Savin' Me

by Nyxed

Summary

Set in the End!verse, 2014

The Croatoan virus has devastated the globe. Dean Winchester and Castiel have made the camp their refuge. It's hell on earth for the ex-angel in particular. Everything changes for Castiel when Dean brings a wounded woman back to camp. ( M for future chapters )

Notes

This may be slightly OOC because I am dealing with the future!gang. Castiel = Man-hoe, Dean = Hardass, Chuck = Still Chuck. Just to clarify, Lucifer -does- manage to take over Sam Winchester's body before the events in this story are set in motion.

I originally began posting this story on another site, so I will be publishing the old chapters here as well as updating it with new chapters in the future.
Women, decadence, and amphetamines. The adult version of the sugar plum fairies. He didn't know how long he had been lying there and truthfully, he didn't care. This place was quiet and peaceful. Gaps in the cabin walls provided a nice draft most days. The world outside the cabin wasn't that bad. The camp was a stronghold of sorts, wasn't exactly nirvana but compared to the real world which lay beyond their cloaking magic and gates, it was almost like paradise.

It had been a long day filled with speaking, teaching, connecting, then more connecting. That was almost all he did; unless their fearless leader called on him for a consult or they needed to get the convoy up and out in search of supplies. Aside from that he was generally in one cabin or another, almost always with a female beside, on top or underneath him. A mere five years ago the thought of sinning, succumbing to temptation would have made him as nervous as a teen stealing his father's coveted issue of Playboy Magazine. Now the prospect of sexual relations or just seeing naked women put a smile on his weary face. None of that mattered now though. God wasn't watching and hell had quite literally broken loose.

Oh, how things changed over the years.

The muffled sounds of yelling and heavy footsteps did nothing to rouse him. However, when those sounds flooded into his cabin it was enough to make him rise out of his near-comatose state. "Cas, I hope you've got pants on!" The voice that had called out to him was that of a sleep deprived and fairly panicked Chuck. The prophet was the first one to burst into the cabin. Followed closely by Dean, behind Dean a small group people that had followed him from wherever the hell he had come from.

Someone switched the light on and Castiel let out a low groan, rubbing his eyes as the glow assaulted them. "Get up!" Dean barked, "We need the bed!"

Castiel didn't even ask. Dean sounded pissed off, extremely so and he was – well he was hungover. Not the time to get into one of their little arguments, as amusing as they were. His body was heavy and sluggish and he couldn't stand up sooner. The second he had gotten off of the bed he saw what had everyone in a frenzy. There was a woman in Dean's arms. An unconscious and blood covered woman who was quickly deposited onto the bed.

A crowd of ten or so people were now gathered outside the doorway, most look like they had just woken up. Castiel could feel their pain. Chuck scissored his way back through the crowd with a woman who he knew as Lisa by his side. One was carrying a large Rubbermaid container that normally housed some of their first-aid supplies, and the other was carrying a bed sheet.

"Where did she get hit?" Lisa asked anxiously as she pushed her way to Dean's side. Cas wasn't quite with it, in fact he felt like he was just barely following along. He was standing at the head of the bed, looking down at the woman's face while people were in a frenzy all around him. Her dark hair was matted and tangled, there was either blood or mud on almost every inch of her face. His eyes traveled down her body as Lisa rummaged through the contained for supplies. Someone had said 'hit'. Had she been shot? Castiel's eyes stopped at a blossoming stain on her lower abdomen, on the right side.

"What happened?" For a moment he barely recognized his own voice as he spoke. Both Dean and Lisa looked up, then Lisa promptly shot a look at Dean. If looks could kill, their leader would have been lying on the floor.

Five Years
The woman clearly had no intention of answering his question and no one else seemed up for it. Lisa went back to work, taking a pair of scissors and cutting the side of the woman's top to make it easier to remove. She needed the area to be unobstructed if she was supposed to tend to the wounds. Lisa was more or less the camp medic. She slowly pulled it back, revealing a tell-tale bullet hole underneath.

She turned to Chuck, ushering him to come forward and hand off the bed sheet. Castiel finally pried his eyes off of the woman and turned them to Dean, who met his gaze with a cold one of his own. "She was going to shoot me."

Castiel was used to Deans generally emotionless tone, but he could have sworn he saw a hint of guilt in his eyes. Just for a second before it was gone. Dean and six others had gone out to sweep a town a state over, looking for survivors and supplies. The Croatoan virus had worked fast and furiously through the general population that made up the USA. As far as he knew, the thing was global. This was the first time that he had seen Dean in two days. So far, it didn't look like the trip was a successful one. In plain English, Dean had more or less just confessed to shooting the woman. Funny how she didn't look like much of a threat to him.

Lisa was staring intently at the wound, a grim look prying at her lips. She and Chuck had strategically placed the clean bed sheet over top of the woman's bare abdomen, cutting a decent sized hole out so that there would still be access to the wound. "It doesn't look deep and there's no exit wound. I've got to get it out. That or she bleeds to death." Chuck's eyes widened like a deer in the headlights.

"You're going to pull the bullet out? We don't have any...This is a bad idea."

Now it was Lisa's turn to glare at Chuck. "Got a better one?" She snapped back.

He could see why Chuck would be alarmed. They didn't have any anesthesia and Lisa was going to take the bullet out try to sew up the wound. That would hurt. Even though the woman was unconscious, having a pair of forceps poking around her delicate insides might just be enough to wake her. Lisa took a step back and removed her already bloody latex gloves, trading them in for a new and cleaner pair. As if following some silent order Chuck picked a standard hospital operation kit out of the box. The type that were kept in those plastic bags, only to be cracked open for the main event. Chuck slowly peeled the first layer of plastic off and set it on top of the sheet. Then he grabbed a flashlight, flicking it on and turning it to the wound. Lisa wielded a pair of surgical forceps, glancing from the stainless steel implement then back to the wound. It became apparent even before she had begun that she was going to need to make the wound bigger.

"Dean, hold her legs. Cas? Keep her arms pinned." Both men followed the gruff orders silently. Castiel leaned over the short headboard of the bed, placing his hands just above her elbows. Applying just enough pressure to make her arms sink into the poor quality mattress below. Dean did the same, securing the girls legs should she wake up. Then the cabin fell silent.

Chuck was no longer looking at the girl. The flashlight was pointed at the opening but he was staring out the door, already cringing. Lisa shut her eyes for a moment and picked up a capped scalpel. Castiel idly wondered if she was praying to some invisible deity. From where he stood it certainly looked that way. The brunette was nervous but she was trying to keep it together. What she was about to do was reckless at the least. The woman could wake up, she could bleed to death, she could go into shock, or the wound could get infected. Any number of possibilities. Lady Luck never really seemed to be by their side.

Lisa took a deep breath, slowly removing the plastic protective cap off of the razor sharp instrument. "I'm going to cut on three." Her left hand poised at the bottom of the wound; hovering just above the
skin.

"One."

Chuck squeezeed his eyes shut as tightly as he could. This horror story wasn't his thing.

"Two."

Dean looked up from the woman only to find Castiel staring intently. He looked stoned, much like he usually did. Totally lost in his own little world. He pressed down harder on her ankles, planting his own feet to the ground.

"Three."

He did have some sympathy for the woman. Now he knew what pain felt like. Castiel had yet to be cut open but he had broken his foot a year back. That had hurt. On three the room fell deathly silent. The men focussed on their tasks while Lisa fought to keep her hand steady. The scalpel lowered to the woman's skin, just pressing. Lisa bit her lip, as if giving it a second thought. Instead of pulling away she pressed the scalpel into the previously untouched skin.

Flesh parted, blood slowly began to flow.

Then the woman began to scream.
The excitement had more or less died down after the impromptu surgery. Word of the new arrival spread like wildfire through the camp. Like teenagers with a trashy rumour it went from person to person until finally, Dean confirmed it. He and the others had indeed found a woman during their last round. Though for the rest of the camp he didn't disclose the injuries; the reason why she was cooped up in a cabin and shielded from the rest of the world. The group got a fluff piece to shut them up. It would work for now, till the mystery woman was back on her feet. He didn't know when that would be but he hoped it would be soon.

Like everything else in life the removal off the bullet had played out to be one of those 'easier-said-than-done' things. The woman had woken up almost automatically. God, the scream on her almost rivalled the ones he'd heard during his time in hell. She'd tried to get off the bed, which resulted in further injury when the scalpel slid further and deeper than intended. After a whole minute they all realized that if she kept thrashing she would give herself a heart attack or bleed out right there on the bed. They had to tranquilize her. She was back out in seconds; luckily Lisa managed to finish the job before things had a chance to get worse.

They dressed her wounds and took away her ruined top and muddy jeans. Castiel had sacrificed an old green shirt for the greater good. She wouldn't have been totally naked when she woke up, Lisa had done the undressing so the navy bra and black boy shorts stayed; till she could find something else for her to wear. Once she and the cabin were cleaned up it was business as usual. Everyone else went back to business that is. Somehow he had gotten himself the role of babysitter. Dean had said that his time as an angel qualified him for the task of looking after the unconscious girl. Castiel disagreed with this, but somehow he still ended up sitting in a chair beside the bed.

He had been sitting in the rickety wooden chair for at least five hours straight now. Five excruciating hours. There were bits of wood and nails digging into his back, but he barely noticed. That wasn't what was getting to him. The fact that time was passing so slowly was starting to irritate him. Lisa had said that the medicine would wear off by morning. By then the woman would at the very least be awake; but no. It was almost dark out and she was still out of it. A whole day wasted. A whole day spent staring into a blank canvas.

It truly was amazing, what narcotics could do. One minute she was in a violent frenzy, then the next it looked like she was barely alive. He hated to admit but the sudden jolt of life had caught him off guard. The fear in her eyes had been seared into his mind. He'd seen many of those expressions before, but for some reason that one wasn't proving easy to cleanse. The image stayed as it was.

Unbeknownst to Cas, Dean had warned his usual bra-wearing entourage to stay away from the cabin and that Castiel was busy with something 'extremely' important.

Around noon Chuck had brought in some food and a beer, and the mystery woman's duffel bag; muttering something about him having to check it. Chuck was the last person he'd seen. Now he
could smell the faint smoke coming from the fire pit outside and the landscape was slowly getting darker. He would sneak out for fresh air later but till then – back to observations.

So far he had the obvious. The woman was pretty despite the fact that she had a split lip and an assortment of bruises along her neck and the right side of her face, around her ear and along her jaw. Those were aged though, they'd be gone in a few days. She had long brown hair that fell an inch or two past her shoulders, and from that split second earlier he had seen a pair of murky but expressive green eyes. She was attractive that was for sure. Beautiful even, prettier than a few of the women that he constantly surrounded himself with.

But a face was nothing without a name. Surely she had to have one. That reminded him…her bag. With a grunt he leaned over and grabbed the black duffle by the straps, hefting it onto his lap. It was actually fairly light. The zipper was already partway undone; Castiel guessed that Dean had gone through the bag first before passing it onto Chuck. Sure enough someone had. There was an empty shoulder holster and at least two knife sheaths, not including what looked like the scabbard of a machete. It actually reminded him of a hunter's bag. Rock salt, two different flasks. One with holy water and the other with some type of whiskey. The second flask he of course had to pull out. There were various old books on the occult and paranormal. Legitimate texts in various languages. Aside from the flask the real item of interest was a wallet.

An old worn piece of leather, a man's wallet. Inside there were small photos and various pieces of ID. Even a necklace. A small Celtic cross on a silver chain, but that wasn't as interesting as the pictures and the licenses. The first two snapshots were dated 2008 and 2009. The first showed their mystery woman sitting at a diner booth with three other people. Two men and another woman. That photo was taken before the virus had been released, obviously during happier times. The second photo, he assumed was taken in late '09 after the virus was making the rounds. Why did Cas assume that? In this photo there were two people sitting on a bed and cleaning out hand guns. Their girl was sitting on the left, and a blond man from the previous photo sitting across from her. He could only see half of their faces thanks to the angle at which the picture had been taken but it was obvious that they both were miserable and sleep deprived.

Castiel put the pictures back into the wallet and withdrew the licenses. One was from the forest and fisheries department in Pennsylvanian and two others were drivers licenses. The hunting license belonged to one 'Brad McKinnon.' The same name on the first drivers license. Given the picture, Brad was the brunette that was sitting beside mystery girl in the first, happier photo.

The second license belonged to one Allison McKinnon. Pay dirt. That license belonged to the unconscious woman that Dean had shot the day before. Her eyes were unmistakable. Satisfied with what he had uncovered he carelessly shoved the wallet back into the bag and placed it back on the floor. All the while keeping the flask filled with whiskey.

"Allison." Castiel murmured under his breath. She didn't look like an Allison, but parents always seemed to pick the strangest names for their children. For example, Dean and Samuel? What had John and Mary been thinking?

He titled the chair back, propping his legs up on the bed. Castiel slowly unscrewed the silver cap of the flask, raising it to his lips. Allison had good taste. The luke-warm liquid was smooth with a bit of a kick that put together a rather satisfying after taste. Dean couldn't have been the one to check the bag, because if he had that flask would have been added to his own private stash.

Well, at least now he had an alcoholic beverage to help pass the time.

Or so he'd thought.
The whiskey provided a nice buzz, unfortunately he couldn't do much about it. By now his limbs had lapsed into a comfortable state of numbness and he could feel the late hour tugging at his all too human body. It was sometime around midnight now and Castiel was all too tempted to go curl up in someone else's bed. There were a handful of women that would welcome him with open arms but if Dean saw him out of the cabin he would pull rank. A loud discussion that he did not want to have at the present time. If Allison didn't wake up by morning, he'd get some of the more sympathetic members in here to watch over her. It wasn't like Chuck had anything important to do.

It was roughly around midnight when he first heard the sound. First Castiel passed it off as an unwelcome breeze making it's way through the cabin. It was something like a low-pitched moan. Then he heard it again, louder this time. He dragged himself off of the chair, eyes straining in the darkness. Even though he was right beside the bed, he'd missed the movement. He was only human, or mostly human. Night-vision wasn't a natural ability that humans possessed.

He pressed one hand against the side of the bed for balance as he leaned over. Had it been her? He hovered over her for a moment, focussing every ounce of available attention on her. Aside from the rise and fall of her chest, there was nothing. That was enough for one night, he needed to get out of the cabin. If she was in a coma she wasn't likely to get any trouble. At this point Castiel couldn't have cared less. Dean was probably occupied anyway, he wouldn't do a bed check.

Just as he was about to straighten himself out he heard a loud gasp. The type of noise a human made when they had just received an unpleasant surprise, or something of the sort. What followed the gasp, he had not been expecting. As Castiel leaned back over to check on Allison again, a hand shot up.

Given the darkness it looked like it came out of nowhere. The hand clamped itself around the collar of his shirt, jerking him downwards. He could feel a cool laboured breath against his face, and when his eyes focussed on the new target it was like he was looking at a ghost; or a memory. There were the eyes. Her eyes, wide and fearful.

She was awake.
Wake Me Up

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was like he could see every little fleck of emotion glinting in her eyes. They just as expressive, if not more as the first time he had seen them. This real life moving portrait was different from the two wallet-sized photos he had examined earlier. There was no sign of joy or laughter, and she didn't look tired and miserable. All Castiel could see was a pure dose of fear that bordering on sheer terror. He could understand why she might be so fearful. In general most women did not act cheerful when they woke to find a strange man looming over them, and since the outbreak everyone's defenses has been raised to staggeringly high rates – it was amazing that anyone was able to trust at all.

Unlike most of the other people that currently sought refuge in the camp, his first reaction wasn't to pull away or even strike back. No doubt in his mind that he could easily pull the collar of his shirt out of her grip if he wanted to, he didn't want to spook her. She was delicate enough. So he hung there despite his bodies protest. His face a mere few inches away from hers.

He knew that he needed to get her to let go of him, but first she would need to come out of the silent frenzy that she was currently in. That was something that he could likely accomplish with little to no bloodshed or screaming. "There is nothing to be afraid of, I won't hurt you." Castiel believed his low whisper sounded sincere enough, but she would be the judge of that. He didn't test the waters further, not till she gave him some sort of sign. Whether it was to continue speaking or to get the hell away.

He had the feeling that to some extent she did believe what he was saying because he could feel her fingers loosen the surprisingly vice like grip she had held on his shirt. It was a start. He could practically feel her stares burn holes right through him, it was like she was silently daring him to move, which of course he did not. If anyone were to win the staring contest, it would be him. Castiel had perfected the art some time ago.

It took roughly five minutes for her to settle, but when that time was up she had let her hand fall away from his shirt and back onto the bed. He wasn't sure if it was a sign of surrender or something else. Either way, he could breath easier. "I'm going to turn the light on," He swept his eyes upwards towards the ceiling where the old light fixture hung "Okay?" Cas asked quietly, but he didn't wait for a reply. He slowly pushed himself away from the bed and stumbled about the cabin. Knee's and legs meeting the chair, a trunk and the small table before he found the light switch.

Allison let out a small whimper when the light cut through the darkness. With the light came pain, that was almost always the case. The last time she had seen light, people were holding her down to a bed and some bitch...some bitch was cutting her. She remembered a scream and the pain, like someone had jammed a hot poker into her gut; then the world went black. Even that memory was all too dream like. It felt like it might not have happened, that she was just crazy. In this day and age crazy was an option. Hell, crazy was the norm. The thing was, Allison wasn't sure which she was. She slowly pushed herself up, using her right elbow as a prop. A twinge of heat and pain seared up her side; but for now she would ignore it. More important things to worry about.

Like the man she had almost choked.

While he looked familiar she couldn't come up with a name, or even where she had seen him before; if she had seen him before. Her mind was working against her, something said that the man in the room would be the least of her worries. All trains of thought had left the station and were on a collision course. She knew that she had been awake for five, maybe ten minutes and instantly she
realized that this was not the old storage room at the factory. That was the last place she remembered, the old Ford assembly plant just outside of Beford. She and Brad, they'd stopped there to see if they could round up a new set of wheels. Instantly her thoughts came to a screeching halt. Where was Brad?

Castiel moved back to the bed slowly, monitoring the every changing expressions on her face. She had gone from scared to confused, then to panicked. Now he noticed how flushed her face was, and the beads of sweat that were rolling down her face. She looked like she had just run a full length marathon, not woken up from the dead.

"B-Brad? " The uncertainty in her voice made him cringe. Castiel knew nothing of a Brad, aside from the name on the license. Dean hadn't brought back anyone else, which meant whoever she was asking for wasn't at the camp. His lips formed a thin grimace as he made his way back to the bed. This was not his area of expertise, far from it actually.

He raised a hand, as if the action would have some instant calming affect on the woman. Of course it didn't. If anything she took it as some sort of invitation. "Sh, you're hurt. You need to lie back down. Everything's fine."

As if she hadn't heard a single thing he had just said, she pushed herself into a sitting position. In seconds she was on her feet. That actually amazed him, she was moving rather quickly all things considered. Humans didn't re-bound so fast. "Where's B-Brad! What did you do to him?" Now she was shaking, fighting to keep her composure and her ground. Standing up clearly hadn't been as good an idea as she had originally thought.

The pain in her abdomen flared up again as she stumbled forward, blindly knocking against the wooden table. The man looked taken back, like she was speaking some other language. He wasn't answering her, he wasn't even trying! There was no way that she was lying back down and there was no way that everything was going to be fine. Things were never fine. Things hadn't been fine for five damn years.

Her legs felt like cement as she moved and everything hurt. The room was practically spinning around her, like some sort of sick carnival ride. "Tell me," She paused, gritting her teeth "Where he is?"

"I don't know who you-" Castiel began to protest. Only to be cut off mid sentence by another ungodly sound. Women were full of them. Allison screeched, rushing towards him "Liar!" Allison's feet stopped before she wanted them too. She wanted to push him out of the way and rush out the door. Instead, she ran right into him. Her body collided against his as a result. More pain and exhaustion. The whole three feet she'd actually moved had been too much. She could feel her knee's going weak, like her body was telling her to give up.

Upon impact she had grabbed his shoulders and now she was squeezing them so hard her knuckles were turning white. She was afraid of falling and she knew that if she let go of him, she'd be a mess on the floor. "Why can't you just tell me?"

He'd flinched when she all but threw herself at him. Whether that had been her intention or not somehow she ended up pressed against him, clinging to him for dear life. Still just as fearful as before. Apparently some things didn't change. He felt her slump against him, but she was still awake. Still asking questions that he just didn't have the answer to.

Castiel tried again, sounding a little more forceful this time around. "I can't tell you because I don't
know."

There was another stretch of silence and he wondered if she believed him. As if a silent reply to his statement, she moved her head against his chest; burying her face in his shirt. It took two whole seconds for him to feel the cool wetness that seeped through the fabric. Accompanying the moister was warmth. Her forehead was burning up. In fact to him, her whole body felt like a burning coal.

"H-He was with m-m-me!" The cry was muffled considerably given the fact that his t-shirt and chest blocked most of the noise. He didn't know what to do and once again moving didn't sound like the worlds brightest idea. She needed to settle down and Lisa needed to check on her, and he needed to talk with Dean. That all needed to happen soon.

If he still believed in God or did the praying and worshipping thing he might have thought what happened next was a miracle. A knock on the door and a normally grating voice that he'd never thought he'd be happy to hear.

"Lisa wanted to know if -" Chuck began, but Castiel had no intention of letting him finish. He craned his next to the side to see the prophets head that was now sticking inside the cabin door. His jaw was practically unhinged when his eyes rested on the two.

"Chuck, go get Dean and Lisa." The man nodded but didn't move. Castiel rolled his eyes and let out a sigh. "Now." He couldn't stand there all night like that. In the blink of an eye Chuck was gone and the door was shut again. He could hear the man calling out for their leader and their not-certified medic from inside the cabin. Now that Chuck was on the case, they would be there soon to assist. Or so he hoped. Till then, he needed to get her back into bed.

Castiel slowly placed an arm around her waist, taking a step forward and in turn carefully pushing her back. In theory it might have been a good idea, but she was like dead weight against him. Having an emotional breakdown right there in his arms, mumbling something about losing Brad. She didn't seem to have any intention of moving.

"You need to lie down." He tried again. One smooth step forward. She moved about an inch and no more than that. This was great. He growing uncomfortable and now...now his shirt was wet. When women were this close to him they cried, sure; but not in this way. Cries of ecstasy were far different from cries of sorrow and confusion. In all honesty he much preferred the first.

Dean and Lisa couldn't get there fast enough.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you're enjoying this so far.

Just a quick FYI for everyone. Yes, this 'Brad' is important. She's not going crazy for nothing! :)
Chapter 4

Get Dean and Lisa. It sounded easy enough, but it really wasn't. Locating Lisa was easiest, she was in their self titled dining hall cleaning up after another meal. She really was a great girl, cheery most of the time as long as Dean wasn't around. She could cook and shoot and people actually liked her. While Lisa was quick to drop everything and rush to Castiel's aid, Dean was not.

Chuck first checked hi cabin, which of course was empty. It never hurt to look though. Then he checked the rest of the buildings according to a schedule that Dean kept. It wasn't written out, but after a while one could predict where he would spend his nights. Usually it depended on his mood.

For example if he had just gotten back in with the team after a few days on the road, he would go see Pamela. A busty young brunette who Chuck was sure was some sort of adult entertainer before the whole demonic virus thing had taken it's toll. Dean didn't even need to say a word when he showed up at Pamela's cabin. She would open the door and Dean would walk in, clothes were off within seconds. Given the fact that they had just returned yesterday from another road trip he should have been at Pamela's cabin, but he wasn't. Chuck checked all the usual spots and to his chagrin, Dean wasn't anywhere to be found.

He had to widen the search to other cabins now. More specifically, to the cabins of the women that flocked around Castiel. He personally found ti ridiculous. With the exception of Lisa and one or two married or dating couples, the women in the camp were divided by who they 'enjoyed' more. There were Dean girls and Castiel girls, and then those smart enough to not get involved with either them. They didn't get a special title like the others, they were just girls. There weren't any Chuck girls yet, but he was working on it.

Now he was sifting through what was more or less Castiel's side of camp. Chuck wasn't sure which of Cas' women would go to Dean. He had to add in the fact that Castiel had not been free to give his usual lesson…whatever it was he taught them. Chuck, personally never could pay much attention to the ex-angel's teachings. The women ate it up though. Besides, he was too busy to try and understand group perception. He had to keep track of the ever dwindling supplies they had, not to mention his other part-time job which involved following Dean around and attempting to be supportive. He really was much better with keeping inventory.

He imagined that Lisa was already with Castiel and the woman. The search was getting tiring. He'd struck out at cabins one, two, three and four. The women were only interested finding out why Castiel hadn't graced them with his glorious presence. Chuck's reply was a nervous laugh and a quick exit every time. He was debating whether or not to knock on the next cabin, in case something was going wrong and Castiel and Lisa needed a hand; someone to hold a flashlight or something similar.

Not even taking the time to knock, he simply grabbed the handle and shoved the door open. Instantly he realized his mistake. "Oh god…" He sounded two steps beyond mortified, like he'd just witnessed someone killing cute woodlands creatures.

His left hand rushed up to cover his eyes, but in those few seconds he had already seen too much. He felt irritated and embarrassed all at the same time. That solved so many unanswered questions. Like where Dean was, and where that last can of whipped cream had gone. Dean told them that they couldn't be wasteful yet here he was…with Nancy, one of Castiels girls, and the last can of whipped cream.

Chuck wasn't even sure if either of them had noticed the door open at first, granted they were
obviously too busy to stop and say hello. "Dean!" The man scrambled, turning back towards the door. "She's awake, Cas wants you at the cabin!" and with that Chuck was back out the door before either got a chance to so much as blink. He heard the bed creak and Dean let out a slew of curse words which were no doubt, directed at him. Chuck had found him and passed the message on. Now his job was done.

Burying her head in a stranger's shirt and crying wasn't normally how she woke up, but under the circumstances she allowed it to happen. It didn't make Allison feel better and she didn't actually know why she was crying. It was all so overwhelming. She couldn't remember what happened, she didn't know why she wasn't at the factory anymore.

She didn't know why she was in pain or why she wasn't wearing pants. She didn't know why Brad wasn't there. Allison was oblivious and that alone scared her more than anything.

She'd heard the man tell her that she needed to lie down but that didn't matter. She didn't trust herself enough to move. She couldn't feel his arm loosely wrapped around her, which would have kept her upright had she decided to attempt the feat after all. Everything ached from her eyes right down to her toes. So she opted to stay there, focusing her efforts on trying to shut off the water works.

If Castiel had been thankful when Chuck had showed up, he was practically thrilled when Lisa barged in. Of course it was an inner sort of joy that didn't actually show on his face or in his voice, but it was there none the less.

"What happened?" Much like their prophet friend Lisa looked fairly surprised to see the girl virtually attached to Castiel.

If it weren't for the fact that her fingernails were now digging painfully into his shoulder blades he might have shrugged. Castiel feared the upwards motion would draw blood and opted to not. "She woke up a few minutes ago. I believe she's sick, she has a fever at the very least."

He paused for a moment, turning his head to see Lisa rummage through the tattered rucksack that she had brought along. He could practically hear the maternal lecture and questions before she'd even opened her mouth. "I told her that she needed to lie down. She's chosen to ignore me instead."

The instant he said it he felt the fingernails dig into his shoulder, causing him to cringe.

Of course she was ignoring him. They were talking about her as if she were in some sort of vegetative state and not standing there crying her pretty brown eyes out. She reluctantly pulled her head away as the new voice neared. A woman mumbling something about listening skills and how some people weren't capable of doing anything themselves.

The woman was standing beside her now, a cautious smile on her face. Like the type nurses and doctors wore before they gave someone bad news. Much like the man, Allison noted that she too looked eerily familiar – but once again she couldn't place the person.

"I'm Lisa," She introduced herself properly. "and the man you're trying to draw blood from is Cas."

Lisa and Cas. Cas, that wasn't a very masculine name. Allison pressed the side of her face against the damp section of the shirt, loosen her grip every so slightly. Now she could look at Lisa. The small smile faded when the two finally made eye contact. She felt like shit, so she assumed that she also looked the part. The brunette carefully reached out and pressed her palm against her forehead. Allison flinched as the cooler skin came in contact with her own.

"I told you that she was feverish." Cas muttered anxiously. To which Lisa merely rolled her eyes and
carried on as if he hadn't said anything at all.

"What's your name?" He knew it was inappropriate to answer for her, the woman had already proven that she could speak. Lisa waited patiently and Allison seemed to debate whether or not to trust the woman with such important information. After about a minute he decided to step in, anything to get out of the wet shirt.

Before the words even rolled off his tongue he had two sets of eyes staring at him. It was rather eerie. "Allison…Her name is Allison." Castiel offered. Lisa left it at that, but he chanced a glance down to the female who had more or less seemed to become an extension of his own body, and she looked shocked.

It would have been nicer if the woman herself had answered, but she was going to take what she could get. Later she would ask how Castiel had figured that one out; but for now she had work to do."Alright, Allison? I can tell that you're not feeling so great and I think I know why. I need you to lie down though. I'm not going to hurt you."

More hesitation. By now Castiel was almost tempted to let go of Allison entirely and either let her fall to the floor or onto the bed. There was something wrong and she was acting like a scared little doe. He could understand why someone in her position might be frightened, but to him this seemed ridiculous. The camp generally lacked this sort of excitement.

Finally Allison moved her hands off of his shoulders and slowly turned towards the bed. She didn't say anything and she didn't look at either of them but Cas had a feeling that she was less than thrilled about what must have felt like a staggering defeat. He didn't know why, but she seemed like she might be the stubborn and headstrong type. Like Dean but possibly more pleasant.

He let go of her waist to have Lisa take his place. She carefully maneuvered the girl back to the bed. Now he was free to inspect the damage while Lisa did her thing and while he waited on Dean.

His light blue button down shirt had a large wet spot on the upper left side of his chest, but nothing dramatic. It would dry. Besides clothing was the least of his worries. He had known that it was going to be a long night before the night had even begun and so far he hadn't been wrong. While Lisa worked her magic he would talk to Dean; if the man ever showed up. Castiel was mildly curious as to where exactly they had found poor Allison McKinnon, and if there had been a Brad nearby at the time.

Her pleading struck a note with him; not only because it had been so loud. A human condition, grief and sorrow. She was a prime example of such emotions. She'd demanded to know where this man was. As to why, he wasn't sure. There really was only so much that one could get off of a small wallet sized picture and a few licenses. He assumed that the Brad she had wanted so desperately moments before had some sort of tie to her. Likely emotional, given her reaction. She was just starting to settle down and he had the feeling that asking her about this Brad would set her off all over again. So instead he waited quietly by the door, keeping a watchful eye over the two.

Ten minutes later Dean finally decided to grace them with his presence. Allison tried to sit up to see who had entered the cabin this time, but Lisa assured her that the man was no one important and for the first time that night a small smile played across his lips. Lisa had said it just loud enough for Dean to hear. The remark had been made simply to get under Dean's skin. Dean just brought out the sarcastic bitch in everyone.

"So she's alive?" Dean asked in an oddly nonchalant tone.
To which Castiel merely nodded in response. Both men were staring at the two women, though Castiel could tell that Dean likely didn't care all that much about Allison, the woman he had shot and almost killed. The oldest Winchester didn't care about much of anything anymore.

Lisa was slowly working up the edge of the shirt Allison was wearing in order to get at the bandage underneath. At which point Castiel decided to turn away, that was when he got a good look at Dean. Flushed and disheveled; but that wasn't anything new. Seeing Dean like this was nothing new, so it was easy to ignore.

Castiel let out a low sigh. "What happened?"

Dean glanced at him, one eyebrow arched. Castiel knew there was something that he wasn't being told, Dean was withholding information. Again. If the woman was going to be staying in his cabin he wanted to know where they'd found her, why she had supposedly pointed at gun at Dean.

He looked back at Lisa and didn't say anything else. Now Castiel was tired and hungry, he'd been shut in all day because Dean thought he was the world's greatest daycare provider. So Castiel decided to try again, at the very least he would get his answer one way or another.

"Was a man there with her?" He lowered his voice to a gruff rumble in an effort to avoid attracting Allison's attention. Dean shifted his weight from foot to foot and while he did his gaze wavered for a second. Just a second, but Castiel had caught the glint in his eyes.

Dean gave a him a small nod.

"Yes. There was a guy there."
"Yes. There was a guy there."

Somehow he'd seen that coming. He'd had a feeling; call it intuition or whatever you wanted. Whether or not it was the man that Allison had demanded to see, he had no way of knowing. Further digging was required.

"There was a guy there." Castiel repeated lowly, glancing back to the bed. This conversation needed to take place elsewhere. "We should step out."

Without another word the two stepped out into the cool night, leaving the women behind in the cabin. Dean leaned against the frame of the now closed door while Castiel chose to stand. "What did he look like?"

"Cas," Dean said the mans name waringly. Had he known that this was what was going to happen, he would have ignored Chuck and stayed in the damn cabin.

By now he had heard Dean say that a million times. That was usually followed by a "Shut up!" and an angry glare. He was more or less human, but being scolded like a child wasn't going to kill him. "What did he look like?" He pressed again.

"I don't know, alright? There was too much blood." Dean rubbed the back of his neck, rolling his eyes upwards over the overcast sky. Castiel frowned, but he didn't say anything. "We were at this old Ford assembly plant, we were clearing out the basement level when Lisa heard the crying. We walked into this old office and there she was with a Berretta 92 in her mouth. She wasn't a Croat and no demon would gank itself. We told her to put the gun down –"

"And that's when she pointed it at you?"

Dean nodded, continuing on "She was freaking out. Screaming about some dude named Brad. She said that if I took a step closer she'd blow my brains out. I took a step and she tried. Dodging a bullet while firing a weapon isn't the most precise art out there, Cas." He was sounding a lot more defensive now. Dean did feel a little guilt. One bullet and he'd almost killed her, she probably wouldn't have minded dying but killing a chick? A hot one no less. It was guilt worthy. In a perfect world he would have clipped her in the leg or in the arm, something to get her to drop the Berretta. Obviously they didn't live in a perfect world.

"She dropped and the crew dealt with her while I checked the other rooms. I found the guy in a room just off the main office. He was missing half his face. He ganked himself. I didn't stop to look for ID. My guess is that dude was Brad." Dean finished with a shrug.

Castiel was still processing but so far he was following along. He didn't like what he was hearing, but he had asked. Allison had meant to kill herself from the sounds of it and Dean had interrupted her. She was crying about a man when Dean had walked in. It had to be the same Brad she had asked for not long ago. If that was Brad, he was dead. He'd literally blown his own brains out. When Allison had first woken up, she'd wanted to know where Brad was. She didn't ask about the injury or where she was, though she must have noticed the change of location and the large piece of gauze that was attached to her abdomen. At that moment, Castiel felt himself grow more uncomfortable.
than he had been before.

When Lisa asked if it hurt, she nodded. The woman had taken her temperature and snapped open one of those dry ice-packs, the ones that instantly got cold when you broke the contents of the bag. The cold compress was placed on her forehead while Lisa attended to other things. Allison was too busy staring at the woman to notice that she had pulled the shirt she was wearing up a bit, revealing a large gauze square and a shitload of medical tape.

She seemed nice enough, and pretty. Her eye's were emerald green. If it weren't for a few small scars that Alli noticed here and there, she could easily picture Lisa as some sort of model. Allison didn't realize that she was staring till Lisa let out a small cough, dragging Allison's wandering mind out of the clouds.

Lisa had removed the tape and the gauze, revealing an angry red and purple row of stitches. Allison lifted her head off of the pillow in order to get a better look at what Lisa was grimacing at. The second she saw the stitches she groaned. That explained the pain. She tried to count the stitches, but she couldn't. Allison's head dropped back down to the pillow and she squeezed her eyes shut. "What the hell happened to me?"

She had just been about to apply some antibiotic ointment to the stitches when Allison asked what had happened. Lisa paused, concentrated gaze faltering. Did she really not know? Dean had shot her at the factory and then once they got her back to the camp, Lisa had removed the bullet. Allison had woken up just as the procedure had started; and that resulted in twice the amount of stitches she would have needed to get if she had stayed unconscious the whole time.

Lisa wasn't sure which route was best, the truth or something else. In the end 'something else' won out. "Looks like you had a bad day."

Allison let out a small, pained laugh. "No shit."

She needed to tell Cas and Dean. If she didn't remember what had happened, like the fact that she had been about to kill herself, things were going to be interesting.

Fifteen minutes

During that time Castiel and Dean talked, mostly about what had happened at the plant. The conversation was fairly one-sided, with Castiel asking and answering all of his own questions. After fifteen minutes, Lisa joined them outside. She took up the free spot beside Dean, crossing her arms over her chest and leaning back.

"You were right Cas. She's got an infection. I don't think it's from the cutting, she might have already been sick. I'm sure getting shot didn't help much though." Right on cue, Dean's head snapped to the side to meet Lisa's icy gaze. "I'm sure she'll be fine though."

"Great. Good to know that you two have it under control. I've got things to do." Dean sounded eager to get away. True to her form, Lisa had to shut him right down.

"Whoever she is, she can wait." Earlier Lisa's witty comebacks were enough to make him smile. Now he just rolled his eyes. If they were going to fight, they could do it later. "It's about the girl."

In an effort to keep the peace and make sure that WWIII wasn't started in front of his cabin, Castiel took the liberty of stepping in. " Is something wrong?"
Lisa nodded, running her fingers through her hair. It was a nervous tick. "You tell me? I don't think she remembers what happened. I took the bandage off and she saw the job I did, and she asked me what had happened."

"What did you say?"

"Doesn't matter," Lisa insisted. The frown on her face seemed to etch itself deeper as she spoke. "I didn't tell her about the factory or the fact that Dean here put one in her gut." Now all of them were sporting the same expressions on their faces.

The fact that Allison didn't remember could either be good or bad. Dean was leaning more towards the first, Lisa was in the middle and Castiel had chosen the latter. People that went through traumatic experiences tended to block it out. She'd been shot, she'd almost died, never mind what she might have lived through before the team had stumbled across her in the Ford plant.

"What do you want to do?" The first thing she'd said without a note of sarcasm yet. She was looking to Dean for the answers now. He actually appeared to be mulling it over.

Amazingly Dean didn't shrug this one off. If it didn't have to do with Lucifer or the hunt for the ever elusive Colt, which was still God-only-knew-where, Dean didn't seem to care much. "Don't tell her."

"Instantly, Castiel hated the idea. "She'll stay in Cas' cabin for now, no room anywhere else. We'll play it by ear."

Castiel grimaced, but silently agreed all the same. He did not want to lie, even if he had gotten good at it; and he did not wish to share his cabin. Even if there wasn't room anywhere else. If he had wanted to speak up, he was too minutes too late. Dean had finished talking and was already walking away from the cabin. Lisa was standing there beside him, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Can you believe him? He's still got a damn stick up his ass. Guess some things never change." Lisa shuddered. "I'm going to pack it in. If she gets worse, you know where I am." Not exactly ending on a happier note, but she smiled anyways.

"Goodnight Cas."

"Goodnight Lisa."

Just like that he was alone again. He looked at the worn old door, wondering if it was safe to step inside or not. Allison had calmed down and hopefully she wouldn't try to re-attach herself to him. Castiel felt too weary to make the short trek to one of the adjacent cabins. Instead he pulled open the cabin door, stepping into the slightly warmer room. Tomorrow he would deal with this and get Allison into a different cabin. Tomorrow he would lead another session, since he'd no doubt disappointed his adoring fans by staying in the cabin all day. All that would be done tomorrow, but tonight all he would do was get acquainted with the floor. Not thrilling, but he wasn't sure he could handle the excitement. Like any fairly sane-minded human would, he wanted to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

So...Have you met Brad? Thank God Cas isn't an angel anymore eh? Lying should come easy, right? As always guys, Thank you so much for reading! :)}
After Lisa had left the cabin she had been alone for a few minutes, but then Cas came in. He didn't say a word to her; instead he took one of the pillows off of the bed and placed it on the floor. He didn't exactly look happy or comfortable, but Allison decided not to bring it up. The bed wasn't big enough for the both of them anyway.

Within minutes Cas was out cold, passed out right there on the floor. Unlike him sleep didn't come to fetch her so quickly. Two hours later she was still lying there, just staring at the ceiling. She envied the man on the floor. She wanted to sleep but the fever had a mind of it's own. Rest was not on the agenda. Instead, Allison watched Cas sleep. She couldn't help but feel a little creepy as her eyes rested on the sleeping man. What else was there to do? Not much.

The awkward feeling did pass after an hour or so. It was innocent enough; it wasn't as if she were undressing him with her eyes. If their paths had somehow crossed five or six years ago, that might have been something she would do. He was attractive. Extremely attractive, and his eyes! The first thing she had seen when she had woken up was his eyes. There was something about this man that was intriguing. Though over the past few years, Allison noted that most of the remaining population was intriguing in some way.

For two hours she watched him, studying the rise and fall of his chest and the small changes in facial expressions. For two hours she felt bad about stealing his bed. She stared and thought about her own situation. Somehow she'd gotten hurt and sick after that. She'd been separated from Brad and taken in by a group of strangers. A sort of thing that would normally have her rushing for a gun and holy water, but she couldn't explain it; she didn't feel threatened. Lying in the same room as a strange man? Letting a woman play doctor with her? She prided herself with being a good judge of character, so far the few people she'd come in contact with seemed nice enough, and sane. Not flesh eating zombies infected by some fucking virus. Brad had told her that some people had the balls to make camps or safe havens, though they had never stopped at one. He had insisted that they were better off on their own anyways. Overtime, Allison had grown used to it. It had always just been the two of them. Being around other people was just so rare.

People weren't all that bad. At least they didn't used to be like that. Events changed and shaped them. For example, Allison hadn't always been good with a gun. People got sick and suddenly humanity was on the brink, everyone thought that the world was ending. Well not everyone, there were a few nut jobs that pinned it on Global Warming. Five years back, she never would have guessed she'd end up being a formidable marks-woman. Her life was one of the many that had changed dramatically. The things she had been exposed to, everything that she had seen and killed. Adapting was the only way to survive it and that was a lesson that she learned quickly

As she lay there she wondered what his story was. Everyone had one, even if they didn't want to
admit it. Cas looked like he had a story, it was a funny conclusion to jump to seeing is that the man had said only a handful of words to her and she knew nothing about him. There was just something about him.

She fell asleep to that curious thought. For a little while, for the first time since she had woken up; Allison's thoughts drifted from Brad.
Moments

Morning came around quickly. By the time Allison forced her eyes open it had felt like she'd only just fallen asleep. She really hadn't slept for long. Rest was a luxury that she didn't indulge herself in, she found it painfully difficult on the best of days. Instead of driving her head underneath the pillow she slowly sat herself up, wary of the bandages this time around. The first thing she noticed was that Cast was gone. The pillow he had been using was up on the table with a pile of clothes and a crumpled piece of paper.

The paper, as it turned out was a note to her.

'these should fit.
If you're feeling up to it, get some fresh air.
It'll help – Lisa.'

She discarded the note and picked up the clothes, eying them doubtfully. Allison would have preferred her clothes, but God only knew where they had gone. She picked up the pair of worn dark blue jeans, they were actually similar to the ones she'd been wearing, but those had blow outs at both knees. Allison slowly slid them on, surprised to find that they fit like a glove. She considered pulling on the navy blue t-shirt that was there and waiting, but instead she left Cas' shirt on.

After a brief shirt she found her hiking boots and the socks, they had been tucked under the bed with her bag. Allison wasn't happy when she did a stock check. Her guns were missing, as were her knives. At any given time she had at least one item on her that could cause serious damage to anything or anyone she found herself up against. She almost felt naked without them. Allison hoped that someone had checked her bag, removed the weapons and out them somewhere safe and somewhere that she had access to, she planned on getting them back; but first the fresh air.

The world outside of the small cabin was covered with fog and the smell of smoke; she could see a fire pit burning not far from where she stood. There were various other cabins and buildings and to Allison herself, it seemed obvious that the place had been a summer camp or something. She had been to one or two summer camps growing up. She wrapped her arms around herself, an attempt to keep the edgy chill in the air away. Allison decided to venture, an attempt to get her bearings. The few people around the fire had stopped what they were doing and turned to stare at her, each gaze was cold and calculating. Almost immediately she felt one edge. No one came up to her; in fact people actually walked the other way when she shuffled in their direction. It wasn't as if she had the plague, she probably looked half dead but she certainly wasn't.

She would have felt better if she'd had so much as a jackknife on her. Everyone looked like they wanted to beat her into a bloody pulp or something. She made a point to stay away from the large bonfire, no matter how warm and welcoming it looked. The icy reception was enough to make her want to fallback to the cabin, and she might have had someone not called her name.

"Allison!"

It came from the hall behind her. At first she simply thought that someone else had the same name, it wasn't a crazy thought; but no one moved or yelled a response. She didn't recognize the voice, but she recognized the face. Lisa was jogging towards her, smile and all.
"You feeling better? It's good to see you up." Lisa sounded surprisingly cheery. Unlike everyone else, Allison didn't feel like the woman wanted to rip her throat out.

Allison shrugged in response; it seemed to be a better answer than any verbal response. Lisa didn't push the envelope either. "How 'bout the grand tour? Unless you were heading back inside...in that case it could wait." Lisa offered, and she felt inclined to accept. It was a nice offer, and getting to know her surroundings would make her feel more at ease.

"As long as you make sure no one tries to jump me..." Her words wandered off as she glanced back at the bonfire. The people surrounding it were no longer glaring daggers at her, but she could practically feel them talking about her. It was like high school all over again.

Lisa had been about to laugh, till she realized that Allison was being serious. She understood why. This was the way they worked. Outsider friendly was something they were not. She remembered her first few weeks at the camp. No one trusted her; everywhere she turned she got the evil eye. Adjusting was a bitch but she'd shrugged it off. She'd soon found friends in Chuck and Cas, the first two to actually hold a conversation with her. Eventually she earned her spot and the people became more accepting; but till that fateful day she spent every other second looking over her shoulder.

She was reassuring by nature, good with people as long as they weren't assholes. Basically, she was good with everyone but Dean. She placed a hand onto Allison's shoulder, nodding towards the dining hall.

"Hungry?"

The dining hall had been the first stop, where she'd gotten some weak tea and toast. She'd also met a man named Chuck and a woman named Pamela. Lisa had broken up an argument about whipped cream, Allison was fuzzy on the details.

The two traveled from building to building and cabin to cabin. Though Lisa purposely skipped actual introductions with other people. She'd point them out and name names, give her a little background but she didn't approach them. That suited her fine. She'd only gotten one warm 'Hello' today, and that was good enough. Chuck seemed like a sweet guy.

When they came to the final cabin they didn't step in right away, but Lisa wanted to show her around this one in particular. Allison found it funny that the woman pressed her ear against the door. She had no idea why Lisa was listening to whatever was or wasn't going on; only that she was in fact concentrating. After a good five minutes of silence Lisa rolled her eyes and reached for the door knob, slowly turning and simultaneously pushing it open. She stepped in and Allison followed suit.

She could hear the soft murmuring and occasional giggle before she stepped in the door. Allison had to admit, she was confused. Lisa on the other hand merely rolled her eyes. Alli understood why, at least her adult mind did. There were four flushed women, all in the process of trying to get dressed. A glistening layer of sweat covered each of them, if that and the lack of clothing wasn't an indicator the look on their faces was.

"As I was saying, it's the physical connection we've been discussing, the key to a total shared perception." A husky voice was speaking off to the side. For some reason, Allison had to bite her tongue when she saw the half-dressed male figure.

Looking equally flushed and sweaty was the man that Lisa had introduced as Cas the night before. The guy who's bed she had 'stolen'. He was standing off to the back of the room, getting dressed like everyone else. Beside her, Lisa acted as if this were normal. She didn't look shocked or disgusted.
Allison herself was torn between laughing or doing something childish, like saying "That's gross" as loud as she possibly could.

"Did they just –"

"Orgy."

Allison nodded her head at Lisa's whispered response, her mouth forming a small "oh". Allison didn't ask for a further explanation. This was one of those things were just better left alone. The women had gotten dressed and were now heading towards the door. Whatever had been going on, it looked like they had missed it; which was probably for the better.

The two of them stood off to the side, watching the cabin empty. Cas was standing in the center of the room, beaming as if he'd just climbed Mount Everest. "You were wonderful today! So eager and full of life…" His words trailed off as his dark eyes finally acknowledged Lisa and her guest. The over the top smile mellowed down some, making him look only slightly crazy.

"You already met Cas. This is where he brainwashes vulnerable woman who don't know any better." Lisa said it all with a smile, but Alli got the feeling that the sweet tone was part of the overall sarcastic package. At Lisa's remark, Castiel's face fell.

Suddenly the room felt tense. Though she could have easily been imagining it. Cas let out a small sigh, shoving his hands into the side pockets of his pants. "It's always a fair exchange," He began in a mellow voice. Only pausing to take a small yellow prescription container out of his jeans. A small smile skittered across his face when he popped the white cap off. "Knowledge for –"

"Women and decadence, I know." Lisa finished with a weary smile. It sounded like she'd heard the speech many times before. That or she just had a knack for finishing other people's sentences. Now both of them had faint smiles plastered onto their faces. Allison couldn't help but feel a little bit lost.

"How are you feeling?" Cas broke the awkward silence with the question.

To her surprised, he actually sounded genuinely interested. Allison let out a soft breath, " Y'know… sore, sick. Aside from that though, I'm just awesome."

He didn't say anything in response; instead he turned his attention back to the pill bottle. He poured the contents onto his hand, then held it out. Allison studied the pills for a moment. She recognized them, pain killers. She couldn't decide whether the silent offer was nice or creepy. Normal people didn't take drugs from strangers. Lisa was right there, she wasn't saying anything. Allison weighed the pro's and con's. He was offering her painkillers and she was in pain. Allison took two of the pills and promptly popped them into her mouth, cringing as she swallowed them back. Cas did the same thing with the remaining two.

Lisa placed her hand on Allison's shoulder, giving it a light squeeze. "Hate to ruin the moment but I need to talk to Dean. You can hang out with Cas for a bit." The brunette suggested. Cas didn't look entirely happy with the idea, but he didn't tell Lisa to forget about it. Allison was fine with this as the last tour stop, the walking had put a bit of strain on the still infected gash. Being left alone in a place that had just housed an orgy, not to mention being left with the single male participant himself, wasn't exactly her idea of a good time – but she'd had worse. A lot worse.

"Don't worry, I don't bite."

Allison let out an unintentional snort. "Yeah? That's what they all say."

Lisa clapped her hands together, now wearing a smile that had to be fake. "You two will get along
great."
"Do you normally offer strangers narcotics?" Question flew from her lips the second Lisa was out of sight. She couldn't help it, of course if he said yes it wouldn't really matter. It was just a stupid question – an icebreaker. Allison wasn't always the world's best conversationalist but anything beat an awkward silence; which was exactly what Lisa had left them to.

Cas was amused by the question. His eyes brows shot up in a surprised fashion. "I assumed you could use them…" His dark eyes slipped from her face and down to her torso. It wasn't exactly quick either. For a second she felt like he was trying to use some sort of x-ray visions. He wasn't focusing too hard, but the lingering made up for that. Finally his gaze worked its way down near the hem of the shirt, stopping on the spot that had she been topless, would reveal the large gauze wrappings and the ugly wound underneath.

Allison's right hand suddenly came to life, pressing against her side. She cringed as the fabric scraped the raw skin underneath. Applying pressure wasn't the smartest move, and she had no idea why she'd felt the sudden urge to cover something that was already out of sight. No, that wasn't quite true. It was the way he was staring at her. He knew that there was something there.

He must have sensed the harsh vibes coming off of her because once her hand moved, his eyes did the same. His timing was great because she could virtually feel the grossly sarcastic comment on the tip of her tongue. Allison diverted certain doom by stepping into the center of the room, which looked smaller from her knew vantage point. There was a small disheveled bed and an off colored rug covering a section of the carpet. There had to be at least a dozen lit candles spread about the room, there were even a few lamps. This was by far nicer than the place she had woken up in.

"So, Cas," His name hung in the air for a moment while she tried to find a place to sit. There was no way in hell she was going near the bed. She wasn't sure if the rug was a safer bet, but she couldn't see any questionable stains on it. "Take advantage of vulnerable women often?"

He let her get her bearings. Scanning the room uninterrupted, like she was looking for a bogeyman in the corner. Once Allison seemed to find the space comfortable, she slowly lowered herself down onto the carpet. Sitting cross legged had to come with a little discomfort but he could see why the bed may not have been a willing first choice.

Castiel liked her. There was something about Allison that he found interesting. For other reasons aside from the obvious. With some sleep and some food, possible some good health she would no doubt be attractive. The first time he had seen her she'd been bleeding out, pale as death. Getting shock took a toll on people that way. Even bloodied up, she was striking. She had an attitude, as she'd already made obvious. Castiel knelt down across from her, sitting a few feet away.

Her question made him laugh, actually laugh. Lisa never had been one to describe a situation fairly, at least not his situation. The mental state of most of the women he met had been altered slightly at the least by the various trials and tribulations that befallen them.

"Vulnerable is a world you could use to describe them, yes. There is a difference between being vulnerable and being stupid. "He watched Allison tilt her head to the side, the action sort of reminded him of all those curious animals in advertisements and children books. "They know what they are taking part in – "

"Orgies?"
"Spiritual lessons." Castiel quickly corrected.

Allison shook her head slowly, side to side. Tangled brown hair ruffling. He knew how it might sound to an outsider, someone not familiar with the way he worked and thought – he expected the awkward pause and uncertain looks. To his surprise, he got neither from the woman.

"Worlds gone to hell and you're giving out free Sunday school classes with a side of sex?" His smirk faded. Cas hadn't been prepared for a remark like that. He bit his tongue, eying her carefully. "I don't really think anyone cares about being spiritual now," Her dark eyes slowly rolled towards the ceiling, as if she were addressing some sort of audience above. "If anyone up there gave a damn, would you be doing this hippy junk and hiding out here at camp Crystal Lake?" Allison bowed her head, shutting her eyes. The edge in her voice had been impossible to mix.

He imagined the last part was some sort of movie reference, it sounded vaguely familiar. However it wasn't the last part that had caught his attention. Cas wondered if she knew the truth, the whole nine yards. Most people alive today did, at least the ones in their camp. They knew about demons and angels, Michael and Lucifer – their vessels. They knew that the monsters that took refuge under their beds and in their closets were real.

Castiel decided to counter with a carefully worded question of his own. "Do you believe in God?"

The room went deathly silent. He could have sworn that for a split second Allison had stopped breathing. There was something different when she looked at him next. The glint her eyes shone with moments before was gone entirely; it was like the dark brown hues had been entirely stripped of their life and light.

"When I was little I went to church and said my prayers before bed. When you're a kid it's nice to think that someone will always love you and will always be there for you…but if God was out there and he cared, if he really loved us do you think any of this would have happened?" Her eyes turned hazy, like she was about to cry. She hadn't given him a definitive yes or no, but Castiel felt it safe to assume that somewhere in there she was leaning towards the latter.

As if realizing this that she hadn't actually said yes or no – she trudged on. "Do I think he's out there? Sure. Do I think that he actually gives a fuck about any single person on this planet? Not a chance."

Allison muttered quietly. Her state of mind reflected everyone else She had a valid argument. His Father had no interest in assisting the human race, or ending Lucifer's run of the earthly domain. No, the sons were to fend for themselves. Their Father had turned a blind eye to them.

"Can I ask you something?" The words came out in an almost normal tone this time. She was no longer avoiding his gaze.

Castiel nodded. "Go ahead."

Allison paused for a moment as if she were trying to put together her inquiry word for word beforehand. Finally she asked, and it hadn't at all been what he'd been expecting. "What's your name?"

Generally, the subject of God was turned back to his own feelings on the matter. Allison had literally picked an entirely different topic. His blank stare spoke volumes.

"I mean…Cas isn't your real name, is it? That's way too feminine."

Now he understood. She was right though, Cas was just a nickname. Because the Winchester brothers couldn't seem to handle 'Castiel'. It was the more human alternative that he quickly adopted.
"It's Castiel." He replied flatly - not missing a beat. Now Allison stared. Slowly, the slight confusion gave way to something else. For the first time she smiled. It wasn't a small awkward upturn of the lips; it was a legitimate facial expression. An expression which he found oddly adorable.

She let out a laugh, batting a lock of hair away from her eyes. "Castiel? Seriously? Did your parents hate you?"

Now it was his turn to chuckle. No comment on how elegant and old-world it sounded. This was also new to him. Heck, the first time he'd met Lisa the first thing she'd said was that his name sounded gorgeous. He wondered if it was the painkillers, or if she found his name genuinely funny. Cas didn't ruin her moment, instead he went with it.

"I think they might have."
The Answer

She felt as if she may have struck a nerve. On the outside he didn't look like he had taken offense to her question and her unneeded response; but no man was great with his feelings. Even in the end of days, that didn't make them open themselves up. So Allison did the only that came to mind. "Ask me."

Castiel stared at her blankly, as if she were speaking some sort of foreign language.

"Ask me something, I'm an open book." Allison treaded lightly. Telling him to ask her something beat her making an awkward and less than sincere apology. She wasn't exactly an open book, but she couldn't think of anything the man could possibly ask that would get under her skin.

She couldn't read the expression on his face; it looked like he was lost in his own little world. Allison wasn't sure if he had heard her at all.

"Who is Brad?" Castiel asked lowly. Something new swept over what had previously been a blank canvas. Allison cringed.

She vaguely remembered when she'd woken up and practically choked Cas with his own shirt collar. The first words out of her mouth hadn't been "Who the hell are you?". She'd demanded to know where Brad was. Since the damn virus they had been inseparable to wake up in a strange place with a man who wasn't Brad close by – that was completely nerve racking.

Allison wasn't sure how to respond to the question, or if she should say anything at all. Cas was sitting there quietly – but he looked like he was expecting something. The woman let out a small sigh. Next time she wouldn't use the term 'open book' so loosely.

She licked her already chapped lips. An anxious action, it felt like she was preparing to address the nation or something. "Brad was – no is, he is my brother." She looked up at Cas and it felt like he was silently pushing her to spill more, something that she was uncomfortable with doing.

"I saw the pictures in your bag."

"You messed with my stuff?" Allison asked icily. In an instant, he could practically feel the invisible walls go up all around her. Suddenly there was an underlying tone of hostility to the room.

The idea of him, or anyone touching the things that had kept her alive since the world had gone to tell irked her. It irked her to a near-violent extreme. That explained why her weapons were missing, and why the expensive flask that had held whiskey at one point was empty. Her entire arsenal was in that damn bag. Holy water, the salt... the books. Dammit. What if they thought she was some sort of freak? Freaks didn't last, they got killed.

So this Brad guy was her brother. They had the same last name, after all. She wasn't wearing some sort of tacky ring to symbolize union. That cleared up sections of the picture. He'd been about to ask something else, but he'd messed up his own opportunity. Apparently reasons now caused issues.

He rolled his shoulders as if he were literally trying to shrug it off. "I did and I was impressed." A weak attempt to change the subject wasn't likely to kill either of them. Besides, in this state he was sure that he could take in her a fight.

"Impressed?"
Castiel nodded "Mhm. The texts you have? Most of those are incredibly hard to come by."

It sounded like a compliment, but they were on thin ice now. So he'd seen her books, and wasn't freaking out. Calling her a witch or something. "I want my stuff back."

He laughed, placing his hands on his knees. "We'll talk to Dean, he probably has it. Though you won't need them in the camp. It's safe here." He spoke with a pure tone of truth. The whole damn camp was safeguarded to the best of their human ( and slightly angelic ) abilities. Allison didn't look so easily convinced.

"Everything?" Allison was skeptical. The virus? Demons, other stuff? Did he even know about demons? Nowadays a lot of people did – but that wasn't always the case. She herself hadn't learned until they had aided a hunter, fighting off a horde of black-eyed bastards and getting a crash course at all the same time.

"Everything." Castiel repeated slowly. It looked like she wanted to ask something else, challenge his claims.

She rubbed her forehead, teeth gently gnawing on the inside of her cheek. "The things in the books?" Allison finally asked after an agonizing moment of silent debate.

He caught what she was trying to ask instantly. Only an idiot could have missed it. She was asking about demons for starters. The first few books dealt with possession and other things. "Especially the things in the books." Castiel assured her. So they couldn't safe guard against every supernatural creature out there, but they'd dealt with the biggest threats. She seemed to settle slightly when he responded. That brought up more questions though. He could only assume that she was a hunter, or her brother had been one. If she knew about demons did she know about everything else?

About vessels, Lucifer or angels? He planned to find out.
The Question

'November 15th,

Alli got two of them. Thank God one of use can recite that Latin crap. I took the other one. We’d lost the rest, that or the thing in white had called them off. I can still hear him laughing; the things he said. He’d been watching Allison. He’d said that he’d seen us back in Penn. State. I’m a good hunter, I don't miss my mark. I shot him at least three times. Three rounds to the chest and he barely flinched. He’d said that he was impressed – siblings staying together. He wished that his family were around to see our example...'

Lisa's eyes darkened as she shut the tattered composition book. One of the things in the other duffel bag that they had brought back, they’d assumed it belonged to the man who had blown his brains out. Dean had only just gotten around to skimming the journal himself. That was why Dean had called the small-scale meeting.

"How the hell did they get away?" Dean asked coldly, placing his palms on the table. She couldn't give him an answer. The entry recounted a run in with a 'man in white' and a group of demons. There was no doubt in her mind that the 'man' was Lucifer himself. There was no name given in an entry, but there was no way it could be anyone else. The troubling part, as Dean had voiced. How had they gotten away?

She flipped back to the first pages, nothing of use in there. It just talked about the places they'd gone and the people they'd run into. The November 15th entry was the last. Not the last entries as in there were a host of blank pages left after that. It was literally the last page in the notebook. The rest had been torn out. Judging by the edges that were still attached to the binding, there was a least one more entry – but God only knew what had happened to it.

Dean reached over, snatching the journal out of Lisa's hands. "They got lucky?" She offered timidly.

"You think?" Dean bit back.

Okay, she had to admit she deserved that one. Luck was the only possible reason. Something had to be looking down on them that day. People didn't just run in with Lucifer and survive to tell the tale. In fact, only a handful of people ever did. To her knowledge most of those people were in their own camp. Lucifer had sent demons after them but why didn't he kill them himself? If the guy had shot him? A few rounds wouldn't kill the Prince of Darkness, but it would annoy him. It was Satan for crying out loud – he didn't need a reason to end lives.

"So we're thinking this belonged to suicide-guy?" Dean nodded, eyes not once leaving the page to further acknowledge Lisa. The encounter had taken place well over a year ago, given the date. Still. Running into Lucifer? Maybe that was why he killed himself. Even that didn't quite fit. Lisa didn't think the man would willingly leave his sister to fend for herself. He had the Eldest Child Complex, on numerous occasions he'd written down that while Allison was skilled, he didn't think she could survive on her own.

This was not how she had wanted to spend her her day. Trying to figure out how the devil himself thought.

Dean closed the journal and placed it back onto the old wooden table. "I want to talk to her." He
demanded gruffly.

Lisa tilted her chair back, crossing her arms. The two locked glares. He was silently daring her to speak. As always, she rose to the occasion. "She has a nam-" Dean held up his hand to stop her.

"Don't give me the damn manners speech again. The chick's got a name? That's great. Doesn't mean jack to me." The Winchester snarled.

The brunette flinched. She had to bit her tongue to keep the acidic remark from flying. There wasn't much that meant anything to Dean Winchester. Something she would point out later. She guessed that the conversation was over because Dean had already jerked the cabin door open. This really wasn't how she had wanted to spend her day. She knew exactly where he was going and she could already hear the conversation playing out in her mind.

Allison was just getting back on her feet; she already knew that most of the camp disliked her. She didn't need an interrogation. It could at least wait till she could hold her own ground against Dean. Lisa also wanted to know why the devil hadn't let them go, but she wasn't about to drag it out of her. After all Allison didn't remember the scene at the factory; Lisa had no idea if she could remember an event that had taken place at least a year ago.

From the look of it though, they were about to find out.
In under ten minutes he had accomplished the impossible. Allison talked to him. At his insistence she told him about how she and Brad had camped out with a pair of hunters during in the early stages of the outbreak. The hunters had saved her and her brother from a Croat infested building, after the fact the insisted that the two stuck with them. After a nasty run-in with a group of 'black eyed freaks' the hunters began to pass on their skill's to the McKinnon siblings. In a week they had been taught what some hunters took years to learn. In addition to learning how to shoot, Allison learned basic Latin. Summoning and exorcism spells, not the lightweight kind either. Castiel was thoroughly impressed.

According to her, she accepted the facts quickly – even if it scared her. Smart move, considering later on her own survival would depend on it. The hunters tossed their theories at her and she had tried to follow along. Angels pushing the apocalyptic agenda? Not surprisingly he found that she had been skeptical about the existence of angels. Which was ironic considering she had come face to face with demons. The subject of angelic beings proved to be touchy. She had been speaking openly till that point. He could have sworn that the air in the cabin grew thicker at that moment.

So angels were a sore subject. It was understandable. Angels were, for the most part, bastards. At least they had been before they started to jump ship. Anyone that was still alive would no doubt be human by now. He'd been toying with the idea of asking if she knew of the bigger picture, why everything had happened. From the sounds of it the hunters that she had stuck with had the right idea. His mouth opened but he lost all train of thought as the cabin door swung open. He slowly turned to face the visitors, while the sudden intrusion had made Allison jump to her feet.

He pleading was falling onto deaf ears. Lisa knew that it was best to just let him go, but all the same the girl didn't need to deal with the force that was Dean right now. There was a time where the Winchester would have cared about that. Human emotion had never really been his strong suit, that was more Sam's department – but Dean could be sympathetic. It had been awhile since he'd shown anything but anger, Lisa wondered if he was even capable of feeling anything anymore. She'd witnessed the change herself. Over the course of a few months Dean Winchester had turned into something hideous, something that couldn't be caged.

Dean was the first to the door but Lisa pushed him out of the way and stepped inside first. She cringed as Allison shot up. A movie that wasn't incredibly smart seeing is as she was gripping her side and leaning against the wall for support. "Just ignore him." Lisa urged as she rushed to the woman's side. Castiel slowly stood up as Dean entered the room. Ignoring Dean was like ignoring a hurricane. You just couldn't do it.

"Did you know that she had a run-in with Lucifer?"

Castiel looked from Lisa and then back to Dean. The blank look on his face spoke volumes. While the question had been aimed at him, Deans attention was fixed on Allison and Cas did not like the look on his face.

"I had a run in with who?" Alii asked through gritted teeth. Dean stepped inside the cabin, swinging the door shut behind him. Lisa who was now supporting Allison by keeping a carefully wrapped arm around at the woman's waist glared daggers at Dean.

The look on Allison's face said that Dean was crazy, but the look in her eyes said an entirely different story.

"Tall, could use a haircut, white suit, likes to bitch about his family and how he's so hard done by?"
For a split second, her face said yes. That was the only answer that Dean needed. Being a Winchester, that just wasn't good enough. If anything it only raised more questions. Something that Allison seemed to be fairly good at. Before Dean could do any further damage, Lisa jumped in. She reluctantly moved away from Alli, leaving her to support herself. "We found a journal," Lisa began slowly. Unlike other people she understood delicate matters. This was obviously one of them. "I know that you know that the man in the white suit wasn't a man. He sent demons after you. People just don't run into him and walk away like you and your brother did."

Castiel looked at Allison – who now wore one of the most expressionless faces he'd ever seen. When she spoke up, he wondered if she'd even registered all of what Lisa had said. "You have my brothers journal?" She slowly pushed herself off of the wall. Dean merely nodded his head in response. "I want it back." Alli hissed at the man.

The Winchester let out a low, hollow laugh. "No."

Allison's fists clenched at her sides so tightly that Castiel could see her knuckles turn white. "Do you have a hearing problem?" Alli countered through gritted teeth. "I said that I want it back."

"You know what I want sweetheart? World peace. "

"Dean this isn't the best time – " Cas attempted to block out the man's words, but his efforts were fruitless.

"Shut it, Cas. Go play with one of your hippies." It wasn't the first time that he'd heard that remark and it likely wouldn't be the last. Usually he shrugged it off, but this time he found it oddly offensive. Those beautiful women were not hippies.

Lisa threw her hands up in the air, a gesture that both men were all too familiar with. "Christ Dean. That's enough! You shot her and now you want to terrorize her?" At that instant the room fell deathly silent. Lisa's eyes widened and her cheeks flooded with crimson. Dean had flicked Lisa's switch and in turn, she had flicked his.

"She didn't need to know that!" Dean barked.

"Oh right, I forgot. We lie. Sorry." Between Dean and Lisa's vicious attacks, no one seemed to notice Allison. Standing there, looking much like a deer in the headlights. Castiel himself had been watching the leader and Lisa verbally battle it out.

The two looked as if they were two seconds away from going for each other's throats. To anyone who had been in the camp for more than a week this was nothing but an everyday occurrence. This is what Dean and Lisa did. They fought, "Why don't you just give her back the damn journal!"

Over the yelling no one heard Allison. "He shot me?"

Dean's jaw set and his eyes narrowed. "No one asked for your help. " A shot directed back at Lisa.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Allison moving forward. The other two were so wrapped up in their own argument, it was like the rest of the world was invisible to them. "Allison!" His arms shot out, attempting to grab the woman before she got any closer to Dean. His fingers grazed the fabric of her shirt but he couldn't get a hold. She was in between Lisa and Dean in the blink of an eye.

He didn't actually see what happened, but he heard it. The sound of a fist connecting with someone's face. It had happened fast. Dean's head snapped to the side, the man yelled a slew of curse words as
he attempted to regain his composure – he'd almost been knocked off balance. Allison was cradling her right hand, eyes brimming with tears. "You're lucky that I don't have a gun..." The woman murmured as she moved backwards. Lisa was standing behind her guiding her away from Dean. The other woman looked surprised but smug. Dean looked shocked and extremely pissed off. There was an angry red patch of skin on the side of his face now; from where Castiel stood it looked like it hurt.

Dean didn't say anything else. Not even a word. He didn't give either woman a withering glare, instead he stormed out of the cabin. Castiel was amazed that the door didn't fly straight off the hinges. Dean pushed his way through the small crowd that had gathered outside, no doubt they wanted to know what was going on.

When he looked back at Allison the tears that she had been holding back were slowly streaming down her face. Lisa was by her side, quietly mumbling something about Dean deserving it. Castiel had to agree. Most of the time he found a way to side with their fearless leader, but this time Dean had been out of line.

If this was any indicator, it was going to be a very long day.
Liar

He didn't see Dean for the rest of the day. Even when Chuck and the rest of the dining crew rang the cliché dinner bell, the Winchester was nowhere to be seen. Knowing the man the way he did – it didn't exactly surprise him. Like any hunter he and an ego, a special type of ego that wasn't easily shattered. Being hit, no being punched by a girl must have done the trick. Dean was no stranger to the odd slap but Allison had full on decked him. Somehow she'd managed to put enough force behind it to make him stumble. Since she was a girl, Dean didn't hit back. That was for the most part the only civilized quality that he still possessed.

Castiel had stayed behind with Lisa to make sure that everything was okay. Aside from extremely pissed off, ill, tired and in pain Allison was fine. Shaken up but really, it was nothing that a few hardcore narcotics couldn't take care of. Lisa had convinced Allison to take a dose of high-grade painkillers, in addition to a small dosage of antibiotic medication to take care of the infection and fever. Once she had forced the medicine down they helped her back to his cabin. This time he didn't feel the strong urge to object to her lying on the bed. The woman looked as if she'd been hit by a fast moving vehicle – she was both emotionally and physically exhausted.

Lisa had stayed around to keep an eye on her though as it turned out, Allison didn't need the company. The medication put her out like a light. Lisa left shortly after the woman fell asleep but Castiel stayed watch till around dinner, where he gave himself a much needed break. He'd considered going to talk to Dean, possibly trying to get the journal back but according to his followers – he wasn't taking visitors. Cas went back to his 'teaching' cabin where a late night meeting took place. That kept him occupied for a few hours.

Sometime after midnight he made his way back to his sleeping quarters, ready to spend another night on the floor. When he reached the cabin he saw the dim glow of lights struggling to get out through the curtains. When he reached the front door he slowly worked it open, pulling it back just enough to glance inside. The first thing he noticed was that the bed was bare. Every scrap of linen was in a rumpled pile on the floor. In the center of that pile sat Allison. In her hands was one of the orange prescription pill bottles that he'd stuffed under the mattress. A supply that Lisa didn't know about.

"I would have shot him y'know. I am very good at…shooting things." Allison mumbled. Whether it was to herself or to him he couldn't be sure. She wasn't looking up at him, didn't so much as flinch when he'd entered the cabin.

Castiel surveyed the mess. Both the state of the cabin and the woman sitting propped against the bed frame. The duffel bag had been dumped on the table. It's contents spread across the tabletop with the odd item on the floor. The bag, it seemed had been thrown across the room. He reluctantly settled in the old wooden chair that was across from Allison. Her head shot up when the wood groaned underneath his weight. Her eyes had an odd glaze to them, a look that Castiel was no stranger too.

Allison smiled weakly and held out the pill bottle to him. "These were nice…do you have anymore?" She asked cautiously. Castiel took the bottle and examined the label. Well, that explained the glaze over her eyes. Of course the bottle was empty. He knew that there had only been three pills left, assuming she'd taken all three; if she had it wasn't cause for alarm. She'd wake up with an unpleasant headache but there wouldn't be any other physical damage done. "Well? Do ya?" She gently nudged his foot with her own to get his attention.

Castiel frowned then shook his head, placing the bottle on the table. "That sucks. " Cas smirked. He couldn't have agreed more.
A silence lapsed between the two while Allison stared at the ceiling. Finding the old wooden beams more interesting than her present company. After a long moment she shut her eyes and slumped aback against the bed frame, letting out a low sigh. "I need to go soon. Brad is gonna look for me and we have to stay together. If you don't then something kills you. That sucks too..." Was it just the drugs talking? She seemed genuinely worried.

"I'm just the sister who needs protection. He said he'd put a bell on me. That's stupid, because we're adults and I am not a cat."

He couldn't lie. He couldn't say that it wasn't amusing. Allison was completely out of it. Every thing she said only further backed it up. This was a dramatic switch from earlier, when she'd been crying and possibly entertaining the thought of manslaughter.

"Allison?"

"Huh?"

Castiel titled his head to the side slightly. "Why are you on the floor?"

She quickly glanced at him, then to the mass of blankets and sheets that were spread out underneath her. Allison slowly pulled the edge of a blanket back in order to get a look at what was underneath. Her face fell when her eyes landed on the old beaten hardwood flooring that was now exposed. She thought long and hard about it, as if she couldn't remember that far back.

"Lisa told me not to move." Alli replied quietly, smoothing the blankets back out. It wasn't exactly an answer to his question, she'd been in bed when Lisa had left and she'd been out cold once he finally took a breather. Allison went back to looking at the ceiling, but Castiel didn't plan on losing her attention so quickly. She was out of it but coherent. His mind drifted back to the days events. Dean's question, or accusation from the way it sounded, still rang in his mind. If Dean hadn't turned into a total ass maybe they would have gotten some answers – or maybe not.

After a moments consideration he decided to test the waters. See if Lady Luck was on his side. She usually looked the other way but who knew. It wasn't as if it would hurt him to try.

Castiel abandoned the chair and instead opted for the floor. He sat down on the blankets beside Allison, the woman didn't seem to mind much. "Can I ask you something?" He asked after a moment. Allison groaned in response, bowing her head. She sounded aggravated but she hadn't actually said no.

"You saw the man in the white suit, didn't you? Lucifer?" He turned so that he was looking directly at her. Meanwhile she tried to avoid any and all eye contact.

"Have you seen him?" Allison crossed her arms over her chest. For a second he thought that they were back to square one. She was challenging him. Why, he didn't know. Trying to call his bluff? Cas nodded slowly. Cool expression not wavering once. "I have." Her widened to the point where they looked more like kitchen saucers.


"Unlike some, lying does not come...naturally to me. I highly doubt that Lisa would say that about me." Even since going human, he was an honest man. Painfully honest. "I've seen him, Lisa has seen
him. Dean, the man that you hit - has seen him too." Castiel responded quietly.

"I don't like Dean." The woman shuddered. He forced himself to hide the smile. Not many people liked Dean. Unlike most, Allison had made that relatively clear to them already.

A thoughtful expression crossed over her face. He hoped she was thinking about what he had said. He wouldn't argue with her about it that seemed petty. He had presented her with facts; he would give her a few moments to process them. It was her move.

Allison pursed her lips. He could see the surrender in her eyes. "He didn't want to get his suit dirty."

There, that hadn't been so hard. That was probably as close to a yes as he was going to get. Castiel knew that; but the man wasn't done yet.

"Do you remember what happened?" His voice was smooth yet cautious, like he was talking to a child instead of a grown woman.

The look on her face said that his question was an incredibly stupid one. "Why can't you talk to someone else?" Allison groaned in protest.

He simply shrugged. "I think you're interesting."

"You're lying again." Castiel rolled his eyes. The drugs hadn't helped as much as he had hoped. Still, he'd made some progress. Even if it wasn't entirely significant. Stoned but still stubborn. He'd been about to give up when she threw him one of those things that he'd come to label as 'curve-balls'.

For the first time since he had entered the cabin Allison was entirely focused on him. He wasn't sure why, but the intense gaze made him shudder.

"If," Allison started "if I tell you, you can't tell. Then you'd prove me right and if you're not a liar well, then you have to prove me wrong." She continued to stare, as if waiting for some sort of magic sign. Somehow he managed to follow along. Really, it sounded like she wanted him to say that he wouldn't tell Dean. Maybe for now and for sanity's sake he could do that. At some point he would tell Dean or Lisa. He could tell Lisa and she could pass on the message.

That was a minor detail. He knew that he could work around it if he wanted to keep Dean happy, not necessarily top propriety but he'd quickly learned that it was critical to keep the man mildly pleased.
He looked sad. Like a puppy. We were in this diner looking for supplies and he was there, sitting at the counter. Brad thought he was dead. Y'know? Propped up there like a puppet or something. I said he suit was too clean. I think he heard that, because he turned around." Allison's eyes darted around the room as if she were trying to decide whether or not they were being watched. She almost looked nervous. "His face was funny when he looked at us. Like a Batman villain. His eyes were creepy too." Allison spoke quietly but there was a defiant edge to her voice. Like she was anxious to get the words out.

He looked funny? The sad part Castiel could understand. Sam had always had a sort of boyish innocence about him. Ironic given his size. Though the part that he didn't understand was the comparison to a Batman villain. That was some sort of pop-culture reference that escaped him. Dean or Chuck would have understood. "He looked funny?" Cas asked out loud. Allison didn't respond. "Allison?"

Her head snapped to the side when he said her name. Like she was just noticing him again for the first time, but she had heard his question. She shrugged, tilting her head to the side. "Just…weird. He was smiling, then it looked like he was in pain. Kept going back and forth. I didn't like his eyes either. I don't think Brad noticed 'cos guys don't notice those things. I always notice peoples eyes…there wasn't blood though. He couldn't have been hurt. Just looked funny. "Her eyes narrowed as she watched him. Waiting to see if he'd understood. At least that looked like what she was doing.

This time though, Cas think he had a handle on it. What Allison was describing, it sounded like something that couldn't have possibly happened. She could have seen it wrong, or read into it. Castiel had heard enough to wonder. The sad expression wasn't anything new, that was one that Lucifer favored – being the hard-done-by one. "Did you see anything else?" Castiel frowned when he noticed Allison looking in a different direction once again. He'd never really talked to anyone in this state before. He wasn't' the type to carry on conversations with himself.

"'M not blind. Why do you ask dumb things?" The woman glared at him. "It was like a person in another person. I don't know. He changed when Brad pointed the shotgun at him." Alli finished quietly.

Castiel fought the urge to get up and leave the cabin. What she was describing. Was it even possible? After all this time? Suddenly the question of how she survived didn't seem so interesting. He wanted to know more about the moment she had just told him about. Every last detail. To him, it sounded as if she'd seen a glimmer of Sam. A person in another person – that would describe the youngest Winchesters situation perfectly. They had given up hope a few years ago. While they'd run into Lucifer a few times, they'd never seen even the faintest hint that somewhere inside Sam was still alive. Lucifer was an incredibly powerful being. It didn't make sense. Could that have happened? God, this woman left more questions to be asked than anyone he'd ever met before.

This time he let silence envelope them. For a solid fifteen minutes he sat there on the floor beside Allison, completely lost in his own world. He processed the information then silently went over it again. He didn't notice Allison start to doze off and somehow he'd missed her moving closer. He became aware of how close she was when he felt the soft, warm breath against his neck. He craned his neck slightly in order to glance down at her. Her eyes were shut and her head was resting against his shoulder. The rest of her body was pressing against his, she was almost sitting on his lap. Allison looked slightly relaxed, nowhere as irritated as she had fifteen minutes ago. Castiel on the other hand
was frozen in place.

"You have a funny name," Allison shifted against him. He was suddenly extremely uncomfortable. "but you're very, very, very...warm." She finished with a small half smile. Suddenly thoughts of Sam and Lucifer were the farthest thing on his mind.

Woman did not get this close to him unless they were naked, or in the process of getting to that point. If he moved even the slightest bit she would topple onto her side. The problem was that Allison wasn't naked and she likely wouldn't be. If she'd decided to suddenly remove a few articles of clothing, he wasn't sure that he'd mind too much. IT was a terrible thing to think about but after all those years of exposure to Dean and his ways – not to mention the path he'd stumbled along once his Grace had begun to wear off.

"The bed is more comfortable." He muttered under his breath. Allison cracked one of her eyes open at his remark.

"Lisa told me not to move because it will hurt. Duh. "

Clearly she felt as if she'd proven some sort of point because she settled right back down. The personal space issue that the Winchesters had been so picky about before, Allison needed a lesson or two in the subject. It was odd, now he found himself wishing those rules were in play. Why? He didn't know. Having a beautiful woman pressed against him wasn't exactly something that warranted a complaint but this was...different.

Staggeringly different.
Three Types

Over the course of five years he had met many women. He was by no means an expert in any way and the world that they lived in posed many restrictions on the type of people who survived. There were certain types of people who just weren't made to withstand the trials and tribulations. Even a few of the ones that had survived baffled him. Like a few of 'Dean's girls', for example. At least two of them had been strippers before the viral outbreak and Castiel was almost sure that was why they were kept around, because Dean needed his playthings.

Lisa hated it when it was pointed out but fact was that there weren't a whole lot of women that were rough enough to lead lives like theirs. He'd met three types of women for the most part. Dean's type, those couldn't spell their names and couldn't be trusted with any form of weapon. Then his type intelligent, calm. Then there was a different type. One he'd labeled the 'Lisa group'. Lisa was one of the funniest, nicest women he'd ever met. Though at the flick of a switch she turned into a menace. Allison hadn't been with them that long; he couldn't accurately categorize her. He knew that she wasn't Dean's type but at the same time she also wasn't his. She didn't quite fit under Lisa's own category either.

The first time he saw her was when they'd brought her in, practically bleeding to death. She looked as nice as anyone in her situation could have. Two days later she was actually up and on her feet and she was well, beautiful. He was highly appreciative of a nice female form. He hadn't realized he'd paid so much attention to her. Try as he did, Castiel couldn't seem to pry his mind off of the equally warm body that was practically becoming one with his. There were no shortage of topics to think about but his mind was betraying him. It all came back to Allison.

It wasn't long before she fell asleep. He knew that she had passed out because at one point she'd stopped supporting herself. She was like dead weight against him now. He was stuck in place. All the blankets were underneath him and the cabin light was still on. He didn't move or attempt to set Allison up on the bed, where she should have been in the first place. Instead he stayed on the floor beside her, hoping sleep would come soon.

Of course that didn't happen. He'd spent the better part of two hours entertaining the thought of moving, possibly sneaking off to his 'teaching' cabin. Instead he stayed behind. His next few hours were annoyingly uneventful. No one stopped by the cabin and Allison was still out. Eventually sleep did take him. With sleep came dreams. Questionable dreams.

One thing that had always amazed him. Once sleep had become a necessity he learned about dreams quickly. It was like being part of an extremely short lived play. You were a spectator or an actor. He didn't believe there was a middle ground. In this case he was merely a spectator.

"If you leave I'm going to make you share a cabin with Chuck when you get back." He couldn't see the speaker but the obviously female voice was oddly familiar. The sound of engines roared to life and blinding headlights cut through the darkness. It was their convoy that he was watching. Dean was already in his and the other men were loading up the Jeep and one of the vans.

He saw himself standing by his truck, a woman in front of him. "Please just stay out of this one. I've never tried to stop you before. Cas? Please?" The desperation in the woman's voice was almost heartbreaking. One of the car pulled away from the pack, when it did its headlights illuminated the pair. Standing in front of him was a very scared looking Allison. Her face was flushed and her eyes were glassy, it looked like she'd been crying for some time. He reached out to her and pulled her into his arms. She didn't resist. Instead she embraced tightly, pressing her forehead against his.
"Dean left you in charge." The person talking now was the dream version of Castiel himself. He looked tired and pained in someway. Neither looked like they'd spelt in a few days. "We'll be gone two weeks, that's it. You heard him, didn't you? He doesn't want you to run the place into the ground. "He spoke jokingly but Allison didn't seem to care. If anything she looked completely unimpressed.

Allison cringed. "It's a hot zone…" The words came out in a hushed whisper. Probably to hide the fear that laced every letter.

Castiel leaned in, his lips lightly brushing against hers. Allison rather stubbornly turned her head away from him. "If you go and make it back okay…I'm never sleeping with you again. Ever."

"Never?"

Allison lightly shoved his chest. "Ever."

The cars were pulling away from the line with Dean in the lead. The man laid on the horn as he passed the pair. Allison lifted her left hand and made a crude gesture. To which Dean only smirked. Allison pulled herself away from Castiel, wrapping her arms around herself to fend off the chill; possibly to hold herself together as well. "Go. "This time she sounded as if she were surrendering.

Allison turned her back on him without so much as another word but he'd stood there and waited, like she was supposed to say something else. He felt disappointed. Rather, the dream version of him did. The two went their separate ways. Allison went back to the camp while he joined the convoy.

The scene went dark, the dream was over.

Castiel stifled a small groan as he forced his eyes open. The cabin was dark; someone had obviously switched off the lights. Allison was still asleep beside him. His eyes lingered on her till his neck grew sore. He'd dreamt about women before. Hundreds of times but never had he had a dream like that. It was startling just how real it had felt. Hints of sadness and the nagging disappointment when she'd silently walked away from him. When his dreams did involve women there was less talking and even less clothing. Those dreams were nice for one real reason – they didn't make him think. There wasn't much to think about in those cases anyways. Clothing was removed and sex was had. It was so basic.
Three weeks later

Things had calmed down as much as they possibly could have over the next few weeks. Since Allison had punched Dean the man had backed down, if anything he ignored her presence entirely. Alli didn't seem to mind and neither did anyone else. If that meant one less fight and one less wound to tend to, it was fine. By the end of the second week Allison was finally on the mend. She didn't need painkillers or antibiotics. Once Lisa gave her the okay she spent more and more time outside of the little cabin. Chuck had enlisted her to help in the kitchen. Since everyone, or mostly everyone contributed to keeping the camp up and running. Allison never complained – well not too much and certainly not to Chucks face.

When she wasn't in the kitchen she was usually by Lisa's side, wherever that may be. On occasion she'd come by the Den of Iniquity as she'd so lovingly named it. She usually timed it so she came in halfway through his speech. She'd sit in the corner and watch silently. Her presence made the other women uncomfortable and it also threw Castiel himself off. Those sessions ended differently from the others. Generally no sex was had when Allison entered her cabin. It played out like this every few days. She would sit there and watch. Castiel swore that on the inside she was laughing. Having Allison there was well, awkward. He didn't confront her about it even though he wanted to. It actually never came up once.

The two still shared his cabin. Castiel spent most nights on the floor while Allison took the bed. She offered to switch places since it was after all, his bed. Castiel declined every time. After about a week she stopped asking. That didn't mean that Allison was quiet though. In three weeks he'd learned most of her life story. They talked till they fell asleep. Or at least Allison talked till she fell asleep. Cas listened for the most part. One constant point of discussion was Brad. According to Allison, she was going to leave the camp to find him. Every time she mentioned her brother's name, Castiel tried to change the subject. When he heard about Brad his mind went back to the picture and what Dean had told him the day after they'd returned. She seemed convinced that somewhere Brad was alive and looking for her. He couldn't bring himself to recount the events that she clearly didn't remember. Aside from that minor bump everything was fine in their little corner of hell.

"No, I'm saying that I can't go. You can't take both of us. Do you really want to leave Chuck in charge of the whole camp?" Lisa planted her hands on her hips, venomous gaze focused on Dean.

They'd been doing this for about an hour. First was planning, then the argument. Dean had planned a rather prompt trip. Back to the warehouse area and the small housing district behind it. The area that should have been covered already. When he'd shot Allison they hadn't had much time to sweep the area. Lisa had been on board so screwing around hadn't been an option; Allison had instantly become their one and only priority. They hadn't exactly met their supply quota at the warehouse and when Dean and the crew cleaned out an area, nothing was left unturned. It had already been decided that they were going, but they needed another person capable of shooting things. As usual Castiel had already been recruited – there was rarely an excursion that he didn't go on. Lisa wasn't a frequent flier in that category, because as she was attempting to point out, someone had to hold down the fort.

Cas tilted the old wooden chair back, rolling his eyes as the two battled it out in front of him. Lisa was right. Chuck was a good guy, but the kitchen and storage cellars were his domain and he was fine with that. The camp was like a rag-tag kingdom, of which Dean was the ruler. Lisa was like the unhappy queen that had been forced into marriage. If she said that she wasn't going, and she'd said it
many times in the last twenty minutes, then she wasn't going.

The problem with that was Dean required a certain number of people for these excursions. For a quick run he only needed five or so people. Anything longer and he wanted seven at least. With Lisa out they were at six.

Six wasn't good enough.

Dean stood his ground. His arms crossed defensively over top of his chest. "What do you suggest then Lisa? I'm all ears." The fakest smile Castiel had ever seen pasted itself onto Dean's face.

He'd been thinking about this himself. He wasn't sure if he had the answer but he sure as hell had a suggestion. "I hate to interrupt these intimate conversations that you two have. I'm going to give you advice. You should take it. Allison spent two years with a hun-

"No." Dean was quick to cut in.

"As I was saying, two years with a hunter. She knows how to shoot. All the men have their jobs to do. Do you want to take one of your girls instead? If so, I would personally love to see the former exotic dancer kill a few Croats." Castiel arched a questioning eyebrow. Of course, he had to thrown in the remark about Dean's type. It was only fair since he hadn't quite gotten the man back for calling his women hippies.

"Are you freakin' kidding me? You want to take her?" As expected, Dean looked completely repulsed by the idea.

As he had hoped, Lisa stepped in. "It's not a bad idea. She's healed enough, not like you're going to a hot zone. We didn't run into anything last time. The place was a ghost town."

Anyone that knew Dean could likely make an accurate guess as to what was on his mind. The camp needed supplies and he needed people for back up, just in case. IT wasn't a game, he went prepared or he didn't go at all. Dean was thinking about it, Cas could tell.

"You'd better keep a friggin' leash on her. She screws up and she gets left there. Got it?"

Cas tried his best to hide the smirk but he couldn't quite pull it off. It had been strangely painless. Dean came full circle and back to the side of the table. Dark eyes starring down at the map. "We're leaving by ten. She stays with you." That was the end of the meeting. Now everyone had roughly an hour or so to get ready.

He didn't think that he'd have too much trouble. For days Allison had been complaining about the fact that she couldn't just leave. She'd wanted to go look for Brad. No matter how safe or comfortable she was here, it didn't matter because she believed that Brad was out there somewhere. He'd taken into account the fact that there was a chance they'd re-visit the warehouse and possibly stumble across the body, assuming Croats hadn't already gotten to it – but he could try to steer her away. Allison didn't seem to remember any of the ordeal anyways. The shock had probably done her in. According to Dean, they had already taken care of most of the warehouse. It was already clear that he'd have to keep a tight, figurative leash on her. Any other person and he would have almost been repulsed at the idea of babysitting. Those days faded away with his powers; but this was Allison. She was amusing and intelligent – not to mention attractive. She didn't seem to hate him as much as she hated Dean. Dare he think it, but over the past few weeks they had almost become friends. They talked and mocked each other, she messed with his 'teaching' schedule and he listened to her life story. She hadn't punched him yet so he could only assume that was a good thing.
Or she just had an amazing poker face.

Castiel forced himself out of the chair and towards the door, leaving Dean and Lisa to their own devices. He had work to do. It wasn't likely to be strenuous, but work all the same.
The lights were on but that didn't necessarily mean that Allison was awake or even in there at all. She had a habit of leaving the cabin lights on, not that it was a huge issue. Global warming was the least of their worries. With the world having already gone to hell, a thinning ozone layer was completely unimportant.

If she was back from the kitchen she probably wasn't asleep yet. Midnight was usually the time where she'd head back to the cabin and get some sleep. Castiel stopped at the door, tapping lightly. "Allison?" He paused as he waited for a reply.

"You're knocking...why exactly?" He smirked and pushed the door open when he heard Allison on the other side. His eyes instantly fell on Allison, who was standing in front of the bed, in her underwear. Actually she was in the process of removing her t-shirt, one that Lisa had lent her. There was a large gauze pad carefully taped to her midsection where the wound still was, but he barely even noticed it. She wasn't naked, but in the three weeks he'd never seen her so exposed.

She was striking. Many of the women at the camp were attractive and she was most definitely not an exception. Her skin was pale but not to the point where she looked ill. Allison was fit, slim but again – nothing screamed disease or disorder. "Staring isn't going to make the clothes fall off." Allison hummed as she kicked a pair of gray sweat pants away. Castiels eyes instantly stopped wandering when she spoke, trailing up her body to her face. "What's up?" Allison asked suddenly.

Castiel hesitated, though mainly because he was finding it extremely hard not to stare. Not that Allison seemed to mind. He collected himself and turned away, instead moving to the small wooden wardrobe that housed his lack-luster collection of clothing. "Road trip, you were recruited." Behind him, the rustling of clothing stopped.

"Asshole wants me to go? " One of the many names that she had for Dean. " He seriously wants me to go? Doesn't this mean that I get a gun?" Allison sounded shocked. Whether she looked it or not, Castiel wasn't sure. He was trying his hardest to keep his eyes away.

"Lisa and I thought that it would be a good idea. We were a man short. You'd get a gun. You don't have to go..." He let the suggestion hang; though he had a feeling Allison would ignore the last part entirely. The rustling behind him continued as Allison shimmied into a pair of jeans that had seen better days. Her face said that she was considering his offer but her eyes said that she'd already made up her mind. Still he waited for her to say it.

"I'm off probation?"

Cas yanked his duffel bag off the top shelf, pleased to see that it was still in it's usual half-packed state – one of the few things that Allison hadn't rummaged through. "I think it's safe to assume that you are." When he turned around he saw that she was grinning ear to ear. Like that freakish looking cat in the movie that Lisa had made him watch some time ago.

Allison followed him back to the bed where he dropped the bag. "When are we leaving?" She asked with an underlying tone of cheer to her voice. It sounded like he'd just said they were going camping or to an amusement park. Then again he understood why she would be so excited about such a dismal task. She'd been stuck at the camp, constantly talking about getting out and looking for Brad. She had to see it as her chance to find her brother. That did worry him; they'd need to discuss that on the way there.
"Tonight. You should pack." Cas responded with a tired smile.

Allison didn't need to be told twice. As soon as she'd said it she finished getting dressed and pulled out her own duffel bag, the one that he had rummaged through when she'd first arrived.

Once he was packed he made his way out to the lot where the vehicles lay in wait. By the time he got there Dean was already in the jeep and the other cars were lined up. The rest of the crew slowly began trickling out of the camp not long after. Allison was third last to arrive; trailing behind her was a concerned looking Chuck and a smiling Lisa. He could practically hear the discussion in his mind already. Chuck was whining about losing his best "assistant" and Lisa was comparing him to a spoiled child. Though whatever conversation they were having stopped before they reached the truck.

"Can I drive?" Where the first words out of her mouth. Castiel quickly shook his head and pulled open the driver's side door, hauling himself into the seat. Taking the hint, Allison made her way around the back to the passenger's side, all but jumping into the vehicle.

Just as he slid the keys into the ignition, Lisa tapped on the window. Allison, who was busying herself with making both of their bags fit, didn't notice. He rolled down the window a crack, just low enough so that he could hear her.

"Cas, if she comes back with another bullet in her so help me-" He cocked an eyebrow, waiting for the punch line. Lisa let out a sigh, shoving her hands into the pockets of her jacket. "Look after her, alright?" Lisa added. It looked as if she were about to say something else but the hum of engines cut her off. The jeep had come to life, as did the three other cars behind him. Lisa backed away from the truck, rejoining Chuck at a safer distance.

Look after Allison. When she's said he was sure that she'd meant to say "keep her out of Dean's way" Something that he'd already agreed to do. He also didn't want to see her bleeding to death for a second time. He was used to 'babysitting'. He'd look after Dean and Sam for some time, though in the end that hadn't exactly worked out for the better. Still, this was bound to be easier. At least he hoped that it would be.
"You don't listen to music?"

The drive was going to be a few hours at the least, according to what Dean had said about their first trip into the area. This one was going to be interesting. He never shared the cab of the truck with anyone, he traveled alone. Now there was someone sitting in the passenger's side, someone who seemed intent on staying wake for the entire time. If the past half an hour was any indicator, his ideal, quiet trip was going to be anything but.

Allison was bent over, rummaging underneath the seats. Smirking as she pulled out a small box full of cassettes, those had been Deans. That box had sat in the Impala for as long as he'd known the Winchesters, and even before that. Though once the car broke down it was left to rot. Chuck had saved the box from a similar, lonely fate. Insisting that they were special. Somehow the coveted box had made its way into his truck, only to be stashed under the seat.

He'd never had much use for music; to him it was nothing more than noise. He didn't find comfort in melodies or carefully planned words. He found comfort in narcotics and naked women. "Generally the trips are quiet." Castiel muttered to himself. Not quietly enough to go unnoticed though. With a huff she placed the cassette filled box back onto the ground, turning her gaze back to the dark world outside the truck. For five minutes she seemed content with staring into the vast nothingness. For five incredibly short minutes there was peace, the type he was used to. It was quiet until he heard the shuffling in the seat beside him. When he tore his eyes from the road he saw that Allison had switched positions, now she was facing him and the look on her face. Cas frowned. He knew that look.

"Can I ask you something?" Allison asked cautiously. Approaching every word as if it were an active mine or something equally dangerous.

Well, at least she was asking for permission. Though that meant that the question was likely going to be of a personal nature. Castiel turned his attention back to the road, nodding silently. With Allison, he had already learned there was no dancing around things. Best to get it out of the way.

For a second he couldn't help but wonder if Allison had decided to not ask. There was the awkward silence in the passengers seat, the woman was gnawing on her bottom lip. He knew not to get his hopes up. She was likely just trying to string the words together in the least offensive way possible. After a few minutes of nothing, Allison had it.

"Why do you do it? The drugs and the orgies, I mean." Castiel's head moved so quickly he was sure that he'd gotten a minor case of whiplash. Allison was holding her hands up, a gesture he recognized as a defense.

There wasn't exactly a right way to reply but Castiel considered the question. "Before, y'know…the world going to shit. Were you like that before?" That was right, when it came to his history he was something of an enigma to her. Allison didn't know anything about the affairs that had taken place before Sam had said yes. She didn't know that he was, or had been an angel. She didn't need to.

Hoarse laughter filled the cabin which granted him with some very confused looks. Once he was able to get a handle on himself, he tried responding. "No. No, I was most certainly was not." It was funny, funny but sad all at the same time. "I was the exact opposite."

Allison mulled over his words. "So you were what, saint like?" And her question only warranted
more laughter. There was no way she could find it as amusing as he did. If Dean had heard that one he might have even gotten a chuckle out of it. After a few minutes he managed to put a stop to the laughter, Allison was giving him look that said she didn't appreciate it. Laughter clearly wasn't the point of that question.

"The world ended. What else should I have done?" Was his perfectly timed retort. Allison was quiet for a long moment.

"It was a coping method?" She asked and he flinched at the words. Castiel nodded, expressions slowly sliding off of his face. The women, the drugs, it was a coping method. He'd screwed up, he'd let both Sam and Dean down. None of his work counted for anything. In the end he'd been reduced to nothing to a powerless human – his powers having faded when the other angels had jumped ship.

"Yes. It was a coping method…” They didn't have time for him to give her a full back-story. Thousands of years of history, though those years weren't as important as the mere handful he had spent with the Winchesters. Allison didn't know any of that; it was likely better she didn't. Most of the people at the camp, women especially, were blissfully unaware of what he used to be. "I was important, powerful. I had a job to do and I failed. The women and the drugs were a type of solace." Castiel spoke quietly, a hint of annoyance in his voice.

Allison looked taken aback. In the three weeks she'd never heard him talk like that. The seriousness, which was usually reserved for Dean or Lisa. He almost sounded sad, or maybe it was just her hearing things.

"I used to be a waitress. I served coffee and pie for a living. Then people started getting sick. My parents got it, the virus. I was a waitress then I was this whole new person overnight." From the corner of her eye she could see him look over at her. "You want to hear irony? My dad was the one who taught me how to shoot."

Cas said nothing. She hadn't really left it wide open for a running commentary there anyways. He'd heard enough horror stories, he knew why she found that ironic. If he'd spoken Allison wouldn't have heard him. Her mind was somewhere else, thinking about the last thing she'd said. The irony. That was the worst example in the history of the world, but it was an example all the same. The story had already begun replaying itself in her mind. It went that way when she mentioned it, dragged her into some fairly hellish daydreams.

He knew that look all too well. It was one that a majority of the human race seemed to share. Sadness with a touch of guilt. To him, to see Allison look like that was entirely new. It didn't suit her at all, but he knew better than to interrupt certain trains of thought. Disrupting this one in particular was like poking a bear with a stick – something that couldn't end well. Instead of trying to distract her he left her to her own devices.

The remainder of the trip was quiet. At some point over the duration of the hour Allison had fallen asleep, it was a prettier sight. It was harder to see the ghosts had haunted her earlier - and he personally enjoyed the silence.
"Cas?" Allison asked in a whisper. Jabbing him lightly in the ribs for good measure. "Can I use that one?"

He frowned at the woman, following her gaze. They'd been standing by the back of the truck for a good. Allison's eyes were locked on the remaining semi-automatic. Now most of the crew sided with Dean, they didn't want the woman to have any sort of firepower at all but denying her a gun would be plain stupid. They brought her for her ability to shoot; still Castiel felt it best to deny her that one small pleasure for the time being. Instead of reaching for the rifle to hand over, he reached for a leather gym bag.

"You can't have that but you can have anything in there." He slowly undid the zipper then stepped back as Allison tore open the bag. A smile played across her lips as she rifled through the contents. Allison had been bugging anyone who would listen about her and her brothers equipment for weeks. While most others were allowed to roam the camp with guns and knives, Dean had kept all of Allison's weapons locked up from the start. The most dangerous thing she'd gotten to hold over the last few weeks was a serrated steak knife.

She lifted a sawed off shotgun from the bag, resting the barrel back against her shoulder. There was a swift change in her overall demeanor. Suddenly she looked tougher, her already high confidence level practically radiated off of her. It was amazing what something like a gun could do to people. "On second thought. You know who needs military grade equipment?" Allison spoke up, placing the shotgun back down as her hands dove back into the bag. He wasn't sure whether or not that was a rhetorical question, so he decided to humor her.

"I don't know, who?" Cas asked.

"People with really, really bad aim."

By the time everyone was suited up, they looked like something right out of a movie. A bunch of rag-tag rebels, which was quite literally just what they were. With the exception of Allison, everyone was carrying military grade equipment once everyone had at least one gun in their hand, Dean laid down the track. They didn't usually do runs in the dark but he wanted to get this one over with. The small patch of houses behind the old factory were on the same power grid, which could be accessed through the third level of the building, which lay in the basement level. The plan was to go through the factory as a group; turn on the lights then hit the small housing area located out the back. The idea was simple, comb the area for supplies. Anything from clothing to medicine would be snatched up and returned to camp. They would go in together and then hit the houses by themselves. Well, with the exception of Allison. Dean made it very clear that there would be hell to pay if Castiel didn't stay glued to the woman. Within half an hour they were advancing on the building, Mag-Lites illuminating the dark path. The sound of quiet breathing and footsteps tinted the night. It truly was amazing how they managed to stay so quiet considering that each were carrying a duffel bag and assorted weapons.

Castiel followed Allison, who was only one man behind Dean. Once they were inside the building the groups air changed, instantly it felt as if they were all walking on eggshells. The only person who didn't exude that was Allison herself. She was too preoccupied with shining a light in every corner, taking in every detail. He imagined she was retracing her steps in her mind. Something he had been worried about. This was the very factory where Dean and the cavalry had found Allison and the
dead body. The woman had no memory of that night, which was likely for the best considering the events. During the last leg of the drive it dawned on him – revisiting the place where she'd nearly been killed could easily dredge of memories of the incident and what had happened before.

Once they managed to get onto the second level, only then did he notice a change in Allison. The woman slowed, falling into step beside him. "Do you think you could stall him?" Allison whispered under her breath. Castiel cocked an eyebrow and the woman sighed. "Brad and I set up camp here for a little, in some of the offices," Allison bit her lower lip. "I think. I just want to look."

He didn't want to give her false hope – though anything to change the pleading look on her face would have been good. Instead he shook his head, remaining quiet.

She shot him a quick glare before turning her eyes forward as they entered a large open room, office three office doors on each side. The group stopped as Dean held up a hand. "The panel should be in that security room. Stay here." His face swung to meet Allison when he spoke. The woman merely huffed, lifting the shotgun and resting its barrel against her shoulder. Dean and the short blond man in front moved off towards the door clearly marked "Security" while the others spread out, mulling in between the offices.

"Y'know what Cas?" Allison broke the sound of shuffling footsteps. The woman quickly turned away from him, heading towards the doors on the far right wall. The man followed suit, swinging his rifle over his shoulder.

"What?"

Allison didn't answer him right away, too preoccupied with opening each of the doors. She'd opened a door, stick her head in and then walk to the next. The process repeated itself till she reached the fifth and final door. The serious look on her face was one that he found slightly disconcerting as she pushed the door opened.

The brunette stepped inside, flashlight sweeping the floors and the walls. The first thing he noticed was the sigils that had been drawn and painted on both the walls and the floor. Protection sigils.

"Brad and I were here."

From the outside of the office he could hear Dean cursing, obviously having no luck as of yet. No one else had come running for them, so he followed her inside, sticking to his orders. The office didn't look as though it had been used as a living space but when Dean and the crew had come through here they'd cleaned the place out. The only sign of humans were the sigils.

While he admired the attention that had been paid to the designs, Allison did a quick sweep of the office. There was another door on the far side which she had set her sights on, but she stopped before she reached the handle. She made a gagging noise, quickly pulling the neck of her jacket up around her nose and mouth. "Can you smell that?"

Wide eyed, he followed the bright light beam to the shut door. He nodded, slowly advancing. A strange feeling was building in his stomach, one that wasn't the urge to vomit. This was where they'd camped out? Dean had said they'd found the body in a room just off the main office. He reached out, snagging Allison's wrist.

"Come on, let's go." Castiel urged gently, tugging her towards the door. Instead of following she simply tore herself from his grasp, advancing on the door. "Allison" He hissed warningly, but it was too late. She'd already swung the door open. Instantly the smell of death and decay flooded. In front of him Allison stopped dead in her steps, leaning against the doorway – from the sounds of it she
was gagging. Castiel was also fighting the urge to heave.

The beam of the flashlight was trained on the wall, revealing ugly, large brown splatter marks. It looked as if chunks of something had been pasted onto the wall. He was half expecting Allison to break down in tears. He was expecting a body. When he glanced over the girls shoulder he saw why she hadn't screamed.

There wasn't a body.

"Christ, something died in here." Allison mumbled. While she stepped into the bathroom, not even a second later the lights on the office floor seemed to come to life. Suddenly every corner was lit and the swearing coming from the other room stopped. Somewhere behind them, he heard Dean calling his name. He didn't respond. Instead every ounce of his attention was trained on Allison, who was now kneeling beside what had to have been a pool of blood at one point. She was staring at it as if she were waiting for an image to appear.

Heavy footsteps came from behind as Dean entered the room. "What part of stay don't you-" Castiel held up his hand and Dean instantly fell silent. His eyes followed the mans gaze and for the first time in a long time, Dean looked uneasy. This was where the drama had unfolded. Right in front of where Allison had parked herself, that was where the body had been. There wasn't a body though.

Allison pushed herself up, the fabric that had shielded her nose and mouth had since fallen away. Her face was contorted into a mask of disgust. "That was not there when we were here. " She said in a small voice. Neither of the men responded. They both looked confused. "He must have packed up after you abducted me. He's probably looking for me right now." Allison tossed the cold remark at Dean, who remained unshaken. She pushed her way between the men again, abandoning the office and entering the main area where the others had already re-grouped.

"This was where you found him?" Dean nodded slowly.

Castiel frowned. "Croats?"

"There would be bones or something. There's nothing there Cas." The Winchester knew what he was talking about. Croats cleaned up, but they weren't this clean. There wasn't so much as a fingernail. After a moment of silence Dean looked increasingly uncomfortable but it was obvious that the Winchester was trying to keep his game face intact. "Come on," He said gruffly "work to do."

Cas got one last look at the room before he rejoined the others. The unpleasant feeling that had started well before they'd reached the floor had now settled in the pit of his stomach. Something told him that the feeling wasn't likely to disappear.
"I'd feel more comfortable if you stayed in my line of sight." Castiel muttered for what felt like the
dozenth time. He'd never had any direct exposure to children, but he felt that likening Allison to one
wasn't too far off. She heard him, because just about every time his complaint was accented by quiet
chuckling – she just chose to ignore his requests. They'd since exited the factory, without incident.
The light panel that Dean had struggled with did indeed hold the key to lightening up the small grove
of hoses that were tucked behind the plant. They already knew the game plan but Dean had once
again reiterated Cas' personal mission. They'd split up in order to cover the most ground. There were
maybe fifteen houses total, including a few shacks – Dean was convinced that it would get the job
done quicker.

He and Allison had worked through the first house quickly and without incident. Allison was
surprisingly serious about the task. By the time they reached the second level of the house he noticed
how methodical her movements were. Despite the fact that she left nothing untouched, he found it a
bit of a struggle to keep up with her pace. She was either almost always ten steps ahead or out of
sight completely. He could still hear her voice, as Allison kept up a steady one-sided conversation
during the first two houses – but he preferred being able to see her. Lisa's request hung over him and
Dean's orders pushed the obligation further. She was his responsibility, even though if someone
where to ask her she'd disagree. To Allison's credit she did look formidable with the shotgun in her
hands, then the other strapped to her back. While she hadn't had to prove anything yet, he was sure
that she could do it – but it was apparently his job to keep her from having to do anything to begin
with.

He'd always been the protector of someone. It seemed as if that was a role he wouldn't shake until
the day he died. The ex-angels attention had always gone where ordered, until he met the
Winchesters. A thought he always tried to shake off. The past was at times, painful. No one really
enjoyed re-living their failures, Castiel especially. He already received daily reminders everyday
when he woke up, he really didn't need anymore than that.

The pair worked quickly together, snatching up any supplies that they saw. Given the lack of
screaming and gunshots, it sounded as if the others were also problem free. He and Allison made
quick work of the first three houses, but by the time they reached the fourth her pace had slowed
slightly; and she'd quieted down. Overall it had been going smoothly till they reached the fourth
house. It was much larger than the others – and clearly older. If Cas had to guess he'd have said that
it was original to the land, that the other houses were built around it. The man stood at the bottom of
the now eroding cement steps. Allison was already at the top, from the looks of it she was fiddling
with the lock. He was focusing on other things. Large, abandoned houses were creepy by nature but
there was something about this one, or the area around it – that was making him glance over his
shoulder. Most humans he'd had the misfortune of meeting referred to it as a sixth sense. Castiel
could quite literally feel the hairs rise on the back of his neck as he stood there. It almost felt as If
there were another presence, someone other than Allison. This clearly having been marked as their
area, none of the others would have ventured into it. There had been no other signs of life. As far as
he could tell the woman wasn't feeling the sudden onset paranoia. If she was, she had no problems
overlooking it. When he glanced up the large door was open and Allison had already disappeared
inside. Now he understood why some parents invested in leashes for their children.

The interior of the house was almost every bit as foreboding as the exterior. There was a fine layer of
dust on almost every surface, including the floor. He could clearly see the tread marks which
Allison's boots had made. Somewhere to the left he heard quiet laughter and a dull thud. He followed the dull beam of light into the kitchen. Allison was sitting cross-legged in front of an open cupboard, a medium sized box on either side. "Jackpot. Thank God for preservatives, right?" Allison asked with a smirk. She seemed pleased with her find, from the looks of it she'd stumbled across an assortment of canned goods. She managed to stuff some of the smaller cans into her duffel bag, but in minutes she was gently urging him to hand over his own. While Allison tuckled the food items away he turned to face the door. He could still feel it. Cas slowly slid the rifle strap off of his shoulders, a motion that Allison noticed.

"Expecting someone?" Allison asked quietly. The woman had to lean to the side, her view obstructed by Castiel's legs. She couldn't see anyone, and she definitely hadn't heard anyone but he was just standing there, staring at the hallway. She tried again, "Cas?" and again he barely acknowledged her. She'd had a dog once when she was little, the thing would sit on her bed and stare at the closet for hours on end. Of course that only reaffirmed a younger Allison's belief in monsters who hid among her clothing. Cas wasn't a dog, but he sure as hell reminded her of one. Allison made a fist with her right hand, and instead of attempting verbal communication, she jammed her knuckles into the back of his knee. Cas grunted, staggering slightly. When he looked down at her his eyes were steely and cold. He obviously didn't appreciate her distraction.

"Can't you feel it?" He asked in a gruff voice.

Allison slowly shook her head. "Mind sharing with the class?" Castiel turned to face her, kneeling down. His eyes didn't once leave hers as he reached for his own duffel bag, which took the spot on his shoulder where the gun had been hanging. The hand that wasn't balancing a weapon was forcefully 'helping' Allison to her feet. She yanked her arm away from him, shooting him a glare. To which his only response was. "Let's just hurry up and finish."

She didn't say a word, not even a syllable. She slung her bag over her shoulder, ignoring the clinking sounds and the digging sensation that was courtesy of the various cans she'd shoved in there. The question was on the tip of her tongue but instead of asking, she simply bit it. He went from nagging to pushy? She wasn't exactly buddy-buddy with the guy but she knew that he wasn't the pushy type. At the same time she knew that she'd only see him around camp, never on one of these missions. Maybe he was the secretly paranoid type. She followed closely behind as they re-entered the front foyer. Castiel stopped in front of the door, eying the entrances to the other rooms.

"Which level do you want?" Allison asked, nodding towards a flight of spiral stairs. He looked at her as if she were a mad woman. "It'll be quicker if we split up. We're still in the same house; I'll just be a floor down." She was attempting to be convincing but he seemed hesitant.

He gave her a quick once over. She had at least three guns on her person. One sawed off shotgun, another in its original state with a scope and all, and then she had a Berreta 92 attached to her hip. Cas knew what was in her bag, aside from the cans of food which had just been placed.

"You have holy water?"

"Mhm."

"Rock salt?"

"That's a stupid question." Alli huffed.

Of course, Allison was right. It was a stupid question. You didn't leave camp without a bottle of holy water and a container of salt. They were staples. He wanted to get out of the house but leaving the
other rooms untouched would be bad. For all they knew, there could be a fully stocked pharmacy waiting in a bathroom. They had to cover the whole house and she had a point. If they were to split the entire search would likely take half the time. That meant they could leave sooner.

In his mind he ran through the list of tell-tale signs of company, both the demon and Croat variety. They hadn't seen any movement and it was silent all around. Cas couldn't say that he'd smelt sulfur. All he had was a feeling. Human paranoia getting the best of him. After a moment of deliberation he felt himself cave.

"You can do the basement." He said all too reluctantly. "If you're not upstairs in less than ten minutes-"

She rolled her eyes at him. "Yes mom. I've got it. I'll scream if I need you." Allison finished with a smirk. Feeling cocky till she looked up at Castiel. He didn't find it funny. The woman bowed her head, not bothering to redeem herself. She turned away and headed down the dark hallway ahead of her. Pausing to adjust the Mag-Lite once she found that the light switch didn't work. Allison slowly shuffled across the carpet towards the door at the end of the hallway. Behind her, she knew that Cas hadn't vanished from sight yet. Once she reached the door her freehand toyed with the handle till she heard a faint click. The door opened to reveal what looked like a set of rickety wooden stairs. On the right hand wall there was another light switch. To her surprise, this one actually worked. In seconds her flashlight was shoved into the carrying sheath on her belt and she was on her way down.

He watched her silently as she headed towards the doorway at the end of the hall. Once Allison disappeared down the dimly lit staircase he slowly worked his way up the spiral set waiting before him. Up he went, step by step. His eyes stayed ahead of him but his mind was still downstairs, at the figurative level. He was thinking about the choice he made, wondering if it was a better idea to go back downstairs and drag her around by his side. She wouldn't have liked it much, he was sure; but he would have felt at ease. She worked quickly enough; with any luck she'd be done with the basement by the time he reached the first bedroom.

Allison didn't follow him up. By the time he got to the second landing he could just barely hear her going through what sounded like garbage cans in the basement. After a few moments of fiddling with a light switch, the landing and hallway lit up. The fixtures attached to the ceiling and walls only provided a dim glow – one that looked like it would last for a short amount of time. He found that it was more than enough to work with. Cas veered off to the left, rifle at the ready. The floorboards creaked underneath his boots as he walked. Making a quiet approach almost impossible. The door that he was cautiously pushing open led into a very large and very empty room.

At one point it would have acted as a bedroom, at least he assumed so. Now there wasn't even a scrap of cloth. There were three windows which had been haphazardly boarded up with plywood. Really, the only thing in the room was the small cluster of uncovered light bulbs that lined the ceiling. He lowered rifle and crossed the threshold, shuffled towards one of the poorly attended to windows. As he glanced out the window the paranoia slowly began to creep back in. Many of the houses were lit up; which made it easy to tell what part the group had covered. From the looks of it, there couldn't have been one or two more houses to go. That should have made him feel better. Out in the hall there was a series of dull thumps. A series of small sounds which he barely notices too preoccupied with scanning the world outside the house. Given his age and what had been his particular line of work, soldier of the Lord himself – he should have noticed.

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The first thing that she noticed about the basement was how ridiculously crowded it was. Against the far right wall there were at least three twin-sized mattresses leaning up against it and in front of those...
was a queen sized bed, frame and all. There were at least three dresses and piles of boxes set around
the room. Cas had given her a time limit of about ten minutes and if she checked everything as Dean
had insisted, she was going to be there till Christ came.

Allison slowly set her duffel bag down on top of one of the beds, along with her flashlight. The
Shotgun stayed in her hands as she surveyed the room. It was dim, but still bright enough for her to
maneuver around the piles of boxes. Alli had ever intention of sitting and and dumping out the old
cardboard boxes, but something else caught her attention first. Underneath the stairwell, half hidden
behind a rather rickety looking wardrobe, there was a door. The boxes could wait a few minutes. It
took all of two seconds for her to decide that the wardrobe needed to be moved. The rifle was
cautiously set down against the wall, as she would need two hands in order to move the thing.

Surprisingly it wasn't as heavy as it looked. The floorboards groaned in protest as she pushed the
wardrobe away so that it no longer blocked the door. Once it was moved the shotgun found its way
back into her hands.

She approached the door with caution, but once it was open she fought the urge to fling it shut.
"What the hell?" She gagged, quickly pulling the collar of her coat over her mouth and nose. Her
eyes scanned the room. Which was a small bathroom. She fumbled with a light switch and after a
moment the overhead bulb flickered on. There was nothing out of the ordinary aside from the god
awful smell. IT was like rotten eggs. A lot of rotten eggs. Allison stepped inside, gun at her side. She
checked the medicine cabinet and then the toilet, attempting to find the source of the smell. Then she
slowly turned to the bathtub, which was blocked by a solid navy curtain. Her fingers slowly wrapped
around the plastic, slowly pulling it back. The smell almost instantly intensified, as if the shower
curtain had been a barrier.

Allison had been expecting a body, or rotten food; which she'd found none of. There was something
in the tub which caught her eye. There was a layer that almost covered the entire porcelain bottom. It
looked like yellow road salt, though of a finer grain. She slowly ran her hand through the substance,
bringing it up to her nose afterwords. Not road salt.

"Sulfur?" Allison mumbled, quickly wiping her hand off on her jeans. Her stomach almost
immediately tied itself into a series of knots as she eyed the area around the tub. More of the stuff.
Sulfur meant demons. It was basic. This was a lot of freakin' sulfur. Suddenly her mind was racing.
There had been a demon here at some point. Cas had been acting on edge. Suddenly she forgot all
about the boxes.

"Calm down. It's probably nothing. If there was something here, it was before we came in. It could
have been here ages ago." She quietly attempted to talk herself down as she stared at the tub. Now it
felt like it was time to go.

Allison exited the bathroom. Bypassing the boxes till she was at the bed. She picked up her
flashlight, jamming it into her belt. Just as she hefted the duffel bag back onto her shoulders, she
heard it. The creaking sound. Allison instantly spun around, gun trained at the stairway. It sounded
like someone was coming down the steps. She slowly shuffled closer, expecting to see Castiel there.
The hairs on the back of her neck stood when she realized there wasn't anyone there. She slowly
worked up the staircase, one step at time. Wood groaning underneath her.

"Cas?" She was only one step away from the top. There was no response. No movement. Allison
moved her hand up the railing, slowly pulling herself to the top step. Before the tread of her boot
even touched the carpet, something pushed her. Allison didn't even have time to react. Suddenly she
was flying backwards, down the stairs. A scream tore through the silence just before her body
crumpled at the bottom of the staircase. At the top, the door swung shut with a force that shook the
entire frame. Allison let out a strangled cry as she tried to pull herself up. Her shoulder had connected
with the cement floor. She tried to find the source, she hadn't tripped. Something had thrown her off the staircase. Her mind was reeling.

Sulfur, invisible things attempting to break her neck. She slowly brought the shotgun back up but her arms were shaking far too much to even attempt to get a shot at anything, though there wasn't anything to shoot out. The stairwell was still empty.

Allison forced herself to get up. She climbed the stairs as quickly as possible. Once she reached the top she tried the handle. It didn't budge. Her boot met the door with much the same effect. Finally she squared her shoulder and rammed it against the wood with as much force as she could muster. Nothing. The creaking had started again but this time it was above her, it sounded like someone was going up the stairs.

"Cas!" Allison screamed at the door, though something told her he wouldn't hear her if he was already upstairs. Suddenly she could feel it. Sheer panic. She needed to get out.
The Past

The scream and the heavy series of thuds were what drew his attention. Castiel couldn't have whirled around quicker. Instantly he began cursing his actions as he rushed towards the door. He should have known better. Fallen or not his sense were still mildly superior to that of a humans. It couldn't have just been paranoia... Instantly he began cursing his actions as he rushed towards the door. He should have known better. Fallen or not his sense were still mildly superior to that

Before he could reach the door it slammed shut and the light bulbs flickered, threatening to allow the room to plunge into darkness. Cas had been ready to break down the door but before he could so much as lay a finger on the handle, a low chuckle sounded behind him. His heart rate sped up accordingly.

"I have to be honest; when they said you were still alive... I didn't believe it. Yet here you are." The voice was low, no doubt male. Not at all familiar to the angel.

Castiel spun, cross hairs trained on intruder. While the voice wasn't familiar, the face was. "You don't remember me, do you? No, that was unlikely. We only met once – back when you were the new boy in class." He found it hard to concentrate on the words. Standing in front of him, arms crossed over his plaid lumberjack jacket was a man striking similar to Allison herself. It was Brad's body standing there, talking to him. He was supposed to be in the factory, head blown off. Instead he was standing there grinning, eyes bottomless black pools. It was Brad, but it wasn't. There was no doubt in his mind. That was the body of Allison's brother standing before him. Possessed.

The man sighed, black eyes turning towards the ceiling. "Come on Castiel. I'm crushed. Don't you remember your first time? The first demon you ever killed?"

The first demon? It had only well over a thousand years ago, so much had happened since then. Why was he even thinking about it? There was a demon in the house and he and Allison were separated. For all he knew she was lying in the lower levels bleeding out. His concentration snapped, his finger pressed against the trigger. Three shots rang out and the demon growled, stumbling backwards.

Before he could attempt to hit his target again the gun flew from his hands, clattering against the wall at the opposite end of the room. He turned, contemplating retrieval. The demon vanished for a split second then appeared right in front of them, only inches between the two. Castiel quickly attempted to put space between them.

"A refresher then? I'd just taken this lovely little sacrifice in the south of France. Naturally, the Killjoys show up. I thought it was going to be another boring bout but then I see you! The prodigy. They let you take me on all by your lonesome... you got quite the ego boost afterwards, I imagine. Thinking you killed me." The demons smile faded as Cas' eyes flickered with recollection. Yes, he did remember that.

"I did kill you." Castiel growled.

The demon laughed, shaking his head. "And who am I?" He asked with a smirk.

Cas didn't utter so much as a word. His defiance apparent. The demon didn't seem to happy with it. He raised his right hand, fingers swiftly curling into a fist. At that second Castiel dropped, hands clawing at his throat. It felt as if there were a rope or chain being pulled, constricting his air ways.

"Come on boy, you can do it." The demon was egging him on. He couldn't have said anything if he'd wanted to, and he did want to. 'Go to hell' seemed fitting.
His lungs ached, screaming for oxygen and the edge of his vision quickly blurred. He slammed his fist on the floor – as if the action could somehow gain him an ounce of control. Castiel's mouth moved but only hoarse rasps were heard. "What was that?" The man crouched in front of him, tilting his head to the side. The demons fist loosened slightly and Castiel didn't waste a second dragging in short breaths.

"B-Belial." The words came out as a whisper, but it was obvious that he was heard. The demon let his fist fall entirely, as he needed both hands to clap.

"That was far too easy. Did you miss me? It's been difficult, hiding for over a thousand years. You see I made a deal. If I were a good boy I was promised a throne in the kingdom. I could have anything I wanted. Lucifer himself summoned me. He needed an experienced demon. You should see what I've had to work with." He shook his head, running his fingers through his hair. " Rank armatures. "

Belial. Yes, he remembered him all too well. He had killed him, or so he'd been led to believe. The demon turned away from him, facing the window. Belial was easily two or three thousand years of age, possibly older. With age came experience. He was powerful, startlingly so. Castiel wasn't listening to the rant, his eyes were fixed on the duffel bag, only a few feet away. He slowly crawled across the floor, willing the floorboards to stay silent. His chance; but just as his hand came to hover above the zipper, Belial turned. With a flick of his wrist Castiel was sent backward, back slamming against the doorway, hanging in suspension with his feet a good foot or so off of the ground.

"Angels. Never ones for listening. Though you aren't really an angel any more, are you dear boy? That's what you get when you play for the wrong team." Belial shrugged, as if he were stating a simple fact. "Now to business. I have been asked to acquire a vessel; your Winchester boy ruined my plans. I had my eye on the girl." The words came out so cold and callused, it sent a shiver down his spine. "What girl?" Castiel hissed.

Belial made a clucking sound with his tongue, booted foot kicking at the duffel bag. "Don't play stupid with me. The girl who is trying to break the basement door down. You see, Lucifer wants a matched set. Getting him was easy," The demon tugged at the black t-shirt underneath the jacket. "A few nasty dreams and BOOM. Blew his pretty little head right off. Naturally, nothing I couldn't fix. Now someone wants the girl, can't see why but at times it's best not to ask. "

"No."

He acted as if Castiel hadn't said anything at all. "Y'know…I do believe you know the little ditch weasel in question. Enjoys kissing Lucifer's ass far too much, it's rather undignified, though he doesn't seem to mind. About the girl. Abbi, is it?"

His jaw squared, nostrils flaring. This was exactly how he remembered him. Arrogant and way too talkative for an agent of Lucifer. "That is not her name. You will not lay a finger on her. " Belial paused, deadpanning.

"Because you are in such a great position to defend her." Belial snorted. As if to prove a point, he lifted his hand up and made a small tossing movement, sending Castiel flying across the room. His back connected with the boards which covered most of the window. He had to fight to stay silent as the ebbing pain rippled down his spine. He fell to the floor in a heap, silently cursing his own mortality. An angel would have stood half a chance but a human of his particular state? He didn't even try to stand. Suddenly exhaustion set in, as if he'd just run a full length marathon.
Looking pleased, Belial shuffled towards the fallen man. "I must say, you and the rest of those angelic assholes did get what you deserved. You don't know how long I've wanted to do this."

Castiel tried to push himself away just as the demon lifted his foot off of the floor, sending the work boot into his chest with a tremendous force. The wind fled from his lungs and he attempted to hold back the cry of pain. When the boot met his chest, he could have sworn that he'd heard a crack. It certainly felt as if there was a crack. He moved his arm, holding it against his chest in an effort to block the second blow that he had been expecting.

"I was following orders but it pained me to have to put up an act. I was told not to fight back." He cursed under his breath, moving to take another strike. Castiel reached out with his left arm, the one that wasn't blocking his chest. His fingers caught up in the pant leg of the jeans. He pushed back as hard as he could, attempting to put space between him and the demon. Belial laughed, pulling his leg away. What happened next happened so quickly, no one would have gotten a chance to react. The foot which he had blocked now pinned his wrist to the floor, Belial applied enough pressure to make extremely painful. No sooner was his wrist pinned than the other demons boot flew at him, it connected with his chin with a sickening crack. His head snapped back and pain shot through his skull. His vision blurred and he wanted to move. Needed to get to the duffel bag, holy water…salt, or a gun.

He needed something.

Another piercing pain in his side. Steel toes meeting muscles and bones. Belial had been poised to strike again when something caught both of their attentions. The unmistakable sound of a shotgun filtered into the room.

"Cas!" The sound of his name and footsteps. Someone rushing up the stairs. He was trying to stay away, trying to respond. The only sound he managed was a pained moan.

He saw the grin on Belial's face grow as the demon shot a look over his shoulder. Now he could hear the tell-tale sound of footsteps, though they seemed so faint. "Looks like your girlfriend wants to play." The demon sneered.

"Get the fuck away from him." Somewhere in the doorway a woman was snarling. A shotgun was pumped. Darkness was ebbing into his vision. Belial hadn't turned, but he was wearing the most sickening look.

"I'll come back, next time I suggest you're ready to put up a fight. Unless you want to just hand her over." The demon whispered.

Castiel's lips parted. "Go to-" The blast of a shotgun erupted, interrupting the remark. He stayed conscious just long enough to see the round hit the demon square in the back. Instead of reacting, as anyone else would have done. He vanished.

Belial was gone. That was when Castiel's world went dark.
The Present

The demon vanished and the instant that it disappeared Allison was on her knees beside Cas. How did she know it was a demon? A simple, educated guess. Allison wasn't sure if the round had hit him, but he was gone. Though the figure that had been towering over Castiel was for a split second she her heart almost dropped to the pit of her stomach. He wasn't moving and he barely looked like he was breathing. It wasn't until she was right beside him that she noticed the steady, off beat rise and fall of his chest. He wasn't dead, just unconscious. Allison had heard the thuds but she didn't know what had happened. He was already on the floor when she finally got to the top of the stairs. Slamming her shoulder against the basement door had gotten her nowhere fast. After the fifth or so attempt, she shot the lock. A round wasted, but it did have the desired effect. She'd gotten herself out of the basement – just in time too, it seemed.

Her own pain was forgotten as her eyes moved swiftly over him. The only blood that she could see was a thin trail leaking from the corner of his mouth, though it looked like the side of his lip had split – nothing more serious there. His shirt and jeans didn't show any signs of wounds, but he was unconscious. Allison swiftly turned her attention to the problems that she could see. His left arm was extended away from his body, palm up. The skin was red and it looked slightly swollen. However, there were no bones sticking out and it wasn't contorted at some sickening angle. His other arm seemed fine, though it was snug against his chest, almost as if he was protecting himself from something. "Cas, can you hear me?" Allison asked as she slowly moved his arm away from his chest, resting it on his side. He just barely flinched, but made no other movements. The basics of first aid ran through her mind. You weren't supposed to move people, and she didn't want to. Not until she knew it was safe. There could be something wrong, a hidden problem. Cracked ribs, internal bleeding. Both of which would only worsen if she moved him.

Allison glanced at his shirt, which was underneath his un-done jacket. Then at the door, then back at his shirt. The woman mumbled something that sounded like 'sorry' under her breath before reaching out and gently tugging at the hem of his top, pushing the material upwards to reveal the pale skin underneath. Instantly the red marks jumped out at her. One almost dead center of his chest, right on the rib cage. It looked like the toe of a boot. She could practically see the tread. There were various red patches blooming along his torso, but the ones that worried her most where those that hovered on the rib cage. The bastard had kicked him, hard. He had to have a few bruise ribs at the very least. Allison hesitantly reached out, brushing a finger along the path of the rib cage, only barely touching him. That, Castiel reacted to. He let out a low, pained moan; Allison quickly snatched her hand away. A cracked rib, at least one. Nothing else would make him so sensitive to touch. "It's just me Cas. I'm sorry, but I gotta do this. You can hate me later." Whether he heard her or not that time, Allison wasn't sure. She retraced her steps, though this time she ran her fingers along his entire side, right down to his hip. She had to apply pressure in order to feel the bones, that way she could get some idea. She counted as quickly as possible, knowing full well that the pain he was in had to be excruciating. Now she didn't want to move him at all. A cracked rib could easily puncture a lung and in their situation, that would be fatal. Allison didn't want to take the chance. Best case scenario was that there wasn't a broken rib, but without a way to x-ray the man she had to rely on basic instinct and all those first aid courses she'd taken in high school. If she had any money to bet, she would have put a fair amount down on the fact that at least half of her diagnosis was right. This posed a whole slew of problems. She wanted to get the hell out of the house. No, she needed to. She was in rough shape as it was, she didn't even want to attempt to lift Castiel up and get him outside, but she also couldn't leave him there. No, that was wrong on too many levels. Allison was also sure that Dean would shoot her again, but make the wound a tad more serious if she left Cas alone. Allison bit her lip as she gingerly pulled the fabric of his shirt back down.
If they didn't leave soon the cavalry was bound to come in and check, but she had a problem with waiting. If that thing re-appeared she wasn't sure that she could cover both of their asses. Allison stood up, eyes searching the room until they fell on the abandoned fire arm. Despite there being no current threat she scrambled for it, grunting at the weight as she balanced it in her arms. The thing was loud, and big. There had to be some sort of flash too, though she hadn't been in the room when the rounds had been set off – she'd definitely heard them. Allison paced back towards the window; the one Castiel was lying nearby. Some of the boards had been knocked away, leaving no barrier between the room and the stale night air. Allison hefted the gun, sliding the barrel out the window. She waited for a moment, attempting to hear anything beyond the house. She could see what she assumed to be the other men carrying on with their duties, but the night was otherwise silent. Her finger came to the trigger, giving it a quick squeeze. The rounds flew out the window and there was a momentary flash. She cringed as her shoulder kicked back – recoil. Her weapons were usually lightly and she was used to the kick, this was unpleasant and new. Regardless, she pressed the trigger again, and again. It took a total of five rounds before she was satisfied. Allison considered emptying the entire clip, but someone had to have heard that. Her own ears were ringing and the sound had to have carried. Even if they hadn't, they would be checking up soon.

There was a safety on the trigger, which she snapped on, pressing her back against the wall and sliding downwards. She set the gun to her side and edged closer to Castiel, who had yet to move an inch. She considered moving his shoulders, bringing his head to her leg so that he was propped – but that wasn't exactly ideal. Instead of moving him she brought her right hand to his hair, slowly pushing it back off of his forehead and then smoothing it down; something her mother had done when she was little – whenever she was sick or hurt. It had always felt oddly soothing, though she wasn't sure if he could actually feel her touch. It was the thought that counted, wasn't it?

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Allison stayed in the same spot, pressed against the wall with the gun in one hand. Aside from their mixed and in Castiel's case, shallow breathing there were no other sounds in the house. In fact, it was nearly ten minutes until she heard a sound. At least it felt like it had been that long. The first thing she heard was Dean's voice, then at least five pairs of heavy footsteps trudging through the bottom level. "We're up here!"

"Coming up!" Dean called back, followed by a series of thuds. She was back on her feet before the men were even in the front hall. Dean all but burst into the room, three armed men behind him. "What the fuck happened?"

Allison lowered the gun as the four edged towards her and Castiel. "Demon," She wasn't feeling big on details. "I got locked in the basement; by the time I got up he was already unconscious. I shot the bastard but he vanished. We've got to get Cas out of here." Dean nodded towards the three men, who slung their guns over their shoulders and advanced towards Cas. Allison strategically placed herself in front of the unconscious man, jaw setting as she motioned for the others to stop. "We can't just pick him up."

"Why the hell not?" Not even two minutes in and Dean looked like he wanted to strangle her.

Allison looked down at Cas, considering showing the bruises. No, they didn't need to see. "He's got bruised ribs and smart money says that one or two are cracked. If we move him, we could puncture a lung. He'd be dead in minutes."

As if she hadn't even talked, the three moved around her. "Dean." Allison's hand slipped back to the gun, as if to get a point across.

The man huffed, grabbing one of the men by the vest and yanking them back. "She said we can't
pick him up. What do you suggest then, Medicine Woman?” Dean asked voice full of venom.

"We need a board or something." She wasn't going to run around and play the role of sarcastic bitch right now. Besides, Dean was playing it enough for the both of them. The three stared at her as if she were growing spares limbs right in front of their eyes. "Go on," Allison urged, "now would be good." The men looked back to Dean, who apparently didn't need to say anything at all – the men left the room in search of the makeshift stretcher.

With them gone, it suddenly got extremely quiet. Dean was staring at her with an intensity that made her skin crawl.

"Why weren't you with him?” Dean asked suddenly as she turned her back to him. Allison's hands balled into fists at her side.

Was he accusing her? Saying this was her fault? Maybe she was jumping to conclusions. "We split up so that we could finish the house quicker" Allison didn't need to turn around to know what look Dean was wearing.

"He just let you run off?"

"Don't be a-"A deep breathe, biting back the insult. "I didn't run off" She knew what he was getting at. He thought it was her fault. They had been separated…because she'd pushed him to okay it. Castiel had been hesitant but he had let her go ahead. Now he was unconscious. Could she have dealt with the demon herself? Maybe, she had a knack for that. Her pride wasn't letting her take the fall for this. Not now anyways. She turned her attention away from Dean, knowing full well that an argument would only result in someone getting wounded, left behind or killed. She'd heard the stories. Instead she focused on Castiel.

Poor, wounded Cas.

Allison knelt beside him, eyes not leaving his sullen face even once until the men returned a few minutes later. They had a door. Actually, they had the door to the basement in the bathroom. It wasn't incredibly thick and it looked as if it were made of particle board; could it work as the make-shift stretcher that she needed? Absolutely. She didn't even give Dean time to think about stepping in.

"We're going to need to get him onto his back. First we'll gently roll him and then we'll need to slide that under him. I need two of you to move the door and two of you to move Cas." She couldn't exactly do much of either, not with the way her arm felt. Allison moved away as Dean stepped in, designated who did what. He and Alli were going to roll Castiel onto his back then he and one of his grunts would life Cas while the other two moved the 'stretcher' into place.

"How do you want to do this?" Dean asked gruffly, nodding towards Castiel.

She knew that anyway they proceeded; it was probably going to hurt like hell. In fact if the pain didn't wake him, she was going to be surprise.

After a moment of deliberation Allison responded. "We need to focus on his torso. The rest of his body will fall into line" She was amazed by the fact that she sounded like she knew what she was doing. She was putting a lot of thought into the process and it wasn't entirely out of guilt either. "Dean? Get on his other side. Can you support his neck when we move him?" Of course, rather than answer the man stepped over Cas, taking up what little space there had been between the wall and Cas. He crouched down and slid a hand underneath Castiel's side and the other underneath his neck. Allison crouched, carefully slipping both hands underneath his other side. Dean led a count to three
and on three, they slowly flipped him onto his back. Allison had one eye closed for the process, though she managed to keep the other eye open. It took less than a minute but she repeatedly muttered 'careful' and 'slowly' during it. The second they'd started to move him Castiel let out a moan, and that was almost enough for her to make Dean stop. Almost. Stopping and starting would only hurt him more. Once they had him on his back the others did their tasks. Though at the last second, she assigned herself to do something else.

While the two other men lifted him up, and the board was slid under him, she took the liberty to support his neck and head while Dean watched over. It seemed like the instant the men lifted him, he moaned, but this time his eyes opened. Slowly, like someone waking up after an extended time in bed. His lips pulled into a thin line, pulling on a mask – attempting to tide the fact that he was in pain.

"I know it hurts, but you'll be fine. " She didn't think that he'd heard her, not over his own groaning. His eyes fluttered shut and he didn't attempt to communicate, but he was shuddering. Without even thinking she quickly stripped off of her jacket, draping it over top of him and carefully tucking in one of the sides. The sweater that she had underneath was more than enough for now. Dean stepped in to give orders then. By now the other men should have gathered around the house, and because of the incident they were cutting the sweep off for the night. Dean seemed every bit as worried about Cas as she did. The Winchester grabbed what had been Castiel's bag while Allison forced herself to pick up her own, grabbing the shotgun which she had since abandoned. Then began the painfully long trek. The other men had gathered outside the house and according to them; the entire area was sealed off. Unless they wanted to dig holes or climb fences, they had to go out the way they came. That meant trekking back with heavy bags, not to mention Castiel. It took roughly twenty minutes since they had to go slow and every five or so they switched out, Cas wasn't much more than dead weight at that point. Everyone with the exception of Allison herself had a hand in carrying Castiel's stretcher at some point. Everything ran smoothly until they reached the cars. The first and most obvious question, where were they going to put Cas? For all intensive purposes he was still out of it, and they couldn't just fold him up in a seat.

"We could always just lie him do-" Allison held up her hand, cutting off one of the men.

"Dean, can we empty the back of the truck?" She asked as she glanced anxiously back at the vehicle which Castiel seemed to own.

He cast her a look that she couldn't quite read. "You driving?"

Allison quickly shook her head. "No, I'd sit in the back. There's enough room back there. If we clear out the bags and you guys take whatever we gathered, we can put him and the door in the truck bed. One of the guys can drive." Her suggestion conveyed a slightly hopeful tone, which won out in the end. Dean gave the signature nod, at which point she had already pulled down the rail and the flip down window, while one of the other men had scrambled into the truck bed and was pushing the remaining bags out.

The leftover weapons and ammo, anything that wasn't hung on the hand-made shelves attached to the walls were moved into the cab of the truck. The duffels which they had filled were placed into the other cars. Once that was taken care of Allison crawled into the back of the truck, narrowly missing bashing her head on the racks or the roof only a handful of times. Once she was in and off to the side, they slid the stretcher in. It was a tight fit but they managed. The stretcher and Castiel were on one side, and Allison took the other. She shifted slightly so that her back was to the rack which hand a small selection of shotguns and sheathed knives, it allowed a little more room. Before long the entire truck shook, rumbling as it came to life. She wasn't looking forward to the ride back in the cramped truck bed, it was cold and she'd given up her jacket, but leaving him alone back there just seemed…cruel. Thankfully the drive would likely only be a few hours, so long as things went their
The first hour was relatively peaceful, aside from the odd jolt and the lovely sensation of her skull smacking into the side of the truck, it was fine. In fact she'd even begun to drift off. Allison had practically been straddling the line before sleep and consciousness when she felt something tug on her boot. It hadn't been rough, but it was enough for her to jolt awake. Allison's back straightened and her head met the roof of the cab cover. "Sonofa-

"Al?"

She glanced down at the hand that was wrapped tightly around the toe of her boot. "Al?" Allison asked with a small smirk. He returned the smirk. Rather, he tried too. She was incredibly relieved to see him awake

"Welcome back, Cas."

The man grunted. "Your name is too long." Grogy and gruff as he sounded, talking was good. He stopped, moving his hands along the linging of her jacket, which was still covering him. Before she could stop him, Castiel lifted both arms out, crossing them over his stomach – swearing as he did so. "What did I break?"

All Allison could do was shrug. "You tell me."

"A rib," He cringed, taking a deep breath. "Feels like a rib." Not surprising. Cracked, broken. It boiled down to the same thing. "What about you?" With that question the small space went quiet for a few minutes. At which point Cas lifted an arm and lightly grabbed her wrist, despite the fact that the movement had to aggravate whatever wounds he had. Out of reflex, her other hand came up and closed over his, carefully prying his calloused fingers off of her sweater.

Allison wasn't actually hurt. Maybe a muscle or two had been yanked the wrong way when she'd been sent flying backwards, but she wasn't bleeding and there definitely weren't any broken bones. She'd been in worse shape. Sure, there would likely be a bruise but nothing more than that. "We're not worrying about me right now."

"Who are we worried about?" Castiel asked, frowning slightly.

Allison responded with a slight air of irritation. "You." While he looked like he wanted to say something, he didn't. Instead he simply closed his eyes. That was almost as bad as him moving. If he had a concussion or something similar…sleep wasn't a good idea, not now anyway.

"Mind staying awake?" She slowly forced one eye open, turning his head to the side so that he could look at her. The groan had to mean that he minded. "Don't fall asleep." He didn't so much as groan that time. Allison frowned, placing her right hand on his wrist (the one which didn't seem to be sprained) and she squeezed. His eyes popped open instantly, and he didn't.

"Why'd you shock me?"

"I didn't shock you."

The look on his face said that she was missing something but she didn't feel the need to ask him to elaborate. "Just stay awake. I'm serious, Cas. You can sleep when we get back to the camp." He opened his mouth, but didn't say anything. Allison leaned back against the side of the cab. She slowly removed her hand from his wrist, pulling the sleeve of her sweater down to cover her cold
As was typical with them, they lapsed back into silence, which was broken less than five minutes later with a random question. Castiel's face turned sullen when he looked at her. "Did you see him?" He asked quietly.

"See who? The demon?" Allison pursed her lips. Castiel nodded. "Only saw the back of his head, he didn't turn around. I shot him and he vanished." Allison responded. For some reason, Cas suddenly seemed worried, tense. Not the type that came with pain either.

"Why? Was there something that I was supposed to see?" The woman asked, voice tinted with uncertainty.

Cas shook his head. Allison smirked, bowing her head but Castiel managed to catch the look in time. "What?"

The woman let out a small laugh, taking the liberty to share the question. "Was it anyone that I knew?"

While Allison was obviously joking, Castiel didn't find it anywhere near as funny. In fact, his face paled a bit, thanks to the lack of light it wasn't too noticeable. He couldn't help but wonder what her reaction would be if he said yes. It had been someone she'd known. The second he saw the face he knew who it was, the 'meat suit' which Belial had taken. The first thought in his mind was how Allison would react. He wouldn't tell her. He couldn't. He knew her well enough to know that would send her on a rampage and then a very lengthy breakdown. No, he considered her a friend. He couldn't tell her.

Thoughts of Belial, the human vessel he had taken, and his own injuries flooded Cas' mind for the rest of the trip while sleep deprivation, hunger and the biting cold filled Allison's. They both fought the urge to sleep, and even with the lack of conversation they both managed. Like everyone else in the convoy, they just wanted to get back.
He'd found it increasingly difficult to meet with Allison's demand. Every bone in his body ached and a chill had set in even though Allison had attempted to keep him warm by shedding her jacket for him. Really, all he wanted to do was sleep. If he was asleep he wouldn't feel the cold or the pain. Cas wasn't a terribly big fan of either of the sensations that he was feeling. It vaguely reminded him of his first serious injury, little over a year ago when he'd broken his foot. Of course the pain was a lot more intense, what with a bone being shattered and all but really to him any sort of 'feeling' aside from those of a sexual nature were completely unpleasant.

Castiel tried regardless. The woman did try to help, though the topic of discussion could have been something a little more captivating. For example if she would have asked him about the demon, given his current state he would have filled in a few blanks. It was already on his mind anyway. Seeing Belial, at least a demon who claimed to be the bastard was extremely unsettling. It was a name that he hadn't so much as heard for centuries and then suddenly, out of nowhere the demon himself showed up.

Almost as unsettling as Belial's sudden appearance and the inevitable ass kicking which he had received. He'd experienced the similar state of mind after breaking his foot. In sudden onset of feelings, in addition was the reminder that he was no longer part of the best club in the world. Back in the good old days he wouldn't have felt a damn thing, he would have rebounded and the demon would have been as good as dead. Could he do anything though, had he been able to vanquish Belial? No.

Useless.

That was exactly what he was. There was absolutely no positive way to spin it. Yes, one would think that over the duration of five or so years, as his grace slowly slipped away he would have gotten used to it but those people couldn't understand. They would never be able to understand. Most days he found himself able to adapt nicely. After all, there wasn't much that narcotics, alcohol and women couldn't fix. Unfortunately at the moment he didn't have any of the three at his disposal. Dean didn't generally appreciate him being completely doped up during their trips and the few pills he'd popped before they left had worn off.

Alcohol was something of a precious commodity, so they didn't just have six packs tucked under the seats. Unless you were Dean. While there was a woman there, well within touching distance – he wasn't sure that Allison would exactly be willing and with the way his chest felt, any movement at all just wasn't worth it. Though he had to admit, if the situation had a slightly brighter outlook he wouldn't have complained about Allison being the woman in question. She was beautiful. Being with her in a more…physical sense would have worked as well as any narcotics. Though the reality of the situation caused him to abandon all of his incredibly misguided hope. If he wanted a 'pity fuck' as both Dean and Lisa had so elegantly labeled it, all he had to do was get back to camp. Besides, Allison had made it clear that she wasn't that type. Far too stubborn, headstrong. Whatever one preferred to call it. That just wasn't a level that he could see her dropping too. As sad as that was.

No, Castiel couldn't wait to get back to the camp. He knew exactly how the scene would play out and he rather looked forward to it. Being whisked away by what was bound to be a fairly pissed off and very worried Lisa. He'd be taken up to the cabin where the sick and wounded generally stayed, segregated from the rest of the camp. He'd shacked up their when he'd broken his foot, and then he'd gotten his first ever bout of the flu. Lisa said that the peace and quiet promoted better healing. Cas had always thought that sounded incredibly childish, after all not everyone got sent to the cabin.
Though at times it was appropriate. In his cases especially. He didn’t like anyone seeing him in the broken and battered state. No, he was a man and he had an ego. One that when bruised cause massive problems. He didn’t much like anyone seeing him in a weaker state. It was perfectly human, or so he’d been told.
Revelations

It had been a week since the demon attack. The second that they returned to camp Dean and Sarah whisked a barely conscious Castiel off to the cabin which was set farthest from the rest of the camp. Allison had offered to help with the man but it was made very clear very quickly that her help was neither wanted nor needed. The very next day life went on as usual, like nothing had ever happened. It was easily the weirdest week that she had lived through since they'd brought her into the fold almost a month ago. She was swept back into the kitchen to work along side Chuck and when she was done with that she returned to an empty cabin at night.

It was weird, not having Cas there. Making some remark about her interrupting his 'classes' or something similar. She had to admit, it was nice having someone to talk to. He had a slightly arrogant side at times, but who didn't? A few times a day some of his 'women' would make the trek to his cabin, banging on the door and all but demanding that Allison get them an audience with Castiel. She just laughed and sent them on their way. Why they were coming to her, she had no idea. She wasn't allowed to see him either. In fact, from the way they were keeping people away from the cabin Allison was close to thinking that the man had died. She'd only seen three people go in out of the cabin and there was almost always someone hovering around, Alli assumed they were standing guard. She'd managed to sneak some fresh bread out of the kitchen, along with some chocolate and she'd had every intention of making sure that the man was still alive, but Lisa stopped her before she could reach the door. Lisa told her that Cas simply wasn't feeling well, that he was too tired for company; but it had been said in such a way which told her not to try again. So she gave it a few days. By Sunday she decided to try her luck again. She just wanted to see if he was okay, she didn't want some elaborate conversation or anything.

She left her cabin shortly after midnight, backpack slung over her shoulder. The woman was on a mission. Chuck had left the mess hall early, something that he never did, he left to go guard Castiel's cabin. Lisa and Dean were nowhere in sight, from the sounds of things they were having another heated argument though – that's what it sounded like as she snuck by. Allison trudged through the cool pre-dawn air in no time. In minutes she saw the glow of a small fire pit and a man crouched beside it, behind him was a cabin. As if he heard her approaching, Chuck jumped to his feet instantly. Allison attempted to step around him, but he was quick. Now he was blocking the door way, arms and legs stretched out just enough so that she couldn't get to the handle.

"Seriously? " She asked, cocking an eyebrow. "Is he dying or something?"

Chuck let out a nervous laugh, quickly turning his head down. "He just doesn't want to see anyone."

Now to her, that sounded odd. Cas was almost like a social butterfly, the closet thing that the camp had to one and he didn't want to see anyone? It had been a week; he should have healed up a little. Allison crossed her arms over her chest. "You've turned away his groupies then?" to which Chuck nodded. That was weird. She'd seen this coming though, which was why she'd came prepared. Allison quickly slid the pack off of her shoulders, pushing it against Chuck's chest. "Can I just have ten minutes? Not even?"

He looked at her, then down at the bag. He cautiously lifted up the flap – and when he did the look on his face said that he was surprised to see the contents. "How did you get these?" Chuck asked voice full of awe as he lifted a plastic-wrapped roll of toilet paper from the bag.

Allison smirked. "Found a big box of them last week. Mind letting me in now?"
"No, go ahead" The prophet mumbled as he moved away from the door, immured in the count he had to be taking.

That had been almost too easy. In a video game, that meant there was something bad behind the door. Allison didn't waste a second. Once Chuck was out of her way she quietly slid inside, shutting the door behind her. The room was filled by the pulsing glow of a wood burning stove which set in the far corner. The whole thing was about the size of Castiel's cabin, though this one had a bigger bed and no table. Though she wasn't interested in the furnishings.

Castiel was there, lying on top of the covers. Fully clothed His eyes were closed and his shirt was unbuttoned, Allison could see an ice pack carefully tucked against his still bruised side. He looked like he was asleep. Allison crept across the room as quietly as she could manage, though she was only half way before his eyes opened. His head turned to the side, blue eyes dull and practically lifeless. He looked pained, miserable.

"Hi," She whispered lowly as she reached the side of the bed. "How are you feeling?"

Allison waited a moment, but all he did was stare. After three or four minutes of that, he turned his head back so that he was staring at the ceiling. "Oh, that good huh?" Allison mumbled with a frown. She didn't expect a reply, but she wasn't giving up just yet. So she stood there, watching the flames dance behind the glass door.

"Your fan club misses you."

Nothing, just the sound of breathing. Then finally, just as she was about to leave she heard him speak.

"You wouldn't understand."

She kept herself from giving a skeptical look; she concentrated on the wood-stove. "Understand what?"

Castiel grunted, she could feel the bed shift beside her. He was propping himself up, moving just about so he wasn't lying flat on the bed. "I'm useless."

Allison shook her head, quick to jump on point. "You got your ass kicked, sure. Are you useless? No. Shit happens." She'd never been one to take part in a pity party. They always seemed so stupid, her views hadn't changed much when the world went to hell either. She looked down at him, he was eerily distant again.

"I am useless." Castiel said it again, but this time the words forced themselves through gritted teeth.

She sat down on the edge of the bed, though he didn't look entirely too pleased with it. "A demon wouldn't have stood a chance against me before. I could have taken him." Allison was only slightly startled by the venom in his voice. Now she was considering regretting coming to visit him at all.

Allison shrugged it off though, or rather; she tried to. The look on his face was making it difficult. She'd always been able to read people, a useful skill. However trying to read Castiel was bordering on painful. There had to be a slew of dark things going on in his mind. He needed a distraction before he exploded or something. That was something that she did not want to see. She didn't argue with him, there was no point in disagreeing. From what time she'd spent with him she knew that he could be stubborn as hell, she'd heard the stories. To her, it sounded like typical macho crap.

Whenever Brad had gotten hurt he'd mope and whine, men weren't too good when it came to dealing with injuries, but this looked like there was more. He was just laying there, eyes clouded. Whether
that was due to drugs or emotions she couldn't be sure.

"I think you need a distraction." She said, idly picking at the quilt which she was sitting on. He'd been isolated for a week, she didn't know how things were before or if this war normal – but part of her wanted to bet that it wasn't. Allison felt as if she were an incredibly awkward position. One that she'd bribed her way into. He probably wouldn't care either way if she up and left or not, but part of her felt bad, leaving him there like that. He hadn't actually said that he didn't want her there; she was sure if he had a problem with it he would have said something. Allison silently weighed her options. Leave the poor guy to stew in whatever mental hell he had fallen into, or do something. One seemed far more logical then the other.

Allison shifted closer on the bed. The look on his face while he watched her said that he was wondering what the hell she was doing. Allison leaned over just a bit, reaching out and slowly brushing a curl of dark hair off of his forehead. Her fingers trailed down the side of his face, along his jaw line. His eyes flickered closed for a split second and his chest moved as he let out a sigh. For a moment it seemed as though he enjoyed the attention.

Allison herself was slightly…lost. Her eyes had been locked with his while they were open, but now that his were closed she was mentally mapping out the terrain of his face, she wasn't even all that aware aware of the fact that she was touching him – even though she could feel the stubble of his beard underneath her finger tips. Then it ended and she was pulled back to the real world.

"Your opinion isn't valid," Castiel muttered and she quickly yanked her hand away "but you are incredibly warm." Whatever moment was there shattered into pieces. "Do that again."

The brunette tilted her head to the side. "Do what again?" But Cas didn't repeat the 'order' for a second time. Instead he reached for her hand. The second he did so, Allison saw a tremor snake up his arm and before she could count to five he let go and her hand fell back to the top of the quilt.

Castiel grimaced, glancing down at Allison's hand. "You did it again."

"Did what?"

"Shocked me" He said in the most matter-of-fact term she'd ever heard. To his surprise, she actually looked confused. "You didn't feel that?" He cocked and eyebrow, leaning back against the headboard of the bed. It was an odd feeling, like an electrical current coursing through his veins. He vaguely remembered the trip back to the camp after the failed house raids; she'd done it then too. It wasn't too strong, but strong enough for him to notice. How had she not?

"Do you want me to leave?" She looked guilty, as if she'd done something wrong. Though given the fact that he looked and sounded incredibly unhappy – that was a good sign. It meant that she had a soul and all that crap.

He pressed his head back against the board, giving a brief snort. "You are the one who said that I needed a distraction." Allison didn't make a verbal response, but the look on her face said that he had her there. After a second of silence, rather than even attempt to respond she changed the subject entirely.

"How are your ribs feeling?" Allison asked, trying her hardest to avoid direct eye contact. Castiel shrugged, wincing at the pain. "Mind if I look?"

Cas smirked, crossing his arms back behind his head. "Go right ahead." He muttered, shutting his eyes.
The bed groaned as Allison shifted closer till her knee was just pressing against his hip. Castiel, who seemed content on lounging didn't budge as she leaned across his chest, trying to avoid touching him. She carefully pushed the section of the shirt that had covered the lower portion of his chest. The red-gel ice pack was warm to the touch and she believed it had stopped serving its purpose an hour or two ago. As if he'd sensed the the question that was forming on the tip of her tongue, he opened his eyes and gave her a look. "Go ahead and move it." And with his permission, she moved the ice pack away.

Underneath his skin was an array of different colors ranging from light purple to a sickly yellow. Dark black in some places. It was easily worse than what she'd initially seen. Without a moments thought she reached out with her right hand, fingers just barely ghosting over the bruised skin. From just below his heart to the waist of the beaten up jeans that he was wearing, where the bruises seemed to stop. Allison was barely aware of what she was doing until she heard him groan. Much like she had seconds ago when she'd touched his face, she pulled her hand back quickly. Allison's cheeks were tinted with various shades of red. "Did I hurt you?"

Castiel quickly shook his head, repositioning himself so that he was propped up on his elbows. Though Allison had straightened up "You're telling me that you didn't feel it that time either?"

She wondered what the hell he was talking about. The shocking thing again?

"How much medication are you on?" Allison snapped back.

The man snorted. "None."

Allison was shocked. She'd known Cas for little over a month and that was enough time to become very aware of two things. The first, was that he had a sort of brutal honesty to him. Lisa had said that Dean was to blame, that the two men had spent far too much time together. The second was that Castiel spent most of his time stoned. He was something of a functioning drug addict. She'd expected him to be completely out of it after that. A legitimate reason to take painkillers, why wouldn't he?

"I haven't had anything in about a week," Castiel pressed on. "I'm not imagining it. You shocked me. Again." He finished with a sigh.

If Castiel said that he hadn't had any, chances were pretty good that he was telling the truth. Her brows furrowed. "Did it hurt?" The brunette asked cautiously.

He couldn't help but laugh, which Allison didn't appreciate. He found it mildly cute. She actually looked concerned. After about a minute she went from concerned to angry, at which point he decided to can the laughter.

"No," Castiel smirked "It wasn't…unpleasant. Just unexpected."

Unexpected. Weren't shocks of any kind generally something like that? Unless you were in the electric chair or licking a battery. Allison shoved her hands into the pockets of her brown knit jacket. "I think that's my cue to go." She was sure that her allotted ten minutes was up, though Chuck hadn't barged in and asked her to leave – Chuck being Chuck probably wouldn't do that at all. Her eyes swung from the door then back to Cas. He had a look one his face, one that Allison couldn't quite read. Though there was an unmistakable glint in his eyes.

"Can you do me a favor before you leave?"

Allison nodded slowly. "I guess so."

"Good," He said with a small frown. "Stay still."
"Why a-?" Allison was cut off before she could so much as form a second word. Castiel had reached out with his left arm, lightly grabbing the sleeve of her jacket. He pulled her closer to him, fabric a few centimeters away from his bare chest. They were face to face now. His breath was warm against her cheek. Goosebumps erupted over her skin. She'd just been about to pull away when it happened.

First she heard the groan, then she felt it. Her stomach tying in knots, dozens of feelings flooded her body. The most prominent however, was a small tremor that ran down her spine. For a moment she was completely lost, totally unaware of what was going on. Then it hit her.

Castiel was kissing her.
A Dream Within A Dream

She didn't know what to do. Staying in this company didn't seem like such a good idea. Not since Cas had 'suggested' that she leave. Allison had to admit, logical said that was the better idea. What was she supposed to say or do after that? They'd kissed. That was usually the type of thing she'd slip into a conversation. What was she supposed to do? For a second she imagined that she knew exactly how one of his women felt. Allison and Lisa had decided some time ago that while sweet – they women weren't all there mentally. There was no way that they could have been. They went to his cabin on what had been a daily basis, listening him talk about some sort of cosmic occurrence and when when the speech was over and he suggested the possibility of erotic contact – pants were instantly dropped. Lovely women, just not all there. For a second she'd felt easy for kissing him back.

Castiel had been trying to prove some sort of point – but he had kissed her. Part of his 'experiment' apparently. Allison could have pulled away; she was sure of it. She did have a backbone. The problem was that she hadn't wanted to. She had be so in the moment that she had kissed him back. Allison really didn't see Castiel as the overtly dominant type, someone would say –try to hold her down. No, instead the opposite had been done. After she had kissed him back he'd acted weird and all but rushed her out the door. Allison was smart, she could take the hint.

Alli went straight back to her cabin. She didn't pass Go, nor did she collect two-hundred some odd dollars. Once she was behind closed doors she shed the days outfit and traded it for dark red, plaid pattern pajamas and an old gray wife beater. With the dressing done she climbed between the cold sheets, pulling them up as far as they could would go. Allison tried to settle in, she really did. Of all things she just wanted to sleep and wake up in the morning, acting like the nights events hadn't happened at all. It was a stupid kiss and he'd had her back pressed against a figurative wall. At east that was what Allison was continuously telling herself. It had been his fault.

Stupid Cas.

She spent the better part of an hour lying in the bed, just trying to push the kiss and Castiel from her mind. Part of her wanted to march back and demand an explanation – a real one. The other part just wanted sleep to come and take her away. It was a slow and grueling process but two hours later she drifted off.

At first it was peaceful, a welcome escape from her ever-confusing reality. This didn't last long at all. No, in no time at all her mind was flooded with dreams.

The first thing that she noticed was the sudden drop in temperature. She was no longer wrapped up in the relatively warm mound of blankets which had been piled on the bed. No, instead she was in the middle of a dim room, fully dressed. Allison shuddered, surprise by the fact that she could actually see her breath. She wrapped her arms around herself, thought it didn't do much to help. The chill quickly became the least of her worries as she took in her surroundings. Allison was no longer in the warm confines of the cabin. She knew exactly where she was and it was extremely disconcerting.

The diner, the one in which she and Brad had a most frightening encounter a little over a year ago. She slowly shuffled along the grungy tiled floor- taking in her surroundings. Something felt wrong. The sitting area was deathly quiet; the only thing she could hear was the faint sounds of her own breath. She was alone but she felt on edge. At times likes these she reached for a weapon, because there always was one. Allison didn't need to check to know that she didn't have a knife or gun.
She highly doubted that there was a shotgun under the bar. She and Brad had swept the place when they'd first reached it all that time ago. There hadn't been one then, why would there be one now?

She didn't like it. She wanted a change of scenery. Of all days, this one not one that she wanted to remember. Running into those demons and –

"Allison?"

The woman's Heart faltered and she feared that it would give out right there. The hairs on the back of her neck stood as she swung around, trying to catch a glimpse of the speaker. All Allison saw was a fleeting glimpse of white out of the corner of her eye. Allison turned towards the booths, which were lined up all against the now ruined window panes. To her surprise there was nothing there. That wasn't right.

"This isn't happening. There's no way in hell-"Allison was cut off mid sentence when she felt something on her shoulder. Her eyes snapped shut and she held her breath. She counted to ten in her mind, and once she reached ten she opened her eyes.

Bad call.

Standing right before her was the man clad in white. Lucifer. That was what everyone had called him. Her blood ran cold. Much to her horror, his right hand was on her shoulder; he had a firm grasp on her.

"You don't need to be afraid of me." He spoke softly; there was a strange urgency to his voice. Allison didn't want to look him straight in the eye, no way. His free hand reached out and took her chin, tilting her head back so that their gazes met. Her breath hitched. His eyes. She'd seen that expression before…right before Brad had shot him.

A person inside of a person. "Get your fucking hands off of me!" Allison hissed bravely, jerking herself backwards. He was bigger, stronger. Despite her efforts she barely budged. He now looked almost as panicked as she did.

"No, no! Allison. Listen to me. You know that I won't hurt you. "She had a feeling that he was trying to reassure her, but he wasn't doing so well. "Listen, my name's Sam..." He let go of her chin, and she quickly turned her head away. Sam? That's a new one.

She let out a short, hollow laugh. "Sam? Nice. When did you change your name? "While she found it a brilliant question the tall man's nostrils flared and at that instant everything stopped being amusing. This was freaking' Lucifer. Pissing him off? Not a good idea. Powers aside he looked strong enough to snap her neck like a twig. Allison swallowed the lump that was quickly forming in her throat.

"Look. You've seen me before. I'm not…" His voice dropped, as if he was afraid something else would hear them "I'm not him. I don't have a lot of time. I need you to give a message to my brother. I need you to tell him that there's still a way –"He'd looked like he'd been about to continue but he was cut off by groan, his own. His face paled and he quickly snatched his arm away from her shoulder. "Tell him that he's got everything that he needs. " Every word sounded more urgent than the last.

Allison couldn't believe that she was asking; but in addition to being afraid, she was now confused. "What do you mean tell him? Who is your brother?"
"Dean," He was rushing now. "Tell him that he can ice him. Please. You don't know how important this is."

Dean? She only knew one. The overly arrogant and ass-like team leader. The guy who had shot her. That Dean? Allison opened her mouth to ask but the man slumped, grabbing for the counter. His entire body was shaking and the look in his eyes. He looked like he was in pain. "Tell Dean!"

Allison backed away.

"Are you-" Allison then took a very reluctant step forward.

"No! Get away from me. Get out of here!"

She whipped her head towards the door, only a few feet away. The mounting tension was almost suffocating her. Running away sounded like a great idea but for some reason her feet weren't so willing to co-operate. When he turned to her again felt something course through her veins. His face was contorting; from smirked to a pained grimace.

"I said get away from me!" His left hand flew up and he punched it forward, as if trying to knock out some sort of barrier. The second he did that the wind was knocked out of her, Allison went flying backwards. Somehow he managed to throw her through one of the few untouched window panes. Glass splintered around her and the pain was blinding.

She hit the concrete outside of the diner hard. Allison heard someone chuckling. The sound of crunching glass. Footsteps. "Well, well. What do we have here?" The voice was oddly calm, but there was something daunting about it. She tried to force her eyes open. On the second attempt she caught blurry figure reaching out for her, she couldn't shrink away. Just as the fingers threatened to brush her cheek she screamed – finally finding her voice.

Allison shot up in the bed, pain lancing through her skull. Her heart was thudding in her chest. She could feel what she assumed to be beads of sweat rolling down the side of her face. She was in the cabin, alone. No glass, no guy in a white suit. It had been a dream. A very, very, very bad dream. Not once could she remember having a dream that was so vivid. It was unsettling for a whole host of reasons. To start, she was surprised that Lucifer wasn't standing in the corner – waiting to pounce. The cabin was white-suit free. Allison wasn't even sure what she'd seen.

Yes, she'd been at the diner. Yes, Lucifer was there. He said that he wasn't Lucifer though. He said that his name was Sam. He'd told her that she needed to tell something to Dean. Allison found it crazy, she hadn't given this much thought to a stupid dream, or rather nightmare, since she was a kid. This wasn't some boy in her class though, this was Lucifer.

She pulled her knees up to her chest, wrapping her arms around them. His face. He'd looked genuinely panicked, like he was waiting for someone to barge in with guns blazing. Would the devil look panicked like that? Then after she went through the window, she could still see vague outlines and colors. All the white she saw when someone reached down for her. It was the same voice too, just calmer. The voice that she and her brother had heard. The tone that had been used when he said that his name was Sam had been a million times different.

Allison's mind now hurt almost as much as it had earlier. All because of a stupid dream. Just thinking about it made her shudder. While she should have tried to go back to sleep, she didn't even bother attempting. Alli knew that it wouldn't do any good. At least now Castiel was the last thing on her mind.
"Cas?"

Some time around nine o'clock Chuck came in, bearing a fair sized breakfast of pancakes and some of 'ready-crisp' bacon. Castiel hadn't been entirely impressed with the intrusion, even if food was offered. It had taken him forever to fall asleep and once his head hit the pillow amazingly enough, the dream had been good. More than that. It had been wonderful. It was as if the dream was based off of what could have happened, had he not insisted that she leave. At least his subconscious wanted to believe that somehow they both would have shed their clothing and Allison would have ended up moaning his name. It felt safe to say that the woman had completely infected his mind. He'd thought that she was interesting before, now she was absolutely fascinating.

Chuck had set the tray down and Castiel purposely made a show of sitting in an upright position. He'd yet to figure out how he'd cover his miraculous healing, but at the time he didn't believe that outing Allison was a good idea at all. He had to have at least a few more hours to spare, he could come up with something then. While Castiel attacked the pancakes Chuck gave him the run down. Dean was going to be in his cabin for most of the day, supplies were running low again and they would need to play a longer trip. Lisa was likely to be tied up most of the day as well, Chuck wasn't sure if they'd have time to check on him but insisted that should he need anything; he could provide.

"What about Alli?" Castiel asked, mouthful of chewed breakfast foods. Chuck paused, glancing back at the door. When he looked back at Castiel it was as if the man didn't understand English. All Chuck could do was stare blankly. "Allison. Do you know what she's doing today?"

It took a second too long but eventually Chuck mustered an awkward chuckle. "Allison's offered to help me for the day. " Castiel cocked his head to the side and the prophet put his hands up. "She asked. Something about needing a distraction. Besides, I need all the help I can get. " With that Chuck took the tray from his lap, Cas having already polished everything off. "I'll tell Lisa that you're up."

He barely noticed Chuck leave. Allison had offered to spend the day in the mess hall with Chuck? That was something no one did. That was something Dean used as punishment. At least he knew where she was. He needed to talk to her; there was much that he needed to discuss with her and the sooner the better. Though he had other things to worry about, mainly Lisa appearing at some point, he found it impossible to get his mind off of Allison. While he'd found her interesting before, now Castiel was absolutely fixated with her. Since the beginning of the end of the world there was a startling lack of 'talented' people. Most were killed off, any ability instantly made them a target, demons often snatched them. Usually just because they were bored and humans were a good source of amusement. They were easy prey.

Two hours went by before there was a knock on the cabin door. Two wasted hours. He'd spent a majority of the time trying to find a way to cover his tracks. The idea of mentioning Allison was completely off the table, which meant that he had to lie. Even after all those years of trailing behind the Winchesters and walking in the human realm, it was something that he still didn't quite have a handle on. Dean openly mocked him for his inability to lie. When Lisa knocked he tried to stay calm, sitting down on the bed with his back propped against the headboard. He needed a way out.

" Morning Cas" Lisa greeted him with a small smile as she made her way across the room, leather satchel in her hands. "How are you feeling? Still in pain?" She stopped beside the bed and placed the leather bag down. Dean had found the satchel a week ago and Lisa was quick to snatch it up. She
kept some of the smaller medical supplies in there, just in case.

Castiel grimaced. "Not exactly…" He muttered as Lisa's attention turned to the partially buttoned shirt which he was currently wearing. Lisa reached out to grab a bit of the material but he quickly pushed her hand away.

"Oh, so now you're bashful? You do remember that my first night here you tried to get me to join in on one of those sessions of yours" Lisa shook her head, dodging the hand that was trying to keep her away. Castiel didn't look pleased at all, though Lisa was clearly amused. The woman undid the remaining buttons with ease and only when she tried to push the shirt off of his shoulders did he try to stop her again.

"I'm fine. It doesn't hurt as much, I think I've finally started to heal." Castiel looked up at her, half hoping she'd skip the check-up. Naturally, rather than listen to him Lisa quickly shoved the shirt down his shoulders.

She shook her head, craning her neck to get a better view of the damage. "You're not fine. I know you're still in-" Her eyes widened and her jaw grew slack. Castiel flinched back. "What the fuck?"

That was about the reaction he'd been expecting. Lisa looked like she'd seen a ghost or something. He could understand her surprise. His reaction had been eerily similar when he'd noticed the lack of bruises and pain. Lisa instantly took a step back, running a hand through her dark hair. She demanded to know what he'd done. It was strange, Lisa never really sounded commanding. It took a special situation to drag it out of her. Generally she was the good cop, Dean filled up the other role quite nicely. He wasn't quick to jump to his own defense – as he didn't actually have one yet. As much as he liked the woman he knew that at some point anything he told her would work it's way back to Dean. That wasn't to say that Lisa couldn't be trusted. With personal matters and other things she was an excellent confident but there were certain issues that she couldn't seem to keep to herself. Saying that Allison possessed some sort of odd healing property was just the type of information that she would feel obligated to share.

That just couldn't happen.

Rather than lie, he told her the truth. Or rather a version that was close to the truth. He removed the details of Allison sneaking into the cabin and interrupting his brooding, and there was no mention of physical contract. Instead Cas insisted that he'd woken up that way. Lisa wasn't exactly buying into it just yet. A good fifteen minutes later he was still trying to explain.

"You know that I can't do anything. I can't heal myself at all. I am every bit as human as you are. There was no divine intervention." Castiel insisted in an exasperated voice.

Lisa's face was stoic, slightly confused. "How is that possible? You had to have done something."

The man rolled his dark eyes. "I told you, I didn't do anything." Castiel paused, taking the time to put his shirt back on properly. "You know that I can't lie." The words weren't more than a mutter, they weren't exactly said for Lisa's benefit but she seemed to have heard them anyway.

She was silent. Likely having a mental debate.

Of course she knew that in all actuality, There wasn't anything that Cas could do. She'd witnessed first hand just how human he was. It really was unlikely that he'd resort to some sort of ritual to heal himself. Sure, the man complained more than the average person when he was sick or injured but he dealt with it. No one in the camp had ever done healing by ritual means that was frowned upon to a near militant extreme. Dean was against it so like it or not, they all were supposed to be. Sure, more
often than not Castiel and Dean butted heads but would the angel flat out defy him? No, that was highly unlikely.

"I don't want this to be a big deal," His face turned pleading as she looked back at him. "We've seen stranger things."

Lisa crossed her arms over her chest. "We've seen stranger." She repeated to herself. "I've got a meeting with the head honcho...I should go." Lisa picked the satchel off of the bed, quickly slinging it over her shoulder. Not a single glance back as she walked to the door, pace quicker than usual. Castiel swore under his breath. It was going to be a big deal, he knew it.

Rather than stay in the cabin and wait for Dean to come by and play a ruthless and uncomfortable game of twenty questions, he made the bed and left. He considered going to the mess hall and cornering Allison but that wasn't a good idea. He still didn't know what he'd say. So he did what he normally did when stuck in a rut, he went to the teaching cabin. He wasn't surprised when he saw a few of the camps girls milling around, clearly lost without him. The second they saw him they rushed to his side. Expressing happiness and concern. It was rather sweet. Though they were all foggy on one thing, they didn't understand how he was out of bed so soon. It was common knowledge that his injuries would put him out for a few weeks at the least, and there he was less than a week later. They were stunned but no one complained.

The lesson was fairly low-key. He stuck to the topic of meditation and similar things, which he thanked for his 'miraculous healing'. Castiel decided to stick to the basics, as a great portion of his time spent in the cabin was going to be devoted to the conversation with Allison which he was so set on having. So while he was explaining positive thought to his little group, his mind was centered on Allison.

Somehow he managed to turn meditation into a topic that spanned at least six hours. Not once during that time did anyone barge, he'd expected Dean to come storming but he hadn't. Castiel could only assume that Lisa hadn't shared the 'good news' yet. When he'd finally run out of things to say and he wished his devote followers a pleasant night they looked at him expectantly. It didn't take a genius to figure out what the women wanted. Him, naturally. Unfortunately for them he wasn't exactly in a sharing sort of mood. He said that he was tired and that he wasn't quite feeling up for it. He'd had to disappoint them. It wasn't exactly a full blown lie, he was tired and he didn't feel up to it. Though despite that, if he wanted to he was sure that he would extremely talented, as he always was. They pouted by didn't argue. One by one they cast him a sheepish smile and then left, no one made a scene which he was grateful for. Once the cabin had cleared out he stayed behind in the quiet for an hour, finalizing his thoughts – perfecting the script.

By the time he allowed himself to leave it was after dinner. He'd yet to see Lisa again and Dean hadn't made an appearance. That was as good as it was bad. If they were still in a meeting that meant something bad was going to happen. When they spent the day all locked in Deans cabin, no good ever came out of it. However Castiel tried to put that out of his mind. He would deal with Dean when the man finally got around to checking in, not before that.

The dining hall was lit up like a Christmas tree and people were coming and going, the dinner was at its tail end. Castiel went around the side of the hall, entering through the kitchen. No one seemed to notice his arrival, everyone was busy stacking plates or carrying trays of steaming hot food out to the serving counter. Only once Chuck rushed into the room did people notice.

"What are you looking at? It's Cas. Back to work." Chuck waved his clipboard at two of the cooks who had decided to stop and stare. Chuck's stressed out voice was enough to send them on their way. "What are you doing up?" The man asked, bringing his clipboard against his chest. Chuck
looked just as confused as everyone else.

Castiel chose to ignore the question; he didn't really want to answer it again. "Is Allison here? I need to speak with her." The words came out in a far more anxious tone than he had originally anticipated.

Chuck shook his head, glancing down at the floor. "You just missed her. I told her she could pack it in for the night. She's probably showering-"

"Thanks Chuck." Castiel cut him off, turning away from the shorter man who now looked completely distressed. He was gone in the blink of an eye, a man on a mission. Which meant that he didn't hear Chuck.

"I don't think that she wants to talk to you!"

Aside from the mess hall the bathrooms and showers took up the second largest building on the site. It was roughly a two minute walk, or in Castiel's case, jog to get there. The complex was one level divided into four areas. The men's bathrooms and showers were on left the while the women's were on the right. He paused in front of the door marked 'showers'. He could hear the low rumble of water on the other side.

Castiel slowly pulled the door opened and stepped inside. A wave of heat and steam hit him the second he entered. All of it coming from the second stall on the left. Every stall had a metal door that wasn't quite full length. There were five or six inches off of the bottom, just enough so that you could see a persons feet. He stood in front of the door, arms crossed. "Allison?" He called out, trying to cut through the sound of the water. She was in there, he could see her feet. There was a pause on the other side, There was a dull thud and the sound of the water shutting off followed.

"Cas? What are you doing out of bed?"

She didn't sound at all pleased. If he could see her face he had no doubt that she would have been glaring at him. Why did she sound angry? He couldn't help but wonder. Why was no one pleased to see him up about about.

He decided to ignore that. Instead getting right to the point. "We need to talk."

"Really? Because I don't think that we do." The door swung open, metal narrowly missing his face. He managed to jump out of the way before it did damage. Standing in the center of the stall was Allison, wrapped up in a housecoat which he immediately identified as his. It was a tan color, much like the old trench coat that he had worn back in his angelic days. The belt that tied it was a blue. Dean had picked it up a few years back, making some joke about how his coat was now in human form. To this day Castiel still didn't find it funny. The housecoat had been shoved into the back of his wardrobe, he'd never worn it before. For a moment he concentrated how nice Allison looked. Her dark hair looked almost black in the light, still soak strands framing her face. The housecoat was wrapped tight enough to accent certain curves…it was enough to completely draw him away from the initial subject. Allison let out a low cough and his eyes instantly flew back up to her face. The only thing that was currently unattractive about her was the look that she was giving him.

Allison's lip formed a thin grimace. "Why aren't you in bed?"

"That's what we need to talk about." He snapped back. Rather than wait for her to round with a snide remark, his finger hastily worked at the buttons of his shirt. He had them undone in seconds and his movements were every bit as frantic as he shrugged the material off of his shoulders, removing it entirely. Allison's eyes widened. He wasn't sure if it was because of the manic show he'd
just put on or if it was because of the fact that the bruises were gone. It was anyone's guess. She took a few steps towards him, right hand outstretched.

"You're...healed?" The poor girl looked and sounded every bit as confused as Lisa had been. "How the hell?" Her fingers ran down the length of his ribcage, eyes constantly flickering back up to see if her actions warranted any actual reaction. Her fingers were lean and damp; they felt as if they were leaving trails of smouldering coals along his side. Castiel tried not to focus on that but it was difficult. Very difficult. After a minute she finally pulled her hand away, done with her importune examination. He almost immediately missed the feelings of her finger tips tracing his skin.

The woman was far too distracting.

Allison shoved her hands into the pockets of her robe, eyes locking with his. "What did you do?" She asked with the same expectant tone that Lisa had used. All he could do was shrug.

"I kissed you."

She rolled her eyes. "Yeah, I was there for that. I mean what did you do to get rid of the bruises?" Any small hope he had of her understanding were completely dashed.

"I didn't do anything." Castiel paused, gesturing to his side then to Allison. "You did." In his mind he had hoped that the conversation was going to flow better than it was. Though in his mind Allison was accepting and not impossibly stubborn.

Allison wrinkled her nose, glaring up at him. "What do you mean I did it?" At that moment he would have much preferred the Allison that had been in his head. "How could I do...that? Are you saying that I'm a witch or something?" While she looked pissed off, he almost wanted to laugh. Someone was jumping to conclusions.

"No," He shook his head, reaching for her arm. "If you'd give me a minute I could explain." The angel wasn't quite sure that just explaining would help him. He had a different method. It was bold but it had grabbed her attention yesterday, he didn't see why it wouldn't work now.

Castiel quickly pulled her against him, one arm wrapping around her waist. He leaned down and while his lips were supposed to meet hers, instead they met with the palm of her hand.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" Allison hissed at him, giving his face a small shove before trying to back out of the awkward embrace. "Mind letting me go?" The words were in the form of a question but the look in her eyes said that it was a demand more than anything.

"Yes, I mind. I need you to listen to me. You're the one who healed me. " Castiel's tone was now dead serious. Lucky for both of them, looks couldn't actually kill.

Allison's face was over cast by a shadow. Expression practically blank. "That's ridiculous."

The ex-angel sighed. "I know how it sounds but you did it Allison. The shock that I felt? That was you. It was all you."

Her face was blank. Nothing.

"I know that you felt it too."

"I didn't."

Castiel didn't skip a beat. "You did. Do you know what that shock was? It was energy. Energy that
came from you. When we kissed it transferred to me, it sped up the healing process. I know it sounds crazy."

Allison's hands came up, roughly shoving at his chest. "As long as you know that, now get away from me." He stumbled backwards, hitting the pane between stalls on the opposite side of the hall. Allison crashed against with a thump, sending them both to the cold tiled floor. Allison had more or less ended up in his lap, while he was force back against the wall. This was not the outcome that he had originally predicted. He wasn't ready to give up just yet, even if he was at a clear disadvantage.

"Allison, you're special."

She looked as if she was going to him. "I'm not!" Allison was seething now "I'm not some sort of freak! Do I need to prove it to you?"

Castiel frowned. There was no way that she could. He already knew, he wasn't the one who was in-denial. He gave her a firm nod "Go ahead."

Without warning she grabbed his chin, Allison's lips crashed against his. If that was how she planned to prove that he was wrong, it was a terrible idea. The second her mouth came in contact with his he felt it. It was like a jolt, stronger than it had been the previous night. It was like an entirely new feeling. His reaction was immediate; the arm around her waist pulled her flush against him. She felt so warm, it made him shudder. Allison herself was shivering but Cas didn't know why. He'd expected something more chaste. He'd expected her to pull away. Castiel himself was the first person to do that.

Allison looked bewildered. The woman was flushed, color flooding into her cheeks. "I know you felt it." Castiel's voice was low, gravely even. Breath hitching with every word. "You're not a freak, Allison. You're special."

It was funny. Despite the fact that he was still speaking on the subject of Allison healing him, his mind was elsewhere. Just last night they'd been locked in a similarly heated embrace, one that had ended all too soon.

"I'm leaving now." Allison whispered in a small voice, glancing over her shoulder to avoid and all eye contact. Suddenly it wasn't about the mysterious healing, or whether or not she was special. It was almost as if something inside him snapped; or someone flicked a switch.

He leaned in, slowly pressing his lips against the side of her neck. "No, you're not."

The thought of her moving was unpleasant, almost sad. She was so warm. He was able to completely overlook the fact that they were currently on the floor in the shower room and that someone could walk in at any moment. When she looked at him it was like every other thought fled his mind. Her gaze was smouldering, not unlike the look that she'd held last night after she'd kissed him. What he would have given to have a repeat of those events.

"You are special." It sounded more forceful that time. He handed meant for it to, that was just the way the words slipped out.

He'd half expected an argument, but all he got in return was silence. Special and gorgeous. Allison was watching him. Considering the many other things that she could have been doing, watching wasn't so bad. She wasn't pushing him or struggling to get away. She'd settled into his lap, whether that had been her intention or not Castiel had no way of knowing. What he would have liked to understood was why she was still there. Yes, his arm was around her waist but if she wanted to get
up it would have been easy enough to do. Instead she sat there, it was almost torturous. He didn't dare move. The two stayed that way for what felt like forever. That was until Allison moved. Rather than move away she moved closer, hands pressed against his chest. "Listen to me, Cas. I didn't do it. I don't know why you think that it was me… but I'm telling you, there's no way in hell or anywhere else that I healed you." The urgency to her words made him cringe. It sounded more like she was trying to convince herself than anything else. She slowly pushed him back, allowing herself to get up.

"Allison?" Castiel followed suit, but by the time he was on his feet she had already emptied the stall of her clothing and slipped on her shoes. She pushed by him, shoulder roughly clipping his as she walked past.

She didn't say anything till she reached the door, but even then it was only one word. One small word.

"Don't."

This was not how the conversation was supposed to go.
He had to be messing with her. That was the only logical explanation. The man was obviously unstable. He buried himself underneath women and drugs, something was off. Allison kept telling herself that, but the problem was that she didn't believe it. He'd been so serious and so set on telling her that; but how could she have healed him? That shock she had felt, had that actually been energy? She was so far out of her comfort zone now. She couldn't even see her comfort zone anymore. By the time she reached the cabin she wanted to bash her head against the wall. She wasn't a born and raised hunter, hell the only things she'd come in contact with were demons. Could things actually transfer energy like that? Apparently Angels could, heal and hurt – and demons were powerful. She was just a boring old human, what Cas had said didn't make a lick of sense.

Allison deposited the damp clothes onto the floor once she was inside, kicking the door shut behind her. She was quick to move to the wardrobe, which now housed her clothing as well as Cas'. She pulled out a pair of black boy-shorts from one of the doors located in the bottom of the wardrobe, and a gray spaghetti strap top. Changing into them took seconds and once she was done she hung the housecoat back up, shoving the doors shut on the wardrobe. Allison could practically hear the bed calling to her. Sleep would be the most wonderful escape. As she pulled back the numerous covers she remembered the earlier night and the weird ass dream that she'd had. Lucifer had been in her dreams. Or rather, Sam had. His vessel or something. He'd said to tell his brother, Dean that he had everything he needed. Allison had no idea what the hell that meant and she honestly did not want to find out.

As she settled into bed her thoughts divided themselves completely. Half focused on Castiel and the run in that they had in the showers, and the other on the dream. The more she thought about Castiel and his insane claims, the less she actually thought about the claim itself. Half an hour later she wasn't thinking about how he said that she had healed him, instead she was thinking about how he wouldn't let go of her. He'd tried to kiss her and she'd shoved her palm in his face in an attempt to avoid it. Then she'd kissed him, only after they'd fallen to the floor. It wasn't supposed to be a kiss – it was more of a way of her trying to prove him wrong. She'd felt it, that jolt. Then she'd promptly tried to leave, but he had other ideas. He'd kissed her again but this time his lips had brushed against her neck. His actions had been completely uncalled for. Why did he have to do that? There was enough on her mind already. Though all things considered thinking about how damn nice that had felt sure as hell beat thinking about Lucifer or magical powers that she couldn't possibly possess.

Cas was an ass, but a good looking one…whom she had kissed numerous times now. There was just something about him. They got along fairly well; he'd helped look after her when she was first brought to the camp. He'd let her take the bed well after she was good and healed. He didn't complain when she sat in on his lectures, which essentially meant that he wasn't going to take part in an orgy that day. He was an amazing kisser. There was just something about him.

Those where the thoughts which Allison fell asleep to some hours later. That she could handle, the lesser evil.

He needed to re-group. The talk hadn't gone as planned, not even close. If making her mad or uncomfortable had been the aim then it could have counted as a success. She'd seemed mad even before he got to the healing part. There had been something off about her. It had taken ever ounce of willpower not to follow her, but doing that likely would have resulted in him sustaining some sort of painful injury. Still, he didn't feel comfortable with just leaving it at that. This was not one of those times where patience seemed acceptable. He didn't want to wait until morning. There was an ever
closing window of time before Dean tracked him down and demanded a story. While he'd been able to pull the figurative wool over Lisa's eyes for now. It was only a matter of time before someone found out that Allison had been in the cabin with him. When they did, there was no doubt in his mind that the sparks would fly.

No, he wanted to tell her now. This was important and something that she'd need to accept. Castiel didn't see how waiting did anyone any good. He left the showers just minutes after Allison did, quickly winding his way back to the 'teaching' cabin. He needed to pull himself together before approaching her again. He spent the better part of two hours just pacing back and forth, but by the time the first hour had passed he already had a plan formed. This one, he wasn't sure if it would be any better or worse than his initial plan but he only felt it fair to try. Once the camp had quieted down, most settling in for the night – he snuck back to his cabin.

The windows were dark, but he was sure that Allison was in there. He proceeded cautiously, slowly pushing the door open and stepping inside. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust but thanks to a few stray beams of moonlight, he could see Allison asleep on the bed, back turned towards the door. Castiel hovered by the door for a moment. He took a step forward, weary about the creaking that was sure to come the second he moved. The floorboard didn’t creak but a noise came from somewhere else, the bed. His eyes snapped up when he heard the groan, he half expected Allison to turn over and glare daggers at him, but she didn't. She was still asleep. He took another cautious step, but this time instead of a groan he could hear a voice.

"No."

Was she…talking in her sleep? Allison slowly turned over on the bed, twisting the many layers of sheets around her. She was lying on her back but he could see her face, she looked like she was in pain.

"Cas is gonna…hurts too much."

That stopped him dead in his tracks. Cas? Had she really just said Cas? Then again, Cas could be anyone. It didn't mean that it was him. It was an interesting thought. Was she dreaming about him? He worked his way over to the bed while Allison mumbled, tossing and turning. By the time he reached the edge of the bed she had cocooned herself in the blankets and her face was buried in the pillows. Her body was shaking. He slowly sat down at the top corner of the bed, one arm pressed against the mattress for support. She filled over again while he settled. Her face was marked heavily with lines of stress. He was sure that if her eyes had been opened here would have been panic in them. Without thinking, Castiel slowly reached out with his left hand, fingers brushing away a lock of hair away from her face. She stilled at his touch. She didn't look as pained and he wondered if she could actually feel him.

It reminded him of the first few nights that Allison had spent in the camp. He'd been tasked with watching over her, since she was in his cabin after all. She'd been beautiful then, even though she'd been pale as death. Now she was absolutely striking. Cas placed the hand that had skimmed her hair on the pillow, leaning in slightly to get a closer look. She really was something else. In all his time in earth and on heaven, he'd never encountered someone quite like her. That thought had entered his mind quite a few times since meeting her but after last night it was cemented, a bonefide fact. Allison was truly one of a kind. For a moment his intentions were totally lost, he was simply sitting there, watching her sleep.

He was taking in the moment. Sleeping Allison was so much quieter than the thing she would turn into when he woke her up, something that was only seconds away from happening. He idly let his thumb run from her forehead down to her ear, then further. Just barely brushing against her jaw.
"Cas?"

He froze, quickly moving his hand away as Allison's eyes slowly opened. She blinked, squinting as she propped herself up. "What are you doing here? Why are you so close?" He didn't say a word in response to the groggy questions. Castiel sat up straight, moving his hands back to rest on the mattress – further away from Allison.

"We need to talk." Castiel spoke quietly, but his tone wasn't without it's seriousness. Allison groaned and sunk back down to the bed, yanking the covers over her head. Well, she wasn't hitting him and it was a start.

"I just woke up…you woke me up. Just go away."

He could see her fingers wrap tighter around the blankets. No, he wasn't going away. Castiel muttered under his breath and leaned forward, left hand grabbing a clump of the linen and swiftly pulling it back. Allison lost her grip on them instantly. Castiel pulled them halfway down and shot her a glare, daring her to so much as think about covering herself up again. Allison just rolled her eyes. "Fine," The woman huffed unhappily "you've got five minutes."

Five minutes. This surprised him. Clearly waking her up had some sort of advantage. He wasn't going to waste a second. He stood up, slowly crouching to his knees and reaching underneath the bed. "What the hell are you going under there for?" Allison asked. When he didn't respond shuffled around on the bed, reaching for a small battery powered lamp that was tucked beside the pillow. With a flick of a switch a dim light bathed him and she could see him pulling out her duffel bag. Opening it up and rummaging through it. "Why you going through my stuff? Is that really-"She'd been rubbing her eyes, blocking him out of sight for a moment. When she got another look at him he had her sheathed hunting knife in her hand and he was simply staring up at her. Without a word he pulled the nine inch blade from the leather sheath, then he motioned for Allison to move back. Allison did just that.

"You're wasting your time." She murmured. He couldn't have disagreed more. He sat back down on the edge of the bed facing her. "Why'd you grab my knife?" Allison slowly tilted her head to the side, confused gaze falling on him. Clearly she hadn't caught on just yet, which really was fine with him.

He held the knife up and her eyes followed the blade. "Just be quiet, alright?"

"What the hell are you going to-" Before Allison could get the question out the sharp blade was pressed against his palm, with one swift motion Castiel dragged it across the skin. Allison gasped and instantly looked panicked. In it's wake the blade left a very deep gash on his hand, blood was already starting to pool. "What are you doing? Are you mental? Fuck. Cas, look at the blood!" Allison snatched his wrist, her free hand reaching for the closest bit of linen. He left the blade on the mattress, spare hand grabbing hers to stop the pursuit.

"If you can't heal me I'll leave you alone, I won't say another word about it. All you have to do is try." He didn't want to scare her, that wasn't the plan, but he hadn't known what else to do. Drops of blood were already streaming down his wrist and the sides of his hand. Allison looked down at the wound, then back up at him. She was hesitating. He didn't want to rush her but the pain was slowly radiating up from his palm to his arm and it really did hurt like hell. The downside to being human.

Allison slowly let go of his wrist. Without warning she pressed her palm against his, fingers intertwining between his own. He swore underneath his breath at the unwanted pressure. She looked up at him, eyes filled with panic and confusion. He merely nodded. They'd need contact for it to work, as much as it pained him. She slowly leaned in, pressing her lips against his. Instantly he felt it.
The jolt, then a warm sensation – separate from the burning in his palm. It had to have taken him less than a second to wrap his arm around her waist and only a few moments more before pulling her against him. Though he lost himself instantly. He was supposed to be focusing on the healing; the energy – but the kissing seemingly shoved everything else into second place.

It was all too easy to forget about why he'd originally come to the cabin, especially as Allison was slowly reclining against the bed, the two still locked in their embrace. It felt like an eternity before the kiss ended. When it did he pressed his forehead against hers, attempting to catch his breath. He was quite literally on top of her. When that had happened he wasn't sure. Allison was flushed and much like him, her chest rapidly rose and fell. The hand that was still encased in hers was over her head. Castiel took great care in moving her arm and bringing their hands between them. Their hands slowly separated, the two stayed silent. Allison inspected her palm first. Her skin was stained with his blood. She flexed her fingers then looked up at him. His face was a mask. There was no smug expression, not a single hint as to the state of his hand.

He moved back, keeping his hand close to his chest. This allowed her to sit up, though she was far more concerned about the state of his injury. "Why are you hiding it?" Allison snapped, reaching for his wrist. Castiel allowed her to pull at his arm, flipping his palm. Allison's reaction wasn't guarded in the least. There was no blood. Nothing. Where the ugly gash had been there was only perfectly creased skin. Her glance shot to the knife which was now resting by the pillow. In the dull light she could see the blood still on the blade. He'd sliced his hand open right before her eyes, but his skin looked as though it hadn't been touched.

Her mind raced. Her mouth opened but no words came out. Castiel was considerably more collected. He'd expected this. He'd known he was right. It was just a matter of making her see the truth. He understood how something of that magnitude was difficult to understand. He believed that she had always had it in her, something of a gift that she had been born with. Her ability could have easily lay in dormant until something triggered it. That was likely the case, considering the pure shock which he was seeing now.

"I don't…what's wrong with me?" Allison let go of his wrist, wrapping her arms protectively around herself. Suddenly it hit him, a feeling of regret. He had just forced her to a realization, hadn't taken her feelings into account.

His eyes were downcast. "Allison, listen to me. There is nothing wrong with you. This is a gift. It's part of who you are. Do you have any idea how rare this is?" He was trying to be positive, attempting to get some sort of reaction from her that didn't make her look as though she'd just received a death sentence. Cas was still being truthful. If this was a genuine gift, like he believed it to be – so few people had ever been given it. He'd never met one in his lifetime. He'd met people who made deals or preformed rituals, but it wasn't in their blood. "Angels can heal people." The words came out. He hadn't meant for them to, but they did. Allison's eyes instantly snapped up.

The woman hissed "Angels are dicks."

Castiel raised his now healed hand to his forehead. Well that statement was entirely true, but not subject matter that he wanted to touch. "And I'm not an angel." Allison spoke defiantly, crossing her arms over her chest.

"No," Cas agreed with a halfhearted chuckle "You aren't"

"What am I then?" There wasn't a tone to the question. She almost seemed genuinely curious. Since she was up, and he'd finally proven his point. Best to strike while the iron was hot.

He just needed to overcome technical wording. Something told him that Allison wasn't fluent in
Enochian. She was intelligent but not everyone was that good. He needed to put it into layman's terms. "Do you know what a conduit is?"
Another Problem

"A conduit? Yeah I didn't drop out of school in the fourth grade. A means by which something is transmitted." Allison shifted on the bed, crossing her legs – attempting to get comfortable. Well, she had the basic idea right there. Perhaps this wouldn't be as strenuous as he had originally thought. "That's what I am? A conduit?"

His idle hands picked up the knife that he had previously discarded, wiping the blade against his old jeans. "Well there isn't a technical name for it. It's... that rare." He said with a frown. "You can transfer your own energy to someone or something else. I imagine you could also create energy." Allison looked uncertain but to his shock, she didn't cut in.

"It's difficult to explain." Castiel said finally, after a moment of silence. This was out of his depth. In all his years he'd never run into anyone like Allison. She was almost the unicorn of the supernatural world.

"So I can heal people. That's wonderful..." He couldn't help but smirk at the disdain in her voice. "Is there any way to get rid of it?" The brunette asked quietly.

Castiel shook his head "No." His answer came almost too quickly; he hoped that wouldn't trigger her. It was a lie. There were certain 'extraction' rituals which demons and other creatures had attempted to perfect, but considering how rare a true conduit was – they didn't get much practice. This resulted in the instant death of the subject. "It's not something that you can tamper with or cure. It's not a sickness. "He said coolly.

To say that Allison looked disappointed didn't begin to cover it. Something like 'crushed' seemed more appropriate. In a perfect world something like this would make a normal person happy. Alas, the world was not perfect and Allison wasn't normal. "I don't get it... if I'm one of these conduit things, why couldn't I do this before?" It was actually a very good question. He had been wondering the exact same thing. Judging by her initial reaction he had assumed she'd never healed anyone or anything in the past, but this confirmed it.

"I honestly don't know. That's anyone's guess." Allison didn't seem any happier with his response. He wish that he could have given her a real answer, but he knew so little about what she was. He wasn't sure if there was anyone else currently in existent that would know anymore than him. There also wasn't likely to be very much text about her 'type' either. Nothing solid anyways.

Allison slumped back against the wall, picking up her knife and focusing on it. God only knew what she was thinking about. He really did wish that there was something that he could say to put her mind at ease. His people skills hadn't evolved so much to the point where he was actually able to comfort someone. Mostly thanks to the fact that a grand sum of his time during such crucial learning points had been spent at the side of none other than Dean Winchester, or 'The Heartless Bastard' as Lisa so lovingly referred to him as. A man who seemed to only have two speeds. Angry and angrier.

He hated the look on her face. He'd never seen her like this. She hadn't been at the camp long, not as long as the others, but she'd spent enough time with him. They'd shared the cabin; she'd sit in the back during his lessons and scare the other women away, making it impossible for him to engage in any 'teaching' activities of the sexual variety. For some reason doing it in front of her seemed so awkward. He felt as though he knew her well enough. Additionally, she had far too pretty a face to be looking like that. Upset, possibly on the verge of tears. Castiel thought about leaving her to her thoughts, but not that seemed almost cruel. He knew her well enough to know that she would dwell. She was like a dog with a bone. She couldn't just let it go.
The bed creaked underneath him as he moved. He settled beside Allison, copying her pose. Legs crossed with his back pressed against the wall. "You know," He took a deep breath and shut his eyes. He didn't want to see the fist before it hit him after he was done speaking. "You're still Allison. This doesn't make you...less of a person. You're not a thing. You're a beautiful, headstrong woman who happens to have an extraordinary gift." Castiel didn't allow himself to go further. His body tensed involuntarily, waiting to feel pain erupt somewhere on his body.

Two seconds of silence and anticipation. She was probably trying to figure out where it would hurt most.

Instead of a tear jerking pain all he felt was pressure on his right shoulder. He slowly cracked an eye open, only moving his head the slightest bit. Allison had leaned over and now her head was resting just there. That was it? She wasn't going to hit him? It was surprising. He hadn't wanted to get hit, but he'd just been expecting it.

Allison muttered something under her breath. He only caught the last part. "I'm not beautiful and this doesn't feel extraordinary." He smirked and instantly prayed that her eyes were still shut. That would get him decked before. He wasn't going to argue with her, not now at least. As much as he wished she would simply agree it just wasn't going to happen.

Well, now what? He decided against arguing and Allison didn't seem like she was in the mood for a chat. She was leaning against him and didn't look like she had any intention of moving. She had discarded the knife again; it was resting on the pillows. He glanced towards the door and the second his eyes stopped on the handle it felt like a terrible idea, but now for different reasons. He was suddenly aware of how close she was. It wasn't a re-enactment of the shower incident. She wasn't naked underneath the robe which she had stolen from his wardrobe. She didn't look as though she wanted to kill him. She was just so...warm. Her breath danced against the side of his neck at a steady pace. He had never been this close to a woman before without something carnal happening. Never.

Not once.

As soon as that thought entered his mind he tried to push it out, but failed miserably. AT the current time he didn't have an active death wish and picturing Allison naked was not going to get him any farther in life. She was beautiful and well within touching distance. Any personal bubbles that had existed had been popped when she'd laid her head against his shoulder. He had thought of her in less than innocent ways before. It wasn't the first time and he was sure that it wouldn't be the last.

Suddenly the earlier conversation was the last thing on his mind. The fact that he had sliced his hand opened and that she had healed him? Wasn't so much as a thought. This was startlingly similar to another experience which they had shared, at least it felt similar. Without thinking he moved his right arm, carefully sliding it through the space between the wall and her back. His hand curled and his fingers splayed against the fabric of her underwear and her leg. For a moment her breath hitched. He both heard and felt it. In response he slowly pulled her closer. This was living dangerously. She looked up at him with another unreadable expression. Castiel wanted to lean down just a fraction, just enough to brush his lips against hers but something stopped him.

Her expression.

Allison had no problem expressing herself. If she was happy, you knew. If she was pissed off, you knew. Sad? The same thing. He couldn't have guessed what she was thinking. Kissing her now wasn't a good idea. He'd just told her that she was something more than human, that she actually could heal people. He'd forced her to come to that realization. He'd slit his palm open just to prove it
to her. As badly as he wanted to do it he found that he couldn't. It seemed cruel, almost manipulative. A big as pain as she could be, he liked her. He had already given her a list of reasons to hate him and he'd already pushed the envelope by getting as close as he was.

"Can you do something for me?" Castiel asked quietly.

She was thinking about it. Her brows furrowed slightly but she nodded her head moments after. "Depends."

He reluctantly moved his arm from its previous position, drawing it back over his chest. "You can't tell anyone about what you are. I need you to keep this between us. You can't tell Lisa or Chuck, okay? " There was a grave tone to his voice. An air of seriousness that he prayed she would pick up on. He wanted to keep it a secret as long as humanly possible. If Dean found out about her it wouldn't be pleasant. If anything, he almost expected their own little version of the Salem witch trials. Once he got over it, he would find a way to use her ability. That was what Dean did. People were a means to an end. He only respected few. People were disposable if they needed to be. He wasn't going to cast Allison into the fire like that. No way in hell.

"Wasn't going to tell anyone anyway…" Was her quiet response. He found himself letting out a sigh of relief. "Now would you mind leaving me alone? I'm tired. " Allison sat up, moving her head away from its resting place. He didn't need to be asked twice. Castiel scooted off the bed and once he was clear of it Allison pulled back the covers, taking the knife and simply dropping it into the open bag. He considered asking if she would mind him sleeping on the floor, but a nagging presence in the back of his mind said that she would. Without so much as another glance at him she crawled under the covers and turned off the lamp, plunging the room into darkness again.

As he headed for the door he wondered if he actually accomplished anything at all. The entire situation felt so off. Surreal even. There was a conduit, living and breathing right there in his bed. She was more than that though. She was a friend and one that he found himself very attracted too. He left the cabin with a heavy sigh. He needed to plot his next move. The camp was small and he couldn't hide from Dean together. He needed to keep the borderline homicidal Winchester happy while keeping Allison safe. Suddenly he felt his age, centuries upon centuries old. He'd been going to head back to his teaching cabin and attempt to get some sleep but now that was out of the cards.

He needed a drink.
The Message

It had taken no time for her to fall asleep. All the days excitement had more or less sucked the life right out of her. Allison didn't fight it, her eyes were shut long before Castiel slipped from the cabin. She welcomed it with open arms. She needed it, now more than ever. Just a little bit of sleep.

"Did you just say that you're glad half the world's population turned into zombies? " Allison asked with a frown. She was lying in bed, partially on top of a very naked Castiel. Alli herself was clothed the same way. He had an arm snaked around her waist over top of the single sheet of linen that covered them. Part of her body was resting on top of his.

He let out a small laugh "I said that I'm glad that I got to meet you. I didn't say it like that." Castiel murmured, pressing his lips against her temple. He might as well have said it like that. "I was nothing before I met you." As he spoke he felt part of herself melt. He sounded so genuine. When he wasn't being an ass he had that guilty about him.

Allison shut her eyes and pressed her head against his chest. Listening to the dull thumping of his heart, which had slowed down considerably compared to the way it had been beating during their earlier activities. Why did he have to say things like that? He knew she wasn't as elegant with her words. She was a bull in a china shop. Blunt as all hell. "Cas, I–" Before she could even begin a draft ran through the room and a tremor ran down her spine. The heartbeat in her ear had vanished and her body fell against the bed.

"You're dreaming about Cas?" A voice asked from behind her. Allison shrieked. Grabbing as much linen as she could and wrapping it around herself she flung herself back against the headboard. She knew that voice. She knew that voice far too well. She opened her eyes and her breath caught. She was afraid to move, never mind actually form a response.

He was standing there at the foot of the bed. A tree wearing a perfectly clean white suit. "You haven't talked to Dean yet." Okay so he wasn't Lucifer, not right now. From the last time she had seen him Allison had been able to note the swift change in demeanor. He was Sam, for now. "Allison, this is important"

She shook her head and pulled the linen up closer against her body. "Why can't you tell him for yourself? Talk to him! Not me."

Sam's forehead creased as he frowned. His eyes landed on her for a moment before turning down towards the old floorboards. "He needs to hear it from you. You can help him. You can save me. I can't just get into his head. It's not that simple." Allison threw him a challenging look, which he must have caught because he instantly went on the defensive. "It's safer for me to talk to you. I need you to understand. You're special and-" Allison grabbed one of the pillows off of the bed and whipped it at the man. It bounced off his chest and landed on the floor at his feet.

"Do not call me that."

Sam smirked. "What, special? Well you are, aren't you? You're powerful. I've never seen anyone like you. Cas has explained it to you, hasn't he?"

How did he know? If her blood hadn't been running cold before it most certainly was now. Allison remained tight lipped, not making so much as the slightest sound. Sadly that was almost as good as actual confirmation. He slowly walked over to the bed and Allison immediately pressed herself back
against the headboard, hoping that it would swallow her up. He sat down on the edge of the bed but didn't face her directly.

"You don't understand, I've been fighting for so long. If Dean wants to ice the devil he's got a shot now. I have a shot, but I wont for much longer."

Well, that wasn't foreboding at all. His eyes turned back to her with one of the saddest expressions that she had ever seen. "I need you to tell Dean. I don't have a lot of time left. I don't want to push you but…” His mood swung from sad to troubled. If she hadn't been on edge before, she certainly was now. What did he mean by that?

He took a deep breath but his own sweet time before he finished his sentence. " We can end this. Hell on earth, we could finish it but we can't do it without you. I can't do it without you." Before she so much as had a chance to react, he was gone. She was alone again.

Allison's slowly opened her eyes, taking in the darkness around her. Once they adjusted she glanced down towards the edge of the bed where she expected to see the man in white. There was no one there with her, she was alone, or so she assumed. It was only just a dream. Another startlingly real and very unnerving dream.

Now that she was awake she was aware of the fact that at some point she had broken into a cold sweat and her top was unpleasantly damp. Allison pushed the covers back and swung her legs over the side of the bed. Waiting till her bare feet touched the cold wood before actually standing up. She didn't bothering switching on the lantern, she was fine with stumbling around in the dark. All she needed to do was walk straight a few paces and the wardrobe was right there. She moved forward and before she could take a second step her foot hooked on something. Allison stumbled forward, her torso and the side of her face connecting with the floor.

She hadn't landed flat. She groaned and propped herself up with her elbows. That was when she felt her body move. She heard another groan and her face flushed. For some reason her heart sped up. She'd landed on someone. Not her bag, someone had been lying on the floor. Before she could say anything a dim light came from behind her; the lantern had been switched on. She slowly glanced over her shoulder to see just who she had landed on.

A tired and now rather sore looking Castiel squinted at her through hazy eyes. Neither said anything as Allison quickly pulled herself up. She had landed on top of him in what looked like a fairly interesting position. He groaned again once her weight was off of him. Allison did her best to avoid his curious gaze.

"What are you doing in here?" She hissed. Noting the fact that he had a pillow and at least three different blankets at his disposal.

Castiel followed her gaze. He had snuck back in a few hours ago. "My cabin. " It was the only defense that he offered. Allison didn't argue, instead she carried on with her original plan. She stopped at the wardrobe and pulled the doors opened. She couldn't have spent more than a minute rummaging before she pulled out a folded grey shirt. She shook it out and then placed it on the door knob. From where he was he could tell that shirt was his.

"You aren't going to apologize, are you?" He asked quietly. Allison let out a shallow laugh but he knew that she didn't find it funny. Which was fine, she hadn't broken anything and while it had been unexpected and unpleasant, he'd woken up to worse. Besides, there were other things to focus on. Like the fact that she was carefully peeling off her tank top right there, just meters away from him.
Allison pulled the damp top over her head. "Maybe if you didn't lie on the floor." The tank top fell and he instantly considered feigning some sort of distress to get her to turn around.

"Where would you prefer I sleep?" His mouth went dry, the words practically cut his tongue as he forced them out.

She paused and threw him a questionable look. "You have other cabins."

"I like this one."

So close.

She reached for his shirt and wasted no time pulling it over her head. Suddenly the bare skin vanished and he felt a twinge of regret. She turned back to him with tired eyes once the wardrobe was shut. His shirt acted like an incredibly short dress. The hem stopped past her hips, hiding the dark boy shorts. It was bagging, but not so much so that it hid her actual body shape. She looked so…gorgeous.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

He hadn't even noticed that he'd been staring. "Like what?"

Allison rolled her eyes and walked back towards the bed, this time taking a careful step over him. He needed to change the subject, and fast.

"You talk in your sleep." He said gruffly.

Allison froze before she could lie back onto the bed. Her cheeks instantly flooded with various shades of red. "I do not."

Oh, but she did. It wasn't the first time he had heard it either. Not that Castiel was complaining. It was his name that he had heard. Unless she knew someone else who went by "Cas". Strange as it was, he liked it when she said his name. He wished he could have seen whatever she was seeing. He merely shrugged, not wanting to further the argument. Allison look as though she were ready to crawl under a rock anyway. She grabbed the lantern and switched it off, then rolled onto her side with her back facing him. Not so much as another word was uttered between the two.

He settled back into his makeshift bed, but not before stealing a few more glances. Even in the darkness he could pick out her form. He did think about asking what she had been dreaming about, but that seemed so personal. While normally he didn't pay too much attention to boundaries it was very early and he'd already cornered her with the remark about talking in her sleep, poking her with a stick wasn't something he wanted to do now.

The cabin fell back into silence. The only noises were the occasional shuffling and the quiet sound of breathing. Nothing more was said as they both drifted off again.
The next day.

"What the hell are you doing?"

She wasn't happy with him but that was nothing new. Allison's lips thinned as her eyes remained glued to the blood on Castiel's arm. She had been sitting on the bed, cleaning up her knife when he had walked in, without warning. He gave her some speech about practicing and how he wanted to see what she was capable of. Allison was only partly paying attention. She had no interest in seeing what she was capable of and she had pointed out in the most sarcastic way possible that he wasn't injured so that there was nothing to heal. No sooner had she said that then he'd grabbed the hunting knife and sliced open his arm.

He had a vertical cut right between his elbow and his wrist. He cupped the skin slightly to avoid spilling the blood. He stood there, all but vocally challenging her. All she wanted to do was call him an idiot and throw him out of the cabin. He had left before she'd woken up and from what she'd heard from Chuck he'd spent most of his day in the cabin with Dean. "Why'd you have to do that?" Alli grimaced, crossing her arms defensively over her chest. It couldn't have felt nice and this was the second time he'd willingly spilt his own blood for the cause. In her mind, he seemed all too eager.

"If you don't heal it I'm going to need stitches, that's almost a guaranteed infection right there. We don't have many supplies so..." Allison's eyes narrowed as he spoke. Now he was trying to guilt her. How was it possible for him to sound so nonchalant about it? Castiel glanced down at the blood which now was flowing freely. "All I'm asking you to do is heal it."

Allison didn't even hesitate for a moment. "No." Castiel only smirked, as though he were convinced that she was joking. However, the look in her eyes would say otherwise if he would just take notice.

"What do you mean no?"

Allison huffed, forcing herself to look away from the bloody wound. "You're fluent in English and how many other languages? I don't want to heal you." And just like that his smirk was gone.

Cas blindly turned his arm inwards and pressed the cut against his previously clean shirt. "What if I were dying?" To his chagrin, Allison only shrugged.

"You're not dying. You were perfectly fine when you came in here."

She wasn't just screwing with him. Then again this wouldn't be the first time they had butted heads over the last few days. "I'm not some...I'm not some toy. It's like you're doing this for fun." Allison spat. Castiel recoiled slightly, as if the words had a physically impact. She couldn't have been more wrong. This wasn't fun. He didn't enjoy slicing his skin open but he had to prove a point, he had to show her. It wasn't a game. This was important. He wasn't doing this for his own good, it was for her.

"I'm trying to help you." Castiel mumbled under his breath as he checked the wound. The bleeding had for the most part slowed but it still stung like hell. He hadn't expected her to instantly warm up to her gifts over night but he could have sworn that he'd broken some ground.

Allison stood up, hands clenched into fists at her side. "What is there to help? I'm some sort of conduit thing. Great. Why are you exploiting it?" Castiel groaned internally. She didn't understand why he was doing it. He was curious, sure. Naturally. In all his thousands of years he had never once
encountered anyone like her. He wanted to learn more and the only way to do that was to experience her powers. Of course he hadn't expected her to come…willingly, but part of him had hoped.

She only seemed to grow angrier with every passing second. He truly wished that for once they could be in the same area without glaring daggers at each other. Like the night before. He'd won the battle and it had ended with them sitting very close to one and other on the bed. He'd been oh-so-close to kissing her again, but not because he wanted to be healed. Simply because he wanted to feel her lips against his. Being the gentleman that he was, of course he hadn't done it.

"I'm not-" Before he could finish his sentence the cabin door opened and Lisa stuck her head inside.

"Sorry to interrupt but Cas, his royal highness wants you in his cabin. Now." Castiel shot her a look, practically pleading with her to vanish from sight again. Rather than do that, she did the opposite. Lisa craned her neck, eyes searching till they landed on Allison. "I think Chuck is looking for you."

Allison's fists unclenched themselves and she turned away from the pair. Muttering something like 'of course he is' under her breath.

There would be no talking to her now. He supposed in some way Lisa appearing was a small sort of blessing. Any longer and the two easily could have been at each others throats. He stole a look at Allison but all he could see was her back. He would have to talk to her later – granted he didn't know what he would say. He turned and Lisa stepped back outside, he followed suit.

"What did you do to your arm?" She asked suddenly, gawking at the blood smeared mess that he had only been able to partially hide.

"It's nothing. Dean still got that first aid kit?"

Lisa gave him a small nod. She didn't ask again. He wasn't the first to end up with mysterious injuries. It was fairly common place. The two walked in silence four about a minute and while normally he could appreciate it, the closer they got to Dean's cabin it seemed as though the air between them got thicker. To the point where he couldn't help but wonder why Dean suddenly want to see him. Because of his miraculous recovery? Were they due for another road trip. "Do you know what he wants?" Castiel asked quietly. He didn't really want to deal with Dean right now.

She only shrugged but from that action alone he knew that the next words to come out of her mouth would be a lie. "Your guess is as good as mine."

Castiel left it at that. He liked Lisa, he truly did but she had one character flaw. She had cemented her loyalties years ago. She had been one of the first people that he, Dean and Chuck had found. Though she was very vocal about what an arrogant ass their fearless leader was on a good day, she would follow him into battle, blind folded if necessary. When the two talked it stayed between them unless Dean gave her permission to let others in. Someday he wondered if she was his new Castiel.

Neither knocked once they approached the door. Lisa slipped inside with Castiel behind her. To his surprise, Dean wasn't sitting at the old wooden table with various maps strewn about. In fact, the only sign that Dean had been there were the empty beer cans. A sinking feeling instantly formed in his gut. Lisa stepped around him, moving to the center of the room and crouching down. She picked at a large rusted o-ring and gave it a quick yank, pulling up the trapdoor and revealing a steep staircase, as well as a pair of voices.

This was no good. Was Dean down there? He had to be, Lisa wouldn't have even touched the trapdoor otherwise. Why was Dean down there? Unless he'd recently taken to torturing those who
lived in the camp. The cellar was used for "special occasions" only. Lisa was the first to disappear down the open pit. Castiel slowly moved to the hole, staring down. Dean's voice was clearer now and it was obvious that he was talking to someone other than Lisa. He took a second to put his defenses up, he had no idea what he was about to walk into the middle of. Well, he had some idea – but that didn't help matter. Castiel's fit hit the first step and then the second. He had to crouch to avoid hitting his head on the way down. Before he'd even made it halfway Dean gruffly ordered him to shut the trap-door behind him. Castiel did as he was told.

He joined Dean and Lisa in the cellar but he barely noticed second the old chair came into sight he froze. The chair was something he and Dean had assembled together. They'd found it a few years ago while they were raiding a clinic. A place that had once provided joint services to those in need. It was a dentist's examination chair – at least it had been until they'd gotten a hold of it. It was a hell of a lot less comfortable now. There was a woman strapped to it now; or rather a demon. Impossible to miss those tell-tale black eyes. The woman couldn't have been more than 5'5. She had a long tangled brown hair which spilled over the sides of the headrest. Her skin was deathly pale and on display to the rest of the room. There were burns and cuts all over her body. Sigils carved with no other purpose than to cause the demon and ungodly amount of pain. Castiel never liked this, the torture. He didn't like demons but he'd never approved of Dean doing it this way, not unless it was absolutely necessary.

"Well…he's here." Dean took a step forward, crossing his arms over his chest. The demon slowly turned her head as much as the forehead strap would allow, eyes setting on himself, Lisa and Dean.

"What's going on? Where did you get her?"

It didn't make sense. Dean hadn't left the camp lately. If a demon had breeched perimeters everyone would have known. It would have been chaos and nothing less.

Dean took a step over towards what had at one point been a card table. He picked up a syringe filled with clear liquid and held it up towards the dimming light bulb. "Doesn't matter," He said "get talking." It was obvious that the latter half of the comment wasn't directed at him.

The demon only smiled as Dean advanced with the syringe. "You have something Lucifer wants." The demon chuckled, shutting her eyes. "Actually, he kind of needs it."

What the hell was she talking about? Castiel still wanted to know where Dean and gotten a demon from and why she was nude in the cellar. He couldn't have possibly missed that much, could he have?

"Yeah, we know!" Dean barked, grabbing her right arm with her free hand and turning it as much as the restraints allowed, till the crook of her elbow was exposed. "Wanna share with the class what it is that he wants?"

Her eyes snapped open and her smile only grew. She didn't seem to mind that Dean was hovering over her with a syringe. "You don't already know?" She asked, cocking an eyebrow. "Guess it is true. Lucifer got to ride with the smart brother." The demon let out a shrill laugh just as Dean rammed the syringe into her arm and pushed the plunger down. The laughter was instantly replaced with what could have passed as the sound of a dying animal. Castiel cringed and Lisa turned away. Holy water was now traveling through the demons vessel. That wasn't a pleasant feeling. She withered and tore at the restraints as best she could, all the while Dean stood over her with a blank look on his face.

"What does he want?" The Winchester demanded. "Tell me or you'll get it again!"
Castiel decided the demon either wasn’t too bright or had a thing for pain, despite the display she was putting on as he heard her response. "It's right here, in your camp and you don't know about it?" The crying died down to a moan, which was replaced with a bitter laughter. "Some leader you are." Dean turned from her and headed back towards the table. A motion that she no doubt noticed because she stilled herself. Chest rising and falling at a rapid rate. It was obvious that she was still feeling the holy water, as she would for a little while longer. That trick was usually enough to make them crack.

"I'd tell you…but you probably haven't even heard of it." She muttered as she turned her attention back to Castiel. Her gaze was eyes were no longer black, but a shade of hazel. That made it all the more uncomfortable. Behind the chair Dean picked up a jug of water. Swishing it's contents around for the demon to hear. "Fine!" Her words came out as a hiss. Her teasing tone now completely abandoned.

"So, Dean. Does the term *conduit* ring any bells?"

The demon's lips curled upwards slightly and Castiel felt his blood run cold.
It's All Downhill

"No," the Winchester snarled back. "Unless we're talking science class."

The demon looked incredibly amused, as if she suddenly forgot about the tray of implements off to the side which were meant to mark her vessel's skin and to wound her true self. He understood why she was amused though. She knew something that Dean didn't know. Never had a conduit come up. Castiel knew for a fact that Dean Winchester knew nothing about this particular 'breed'. This was entirely new ground. Castiel himself had never even thought of such beings until Allison was brought into their lives.

Dean paced back and forth, the demon's chiding laughter was getting to him – it was evident in every step. "What the fuck is a conduit?"

Lisa only shook her head. No, he wouldn't expect her to know. She was smart but her knowledge of the supernatural came from Dean, with the odd footnote from Castiel himself. That was when all eyes turned to him. Aside from their hostage, he was the most knowledgeable creature in the room. If he lied the demon would know – Dean would know. Lying to Dean Winchester did not bode well. Could he tell the truth? He couldn't think straight. He needed a drink or, even better, a Vicodin or two. Lucifer wanted a conduit. He wanted Allison? How did he even know about her? Even the devil himself likely wouldn't be privy to such things. The angels hadn't known and there was no way that one of Lucifer's foot soldiers had found out.

No. Maybe he had known. She'd seen him once. She and her brother, they'd run into him. Castiel battled to keep his cool exterior. If he hesitated any longer Dean would know for sure and he couldn't risk it, not now. Not with their audience. "They're rare beings. They can transfer their energy into other living things. If they're powerful enough they can create it." Castiel slowly turned towards the demon, who seemed perfectly content with watching the show. "They were more commonly referred to as healers. That is, in essence, what they do." He wondered what Dean was thinking. He couldn't tell. The man had perfected his poker face so long ago. Even without the fog of sex, alcohol and drugs it had been difficult for Cas to figure out what was on his mind. It was only the odd occasion now that he got to see behind that mask.

Dean let out a hollow laugh as he turned back towards the tray "So you're saying we have a healer… here? In my camp?" He picked up a rusty old knife stained with the blood of his past 'guests'. "Don't you'd think I'd know if we had someone like that here?" The demons restraints groaned as she tried to raise her shoulders. 'No,'Castiel added silently 'You wouldn't know."

"Why would he even need one?" Dean asked as he advanced. "Devil got a cold?" And just like that the switch was flicked again.

The demon cast Dean a smug little smile. "I'm not a gossip." She retorted.

"Why would Lucifer need a conduit? He couldn't contract illnesses. He was literally immune to every virus and bacteria on the planet. Additionally, he was in his true vessel now. Lucifer could walk the earth for all eternity with Sam as his vessel. What use could he possibly have? He didn't collect but a conduit was rare enough. Not even that sat right with him. Who did he have to show off to? The angels were gone, their Father had abandoned him and any demon with a lick of sense bent to his every will. Lucifer had no use for 'fancy toys'."

"We've got ex-prophets, we've got ex-angels but we do not have any healers." And Dean sounded like he believed that. That didn't do much to quell the sudden wave of anxiety though. Dean held the
knife up to the up to the overhead light. He inspected the blade and after a moment he seemed to
dem it unfit for the task ahead. He turned back, picking up another instrument off of the tray. Dean
now held Ruby's knife in his hands.

"Dean, wait." Lisa held up her hands. "We can get the information out of her. A name, something.
Do you really think-" But an inhuman scream cut Lisa off. Dean had plunged the blade right into the
center of her exposed chest, giving it a quick turn just for good measure. The demon convulsed in the
chair, one final fight before the light left her eyes. The odd spark leapt from the wound as he
withdrew the blade. In the corner Lisa was fuming. He silently hoped that she wasn't surprised. She'd
been around Dean long enough by now to know how he dealt with things. Before the world had
gone to shit he hadn't been the most patient person on the planet but after? More than a few people
were bore marks of Dean's impatience.

The woman hissed something about Dean being an idiot, but when he asked her to repeat herself she
said nothing. "If we had a Benny Hinn on these grounds we would know." Dean spoke harshly,
placing the knife back down. "Any idea why he'd want one of those conduit things?" Castiel only
shook his head. Was Dean not taking her seriously? It certainly didn't sound like it. They'd had
demons try to screw with them before, if he had a dollar for every time one claimed to be Lucifer's
messenger. He turned his eyes back to the now lifeless form on the chair.

"Was this all you needed?" The ex-angel asked.

"Guess so. Any idea why she wanted you? One of your old pals?" No, not as far as he knew.
Demons could change their vessels easily but generally their energy stayed the same. She hadn't
identified herself and nothing about her stood out. If they had run into each other some time ago, he
couldn't recall.

Cas chose to offer Dean the only explanation which he saw fit. "Maybe she just wanted me to
translate. Conduits are a thing of folklore. Most angels weren't even aware of their existence unless
they were fortunate enough to stumble across one." Dean shot him a look that told Castiel he was out
of line, but the other man didn't actually comment. To Castiel's surprise he seemed content with the
response - even if he hadn't appreciated the wording.

"We'll burn the body after everyone's asleep. I would appreciate it if you two could keep your
mouths shut. No one need's to know about our visitor, about Lucifer, none of it." That was fine with
him; he had no intention of sharing with anyone aside from Allison herself. He needed to talk to her.

"If you don't need me...I'm going to grab some bandages and go." Dean cocked an eyebrow and
glanced down at Castiel's arm. While the blood flow had more or less slowed to a stop, the cut was a
particularly angry shade of red and it obviously needed tending to. The Winchester waved him off
and Castiel tried not to look too eager to leave the basement. He wasn't sure what he'd just witnessed.
Cas took the stairs two at a time until he was on the main floor again.

Rather than darting towards the door he changed course to the desk. There was an old metal
container sitting on the far right, roughly the size of a shoebox. It was one of the twenty or so small
first aid kits which they had spread out through the camp. Castiel took a smaller role of gauze
wrapping and a pad. He also snagged two of the small metal clasps, because he saw no tape and
wasn't about to tear the cabin apart. Then he took his leave.

He needed to get away from there. He needed time to settle down and think. He also needed to talk
to Allison, that wasn't a conversation he was looking forward to. It was the absolute last thing on the
list now.

The teaching cabin was closest. Castiel stopped in there once he was sure that the coast was clear.
The first order of business was to clean up the cut. Their antibiotic supply was at an all time low again, and the last thing he needed was a painful infection. He took off his shirt and find what he assumed to be a clean cloth. He tried to rub the dried blood away as best he could, but with an old cloth and spit there really was only so much you could do. Luckily he did have a little antibiotic ointment left in his own kit. He used a generous amount on the wound and tossed the tube aside. It stung on contact, but that meant that it was working its magic. There really wasn't much thought put into the rest of the process. He could bandage almost any wound with his eyes closed by now. There really wasn't much too it.

Once the pad was placed and he'd used the wrappings to keep it in place, he changed into a clean, blood free shirt. That was one thing down. Only a million more to go.

He had to figure out what to tell Allison. Dean had requested, or well, demanded that they keep it all on the DL. Castiel wasn't comfortable with that. She needed to know, she deserved to know. If the demon hadn't simply been screwing with them and there was a grain of truth to any of it then Allison was in trouble. What Lucifer wanted her for, if it all was beyond him? If Dean hadn't have killed the demon maybe they could have gotten a little more information – but it was too late for that. What was he supposed to say to her? He had been trying to get her to accept her gift and her role in the universe. This was going to be incredibly counterproductive. He was practically painting the target on her back himself.

What other choice did he have? There was absolutely no way to be optimistic about this. Assuming that the demon was lying was an open invitation for a world of unpleasantness. No, being pessimistic had gotten him a hell of a lot further in life. For the sake of argument there was a grain of truth to the message and he refused to believe otherwise.

Castiel sat down on the edge of the bed, burying his face in his hands. Well she was probably still angry at him for the stunt he had tried to pull earlier. It seemed like that was how she spent most of her time, being angry at him for something he'd done or said. He couldn't tell her now, not while Chuck has his claws in her. Perhaps sometime after dinner, before he was called upon to aid in the disposal of the body in Dean's cabin. That would give him plenty of time to get a firmer grasp on the situation. Wouldn't it?
Belial

Chapter Summary

Author's Note: Okay you guys are going to notice right off the bat that this is not like my usual updates. This is from the POV of another OC who I introduced back in Chapter 21 (The Past) so if you don't remember Belial you might want to go back and re-read that chapter. I'm bringing in two more characters in this chapter. One you will recognize from the show, the other is of my own creation. I know you're wondering where Cas and Alli are but believe me when I say that this chapter is important. It should answer a few of those questions that you guys have been sending me. You will be seeing more of these characters in upcoming chapters. This officially marks the stories turn to the 'darker side'.

If you get a minute I would love feedback on Belial and our new angel. So if you could R & R or R & PM I would love it!

I hope you enjoy it.

"No! I will not let you do this. I've served under him for longer than you've been on the planet!" Belial screeched, sending the nearest lamp against the wall. It wasn't fair. He'd been promised all of the glory. He'd been promised a seat beside Lucifer and this; this harlot was going to take it all away from him? No!

The smashing of the ceramic base was accented by one of the most grating sounds he'd ever heard. He did have a point to get across though. This filthy little harlot was not going to get in the way of him and what he had been promised. He knew it, she was so grossly transparent. What Lucifer saw in her was beyond his comprehension. This bitch they called 'Meg' was nothing but a lowly demon. Someone who so desperately wished to play with the big boys that she would do almost anything – and suck up to almost anyone. He had to hand it to her; at least she could do that one thing right. She understood that in the blink of an eye, her time could be up. Wiped off the face of the earth and all existence with nothing more than a wave of the hand.

She stood there in the center of the room, arms crossed. The only expression on her face was a coy smile, as if she was enjoying the show. Meg seemed to think that Lucifer would allow her to enter this Allison woman. The girl was unmarked. How that was common knowledge Belial didn't know, nor did he care. It certainly posed a problem though. The woman was a conduit. The additionally energy and power that flowed through her veins was enough to send a shiver down the spine of anyone who knew just what she was capable of. It would take a demon of power to be able to secure the body without killing Allison. That was the tricky part. If somewhere deep inside, the woman died, the power was gone. Her powers did not lie in her body, but in her soul.

It would take time and some training for her powers to reach their peak; but she had someone capable and knowledgeable enough to get her there. By the time they got their hands on her, keeping her in control would be a difficult task if too much time past. He highly doubted that Meg was capable of handling anything with care. She'd killed the woman as soon as she took hold of her body. Meg lacked power, knowledge, everything that was needed in his eyes. He had heard mutterings of another demon coming to take on that very job. Someone Lucifer himself trusted. Belial
would have offered his own services, had he not been assigned to the tattered old meat suit that he was currently pacing back and forth in. He'd been assigned this body. At some point it would be useful, or so he had been assured.

"Someone's jealous." Meg said. Her tone was so sickeningly sweet it made him feel ill. Jealous? Of her? No, never.

Belial stopped dead in his tracks. "If I didn't think that he might notice the loss of his precious bitch you would be long gone already." Unfortunately that didn't seem to faze her. Of course, it wasn't the first time that he had threatened her life since they had crossed paths.

It looked as though Meg had been preparing some sort of counter attack when both the swinging doors burst open. He didn't need to turn around to know who had interrupted. He could feel.

"Azriel." The demon regarded the new presence with a quieter, malice free tone. He couldn't attack Azriel the way he did Meg, oh no. Azriel was Lucifer's second in command. The only angel left with their grace intact – or so the rumors went. In heaven she had been the Chief Angel Supervisor. She was known more for her destruction for some time though. She had carved out quite the reputation for herself.

He turned to see a petite young woman standing in the doorway. Her black hair cropped short, piercing green eyes. No more than seventeen at the most, she'd chosen a young vessel. Apparently this one she had been using for centuries. It was difficult to picture her as an angel, Lucifer's "little sister." It was near impossible to picture her as the angel from legends and nightmares.

"I heard the commotion. You know that you may not cause each other harm." She spoke in such a cool tone. Devoid of almost everything. Untouched by her surroundings and humanity. Indifferent to everything, the way the angels had been before some like that idiot Castiel had decided to break the rules.

Meg stepped out from behind him. Hands raised slightly as if she were surrendering. "Nothing to worry about. Just a friendly chat. Isn't that right, Bel?" He growled as Meg cast him an innocent look.

Azriel seemed to buy it, or she simply didn't care. "I need to speak with Belial. Alone." Meg took the hint and quickly left the room, but not before giving Belial a pat on the butt. The man snarled but Azriel raised her hand to silence him. Once they could hear Meg's footsteps fading in the distance she focused her attention back onto him.

"How is he?" Belial took the first step. If he knew anything, it was the subject matter on which the angel wished to speak.

"Dying." The demon cringed slightly. The way she spoke, of course. He should have been used to this. Angels and their delivery. She was so cold and harsh. "I saw Samuel three times today. Three. It is completely unacceptable." Now, rather than indifferent she sounded disgusted. And rightly so. "Why he has allowed it to live baffles me."

"The Winchesters aren't known for dying easy." Belial muttered under his breath.

"Excuse me?" Azriel gave him a funny look. He didn't respond. He knew that she had heard him loud and clear. Though she chose to carry on as though she hadn't. "We need the conduit now."

Belial couldn't hold back a small laugh. "You want her...now? How exactly do you propose we go about acquiring her? She's in one of the most fortified encampments that I have ever seen." Azriel
only blinked.

"Why do you think you were ordered into that body? You gave him your word." The angel reminded him sternly.

Ah yes, that agreement. When the time was right he had agreed to fetch the girl, yes. The time wasn't right though. "She won't be ready yet. I am sure that your brother is working on preparing her for us."

The angel's eyes flashed dangerously when he uttered the word 'brother'. Azriel only regarded Castiel as a traitor now, something to be conquered. "We do not have the time. Whatever preparations must be done, they can be done here."

He wondered, was it truly that dire? How were they even in such a position to begin with? How had they not foreseen this? Lucifer must have assumed that he would remain powerful for eternity, yet he was slipping. The battery was running out, and fast.

Belial's arms unfolded, his fists clenched at his sides. "The one who is supposed to possess her?" The demon asked.

"It isn't important." Belial cocked an eyebrow. "We need the conduit, time is running out. Any elaborate scheme you may have put together will be of no use now. You will watch the camp and the second an opportunity presents itself, you are to take it."

The demon frowned but quickly stowed the expression as the angel's unreadable gaze locked on him. He understood the urgency but he wasn't quite sure that anyone else understood what they were planning on doing. The power that the woman might eventually possess could put even the oldest angel to shame. There was nothing about this that wasn't idiotic. Even if she didn't know what she was capable of, at least one other member of that rag-tag bunch did. He would bet all the souls in hell that Castiel was already aware and if she was willing, he would be coaxing her to explore her new found skill set.

They couldn't just walk into the camp. If that was in any way possible there would be nothing but piles of bones and smouldering ashes covering the grounds. The only way to get the girl would be to wait until Dean and his posse went on one of their little trips. Even then there was no guarantee that she would be there. He would need to craft a scenario, a situation. Tailored to fit his needs.

"This is suicide." Belial hissed.

Azriel gave a simple shrug. A small rise and fall of her shoulders. "It is what must be done. You will obtain the conduit." The gravity in her voice would have chilled a soul, if he happened to have one. While she had chosen to leave out the 'or else' he could feel it in the air. If he didn't grab the girl, he was as good as dead. Something he'd already been able to avoid century after century.

"Is that all?" Normally he would have been perfectly content with waiting, but between Meg's childish antics and the angels, well, being all angelic and holier-than-thou. Azriel nodded, folding her arms over her chest.

What a relief that was then. He needed time to himself to figure out how the hell he would pry the girl away from the Castiel and rest of the camp. When he looked backup from the floor to the angel, she seemed satisfied. Though there wasn't a trace of a grin anywhere on her face. It made him cringe.

By that point Belial assumed that she would leave, off to keep a watchful eye over her struggling brother or something of the sort. He was correct – for the most part. She did walk away but she
paused by the door, throwing him a look over her shoulder. "If you cannot complete the job, I am sure that there are others who would appreciate the reward." The right side of her lip twitched upwards as he growled, happy to have hit a nerve.

For what felt like the millionth time that day he had to restrain himself. This was neither the time nor place for a battle. Besides, he had other things to worry about. Other things such as losing his potential promotion to a less qualified and deserving individual.

He shut his eyes once he was alone again. He needed a plan, and he needed one fast. If the girl was what they wanted, then the girl was what they would get. Somehow he would get her. He didn't have a choice.
"Everything alright?" Chuck's voice came out of nowhere, causing Allison to jump. The clipboard which she had been staring at clattered to the floor. Before she could reach down to pick it up the man dove on it, as if she'd dropped his child or something.

"Jesus. Why hasn't anyone put a bell on you?" She snapped back. "You almost gave me a heart attack." Chuck back off a few feet, hand and clipboard raised as if to end the verbal assault.

"You've been down here for over an hour…I know that we don't have that much to inventory." He let out a shaky laugh. "Are you okay?"

She wanted to answer him honestly, she really did. Chuck was nice and they got along well. He seemed like the type of person that you could talk to. Y'know if you really needed someone and were out of other options. "Just having some people issues. It's not a big deal. I can finish the inventory if you want." Allison reached out but Chuck took another step back.

"Is it a Cas thing?"

She was slightly caught off guard by the question. That was more personal than she was used to with him. "Did he do something?" Allison didn't respond. Chuck didn't take the hint. "I thought that you two were friends." Her mouth opened and closed but no sound came out. Friends? She'd never really thought of it like that. Then again over the past few days she hadn't gotten to think about a whole lot. "Do we have anymore canned peaches?" He asked.

Allison moved over to one of the large shelves, slowly crouching down to get a better look at their dwindling supply of canned fruits. She had a feeling that Chuck would keep asking until she finally snapped. "We had an argument." An argument didn't even begin to describe. Part of her hated him with every fiber of his being. He was acting…crazy. It was almost scary, how interested he was in her abilities. "I can't find any" She responded as Chuck knelt down beside her.

"He likes you." The man grumbled under his breath as he joined the search for the elusive peaches. What did that mean? Like as in as a friend? Or was there a more juvenile meaning to it? Asking seemed so childish, but she couldn't just leave it there. Not after the past few days. "What do you mean by that?"

Chuck paused, moving a small stack of creamed corn off to the side. For a moment he looked as though he regretted making the previous statement. "Since you uh…came to camp. He's been different. The teaching cabin hasn't been getting much use." Chuck still looked uncomfortable, and given all that she had learned in her time at the camp she assumed that he was trying to say that Castiel wasn't trying to sleep with everything that had legs.

Allison knew about that, she'd been certain that was the reason why a few of the woman went out of their way to pretend that she didn't exists. She hadn't slept with him, not that lately the thought hadn't crossed her mind once or twice. She didn't want to be one of those girls. A groupie…there were bigger things to concern herself with than sex or relationships. Maybe in another lifetime, where the world hadn't gone to hell-

"I can see why…there's something about you." Chuck muttered under his breath as he stood up. Allison looked up, startled. What did he mean there was something about her? Did he know? No… that wasn't possible. The only person who knew was Cas. He'd been so adamant about her keeping it
a secret, and she was not rushing out to tell the world that she was a freak. She decided that she was just on edge, Chuck didn't mean that.

"I think you're all just crazy." Allison retorted with a forced smirk. "I think we're about done. Not a whole lot else to check. I guess we'll have to keep an eye out for those elusive peaches." Chuck didn't really respond, he already looked as if he were on a different planet. Or stuck on the previous subject. Alli stood back up and cast one more look towards the shelf. Yep, not a whole lot she could do here now. Without another word he flicked off the light and they both headed towards the stairs. Well, it had almost been without another word. Chuck ruined that. "Do you like him?"

His first impulse was to charge into the mess hall and pull Allison aside. Once he got her alone he would re-tell the events that had unfolded, ever detail. Now that plan of attack was incredibly flawed. She would either be scared or think that he'd simply gone off his rocker – or both. Neither were paths that Castiel wished to explore. He'd already frightened enough with the conduit nonsense and this would just be the cherry on top. With those issues alone he was earning black marks against himself quicker than he was comfortable. He didn't want her to hate him and the possibility that one word could tip the scales sent unease flowing through his veins.

Castiel was no stranger to anger or hate, he'd both given and received those during his lifetime. Especially after his untimely descent from grace. He could hold his own. God knew that Dean and the others had shaped him to be more 'accepting' of such things. Normally sarcasm was met with sarcasm and hate was simply shrugged off. It was something of a skill. An art that he had mastered over time. He could deal with upsetting almost anyone else – but Allison? She was in a league of her own.

He'd already done enough damage by forcing her to accept that she had some sort of otherworldly ability. He was sure that he'd just narrowly managed to avoid a punch to the face a few times. They had been getting along well enough before that – even when she sat in on his classes and cancelled his 'extra activities' with nothing more than her presence. Allison was fascinating. She was intelligent and amusing, and absolutely stunning. She wasn't like most of the woman that he surrounded himself with. Lovely as they were, there was a depth to Allison. What she was did add another spectrum, but he'd been fascinated by her before he'd known about her gift.

Over the course of the past few weeks he had grown fairly…fond of her. He enjoyed being around her, he'd willingly surrendered his bed to her and taken up a spot on the floor. Even after she'd healed he'd been content to let her lie where he had once. As of late there were certain stirrings that he felt when she was around, or when they had kissed. Though those kisses hadn't exactly been born of a secret love for each other he was convinced that he had felt something.

He rebelled against his instincts, retreating to his cabin instead.

Something told him that Allison would be kept busy until dinner at least, which was fine. He needed the time to himself anyways. His mind still trying to process what information which had been thrown at him earlier. Lucifer was looking for Allison and that meant that he had to know. That meant that other unsavory scum knew as well. That wasn't good for anyone. That meant that there was a target on the camp and a bigger one on Allison.

Truth be told, he had no idea what use Lucifer would have for a conduit. Sure they were powerful creatures, but he wasn't the type to start up a collection. Lucifer acquired what he needed – he was fairly simple that way. The list of things that Allison could do once her abilities strengthened was fairly long as well as impressive. That fact didn't really help at all.
He spent the rest of the day in the cabin. Alternating between pacing back and forth as well as lying down. Nothing took the edge off, unfortunately for him there were no narcotics in the cabin at the current time and quite frankly – he didn't feel like sniffing them out. He went without and it was painful. He mostly spent the time brooding. When the dinner bell rang, letting the campers know that it was feeding time at the zoo he did leave the cabin. Part of him hoped that he might run into Allison.

Castiel hadn't exactly formulated a game plan for the next encounter – but maybe that was good. Perhaps over thinking it would only make it worse. There was no gentle way to tell someone that Lucifer was out to get them. Even if there was, Allison probably wouldn't appreciate the situation being candy-coated. If anything she'd likely kick his ass. A fate that he had been attempting to avoid.

He ate with Lisa and Dean in the dining hall, not speaking to either. The odd woman came up greeting him, asking how he was or what he had done to his arm. Cas kept the conversation short. It was difficult to carry on when his mind and eyes were elsewhere. He'd only managed to catch a few fleeting glimpses of Allison. She was running back and forth between the serving line and the kitchen, behind the counter of course. It looked like she had her hands full.

Once his plate was cleared he had been informed by Lisa that they were to take a detour to Dean's cabin, a little chat before they burnt the body of the demon who was currently lying underneath the floorboards of Dean's place of residence. While he could have done without the company, refusing Dean's 'invitation' wouldn't likely go over well so once he was ready, they left.

The next few hours were spent listening to the Winchesters rants and theories. He fixated on the conduit business, which didn't come as a shock. Castiel was forced to employ his best poker face. He wasn't an active participant, only repeating what little he had shared with the two hours prior. He couldn't say more. Luckily, Dean didn't seem interested in pressing him for information. He probably chocked it up to brain damage or something of the sort. When he fell from grace, some secrets of the universe fell with him. The years, alcohol, and drugs had not exactly treated him kindly.

When the time came they gathered the body, wrapping it in a bed sheet. Dean and Castiel followed Lisa, who manned the lantern and carried the partially full container of gasoline. There was a path behind Dean’s cabin which led into the woods. A five minute walk down a fairly well beaten path led them to a small clearing. There was another fire pit here, as well as handful of dirty plastic lawn chairs. In the beginning Dean and body had agreed that burning bodies in the camp would be bad. Even if it was a necessity, it would make the natives restless. While Dean generally didn't seem to care much about the feelings of others, but he kept to the body burning tradition all the same.

Once they dropped the body into the pit they added some split wood from a nearby pile. Then the gasoline was poured on. Dean did the honors of setting the blaze, tossing one lone match onto the cloth. No one said anything; the three only watched the flames dance and the sparks as they sprang into the cool night air. He stood in his designated spot for little under half an hour. Castiel stayed long enough to see if the man had any other requests. Dean would stay by the fire until the flames died, Lisa would likely stay with him. While they could barely stand each other on what seemed to be a good day – Lisa was loyal to him. Though they didn't have any sort of 'relationship' to speak of, Castiel was convinced that she was one of the reasons why Dean hadn't gone completely overboard. She kept him in line, most times anyways.

Castiel took his leave, Lisa said goodnight but Dean didn't offer a pleasantry, he seemed lost in his own world. It was best to leave him there for now. The trek back to the camp was quiet. There were no stops or detours; he just wanted to get back to the cabin. He was sore and exhausted, all he wanted to do was curl up onto his spot on the floor, which seemed to get more and more comfortable
with each passing night.

From the outside the cabin looked dark. He wasn't exactly quiet about entering. The door rattled in
its frame when he shut it and the sound of his boots against the old wooden floorboards would have
almost been loud enough to wake the dead. While there wasn't a corpse to rise, there was a person. A
low groan came from the bed and the small lamp which Allison kept there flicked on. Castiel froze
by the table as Allison emerged from the pile of blankets.

"Didn't mean to wake you." He grumbled.

She ran her hand through her hair as she sat up on the bed. "It's okay, wasn't sleeping anyways."
Right, she'd just been playing hide and seek underneath the covers. He didn't respond, unsure of her
current mood. The last time they had encountered a scenario similar to this, it had gotten complicated
quickly.

He stood by the table for a minute, unsure of what to do. Neither spoke again right away. Allison
seemed to be waking up. After a moment of exchanged glances she motioned to his arm. "How is
it?" The brunette asked.

Castiel shrugged, glancing down at the gauze as if the answer was printed there for him to see.
"Hurts like hell." His timing was perfect, because when he looked up he saw Allison's tired features
change to a look of dare he say it, concern.

She frowned, drawing herself up so that she was perched on her knees. "Is it infected? Come here,
Let me see it." Castiel moved towards the bed and once he was within reach Allison's slender finger
wrapped around his wrist. He sat down on the edge of the bed, one leg hanging off to the side. He
watched her wordlessly as she began to undo the tape.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm just looking." Alli grumbled.

She undid the tape and slowly peeled back the gauze, revealing the ugly cut. "Shit..." She hissed
under her breath, squeezing her eyes shut. How long did it normally take for infections to set in? She
didn't know.

"How does it look, doctor?" His eyebrow arched out of habit. Why did she care? Earlier she'd
refused to heal him; she'd wanted nothing to do with him. Now she was staring down at his self
inflicted wound looking as if someone had just killed her puppy.

When she finally did look up, he saw the words in her eyes before she said them. "Look, I'm sorry…
about earlier. I shouldn't have been so..." She was practically choking on her own words. He was
surprised the word sorry had even escaped her lips. She looked at him, silently struggling with what
was struggling with w hat was supposed to come next. She couldn't finish it and part of him didn't
want her to. She had a point earlier. While he wasn't exploiting her, he was pushing her, it wasn't
exactly fair. Of course he couldn't just say that to her, no that was too easy.

"Not like I didn't deserve it." Castiel muttered. He couldn't help but wonder why the sudden
apology. Allison didn't seem like the type. It didn't sound like bullshit, either. She meant it, he could
tell.

Her attention had swung back down to his arm. She didn't say anything as she placed her hand over
the marred skin. He let out a hiss, recoiling slightly. Her fingers dug into the untouched part of his
arm. Before he could protest she pressed her lips against his.
Anything he had been about to say, or anything that had been on his mind, it all vanished instantly. The feeling of electricity coursing through his veins made the hairs on the back of his neck stand up. A tingling sensation moved from her skin to his. However, that wasn't what he was focusing on.

His free arm snaked around her waist, pulling her in as close as he could. Her lips felt like hot coals against his, warming him down to his very core. The feeling faded, only for a second while she spoke. "I'm sorry." She whispered to him. Allison pressed her forehead against his and he knew that he should have pushed her away; it would be the smart thing. Yet he still sat there in stunned silence. She watched him. Green eyes meeting blue, looking for something but he didn't know what. Castiel didn't want to speak. He knew that if ever there was a time to say something, it was now. He couldn't bring himself to do it.

Over the past while whenever he opened his mouth something bad happened. He was either lying to Dean or scaring her it seemed. They were so close now. If he said something surely she would pull away, angry or disgusted. Then the moment would be gone. Wasn't that how it happened with them?

Castiel didn't want her to move. He wanted to feel her lips against his again; he needed to keep her against him. He couldn't explain it…the places his mind ran to when he was near her. No one had ever had that effect on him. In all honesty, it was more than a bit frightening. He didn't want to admit it but she had power over him. She possessed an extraordinary gift, but his attraction had started before that. Of course part of him had always known, but it ran deeper. It was something that he couldn't explain.

"I can sleep in the other cabin…" His words trailer off as he silently cursed himself. She needed to give him something. A sign or a slap. Anything. They couldn't just hang suspended in the moment. It would kill him.

Allison nodded her head slowly, as if to say no. "Or you could stay here." The brunette said quietly.

She wasn't playing him; there wasn't the faintest trace of sarcasm in her voice. Allison wasn't going to kick him out? She wasn't going to curse him? Perhaps it was still early but where were the evil looks? His fingers twisted in the fabric of the shirt she was wearing. She'd been in the wardrobe again. Another of his, he noticed.

Castiel's heart sped up. As if it hadn't been beating fast enough already. It was practically slamming in his chest now. Every beat thundered in his ears. It was deafening. So much so that he barely heard himself respond to her.

"Or I could stay. " 


She wasn't sure if he would do it. She wasn't sure if he would stay that is. If he left now she wouldn't know what do with herself. She'd climbed down off of her high horse and apologized to him. Something that normally would have taken yelling and possibly bloodshed before. Even if she knew that she was wrong, she was too damn stubborn to admit it.

The apology was Chuck's fault. Well, he likely didn't know that he had played a part. But the discussion that he had drummed up earlier that evening, it had made her think. Chuck had talked about how different Cas was around her now. It wasn't an entire change of personality, but it was a noticeable difference. There was something about the way he treated her. The way he acted in the heat of the moment. Allison knew that a good portion of her frustration wasn't Castiel's fault. It was this thing inside her…the power that she possessed. Suddenly she could do things that no normal person could. It was freaky. No, frightening. It was frightening.

If anything she was lucky to have Castiel. He seemed to know what this conduit thing was. It wasn't some sort of curse, it wasn't horrible, and she wasn't a monster. All things that he had been trying to knock into her impossibly thick skull as of late. If he'd wanted to leave she couldn't have blamed him.

But he didn't move. He stayed still as a statue, as if he were afraid to move. The dim light from the lantern cast long shadows. Somehow it made his features so much more intense. Allison could see every line on his face. He seemed older, wiser. He looked so much different now. Like someone had peeled back a layer, revealing the real man underneath. She could see what time had done to him and it was more than a bit intimidating.

She let out the breath that she hadn't known she'd been holding. Her hands moved on their own accord to the top button of his shirt. She wasn't sure what she was doing now, or why he was letting her do it – but she knew that she wasn't about to stop. Not unless he wanted her to.

He seemed more than a bit surprised when he glanced down, as if that was the opposite of whatever he had been expecting. But as her hands moved against the fabric he eased up. The progress she had hoped to make was stopped when he reached up and took her hands in his.

"Did I do something wrong?" She asked uncertainty. Was this too far? Or two fast? A combination of both? Why was he just looking at her like that?

He suddenly felt guilty. No, she hadn't done something wrong. Not at all. It was him. He'd been so transfixed, so swept up in the moment. Funny how the feeling of her lightly tugging at the buttons on his shirt had jolted him back to earth. Now fully aware of the situation, he felt anxious – self conscious. It was absolutely ridiculous.

Not since his first night with a woman had he ever stopped someone from undressing him. He'd been so clumsy and clueless. Afflictions that he'd considered long gone until now. But suddenly they all came rushing back. Castiel silently cursed himself for it.

She was beautiful, truly beautiful. She possessed such an extraordinary gift that could rival the powers that angels themselves held dear. She was amazing. Then there was him.
He was a fallen angel; his mojo had drained like a battery did after too much use. Once the angels started disappearing it all just kind of slipped away. He'd fallen and he'd become lesser. With his grace gone he was vulnerable. He hated the word, and he'd denied it. He'd tried to deny it for so long. No amount of drugs, alcohol, or women could make him forget how he felt the first time he'd gotten sick. Then it was his first broken bone, and how very human he felt when he had a rouge camper's gun jammed underneath his chin. He didn't have anyone or anything in his corner now. He'd been lost for a long time before that, but only then did he feel truly alone.

The past few years he'd grown used to his situation. There were reminders, but faint. Despite Dean's bull-in-a-china-shop approach to everything, the quips about his lost powers were kept to a minimum. With the exception of Lisa and Chuck, he wasn't sure that anyone knew his story. Then Allison came to the camp. Well, technically she'd been brought to it after Dean had almost killed her. Once Castiel realized what she was, what she could do. It was almost like a slap in the face.

She was so much more than he was. She was so much more than he ever had been. Allison didn't know that at one point he had been part of the God Brigade, but she didn't need to. Compared to her, he was nothing. Yet here they were.

What if she was unimpressed? Or disappointed?

She sat there, watching him. Looking incredibly apologetic even though she'd done absolutely nothing wrong. This was a different side of her. Cas didn't want her to leave, and if he stayed quiet for much longer he knew that she'd be out the door. Then tomorrow this wouldn't even be a thought. They'd act like nothing had happened and carry on. They couldn't do that.

He silently repeated a phrase that he'd heard a million times.

'Suck it up.'

He held her close, leaving her hands wrapped up in his shirt. His lips found her neck, warm and exposed. Castiel could practically feel her melt against him with nothing more than a quick kiss. He let go of her hands, holding them there like that hadn't been too comfortable anyways. Rather than allow them to return to their previous task, they were resting against his shirt. As if she had found her way into his train of thought.

Another kiss, another hitched breath.

It was slow at first. Like they were testing the waters, unsure of whether or not they should dive right in. Who knew how long they had been there like that. Minutes, hours, it was like time had just stopped.

Gradually their actions increased in pace. Each touch, each kiss, more feverish than the last. One by one the resolve and the insecurities just seemed to fade away into the moment.

His hands came to rest at the bottom of the shirt she'd chosen to wear that night. As soon as Allison felt his fingers brush against her, she slowly pulled back. Castiel had to stifle the groan that was building up in his chest. He was just getting used to the feel of her. Something that he was finding rather enjoyable. The taste of her lips, the way her fingers managed to barely touch him as they glided over his anatomy, yet they set him on fire as if she had struck a match.

She didn't say a word when she moved back onto the bed. All that she did was slowly cross her arms, taking a side of the shirt in each hand before pulling it over her head. Something inside him
panicked then. Was he supposed to look away? Did she want him to look away? The shirt fell from her grasp at her side and she shivered. Like she hadn't anticipated the cool breeze in their all-too-drafty little cabin. Allison didn't reach for a blanket though, nor did she grab the shirt. Instead she sat there, a shy smile slowly tugging away at her lips.

While he had considered looking away seconds ago, there was no chance of it now. She hadn't worn a bra or any other scrap of clothing underneath his old shirt, nothing. He could see everything. His eyes swept over her taking in every detail. He had imagined a scenario like this in his mind a few times over the last few weeks, not that he would have ever admitted it. But the image of Allison that he had conjured up in his mind paled in comparison. Perhaps by the social standards that had been applied before the world had gone to shit, Allison was simply average. But to him she was breathtaking.

Her skin looked so smooth, so inviting. Of course Castiel noticed the scar which his dutiful leader and created, but it didn't repulse him. It was as much a part of her as anything. God knew he had a few scars himself. That aside, he was quickly distracted by other things. The tone of her muscles, fit but not overly so. Fit enough to survive in these wastelands. Of course there were her breasts, two things which he had avoided looking at at first but as the seconds dragged on it became increasingly difficult to avert his gaze. It also seemed as if that were the whole point behind the removal of her top. They looked firm, pert. There was something youthful about them. They weren't large, like the women in the magazines that Dean had introduced him to, and had horded over the years. Nor were they no existent. They were just enough to be cupped in his hand, if she'd let him.

"I look better with a tan." Allison muttered, heaving her shoulders in defeat. Castiel didn't hear her though, he had barely been aware of the fact that her lips had moved in the first place. He was on the bed now, moving across to capture her in his arms. There was no protest, no scolding. She came to him willingly.

Her arms draped over his shoulders as he changed their position, fusing their lips together in a searing kiss as he slowly lowered her back against the mattress. His lips danced across her jaw, down to her neck. He'd noticed that seemed to be a weak point of hers. When he got to her collarbone she let out a quiet moan of approval. Her fingers traced his biceps, pulling him down closer to her. He stopped his work there.

"Cas."

His name slid from her lips in a breathy whisper. Had he not been so close he would have missed it entirely. He froze there, hovering above her. Allison arched her back, hips meeting with his. She looked up at him and at that moment he felt as if he were going to die. It wasn't his name that she had uttered this time. It was something different. Something that shattered his willpower and awoke the most carnal part of his spirit.

"Please?"

He didn't want to sleep. It was calling to him, he could barely keep his eyes open. Yet Castiel fought the feeling. What if he woke up in the morning to find out that it had all just been a dream? That the woman lying beside him stealing almost every blanket on the bed wasn't even there, or worse, wasn't real. He didn't want this moment to end. He wanted the afterglow to drag on. He wanted the smug feeling of satisfaction, and the bordering on childish feeling of awe to stay with him.

This wasn't the first time he had gotten into bed with a woman but this was different. As he had
constantly taken to reminding himself, Allison wasn't just some woman. This hadn't happened simply because she had been there, as was usual when people got undressed in the 'teaching' cabin. He was drawn to her like a moth was to a flame. He didn't want to believe it was simply because of the power that she possessed within her. In fact, Castiel refused to believe that. This woman was more than just a power, more than just a conduit.

His arm had fallen asleep sometime ago. He'd propped himself up on the pillows to get a better look, once she had fallen asleep of course. The body that he had seen not too long ago was now safely tucked away underneath a mound of thermal blankets. It was hard to believe that they were here, that they had somehow ended up this way. Half the time he thought she wanted to throttle him, the other half he spent talking to her as if she were a child. All of that was forgotten when she touched him. He could barely believe that she'd allowed him to. There wasn't a part of her that his calloused fingers hadn't traced; trying to create a memory should the moment come crashing down around him.

Castiel had to resist the urge to brush the wavy hair away from her face. She looked so peaceful. This was something that he could get used to, even though he doubted, or knew, the odds of anything even close to it happening again were slim to none. In the morning she would probably wake up and shove him out of bed. She would regret what they had done, or she would hate him for doing it. Though she had been so willing to let him in, even the worst case scenario had to be considered.

He let out low sigh and lowered himself down from his perch. Now he was over thinking it, running the moment. Castiel pulled what blankets he could over his chest, attempting not to disrupt the sleeping Allison. He stole one last look at her before he closed his eyes. If he were to die in the night, the image of her curled up beside him would be his last. If he were to die sometime before morning, he would die with the memory of Allison fresh in his mind. The way she touched him, the sounds she made, the way she felt. If he were to die at that moment, he would die happy.
Chapter Summary

Please keep in mind that this is kind of a warm up chapter for me. I'm happy enough with it to publish it but I know that it's not super amazing. We'll get back to super amazing though. It has been awhile so I refrained from doing anything too extravagant or dramatic here, I just wanted to make sure that I could (still) comfortably write for my lovely OC at the very least. This chapter isn't just filler though. It's going to serve as my bridge from the first part of the story (chapters 1-34) to the second part. The storyline will be picking up shortly as promised. So thank you for reading this and being patient with me! I love you guys :)

She rose with the sun the next morning. It took a moment for Allison to figure out why she wasn't wearing a single scrap of clothing or why a man's arm was draped across her torso. She slowly shifted in the bed, catching a glimpse of the sleeping face beside her. As soon as she laid eyes on Castiel the memories from the previous night came flooding back. A rush of heat flooded her body as she looked at his peaceful expression, one she didn't think she had ever seen.

Part of her wanted to go back to sleep. Surely she could get in another hour or two before Chuck reeled her into doing the day's dirty work in the kitchen. Part of her wanted to curl up against his warmth and drift back off. That part confused her. This was Cas, the self designated 'man whore' of the camp. She spent more time fighting with him than anything else. Why did she want to stay with him? What sense did that make?

Allison rebelled against the feeling. She could have stayed. She should have. Instead, she slowly removed herself from the bed. As soon as she was clear of Cas she couldn't get out of there fast enough.

The warmth of the showers did nothing to calm her mind, or wash away the memory of what she'd done the night before. She'd asked him for it, she'd almost begged. There had been something there - a connection of some sort. She'd felt drawn to him, it was a feeling she couldn't have denied. The moment had consumed her and she had let it. Allison told herself she couldn't hold this one against Cas. She had initiated it and to her surprise he had wanted it just as much, if not more. He was intoxicating. A bomb could have gone off outside of their cabin and she doubted either of them had noticed. Hell, Dean could have shot her again and she wouldn't have so much as flinched, blissfully unaware. Since the world had gone to hell she hadn't been able to put the situation out of her mind, she'd never been at ease. There wasn't a moment where Allison didn't think about her parents or her brother. There wasn't a moment where she didn't think about how they had to scavenge for food like wild animals, where men cut down other men as if it were nothing. Being brought to Dean's camp hadn't helped matters. But the past night...none of it entered her mind. Not her family, not her brother, not the life outside their barbed wire fences. Not even her 'gift'. The only thing that mattered was his lips against her skin, her nails raking at his back as their bodies clashed together.

Needless to say the shower didn't help.
She needed something to do, desperately. She wasn't going back to the cabin. Allison didn't want to face Castiel, not yet. She didn't know what she would say, or how she would act. For now it was easier to retreat and hide. Unfortunately, being locked into a camp and restricted to certain areas didn't provide optimal hiding places. So she went to the only place she knew, to Chuck's side in the kitchen.

He would keep her busy and truth be told, he was a little strange but all around a pretty good guy. Allison didn't mind 'earning her keep' either. Every set of hands helped, and today she would take advantage of that.

She ended up here more often than not. Allison had a sneaking suspicion that on some subconscious level she was actually beginning to enjoy it. As predicted the second she stepped into the dining hall Chuck appeared, almost out of nowhere. Allison helped set the hall for dinner, preparing what food they had. Once she was done with that she was asked to help out with inventory. According to Chuck they were running dangerously low on some things and Dean needed exact numbers for the days run.

So they were going on a run. This was good she thought. That meant Cas would probably go with him, he'd be out of the camp all day; which meant that she would not need to go out of her way to avoid him.

For a few hours her plan had worked out. There was no sign of Cas anywhere. In fact the first visitor she had all day was an unlikely one. When she looked up from Chuck's clipboard to see Dean standing in the doorway, eyes locked on her she wasn't sure what to expect. Only that it probably wasn't going to end well.

"You busy here?" Dean asked gruffly.

Chuck handed over the coveted piece of equipment to him"Just finished inventory. Here are the numbers you wanted."

Dean scanned it and he didn't look happy Then again, when did he ever? "We're going out today, I'll pass this on," then he turned to her. Allison's skin crawled. There was something about Dean. Maybe the fact that they'd gotten off to the wrong start - what with him shooting her and all that. "If he doesn't need you for anything else. I want you packed and in the truck in twenty, we need the extra bodies."

Allison looked at Chuck, and he looked back at her. They were both equally confused. Dean wasn't leaving yet though. He looked as if he was waiting for something from her but Alli wasn't sure what that something was. It wasn't like Dean had left much room for argument. He hadn't asked her if she wanted to go. Sure, he'd said that if Chuck didn't need her...but even if he did he wouldn't make her stay now. Dean was requesting her presence on a run for the second time. That felt more than a little strange to her but what ounce of self-preservation she had left told her not to question it.

"Twenty minutes." He repeated, turning away from the two. Alli and Chuck exchanged glances once more before Allison hesitantly followed the man out of the mess hall. Guns were in the truck, all she needed was a the bag, maybe a coat. Of course there was the Cas issue. He always went on runs, he was Dean's right hand. Maybe if she got to the cars early enough she could ride with someone else. Yeah, that sounded good.

If only it had worked out that way.

After she'd left the cabin she'd gotten distracted by Lisa. It didn't make her late...but by the time she reached the lot most of the people were already packing the vehicles and starting the engines - not
even ten minutes after she'd gotten word of the venture. There was only one vehicle which she knew would hold an empty seat.

Begrudgingly she shuffled around the back of the beaten up pick up truck. She lowered her bag off of her shoulder as she opened the passengers side door, tossing it onto the seat before hauling herself in. Allison instantly felt on edge. From the corner of her eye she could see Castiel looking at her. By the look of it, he didn't seem angry...or like there was any real emotion coursing through his veins at that moment. He just looked like Cas. "You left early." He remarked casually, leaning back against his seat.

Allison's body went rigid. When was the last time she'd done this? Years ago...even longer. Was there another meaning behind his remark or was she just being paranoid? Was it too late to get out of the truck?

"I couldn't sleep." The words were muffled as she bowed her head, feigning interest in the belt buckle that she was currently 'attempting' to snap into place.

Castiel shrugged, shifting in his seat. "You could have woken me up."

"You were asleep." Allison's words were colder, almost callous. She sounded defensive and Cas hadn't missed it. The near carefree air about him change slowly. A smirk formed on his face and he laughed. He actually laughed. Why the hell was he laughing?

"So that's how it's going to be." At that moment she just wanted to disappear. In fact, she was hoping she could just fade back into the seat. If she pressed herself hard enough against it who knew, maybe God would help her out just this once. "Do you want to talk about it?" He offered.

She looked at him incredulously. Was he offering to talk or was he mocking her? "I don't know, do you usually talk about it with your girls?" If she'd sounded defensive before, now she sounded as if he'd backed her up against a wall entirely. It was cold, mean. The words had just come out that way. All rushed and jumbled, she hadn't really meant it.

The smile disappeared instantly. Castiel's face turned expressionless. No laughter, no nothing. Now she'd done it. Alli had been so wound up, so freaked out...she'd offended him. No one ever referred to Castiel's groupies in a way that wasn't negative or wildly inappropriate. Any hope of the car ride being even a little normal were gone after that crushing blow. They sat in silence for a few moments, she didn't dare look at him. He wasn't happy now, she'd struck a nerve. She wasn't sure if it was her tone or her remark about his 'girls'.

Whatever it was it kept them silent for a few minutes. All around them engines roared to life. As he started the truck all she wanted to do was jump out and run away. It was stupid, this was stupid. She knew it but at this point Allison gathered that she didn't have much reign over her thoughts or her feelings. There was a sinking feeling that she had just single handedly set the tone for the entire trip.

As they rolled out of the gates he looked over at her. His blue eyes seemed darker, like a storm was raging within them. "I've never thought of you as one of 'my girls'" Now the same bitterness that had encroached in her words began to seep into his.

In that moment, Allison couldn't have felt worse. It was going to be a long ride. A very long ride.

The trip only took about an hour, but that hour was painful. Allison hadn't expected them to stay so close to the camp but perhaps this was what they did, cycle through towns in case they missed something. People passed through all the time, or they got stuck in one place...At the very least she
was thankful that this wasn't the day where they would partake in one of the days long runs she'd heard about from Lisa. During that hour neither of them spoke. Allison felt too bad and she had far too much on her mind to even try. It was obvious that she'd offended him in some way. She hadn't meant to at all, it had just happened. It felt way too late to apologize. On top of that, what had he meant when he said he'd never thought of her as one of his girls? Allison wasn't sure what made her different. Was it the fact that she had some sort of mystical power? She wasn't entirely sure what else it could have been. If you were to put her in a line up with most of the women that Castiel had regularly preached to, and then picked the prettiest ones...Allison knew she wasn't horrible looking but she wasn't a beauty queen - she was average. There was nothing remarkable about her. She'd spent most of her time in the camp arguing with Cas. The only time they weren't arguing was when they were asleep or kissing.

That seemed to happen a lot lately.

She shoved the door open rather unceremoniously. Her bag was slung over her shoulder as she rounded to the back of the old pick up, waiting with two other to get their weapons. Dean allowed some in the camp to carry, but Allison wasn't exactly one of the privileged few yet. Cas appeared, pulling down the back gate and reaching for the guns.

Allison's equipment was much the same as it had been the first time. She still had a feeling that she was lucky to have anything in her hands at all. The gun was placed in her hands without so much as a word or a look, which she found very unsettling. Even when mad he had a remark for everything. She'd never seen him so quiet before. She hadn't known him long, but still. Most of her time in the camp had been spent around him so far - when she wasn't cooped up in the kitchen.

"Alright, everybody listen up!" Dean called the small group to attention. "This is just going to be a quick sweep. We'll do it in pairs, no buildings unless there's signs of life. You find any people, you bring them to me. You find anything else - kill it." Alli wasn't sure what she'd expected from him but that seemed very in character for the Winchester. She didn't have time to worry about the speech now though. They were sweeping the area in pairs...last time she had been with Cas. She couldn't do that today. Right now he wouldn't even look at her.

Of course, this reminded her that she barely knew anyone else at the camp. Chuck and Lisa stayed behind, and most of the guys here she'd barely even spoken to. As if he'd sensed her plight Dean made his way over. At first she thought that he was going to speak to Castiel but instead he came right up to her.

"You're coming with me." He said gruffly. Allison looked around, but it wasn't as if someone would rush to her aid. Suddenly an uncomfortable hour with Castiel seemed like a great idea.

Dean made her uneasy. Even if he hadn't shot and almost killed her. There was something about him that made her skin crawl. He was so cold, so severe. Half the people in the camp were afraid of him. If the stories she'd heard were even a little true, Allison couldn't say that she blamed them. "I am?"

Allison was cautious with her words now,

The dark hair man grunted in response. She assumed that was meant to be a yes. Further questioning this decision didn't seem smart, so Allison reluctantly followed Dean past the row of vehicles, where an abandoned main street stood beyond. What she didn't see while she was walking away was Castiel and the worried expression in his eyes.
Inquisition

Chapter Notes

This chapter took me so long, mainly because writing any sort of action sequence is a weakness for me. It's something I'm constantly trying to improve on. I'm not the best at them but I absolutely needed this update to have these scenes. This is also one of my longest updates to date, I think. I was going to divide it up but when I re-read it...it just didn't seem right to have it in individual chapters. So I hope you guys don't mind it. I wanted to submit it all together in the end, instead of as a bunch of smaller updates. This will also allow for the next few chapters to run a bit more smoothly - this was 'the' chapter I was most worried about because I needed a certain event to take place...and I couldn't think of any other way to initiate it.

Anyways! As always, thank you so much for reading along! I appreciate you all so much. I'd send each of you boxes of fresh baked cookies ( or a homemade dessert of your choice ) if I could. If you feel so inclined - I'd love it even more if you could R&R! Or R&R&PM. I read all of my reviews, answer questions, all that jazz. I also respond to all the messages so no one goes unnoticed!

I hope you guys enjoy this one.

Gravel and dead leaves crunched beneath their feet as they walked down what had at one point been the sleepy little town's main street. Her eyes stayed trained ahead, sweeping over the terrain; but her mind couldn't have been further away. Every so often she'd glance to her side to see whether or not Dean was still within arms reach. Of course he was. Why had he chosen her today? Out of everyone who had come on the run Dean had singled her out. They got along as well as gasoline and open flames did. Neither liked or trusted the other and it was obvious. No one was coming to rescue her. Alli had a sneaking suspicion that no one cared.

It took her a few minutes but she finally worked up the courage to ask. "Why did you single out me?" He shot her a look that told her it was a stupid question, but Allison didn't care. She really couldn't come up with an answer on her own. "Come on. You don't like me. You don't trust me. Why did you want me with you?"

"I don't know you. You've been in my camp for weeks know and I know jack all about you."

As soon as she said it she could hear Castiel's voice in her head. When they'd figured out what was wrong with her, how she healed him. He'd asked her to keep it a secret. He didn't want her telling anyone in the camp. At the time she hadn't asked him why he'd sworn her to secrecy, she'd been too worn down to care. For whatever reason Castiel thought it was important. Allison had never questioned it. Dean was right. He didn't know her.
"What do you want to know?" The pair on their left consisted of a teenaged boy and an older man. The one on the right was more or less the same. Allison couldn't have named any of the four. They didn't look at all concerned about what was going on up front either.

Dean looked over at her then to the road ahead, then back to her. She could have been imagining things but she swore she'd seen the ghost of a smirk pass over his face. "Okay then," he'd ask her about her brother, maybe some of the stuff he'd read in the journal he'd found while riffling through her personal belongings while she had been unconscious after he'd almost killed her. "What's going on between you and Cas?" and when he asked only one thing ran through her mind.

Shit.

Her heart began to beat faster in her chest. Allison prayed that she wasn't giving herself away. It was a loaded question, even if Dean didn't know it. Allison decided to counter it, play the oblivious card. "What do you mean?"

Dean only shrugged. "One of the guys on night watch heard some…interesting noises coming from the cabin last night. He thought I should check it out." Allison tried to play it cool, but she was torn between running or slamming her fist into the side of the man's face and then running.

From the moment she'd woken up in the camp, she'd had an intense dislike for Dean. He'd almost killed her, he'd taken her personal belongings, interrogated her. He seemed like he was a complete ass to everyone in the camp but with her? There was an extra helping of it. The idea of them being overheard was…embarrassing. The thought of Dean coming to investigate? She tried to remember if the windows had been covered or maybe there had been a knock on the door that they had ignored. It was hard to remember anything that wasn't Cas. The way he touched her, the heat of his skin underneath her lips. She didn't know what to say, and if she opened her mouth she doubted she'd be able to formulate anything close to a coherent sentence.

Dean must have picked upon her level of discomfort and as if he wanted to prolong the moment for as long as possible, he continued. "Cas doesn't bring girls back to the cabin. He never has, as long as we've been there. I know he was with someone."

Finally, she found her voice. "Maybe he brought someone back."

Dean gave her a simple, pointed look. "Then where were you? I had watch check the camp, you weren't hiding out anywhere." Despite her best efforts she felt a slow wave of heat stir in her cheeks. "Pretty sure we don't have any other ladies named Allison in camp, either."

*Son of a bitch.*

The way that he was looking at her, he knew. At this point her cheeks were no doubt flushed, and the anger would be shown flush across her body. The way she looked at him, the way she held herself. There would be no denying it now, he'd caught her. She hadn't wanted to have this conversation with Castiel, but she would have thrown herself into a flaming pit rather than have this talk with Dean Winchester. "Why do you care?" Allison asked, if her overall composure hadn't given it away the near 'catty' teenage-worthy tone definitely would have. Dean didn't respond right away. She wondered if she'd crossed a line, but she wasn't sure that there were really any 'lines' to cross with this man. He was all raw, exposed nerve.

It looked like he was actually thinking about something, picking out the right answer. "You don't know anything about him, do you?" The laugh that accompanied the question was every bit as cold and bitter as the man himself. What did that have to do with anything? Allison didn't know his life story, she hadn't asked. She'd been a bit too per-occupied with certain other things to think about.
where he'd grown up, what sports he played in highschool, or if he'd gotten bullied because of his slightly ridiculous name. "I'm all he's got." Dean wasn't looking at her anymore, he was staring straight ahead. His jaw was set, either he was angry or annoyed. Or both. It was probably both. She wondered what he meant by that. Did Castiel not have family? What about Lisa and Chuck? Were Dean and Cas related or something? She wasn't sure, but she wasn't about to ask that now.

There was this feeling in the air, like she had only just heard the beginning from Dean and he wasn't anywhere close to done with her yet. Lucky for her, fate decided to do her a favor and intervene. The pair on their right had stopped, they were looking at one of the old houses that lined the side of the road, only they hadn't noticed just yet. They had been too busy taking snipes at each other to even take in the world around them.

"Dean!" The older of the two called out. There was a slight urgency in his voice.

"What?" The man snapped, looking around. When he noticed the source of the voice was further away, he called out again, this time louder "What?"

The two men looked at each other, as if suddenly unsure of getting their leaders attention. "I heard something…"

Dean rolled his eyes, muttering something under his breath that sounded like a string of barely coherent insults. "What do you mean 'you heard something'?" Dean strode over to them, and Allison reluctantly followed.

"I uh… think I saw something, too." The younger man piped up.

Dean's jaw set. "Why are you standing out here then?" She understood that the younger boy hadn't been on a run with Dean yet - ever… but the other guy she knew for a fact that he had done at least one or two. They had their orders. Small disturbances, you checked out for yourself. If something went wrong, you screamed for help and the cavalry would come running. If you could scream for help, that is.

Neither moved towards the house. Dean took the steps two at a time, when he reached the door he tried the handle once, and then kicked it open. "You," He pointed to the older man "Come with me." Then he turned his attention to her. "And you..." Allison cringed "stay with the kid." Okay, that hadn't been anywhere nearly as bad as she had been expecting. Of course there were likely a million reasons why Dean did not want her going into the house, and if she really thought about them then her anger would return. For now she was fine with where she was.

Allison leaned up against the old metal railing that was still firmly attached to the side of the porch. It ground slightly, but supported her weight. The other groups who had come up behind them were slowing down. It seemed as if them stopping had made the others more cautious. There were no more purposeful strides, and no one only stared straight ahead.

The kid who was waiting on the porch with her looked uneasy. She wasn't sure why, maybe it was first run nerves or Dean's abrasive personality had gotten to him as well. The way he held himself, the way he cradled his rifle. His feet were moving underneath him, shifting his weight from one foot to another. Had he ever even held a gun before this? Somehow, she doubted it. The hold was too awkward, he gripped it so tightly his knuckles were white.

"Are you alright?" She asked cautiously.

He jumped, actually jumped. It was like he had totally forgotten that she had been there in the first place. Which, given that she was standing only a few feet away from him was more than a little odd.
She mentally scratched her first question out. He obviously wasn't okay. The way he acted reminded
her of how she had felt, the first few weeks after the infection had begun to spread. Allison had no
way of knowing what was going through his mind - but she knew she had felt the way that he had
looked. Her brother had been around her at the time, but he had just barely been hanging on. He was
the big brother, and all the family that she had left. He had to look after her. Keeping her calm had
been a big part of that.

So she tried from a different angle. "Is this your first run?" Now he had her attention. For better or
worse, he was looking at her. He nodded slowly. "Probably your first time with a gun, too. Right?"
She assumed, anyways. Only a few people were allowed to carry guns within the camp, for the most
part their weapons were stored and the 'general public' did not have access. He nodded again.

"You know, I'd never even held a gun before everything went to hell...we had an old rifle in our
house, it was my grandad's. It was mounted on the wall above our fire place. It didn't even work.
That was the closest I'd been to a gun." Allison watched him from the corner of her eye, only turning
to look at him every few seconds' she didn't want him to get even more antsy.

"We found a pistol, after everything started...one of our neighbors was a gun nut. I didn't want to use
one, but my brother told me to look at myself, what was I gonna do, kill one of them with my bare
hands?" A small smile formed on her face as she heard the conversation play out in her mind again.
There was the faint sound of a chuckle, only it belonged to the young man standing across from her.
"There was a shotgun too, but he didn't want me to have that one. Anyway, my brother figured out
how to load them...I didn't even have the pistol in my hand for a minute and I almost shot my own
foot." Now he was smiling. "I was a horrible shot, too. The first time I actually used the thing, I shot
out one of the tires on our truck. Some genius had set up all the bottles and tins just close enough...I
got better, but it took awhile. It's okay to be uncomfortable, I don't like guns either."

"But you look...fine with it."

Allison shrugged. "I think I realized somewhere along the line, that a gun was my lifeline. I wouldn't
have made it this far without one. If you're antsy, freaking out, you're more likely to waste bullets or
worse; you might hurt yourself or someone else. Someone you don't want to hurt. You don't have to
like it, but you've got to accept it." He looked down at his own gun now, Allison noticed his gripe
had loosened on it, and he had stopped fidgeting.

"My name's Allison, by the way."

"I know." She tilted her head, glancing at the road. Of course he knew.

Then he surprised her. "I'm Jesse."

Suddenly she felt a lot better about having been left out on the porch.

Dean and his guy had taken about fifteen minutes all together. They came out of the house unscathed
and with a full backpack of supplies. Whatever they had the thought they had seen or heard, it wasn't
anywhere in the residence. Allison and Jesse has talked about camp life, how long he'd been there;
whether or not Dean had always been so personable. He didn't offer many details about his life
before the camp, but Allison didn't ask. She knew that he had a mother and a younger sister back at
camp and that Dean had been the one to take them in.

When Dean got our he barked his orders, he wanted them to continue down the strip, he wanted
Jesse and Richard ( the older man, as she had found out) to stay with him and Allison.
There was a more cautious air this time. Even though Alli was walking by his side again, he didn't bring up Castiel, he didn't so much as speak to her. Jesse stayed closer to her this time, she noticed that he chose to stay by her, instead of on Deans other side. He looked over at the gruff man every few seconds, as of he were afraid of Dean. She couldn't blame him, Dean didn't seem like the type of guy who put people at ease.

The group was fast approaching a fork in the road. One roadway veered to the left while the other veered to the right. The entire group was now converging on the crossroads, everyone who had come with them was now closing in on the area.

"My recovery team. Come with me. The rest of you, I want you to check the first few houses down that way. Clear it and then make your way back here. We've got half an hour to work this."

Allison stood there, holding her rifle against her chest. Who was part of his recovery team? Dean didn't bother repeating himself, he only stepped away from the crowd. With him, other members of the group separated themselves and followed their leader. Allison looked around, the ones who didn't follow Dean stood there for a moment before their attention turned to her left.

"You heard him. We'll work this four people to a building. We'll clear it faster that way." Allison cringed. For a split second she seriously considered chasing after Dean. Apparently, the 'leader' of the second group was Castiel. Now she'd just need to suck it up. If everyone co-operated and did their jobs this wouldn't take long, she'd be back in the truck in no time. Did she want to be in the truck? Well…she hadn't thought about that.

Castiel moved out. Allison found that Jesse was still stuck to her side, clearly Dean didn't want the 'new boy', or he didn't think this was an appropriate teaching experience. Neither said anything as the mob moved forward. They stopped in front of the first building, a small corner store. Castiel turned to them, scanning the crowd. He began calling out names. There was a dozen people in his group and he was dividing them up. There were two more buildings within earshot, a small house and what looked like another store. He sent one group into the house, the other towards the store. Jesse reluctantly went with his group; but not before casting Allison a look that she deciphered as a silent plea.

That left Allison, and two other men whose name escaped her; with Castiel himself. Once the others had gone on their way Castiel ushered the three of them to follow him into the store.

Allison purposely waited for the men ahead of her to step through the doorway, using the two as a space between her and Castiel. The ride had been painful enough; but she hoped their issues wouldn't be brought up now. More than anything she just wanted the day to end.

They advanced slowly. Once they were inside she saw a barren storefront. Knocked over shelves and a handful of display cases, smashed up coolers. They clearly weren't the first people to pass through; and she doubted they'd be able to salvage much. They hadn't been in there for more than five minutes before one of the men voiced the concern that they all had in their mind.

"Cas? I don't think we're gonna find much in here. It's a goddamn wreck." The older of the two said, shoving an empty brown box out of his path with his foot. "Nothing here." He grunted.

Allison looked up, pulling her eyes away from the shelving unit that she had been inspecting. Castiel was at the other end of the store, he had been looking at some of the smashed in coolers. At one point they might have held drinks, popsicles, other treats. Now? Not so much. He didn't even turn around when he adressed the man.

"We have to look anyways. Unless you want to explain to Dean why we aren't salvaging. In that
case, be my guest.” He looked over his shoulder at the man, Allison had almost expected to see some sort of smile; a joking grin. Only there was nothing. It was stern, almost cold. The man took one look and then ( begrudgingly ) went back to his search.

They continued with the store. Castiel eventually worked his way to the back office, and he took one of the men to check the basement. Leaving Allison with the complainer upstairs to keep an eye on things. Castiel had insisted that they be thorough or face Dean's wrath, so once he returned from the basement they checked the store top to bottom before moving on. Once they were finished with the corner store they moved on, now the next step was to check on the other groups; in case someone had missed something.

The other groups were having as much luck as they did. This pushed Castiel to do quick walkthroughs of four more buildings before he gave up. The time was up, and Dean would be heading back with whatever he had managed to salvage. No one in their right minds would keep him waiting. All together they had only managed to fill a duffel back and a half. It was pathetic, as one man put it. Castiel assured them that it was better than nothing, and they had figuratively struck gold when they had found clean bandages, some unopened tubes of antibiotic ointment, and a few rolls of medical tape.

xxx

Feeling more than a little defeated, they began the trek back to the meeting spot. As if reflecting their moods, heavy grey clouds were rolling in fast. It looked like a storm was on it's way. There was a scent in the area - the type that came before rainfall Allison noticed. As if the mood wasn't already grim enough.

To their collective surprise, they were back at the meeting place before Dean was. Someone asked if they could go to the cars and wait there and Castiel gave them one of the scariest glares she had ever seen. Which effectively kept all complaining to a minimum. The group stayed partially bunched together, anxiously kicking at the gravel or making small talk. Castiel had situated himself away from them, for whatever reason. Allison has thought about going up and talking to him. What she'd say, she wasn't sure. Maybe warn him about Dean knowing; but she had a feeling she would be the only one catching heat for that. She was the stranger, the outsider. It only took her seconds to decide that talking to Cas was probably a bad idea.

They waited, one minute quickly turned into five and the others began to get impatient. She noticed that Castiel's demeanor had seemed to change as well. While he'd kept a watchful eye on them, now his eyes were fixed on the road that Dean had taken. They stood there for ten minutes before one of them approached him.

"He's never late." The man said. Allison had inched closer, just enough to hear the muted voices. They were purposely keeping their tones low. "We should go down there."

Castiel didn't look away from the road. "We'll give him a few more minutes." The man only looked more worried.

"You really want us to wait?"

Castiel opened his mouth, but he never got a chance to reply. The sound of shouting and gunfire pierced through the still air. Everyone jumped, raising their guns. The sound had come from down the road, a ways from where they stood. While moments ago the streets had been empty; Allison could now see the gun toting shapes pouring out onto the road. With extra bodies.

Her blood ran cold. No one said anything, no one gave any orders. Castiel took off and they
followed closely on his heels. The closer they got, the clearer the picture became. Those things…
Croats, as people at the camp called them. There had to be at least a dozen of them, with more
coming from every angle. Dean and his crew were alternating between running and firing; but the
running would need to stop at some point. These things were fast and there were only some many
times you could miss the targets. As soon as their groups converged on Dean's, they opened fire.

"Dean!" She heard Castiel shout over the gunfire - he wasted no time returning to his leaders side.

"They came out of nowhere!" Dean didn't sound scared, or surprised…he sounded pissed.

The group had more or less stopped now. Two of theirs had shouldered their rifles, and were
attending to one of Dean's guys. She could see them out of the corner of her eye. Allison didn't pay
too much attention to them though; she was trying to help thin the heard.

She was pushed backwards by the force of the blast when she pointed the shotgun at a gnarled
woman who flung herself towards them. The first shot was in the shoulder, she staggered backwards
but didn't crumple to the ground. One by one the monsters dropped in the shower of ammunition; but
it seemed like the more they put down the more appeared. Someone to their right had said their were
some coming from the ally between two of the houses, then someone on the left said they were
coming from up the road. She didn't know if that was true, she didn't look. All she knew is that
where there had been a dozen before, there was double that now.

"We gotta move, We can't cut through them." Dean's voice cut over the sounds, urging them to
double back.

"Get back to the trucks! We'll be right behind you" Another voice urged, Castiel's.

She froze in place. She had the gun leveled, poised to shoot. She looked at Castiel, the only
expression on her face was a blank stare. He wanted them to run? While he did what? Still, what
were their odds? The Croats were crawling out of every alleyway now. How had they missed them?
Where the hell had they come from?

"Go!" Their leaders cold voice boomed.

Someone grabbed her shoulder, pulling her back. Allison almost fell right over but she snapped out
of it just in time. Jessie had grabbed her jacket and was attempting to drag her away. Get back to the
trucks. Right.

She ran with him, at least several other people were alongside them. Now they noticed bodies
appearing on the roadway that they had just come from moments ago. Not as many as the gathering
swarm behind them, but enough to worry.

They were still firing behind them, but when she glanced back she saw that some of the men had
switched to other tactics. At least three had abandoned guns for blades, hacking and slashing at
anything that came within reach. They were gradually moving back, but at this rate they were
outnumbered. Allison turned on her heel, she'd been told to run from the mob and she had been - but
if they men didn't move they'd be overtaken. She wasn't thinking as her feet pounded against the
gravel. She heard something behind her, someone telling her to come back. Allison ignored him,
tunnel vision kicked in.

As she reached Dean and Castiel, one of the Croats had gotten hold of one of Dean's men. Allison
jumped into action, she knew she couldn't fire; she would hit the man and not the monster. She
slammed the butt of her rifle into the thing, it's jaws dislodged from the man's shoulder and it faltered
backwards, letting out a guttural moan. It poised it's rotting teeth to bite again, but she slung the rifle
into it's face with enough force to push it back. Allison did it again, and again. On the third strike there was distinct cracking sound, and something splashed onto her face...she could feel it fly up and hit her but wasn't as much concern to her as the corpse at her feet. It stopped moving, so she turned her attention back to the man she had saved. He wasn't back on his feet, in fact he wasn't moving at all. Blood was pooling around his head and she could see now there was a horrible open wound on his neck. He was already gone by the time she'd pulled the Croat off of him. He had lost blood too fast, there wasn't anything that she could have done.

Allison felt a pang of guilt, but instinct quickly overrode it. She pulled the machete out of his hands, rifle shouldered for now. Everything was too close. She could see Dean a few meters away, Castiel was still at his side. One of them was handling a knife, the other had a handgun. There were two other people within arms reach of her, each trying to evade the gnashing teeth and crooked claws of the zombie-like creatures hellbent on getting a hold of them.

There was no thought process as she slashed at the creatures, the blades cutting clothing, and flesh. They weren't people anymore, they didn't feel pain, or remorse. She'd come up against them before. Not this many, smaller groups. Her parents had turned into these things, gradually everyone she'd ever known had. She'd had to kill her own father. Only, it hadn't been their father. That was what her brother had told her. Their dad was gone when the infection kicked in, the monster that had come after her was not the man who had raised them. Still, the monster had his face. Brad had always said maybe it was good, in some morbid way, that they dealt with something so horrific first. It prepared them...it molded them into survivors.

Allison had known emotional attachments to these creatures. They had one purpose - to kill. They were like rabid animals; and rabid animals had to be put down.

The machete was serving it's purpose; though the blade wasn't the sharpest...each swing brought a new ache into her bones but she knew that she couldn't let up. Getting the heads seemed to work, if you rammed something through their eyes, ears, skull...even the mouth if you could get the right angle they would drop. She wasn't sure how long she'd been there but the next time she looked over to her side she saw that Castiel was there, and Dean was just in front of her. She hadn't even seen them move.

"Where the fuck are they coming from?" Someone yelled.

Dean looked at them. "We've gotta get back to the trucks, we can't stay here!" That meant they'd need to try and outrun them. They could try to cut them back step by step, but eventually they'd be surrounded; or someone would misstep. They had to make a run for it.

Before they could make a move she heard a screech. A pained cry. It wasn't from the Croats, it was from one of them. But their group was together? Where had it come from? Her eyes fled form figure to figure until they saw a group three, some of the guys that she had been heading back to the trucks with. They had doubled back. There was one with a gun, letting the bullets fly in the direction of anything that moved. There was one on the ground, and another trying to wrestle a Croat off of them. There was another corpse on top of the flailing figure, but it wasn't moving.

They needed help, and she could get to them.

It took her all of seconds to reach the group. She helped the man wrestle the Croat off of it's intended victim. The thing was huge, in life it had to have weighed upwards of 200 pounds easily, it was like trying to pin a pro wrestler down. She got a hold of it, pinning it to the ground while the other rammed a knife into it's eye socket.

"What the hell are you doing?!!" It was Dean, was at her side. Allison got up, pulling herself off of
the corpse. Her eyes flew to the person on the pavement. They were still screaming, even though nothing was attacking him; he'd kicked the other corpse off of his legs. But he was bleeding. There was a bite on his arm, at least that was what it looked like - some sort of bite. The monster she had just held down had a bleeding mouth, and something had fallen from it while they had been trying to pull it away. A chunk of flesh, it was laying by her feet. She could see muscles, she almost swore that she could see bone. Could they even get that deep? Panic rose in her chest.

The young man was babbling "You gotta get me out of here, I'm bleeding…I'm dying. Please!" Allison looked into his pleading eyes. Jesse. The kid she'd given the pep talk to not even an hour ago, he was laying there on the roadway. He had another bite wound to his neck, it was bleeding profusely. She flew to his side, the machete clattered to the ground - finally leaving her vice-like grip. She needed her hands for other things now. She pressed her hand against the open wound as hard as she could. Blood seeped through her fingers, but that only made her tighten her hold. She tried to hold him but, fumbled, she needed help. She looked up at the men, most too busy with the infected to even notice her. Then she saw Castiel, he was at Jesse's side now.

"He's been bitten…it's really bad, Cas." Her voice broke. It wasn't just panic now. It was fear. Fear for Jesse's life, he was just a kid. This was his first run. He didn't even want to be there! Then it was fear for her own safety - and for the safety of the others. When she had spoken to him on the steps it had been obvious that he wanted to be anywhere but there. The mob that had been centered around Dean had moved with him. "Help me get him up! If we can just get him to the trucks…We can bandage him and then - "

"No."

Allison's eyes widened, had he really just said that? No. His lips hadn't moved. Then she looked up. Dean was towering over her and the young man. "Leave him here, we have to go now. He wont make it back." Castiel didn't move, he didn't get up. He didn't do anything.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Allison jerked herself into a standing position, desperately trying to pull Jesse to his feet. "We need to get him back to the trucks."

"I said leave him!" Dean roared. Hot tears ran down her cheeks. The anger, the fear, it was overflowing now. Seeping out of her very being. Dean didn't tell her again, instead he left. He took off running, the others began to follow. If she didn't move she'd get left behind.

"You've gotta move, okay? I'll get you out of here." Allison pleaded, urging Jesse to co-operate. He was losing blood, fast. His eyes were half shut and the screaming had died down to moans. He was heavy, taller than her. Allison took a step forward but she knew she couldn't hold him and maintain the pressure, she needed extra support. If she didn't move faster they would both die.

She took another step, but this time the weight of Jesse's body moved forward more easily, it felt more as if she'd been pushed as opposed to dragged…someone was supporting him. She didn't look; but she heard it. "He said to leave him." Castiel's voice overtook the pained moaning.

The tears came harder now, she wasn't sure why, but they fell even faster. "I'm not leaving him!" She bit back, wrapping her free arm around Jesse's waist to better support him. She was going to save him. They were. Castiel was helping her move him he had to be supporting at least half Jesse's weight. They were moving faster. Moments ago she'd thought that they wouldn't make it but now…now they had a chance.

A small group had stayed behind them, they were picking off the Croats the choose to follow; as well as any ahead of them that the others hadn't taken care of.
As they neared the crossroads she could feel Jesse's pulse begin to slow underneath her fingertips. It had been fluttery- but now…it was slowing. She didn't know how she could feel it, maybe the wound had been that deep? Or maybe her mind was just putting two and two together. They weren't at the trucks yet, they were still at least five minutes from them…and that was if they ran. Unless some of the others brought the vehicles back; and she prayed they would.

"He's not going to make it." Castiel's voice cut through the air like a knife. "He's fading fast."

Allison shook her head, forcing herself to take a step forward. No. He wasn't dying. She wasn't letting him. Only when she moved, Castiel didn't. Why was he stopping? What type of an idiot would stop? "Allison, He'll bleed out before we get him back."

She jerked on the boys waist but Castiel wouldn't allow him to move. "No! No! Don't you dare. We can save him! Cas, please!"

She could do something. He could make it a few more meters, they'd bring the trucks around…there were bandages in the car. No, she couldn't wait for the cars. She knew he was dying, she wasn't stupid. His blood was staying her fingers, running down her arms. It was seeping into her skin. She could feel him dying beneath her fingertips. She had to do something.

Allison swung herself around, repositioning her hand. Before Castiel could tell her to stop, her lips connected with Jesse's.

She didn't notice the taste of blood or dirt, both covered his mouth. A jolt ran through her body; her eyes shut. She could hear Castiel speaking; he was frantic, he was calling her for. All she could think about was Jesse. The bites, the terrible bites….and the blood. She could do something. Drowning out Castiel's pleading voice was a dull thudding sound, it got louder…every second it grew more and more until she could practically feel the vibrations in her body. It was like a heartbeat. Her's? Or His? There was another jolt again; she'd felt that sensation before…with Castiel. Then all of the sudden the thudding stopped, her eyes snapped open. She was staring into Jesse's, his were wide with fear, they had been closed a second ago, but now he looked alive. She felt dizzy, she noticed that right away…but alive. Maybe it was the adrenaline? Maybe it was something else entirely.

Castiel was looking at her, pulling at Jesse. His eyes were wide, too. Allison noticed. She looked at her hand, where it lay on the young man's neck. The bleeding had stopped, it was no longer dripping from her fingers; running down her wrist. She slowly moved her hand away and she saw the wound…it didn't look as bad. In fact, it looked like it was closing. Right before her eyes. She wasn't sure what to say, she didn't even know what to do. Could it be closing? Had she done that? Did she save him?"

She kept a hand there as a precaution but she finally moved forward. Finally given into the frantic demands of Castiel and the men around them. She moved forward with a renewed vigor. The fear that had coiled around her was fading; quickly replaced by something else. All she could think about was getting back to the trucks.

Maybe they would make it after all.
Judgement

He tried to keep his eyes on the road ahead of him, following the other cars in their little convoy. It sounded like something so simple, he didn't need to watch her but he did. Her and the boy. The men in the group who had reached the cars first had followed protocol, they'd driven the worn out bunch of vehicles to the straggling members. Almost every vehicle had a spare key hidden somewhere in it; which was useful. It saved them the trouble of having to hot-wire cars.

Once they reached the running truck, he switched spots with the driver. Allison loaded the boy into the front seat, positioning him between the two of them. He'd told Allison to hold onto him and he'd told the kid to keep his eyes shut until they were on the road. Allison was still supposed to bandage the wound; but at this rate Castiel wasn't sure that there would be a wound to bandage.

His knuckles tightened around the steering wheel as he looked over at her. Jesse was leaning against her, his head in on her shoulder. She'd bandaged his wrist and his neck. Using spare gauze pads from the truck's first aid kit and bandana's that had been tucked into the glove box. He was asleep now. Somehow, he was still alive.

That was when his attention turned to her. He wasn't sure which feeling was stronger - the anger or the fear.

He was angry because she'd defied Dean, she could have gotten herself injured or worse by stopping to help him but she'd done it anyways. Then she healed him. She just stopped and did it.

That was why he was fearful. She'd healed him; Jesse would most likely be perfectly fine in a day or two - like nothing had ever happened. It was an incredible display of power...she knew eventually she could get to that point; Conduits were known to possess powers of that of an angel; or someone say God himself. To his knowledge she'd only ever used her powers twice - and on him. Those were smaller injuries, he hadn't been on the verge of dying. Now as he looked at her, he noticed she was paler. Once they'd gotten in the truck she'd said that she felt dizzy, and exhausted. Like she'd just run a marathon. He wasn't sure if that was because of the sheer amount of physical activity she had just taken part in or if it had something to do with the energy transference. Either way, she fell asleep shortly after the boy did.

Dean had seen the state of the boy - how would he be able to justify the fact that he had survived the trip back? Upon inspection, they would see his wounds for the most part healed - no longer posing a threat. Of course even a scratch was enough for a death sentence. The boy would still die, Castiel decided. It was a grim reality - Dean would not allow him to stay in the camp. When the boy was dealt with they would come for Allison. The Winchester knew that he couldn't use his powers anymore; he was tapped. Useless. No way could he pull of something like that. Dean hadn't seen it, he'd been so far ahead of them but the others...There were at least four other people. At the time they might have been a bit busy shooting things but if they'd seen something. Wouldn't it be a bit strange, Allison stopping and kissing some dying boy? Then that dying boy making ( what Castiel assumed ) would be a full recovery?

Allison would die too, he realized. When Dean found out, and he would find out. He wasn't sure if he'd shoot first or ask questions later. Usually, that was how he operated. This was new, this was power. That was a threat. In their time they'd come across a few people, or "things" who could heal. None of which had exactly been good…and Dean had ended up killing most of them. When he'd first realized what she was, he'd thought about what would happen if Dean found out. He'd never really thought about how he would handle it when he did. He hadn't considered it, and he should have.
He'd asked her not to tell Dean. But had he explained why? He couldn't remember. Now, when it was most important he couldn't remember a damned thing. Castiel thought about waking Allison, warning her. What could he do, really? Dean Winchester did what Dean Winchester wanted to do. He didn't seek the counsel of others. Maybe he could explain what Allison was - what she could do. Explain that she wasn't a witch, she didn't have a reaper in her service, there were no crossroads deals. It was a gift. A rare one, at that. Something told him it wouldn't be enough. Dean wouldn't care about that.

Could he somehow sell her as a healer? By definition, she wasn't exactly one…what she could do, it wasn't strictly medicinal. What camp wouldn't want their own personal healer? However, he didn't know if her powers could ward off illness and infection. They seemed to work well with lacerations and broken bones at any rate. Even if he convinced Dean that Allison wasn't a threat - he would never trust her. Not that he knew Dean to be the trustworthy type. She would be an outsider in the camp, no one would look at her the same way again. What type of life was that?

If he hadn't known Dean from the start, if he had stumbled across him on a run…Castiel imagined the same thing would have happened to him. Save for his knowledge of the supernatural and ancient texts, he didn't possess many redeeming qualities. At any rate, what was different was dangerous and Allison was so very different.

Outside the vehicle the clouds grew darker. The rain slowed, and then started again. He was running out of time and ideas. While they were on the road, they were safe. Once they reached the camp all bets were off.

xxx

He wanted to wake her. He really did. He couldn't bring himself to do it. It had been a heat of the moment decision, if her powers had been on the forefront of her mind she would have tried to help the young man the second she saw him, she wouldn't have waited until they were dragging him back to the truck. She'd been desperate.

Castiel didn't want to see her hurt. She was good, he knew it. There were some people who went sour with the world, and if she had she hid it well. Maybe she didn't laugh as much as she used to, or smile as much…but he'd seen people change for the worse. If there were more people like Allison, they'd be better off.

His mind hung on those thoughts, her smile and her laugh. Since she had been brought to the camp weeks ago, he could have counted the number of time's that he'd witnessed either on one hand. His earth shattering revelations likely hadn't helped matters. They spent most of their time angry with each other and after the morning they had..

Castiel's jaw clenched. He couldn't think about that, not now. That would usher forth a whole host of feelings that he couldn't afford to handle right now. It awe a distraction that he couldn't handle He needed to focus on the problem at hand, that was all that mattered now.

He knew that he would not be able to protect Jesse from whatever would come once they reached the camp. It would be stupid of him to even entertain the idea. If there was something that he could do that would actually work in the man's favor it would be a totally different situation. Was it right? No, but there was nothing that he could do. He knew that. He leaned early on to pick his battles, there were some fights you just couldn't win - there was no point in even trying.

He had already picked his battles. Though Castiel didn't feel as if he got much of a say. He couldn't let her get hurt, she wasn't going to die for this. At least that is what he told himself. Over and over again. He would protect her, somehow.
Castiel reached over, gently nudging the sleeping woman. "Allison, wake up." He spoke softly. He was only doing it because he had to. The gates were shut behind them and the people on watch had already secured them. The truck had come to a stop in line with the other vehicles. People were grabbing their gear, what little they had managed to salvage, and were pouring out onto the grass.

Overhead the thunder rumbled and lighting up the dark clouds. It was fitting, he thought to himself.

Castiel noticed that people were watching the truck, some were trying to not be too obvious, but they had eyes on them. Beside him Allison had woken up, she looked rough. Like she hadn't slept in days. She was quietly waking up Jesse; who was still alive and normal as far as Castiel could tell. He hoped that he could get them both to the cabin before anything happened. It would allow him a little more time to think things through. That was time that he desperately needed, if he could get it.

He cautiously slid out of the old truck. He scanned the small crowd, some of the men already had drinks in their hands. Some of the camp's other inhabitants had begun the ritual of coming out to see who had made it back from the run. He saw Dean, he was four cars away talking to someone, distracted for now.

Allison helped Jesse out of the car. Neither looked steady on their feet, but he didn't rush to help them. She managed to support him fine; it was probably easier now than it had been while she was trying to escape a bad situation with her life. "We should go to the cabin," Castiel said under his breath as she neared the front of the truck. "You should lay down. I can look after him." Allison looked at him, and then nodded her head. For once she didn't argue.

Castiel took the lead, avoiding Dean would be the main goal for now. Allison followed him, as quickly as she could manage. He couldn't have gone more than a few feet before he heard her call to him. Only, the voice wasn't by his side. It was behind him. Allison wasn't following him anymore. She was being held in place by a big brute of a man. His large hand was wrapped around her free arm. She was trying to pull herself away from him, but while keeping ahold of Jesse it wasn't an easy task. "Let go of her." The words seethed through his gritted teeth.

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He had started in her direction but before he could reach her someone else spoke up.

"I told you to leave him behind."

The angel froze mid step. Dean was there now, striding up to them. His pulse quickened. Allison's gaze hardened. For a moment it was as if she forgot the fact that she was being man-handled. The tired woman who had been resting in the truck was gone now. She looked angry, like she would go at Dean if she was given the chance. By now - she'd have more than enough reasons to want to hurt the Winchester.

He wanted to defuse the situation, he wanted to do something. But when he opened his mouth to speak no sounds came out no matter how desperately he tried to form the words.

Allison however was not left as speechless. "He'll be fine, no thanks to you." She turned her head away from Dean, as if she wasn't concerned about his presence in the least. She tried ripping her arm away from the man again - ready to get to the cabin.

Castiel wasn't sure if it was a good thing or not, that she looked away. The gun went off before she, or anyone else, could react. Allison would have fallen backwards if it weren't for the fact that she was being held in place. Jesse's body crumpled to the ground. Dean had gotten good at that. Too good. One shot was all it took.

When Allison finally looked back at Dean, the look in her eyes made his heart break. She looked
confused. Her jaw was slack, eyes wide. It was shock. An expression that no one else in the vicinity shared.

"Dean," He finally found his voice. Small, broken. It sounded more like a plea than anything.

The man pushed Allison forward. He had both her arms now, and she fought him, digging her feet into the dirt, swinging her body as much as she could as if wriggling out of his grasp was a possibility.

"How did you do it?" Allison looked up at Dean, then over to Castiel. As if she could provide the answer. "He's not going to help you," Dean said as he followed her gaze.

She said nothing. Allison was much more concerned with getting away from her captor. This only seemed to make Dean angrier.

"I knew there was something about you…that you'd be trouble," The man let out a low laugh. "Then Castiel took an interest in you. That should have been my first clue. Why else would he care about you?"

That hit Castiel. It hit him hard. His hands, they'd been clenched into fists but now one was slowly reaching towards the holster that was strapped to his leg.

Dean waited a minute but Allison gave him no response. "I should never have brought you here." Dean raised the gun again, Castiel knew he wouldn't ask anymore questions. Dean probably didn't even care, he was going for the reaction. In his mind he'd already delivered Allison's sentence.

Castiel knew what was coming next.

The crowd that had gathered to watch the festivities cowered and slunk backwards when the sound of a second gunshot rang through the air. Someone had wasn't sure who it had been. Another body dropped to the ground.

Overhead the sky erupted. Thunder and lightning clashed, and the rain poured down. Once again, blood flowed in Camp Chitaqua.
Allison had fought against the man restraining her, but he was easily twice her size, and he felt twice as strong. She was fighting the exhaustion that had set into her bones. She was trying to get away. Dean had just killed Jesse, right in front of her. Without hesitation. Then the gun was on her. Cas was just standing there, he looked lost.

Searing tears streamed down her face as the man moved her into a different position, away from him. He was now holding her awkwardly at his side, his thick arm wrapped around her neck. Dean was talking, but Allison couldn't understand him. All she could see was the gun. The gun that he'd just used to shoot and kill and innocent kid. A gun that he was going to use to kill her. She wondered, was that the same gun that he had shot her with in the warehouse?

Her eyes were squeezed shut, body trembling. She didn't want to see it, she didn't want to see any of them. He needed to just get it over with. In that moment, Allison had all but resigned herself to her fate.

The gun went off, but she felt nothing. It didn't make sense. She'd heard it. Allison opened her eyes, and she was standing in exactly the same place as she had been. Still held in place, only the gun was gone. In fact, it didn't appear that she had been injured at all.

Dean was gone too.

No, he wasn't gone, he was on the ground. Someone was on top of him. Dean no longer had a gun, his was on the ground a few feet away. The man was thrashing wildly, he and Castiel were practically locked together.

In that moment Allison's body came alive. She bowed her head, her jaws locked around whatever she could get her hands on. She bit down, hard as she could. The salty-metallic taste of bloody flood into her mouth. Her captor yelled, wrecking his arm free and in the process knocking her to the ground. Allison dove towards the gun immediately, the man went after her. He hooked her boot as she desperately tried to claw her way to the gun. He was hellbent on trying to grab her other foot. She aimed this time, her boot connected with his face, not once, but twice. Two kicks in quick succession was enough to get him to let go. Enough to let her grab the gun. Her hands were shaking as they wrapped around the handle. Allison tried to pull herself up, but she felt like she could barely stand. The mouton of a man was trying to get back to his feet. In one quick stride, she had the muzzle pressed against the side of his head, finger ghosting on the trigger.

"Don't move," She hissed, blood and dirt running down her lips. He looked at her with rage in his eyes but he didn't budge

xxx

He'd flown at Dean. He'd knocked the gun out of his hand before he had the chance to put a bullet in Allison's brain.

He'd never laid hands on Dean. They'd never been in a physical altercation before. Dean had threatened to lay a beating on him a couple of times, but it had never happened. He wasn't sure if it
was because Dean was worried about hurting him or if they were simply empty threats. His leader often looked at him as if he were a lost puppy with a permanently broken leg. As if he were fragile.

But that Dean was not the one that he was fighting now. This Dean was enraged, quite possibly out for blood. No, definitely out for blood. Castiel didn't want to hurt him, he was trying to subdue him. He'd succeeded in getting the gun out of his hands but that had only pissed Dean off more.

They were almost the same size, but Dean was stronger. Castiel didn't really do much of the physical heavy lifting unless it was absolutely necessary. He could hold his own, but he didn't do it forever. Dean wasn't holding back either.

At this rate his best bet would be to render the man unconscious - they were beyond rationalizing now. But how did you do that when the other person was hellbent on doing the same? At the moment he had the upper hand, almost literally. Both men clawed and punched at each other, Dean was moving too much underneath him; nearly throwing Castiel off every time his body bucked upwards.

He glanced up for a second. Only a second, and then he felt Dean's hand's close around his throat. He'd caught Castiel off guard and Dean took full advantage. Suddenly he was the one with his back pressed against the muddy ground. Above him the sky had opened up. Rain was pouring down, drenching everything. He noted that the hand's around his neck had loosened and were no longer completely constricting his airway, whether it was because of his shoving at the enraged man or something else Cas wasn't sure. It didn't matter either. It seemed that Dean had let go only to allow himself use of that particular hand.

Dean's fist landed firmly against his jaw. Pain tore through him as if it had been a drug injected directly into his veins. He tried to grab what he could, he tried to push. He was struggling underneath him but his body was tiring by the second. His hands found Dean's shoulders, and his face but there was little that Castiel could do about the on slaughter of blows. Somewhere nearby, he heard a woman cry out. It sounded like Allison, but he wasn't sure. So many people were yelling. Dean was yelling, he was yelling. After the second punch landed he lost track. His darkness began to slowly creep into his vision. Dean leered over top of him. He could see the closed, now bloodied fist coming towards him again but it never landed.

There was another gun shot. Immediately, his thoughts flew to Allison. Had one of Dean's henchman shot her? Was she even still alive? He'd tried to stop Dean from killing her but now his mind was too rattled, every thought mixed up. He was having trouble even keeping his eyes open.

"What the fuck are you doing?" A woman screeched. He could see people rushing towards them. Lisa and Chuck. Lisa had a gun, Chuck looked completely bewildered by the scene. There were a few other people following them. With her free hand and the help of a few other residents, they wrestled Dean off of him.

"Get off of me!" The eldest Winchester spat out, fighting against the arms of the men holding him in place. "She's a witch." There were murmurs in the crowd. Witch, demon, freak. It was all a death sentence. "I was taking care of it." Dean looked beyond Lisa. As Castiel weakly attempted to pull himself up, with Chuck's aid, he caught the other man's deathly glare. "He's been protecting her." He said it as if it were a bad thing. What Castiel had done. This was unusual.

He didn't hold Dean's gaze for long. At the mention of Allison he felt the sudden urge to seek her face out in the crowd. He whirled around, barely able to keep himself upright had Chuck not made himself something similar to a human crutch. He was expecting the worst as he turned to face the last spot that he had seen Allison. Maybe Dean's goon had killed her, or maybe the bullet had hit her anyways. Timing had never been his strong suit.
He had expected to see her laying there in the mud, body crumpled beside the boy that she had saved. Another innocent life lost. Only, she wasn't laying in the mud. She was standing, the brute that had grabbed her was on his knees with a gun pressed against his temple. It looked as if she were fighting to keep ahold of it, both of her hands were wrapped around the weapon. She was shaking, crying. Covered in mud, water…and blood. For a moment he looked for an entry wound, bleeding from the mouth…it was a sign of something. Only, he couldn't see anything. Then he noticed the man holding his arm against his chest. He had never felt more relieved in his life. Seeing her in such a state was somewhat terrifying and not an image he would easily forget, but…she'd saved herself. Oddly enough, he almost felt proud.

Behind him, Dean had finally been let go but the people surrounding him looked ready to pounce at a moment's notice. Others in the crowd had guns, knives, there was even a baseball bat at the ready. "She's a goddamn witch! He knew that, and he let her stay here! He knew!"

Dean's words distracted him from the temporary happiness that had come as a result of seeing Allison alive. "What are you talking about? What did she do?" Lisa looked from Dean, to Castiel, and then to Allison. There was a certain blend of confusion and fear on her face. Calling someone a witch was not exactly a light accusation.

"That kid, he got torn up by croats…he was basically dead by the time they got him back to truck." Dean moved away from Lisa, slowly stepping towards Castiel. "Imagine my surprise when he got out of your truck, very much alive." The man let out a dark laugh. "We all know you don't have any juice left in you. You wouldn't be so fucking useless if you did." Even though Dean was still a foot or two away, his words landed like a physical blow. Like a knife had been forced through his tender flesh. He tried to hide it; but it wasn't often that Dean came after him with so much ferocity. In fact, this was the first time.

"The kid wasn't anything special. She did it. I know she did. That's why you've been paying so much attention to her.

Finally Castiel managed to find his voice.

"You wouldn't understand what she is." Castiel shook his head, but instantly regretted the movement. He was in so much pain he felt like he would be ill. "She is no witch." True to form, Dean didn't seem to believe him. "How many witches have you met that can heal someone like that? And so quickly?"

"So she's got a pet reaper."

Castiel wanted to laugh, but even the thought hurt him. "Now you're just making yourself sound like an idiot." The words tumbled forth almost effortlessly - he didn't care at this point. He needed the man to shut up and he needed it to happen now.

Dean's jaw set as he came to a full stop in front of Castiel. Beside him, Chuck looked around for back up should they need to pry the two men apart again. "Is she an angel then?" This, somehow silenced the crowd. All that could be heard was the thunder and the sound of the rain coming down over top of the cars and cabins. "Because I've already got one too many in this camp." The man bit out through gritted teeth.

It was like Dean had physically slapped him despite the fact that his fists remained at his side. His guess was slightly more logical. Angels had immense healing powers, but since the world had gone to shit, their powers had drained away. Castiel himself couldn't even heal a damned paper cut. An angel, with any type of power…there wasn't one on earth. Their batteries had all dried up. Most that had fallen were dead; angels had been hunted relentlessly. If he hadn't formed an alliance with the
Winchester's long before it all happened, he would have been dead too.

He wasn't going to dignify him with a response. The two stood their face to face, eyes locked. It felt like an eternity before Lisa intervened again. "You three, we're going somewhere private." Her words could not have been mistaken for an invitation. "The rest of you can move along. Unpack what you brought back, get ready for dinner. We'll handle this." No one seemed eager to leave, but they understood that it would be better if they did.

Castiel turned his back to Dean now, shrugging Chuck off as he made his way towards Allison. To her credit, she was still standing her ground. Allison was in front of her, coaxing her to relinquish the gun. The brunette said nothing. Lisa looked over her shoulder at him - she was uncertain. Dean spouting nonsense about Allison being a witch had no doubt stirred up something in the camp. "She won't hurt you." Castiel muttered as he pushed past her. He reached out, putting one bloodied hand over top of her shaking fingers. "I need you to give me the gun, okay?" He looked into her eyes, hoping to see some sort of understanding. All he saw was fear and pain. She was like an animal caught in a trap. Given her current situation, it was an accurate comparison. "Allison?" Now she wasn't even looking at him. She was looking at the man that she had on his knees. "No one's going to hurt you, but I need you to give me the gun."

When she looked back up at him her face had changed. It was almost expressionless. Somehow the pain and the fear in her eyes had disappeared. It was replaced by a vast nothingness that he couldn't read. She slowly unraveled her hands from their place around the gun. Castiel was careful when he took it, in case she changed her mind. He thought about keeping it in hand but he knew how well that would go over. So he, very reluctantly handed the firearm to Lisa.

"Get that looked at." Lisa addressed the man. He looked at Allison as he hauled himself up. The woman shrank back. Thankfully he took the hint. "As for you three. Cabin, now."

Castiel stayed beside Allison, keeping a close eye on Dean. Lisa stayed as a buffer between them as the group made their way towards Dean's cabin. He had until they reached the door to come up with a valid argument as to why they should let Allison live, and keep her in the camp. Even if she could heal, and only heal, he doubted Dean would ever accept her. He'd seen too much; and genuine healers…virtually unheard of. People normally only had these powers because they'd been granted them by something much darker. He had talked the Winchester out of many a stupid thing before, but this…this was something else. If Dean managed to convince Lisa and Chuck, then Allison's fate would be sealed. Unfortunately for them, the Winchester was very convincing. The accusation of being a witch, or even an angel was not one that anyone in their camp would take lightly.

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Admittedly, I am not the best at writing any sort of action sequence. At least for me, I think it's something that I need to work on. I think that Dean and Castiel literally coming to blows was inevitable. This definitely felt like the right time to have that happen as well. While writing this I can't tell you how awful I feel for Castiel. There's Dean on one side, who might be the main reason he is even still alive...and Allison on the other. At this point it's obvious that he cares about her, and that he cares about more than the fact that she is a conduit. If it hadn't been a life or death situation I think he would have been more torn between the two. Even if Dean is an ass, he's an ass that Castiel has known and stood by for a very long time. Something like that doesn't just go away overnight, or even over the course of days.
In regards to Dean's trigger happy call. We've seen him just blow someone away post run in the show ( in the end!verse episode ) I think that's extremely in character. It would have been nice for Allison to have another friend, but that needed to happen. I also have to say, I think I'd defend Dean's actions to an extent as well. With -everything- that he's seen and dealt with...if Cas hadn't been a friend pre-end of the world, I'm pretty sure that he wouldn't have made the cut to get into the camp. If I were Dean I would see anything that isn't human as a threat right now. Especially given that the earth is overrun with these almost zombie like rage monsters, demons, and a whole host of things that go bump in the night

I'd love to hear what you guys think! As always, any and all reviews are appreciated! I love getting the feedback from my readers :) Thank you all for taking the time to read this update!
"You need to drink this." Dean glowered at her as he thrust a flask into her hands. She took the beaten up flask into her hands, but she did not open it. She looked at Castiel, who had taken up post beside her the second that they had walked through the door and into Dean's cabin. She didn't want to drink, she didn't know what was in the flask. Dean had just been ready to blow out the contents of her skull - now he wanted her to down some mystery cocktail? Castiel slowly nodded his head. Maybe he knew what was in it? He had to know it was safe.

Allison slowly brought the flask to her lips, her hands began shaking all over again. Her eyes involuntarily squeezed shut as the liquid slid down her throat. It was cool, tasteless. She wasn't sure what she expected, her body to start convulsing, becoming violently ill, passing out. None of it happened, there was nothing. She took another gulp and lowered the flask, her eyes opened again. Dean was still in front of her. He grabbed the flask, placing the cap back on and giving it a light twirl. He didn't look pleased; like he had been expecting something to happen to her.

"I still don't want her up here. We can do this downstairs." He said gruffly, turning away and placing the flask down on a worn out desk sitting opposite his bed. By the time that Dean had turned around to face her again, Castiel was standing in front of her. Over in Dean's corner Lisa also looked as if she were ready to throw herself into the middle of the situation.

"No," Castiel was defiant again. He was trying to protect her, and she knew that. "You've got no reason to take her down there. She isn't a threat to you - or anyone else in this camp. You've got this all wrong."

"He's right," Lisa finally chimed in again. "She's obviously not a demon, and we've warded against those and almost everything else you out there. She didn't spontaneously combust when he brought her into the camp."

"So how the hell do you explain what happened? That kid was as good as dead. One car ride with you and he gets his juice back?" Allison flinched, despite Castiel being in front of her, it felt as if she had no buffer at all. She could feel Dean's words, each and every one of them. "Now I know who didn't do it-" He paused, she wasn't sure why but he did. "That leaves one other person." No one said anything, Castiel shifted his weight from foot to foot but the creaking of the old floorboards beneath their feet were the only comment given. "If she's not a demon what is she then? A witch? An angel?"

How was he coming up with all of this stuff, Allison wondered. She knew that he had been a hunter at one point…A Winchester. People around camp still talked about it. The glory days, before the world went to hell. "If you would just listen to me," Castiel practically growled. It threw Allison off, at this rate she was used to seeing Dean angry that she wasn't sure that he had other emotions but Castiel…he was always the calm one.

"She's not something you would have ever heard of before. They're so rare, they don't even have a name. In all my time I have never met one before…and none of my brethren had, either. One may show up every hundreds, or thousands of years. The reason why no one has heard of them, is that at best guess their powers are not active since birth, or not even once they mature. They are activated…spontaneously. People could walk around their whole lives and die not knowing what they are." He sounded like an exasperated teacher trying to explain a problem to a student who just wasn't quite getting a handle on it. From what she gathered that was his spot in the camp. It was weird the way he talked; she knew that Dean had been a hunter but what was Cas? How did he know so much about all of this? Had Dean taught him, or was he a hunter too? "On the rare occasion if one was
discovered…I can only imagine the lengths that some would go to to acquire them."

Lisa looked like she was buying it. At the very least, she was paying attention to what Castiel had to say. Dean on the other hand…to say he looked skeptical didn't quite cut it. "If they're so damn rare, and you've never seen one before - how do you know that's what she is?" Allison hated to admit it, but she was asking herself that. If what Cas was saying was true - how did he know what label to apply to her? That didn't really make a whole lot of sense.

"It's the only thing that makes sense," He bit back. "True healers…they don't exist. Someone's been with her almost every hour of every day since she got here, she hasn't tried anything. I sincerely doubt she's exactly knowledgeable about witchcraft."

"What about the other books? She was packing some seriously old texts" "She used to run with hunters, just because she has them doesn't mean they're her's. None of them are exactly The Occult for Dummies, are they?" Dean looked like he wanted to say something, but Castiel pressed on before the other man got the chance. "Go to anyone in this camp - anyone and they'll know how to exercise a demon."

Dean only rolled his eyes. "How did she heal you, then? and what about that kid?"

"She didn't heal us, not in the way that your thinking. A conduit conducts energy. That's all around us, it is essentially…channeled through her. I believe it sped up the healing process, it gave our bodies a boost; a kick that our systems needed to heal us faster." Dean still didn't look like he was buying it. Did he really hate her so much? Allison knew something was off about him, but what the hell had she done to earn this? Become a subject of a witch hunt? Sure, she got how the appearance of someone with powers sent off alarm bells but she hadn't hurt anyone! She'd done nothing but help the camp since she'd woken up in Castiel's cabin.

Dean let out a low laugh, turning away from them. Lisa and Castiel exchanged nervous glances as Dean took off his wet jacket, tossing it onto the desk. He practically ripped the sleeve of the shirt off of his arm. From his belt he pulled out a knife, "Dean…don't." Lisa urged him, but Dean didn't so much as glance her way. His eyes were glued to Allison. Without a word he pressed the blade against the skin on his exposed forearm, pressing down and dragging it across. Allison wanted to look away, she'd seen this scene before after all. She couldn't do it though, her eyes were locked with Dean's. He barely flinched as he pulled the now stained blade away from his arm, holding it at his side as he held his arm out for them to see. Blood was already running, dripping. The cut was clean but deep. If it was left exposed for long enough an infection was inevitable.

Allison flinched and instinctively took a step backwards. She knew where this was going. What was with the men in this camp? Castiel had done almost the exact same thing. The difference was, that Castiel hadn't tried to hurt her. He hadn't all but called for her to be burnt at the stake. Just minutes ago Dean was ready to pull the trigger on her himself. Now he was standing there, waiting for her to do something. In that moment she'd never hated anyone more in her life. "Prove it." The demand came with a smirk. It almost sounded like a dare, to Allison anyways. She looked at Castiel, then to Lisa. Both were stuck in place again. They looked torn, it mirrored the scene that had happened by the trucks. They wanted to do something but they couldn't. She knew they wouldn't. She just wanted it to stop, she wanted it to be over.

She tried her best not to sound as frightened as she felt, but even if she could mask the tone it was evident something was wrong "Put the knife down first." Allison spoke through gritted teeth. To her surprise Dean did just that. He didn't rush to do it, and he seemed to take his own sweet time placing the knife on top of his jacket, but he did it. From where she stood, he was unarmed now. He was bigger than her, stronger too. She could put up a fight if she needed. Allison kept a watchful eye on
where the knife was placed - just in case. She approached him cautiously like she expected him to lash out at her. At this rate, it didn't seem like it was so outlandish not to trust him. She wished there was some other way to prove it; if there was Castiel hadn't shown her. A touch wouldn't simply do it. Sure, he would be able to feel some of the energy but it wouldn't be enough to open a connection between the two of them.

"Stay still." It was her turn to order him around. Allison placed a hand over the cut, pressing down against it. It wasn't until she leaned in when she felt as if she would be sick. She didn't want to do it, but she didn't know what else to do. Maybe if she could prove that she wasn't a threat? She just needed to keep the contents of her stomach inside of her body for a minute, or however long this would take. Dean's body twitched when her lips pressed against his. Allison could feel it instantaneously. Dean's eyes widened like he was in shock. It was a deep cut, she couldn't just pull away. She needed to prove something. She hated the feeling of his lips against hers, hated that it was him. It was different with Castiel, even when she'd been angry there was something…different. Then again, maybe that was simply just because Cas hadn't planned on killing her.

Dean's body seemed to relax before her, suddenly he didn't feel quite so wound up. Like he would strike if he got half the chance. His eyes slowly fluttered shut; and despite her best efforts her did as well. Not the best move on her part, but at least it allowed her brain to picture someone else for a moment. Allison was rooted in place, the two looked as if they were frozen in a kiss. In her head she counted, not wanting to pull away too early and not wanting to stay a second longer than she needed. She counted out one minute and than another. She could feel it coursing through her, it felt strong. Whatever it was she hoped it was doing the trick. If not things would only get worse.

She pulled herself away from Dean. Her lips peeled from his, her blood covered hand from his arm. Slowly his eyes opened - he looked like he had just been woken up. Allison felt sick, dirty. She wanted to run to the showers and stand underneath the scalding hot water until the feelings, the dirt, and the blood were all washed away. He examined his arm, wiping away the remnants of blood. The cut was nothing more than a faint line now, and she was sure even that would be gone within a few minutes. If Dean had any thoughts about that he wasn't forthcoming.

The cabin was eerily silent with the exception of her pounding heart. Dean continued to examine the area where he had cut himself moments before. Finally, the two silent partners in the back spoke up. "Are we done here, Dean?" There was something in the way Lisa had asked, she sounded angry…as if that was not really what she had wanted to say. Dean shot her a look which Allison couldn't decipher herself, but somehow Lisa seemed to get it. "Take Allison back to your cabin. You should both get cleaned up." Lisa didn't take her eyes off of Dean as she gave Castiel his instructions, it seemed as if she didn't entirely trust him either.

Allison wasn't about to wait around for Dean to order her to stay, she needed to get out of that cabin. Castle reached for her, but she walked right by him; ignoring th feel of his fingertips brushing against his arm. Allison practically ripped the door open, revealing a small crowd waiting just off of the porch. Their eyes bore into her. Some looked scared, other surprised, some disgusted. Suddenly disgust wasn't the only thing that she was feeling. She quickly descended down the steps, the people parted like the Red Sea as she walked by. She kept her head down, avoiding their looks. Allison didn't head back to the cabin, instead she made a beeline towards the showers. With the the excitement she doubted anyone would be there, not after what would happen. Most would be holed up in the rec hall or in their cabins, gossiping about what had happened. She didn't want to be near them now, she didn't want to see anyone. She didn't want anyone to see her.

She only looked back once, and that was to make sure that no one had followed her. To her shock she couldn't even see Castiel, but maybe that was good. More than anything she just wanted to be alone. Tears streaming down her face, Allison walked on.
Chuck had almost jumped out of his skin when he'd seen her. He had been heading towards the crowd gathering at the cabin when she'd crossed his path. Allison was sopping wet, covered in mud and blood smeared over every possible place. There was still blood smudged on her face from ripping a chunk out of the man's arm. He'd cautiously asked her where she was going, all she could do was utter 'shower' before quickly picking up again, noticing others had begun to follow her.

Rather than walk away Chuck stayed with her, wordless. When they reached the shower he did something unexpected. "Go in, I'll make sure no one disturbs you..." She looked at him like he'd just said something crazy. He hadn't gone to the cabin, he'd tried to control the crowd after Lisa had hauled them away. He had been on his way there to make sure that he didn't need to have another body dragged off. He'd heard the accusations, everyone had. Outwardly, Allison looked like nothing more than a terrified woman.

On some level he understood why Dean had reacted the way he did. If the kid had been gotten by someone who had been infected, he was not making it back to his bunk alive. Anything remotely magical or supernatural scared Dean now. There was no other way to describe it. The angels were supposed to be dead, and everything else was very bad news.

What Chuck didn't understand, and why he had taken up post in front of the entry to the woman's showers, was why he thought she was a threat. If she had some sort of power - who was to say that she was evil? She'd spent most of her time since entering the camp helping make meals and cleaning dishes. Without complaint, too. She went on runs with them, she was as model a citizen as someone living in a small camp during the end of days could be. If she had been evil, something bad, wouldn't Castiel have sensed it? Maybe the angels powers had mostly faded, but there was no denying that Cas still had some sort of freaky supernatural sixth sense going on.

Regardless of it all he stood there. She'd never been anything but kind to him. Wasn't that reason enough to return the favor?

It wasn't hard to figure out where she had gone, as part of the crowd had broken off and followed her, too. Which put Castiel on edge. While most of the big guns were kept stored, or only accessed by a chosen few...you'd be hard pressed to find someone without a knife or pistol in camp. They headed towards the shower. Allison had been living amongst them for weeks without issue. It was obvious she wasn't one of Dean's favorites, but that just made her more normal to the rest of the camp. After what had transpired after the run, the accusations, the fight. All this time they spent their existence trying to keep the outside world at bay. Including Dean only three people knew about what he was. They didn't accept witches, they didn't accept fallen angels. Humans. Down on their luck, regular old humans were the only thing that would be able to pass through that gate.

They had spent years perfecting the wards, every single spell had painstaking detail poured into it. They had warded against everything that he could think of. How did you ward against something that hadn't even come to mind? Allison wasn't volatile, not so far as he understood it. He didn't see how she could use her so-called powers to harm anyone but that wouldn't matter. She was different, she wasn't like the rest of them. Dean had accused her in front of the whole damn camp. It didn't matter if she'd come out of it alive, they would know that there was something about her now. It didn't matter if it was good or evil or whether. It just didn't matter.

Castiel broke into a run, damned and determined to get to Allison before any of the others could. He
could see Chuck up ahead, standing in front of the doorway that led to the shower. It didn't take extensive thought to sort out why the man was standing there. As soon as Chuck laid eyes on him he seemed nervous, more so than he normally did. "I need to see her."

Chuck shook his head. "I don't think that's a good idea." Neither of them were exactly specimens of perfect health but he was sure that he could move the other man away from the door if he really needed to. He just didn't want it to come to that.

"You don't understand, I need to make sure that she's okay." He was being honest. He did want to make sure that she was okay, he cared. Castle didn't know what he would do or say to her. What could he really? He just knew he needed to see her.

He could tell that is made him uncomfortable, likely because Chuck had no intention of moving. "No, I think you need to leave."

"Chuck just listen-"

"No!" He raised his voice but quickly adjusted his tone as the stragglers from the cabin began to appear. "No, you listen! You're probably one of the last people she needs to see right now. Do you understand how she must be feeling? She's terrified, Dean was ready to execute her in front of the whole crowd."

Castiel wanted to interject. "What if it had been one of us? If we hadn't been with Dean from the start…if anyone here knew what we were. If we'd just appeared at the gate, a prophet and an angel?" Chuck's voice was shaking. "They would have put a bullet in our heads without hesitation. They almost put a bullet in Allison's. She doesn't need anyone right now. She just watched someone die, she almost died. What she needs is to be alone." Chuck shut his eyes, slumping back against the door.

He didn't have a word, not a single one. He couldn't argue, Chuck was right. If they hadn't been with Dean from the start…before everything. If somehow either had found the camp or the group themselves. They would have either been deemed insane and left to their own devices or they would have been believed and promptly dealt with. Zero tolerance. He had seen many horrors in this world, attempts had been made on his own life many times. How many times would someone have pointed a gun in Allison's face, ready to pull the trigger? He didn't know what it felt like - he barely even put much value on his own life anymore. He supposed living beat the alternative but for some time if he had never woken up he wouldn't have been too upset about it. Like everyone else in this camp Allison had fought to survive. The world was miserable, they were miserable. He knew in their hearts just about every soul residing within the walls still wanted to live. Allison likely would not be an exception.

"You aren't going to let me in, are you?" Castiel tried one final time. To which Chuck's sole response was a brief shake of his head. It wasn't going to happen. He didn't want to fight him, Chuck was only looking out for his friend. Castiel knew that.

He had never seen Chuck like this before. He knew that he and Allison were close, she'd spent a lot of time under his watchful eye. Just to see this side of him. Chuck with a back bone. It was new. "Walk away, Cas."

Neither of them were much for fighting. Castiel only had a slight edge over the ex-prophet. Other people were noticing their little disagreement. Standing there and arguing was only going to draw more attention to the situation which he really didn't want right now. Chuck was high enough on the command list that the others were likely to listen to him when he turned them away. He hated doing it but he took Chuck's advice. He left.
He spent the rest of the day in the teaching cabin. Sitting on the edge of the well used bed in silence. He hadn't done something hadn't he? He had saved her. If he hadn't lunged at Dean the bullet would have been embedded in Allison. He fought with his friend. His knuckles were covered in blood and dirt. He could already feel the bruising forming from where the skin repeatedly made contact with Dean's face. He had saved her from the gun. That was something, wasn't it?

Something broke in him when he saw Dean set his sights on her. He'd never stepped up like that. Never. He didn't want to take her to the cabin. He didn't, but good ol' Cas did as he was told. Anger burnt up in his stomach when Dean sliced open his arm right in front of her. He had done the same thing but it felt different. He didn't hate her. He knew that it wasn't a kiss like they had shared but it was still contact. It took everything he had to stay in place instead of grabbing her away.

Castiel wasn't sure how long he had been at the cabin. Eventually the storm eased off outside and the sky grew darker. He hadn't heard the sound of angry villagers, nor saw passing torches and pitchforks from the window. He hoped that Chuck had looked after Allison and kept the others away from her.

It was only when it was pitch black out did Castiel decide to retire to his cabin. Surprisingly, there was a light on when he reached it. One of the oil lamps was burning still. When he opened the door he saw Allison curled up on the bed, desperately clutching blankets in her sleep. He thought about leaving. She was asleep and wouldn't know he was there, but leaving her alone in the cabin...he didn't like that idea. Instead he would pull up a chair and sit by the table. Replaying the horrific events from earlier that day over and over in his mind. Wondering what he could have done wrong.

There was no way of saying that Dean wouldn't have been ready to kill her even if Castiel had told him. Dean had never been the most rational or sympathetic of the Winchester brothers. Castiel supposed it was his upbringing that was to blame. Unfortunately for them it wasn't something that they could fix now. Maybe there was some way he could put a positive spin on it. Allison could heal, she'd saved a kid from the brink of death. It occurred to him that after that it was going to be very unlikely that Allison would willingly help him, or any of them with anything. Never mind healing their people. It wasn't the type of thing you could force her to do either. No way to manipulate it. The idea of even suggesting that she be their in-camp medical service was disgusting. They had saved her life but she had never done anything wrong. She had been a model citizen. He knew that the had to think of something. It wasn't going to stop there. Dean wasn't going to just roll over and accept that fact that Allison was something and that she was there.

He had the rest of the night to figure out what to do. At dawn he knew the sun would rise over a camp that would forever be altered. He could feel it in his bones. What had happened today was just the beginning. Castiel wasn't sure how he knew but he just did. He would have bet his life on it. The worst had yet to come.
I'm officially pulling this story off of hiatus. It's been a long time coming. I very badly want to finish this first installments as I've had this and the second part in my head for years now. It's long over due and I'm going to try to accomplish that.

I'm not so great with 'action' chapters so this may feel a bit rough. Hopefully not too bad though!

I want to thank everyone again for the feedback, the kudos, and the reads. It means a lot to me that people are still interested in this story. I'd like to continue to keep it up, there's no better motivation for me. I love this story dearly but to know that people are still invested in it...that's something else entirely. There wouldn't be a story without you guys! I'd like to encourage keep those messages and reviews coming, I read each and every one. Thank you guys for sticking with me on the road so far <3

No amount of water hot or otherwise could rid her of the feeling. Like she was covered head to toe in filth and blood. Allison scrubbed her skin like a woman possessed. She scrubbed until it hurt. She scrubbed until she started worrying that maybe, just maybe she had broken the skin. When she reached that point all she could do was stand underneath the shower spray and cry.

Chuck had made good on his promise. No one else entered the women's side of the showers while she was in there. He was still standing outside the door when she got out some time later. He asked her if she needed anything. There was an impossible kindness in his voice. Such a contrast to the brutality she had witnessed earlier. She just wanted to go to bed. He walked her back to the cabin, even checking it before she stepped inside in case anyone was waiting for her. He made it very clear that if she needed anything - he would be in his cabin. It made her feel a little less alone.

Almost as soon as she sat down on the bed she fell asleep. Blankets pulled over herself protectively as if they could shield her from the rest of the world. The shock and exhaustion had taken it's toll. Whatever she had done to Jesse before Dean had killed him, it had drained her. Then having to heal Dean. A thought that had nearly made her throw up. Unfortunately the sleep that she fell into was not dreamless.

She was back in the centre of the camp, Dean was holding a gun to her head. Jesse was dead at her feet. Castiel was nowhere to be seen. She prepared for it, for her death. Only the gun didn't go off. Dean's face contorted and his body crumpled to the ground. Standing directly behind him was the man in the white suit. "You didn't think I'd let him hurt you, did you?" The asked with a small smile as he stepped forward, walking right over top of Dean's body. "Dean Winchester is nothing more than a scared little boy. You'd expect more for someone with his lineage." Lucifer sighed, placing a hand on top of her shoulder. "Did you ever wonder why I didn't kill the two of you that day in the diner?"

Allison was frozen again. Fear rooting her in place. He didn't seem to mind the fact that she hadn't answered one bit. "As soon as I saw you I knew. I knew what you were and I knew some twist of
fate had put you in that diner with me. It's taken me so long to find you. I can't do this without you."

Somehow she found her voice. It was quiet, hoarse. "Do what?"

Around her the camp seemed to crumble right before her eyes. She heard screaming, crying. Blood curdling snarls. In seconds she was standing in what looked like a crater. Like a bomb had gone off. "I'd set the world free. No more pain, no more suffering. That's all I ever wanted to do."

The screaming had stopped. All sounds had stopped. It was deathly silent. "You would be free. I'd personally take care of anyone who ever hurt you." He reached out, cupping her chin and tilting her head upwards. "I could set you free."

Allison tried to yank her head away. "We can help each other." Allison pushed herself away from him, turning her back to the devil. At her feet were bodies.

Chuck, Lisa, and Cas.

"You know that you can't run forever, Allison. You're safer with me than you are here. I wouldn't let anyone hurt you. You don't belong in this camp. No one here appreciates you. Their leader almost killed you. He will try again. Dean Winchester may be an idiot but he is determined." His voice sounded like honey. "If he wants you dead he will make it happen."

The scene around them shifted underneath her feet. She was no longer outside, but in some dimly lit room. She was strapped to a chair and Dean was standing in front of her. There was a metallic tray to his right. Lucifer hung silently over the mans shoulder.

Before she could open her mouth, before she could breath, Dean was in front of her. He grabbed a knife off the table and plunged it into her stomach. Allison screamed as Dean twisted the knife, but the man didn't so much as flinch. If anything he pressed the blade. "I can get you out of this camp alive. I can look after you." Somehow through the extraordinary pain and the sound of her own sobbing she could hear him clear as day.

Allison woke with a start, kicking off the blankets instantly and glancing down at her shirt. Expecting a blood, a knife, anything. She was alone. There wasn't anything, she was fine. 'I can look after you.' The words rang in her mind.

Her eyes adjusted to the darkness and it took her a moment but she realized she wasn't alone. Das was there slumped against the table, either asleep or dead. Unconscious either way.

'I can get you out of this camp alive.'

Allison shook her head, throwing her legs over the edge of the bed. She wasn't a stranger to nightmares but that had seemed so real. She'd expected either Dean or Lucifer himself standing there in the cabin. Maybe both. A feeling of claustrophobia began to stir in the pit of her stomach. Every second she sat there it only intensified. She didn't want to stay there. She grabbed her boots, pulling them on over top of the old grey sweatpants. A sweater that she had gotten from Lisa a few weeks before hung over the bedpost.

She exited the cabin as quietly as she possibly could. No part of her wanted to be near Castiel. If he woke up she knew he would try to talk to her. He would apologize for himself, make excuses for Dean. She didn't want to hear it. She couldn't.
Luckily night had fallen sometime between getting out of the showers and falling asleep. It meant she could walk around outside, mostly unnoticed. Just like anyone else in the camp. Like everything was okay, like it was all normal. Most everyone was asleep save for the people who were set up for patrol.

The air was cool, it had a certain calming effect. It soothed her impossibly frayed nerves, she could breathe easier. Her mind was still restless but she didn't think that would calm anytime soon. She had been seconds away from being executed just hours before. That wasn't something someone just got over. IF she had anywhere else to go she would have left. There wasn't a world left outside the gates. She couldn't survive on her own, something, someone would pick her off before she got a chance to try. Leaving would have been suicide. Assume they would have even let her leave alive. With how damn eager he had been to drop her and the nightmare she had woken up from, that didn't seem like a likely outcome.

She circled the camp, hands shoved into her pockets and head bowed. Lucifer's words replaying themselves over and over in her mind. The image of Dean plunging the knife into her seared into her brain. She instinctively stayed far from the cars. By now they had no doubt removed the body. The rain would have washed away most if not all the blood but that didn't matter. Allison considered showing up at Chuck's cabin. He had said that if she needed anything, anything at all she was more than welcome to go to him. He'd do whatever he could. What did she need? Dean's word that he wouldn't kill her the next time he saw her? Could Chuck make the other's in the camp stop looking like her as if she were some sort of monster? No. He couldn't. She didn't want to wake him for nothing.

Allison didn't get much further past the 'teaching' cabin when she heard the sound of men. Patrol speaking, rather loudly. They sounded frantic. The gates were usually quiet. Everything was warded up so tightly nothing was getting near them. The only people who entered and exited those gates were Dean's people. When she grew close enough to see that the spotlights were on and beyond the gate, there was a trio of vehicles her course changed.

Her heart sped up as she neared the gate. There were cars, not ones she recognized…and people! There was only three. Still three more than she had ever thought she would see at the gate. Dean's men had their rifles pointed, barking orders. The group stood their illuminated by the spotlights.

"Don't come any closer! We've got orders to shoot!" One of Dean's henchmen shouted.

Of course they were threatening violence. They had been ordered to. Allison hung back in the shadow of one of the cabins. Dean's guards ordered the group to step away from the fence. She heard a few poorly articulated pleas before she heard it.

"Heard him.

"We need help, we've got someone in the truck…a little girl. She's dyin'. I gotta speak to whoever's in charge here. We didn't come all this way to let her die!"

Allison's heart nearly stalled right then and there. Her mind was reeling.

"Come on man, you've gotta let us in!"

Allison could hear wailing now. The distinct sound of a child in an immense amount of pain. This
seemed to change things. Allison crept closer, trying to get a better look. She knew that voice. The group of five that had been assembled on guard was now four as one broke away, no doubt to get Dean. The wailing continued, growing louder by the second.

The men seemed torn. Like they couldn't stand the sound. "Ya'll armed?" The man in the plaid lumberjacket nodded. "Weapons down now. Do it!" She took another few steps. No one seemed to notice her presence. The four pulled out knives, guns, and pistols. A small assortment was instantly placed down on the muddy road. "Goddammit listen to it!" One of the men cursed. The crying was getting to them. Allison was amazed by what happened next.

The gates groaned in protests as the chains slid. They were opening the gate.

Others had heard the commotion and people were beginning to show their faces, drawn to the wails. They were going to check on the child, make sure the group was disarmed completely. Allison could make out the faces now. Three she didn't recognize but the third…the man who had demanded to see Dean.

The gate was open, they'd left it open just enough for the men to get out and then they had left it. The operator was now outside with the others, urging the four to step back. It was open just enough. She wasn't sure how she got onto the other side but she did, it felt like an instantaneous reaction. Now they noticed her. All eyes were on her, the guns of the patrol guard's pointed at her. They looked confused, startled. Allison barely noticed. Someone was yelling at her, ordering her to stay back. Someone tried to grab her but she wretched her arm away from them, instead throwing herself at the man.

Allison wrapped her arms around him and held on tight. She could hear yelling now, on both sides of the gate. It was drowned out as she buried her head into the man's chest.

"Al?"

The words broke her. No one called her Al, she hated it. He was the only one who ever had. His arms wrapped around her, hugging her tightly.

"B-Brad." She'd never thought she would see him again. She'd given up that hope long ago. It was easier to believe that he was dead than to hope that somewhere out there he was still alive. She knew him. She knew her older brother. It was his face, his voice. The jacket…it had been their fathers. He was dirty, he looked tired, but he was her brother.

The rest of the world just seemed to melt away, it was just the two of them now. "Are you real?" He let out a quiet, pained laugh. The type of laugh that told her he was crying without her needing to look.

"I've been looking everywhere for you. We got hit by - christ I don't know what. These things just appeared in the middle of the road, Claire's vehicle veered off and flipped. Her little girl was inside…we heard about the camp. Some hunter, we were already on our way here." Allison couldn't concentrate on what he was saying. She didn't know who Claire was, she didn't care. The only thing that mattered was that Brad was there, he was real. He was alive.

"What the hell are you doing? Who don't open the gate for anything!" Dean's voice cut through the moment. Absolutely shattering it. Dean seemed to have a way of doing that. The men instantly began to attempt to explain themselves. Allison pulled herself away from Brad, turing back towards the gate. The crowd was a lot bigger now. A rifle toting Dean was standing on the other side of the fence, along with a very tired looking Lisa.
"We've got a little girl here. She's hurt real bad, we gotta get her help. Are you in charge?" The desperation in her brother's voice broke her heart. It was too bad that he didn't know who he was dealing with.

"That what that wailing is?" Five more armed men appeared surrounding Dean. The men on the side of the gate with her still had their weapons up, still pointed at Brad and the others. "We don't open the gate for anything." Dean cursed. He stepped outside the gate, joining them. The second he was in the spotlight the gun was pointed at Brad's head. Dean had looked pissed before, but now...this was something different. Why would he look confused? "You need to back the hell up right now." The man hissed out.

"Dean no! It's fine, he's safe thi-"

Dean wasn't having any of it. "Allison, come to me." What the hell was his problem? "Now!" He barked at her. Brad reached out, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"We just want medical help for the girl. That's it."

"I told you to get back!"

Another voice cut through the panic. "Allison!" Castiel was standing on the other side of the fence now.

"Goddammit Cas stay there! Allison, you need to get away from him!"

"Listen to him Allison! Please!"

There was an undeniable urgency in Castiel's voice. She could even hear it in Dean's. What the hell was wrong with them? Brad and the others had put their weapons down! They weren't arm! There was a kid screaming it's head off in one of the trucks and they were worried about her.

Allison shook her head. "Dean, please! I know him. It's my brother. He's not going to hurt anyone!" Tears were stinging at her eyes now.

"Allison you need to get away from him!"

"Look, we aren't here to cause any trouble-" Dean cut Brad off, advancing on him.

"Another move and I drop you right there."

What the hell was going on? Why wasn't Dean backing down? The crying from the car only grew louder and louder. Allison quickly put herself between Brad and Dean. She did it without thinking, with little regard for the gun trained on her. Like she could protect him. As if she could make Dean lower the weapon.

Brad's fingers gripped her shoulder. Lucifer's words rang in her head. The promises, the warning. Like he was right there whispering in her ear.

"That thing isn't your brother!" She felt dizzy, weak. Brad couldn't be dead. He was right there.

As if on cue Castiel tried to shout above the growing noise from the crowd. He tried to get through the gap in the gate but he was held back. "You need to get away from him! Now!"

She wasn't sure what happened next. She saw Dean drop his rifle, instead he lunged at her. She could feel his fingers just graze her sweater. She heard screams, shouting, cursing. It was like the
breathe had been sucked right out of her lungs, like the world was closing in on child had stopped crying. The lights and the people, everything went to black around her. There was chaos and then there was nothing. Only the embrace of darkness.
And I Feel Fine

Chapter Notes

This chapter does feature torture and is somewhat graphic towards the end of the update. Blood is mentioned and plays a role in this chapter. It is brief, but it most definitely there. This is a warning for those who may be triggered or made uncomfortable by such content.

The noise had disappeared. At least the screaming had. It was replaced by something far less grating, erratic whispers. Allison let out a low groan as she forced her eyes open. Instantly regretting it, wherever she was - it was impossibly light. She had no idea where she was, she could barely think straight. Her mind felt sluggish, her entire body ached. She had opened her mouth to speak but no words had come out.

“Finally, she’s awake. Allison? Allison, can you hear me?” Allison squinted against the light. Someone or something reached out to push the beam out of her way. When her eyes adjusted she saw the offending fixture something similar to the type of light you would see at a dentist’s office, affixed to a metal arm which ran down to a stand that held it in place.

The room was small and cramped. There were at least eight people in it in total - each pair of eyes focused on her. Something in the back of her mind was telling her to run, to do anything in her power to get out of the room. She had tried to stand but could barely move. Her eyes drifted downwards, surveying her bonds. Thick leather straps held her wrists and ankles in place, additionally one ran across her midsection. There was something across her forehead, too. She couldn’t see it but she could feel it. “Allison?” She gritted her teeth, pulling against the restraints as hard as she could. “I wouldn’t waste your energy on that,” The speaker came into view, standing right in front of her.

It was Brad’s face but it was not his voice. It wasn’t his eyes. They were black, black as a starless sky. Allison’s jaw set so hard it was nearly painful. “We don’t want to hurt you. In fact, the sooner you co-operate the sooner I can let you out of that wretched chair.” The voice was a reassuring one. If it weren’t for the eyes or the body, she might have believed it. “I’m going to throw up,” Her voice was a hoarse whisper - ragged from hyperventilating. “I understand this must be incredibly...frightening.” Her eyes scanned the room again, there was no a familiar face among the lot.

“Where is Cas?”

Not-Brad’s eyebrows furrowed “He isn’t here. He’s safe. In fact, they all are. We weren’t there for them.” That did nothing to settle the uneasy feeling in her stomach. The thing in front of her was a demon, it might have had her brother’s body but it wasn’t Brad. Not with those eyes, or that voice. Why would a demon tell the truth?

“I know that he told you that you would be safe here. You’re under his protection now. No harm is going to come to you so long as you do your part.” The word ‘he’ sent a violent shiver down her spine. “He just needs your help. It’s such a simple thing.”

“No one needs me,” Allison bit back, baring her teeth. “That’s where you’re wrong,” the demon’s
words were accented by a light-hearted chuckle. “You’re the only one who can help him. I know that Castiel knew what you were, I know he had to have told you.” Murmurs erupted in the room again but were silenced when the demon rose his hand. “You are more powerful than you know. When God created beings like you, he added something a little extra to keep certain parties from...exploiting your extraordinary abilities.” Her heart was pounding in her ears so loudly she could barely hear the demon speak. The voice in her head grew louder by the second, virtually begging her to run. “I know you likely don’t understand the full extent of your power, or how to harness it...that’s why we’re here. We can help you, but only if you say yes.”

Say yes to what? What the hell was he talking about? “There are many things in this world capable of possession - but none that are capable of possessing you. Not unless you give us permission.” As if sensing how deranged and downright horrifying his words were, the demon seemed to backtrack. “We won’t harm you. We just need someone to...step into your shoes, so to speak. Someone who knows what they’re doing. When they’re done, you would regain full control.” He paused, reaching out and placing a familiar hand on her ankle, which Allison tried in vain to kick off. “We just need to borrow your body for a little while. It’s not as bad as it sounds, really.”

Borrow her body. The words repeated themselves over and over. Borrow her body like the demon had Brad’s? Was he going to get his body back? The taste of bile cancelled out everything else as her body convulsed. Some of the spectators seemed disgusted, others amused. The demon who was in her brother’s body merely let out a sigh, shaking his head. Much like a disappointed parent would to a child.

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They needed her to say yes. Lucifer needed her to say yes. Somehow she had known before they had even muttered his name. The white-suited man from her dreams. The one who had promised to protect her, he needed her.

Allison bit back her tears, sinking back into the chair. The restraints remained on, they had not loosened or removed them. The group had cleared the room. Promising to allow her some time to think it over and come to a ‘rational’ conclusion. Allison wasn’t sure how long the demon and his companions had stood there, attempting to explain the situation. It had felt like an eternity. Similarly, she wasn’t sure how long they had been gone for either. With every passing second the anxiety mounted. She needed to get out of the chair. Get out and get away from them. If the one was a demon, there was no doubt in her mind the others, most if not all, likely were as well. The way they had restrained her allowed for virtually no movement. She had attempted to rock the chair, but all of her efforts were in vain. It didn’t budge, which led her to believe that it was fixed to the floor below. She was at a loss. There was no way out. Even if by some miracle she made it out of the chair and in turn out of the room, she had no idea where she was. She had no weapons, no supplies. She had nothing.

By the time the demon returned the hopelessness felt crushing. The only way out of the chair was to co-operate. To let one of them in. A thought that almost caused her to throw up again. She had no reason to believe they would set her free, or that they wouldn’t kill her. What good was a demon’s word? Some small part of her urged her to take the deal. Once she was free of the restraints, she could figure something out. There had to be a way once the bonds were removed.

Not-Brad had returned with a new entourage this time. Two woman flanked him on either side. One looked like nothing more than a teenager, while the other...there was something about the other
woman that made her squirm. There were two men behind them. Each carried some sort of plastic jug. The contents looked almost black. “Now that you’ve had some time to think...have you reached a decision?” The demon asked as he stopped at the foot of the chair, setting the jug in his hand down. “You aren’t going to kill me?” Allison could barely believe it was her own voice asking. It sounded so small, broken almost. It was pathetic. She was pathetic. It wasn’t a hunter, she wasn’t anything special. Before the end of the world she had served pie and coffee for a living, lived in a one stoplight town.

“Of course not! We all benefit greatly by keeping you alive.” He sounded a little over eager to explain that point. The shorter brunette let out a low, sardonic sounding laugh. The demon cast her an annoyed look, to which the woman only rolled her eyes. “Once you help him, the demon leaves. You get your body back. You get your control back.” The demon’s voice was honey sweet. Reassuring, again.

It was the only way out. Allison swallowed the lump that was forming quickly in her throat. “Does it hurt?” The demon’s hand found its way to her knee, giving her a gentle pat. “It’s just like falling asleep. They can put you in a dream, whatever you want to do, whoever you want to see. They can make it happen. You won’t know what’s going on. When it’s all done, it will be like you’ve just woken up from a nap.” A nap? That sounded enticing. The idea of all of it being a bad dream. Suddenly she felt defensive. It sounded too good to be true. Too simple. “How do I know you aren’t full of shit?”

The demon let out a slight chuckle, pushing his hands into the pocket of his jeans. “He likes you. Think of it as a token of appreciation, for helping him in such a difficult time.” Allison sneered at the remark. “He lets me live?” The demon shook his head. “He sets you free.”

That comment seemed to spark the woman hanging in the doorway. “How many times do we need to go over it, honey? You’re wasting our time. You either help us and you live, or we kill you right now. Those are the only options you have and if you don’t make a choice we’ll make it for you.”

The demon whirled around to face the woman. “Meg! What part of stand there quietly-”

“Cut the crap, Belial. We don’t have time for your salesmen bullshit. He doesn’t have time!” The two immediately began to bicker. The woman, Meg, was incredibly angry. She didn’t appreciate how the other, Belial was handling the situation. Too slow, too stupid.

“W-what do I need to do?” Her voice seemed to instantly cut through the noise. The bickering pair paused, turning their sights back on her. This seemed to cause some surprise amongst the others, save for the teenager. Who had barely so much as flinched since she had entered the room. Belial’s demeanor changed again. He reached down, picking up the small jug. “First we need you to drink this.” He spoke as he rounded the side of the chair. In an instant, the jug was pressed against her lips. Helpless and captive, Allison couldn’t shrink away. Before she could ask what was inside, he tipped the jug upwards. The warm contents crashed against her lips, coating her throat. The salty-metallic taste was overpowering. Instantly, she began to choke.

From somewhere in the room, Meg began to laugh. The liquid spilled out of her mouth and down her chest. The sickly sweet smell invaded her nostrils and Allison began to convulse as she saw the streams of dark red blossom along her stomach. It was blood. The sight only confirmed what some part of her had known the instant the liquid touched her lips. It had to be blood. Bile was quick to mingle with the taste, she was powerless to stop it. Rather than tip the jug back up, Belial lowered it. Tears stung at the corner of her eyes, threatening to fall.

“I can’t...I can’t do it.” The words tumbled out of her over and over, like a mantra. Each time
growing louder and more frenzied than the last. Belial was speaking but she couldn’t make it out. Something about needing to drink, the blood making her strong. Allison wasn’t sure. There was too much noise. The fear was too great, it overruled everything else.

He lifted the jug to her lips again but this time she turned her head away from him, squeezing her mouth shut. It was at that moment the others seemed to come to life. They were arguing. The two men, Meg, and Belial. Gesturing and cursing, each growing angrier by the second. Not the young woman at her side though. She remained calm, collected. She tilted her head to the side, there was something about her eyes. There weren’t black. Instead they were the most brilliant shade of green that Allison had ever seen. For a moment, the rest of the world faded away. The only thing she saw, the only thing she cared about was those eyes.

It was a moment of quiet. Of peace even. A moment before reality came crashing down around her.

The pain was sharp and sudden, almost blinding. It cut through everything. A scream sounded somewhere in the room but Allison was unaware of who had made it. Instead she was focussed on the pain. The pain and the eyes. The eyes that were a mere inch from her face. The woman was over top of her now, a hand latched onto her shoulders.

“You will say yes.” Unlike Belial’s voice, while the woman’s was calm it lacked any sort of genuine emotion. “You will drink. After you help my brother, you will be free.” There was a tugging sensation in her abdomen, which was quickly replaced by burning. “You will say yes or you will die.” The woman pulled away, raising her other arm up in front of Allison’s eyes. She wanted her to see something.

She wanted her to see the knife. The blade now coated with blood. Her mind felt sluggish again, like when she had woken up. It was incredibly difficult to concentrate. Allison’s brows furrowed. The woman lowered the blade again and this time she could feel it. She pushed it deep into her gut, inch by painstaking inch. Slowly twisting it once the blade was buried to the hilt. Now she was aware of who the screams belonged to, who was making the wounded animal like sounds. “You will say yes.”

“Azriel!” Belial cursed, grabbing the woman’s arm and pulling her off of the chair. Allison’s strained desperately, trying to get a better look. A better view of the knife as it was withdrawn from her flesh. The woman stood at the foot of the chair, green eyes fixed on Allison’s own. “Can they enter?” No trace of emotion. Nothing.

The split second of clarity was quickly gone. Lost to the pain and the sobbing. Somehow she could feel it, the seeping from the wound. Her vision began to blur, black edges framing the room. “You will say yes or you will die.” She could feel it coming, she could feel herself begin to fade. It was terrifying, the idea of inescapable darkness. Allison knew she was dying, slipping away with every labored breath.

“Y-Y-Yes,” Allison sputtered, squeezing her eyes shut. Someone had once told her that to live in this world you needed to be ready. Ready to do anything if it meant getting to see another sunrise, another day. She wasn’t a hunter, she wasn’t incredibly strong or intelligent but she was something. Something notable, something that had gotten her this far. There was one thing that she had in common with all the people back at the camp, regardless of faith, walk of life, or varying skills. She was a survivor. Survivors did what they had to do.

“They can enter.”

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