks.

She was glad the boy was in front of her now, because he obviously needed help to deal with whatever had happened to him, but it would certainly take longer than one hour to break down the wall he had built around himself.

When the session was over, Sam saw the doctor standing up to open the door with great relief. ‘I’m going home,’ he thought, gladly.
Sam walked out of the room quickly and ran into his father. John looked curious and seemed to be in a good mood.

“How was it?” He asked Sam and then let his eyes travel to the doctor.

Sam looked at the doctor and there was evident fear in his eyes. Would she say that he hadn’t spoken a word? Sam didn’t want his father to know. He didn’t want to feel any more pressure than the one of building his wall back up.

“I think Sam and I are going to need time to get to know each other, right Sam? I believe we should make it two visits a week, if you can bring him.”

“Yes, no problem. I’ll bring him.”

‘Great,’ Sam thought, sarcastically. Now he would have to go there and sit in silence for a whole hour twice a week. Yet, he was glad the doctor hadn’t said anything about his silence. He had a feeling his father wouldn’t have been very pleased to know about it.

The doctor could almost tell what was going through the boy’s mind. In the quick time she had been with them, she understood the boy’s father was an extremely powerful figure of authority, and that telling him about his son’s less than collaborative response to their first session would perhaps put Sam in trouble. Dakota knew she couldn’t expose him. It was all about gaining Sam’s trust, thus she kept to herself the details of their lack of interaction.

“I’ll see you next week then. Tuesday, at the same time?” John asked.

“Perfect.”

“Let’s go, Sam.”

John placed a hand on his shoulder and walked him out of the building and into the car. He started the engine and turned on the radio.

“Did you like her? Is she nice? She seems nice.”

“She’s okay,” Sam said. He looked out of the window and pretended he was out of the car, somewhere in the darkening sky, away from all sorts of questions.

John cast a look at his son’s profile and sensed Sam was not in the mood to talk, so he shrugged off his curiosity and drove in silence back to Bobby’s house.

~ * ~

When they arrived home, Dean was not there. He had gone out to run some errands for Bobby and would be back later. Sam went up to his room so he could be alone, and his father met Bobby in the kitchen.

“How was it?” Bobby asked when they were alone.

John shrugged. “Alright, I guess. He didn’t say anything.”
“I think these things take time,” Bobby said.

“Yeah, I think so. She wants Sam to go there twice a week.”

“Did he agree to it?”

“He didn’t say no,” John pointed out, and then his cell phone started ringing.

Bobby watched as he frowned and looked at the number calling. “Who is that?” He asked.

“Sam’s doctor,” John picked up the call. “Hello, doctor Reece? Hi. It’s him. Is everything all right?”

John listened for a few minutes. “Yes, no problem… I can be there. Sure.”

Bobby studied him as he listened for a moment more and then said goodbye before ending the call.

“What was it?”

“She wants me to go there tomorrow to talk about Sam.”

“Why? Did he say something in therapy?”

“I don’t know. I think she just wants to know more about what happened to him so she can help. I think it’s safe to say Sam didn’t open up in the first session.”

“I didn’t think he would. In fact, I think it’ll be difficult to make him speak.”

“I know. Maybe that’s why she wants me to tell her what happened, so she can choose how to get him to speak about it.”

“Will you tell her everything that happened?”

“I’ll tell her everything I know.”

John and Bobby exchanged a meaningful look before opening a couple of beers.

~ * ~

When Dean arrived, it was late in the night and his father was watching an old movie in the living room before he fell asleep.

Dean exchanged a few words with him before going upstairs. The door to Bobby’s room was closed and the lights were off. In Sam’s room the lights were on, and when Dean pushed the door open he found his brother asleep in bed.

Dean stared at him for a moment as he undressed. He stripped down to his underwear and looked at the light switch.

Dean flicked the lights off and got in bed, underneath the sheets where Sam was. It didn’t take long
for his brother to feel the darkness around the room and react to it.

“Hm,” Sam mumbled and opened his eyes. His first instinct was to scream. He parted his lips but Dean was faster.

“I'm here, Sammy. I'm right here with you,” Dean wrapped his arms around him and drew him closer, so Sam could feel he wasn’t alone.

Sam’s lips closed and he relaxed.

“Do you think you can sleep with the lights off tonight?”

Sam thought about it. He felt uneasy about the dark and he was afraid of having terrible nightmares, but being so close to Dean felt like there was this bright, burning fire licking at his insides, and even when Sam closed his eyes he felt something good, something warm that tickled his heart and made him happy.

“Yes… I kind of like the dark with you,” he chuckled softly and nestled his head on Dean’s chest. The intimacy was so strong, and felt so right, that nothing else seemed to matter.

Dean chuckled too and ran a hand through his hair. “How was therapy?”

“I hate it, Dean. I don’t want to go anymore, but she told dad I need to go twice a week.”

Dean felt the anguish in his voice.

“Maybe you’ll end up liking her. Give it a chance.”

“I don’t want to talk about what happened to me,” Sam confessed.

“You don’t need to tell her anything you don’t feel ready to,” Dean reassured him.

“But it’s like dad feels I’m gonna walk out of there as if nothing happened.”

“Forget about dad. You need to do this for you.”

“Do you think I should keep going?”

Dean thought of Sam’s night terrors and fear of the dark. He thought of the things Sam had told him, and he thought of the things Sam hadn’t told him too.

“I think that one session is too soon to tell. Give it some time.”

“I don’t think time will change how I feel about it.”

“So be it. Then you leave. But try to go for at least a month. How about that? If you still can’t stand it after a month, I’ll help you talk to dad about quitting.”

“You’d do that?”

“Yeah, of course.”
“Okay. One month… it’ll suck, but I can do that,” Sam considered.

“Of course you can. You can do anything you want to,” Dean was smiling in the dark, even though Sam couldn’t see it. “I’m exhausted. Night, Sam.”

“Night, Dean.”

Sam closed his eyes and relished the light he found inside his mind because of Dean’s closeness. His brother’s warmth lit up a fire that was able to fight away his fear and awaken his heart.

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$tbc...$
John Winchester felt slightly uncomfortable when he sat down on the lilac sofa, in front of doctor Reece. The place was too neat and too pretty for a man like him, used to being covered in blood and grit. His presence in her office almost felt obscene, and John looked pretty much as awkward as Sam did when he had sat there just one day ago.

“Thank you for coming, Mr. Winchester,” the doctor smiled and picked up a pen and a notepad.

“John. You can call me John,” He smiled, albeit uncomfortably, and looked around once again. Her office screamed of a simple, regular life. John wondered if she was married and had children. He looked for a picture frame in the room but didn’t find any.

“Thank you, John. As I said over the phone, I asked you to come here so we could talk about Sam.”

“Right,” John felt his throat tight with tension. He looked at his legs and the sofa, and felt once again like he was almost too big to be there.

“You said Sam agreed to therapy, right?”

“He did. Why do you ask? Did he say something different?”

“No,” the doctor assured him. “In fact, Sam didn’t say anything.”

“Was he quiet all session long?” John frowned.

“You speak as if he has done that before. And yes, Sam was quiet. I tried to talk to him, but he wouldn’t say a word.”

John sighed. He couldn’t say he was surprised, but he had hoped things would be easier.

“He did it before, when we found him. During the time he was in the hospital, Sam didn’t speak to anyone. He only talked to us again when he was back home.”

“Right,” the doctor took notes. “You told me he was kidnapped and gone for three months. You also said that he was very hurt when you found him, like he had been tortured.”

“Yes.”

“Do you have any idea of what happened to him in the place where he was?” The doctor studied him carefully. “And please, the more you can tell me, the more I can use to try and help him.”

John took a deep breath. How does one admit to being a terrible father and letting his son suffer the
long list of injuries Sam had?

“You know about us hunters, right?”

“Yes,” the doctor said, narrowing her eyes and paying full attention. “Has Sam’s kidnapping had something to do with the supernatural?”

“Yes, but I still don’t know what. All I know is that he was taken by a demon, and he was tortured by a man who is now dead,” John hoped she wouldn’t ask details about this man. He waited a moment, but she didn’t. “I know my son was beaten, I know he was tortured in different ways.”

“John? I’m sure this must be extremely difficult for you, but the more you tell me, the more I’ll understand where Sam’s silence and wariness is coming from.”

John nodded and sighed again.

“He was burned, whipped, cut... I know he was tortured like a prisoner of war, having fingernails pulled, or his head shoved into a bucket of water. I know they didn’t give him much food. And I know that every time he was hurt, it happened in the dark.”

The doctor stopped writing and looked up into John’s eyes. “In the dark, you say?”

“Yes. Whenever this man entered the room where my son was, it was always pitch black, and Sam could never really see him, just suffer the attack.”

“I see. Has he shown any fear of the dark since he came back?”

“Fear? Yes, you could say that,” John arched his eyebrows and let out a puff of painfully amused breath. “My son is terrified of the dark, doctor. When he came back home he slept with the lights on for many days, and he still does sometimes. He also has night terrors, and they are so bad that the first time it happened we thought he was seizing.”

The doctor looked down at her notes. She was a professional, she knew how to deal with that. But she was also human, and the pain in that description tugged at the strings of her heart.

“And what did you do to calm him down?”

“I couldn’t really do anything,” John confessed. “My older son, Sam’s brother, was able to calm him and put him back to sleep.”

The doctor stared at the man in front of her and nodded. “Who is this young man?”

“His name is Dean, and he’s four years older than Sam.”

“Right. And how would you describe their relationship?”

“It’s great,” John smiled, and for the first time he didn’t feel so uneasy. “Dean’s always taken care of Sam, since he was a baby.”

“What about his mother?”

John was silent for a moment. All his joy was sucked right out of him as if he had taken a blow to the
stomach.

“My wife, Mary, um… we lost her when Sam was still a baby. Ever since then it’s been the three of us.”

“And do you hunt a lot, John?”

“I do,” John’s growing discomfort was clear in his face. Could they go back to talking about Sam? “I’ve had to make some tough decisions, and I acknowledge that life was mostly hard on us, but we’ve made it so far,” he said, and the doctor could sense a hint of defiant protection in his tone.

“Right. So Sam and Dean get along?”

“They are boys. They pick on each other, tease each other… but I’m sure they love one another. And since Sam came back Dean’s been the only one who can get close to him. Sam trusts him, even though he hasn’t opened up about his past.”

“So no one knows what really happened to Sam? No one has heard it from him?”

John shook his head slowly. “We know he was badly hurt, but we don’t know any details.”

The doctor looked down at her notes. “One more thing, John. During the time Sam was held captive, did he suffer sexual abuse?”

John stiffened. He narrowed his eyes and then looked down at his hands. He knew the doctor was waiting for an answer.

“I… I think so, yes.”

“You think so? You don’t know for sure?”

“He’s never talked about it. When you ask him, he just shuts down completely. But I have reason to believe it happened.”

“What reason? It’s important that I know.”

“I know…” John ran his fingers through his hair. “Well, Dean told me that one day they were watching a movie together, and when a scene came up with a man trying to rape a woman, Sam freaked out and started running into the woods near the house. When Dean caught up with him he wouldn’t speak, but he asked him not to tell me anything. And he didn’t, for a while.”

“Is there any other reason why you think he was violated?”

John swallowed hard. “This man that hurt my son… he said so.”

“He confessed his crimes?”

“He did before he died.”

The doctor looked intently at John. Judging from what he did for a living, and the thirst for revenge he clearly felt, she had an idea of how such man had died, but it was not up to her to question him about it.
“What did he say?”

“He said he raped my son, more than once.”

“And did you ask Sam if it was true?”

“I did. In fact, that’s pretty much what has made us end up here. I tried to make him talk. I admit I might have been a bit harsh on him…”

“Did you hit him?”

“What? No! No, I don’t hit my children.”

“I had to ask.”

“I see…” John looked around, his forehead creased. “I raised my voice, and insisted that he tell me if he had been abused.”

“What did he do?”

“He panicked. He tried to get away from me, wouldn't listen to me, couldn't even look at me. He looked terrified and started crying. Then he started screaming at me and ran away. Later, after he calmed down, he agreed to come see you. So yes, he never said anything, but I believe it happened.”

“Why wasn’t a rape kit done when he was admitted to the hospital?” She wrote on a piece of paper quickly.

John’s heart fell. He felt like he was being judged for all his sins. How could he feel any worse than he already did? “I…didn’t let the doctor run it. I thought it was a ridiculous suspicion, that it hadn’t happened. I didn’t want to submit him to it,” he swallowed hard and ran his hand over his face.

“Well,” the doctor said, putting down her pen. “I can see that you feel guilty about it.”

“And why shouldn’t I? Maybe we could have found the bastard that hurt him sooner.”

“If that makes you feel any better, I doubt your son would have said yes to a rape kit. Even if the doctor had your authorization, from what I saw of Sam, I don’t think it would have made a difference. He’s built such a strong shield around himself that I have reason to believe he would not have allowed a rape kit to be done. And as you know, even though he’s a minor, you would need his consent to collect evidence. Otherwise the doctor would just be damaging him further.”

John listened to that, and even though it was all so terrible, he caught himself hoping that her words were true. And if he gave it thought, he could not see Sam willingly allowing the doctor to check him all over for evidence of sexual assault. Most likely Sam would have fought who ever tried to get near him, or screamed, or run away from the hospital.

“I believe that everything your son’s been through is extremely painful, and of course no child should ever be put through that. But unless Sam acknowledges what happened to him and accepts it, he won’t be able to move on. From what you said, your son seems to be deep in denial.”

“He couldn’t even say yes or no when I asked him about the rape,” John agreed.
“That’s because he doesn’t want to go back to his past. He can’t stand going back to the place where he was. Unfortunately, the only way to deal with it and move on is to face what happened and understand that he is strong enough to get past it. And even though we haven’t talked, I can see Sam is strong.”

“He is.”

“I’m gonna need time to make him talk. I can tell you are eager to see your son get better, and I understand it, but you’ll need to be patient.”

“Right…”

“Some people will live their entire lives under the effects of PTSD. Therapy can help, but it’s not overnight. I don’t know how long it will take until Sam trusts me and opens up.”

“But do you think it will happen? Do you think you can help him?”

It was the doctor’s turn to frown and sigh deeply.

“I’ve helped people before. I don’t think it’ll be easy, and you need to know that a lot of this depends on your son, but one thing I can tell you, you did the right thing when you made him come. Sam needs to talk to someone.”

“So I guess it would help if he actually talked, right?”

“He will. We just need to be patient. Now, John? I would really appreciate if you didn’t mention anything about our talk to Sam. Does he know you are here now?”

“No.”

“Good. I’m trying to establish a bond with him, and I want him to trust me.”

“I get it. I won’t say anything. I won’t tell him I know that he didn’t speak.”

“Thanks. It’s better like this.”

“Is that all, doctor?” John looked at the neat office once again and got up.

“It is, for now. I might want to talk to his brother too, but I’ll let you know.”

“All right. Goodbye, doctor.”

“Goodbye,” she shook his hand. “See you next Tuesday.”

“You will.”

~ * ~

Bobby was in his office reading while Sam and Dean were outside. Dean was finishing his work out
as Sam watched him from the porch. Dean took off his T-shirt and wiped some of his sweat with it. He looked at his brother and he was smiling.

“What? Are you enjoying the sight of me busting my ass here?” He arched his eyebrows.

Sam chuckled. “It’s kind of fun, yeah.”

“Oh really? Then get your skinny ass over here and let’s see if it’s still so much fun,” he threw his sweaty T-shirt at Sam.

“That’s gross, Dean.” Sam threw the T-shirt quickly off him, and made a disgusted face when he realized he was covered in his brother’s sweat.

Dean grinned.

“You know. I think I’ll take your advice.”

“What?” Dean looked intently at Sam when he got up and started to walk in his direction under the bright afternoon sun.

“Yeah, you heard me. I got my skinny ass here, so what are you going to do?” Sam’s eyes were teasing and playful, like Dean hadn’t seen for a while.

“Do you mean it?” He asked, a half smile on his lips.

Sam sighed, but didn’t change his mind. “Yes. I want to go back to training. Can you teach me again?”

Dean’s smile widened. His reply was to move swiftly towards his brother and engage into playful wrestling.

“Hey!” Sam protested, trying to fight him off.

“You said you were ready. C’mon, Sammy, show me what you got,” Dean tried to overpower him, but he didn’t put too much strength behind his moves. He allowed Sam to fight back, in a fight that was much more friendly and fun than a serious training should be.

~ * ~

When John arrived in the Impala, he saw his two kids wrestling on the ground. He frowned for a moment and watched, and then he quickly realized that they were training, although there was a lot of laughter involved. The sound lightened his heart, and made John forget about his talk with the doctor.

Bobby showed up on the porch and looked at the scene as well. He and John looked into each other’s eyes with silent approval.

“Hey, dad,” Dean saw their father and got up. He helped Sam up too. They were both dirty and sweaty.
“Were you training, then?”

“Yes. Sam asked to go back to it.”

John looked at his younger son. “Is it really okay, Sam? Is that what you want?”

“Yes,” Sam said. He didn’t know why he wanted it, but he did. He thought that perhaps some physical activity, the way he used to have before it all happened, might help take his mind off things he didn’t want to think about. Besides, the afternoon had been fun. Training could be boring and demanding, but it was also empowering, and Sam was tired of feeling scared all the time.

“Great. You know that makes me very happy,” John looked at them for a while longer and started walking towards the house. “No go get clean, we’ll eat dinner shortly.”

Sam and Dean looked at each other and smiled with complicity.

Inside the house, Bobby followed John into the kitchen as he opened himself a beer.

“Dean said that Sam asked to start training again,” John said.

“I heard it.” Bobby nodded, and there was joy in his eyes.

“You see? Therapy has barely started and already it’s helping him,” John said.

Bobby didn’t reply. He understood that his friend was hopeful with Sam starting therapy, but for Bobby, Sam’s therapy had already started, since the day he was found. He looked outside the window and saw the two brothers fooling around. John could convince himself that a doctor would help Sam, but Bobby knew that all the help Sam needed to get truly better was right there, sleeping under the same roof, and recently, sharing the same bed.

------------------------------------------------------------------

tbc...

a/n: next one will be longer ;)

Sam walked out of his second session with Doctor Reece just as quietly as he had entered. He had managed to spend another entire hour in absolute silence, ignoring her questions and looks, staring at nothing in particular, avoiding the pair eyes trying to see through him.

John picked him up and exchanged a meaningful look with the therapist, but doctor Reece didn’t tell him anything with her eyes. She smiled her goodbye and said she would see Sam again on Thursday.

As they drove back to Bobby’s house, John tried to make Sam speak about therapy – he was curious to know whether or not he had spoken at all this time – but Sam was vague in his answers, and didn’t give John much room to probe.

Back at home, Sam didn’t want to talk about therapy, not even when Dean asked. He convinced his brother they should do something else, like watch TV or do some training, and Dean complied. They spent the rest of the day shooting and joined Bobby and John for dinner a while later.

When night came, Sam and Dean found sleep beside each other, in the old and silent house Bobby Singer had welcomed them into.

~ * ~

There was a faint light coming from the hallway, casting its gray shadow up to the entrance of their room, making the place less dark and more shadowy. When Dean opened his eyes, in the middle of the night, he could see around the room after a few minutes of his eyes adjusting to the lack of clarity.

“Sam?” Dean felt beside him but didn’t find his brother. His eyes quickly went to the bathroom, but the door was ajar and there was no light inside.

“Sam?” Dean asked again, and sat up in bed.

Where had he gone? If he wanted to use the bathroom there was no need to leave the room. Had Sam gone down to the kitchen? Dean frowned and stood up. He walked towards the bathroom to take a closer look inside. “Sam, are you in there?” He wasn’t.

Dean was about to turn around and go downstairs to the kitchen when something like a hunch, perhaps, made him turn around and look at a corner of the room.

“Sammy?” Dean’s heart drummed in his chest, and for a split second he was afraid of what he saw. There was a shadow crouched in the corner of the room, rocking quietly, and for a moment Dean
feared it could be some sort of supernatural creature. The impression, however, was quickly gone, because when he blinked a few times and his eyes adjusted better to the dark, he saw his baby brother, rocking himself back and forth and staring at nothing in particular.

“Sam?” Dean walked towards him and crouched before him. The scene reminded him a lot of the first night they had spent in Bobby’s house when they came back from the hospital, and it caused his heart to ache.

Sam didn’t speak. His eyes were wide and glassy, and there were waves of visible shudders raking him every now and then.

Dean swallowed hard and touched his shoulder. “Sam?” He called softly.

When the hand landed on his shoulder Sam moved, startled, and his eyes focused Dean as if he saw him for the first time. Dean believed that indeed, it was like Sam hadn’t really seen him there before.

Sam gasped and licked his dry lips; he shook under Dean’s touch.

“It’s alright… it’s me…” Dean soothed him, squeezing his shoulder.

Sam relaxed and studied his brother. He was shaky when Dean started to help him up. “C’mon, let’s go to bed.”

Sam let Dean help him back to bed until they were both tucked beneath the covers.

“What happened? Why were you there?” Dean asked, watching over him gently.

“I don’t know…” Sam whispered. “I don’t know how long I was there. I don’t remember waking up.” Sam chewed on his bottom lip and looked at Dean. “Do you think I’m losing my mind? Like, going crazy for real?”

There was so much anguish behind that question that Dean just wanted to be able to heal Sam with his touch, and promise him he wouldn’t have to feel like that.

“No, Sammy. You’re not going crazy. You probably had a bad dream, that’s all.”

“I don’t remember anything…”

“You don’t need to,” Dean pulled him closer and felt Sam turn around in he embrace, until his back fit perfectly against his chest. “Go back to sleep now.”

Sam closed his eyes and tried to comply. He had a troubled night of falling in and out of different stages of dreams. He writhed and moaned faintly, or simply fell into blankness and lay unmoving for a moment. Throughout the rest of the night, though, Dean was there, holding him, patiently trying to be what Sam needed to feel safer.

~ * ~

On his third session with doctor Reece, Sam looked at the room around himself, a room that he was becoming familiar with.
“So, Sam… do you think we could talk a little bit today? Maybe just talk about something you saw on TV or about the weather?” She smiled.

Sam didn’t smile back. He couldn’t forget that he was there because of the darkness, and because of what had happened to him in there. That woman seemed nice and all, but what she really wanted was to break down his wall and make Sam go back to the bright room, and walk her through the painful memories he had of being in there. If it was up to him, that was not happening.

“So you like to read? Have you read any good books lately?”

Sam stared at her, silently. The more time he spent in silence, the easier it became to give in to it, to feel protected by it. Soon, her words didn’t bother him so much. Sam could pretend she wasn’t even there. He looked at the clock and kept hoping time would pass faster.

When the session was over and Sam could walk out of yet another speechless hour, he wondered how much longer the doctor could handle before she gave up on him. How much more silence before she told John there was nothing she could do to help, and Sam could stop coming?

“Dean?” The sight of his brother waiting for him when the door opened surprised Sam, and he smiled largely before he could help it.

“Hey, kid. Dad couldn’t come. He asked me to pick you up.”

The sound of Sam’s voice had definitely called doctor Reece’s attention, and she looked curiously from Sam to the handsome young man who had come to pick him up.

“And you are?” She smiled and reached out her hand.

“Dean. I’m his brother. You must be the doctor.”

“Dakota Reece,” they shook hands.

Dean then turned his attention back to Sam. He looked at his brother with worry and so much care that one could not fail to notice. Unlike John, who waited for his son and looked intently into her eyes to try and learn about the session, his brother didn’t seem to care less about what had happened in the past hour. His attention was all focused on his brother, and he didn’t bother looking at the doctor again.

Sam felt slightly embarrassed. He hadn’t said a word in the past hour, but he had happily called Dean’s name now. He couldn’t help it, though. For someone who had been expecting his dad to come pick him up with lots of unpleasant questions, the sight of Dean was more than he could have wished for, and his heart felt joy.

“Let’s go home?”

“Yes,” Sam answered him quickly.

The doctor watched the exchange of looks between them. It was good that John had sent Dean to pick his brother up, because she really appreciated watching them interact. John had been right when he had described their relationship as something that did Sam good. In the small time she had known Sam, it was the first time she saw him smile, and the first time she felt he had let his guard down.
Sam looked at Dean like he was his savior, and the doctor watched as her patient gravitated towards his brother almost unconsciously.

“Goodbye, doctor. He’ll come back next week.”

“Goodbye. Have a nice weekend.”

Sam looked at her very briefly before he turned around to leave with Dean.

~ * ~

On the weekend, the two brothers were left alone when John and Bobby went out hunting. They didn’t mind having the house to themselves, and thus they spent the day relishing the comfortable routine of eating and watching TV like a regular pair of teens. When they grew tired of doing nothing, Sam went to his room and studied for a couple of hours, and Dean also studied supernatural lore during the same time.

Before they went to bed to find sleep, Dean had made sure all the doors were locked and the house was safe. When he went upstairs and walked into the bedroom they shared, Sam was waiting for him.

“Can I turn off the lights?” Dean asked him.

“Yes…” Sam pondered. “Just keep them on in the hallway.”

“Right.”

Dean did as asked before joining Sam on the bed, and the two brothers fell asleep a little later.

When Dean opened his eyes again it was the middle of the night. The sound of soft, painful crying had waken him up, and Dean looked to his side to where Sam was lying.

His brother was curled up in bed, his back to Dean, and he seemed to be crying into the pillow. Dean’s heart tightened and throbbed, and for a moment he didn’t move, he just lay there in utter silence and listened as Sam sobbed as quietly as he could into his pillow.

He then looked at his brother and saw his back move every now and then, every time a sob raked him and caused him to shudder.

It was the first time Dean had actually heard Sam give in and cry after he had come back, and it broke his heart into so many pieces that Dean felt like he was bleeding into his own veins.

Sam closed his lips tightly when a betraying little gasp escaped his lips – they quivered at the strength he put behind trying to be quiet, and Sam buried his nose into the pillow and blinked, feeling fat, warm tears pool against his face. He tried to breathe in deeply, but his nose was running, so he had to part his lips to let the air in, and when he did so a sob escaped from deep within him, and the sound was so broken and anguished that it caused Sam to weep harder, because the pain sometimes was just too much and he could not handle it.

Dean turned around and snaked his arms around Sam. One between his neck and the pillow, the
other resting on his chest and feeling his heartbeats.

Sam stiffened and held his breath when he realized Dean was awake. The embrace felt good, but Sam was also embarrassed, and he tried to swallow down the tears that insisted on coming, but they were strong, like water flowing through a dam.

“Shhh….” Dean whispered. “You can cry, Sammy…” He held him tightly and didn’t say anything else. Words wouldn’t make Sam feel better, so Dean just held him in silence, but tightly, as the crying kept coming, intense and unstoppable, for a few more minutes.

Sam didn’t know what was going on. He didn’t understand exactly why he was crying, but he felt so sad, so broken that he couldn’t control it. He cried because he couldn’t not to, because right now he felt so tired of everything that had happened to him. Sam was exhausted from trying to build a wall, a wall that instead of protecting him sometimes seemed to crush him under its heavy weight.

Eventually the tears stopped, but not the tightness of the embrace. Sam grew quiet and he didn’t move at all, except for the fingers closing around Dean’s wrist before he fell asleep again.

~ * ~

When the morning came, Dean woke up and found himself alone in bed. He rubbed at his sleepy eyes, put some clothes on and started looking for his brother.

He found Sam sitting down on the porch, looking into the distance, lost in thought.

“Sup, Sammy?” He sat down beside him and looked into the distance too.

Sam didn’t look at Dean. He felt insecure for having cried the night before, so he shielded himself in silence. “Are you hungry? Have you had breakfast?” Dean insisted.

“No,” Sam confessed. “She’s okay. But I keep thinking she wants me to speak about the past, and I hate that.”
“I told you you don’t need to talk about stuff you don’t feel ready to.”

“I know. But I feel like I’m wasting everyone’s time going there and saying nothing.”

“You don’t speak to her?”

Sam shook his head.

“Are you mad at me?” He asked.

“Of course not. But why don’t you talk to her? Does she insist on asking about the past?”

Sam thought of her harmless questions about the weather.

“No. I think I might be trying to make her give up on me.”

Dean nodded.

“Is that what you want? Do you truly want to never talk about what happened, and live as if nothing happened at all?”

Sam felt his throat sting and tighten, and he closed his hands into fists until his knuckles turned white.

“I don’t know…” He said, honestly.

“So give her a chance, Sam. Talk to her. Find out whether you want to tell her something or not. Remember, you don’t need to talk about stuff you don’t want to, and she won’t force you.” Dean studied him with the corner of his eye. “Is that what’s been bothering you?”

Sam nodded. There was something else bothering him, but something that wasn’t bad at all. There was something Sam didn’t understand, – it seemed to hurt and ache, but then it seemed to burn in a good feeling, and it felt better when he was next to Dean – but even though Sam didn’t understand it, he didn’t think it was responsible for giving him nightmares.

“Let’s go eat something?” Dean asked.

“Yeah,” Sam nodded and got up to follow his brother into the kitchen.

~ * ~

On his next session, John dropped him at Dakota’s office and left when Sam walked inside and doctor Reece shut the door.

“How are you today, Sam?”

Sam thought of Dean’s words. It was okay to speak to her, as long as he knew the line he had drawn in his mind, the line no one would make him cross.

“I’m good,” he answered, and looked away shyly.
The doctor stared at him for a moment before speaking again.

“And how did you spend the weekend?” She asked, wondering if Sam would really let them engage in conversation.

The boy shrugged. “It was okay. I read, studied a little, watched TV…”

Doctor Reece nodded. She hid her smile and kept it to herself. Sam was talking! She didn’t know what had happened or what had made him change his mind, but she promised herself she would not take advantage of the crack in his shield through which Sam had established communication. He had already taken a huge step towards trusting someone, and Dakota would not scare him away.

Thus, they made small talk for the next hour. She asked Sam about what he liked to do, and asked small things about his childhood which Sam would be willing to share. When the session was over, she knew Sam liked to study, but he didn’t miss school so much. She knew Sam liked to read and be in his uncle Bobby’s home, and she had also started to realize that maybe the youngest son of John Winchester wasn’t as excited about the hunting world as his dad was, but that was something they would have to speak about later, because now their time was up.

When she opened the door to let Sam out of her office, she ran into the young man who had come to pick him up before.

“Dean, right?” She smiled as Sam gravitated towards his brother.

“Yes. How are you, doctor?”

“I’m okay, thanks.”

She watched when Sam’s face opened into a smile that shone in his eyes, and she studied the way Sam’s body relaxed and assumed a trusting attitude toward his brother.

“Let’s go?”

“Let’s,” Sam’s eyes met Dean’s, and the eye contact lingered for a few seconds.

It was brief, but it was enough to catch the doctor’s eye and make her stare curious and intently at the two of them.

Dean looked at his brother and smiled, and Sam looked at him with so much adoration that it felt thick, and in his eyes it was like his quickened heartbeats were reflected, and the shine in those hazel eyes, that got lost into green for a moment, was so bright that it burned hot, and one could hardly look away from the way the two brothers stared at each other.

The doctor watched when Sam went closer to his brother, making sure his body could brush his, and then she watched the way Dean’s hand rested on his shoulder and squeezed.

The touch seemed to make the boy’s eyes sparkle, and for a careful observer, even his breathing pattern seemed to change. When Sam looked into his brother’s eyes, he was barely able to hide what he felt inside, and there was something in his eyes that wasn’t difficult to identify. Dakota had seen it many times before, and right now it made her thoughtful and curious.
The impression she got from looking at the two of them standing so close together was powerfully intriguing. Seeing the way the world seemed to fade around Sam when he looked into his brother’s eyes, a shocking thought crossed her mind, one she couldn’t immediately shrug off.

Sam certainly liked his big brother a lot, but Dakota wondered if he knew how dangerously close to infatuation his feelings seemed to be.

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tbc....
During the next month, Sam went to therapy regularly, twice a week, as he had agreed he would. By the end of the month it wasn’t as bad as Sam believed it would be in the beginning. During most of the sessions, Dakota — as she insisted Sam called her — was friendly and patient, and they talked about Sam’s week, his studies, his chores, and some of his feelings. She didn’t push him when he drew his line, and Sam did that often. The reason why he was going to therapy was not forgotten between them, and sometimes the doctor would ask things that Sam would either not answer or deliberately choose to change the subject.

John didn’t know what went on in these sessions, but he liked what he had been seeing lately. Sam was training again, and his nightmares had become less frequent. He was still withdrawn and John still needed to watch what he said near him, but there was visible improvement.

For the past four weeks, Doctor Reece observed Sam as much as the boy observed her. She studied his reactions to the people who came to pick him up, John and Dean, and eventually his uncle Bobby. She let her critical eye take in the details of Sam’s relationship with his family members and she started to have an idea of Sam’s feelings based on what she saw and what he said in therapy.

She was positive that Sam’s feelings for his brother were far deeper and much more complex than Sam himself dared to admit. She could see it in the way they looked at each other, and in the way Sam’s eyes seemed to melt into a pool of adoration, that there was something so thick, a bond so intense between the two brothers that maybe they would have to explore it in therapy. If Sam was in denial about his past, he could also be in denial about his present. Perhaps if she could get him to speak about his feelings for his brother, she might help him open up about his feelings concerning his captivity.

As Sam sat before her now, after they had made small talk about the weekend, Doctor Reece smiled lightly at him before speaking again.

“Tell me about your brother, Sam.”

Sam looked at her and then made a small shrugging gesture. “What about Dean?”

“You like him very much, don’t you? I can see the way you look at him when he comes to pick you up.”
“He’s my big brother,” Sam said, matter-of-factly.

“Right. And you love him,” she stated.

Sam looked briefly at the blinds of the window before agreeing.

“I do, sure.”

“Would you say that Dean is the person you trust the most in your life?”

Sam thought for a moment. He hadn’t given it much thought, but yes, he was. There was no one else who knew him half as much as Dean did.

“He is. He always took care of me.”

The doctor nodded.

“Since your mom passed away, Dean was pretty much your brother and mother, wasn’t he?” She smiled.

Sam laughed lightly. “I guess you could say that.”

“Have you told him about the things that happened to you when you were gone?” She asked, knowing she had just gotten really close to the point where Sam might stop communicating and shut down.

Indeed, Sam seemed to take his time considering the question, and even though his breathing slowed down, his heartbeats increased.

“No,” Sam looked down at the floor. “He knows some stuff, but I never told him about it.”

“And why’s that, Sam? I thought you trusted him.”

“I do. It has nothing to do with trust,” Sam explained.

“Do you think you could tell me what it has to do with?”

Sam frowned lightly. There wasn’t a simple answer to that.

“I just don’t want to talk about what happened.”

“Not even to Dean?”

“No.”

Doctor Reece wondered if shame was what Sam felt, so she tried to probe a little.

“How do you think he would feel if he knew?”

“I don’t know,” Sam shrugged again, visibly tense. “Sorry for me, I suppose,” he swallowed hard and looked away, unconsciously biting on the inside of his bottom lip.
'He does feel ashamed,' she realized. If only she could help him understand that none of what happened was his fault, and that he had no control over it…

“You said he knows some stuff… How did he find out if you didn’t tell him anything?” She insisted a little more.

Sam’s muscles became taut. He grew fidgety and the doctor knew he would stop talking at any moment.

“I have nightmares sometimes. I said some things.”

She could feel the same powerful wave of fear combined with anger that Sam had already demonstrated before. The intensity of both emotions struggling inside him made the wall Sam built around himself seem almost unbreakable.

“And does Dean help you when you have nightmares?” She softened her voice and changed the subject slightly. She wouldn’t ask about those nightmares, not now. Sam was visibly very defensive and unwilling to delve into the matter, so she might as well try and put him back into a lighter mood.

Sam thought of Dean snuggling closer in bed and wrapping his arms around his body. His chest felt immediately warm and his heart rhythm shifted to something faster, however lighter.

Sam nodded, and instead of fear and hatred, there was something soft in his eyes, something interesting.

“Do you go and ask him for help at night, when you have those dreams?” She asked, wondering if Sam would confess to what she had an idea happened between them.

“No, he usually sleeps with me,” Sam said and then it was like he listened to his own words. For a moment, he blushed despite himself. Should he have said that? Had he just shared too much? Would Dakota judge him for that? Sam tensed, but his heart beat fast and his cheeks burned. He felt vulnerable and shy, but altogether the feeling wasn’t entirely bad.

“I’m glad you let him get so close. He must be very important to you.”

“He’s my big brother,” Sam repeated, automatically, and when the doctor changed the subject and they started talking about unimportant things, Sam felt relieved and was able to relax.

Nevertheless, that night, when the session was over and Sam was back home, ready to fall asleep, he breathed Dean’s scent so close to him in bed, and it was like Sam had never been so aware of the warmth emanating from his brother’s body.

~ * ~

Sam woke up in the middle of the night, at first not really sure of what was going on. He blinked a few times, the shadows in the room becoming familiar and his body relaxing despite the lack of light. Then, as he studied the bedroom around, he heard the heavy breathing beside him in bed and turned around to look at Dean.
His brother was perspiring and breathing with difficulty. When Sam got closer, he could see Dean’s eyelids moving as if he was dreaming, but judging from the wrinkles on his forehead, Sam didn’t think it was good.

“Dean?” He touched his brother’s arm and pressed softly.

Dean’s eyes darted open and he gasped, staring at the ceiling and trying to catch his breath. The whole thing lasted for a few seconds, until Dean was able to look at Sam, beside him, and feel his touch against his skin.

“Are you alright? Did you have a nightmare?” Sam asked, curious.

Dean ran a hand through his hair and sighed. He swallowed down and felt his throat dry. “Yeah,” he said, and his eyes studied Sam intently in the dark.

“What did you dream of?” Sam wanted to know.

“I dreamed you were gone,” Dean admitted. In his dream they had not found Sam; they had nothing but the certainty of the terrible things being done to a boy they could not save. “I dreamed we hadn’t found you.”

“You found me,” Sam whispered. “I’m right here.”

“You are,” Dean agreed, barely trusting his voice. His heart was still racing from his dream, and he couldn’t take his eyes off his brother.

Sam did what he had seen Dean do for him many times. He let his fingers close around Dean’s wrist and squeezed, trying to show him with his touch that it was alright.

Dean smiled at the feeling of Sam’s fingers against his skin. And in the dark silence of the night, without the need for any words, he saw Sam smile back at him before he closed his eyes.

~ * ~

“Sam, remember the nightmares you told me about?” Doctor Reece studied the boy sitting before her.

“Yes,” Sam said, seemingly uninterested.

“Do you have many dreams about the time you went missing?”

Sam felt his throat tighten almost as a reflex action.

He shrugged and shook his head lightly.

“Your father told me why you were seeking therapy, Sam. I know that you were gone for three months, and he told me how they found you. I know that you were severely injured when you were taken to the hospital.”

Sam felt his stomach tighten. He looked either at his hands or at the rug on the floor. He listened to
every word she said, but before they could sink in his mind, there was a wall they would need to get past, and Sam was not keen on letting that happen.

“Did they torture you, Sam? The people who took you?”

Sam’s mind was in the dark. He saw darkness take over his thoughts and knock on the door of his awareness. Sam bit on his bottom lip and avoided eye contact.

“Yes,” he said, and the voice that came out of his throat seemed hoarse and unlike his own.

Doctor Reece took a deep breath. It was the first time Sam let her go a little bit further. As much as she was eager to go on and find out more about how he felt, she knew he was on the verge of falling silent and ignoring her questions. The signs of his discomfort were evident, and in his straying eyes she could see the same traumatized look her PTSD patients usually had.

“Can you tell me some of the things they did to you? I think it might help me understand you, and maybe even help you.”

Sam’s boyish, sweet features changed before her eyes, in a startling and worrying way. He squinted his eyes and his lips twisted weirdly. When he spoke, there was a cruel detachment in his voice and look that to an untrained eye might seem fierce, but to her was a screaming cry of hurting.

“They beat me. Burned me. You know. Stuff like that,” Sam grinned lightly and humorlessly. Inside him there was only tension, and the desperate need to say those things as if they didn’t mean what they did, as if the boy hiding behind his walls wasn’t in fact cowering in fear and begging for help.

“Do you know why they hurt you?” She asked gently.

Sam shrugged and shook his head. His eyes looked glassy and uncaring, but his shaky hands betrayed his attitude.

“What else did they do to you?” She tried.

“They didn’t. He did,” Sam said. “He cut me; he whipped me; he tased me.” Sam said those things like they didn’t matter, almost like he relished the idea that he could shock the doctor with his honesty. He displayed those words like graffiti painted on the wall of his mind, like vain and hollow words, without any meaning.

“Did he rape you too?” She asked boldly, knowing that question could just change everything.

Sam held her stare for a few more seconds, and then the tough, aggressive attitude in his eyes shifted dramatically. His hazel eyes went back to looking young and lost, and in a moment Sam looked so vulnerable and so hurting that it was like he would break.

The shaking in his hands was spreading quickly, and soon his lips quivered, and when he looked at her he seemed so desperate and so frail that she almost regretted her question. She had to remind herself that she was there to help him talk about his trauma and move on.

Sam didn’t talk any more, though. He fell absolutely silent, and his eyes didn’t find hers again for the remaining twenty minutes of the session.

“Sam? Why does the question bother you so much?” She tried, but he didn’t even acknowledge her
voice. Sam shut down and became completely withdrawn, and there was nothing that she could say to make him come out of his shell.

When his father came to pick him up, Sam followed him to the car without a word, and without looking back at her.

She had made some progress getting Sam to tell her a little bit of what had happened to him. But at what cost, she wondered.

Doctor Reece soon found out. During their next four sessions, Sam didn’t say a word. He walked into her office, sat down and waited for time to pass. He didn’t answer any of her questions; he didn’t even look at her.

One might lose heart at such response, but she knew she was getting to him, and if Sam had shut down, she would need patience to build communication back again.

~ * ~

Sam stared at his brother as Dean practiced his stitches on some pieces of leather. He watched him silently, and as he did he thought of some of Dakota’s words. Did he trust Dean? Sure he did. Then why didn’t he talk to him?

Sometimes Sam felt so tired, he almost wanted to tell him everything. But when he thought of himself, bleeding, crying and begging on the white floor of the dark room, Sam’s urge to tell him anything vanished, and he silenced himself with the weight of his shame. How could he tell Dean that he had begged them to stop? That he had begged the man not to…

Sam swallowed hard and studied Dean, absently lost in his task. Did Dean think about the white room, Sam wondered. Did he sometimes think about the day Sam had run away after the movie, and asked him not to tell anything? Did Dean know what had happened, or did he just suspect it? His father had asked him, so the man had probably said something.

Oh God, what had he said? Sam had never given it any thought until now. Had he told his father and brother about the things he had done to him in the dark? Had he told them about how he screamed and begged when he…–

“How’s Dean?” Doctor Reece asked, on their fifth session after Sam had stopped talking.

“He’s fine,” Sam answered. He pretended nothing had happened. He trusted the doctor wouldn’t
bother him about the past again now that she knew he would not speak about it.

The doctor felt relieved when Sam answered her. Again, just talking about his brother seemed to put him at ease, and she wondered about that.

“Will he pick you up today?”

“I hope so.”

“Is he a good driver?” She asked suddenly.

“Are you kidding? Dean’s great with cars,” Sam smiled.

“Really? Are you?”

“No. He tried to teach me once, but I’m not sure I will learn that stuff.”

The doctor encouraged Sam to tell her more about this brother he loved so much and whose name was able to change his mood, and make Sam’s eyes look so crystal and so true that for a moment the strong wall between Sam and rest of the world could not be seen.

~ * ~

They walked side by side on the sidewalk, after having left the supermarket. John had told Dean to go get groceries, and Sam had quickly volunteered to go with him. It was the middle of a sunny, slightly cold Saturday morning, and the brothers walked beside each other and towards the car Dean had parked a few feet away.

As they walked, a beautiful girl walked past them and let her eyes focus on Dean, smiling briefly and cheekily when she was close to them.

Dean smiled back, despite himself, in a flirtatious way, and he checked her out when she was moving away, letting his eyes linger for a while longer on her butt. Sam saw it and puffed, half annoyed, half amused. He felt a hint of jealousy stab him as quick as lightning, like he often did when he understood there was a girl getting Dean’s attention.

“Just marry her already,” he mumbled, and chuckled lightly.

“What?” Dean looked at his brother, as if he had forgotten he was there. The truth was, things were always somewhat tense in Bobby’s house and as a teenager, there were raging hormones that urged Dean to just take a break and indulge.

“The girl. The way you looked at her, it was like you had x-ray vision.”

Dean laughed at that.

“Seriously, you can’t help yourself,” Sam said.

“What are you saying?”
“The truth. You can’t help yourself from drooling all over when a hot girl walks by.”

Dean felt slightly uncomfortable, but highly amused.

“Perhaps.”

“Perhaps no. It’s true. That’s how I knew that day on my birthday that you weren’t you.”

Dean’s smile immediately faded, and Sam walked a while longer before he realized what he had just said.

“What do you mean, Sam?” Dean asked, studying his brother curiously.

Sam’s smile was gone, be he spoke calmly.

“When the shifter picked me up at school,” he began. “Two beautiful girls walked past us, and he didn’t even bother looking, not even when one clearly flirted with him. He just didn’t care.”

Dean listened attentively.

“That’s how I knew it wasn’t you,” Sam tried to smile and make light of it, but his lips were tenser than he expected.

“So you ran from him?” Dean asked softly.

Sam nodded. Suddenly it hit him that he had, for the first time, gone back to the day of his disappearance and thought about it, and remembered stuff about it.

“I ran, but the demon caught me. He pulled me into a van,” Sam spoke, and they came to a halt in the middle of the sidewalk. “He injected me with a drug. When I woke up again I was…”

“In the room?” Dean asked.

Sam nodded. He looked around nervously and avoided eye contact. It was the first time he had said anything about what happened, and how it happened, and it scared Sam that he had inadvertently told Dean all that.

“Let’s go?” Sam resumed walking and tried to move faster, ignoring the long, meaningful look in Dean’s eyes.

“Yes, sure.”

Dean followed him closely, studying the way his baby brother grew uneasy and uncomfortable, and wondered what he could possibly do to make him understand that he could open up to him.

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tbc....
“Do you have a girlfriend, Sam?” Doctor Reece looked at the boy sitting in front of her. She had been thinking a lot about Sam’s relationship with his family members, particularly with his brother, and she wondered whether the feelings Sam had for his older brother could help him open up about the things he had been through.

Sam narrowed his eyes and frowned, then he smiled lightly.

“No, I don’t.”

“Have you ever had one?”

“Not really. We’re always moving, it’s difficult to stay in the same place long enough to meet people.”

“Does that mean Dean has trouble finding girlfriends as well?”

Sam laughed.

“What?” The Doctor asked.

“Dean? Having trouble with girls?” Sam grinned. “No, that doesn’t happen. Dean can have any girl he wants. They all seem to love him.”

“Really?” She smiled. “Does it mean he has a girlfriend now?”

“No, he doesn’t.”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course I’m sure. Dean would tell me if he did.”

She nodded. “Sam? Do you sometimes feel jealous of the girls who date your brother? Of the attention they get from him?”
Sam thought about her question briefly. He knew he did, but he thought that wasn’t a big deal. “Sometimes, I guess,” he confessed casually. “Do you think that’s weird?” He asked, wary.

“No, not at all. It’s actually quite common among siblings who have a strong friendship. Eventually one finds a significant other, and it’s understandable the other one feels left out.”

Sam listened to her words silently.

“I do think, however, that you and Dean have a connection unlike what I’m used to seeing between brothers.”

“Well, not many brothers were left to take care of each other while their father hunted monsters,” Sam said.

“That’s true. Have you always been this close, then?”

Sam thought about his childhood. His favorite memories always involved Dean. Surely there had been many fights and stupid arguments, but in the end it was always Dean in his mind, and how much he meant to him.

“I think so.”

“You know, Sam…I’m not here to confuse you or anything, but I am here to try and make you talk about your feelings, whatever they might be. You know I would never judge anything you told me because I just want to be able to help you feel better.”

Sam frowned. What was she getting at?

“I’ve noticed during these almost two months you’ve been coming here, in these many sessions we’ve already had, that there’s something interesting in your eyes when Dean comes to pick you up. There’s a clear joy in your face when you talk about him. I understand that you love him very much, and you told me he’s been helping you through your nightmares and fears…”

“So…?”

“So sometimes I wonder whether this feeling of love you have for your brother is more complex than you think it is.”

“What do you mean?” Sam’s heart started racing, but his mind was willfully blind to the picture she tried to paint.

“I think that your unusual childhood, combined with what happened to you when you were taken, both find in Dean a strong figure of safety and love. Maybe over the years you started to love him more than a brother loves another. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

“That I’m in love with my brother?” Sam laughed, perhaps a bit too fast and loud. He felt quickened, silly heartbeats slamming against his chest as he studied the doctor.

“I think that it’s not farfetched to wonder whether Dean has evoked feelings of romantic love in you. Maybe you are unaware of these feelings, maybe not. Have you ever thought about your brother, or dreamed of him in ways that would not be considered normal by other people?” She knew that this was a delicate subject to explore. If none of her assumptions were right, she might be confusing the
boy, but if they were and Sam had been suppressing his feelings, adding this denial to the one already eating him from inside, then helping him talk about it might help him feel a lot better, and perhaps even ease the way to talk about his dark past.

Sam looked around nervously and thought about her question. He loved when Dean slept with him. He loved to feel his touch, to listen to his soothing words, and he even loved his teasing jokes.

“Let me ask you something,” the doctor went on as Sam thought. “As the son of a hunter you were probably taught to be tough, right? You trained hard, you studied a lot, and you probably didn’t talk too much about feelings, is that correct?”

“Yes,” Sam agreed.

“So if you had feelings that for some reason could be considered inappropriate, you would try to bury them as deeply as possible, and not think about them at all, wouldn’t you?”

“I think so…”

“Because that’s what you’ve been doing with the three months you spent in captivity, Sam. You buried them and you’re trying to ignore that they are part of you. If you perhaps had romantic feelings for your brother, would you try and deal with them, talk to him and try to understand these feelings, or would you just ignore them and pretend they weren’t there?”

“I…I guess the second option,” Sam said carefully.

“Then do something for me. Close your eyes, Sam.”

“Now?”

“Yes. Just for a moment. Close your eyes and let’s do an exercise.”

Sam complied.

“I want you to picture your brother kissing you. On the lips, like people do on dates.”

Sam tensed, but did as she asked.

“Alright…”

“Does it feel disgusting? Would you like it to stop?” The doctor studied him closely. “Or does it feel good?”

Behind Sam’s shut eyes he saw his and Dean’s lips connected. His heart was now drumming in his chest, and the mental image made his blood seem like liquid fire running in his veins. Sam’s breath became slightly uneven, and he opened his eyes, startled, when the image became too intense.

Sam looked at the doctor through wary, confused eyes. He didn’t know what to say.

“All I want for you to do is think about how you feel, Sam. Go home today and think about it. And I don’t mean just about your brother. Think about what happened to you, let your guard down for a moment and think about these things. I want you to try and get in touch with your feelings. It’s really hard for someone else to help you when you keep your own feelings so distant from yourself.”
Sam didn’t reply. He was already too deep in thought to say anything. And when, at the end of the session, his father showed up to take him home, Sam was glad for the first time that it wasn’t Dean. There was too much on his mind right now, and he was afraid Dean would be able to read his troubled thoughts.

~ * ~

Sam kept to himself during the rest of the day, letting the doctor’s words swirl around his thoughts. Even if he didn’t want to, he couldn’t help thinking about them. Did he have feelings for his brother?

The truth was, it should be an easy question to answer, but Sam didn’t know. When he thought of Dean kissing him he did not feel disgusted. He was actually more curious than anything when he let his thoughts toy with the idea. Did that mean something was different? Was the doctor right?

Sam stole a few glances at Dean during the day, and when it was night and time to sleep, he went to bed before his brother because he wanted to be asleep when Dean joined him. There was so much on his mind, maybe Dean would ask him what was going on, and Sam wasn’t ready to tell him just yet.

When Dean walked into the room they had been sharing he found his brother already asleep — which usually indicated something was wrong. The only reason why Sam chose to fall asleep before him was to avoid talking, so Dean couldn’t help but wonder what was going on.

He lay in bed and prepared for a night with nightmares and fears, but Sam slept peacefully by his side until morning came.

~ * ~

Friday morning, when Dean walked downstairs, he found Bobby alone fixing them lunch in the kitchen.

“Where’s dad?”

“He left early this morning.”

“On a hunt?”

“I guess you could say that. He’s out trying to find information on what happened to Sam.”

Dean nodded. He knew that trying to understand why Sam was taken and hurt might be a quest as long and as difficult as trying to find the thing that killed their mother, but he also knew that in the end his father would manage to do it.

“Is Sam okay?”

“Yeah, he’s studying upstairs,” Dean said.
Bobby nodded.

“Do you need some help?”

Dean helped Bobby prepare them lunch, which they ate a couple of hours later. Nevertheless, when the brothers started to look forward to a pleasant afternoon in Bobby’s company, the hunter’s phone rang. When Bobby ended the call he looked deeply disturbed.

“What happened?” Dean asked, as Sam and he stared at Bobby’s frown.

“A friend of mine is in danger. She ran into what she described as some serious witchcraft,” Bobby was clearly worried.

“Then go and help her.”

“I wish I could…but you guys-“

“We’ll be fine,” Dean said.

“Yeah, you can help her. We’ll be okay,” Sam added quickly, seeing the distress in Bobby’s face.

The hunter looked at the two kids sitting in his living room and thought of his friend’s life in danger. The boys had been alone before, but as for his friend, she might not make it without some help.

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, go,” Dean urged him.

“Right. You two take care. Don’t open the damned gates to anyone, and call me if something happens.”

“Sure. We’ll be fine,” Dean reassured him again.

The two boys watched as Bobby picked up a few items hurriedly and left, leaving them behind.

Dean’s eyes found Sam’s and they locked for a moment.

“I’ll go back upstairs to my homework,” Sam said quickly, before Dean had a chance to say anything, and got up to move.

Dean watched Sam go, a puzzled look on his face. What was up with him? He seemed weird since he had come back from therapy yesterday.

Dean sighed and decided to go busy himself with his training.

~ * ~

In the early afternoon, Sam went downstairs and sat on the porch stairs to watch as Dean practiced shooting. The sun was high in the sky, and there was no cloud as far as his eyes could see. Sam watched his brother for a long while before Dean realized he wasn’t alone and stopped training to
join him.

Dean left his gun on the hood of a car and walked towards Sam, sitting on the porch stairs right beside him.

“So…will you tell me what’s been eating at you all day?” He asked casually, the hint of a faint smile on his lips.

Sam sighed.

“My therapist thinks I may have feelings for you,” Sam said and watched Dean’s reaction.

For a couple of seconds Dean showed no reaction at all. Then, his lips parted and he scoffed.

“What?” He laughed with a rather indignant tone.

“She thinks that it’s possible I’m developing romantic feelings for you, and that I should think about the way I feel.”

“I cannot believe she said that!” Dean frowned, and his first reaction was of outrage. “I mean, I thought she was supposed to help you, not fill your head with crazy ideas. Why would she say something like that?”

“Because she thinks I am in denial about my feelings. She thinks that’s why I don’t want to talk about what happened to me.”

Dean tilted his head lightly, as if pondering the information.

“Well…I don’t think she’s wrong about that, but…I mean, c’mon! Why would she come up with such an idea?” He looked at his brother but quickly looked away. His heart was beating weirdly and wildly faster, and Dean told himself he was just shocked to have heard those things.

“She said that she sees something between us,” Sam shrugged lightly, and Dean swallowed hard.

When Sam started therapy he would have never thought that he would be a big part of it.

“And what do you think about that?” Dean asked him, curious.

Sam shrugged again. “She asked me to picture you and me kissing. Then she asked me how I felt about it. Whether I felt disgusted or…good.”

Dean felt his heart beating in his throat. He had a feeling that if he tried to shoot now he would completely miss the target.

“What…what did you feel?” He hoped his voice didn’t sound as nervous as he felt.

“I don’t know. It’s hard to tell just from imagining something.” Sam looked in the distance at the wrecked cars and the point where the blue sky seemed to touch the ground. “Can I kiss you?”

Dean’s chest throbbed and he widened his eyes.

“What?” He asked dumbly, trying to buy his confusing thoughts some time.
“You know, maybe if I do then I can know what I feel, for real.” Sam spoke with so much calm that Dean couldn’t help but be fascinated by it. “Besides,” Sam said. “I haven’t really kissed anyone before. And if I had died in the bright room—“

“Don’t say that,” Dean cut him off.

“If I had died there,” Sam continued, as if he hadn’t heard him, “then I wouldn’t even know what it feels like. I want to know what it feels like,” he stated.

Dean looked into Sam’s hazel eyes, barely believing what he was hearing. When he thought Sam’s behavior was odd, never would he have imagined what was behind it.

“So, can I?”

“What?”

“Kiss you?” Sam smiled lightly, and looked into his eyes.

Dean thought of a million reasons why he should say no to that. It was his brother, it was his baby brother, it was a boy who had been through hell knows what, and who was probably very confused about everything. It was a boy who trusted him, who looked up to him, and who looked at him now with the most adorably pleading eyes and cheeky little smile. Indeed, there were over a thousand reasons to say no, but there was another one to say yes—Dean wanted it. It might sound crazy, and completely shocking to realize that, but he did.

“Yes.”

When Dean parted his lips to answer, little did he know that one day his simple yes would change the fate of the world.

Sam closed his eyes and parted his lips lightly. Dean parted his lips too, but kept his eyes open. He felt their faces coming closer, inch by inch, and soon he could feel Sam’s warm breath on his face.

Dean felt as if he was wearing his heart on his lips when they at last touched Sam’s. There was a moment of stillness between them, with nothing but the faint brushing of their lips.

Dean shut his eyes and shuddered. He felt Sam press lightly against his lips for a moment longer before he pulled away and looked at him.

Sam was smiling.

“That was okay,” he said.

Dean was completely wrapped up in how surreal the moment felt. Out of time and space, it felt like they lived in a world where nothing else mattered. Feeling slightly reckless and euphoric, Dean smiled back.

“You do know that’s not a ‘real kiss’, right?” He marveled at Sam’s innocence. How could he be his brother, having listened to all his dirty stories, and still be so beautifully unaware?

“What do you mean? Did I do something wrong?” Sam looked nervous.
“No,” Dean calmed him. “Of course not. But a real kiss has more going on. One day you’ll kiss a
girl, and then you’ll understand,” he said.

“No,” Sam shook his head quickly. “I want to know now.”

Dean felt his heart slamming against his chest, setting off a high spike of adrenaline and powerful
emotions.

“Sam, no. You should do that with a girl you like.”

“I don’t know when that’s going to be. What’s so much more that you can’t show me now?” He
insisted, stubbornly.

Dean looked ahead in the distance, as if he tried to find his own reason, lost for the time being. Why
was he agreeing to that? Was it because of the intense look of want in Sam’s eyes? Was it because he
couldn’t remember Sam looking so eager and so interested in something, in a way that he could not
see the dark shadow of hurting in his eyes?

“Fine. But if you don’t like it, you pull away.”

“Fine,” Sam agreed, quickly. He could hardly believe Dean would do that. Dean would show him
what it was. He would teach him… Sam’s heart was beating fast, and he offered his lips eagerly
when Dean got closer.

Dean closed his eyes and leaned in to kiss Sam’s lips again. He let his lips brush Sam’s lightly, and
felt his brother’s lips part against his own. For a few seconds, Dean did nothing else. He let their lips
touch, he let their breaths mingle and he breathed slowly to try and slow down his intense heartbeats.

Then, tentatively, Dean let the tip of his tongue touch Sam’s bottom lip. Sam didn’t pull away, he
remained perfectly still when Dean’s tongue ran over his bottom lip before he sucked lightly on it.
Sam felt light bursting in his head and his limbs went weak.

Slowly, Dean let his tongue delve a bit further, and slip past Sam’s lips. He licked the tip of Sam’s
tongue gently, and his heart skipped a beat when his brother’s taste filled his mouth.

Sam pulled away, his eyes huge and his breath uneven. What was that? Had Dean just licked him?
Like, his tongue and his brother’s tongue? Was that what a real kiss was all about?

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have-“

Before Dean had time to finish, Sam’s lips were on his again. He pressed them tightly to Dean’s and
parted them, hoping Dean would do that again. When Dean parted his own lips but hesitated, Sam
boldly did as he had learned. He let his tongue slip past Dean’s lips until it touched his, and this time
he didn’t pull away.

Dean felt a shudder rake him, head to toe, when their tongues touched and Sam kissed him, shyly but
eagerly.

Dean felt himself melting irrepressibly deeper into the kiss. He let his hand rest at the back of Sam’s
head and kissed him back, regardless of reason or logic, completely under the spell of whatever
happened between them now.
It is known that some kisses can change lives forever, but that kiss, between the two Winchester brothers, in Bobby Singer’s house, under a blue sky as its only witness, could one day save the entire world from darkness.

They broke the kiss softly and looked at each other briefly, before looking into the distance.

“So, did you feel disgusted or…?”

“Good. I definitely felt good,” Sam smiled, looking at the salvage yard before his eyes.

As he looked into the horizon, Sam realized he could hardly stop smiling. For the first time in a long while, things didn’t seem so bad, and there seemed to be something worth living for.

After so long living in the shadow of his fears, Sam had trouble naming what he felt. It took him a long moment to understand what it was.

He felt happy.

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tbc...
Chapter 43

Bobby arrived back home late that same night, after having helped his friend face a wicked witch. It was way past midnight when he walked into his house, and he found the two Winchester brothers sitting in the living room, watching TV. Bobby wouldn’t lie to himself—it felt good coming home to that. Dean and Sam were like sons to him, and the look on their faces when he got back safe and sound could melt his usually tough heart.

“Hey boys,” he greeted them.

“Hi, Bobby. How did it go?” Dean asked.

“My friend’s fine, but the damn witch got away. Where’s John?” Bobby looked around and didn’t see his friend.

“Dad called when you were away,” Dean said.

“He said he won’t be coming home tonight. Tomorrow maybe,” Sam added.

“Right. Do you boys need anything?”

“No, thanks, Bobby. We’re fine.”

“Good. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ll crash for a few hours. I feel like a truck ran over me.”

“Night, Bobby,” they said in unison, and watched as he climbed the stairs towards his room.

“You wanna sleep too?” Dean asked his brother.

“Yeah, sure.”

Sam’s heart seemed to have picked up a slightly faster rhythm since the afternoon. He could remember the taste of Dean’s tongue in his mouth, and whenever he let his thoughts go back to that moment on the porch, he could feel the heat spreading to his cheeks and causing him to flush.

Sam watched as Dean turned off the TV before they made their way upstairs.
In silence, they got ready for bed, changing into comfortable clothes and brushing their teeth. Dean stole a few glances at Sam as he got in bed. He didn’t seem disturbed by what they had done. Thank goodness. Dean wasn’t sure how he felt about the whole thing. Aside from good, of course. He didn’t want to confuse Sam or—God help him—take advantage of his curiosity and trust, and that’s why Dean felt slightly on edge when he made his way towards their bed.

“Are you okay?” Dean asked when he realized Sam kept studying him closely.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Do you want to do it again?”

Sam hoped his heartbeats weren’t as loud as they seemed to be. He summoned all the courage he had inside to keep looking Dean in the eyes as if he had just proposed a casual game, and not something that caused his heart rate to increase exponentially.

Dean’s chest throbbed and he felt his pulse quicken. “You want to kiss again?” He arched his eyebrows.

“Yeah…if that’s okay by you. I mean, I really liked it. It felt good. You know…different.”

Dean looked at his younger brother and again he felt himself torn between two insanely strong feelings. He could hardly understand why, but he had enjoyed kissing Sam. It was odd, but it felt like some part of him had always wondered what it would feel like, and it killed Dean because the whole thing evoked feelings he couldn’t comprehend, and that were too strong for him to control. And yet, there was his rational side, just as strong, that urged him to take a step back, to talk some sense into Sam, to explain why they shouldn’t go around kissing—they were brothers!

“Are you sure about it?” Dean asked, voicing his own doubts.

Sam’s smile was so true that his eyes were smiling as well, and when he leaned closer in bed towards his face, Dean’s breath caught.

Sam closed his eyes and kissed Dean’s lips lightly, pulling back and looking at his brother’s face, wondering if Dean would be mad. He didn’t look mad, Sam thought. He looked something between worried and pleased, which was definitely better than mad.

“Bobby’s here,” Dean murmured, as if he had just found a reason good enough why they shouldn’t.

“Bobby’s sound asleep. Besides, he would knock before walking in.”

Dean seemed to consider that for a moment.

“But if you don’t want to, that’s okay…” Sam began.

“No,” Dean said quickly. “It’s that no that I don’t want to-“

Dean never had time to finish explaining. His words were all Sam needed to lean in again and press their lips together.

Dean didn’t pull back. In fact, he didn’t even move at first. He stayed perfectly still, sitting in bed across his brother, as Sam took his bottom lip between his and sucked, the way he had felt Dean do to him earlier.
Dean’s heart gave in to a delicious arrhythmia and he parted his lips slowly, allowing Sam to take things further and slip his tongue inside his mouth.

The moment the two tongues touched and the warm wetness of each other’s mouths could be unmistakably tasted, Dean shut his mind to the struggling part of his thoughts and kissed back.

He let the tip of his tongue learn Sam’s taste with soft but bold licks. Dean let Sam take control of the kiss for a moment, but he also allowed himself to indulge, to press into the kiss and relish the sweet taste of Sam learning the details of this new kind of intimacy.

They kissed for a long moment, their eyes always shut—as if the sight of such a deep connection was too much in the eyes of the brothers. Dean let his fingers run through Sam's hair and by doing so he could smell his shampoo faintly.

Sam could hardly wrap his mind around what he felt. It was Dean, and he was kissing him. Again. And it was good, this feeling that Dean was so close that he could taste him, that he could have something from Dean that would linger in his mouth, that would linger in his thoughts…

Sam felt Dean rub his tongue against the tip of his and suddenly there was an electrical current of arousal traveling his body. Sam felt himself twitch, and the unexpected feeling caused him to pull away.

They looked into each other’s eyes. Their lips looked fuller and their eyes seemed clouded. Sam hoped his cheeks weren’t too red, and he hoped it wasn’t obviously written all over his face what he had just felt in his groin.

Dean studied him intently. “Is everything alright?” He whispered, feeling slightly insecure about what had just happened. Again.

“Yes,” Sam answered, almost shyly. His eyes, however, were bright, and the joy in them reassured Dean that he was fine with it.

“You want to sleep now?” Dean asked.

Sam nodded.

He turned on his side quickly and looked at the wall. His heart was still beating fast, basking in a warm feeling that made him feel like he was glowing from the inside out.

“Can I turn off the lights?”

There was a brief moment of hesitation, as if Sam had to remember why that question was an issue, and then he agreed.

“Yeah, it’s okay.”

He then listened as Dean stood up to do just that before he got beneath the covers and adjusted himself beside him.

In the darkness of the bedroom, Sam’s thoughts shifted slightly. He sensed Dean was close, but their bodies weren’t touching.
What if Dean thought it would be weird to touch him now? What if he had a nightmare in the middle of the night, and because they had kissed it felt weird that Dean held him to calm him down?

Sam felt tension creeping to his body. He didn’t want to do anything to jeopardize the comfort Dean offered. But what if asking to kiss him again had just done that? Maybe Dean would hesitate to hold him now that they had sort of crossed a line…

The troubled thoughts kept Sam awake for a long moment, but eventually he fell asleep beside his brother.

~ * ~

Sam’s eyes darted open in the middle of the night. His heart was beating fast, and during the time it took his eyes to adjust to the darkness around, his breathing remained slightly faster and louder too.

Yet, oddly enough, Sam realized he wasn’t scared. Something had caused him to wake up abruptly, yes, but not a nightmare. Instead of tension and fear, Sam felt a giddy feeling of warm joy inside his chest, and in the silence of the darkened room, staring at the wall, Sam smiled.

“Are you okay?” Dean’s voice came softly from beside him in bed.

Sam’s heart raced even faster. How did Dean know he was wake? Had he heard his breathing? Was Dean’s ear that sharp and trained to come to the rescue?

“Yes, I’m okay,” Sam reassured him.

“Good,” Dean whispered. “If you need anything, I’m here.”

Sam’s heart almost ached with gratitude for those words. Even though Dean wasn’t touching him, his words could make him feel safe enough to go back to sleep in the dark.

“I know,” Sam whispered back and closed his eyes, inhaling deeply and relaxing.

~ * ~

On Saturday, as Bobby worked on the cars in his salvage yard, Sam studied in his room, and Dean cleaned up the place. They hadn’t heard anything from their father, but they were all used to his disappearing for a few days. Particularly when he knew the boys would be well taken care of, which was the case whenever Bobby was looking after them.

When Sam went downstairs in the early afternoon, Dean was in the kitchen fixing himself some food and Bobby was still outside. A familiar sound made all the hairs stand on the back of his neck, and for a moment Sam shivered, head to toe. Drawn to the sound of the television, Sam made his way to the living room and little by little walked towards the TV and the sound of pain and whipping coming from it.

As he stood before the screen, Sam saw what was causing that familiar sound. There was a movie on TV, a slavery movie in which a male slave was tied to a tree as a white man whipped his back bloody.
Sam shut his eyes and felt as if he would get sick. For a moment his stomach hurt and he felt a wave of vertigo, as if there was no ground beneath his feet.

_The handcuffs. The whip hitting his back. The skin breaking. The blood soaking everything._

Sam opened his eyes and breathed raggedly. On the TV, the slave cried out with a realism that tugged at Sam’s memories and threatened his wall. He shut his eyes again and felt the shaking start in his hands and spread to his limbs.

_He tried to recoil from the pain, but there was nowhere to go. Again and again the man brought down the whip, and new, burning cuts caused him to scream louder._

Sam bit on his bottom lip and grasped his own fingers tightly. He thought of the shrink’s words, and how she had said he was in denial, and how he should get in touch with his feelings. Yet, the only feeling Sam felt now was the pain of having to lie on his stomach because his back injuries were too painful. Without the wall, the only thing on Sam’s mind was falling asleep out of sheer exhaustion, when the throbbing pain from his cuts would punish him constantly.

Dean walked in on him and immediately sensed something was wrong. Sam’s stiffness and the sounds coming from the TV were quickly interpreted by him, and soon Dean was walking closer and taking a look at what was going on.

Sam looked at his brother and was able to snap out of the dangerously dark turn his thoughts were taking. Nevertheless, he felt shaken and open, and when Dean looked at him after having seen the violent scene on screen, Sam turned around and walked away, towards the sunny day outside.

“Dammit,” Dean whispered, turning off the TV. Sometimes, when things seemed to be getting a little better, there was something capable of triggering Sam’s trauma and causing his brother to shut down all over again.

Dean followed him outside and found Bobby working on a car.

“Is Sam okay? He had this weird look on his face when he walked past me,” Bobby said.

“Yeah, he’s fine. I think we just need to talk. Which way did he go?”

Bobby pointed Dean in the right direction and he went after his brother at the same time Bobby decided to take a break and go back inside. Instinctively, he could tell they might need privacy.

Dean found Sam sitting inside a wrecked car, behind the wheel, looking absently out of the window. He joined him in the car, sitting beside him and waiting a moment.

“I’m fine,” Sam said, almost defensively.

“I know you are. Even though that movie stirred up some bad memories, right?”

“Except for the tree thing. He handcuffed me to the wall,” a part of Sam wanted to cry. He longed to just give in to all the grief and pour it all out to someone who would help him, but Sam was afraid to. He feared that if he started talking he wouldn’t be able to stop. He feared there would be nothing left of him when he managed to stop.
Dean put a hand on his brother’s knee and listened intently.

“You can tell me,” he said, when Sam seemed to be struggling.

“No,” Sam shook his head quickly.

“Sam… Let me help. Let it out, I know it’s killing you.”

Sam shut his eyes and his breathing came in short, clipped gasps.

“The doctor said I need to think about what happened. She keeps saying that until I face it I won’t be able to move on. She thinks the nightmares are a side effect of me trying to shut it all off,” Sam blurted.

“I don’t understand about psychology and shit, Sam, but I think she’s got a point.”

“I know,” Sam said, vehemently. “But I can’t, Dean! It’s not rational, it’s not like I can control it… I’m just, unable to remember stuff. There are things that happened… things that happened in the dark… Sometimes I think I deliberately erased some things, and sometimes when I have a nightmare I don’t know whether it’s just a nightmare or I’m remembering things that I blocked. Three months is a fucking long time when you’re in a cage,” Sam confessed. This was something that tormented him, but the truth was, Sam didn’t know how much of his nightmares were memories or just bad dreams. In three months of darkness and torture, a lot happened. He remembered getting whipped five times. Vividly. But what if it had been a dozen? There had been so many moments of darkness that his brain seemed to have created an equal number of blackouts to deal with them.

“You say you can’t remember, but you don’t really try to, right? You never tried to tell me what happened, you know. Maybe I could help you.”

Sam thought about it, his breathing growing erratic.

“You told me that you realized the shifter wasn’t me, and then you said you were drugged and taken to the room. What happened later?”

Sam didn’t want to think of Dean’s words; he didn’t want to answer that. He hated the fact that the memories were stronger than his will.

He closed his eyes and saw himself in the bright room.

“I…I woke up there and I had no idea what was going on… All I wanted was to go home and celebrate my birthday…” Sam paused and looked into the distance. “I walked around the room, tried to find a way out… there was a camera. I…I think the demon used it to see me.”

“He never told you why you were taken there? Not even a hint?”

Sam shook his head.

“Until the day you found me, he never said anything. I don’t know why they took me. There…” Sam swallowed hard. “There was food they slipped inside the room. I didn’t want to eat at first, but then I got so hungry…”

Dean listened carefully, almost unblinking.
“The first time the lights were turned off I didn’t understand a thing. I…” Sam saw himself in the room, he felt his own confusion when darkness came. He heard the footsteps coming and the door opening. “I heard the door opening, and at first I thought someone would save me. But the man never said anything…he just…”

*He beat me. He punched me. He cut me. He burned me. He humiliated me in the dark. And there was blood, there was blood everywhere when the lights were back on.*

“In the dark he just…” Sam felt his chest hurt and his insides turn. Everything inside felt painfully tight and he couldn’t speak. He bent over and panted, as if in terrible pain.

“Sam?” Dean looked worriedly at him and put a hand on his shoulder.

“Hmm,” Sam groaned, his eyes squeezed shut.

*He was left to wipe the man’s mess from between his legs. There was blood and…*

“I can’t! I can’t, Dean! No!” Sam started shaking. He knew there was a panic attack coming and he couldn’t do a thing to stop it.

“It’s okay, I’m here with you. Nothing’s gonna happen, remember?”

*The man entered again, and there was a metal bar in his hand. He brought it down over and over, hitting, breaking, cutting… And when he was done, Sam didn’t think he would ever walk again. The pain was more than he could handle, the pain was exploding in his brain—*

“No! NO! I’m not talking! NO, Dean! No! Don’t,” Sam gasped, he blurted the plea, as if he was running away and the words were rocks he tripped on.

“Hey, it’s alright…you don’t have to. Not now, alright? It’s okay.”

Sam felt Dean pull him closer. He let himself go, his breathing still erratic and loud.

“I want to tell you, but I can’t! I can’t do it! When I try to I feel this thing inside, it feels like I’m going to suffocate or die, or something,” Sam confessed.

Dean held him tightly.

“You won’t, Sammy. I won’t let it happen. Just relax now, okay?”

Dean stayed with him until Sam’s rising panic attack could be tamed into little tremors and a slightly irregular breathing pattern.

Dean thought of the movie that had triggered Sam’s memories. Trying to protect his brother from violence in the world they lived in seemed like an impossible thing to do. If Sam could not learn to accept what had happened and deal with it, how could they possibly face the future?

~ * ~
That night, even though the hallway light was on and the room was only a little dark, Dean had prepared himself for what he believed would happen.

And indeed, the distress from the day had taken its toll on Sam’s sleep, and in the middle of the night Dean woke up to find his brother’s body rocking softly in bed, and a low sound of anguish being produced in his throat.

Sam’s eyelids fluttered and he frowned in his sleep.

Dean moved closer and wrapped his arms around him. He pulled Sam closer, as he had done many times before, and squeezed him gently until Sam opened his eyes and realized he was alright.

“Dean?” Sam gasped, slightly confused.

“It’s alright, Sam. You were having a nightmare.”

Sam felt his brother’s arms around him, the same arms he was afraid might hesitate to touch him again. Relief helped take him out of his painful dream and back into reality, and when Sam turned around in the embrace and looked into Dean’s eyes he was no longer scared.

Dean’s heart skipped a beat at the intense way Sam looked at him. Then, before Dean had time to understand what was happening, Sam and he were kissing, in the dark and silence of the room, in the middle of the night.

They kissed like they had been doing that forever; they kissed with something that was deeper and infinitely stronger than curiosity. Their mouths connected with a need unlike anything they might have anticipated, and in that moment Dean realized how wrong he was when he believed that was something he could control.

When they broke the kiss and Sam buried his head against his chest, Dean held him tightly, and without having to say a word, he understood his world had already changed forever.

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tbc...
They didn’t hear from John again during the weekend, and when he did get in touch it was late Monday. Instead of announcing he was coming home, however, John called to ask Bobby to join him to hunt something he had stumbled upon when trying to find the demon who took Sam.

“I don’t know what it is,” Bobby told Dean. “But your father said he needs backup. And when your daddy asks for help…”

“The shit is serious,” Dean finished for him.

Bobby nodded. “I’ll leave as soon as I finish packing some stuff. Your dad asked you to take Sam to therapy tomorrow and take care of things while we’re gone.”

“Right,” Dean said. Bobby didn’t have to say more. Dean knew what his father had said, the same thing he always did when he was about to leave them alone and go hunting—take care of your brother. And he would, of course. There was nothing in the world Dean would rather be doing.

“You know where I keep canned goods. You also know where the weapons are. If shit happens, use this stuff wisely,” Bobby said, seriously.

“Shut up, Bobby. Nothing will happen.”

“I know. You’ll make sure everything is alright, and if you need help, call us.”

“I will.”

“Now let me get my stuff and say goodbye to Sam.”

Dean watched as Bobby turned around and went upstairs.

A part of him was always nervous when some big hunt was taking place somewhere involving his father, but another part of him actually enjoyed the privacy of being alone with his brother with no one telling them what to do and when to do it. That’s why it felt so good being with Bobby—the older hunter made them feel home. Yet, as Bobby got ready to leave now, a part of Dean felt a different sort of thrill, as if he caught himself inadvertently looking forward to time alone with Sam.
Dean blinked his thoughts away and shrugged. His cheeks might not be blushing, but his heart was definitely beating faster.

~ * ~

“Dean?” Sam asked, as they got ready for bed.

“Yeah?” Dean turned on a light in the corridor upstairs so it wouldn’t be too dark when they turned off the lights in the bedroom.

“Can I not go to therapy tomorrow?”

Dean knew Sam might try that. “Sorry, man. I promised Bobby I would take you.”

Sam sighed, visibly annoyed.

“I don’t see how that’s helping me. As far as I know, all she’s done is make me want to kiss my brother.”

Dean’s face felt immediately warm at Sam’s bluntness.

“Well…” He pondered. “I don’t know how she works, but I know you have to keep going. Unless you talk to dad and he says it’s fine to quit.”

“Why do you always jump to do what dad asks? He doesn’t have all the answers, you know?” There was a hint of resentment in Sam’s voice that Dean picked up easily.

“I didn’t say that. But he’s dad, you know. He calls the shots.”

Dean observed as Sam narrowed his eyes stubbornly. He wondered just how far that feeling growing in Sam would go someday. He could picture his younger brother a grown man, and Dean didn’t like the picture of the confrontations Sam and John might end up having.

Sam shrugged. “Whatever. I’ll go then. But I don’t think it’ll make a difference.”

“How about we go grab dinner at any place you choose after therapy? Will that make it better?” Dean offered.

Sam studied his brother as if he was considering the offer, but the hint of a smile was already showing in his eyes.

“I can choose where?”

“Sure. We can go eat wherever you want.”

Sam smiled as he sat in bed and crossed his legs.

“Fine.”

Dean smiled too, and put his hand on top of the light switch.
“Can I?” He asked.

Darkness. Sam’s heart always hesitated a second when it came to making a decision about the dark.

“Yes,” he said. “If we kiss again.”

Dean flicked the lights off, and in the dark, he chuckled.

“Are you serious? Aren’t you afraid it’s just weird…” Dean asked.

“Are you?” Sam asked back as Dean walked towards the bed.

“I suppose I should be, but…not really,” Dean confessed, getting in bed with Sam.

They didn’t say anything else.

Sam leaned in closer and Dean’s hand found the back of his neck. Their lips parted and they kissed silently and leisurely.

Dean let his fingers run through Sam’s hair and enjoyed the silky feeling brushing his skin. Kissing his own brother was surprisingly easy and delightful. Sam kissed him like it was the most natural thing for them to do. Their lips brushed and their tongues explored gently at times, and slightly more curiously at others, nibbling, licking, tasting something they could hardly believe they had found, and that belonged only to them.

Dean felt Sam bite down softly on his bottom lip before slipping his tongue past his teeth to let it tangle with his. He was a fast learner, Dean would give him that. Sam was doing really well for someone who had never French kissed before, so well in fact that Dean broke the kiss slowly when he realized how far it had pushed him.

Dean kept perfectly still for a moment, his breathing slightly uneven in the dark room as he realized he was hard and throbbing in his sleeping shorts. When he became aware of his erection, he was thankful for the darkness around them, capable of shielding his face from the blunt desire he could not conceal.

‘What the fuck is wrong with me?’ Dean chided himself mentally. ‘It’s your brother. It’s Sam,’ Dean tried to argue with his feelings, but his body didn’t seem to care—a good kiss was a good kiss.

“Good night, Sam,” Dean said quickly, hoping his voice didn’t reveal anything. Then he got under the blankets and turned around to face the wall, hoping his embarrassing hard-on would go away soon.

Sam felt something was up. He couldn’t see details on Dean’s face because of the lack of light, but he could hear the quickened pattern of his breathing, which made him definitely curious. When Dean turned around in bed, Sam wondered what had just happened to make his voice sound low and rushed.

“Dean? Can you hold me for a moment?” He asked, not as innocently as he knew he probably sounded.

“Now?” Dean nearly choked. If he turned around and hugged Sam, as they often did, he knew his
brother might feel his arousal.

“Yes. Just for a while, until I fall asleep,” Sam got under the sheets and waited.

Dean sighed. *Please go down. Please go down. There’s nothing here for you,* he thought over and over as he turned around.

When Dean wrapped his arms around Sam, trying to keep his midsection safely distant, Sam smiled into the dark. Then, pretending to be nestling within the position, Sam pushed himself against his brother, adjusting their bodies closer.

*’Shit,’* Dean thought. *’Shit, shit, shit. He’ll feel it. He’ll know, and he’ll freak out,’* Dean shut his eyes and waited for Sam to question what he felt against his lower back, but he didn’t.

In fact, for a moment it almost felt as if Sam had *deliberately* pushed his hips back against Dean’s, brushing his bottom against Dean’s crotch. Dean’s heart raced. There was no way Sam hadn’t felt his hardness now. He held his breath, knowing the adrenaline made it even more difficult to just let go and relax.

“Good night, Dean,” Sam said softly. Indeed, he was aware of Dean’s desire.

“Night Sam.”

No, he didn’t mind it one bit.

Dean fell asleep a while later, unaware of the small, sneaky smile on Sam’s lips.

~ * ~

“Did you think about what we talked last time?” Doctor Reece looked at the boy sitting in front of her. Sam looked good today. She wondered if her words had helped him deal with some of his feelings.

“I did,” Sam said casually.

“And…?” The doctor insisted when Sam didn’t seem like he would speak again.

“I don’t really want to talk about that. I really don’t think I’m here to talk about my brother.”

The doctor analyzed Sam. There was a confidence in his look that hadn’t been there before. She realized she was curious to know what was behind it, although she didn’t really think Sam would tell her.

“But did you talk to him about it? About those feelings?” She tried. “Are they even there?”

Sam shrugged.

“I love my brother. I feel better when he’s around. That’s it,” Sam said, indicating that was the end of the story, and he would speak no more of it.
“Alright then. I just asked you to consider it because I thought maybe thinking about your relationship with your brother could help you think about the past.”

“Dean’s not the reason I’m here,” Sam said.

“No, he isn’t,” Dakota agreed. “The fact that you, a fourteen year old boy, was tortured for three months in the dark is, isn’t it?”

Sam stiffened in the chair.

Doctor Reece wondered what could make Sam talk. What was his trigger? She didn’t think that waiting for him to open up would work in this case. Sam was a rock about his feelings, he wouldn’t let her in. Maybe trying to catch him off guard? Asking questions before he had time to build a shield thick enough to ignore them?

Sam didn’t say anything. He thought about Dean and he in the car, and what had happened when Dean tried to make him talk.

“What would you say was the worst thing they did to you there, Sam?”

Sam thought of kissing Dean, and he kept a smile on his face. The therapist wanted him to think about stuff he didn’t want to remember. The whipping, the burning… Sam blinked a few times and shook his head. *Dean, think of Dean.*

The beatings, the bruises, the cuts…

*The worst thing they did to me…*

Sam shut his eyes and thought of the previous night, of what he had felt in the dark, when Dean and he were close. He smiled.

“Sam? Was it the thing you won’t talk about?”

Sam’s face changed. He narrowed his eyes and his heart raced. Then, he looked at his feet and started toying with his shoelaces.

“Sam? Did you hear my question?”

The wall. There was a lot of damage to his wall, but it was still there. And thinking of Dean helped Sam trust this wall. He wouldn’t go to the bright room. There was no reason to return, not even in thoughts.

“Sam?”

The doctor waited for fifteen long and silent minutes. Every time she tried to bring up the past—particularly the possible rape—Sam had a mechanism of shutting down and ignoring his surroundings.

“Do you want to talk about something else?” She resigned, realizing he needed more time. Something had happened over the weekend, she could tell he was different, but he still wasn’t ready to talk about his past, and there was nothing she could do but accept it.
“Okay,” Sam agreed, and allowed her to change the subject.

When Dean came to pick him up he looked eager to leave.

“Let’s go eat?” He asked his brother, ignoring the questions doctor Reece had asked, ignoring the answers that could possibly break him beyond repair.

“Sure, you hungry?” Dean looked at him warmly.

Sam nodded.

“Bye, Doctor,” he said before walking out with Sam.

The doctor watched them leave, studied their closeness and took a deep breath. What kind of secrets could their intimacy be nurturing?

~ * ~

The next day, the boys were still alone in Bobby’s house. It was a sunny, slightly cold Wednesday, and they had talked to Bobby on the phone, who told them everything was alright and they were on their way home, probably to arrive tonight.

Sam watched as Dean got ready to train hard. He was wearing comfortably loose clothes and stretched in the middle of the salvage yard, among some cars.

“What are you going to do?” Sam asked.

“What does it look like? I’ll practice some kicks and new moves… gotta keep at the top of my game, Sammy.”

“Cool. Can I join?”

“Can you have your ass kicked? Of course,” Dean grinned.

“Shut up,” Sam punched him on the shoulder and smiled.

“You better stretch and warm up before we get started. I don’t want you pulling a muscle or anything.”

“Right.”

Sam did as told. He stretched and followed Dean in a series of warm up exercises before they started punching and kicking in the air several fighting sequences until they decided to try the moves against each other.

“Keep your guard up,” Dean said as they circled each other attentively, ready to engage in fighting practice.

“It is up,” Sam protested.
“Is not,” Dean slapped him across the forehead and laughed.

“Hey!” Sam laughed, too, and brought his closed fists higher, closer to his face.

“Gotta pay attention, Sammy. If you don’t, big brother here will—Ouch!” Dean frowned when Sam hit him unexpectedly and precisely.

“Who needs to start paying attention now, huh?” Sam teased, basking in his successful punch.

“Oh really? That’s the way it’s gonna be?” Dean narrowed his eyes.

“No, Dean…no…” Sam could barely keep his laughter under control when his brother charged at him, tickling him hard and bringing them both crashing to the ground. “STOP!” Sam screamed, as Dean tickled him relentlessly, trapping his body between his heavier one and the ground beneath Sam.


The two brothers wrestled on the sandy ground for a moment, until they were dirty with sand dust and slightly sweaty. Sam tried, but he could not overthrow Dean off of him. He pushed and writhed, but Dean’s weight was pressing down on him hard.

“Let me go!” Sam groaned, his cheeks flushed. He smiled, despite his frustration.

“What?” Dean asked, as he held both of Sam’s wrists on each side of his face. “Sorry, I can’t hear anything, what did you say?” He pressed down on him to stop his struggles, his hands firmly holding Sam’s wrists to stop an attempt at escaping.

“Dean!” Sam protested half-heartedly. He was no longer struggling to get away when Dean pressed his weight down on him. Sam’s eyes fell shut and his lips parted. He arched into the body pressing down on him and a moan escaped his lips.

The sound made the hairs stand in the back of Dean’s neck. Suddenly, he looked at Sam as if he was only now truly seeing him. His brother’s cheeks were flushed pink, and his chest heaved up and down with a labored breathing.

“Sam?”

Sam licked at his lips and arched into Dean once again, trying to get more friction. When he did so, his eyes rolled in the back of his head and he gasped, pleasure evident on his face.

It hit Dean that Sam was aroused from the friction between their bodies, and the thought that it had caused Sam to get hard was all his own body needed to respond and harden too. To his deep shock, Dean realized they were both hard, rubbing against each other on the ground, in the middle of Bobby’s wrecked cars.

“Sam?” Dean pressed into him, curious to see his reaction.

Sam didn’t disappoint. He moaned and his body tried to prolong the friction by letting his thighs fall open so Dean could settle more fully between them.

Sam tried to arch again, to feel that again. He could not control the need within. It felt too good.
“Sam, no,” Dean came to his senses and shook his head. “This is wrong, we shouldn’t be doing this.” He tried to move and get up, but as soon as he released Sam’s wrists, his brother’s hands flew to his flannel shirt and held it, keeping him close.

“No! No, don’t. Please, Dean…please don’t go…I need…” He begged. He was throbbing, and his whole body seemed to throb with his cock. The feeling of their erections rubbing, even though there were layers of clothing between them, was clouding everything in Sam’s brain, and he needed to have more.

“Sam, no…we can’t.” Dean shook his head and put his hands around Sam’s, ready to remove them so he could get up.

“Dean!” Sam’s eyes were wide open now, and he sounded desperate. “Please don’t stop…I haven’t felt this good in so long…” Sam confessed, the words thick in his throat, a hot mix of painful admission and lust.

“But Sam…” Dean looked at his brother. What were they doing? Rubbing against each other in the middle of the yard, what was that supposed to mean?

“Please, Dean…I need…I need to feel something good. Please.” Sam didn’t care that he was begging. It was the truth. He couldn’t remember the last time he had had an orgasm, but it was before darkness had happened, and that was a long time in a healthy teenage boy’s life. He was so hard it hurt, and the pleasure he felt from Dean thrusting against his hard-on was too good to be true.

Dean felt the despair in Sam’s voice and let his hips roll again, thrusting into him, rubbing his own painfully hard cock against Sam’s, relishing the friction that was amazing, and yet hardly enough.

“Like this?” He asked, his voice dangerously low and incredibly lustful, even to his own ears. “That’s what you want, Sammy?”

“Yes!” Sam arched into the friction and closed his eyes again. He moaned when Dean picked up the rhythm, pressing hard against his midsection, taking him to higher levels of pleasure. “Hmmm,” Sam moaned, and the sound went straight to Dean’s cock. He could hardly think straight by now. He drank in the sight of Sam, lost in pleasure, begging him to feel something good. Sam deserved to feel good, and Dean wanted to give him that, regardless of the consequences.

He moved faster on top of him, rolling his hips into Sam’s, watching his face intently to understand what he felt.

“Oh!” Sam looked into Dean’s eyes and he seemed pained, but his eyes were glowing and his face was flushed. His breathing came in short, raspy gasps and he arched one last time into Dean, losing control and shaking, shaking as if he would shatter as he came hard in his pants.

Dean marveled at the sight of him. He saw Sam’s eyes fall shut and felt the tremors beneath him. Dean watched every second of the orgasm roaring through Sam, and he rode it a while longer, until Sam opened his eyes and smiled a lazy, pleased smile.

“Was that good?” Dean whispered, hardly trusting his voice.

“Hell yeah,” Sam chuckled, going limp beneath his brother. Then, a thought seemed to occur to him. “How about you? Have you…?”
“Shhh…don’t worry about me,” Dean said. He was throbbing in his pants, his dick hard and demanding attention, but Dean ignored it for now. It was about Sam, and making him feel good. Dean didn’t want to acknowledge how much it had affected him.

“But…”

“I’m okay, Sam…relax,” Dean smiled, and reached out a hand between their bodies to adjust himself within his pants.

Sam didn’t seem entirely convinced, so he reached out a hand between their bodies too, and tried to touch his brother.

“Shhh,” Dean chided him softly and pressed Sam’s wrists to the sides of his head once again. “I’m fine,” he reassured him.

“Me too,” Sam said. “Thanks.”

“You don’t need to thank me,” Dean said.

They looked into each other’s eyes for a long moment, processing what had just happened. Little by little, Dean let go of Sam’s wrists and touched his face, letting his thumb graze his lips.

Sam smiled lightly at him, and Dean mirrored his brother. And when Sam closed his eyes and parted his lips, Dean understood what he wanted, and he lowered his head so they could share a kiss.

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tbc...
Dean let Sam shower first to wash away the dust, the sweat and the sticky evidence of pleasure off his skin. He waited for his turn to go, his heart beating fast. When at last Sam exited the shower and Dean entered, he locked the door and took off his clothes.

As the water washed down his body, Dean thought of what had just happened outside between them. He thought of Sam begging him not to stop, and he thought of the beautiful flush on his cheeks as his pleasure escalated quickly.

Dean took a deep breath, licked his lips and felt himself harden at the memory.

That was so weird...how many lines had they just crossed right there? And why was it that it should feel every bit as gross as it would certainly sound to anyone else, and yet, it felt every bit as hot and right inside of him?

Dean let his fingers close around his aching cock and he stroked himself. The feeling was amazing. He hadn't come as Sam had, and his body was pulsing, begging for release. In a few minutes of stroking, he was painfully erect and desperate to come.

Dean let his forehead touch the cool tiles of the shower and stroked faster. He tried to keep his breath under control; he swallowed the pleasure that scraped his throat and hoped the water cascade would muffle his need.

The image of his brother, of Sammy, arching up into him, the sounds that escaped his lips...Dean frowned and squeezed himself. “Hmm.” He bit on his bottom lip and gasped. He closed his eyes and could see Sam looking at him as he was about to fall over the edge. Dean could still feel Sam shuddering beneath him, letting go and having an orgasm roll through his body and make him boneless.

“Fuck,” Dean cursed. Right now there was no room for doubts and worries. He stroked himself faster and felt pleasure tighten around the base of his dick before it exploded in a hot spray against the shower wall. Dean shuddered and rested his forehead on his arm, and his arm against the tiles, needing the support.

He panted for a few more seconds until he could find his control again. Dean took the rest of his shower in silence, and although his body was calmer, his heartbeats remained frantic.
Outside the bathroom, Sam wondered what was going on. Unlike his brother, he wasn’t worrying about the right or wrong of the situation, because inside of him there was only joy. There was a feeling of happiness and freedom in Sam that he could do nothing but welcome, and as he wondered whether Dean was as affected by it as he was, he pressed his ear to the bathroom door and listened.

It was hard to make out any sounds because of the running water, but Sam wondered if the faint moan he could hear indicated that Dean had been just as turned on by what they had done. Surely Sam had felt Dean’s hardness against his own, but he knew his brother hadn’t finished as he had, and he wondered if it had been as insanely hot for Dean as it had for him.

Sam moved away from the door and sat on the bed. His heart raced when he thought of what had just happened. He could have never imagined that Dean and he would find themselves in a situation like that, but Sam could not deny that being that close had made him feel better than he had in months.

There was so much light in Dean, so much safety, that letting himself go and feel pleasure caused by him was like a drug his brain clung to. Being with Dean made him feel so good that it was almost as if there was no darkness in the world.

When Dean left the shower, Sam tried to stop smiling but it was difficult. He didn’t want things to get weird between them, but honestly, he didn’t think he could go back to pretending nothing had happened. Sam wanted more of that good feeling.

“Has dad come home yet?” Dean asked, casually.

“No, not yet. Let’s eat something?”

Dean nodded. He followed Sam out of their room and downstairs to the kitchen, and that was when they heard the noise of the Impala coming in.

~ * ~

When John walked in, followed by Bobby, he quickly found his younger son and walked towards him. “How are you, Sam?” He smiled and put a hand on the back of his neck, squeezing.

“I’m fine. Are you alright? How was the hunt?”

“It was okay.” John walked away and patted Dean’s shoulder. “You good, too? Was everything alright while we were gone?”

“Yeah, everything was fine.”

John let his eyes fall on Sam once again. Every night he was away he worried about him, but now that he could see him, his heart felt lighter. Sam looked fine. He didn’t know how he had been spending his nights, but John wanted to believe therapy was working, because there was a lightness about his son’s attitude that John hadn’t seen there before. Sam even smiled when Bobby started to
talk to him about the hunt.

They had dinner together and then John started to talk about serious stuff.

“I didn’t find any leads on the demon who took you, Sam.”

Sam’s arm stiffened on the way to taking food to his mouth and he pretended not to listen.

“But you know I’m not giving up.”

Dean looked at his father and Bobby eating, and they both looked tense.

“I did see that staying away from the job is not good, though. Things take a turn for the worse when less hunters are out there, doing their jobs. Bobby knows that. I ran into some pretty nasty cases these last days, and Bobby helped me with a particularly gruesome one,” John explained. “The thing is, I need to be on the road again. I need to go out and hunt. There are people to save, and now I have even more unfinished business out there.”

“Are we going to leave Bobby’s house?” Sam’s voice sounded every bit as worried as he felt. He didn’t want to leave. He wasn’t ready to fall back into their routine, moving all the time, starting over at different schools…

“Do you want to stay here?” John asked. “Bobby said it’s okay if you want to stay. He can be with you, and I can be too, but we’ll have to be more absent than we have been. We can’t just sit here as evil takes control of this country.”

“You guys can stay here as long as you want, you know that,” Bobby said. “Besides, there’s Sam’s therapist now. I wouldn’t want you guys to move and have to find another.”

“We don’t wanna move, right Sammy?” Dean asked.

Sam shook his head quickly. “We don’t. We like it here. We don’t care if you have to go out hunting, dad. We are fine on our own.”

“I know that,” John said and looked at Dean. He knew he could trust his older son to take care of Sam, especially now after everything that had happened. He knew they were closer than ever. “I just wanted to make sure you understood things.”

“We do,” Dean said.

“And I also hope you understand how important it is that you keep training. You did train while I was away, right?”

Sam looked away and bit down on his bottom lip. There was an unstoppable smile on his lips that tried to turn into a chuckle. He had to summon all his self-control to keep that from happening.

“Yes, we’ve been training,” Dean said, and he felt the heat of what they had done that afternoon spread to his face and make it difficult to use the silverware correctly. Dean looked at Sam’s mischievous little grin and his heart picked up speed.

“In fact, we were training just before you got here,” Sam said, and how he managed to say that with a straight face was beyond Dean.
“Good,” John said.

‘It was,’ Sam thought, and looked into Dean’s eyes. They exchanged a look full of complicity that lingered for a few seconds until they both felt warm inside.

Then, they ate the rest of their meal listening to the two hunters talk about their activities and their future plans.

~ * ~

John and Bobby stayed home for a few days before they took off on another hunt. Dean promised to take care of everything, which included taking Sam to therapy and making sure he was studying. The two hunters left after lunch, after packing enough gear to spend at least a week outside.

As soon as they were alone, the boys felt all of the tension they had been keeping at bay come back and dance around their thoughts, and every time they looked at each other or touched, it felt like sheer electricity between them. For the past few days, with John and Bobby in the house, they had acted as if nothing unusual had happened between them, but the nights had been particularly tough.

Sleeping beside each other, so close on the same bed, was causing Sam to have a different sort of sleeping disorder. Sometimes he got hard just thinking of the afternoon they had spent outside, and Dean’s body on top of his. Then it would take him forever to fall asleep, because his body didn’t understand it could not get what it wanted.

For Dean it hadn’t been any easier. The days they had spent with their dad in the house were good to give him time to think about what had happened. Dean knew it was not something that should happen again, but he also felt helpless when he thought about it, because his stupid body didn’t understand it was not supposed to respond to his brother’s touch. Besides, he missed their kissing. He would not admit it, not rationally, but the feeling of Sam’s lips against his caused something so amazing to burst all over his chest that it was hard not craving it again.

“We’re alone…” Sam said and looked at his brother.

They were on the porch, after having waved their dad and Bobby goodbye.

“We are,” Dean agreed, and his heart started beating fast.

Sam tried to look into his brother’s eyes, but Dean’s green eyes strayed, and when Sam stepped towards him Dean stepped back, as if he would move away.

“Hey.” Sam touched his arm. “Are you avoiding me?”

Dean took a deep breath and swallowed hard. The warm feeling of Sam’s fingers on his skin was enough to mess with his thoughts.

“Avoiding you? We shared a bed last night.” He tried to make light of it.

“That’s not what I meant. Now…being alone…touching…kissing… Are you trying to prevent it?”
Dean’s heart was thudding in his chest. Sam didn’t seem to understand what the problem was. How could he tell him without hurting him?

“Is it because of that day in the yard?”

“Sam…” Dean began.

“Because I’m fine with it.” Sam smiled.

“Sam, it’s not so simple… You’re my brother, right? My little brother… There are things we just… we can’t do,” he said.

“Why?” Sam frowned and retracted his hand.

“C’mon. You know that. It’s not that difficult to understand why we shouldn’t be doing that kind of thing. Or kissing…it’s wrong, Sam.”

Sam felt his heart fall in his chest. No, he thought. He couldn’t just stand there and listen as Dean tried to take away the one feeling bringing him joy because of stupid reasons.

“Says who?” He asked, boldly.

“Says everyone everywhere, if they found out.”

“Well, they won’t. It’s none of their business, Dean. I don’t care what people would say, because people won’t know.”

Dean understood what Sam meant, but it wasn’t so simple…

“Sam, I can’t do that…”

“Can’t? You don’t want to?” Sam stepped closer, closing the distance between them. He let his face lean closer, until he felt Dean’s breath against his cheeks. “You don’t want to kiss me anymore?”

Dean couldn’t find his rational thoughts. It was a weakness, and he knew that, but one he was unable to overcome. Sam was his weakness, doing whatever he could for his brother was what fueled his life, and having him so near, his lips so inviting, his eyes asking for that intimacy that they had recently discovered… Dean could not resist, and at the same time his own weakness killed him, it caused him to bask in a feeling of delight when he allowed his lips to close the distance and find Sam’s.

They kissed softly at first, but soon there was more behind the light brushing of lips, and Dean let his hand go to the back of Sam’s neck and pull him further into the kiss. He slipped his tongue past his lips and tasted Sam’s mouth until his own heartbeat buzzed in his ears and his body felt several degrees hotter.

“Mm,” Sam moaned into the kiss. He pressed himself into Dean and let his brother take over the kiss. When Dean’s lips traveled to the corner of his mouth and jaw line, Sam shut his eyes and his breathing hitched.

Dean let his kisses travel, light and wet, down Sam’s neck, kissing softly, nibbling too, tasting the salty skin of the boy who went weak against him.
“Dean…” Sam spoke, hoarse and breathless. He felt himself harden and his limbs didn’t obey him anymore. Dean’s lips closed on the spot where his shoulder and neck met and he sucked, and Sam tried to bite back a moan, but it was too late.

“What?” Dean asked, pressing his forehead to Sam’s, his breath just as throaty and needy.

“I…I want more, Dean…”

Dean felt himself harden, his pants suddenly too tight. How easy it would be to just close his eyes and let it go, but it was his brother, it was Sam! He had to take care of him, to protect him! Not kiss him and touch him and want to lick him all over…

“I need…” Sam blurted, his voice clouded and thick with lust.

“What do you need, Sammy?” Dean framed his face, his fingers tangling in his hair. His voice sent shock waves down Sam’s spine until his eyes rolled in the back of his head.

“I need you…”

Dean’s heart slammed against his chest, but he blinked the thick urge off his brain until he could think with some clarity. Then, he pulled Sam closer and hugged him, nestling his brother’s head under his chin and squeezing.

“You have therapy. We need to go.”

“Noo!” Sam’s voice sounded like a whine. “No, I don’t want to go. No…” He shook his head.

Dean pulled away and smiled at him. “We have to go,” he said. “I promised dad. C’mon, go get ready.”

Dean saw as Sam’s hazel eyes cleared. He saw the lust abandon his face until there was only annoyance in his eyes.

“Fine,” he said. “Whatever.”

Dean felt relieved when Sam turned around. His heart could at last find a softer rhythm, and he relaxed despite the stiffness in some very specific parts of his body.

“This is not over,” Sam said and squinted his eyes, and they both chuckled at it.

~ * ~

When they returned, in the end of the afternoon, Dean said he would make them dinner. Sam helped in the kitchen so they could make it faster, and even though the mood between them was friendly and light, there was that underlying tension between them, something that pulsed every time they were closer, but now they didn’t give any room to surface.

Sam was chopping vegetables when Dean surged behind to open a kitchen cabinet above his head. Just the feeling of Dean’s body behind him, and the whiff of his scent that Sam caught were enough to make goosebumps break on his skin. Sam could hardly understand what was happening. That
was his brother, it was Dean—someone he had been used to since ever. Sam had always admired his brother, and he knew he sometimes felt jealous of other people near him, but now everything was so different… Why couldn’t he control his heartbeats or the way his body responded to his brother’s presence?

“Ouch,” Sam frowned and gave Dean a dirty look when he tweaked his ear playfully. Dean looked at him and smiled, and Sam smiled too.

It felt good knowing that whatever he felt and couldn’t understand, Dean would help him deal with it, because they had each other.

When dinner was ready, they decided to eat in the living room, watching TV. Dean was eating off his plate and scanning through the channels when Sam got up from the sofa.

“I’ll get something to drink. What do you want?” He asked.

“I’m good for now.”

Sam went into the kitchen with the same butterflies in his stomach. He was growing used to having them there, and he welcomed this new feeling in his life. He couldn’t remember having felt so good, so hopeful after everything that had happened.

He was so distracted with his feelings and deliciously arrhythmic heartbeats, that when he opened the cabinet above his head to get a glass, he ended up bumping his hand against another, a glass that was on the edge of the cabinet and that fell as soon as Sam touched it.

Because of his years of training and his quick reflexes, Sam reached out to try and grab it before he knew what he was doing. It all happened too fast, but when he closed his hand around the glass it shattered, falling to pieces on the kitchen floor, causing Sam to hiss at the feeling.

From the living room, Dean heard the noise of a glass falling and breaking.

“Sam? What happened? Did you drop something?”

“Yeah, just a glass,” Sam answered from the kitchen. He looked at the glass pieces by his feet, and then at his hand. There was nothing at first, just a cut, but then, in a matter of seconds, a flood of red started gushing out of it, dripping on the floor and on Sam’s T-shirt before he could think of what to do.

“Did you get hurt?” Dean asked, still from the living room.

In the kitchen, Sam looked at the sight of his blood staining everything on the floor and running down his arm.

The bright light of the kitchen made his blood shine, and on the floor Sam could see the patterns it formed as it dripped from the deep cut on his hand. For a moment he couldn’t move. The sight evoked so many memories that Sam was unable to shake off his stupor.

He stared at his red blood and felt the throbbing in his hand. Sam held at his cut, trying to stop it from bleeding, but the red liquid kept pouring out of the cut, trickling between his fingers and making a mess.
When Sam didn’t reply, Dean stood up to go check on him.

“Sam, what happened?” He asked as he entered the kitchen, a moment before his eyes fell on the blood and glass pieces pooling by his brother’s feet. There was blood on Sam’s clothes and arm, and when Dean looked into his eyes his breath caught.

“I had an accident,” Sam whispered as the shaking started.

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tbc...
Dean looked at his brother and the blood covering his hand and dripping from it. He went closer to him and tried to see the damage the broken glass had caused.

“I’m fine,” Sam said, but his voice sounded shaky. It wasn’t the pain—that was something he had grown used to. It was the sight of his blood, and the memory of having it everywhere around him in the bright room.

Sam looked at Dean as he grabbed his wrist gently and forced him to stretch out his arm. His eyes were huge and his thoughts were hectic as Dean’s fingers held his wrist and he examined his hand.

“Here, let’s put it under some running water. I wanna see just how bad it is.” Dean opened the tap and Sam complied, going closer to it. Sam watched him intently as Dean put his bleeding hand under the water. The feeling caused Sam to hiss shortly at the pain.

Dean watched as the water washed the blood down the drain, his forehead wrinkled with worry. After a few seconds of studying Sam’s hand carefully, his heart calmed down a little and he took a deep breath.

“It’s not big, but I’m afraid it’s pretty deep. You’re gonna need some stitches.”

Sam looked at Dean as he spoke. He didn’t say anything. He was barely aware of the throbbing pain in his hand because the sight of blood was still staining his vision with memories from his past.

“Wait, where are you going?” Sam shrugged off his thoughts and asked when Dean turned around.

“I’ve got to get the keys to Bobby’s car. I’m taking you to the hospital.”

“No!” Sam shook his head vehemently.

Dean stopped in his tracks and looked at his brother.

“Sam, we need to go. Your cut needs stitches or it’ll keep bleeding.” Dean studied his brother’s eyes. There was something frail and agitated in them, and Dean wished he understood what it was.

“No, Dean. I don’t want to go to the hospital,” Sam said. As he spoke, warm blood kept pouring out
of his cut, and Sam kept his hand on top of the sink so the blood wouldn’t drip on the floor. “Don’t take me to the hospital, please. I don’t want to go.”

“But Sam—”

“You can do the stitches. I know you can, you’ve been practicing for a long time, haven’t you? You stitched up Dad’s cut once. I saw it. Remember? You do it,” Sam spoke quickly and looked at Dean with something so intense in his eyes that it was hard to look away.

“Yeah, but then we had some anesthetic, Sam. We don’t have any now. I’m not going to stitch it up without something for the pain. It’ll hurt too much.”

“I don’t care about the pain, Dean,” Sam said, his voice rushed and his eyes begging. “You do the stitches here. I’m not going to the hospital. Please, Dean…I don’t want to…” Sam knew he was getting to his brother. Dean was almost convinced.

“Sam, it’s gonna hurt like a bitch.”

“Is that your final argument?” Sam chuckled sadly. He looked at the blood coming out of his hand and shrugged slowly. “This is nothing, Dean. I’ve felt pain. I’ve felt lots of it. This is nothing, trust me.”

Dean observed his brother carefully. His heart ached at the implication in Sam’s words. There was a deep cut in his hand, bleeding profusely, probably hurting a lot right now and yet, that was nothing. It was nothing compared to what Sam had endured in the bright room where he was found.

“Will you do it?” Sam asked.

Dean swallowed hard. Sam seemed certain about it, so Dean decided he would take a chance. It wasn’t a big cut, and if Sam thought he could handle the stitches without an anesthetic, he was willing to believe him.

“Yeah,” Dean said. “Just wait here and don’t move. There’s shattered glass everywhere. I’ll get the stuff.”

“Thanks,” Sam nodded, feeling relief wash him over. He didn’t want to find himself in a hospital again. He’d gladly handle pain if it meant being home with Dean.

He waited for his brother in the middle of the kitchen, not moving. It took Dean only a couple of minutes to find where Bobby kept what he needed, and then he was back there with Sam.

“All right, let’s see this.” Dean put the first aid kit on top of the kitchen table. “And I’ll take care of this mess later,” he said, walking towards Sam and looking at the broken glass by his feet.

Sam offered his hand when Dean asked for it. It was still bleeding, even though Sam had been applying pressure to it.

“Come closer to the sink. We need to make sure we clean it before we close it.”

Sam nodded. He followed Dean to the sink where once again his brother let water pour on top of his cut. Sam’s jaw was tense, but he didn’t make a sound as Dean cleaned the wound and made sure there was no glass inside of it.
“Alright. Sit here now,” Dean instructed Sam to sit on the kitchen’s chair, across the table from him. Sam’s arm was stretched towards Dean on top of the table, and he watched as Dean picked up a needle and thread to start the process.

Dean looked at him, deeply into his eyes, as he held the needle between his thumb and forefinger. “Are you sure about this? We could still go to the hospital. It won’t take us too long and we’ll be back home in no time.”

“Please, do it,” Sam answered, looking at the cut and the small trail of blood continuously trickling from it.

“Fine,” Dean sighed. “But if you change your mind just tell me.”

Sam wouldn’t change his mind, but he nodded. He watched as Dean took his wounded hand and focused on the task at hand. When the needle pierced his skin, so near the throbbing core of the pain, Sam’s breath came out of his nostrils in a harsh and fast puff, but he didn’t make a sound.

Dean focused all of his attention on doing a good job, and he was glad, that despite his nervousness, his fingers were steady and precise. He pierced the tender skin again and finished the first stitch gently. Sam would need at least two more.

Sam shut his eyes briefly and swallowed hard.

_Sometimes the man came in with a knife, and then he would great creative…_

A small sound escaped Sam’s lips, coming from deep within his throat, and Sam hated himself for it.

“Do you need time before the next one?”

Sam shook his head. The pain was fierce, but that was not his problem…the memories were. The memories associated with pain.

“Hey,” Dean called, until Sam opened his eyes and looked at him. “Keep looking at me, alright? Just focus on us, right here.”

Sam nodded and managed to smile lightly. Dean pierced the skin with the needle once again and Sam didn’t close his eyes. He handled the throbbing feeling, looking intently at Dean as he closed the cut with the black thread.

_‘That must be hurting like hell’, Dean thought. He had seen hunters need stitches without any kind of anesthetic, and he had seen grown men cry out at the pain. But not Sam. Sam had been through much, much worse. Sam looked at him and didn’t flinch when Dean pulled at the needle, tightening the knot._

“Are you okay? I think I’ll need to do one more.”

“Go ahead,” Sam nodded.

He looked at his hand and the cut Dean was closing, then he looked into his brother’s eyes and let his mind go back to the day they had wrestled on the ground, and how that had ended for him.
This time, when Dean pierced his skin with the needle once again, Sam moaned faintly, but the sound was not entirely of pain, as Dean must have imagined.

Sam thought of Dean and how good it felt being intimate with him, and even if Dean caused him pain—as he did now—it felt good, and Sam wanted more of it.

Dean looked briefly into Sam’s eyes as he pushed the needle through his skin. There was a small flinch in Sam’s eyes, but there was also something clouding his look, something heated. Dean’s heart raced, because for a moment it was almost as if it was pleasure, and not pain, he inflicted upon Sam now.

When he finished tightening the last stitch, Sam was slightly out of breath, and the look in his eyes was intent and mysterious.

“All right. Let’s put some antiseptic on it now. It should be fine. I think we don’t even have to tell dad. If it takes him longer than a week to return it’ll be fine by then.”

“Great,” Sam said as Dean put something on a piece of gauze and covered the wound with it.

“I’ll put some bandage around it, just to remind you to take it easy with this hand, alright?”

“Yeah. Thanks,” Sam said while Dean wrapped his hand neatly with the bandage.

“It should be fine in a few days, but we’ll keep an eye on it. In the meantime, you better learn to use a different hand when you play with yourself, Sammy,” Dean winked playfully and teased.

Sam could hardly believe he had just been teased so bluntly, and he blushed before he could prevent it.

“Shut up,” he said, retracting his hand when Dean was finished and chuckling lightly.

“You should take a painkiller, though. Do you still have Doctor Michael’s pills?”

“I guess so,” Sam said.

“Take one, then. I’ll clean up this mess.” Dean got up and looked around.

“Thanks,” Sam said again.

“You’re welcome. Although I’m sure it hurt like hell.”

“I don’t mind pain. Not when you are the one causing it,” Sam looked deeply into Dean’s eyes, his words lingering in Dean’s ear, playing tricks with his thoughts, daring him to try and find a deeper meaning to them.

~ * ~

In the middle of the night Sam woke up because his hand was throbbing. He stirred in bed until he decided he would get up.

“Sam?” Dean asked sleepily when he felt him get out of bed. “Are you okay?”
“I’m fine. I’m just going to the bathroom.”

“Is it hurting?”

“Just a little,” Sam lied.

Dean waited until he was back in bed.

“Do you want to take another pill?” He asked.

“I think I can sleep without it,” Sam considered.

“Okay. But if you want one just tell me and I’ll get it for you.”

Sam lay on his side, his injured hand resting on the pillow by his head, and he felt Dean move until he could wrap his arms around him. Sam shut his eyes and smiled at the warmth of Dean’s body holding him.

They didn’t say anything. Sam closed his eyes and it wasn’t long before he fell asleep.

He only woke up again when it was late morning, and by then his hand was throbbing painfully. Dean was still spooning with him, and Sam quickly realized that his hand wasn’t the only thing pulsing.

His dick was hard, a consequence of both the morning and Dean’s closeness.

Sam thought of how good it had felt to come a few days ago, in Bobby’s yard. It had been so long since he had last felt an orgasm… Sam had never touched himself in the bright room, for obvious reasons, and he had not done it when he got back either. Part of him was afraid of feeling pleasure, as if there was nothing good left for him after all the pain he had been through.

But now, now his body was alive again, and Sam wished he could wrap his hand —his good hand— around himself and stroke.

“You awake?” Dean asked softly, moving behind him.

“Yes…” Sam said. He arched a little against Dean, wanting to feel his body close, wanting to give in to how amazing it felt.

Dean felt Sam stiffen in his arms and press against him. A feeble moan fell from his lips, and Sam sighed deeply. Dean didn’t think it was about his hand.

“Sam?”

“Yeah?” Sam asked lazily, his throat tight with the lust building up as his cock twitched within his shorts.

“What’s up?” Dean frowned lightly, and then he felt Sam’s left hand find his under the covers and put it on top of his hip.

“Remember when you said I’d have to find another way to play with myself?”
Dean’s heart started a crazy rhythm that soon had him much more awake.

Sam’s fingers tangled with Dean’s and he made his brother’s hand slide down his hips towards his crotch, until it rested on top of the bulge in his shorts.

“Can you help me?”

Dean’s heart seemed to beat in his throat and his breath hitched immediately. Yet, there was enough residual sleep in him to make him slightly confused and easily manipulated.

“Please?” Sam bit on his bottom lip and took Dean’s hand, trying to slide past the waistband of his shorts and underwear with it.

“Sam,” Dean hesitated and tried to retract his hand.

“Dean,” Sam insisted “…my hand’s hurting now, it could help me forget it for a while.” He knew he was teasing, but it was also true. Right now the stiffness in his dick and the insistent throbbing was drowning the pain coming from his stitches.

Dean felt Sam’s fingers tugging, and when he didn’t struggle, Sam guided his hand until his fingers were touching a hot, smooth column of flesh that seemed to come to life at his touch. Instinctively, Dean’s fingers closed around the shaft and he stroked tentatively.

“Hmm,” Sam moaned and thrust into Dean’s hand. His response was so hot and so needy that Dean hardened immediately, and swallowed down a thick ring of lust that tightened his throat.

“Are you sure you want this…?” Dean asked with an honest frown on his forehead.

“Yes!” Sam licked at his lips and closed his eyes, feeling every inch of Dean’s rough palm wrapped around his cock.

Dean squeezed and stroked, his left arm snaking around Sam’s hip and disappearing inside his shorts, where his hand moved up and down until there was moisture gathering at Sam’s tip, causing Dean’s fingers to grow slick.

Sam bit back a moan, and his breath became raspy and quick. He thrust into Dean’s hand and pushed back against him, brushing his buttocks against the evident hardness in Dean’s underwear.

Dean drank in the sounds of pleasure. He closed his eyes and let his lips find Sam’s earlobe. He was greedy to taste his skin, so Dean sucked on it and let his hand pick up speed.

“Dean…ohhmm.” Sam’s voice was low and sultry. He gasped and his left hand closed tightly around the sheets, needing to hold on to something as he lost control of his body and depended solely on Dean’s hand on him.

“That good, Sammy?” Dean didn’t recognize his own voice. It was so thick with sex that for sure there was no rational thought able to drag him away from pleasing Sam now. He let his lips close around the nape of Sam’s neck and licked him, sucking on the skin until it was red, until Sam was writhing.

“Dean!” Sam felt his climax building up. “Faster!” He urged, shuddering when Dean complied. He
arched against him, feeling Dean’s clothed hardness pressed against his lower back as Dean’s fingers closed around his cock and brought him closer to the edge.

Dean let his lips travel down Sam’s skin and planted wet, hot kisses on his neck and shoulder. Sam’s breath turned into panting, and soon he was shaking in Dean’s arms, his left hand closing around his brother’s arm and squeezing the muscles that flexed rhythmically with every stroke.

“Dean, I’m gonna—!”

“Come, Sammy. Let it go,” Dean whispered hotly, stroking him faster.

Sam’s rising moan ended in a loud, heavy cloud of breath. His body tensed and he went perfectly still before he writhed messily and came, covering Dean’s fingers with his hot, liquid orgasm.

Dean stroked him until Sam grew too sensitive. The warm seed on his fingers was insanely hot, and his own cock throbbed and begged for attention within his underwear.

When Dean retracted his hand he could feel Sam’s pleasure drying on his skin, and he looked at his brother’s relaxed, pleased face.

“You happy?” He asked, studying him.

Sam chuckled, the sound amusing and delightful to his ears.

“Yes,” Sam said. He could barely feel his hand hurting. Everything inside him was tingling with pleasure. “Your turn now.”

Sam moved until he could face Dean, and he let his left hand find his brother’s body and rest on top of his belly. His fingers were about to trail lower when Dean put his clean hand on top and stopped him.

“No…” He shook his head.


“I am,” Dean admitted. “But you don’t have to. It’s okay, really.” Dean was shaking inside. It was difficult to do what was right when his body screamed for Sam’s touch. It was one thing doing what Sam asked—getting him off, making him feel good—but it would be a completely different thing letting Sam do the same to him. Dean could not do that. It would feel like he was taking advantage of his brother, and the fear of such a thing was stronger than the desire burning within him. He would not let Sam touch him because the thought of getting off on his brother’s innocent curiosity punished his guilty conscience and made Dean hold back.

“I want to, Dean,” Sam explained, his eyes shining. “Let me.”

Sam released his fingers and cupped Dean’s erection through the fabric. Dean shuddered and closed his eyes for a moment, but then he opened them and took Sam’s hand away. “No, Sam…not now.”

“Why not?” Sam insisted, a frown growing on his forehead.

“Well, your hand, for one. You couldn’t do it for yourself, how are you going to do it for me?” Dean argued, arcing an eyebrow and smiling, pretty sure that was a decent enough point. “Or did you just
say that to get me into doing it?” He teased, smiling at his brother.

Sam smiled too, feeling slightly embarrassed.

“Yeah, I wanted you to do it. But now I want to do it to you.”

Sam tried to touch him again, but Dean caught his hand gently and held it.

“I can’t, Sam.”

“Why not?”

“Because,” Dean thought of how to explain. “You’re my little brother. Do you know how confusing this is?”

“You’re overthinking this,” Sam said, surprising Dean at how mature he sounded.

“Maybe I am. But right now I can’t. You know I feel it too, but I guess I need some time to wrap my mind around all this, you know?”

Sam considered his words. He kind of understood them, although he didn’t want to. All he wanted was to touch Dean. Sam was dying to touch his brother and see him lose control—and he was dying to be the cause of it.

“I get it…but at the same time, I don’t.”

“Just give me some time, alright? Please, Sam.” Dean begged into his eyes. He knew Sam thought he wanted to do it, and right now he was about to get upset that he couldn’t, but he had to understand things weren’t so simple. Dean was the big brother, he had to overthink things. He had to be strong, even though his body was weak. He had to refrain from taking advantage of his brother’s vulnerability, even though he had probably already crossed too many lines concerning that.

“Just bear with me, alright?” Dean insisted.

“Fine,” Sam shrugged. He sensed Dean was talking about something important, and Sam knew what it was. His brother felt guilty about what they were doing, but Sam would make him see there was no reason to feel that way.

After all the darkness Sam had felt shoved into his soul, being with Dean in such an open and strong bond made light find its way back into his heart, and Sam knew it was right, because Dean’s touch made him feel like there was enough light to maybe heal him someday.

“Thanks,” Dean said, sighing with relief. He didn’t know for how long he could keep resisting, and if he wanted to resist, but he had to try. He had to at least try and keep some control. “Shower?” He asked, looking into Sam’s eyes.

“Yes. But only if you kiss me,” Sam’s smile was knowing and patient.

This battle Dean wasn’t willing to fight, and he surrendered easily when their lips melted together, unable to resist the feeling of their tongues tangling.
tbc...
During the next week, as the boys found themselves alone, they enjoyed Bobby’s house as if it was the home they never had. They were used to John going off hunting and leaving them in motels and rented places, but it was different now. They were growing used to the feeling of having a safe place to sleep, and even though they were aware it would not last for much longer, they allowed themselves to enjoy it.

At night, when they shared a bed, they also learned to share secrets. Underneath the sheets they kissed and touched, and on a few more occasions Sam had asked Dean to touch him with more intimacy and urgency. Alone in Bobby’s house, Dean sometimes allowed his mind to forget reason and indulge in gentle, firm touching that brought Sam a sweet kind of release. He didn’t let Sam touch him back; Dean was not ready to let that happen, but it was quite easy letting Sam guide the way, showing him what he wanted, and then touching him until he shuddered and thrashed, and felt pleasure so intense that his face glowed, even when the light in the bedroom was dim.

During this time they were alone, experiencing these touches and heated kisses, Sam didn’t have any nightmares. And even though his injured hand was probably making him uncomfortable with pain, Sam looked happy and easygoing, and Dean clung to that whenever his reason tried to tell him he was being harmful to his little brother.

Sam still went to therapy, as he had agreed, but he refused to tell the doctor anything about his past. Lately, Doctor Reece had been unable to talk to Sam about the time he went missing, or about his feelings for his brother. There were different ways in which Sam shut her out, but he always did. So, in their last sessions, she had settled for talking to him about anything he would allow her to, anything that might help her get to know him a little more.

“What happened to your hand?” The doctor asked.

“Nothing. I tried to grab a glass as it was falling in the kitchen. I guess having the quick reflexes of a hunter doesn’t always pay off.”

Doctor Reece nodded.

“How do you feel about hunting?” She took the chance and asked as Sam was sitting before her,
toying with the bandage around his hand.

“What do you mean?” He barely raised his eyes to look at her. All he wanted was to be back home with Dean.

“Your dad is a really good hunter, isn’t he?”

“He is,” Sam agreed.

“Has it always been like that?”

“My dad started hunting when my mom was killed in a supernatural fire,” Sam explained. “I was just a baby. So yeah, for me it’s always been like that.”

“You have pretty much grown up raised by your brother, is that right?”

“And my Uncle Bobby, too. He took care of us sometimes.”

“And how do you feel about hunting?” She asked again. “You told me that you and your brother have a strict training you must follow. Does it make you happy, training to be like your father?”

Sam didn’t answer immediately. He thought about her question and what he felt inside.

“I don’t mind it…I mean, I wouldn’t say hunting makes me happy or anything…but then again, who would? It sucks. It’s bloody and it’s dangerous, and in the end you lose everyone you love. Either that or you watch them get hurt.”

“You sound like you know something about that,” she said, softly.

Sam shrugged.

“Maybe if my father wasn’t a hunter, maybe if he didn’t hunt down demons and creatures like that, maybe they would have just left me alone,” Sam said, his eyes lost somewhere on the floor.

“So, your father is responsible for your kidnapping,” she said, testing him.

Sam sighed. He wanted to blame his dad. It would be easy to point a finger and find a culprit, but he knew it wasn’t so simple.

“I don’t blame my father. I know he did everything he could to try and save me.”

“He didn’t prevent it, though. He didn’t save you before they really hurt you.”

Sam fell silent. He had already had that conversation with his father, and it made him uncomfortable. He let his eyes stray and avoid hers, and for a long moment neither spoke.

Doctor Reece sighed and tried again.

“What would you think about a life without hunting?”

“You mean, a normal life?” Sam asked. “Like, going to college, getting married, having a family?”
“Yes. How does that feel?”

He couldn’t say he had never thought about it. But now there was so much on his mind; the dark room, the torture, the fear…the comfort he found in Dean’s arms, the things happening between them… Sam hadn’t really thought that far ahead in the future for a long time.

“I guess it would be great. But my dad’s a hunter, my brother is, too… It’s not like I have a choice.”

“Sam,” the doctor spoke gently. “It may seem difficult to see it, but it’s important to recognize that your life is your own, and whatever you choose to do with it, there’s always a choice,” she smiled.

Sam liked that she was trying to be nice to him, but the only choice he felt like making now was what Dean and he would watch on TV before they were snuggled close in bed for another night.

~ * ~

John and Bobby returned home after having spent over a week out hunting. By the time they were back, Sam’s hand had already healed, and except for the thin line of a scar, there was nothing that could draw attention to his injury. Dean cut the stitches out and Sam was good to go when he saw his dad and Bobby. When that happened, John couldn’t help but notice how well Sam seemed to be doing. He supposed Doctor Michael had been right all along when he had insisted that he take Sam to see a therapist.

As John talked to Dean about their last few hunts, Bobby joined Sam as he sat on the porch stairs and looked into the distance.

“Hey, Sam.” Bobby sat by his side and let his eyes look into the line where the blue sky ended and the wrecked cars piled up.

“Hey. How was it?” Sam asked.

“It was okay. Nearly got killed a couple of times, you know, the usual,” he chuckled.

“You should be careful,” Sam said, seriously.

“We are careful, kid, don’t worry. So how are things here, with you and Dean?”

Sam thought of the nights they spent so close together, so warm under the covers, touching, holding, kissing… He knew he couldn’t tell Bobby why, but Sam thought he would like to know he was happy.

“We’re fine, Bobby. Thanks for letting us stay here. It’s been really good.”

“You know you can stay for as long as you want.”

“Is dad thinking of moving?” Sam asked, and in his eyes Bobby could see dread.

“Not that I know of. So far John’s been okay with going out to hunt and knowing you two are fine here.”
“Good,” Sam sighed, relieved.

“You know, Sam…when I was out there, being hunted by some pretty mean and nasty creatures, and when I almost died because of them, I couldn’t help but think of you.”

“Of me?” Sam asked, surprised.

“Yes, of you. We never really talked about what happened to you in those three months, Sam. I know you don’t like to talk about it, I’ve seen what those memories do to you.”

Sam listened quietly. He could never get mad at Bobby. The man sitting beside him now was like a father to him, and the love and respect Sam felt for him were too big.

“I don’t suppose you would like to open up to this old man here, but I would just like to tell you that if you ever want to talk to me about anything, I’m a good listener, son,” Bobby said. He felt his heart tight with love for that kid. He had never pressured Sam to speak about his time in darkness, and neither would he ever, but he needed him to know that if he needed someone to talk to, Bobby was there for him. “I know you probably feel much more comfortable talking to Dean, and I understand that. But, again…you know, if you need to talk…”

“Thanks, Bobby,” Sam smiled. “It means a lot.”

Bobby nodded. He looked into the horizon and sighed. Many thoughts came and swirled around his mind, and Bobby wondered just how Sam managed to smile after everything he had been through. It was easy to busy himself with hunting monsters, but if he stopped to think of Sam’s pain during three terribly long months, his throat tightened and his eyes stung. The boy beside him now had been tortured like an adult, and being just a kid, he had seen the worst. The boy sitting beside him had been beaten and raped, and how he managed to get up every morning and carry on was amazing.

“Sam?” Bobby felt his voice was thick with raw emotions. “Just something else. You know how soldiers come back from wars and are hardly able to fit back into society because they’re haunted by their past?”

“Yes…”

“You’ve been to war too, Sam. And you survived. Don’t ever underestimate how strong you are.”

Bobby looked into those young eyes paying attention to him, patted Sam on the shoulder lightly and got up before his emotions took the best of him.

Sam was sitting there alone, staring into the endless sea of wrecked cars and the blue sky above his head.

Bobby thought he was strong, but that was because he didn’t know. They didn’t know, no one knew. They didn’t know how he had begged. They hadn’t seen him cry and plead. The people he loved didn’t know about the boy who screamed and, defeated on the white floor of a dark room, felt his body be taken from him, and felt his self-control shatter to pieces.

Sam thought of the man breathing into his ear, his hot breath puffing into his neck as he forced his way inside him. Sam could hear his own desperate cries if he closed his eyes, and those were the cries that lived in the darkness he could not face.
Sam shook his thoughts off and searched for Dean inside the house. He didn’t care that they weren’t alone. Tonight he wanted his brother’s touch to help him find light in the desolation of his memories.

~ * ~

The door was closed in the room where they were sleeping. The lights were off, but not entirely. From the bathroom, there was a faint light pouring itself into the room and on part of the bed, and Sam and Dean could look into each other’s eyes.

“Did dad say anything about your hand?” Dean asked.

“No, he didn’t notice it. There’s nothing to see anyway. Your stitches were perfect.”

Dean smiled.

“Night, Sammy.”

“Dean…” Sam called softly and moved closer, until their limbs were tangled under the sheets.

Dean heard the way Sam’s voice dropped to something low and intimate when he called his name, and his heart responded instantly with a faster rhythm.

“Yes?”

Sam didn’t say anything. He leaned in and kissed Dean’s lips, letting his taste fill his mouth for a few seconds before Dean pulled away.

“Sam…we’re not alone now. Bobby or Dad could come check on us any time. The door is half open, and you know dad doesn’t usually knock.”

“I know,” Sam agreed. “But…” He took Dean’s hand and placed it on the bulge in his underwear. “I can’t help it…”

Dean’s green eyes looked certainly darker, and it wasn’t just the lack of clarity in the room. He let his fingers squeeze gently and relished the small little moan that stumbled past Sam’s lips.

“You know this is risky, right?” He whispered, but his blood was already pumping faster, and it didn’t help that Sam smiled mischievously and lustfully.

“Please, Dean…no one will come.”

“We can’t make a sound then. Can you be quiet for me, Sammy?” Dean’s own cock twitched at the desire building up in response to Sam’s evident arousal.

“Yes,” Sam whispered throatily and thrust lightly against Dean’s hand.

“Turn around so it won’t show if anyone walks in.”

Sam complied in a heartbeat. He turned on his side until he was facing a different wall, and soon Dean wrapped his body behind his and his hand slipped past the waistband of Sam’s shorts—a way
his fingers were not unfamiliar with.

When Sam felt the hot touch of Dean’s rough fingers wrapping around his aching erection, he shut his eyes and swallowed back a moan. Instead, he let his breath come out of his lips in a hurried, needy manner.

Dean felt the adrenaline pumping in his veins. The risk of getting caught just added to how much trespassing they were doing, and he couldn’t lie that it fueled his desire further.

“Dean…” Sam whispered, arching against Dean, deliberately rubbing his ass against the hard-on his brother couldn’t hide.

Dean closed his eyes and swallowed hard. He would not let Sam distract him. He let his fingers feel every inch of Sam’s hot, pulsing cock, and Dean stroked him the way he was learning Sam liked. Slow and teasingly at times, fast and urgent as his need grew.

“Hmm,” Sam writhed, chewing on his bottom lip.

“Shhh…quiet, Sam,” Dean whispered hotly into his ear, letting his thumb graze the tip of him and feeling his own cock throb at the wetness he felt there.

Sam shuddered. He felt so hot his body seemed to be burning. He thrust into Dean’s hand and arched back against his hips, lost in a haze of pleasure he didn’t want to ever end.

Even though Sam wanted to hold on to the moment, to the light shining in his brain as Dean’s touch brought him closer and closer to a climax, he felt himself unable to stop the pleasure building up. Sam clawed at the bed and his hips moved to the rhythm Dean had set, needing to feel more, needing to find release.

“Dean…Dean…hmmm…”

Dean’s cock twitched and he could feel a wet spot forming on his underwear every time Sam called out his name in such a horny, greedy way.

“Feels good, Sam? You’re gonna come?” He whispered into his ear, sucking on his earlobe and letting his wrist pick up speed.

“Hmm!” Sam moaned.

“Shhh…quiet, Sammy,” Dean shushed him. “They’ll hear you.”

Sam couldn’t help it. His orgasm was right there, taking over, and he buried his face into the pillow when it hit him.

Dean heard the muffled sound of pleasure Sam hid in the pillow as his body tensed and he let go, coming all over Dean’s hand, feeling light burst in his head and chase away any shadow that threatened to find him.

Dean stroked him until Sam grew soft against his palm. He retracted his hand knowing that he should probably get up and get something to clean them both up, but right now he didn’t want to move.
Sam turned around and looked into his eyes. They were glowing, and Dean could see the faint flush in his brother’s cheeks.

“Was that good?” He smiled.

Sam nodded, unable to use his words. He looked intently at Dean, and then he let his hand touch his brother’s lower belly and aim for the waistband of his underwear.

“No…Sam, no,” Dean shook his head, grabbing his hand to stop him.

“Why not? You’re so hard, let me help.”

“You don’t need to do it just because I did it to you.”

“I want to do it,” Sam protested.

“Shhh,” Dean reminded him silence was important.

“Please, Dean…” Sam tried to let his fingers trail lower but Dean kept him still.

“I’m not ready, Sam.” Dean wanted to, his body craved the feeling of Sam’s fingers on him. Just wondering what it would feel like to be stroked by Sam caused all hairs to go up in the back of Dean’s neck with anticipation, but his brain was still unsure about it. It was like, as long as he didn’t let Sam get him off, he could pretend he wasn’t doing anything terribly wrong.

“I want to see you come, too,” Sam whispered. His eyes were so willfully meaningful that Dean couldn’t look away.

“Sam…”

“Touch yourself, then. If you don’t want to let me, then do it yourself. Please, Dean. Let me see what it looks like when you lose control, too.” Sam looked at Dean with hunger in his eyes, and Dean felt too weak to fight his way out of the spell between them.

Sam let his fingers cover Dean’s and moved his brother’s hand until it rested on top of Dean’s erection.

“Let me see you,” Sam whispered, pressing Dean’s fingers down.

Dean closed his eyes and his breath quickened. He tried to swallow but his throat was either tighter or thicker with lust, because it was difficult. Slowly, he let his hand disappear underneath the covers and the waistband of his underwear. He closed his hand, the same hand that was still covered in Sam’s come, around his cock and stroked.

Dean shuddered with pleasure and even though his eyes were closed, he could feel the heat of Sam’s eyes watching him intently, reading every movement on his face, every raspy breath that left his lips. It felt incredibly hot having Sam so close to him, studying every flex of his muscles as he stroked himself harder.

Sam watched, his eyes glowing, as Dean pleasured himself. It wasn’t exactly what he wanted—Sam wished he could feel Dean against his hand, but it was amazing to look at his face as his hand picked up speed beneath the blanket.
“Hm,” Dean moaned softly and opened his eyes. His hand never stopped. He was too close now. Touching Sam and making him come left him so aroused it hurt. It wouldn’t be long now before he lost control. Dean licked his lips and tasted his orgasm building up.

“Do you like to watch me?” He asked, his eyes squinting in the dark, his voice thick with lust.

Sam nodded and licked his lips. He let his fingers run through Dean’s hair and caress him, and he could feel a thin layer of sweat against his fingertips as Dean’s jerked himself faster.

“Yeah… Are you thinking of how you made me come all over your fingers?”

Dean’s stomach muscles flexed and he tensed. His cock throbbed and he had to hold on to his self-control not to make a sound.

Sam watched, delighted, as Dean frowned and his breath heaved. His arm moved frantically fast now, and Sam knew he was close.

“Let me see you come, Dean.”

Sam’s voice undid him. Dean barely had enough coherence to nod before he went still and his cock pulsed in his hand. Dean’s lips parted in a silent cry of pleasure as he covered his hand with his orgasm.

Sam let his fingers touch Dean’s face lightly, his shut eyelids and nose, his fingertips tracing his eyebrows and lips until Dean stopped shuddering and opened his eyes again.

“Happy now?” Dean asked, his limbs feeling like jelly, his whole body relaxed.

Sam nodded. He thought Dean looked beautiful when he came.

Dean was still coming down from his pleasure when Sam left the bed quickly and returned with some toilet paper and a wet rag for them to clean up the mess.

When they were done getting rid of the evidence of the lines they had crossed, Dean nestled his head against Sam’s chest and squeezed him.

Sam chuckled. He loved the feeling of Dean nestled against him.

Little by little, Dean was helping light up the darkness hiding away in his brain. Whether or not that light would be enough to heal him, they could not know for sure. But maybe it would soon be enough to help Sam stop hiding and open up.

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tbc...
At nine a.m. John walked into their room and woke them up.

"C'mon boys. Get up and come downstairs. We've got a visitor."

John was gone before any of his sleeping kids had time to ask who this visitor was. As they were left behind to wonder about this person, they stretched and yawned, blinking a few times as their eyes adjusted to the light of a new day. "See? Told ya dad doesn’t knock,” Dean said softly, smiling mischievously at Sam.

Sam chuckled and rubbed at his sleepy eyes.

"Who do you think it is?” He asked.

"No idea,” Dean shrugged. "But let’s go before dad comes back.”

Sam nodded and they got up and dressed. When they went downstairs, they found their father talking to Doctor Michael in Bobby’s living room. Bobby wasn’t anywhere they could see, and Dean asked about him before he even greeted the man sitting on the sofa.

"Where’s Bobby?”

"He’s out. He’ll be back for lunch,” John said.

"Hey, Doctor,” Dean reached out his hand and squeezed Doctor Michael’s.

"Hello, Dean,” he smiled, and then his eyes found the boy walking right behind his brother. "Hi, Sam.” The doctor smiled at him.

"Hey,” Sam greeted from a distance. He liked the doctor, but he felt uneasy in his presence. Doctor Michael reminded him too much of his past for his own sake.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t come sooner. I’ve been meaning to, but there was always something coming up.”

“It’s okay. You shouldn’t have bothered,” Sam said and meant it. He understood the doctor worried
about him, but just the sight of him reminded Sam of being in the hospital because of his injuries and of things he’d rather not talk about.

“I wanted to see you. You look good, Sam. How have things been going?”

“They’re okay,” Sam answered curtly.

John watched his son and the doctor speak. He probably felt as uncomfortable as Sam in his presence, because Michael being there reminded John of everything his son had been through, even the things he tried hard to push away from his mind.

“Your father was telling me that you are seeing a therapist.” Sam looked at his dad and then at the doctor. He knew his father wasn’t exactly thrilled with the visit either. “Yeah.”

“Doctor Reece is a very nice lady. I hope she’s been able to help you.”

“She’s alright.” Sam scratched at his head and looked around.

The doctor followed the movement of his hand and frowned. “What is that on your hand? Did you get hurt?” He asked when he noticed the fresh scar on Sam’s right palm. He had not forgotten Sam’s case, and he could still go over each one of his injuries in his mind. That was a new one.

John followed the doctor’s eyes and looked at the thin scar on his son’s hand. Indeed, there was something there which he hadn’t seen before.

Dean and Sam exchanged a quick look before Sam hid his hand from sight and shrugged.

“It’s nothing. I got cut with a broken glass, that’s all.”

“It looks like you needed stitches. Here, let me see it,” Michael asked.

“When did that happen?” John asked as Sam forced himself to step ahead and give his hand for the doctor to study.

“You were out hunting with Bobby,” Dean explained, feeling as if he had just been busted for doing something wrong. “Sam didn’t want to go to the hospital, so I did the stitches myself.”

“Oh, really? And when was I going to know that?” John stared Dean in the eyes intently.

“Dad, it was nothing,” Sam intervened. “I asked Dean not to go anywhere. You know he’s good at it.”

“I don’t care that he did it, Sam. But I’m your father, you should have told me. You know, I’m supposed to know what goes on with my kids. What is wrong with you guys? What else have you been keeping from me?” John didn’t mean to sound so upset, but he was hit by one of those moments when he realized just how much deeper Sam’s connection to Dean was. It didn’t matter how much he tried to maintain his authority, the boys were always going to be keeping things from him. John knew the day was coming when they would outsmart him.

“John, it’s alright. It’s not a big cut, and your son did do a splendid job here,” Doctor Michael added. “I know doctors who can’t do such a good job. Congrats on teaching him,” he said, trying to lighten up the mood.
John swallowed down his outburst and sighed.

“I just want to know what’s going on with Sam, alright?” John looked at Dean.

For a moment Dean felt himself tense with guilt. ‘Do you wanna know what’s going on with Sam, Dad? You would not believe what happens between us sometimes’, the thought filled him with uneasiness and Dean looked at the floor. He knew his father would go fucking crazy if he ever found out how close Sam and he had grown. He would never understand. And even though John loved them and Dean knew that, he didn’t know what his father would be capable of doing if he ever found out Sam and he were crossing lines and getting intimate.

“Yes, Dad. Sorry,” he spoke softly.

“Yeah, whatever… Why don’t you go outside for a moment? I want to speak to the doctor alone.”

Sam didn’t need to be asked twice. He left quickly, and Dean followed right after him. Outside, in the middle of wrecked cars, Sam could breathe much better without the knowing look in the doctor’s eyes.

~ * ~

“You are too hard on your boys,” Michael said as they moved to Bobby’s office and he sat down on a chair across from John, who sat behind the desk.

“I have to be. They need to know I’m in charge here. They need to obey me. Their lives may depend on it someday, and you know I mean it.”

“Right. But it was just a cut. And Sam trusts Dean, I don’t see a problem with that.”

“Now it was just a cut, but it has been more than that.” John’s face looked serious.

“What do you mean, John?”

“Dean covers up for Sam. Even when it’s important stuff that he should tell me immediately.”

Michael had a feeling John was going somewhere with that, because he looked badly distressed.

“Are you talking about anything in particular?”

John sighed and ran a hand through his dark hair. He stared the doctor in the eyes and looked down at the table and the papers on top of it when he spoke again.

“You were right, Michael.”

“About what?”

“About Sam.”

Doctor Michael nodded slowly. “I told you therapy would do him good, John. He looks much better than when I last saw him, and that was a few months ago.”
“Right, that too. But I wasn’t talking about therapy.”

Michael frowned and waited, but John didn’t go on.

“What was I right about then?”

“Michael, I can trust you, right? You know what it’s like to be a hunter.”

“I know, that’s why I try to keep my distance.”

“So you understand that a hunter, and a father, sometimes have to do things that society doesn’t necessarily agree with.”

“What do you mean, John?”

“I found the man who tortured my son.”

The doctor went silent for a long moment before he spoke again.

“You did?” He narrowed his eyes and leaned in closer toward the table.

“I did. Actually, he came knocking on my door. I believe he was trying to check whether my son remembered his face or not. Well, long story short, I killed him.”

Michael nodded slowly. “I believe I would’ve done the same.”

John nodded too, appreciatively.

“Before I killed him, though, I made him talk.”

“Do you know why they took your son?”

“Unfortunately I don’t know yet.” John shook his head, and it was like a shadow crossed his eyes. “I will discover it, Mike. But you see, I made this man talk about the things he did to my son.”

“Did he tell you?”

John nodded gravely.

“That man was a deranged hunter.”


“A hunter who lost his fucking mind, Mike. It’s not unknown to have happened. This hunter beat, burned, cut, and whipped my son, and more.”

Michael looked at the table, feeling the weight of John’s words.

“And you were right about it, Michael. This man said he raped my son, too.”

The younger man stared at the seasoned hunter before him and was at a loss for words. He had
instinctively known that all along, so why did it feel so shocking to hear John say it now? Perhaps it was the profound sadness in the eyes of the boy’s father. There was something bitter in his look, something that screamed of defeat and guilt. Doctor Michael felt sorry for him, because John looked like he needed a shoulder to cry on, and he knew that crying was the last thing the man looking at him now would allow himself to do.

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“Why does Dad have to be such an ass?” Sam picked up a rock and threw it in the distance, as Dean and he sat by one of the wrecked cars.

“He’s right, Sam. We should have told him about your hand.”

“No, we shouldn’t. If it hadn’t been for the doctor he would have never known. Dean,” Sam looked at him. “Dad doesn’t have to know everything about us, don’t you agree?”

Dean’s lips twitched briefly. “Of course I do. He would kill me if he knew I’ve been touching you,” he lowered his voice.

“Oh, c’m on, Dean. You make it sound like I’m a freaking child you’ve been molesting. You insult me.”

“You are a minor, Sam. And I’m supposed to take care of you. And I’m your brother,” Dean shared some of his troubled thoughts.

“I’m old enough to know what I want. And I want your touch. And I want to touch you, too. “

“Sam, we’ve talked about this before.”

“You asked for time, like a girl,” Sam chuckled.

“Oh, shut up,” Dean poked his ear playfully and they laughed. “It’s a big deal for me.”

“Girl,” Sam said again, and this time Dean slapped his head and Sam laughed harder.

“I’ll show you the girl the next time we’re training,” Dean promised with a mean voice.

“I mean, it though. I want to touch you. What’s happening between us, it’s been making me feel in control of my life, Dean. I feel good. Why should I care about what other people would say?”

Dean considered Sam’s words. He looked at his brother and sighed.

“Look, I’m happy that it makes you feel good.”

“But…?” Sam asked.

“What?”

“There is a ‘but’ coming, isn’t there? I can feel it,” Sam chuckled softly.
“Yeah, there’s a lot of ‘buts’ actually. But let it rest for now. C’mon, do you wanna learn how to fix a broken engine?” Dean got up and leaned over the open hood of the car. He didn’t know what else to say. How could he admit to his little brother that touching him made him feel better than any kind of intimacy ever had? How could he admit to Sam that there were feelings inside him, feelings that burned and grew faster, and feelings Dean could hardly control? He couldn’t admit those feelings to himself, let alone to Sam.

Dean focused on the broken engine and hoped Sam would do the same.

“Oh, you’re kidding me. I’ll pass. If you’re gonna start doing that I’ll go upstairs and take my homework. God knows how long Doctor Michael will stay, so I might as well start doing it outside, here with you.”

“Oh, Go get it,” Dean watched as Sam got up and walked towards the house.

~ * ~

As Sam stepped quietly into the living room, he didn’t mean to overhear his dad’s conversation, but as the two men talked a few feet away, hidden from Sam’s sight in Bobby’s office, their words caught Sam’s attention and caused his breath to catch.

“Did the man say that?”

“He did. He said he raped my son on more than one occasion.”

Sam stood very still where he was, in a place where he couldn’t be seen. His heart raced and he listened, even though all he wanted was to run away.

“Dammit, John…” Michael ran a hand through his hair and adjusted his glasses. “I mean, you know I suspected it, but…”

“I didn’t let you do the test, Mike.” John said what was troubling him. “You wanted to do a rape kit. I didn’t let you.”

The doctor looked intently at the man sitting across from him. He could feel his pain, and he knew an ‘I told you so’ was not the best thing to say now.

“You tried to protect him, John. I can’t blame you for being in denial about the possibility. I mean, I understand how difficult it must be for a father to deal with that.”

“I should’ve let you do it, Mike. If we had gotten some DNA I might have caught him sooner.”

“Well, you caught him now. That’s what matters, isn’t it?”

John took a deep breath and nodded lightly.

“I’m glad you know about it, though. This way you can help Sam deal with it. I’m sure he’s been suffering a lot.”

“Oh, Sam never confirmed it.”
“What do you mean?”

“I mean, I know he was violated because the man said so, and when I questioned my older son he stuttered all over, like he knew it too. But Sam has never talked about it, not to me anyway. And I doubt he’s talked to Dean, no matter how close they are.”

“Well, he needs to talk about it. This is too much for a boy to carry on his shoulders, especially with all the torture he suffered. Do you think he’s been talking to his therapist about the abuse?”

John shrugged.

“I think therapy is helping him. I can see that he’s doing better. But honestly, I don’t think he told that woman anything. It’s like no one can get him to talk about the abuse. Sam has talked about the torture, he’s already listed what happened to him, but when I tried to confront him and ask him whether or not the man had spoken the truth, Sam shut down and snapped.”

Sam shuddered. He closed his eyes and thought of Harry and those piercing blue eyes. Harry had told his father about the dark? He had…he had said that more than once he…and the rape kit, the rape kit in the hospital, and the doctor’s smooth voice trying to convince him to do it…

Sam felt himself on the verge of a panic attack. He could not control the symptoms. His hands started to sweat and the shaking took his legs and arms. He was breathing raggedly and his pupils dilated.

“Unless Sam can talk about it, the torture and everything else, it will always be difficult for him to move on, John.”

“I know, but how can I make him talk? If it weren’t for the man telling me what he did to Sam I might never know—”

Their conversation was cut short when they heard the noise of someone stumbling upstairs hurriedly. They got up and walked into the living room, and John still had time to see Sam entering his bedroom quickly and slamming the door shut.

The doctor and John exchanged a tired, worried look and John sighed.

“You see? Sometimes I think he’s doing better, and then something happens…I don’t know how to help him.”

“Do you think he heard us talk?”

“I’m sure he did.”

“Can I try to talk to him?”

“Be my guest.”

“John? I know you want Sam to get better, but you need to be patient. And perhaps you need to start dealing with the fact that Sam may never go back to being the boy he was before. You can’t expect him to after all he’s seen and suffered.”

Michael’s words rendered him speechless. Deep inside John was always clinging to the hope that one day Sam would be healed, he would be exactly who he was before all that. But what if the
doctor’s words were true? What if Sam could never be completely okay after everything?

He watched as Michael went upstairs. For a moment John shut his eyes and thought strongly of his wife.

'Mary? If you can hear me, please dear... Our son needs so much help. I know you’re in Heaven, baby. I don’t know how to help him, Mary... I confess we could really use a miracle,’ John prayed silently.

~ * ~

Doctor Michael knocked three times on the door before opening it and walking in.

Sam was sitting on the bed, a frown on his young forehead and a clear warning in his eyes.

“Please go away. I don’t want to talk,” he said when Doctor Michael went closer to his bed.

“Sam? I’m sorry you heard our conversation. But you see, your father is very worried about you.”

“I asked you to go. Please.” Sam looked away. His heart was beating fast. He wished he was still outside with Dean and had never heard the doctor and his father talking.

The doctor studied the obvious pain twisting Sam’s features.

“I know you think it’s really hard to talk about the past, but you are stronger than it, Sam. You need to understand that if you let someone in, if you can share all these awful memories with someone, then you don’t need to feel so alone.”

Sam’s breath quickened and he stared intently at the doctor. Michael didn’t honestly know whether Sam would start crying or attack him. He looked dangerous, but he also looked dangerously close to breaking down. “What are you so afraid of? No one will love you any less— “

“I don’t want to talk about the past; I don’t need to talk about the past. It’s my life and I don’t want to!”

Sam shut his eyes and ears and started shaking, focusing hard on the damaged wall he still tried to fix in his mind. He pulled his knees up to his chest and rocked himself back and forth. The doctor recognized the signs of PTSD coming to the surface, and knew he’d better not insist.

“Okay, Sam...I just wanted to give you this.” The doctor reached into his pocket and pulled a prescription bottle from it.

Sam opened his eyes and looked at it.

“What are those?” He asked.

“Sleeping pills. This is the last bottle I’m prescribing you, Sam,” he said as the boy took the pills quickly.

The doctor watched when Sam closed his fingers tightly around the prescription bottle and looked at him warily.
“There’s only so much time those pills will buy you before you need to face your nightmares in the eye and deal with them.”

Sam said nothing.

“Take care, Sam.” The doctor smiled sadly before he turned around to leave.

In Sam’s mind, there was a boy banging desperately on the walls of a bright room, trying to come out, trying to ask for help.

“I can’t go back,” Sam whispered to this boy as he slammed his tightly closed fists against his prison. ‘Please!’ The boy screamed at him. ‘Let me out! Let me out!!’ “I can’t…can’t handle all that again…” ‘Please!!...’ The boy cried, but Sam ignored him. He turned off the light in his mind and thickened the brick wall that prevented him from looking at the desperate boy who screamed when darkness came.

“I’m sorry…” Sam whispered to that version of himself, still trapped in the dark, still unable to break free.

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tbc...
It wasn’t long before Sam and Dean were alone again. In a few days John and Bobby took off with lots of hunting gear after the usual instructions on how the brothers were supposed to look after one another.

Sam hadn’t said anything about Doctor Michael’s visit, but after the doctor left Dean had found his brother withdrawn for the next few days. Sam didn’t tell him what was wrong, but at night, when they shared a bed, Dean felt the distance Sam was putting between them, and he watched as Sam’s sleep became troubled and his brother woke up with bags under his eyes.

Whatever Sam didn’t want to tell him, it had a way of taking its toll on his sleep.

Deciding Sam could use a break, Dean told him to get ready because they were going out for the day.

It was a sunny Saturday morning, with a chilly wind blowing against their skin as they boys stepped outside after breakfast.

“Where are we going?” Sam asked.

“Just get in the car. You’ll see.” Dean smiled as they entered the vehicle. Bobby had left him the keys to one, in case there was an emergency.

Well, Dean thought, making Sam relax a little bit and have fun was an emergency.

He drove for about one hour before he parked near a park and they got out of the car.

“Where are we?” Sam asked, looking around.

“I have no idea. But it looks like a nice park, why don’t we check it out?”

Sam frowned. Dean was acting weird. What was the point of going to a park?

“I mean, how do you feel about being around people? Is it okay?”

“Yeah, it’s okay,” Sam said.
He followed Dean into the park, his feet stepping on green grass as they walked in further. It wasn’t long before Sam’s eyes lit up and he walked closer towards a group of people and their dogs.

Dean watched from a distance as Sam’s face opened into a smile when a couple of puppies ran towards him and started jumping around his legs.

“Dean, look! It’s like a dog lover’s meeting or something. I’ve never seen so many puppies together,” Sam laughed and got on his knees to play with them as their proud owners watched from a distance.

Dean knew what he was doing. He had read in the paper about that encounter in the park where people would be taking their puppies. He knew Sam liked dogs, and he thought it might be a good idea to get him out of Bobby’s house and into the world a little.

“Yeah, I know you like these little flea balls, so when I heard about this meeting here today I just thought I’d bring you,” he confessed, watching as Sam smiled from ear to ear while the puppies chewed on his fingers and wiggled their tails.

“Thanks.” Sam looked at Dean. “I wish we could have one,” he spoke softly.

“Yeah, because taking care of a ball of fur that poops and pees and eats all day is exactly what we need in our lives.” Dean made a face and Sam laughed at him. He knew Dean wasn’t very warm to dogs, but that was probably because he had never had one, Sam thought.

For the next couple of hours the two of them walked around the park, bought hot dogs and ice cream, and Sam interacted with every puppy that came his way. The younger Winchester felt lighter than he had in days, and he was in a very good mood all morning, until he saw something around midday that made his smile fall.

Sam had been playing fetch with a dog when he turned around to look for Dean and found him talking to a pretty girl. Sam stopped playing with the dog because he couldn’t really take his eyes off the scene. The girl was absolutely beautiful, and the way she and Dean talked, Sam knew his brother was attracted to her.

Despite anything that was rational and probably right, Sam felt himself burn with jealousy that caused a feeling of heat to wrap around his heart and squeeze it until it hurt. Sam looked away and took a deep breath, his heart beating fast.

Of course Dean was flirting with a hot girl. That was what Dean did when he had the opportunity. Sam couldn’t have possibly thought that something would change just because they had been touching, right? In fact, Dean hadn’t even let Sam touch him…he obviously didn’t feel what Sam did.

And what did he feel?

Sam’s heart expanded inside of him and it felt like fire sparks started running in his blood. Even though Sam didn’t want to, he hated the girl and the way Dean looked at her. It caused him pain he could not understand or control it until Sam realized why it was there.

‘I’m in love with my brother,’ Sam understood, and the moment he did so he felt deeply vulnerable and stupid. He shook his head fast and tried to push that outrageous thought away from his mind.
Shutting down feelings had become something Sam was quite good at.

“Hey, Sam?” Dean came in his direction, smiling, after he dismissed the girl.

“So, hot girl, uh?” Sam said, trying to ignore the burning ache in his heart and keep a cool tone of voice.

“Yeah, she is.”

“Are you going out with her?”

“What?” Dean laughed. “No, what makes you think that? She just asked me if any of these puppies were mine.”

“Well, she’s obviously interested. And not in the puppies,” Sam grinned, but the sound was hollow and weird.

“Hey,” Dean frowned, sensing something was wrong with his brother. “What’s up?”

“Nothing. It’s okay, really. If you want to go out with her, you know I don’t mind, right? I mean, it’s not like anything’s changed,” Sam lowered his voice and spoke fast. Perhaps a little too fast, letting his tension slip through his smile. “The things we’ve done, you and I, I mean…it’s not like it matters.” Sam forced a little chuckle and turned around, looking at the dogs in the distance.

Dean frowned and tried to understand what Sam was getting at. Did he really mean that? That the things they had done in secret meant nothing? That hurt to hear, but Dean didn’t blame him. Sam had been through hell. Needing to feel something good was a desperate demand from his body, and perhaps Dean just happened to be the person who could give him that, and nothing else.

“Sam?” Dean touched his shoulder and Sam looked at him.

In his brother’s eyes there were so many layers of feelings that Dean’s heart seemed to be in a roller coaster inside his chest.

“It’s okay, Dean. You don’t have to say anything. Go after her. I don’t mind.”

Sam smiled, but that smile was not in his eyes. Dean had looked into those hazel eyes way too many times to know that there was something amiss there.

“Sam, let’s go home. We need to talk, alright?”

Sam stared at Dean and didn’t say anything. What did he mean? Was he angry? He seemed serious. Why was he serious? Sam supposed he should be chuckling and going after the girl now.

Sam nodded and followed Dean back to the car, feeling alternating jolts of tension and fear that fed on his insecurity.

They made it back to Bobby’s house and Sam went straight upstairs and into the bathroom. He relieved himself, but he also bought some time as he stared into the mirror. What did Dean want to talk about? Had he noticed his jealousy? Was he angry?

When Sam walked out of the bathroom, his eyes stared at the floor and were unwilling to face his
“Sam, we need to talk.”

“Yeah, you said that. What is it?”

“You told me in the park that what we’re doing doesn’t matter. Do you mean that?”

“Yeah, totally. I’m cool with it,” Sam tried to make light of it, as if his heart wasn’t beating too fast.

“Sam, the thing is, it does matter. You’re my brother…” Dean ran a hand through his short hair. “I mean, what do you think we’re doing? What does it mean to you? I want to understand.”

Sam didn’t know what Dean wanted to hear. His eyes fixed on Dean and Sam thought fast.

“It’s fun, Dean. We have fun, you help me with stuff…nothing else.”

“Sam, this needs to stop. I can’t keep ‘helping you’ with stuff… You know that’s not supposed to happen.” Dean thought of the feelings he had been growing aware of. Ending things with Sam might be a matter of self-preservation.

“Why? We’ve talked about this before. No one needs to know, Dean. We do that sometimes and it stays between us. It doesn’t have to change anything. You can still go and sleep with as many girls as you wish,” Sam said, and it sounded bitter, even to himself.

“Yeah, but you see, that’s the problem, Sam. I don’t want to be with some girl. I don’t think that what has happened with you is just casual fun. It matters to me, and it was weird hearing you say those things in the park.”

Sam frowned and studied his brother. Dean looked distressed and nervous.

“You don’t want to be with that girl? Why? Is she not pretty enough?”

“It’s got nothing to do with that. I just don’t feel like being with girls and being with you…it’s… weird.” Dean tried to explain what was very simple—he didn’t want to be with any girl at the moment. He wanted to touch Sam again, and then touch himself to memories of his face and the sounds he made when he climaxed.

“‘Weird how?’” Sam insisted.

“Look, maybe we should just stop doing this, you know. There are things you don’t need to know. Trust me, it’s better like this. I’ll still be here to help you, you know that. Nothing is going to change this, Sammy. But let’s just move on about that other part, right?”

“Why? What things I don’t need to know? What aren’t you telling me?”

‘That I crossed the last fucking line and fell in love with my brother,’ Dean thought, desperately.

“Look, Sam…don’t do this man. Just let it go, alright? We’ll get past it—“

“No,” Sam cut him off. “Tell me what you mean. I want to know why you want to end this. Tell me the truth.”
“Because, Sam!” Dean breathed faster, and his mouth felt dry. “Because there are things I can no
longer control, things you don’t need to deal with, so it’s better if we just pretend none of this ever
happened.”

Sam studied his brother. Could Dean possibly mean that? Could he be trying to say that maybe he
felt…the same?

Sam’s heart rate picked up speed.

“Tell me Dean,” Sam stepped towards his brother until they were very close. “What is it that you
can’t control? Tell me?”

Dean shut his eyes and struggled for a moment. Sam didn’t need to know that, it was not his problem
that Dean had let himself go this far. It was up to him to deal with his feelings without disturbing his
brother.

“Sam, no— “

“Please…” Sam’s fingers closed lightly around Dean’s wrist, the touch surprisingly warm.

Dean looked at Sam’s hand around his wrist and felt his heart thudding in his chest.

“I…” Dean looked into those young eyes urging him on. “I’m in love with you, Sammy. I’m sorry.”

When Dean realized what he had just said, he felt, for a split second, a deep and cold fear spread
inside his chest.

“I love you too,” Sam smiled, relieved, and his whole body tingled.

“What?”

“I feel the same, Dean. But I never thought you would…you know, I didn’t think…” Sam stuttered
and didn’t finish the sentence.

“You can’t be serious…” Dean whispered. “You’re confused, you’re—”

Sam pulled Dean’s plaid shirt and made Dean lean over until their mouths could meet. When their
lips touched, Dean’s protests and explanations were silenced, and they spoke a different language
that soon took over their rational thoughts.

Dean let his fingers run through soft locks of brown hair and felt as if his heart would burst in his
chest. They kissed roughly and desperately, and when they pulled back for air, their lips were raw
and their breaths puffed against each other’s faces hotly.

“What are we doing?” Dean whispered against his lips. “I don’t want to confuse you…”

“Shhh,” Sam whispered back and framed Dean’s face between his hands. They kissed again, and
this time Sam let his tongue explore boldly and urgently. He licked into Dean’s mouth obscenely
until they were both aroused and breathless.

Sam let his hand trail lower and cupped Dean’s hard-on through his pants. He squeezed until Dean
moaned into his mouth.
Sam intoxicated him. His smell, his touch, the familiarity in being with him got to his head and Dean’s thoughts were clouded and heated. They stumbled upon the bed and continued the touching, the exploring, and the hands that groped and kneaded fast and harshly.

Sam rolled on top of his brother and broke their kiss. He squeezed Dean again and fumbled with the button on his jeans.

Instinctively, Dean’s fingers covered Sam’s and made him stop.

“Please, Dean, no more. Let me touch you. I want to touch you,” Sam pleaded. He was horny and eager. He needed to do that, to feel Dean’s skin, to be the one making him come undone. “Let me…” he whispered, toying with the button.

Dean looked into Sam’s eyes and for a moment just listened to the sound of their labored breathing. His cock throbbed beneath the layers of clothing and his heart was still drumming loudly in his chest. Dean didn’t trust his voice, but he nodded.

Sam smiled and relaxed, visibly relieved. He opened the button quickly and Dean helped him get rid of his jeans before he took off his plaid shirt and under shirt.

When Sam looked again he could see Dean’s erection bulging beneath his underwear, and the sight caused goosebumps to break on his skin. Sam’s heart was beating erratically when he let his palm touch the flesh and feel the heat through the fabric.

Dean watched, his green eyes unusually darker, as Sam hooked his fingers on his underwear and pulled them off his body, exposing Dean’s stiff need for his touch.

Dean held his breath as Sam hovered on top of him, studying him intently.

“What?” Dean asked, feeling slightly nervous, his cheeks flushed as Sam stared at his painfully hard cock.

“Nothing,” Sam smiled, and his eyes narrowed teasingly. He let his fingers close around the base of Dean’s dick and stroked.

Dean hissed and threw his head back. Sam’s fingers were warm as they squeezed him tentatively. Dean felt himself pulse against the hand moving slowly up and down on him.

A thick, throaty sound of pleasure escaped Dean’s lips and his eyes rolled in the back of his head as Sam touched him with more confidence.

“Is it good?” Sam asked, transfixed at the sight of Dean’s face taken over by pleasure — pleasure that was caused by him.

“Yeah, Sammy, very good.” Dean thrust lightly into the hand stroking him, and bit on his lip to hold back a moan before it escaped his mouth.

Sam licked his lips and watched as the muscles flexed in Dean’s abdomen every time a shudder of pleasure raked him, causing him to thrust into his hand, and causing Sam’s fingers to grow slick with his arousal.
“Dean, you look so hot.” Sam stroked a while longer before he needed to stop. His own cock was throbbing and painfully tight in his pants, so Sam got rid of his clothes until he was naked. He went back to stroking his brother and cataloguing the raspy sounds of Dean’s clipped breath as they rose and filled the room the more Sam touched him.

“Sam…” Dean closed his eyes and felt himself nearing his orgasm. “Lie down here,” he managed to say. Sam lay beside Dean, but his hand didn’t stop moving. He still stroked up and down and squeezed, letting his hand pick up speed as Dean showed signs of being close.

“Is this the way you like it?” Sam looked into his brother’s eyes, and when he saw the evident pleasure and need building up in those eyes, Sam felt powerful.

“Yeah. Let me help you,” Dean closed his larger hand on top of Sam’s and guided his movements.

Sam watched, his blood pumping with desire, as both of their hands worked on Dean’s cock, stroking harder and faster and bringing Dean closer to an orgasm. Sam loved the way Dean’s fingers squeezed around his own and urged Sam to move faster.

“Sam, I’m gonna—” Dean felt his orgasm hitting. He let go of Sam’s hand and tensed.

Sam stroked him faster, drinking in the sight of Dean when he moaned and arched into his touch. Dean went still for a moment and his breath escaped his lips hurriedly as he came, his pleasure hot and sticky against Sam’s fingers.

Sam could not explain what he felt. It was like he glowed inside. He had just made Dean come, and damn, it felt good.

“Dean…” Sam whispered, his own need evident in his face, his joy clear in his eyes.

“My turn.” Dean moved swiftly, and before Sam knew it, he was on his back as his brother covered his body with his own. The feeling of their naked bodies pressed up together was more than Sam could have expected, and he moaned with surprise and need when Dean pressed into him.

Dean let his lips lock on Sam’s neck and he sucked until Sam was squirming under him, his hard cock throbbing against Dean’s lower belly.

“Hmm,” Sam moaned and arched into Dean when he licked a trail from the curve of his neck to his ear. “Dean!” There were goosebumps all over Sam’s skin, and when Dean felt them he chuckled hotly.

“What do you want, Sammy? Want to come for me?” Dean whispered into his ear and let his hand find Sam and squeeze.

“Mmm!” Sam moaned and panted. “Yes!” He licked his dry lips and closed his eyes. “Yes, Dean.”

Dean unleashed his need to touch and taste. He planted kisses all over Sam’s soft skin, he licked and sucked on each of his nipples until Sam writhed beneath him and Dean felt how turned on his brother was by the wetness gathering against his abdomen.

Suddenly, Dean wanted more than just to touch Sam. He wanted to know what his pleasure would taste like in his mouth.
Dean let his kisses trail lower and then pulled back a moment to stare at Sam’s hardness.

“Dean?” Sam questioned when he opened his eyes and saw the way Dean was staring at him. For a moment Sam wondered if Dean was going to do what it looked like he was, and Sam’s heart raced even faster.

Dean lowered his mouth and licked around the tip of him. He had to hold on to Sam’s hips, because they nearly flew off the bed.

“Fuck!!” Sam cried, surprised. He barely had time to register the pleasure he had just felt, because the next moment Dean had wrapped his lips around his dick and started to suck.

Sam clawed at the sheets beneath his body and fought the hands holding his hips down. The pleasure was so good and so intense that he couldn’t stop his hips from trying to arch into it.

Dean swirled his tongue and let Sam’s pleasure mingle with his saliva. Tasting had always been something he enjoyed very much in sex. It aroused him knowing he could bring so much pleasure with his mouth and tongue, and it wasn’t any different with Sam. As his brother squirmed and arched into his mouth and helpless sounds of pleasure escaped his lips, Dean closed his eyes and went down on him, sucking him deeper, bobbing his head up and down.

“Ohh!” Sam started to grow restless. He had never felt anything like that, and his body would surrender to the feeling at any moment now. It was too good, he couldn’t hold on to his self-control, even though a part of him wanted it to never end.

Dean used one of his hands to stroke the base of Sam’s cock as he sucked on the tip of him, and he started to do both things faster until Sam’s body grew hotter and harder and Sam moaned wantonly.

The sounds drove Dean wild. They urged him to lick more and wrap his lips more firmly around Sam. His hands moved to the rhythm his mouth set, and soon Sam was losing control.

“Dean! Dean, I’m going to…I’m close!” Sam warned, breathlessly.

Dean wasn’t exactly ready to find out how that would taste on his tongue, so he pulled his mouth away and wrapped his fingers more fully around Sam’s cock, stroking him swiftly.

“Hmmm!” Sam’s rising moan meant the end for him. He arched into the fist working on him and groaned, and when Sam started coming his throat felt tight and he felt lightheaded.

Dean stroked him until Sam grew sensitive and put his hand on top of his, silently asking him to stop.

When Dean moved on bed to lie beside his brother, Sam was still shuddering and his skin seemed to glow. He opened his eyes lazily and smiled when he saw Dean looking so closely at him.

“That was…ah!” Sam laughed, tired and content.

“I love to make you feel this way, you know that?” Dean confessed, feeling his heart swell at the feeling growing in him.

“Make me feel this way always, then.” Sam said and snuggled closer.

Dean wrapped his arms around him and they stayed in bed for a while, their naked bodies creating
all the warmth they needed in that chilly afternoon.

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tbc...
Chapter 50

The two brothers were still lying in bed, tangled and lazy, as the sun set unhurriedly in the horizon.

Slowly, the last rays of sunlight started to fade, and shadows started to dance on their naked skin when a faint moon became visible in the sky.

“It’s getting dark,” Sam pointed out.

“It is,” Dean agreed, but didn’t make as if he would move. He just stayed where he was, staring at his brother as if he had never seen him before.

“I’m getting hungry,” Sam said. He looked into Dean’s eyes and he loved the way he was being looked at. Whatever Dean felt for him, it must truly be love, because it was thick, and it was warm, and Sam was addicted to how it felt.

“You probably are. We’ll get up, take a shower and make dinner, how’s that?”

“Good.” Sam made as if he would move, but Dean held his arm. “What?” Sam looked at him and frowned.

“I’m getting hungry,” Sam said. He looked into Dean’s eyes and he loved the way he was being looked at. Whatever Dean felt for him, it must truly be love, because it was thick, and it was warm, and Sam was addicted to how it felt.

“You probably are. We’ll get up, take a shower and make dinner, how’s that?”

“Good.” Sam made as if he would move, but Dean held his arm. “What?” Sam looked at him and frowned.

“Before we go, you’ve been distant for the past few days. You looked weird when Doctor Michael left. What happened?”

Suddenly, Dean’s eyes were not only loving, they were also searching, and the fears Sam locked away inside of him stirred, making him shift uncomfortably in bed.

Sam looked from the sheets around their bodies to Dean’s face, partially hidden in shadows and moonlight.

“Sam, we’ve shared something pretty intense. You know you can trust me,” Dean encouraged him. “I know there are things you are not ready to share with me, but the less secrets the better, right? If something upsets you, I want to know.”

Sam waited a moment, and in his silent face Dean could see a battle happening within his thoughts. At last, Sam sighed and looked at his own hands.
“I went back inside the day the doctor was here. I was going to get my homework.”

“I remember that.”

“When I walked into the living room, I overheard Dad and the doctor’s conversation. They were talking about me.”

Dean could tell it was hard for Sam to go on. It seemed as if it was physically difficult for him to get the words out.

“What did you hear, Sam?”

Sam swallowed hard at the memories that came back.

“Dad said the man spoke to you in the basement. About me.”

Dean nodded slowly. He lifted himself a little on the bed as Sam sat, his legs crossed.

“I just hadn’t really thought of that before. I mean, I did wonder about it, but I just…I didn’t know how much the man might have spoken about…about the dark and what happened.”

“He was being tortured. He spoke,” Dean said. “But what did you hear that made you feel so bad?”

Sam’s breath quickened and he stared into Dean’s eyes. ‘The rape kit,’ he thought, and his heart raced. ‘They were going to run a rape kit on me.’

“Hey, take it easy,” Dean realized Sam’s breath was quickly hitching to something audible and labored.

Sam shook his head and his fingers tightened around the sheets. His throat felt tight and the darkness around him began to disturb him.

“Let’s turn on the lights and go downstairs?”

“Sam.” Dean put a hand on his brother’s naked knee. “What did you hear?”

Sam could not keep the distress on a tight leash. His heartbeats picked up speed and he knew that if he lifted his hands they would be shaky.

“The doctor wanted to run a rape kit on me when I was at the hospital,” Sam blurted, and his breathing was clearly messy and difficult, and his eyes were wide and worried.

“I guess that’s standard procedure…”

“I didn’t let him,” Sam said, his chest heaving up and down, his fingers twisting the sheets as his palms grew cold and sweaty. “Doctor Michael asked Dad then, but he didn’t let him do the test. I overheard Dad saying he should have let the doctor do it because of what the man said.”

Dean understood Sam’s distress now. He wished Sam wouldn’t feel so visibly upset about it.

“Sam, Dad was very shaken by what we heard in that basement…”
“I don’t care!” Sam snapped and got up, looking for his clothes and putting them on quickly.

Dean watched, worried, as Sam fumbled with his clothes as his shaky hands tried to put them back on.

“It’s my body, Dean! My body and I wouldn’t, wouldn’t—” His breath failed him and Sam choked. The idea of his father telling the doctor to examine him against his will, the humiliation in that, it was too much, and for a moment Sam couldn’t breathe.

“Hey, calm down.” Dean got up, naked, and reached out for him. “Take a deep breath,” he instructed.

Sam was panting. His face suddenly twisted into a pained expression. He didn’t want to remember that, didn’t want to talk about that, didn’t want to answer any questions. It hurt!

“No.” Sam pushed Dean’s hands away and covered his face with his hands. Dean couldn’t possibly know what it felt like being surrounded by utter darkness, feeling the most terrible pain, being burned, cut, broken… Dean didn’t know what it felt like to be ravaged and subjected to the most shameful humiliation.

“Sam, it’s okay… Do you want to tell me why it bothers you so much?” Dean tried. He hated to see Sam in such deep pain and feel unable to share this burden.

Sam bit down hard on his bottom lip because he was afraid it might start trembling pitifully if he let go. Everything inside of him was out of his control, his feeling of helplessness being intensified by the shudders raking him, head to toe.

He could see the boy in his memories slamming his fists against the walls, he could hear his painful cries for it to stop, for mercy…and Sam could also hear the wailing when the man found him, when his young body could no longer handle the physical pain and the mental abuse. Dean wouldn’t see this boy, he wouldn’t love this boy…he was not a hunter, not strong; he was just a frightened little boy who cried and begged for it to stop.

“No, Dean, no,” Sam shook his head. “Please, you said we don’t need to talk about the past; I don’t want to talk about the past.”

“What are you afraid of? You know I’ll understand,” Dean insisted and held Sam’s hand in his own, squeezing it.

Sam frowned and shook his head, breathing raggedly.

There was that one door in his mind that Sam wasn’t strong enough to open. If he was forced to look inside the darkest of the rooms in his mind, then Sam was afraid he would be trapped in there again, unable to leave. If he allowed himself to remember what he tried so hard to push off his mind as the scent of citrus invaded his nostrils and the man’s sweat covered his skin, then Sam knew he would shatter. Behind that door there was only insanity.

“Sam?”

Fear.
So much fear it darkened the corners of his eyes.

Sam slammed that door shut and ran away, blinking several times until his breath slowly came back to normal.

“No.”

“What?” Dean frowned.

“That door is still closed, Dean.”

“Why?” Dean tried again, already knowing Sam had shut down.

“Because it’s still too dark in there.”

Sam turned around and made as if he would reach for the light switch. Before he could, though, Dean put a hand on his shoulder, turned him around so they were face to face, and brought his mouth down against Sam’s, kissing him passionately.

Sam’s heart slammed against his chest and all the darkness was slowly chased away from his mind. When he parted his lips and let Dean’s tongue into his mouth, the shadows started to melt and light started to shine, making his limbs relax and the shuddering stop.

“I’m sorry,” Dean whispered against Sam’s wet lips. “You know I just want to help.”

“I know. But I can’t go back there. Not yet.”

Dean nodded. He let his fingers run through brown locks of hair and kissed Sam again, softly this time.

“Let’s shower and eat?”

Sam nodded, relieved.

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They cleaned up before Dean made them dinner in Bobby’s kitchen. The boys ate while watching TV, and when they turned it off and went upstairs to find sleep it was well into the night.

Dean made sure all the doors were locked and everything looked safe, then he turned on the light in the bathroom in their room, and turned off the lights everywhere else.

Sam was waiting for him in bed, and when they were both under the sheets it was inevitable that their bodies were drawn to one another, to the secret, the intimacy, the warmth of touching and learning.

Without saying a word, their mouths connected and their hands searched. They removed every item of clothing until they could press against each other as they had done earlier today.

They sighed in unison at the feeling of their hot skin touching.
Dean relaxed and let Sam set the pace. He didn’t even try to resist, because what he felt for his brother was too strong, and he was simply unable to fight against it. Sam filled every space in his mind and heart, and there was not enough rationale in this world to make him give up on that feeling.

“Touch me,” Sam whispered against Dean’s lips. He was hard and needy, and he rubbed his arousal against Dean’s hipbone in a slow and steady rhythm.

Dean’s breath got shallow with desire. He let his fingers find Sam’s cock and stroked, drinking the small sound of pleasure that rolled out Sam’s lips and into his ear.

For a moment Sam just felt the touch. Dean’s fingers were rough and calloused, they felt big around his dick, and yet, his touch was soft and warm, slow but firm.

“Hmm…” He moaned softly, thrusting into his brother’s hand.

Dean watched him for a moment, and then he felt Sam’s hand trail down his chest until his fingers closed around his erection. Dean closed his eyes and exhaled a long sigh of pleasure.

“Sam…” His voice was throaty and pregnant with need as Sam started to stroke him too.

In the middle of the night, they stroked each other steadily faster, listening to the whispered pleas and the moaned need that slipped through their lips and found echo in each other’s pleasure.

“Oh…” Sam started to shudder, but he didn’t stop moving his wrist. He wanted Dean to come too.

“I’m almost—” Dean confessed, shutting his eyes and enjoying the pleasure building up.

Their hands moved faster, with urgency, until they could no longer fight the need for release. Sam went first, covering his brother’s hand with his seed. He shook and moaned, tensing and then relaxing, ignoring Dean’s aching need for a moment because he seemed to be floating.

As soon as his senses started to come back, he found Dean’s cock and squeezed, and stroked him faster and harder, until Dean’s breathing became a series of gasps and rough panting.

“Oh!” Dean tensed. His lips parted but his climax was silent. He came all over Sam’s hand and his belly, and then he felt each rippling wave of pleasure making his body tingle.

They took their sweet time to come back from the buildup before they got up, washed up quickly in the bathroom, and returned to bed.

Sam was almost deep asleep after having relaxed so much. He nestled against Dean and breathed his scent in deeply.

Dean stared at the ceiling for a moment, lost in thoughts. There was something bothering him, something he had remembered after their conversation from before, but he was afraid of bringing it up and causing Sam another wave of panic.

After some long minutes of struggling with whether or not he should say anything, Dean decided to try.

“Sam? Are you asleep?”

“You know what you told me before? About overhearing Dad and the Doctor?”

Sam tensed a little.

“Yes,” he said.

“The man spoke to us in the basement.”

“I know.”

“He talked about the torture, but he also talked about the demon.”

Sam was silent, but attentive. His body, so relaxed just a few minutes before, had stiffened considerably.

“Dad asked him about why they took you.”

“Did he say something?” Sam’s heart raced and he was extremely curious.

“He didn’t know what the demon wanted with you,” Dean said. “But he told us that we ruined the demon’s plans, that he would have erased your memories of everything in the end.” Dean remembered that part of their conversation now. On the day it had happened, everything had been so wild that he hadn’t really had time to reflect upon that. There had been John confronting Sam, and then Sam finding the gun and trying to use it on himself…no wonder Dean hadn’t really thought back on that stressful moment.

“He would have made me forget?” Sam frowned.

“That’s what Harry said. He was counting on it, I think. You were right; I guess he came here to make sure you didn’t recognize him, because the demon promised him you wouldn’t remember anything.”

“I don’t get it,” Sam said. “Why would he go to the trouble of doing all those...things to me if he was going to erase my memories in the end?”

“I have no idea,” Dean shrugged. “Dad won’t rest until he gets to the bottom of this. I just, I didn’t tell you sooner because there was so much going on that day…I guess it went to the back of my mind until we brought that up again.”

Sam thought about what he had just been told. So his memories would have been wiped? If his dad hadn’t rescued him, then right now he would probably be a normal fourteen year old boy, who remembered nothing about being spanked in the dark?

“How can you trust a demon? What if he lied?” Sam asked.

“It’s possible. I have no idea why he would do all that and then make you forget about it.”

They were silent for a moment, and Dean could tell Sam was lost in thoughts.
“But Sam, if the demon didn’t lie, if he was really going to erase your memories in the end, then it means that by saving you, we actually made all those memories come home with you.”

“There was no way to know that,” Sam reasoned.

“I hate to think that there could be a chance that you wouldn’t have to carry all those horrible memories and we took it away. I hate that you have to live with all those things you can’t tell me.”

“But Dean…even if he did erase my memories, it would be exactly what he wanted to do, it would be the success of his plan. Whatever he meant to do by taking me, I’m glad he didn’t succeed.”

“You’re right,” Dean agreed quickly.

“And who knows what else he would have done to me until he decided it was enough.” Sam shuddered at the thought. He had flashes of the day the man walked into the room with a metal bar. Sam thought that had been his last visit, but since he had drifted in and out of consciousness at the time, drowning in a world of excruciating pain, he wasn’t sure. There might have been more visits. There might have been more times when that metal bar came crashing down, breaking bones, wounding flesh. Who knows? If they had waited a while longer to rescue him, perhaps the man would have found him again in the dark, on his bed, on the floor, against the wall… Sam didn’t want to think of what could have happened. He didn’t think he could have handled another day in that bright room anymore.

“I don’t think he would have wiped my memories. But if he would, it was probably for a horrible reason. There was no way he did all that planning for nothing.”

“I agree. But still, it hurts me the thought that maybe, despite every horrible thing that happened in there, you could be here now, happy, without remembering a thing.”

“I could be… But it wouldn’t be me, Dean. Without my memories, it would be a different Sam. I was in that room. I went through each and every torture act he inflicted upon me using the man. That changed me. I don’t think I could be back to who I was before without any scars, even if they were not visible.”

Dean nodded. Sam had grown so much out of the pain he had been through. His brother sounded so mature, so wise beyond his years… Dean knew he shouldn’t be surprised by now to know that suffering forces people to grow up faster.

“Besides…” Sam began. “If I could go back in time and never step foot into that bright room, believe me, I would. If there was any possible way that I could go back and make it so that had never happened, I would definitely choose it, Dean, because it was too awful, and no one should ever be forced to experience something like that. But it happened, and it can’t be changed. It was real, and it didn’t only change me…” Sam licked at his lips shyly. “It changed us.”

Dean looked into his brother’s eyes and his heart felt warm.

“So I’ll take this and not look back if I can,” Sam squeezed Dean’s hand to make a point.

In the shadowed room, Dean smiled at him.

“I love you, you know that?” He said.
Sam opened a wide smile and Dean swore his eyes were shining. He felt his brother turn around until his back was against his chest, in that familiar and comfortable position they were used to sleeping in.

Dean wrapped his arms around his brother readily, feeling their naked bodies fit so perfectly against each other.

“I love you too, Dean.”

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tbc...
Chapter 51

During the next couple of weeks, Bobby and John were hardly seen at home. It seemed like monsters were always busy, and hunting was necessary to keep them away.

Little did they know that Sam and Dean didn’t mind their absence so much. In the time they had to themselves in Bobby’s home, their intimacy deepened and their feelings for each other flourished.

Nonetheless, even though they were enjoying each other’s company and finding pleasure that was intoxicating, Dean insisted on setting some boundaries, and despite Sam’s attempts at getting his brother to forget his silly rules, sometimes Dean was too stubborn for his own good.

Alone at home, a little after lunch, they made out passionately on the sofa. With their father and Bobby safely away, they felt bold enough to venture outside the bedroom with their need for each other.

Sam helped Dean out of his last garment of clothing and straddled him on the sofa. Dean’s hands ran up Sam’s thighs as their tongues tangled, and soon they were both panting and achingly hard.

“Hm,” Sam moaned into Dean’s mouth when his brother sneaked a hand between their bodies and started to stroke him. For a moment there was only the sound of Sam’s panting as his pleasure built up.

He closed his eyes and rested his forehead against Dean’s, feeling every inch of Dean’s hand wrapped around his cock.

Dean drank in the sight of him, lost in pleasure, his lips raw from all the kissing; his eyes—whenever Sam opened them—clouded with pleasure.

Sam let his lips find Dean’s neck and sucked, not stopping until Dean hissed and squirmed under him.

Dean heard the muffled sound of Sam’s chuckle against his neck and that turned him on even more. When Sam started to plant butterfly kisses on his chest, stopping to nibble and lick his way down to his navel, Dean stopped stroking him and his head fell back with delight.
Sam stuck his tongue into his belly button and Dean chuckled hotly, his cock pulsing at the provocation.

However, when Sam thought Dean would be too carried away to stop him, he found out he was wrong. When he lowered his head and settled between his brother’s spread thighs, Dean opened his eyes and quickly pushed him away.

“No,” he chided.

“Why not?” Sam almost whimpered. “You’ve done it to me. More than once. I want to taste what you feel like,” he protested.

Dean shook his head. His cock was throbbing, and of course he wanted to feel Sam’s tongue licking at him, but he couldn’t let him. It was his baby brother. It was enough trespassing getting each other off, and he had allowed Sam to get him off too, but he wouldn’t have his brother blowing him as well. Sam might think he wanted that, but he didn’t know, he was too young. Besides, Dean knew Sam probably wanted to please him, so he had to make him understand that he didn’t need to go so far.

“No, Sam…not this.”

For a moment Sam was so annoyed that he completely forgot his erection.

“C’mon, Dean. I’m not a child,” he insisted.

“I don’t think you are. Look at what we’re doing.” Dean smiled, trying to distract Sam from his evident discontentment.

“Please…” Sam looked at him teasingly and nibbled on the skin of Dean’s inner thigh, going closer to the hard column of flesh between his legs.

Before he could get any closer with his mouth, though, Dean covered himself with his hand and placed a finger on top of Sam’s lips.

“No is no,” he said gently, but firmly.

Sam narrowed his eyes with stubbornness and annoyance, the way he usually did when he was pissed at his dad or at Dean’s teasing. For a moment, Dean couldn’t help himself and he had to laugh, because he loved that look—it was cute.

“What’s so funny about you telling me I can’t put my mouth on you?” Sam frowned.

Dean grinned at the look in his brother’s eyes.

“Well, maybe I won’t let you do it to me anymore then,” Sam bit back, his hazel eyes teasing and willful.

“Oh really?” Dean narrowed his green eyes and studied Sam, and his voice dropped to something low and promising that caused chills in his brother.

“Yes,” he said vehemently.
“Well, we’ll see about that.”

“Dean, no!” Sam was surprised when Dean got up and grabbed around his waist, lifting him up from his kneeling position and practically slamming him down on the sofa. “Get off of me!” Sam protested, half-heartedly, when Dean started to kiss his neck and chest, settling between Sam’s thighs and thrusting against him until their matching arousals came into full contact.

“What?” Dean arched a cocky eyebrow and went back to planting kisses all over Sam’s chest, before he took a moment to suck on each of his nipples.

“Hmmgrhhs!” Sam tugged at Dean’s hair and arched off the sofa in pleasure.

“What was that? What did you say?” Dean chuckled, his voice sultry and lustful.

“Hmm!” Sam moaned when Dean went down swiftly and engulfed him in his mouth, sucking him down from base to tip, and swirling his tongue around the dripping head of his cock.

“Have you forgotten how to use your words?” Dean teased, holding Sam’s hips down as he licked the length of him.

Sam was writhing, his cheeks flushed and his breathing hard.

“Shut up!” He chuckled, but the sound ended in a string of moaning when Dean went down on him again.

Dean sucked him in deeply, bobbing his head up and down, and if that wasn’t the best activity in the world, the responses he got from Sam were. The soft moans, the shaky limbs, the thrusting hips Dean had to hold down not to gag.

“Dean! Fuck…” Sam bit down on his bottom lip and his eyes rolled back in his head. He nearly tugged Dean’s hair off his head when his pleasure became too intense and wild to be tamed.

Dean could feel Sam was close. He felt it in the taste pooling on his tongue, and the tremors that started on his thighs. Sam’s panting became loud and clipped, and his lips parted in a desperate and silent cry of pleasure.

“Dean!” He tried to warn him, but Dean didn’t stop.

Maybe he wasn’t fast enough, but maybe there was a part of him that wanted to taste it. Dean kept sucking him when Sam came, thrashing on the sofa, throbbing into his mouth.

The taste surprised him, and Dean swallowed it quickly, before he had time to regret his decision. It wasn’t as bad as he would have expected it to be, and when he looked up at the expression in Sam’s face he decided it was worth it.

“What?” Dean smiled and wiped his lips seductively.

“You swallowed it.” Sam widened his eyes.

Dean laughed at his shock.
“I did.”

“I’m sorry, I tried to warn you—”

“I wanted to.”

Sam frowned and studied his brother for a moment.

“So what did it taste like?” He finally asked.

“Not like candy, I can assure you, but not bad either.”

Then, a realization started to sink in and Sam grew restless under his brother’s body.

“What?” Dean asked when Sam looked bothered.

“You won’t let me lick you, but you swallowed down my come? That’s not fair.”

Sam’s eyes were accusing and he looked angry.

“Hey, it’s not like I planned it. It just happened,” Dean explained.

Sam didn’t seem pleased with the answer. His forehead was still creased as he stared intently at his brother.

“Do you want to know what you tasted like?” Dean asked, trying to ease Sam’s mood. “Want me to kiss you?”

Sam swallowed hard, his heart raced and he nodded. He parted his lips and welcomed Dean’s tongue when it searched into his mouth. The taste was faint, but it was still there, and he shared it with Dean to the last trace.

“We need to go,” Dean said when they broke off the kiss. “You’re gonna be late for therapy.”

“I’m not going anywhere until you come, too,” Sam said, stubbornly.

“We’re gonna be late,” Dean insisted.

Sam shrugged like he didn’t care.

“Fine, but I’ll do it, so it’s faster.”

Still atop his brother, Dean closed his fist around his erection and stroked.

“Do you want to watch me?” Dean’s eyes darkened as he began a steady rhythm.

Sam nodded, and all his annoyance was forgotten because Dean looked so hot when his pleasure started to take him, and Sam loved it when he talked dirty—something which he was learning Dean was quite unstoppable at.

Dean let his forehead rest against Sam’s and let his wrist pick up speed.
“Do you want me to come all over you?” Dean whispered hotly, and his eyes were clouded with lust. There was only so much he could hold back when his arousal was so fierce. Sam unleashed a raw need in him, and although Dean tried his best to be in control of it, sometimes this urge inspired by Sam was just too strong.

“Yeah, Dean. Come all over me.” Sam smiled a naughty smile, a searching smile that looked into the core of Dean’s need for him.

“Hmm,” Dean moaned, and the room was filled with the sound of his hand stroking himself faster.

Sam hardly blinked. He didn’t want to miss a single detail of Dean’s face as he started to lose control.

“Kiss me,” Dean asked, and then Sam complied and shut his eyes, because kissing Dean was as good as watching him.

They kissed hotly, wetly, open-mouthed, and soon Dean couldn’t hold back any longer. He moaned into Sam’s mouth and his biceps flexed a few more times before he went still, pulsing and coming, being raked by a shuddering orgasm until he let himself rest on top of Sam, messy and pleased.

They stayed like that for a few minutes, just enjoying the feeling of each other’s skin, before Dean came back to reality and checked his watch.

“We need to clean up and go.”

“We don’t have time for that. I’ll just wipe it and we wash up when we come back.”

“You’re not going to therapy with my come drying on you.”

“Well, if you had let me do what I wanted, then you wouldn’t have made a mess, just like I didn’t.”

“Shut up,” Dean smacked him in the head and Sam laughed, getting up and heading upstairs for a quick wash up.

~ * ~

“How are you today, Sam?” Doctor Reece greeted him with a smile as Sam sat down in front of her.

“I’m good,” he said, and he felt good. His body was still tingling with the memory of coming in Dean’s mouth, his eyes were bright and he knew he could hardly keep himself from smiling. He finally understood what people meant when they used the term ‘love fool’. Sam felt foolish, and it was delicious. He could hardly wait to go back home and be with Dean again.

“You look good,” she pointed out. Dakota studied Sam slowly and approvingly. He looked light and carefree. She didn’t know what had happened to him, but there was something positively happy about the boy she had known for a few weeks now. There had been a definite improvement in Sam’s mood over the past sessions, but today he looked particularly well.

Sam smiled at her and looked around, slightly impatiently.
“You know, I’ve been feeling good for a while now. Maybe I don’t need therapy anymore,” Sam tried and watched for her reaction.

Doctor Reece pondered Sam’s words carefully. He seemed confident today, he looked strong. Maybe he could handle it if she tried to talk to him about his trauma. It had been awhile since she had last pushed him to talk about it, so Dakota decided to try a more aggressive, provocative technique to test Sam’s apparent high and see whether or not his shield could be broken.

“Why do you think so, Sam?” She asked calmly.

Sam shrugged. “I feel good, as I said. You noticed it too. Besides, it’s not like I’m talking about anything other than casual stuff with you.”

“That’s all true. What about your nightmares? How are they?”

It took Sam perhaps a bit too long to reply. The brief hesitation told Dakota just how much he was still hiding inside.

“They’re better. I still get them sometimes, but it’s a lot less. I suppose that’s normal, right? And good?”

“It is, Sam. Therapy cannot wipe away your bad experiences, and eventually they might come back in dreams. The point here is to try and give you control to make them come as less often as possible.”

“So,” Sam began. “Check, right? They are less often.”

The doctor studied the boy and thought about his arguments. Sam was such an intelligent kid…if only he wasn’t using his intelligence to try and manipulate her into releasing him from facing his fears.

“Sam, it may seem like you are doing better, I really believe this…but unfortunately you cannot trust this feeling to keep you safe from your past.”

“What do you mean?” Sam frowned.

“I mean that you still have many triggers, Sam, and you know what I’m talking about. I mean that someday you might be walking down the street, not a single worry in your mind, and then something reminds you of your time in captivity and you don’t know how to deal with it. You might even end up putting your life in danger if you can’t control all this fear you keep inside.”

Sam didn’t say anything. Stupid psychological bullshit, he thought. Just excuses to convince him he needed help. Yet, even as Sam tried to convince himself she was wrong, he knew, deep inside, exactly what she meant.

“For example, you still haven’t been able to talk about the abuse you suffered. Do you really think you can live the rest of your life without facing it?”

Sam’s heart raced and his eyes were no longer friendly and easygoing.

“You can’t even admit whether or not it happened. Don’t you think this may be a ticking bomb to your mental health? I know you’re smart enough to see where I’m going.”
“Maybe you’re right,” Sam caved. “But I don’t see how therapy can change that. It’s not like I’m ever going to talk about what happened and you know that,” Sam spoke, and his honesty was blunt.

Doctor Reece sighed, trying to hide how frustrating Sam’s stubbornness could be. She had to remind herself that the apparent unwillingness to cooperate was caused by sheer fear of suffering what had happened to him in the past again. When she remembered that Sam’s reluctance to talk came from being terrified of the hurting it caused, she relaxed and softened.

“Perhaps you’re right. But you can’t blame me for trying, right?” She smiled.

Sam shrugged, and smiled lightly too. How could she be so patient? Well, no wonder it was her job, she was good at keeping calm, Sam thought. “But you can tell me how your brother is, can’t you? Let’s talk about Dean.”

“What about Dean?” A roller coaster of emotions just rolled through Sam’s brain and heart, and all his uneasiness melted away into a pool of warm love. His eyes brightened up and the corners of his mouth quivered with the hint of a smile. His chest felt hot and his heart raced, and he couldn’t help but think of Dean and he touching each other, losing control because of each other.

The doctor catalogued the drastic change in his mood approvingly. She still didn’t know whether Sam had acted on his feelings for his brother, but something seemed to be going on between them, and something good.

“How is he? Has he been helping you when you have nightmares?”

For the next forty minutes she let Sam talk about his brother and just observed the joy coating his words. As a therapist, she needed to learn to listen to more than just words, and when Sam spoke, she listened to the sound of his happiness and felt glad.

When Sam was completely relaxed, talking about something casual that had happened during his day, she decided to try a different approach.

“And then we ended up laughing and I never finished the whole thing,” Sam finished the story and chuckled.

“You didn’t finish it? How come?” She studied Sam carefully and thought about her decision to conduct a more aggressive line of questioning that might make Sam realize what she had told him before, which was the frail nature of his apparent stability.

“Well, Dean didn’t make me. It’s not like he would force me to clean. I don’t think anyone could have forced me to,” Sam said.

“What about the man in the dark? Could he force you?” The question was light and quick, and it took Sam a while to realize she had really just asked that.

The blow was so unexpected that Sam’s wall wavered in his mind and he could almost hear a scream from a boy who begged for it to stop, because it felt raw, and it hurt more than he could handle.

“You don’t need to tell me details, I would just like to hear it from you, Sam. Your dad thinks it happened, but he said you never confirmed anything. Can you tell me about it? Because if this man raped you, I can try and help you understand your feelings about it and move on.”
That was a word that Sam had erased from his mind. It was not supposed to exist. He could talk about being cut and having his bones broken, he could even talk about the feeling of fire burning his skin until blisters broke and the pain made him cringe. But he could not talk about that word.

He had never kissed when he entered the bright room, and when he left, the man had robbed him of everything.

Sam realized his left hand was shaking, and he quickly tried to hide it by placing it on top of his knee.

The doctor saw the movement, and she saw the way his hand kept shaking, even though he clearly tried to act as if nothing was wrong. Could she make him crack that safety wall a little bit? Could she get a confirmation from him? If only she was able to pull him out of his state of denial, then she could start the long healing process of acknowledging what had happened and dealing with it.

“Sam?”

“No.” Sam’s voice was hoarse and dropped low.

“No? Are you telling me that the man didn’t touch you?”

“No, I’m telling you this is over now.”

Sam made as if he would stand up from the sofa, but the doctor leaned over and put a hand on his arm.

“Sam, please. Stay.”

“Don’t touch me,” Sam said, looking down at the hand on his arm.

The doctor retracted it immediately and looked at the boy now standing in front of her. She stood up as well.

“Why are you so afraid of telling me about it? Just try, Sam. You don’t need to keep all that inside.”

“No!” Sam raised his voice and could no longer pretend he wasn’t shaking. His panting made it clear just how bothered he was.

“Sam…”

“No! Enough! I’m leaving!” Sam shook his head and shut his eyes, and when he walked to the door he was desperate to keep his feelings under control.

“What happened?” Dean asked when he saw Sam walk out of the doctor’s office a bit earlier than usual and looking extremely upset. That was a different boy from the smiley Sam he had dropped off.

“Nothing happened. We’re just going home.” Sam tried to sound natural, but his throat was as tight as his jaw.
“Sam?” The doctor followed him outside. “Hi, Dean.” she smiled at him. “We finished a bit earlier today. I’ll see you guys next week?”

“Yes…” Dean frowned. He looked from Sam’s distressed face to the doctor’s, and he knew something was going on.

“Bye, Sam.” She knew it was over the moment Sam opened the door. She had tried a more blunt approach, trying to apply some actual force against Sam’s shield, but apparently that wouldn’t work either. Dakota Reece started to fear that Sam’s words were indeed true—he would never tell her anything. Although that was a thought which hurt deeply into her pride as a professional, Dakota knew she couldn’t be so hard on herself. Some patients were just not ready to talk to someone about their darkest fears, and sometimes there was only so much a therapist could do.

That day she went home with a lot on her mind, ready to study Sam’s case well into the night, to assess her possibilities and to accept the fact that she might be unable to help Sam on her own.

~ * ~

In the car, Dean started driving as Sam looked out of the window.

“Hey, are you really okay? What happened there?”

“Nothing you need to know.”

Dean arched his eyebrows and tilted his head lightly.

“All right, sir.”

“Sorry,” Sam said, realizing he had been rude. “I just don’t want to talk about it, okay? She tried to make me talk about the man and…the dark, you know. I was feeling good before, why did she have to ruin it?”

“I don’t know… Maybe she thought that since you were feeling good she might get you to open up?”

“Well, she thought wrong,” Sam said curtly again.

They stopped at a traffic light and Dean let his hand rest on top of Sam’s thigh, squeezing gently.

“Hey…it’s alright now, okay? We’re going home for the weekend. Just let it go.”

Sam nodded, but even with his side glances Dean could tell he had built a lot of tension up.

“Sammy? Is there anything I can do for you now?”

“Yeah, just take me home.” Sam took a deep breath and looked at Dean. He didn’t mind that home was actually Bobby’s house. It felt like home, and that was all that mattered. “Dean?”

“Yes?”
“I just need to be with you.”

Dean looked from the street ahead to Sam, and he finally saw him let his guard down and smile. The look in his eyes made Dean’s heart jump and burn, setting a faster pace for the next few minutes.

He smiled briefly, but lovingly, before turning his attention back to the traffic.

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tbc....
Dean hung up the phone and looked at his brother.

“It was your therapist,” he said.

“Doctor Reece?” Sam frowned. Why would she be calling?

“Yes.”

“What did she want?” Sam had been there just yesterday and had not liked their session very much.

“She wants to talk to me.”

“What? Why?”

“I don’t know.” Dean shrugged. “But it’s probably about you, right?”

Sam’s forehead was still creased.

“Sam, does she know about…you know…” Dean tried not to seem as shy as he felt.

“About us? No, no way…I didn’t tell her anything.”

“Good.” Dean looked relieved. “Because you know she probably wouldn’t understand.”

“I know. But then again, if it weren’t for her we might have never kissed.” Sam smiled.

Dean chuckled.

“But still, I won’t tell her anything,” Sam reinforced and Dean nodded. “Will you see her?”

“I said I couldn’t go today because we’re home alone, and I don’t know when Dad will be back so I can leave. Do you want me not to go?”

Sam shrugged, unsure.
“Whatever. She probably thinks she can get more information on me from you. Apparently she has talked to Dad, too.” Sam thought of her words—*Your father thinks it happened, too*… So yes, they had talked about him. “Just tell me what she asks you later, alright?”

“You know I will.”

Dean walked towards his brother and for a moment they just looked into each other’s eyes. There was something deliciously intimate and soothing in how they both felt when they were this close; when Dean’s mouth captured his in a soft kiss and he could taste Sam’s smile against his lips.

~ * ~

John came back alone this time. After reassuring his sons that Bobby was alright, he just had to go elsewhere and help a friend before coming back, John took a much needed shower and slept five hours of a blank, exhausted sleep.

When he woke up he realized Dean had made the three of them dinner, which they ate in the living room.

“Is Bobby going to be alright?” Sam asked, watching his father.

“He’s fine, Sam. I think the person who asked for his help was a special friend, you know. He probably wanted to go there alone.” John winked.

Sam smiled and nodded. He hoped so. Sometimes Bobby seemed so lonely. Sam was sure he had been enjoying their company in the past few months.

John finished his meal and watched as Dean started to clean up the kitchen, helped by his brother.

He didn’t say anything, but John was proud of them. They were good kids, they helped each other, and they would make great hunters when the time was right. He realized he was often too hard on them, but at times like this, when he saw how decent his kids were, it seemed to pay off in the end.

“So hey, what about I take the night off tonight and take you guys somewhere fun?”

Dean and Sam exchanged a look and frowned. They knew what each other was thinking without saying a word.

“Sam, go get the holy water,” Dean said warily, and Sam laughed.

“What?” John sounded outraged, but he ended up laughing too. “Can’t I be cool for once? You know, just take you guys somewhere, shoot some pool, spend some time together?”

Sam and Dean exchanged another meaningful look and this time Sam spoke.

“I’ll go get it, Dean.”

John got up and took Sam in a playful headlock, messing his hair.

“Dad!” Sam protested, but they were both amused.
“C’mon. Get dressed. I’ll take you to a place I know nearby. The owner is my friend, he’ll let Sam in, too.”

“Alright.” Dean shrugged, arched an eyebrow and looked at Sam.

John waited as they got ready to leave, and thought about the case he had just worked. There had been a vengeful spirit, coming back to haunt his father after having been driven to a suicide due to their constant fighting. John had found a man full of regrets, bitter, who had been unable to show love for his only son when he was alive, and whose inability to connect to his child had driven an eighteen year old boy to take his life.

Of course, John wouldn’t tell his kids any of that, because the truth was, he would hardly admit to himself just how much it had affected him in the end, when he had burned the boy’s bones after a last, hurtful moment between father and son.

Sometimes it seemed like life was trying to give a message, and John decided that tonight he would listen.

He drove the Impala with his two sons sitting in the backseat, and this time they weren’t going anywhere to hunt monsters. John took them all to a small bar, where there were only a couple of people drinking, two or three people eating at tables, and a pool table waiting for players.

John talked to the owner and he didn’t try to stop Sam from being there. He was one of the many people who owed John a favor, so he just kept on with his bartending service as the three people who walked into the bar started to play pool.

John ordered him and Dean a beer, but wouldn’t let Sam drink, and for the next couple of hours they shot pool and listened to the music playing in the bar.

Sam and Dean teamed up against their dad, and to their surprise, even though Dean was a terribly good player, John was tough to beat. Sometimes they got lucky, other times they had their asses kicked, but in the end they had fun, and together, as a family, they laughed and talked like they hadn’t in years.

When they drove back home, at two in the morning, they were all tired and sleepy, and the mood was light and easy between them.

“I need a shower,” Dean said when he walked into Bobby’s home. “I smell like an ashtray.”

“I’ll give Bobby a call, see if he’s alright,” John said and walked into the kitchen.

When he found himself alone, Sam sat on the sofa and sighed. He felt sleepy, but happy. There were some moments when their lives as a family didn’t seem so bad, and when Sam could see the father he could have had if fate hadn’t taken his mom away. He knew John loved him, and Sam knew he was a good dad. He just wished there were more moments like tonight, and less moments of hunting and moving, of silence and obeying.

A few minutes after he’d turned on the TV, his father joined him in the living room, holding a beer.

“I’m sorry, I’ll go upstairs and let you sleep,” Sam said when John sat beside him.
“I'll sleep upstairs tonight, it's okay.”

Sam watched his father briefly and relaxed, watching the cartoon on TV.

“Is Bobby alright?”

“Yeah, he’s fine.”

Sam nodded.

“Did you have fun tonight?” John asked.

“I did. Thanks for taking us there.”

John smiled briefly. He wondered if Sam knew how much he loved both of them, but it hurt him how unable to express his feelings he felt. It was like all his carefree tenderness had burned along with Mary on the night she died.

“You seem better, Sam,” he pointed out, and took another sip of his drink. “How is therapy?”

Sam hesitated a few seconds before shrugging.

“It’s okay.”

John studied him intently. He could tell his son’s mental state had been improving, even though he wasn’t home with him that often. He wondered just how much Sam had shared in therapy, and how helpful Doctor Dakota was being to make him heal.

“Have you talked to the doctor about what happened to you?” He asked.

Sam’s heart seemed to stir out of its calm little pace.

“We talked about some things,” Sam offered, hoping it would be enough of an answer.

“Did you tell her about the man and the torture?”

John saw the way Sam looked uneasy and his eyes strayed to the television and fixed on it intently.

“Sometimes we talk about it,” Sam said, and his throat felt dry. He wondered if Dean had finished his shower. Suddenly he wanted to be upstairs in bed with him.

“Did you talk to her about the question I asked you? The one you couldn’t answer me?”

Sam tensed. His body had already learned how to respond to probing about that matter, and Sam had to breathe in and out very slowly to try and keep calm.

“You know what I’m talking about, right? The question I asked you when we killed Harry.”

“I know,” Sam said curtly.

“I understand you couldn’t talk to me, but could you talk to her? Did she help?”
Sam knew that indirectly his father was asking him the same question again.

“What did the man say?” Sam’s question surprised John, but it also surprised himself. “Harry, what did he say in the basement?”

“What? Why are you asking that?” ‘Your son screamed like a little bitch when I fucked him.’ John swallowed down hard and it was his turn to tense. He let his eyes focus on the television instead of Sam’s searching look.

“I don’t know,” Sam confessed. “I don’t really want to talk about it,” he ended up saying.

“Well, you’ll have to eventually, you know. That’s what therapy is for, Sam. Both doctors who have seen you agree that you need to face what happened in that room.”

“Blood,” Sam blurted.

“What?”

“Blood happened in that room. A lot of it. All mine,” Sam got up and he looked visibly disturbed and agitated.

“Sam? Are you downstairs?” Dean’s voice cut through the awkward silence in the living room.

“Coming up,” Sam said, relieved. “Night, dad.”

“Sam, wait,” John looked at his youngest, so traumatized, trying so hard to be strong… When would therapy get him to open up? What if Doctor Michael was wrong, and no amount of therapy could get Sam to talk about what had happened to him?

Sam looked at his father with anguish in his eyes, begging him not to push, and John caved.

“Never mind. Goodnight, son.”

“Night,” Sam said again and turned around to leave.

~ * ~

In the early morning, when John at last went upstairs to find sleep as well, he checked on Dean and Sam through the open door of the room. They were in semi darkness. John could see a faint light in the room—probably coming from the bathroom—and the two boys sharing the bed. He wondered for how long Sam would need Dean to be able to fall asleep, but he wondered just briefly, because the memory of what had happened the last time he had suggest that Sam and Dean sleep in separate rooms was still vivid in his mind.

‘He’ll grow out of it,’ John thought. ‘He’s getting better,’ he tried to convince himself as he walked into the small room Dean had been using before Sam and he had started to sleep together. John lay down on the mattress on the floor and closed his eyes.
Sam was walking in a dark corridor. He looked ahead, but he couldn’t see anything. He stretched out his arms and could touch the walls on each side of his body, but straight ahead there was nothing he could see, and the sound of his loud, heavy panting echoed all around him.

He looked over his shoulder but there was nothing. Not a shadow, not a sound. He widened his eyes but there was nothing to guide him, so he kept going, he kept moving forward, touching the walls on his sides tentatively, taking slow, unsure steps towards the black nothing surrounding him.

The fear was burning in his stomach and spreading to his shaky fingertips. Sam shut his eyes and prayed that it was just a dream, that he could get out of there.

As he frowned, focused on his silent plea, he heard the noise of footsteps behind him, and it set him off.

Sam’s panting grew more labored and urgent, and he started to move forward again, faster this time, despite the darkness, walking faster as the footsteps chased him, as they got closer, as they sounded louder.

Before he knew it, Sam was running into that dark tunnel, running away from the footsteps following him, the thuds behind him as loud as the drumming of his heart.

Sam ran, even though he was afraid to trip, even though he was terrified of going forward, because he knew he could not stay where he was.

Scared, frightened and alone, Sam ran until there was no other sound other than his fast breathing. He stopped and stood still, trying to listen to something, but there was nothing.

Where had the footsteps gone?

Sam’s heart started to relax when suddenly the lights were back on.

Relief hit him like a breath of fresh air in a hot day, and Sam shut his eyes and took deep, long breaths. His lips were about to curve into a small smile when he turned around and everything changed.

Harry.

Sam looked at the blue eyes staring down at him, knowing, intimate, terrifying.

‘No…no…’ Sam thought. ‘You’re dead!’

The man smiled.

‘You…you only came in the dark,’ Sam tried. ‘It’s not dark now, you can’t touch me! You can’t have me!’ He protested, stepping backwards, his heart racing so much it felt painful.

Harry didn’t say anything, but he kept smiling, and his piercing blue eyes never left Sam’s when he spoke, looking into the core of his fears.

“Caught you!”
Sam woke up panting and tense. He blinked several times until he could believe his eyes and the room around himself. He looked at his brother, sleeping peacefully beside him, and his heart was able to slow down—he was safe. There was no dark tunnel, no Harry following him.

Sam closed his eyes and felt like crying. Why did it still hurt so much?

He looked at Dean again, and then he looked briefly at the open door to their room. He got up, used the bathroom quickly before splashing some water on his face, and closed the door gently before going back to bed. He supposed the beers Dean had shared with their dad were keeping him deep asleep as Sam crawled on top of him and let his open palms slip beneath his shirt and touch his skin.

Sam needed Dean, and that was all he knew. He didn’t care that it was risky, and that Dean might get mad for his actions, because there was only one thing capable of bringing him light when he was that desperate, and it was Dean. And the feel of his skin under his fingertips started to lighten Sam’s thoughts and his desire as he kissed his brother’s chest and let his hand travel down and cup his hardening erection.

Dean stirred, but didn’t wake up, when Sam touched him.

Right now Sam would have fought the entire world if it had tried to stop him, because there was an urge too great behind his actions, a need too strong that he could not, did not want to repress.

Sam straddled Dean and pulled the covers on top of himself. Dean moaned faintly, but Sam moved quickly. He could feel Dean was already hard when he pulled his loose pants down, and when Sam saw his brother’s cock pressed tautly to his stomach, he lowered his mouth and took him in.

Dean’s eyes darted open and he didn’t understand what was happening. He felt a sharp, tingling pleasure piercing him, so he lifted the covers and looked down to find his brother on top of him, with his lips tightly closed around the base of his dick.

“Sam! What are you doing!?” He whispered in protest, but he trembled and gasped when Sam’s tongue swirled around his tip.

Sam didn’t stop. He sucked greedily, intoxicated with Dean’s taste on his tongue, wanting to feel more, to give more pleasure, to connect to Dean so strongly that nothing else would matter.

“Sam, no!” Dean whispered again, and tried to pull Sam off of him.

When Sam felt Dean’s hands trying to stop him, he let his cock slip out of his mouth and pressed Dean’s wrists to bed, on each side of his hips.

“Don’t,” Sam warned.

Dean’s eyes were still adjusting to the dark and to the disheveled sight of his brother looking fiercely into his eyes.

“Sam?”
“Don’t try to stop me.” Sam narrowed his eyes. There was something so strong, so fiery in his look that Dean didn’t say anything. He found himself speechless and unmoving as Sam went down on him again, sucking him in deeply, licking at his skin and stroking what he couldn’t put in his mouth.

“Hmm.” Dean trembled, and pulsed against Sam’s tongue. His pleasure was already buzzing in his ears, and he could hardly be rational about anything after having been so unprepared for that.

“Sam, Dad’s sleeping upstairs…” Dean held on to a desperate bolt of lucidity before he could no longer help himself.

“He’s deep asleep,” Sam retorted. “And I closed the door.”

Dean looked at the door that was indeed closed, and relaxed a little. Then, he looked at the small mouth closing around his cock and sucking again, and once he understood he could not fight it any longer, he let his fingers go down and tangle in Sam’s hair, tugging urgently as his brother pleasured him.

Sam’s heart raced and his blood ran hotter and faster. He understood Dean had given in, he could taste the surrender in the moisture gathering at his tip, and that urged him on further.

“Sam…” Dean whispered throatily, trying hard to be quiet. He forced his hips not to thrust up and tried to be quiet as he began to lose control.

Sam never stopped. He sucked and licked, stroking Dean into his mouth, his lips and hand both wrapped around Dean as he bobbed his head up and down and fist ed his cock.

“I’m gonna come, Sam, stop—” Dean tried to pull him away but Sam ignored the urgent tugging at his hair. “Please Sam!” Dean whispered, desperate and shaky as he felt his orgasm hitting.

Sam never listened. He swallowed down the hot spray that hit the back of his throat, and only complied at the tugging when Dean was soft and sensitive.

Sam went up and rested his head on the pillow, so they could look into each other’s eyes.

“What was that for?” Dean whispered, breathless and tingling.

Sam wanted to speak. He wanted to tell Dean how much he needed him, loved him, and how good it felt to open his eyes and see his face, but suddenly it became too much. His throat tightened and it felt like there was a knot closing his air passage. Sam opened his mouth and choked, and he realized, to his horror, that he was going to cry.

“Hey…” Dean turned on his side. “Hey, hey, what happened?” Dean looked at the tears gathering in Sam’s eyes and the agitation looking back at him.

“I don’t know,” Sam whispered. “I don’t know what’s wrong.”

“No, Dean. It’s not that. I wanted to do that. I needed to do it.” Sam held Dean’s arms fiercely, trying
to make him understand. Then he shut his eyes for a moment, feeling the tears trickle down his cheeks.

“What’s going on then?” Dean wiped the tears with his fingers and waited.

“I had a nightmare,” Sam confessed, feeling stupid and weak. “With Harry, he was alive…”

At the same time Dean was glad that Sam wasn’t crying because he felt bad for giving him a blow job, it hurt him that those nightmares just wouldn’t go away.

“I want to get better, Dean, I really do. But I seem to be doing everything wrong, I can’t let go—”

“Shhh…” Dean silenced him, looking deeply into his eyes and caressing his hair.

“Dean?”

Sam watched his brother as he moved under the sheets, lying partially atop of him, looking into his eyes, one hand wiping the wet trails on his skin as the other went down and rested on top of his pajama pants. Sam was hard, and when Dean felt it against his palm, he squeezed softly through the clothing.

“Hm,” Sam moaned, and his tears stopped coming. He still felt agitated and lost, but Dean’s hand on him was something good he held on to in the dark room.

“Shhh, let it go, Sammy. Don’t worry about it. I’m here, alright?” He whispered softly against Sam’s lips as his hand slipped under his pants and underwear and wrapped around his cock. “Let me take care of you.”

Sam closed his eyes and throbbed against Dean’s hand. He felt Dean’s body on top of his, weighing down on him, filling Sam’s nostrils with his scent, with familiarity, with light.

“Mmm.” Sam thrust tentatively into the hand pleasuring him, turning all of his anguish into lust, letting Dean’s touch work on his desperation until it was fierce arousal, burning in his loins and pooling in his lower belly.

“Yeah, that’s it, Sammy. Feel my hand on you,” Dean whispered hotly, his nose touching Sam’s, his eyes looking so deeply into his that when Sam opened his eyes and saw Dean, he felt open and vulnerable, and yet turned on irrepressibly by both feelings.

“Dean…” Sam’s voice was a small, aching plea.

“What is it? Hm? That better now?”

Sam nodded, his nose again touching Dean’s when he did so. He looked into his brother’s eyes as his pleasure started to build towards the inevitable climax, and he bit on his bottom lip to try to control his ragged breathing.

“I’ll take care of you, Sammy,” Dean’s sultry voice was a caress. “Do want that? Want me to take care of you?” Dean squeezed Sam’s cock and stroked faster.

Sam’s fingers clawed at Dean’s arms and he widened his eyes. His cheeks burned red and hot and his thoughts were clouded with the need to come.
“Dean, please…faster,” Sam begged, burying his head against Dean’s shoulder as he complied, his wrist moving rapidly and steadily as Sam lost control and fell over the edge.

Sam held back his moaning as he coated Dean’s hand with his orgasm. It was so powerful that when it was through with him, Sam relaxed instantly and almost fell asleep again.

He barely registered anything when Dean got up, cleaned up quickly in the bathroom and opened the door to take a look around and make sure John hadn’t heard anything.

When Dean was satisfied it was fine, he went back to bed and looked at Sam.

“Dad’s still asleep,” he whispered, but Sam didn’t reply. “Sam?” Dean called him, and touched him softly.

Sam didn’t listen and didn’t move. He was fast asleep, his limbs relaxed, his breathing peaceful.

Dean smiled at the sight of him and sighed. He leaned over to plant a kiss to Sam’s temple before he turned to the other side and went back to sleep, too.

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tbc...
Bobby still hadn’t returned from helping a friend of his when John was forced to leave again. For another whole week Sam and Dean found themselves alone while John and Bobby fought supernatural creatures in different parts of the country.

When John finally arrived, Bobby was still away, but they had talked in the meantime, and they knew everything was under control. John could expect Bobby back home the following day, and that was what he told his sons when he arrived.

“You look like shit,” Dean pointed out as his father had a sandwich and drank coffee. “Are you sure you didn’t get hurt?” John’s face was dirty and there was blood all over his clothes.

“I’m fine,” John reassured him. “I just need to sleep for three days,” he sighed.

John had slept little more than four hours in the past week, and it was weighing hard on him. Sleep deprivation could shorten his temper and make him intractable, and he was aware of that. Thus, he finished off his meal, showered and started to prepare his bed in the living room.

“Sam?” He called his son when he saw him walking by.

“Yes?”

“Just make sure you and your brother are quiet. No horsing around until late, I need to sleep.”

“Right.” Sam watched his father as he lay down and sighed, kicking off his shoes and shutting his eyes. He looked exhausted, and Sam couldn’t help but smile at the thought that Dean and he would probably have privacy to do some touching after John blacked out.

The two brothers found themselves in bed, but they weren’t ready to fall asleep. Sam and Dean kept their voices down to a minimum and talked a little about casual stuff before they began to feel sleepy. Dean guided Sam through the best songs from the best bands, making him listen to his headphones as he tried to teach his little brother to develop a good musical taste.

When Sam started to yawn in the middle of the masterpieces Dean showed him, he decided it was time to call it a day and go to sleep. He turned off all the lights in the room and wondered if Sam
would say anything. When he didn’t, Dean bit back a pleased smile and joined him in bed.

“You know,” Sam said, his eyes half-closed. “Dad’s passed out downstairs. We could do something…” He smiled teasingly and drew closer.

“Sammy, it’s too risky. I didn’t close the door because you know how dad feels about closed doors. He seems to be pretty worn out, but what if he gets up?”

Sam knew Dean had a point, but that didn’t mean he was pleased about it.

“Fine. But can’t we at least kiss?”

Dean smiled in the dark.

“I love you, you know that?” He said.

Sam’s smile lit up his face and Dean knew that if he touched his brother’s chest he would feel the fast thudding of Sam’s heart against his palm.

“I love you too.”

In the dark, their faces got even closer, and they kissed quietly for a moment.

When they broke off the kiss, they were still able to taste some of the other’s warmth on their tongues.

“Sam?”

“Yes?”

“Doctor Michael called today.”

Sam frowned.

“He did?”

“Yeah, you were in the shower,” Dean said.

“What did he want?”

Dean had been struggling with whether or not he should tell Sam, but in the end he couldn’t look into those eyes so full of trust and not tell him.

“No big deal. He just wanted to ask me to go talk to your therapist. She must have called him.”

“She thinks you don’t want to go,” Sam said.

“Yeah. I told her I can’t go while we’re home alone, and Dad was away all week long. But I think she thought I was making it up, so she called Doctor Michael.”

“What did he say?”
“He told me I should go. That I would be helping you.”

“You know who would help me?”

“Who?”

“The two of them, if they stayed out of my life,” Sam said, annoyed.

“C’mon, I’m sure they just want to help.”

“Yeah, whatever. Doctor Michael and Doctor Reece think they have all the answers; they think they know what’s best for me.”

“Only you know what’s best for you,” Dean said.

“Right. And I know what that is.”

“Oh, really?” Dean smiled.

“Yeah, and I’m gonna kiss him again,” they chuckled softly before their lips met. “Goodnight, Dean.”

“Night, Sam.”

The two brothers turned onto different sides and tried to find sleep.

~ * ~

Sam woke up slowly and had to blink a few times. The light in his eyes was bright, and for a moment it blinded him completely.

“Hey, Sam. How are you?”

Sam looked in the direction of that voice and saw Doctor Reece standing by his side, looking at him. Sam looked at her and the room around himself.

“Am I in the hospital?” He frowned, looking at the clean, bright room around himself and the light blue sheet on top of his body.

“Of course you are, Sam. You need help, remember? You were severely hurt.”

Sam frowned. That was weird. He could swear he had already left the hospital and had been living in Bobby Singer’s house with his brother and dad.

“I feel better already, why am I here?”

“Hello, Sam.” Doctor Michael walked into the room and greeted him and Dakota.

“Michael.” She smiled at him as he came closer.
“Doctor Michael?” Sam’s frown deepened.

“I’m here to check on you. You seem to be getting better.”

“I feel better,” Sam said as Doctor Michael pulled a chair and sat by the end of his bed. It was a weird bed, Sam realized, he didn’t remember having been in a bed quite like that before.

“So, shall we get started?” Doctor Michael looked at Sam and then at Dakota.

“Yes, let’s do this. We need to know,” she replied.

“Need to know what?” Sam was confused.

“We need to know what happened to you, Sam.”

And then Sam looked at the cardboard box Doctor Michael had brought and was now opening on top of a rolling surgical instrument tray.

“What is that?” Sam swallowed hard and his heart raced.

“This, Sam, is a rape kit. I’m going to use it to collect evidence so we can determine whether or not you were raped.”

Sam’s eyes widened and he shook his head.

“I’m not doing it,” he said. “I won’t allow it.” Sam looked at the two doctors watching over him.

“Sam, I’m sorry, but Doctor Michael needs to do it. You need to talk about what happened to you; you need to let people know.”

Sam watched, his panic rising, as the doctor opened up the kit and started to prepare to examine him.

“No, I won’t do it!” Sam was determined to go away, but when he tried to move he realized, to his horror, that his arms were strapped down to the bed. “What’s going on? Let me out of here! You can’t do this to me.”

“Actually, we can, Sam. Your father has signed a consent. Right John?”

“Right, Michael.”

Sam suddenly realized his father was in the room as well. In a distant corner, watching the scene unfolding in the hospital bed, John Winchester watched as his son protested against that violation of his privacy.

“Now, Sam, please. You need to spread your legs. This will not hurt, I swear. If anything it’ll be mildly uncomfortable.”

Sam’s heart slammed hard against his chest and he twisted against his bindings.

“No! No, I won’t do it! Don’t touch me!” Sam squirmed and kicked when Doctor Reece went closer and pulled the hospital sheet off his body.
Sam was wearing a light green hospital gown, and nothing underneath that. The garment could barely cover his nakedness, and Sam felt vulnerable and ashamed under all those looks.

“John?” Doctor Michael looked at his father, and Sam fixed pleading eyes on him.

“Dad, no... please, don’t let him, please…”

John looked into his son’s desperate eyes and sighed.

“Yes or no, Sam?”

“What?” Sam was confused, agitated, scared.

“Yes or no? Did Harry rape you in the dark room, yes or no?”

Sam shook his head and shut his eyes. No, no, no! He would not talk about that, he would not go back, no!

“Dad! Please!”

“If you just answer yes or no then I’ll tell them to stop.”

“Just admit it, Sam,” Dakota added. “Just face it and it’ll help you, you’ll see.”

“Did he or did he not sexually abuse you, Sam?” John asked once more.

Sam shook his head and whimpered loudly.

“No! No, no, no, no, no! Let me out of here!” He struggled.

Doctor Michael sighed, seemingly frustrated.

“I’m sorry, Sam, but this is the best for you. We’ll just help you face your fears so you can get better. You need to talk about the past. You need to tell us about the man. Nurses!” He called.

Sam saw when a couple of strong young men, whose blurred faces he did not recognize, entered the room and stood by his bed.

“Help hold him down and strap his legs here.”

Sam looked at the bed and the weird things he had not recognized before. Now he knew where he had seen it before, and it was in a hospital room, a few years before when he had followed his dad into a hospital because of a case. When Sam had wandered through the hospital halls sticking his head inside a few of the rooms where the doors were open, he remembered seeing that weird bed, and he remembered asking Dean what it was for a while later. Dean had made him blush at the time, and now Sam blushed furiously.

“No! No, don’t touch me!” Sam kicked at the pairs of hands trying to hold down his legs. He tried hard to break free from the bindings on his arms, but they were too tight, and the hands trying to force his thighs apart were punishingly hurtful.
“NO! Don’t!! PLEASE!”

“Sam, relax. I said I won’t hurt you. It’s for your own good. You need to deal with it.”

Sam looked down as the doctor put on surgical gloves and took a swab between his fingers. He pulled the chair closer to Sam’s bed and settled between the legs the nurses were trying to hold down.

“NO! NO, NO, NO!” Sam kicked and screamed, willing to fight until the very end against that humiliation.

“Sam! Stop struggling! Let them help!” John said.

Sam looked at his father, watching from a distance as they tried to hold him down and force him to undergo examination. He didn’t think his shame could burn any hotter.

Sam groaned and thrashed like a wild animal, and tried to bite the arms pushing him down onto the bed.

“Dakota, please! Give him something to make him stop,” Michael asked.

“Right.”

Sam watched, petrified, as she prepared a shot of something. Sam looked at the syringe in her hand and the medicine bottle she used. When she came towards him to inject him with the drug, Sam bolted against his bindings, his movements frantic and skittish.

“No! NO! You can’t make me! You can’t force me!! Leave me alone!” Sam screamed his protests, but the drug was in his system after a few seconds, and quickly Sam began to lose all ability to struggle.

His muscles relaxed and didn’t obey his commands anymore.

“No!” Sam whimpered. He was so angry his teeth were gritting and his jaw was tight. If he could, he would kill everyone in that room if that meant escaping. They had no right to do that! It was his body! “Don’t, please…it’s my body, I don’t want it…” He cried as he lost control of voluntary movement and lay limp against the bed.

“Guys, his legs, please.” Doctor Michael instructed the nurses to place each of Sam’s legs on metal supports so he could have access to his body. “Take it easy, Sam. This will be over soon. And then we’ll know. We’ll have a confirmation, Sam.”

Sam groaned, the sound wild and furious, his cheeks burning with shame and tears. The thought of his father watching the scene from afar killed him from inside, and Sam wanted to die out of shame.

“Don’t! Don’t!”

Sam felt it when the doctor violated his privacy and he screamed, unable to process all that choking humiliation.

~ * ~
Sam woke up sweaty and breathless. He was so angry, so shaken and blinded by his dream that he could not tell what was real anymore. All he felt inside was blind, hot red rage at what they were doing to him, opening his body, shoving something inside of him without his permission, robbing his secrets from deep within him.

“NO!!” Sam screamed angrily and pulled the covers off himself. “NO! You won’t touch me! Won’t touch me!” He yelled, mad, as he got up and stumbled his way around the dark bedroom.

“Sam?” Dean woke up quickly and heard the noise of something falling and shattering. He was up in a heartbeat and turned on the lights in the room. “Sam, what’s going on?” Dean saw his brother’s wild look and feared for him. Sam looked rabid.

“NOO! They can’t!” Sam screamed, and knocked over some picture frames that had been lying on Bobby’s dresser. “They can’t do it! I won’t let them!” Sam groaned.

“Do what? Who won’t?” Dean tried to talk to him, but Sam was wildly upset and out of his mind.

“NOO! It’s my choice! My secret! MY BODY!” Sam cried and groaned, the sound low and gritty, and pushed everything he could find to the floor, breaking a vase and shattering a mirror, screaming at Dean when he tried to get closer.

“What’s going on here?” John had woken up with the noise, his heart racing, and had quickly moved upstairs, his gun loaded and on his hand, ready to shoot if he found anything unusual. The sound of things breaking and of screaming had made adrenaline buzz in his body and wake up his senses, but instead of an enemy, John walked into the room to find his youngest son trashing Bobby’s room as his oldest tried to stop him.

“I think he had a nightmare. I can’t talk to him,” Dean said, desperate.

Sam looked like a wild animal, a zoo runaway, who looked his captors in the eyes with a defiant challenge in his face. A come and get me if you dare look, the look of someone who had nothing to lose.

“They won’t!” Sam screamed, and when he saw John’s face he immediately thought of the dream, and of the way his father had stood in a corner, watching as the doctor prepared to breach through Sam’s opposition. “YOU!” Sam accused loudly. “You have no right! You won’t make me! None of you will! YOU CAN’T MAKE ME TALK!” Sam screamed, and walked towards his father as if he would hit him or something.

“Sam!” Dean grabbed him in the middle of the way and Sam squirmed and struggled until Dean was forced to let go. “Sam, please! What’s going on!?”

Sam got rid of Dean’s arms and paced back and forth inside the room. He breathed like an asthmatic patient in the middle of a crisis, and his eyes were madly wide. He knocked a bottle of cologne down and felt his anger escalating.

John looked at the mess Sam was making in his friend’s room. He didn’t know what was going on, Sam was probably very scared because of a night terror or something, but right now John was in no condition himself to deal with him. He was sleep deprived, and his patience was non-existent. Even if he wanted to, there was no way John could be of any help with a weary brain and battered body.
“Dean? I really need to get some sleep. I don’t have time for this tonight,” John said. “Please handle your brother.”

“Yes, sir,” Dean said quickly, realizing John really meant it. Dean didn’t know what had happened in John’s last hunt, but he looked tired enough, and frustrated enough, to slap the panic attack out of Sam until he was sleeping again. “Sam, come here.”

Sam was staring at his father and the room around him, and little by little he started to come to his senses and understand what was going on. ‘Please handle your brother. Please handle your brother…’ Sam blinked a few times and swallowed hard.

“Sam, it’s okay.”

Dean’s arms were around him and Sam shook like a leaf, his body suffering one discharge of adrenaline after the other.

“And clean up that mess. Bobby won’t like that one bit.”

“Yes,” Dean agreed. “We’ll fix it.”

John turned around and left the room, putting the gun back on his waist and going downstairs.

When they were alone, Sam looked into Dean’s eyes and then at the mess around them. Slowly, realization and regret started to creep into him and Sam began to hyperventilate.

“What have I done? What have I done?”

“Take it easy, you’re having a panic attack. You need to try and stay calm, okay?” Dean held him by the shoulders and looked him in the eyes.

“Dean! Dean, I screwed up Bobby’s bedroom. He’ll hate me! He’ll be so angry! He’ll kick us out!” Sam’s panic escalated and he choked, and for a moment he bent forwards as if he would either throw up or pass out.

“Sam! Sam, listen to me, you need to calm down, okay? You’re hyperventilating. Take deep breaths, alright?”

Sam tried to take the air in deeply, but his muscles hardly obeyed, and his mind was a broken mess of confusion, despair and reminiscent anger.

“Dean!”

“He won’t hate you. It’s like you don’t know Bobby, Sam. You know he can’t hate you.”

“Dad said he will! Dad said he will be angry. He’ll—” Sam felt the corners of his vision darkening and held on to Dean when he began to feel weak and lightheaded.

Dean didn’t think of his next move. He framed Sam’s face between his hands and kissed him, hard. It was either that or slapping him, since he needed to try and get Sam out of that mental state.

The kiss seemed to work, thank goodness, because Dean wouldn’t have liked to slap him.
Sam fell silent and started to breathe deeply, in and out.

“That’s it. Just try and relax. Go back to bed, okay? Sit there and try to relax. I’ll clean up here and then I’ll be with you in a second, alright?”

Sam didn’t reply, but he let Dean lead him towards the bed and tuck him beneath the covers.

As Sam shuddered uncontrollably under the sheets, Dean cleaned up what had spilled and picked up what had broken, trying to minimize the damage Sam had caused. In the end, it was nothing really serious, just some minor vandalizing of Bobby’s stuff. Dean was sure Bobby wouldn’t mind a broken bottle of cologne and a shattered mirror. The picture frame had broken, but the picture was intact.

It took him twenty minutes to try and make everything as close to normal as it had been before, and then Dean turned off the lights in the room and turned them on in the bathroom. In the time it took him to turn on some lights, Sam gasped and Dean could feel his worry in his quickened breathing.

“It’s alright. The lights are on in the bathroom, and I’m here.” He got under the covers and wrapped his arms around Sam. His brother’s skin felt cold, and the shudders were still raking him as an aftermath of his attack.

“Dad is angry with me, Dean. And Bobby will be, too. They’ll be both so angry with me. We’ll have to leave Bobby’s house.”

“Sam, don’t, just don’t…” Dean squeezed him. “That’s not gonna happen. Dad’s tired, that’s all. And Bobby won’t mind it, you know him. I’ll talk to him. You know it’ll be okay.”

Sam wasn’t so sure, but he accepted Dean’s words for now.

“What happened, um? Where did that come from?”

Sam thought of the hospital and of the doctors, and of the rape kit and the nurses holding him down.

He closed his eyes and shook his head.

“I was in the hospital, Dean. Doctor Michael was there, and Dakota…and Dad was there, too, watching from a distance. They were going to examine me. Doctor Michael would run a rape test against my will. He would force me to do the exam, and Dad consented to it, because I wouldn’t answer him about the man.”

Dean sighed. Now he wished he hadn’t told Sam about Doctor Michael calling right before going to sleep. Sam’s mind was extremely fragile to some specific triggers, and Dean had unknowingly helped put a nightmare into motion.

“It was just a dream, Sam. No one could force you to do anything. Not even if Dad consented, no one would have forced you. Not Doctor Reece, not Doctor Michael either.”

“Why do they want to make me talk? Why do they want to know?” Sam asked, full of anguish.

“They think it’ll help you if you stop trying to act as if you’re okay.”
“And what do you think?” Sam asked suddenly.

Dean thought carefully of his next words.

“I don’t think they’re wrong, but I don’t like the way they’re making you feel cornered.”

“I remember being on my hands and knees in the middle of that room, coughing blood and thinking I could never get up again because it hurt too much,” Sam blurted the words.

Dean’s heart raced when he realized Sam was talking about the bright room.

“Then the demon came in and made me better, just so the man could come back and do it again.”

Dean felt his eyes sting and his throat hurt with the sudden tightness that closed in around it.

“I don’t understand. Why would anyone want to hear about all that?” Sam asked softly, sadly.

“We don’t, Sam. We don’t want to hear about that; we just want for you to not have to keep all that burden to yourself.”

“You don’t make me feel like they do when they tell me to talk.”

“So why don’t you open up to me?”

Sam tensed a little against Dean’s body.

He pressed his head into Dean’s chest and inhaled in deeply the scent of him.

“Night, Dean.”

Dean sighed. He heard the plea Sam didn’t voice. He heard the need for silence, the begging for more time as Sam’s fingers closed around his sleeping shirt tightly, and Dean would respect that silent urge, because he loved Sam too much not to.

“Night, baby.” He kissed the top of Sam’s head and closed his eyes too.

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tbc...
Bobby got back home the following morning and walked through the door at the same time John was hanging up the phone.

“Hey. How are you?” John asked.

“I’m alive. That’s good enough.” Bobby looked tired, but unharmed. “How are things around here?”

John sighed. He thought of Sam’s nightmare the night before and how he had trashed Bobby’s bedroom.

“I’m fine, but Sam had another episode.”

“Is he okay?” Bobby frowned.

“I guess so. I haven’t seen him since then.” John thought of him telling Dean to ‘handle Sam’ because he was too tired. He knew that was probably a very bad thing for a father to say, but what else could he have done? He was burned out from the previous hunt, and he knew he would have been unable to help Sam the way Dean could. Even though John loved his youngest son very much, sometimes it was maddening how frustrating it felt being unable to help him. “He broke some stuff in your room when he woke up. He was extremely unruly. It was a while before Dean could get him to calm down. I’m sorry, Bobby. You know I’m glad you let us stay here, and I didn’t mean to cause any trouble—”

“Shut up,” Bobby cut him off. “Really, John. Your son has a nightmare about the three months he spent locked up being tortured and broke a few things, so what? Do you think I care?”

John felt relieved. He knew Bobby wouldn’t, but he couldn’t help feeling apprehensive about overstaying their welcome.

“They cleaned everything up. I don’t know how bad it is, though. I’ll make Sam apologize to you.”

“Don’t,” Bobby said. “There’s no need to, John.”
“Yes, there is. I know Sam’s hurt, but that doesn’t mean he’s not going to take responsibility for his actions. That’s not what I’ve been teaching them.”

Bobby sighed. He knew it wouldn’t help arguing with John’s stubbornness, so he just waved a hand in the air dismissively and shrugged.

“Whatever, John. You know I don’t mind. I just need to take a shower like, now. There’s monster goo on me.” Bobby made a face.

John watched Bobby go upstairs and saw his two sons come down the same stairs a few minutes later. Sam was walking right after Dean, looking worried and shy.

“Morning,” Dean said, trying to break the ice.

“Morning. Dean, Sam’s therapist has just called. She says she asked you to go there and talk. Why haven’t you gone?”

Dean didn’t need to look over his shoulder to know Sam looked tense.

“I wanted to, but we were always alone,” he explained.

“Well, you’re not alone now. Get your things and go, she’ll be waiting.”

Dean looked from his father to Sam, but they didn’t say anything in the silent exchange.

“Now?” Dean asked.

“Yes, Dean. I told her you’d be there as soon as possible.”

“Fine,” Dean agreed, looking at Sam for a last, lingering moment before walking towards his father and taking the car keys. “Bye, Sam,” Dean didn’t want to leave his brother, but there was nothing he could do now. He just hoped Sam would be fine after last night’s strong emotions.

“As for you,” John said when they were alone. “Bobby’s back. He’s in the shower.”

“I heard him,” Sam said.

“Good. I told him about last night. He’ll be expecting your apology when he comes down here again.”

Sam stiffened and his heart raced. He felt ashamed and insecure about last night, and the thought that Bobby might be upset just made it all even worse.

“I didn’t mean to break anything…” He said, his voice small.

“I’m sure you didn’t. But you should tell Bobby this. It was not my stuff.”

Sam nodded and turned around quickly. He walked into the kitchen and pretended to make himself breakfast when what he really wanted was to have some time alone and help himself hold back the stinging sensation of helplessness burning in his throat.

John watched him go and sighed. He couldn’t stay home much longer. It was difficult to be around
Sam and not know why those terrible things had happened to him. So far John had found nothing that pointed him the direction of the demon who had taken him, but he wouldn’t rest. Perhaps when Sam knew the demon was gone, and when they understood why he was taken, then they could all move on.

What John didn’t want to admit was that being outside, desperately searching for this demon and telling himself he was doing everything for Sam, was a lot easier than seeing the broken look in his son’s eyes and being unable to mend what he felt inside.

~ * ~

Dean walked into the neat office for the first time. Dakota Reece welcomed him into the room and closed the door behind them as Dean sat on the lilac sofa and started to look around.

“Hi, Dean. Thanks for coming. I know I’m being less official given the nature of Sam’s case, which includes not keeping records on what we talk about in our sessions, but I would really like to explore my options to help him, and that includes talking to you.”

Dean watched as she sat before him on a black chair.

“No problem.”

“I’m sorry I seemed insistent, but I was afraid you were deliberately avoiding my request.”

“I wasn’t,” Dean said. “My dad is out hunting a lot, and so is Bobby. I can’t leave Sam alone.”

She nodded. She knew the boys’ father hunted a lot, but perhaps he did it more often than she imagined, leaving them to look after themselves.

“Right. And speaking of him, does he know you are here?”

“Yes. I keep no secrets from him,” Dean said, looking her in the eyes.

Dakota was once again forced to think of the thick, intense bond between the two brothers. There was something physically strong between them, and she wondered just how deep it ran.

“But Sam keeps secrets from you, doesn’t he?” She asked softly.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean the things that happened to him when he was taken. Has he told you about that time?”

“Those are not secrets,” Dean said. “Sam can’t talk about what happened to him in there.”

“And why do you think he can’t, Dean?”

“Well, I don’t know, maybe because he feels bad thinking about the time he was beaten bloody in a weird, dark place?”

Dakota wondered why Dean was so defensive. She could tell, just from studying him, that he felt responsible for his little brother, and that getting Dean to do or say something Sam didn’t want might
“Yes. I know it was extremely painful, Dean. Don’t think for one moment I underestimate the pain Sam has been through. That’s why I brought you here. I’m trying to get all the help I can so I can help him deal with that happened. And I believe that talking about it is an important step towards feeling better.”

“Maybe,” Dean admitted. “But it’s not like he can help it.”

“Have you already tried to get him to tell you more about that time?”

“Yes, many times.”

“And what happens?”

“He shuts down. I know it’s a burden he can barely handle, and Sam can’t speak about it. Whenever I tried to make him talk he couldn’t control himself, and I had to stop pushing before I triggered another panic attack.”

“And how would you describe these panic attacks? When I ask questions Sam doesn’t want to answer he just falls silent. What happens when he’s with you?”

“Well, it starts with falling silent,” Dean began. “But it’s like he shuts down and explodes at the same time. If I insist then there’s the shaking and the panting.” Dean thought of Sam’s last nightmare. “And if it happens after one of his night terrors he’ll wake not knowing where he is, completely disoriented, lashing out until he comes back to reality.”

“I see,” Dakota said. “You know you are the person he trusts the most in his life, don’t you?”

Dean felt his heartbeats increase appreciatively at that.

“I suppose…”

“Well, you are. He has said so himself. This means that you can probably get closer to him in a way no one else can. Even though I’m a professional therapist, I cannot hope to have Sam trust me as he trusts you. And Dean, I’ve had difficult cases before, but your brother…I mean, for such a young boy Sam is extremely tough. I can’t help but think of how much he suffers when he doesn’t talk about his past.”

Dean thought about her words. He knew Sam suffered a lot by not saying anything, but what could he do?

“Well, I’m not going to push until Sam breaks down.”

“Why do you think this is a bad idea?”

“Why?” Dean sounded outraged. “My brother loses all control of himself, he shakes and shudders and I can see he’s in hell, and you ask me why I don’t insist? It’s so easy for everyone to just keep saying he should open up. You don’t know what it feels like for him. Hell, I don’t know, but at least I don’t act like his feelings don’t matter.”

“Dean, no one is saying that Sam’s feelings don’t matter. You think that putting pressure on him is
harmful, but you have got to understand that only pressure will cause him to open up. You think
pushing is bad, but it is actually helping, Dean. If no one manages to squeeze all that suffering out of
him, Sam will just keep on choking on it. And he trusts you, so eventually you will have to be the
one who breaks this wall he insists on building.”

“You don’t get it…” Dean shook his head. “You keep pushing him, but you’re not there when he
breaks down. You’re not there picking up the pieces, Doctor. With all due respect, you can sit on this
chair and tell me how you think Sam should act about his trauma, but you don’t know what it feels
like to see him descend into chaos and you don’t know how it feels not knowing how to bring him
back.” Dean felt his throat tight and had to take a deep breath.

Dakota studied Dean carefully for a moment. She wondered if that young man knew just how much
he needed help as well. Being there for someone with such a haunting trauma as Sam, being his
strength, would be extremely demanding for anyone.

“Well, then tell me this. Your father said that Sam didn’t talk to anyone when he was at the hospital.
Did he talk to you?”

“No,” Dean said.

“He said Sam only spoke again when he was back home. Is that right?”

“It is.”

“And what happened that caused him to speak, do you remember?”

Dean thought of that night when he inadvertently turned off the lights in Sam’s room for the first time
since he had been found. He thought of the screaming and crying, and how Sam had gone back to
talking after that.

“I… I turned off the lights in his room when he was sleeping. I didn’t know about the dark.” Dean
felt his chest strung tight at the memory. “He woke up screaming. I tried to calm him down, and we
were just talking again after that.”

“Now Dean, if none of that had happened, how long do you think it would have taken for Sam to
speak again?”

Dean shrugged.

“Right. So a little push, even though you didn’t know what you were doing, caused him to move on
and break down one of his shields.”

Dean didn’t know what to say to that.

“Your father also told me that he confronted Sam about being sexually assaulted in captivity. He said
Sam never confessed to anything. But he also said that trying to get him to admit that it happened
was what ended up bringing him to therapy. Once again, pushing seems to have a positive effect on
Sam, even though at the time you may not see it.”

Dean couldn’t deny she had a point. But again, it was so hard to see this point when Sam was being
rocked by tremors, his eyes wildly scared and his body disobeying any rational command…
“Maybe. But it’s not that simple to push him.” Dean thought of Sam and the gun he had found on his hand on the day their father had tried to push him further than he could go.

“I don’t think it is. And I’m not saying that it will happen all of a sudden. If we can somehow break Sam’s burden into small steps, then there’s a chance it’ll be easier for him to manage it. You know his triggers better than me, so maybe you can help him deal with each one at a time, you know. That’s why I wouldn’t think anyone else was better able at doing it than you.”

Dakota studied Dean carefully. It was easy to get carried away with his looks. There was something fierce in that young man, and something so extremely protective that she was almost breathless. Once again she caught herself wondering at the nature of his and Sam’s relationship.

“Dean…some time ago I was talking to your brother about his feelings…” She narrowed her eyes and observed him. “…about you.”

Dean shifted uncomfortably on the sofa.

“Yeah?” He tried to act cool about it, but his heart was racing.

“Did he ever talk to you about those feelings?”

“No.”

Dean arched his eyebrows and pretended he didn’t know what she was talking about, but then he remembered she was a trained professional, and immediately he was painfully aware that his lie was all over his face.

“Dean…” She began. “I will tell you the same thing I told Sam. I’m not here to judge anyone. Sam is my patient and I just want what is best for him. You seem to be the one thing I’m sure does him a lot of good, and as his therapist, I’m glad you are in his life and mean as much to him as you do.”

Dean hoped his cheeks weren’t blushing or anything. He felt vulnerable under her knowing look. Even though Sam said he had never told her anything, it was almost as if she knew there was something between them.

“Society has created some rules because we, as humans, often feel the need to follow a guideline. Science explains why incest is an issue in our society.”

Dean tensed. He felt his heart race and he hoped his eyes weren’t betraying him.

“I mean, it’s not desirable, genetically speaking, to have babies born between siblings. That doesn’t mean that eventually a strong, romantic affection won’t exist between a brother and a sister, or between two brothers. And if this is the case, I don’t see how it could be an issue, genetically speaking.”

“I really don’t know—”

“Just hear me out,” she cut him off when Dean tried to interrupt her. “I don’t think you need to stop feeling what you do because someone says it’s wrong. But I trust you know how vulnerable Sam is, and how careful you need to be around that vulnerability. I know you love him very much and I trust your instincts when it comes to him, but keep in mind that he is only a kid, who is very confused, and who loves you very much and looks up to you. If there are feelings between the two of you that
are perhaps more than you can understand at the moment, you have to be the one who’s rational about it, Dean. Fourteen is too young to cross some lines. Sam needs time to grow and think about what he really wants.”

Dean shifted uncomfortably once again and looked at the clock on the wall.

“Are we done here? Because seriously, you’re not making any sense anymore,” Dean said, defensively. “I would never hurt my brother,” he added.

“I know,” Doctor Reece agreed. “You protect him very much. Too much sometimes, Dean.”

Dean frowned. He understood now what Sam probably felt when she asked questions and cornered him about his feelings.

“You can choose to ignore everything I just said if it didn’t make any sense to you, but don’t forget what we discussed before. Sometimes, insisting with Sam is helping him.”

She looked intently into those green, beautiful eyes.

“I called you here because I wanted to tell you this, Dean. You know what Sam needs, most of the time. So don’t be afraid to push.”

~ * ~

Bobby found Sam sitting on the porch stairs, a place where he often found him when he was thoughtful.

He took a deep breath and sat down beside him.

Sam realized he was no longer alone and his heart skipped a beat when Bobby sat down next to him.

“Where’s Dad?”

“Not here. Somewhere in the house writing on that diary of his. He said you wanted to speak to me.”

Sam swallowed hard and looked at Bobby.

“Yes…” He forced himself to speak. He needed to face the consequences of his actions, his dad was right. “Did he tell you about last night? How I broke some of your stuff when I woke up after a nightmare?”

Bobby nodded. “He might have said something, yes.”

“I’m sorry, Bobby. I didn’t mean to. I didn’t really know what I was doing, I was just so angry… Dean tried to stop me, but I broke a picture frame and a bottle of cologne, and a vase and…”

Sam felt an arm rest on his shoulders and pull him closer. The hug was unexpected and Sam found himself relaxing some of the stiffness in his limbs. He fell silent and they didn’t say anything for a moment.
Bobby breathed in and out deeply, running a soothing hand up and down Sam’s back.

“So you’re not mad? You’re not gonna kick us out of your house?” Sam looked into his eyes.

“’Course not, you idjit,” he said, and made Sam smile. “I love having you here. I’m a lonely man, Sam. Sometimes it gets boring coming back to an empty house. I’m glad to see you and your brother when I’m home. And your dad, too, even though he’s often gone.”

Sam smiled. “I’m still sorry about it. I’ll try and fix—”

“Shut up.” Bobby pushed Sam playfully and they laughed. “You could probably set my entire house on fire by accident and I would still love you idjits very much.”

Sam laughed, delighted.

“You’re the best, Bobby,” Sam said. “Sometimes I wish Dad was as understanding as you,” Sam said.

“Your daddy loves you, Sam. He just has a hard time expressing it after everything that happened. He believes he needs to raise you to be tough. He thinks that this way he can protect you from the evil out there.”

‘Well, he obviously can’t,’ Sam thought.

“Try and cut him some slack.”

“I will,” Sam said, but not for the first time he found himself toying with the guilty thought that Bobby would have made a really good father.

~ * ~

As soon as Dean got back, John took the Impala and left on a hunt. At least that was what he said, but Dean had a feeling his dad just wanted to be away for a while, after what had happened with Sam the previous night.

Dean truly wished there was an easier way to enhance communication between his brother and his father, but he didn’t really know how he could help. All his life he had been told to watch out for Sammy, so that was pretty much what he had done. No wonder Sam trusted him, no wonder he was unable to open up to a father who was mostly absent and very demanding.

Dean found Sam lying in bed, reading a book on Greek mythology.

“Hey,” he said, walking in.

“Dad left again?” Sam asked. “I heard the Impala driving away.”

“He did. But Bobby’s downstairs.”

“Dad made me talk to him, you know. Apologize for last night.” Sam put the book down and sat on the bed, looking at his brother.
Dean sat beside him and studied him.

“Really? How did it go? Did he kick us out?” Dean smiled, knowing Bobby would have never done such a thing.

“He was awesome. He told me not to worry.”

“Well, of course he would say that. He’s Bobby,” Dean said, matter-of-factly.

“And what did Doctor Dakota say to you?” Sam asked, barely able to hide his curiosity.

Dean took a deep breath. He wouldn’t lie to Sam, but he wondered how much of their talk he should know. He made himself more comfortable, partially lying on the bed as he rested his head on his right hand.

“She thinks you need to open up.”

“Same old, same old,” Sam shrugged.

“Right. She thinks I should help you talk about the past.”

“She just won’t quit.”

“I guess not,” Dean said, and he also thought about her conjectures on his relationship with Sam.

Dean let his eyes fall on the bedspread, but he wasn’t really seeing anything. He kept thinking of her words, about being with Sam, about being with someone who was confused and vulnerable, and who trusted him above anything else.

“Hey…”

Sam’s voice and his touch brought Dean out of his thoughts. He looked at the way Sam’s fingers rested on top of his on the bed and smiled.

“What’s that look you got? Did she say anything else?”

“She’s just worried about you,” Dean said. “And so am I. I wonder how I can help you more, you know.”

“I know how you can help me more,” Sam’s voice dropped a little and he leaned closer, letting his lips brush Dean’s.

Immediately, Dean’s heart was beating faster, and he let his fingers tighten around Sam’s. But when his brother tried to deepen the kiss, Dean drew back and didn’t let him.

“Bobby is downstairs…” Sam said.

“I know. It’s not Bobby, it’s just…” Dean shrugged.

“What? Don’t tell me you’re going to get all weird again. You know this makes me happy.” Sam wondered if the doctor had said anything to Dean about something happening between them, because Dean looked slightly unsure about intimacy.
Dean pinched Sam’s nose playfully, but he had a thoughtful smile on his face.

“You know I don’t ever want to hurt you, right?” He asked, seriousness in his voice.

“Of course I do.”

“No, Sam. I mean it. I can’t bear the thought of hurting you.”

Sam frowned. He wondered what it was that Dean meant with his words. If only he could make his brother understand the amount of light he was able to bring back into his soul just by being who he was and being close to him. Lately, Sam had been thinking more and more of how good it felt being with Dean, how easily he could shut down any darkness in his heart and feel good when they were together, and Sam didn’t think he could control any of his feelings. He didn’t want to.

“You can’t hurt me, Dean.”

Dean smiled and swallowed hard. He never thought love could be so physical, so thick…there was a feeling in his tightening throat, in his heaving chest, in his fast beating heart, and it was such an amazing feeling Dean could hardly fight it.

He reached out his hand and pulled a lock of hair behind Sam’s ear.

For a moment Sam didn’t say anything. He looked into his brother’s eyes feeling happy and silly, as if each beat of his heart spread a powerful drug in his veins that made the world simply a better place.

“I need to have my hair cut. I’m beginning to look like a girl.”

“No, you aren’t.”

“I mean it, though. It’s too long.” Sam grabbed fistfuls of hair and pulled, and Dean chuckled softly at that.

“Fine. We can go somewhere tomorrow.”

“Thanks,” Sam said and watched as Dean made as if he would get up. “Dean?”

“Yeah?” Dean stood up and looked at his brother.

“I don’t care what she said. I need what we have.”

Dean felt his stomach flutter with a cold, and yet burning sensation. He looked into those hazel eyes he had loved since they had first opened, and when he nodded there was so much love in his eyes that he simply didn’t have to say anything else.

Silence was the most eloquent language for a love that felt this strong.

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tbc...
The next few weeks went by slowly. Sam spent a lot of his time indoors studying or reading, or outside training with Dean. After Sam’s last nightmare in which he had broken a few things and had a rough time with his dad, John hadn’t shown up at Bobby’s place again. He called every two days to see how things were going, but every time he finished a case there was another one somewhere else that would cause him to stay away a while longer. John felt awful for hiding his inability to help his younger son in his job, and it killed him when he thought that they probably didn’t even miss him that much with Bobby there. John knew how much his kids loved Bobby, and sometimes he just forced himself not to overthink it, and especially not to let something as silly as jealousy ruin the gratitude he felt for his friend for being there for his two sons.

Bobby was home most of the time John was away, having to leave eventually to help someone or work a case. When that happened, Sam and Dean would be alone, in their familiar dynamics of training, cooking, cleaning, eating, watching TV and all those things they had been doing for a long time. And some other things they hadn’t been doing for that long, but that happened when the lights were dim and they were so close in bed.

The next time Bobby had to leave, he drove Sam to therapy since it was on his way, and Dean would pick him up in an hour. Sam could hardly wait. Even as he sat on the lilac sofa and listened to Doctor Dakota, all he really wanted was to be back home and enjoy the time alone with Dean.

“So, Sam…how’s it been? You haven’t really shared a lot in the past few sessions,” Dakota said.

“Well, there’s nothing really interesting happening,” Sam argued.

“Is that so?”

Sam nodded.

“How about your nightmares? Have you had any bad dreams lately?”

Sam hesitated for a few seconds. He thought of his last terrible dream with her, Doctor Michael and his dad, all three trying to dig into his secrets and expose his shameful past.

Dakota already knew the answer to her question. There was uneasiness all over Sam’s face, and she
wondered what had happened in his last nightmare.

“No, not really,” Sam ended up saying.

“Sam, are you lying to me? I understand if you don’t want to tell me what it was, but I thought we had agreed that there would be no lies.”

Sam sighed deeply.

“Fine. I had a bad nightmare a couple of weeks ago.”

“And what was it about? Can you tell me?”

“No,” Sam said shortly.

Dakota breathed in deeply. Sometimes she wondered whether Sam was testing her patience, trying to make her give up on him.

“Sam…you know you are here to try and understand what happened to you…”

“There’s nothing to be understood in what happened to me. Unless you can tell me why the demon took me and why he had me tortured for three months, I don’t see what’s possibly left to understand.”

“Why you are so angry, for instance. That’s something we could investigate, don’t you think? Why does it anger you so much to talk about it?”

“I don’t know, because it was the worst three months of my life, maybe? Because I was kidnapped on my birthday and used as a lab rat in some twisted experiment?” Sam said, sarcastically.

“Why do you think they took you?” She asked suddenly, and Sam looked intently at her. “I know you don’t really know, Sam, but do you have any guesses?”

Sam sometimes wondered about it. He knew he had grown up feeling different. Sometimes he would have weird thoughts and weird feelings, something he would not understand at all. But he had no idea where any of those feelings came from, that feeling of being different, of not belonging, of having another part of himself, something dark, something he couldn’t comprehend and that was beyond his control. Nevertheless, those were just feelings, impressions, crazy thoughts that probably every other child and teenager had already experienced. Nothing that could justify why he had been taken and abused for three months.

“I don’t know,” Sam ended up saying.

“Do you think they would have killed you? If your family hadn’t rescued you, I mean?”

Sam had thought of that, too, and the answer disturbed him.

“No,” he said.

“Do you know this for sure? Did they say they wouldn’t?”

“They never said anything. They never talked to me. But they wouldn’t kill me.” Sam spoke with a
certainty he didn’t know he felt, and that came as a surprise to him.

“If they didn’t want to kill you, why do you think they hurt you so badly for all that time?”

Sam’s eyes seemed glassy, and Dakota was sure he could see the place where he had been held captive for three months. In his eyes, she could almost see the lights going off and the memories coming back.

“They wanted to break me.” When Sam spoke there was a calmness in his voice that sent chills down her spine. She wondered if Sam knew just how haunting his answer was.

“And did they, Sam? Did they break you?”

Sam thought of himself, yelling at the camera, kicking off a tray of food, promising himself he wouldn’t be needing the toilet or the sink in the bright room. Sam thought of the darkness, and of the white rags he used to wipe his blood, and the other ones he used to clean his body by the sink, of all the blood and filth on his skin. Sam remembered the hunger, the thirst when he was curled up on the floor, unable to get up under all that pain, and the clean pajamas he would change into when the ones he was wearing would stick to his skin with dry blood.

“Did they break you?” Doctor Dakota repeated the question, hoping she would be able to get a bit further into Sam’s thoughts today.

Sam thought of the first time he had cried in the room. That was when he understood he was damned. From that moment on, it had been just pure hell. When the crying started, so did the sobbing, and from that to the begging it was quick. And when Sam started to beg, he had already lost everything.

“They shattered me,’ Sam thought, and he felt he would start shaking and lose control unless he stopped talking about it.

“I don’t want to talk about it anymore.”

Dakota had been holding her breath, and she let it out now in a long, deep sigh. ‘So close,’ she thought. Sometimes she got so close to knocking on the door to Sam’s fears, and then he would slam it shut fiercely, and push her away forcefully.

“Sam?” She tried, gently.

Sam shook his head, trying to get rid of the memories.

“No. No more. I’m not going there.”

“Sam, there’s no shame in admitting you couldn’t fight a demon. You are just a kid, there was no way you could have helped yourself out of what they planned for you.”

“I said no more,” Sam spoke slowly, calmly, but there were sparks in his eyes, and Dakota understood that unless she wanted to spend the next month in silent sessions with him, she had better stop pushing.

“Okay. I’m sorry.” She gave up, and she couldn’t help noticing Sam’s shaky hands and edgy mood. There was still so much behind the closed doors to his past. She wondered if he would ever truly
come out of that room where he was kept. If only he understood that eventually he would need to go back in there before he could truly get out.

She believed they were making progress, but at this rate, she wondered how many years it would be before she could truly help him with his PTSD. Not for the first time since they had met, Dakota thought that perhaps she would not be able to handle Sam’s trauma alone.

“So what do you want to talk about then?” She smiled at the uneasy boy looking intently at her and hiding behind his walls.

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When Dean drove Sam back home, the sun was almost setting in the horizon. As soon as Sam was out of the car he rushed into the kitchen and looked around the living room.

“Bobby? Dad?” He called out.

Dean followed him inside and frowned.

“You know they’re not here, Sam. Is something wrong?”

When he realized they were truly alone, Sam’s face changed into an unreadable expression as he walked towards Dean.

“Seriously, is something—“

Dean never had time to finish that. Sam’s mouth found his and his brother’s smaller body was all urgent need and feverish passion as it pressed hard into him until they were both up against the wall.

Dean barely had time to understand what was going on, but he kissed back. In only a few seconds Sam’s desire set fire to his own, and Dean kissed back just as hotly and let his hands hold and grasp just as desperately.

When Sam broke the kiss to breathe, his cheeks looked flushed and his eyes looked darker.

“Seriously, though. Are you okay?” Dean asked as he framed his face, in between long intakes of breath.

Sam nodded and smiled, and for a moment he just enjoyed the feeling of Dean’s palms on his cheeks.

“Miss you, Dean. I want to touch you, want you to touch me…” Sam’s eyes were clouded with desire, and Dean felt himself harden at the blunt arousal in Sam’s eyes. “Let’s go upstairs, bed…” He babbled. He knew he should try and focus to get his words right, but Dean didn’t seem to care.

In a confusing, and yet delightful mess of groping and kneading, they made their way upstairs and into the room where they usually slept. As their mouths still kissed and tasted, they helped each other out of their clothes until they were all pooling on the floor, a colorful mix of plaid and jeans.

Sam was hard and he shuddered when Dean ran his hands all over his back and pulled him closer by
“You’re shaking,” Dean said, his voice low and intimate.

“I’m cold,” Sam smiled. It was a little chilly, but that was not all. There were so many emotions, so many fears… Sam needed the feeling he had when they were together; he needed that safety, that light that shone inside his head when Dean’s hands were on his skin.

“C’mere.” Dean’s hands went up from his body to his neck, and they raked his hair and tugged, until Sam opened his mouth and Dean could lick into his secrets.

Sam was breathless and aching as their kisses grew greedier. He pulled Dean towards the bed, but before his brother did anything else, Sam sat on the edge of the bed and drew him closer by the hips.

“What?” Dean looked down at the mischievous look on Sam’s face.

Sam didn’t reply. He smiled with the corner of his mouth and placed both hands around Dean’s hipbones. Dean shuddered with anticipation when Sam’s mouth closed around his cock and he began to suck.

“Fuck,” Dean cursed and shut his eyes when everything he felt around his throbbing dick was warmth and wetness, and the softness of Sam’s lips.

Sam loved the way Dean tasted on his tongue. He loved knowing that his desire was because of him, that he could make Dean weak with pleasure and need… It was so empowering, so deliciously arousing. Sam felt his own cock twitch as his mouth tried to take as much of Dean as he could inside, where his tongue could lick and tease.

“Sammy…” Dean’s fingers tangled in Sam’s hair. It was shorter now, but he could still tug at it, and he loved the silky feeling of Sam’s hair between his fingers almost as much as he loved the feeling of his cock slipping in and out of his mouth.

Dean shut his eyes and bit back a moan. He couldn’t think. His thoughts were all clouded, they were melting into something hot, something liquid and lustful and that urged him on.

“Enough.” Dean pulled Sam away and looked down at him.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat at the flaming desire he saw in his brother’s eyes when Dean squinted them.

“I want to taste you, too.” Dean pushed Sam back on the bed and crawled on top of him until his head was hovering above his midsection.

“Hm!” Sam moaned and shuddered when Dean bit the inside of his thigh softly. “Dean!” He protested, when Dean bit him again.

Dean chuckled, the sound wet and hot against Sam’s skin, sending shock waves down his spine, making heat pool in his belly and his cock harden even more.

Dean’s large hands held his buttocks when his mouth drew closer. Sam kept his eyes wide open, because he wanted to see it, but the moment Dean’s lips closed around his tip, his eyes rolled back in his head and Sam threw his head back, swallowing back a moan that tried to claw its way out of his
“Dean!” Sam bucked into his brother’s mouth and had to be kept still by Dean’s hands on his hips. It didn’t matter that they had already done that before, every time felt like the first time, and Sam was barely able to handle the pleasure exploding in his head as Dean’s lips closed around the base of his cock and his tongue flicked against his tip.

“Hmm!” Sam moaned and writhed, his fingers closing around the sheets and his heart racing. Dean felt Sam’s pleasure against his tongue, and sucked him relentlessly until Sam started tugging at his hair.

“Dean! Dean, Dean!”

At first Dean didn’t want to stop. He went up and down on Sam, licking and sucking, holding his bucking hips down as Sam shuddered and squirmed.

“Dean!” Sam tugged hard at Dean’s hair until he let go and looked him in the eyes.

“Ouch. What was that for?” Dean frowned, and loved the way Sam laughed, his face lit up with desire and pleasure.

“Here.” Sam opened his arms and gestured for Dean to come between them.

“What do you want?”

“Like that time outside? When we were training?” Sam said, breathlessly.

Dean narrowed his eyes and licked his lips unconsciously. He covered Sam’s body with his own, settling between his brother’s thighs, and thrust slowly, bringing their hard cocks into contact.

“Ohh!” Sam choked on his own breathless panting and shuddered at the feeling.

The sight of him so lost in pleasure, so wrapped up in the feeling of their bodies rubbing, was like a drug, like the most addictive drug ever. Dean let his body weigh on top of Sam’s and let his hips roll into his, pressing their midsections together, causing their slick cocks to rub as they slid one against the other.

Dean’s forearms and elbows rested on each side of Sam’s body as he thrust rhythmically on top of him.

“Hmm!” Sam moaned and let his hands find both of Dean’s arms and squeeze.

Dean drank in the sight of him. It was perfect. Sam was perfect. There was nothing more beautiful in the entire world, not that Dean had seen.

He lowered his head and seized Sam’s mouth into a kiss. Their tongues tangled the same as their legs, and their tongues rubbed the same as their cocks, in a crescendo of lust and urgency that neither could, nor wanted, to fight.

Sam looked deeply into Dean’s eyes as he moved on top of him. His heart was bursting in his chest, and Sam held on tightly as his climax built up.
‘Unbreak me, Dean,’ Sam thought, lost into those green eyes that were always there for him. “Please…” he whispered, arching up into the friction.

Dean let his hand travel lower and wrap around Sam’s cock. He stopped thrusting and let his hand do the job. Sam panted and moaned, his body bucking and shuddering as Dean stroked him swiftly, squeezing and moving until Sam couldn’t hold back.

“Hehm! Dean!” Sam moaned and writhed, then he arched into the fist wrapped around him and came, his thighs falling open and his stomach flexing as the wave of pleasure rumbled through him.

When Sam was satisfied and languid, Dean straddled him, still on top, and closed his own hand around himself. As soon as Sam opened his eyes, though, he slapped Dean’s hand away and replaced it with his own.

“Let me,” he whispered.

Dean nodded. He couldn’t resist even if he wanted to. He was throbbing, aching. He needed to come, and when Sam’s fingers wrapped around him and stroked, Dean thrust into his hand and shut his eyes, letting the feeling escalate and take control of his body.

Sam watched him, transfixed, as Dean lost the fight and surrendered. He stroked faster, moving his wrist up and down until Dean’s breath came in clipped, breathless pants.

Dean bit hard on his bottom lip and groaned, the sound low and sultry, and then he pulsed within Sam’s hand and released, his come covering Sam’s skin and some of it pooling in his belly button.

When the last tremor was done with him, Dean collapsed beside Sam on the bed and pulled him closer, his chest partially atop Sam’s and their thighs tangled, in a sweaty and sticky mess.

Sam ran his fingers through Dean’s hair at the same time he felt his hot breath against his neck. The feeling of being meant to be like that was so strong that it seemed to thicken with every beat of his racing pulse.

“Dean?”

“Yeah?”

“I want more.”

Dean chuckled, breathless. The sound muffled between Sam’s neck and shoulder.

“Well, I’m not fourteen anymore. Give me half an hour, a quick shower and we can do it again.”

“No,” Sam said, his fingers still in Dean’s hair. “That’s not what I meant. I want more,” he repeated.

Dean lifted his head and looked into Sam’s eyes. There was puzzlement and genuine confusion in his look.

‘Oh god, he didn’t understand,’ Sam thought, and his heart raced, like it was beating in his throat.

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes when he said his next words, and he didn’t look away because he wanted to see the moment when realization sank into the green eyes staring back at him.
“I want you inside of me.”

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tbc...
Chapter 56

Dean’s eyes widened and his lips parted. His heart started to race and he blinked a few times. Dean’s mind was immediately taken over by a thousand feelings that could hardly coexist in his body.

His first thought, the one that was closest to his heart and understood Sam’s words faster, took advantage of his confusion to relish the idea of being inside Sam. For a split moment, Dean felt his thoughts swirling away with the impossible desire of holding Sam in his arms and feeling him wrapped around his body. Being inside him. Dean thought of himself taking Sam, knowing everything he tasted like, and smelled like, and what it would feel like when he fell over the edge because of him, because of them…

Dean’s reason was quick to resume control, though. It shattered his fantasy into a thousand pieces, slowed down his heartbeats and made Dean swallow with some difficulty down his dry throat. He took a deep breath to try and clear his thoughts of the haze that seemed to have taken over, and then he looked into his brother’s eyes.

“You can’t be serious, right?”

Sam’s heart was still beating fast. He didn’t even know he wanted it so much until he said it out loud. But it made sense. It made so much sense that it ached. There was nothing he wanted more than to know Dean was inside of him, in every last place where darkness had been, so there would be light to chase away the worst memories.

“You not?” Sam asked, a smile on his face.

‘Oh my god, he is serious,’ Dean thought, and shifted in bed until he was sitting. He watched as Sam did the same and looked expectantly at him, waiting for an answer.

“Sam, we can’t!” Was the first thing Dean could think of saying. What else could he say? There were so many reasons popping up in his brain right now as to why that was so very wrong, that he was unable to put them into a decent order and start explaining.

“Why not? We’ve been doing great so far.” Sam studied him intently. He knew Dean enjoyed sex a lot, he had reason to think so before they were anything more than brothers, and now, after their new level of intimacy, Sam was certain Dean loved touching.
“Yeah, but it’s different. What we’ve been doing…it’s completely different.” Dean tried to explain.

“How so? You touch me, I touch you, we get off…don’t you think that’s sex too?”

Dean grew uneasy and looked at the bedspread.

Sam didn’t like it when Dean started to reach out for his underwear and get dressed.

“Hey, what’s going on?”

“I knew we shouldn’t have done anything. Now look how confused you are.”

“I’m not confused!” Sam protested and started to get dressed as well.

“Yes, you are Sammy. You’re my brother. We can’t…we can’t have sex.” Even as he tried to explain it, Dean felt his heart race at the thought.

“Why not? Don’t you want it?”

“It has nothing to do with want.” Dean would not let Sam lead him down that road.

“Then what does it have to do with?”

Dean put on his jeans and sighed.

“You being fourteen, for instance.”

Sam narrowed his eyes in such a way that Dean knew he had just flared his temper before Sam even said his next words.

“Oh, so what? I’m too young for sex?” Sam’s face was all indignant and defiant protest.

“You’re a minor! It’s against the law.”

Sam let out a ringing, sarcastic laughter.

“You and dad killed a man in Bobby’s basement a few weeks ago. How’s that for breaking the law?”

Dean cursed mentally at Sam’s smart answer.

“That was different and you know that.”

“Why? Violence is okay, but sex isn’t?” Sam tried to look into the eyes avoiding his. Dean tried to busy himself with looking for the rest of his clothes. “Dean, I got a gun for my fourteenth birthday, and it wasn’t even the first time I handled a weapon. I’m not a child anymore—”

“I know, Sam. That’s not what I mean. I just think you don’t really see the full picture here.”

“I don’t.” Sam started to put on his pants as well, but he was still on the bed as Dean paced back and forth in the room.
“Sam, you’re fourteen and my baby brother. I know I’ve crossed some lines here, and Jesus, Sammy, I’m sorry I did, I just couldn’t seem to control myself.”

“Don’t apologize for us.” Sam widened his eyes and his throat tightened.

“I didn’t mean to confuse you. I never meant for things to go this far. Sam, I can’t have sex with you, you’re my little brother.”

“Stop saying that like I’m a baby, Dean. I know what I want. Do you think I haven’t thought this through? Do you think I would say anything if I didn’t really mean it? What’s bothering you so much?” Sam stood up as well.

“Don’t tell me you can’t see it! Sam, you’re my brother, I’m supposed to take care of you, not f—” Dean shut his mouth before he could have said anything further, but it was too late.

“Say it.” Sam stepped closer and dared him. “Say it, Dean. You can take care of me, but not fuck me, is that what you were going to say?”

“Sam…” Dean begged. “Please, don’t…”

“I don’t care, Dean. It’s just a word. You think I can’t handle it? You think I don’t know the implications of what I just said? Yes, I want you to fuck me.”

“Sam…” Dean felt breathless, hot, dizzy, lost, desperate…

“So what? I don’t care about a stupid word.” Sam closed the distance between them and grabbed Dean’s flannel shirt. “I just want you and me, that’s all…” He lowered his voice and looked intently into Dean’s eyes.

Dean felt his knees buckle at the look in his brother’s eyes, but what could he possibly do? There was no way he would take advantage of Sam’s confusion. The doctor had reminded him of how vulnerable Sam was; he might think he wanted that, but he didn’t know. He had never…

“Shit.” Dean closed his eyes and shook his head.

“What? What are you thinking?”

“We can’t do it, Sam…”

“Stop saying that. You’re not going to convince me just by repeating some senseless argument over and over. Tell me why we can’t do it, Dean. Tell me why you won’t—”

“Sam, you were raped,” the words blurted out of Dean’s mouth from amidst the storm of angst and desire he felt inside. How could he ever do to Sam what that monster had done in the dark? How could he possibly hurt him in the same way? No, Dean would rather die than know he was hurting Sam that same way again.

Sam’s lips quivered with something that was every bit as much anger as it was helplessness.

“You don’t know that!” He snarled at Dean and turned around quickly enough to hide the pool of angry wetness gathering in his eyes.
“Sam…”

“Don’t touch me!” Sam groaned, not turning around, and managed to put on his socks and sneakers.

Dean shut his eyes and ran a hand through his hair. ‘Damn. Fuck, fuck, fuck!’ He cursed over and over in his mind. Why had he said that? But how could he not have said it?

“What are you doing?” Dean asked, worried, when Sam made as if he would leave the bedroom.

“Downstairs,” Sam said, without turning around or looking at his brother. “I just need to be alone for a while. Please don’t come after me.”

“Sam…”

“I won’t leave the house, okay?”

Dean didn’t say anything. He watched as Sam went down the stairs and then saw as he started to turn on the lights in every room he passed by.

~ * ~

Dean sat down on the edge of the bed and let his head fall between his hands. He raked his fingers through his hair and sighed deeply as a thousand thoughts raced through his mind.

Why was this happening? It was the question that kept burning on his mind more often. This was not supposed to be happening in the first place. Why had things gone so far?

That kiss, that one kiss on the porch, that had been to blame for all this mess…or had it?

Dean knew that even before they had kissed he had already been feeling all these crazy, warm feelings for Sam. And he could only wonder that Sam was probably feeling them too, because even his therapist had seen it in his eyes.

So what? Was he supposed to have said no? Never let anything start? Well, it would certainly have saved them from this crazy, stupid argument… Nonetheless, Dean refused to regret everything they had done so far.

“I’m a sick fuck who’s going straight to hell,” he whispered softly. He should know better. He was the older one, the big brother…what was he thinking when he started to touch Sam in a sexual way? ‘That he’s never been happier since he came back from the bright room?’ His own thoughts answered his questions and Dean’s lips thinned, his forehead wrinkling with confusion.

It didn’t matter that Sam seemed happy. Maybe what they had done so far wasn’t that bad, or harmful…but what Sam had just asked of him, for Dean to be inside of him, that was wrong, that was damaging.

If only he could make Sam understand that he might think he wanted that, because it felt so good being together, but sex was not as beautiful as romance would have it. Dean knew that, he had been there. It was messy and sloppy, and yeah, deliciously good and hot, but still…Dean shrugged off his thoughts. He knew that sex—even when it was the most amazing pleasure one could have—was not
all that pretty. Sam didn’t know that, because he had never been with someone, he had never willingly chosen to be with someone.

Then there was the rape. What had Sam meant with ‘You don’t know that?’ Was he implying that he hadn’t been raped at all? By now Dean had pretty much no remaining doubt that Harry had gone as far as violating his brother, so why was Sam denying it?

Sure, Dean knew Sam had never truly admitted anything. He could have just been trying to protect himself from Dean’s words, from the truth he couldn’t seem to face…but he must understand that Dean could not take him after everything he had been through… What if Dean agreed, what if he actually had sex with his brother, and when he was inside him, as Sam believed he wanted, all sorts of memories came back, crashing down, unlocking all the fears Sam tried so hard to fight? Dean couldn’t bear being the one to make him remember the abuse. He had tried so hard to pick up the pieces of Sam’s broken spirit; he couldn’t live with himself if he was the one to break him all over again.

And Sam’s past was only one of the reasons why it was so wrong. It seemed pointless to go over the same things over and over, but Dean couldn’t help himself. Sam was his young brother, he was supposed to take care of him, not take advantage of Sam’s trust and need of his care. For heaven’s sake, what would their father say if he found out what they had been doing…?

Dean felt a cold chill grab his heart and make it beat faster. John would probably lose his fucking mind and beat them both senseless before he even thought of trying to understand something. Or maybe he would just turn around and walk away, go on a hunting trip and never come back, leaving them for good with Bobby.

And what would Bobby say? He was so nice, and so understanding…but he didn’t know Dean had been touching Sam. What would he say if he knew?

All his guilt-driven thoughts were killing him, and Dean felt that even breathing seemed to burn and demand too much of an effort.

After a while, he realized he was still covered in Sam’s and his come, and decided that a nice hot shower would come in handy.

~ * ~

Sam didn’t understand it. Why did Dean have to be so stubborn? He thought they had already gone past the whole guilt trip thing?

Sam sighed angrily as he made himself a sandwich.

There was no reason to overthink anything. They were just two people who loved each other, and it felt good being together, why couldn’t Dean just hang on to that?

Screw his age or his past. Sam knew what he wanted now. And he wanted the only thing that had been good in his life since he had come back from the darkness of the bright room—he wanted Dean.

He was aware of what it meant to have sex. He knew it was much more than a hand job, or the two
of them rubbing against each other until they came. And he wanted that! He couldn’t stop thinking about it, and the more he did, the more it felt right. Sam wanted to think of his body as somewhere with light, and not darkness. He wanted to be able to close his eyes and know that Dean had been inside him, and that everything would be alright.

Fuck, he just wanted Dean to be inside him because he loved him so much and sometimes it was like his heart couldn’t handle all that feeling.

Sam wiped at his eyes furiously and went to the living room, where he turned on the TV and ate in silence.

~ * ~

When Dean came down to the kitchen to fix himself a meal, he heard Sam turn off the TV and head upstairs, all without exchanging a word with him.

‘We’re in for a long night,’ Dean thought.

They had been there before, and the last time they had argued and Sam decided to sleep by himself, things hadn’t turned out so well. So tonight, it didn’t matter what his brother said, Dean wasn’t willing to let him sleep alone and wake up to all sorts of nightmares.

He finished his food and went upstairs. Sam was leaving the shower and getting into bed.

‘God, he’s beautiful,’ Dean thought, and felt his heart ache in his chest. Why did things have to be so difficult? Why couldn’t Sam be happy with what they had? Why want more? ‘I want more too,’ a voice inside his head whispered, a voice Dean fought and tried hard to silence, because that was not the voice of reason, that was the voice of a blind lover who couldn’t get enough.

“Do you want me to sleep elsewhere…?” Dean broke the silence.

Sam didn’t look him in the eyes. He sat on the bed and started tugging at the covers.

“Whatever,” he said before lying on his side and shutting his eyes.

Dean watched him for a moment, still not sure of what to do next. He decided he would sleep with Sam, because he knew his brother was probably too angry and too proud to admit that was what he wanted, too.

“Don’t turn off the lights,” Sam said firmly, his eyes still closed.

Dean complied. He turned them off everywhere else except for their room, and when he was done he slipped into the same bed with Sam, being extremely conscious of the space between them.

They had grown so close that it felt weird not having Sam’s warmth all over him. It hurt not being able to just turn around and pull him closer, and discreetly bury his nose into his hair until his stomach fluttered at the scent.

It was such a stupid argument… Why couldn’t Sam just understand so they could go back to the way it was? ‘Well, I suppose that’s what being in a relationship feels like,’ Dean thought, partially
amused, and closed his eyes.

~ * ~

It was not an easy night. Both brothers had trouble sleeping. Dean had trouble with the brightness of the room, and Sam had trouble telling himself he could fall asleep without the fear of an impending nightmare.

In the end, they had both drifted in and out of a restless sleep, and as soon as the sun was rising in the horizon, Sam rose, too. He could no longer stand being in the same bed with his brother, so close, and not touch each other.

He hoped that the night had given Dean time to think things over, and to realize that there was nothing wrong in being together in a more complete way.

“Morning,” Dean said when he saw Sam getting up.

“Morning,” Sam replied shyly, putting on his clothes.

“Did you sleep well?” Dean asked, sitting in bed and watching as Sam got dressed.

“Kind of. Did you?”

Dean shrugged and yawned, and that was pretty much enough of an answer.

“So…” Sam looked down at his feet and then into Dean’s eyes. His heart picked up speed. “Have you changed your mind?”

“Sam…” Dean felt the same burning weight of guilt return and add pressure to his chest, making his heart race and his breathing more difficult. “Nothing has changed. I still think you’re too young and we shouldn’t do it.”

“Too young?” Sam finished buttoning his jeans and walked closer to bed. Dean looked at the hard muscles in his lithe, young body, and yes, he thought, he was too young. “Dean, do you really think I’m not mature enough to make this kind of choice?”

“Of course you are mature, Sam. I know what you’ve been through.”

“Do you, really?” Sam placed both of his hands flat on the bed and faced Dean.

Dean sighed and shook his head briefly.

“Sam, I know you’re mature, okay? But even if you weren’t my little brother, fourteen is too young.”

Sam frowned, but he wasn’t really thinking about what Dean had just said. His mind was already made up.

“While it’s true that most fourteen-year-olds are not rushing into sex, it’s also true that most kids my age haven’t grown up to be a warrior, and have certainly not been kidnapped by a demon and tortured for three months straight,” Sam said.
Dean pulled the covers off himself and got up as well.

“Sam… Sex is not all that you probably hear about. It’s not all that pretty, and it’s certainly not all that sweet. It’s also raw and primitive and it can hurt, it doesn’t matter how much you try to avoid it.”

“Hurt? Is that what this is all about? Are you afraid you’re gonna hurt me?”

Dean didn’t think he liked what he saw in Sam’s face.

“Dean! Have you forgotten what happened to me?? I was burned until my own flesh melted in my bones, and you’re afraid you’ll hurt me with sex?”

‘When you put it that way…’ Dean thought, but quickly shrugged it off.

“Can we talk about this again in a couple of years? When you’re older, if you still want it…”

“No!” Sam cut him off. “I was beaten unconscious for three months, Dean! No one told the man he could not beat the crap out of me because I was fourteen. No one told him he should be careful when he beat me with a fucking metal bar because I was just a kid. He fucking broke me in that room!”

There was fire in Sam’s eyes, and his pain lay bare on his face. “So forgive me if I don’t understand it—I’m old enough to be tortured, but not to make love? It’s okay to have my bones broken and my skin cut, and everything taken from me until there’s nothing else and I just want to die, but if I choose to have sex with someone I love then I’m too fucking young to know what I want?”

“Sam…”

“No! Don’t you see? It doesn’t make any sense! You keep saying that I’m too young and I’m confused, but I know exactly what I want, and I want to be with you. Now what do you want, Dean? Do you want me or not?”

“Sam…” Dean felt his chest tight with tension and pain.

“Because for me it’s pretty clear that there’s only one person who’s confused here, and it ain’t me.”

Dean watched when Sam turned around and walked away.

-------------------------------------------------

tbc...
Chapter 57

“Sam, c’mon. We have to go to therapy.” Dean stood by the door to their room toying with the car keys as Sam read a book in bed.

“I’m not going today,” Sam replied without even looking away from the pages he was reading.

Dean sighed deeply. He hated this awkward mood between them. Sam was still angry because Dean wouldn’t allow their relationship to delve further, but the way Dean saw it, there was not much that moping and sulking would get his brother. He would not change his mind. He would not have sex with his fourteen-year-old, vulnerable younger brother.

“Sam, cut it out. C’mon, we’ll be late.”

Sam arched his eyebrows and looked at his brother.

“I’m not going today,” he repeated calmly, seemingly undisturbed by Dean’s growing frustration.

“Just put the book down, alright? You can still be mad at me after therapy; now we have to go.” Dean stepped further into the room.

“Really?” Sam closed his book and put it by his side slowly. His eyes still burned into Dean’s with fierce determination. “Then make me,” he dared, narrowing his eyes.

“Jesus, Sam…” Dean’s voice sounded like a warning.

“Jesus, Sam…” Dean shook his head and shut his eyes briefly. “Now, if that isn’t being childish then I don’t know what is,” he mumbled.

“I’m allowed to be childish. I’m just a fourteen-year-old, helpless and insecure kid,” Sam teased with scorn.

“Sam…” Dean’s voice sounded like a warning.

“Please don’t make me go, I don’t think I can handle her questions, they will be too much for my young, innocent mind,” Sam mocked further, knowing he was deliberately pissing his brother off.

“Oh, shut up,” Dean finally groaned. “Fine. Suit yourself,” he muttered and turned around to walk out of the room and leave Sam alone.
Sam smiled a petty, vengeful little smile and picked up his book again. It was better to give in to the silly argument than to feel the hurt it caused him knowing Dean wouldn’t take him as he needed.

~ * ~

Dakota checked her clock. Sam was twenty minutes late, and that had never happened before. She had already checked with the receptionist, who had assured her no one had called on the behalf of her patient to inform her of any delay, or even if he wasn’t coming.

“That’s weird,” she whispered, and picked up her cell phone.

Dakota called the number John Winchester had given her and recognized Sam’s brother’s voice when he picked up the phone.

“Hey.”

“Dean?”

“Yeah, that’s him. Who’s speaking?”

“This is Dakota, Sam’s therapist.”

“Oh, hey…” She sensed that he seemed to stall a little, as if he was looking for words. “Sorry we couldn’t make it today.”

“Is everything alright with Sam?”

“Yes, yes…he’s fine. He’s just a little indisposed, say.”

Dakota’s forehead creased and she wondered if that was true.

“Really? I hope it’s nothing serious.”

“No, it’s fine. Just some food poisoning. Can’t seem to get him out of the bathroom, you know how that goes,” Dean grinned, knowing Sam would be pissed if he could hear his lie.

“I suppose…” She agreed. “Well, I hope he feels better soon.”

“Sorry for not calling before, but it all happened unexpectedly.”

“It’s alright. Will I see him next week?”

“Sure. He’ll probably be better in a couple of days.”

“Okay then. Goodbye, Dean.”

“Bye.”

Dakota ended the call and sighed. Sam was her last patient of the day, and if he wasn’t coming it
meant she was free to go home.

Instead of going straight home, though, she thought for a few minutes and made another phone call.

“Hey, Mark? It’s Dakota. How are you?”

She talked on the phone for a few more minutes until she could schedule a meeting with her friend in a nearby cafe.

Then, Dakota waved her receptionist goodbye and left her office, getting into her car and driving for about ten minutes before she was where Mark had agreed to meet her.

Mark Duchesneau was a forty-eight-year-old man whose parents had come to the U.S. from France, and who was born and raised in South Dakota. He was married to his high school sweetheart and had a couple of kids, and he was also a psychiatrist. He had been one of Dakota’s brightest and dearest professors before she became his colleague. She still reached out to him when she felt like she was stuck with a case, and considering her latest sessions with Sam, she believed she could use his help.

“Hey, Dakota, dear. Nice to see you.” He smiled warmly and pulled a chair for her to sit across from him.

“Thanks, Mark.” Dakota smiled at him. Mark had friendly and intelligent blue eyes. He was thin and his hair was graying fast, and he welcomed her with one of the warm smiles he often displayed for people close to him.

They ordered a couple of coffees and waited until the waiter went away with their order.

“How can I help you?” He asked, studying the busy woman in front of him, one of his best students, and someone he trusted did a great a job with her patients. If Dakota was now seeking his help he imagined she must be dealing with a difficult case.

“Mark, before I tell you anything, I need you to know that this case is very unusual. I may not have followed protocol with this patient, and there are things I’d rather keep private about his situation. I have no one else to turn to that could get past these…technicalities, say. I trust you’ll trust my judgment on why I’m choosing to keep some things private and not raise alarm. Even because I remember you saying in class that sometimes a patient’s well being is above right or wrong, and that includes the law.”

“Oh, Dakota, one can’t say you don’t have a great memory,” he chuckled.

She smiled. “Can I ask for your trust with this very peculiar case?”

“Yes, you can. I trust the decisions you’ve made so far. I will accept them and focus on what you want me to.”

“Thank you so much, Mark,” Dakota sighed, relieved. “So there’s this kid I told you over the phone. I got the referral through a local free clinic. He’s been coming to therapy for almost six months, and I just can’t seem to get past the wall he’s built around himself. He was kidnapped for three months and tortured by a man, always in the dark.”

Mark frowned.
"How old is he?"

"Fourteen,” Dakota said. Mark didn’t know about hunters and anything supernatural, so she had to be careful with what she told him. “His dad is involved in some pretty violent stuff, but I can tell you he really loves his kid and tries to protect him. No one knows exactly why he was taken, but it probably has something to do with the nature of his father’s job. But that isn’t why I’m asking for help.”

"Why are you, then?"

They silenced and waited when the waiter came back and put two cups of coffee before them. Dakota quickly added some sugar to hers, Mark took his black.

"The things this boy suffered in that place…I think I’ve only scratched the surface with what he’s told me. He was really tortured, Mark. I don’t think war prisoners suffered quite as much as he did, and it all happened in the dark; he could never know what to expect.”

“That’s horrible. Whatever happened to him, darkness must have enhanced his feeling of helplessness to something unbearable.”

“Right,” Dakota agreed. “When he was found he had to spend a week in the hospital, during which he didn’t speak to anyone at all.”

“How severe would you consider his PTSD, in a scale from 1 to 10?"

Dakota thought for a moment, sipped her coffee and frowned.

“When I first met him I thought it was a five. Nowadays, I think that behind this wall he’s built, there is a full ten, Mark. Although it’s a ten I can hardly get a glimpse of. I’m afraid of what can happen whenever this wall isn’t strong enough to protect him.”

“How do you think I can help you?”

Dakota sighed.

“He was sexually molested too, Mark.”

“Oh.” Mark spent most of his professional life working with kids who were victims of sexual abuse. His thesis and his whole career had been based on how to approach such victims, how to help them deal with what happened to them, and how to empower them so they could overcome the trauma.

“I know you are amazing with kids, Mark. I honestly don’t know if I can help him. At first he wouldn’t even speak to me, but eventually he allowed me to establish communication. Every time I ask him about the sexual abuse, though, he just shuts down, and there’s nothing I can do to make him talk. If I insist on asking about it, he will give me the silent treatment for the next two or three sessions.”

“I see.” Mark narrowed his eyes and seemed thoughtful.

“He’s even talked about the torture. He told me things that made my insides turn… If you agree to take the case and if his father gives his consent, I’ll fill you in on the details. But let’s just say that
whatever you can imagine was done to him in the dark, it was probably worse. He told me some of it, but when I ask him whether or not he was raped, he hides behind his wall and there’s no way he will let me in.”

“How do you know he was raped if he never really speaks about it?”

“His father, for one. I have reason to believe he did justice with his own hands, but I didn’t ask him any details about it. He said that he found the man who tortured his son, and he confessed to having raped him on more than one occasion. His father also told me that he once reacted very badly to seeing an assault scene in a movie. I mean, everything points towards sexual abuse, but he won’t even admit that anything happened, let alone talk about it.”

“And what makes you think he’ll open up to me?”

“Well,” Dakota’s brown eyes got lost for a moment, before they found Mark’s. “Every important figure in his life so far has been a man. His mother died when he was a baby, and ever since then it was just his father and his older brother, who pretty much raised him and who he trusts a lot. Then there’s this uncle of his, who I don’t know whether or not is really family, but who he also likes very much. He’s been living with him since the attack. So basically there’s no strong female presence in this kid’s life. You may call this a long shot, but I have a feeling that he connects more easily to male figures than he does to female ones. Perhaps you could get to him. Besides, you’re amazing with children, I know your work.”

Mark smiled softly and sighed.

“I love being able to help kids, that’s true. And this boy seems like someone who really needs help, but it would probably be a while before he opened up to me.”

“Maybe. But you could at least try, couldn’t you?” She insisted. The thing was, she really wanted to help Sam, but she was really losing heart about her ability to make him speak. “Besides, it gets more complicated.”

“How so?” Mark drank his coffee and listened.

“His older brother…he’s been really helping him, and they are really close. And Mark?” She raised her eyebrows. “I don’t know how close they are, but I have this feeling that it gets really intimate between them.”

“Do you think there’s incest involved?” Mark frowned.

“He obviously hasn’t told me anything, but I do think he has romantic feelings for his brother, and I believe his brother feels the same. When I see them together there’s just something…something I can’t quite put my finger to…but it’s there, Mike.”

“Do you think this is making things more difficult for him?”

“Honestly? No. I think that it makes him happy, and I’m really not worried about it too much. I mean, he is a kid, and vulnerable, and probably very confused…but his brother is very protective. I don’t think he would cause him any harm. So that’s really not something that bothers me as long as I believe it’s not sexual, which I do. His silence, however, that does bother me. His inability to speak about his past, to admit he suffered sexual abuse, to confess he can’t deal with that…I need for him to see that he doesn’t need to carry that entire burden alone,” she said, and felt lighter when it was all
out. “So, will you help me with him?”

Mark thought for a moment more before he spoke again.

“I will try, Dakota. I’ll talk to this kid if you want me to, and I’ll see if I can help him open up about the abuse. Of course I can’t promise you anything, but I really wish I could help this boy. Three months being tortured in absolute darkness?” Mark felt his chest tight. “I’ve seen and heard of some pretty terrible stories, but this is definitely one of the scariest ones.”

“Thank you, Mark!” Her eyes lit up.

“There’s only one problem. I’m traveling this weekend—I’ve got a conference in New York. I don’t know exactly how long I will be gone because Martha asked me to visit her sick cousin while I’m there…you know, family stuff.”

“That’s okay. You travel, do what you have to do, and I’ll talk to his father. When you come back let me know and I’ll schedule your session with him.”

“Good. I hope I can help.” Mark sipped his coffee again and looked at his former student.

“I hope so too,” Dakota smiled, her heart lighter with the sensation of having done the right thing.

~ * ~

It had been an awkward day, to say the least. Alone in Bobby’s home, Sam and Dean avoided each other at all costs. There was a lot of resentment and underlying tension in the pregnant silence that had been established between them.

Sam looked distant and cold, and ignored every weak attempt Dean had made to try and engage him in conversation.

For the first time since they had taken things further, Dean was looking forward to Bobby and his dad coming back home. He knew Sam would be forced to speak and let go of this grudge when there were other people around. Right now, though, dealing with Sam’s sulking mood was almost too much.

Dean loved him, he wanted to show him that, to feel him close… Why couldn’t Sam understand that there were things that were simply off limits? Dean hadn’t come this far trying to comfort Sam only to break him all over again by inflicting on him the same kind of pain that monster had in the dark. Dean didn’t even understand why Sam wanted that. Why did he want to go back and unleash all those memories of the worst thing that had happened to him? And why was Sam pretending that the abuse never happened? For sure he knew by now that Dean was aware of it…

‘He never confirmed anything…” Dean caught himself thinking, and he could understand his father’s despair when he begged Sam for a straight answer—it was just too tempting to believe it hadn’t happened, to close his eyes and pretend that something so nasty and dark hadn’t really happened to Sammy.

When night came, Dean finished up some of his chores and locked the doors before turning the lights off downstairs.
He walked into the room he usually shared with Sam and found him asleep—or pretending to be asleep, Dean wasn’t sure—in bed.

Dean took a deep breath and turned off the lights, putting the house in absolute darkness.

It wasn’t long before Sam stirred and opened his eyes. It was so dark around himself that for a moment he couldn’t really see anything.

Sam heard the noise of Dean settling beneath the covers at the same time he realized he was breathing faster. Why so dark? Why wasn’t there a light on in the hallway or in the bathroom? Was Dean punishing him for before?

Sam stiffened and tried to shut his eyes and calm down. Nothing was going to happen. He was home, with Dean, in bed. Even if Dean wasn’t touching him, he was right there, beside him, and nothing would happen, nothing—

“Hm,” Sam moaned faintly and breathed in a series of irregular, clipped sounds.

Dean felt his heart ache at that. It was just the dark, and Sam wasn’t alone…but still he couldn’t handle it, not without some clarity to remind him he was no longer a hostage.

Without saying a word, Dean got up and walked to the bathroom. He turned the light on there, and the room was soon much more gray and less dark, with many shadows dancing in the dim light that filled the place.

When Dean returned to bed he waited a few minutes and realized Sam’s breathing was returning to normal. His brother never said anything, never looked at him or asked for the lights on, but Sam hardly needed to use words for Dean to understand what he wanted. Reading Sam’s needs was a skill Dean had learned very early in his life.

He shut his eyes and let his mind drift to unconsciousness, hoping Sam could do the same.

A couple of sleeping hours went by, and the room was still shadowy as the boys slept quietly in Bobby’s house.

In their sleep, there was little to no conscience, and there was no room for resentment.

Sam moved in his sleep until his back touched Dean’s body. Unconsciously, he pressed against the warm feeling, and it wasn’t long before Dean wrapped his arms around him and snuggled closer, like they had done so many nights since Sam came back changed.

For a moment, neither realized what had just happened. Dean held him in silence, the way his body had learned to hold Sam when he needed—tight, safely. Soon, though, Sam opened his eyes and realized he was wrapped in Dean’s embrace.

All his anger abandoned him, and Sam felt his heart burst with love and need. How could he be angry at Dean? How could he resist this touch that felt so good?

Sam turned around in the embrace and pressed his lips to Dean’s.

Dean woke up with Sam’s kiss. He felt his brother’s lips so warm and slightly wet covering his own,
and he opened his mouth a little, tingling all over when he could taste Sam very briefly.

Dean’s heart slammed against his chest and his stomach fluttered with a ticklish sensation. He opened his eyes and saw Sam breaking the kiss, his face still just a few inches away, his eyes looking deeply into his own.

“Make love to me,” Sam whispered.

Dean felt like his chest was being cut open and someone’s hand was squeezing his heart until it hurt, until it bled. His blood pumped faster in his veins and he realized how dry his mouth was. He looked into Sam’s boyish face, the trust in his eyes, and the love lying bare on his plea, and Dean shut his eyes under the painful resistance he offered.

“I can’t,” Dean replied, and for a moment he truly regretted saying that, because he could see the way it shattered Sam, and the way his eyes—so clear and giving before—were suddenly hazy and fiery, barely able to hide his disappointment and his anger. “I can’t, Sammy…” Dean begged.

‘Please understand,’ he thought. ‘Please, Sam, try and understand…’ He thought feverishly in those seconds Sam was looking into his eyes. ‘Please…’

Sam narrowed his eyes and thinned his lips, and Dean saw him shut the door to his feelings and dive back into a cold ocean of stubborn distance he insisted on falling deeply into.

Sam turned around, gave his back to Dean and shut his eyes forcefully. He hated what Dean was doing to him. He hated his damn morality and his stupid guilt.

Dean reached out his hand and touched Sam’s shoulder.

“Sam…”

“Don’t,” Sam said curtly and Dean retracted his hand.

The older Winchester sighed and stared at the ceiling.

He honestly didn’t know what to do, but he knew he would hardly find sleep again that night.

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tbc...
After three extremely awkward days and painfully tense nights, Dean was glad when his dad and Bobby came back home around lunch time. They both looked dirty and exhausted, and they didn’t talk much before they headed each to cater to different needs—shower, food, sleep.

This time the two hunters were really weary, and for the next few days they stayed home, recovering from their last hunt, healing from the freshest wounds and preparing for what was next.

Sam and Dean shared a room as if nothing had happened, but the truth was that things between them were not good at all. Sam was still mad, and Dean was still determined not to change his mind. There had been no touching, no kissing, not even words when they were alone. They talked to each other if they had to, when John and Bobby were around, and kept to themselves, each one facing their own reasons to keep the cold distance between them. Not even the same bed they shared could bring them closer, and Dean wondered how long it would be until Sam accepted that he wouldn’t change his mind. ‘I won’t hurt him,’ Dean kept thinking, over and over. He tried to ignore the fact that Sam looked very much hurt with his denial.

Bobby was the one who drove Sam to therapy that week. John was busy investigating some information he had found, wondering if perhaps he had stumbled upon a case, and Dean had been practicing his bow hunting skills. So Bobby drove Sam to therapy and picked him up on both occasions, and on both occasions Sam had been vague and less than chatty with Dakota.

On Tuesday, as she asked him how he was, if he had gotten better from being indisposed, Sam could barely stand the sight of her. He was angry. He was angry at everyone and everything. Why couldn’t he have the one thing he needed? Why wouldn’t Dean give himself to him the way Sam needed him to?

“I hope you’re feeling better, Sam.”

“I am.”

“What was it? Food poisoning?” She wondered if something had happened, something that could explain Sam’s cranky mood.

“I guess so. I’m good now,” Sam answered curtly.
“So what do you want to talk about today? How was your weekend?”

“It was okay.” Sam barely looked her in the eyes. She didn’t know what had happened, but Sam was definitely in a foul mood. Today, he looked every bit a stubborn teenager, and she had difficulty establishing a nice conversation.

“How is your brother?” She tried, thinking that perhaps something had happened between the brothers, something that caused Sam to be angry.

“Fine.” Sam shrugged.

“Did you do anything good together this weekend? Any training, talking?”

“He’s fine and I don’t want to talk about him,” Sam cut her off.

Dakota sighed and took a deep breath. She would bet everything on the fact that Sam and Dean weren’t seeing eye to eye. She had had a feeling, when she talked to Dean on the phone, that something was off, a feeling she only confirmed now by talking to Sam.

It was an extremely unproductive one hour on Tuesday, and another equally fruitless session on Thursday. Sam was in a terrible mood, completely shut down, unwilling to talk about anything. By the end of the week, Dakota was exhausted from trying to help him. Perhaps because she cared so much for that boy and couldn’t get the results she desired, she was extremely frustrated.

She thought of Mark at his conference in New York, and hoped he would be back soon to help her deal with Sam. She didn’t want to admit it to herself, but Mark was pretty much her last hope to try and see through the wall Sam hid behind.

~ * ~

“Are you leaving again?” Dean asked as he watched his father pack a few things into a duffel bag.

“Yeah. There’s this poltergeist, I think. It’s in a small town, a hundred miles away. I need to check this out, the whole family might be in danger, and I know they have young kids.”

Dean nodded.

John then looked at everything he was packing and had an idea. He stopped in the middle of putting clothes into his bag and looked his son in the eyes.

“Do you wanna come?”

Dean arched his eyebrows, surprised.

“Do you mean it?”

“Yeah. It’s been a while since you’ve joined me on a hunt. And you are nineteen now,” John said.

Dean thought about the awkward feeling of the past few days and realized that he could really use an excuse to get away for a while. He loved Sam, but his angry sulking was killing him.
“Yeah. Yeah, I want to.” Dean nodded.

John smiled with approval.

“Good. Go pack your stuff. I’m leaving in an hour.”

When Bobby drove Sam back from therapy, the youngest Winchester found his father packed in the living room, and immediately realized he was leaving on a hunt. He didn’t expect, however, to see Dean coming down the stairs carrying a similar duffel bag that he placed on top of the sofa as he looked their dad in the eyes.

“I’m ready,” he announced.

Sam looked at Dean’s bag and couldn’t help the cold angst grabbing his heart.

“You’re leaving?” He asked, despite his anger and his silent resolution not to talk to his brother.

Dean looked into Sam’s eyes and could see that realizing he would be leaving with their dad had gotten to him. However, for the past few days Sam had been so annoying that Dean didn’t mind letting him enjoy a couple of days without his presence. Sam hadn’t spoken to him or touched him, and he refused to understand the obvious—that Dean was just doing what was best for both of them, he was just being the big brother! So perhaps a couple of days without him would make Sam think a little, and maybe see things from a different perspective. What Dean didn’t want to admit was that he hoped Sam would miss him enough to be happy about him coming back and let go of that ridiculous fight.

“Yeah. Gonna hunt a poltergeist with dad. Be back in a couple of days,” Dean said, and in his eyes there was a silent provocation that Sam understood.

‘Fine’, he thought. ‘Go away then’. Sam narrowed his eye briefly with annoyance and Dean almost laughed at his peevish look.

“Good luck with that,” Sam ended up saying.

“Thanks, son. You and Bobby take care.”

“We will,” Bobby said and watched as Sam made his way upstairs quickly. Not for the first time since he had come back from his last hunt, Bobby wondered what had happened between those two, because there was definitely something up.

“Bye.” Dean looked at Bobby and couldn’t help himself when he looked at the stairs to where Sam had just gone. He could not see his brother, who had probably walked into his room. Good, Dean thought. It was probably better like that.

John and Dean were in the Impala and driving away in a few minutes. Upstairs, from the window in his room, Sam watched them go, trying to ignore how sad he felt with Dean’s absence.

~ * ~
John told Dean all he knew about the case as they drove there, and the first day when they arrived at their destination was spent collecting evidence and observing the haunted house. John and Dean checked into a motel and left their stuff as they questioned the family about strange occurrences in their room since they had moved in, two months before. They learned that the family dog had died a week ago, and that they were scared enough to accept any kind of help, including paranormal help.

So, on their second night in the place, John and Dean prepared themselves to fight the evil spirit living in the house as the family took shelter somewhere else.

“I want you to watch me, okay? If I need your help I’ll ask for it. Stay inside the salt circle,” John ordered, and Dean obeyed.

He made a circular shape around himself with salt and stayed within it watching as his father drew symbols on the walls, murmured a few words and lit a few candles.

The house was old but spacious and fancy. In the living room where Dean was, there was piano in one of the corners, and some paintings on the wall—two of them of still life, and a bigger one, in the middle, portraying an old couple. Dean thought it was creepy, and quickly looked away from it. There was a beautiful chandelier hanging from the ceiling, and that now made sure the place was well-lit.

However, it wasn’t long before the lights started flickering in the house and the wind started to blow hard against the windows.

John exchanged a look with Dean and kept repeating those strange, ancient words out loud as he sprinkled what Dean believed was holy water around the room.

Suddenly, the floor started crackling too, and they both heard it when the loud noise of shattering glass could be heard in the kitchen.

“What was that?” Dean asked.

“I don’t know. I’ll go check it. You stay where you are.” John took something out of his pocket and threw it at Dean. “Here, keep saying these words out loud.”

Dean took the notepad from the air and looked down at the words his father had scribbled on it. He started do as he was told, and soon the house seemed to come to life around them, with windows shattering and furniture moving.

Dean watched as his father disappeared into the kitchen and he kept chanting the words, trying to ignore the angry spirit rising in the place.

“Dammit!” John yelled from the kitchen and Dean heard the noise of things falling and breaking.

“Dad! Are you alright?”

One of the broken windows let in a gust of wind, and when Dean looked down he could no longer see the perfect circle of salt around himself. He moved quickly, wanting to go into the kitchen and find out whether his father needed help, but whatever was in that house had different plans for him. Dean felt himself thrown against one of the walls and all air escaped his lungs when his back hit it forcefully.
He fell on his hands and knees, gasping loudly, trying to catch his breath. He could hear the wildest sounds coming from the kitchen and understood that whatever they were fighting was now in a battle with his father, and tried to keep Dean away from the kitchen.

Summoning all his strength, Dean got back on his feet and reached out for the salt. There were things flying in his direction, but he rushed blindly towards the sound of his father’s voice, and when Dean finally saw him, he could see a figure of blue and white light strangling his dad.

“Hey! Over here!” Dean tried to call its attention, and when he felt the evil spirit was interested in him, Dean threw all the salt he had in its direction, making it howl and cry and disappear for a moment. “Dad, are you okay?” Dean reached out for his father.

“I’m fine! And I think I know what we need to burn. Did you see the painting in the living room with the old couple?”

“Yes.”

“I’m pretty sure we’re dealing with the spirit of the man. Remember the painter I told you about before?”

“Yes. The man who killed all those women in this house.” His father had told him part of what he had found out about the house, but not everything.

“Yes, he killed and painted dead women. And since he was cremated, he must be hanging on to something here.”

“His picture on the painting.”

“Right. That poltergeist looked an awful lot like that painting. Gotta burn that, Dean. Gotta burn it quickly.”

Dean nodded and helped his father up. They both rushed to the living room and John took the gallon of gasoline and poured it all over the painting. Dean was reaching for the lighter that had fallen from his pocket when he was thrown against the wall, when the blue-white light was back among them, angrier than ever.

“Dean!” John screamed. “Be careful!”

Dean never saw it coming. When he raised his eyes at the sound of his dad calling, the piano was already on him. The heavy thing hit him hard in his midsection, making him groan and bend over with pain when his ribs were crushed.

The lighter rolled out of his hand and John quickly made for it. He looked briefly at the sight of his son crushed between the piano and the wall and realized he had to be fast.

When the spirit stopped pushing the piano against him, Dean was extremely hurt and unable to stand. The pain in his ribs made him fall on his ass, unable to help himself back to his feet. The poltergeist grabbed one of the lamps within reach, shattered it angrily and walked towards Dean, holding the heavy, metal object and swinging it above its head.

“No!” Dean widened his eyes when he realized the thing would hit him hard with it. “Don’t!”
Then, everything seemed to happen at the same time. John lit the painting on fire and the spirit brought the lamp down against Dean’s head. Before everything went black Dean could hear the sound of angry, loud screaming as the spirit was forced to leave this world for good.

‘He made it,’ Dean thought, knowing his dad had been right about the painting, and then pain exploded in his head and his vision darkened. ‘I’m gonna die… no… Sam!’

Dean tried to hold on to his thoughts, but darkness was stronger, and when John found him he was lying unconscious on the floor.

“Dean!” John slapped his son’s face and called his name louder. “Dean!” There was blood on his body, but as John looked at the wound on the top of his head, the one that had knocked him unconscious, he realized it wasn’t deep, neither was it bleeding too much. John then assessed Dean’s body quickly and lifted his son’s shirt to see where the blood was coming from. There was a nasty bruise on his ribcage, and there was also a cut there, where the piano had hit him, and that was bleeding quite a lot. John took off his jacket and then the long sleeved shirt he was wearing. He ripped the shirt to shreds and wrapped it around Dean’s torso to stop the bleeding.

As long as a broken rib didn’t puncture a lung or anything, Dean would fine. John would have to stay awake at night and make sure his son could breathe well and no complications would arise from his injury. Knowing what was waiting for them in the hunting life was a constant reminder of how hard John had to make them train. The harder he pushed them, the longer they would survive in the battle against evil.

John carried Dean very carefully to the Impala and drove them back to the motel. He could deal with his injuries without the need for a hospital, he thought, and drove quickly with his unconscious son by his side.

~ * ~

He didn’t know where he was or what time it was, but it didn’t seem to matter. There was pain somewhere very near him, pain that demanded his attention but that Dean chose to ignore. Dean opened his eyes and there were bright lights blinding him. For some reason, those bright lights made him restless, and Dean tried to move, causing more pain to explode in his head and make him dizzy.

“Hmm,” Dean groaned.

“Hang in there, Dean. We’re almost at the motel,” John said when his son started to squirm in the seat.

Dean knew he was lying on the floor, but when he tried to get up he realized he couldn’t. He must have gotten injured, because his body screamed at him and Dean felt fire spreading somewhere around his ribs, causing a throbbing pain that grew and took everything he had inside.

‘Sam… I need to go back, I need to find him,’ Dean thought desperately, struggling against the pain he felt and trying to get up.

“Hmmm!” He groaned again and tried to move.
“Easy…” John put a hand on his chest and pushed him back against the seat. Dean was sweating and troubled.

Dean lifted his head, still lying on the floor, and saw the white, bright room around himself. ‘I know this place,’ he thought. ‘I’ve been here before. But when?’ Dean frowned and tried to focus, but it hurt too much.

He kept looking around himself until his eyes found something that made his heart jump.

‘Sam!’ He screamed. ‘Sam!’ Dean could see his brother handcuffed to a wall, his arms above his head, and he was naked. ‘Sam!’

John looked at Dean once again and realized he was probably having a nightmare. Well, that was good, it meant he was going to wake up soon.

Dean’s heart was racing, and he tried to get up to help Sam, but he couldn’t move, the pain kept him there, lying flat on that cold, cold floor, and his despair rose and strangled his thoughts.

Suddenly, though, Sam looked at him and started to walk in his direction. Dean watched him get close, his eyes screwed tight with perplexity. ‘Sam? I thought you were handcuffed, how did you—?’

Sam got on his knees beside his body and smiled.

“No. It’s not dark, Dean. I’m free to do as I want,” his brother smiled and cupped his face, and Dean smiled back despite his pain.

“Sammy…” He smiled at the boy looking so gently at him, and touching his face so lightly and carefully.

“It’s not dark with you, Dean. You can make it all better.”

Dean was still smiling faintly, and he still tried to understand Sam’s words when he saw his brother move and straddle him, and then start to slowly undress him.

“Sam? Sam, what are you doing?” Dean frowned.

Sam smiled at him and kept removing his clothing.

“I’m making it all better.” Sam smiled, the sight so fucking beautiful Dean could cry, but everything made him flustered and his heart was slamming against his chest.

“Sam, no! Sam, we can’t!” Dean looked panicked when Sam finished undressing him. To his horror, he realized he was hard, and he understood what Sam would do.

“Relax, Dean… It’s what I want…”

“Sam! No! No, don’t do this!”

Dean shook his head frantically, over and over, trying to stop what he knew was about to happen.

Sam, however, didn’t pay him any heed. He smiled at him and put a soft finger against Dean’s lips, silencing his protests. Dean then watched, with silent and rising despair, as Sam lowered himself on
his arousal, throwing his head back and moaning with delight.

“Nooo!!” Dean screamed and his eyes darted open.

“Hey, take it easy.” John pushed him back on the bed.

“Where am I? What happened?” Dean felt his heart racing, and all the pain he could feel in his dream was very real, and it took him all at once and made his face twist and his breathing shorten.

“We’re in the motel. The spirit knocked you out pretty good. I put you in the car and then brought you here. You’re alright. You have a wound on your head that isn’t really serious, and a nasty cut on your side that will probably leave a scar. I don’t think you need any stitches though.”

Dean felt it slowly coming back to him. The haunted house, the blue-white light, the piano.

“The spirit?”

“Gone,” John answered.

Dean let his head fall back heavily against the pillow and groaned.

“Are you alright? It seemed like you were having a nightmare about Sam,” John asked before continuing the task of cleaning Dean’s wounds. He pressed a wet cloth to Dean’s head to remove the dry blood.

“I’m fine,” Dean said. He thought of the dream and had to look away because of how real it had felt.

Dean thought of Sam in the bright room, but he wasn’t really tied up or anything. He had come to him, naked, and then he had…

‘I’m making it all better’ Sam had said in his dream.

Dean thought of the last week and how awful things had been since he had told Sam he wouldn’t be inside of him. Then he thought of how happy Sam had been in his arms, and how good it felt when they were together. He understood then that he had been so worried about his own conscience that he hadn’t really thought of how much it meant to his brother to have this happen between them. Sam had been through enough to know what he wanted, and all he was asking was for Dean to trust that he could make his own choices.

Dean thought of his own arguments, of his fear of doing to Sam what that monster had in the dark. ‘I will never hurt him,’ he thought. ‘Never. Sam knows that. He knows I won’t hurt him.’

And when Dean understood what Sam already had—that he couldn’t possibly hurt the person he loved the most in his life—then he also realized that it made no sense to fight what he felt, what he had been feeling since the first time they kissed.

“I’m such a fool,” Dean whispered.

“Why?” John looked at him as he tended to his wounds.

“Hm? Nothing.” Dean quickly shrugged and smiled. His smile, though, soon turned into a grin, and this grin was quickly followed by the sound of laughter.
“Dean, are you alright? Maybe the spirit hit you harder than I thought.” John frowned.

“I’m fine!” Dean laughed, despite how much it hurt when he did so. “I’m sorry dad, I’m fine.”

“Glad you had fun,” John said, still not understanding Dean’s reaction.

“Let’s just say that being hit on the head has cleared up a few things in my mind.”

“Well, good for you.”

“It is,” Dean agreed.

He thought of Sam and he, and the strong feeling bonding them together. John wouldn’t understand —no one would understand. But if Sam could trust him, then Dean could trust his younger brother, too.

‘Be inside of me,’ Sam had asked.

‘Yes’, Dean thought. He was ready to do that.

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tbc...
“All right,” Bobby said, talking on the phone. “Yeah, I’ll be waiting. See you.” He hung up and looked at the boy watching him.

“Who was that? Dad?” Sam asked.

“Yeah, it was your dad. They’re coming home.”

Sam still had a mildly annoyed, cold look on his face, even if his heart did react to the news. He lowered his eyes to the homework he was doing at the kitchen table because he didn’t know Bobby wasn’t done.

“Sam? Your dad said Dean got hurt on the hunt.”

Sam stopped in the middle of writing down something and felt his heart be embraced by a cold, unexpected feeling.

He raised his eyes to Bobby and the older man could almost grasp Sam’s fear with his fingers.

“How bad is it?” Sam asked.

“I don’t know. But your dad is bringing him here instead of going to a hospital, so it can’t be too serious.”

Sam wasn’t convinced by Bobby’s answer. He looked at his homework and the pencil in his hand and realized he could no longer focus on anything. His heart was drumming in his chest and his mind kept picturing the worst scenes of Dean getting hurt, just adding to his growing concern.

“How bad is it?” Bobby put a hand on his shoulder. “You can do your homework. I’m sure Dean is fine.”

Of course Bobby would say that, but he didn’t know. He didn’t know how badly Dean had been hurt, and Sam knew that Dean had only agreed to go on this hunt to get away from him, because he had been bitching the past few days.

When Sam added guilt to his already troubled thoughts, the result was unsettling. He let go of his books and went upstairs, where he started pacing around Bobby’s house. For the next three hours
Sam felt edgy and restless, and when at last he heard the noise of a car coming through the gates he jumped and rushed to see it when Bobby got up to open the door.

“Hey.” John walked in alone, and Sam’s heart sank.

“Where is he?” Bobby asked, voicing Sam’s own question.

John stepped in further and Dean walked in right behind him. The moment Sam saw him, he could breathe a little easier. Dean was alive and in one piece, and that was all that mattered for now.

“I’m here. I’m fine,” Dean said, walking in with difficulty. His eyes fell on Sam, who was half-way down the stairs looking at him intently. For a moment their eyes lingered on each other, with so many unspoken feelings, but then Dean groaned at the pain of moving and walked to the sofa where he sat down.

“What happened to you?” Bobby asked him.

Sam started to go down the remaining stairs slowly, sharpening his ears to listen to their conversation.

There was a visible wound on Dean’s head, like something had hit him there, but that couldn’t be the reason why he had trouble walking.

“A piano,” Dean said.

“A piano?” Bobby frowned.

“Yeah, a damn piano,” Dean said and lifted his shirt so Bobby could see the nasty bruise on his ribs, and the ugly cut in the middle of it.

Sam couldn’t really see anything, since his father was standing between Dean and him, but from the sound Bobby made he imagined his brother had something going on underneath his shirt, something that wasn’t pretty.

“The spirit tried to keep us from burning the painting he was holding on to, but we burned that bitch,” John explained.

“Well, good.” Bobby nodded. “Do you need anything for the pain?” Bobby asked Dean.

“No, I’m fine,” Dean said.

“He most certainly isn’t,” John intervened. “Do you have your first aid stuff? That cut needs cleaning, and you need to rest. I don’t know if you broke a rib or anything, but there’s no training for you until that bruise is gone.”

“Dad, I’m fine,” Dean protested, even though he knew the only training he could do for the next few days was reading books and learning spells.

“Sam, go get the first aid kit, will ya?” Bobby asked him.

Sam nodded and turned around to do as asked.
When he returned, Bobby realized they had better pay a visit to a pharmacy as they were running out of bandages and medicine.

“There’s enough for now,” Bobby said, looking at the stuff. “But we should probably go to town and get more.”

“I’ll go,” John said. “Just make me a list.”

“Alright,” Bobby agreed.

“Sam?”

His father called his name and Sam looked at him quickly. He almost felt he had been forgotten in the middle of the hunt account and Dean’s wound.

“Yes?”

“Help your brother upstairs and tend to his wound. He needs to rest.”

Sam swallowed hard. He felt his heart race and burn in his chest, and he knew Dean’s eyes were burning on him, even though Sam tried hard to avoid his look.

“Do you think you can do that? Do you remember how to clean a wound and everything?” John asked.

“Yes, Dad,” Sam said, his voice small.

“Dad, I can do it, there’s no need—”

“Shut up and get some rest, that’s an order, Dean.” John looked serious, but Dean knew he wasn’t angry or anything. It was just John Winchester showing concern.

Dean let his eyes find Sam’s again and he could almost feel his brother’s uneasiness, his concern, his feelings… There were so many things behind Sam’s look, even the same cold distance and annoyance from before—Dean could still see a great deal of that behind his look.

“Argh.” Dean got up.

“I’ll help.” Sam moved closer to offer him leverage and kept his eyes on the floor to avoid that eye contact that burned him from the inside out.

“It’s fine…” Dean tried not to show how much he had missed Sam’s touch, and tried not let his mind get hazy when he could smell Sam’s scent so close.

As Sam disappeared with Dean upstairs, Bobby gave John a list of what to buy.

“Thanks,” John said, heading outside.

“I’m glad he’s okay, John,” Bobby said.

“Yeah…me too. It was a fucking nasty job, Bobby.” John sighed. “Dean? He saved my ass in there. Before the spirit trapped him against the wall, he saved me.”
Bobby nodded. He believed that. Dean was turning into one hell of a hunter, unfortunately for him. That was not the kind of life one wished on a young man, or on anyone for that matter.

“He’ll be great, John. They both will.”

John nodded and waved the list in his hand.

“Be right back.”

~ * ~

“Boys?” Bobby walked back inside and called loudly.

“Yes?” Sam showed upstairs.

“I’ll be outside working on the cars. If you need anything, call me.”

“Thanks, Bobby,” Sam said and watched him leave before he turned around and went back inside the room.

Dean was lying on the bed after having kicked off his shoes. Sam had put a couple of pillows against the headboard so Dean would be more comfortable.

Slowly, Dean took off his shirt, and Sam saw his wound for the first time as he prepared the things he would need to take care of it.

Sam let his eyes glance at the bruise and the cut and then lowered them again to the bandage and medicine bottles he placed on the bed.

Neither had said a word since they entered the room, but it felt like they spoke volumes every time their eyes met.

Sam’s heart was beating erratically. Dean was hurt, but it was nothing serious. He still felt guilty and worried, but his annoyance and resentment from before were still alive inside of him, and they were just as strong as the feeling of need he felt inside, the need to touch and kiss Dean before his heart burst.

Sam took a deep breath before putting some antiseptic on a piece of gauze and pressing it to the cut on Dean’s skin.

Dean hissed and closed his eyes briefly.

“Does it hurt?” Sam asked softly, breaking the silence. He kept the gauze pressed to the wound for a bit longer before he started to clean it.

“Just a little.” Dean shook his head. He looked at Sam’s face, concentrated on the task at hand, and the way a lock of hair got insistently in his eye, getting pulled back by his quick fingers. He smiled despite himself. Sam was beautiful. It didn’t matter if he still looked annoyed, and if he was still pissed at him, his brother meant the world to him, and Dean knew that his heart could never love
anything or anyone as much as it loved that bright, cranky boy taking care of him.

“What?” Sam asked, when he realized Dean was smiling.

Dean shrugged. “Nothing.”

Sam went back to doing his job. He put some balm on another piece of gauze and applied it to the wound before he started covering it with Ace bandage. He wrapped it tightly around Dean’s torso in order to restrict movement and allow any broken ribs to heal. Dean watched him do it neat and carefully, until he could no longer take a deep breath.

He looked at his little brother and thought about his dream. He thought about taking Sam, being inside of him, and everything it meant. His heart raced and Dean took a deep breath, as deep as the bandages around his ribcage would allow. He had thought a lot about it, and he could see things from Sam’s point of view… besides, he wanted it, too. He couldn’t deny it much longer. But was it the right thing?

Hell, as if knowing what the right thing was all the time was something easy.

“There,” Sam said when he was done. Then he looked for something he found in the first drawer of the night stand. “Take one,” he offered.

Dean took the bottle Sam handed him and read the label.

“These are the pain pills Doctor Michael prescribed to you. I’m not taking them.”

“Why not? You’re in pain.”

Dean scoffed, and the movement caused him to frown.

“That’s nothing, Sam, and you know that.”

Sam swallowed hard and looked at the bedspread. He was sitting cross legged in bed in front of Dean, and he could feel his throat tighten around the unspoken things he bore inside.

“Dean, I…” Sam began. He felt his chest heavy with feelings he could no longer silence. “I’m sorry for the past few days,” he said at last.

Dean watched him intently, even though Sam looked away, avoiding his knowing look.

“I know I’ve been a pain and I know you left with Dad because of me…”

“I left because I wanted to hunt,” Dean said.

Sam looked into his eyes like someone who knows better.

“Yeah, whatever… I’m just sorry you got hurt. I…” He licked at his lips and thought. “I still don’t understand why you won’t change your mind. I still think this is right, Dean, and I still want it,” he said, even though it made him feel vulnerable and angry all over again, he said those words because they were burning in his heart, and they burned their way out of his mouth. “But I don’t want to fight with you. I hate this stupid thing where we’re mad at each other and not talking… I know it’s my fault, and I want it to stop.”
Dean’s heart softened inside his chest, and he couldn’t take his eyes off his brother.

“I hate this, too, Sammy. And I want it to stop.”

Sam felt a wave of relief at the words and nodded, still looking down at the bedspread. He wanted to make things good between then, he really did, but some things were just stronger than him.

“I mean, I still wish you would do it—”

“Yes,” Dean said.

Sam stopped in the middle of his next argument and raised his eyes to meet Dean’s.

“Pardon me?”

“I said yes, Sammy.”

Sam frowned, as if he didn’t dare believe the meaning of that word.

“You mean yes, you’ll…be inside of me?” He lowered his voice and his heart raced.

“Yes,” Dean agreed.

Sam’s lips parted and he took a deep, incredulous breath.

“What made you change your mind?”

“I guess you could say some sense got knocked into my head.” Dean tilted his head, indicating his head wound.

Sam laughed.

“Are you serious?”

“Yes, I am.” Dean saw Sam’s expression change, and he couldn’t lie that it felt amazing being the reason that caused his annoyed face to turn into something cheerful and excited. “After I got hit in the head and blacked out for a while, I thought a lot about everything you said, especially about you being through enough shit to know what’s best for you.”

Sam nodded quickly.

“Yes.”

“And I want to trust you, Sam, I really do. I want to trust this trust you put in me, and I want us to do this because I can see how much you want it, and because I want it, too.”

Sam bit down hard on his bottom lip to keep from smiling like a fool. He couldn’t believe it! Dean had agreed! Dean would help him erase all that darkness, Dean would—

“But, I have my own terms for it to happen,” he said, finally.
Sam narrowed his eyes a little. “Terms?”

“Yeah. If this is going to happen, I have two conditions.”

Sam’s smile faded and he looked attentive.

“What are they?” He asked.

“First, you’ll let me set the pace. We’ll go slowly. Not tomorrow, not the day after tomorrow…I don’t know when it’s going to happen.”

“But it will, right?” Sam asked, worriedly.

“It will. But you’ll have to follow my lead, alright? It happens when I think we’re ready.”

“Okay, I can go with that.” Sam nodded. “What else?”

“The other thing is…Sam, I want to know more about what happened to you before we take things further.”

Sam shifted his weight uncomfortably and adjusted his position on the bed.

“I want you to tell me more about what happened to you, so I can understand where your fears are coming from, alright?”

Sam chewed on his bottom lip and looked uneasy and thoughtful.

“Do you want to know about the darkness?”

Dean took a deep breath.

“I do.”

For a moment Dean thought Sam wouldn’t say anything. He could tell that his bottom lip was on the verge of quivering under the tension building up inside, but Dean would not step back, that was important. ‘Don’t be afraid to push,’ the doctor had told him.

“Okay,” Sam eventually said.

“Okay?”

“Okay,” he repeated. “It’s not going to be tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, but it will happen,” Sam said, paraphrasing his brother.

Dean smiled at that.

“Will it happen, Sam?”

“Yes.”

For a moment they just looked at each other and said nothing. Then, slowly, Sam crawled over Dean’s body and pressed their lips together.
Dean closed his eyes and knew he was home. He let the warmth of Sam’s lips travel to his body and elicit a delicious shudder that raked him, head to toe. Then, he parted his lips when Sam demanded entrance, and tasted in his brother’s mouth the same need they had been trying to hold back for the past few days.

“I missed you,” Sam said when they broke the kiss.

“I missed you, too.”

Sam then looked at Dean with a different, mischievous little smile.

“What?” Dean asked when his brother got up and walked to the window.

“Bobby’s working on the cars, can you hear him?”

“Yeah, but what does it got to do with anything?”

Dean watched as Sam walked towards the door to their room and closed it. He immediately understood what Sam had in mind, and he would be lying if he said his dick didn’t twitch with anticipation.

“Sam, it’s risky…”

“Dad is out, Bobby won’t come up,” Sam said, getting in bed again.

“I’m hurt. I can’t really do much,” he tried.

“Shh…” Sam placed a finger to Dean’s lips and looked at him with liquid lust dancing in his eyes. “You won’t have to.”

Dean could already feel his blood pumping faster. He let his tongue dart out and lick at Sam’s finger before pulling it into his mouth.

Sam hardened and closed his eyes at the feeling, but he didn’t let it go on for too long. He had other plans, and Dean’s mouth was getting in the way.

Dean watched when Sam straddled him and touched his chest lightly. His fingers grazed his skin and Sam chuckled when goosebumps broke under his fingertips.

“Are you cold?” He asked, cheekily.

“No, it’s you, Baby,” Dean said teasingly, tickling Sam’s arousal with a voice that was sultry and hoarse with lust.

Sam let his fingers brush against Dean’s nipples and play with them until he could elicit a moan from his brother. Then, he let his lips touch his chest, and planted several butterfly kisses on Dean’s skin, paying special attention to his nipples before letting his mouth travel lower, where his tongue found the thin trail of hair that disappeared beneath Dean’s jeans.

When Dean looked at Sam as his fingers fumbled with the button and zipper, he was already hard, and when Sam lowered his pants and underwear, Dean’s cock was taut against his stomach,
demanding the sort of attention Sam was very willing to give.

“Sammy…” Dean’s voice had dropped so low that Sam could barely hear him when he went closer and let his tongue dart out to lick at the wetness gathering at his tip.

Dean shut his eyes and breathed faster. His eyes were still squeezed shut when he felt a hot, wet mouth closing on his tip and sucking. Dean opened his eyes and his right hand found Sam’s hair, letting his fingers get tangled in it as Sam bobbed up and down on his erection.

“Hmm,” Dean groaned, feeling himself throb against Sam’s tongue. He closed his eyes and thought of all the things he would do to Sam the next time they were alone. He would make Sam scream with pleasure. Such thoughts, combined with the velvet feeling of Sam’s tongue and lips working on his cock, were enough to take him close to the edge.

Sam realized that. He saw the way Dean’s thighs were tense and his hips tried to buck into his mouth. Then, unexpectedly, Sam let Dean slip out of his mouth to a pained sound of protest that was quickly replaced by a longer, throaty moan of pleasure when Sam closed his mouth on one of Dean’s balls and sucked. The sound of panting was soon loud in the room.

“Hey, control your breathing. We can’t have you all worked up, now can we?” Sam teased.

“Fuck, Sammy,” Dean gasped and his cock jerked. “Fuck, that feels good.” He shut his eyes and enjoyed the sensation.

“I mean it, Dean. Slow your breathing down. How will I explain if you pass out on me?” Sam grinned and caused Dean to chuckle lightly.

“Can’t help it…” He said, breathless. For the first time since he got hurt, Dean couldn’t feel a single trace of pain, because Sam’s mouth on him felt like heaven.

Sam sucked on the other one, too, before he swallowed Dean down his throat as far as it would go, moving up and down faster, and letting his fingers wrap around the base and jerk in time with his mouth.

“Mmm!” Dean’s clipped breathing and muffled moaning was the beginning of the end. His fingers tugged at Sam’s hair, trying to warn him, trying to make him pull away before he let go, but Sam wouldn’t take the hint, he wouldn’t stop. “Sammy please…”

Sam knew what Dean wanted, but he wouldn’t abide. He wanted to swallow him. Even if it wasn’t the best taste in the world, he wanted Dean to finish in his mouth, and when he felt the hot, liquid orgasm in the back of his throat, Sam swallowed quickly and let his lips linger for a while longer, until Dean was growing soft and his breathing was deep and relaxed.

“C’mere.” Dean motioned for Sam to get closer and he complied. Sam nestled between Dean’s open arms and looked into his eyes. “Kiss me.”

“I thought you didn’t like the taste,” Sam said.

“Shut up,” Dean chuckled and planted an open-mouth, deep kiss on Sam’s lips that left Sam panting and shaky. “It’s you, Sammy. I love your taste. Even when it’s my taste. I don’t care.”

Sam chuckled too, and as they kissed again he felt Dean’s hand travel lower and cup the bulge on his
pants.

“No, it’s okay,” Sam said, removing his hand. “Get better first, then we’ll do it.”

“No, it’s okay? Because I could get you off real quickly.” Dean’s hand squeezed him and Sam shuddered.

“I’m sure, Dean.” It took a lot of self-control, but Sam managed to take Dean’s hand off his arousal. “You promised we will do it, right? Slowly, but we will.”

“Right,” Dean agreed.

“If you aren’t in a hurry, neither am I. I can wait,” Sam said, and for some time that would be true, until the day when he would understand that he couldn’t wait anymore.

“Come here then, before Bobby comes back inside.”

Sam settled against Dean’s chest, careful not to put too much pressure on his ribs, and felt his open arms close around his body. God, it felt good being that close. Sam let his eyes fall shut and his nose graze Dean’s skin lightly. “You smell good,” Sam whispered, relaxing in the embrace.

Dean squeezed his arms a bit tighter and kissed Sam’s hair.

It didn’t matter what had happened before, or what would happen tomorrow, because that moment was perfect, and Dean closed his eyes and made sure to remember every detail of it. In the rough lives of hunters, good memories were a treasure one learned to hold on to.

------------------------------------------------------

tbc...
Dean rested for an entire week, and no one could make him stay in bed for longer than that. He knew he wasn’t well enough to start training, but lying around in bed doing nothing was driving him crazy.

“What are you doing out of bed?” John asked when he saw his son standing in the middle of the living room, all dressed to leave the house.

“I’m fine, Dad. Really. I don’t think I broke anything. Besides, it’s not like I’m going to train hard. I just need to feel useful, alright?”

John nodded and relaxed.

“Alright then. Can you drive? Bobby and I are preparing another hunt. We need a few things that you can pick up for us.”

“Great, I’ll go,” Dean said as his father wrote down items on a slip of paper.

“I’ll go, too,” Sam said.

“Great, I’ll go,” Dean said as his father wrote down items on a slip of paper.

“If you want to go, too.”

Dean nodded and took the car keys. He smiled briefly at Sam as they made their way to the Impala and out of Bobby’s salvage yard.

They needed to make three different stops along the way to find everything John had asked on his list—a supermarket, and a couple of antique shops. In one hour they had gathered everything they needed, so Sam didn’t understand when Dean parked the car again and told him to wait for him.

“Where are you going?”

“Pharmacy.”

“Why? Dad went to a pharmacy a few days ago. What do you need?” He frowned.
Dean took a deep breath, looked intently and mysteriously into Sam’s eyes and winked.

“Just wait for me.”

Sam shrugged as he changed the radio station in the car and waited for his brother. Dean was gone for no longer than fifteen minutes and soon they were heading back towards what they both liked to think of as ‘home’.

~ * ~

John and Bobby leaned over a map spread on the kitchen table. They were talking fast and circling locations as they made their plans. At first John barely heard the phone ringing, and he was tempted not to answer it, but whoever was calling was insistent, and he ended up picking up the call.

“What? Yeah, this is him,” John spoke but his eyes were still on the map, and his brain was only paying half of the attention it should to the caller, because what he and Bobby were about to do was far more interesting. “Right. How’s it going, Doctor?”

“Sam’s doctor?” Bobby mouthed the question and John nodded.

“Yeah, sure. No problem. Whatever you think will help him.” John listened as he picked up a pen, drew another circle on the map and eyed Bobby, who nodded appreciatively at the gesture. “Yeah, fine. You can have this friend of yours, Mark?, talk to him, it’s good. As long as you think it’ll help, and only if you can keep hunting out of it.” He frowned and looked at the gun and the silver bullets on the table. “Sorry, I’m kind of busy right now, doc. But it’s fine, yeah. No problem. Bye.” John ended the call and focused on the map.

“Everything alright?” Bobby asked.

“Yeah, yeah… Sam’s therapist thinks she has a friend who can help him. I told her it’s okay. God knows Sam needs all the help he can get.”

“He’s been doing good lately,” Bobby pointed out.

“I know. But Sam’s become unpredictable, Bobby. Now, the teenage kind of unpredictable? I can handle that. But this is something else entirely. I can’t have his past put him in any kind of danger, you know? He needs to get better; his life depends on him getting better.”

“Right. And as he works through it, we rid this world of another son of a bitch,” Bobby pointed to the map again.

“You’re damn right we do.” John nodded before he forgot the call and let his mind busy itself with thoughts of his impending hunt.

~ * ~

Even though they were all set, John and Bobby had to wait another week before they could leave on their next hunt. They were waiting for the full moon, their nerves on edge with anticipation for what was to come. Little did they know, however, that theirs weren’t the only nerves on edge.
Sam and Dean longed for some time alone. During the past couple of weeks it had been difficult to be intimate, and save for a few kisses they shared when they were sure no one was around, they couldn’t do much else but wait. Thus, Sam went to therapy that week, did his homework, watched as Dean got a hundred per cent better and waited for the day the full moon would be in the sky.

When that day finally came, Bobby and John left early in the morning, packing food and guns, and plenty of silver bullets.

~ * ~

Sam saw the car leave through the gates and stretched his arms, yawning loudly.

“So, what do you want to do?” Dean’s voice almost startled him when it came from behind him.

Sam turned around and smiled boldly.

“I may have a thing or two on my mind…”

“Oh, really?” Dean arched his eyebrows and felt his heart race.

“Really,” was the last thing Sam managed to say before their mouths were pressed together, kissing as hotly as the fire burning low in their bellies.

Dean managed to kick the front door shut as they stumbled their way upstairs.

Somehow Dean managed to take them both to bed, and as he covered Sam’s body with his own, Sam moaned and shut his eyes. His pleasure was short-lived, though, because when Dean took off his shirt and tickled him, Sam screamed and writhed, laughing loudly and trying to get away.

“Stop! Stop, Dean!” Sam laughed, breathlessly, both aroused and annoyed at the torture.

“Stop what? I’m not doing anything,” Dean said cheekily, loving every sound of joy that tripped out of Sam’s lips.

~ * ~

“I can’t believe you forgot the map,” John said, stopping the car only a few meters off the gates.

“Hey, you didn’t remember either,” Bobby accused. “Since when is it my job to make sure you take your belongings? As far as I remember that was your map.”

“Alright, alright. Can you go get it quickly?”

“Fine. Wait here, I’ll be faster on foot.” Bobby jumped out of the car and slammed the door.

Not ten minutes since he had left, he was back in his house, looking for the map they needed. It wasn’t in his office, as Bobby had thought it would be. Then he remembered he had been looking at
the map the previous night, and had probably forgotten it in his room. That was why John hadn’t remembered either, it was actually Bobby’s fault. ‘Like he’ll ever know that,’ Bobby chuckled and started making his way upstairs.

The sound of laughing and horseplay became louder as Bobby went upstairs, and he smiled at the thought of Sam and Dean having fun. He wouldn’t disturb them.

Bobby went inside his room, got the map he needed, and was about to make his way downstairs when he stopped on his tracks.

“Hmm, yes! Do that again!”

“Like this?”

“Yes, oh! Dean…”

Bobby froze. For an entire minute—and a minute could be a long time—he didn’t move a muscle. He stood perfectly still as his mind tried to understand what the hell he had just heard. Then, moved by something that was stronger than him, Bobby took a few tentative steps towards the boys’ room and looked through the half-closed door.

“Holy fucking shit,” Bobby whispered, so low that the boys in bed couldn’t have heard him with the noise they were making.

Bobby’s eyes couldn’t believe what they saw. In bed, his bed!, Dean lay partially atop Sam and they kissed. They were both shirtless, and their hands seemed to be everywhere on each other. Before Bobby could snap out of his shock, Sam rolled over until he was on top. Bobby could see the way they smiled at each other, unaware they were being watched, and he saw the way Sam looked at his brother adoringly before he leaned down and let their lips touch.

That look was a look of…a look of…damnit! It was a look with so much intimacy that Bobby would be a fool to think this was happening for the first time.

Then, the older hunter snapped out of his torpor and shut his eyes briefly. That was too much information to process. He didn’t even know how he felt about the whole thing, but he doubted the brothers would have cared much about his opinion.

‘I can’t deal with that now,’ Bobby thought quickly. ‘John is waiting.’

“John. Fuck!” Bobby cursed, still in a low voice, as he thought what his friend would do if he found out. ‘He’ll go ballistic,’ Bobby thought, answering himself.

Quickly but silently, Bobby made his way downstairs and out of the house. He closed the door without making a sound and started to make his way back to the car.

His heart was still beating fast and his mind was still very much in shock as he strode towards the car, and Bobby nearly jumped out of his skin when he ran into John.

“Jesus, John, you scared the living hell out of me.” Bobby bent a little and placed his hands on his knees as he recovered his breath.

“Why? What happened? What took you so long?”
Bobby thought of his friend’s sons tangled in bed, exploring a kind of relationship no one would have ever imagined for them. John wouldn’t be able to deal with that. Hell, Bobby didn’t know if he could.

“Nothing. I got it.” Bobby showed John the map. “Let’s go?” He didn’t even know why he was covering up for them, but deep inside Bobby knew he was doing the right thing.

He had seen Sam, and heard him. He was laughing, he looked so happy he was beaming. Bobby had always known that Dean would be the answer to heal Sam’s traumas; he just never thought things would have gone down this path… If they had, though, he could not expose them. They had both been through enough, Sam particularly, and his relationship with his daddy was already difficult enough without adding that kind of revelation in the mix. No, Bobby couldn’t say anything. He would speak to them if he had to, but he wouldn’t bring John into this.

They got into the car and John put the key in the ignition.

“Ready?” He asked.

“Hell yeah,” Bobby replied and stared at the road ahead.

~ * ~

Sam was lying half atop his brother, looking into his eyes. He felt his heart grow bigger with every breath he took, and he knew his eyes told Dean what he felt, but he still needed to say it.

“I love you, you know.”

Dean looked into Sam’s eyes, watching him so closely, and felt his chest warm and tight with love. It was so much that he hardly knew how to handle it.

“Yeah, no chick flick moments, Sam. I’m almost feeling like I’m in a cheesy paperback novel,” he said and Sam chuckled.

“Oh, you mean like the ones you read during our road trips? With the women on the cover and stuff?”

“Shut up, I do not!” Dean hoped he didn’t start blushing the moment Sam started laughing.

“Oh, please. You’re a softie at heart,” Sam teased.

Dean grew serious, though. His smile faded and he looked deeply into his brother’s eyes.

“I love you, Sammy.”

Sam’s smile faded, too, under the seriousness of Dean’s voice. He let their eyes linger for a moment longer before their lips did the talking, and they kissed softly at first, and more passionately as their desire grew.

When they broke the kiss, Dean looked mischievously at Sam and looked for something in his
backpack.

“So, you asked me what I went into the pharmacy for. Well, for this.” He put something on the bed, which Sam took and studied.

At first it meant nothing to him, but when Sam read the label he knew his cheeks were rosier, because he could feel the heat on them.

“What? Is it too much? You can tell me,” Dean said, searching Sam’s eyes intently.

“No, it’s fine.” Sam felt shy, but his heart raced approvingly. “So does it mean we’re going to…” Sam heard the way his breath hitched when he let the question hang in the air.

“That’s not what this means. I told you we’d take things slow. This just means I’m not gonna hurt you.” Dean studied his brother. “Alright?”

Sam nodded. He put it aside and leaned in for another kiss.

This time they didn’t stop. They kissed until they slowly got rid of the rest of their clothing and Dean settled between Sam’s parted thighs.

Sam tossed his head back with pleasure and Dean took the chance to kiss and suck possessive trails down his neck. Sam tugged at his brother’s short hair and gasped, feeling himself hard and aching, rubbing against Dean’s own hard-on.

Dean went lower and let his tongue trace Sam’s collar bone slowly, eliciting a soft little moan from the boy arching into his body.

When Dean’s mouth was gone, Sam opened his eyes to find him straddling him, pressing against him slowly, letting his hands touch Sam’s chest and squeeze around his ribcage.

Sam wanted to touch, too. He reached out his hands and let them touch Dean’s chest. His barely noticed, but his fingertips were shaky when they found how hot his brother’s skin felt under his touch. Sam grazed his fingers down Dean’s chest until they were tracing the hard muscles on his abdomen.

Sam didn’t know why, but suddenly he felt self-conscious of how attracted he was to Dean. He had already seen his brother shirtless countless times, but now, as he touched every inch of his skin, Sam realized how much he had longed for that kind of physical intimacy.

“Do you like it, Sammy? Touching me?” Dean asked, as if he had read his thoughts.

Sam nodded, his throat tight with lust, so tight his voice could hardly make its way out of it.

“I love touching you, too,” Dean murmured softly and moved lower, out of Sam’s reach, in a way that he could plant kisses on Sam’s lower belly and thighs.

When Dean started nibbling on the inside of his thighs, Sam found his voice again and moaned. His cock jerked and he clawed at the sheets beneath his body with anticipation.

“Dean, please…” Sam’s forehead was wrinkled with need, and when at last he felt Dean’s mouth close around his tip and go down, Sam groaned and licked at his lips.
Dean closed his eyes and took his time pleasuring Sam. There was no hurry; it was all about making Sam relax and feel good. So Dean sucked and licked him, holding his hips down when Sam started to try and buck into his mouth.

“Dean…Dean…” Sam’s voice grew throaty and pleading, and Dean knew his brother was lost in a haze of pleasure.

Slowly, Dean let him slip out his mouth and found what he had handed Sam before. His brother was so hot and bothered that he didn’t open his eyes, he didn’t see what Dean was doing, he was just waiting.

Sam felt Dean’s mouth sucking on his balls and he gasped and writhed, his body tingling with pleasure, his breathing heavy and clipped.

Dean stopped his ministrations and coated one finger with lube. His heart was beating fast, and his arousal was pulsing with his every thought. Yet, Dean was nervous, like he didn’t remember being in the middle of sex before, and he looked at Sam’s face intently for any signs that he should stop.

“Spread your legs for me, Baby,” he coaxed gently, hotly.

Sam complied. He was too far gone to think about anything. All he knew was that his dick was throbbing and Dean would make him come soon.

Nonetheless, when Sam felt a cold, slippery finger probing between his legs, he opened his eyes and looked down at his brother. Dean’s finger was just circling his opening, not pushing or anything, just…there.

“Hey, are you okay?” Dean asked, when their eyes met. “Is that what you want?”

Sam hesitated a moment and then nodded. He wanted that, he really did. He just felt…well, vulnerable and kind of shy to know that Dean was doing that to him, and seeing him like that.

“What’s going on, hmm?” Dean moved until he was lying beside his brother and their faces were near. His hand, however, was still between Sam’s legs, his fingers resting on a pale thigh.

“Nothing.”

“If you changed your mind—” Dean began.

“I didn’t. I didn’t change my mind,” Sam said, vehemently. “It’s just…” He swallowed hard. “It’s you…and you’re…going to do this and…” Sam smiled an embarrassed, small smile that caused him to blush and laugh.

“Is that what this is all about? Are you shy?”

Sam’s response was a nervous, quick laugh.

“Sammy, it’s me…relax…” Dean nuzzled his face and kissed his jaw line. “You can show me everything you feel, okay? Probably not a good moment to say this, but I’m your brother.”

Sam burst out laughing and Dean laughed, too. Gotta be able to find the humor in it, he thought
vaguely.

“I know you, alright? I won’t do anything to hurt you.”

Sam stopped laughing and nodded. He felt Dean’s fingers squeeze his thigh and nodded.

“Do it…”

Dean looked at those lips, slightly wet and totally inviting.

“Kiss me.”

Sam complied and their mouths met, and between Sam’s legs, Dean let his slippery finger add pressure until it was inside his brother. For a moment they remained perfectly still, even the kiss broke as their lips touched and their breaths mingled. Both of their eyes were squeezed shut when, little by little, Dean moved his finger in and out.

“That okay?” He whispered against Sam’s lips.

“Yeah…” Sam managed to breath out a response.

For the next moment, though, there was only silence and panting in the room. Dean buried his nose into the curve of Sam’s neck and shoulder and let his finger open him slowly, going deeper, exploring the tightness that clamped down on him.

With the generous amount of lube Dean had used, he could slide in a second finger easily, though he did it slow and carefully. When his two fingers were moving steadily in and out, stretching and teasing, Dean opened his eyes and studied Sam’s face. It was closed tight in concentration.

“How does that feel?” Dean asked.

Sam took a moment to reply, as if he was considering what he felt. He could feel Dean’s fingers deep inside him, moving, and the thought that his brother was actually doing that was more arousing than the action itself, and Sam was getting off much more on the thought of what they were doing than on the feeling of being breached.

“Not bad…”

“But not good either?”

Sam looked at Dean. He wouldn’t lie to him.

“It’s a little weird, but I don’t want you to stop.”

Dean nodded. He loved the way Sam’s hair was becoming wet and sticking to his forehead. He took a minute to enjoy the sight of his brother so unraveled, and then he moved lower so he could close his mouth around Sam’s cock and start sucking on him again.

“Mmm,” Sam moaned when that happened. Dean’s mouth was back, bobbing up and down, his tongue swirling around his tip, and suddenly Sam didn’t care so much about the fingers moving inside of him, because his cock was hard and getting the attention it wanted.
Sam relaxed around Dean’s fingers and gave in to the pleasure pooling on his lower belly. Encouraged by the sounds Sam was making, Dean moved his fingers faster as his mouth worked.

“Fuck!” Sam cursed and writhed, and Dean stopped everything right away and looked at him worriedly. “Don’t! Don’t stop!” Sam begged, his lips parted in a silent plea.

Dean let his mouth close around Sam’s tip again, believing his brother was now close.

“No, the fingers Dean, don’t stop,” Sam said, in between deep intakes of breath.

Dean realized he had stopped moving his fingers, but now he moved them again and watched Sam’s reactions.

“Ahmm…!” Sam writhed and his hips came down on Dean’s fingers, almost as if he needed more friction.

“Is it…is it good now?” Dean asked, his cock throbbing against his stomach as he understood where Sam’s pleasure was coming from.

“Hell yeah,” Sam tried to smile but a moan changed his plans and he abandoned himself to what he felt, his hips chasing after Dean’s fingers when they threatened to withdraw.

Dean wasn’t sure of what he was doing right now, but he let his two digits rub him from the inside, and Sam didn’t disappoint with his reaction. Dean watched, his throat dry and his blood boiling, as Sam groaned and his head thrashed against the pillow as sweat started to glisten in a thin layer on his taut stomach.

“Dean…” Sam moaned. He was a mess. He couldn’t take it anymore, and Dean understood that. He closed his mouth on Sam’s cock and sucked him as his fingers moved faster, steadily, in and out, hitting that spot that had changed everything, making Sam’s muscles relax and flex, as if they danced to the feeling of his climax coming.

When it hit, the first thing Dean thought was that he was glad they were alone. Sam screamed, nearly sitting on the bed as his whole body jerked and he came, shuddering and trembling as a powerful wave washed over him and left him boneless.

Dean swallowed him quickly and watched him as Sam lay unmoving in bed.

“Sam? Are you alright?”

Sam opened his eyes and they looked so dazzled with pleasure and he seemed so languid that Dean would have laughed, if only he wasn’t painfully hard himself.

“You killed me,” Sam chuckled.

Dean was willing to ignore his cock and how it was almost hurting him to be that fully erect, because Sam looked so sleepy that all he wanted was to hold him and make sure he was alright.

Sam must have sensed Dean’s plan, though, because before Dean could move and lie down beside him, Sam sat in bed and his eyes were wide open.

“I have to take care of you.”
“It’s alright.”

“Shut up,” Sam smiled. “Where’s that thing? Here.” Sam took the lube and applied a generous amount on his hand.

“What are you going to do?” Dean arched a worried eyebrow, and Sam laughed.

“This,” Sam said and closed his slippery fingers around Dean’s cock and stroked.

“Ohhh, oh! Good, Sammy, good.” Dean bit on his bottom lip and his cock pulsed against Sam’s palm. Dean closed his eyes and rested against the headboard as Sam stroked him knowingly.

It wasn’t long before Dean couldn’t control it anymore. The image of Sam coming undone on his fingers was taking over Dean’s thoughts and fueling his arousal. Behind his closed eyelids, Dean saw Sam moaning and pushing against his fingers until he came so hard he shook, and Dean was going to come too, because that picture was just scorching hot and he couldn’t, and didn’t want to, hold back.

“Oh…mm.” Dean bit down hard on his bottom lip as Sam’s fist worked harder, jerking and squeezing, and then Dean was shaking too, his orgasm silently roaring through him until Dean’s head fell back and hit the headboard hard.

“Ouch,” he groaned at the pain and chuckled.

Sam smiled at the sight and when Dean collapsed by his side, he allowed himself to do the same. He loved the warm feeling of Dean’s breath puffing against his neck as his brother’s face nestled under his chin.

Sam just felt the intimacy, his body still tingling all over, and closed his eyes. There was nothing on his mind except for how good he felt, and how amazing this feeling was.

“Hey, wanna take a shower with me?” Dean asked, lifting himself on his elbows and biting down on Sam’s shoulder.

“Hey! That hurts!” Sam pushed him and they both chuckled softly. “Yeah, I could use a shower.”

Sam then watched, puzzled, as Dean took the lube again and poured a small amount on his index finger before closing it again.

“What are you- Hey!!” Sam protested when Dean pressed his lube coated finger to the tip of his nose. “That’s so fucking childish.” Sam shook his head and wiped his nose clean as Dean laughed out loud. “Really, Dean,” Sam said, getting up. “That was straight out of one of your chick-flick novels,” he teased. “Told ya you were a softie.”

“I am, Sammy. That’s why you love me,” Dean provoked, his eyes beaming with joy.

“I do.”

Dean helped Sam up and out of the bed and they headed for the bathroom together.
Thank you everyone who commented to let me know the site was working. I've been told that some comments on chapter 59 failed to show up, and some people didn't get an email informing of the update. I think the site's back to normal now.

I know it's difficult to comment all the time, I totally understand that! But I hope you guys know how much it means to me when you give me feedback on the fic. It definitely makes me work harder to bring you more updates! So thank you!
Chapter 61

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much *kittenbot* for beta-ing this! =)

Chapter 61

When they left the shower, Sam and Dean nestled in bed together and just enjoyed the silence of the house they now had to themselves. Beneath the blankets covering them there was warm, naked skin touching, and limbs that tangled.

Dean raked his fingers absently through Sam’s hair. He watched his brother doze off for a while, but now Sam was waking up, stirring and stretching like a lazy kitten, and for a moment Dean thought he would purr when he started making soft little sounds.

“Why are you smiling?” Sam asked, his eyes half shut.

“You’re smiling, too,” Dean pointed out.

Sam chuckled.

“Well, I’m happy.”

“Good.” Dean brushed a lock of hair out of Sam’s forehead. His heart swelled in his chest, and he could feel his quickened pulse on his fingertips as they touched Sam’s skin. “I’m glad you’re happy.”

Dean stared intently into Sam’s hazel eyes, and he wished his brother knew just how much it meant to him to hear that, and how much Dean would fight everything on their way to make sure nothing hurt him again.

“So…” Dean let the back of his fingers graze Sam’s cheek lightly. “Are you feeling good now, then?”

Sam nodded.

“Do you feel safe here with me?”

“I do.”

Dean searched Sam’s eyes, knowing he had to say his next words.

“Would you like to tell me a little more about what happened to you?”
Dean swore it was like Sam’s eyes changed color right before his eyes. From the clear, hazel brightness in them, Dean could see a darker, more shadowy look.

Sam didn’t say anything immediately. He felt his body stiffen and his heart lose its steady rhythm. Honestly? Sam didn’t know what happened to him, but it felt like his body had a mind of its own, and there was no fighting its response to that subject.

“Now?” Sam’s voice was barely audible and extremely defensive.

“Yeah, now. It’s just us here, no one will come. You’re feeling good, relaxed… I’m here, nothing will happen. You know that. Besides…” Dean arched his eyebrows and tried to soften his voice. “We do have a deal, right? I’m holding my side of it, ain’t I?”

Sam swallowed with some difficulty and felt a deep, slow intake of breath making its way in and out of his lungs. “You are,” he agreed.

Dean waited patiently for Sam to say something but he didn’t. Since their bodies were touching all over, he could feel Sam had grown tense, so he tried to soothe him with small, caring touches on his face and neck.

“You were taken to the room. You told me there was a camera, remember? You told me there was no way out, and that they slipped food inside from time to time.” Dean tried to help him, and he heard it when Sam’s breathing pattern shifted to something louder and faster, but he kept going. “You told me you didn’t want to eat at first, and then you said you just had to, because you were hungry.” Dean studied Sam carefully. He knew his brother was on edge and unwilling to talk, but unless he tried, Dean didn’t believe Sam would wake up one day and simply tell him everything out of nowhere. “Then you told me about the first time there was darkness.”

Sam parted his lips and breathed quickly. He knew he had to hold his part of the deal, but it was difficult to speak when everything inside him froze and told him no. His body didn’t obey him, and it didn’t want to speak of the horrors it had suffered; his body wanted to forget and nothing else.

Sam shut his eyes and it seemed like he was straining with the effort of speaking.

“At first, I thought I could fight him.”

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes briefly before looking away. He focused on somewhere else only his eyes could see—Sam focused on the past.

“I thought that if I ate and exercised I could build up my strength. I thought that’s what you would do.” Sam’s lips quivered and it felt like he had to hold on as tightly as he could to keep going without losing control.

Dean’s heart beat fast, and it felt like it was beating in his throat. He wanted to speak, damn it, he wanted to know what the right words were, but he couldn’t. He was speechless. Dean waited and listened when Sam started again.

“But then he…the next time he came he handcuffed me to the wall. It was pitch black, I couldn’t see my own hand if I held it before my face,” Sam explained. “But I could feel his whip on my back.”

Sam closed his eyes and thought for a moment. He wanted to do that, he wanted to tell Dean, but
God, it hurt so much going back to those memories…

“When the lights were turned back on he was gone, and I remember there were clean clothes in there as well. So I changed. There was…there was blood all over. I had to lie on my stomach for days if I wanted to get any sleep.”

Dean could see how much Sam was struggling to speak, and he found his hand beneath the sheets and squeezed gently to try and reassure him that he was doing great.

“The doctor helped.”

“The doctor?” Dean remembered the man who had tried to help him when he had entered the bright room and found Sam’s unmoving body curled up in the middle of it.

“Yeah. The first time the man beat me up, the doctor came in and fixed my nose. He wouldn’t speak to me except for some commands, and he examined me all over. The same thing happened after the whipping. He even left behind a balm I could put on the cuts so the pain wasn’t so bad. I knew he was a weak link in whatever was happening, so I tried to use him to escape.”

“You did?”

Sam nodded. He took a deep breath and forced himself to go on.

“I realized he had a Taser in his pocket, and he wasn’t very strong. One day, when he came in to examine me, I took him by surprise, grabbed hold of the Taser and told him to open the door. I threatened him with it and shouted orders.” Sam felt his stomach turn and he closed his eyes at the pain.

“You tried to escape… What happened?”

“The demon,” Sam said. “He walked in. Those black eyes looked at me…next thing I know I was flying against a wall, the Taser gone, the doctor gone.”

Dean felt his heart tight, his own breath coming with difficulty as tension crept into his muscles with Sam’s every word.

“That’s when I understood.” Sam felt his eyes burning, but he fought the tears bravely, at the cost of his throat thickening and tightening around an invisible knot of tension.

“Understood what, Sammy?”

Sam gasped and blinked, shaking his head briefly against the pillow.

“I couldn’t fight them. I was…” Sam couldn’t speak. The word burned in his throat, it felt bitter in his mouth, it made him feel nauseated.

“Was what?” Dean insisted softly.

“Scared,” Sam admitted, and the shaking started.

Dean could feel him shaking against his body, and when he tried to find Sam’s fingers again to show him some comfort, those fingers avoided contact and Sam withdrew from his body.
“Sam, it’s okay to feel scared. They worked very hard to make you feel that.”

“The next time he came in the dark he Tased me until I passed out,” Sam blurted.

“You were so brave.”

Sam moved away, out of Dean’s touch and sat on the bed, pulling his knees up. ‘You don’t know,’ Sam thought. ‘You didn’t see me beg,’ he thought and looked away, ashamed.

“I don’t want to talk anymore,” Sam stated.

“Why not? You’re doing really well,” Dean tried.

“I don’t.” Sam insisted.

“Sam, please… tell me what else happened in the dark. What else did Harry do?”

“Why are you asking this?”

“Because we’ve been doing stuff, you know…” Dean didn’t know how to say what he meant, but it would be good to know exactly what happened to Sam—whether he had been raped or not—before anything further happened between them. “I need to know what he did to you, because I don’t want to hurt you. Do you understand?”

Dean saw how hard it was, he could see that Sam was visibly struggling with his past and everything that was still hiding behind his wall.

Sam understood. But that didn’t make things any easier.

He shook his head and felt the shudders raking him, rendering him powerless against his own memories.

“Dean, no…”

“Sam, you see that you can open up, right? I’m here for you… Please let me help you…”

Sam’s eyes were huge and his breathing was on the verge of turning into panting.

“Did one of the ways Harry hurt you in the dark include forcing himself on you?”

Sam thought he would choke. Or vomit. Or both.

He shook his head violently and made as if he would move away. Dean held him softly and made him look into his eyes.

“Sam…”

“Dean, no. Let me go.”

“Sam, I need to know. I need to know what happened before anything can happen between us, don’t you see?”
Sam started pushing at Dean’s hands, trying to wiggle free. He couldn’t think about that, he couldn’t turn off the lights to that memory.

The man. The belt being unbuckled. The pajama pants being pulled down.

“Trust me,” Dean asked.

The sounds of stabbing pain and shame that filled the bright room, and the blood that reminded him of having been subjugated and broken.

“No. I’m not going to talk about that.” Sam shook his head and groaned, shoving Dean hard.

Dean let him go, but didn’t give up.

“Sam, just tell me what he did, you know I will understand. Just let me in, you don’t need to keep this secret, it’s poison.”

‘No. No, I can’t.’ It had taken everything he had to try and put himself elsewhere as the man ravished him, and if Sam closed his eyes and remembered what that boy had felt during those endless minutes, then he would break.

“Dean, no!” Sam yelled.

“Well, screw that deal!” Sam cried out. “I’m not talking about that, I’m not! I don’t care about the deal, I can’t!” He groaned, unaware of the wetness that pooled in his angry eyes without enough strength to fall down his cheeks. “If having you with me will force me to talk about that, then I don’t want it.” Sam shook with his words, because they hurt. He wanted Dean. He did, so much… He was just unable to face his fear. Sam felt it was physically impossible for him to overcome the panic that spread all over his brain and controlled him when he thought about that secret.

“Sam, Sam…c’mere,” Dean shut his eyes and lowered his voice. Screw Dakota and her whole pushing isn’t always bad. All Dean could see now was how upset Sam was, how shaken, and how unable to control his own feelings. He knew it must drive him mad being unable to handle his reactions, so Dean just pulled him close and held him until Sam calmed down. At first Sam resisted and tried to fight the embrace, but soon he loosened and accepted the warm comfort.

“I’m sorry. It’s okay. You told me a lot, thank you. I’m sorry I asked for more.”

“I can’t,” Sam said, his lips against Dean’s neck, the words muffled, but they could find Dean’s ear and his understanding. “I can’t Dean,” he repeated. “Not yet. I can’t.”

“Shhh…it’s alright.”

“No it isn’t, you’ll change your mind about us,” Sam said, feeling anguished and angry.

“No, I won’t.”

Sam pulled out of the embrace to look into Dean’s eyes.
“But you said it’s a deal. If I don’t want to talk…”

“Right,” Dean interrupted him. “It’s a deal, not a threat, Sam. If you still want to take things further, if that makes you happy, we’ll keep doing it.”

“Yes,” Sam nodded quickly.

“And I still want you to open up more about everything that happened, but I don’t want to upset you. I won’t force you to talk, okay?”

“Thanks.” Sam nodded and relaxed, the shaking leaving his body and his breathing falling into a more soothing rhythm.

“Come here.” Dean pulled Sam into a hug again and kissed the top of his head.

Dean let go of his need for answers and his own insecure and guilty thoughts. He focused instead on calming Sam down and making him feel better. One step at a time; and for now making sure Sam was okay was more important than having answers.

~ * ~

John and Bobby were back in a couple of days. They successfully hunted down the werewolf they had been tracking, and came back home without as much as a scratch.

“Hey, how was it?” Dean asked them as they started to unpack in the living room.

“That was surprisingly easy,” John said.

“Really? What happened?”

Bobby watched as John and Dean started to talk, and he also watched as Sam read a book nearby. Bobby still couldn’t shake off the things he had seen when he was last home. He looked at Dean and saw he and Sam tangled in bed, and Bobby’s skin broke into goosebumps with anxiety and edginess. If only he could go back in time and un-see that! He didn’t want to get involved in the middle of what he thought was going on; he wanted no part in whatever Sam and Dean had been up to when they were alone, but Bobby realized it was a little too late for that now. Sam was still a minor, and he was, to say the least, vulnerable after everything he had been through. Bobby hated to admit it, but he might need to speak about what he had seen in the bedroom.

“Hey, Sam? You okay?” John looked at his youngest son. “Come here. Let me tell you about that werewolf.”

Bobby knew that his friend could not know about it. John wouldn’t be able to handle it. Hell, what father would?, Bobby thought. Telling John would just make things more difficult for his boys, and the way Bobby saw it, Sam and Dean already had it hard enough, they didn’t need more harsh control from their daddy.

So Bobby knew he had to wait. He had to wait for the right moment to talk to Dean alone. Because honestly, Sam had too much on his plate, and Bobby wasn’t sure how to approach him with the subject.
It was a few days later when the opportunity to speak presented itself. John drove Sam to therapy because he wanted to pick a few things up in the city, and left Dean and he alone in the house.

Bobby found Dean in the yard with an array of weapons disposed before him as he cleaned each and every gun carefully and sharpened each and every knife to perfection.

“Hey, kid.”

Dean looked up from the knife he was polishing and had to squint when the sun blinded him for a moment.

“Hey, Bobby.”

“Need help?” Bobby sat down beside him and took one of the guns.

“Nah, it’s fine. You can work on the cars.”

Bobby nodded. He studied how unknowing Dean looked, cleaning the guns without the slightest idea that Bobby knew their secret.

“Well, balls,” Bobby mumbled and put the gun down.

“You okay, Bobby?” Dean frowned.

“Yeah, I’m okay. I would be better though, if only I hadn’t forgotten the damn map with the werewolf’s location.”

“What are you talking about? You and dad killed the son of a bitch.”

“Yeah, we did. But before that I had to come back home for the map, you know, before we left.”

Bobby looked intently at Dean, who stopped working and gave him a puzzled look.

“Dammit, kid. I went back inside the house and I heard you and Sam, alright?”

Dean’s heart seemed to be made of ice. It froze in his chest and there was a cold sensation, much like lightning, spreading in his chest.

Bobby looked at Dean’s wide eyes and knew he understood what he meant now.

“I heard, and then I saw it. You two in bed.” Bobby swallowed hard and shook his head, as if he could fight the image away.

“What, what did you see?” Dean’s fingers felt cold and his blood pumped fast with fear and shock. He thought of the things Sam and he had done that day, and he felt simply mortified to wonder how much of that Bobby had actually seen.

“Well, relax, I only saw a kiss. And for heaven’s sake, I don’t want to know if something else happened.”

A part of Dean relaxed considerably at that, but most of him was still nervous with tension and
worry. Bobby knew!

“Hell, I hope nothing else happened, Dean. What are you thinking, it’s your damn brother!” Bobby smacked Dean across the head not so lightly.

“Ouch!” Dean lost balance and fell briefly, before he resumed his sitting position.

Bobby sighed, exasperated.

“He’s a minor, you know that? He’s confused, and he’s been through hell, and the last thing he needs—”

“I’m in love with him.”

Bobby stopped in the middle of what he was saying. He looked at Dean and realized, to his horror, that John’s oldest son had tears in his eyes. Bobby wished he hadn’t seen those damn tears, because he had a lot more he needed to say to Dean, but at the time being his heart softened and he took a deep breath.

“Pardon me?” Bobby asked, trying to organize his thoughts.

“I’m sorry, Bobby. I wish you hadn’t seen it, but I love Sammy, and not the way I’m supposed to. It’s so much more than that.”

“What? What…what about him?”

Dean couldn’t help it when he smiled, and Bobby didn’t fail to see the way his eyes shone. “It’s pretty safe to say Sam feels the same about me.”

“Oh, holy crap, Dean! For Christ’s sake, what the hell has gotten into you? How long has this being going on?”

“A couple of months, maybe more. The therapist thought Sam might have stronger feelings for me, and one day he just asked to kiss me. I hadn’t thought about any of what I felt until that day, but Bobby…it makes sense. I would die for him, I would kill for him. There’s nothing more important in my life, no one…” Dean wiped at his tears forcefully.

“But son…I, more than anyone—and perhaps more than your own daddy—understand the bond you two share. Hell, I told you when Sam was in the hospital that he needed you to get better, and since you guys came to live here everything that has happened has served to prove me right. I know that you can understand him the way no one else can, and I know he trusts you more than anything. I’ve been so grateful for the fact that Sam has you, because honestly? I don’t think therapy is helping half as much as you are.”

Dean listened silently. He thought of the guilt he felt, and how hard it was to love Sam despite this guilt.

“But son…I never imagined things would go this far.”

“Neither did we, Bobby. Sam and I never meant for any of this to happen. And trust me, I feel terribly guilty when I think about it, because I know Bobby, I know he’s my brother, I know I’m supposed to look after him and protect him…” Dean felt the tears come again and he choked, angry
at himself for his lack of control. It had been too much, though, too many feelings, and no one to talk
to, and right now Dean just let go. “I hate myself when I think I might be harming him,” Dean spoke
with so much honesty it hurt. “But Bobby…Sam likes being with me. He’s happy, he’s been so
much better since it started. He hardly has nightmares, and I can see it in his eyes that he feels good.
He’s the one wanting to take things further, and I’m the one trying to slow things down. And I’m not
saying this to make it look like I’m not to blame, because I know I’m the oldest, and I know I should
know better than to do this, but Bobby, I haven’t seen my brother this happy since he was taken to
that fucking torture chamber, and even though I feel guilty as fuck, I confess I’m willing to shut
down this guilt because I’m just so happy to see him smiling.”

Bobby closed his eyes and nodded slowly. He saw Dean wipe at his eyes with his shirt and began to
realize just how much deeper all this was.

“I see what you mean, Dean,” Bobby admitted. “Only a fool can’t see how much better Sam’s been.
John thinks it’s all because of therapy, but I always knew it was because of his connection to you. I
just didn’t think…hell,” Bobby shrugged and laughed lightly.

“Yes, I know,” Dean nodded. He swallowed hard and forced himself to meet Bobby’s eyes. “Are
you going to tell Dad?” He asked, feeling his heart race and his chest tighten.

“Hell no! Are you out of your fucking mind? John would lose his shit,” Bobby said.

Dean couldn’t help the audible sigh of relief that escaped his lungs.

“Thanks, Bobby.”

“Well, don’t thank me for that. I don’t want this on you, but I specially don’t want this on Sam. He’s
been through enough, and I’m afraid of what may happen to him if your dad tries to separate you.
Honestly? I don’t approve of what’s happening. I think Sam’s too young, but I know it’s not for me
to judge. I want to see him happy, Dean, and I want to see him get better. And hell, when I think of
the messed up childhood you had with John, I almost can’t blame you for what’s happening now.
It’s screwed up, it is. But if it’s working…”

“I would never take advantage of him, Bobby. I love him too much to hurt him.”

“I know you do. I would tell you not to hurt him, but I think it’s stupid to say that. I will ask you to
be careful with him, though. I believe Sam is happy with it and wants it, but Dean you’ve got to
move slow.”

“I know, Bobby. I do.”

“Have you…?” A thought crossed Bobby’s mind and he hated himself for voicing it. “No, forget it. I
really don’t want to know,” Bobby rushed in. “Just promise me you’ll do what’s best for him,
Dean.”

“I will. Always,” Dean nodded vehemently.

“And I promise I won’t tell John. Just damn, kid, be more careful about the door being closed and
the sounds you make. I don’t think I can help you if John walks in on anything.”

“It won’t happen; we’ll be careful.”
Bobby nodded and pulled his cap out of his head to run a hand through his hair.

“I wish Sam needed something simpler to get better,” Bobby confessed. “But after everything that was done to him, I think that asking for a simple answer is kind of too much.”

“What do you mean, Bobby?”

“I mean that if you are what Sam needs to get better, then—goddamnit, I can’t believe I’m gonna say this—I’m glad he has you.”

Dean looked into Bobby’s eyes with so much gratitude that Bobby had to get up before he lost his tight grip on his emotions.

“It’ll be alright,” Bobby patted Dean’s shoulder lightly and got up.

“Thanks, Bobby. You’re awesome.”

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tbc...

* Guys, I realized I started publishing it on November 1st, 2014. It's been one year already! Thank you guys so much for encouraging me to keep going! ♥
Chapter 62

Sam was already used to waiting alone for a while in the neat white room, making small talk with Doctor Reece’s receptionist as she finished with another patient before his appointment. His dad was usually in a hurry when he drove him to therapy, leaving him at the office a few minutes earlier to run some errands and picking him up an hour later.

Today, though, as the door opened and Sam got up, he looked into the eyes of the person holding the door open to him and for a moment he stood still and stared.

“Sam Winchester?” Mark smiled warmly at him and reached out his hand. “My name’s Mark Duchesneau, how are you?”

Sam looked at the hand reached out before him and then looked again into the man’s eyes. There was so much hesitance in his look that it was almost as if he said it out loud that he didn’t trust that person.

The doctor didn’t lower his hand. He kept smiling and waiting, and eventually Sam shook hands with him, albeit it quickly.

“Dakota asked me to lead our session today. Please, come in.” He moved so Sam had room to go inside.

Sam gave the receptionist a lost, unsure look, but she encouraged him on with a nod and a smile.

Sam forced himself to walk into Dakota’s office, even though his thoughts were wild and he felt extremely uncomfortable.

“It’s alright, Sam. Come in.”

Sam heard it as the doctor closed the door behind them and realized he was unable to move. Sam stood in the middle of the office, the lilac sofa behind him, the black chair before him, and it was like he couldn’t decide what to do.
Mark didn’t have to look him in the eyes to feel the wave of distrust and the many layers of shields Sam had put around himself.

“Please, sit,” Mark said as he sat down on the black chair.

“I’m not talking to you,” Sam said suddenly, surprising the doctor and surprising himself as well.

Mark looked into the quick moving eyes that analyzed him and waited a moment.

“I don’t know you, and I won’t tell you anything.”

“My name is Mark Duchesneau, I’m forty-eight years old and I used to be Dakota’s professor in college. She asked me to be here today, I’m sorry you didn’t know. I’m pretty sure she called your family and talked to your dad.”

“Well, I didn’t know,” Sam said, warily. “And I don’t know what she told you, but I’m not going to say anything,” Sam said, and he was so defensive that it felt like sparks were coming out of his eyes, challenging that man to try and make him say something.

Mark smiled patiently and nodded.

"Fine. If you don't want to talk, I won't make you. But if we're going to stay here for one hour, you might want to take a seat."

Sam didn't say or do anything.

"Or you could just stand for a whole hour. Sounds interesting." Mark smiled. "Forgive me, but I'm not as young, and I need to sit down. Feel free to join me if you change your mind."

Sam looked into the blue eyes watching him, and for the first time since he had seen the man, he felt himself relax a little.

“Alright. I’ll sit, but that doesn’t mean I’ll tell you anything.”

Mark nodded. “Okay. Understood.” Sam’s reluctance was a cry for help, a loud one, spoken in the language of hurting.

“You can tell Dakota that this won’t work,” Sam said, his eyes narrowing with bold stubbornness. He wondered what had happened. Why had she sent this person to their session? Did she think Sam would open up to a stranger? Did she really think it would work? Surprising him with a friendly looking man that would make him talk about the past? Sam didn’t think so.

Mark studied Sam with such a relaxed, laid-back attitude that after a few minutes, when Sam understood he would not be alarmed with all sorts of questions, he relaxed on the sofa and took a deep breath.

“I don’t need to tell Dakota anything that happens here, Sam,” Mark explained.

Sam didn’t say anything. He watched the man in silence, ready to put up all his walls and barriers if he tried to probe.
Mark let Sam be for a moment. He studied the boy who was visibly tense and fidgety on the sofa. He thought of the things Dakota had shared about her patient once he agreed to take the case—the three months of torture, the dark, and everything that kid had been through, so much more than he could deal with.

Mark had seen a lot in his professional years, and it was not the first time he saw that wounded look on a boy. Sam looked very much the wild, injured animal trying to self-protect, ready to growl and snap at anyone who got too close, because he didn’t understand help, not the way it was being offered. Yet, with all the hurting he kept inside, help was everything he needed and didn’t know how to get it. Sam looked vulnerable and ready to break, but he also looked tough, like someone who wouldn’t go down without a fight. Mark knew that the moment he pushed a wrong button Sam would snap and run to his safe place—a place that right now was made of oblivion.

Mark thought of how he could approach this wounded kid so as not to scare him away. What did Sam need to hear to admit he was hurt?

“But, if you don’t want to talk, what do you say we do something to make time pass faster?” Mark arched his eyebrows and smiled.

“What?” Sam frowned and watched as the man stood up and walked towards a briefcase on a shelf.

“Well, you don’t want to talk, and I’m not here to make you do something you don’t want. So what do you say we find something to do in this one hour, and then when it’s over we say goodbye and that’s it. Next time you come here you see Dakota, as if nothing happened.”

Sam wondered why he was saying those things. Would he really let him not speak about anything? Was he a doctor? A therapist, for real?

“Are you a doctor?” Sam asked.

“Yes,” Mark chuckled. “I told you I used to be a professor. Nowadays I mostly write books,” he said as he looked for something in his briefcase.

“What do you write about?” Sam asked.

“Well, mostly about young people who have been very hurt and have trouble moving on,” he said casually, as if it was nothing important, and then quickly went on. “Chess?”

“What?”

“Do you play chess?”

Sam watched as he pulled a chessboard from his briefcase and laid it on the floor after pushing his black chair further back in the room.

“What are you doing?” Sam asked, puzzled, as the therapist sat down and started to arrange the pieces on the board.

“I was playing with a colleague a couple of days ago, and I forgot it in my briefcase. Which is fortunate, because if you can play then maybe we could spend this hour doing this, what do you say?”
Sam looked at the little black and white squares and then at the inviting blue eyes. He knew how to play chess. His dad had taught him and Dean. Well, he had tried to teach Dean, but only Sam had mastered the game fairly well. In fact, he rather enjoyed it. There was something thrilling about all the silence involved as each and every move had to be carefully thought out, and your enemies plan had to be anticipated. Of course Sam ended up not playing a lot, since Dean would much rather be shooting something or exercising, and John was always away. Sometimes Bobby would play with him, but even that had been a while now.

“Okay,” Sam agreed, and sat down on the floor, too, cross-legged on the other side of the chessboard.

‘Thank goodness,’ the doctor thought. The whole chess thing had been a wild guess. Sam looked like the smart kid who would have learned and taken an interest in such entertainment, but he could always be wrong.

“You’re the white ones,” Mark said, because he was almost done with placing the black pieces in place.

He watched, stealing a few glances, as Sam started to position his white soldiers neatly on the chessboard. When he was done with his army, Mark looked into his eyes teasingly.

“Do you want me to let you win or can you handle a hard game?”

Sam narrowed his eyes in response and smiled, too, buying the provocation.

“Give it your best shot,” Sam replied, and Mark chuckled. Sam almost chuckled, too. He held back and studied the game. He knew he was good; he didn’t know if he was good enough to defeat that man, but he sure as hell would try.

For the next twenty minutes they played a well-thought, balanced game. Sam made smart moves, but also suffered a few losses in his army. He realized that either Mark was truly playing for real, or if he was trying to let him win he was doing it in a really sneaky way. Sam liked that. He liked to be intellectually challenged, and without realizing it, the game made him relax and let his guard down.

Mark was paying intent attention to Sam. To the game too, of course, because he wanted to present Sam with an interesting match. But as they leaned over the chessboard, moving bishops and horses, hiding queens and losing pawns, he took his time to look at Sam and catch the nuances of his behavior.

Mark thought of everything Dakota had said about how hard it was to make him talk, about Sam always finding a way to avoid the questions about his past, particularly those that hurt the most. He knew Sam had never truly admitted to having suffered sexual abuse, and he wondered just how badly Sam was hanging on to the idea that by ignoring his past he could pretend it never happened.

When he spoke, Mark kept his eyes on the chessboard, his hand raised high with his horse as he decided his next move.

“How many times did he rape you, Sam?”

He asked the question softly and gently, but his voice was firm.

Sam’s heart burst into frozen little pieces and he stared at his white little soldiers intently for the next
entire minute.

Mark knew Sam had heard his question, but he didn’t look into his eyes. He kept focused on the game as he finished his move and waited for Sam to make his.

Sam’s lips quivered. He felt like the doctor’s question had just gone to a very hidden and unprotected part of his memories. Unlike all the times anyone had ever tried to approach him about it, Mark wasn’t asking if the man had raped him in the dark.

Mark knew it.

He felt no need to ask a yes or no question. Mark asked how many times it had happened, and Sam didn’t know how many times.

For three long minutes Sam didn’t move. His eyes were glued to the chessboard as his heart raced, Mark’s question echoing in his brain and stirring his memories. He knew the doctor wasn’t looking at him, and yet, Sam felt so open he couldn’t hide.

At a sudden point, so much time had passed that Mark didn’t think Sam would speak again. The boy stared at the chessboard, and Mark could see him struggling. His lips parted and then closed again, and they quivered every now and then. Behind Sam’s glassy hazel eyes, there was a battle going on, and Mark wondered who would win. The white realization of what had happened or the black oblivion of denial?

Sam’s hand went to his king and he picked it up. His fingers were shaky.

The man tied his hands behind his back.

The man handcuffed him to the wall.

“Twice,” Sam said, the word rolling out of his tongue. “Maybe…maybe more, I don’t know.” Sam was petrified to realize the things he was confessing to, but it felt different talking to someone who saw past his denial to the truth he had tried to hide.

“You don’t know?” Mark’s heart raced, but he kept a perfectly calm voice and face. “You don’t remember?”

Sam shook his head quickly, his eyes still lost somewhere in the game. He put his king down and his lips parted. “Sometimes I have these nightmares…it could be more, I don’t know…”

“I see.” Mark nodded. “And why didn’t you stop him, Sam?”

Sam’s eyes met the doctor’s for the first time since his question, and in his desperate eyes Mark could see that wild animal trying to run away from a wound carved deeply into its flesh.

“I tried!” Sam frowned and said, enthusiastically. “I tried everything I could.” Sam looked into the doctor’s questioning eyes and shook his head, the words coming to his lips fast and messily. “He…he tied my hands behind my back, and another time he handcuffed me…”

“And you couldn’t fight, really? There was nothing you could do?”

Why was the doctor saying those things? Why? “It was dark, I couldn’t see anything, but he could
find me,” Sam went on. “He’s…he was a man, he was much stronger than me,” Sam explained, his face twisting under his intense emotions.

“But you’re smart, and you’re strong, too…”

“I’m just a boy!” Sam blurted, angrily. He was nearly panting now, his body shaking.

“So, what you’re telling me is that you tried everything you could and still there was nothing you could do to stop it from happening?”

“Yes!” Sam nodded vehemently.

“Then Sam,” Mark softened his eyes and looked into Sam’s, “why do you blame yourself so much?”

Sam was not prepared for that question. That question felt like a hot bullet to his fears, and when Sam understood how much truth there was in it—that he did blame himself—the tears started coming.

Mark watched when the boy sitting across from him started crying, water flowing down his cheeks like two rivers, fat and uninterrupted. Sam leaned back against the sofa and pulled his knees up, holding them close as the tears kept coming, rocking his body with the sobs and shudders they brought along.

Mark gave Sam time and space to feel that. He knew that Sam had just understood how much he blamed himself for something he couldn’t possibly have prevented. There was still so much Sam needed to understand in order to begin to heal and feel better about his past, but right now crying was the best thing he could do—the wild animal had settled and stopped flinching, but the question was whether or not he would be able to help him heal that deep, festering wound that still poisoned the boy’s thoughts.

Sam didn’t know why he was crying. It had been so logical to blame himself for not being strong enough, why did it hurt so much to face his own helplessness?

Sam wiped at his tears and eventually they stopped coming. He took a deep breath and his lungs seemed to shudder as the air entered and inflated them.

“It’s okay to cry, Sam. You’ve been holding back so much, haven’t you?”

Sam nodded, biting down on his bottom lip so hard it hurt.

“Would you like to tell me something else now?”

Sam didn’t know exactly how he felt. Lighter, yes, but oddly quiet. So okay, he hadn’t been able to stop it, it wasn’t his fault. That didn’t change the fact that he had lost his shit and begged, and that didn’t change the fact he had broken under the assault. There was still a lot of shame that Sam couldn’t face. He shook his head slowly.

“You know,” Mark went closer and looked at the boy, the chess game forgotten between them. “It’s good that you realized something today. I wonder though if you’ll be tempted to retreat behind your wall again. And that’s okay, Sam, because confronting pain can be scary and difficult. I can help if you want. I can help you learn about yourself, your thoughts and feelings, think about things in different ways, work on some skills. And you can use all of that however you think makes the most
sense for you. Many people struggle with talking to their families, the people they love, about what happened to them. I can help with that, too. For many of us, the people we love give us comfort and acceptance, and that goes a long way in helping us heal," he said and studied Sam for his reaction.

Sam listened to the doctor's words and thought of how much he wanted to tell Dean everything, and how much Dean wanted him to speak.

“I can’t. Can’t tell them. Can’t tell him…” he murmured.

“Him? Your brother?”

Sam nodded.

“The one you love?”

Sam looked at him briefly. He didn’t know how much Dakota had told him, but apparently it had been enough for him to know about Dean, or at least know as much as Dakota thought she did. Sam nodded again.

“Why do you think you can’t tell him about it?”

“I don’t want him to know.” Sam felt a sob coming up his throat and gasped.

There had been loud, desperate screaming as the man burned his way inside of him, and Sam didn’t want Dean to see it in his eyes. “I can’t, I can’t…can’t,” Sam babbled, over and over.

“Shh, it’s okay. Just relax now, Sam. It’s alright,” Mark squeezed the boy’s shoulder briefly before starting to put away the chess pieces.

“Do you have kids?”

Sam’s questions took Mark by surprise, and he raised his blue eyes to Sam and smiled. “A couple. A boy and a girl.”

Sam nodded, sniffing absently and inhaling deeply. His eyes were dry now, and he could feel the salt drying on his cheeks.

“They’re lucky to have you.”

Mark smiled, and for a quick moment he thought Sam might smile, too, but instead the boy fell silent, suddenly shy and withdrawn.

"Sam? What do you think about talking more with me?"

Sam looked at something in the distance and shrugged. He didn't know if he wanted to talk. He wasn't feeling bad or anything, but he felt so sad.

"I don't know." Sam hesitated.

"Do you think it makes sense if we talk again next week?"

“Maybe.”
Mark nodded. Maybe was a good answer. They could work with maybe.

Maybe was definitely a good start.

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tbc...
Chapter 63

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much *kittenbot* for beta-ing the chapter! =DD

Chapter 63

Sam came home from his appointment with Doctor Mark feeling light but withdrawn. He wasn’t disturbed by what had happened in Dakota’s office with that different therapist, but he was unwilling to think too much about it, at least not so soon. It seemed like a lot to take in, and just thinking of everything he had felt when the doctor asked his questions was too much for him now.

Sam wondered what the man had done to make him crack and spill things he hadn’t told anyone. It seemed unbelievable that in one session together he had managed to extract more from him than Dakota had in months. Perhaps the fact that Sam was growing tired of the burden of keeping secrets had a large role to play in that. Perhaps it was just easier to keep in denial with people he hadn’t told anything to, and maybe it was easier to admit everything to someone he barely knew. What had truly gotten to Sam, though, was the fact that this doctor, Mark, knew what Sam had been through. It was in his tone of voice, in his calm question about how many times it had happened… It had played directly into Sam’s own questions, his own doubts about those months spent in the dark.

Sam didn’t know if he would see this therapist again next week. It was Thursday now, and there would be plenty of time to think about what had happened before his next appointment. But the truth was, Sam wouldn’t mind talking to him again. Now that he knew about the worst, Sam didn’t think it would be difficult to handle questions. He still couldn’t picture himself looking Dean in the eyes and telling him everything, and everything wasn’t just the admission of rape, everything included telling him exactly how he had reacted to being broken and humiliated.

It would feel like being naked beyond skin, it would mean letting his soul bare, with all the bruises and scars that had never truly healed. What if Dean found the sight too horrific?

Sam didn’t know why they had taken him, why they had done to him all those things, particularly if they planned on erasing his memories in the end, but what if their plan all along had been to break him? What if they had truly destroyed his self-control in a way that Sam could never trust himself again? What if, for some reason, what they really wanted was to create a dark place in his memories, a place that Sam had to try and ignore, because being there implied feeling a fear so intense he could not think rationally, and someone who was that scared was someone who could be easily manipulated?

“How was therapy?” Dean asked, sitting beside Sam on the door’s entrance.
Sam jumped, startled, and was pulled out of his thoughts.

“It was okay,” he said quickly, looking at Dean and managing a small smile.

Dean nodded.

“Dad and Bobby are planning a hell of a hunt for the weekend. You should see the house they’re going to hunt the ghost in. It’s like these old Hollywood haunted mansions, I swear. It’s even got a haunted barn.”

Sam nodded at Dean’s excitement. Sometimes he couldn’t help but not feel the same enthusiasm for that kind of life.

“I’ll show you, come here,” Dean invited.

“Maybe later. I gotta finish up my homework.”

Dean looked at him and Sam smiled, so Dean relaxed and nodded. “Fine.”

Sam watched him go and sighed. He got up eventually and stretched, ready to go upstairs. He was on his way when he stopped for a moment to see his father and Dean discussing hunting issues in the kitchen, and Sam didn’t feel it when Bobby showed up right behind him.

“Big hunt coming up. You’re brother’s excited, even though he’s not going,” he said.

“Yeah,” Sam agreed, turning around and walking away from the kitchen with Bobby. “I’ll go upstairs to do my homework.”

“Oh, that’s where I’m headed too; I need to get some stuff in my room.”

“By the way, Bobby, your room is kind of my room. I mean, whenever you want it back…” Sam began as they went up the stairs together.

“Please, Sam. That’s a good bed that deserves to be slept on. I hardly have time to sleep. You and Dean stay there,” Bobby said, and then suddenly he realized the implication of what he had just said. Sam didn’t know that he knew—well, at least Bobby didn’t think he did, and it was impossible not to think of the kinds of things those two had already done on his bed. Bobby tensed for a moment and begged his brain not to go there.

“Thank you, Bobby,” Sam said when they were both upstairs.

“Don’t mention it. But say, Sam… How’s therapy?”

Sam frowned. That was the second time he was asked that question today, and he wondered if it was so obvious on his face that he was still shaken from it.

“It was okay…” he answered, warily.

“It’s been helping, hasn’t it?” Bobby probed.

“Right,” Sam agreed.
“But not as much as Dean, yeah? Your brother is really helping you through this, isn’t he?” Bobby studied Sam attentively for any sign that the answer to that question wasn’t the same love Dean had told him about a few days earlier.

Sam’s eyes seemed to light up and he chewed on his bottom lip shyly, unable to hide how he felt inside, and now that Bobby had talked to Dean, he could understand exactly what Sam was feeling.

“Honestly? I think…I think I wouldn’t want to be alive if it weren’t for Dean,” Sam confessed in a small, insecure voice.

Bobby’s heart swelled in his chest and he thought of his conversation with Dean. So what if he didn’t agree that things had gotten sexual between the brothers? Who was he to judge if they had found exactly the comfort they needed in each other?

“I’m glad to hear that, Sam.” Bobby smiled and took a deep breath. “Now go do your homework ‘cause your daddy and I still got a lot to plan.”

~ * ~

That night, John and Bobby left in the middle of the night. They wanted to arrive in the town early to prepare themselves for the hunting night. They had left behind the two boys sleeping on the same bed, under the one light turned on in the house, inside their room. Sam had asked Dean for the lights on that night, just because he knew he had shared too much in therapy and feared he might have nightmares.

He was sleeping through the night, though, and didn’t even hear it when his father and Bobby left, locking them safely in the house. Sam did wake up, however, a while later, when darkness descended in the room. It seemed like even his sleeping brain could detect the lack of light.

“Dean,” Sam called, his eyes darting open, his pupils dilating and his senses alert. “Dean wake up, it’s dark.”

Dean opened his eyes to the darkest Bobby’s house had ever been.

“Did you hear that noise? I think the light went out,” Sam said, his heartbeats fast.

“Do you want me to change it now?”

“It’s so fucking dark.” Sam wished he could control how he felt, but he honestly couldn’t move.

“Wait.”

“Dean? Where are you going?” Sam’s breath caught and he clutched the covers tightly when Dean left the bed, worry all over his face.

“Relax, Sam. I’ll turn on the light in the bathroom. Tomorrow I’ll take care of the other one.”

Sam waited, his body tense, until there was light in the room again and Dean was back beside him.

“Is it better?” Dean asked, pulling Sam closer to his body.
“Yeah,” Sam admitted.

“Darkness is still a problem, isn’t it?” Dean asked softly, gently.

Sam bit hard on his bottom lip.

“I’m sorry…”

“Don’t,” Dean said quickly. “Don’t ever be.”

He kissed Sam’s forehead and only relaxed when he felt Sam fall asleep beside him.

~ * ~

The following morning, when Sam left the shower with a towel loosely wrapped around his bony hips and walked into the room, he saw Dean standing on a chair in the middle of the room to change the light bulb. As soon as he saw Sam walking in, Dean finished quickly what he was doing and sat down heavily on the chair, smiling at his brother.

“There. It’s okay now.”

“Thanks,” Sam murmured and walked closer. In the few steps he took towards his brother, Sam grew curious as to the way Dean’s eyes darkened as he stared at his belly, specifically at the line where skin met fabric. “What?” Sam asked, his voice dropping as he got within touch range of his brother. “Like what you see?” He chuckled nervously.

Dean looked at the small droplets of water drying on Sam’s skin and let his fingertips touch them, wetting the soft, velvety skin of Sam’s lower belly and causing goosebumps to break on his younger brother’s arms and thighs.

“You didn’t dry off properly,” Dean observed, his voice lower and his eyes darker. He couldn’t even control the way his body responded to Sam. Right now Dean’s hands were shaking with the need to touch him.

“Perhaps I didn’t want to get dry,” Sam said in a small, teasing voice, and stared intently into Dean’s eyes as his brother slipped a finger beneath the towel and touched Sam’s skin with a feathery touch that caused him to harden.

Sam parted his lips and his breathing grew labored as he felt the ball of Dean’s finger run across his skin until it found the sensitive tip of his erection, now standing taut against Sam’s belly.

Sam let out a shaky breath and shuddered when Dean’s finger hooked and pulled to let the towel pool around his feet.

“C’mere, Sammy.” Dean patted his lap, and when Sam saw the way Dean was chewing on his bottom lip, and the lustful look in his eyes, he nearly moaned.

“Wait.” Sam forced himself to concentrate and go look for what he wanted. When he found the lube inside Dean’s backpack, he placed it on the edge of the bed, within reach, and climbed on Dean’s lap
as his brother was sitting on the chair.

Sam’s naked thighs brushed against Dean’s jean-covered ones, straddling him and coming as close as possible. Dean’s fingers lay sprawled open on Sam’s back, holding and kneading possessively, pulling him closer and feeling the warmth of the shower still tingling on his skin.

They looked into each other’s eyes and breathed heavily for a moment or two, the silence between them clouded with the thick and lustful panting they could not control.

When Dean couldn’t hold back any longer, he brought Sam’s mouth down against his and kissed him in a way that made Sam blush. Sam could feel Dean’s tongue licking at his as if he was marking his territory, and after a few minutes of kissing, Sam’s limbs were weak, and the only reason why he was still on Dean’s lap was because his brother’s large hands were holding him there.

Dean let his fingers run through Sam’s hair and pulled, perhaps a bit too harsh, but Sam didn’t mind. He moaned and arched his head back, thrusting his cock against Dean’s clothed bulge, relishing the friction.

Dean’s hands were everywhere. His mouth closed down on Sam’s exposed neck and he sucked greedily as his hands groped every little bit of skin until Sam was squirming against him, needing more.

“Take off your clothes, please,” Sam managed to utter his plea as his fingers fumbled with the buttons on Dean’s flannel shirt. There was something thrilling and arousing about being completely naked on Dean’s fully clothed lap, but now Sam needed more, he needed to feel skin against skin.

Dean helped Sam get rid of his shirt and then unbuckled his belt quickly. With a little help from two pairs of hands, Dean could get rid of his pants and underwear without Sam having to climb off his lap. When he was done, Sam was straddling him closer now, their cocks pressed together, their hearts thudding loud.

“Dean…” Sam whispered, touching his forehead to his brother’s and gasping at the friction they created.

“What? Hmm?” Dean licked Sam’s ear shell and could swear he felt Sam throb against his own erection.

“So good.” Sam licked at his lips and moaned a low, muffled sound when Dean squeezed his thighs at the same time he sucked on his earlobe.

“What about you hand me what you got before?” Dean whispered in his ear, slowly, provocatively.

Sam shuddered and nodded. He leaned back until his fingers found what he needed, and then he handed it to Dean. As he watched Dean pour a generous amount of lube on his finger, Sam swallowed hard with anticipation and let his fingers tease Dean’s nipples until his brother gasped and bit down softly on Sam’s biceps.

Sam’s thighs were spread open on Dean’s lap as he straddled him on the chair, so Dean had easy access when he let his finger find the crack of Sam’s ass and probe.

Sam tensed a little when he felt the cold fingertip circling his entrance.
“Shhh…it’s okay.” Dean looked into his eyes with care and reassurance, but also with the raw heat of passion.

Sam knew he trusted Dean with his life. It was a weird thought to have in that moment, but when he looked into his brother’s eyes and felt all the safety and all the pleasure he could give him, there was nothing else that mattered in this world—at least not in his world.

Dean let his finger breach in to the first knuckle and waited until Sam adjusted to it. The hot, slippery feeling of being inside of him made Dean’s cock ache and throb with envy.

Sam closed his eyes and relaxed his thighs, knowing it would be easier for Dean to move, and he seemed to feel it, because Dean let his finger go all the way inside of him and then began a slow, in and out motion that stretched him gently.

“Everything alright?” Dean’s free hand went to the back of Sam’s neck and he squeezed, pressing their foreheads together, looking into Sam’s clouded eyes for any signs of distress.

“Yeah…” Sam said, getting used to the feeling.

“So why don’t you touch yourself? Hmm?” Dean kissed Sam’s lips and neck, tasting a faint trace of soap on his skin, and when he opened his eyes to look between their bodies he saw Sam’s hand close around his cock and stroke. Dean knew that if Sam pleasured himself it would be easier to make him comfortable, so he waited a few minutes before applying a bit more lube to a second finger and squeezing it into the tight opening.

“Hmm,” Sam moaned. There was a slightly burning sensation, but Sam stroked himself faster and tried to relax around the fingers moving inside of him, exploring him so intimately.

Dean curled his fingers and rubbed tentatively at something he had felt before. The texture felt different against his fingertips, and every time he had rubbed that spot—

“Dean!” Sam moaned and bucked on his lap, swiveling his hips and bringing them down hard against Dean’s fingers.

“It’s here? Here is good?” Dean asked, breathlessly, as his fingers rubbed over the spot in circles.

Sam’s response was a whimper that fell from his lips, and the rolling of his hips in time to the movement of Dean’s fingers.

Dean held Sam tighter with his free arm, pulling him closer, and started to fuck him with his fingers, making sure to rub against the pleasure spot within his body.

Sam squeezed his cock and gasped. His breathing was a mess and his body was burning. His heart slammed against his chest and his thighs and lower belly were afire with arousal.

“Dean.” Sam looked into his brother’s eyes. “Do it, I’m ready,” he begged, moving his hips in small little circles, pressing down against the two digits driving up into him.

Dean’s cock twitched approvingly at the idea. There was nothing he wanted more than to replace his fingers with his hot, pulsing dick, but something stronger than wild, raw need made him hold back.

“I want you inside of me,” Sam whispered heatedly.
“I am inside of you,” Dean twisted his fingers and stroked Sam’s prostate until he squirmed and groaned.

“I want more, Dean…please.” Sam was so aroused that his body was burning up, his skin feverish beneath Dean’s touch.

“You know what I want, Sammy?” Dean let his lips brush Sam’s ear and lowered his voice to something barely audible. “I think I would like to see you come undone on my fingers.” Dean made his point by fucking him faster with his slick fingers, eliciting a kneeing sound of pleasure that made his cock ooze. “Do you want that? Want to show me how good you’ll come on your big brother’s fingers?”

“Dean!” Sam shuddered all over. That was so…so dirty, there was no rational explanation for Dean’s words turning him on beyond belief and making him desperate for more. “Mmm,” Sam moaned and stroked himself faster, impaling himself on Dean’s fingers as his breathing hitched to something clipped and urgent.

“That’s it, Baby, keep stroking that cock faster and let me take care of you,” Dean’s chest was covered in a thin layer of sweat as he moved his fingers in and out of Sam and held him around the waist with the other arm, helping Sam swivel his hips and lift himself to thrust against the fingers pleasing him.

In the middle of their frantic moving and escalating pleasure, their mouths met again and they kissed roughly, wetly, and Sam was pretty sure he had bitten down hard on Dean’s bottom lip, because he could taste a faint trace of blood in his mouth. But Dean didn’t seem to mind, he kept kissing him just as passionately, and Sam let himself go.

“You like to ride my fingers, Sammy? Hm? That good?”

Dean’s sultry voice pushed all his buttons and Sam cried out, his hand going still around the base of his cock as pleasure exploded and he started to shake.

“Dean! Dean!!” Sam’s unabashed pleasure fueled Dean’s desire. He stroked him from the inside until Sam was a mess, his come warm on Dean’s abdomen as he climaxed so hard he almost blacked out.

When Dean let his fingers slowly slip out of his brother, Sam fell against his body, limp and boneless. Dean held him tightly with his clean hand, burying his nose into his sweaty, perfumed hair.

The moment was short lived, though, because soon Sam was moving, letting himself slide to the floor and off Dean’s lap, landing on his knees before Dean’s spread thighs.

The anticipation nearly killed him, and thank goodness it was a brief one. Sam’s mouth closed on his cock and Dean groaned low, the sound vibrating in his throat as a warm tongue stroked the pulsing vein underneath his dick.

“Hm.” Dean’s fingers tightened into Sam’s hair, not forcing, just holding on, enjoying the way his head moved as Sam swallowed as much of Dean’s erection as he could. “Sammy,” Dean whispered, his thighs falling open, giving more access, his cock swelling inside the warm wetness that was Sam’s mouth.
Sam knew he was getting good at that. He was learning the way Dean liked it, he knew when to lick and when to suck him, and just how fast or how soft he needed to do those things to bring Dean closer to an orgasm.

Sam closed his eyes and sucked diligently as his hand found Dean’s balls and squeezed.

“Fuck.” Dean wished he could last longer. Hell, he wished it could last forever, but finger-fucking Sam to an orgasm had been too hot on his senses, and he couldn’t hold on much longer.

Sam felt the shaking in Dean’s thighs. They shuddered and his balls jerked when Dean came, the heavy sound of panting filling the bedroom as Sam swallowed Dean’s come and licked him clean.

When it was over, Sam moved and climbed back on top of Dean, letting their legs tangle. Dean’s eyes had been shut as he tried to slow down his breathing and come down from his climax, but when he felt Sam on his lap again he opened his eyes and smiled. They kissed softly, tenderly, their hunger sated for the moment.

“You didn’t take me like you said you would,” Sam narrowed his eyes and accused, lightly.

“I didn’t. Not yet.”

“Will you ever? It’s been weeks since you agreed and nothing.”

“I told you I will.”

Sam seemed to consider the answer.

“Hey, are you complaining?” Dean chuckled and pinched Sam’s butt, causing his younger brother to jump and cry out in protest.

“No,” Sam laughed. “I’m not.”

“Good.” Dean looked into his eyes, and Sam was so happy that his eyes were shinning, and that happiness put Dean at ease. “Good,” he repeated, pulling Sam closer until he was resting against his chest, and then wrapping him in a sweaty, loving embrace.

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tbc...
Chapter 64

When the phone rang, Sam and Dean were lying in bed, only half awake, after having spent the entire day giving in to life’s pleasures. They were so relaxed that it took them a while to realize the phone was ringing, and if it weren’t for its insistence, they might not have gotten up at all.

Dean went downstairs, wearing nothing but underwear, and picked up the phone.

“Dad?”

Sam walked out of the bedroom and started to turn on the lights upstairs. It was almost evening, and he made sure the place was well lit as he made his way downstairs to listen to the conversation.

“Dean, I need your help.”

“What happened?” Dean frowned.

“This ghost we’re hunting, in the old Victorian house?”

“Yes?”

“Well, turns out it isn’t just a ghost, it’s several ghosts. I’ve never seen so many evil spirits in one place. It’s like this house is a gateway or something.”

“Where are you now?”

John seemed to take a deep breath before he answered.

“I had to come back to the motel, get some more ammo, plan things better.”

“Is Bobby with you?” Dean asked, and he didn’t know why, but he felt a chill when he asked that.

“They have Bobby.”

“They what?!” Dean’s heart raced, and he was vaguely aware of Sam looking curiously at him and coming closer. “Where is he?”

“Bobby’s is still in the mansion somewhere and that’s why I need your help. I can’t handle all these
spirits on my own if they have Bobby. I need you to come here and help me find him while I find a way to send all those ghosts away for good.”

“Can you do that?” Dean asked, his forehead wrinkled.

“What happened?” Sam mouthed, but Dean’s reply was just to raise a hand asking him to wait.

“I think so. I was reading more about it, I managed to snatch a book from the library before I had to run, and it’s likely that all the bones of everyone who’s ever lived in the house are right there, buried somewhere in the house. I just need to find them while you find Bobby.”

“Fine,” Dean agreed. “Just give me the address again,” Dean said as he frantically looked for paper and pen. Sam handed him both readily and watched as Dean scribbled down on a slip. “Okay, Sam and I will be right there—”

“No!” John cut Dean off. “Do not bring Sam! It’s too dangerous, Dean. Leave him at Bobby’s. I don’t know if I can protect the two of you in that house.”

Dean listened to his father and looked at his brother studying him intently. Sam looked puzzled and eager for information, and the thought of leaving him home alone tugged at Dean’s heart and made him uneasy.

“Dad, are you sure? Sam can wait in the car or something. I don’t know if it’s a good idea to leave him…”

Dean could see the reaction in Sam’s face, the widening of his eyes and the quickening of his breath.

“Dean! This is not a discussion, this is an order. Do not bring Sam here, it’s too damn dangerous! Bobby’s house is safe. For heaven’s sake, he can survive a night on his own, or have you forgotten how you grew up?”

“No, sir.” Dean swallowed hard. He had not forgotten their childhood, and all the times they were left alone, as young boys, to take care of themselves. Just as Dean hadn’t forgotten what happened the last time Sam had been alone. The three scariest months of their lives had taken place.

“So can I count on you to make it here as fast as you can? If you hurry, you can be here in less than an hour. I’ll wait for you before I go inside the house again.”

“Right.”

“Dean? Hurry up, I don’t know what happened to Bobby.”

“Yes, Dad. I’m on my way.”

Sam watched as Dean hung up the phone.

“What happened?” Sam asked quickly. “Where are you going? Why are you leaving me?”

“Sam…” Dean began, looking at the slip of paper with the address where he was supposed to meet his dad at.

“Is Bobby alright?”
“Dad doesn’t know. He needs me to go there and help him. Something took Bobby, and Dad needs someone to find him while he tries to kill all the ghosts.”

“All the ghosts? I thought there was only one.”

“So did they. Apparently there’s a whole lot of evil sons of bitches, and I need to go, Sam. They have Bobby. We gotta find him.”

“I’m coming, too,” Sam said quickly, confidently.

“You can’t,” Dean said. “Dad said it’s too dangerous. I’m not supposed to take you with me.”

Sam waited for a moment, his eyes wide and his thoughts working furiously.

“I don’t care what he said!” Sam said at last, his nostrils flaring with a bold challenge. “I’m not staying behind!”

Dean looked at his brother and felt torn between his father’s command and Sam’s urgency not to be left alone.

“Sam, we’ll be back soon. It’s crazy in that house; it’s too dangerous. Dad doesn’t think he can protect us and find Bobby and still get out of there alive.”

“I don’t care. Unless you lock me in the panic room and take the key I’m coming with you,” Sam stated vehemently. When Dean looked pissed and distressed Sam went on. “The last time you all left and I was alone shit happened. Now, I don’t think the demon who took me has been lurking around Bobby’s house, just waiting for the moment when you all leave to find me alone…I don’t think that’s gonna happen. Not rationally.” Sam swallowed hard and looked intently at his brother until Dean understood exactly what Sam meant with his silence.

Rationally, the youngest Winchester knew there was no demon waiting to break in and take him away to a bright room where he would be tortured relentlessly when darkness came. Yet, there was very little rationality in Sam when it came to dealing with his past in the darkness.

“So there’s no way you’re walking out of here without taking me. Bobby is my friend, too, and I want to help. And even if I can’t help, I’ll just stay out of the way,” Sam promised. “But please, Dean…” his look softened and his voice cracked with a vulnerable plea. “Don’t leave me here, don’t leave me alone…”

Dean looked into Sam’s desperate, pleading eyes and felt absolutely helpless.

“Screw it,” he mumbled and started looking around for his things. “Sam, you gotta promise to stay away from danger, do you promise that? Promise you’ll do exactly what I, or what Dad says? That is, if he doesn’t kill me for taking you along.”

“I promise.” Sam nodded quickly, his chest relaxing after the tight tension of not knowing whether or not Dean would leave him behind.

“Then go get your things. We’ll take as many salt rounds as we can find, and weapons too.”

“Right.” Sam nodded, and in a moment he was John Winchester’s son, a trained boy, a fearless
hunter-to-be ready to fight evil in all its shapes.

Dean watched as Sam turned around and started to get ready, and he closed his eyes for a moment and prayed to God he was making the right decision.

~ * ~

Dean drove fast for the next forty-five minutes through miles and miles of trees and a desert road ahead. Sam was by his side, and they were both nervous and anxious about the night ahead. They wondered where Bobby was, if he was alright, if their dad would be able to hunt down the ghosts, and Dean also wondered just how damn pissed John would be when he saw Sam there. Dean knew deep inside that he shouldn’t have agreed to Sam going, that was not the right call to make as a hunter. But if Dean’s affection for Sam had always made him soft, being in love with his brother made Dean irrational. It was difficult to think straight because Sam was all over his mind and everywhere in his body responded to him.

When Dean parked the car and saw John rushing towards him, he was edgy and his throat was dry.

“Promise to be safe?” Dean whispered right before John was there with them.

“I do,” Sam answered quickly and they left the car at the same time.

“I brought weapons and salt rounds,” Dean said quickly, trying not to act as nervous as he felt.

John looked at Dean briefly before his eyes fell on Sam and his heart skipped a beat. John stared at his youngest son and Sam stared back, unmoving. After what felt like a long moment but couldn’t have been longer than a few seconds, John narrowed his eyes and shook his head. “What is he doing here?” He grunted. “I gave you an order, Dean!” He looked his older son in the eyes with an exasperated expression.

“Dad, Sam couldn’t be alone, not after everything—”

“I’m here because I want to. I know it’s dangerous, but I feel safer here than I would at home,” Sam said quickly, coming to Dean’s aid.

John looked into Sam’s eyes, his face still a mix of anger and worry. That house they were about to go into, that was the last place on earth John wanted to see his kids in. However, when he thought about Sam’s fears and his past, John couldn’t truly blame him for feeling safer near his family.

“Dad, please…” Dean started.

“We don’t have time for this now. We’ll talk when we’re back home,” John stated. Then he stepped past Dean and looked into the car’s trunk, quickly taking what he wanted before giving his orders. “You see that old barn?” John pointed into the distance and Dean followed his finger.

“Yes. Is there where Bobby is?”

“I bet it is. Those damn spirits won’t let me near the damn thing. I want you to try and get near the barn as I go inside and burn their bones. According to the book I got from the house earlier they’re all buried in the basement somewhere.” John handed Dean a map which he quickly unfolded.
“You think they’ll let me in the barn if you’re trying to torch their remains?” Dean asked, studying the map as Sam waited for them a few feet away.

“I’m counting on it. It’s Bobby’s only chance if…” John couldn’t finish.

“If he’s still alive,” Sam finished for him, and John nodded, albeit it reluctantly.

“I’ll take Sam. The less attention we draw to someone trying to break into the barn, the better. Apparently there’s an old underground passage that connects the basement to the barn. We’ll find it and meet you guys at the barn when this is over.”

Sam and Dean exchanged a look. They didn’t say anything, but the idea of getting separated instantly made them both experience something bitter.

“You’re not sure there’s a passage in the basement?” Dean asked, hoping his voice didn’t betray how uneasy he felt about Bobby being missing and the perspective of parting ways with Sam.

“Dean, more often than not you’ll have to hunt on instincts. I think there’s a way. This is an old ass house that goes back to the time where rich folks liked to build all sorts of secret passages in a house. And if I can’t find it, I’ll get Sam and I out, you can be sure I will.”

“Right, Dad.” Dean nodded, and then he checked his gun to see if everything was alright.

“Sam? C’mon. We’re going in,” John said, motioning for Sam to get closer. If he could choose, Sam would be far from there tonight, safe in Bobby’s house. But now, as things stood, John would make sure to keep his son in his sight. “Here, it’s dark inside. Take this.” John put a flashlight in Sam’s hand, which he took gladly.

When Sam lifted his eyes he saw Dean looking intently at him.

“Take care,” Sam said quietly, before he took one of the guns his dad pushed against his chest.

Dean nodded quickly, his eyes getting lost into Sam’s for the briefest of moments. “You too,” he mouthed and turned around, ready to make his silent way towards the barn.

John put a hand on Sam’s shoulder and made him move forward. The younger Winchester still looked over his shoulder one last time and was able to see his brother’s shadow moving further away as his dad and he walked towards the haunted house.

~ * ~

“Now listen to me,” John said as they walked in and the door slammed itself shut behind their backs. “Stay close, do whatever I tell you to, and if it moves you shoot, you understand?” He had his hand on top of Sam’s shoulder.

Sam nodded. It was dark inside the house, but not much. The flashlight was helpful. Besides, there was moonlight spilling itself through every cracked window, and they could see around themselves with ease despite the shadows. “Do you understand, Sammy?” John repeated.
“Yes, sir.”

“Good. Now follow me.”

John guided them through what certainly used to be a fancy entrance hall. Two long sets of stairs connected the two stories, and with every step they took towards the basement the wood creaked under their weight and caused them to stand attentive and ready.

They hadn’t been in for longer than five minutes when chaos began.

“Sam?” John saw it when the ghosts started to come. One, two, three…they were all over and they gathered to attack as they got closer to the basement. “Shoot!”

He wouldn’t have to ask. Sam was already shooting, his back pressed to his father’s as salt rounds flew from both ends of their guns.

As Sam started hitting the ghosts and making sure he followed in his father’s lead to advance, he realized he wasn’t scared. His initial uneasiness about the lack of clarity was soon replaced by the cold need to kill and to survive. Sam hardly missed a shot as John and he stumbled towards a small, narrow door.

“Damn it!” John started to kick the door frantically as objects started flying around them. Sam tried to shoot as fast as he could as his father worked on opening the door and letting them in.

“Shit!” Sam groaned when the ghosts managed to disturb him enough until he dropped and broke the flashlight he carried. “Dad! Watch out!” Sam looked up when an old, enormous chandelier came to life on top of their heads, the candles burning bright as the heavy thing swung.

John looked at the dangerous thing about to fall on their heads and was able to kick the door open and push Sam inside at the last minute, father quickly following son. Both hunters nearly fell down the basement stairs as the ancient chandelier fell on the floor and fire started to lick at the old wood of the floor and walls.

“Shit. They’re gonna burn this place down,” John realized, looking around quickly to try and see the bones he needed to burn and the exit they would need to take.

“Is there a way out of here?” Sam asked, looking at the top of the stairs and the fire burning hotly and spreading quickly, blocking any attempt to try and get out of the basement. Sam was tense, of course, but he didn’t mind the sudden brightness.

“There’s got to be,” John mumbled. “Try to find it, Sam. Look at the walls, see if you can find anything that gives under pressure. I think I know where the bones are.” John stared at the weird pattern of drawings on one of the walls and went closer. He didn’t hesitate in taking a shovel from his bag, and the moment the EMF went crazy at the proximity to the wall, John started to break rocks and cement.

In the next hurried minutes, John dug for bones and Sam looked for a way out as the fire consumed the house upstairs, and higher and higher flames licked the basement stairs and threatened to come closer. Eventually, they had to stop what they were doing and shoot a salt round against one of the spirits, but soon the fire was everywhere, and not even the ghosts dared come too close.

“I found it!” Sam exclaimed, trying to move some furniture. “Behind this bookcase there’s a
passage.”

“Great! You go in and run to the barn, I’m gonna torch these bastards now.” John was sweaty because of the digging effort and the several degrees hotter inside the basement. If they didn’t get out soon, the lack of oxygen would become a problem, because as smoke and fire invaded the place, less air was available.

Sam pushed the bookcase to the floor and looked at the dark passage before his eyes. At the same time Sam looked at the secret path he had just found he listened to the angry screaming as bones started to get torched.

“Go in, Sam!” John looked over his shoulder and saw his son standing before the entrance to the passage, looking into the absolute darkness that awaited. “Go in, now!! Run! I’ll finish it here.”

Sam looked from his father to the darkness before his face. It wasn’t just dark. It was pitch black. Inside that underground pathway there was nothing! It was like the inside of nothingness itself, and Sam had only seen darkness so complete when—

“Sam? GO!!! NOW!” John saw the fire coming in their direction. There was no other way out now. If that passage was obstructed for some reason, then they would die inside that house. The memory of Mary dying in the fire triggered all sorts of anguished responses from John, and his fingers were shaking when he finished lighting the last match and setting all the bones on fire.

Sam looked at his father again, and heard the screaming of the ghosts and the noise the fire made as it destroyed everything with a furious and unstoppable strength. Then, he looked into the dark passage and his heart raced. Sam tried to step towards it, he tried to tell himself that Dean was there, but when he tried to move, Sam realize he couldn’t. His feet didn’t obey him.

“No…” Sam whispered, realizing what was going to happen, what he couldn’t stop. “No, please… no…” Sam bit hard on his bottom lip and tried to move forward, but the shaking was too intense and his brain refused to step any closer to that terrifying darkness.

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“Sam! There’s no time for this! We have to go in!” John took Sam by the waist and forced him into the dark tunnel.

“NO!!” Sam stretched his arms and put both of his hands by the entrance, keeping his body safely away from the utter darkness trying to seduce him. It felt like merely touching that darkness would be poisonous, and Sam couldn’t reason with himself.

“SAM!! NOW!” John put a strong arm around his son’s back and shoved him into the darkness, following right behind.

“NOO!” Sam screamed. He couldn’t see anything; he couldn’t see one inch ahead of his face. What if the demon was waiting for him there? What if the man was? What if there was another man? Or if he had been wrong and the real man was still alive? What if his dad couldn’t protect him from the torture he would suffer by walking in? “NOOOOO!!” Sam crouched, bringing his body down with all his strength, forcing John to follow him down, stalling their escape.

“Sam! Please! We gotta run! It’s all burning down!”

John tried to appeal to Sam’s logic and reason, but they were gone the moment darkness was the only thing the boy could perceive around himself. It wasn’t as if Sam could fight it. The demon
had broken him. He had exhaustively and effectively conditioned Sam’s brain to respond to darkness with his most primitive instinct of fear and the most utterly powerful loss of control. The demon might not have been able to have his grand finale, with Sam walking out ready to be a hunter, but he had succeeded, he had managed to find Sam Winchester lying broken and helpless on the floor of his trap, his brain so terrified of the dark that it was a trigger nothing could ever fight and that, unknown to Sam, Lucifer would be still counting on when he was set free.

“NOOO!!! NOOO!!” Sam groaned and threw all of his weight on the floor, looking at the light burning in the basement as his father dragged him further into the dark tunnel. “Let me go!! LET ME GO!!” Sam wailed and thrashed. Inside the chaos of his feelings, there was only light and darkness, and he couldn’t possibly understand that right now light meant suicide.

“Sam, c’mon!” John lowered himself to try and gather Sam, but his son surprised him by biting him hard and fast, causing John to pull back and frown. “Sam? SAM!” John screamed at the top of his lungs when Sam crawled on his knees quickly before he got up and started running. “SAM, come back!!!” John felt his heart tightening in his chest. ‘He’ll die. Oh, my God, I’ll lose him,’ John’s thoughts were desperate and hurried. Never had John Winchester felt so scared in his life as when he saw Sam run blindly into the fire burning hotly at the end of the tunnel; the light Sam ran desperately toward was nothing but certain death.

“SAM!!!!!!!!!!”

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tbc...
Chapter 65

John didn’t think he had ever run so fast in his life. His heart was nearly beating itself out of his throat with rising fear and desperate urgency as he ran towards the boy running headlong into the fire.

Sam never heard anything. Behind him there was only darkness, and he needed to get away. Sam escaped the shadowy fingers trying to grab him and ran towards the appealing light calling to him. When he got close to this light, however, it was so insanely hot that Sam stopped abruptly in his tracks and considered for a moment.

“Sam, wait!!” John screamed, only a few seconds from catching him.

Sam looked over his shoulder to the sound of the person coming quickly to get him. He wanted to get away, but the heat was so intense, and he couldn’t breathe properly. What should he do? There was no way Sam could go back to the darkness he had just run from. He would have to face that fire wall, maybe if he could make his way past it, then—

“Ahh!” Sam gasped when a hot hand grabbed at his wrist and Sam saw a ghost, its scary, laughing face melting in the fire as the spirit looked into his eyes and made a sound that got drowned by the flames. Sam felt the burning tug on his wrist when the spirit tried to pull him into the fire.

“Stay away from my son!” John groaned and pulled an iron knife from his pocket to cut at the fingers holding Sam. There was a muffled scream and then the ghost disappeared.

In the few seconds it took Sam to understand what was going on, John didn’t give him time to react. He took Sam and lifted him, throwing him over his shoulder as a wave of coughing and nausea tried to take him down.

“No…” Sam began to shake his head as he slowly realized he would be taken back into the dark. “No, don’t! No!!!”

But by now it was too late to fight. John had him securely placed on his right shoulder and he ran as fast as humanly possible towards the other end of a dark passage he could only hope would lead them to safety.
In the barn, Dean had managed to slip inside unknown and was able to start a frantic search for Bobby. He had found his friend knocked unconscious on the ground, lying on top of a pile of hay.

“Bobby?” Dean went closer and studied the older man. There was blood on Bobby’s t-shirt and on his face, but when Dean touched his neck he felt a pulse and relaxed. “Bobby, c’mon!” He shook him lightly.

It took Bobby a while to come to his senses.

“What happened?” He groaned. “How long have I been out?”

“I don’t know,” Dean replied. “Are you hurt?”

“Dean? What are you doing here?” Bobby frowned. “Where’s John?”

“He’s in the house with Sam. He asked for help when you went missing. How badly are you hurt?” Dean insisted.

Bobby studied himself briefly and found small cuts, but nothing too serious. He didn’t know how long he had been unconscious, but he supposed that had been a while for John to get help.

“The last thing I remember is flying into the air and being thrown against a wall.”

“You’re all right now. Dad’s taking care of the ghosts. They wouldn’t let him come near the barn to rescue you.”

“You said Sam’s with him. What’s he doing here?”

Dean hesitated a moment. He still felt guilty about the fact that his brother could now be in danger because of him, but he couldn’t really see another option.

“I couldn’t leave him alone, Bobby.”

The older man looked into Dean’s worried, pained eyes and nodded slowly.

“Help me find a passage or something. Dad saw it on a map, he and Sam will use it to escape from the basement.”

Bobby didn’t waste any more time. The two of them were soon going over every inch of that old barn, exploring every corner of it until they found a heavy door and tried to pull it open.

“Touch it, Bobby. Can you feel it?” Dean arched his eyebrows as he flattened his hands against the door.

“Yeah, it’s hot. Do you think the house’s on fire?”

They exchanged a silent, fretful look and started to push against the door with all of their strength, until at last the heavy, rusty barrier moved and they could see inside a dark, narrow hallway and feel
the heated wave of air that hit them when they opened it.

Dean and Bobby were looking into the darkness for no longer than a minute when they heard the hurried sound of running and felt the intense heat coming from the passage. When the sound of heavy breathing could be heard, so could the sound of explosions happening not too far away, and a second later John Winchester was stumbling into the barn with Sam still held tightly.

“What happened?” Dean looked at his father and Sam, and he might have figured something was wrong, but at the moment everything was wrong and hectic, and he could hardly understand what was happening before his father was shouting hurried orders.

“We need to get out of here! The fire is coming, this whole place will blow through the roof!” John explained. “Bobby, you’re alright.” He looked at his friend and took a deep breath, his grip on Sam not loosening.

“Did you find the bones?” Dean asked.

“I did,” John replied.

“Let’s get the hell outta here then,” Bobby said what they were all thinking, and they started moving before the fire could find the barn and burn everything else to the ground.

The three men left the barn quickly, running into the moonlit night, dragging along a boy who could barely communicate at the time.

They split into the two cars parked close by—John pushed Sam into the car he had driven there, and Dean drove back with Bobby by his side.

For little more than half an hour, the hunters drove back to Bobby’s house, and in both cars silence was the most intense presence. As John drove, he could barely look at Sam, sitting on the passenger seat in utter silence. John was so shaken and so scared of having almost lost Sam that he couldn’t organize his thoughts or find his voice. When he blinked, all he saw was his son running towards the wall of fire, and the thought of what could have happened if he had gotten to Sam a moment later—the fire would have licked at Sam’s body and taken him away as it had done with Mary.

John shuddered behind the wheel. That was not going to happen. He couldn’t lose anyone else in this family. He couldn’t let that happen.

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When they were back in Bobby’s house, and Dean saw John push Sam before him and into the house, he realized something must have happened in the basement of the haunted house. The four of them walked in and turned on the lights quickly.

“Dad?” Dean asked tentatively, looking at Sam’s shaky attitude and huge eyes. “Dad, is everything —“

“Shut up, Dean!” John burst, his large chest heaving up and down with a visibly labored breathing pattern.
Bobby looked at Dean and at John, and at the way Sam seemed distressed.

“What happened, John?” He tried.

“What happened is that Dean disobeyed an order and took Sam to that damn house, that’s what happened,” John groaned, looking at Dean coldly.

Dean swallowed hard and his heart beat fast. What had happened? His dad looked furious, but he also looked scared.

“And Sam? Sam nearly walked into a wall of fire because he was afraid of going into the dark,” John said angrily, looking at his youngest son and shaking with residual fear.

Sam didn’t say anything. He was vaguely aware of Dean looking at him, but right now he was too petrified to move.

“What were you thinking?!” John grabbed Sam’s shoulders and forced him to meet his eyes. “You could’ve died there, would have died there! That spirit grabbed you, it would have pulled you into the fire, you would have burned Sam! I would have watched you die!” John shouted, his heart tight. “And all because you didn’t want to walk in the dark?! I know what happened, but it’s in the past, Sam! That room you were taken to is past! You have got to let go!”

Sam started shaking. He knew his father was angry, he could feel the waves of heated emotions coming off his body, but Sam couldn’t move.

“I’m sorry…” He said, guiltily. “I couldn’t…I didn’t know what I was doing.” His voice was so low it was barely audible.

“Didn’t know what you were doing? Why the hell am I taking you to therapy for then? It’s been months, Sam! Tell me why I’ve been taking you to talk to a goddamn shrink about the dark if when the time comes for you to save yourself you’ll run blindly towards death? What good is therapy if you can’t get over this darkness thing?!”

“John…” Bobby intervened.

Sam shut his eyes and listened to John’s words as his body shook.

“Dad, please… Let’s talk about this later,” Dean tried.

“You don’t get it, Dean! You weren’t there; you didn’t see your brother run headlong into the fire because he didn’t trust his own father to walk him through a dark tunnel. This has gone too far! I won’t have this fear of yours getting in the way of your survival. I’m sorry, Sam, but if therapy won’t help you deal with darkness, then I will.”

“Wait, what?” Dean watched, in horror, when John grabbed Sam by the arm and started dragging him upstairs.

“No! No, Dad! What are you doing?” Sam asked, fear licking at his insides as John forcefully made him go up the stairs towards the second story of the house.

“Dad! What are you doing?” Dean’s breath hitched.
“John! Wait!” Bobby followed right after Dean as John kept moving forward with blind resolution.

“It’s time you let go of it, Sam. I’ll show you there’s nothing to fear in darkness. I’ve tried their way. But if they can’t convince you with nice words, it’s my turn to do something about it now.”

“Dad!” Sam grabbed at his father’s arms when he opened the pantry and pushed him inside. “What are you doing? Why are you putting me here?” Sam didn’t understand, but he didn’t like the situation one bit.

John pulled out his gun quickly and aimed.

“JOHN!” Bobby screamed, frantic.

They heard the noise of a light bulb shattering and both Bobby and Dean looked at John in shock.

“Dad, what are you doing?!”

John knew Bobby’s pantry had a lock. He also knew it was a small, square room without a single window in it. He knew that when he closed the door and locked it, after having gotten rid of the only possible source of light in the room, there would be nothing but darkness—a darkness as deep and thick as the one they had faced earlier that night.

“DAD!!” Sam screamed when realization descended on him. He tried to hold on to his father’s arms, but John shoved him hard until Sam stumbled backwards.

“I’m sorry, Sammy. But that’s the only way.” John slammed the door shut and locked the door, leaving his youngest son locked into complete darkness.

“Dad, what are you doing? Are you crazy?!” Dean stood a few inches from his father, his heart slamming against his chest at the idea of Sam locked in the pantry, in the dark.

“DAD!! DAD! Let me out!!” Sam slammed his fists against the door, his eyes squeezed shut to try and avoid seeing his surroundings.

“You stay out of this!” John pushed his finger into Dean’s face until he stepped back. “This is on you, Dean! I told you to leave him here, you could’ve gotten him killed!” He barked.

That hit Dean. He stepped back, his face anguished and his chest aching. The thought that Sam could have died because he had failed to protect him was too painful, and Dean went silent for a moment.

“John, are you sure this is a good idea?” Bobby tried to knock some sense into his friend.

“Bobby, my son could have died in there because he’s too afraid to step into the dark. The way I see it, I can either prove to him there’s nothing to fear in the dark or settle for losing my son the next time he has to make a choice like that. And I won’t lose my son!” There was fire in John’s eyes.

Inside the dark pantry Sam opened his eyes and gasped when darkness embraced him. He raised his shaky hands before his face, his fingers spread open, but he couldn’t see anything at all. It was black in there, it was chaos.

“Dad!! Please!” Sam lost control, looking around the nothingness that was everywhere around him.
“PLEASE!! LET ME OUT!!!” He screamed, banging on the door frantically, trying to hold on as a panic attack rose and hit him, full force.

“Sam?” John spoke against the door. “There’s nothing to fear, son. It’s just the dark, there’s nothing in there that can hurt you. You can do it. You can be there, Sam. We’re right here, no one will harm you.”

John didn’t understand. Sam knew he was locked in Bobby’s pantry. He knew there was nothing coming inside that room. That wasn’t the problem, though. Sam was not afraid of what might get inside the darkness with him, he was more worried about what might come out of the darkness and keep him company.

The memories. The door opening. The man. The steps coming, the hands finding him.

“NOOO!!! PLEASE!!! NO!!!” Sam shook his head vehemently, but the memories were fast and cruel, and in the darkness they climbed over Sam’s wall and freed themselves to torment him.

Sam had tried to shut his eyes, he had tried to pretend he wasn’t really there during the whole thing, but the truth was, Sam was there. He was there when he felt he couldn’t handle it any longer, when the man burned his way inside of him and Sam screamed, because the friction made him raw and bloody.

“Let me out, let me out!!! DEAN!!! PLEASE!” Sam cried against the door, slamming his already injured fists against it, shaking as his knees threatened to buckle.

Sam’s plea tug at his heart and Dean felt a twinge of pain cut through his chest and leave him aching. He stepped towards the door, unable to help himself at the sound of how much Sam needed him, but before he could get any closer John raised the shotgun he was holding and pointed it at Dean.

“Dad?”

“John, are you fucking crazy?” Bobby groaned when he saw John pointing his gun at his older son.

“Relax, Bobby. These are salt rounds. I just want Dean to stay away. I’m teaching Sam an important lesson here, and he needs to step back.”

Bobby made a pained face and shook his head with distress.

Dean looked at the gun pointed at himself and at that moment he hated his father as much as he loved him, which was a lot.

“DEAN!!!”

Or maybe even more.

“Sammy!!” Dean called, his heart breaking for his brother, his own body dying with need to just break in there and pull Sam into his arms.

Bobby looked at Dean and understood his despair. Because he knew about their love, it was even more painful to watch.

“Sammy, hang in there! Please!”
“He can’t help you, Sam!” John intervened. “Dean can’t help you now. You gotta do this on your own. C’mon, son! It’s just a dark room, you can do it!” John knew that the other people with him now saw him as evil and cruel, but he truly believed that he could help Sam. If therapy had failed, and if Dean had failed, then perhaps Sam could learn it the hard way. John didn’t care if Sam hated him for it, as long as he wasn’t afraid of the dark anymore and thus didn’t endanger his life because of it ever again, then he would gladly live with it.

“DAD!! NOOOO!!” Sam cried, and the cry turned into sobs as he stopped slamming his fists and started shaking with the violence of his tears.

The man pushed so deep into Sam’s fighting body that pain exploded in his head with every thrust. Sam had tried to close his eyes and pretend he wasn’t there, but he was, and his skin was torn and his body bowed under the strength of his aggressor.

Sam started to stumble blindly inside the room. He closed his eyes tightly and shook his head over and over, as if he could fight the memories and preserve his mind. Sam wasn’t afraid of being attacked in the darkness, he was afraid of seeing the boy he had kept locked away in his mind, the boy who begged and screamed so loud that his voice broke and his throat hurt.

“No, no, no no no no no….” Sam mumbled over and over, moving aimlessly, knocking over things he bumped into with his legs or arms, making an invisible mess in that tiny room as he moved in frantic circles. “No, no, no, no!” Sam tugged at his arms and pulled hard, groaning at the pain. He pressed his forehead against a wall for a while, trying to stop the evil memories from taking control.

“See? He’s calming down,” John said.

Dean narrowed his eyes with fiery anger and judged his father. His own guilt of having put Sam into that situation was probably what kept him from attacking his own daddy.

Sam had looked down between his legs and there was a mess. When he felt the warm seed on his fingers, Sam had puked until his stomach cramped. Under the bright lights, the man’s semen had been pink, because there was blood in it, his blood. A blood that kept coming out of him for hours, maybe for days after the assault, reminding Sam—when he woke up and saw the sheets, or when he tried to do any of the basic needs a human had—that he had been opened and claimed by the very darkness that tormented him.

“Nooo…” Sam whimpered.

He moved blindly inside the tight, dark pantry, and suddenly Sam hit the corner of one of the shelves hard, with the sensitive place right above his right eye and the end of his eyebrow, and he hit it so hard that the darkness was no longer real. Sam didn’t have any more memories and he wasn’t scared anymore.

“He’s quiet. He’s been quiet for ten minutes! Open the door!” Dean begged.

“No. He’s calmed down. Let him be, Dean. You think Sam needs you for everything, but he’s not a puppy you can cuddle and shush back to sleep. He needs to do something for himself now. Give him time, he’s getting used to it. He’s understanding there’s nothing to fear.”

Dean wasn’t buying any of that, though. He frowned and looked at Bobby, who looked visibly distressed and ready to burst as well. They managed to wait silently for another five minutes, until
Bobby saw the torment in Dean’s face and could no longer bear his pain.

“That’s enough, John. Give me the keys and step back.”

John looked at his friend as if he had grown a third eye or something.

“What?”

“I said step the fuck back, John! This is my fucking house and I won’t have you terrorizing your son like that! You wanna be an ass, fine! But not tonight, not under my roof, got it?”

John had never seen Bobby so angry, at least not at himself.

“Now step back or I’ll shoot you myself, and not with salt rounds.”

John was so taken aback that he complied. He gave Bobby the keys and stepped back, watching when Dean and Bobby squeezed near the door to open it.

“He’s fine, guys…Sam’s learning to cope,” John spoke, wanting desperately to believe it, and feeling the coldness of a claw grab and squeeze his heart when Bobby opened the door and pushed it open.

At first there were only canned goods and broken objects everywhere.

“Sam?” Dean walked in carefully, moving the cans as his heart beat faster and harder in his chest. Was Sam beneath all those cans? What had happened there? Dean was on his way to throwing a can away when it slipped from his hand and fell. ‘What the—?’ He thought, and looked at his hand. “Fuck!” Dean could see blood on his hand, blood that had been on the can he had just held.

“What happened?” Bobby asked worriedly, and John looked attentively as Dean threw cans frenetically away from Sam’s face.

When Dean was done, the light coming from the hallway invaded the small pantry and revealed the sight of a boy lying still and bleeding profusely from a cut in his head, a boy who could not respond to any sound or movement happening around him.

John’s heart broke when he realized his son had lost the battle to darkness.

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“Sammy? Sam!” Dean pulled Sam’s head into his lap urgently and tried to wake him up. When he couldn’t, he let his eyes meet John’s and speak volumes in the awkward, angry silence between them.

“What happened, Dean?” Bobby stepped further into the pantry and looked at Sam’s unmoving body and the blood on his face.

“He must have hit something in the dark,” Dean said as he cradled Sam’s head gently and pulled his hair away from his bloody forehead.

John didn’t say a word. He watched the scene in fear-struck silence. His heart beat fast and for the sake of him he couldn’t think of what to do.

“Hmm!” Sam stirred and moaned loudly in pain.

“Sammy?” Dean called softly.

Sam didn’t know where he was. When he tried to open his eyes the pain in his head was fierce, and he could feel something wet trickling down his cheek. The memory of darkness assaulted him and Sam bolted skittishly, trying to get up.

“Noo!” He shook his head, wincing at the pain as he tried to move.

“Take it easy,” Dean said quickly.

“Sam? It’s okay, kid, you’re okay,” Bobby tried to help as well.

Sam listened to their words and looked at the brightness around him. He remembered being locked in the pantry and he remembered the memories coming back and hitting him, hitting him as hard as he hit something, and now his head was throbbing with a sharp pain that nearly blinded his left eye.

“We should take him to the hospital,” Dean said.
Sam moved his head frantically, hissing at the pain. He tried to understand what was happening, but he was confused and shocked, and when he saw his father looking intently at him, Sam also felt embarrassed. He covered his face with his hands and breathed loudly into his palms, unwilling to face anyone.

He had lost control again; he had let the darkness make him its bitch.

“Sam, how are you feeling? Can you say something?” Bobby leaned over him.

“Sam?” John tried, too, and his throat felt dry.

Suddenly Sam surged upwards, pushing Dean away, getting up quickly to try and get away from there. Yet, when Sam found himself on two feet, he wavered and lost balance. He had lost a great deal of blood from his open cut, and getting up fast had deprived his brain of oxygen. Sam swayed and had to be stabilized by Dean’s grip on him as he got up as well.

“He’s disoriented and he hit his head. We need to see a doctor,” Bobby agreed.

“Maybe we can call Doctor Michael; he could come here if he’s around. I don’t know if we need to —” John stopped in the middle of his thoughts when Sam fainted and both Dean and Bobby kept him from falling down.

“Dad, you’re not making any more decisions tonight.” Dean looked into his father’s eyes with all the anger and love he had inside, and even though never in his life had he defied his dad so bluntly, Dean felt strong and determined to fight him if John became a problem.

“He’s right, John. We need to go,” Bobby said curtly, unwilling to spend more time in John’s company. “You should stay. We can handle it,” Bobby said, and what he really meant was that John’s presence was not welcomed.

“Right…” John swallowed hard. He hated what had happened, but he hadn’t meant for it to happen! He had hoped Sam would face his fears under pressure, he had hoped his son would come out of that dark pantry believing he could handle darkness, so that he would never put himself in danger because of it ever again.

“Hmm.” Sam woke up again and shook his head. Everything started to come back and Sam covered his face again, too ashamed to do anything else.

“Let’s go, Sam. We’ll get help. C’mon,” Dean said softly, putting his hand on Sam’s lower back and helping him downstairs.

Sam didn’t say anything. He kept his eyes on the floor as the blood dried on his face. He was shaking and his stomach was violently upset. It was only so much he could do not to empty it right there.

Bobby led them outside and opened the door to the car while Dean helped Sam into it. The moment they were inside and Bobby was behind the wheel, Sam covered his face with his hands again and didn’t remove them during the entire trip. He was too ashamed to see anyone. He knew it was stupid thinking they couldn’t see him just because he couldn’t see them, but Sam felt small comfort in the fact that his hands covered his broken face, and he didn’t lower his hands, not even when Dean tugged gently at one of his wrists.
“No,” Sam murmured, his face still hidden.

“Shh, it’s okay. It’ll be alright now,” Dean said, hating himself for what had just happened, blaming himself for not preventing it, and his father for not understanding Sam.

‘It will never be alright,’ Sam thought. ‘Not as long as there’s darkness.’

~ * ~

John watched them go and then went back inside. He let his fingers graze his hair and face and exhaled a weary, sad breath. What had he done? What had happened tonight?

John could not shake away the image of Sam running into a wall of fire, and it still caused his heart to race. He could have lost Sam tonight. He could have watched his youngest son run into the flames and thus into Mary’s arms, never to return. What kind of father would he be if he couldn’t protect his own children? What kind of father didn’t try to teach their kids how to protect themselves, how to survive?

Locking Sam in a dark pantry was not an easy choice; it was not a well-thought-out plan. It was a desperate move from a desperate father. The truth was, John didn’t know what a father was supposed to be like. During most of his childhood and his teenage years, he had pretty much been on his own. He hadn’t had someone he could look up to and learn from when it came to making the right decisions until the Marines happened in his life. And after Mary’s death, everything had been so hard! How could John raise his kids in a loving world, when the truth was that there was so much fear and danger walking this earth? He needed to prepare his boys; he needed them to be strong…

“Oh, God,” John choked, the sound strangled and unexpected, and he leaned against the nearest wall for support. “What did I do, Sammy?” John lifted his hand and pressed his thumb and index finger to his eyes, rubbing and blinking as fat tears rolled out of them and down his cheeks hotly. Alone in Bobby’s house, John didn’t know what else to do.

If Sam had lost his battle against darkness, so had John for being unable to help him.

For a moment John could not control the culmination of so many emotions. There was the fear of almost losing Sam, the frustration of being unable to help him, the guilt, the anger, the thirst for revenge… John cried because he hated feeling helpless; he hated not knowing what to do.

Eventually, when he moved again, he went into the kitchen and poured himself a strong dose of whiskey. He might not find the answers in the bottom of that glass, but at least he could drown his pain a little.

~* ~

“What happened to him?” The doctor who came closer to Sam and Dean asked as Bobby fell behind, dealing with insurance issues with the help of some fake credit cards.

“I fell,” Sam answered, before Dean could. “And bumped my head.”
The doctor gave Dean a lingering look, but Dean just nodded and swallowed hard.

“I’ll go in with him. I’ll come back for you in a while. Please wait here.”

“Thank you.” Dean nodded and watched, reluctantly, as Sam was separated from him and guided through a pair of white doors, where he disappeared inside a room.

“Sit on the bed, let me see your cut,” the doctor instructed.

Sam wanted to comply, but now that he was out of everyone’s sight it was harder to control his nausea and he knew he would end up caving.

“Something wrong?” The doctor asked.

“I think I’m gonna puke,” Sam admitted, his face twisting in advance at the dreadful prospect.

The doctor quickly handed Sam a container where he readily emptied the scarce contents of his stomach. When he was done, he was feeling much better, and the doctor went away briefly to come back with a glass of water which he offered Sam.

“Better?”

Sam nodded.

“Thanks.”

“So, do you want to tell me what really happened?” The doctor asked as he started to prepare the medication to anaesthetize and stitch up the wound on his forehead.

“I fell and hit my head,” Sam repeated, and over the next days he would say the exact same words to whoever wanted to question him.

“Are you sure? You know your father is outside now, right?” The doctor said, referring to Bobby. “You can tell me what really happened.”

“I fell and hit my head,” Sam said again, with annoyance and defiance.

The doctor sighed and nodded.

“Fine. Just hold still so I can close it, alright?”

The doctor was surprised to see how little the boy complained during the procedure. Sam barely flinched as the doctor closed the cut with two neat stitches.

“It’s not a big cut, Sam, but the location is very bad. There’s little soft tissue above the bone, and it’ll bleed tremendously if you break the skin. Because of the high vascularization, even a small cut can be a problem in this region,” the doctor explained. “Have you felt any kind of dizziness, or lightheadedness when you moved?”

Sam nodded. “A little, yeah.”

The doctor nodded. “You must have lost a significant amount of blood. I’ll put you on an IV drip
with an analgesic and you’ll feel better in a couple of hours, okay?”

“Then can I go home?”

The doctor looked into the boy’s eyes and thought of his words ‘I fell and hit my head’. Of course that could be true, but there was something fearful and withdrawn in his look, and maybe it would be a good idea if the boy talked to a social service worker before he left.

“I’m afraid I need to keep you in for the night, Sam. You suffered head trauma and you threw up. We need to keep you on observation overnight. You may have a concussion.”

Sam sighed. He knew that his throwing up had probably made the doctor cautious about his situation, but he couldn’t explain that his vomiting had nothing to do with a head trauma, and everything to do with the anxiety from his panic attack. For a moment his eyes stung and he was afraid that the burning feeling would turn into a wet one, but he took a deep breath and swallowed the tears before they climbed up his throat. Sam didn’t want to stay in the hospital; it reminded him of being there before, helpless and brutalized. Yet, when he thought of going back to Bobby’s house and seeing his father there, he realized that spending the night away did not seem like such a bad idea.

No, Sam wasn’t angry at his father. He was sad. He was deeply, terribly sad with the realization that his father just didn’t get him. John didn’t understand him, couldn’t possibly do so. He kept his false hopes, his stupid ideals, and it didn’t matter what Sam did, or how much he tried, he could not live up to the boy his father wanted him to be, the boy who simply put his past behind and rose to a new challenge. Sam wasn’t that kind of person. He was trying to bury his pain and his trauma as deeply as possible, as he had seen his dad do with the loss of their mom, but he wasn’t as good as him. Sam couldn’t block everything completely, and even though Sam understood that his father wanted desperately to help him, and even though he loved his daddy, Sam didn’t think he could forgive him for bringing darkness back into his life and unleashing his memories so they could haunt him.

“I’ll let your brother and father in, is that okay?”

Sam nodded to the doctor and watched him leave. He didn’t correct him by saying Bobby wasn’t his father. Sam didn’t know exactly what had happened outside the dark pantry, but tonight he knew Bobby had been more of a father to him than either he or John would like to admit. He took a deep breath and looked at the IV drip attached to his right arm.

~ * ~

Bobby and Dean were allowed into Sam’s room and told that he would have to spend the night to make sure he hadn’t suffered any serious head trauma. Dean and Bobby stayed in the room with him, but Sam was quiet. The resemblance to the time Sam had been rescued from captivity and didn’t communicate with anyone was eerie, and left both men uncomfortable.

After one hour, Bobby could no longer stay there and look at Sam’s silent, obviously hurt face. He got up and paced around the room.

“I should probably call John, let him know where we are and that everything’s okay,” he said.

“Yeah, do that,” Dean said, because he wanted to be alone with his brother.
Bobby nodded lightly with his head and left, leaving the brothers alone.

Dean pulled his chair closer to Sam’s bed and put his hand on top of his.

Sam felt the warmth of Dean’s fingers on his and his strength faltered, making his chest ache and tighten with repressed pain.

“I’m sorry, Sammy. Please forgive me. I should’ve stopped him. I shouldn’t have let him do that…” Dean said the words that were tightening his air passage, choking him. “I wish I’d done something sooner. I’m sorry I couldn’t stop him…”

“I know you tried,” Sam said. “I know he didn’t let you.” Sam had heard their conversation outside, and he thought his dad had probably threatened Dean to stay away from the door.

“I thought he was gonna shoot me with those salt rounds,” Dean confessed. “But I should have stopped him, Sammy…I—”

“Don’t, it’s enough, please…” Sam begged, and squeezed Dean’s hand. “My head hurts.”


“And you?” Sam asked, softly.

“What about me?”

“Do you forgive me?” Sam asked, looking at the white sheet covering his legs so he didn’t have to face Dean.

“For what?” Dean widened his eyes a little and frowned.

Sam thought of the lock turning and the darkness all around him, and the way he panicked until it ended in blood.

“Because I can’t stop it.”

“Can’t stop what?”

“Being afraid of the dark.” Sam chewed on his bottom lip and thought of the man, and all the many dark moments the man and he would forever share on his mind.

Dean felt his eyes well up with the liquid pieces of his heart.

“You won’t always be afraid, Sammy. One day, darkness won’t bother you anymore. I promise you.”

“You can’t promise that. You don’t know that. I can’t change,” Sam protested miserably.

Dean managed to smile as he wiped his tears away.

“You can. I’ll help you. One day there will be no more darkness. Do you believe me?” Dean had no idea how he would do that, but looking at the broken cry for help in Sam’s eyes, he knew he would
go to the end of the world to give him what he needed to face darkness again.

Sam swallowed hard and nodded, afraid that if he spoke his voice would crack.

“Good. Then we’ll make it happen, Sam. You won’t be afraid of the dark forever.”

“How will you do it?”

“I have no idea,” Dean confessed and his honesty caused Sam to chuckle. “But you bet I’ll find a way. You know why?”

“Why?” Sam was smiling now, his heart warm.

“Because I love you, you smart ass, that’s why.”

Sam licked at his lips unconsciously, the movement sweet and coy, causing Dean’s heart to lighten and throb.

He took Sam’s fingers to his lips and kissed them, and before the small action was over, Bobby was entering the room and looking at the scene.


“Oh, my God!” Sam whispered when he was gone.

“Relax, Bobby knows,” Dean calmed him.

“He does?!” Sam widened his eyes.

“Apparently he caught us, um, not studying or training. He came back home one day after we thought he had left and he sort of heard us.”

“Damn, Dean! What did he say? Is he gonna tell Dad?”

“Hey, chill out. Bobby talked to me. I mean, he’s not a fan of the whole thing, you know. I think it’s safe to say he’s uncomfortable with the idea. But he won’t tell anything, and he respects the way we feel.”

“Does he know that…that you…”

“That I love you?” Dean chuckled. “Yes.”

“And that I love you, too?”

“I think he pretty much got it by now.”

Sam sighed deeply and thought for a while.

“Do you think Bobby is so nice to us because he didn’t have children of his own? Do you think that if he was our father he would have thrown me in the pantry the same as Dad did?”
“Sometimes people don’t know how to show they care.”

“Dad throwing me into a dark pantry and leaving me there is him showing he cares?”

“He was scared, Sam.”

“Well, so was I,” Sam replied quickly before he let his words trail off and his mind drift with thoughts.

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tbc...
In the middle of the night, there was a knock on the door and someone asked Dean and Bobby to leave Sam’s hospital room for a moment.

“My name is Janet Harrison and I’m a social worker. If you could excuse us for a moment, I would like to speak to Sam alone.”

Bobby and Dean exchanged a look, and then they looked at Sam. The youngest Winchester was no longer on the IV drip. He was just lying in bed, trying to get some sleep, and waiting for the night to be over so he could go home.

Sam watched his brother leave with Bobby as the woman occupied the chair next to his bed.

“How are you, Sam?”

Sam looked at her and didn’t answer immediately. He was sick of that tone of voice being used when someone addressed him. It was patronizing and Sam could barely stand going through that kind of conversation.

“Fine,” he managed to say, hoping that would be fast.

“The doctor who tended to your wound sent me here to talk to you. He was worried about your injury, Sam. What happened to your head?”

“I fell and bumped my head,” he said, emotionless.

“That’s what you told him when you got here, right?”

“Yes.”

“Because someone asked you to?” She probed.

“No, because that’s the truth.” Sam took a deep breath and tried not to let his annoyance show.

The social worker let her eyes wander and stop on the boy’s wrist. There was a red, circular mark around it, like the skin had been burned or something.
“What is that?” She nodded at his wrist. “Did you fall and bump it too?”

Sam looked down at his wrist. It had been burning since the ghost had grabbed him, but until a few moments ago there had been no sign of injury. Now, though, Sam could see his skin had grown red where the ghost’s burning grip had been. Sam hid his hand beneath the sheet covering him.

“What, you know that sometimes we’re afraid of trusting someone, especially if we feel hurt and vulnerable, but I promise you this is one of those moments when it’s okay to trust.”

“What do you even mean?” Sam frowned, his patience running out.

“I think you know what I mean. I’m a social worker, Sam, and you are an injured minor. It’s my job to make sure everything is alright at home. If there’s anything going on, if you for some reason feel scared to go back home, you can share it with me and I’ll help you.”

“My father didn’t do this to me,” Sam cut to the point. “I fell and bumped my head.”

“Really? So your dad has never hit you?”

Sam had some flashbacks of rough times. More than once John had been harsh with them, and sometimes it had resulted in a few bruises, but it had never been intentional. John had never raised his hand to hit Dean or him, and if he had physically hurt them it was probably in the process of saving them from imminent danger. As for psychological pain, that would be an entirely different story…

“No, he hasn’t,” Sam answered.

“What about your older brother? Sometimes horseplay can get a bit rough. You can tell me if something happened. Maybe he didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“My brother didn’t do this. I fell. I bumped my head. I was brought here,” Sam insisted, feeling weary of that conversation.

“Alright, Sam. It’s just hospital standard procedure, I had to ask and—”

“Excuse me, Sam?” A man knocked quickly on the door and entered before anyone had welcomed him. Sam knew the man who walked into his room and closer to his bed.

“Doctor Mark?” He recognized the therapist with whom he had played chess the week before.

“Hello, Sam. How are you?” He smiled warmly and studied the boy’s cut.

“I’m fine,” Sam said, but without the sharp twinge of annoyance he had saved for the social worker.

“And you are…?” She asked, standing up.

“Mark Duchesneau, his therapist. I came as fast as I could.”

“I see,” Janet said. “And why is Sam seeing a therapist, may I know?” She smiled softly and cleverly, and cast Sam a quick look before focusing on the blue-eyed man.

“Sorry…?”
“Janet Harrison, social worker.”

“Sorry, Ms. Harrison, but it’s privileged,” Mark said and looked at Sam, winking and smiling, knowing the boy would relax with his words.

“Oh…”

“But I can assure you that there’s nothing to worry. Sam’s family means well. They would never hurt him. There’s no need to protect him from them.”

“Well, you’re his doctor, if you say so…”

“I do. If you could leave us alone for a moment…”

“Right. Goodbye, Sam. Bye, Dr. Duchesneau.” She excused herself and left the two of them behind.

“Hey…” Mark went closer to the boy he had met just last week and studied the look in his eyes.

“How did you find me here?” Sam asked.

“Well, Dakota works in this hospital during the week. When someone was admitted under Samuel Winchester, the hospital gave her a call. Psychiatrists are often told when one of their patients is in hospital care.”

“Where is she?” Sam wondered.

“She’s at a conference this weekend, so she called and asked me if I could come.”

“We’ve just talked once. You didn’t need to bother,” Sam said softly.

“Well, I did. Will you tell me what happened there?” He nodded at the bandage covering a fresh cut.

“I just fell and bumped my head,” Sam said, tiredly. “Actually, I think I bumped my head first, and then I fell. I don’t know.”

“Okay…” The doctor pulled the chair closer to the bed and sat down. “And why did you fall?”

Sam looked into the kind eyes waiting for his answer. How come that man always knew what question he should ask to get answers?

“I suppose you didn’t just trip randomly.”

“No,” Sam agreed.

For a moment they didn’t speak. Mark didn’t pressure, and Sam considered what he would say. Did he want to lie? Hardly. After what he had already told him, Sam didn’t really care so much about telling him the truth.

“My dad locked me in the pantry in the dark.”

Mark listened to the words that came out of Sam’s lips and his chest felt somewhat tight. That boy
had been tortured in the dark—his worst fears had happened in the dark. It didn’t make sense that his father, who Dakota assured him was a good man, would have done something like that.

“Why did he do it? Was he angry with you?”

“Well, kind of. I think he was more scared than angry.”

“Why so?”

“Because I nearly walked into the fire while running away from the dark.”

“Sam,” Mark began. “I swear you’re losing me here. Do you think you can make this old man here understand you better? Why was there fire involved?”

Sam sighed deeply. He knew the man talking to him now had no idea that monsters were real, so even if Sam wanted to tell him everything, he would have to omit some parts of it.

Sam left out the part about dozens of ghosts chasing them and bones being burned, and tried to tell some of what had happened during this long night. Doctor Mark didn’t interrupt his narrative, so Sam just kept telling him everything from the need to run away from darkness even though fire was the only other option, to how it had felt like he couldn’t handle being locked in the dark, even though he knew was in a safe place.

As he listened to Sam tell him about the events that had led to his injury, Mark felt deeply sad and frustrated that the small progress he had made with Sam had perhaps been severely threatened by his dad’s inability to comprehend his trauma and deal with his PTSD.

~ * ~

Dean sighed and looked at Bobby, who was drinking coffee and pacing back and forth.

“Bobby?”

“Yeah?”

“Why do you have a pantry upstairs, anyway?” Dean asked suddenly, causing Bobby to chuckle.

“Well, it used to be a linen closet. But then it became a pantry when I turned my pantry into a room full of weapons and ammo. I just figured that if I was ever running from something and managed to make it home, it’d be easier to get a gun if I didn’t have to go up or down some stairs first. Guns are more important than food when your life is in danger.”

Dean nodded. “Clever.”

“Thanks.”

Just a few minutes later they heard the footsteps coming closer.

“Where is he?” John asked when he ran into Bobby and Dean waiting outside a hallway. It was four a.m. in the morning, and no one had slept that night.
“He’s inside talking to someone,” Bobby said. “His therapist.”

“What happened to Dakota? Bobby and I thought Sam was seeing a woman. This man, Mark, introduced himself as Sam’s therapist and he walked in half an hour ago. The good thing is, he managed to drive away the social worker who looked at us as if we were the devil,” Dean said.

“A man? I don’t know,” John was so disturbed by everything that he couldn’t possibly remember his conversation on the phone with Dakota, in which he had authorized her to bring someone else to talk to Sam. “And I don’t care, I’m walking in.”

“John, maybe you should wait a little,” Bobby tried.

“Bobby, it’s my son in there, and I know things didn’t work out as planned, alright? But I gotta see him.”

Dean and Bobby watched when John opened the door and walked into Sam’s room, closing the door behind himself.

~ * ~

“Sam,” John said and looked at his son. The sight of Sam lying in that hospital bed evoked terrible memories, and it made John hate himself for inadvertently letting Sam end up where he was.

Sam looked at his father and didn’t say anything. He just watched when Mark stood up and walked towards him.

“Hi. Nice to meet you. Dr. Mark Duchesneau.” He reached out his hand.

“John Winchester. I don’t think I know who you are.”

“I had a therapy appointment with Sam last week,” he explained.

“Well, last time I checked, Sam was seeing a woman named Dakota.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I thought she had checked with you before she asked me to speak to Sam.” Mark frowned.

John thought for a moment and remembered the phone call. “Right. She might’ve said something,” he rubbed at his wrinkled forehead.

“John? Would you mind speaking outside for a moment?” Mark put a hand on his shoulder.

“Now? I want to talk to my son.”

“And I will give you privacy. Can I just have a minute before that?”

John let Mark guide him out of Sam’s room, albeit reluctantly.

When they were outside, Bobby and Dean watched the two men standing before each other.
Mark took a quick look at the two people sitting near them, and his eyes fell on Dean for a moment. That was the brother Dakota had mentioned, the one she thought Sam might have feelings for. There was so much to explore in therapy with Sam, and Mark hoped the boy’s father wouldn’t get in the way of his son truly talking to someone.

“Sam told me what happened,” Mark said.

“He did?” John arched his eyebrows.

“He said you locked him in a dark pantry,” Mark went on, his voice pained.

John’s heart raced and he felt immediately defensive. He looked briefly at his son and at Bobby, wishing they weren’t there to listen to that.

“Did he tell you why I did that? Did he say that he ran headlong into a burning house, that I saved him from killing himself? And all because he was afraid of the dark?”

“He did.” Mark nodded gravely. “He told me that, too. And please, don’t think I called you here to judge you, I understand where your attitude is coming from, but John,” Mark’s voice had a soft intimacy to it that unnerved John at the same time it got to him, “you need help dealing with Sam’s fear. Many times it’s really difficult for family to understand the scarring a trauma can cause in a child’s life, and Sam’s trauma is by far the worst I’ve heard of in my years as a therapist. I only talked to your son once, but we made progress, John. He talked to me. He told me things he didn’t tell Dakota in months.”

Dean listened to that and wondered if what Sam had spoken about had anything to do with the abuse he suffered.

“I feel like he trusts me, and I can talk to him about his fears.”

“Yeah, talking and more talking. Sam’s been talking for months, and look what’s that done to him—nothing! The first chance he gets he’d rather kill himself than face a few minutes of darkness.”

Mark felt all the anger John had inside, and he knew that anger was a disguise for his desperate helplessness when it came to saving his kid, but of course he couldn’t tell John that.

“For Sam that was not a few minutes in darkness. For Sam darkness is where anything can happen, with the only certainty that he will feel more pain than he can handle. By throwing him in that pantry in the dark, you forced Sam to deal with memories he’s not ready to face, and you caused a fear he cannot control to surface and take over. That’s what PTSD means. It’s not something Sam chooses willingly. He didn’t rationally choose to walk into the fire. What you’ve got to understand is that Sam can’t control his responses. At least he can’t now, and he needs help to learn to do that.”

Dean listened to the doctor’s every word, secretly agreeing with them, and also hurting because of the truth in them. Sam had always been such a smart, reasonable boy. Whichever school he was in, Sam was always one of the brightest students. He was organized, methodic, correct. Then, suddenly there had been darkness in his life, messing with his ability to control the responses of his own body to his surroundings, and that must be terribly hard on someone like his brother. Losing control and showing weakness was a fear that just added to the monstrous fear already eating at Sam.

“Well, how long will it be until therapy can give him the help he needs? Because last night my son
might have died, and therapy wouldn’t have helped at all,” John said angrily.

“And do you honestly think that locking your terrified kid in a dark pantry would?” Mark asked softly, but meaningfully, and for a moment John stared at him with something so powerful that it bordered on loss of control, and he wondered if the boy’s father would hit him.

John wouldn’t, but it took him a lot of self-control not to raise his voice and do something he might regret. He looked into the doctor’s eyes for a tense moment. It was easy for him to speak, he had studied all that bullshit about dealing with trauma and stuff. John didn’t know anything! He had no tools to help such a damaged psyche as Sam’s was. All he could do was try and make his kids survive, and that he did.

“If you’ll excuse me now, I need to talk to my son,” John lowered his voice and walked past the doctor, not looking anyone in the eyes as he disappeared into Sam’s room.

~ * ~

Sam hadn’t listened to the entire conversation, but he had to the last bits, thus he understood it when his father walked into his room looking distressed and breathing fast.

“Hey,” John tried to smile, even though his lips were still tight from the tension he had built up. He walked closer to Sam’s bed and looked at his wound. “How many stitches did you get?”

Sam looked at his legs and fought the hollowness threatening to take over.

“Two,” he said, at last.

John nodded.

“You know I’m sorry, right? I didn’t mean for that to happen. I thought I was helping you face it and grow stronger—”

“You weren’t,” Sam interrupted his father, but didn’t look at him.

“I see that now. Can you forgive me?”

“That depends,” Sam narrowed his eyes.

“That depends,” Sam narrowed his eyes.

“On what?” John frowned.

“On how many times you’ll do something like that and then regret it.”

John felt as if a knife had just been twisted into his heart.

“Sammy…”

They were interrupted by the door opening again and Mark returning.

John looked at him and his mood changed from hurt to annoyed in a heartbeat. “What do you want now?” He asked.
“I’m just here to tell Sam I’ll go now. And if you can take him, I’d like to see him on Monday for our next session.”

Sam looked at the doctor and at his father, and he had already made up his mind.

“I’m not going to therapy anymore.”

Both John and Mark looked at Sam at the same time.

“What?” Mark asked, truly confused.

“You heard me. I’ll no longer be doing therapy. Thanks,” Sam said again.

“Why not? Sam, please…you can’t quit now. There’s still so much we can accomplish together,” Mark said. ‘Please don’t give up now, not now that you’re beginning to open up,’ he thought hurriedly.

“I’m sorry, but my dad is right. Therapy is not helping me. There’s no point in continuing with it.”

John watched Sam talk to the doctor, completely taken aback by his resolute decision.

“That’s not true, Sam. You know there’s a lot we can still do. Is it me? Because if you want to go back to your sessions with Dakota, that’s absolutely fine—”

“No. I’m sorry, Doctor, but I’m done with therapy.”

Sam had made this decision the moment he was alone in the room, receiving the IV drip and thinking of what had happened tonight. Something had changed in him, something had broken and hardened, and Sam just didn’t see himself sharing anymore. Therapy was like a dark pantry filled with his memories, with the exception of the door being open and not locked. However, even though it was not an obligation to interact with his memories, Sam realized he was unwilling to stay in that dark room any longer. He was walking out, and no one would stop him.

“You heard him,” John said. “I think you should leave now.”

“John, please…consider this for a moment. Do you honestly agree that quitting is the best option here? You know it’s been helping him.”

John looked into Sam’s eyes.

“Is that what you want? Not to go anymore?”

“Yes,” Sam confirmed.

“Please, doctor. Your work here is done. You can tell Dakota that I thank her for her services and I’ll stop by to settle any debt I may have.”

“Sam…” Mark let his eyes go from the boy’s father to Sam, and pleaded with him one more time.

“Thank you…but I’ve made up my mind.”
Mark sighed. Despite all that had happened tonight between father and son, he realized that right now John and Sam were a team, and they both wanted the same thing. He had lost.

“Okay, Sam. I respect it, but I hope you change your mind. If you do, you know Dakota and I would be happy to welcome you back. Take care.”

Sam and John watched the doctor turn around and leave.

“Sam, if you think therapy is helping I’ll keep taking you to it, you know. I didn’t mean that you should stop going or anything…”

“Please go away.”

“What?” John’s throat tightened.

“Please go away, Dad,” Sam repeated, staring into the distance, unwilling to face his father and remember the despair he had put him through just a few hours ago.

John got up, feeling weirdly unreal and confused. He reached out his hand and tried to touch his son’s head, but Sam retreated without uttering a word.

John looked at his hand and felt the stab of pain and guilt at the avoidance in Sam’s eyes.

“Do you want me to get Dean?” He asked, swallowing down yet another failure with his son.

Sam nodded, but didn’t say anything.

John walked out of the room with heavy, tired steps. When he was out Bobby and Dean looked at him expectantly, waiting for what he would say.

“Will Sam really stop going to therapy?” Bobby asked. “We heard it.”

John shrugged. “It’s up to him. If he wants to stop, I won’t make him go.”

John then looked at Dean and nodded towards the door before letting his eyes study the white floor.

“He’s asking for you.”

Dean’s heart warmed and grew in response, and he slid inside Sam’s room quickly, without another word.

John watched him go and sighed when he was alone with Bobby.

“What should I do, Bobby? Hm? Can you tell me?”

“The one thing you’re not very good at.”

“And what would that be?”

“Nuthin’,” Bobby said. “Just wait it out.”

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tbc...
Sam was back in Bobby’s house the following morning. He had a small bruise on his inner arm, where the nurse had taken his vein for the IV drip, two stitches above his eye, a red burn around his wrist and a silent attitude that followed him for the next several days.

As the week unfolded, Doctor Dakota called John’s cell phone and Bobby’s house more than once. When Tuesday came and Sam didn’t show up, and then when the same thing happened on Thursday, she tried to talk to the boy’s father, to convince him to take Sam back, but John was firm when he told her that Sam didn’t want to go, and that he would respect his decision. Eventually, she would have to understand and stop calling.

Eventually, John also thought, Sam would have to forgive him and speak to him again.

Sam’s withdrawn and wary attitude held so much resemblance to the one he had when he was brought there after his kidnapping that everyone living in Bobby’s house now was certainly uneasy with the unspoken awkwardness that rose as a side effect of what had happened.

Sam didn’t speak to John unless spoken to and, after a few attempts at establishing communication, John gave up when he understood just how hurt and unwilling to let go Sam was. John didn’t blame him; he knew he had screwed up, but he didn’t know how to make things better, and after an entire week feeling unsure and tense around his own son, John knew he had to bolt. Thus, he threw himself into the first hunting case he could find, something far enough away to make sure he would have days to give his head a rest and try to think of how to approach Sam again.

Bobby knew exactly what John was doing when he announced he was going to leave to hunt an important case. He knew his friend could hardly handle being in the same house as Sam and facing in his son’s straying and fearful eyes the damage he had caused him again.

Even Dean seemed deeply affected by Sam’s silence and observant behavior. Bobby had gotten used to the sound of the boys talking and even laughing, and it broke his heart now to see the way Sam would spend his days quietly watching TV, or reading a book, or just doing his homework.

So, when the opportunity presented itself, Bobby too found a case to work on, something he could use as an excuse to leave the house and let the boys alone so they could talk. It was easier now that he knew how deep Sam and Dean’s relationship was, because Bobby could hope that by giving
them privacy Dean would be able to talk to Sam and help him out of his bubble.

Two days after John left, Bobby packed and left too, leaving the Winchester brothers alone in his
house. Dean couldn’t say he wasn’t glad for the opportunity to be alone with Sam and try to figure
out how he really felt. The truth was, for the past week Sam hadn’t really spoken to him about what
had happened. When they went to bed at night, Sam was either already asleep when Dean joined
him, or he just rolled to one side and fell asleep quietly, without exchanging many words. Dean tried
to probe a little, but Sam had shut down, avoiding conversation and, of course, touching.

Dean wondered how much of that distance was because of what had happened over the weekend,
and how much was simply because they weren’t alone. Sam hadn’t been very cautious when their
dad and Bobby were around before, that was true, but perhaps knowing that Bobby was aware of
their relationship had made Sam wary of doing anything.

Perhaps.

Dean didn’t know. They hadn’t kissed or done anything since Sam came back from the hospital, and
now that Bobby left too, Dean hoped they could at least talk about what had happened.

Dean walked up to their bedroom and found Sam reading a book in bed.


“He is.” Dean nodded. “We’re alone.” Dean studied his brother, wondering if he could get him to
share some of his thoughts. “You know, maybe we should talk,” he suggested casually.

Sam started to get up and stretch.

“Maybe,” he said.

Dean stared intently at Sam’s face, trying to read him.

“Your stitches…I can remove them if you want.”

“That’s okay. I can do that by myself.”

“Where are you going?”

“Shower.”

Dean watched as Sam walked right past him and entered the bathroom. When the door closed, Dean
sighed and sat on the bed. Was Sam deliberately avoiding him again? Was he mad at him for not
preventing the whole pantry episode? Sam had forgiven him in the hospital, but then why was he
acting so distant and cold?

They had been doing well before the weekend, Sam had been happier and had even opened up a
little bit. What about now? Should Dean expect everything to go back to what it was in the
beginning? With Sam hardly talking and extremely susceptible to his fears?

While it was true that Sam hadn’t had nightmares this past week, Dean knew something was up with
his brother. There was something cooking in Sam’s mind, and Dean hoped they would be able to
talk about it soon.
When Sam left the shower and walked into their room, he no longer had the stitches above his eye. He wasn’t wearing any clothes either. Dean, who was still sitting on bed, his legs stretched before him as his back found support against the headboard, could not help his eyes when they studied his brother’s body carefully. Quicker than Dean would have liked or could have prevented, his body twitched with approval at the sight of Sam’s growing, lithe young body. God, it had been a while since Dean’s fingers had last touched his skin…

“Walking around naked now, are we?” Dean teased, trying to sound casual and not bothered as his cheeks felt warm.

Sam took a deep breath and walked towards Dean’s backpack resting on a chair. He found what he wanted inside of it and put it right beside the bed, on top of the nightstand. Dean swallowed hard when he looked at what Sam had gotten.

“What?” Dean’s heart raced, and he could feel his blood running hot under his skin.

“I want to know if you really love me,” Sam asked again, walking closer to the bed, his eyes lingering long enough to burn into Dean’s.

“I do,” Dean said, his chest throbbing. “I love you, Sammy. Why are you asking that?”

“Because I don’t want to wait anymore. If you really love me, then you have to understand it. I can’t wait anymore. I need you.” Sam’s heart was beating fast and he felt a hot cold mix of vulnerability and determination. “Make love to me, Dean. Now.”

Sam went closer to the bed and climbed on top of it until he was right there with Dean, staring closely into his eyes.

Dean felt his throat constrict with lust and insecurity. His breathing became erratic and he stared into Sam’s eyes as if he was waiting for him to change his mind.

“Sam, don’t you think we should wait a little? I mean, after everything—”

“I’m done waiting.” Sam said. “Please. I need it.” Sam’s eyes looked fiery and there was thick urgency in his voice. “I need to feel you inside of me,” Sam finished to himself.

Dean’s heart slammed against his chest when Sam straddled him and his nose came close enough to touch his. Sam’s lips parted and Dean could taste his fresh breath as it puffed into his mouth.

“Will you do it? Will you show me that you love me? Please?” Sam begged, his hands flattening against Dean’s cloth-covered chest, his lips brushing lightly against his brother’s.

“Sam…” Dean’s breath was audible, and his thoughts were clouded. He felt a small little barrier of resistance tumble down when Sam pressed down on his lap, and his tongue lapped at his bottom lip before slipping inside and licking into Dean’s mouth.

Dean hardened the moment their tongues brushed, and his hands went to Sam’s slim, bony hips, resting on them.
“Will you take me?” Sam whispered.

Dean tightened his grip on Sam’s hips for a moment before letting his hands go up and frame his brother’s face between his palms.

“That what you really want?” He asked, searching into Sam’s eyes.

Sam nodded. “Yes. I love you. I want it.”

Dean took a deep breath. “I love you, too.”

“Will you…?”

“Yes.”

Sam’s mouth slammed against his, and for a moment Dean’s head was spinning. He let his fingers tangle into Sam’s hair and pull him in deeper for the kiss that promised so much more.

Sam helped Dean get rid of his clothes until he was naked too, and when Dean rolled them over so he could lie partially atop of Sam, their naked bodies were tingling and hot from the friction.

Dean sucked on Sam’s neck until he squirmed softly beneath him, his thighs tangling with Dean’s so their cocks could slide, one against the other.

“We’re gonna take this very slowly, okay?” Dean whispered into his ear, nibbling on his earlobe, licking a wet trail from Sam’s ear to his jaw line.

Sam nodded. “Yes.” He was aching for Dean’s touch. The last thing he wanted was to slow down, but he would let Dean guide them into it.

Dean took the lube from the nightstand and poured a generous amount on his right hand.

“Spread your legs for me, baby.” Dean lowered himself until he was facing Sam’s hard dick. He nibbled on his pale, smooth thighs for a moment, just until Sam started to writhe impatiently under his touch.

“Dean,” Sam urged him.

“Shh, slow, Sammy.” Dean let his index finger find and circle Sam’s opening, and for a moment he just touched him there, a ticklish teasing at the rim of skin, letting Sam get used to the feeling.

Sam felt heat spread on his cheeks and pool in his lower belly. When the fingertip probed him open he shuddered lightly, letting his thighs fall open as he tried to relax.

Dean slid his finger all the way past his knuckle, and then he lowered his mouth and took Sam into his mouth.

“Hmm,” Sam moaned and when he moved to thrust into Dean’s mouth he ended up impaling himself further on his finger.

Dean’s finger went in and out, thrusting at the same time he sucked on him until Sam was so aroused
he was leaking against his tongue. When Dean could move his finger with ease, he gently pushed
another one into the tight passage trying to fight him out.

Sam clawed at the sheets and pressed his head into the pillow as his spine arched into the pleasure.
His hips were trapped between the mouth going down on his cock and the fingers that rubbed
against his sensitive spot.

“Dean,” Sam choked.

Knowing he had found the right spot, Dean kept up his ministrations diligently, stroking Sam from
the inside, twisting his fingers to try and loosen him up as he sucked him in as deeply as he could.
After a few minutes, Dean added a third finger inside the passage he tried to prepare, and by now he
could see droplets of sweat on Sam’s forehead and hear the clipped sounds that started to roll out of
his lips.

Sam was lost in a haze of pleasure when he realized he needed to stop. If he didn’t, Dean would
definitely undo him like that. And as good as it felt, Sam wanted more. He wanted so much more; he
wanted to feel Dean inside of him, filling him until it hurt, until there was only Dean and him and
nothing else.

“Please, stop…” Sam begged. “Mmm…” His head thrashed on the pillow, his breathing pattern was
a mess and his thighs felt shaky.

Dean complied. He let Sam slip out of his mouth and retracted his fingers. Sam was panting, his toes
curling.

Dean watched him and his cock throbbed. He had to reach a hand down and squeeze himself around
the base to relieve some of the tension building up.

“Do it, Dean. Do it now.” Sam was lying on his back, his thighs spread open, his eyes locked on
Dean’s as his chest heaved visibly up and down.

“No.” Dean shook his head.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat and he parted his lips with despair.

“Not like this,” Dean said.

Sam watched, ready to protest, when Dean assumed the same position he had been in before when
Sam found him, his legs stretched on the bed, his back resting against the two pillows Dean put
between himself and the headboard.

“Like this, Sam.” Dean offered his hand and Sam understood what he wanted. He took the hand and
let Dean help him move until he was straddling his brother again, except this time they were both
naked.

“Here, make me ready.” Dean handed Sam the lube and watched, his eyes half-closed, when Sam
poured a lot of it on his hands and stroked Dean’s cock with his slick palms.

Dean took a deep breath and bit on his bottom lip. He let Sam coat his dick with as much lube as he
could, and when he thought it was enough, Dean looked into his brother’s eyes and tried to blink
away some of the pleasure haze burning through his system.
“C’mere.” Dean took both of Sam’s hands in his and helped him position himself on top of him, his thighs ready to straddle Dean’s stronger ones.

Sam’s heart was racing with anticipation when he lowered himself a little and felt the slickness of Dean’s cock rubbing against the crack of his ass. He shuddered.

“We’ll do it like this so you can control how fast you want to take things, okay?” Dean’s face was serious, and he looked intently into Sam’s eyes to see if he understood.

“Yes,” Sam agreed.

“You decide how much you want to take of me, alright? And if you change your mind you stop. Promise me?”

“Yes.”

“Do you?” Dean insisted.

“I do. I promise. If it gets too much I’ll stop,” Sam said, but he doubted he would be able to. His body was afire, and he hadn’t come this far to back off now.

“Good. Then let me help you.” Dean helped Sam lift himself so his tip was at his brother’s entrance, and then he let their fingers intertwine and hold on tightly, their sweaty palms pressed together, their eyes firmly locked as Sam began to lower himself down on his dick.

Sam tried to keep his eyes open so he could look into Dean’s burning gaze, but when he felt himself stretch around Dean’s tip he shut his eyes tightly and a hurried puff of breath escaped his lips. Sam held still, his thighs shaking under the effort of holding his body up as Dean’s tip breached him.

Dean fought against the urge to shut his eyes. He couldn’t give in; he needed to pay attention to Sam. So when he felt the tip of his cock become wrapped in impossibly scorching tightness, he panted and licked at his lips, swallowing with difficulty as his lust thickened his air passage.

“Are you okay? Sammy?” Dean managed to ask, the muscles in his abdomen flexed as he fought the urge to just slam up into the clenching heat.

“Yeah. ‘M fine,” Sam slurred, and then lowered himself a little bit more, feeling the burning spread inside of him as Dean’s cock filled him up. Sam let his body weight pull him down and relaxed his thighs until he was fully seated on top of his brother, his body clenching around the thick base of Dean’s dick.

Sam moaned at the burning feeling and started to shudder. Dean let his eyes close and threw his head back. His lips parted and heat pooled in his lower belly at the feeling of being sheathed into Sam’s warmth. God, he felt so damn good wrapped around him, Dean could hardly handle the feeling.

Sam tried to move. He let go of his fingers’ grip on Dean’s and used his hands flat against Dean’s belly to lift himself slowly and lower his body again, letting Dean slide inside as he tried to adjust.

“Sam?” Dean asked tentatively, his hands holding on to Sam’s thighs on each side of his body.

“It’s okay,” Sam reassured him quickly.
“Are you sure?” Dean’s throat was so dry he could hardly speak without it sounding low and sultry.

Sam nodded. He couldn’t say it didn’t hurt, but he couldn’t stop either. He lifted himself and brought his hips down against Dean’s cock.

Dean groaned at the feeling, his thighs tense as he tried to just lie there and not thrust as Sam found his rhythm.

Dean let Sam decide how it would be. He watched him as Sam began to grow more confident and ready, and his hips started a slow movement that allowed for friction to build into something less burning and more comfortable.

Wanting to help, Dean closed his right hand around Sam’s cock and stroked him back to a full, hard erection.

“Ohm,” Sam moaned and swiveled his hips.

“That better?” Dean asked, jerking Sam’s dick in that knowing way he could.

“Yes. It is,” Sam barely found his words. He thrust into Dean’s hand and when pleasure started to build again, he relaxed, making it possible for Dean’s cock to go deeper and slide with ease inside his accommodating body.

Dean stroked Sam with one hand and held on to his hip with the other, guiding his movements, trying to thrust gently into him every time Sam lifted himself a little.

“Omm,” Sam moaned when Dean’s cock brushed against that same place his fingers knew. He shuddered and his tongue made a show of licking at his lips.

“Feels good, baby?” Dean’s forehead was creased with concentration as he watched Sam move on his lap, their sweaty thighs tangled and rubbing as Sam’s hips moved faster, his palms finding leverage against Dean’s skin to lift himself up and slam back down rhythmically.

“Yeah…faster, Dean.” Sam chewed on his bottom lip and felt his pleasure build higher. His cock pulsed against Dean’s hand and his body tightened around Dean every time his pleasure spot was stroked.

When Dean started to stroke him faster, Sam lost his smooth rhythm and knew he wouldn’t be able to last. He still managed to open his eyes and look deeply into Dean’s before it became too much. He realized Dean was studying him intently, with so much care, so much concern that it caused Sam’s heart to melt inside of him, and his skin to feel feverish under the attention.

“Dean—” Sam felt his control slipping, and the faster he thrust into Dean’s fist, the harder he rocked into the cock stretching him.

Dean looked into his eyes, paying attention to his every move and drinking every sound.

For a moment, Sam felt so much love that he almost couldn’t handle it. That was his brother, and the way Dean looked at him now, Sam knew he would give him the world if he asked. In Dean’s eyes, there was nothing he wouldn’t do for him, and the feeling felt warm and thick, and Sam rejoiced in it.
Dean had always been everything in his life. His big brother, his friend, his mother and father, and now Dean was his lover, too.

“Make me come,” Sam begged and started to shake on top of him.

Dean’s hand worked faster as he squeezed Sam’s cock and felt it jerk and throb against his palm when Sam came, shooting his seed all over Dean’s skin, losing control of his movements, clamping down on Dean’s erection.

“Fuck.” Dean shuddered when he felt the contractions around his dick. He could feel Sam’s orgasm from the inside, the feeling pushing him so close to the edge that Dean could taste his climax on the back of his tongue.

Sam was gasping for breath, his body tingling and shuddering as his orgasm roared through him, and when he was done he didn’t stop moving, because Dean still needed to come.

“We don’t have to continue,” Dean managed to say, even though his body was tight with need. “We can stop and you help me out some other way. I don’t want to hurt you,” he said.

“No. I want to feel you coming inside of me,” Sam said, moving his hips again, in slow, teasing circles, letting Dean’s cock touch everything inside the tight heat squeezing around it.

Dean nodded, too weak to say anything. He let his fingers squeeze Sam’s thighs and thrust upwards into him as gently as he could, trying to hold back the animal urge rattling in the cage of his desire. Dean swallowed back the savagery of his lust and thrust slowly into the welcoming heat, letting the friction against his tip and the tightness against his base drive him crazy.

“Sammy,” Dean felt the powerful wave coming and let go.

Sam watched intently, his eyes drinking in the sight of Dean when he tensed and his fingers dug into Sam’s skin. Dean came deep inside his brother with a low, muffled groan of pleasure tearing through his throat and lingering in the room.

When Dean's body relaxed and his heavy breathing started to slow down, Sam moved to let Dean slip out of him and lay down beside his brother, feeling the wetness between his legs.

“Wait, don't move,” Dean said when he saw Sam.

The younger boy waited and watched as his brother got up and disappeared inside the bathroom. Dean came back with a warm wet washcloth. He went back to bed and settled between Sam's thighs.

Sam spread his legs in response and watched as Dean cleaned him off his come. The feeling was so gentle and intimate that Sam's cheeks felt warm as he blushed faintly and his heart fluttered in his chest.

“There.” Dean put it on the floor, beside the bed, and pulled Sam closer to kiss him, first on the lips, then on the forehead.

Sam felt shaky. His limbs were tingling and disobeying his commands. His body was throbbing, as if Dean was still pounding into him, and his mind kept replaying every detail of what had happened to make sure he would remember everything.
Dean’s arms were wrapped all over him, and Sam remembered thinking how hot his brother’s body felt against his. It was like Dean had a fever.

“How do you feel?” Dean asked softly, pulling at a lock of his hair and looking into his eyes as they shared the same pillow.

Sam felt his throat tighten around the thickness of his feelings. The opposite of darkness was not light. The opposite of darkness was love.

“Like nothing could ever hurt me again.”

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\textit{tbc...}
Chapter 69

Chapter Notes

Thank you *kittenbot* so much for beta-ing the chapter! =)

Merry Christmas, guys! =))}

Chapter 69

After a lazy afternoon spent in bed, they showered again, together this time, and by the time they came out of the bathroom night was falling.

Dean called his dad and they talked for a few minutes, just long enough so he knew John was still far away and alive, getting rid of some creatures. Bobby had left this morning and they still hadn’t heard from him, but it was too soon, and they had no reason to worry.

Sam helped Dean fix them dinner and they ate it quickly in the kitchen.

“Is it good?” Dean nodded at the plate full of mac and cheese before his brother.

“You’re getting better at this,” Sam chuckled softly and put more food in his mouth. He felt good and happy, and yet, there was something shy in the way his cheeks burned when he caught Dean studying him. It wasn’t an uncomfortable feeling or anything, but Sam felt as if Dean knew him to his very core, and his knowing look caused Sam’s heart to flutter and skip a beat or two.

“What do you wanna do after dinner?” Dean asked. He liked to look at Sam and study him. It was important for him to understand that his little brother was truly fine after what they had done, and Dean liked what he saw. He could see Sam’s shining eyes and the stupidly cute shyness he tried to hide, and it made Dean’s chest expand with a feeling of love he had never known before.

“I’m behind on my Latin lessons,” Sam said, casually.

“Oh. I was thinking we could do something more interesting. Latin’s boring.”

“Dad says it’s important.”

“Right. It is,” Dean caved. “I don’t wanna get in the way of your studies. Nerd,” Dean teased.

“Shut up.” Sam narrowed his eyes with feigned annoyance and smiled. “It doesn’t mean I have to do it tonight, though.” Sam looked intently at his brother. “What did you have in mind that’s more interesting?” Sam felt his heart race and his blood pump faster.
“Hey, easy tiger,” Dean said, because he saw the lustful shift in Sam’s mood. “I didn’t mean that. We’re not gonna do that again today. Or tomorrow.”

“Why not?” Sam frowned.

“Because we should wait a few days, that’s why. I don’t wanna hurt you.”

“Damn it, Dean…” Sam sighed, toying with his food. “You keep treating me like I’ll break or something. I’m not a princess, you know. I can take it.”

Dean laughed lightly at Sam’s annoyance. “Yes, you’re a princess Sammy,” he teased, making his napkin into a paper ball and throwing it at his brother.

“Hey!” Sam protested when he moved his head, but not quick enough to dodge the paper ball. “You’re such a jerk,” he said, drinking his water.

“That’s because you’re such a bitch,” Dean shot back and they laughed lightly.

They locked eyes for a moment, realizing that the usual brotherly bickering would always be there, it didn’t matter if they had just had sex, those were boys who had grown up together, being everything for each other, and the bantering was an important part of their relationship.

“Seriously, though. We’d better wait a couple of days, alright?” Dean’s eyes were no longer smiling when he tried to stress the importance of the issue.

“Fine,” Sam agreed. “What did you have in mind then?” Sam finished off his food and watched as Dean got up from the table to wash his dishes. He did the same, standing up and walking towards the sink.

“Well, I was hoping we could do some talking,” Dean said, slowly.

“Talking?” Sam felt a cold little breeze sweep past his heart and tickle it. “About what?”

“I don’t know. Is there anything you want to share with me? About what happened in the last hunt, you know…the dark tunnel you wouldn’t get into, the pantry…”

Sam shifted uncomfortably and let the plate slip out of his hand and into the sink noisily. It didn’t break, but it showed him how unstable his hands quickly became.

“Sam?” Dean watched intently when Sam took a step backwards and his eyes strayed quickly.

“Are you saying that you want to talk or that we should talk?” The youngest boy asked warily.

“I think we should, but I’ll let you draw the line, okay? I just want to know what happened that night, that’s all.”

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes briefly and then looked away.

“Why don’t you go wait for me in the living room? Let me finish these dishes and I’ll meet you there.”
Sam nodded quickly, glad to leave for the time being and go somewhere else. He went to the living room and sat down on the couch, turning on the TV and trying to distract his mind from the memories Dean would like to know about.

When his brother walked in to join him, a few minutes later, Sam was fidgety and he seemed startled when Dean sat right beside him and turned the TV off.

“So…what happened that night?”

Sam felt a physical feeling of dread weigh down on his shoulders and cause his limbs to grow shaky. He hated his reaction to things he didn’t want to remember; he hated not being able to just talk about something without his body going through all sorts of fearful responses.

“Dad was fighting the spirits off in the basement, trying to burn the bones. I was trying to find the secret passage to take us out of there.” Sam let his eyes cloud as he remembered that night vividly. “I found the tunnel, and Dad started to burn the bones. Then suddenly everything was on fire, and it felt really hot in that basement. Dad told me to go ahead.”

“But you didn’t.” Dean listened carefully.

“I couldn’t. I tried,” Sam admitted. “But I looked into that passage and I couldn’t see anything. It was as dark as…” Sam’s lips seemed to trip on his next words and for a moment he just breathed quickly.

“What happened then?” Dean went on, because he knew how that sentence was going to end.

“Dad pushed me into the tunnel, he started to drag me further into it as the fire burned everything down in the basement.”

Sam looked at his hands and at the familiar shaking that took his fingers. He felt Dean’s larger palm cover his hands, and the warmth of his hand soothed him a little.

“I couldn’t move further. I could not, Dean, I physically couldn’t bring myself to…” Sam raised apologetic eyes to his brother. “I felt like I was walking towards all that I escaped from, and I just couldn’t.”

“So you ran back to the basement?”

Sam nodded. “I ran back to the fire.”

Dean’s heart tightened with fear just imagining the scene. He could understand his father’s panic when he saw his son start running blindly towards a burning house. It didn’t help that John had lost their mother to a fire, and that seeing Sam about to go down the same horrible death must have driven him insane with fear.

“Sam, but the fire…it would’ve killed you. Wasn’t darkness better than being killed in a fire? Dad was with you, he wouldn’t let anything happen.”

Sam was shaking his head vehemently.

“What?” Dean asked.

“No. Darkness is never better. It’s never an option, Dean. I can’t deal with it. I can’t control myself
in that kind of darkness. It’s one thing in our bedroom at night, with some light somewhere, but it’s different when I raise my hand before my face and can’t even see it. That’s a different kind of darkness, and I can’t, I wish I could, but I can’t—"

“So you ran towards the fire? What happened?”

“I don’t remember; it’s kind of blurry. I stopped when I felt the heat, and then a spirit grabbed my wrist. It was going to pull me into the fire, but then Dad caught me and dragged me away.”

Dean nodded. He could understand how their dad had lost his shit that night. He had almost lost Sam. After almost a year since Sam was kidnapped and tortured, he still might very well have chosen death over darkness. That was a scary thought, the one that Sam might willingly walk into a wall of fire or any other harmful thing if it meant not having to face darkness.

Then, a thought crossed Dean’s mind and he took a deep breath. He looked at his brother sitting beside him and got up.

“Where are you going?” Sam asked.

Dean looked at him for a long while as he made up his mind about trying to help him in a different way.

“Dean?”

“I’m going upstairs, and if you follow me, you’ll have to face some of your fears.”

Sam frowned and looked worriedly at his brother.

“What do you mean? Dean?” Sam stood up as well when his brother took to the stairs and started to go upstairs. “Dean!” Sam followed him to the base of the stairs and looked at him.

“If you come after me, I’ll try to help you.”

Sam frowned and decided not to move. He simply watched as Dean disappeared upstairs, feeling puzzled and lost.

“Dean?! What do you mean? Where are you going?”

Dean heard Sam’s voice from downstairs, but didn’t bother answering him. There was something on his mind, something he wanted to try. Dean walked to the pantry where everything had gone down that night when John brought them back, and looked at shelves with cans and the boxes neatly organized. John had cleaned up everything after Bobby and he had left with Sam to the hospital, and it didn’t look like anything unusual had happened in that pantry, except for the broken light on the ceiling making it impossible to have any light inside that tight little room.

Dean walked down the hallway turning down all the lights upstairs, until Bobby’s house would be in complete darkness if it weren’t for the lights being on both in the kitchen and living room downstairs.

“Dean? What are you doing?” Sam asked nervously when he saw all lights be turned off upstairs.

“Why is it dark in there?” His heart was racing.

“Sam? If you come up to let me help you, don’t turn on the lights.”
Sam started to pant. He listened to Dean and his heart lost its rhythm and his fingertips grew cold. He looked around himself one last time before starting to make his way upstairs and towards Dean. ‘If you follow me, I’ll make you face your fears.’ Dean’s words were echoing on his mind, and Sam’s eyes were wide and untrusting when he went upstairs.

“Dean? I’m here. Where are you?”

“I’m here, Sammy.”

The voice came from the pantry, and when Sam realized it, his limbs grew shaky and it was hard to force his legs to walk towards the sound. It was dark all over the corridor, but not completely because of the light coming from downstairs, so Sam could see his brother standing inside the dark pantry, looking at him.

“What are you doing there?”

“I’m inviting you in, to be here with me, in the dark. Will you come?” Dean reached out his hand.

Sam shook his head quickly and took a step back as his throat tightened. “No, Dean…why are you doing this? Come out of there.”

“No. You come here with me.”

“Dean,” Sam’s voice was dangerously close to a whine, but he couldn’t have cared less. His breathing was ragged and his thoughts were crazy. “Come out, let’s watch TV…c’mon…” he begged.

“Take my hand. Come here with me.” Dean’s hand was still stretched into an invitation.

Sam swallowed with difficulty. It felt like there was no saliva left in his mouth and the dryness scraped and hurt. He lifted his hand slowly, until his shaky fingers rested on top of Dean’s hand.

“Easy…come here…yes.” Dean helped Sam into the pantry until they were standing very close.

“Why are you doing this?” Sam asked, chewing on his bottom lip to try and stop himself from letting a string of small, frightened sounds escape through his mouth.

“To show you that you can handle total darkness.”

“I can’t!” Sam protested.

Dean pulled Sam further in and reached behind him to slam the door shut. The moment the pantry door was closed, there was utter darkness in the small room, the same pitch black desolation Sam had experienced the night John had locked him there, or whenever the man’s footsteps could be heard approaching him in the room.

“No! Dean, NO!! Open the door!” Sam lost the last control he had been holding on to and turned around to try and reach for the door.

“It’s okay, Sammy. I got the key, the door is not locked, we can walk out whenever we want.”
"I want to leave now!" Sam pushed at Dean and tried to break loose from the arms holding him, bolting for the door desperately but being stopped in the process and held firmly against Dean’s chest.

“You can do it. I’m right here with you. There’s no way this darkness can harm you.”

“Let me out, let me out, let me OUT!” Sam’s fear escalated higher than Dean had anticipated, and before there could be another accident in the pantry—Sam was twisting blindly and dangerously in the small space—he let go of his brother and reached over his shoulder to push the door open.

The moment Sam saw the corridor he stepped outside, his breath audible and pained, his whole body shaking and disobeying.

Sam stood outside the pantry looking at Dean, still inside.

“Come out. Please.”

“No.” Dean shook his head.

“Please, Dean…I can’t go in, I can’t…please…” Sam begged. “Just come out, let’s watch a movie…” he blabbered the words, trying to hold on to his fear as it clawed its way out of his soul and took over his thoughts.

“I’m going to stay right here, and if you want to be with me, then you’ll come back in.”

“Dean!” Sam protested and swallowed back the tears that tightened his throat.

“It’s just for a short time, I promise. We won’t spend the night here, just a little bit. Do you trust me?” Dean reached out his hand again.

“You don’t get it, you don’t…” Sam shook his head sadly. “You don’t understand, no one does! I can’t control it, Dean… It’s not rational, I can’t tell my body to stop doing this, I can’t tell my mind to listen to reason! Nothing obeys me!” Sam cried out. “It’s like they fucked up my brain in that room, because I can’t control how I feel about darkness. It’s like this animal in me takes over and just wants to run and hide and I swear I can’t control it!” Sam was shaking. “I’m sorry! I’m so sorry, I wish I could, I wish I…” He started choking on his suppressed sobs and was dangerously close to hyperventilation.

“Come here. I’ll keep you safe,” Dean repeated calmly, refusing to give in to the agitation Sam felt.

“I can’t! I can’t!” Sam insisted, almost too weak to hold himself in a standing position.

“You can, Sammy. I believe in you.”

Sam shut his eyes and closed his lips tightly, but not tight enough that he couldn’t taste the salty evidence of his despair on his tongue. He stepped into the pantry again, choking on a fugitive sob as he did it, shuddering when he felt Dean close the door once again and bring darkness upon them.

“Shhh…” Dean parted his arms and welcomed the boy trying to hide against his chest. Together, in that tight embrace, they slid to the floor and sat there, in that tangled mess of griping and tugging.

Sam breathed rapidly, sometimes in loud, long gasps, as if oxygen was difficult to find. Dean held
him close and ran a hand up and down his back, not knowing if he was doing the right thing, because his heart was breaking, but willing to go through with it now. If there was a chance that Sam would once again find himself in a position where he would have to choose between the safety of the darkness and risking his life to find light, he hoped it would help him make the right choice. Dean didn’t think he could live if he lost Sam to darkness.

“Open your eyes, Sammy.”

Dean’s index finger curled bellow Sam’s chin and lifted his face. He could barely see Sam, but he knew, instinctively, that his eyes were closed.

Sam shook his head violently.

“No. I can’t. No.”

“Shhh…open your eyes. It’s okay.”

It took Sam a long time to comply. There were long, silent minutes of shaking and labored breathing filling the pantry, until Sam complied at last and opened his eyes to the darkness around him.

He looked around worriedly and fearfully, unable to see anything, his fingers curling against Dean’s T-shirt tightly, probably damaging the delicate fabric with his twisting grip on it.

“It’s just for a moment, okay? Just for a little bit.” Dean ran his hands through Sam’s hair and caressed his head.

Sam blinked a couple of fat tears and stayed silent. He was so tense he couldn’t really enjoy the caress.

“What are you afraid of? Can you tell me? I know you know nothing will get in here with us, so what is the problem?” Dean asked softly, his fingertips stroking Sam’s cheeks and neck lovingly.

“I don’t want to remember,” Sam confessed. His lips were trembling, but he held back his tears at the cost of the tightening of his throat and aching of his chest. “When it’s dark I remember.”

“If you can tell me what you remember, then maybe you can let it go. Have you thought about it?”

Sam was shaking, trying to hold on to the small reasonable part of his brain as the memories hit him hard.

*Sam shuddered and squeezed his eyes shut. He thought of home. He thought of his room. He thought of his brother and father and school. He hung on to anything that could take him out of there, because if Sam allowed his mind to process the damage being inflicted now, he didn’t think he could make it. ‘I’m not here, I’m not here, I’m not—’ *, “Arghhhhh!” Sam screamed and cried fresh, salty tears. It was so difficult blocking the pain!

Sam thought about it; he struggled with his memories, but he couldn’t be stronger than them. The echoes of his begging and pleading were still too haunting, and Sam didn’t think he could open his eyes to another day if he spoke of the shame he felt, and the pain he should have handled, but that instead broke him into pieces.
Neither boy knew how long it had been when Sam’s voice was heard. They had been in the dark pantry in silence as Sam tried to calm down and find his words.

“There would be clean clothes every now and then that they slipped into the room when I was asleep or passed out.”

Dean’s heart raced when he understood what Sam was talking about.

“There was a pile of white rags by the sink, and I used them to clean myself sometimes. I tried to wash my skin using the rags and the water from the faucet, but there was always the sick smell of blood on me.”

Dean held him in silence, his hands touching him gently with soft caresses and reassuring touches.

“One day he turned off the lights and turned them back on, just to see if I would lose control. And I did. And then he turned them off again, for real, and the man came.”

Sam swallowed hard and felt his chest aching.

“In the end, when the lights went off and I felt the man coming I just wanted to die. I asked him to kill me.”

Dean squeezed him in his arms and rocked them both in the darkness of the pantry.

“You were so strong, Sam…you didn’t die, you resisted till the very end.”

“No!” Sam protested.

“No what?”

‘No, I wasn’t strong, no, I didn’t resist. I shattered, I begged, I pleaded, I screamed and cried like I had nothing left,’ Sam thought.

“No more darkness, please…” he whispered, weakly.

Dean nodded. He helped Sam get back on his feet and when they were both up, Dean opened the pantry door and turned on the lights everywhere in the hallway before turning them off downstairs.

When he went back upstairs he looked at Sam’s face, which was a mess, and felt a twinge of guilt piercing his heart and threatening to make him regret having done what he did.

Sam wiped at his dry cheeks, his eyes looked puffy and red, and he walked towards Dean and let his arms wrap around his waist, his face buried against his chest.

“Let’s go to bed?” Dean asked softly.

Sam nodded and followed Dean to their room. Dean turned off the light in the bedroom, but left them on both in the hallway and in the bathroom inside their room, so there was plenty of clarity inside when they found themselves tucked under the covers.

Dean was still unsure about what he had done. Sam looked battered, as if he had just spent days
without sleep, and he seemed strangely calm and observant now.

“Dean?” Sam licked his lips.

“Yeah?”

“Remember when you asked me if I ever wanted to speak about it?”

“Yes.”

“I do. I want to tell you everything.”

“That’s good, Sammy.” Dean nodded, feeling hopeful.

“But please…not now. I still can’t. Just give me a little more time. Please, Dean, just a bit more…”

Sam knew he wanted to tell Dean everything. He realized this now. But he didn’t know how to, and he hoped that a little more time would show him.

“Of course. You can have all the time you need.”

Sam nodded.

“I’m sorry for the pantry, Sam. I didn’t mean to push you too far and upset you. It just kills me thinking that you could’ve died because you were afraid of the dark. I want to help you so much and I don’t know what to do. I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be. Don’t be sorry for tonight. I want to thank you, actually.”

Dean looked into his eyes, startled. He had pretty much triggered a panic attack so why was his brother saying that?

“Thank me? For what?”

“For not giving up on me.”

Dean felt Sam snuggle closer to him and fall asleep a few minutes later, exhausted, but a little bit stronger than the boy he had been when he woke up this morning.

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Chapter 70

Sam held the crossbow in hand and tried again. This time, his arrow found the target; not in the very middle, but close enough to please him.

“Not bad,” Dean said from a distance. “Keep at it.”

“I’m tired of it,” Sam confessed, letting his arm hang beside his body, holding the heavy crossbow. He looked around and found Dean still working out. He was wearing a white tank top shirt that stuck to his skin as he sweated under the afternoon sun. “Can we do something else now?”

“Just shoot a bit more, you’re getting closer to the center now. I still haven’t finished here.”

“I’ve been shooting at that stupid target for three hours, and you’ve been working out for half this time. I think we deserve a break.” Sam studied Dean’s body, his eyes getting lost for a moment.

Dean finished his series of sit ups and let himself lay unmoving for a while, enjoying the burning feeling in his abdomen. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, relishing the warmth of the day resting against his closed eyelids. When he opened his eyes he saw Sam standing before him, crossbow in hand.

“What?” Dean asked.

“We’re still alone. Dad is far away, Bobby won’t be home until the end of the week.”

“Yeah. So?”

Sam’s heart started racing and he looked appreciatively at Dean’s chest and arms. “We could do that again. You know, it’s been a few days now.” He chewed on the inside of his bottom lip and hoped his need wasn’t as unabashed as it felt.

Dean’s heart pumped his blood a little faster through his veins and he sat up, looking his brother in the eyes.
“Are you—”

“If you ask me if I’m sure I’ll fucking shoot you with this.” Sam raised the crossbow and pointed it at Dean, causing a nervous laugh to roll out of Dean’s lips.

“Alright. Help me up.” Dean offered his hand and Sam took it, helping his brother to his feet. “I stink, though. Gotta take a shower first.”

“No, you don’t…” Sam said in a low, somewhat husky voice. He went close enough to be enveloped by Dean’s scent, and even though he had been exercising for the past hour or so, he smelled of something musky and inviting. “But I’ll take a shower with you.”

Dean could feel Sam’s faster breath puffing against his face, and he let his hand find the back of Sam’s head to press him into a kiss. They kissed leisurely in the middle of the salvage yard before moving their touching to the house, under the shower.

After washing away their afternoon training and indulging in touching that soothed and teased, they left the bathroom hard and didn’t bother finding any clothes.

Sam felt the back of his knees touch the edge of the bed and sat down on it, pulling Dean closer by the hips.

Dean looked down, his eyes filled with lust and anticipation as Sam parted his lips and let the tip of Dean’s swollen cock slide into his mouth and against his tongue.

“Damn it,” Dean cursed lightly, running his fingers through Sam’s wet hair and gasping when his brother’s mouth went down on him, covering his erection with warmth and wetness.

Sam closed his eyes and relaxed his mouth and throat so he could take Dean deeper. He made sure to breathe through his nose so he wouldn’t choke, and let Dean fuck his mouth until he was groaning with pleasure.

Dean licked his lips eagerly, his thighs shaky under his weight as his pleasure built and made him throb into Sam’s mouth. It took a lot of self-control to pull Sam gently away.

Sam looked up into his brother’s eyes and licked at his swollen lips, and Dean was unable to fight the urge to dive in for another kiss. He kissed Sam and tasted himself on his tongue, and slowly he lay Sam on the bed and settled on top of his body.

The friction caused by their hard-ons was enough to cloud Sam’s thoughts and boil his blood. He arched into Dean’s body and his heart was racing with the anticipation of what they were going to do.

Dean let his mouth taste and explore every inch of Sam’s neck, finding that sweet spot where his neck and shoulder met and sucking on it until Sam was panting, his thighs holding Dean’s against his midsection so he could rub his arousal against his hot skin.

“Dean…” Sam whispered.

“Just relax, love.” Dean moved his mouth lower and nibbled on each of Sam’s nipples, until they stood at attention, hard and sensitive. By the time Dean’s tongue dipped into Sam’s navel, he was a squirming mass of desire begging for more with the sound of his hitching breath.
A strangled moan left Sam’s lips when Dean’s mouth wrapped around his dick and sucked on it. Sam’s thighs tensed and relaxed as he registered the buzzing pleasure spreading through his body.

Dean bobbed his head up and down a few times, enjoying the way Sam’s fingers found his short hair and tugged, unable to decide whether they wanted to pull him further in or push him away.

Dean let Sam slip out of his mouth and chuckled softly at the sound of dismay he heard from his brother, but Dean had other plans. He licked at Sam’s balls and sucked on them, and was rewarded with a loud sigh of pleasure and the relaxing of Sam’s limbs, falling open before his mouth.

Sam felt Dean tugging gently at the back of his knees, pulling them against Sam’s chest and opening him before his face. For a moment Sam’s heart fluttered at how exposed he felt, and his moan was an undecided mix of arousal and shyness.

“Dean…” His voice sounded shaky, and when he tried to pull his knees down Dean didn’t let him—he made sure Sam held his own knees in that same position for what he was about to do.

Dean gave Sam a small, cat-like smile before he let the tip of his tongue tease Sam’s opening.

“Shit!” Sam cursed and his body tried to pull away, startled.

“Shhh…” Dean soothed, and held Sam’s hips the next time he darted out his tongue and licked around his rim.

The feeling was almost too much. It aroused him like fire searing through his veins, and yet it was barely there, a ticklish and wet sensation causing Sam to feel something he would have never dreamed of.

“Mmm!” Sam tugged at the sheets beneath his body, and this time he arched into the stroking of Dean’s tongue.

Dean’s cock twitched at the response he got, and he knew that for the rest of his life he would be a sorry bastard who would give anything, anything, to make Sam feel that way. Sam’s pleasure was his drug, and the more he fed on it, the more Dean craved it. He flattened his tongue and teased Sam’s little hole before he tried to push his tongue inside.

“Dean! Dean!” Sam squirmed, his breath labored and messy, his throat tightening around his pleas and making them sound wanton and desperate.

Dean coated two of his fingers with plenty of saliva before pushing them gently into Sam, moving them around to try and prepare him for his dick.

When Dean’s mouth was once again on his cock, sucking him, as his fingers worked him open, Sam thought he would die under the sensation. His body couldn’t decide whether he wanted to thrust up into the mouth pleasuring him or down onto the fingers moving with scissor-like movements inside of him until they stroked his pleasure spot, eliciting a low and muffled groan that vibrated in the back of Sam’s mouth.

“Dean! I need it…please…be inside me,” Sam asked, managing to voice his urgency in the middle of his incoherent desire.
Dean stopped his ministrations and lay down in bed, same as he had done on their first time, ready to help Sam straddle him again.

“C’mere.” He offered his hand.

“No.” Sam shook his head. “I want it like this.” Sam didn’t move from his position. He was lying on his back, his thighs open, his body welcoming Dean on top of him.

“The way we did it before you can have more control,” Dean explained, unsure.

“I don’t care. I want it like this,” Sam insisted, breathing quickly and with clipped sounds. “Dean…”

“Okay,” Dean nodded and took the lube. He applied enough on his cock to make himself slick, and then he applied some more at Sam’s entrance before tossing it aside.

As Sam opened himself for Dean to cover his body, Dean’s heart rate picked up and his chest felt tight. He positioned himself at Sam’s entrance but didn’t immediately penetrate him. Dean was afraid of pushing into him, afraid of moving too fast or too hard, afraid of triggering memories Sam couldn’t control. It was one thing letting Sam control the whole thing, it was another to take control of his brother, and he knew that Sam was aware of that.

“Dean…” Sam coaxed, urging him in.

Dean took a deep breath and pushed at Sam’s entrance, not hard enough to enter him, just to feel the impossible tightness trying to fight his tip. He looked intently into his brother’s face, his eyes shut in concentration, and didn’t move again until Sam opened his eyes and looked at him.

“I’m okay. Do it,” Sam reassured him and wiggled his bottom, trying to take Dean inside.

Dean felt Sam’s fingers closed around each of the arms he placed beside his brother’s head and, without breaking the eye lock between them, Dean dared push a little bit inside, until the tight ring of muscles gave in and accepted the head of his cock.

Sam shut his eyes and winced very briefly, but Dean saw it and didn’t move for a while. It took more encouragement from Sam to get Dean to move again. “Dean…do it.” Sam’s body was afire with the need to feel Dean inside of him, possessing him.

Dean complied and pushed inside again, inch by excruciating inch of his hardness, until he was buried to the base in the heated velvet of Sam. Dean shuddered and bit down hard on his bottom lip. That was the most amazing thing he had ever felt. Sam had a fever deep inside his body, and at the same time the tightness squeezed him out, it seemed to suck him in.

“Hmm,” Dean moaned at the pressure around his cock. He pulled out slowly, watching Sam’s face intently, and pushed back, letting the slickness of the lube ease the friction.

Sam tensed a little at the feeling of stretching around Dean’s hardness. There was a burning feeling and a painful feeling, too, but Sam fought it, because that was what he wanted, and he knew it would get better.

“You alright?” Dean asked breathlessly, pushing a lock of brown hair behind Sam’s ear.

Sam nodded, not trusting his voice. Dean moved slowly and gently, letting him get used to the
feeling of having something inside, filling him up. Sam’s forehead was creased as he focused on relaxing his muscles from the waist down, and when he managed to loosen a little, he started to meet Dean’s shy thrusts with a tentative circling of his hips.

“Dean…” He looked into his brother’s eyes with urgency, and Dean seemed to read his thoughts.

He lowered his body until he covered Sam’s like a blanket and pulled Sam’s thighs against his hipbones to be able to dive into him. Sam threw his head back with pleasure at the feeling of Dean taking control. He could feel him deep inside, thrusting in slow, deep movements of his hips, and Sam could feel the arms on each side of his body, holding him protectively.

Dean let his nose touch Sam’s and looked deeply into his hazel eyes as his hips picked up a gentle, smooth rhythm. His thigh and butt muscles flexed rhythmically every time he pushed into Sam, and soon he could hear the faint moans that started to pour out of Sam’s lips.

“I love you,” Dean smiled, kissing Sam’s lips, thrusting into the burning softness of his body.

“Mmm,” Sam moaned, his hands flattening around Dean’s ribcage possessively before sliding to his back, where Sam kneaded and groped the working muscles with his eager fingers. “Love you, too,” he managed to say, before a shuddering gasp tore from his throat and Sam squirmed. Dean’s cock had just brushed against the nerve endings within, and Sam arched into his thrusts with the pained stability of an addict who knew he needed the next fix. “So good,” Sam whispered, letting his hands tighten around Dean’s biceps and his fingernails bite into his skin as the thrusts got a little faster.

“Is it?” Dean asked in a slurred, intoxicated voice.

Sam nodded. He never thought he would ever want to do that, but being beneath Dean’s body, feeling the weight of his brother’s body as he took him so thoroughly was exactly what Sam wanted, and he didn’t think he would be able to hold back the pleasure building up.

“Dean…faster…please…” Sam begged, rotating his hips into Dean’s thrusts, trying to force his brother into a applying more speed behind his movements.

“No, slowly, Sam…slow is good,” Dean teased, moving his hips sensuously against Sam, letting his cock slide into his tightness and stroke his pleasure until Sam groaned and bucked into him.

“Mmm.” Sam panted and his head thrashed. His mouth felt deliciously dry as he felt himself nearing his climax.

Dean lowered himself again and licked at Sam’s ear, causing goosebumps to break all over his skin. Sam shuddered as Dean sucked on his earlobe and thrust slightly faster into him.

“Dean!” Sam choked. “Let it go. Please! I need more,” Sam begged, writhing under Dean’s body, trying to make Dean comply with his urgency by giving in to the desperate need consuming them.

Dean wanted to give more, hell, he wanted to take more, but he was so terrified of unleashing the beast he had inside, that beast that fed on sheer lust, that selfish need for pleasure that made him descend into chaos in the pursuit of his orgasm, that he didn’t dare lose all control with Sam. He tried to give what Sam wanted with harder, faster thrusts, and yet, thrusts that held back as he studied Sam’s every reaction, wondering if he was going too far.

“Dean, please!” Sam looked into Dean’s face and he knew his brother so well he understood Dean
was holding back. Even though he sped up his thrusts and even though he put more strength behind the hips pistoning inside of him, Sam could tell, just by looking at him, that Dean was not letting go completely.

“I want more!” Sam groaned, his hand closing at Dean’s chest, clawing at his skin; his hazel eyes burning into Dean’s green ones, demanding that his hunger be sated.

“I don’t want to hurt you,” Dean confessed, holding Sam’s hips and thrusting with a little more vigor.

“Hurt me,” Sam choked the pleasure-driven plea. He was desperate to come, his cock pulsing between their bodies, now slick with sweat. Yes, there was pain, of course there was. The friction burned, and sometimes Dean was too deep into him, and it hurt, and yet, there was that sweet, sweet spot inside of him, and Sam was about to burst because every time Dean stroked it he felt closer to losing control.

“Sam?” Dean frowned, startled by what he had just heard.

“Hurt me, Dean. I don’t care. Please.” Sam didn’t mind his words. All he cared about was the pleasure taking over and drowning him into a hot pool of arousal, and he couldn’t care less that his pleasure was coated with pain, or maybe that his pain was actually spiked with pleasure, because it felt good, and Sam wanted to give in to it.

Dean didn’t have time to think about the meaning of Sam’s words, and the feelings that lay behind them. Right now he saw his brother descending into chaos, arching into his body, moaning loudly and shamelessly, and Dean gave him harder thrusts, meticulously planned to be what Sam wanted without putting Dean in a position where he lost himself.

He held Sam’s thighs and thrust deeply inside of him. Dean was about to reach his hand down to stroke his brother and help him find release when Sam’s keening cry of pleasure pierced through Dean’s arousal and he looked down to see Sam coming, the tight passage stretched around Dean’s cock clamping down on him, making Dean feel each and every spasm of pleasure as Sam’s orgasm roared through him.

“OH! Oh, fuck!” Sam cried, shaking. He barely understood what had just happened. All he knew was that his body convulsed and he was coming, hot and fast between their bellies.

“Damn it,” Dean groaned, his lower belly tightening at the sight, his arousal piercing him. Dean let his lips brush Sam’s ear and his hips lost their rhythm, thrusting erratically into the tingling body taking him deeply. “You came on my cock,” Dean whispered hoarsely. “How fucking hot is that, Sammy? Hmm? You came undone on my cock.”

Sam chuckled, his body still shuddering from his orgasm, his mind blissfully drifting.

Dean tried to last, he wanted to last, but the impact of what had just happened did it for him. The image of Sam shaking and coming because of Dean’s cock buried deep inside of him was too much. It pushed all the buttons of Dean’s lust-driven fantasies and he couldn’t last anymore. He thrust a few more times before his balls jerked and he spilled his hot seed into Sam’s body, shaking and groaning until he was done.

Dean collapsed beside Sam, breathing heavily. For the following moments neither boy said anything. They just lay in bed, trying to catch their breath.
When Dean moved at last, he rolled on his side so he could look into Sam’s eyes. He ran the back of his hand lightly across the younger boy’s cheek and smiled.

“You okay?” He asked.

“I’m awesome,” Sam smiled a lazy, sated smile and yawned.

“It’s too early to fall asleep,” Dean chuckled softly.

“I don’t give a fuck,” Sam grinned.

“Hey! Language.” Dean frowned and reprimanded.

“No fucking way, you’re serious?” Sam widened his eyes and looked at his brother, and Dean couldn’t keep his straight face. He laughed and Sam did the same. “You’re so stupid,” Sam smiled lightly, yawning again and nestling his head on the pillow. He didn’t care that it was the middle of the afternoon, he didn’t care that he had just had a mind blowing orgasm because of his brother’s cock, and he certainly didn’t care about the mess they had just made. Nothing mattered, nothing but the feeling of floating out of his body and into a place where there was no pain and no bad memories. Sam relaxed and closed his eyes.

Dean watched him for a moment, enjoying the peacefulness he felt in his brother.

Yet, Dean could not forget what he had just heard, and for some reason he could still hear Sam’s voice in his head as he had asked Dean to hurt him.

Watching Sam’s seemingly serene state now might evoke a deceiving feeling of peace. Sam’s emotions were like an ocean, and Dean wondered about the waves of confusion and torment that twisted in the bottom of the darkest waters, where Sam dared not go.

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In the aftermath of their pleasure, Sam and Dean dozed off for about an hour or so. When they woke up again it was evening, and the first shadows started to spill inside the room and darken their naked skin.

“Hey…” Dean said softly, watching as Sam opened his sleepy eyes, feeling warm at the small little smile of contentment that curved his lips. “You okay?”

“I’m great,” Sam replied, also in a soft, lazy voice. “Don’t ever wanna get up,” he chuckled and yawned.

Dean observed him quietly for a moment. Sam seemed relaxed and pleased. He studied his brother’s profile carefully—the absence of a single wrinkle on his forehead, the dark eyelashes, the curve of his nose, the lips that a pink little tongue darted out to lick at… A thought crossed Dean’s mind when he realized how much time had passed since Sam had been taken.

“Your birthday is coming up,” he pointed out.

Sam’s smile faded slowly and his chest tightened at the thought. Indeed. In a few days he would turn fifteen years old. It would be an entire year since the demon had pulled him into a van and taken him away to his worst nightmare.

“I know,” he said, feigning a casual feeling.

“What do you wanna do?” Dean asked.

“Nothing,” Sam answered quickly. “We didn’t do anything on your birthday.”

“We had dinner together. That was something,” Dean said.

“Yeah, and Dad was late for that,” Sam remembered.

“He was hunting. He did come home, though,” Dean tried to argue in John’s favor.
“Whatever. I don’t wanna do anything, Dean. If Dad and Bobby want to eat something together again, that’s okay. I’m not leaving the house, though.” Sam seemed resolute about it, and Dean didn’t have to ask him why. He knew that when that day came there was a high probably that bad memories would stir in Sam’s brain and make him uneasy.

“Okay. I’ll tell Dad and Bobby we’ll do something here,” Dean said, studying Sam’s serious face. He could almost cut the air around his brother with a knife, because it was suddenly thick with tension. He thought of how he could change that. “I wish I could do something special with you, you know,” he said, mysteriously.

Sam looked at him and frowned lightly. “Why?”

“Well, considering I’m now your boyfriend…”

Sam sucked in his breath and his cheeks burned hotly. His heart raced and he felt stupidly silly and shy and ecstatic.

“No, you’re not!” He protested, his face afire with embarrassment and joy, his hazel eyes shining with unabashed pleasure.

“I guess I am,” Dean nodded, and relished the way Sam’s mood had instantly changed to something light and amused.

“Are not! Shut up!” Sam punched Dean’s shoulder not so lightly and laughed.

“Ouch! See? That’s exactly what I mean. I’m so your boyfriend,” he teased.

“Are not! No fucking way!” Sam laughed and moved towards his brother, getting partially on top of him on the bed and trying to pin him under his lighter body.

Dean laughed as he wrestled his brother playfully.

“Admit it, Sammy.” His green eyes were flashing with joy as he watched Sam try to overpower him.

“Shut up!” Sam laughed harder and tried to press Dean’s wrists to each sight of his head. He straddled his brother to get better leverage, but it didn’t matter how much strength Sam used to keep his brother under him, when Dean wanted to move out of his grip he didn’t need to do much to escape him.

Dean moved his hands swiftly and suddenly his wrists broke free of Sam’s hold on them.

“Ow!” Sam grimaced and made a funny, yet pained face. He felt at his right wrist when Dean managed to break free.

“I’m sorry. Did I hurt it?” Dean’s carefree expression got immediately more grave and he held at Sam’s wrist gently. “It’s the one that got broken, isn’t it?” Dean frowned, watching as Sam rubbed at his wrist. Of course he hadn’t meant to hurt his brother, but sometimes horseplay could end in a few scratches or minor injuries. They had been brothers long enough to know that.

“It’s alright, really,” Sam calmed him. “It just felt like it snapped or something, but it’s okay,” he reassured him.
“You sure?”

Sam nodded.

Dean looked at his brother, on top of him, rubbing at his wrist softly and smiling at him. He thought of their intimacy just a couple of hours before and the things Sam had said. Dean frowned and his eyes seemed lost for a moment as he organized his thoughts and chose his words.

“You know…when we were going at it before, you said something. You told me to hurt you,” he said and studied Sam’s reaction to it. “What was that all about?” Dean tried to search into Sam’s eyes for something he might be trying to hide.

Sam chewed on his bottom lip and felt a hot flash of arousal stab him in the chest and make his heart rate pick up.

“Was that the spur of the moment?” Dean questioned.

Sam felt embarrassed. He had meant that. He couldn’t explain why; it was confusing why he felt that way, but he had really meant it. For a moment there, during sex, he had actually wanted Dean to be rougher and, perhaps, hurt him in the process. But now, as his brother asked him about it and studied him intently, Sam felt suddenly shy.

He made as if he would move but Dean’s hands on his naked thighs stopped him.

“Don’t hide from me,” Dean asked, letting his hands slide down Sam’s skin and rest on top of his hands. “You can tell me what you’re thinking. I won’t judge you. I just want to know what’s going on in your head, okay?” He said, his eyebrows arched and his eyes intense. “I promise.”

Sam waited a moment and then took a deep breath. He stopped trying to move away and stayed where he was, straddling his brother in bed.

“I don’t know,” he said, eventually. “Honestly. It’s all a bit confusing.”

“What is? Try to tell me,” Dean insisted softly.

Sam swallowed hard. He felt uneasy, but Dean’s eyes were trusting and safe, and he really believed his brother would not judge whatever he said next.

“I think that I felt so much pain in that place, that it kind of changed the way I see pain now. I mean, it’s difficult to explain, but it’s set a different standard of pain, if you know what I mean. Like, feeling my bones breaking under the man’s blows, that was pain. The open cuts that kept me awake all night, throbbing, that was also pain.”

Dean swallowed hard, and forced himself to listen silently without interrupting Sam.

“But the thing we were doing before, with you inside of me…it was good, it was amazing. I mean, I didn’t think it was possible to come because of it,” Sam confessed.

Dean smiled with the corner of his mouth. He didn’t either. That had been a delightful surprise, and just thinking about it made him tingle all over.
“I know,” he agreed.

“And even though it’s that good, there’s a part of it that hurts, obviously. I guess I just wanted you to know that I don’t mind it. I don’t mind a bit of hurting with you.” Sam thought carefully about what he felt. He wasn’t being completely honest, not yet, and Dean’s eyes were so comforting and worried, Sam knew he deserved the truth. “I think…” he stuttered, “I think some part of me is like, even more aroused if it hurts a little…” The confession ended in a careful, sheepish tone, and Sam studied Dean intently to see whether or not he would judge him now. “Do you think I’m weird?” He blurted, chewing on the inner side of his bottom lip and waiting for Dean’s answer expectantly.

“Well, you’ve always been weird,” Dean teased and pinched Sam’s thigh, lightening up the mood and making his brother chuckle.

“Oh, screw you,” Sam laughed.

“You’ve always been my little weirdo,” Dean smiled, enjoying the little happy sounds he could elicit. “But yeah, I was kind of afraid you’d say that,” he went on, on a more serious note.

“Say what?”

“That hurting might actually feel good.”

“Why? Is it sick? Do you think I’m freaked up in the head now?” Sam looked worried and Dean could see his thoughts working furiously behind his nervous questions.

“No, I don’t. I don’t think it’s sick or crazy, or anything. I actually think that in a terrible and sad way it kind of makes sense. I mean, after everything you’ve been through, it would be weird if it didn’t alter your perception of things…including pain.” Dean knew that Sam had had an intense sensory experience in the room. He had had utter deprivation of his sense of sight whenever he was tortured, and an absurd enhancement of his feeling of physical pain. He supposed it would be very difficult to catalogue just how deeply everything had affected Sam, and how many scars he might still stumble across on his way to recovery.

“It’s not like I want you to beat me or anything,” Sam grinned nervously.

“I know,” Dean reassured him.

“Do you? Really? Because it doesn’t seem like it.”

“What do you mean?” Dean frowned.

“I mean that you’re holding back,” Sam said. “I’ve known you long enough to know that. Even though it was like, the second time we went all the way, I can tell you’re holding back. Why?”

It was Dean’s turn to feel tense and exposed under Sam’s knowing look. He had never expected Sam to ask him something like that. Yes, he had been holding back, he recognized the truth in Sam’s words without a doubt, but how did he know that? How did Sam, who was pretty much a virgin when it came to sexual experience, know that he was holding back?

“Surprised?” Sam chuckled at Dean’s expression. “Please. I’ve grown up with you. I know a thing or two about Dean Winchester.”
“I guess so.” Dean smiled lightly, feeling shy under Sam’s observing eyes.

“So? Why are you holding back?”

“I tried to give you what you wanted when you asked. I thought you liked it,” Dean tried to avoid the subject more directly.

“I did, it was good. You know it was. But why are you so afraid of letting go? Why won’t you let yourself lose control with me?”

Dean sighed and studied the boy straddling him and waiting for a satisfactory answer.

“I told you. I don’t want to hurt you.”

“You sound like a broken record.” Sam rolled his eyes.

“It’s true, though,” Dean insisted. “I…” Dean knew it was his turn to be honest about how he was feeling. “I’m afraid that if I shut down my self-control and just let go I’ll hurt you. I’m afraid that if I take too much from you then you might be in pain, and might want me to stop and just not say it because you don’t want to disappoint me or something like that,” Dean explained. “And I’m also afraid that if I cause you pain I will bring back the worst memories.”

Dean fell silent after that, and for a moment they just looked into each other’s eyes and said nothing.

Sam moved and lay down again, beside Dean. He went close enough so they shared the same pillow, and their eyes spoke that language that words were not really good at for a while.

“What if I promise you I’ll let you know if anything comes back and I want to stop?”

“But that’s the problem. What if I can’t stop?” Dean retorted. “I don’t know, sometimes it’s like there’s this beast inside of me, and if I unleash it, I might not be able to control it.”

“You don’t get it, do you? I don’t want you to control it. I want you to let go. I wanna know you’re losing control, too; I wanna be the cause of that,” Sam said with so much anguish that it surprised Dean. “I want to feel it, Dean, I wanna feel you take me like there’s no tomorrow, like nothing else fucking matters. I want that. And I don’t care if it hurts.”

Dean tried to see through Sam’s words.

“Please. I think that if something bad was to come to my mind, it would’ve happened by now. And it didn’t. It felt so good being with you.”

Dean smiled. “I’m glad to hear to that.” He touched Sam’s face and neck.

“So, are you going to let go the next time?”

Dean chuckled, the sound low in his throat. “We’ll see.” He let his hand travel lower and stroke Sam’s ribcage.

“C’mon, Dean. Lose control, show me this beast,” Sam teased and grinned.

Dean let his hand rest on top of Sam’s hipbone and then grabbed his thigh forcefully, letting his
fingers dig into soft flesh. “Like that? Hm?” He pulled Sam towards him, his large fingers causing a red impression on his skin.

Sam’s heart raced and his blood responded to the touch immediately by flowing to his lower belly and making his cock twitch.

“Yes,” he answered, throatily.

“Do you want it a bit…rough?” Dean caressed his thighs and grabbed at his hipbone, drawing him even closer.

“Yes, I do,” Sam could barely swallow the lust in his voice.

Dean looked between their bodies and saw that Sam was getting hard again. Perhaps he really meant that—he wanted their intimacy to be that intense.

“Would you trust me to take you like that?” Dean asked and stopped the teasing.

“I trust you with everything,” Sam said, hoping Dean understood how much he meant it. He hoped he did, and then Sam pulled him close and kissed his forehead, and that was the last thing they said in bed before they moved and went downstairs to grab a snack.

~ * ~

When Dean left the shower, after Sam had already taken his, he found his brother downstairs, sitting cross-legged on the floor and going through one of Bobby’s books.

“So, you gonna help me make dinner?” He asked, watching how Sam seemed really interested in an old book.

“Yeah…just a sec…this is really, um…interesting.” Sam frowned and turned the page.

“What is?” Dean looked over Sam’s shoulder at the book on his lap.

“I found this book while you were taking a shower. Actually…” Sam licked at his lips and hesitated briefly. “I found this book a long time ago, but it never occurred to me to look for something until now.”

“Okay, I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Dean gave up. There were some weird drawings on the pages that he tried to understand. “Is that a book of spells?”

“No,” Sam grinned. “It’s, er, like a sex book.”

“A what?” Dean grew a lot more curious and crouched behind Sam to take a closer look at the drawings. He realized then they were different sexual positions. “What is it? Kama Sutra?”

“Kind of. It’s an ancient book on sex, but I’m pretty sure it’s Celtic.”

Dean had no idea how Sam was pretty sure of something like that, but he chose not to ask.
“Bobby, eh?” He chuckled. “That old dog!”

“It’s not really porn or anything. It’s more like a study on human sexuality.”

“You said you found this before. What made you think of it now?”

“Well,” Sam turned a few pages and pointed a paragraph out to his brother. “I knew there was a part that talked about pleasure spots in the male and female bodies. I just leafed through the book before, but now I actually read some parts because…” Sam licked at his lips and took a shaky breath. “well, I was curious.”

“Curious about what?”

“About feeling good when you touched me…you know, there.” He swallowed hard and his heart skipped a beat.

“Oh.” Dean too felt slightly bashful with the subject, but his curiosity was instantly aroused. “So, what does it say then?”

“The thing that feels good is just the prostate. It’s like a pleasure spot, and it says here that it’s possible to have an orgasm just from stimulating it.”

“I guess we didn’t need the book to tell us that, eh?”

“I guess not.” Sam looked into Dean’s eyes and smiled shyly before looking away. “You didn’t know that?”

“No, not really. I mean, I saw that it was good for you depending on how I touched you, but I didn’t really know what I was doing.”

“Weren’t you curious? I mean, I wanted to know what was going on and why it was going on, especially after…well, after coming without touching myself. Besides…knowing that there’s a spot like this inside of you, doesn’t it make you wanna feel it, too?”

Dean narrowed his eyes and frowned. “Excuse me?”

“Yeah…” Sam went on. “Don’t you ever wanna know what it feels like? Wouldn’t you let me do it to you?” Sam wondered.

Dean seemed a bit awkward. He chuckled nervously. “Why, do you want to?”

“Maybe. You know, someday I’ll probably want to. Would you let me?” Sam studied his brother.

Dean sighed. He wouldn’t lie to him. “Well, does the idea excite me? No. Does it scare me a little? Maybe. If you ask me, right now I don’t think I would like to…but I love you, you know that. So whenever you want to do that, you let me know and I’ll…let the idea cook for a while.”

Sam smiled appreciatively at the answer.

“There are some lovely positions in here we could try,” he teased.

“You’re such a nerd, Sam. Even when it comes to sex, that’s unbelievable,” Dean sighed, amused,
and got to his feet.

Sam didn’t mind the teasing. He did love books, and he liked to know why things happened. Studying had never been a burden to him. He put the book back where it was, and it seemed to fit perfectly and disappear beside so many others just like it on the shelf. Sam got to his feet and looked at his brother.

“I was just curious. When we started I didn’t really expect it to feel good,” Sam confessed.

Dean looked at his brother and for a moment Sam’s eyes seemed to be lost, as if a shadow had just crossed through them.

Sam remembered the pain that made it feel as if burning scissors were cutting him open from inside, tearing and scorching his skin, and he remembered how he screamed when the man kept pushing, harder, deeper, until blood was the most evident fluid in the mess he left behind.

“It certainly never felt good when he…” Sam trailed off and his heart raced when he realized he had just spoken his thoughts out loud.

“When he what?”

Sam snapped back to reality and looked into Dean’s eyes. His breathing hitched immediately and his eyes widened, as if he had just woken up from a bad dream. Dean was looking intently at him, his eyes searching into his soul, his whole body ready to catch him if he took that leap and jumped into his fears.

“Hm…” A small sound of anguish made it past his throat and Sam didn’t know what to say. He was petrified. He had almost, he was about to—

His lips started to quiver and his hands felt shaky. Sam didn’t know if he would run or shatter, he had no idea how he had suddenly gotten himself in that situation.

“When he what, Sammy? Hm? You can tell me. It’s okay,” Dean said as sweetly as possible, his attentive eyes almost caressing Sam, the softness of his voice trying to soothe and coax at the same time.

Sam’s breathing became an audible panting and he shook his head lightly. He would have stepped backwards but Dean’s hand held him, gently.

“It’s okay. Just let it out. I’ll help you.” Dean nodded seriously into Sam’s eyes, promising the safety he needed so badly.

Sam thought of the man pounding into him and changing his life forever with a kind of shame that had tainted his self-esteem.

“I…” Sam began. “Dean, I…”

Dean widened his eyes, his heart racing, ready for whatever it was that Sam would say.

Nonetheless, whatever Sam’s next words would have been, Dean never got to hear them. The noise of the Impala arriving quickly and parking in front of the house filled the room and announced they would no longer be alone.
At that very second, Dean wanted to kill his dad for the terrible timing. He took a deep breath and realized the moment had been lost, and Sam would say nothing tonight.

Sam didn’t know whether the fact that their dad was coming home was a relief or some unwanted interruption. His heartbeat started to slow down and he too took a deep, calming breath. He didn’t know if he would have been able to tell Dean what he wanted to know right then, but he had felt very tempted to.

He looked into his brother’s eyes and saw Dean’s frustration.

“Well, guess Dad’s home. We’d better go start dinner,” Dean said, and was about to turn around when Sam grabbed his hand and made him stop.

“Soon, okay? I promise,” Sam didn’t know how he would keep that promise. He didn’t know how he would tell Dean everything and not break. Perhaps he would break. He didn’t know. He was scared shitless of what would happen the moment he went back and went through all that darkness again. But he would. Sam knew now that it was inevitable.

“I’ll be here.” Dean smiled lightly, touched the tip of Sam’s nose playfully and turned around to welcome their dad into the house.

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tbc...
Chapter 72

On Sam’s fifteenth birthday, there would be no box with a deadly present, or plans to eat himself silly with Dean when school was over. Sam had made it clear that he didn’t want anything done, and Bobby and John agreed to a nice ‘family’ day indoors.

However, the moment Sam woke up, he couldn’t have expected the anxiety that took control of him.

As soon as his eyes darted open to a sunny morning, and Sam understood it meant one complete year since he was taken, he couldn’t really control his edginess. He sat up in bed and looked around himself, not sure what he expected to see, or even if he had expected something to happen.

“Morning, birthday boy.” Dean woke up when he sensed movement and smiled at his brother.

“Morning.”

Sam felt his throat dry. Probably because he had just woken up, but maybe because his senses were alert, eliciting a string of flight responses from his body.

“I would give you a kiss but Dad and Bobby might come into the room at any time,” Dean said, and when Sam barely looked at him for a quick acknowledgement of what he had just said, Dean understood the day might present itself as a challenge.

Sam couldn’t pay Dean’s words too much attention. He studied the bedroom and sharpened his ears. Neither Bobby nor John seemed to be moving outside their room. Perhaps they were still asleep. Perhaps they were no longer in the house.

With his heart racing, Sam got up from the bed and headed to Bobby’s dresser, where he opened the last drawer and started to go through things.

“Sam? What are you looking for?” Dean asked from the bed.

Sam didn’t have time to reply. It might be too late already. He found what he wanted and started to use it right away. He started with the window. Sam poured salt on the window’s frame and then did the same to the door, pouring a white line of salt that barred the entrance of anything evil.
Dean sat on the bed and realized Sam had blocked every way into their room with a trail of salt.

“Sam? What’s with the salt?” Dean frowned.

“Just making sure the demon can’t get in,” Sam said without even looking over his shoulder. He studied his job, checking whether or not the salt line was satisfactorily thick.

“Dad and Bobby are downstairs. There’s no way—”

“You don’t know that,” Sam cut him off and turned around. “Can’t be too careful, right?” His eyes begged for a confirmation, and in his eyes Dean could see the madness and hysteria Sam could barely keep at bay.

“Sam? Come here for a sec.”

Sam didn’t comply immediately. He made sure his salt trails were in order at least three more times before he went back to bed and looked at his brother.

“Yeah?”

“Nothing is gonna happen today, alright? The demon isn’t coming for you. You’re safe here.”

Sam narrowed his eyes and studied his brother.

“Did Dad kill the demon?”

Dean frowned. “You know you can’t kill a demon…”

“So if he’s alive he could still be looking for me.”

Dean hated the rationality behind Sam’s train of thought.

“Well, he isn’t, alright? And even if he is, he’ll never get his filthy hands on you again.”

Sam didn’t seem entirely convinced, but he didn’t get a chance to say anything further because soon his dad was opening the door and stepping into the bedroom.

“Morning son. Happy birthday.”

“NO!” Sam jumped out of the bed, his eyes looking at the ruined trail of salt and his heart thudding in his chest.

John widened his eyes and a frown twisted his forehead when he saw Sam come quickly in his direction and crouch before his feet.

“You ruined it!” Sam complained, and then he set off to get the salt again and redo the salt trail.

It was only when John looked down that he saw what had just happened.

“Why are you using salt to block the door? You know there’s nothing here.” John looked at Dean, as if he could offer him an explanation, but Dean just shrugged.
“You said it yourself a million times, better safe than sorry when it comes to supernatural stuff,” Sam said.

“Sam is afraid the demon might come back for him,” Dean said, when he saw the puzzled look in his father’s eyes.

John’s heart twitched at that.

“Sam? He’s not coming. There’s no need for the salt. Let’s go downstairs and have breakfast, Bobby’s waiting for you, too.”

“I’m not leaving this room,” Sam said calmly and went back to bed, where he sat and crossed his legs. “I’m not going anywhere.”

Dean saw the look of powerless frustration in his father’s eyes escalate to something that might not end up well. If John insisted, Sam would grow more stubborn, and nothing good would come out of that interaction.

“What if we salt all the windows and doors downstairs too? Will you go down, then?” Dean suggested, and offered his father a look full of complicity. John immediately understood what Dean was doing—working his magic and putting Sam at ease by gaining his trust.

Sam pondered for a moment. That seemed logical.

“If there’s salt downstairs, then it’s okay. But I’ll wait here until it’s done.”

John knew there was no need for that. That demon was probably far away, and he wouldn’t dare come back to a house full of hunters after the failure of his plan. John had been hunting that damn demon for a year without any success, it was highly unlikely that he would just pop up in the house where they were living today. Yet, even though John saw no need to, he decided to play along with Dean—whatever helped Sam get through the day.

“Fine. I’ll go downstairs and prepare everything, alright?”

Sam nodded. He saw his dad turn around and leave, then he looked at Dean again.

“So,” Dean smiled. “What about we do some—”

“You go down and tell me when it’s ready.” Sam cut him off with the hectic calm that precedes a storm.

~ * ~

The four hunters spent a tense day inside Bobby’s house. It didn’t matter how much anyone tried to distract Sam with small talk or good food, the youngest person in the house was on edge from morning until night, checking his salt trails, looking at the clock, jumping at any sound he hadn’t been expecting.

Bobby made Sam a birthday cake, which turned out surprisingly good, and John gave him a book on witchcraft lore. Dean didn’t have time to go out and get his brother anything since they spent pretty
much all day together, but he tried his best to cheer Sam up and get his mind off the tension he was building up.

“I saw there’s a good movie on TV tonight. How about we sit down and watch it?” Bobby suggested when the sun had already set. He was trying not to feel like a prisoner in his own house, but the fact was that Sam’s edginess about staying safely inside and not letting anything in was getting to him, and he had to try and stay calm. He could see his friend pacing back and forth in the living room, like a caged animal, and Bobby hoped John would be able to keep his cool for Sam’s sake. It was just for a day. It was not only his birthday; it was the anniversary of the day his life had changed. They had to cut him some slack.

“Sounds like a good idea,” Dean jumped in readily.

“Yes, let’s do that.” John sat down on the sofa and opened himself a beer.

“Sam? Where are you going?” Bobby asked.

“Bathroom. Be right back.”

Dean watched his brother disappear upstairs. If Sam needed to take a leak, there was no need to go all the way to the second story, so Dean chose to go after him and just make sure he was alright.

He found his brother knelt beside the bed, pulling a wooden box from underneath it. When Sam bent forward to grab something, Dean could see the handle of the gun Sam had gotten for his birthday at his brother’s waist, and a chill ran up and down Dean’s body.

“Lost something?” Dean asked and walked further into the room. He looked over Sam’s shoulder at the bullets inside the box.

“Dean?” Sam was obviously startled, and his hand went for the gun.

“What are you doing with that thing at your hip? And why do you need bullets?” He asked, worriedly.

“I’ve been packing it since morning, you just didn’t notice it. And I realized that I don’t know how many bullets are in it, so I was just going to make sure it was loaded.”

“For what, Sam? Nothing’s gonna happen. There’s salt everywhere…”

“It’s a demon, Dean,” Sam had to explain, as if to a child. “If it really wants to get in, it will.”

“And since when will a firearm kill a demon?” Dean argued.

“It’s not for him,” Sam said, almost too quickly, almost too silently, the meaning almost lost on Dean. Almost.

“Sam? Who is the gun for?” Dean went closer and stood before his brother so he could look Sam in the eyes.

“It’s for me, if the demon gets in and past you guys. If no one can stop him, I just want to make sure he doesn’t take me again. I’d rather die than go back to that place. Or any place he decides to take me.”
“Sam…” Dean crouched before his brother, his heart racing. “The demon is not coming back for you. Even if he was, which he isn’t, no one in this place will allow anything to happen. I promise you.”

“You can’t promise that,” Sam argued, still holding the gun.

“Look at me. Look into my eyes and see if I’ll let him hurt you again.” Dean stared into Sam’s eyes with all the love he had inside, so much that it seemed to burn and shimmer in his iris.

Sam seemed to hesitate. “Maybe he’ll—”

“He won’t. I promise. He won’t, Sammy.” Dean put his hand gently on top of the gun. “Do you trust me?”

Sam looked at the gun and at Dean’s hand on top of it, clearly trying to take it out of his hand.

“Dean…”

“You trusted me to be inside of you, please trust me to keep you safe, alright?”

Sam looked into his brother’s eyes and his heart throbbed. He sighed deeply and nodded, albeit reluctantly. “Fine.”

Dean let out the breath he had been holding and put the gun away.

“Let’s go downstairs and watch the movie? You’re fifteen now, we’re together. Everyone in this house loves you. Some more than others,” Dean chuckled, and Sam mirrored him. “So let’s celebrate, yeah?”

“Okay,” Sam nodded again and let his brother lead them back downstairs and into the living room.

~ * ~

At around ten that evening, Bobby left to find some sleep. He had a mean headache, and he needed to lie down and try to sleep through it. The Winchesters were together for another hour in Bobby’s living room, watching TV and bringing back a few nostalgic memories until John’s phone vibrated in his pocket.

They watched as John stood up and answered the call. He listened and talked for five minutes before he returned to the living room.

“What was that?” Dean asked.

“An emergency. I need to go.”

“Now?” Dean asked.

“Yeah. Sorry guys. It’s someone who I owe a thing or two. He’s nearby and needs help. I’ll be back tomorrow morning.” John hated every time he spoiled one of their moments together with the job,
but it was not possible to simply ignore the fact that he was hunter and that lives depended on this choice of his. “But hey, at least we got to spend the day together, eh?”

Neither Dean nor Sam said anything, they just looked at him.

“I’ll write down an address. You let Bobby know tomorrow.” John turned around and headed towards the kitchen.

The moment he was gone, Sam got up and followed his father. Dean watched when they both disappeared into the kitchen, but he didn’t go after them.

“Sam?” John looked at his son when he showed up right behind him in the kitchen. “Did you like the book?”

“Don’t go.” Sam went straight to the point.

“What?”

“Don’t go,” Sam repeated. It didn’t matter that his dad and he had their differences, and that there was a lot of hurting and lack of communication between them. He was still his dad, and Sam was still his kid. What if the demon was just waiting for this moment, for John to leave, so with the group weakened—Bobby was already asleep—he could come in and take him? “The demon might still come. The day isn’t over. Don’t go.” Despite anything that had happened before, Sam trusted his dad. He felt safer knowing he was in the house. He knew the demon must fear him to a certain level, after all he had avoided confrontation by sneaking Sam out of school without alarm when he wanted to take him. Not that Sam didn’t trust Dean with his life, but his brother was training to be a hunter, he wasn’t the seasoned warrior their dad was, at least not yet. It felt good knowing his dad was with him, because Sam knew John would not see a demon take his son away again.

“Sam, it’ll be okay. It’s…” John checked his watch. “A quarter past eleven. The day is pretty much over. You’re safe.”

“Please,” Sam said, his eyes intently locked with John’s.

John felt his chest tight with worry and love, and took a deep breath.

“Fine. I’ll stay. I’ll be here until after midnight. Will that be better?”

“Yes,” Sam said shortly. He didn’t feel like explaining what he felt and why he needed this. He just expressed his need because it was too strong.

“Okay then. Let’s go back and watch some more TV.”

Sam turned around and headed back to the living room without another word.

~ * ~

One hour later, when Sam’s birthday was officially over, John left Bobby Singer’s house to go help out a friend in need. Sam watched him go, and this time he didn’t ask him to stay. When the clock indicated it was past midnight and nothing happened, Sam relaxed considerably. Dean noticed how he looked lighter and almost tired of the tension he had been holding.
“Do you wanna go to sleep?”

“Yeah,” Sam nodded quickly.

They went upstairs and started to prepare the bed and themselves for the night. They brushed their teeth and arranged the sheets. Sam left the light on in the bathroom before joining Dean in bed.

“Hey…” Sam started.

“Hey.” Dean looked at him, glad to see Sam was slowly returning to normal.

“I’m sorry for freaking out today.” Sam swallowed hard, but he wanted to say those things. “I know it might seem weird for you and Dad and Bobby…but it just felt really bad thinking that something could happen.”

“It’s okay. You don’t need to apologize. I’m glad you’re better now. See? Nothing happened.”

Sam nodded. “Thanks for helping me.”

Dean smiled.

“So, how does it feel to be old?”

“I don’t know, you tell me, you’re the one who will be twenty in no time,” Sam teased back after the provocation.

Dean laughed lightly.

“No way. I’ll be nineteen for a long time. Long enough to plan your sweet sixteen, Sammy.”

“Shut up!” Sam laughed and punched Dean lightly.

“Shh…Bobby’s asleep,” Dean reminded him.

Sam silenced his laughter and yawned.

“Hey…” Dean started this time, staring intently at his brother.

“Yes?”

“I’m sorry I didn’t get you anything. I really didn’t have time to go out. I’ll get you something when we’re in town again.”

“Oh, please. Shut up. You don’t have to,” Sam said.

“I want to give you something. Even though…” Dean left the sentence hanging.

“Even though what?”

“Even though you already have what really matters.”
“Oh,” Sam arched his eyebrows. “I do? And what is that?”

Dean licked his lips and looked into Sam’s eyes.

“You already have my heart.”

For about five seconds Sam didn’t say anything. He seemed to be registering and processing Dean’s words, but when they finally made sense in his brain, no one, not Dean, and definitely not Sam, could have expected the outburst of laughter that erupted from his throat.

Dean watched, taken aback, as Sam’s ringing laughter echoed in the room and he bent forward with the strength of it.

“What?!” Dean asked, seemingly indignant.

“That was…” Sam could barely catch his breath because he was laughing so hard. “That was the cheesiest, most corny thing you’ve EVER said.” Sam laughed harder and held at his stomach, because it was aching with the contraction of his muscles. “Like…EVER!” Sam rolled on the bed, shaking with laughter.

“Oh, shut up! I opened my heart to you and that’s how you react?” Dean was far from angry, but he did feel quite embarrassed. He had trouble showing emotion, but when he felt something so powerful and expressed it, it came from the depths of his soul.

“I’m sorry!!” Sam laughed. “Sorry, but it’s fucking hilarious!! Like a chick flick or something!”

Dean watched when Sam’s laughter started to rumble through him all over again. The sight in itself was extremely amusing, and when Dean realized that he hadn’t heard the sound of Sam’s laughter in over a year, he understood he had just given Sam the best present he could have hoped for. The sound of Sam’s light, unstoppable laughter filled the room and warmed Dean’s chest with joy.

“What’s going on? Are you guys okay?” Bobby showed up at the door and looked into the room.

“Damn it. Sorry Bobby,” Dean apologized quickly. “We didn’t mean to wake you up.”

“Sorry! I’m sorry!” Sam tried to sound apologetic but it was difficult when he was still highly amused. After all the tension he had experienced during the day, letting himself go into that absorbing laughter was irresistible. It was like the sound and the pleasure of it channeled all of Sam’s fear and edginess and turned them into something delightful.

Bobby saw Sam’s cheeks were pink from the effort of laughing, and he frowned, trying to understand how the worried boy from before could be so joyful now.

“He can’t stop laughing at me. He’s making fun of me, Bobby. You should see that. After all I do for him, he has the nerve to laugh in my face,” Dean said with feigned disappointment, which only served to cause Sam to laugh some more.

Dean and Bobby exchanged a look and Bobby couldn’t help but smile, despite his splitting headache. He hadn’t seen Sam that happy in years. Sam had never been the kind of kid that lets out a ringing laughter often, and the last year had been tough. Thus, Bobby really, really enjoyed having been awoken to witness that.
“Well, I believe it was indeed funny, but try and keep it down now, will you, ya idjits? Some people need to sleep.” He pretended he was grumpy.

“Sorry, Bobby,” Dean said.

“Sorry, Bobby,” Sam repeated.

“By the way, Dad’s left on a hunt. There’s a note for you in the kitchen. He asked me to show you tomorrow.”

“I’ll see it tomorrow, alright. You boys go to sleep now. Night.” Bobby turned around and went back into his room.

When they were alone again Sam looked at Dean, a smile still dancing on his lips.

“I’m sorry,” Sam began.

“Shut up. You hurt my feelings,” Dean mocked annoyance and Sam chuckled.

“C’mere,” Sam insisted.

“Don’t touch me!” Dean laughed lightly.

In the semi darkness of the room, the two brothers kept the act on for a while longer, until they settled in their usual cuddling position, with Dean wrapping his arms around Sam as they closed their eyes and waited for sleep.

It was all silent in the house when Sam spoke.

“Dean?”

“Yeah?”

“You have mine, too.”

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tbc...
Chapter 73

It was a while before the boys were completely alone again. John left on a few hunts for the following weeks, but Bobby mainly helped other hunters from home. Even though Bobby was aware of the nature of their relationship, neither Sam nor Dean ever expressed affection in front of him. Just because Bobby was covering up for them didn’t mean he was willing to catch glimpses of their relationship, so if it weren’t for the fact that Bobby had seen and heard them, and then gotten a confession from Dean, he would never imagine the two brothers were anything more than friends.

Dean taught Sam some different stitching patterns and let him practice for hours. By the end of the week, Sam’s fingers had grown calluses, but he was proud of his progress. Dean alternated between more physical training and Latin lessons, which Sam forced him to take. ‘To exorcise demons’, Sam would say, and help his brother with the most difficult words.

When at last Bobby was needed somewhere else, and John was far from South Dakota, Dean and Sam enjoyed the privacy of having the house to themselves again.

That afternoon there was no training, only the urgent kissing and kneading they did in the bedroom to the sound of their heavy breathing.

They undressed each other with ease and teased each other to an aching desire with a knowing touch. Dean still made sure to prepare Sam’s body for what was to come, and then he took him slowly, bringing them impossibly closer and making their skin burn impossibly hot.

Sam shut his eyes and let his head fall back against the pillow. His arms wrapped around Dean’s body as it weighed down on him, and he let Dean build it up slow and steadily.

“That good, baby?” Dean whispered into his ear, thrusting lazily into Sam’s accommodating heat, swiveling his hips to try and make him moan.

“Yeah,” Sam’s throaty reply urged Dean to move faster, to thrust deeper, to let himself enjoy the throbbing pleasure of being sheathed to the hilt in Sam’s tightness.

A low, vibrating sound of pleasure died in Dean’s throat as he picked up speed. He could feel Sam moaning beneath him, arching into his thrusts, his cock hard against their bodies.

Dean opened his eyes and looked into Sam’s. His brother’s eyes were clouded with lust, and Dean
felt some of his hunger surface and ask for a little more. He still couldn’t bring himself to just let go and lose control, but the sight of Sam, so disheveled and hot, his cheeks rosy and his lips swollen from their kissing, was absolutely fucking perfect, and Dean wanted to take more from him.

“Say it,” Sam said. He looked into his brother’s eyes and the way they were burning into his, and Sam could almost touch the desire building up in Dean’s mind and the struggle to let it come to his lips. “What do you want?” Sam smiled breathlessly.

Dean seemed to hesitate, and Sam could see his doubt all over his face.

“Say it, it’s okay,” Sam reassured him.

Dean licked his lips and lowered them to Sam’s ear. “Do you wanna turn around for me, Sammy? Lie on your stomach so I can take you from behind?” The request was low and sultry, and it caused goosebumps to break all over Sam’s skin. Dean was finally relaxing a little, letting himself enjoy sex with a hint of selfish abandon that Sam was dying to see. He knew Dean cared about him and would do everything to make him feel good, but Sam wanted Dean to take him without all his finesse and all his concern, to just take what he wanted and give in to his pleasure; Sam wanted less thinking and more impulse, because he felt they both needed that.

Instead of replying, Sam’s hands went to Dean’s body and made him stop moving. His lips curved in a mysterious, lustful little smile and his eyes looked deeply into Dean’s before Sam agreed and turned underneath him, lying on his stomach and spreading his legs a little.

The sight of Sam’s smooth back and small ass inviting him made Dean’s cock twitch and ache to be buried in there again. It was a position he sometimes dreamed of taking Sam in, but he held back because he didn’t know if that might make him feel uncomfortable. After all, lying on his stomach, unable to see it as Dean covered him again, like a blanket, not sure when to expect him inside, that could bring back memories of helplessness. Dean knew it was a position that implied submission and a certain level of dominance, so he tried to read Sam’s reactions to his touch very carefully before he was back into his body.

Sam was breathing fast with anticipation. He felt Dean’s dick brushing against his cheeks and his heart raced a little. Then he felt a pair of wet, hot lips close around the nape of his neck and suck, and he shivered at how good it felt.

“Is it okay? Being like this?” Dean whispered softly, after leaving a mark on Sam’s neck. “You can tell me if you don’t want to.”

“I’m okay. Really. You can do it.” Sam knew he was a little tense with the position, but he was also extremely aroused. He felt vulnerable, but it was Dean, and nothing bad could come out of being with him.

Dean found the lube and applied more to himself and to Sam’s entrance, so when he pushed inside again he was slick and slightly cold.

“Hm.” A small little moan left Sam’s lips, and then Dean’s mouth was once again on the nape of his neck, kissing, biting, licking the thin, salty layer of sweat off Sam’s skin.

“It’s okay, baby. It’s me.” Dean pulled out and pushed back inside, slow and gently. “I love you, Sammy. So fucking much, you know?” He murmured against his ear as his hips found a new rhythm and started thrusting.
There was no room for Sam to feel scared or to think of anything that wasn’t Dean and how good he made him feel. If there was the slightest fear of unleashing bad memories, it was gone because Dean made sure to show him that he was the one taking him—his smell, his kisses, his whispered words, they showered Sam with safety so he could relax beneath Dean’s body.

“Mmm.” Sam began to hump the mattress in time to Dean’s thrusts. He rubbed his cock against the soft sheets as Dean rubbed his prostate from the inside. Soon, the pleasure was fierce and Sam grew incoherent.

Dean angled his hips when he thought he had found Sam’s pleasure spot, and thrust relentlessly against it until Sam’s moaning got louder and he shuddered, trapped between the sheets and Dean’s body.

“Dean!” Sam’s plea was a warning of how far gone he was. He rubbed against the sheets and tried to arch his hips into Dean’s thrusts, and nothing made sense except for the pleasure building up to something unstoppable.

“Gonna make you dirty the sheets, Sammy,” Dean whispered hotly into his ear, causing Sam to groan and writhe, his body afire. “Do you want that?”

“Yes, do it…” Sam was panting, his eyes rolling back with pleasure.

“Come for me, baby boy.”

“Fuck! Dean!” Sam started to shake. He thrust one final time against the sheets and before he understood what hit him he was coming. Dean’s words and the double stimulation making him go boneless as his orgasm roared through him.

Dean groaned when the tight contractions of Sam’s climax squeezed him into that slick warmth that surrounded his cock. Dean didn’t even want to last when he felt Sam relax and grow limp with pleased stupor beneath his thrusts. He pushed into him a few more times and let go, his balls jerking as he emptied himself into Sam.

Sam felt the wetness running down his thighs when Dean pulled out. They would need to change the sheets and take a shower, but there was no hurry, nothing that prevented them from enjoying the aftermath of their pleasure.

“Damn…” Dean whispered. The muscles in his belly were still flexing with each deep breath he took. His skin glowed and Dean shut his eyes to try and prolong the tingling feeling spreading through his body.

Sam snuggled closer and just stayed as he was, breathing slowly, recovering from the explosion of sensations.

“You okay?” Dean asked as he looked at his brother.

“I’m great.” Sam smiled. “I’m actually very happy that you let go a little more.”

“You like this? Is it seriously alright? You could’ve told me if the position made you feel uncomfortable.”
“It was fine, really. I enjoyed it. And I mean it; I want to know you’re giving in to this as much as I am. Because damn, it’s like I don’t know my fucking name, you know?” Sam chuckled. “I just want it to be like this for you, too. I want you to just let go and stop worrying so much about me. I said you won’t hurt me.”

“I know you did.” Dean looked lovingly into Sam’s eyes.

“Then let go. I can handle it.”

Dean chuckled.

His reply was to lean over and plant a kiss to Sam’s forehead, and then they didn’t speak again for the next hour or so.

~ * ~

It took some warming up for Dean to really let go within their intimacy. It was something that was easier said than done, almost like getting Sam to open up. He knew it was okay to do it, but there was something holding him back, and in Dean’s case, it was the insistent thought that Sam’s well-being had to be preserved at all costs.

Yet, as the weeks went by and they grew more comfortable with each other, and with having sex with each other, it was easier to relax and let himself take as much as he gave. It certainly helped Dean relax the fact that for the past month, since they had first had sex, Sam hadn’t had nightmares or panic attacks. One entire month was the longest Sam had gone so far without any kind of episode, and even though Dean knew he could not trust this truce blindly, he was hopeful that it meant Sam was healing.

Aside from the incestuous relationship growing and deepening between them, Sam was every bit a regular teen in the past weeks, cheerful, cranky, moody, thoughtful, and all those things he had always been—smart, attentive, loving.

This feeling that Sam was getting better, and would soon be ready to talk about his fears, not only made Dean hopeful, they also made him bold.

For their next time alone, Dean wanted to reward Sam’s trust in him by giving in to his most honest urgency.

“I’m going downstairs to watch some TV,” Sam said when he put down his homework and got to his feet.

“No, you’re not,” Dean stopped him halfway to the door and snaked a hand around his hips.

“I’m not?” Sam cocked an eyebrow.

“I won’t let you,” Dean smiled mischievously, and the blood was immediately pumping faster through Sam’s veins. “I’m gonna keep you here for a while, and do things to you…” Dean promised in a low, needy voice.

“Oh, really? What kinds of things?” Sam’s voice sounded slightly gritty with desire.
“Dirty things,” Dean said, and they chuckled. Dean started to push Sam against the wall and corner him there.

“What if I don’t want to?” Sam teased, even though he was already hard and his breathing was already messy.

“You don’t get to say no to your big brother. He knows what you want, doesn’t he?” Dean licked Sam’s ear slowly and provocatively, and when he was done Sam was throbbing in his pants.

“I suppose…” Sam sounded weak, because his knees were weak and about to buckle under his weight. He absolutely loved the way Dean was taking control. When Dean pressed his wrists to both sides of his head against the wall, Sam felt heat spread inside of him and make him ache. Dean’s fiery green eyes and the promise in them was intoxicating.

The next thing he knew, Sam was being manhandled into bed, his clothes leaving his body and pooling on the floor. Dean’s hands were traveling all over his naked skin, eliciting all sorts of indistinguishable sounds from deep within Sam’s throat.

There was an edge to Dean that set fire to Sam’s arousal. Even within the care Dean would always have with him, there was a roughness in his touch, a greediness in his need that drove Sam wild.

They were soon naked, rubbing against each other in bed as their pleasure grew. Sam didn’t have patience for foreplay when Dean’s fingers tried to stretch him open. He was soon twisting and moaning, his body begging for Dean to just go ahead and take him.

Dean seemed to understand it, because soon he was inside of him, filling Sam with his steely hardness, pushing inside of him as Sam lifted his thighs and let them lock around Dean’s hips.

At first there was no sound, just clipped, heavy breathing as Dean’s hips picked up speed and thrust sensuously into Sam’s willing body. Then, as Dean began to stroke Sam’s sweet spot with every thrust, the moaning filled the room and fueled their movements with urgency.

“Dean!” Sam cried out when Dean’s hand closed around his dick and stroked. “So good…Damn!” Sam’s tongue darted out and licked at his upper lip, his body strung as tight as a bow beneath his brother’s.

Dean shut his eyes and could still see Sam’s pleasure-ridden face in his mind. He let himself feel every pulsing wave of lust and need and thrust faster, harder.

Sam couldn’t wait anymore to know what it felt like when Dean lost control as much as he did; Sam wanted his brother not to think of anything that wasn’t his own desperate need to come.

“Harder, Dean. C’mon,” Sam begged, wiggling his ass into the thrusts.

Dean narrowed his eyes and let his hands find Sam’s slick thighs. His fingers grasped the skin, slippery because of the sweat their friction had caused, and tried to open Sam further for his thrusts.

“Dean?”

“Yeah?”
“Fuck me.” Sam looked hotly into Dean’s eyes and voiced his even hotter plea. “Just _fuck me._”

Dean shut his eyes and let go. It had been building up for a while now, and Dean was no longer strong enough to hold back. He let his hips do the thinking and thrust blindly into the welcoming heat. Dean’s fingers tightened in a bruising grip that pulled Sam’s hips into his lap as his cock split him open from the inside.

“Ohhhmmm!” Sam moaned. The sound was so deliciously wanton that it drove Dean to lose all sense of finesse and slam his hips harder into Sam, until the sound of slick flesh rubbing was loud in the room, as loud as their ragged breathing.

“Yes! Dean!” Sam was shaking with the strength Dean put behind every thrust. It felt different now. It felt like Dean was really taking from him what he needed in the most primitive and irrational way—and Sam loved it. The thought of descending into chaos with Dean made Sam’s pleasure escalate to something impossibly good. There was nothing on his mind but how Dean felt; there was nothing in the entire world except for them, and the way they moved against each other, in perfect harmony, two desperate lovers blind for that one moment when they would fall over the edge.

Dean didn’t listen to anything else. There was only the tightness of Sam’s body around his cock, squeezing his orgasm out of him, and Dean thrust blindly into it, hungrily, greedily. He unleashed the raw need for release and gripped Sam tightly for the demanding pace his hips set.

Sam still had time to open his eyes and relish the sight of Dean lost in a haze of pleasure before he needed to come. He reached down his hand and squeezed himself, stroking a few times before it became too much and he coated his hand with his come.

Dean didn’t see it, but he felt the spasms around his dick and knew Sam was coming. His forehead creased and he thrust a few more times as a helpless slave to his libido.

“Fuck!!” Dean cried when his orgasm hit, and it hit hard. He collapsed on top of Sam as his body pulsed hotly inside of him, letting go of all that need that had been building up.

They both needed time to recover from it. Dean in particular. It was almost too much to take in, and his body was still being raked by shudders as it calmed down from his ecstasy.

When Dean looked into Sam’s eyes and saw him smiling, he relaxed.

“I’m good, before you ask,” Sam said, and Dean’s lips curved.

“Good. It’s good you’re good.”

Sam laughed lightly.

They stayed in bed awhile longer, until they were strong enough to get up and head to the shower.

Dean let the water cascade run and pulled Sam into the bathtub with him. It was a moment they often enjoyed when they were alone, making love, showering together, watching something good on TV, sleeping…as if nothing was wrong with the world. At least with their world.

Dean was washing himself with soap as Sam rubbed shampoo on his hair. They made small talk, nothing serious, nothing that could possibly disturb the peace they felt.
Nothing except for the blood Dean saw trickling down Sam’s thighs.

Dean froze and for a couple of seconds he really forgot how to breathe. Sam was still washing his hair, undisturbed, but Dean couldn’t un-see what he had just seen. His heart raced and his eyes widened, and he must have looked terrified, because when Sam turned around and saw him he frowned and looked lost.


“Blood,” was the only thing Dean could manage. He kept looking at the tiny trail of blood running down the inner side of Sam’s leg and disappearing with the water down the drain.

Sam’s forehead creased further and he followed Dean’s eyes to see what he meant. When Sam lowered his eyes at first he didn’t see anything. Then, instinctively, he put his hand between his legs, where he was feeling a bit sore, and then he understood what Dean meant by blood.

There was blood indeed. There was red blood on his hand, and then Sam realized it was trickling down his leg.

For a split second Sam thought he would snap. The memory was too vivid, the feelings were too raw and desperate. He was in the bright room when he saw blood trickling down his legs, after the man pushed his way inside him, after the man tore him up with his punishing thrusts.

“I’m so sorry. I hurt you, I…damn,” Dean stuttered as his heart raced out of control and his thoughts rushed too fast for him to get a grip on them.

Sam looked into his brother’s face and at the blood staining his hand, and he knew he had a decision to make, a decision he needed to make fast. A part of him was reeling, going back to the room, going back to the sight of blood and semen and filth on him; a part of him thought of the rags he wiped himself with, and the shame, the shame that felt as if his skin was being ripped off his body.

Nevertheless, if Sam let his mind go down that path, if he let the fear cloud his thoughts and take control of his actions, then Dean would be gone, too.

Sam could see, in those few seconds, that Dean needed him. Dean depended on Sam to save him, as Sam had depended on him many times. Right now, Dean was on the verge of some sort of bad attack, if not of panic then of guilt, and unless Sam reached out and took him out of that dangerous place, he knew their love would suffer the consequences.

He had a choice. He could give in to the panic escalating and demanding entrance in his mind or he could save Dean and thus save himself.

“I’m okay!” Sam said, quickly.

“There’s blood, I hurt you. I did, I’m sorry!” Dean looked hectic and devastated, and Sam knew he had to be fast and incisive.

“Dean! Dean, look at me!” Sam grabbed his brother’s arms. “I’m fine! This is nothing. This is nothing, okay? I’m good, and I’m happy with what we did, and you didn’t hurt me,” Sam said quickly, reassuring him.

“I did, the blood. Oh my God, Sam! How—”
“Dean, you’re freaking out. Stop. I’m fine. Look at me. I’m okay. You’re the one that’s upset.” Sam waited for Dean to actually listen to his words and understand them. “See? I’m really okay. It’s nothing, just a little blood, nothing serious. We’ll probably have to wait a few days before we do it again, that’s all,” Sam chuckled lightly.

Dean arched an eyebrow, as if he wasn’t entirely convinced.

“Do you mean it? Are you really okay? I shouldn’t have—”

“I am,” Sam cut him off. “I promise. Please believe me.” Sam begged into his eyes.

Eventually Dean nodded and relaxed.

“I do. But I’m still sorry.”

“It’s okay. Really. I loved every minute of it.”

Dean searched into Sam’s eyes, and when he didn’t see any cloud of doubt or fear, he nodded and let Sam pull him into a kiss. That moment Sam learned something very important—he learned that there might actually be a way to prevent a panic attack before it spun out of control, that given the right motivation, he could be strong enough to handle the signs of distress and not give in to them. Right now it was either shutting down his panic attack or losing all the trust he had been building in his intimacy with Dean, so Sam was forced to choose Dean and shut down his fears.

They stood in silence in the shower for a while, letting the water cascade down their bodies. Sam pressed their foreheads together and Dean’s fingers dug into his brother’s back. There seemed to be no words that could translate what they felt, so they didn’t say anything.

Sam’s blood in the bathroom was like a reminder of the joy and the perdition of their relationship. It seemed to contain all the trespassing and need to collide, to love each other until it hurt, and the idea that it would hurt.

There was blood on the bathroom floor, the same blood running through their veins, the same blood that was spilled on a bright floor and that brought them closer, and that now pumped faster and made them fall harder in love with each other.

If there was a price to pay for the thickening of their bond and trust, the brothers had paid it in blood.

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tbc...
Chapter 74

They finished the shower and went downstairs to fix themselves dinner. Dean cooked and Sam did the dishes, and they ate in front of the TV before they felt sleepy and ready to wrap up their day.

Upstairs, already in bed, Dean left the light on in the corridor, and turned them off in the bedroom. It was a bit darker than leaving them on in the bathroom and off everywhere else, but Sam didn’t complain.

They nestled under the covers and the warmth of their bodies so close together soon made it very comfortable.

“How are you?” Dean asked in a voice that was so soft it was barely audible. He had cooked dinner and watched TV, but the scene he had seen in the bathroom hadn’t left his mind during the entire evening.

“I’m okay,” Sam said in the same small, whispered voice.

“Are you sure? Doesn’t it hurt?”

Sam shook his head. He wasn’t in pain or anything. Yes, their lovemaking had been a bit rough, but no, he wasn’t injured and, most importantly, he didn’t regret anything.

“I’m sorry I hurt you,” Dean apologized again, his throat tight with guilt.

“Just stop it, okay? I’m fine, you didn’t hurt me. It was just a little blood, and I enjoyed every minute of it.”

Dean studied Sam’s eyes in the shadowed room.
“Please don’t be like that,” Sam begged. “I was looking forward to you losing control, and then I was just so happy you let it go…please don’t say you regret it, and promise me this won’t change what happened. I want it to be like that again. I want to know you’re giving in to this as much as I am.”

Dean understood Sam’s plea and his anguish, but he was still shaken with the idea of having drawn blood with his passionate thrusts.

“It won’t change. I just want to be careful so it doesn’t happen again, okay? Next time there will be more foreplay, and more lube.”

Sam smiled lightly, his cheeks probably coloring a little, even though Dean couldn’t notice it.

“Okay,” he agreed.

“I thought,” Dean began, but then seemed to consider his words halfway through his thought.

“You thought what?” Sam asked.

“I thought it would bring back some bad memories. I thought you would…” Dean trailed off.

“Have a panic attack?”

“Well, yeah.”

“I thought so, too,” Sam confessed. “But then it seemed like you would have one.”

Dean chuckled nervously. “Yeah, I guess it did.”

“I just couldn’t give in to something dark because you were already freaking out.”

Dean nodded. “That was brave. You could control it before it controlled you. That’s great news.” He felt real joy at realizing what Sam had been able to do.

“I guess so. I mean, if you were losing your shit, someone had to keep it together, right?”

“Right,” Dean laughed lightly. “Good night, Sammy.”

“Night.” Sam felt on his lips the kiss Dean gave him and closed his eyes before sighing with contentment.

He turned around in bed and found a comfortable position he could sleep in.

It took Dean a while longer to fall asleep. He kept thinking about everything that had been happening between Sam and he, and what had happened today. He couldn’t deny that the sight of blood had completely freaked him out, but knowing that Sam had been able to shut down his imminent panic attack to help him was wonderful news. And when at last Dean began to feel sleepy, he was hopeful with the progress Sam was making.

~ * ~
In the middle of the night, Dean was awoken by stirring against his body. He opened his eyes and saw his brother sleeping beside him. Dean blinked a few times and then felt it again, the tremors that traveled Sam’s body and caused him to shudder under the sheets.

The faint sound of heavier breathing was escaping Sam’s lips, and the tiny tremors that rocked his body told Dean he was having a nightmare.

Dean wasn’t surprised. After the great effort Sam had managed to go through when suppressing his fears before and trying to be strong, it wasn’t hard to imagine his subconscious would suffer some kind of pressure to deal with his unspoken fears.

Dean tightened his arms around Sam’s body and pulled him closer to his chest.

“Shhhh…it’s okay,” he whispered.

Sam shook in the embrace, but didn’t wake up. A gasp made its way past his throat and Sam panted for a few seconds, before he went limp and relaxed.

“Shhh…go back to sleep,” Dean murmured, caressing Sam’s hair and arm before letting his hand rest on his chest.

Sam didn’t open his eyes, but the movement had stopped. There was a long, deep sigh from his inflated lungs and Sam fell back into a dreamless sleep.

When he realized Sam was sleeping peacefully now, Dean allowed himself to drift into unconsciousness again.

~ * ~

The days turned into weeks, and the weeks turned into a couple of months that went by very fast. Sam and Dean’s relationship developed into something safe, comfortable and passionate that brought them closer and deepened their trust and need for each other. They learned their way into that new level of intimacy until they had learned each other’s body with details, and explored every inch of skin that could elicit pleasure when touched.

For these last two months things had been smoother than they had ever been since Sam’s kidnapping. There had been no episodes, no panic attacks, only the occasional nightmare. John and Sam hadn’t gotten into any sort of argument—Dean supposed their dad was still wary about upsetting Sam after the pantry episode, and had been overly lenient with them for the past weeks—and everything was at peace in Bobby’s house.

Although Sam hadn’t spoken of his past trauma again, he had not been scared or withdrawn either, and as long as Sam kept his good mood and seemed so easygoing, it was easy to cling to the hope that he was better and moving on.

Things were so peaceful, in fact, that for the past week neither Bobby nor John had left on any sort of hunting activity, which meant that Sam and Dean could hardly find enough privacy to kiss, let alone do anything else.
“I wonder when they’ll have to leave again,” Sam said absently to Dean as they watched Bobby and John talk to each other among the wrecked cars.

“At least they’re safe here,” Dean pointed out.

“I know. That’s not what I meant. It’s just that…well, I miss, you know. Being together,” Sam managed to say.

Dean looked into his eyes and smiled teasingly. “I know, baby. So do I.”

Dean looked at his dad and Bobby talking, and then suddenly a thought crossed his mind.

“You know what? If they won’t leave the house, maybe we could.”

“What do you mean?” Sam asked.

“Do you wanna take a break and go somewhere else with me?”

“Where?”

“Dad has this hunting cabin some two hundred miles away. Remember? You’ve been there before. There’s some hunting gear and it’s in a nice place. Quiet, comfy, no one to bother us.”

Sam began to realize what Dean was getting at. “Do you think Dad would let us go there? What would you tell him to convince him?”

“How about, hey Dad, can Sam and I have the keys to your hunting cabin? You know, just so I can fuck him stupid without anyone walking in on us?” Dean joked and Sam laughed.

“I think that would go down pretty well,” Sam said, sarcastically.

“Yeah. I don’t see how it would not work,” Dean added and laughed.

Dean approached their dad that same night, and asked him about the possibility of taking Sam out for a few days, for some change of scenery.

Normally, John would be wary of letting his kids go away without his supervision. It was difficult watching your kids travel when you were a regular parent, worried about casual stuff. Yet, when you knew exactly the kind of thing that lived in the dark, it was even harder to allow your kids space to go out of your sight.

“I think Sam could really use some time away,” Dean said, and studied John.

John looked at Sam, watching from a distance, and took a deep breath. He couldn’t really find it in him to say no. After the things he had put his son through, John didn’t think he could deny him something Dean believed would do him good.

“Yeah, why not. You can go. But there’s nothing in that cabin now. Make sure you pack plenty of food and gasoline, and take some weapons just in case.”

Dean smiled widely.
“We will.”

John found Sam’s eyes and looked at his son.

“Do you wanna go?” He asked, trying to establish communication with him. Sam hadn’t really talked much to him since the night in the pantry, and John’s heart ached at the thought he would not forgive him.

“I do,” Sam said quickly and shortly.

“Fine. You two can take the car and go. If I need to go out I’ll borrow one of Bobby’s cars.”

“Thanks, Dad,” Dean said.

“Just be careful out there and make sure you’re well-warded,” John warned.

“We will,” Dean reassured him.

“And Dean?” John grabbed his son’s wrist and looked into his eyes, lowering his voice. “Take care of your brother.”

Dean nodded. He had been expecting that, so he just looked over his shoulder to where Sam was, watching him intently, and smiled with complicity.

~ * ~

The next day Sam and Dean were packed and on their way to the hunting cabin to enjoy a few days alone. Dean was in such a good mood that he even let Sam choose the songs on the radio, and he was in an even better mood when Sam chose some classic rock songs Dean had shown him before.

When they arrived in the hunting cabin after a four-hour drive, they realized John wasn’t lying when he said there was nothing there. The place had been locked for over a year, and it looked very abandoned indeed. As soon as they walked in, in the middle of the afternoon, they had to spend a good hour cleaning the place out to make it neat and comfortable.

It was a small wooden cabin with just the essentials a hunter might need. There was a fridge and a large bed, a bookcase with some old books in it, a bathroom with a shower, and a fireplace, considering the winters there could be punishing.

Before they did anything else, Sam helped Dean make sure the devil’s traps were intact and they had holy water and salt to block the door and the windows. When they were done warding themselves and unpacking a few necessary items, they looked into each other’s eyes and smiled.

“We’re alone now. Know what this means?” Dean’s voice was low and seductive.

“That we can make all the noise we want?” Sam replied, just as hotly.

Dean chuckled, the sound muffled between Sam’s lips as they kissed.

Their arms held at each other with longing and desire. Dean explored Sam’s mouth and held Sam
possessively, feeling his blood burn through his veins with anticipation. Never would he have believed he would find everything he ever wanted in one person, in the one person he least expected to love like that, but Sam was everything he ever wanted. Every time Sam moaned under his touch and begged for more, Dean just wanted to eat him alive, to kiss him all over until his lips knew nothing but Sam’s taste, and his mind could think of nothing but how it felt when they were together.

Sam let Dean undress him and helped his brother get rid of his clothing, too. He sighed and shuddered when Dean closed his hand around his dick and made him harden quickly.

“Hm,” Sam moaned, his eyes rolling back in pleasure.

“Go ahead and moan, baby. You can be as loud as you want,” Dean teased and Sam chuckled, the sound cut short by a pleasured gasp that left his mouth.

Sam let his hands touch and explore, too, and soon he had Dean as hard and desperate as he felt, and they could no longer wait. It had been a while since they had last been together so completely, and they needed it badly.

Dean pulled Sam towards the bed and threw him lightly on it, following right behind him and squeezing his hipbone.

Sam placed both hands on the bed and arched his back when he felt Dean’s tongue licking between his shoulder blades and trailing lower, towards his lower back. He was lying on his stomach, and the moment Dean’s tongue licked at his entrance Sam bucked and tossed his head back. He got on his hands and knees to give Dean more access.

Dean grinned at the reaction he got, his cock throbbing appreciatively at the sight of Sam far gone and ready for more.

“Please…do it, Dean,” Sam begged, his eyes half-closed, his body afire.

Dean still took time to prepare him. He lubed his fingers and worked Sam open to the rising moaning echoing in the room. When he was satisfied he wouldn’t hurt his brother, he lubed himself and positioned his cock at Sam’s opening, ready to take him from behind.

Sam groaned and shut his eyes when Dean slid in. The feeling of being filled with Dean’s cock was so good it was almost too much. Sam let his head hang between his arms and relaxed around the invasion.

“Gonna ride you so good, Sammy,” Dean let his chest cover Sam’s back and his lips find his ear. “You want that?”

“Fuck, yeah.” Sam pushed back into Dean’s cock, impaling himself deeper.

Dean closed his hand around Sam’s hard-on and stroked him at the same time his hips started moving, picking up speed gradually.

Sam gasped and panted with the double pleasure. Dean’s hand squeezed his cock and his thrusts were soon slamming against his sweet spot. In bed, supporting the weight of his body on all fours, Sam was barely strong enough not to fall apart under the pleasure. “Dean! More!” The keening plea sent shock waves down Dean’s spine and he thrust faster, his free hand holding on to Sam’s hip and pulling him closer.
Dean felt the tightness wrapped around his cock and shuddered at how hot Sam felt inside. Every
time he pushed into his body, Dean felt like he would melt under the burning pleasure building in his
loins and throbbing at the tip of erection.

“…wanna split you open on my cock, Sammy…fuck you so good…” Dean was too far gone, his
pleasure building up higher and fiercely, and the fact that he knew Sam was right there with him,
giving in just as much to the same aching desire, allowed him to indulge.

“Yeah, do it. Fuck me,” Sam moaned unabashedly. He pushed hard against Dean and cried when
the hand around his cock squeezed and jerked him faster. “Dean!” Sam’s panting was mingled with
moaning towards a crescendo he could not control. He let himself fall over the edge and tensed when
his orgasm hit, his muscles squeezing around Dean’s cock as his come covered Dean’s hand.

Sam nearly collapsed. He let himself fall on the bed, his cheek pressed to the pillow, his ass arching
invitingly for Dean to find release, too.

“Fuck,” Dean cursed, closing both hands around Sam’s hips and thrusting harder. “Gonna come,
too, Sammy. You’re too hot. I can’t…” Dean groaned when his balls jerked and he came, filling
Sam with his seed and only letting go a few seconds later, when his breathing was a mess and his
body was satisfied.

Dean let himself fall heavily in bed beside Sam and sighed with pleasure. He pulled Sam closer and
they kissed.

“Is this like a honeymoon?” Sam asked suddenly, and Dean laughed.

“Why do you say that?”

“Cause I just wanna do that over and over again. I don’t care if I can’t sit for a week.”

Dean grinned and kissed Sam’s head.

“We can do whatever you want, as many times as you want.”

“Good. I think now I’m ready to see if we have running water in this shower.”

They waited a while longer in bed before moving and heading to the bathroom.

~ * ~

When they left the shower, it was getting dark inside the cabin as night began to fall outside.

Sam didn’t even bother putting on clothes, and neither did Dean. It felt good being alone and having
privacy, and there was not a worry on his mind when Sam walked towards the light switch and
flicked it on.

Except nothing happened. Sam tried again a few times but nothing happened, and when there was
no light to chase away the shadows creeping everywhere, Sam’s heart raced and he looked for
Dean’s eyes, staring at him worriedly.
“The lights don’t work,” he said, his voice pregnant with urgency.

“They don’t?” Dean went for a different light switch and tried, unsuccessfully, to turn it on as well.

“No. What are we gonna do?” Sam knew there was an edge to his voice, something he didn’t really know how to handle.

“Well, good thing your brother here had a feeling this might happen. I brought a lot of candles; I’ll go get them from the car.”

Sam watched as Dean left and returned a moment later, carrying, as he had said, a whole lot of candles.

He watched as Dean started to light them everywhere inside the cabin, and he helped Dean place the candles in every corner, until there was a yellow light shining inside the cabin, making it feel even cozier, and certainly safer.

“How’s that?” Dean asked, when he was done.

“Much better. Thanks.”

“Wanna eat something now?”

Sam nodded and he and Dean shared some food they had brought before they went to bed a couple of hours later, with the candles burning silently in the cabin.

Sam was sleeping. It was a weird thing to do in a dream, but he knew he was sleeping. He was still barely aware of anything when he felt a body weighing on top of his, and as his eyes fought the sleepy feeling to try and understand what was going on, Sam felt a hard column of flesh probing between his legs. His heart raced. He took a deep breath and the smell of citrus filled his lungs.

Sam parted his lips to scream but a large hand closed his mouth and muffled his cry when the man took him from behind, spreading him open and tearing him apart with the raw penetration.

Sam writhed and bolted, his hands trying to uncover his mouth, his hips trying to move away from the invasion. ‘No! NOOO! STOP!!’ Sam thought desperately and moaned and thrashed, but the hand kept his mouth firmly shut, his pleas securely muffled, as the heavier body thrust into his captive one, hurting him and tainting him with a shame Sam couldn’t seem to wash away.

Sam’s eyes were fully open now, and darkness hit him like a slap to the face.

“No...no...no! NO!!” he screamed.

“Sam? What’s wrong? I’m here, wake up.” Dean’s voice from behind him in bed pulled Sam out of his troubled dreams and he looked around himself. It was dark in the room, and for a moment he was completely disoriented.

“Where am I? Where am I, Dean?”

“We’re in Dad’s hunting cabin, remember? We came here yesterday. To be alone,” Dean explained
quickly.

“Why is it so dark?”

“The draft must have blown some of the candles out. I’ll light others up.”

“Please.” Sam watched as Dean got up and lit a few more candles around the room until it was fairly bright again. Dean also made sure their salt trails were intact before he went back to bed. When his brother was within his reach, Sam snuggled closer and relaxed against his warmth.

“Nightmare?” Dean asked.

“I don’t know. I think so. It could be a nightmare, it could be a memory…” Sam shuddered at the idea that the thing in his mind had not been just a nightmare. The image of the man taking him from behind as his hand covered his mouth and kept him from screaming, as well as the feeling when he pushed inside Sam’s sore entrance and dominated him with the sheer weight of his body was haunting. “What if it’s a memory? What if it really happened?” Sam seemed anguished.

“Does it matter? It’s in the past. It won’t happen again,” Dean tried to help. “Do you want to tell me what you dreamed of?”

Sam looked into his brother’s eyes under the yellowish light of the candles. He tried to think of the right words, but his lips quivered and his heart raced.

“You’re shaking,” Dean said, softly.

Sam thought of how hard it was to think of what happened, and how afraid he was of telling Dean everything.

“It’s not so much what happened,” Sam blurted.

“What?”

“It’s not so much what happened,” Sam repeated. “It’s how I feel about what happened.” Sam thought of his shame, of his begging, of breaking down and crying like a little boy as the man hurt him and reduced him to a whimpering mass of hurting.

“How do you feel, Sammy?” Dean asked intently, his eyes almost wrapping Sam in a warm embrace.


“It’s what he did, but it’s also what I did…” He raped me. I cried and begged, weakly and desperately.

Dean frowned.

“Do you love me no matter what?” Sam asked.

“Of course I love you. I love you with all my heart,” Dean said, his eyes never once leaving his brother’s. “How do you feel, Sam? What did you do?”
“I’m afraid to say it.”

“You can trust me.”

“Please…no, not yet. Not here.” Sam shook his head. That cabin didn’t feel very safe. Waking up to darkness made it harder to organize his thoughts and Sam didn’t know how to begin.

“What can I do for you now? Hm? How can I help, then?”

“Make love to me again? I want to feel you as close as possible.” Sam wanted to convince himself that Dean could actually love him enough to handle the truth and be there to catch the pieces Sam might fall apart into when the truth was done with him. “Can you…can you—?” Sam swallowed hard.

Dean moved under the sheets and lay on top of Sam slow and gently.

“Yes, love. Of course I can.”

They were naked under the covers, and they had what they needed within reach to ease the way. This time they were slow and gentle, unlike the rushed and burning need from before. This time it was soft and tender, with small, warm kisses and slow, languid thrusts when Dean entered him again.

They sighed in unison and didn’t move for a while. Dean looked down into Sam’s eyes and kissed him again. Sam wrapped his thighs around Dean’s hips as his brother set an unhurried rhythm of thrusting in and out.

Sam felt Dean’s tongue inside his mouth, licking, sucking, begging for his secrets, and he relaxed into the pleasure of Dean’s knowing touch. It felt so good that Dean knew how to touch him, how to drive him slowly and certainly to a climax.

“Mmm,” Sam moaned, the sound a feeble plea against Dean’s ear, his body clutching Dean’s as his thrusts grew longer and faster. The sweet thrusting was a caress against his pleasure spot, and soon Sam was so aroused he thought he would burst.

“Love you, babe,” Dean whispered, his hips perfectly settled between Sam’s thighs, bringing them closer to the edge, helping them find what they needed so badly.

Sam’s fingers dug into Dean’s back and he shuddered uncontrollably when he came. The moment Dean felt him letting go, he stopped holding back and found release as well, shaking as a wave of pleasure washed over him from head to toe.

They didn’t move for a long moment. Then, slowly, Sam nestled against Dean’s chest and relished the warm embrace pulling him into a feeling of safety.

“Dean…?”

“Yeah?”

“Will you love me forever?”

Dean smiled.
“I’ll love you till I die. And then when I die, I’ll keep loving you just the same.”

Sam smiled, too.

“Do you believe in soul mates?” He asked.

Dean squeezed him tight and kissed his head.

“I do now.”

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tbc...
Chapter 75

Thank you so much *kittenbot* for helping me a lot with beta-ing and suggestions for the chapters!

Chapter 75

Sam and Dean spent three days in the hunting cabin enjoying each other’s company and giving in to their love without having to worry about right or wrong or being caught. The day after they arrived they went out and bought some light bulbs, which Dean changed as soon they got back, and there were no more incidents, no nightmares, nothing but the sheer happiness of being together. They made love as often as they could handle it, and when they returned to Bobby’s house they were extremely relaxed and pleased.

During the next month, there was no incident regarding any of the Winchester family members. Everything was smooth and peaceful, aside from the occasional ghost that needed to be hunted every now and then.

Sam hadn’t had nightmares, let alone any episodes of a panic attack. He had been training with Dean, and he often joined his brother when he had to go to town and pick something up. Leaving Bobby’s house didn’t bother him anymore, and if his days continued to be as they were now, Sam felt he could really relax and start to enjoy his life without the haunting memory of what had happened to him.

The four of them were together for an entire week before Bobby had to leave. He packed his things and geared up on weapons to deal with a problem he believed he could handle on his own. Bobby left them after promising he would be back in no longer than three or four days.

When he found himself alone with his kids, John waited for the right moment to approach his younger son. He waited until a morning when Dean woke up earlier and asked him to go run some errands. When Sam woke up an hour later, he was alone in Bobby’s house with his father.

John watched his son come down the stairs and ask for his brother before he even said anything. After reassuring him that Dean would be back soon, John watched as Sam went into the kitchen and fixed himself breakfast.

He waited for Sam to finish his cereal and then pulled a chair to sit across from him.

“Hey,” he began.

Sam looked at his father slowly and put down his spoon.
“Hey, Dad.”

“How have you been?”

“I’m good,” Sam said.

“Dean said the hunting cabin was nice. I’m glad you enjoyed it.”

“It was. Thanks for letting us go.” Sam thought fondly of those few days they had spent together. He wished they could go back and do something like that again.

“No problem. I really want what is best for you, Sam. Even if sometimes I don’t go about it in the best way.”

Sam wondered if his dad would start talking about something really personal or really awkward.

“Sam…I just want to say that I’m really happy to see you doing better. I know there’s still a lot you keep inside, but I just thought I’d let you know how strong you’ve been.”

“Thanks.” Sam swallowed hard and lowered his eyes to the tablecloth.

“About that night in the pantry…” John’s heart raced and his eyes strayed.

“Dad,” Sam cut him off. “You don’t have to. It’s okay. We don’t need to talk about that,” Sam offered.

“I’m sorry I put you through that. I know it wasn’t right. I guess I just wasn’t thinking straight, you know. I almost lost you that night.”

Sam didn’t want to remember that night. Or any of those nights that had caused him to feel less than good. He was happy, and peaceful, and he didn’t want to let anything ruin that for him.

“It’s okay, Dad,” Sam said again, hoping his father would understand they didn’t need to talk about that night.

“Sam? You know I love you, right? You’re my son. I know I might not say that often but—”

“You never say it at all…” Sam said softly, and a sad little chuckle left his lips.

“I know,” John admitted. “I’m sorry. But you see, I’m sure there are things about you and how you react to stuff that you wish you could change, right? And then because of everything you went through, you find yourself unable to change, or to show a different reaction than the one that feels…I don’t know, safest. Does that make any sense?”

“I guess…”

“I just mean that sometimes I wish I could react differently to stuff that happens, but I have my own darkness, Sam, and I’m not good at all when it comes to dealing with it.”

That caught Sam’s attention. He looked his father in the eyes and thought about his words.
John seemed shaken with his own words. He took a deep breath and got up.

“I… I just…”

“I love you, too, Dad,” Sam said. There was still a lot of hurting in his relationship with his dad, but Sam knew John had just shared something really intimate, and Sam could relate to that feeling of being unable to handle a certain dark corner of one’s soul.

John nodded and smiled lightly. His eyes softened and, for a moment, Sam saw a glimpse of the vulnerable core of John’s feelings as they surfaced briefly.

“Have a good day, son,” John said and left the kitchen quickly.

~ * ~

The following day, John kept telling Dean about this hunt he would go on. He was pretty excited with the prospect of hunting a Vetala. It would be the first time he ran into one of those creatures, and he was getting ready to leave.

Dean couldn’t hide his excitement either. A Vetala was not a creature one stumbled upon very often, and few hunters could say they had had the chance to hunt down one. He wouldn’t be lying if he said that a part of him really wanted to take part in that hunt.

Sam heard Dean and his dad share information on the Vetala, and he could see the way Dean was curious and eager. He didn’t need to be told how much Dean was excited to follow John on this hunt—Sam could see it in his eyes.

“There might be more than one, so I gotta be extra careful.”

“It’s a shame Bobby isn’t here. You should have backup,” Dean said.

“I agree,” Sam added. “Why don’t you go?”

Dean looked at his brother.

“I mean it. I can see you’re all curious about seeing this monster. You should go with Dad. I’ll be fine on my own.”

Dean looked deeply into Sam’s eyes, and then looked at his father briefly.

“I can’t go. We don’t know when Bobby is coming back; I don’t want you to be alone.”

“I’ll be fine,” Sam said. “Really. You can go, hunt down this Vetala thing, and be back in a couple of days. I’ll survive.” Sam smiled.

“Do you mean that?” John asked.

“Yes. I can be alone. Really.”

Both John and Dean looked unconvinced, so Sam sighed and tried again.
“Look, Dean and I have been staying by ourselves since we were kids. I’m fifteen now, Dad. I’ve done this a hundred times before. I know I didn’t want to be alone last time, but I’m feeling better now. In fact, I really want to do it. You know, show myself I can.”

“I think that’s great, Sam. If your brother wants to come, you can stay here in Bobby’s house. I trust you can take care of yourself, and I know nothing will happen in a couple of days.”

Dean looked from his dad to his brother. He wasn’t sure he was really hearing that conversation. Did Sam really, really mean that? Would he be okay with staying alone? Did he want that?

“So, what do you say Dean? Wanna come?”

Dean looked into Sam’s eyes and saw nothing but serene agreement. Still, his heart needed a bit more than that, and Dean turned to look at his dad again.

“Can you wait a minute? I want to talk to Sam alone. If you wait a few minutes I might go, too.”

“Fine.” John seemed happy with the idea. “I’ll be waiting in the car. If you wanna come, you know what to pack.”

Dean nodded. He and Sam watched as John left the house carrying a duffel bag.

“Sam…” Dean began.

“I really mean it,” Sam said again, before his brother could say anything.

“I know. Let’s just…let’s talk upstairs? I’m afraid Dad will forget something here, you know…”

Sam understood what Dean meant and followed him to their room.

When they were alone upstairs Dean started again.

“If I leave with Dad, are you sure you’re gonna be alright? Do you really want this?”

“I do. I know it sounds weird because the last time Dad wanted you to leave me here and go I couldn’t stand the idea. But it’s different now, Dean. I feel better. I’ve been feeling better for the last month. You know that.”

“I do,” Dean agreed. “But I wouldn’t dream of leaving you alone unless you’re absolutely sure that’s something you want to do.”

“It is,” Sam said. “I’ve been feeling stronger, you know…after my birthday, and the fact that nothing happened…and then everything that’s going on between us…I really feel like I can handle it, Dean. Actually, I kind of want to prove to myself that I can, you know? I can be here, in Bobby’s home, for a couple of days and be fine. I can stay here and not freak out or anything. I guess I need that,” he confessed.

Dean nodded. “I thought that’s what you meant downstairs, but I needed to be sure.”

“You can go and come back in one piece. I’ll be waiting here.”
Dean stepped closer to his brother and let his fingers touch Sam’s cheek. He felt the warmth and softness of his brother’s skin and took a deep breath.

“I love you so much. Just tell me you want me to stay and I’ll be here with you. I swear.”

Sam smiled and his heart raced. “I know,” he whispered, his voice almost shaky with emotion. “I know you will. But I mean it, Dean. I’m really fine with the idea. I want you to do this; I know you’re eager to. And I’m eager to show myself I can handle it here, too.”

“Are you sure?” Dean let his hand rest at the back of Sam’s neck and drew him closer. “Because if Dad goes then we’ll be alone. We could do it in every fucking room of this house…” He lowered his voice and chuckled hotly.

Sam felt a hot chill spread inside of him and he chuckled, too. He parted his lips and his heart slammed against his chest when their lips touched. For a moment, Sam closed his eyes and felt the warmth of his brother’s lips caressing his own. Sam let his tongue find Dean’s and they kissed slowly, lovingly.

“I’m sure,” Sam said when the kiss broke. “We can do it when you come back. I’ll be here.”

Dean stepped back and looked into Sam’s hazel eyes.

“You really want this, don’t you?”

Sam nodded.

“Well, I’ll let you be here then. I believe you can stay here on your own.”

“Thanks.”

“Dad has his cell phone. You make sure you answer when we call, and if anything happens, you call us.”

“Okay.”

“I mean it, Sam,” Dean stressed. “If the minute I walk out of that door and you find yourself alone here, you decide you no longer want to go ahead with this, just call us and I’ll come back.”

Sam smiled. “Alright.”

“Do you understand? I don’t care how far I am, I don’t care if I have a damn Vetala breathing down my neck, you call me and I’ll come back.”

“I got it,” Sam laughed, lightly.

“Fine. I’ll get my things then.”

Sam watched as Dean threw a few items into a duffel bag much similar to the one John had already packed. When he was done, he stood before Sam again and looked into his eyes.

“Promise you’ll take care?”
“I do.”

Dean smiled. “You’re awesome, you know that? I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

Sam closed his eyes and they kissed for a long, lingering moment before Dean left the house and joined their dad in the Impala.

~ * ~

The moment Sam found himself alone, he took a deep breath and relished the calm he felt inside. He could totally do that, he thought. A couple of days would go by so fast he wouldn’t even have time to miss Dean. Except that he missed him already.

Sam spent the rest of the morning cleaning his room and then he thought he would organize Bobby’s books. He spent over an hour sitting by the piles of books, going through different titles and leafing through old pages. To Sam’s surprise, he realized the books were actually neatly organized. Bobby had already put them in order, even though it looked like they were messily arranged everywhere. Sam took his time to dust off the books and read some parts of the ones that called his attention.

When he was tired, it was the beginning of the afternoon and he felt hungry. Sam went into the kitchen and fixed himself a quick meal. He was washing the dishes when the phone rang.

“Yes? Dean? Where are you?” Sam listened as his brother said they were almost arriving at their destination, and answered when he asked if everything was all right.

After reassuring Dean that he was fine, Sam hung up the phone and thought about what his next activity would be. It had been a few hours since his dad and Dean had left, and Sam was proud of himself for the peacefulness he felt being alone in Bobby’s home.

~ * ~

Dean seemed nervous. John went into the motel to check them in and when he came back to the Impala, he found his son pacing back and forth in front of it.

“What’s up, Dean?”

“Hm?” Dean seemed startled. “Nothing. It’s okay.”

“He’s fine,” John said, reading his son’s mind. “You talked to him a few hours ago. Relax. It’ll be okay. Let’s go in.”

“Right,” Dean agreed, but his heart was tight in his chest.

He looked at the sky and saw the clouds moving fast and darkening.

“I think it’s gonna rain,” he said.
John followed Dean’s eyes and looked up at the sky as well.

“Yeah, it’s probably gonna rain hard. Don’t worry about it. Sam is safer than us.”

Dean nodded again. He really wanted to believe it like his father did, but there was something troubling his heart, and Dean couldn’t help but wonder whether he should have really left Sam alone.

~ * ~

A few hours later, when Sam left the shower, he realized it was getting dark. The afternoon sun cast its last weak, orange rays, into the rooms of the house, and Sam knew that soon it would be night. He set out to turn on the lights everywhere in the house. He started upstairs, and as he made his way downstairs, Sam turned the lights on in the kitchen, in the living room, and everywhere else where there was a switch he could flick on.

When Sam walked towards to the door to lock it, he heard the loud blowing of the wind against the windows and stepped outside a moment to look into the darkening sky.

“It’s gonna rain hard,” Sam said casually, as he watched the dark clouds start to gather in the sky.

He made sure to lock all the doors, and because the wind grew strong and louder, Sam was forced to shut down all the windows too, to keep them from slamming hard.

Sam went into the kitchen and fixed himself dinner. He turned on the TV and nestled on the sofa to watch a movie, and that was when he heard the first thunder cutting through the sky. Soon there was a white spike of lightening brightening up the house even more.

“Yep, a storm is coming,” Sam said to himself as he flipped through the channels. It didn’t bother him much, though. He wasn’t afraid of thunder or lightening, he was actually quite fond of sleeping to the sound of rain falling.

Sam settled for an interesting scene on TV and ate his dinner quietly in Bobby Singer’s bright house as the storm roared outside the walls.

~ * ~

Dean hung up the phone and looked edgy. John was preparing his silver knives on the bed and caught Dean’s anxious mood with the corner of his eye.

“What’s up, Dean?” He asked, already knowing the answer.

“Sam didn’t answer the phone.”

“Well, I’m sure he’s in the bathroom or something. Chill out, Dean. Sam can take care of himself, and he would’ve called if he wanted you back there.”

Dean looked into his father’s eyes and tried really hard to see it the way he did. But the truth was, the
more Dean tried to let it go and be cool about it, the tighter his heart seemed to shrink with worry that grew and squeezed his heart inside his chest.

That exact moment, a loud thunder cut through the sky and the following moment they could hear the sound of fat drops of rain beginning to fall.

“It’s just a storm. Sam can handle that,” John said.

Dean knew that was true. His father was probably right. Sam was fine, he didn’t answer the phone because he was showering or something. He knew his brother was okay with storms. Sam was probably going to sleep all night long, really cozy in bed to the sound of rain.

But why couldn’t Dean seem to shrug off the ominous feeling he felt? Why couldn’t he just ignore the icy cold fear in the pit of his stomach telling him of imminent danger?

All Dean’s senses were alert, and when another thunder cut through the sky and lightning filled the room, Dean shivered from head to toe and even his eyes stung with an eerie sensation.

“Oh, crap,” John said when the lights in the room went suddenly out. “Stupid storm. Now that’s gonna make things easier,” John muttered sarcastically, and a moment later the lights were back on. “That’s better.”

“Fuck!” Dean cried out.

“What?”

“The lights!” He looked panicked.

“Yeah, they went out, but they’re back on again. It’s probably this storm—”

“The lights, Dad! Sam!”

John went pale. Dean wouldn’t have to say anything else. John already understood everything that was going through his son’s mind, and his heart raced.

John knew that if he left town the Vetala would make more victims. He knew he had to save the ones it was probably feeding off as they spoke. And he also knew that Dean could not come with him for that.

He tossed the Impala keys to Dean and nodded gravely.

“Go.”

~ * ~

Sam was almost sleeping halfway through the movie. The sound of the rain falling outside and of the wind rattling against the windows was making his eyelids heavy. Sam stirred in the sofa and yawned. He sat and stared at the television, blinking a few times to fight off his sleepiness.

Sam was thinking about whether or not he should just turn off the TV and go to bed, or if he could
try and see the movie until the end when everything changed.

In a moment, all the lights were on in every room of Bobby’s house.

In the next, darkness came with a loud thunder, and Sam found himself surrounded by a thick and dark nothing.

All his sleepiness seemed to have been magically removed, and Sam stood absolutely still as all of his body came to life, his senses sharpening with alertness, his eyes widening and his hearing trying to capture the smallest sound.

For the next few minutes, Sam didn’t move. He was absolutely petrified in his position. He didn’t even dare turn his head for fear of what he would see.

Or worst—what he wouldn’t see.

Sam blinked a few times and let his eyes take in the house. Except there was no more house around him. Sam was surrounded by the kind of darkness he had experienced only in one other place in his life, and before he knew it, his breathing had become audible and his fingertips were growing cold.

The fact that all the windows were shut and that the place had been so bright before, caused the house to fall into a blanket of pitch black nothing, and Sam’s heart raced when he raised his hand before his eyes and realized he couldn’t see it.

“It’s the storm,” he told himself aloud, and didn’t like the way his throat felt dry. “It’s a blackout, that’s all.”

‘Or is it?’ A voice in his head whispered, and Sam didn’t like the shudder that traveled his body when he listened to it.

“Of course it’s a storm. I just need to stay calm,” Sam told himself as his breathing slowly increased in intensity and speed.

‘Are you sure it’s just the storm? Isn’t it too much of a coincidence? It’s the first time you stay alone and suddenly it’s all dark?’ The voice whispered doubt and fear, and Sam knew he shouldn’t listen to it, but how could he not? It was just darkness and him now, just him and this voice.

“What do you mean? This is crazy,” Sam argued with his thoughts. ‘Maybe it’s not. Maybe it makes perfect sense. It’s the first time you’re alone, the first time you’re vulnerable. Neither Dean nor Dad are anywhere near. If the demon has been looking for you, that’s when he’ll strike.’

Sam started to shake. “No,” he whispered. “This is not true. The demon’s gone,” he tried to convince himself as he looked at the darkness all around him. Sam had only been this deep in the dark when he came...when he came to take him and...

“He’s dead,” Sam said out loud to himself. “The man is dead. Dad killed him,” he tried to reason with his escalating fear.

‘Did he? Have you seen the body?’ “No, I didn’t see a body, but Dean said—” ‘So there’s no body. This means anything could’ve happened to the man. Maybe he got away, maybe they didn’t want to tell you. Maybe he’s coming back now.’
“No!” Sam cried, his breathing a mess by now. His throat was closing in on his air passage and his legs were shaky.

Sam began to look around himself, and the more he looked, the more he realized he was surrounded by the same darkness he had fallen victim to before.

Suddenly, the wind blew loud and fast against the windows making a noise that caused Sam to jump, startled, and shudder.

“I need to stay calm, I need to—” Even as he chanted the words, Sam felt his control slipping. He raised his hands again, but there was nothing before his eyes.

He was alone and in utter darkness, and Sam knew what happened when the lights were turned off.

The similarity to what he had experienced for three long months was too much on his senses. One moment he was in a bright place, the next he couldn’t see anything before his eyes. He was disoriented and helpless, exactly the way the demon had always prepared him to be for when the man came to find him…

“No…no…” Sam felt his panic winning the battle and taking over his thoughts. He tried so hard to hold on to a good thought, to a hopeful memory, but the darkness was too strong, and his brain was too scarred from it not to surrender.

Sam didn’t know how much time had passed, but he continued standing still in the same spot, shaking like a leaf, his pupils dilated and his panting loud and clipped.

A window opened somewhere in the house, the noise loud in the silent house. ‘What was that? I locked the doors!’ Sam’s mind screamed and he shuddered uncontrollably. ‘It must’ve been a window…but what if it wasn’t?’

“Oh my God, he’s coming. The man…” Sam choked on his gasp.

In his mind there was only the familiar sequence of brightness, darkness and the sound of a door opening. The man was coming for him. He was alive and he was coming for him again.

When the window slammed shut forcefully, the sound startled Sam and made him lose the last shred of control he had been desperately clinging to.

Sam’s shield came tumbling down so fast he barely understood what was happening.

As the darkness inside his mind was set free and his worst memories burst loose, Sam had nowhere to run to, nowhere to hide.

Suddenly, Sam was again the boy waiting in the dark for his next torture.

After all this time, his wall was gone and Sam screamed.

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For all he knew, Sam was back in the same battle he had fought over and over for three months, the same battle he had lost time and again to darkness and the pain he would find in there.

As he looked around himself to the nothing embracing him, Sam knew he had to be fast and quiet if he wanted to escape the man. Because the man was there to get him again, this much he knew. And when he found him, he would do stuff to him again. He would cut him and whip him, and he would rape him, too, until Sam begged again, and he would do it all night long until Sam opened his eyes to a pool of blood around himself.

Sam was shaking and panting. His breathing was a mess, and his eyes were wildly open. He took his first tentative steps, his ears sharp to try and listen to anything.

Sam tried to touch his way around darkness, knowing he needed to find something so he could fight back. He needed a weapon; he needed something he could use against the man before he caught him.

“Oh, God…” Sam choked on his own despair. The fear of being caught and taken to the bright room again was almost strong enough to keep him paralyzed, but Sam forced himself to move. He had to at least try to escape.

Sam was moving slowly in the living room, as blind as darkness would have him, trying not to trip as he advanced in the middle of the black around him. In the dark of the night, the only sound Sam could hear was that of the rain falling hard, and the thunder echoing somewhere not too far. However, a moment later there was another sound in the middle of that, and it was the sound of a car coming, and of gates opening.

“He’s here.” Sam’s heart seemed to be beating in his throat and his hands were shaking hard. “He’s come for me.”

Sam looked around in the dark and thought he saw a shadow pass him by. He jumped and a loud whimper left his mouth.

A door opened somewhere in the house, and Sam felt cold to his core.

‘I'm here, boy…I'm here to finish everything.’
Sam wondered where that voice had come from.

“Who’s there?” Sam was shaking, his mind shattering as the worst memories danced before his eyes.

‘It’s me, Sam. We’re gonna have some fun before I kill you. Are you ready to feel me again?’

Sam screamed and shut his eyes. Without his wall to keep his fears at bay, Sam’s mind was easy prey, and that was when the hallucinations took control.

~ * ~

When Dean parked the car in Bobby’s yard and looked at the house, his heart sank. The lights were all out in every single room of Bobby’s house, and Dean could only imagine what he would see when he stepped inside.

He rushed to the front door and unlocked it with his key. He was met by the utter silence inside the place.

“Sam?” he called out loudly, cutting through that silence. “Sam, are you there?”

Dean waited but there was no reply. His heart raced and his mind went crazy with a thousand worried thoughts fighting for Dean’s attention at the same time. He walked in further and pulled a small flashlight from his pocket. He used the beam of light to try and see something around Bobby’s living room, but there was nothing. As Dean’s eyes adjusted to the complete darkness around him, he heard the noise of hurried footsteps.

“Sam!” Dean tried to follow the sound. He couldn’t understand a thing when he heard the sound of clumsy footsteps desperately moving away. “Sam, it’s me! It’s Dean!”

~ * ~

Sam stumbled his way up the stairs until he was on the second story. His blood was pumping so loud that it was buzzing in his ears. All Sam knew was that he wasn’t alone. The man had made his way into the house, and he was coming for him. Sam needed to be fast. He needed to try and protect himself before it was too late.

In the middle of Sam’s rampant of despair and panic, he couldn’t have recognized his brother’s voice or the calling of his name. Sam’s brain had shut down to reason. His brain only knew chaos and pain, and Sam would fight to his last breath before he was dragged back to his captivity, or before the man’s dirty body was inside of him again, pounding and robbing him of all his dignity.

Sam’s palms were flat against the walls as he made his way through the rooms with blind, urgent steps. He walked into his bedroom, his vision now a little more adapted to the darkness, and fell to his knees before the bed.

A loud thunder rumbled through the house when Sam found the box beneath his bed. He knew what was inside that box—his only chance of defeating a man much stronger than himself, a man who
could see in the dark and find him if he wanted.

~ * ~

Dean found the stairs and tried to see what was going on upstairs. Was it his brother? Was someone else there in the house with them? Why hadn’t Sam responded to the sound of his voice? What was going on?

Dean supposed Sam was freaking out, God knew how long he had been in that darkness until Dean arrived, but why hadn’t he rushed to meet him?

“Sam? Sam, it’s me! I came back! I’m here to help you. Where are you?” Dean started to make his way upstairs when his flashlight stopped working. “Great. Just fucking great,” he whispered, hitting the thing a couple of times before deciding the battery had really died on him.

“Stay away!”

Dean heard the scream and froze where he was, in the middle of the dark hallway.

“Sam?”

“Don’t come close! I’m warning you! Stay away!” Sam screamed.

Dean’s heart skipped a beat and his breath escaped his lips quick and urgently. Just how messed up was Sam?

Dean found the door to the room Sam and he shared and walked inside, ready to comfort his brother from his fears.

“Sammy, it’s me… What the—” The moment Dean stepped inside, though, it was sheer luck that made Sam miss the shot. Dean barely knew what had happened when he heard the unmistakable sound of a bullet zooming very near his ear and missing his head by little.

“Fuck!” Dean cursed and stepped quickly outside the room, his heart racing with the near-death taste in his mouth. What the hell was going on?

~ * ~

Inside the bedroom, Sam was crouching in a corner of the room, pressed against the walls, the gun raised high in his hand. The man was just outside the room, but if he thought he would get him, he had another thing coming.

“Sam! Please put down the gun! Sam, it’s me! Dean! Put it down!”

Sam was shaking. He held the gun tightly, his hands sweating, his eyes wild as madness shone in them. Sam couldn’t understand a word of what he heard. His mind was in such a high level of psychosis that he couldn’t make out a word Dean said, he couldn’t even understand who that person trying to get inside his room was. All Sam’s brain knew was that the man was back. The man was
trying to get him, the man was going to take advantage of Sam being alone, and if he got his hands on him, the man would hurt him so bad that Sam would wish he was dead. He could not handle it again. The handcuffs, the pain, the bleeding, the shame… He could not, would not…

“Sam, please—”

The moment the man tried to walk in again, Sam didn’t think twice before shooting. He shot twice, crying and screaming for him to go away, raising the gun with shaky hands as his body was rocked by wave after wave of desperation.

~ * ~

“Damn it,” Dean said, leaning against the wall outside the room. If he tried to walk in, Sam might actually kill him before he even knew what he was doing. Dean didn’t know what was going on, but he knew his brother was out of his mind, blinded by his own fear and choking on his past memories. Dean didn’t know how to cut through the worst panic attack he had ever seen.

Three times, Dean had counted. Sam had fired three times. Dean doubted he would be able to load more bullets fast enough, but before he tried to stop him, he needed to make sure Sam had run out of ammo.

He found his useless flashlight and threw it inside the room, and as he hoped it would, the sound startled Sam and caused him to fire again. Two more shots.

“Stay away! I’ll kill you! I’ll fucking kill you I swear!” Sam’s voice was hoarse and cracking, and it made Dean wonder just how much he had already screamed before Dean arrived.

With his heart breaking in his chest and his blood pumping fast with the imminent danger, Dean tried to step into the room again, and was fast enough to withdraw when Sam started firing. One more shot, and Dean knew Sam had run out of bullets. He took the time to walk into the room as fast as he could towards the boy sitting in a corner, holding a gun with unsteady hands.

~ * ~

Sam pulled the trigger once, twice, but nothing happened. “No,” he moaned, realizing he had no more bullets. He saw the man rushing towards him and panicked.

Sam threw the gun away and covered himself with his arms, pulling his knees up in a pathetic attempt at protecting himself from his aggressor. “NO! Stay away!!! Don’t touch me! Don’t!” Sam screamed.

Dean looked at his brother curled up in the corner. He leaned over him and touched his arm.

“Sam…” he called softly.

“DON’T TOUCH ME! DON’T TOUCH ME! STAY AWAY FROM ME!” Sam groaned and thrashed so hard that Dean retracted his hand and watched, in horror, as Sam descended into chaos, crying and rocking himself as his panic soared.
“Sammy, it’s me. It’s your brother. It’s Dean, okay? I love you. I’m here to help you.”

Sam couldn’t hear a thing. All he heard was the sound of chains and whipping, all he heard was his own screams as the man made him his bitch in the dark.

“Stay calm, please…”

“NOOOO!!” Sam shrieked when Dean tried to touch him again. He recoiled as far as he could go, his whole body shaking with powerful tremors that took his limbs and sped up his heart.

Dean frowned. He looked at the way Sam was shaking and it made his heart tight with worry. He had never seen that before. Sam was…he was…

“Damn it, are you seizing?” Dean looked from one side to another, not knowing what to do. He saw his brother’s body twist against the wall as if there was an electrical current traveling through him. Dean reached down and grabbed his wrists, pulling them away from Sam’s face and trying to look into his eyes.

The darkness Dean saw in Sam’s eyes was so deep that for a moment Dean was afraid of falling in there, too. Sam’s pupils were ridiculously dilated and his eyes were glassy, with not a glimpse of recognition shining in them.

“No, no, no, no….” Sam chanted over and over, trying to get away. “No, don’t, please, please.” He tried to release his wrists as his body convulsed.

Dean crouched before Sam and held his wrists down, on each side of his body, desperate to try and cut through that terrible episode and find Sam’s consciousness.

“Sammy. Sammy, listen to me, you’re safe. It’s okay now. You’re safe.”

Sam felt his wrists forcefully held on each side of his body and a new wave of panic descended over him and made him struggle.

“NOOO!! Let me go, let me go!!!! STAY AWAY!!” Sam fought like he had fought in the dark room. He tried to scratch and bite, but the hands around his wrists were too tight. He bolted, using all of his strength, trying to push that man off of him, trying to save what was left of his soul.

“NOOOO!! DON’T!!!! PLEASE!” Sam howled, fighting with a strength his body could no longer offer him.

Dean shut his eyes and pulled Sam into a bear hug. He held tightly as Sam struggled for all he was worth, trying to get away.

Dean didn’t know how long they went on like that—Sam struggling, Dean using all of his strength to try and contain his frantic movements. Eventually, Sam’s smaller body was just exhausted from fighting and he grew limp against the body holding him captive.

Dean took advantage of Sam’s lack of resistance and tried to speak to him again.

“Shhh, it’s okay, baby boy. It’s alright now. I’m here with you. You know how I used to sing to you when you were a baby and couldn’t sleep?” Dean closed his eyes, his hands still securely wrapped around Sam’s wrists in case he started fighting again, his chin above Sam’s hair. He began to hum a
soft melody, trying to remember the words of something he used to sing by Sam’s crib when he cried in the middle of the night.

Dean sang softly, but his arms still held tightly. Sam didn’t do anything. For the entire song he didn’t struggle, he didn’t speak, he didn’t move. When Dean finished humming the melody, he felt Sam’s wrists tugging at his hands and released him, wondering what Sam would do next.

Dean felt shaky and cold fingertips finding his jawline before sprawling more fully against his cheek.

“Dean?” Sam’s shaky and hoarse voice cut Dean’s heart in two.

“Yes, baby. It’s me. I’m here with you.”

“Dean?” Sam breathed in the safe scent of his brother and began to realize where he was, and what had happened.

“It’s okay, just relax.”

“I lost control!” Sam choked. “I…” He tried to speak but the words wouldn’t come, his throat felt tight and everything inside of him ached.

“Shhh…”

Sam’s arms wrapped around Dean and he broke down.

Dean was taken aback by the intensity of Sam’s sobbing. Sam’s crying seemed to be coming from deep within his soul, and the strength of his sobs made him shake against Dean’s chest.

“It’s alright.” Dean placed a hand at the back of Sam’s neck and pressed his face against his shoulder.

Sam cried like he had never cried before. His keening pain tore from his chest and washed down his cheeks with hot, fat tears that soon had soaked his and Dean’s shirts. Sam cried for every wound he had tried to hide, and for all the shame he could no longer carry. He held on to Dean as his body was rocked by wave after wave of unstoppable sobbing.

Dean held him tight, his hands running up and down Sam’s back. He closed his eyes and just held his brother as Sam finally let it all out—all his pain, all his fears, they were naked before Dean’s eyes, they were washing Sam’s face and covering his skin with salt as he cried loudly and shamelessly.

Dean had no idea of how long Sam cried. He knew he never loosened the embrace. He just held on as Sam’s sobs turned into deep, shaky gasps and then soft, shuddering sighs.

When Sam loosened the embrace and Dean could look at him in the dark shadows of the room, he could see Sam’s eyes were swollen, as well as his lips, and he looked a mess. Dean leaned over and kissed Sam’s closed eyes, tasting the salty tears in his lips.

“It’s so dark in here…” Sam murmured.

“I’ll go find some candles,” Dean made as if he would stand up.
“No!” Sam held on to his shirt. “Don’t go.”

“I’ll try to make it brighter. Maybe if I open the window—”

“Don’t move. Please. Don’t.”

“Okay. Okay, I’m right here.” Dean sat down and pulled Sam closer. He could feel his brother shaking when he kissed the top of his head.

It was a long while before Sam moved, but when he did, he pulled away just enough so he could look into Dean’s eyes.

“The day it happened I hid under the bed when darkness came. I knew it wouldn’t work, but I just hid anyway,” Sam said, his lips quivering. “The man came and of course he found me. He dragged me from under the bed, and I remember wondering what he would do to me that time. I thought of the whipping, the shoving my head in a bucket of water, pulling nails, breaking fingers… I had no idea what to expect. Then he straddled me as I lay on my stomach, and I remember the sound of his belt as he unbuckled it on top of me.”

Dean’s eyes widened. ‘Oh, God…’ he thought. His heart started to race. He could hardly believe Sam was doing that, he was going back to his worst fear, he was talking about the abuse.

“I felt him pull down my pajamas.” Sam had to stop for a moment, because the tears came again, and they came hard.

“Sammy, you don’t have to do it now. I don’t want you to hurt—”

“Let me,” Sam begged. “I need to.”

Dean nodded, his heart aching at the visible pain in Sam’s face.

“When I realized what he was going to do I freaked out. I thought that was the one thing he wouldn’t dare do to me. I thought that line would not be crossed. But then I felt him tying my hands behind my back, and he hurt my shoulder so bad I couldn’t fight anymore. I knew then that I couldn’t escape. He pushed inside of me and I just wanted to die,” Sam choked and wiped at his tears.

Dean found his hand and squeezed, encouraging him.

“I couldn’t believe that was happening. I tried to shut down everything, I tried to ignore how much it hurt. Because it hurt, it hurt so much…”

Dean closed his eyes and felt his own tears trickle down his cheeks. He wiped them with the sleeve of his shirt and opened them again, watching Sam closely.

“But not as much as it hurt when he came again. He didn’t wait for it to heal. He came back and raped me again when it was still raw and aching. He handcuffed me to the wall and spread my legs, and there was nothing I could do. I couldn’t even see anything, just feel him pushing against me, his filthy sweat all over me, the sick smell of citrus. I couldn’t, Dean… I had to shut it down, I had to pretend it never happened, it just hurt too much…”

“I know, baby… you were so brave…”
“No,” Sam choked, and the tears came back again. “You don’t understand.”

“What don’t I understand?” Dean asked softly.

“I forgive myself for crying and begging when he burned me. That kind of pain was horrific. No one could’ve handled it, Dean. No one. I know that. I forgive myself for crying when he cut me open and beat me bloody. That’s not something anyone can handle. But…” Sam’s lips quivered and he closed them tightly, needing a moment before he could go on. “When he raped me I just cried and begged like I was no longer myself. I asked him please to stop, over and over, I didn’t care anymore. I wasn’t strong; I didn’t feel like a hunter. I was so scared, and I couldn’t handle it anymore. Physically speaking, it was not the worst pain I felt there, but for some reason it was the worst,” Sam choked.

He looked into Dean’s eyes and couldn’t even try to hide his tears anymore.

“When he left and the lights were on, there was blood between my legs, and his seed all over me, it was filthy…I felt so ashamed…”

“Sam, there was nothing you could do… You have no reason to feel ashamed. You did everything you could.”

“I could’ve been stronger when he raped me. I could’ve said nothing. I should’ve been quiet. But I cried. I gave him and the demon watching me the satisfaction. I begged him please to stop. I’m weak, Dean. I failed. Everything Dad taught us, everything we try to be when we train, and he broke me when he was inside of me, he made me want to die.”

The realization of the burden Sam carried was so painful that Dean had to struggle himself out of his own stupor. He pulled his brother closer and held him between his arms, against his chest.

“Sam, you are the bravest person I know. You shouldn’t doubt that for one second. You begged, so what? I would’ve begged, too. Damn it, Sam, Dad would’ve begged just the same. Don’t you see it? You had no choice. They set you up. From the moment you were taken there, they knew what they were doing. How can you blame yourself for what those monsters did to you? You are amazing, Sam. Honestly? I wish I could one day be as brave as you.” Dean looked into his brother’s eyes when he spoke and his heart broke all over again when his words seemed to cause another wave of crying.

“Do you really think that? Do you think I’m brave after what I just told you?”

“Of course! And I love you.” Dean kissed Sam’s forehead, his cheeks and his lips.

Sam kissed back, his lips quivering against Dean’s.

“I love you, too. I’m sorry I didn’t say anything before. It just hurts so much. I don’t even know how many times he raped me, Dean. I blocked these memories so hard that it could’ve been a lot of times. I dream so often about it, and I can almost feel him inside of me, and I just want to run away from myself because it feels like I’ll break.”

“It doesn’t matter now. It’s over. He’s dead and it’s over.”

“Is it?” Sam cried, sadly. “Look at me! Look at what just happened tonight! It’ll never be over, Dean. It doesn’t matter how much you love me and help me, darkness will always win!”
“Don’t say that,” Dean begged. “It’s not true. We can figure it out.” He looked desperately into Sam’s eyes.

“No, we can’t. It doesn’t matter how much I love you, and how safe you make me feel.” Sam cried. “I can’t do this anymore. These memories hurt too much. I can’t—”

“Shhh! Don’t say that. Please, Sammy. Don’t say that. We’ll find a way. You know we will.” Dean pulled him close and held him tight, his eyes wide with fear, his heart racing.

“I’m broken, Dean. They won.”

“Please don’t say that. Please, Sammy.”

Dean’s tears came more urgently now.

“Sam?” he called softly. “Sammy?”

Dean frowned. He pulled his brother away from his embrace and realized Sam was lying unconscious in his arms.

“Sam?!”

Dean’s thoughts and feelings started to swirl out of control with worry when suddenly there was a loud thunder followed by lightning so bright that it shone inside the room, lighting every corner of the place with a whiteness that was so intense and absolute that Dean had no choice but to close his eyes before he was blinded by it.

He held Sam’s unconscious body tightly and tried to shut down his ears as well when the loud, screeching sound began.

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Chapter 77

Dean shut his eyes and held Sam tightly against his chest. The impossibly loud sound was over almost as fast as it had begun, but the blinding light spilling into the room, making it day in the middle of the dark night, lingered for longer.

When Dean could open his eyes again, the room was back into darkness, and the window had been slammed opened.

“Sam?” Dean looked at the boy in his arms and shook him lightly. “Sammy?”

“He’s unconscious and you can’t wake him up.”

The voice startled Dean and he looked around worriedly, his heart racing, his eyes widening to try and see where that voice had come from.

“Who’s there?!” Dean groaned, wondering if he could locate Sam’s gun and reload it fast enough.

“Relax, Dean. I’m not here to hurt anyone. I’m here to help.”

In a corner of the room, there was a place, near the window, where the shadows where denser, and where a person seemed to be standing. Dean couldn’t see a face to go with the voice of the man speaking to him.

“I put Sam to sleep. He’s perfectly fine. You shouldn’t worry.”

“Who are you and what the hell do you want from us?!” Dean looked around, desperately trying to see if he could use something as a weapon. He thought of the salt and crucifixes in the bedroom, but he was unwilling to let go of Sam in order to go look for them. “Exorcizamus te, Omnis Immundus Spiritus…” Dean began.

“I’m not a demon. Please, you insult me. I’m a much higher, cleaner creature.”

“Show yourself! I want to see you now!” Dean demanded.
“You cannot see my true form, Dean. The sight of me would cause your eyes to burn. I’m afraid we’ll have to skip introductions.”

“What the hell do you want from me?” Dean asked again, his heart slamming against his chest.

“I’m here to help Sam. Consider my presence here an answer to your prayers,” said the man standing in the shadowed corner.

“What?” Dean was confused, scared…he didn’t know what to do aside from holding Sam tightly to try and protect him if anything happened.

“You have been praying, haven’t you, Dean Winchester? You have been praying for your brother to get better, for his awful memories to go away. You’ve prayed for many a night in the past year, or am I wrong?”

Dean remained silent. His brain tried to work an answer to whatever the hell was going on now.

“Who are you?” He asked again, his voice less angry and more puzzled this time.

“I’m help. I’m the answer to these prayers. I’m here to erase your brother’s memories of the torture he suffered. I’m here to give you your brother back.”

Zachariah watched from his dark corner in the room as Dean looked towards him without really seeing his face.

For the last year he had watched, from Heaven, as the events concerning Sam Winchester unfolded on earth. It had been his mission to pay careful attention to the boy and to report about him to his superiors. One year had gone quickly by before he was told to intervene. Sam Winchester had a role to play in the future of mankind. This much Zachariah knew. He was told that in order to rid the world of evil, as God had first planned, Sam Winchester would have a decisive role to play when the time was right to deal with their fallen brother—Lucifer.

The details of the future prophecy, Zachariah was not yet entirely familiar with, but he did know that unless Sam grew to be the powerful hunter he was meant to be, the Apocalypse could never come to pass.

Some of the angels were aware of the demon’s plan, Lucifer’s first lover, and what he had planned to do with the boy. Except that he had failed when it came to wrapping up his plan, and by letting the boy walk away with all that damage in his soul, that stupid demon had nearly risked it all. Zachariah was here now to correct that mistake. He was here to make sure the plan could go on as it had been first drawn out.

For one year they had watched as time and again Dean had tried to fix his brother, but it was pretty clear to Heaven, as it probably was to the boy himself, that there was no fixing what the demon had done. Sam’s soul was damaged, it had been tainted with darkness, and unless something was done to bring him back to the boy he used to be, there would be no Sam Winchester—the hunter, the man he would grow into, the man who would someday help Heaven get rid of Lucifer in the final battle God had planned so long ago.

The demon had seen Sam as the key to help Lucifer take control of the world; the angels—the ones who were aware of the prophecy—saw Sam as the chance to get rid of Lucifer forever and bring
peace on earth. Either way, both parties needed Sam, and thus Zachariah was sent to finish what Lucifer’s weak lover couldn’t.

“What do you mean?” Dean asked.

“I mean that all these nights you have spent wondering what you could do to help your brother…I’m the answer to your prayers. I can erase all of Sam’s suffering. I can lay a finger on his forehead and make as if the last year has not happened at all in his life.”

“How can you do something like that? You’re lying!” Dean frowned.

“You know I’m not. If I wanted to harm you, believe me, you would both be dead by now. I want to help.”

“And why is that?”

“Dean, Dean…” Zachariah shook his head in the dark. “How can you pray so feverishly for Sam’s salvation when you refuse to be a believer? Sometimes miracles do happen. I’m your miracle. If you let me, I’ll heal Sam of his deepest wounds.” Not that Dean would have stopped Zachariah—he would get it done no matter what. But it was important to have the older brother’s collaboration for it work.

Dean looked down at Sam’s sleeping face and then raised his eyes again to look at the shadowed face of the man standing in a corner.

“You can really do that? You touch him, and when Sam wakes up he doesn’t remember the bright room?”

“Not a thing. There will be a gap in his memories which I will fill with random memories from previous moments of his life. It will be up to you and your father to fill in this year gap with what you would like Sam to remember. This means that when he wakes up, in forty-eight hours, he will believe whatever his family wants him to believe about his recent past. If you tell him you spent a year in Europe chasing after a Sheik from the Middle East, Sam’s memories will adapt to accept that as the truth. I can do that.”

Dean thought about what that man was saying. Could it be really possible? To erase Sam’s worst memories, to bring him back to the boy he was before the demon had taken him, before the man had broken him in the dark?

_They won, Sam had said. It will never be over…_

Dean wanted it to be over. He wanted Sam to be able to sleep without the fear of running into the man in his dreams and being abused over and over again. He wanted his brother to close his eyes in the dark and not see a man coming towards him, ready to break his bones and cut his skin. Dean wanted Sam to wake up to a new day without the sight of his own blood pooling on a white floor as he dreamed over and over of the torture he suffered.

“What if I don’t let you erase his memories?” Dean asked, but there was uncertainty in his voice. He remembered the conversation he had had with Sam a while back about whether or not the demon would have made him forget everything. Was it the best thing?

“Dean, you know he has nearly died because of his fears. You have seen what happens when Sam is
alone and his panic is triggered,” Zachariah said. “Tonight you made it back and saved him. But what if you can’t be there, Dean? Can you honestly promise yourself—and Sam—that you will be there for him every minute of every day for the rest of your life? You know you can’t. And you know that it doesn’t matter what you do, or how hard you try, it’s only a matter of time until something triggers his fear again. And then what will happen, Dean? Sam had a full-blown psychotic break and a loaded gun tonight. He was willing to shoot you because he thought you would harm him. After everything you’ve done for him, Sam was disturbed enough to believe you were the enemy. What makes you so certain he won’t shoot someone else the next time he loses control and you’re not there to help him? What if you are there and you just can’t help him? What if Sam decided, tonight, to use the gun against himself for fear of being taken back to captivity? You know as well as me that he’s capable of doing that. So how would you feel if Sam accidentally killed himself in a rampant of fear you were unable to prevent or control—”

“Stop it,” Dean begged.

“…knowing you could have made it all go away by listening to me.” Zachariah studied Dean intently.

It was a long while for Dean to consider everything the man in the shadows had spoken. He was right. Sam was unpredictable. It didn’t matter how much he loved his brother, and how much he had tried to help him, Sam was still deeply affected by his past. What if, as the man had said, the next time Sam had an episode of blind fear and rage Dean wasn’t around to calm him down? Or what if he couldn’t calm him down? He had barely managed to get Sam to listen to him tonight. What if someday Sam really hurt himself during one of his panic attacks? Dean’s heart shrunk in his chest and ached with pain.

“Will it hurt? To make him forget?” He eventually asked.

“Of course not. All it needs is one touch.” Zachariah smiled appreciatively in the dark. “With one touch I can make your brother a normal kid again. He won’t be afraid of the dark; he won’t have any scars in his body. He will be able to fall asleep and not wake up shaking and screaming. You will have your brother back, Dean. I promise you that.”

A thunder echoed in the distance and Dean was silent for a moment before he finally nodded.

“Do it, then.”

Zachariah smiled in the dark and nodded, stepping out of the shadows, although there was still a veil of darkness covering his face.

“There is something you need to know, though. I can erase his darkest memories, but I cannot make them not have happened at all.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means that somewhere in a corner of Sam’s soul, all his experience in the dark will be hidden and stored away. I can give Sam a happy, normal life without the memory of it, but I cannot undo what was done to him. Let’s just say that I can build up a wall, a real wall. Unlike the one he desperately tried to build, the wall I will build can keep everything away from his mind, so long as he doesn’t push. Now, Sam won’t remember what happened, so he won’t push. This means you need to help him stay away from anything that might remind him too strongly of his torment.”
“We’ll do that. We’ll keep him away from total darkness—”

“Darkness won’t be a problem. Sam won’t know why he should be afraid of the dark, thus, he won’t be affected by it. Not consciously anyway. No, the lack of light won’t be enough to bring down my wall.”

“Good. Then what will?”

“You.”

“Me?” Dean frowned.

“You and what Sam shared with you. Yes, I’m talking about your romance, Dean.”

Dean swallowed hard and unconsciously his arms tightened around Sam’s body.

“I know what happened between you. I know about the kisses, and everything else that has happened when you decided to cross the line.”

Dean didn’t know whether he felt outraged or ashamed knowing that stranger was aware of their relationship. For the moment, Dean couldn’t find his voice. He just listened to the thuds of his heartbeats as he began to realize what the man meant.

“What happened between you is too strong. And it started out of Sam’s vulnerability. This means that in order for my wall to work and for Sam to be truly healed from his poisonous memories, he cannot, for the sake of him, remember any of what happened between you.”

Dean gasped. The feeling was like that of a knife digging into his heart.

“He’ll forget about us?” His voice was small because the pain was too heavy, and it made it difficult to speak.

“He must, Dean. I’m sorry, but there is no other way. For darkness to go away, so must Sam’s love for you. So long as Sam remembers the two of you, it will be a strong link to what happened to him when he was taken. I cannot build a wall against the torture without erasing his memories of you, as lovers. The two things are extremely connected.”

“So this means that if Sam hadn’t…if he hadn’t gone through all that shit then he and I would’ve never…” Dean couldn’t finish. His throat seemed to strangle the words.

“That’s not what I meant. I mean that what happened to you started out from Sam’s pain and grew into what you had. I can’t tell you whether or not Sam won’t have feelings for you when he wakes up without his dark past. This might happen, Dean. But you need to know that if you ever let yourselves indulge again, if anything happens between you that could remind Sam of what you had, my wall won’t be strong enough to keep the darkness at bay. This is to say that if you ever cross the line again, if you are ever more than brothers, it will be too powerful, and it will tear down my wall. If you so much as kiss him, that might be the trigger that sends Sam straight back to his tormented memories of being abused and broken.”

Dean looked down at Sam’s sleeping face. He looked so peaceful in that induced sleep. Dean didn’t even know he was crying until his tears were falling on Sam’s cheeks. He wiped them quickly and tried to hold on to his reason as his heart shattered into a million pieces.
“So what will it be, Dean? Are you ready to give up on your love to save your brother?”

That question went straight to the core of Dean’s feelings for Sam. Of course he would save his brother! Even if it killed him, and Dean would learn it might very well do so, there was no way Dean could put his feelings above Sam’s well-being. It would be too selfish to deny Sam the possibility of having his life back, a normal life, or the closest to normal they could have, without looking over his shoulder all the time, without the fear of turning down the lights and losing control, without having to close his eyes and pray that he could sleep through the night without being reminded of the pain he endured over and over for three excruciatingly long months.

Dean looked at the man waiting for an answer and felt his heart bleeding inside his chest. That was the right thing to do. It was what his father would have done if he was given the choice. Save Sam, no matter the consequences. Besides, what they had been living could not last, they knew that, right? How on earth would they make that kind of relationship work in the world they lived in? There was only hurting and heartache down that path, and if Sam had his memories erased, then it was an easy way to end it before the inevitable pain of a breakup. If Sam didn’t remember their kisses and their love making, then he wouldn’t suffer the loss. Never having crossed the line was completely different from having to pretend nothing had ever happened between them.

As for Dean? He knew what he was signing up for. He knew it would hurt like hell waking up every day of his life, for the rest of his life, trying to suffocate a love that had grown to take over everything he had inside. Even before Dean said yes and saw it happen, he knew the pain would be almost unbearable, but he knew he had no other choice. It was Sam’s only chance of being who he was before all that. It was Sam’s miracle, and there was no way Dean would rob him of that.

“Can you do that? Can you hide your love away for Sam’s sake? I know what I’m asking of you.” Zachariah knew the Winchesters were soul mates. He had known Sam and Dean since they were born, and would know them longer after they grew into adult men. Psychotically, irrationally, erotically codependent on each other. Yes, Zachariah knew what he was asking of Dean.

“Yes,” Dean said, and his voice sounded raspy. His lips quivered and he looked at Sam’s sleeping face again. Before he looked at the man, he wiped his eyes with the back of his sleeve and took a deep breath. “I can do that. Make him forget.”

Zachariah nodded.

He stepped into a lighter shadow and Dean could see his face. In the middle of his tormented emotions, though, it was a face he would hardly remember the following day.

“You’re doing the right thing. Sam would thank you if he could,” Zachariah said, getting closer.

“Just do it. And if you hurt him, I swear to God I’ll—”

“For forty-eight hours he will sleep,” the angel cut him off. “When he wakes up, remember what I told you. You will help him shape his last memories.”

Dean nodded, but his struggle was bare on his face.

“He’ll be okay, Dean. As long as you don’t let him scratch that wall, and as long as you can keep a secret.”
“I can,” Dean said and watched when the man leaned over them and placed his two forefingers to Sam’s forehead.

Dean thought of their first kiss on the porch, with the sun blinding his eyes, and he closed his eyes now when the light was bright again and filled the room. Dean heard the man murmur some words softly in a language he couldn’t possibly understand, and everything didn’t last longer than a minute.

When Dean opened his eyes again the light was gone, and the room was once again in complete darkness.

He looked at the boy lying in his arms and cupped his face.

“Sam? Can you hear me?” Dean called him softly, but Sam didn’t move an inch.

For a moment Dean wondered if everything had been nothing but a dream. What if he had been hallucinating, just like Sam? There was absolutely no sign that anything out of the ordinary had just taken place in that room, nothing was unusual, aside from Sam’s sleeping frame and the open window.

Dean wondered if his brother would indeed sleep for two whole days. Was that man speaking the truth? Who was he? Would Sam really wake up without the pain he carried in his heart? Would his brother finally find peaceful sleep in the dark without the fear of losing control and losing himself?

Honestly? Dean didn’t know. He didn’t know if Sam would wake up without the memories they had shared. He didn’t know if the boy in his arms wouldn’t remember their kisses, and wouldn’t remember when Dean was inside of him, taking him, loving him…

The thought that Sam would never know about them hurt so much that Dean forced himself to move and shrug it off.

He stood up with Sam in his arms and laid him gently on the bed, adjusting his head on top of a pillow and pulling a blanket over his body.

Lightning broke the darkness of the room for a moment and a few seconds later Dean could hear another thunder roaring in the sky. He looked at the boy sleeping peacefully on the bed and wondered if Sam would ever know what he had done, the choice he had made.

Dean hoped he wouldn’t, because if he did that would mean Sam would remember all the violence he had suffered, too.

Yet, Dean couldn’t help but wonder, and in the hours that followed, as Dean watched over his brother’s sleep lost in thoughts, Dean wondered a lot.

Sam would live his life and never know they were once lovers. He would forget being abused, but he would never know how fast their hearts had beat for each other.

And if Sam ever found out what Dean had done, he hoped Sam would understand it. It was the right thing to do.

Till his last breath, Dean would make sure Sam never remembered the darkness and the pain, and he hoped Sam could forgive him for that.
Dean hoped he could one day forgive himself, too.

---------------------------------------------

tbc...
Chapter 78

Dean only left Sam’s room to try to call his dad, but the lines were still dead, which was probably the reason why Sam hadn’t picked up before. When he couldn’t communicate with John, Dean gave up and sat by Sam’s bed through the entire night.

The older brother couldn’t really fall asleep. He dozed off a few times, but always woke up before he was able to find any real rest. And when Dean opened his eyes and studied Sam’s sleeping frame, he kept thinking over and over of the man in the shadows and what he had said.

Would Sam really sleep for two whole days? A part of him was praying that none of that had been real. Dean wouldn’t lie to himself—there was a part of him that hoped Sam would open his eyes, yawn and move to kiss him. If none of that had been real, if none of that was true, Sam would wake up and still remember them. Dean would still have the person he loved the most in love with him, and whatever happened about Sam’s fears, Dean hoped they would find a way to work it out. If Sam woke up now and still remembered, Dean would find a way to help him, he would… But what if that man had spoken the truth? What if Sam would indeed sleep for forty-eight hours and wake up without the slightest memory of the dark room and of their love?

Dean hardly knew what to feel anymore. He didn’t know whether he was more desperate to believe Sam could forget his trauma or to hope that he wouldn’t forget about them.

It was one of the longest nights of Dean’s life. The storm went away and the lights returned when the sun was rising in the horizon. Dean looked out of the window at the shy sun starting to color the sky, and then he went back to Sam’s bed and looked at him.

“Sammy? Sam? Are you up?” he tried, even though Sam was obviously still asleep.

Dean touched his brother’s shoulder but Sam barely stirred. He took a deep breath and kept drifting in unconsciousness, somewhere Dean could not follow him.

He sighed and ran a hand through his hair. There was not much he could do but wait, so Dean went downstairs, fixed himself a quick breakfast, and returned to Sam’s room where he sat by his head and watched his profound sleep.

~ * ~
John returned home around midday. He walked into Bobby’s house calling after his sons.

“How? Sam? Are you there?”

“Dad?” Dean showed up upstairs.

“Dean! Why haven’t you answered the phone?” John seemed worried.

“The line is dead. There was a storm last night and the power went out. I guess the telephone still isn’t working,” Dean said as he made his way downstairs. His heart was racing with the prospect of telling his dad what had happened.

“Your brother?” John frowned when Dean came down to meet him alone.

“He’s sleeping upstairs. I… Dad, I need to talk to you about Sam.”

“Why? Is everything okay with him? How was he when you got here?”

Dean took a deep breath. Where to start? How to tell his dad everything that had happened from the moment Dean walked into the dark house to the blinding light that filled the room when that mysterious creature touched Sam’s forehead?

“Let me pour us a drink, eh? I think we’ll need it.” Dean looked at his dad before going through Bobby’s bottles. “By the way, the Vetala?”

“There were two of them and I killed them. They almost had me, but I was faster.”

“Good,” Dean said absently, pouring them each a dose of whiskey as he pulled a chair and waited for his father to sit across from him in Bobby’s kitchen.

“What happened, Dean? You look spooked.” Which said a lot when you were talking to a hunter.

“Last night when I came home the lights were all out. Sam was alone in the middle of a blackout.”

John swallowed hard. He didn’t speak for a moment, because his mind was working fast painting the picture of despair Dean must have run into.

“Last night was crazy, Dad. I don’t even know exactly what happened…” Dean shook his head, seeming lost.

“Well, try telling me from the beginning. What happened when you found Sam?”

Dean told his dad of Sam’s high level of despair. He told him of Sam’s hallucinations and of the gun—he had to, there were bullet holes in Bobby’s walls that would be hard to miss. He told his dad of Sam falling apart and his trying to bring his brother back to sanity.

“He admitted he was raped, Dad,” Dean said, his voice low and lifeless.

“He did?” John’s heart seemed to ache at that, a last little hope was dying, and for a moment he thought he felt tears welling in his eyes.
“He told me everything. How scared he was, how ashamed… Sam was hurting because he couldn’t 
fight as bravely as he believes he should have. He was ashamed of the way they broke him. He told 
me he wasn’t as strong as we were raised to be.”

“What? How could he say that?” John tried to ignore the warmth in his eyes, and he wouldn’t admit 
there were tears falling even when he felt their wetness down his cheeks. “He stayed alive! What else 
could he have done?!” John wiped at his eyes swiftly.

Dean shrugged, sadness all over his face.

“It weighed on him a lot, and Sam let me see his pain last night. But then something weird 
happened.”

John looked at his son and wiped at his eyes again. The tears had stopped coming now, because 
Dean’s voice sounded so worried that it started to spread the same tension to John.

“What happened?”

Dean told his dad about the white light, the loud sound, and the man standing in the dark. When 
John asked if that was a demon, Dean could only explain why he thought it wasn’t. He said the man 
standing in the shadows did not harm them, and Dean told his dad what the man offered—to erase 
Sam’s memories.

John frowned and narrowed his eyes as Dean went on.

He told his dad everything he remembered from his dialogue with the mysterious man, except, of 
course, for the part where he knew about Sam and his relationship. Dean told John about having to 
decide whether or not he would let the man erase Sam’s trauma and make him not fear darkness 
again.

“Did he do it? Did Sam forget?” John’s heart started beating faster.

Dean shrugged. “I don’t really know. He said Sam would sleep for forty-eight hours. He’s been 
asleep since the man left, and I haven’t tried too hard to wake him up. He’s still upstairs, in bed,” 
Dean explained. He seemed fidgety and nervous. “Did I do the right thing? I mean, I don’t even 
know if it worked, that thing could be lying for all I know, but I wonder if I should’ve let him touch 
Sammy…”

“Dean, are you crazy? I don’t know what that was, and right now I’m curious as hell as to what it 
was doing in the room and how it knew who you were. But if he spoke the truth, of course you did 
the right thing! Making Sam forget that terrible captivity is a miracle! It’s everything we’ve wanted 
for him, right?” John looked fiercely into Dean’s eyes, who was forced to nod.

“Right.”

“If Sam wakes up without any memory of all the torture he suffered, then I can have my son back, 
and you can have your brother. I mean, we can go back to the way it used to be. No more 
nightmares, no more night terrors, Dean! Can you imagine, going everywhere with Sam and not 
having to worry about something triggering his fears and making him suffer?”

When John put it that way, of course Dean had to agree. It was the dream, wasn’t it? Except his
father didn’t know the entire story; he didn’t know the way Sam and he had grown close. It didn’t seem to matter, though, because Dean would never be so selfish as to put his own needs above Sam’s. If there was a chance that Sam could live without fear, then of course Dean had to take it—he was glad his father reassured him. Dean was already so insecure and hurting that had John told him he had made a mistake, Dean didn’t think he could have handled it.

“He said we need to sort of reconstitute his memories of the previous year. He said Sam will remember whatever we tell him happened.”

“Right. We can do that. We just have to sit and talk and agree to the same timeline for when he’s up,” John said. “I wanna see him now.”

Dean nodded. He followed his father when he made his way upstairs and into Sam’s bedroom.

The youngest Winchester was still asleep in bed, looking peaceful and distant.

Seeing his son’s chest move up and down with a deep, calm breathing, John found it easy to believe Dean’s story, and to hope that it was true.

“Sam?” He walked closer to the bed. “Son?” John ran his fingers through Sam’s hair. There was a soft sigh from the boy in bed, but he didn’t even move.

John and Dean exchanged a look.

“Who was that man, Dad? Why did he want to help?”

John shook his head lightly and closed his eyes. Everything surrounding Sam’s disappearance was so mysterious, and now this! It drove John crazy not having answers. Who killed Mary? Why? Who took Sam? Why had they hurt him? And who had apparently helped him heal?

“I don’t know, son. It kills me not having answers, but I will find out. I think right now we just need to wait and see what happens when Sam wakes up.”

“Right.”

“So you wait here, I’ll go out now.”

“What? Wait, where?” Dean frowned.

“I’m pretty sure this man you saw and that touched Sam is gone, but that doesn’t mean I won’t look around to see if I find anything suspicious.”

“Okay.” That seemed reasonable, and Dean couldn’t blame his father for wanting to do that, although he knew deep in his heart it would be a worthless effort.

As Dean was following his father downstairs, the door opened and Bobby walked in.

“Hey,” John greeted his friend.

“Hey,” Bobby said. “Glad everyone’s alive.”

“Look, I’m leaving now. Dean will fill you in on what happened to Sam,” John said and turned
around to leave. There was no time to explain. If he had the smallest hope to find whatever had shown up in Bobby’s place last night and changed Sam’s life, he needed to go now.

“What happened to Sam?” Bobby frowned and watched as John disappeared. When he got no answer, he let his eyes fall on Dean, full of questioning.

“You’re gonna need a drink. Trust me,” Dean said.

“Alright.” Bobby let Dean lead them into the kitchen where they sat down in the company of the bottle of whiskey already waiting there.

“We still don’t know for sure, Bobby, but Sam’s asleep upstairs, and when he wakes up, everything might be different.”

Bobby frowned and took a large sip of his drink, and for the next half an hour he listened to everything Dean had just told his dad, except Bobby was rewarded with more details.

When Dean was done telling last night’s tale once again, he needed to pour himself another drink to cope.

“Does John believe Sam will wake up without a clue?”

“He does. He’s out looking for this creature right now. Who or what do you think could’ve done that, Bobby?”

Bobby shrugged. “I don’t know. I never heard of anything like it, Dean.”

They fell silent for a while, and Bobby worked up the nerve to ask what was really bothering him.

“So, if this works then Sam won’t remember that he and you…”

Dean shook his head, perhaps way too quickly and a bit too harshly.

“He won’t.” Although he hadn’t meant to, his voice cracked and Dean sounded on the verge of breaking.

Bobby studied him as he tried so hard not show how heartbroken he felt. Deep in his heart, it didn’t matter that Bobby had never approved of what Dean and Sam had, he was devastated by Dean’s pain.

“That sucks, Dean,” Bobby said, and even though his words were light, his eyes were heavy with emotion.

“And not only that. The man said that if something ever happens again, say, if by any chance Sam happens to develop feelings for me, I can’t allow anything to happen. It would be too strong and would probably cause all his memories to come crashing back,” Dean said what had been tightening his throat and squeezing his heart for the past hours.

“I understand what he means, Dean. And I’m sorry for you, kid, I truly am. You know I was never excited about the idea, but I respected the way you felt for each other.”

“Thanks, Bobby.” Dean took another large sip of his drink. “It’s probably for the best, though. I
mean, how could it possibly work, right?” Dean half smiled, but even that couldn’t hide his pain.

Bobby tried to smile, too. “Right.”

He watched as Dean looked down at the table, his eyes lost somewhere only he seemed to see. It crushed Bobby’s heart to see him like that.

“Dean, we don’t know if he’ll really forget,” Bobby offered.

Dean forced a small smile and shook his head lightly.

“Do I want my brother to wake up and forget how much he loved me? No. But do I want Sam to wake up still afraid of the dark and suffering the many physical and mental scars he’s suffered? Hell no. So I’ll deal with it.”

Bobby nodded, admiring Dean’s attitude. He didn’t expect anything less from him anyway.

“Dean?”

“What?” Dean felt his voice couldn’t be trusted, and his throat seemed twice as thick with the feelings swirling inside.

“It'll get better with time.”

~ * ~

When John returned after hours of fruitless searching, they all met in Sam’s room to watch a boy who had been asleep for over forty hours. They talked to each other and agreed on what they would tell Sam to fill in last year’s gap in case he really woke up without any memory of why he was in Bobby’s house. When they were done going over their matching stories, Dean yawned and excused himself.

“I need to sleep a couple of hours. We should all leave the room, too. If Sam wakes up and we are all here looking at him, he'll definitely find it weird.”

“Right,” Bobby agreed and John nodded.

They left the room and tried to get some rest, but as the hours passed by and they expected Sam to wake up at any moment, they grew more and more tense.

When morning came, Bobby woke up early and went outside to work on his cars. He couldn’t handle the anxiety of waiting for Sam to wake up at any moment, they grew more and more tense.

When morning came, Bobby woke up early and went outside to work on his cars. He couldn’t handle the anxiety of waiting for Sam to wake up; he needed to do something.

John and Dean were fixing themselves breakfast in the kitchen when they heard the noise of footsteps coming down the stairs. They looked at each other and their hearts raced.

For a moment Dean held his breath and waited, feeling the thud of his heartbeats slamming against his chest.

“Morning,” Sam said as he stepped into the kitchen, his eyes puffy from all the sleep, his hair
beautifully messed against his head.

“Morning,” John said, as Dean still tried to find his words.

Together they watched as Sam pulled a chair and sat down.

“What are you guys eating? I’m hungry.” Sam frowned, as if he had just realized how hungry he was.

“Want some cereal?” Dean found his voice and asked.

“Yeah.”

“I just got back,” John said as Dean fixed Sam breakfast.

“How was the hunt?” Sam asked, automatically.

“It was good. Bobby and I finally caught that ghost, burned the bones, and it’s over now.”

Sam nodded casually, his eyes fixed on the bowl of cereal as Dean poured milk and got him a spoon.

“You’re being nice,” Sam teased and looked at his brother suspiciously.

Dean swallowed hard. His heart skipped a beat, but on the outside his face didn’t give anything away.

“Can’t I?”

“’Course not, you’re a jerk,” Sam mumbled and chuckled quietly.

“Sam?” John called his attention.

“Sorry.” Sam looked at Dean and gave him a crooked smile.

Dean smiled too, but when he saw the brotherly look in Sam’s eyes, with all the affectionate and teasing feeling, and none of the intimacy they had known, what he really wanted was to start running and never stop.

During the entire day Sam was quietly observed by his dad, Bobby and Dean. As they talked, Sam accepted the fact that they were in Bobby’s house now as his father worked a case with his friend. Sam didn’t care too much about details. He knew pretty soon it would be over and they would be back on the road, and honestly? Sam liked Bobby’s house. He hoped they could stay a few days longer.

Deciding that Dean was the best person to probe a little and confirm whether Sam didn’t remember what happened at all, John and Bobby gave them privacy and picked up an overnight job so the brothers could talk.

“So, what’s today’s training?” Sam asked when they were alone.

There was no one in the house; Sam knew both his dad and Bobby were out. If there was any chance Sam was still the boy who feared the bright room, then Dean knew right now they would be
all over each other, kissing and touching.

“Erm… Dad didn’t say anything. I suppose we can have the day off.”

“Really? That’s cool.” Sam smiled and looked around Bobby’s place before sitting on the sofa and turning on the TV.

“So, what do you wanna do?” Dean asked, studying him intently.

Sam looked at his brother as if he had grown a third eye or something.

“What do you mean what I wanna do? As if you want to do something with me,” Sam scoffed. “Go ahead, you can leave. I won’t tell dad you left me alone.”

For a moment it felt like his heart might not make it alive till the end of that bizarre day.

“I’m not leaving,” Dean said and sat next to Sam on the sofa. “So what do you wanna do?”

“I don’t know,” Sam shrugged. “I was thinking of watching some TV. I mean, when was the last time we could just sit, watch a movie and eat ourselves stupid in the middle of the afternoon?”

‘Well, that’s pretty much all we’ve been doing for the past year,’ Dean thought sadly, with a tiny hint of amusement.

“Fine. You can choose the movie, then.”

Sam eyed Dean again with a weird look.

“I’m not doing any of your chores, so just cut it out.”

Sam laughed lightly before focusing on the screen. For a couple of hours they watched TV, both brothers sitting beside each other, and never once did they touch accidentally. Sam didn’t look at him with his adoring eyes and cracking vulnerability, and Dean held back and suffered in silence, the burning flames eating away at his love.

In the evening, after they ate something quickly, Sam went upstairs and entered the room where he had been sleeping.

Dean followed a moment later and found Sam looking around, a frown on his face.

“What?” He asked, worriedly.

“Nothing.” Sam shrugged. “It’s just… why would Bobby give me his room, you know?”

“You heard him. It’s a good bed, it’s a shame it hardly gets slept on,” Dean said, quickly.

“Yeah. And I get to have it? That’s cool of him.”

“Well, I did lose on rock, papers and scissors, you know,” Dean said.

Sam narrowed his eyes as if he tried to remember. Then, he smiled and nodded.
“Right!” he agreed. “Dean…always with the scissors!” he chuckled.

Dean mirrored him, despite his feelings. “I’ll just keep leaving my stuff here, though. There’s more space,” Dean added when he realized all his clothes and bags were on the floor.

“Whatever,” Sam said and kept looking around. “Hey, look!” Sam exclaimed as he went closer to Bobby’s dresser. “The Silmarillion! I would’ve never guessed Bobby read this kind of book!” Sam’s face lit up and Dean smiled. That had been the book he had given him when he was at the hospital.

“Don’t tell me you’re gonna read that hobbity crap,” Dean teased.

“This is about the elves, moron,” Sam argued.

“Yeah, whatever. I’ll leave you to the elfies, Sammy. Enjoy.”

Dean watched as his brother lay down in bed and started leafing excitedly through a book he had already read. If Sam’s memories had been erased? There seemed to be little to no doubt that the man who stood in the dark, whoever he was, had spoken the truth.

Dean lay on his own bed staring at the ceiling and thinking, and he only moved when it was night and his room was getting dark. He walked out of it and found Sam asleep in his bed, the book opened and forgotten under his cheek. The light in his room was still on.

Sam must have heard Dean’s footsteps coming closer, because he woke up and looked at his brother.

“Dean?”

“Sorry I woke you up. I’m going to sleep. You okay there?”

“Yeah,” Sam replied, sleepily. “Do me a favor?”

“Yeah?”

“Turn off the lights, please.”

“The lights? In your room?” For a split second Dean couldn’t help his shock.

“Yeah, Dean, of course. I want to sleep.”

“Right,” Dean said, once again swallowing down a very dry throat. “Night, Sammy,” he said as he turned off the lights.

Dean saw his brother nestle in bed in the complete darkness of the room. Sam cuddled the pillow and yawned, like any normal boy might have done.

“Night, Dean.”

And then, in the middle of his pain, Dean still managed to smile.

_________________________________________________________

tbc...
For the next three days Sam was observed carefully by everyone around him. The youngest Winchester, of course, had no idea he was being studied. For three days he trained and did his homework, unaware of anything unusual going on whenever John, Dean and Bobby had a chance to talk without him listening.

One of these conversations took place as Bobby was working on the cars outside, and the two brothers were nowhere in sight.

John approached his friend and leaned against the hood of an old, blue Chevy.

“Everything alright, John?” Bobby asked, coming out from beneath the car and sitting, so he could look at his friend as they talked.

“Yeah. Everything is fine, actually.” John looked around and opened the beer bottle he had brought, offering one to Bobby, who opened it eagerly.

“Good. Did you talk to Dean? Did he talk to Sam?”

“I don’t know how much talking he did, but Dean assured me that Sam’s memory of the torture has really been deleted. And you know it’s true, right? You can feel he’s different.”

“Yeah,” Bobby agreed. “He actually sleeps in the dark as if that’s never been an issue.”

John nodded.

“Who do you think did that to him, John?” Bobby asked. He had read some of his books, but nothing rang any bells concerning the things Sam and Dean had been through during the storm.

John drank his beer, licked at his lips and looked into the distance.

“I don’t know, Bobby. I mean, what if this is all related to what happened to Mary, you know?”

“You think so?”

John shrugged.
“I have no idea. My son was taken, brutalized, and now he doesn’t remember a thing. And I simply don’t know why and who did that.” John’s lips were as tight as his jawline. “But you know something? Sam’s fine now, Bobby. I know that’s not the way he should heal, hell, I know erasing his memory is far from ideal, but my son’s back to the boy he was before all that.”

Bobby didn’t want to ruin it for his friend, but he didn’t agree that Sam was exactly the same boy. *Something* was probably still different in him, even if they couldn’t point out what right now. One couldn’t really believe the illusion of normality, especially when the supernatural was involved.

“So I’ll chase this whole thing down to the bottom of it, until I have answers to all my questions. But right now? Damn it, Bobby, right now I think I just want to take a deep breath and enjoy the fact that Sam’s no longer afraid all the time.”

Bobby nodded. He couldn’t blame John for feeling that way. He supposed it was a huge relief for his friend knowing his son was no longer tormented by a violence his daddy couldn’t prevent.

“I see. Well, you know you can take all the time you want.”

“What about that,” John began. “I think the boys and I will be hitting the road again.”

Bobby felt the beer go down his throat as if it was a rock, but outside his face remained the same. Of course he knew that was coming. He knew the boys would be gone someday, he just thought…well, maybe Bobby thought there was always more time. He had gotten used to Sam and Dean all over his home, and Bobby couldn’t ignore the little painful throb in his chest at John’s words.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Yeah. I mean, I can never thank you enough for all you’ve done for us. I don’t think I would’ve known just what to do with Sam in the state he was in when we found him, so thank you for offering your house. I’m sure Sam felt better here than he would’ve felt traveling around and sleeping in a car or in a motel room. I’m sure that if he could he would thank you, too.”

“Bullshit. You know there’s no need to thank me. I love those boys, John. I would’ve done anything to help. And if you want to stay more…” he tried.

“Thanks, Bobby. But there’s no need to. Now that Sam’s better, I really feel we should focus again. You know, train them to be strong hunters, try and find out what happened to Mary; and of course, Dean and I will still hunt down whatever took Sam.”

“Yeah, I get it.” Bobby felt his chest tight, so he finished up his beer quickly in the hope that the fresh liquid could put out the burning he felt near his heart. He knew it was coming, especially when they realized Sam was no longer afraid of a past he couldn’t remember. But perhaps a part of him had hoped they would stay a while longer. “Whenever you’re ready to go, John…”

“I’ll talk to the boys, but I think we’ll leave tomorrow.”

Bobby nodded. He swallowed with some difficulty and then slid beneath the car once again, where he could focus on simple mechanics instead of how he felt.
Dean heard the news from his father and couldn’t say he was surprised. The moment he realized Sam was “better” he knew his dad would have road fever again. There was no point in staying with Bobby when they could be traveling the country hunting and looking for answers, now more than ever. Yet, knowing it would happen did not make it hurt less.

For the past year Bobby’s house had meant a safety they hadn’t known before. And for Dean, even though Sam might have forgotten, it had also meant the place where he was the happiest with his brother, falling into a love that had shown him heaven for a while. It hurt leaving behind that house and the memories he had in there, but since Sam’s mind had been erased, being in Bobby’s house, surrounded by the memories of Sam and him being lovers was actually very painful. So in a way, Dean was eager to leave that place and walk away from the constant reminder of what he could no longer have.

He watched from a distance as Sam finished packing his things inside Bobby’s room. Dean was looking at his brother’s back as he knelt before the bed and seemed to hesitate.

Dean’s heart raced when Sam pulled the wooden box from under the bed. He stepped further into the room and looked over Sam’s shoulder as he picked up the gun and studied it.

“Hey, is something up?” Dean asked, studying his brother carefully.

Sam’s forehead was creased as he analyzed the gun.

“No…I just, I can’t remember when Dad gave me this…”

“You’re fourteenth birthday, remember? We practiced shooting all day and then watched movies all night. You had so much junk food you were puking for two days,” Dean said quickly, his heart thudding in his chest.

Sam seemed to consider that for a moment, then he smiled. “Right, I remember that.”

It hurt in his heart having to lie to Sam, but Dean figured it was much better if his brother could relate his fourteenth birthday to a bad case of food poisoning instead of the darkness that he had actually faced.

“Let’s go? I think Dad’s waiting.”

Sam nodded slowly. He placed the gun carefully into the box and stared at it for a while longer.

“Sam?”

“Yeah…it’s just, I have this feeling like I’m forgetting something important.” He turned his hazel eyes to Dean and looked questioningly at his brother. Little did Sam know how haunting his hazel eyes could be, how they managed to tug at the strings of Dean’s heart and make its broken pieces rattle in his chest with longing.

“I’m sure it’s nothing. Besides, if it’s something important Bobby will find it and save it for you. Now c’mon.”

Sam nodded, seemingly convinced, and Dean watched him get up and head downstairs with his bag,
Saying goodbye was never easy, but it was particularly difficult for those who thought fondly of what was being left behind. Sam gave Bobby a quick hug and joined his father in the Impala. John wasn’t the kind of person to say goodbye— whenever he could he would just nod quickly, turn around and walk away. Bobby knew that, he understood it. Dean, however, needed a little more time to say goodbye to that man who had opened his house to them when they needed it the most, and who had opened his heart to him when he confessed his love for Sam.

“Thank you, Bobby,” Dean said, standing before his friend. “I know Dad has probably said this, but we can’t thank you enough for all you’ve done for us…for Sam.”

“Shut up, kid. You know I’d do it all over again.” Bobby studied the young man before him, trying hard to be strong.

“You know…I wish that creature, whatever it was, had erased my memories as well,” Dean chuckled sadly. “So I didn’t have to remember…” Dean swallowed hard and took a deep breath.

“Dean…I know it seems like everything’s fine, but you know that all that darkness is still somewhere inside your brother. I like to see that you’re not as relieved as John seems to be. You know it’s all still there, Dean. Maybe it’ll never surface, but maybe it will. Your memories need to live on Dean. Someone needs to remember, in case it all comes back, in case Sam loses himself again. I know it’s gonna be a hell of a burden on your shoulders, but you gotta be able to deal with that.”

“I’ll handle it, Bobby. I will.” Dean nodded seriously and sighed. “Thanks for everything.” Dean looked deeply into his friend’s eyes, hoping he knew just how much he meant by that.

“You’re welcome, kid. And whenever you need, just give me a call.”

Dean nodded and turned around to leave. He saw his dad behind the Impala’s wheel and Sam reading his book in the backseat. He smiled sadly before opening the door and joining them.

~ * ~

Being back on the road after an entire year of living in the same place had a bittersweet feeling to it. Dean shared the backseat of the Impala with Sam, since his father had piled up his stuff beside him in the front of the car. Looking outside of the window as John drove, Dean let his thoughts trail off to something that didn’t hurt as much as remembering the way Sam and he had been close. That was in the past now, and he would have to learn how to go back to the way things used to be.

“Dad?” Sam asked suddenly, putting his book down.

“Yeah, Sam?”

“Where are we going?”
“Don’t know for sure yet. There are rumors of a case somewhere in east Missouri. Thought we could check it out.”

Sam nodded. “Can I go back to school?”

John looked at Dean through the rear view mirror, then looked at Sam.

“Yeah…of course you can. Do you want to?”

“Yeah.” Sam didn’t know why it felt like so long since he had last gone to class. He was sure it couldn’t have been more than a few weeks. It was weird how confusing some of his thoughts were lately.

“Right. We’ll find a place to settle down for some time, then. You can go back to school.”

Sam nodded. He looked at his book and yawned. God, he had been so sleepy these past couple of days. He picked the book and opened it again, but his eyes were already heavy, and Sam knew he wouldn’t be able to read for much longer.

Dean had been looking outside the window at the silent trees and darkening sky when he felt the warm weight of Sam’s head resting against his shoulder. He looked at his brother and found Sam asleep, leaning against him.


“Hm?” Sam blinked a few times, looking lost for a moment.

“Move. I don’t need a pool of drool on my shirt.” Dean swallowed hard. He had to keep up the appearances.

“Sorry,” Sam mumbled and leaned against the other window, immediately closing his eyes and drifting back into sleep.

Dean went back to looking outside the window, his heart still drumming after the sudden contact with Sam. How could he enjoy that, though? How could he let Sam see that his touch was all Dean wanted, and that he missed him so much his heart wanted to stop? Dean had to keep his promise of helping Sam forget. Acting like the big brother he had always been was part of the deal.

Yet, when half an hour later Sam stirred in the backseat and his head once again leaned against Dean’s shoulder, the older brother could not find it in him to wake him up again.

Dean looked at Sam’s sleeping head nestled against his body and relaxed. Sam looked so sweet in his deep sleep that Dean could not, for the sake of him, move and wake him up. For the next hour Dean barely moved. He had trouble breathing. The soft weight of Sam’s head against his right side was so little, and yet was warm enough to light a fire in his heart.

Dean looked at his father, driving away, unaware of what went on in the backseat. And Dean thought of Sam, sleeping against him, unaware of the love they had shared. It seemed like a cruel fate that Dean had to be the one who remembered how hotly that fire in his heart could burn.

~ * ~
After four days on the road, John checked them into a motel to catch a break, and because he wanted to investigate something he had read in the local paper.

So, after his usual recommendations to his kids, John left them alone in the motel and walked into the night carrying a gun packed with salt bullets and an iron knife.

“Is Dad gonna hunt a ghost?” Sam asked when they were alone.

“Didn’t you see him loading the salt bullets?” Dean answered, a twinge of crankiness evident in his voice.

“I did…” Sam wondered why Dean was acting somewhat short-tempered with him. Had he done something wrong? “Do you wanna do something? Watch a movie, or…”

“Sam, I’m tired. I need to get some sleep.”

“Okay…” Sam said, feeling his heart fall. He looked at Dean as he kicked off his shoes and took one of the beds in the room.

“You slept plenty in the car. There was a wet patch on my shirt to prove that. Now I need to get some sleep, too.”

“Sorry about that.”

“It’s okay.”

“Where will Dad sleep when he comes back?”

“He won’t come back tonight. If he does, he’ll probably sleep on the couch.” Dean closed his eyes and tried to clear his mind. It worked for a few minutes, and then his heart jumped in his chest.

“Dean?”

“Yeah?” He opened his eyes and found Sam’s face so close to his that for a split second Dean was sure Sam hadn’t forgotten them. For a wild, desperate moment, Dean was certain Sam would lean over and kiss him.

“Do you mind if I keep the lights on? I wanna read some more.”

“Course not, Sammy. Enjoy your nerdy book.”

Sam smiled. He took *The Silmarillion* and jumped on the other bed, where he started to leaf through the pages until he found what he was looking for.

~ * ~

Dean woke up in the middle of the night. It was dark in the motel room, and when he looked to his side, he could see Sam asleep on the other bed. Indeed, darkness was no longer an issue for his
younger brother, and Dean should celebrate that, but instead, the lack of Sam’s closeness was suddenly too much, and the hollowness of not having Sam all curled up against him, sleeping in his arms, threatened to eat at his sanity, and Dean could no longer lie down.

He got up, his legs shaky and his chest so tight it hurt, and stumbled his way to the bathroom, where he locked the door and sat down heavily on the cold floor, his back against the tiles.

“Fuck,” Dean cursed in a low voice. Would it ever get better? The feeling of loss, the pain of a thousand shattered pieces of the only true love he had ever felt, and would always feel? Dean felt the tears come fast and hot. His lips trembled and he shut his eyes tightly, trying not to make a sound when a sob made its way past his throat.

With his head leaning against the cold tiles in that cold bathroom, Dean let his tears come, simply because he couldn’t hold them back anymore. He closed his lips tightly to avoid any betraying sound of pain to escape from them as memories of Sam and him together filled his brain and tore him apart.

“Dean?”

The small voice came from outside the bathroom and caused Dean to swallow down quickly and run a hand over his messy hair and puffy eyes.

“Sam?” he asked, his voice gritty. “What are you doing up?”

“I heard you in there. Are you alright?”

Dean closed his eyes and took a deep, shaky breath. “I’m fine. Go back to sleep.”

“Are you sure? Do you need help?”

‘Damn it, Sam. Don’t break my heart even more,’ Dean’s brain begged.

“Yeah, I’m fine. I think I ate something weird in that last diner we stopped by.”

“Do you want me to do something?”

“I’m fine. Just paying the price for that extra bacon double cheese burger, I guess.”

Dean could hear Sam’s soft chuckle outside the door and smiled.

“Okay then. If you need anything just ask.”

“Right. Night, Sam.”

Dean heard the footsteps go away and relaxed, his head once again leaning against the tiles on the wall.

Dean knew he needed to be strong. He knew that for his and for Sam’s sake he had to get over his feelings and move on. Nothing good or helpful would come from letting this pain take control like that.

He knew what he had to do, and he knew it would not be easy.
Dean had to let go of all the love he felt—bury it as deeply as possible so he could live his life without falling apart.

He would do his best to make it happen, but not tonight.

Tonight Dean didn’t want to be strong. Tonight, alone in the bathroom and trying to muffle his tears, Dean let himself cry for the pain of loving Sam.

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tbc...
Chapter 80

Time seemed to go by fast when you were on the road all the time. As they traveled the country, lingering, sometimes, for a few weeks in the same place, a whole year went by. Dean, now a twenty-year-old young man, kept his promise of helping Sam build his memories and forget the abuse he suffered. Sam never, not even once, mentioned anything that could be vaguely indicative that he remembered something, and John couldn’t be more pleased with the fact that he had his two kids back in their little routine once again.

Bobby was right when he had told Dean that it would get better. Eventually, it did. Dean didn’t know how many nights went by until he could sleep without having to muffle his sorrow into a pillow in the silence of the room. He didn’t know how many weeks it had been with the physical pain of not having Sam in his arms, of interacting with his baby brother as if nothing had ever happened between them, and of making Sam laugh without his heart falling to pieces with longing.

But, eventually, it got better.

It was inevitable that Dean resorted to the one thing capable of making him forget, even if for just a few moments, the love he had to suppress. As they traveled through different towns, Dean met different girls, and he started a large collection of hearts and orgasms in the different places they stopped by to work cases. Perhaps it had something to do with the patience Dean had learned to have because of Sam, or perhaps all his practice was really paying off, but Dean knew he was getting good at it. He enjoyed sex, not only because of the obvious and immediate pleasure, but also for the chance it gave him to give in to oblivion and find happiness for a brief time.

By the time Sam turned sixteen, they had been living in the same rented house for over a month. Sam had been going to school in town and he kept up with his dad’s training lessons in between his studies. The harder Sam tried to work on his hunting exercises, though, the more anguished he felt when he understood he’d much rather be studying.

Honestly, he didn’t know what was happening to him. Sam watched his father go from town to town, hunting things, saving lives, and he admired him for that. He also admired Dean’s diligence to follow in their dad’s footsteps, but the truth was, when Sam thought of life as a hunter, there was a bitter feeling in his mouth, something that repelled him strongly and forced him to consider other options. The fact that Sam couldn’t really see himself breaking away from his family and doing something else with his life sometimes weighed on him and brought him down. Nonetheless, whenever Sam was feeling a little under the weather about the family business and the sacrifices they
were forced to make, something that never failed to cheer him up was getting home after school, sitting down on the stairs of wherever they happened to be living at the moment, and watching as Dean trained hard under the sun.

Dean finished a series of pushups in the middle of the improvised gym they had built on the yard and got up, sweat trickling down his face. He took his shirt off and wiped his face with it, his eyes squinting under the bright sun when he found Sam looking at him from the back door of the house.

“What are you looking at? Come here and start busting your ass, too. I know you got training to do,” he said.

“Nope, not until four o’clock I don’t,” Sam smiled teasingly.

“What time is it?”

“Three-thirty,” Sam said. “Go ahead, keep working out. I’ll even cheer you on,” Sam provoked and laughed.

“Haha,” Dean retorted, humorlessly. He tossed his shirt on the grass and got down for another series of pushups.

Sam looked at his brother from a distance. He couldn’t remember how many times he had been in that position, watching as Dean worked out, trying to learn something as his big brother worked hard on his training. Not much had changed, except that Sam was hardly the skinny boy he had been when they were kids. With an impressive speed, his body seemed to be developing day by day. His chest was larger, his arms bigger than they were last year, and Sam was almost as tall as Dean. He liked to tease his brother on how he would soon be taller than him.

Sam looked at Dean’s back as his muscles flexed rhythmically. When Dean got up and started to do some chin ups, Sam followed him with his eyes and let them linger for a moment, lost in how his brother’s muscles seemed to bulge when he pulled himself up, and how nice they looked as his skin glowed under the sun.

It wasn’t the first time Sam let his eyes trail off and enjoy the sight of Dean when he knew his brother wasn’t looking. He didn’t even know why he did that, it was somewhat of a guilty pleasure, but Sam liked to watch Dean when he was lost in his training and unaware of his looks.

At first Sam had told himself it was nothing but curiosity. He liked to watch Dean’s body because it made him wonder if he, too, would grow into a similar shape. Besides, there was that raw magnetism Dean had always had over him—Sam liked to be near his brother, he felt good when he had Dean’s attention. Even if sometimes they were at each other’s throats after spending way too many hours together in the same car, that hadn’t changed much over the years. There was still something warm about being in Dean’s presence.

Dean finished his exercise and took a bottle of water he had placed nearby. He drank some and spilled the rest on the back of his neck and hair, shaking his head to better enjoy the feeling of freshening up. Sam watched him, entranced.

When Dean realized Sam had been looking intently at him, he smiled and walked closer in his direction.

“C’mon. Go change and join me. There’s a lot we need to do today.”
Sam bit down on his bottom lip and nodded. His heart beat fast and he tried to act like nothing was wrong, but the fact was that Sam could not, for the sake of him, stand up right now. It would be embarrassing if he did.

“C’mon,” Dean insisted.

“Give me a minute, I’m working up to it,” Sam said casually and looked away.

Dean gave him a weird look for a moment, a look that made Sam’s heart feel chilly inside his chest, and then shrugged and went back to his exercises.

Sam took a deep, relieved breath and tried to calm down. Sixteen was definitely an age of raging hormones. It was so crazy that his body hardly knew what it should respond to, apparently. Sam needed five entire minutes until he could stand up and not make a fool of himself.

Sometimes being a teenager was weird, he thought as he got up to change and join his brother.

~ * ~

A month after that small incident, Sam was once again struck with the oddness of being a teenager. Everything had been going on smoothly during his day. He had woken up early and left for school in the morning. He was even cheerful about not having the last period of PE. Their teacher had felt indisposed, which had caused them to be released earlier. Sam didn’t mind it. He had enough physical education at home to be glad he could skip it at school.

Thus, as he returned home a little earlier than usual, Sam opened the door to their rented house to find his brother making out with a half-naked girl on the couch.

“Oh, sorry,” he said the moment he walked in on the scene.

Dean and a blonde girl stopped abruptly and looked at him. The girl covered her breasts quickly and chuckled, embarrassed.

“Thought you said there would be no one home,” she whispered and pinched Dean’s hip playfully.

“Um…” Dean looked at his brother and then at the girl. He knew his father was on a hunt and wouldn’t be home for the next couple of days, he just didn’t expect Sam to arrive earlier from school.

“Nevermind me. The PE teacher was sick so we left early. I’ll go upstairs,” Sam said quickly and disappeared.

“Thanks!”

He heard Dean cry out after him as he made it to their room upstairs and shut the door. Sam thought the heard giggling and moaning, even as the door was closed, so he searched for his headphones and put them on as fast as he could, turning up the volume of the music and lying on his bed.

Sam looked at his backpack, lying on top of the bed, and in a rampant of stupid rage, he kicked it off the bed and his nostrils flared with annoyance. Why did Dean have to bring his love conquests
home? Why couldn’t he go about his little love escapades out of sight? Sam didn’t need to see his brother rubbing his sex life right to his face.

He didn’t even know why he was so angry, but something in his chest burned with annoyance, and Sam’s already serious face was even graver as he tried to think of something else that wasn’t Dean’s hands all over that girl’s body, and the little pleasure echos coming from the couch.

It wasn’t the first time Sam felt jealous of Dean’s girlfriends. As soon as he was old enough to understand what going on dates meant, Sam was never too fond of the idea of having to share his brother’s attention with the parade of girls that seemed to go by Dean’s life. It wasn’t even rational or anything—Sam knew Dean was allowed to have his affairs. He understood his brother was all over chicks, and that Dean’s adrenaline buzzed almost as much hunting monsters as it did when he was seducing a girl.

Honestly, though, Sam didn’t know why it bothered him. Why it hurt him.

Perhaps it was all about how lonely it felt leading the kind of life they did. They were never in the same place long enough to make friends, so that they basically just had each other by the end of the day. Of course Sam could try and do as Dean did—he supposed he could start chasing after girls, but Sam was not as confident as Dean seemed to be. He felt shy near the girls he found pretty at school. It was like he didn’t know what to do or what to say, even when they clearly seemed to like him back. Perhaps he should try harder. In moments like this, when his feelings were all confusing and wild, Sam realized that perhaps he should try harder to connect with someone else.

He didn’t know for how long he had been in their room, lost in thoughts and listening to music, but he didn’t hear the knock on the door. Dean had to open the door to their shared room to see if Sam was still alive in there.

“What?” Sam asked, crankily, when Dean screamed at him and laughed.

“Nothing. Just wanted to tell you that Camilla is gone, in case you need to go downstairs.”

“Oh, thank you. How considerate of you to stop having sex on the living room couch,” Sam said, bitterly.

Dean cocked an eyebrow and studied him.

“What got your panties in a bunch, eh? Jealous? You could be having fun, too. Look at the way you’re developing, Sammy, don’t tell me the girls at school haven’t noticed you.” Because they surely had, Dean thought. If he had seen the way Sam was growing into a large, attractive dude, then the girls most certainly had, too.

“Shut up. I just wanna get home and not have a porno going on in the living room.”

Dean catalogued Sam’s pissed attitude with curiosity.

“Don’t be such a prude. Like you haven’t—” Dean stopped abruptly in the middle of his sentence when Sam gave him a dirty look. “Oh, you haven’t…never?”

“Shut up.” Sam felt his cheeks grow heated and he felt uncomfortable.

Dean didn’t think Sam had had sex with a girl yet, but he couldn’t help the desire to confirm it. His
brother was so closed up about his personal life that sometimes all Dean could do was wonder, and that he did a lot—much more than he should.

Sam got up and walked hurriedly past his brother and towards the stairs.

“That’s okay, Sammy! You’re taking your time, that’s sweet!” Dean tried, but Sam’s only response was to give him the finger on his way down the stairs.

Dean chuckled. He acted the big brother, as usual, but he couldn’t deny the small little pleasure he felt at knowing Sam still hadn’t belonged to anyone else that wasn’t him, even if he would never know that.

~ * ~

“I swear I hate this fucking thing,” Sam cursed and let the crossbow hang beside his body after his hundredth failed attempt to hit the target.

They were still living in that large rented house so Sam could go to the same school and they had a reasonably good space to practice all sorts of hunting skills in the backyard.

Dean was sitting on a bench lifting weights, and he looked over his shoulder as Sam muttered under his breath, struggling with the crossbow.

“Keep at it. You’ll get better.”

“Oh, shut up. Easy for you to say. I can’t handle this damn thing. Why can’t I just play soccer like any normal kid my age?” Sam mumbled, his forehead creased.

“Because other kids your age don’t need a good shot to fight ghosts and creatures of the night,” Dean replied.

“Whatever.” Sam narrowed his eyes with annoyance and made as if he would drop the weapon.

“Pick it up. Dad said two hours of training. There’s half an hour to go.”

“Dad isn’t here,” Sam retorted.

“And how are you going to get any good if you don’t follow his advice?”

“I’m done, Dean. Rat me out to him if you want, I’m sick of this.”

“Hey…” Dean put down the dumbbell and walked towards his brother. “You’re doing it wrong, Sam. First, look at your shoulders. You’re as tense as the bow itself.” Dean positioned himself behind his brother and started to give instructions. “You need to relax your shoulders, you’re getting twice as tired being this tense. C’mon, pick it up.”

Sam sighed, still annoyed, but did as Dean asked. He picked the crossbow and lifted it to his eyesight once again.

“There you go, now stop putting the weight of the world here.” Dean’s hands fell on both of Sam’s
shoulders and eased some of the tension he carried. “Now, you’re pulling the arrow the wrong way. Here, let me show you.” Standing right behind his brother, Dean reached out his arm and let his hand cover Sam’s, guiding his brother’s fingers gently in order to show Sam what to do.

Sam felt Dean’s body behind his and despite everything he thought he knew about himself, his heart was racing and his blood was pumping faster. Sam could hardly concentrate long enough to hold on to the arrow as Dean’s fingers covered his.

What the hell was going on?

Sam could smell a faint vanilla scent coming from Dean’s aftershave and it made him feel as if his heart was beating in his throat.

“Now this hand you keep on the trigger, and only let go when you’re sure you’ve got the target right.”

Sam could barely listen to a word Dean said. The craziest things were happening in his body. His knees felt weak and it was all Sam could do to try hard to stand on his two feet.

“Slow down your breathing,” Dean instructed. “You’re too anxious.”

‘Easier said than done,’ Sam thought, desperately. He didn’t know what was going on, but it felt like all the times he had spent watching Dean train from afar, and all the jealously he had built up whenever he saw Dean with a girl, came knocking hard on his sanity to make Sam feel an unreasonable amount of longing.

“Now open your eyes and aim.”

Sam closed his eyes instead and leaned, ever so lightly, against Dean’s body. It was just an inch, maybe less, just a small little brushing of their clothing, and Sam wondered if Dean had felt it, if he would pull away. When he didn’t, Sam’s heart thudded louder in his chest, and for a moment he feared Dean would hear it and ask about his loud heartbeats.

“Let it go, Sammy.”

“What?” Sam nearly jumped out of his skin when Dean’s breath tickled the back of his neck. Goosebumps broke all over his arms and he hoped Dean wouldn’t notice it.

“The arrow, let it go.”

Sam swallowed hard. He shut his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath. Dean’s scent was intoxicating. But why was he thinking that? Why was Sam reacting so unreasonably to his brother’s closeness? Sam didn’t have answers, and he didn’t have control. He opened his eyes to try and steady himself, and let the arrow fly off the bow.

“See?” Dean pulled away and smiled. “Close enough.”

Sam’s arrow had hit the target this time, very near the center, but not quite there yet.

“Keep at it for another half hour and you’ll be a pro,” Dean smiled and winked at him.

Sam let the crossbow fall slowly to the side of his body and looked at his brother. What had just gone
on? Why did he feel so shaky, as if his body had a mind of its own that Sam couldn’t possibly control?

Why couldn’t he look away from Dean’s smile? Why didn’t he want to try and look away? Why were those feelings—

“Stop it,” he whispered.

“What?” Dean asked.

“Nothing. I’ll keep trying for a while longer,” Sam said quickly, trying hard to silence his hectic thoughts.

“Good. You do that. I’ll go eat something. I’m starving.”

Sam watched Dean go and took a deep breath when he was alone. He looked at the arrow so near the center of the target and his heart raced all over again.

~ * ~

That night, as Sam lay in his bed in the middle of the night and listened to Dean’s peaceful breathing as he lay on his bed, just a few feet away, he couldn’t help thinking over and over about the events of the afternoon.

What had happened in the backyard as Dean tried to teach him how to use the crossbow properly? Why had he felt all those weird feelings at their proximity? Dean was his brother and Sam was used to his closeness. They had shared a bed so often for lack of enough space to sleep that they were completely used to each other’s scent and touching. Why was it suddenly different?

But it hadn’t been different only today, and Sam knew that. It had been different a few times, even though he tried hard not to think of it. Over the years, and particularly over the last year, Sam had tried not to overthink his lingering gazes in Dean’s direction, and the warm feeling spreading inside him when they were together. He had tried not to think too much of the goosebumps he sometimes experienced when they touched accidentally, or the heartbeat that would fail to keep the rhythm if he stared for too long into his brother’s eyes.

But today…today it had been strong. Today Sam’s body had reacted almost violently to Dean’s closeness. Sam didn’t understand any of it, or at least he tried to convince himself he didn’t.

There was something that could explain all these weird feelings, but Sam was terrified to go there. What kind of sick person would grow feelings for his own brother?

Yet, instead of disgusting him, as Sam hoped the thought would, it made his heart speed up and his sleeping shorts feel tight.

Sam squeezed his eyes shut and tried to think of anything that wasn’t Dean’s body and the way the sunlight glowed on his skin as he trained. Sam tried, weakly, not to think of Dean’s scent and his breath puffing against his neck, making him shiver with helpless desire.

Within a confusing mix of emotions, Sam reached his hand and quietly squeezed himself through his
shorts. The more he fought the unusual thoughts about his brother, the stronger they seemed to grow.

Sam looked around, worriedly, wondering if Dean was awake and looking at him. His brother was still peacefully asleep, just a few feet away. ‘*He has no idea how gross my feelings are right now,*’ Sam thought with anguish as his cock stood taut and pulsing against his lower belly.

Sam shut his eyes and tried, for a while longer, to ignore the shameful desire throbbing between his legs. What would Dean say if he ever found out Sam was aroused because of him? Just how disgusted would he be if Sam actually touched himself to the thought of his own brother?

‘*Fuck it, he won’t know,*’ Sam lost the battle against his struggling thoughts and wrapped his hand around the base of his erection.

For the next few minutes, Sam shut his eyes and bit back his labored breathing as it grew to a crescendo of pleasure. He stroked himself faster, and during those few minutes he let himself indulge. Sam wouldn’t admit to himself when he woke up the next day the kinds of things that ran through his mind as he fisted his erection under the blanket, but right now nothing mattered. Right now Sam jerked himself faster to thoughts of his brother’s naked body wrapped around him, and the thought of how Dean’s hands would feel if they touched his chest and lower belly, and if they wrapped around Sam’s cock and did what Sam did to himself now.

A faint little moan escaped Sam’s lips when he came, and he tried to swallow the sound as he coated his hand with his come.

For a few seconds Sam lay there, unmoving, trying to calm his breathing down. He let his pleasure dry on his skin, too afraid to move and clean up and maybe wake Dean up in the process.

Now, with his desire sated and reason finding its slow way back to his mind, Sam’s pleasure was strangled by guilt and his heart wrapped in warm, confusing feelings.

‘*I think I need therapy,*’ Sam thought before he closed his eyes and tried to find some sleep.

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tbc...
Chapter 81

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for beta-ing this, *kittenbot* =))) <3

Chapter 81

It started to get worse when it started to get better. It took Dean months to be able to sleep with the emptiness of Sam’s absence; it took everything he had inside to look at his brother and hide his love away, and pretend he didn’t desire him just as badly as he did before. Nonetheless, when everything started to become a little more bearable, there had been the realization that Sam was growing feelings for him.

After a few months of watching Sam as he watched him, after careful observation of his brother’s looks and touches, Dean knew something was going on. He couldn’t tell exactly when it had begun, but he felt something was different in the way Sam reacted to his presence.

Not that his brother wasn’t very discreet—if Dean wasn’t madly in love with him, he might not even have noticed the way Sam studied him with longing when he thought Dean wasn’t looking. It was in the small things; the way Sam would make sure their legs brushed frequently during a long ride in the back of the Impala, or in the way he would ask for help with some part of his training that required a lot of physical contact, or even in the jealously he could barely hide whenever Dean was up and about with a girl.

Now, it was one thing trying to control his feelings when Dean thought Sam was completely oblivious to what he felt. However, it was a hundred times harder having to pretend his love wasn’t there when Dean could feel Sam’s growing interest in him.

There were moments when it just drove him mad. Like now, for one.

Dean looked away and took a deep breath as Sam sat by his side, trying to teach him some Latin. The words were already difficult enough for him to memorize, but with Sam’s scent so close, so intoxicating, it was just cruelty. There was no way Dean’s brain could focus.

“So this letter actually sounds more like this one.” Sam pointed at something on a sheet of paper and Dean rolled his eyes.

“Why can’t we exorcise demons in English? I mean, they understand the language, right? Why doesn’t it work?” Dean grumbled.

“Were you even paying attention to what I said?” Sam studied his brother. They were sitting at the
study desk in their room, and even though there was plenty of space, Sam let his knee casually rest against Dean’s.

“Yeah. You went like, blah blah blah Horace, or Terence, or Cicero, or whatever weird names these dudes have.”

Sam smiled. “Nummumst iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius.”

“What?” Dean frowned. “Yeah, for you too, smartass.”

“I said, nothing has yet been said that has not been said earlier,” Sam chuckled. “It’s a famous literary proverb.”

Dean stared intently into his brother’s face, hardly amused.

“Seriously, Sam, I need a break. My head will explode—”

“We haven’t finished yet.” Sam placed his hand on top of Dean’s and kept him when he tried to stand up. “Stay and learn more. Isn’t that what you tell me? This is important.”

Dean felt Sam’s skin against his and the warmth was crazy good.

“Yeah, whatever.” Dean slid his hand away smoothly, but his heart had already started a faster rhythm.

For another half hour Dean had to handle the closeness, the scent that messed with his thoughts, the curve of neck just a few inches from his face, the same neck he used to bury his nose into and suck and lick until Sam was squirming with pleasure.

‘Fuck,’ Dean cursed mentally when he felt his blood rushing to a much more fun part of his body that wasn’t his brain. He could hardly listen to what Sam said when his leg was still pressed to his, and every now and then Sam had an excuse to touch him.

As if Dean didn’t already have a hard time watching Sam grow into a tall, muscular young man, his body changing handsomely into firm muscles and a strong jaw line that, little by little, consumed the remaining boyish features he still had. It wasn’t once or twice, it was more like a million times actually, when Dean had been forced to relieve himself to the memories he had of them, together. It didn’t matter how many girls he screwed, there were times when what his body craved was the memory of touching Sam, of running his hands over his body and eliciting soft little moans and helpless pleading.

And now, now that Sam was growing older, Dean could only imagine how different it would be between them. Sam was more fierce and he was definitely stronger than he had been when they were together. Sometimes, when he couldn’t help himself, Dean wondered what it would feel like to take Sam now that he could almost match Dean’s physical strength. How amazing would it be to tangle in bed with him, both fighting for dominance, both wanting to take more and both equally giving more…

“Enough…”

“What?” Sam asked, in the middle of an explanation.
“That’s enough, I can’t pay attention anymore.”

Sam studied Dean intently, trying to read something behind his words.

“And why is that?” He lowered his voice and looked intently into Dean’s eyes, his heart racing. He couldn’t deny that their closeness affected him, and sometimes Sam felt reckless enough to try and push at this feeling.

Dean looked at the hazel eyes searching into his, almost invitingly, and he knew he had to do something quickly.

“I got this date tonight and I can’t stop thinking of how lovely Rita is gonna look when I undress her so very slowly…” Dean said the first thing that came to his mind.

Sam rolled his eyes and pushed the papers away with an annoyed sigh.

“That’s all you can think about?” He asked, his heart falling.

“Well, you’d think about it a lot, too, if you ever got started…if you know what I mean,” as much as Dean didn’t like the idea of Sam with someone else, he began to realize that encouraging him to live his life and meet someone might be necessary in order to discourage this bond Sam seemed to be flirting with.

“Yes, Dean, I know what you mean.”

Sam stood up and stretched, walking out of the room and leaving his brother behind, trying not to think of his confusing feelings.

~ * ~

There was a girl Sam liked at school. She had short blond hair and was about his age. She was smart, funny, and she seemed to take an interest in him. Being in her company was a nice break from the whole hunter’s routine, and at the same time Sam liked her more and more, he began to dread the moment their father would say it was time to move again.

Her name was Emma, and she helped take Sam’s mind off his constant desire to be around Dean and the erratic heartbeats of that closeness. When they were together, talking after school, or sometimes over the internet, Sam liked to pretend he was just like any regular teenager, with a crush on a cute girl; not the son of a ghost hunter, and someone who had feelings way too strong and complex for his own brother. Sam liked to like the girl, because it made it easier to forget that he sometimes masturbated to thoughts of his older brother.

Eventually, his relationship with Emma grew into something else. Sam didn’t know exactly how it had happened, but suddenly they were kissing each other and holding hands after school. Their so-called study sessions were now much more make out sessions than anything else. And the more Dean bragged about his dates, the more Sam allowed himself to indulge into something that made him feel normal. Being with Emma was not like kissing a Kitsune—something his dad and brother had hunted before—and it definitely wasn’t like the weird feelings he had for Dean.

On his seventeenth birthday, Sam brought home a small present from the girl he believed was now
his girlfriend, even though they had not yet gone all the way with their relationship. Sam had blushed faintly and smiled from ear to ear, and now he walked into the rented house carrying the small gift bag with the present inside.

“Happy birthday, birthday boy!” Dean cheered when Sam walked in. He hadn’t seen his brother yet since Sam had left early for school while he was still asleep.

They hugged briefly and pulled away. “Yeah, thanks.” Sam looked around. “Where’s Dad?”

Dean’s smile faded.

“Don’t tell me, the job will take longer than he imagined and he won’t be able to make it,” Sam said, matter-of-factly.

“He tried, Sam. He was making his way back home when something came up.”

“Something came up,” Sam repeated. “Right.”

Dean felt visibly uncomfortable with Sam’s disappointment, so he tried to change the subject quickly.

“So what’s that, hmm? Your girlfriend gave you something, eh? That cute girl you sometimes kiss by the gate when you come home?” Dean teased.

“Shut up,” Sam said, but he smiled despite himself. “She’s not my girlfriend.”

“Really?”

“Well, it’s not like I asked her to be my girlfriend or anything.”

“You should. The girl definitely likes you. I mean, buying you presents and stuff? That’s love.”

“Yeah, whatever. Next month we might be moving and then it’ll be over.”

Sam was always a little grumpy on his birthdays, so Dean tried to cheer him up again.

“What is that? Did you open it?” He nodded at the small pretty bag.

“Yeah, it’s a bottle of cologne or something. I didn’t really open it.”

“Go ahead, open it. First it’s a cologne, next thing you know she’s giving you her flower,” Dean laughed.

Sam rolled his eyes and opened the bag to take the bottle filled with liquid. He opened the small round lid and took the bottle to his nose, inhaling deeply.

*There was darkness.*

For a split second Sam didn’t know what had happened. He shut his eyes and the vision of complete darkness was so intense that when he opened his eyes, startled, he almost didn’t know where he was. Sam’s breathing hitched and his eyes were wide open.
Dean narrowed his eyes and studied his brother curiously.

“What happened?”

Sam couldn’t find his voice. He shut his eyes again.

And the man.

Sam shook his head when a powerful shudder raked him, head to toe. He closed the bottle of cologne quickly with fingers that were hardly steady.

“Sam?” Dean questioned his weird look.

“Um, nothing. I don’t know, it’s nothing.” Sam shook his head and smiled. “I just…I guess I didn’t like this smell very much,” he confessed and chuckled awkwardly.

Dean reached out his hand to try it and Sam handed him the bottle. The older brother smelled the same thing Sam had a few moments before and shrugged.

“What about it? It’s okay for me.”

“I don’t know. It’s probably the whole citrus thing. I guess I’m not really a fan.”

Citrus. Dean’s mind stuck with that word and he froze. It took him a couple of seconds to remember why that word caused him to stay on alert. Citrus had been what Sam smelled in the dark every time Harry came in to torture him. He remembered that. Dean remembered Sam telling him how the man who tortured him had a strong smell of citrus that filled Sam’s nose when he was being abused. That same smell had been what caused Sam to recognize the shadow that attacked him during his months in captivity, so Dean imagined it was linked pretty heavily to his memories.

“I read somewhere that this scent may give some people a migraine. Maybe you’re one of these people,” Dean offered, his heart tense.

“Really? Did you really read that?” Sam frowned.

Dean nodded quickly.

Sam shrugged. “Weird.” He took the bottle of cologne from Dean’s hand again. “Anyway, I’ll just tell her I liked it.”

“Yeah, you should do that.”

Dean watched as his brother disappeared upstairs with his present, and for the first time in nearly two years, he was worried about Sam’s memories.

~ * ~

Sam was alone in their shared room, about to go to bed. He was already wearing sleeping clothes, his teeth brushed and his alarm clock set. Yet, before he walked towards his bed, Sam was drawn to the dresser where he had put Emma’s present.
He didn’t know why, but he had felt something really, really strange when he had smelled it before. So strange that Sam couldn’t help his curiosity when he opened the lid and took the fragrance to his nose once again.

*Citrus.*

He closed his eyes.

*Darkness.*

His heart raced.

*The door opened.*

Sam sucked in his breath and shuddered.

It happened too quickly, just a few confusing thoughts, fragments of images and darkness, nothing that made any sense to him, but for some reason Sam realized that smell provoked a strong feeling in him, and Sam identified it as fear.

Trying to shrug off the weird impression, Sam turned off the lights in the room and went to bed, and in a few minutes he couldn’t remember any of his troubled thoughts.

~ * ~

That night, as Dean slept deep and peacefully, he was woken by a sound he hadn’t heard in a long time. At first it sounded so distant and so small that he barely paid it any heed. His eyes fluttered open and Dean was about to turn in bed and go back to sleep, but his brain was waking up fast, and his brain remembered exactly why that sound was important.

“Mmm…”

Dean blinked and opened his eyes in the darkness of the bedroom. For a moment he didn’t move, just listened.

“No…”

There was a series of panting and then a long moment of silence. Dean’s blood started to pump faster.

*“Please, no…”*  

“Sam?” Dean called softly and got up. He walked towards Sam’s bed and his heart slammed against his chest. “Sammy…” Dean saw his brother twisting in the middle of his covers, the sound of pained distress escaping through his lips.

Dean lit the lamp by the nightstand and saw sweat breaking on Sam’s forehead.

“No…go away…” Sam murmured, the plea small and broken.
“Damn it,” Dean whispered, for a moment frozen where he was, unable to deal with the fact that Sam was having a nightmare. And not any nightmare, it was a nightmare about the dark room, a nightmare caused by the citrus he had smelled earlier. It seemed like whatever wall had been built in Sam’s mind, it wasn’t *that* strong. “Hey…it’s okay…” Dean touched his brother's forehead.

“Mmm!” Sam grew more agitated and breathless. “No!!” he cried, struggling with his invisible past memory.

Dean was afraid of waking Sam up and bringing back his memories, or at least questions Sam wouldn’t be able to deal with, so he did the one thing he had learned to do when Sam needed him the most. Dean lay down beside Sam in that small bed and pulled his brother closer until Sam’s back was nestled against his chest and Dean’s arms locked him in a tight embrace.

At first Sam squirmed and moaned, the sound full of anguish, causing Dean’s heart to break.

“No…don’t…no…please…” Sam begged, his eyes tightly shut, his body shaking in bed.

“Shhh…it’s okay. That’s not real. You’re safe, Sammy. You know that,” Dean whispered softly into his ear.

Sam grew restless for a moment, as if he tried to break free, so Dean tightened the embrace as he had done many times, in a way Sam could hardly move and was forced to calm down from his panicked writhing.

It was a long time until Sam stopped shaking, and Dean was holding him during every second of that nightmare his brother probably wouldn’t even remember the next morning.

Dean held Sam in the silence of the night for so long that he almost fell asleep. When he realized Sam was no longer moving and Dean was almost drifting into unconsciousness, he tried to move slowly away.

However, the moment Dean tried to remove his arms from around Sam, his younger brother stirred and grabbed at his wrist so tightly that Dean was certain Sam had woken up. When he convinced himself that Sam was still asleep, Dean realized he couldn’t move without waking him up. Sam’s fingers were grasping his arm and the shudders had come back.

“Relax, I’m not going anywhere,” Dean whispered against Sam’s hair before kissing the top of his head. He reached out with one of his hands and turned off the lamp by the nightstand.

The fact that the wall between Sam and his past had wavered was scary as hell, but right now, as Dean held Sam in his arms to ease him back into sleep, it was difficult not to give in to the joy pulsing in his veins.

It had been so long!

Dean shut his eyes and felt the warmth of Sam’s body pressed against his, and despite his concern, Dean could hardly hide from the happiness that accompanied his dreams.

~ * ~
Dean woke up before Sam did. He had drifted in and out of a light sleep, afraid Sam might wake up in his arms and completely confused. So, before the sun rose outside, Dean moved gently until he could slide out of bed in a way that didn’t disturb Sam’s sleep.

When he found himself standing up, his brother still lying unconscious in bed, Dean looked around their bedroom and walked towards the dresser where the girl’s gift to Sam was.

Dean cast a glance in Sam’s direction before looking at the bottle and making up his mind. Slow, so as not to make much noise, Dean went downstairs and emptied the bottle of cologne down the sink. Then, he went outside the house to make as little noise as possible, and broke the bottle by the stairs.

When Dean returned to their room, Sam was still asleep, and he placed the broken bottle of cologne on the dresser again before finally going back to his bed and pretending to be asleep.

When Sam woke up, an hour later, Dean woke up, too.

“Morning,” Dean said, studying Sam intently for any signs of his troubled night.

“Morning. Damn, I overslept. I need to get up fast,” Sam said, looking at his wristwatch and rubbing at his face. When his eyes fell on the dresser in front of the bed he frowned. “What happened to my present?”

Dean sucked on his bottom lip and widened his eyes. “Yeah, about that. I came home a bit drunk last night and knocked it over. I’m so sorry, man…”

“I can’t believe you broke my present.” Sam looked angry when he eyed his brother.

“I’m sorry. It wasn’t on purpose or anything. I’ll buy you another one if you like…”

“No, that’s okay,” Sam mumbled. “Just damn it, Dean, be more careful with my stuff,” Sam insisted with a serious look that was just adorable for Dean.

“I’ll try. I’m really sorry.”

Sam shook his head and got up. Of course he wouldn’t say anything, but deep inside, Sam was surprised to find how relieved he felt knowing that smell wasn’t there anymore. He couldn’t explain why, but he just did.

Dean watched his brother leave the bed and walk out of the room.

Sam didn’t seem to remember anything from the past night, which was great.

Yet, knowing that the wall keeping him safe from his trauma was not as strong as it seemed to be definitely made Dean think of Bobby’s words to him—somebody had to remember what happened.

Somebody needed to remember in case darkness returned and Sam found himself lost again.

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tbc...
Chapter 82

Chapter 82

It wasn’t long after his birthday that Sam took Emma home on a day when her parents weren’t there. Even though he kind of knew that moment was coming, his heart still raced erratically when she guided him upstairs to her room and started to undress him.

The usual insecurities were there, of course. Sam was afraid of not knowing exactly what to do, and he worried about doing it right. He didn’t know whether or not he was Emma’s first—she had never said anything, and Sam thought it would have been rude to ask—but he let her help him and lead him into it.

It happened slowly and Sam wanted to remember every minute of it. On his mind, the romantic idea of taking his first girl made his blood rush faster, and it didn’t matter if he would soon forget most of the details of that afternoon, because at that moment he enjoyed it thoroughly.

Emma was fun and put him at ease. When his nervous fingers fumbled with the condom she chuckled sweetly and helped him, and Sam would have been embarrassed if only he wasn’t so aroused.

He entered her gently and shut his eyes at how good it felt. The warmth of her skin, his hard-on sheathed in her wet tightness…and when Sam tried to take it slow he realized how difficult it would be.

He kissed her and moved on top of her until he could no longer hold back. Sam felt her arms wrapped around his back and her long legs tangled with his, and soon he was falling over the edge, shaking and letting go.

Emma ran her hands through his hair and smiled, her green eyes flashing.

When Sam pulled out he desperately wanted to know whether it had been good for her, too. Had she come? Did she like it? What was she thinking?

She must have read his puzzled look, because she motioned for him to lie down beside her and Sam complied.

“Sometimes it’s a bit harder for a girl to come with penetration. Do you wanna help me finish?” She tangled her fingers with his large ones and took his hand down her lower belly, making it pretty clear

Thank you *kittenbot* so much for beta-ing the chapter! <3
what her intentions were.

Sam’s heart raced again and he watched her intently when he touched her.

Her soft little moan encouraged him further, and with her help, Sam was able to bring his girlfriend to an orgasm, too.

During the remaining afternoon the two of them stayed in bed, basking in the aftermath of what they had just done together, caring little about the world happening outside of that room.

~ * ~

When Sam didn’t get home at his usual time after school, Dean couldn’t help his worry. At first he tried to get his mind off the fact that Sam was late. He kept himself busy cleaning the house as his dad had ordered, and then reading the magazine about cars he had bought himself earlier that week.

It didn’t matter how much Dean liked cars, though, because when the hours started to go by and Sam didn’t show up, Dean’s thoughts began to get out of hand and go back to the day everything had changed in their lives.

It didn’t matter how much time had gone by, and if Sam didn’t remember a thing, Dean would never forget how he had felt when he looked for his brother after school and didn’t find him. It didn’t matter that things were apparently normal again now; Dean still recalled every chill that traveled his body as he had waited for Sam in vain, and the cold claw of despair that grabbed at his heart when he had realized that Sam was gone.

By the end of the afternoon, Dean could no longer handle his growing restlessness. He put down his stupid magazine and, with his chest tight with unspoken worry, began looking for his keys and jacket.

He still hadn’t found the latter when Sam walked in.

“Hey,” Sam said as he walked past his brother carrying his backpack over one shoulder.

It felt like Dean’s heart was instantly wrapped by a warm and comforting blanket. He sighed and put down his keys. “Hey. What happened?”

“What do you mean?” Sam asked, innocently.

“What do I mean? Look at the time. Where were you?”

Sam shrugged casually and hoped his face wouldn’t betray him.

“Out. What’s the problem?” He tried to sound annoyed.

“Oh, so making me worry about you is no problem?” Dean studied him.

“There was no reason to worry. I was just hanging out with Emma. No big deal.”

The moment he said her name Sam realized he had made a mistake. Dean seemed to look at him
with less worry and more genuine interest, and there was only so much of Dean’s intent staring that Sam could handle before his cheeks started burning.

“What?” he asked, feeling the heat on his face.

“Oooh, I get it. You were with Emma, eh? That’s okay. That’s good, Sammy. It is,” Dean nodded and smiled, and the moment his teasing worked and Sam seemed absolutely shy, Dean understood what had happened. “So how was it?” Dean forced himself to ask even though there was a part of him that was all jealousy and longing.

Sam knew it was useless to try and pretend his brother wasn’t right. When Dean knew something he was just as impossible as when he thought he knew something, and sometimes it just felt like he knew him too well and Sam had nowhere to hide. Not that he wanted to hide…Dean’s attention had always made him feel warm inside, but lately this warmth had been more heated and confusing, and Sam still didn’t know how to deal with what he felt.

“Dean, c’mon.” Sam tried to walk past his brother and thus avoid the subject.

“C’mon what? So, did Emma let you go further than second base this time? I’m curious.” Dean smiled with a joy he didn’t feel.

“I guess that’s your problem then, isn’t it?” Sam made a face, but he ended up smiling and caving.

“Don’t be this grumpy, you just had sex. You’re all grown up now, baby brother.” Dean played his part. He did the teasing and everything else Sam would have expected of him.

“Shut up.” This time Sam really walked past his brother towards the stairs. “Where’s Dad by the way? Haven’t seen him in a while.”

“He said he’d be back tomorrow.”

Sam nodded and didn’t say anything else.

Dean watched him disappear upstairs and experienced a confusing mix of relief for having Sam home and knowing he was okay and pain at the thought of that special part of Sam he could never have again.

~ * ~

At first it was Emma. Emma’s hands, Emma’s smile, Emma’s bed. They undressed each other and kissed passionately on the bed. Sam could see her short blond hair and green eyes, and he could hardly wait to be inside of her again.

Sam found himself lying on the bed, his heart thudding with anticipation. He opened his eyes, his body fully aroused, and then gasped when he saw Dean’s face.

“Dean?” Sam frowned when he saw his brother crawling on top of him, his hands grasping his thighs and spreading them slightly.

“What? Don’t you want this, baby brother?”
Sam shuddered and his heart raced. He could feel his body burning several degrees hotter. He shouldn’t be doing that, it was absolutely crazy. Why was Dean on top of him? That made no sense, it would never happen…

Sam didn’t have time to wrestle his confusion. The next moment Dean was all over him, covering his body like a blanket and finding his way into his body, causing Sam to arch off the bed and into his thrusts.

“Hmm!” Sam groaned, his body tight as a bow. “Dean! What are you doing? Dean?”

“I’m giving you what you want, Sammy.” Dean lowered his mouth to Sam’s ear and licked at his earlobe. “What you really want.”

Sam moaned. His body was made of fire when Dean picked up speed. His head thrashed against the pillow and Sam’s lips hung open in a silent plea for more. He didn’t know what was happening or why, but his body seemed very comfortable with it, so Sam let go.

He felt his brother pounding into him, claiming him with his thrusts and touching him until it was too much and Sam couldn’t take it anymore.

Pleasure exploded before his eyes and Sam bucked, coming hard between their sliding bodies, feeling Dean come, too, inside of him just a few moments later…

Sam woke up perspiring and with heavy tachycardia. His mouth was dry and his blood rushed fast in his veins. What the hell had been that? What kind of weird, weird dream had he just had with his own brother?

“Oh, no…” Sam whispered when he realized he had actually come in his sleeping shorts. “Damn,” he cursed and looked to his side, mortified.

The moment Sam saw Dean’s bed empty, he took a deep breath and allowed himself to relax. Thank goodness his brother wasn’t there. Sam had no idea if he had said anything out loud, but the thought that Dean might know anything about that sinful, wrong dream made Sam panic.

How could he hope Dean would understand something that Sam himself didn’t?

Except that Dean did understand, and in the bathroom downstairs, he fisted the erection he couldn’t have prevented when he woke up to the soft sound of Sam calling his name in a sweet moan that spoke straight to Dean’s hunger.

~ * ~

“Sam?”

He turned around at the mention of his name. Sam was paying for gas as Dean filled the tank, and he looked into the eyes of the person calling his name.

“Is that you? It is, isn’t it?”
Sam frowned and offered an awkward smile.

“I’m sorry, do I know you?”

“Yes, it’s me, Dakota.” She opened a large smile and studied the young man in front of her. At first she had thought her mind was playing games, but after observing him from a distance for a few minutes, she was certain that handsome guy in front of her was the kid she used to treat in therapy some years ago.

Sam frowned.

“I’m sorry, I don’t think we’ve met…” Sam’s forehead was creased in concentration, and even though that woman did look familiar, Sam couldn’t seem to link her face to anyone in particular.

“It’s me, from therapy, remember?”

Dean saw Sam talking to a woman from where he was outside and, because he grew curious, he decided to enter the store and check that person out closely. Luckily, he was able to arrive before Dakota said anything else.

“Therapy?” Sam made a confused face and looked at his brother when he walked in.

“Hey!” Dakota said, and looked at him, too.

“I’m sorry, miss. I don’t think we’ve met before. Sam? Can you go wait outside?”

“Wait, what?”

As Sam looked at him, Dean eyed Dakota intently, until she understood something was wrong and seemed to step back.

“Sam, your phone is ringing in the car. I think it’s your girlfriend.”

“Emma?”

“Is there another? I’ll finish paying for it. I gotta get some stuff. Now go see what she wants.”

Sam seemed not to know what to do for a split moment. Who was that woman in the store? Did she know him? Was Emma calling? What did she want?

In the end, Sam just shrugged and left the store.

When he found himself alone with Dakota, Dean sighed and approached her in the most discreet way he could manage.

“He doesn’t know who you are. He doesn’t remember you.”

“What?”

“You heard me. He has no idea who you are. Something happened, that whole year has been forgotten. I’m trying to keep it that way, alright?”
“How could something like that even happen?” She wondered.

“How could you treat a boy who had been kidnapped by a demon?”

Dakota fell silent. She had no idea what kind of crazy thing had gone on, but she believed in crazy things.

“Is he doing better, then?” she settled for asking.

“He can sleep in the dark,” Dean replied.

He looked at her for a while longer before heading to the cash register while Dakota looked briefly through the store window at the car where Sam was.

When Dean got back in the car Sam was eyeing him accusingly.

“So, Emma didn’t call me.”

“She didn’t?” Dean feigned surprise.

“No, but of course you knew that.”

“I swear I thought I heard something.”

“Dean,” Sam began. “Who’s that woman? What’s going on?”

“I’ve never seen her before in my life. Who knows.”

“Well, then how the hell did she know my name?”

“She must’ve confused you with somebody else.”

“Yeah, I’m not buying that.”

“Sam! Sam, wait,” Dean said when he saw Sam get out of the car and walk back towards the store. “Sam! Dammit.”

Inside, Sam looked for that woman and approached her.

“Um, hi. It’s me. I’m sorry, but how do you know my name?”

Dakota’s heart raced and she put on a puzzled look.

“Oh, that was a lucky coincidence. You look too much like my friend Sam. I thought you were him. I haven’t seen him in years, and we used to go to therapy together. I guess I miss him so much that I sometimes see his face everywhere. I’m sorry. I should go now,” she smiled and excused herself, leaving behind the boy she had once tried to help.

Sam stood where he was for a moment, trying to make sense of that weird situation, unaware that right now his brother was picking up his phone in the car and making an important call.
“Yeah, Dad? You’ll never guess what happened…”

~ * ~

For the next two weeks Sam went out with Emma and they repeated what they had done in her bed many times. Sam realized she had some experience, and she patiently tried to teach him how to best please her. By the end of their second week together, Sam could say he understood why Dean needed that so much. It felt really good, not only for the physical pleasure, but for the strong bond he could have with someone else, even if just for a few moments.

Sam was enjoying those moments, and that was why, when John announced they were moving again, he could hardly handle the news.

“What?” Sam looked his father in the eyes and his forehead creased.

“You heard me. Pack your things,” John said. “We leave at the end of the week.”

Dean nodded and turned around to do as told, but when he did his eyes met Sam’s, and he could read the hurting in his eyes.

“Why do we have to move? I mean, we’re doing great here, aren’t we? This is a big house with a yard where we can train. And you said it yourself before, we can afford it for a while longer.”

“I know I said that,” John began. The year they had spent with Bobby, the year that had been erased off Sam’s memory, had allowed him to save some money. “That’s not the problem. We need to move because I’m afraid some cop picked up my trail. He’s been sniffing around. If we stay here, sooner or later he’ll be knocking on my door.” John came up with an excuse, but the truth was that he had been looking for a new place to move to since Dean had told him about running into Sam’s therapist. They couldn’t risk living so near somebody who had been part of the past they wanted to make sure Sam would not remember.

Sam closed his eyes and shook his head. He couldn’t believe it. No, not now that things were so good with Emma. His father couldn’t take that away from him, because being with that girl was what kept Sam sane with the whole confusing feelings he had been dealing with. He had no idea if he could handle being on the road again, just him and Dean, for hours in the back of the Impala or sharing small cheap motel rooms.

“You should’ve been more careful then,” Sam accused, angry.

“Sam,” Dean began.

John went closer to his son.

“What? You don’t think I did what I could?” He narrowed his eyes at his son. “Just go and pack your things. We’ll find you a new school.”

“What if I don’t want to go? What if I want to stay?”

Dean knew what was going on. Moving had always been harder on Sam. As his brother grew up, Dean had been forced to watch as time and again Sam made new friends and then a few weeks later
had to abandon them and get back on the road. He could imagine how much worse it felt now that there was a girl he liked. The fact that Dean knew they were moving because he had told his father about Dakota didn’t help. He felt guilty for being the one to pull Sam away from his girlfriend, but what could he do? Living close to Dakota was too dangerous, they had come too far now to let Sam’s memories return—and now Dean knew they were still there somewhere.

“What? I don’t think you understand, this is not an option, Sam. This is an order. Pack your things today or tomorrow, we leave on Friday.”

“Maybe I’ll stay. Maybe I’ll get a job and live here. I like it here,” Sam said, defiantly.

“Sam, c’mon,” Dean tried to intervene before things got too hot. He never liked it when John and Sam started arguing. Sometimes Dean wondered if some part of Sam still subconsciously resented his father for throwing him into a dark pantry and locking him in the darkness with his fears.

“Oh, do you think you have a choice? Sorry to break it to you, Sam, but I’m your father and there is no choice. You’ll do as I say and end of discussion. I don’t even know why we need to have this conversation over and over again. You know the job, you should’ve understood by now there are sacrifices.”

John wasn’t in the mood to fight. He turned around and walked away, locking himself in his office.

Sam was breathing fast as his nostrils flared. He was so angry he shook.

“Hey…” Dean approached him with a soothing attitude.

“There’s always a choice,” Sam said under his breath.

“What?”

“I said there’s always a choice, and he can’t control me forever.”

“I know you like the girl, and I’m sorry man, I really am. But you know we have to go, Sammy…”

“He doesn’t even care about us, how can you just accept it so easily?”

“Of course he does. He cares about us being safe,” Dean argued.

“Really? What about us being happy? Us being normal for a change, doesn’t he care about that?”

Dean sometimes wondered how much of Sam’s past torture in the dark had to do with Sam’s feelings about hunting. Did some part of him remember the pain? Was he still unconsciously running away from what he knew, somehow, could hurt him badly?

“Do you really want to stay here? Do you wanna leave us for this girl?”

“It’s not about the girl,” Sam said, feeling tired and frustrated. “I like her, but it’s not just about it. It’s everything, don’t you see? It’s the way he treats us, it’s this damn life we have to take, training every day as if every day we have to fight for survival…”

“And we do. You know what’s out there, Sam. How can you blame Dad for wanting to prepare us for it?” Dean went on before Sam could reply. “Besides, would you really stay here and watch us
“Go?” He took one step closer towards his brother. “Would you leave me?” Dean didn’t know how much of his love he unleashed, but it must have been a lot, because he could feel it in his eyes, and Sam must have seen it, since he stopped fretting and looked intently at him.

“No…” Sam heard himself saying. “I won’t leave you.”

Dean smiled, and Sam felt his heart melt and surrender under that smile.

“Good. Then let’s go upstairs and pack. I’ll help you.” Dean put a hand on Sam’s shoulder and Sam would never forget that moment.

Dean’s hand on his shoulder, green eyes looking into his, the arguing with his dad and the frustration that grew inside of him. The desire to stay, and the realization he couldn’t.

Sam would never forget that moment because it was when he realized he was in love with his brother.

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tbc...
Chapter 83

Chapter Notes

Thank you *kittenbot* so much for beta-ing the chapter! <3 =D

Chapter 83

For the next months, a routine of sleeping in roadside motels and driving for long distances was back in the boys’ lives. They drove through hundreds of different cities, never once going back to the same place, according to Dad’s rules.

Sam hardly had time to dedicate himself to his studies, but he did everything he could not to let the training routine take up all of his time.

Studying helped keep his mind off things. Hunting, traveling, moving, monsters…and Dean. When Sam focused on learning he could ignore, even if just for a moment, the insane desires of his heart.

At first Sam struggled with the realization. He told himself he was delusional, that growing up in a dysfunctional family that knew the monster under the bed was actually real had gotten to his brain and made him unable to tell reality from absurdity. Loving Dean should be absurd. There was no way that made any sense, or had any logic; and yet, the more Sam tried to convince himself there was nothing there, nothing but his admiration for his older brother, the more his heart told him otherwise. The more it jumped and raced when they were close, and the more it broke and ached whenever he had to watch Dean chase after girls and leave him behind.

There were moments when Sam almost felt as if he wasn’t the only one living this crazy roller coaster of feelings. There had been times sitting in the back of the Impala when their knees had brushed, and there had been times when Dean’s eyes seemed to linger just a little bit longer on him, long enough to make Sam’s heart race, to give him hope…

But mostly Sam was too scared to do or say anything. If he was wrong, if there was absolutely nothing there but the brotherly love he knew Dean had for him, then Sam didn’t think he could handle the shame. If he said anything and Dean rejected him, Sam knew he wouldn’t be able to live with himself. Falling in love with your own brother was not something one could easily move on from, and if Sam had his heart broken by the person who had shown him the most love throughout his life, then he wasn’t sure he could find the pieces of it ever again, let alone put them together.

~ * ~
“Get your gun and ammo ready, we’re leaving,” Dean said as he ended the call.

“What?” Sam asked, putting down the book he had been reading. “Was that Dad?” He nodded at the phone.

“Yeah. He gave us an order. C’mon, get your things. We’re gonna need some water and food.” Dean started to look around for the things he wanted to pack.

“Where are we going? Does he need help in the case?”

“No, we’re not gonna hunt with him. Dad’s prepared something like a hunting arena for us. He gave me an address. He wants us to go there and do the things he set up.”

“Again?” Sam frowned. It was not unusual that John would find an abandoned warehouse somewhere and put up a real fighting arena where Dean and he could practice some of their hunting skills.

Living in different motels made it difficult to get enough space and privacy to train as they should, so eventually, when the right place presented itself, John made sure to put together a place full of challenging tests his boys could go through to make sure they kept their skills sharp.

“Yeah, it’s been a while since the last time we went somewhere to train,” Dean said as he threw a couple of water bottles and snacks into a small duffel bag. “Aren’t you excited to see what he came up with this time?”

Sam looked at his brother and the sparkle in his eyes.

“Can hardly wait,” he said with a tone of apathy Dean could not have missed.

“C’mon, it’ll be fun.”

Sam sighed. He didn’t know which was worse, the idea of having to spend an entire afternoon following whatever commands his dad had given them or knowing he was in for long hours of longing in secret at Dean’s closeness.

“Just give me a minute,” Sam said and started looking for his things.

~ * ~

They had been driving for almost two hours when Dean parked the Impala in a deserted place, where the sand seemed to shine under the afternoon sun and a huge and obviously abandoned warehouse could be seen.

“This is the place,” Dean announced.

“Well, finally.” Sam got out of the car and stretched his long legs and arms.

“Are you ready to see what the old man prepared for us?”

When Sam looked into the excitement in Dean’s eyes he let himself feel some of it as well. Knowing
that this was something that made Dean happy made Sam relax and try to play along.

“Fine, let’s do this.”

Inside the abandoned, two-story warehouse, the brothers found their instructions. For the afternoon, John had prepared a series of traps and clues they needed to follow in order to put their abilities to the test. Among the activities John had prepared, the most important ones included target practicing and escaping from dangerous situations. There were many pairs of handcuffs in many different corners of the huge place, and near them there were keys, hair pins, paper clips or anything the boys had learned to use to open them and get away.

Dean started with the escape training, and Sam got his gun and ammo ready to start shooting practice. The building was big enough to seem like a maze, and it also looked as if no one had been around for years. Most part of the floor was made of concrete, but eventually, as Sam followed the clues left behind by his dad, he ended up on a wooden floor on the second story of that place. He looked around carefully, gun raised high, as he waited for his next target to show up. John did put up a nice training arena for them, Sam would give him that. As he stepped carefully over the old wooden floor, Sam wondered how much time it took his dad to prepare all the targets and hide all the helpful tools to help them open cuffs and get away from strategically chosen positions.

‘Two days,’ Sam thought. ‘At least two,’ he was still thinking when he heard the noise of something moving and turned around quickly, ready to shoot his next target.

As he moved towards the black shape of a head coming in his direction, Sam didn’t realize the wooden floor was too old to handle the weight of his heavy steps. He was in the middle of shooting when he felt something give away and crack beneath his feet, and the next thing he knew was that he was falling, his stomach feeling a sudden chill that spread through him quickly.

~ * ~

Dean finally managed to grab hold of the copper wire and started to work on the handcuffs. He had already broken free of a dozen places, using a dozen different tools. This little bastard of a copper wire had been hidden away under an old bookcase, in a room that looked a lot like an old office, and it took Dean a long time to find it and then a lot of stretching to catch it.

‘No cheating,’ Dean could almost hear John’s voice saying that. First you lock both cuffs around your wrists as the instructions say, then you go looking for a way to escape. That was real life for you, he said. First you found yourself in a dire situation, then you learned to look around and see what you could do to get out of it. If something went sour, John let the boys keep a key in the car, but they had never needed it so far. They were good at escaping.

“There, you bitch,” Dean smiled, pleased, as he was able to remove the handcuffs from around his wrists and stand up.

He was still basking in yet another successful escape when he heard the noise of something breaking right above his head. He would have moved if he had had time, but everything happened too fast, and before Dean knew what had happened, he was lying flat on the floor, his head hitting the wood and throbbing, and a heavy weight above him crushing his lungs and making it difficult to breathe.

“What the hell?” Dean groaned. “Sam?”
There was someone on top of him, someone who coughed and shook his head, making a cloud of dust with the movement.

“Dean?” Sam looked at his brother and then up at where he had just fallen from. “The floor broke.”

“I can see that,” Dean said, looking at the big hole above their heads. “Are you alright?”

He looked intently at his brother, looking for signs of injury.

“I’m okay. I guess it helped falling on top of you,” Sam chuckled, but didn’t make to move. “Are you?”

“Yeah, yeah, I’m fine. Just bumped my head.” Dean shut his eyes and rubbed at the spot he had injured, and when he opened his eyes again Sam was looking right at him, his face just a few inches away. Dean’s heart skipped a beat before it started racing.

“Are you sure?” Sam’s voice dropped a little and he studied his brother. There was thudding inside his chest responding to the closeness of their bodies, and suddenly Sam grew very conscious of his body weighing on top of Dean’s.

“Yeah, I’m fine.” Dean hoped his voice didn’t sound as shaky as he felt.

“Dad, huh? You would think he sent us here to get us killed,” Sam joked, and Dean laughed.

“Right. Help me up.”

Sam moved, albeit it reluctantly, and helped Dean to his feet.

“What time is it?” Dean asked.

“Five-thirty.”

“Let’s swap it? You get locked up, I shoot things?”

“Yeah,” Sam agreed.

“It’s too dark, though. There’s no way you’ll find the things to unlock the cuffs. Let’s turn the lights on in this place. I hope they still work.”

Sam helped Dean look, and soon the old warehouse was well lit and they could resume their activities.

There was one of those lingering looks between them before Dean arched his eyebrows in a playful way, walked past Sam and left him behind.

~ * ~

For the next two hours they worked on their assigned tasks. Dean shot different targets in different parts of the warehouse, making sure to keep away from the wood floor on the second story, and Sam
locked dozens of handcuffs around his wrists before managing to find something that let him out of them.

The sun set outside the warehouse and the evening was soon welcoming the night, but inside the old building the activity was still going strong.

Sam looked at his next task and studied the large pipe right ahead of him. ‘No cheating,’ he thought, so he tried not to look for anything that would help him escape in advance. He walked closer to the handcuffs lying around the pipe and locked them around his wrists. When he was done, Sam began looking for anything his dad had left around, and Dean had already used, that he could use to unlock the cuffs and walk free.

“Found it.” Sam was sweating by the time his fingers closed around a hairpin hidden away on some dusty shelves. He grabbed hold of the small thing and was going to start setting himself free when suddenly he couldn’t see anything before his eyes.

~ * ~

Upstairs, Dean was shooting his last bullets. He stopped to reload his gun and went back to checking the last places for remaining targets.

Dean shot again, but this time he missed the target and there were sparkles of electricity flying for a moment before everything went completely dark.

“Fuck,” he cursed when he realized he had just shot the fuse box and killed off the electricity supplying the place.

Dean looked around himself to a warehouse that was so dark he couldn’t see an inch ahead, and suddenly his heart started racing.

“Sam!” he called, his blood pumping fast when there was no reply. “Sam, where are you?!”

~ * ~

When darkness covered him like a blanket, Sam’s hand stopped in the middle of working himself free and his whole body seemed frozen in place. For five long seconds, Sam felt his heart race and his legs weaken, and when he tried to use the hair pin again his fingers were so shaky that they dropped it.

“Dammit,” he cursed, looking at the darkness pooling around him. “Shit!” Sam heard the pin as it hit the floor, but in total darkness, there was no way he could find it again.

Sam tugged at the handcuffs binding him to the pipe on the wall and looked once again into the darkness all around him. There was something cold grabbing at his heart and making it hard to breathe, something Sam didn’t understand at all.

“Sam?!”
“I’m here!” he called as soon as he heard Dean’s voice. “I’m handcuffed to the wall,” he said.

Dean followed the sound of Sam’s voice and ran towards it.

“Are you okay?” he asked.

“Yeah,” Sam nodded quickly, even though he could not see the face of the person whose warm hand was now resting on his shoulder. “What happened to the lights?”

“I must’ve shot the fuse box or something. There were sparks of light and then everything went dark. Let’s get out of here.”

“I can’t,” Sam said. “I’m still stuck here.” He pulled at the handcuffs and Dean heard the clinking sound of metal as it hit the pipe.

“Well, then break yourself free and let’s go.”

Sam swallowed hard and felt his heartbeats were way too fast. “I…I can’t, Dean. I dropped the hairpin…I don’t know where it is.” Sam didn’t know why it felt difficult to say that, but it felt like some part of him was afraid of that situation, and fear was a feeling that made no sense and made Sam feel uncomfortable.

“Let me see if I can find it.”

Dean got down and tried to feel for the thing Sam had dropped on the floor. He wanted to get his brother out of that dark warehouse as soon as possible. He knew the man in Bobby’s bedroom had promised him darkness could not break down the barrier between Sam and his past memories, but Dean wasn’t willing to risk it. Sam was handcuffed to a wall, in the middle of a dark place. There was no need to push so hard at the wall keeping his trauma at bay.

“Did you find it?” Sam asked, and there was a metal edginess in his voice that disturbed him.

“Not really. I think I’d better go get the key in the car.” Dean got up, trying to look into Sam’s eyes, but only being able to see his brother’s shadow a few inches from him.

“Wait…” Sam blurted.

“What?”

“Nothing…no.” Sam shook his head and swallowed hard. “Go get it, I’ll see if I can find the pin.”

“Okay, be right back. Don’t move,” Dean said and relaxed a little when Sam chuckled.

Sam heard the footsteps moving away and suddenly there was only darkness and silence around him. ‘I’ll look for the pin,’ he had said, but the truth was, Sam couldn’t bring his body to move. Every inch of him seemed petrified, as if he was taken by a violent wave of panic that Sam just couldn’t seem to understand.

Regardless of logic, Sam started pulling hard at the handcuffs, as if he could break free out of strength, alone. When that didn’t seem to work and the cuffs seemed to close around his wrists tightly, hurting him, Sam looked around at the darkness surrounding him and started breathing rapidly.
He shut his eyes tightly and felt dizzy, lightheaded. Why was that happening? It was just a stupid warehouse, and a stupid pair of handcuffs that would soon be out of him. What was going on with his body? Why did it seem to lose control and demand to be taken out of there so desperately?

“Hm,” Sam moaned softly and swallowed hard. The only sound he could hear was of his own panting.

‘What the hell is going on? Why am I shaking?’ Sam thought urgently, and then the thought caused another wave of something powerful to take him, and he pulled at the handcuffs, making metal rattle against metal, and causing his heart to race.

Suddenly, a door opened somewhere and Sam fell silent. He heard the sound of it opening and then the sound of footsteps coming in his direction.

He is coming.

The thought hit him so hard that it made Sam’s head spin. There were goosebumps all over his arms and legs, and he shuddered so much he could hardly maintain a standing position.

He who? Who is coming? What the hell is going on?

“Dean? Is that you?”

Dean heard the despair in Sam’s voice and rushed towards it as fast as he could without tripping on something and falling along the way.

“Yeah, it’s me! I’m coming!”

Dean’s heart was racing when he found his brother and touched his shoulder lightly. “I got a key; let’s get you out, okay?”

Sam relaxed when he heard Dean’s voice, and he felt his body beginning to respond to reason when Dean touched his shoulder and started to unlock the handcuffs.

Dean did it as quickly as he could, but he didn’t like the way Sam’s breathing had hitched since he had left. That told him a lot about the way his brother was probably feeling right now.

“Done, let’s get out of here.”

Sam nodded and followed Dean outside the warehouse and into the night. As soon as they were both out, Sam stopped and looked at the sky, now filled with stars.

“Are you okay?” Dean asked casually, his eyes analyzing Sam from head to toe.

“Yeah… I’m fine,” Sam said, but he didn’t feel fine. There was something hectic inside of him, something he didn’t understand. Where had all that fear come from? It was almost as if he had felt something that didn’t really belong to him. “Let’s go home?” he asked.

“Yeah, of course.”

Dean was still studying his brother intently as they got inside the car and started to make their way
back home.

~ *~

Dean hadn’t driven for very long when Sam grew restless in the seat beside him and made as if he would open the door of the moving car.

“Stop the car.”

“What? Sam, are you—”

“Stop it, Dean!”

Dean complied and stepped hard on the brakes. He didn’t have time to ask another question because Sam was already leaving the car and walking towards some trees by the side of the road.

Dean left as well and went after him.

Sam stumbled into the woods for a few seconds, feeling his chest tight with an anguish he couldn’t comprehend, and his stomach upset at just how weird it all felt and how helpless he seemed to feel at the strange, yet powerful, responses of his body to what had happened in that warehouse. ‘He is coming’, he had thought, and it had been such a loud thought, so clear, so… fearful.

What was going on? Why did he think that? It made no sense; there was no reason, no one...

Sam bent over his stomach and emptied it when the nausea got too strong. Dean watched from a distance, his heart heavy with concern, as Sam fell to his knees and his hand found leverage against a tree when he needed to throw up one more time.

‘Fuck,’ Dean cursed mentally. That wall in Sam’s mind better be strong enough to make it past tonight. Dean didn’t think he could stand to see the fear in Sam’s eyes when he remembered what had happened to him in the dark. He didn’t want his brother to break under that fear; it would be too cruel to make him go through that again.

Sam coughed and fought to regain composure, but apparently his stomach wasn’t done with him. Sam felt the bitter taste of bile in his mouth and the painful cramping in his stomach when there was nothing else.

He lifted himself again slowly and rested against a tree for a long time.

“Hey…” Dean approached him softly. “Everything alright there, buddy?”

Sam nodded, even though he felt weak.

“Yes… I think I ate something that didn’t sit well.”

“You think?” Dean arched his eyebrows and Sam smiled weakly, his face pale. “Are you okay to go back?”

“Yeah, I’m fine…”
Sam started to follow Dean back to the car, and when they were near it Dean stuck his head inside and got something.

“Here,” he said, throwing one of the water bottles at his brother.

“Thanks.” Sam caught it in the air and opened it, drinking it down gladly and then pouring some of it on the back of his neck and hair. He drank more when he was done, and with the remaining water he washed his face as well.

Sam walked closer to the car and threw the bottle inside. Instead of getting inside the vehicle, though, Sam walked around it and rested his lower back against the trunk.

Dean studied him for a moment and approached him.

“Hey…what’s up?”

Sam shrugged. “Would you believe me if I said that I don’t know?”

The look in his brother’s eyes spoke straight to Dean’s heart, and it physically hurt him being unable to show Sam his love.

“Do you wanna talk or something…?” Dean offered.

“Something happened in that warehouse, Dean. Something weird,” Sam said. “When the lights went out and I was handcuffed to that wall, it was like something came over me, something I couldn’t control.”

Dean swallowed hard.

“That’s weird. Why do you think it happened?” Dean asked tentatively, afraid of what Sam might say next.

“I don’t know. Maybe I’m just tired of this whole training and hunting. Maybe…” Sam never finished his sentence. *He is coming*, he had thought, and that weird, senseless thought that caused havoc in his mind.

Dean looked at his brother’s lost eyes and felt the confusion, the sadness behind that look. He couldn’t handle that. Dean couldn’t handle that sad look, that silent need.

He walked closer until he was standing before his brother, then he opened his arms and pulled Sam into a hug. “C’mere.” He made Sam’s head nestle under his chin and held him tight.

Sam was surprised at first, and for a moment he almost pulled away. There weren’t many hugs between Dean and he, and it usually felt a bit awkward when one happened, but right now…right now nothing could feel so right.

Sam closed his eyes and let his arms wrap around his brother’s torso. As he squeezed tightly to feel the comfort Dean offered, Sam also buried his nose into his brother’s shirt and took a deep breath. *Vanilla*. The scent of safety was so strong that Sam didn’t want that to end, ever. The thought that they would have to pull away and break that embrace was already breaking his heart, so for the moment Sam shut his eyes and held on to the one thing in his life that made sense.
Dean knew he had lost a bit of control now. He was aware that he was letting his guard down and letting his love surface, but it hurt so much to see Sam so confused that Dean couldn’t have fought the need to comfort him.

In the middle of the road, under the light of the stars, Dean’s fingers raked through Sam’s hair and he stood there, trying to be the light Sam needed to leave behind the shadows of his past.

-------------------------------------------

tbc...
Sometimes there was so much on his mind that Sam could barely hold it all together. The harder John tried to train them and prepare them to be hunters, the more Sam felt like running away from that life and finding himself something different. ‘There’s always a choice.’ The thought sometimes resonated in his brain for days. He didn’t really know why, but there was something about hunting, aside from the obvious danger and loneliness of the life, that made him uneasy.

There were times when Sam felt as if he might suffocate. There were dreams and weird thoughts, and feelings Sam couldn’t understand. It was like he was different, like he didn’t really know himself, which was something so scary Sam could hardly handle delving further into the feeling.

Then, there was Dean. The one thing in his daily life that made him sane, that made him want to keep going and that, indirectly, gave him strength to keep doing what was expected of him. And yet, there was Dean. Sam didn’t know how to deal with the way his feelings grew and with how helplessly in love he kept falling with his brother.

There were good days and bad days. Sometimes it was easier to hide, to pretend it wasn’t there. Sam would go through entire months of suppressing his feelings. But then there would be a different look, a lingering touch, something that awakened his heart and made him feel as if maybe, just maybe, he wasn’t going crazy. What if Dean felt the same way?

And what if he didn’t?

Sam couldn’t, for the sake of him, risk what Dean and he had by throwing in feelings of unrequited love. He could not jeopardize what his brother felt for him by confessing he had crossed the line in his mind. What if Dean couldn’t handle it? What if he mocked him?

Sam didn’t think he would, but what if he did? What if he wasn’t around Sam anymore, or refused to share the same room? What if he thought Sam was sick and could never look him in the eyes with the same affection ever again?

Those terrifying thoughts were killing him.

The last months had been tough, and Sam knew he could really use a break. Still, when Dean presented him with a fake ID and invited him to hit a bar and grab a few drinks, Sam hesitated.

“C’mon. It was my birthday last week and we didn’t get to do anything ’cause we were hunting that
shifter. Dad’s away, we don’t have a curfew, so why not shoot some pool and drink a few beers?” Dean insisted.

Sam took a deep breath and looked at the fake ID. He wanted to go, but he knew that by saying yes he would have to handle an entire night of Dean parading chick after chick in front of him, flirting, making out, and it would all probably lead to Sam coming back to the motel alone.

“Say yes, Sammy. You know you want to.”

He sighed deeply and ran a hand through his hair. “Okay.”

“Great,” Dean beamed. “I know a place nearby where we can…”

Sam was hardly listening. All he could think of was how to get through the night without letting his feelings get the best of him and bring him down.

~ * ~

The bar was a nice little place, Sam would give his brother that. There were three pool tables, beautiful waitresses and good music. After giving the bartender a taste of his puppy eyes when she looked twice at his ID, Sam was allowed to start their night by shooting pool and drinking beers. They had been doing that for a couple of hours when they noticed a small group of young men circling and watching them play.

Sam knew Dean was mad skilled when playing pool, and he knew those boys wearing college sweaters were impressed. They started to pay attention to Dean’s every shot, and Sam was aware of how much of an effect that had on Dean’s ego. When he knew he had an audience cheering his perfect moves, Dean drank more beer and started to put on a show. If before he tried to let Sam win every now and then, now it was damn near impossible to beat him, and soon Sam was in a foul mood.

“Whoa! Did you see that? Man, that was insane,” one of the boys said and caused Dean to brag about his skills.

Sam looked away and sighed, and that’s when he realized one of the college boys was looking intently at him.

“I was never any good at pool either,” he said when Sam looked at him. “But playing with that dude, that’s just unfair. Hi, I’m Derek.”

“Sam,” he said, and looked at the pool table and the game he had just lost.

“Is that guy a professional player or something?” Derek asked.

“That?” Sam scoffed. “That’s my brother Dean. He’s no professional player, he’s just got way too much time on his hands.”

Derek chuckled.

For a moment Sam and he watched as three young men circled Dean and started to ask for tips on
how to play. When Dean made as if he would start teaching, Sam knew his brother’s ego had been stroked good enough to get him going for a while. Frustrated, Sam sighed again and turned around.

“Hey, your brother seems to be interested in helping my friends now. Why don’t we go grab a beer and leave them to it?”

“Don’t you wanna learn, too?” Sam asked.

“Me? Nah, not really. I’m not much of a pool player.”

Sam looked at Derek as if he was only now seeing him. That was an attractive guy, Sam realized. Derek had dirty blond hair and blue eyes. He wore glasses that made him look smart and observing. Sam wondered if there was something going on with Derek, maybe something supernatural, but when he smiled again it was with so much ease that Sam relaxed. Hunting too much sometimes put him on edge.

“What are you much of then, Derek?” Sam asked as they sat on a couple of stools by the bar.

“I’m more of a writer. I’m a freshman at the University of Colorado. I’m studying literature.”

The barman opened their beers and they started sipping from them.

“I know this sounds very cliché, but I hope I can be a published writer some day.”

“Well, I suppose you gotta dream, right?”

“Sure. What about you, Sam? What do you do?”

Sam looked sideways at where Dean seemed entertained with his audience and saw it when a waitress walked past his brother and flirted with him. Sam could tell Dean was having fun, so he tried to relax and do the same.

“I don’t know yet… I’ve been thinking about law school, you know.”

“Law school? Sounds interesting. Have you been applying?”

“Not yet. I haven’t…I haven’t really told anyone either. It’s just a thought.” Sam shrugged.

“It’s a nice thought. Why don’t you apply?”

“It’s not so simple,” Sam shook his head and smiled sadly.

“You seem troubled,” Derek observed.

Sam scoffed and arched his eyebrows. He took a long sip of his beer and looked Derek in the eyes.

“What’s going on Sam? C’mon, tell me,” Derek smiled teasingly, his eyes flashing.

“It’s complicated.”

“Well, then let me tell you this.” Derek leaned closer and let his hand rest on top of Sam’s knee. “I have a thing for complicated,” he whispered and winked, drinking his beer as his eyes burned into
Derek’s eyes burned almost as hot as the hand on his knee. Sam looked down at the fingers still resting on his knee and realized what was going on and what had seemed a bit off about Derek—he was hitting on him. He wasn’t just being friendly out of nowhere; Derek was interested in him and was making a move.

Sam didn’t know why he knew it, but the moment he looked at Dean he knew his brother’s eyes would be focused on him, and he wasn’t wrong. From the other side of the bar, three pool tables away, Dean’s eyes locked with Sam’s and then went lower, to the hand a guy had just rested on his brother’s leg.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat at the look in Dean’s eyes. Sam could swear there was something heated there, something like…something like…jealously. Dean’s smile had faded and he now stared intently at Sam, his students forgotten.

The thought of having Dean stare at him with such a fiery look caused all sorts of tittering feelings in Sam. He liked it. He liked the look in his brother’s eyes, and when Sam turned around and faced Derek, and when he smiled at that stranger and drank another large sip of his beer, he hoped Dean was watching him, and he hoped he wasn’t liking it one bit.

Dean could hardly focus on the pool table and whatever the hell it was those kids were asking him. When he saw that other guy, that handsome guy, speaking to his brother so closely, resting a fucking hand on his knee, there was little Dean could still focus on.

Yes, he had seen Sam with girls, and yes, he had already tasted jealously before. Yet, the sight of that guy deliberately flirting with his brother pushed all the wrong buttons and caused his blood to boil. In his defense, Dean tried to ignore the scene. He tried to focus back on the pool game and pretend nothing was going on. However, when he raised his eyes again and saw that dude obviously putting his moves on his brother, Dean couldn’t take it anymore.

All he could see was the boy he had loved with so much care and who needed so much love about to fall prey to someone who wanted god knew what from him, someone who obviously wouldn’t care for him or love him the way Dean did, someone who didn’t deserve him.

“Hey, where are you going?” One of the guys called after him when Dean started moving, but he didn’t look back. And he didn’t stop either, not until he was standing right between Sam and the guy flirting with him.

“Hey, listen, we gotta go,” Dean said, looking intently at Sam.

Sam felt his brother’s presence so near and his heart raced.

“Why? I’m having fun,” Sam said, deliberately provoking Dean to try and elicit a more interesting response. “Thought you were, too.”

“It’s time to go. C’mon, let’s leave,” Dean insisted and looked at the man studying him and Sam, obviously puzzled.

“Why do you have to go?” Derek asked.

“I don’t have to go,” Sam said and cast a glance at his brother, trying to read behind his serious
expression.

“Yes, we do. C’mon, Sam.” Dean grabbed at his brother’s arm and pulled.

“Hey, just leave him, man.” Derek stood up and frowned at Dean. “He says he doesn’t want to go.”

“No one asked you.” Dean’s chest seemed to grow bigger as he eyed Derek defiantly.

Sam saw things were escalating quickly and knew he had to do something.

“That’s alright, Derek. I’ll just see what my brother wants. Sorry.” He took money out of his pocket and put it on the counter.

“Are you sure?” Derek’s eyes went from Sam to his brother.

“Yeah, I’m sure.”

Derek helplessly watched as the two brothers walked way and left the bar.

~ * ~

Outside, Sam and Dean stood near the Impala after Sam had broken free from Dean’s grip on his arm.

“Would you like to tell me what the hell that was all about?” Sam frowned.

“You’re kidding me, right?”

“No, I’m not. What’s going on, Dean?”

“What’s going on is that a dude was all over you and you didn’t even realize that.”

“Who says I didn’t realize that? I’m not stupid, you know.”

“Oh, so you knew he was deliberately trying to get into your pants?”

“Yeah. So what?”

“So what?!” Dean had trouble keeping his voice down. “Are you gay or something?” he blurted as he struggled with his jealously.

“No, Dean. I’m not gay. So what’s the damn problem if I talk to a nice guy while you entertain a flock of admirers?”

“He’s not a nice guy. He just wants to fuck you.”

“And why do you care? You wouldn’t if it were a girl.”

Dean’s breathing was labored as Sam stared intently at him.
“Hm? Why do you care so much if a guy is interested in me?”

Sam’s heart was racing. He could feel the heated waves of jealousy coming off Dean’s body, and even though part of him was angry, another part was just feeding off these waves, relishing the attention, the feelings that might lay underneath the fiery look in Dean’s eyes.

“Tell me.” Sam stepped towards his brother and closed the distance between them. They were so close that mere inches separated their faces, and Dean thought maybe Sam would hear the loud thuds of his heart rattling in his chest.

“Sam…” Dean shook his head and his voice came out hoarse, cracking.

“Tell me…” Sam coaxed, his heart beating in his throat, his eyes begging, his whole body aching for that feeling he wanted to believe Dean felt, too.

The sound of a phone ringing came between them like a shower of cold water. It took them a few seconds of silent recovering from the tension that had built up until Dean was calm enough to answer it.

“Yeah? Hey, Dad.”

Sam watched, his hands shaky, his blood still pumping hotly, as Dean talked on the phone for a minute.

“Right. Bye.” Dean ended the call and sighed. “Dad’s back. We should go back, too.”

“Won’t you tell me?” Sam insisted, even though he knew the moment was over.

“Tell you what?” Dean frowned and seemed impatient.

“What happened back there?”

“Well, I don’t know what you’re talking about. I tried to save you from a pervert who was all set to take advantage of you. Now, if that’s what you wanted then forgive me. Do go back,” Dean said, angrily.

Sam bit back his reply and swallowed hard.

“If you’re not going back then get in the car. We gotta go.”

It took Sam a couple of minutes to comply and get in the car.

They drove back to the motel in absolute silence.

~ * ~

They didn’t talk about that night at the bar again, but neither could stop thinking about it. It drove Sam crazy because he didn’t know what to think. Sometimes he was absolutely sure that Dean didn’t feel the same, that he would freak his brother out if he told him how he felt, and some other times Sam was almost sure he saw something in Dean’s eyes, some of the same desire, the same need…
Not knowing was killing him. And then there were the weird dreams… Sometimes Sam would have these vivid dreams about Dean and himself tangled and sweaty in bed, going at it with an ease and intimacy that felt way too real and caused him to wake up breathless.

The fact that Dean seemed distant these past few weeks weren’t helping. Sometimes Sam just wanted to scream.

The next time John left them for a few days, Sam found the fake ID Dean had given him and put it to good use. He told Dean he would be leaving to hit a bar, but didn’t invite him, and Dean didn’t offer to go along.

When he found himself outside their shared motel room and at the counter of the bar, Sam started drinking in the hope he could forget.

Nonetheless, the more he drank the more he thought of Dean. The more he remembered every look, every touch, and the more his heart begged him to do something.

After midnight, when Sam left the bar trying not to stumble on his way out, he was drunk, but not so drunk that he didn’t know what he was doing when he went back to the motel.

~ * ~

Dean was sleeping in bed when Sam opened the door and let himself in. He tried not to make a lot of noise as he walked towards Dean’s bed in the dark.

There were two single beds in the room, and it wasn’t so dark that Sam couldn’t see which one Dean was using right now.

What he should do was to kick off his shoes and lie down on his bed until he woke up free of the wild thoughts drifting through his mind now. What Sam did was to kick off his shoes and walk closer to Dean’s bed, where he squeezed himself in so he could lie right next to his brother.

At first Dean didn’t move. It was a narrow bed so Sam had to be careful not to fall. Slowly, Sam turned on the lamp on the nightstand so he could look at Dean’s closed eyes.

‘So beautiful…’ he thought. Sam let his fingertips find Dean’s closed eyelids and touch them. His heart was racing when his fingers trailed lower, touching nose and cheeks until they stopped upon soft lips.

Dean’s eyes were open now, and they studied Sam curiously. He could smell the booze in his breath, which only reminded him of how close they were in that bed. The look in those green eyes was so powerful that Sam’s heart slammed hard against his chest and he felt breathless.

And bold.

Sam closed his eyes and the distance between their lips. He pressed his mouth to Dean’s and held still, all of his body taut with urgency and fear.

Dean closed his eyes and his heart woke up furiously in his chest. Sam’s lips on his, Sam’s lips on
his again! After all that time, his lips, they were… ‘Oh, my god…’ Dean’s thoughts were wild. He knew that was wrong, he knew that couldn’t happen, but for a split second he couldn’t remember why. There was so much joy, so much love reverberating in every corner of his being that Dean couldn’t move, not for all the stars in the sky he couldn’t.

When Dean didn’t immediately pull away, it encouraged Sam further and he parted his lips a little, just enough so he could do what he had so desperately dreamed of doing for so long. Sam let his tongue lick at Dean’s lips tentatively, almost shyly, wondering what would happen, if Dean would push him away; if he would…

Dean’s lips had a memory of their own, and they remembered that, and they had been longing for that. When Sam’s tongue demanded entrance, Dean was irrationally drawn to what he knew it would taste like. He turned off his brain for one more second and let his tongue meet Sam’s, and when they touched, and when Dean tasted again all that love he had had and had lost, everything made sense again, and his heart swelled with love, waking his body up with need.

Dean licked at Sam’s tongue and the taste sent him spiraling into chaos. ‘Can’t!’ His brain suddenly screamed loudly into his thoughts. ‘Why? Why not? Just a little, just one second, I promise…’ he thought, feverishly. Then, the man’s words, the man who had stood in the corner of Bobby’s room and spoke to him as he held an unconscious young Sam in his arms were back, haunting him—Just one kiss could be enough to bring it all back, Dean. One kiss and my wall could come tumbling down, and darkness will spill into Sam’s mind all over again, bringing all of his fear back.

Just one kiss could risk it all.

One kiss could make Sam remember.

One kiss and it might be dark again.

Sam’s blood buzzed in his ears. ‘He’s kissing back! He’s kissing me b—!’

“Sam? What the hell?” Dean pushed him away and broke the kiss. “Are you out of your mind?” He spoke quickly, the words rushed, his thoughts a mess.

“What?” Sam felt dizzy. His heart was beating fast as Dean’s taste still filled his mouth. Yet, something had gone wrong. Dean was angry, he had pushed him away, he was freaking out…

As Sam panted, Dean could once again smell the evident alcohol circulating in his brother’s system.

“Are you drunk?”

Sam knew that was the only way out of it, so he nodded, and after he nodded he chuckled, and soon he was laughing.

“Jesus, Sam…” Dean shook his head and looked at his brother. “How much did you have to drink?”

“A lot. It was good. You should’ve come. Thought you were a girl. Sorry,” Sam slurred.

They both knew Sam hadn’t thought Dean was a girl as he had lain by his side. There were plenty of seconds of Sam studying his brother’s face carefully under the dim light of the bedside lamp, but they both chose to ignore it. It would be better if they did.
“Damn it. You need to sleep it off.”

Sam made as if he would move, but there was enough booze in his system to make it pretty convincing that he had trouble getting up.

“Nevermind,” Dean sighed. “You can stay here. I’ll take the other bed.”

Dean got up and moved to the empty single bed, where he got under the sheets and looked at Sam get comfortable in his bed.

The adrenaline discharge was soon replaced by the powerful effect of the drinks on his brain, and soon Sam was drifting, his thoughts confusing, his level of conscience low.

“Dean…?” he mumbled.

“Yeah, Sam?” Dean sighed.

“Don’t turn off the light.”

Dean’s heart felt something cold like a shock and he stared intently at Sam’s shadow sleeping on the other bed.

“What did you say, Sam? About the light?”

“He comes when it’s dark.” The words were slurred and barely audible.

“Who, Sam? Who comes?” Dean asked, but there was no answer. He could feel his heart racing. “Sam? Tell me,” he insisted, worried that their kiss might have cracked the barrier between Sam and the darkness. “Sam…?”

There was no reply, nothing but the resonating sound of Sam’s deep and peaceful sleeping through the night.

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*tbc*...
The next morning Sam woke up slightly hungover. Yet, the memory of kissing Dean was alive and burning in his mind as he opened his eyes and blinked a few times. Dean had kissed back. For a small, wild second, he had responded to it.

But then there had been lucidity and Dean pushing him away. Had Dean been disgusted by it? Or had he been afraid to give in further?

Not knowing would haunt Sam for days, he was aware of that. Thus, the best thing for him to do was just to play along and pretend it hadn’t been a big deal.

When he got up Dean was already having a bowl of cereal in the motel room.

“Morning,” Sam said, and ran a hand through his disheveled hair.

Dean watched him quietly for a moment, following Sam’s steps with his eyes, studying his sleepy face, the messy hair and the large fingers that combed through it. His heart raced at the thought of having tasted those lips again last night.

“Morning. You better?” he asked casually, glad Sam could not hear the loud thuds of his heart.

“Yeah, kind of. Feel a bit sick, though.”

Dean nodded.

“About last night…” Sam began. “Look, I know I did something stupid, I don’t know what got into me—”

“Hey, it’s okay. Relax. You were drunk.” Dean eyed him intently and Sam eyed him back, his eyes just as fierce.

“I was.”

“So there’s no need to apologize. It’s like it never happened,” Dean said, still worried that the stolen moment of intimacy might have scratched at the wall in Sam’s head.
“Right. Like it never happened.” Sam swallowed hard, and in that moment all he wanted was the ability to teleport himself out of there. It hurt too much having those unrequited feelings for his brother.

“Grab some breakfast. We’ll be meeting Dad to work on a case later on.”

“Right,” Sam said again, but his jaw felt tight and the last thing he wanted was to work a case. He was heartbroken and just tired of that kind of life, and even though he sat down and had his breakfast beside his brother, for the first time in his life, Sam really didn’t know if he could keep doing that for much longer.

~ * ~

When he turned eighteen, Sam realized that life beside his brother and father had become unbearable. Seeing Dean every day, hunting with him, following their father’s orders and pretending he was happy was killing him inside.

Sam wasn’t happy. He was being devastated inside by a love that grew bigger and stronger the more he told himself to let go. He couldn’t be happy living that kind of lonely hunting life, where he had to kill not to die every day, living in the shadows and away from society since people just couldn’t live knowing monsters were real.

When he applied to Stanford, there was a lot of that going through his mind. At first Sam thought the idea sounded amusing. There was no way he could actually go to college. No way John Winchester would allow him to leave. Then, as Sam thought of how pissed his father would be if he found out about it, it sort of encouraged him to flirt with the idea and almost hope for a positive reply.

Of course, Sam never really thought of leaving. He couldn’t just walk away and leave Dean behind. Except that the kiss Sam had shared with him, and that had ended so abruptly, still tormented him in his dreams and made it difficult to go on. Sometimes loving Dean in secret was so frustrating, and the pain was so maddening that Sam hoped he could get away somehow. He would find himself praying that something happened, something that made it easier to live without that searing pain of craving something, someone, he could never truly have.

So, when Sam sent that application letter he was torn inside. Part of him was dying to break free from that hunting life and see if he could build something different for himself. Going away meant having a possibility to forget; forget the killing, the bloodbaths, and most importantly, forget the quickened heartbeats that Dean always elicited when he smiled at him.

Even though Sam didn’t really think he would be accepted, and if he was, he didn’t think he could actually leave, he thought it would be nice to dream, even if just for a few days, that he had a chance at having a better life, a life in which his heart wouldn’t bleed constantly for someone who just didn’t feel the same.

What Sam didn’t expect, though, was that the day the letter arrived to the place where they had been living at, he wasn’t the one who got the mail.

John Winchester picked up a bunch of letters and went through them quickly. They had been staying at that rented house for the past two months, so there were the usual bills to pay, some advertisements, and then another letter that caught his attention.
He walked back inside the house and opened the letter, hardly believing his eyes when he read the content inside.

John read the text that said his son had just been accepted into Stanford University and his heart fell.

“Dean?!” he called from the kitchen, where he had been sipping some black coffee.

“Yeah?!”

“Come here, I need to speak to you.”

John waited for Dean to join him in the kitchen. He knew Sam was not home right now, so he lay the letter flat on top of the table and his eyes studied his older son. “What is this all about?”

“What?” Dean asked, unknowing.

“This letter, what the hell is it supposed to mean?” John pointed at the sheet of paper.

Dean frowned and picked up the letter to read its content.

“What the hell is your brother thinking?! Has he mentioned any of this to you? Did you keep this from me?”

“No,” Dean blabbered at first, his thoughts spinning with what he was reading. “No, he hasn’t…I didn’t know about this.” Sam being accepted at Stanford? Dean didn’t even know he had applied. What was going on? Was Sam actually thinking of leaving them? Of leaving *him*? Dean’s heart shrunk and he put down the letter.

“What the hell is Samuel thinking? Does he think I’ll just let him walk away on us? Turn his back on his family?”

“Dad, I’m sure this is not what he meant to do…”

“Dean, you read the letter! Your brother applied to a damn university. He clearly wants out of hunting. You know I cannot let this happen.”

Dean refused to believe Sam would have just left without even talking to him about it, but he understood his father’s distress.

“Dad, if we talk to him I’m sure Sammy can explain—”

“We won’t talk to him, are you crazy? There’s no way Sam will get his hands on this stupid letter. You make sure this piece of crap sees the trash.”

Dean didn’t understand why John was so angry. It certainly wasn’t just because Sam wasn’t eager to spend his life hunting monsters.

“Dad, what’s going on?” Dean tried.

“What’s going on?” John frowned. “Have you forgotten what happened to Sam? The kid doesn’t remember his past, Dean. Sam was tortured by a demon for three months, and we still don’t know
why. God knows what they did to your brother during all those days and for what purpose. There’s no way I’m letting Sam out of my sight when I don’t know if they’re done with him.”

“But Dad…Sam and I have certainly gone through much more dangerous stuff than college, I mean…”

“Are you supporting this crazy idea of his?”

“No, that’s not what I’m saying.” Sam was his brother, his…his world…there was no way Dean wanted him to leave. “It’s just that maybe hunting is making him unhappy; maybe he wants to try something different.”

“Well, he can try something different here, with us. I’m not letting Sam walk out to where I can’t keep an eye on him. Until I know exactly why they took him, I don’t trust Sam out there on his own, and neither should you.”

Dean understood why their father was so disturbed with the idea, but he thought he should give Sam more credit. His baby brother was no longer a kid. Sam was older and stronger now, and Dean knew that he could watch out for himself.

“Sam’s been training hard, Dad. We both have. I don’t want him to go either, but maybe if we just talked to him about it—”

“Dean,” John interrupted him. “There will be no talking. Sam is not getting this letter. That’s the end of it. Just throw it away before he gets home.”

Dean sighed and nodded. He took the letter and left the kitchen, the piece of paper seeming to burn between his fingers.

Did Sam really want to leave? Was he that unhappy? Well, Dean couldn’t blame him if he was. Sam was never a fan of the kind of job they did, and after what had happened to him, even though his memories were taken away, Sam had seemed even less enthusiastic about the whole thing.

Then there were the feelings. Dean knew Sam felt something; hell, he knew exactly what Sam felt. It made his heart race and drown in pain just thinking about it. But the fact was that Sam felt it too, Sam loved him, just as Dean loved him back—deeply, blindly, needfully. The problem was that Sam didn’t know; he couldn’t know how much his feelings were real, and how much Dean felt the same. Dean didn’t honestly know which was worse. He didn’t know if he suffered more because he was aware of how much they loved each other and couldn’t be, not without unleashing darkness again, or if Sam suffered more because he thought Dean didn’t feel the same.

Ever since the kiss Sam and he had sort of shared in the middle of the night, things had been more tense between them. Of course Sam had blamed the act on booze, and Dean had readily accepted the excuse, but sometimes, when their eyes met and lingered, it felt like they both knew better than that. There was an unspoken connection between them, an urgency that bordered on something physical, and Dean could see Sam struggling with it. If only he knew that Dean, too, was struggling with his feelings.

Perhaps that had pushed Sam to want to leave. Perhaps it had become too much, these feelings he didn’t understand and probably blamed himself for feeling, the same feelings that Dean would give everything he had to just be able to give in to, just one more day like they used to have, one more moment when they were everything to each other and nothing else mattered in the world.
Now, Dean knew what his dad had asked of him. He knew what he was supposed to do; he just didn’t think he could break Sam’s heart like that.

Dean let the letter fall neatly in the trash can, in a way that Sam would definitely see it and pick it up if he but looked at it.

Dean had been living with a broken heart long enough to have gotten used to it, but if he could, he would do anything to prevent Sam from feeling the same.

~ * ~

The irony was that Sam was actually reading up on supernatural lore in his bedroom when he happened to glance into the trash can and see that unfolded letter lying there.

When he saw the Stanford stamp on the right corner, Sam’s heart raced and he reached for it. He read the letter quickly once, and then read it again to make sure he had really gotten it right.

They wanted him? He had been accepted? He could change his life, go to law school, do something different?

For a moment Sam was assaulted by two very conflicting feelings. Dean. Dean, Dean, Dean. How could Sam go? How could he leave him? And yet, that letter meant a way out, that letter meant finding peace to his heart, somewhere where he didn’t have to wake up to a love that strangled him and made him choke with longing every day. That letter meant an escape from hunting, from obeying, from craving the love of his own brother in a way Dean could never give him.

That letter…that letter was in the trash. What was it doing there?

The moment it dawned on him that he was not supposed to have gotten that letter, Sam’s mood shifted from surprised and hopeful to mad with red anger. What was that letter doing in the trash? Who dared decide what Sam could or not read, or what decisions he should make?

The answer was obvious, and when Sam went down to the living room looking for his father he was fuming.

There was a map spread open on the kitchen table, and John was going over it when Sam busted into the kitchen, letter in hand.

Dean saw it from the living room and got up immediately, walking closer. The moment he had decided to let Sam find the letter he hadn’t exactly gone through all the implications of his actions. He knew his brother was probably furious right now and that he might have to intervene.

John raised his eyes when Sam’s steps echoed hard on the kitchen floor, and the moment he saw the piece of paper he was holding, the same letter he had read a few hours ago, he knew they were in for a heated discussion.

“I found this in the trash. Why?” Sam started, trying to control the boiling rage he felt inside. He didn’t even know if he was mad because he had wanted the letter or simply for the fact that it had been hidden from him.
“I don’t know. Ask your brother. He was supposed to have thrown it away somewhere you wouldn’t see it,” John retorted, his eyes narrowing when he looked at Dean accusingly.

Sam’s eyes didn’t move from John’s face. He understood what had gone on. John had told Dean to get rid of the letter, Dean hadn’t been able to do that behind his back. It didn’t change the fact that his dad was once again trying to control his life.

“This letter’s mine. You had no right to even open it in the first place.”

“Oh, I didn’t? I’m your father, Sam. I can do whatever the hell I think is best for you.”

“And college isn’t? Why am I not allowed to do what I want? It’s my life, Dad! What if I wanna go to school? Any normal kid my age would—”

“You ain’t no normal kid your age and you know that, Sam. You know what’s out there, and you know we’ve got to fight it.”

“Why? Why do we have to fight it? Why can’t other people fight it, too? Maybe I’m tired of killing monsters and chasing after ghosts. Maybe I want to live a real life now.”

John walked fast and closed the distance between them, standing just a few inches away from Sam’s face.

“This is real life, Sam. You don’t get to play college boy as if none of this is real, as if your mother didn’t burn on the fucking ceiling of your nursery room.” John’s chest was burning.

“Guys…let’s just, let’s all sleep on it and talk about it tomorrow, eh? We’ve all had a long day…”

“Don’t say that like it’s my fault!” Sam went on as if Dean hadn’t said anything. “I was just a baby when we lost mom, and all my life I’ve done nothing but follow your rules. Look and learn, sit and obey. You don’t get to tell me what’s right for my future, I’m not a kid anymore.”

“I get to tell you what I want, because it’s my job to keep you safe.”

“I can take care of myself,” Sam protested.

“Because I taught you to, and you should listen to me.”

“What if I don’t? What if I choose to accept it and go to Stanford?” Sam provoked, his eyes flashing.

“I won’t let you,” John replied calmly, his face stern.

“Oh, really? What are you going to do? Lock me up in the pantry or something?”

Dean sucked in his breath and for a split second John’s and his eyes met and they exchanged a silent and fast conversation.

Sam didn’t know why his heart was racing and his knees felt like they would buckle, but he had gone too far to back off now. He didn’t even understand why he felt so irrationally angry and…and what? And…scared? Why was he afraid? Sam felt shaky.
“Well, perhaps I will,” John said slowly, gravely.

Sam stared deeply into his father’s eyes and it took all he had not to break under that hard look.

“Let me see you try,” he challenged.

“Sam… Dad….” Dean felt dizzy looking from one to the other. He saw the fire in Sam’s eyes, and it felt like even though Sam had had his memories wiped and years had gone by, a part of him still remembered being locked in a dark pantry by their father, the fear and anguish were there, lying just beneath the surface, and Dean could tell.

“Sam!” John started when Sam turned around as if he would leave. “If you walk out of this house now don’t bother coming back!” John said desperately, because he didn’t know what else to say. How could he tell Sam that he shouldn’t be on his own? That he had been targeted once by a demon that nearly killed him with torture? How could he tell Sam that he was safer with his family without making him remember everything? “Sam!”

He didn’t turn around. Sam stormed out of the kitchen and up the stairs to his room. He was so mad that he barely heard the footsteps that followed after him.

“What are you doing here?” he asked when he saw Dean walk into their shared room. “You helped him hide the letter.”

“Kind of. You know I meant for you to find it.”

“Why? Why did you want me to find it if you’re here to tell me the same thing he just did? You think I should stay, you think I should keep hunting, the family business and all that—”

“No,” Dean shook his head and his heart raced. “I think you should have the right to choose, that’s why I didn’t throw away the letter.”

Sam stopped in his tracks and looked at Dean, as if he was only now truly seeing him. He moved so he was closer to his brother until Dean’s scent filled his nose and made him stupid.

“What?” Dean’s question was a whisper.

Sam felt his heartbeats in his throat, and he could taste his love on his tongue.

“If that’s what you want…” Dean mumbled, his lips barely moving.

Sam felt his heart crying out and making it difficult to think straight. He pushed Dean against the nearest wall and pinned him there using both hands against Dean’s shoulders.

“What?” Dean’s question was a whisper.

Sam felt his heartbeats in his throat, and he could taste his love on his tongue.

“If you don’t care then I don’t care,” he said hurriedly, intensely, enigmatically.

“What?” Dean’s knees could barely keep him up.

Sam’s breathing was fast and it puffed against Dean’s cheeks in a way that intoxicated him.
"You're my brother...I know, Dean…but…if you don't care, then I don't care," the words came out pained and pregnant with meaning. They left Sam’s mouth and caressed Dean’s face before punching his heart. It was a plea. It was Sam’s love spilling all over his eyes as his skin perspired with the need to push himself against Dean until he was consumed by his brother.

“Sammy…” Dean’s lips trembled. ‘Just one kiss and everything could come back’. The shadowed man’s words haunted Dean. He shut his eyes for a second and he could see Sam in his arms, crying convulsively, shaking like a leaf in the wind as he told him how the man raped him in the dark and shattered whatever hope he had left. Dean couldn’t see Sam that hopeless again, that scared… He had tried so hard and had been unable to fix him; what if his love for Sam wasn’t enough to pull him out of darkness if he happened to remember? “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Dean said at last, his heart falling at the dismal look in Sam’s eyes.

Sam let him go slowly and took a deep breath. His heart was in so many pieces that Sam wondered if that was the reason why everything hurt. With Dean’s rejection, everything physically hurt.

“I…I need to start packing.”

“Sam…” Dean couldn’t believe his eyes when his brother actually started to throw his clothes into a duffle bag. Sam really meant that, he was leaving. “Let’s talk about this tomorrow, what do you say? Maybe we can find a solution…”

“Don’t touch me, Dean,” Sam said when he felt Dean’s hand on his arm. So many broken pieces… they were everywhere, like invisible wounds Sam could never hope to heal from.

“You can’t be serious, man. You can’t really leave us.”

“Why can’t I?” Sam asked, when he was done throwing what was most important into his duffle and zipping it shut. “Give me one good reason to stay. One, Dean. Tell me what I need to hear and I’ll apologize to Dad and stay.” Sam tried one last time.

Dean’s silence was deafening. Little did Sam know the pain Dean was hiding behind his green eyes. The pain he had been hiding for a long time, and that was now such a deep part of him that Dean couldn’t possibly be himself without it anymore.

“That’s what I thought,” Sam whispered and picked up his bag.

“Sam…”

“Neither of you can stop me. Goodbye, Dean.”

Dean watched as Sam disappeared downstairs and slammed the door after himself.

For the second time in his life Sam was gone, and Dean braced himself for the hollowness that would eat at him with his absence.

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Chapter 86

Change was never supposed to be easy, and Sam could say his life had changed a lot in the past four years. Yet, Sam had to acknowledge that change had done him a lot of good.

Being in school and being all alone proved challenging at first. Sam had all sorts of second thoughts and his days were filled with memories of his brother. He had dreamed of Dean for two entire months after he left—with longing, with love, with burning desire that made him wake up in drenched sheets.

However, John Winchester had apparently done a pretty good job of training his boys to be independent, because Sam went through his Dean withdrawals, as he secretly referred to them, and eventually things started to get better.

Of course things only got truly better when Brady introduced him to Jessica. Sam couldn’t deny that it had become much easier to smile after she had become a part of his life.

Jess was the kind of girl Sam used to dream about when he was very young and first started taking an interest in girls—she was sweet, beautiful and smart. She had helped Sam reassure himself of his decision to go away. Waking up and looking into her understanding, encouraging eyes seemed to fill a hole that had been eating at him for too long.

With Jess, Sam had everything his family couldn’t offer him. He had love, he had safety and had plans for the future. Moving in together was just the first of them. As soon as he started law school, Sam had plans to make her his wife.

Of course he missed Dean. And his father. Sam often wondered how they were doing, but he was also holding true to his father’s words—he was staying gone.

And that meant dodging phone calls from his brother and pretending he never got the text messages asking if he was okay. It wasn’t on purpose. The problem was that whenever Sam thought of Dean
there was a wave of hurting and unrequited love that had no room in his life anymore. Thinking of Dean still hurt in a part of him that Sam had locked away the day he left his family behind. Sam didn’t think he could still be in touch with his brother and keep his feelings on a tight leash.

Dean was pretty much the only thing that could threaten what he had built so far. Dean reminded him of being young and vulnerable, and so helplessly in love that it was hard to breathe.

Jessica, on the other hand, made breathing easier. She smiled one of her radiant smiles and like the sun she chased away the shadows of Sam’s thoughts.

“What were you thinking?” she asked, looking into her boyfriend’s eyes.

“Ah, nothing… I’m just tired of studying.”

“You should take a break,” she said. “I know you’ll do great on your LSAT.”

Sam smiled at her and admired how pretty she looked with his old, large t-shirt and pink panties. Moving in together had definitely been a great decision.

“You know what I was thinking?” she asked, a mysterious smile on her lips.

“What?” Sam let go of his pen and the sheets of paper spread on top of the desk and went closer to the bed.

“I was thinking that my aunt and uncle will be in town in a couple of weeks. That would be a perfect moment for you to meet them, what do you say?”

Jessica’s parents had died in a car crash when she was a child, and Sam knew her uncle had raised her with his own kids and had since then become like a father to her.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat. He loved Jess, he just had trouble dealing with the whole family thing considering his background.

“That sounds…great. I’ve been dying to meet them, you know that. You tell me so much about them…”

“Relax,” she chuckled, seeing past Sam’s cool attitude to the nervous edge on his voice. “They’ll love you. My aunt is just so eager to please everyone, she’ll probably make you gain like, five pounds in a weekend.”

Sam laughed lightly.

“And my uncle is just the best. I told you what he does, didn’t I?”

“He’s a therapist, right?” Sam said, pulling from memory.

“He used to be, not anymore. He just writes books now.”

“I forgot their names, babe…” Sam seemed apologetic. The truth was, even though they had been together for over a year, they had never talked a lot about their families. Sam thought he was the one to blame. He opened up so little about his family life that Jessica ended up saving the details of hers as well.
“Martha and Mark Duchesneau.”

She smiled at the sound of the word.

“Your aunt married a French guy, right? I remember you told me about this when we met.”

“Yeah. Mark is the sweetest. I think having him there for me really helped me get through the loss of my parents. He made me feel like his family was my family, you know? It’s like he always knew what to say to help me through that.”

“He seems like a wise man.”

“He is. You’ll love him. He’s the greatest person to talk to,” she paused. “What about your dad? And brother? Dean, right? You never talk about them.”

Sam took a deep breath and shrugged. “There’s not much to talk about, you know.”

Jessica could always sense the hesitance in Sam when she asked about his family. It made her curious, right, but also understanding. There was something Sam seemed to be struggling with, and she felt certain that he would share it with her when he was ready.

“Let’s go to bed? It’s late. You gotta wake up early tomorrow,” she said slowly, running her fingers through his hair.

“I do…but that doesn’t mean we need to fall asleep right now, does it?” Sam chuckled low in his throat and started kissing her neck as they settled in bed, rolling until he was on top.

“Sam!” She smiled and tingled with anticipation when his hands started to run under her t-shirt and over her skin.

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John Winchester had seen a lot since he had become a hunter, but nothing could have prepared him for what he had just run into that night. If he hadn’t seen it with his own eyes, John might never have believed it was true. The thing was, he had just killed vampires. Or, if he was honest, he was almost killed by a couple of them. If Daniel Elkins hadn’t shown up just in time, John might have been caught off guard. Who knew it took beheading to get rid of blood sucking creatures?

When the night had begun, John knew little about those creatures, but before it ended, he would happen to know a lot more.

After Daniel pretty much saved his life and John helped him finish off the other vampire—he took the hint pretty quickly, as he saw Daniel cut the head off one of them, John was already on the other, taking him down—the two hunters had exchanged a few lines and, unlike what usually happened in the hunting world, they decided to share a few beers at the nearest bar.

Daniel told John everything he knew about vampires, and the lore was extensive. There were supposed to be just a few of them left in the world, and he told John everything he knew about their habits and weaknesses while they drank one beer after the other.
As the alcohol started its effect, they talked less about hunting and more of personal life, and against all odds John found himself sharing some of his personal quests with that stranger who had saved him that night. Daniel told John of his life, his kids, the lack of communication between them, and they both drank to that.

As it usually happened with hunters, eventually the conversation went back to previous experiences with creatures and ways to defeat them. It got interesting when they started talking about demons.

It was late, and they were definitely intoxicated, but John remembered very well when Daniel started to talk about some weird gun he had gotten his hands on, a gun that allegedly could kill demons.

As Daniel went on and on about this magic weapon of his, John remembered laughing it off with disbelief. A bullet that could kill a demon? That was something he would like to see. It didn’t matter how much Daniel insisted that such a thing existed, a part of John just smiled a condescending smile at that eccentric hunter he had run into.

Before they parted ways, the two men exchanged phone numbers in case they were ever in an emergency, and John drove Daniel home before he said goodbye to someone he thought he would never see again.

On his way back home after the week spent hunting and stumbling upon vampires, John did what he usually did after a hunt. He drove an extra hundred miles to Stanford University and parked his car outside, wondering if tonight he would get a glimpse of his son.

Sometimes John saw him. Other times he walked in and talked to some people very casually, just to get some information on Sam. The thing was, it killed John that Sam had gone and never come back. He had told his son not to come back in a moment of anger, of not knowing what the hell to do…but now that Sam seemed happy with his life, John didn’t have the heart to ask him to come back. He didn’t think Sam would anyway. So what was left for him was to drive by Sam’s school and apartment every now and then and make sure he was alright.

John was aware that Sam was now living with his girlfriend, and he had the address. He had given Dean the address too in case something happened and they needed to reach Sam, but John had never dared to stop for a visit.

Tonight he was just glad to see the light was on in Sam’s apartment, and after waiting there on the street for about an hour, John drove back as soon as that light was turned off.

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Dean was alone in the motel room, waiting for his dad, when his cell phone rang. He picked it up and looked at the number. The very faint hint of smile tried to come to his lips, but it wasn’t strong enough to.

“Hey, Bobby. What’s up?” Dean answered.

“Hey, Dean. It’s been a while. How are you?”

Bobby had called Dean often when they had left his house with Sam not remembering anything. In
the beginning it was as often as every week. Then, as time began to pass and they grew older, Bobby still managed to call him once every few months.

It warmed his heart, because Dean knew Bobby and his dad had had a falling out. Neither had ever told him what it was about, but Dean was aware that Bobby and John weren’t on speaking terms. Nevertheless, it hadn’t stopped Bobby from checking on him every now and then.

“Alive and kicking, and you?” Dean listened to Bobby tell him about his latest hunts and filled him in on what was going on in their lives.

“How’s Sam?” Bobby asked.

Dean’s eyes got lost and there was the briefest hesitation on the phone. Those two seconds of silence told Bobby a lot, and they broke his heart.

“Don’t know, Bobby. Kid’s still gone to become a lawyer or whatever he wants. Hasn’t written, doesn’t return my calls…so who knows, eh?” Dean made little of it, as if Sam’s absence didn’t ache him physically.

“I’m sure he’s alright then. If something had happened John would know,” Bobby tried to offer.

Sam’s well-being was very important to him. There was no way he could just turn his back on whatever happened to him after having watched Sam broken and traumatized for over a year. It mattered to Bobby knowing he was okay. And that wasn’t the only thing that mattered to him.

“And how are you…I mean, for real, Dean?” Bobby asked the question he only sometimes did, because he knew Dean didn’t like to speak about it. But again, how could Bobby just turn his back on the love he had seen between the brothers when he was the only one in this world Dean could speak to if he needed? John would never understand what had happened between his kids that year, and Sam didn’t remember a thing…

“Ah, you know…” Dean swallowed hard. “Same old, same old.” What else could he tell Bobby? How to say that there were days when he thought he was doing just fine, when Sam’s face was just a memory he could keep at bay, and yet, there were those days when it hurt so fucking much Dean honestly thought of putting a salt bullet to his heart to see if Sam would stop haunting it. “Been carrying on, Bobby. It’s fine. It’s been a long time.”

A long time since it had happened and a long time since Sam had left.

Four years was a long time. Dean had seen Sam once in the meantime, but it was very quickly. Four years away could make anyone a stranger, even a brother.

‘Even a lover’, Dean thought. Sam had surely grown. Last time Dean had seen him he was a tall and strong man, so different from the boy who fell in love with him, or the teenager who had fallen with what Sam believed was unrequited love for him again later on… Dean couldn’t seriously expect that Sam hadn’t changed, that he still felt some of the same. If he did, he would have come back. He would have phoned. He would have fucking picked up Dean’s calls.

So yes, it hurt like a motherfucker, but what was so new about that?

“Yes, I know. It’s been a while. Well, good to know everything’s fine. Give me a call if something comes up.”
“Sure. Thanks for calling, Bobby.”

“You’re welcome, you idjit.”

Bobby hung up the phone and Dean smiled at his cell phone before putting it away.

~ * ~

John didn’t think of his encounter with Daniel Elkins again until a demon spoke too much. He had never stopped searching for the demon who took Sam, and eventually, as he questioned one of those black eyed creatures, John came across information that was new to him. Yes, he had always sort of known that a demon had been responsible for Mary’s death, but getting a confirmation was still unsettling. For the first time since he started hunting for revenge, John stumbled upon a demon who knew about his wife’s death, and who happened to leak some very precious information before John was through with it.

For the first time in his life John had something to go on—a name.

Azazel.

The moment he was in possession of that name, John knew he couldn’t stop. He had spent years of his life searching in vain for answers to what had happened to his sweet Mary, and now he had the name of the demon responsible for her death. That was when the memory of his encounter with Daniel Elkins returned to his mind and didn’t let him sleep for days.

A gun that could kill a demon, for real? For good? As impossible as it seemed, John couldn’t think of anything else. And he didn’t, until he decided to do something about it.

John left the motel where he had been staying with Dean in Jericho, California, and gave him instructions after sharing some very vague information about his next hunt.

His next stop down the road was to pay his friend Daniel a visit, one John was sure would make his hunting friend extremely pissed.

John stood by Daniel’s house for a few days and observed his routine carefully. He made his plan and went over it many times in his head before he was ready to execute it. Then, he waited for Daniel to leave and broke into his house, ready to search for that magic gun.

Finding it wasn’t difficult. John remembered Daniel telling him details about the weapon during their drunk chat, so that when his eyes found the gun hidden under a trapdoor, John knew he had the right thing in his hands. The problem was when he was about to leave.

Daniel came home sooner than John had anticipated and caught him before he had time to escape.

The moment he stepped foot into his house, Daniel knew something was wrong. Instinctively, he went straight to where he kept the Colt safely hidden and took his gun, and he was only half surprised when he found the trapdoor open and someone packing The Colt.

“Leave it! Right now!” Daniel ordered as he looked the thief in the eyes. “John Winchester?” He frowned, and the moment of puzzlement he had when he saw his friend stealing his gun was all John
needed to act quickly.

“I’m sorry, Daniel. I swear I’ll bring it back.”

John turned around and went away through the open window so quickly that Daniel barely had time to register what had happened. At the same time he understood what was going on he remembered his conversation with the man in front of him not so many nights ago.

“John, wait! John, come back here! You can’t take it! The Colt is not meant for personal revenge!”

But John was already gone.

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As soon as he got his hands on it, the search began with renewed urgency. John learned new tricks and put them all to practice when it came to capturing demons and making them talk. For the following three weeks he was so wrapped up in looking for Azazel that he hardly had time for anything else in his life. He didn’t eat or sleep. He knew he had to be fast; Daniel Elkins was a good hunter and would pick up his trail sooner or later. And he didn’t call to check on Dean either. This was too huge. If John could indeed find the demon that had killed the boys’ mother and the love of his life, he wanted to call back with good news, and not just assumptions and hopes.

So, wherever there was a report on demonic possession John was there to check and try to get his answers.

This demon, though, the one he had tied to a chair in front of him right now, in the middle of that abandoned warehouse, this was an unusual catch. Usually it was John doing the hunting for those black-eyed bastards, but this demon, the one he had lured into the empty warehouse and caught under a devil’s trap, this son of a bitch had been following him.

That alone was enough to get John excited and eager to start questioning him. He could tell the demon was ready to overpower him when he found himself trapped and unable to move. John loved the look of surprise on his face. But not as much as he would love it when he started talking.

After making sure the demon was securely tied to an old chair John had found in the place, he startled circling the creature, a knife in hand. He could feel the cold metal of the Colt pressing against his hipbone, but if Daniel had been right about that weapon, there were only a few bullets left, and John wasn’t willing to waste any of them on some low rank demon before he could be face to face with Azazel.

“So, why were you following me?” John began. “And don’t pretend you don’t know what I’m talking about. Believe me, I don’t have patience for that.”

The demon stared intently into the flashing dark eyes and smiled slowly, with the corner of his mouth.

“John Winchester...” he said slowly. “I gotta give it to you. Time has been kind to you,” he sneered approvingly.

“Shut up and tell me what you want with me,” John groaned and pressed the knife under the
demon’s chin, ready to start cutting.

“Oh, why the hurry, John? Reunions are supposed to be something fun.”

“What the hell are you talking about? And how do you know my name?”

“Because we’ve met before. Don’t you remember?” The demon seemed particularly calm for someone who had a knife pressed to his throat. That unnerved John.

“I don’t remember you. I’ve never seen you in my entire life.” John stepped back and studied that face again.

“Oh, well. Different meat suit,” the demon shrugged casually.

“Who are you?!” John demanded.

“I’m someone who knows your family, John. See? It feels like I’m almost part of your family after what I’ve done.”

“What have you done?” John growled, the sound low and mean as he tried to work some logic through the demon’s taunting words.

Demons enjoyed messing with people’s head, that was true. Demons who didn’t think they could possibly be killed seemed to enjoy that even more.

The demon took a deep breath before looking John in the eyes.

“I hurt someone you love, John. I changed the course of history,” the demon beamed proudly.

John’s breath came in heavy pants and his throat felt tight. Suddenly, the Colt on his hip seemed hot, and not cold, as it pressed against his skin. John’s voice was slightly shaky when he spoke again.

“You killed Mary? Are you Azazel?”

“Who?” The demon frowned. “Oh no, me? I’m much more than a mere General from Hell. While it’s true that Azazel played a fundamental role in making everything possible, he’s nothing compared to me.” When the demon saw the confusion in John’s face he licked his lips and waited.

“If you didn’t kill Mary then who…” John’s voice died when realization struck him. “Sam,” John said and his throat felt dry, so dry that John thought he would never be able to say another word.

“Ah…he remembers!” The demon grinned. He studied John with an arrogant smile and a cold look in his eyes.

John started breathing hard and his head began to spin. He looked into the black eyes staring at him and felt cold, so cold he shivered.

“Tell me, John. Is Sammy still afraid of the dark?”

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tbc...
“You…” John narrowed his eyes as his heart raced. “You took my son away. You’re the one who took him to that terrible place.” Suddenly it was difficult to control his thoughts. John had waited for that moment with the same passionate need for revenge that he still felt waiting for the moment when he would kill Azazel. Yet, running into the demon who had taken his son was not at all what John had expected when he left California and stole the Colt, and right now he had trouble organizing his thoughts as his rage started to boil and urge him to kill that beast.

“That’s right. And you’re the one who ruined my beautiful plans. Tell me, John, how was it bringing home a broken boy who could hardly keep it together through the night?”

John shook with the power of his anger.

“I’ll fucking kill you,” he gritted his teeth and blinked a few times. He was seeing red, but he reminded himself to stay calm. That was the moment to get answers; that demon in front of him was the only one who knew why Sam had been taken.

“I believe you want to, but I’m afraid you can’t,” the demon sighed and faked a sympathy shrug. “The thing is, John, you have no one but yourself to blame. If you had let me finish, I’d have returned Sam home without a memory in his beautiful head. You would’ve had your boy back.”

“Bullshit,” John spat. “You would’ve most likely killed him. I saw the state he was in when we found him.” John felt chills at the memory. That, and Mary burning on the ceiling of Sam’s nursery, were certainly the worst moments of his life.

“Killing Sam was never on my plans, John,” the demon explained calmly. “I even had a doctor there, remember? I fixed him when things went too far. There was no way I would end your son’s precious life.”

“Then what the hell did you do all that for? Why did you kidnap him? Why did you torture him like he was a war prisoner for three damn months?!”

The demon licked at his lips and arched his eyebrows.

“That, my friend, I cannot tell you.”
John’s lips crooked with the hint of an insane smile. “Oh, you can’t?”

“I’m sorry. Some things must remain secret.”

“What if I threatened to kill you?”

“What if it made me laugh?” the demon grinned. “You can’t kill me.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure.” John pulled the Colt from his waistline and aimed. Truth was, he didn’t know whether that thing was the real deal. He might be making a fool of himself. But then, the way the demon’s eyes darkened as if they were a black hole and for a moment lost the sneering glint, the way the curve of his lips faded and he stared seriously at John, that encouraged him further.

“What? Changed your mind?”

“Where did you get that?” the demon snarled. That thing was not supposed to exist anymore! It was gone! No hunter should be allowed to find it, how the hell had John—

“So I guess you’ll be more chatty now, eh?”

The demon narrowed his eyes and remained silent. The Colt could kill him, and he assumed John Winchester had already realized as much. If he died, it meant never being reunited with his lover when he rose again after breaking free of his cage. If he chose not to talk, he might never be in Lucifer’s arms again.

~ * ~

Sam heard the noise in the middle of the night and his eyes darted open. There had been way too many years of training and a fucked up sleeping schedule as he was growing up ensuring he was a light sleeper.

He looked at Jess sleeping peacefully beside him on the bed and got up, all his senses alert.

Sam walked cautiously around the darkened apartment and his eyes fell on the window. Had he left it open before? He was sure he had closed it. Sam waited and saw the shadow of a man walking in his home, and he knew he had to act quickly.

He hid behind a wall and waited, ready to beat the hell out of whoever had broken into their place in the middle of the night.

And that was exactly what Sam did.

The moment the target was in sight, Sam didn’t think, he just acted. He punched and dodged punches in the dark, hitting and being hit, fighting with all the moves he remembered and sometimes secretly trained when he was alone. Sam tried to overpower his opponent, but before he knew it, he was lying flat on the hardwood floor, his head spinning.

“Whoa, easy tiger.”
“Dean?” Sam panted, and his heart, that was already beating fast, seemed to burst inside his chest.

Dean chuckled. He could barely hide how happy he felt as he pinned Sam under his body and stared into his eyes. It had been way, way too long.

“You scared the crap out of me.” Sam tried to catch his breath.

“That’s ’cause you’re out of practice,” Dean pointed out.

Sam closed his hand on top of Dean’s and moved his legs swiftly so he could reverse their positions and be the one pinning Dean down under his weight.

“Or not,” Dean beamed. “Get off me.”

“Dean, what the hell are you doing here?” Sam asked as he helped his brother to his feet.

“I was looking for a beer…”

“What the hell are you doing here?” Sam asked slowly, his blood getting warmer.

“Okay, alright, we gotta talk,” Dean caved.

The moment he saw his brother Sam knew, he just knew he was lost. Four years it had been, and yet, his heart pounded in his chest like he was again a boy laying eyes on his favorite thing in the entire world. He knew he had to see Dean gone before it was too late, before that love found its way back into his life and destroyed everything he had been carefully building so far.

“Ah, the phone?” Sam suggested.

“If I’d called, would you have picked up?” Dean retorted.

“Sam?”

The two brothers looked at the blond girl who turned on the lights. For a moment there Sam just wished badly he could go back in time and pretend that wasn’t happening.

“Jess, hey… Dean, this is my girlfriend, Jessica.”

Dean looked appreciatively at the girl. He smiled one of his large lady chaser smiles, because smiling came naturally when he needed to avoid the pain. That was the girl Sam loved now; that was his brother moving on.

“Wait, your brother Dean?” Jessica frowned.

Sam watched the stupid grin on Dean’s face as he chatted his girlfriend up, and for a moment he couldn’t believe that night was really happening. The sooner Dean was out of his apartment and out of his life, the sooner Sam could try to establish control again.

“Whatever you wanna say you can say it in front of her,” Sam said, hoping it would discourage Dean to go on.

“Okay,” Dean looked at the couple. “Dad hasn’t been home in a few days,” he said looking
intently into his brother’s eyes, trying to make Sam understand how much they really needed to talk.  

When Sam made little of it and tried to keep the appearances in front of his girlfriend, Dean realized there were secrets between them. Jessica had no idea who Sam really was, and Sam had no idea how serious the situation had become.  

“Dad’s on a hunting trip,” Dean stressed. “And he hasn’t been home in a few days.”  

They locked eyes for a moment and Sam saw the distress behind Dean’s apparently cool look. It was his dad they were talking about, and even though they had not parted on good terms, there was no way Sam could simply ignore it. He wished he could, but that was just not him.  

“Jess, excuse us. We have to go outside.”

~ * ~

“Why did you take my son?” John repeated the question. “What did you want with Sam?”  

The demon stared at the Colt and took a deep breath. He supposed nothing he told John Winchester could possibly alter the course of events by now, and talking seemed like his best shot at trying to stay alive long enough to think of something.  

“Your son is special, John,” he began, “and not the kind of special parents usually brag about. No, Sam is really a special boy. Has been even before he was born,” he went on mysteriously.  

“You’d better start giving me some real answers, or else…” John’s hand shook with the Colt pointed at the demon.  

The creature with black eyes knew that there was no way he could reveal to John anything about Lucifer’s plans. He’d rather die than damage his lover’s plan any more than what had already happened by not seeing his plan through. Yet, there was something he could tell that revenge thirsty man who was seeking Azazel.  

“Your son has demon blood, John.”  

The words were English, but they made no sense. John frowned and shook his head lightly as if trying to get rid of a bad thought. “What?”  

“That’s exactly what you heard. The day your lovely wife burned on the ceiling of Sam’s nursery, Azazel was there, and he bled into Sam’s mouth and made demon blood run in his veins.”  

“What the hell would he do that for?” John asked, outraged.  

“Because we have grand plans for your boy.”  

“What kind of sick plans?”  

“Do you really want to know?” The demon asked provocatively. “Well John, your son, Sam Winchester, will help us open the gates of hell. Sam will be our soldier, he will set us free so we can walk this earth as we deserve. Yes, that’s it. The son of a hunter, and a hunter himself, Sam will
bring the end of the world as we know it, and mark the beginning of a new era.”

“This is insane!” John barked. “Sam would never, he would never do anything like that!”

“There’s so much about your son that you don’t know. I’m sure you’ve seen that already? Sam is half ours, and when the time is right, he’ll take over and lead our army as we claim this earth.” The demon beamed at the plans. That was just the beginning, because when Lucifer was free, he would take that strong body of Sam’s, using darkness as the front door to enter Sam’s mind, and then, then everything would be perfect.

“You’re lying! He would never!

“He can’t run from it. It’s his destiny, John. Sam was born to rise up to the challenge, even though he’s unaware of this at the moment. He can’t run from it. Your son will be like…like the Apocalypse itself on this planet,” the demon chuckled at how true that was.

John’s head was spinning. That was not true. That demon was taking him for a fool saying all sorts of crazy things that John couldn’t possibly believe. He was distracting him from the real questions here.

“Why did you hurt my son?!?”

“I have never laid a finger on Sammy.”

“You had that filthy man do your dirty work,” John’s nostrils flared. “Why did you kidnap him? Why did you torture my son in the dark? Why did you break him?!” John trembled with the strength of his emotions.

“To prepare him!” The demon groaned back. “I did what I did to prepare your son for the role he will play in the future. I planted darkness in Sam’s soul so when the time is right that darkness will be unleashed and feed on his self-control. I made your son ready to be the one who brings chaos as we rise again!”

“You are delusional! You kidnapped and tortured a boy for three months! You’re an evil, lying son of a bitch!” John seethed.

“No, John. You believe me. That’s why you’re so angry. We both know that.”

John’s lips were quivering almost as bad as his hand. Sammy? Bringing open the gates of hell? Leading an army of demons against people? Sammy having demon blood in him? For years John had wanted answers, but now that he had them they were almost too much for him to process and John felt his stomach cramp with the feelings assaulting him.

“You’re wrong,” John whispered.

“It has started, John. The next time you see your son, and that’s assuming you will ever see Sammy again, ask him about his visions.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?”

“I told you Sam was special. The stronger Azazel is, the stronger Sam’s psychic powers grow, and soon nothing—not you, not Dean—will be able to stop him.”
The demon saw the way John Winchester was lost and devastated by the information, and he played his cards.

“If you let me walk out of here today I might help you find Azazel, and then you can ask him whatever questions you still have. You know, about your wife and all…”

“What?”

“You heard me. Let me out of here alive and I’ll fetch Azazel and deliver him to you.”

“You’re lying. Why would you do that? Why would you help me?”

“John, you are beyond help,” the demon smiled slowly and studied John. “I would help you find him, just for the sake of it. Not that I think you can kill him, but it would be fun watching you try. So what do you say, hm?” The demon narrowed his eyes. He could see that he had touched a nerve. Promising John he would help him find the man who made his lover burn on the ceiling and destroyed his happiness was a powerful move. “C’mon, John. Let me walk and we can discuss details.”

John’s face changed suddenly from lost and baffled to sheer fury, and the next time he spoke it was like a storm.

“You had my son beaten bloody! You beat all the hope out of him and left him to die! If they hadn’t…hadn’t erased his memories he’d be still screaming in the middle of the night!”

“So he had his memories erased?” The demon had heard rumors. Rumors he hoped were true. It made him realize that he wasn’t the only one planning the Apocalypse.

“Shut up! Sam’s fine now! But if you think I’m gonna let you walk out of this place tonight…”

“I’ll give you Azazel!”

“You’ve given me hell! You’ve taken my son from me, you’ve done to him things I still have nightmares about.” John felt his finger tighten around the trigger as he remembered the night Sam had run away from him and into the fire. “You made Sam give up and shatter!” There were tears running down his cheeks, but John didn’t know, and if he did, he wouldn’t have cared. “You don’t get to live another day.”

“John, no!”

“I’ll find Azazel myself.”

John shot once and the bullet carved itself into the demon’s forehead, stopping all sound in the place except for John’s sobs as he watched the body bending forward on the chair.

John fell to his knees and didn’t know for long he cried. The things he had learned today, the revelations…and knowing that he had killed the demon who had tormented his son were all too much. ‘One down, one more to go.’ John thought of Azazel.

“John Winchester? Put the gun down slowly and step away from it.”
John was startled by the sound of another voice echoing in the warehouse, and he turned around to find his former friend, Daniel Elkins, pointing a gun at him. It seemed he had caught up with him after all.

At the moment John was so gripped by his emotions that he didn’t resist. He set the Colt on the ground and stepped away from it. His eyes were puffy and tired, looking sadder than ever.

“You were right,” John said wearily, “it really does kill a demon.”

“How do you repay me? By wasting the Colt’s precious bullets with personal vengeance.”

“That demon…” John shook his head and went on, even though he felt battered, as if he had just taken a beating. “He took my son when he was only fourteen. He kept him in a secluded place where he paid a hunter off to torture him, in total darkness,” John swallowed hard. He knew Daniel was listening, and he knew he might really shoot him at any given time. “He had my baby boy beaten constantly,” John blurted. “For three months I searched in vain as that demon watched through a glass window while a man walked into the dark and whipped him bloody or cut him or… raped him…” John choked. “He even did that. He broke my son.” John’s eyes were drowning in tears, and he wasn’t even embarrassed by it. “I had to, Daniel. I dreamed of this moment. What kind of father would pass the chance to kill the one responsible for abusing his son in every way known to man?”

Daniel sighed and lowered the gun. He knew he might not be able to kill John, and that didn’t make him happy.

“I understand how you feel. But getting back at those who wronged you is not why this gun was made. The Colt serves higher purposes. The bullets need to be spared at all costs. You know things can get ugly and messy, and I can’t have you or anyone going around wasting our best chance at real evil.”

John didn’t say anything.

“You’ll never see this gun again, John.” Daniel knew he would need to keep it better hidden from now on. A safe might just be it, he thought. “Because if you do, if you come looking for it again, I will kill you my friend. The only way you’ll touch it again is over my dead body.”

John kept silent. He watched as Daniel sighed and made as if he would leave.

“Even though…” Daniel turned around one last time. “I would’ve done the same thing if I were you.”

~ * ~

Sam could hardly believe Dean had convinced him to work a case with him, but then again, Sam didn’t really need much convincing when his heart was drumming happily with his brother’s presence.

Four years had gone by, and yet, as Sam had sat there on that Impala beside his brother, he realized
how strong a grip Dean still had on him. Probably would always have. Sam was thankful he was older now, more mature, more capable of hiding his love away and not expecting from Dean any more than the brotherly affection he seemed eager to give.

When Dean dropped him home, Sam couldn’t deny that it had been tough to hear the disappointment in Dean’s voice when Sam told him he couldn’t go with him. Dean would have to search for their dad alone. There was his interview, yes, but there was also the fear that every moment spent in Dean’s company would bring back sweet memories of a love Sam could never really get out of his mind.

It was with relief that Sam said goodbye and walked back home, looking for Jess. Honestly? He hoped they wouldn’t go another four years without seeing each other again, but right now Sam acknowledged that he needed the distance. His feelings were a mess.

“Jess, are you home?”

When Sam didn’t find his girlfriend he threw himself on the bed and shut his eyes for a moment.

‘Of course you should be afraid of the dark, you know what’s out there,’ Dean’s words resonated in his brain and gave Sam goosebumps. Suddenly, Sam was assaulted by an eerie feeling, a growing feeling of dread that made his heart turn to ice when he felt the first drop of something wet on his face.

When Sam opened his eyes and saw his girlfriend on the ceiling, his world fell apart.

“Jessica! No!!”

The fire started out of nowhere; it burned so hot that Sam could barely understand what was happening. If Dean hadn’t shown up and taken him out of that burning room, Sam didn’t think he would have been able to leave. He was in shock as his brother walked him out of the flames and into safety.

A long time went by before either could speak again.

“Sam?” Dean looked at him worriedly, his chest tight. “Sam, are you alright?”

Sam didn’t reply. When he finally moved, he walked towards the trunk of the Impala and stared down at the collection of weapons he found there.

Dean watched Sam intently, trying to understand what was going on behind his glassy eyes and deceivingly calm attitude.

Sam looked at Dean with the certainty that his world had already changed forever.

“We got work to do.”

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tbc...
Chapter 88

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much *kittenbot* for beta-ing the chapter!! =DD

The next chapters will contain spoilers from seasons 01 through 05. Although most of what happens next is canon, it's not my intention to re-write the show, so I ended up leaving some storylines and characters out of my story and altering a few things. It may seem a bit rushed from now on, but I've tried my best to go through the necessary stuff to connect my original idea, the series, and the ending I have in my mind. I confess it was challenging choosing which scenes could better fit into my own story and how to write it all in an interesting way. I hope you like the result. The end is nigh. ;)

Chapter 88

Being on the road with Dean again as they looked for their father was all a bit surreal at first. Overnight, Sam felt like his life had changed more than he could’ve possibly anticipated. Jessica was gone, and apparently, so were his dreams of having a safe life and building a family with her.

It was all so much that Sam didn’t know what to think. Sometimes he’d just fall silent in his seat, trying to process everything. Sometimes he’d wake up sweating in the middle of the night, not knowing where he was, or what time it was, and it would take him a long while to figure it all out. He was back with his brother, hunting things, hoping to find their dad and learn about whatever it was that had stalled John.

His mood alternated from guilty to confused and secretly edgy. Sam had been dreaming about that fire since before it happened. He hated to think about it; he hated to think that he could have prevented it, that maybe Jessica could still be alive…but right now that kind of feeling was useless. Sam tried to focus on the jobs they stumbled upon; he tried to clear his mind and soothe his feelings with the promise of revenge. And, meanwhile, he also tried to handle the wave of longing that hit his heart now that Dean was again so close.

They spent pretty much all the time in each other’s company. The Impala was their home, their restaurant and their bedroom when a roadside motel wasn’t affordable or wasn’t in sight.

Sam knew Dean was happy to have him back. His brother could barely hide the gleam in his eyes whenever they started a new case. Sam hated himself when he began to wonder how much of that joy was to have his brother back, and how much could mean something else, maybe some sort of longing that Dean, too, had been feeling…
That was a dangerous road. A stupid one, too, Sam knew that. If he had to stick around with his brother twenty-four-seven until they found their father, and until he got revenge on whatever had killed Jessica, then Sam had better, for his own fucking sake, not bring up those old feelings. He should let them rest. It would be easier that way, easier to look into Dean’s eyes and pretend he was fine.

Yet, it made him wonder when other people seemed to pick up on something. As Sam and Dean started to create their routine of false identities and fake stories to get access to information on different cases, it wasn’t once or twice that they were mistaken for a couple.

More often than either brother would like to remember, they had motel clerks offer them a discount on a room with a double bed, or ask them if they wanted a more romantic room if they happened to be dressed fancy. They had to clarify they were brothers whenever people would give them that sweetly awkward smile and tell them they seemed like a great couple.

Not a couple! Definitely not… Sam wondered what it was that people saw that made them act like that and ask those questions. Was it that obvious? Was it him? Did he sometimes let his guard down so his feelings were too bare? Was his love for his brother written all over his face, in a way that others could see it, but Dean could not?

Sam didn’t know what happened. He just hoped they could find their father soon and get some answers.

~ * ~

Dean would be lying if he said he wasn’t happy to have Sam back. He didn’t like the circumstances, of course. He felt terrible for Sam for having lost a girl he seemed to love so much in that…terrible way. And it made him nervous that they still hadn’t heard from their father, but they would find him, Dean was sure of that. Meanwhile, he let himself secretly enjoy having Sam by his side from the moment he woke up to the moment he closed his eyes.

Even if Dean could never tell his little brother just how much he loved him, just how badly it choked him looking at him and wanting to kiss him and knowing he could never do that, he would settle for having him in his life and being able to look after him and know he was okay. At least Dean tried to tell himself that Sam was okay.

As they alternated between sleeping in the Impala and sleeping in motel rooms, Dean couldn’t help but realize Sam was having nightmares every now and then. As Sam refused to talk about his dreams, Dean could only hope they were about his girlfriend’s death, and not anything related to the darkness Sam had forgotten. Dean had witnessed Sam have nightmares way too devastating not to be wary when he saw them happen again.

Eventually, Sam might speak about them. Except that when he did, instead of soothing Dean’s worries, they disturbed him even more. Sam wanted to convince him they had a case waiting for them in Kansas, but not anywhere in Kansas—Sam wanted them to go back home. There was no way Dean was going back to that house, not without a very good reason.

“I have these nightmares,” Sam said.

“I’ve noticed.”
“And sometimes they come true.”

Dean kept looking at his brother as if he was still waiting for him to say something.

“Come again?”

“Look, Dean…”

That was when Sam told him about his dreaming of Jessica’s death in detail before it happened. Dean couldn’t say it didn’t scare him shitless that Sam was having nightmares, and that those nightmares could be potential visions of the future. What if it was somehow related to the past? What if these nightmares were going to weaken the door to what Sam couldn’t remember?

All Dean knew was that as long as they didn’t have answers, he needed to keep a close eye on his brother. They still didn’t know why Sam had been taken. Nothing had happened over the past years, but those three months his kid brother had spent being tortured in the dark, there was a reason behind that, it had to mean something. What if Sam’s visions were it?

Dean knew he had to try and keep his mind straight. He tried calling his dad when they worked a case in Lawrence. He had hoped that talking about his mother’s ghost saving them would get John to come back, to shed some light into what was going on. Yet, nothing happened. Not reply from his dad, and for the following days Dean knew they would have to try and figure things out on their own.

~ * ~

When Sam’s nightmares became visions, and when those vision started happening during the day, Dean didn’t know what to do to keep it together. He had to witness his brother screaming in pain as the visions hit, and then he saw himself chasing after what Sam had seen only to find out it was real. He wished he had his dad to talk about it with. What the hell was going on with Sam? What was that psychic thing and why was it happening now?

The more they dug into the matter and the more they learned, the more complicated things got. Finding out that Sam wasn’t the only one whose mother had died burning on the ceiling of his nursery and who now had weird powers didn’t make things any easier. Dean knew that as long as he was around, he wouldn’t let anything happen to his brother, but at the same time, it killed him not knowing what was going on and how he could help—which was pretty much the same helpless feeling he had experienced before, trying to be there for Sam when the bright room haunted his dreams.

It wasn’t only Dean who didn’t know what to make of the whole thing. The more Sam learned, the more intrigued he felt, and the more scared, too. What was going on with him? What was he? What were those visions? What if they turned into something else? There had been that one time when Sam saw Dean getting shot and that vision caused him to move a heavy piece of furniture with his mind. That hadn’t been a dream or anything. Where were those powers coming from, and why manifest now?

Sometimes it felt like there was a huge part of his identity that was missing, and that Sam couldn’t really understand. It was like some part of him was still kept in the dark about his true self.
As John gathered as much information as he could on Sam and on the demon who killed Mary, he thought it was best to keep his distance from the boys. He knew they were working together, and he had gotten enough voice mails to know they wanted to see him, but John just couldn’t go to them until he knew the whole truth. He was going to kill Azazel, same as he had killed the demon who took Sam, but first he needed a solid plan. After what had happened between Daniel Elkins and him, John didn’t think he would be seeing the Colt any time soon, so he tried to work on the two biggest problems at hand now—how to get that powerful gun back, and then how to find Azazel and kill him, both of which proved to be extremely difficult.

When the boys’ lives seemed truly endangered, though, John was forced to break his rule and go check on them. He knew they were digging too, he knew they were close, and right now he just needed to know they were alive.

John waited in the apartment the boys had been investigating until they came back. He could’ve left the moment he saw the girl flying out of the window, the girl whose body a demon had possessed to try and kill the brothers, because when he saw that John understood his boys would be okay. But he didn’t. He had to see them.

“Dad?”

“Hello, Dean.” John looked at his kids and hugged back when Dean walked towards him and locked him in a tight embrace. John’s eyes, however, were fixed on Sam.

He could see his younger son circling him, unsure of how to approach him, and John didn’t blame him. They hadn’t parted on good terms; Sam was probably feeling as awkward as John now.

“Sam…the last time we saw each other there was a hell of a fight.”

“Yes.” Sam’s eyes were wet, and it was all he could do not to let that wetness take the best of him and spill down his cheeks. When his father pulled him in an embrace Sam realized how much he had missed him.

Dean watched as John and Sam hugged. Hell, he knew that was an intense moment. He had been there through enough arguing and fighting to know that moment should be appreciated.

It hurt John when he had to say goodbye to his kids again, but they understood the fight was just beginning, and right now they needed to let him go, they needed to let John find out the whole truth.

John had wanted to tell Dean what he had learned about Sam and his three months in the dark. He knew Dean deserved to know what had happened, but their time had been too short, and John hoped they would be able to talk about it further down the road.

However, if what John was learning about turned out to be true, he wondered how Dean would take the news that his brother might one day be a force they would need to stop. If the demon had spoken the truth, the kid Dean had shared a bed with and whose nightmares he had soothed so many times could eventually be the one who opened the gates to hell and brought chaos to the world.
It wasn’t long before their paths crossed again. When Daniel Elkins died, leaving a surprising note for John, he knew he had to go after the Colt, and he knew he would need his boys’ help for it. In order to protect his boys, John tried to keep them as in the dark as much as he possibly could about the whole thing. He told them Daniel was an old friend whom he had last seen years before and who hadn’t parted in good terms with him. The last bit was true, but an old friend? John had to think of something quick; he couldn’t tell them that he had killed a demon who had done things to Sam better left forgotten. And it was too risky trying to get Dean alone in order to tell him. They had both agreed never to talk about Sam’s past unless it was absolutely necessary, and right now John didn’t think it was.

Right now there were more pressing matters, like getting their hands on the Colt and finding the yellow-eyed demon.

When Sam and Dean became aware of the existence of a way to truly kill a demon, they knew they were close to fulfilling the most important hunting job of their lives. The fact that they were together again, working as a family, also meant the tension was high and their nerves were on edge.

The last time the three Winchesters had lived under the same roof, things had gotten heated. Now would be no different. John knew Sam and he still had their differences, and he knew that what they were doing right now…they might not come back from it. Who was to say that if they went after Azazel they would be able to kill him without losing their lives in the process? The prospect of dying made John crave some time alone with Sam, to try and set things right.

When Dean left on a supply run—food, ammo, holy water—it gave John the opportunity to speak to his son alone.

“Sam?”

“Yeah?”

John looked at how grown up he was. He could still see that baby that ended up in his arms the night Mary died, that baby who looked at him completely unaware that his entire world had just changed. John could see the boy whose childhood he had so shamefully missed out on, and he could see the teenager he had failed to protect. He still considered it a blessing that Sam’s memory had been erased. Perhaps none of the plans they had for him would work if Sam couldn’t remember his past, right? John could hope… Except that the demon had wanted Sam to forget everything, so where did that leave them?

“Yes, Dad?” Sam arched his eyebrows.

John smiled slowly, a tired smile. He was glad Sam couldn’t remember the torture he had endured, or the terrible aftermath of him trying to recover…or even all the times John had failed to help him when he needed.

“I just wanted to say I’m sorry.”

“For what?”
“You and I have had our moments, we know that…”

“Dad, we’ve talked about it. We’re not that different, remember? What happened to mom and what happened to Jessica, I told you we have a lot in common now.”

“Yeah, I know that. I just wanted you to know that I’ve made lots of mistakes as a parent, but I was always trying to do my best.” Sam frowned and John sighed. Of course Sam couldn’t understand that John was actually apologizing to a scared fourteen-year-old boy who got thrown into a dark pantry to try and work through his fears. John couldn’t tell Sam how much it weighed heavily on him that he couldn’t go back in time and make better choices.

“I don’t understand, Dad… I mean, we’re trying to get that demon now, there’s no need to apologize. We’re together now.”

“I know, son. I know…” John said. “I just wanted to say that sometimes we do irrational things when we’re scared. Well, I know I do, anyway,” John cocked an eyebrow and chuckled sadly. “So if one day you happen to wonder why I did something that hurt you, I just want you to remember that I was scared, too, Sammy.”

“You’re not making any sense. In fact, you’re scaring me. What’s going on?” Sam’s forehead was creased with worry. That sounded like a weird kind of goodbye, and it made Sam feel uneasy.

John went closer and put a hand on Sam’s shoulder.

“Do you forgive me?” John asked. ‘That depends,’ there was a voice echoing in John’s mind, a voice from the past. ‘On how many times you’re gonna do something like that and then apologize,’ the voice of a boy lying in a hospital bed, unwilling to talk to his father.

“You’re seriously freaking me out.”

“Hey, I’m back,” Dean walked in and the moment was gone.

John stepped back, self-conscious of how much his emotions had gotten the best of him, and Sam still looked puzzled as Dean started talking.

That night, however, before the battle they knew was coming up, Sam looked for his father in the middle of the night. John was studying the Colt and the four bullets left.

Sam knocked softly on the door.

“Yes?” John asked.

“Listen…I don’t know what you were talking about before, but I just wanted you to know that you’re my dad, and I think you did a great job with us. So yeah…I don’t know what needs forgiving, but I do.”

John blinked a couple of times and nodded, his chest tight.

“Good night, Sam. Get some sleep. You’re gonna need it.”

~ * ~
It’s funny how things sometimes turn out so differently from what we expect. A regular day of school when Sam was supposed to come home and celebrate his birthday, and instead he was pulled into a van and taken to a torture chamber where he was kept hidden away for three months. And now, the perfect plan to catch Azazel in the act of claiming another infant and everything went to hell.

Between the car crash and Dean ending up in a coma, little had gone as planned, John acknowledged that.

When he stood before the demon he wanted to kill more than anything in his life, he saw himself giving away the only hope of ever doing so, and not just that, John found himself giving away his life as well. Never, in all these years John had spent looking for that evil creature, had he pictured himself making a deal with him. But if that was what it took to save Dean’s life, so be it.

~ * ~

Sam was a wreck. He looked at his brother lying unconscious on that hospital bed and he didn’t know what to do. For four years he had lived his life as if Dean wasn’t there anymore, but the thought that Dean might actually not be there, not a phone call away, or a road trip away, that was a scary thought. Dean had always been the one taking care of him, and Sam didn’t know, just didn’t know what to do without him. The thought of losing his brother, the person he loved more than anything in this world, didn’t let Sam sleep while he was at the hospital.

When Dean woke up, as if coming back from the dead, Sam couldn’t begin to describe the relief he felt. Yet, it was as if he’d always known Dean would make it. Picturing his life without Dean just didn’t make sense at all, so Sam would take whatever miracle had just happened, because Dean being there with him was the only thing that Sam would accept.

His father, however, acted like all those things he had said to him a few hours ago didn’t matter. Where had he been last night? Where was he when Dean was dying? Fighting the demon? Getting revenge? Sam could hardly control his accusing anger at John when he walked into Dean’s hospital room.

It took John all he had inside not to break as he looked at his two kids. Even Sam’s anger made his heart feel warm. If he could, he would hug Sam again, ask for his forgiveness, tell him how much he loved him. Right now, though, the time was short. The yellow-eyed demon would be waiting for him to fulfill his part of the deal, and he needed to speak to Dean before that happened.

“Sam, could you get me a cup of caffeine?”

Sam still looked lost at his father’s apparent calmness.

“Yeah. Sure. I can do that.”

When he left, John knew it was time to say goodbye to Dean. Time to say he was sorry for the burden he had put on his shoulders, for making Dean grow up so fast, for making Dean take care of Sammy, yes, but of himself as well. Yet, most importantly, it was time to tell Dean what little he could in the time he still had.
“Dean, listen to me carefully. I had the Colt in my hands before. I found the demon who took Sam, and I killed him.”

“What?” Dean’s heart started racing.

“Just listen to me, this is important. I know why they took Sam. I know why he was gone for three months.”

Dean’s lips moved but he couldn’t form words. His eyes widened and his loud heartbeats were thudding in his chest. He wanted to ask what had happened, why had they taken Sammy, he wanted to know why, even as his father spoke his next sentence.

“They were grooming him for something evil, Dean. The torture, the darkness, they were all part of their plan for Sam. And unfortunately, making him forget everything might’ve been exactly what they wanted.” John needed to hurry. “You need to save him, Dean.” John paused and closed his eyes for a brief moment that felt like forever. “And if you can’t, you need to kill him.”

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tbc...
Chapter 89

It wasn’t easy, but when had life been anything but hard on the Winchesters? Having to face the fact that John was gone, and for Dean, having to live with the realization that his father had made a deal with the demon who took their mother in order to save him...hell, it wasn’t easy at all.

Sometimes Dean thought he couldn’t do it. And then there was Sam. What the hell did his father mean when he had said those things to him at the hospital?

Dean was so happy John had managed to kill the demon who had taken Sam when he was a teenager, but what else had John found out? What the hell was supposed to happen to Sammy that might cause Dean to have to put him down?

Discovering there were more kids like Sam in the world, whose mothers had died burning on the ceiling of their nurseries, and who were now demonstrating the weirdest abilities, certainly didn’t put Dean at ease. He wished he understood what was going on with his little brother and how to help Sam. Because if John had been right, and if God forbid Dean had to choose to kill Sam one day, he knew he wouldn’t find it in him to do it. Not his baby brother, not Sammy.

Dean had a taste of how difficult it would be to leave Sam behind when they both thought his brother had been infected with some sort of demon virus. Sam told him it was over; Sam wanted Dean to go and save himself. Little did Sam know that it would be impossible for Dean to do that. Asking him to walk away from his dying brother would be like asking Dean to leave his heart behind.

It’s not like a body can function without a heart, so what was the point anyway?

No, Dean was staying. And there, as they both thought it was the end, as Sam thought he was going to die, Dean almost had a moment of weakness. He almost wanted to tell Sam everything.

“Dean, I’m sick. It’s over for me. It doesn’t have to be for you.” Sam could almost feel the deadly virus pumping in his blood, about to make him a demon at any time now.

“No?”

“No. You can keep going.”
“Who says I want to?” Dean felt his chest tight as his eyes met Sam’s. For a moment it felt like his love would get the best of him. ‘Who says I want to keep going without you? Who says I can?’

“What?” Sam frowned and watched as Dean took his gun.

“I’m tired, Sam. I’m tired of this job, this life…this weight on my shoulders man, I’m tired of it.”

“So what? So you’re just gonna give up?” Sam couldn’t understand that, couldn’t accept it. “Look, I know the stuff with Dad—”

“You’re wrong,” Dean cut him off. “It’s not about Dad,” he said, his heart beating in his throat. “I mean, part of it is, sure, but…”

“Then what is it about?” There was something in Dean, something that caused all the hairs to stand in the back of Sam’s neck. His brother didn’t know it, but he gave Sam goosebumps. What was it about? What was that look in Dean’s eyes? Was it…was it what Sam thought it was? The feelings they wouldn’t talk about, was that it? Would Dean say something?

Suddenly the anticipation was so great that Sam felt it was hard to breathe.

Dean looked around and his throat felt dry. Sam was going to die, wasn’t he? So what was the point? What was the point of hiding the truth, of protecting him from his memories? He might as well tell his brother he loved him, and then maybe they could at least have one final moment, one last kiss; at least Sam could go knowing how they really felt about each other.

Dean parted his lips, but the knock on the door kept his words from ever surfacing. One knock on the door and Sam knew the moment was gone. Whatever it was that Dean was about to say, Sam would never know.

Suddenly, everything seemed to be over, that whole Croatoan nightmare. Not only that, Sam was apparently immune to whatever demon virus had been taking the city.

Not that Dean wasn’t grateful that Sam wouldn’t die, hell, it was the miracle he had been secretly praying for. Yet, the further they seemed to go down this road, the more uncertain and dangerous it became.

Save him or kill him. John’s words echoed in Dean’s mind, and he wished for the sake of his sanity that they would just fucking stop.

~ * ~

Demon virus, yellow-eyed demon, psychic powers… Things seemed to be closing in on them, and that was around the time Bobby started to become a greater part of their lives again. Dean couldn’t lie that it felt good having Bobby help out. Dean missed him; he missed looking at someone who knew exactly what he was going through. Yet, they had no time to talk about the past. Bobby was right, a storm was coming, and Sam and he seemed to be right in the middle of it.

Things weren’t looking good, and Dean knew that. When Sam disappeared and Bobby started to help him look for his brother, Dean had a feeling that something with the potential to be catastrophically bad could happen. He just never expected that…he never thought…
“Sam, look out!”

Sam stumbled his way towards his brother after having fought for survival in whatever demonic game Azazel had made his gifted kids play. Sam saw Dean’s face and thought everything would be alright. He just never expected that…he never thought he would…

“NO!” Dean started running as the man who had stabbed Sam in the back pulled away and turned tail. He was vaguely aware of Bobby chasing after said man while Dean fell to his knees the moment Sam leaned forward with a deadly injury.

“Sam? Whoa, Sam…” Dean tried to hold Sam close and look into his eyes, but his brother’s body felt heavy and boneless against him.

“Hm…” Sam moaned faintly, feeling the corners of his vision darken. What the hell had just happened? He had survived Azazel’s trap, Dean had come for him, everything would be alright… then why wasn’t it? Sam felt pain at first, but he was quickly growing numb. He imagined he was losing blood quickly.

“Hey, look at me,” Dean tried. He put his hand over Sam’s wound and saw it get covered with red blood. Even the dark night couldn’t mask that redness. “It’s not even that bad,” Dean heard himself saying as he clutched Sam close. “Sammy? Sam! Listen to me, we’re gonna patch you up, okay?”

Sam could see Dean’s lips moving, but he couldn’t make out the words anymore. Sam wanted to tell him he loved him; he wanted Dean to know how much he had always loved him. And Sam wanted to ask for his forgiveness, even though he didn’t understand why.

“Gonna take care of you, I got you…” Dean’s hands ran over Sam’s face and hair, trying to keep him steady as Dean’s heart started to sink, to drown…

Sam’s eyes rolled in the back of his head and there was only darkness. Sam remembered being afraid; he remembered being terrified of that darkness, and then he didn’t feel anything else.

“Sammy?!” Dean shook his brother, his fear escalating to something he couldn’t keep quiet anymore. “No. No, no, no, no…oh God.” Dean held Sam tightly as the tears came, furious and hot, making everything inside of him a river that needed to get out.

Dean’s hand held at the back of Sam’s head as he pressed his brother’s lifeless body against himself. That couldn’t be happening. No…Sam couldn’t die. Not the boy Dean had raised, taken care of, loved…not the boy who had clutched to him in the middle of the night as if Dean was the only light in the world that could get him through it. No…not his Sammy, his world, his baby brother…

“SAM!” Dean screamed into the night as his brother stopped breathing in his arms.

~ * ~

Dean looked at Sam’s lifeless body lying on the ground and it felt as if he was made of stone. Everything inside Dean felt hard and tight, ready to burst. And when Bobby came and started to talk to him, Dean knew he meant well, but he just couldn’t care less. Bury Sam? Torch his corpse? No. Dean couldn’t. He just couldn’t.
“I gotta admit I could use your help,” Bobby tried a different approach. “Something big is going on. End of the world big—”

“Well then, let it end!” Dean screamed with the rage that was boiling inside of him.

“You don’t mean that…” Bobby shook his head lightly.

“You don’t think so?” Dean stared deeply into Bobby’s eyes. “Do you have any idea how it feels?” Dean knew he was shaking inside, the tears barely kept at bay as he spoke, his voice thick and unlike his own. “Seeing him like this, after everything we went through, Bobby, everything?”

“Dean, I know…I get it, alright? If there’s anyone who can understand what you’re feeling that’s me. I know you never stopped loving him, I know this is hard…”

“Hard? I can’t fucking breathe!” Dean blurted and his lips quivered. “That’s the same boy who was thrown into a fucking room and tortured in the dark, Bobby. That’s the same boy who I found and picked up off the white floor, so broken and so bloody he couldn’t even speak!” Dean felt the tears coming, they were in his throat now, making it difficult to go on. “That’s the boy who came to me for help, even if he doesn’t remember that. And I promised I would help him, Bobby, I promised to take care of him.”

“Dean, that was a long time ago. And you took care of him, you did. Things just took a different turn. Sam doesn’t remember… I’m not saying this makes it any easier, but at least he died without knowing he suffered all that anguish.”

Dean shook his head. No. No and no. Again there was that feeling of denial rising within him, strong and stupid.

“Bobby, just go.”

“Dean, I want you to come with me,” Bobby said. He could see how absolutely unraveled Dean was, and he feared for what he might do.

“Just leave, Bobby. If you know what’s good for you, then leave now.”

Bobby stared into Dean’s eyes, seeing the despair speak through them.

“I’m sorry,” Dean caved. “But just go, just…”

Bobby sighed and complied. He knew the Winchesters were stubborn, and he knew how much worse grief could make that, so he chose to leave Dean alone with Sam for a while longer.

When Bobby was gone, Dean turned to his brother’s body and looked at Sam.

His eyes were tired, but the tears were endless. It hurt so much Dean couldn’t keep it inside himself. He wished he could turn off how much his heart ached as Sam lay there, unmoving.

“I was supposed to take care of you,” he murmured, choking on a sob. “I promised you I would, Sammy. I had one job and I screwed up.” Dean shut his eyes and wiped at his tears. “What am I supposed to do now? How can I go on?”
And then Dean understood the answer. He couldn’t.

Without Sam he just couldn’t go on.

~ * ~

Making a deal with a demon, the way his dad had done to save his life, was really the only choice Dean had left. And it didn’t even matter that they had given him just one year to live before Hell would claim his soul. In the end, Dean would have made the same choice over and over again, because he needed to save Sam. Even if they never spoke of the past Sam had forgotten, even if none of that ever surfaced, Dean needed to look out for his brother. He might never say it to anyone, but taking care of Sammy, not hunting monsters or even saving people, taking care of his baby brother was what gave his life meaning.

John’s life after Mary’s death, though, that had been driven by revenge, and by finding Azazel and killing him, Dean knew he would be finishing an important job, the job his father had spent most of his life trying to do. When the day came, everything was messy and chaotic, like it usually was with them.

Dean brought Sam back from the dead, and he didn’t give a fuck about the dirty looks that earned him from Bobby. They went after the yellow-eyed demon and they killed him, and perhaps in the process they had even saved their daddy’s soul.

So what if Dean only had a year to live? Sam was alive again, by his side, and one look at those hazel eyes every morning and Dean knew he would have made a thousand deals to keep Sam with him. One year he had, twelve months to be with his brother before it was over. Dean tried not to think about it. He tried to ignore the fear of dying and leaving Sam alone. He tried to pretend he was strong, because really, when it came to him and Sam, that was what Dean was used to doing—being strong for his brother, even when he was breaking inside.

~ * ~

With the death sentence hanging over Dean’s head, the year seemed to go by even faster than usual. Sam and he hunted monsters, dug up bodies, killed weird creatures and carried on with their routine.

Ever since Dean had found Sam at Stanford and his brother had joined him again, Dean had never caught any sign that showed him Sam was still affected by the past. The visions had been scary, and for a moment Dean was afraid that all that psychic thing might affect the wall in Sam’s mind and open the door to the darkness hidden deep within. However, with Azazel’s death all that seemed to be gone.

The mind, though, that was something complex. Sometimes a small thing could trigger a memory. A smell, a song, a photograph…or a specific kind of torture, for instance.

It happened after they hunted down pagan gods during Christmas. The case itself was far from being the most dangerous or the scariest the brothers had faced, but for a moment there, tied up in the hungry gods’ kitchen, Sam’s mind had a brief, secret déjà vu that his consciousness wasn’t even aware of.
Tied up to a chair, Sam stared at the man who leaned over him with a tool, aiming for his hand. Then, as he pulled the fingernail off, Sam shut his eyes and screamed. It was quick and fierce pain, and when it was over, Sam was left with the throbbing in his fingertip. It seemed insulting that such a small part of his body could cause that much pain, but it did, and Sam took a deep breath while trying to manage it.

Of course he didn’t remember. Zachariah had taken away his awareness. Yet, some part of Sam never forgot. His memories, his pain, his trauma, that wasn’t gone, it hadn’t all just been deleted. Everything was still there, somewhere Sam couldn’t reach, but inside his mind, almost impenetrable to any kind of trigger.

Almost.

That had been a pleasant night. Dean and he exchanged Christmas gifts, like they hadn’t in ages. They were painfully aware that their time together was running out as Dean’s deal couldn’t be unmade, so they gave in to a little moment together, just hanging out and celebrating the holiday like they weren’t hunters, like they weren’t in love with each other.

“I’m off to bed,” Sam said eventually, getting up and stretching. “Thanks for my, uh, skin magazines.”

“You’re welcome,” Dean chuckled. “Use them wisely. And when I’m not around.”

Sam chuckled, too. “Right. Night, Dean.”

Sam turned around and walked away as his brother still watched the game on TV and drank a beer.

He brushed his teeth and took off his shirt before nestling in bed, and when Sam’s head hit the pillow he didn’t even remember falling asleep.

When Dean turned off the TV to get some rest himself, he walked into the room and found Sam already asleep in bed. Dean kicked off his shoes and lost his jacket and belt before throwing himself on his bed.

Usually, Dean didn’t wake up to use the bathroom in the middle of the night. He had so little time to sleep that getting up in the middle of the night was not something he did often. That night, however, Dean blamed the beers for making him get up and walk blindly towards the bathroom in the dark. He barely opened his eyes until he was inside the bathroom and turned on the light. Dean took care of business and was about to turn off the light and go back to bed when something made his heart race.

At first Dean thought of five or six kinds of monsters that could be in the corner of the room, sitting quietly in the dark, and he almost reached for his gun immediately. However, in the split second it took him to look at his pillow at where he had a gun hidden underneath, Dean’s eyes passed by Sam’s bed and he realized his brother wasn’t there.

“Sammy?” Dean left the light on in the bathroom and walked towards the shadow sitting in a corner of the room.

Indeed, it was his brother. Sam rocked himself slowly, and even though his eyes were wide open, Sam didn’t seem to see Dean at all when he crouched before him.
Now, Dean had seen that before. He could swear he had seen Sam in that exact same position in the middle of the night, in a corner of Bobby’s room after he had a nightmare about the darkness. Dean’s heart was thudding loudly when he touched Sam’s hand gently.

“Sammy, you okay?”

Sam shied away from his touch and shook his head quickly. He blinked a few times and kept his hands close to his chest. Dean looked at Sam’s hand and realized he was holding at his injured finger, the one the pagan god had pulled a nail off.

A lot had happened to Sam when he was taken into the bright room as a teenager, and when Dean saw his brother now, he remembered that Sam had told him about it, years before, about how the man had tied him up to a chair and pulled off his fingernails or broke his fingers. How could Dean forget? Well, Sam apparently hadn’t. A part of him definitely remembered the torture.

“No, no…no more…no, please…” Sam whispered, as if he was chanting, barely moving his lips.

“Hey…it’s okay.” Dean put his hand on top of Sam’s and looked into those wide eyes, and the dark dilated pupils that seemed to be staring into nothingness. “No one will hurt you. Let’s go back to bed, eh?” Dean wasn’t sure Sam could hear him. Hell, he wasn’t sure if his brother was awake.

Sam was shaking lightly, and his eyes were lost, lost in the past, unable to see anything that was happening right now. It was dark, and there were footsteps, and then the rope was tight, so tight around him…Sam didn’t know why he couldn’t fight, why he felt so helpless. And then it hurt. Then there was pain. The bones cracking, the throbbing of his fingertips as they bled where the flesh had been exposed. “Stop…” Sam whispered.

Dean didn’t know whether or not he should try to wake Sam up. What if he got confused? What could Dean possibly tell him to try and explain what was happening? Sam might be completely disoriented and dangerously curious if he woke up now, so Dean wondered if he could soothe him back to sleep.

“Hey, listen to me. It’s alright, Sammy. Go back to sleep, okay? You’re safe.”

Sam’s eyes never even flicked with recognition, but his lips moved. “He’s coming…he’s here…”

“No, he isn’t.” Dean’s heart ached as if someone had squeezed it. “He’s gone. I promise. You can go back to sleep.”

Dean thought of his brother when he was just a boy, shaking in the dark in the middle of Bobby’s bedroom, afraid he had lost his mind, unable to control his nightmares and fears.

“Here.” Dean took Sam’s injured finger and pressed it to his chest, then slowly he pulled all of Sam against his body and let him rest there, unmoving and silent.

During the day there was the hunting life, the jobs, the hardened feelings, the being strong and all that, but in moments like this, when Sam was so completely bare in front of him, so truly vulnerable and scared, Dean swore his heart bled into his veins with the sweetest kind of pain. He felt an affection that was so tender it felt warm on his skin, like that feeling of Sam leaning against him, seeking his comfort, was the only thing that really mattered in the whole world, and the only truth in their lives.
Dean felt Sam shudder against his body but he didn’t move. He pressed Sam’s head to his shoulder gently, and eventually he could feel Sam’s neck relax and his brother’s head weigh against his shoulder, as if he was falling asleep again.

It was one thing carrying a fourteen-year-old, light kid as Sam had been, to bed when he fell asleep. Carrying Sam’s adult, enormous body would prove much more challenging, but Dean thought he could do it.

If he could put Sam to bed without waking him up, he knew his brother wouldn’t remember a thing about that in the morning. However, if Sam woke up now he might have questions, and that was the last thing Dean wanted to deal with.

So, he gathered his strength and tried to be as smooth as possible when he pulled Sam in his arms and walked towards the bed.

Those four or five steps took a lot of strength and focusing, and Dean was certain that there was a vein bursting somewhere on his forehead as he tried to pull it off, but he did it. He lay Sam carefully on the bed and then pulled the sheets on top of his body.

As he stood beside him, watching over Sam’s sleep, Dean wondered how the hell he could just die and not be there if Sam needed him.

The thought saddened him deeply, and Dean went to his bed and sat down, looking at Sam through the rest of the night, unable to find sleep again.

He tried to fight it, but there were too many memories, too many feelings.

And even though Dean fought it till the very end, his fate caught up with him.

A few months later, Dean found himself unable to run and unable to hide. His time was up. He could see the hellhounds coming for him. And when they did, and when they started tearing at his flesh and biting the life out of him, Dean still tried to hold on, he still hoped he could win.

Dean would soon learn that death wasn’t the end he was expecting, but the beginning of a different kind of nightmare.

In Hell, as Dean found himself bleeding and hurting, tied up in an ocean of nothingness and screaming, a memory struck him vividly.

“Dean…?”

“Yeah?”

“Will you love me forever?”

Dean smiled.

“I’ll love you till I die. And then when I die, I’ll keep loving you just the same.”
Dean looked around himself and screamed at the top of his lungs.

“SAM!!!”

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During the time Dean was gone, trapped in Hell, Sam experienced the darkest his feelings had ever been. Without his brother and going mad with grief, all Sam could think of was revenge. He realized he was losing his mind, but killing Lilith, the demon who had sent Dean to Hell, had become an obsession to him. And, as any obsession might, it had a grip on Sam almost too tight for him to fight it, and that was when Ruby became handy.

Deep inside Sam knew he shouldn’t trust her, he had learned better than to trust a demon, but with Dean gone there was nothing else he could do with his life but seek vengeance. If he couldn’t have his brother back then he would at least kill the one who had taken Dean from him. And when Ruby started feeding him demon blood, Sam told himself it was just a means to an end—get strong enough to take on Lilith. But then again, as it happened with his feelings for his brother, deep down Sam knew he wasn’t fooling anyone.

Sam knew he had demon blood in his veins even before he started drinking it. He had learned that Azazel had bled into his mouth when he was just a baby, and weirdly enough, knowing that hadn’t scared Sam. On the contrary, it was almost peaceful when Sam understood that it made sense. After all, he had always felt different.

There was a darkness in Sam he couldn’t understand completely, but that fed on the power the demon blood gave him. Feeling powerful was a nice change from feeling helpless all the time, unable to let go of a feeling of unwanted love that consumed him every day. Nothing changed with Dean gone. The feeling of loss ate at Sam as much as love itself did, and the demon blood helped make him numb to the pain.

Sam knew he was traveling down a dangerous road. Most nights his dreams were blank now, or Sam couldn’t remember them. Something was changing in him, as if something kept brewing deep inside his soul. Sometimes Sam felt like he was spiraling into something so black he couldn’t possibly see the way out, and without his brother, the truth was that maybe Sam didn’t want to see a way out of it.

~ * ~

When Castiel raised him from perdition, Dean didn’t know exactly what to expect. He was back,
alive and kicking, but the scars he bore from Hell were deep, and when Dean rested his head on the pillow at night he was sometimes afraid to close his eyes and unleash the memories of torture, both from what he suffered and what he later learned to inflict.

Seeing Sam again was the only thing that mattered, and sometimes the only thing that got him through another day without the thoughts of Hell taking over.

Dean knew Sam couldn’t be told of his past, of the darkness and the torture the man inflicted on him in the dark room, but for the first time in his life Dean could understand some of Sam’s pain, both physical and mental. Of course, he hadn’t been a helpless kid as Sam had been when he was taken, but the way time seemed to pass differently in Hell, Dean felt as if he had suffered for hundreds of years the pain of trying to resist, the pain of breaking down, and the terrible shame of what Alastair had made him become in Hell—a torturer himself.

The idea that he had broken down haunted Dean in a way that made it almost impossible to communicate with Sam. During the time Dean was in Hell, something seemed to have happened to his brother, because Sam was different. Dean couldn’t quite put his finger to it, but his brother didn’t seem the same. Dean hated to think about it, but sometimes there was something dark in Sam’s eyes, something Dean had seen a few times during the year Sam fought his trauma, and it was a feeling coated with hopelessness and dread.

A part of him wished he could open up to Sam. It had been so long…maybe Sam could handle knowing his past by now? If they both sat down and talked about their experiences with torture perhaps they could help themselves in a way they couldn’t alone?

Knowing he had broken down and become a torturer didn’t hurt as much as knowing he had been responsible for breaking the first seal in a chain of seals that would end when Lucifer was free to walk the Earth.

One year ago life had been so much simpler with ghosts and demons and the occasional monster, but now there were angels in the middle of it and there were seals being broken, and Lilith was still on the run, and then there was talk about Lucifer being in a cage in Hell, a cage Lilith was trying to break open. And apparently, by caving and giving in to Alastair in Hell, Dean had jumpstarted all that.

If Sam felt guilty about begging and crying when he was violated, Dean couldn’t begin to describe how he felt about not being strong enough.

If only they could talk and help each other, but apparently they couldn’t. Eventually, the love that had once been so tender between them was drying and becoming something hard, something they refused to feed and that turned cold and hurtful. Dean couldn’t blame Sam for being distant at times. For all Dean’s efforts to help Sam escape darkness, it seemed ironic that most of it consisted of keeping Sam in the dark about his past.

When they hunted down a siren, a creature who could take the shape of its victim’s greatest desire and then lure them into killing on its behalf, they saw a parade of men who had fallen head over heels in love with the perfect woman and murdered for her love. Well, when the siren approached Dean and read his heart’s desire, it shouldn’t have been surprising that it lured Dean with the figure of a little brother who looked up to him and trusted him above all else. Dean missed the time when Sam would have done anything for him, and trusted him with everything; he missed it so much that he fell for the promise of a younger brother who still needed him badly.
Bobby had helped them out of that case before it was too late, but Dean still wondered if that hadn’t made Sam suspicious of his love. If it had, Sam had obviously not said anything to him. Perhaps he had simply grown tired of loving Dean when he thought Dean didn’t feel the same.

Dean knew he should be relieved, but the truth was that it hurt him too much for words.

~ * ~

Having Dean back should’ve been everything Sam wanted, but it wasn’t. He knew he was too far gone when he realized the demon blood was becoming more than a tool to reach a goal. Sam knew he was being used by the blood. He knew he was losing control fast, but he just couldn’t bring himself to admit it or ask for help. What would Dean say if he found out? How disappointed would he be? Sam couldn’t let that happen.

The look in Dean’s eyes if he ever found out what Sam was doing with Ruby would kill him. Knowing he had broken his brother’s trust so terribly hurt him, but Sam couldn’t stop. The demon blood fed and soothed a part of Sam that nothing, until this day of his life, had ever seemed to appease. It sated a hunger in Sam that was too dark to voice, and Sam was afraid Dean wouldn’t understand. Hell, how could he when Sam himself didn’t?

No, it would be better to keep everything a secret. Sam told himself he was doing what it took to kill Lilith and prevent her from setting Lucifer free, but the truth was that he didn’t know what he was doing anymore, and eventually the day came when Sam couldn’t control it any longer.

Dean had to witness his brother’s mouth sink into a wound in a possessed body, and he had to see the blood trickling down Sam’s chin, and that was when Dean understood part of what was keeping them distant from each other.

Locking Sam up in Bobby’s panic room to try and force him into a detox from demon blood was not the easiest of choices, but it was the only thing left for Dean to do. How could he just sit and watch as his brother fell harder and deeper into a pit of darkness?

Chaining Sam to a bed and hearing him scream all day hurt Dean physically. Every scream, every cry for help for them to let him go, they went straight to Dean’s heart and begged him to go in and take Sam in his arms. But they were no longer kids, and Dean didn’t know if their love was strong enough to save Sam now.

In the panic room, tied up to a bed as his body convulsed under the effect of withdrawals, Sam hallucinated of the past, of his mother, of Dean, of himself…and he also hallucinated about things he had never seen before, things that made him feel confused and scared—things like the man who walked into the panic room and turned the lights all off, and then the pain he started to cause him, different and sadistic kinds of pain.

From all the delusions taking over in Sam’s intoxicated mind, this man who came in the dark to torture him was the one who made him scream the loudest.

~ * ~
Little did Dean know, at the time, that there was a part of Heaven that was actually working to bring about the Apocalypse, and this part set Sam free so he could go after Lilith.

Little did Dean know that by going after his brother, now a junkie who craved demon blood to feel powerful, he would also be going towards the worst fight they had ever had.

Finding Sam had been easy. It didn’t matter how much Sam tried to hide, Dean knew him too well to fall for his misleading clues. Convincing Sam to go back with him, to lay off demon blood and let go, however, wasn’t easy at all.

When people say there’s a thin line between love and hate, they know what they’re talking about. Suddenly, all their love was just blind anger channeled into the need to hurt each other. The two brothers fought each other and drew blood, because without the love they felt, they weren’t really good with words.

“You don’t know me!” Sam growled at his brother.

‘Don’t know you?’ Dean thought, his eyes narrowing with pain. ‘Kid, I finger fucked you to an orgasm, I know you’, he thought and shook with the strength of his feelings.

“Never did, never will,” Sam said. If Dean didn’t understand the nature of Sam’s love, then he couldn’t possibly understand why Sam suffered, and thus he couldn’t help him.

“If you walk out of that door you don’t need to come back!” Dean said in a last desperate attempt at making Sam stay, and when the door slammed shut and Sam left him behind, alone and bleeding on the floor, Dean thought he understood how his dad felt the day Sam had walked out on them.

~ * ~

After the fight, Dean looked for Bobby because he didn’t know what else to do. Sam was somewhere with that demon bitch, running high on demon blood, ready to find Lilith and kill her. Dean wondered if Sam would have trusted Ruby if he had known what a demon had done to him on his fourteenth birthday.

“Dean…”

“I’m not going after him, Bobby.” Dean was angry. After everything he had done for Sam, how dare he not listen to him? How dare he choose a demon over his own brother?

“He’s your brother and he’s drowning,” Bobby said.

Dean shook his head. He had tried. He had done everything he could. It was too late now, too late to help Sam.

“I’m not sure he’s still my brother. If he ever was…” Dean heard the words coming from his broken heart.

“You stupid, stupid son of a bitch. Well, boo hoo, I’m sorry your feelings are hurt, princess. Are you under the impression that family’s supposed to make you feel good? They’re supposed to make you miserable, that’s why they’re family!”
Dean was caught off guard at the strength behind Bobby’s words.

“I told him that if he walked out of that door it was over, and he did it anyway.”

“You sound like a whiny brat,” Bobby argued. “No, you sound like your dad. Well, let me tell you something, your dad was a coward.”

“My dad was a lot of things, Bobby, but a coward?”

“He’d rather push Sam away than reach out to him. Have you forgotten how it was when you guys lived here? Have you forgotten how John tried to help Sam by triggering one panic attack after another?”

Dean swallowed hard.

“Tell me you haven’t forgotten the way your dad threw Sam into the pantry, in the dark, as he begged him not to. Because Dean, if I still dream of Sam’s voice crying out for help, banging on that pantry door, then I’m sure you do, too.”

Dean’s heart tightened.

“You’re a better man than your dad ever was,” Bobby went on. “Sam’s locked in that pantry again, Dean. He doesn’t know that because this knowledge has been taken away from him. But right now he’s going around in circles in the dark, not knowing how to break free, scared and alone, and you know that, because you know your brother. You know that demon blood has gotten to his head, you know that the man who fought you doesn’t really know what he’s doing. Sam’s crying out for help again, so what are you gonna do about it? Are you gonna walk away? Are you gonna pretend he’s okay like John did, when he was actually bleeding and unconscious on the floor?”

“Bobby…” Dean begged.

“No, you tell me what your heart is saying Dean, because it used to know exactly what Sammy needed.”

“I don’t know what he needs anymore!” Dean cried out, his eyes wet and stinging. “All right? Things have changed, I don’t know what he needs…”

“Don’t be a fool, Dean. Sam needs the same thing he’s always needed.”

Dean’s bottom lip quivered before he spoke with a voice that sounded hoarse. “And what is that?”

“You, you idjit. Sam needs you.”

~ * ~

In one moment Dean was in Bobby’s living room, in the next he had no idea where it was that he found himself. As his brother ran off with a demon somewhere Dean couldn’t find him, the angels had taken him to some kind of safe room, packed with burgers and beers, where Dean was supposed to wait for the end, whatever the hell they meant by that.
Well, Dean had never been one to wait patiently for something, particularly not when he thought his brother was in danger and he couldn’t reach him to speak to him. Dean no longer cared about their fight. Bobby was right. Sam was lost, he was drowning, and he needed him. It didn’t matter if Dean was still hurt, and if his pride was still suffering, he could not turn his back on Sam. He just needed to find him.

Yet, Dean soon learned that would prove harder than he thought. Dean wasn’t simply waiting for something to happen; he was being held prisoner by the angels as their plan unfolded in some small church on Earth.

“Lilith is the last seal,” Zachariah said. “And when Sam kills her, Lucifer will rise.”

At first it didn’t make sense. Dean had thought the angels were supposed to protect the seals, to fight Lilith, to make sure Lucifer never escaped his damn cage. What the hell was going on?

“How do I stop it?”

“You don’t stop it. Sam will kill Lilith and set Lucifer free. You don’t stop the Apocalypse, Dean. But we still need you, you’re still the chosen one. You will stop Lucifer when the time is right.”

“I want to see my brother now!” Dean demanded, staring Zachariah in the eyes and seething at the realization that he and Sam had both been played by the angels.

“Dean, relax…there’s nothing you can do now. Sam is on his way, you have to let him do what he was meant to do all along. It’s his destiny to set Lucifer free, Dean, as it will be yours to stop him.”

“Shut up! Take me out of here right now!”

“I see you have forgotten me,” Zachariah softened his voice and smiled lightly.

“What the hell are you talking about? I haven’t forgotten you, you old son of a bitch.”

“I guess you have. But I remember you, Dean. I remember you from a few years ago, holding your unconscious brother in your arms in the middle of a storm.”

Dean’s forehead creased and his eyes narrowed.

“I was there, Dean. I was in that room as Sam fell apart and broke down because of his burden. I saw it when darkness was too heavy a weight on his shoulders, and I was there to help when you didn’t know what to do for him.”

“You…” Dean began slowly as it dawned on him. “It was you in Bobby’s room, all those years ago. You erased Sam’s memories!” Dean accused. “You’re the man in the shadows.”

“That’s right. I saw what was happening and I intervened. We angels just want what’s best for the planet. Right now the Apocalypse is what we need. Paradise on Earth, what is there not to like?”

“Millions of people will die!” Dean protested.

“Sometimes we have to make sacrifices for the greater good. But I suppose you already know that, don’t you, Dean? You sacrificed your romantic love for your brother to save him from the darkness
eating at his soul.”

Dean shut his eyes briefly and for a moment it felt as if the very floor was spinning under his feet. He remembered that night so vividly. Sam lying unconscious in his arms, the man in the shadows offering to make it all better, and the moment when Dean chose to let go of the only love he had ever known to save Sammy.

“Why did you do that? Why did you erase Sam’s memories?”

“Because that was the right thing to do. Sam was supposed to grow into a fierce hunter, he was supposed to be strong. All that fear and trauma? They would have kept him from becoming who he was born to be.”

“And who is that?” Dean frowned.

‘Lucifer’s vessel’, Zachariah thought, but instead he just said, “All in due time. All you need to know right now is that whatever starts tonight has been set into motion a long, long time ago. Even before you were born, Dean. I know you might think I’m evil for keeping you here, but trust me, I’m just doing what’s best for you, as I did what was best for Sam on that night you saw him falling apart.”

When Zachariah walked away he left Dean with a thousand thoughts rushing in his mind and the desperate need to get out of there and find Sam before he could kill Lilith and break the final seal.

Convincing Castiel to help him was the only way to get out of there, and even though they would definitely get in trouble with Heaven for doing so, the angel helped Dean escape his prison so he could look for his brother.

It seemed like Zachariah was right when he had said it was Sam’s destiny to kill Lilith and break the last seal, because when Dean found his brother it was too late.

When Sam realized what he had done he felt himself falling hard, spiraling down into something dark and painful. How had he let it happen? He had trusted a demon, he had broken the final seal… And now, now he had just opened Lucifer’s cage!

When Dean busted through the doors of the small church, Sam was almost afraid to look him in the eyes. At the same time that it had all felt inevitable, Sam was being crushed under the weight of his despair.

“Dean, I’m sorry!”

Dean walked up to him and they held at each other when a beam of light erupted from the cracking floor.

“He’s coming, I freed him…” Sam blurted the words, his heart racing.

“Sam, let’s go.” Dean tugged at Sam’s jacket and tried to move him, but for a moment Sam was mesmerized by the intense, beautiful light.

And even though Sam was supposed to fear that light, he realized he didn’t. The total absence of darkness felt like a blessing, and though Dean might be scared, the blinding light busting in the room actually made Sam feel peaceful.
‘It’s okay. *The pain happens in the dark,*’ Sam didn’t know where the irrational, however powerful thought was coming from.

“Sam!”

It was hard to look away, but eventually Sam was able to blink away the spell the light had over him and follow Dean. His mind, though, was still wrapped around the feelings the light evoked.

‘*As long as there’s light, I’m safe.*’

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tbc...

Chapter 91

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for beta-ing the chapter, *kittenbot* =)

Chapter 91

Setting Lucifer free from his cage because he had trusted a demon instead of his own brother was a weight that Sam now had to carry for the rest of his life. If his guilt could somehow materialize in the shape of something physical, Sam knew it would swallow him in a heartbeat. The worst part of everything, even worse than knowing the devil was free because of him, was the look of disappointment on Dean’s face. Sam didn’t know how to deal with that. He knew he deserved Dean’s anger, but he could hardly handle knowing he had let Dean down.

If only Sam could explain to Dean what he really felt, and why he had made the poor choices he had, then perhaps Dean would understand that Sam had been heartbroken and desperate. Or maybe he wouldn’t. Maybe if Dean knew about his love it would just make things worse. After all, Dean had never expressed the slightest interest in Sam’s love…or had he? ‘There was that kiss, he kissed me back. It was over so quickly but he did kiss me back.’ Sam’s thoughts seemed to whisper, but it was pointless hanging on to that. Right now there was only that look of disappointment in Dean’s eyes, a look Sam couldn’t stand anymore.

They decided to part ways when it became unbearable. Sam left Dean to himself after his brother agreed it was indeed the best course of action. By now, Sam thought, there was little to nothing he could do to show Dean how sorry he was without the risk of exposing his love and really damaging whatever affection was still there.

~ * ~

During the time Sam was gone, Dean gave in to drinking and hunting like there was no tomorrow. Depression wasn’t a word that was allowed into a hunter’s vocabulary, but if it was, Dean would probably be surprised with how good it was at describing how he felt inside.

The truth was, he just didn’t know what to do about Sam. His kid brother had freed Satan from his cage, and all because he refused to listen to him. Now it was Apocalypse on Earth, and Dean had no idea how to stop it. He found himself thinking of his father’s words again these last few days—save Sam or kill him. Did John’s knowledge extend so far? Did he know Sam would end up being responsible for the end of the world?
Then there was the fact that Dean loved his brother. The painful, maddening fact that he was in love with a boy he could no longer protect or even understand. Sam seemed to have changed so much from the kid Dean knew. But then again, perhaps the fact that there was all that love denied between them had pushed Sam away more often than not. Dean remembered how loving each other had been the answer to helping Sam through the darkest his life had been. What if that was what Sam needed now?

Dean shook his head and sighed. There was no way that was the answer. Sam had most definitely moved on from the puppy love he had felt when he was a teenager. As for the undying love they had sworn over and over to each other, well, it was a shame Sam couldn’t be allowed to remember that.

During these difficult times Dean became closer to the angel Castiel. It seemed highly unlikely of him to do so, but Dean grew fond of the angel. There was something naive in Cas that captivated Dean, and there was also a raw courage that Dean couldn’t help but admire.

With Sam gone, it was good to spend time with the angel, and Dean had fun trying to teach Cas a thing or two about humans.

Yet, Dean would give it to Cass, getting him drunk was no easy task. They had been drinking at a bar for hours before Dean drove them somewhere near where he parked the Impala and they looked at the sky while sharing a couple more beers.

Dean had had a fair amount of alcohol by now, and unlike Sam, he wasn’t exactly a happy drunk.

He looked at the stars filling the sky and sighed.

“Cheers,” he said, toasting with Castiel.

“Cheers,” Castiel replied. And then, after a moment, “What are we celebrating?”

Dean chuckled lightly. “The fact that I’m drunk, for one.”

“Oh, okay. I thought we had already drunk to that.”

“We’re drinking again. The night is young and I’m not nearly as drunk as I want to be.”

“And why would you want to get more drunk?” Castiel asked. “It has come to my knowledge that you don’t have a very pleasant morning to look forward to if you continue with this.”

“I guess I don’t,” Dean agreed, his voice mysteriously sad. “But Cas, sometimes you know you’re gonna screw up, and you just can’t stop it, you know? Sometimes the pain is so fucking great that you just do whatever you have to do to numb it and make it go away. Even if you won’t have a very pleasant morning to look forward to the next day,” Dean explained.

“I don’t understand this kind of pain.”

“Then you’re one lucky bastard,” Dean mused. “You never feel pain or love…you never get your heart broken.”

“Is this about Sam?”

“Forget Sam. I don’t wanna talk about him.”
“The broken heart, I mean. Is it because you still love him?”

Dean looked at Cas intently and, for a moment, he didn’t feel drunk at all. His heart raced and Dean was pretty sure his lips moved but he didn’t say anything.

“I know about you two, Dean. I’m an angel, remember? I saw it happen. I know you and Sam were once lovers.”

“Well,” Dean said bitterly. “Then you also know that’s over now.”

“I guess it is. Kind of.”

“What do you mean, kind of?”

“I’m not very good with human feelings, Dean, but I can see how much you love him still. It’s clear in everything you do, every step you take. Your whole life has been shaped around the love you feel for Sam, whether it’s romantic love or just brotherly affection. I suppose it’s difficult for you having to remember that time when Sam can’t.”

Dean swallowed hard and his lips were tightly pressed together. His eyes narrowed and his face turned cold. “You’re right, Cas. You’re not very good with human feelings.” Dean finished his beer and got inside the Impala, slamming the door shut after himself.

~ * ~

The first time Sam saw him, Lucifer came to him in a dream. At first Sam thought he was dreaming of Jessica, but the dream shifted to something less familiar and more unnerving pretty quickly. It was the devil speaking to Sam when his subconscious had control and his guard was down, and it was then that Lucifer made Sam aware of his plans for him.

“You’re my true vessel, Sammy. It’s you. You’re special, you’ve always known that, haven’t you? Everything that happened to you from the moment you were born has been leading you to me.”

“You’re wrong. This is ridiculous,” Sam said, naturally. Yet, even as he spoke in his dream, Sam realized it wasn’t entirely true. Finding out he was Lucifer’s vessel came with less surprise than Sam knew he should have felt. He didn’t understand why, and he hated the feeling, but deep down it was like a part of him had always known.

“Oh, but it isn’t, and you know that. You’ve always felt different, haven’t you? You know there’s darkness inside of you; you’ve experienced it all your life, Sammy. It was all for me. We are meant to be, you and I.”

“Shut up!” Sam protested.

“And even though this vessel here can barely hold me in, I will give you some time to come around, Sam.”

“What are you even talking about?!”
“You’re gonna say yes to me, and then we’ll take over the world together.”

“Wait, say yes?” Sam seemed confused. “Do you need me to say yes?”


“Then I’ll never say yes. You can’t have me.”

“We’ll see about that,” Lucifer said mysteriously. “Oh, and Sam? Before you wake up…how was your fourteenth birthday?”

Sam frowned. “What? How was my…?”

Lucifer smiled a last little smile, full of mystery and promise, and then he was gone.

Sam woke up breathing fast and feeling hot. He pulled the covers off his heated body and sat up in bed. He looked around at the motel room where he was spending the night, alone, and suddenly the urge to speak to Dean grew too great.

Sam picked up his cell phone and called his brother.

“Dean?”

Dean’s heart raced when he listened to Sam’s voice. “Yeah?”

“I…I’m sorry I called.” Sam felt his heart falling at the dryness in Dean’s voice. “But I just had the weirdest dream. I think Lucifer spoke to me.”

“He what?” Dean frowned and was at full attention.

“Yeah, it’s crazy, but I think he spoke to me through my dream.”

“And what did he say?”

Sam swallowed hard. It was difficult speaking about it, it felt like confessing to the truth of the darkness Sam felt within himself. “He said I’m his true vessel.”

Dean shut his eyes and took a deep breath. “Oh, yeah? He’s probably full of shit. He’s the king of evil after all.”

“I don’t think he was lying about that…”

“Well Sam, then what do you want me to do?” Dean was having all sorts of feelings at the moment and he didn’t know exactly what the strongest emotion was among the helplessness, the fear and the rage he felt.

“I…nothing,” Sam said. “I just wanted to tell you.”

“Yeah, you told me. I’ll talk to Cas.”

“Okay…and Dean? Before I woke up, he also asked me what I remember about my fourteenth birthday.”
Dean felt all the hairs stand on the back of his neck and tachycardia take control of his chest.
“What?”

“Yeah, that’s crazy, right? But you know what’s even crazier? I tried to remember it, and come to think of it, I just can’t. In fact, I can’t remember my fifteenth birthday either. What did we do?”

Dean felt the hand that was holding the cell phone grow cold, and he had to think fast.

“What the hell is it with Lucifer and birthdays,” he forced a laugh and hoped Sam wouldn’t hear the edge in his voice.

“Yeah, it makes no sense. But I just can’t seem to remember it, and if I try my head hurts.”

“They stop trying,” Dean said quickly and then added, “You and I ate ourselves stupid on your fourteenth birthday, remember? Dad got home late, we were passed out on the couch watching TV,” Dean felt his heart aching as he lied about those memories. “And Bobby was there for your fifteenth birthday. He made you a cake.”

“Right…” Sam said, but he sounded unsure. The truth was, he could really see the things Dean was saying happening, but for some reason they didn’t really feel real.

“Sam, I gotta go. Talk to you later. Just…just don’t listen to that bastard, okay?”

“Okay. Bye, Dean.” Sam ended the call and frowned.

A few miles away, Dean looked at his phone and still tried to get a grip on his galloping heart. Sam was Lucifer’s vessel? Lucifer had asked Sam about his fourteenth birthday, the day the demon had taken Sam away… That couldn’t be just a coincidence, now could it?

Dean ran a hand through his hair and wondered what the hell he was supposed to do about it.

~ * ~

Soon, the Winchesters began to understand how deeply connected to everything that was happening they truly were. Dean learned that he was Michael’s sword, meaning that he was supposed to be Michael’s vessel when he struck Lucifer down and ended the Apocalypse. That meant that if Sam was supposed to be Lucifer’s vessel, then in the end it all came down to Dean having to kill Sam.

The pressure to ‘play their roles’ in the Apocalypse came from everywhere. Both Heaven and Hell seemed to agree, for once, that the two brothers were destined to play Lucifer and Michael, and Dean was destined to smite Sammy down to the likely cost of his own life when Michael was through with him.

Sam would star as the rebellious son, unwilling to follow through with Daddy’s plan, and Dean was supposed to be the good son, who would bring paradise on earth.

Dean was even shown a glimpse of a possible future, the world five years from then in case Sam said yes to Lucifer, and it was absolute chaos. The Croatoan virus they had found before infected the human race, and those still alive were surviving in a Zombie-like, post-apocalyptic scenario with little
Lucifer was riding Sam, using him as a vessel as he extinguished the human race slowly and painfully. Seeing what could happen if his brother said yes to Lucifer made Dean understand that he needed to be back with Sam. Whatever happened, they needed to be together.

Dean didn’t know how Sam’s past in the bright room related to him being Lucifer’s vessel, but he had a feeling the two things were connected. As long as he didn’t know how the two things linked, though, he knew he should keep a close eye on Sam. His little brother might not know that, but Dean feared that soon the wall in his mind keeping Sam sane and out of darkness might crumble, and who was to know, after all those years, what would be left of Sam’s self-control when that happened.

At the same time Dean tried to be with Sam and make sure his brother wouldn’t give in to the devil, he had his own struggle to avoid Michael. There was no way Dean was saying yes to the archangel and allowing for millions of people to die. And most importantly, there was no way Dean was killing Sam at the end of things. They would have to find another way.

It didn’t matter that it was Heaven giving the orders, nothing in this world could be powerful enough to make Dean kill his brother. Taking care of Sam was not only his job, it was also who he was, and even if Dean hadn’t been in love with his brother, there was no way he could do that.

So, when angels couldn’t make Dean ignore what Sam meant to him, running away and hiding from Heaven seemed like the most reasonable thing to do.

~ * ~

As the Apocalypse soared through the Earth, demonic possessions became an everyday occurrence, and with so many demons walking around, it didn’t take long for other hunters to understand what was happening and why it was happening. And when they put together what, and when, it didn’t take them long to find out who had been responsible for freeing Lucifer, and that was when Sam became a target. Then, because those who knew Dean were aware that he would not let his brother go, not without deadly revenge, it ended up making him a target as well. Killing the Winchesters would not prevent the Apocalypse, considering the angels would just keep bringing them back to life until they played the roles they were supposed to, but the two hunters who shot Sam and Dean dead in their hotel room didn’t know that.

Being in Heaven was not like anything the boys could have anticipated. Not that they knew where they were, at first. Suddenly, Sam and Dean saw themselves reliving some of their memories, and it wasn’t long before they understood those were precious memories, of moments they would have liked to hold on to.

For Dean, most of them included Sam, and some of them were of Mary looking after him when he was young. As much as Dean felt tempted to explore the vivid images around himself, Castiel was able to reach out and tell him that he and Sam were both dead and in Heaven. When you were running away from angels and desperately trying to avoid them, Heaven wasn’t exactly the best place to be, so Dean knew he had to find Sam and get the hell out of there before Zachariah got to them first.

Before Dean found Sam, as he traveled in the Impala down an endless road, he just had to stop when something called his attention. Dean got out of the car and looked at the hunting cabin in front of
him. ‘Dad’s hunting cabin,’ Dean recognized the place and opened the door with shaky fingers. Sam and he had spent three days there when they were lovers. A honeymoon, Sam had called it.

Dean found himself lying on the bed with a much younger version of Sam in his arms. “Make love to me again?” Sam asked. “I want to feel you as close as possible.”

Dean shuddered when he saw the urgency in Sam’s eyes. He remembered that. They were in the cabin and Sam had just had a nightmare.

“Can you…can you—?” Sam begged.

“Yes, love. Of course I can,” Dean whispered back and closed his eyes. He knew that wasn’t real and that he should go, but he was so tired of missing Sam in his arms, and he was, as he had always been, so weak to resist Sam when he needed him, that Dean just let go and took Sam slowly. And even though it was just a memory, it made Dean’s body tingle all over and he wished for a desperate second that he couldn’t ever wake up.

“Do you believe in soul mates?”

“I do now.”

~ * ~

Sam’s greatest memories were mainly from the times he had felt like he had a normal life or a real family. He remembered his first real thanksgiving when he was a kid and spent it with somebody else’s family. Sam remembered running away and having a dog named Bones for a while. He had pretty much understood that he was in Heaven by now, reliving his greatest hits. And that was when he suddenly found himself in Bobby’s house, sitting on Bobby’s porch. ‘What is this? I don’t remember this…’ Sam thought, confused. There was no big happy memory in his mind of being in Bobby’s house, that he remembered anyway. So where did that one fit? Sam walked back inside Bobby’s house and went up the stairs tentatively, as if something called to him. He felt a strong urge to walk into Bobby’s bedroom, but when Sam tried the door it was locked. ‘That doesn’t make sense,’ he thought. Why would a cherished memory be locked away from him? Sam pulled hard at the door but it wouldn’t open, and then he felt a hand on his shoulder.

“Sam, we gotta go. We gotta get out of here.”

“Dean!” Sam looked surprised. “We’re in Heaven. I think we’re going over our favorite memories or something.”

“Yeah, I talked to Cas. We need to get out of here before Zachariah finds us.”

“Wait,” Sam said when Dean tried to pull him away. “Do you know why this door won’t open?” Sam asked, pointing at the door to Bobby’s room. “I have no idea what memory is behind this door, but I feel like I really, really want to know.”

Dean looked around with less hurry and more attention, and then realized where they were. He looked at the door and thought of the many things Sam and he had done behind it. Many things Sam didn’t remember. They had kissed and held each other many nights. Dean had told Sam he loved him in that room, and Sam had said it back to him. They had had their first time on that bed, with Dean helping Sam straddle him and being so careful not to hurt him…
Dean swallowed hard and shrugged off his thoughts. That was a dangerous door, one that certainly should not open.

“I don’t know, Sam, but we don’t have time for that. We gotta go now,” Dean pulled harder at him.

Sam let himself be led away, albeit reluctantly, but his heart still raced at the thought of what was behind that door.

His heart only let go of the door and thought of something else when Dean and he learned something about Heaven—each person had their own heaven, filled with their own happiest memories, and only on rare exceptions did people share the same Heaven.

Soul mates, for one. They were able to find each other in Heaven.

Dean’s eyes found Sam’s and for a moment they looked at each other without saying anything.

“Do you believe in soul mates?” Sam asked suddenly, even though he had no idea where his question had just come from. All Sam knew was that asking that question made him feel eerie, and it made all his blood warm and thicker in his veins, as if it meant something really important.

Dean’s heart raced.

“Do you believe in soul mates?”

“I do now.”

“Sam, we don’t have time for that. C’mon, let’s get out of here.” Dean grabbed Sam’s arm and insisted that they keep moving. Whatever was happening to them in Heaven or down on Earth, Dean didn’t know if Sam’s mind would manage to make it through unscathed.

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tbc...
Chapter 92

In a moment of weakness, Dean thought that maybe saying yes to Michael was the best choice to make. If Sam and he couldn’t find a way to kill Lucifer, because the Colt had already proven useless, then the weight of millions of deaths during the Apocalypse would be on Dean’s shoulders. What was he supposed to do?

He couldn’t kill Sammy, but he didn’t want his choice to mean the death of so many people.

The minute they understood where Dean’s mind was going, Bobby, Cas and Sam tried to talk him out of it. They all believed in him, they all thought he was strong and that they would find another way. Castiel even beat him bloody to prove his point.

Sam didn’t understand why Dean was suddenly having a change of heart. His brother had been so emphatic when he told Zachariah there was no way Michael would use him as a meat suit, so why was Dean suddenly having second thoughts about it?

“Hey, can we talk?” Sam grabbed Dean’s arm in the middle of Bobby’s salvage yard and pulled him towards a car.

Dean let Sam lead him and leaned against the vehicle as his brother spoke.

“What is it with you and this stupid plan of saying yes to Michael? I thought we were gonna find our own way of doing things.”

“Well, Sam, our own way of doing things doesn’t seem to be working out so great, now is it? We’ve tried to kill him with the Colt, we’ve lost people trying to do that. For what? For nothing. Maybe I don’t want any more deaths on me. Maybe I can’t handle it,” Dean confessed and his eyes got lost in the distance.

“Dean, it doesn’t have to be like that. Bobby and Cas are still working on something. We’ll figure it out. Besides, I’m not saying yes to Lucifer, so what is the point of you giving in to Michael?” Sam asked.

Dean looked into Sam’s eyes for a long moment.

What the others didn’t know, because Dean didn’t share, was that he was afraid Sam might not be
strong enough to deny Lucifer. If the darkness Sam had experienced could somehow be unleashed, Dean had no idea how things could play with the devil.

“Lucifer seems to be very sure that he’ll wear you to prom. He said you’ll say yes to him,” Dean pointed out and studied Sam.

“He’s the devil, of course he would say that. He tempts people, remember? But I won’t say yes to him,” Sam said, vehemently.

“I want to believe you, I really do.”

“Dean,” Sam frowned and shook his head lightly, “I can do this. I can resist him.”

‘Not if he unleashes your fear, Sammy,’ Dean thought, sadly.

“But I need you to do this with me, okay?” Sam went on. “Forget this crazy nonsense about letting Zachariah take you to Michael. I don’t say yes, neither do you.”

“What if we fail, Sammy?” There was anguish in Dean’s voice, and a sadness he couldn’t really defeat.

“We won’t.”

“If I say yes to Michael…”

“Then millions of people die,” Sam cut him off.

“But at least some of them get saved,” Dean argued.

“And when Michael is through with you you’ll be nothing but a comatose body with no real life left inside.”

“This isn’t about me; I can’t think like that.”

“Please, Dean.” Losing his brother was not an option, not again. Sam couldn’t take it. “I know that you know this isn’t the answer. Deep down you know, Dean, and when the time comes you’ll make the right choice. I trust you.”

Dean felt Sam’s intent look and sighed.

“You promise you won’t say yes to Lucifer?” Dean asked again, his voice dropping and his eyes seemingly darker.

“I do!”

“Even if…if you really feel like you want to?”

“Dean, what the hell? I won’t say yes to him.” Sam looked perplexed.

Dean nodded slowly and looked away at nothing in particular.

“Let’s go back inside. Let’s see if they got something.”
Dean wanted to believe Sam could do it, and he wanted to be the person Sam saw in him; the one who would say no to Michael, the one who would find another way. Yet, if Dean stood any chance at resisting the archangel, he needed to do something about Zachariah, and he needed to do it fast.

Dean got the angel blade from Castiel, and he kept it hidden from sight when he went looking for Zachariah. He tricked the angel into believing Dean would say yes on the condition that Michael killed Zachariah first, thus making the angel confused and outraged. Dean took the moment when they were standing very close to turn the surprised look on Zachariah’s face into something even more confused as the baffled angel saw the blade go into his chest.

The truth was, Dean wasn’t only doing it to avoid his role as a vessel. He killed Zachariah because he had been the one who put the wall inside Sam’s brain, and Dean was afraid that he might remove that wall at any moment and make Sam go back to a state of vulnerability and fear they wouldn’t know how to help him out of.

Dean didn’t know why Zachariah had helped them so many years ago, or even if erasing Sam’s memory had served the angel’s plans, the ones unfolding right now, but Dean just couldn’t risk it. If Sam remembered what had happened to him, there was a lot of fear that would get unleashed, a lot of confusion and definitely a kind of frailty Lucifer might very well prey on.

Killing Zachariah made Dean feel relieved that the wall in Sam’s mind would hold, if only for a little more time.

Sometimes help came from the least expected places, and Sam and Dean learned that the next time they ran into the Trickster, who was actually an angel of the Lord and brother to Lucifer. After insisting that Sam and Dean should play their roles and serve as vessels for the final battle between Michael and Lucifer, Dean’s words seemed to have gotten to him. Dean had told the Trickster that he was just scared to stand up to his family, to his brother, and before the angel died, he had given them a little hope. The Trickster had let them know that although killing Lucifer was out of the question, there might be a different way to stop him.

The plan was crazy, and there was very little hope that it would work, but it was the only one they had, and the two brothers didn’t know what else to do.

The four rings of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse could, when together, open the cage where Lucifer had escaped from, and it was possible that they could throw him back there again. Locking Lucifer in the pit meant no Heaven or Hell, just the world as it was, without massive deaths and destruction on the planet.

Dean looked at Bobby sitting behind his desk and put the four rings in front of him.

“Think it will work?”
“It better work. It’s our only hope.”

Sam also looked at Bobby, and not for the first time he wished there was something they could do to help him. It had been a while now, but it was still painful to look at Bobby in a wheelchair.

A few months before, Bobby had been possessed and had been able to take back the control, seizing the opportunity to dig a knife into his own body before the demon inside of him made him hurt the boys he thought of as his sons. That wheelchair was the price he had to pay. Bobby kept telling himself that Castiel would have the angel juice he lost when he helped Dean out of Heaven back again soon, and then he would be able to help. It was a thought that helped him get through each day, one he just had to hold on to. But meanwhile, the two brothers would have to face it alone. Castiel without his powers was just like any other human, and one not very good with guns. It seemed like it would be up to Sam and Dean to lock Lucifer up again.

“I’ll do it,” Sam said, his eyes lost staring at the four rings. “I set him free, I need to put him back in the cage.”

“Sam is the only one who can do it,” Castiel agreed. “He’s the only one who can get close enough to Lucifer to trap him again. There’s no way Lucifer will hurt his vessel.”

Dean didn’t like that one bit. “What if Lucifer tries to make him say yes?” Dean looked at his brother and at everyone else in the room.

“I won’t do it, Dean,” Sam argued. “I will never say yes to him, no matter what. I’ll open the pit and I’ll throw him in there myself, but I won’t say yes.”

“Do you have any idea how you’re going to throw the devil into the pit?” Bobby asked. “I suppose just asking nicely won’t do.”

Sam sighed. “I have no idea, but I’ll find a way.”

“I’ll find a way is not good enough, Sammy,” Dean protested. “I won’t let you get yourself killed without a better plan. We need to think of a way to lure him into the pit.”

“If you have one, then I’m all ears,” Sam sighed, frustrated. “C’mon, Dean. You know we don’t have time to figure this out now. You talked to Death, you heard about Lucifer’s plans. He needs to be stopped now.”

“So you just walk in and fight the devil?” Dean arched his eyebrows.

“I’ll do whatever I have to do to put a stop to this, Dean. You need to let me try.” Sam’s eyes were full of seriousness and Dean sighed with frustration.

“Do we even know where he is now?” he asked.

“There are the omens,” Bobby said. “Cas and I circled a place here,” Bobby opened a map on the table. “All sorts of weird seems to be happening around this place. Lightning storms, earthquakes, temperature dropping suddenly…you name it. We think that’s where he’s gonna be.”

“Great,” Sam said and took the four rings, putting them in his pocket. “It’s time to go now.”

“I’ll drive,” Dean said.
“Dean…” Sam began. “There’s no reason for you to be there. If Lucifer sees you, he’ll kill you. It’s me he wants. I’m the only one who can go after him.”

“I don’t care. Bobby and Cas are staying here, but I’m coming with you. You’re not going alone on this suicide mission.”

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes and for a moment there was another of those silent, meaningful stares.

“Alright then, let’s go.”

Before Dean could move, though, Castiel grabbed him by the jacket and pushed something against his hand.

“What is this?” Dean asked as he looked down at the angel blade. “Really, Cas? Do you think it can kill him?”

“I think he won’t let you close enough to find out. But he’s still an angel, Dean.”

“Why not give it to Sam? He’s the one about to chat the devil up.”

“Because we need a plan B, and you know that.”

Dean didn’t reply, but he nodded and hid the blade under his layers of clothing.

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“Dean?” Sam asked as Dean focused on the road ahead. “I’ve been thinking… Remember how Bobby was able to take back the wheel when he was possessed?”

“Yeah, how about that?”

“What if I say yes to Lucifer, allow him into my mind, and then I make him,” Sam swallowed hard, “make us jump into the pit? That’s the least I can do after bringing the Apocalypse down upon…”

The loud noise of screeching cut Sam off and he nearly flew out of the window with the abrupt stop.

“Get out of the car,” Dean said with a raspy voice and got out, slamming the Impala’s door.

“Wait, what? Dean!” Sam looked as his brother stood outside, leaning against the car. “Come back inside, we don’t have time to waste!”

“Get out of the car now, Sammy!”

Dean’s command sounded way too serious for Sam to avoid it. He did as he was told and left the Impala, walking around it to stand before his brother.

“What is it?” he asked again.

“You have to promise me you won’t say yes.”
“Dean, I—”

“Promise, Sammy!”

“What if it’s the only choice we have left? It’s a better plan than we’ve had so far,” Sam argued.

“No, it isn’t, and you’re not doing it. You talked me out of saying yes to Michael, you have no right to do this to me now. I won’t let you be Lucifer’s vessel after you helped me say no to Michael.”

“This is different,” Sam tried.

“Like hell it is. And unless you can promise me you won’t say yes to the devil then we’re not going anywhere tonight, Sammy.” Dean’s eyes were shimmering with something so powerful that it gave Sam goosebumps.

Sam might think he could take Lucifer on in a fight in his mind, but he couldn’t, because Sam wasn’t aware of his own weakness. In normal circumstances the plan was crazy enough, but with Sam’s past trauma and the darkness in his soul the plan was suicide. Once Lucifer was inside Sam’s mind and had access to his most secret memories, who was to know he wouldn’t be able to look past the wall the angel Zachariah had put there? Who was to say Lucifer wouldn’t relish the fear he found in Sam’s unconsciousness and use it against him, to dominate him, to make Sam his puppet?

“Dean…”

“I promised to let you do this, to let you face Lucifer on your own, but you have got to promise me you won’t say yes to him,” Dean felt his throat tighten but managed to hold the stare. “Please.”

Sam took a deep breath.

“We’ll find a way, you said that yourself. So please, Sammy.”

“Is this about the locked door in Bobby’s house?”

“What?” Dean frowned, and his heart picked up speed.

“Yeah…do you think I have like, stuff in my mind that I don’t remember, that Lucifer might use against me?” Sam licked at his lips. “Because it certainly felt like there was something going on in Heaven, some part of me that felt locked away.”

“Look,” Dean began. He didn’t know what to say without opening the one door Sam could not open right now, especially not now! “I think that we all have weaknesses and stuff we don’t want to or can’t remember, and there are reasons for that. Whatever it is that you can’t remember maybe it’s better that way; maybe you just can’t deal with it right now. But if you say yes to Lucifer he’ll look inside your mind and he’ll know all your secrets. Do you really want that?”

Sam’s eyes seemed to blur.

“Do you want the devil to see what’s in your heart, to know you better than you know yourself?”

“No…” Sam whispered. He didn’t want to imagine Lucifer inside of him, reading his feelings, messing with them.
“Then please promise me you won’t say yes to him. Promise me you’ll find another way.”

Sam nodded slowly and looked deeply into Dean’s eyes. “I do.” Sam breathed in and out deeply. “I won’t say yes to him, Dean. You’re right. I believed you would resist Michael and you did, it’s my turn now.”

Dean let out a shaky breath of relief and nodded.

“Good. That’s good.”

Sam looked at Dean’s face, so close to his, his eyes so emotional, his lips half parted… Sam’s heart throbbed in his chest and he pulled Dean into a hug before he did something stupid.

Dean hugged him back and pressed Sam’s head to his shoulder.

“It’ll be alright, Sammy. You can do this. You can resist Lucifer and throw him in the pit. I believe in you.”

Sam wanted to believe his brother’s words, he wanted to believe in himself too, but he didn’t tell Dean anything about the looming feeling of dread spreading inside of him as they got closer to their destination.

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After that, Dean drove for about four hours with Sam sitting right beside him. They hardly spoke during the rest of their trip because the tension had the best of their nerves and they didn’t know what else to say. There was a high probability that tonight Lucifer would get Sam to say yes to him, and would ride him to end the world. And if Sam didn’t say yes, Lucifer might still kill Dean, or trick Sam into having no choice but to accept him.

They drove up to the spot Bobby had circled on the map, but when Dean parked the car it seemed like they were in the middle of nowhere.

“Dean, can you please wait in the car? Please…just give me some time to try and do this on my own.”

Dean sighed deeply and nodded with evident discomfort. They had had this talk before. Sam was no longer a kid, he was a grown man capable of making his own decisions and taking risks, and Dean needed to grow up as well and let him.

“Fine. But if I don’t hear from you in fifteen minutes, I’m going in.”

Sam nodded. He got out of the Impala and looked around. There was an old building before them, what looked like an abandoned factory, and nothing else.

“Do you think this is it? Think he’s in there?” Sam asked.

“Can be. It’s weirdly quiet, though. I don’t see any demons standing guard. It might be a trap.”
“Of course it’s a trap,” Sam said. “I’ll go in, you stay here.”

Dean got out of the car and leaned against the Impala as Sam made his way towards the factory.

There had been a weird feeling bothering Dean as they got closer to their destination, but he kept telling himself it was the whole end of the world feeling they both had tonight.

Yet, when Dean looked at the building before him with a little more attention, a realization sunk in his mind and made him breathless.

He looked around quickly and when he understood where they were it felt like his heart stopped beating for a second or two.

Sure the place had changed over the years, but now Dean understood what had felt so wrong about it.

He had been there before.

“All!” Dean screamed after his brother the moment Sam disappeared inside the building. “Sam, come back! Don’t go in there!” Dean shouted at the top of his lungs and started running towards the same place he had carried Sam out of in his arms so long ago, beaten bloody and almost unconscious, after having undergone three months of torture in the dark.

Dean ran as fast as he could to stop Sam from walking right back into the bright room.

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tbc...
Chapter 93

Sam made his way into the building quickly. The place was terribly quiet, and it seemed completely abandoned for years. However, there was a small sound coming from upstairs, a low humming of electricity that Sam followed until he found himself in a white room, brighter than day, that certainly didn’t look abandoned at all.

Sam looked around at the whiteness in that place and in the silence around him he could feel his heart pounding in his chest. That room looked as if it had been well-taken care of and didn’t belong with the rest of the decaying building. Everything in there seemed to have been neatly cleaned, and Sam didn’t know why but it caused him to feel dread.

He stepped further into the room and tried to understand where he was. Lucifer wasn’t there, but Sam could see a sink in a corner of the room, a toilet and a small pile of white rags. In front of it, in a corner, there was a bed with white sheets covering it. There was no other furniture in the room; there was nothing except a black window on the other side of that whiteness.

Sam walked towards the bed as if drawn to it. His eyes couldn’t seem to look away when he let his fingers touch the bedspread.

He shuddered.

He closed his eyes and gasped the moment he heard the noise and turned around.

“Dean!” Sam exclaimed. He didn’t know why, but it felt like he had just run a small marathon. His heart was racing and his breath had grown short. “What are you doing here? I thought you’d let me do this on my own…” Sam said, as if he only now remembered what he was doing there in the first place.

Dean looked at the bright room and his stomach turned. For a split second he was almost sure he would walk in there to find Sam lying in the middle of that white floor, a puddle of blood around him, the smell of sickness and death when he took him in his arms.

“Listen, Sammy, we have got to get out here,” Dean said as he walked towards his brother and grabbed Sam’s arm.

“No, wait! What are you doing? We came here for a reason,” Sam protested.
“I don’t care what the hell we came here for; we’re leaving right now!” Dean didn’t care what they had agreed to, all he knew was that Sam couldn’t be in that place. He should have seen it coming; he should have known Lucifer would play dirty by using Sam’s weakness against him, so Dean needed to get his brother out of there before the wall was gone, before the darkness came back.

“Wait!” Sam pushed Dean away when his brother started to try and drag him out. “Have I been here before?” Sam frowned. Right now there were so many things rushing through his head, and so many confusing feelings…yet, Sam felt like he was so close to something important, to some truth he had forgotten.

“What do you mean? Of course you haven’t,” Dean lied because he was desperate. There was no time to make up a story and convince Sam to get out. “Why would you think that? Now c’mon!”

“No.” Sam shook his head. “This place looks familiar, Dean. I don’t know why, but it does.”

“Sam! Let’s go!” Dean watched, helpless, when Sam moved away from him and toward one of the walls.

Sam didn’t know what he was looking for until his fingers found small metal hooks on the wall.

“I knew these would be here.” Sam turned to his brother and gave Dean a baffled look. “How did I know that? What’s going on here?!” Sam felt something stir in the depths of his memory, and he didn’t like the feeling one bit.

“Sam, let’s go!” Dean pulled at his brother’s shoulders and Sam looked confused.

“Dean, what’s going on? Why does it feel like I know this place?” Sam was begging, but Dean never had a chance to answer that.

“Because you have been here before, Sammy.”

The brothers turned their heads at the same time to see Lucifer standing in the room with them. He was wearing a white suit, so white that it almost made him disappear as he walked near the walls of the room.

“You!” Sam looked at the devil and for a moment forgot about the room.

“Hello there, Sam. My favorite person in all the world,” Lucifer smiled.

“Sam! The rings! Do it! Do it now!” Dean urged his brother. He needed Sam to throw Lucifer back in his cage before the demon had any chance to mess with Sam’s head.

“And you,” Lucifer went on. “My least favorite human. Hello, Dean.”

“Sam, do it!” Dean urged again as Sam got the rings out of his pocket and started to chant some words in an ancient language.

“First things first. Dean, you’re not needed right now, so please don’t get in the way.” Lucifer sighed and snapped his fingers, and when he did Dean found himself thrown against the farthest corner of the room, where he landed on his ass after hitting the wall, and where Lucifer kept him, unable to move.
“Let me go, you bastard! Let me go!” Dean struggled, but what he really wanted was to call the
devil’s attention as Sam opened the pit with the four Horsemen rings and a few powerful words.
“Look at me, you little brat! Let me go and you’ll see what I’ll do to you!” Dean threatened, even
though Lucifer had him pinned to the wall, unable to do anything but watch.

When Sam was done whispering the hurried words, a hole began to open where before there was
only a white wall in the room. Sam looked at the nothingness trying to suck at things to drag inside,
and he stepped away from the hole, his eyes huge.

“Sam, Sam…why did you do that? There’s no need to open the cage. We’re not going in there. Me
and you.”

“You’re damn right I’m not!” Sam groaned. “Because I’m not going anywhere with you. You need
me to say yes, and I’m here to tell you that’s not happening.”

“Oh, but it is happening,” Lucifer said slowly, condescendingly. “And to prove to you I speak the
truth, I won’t even close this hole you’ve just opened in the wall. The entrance to the pit, Sammy?
You and I will close it, together.”

“I’ll never let you in my mind,” Sam gritted his teeth.

“You will. You will say yes and when you do, we’re gonna close this cage together. And that will
be the first thing we do before we go on and take over the world. You and I, Sammy.” Lucifer
smiled.

Sam frowned and looked from Lucifer’s peaceful face to Dean’s angry one as his brother twisted
against the invisible bindings Lucifer was keeping around him. Sam looked over his shoulder at the
hole leading to Lucifer’s cage, a hole no one could see the bottom of, and a place Sam hoped he
could throw Lucifer into tonight. Except that the devil didn’t seem to mind that open hole much,
especially when he walked to another part of the room and asked Sam to come closer.

“Tell me, Sam. Have you thought about what I asked you? Have you thought about your fourteenth
birthday in particular?”

Sam’s forehead creased.

“Do you remember how you spent it? Where you spent it?” Lucifer arched his eyebrows.

“Sammy, don’t listen to him!” Dean yelled from the far corner of the room where he found himself
unable to reach out for his brother.

“It’s okay, Sam. I’m going to help you remember. You spent your birthday here. That’s why this
place looks familiar.”

Sam looked as if he didn’t believe a word the devil was saying, but he still felt the cold gust of wind
that traveled inside his chest.

“What are you talking about? I don’t know this place.”

“Oh, but you do. You spent three months in here. I bet that with a little help you’ll be able to
remember it.”
“Dean, what the hell is he talking about?” Sam looked at his brother as if he could answer him.

“Don’t listen to him, Sammy. Everything he says is a lie!” Dean warned, but his heart was already racing because he knew, deep inside he knew, that the wall inside Sam’s mind was about to tumble down.

“Listen? Who said anything about speaking?” Lucifer bit on his bottom lip as if he enjoyed every minute of it. The truth was, he did. That was the moment he had been waiting for for way too long. He had dreamed of this day, he had planned it, and he had had help to make it finally happen. Of course he would savor it to the last minute. “I’m not going to tell you about it, Sam. See that camera?” Lucifer pointed at the surveillance camera looking down on them from a corner of the ceiling and Sam laid eyes on it. “Why tell you when I can show you?”

Sam and Dean watched when Lucifer touched the wall behind himself and turned part of it into a large screen.

“What? Surprised? You’ve met the Trickster before; you saw what he could do. Well, my brother learned all his tricks from me,” Lucifer smiled cockily and when he opened his hand there was a videotape resting on his palm. “Grab your popcorn, boys! The movie is about to begin!”

“No, no, no…” Dean shook his head and the whispered words stumbled past his lips. ‘Please don’t let this be…’ Dean looked from the camera to the tape Lucifer was holding, and when the first image was on the screen, and he saw his fourteen-year-old brother looking around the very room where they were now, Dean understood what Lucifer was about to do.

“Sam! Don’t look at that, close your eyes! Please, Sam, don’t look!” Dean screamed and thrashed against the invisible force keeping him where he was.

“Dean, please! The movie is about to begin. It’s impolite to speak.” Lucifer made as if he was annoyed and when he snapped his fingers again Dean could no longer find his voice.

Sam hardly paid that interaction any heed. His eyes were fixed on the screen, and Sam found himself walking closer to it, to Lucifer, until his fingers touched the lost boy on the other side of that screen.

“Do you recognize him, Sam?”

Sam’s breath came faster as he studied the boy in the video.

“That’s not possible,” Sam murmured. “That’s me…but I haven’t been to this place before. When did this happen?”

“Your fourteenth birthday. You were brought here by a demon.”

Sam looked at Dean, and in his brother’s eyes Dean could see all the desperate confusion of his thoughts. Dean twisted where he sat and looked into Sam’s perplexed eyes, as if he could save him from what he was about to see.

“Why would a demon bring me here?”

Lucifer looked deeply into Sam’s lost look and he could hardly wait for the moment when he would finally claim Sam as his vessel. It was close now, he could taste it.
“I’ll flash forward to the best moments, Sam. After all, we all know this vessel can barely hold me inside, and we don’t have all night.”

Sam frowned and looked at the screen once again. It was himself, there was no doubt about it. Sam watched as that younger version of himself walked around that bright room and eventually sat on the bed. Sam watched, puzzled, when suddenly the bright image became gray, as if the lights had all been turned off.

Sam’s heart pounded in his chest when he saw himself standing in the middle of that darkness, blinded by it.

“Do you remember the darkness, Sam?” Lucifer asked softly, his voice almost sweet. “Do you remember the man?”

Sam looked at the image before his eyes and saw it when the door opened. There was a man walking into the room and towards the boy who was now asking loud questions about who was there. Sam could hear his own voice, and the footsteps as the man got closer. A man who knew exactly where to find the boy who was obviously blinded by the dark.

Sam closed his eyes and shook his head.

The man…the man came in the dark…he…he—

The man punched the boy so hard that he fell, and Sam cringed at that.

“What the hell is going on?!” he screamed. “Why is he doing that to me?!”

Sam looked for Dean’s eyes, and when they met, he begged his brother’s silent look for answers, and Sam could only see despair on Dean’s face, and somehow that managed to drive him closer to a state of absolute chaos in his mind.

“It’s all there, Sam. The answer is in your mind, but you need to look at it, because it’s been kept from you.” Lucifer studied Sam closely as he grew increasingly distraught.

Sam looked at the movie on the screen and saw the lights were on again, and he was that boy, beaten bloody on the white floor, the same white floor where he stood now, by a man who had just come and hurt him in the dark.

There was a doctor, he came in to check on me, I tried to escape…

The thoughts were rushed and messy, and Sam looked at the man walking into the bright room wearing white and examining him. Sam closed his eyes and saw the Taser, and the black eyes, and the darkness again, and then he took his hands to his head because it hurt.

“Don’t worry. It’ll come to you. Let me help with that.” Lucifer whispered a few words and smiled.

Sam groaned. He wanted to run away from that place but he found himself stuck. He simply couldn’t look away when the movie turned gray again and the man came back, and this time he tied him to the wall on the very hooks Sam had found a few minutes ago.

‘He’ll whip me’, the thought came as a certainty, even before it happened on the screen. ‘He’ll whip me bloody.’

When the man in the video whipped him for the first time, Sam screamed both in and out of the
“What did you do?!” Sam cried out when he felt the pain of a whip cutting his skin and making it throb.

Dean’s breath became short gasps as he saw his brother twist and groan as if he suffered the exact same torture his younger self was being subjected to on the video.

“I’m helping you reconnect,” Lucifer said.

“ARGH!” Sam groaned and tore at his clothes until he was shirtless. He touched his back as if he would find it cut and soaking in blood but there was nothing.

“You’re not being physically hurt, Sam. Did you know that pain is actually in your brain? That’s why you can perform surgery without the person screaming to death. If you numb the brain from the perception of pain, you can do pretty much anything to a person. What I’m doing now is quite the opposite. I’m not hurting you, just activating your memory of pain, the same pain you felt before in this very room, so you’re now connected to the boy you see. I’m giving you yourself back.”

“How did I forget it!?” Sam managed to ask, his voice hoarse, his eyes wide. “How did I forget it, Dean?” He asked before the whip was brought down again, then he screamed, his body moving as if in a weird dance every time the boy got whipped in the video and Sam felt it on his skin.

“You can tell him,” Lucifer snapped his fingers and Dean had his voice back.

Dean licked at his dry lips and took a deep breath. His words seemed tired under the heavy weight of defeat.

“Zachariah made you forget. He put a wall in your brain. I let him do that, Sammy. I couldn’t stand seeing you broken anymore.”

The brothers shared a look full of anguish before Sam heard his fourteen-year-old self scream as each lash broke the skin of his back into a throbbing cut, just as he screamed now.

“Sammy!?” Dean screamed, too. He couldn’t stand it. He couldn’t look at his brother as everything came back to him, and he certainly couldn’t look at his baby brother tied up and being whipped mercilessly in the video. How many times had Sam told him that had happened? How many times had Dean pushed that image away from his brain? And now it was there, now Dean had to see what Sam went through during the months he was missing. Now Dean finally got to see why Sam was afraid of the dark.

*The man...the whipping...the burning...the...he raped me. Oh God.*

“Stop that!” Sam screamed when the pain stopped. He looked at the video and there he was, lying on his stomach, the lights on, his skin torn and bleeding.

It hit him full force, and when Zachariah’s wall came down as fast and heavy as the blow Sam was suffering on the screen, he could almost smell the citrus again.

*The van, the demon, the bright room, the darkness, the man, the beatings, the whipping, the fire licking at his skin, the bucket of water, the begging, the loneliness, the shame, the rape...over and over, the crying, the screaming...the metal bar... Please, kill me! Don’t do that again, just kill me,*
“Stop that!” he groaned, looking at Lucifer and at the screen.

“Oh, but we still haven’t seen the best parts, Sam! Don’t ruin the movie for your brother. He’s never seen it.”

Sam looked at Dean, and when Dean saw the horror written all over Sam’s face he thrashed anew and groaned with rage. “Dean!” Sam’s plea was a painful mix of confusion and fear, and it tore at Dean’s chest and made his heart ache.

Suddenly, Sam couldn’t breathe. He parted his lips but no air entered his mouth, and Sam fought desperately for oxygen. He looked at the screen, feeling helpless, feeling paralyzed by the realization that he was that boy whose face was shoved into a bucket of water; he was that kid who couldn’t breathe, who was lying unconscious and wet on the white floor.

“Sammy!!” Dean groaned, his pupils dilated as Sam fought for breath.

Lucifer skipped forward in the video before Sam passed out, but the pain that came next made Sam howl.

Dean felt his eyes burn with tears as hot as the fire that licked at Sam’s skin in the video.

“AAAAHHH!!!” Sam screamed and fell to his knees. He could feel the inside of his thighs burning, he could feel the skin melting and he could almost smell the sick aroma of flesh, his own flesh burning.

“What are you doing to him?! STOP IT! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!” Dean screamed. He saw Sam crying tears of sheer pain as he twisted on the floor fighting that invisible fire.

“I’m not doing anything. That’s just his memory. That’s the pain he’s felt, and now he truly remembers it.” Lucifer seemed entranced by the sight. The more Sam felt, the more he remembered what it was to be afraid of the dark, the closer Lucifer would be to possessing him.

“ARRGHHH! PLEASE STOP!!!” Sam cried in unison with the boy in the video.

Dean wanted to shut his eyes because he couldn’t see that, but Sam’s pain was way too real, and Dean forced himself to look at his brother, as if he could try and help him with the feeble strength of his look.

“NOOOOO!!” Sam groaned, he panted and cried, and he didn’t care if he sounded weak, because he didn’t care about anything else except the pain making everything else fade away. “PLEASE!!!!” he begged. “PLEASE STOP!!” he cried out, choking on his own tears.

Lucifer skipped ahead and suddenly Sam could breathe again. The burning was gone, but Sam’s whole body shuddered as if it had truly just been through that.

“No more of that!” Sam screamed at Lucifer. “That’s enough! You wanted me to remember, I do! Stop that!”
“But Sam, we still have more to see. I want you to remember everything that happened. And since Dean is here, I’ll let him see the grand finale, don’t you agree? He deserves to know what happened to you.”

Sam listened to Lucifer and looked at him, but then his eyes found the screen and Sam saw the bright room turn gray. He saw the man coming for him, and he saw himself hiding under the bed. Sam knew what happened next. He remembered his nightmares.

“Don’t!!” Sam screamed. “Stop that! Stop that!” When Sam tried to move and get up Lucifer raised his hand and Sam found himself unable to.

“Believe me, this is painful for me to watch, too, Sam. But tonight you need to know what happened to you, and I’m here to show you.”

Dean’s eyes widened and his mouth went dry when he saw the heavy man overpower his brother and pull down his pants. ‘Oh God, no…please…’ Dean shut his eyes forcefully and refused to open them when the young Sam in the video started to scream.

Sam bit down hard on his bottom lip when he felt it. He looked at himself on the screen and he felt the burning violation of his body. Sam clawed at the white floor as he felt the man take him all over again, pounding into his body and making it feel like he would break.

“Dean? If you don’t open your eyes I’ll keep playing it over and over again,” Lucifer provoked and Dean was forced to comply.

“I’m gonna kill you, you nasty fucker! I swear to God, I’m gonna kill you!” Dean looked at Sam, lying on the floor, obviously struggling with the pain he felt, trying hard not to voice how much it hurt, just like the boy on the screen, who cried silent tears of defeat.

Dean gritted his teeth with rage as Lucifer made him watch. He could barely handle it, between the sight of Sam falling apart in the bright room and his little brother being raped on the screen, Dean just couldn’t take it anymore.

Dean saw the man push into his brother as Sam screamed and begged him to stop, and he saw the man beat the fight out of the boy who cried painfully during the attack.

Sam hid his head in his hands. He didn’t know what to do. He felt everything come back, and the shame…the shame just ate at him and he could barely lift his eyes to look around himself. When he realized Dean was seeing him on the screen being abused, he just wanted to die. It hurt more than the physical reminder of the rape he now felt deep within his body.

“Sam, I know it’s hard to look at all those things that happened so long ago. But I don’t think you can understand, really understand what you went through unless you feel all that pain. So before you and I can be one, I’m here to help you remember. I’m here to make you connect to that boy and to save you.”

Lucifer once again looked at the video and skipped ahead. Sam barely had time to catch his breath when he felt the beating come.

There was no one beating him now, but his body reacted to every blow he suffered on that video, and Sam tried not to cry out too loudly when the man walked in holding a metal bar and brought it down onto the curling body lying on the floor.
The man on the video hit his ribcage twice, and all air escaped Sam’s lungs. When Sam could breathe again, he screamed and choked, mirroring the boy on the video, and even if the pain wasn’t physically real, it was real enough to his brain, and Sam wouldn’t be able to get up and fight now if his life depended on it.

“That’s enough! You’re gonna kill him!” Dean growled, looking at his brother curled up on the floor, suffering the same torture he had already suffered in the dark. “Sammy!”

“It’s almost over, and Sam knows that. He remembers it,” Lucifer spoke calmly.

Dean looked from Sam’s shaking body to the body of his baby brother being battered over and over by fists and metal, until the man walked away and left behind an unmoving boy lying in a pool of his own blood. Dean closed his eyes and shuddered. Every nightmare, every night terror…every time Sam couldn’t speak because he was too afraid of what he had been through…Dean understood that. He had always understood it, but now he felt Sam’s pain in his soul, too.

Lucifer ended the movie and suddenly the pain was gone. Still, Sam felt weak and bruised, and when he got on all fours to try and get up, his body was being rocked by waves of tremors.

“So…how does it feel to be back here after all those years? How does it feel to come full circle?” Lucifer looked intently at Sam.

“That’s over,” Sam spoke and his voice sounded tired, as battered as he felt.

“Is it? Really? I wouldn’t be so sure.”

“What do you—”

Sam never finished his question. Lucifer snapped his fingers and Sam couldn’t believe his eyes. Standing there beside Lucifer, just a few feet from him, was the man who always came in the dark. The man Sam never saw but always felt. The man his father had allegedly killed in Bobby’s basement.

“No…” Sam whispered.

“Sam!” Dean saw Harry standing there, the very man who had put Sam through all that pain, and he understood his brother would lose control. “Sam, he’s dead!! The devil is messing with your head, the man is not real!!”

Sam could barely hear Dean. His eyes were fixed on the man and his breathing was labored.

Lucifer took a deep breath and clicked his tongue, and in the next second the bright room was completely engulfed by a darkness so thick that Sam couldn’t see an inch before his face.

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tbc...
Chapter 94

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much *kittenbot* for beta-ing the story! =)

A/N:...my heart goes out to the victims in Orlando.... All we need is and will always be love.

Chapter 94

Sam was shaking so hard he couldn’t seem to hold on to a single thought. He looked around himself and all he could see was the black nothingness that surrounded him. Instinctively, Sam raised a hand before his face even though he already knew it was useless.

Sam felt his breath hitching to something messy and fast, and suddenly he was very much aware that his self-control was slipping through his fingers.

“Sam!” Dean yelled after his brother, still unable to move as the devil kept him in a corner of the room. “The man is not real!” Dean couldn’t see his brother, but in the silence of the room he could hear Sam’s panting, and he understood the havoc taking over his brother’s feelings.

Sam could barely pay Dean any attention. His thoughts were spiraling into chaos and Sam shut his eyes as the tremors rocked him over and over.

The bright room was real. It wasn’t just a nightmare or something he couldn’t really remember; the torture chamber was real and Sam was back in it now, and the man was there, too, and there were footsteps everywhere in the dark.

“No…” Sam gasped and tried to move, but his fear had been fueled by all the pain he had just felt, and it was difficult to tell his body to move. It felt like each of his legs weighed a ton and Sam looked around worriedly, wondering where the man was and when he would find him. ’No, no…not again…this isn’t happening, no…’ Sam covered his face with his hands and felt a shudder rake him and make him feel cold, so cold he shivered and goosebumps broke on his skin.

He could feel, vividly, the pain of the skin on his back breaking open and burning under the whip. He could feel the anguish of feeling his bones breaking under the man’s blows, and above everything, Sam could feel the fear of being caught by the man again.

With his loud panting echoing in the darkness, Sam lowered himself slowly to a crouching position. He was hardly rational by now. The man was back, and the fear of feeling his hands on him, subjugating him, forcing Sam to take him deep into his fighting body was so intensely strong that Sam forgot he was no longer the same boy. His fear of the dark and of the man were so deeply rooted in his memory that Sam couldn’t see himself as a strong adult now, someone who could
definitely stand up to any man; someone who represented much more of a fight than a fourteen-year-old boy ever could.

If Sam could just think about what was happening, he might not have been so scared, but Lucifer didn’t want Sam to think. Everything had been planned so that moment could happen. Every cut the man made on Sam’s skin, every bruise, every scream Sam had desperately screamed in the darkness had been for that reason, so that he could find himself completely lost and hopeless when darkness came again.

“Stay away from me!” Sam screamed blindly at nothing in particular, and with his body touching the cold floor, Sam pushed himself until he felt a wall behind his back, and his hands pressed flat against that wall, as if he could somehow find a way out of there. There was no way out, though, and Sam knew that. He had banged his fists against those walls countless times to have learned that there was never any help when darkness came.

Sam could hear the vibrating noise of the hole he had opened just a few feet behind him, to his back. If he walked aimlessly around the darkness he was now enveloped by, Sam might end up tripping and falling into the hole sucking everything up into Lucifer’s cage; so with the last shred of reason Sam had he tried to hold on to the wall to prevent himself from falling into the pit. Although…if the man managed to find him, Sam didn’t think he could tell himself to stay away anymore. Lucifer had successfully unleashed a panic attack, and even though so much time had passed since the last time Sam had had to deal with one, he didn’t know how he would respond if he thought the man was about to torture him again.

“Sam!” Dean screamed. He wanted desperately to see his brother, but in the darkness he couldn’t see his own hands in front of his face, let alone Sam or Lucifer. Or the pit. He had no idea what was going on in the pitch black nothingness Lucifer had created.

Then, suddenly, in another corner of the room, the part where the movie about Sam’s captivity had played just a few minutes ago, Lucifer made himself visible again.

“Sam?” he called softly, his voice almost sweet.

Sam’s eyes were immediately drawn to Lucifer. It had little to do with the comforting tone of his voice and much more to do with the fact that Lucifer was now glowing.

In the middle of the dark room, Lucifer had cast a white light around himself, and in the middle of this bright, shining light, Lucifer stood in all his glory. He was wearing a white suit that reflected the light around himself and made him look like the alluring angel he had once been, before falling from God’s grace.

Sam looked at that beacon of light in the middle of the darkness and was immediately tempted to walk towards it. When he took his first tentative step in Lucifer’s direction, the only thing in Sam’s mind was that the light was good and safe, and that the darkness would hurt him until he begged it to stop. And it wouldn’t stop.

“That’s it. Come here, Sam. Come to me. I am the Lightbringer, Sam, and I’m here to release you from all this pain.” Lucifer reached out his hands in Sam’s direction. “All you have to do is say yes and I promise I will keep you safe.”

And there it was. The final objective of the plan. The last goal. The moment when all the torture would pay off and Sam would say yes. The moment darkness would win and Lucifer would gain
access to Sam’s brain.

The angel smiled. Sam looked absolutely terrified. It made Lucifer feel warm inside when Sam looked at him with lost puppy eyes and took another step in his direction.

“Sam, NO!” Dean understood it all then; he put the last piece of this evil puzzle together and understood, finally, why Sam had been taken on his fourteenth birthday. And why they had broken him in the dark. For that. For Lucifer. They had tortured Sam to weaken him into giving Lucifer his permission to use him as his vessel. “Don’t listen to him!” he screamed.

Dean’s voice, however, was like an indistinct noise coming from a distant part of the room. All Sam was aware of was the humming sound of the pit trying to suck at things behind his back, and the glowing light of Lucifer shining before his eyes. The voice that begged him for his attention, the voice coming from his brother, could not reach Sam, because that voice was coming from a dark corner, and Sam could not even look into that direction without the fear of the dark creeping under his skin.

“Come here, Sam. That’s it. You can do it. All you have to do is say yes, and I promise you,” Lucifer’s eyes were shining with fiery intent, “I swear to you that you’ll never feel pain again. Do you want that?”

Sam nodded, weakly.

“Do you want to feel safe?” Lucifer played into Sam’s thoughts and stroked the core of Sam’s fear. “Because I can promise you that, Sam. I can promise to take care of you. God created me to bring light. Isn’t that what you want?”

“Sam! Don’t listen to him! Those are lies!” Dean yelled, desperately.

“Don’t listen to that voice, Sam. It’s coming from the darkness. You know what the dark feels like, don’t you?”

Sam didn’t say anything because his throat was too tight to emit any sound, but he took his hand to his eyes and wiped at the wetness blurring his vision.

“Besides, he couldn’t protect you before, could he? When the demon took you, when they brought you here… For three months you waited for him and he wasn’t there,” Lucifer said and then added solemnly. “I would never do that to you, Sam. To me, you are the most important thing in the whole world, and I’ll protect you until the end of times.”

Sam was getting closer to the light, despite any control he might have. It seemed like an easy choice. There was light, and there was darkness, and Sam had had enough experience in the dark to know it ended in blood.

“All you have to do is say yes, and I’ll be there for you. I’ll be there with you.” Lucifer narrowed his eyes and smiled. Sam was halfway there now. Just a little more and he would be able to touch him.

“Sammy, please! You can’t say yes to him! Remember why you’re here!” Dean pleaded, thrashing against the invisible binding keeping him in the dark and out of Sam’s sight. If only he could make Sam look at him…

“So, what do you say, Sam, hm? With one word you can come into the light.”
Sam closed his eyes and gasped. His heart was racing and he looked around himself again. Lucifer’s light was so intense that it made everything around even more black. Sam could feel the hole leading to the cage behind him, but he couldn’t really see it. He could hear Dean’s voice but he couldn’t hold on to his brother’s words.

In the end it was simple. There was light and darkness. There was safety and pain, and Sam only had one choice left to make.

“Say yes, Sam, and I’ll chase all the darkness away, and there will always be light in your mind.”

Sam swallowed hard and shook.

“Sam!” Dean screamed.

“Say yes…”

Dean felt his heart would shatter into a million pieces, and when he felt like he would die, he found strength in the only thing that mattered in his life and spoke again.

“There wasn’t only darkness, you know!” Dean screamed as loud as he could, hoping Sam would hear him through the haze of fear his brother was now caught into. “There wasn’t only darkness, Sammy…” Dean licked at his dry lips and his chest heaved up and down. “There was also us.”

Sam closed his eyes tightly and felt the tremors getting worse. Everything in his body demanded to be taken closer to Lucifer’s light and to give in to the promise of safety. Sam could feel his yes growing in him, born from his fear and nurtured by his helplessness, but then Dean was speaking again.

“That’s right, Sam! There was also you and me. You remember that, too, don’t you? You remember us?” Dean knew the wall had tumbled down and Sam had been forced to remember his past, but how much of it exactly did he remember? Was he aware of their time as lovers? Right now Dean had to pray his brother could remember that, too. “You and me, Sammy, in the back of Bobby’s house, sitting on the porch stairs. Remember that?” Dean felt his eyes well up with something warm, but he forced himself to swallow it down and go on because the world fucking depended on it. “You asked to kiss me!” Dean chuckled unexpectedly, the sound eerie in middle of that room. “You and I, it was a sunny day, and we kissed, Sammy. That was our first kiss.”

Sam felt a shudder rake him so hard that he stumbled backwards. He closed his eyes and for a split second there was an explosion of light in his head, and with this light there were memories, and Sam could see the porch, the stairs, the sun in the horizon and Dean’s lips so close.

“Can I kiss you?”

Sam could hear his own voice and could see Dean’s face, and he could feel the softness of his brother’s lips when they shared their first kiss.

Lucifer saw Sam shake his head as if the memories were coming back, and he didn’t like that one bit. “Sam? The man is here in the dark. You know it’s only a matter of seconds before he finds you now.”

Dean ignored Lucifer and went on, because he had to hope his words could cut through the darkness
and get to Sam. “We kissed many times after that day, Sam. We would kiss in bed before going to
sleep, remember that? Do you remember how we fell in love so hard?” Dean’s lips quivered. He
could see his brother now because Lucifer’s light made it possible, but Dean couldn’t see Sam’s eyes
and Sam couldn’t see him back, so Dean couldn’t know what was going on in his brother’s head
now. “Because I do, Sam! I remember how it felt when I realized I was in love with my brother, my
best friend…”

“Sam!” Lucifer urged Sam to make up his mind.

Sam took both of his hands to his forehead, now creased with something akin to confusion, and his
heart started to thud when the images began to flow.

The kiss on Bobby’s porch, their first kiss. Their lips touched when the sun was shining. Bobby’s
bedroom, the hugging, the touching. Dean’s body on top of his, the thrill, the pleasure, the hunger.

“Hmm,” Sam groaned.

The nightmares. Dean’s warmth. The fear of the dark. Dean’s arms around him. The panic attacks.
Dean’s kisses and love showering him with light.

“Sam! Say yes now and I can make the darkness go away. You need to let me in before it’s too late.
We need to close this hole together; we need bring light again!” Lucifer exclaimed.

“You asked why your memories were locked in Bobby’s room when we were in Heaven, well that’s
why, Sammy. Some of your happiest memories were of us, together! What you couldn’t see behind
that door was how many times we were lovers, how many times we loved each other until it hurt.”
Dean knew Sam could listen to him now. He could feel his words were affecting him, but Dean
didn’t know if they would be strong enough to fight the darkness.

Whenever Sam had found himself having to choose between darkness and light after the bright room
happened, he had always made the same choice, time and again. Dean thought about the burning
house with John, and how Sam had desperately run to the fire and into certain death because he
couldn’t trust the safety of the dark, not even with his own father.

Sam had never chosen darkness.

But Dean had to try.

“Do you remember, Sammy? All those years I had to act as if nothing happened, but it did, and it
was the happiest I ever was,” Dean confessed. “I kissed you and held you, and…” Dean let himself
smile in the midst of his desperation. “I took you, Sammy…I was inside of you, remember?”

Sam’s heart felt about to burst. He opened his eyes but a feeling of vertigo made him shut them
again.

Their fingers intertwined as Dean helped Sam position himself on top of him. Their first time. Dean
taking care of him, so gentle, so loving. Sam moving, harder, faster, falling over the edge, falling
into Dean’s arms.

“Sam! Time is up! I can’t protect you from the darkness much longer! You must say yes!”

Dean letting go, Dean taking him so thoroughly that Sam felt light explode in his head as his body
Do you believe in soul mates? I do now.

I do now…

Sam made a loud, pained sound as if he would shatter into a million pieces. He was torn, so torn… The memories were hitting him full force, but there was darkness, and there was the man, and Sam was afraid to move.

“I’ll keep you safe,” Lucifer promised softly.

“Sam! Don’t you believe him! He put you through all this. You have got to remember us! There was darkness and fear, but there was also hope, Sam, remember? Remember that?” Dean felt a sob coming to his mouth and fell silent, choking on it.

Sam’s breathing was a mess and he wiped at his tears with the back of his hand before he lifted tired eyes to Lucifer.

“Can’t…” Sam’s lips tried, but his voice seemed to be locked tight in a place he couldn’t reach. “Can’t…” Sam tried again, looking into Lucifer’s promisng eyes.

“What? Can’t what, Sammy? Tell me.”

“Help me,” Sam blurted, looking at Lucifer and reaching out his arms. “Can’t move…darkness…” There was something wild in Sam’s eyes when he reached his shaky hands in Lucifer’s direction, begging for him to take them.

That moment Lucifer gloated. He looked at Sam, so broken, so desperate to be saved, and understood that Dean’s love had failed and that he had won. Darkness had prevailed over everything, ruling Sam’s mind and bending him to Lucifer’s will.

“Please…” Sam begged, his fingers wanting to touch Lucifer even though he didn’t move his legs.

Dean sighed with defeat when he saw Lucifer move towards his brother. If his love couldn’t save Sam, then Dean had failed, and now the world would pay.

Lucifer walked towards Sam and closed the distance between them. He offered his hands and Sam grasped the devil’s fingers tightly, holding on to Lucifer’s wrists and then elbows as if he was a drowning man needing safety. His lips tried to move again.

“Is there something you want to tell me, Sam? A yes, maybe?” Lucifer offered sweetly.

Sam’s lips moved again but no sound came out. He was paralyzed by fear, Lucifer thought, with triumph. He smiled a condescending smile and leaned his head in closer so his ear could brush Sam’s lips.

Lucifer could feel Sam’s hot breath puffing against his ear and prepared himself to become one with his vessel.

“C’mon, Sam, you can do it,” Lucifer encouraged him.
Sam’s eyes had a different glint and he looked towards the place where Dean was still bound.

_The opposite of darkness was not light. The opposite of darkness was love._

“Got you.”

Lucifer didn’t understand it immediately. Sam moved so fast to revert their positions and shove him hard that Lucifer’s head was still spinning when his feet left the ground. It all happened in a second or two, but Sam took advantage of their proximity and the way Lucifer had let his guard down when he began to celebrate the success of his plan. But Sam never said yes. He turned on his heels, still holding on to Lucifer as tightly as he could, and used all the weight of his large body to push the devil into the entrance of the pit.

The moment Lucifer understood what had just happened he held on to Sam’s arm before he was sucked into the pit.

“Oh, no Sam! You’re not doing this to me!” It hurt. It hurt so much that Sam had betrayed him, but now there were more pressing matters, like staying out of the cage for instance. Lucifer had been so sure that Sam would say yes that he hadn’t bothered closing the door to his cage before. If his father were there, God would probably say that arrogance was much of what had caused Lucifer to fall in the first place, and it was about to cause him to fall again.

Sam tried to push back, but Lucifer was being sucked into the pit, his legs already into the dark pit, and the angel clawed at Sam’s arm desperately, trying to drag himself out. The moment Lucifer found himself up to his waist into the pit, something seemed to happen, because the hole began to pull at things with more strength. He knew it was the cage calling to him, and Lucifer was not willing to go. Not alone, anyway.

“If I’m going back to Hell, then so are you, Sam! You’re coming with me!” Lucifer groaned, and in his rabid anger Sam saw the devil’s eyes flash an angry red that caused Sam’s eyes to widen in response.

“Like hell he is, bitch.” Dean was suddenly behind Sam and the angel blade slid easily to his hand, and swiftly into the arm holding at Sam.

“NOOOO!!!!” Lucifer screamed when the angel blade burned his skin and made him let go.

The moment Lucifer found himself being sucked in by the pit, his freedom threatened, his spell on Dean was gone, and the older brother moved as fast as he could, following the glowing light with the angel blade Castiel had given him. When Dean slashed at the arm trying to pull Sam into the pit, he saw Lucifer’s perplexed face twist with rage. He was pulled in fast and the hole closed with a loud noise and a release of energy that caused both Sam and Dean to fall back. Everything had disappeared as if the whole entrance to Lucifer’s cage and Lucifer himself had never been there.

When the hole closed on the wall the lights were back on and the boys found themselves alone in the bright room.

Sam looked at the place where Lucifer had just disappeared into and there was nothing there. The lights were back on, and yet, Sam couldn’t stop shaking.

Dean looked at his brother and didn’t know where to begin to say anything, so instead, Dean got up,
leaned over his brother and let his hands rest gently on Sam’s shoulders.

“Are you alright?” he asked, squeezing his brother’s shoulders.

Sam didn’t trust his voice. Everything inside of him was new and old, strange and familiar, and it seemed like all of his energy was focused on making sense of what had just happened.

“I guess so,” Sam eventually said, and the sound of his own voice made him shudder.

Dean looked around at that terrible room he had been to before. He knew they needed to get out of there. The images Lucifer had just forced him to watch were haunting, and Dean had a hard time celebrating the fact that Lucifer had been locked up again because his stomach was hurting and his heart was breaking at what he had just seen, and at what he saw when he looked at his brother now.

“Sammy?” he asked softly, trying to make Sam move and stand up.

“How could I have forgotten something like that?” Sam said, looking at the white floor as his hands flattened against it. So many times Sam had wiped his blood off that shining floor. How come he had forgotten about it?

Dean took a deep breath and looked into his brother’s eyes, then he crouched so they were face to face.

“Zachariah. He came to us during a storm. Of course, I didn’t know who he was at the time. We were in Bobby’s house. There was a blackout, you were alone when I arrived. You had a panic attack. The worst I had ever seen.”

Sam’s eyes seemed unfocused as if he tried to remember. He heard the loud noise of a gun firing in his memories and blinked hard, willing the thought away. There was so much despair that night, such hollowness eating at him…the man…Sam had told Dean everything, his shame, his secret…then there was blankness.

“He offered to erase your memories.” Dean paused and it was as if he felt the weight of the world on his shoulders. “And I let him,” Dean admitted, feeling the guilt burning his insides. “I don’t know if I should have…maybe he would’ve done it anyway, knowing that bastard wanted to bring down the Apocalypse. But I let him, Sam,” Dean’s voice cracked. “I was afraid I couldn’t help you. You were suffering so much…I—”

“It’s okay,” Sam interrupted him.

“Do you forgive me?” Dean asked the question he had both dreaded and dreamed of asking Sam since the night Zachariah had first appeared in Bobby’s room.

Sam didn’t reply. He was so taken by the many emotions swirling in his mind that he didn’t know what to say. He pulled Dean into a hug, a hug that Dean tightened, and they didn’t speak for a long moment.

Dean held on to his brother and felt his chest warm at the feeling of Sam in his arms, safe.

“Dean?” Sam loosened the embrace and looked around. The video Lucifer had shown still played on his mind along with his memories of the actual abuse, and Sam felt himself shuddering again.
“Yeah?”

“Can we please…just, get out of here, please?”

“Yeah. C’mon.” Dean got up and helped Sam to his feet.

For the second time in his life Dean walked out of the bright room, except this time he wasn’t carrying the unconscious body of his brother in his arms. Sam walked right beside him, and even though his body was not covered with injuries, Dean wondered about the many scars Sam was again taking with him as they left.

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tbc...
Chapter 95

Outside the building that still looked very much abandoned, night had begun to fall. Dean could see that Sam was still shaking. His brother had fallen silent, but Dean could almost hear the turmoil in his head right now.

For a quick moment Dean wondered what he should do, where they should go, and then the answer seemed obvious.

“Let’s go back to Bobby’s, okay?”

Sam nodded. He couldn’t find his voice. He followed Dean to the Impala and took the seat beside his brother. There was way too much going through Sam’s head now, and he didn’t even know what he could say when his feelings were a mess. So, instead of saying anything, Sam just looked ahead to the road unfolding and took deep, calming breaths as his memories clawed at him.

Dean drove, occasionally looking at his brother with the corner of his eye. Sam was chewing on his bottom lip, and he could also see the look in his brother’s eyes. Dean wished there was something he could say, something he could do, but right now he assumed that giving Sam time to figure everything out was the best he could offer. He could only imagine the chaos in Sam’s mind after having so many memories awoken inside of him. Besides, there was the pain Lucifer had caused Sam to feel. For a few minutes, Sam was forced to relive the same pain that had broken him in the past, and even if it was three minutes and not three months, Dean had heard the screaming, and he could tell Sam was still affected by what he had felt.

The shapeshifter who looked like Dean. The van he was pulled into. The room that looked like a hospital. The doctor that came in to check on him after the torture...

Sam took a deep breath and let his head rest against the window.

The beatings… How many times had he run blindly in that dark room, trying to escape the man smelling of citrus who would always find him in the end? The pain of his ribs breaking under the metal bar, and of his cuts throbbing after the whipping was, thanks to Lucifer, very vivid in Sam’s mind. The fire licking at his skin and the way Sam screamed, the way the boy in the video screamed, too…

Sam closed his eyes and massaged his forehead for a few minutes.
But then there was also Dean. There were the memories Lucifer hadn’t meant for Sam to remember, and those were memories of tender love and sweet affection. Sam could remember every tentative kiss, every needy touch, and every time Dean’s arms found his body in the bed they shared and comforted him after a nightmare.

And those memories, well, they warmed his heart, and they made it burn, and Sam had to sigh deeply to keep himself from smiling foolishly.

All this time Sam had thought Dean didn’t love him back. Even when Sam was so close to believing Dean felt something, his fear had always been bigger than the desire to find out. So that meant Sam wasn’t crazy. All those dreams he had had during his teenage years in which Dean took him and made him come with his thrusts…those weren’t just dreams, those were actual memories and the longing Sam had to feel it again…

The thought burned him from the inside and Sam closed his eyes again.

Dean had loved him! They had been lovers! They had been everything to each other…even if that had changed later.

Sam’s eyes looked once again lost and he stared at the road ahead. He was aware of the looks Dean cast in his direction every now and then, but Sam didn’t think he was ready to deal with things now.

There were the horrible memories, too. There was the time when his pajama pants were pulled down, and now Dean had seen it. His brother had heard the screams and the begging, and the cries of pain that boy had uttered in the dark when the man violated him.

Sam shuddered.

“Hey…are you okay?” Dean asked softly. He knew the answer to that question, but he couldn’t help himself. He felt like he needed to say something.

“Yeah…” Sam nodded, but his voice betrayed his answer. He was shaky inside, and Dean could hear it underneath the veil of his words.

They drove the rest of the trip back to Bobby’s home in silence.

Once, a long time ago, that house had been a safe place where Sam could rest and get himself together. Dean hoped Bobby’s place could offer some of that comfort again.

~ * ~

The moment they stepped out of the car, Bobby came to greet them outdoors.

“Bobby!” Dean exclaimed, and he smiled widely. “You’re walking!”

Sam smiled, too, glad to see their friend walking towards them instead of being pushed in a wheelchair.

“Cas fixed me!” Bobby beamed, getting closer. He pulled Dean into a hug before the older Winchester could have said anything. “He’s got his mojo back, so I take it you kicked Lucifer’s ass
back to hell?” Bobby looked from Dean to Sam, and he let go of Dean’s shoulders and stepped closer to Sam, his eyes studying the younger man.

“Yes. Sam did it, Bobby,” Dean said.

Bobby narrowed his eyes and studied the way Sam seemed different.

“No…it was actually Dean, he used the angel blade…” Sam began.

“But Sam tricked the devil,” Dean explained. Then he saw the uneasy look in Sam’s eyes and the puzzlement on Bobby’s face and spoke again. “He also remembers everything now.”

The older man felt a chill down his spine and his eyes looked for Dean’s quickly. Dean nodded lightly at the question in Bobby’s eyes, and when the older hunter looked at Sam again, he realized what it was that had seemed different about him.

“He’s right. Lucifer made me remember it, Bobby,” Sam said quickly and lightly, but his straying eyes betrayed his calmness.

And that was what Bobby recognized in Sam’s eyes. The same fearful wariness Sam had in his hazel eyes during the year he had lived under Bobby’s roof.

“I’m sorry, Sam…” Bobby started.

“I’m not,” Sam cut him off. “It’s…it’s my life, Bobby. It’s part of who I am.”

Bobby nodded gravely and looked over his shoulder at his house.

“C’mon. Let’s go in and you can tell us what happened.”

Inside the house Castiel was waiting for the brothers, and his eyes fell on Dean as soon as he walked in.

“Well done,” he said before his eyes looked for Sam’s. Castiel narrowed his eyes and studied Sam for a second, then he walked towards him and seemed to look deep into his soul. “He made you remember,” he said, and it wasn’t really a question. “I can feel the darkness in you.”

Sam swallowed hard. He could see all eyes on him and he felt very, very uncomfortable.

“I can also feel light, though. You did really well tonight, Sam. You saved us all,” the angel added.

Sam looked around, not knowing exactly what to feel. He seemed desperate to be alone, so Bobby intervened.

“Yeah, I…I mean, Dean had the angel blade…” Sam began.

“Hey, Cas? Why don’t we let them boys rest for now? I believe they’ve earned their night’s asleep and Sam probably wants some time to collect his thoughts, right kid?”

“Thank you, Bobby.” Sam nodded, relieved.

“Okay,” Castiel said and stood exactly where he was.
“Ahem,” Dean moved towards the angel. “I believe that what Bobby meant is that we could use some privacy now, Cas.”

The angel looked at Dean and then at Bobby and Sam. “Oh,” he said. “Right. I’ll go then. You did very well tonight,” he repeated.

In a moment Castiel was gone, and the three hunters were alone in Bobby’s living room.

Dean didn’t know what would happen next. About the world, about their world. The Apocalypse had been prevented, they should all be allowed some time to breathe and recover from it. Sam’s world had just changed, though. For years Dean had feared Sam’s past coming back, the wall in his mind tumbling down, and all that darkness swirling with his brother’s thoughts once again. As much as Dean wanted desperately to know what was next for Sam, he knew he had to give his brother time to adjust to everything. The bright room, the darkness, the torture, yes, but also the knowledge that they had been lovers.

Dean wondered how that was affecting Sam right now. Did he remember all their times together? How did it make him feel knowing they had been so in love, and Dean had been inside of him so many times, possessing him, taking him over the edge…

Dean forced himself to take a deep breath and shrug off his thoughts.

“I’ll tell you what. Tomorrow I’ll go visit some friends. Since the world didn’t end, I believe I have stuff I would like to get back to,” Bobby said mysteriously, but both Sam and Dean understood what he was doing. Bobby knew there was a lot going on right now, and he was offering the brothers the peacefulness of his house, a place they once thought of as home, so they could work it out with privacy. “You can stay here for as long as you want. I’ll let you know when I’m coming back.”

“Thank you, Bobby,” Sam and Dean said in unison.

“Tonight you sleep in my room, Sam,” Bobby said. “And you can sleep there while I’m gone, too.”

“Bobby, there’s no need to—” Sam immediately started protesting.

“Sam,” Bobby cut him off. “I know you have a lot going on in your head right now. I know you need time to think of everything you’ve just remembered, and I know that being here will help that. Go upstairs, stay in the room you know very well, and I promise it’ll make me happy to help you rebuild your memories.”

Sam nodded, as he didn’t trust his voice to speak, but after a minute or so, he took a deep breath and stared into Bobby’s eyes.

“Thank you,” he said.

“You’re welcome, idjit,” Bobby tried to smile, to hide with humor the tightness in his chest.

“For everything, Bobby. For that year you took us in…and everything you did for us, for me… Thank you.” Sam thought of how comforting it had been to live in Bobby’s house for a year. No roadside motels, no impersonal houses, but somewhere Sam could have a taste of what it felt like to have a home to go back to. He remembered Bobby’s hospitality and his understanding, and his eyes flashed with emotion as he thanked him again. “Thank you so much.”
“Shut up,” Bobby said quickly, feeling his throat swell with a feeling of love he couldn’t really hide.

“Sam’s right, though,” Dean said. “It meant a lot for us being able to stay here. And thanks for doing this…now,” Dean added.

Bobby waved a dismissive hand. “There’s plenty of food in the fridge because I actually believed you idjits would stop Lucifer and come back home hungry. Now, I’ll be watching TV here and leave in the early morning. If you need anything, you’re big enough to go get it yourselves.”

“Night, Bobby,” Sam smiled, and then started to make his way upstairs.

Dean waited until Sam was gone and then looked into his friend’s eyes.

“Do you think he’s gonna be okay?” Bobby asked.

Dean shrugged. “Lucifer made us watch a video of his torture,” Dean said in a low voice so only Bobby could hear him.

“What?” Bobby whispered and his eyes widened. “Holy shit, Dean…”

“That’s not all. He made Sam feel the pain again. He didn’t actually hurt him, but he got in his brain, and it was like he activated Sam’s memory of everything. It was awful, Bobby. I saw Sam howl with pain together with my fourteen-year-old brother in the video.”

Bobby swallowed hard. “How did…how did he beat Lucifer?”

Dean’s eyes changed slowly from deeply worried to something lighter and warmer. “I tried to remind him about something else he had forgotten. You know…between us. I think it worked,” Dean smiled and Bobby nodded with understanding.

“I’ll be damned if the time you spent jumping your brother’s bones in my bed actually helped save the world.”

Dean laughed quietly and Bobby shook his head, amused.

“So, how is it between you now?”

Dean’s face became somber once again. “I don’t know, Bobby. I don’t know what’s gonna happen now, about me, about us, about the dark… I guess Sam needs time to let it sink in.”

“He does,” Bobby agreed.

“Thanks for offering the house. I really appreciate it, Bobby.”

“Yeah, no problem. Just, whatever it is that happens now, I know you can help him.”

“Do you think so? It’s been so long. And I was the one responsible for him forgetting…”

“Let him process it, Dean. Sam’s no longer a kid, now. He’s a strong hunter and a smart man. He’ll figure this out.”
“I hope you’re right, Bobby,” Dean said and then looked towards the stairs Sam had climbed just a few minutes before.

~ * ~

Sam was standing in front of an open door when Dean found him upstairs. His brother was looking intently into a small room, one that might have been a linen closet, but was instead Bobby’s pantry.

Dean felt his heart race when he approached Sam softly from behind. He knew what his brother was thinking of when Sam’s eyes stared at nothing in particular inside that dark little place.

“He felt really bad for what he did to you,” Dean said.

Sam took a deep breath and thought of himself, desperate and frightened, screaming for his dad to open the door before the memories took him down. Sam remembered the panic, the arguing, and then his fingers went to his face, to the part above his right eye where his eyebrow ended. He had hit something pretty hard in there. He remembered needing stitches.

“I know,” Sam said. He had almost run towards a wall of fire. He knew he had scared his dad to death that night. “And I forgave him, Dean. I really did.”

“Good.” Dean thought of their dad and something occurred to him. “He killed the demon who took you.”

Sam stared at him. “He did?”

Dean nodded. “When he was gone and we were looking for him, he ran into the demon who took you and killed him with the Colt. I don’t know much about it because he told me this right before he…” Dean let his words trail off.

“I’m glad he did it, Dean. I wish I could thank him.”

Dean looked around trying to shrug off the subject, and then walked towards Bobby’s room, the one the older man had now offered to Sam. Dean turned the lights on and looked around.

“You should probably get some rest, Bobby’s right,” Dean said.

“I will.”

Sam walked towards the room and stopped right at the door. “The locked room in Heaven.”

“That’s right. It’s open now.”

Sam looked inside and the moment his eyes fell on the bed he felt a shudder travel him—a good one. Sam could almost see Dean and him naked, sweaty, their legs tangled, their bodies connected as they moved faster and harder towards a climax.

Sam let his eyes meet Dean’s and for a second it felt like an electric current had just traveled between the two brothers. Sam swore Dean could see exactly what was on his mind and Sam was afraid he might have blushed. The younger brother looked away quickly, at the floor, and felt his heartbeats
becoming louder.

“I…I’ll be sleeping in that small room next to you,” Dean stuttered. “Gotta go…find the stuff, you know,” he said and then turned around and left quickly, as if Sam’s intent look from before had been too much for him to handle.

Sam nodded. “Yeah, do that.”

“If you need anything…” Dean said a few feet away from him.

“Thanks. I’ll be fine.”

Sam watched as Dean started to look for things to prepare his bed and finally walked into Bobby’s room.

Sam realized he had been holding his breath the moment he stepped inside. He let the air out of his lungs and allowed his eyes to stray and take in everything inside that room. It was almost exactly the same as Sam remembered it from the last time he had been there. The sheets were different, and there were some other things on Bobby’s dresser, but most of it was still the same, including the picture frame Sam had broken during a really bad night terror.

Sam looked at a corner of the room and his heart hurt when he remembered the last night he had been there, before his memories were taken. He had been out of his mind with fear, blind and deaf to anything that wasn’t the pain of his memories.

Sam walked slowly towards the other corner of the room, and he could see two small holes on the wall. They were bullet holes, and Sam had caused them. He wondered why Bobby had never gotten it fixed. Sam let his fingertips touch the holes on the wall and then he walked towards the bed, where he sat down.

Sam flattened his palms and let them run over the bedspread. So much had happened in that bed, so much love, so much devotion…

His memories were still a mess. Images of himself hanging as the man whipped his back danced with images of Dean and he making out. Sam didn’t know exactly what he felt.

He stayed where he was for a long while, until he decided to move again. Sam walked into the bathroom, and the memories inevitably followed him. When he got out, he had kicked off his shoes and taken off his jacket, and he walked towards the light switch and turned the lights off.

Sam went back to bed and lay down in the dark.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, hoping to relax. Yet, as the minutes passed by, Sam’s heart was racing instead of calming down. His blood pumped faster and Sam felt more alert and not at all sleepy. He opened his eyes and looked at the dark around himself.

“It’s over,” he whispered. “Lucifer is gone, the man is gone, the demon is gone…”

It was time to get over this darkness thing. It was one thing being scared of the dark when he was fourteen years old. Sam was a grown man now. It would be ridiculous of him to give in to this fear.

‘Easier said than done’ he thought. Sam tried to sleep, but for the next half an hour he just lay in
bed, awake, dreading the moment he would drift into unconsciousness and dream of the scarring memories he had been reminded of tonight.

Eventually, Sam grew tired of trying to sleep and got up to turn on the lights.

~ * ~

In his room, Dean could see the moment the lights were turned off in Bobby’s bedroom, where Sam was now sleeping. He sighed with relief and slid an arm beneath his pillow, trying to get some rest as well.

There was so much he wanted to talk to Sam about, so much he wanted to ask, to listen to… What about the love Dean felt for him? Now that Sam knew what had happened, how did he feel about it? It was so long ago…Dean knew Sam had most definitely moved on… And what about the memories? Sam had nearly broken before. Dean knew his brother was stronger, but how was he coping with all that?

Dean was struggling with these questions when he saw the lights be turned back on in the room. His heart tightened at that and Dean got up.

Before he could think of what he was doing, Dean went to Bobby’s room and found his brother in bed, trying to sleep with the lights on.

“Hey,” Dean said, from the door.

Sam opened his eyes and looked at his brother. His heart might have skipped a beat and Sam sat quickly in bed, looking somewhat embarrassed.

“Hey…” Sam avoided Dean’s eyes.

“It’s alright, man. I mean, tonight was tough. Just give yourself a break, eh?”

Dean walked into the bathroom and turned on the light, then he turned them off in the room, but it was not completely dark, and Sam appreciated that. In fact, the memory of how Dean would be careful to leave some light on through the night so Sam would sleep better warmed his heart and Sam smiled lightly.

“That better?” Dean mirrored the smile.

“Yeah, thanks.”

“You know…” Dean started as he looked at the corner of the room where he had found Sam in the night his memories were erased. His brother had been in the middle of a blind panic attack, and had just tried to kill him before Dean was able to get through to him. Then, Dean had listened as Sam poured his heart out. “Last time we were here, you told me everything. You said they had broken you. You told me they had won,” Dean smiled sadly at the thought. “But we’re here now, and Lucifer is locked up in his cage. You saved the world. You beat the devil. So the way I see it, Sammy, you are not broken.”

Sam bit down hard on his bottom lip.
“And they did not win,” Dean finished.

Sam felt his eyes sting and his voice vanish.

“Good night, Sammy.”

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$tbc...$
Chapter 96

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for the beta-ing, *kittenbot* <3

****There's a different description of Sam and Dean's relationship in this chapter. You might wanna check at A/N at the end for more details.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 96

When Sam woke up the following morning, Bobby had indeed left the house. The thought that Dean and he were now alone made Sam feel irregular heartbeats as he made his way downstairs.

Dean was taking a shower when Sam went into the kitchen to fix himself breakfast. He got himself a bowl of cereal and milk, and Sam couldn’t help but remember the time he had lived in Bobby’s place and waken up to that same breakfast almost every day. Sam ate quickly and silently, and after washing up his dishes he walked towards the porch, where he sat down on the stairs.

Sam took a deep breath and looked at the sky. The small hint of a smile toyed on his lips as he thought of the day Dean and he had first kissed. Sam had been sitting exactly where he was now, and he remembered he had been thinking over and over of what his therapist had told him. Dakota, Sam remembered, had made him think about his feelings for his brother.

_Can I kiss you?_

Sam could close his eyes and hear his own young voice as he asked the question that had changed their lives. If he tried hard, Sam could almost feel the warmth of the sun on his cheeks and the warmth of Dean’s breath on his lips when their mouths were close.

“Did you sleep well?”

Sam’s heart jumped, startled, when he heard Dean’s voice coming from behind him.

“Hey,” Sam greeted. “I didn’t hear you coming.”

“Can I sit?” Dean asked, staring into the distance at the many wrecked cars in Bobby’s salvage yard.

“Sure.”

Sam felt his heart race when Dean sat beside him on the porch stairs. It took Sam a lot to control his
feelings after the memories he had been contemplating just now.

“Did you sleep well? You didn’t answer me.”

“Yes. I didn’t have any nightmares with Lucifer or anything.”

“Good.”

They fell silent for a moment, both boys looking into the horizon where the blue sky met sand and old cars, and a few birds hovered above everything.

“Can I ask you something?” Dean broke the silence.

Sam looked into his brother’s eyes and nodded.

“The night of the storm with the blackout when Zachariah came…” Dean began. “All these years, I always wondered whether I made the right call, Sammy. There were nights when I would find you perfectly asleep in the dark, and then I would’ve done it all over again. But there were also times when you seemed so confused, so lost…like you knew there was this missing part of your life…”

Sam nodded his acknowledgement.

“And it made me think whether I should’ve really let him do that to you.”

“Dean…Zachariah was an angel. I don’t think he would’ve taken no for an answer,” Sam pointed out. “I’m sure he wanted your cooperation, but in the end, if he wanted me to forget, I think you wouldn’t have been able to stop him.”

“Maybe,” Dean considered that. “I’m still sorry, though. I didn’t know what to do.”

Sam saw all of his own despair reflected in Dean’s eyes, the despair of the boy who was terrified of the dark and who didn’t know what else to do in that dark night during the storm when the hallucinations had come.

“You did what you thought was right, Dean. I mean…” Sam looked for words. “Now that I remember everything that happened to me, when I think about it…” Sam felt his throat tighten. “You were a hero, Dean,” he smiled, even though his eyes looked sad and thoughtful.

“C’mon…”

“I mean it. You saved me. You held me and comforted me, and you were the only one who could make me feel safe when everything started to fall apart.”

Dean felt his heart race.

“I don’t know how many times I’ve said that you don’t know me,” Sam chuckled. “But the truth is, you know me better than anyone.”

Dean could barely hide how great it felt listening to that. He felt his cheeks warm at the feeling.

“There’s no way I would’ve made it if it weren’t for your patience and your…love.” Sam swallowed hard and a discharge of adrenaline made him shudder.
“I did the only thing I could’ve done, Sam. It just couldn’t have been any different, and I’d do it all over again if I had to.”

They stared deeply into each other’s eyes and for a brief moment they were both caught up in the tension.

“I…I have something to ask you, too,” Sam said.

“Yeah?”

“When Lucifer was trying to make me say yes, you made me remember all that happened between us… Lucifer wanted me to remember the dark and the pain, but you reminded me of the love we had.” Sam paused for a moment and thought of his next words. “I know it’s been a long time, and I don’t expect things to be the same, you know…” he smiled sadly. “But I guess I just have to ask anyway.” Sam’s heart was thudding in his chest. “This love you felt…for me, is it…do you still feel the same?”

Dean was very still for a few seconds. He held his breath and thought of the way his heart rattled in his chest with a longing he had never really gotten over. If he told Sam about his feelings and Sam didn’t feel the same, Dean knew he would be opening himself to feel more of the familiar pain of craving Sam in a way he could never have again. Yet, it had been so long, so many years of trying to forget, of trying to deny it… Dean was just tired. So what if Sam didn’t feel the same? He wouldn’t be mad or disgusted, and maybe they could still be good brothers in spite of it. No more secrets, Dean decided. He was done with hiding his love.

“Never…” Dean licked at his dry lips.

Sam’s heart ached.

“I never stopped feeling it. I mean, I know it’s hardly fair to tell you this now, but the truth is…what happened between us back then, it never happened again with anybody else.”

“Does this mean you’re still in love with me?” Sam felt his heart on his lips when he smiled softly.

Dean looked in the distance and then let his eyes fall on Sam.

“’Course I’m still in love with you, Sammy,” he spoke in a soft, sweet voice that cracked with emotion, and that was all it took for Sam to close the small distance between their mouths.

Dean’s eyes fell shut when Sam’s lips pressed against his. It was at the very same moment that his heart slammed against his chest.

Dean’s left hand found Sam’s cheek and his fingers raked through Sam’s hair, pressing his brother in further. When Sam felt Dean’s fingers tugging at his hair he parted his lips and felt his heart throb when Dean’s tongue invaded his mouth. The taste of Dean taking over the kiss was so intoxicating that for a second, Sam doubted that kiss would ever end. He let his tongue rub against Dean’s and taste all the need for a love that Sam had buried deep in his chest.

Sitting on the porch stairs of Bobby Singer’s house, the Winchester brothers kissed hard and needfully for a long moment. When their lips broke apart, they were both tingling as each other’s taste settled in their mouths.
Dean smiled, his eyes adoringly lost into Sam’s. It had been so long; he could hardly believe what he felt. His palm was still against Sam’s cheek, and now Sam covered Dean’s hand with his own.

They both chuckled with a happiness that didn’t seem to fit inside their bodies.

“Sammy…” Dean whispered. “I’ve missed you so much…all these years…” Dean leaned in and kissed Sam’s lips again, as if to make sure it was real.

Sam looked into Dean’s eyes and felt a warm feeling of home and safety spread inside of him. “What I don’t understand,” he said, “is if you’ve felt this way all this time, why didn’t you tell me? I mean, even when my memories got erased, a couple of years later I was head over heels in love with you. You have got to have realized that.” Sam widened his eyes as he made his point. “I was so in love it hurt. I used to watch you train as often as I could, and…well, how come you never noticed how it affected me?” Sam’s mind was filled with hurried thoughts. “And there was that time I kissed you, remember? I kissed you, dammit! Why did you push me away?” Sam’s voice was a mix of delight and despair.

Dean smiled sadly and shook his head. He let his hand fall and rest on top of Sam’s knee.

“Of course I knew, Sammy. I knew you had feelings for me, and yes, I remember that kiss. Hell, I’ve thought about it so many fucking nights…” Dean confessed and chuckled. “I just couldn’t let you do that. I couldn’t let anything happen between us.”

“Why not?”

“Zachariah,” Dean answered. “When he erased your memories he made me promise I could keep a secret. He said that if something ever happened between us again then the wall he put in your head wouldn’t be strong enough to keep the darkness at bay. He said that if we so much as kissed everything might come crashing down and you would remember all the pain.”

Sam’s lips parted with evident shock as he let Dean’s words sink in.

“That’s why you never let anything happen?”

Dean nodded, and he sighed with a painful mix of amusement and relief. “I couldn’t, Sammy. If I let anything happen I might be the cause of you remembering that torture all over again.”

“So all this time you just kept our love to yourself? You just pretended like nothing happened? How…” Sam lost his words and he knew his eyes were wet. “How could you do that? I mean, I didn’t remember anything, but how could you go on with all our memories? It would’ve killed me,” he blurted.

Dean couldn’t hold back. He covered his face in his hands and cried. For an entire minute, or maybe more, Sam let Dean cry into his palms and get rid of a feeling he could no longer keep inside.

When Dean lifted his head there were no tears, but the red in his eyes still gave him away. “It nearly killed me, Sammy,” Dean admitted. “There were days I thought I couldn’t do it anymore. But then I would see you doing so well, without the fear and the triggers, without the panic attacks…how could I not be happy over that?”

Sam felt his heart breaking when he understood it. He had known Dean had been a hero to him, but
he would never know just how much it had cost him to be his savior.

“Dean…”

“Shut up and kiss me again.”

Sam complied immediately. The two brothers kissed hotly on Bobby’s back porch, and their hands began a greedy groping that tried to claim every inch of each other until it felt the way they remembered their love did.

This time, when Sam pulled away, he knew his eyes looked glassy with desire, and he could see the same haze of longing in his brother’s eyes.

Sam swallowed hard. It felt like there was a lump in his throat when his desire thickened and boiled. “Dean…” his voice was low and it sent shivers down Dean’s spine.

“I missed you so much…” Dean’s fingers dug into the skin on top of Sam’s knee before going up towards his thigh.

Sam closed his eyes and gasped. Dean’s touch felt so familiar, and right now it was triggering all sorts of needy responses from him.

Sam got up so fast Dean barely saw him moving. He looked questioningly at his brother and then smiled, reaching out his hand.

“Come on.”

Dean took the hand and his blood felt like lava running through his veins. He followed Sam to Bobby’s room where their words died so their love could speak in that language that had been forbidden for the last years. They took each other’s clothing off in between passionate kisses and hungry stroking, and when they were both naked they stopped before each other and gave themselves to the moment.

Sam smiled when Dean let his hands travel down his chest and hips. He sighed with pleasure when Dean’s fingers grazed his thighs before his hand wrapped around his erection.

“Well, you have definitely grown, little brother,” he murmured hotly into Sam’s ear and Sam chuckled, the sound lost when a moan rose to his lips.

Sam let his head fall against Dean’s shoulder as his brother stroked his already aching cock. It felt so good being touched by Dean, being loved by Dean, knowing that what they had was still strong. Sam didn’t think he could stop smiling.

“I want you,” he forced himself to push Dean away so they could move to bed.

Dean lay down in bed and his eyes narrowed in anticipation when Sam followed him and covered his body with his own.

Dean’s arms were around Sam in a heartbeat, and when their erections aligned and slid one against the other, the two of them moaned at the friction.

Sam lifted himself a little to look into Dean’s eyes. The look he was met with warmed his heart, and
Sam lowered his mouth to his brother’s chest, where he teased and pleased until Dean was panting with arousal.

When Sam closed his lips around the base of Dean’s cock, there was a choked sound of pleasure in the room, and Dean’s fingers immediately locked into his brother’s hair to hold him there. Sam let his tongue flatten around the underside of Dean’s cock and sucked on him until the taste he now remembered filled his mouth and drove him crazy.

“Sammy…” Dean whispered, his voice hoarse with need.

Sam let Dean slip out of his mouth and they looked at each other. The feeling of being together was both familiar and awkward. They had changed a lot since the last time, Sam particularly. He was a full grown man now, taller and larger than his brother, and with every tentative touch it felt like they were learning their way back to each other.

Sam’s face rested a few inches from Dean’s, his hair touching his brother’s cheeks, and he looked deeply into his eyes. “Dean? Let me take you. I want you so much…I…” Sam licked at his lips and gasped. “Please, let me have you…” Sam didn’t know exactly what would happen when they stumbled into Bobby’s room, but now that they were tangled in bed, he felt the desire to possess Dean grow in him and take over. There was a wild hunger in Sam to have Dean, to devour him, to finally know that Dean was his, and nothing and no one would change that.

Dean’s heart raced. He was painfully hard and desperate for the intimacy. He felt a small twinge of fear and excitement tangle and then tickle his heart, and he nodded.

“Yes. Do it, Sammy. Take me.”

Sam’s lips curved in a smile and he ravished Dean’s mouth with kisses. His hips settled between Dean’s parted thighs and they were once again thrusting and grinding until their need for something else was throbbing in every sensitive part of their bodies.

“Just…” Dean looked at Sam and at the impressive cock standing taut against Sam’s lower belly. “You look big, Sam,” he said, breathlessly. “Make sure you go slow, okay?”

Sam chuckled hotly. “I don’t wanna hurt you.” Then something occurred to him and he looked thoughtful. “We don’t have lube. Maybe we should wait a bit until we get some.”

“Don’t wanna wait, Sammy. Can’t.”

“But…”

“Maybe we can use something else, eh?”

Sam watched when Dean got up and started to walk around the room. It was an amusing sight, not to say extremely hot, to see his naked, hard brother going through drawers as he tried to find something to help them ease the way.

When Dean didn’t find anything he liked inside the room, he looked as if a thought crossed his mind and lifted a finger. “Don’t move!” he said, and after leaving the room he went quickly down the stairs.

“Dean?!” Sam called after him. “Come back here,” Sam laughed lightly, and he squeezed and
stroked himself, feeling the arousal pooling in his lower belly and oozing from his tip.

A few minutes later Dean was back and he was holding something.

“What’s that?” Sam asked.

“Don’t laugh. I saw it in a movie,” Dean explained.

“Saw what?” Sam frowned.

“There was butter in the fridge.”

Sam stared at Dean before he burst with laughter. “Bobby would so fucking kill us if he knew.”

“I know, right?!” Dean mirrored him.

“A movie, eh? Let me see it,” Sam beckoned Dean closer and took the butter from him. “I wonder what kind of movie you were watching…” Sam let his finger toy with the butter and smeared some on Dean’s chest, playfully.

“It wasn’t porn, I swear!”

“Right.”

“It wasn’t,” Dean protested. “Hey, it’s my ass we’re talking about. You gotta be nice to it.”

“I will be,” Sam said, and felt goosebumps break on his skin with anticipation. “Now, lay down for me, baby.” Sam looked at Dean and marveled at how natural it felt being together again. Slowly, it was almost as if the time apart hadn’t happened at all.

Dean closed his eyes and his heart raced. He didn’t know what caused his heart to beat the fastest; knowing Sam still loved him and they were together, or the thought that his baby brother was about to be inside of him. It was probably both things.

Dean lay down again and saw it as Sam coated his fingers with butter.

“You always made me feel so good. I hope I can do the same for you.”

“I love you, Sammy. Now do it.”

Sam nodded and bit down on his bottom lip when Dean spread his thighs open with invitation. He let one of his fingers circle slowly, and before Sam probed the entrance open, he closed his mouth on Dean’s cock once again.

Dean arched into Sam’s mouth when he felt his brother’s finger sliding in. The feeling burned and felt uncomfortable at first, but Dean soon managed to relax around the invasion so Sam could add another.

His brother’s fingers were thick, and when Sam had his two fingers sliding in and out of him, Dean felt himself sweating with concentration.

Sam sucked on Dean for a while longer before he moved and faced his brother.
“Relax for me, Dean,” he said as he moved his fingers, looking for that spot Dean could so easily find within him.

“Yeah…” Dean nodded, his breathing fast and his fingers clutching at the sheets.

Sam moved his fingers with patience and curiosity, and when Dean jerked and brought his hips down against his moving fingers, Sam knew he had found what he wanted. “Fuck, Sam. That feels good,” Dean moaned and his forehead was creased as Sam stroked his prostate.

“Just wait, Dean. I’m gonna make you feel so good…” Sam spoke hotly and let his fingers stretch and stroke until Dean was hard again and trying to rub himself against Sam’s body.

“Do it,” Dean said when he thought he was used to the feeling. “Let me feel you.”

“Are you sure?” Sam asked as he withdrew his fingers and positioned himself at Dean’s entrance. He looked lovingly into his brother’s eyes and waited.

Dean nodded and squeezed Sam’s hips with his thighs, urging him further. Sam smeared some butter on his hardness before he complied and pushed the tip of his erection against the tight ring of muscles that fought him. Dean was so tight that Sam had to push a bit harder to breach in and feel the heat of Dean around his sensitive skin.

“Oh, fuck!” Dean cursed and in his face Sam could see the pain.

“I’m sorry, I’ll pull out—“

“Don’t!” Dean said and closed his legs around Sam’s midsection so he couldn’t go anywhere. “Don’t you dare. Just give me a minute.”

Sam waited and they stayed like that for a long time. Whenever Dean relaxed, he would nod and Sam would slide in a bit more, and they did that until Sam was completely buried into his brother.

“You know,” Dean said, sweat breaking on his forehead. “Kinda wish we’d done this when you were younger and smaller,” he chuckled, and so did Sam.

“I’ll make it feel good, love. Just let me.”

“I know you will.”

They kissed again and Sam started moving slowly. Never in his life after Zachariah’s visit had Sam dreamed that moment could truly happen. That was such a wild fantasy, being able to take Dean so thoroughly, being inside of him until Dean belonged to him, until Sam could make him feel all his love and all his need.

Sam buried his head into Dean’s neck and let his hips pick up speed. After a few thrusts, Dean was no longer struggling with the burning sensation. He let himself enjoy having Sam in his arms and so close again. He breathed in Sam’s scent and left finger-shaped bruises on his brother’s skin. Then, when Sam angled himself in a way that his cock brushed against his brother’s prostate, Dean tossed his head back and groaned.

Sam heard the sound and it encouraged him to thrust deep and hard against the same spot. Dean was
soon writhing under him, and Sam could feel him arching into his thrusts, wanting to feel more.

“Fuck, Sammy.”

“Feels good?” Sam lowered his mouth to Dean’s ear and licked him before sucking on his earlobe. Dean’s response was to squeeze Sam between his legs and try to open himself for his thrusts. “I wanna fuck you so many times, Dean,” Sam whispered into his ear. “And I want you to fuck me, too. I want you to take me and make me come on your cock like you used to, remember?”

Dean shuddered and groaned at the memory. “Fuck, Sammy. Yeah. I remember.”

“Gonna make you come, big brother. You want that? You want to come for me?” Sam was lost in a haze of pleasure and entranced with the feeling of taking Dean.

“Yeah. Make me,” Dean said in between gasps of pleasure. He felt Sam wrap his large fingers around his cock and stroke in time to his thrusts, and Dean rolled his head in the pillow as his body grew taut. “Mmm.”

Sam thrust harder and let his hand work faster. He was almost losing control, but he would hold back until he saw Dean shake with an orgasm. Sam’s hips were driving harder into Dean and his hand worked fast between their bodies when Dean’s rising moan echoed in the bedroom.

When Dean came, though, no sound escaped his lips. His body thrashed in silence and Sam felt him coat his hand with warm seed.

Dean relaxed and shuddered when he felt Sam thrust a few final, desperate times into him before he groaned and went still. Dean then opened his eyes to the beautiful sight of Sam falling over the edge before he collapsed on top of him.

As much as Dean wanted the moment to last, he was soon poking at Sam’s ribs for him to move.

“Roll over, you weigh a ton and you’re crushing me,” he said, and Sam laughed.

He complied and rolled over so they were now sharing the same pillow and looking into each other’s eyes.

It was an interesting day. The boys spent most of the time in bed, during which they hardly said anything. They got up and showered, they called Bobby to see if he was alright, and they fixed themselves something to eat quickly before they went back to bed and just relished the closeness of being together again.

When night fell and they decided to sleep, Dean walked out of the bathroom after brushing his teeth and found Sam lying in bed. The sight warmed his heart and it made Dean want to take a break from hunting so they could enjoy the happiness of the simple things. He then walked towards the light switch and hesitated for a moment.

“Can I?”

“Yeah, sure.”

Dean turned off the lights and joined Sam in bed, and over ten years later, Dean could once again wrap his arms around his brother and bury his nose into Sam’s hair as he fell asleep beside him in
Sam woke up a few hours later in the middle of the darkness of the room. His heart was racing and when he put a hand on his chest and neck, he realized he was covered with sweat.

“Sam? You okay?” Dean opened his eyes and looked at his brother. “Did you have a nightmare?”

Sam felt his heartbeats thudding insistently against his chest as his eyes studied the darkness around. Sam didn’t remember what he had dreamed, but he was extremely familiar with the feeling of dread throbbing in his chest right now.

“Do you want me to turn on the light?” Dean offered.

And that was when Sam understood what he needed to do.

“No, it’s okay. I’m fine.” He lay down again and took a deep breath.

“It’s over now, Sammy,” Dean whispered and put an arm around Sam’s torso.

Sam stared at the ceiling in the dark and didn’t say anything.

It wasn’t over. Not yet.

But it would be.

Sam closed his eyes and tried to go back to sleep. And in the morning, when Dean woke up and looked around, Sam was gone.

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tbc....

Chapter End Notes

A/N: ***contains SPOILERS-->in case you haven’t read the chapter yet.****

I’m sorry if this bottom!Dean scene offended you. It was not in my plans at all when I started the fic, but it happened in my mind when I got near the end. I chose not to add a tag because I didn't want to give the ending away. Besides, even though this scene happened, I still honestly see my story as a bottom Sam fic in all its context. After
everything that has happened, and will yet happen between them, I hope you agree. If you don't, then please understand that by adding this in the tags I'll be ruining the suspense for those wondering whether or not they will end up together again. For some people this story is more than just porn, it's about love, and its mainly for them that I wrote this.
Sam had woken up early and left without making a sound while Dean was still asleep. He had found the keys to the Impala and started driving in that bright, chilly morning. He stopped to grab something to eat when his stomach started growling, but after a few minutes Sam was back on the road. There was something he had to do in order to be at peace with himself.

A few hours later, Sam parked the car and got out. He stared at the building in front of him and sighed deeply.

Sam knew he still had unfinished business with the darkness, and today he was going to prove to himself that he could handle it.

Alone in that deserted place, Sam’s heart started beating fast as he walked into the building and went up towards the room that had fed on his blood and anguish for three months.

~ * ~

Dean started calling Sam’s name as he threw on some clothes. He checked in the bathroom and then went downstairs.

“Sam?” Dean walked into the kitchen but there was no one there. He stepped outside and looked at the salvage yard, but everything was quiet. “Shit,” Dean cursed when he realized the Impala was gone. Where was Sam? Did he go into town to buy something? Why didn’t he wake Dean up before he left?

Dean opened the fridge and found whatever was at hand to fill his stomach as he wondered what
might have happened.

When he was done eating and could focus with more clarity, Dean sat on the porch stairs and picked up his cell phone. He tried calling his brother, but Sam didn’t answer. That bothered Dean, because maybe it wasn’t just a run to pick up something at the market. But where could Sam have possibly gone now that everything was over? Lucifer was in his cage, the demon was dead, the man was dead…they deserved a break. Sam remembered everything from his past, but there was no longer any real threat, was there? There was no reason for Sam to worry…

“The dark,” Dean thought aloud. Sam was still unsure about the dark. He had struggled with turning the lights off when they got to Bobby’s home, and last night Sam might have had a nightmare while they slept in the dark. There was still one enemy Sam might yet have to defeat.

Dean thought of the Impala gone and it dawned on him where Sam was headed. His heart seemed to be licked by fire when Dean thought of Sam going back to that place, so he got up quickly knowing he needed to go after him.

When Dean got the key to one of Bobby’s vans he knew he might be going crazy. Maybe Sam had just gone into town and didn’t pick up his phone. Maybe Sam would be back in a few more minutes if Dean just sat there and waited. Maybe. But if there was one thing that Dean had learned to do when it came to Sam, it was to trust his instincts when he thought his brother needed him.

Dean put on his jacket and left.

~ * ~

Sam could hear his footsteps echoing in the silence of the corridor as he approached the door that would take him into his worst nightmare. The light switch was just outside the door, and Sam turned the lights on before he walked into the bright room where his life had changed.

At first, Sam felt wary and completely tense, part of him expecting to find Lucifer there, waiting for him. The devil was gone, obviously, and there was just a wall with black windows in the place where a hole had sucked Lucifer back into his cage.

Although yesterday the room had seemed shining and clean, it now looked pretty much abandoned, as if nothing and no one had been there since the time Sam was rescued.

Sam stepped inside the room and closed his eyes for a moment when the memories started flooding his brain.

The only sound in that hospital-like room was of Sam’s footsteps and, Sam thought, of his loud heartbeats as he made his way towards the bed. Sam sat down on it and let his fingers touch the sheets.

Unlike yesterday, when Lucifer was there, they now looked like they hadn’t been changed in a long time, and as Sam’s hands explored the fabric he tensed when he saw old blood stains tainting the white. Sam’s fingertips touched the dry and faded stains and Sam knew his hands were shaky. That was most likely his own blood, from the time he was fourteen years old, from the time he was alone and bleeding and hurting, desperate for help that did not come.
Sam shut his eyes and got up. He walked towards the sink and touched it briefly. Then he kept walking until his fingers found the hooks on the walls, the hooks the man would sometimes handcuff him to.

As Sam’s fingers touched the small metal hooks and the memories of being whipped and burned and raped came back vividly in his mind, Sam caught himself having a thought that hadn’t yet occurred to him when he thought about his torture.

“There was no way I could’ve fought him. I did everything I could. Hell, I’m surprised I survived that long in here…” Sam spoke softly to himself. It seemed a lot easier to understand and accept what had happened now that he was an adult. Sam could think of his fourteen-year-old self, so scared, so alone, and he could finally see the bravery that had always lain under layers and layers of fear and shame.

Sam smiled sadly at the thought.

Yes, he forgave himself. For the fear, for the begging, for the hopelessness.

It was time to let that boy out of this room and into his life again, and Sam was ready to welcome even the most scarred part of himself back.

But now, as Sam embraced his past, there was one more thing he needed to do. Something he owed to that part of himself who was so scared, that part that had always been inside of him even though Sam didn’t remember.

It was time to face darkness.

~ * ~

Dean saw the Impala parked before the building a few miles away, and that made him drive faster. He was glad he had trusted his gut, but also apprehensive when he wondered what Sam was doing back into that place and how it was affecting him right now.

That’s why Dean didn’t waste any time. He parked Bobby’s van and jumped out of it. The sun was high in the horizon; it was probably sometime around noon when Dean entered Sam’s captivity for the last time in his life.

~ * ~

Sam walked towards the door and looked at the light switch. He took a deep, calming breath before his fingers rested gently on top of it. Then, summoning all of his courage, Sam turned off the lights, opened the door and slammed it shut behind himself.

And there he was. Alone in absolute darkness in the place had felt the most pain in his entire life.

Sam felt the initial signs of panic that he believed would be there. His fingertips grew cold and yet his palms were sweaty. His heart was thudding in his chest and when he tried to walk his legs felt shaky and almost too heavy under his weight.
Sam raised his hand before his face and couldn’t see his fingers, and that was exactly how he remembered it—utter darkness.

Sam walked around the room tentatively, his eyes engaged in a futile hope of trying to adjust to a kind of darkness that had no possibility of adjustment. It didn’t matter how long Sam stayed in there, he couldn’t see anything in the thick nothing he cut through with every step.

The silence of the place was intimidating, and when Sam opened his eyes to take in his pitch black surroundings, it took him a lot of courage, and a lot of respect for his own struggle inside that room not to give in to the fear and run away.

“I can do it,” Sam whispered. “Because every time he turned off the lights, he didn’t break me. He gave me a chance to survive. And I’m here now. And you didn’t break me!” Sam chuckled, even though his eyes felt wet. He thought of the demon and his black eyes when he had shown himself into the room. He thought of his plan, of Lucifer, of the Apocalypse. Dean was right. He was there and they were gone. “I won!” Sam spoke fiercely into the nothingness.

He wiped at his eyes and suddenly he realized he was growing calmer. Sam’s breath was still short and his heart was still racing, but he went silent and allowed himself to be embraced by darkness.

Sam’s shoulders relaxed and he took a deep breath.

And that was when he heard the door open again, and the footsteps walking towards him in the dark.

~ * ~

Dean became nervous the moment he understood Sam was inside the room in complete darkness. If the corridor leading to the room was impossibly dark, that could only mean Sam had turned the lights off.

Dean had a small flashlight to guide him to the door, but he hesitated when he was standing right next to it. What would he find in there? What was Sam doing, what did he need? Suddenly Dean wasn’t certain of anything, but he knew he had to go inside that room one more time, and he knew he had to respect whatever it was that Sam had chosen to do.

Thus, Dean turned off the flashlight and put it on the floor before opening the door, and when he walked into the dark and let the door slam shut behind himself, Dean didn’t make a single sound.

He waited and listened, and yes, he could hear it. He could hear another breathing, a louder one, inside the room with him. It had to be Sam, although Dean would never be certain of anything if he tried to base it on his sight. He couldn’t see an inch before his face, but he let his feet guide him to the sound of a faster breathing not too far from him.

~ * ~

Sam’s heart slammed against his chest and for a moment the blind, irrational fear had its claws on his mind. The darkness, the door, the footsteps. Sam felt his entire body shaking and was unable to
move, and he felt the very familiar triggers of a panic attack rising and making his lungs feel tight.

*Run!* Said the voice in his head. *He’s coming! Hide!*

Sam struggled with his thoughts, trying hard to clear his mind.

*He’ll get you! He’ll hurt you!*

Sam shuddered. He knew the footsteps were coming in his direction. Then, within a few seconds, Sam could hear breathing right in front of him, and he knew there were just a few inches between him and the other person.

*I can do this. I can do this.*

Sam’s hands were unsteady when he raised them ahead blindly looking for a face, and when he found the warm skin beneath his fingers Sam gasped and his pulse quickened.

“I can do this.”

“Of course you can.”

Their mouths slammed together in the darkness and Sam kissed Dean with a passion that channeled all his strength and urgency.

Dean felt the hunger in Sam’s kisses and he gave himself over to whatever was happening between them right now. He let his hands find Sam’s hair and then pulled him closer, and in the total darkness enveloping them, it felt like his fingers were even more aware of every detail of skin.

“Take me,” Sam whispered. “Right here, right now.”

Dean’s heart slammed against his chest and Sam’s taste inside his mouth still made him feel incoherent.

“Sam…”

“Here, in the dark, Dean. I want it.”

“I’ll hurt you if I do.”

“No…” Sam kissed Dean’s lips over and over. “No…no…” he whispered in between kisses. “I’ll conquer darkness. With you.”

Dean barely registered it when Sam started to undress him. He was deeply affected by the total absence of light and the powerful urgency of Sam’s love.

“They wanted me to think of pain in the dark, right?” Sam said breathlessly, getting rid of his own clothes until his naked chest could feel the warmth of Dean’s skin, then his hands began to fumble with their jeans. “Not anymore. Help me. Help me make it better.”

Dean felt his knees go weak when Sam finished his clumsy and fast undressing, and the next time their mouths met and their tongues fought, Dean surrendered to the pleasure of feeling their bodies pressed up together.
Sam hooked a leg behind Dean’s and pulled them both down to the cold floor, Dean landing on top of him. They both gasped when they found themselves in that new position, and Dean thrust his erection against Sam’s own hardness and relished the sound of pleasure that echoed in the darkness.

Without the possibility of exploring with their eyes, everything felt more intense, as if every touch had a deeper meaning, and the temperature of each other’s skin could speak of the very need burning within their bodies.

Dean’s hands grabbed at Sam’s large thighs possessively and he lowered his mouth blindly, darting out his tongue until he could feel the hardness, and licking up that column of flesh until he tasted Sam on the tip of his tongue.

“Mmm,” Sam moaned, his eyes wide open. The adrenaline was buzzing through his system and making his body almost painfully alive. The same darkness he had desperately feared was now the witness of Sam’s greatest love.

It was easy to get lost in pleasuring Sam when Dean couldn’t see his brother’s face and see how close he was. He sucked slowly but steadily, letting his tongue wrap around the liquid evidence of Sam’s arousal.

“Stop…Dean,” Sam tugged at Dean’s short hair. “I wanna come with you inside of me.”

Dean raised his head to where the voice had come from, and he supposed Sam and he were now looking into each other’s eyes, but the darkness around them couldn’t let him know that for sure.

“It’ll hurt, Sammy. It’ll kill me to hurt you,” Dean confessed, even though his own need pierced at him and made his cock throb.

“Dean…”

“But I’ll do it,” Dean said before Sam could say anything, because he knew how important it was for his brother, and how much trust Sam had just put in him to help him overcome his last fear.

Sam waited, his breathing hitching with anticipation, his eyes straying as the darkness filled everywhere inside that room. Then, he felt Dean’s tentative fingers, his wet fingers, probing at his entrance.

Dean had slickened his fingers with plenty of saliva before guiding them into Sam’s body slowly. Even though he couldn’t see anything, Dean felt Sam’s tension around his fingers and tried to loosen him a little. In the dark, all Dean could do was feel the heat against his fingertips, and the arousal that built as he tried to find Sam’s prostate.

Sam gasped. “Right there,” he said, throatily. His hips moved against Dean’s fingers. “You still remember,” Sam chuckled hotly.

Dean smiled and stroked until the sounds inside the dark room grew louder, and when Sam’s hand found his wrist and held at it, urging him to stop and move on, Dean took a deep breath to try and calm himself as he thought of what he was about to do.

Sam would be his again. In his arms.
Dean wrapped his hand around the base of his engorged cock and stroked, shuddering at the pleasure. He did it for a moment, just so he could graze his tip with his thumb and assess the slickness there. That should help him ease the way.

Dean used his fingers to spread more saliva at Sam’s entrance, then he positioned himself.

Sam’s thighs fell open as Dean adjusted himself, and when he started to push Sam’s forehead creased with pain.

Dean couldn’t see Sam’s face to see how he felt, but he could press his lips to his brother’s ear and feel their cheeks touching, their smell mingling as he stretched Sam slowly onto his hardness.

“You’re mine again,” Dean whispered.

Sam thought that was a funny thing to say, because truth was, Sam had always been Dean’s, but the burning feeling of being taken made him fall shut and focus hard on trying to relax.

For a brief moment, the burning penetration tangled with the darkness in the room and Sam felt a wild spike of panic.

“Hm!” He tensed and his body fought the invasion, and Dean could feel all of Sam’s large body shaking against his own.

“Sammy?” Dean went very still inside of him and let his neck brush Sam’s nose before burying his face against Sam’s shoulder. “What do you smell?”

Sam didn’t reply immediately. He was looking into the darkness and trying to control his feelings.

“What do you smell?” Dean repeated.

Sam took a deep breath. Vanilla. He smelled Dean. He smelled his lover.

“You. I smell you.”

“Good. Now feel me, baby. It’s me inside of you again, Sammy, and I’ve missed you so much.”

Sam relaxed and let Dean start a slow rhythm. In the middle of that dark room, against the cold floor, Sam pushed the last shadows away and let his body clutch at Dean as he drove into him deeper and harder.

When the thrusts found his prostate, Sam’s lips parted in a silent plea. The friction was as intense as the heat of their skin, and the more Dean stroked the sensitive bundle of nerves with his cock, the less Sam cared about the dark and the more he cared about finding release.

“Dean!” Sam clawed at Dean’s arms and began to arch into his thrusts, because he felt his orgasm close, and the need to ride it grew fast and hot.

“Do you think I can make you come on my cock, Sammy?” Dean asked breathlessly as his thrusts grew erratic and greedy.

“Fuck!” Sam cried, his arousal bursting in his head with light. “Fuck me,” Sam’s voice was a soft and wanton plea, and a few thrusts later Sam began to shake as his orgasm hit him.
Dean felt the contractions around his dick and let his hand find Sam’s cock to stroke him and help
him ride out his orgasm to the last shuddering wave. As it invariably happened, the feeling of Sam
coming beneath his body, because of his body, pushed Dean over the edge.

He buried his nose into Sam’s neck and thrust a few desperate times until his need ended in a
muffled groan and Dean came, too, still pulsing within the softness of Sam’s body.

~ * ~

They stayed in the dark for hours. The two of them, inside the silent room, embraced by the total lack
of sight, their bodies tangled against the cold floor.

Sam was at ease. There he was, in the middle of the very darkness he had learned to fear, and he was
at ease.

It made him smile.

“Sam?”

“Yeah?”

“I know you had to come here. I understood that when I woke up. I have two questions, though.”

“And what are they?”

“Was it what you needed?”

Sam thought about it and nodded, and even though Dean couldn’t see his gesture he could feel Sam
moving his head since they were so close together. “It was,” Sam admitted.

“I’m glad,” Dean said with honesty. “The second one is can we get the hell out of here now?”

Sam chuckled.

Dean got to his feet and helped Sam do the same, and after a few minutes of feeling their way around
the darkness and stumbling upon a few things, Dean found the door, opened it and turned the bright
lights on inside the room.

Their eyes hurt with the punishing brightness of the place, and they squinted instinctively for the first
few minutes as they found their clothes and got dressed.

When Sam’s eyes adjusted to the brightness once again, he noticed something in a small corner of
the room.

“Let’s go?”

“Wait,” Sam said, and walked towards the video tape he saw resting on the floor.

Dean saw it when Sam picked it up and showed him. It was the film of his abuse, the horror show
Lucifer had made them watch, filled with torture and the horrific sound of pain of the boy suffering it.

Dean felt his heart ache as Sam studied that tape.

“You know,” Sam began. “For a long time I would’ve given anything to know how many times the man raped me in the dark.” He spoke calmly and thoughtfully. “During that year after you rescued me, I kept wondering how much of my nightmares were memories. Was it once, twice? Ten times?” Sam stared intently at the tape. “And the answer is here, Dean. With this tape I can know exactly how many times he made me beg and cry and break.”

Dean watched carefully when Sam laid the tape on the floor again and then stepped hard on it, crushing it beneath his boot.

“And you know what? It doesn’t matter anymore.” Sam looked into Dean’s eyes. “It’s over, Dean. I’m letting it go.”

“Good,” Dean couldn’t explain the amount of pride he felt at hearing that.

Sam walked closer to him and his eyes seemed lost for a moment.

“I used to be terrified of the idea of telling you that he raped me. I thought I would die of shame if you knew how broken I felt. And then Lucifer came and made you watch it.” Sam shook his head and laughed sadly. “He made you see my worst nightmare.”

“All I saw was my brother being this strong kid who would grow up to beat the devil.”

Sam thought about Dean’s words and nodded. “I guess I screwed up his plans.”

“I guess you did,” Dean agreed.

“I love you so much, you know?” Sam smiled widely.

They looked at each other and kissed, and then Dean looked at the room around them and had an idea. “Hey,” he said. “You wanna burn this place up?”

~ * ~

They used all the gasoline in Bobby’s van to light the building on fire, so, as the night fell dark and the stars became visible, the bright room was the brightest it had ever been as the flames consumed all of it.

Leaning against the Impala, the two brothers watched the scene.

“I’ll probably still have nightmares,” Sam spoke suddenly, his eyes lost in the flames ahead.

Dean pondered the words and nodded gravely. “Probably.”

“I accept my past, Dean. I can deal with that, I really can. But I know there might be nights when it’s harder. I could face darkness today, but I’m not a fool to think this is completely over. What
happened in there,” Sam nodded at the burning building. “Will always be part of me.”

“You’re right,” Dean said. “But now you know that you can beat it. And whatever happens in the future, you don’t have to face it alone. I’ll be there with you.”

Dean’s hand found Sam’s and squeezed, and he looked at his brother’s profile as the fire light danced on his skin.

Sam turned his head so he could look into Dean’s eyes.

“I don’t wanna do this alone, Dean. Just promise me that. I don’t want to forget, and I don’t want to lose you.”

“I’ll be here,” Dean stressed the words. “I’ll always be here, Sammy…”

Sam closed his eyes when their lips met and they kissed, the heat of the burning fire licking at their skin.

Dean smiled mischievously and went on, “…considering I’m now officially your boyfriend.”

Sam burst into a fit of laughter and pushed Dean away playfully. “Are not! Shut up!”

“Am too. Admit it, Sammy. I’m so your boyfriend now,” Dean teased.

“Oh, really?” Sam arched his eyebrows. “Because that makes me your boyfriend too, you know that, right?”

“Eh…” Dean tilted his head to one side and the other as if considering the idea. “I suppose I could live with that.”

They both laughed before getting into the car.

There might come a time when it was dark again, and there might come a time when Sam was afraid again, but Sam knew there was a light inside himself. And as long as Sam followed this light that Dean’s love had helped him find and had helped him trust, he knew he would be okay.

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The End

...or is it?

There's a short Epilogue coming up soon. ;)
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Thank you everyone who helped me with the story!
My beta reader, kittenbot <3
Monsterdoughnut for all the help with the therapy scenes
CanthelplovingDean for making me write an Epilogue,

And you guys who left me comments and encouraged me to go on! <3333

Epilogue

A few years later…

_His heart raced when he realized where he was. The unmistakable brightness around him spoke volumes about that place._

_He looked around at the bed, the black windows and the closed white door in a corner and knew he had to do something about it fast._

_Soon there would be darkness, and when darkness came…he shuddered. When darkness came so did the pain and the screaming, and he had to prevent that, he had to find a way to make it stop._

_He walked around, his eyes looking at every corner of that white place with increasing anxiety, and then suddenly darkness came and the door opened._

_No._

_He knew who was coming, and he knew what the man would do. No, don’t…_

_He could hear the footsteps and his breathing becoming louder._

_Please…_  

_“NO!” He thrashed and pushed at the sheets covering him._

_“Hey…Dean? Wake up. It’s okay.” Sam turned on the lamp by the nightstand. “It was just a dream.” he touched his brother’s shoulders to still him and looked worriedly at his distressed face._

Dean was still breathing fast. He opened his eyes and in the dim light he recognized the bunker and
the bedroom around himself, and soon he could see Sam leaning over him and feel his brother’s hand on his cheek.

Dean closed his eyes and took a deep breath, feeling his muscles relax when he did so.

“Nightmare?” Sam asked.

“Yeah,” Dean said and realized his throat was dry.

Sam waited for his brother to say more, and eventually Dean did. He looked into Sam’s eyes and then his fingers ran through his hair, making Sam’s heart throb with appreciation.

“I dreamed of the bright room. Dreamed I was there, and I knew what would happen to you, and I had to stop it.”

“I’m right here with you. Not there anymore,” Sam smiled softly and caused Dean to mirror him.

“I know. And you know what? I don’t remember when it was the last time you had a nightmare about it.” Dean felt genuinely happy when he thought about it. “Last year?”

“Yeah, I guess,” Sam admitted. There had been a few nights when Sam woke up screaming and shaking, and on those nights Dean had been there, soothing him, bringing Sam out of the dark and into his love again. “And you helped me.”

They looked into each other’s eyes for a moment and then Sam went closer and kissed Dean’s lips.

Dean let his hands trail under the sheets and run over Sam’s warm body. “I love you so fucking much,” he said in between kisses, his hands still roaming.

Sam smiled against the lips pressing into his. Most of the days it was hunting and driving and killing. Most of their nights were about working jobs, solving puzzles, saving people. But then there were the nights, like tonight, when they shared the bed; when they let the world outside take care of itself for a few hours, and when they gave in to their feelings.

“I love you, Dean.” Sam felt his brother move and lie partially atop of him, and soon Sam felt Dean’s hard-on against his naked thigh. “But my ass is probably still a bit sore.”

Dean chuckled as his hands worked against smooth skin to waken Sam’s arousal skillfully. “No problem, little brother. You can do mine.”

Sam shook his head, his throat already thick with desire as Dean’s hand worked under the sheets to make him gasp.

“No…you do it. I know you want to. Just start slowly.” Sam knew the man on top of him well enough to read his every need, and even though they alternated roles quite often, he could feel the hunger behind Dean’s eyes, and he knew his brother was aching to take him.

“Sure?” Dean asked.

Sam’s response was to open the first drawer and hand him the lube.

Dean smiled wolfishly and started to prepare Sam for his body.
Sam’s lips parted and a small gasp left them when Dean pushed his way inside and covered him with his moving body.

Their intimacy had become something familiar to them. Whether it was the fast, rough fuck in the back of the Impala or the long, gentle love making in the middle of the night.

Dean knew how to work Sam’s body in order to hear the wanton little sounds his brother made when he needed to come.

“Dean.” Sam’s short fingernails were biting into the skin of Dean’s shoulder blades, leaving small little half-moons as he held on to him.

“Gonna make you come on my cock,” Dean whispered hotly into his ear, thrusting against Sam’s prostate over and over.

Sam shuddered and a small smiled showed on his lips as he shut his eyes. He knew Dean loved that. He loved being able to make Sam come without a touch, just with the rhythm of his thrusts and the angling of his hips. Sam knew Dean would brag about it as soon as he could make him come, but Sam didn’t mind it. He was too busy feeling his body tense and shake when his orgasm hit, and even though his eyes were still shut he could swear he knew exactly the look in Dean’s eyes when his body writhed with pleasure and he squeezed around Dean as he came.

Dean buried his head into Sam’s neck and it wasn’t long before it ended in a shuddering climax that made all his muscles feel like hot water. Dean pulled out but stayed close, his arm still resting possessively on top of Sam’s chest.

“I think I’m ready for some good dreams now,” Dean spoke in a sleepy voice as he adjusted his body close to Sam’s, who smiled at that.

“Night, Dean.”

“Night, Sammy.”

Sam turned around in the embrace and felt Dean’s body wrapping around him.

As Dean’s breath tickled the back of his neck Sam smiled, reached out his arm, and turned off the lights.

_The End_

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Thank you so much everyone who supported me and gave me feedback on this story... You guys have no idea how your comments made me happy and inspired me to continue. I hope you enjoyed the ride. =)

I would love to hear your last thoughts on this! <3
Also.... for those who might be interested, I started a new Dean/Sam slash fic. ;-)

If it's red, drink it.

The day Azazel's son turns sixteen years old, there's a big party thrown in his mansion to celebrate prince Samuel's birthday. The boy is smart but quiet, and not used to the world outside his dad's home. He also carries a secret that shapes his life and burdens him constantly. While the most important people in town will be there to take part in the event, people like Dean Winchester, the son of the town's mechanic and Azazel's enemy, is definitely unwelcome at the party. Dean, who has a reputation for his great charm and libido, can hardly resist the chance to crash this party and provoke his dad's foe. What happens when Dean, an experienced and seductive lover, lays eyes on Azazel's mysterious and shy son will cause old secrets to surface and change their lives forever.

(Chapter 1)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!