Love Is A Slippery Slope Into Hell
by Forlorn Kumquat (sara_wolfe), Liron_aria

Summary

Dean comes back from Purgatory with Benny at his side, all hard edges and simmering anger.

He just needs time to readjust, Sam thinks, so he takes the resentment and anger and heartache. He takes it until he can't, but then Dean and Benny are pressed against him and Sam's too drunk to think by the time they hit the bed.

It only goes downhill from there.

Notes

Disclaimer: Neither of us own Supernatural. In fact, it's probably better for Sam Winchester that we don't.

See the end of the work for more notes

Dean’s back from Purgatory and he’s different, all anger and hard edges and resentment, and Sam puts up with it, because this is Dean, this is his brother, and Dean just needs some time to readjust. But it never really does get better, and Sam spends more nights sick with heartache until he starts putting his foot down.
It’s not fun, and it’s not pretty, but it needs to be done, for the both of them.

After a particularly bad fight, Sam heads off to a bar, and Dean calls up Benny to let off some steam. Sam comes back drunk and belligerent and Dean’s pissed that Sam’s getting in the way of him and Benny getting it on, and Benny jokes that maybe sex would distract him.

Unexpectedly, Dean decides it’s a brilliant idea because hey, it worked for Ruby, right? Benny’s up for anything, and Sam’s so drunk off his ass that Dean can get him to do anything, no matter what kind of fight he puts up, or how much he says he doesn’t consent. He knows all of Sam’s kinks and it’s not like doesn’t sleep with anyone who’s interested - half of Rhode Island proved that.

When it’s over, Dean’s calmer and he and Benny head out to relax. Sam’s left behind, not even part of the conversation, feeling dazed and used and dull, something inside him broken and fading.

Dean’s just happy that Sam’s stopped being a little bitch about everything.

It becomes a thing that Dean and Benny do to shut Sam up whenever he starts annoying them. And he’s conflicted as all Hell because the sex is actually good and his body clearly reacts well to it, so why should he be feeling so shitty about it? He feels ungrateful and he tries to make it up to them by being quiet, not going against Dean on anything - but that just perpetuates the cycle the next time Sam tries to stand up for himself or voice a contradictory opinion.

And fuck, Sam hates himself because why can’t he just be happy, why can’t he be grateful that Dean and Benny are so good to him, because the last actual relationship he had was with Lucifer and that was rape, that was torture and cruelty and worthlessness, so what the fuck is wrong with him now?

Sam’s pretty sure he’s still managing to fuck things up, because Dean’s word’s are still sharp, and Benny’s hunger is never satisfied, so when Kevin tells them about how to close the gates of Hell, it’s like a sign from the universe. He undertakes the Trials to try and please them, and then -

And then -

Dean has to kill Benny during the second Trial, shit completely hits the fan.

Sam is horrified and hates himself even more because he begged and pleaded but it wasn’t enough and Benny stayed in Purgatory, and Dean is furious and and grieving and their sex is angry-verging-on-hatesex and Sam gets no pleasure from it, but Dean does, and he owes Dean this.

‘I can do this, Dean, I can close the Gates of Hell, I can finally do something good for you, please, just give me one more chance to be a good brother’

And instead of ‘who are you going to trust next time’ it’s ‘I’m not good enough for you, Dean, for Benny, this is only way I can even come close, don’t you see’
And Dean’s shouting and begging and pleading, but Sam finishes the Trials and as he’s dying, he looks at Dean hopefully and asks if he did good.

Dean says no, because it wasn’t supposed to go down this way.

The light in Sam’s eyes dies, and his last words are ‘I’m sorry - I tried, Dean - to be good - I swear. I’m so sorry.’

And then Sam wakes up in the hospital and the angels have fallen and the Gates of Hell are still open.

One more failure, another drop in the ocean of his sins.

When Sam first wakes up, it feels like a second chance. A chance to make things right, to finally be the brother Dean deserves. He remembers seeing Dean as he was dying, things that Dean has finally, finally forgiven his many mistakes.

But something’s wrong again, something’s always wrong where Sam’s concerned, and Dean won’t touch him anymore, looks faintly nauseous at the very idea. Sam doesn’t know why Dean’s mad at him - for surviving, for not finishing the Trials, for starting them in the first place, for making Benny’s sacrifice worthless, who knows?

It feels like a punishment.

But he loves Dean, more than anything, and he’ll take going back to “just brothers,” back to no more lingering touches or teasing or passion.

But then Kevin dies. And Sam finds out that he’s been possessed by an angel the whole time. And Dean drives off and leaves him on the side of the road.

And that’s when Sam realizes Dean didn’t save him because he loved him, Dean saved him as a punishment, so that Sam could do penance for his sins, only he failed, just like he failed everything in his life. And of course Dean left, why would he stay? Sam’s not enough to make him stay.

So when Cas asks ‘why must Winchesters always run towards death’ when Sam is forcing him to extract more and more of Gadreel’s grace, Sam can only say, “This is the only way I can make it up to Dean.”

And then there’s Dean.

Dean, who comes back and is willing to work with him again.

Dean, who takes on a dangerous, life-altering Mark because Sam wasn’t good enough to stop Gadreel from killing Kevin.

Who still doesn’t forgive Sam for Benny’s death, based on his speech at their re-virginining.
Who runs off with the group leader because he obviously can’t stand to have Sam touching him anymore.

Who tells Sam that he’s in charge of their dictatorship, and that he can’t trust Sam not to mess up something as important as killing Metatron.

Who dies because Sam wasn’t there to protect him, it’s all his fault, Dean is dead because he wasn’t good enough -

---

But there’s no body, and Sam isn’t going to make the mistake of not looking this time. Dean wants to live - Dean deserves to live - so he’ll tear the Earth apart looking for him.

He thought he couldn’t hate himself more, but looking at the footage with Dean’s black eyes, he does, he does more than he could have imagined.

And Dean’s laughing, because Sam is weak, Sam is pathetic, Sam was nothing more than his bitch who couldn’t save anyone if he tried, so what is he actually going to do now? But Sam begs and pleads and loves, and Dean hesitates, softening, and the next thing Sam knows, they’re kissing, like they haven’t done in over a year, like they did when things were good and Sam wasn’t as much of a fuck-up.

So Dean takes Sam, more viciously than he’s ever been, and Sam lets him because maybe he can get through to Dean, maybe he can save him before things get bad. Except that Dean throws Sam away when he’s done, leaving him battered and broken on the floor.

But Sam can move mountains for Dean, and Dean winds up in the bunker, spitting fury and hate at Sam injects sanctified blood into his arm. When Dean snarls that Sam destroyed his life, that Mary and everyone he loved was dead because of Sam, that Sam was nothing but a burden and an occasional stress-reliever, Sam just smiles, tight and broken, and says ‘I know.’

It feels like a shard of glass in his chest and a stone in his throat and acid in his eyes, but he can’t cry, he won’t, because he knew this was coming, and it wasn’t like any of it was untrue.

And when Dean swings a hammer at him, all he can do is dodge and try not to give way to the agony in his throat demanding to be set free. His blade barely rests against Dean’s throat, because he can’t kill Dean, he can’t he can’t oh god he can’t, and he can’t think of a way out of this -

- And then Cas

Cas who stops Dean, who saves him, who has been a better friend and brother to Dean than Sam ever was, who’s there for Dean when Sam fails, and oh, he’s failed so many times

Cas, who’s the reason Sam manages to finish curing Dean

And when Dean’s bright green eyes look up at Sam, stunned and confused and horrified, it’s all Sam can do not to drop to his knees in thankfulness, to press kisses against Dean’s skin - but then Dean stiffens when Sam steps forward.

Oh.
Of course.

For a moment, Sam forgot his sins, his failures. But he remembers now, so he just smiles, soft and loving and broken.

"Hey, Dean. Welcome back."

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Sam’s not stupid enough to think that things will ever go back to the way they were.

Not when Dean takes one look at his busted arm and rolls his eyes, mockingly. How had Sam ever managed to cure Dean when he couldn’t even keep himself in one piece?

Not when he can’t talk Olivia down and Dean has to kill her - putting down a monster, just like he’d promised to do to Sam, once, and Sam still wonders why Dean hasn’t, why he still lets Sam breathe when all he’s done is hurt people.

Not when he can’t keep Cole from coming after Dean to try and kill him - it should have been him, he’s the one who fucked up.

And not when Dean tells him that he’d been lying about the Mark - how could Sam be so stupid, of course Dean couldn’t trust him with the truth.

No, Sam knows without a shadow of a doubt that things will never be the same with Dean. How could they, when all Sam does is make things worse?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

But then, somehow, it still feels like things are better - a little, enough to give Sam hope - hope he doesn’t deserve, he reminds himself, but still. Because when Dean finally kissed him, finally touched him, it was like a connection sparked between them again. Because Dean touches him again, body warm against his skin, and if he’s a little rougher, bruises a little harder, well -

They’ve all changed, been through so much, this is more than enough, more than Sam had ever dreamed of having again. Because despite everything, Dean still loves him, and Sam has the chance to try and give back to Dean once again.

Which is why he can’t ever give up on Dean. Which is why he’ll give Dean whatever he needs - food, sex, research, everything. Which is why even if he’s bruised and battered when Dean crushes his mouth to his, when Dean’s teeth dig into already sprained muscle, he pushes through and wills his body into compliance.

There are still so many struggles on the horizon, he has to keep going, no matter the cost to himself.
If only he’d known how high that cost would be.

Dean had promised him after Hibbing that he was in control, that he was commanding the Mark, and not the other way around. And Sam believed him, and trusted him - up until five men lay slaughtered on the floor, Dean covered in their blood.

"Tell me you had to do this," Sam begs, frantic. "Tell me it was them or you!"

But Dean has no answer, and Sam’s more than a little afraid of what he’d hear, anyway.

He gets Dean back to the bunker, gets him cleaned up and into bed. And when he goes to move around to the other side, and Dean just shakes his head, Sam goes back to his own room without complaint. Dean’s been through a lot, and if he needs space, Sam is more than happy to give it to him. It’s the least he can do.

He dives into research, reading everything even tangentially related to the Mark of Cain. He’ll chase down whatever lead he has to to free Dean from the Mark.

When Dean decides to shut himself up in the bunker, Sam brings him everything he needs to be comfortable. When Dean gives up alcohol, Sam lugs all of it to the basement, to keep temptation out of reach. When Dean decides that he needs to go on a juice fast to cleanse his body of all the junk he’s been eating over the years, Sam goes to the store at the crack of dawn to buy supplies.

And when Dean decides that Sam is one of the things he needs to avoid in order to be good, well, Sam can hardly blame him. On a list of things poisoning Dean’s life, he’s right at the top of the list. Frankly, Sam’s surprised that it took Dean this long to do it.

And then Dean -

Sam doesn’t understand.

Because barely a week later, Dean’s knocking back a shot of whiskey and telling Sam to stop researching. Dean’s nail are digging into his hips and his teeth into the meat of Sam’s shoulder and his body is like fire against Sam’s skin.

Sam doesn’t understand, because Dean’s giving up but he still loves Sam and Sam’s supposed to listen to Dean but he has to keep researching to get the Mark off Dean, to do this one good thing for his brother after his infinite string of failures.

Saving Dean.

He can take Dean’s anger and betrayal and hate, take cold nights and silence and Dean’s eyes looking past him like he’s not even there if it means saving Dean.

He can take being battered and bruised and bloody when Dean’s angry and antsy and needs to let off steam.

Because if he can just save Dean, set him free to live his life to the fullest again, then it’ll all have been worth it.

So when Sam finds himself kneeling at Dean’s feet, cuts and bruises and broken bones, shaky with
blood loss as he had been when vampires were draining him dry, he’s not afraid.

"I always forget how good you look on your knees," Dean says, tapping the First Blade against Sam’s lips. His eyes are bright green and wrathful, and the Mark is vivid and red on his arm.

This is it.

This is Sam fixing his mistake.

Dean chuckles under his breath and the corners of Sam’s lips tilt up, looking into Dean’s eyes with a lifetime of love and adoration, because if he can give Dean one last offering of pleasure before he goes -

Dean slides the Blade into Sam’s heart, and the room lights up with hidden sigils and a maelstrom of energy and Sam’s blood flows up the Blade and up and up to the Mark, igniting it.

Dean roars, the Mark screams, and Sam lets the chaos of energy carry him away.

The next thing he knows, he’s surrounded by grace, searing into him, submerging him, and it’s five thousand years of familiar agony coming back to him, because grace is grace in Heaven or Hell.

But he can feel Dean’s soul too close and just out of his reach, and it doesn’t matter anymore, because somehow, somehow, Dean still loves him, and he’s learned since Dean and Benny came back from Purgatory - known since well before then, actually - that the pain is what he deserves.

Dean’s soul is safe and whole and beautiful against his fraying psychic senses, and that’s what’s important, that’s what matters -

In the end, everything is as it should be.

End Notes

Thoughts? Comments? Please, let us know!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!