### Promises Made, Promises Kept

**Summary**

Cas should have said no and let it end there. There wasn't really any space in his life for rich, older alphas who may or may not have been dating someone else. But he found he couldn't turn him down; he didn't want to.

Dean couldn't shake the feeling that he was about to jump headfirst into something that he wouldn't be able to control. And for an alpha whose entire life was built on control, it was both exhilarating and terrifying.

Previously Kept Boy!Cas Verse

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**Notes**
I had a few people ask me about writing a series based on my one-shot "I Did It for Us," and after much deliberation, I have decided to go ahead with it. I'm still learning about D/s relationships as I go, so if you have any comments or suggestions regarding the dynamics of a D/s relationship (or anything really), please comment! As always, hope you enjoy!

- Inspired by [I Did It For Us](https://archiveofourown.org/works/2500274) by [orphan_account](https://archiveofourown.org/users/orphan_account)
"I can help who's next," Cas called. A tall alpha typing away at his phone stepped up to the counter. Cas could tell he was a business man from the charcoal grey suit he was wearing.

"Hi, what can I get you today?" Cas asked. The alpha glanced up to look at the menu above Cas's head, and the omega drew up short. Fuck, but the guy was handsome. His face was so perfectly symmetrical, it looked like it had been sculpted; his cheekbones and jawline were sharp, but his lips looked so soft. His eyes, a striking green, were made even more so by the green shirt he wore. Cas tried not to stare, chanting his personal mantra of "Don't be creepy" in his head as he waited for the man to order.

"Uh..." The alpha stared at the menu, his eyebrows furrowing. "Sorry, I..." He brought his eyes down to meet Cas's, and the rest of the sentence faltered. Cas blushed but preened internally. Yeah, he knew he was pretty. The alpha's smile turned flirtatious. "I probably should have had my order ready," he finished, and Cas smiled.

"It's okay; what do you usually get?" Cas asked, and the alpha shrugged, his eyes locked onto Cas.

"I honestly don't know; my assistant usually buys my coffee, but she's out sick today." He admitted. "Okay. What does the drink taste like? Or how bout this, is it hot or cold?"

"Hot. Very hot." He said, his voice dropping an octave as his eyes skimmed Cas's body again. Cas's stomach fluttered, and he giggled. Yeah, he fucking giggled.

"Is it usually flat on top or does it have foam?" Cas asked.

"It has foam, but not too much. I hate all that foam on top," the alpha confided, and Cas perked up at that.

"Wait, is your assistant Hannah?" Cas asked, and the alpha's eyes widened.

"Yes! Do you know her?" He asked, trying to sound casual.

"Hannah and I go way back." Cas assured him. The alpha's eyes sparkled with curiosity, but he didn't ask. "So then you're the cinnamon dolce latte with light foam on top?" Cas guessed, but the alpha still shrugged.

"I guess; I mean, it tastes like cinnamon."

"Yep, then that's it. Grande like usual?" He confirmed.

"That's medium, right?" The alpha asked, squinting his eyes. Cas chuckled and nodded. "Then yeah, medium's fine."

"Perfect. Can I get a name for this?" Cas asked, pulling out the marker.

"Dean." The alpha answered. Cas carefully wrote the name on the cup, hand trembling with excitement; he could feel the alpha staring at him. He set the cup aside and told Dean the price. Dean handed over his card so Cas could swipe it.

"Your drink will be ready at the counter down there." Cas pointed to the end of the counter as he handed Dean back his card.
"Thank you..." Dean reached to take the card and arched an eyebrow at Cas.

The omega blushed as he replied, "Cas."

Dean smiled, "Cas... I like it." Cas smirked and found that he suddenly didn't mind being a little creepy if it meant he got to stare at Dean all day.

Dean tapped the counter with his finger twice before he strode toward the end of the counter to wait for his drink. Cas forced his attention on to the next customer.

Once Dean had received his latte, he headed for the door. "See you around, Cas," He called as he walked out.

"Do you know who that was?" Meg murmured to Cas as she stepped up behind him, eyes wide with recognition.

"No?"

"God, what is with you Christian school kids? Don't you go online? Or at the very least look at the gossip magazines at Walmart?" Meg complained, but Cas simply shrugged. "That's Dean Smith!" She hissed before moving away to prepare the next drink.

Cas's frowned deepened. Who the hell was Dean Smith?

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Hannah was back the next day, and Cas tried to hide his disappointment. It's not like he was looking forward to seeing Dean again; he'd barely met the man once. And yeah, they'd flirted, but now that Cas knew who Dean Smith was, he knew that there was no chance of the flirting actually going anywhere.

He'd looked Dean up online the night before. He'd spent hours looking over the many gossip websites dedicated to the alpha and his love life. As sole heir to Smith Pharmaceuticals, he was sinfully rich, and paired with those looks... Needless to say, he was a hot commodity. The websites Cas had looked at had paired the handsome alpha's name with actresses and musicians and other celebrities.

One name that came up more than any other was Lisa Braeden, an omega socialite who was just as wealthy as the alpha. They'd been seen together at multiple social events, and Cas could see why the alpha picked her. She was as beautiful as he was handsome.

Cas wasn't sure he could have taken the flirting again, knowing how far below the alpha's league he was. Yeah, Cas had a pretty face, but there wasn't much else he could offer. Even if Dean had wanted to start something, Cas wouldn't have known how.

His parents had raised him in church, so he was embarrassingly ignorant about all things sexual. He'd never even had his first kiss yet. Cas was about 99.9% sure that if the alpha was looking for someone, he wouldn't go for the sheltered, homeschooled kid who didn't even know how to fucking kiss.

Once Hannah left, Meg smirked at him knowingly, "Don't be sad, Clarence. I'm sure you'll see him again... In your dreams."

"Wow, that was such a great one, Meg. Really got me right here." Cas dead panned, pointing at his chest.
"Hannah, can you come in here?" Dean asked through the phone intercom.

"Yes, sir?" Hannah asked as she stepped into the large office.

"Have a seat," Dean motioned toward one of the chairs in front of his desk without looking up from the sheaf of papers in his hand. Hannah sat, her heart thundering. Was she in trouble? She remained silent, waiting for the alpha to speak first.

"I went to Starbucks to get my coffee yesterday," the alpha began, and Hannah's eyebrows lowered in confusion. Why the hell was he telling her about his coffee run? "And while I was there, I met a friend of yours." Dean finally lifted his eyes to meet hers.

She had to think for a moment. "Castiel?" She finally asked. Dean's eyebrow arched.

"Sure; Cas. He said you go way back?" Dean asked, and Hannah nodded.

"Yes, our families attended the same church," She said.

"So then you know a lot about him?"

"Kind of. I mean, I knew of him. He was a few years younger than I, and his parents were very strict. They didn't really allow him or his siblings to interact much with the rest of the youth group," She explained. Dean frowned; if Cas was sheltered, that might put a damper on his plans. But then again, inexperienced was often just another word for teachable.

Dean's body stiffened at the thought of Cas being teachable and pliable for him. Before, the thought of the blushing omega giving himself over to Dean, completely surrendering himself to the alpha's hands, had been torturous. Dean had popped one off in the shower that morning imagining those beautiful blue eyes staring up at him while those swollen pink lips wrapped around his cock.

But now, the possibility of Dean being the one to teach Cas those things, how to give and receive pleasure, made it exponentially worse. His cock was already straining against the zipper of his slacks, and he was grateful for the desk between him and his assistant.

"Is he seeing anybody, do you know?" Dean asked lightly, but Hannah shook her head.

"I don't; I meant to keep in touch with him when he came here for college, but we're both just so busy. I see him in the mornings when I get the coffee, and that's about it."

"College?" Dean asked, his interest piqued.

"Yes; he attends the Christian college our church is affiliated with. I think he'll be a sophomore there in the fall."

"So he's very young..." Dean murmured to himself. If Cas was normal college age, that meant he was ten or eleven years younger than Dean's thirty. "Are his family in the area?"

"Nope; they live in Pontiac still. He had an older brother and sister who attended the school here, but they've both moved on."

"So then is he living at the school?" He asked. Hannah shook her head, "During the school year he does, but now for the summer, he's living with a couple other students in an apartment near there."

Dean looked lost in thought. Hannah politely cleared her throat; Dean's eyes shot back up to hers.
"Thank you, Hannah. I think I'll be picking up my own coffee from now on."

She nodded and stood to leave, but paused at the door. She didn't know very much about her boss's personal life, but she had heard rumors of his...preferences.

"Mr. Smith?" She called, and Dean looked back up at her. "You're right; Castiel is very young, and he's been very sheltered. Please..." She faltered, but drew a deep breath and pushed on, "be gentle with him." And then she opened the door and slipped out.

"I can help the next customer," Cas called as he set aside the cup he'd just written on.

"Hello, Cas." The deep voice shot straight through him, and Cas froze. He shivered as he slowly brought his eyes up to meet the alpha's. He wasn't supposed to come back; why had he come back?

"Hello, Mr. Smith," Cas murmured. Dean smiled, and Cas's eyes flickered to his mouth. He stared for just a second too long before he remembered that he was supposed to be taking his order. "The usual?"

"Yes, please," Dean responded. As he handed over his card, he asked, "When is your lunch break?"

"Uh, well, actually, my shift ends at 12:30," Cas said.

"Perfect. Would you care to join me for lunch today?" The alpha requested, and Cas's eyes widened. Why the hell would someone like Dean Smith want to eat lunch with him? Hell, why would he want to do anything with him? Wasn't he dating Lisa? Despite his misgivings, Cas found himself stuttering out, "Uh, yes. I would like that very much."

Dean's smile nearly split his face. "Awesome. I'll meet you here at 12:30." And then he took his card back from Cas and went to wait for his drink.

After he left with another farewell to Cas, Meg stepped up beside Cas, wide-eyed. "Did Dean Smith just ask you out on a date?"

"I think so..." He mumbled, still in shock.

"Well..." She began, but Cas held up a hand.

"I'm still absorbing, Meg. I don't need your shit just yet," He cut her off abruptly. She shrugged and walked away.

When Cas clocked out at the end of his shift, he found Dean waiting out front.

"Hello again," He greeted. Dean smiled widely, "Hey, Cas."

"So, what's the plan?" Cas asked. Dean pointed down toward a hot dog stand on the corner.

"You like hot dogs?" He asked.

Dean bought their lunch and led Cas across the street to the park. They found a shaded bench and sat to eat their meal.

They talked about Dean's job ("I sit in meetings and stare at spreadsheets all day. Really boring
stuff.

But underneath their easy conversation, there was this current. Cas felt it every time Dean's smile drew Cas's gaze to his mouth, every time Dean smirked at Cas's blush, those few times when their hands brushed between them. So even though the conversation was easier than Cas had expected, it was also harder.

"I have to get back soon," Dean eventually said, his tone regretful.

"Of course," Cas agreed. "I should probably get back to my apartment."

Dean paused and looked over at him, his expression hopeful. "I really enjoyed this, Cas. Could we maybe do dinner sometime? Sometime soon?"

Cas should have said no and let it end there. There wasn't really any space in his life for rich, older alphas who may or may not have been dating someone else. But he found he couldn't turn him down; he didn't want to. So he nodded, a happy little smile tugging at his lips. "I'd really like that, Dean."

"Awesome! Let me check my schedule, and we can talk about it tomorrow?"

Cas nodded. "Yes, that sounds fine." He almost turned away to leave, but on impulse, stepped closer instead. He grabbed dean's forearm for balance as he leaned up on his tiptoes to brush a quick kiss against the alpha's cheek. His own cheeks were flaming as he stepped back and smiled uncertainly. "Thank you for lunch, Dean." And then he spun around and hurried away.

Dean stared after him, his eyes wide as he reached up to rub at where Cas had kissed his cheek. If that was the omega's reaction for a kiss on the cheek, he couldn't even begin to imagine what it would be like if they ever actually... He shook his head to clear it. He couldn't afford another hard-on right now; he had a meeting to get to.

But as he walked back to his office, he couldn't shake the feeling that he was about to jump headfirst into something that he wouldn't be able to control. And for an alpha whose entire life was built on control, it was both exhilarating and terrifying.
Holy shit, Cas was about to go out on a date with a much older, very wealthy alpha who had a driver that he could just send to do his bidding whenever.

What the hell was he getting himself into?

"Good morning, Cas," Dean greeted as he stepped up to the counter. Cas didn't try to hide his grin as he responded, "Good morning, Mr. Smith."

"You know, you can call me Dean." The alpha reminded him. Cas smiled flirtatiously, winking at the older man. “Don’t pretend you don’t like it.” Dean smirked.

“How was the rest of your day yesterday?” He asked, studying the omega's face.

Cas blushed, "It was actually pretty amazing."

"Oh, really?” Dean murmured, arching an eyebrow. “Any particular reason?”

"Yeah, lunch was... Lunch was really great," Cas admitted. Dean looked smug, and Cas couldn't help himself. A mischievous smirk settled on his features as he said, "I mean, I had a really delicious hot dog."

Dean scowled, but there was humor in his eyes. "Oh, so it had nothing to do with who you ate with?"

Cas's smile turned content as he said, "Yeah, the company was pretty amazing."

The alpha hummed approvingly. "So, I was thinking maybe tomorrow night?" He licked his lips, and Cas's eyes were drawn to the small movement.

"Tomorrow night?” He asked distractedly, and Dean smirked.

"Our date?” The alpha reminded him. Cas's eyes widened.

"Right! Yeah, tomorrow night would be perfect," He agreed. Dean grinned, "Awesome. I was thinking like around seven?"

"Yeah, that sounds great. Um, what should I plan on wearing?” Cas asked, suddenly worried. He didn't own anything really nice, so if they went somewhere expensive, he knew he'd be underdressed.

"Clothes?" Dean sounded perplexed by the question, and Cas rolled his eyes.

"Great, so I'll just wear my scuba suit, then."
"Uh, no! Just, anything will work. We're not going anywhere too fancy," Dean promised, and Cas smiled gratefully.

"Good. Uh, let me give you my cell number in case something comes up." Cas pulled a grande-size cup from the stack and wrote dean's order on it, along with his own phone number.

"Don't worry; nothing's going to come up," Dean assured him as he paid for his drink.

"I certainly hope not," Cas murmured.

Cas paced his bedroom, glaring at the pile of clothes on his bed. He walked over to the closet and pulled out another shirt, started to put it on, then sighed and threw it on the growing pile on the bed. Right then, Balthazar passed the doorway to his room, whistling happily, then drew up short.

"What the hell happened in here?" He asked, eyes wide as he took in the disaster. Clothes covered every surface, the drawers and closet doors were flung open, and Cas was looking around wildly.

"Dean's going to be here in twenty minutes, and I have no idea what the fuck I'm going to wear!" Cas growled, running a hand over his eyes. Balth grinned.

"Cassie, are you actually...worrying about your appearance?" He asked, his delight obvious in his tone.

"Yes, okay? I'm freaking out." He turned to Balth, eyes desperate. "Please! Help me!"

"I don't know. I mean, aren't you the one who's always going on about clothing being a temporal distraction in the vast uncertainty of the universe?" Balth asked. Cas glared at him. Balthazar rolled his eyes. "You're lucky I'm such a softie." He walked over to the bed and pulled out a blue sweater from the middle of the pile. "This one looks good on you."

"Are you sure?" Cas asked, eyeing the garment critically.

"Trust me. Crowley couldn't take his eyes off of you when you wore that to the bar last week," Balth said. "You're a knockout, kid."

Cas still looked uncertain, and Balth sighed wearily. "What?"

"What if... Balth, you know I don't... I mean, every time I see him, I can't stop staring at his mouth!" Cas groaned.

"Yes, physical attraction is often a good thing when you go on a date. Usually means you're gonna get laid," Balth explained this like he was talking to a five-year-old.

Cas looked even more distressed at this. "But I've never even had my first kiss!" He cried, frustrated.

Balth stared at him like he'd grown an extra head. His mouth opened, then closed, then opened again as he held up a finger. Finally he shook his head.

"Well, I mean, that's not that weird, for people to wait til they're nineteen."

"I'm twenty," Cas reminded him softly. He groaned and ran a hand through his already messy hair.

"What if I'm terrible at it?"

"Well, if you really wanna practice with someone..." Balth offered, moving toward Cas with open
arms. Cas glared at him until he dropped his arms. "Well, the offer still stands, if you change your mind."

Cas rolled his eyes and shoved the other man out of his room. "No, thank you! I want my first kiss to actually mean something." He shut the door behind him.

Right then, his phone buzzed from his nightstand. He ran over to pick it up, his hands shaking. What if it was Dean canceling? Maybe he'd finally come to his senses... Oh shit, it was from Dean. Cas's eyebrows lowered as he read.

'Meeting running late. I'm sending my driver to pick you up. See you soon. ;)' Cas smiled at the winky face; he loved emoticons. But then his stomach dropped... Dean had a driver. Holy shit, Cas was about to go out on a date with a much older, very wealthy alpha who had a driver that he could just send to do his bidding whenever he wanted. What the hell was he getting himself into? But even as he felt the surge of panic, he felt a flutter of excitement.

'Ok. Can't wait,' he responded truthfully before setting the phone back down on the nightstand to finish charging. He pulled on the blue sweater along with his nice pair of jeans and his black Chucks that weren't scuffed up. He went into the bathroom to try to wrestle his hair under control, cursing his persistent bedhead.

"Leave it messy; looks sexier," Balth advised as he walked past. Right then, the apartment buzzer rang. Cas ran to press the button on the intercom.

"Yes?" He asked.

"This is Mr. Smith's driver," A deep voice with a strong creole accent responded.

"I'll be right down," Cas said. He made sure he had his wallet and keys before heading for the door.

"Knock him dead!" Balth called after him.

When Cas stepped outside, his eyes were immediately drawn to the sleek black car that was parked at the curb. He smiled hesitantly at the tall, imposing alpha waiting next to the car.

"Hi, I'm Cas," He introduced, extending his hand toward the other man. The man smiled kindly and shook his hand, "I'm Benny Lafitte, Mr. Smith's driver."

"It's nice to meet you," Cas said as Benny opened the door to the back seat for him.

"Mr. Smith's already on his way over, so we've gotta hurry," He explained, and Cas nodded, "Of course."

Benny drove them toward the city limits, and Cas could feel his anxiety rising. He smoothed his hands over his thighs, grimacing at the clamminess of his palms.

"So, where are we headed?" Cas asked.

"You'll see," Benny promised, eyes crinkling as he smiled at Cas in the rear view mirror.

When the car stopped at the pier, Cas frowned. Weren't they doing dinner? Shit, he hadn't eaten. Benny came around to open his door then motioned for the omega to follow him.

He led Cas down toward the docks where the small boats were docked. But they didn't stop at any of the small boats. Cas's eyes widened as he realized they were headed towards he private docks where
As they drew nearer to the yachts, Cas spotted Dean standing on the dock, waiting for him. He was rumpled and tired-looking. His hair was messy, like he'd run his fingers through it, and his shirt sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, while his tie hung in a loosened knot. Somehow, the rumpled appearance made him look even better. His face split into a wide smile as Cas drew nearer.

"Hope you don't suffer from motion sickness," He greeted, and Cas frowned. "Actually, uh..." He ran a hand over the back of his neck, and Dean's face fell. Cas grinned, "Nah."

Dean rolled his eyes. "You're the worst." He held out his hand toward Cas. "Come on; our dinner's waiting." When Cas took his hand, he could feel the sparks shoot straight up his arm to his heart as Dean's fingers curled around his. Dean nodded toward Benny and the driver turned around to head back to the car. "I'll be driving you home afterward," Dean explained.

Dean led Cas toward the yacht, their fingers still twined together. "How was your day?" He asked, smiling down at the omega. Cas loved the way his eyes crinkled at the corners when he smiled, and he reached up with his free hand to trace them. Dean froze, and Cas blushed, pulling his hand back.

“Sorry,” He murmured, but Dean shook his head.

“Don’t be. I’m just not really used to people touching me,” Dean admitted. Cas must have looked surprised, because Dean suddenly looked embarrassed. “Um, in a job like mine, I don’t really have much time for personal stuff.”

“So then what is this?” Cas wondered.

“This is me finally making the time.” Dean smiled warmly, and Cas felt something in him stir at the confession. He almost told Dean that he wasn’t worth it, that if Dean was making time to spend with someone, he should at least find someone who could do more than blush prettily. But before he could say anything, Dean was speaking again. “How bout the grand tour?”

Dean led him onboard, showing him into the salon first. Cas’s eyes widened as he took in the leather couches and marble-top tables on one side and the state-of-the-art appliances and a kitchenette on the other.

“Holy shit,” Cas breathed. “Your boat is nicer than my parents’ fucking house. And they’re loaded.”

Dean chuckled as he led him to a small staircase that led down to the lower level. “Wait til you see the bedrooms.”

“Bedrooms? Like plural? With an ‘s’?” Cas clarified, and Dean nodded. He toured Cas through several rooms, throwing around terms like starboard and stateroom and galley. Cas nodded like he understood even though he was having trouble simply grasping that all of this could fit on a single boat.

“That’s a king-size bed,” Cas pointed out when they reached the master stateroom, and Dean nodded, “It is.”

“There’s a king-size bed on your boat,” Cas murmured, shaking his head in disbelief.

“I really don’t feel like that’s the most impressive thing in the room, Cas,” Dean pointed at the large flat screen TV on one wall.

“Of course; in case you wanted to watch TV while you were laying in your king size bed on your
boat.” Cas muttered. Dean laughed. Cas glared at him, but Dean shook his head.

“Sorry, I just forget how ridiculous this might all seem to someone who’s not used to it. I know it can be a little overwhelming.”

“Yeah, I guess it can be. But, uh, I’m adjusting.” Cas admitted shyly.

"Homeschooling? Really?" Dean asked, his eyes squinting. The meal was long over. They'd spent the last hour talking about anything and everything, allowing the conversation to flow freely from topic to topic.

Somewhere along the way, they'd both scooted their chairs around the small round table so that they were sitting right next to instead of across from each other. Dean's knee repeatedly brushed against Cas's under the table, and it was distracting as hell.

Cas shrugged. "Yeah. My parents are, as I mentioned last time, very religious. They didn't want us to be 'tainted by the temptations of this sinful world,’” Cas held up air quotes.

"What did you do for friends?"

"My siblings were my friends. Well, I mean, I had other friends from church and our co-op, but that was about it."

"Co-op?"

"Yeah, a bunch of other homeschool families in the area got together for sports and field trips and special classes."

"Really? Did you play anything?" Dean asked, curious. Cas shook his head, smiling bashfully.

"Uh, no. My mom didn't think that omegas should participate in organized sports with alphas. So, uh, she signed me up for something a little more...genteel, I guess you could say."

He suddenly looked uncomfortable, and Dean grinned mischievously.

"What did she sign you up for?" He asked, but Cas shook his head. He took a sip of his water, feigning nonchalance. "It's not really that important."

Dean's grin widened. "Cas..."

Cas could tell he wasn't going to let this go. He sighed and ran a hand over his eyes. "You have to promise not to laugh."

Dean schooled his face into a serious expression and crisscrossed his fingers over his heart. "Cross my heart." Cas smiled and looked away, running a hand over the back of his head before looking back at Dean.

The alpha reached out and took or of the omega's hands in both of his, smiling warmly. "I promise that I will not laugh."

Cas's gaze met his and he knew he could trust him. He still blushed as he mumbled, "Ballroom dancing."

Dean paused for a moment; that wasn't that bad. Dean's smile widened. "That's awesome! I didn't
learn how to ballroom dance until I had to for Benny's wedding," he admitted.

"Yeah, well, I didn't think it was awesome back then. When all your older brothers get to go out and play cool sports like baseball and soccer while you're stuck learning how to execute a natural spin turn... It's just not that great." cas explained.

Dean's smile was understanding. "I get it." He nudged Cas's knee with his. "I bet you're super good at it, though." The omega blushed and glanced down to where Dean's hands still held his. "Uh, yeah. I actually placed a few times."

"Wait, placed?" Dean asked, and Cas nodded.

"Yeah, I competed some in high school. It wasn't really a big deal," he said dismissively, but Dean shook his head.

"You're right, it's not a big deal; that's a huge deal!" Dean gushed, and Cas's blush deepened. Dean ducked his head down so that he could see Cas's eyes and smiled hesitantly. "Will you show me?" Cas nodded and stood, pulling Dean up with him.

He took a few steps toward the center of the room, tugging Dean along. He turned around to face the taller man, smiling softly as their eyes met.

"Put your hand here," he directed, placing Dean's hand at his waist, "and I'll put my hand here." He placed his hand on the alpha's shoulder. "And then we hold these hands here." He took Dean's hand into his and held them up at their shoulder level.

He looked up at the alpha, and he suddenly realized how very close they were. His breath caught in his throat. They'd been close before at the table, but now, they were right there, their bodies aligned perfectly. Cas's eyes were immediately drawn toward Dean's mouth again. He'd barely have to stretch up to reach it... Dammit, he needed to stop staring at it.

"Okay, so we're going to plant the left here, and then we're going to bring our right foot out here..." Cas explained softly. He guided him through a left turn step and then another, counting their steps in groups of threes. Dean stared at him, his green eyes locked onto Cas's features. Cas's counting trailed off, his mind stuttering as he stared back at the alpha.

The silence felt heavy, too heavy. "You're really good at this," Cas praised, trying to fill the space, but Dean didn't respond. His eyes dropped to Cas's mouth, and he slowed their movements until they weren't dancing so much as swaying back and forth. His hand at Cas's waist slowly slid around until it rested in the center of Cas's lower back, pulling him closer. Cas's hand slid from the alpha's shoulder to cup the back of his neck.

"Cas..." Dean murmured softly, his eyes locked onto Cas's lips. Cas's tongue flicked out to lick at his lower lip, and Dean's pupils dilated as they tracked the movement. He slowly dipped his head, eyes intent on his goal. Cas made a small distressed sound in the back of his throat, and Dean's eyes flickered up to meet his. He froze at the uncertainty there. "Cas?" He asked.

Cas struggled with how to explain, cursing his own stupidity. He shouldn't have done anything, he should have just let it happen. People got kissed every day; it's not like it was anything huge. But not telling the alpha somehow felt dishonest.

"I don't..." He began, but fafaltered. "I've never...before." He confessed, his sentence broken and incoherent. Dean understood anyway. He smiled, pleased at the admission. "Good."

Cas's eyes widened. It didn't bother him that Cas was inexperienced? If anything, it actually seemed
to please him.

"What if I'm bad at it?" Cas whispered. Dean shook his head.

"You won't be. It's as easy as breathing," he promised, his eyes returning to Cas's mouth.

"I can't really remember...how that works...at the moment..." Cas admitted, his own eyes drawn to
the alpha's mouth. His heart thundered in his chest.

Dean smirked. "First you breathe in," he instructed in a barely-there whisper, and Cas drew in a
shallow breath. "Then you breathe out." Cas released the breath. Dean moved closer as he spoke, his
head dipping toward Cas's.

"Breathe in..." Cas pulled in another breath, his eyes fluttering shut in anticipation. "Breathe out...
"Cas released it. "Breathe in..." Cas drew in the breath. And then Dean was pressing his lips gently
against Cas's. The kiss was brief, barely there, and then Dean was pulling away. Cas unconsciously
followed after him, seeking more of that delicious pressure.

"Breathe out," Dean whispered. Cas released the breath. And that quickly, between one breath and
the next, it had happened.

Cas's eyes opened as he smiled shyly up at the alpha.

"Well?" Dean asked softly.

"That was nice." And then Cas was reaching up on tiptoes to claim the alpha’s mouth again.

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When Dean drove Cas home later, he walked him to his door, their fingers linked loosely between
them.

"Thank you for dinner tonight," Cas murmured, looking up at him through his eyelashes. “And, uh,
for being so nice about everything.”

"Cas, there's nothing to thank me for...”

Cas looked down at their hands, shaking his head.

“Look, I know that I don’t know a lot, and I’m sor—” He started, but Dean pulled his chin up and
cut him off with a firm kiss.

“Don’t you dare apologize.” He murmured, and Cas’s eyes flicked back up to his, hesitant. Dean
smiled. “You let me have your first kiss tonight. I don't think anyone's ever done that for me before.
It's a little humbling... And somehow a total ego boost. Not that I really need it." He smirked, and
Cas giggled. "I mean, the fact that I got to show you that... That's awesome. And besides, you’re
kind of a pro now." Dean squeezed Cas's fingers.

"I had a good teacher," Cas murmured. Dean grinned proudly.

He lowered his head, and Cas rose up to meet him eagerly. Cas’s free hand curled into the front of
Dean's shirt as the alpha's hand came up to cup his jaw. Dean nipped at his lower lip, and Cas
opened for him, sighing as Dean's tongue tangled with his.

Dean angled his head, deepening the kiss as his hands moved to smooth around Cas's back. The
omega's hands slid up Dean’s chest to wrap around his neck, pressing his body flush against Dean's.
Dean moaned low in the back of his throat. Cas was a little surprised at the display of emotion.

Every time they kissed, Cas felt overwhelmed by the flood of emotions that raged through him, but Dean always seemed to have a firm grasp on his. Every action the alpha took, whether it was the flick of tongue, the gentle nibble of teeth, or a quick nip against his lip, was controlled and purposeful. Every action was intended to draw a response from the omega.

But that moan, it had been unintentional. It thrilled Cas to realize that he might have just as much power over Dean as the alpha had over him.

The apartment door swung open just then. "Inaias, I'm just running to pick up..." Balth was saying but cut off abruptly when he saw them. "Awkward..."

Dean reluctantly tore his mouth away from the Cas's. He turned his head to glare at Balthazar as Cas hid his burning face in Dean's neck.

"Cassie, who is this?" Balthazar asked. Cas finally pulled away long enough to smile bashfully at Balthazar.

"Balthazar, this is Dean. Dean, this is my roommate, Balthazar."

"Charmed, I'm sure," Balth said.

"Likewise," Dean replied.

Right then Inaias ran up behind Balth in the doorway. "What's going on?"

"Cassie was macking on the alpha." Balth explained out of the corner of his mouth.

"Oh, I'd hoped the neighbors were having another naked social..." Inaias murmured, obviously disappointed.

Dean's face deepened into a frown as his arms tightened around Cas. Balth rolled his eyes. "Don't worry, Cassie here has a thing about people seeing his goodies. I've never even seen him naked on accident."

Cas's face burned brighter as he glared at his roommates, "Guys, a little privacy, please."

"Yeah, yeah. Only because you said please." Balth stepped back into the apartment and shut the door.

"I am so sorry about that. My roommates can be a little... Yeah."

"Do your neighbors really have naked socials?" Dean asked, a concerned expression on his face. Cas rolled his eyes and shook his head.

"No, Inaias was talking about this one time when our neighbor Hester got locked out of her apartment in just a towel." Dean's face cleared.

Cas smirked knowingly. "Were you jealous, Mr. Smith?"

Dean dipped down to claim his mouth in another kiss that left Cas breathless.

"Absolutely," He murmured when they parted. "And, uh, what he said about the naked thing... That doesn't apply to everybody, right?"
Cas shook his head.

Dean's grin turned predatory. "Good, because I was really hoping, you know, eventually..." He trailed off as Cas blushed.

"Yeah, I'm thinking there's a pretty good chance of that," Cas admitted.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, sorry it took so long to post. In all honesty, I had this written a few days ago, but I couldn't bring myself to post it until I had edited and revised it to within an inch of its life (what can I say, I got a little intimidated by all the positive feedback...) anyways, hope you like it. As always, comments are very much appreciated. Okay, byeeeee.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Silence fell over the line for several long seconds. Cas winced. God, what must Dean think of him now? He shouldn't have said anything; he should have just ignored Balthazar and gone through with it. Now he was coming off as some sort of needy omega, and Dean probably didn't want that in his life.

Dean was silently cursing himself. Why had he been so stupid? Of course he should have been there for Cas; he was just so used to... Now his omega was in a situation that clearly made him uncomfortable.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Tonight was really amazing, Dean," Cas whispered as they lingered outside Cas's apartment door. Dean was dropping him off after their fifth date—they'd gone to the carnival—and as had become their custom, they were taking their sweet time saying goodbye. His fingers tangled into the alpha's hair as he reached up on tiptoes for another kiss.

"Yeah?" Dean whispered when they pulled apart.

"Yeah," Cas sighed as he tugged at Dean's lip with his teeth. "I love my teddy bear." The alpha smirked as his eyes skipped over to the giant teddy bear that Cas has propped up against the door.

"No big deal," Dean assured him, but Cas shook his head.

"Um, yes it is!" Cas disagreed fervently. "No one's ever won me the big prize before!"

"Babe, it was just knocking some bottles over." Dean tried to protest.

"Really? Because from your stance, I'd say you know a thing or two about pitching baseball." Cas teased; Dean's face split into a proud grin.

"Only all four years of high school," He bragged, and Cas giggled.

Dean's gaze dropped to Cas's mouth as he grasped his chin between his thumb and forefinger, angling the omega's head so he could kiss him properly. It was invasive, demanding, hungry. Cas felt something stir low in his stomach, and he moaned as desire pulsed through him. He began to shift his body against Dean, his slim hips rubbing in tantalizing strokes against the alpha.

He didn't even realize he was doing it until Dean placed firm hands on his hips to still him. Cas whimpered at the loss of friction but then froze, his mind finally catching up with his body. He immediately pulled back from the kiss, his eyes wide, his face burning with shame. He'd practically been humping the older alpha like an omega in heat.

"Sorry!" He mumbled, glancing away. "I didn't mean to." He could feel Dean's gaze on his face, but he didn't look at him. He tried to step away, but Dean's grip on his hips was firm.
"Cas, look at me," Dean spoke softly, but the command was obvious. Cas's eyes flicked back to Dean, embarrassment evident in his expression. The older man smiled gently. "Don't be embarrassed; it was a natural, physical reaction."

Cas let out a deep breath but still shook his head. "I know. I just..." Cas sighed. He tried to look away again, but Dean shook his head.

"Cas, tell me." Dean said.

"It's just that you never seem to lose control; if it's such a normal thing, why don't you ever do it?" Cas asked dejectedly.

"Because I'm more used to it; you're still learning." Dean explained. Cas glanced up at him through his eyelashes, a flush spreading along his cheekbones. "Control is something that is learned, Castiel."

Cas's stomach fluttered as the words produced images of Dean teaching him control. Not how to control his body, but rather teaching him how to submit, how to obey. Cas thought about Dean making his body yield under firm hands, and he shivered.

Cas had realized early on that he enjoyed it more when Dean took control of the situation. He loved being able to give himself to the alpha and trust that he would take care of him.

He almost told Dean about it, about the fantasy that played through his head almost every night now. But he couldn't bring himself to voice it. How the hell was he supposed to tell Dean he wanted to be controlled in bed when they hadn't even been to bed yet?

Despite his lack of words, Dean knew. He saw it in the way Cas's pupils dilated when Dean gave him a command instead of a request; he heard it in the way Cas's breath caught in his throat when Dean praised him; he sensed it in the way Cas waited for his instruction. The omega was a natural-born submissive, more so than anyone else Dean had ever met.

But Dean wouldn't rush him. Even if Cas was the sub in the relationship, he needed to be the one to take the next step. The alpha wouldn't take the omega to bed until Cas was ready. Still, he wasn't a complete saint, so he tilted the omega's face up until their lips were a mere breath apart. And then he froze, ensuring that he had the omega's full attention.

"Cas, if there's something you want, you need to tell me," He instructed.

Cas nodded, his pupils blown so big that his shining blue irises were almost completely lost. He licked his lips and drew in a deep breath before whispering, "I want you to be my first. I... I think I'm ready."

Dean smiled proudly at the admission and nodded. "We can definitely arrange that." He pressed his lips to Cas's for one more brief kiss before pulling away. "Unfortunately, those arrangements will have to wait. I have to go out of town for a few days to tour the plant in Illinois," He explained. Cas tried to hide his disappointment.

"How long will you be gone?" He asked, sadness tinging his tone.

"I'll be back on Friday afternoon," Dean said. It was Monday; that was the full work week.

"I'll miss seeing you every morning," Cas admitted.

"I'll miss you, too. But, I will text you every day, and I'll call you when I have the chance," He promised. "While I'm gone, there are a couple of things you need to do for me."
Cas nodded eagerly. He was not expecting Dean's business-like tone when the alpha said, "You need to go to the doctor and get checked, and you need to make sure that your current suppressant includes a birth control."

Cas drew up short. Get checked? Why the hell would he need to get checked? Didn't Dean trust him that he was a virgin?

"Dean..." He murmured uncertainly. Dean shook his head. 

"Cas, it's not that I don't believe you; trust me, your reactions are too sweet to be anything but innocent. It's just something that all my partners have to do."

Cas felt like he'd been slapped in the face with the sudden reality check. All his partners... Right, because Dean was the heir to a prescription drug empire that was worth millions. Cas was suddenly reminded that even though Dean might act like the average guy, he was far from it.

He also realized where he stood in Dean's life. Because even though Dean was going to be his first, Cas was just going to be the latest in a line of partners. Who knew if he would even be the last in line?

He didn't say any of this, though. He just nodded and smiled, "Of course; you need to be safe. And, uh, I think my suppressants do contain birth control."

"Double check on it, please. We can't really afford any...complications," Dean explained gently.

"I understand. Trust me, Christian colleges don't take too kindly to pregnant, unmated omegas." Cas smiled tightly once more before slowly untangling himself from the alpha's grasp.

Dean grew concerned at Cas's sudden withdrawal. It wasn't just physical, but emotional as well. "I'll text you," he promised again as Cas picked up the giant teddy bear and started to unlock the door.

"Good. I might just text you back," Cas forced himself to tease with a grin he didn't feel as he unlocked his front door.

"Good night, Cas," Dean murmured. Cas turned and winked at him.

"Good night, Mr. Smith," He replied as he slowly shut the door between them.

After he'd turned the lock, Cas slumped forward to rest his forehead against the wood, his eyes sliding shut. Why did he feel so terrible inside? He felt cheapened, somehow; used. But why? So he'd go get tested; that wasn't a big deal, right? People did it all the time; he was just doing it preemptively.

He sighed. If he were being honest with himself, he'd just admit that it wasn't really the testing that bothered him. It was the calloused way Dean had thrown it out there. "All my partners have to do it."

Cas chuckled mirthlessly. Apparently he was now one of Dean's partners that could be sent for testing, like Benny could be sent to pick dates up or Hannah could be sent to get coffee. Dean would send Cas to get the tests done, and then Cas would present himself in a neat little package all wrapped up in negative test results.

Cas immediately chastised himself. He was being ridiculous. Dean was a good man; he'd been nothing but a gentleman the entire time they'd known each other. He was simply busy. Cas needed to stop his little pity party and grow up.
"I don't understand why the hell I have to be here," Balth mumbled as they sat in the doctor's waiting room.

"Emotional support," Cas replied without even glancing up from the Alpha magazine he'd snagged from the counter.

"Yeah, emotional support that I'm not even going to reap the benefits from! Tell me, Cassie, what exactly am I going to get out of this, hm?" Balth stared at him inquisitively.

"The satisfaction of being a good friend," Cas reminded him. "And lunch."

Balth sighed as he looked around the small waiting area, his eyes studying the informational charts on the wall.

He finally spoke up again. "Look, be it far from me to judge, but shouldn't he be here with you? I mean, you are doing this for him."

"He's busy," Cas explained, flipping another page in the magazine.

"Really? Too busy to go with his virginal boyfriend to get STD testing?" Balth asked pointedly, and Cas couldn't quite hide his wince.

"Aha! I knew it! It does bother you." Balth crowed proudly, and Cas rolled his eyes.

"Of course it does, but I'm trying to be a big boy about it."

"Cas—" Balth started again, but Cas cut him off.

"Look, Balthazar," He pointed at the magazine, and Balth's eyes widened as he took in the picture of Dean with a beautiful model at a charity auction back in March.

"I thought I recognized him from somewhere..." Balth murmured.

"That is Dean's life, okay? He's used to dating models and actresses and gorgeous people who probably don't get tested often enough. He'd be stupid not to make his partners get tested."

"Yes, but see, this right here," Balth pointed around the waiting room, "this is your life. And just because he's rich and famous doesn't mean that you are, by default, unimportant. If you are important enough for him to have sex with, then you are important enough for him to go to testing with."

Cas glared at him. "Honestly, Balth! I don't need him here for me to pee in a cup!"

"Oh really? Then what the hell am I doing here, Cas? If you've really got it under control, why did you drag me along?" Balth refused to concede his point.

Cas huffed and slumped back into his seat to continue perusing the magazine. "Fine, take the car and go home then. I can catch a cab after."

"Cas..." Balth started, immediately apologetic, but Cas shrugged.

"You're right. If anyone should be here with me, it's him. But since he's not, maybe I shouldn't have anyone else here at all," Cas murmured regretfully.

Balth placed his hand on Cas's forearm. "Cas, did he actually say he didn't have the time?" Cas..."
finally looked at him, his face blank.

"No, he didn't. But he doesn't have to tell me how busy he is. And he already makes enough time for me; I don't want to be more of a burden," Cas admitted flatly.

"Look, I've only met the guy a couple of times, but I can tell you one thing for sure about him," he paused to make sure Cas was listening. "He doesn't think you're a burden."

Cas studied him, his eyes uncertain. "Do you really think so?" Balth rolled his eyes and nodded. Cas finally pulled out his phone to text Dean. 'Can we talk?'

Not fifteen seconds later, Cas's phone was ringing. He glanced at Balthazar before he stood to take the call outside.

"Cas," Dean said when he picked up, and Cas smiled at the warmth in Dean's tone.

"Hi, Dean," He murmured. "I hope I'm not catching you at a bad time." He tried to keep his tone neutral, but Dean picked up on his distress.

"What's wrong?" He asked.

"Umm, I'm at the doctor's office right now. And, uh..." He trailed off, unsure how to word his request. He started pacing anxiously.

"Cas?" Dean sounded concerned. Cas decided to just put it out there.

"Will you go with me? For the testing? I know you're busy, and I know that this means we'll have to wait a little while longer, and it shouldn't even be that big of a deal, but it would mean so much to me if you were there." Cas said. "Please," he added as an afterthought.

Silence fell over the line for several long seconds. Cas winced. God, what must Dean think of him now? He shouldn't have said anything; he should have just ignored Balthazar and gone through with it. Now he was coming off as some sort of needy omega, and Dean probably didn't want that in his life.

Dean was silently cursing himself. Why had he been so stupid? Of course he should have been there for Cas; he was just so used to... Now his omega was in a situation that clearly made him uncomfortable. No wonder their phone calls had been so stilted. He realized that he'd been silent too long when Cas spoke again.

"You know what, forget I said anything..." The omega started, but Dean cut him off.

"No, you're right." He sounded upset, but his next words put Cas at ease. "God, sometimes you're so good at all of this that I forget... This is my fault."

"No, it's not," Cas hurried to reassure him.

"Yes, it is. I'm the one who's supposed to be taking care of you." He sighed again, but then his voice turned firm. "Cas, I need you to make me a promise."

"Yes, sir?" Cas murmured.

"You will never again hesitate to voice your concerns to me. I can't take care of you if you don't tell me how."

"I understand," Cas replied meekly.
"Good. Now, reschedule your appointment for next Monday, sometime in the afternoon. I have a board meeting in the morning, but I can take the rest of the day off. We'll go to lunch after you finish work and then go to the appointment."

"Yes, sir." Cas agreed, much calmer than before. "I'll talk to you later."

"I'll call you this evening," Dean said. Cas was about to hang up when Dean spoke again. "And Cas? Thank you for telling me."

Cas smiled. "Thank you for listening." He hesitated for a moment. "I miss you."

He could hear Dean's smile in his response. "I miss you, too."

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After the appointment on Monday, Dean took Cas out for ice cream. Cas squeezed his fingers as they waited for their chocolate dipped cones.

"Thank you for going with me." Cas was glad the alpha had been there; it had ended up being a little more involved than just peeing in a cup.

Dean's expression turned stern. "Cas, I don't ever want you to feel that uncomfortable again. If I ask something that's too much, tell me. Whether it's in bed or out. Don't ever assume that..." He paused, searching for the right words. "Listen, you know you better than I do. Yes, I have a pretty good idea of what will work, but I don't know everything about you. So if something isn't going to work, tell me!" Dean's tone was urgent.

"Yes, sir," Cas agreed. Dean smiled as he ducked down to kiss him.

"Just a couple more days," he promised, and Cas smiled eagerly.

"Just a couple more days," he echoed.

Chapter End Notes

So, two chapters in two days! Exciting, right? I actually woke up at, like, four this morning with a partial idea, and I thought 'Oh, I'll write down that part and then go back to sleep!' Hahahahahahahaha! And again I say HA! I didn't go back to sleep....I wrote until I had to go to work. Yeah. Anyways, I LOVE HEARING YOUR COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK! If you ever have any questions, or something isn't clear, ask so I can address it in a future chapter. As always, I hope you enjoy. Okay, byeeeeeeeee!
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Dean carried Cas into the master stateroom and laid him out on the king size bed.

“You’re so beautiful like this,” He murmured before dipping down to take Cas’s mouth in a kiss.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

A flutter of nerves ran through Cas as he opened the apartment door for Dean on Thursday evening.

"Hello, Dean," he murmured breathily, and Dean smiled, "Hey, Cas."

Cas immediately slipped into his space, reaching up for a kiss. Dean's lips were soft as they claimed the omega's, his fingers gentle as they brushed over Cas's cheek, stroking the soft skin there. Cas sighed happily, one hand sliding up to cup the back of the alpha's neck while the other tangled into his green paisley tie.

He hadn't been this close to Dean since after the doctor's appointment on Monday. The older man had decided that they should wait until their date to see each other again, so Cas had only seen him in the mornings when he came in for his coffee, and those little meetings were far too brief. But given the way Cas had just thrown himself at Dean before he could even make it inside the door, he suddenly understood why Dean had wanted to wait.

Not that waiting was really a bad thing; it had just built the anticipation for the omega. He could smell the excitement in Dean's scent, the anticipation of what was to come, just like he knew Dean could scent it on him. His lips grew more insistent as he pressed in closer, eager for the feel of Dean's body against his. Dean's hands squeezed his waist, stopping him. Nothing was said, but the command was clear: Wait.

Dean pulled back a fraction of an inch, their lips still brushing together when he asked, "Ready to go?" Cas nodded, his nose rubbing against Dean's before he stole one more quick kiss. Dean took him by the fingers and tugged him out the door.

"I won't wait up then, I guess?" Balth called from his spot on the couch; neither bothered to answer. They descended the stairs, fingers linked between them as their shoulders brushed together with each step. They both seemed determined to maintain as much physical contact as possible.

"So, I figured we'd keep things simple," Dean said as he opened the passenger door for Cas.

"Sounds perfect," Cas agreed, smiling contentedly as Dean leaned down for another quick kiss. Cas settled into the leather seat, and Dean shut the door for him before hurrying around to the driver's side.

As soon as Dean was in the car, he reached over to take Cas's hand in his again, keeping their hands joined between them on the seat. Cas didn't ask where they were going as they drove; if Dean wanted him to know, he would've told him. Cas figured it out soon enough when they took the exit
He smirked mischievously. “Am I going to lose my virginity on a yacht?” Dean chuckled and glanced over at Cas, bright heat lighting his green eyes. “Is there, like, a special club for that? Like the mile-high club, but for boats?” Cas wondered. He managed to keep up his carefree attitude all the way to the pier, but as they stepped on board, Cas felt his stomach tighten with nerves.

The table for two was set up in the salon area again, romantic and intimate, but Cas looked uncertain. He flushed as he smiled nervously at the alpha.

"I don't really know if I can eat..." He hedged.

"Did you eat before?" Dean asked as he pulled Cas's chair out for him, but the omega shook his head.

"Not exactly..."

"When was the last time you ate?" Dean asked. Cas thought about lying, it was on the tip of his tongue when he opened his mouth to answer, but the alpha arched an eyebrow, and Cas caved.

"I think I had a bagel before I left work."

Dean's expression was firm, his tone authoritative. "Cas, you need to eat at least a little bit beforehand."

Cas's blush deepened at the tone. "Yes, sir," He murmured meekly. Dean retrieved their plates from the food warmer and set one down in front of Cas and the other in front of his seat. Cas eyed the stuffed pasta dish uncertainly, his stomach offering a little flip in protest.

He waited until Dean started eating to pick at his own food, but he still only managed to get a couple of bites down. Dean glanced at his plate and frowned.

"Cas, you need to eat more than two bites."

The omega smiled apologetically, "I'm trying...it's just..." He trailed off, and a small smile curved at Dean's mouth as he took Cas's hand in his.

"Cas, what's wrong?"

"I'm just a little nervous," He finally admitted hesitantly. Dean squeezed his hand, his eyes understanding as he asked, "Should we wait?"

Cas's eyes widened as he shook his head. "No! I want this; I really do! It's just..." He struggled to justify the anxiety that he knew was just first-time jitters.

Dean suddenly pushed his chair back, and Cas thought for a moment that he had changed his mind. However, Dean remained seated, using the hand that still held Cas's to pull the omega out of his chair. He patted his lap, "Sit."

Cas moved to sit sideways across Dean's lap, but Dean shook his head and moved Cas to straddle him instead. Cas settled into the alpha's lap, his legs dangling over the sides, his crotch situated right against Dean's thighs.

Dean brought his fingers to gently grasp Cas's chin. "I know it's a little frightening, but I'm going to take care of you." He paused for a moment, allowing the words to settle deep inside of Cas before he
murmured, “I promise.” Cas let out the breath he hadn’t realized he’d been holding. He smiled shyly and nodded; of course Dean was going to take care of him.

Dean continued speaking, "But part of taking care of you is making sure you're ready. And you need to eat first." The alpha smiled gently. "I can't have you passing out on me in the middle." He shifted, pulling Cas closer. “Put your hands on my waist.” He instructed, and Cas did as he was told. His thumbs rubbed softly at the material of Dean’s dress shirt, but Dean shook his head. “None of that, Cas.” Cas blushed.

Dean reached around Cas to scoop a bite full of food onto his fork and brought it to Cas's lips, "Open." Cas opened his mouth and allowed Dean to feed him the bite. As he chewed, Dean smiled. "Good little omega."

Cas flushed at the praise. His eyes dropped to the alpha's mouth as Dean took the next bite of food for himself, and he felt excitement stir through him as he stared at the alpha's soft lips. He so badly wanted to taste them. His eyes flickered up to Dean's to ask for permission, but the older man simply shook his head as he brought another forkful of food to Cas's mouth. As he pulled the fork out, his thumb brushed across Cas’s plump lower lip. Cas’s stomach gave a little flip at the touch.

As they continued to eat, Dean began to ask Cas about the past few days. Cas tried to focus on the questions, telling Dean about his upcoming appointment with the school registrar. But he found that the longer they sat there in such close contact, the harder it was to concentrate.

Dean smelled good to begin with, spicy and appealing with a woodsy undertone, but with the close proximity, Cas found his scent even more potent. He struggled to understand why they needed to talk about mundane things like his schooling when all he wanted to do was press himself tighter against the alpha and grind against him until he came. Even as the thought flashed through his mind, his hips shifted against Dean's lap.

Cas almost moaned at the friction, and immediately his hips moved again, seeking more. He could feel his hole starting to produce slick, and he wondered if the alpha could feel it. Dean's smirk confirmed that he could, in fact, feel the omega growing wet, but his voice was firm when he said, "Don't squirm, Cas."

Cas forced his body to remain still. Dean fed them each a few more bites as he told Cas about the new old secretary down in payroll. Cas could feel Dean's deep voice reverberating through him, and he couldn't help his shiver.

Cas tried to focus, he really did, but it was so hard to keep his mind on task. Dean was right there, his face mere inches away, his body pressed up against Cas’s, but Cas could do nothing but stare hungrily. Every time Dean took a bite, Cas's gaze dropped to his mouth; every time he fed Cas a bite, he brushed his thumb across Cas’s lips. Between the soft lips and the bright eyes and the deep voice and the delicious scent, Cas's body was being tugged in a million different directions.

Dean finally decided that they had eaten enough, and he set down the fork. He smiled proudly at Cas. "You've been so good, obeying me, Cas. I think that deserves a reward."

Cas smiled eagerly, but didn't speak. His eyes fell back to Dean's mouth, and the alpha chuckled. "Is that what you want, Cas?" Cas licked his lips and nodded, his head slowly moving forward of its own volition. Dean smirked, his next words barely a whisper. "Then kiss me."

Cas closed the rest of the distance, his mouth slamming against Dean's. He attacked Dean's mouth enthusiastically, using all the little tricks he knew the alpha loved—a nip at his lower lip, a swipe of tongue against the roof of his mouth, a few soft pecks between bruising kisses.
Dean’s big hands clamped onto his hips, their grip bruising, and Cas moaned. He so badly wanted to rub against the alpha, but Dean had only said he could kiss him, not that he could move anything else.

Dean must have sensed his need, though, because he began to use his hands to guide Cas against him, slotting his crotch so that Cas was rubbing right up against his growing erection. After not being allowed to move at all, the relief of pressing himself against the alpha was exhilarating.

Dean began to roll his own hips in time with Cas’s, rubbing his still-clothed cock against the omega’s smaller one. Even through multiple layers of clothing, the sensation was overwhelming and heady, and Cas moaned into the alpha’s mouth. Dean pulled away for the briefest of seconds, barely long enough to whisper, “That’s it, sweetheart. You’re getting it.”

Cas’s eyes were half-lidded, his breaths little more than stifled gasps and pants as Dean shifted them once again. Cas’s forehead slumped forward to rest against Dean’s shoulder as the older man guided his movements.

“Alpha…” He breathed out, and Dean pressed a soothing kiss against Cas’s temple. He could feel the omega’s body tensing, his movements growing jerky under Dean’s hands.

“Are you close, baby?” Dean asked breathlessly, and Cas could only moan in response, his body surging forward, pushing toward that promise of relief. Heat coiled low in his stomach as he continued to hump against Dean’s body, “Are you going to come for me? Do you want to be my good boy and come right here in my lap?”

“Please,” Cas pleaded, his voice wrecked.

“My good little omega,” Dean crooned. He nudged the side of Cas’s face with his nose. “Give me your mouth.” Cas lifted his forehead from the alpha’s shoulder and turned so Dean could lean in for a kiss. Dean’s voice was barely a whisper as he commanded, “Come for me.”

Dean’s mouth was hungry, bruising even, as he shoved his own hips up and pulled Cas right against him, slamming their crotches together. Cas moaned, his body convulsing as he came right there in his pants. His hands slid up to wrap around Dean’s shoulders for support, his mouth barely responding to Dean as waves of pleasure washed over him. Even after the pleasure started to abate, his hips continued to rock against Dean’s, riding out the last of it.

He slumped against Dean’s front, panting and sweaty. He knew he should have felt embarrassed; they were both still fully clothed, and he’d already come. But then Dean was pressing soft kisses against his temple, praising him for how well he’d done, telling him how gorgeous he looked, completely spent as he was.

Dean slowly shifted them so he could stand, still holding Cas against him. He nudged the omega’s legs, and they willingly wrapped around his waist. Cas’s arms clung to Dean’s neck as the alpha carried him down the narrow stairway that led to the staterooms. He shivered as he felt the older man’s erection rub against him with each step, and he turned his head to press soft kisses along Dean’s neck.

Dean carried him into the master stateroom and laid him out on the king size bed. He sat on the edge of the bed and bent over so that his face was right above Cas’s. He rested a hand on either side of Cas’s head, smiling as he hovered over the omega.

“You’re so beautiful like this,” He murmured before dipping down to take Cas’s mouth in a sweet kiss. Cas grabbed at his tie, using it to hold him there as their mouths moved against each other in
When Dean pulled away, Cas’s hands slid up to the knot, his fingers fumbling with it. When it came loose, he slowly slid the strip of fabric out from under Dean’s collar and tossed it off to the side with a flirtatious smile. Dean remained there, hovering over him, watching him with a strange light in his eye as Cas’s fingers moved to the buttons of his shirt. He fumbled with them a little bit, but he slowly worked each one open, revealing more of the bare skin beneath.

When the shirt hung completely open, Cas’s eyes roamed over Dean’s torso hungrily, his fingers skimming along the muscles of Dean’s abs, tracing lightly over the jut of his hipbones. Dean’s eyes fluttered shut when Cas’s hands slid up to rub over his chest, his fingers just barely brushing against Dean’s nipples. Dean groaned deep in his throat, his head dropping back down to kiss Cas again.

Cas’s hands slid over Dean’s shoulders, pushing the dress shirt down his arms. Without breaking the kiss, Dean pulled it the rest of the way off and tossed it away, leaving his torso completely bare. Cas wanted to feel Dean’s bare skin completely against him nothing in between. He reached down to grasp the hem of his pullover sweater and Dean helped him tug it off.

His eyes studied Cas’s bare chest in the dim light of the room and brushed his fingers over the lean muscle. Cas’s breath hitched when Dean brushed his thumb across a nipple, and Dean’s eyes shot to his face. Without breaking eye contact, Dean slowly lowered his head to lap at Cas’s nipple, and Cas hissed, his back bowing as he pushed his chest out for further attention.

Dean moved across to lap at the other nub, alternating between them with small licks and nips. He finally pulled one into his mouth, sucking as his tongue continued to lash at the bud. Cas cried out, and he shoved his fingers into Dean’s hair to hold him there.

Dean eventually pulled away and watched Cas’s face closely as he reached up to brush his fingers over the puffy, red nipple. Cas gasped at the tenderness.

Satisfied with his work, Dean reached back to pull Cas’s feet into his lap. He tugged off the omega’s Vans and socks, stuffing the socks into one of the shoes and setting them down next to the bed. He set Cas’s feet back on the bed and then bent over, about to untie the shoelaces on his Oxfords, when Cas sat up and placed a gentle hand on his shoulder.

“May I?” Cas whispered, his eyes hopeful. Dean nodded and Cas climbed off of the bed, dropping to his knees in front of the alpha.

He carefully untied the shoelace on the right foot, then the shoe on the left, before slipping them both off. He pulled off the black dress socks and placed them into the oxfords before setting them down next to the bed. He smiled at the picture that the two pairs of shoes made together; it somehow seemed so domestic, but simultaneously at odds. Expensive dress shoes next to beat up old Vans.

He turned his attention back to Dean and smiled hesitantly up at the older man as he scooted forward into the V between Dean’s legs. Dean spread his legs a little more, and Cas turned his head to press a soft kiss against the inside of Dean’s knee. Dean brought a hand up to thread through his hair, not guiding, simply resting.

Cas nuzzled his nose against the black dress pants, his hot breath marking a path up Dean’s thigh as he nipped and rubbed his way toward the alpha’s crotch. Just as Cas was about to reach Dean’s cock, when he could feel the alpha’s thighs tensing under his hands in anticipation, he switched to the other side.

“Tease…” Dean muttered, and Cas smirked as he started again at the inside of the knee and worked
his way upward with soft strokes and kisses. When he reached the juncture of Dean’s thigh, he finally allowed his head to be guided by Dean’s hand toward the obvious bulge in Dean’s slacks.

He paused right above the bulge, his eyes flicking up toward Dean, staring at him through his lashes for the briefest of seconds before he leaned forward and licked a stripe up the hard length. Dean groaned and his hand tightened in Cas’s hair as he murmured, “That’s it, baby. Get your mouth on it.”

Encouraged by his words, Cas licked another long stripe up the alpha’s cock before pressing forward to wrap his lips around the base, sucking through the fabric. Dean’s grip on his hair was almost painful as he began to undulate his hips, pressing himself tighter against Cas’s mouth. Cas felt a wave of desire rush through him, and he knew that this wouldn’t be enough. He wanted to see it, to touch it.

He pulled back and glanced up at Dean shyly. “Um, may I…” He trailed off, but Dean still understood. He nodded and Cas’s hands moved to his belt buckle, eagerly tugging at the leather to unhook it. Once he’d slid the belt out from Dean’s pant loops and laid it off to the side, his hands returned, shaking as they unhooked the button then tugged gently at the zipper. Cas started to tug the slacks down and Dean lifted his hips off the bed so that Cas could peel them all the way off, leaving Dean in just his boxers.

Cas neatly folded the slacks and draped them over the side of the bed, and Dean had to smile at his extra care of the clothing. Cas turned back to Dean and eyed his crotch, the bulge of his cock more prominent without the slacks impeding it. Cas reached up to hook his fingers into the waist band and pull them down as well, his fingers skimming along Dean’s hip bones as he did. When Dean’s cock sprung free of the impeding cloth, long and beautiful and curving up toward Dean’s stomach, Cas froze, his eyes widening.

“Holy shit…” He breathed, his eyes glued to it. Dean smirked and placed his hand back on Cas’s head, using his grip to pull Cas’s head back so that he could look into his eyes.

“Don’t worry; it’ll fit.” He assured the omega, but Cas shook his head as his eyes returned to the alpha’s long, thick member.

“That’s not what I meant,” He murmured, his hand reaching up to wrap around the base. He began to gently pump the skin there, his eyes wide with fascination as he watched his hand move up and down. As a male, he had his own dick, sure; but because he was omega, it was small and slim. Dean’s though…

Cas almost asked Dean if all alpha cocks were this big, but then thought better of it. He didn’t care about any other alphas, anyway; he didn’t want anyone but Dean.

“You’re so much bigger than I’d thought,” Cas admitted, but he didn’t sound nervous about it. He sound eager, hungry. Dean hissed as Cas’s hand rubbed a little too abrasively against the skin, and Cas’s eyes immediately slid up to his, worried that he’d done something wrong.

“It’s just a little dry,” Dean explained, and Cas nodded. He leaned forward to tentatively swipe his tongue up the underside, and Dean gasped. Cas repeated the action again, this time bringing his tongue all the way to the top so he could lick at the head.

“Use your whole mouth, Cas,” Dean instructed. Cas swirled his tongue around the head before pulling it completely into his mouth. Dean moaned hungrily as Cas began to suck, his tongue swiping experimentally at the slit as he pulled Dean further into the hot suction of his mouth. He began to bob his head up and down, his tongue swiping along the shaft as he went.
It was messy and slightly uncoordinated, but with Dean’s guidance and encouraging utterances, Cas quickly picked up on what the alpha liked. Cas shifted so that he could place his hands on the tops of Dean’s thighs for leverage as he lowered himself further with each stroke. He felt it expanding in his mouth, hot and heavy, and he reached up beneath the alpha to play at his balls.

Dean’s hips jerked up off the bed, shoving his cock further into the omega’s mouth and hitting the back of his throat. Cas gagged, and Dean immediately started to retreat, his fingers stroking through Cas’s hair apologetically, but Cas pushed himself forward again.

Cas’s mouth sucked greedily as his hand began to stroke at the skin just behind the alpha’s balls. He could feel them tightening up, drawing close to the body, and he wondered if Dean would let him swallow the load. But then Dean’s hands were gripping Cas by the ears and pulling him off completely. Cas let out a high whine at the loss, but Dean shook his head. “That’s not where I want to finish.”

He pulled the omega to his feet and Cas gasped at the rush of feeling that flooded back into his calves. He hadn’t even realized how long he’d been kneeling down there. He grabbed onto Dean’s arm for support, and Dean slid an arm around his waist to hold him up.

“Let’s get these pants off,” Dean murmured, and Cas nodded frantically. Cas unbuttoned his pants and shoved them down. He reached for his underwear, but Dean’s hand on his stopped him. The alpha’s dark eyes ran over the bright yellow briefs, the tight cotton straining around Cas’s much smaller erection.

Dean slowly pushed him back onto the bed, climbing over him as his hand reached down to cup Cas through his briefs. The crotch was soaked through. Cas gasped as his hips thrust up into the touch.

“You’re so fucking wet,” Dean breathed, and Cas shivered. Dean pulled Cas’s briefs off in one tug, opening up the omega’s slick hole to his touch. His index finger sank into the tight heat, and Cas moaned. He began to slide his finger in and out, mesmerized by the feel of Cas’s hole clenching around him.

“Beautiful,” Dean murmured, causing Cas to blush. He slid down the bed and laid on his stomach between Cas’s spread legs, his mouth right by the omega’s hole. His tongue slipped out, swiping across the opening. Cas gasped above him, his body trying to arch into the touch, but Dean threw an arm across his slim hips to hold him down.

“Dean, please!” He gasped out, his hand reaching up to tangle in his hair and tug at it. Dean began to lick at Cas’s hole, the flat of his tongue dragging across the sensitive rim. Cas’s hand gripped tightly at the bed spread, his asshole clenching around the long, talented tongue that was slowly but surely opening him up.

The omega’s fingers clenched and unclenched in the bedspread, scrabbling for something solid to hold onto. Dean reached up and twined their fingers together, giving something for the omega to grip tight to as his ass was fucked open. He could feel Cas’s stomach clenching under his arm, and he ran a soothing hand over the lean muscles there.

“Relax, baby.” Dean soothed. “We’ve still got a long way to go.”

Cas jerked at his words. A long way to go? He didn’t think he was going to survive just this. Pure pleasure radiated outward from where Dean’s tongue worked at Cas, spreading him open with each thrust of tongue, threatening to overtake him again. He didn’t want to come yet, though; he didn’t want to come again until he could come with Dean.
“Dean!” Cas gasped, squeezing the alpha’s hand tightly. “Dean, stop! I don’t want to come yet, please!” Dean didn’t pull away, but his eyes flickered up to meet the omega’s, his pupils so blown that there was hardly any green left. “I want to come with you,” Cas managed to gasp out.

Dean growled at the admission, sending tremors through Cas’s entire body, before he pulled away from the omega’s hole, his nose and mouth covered in slick. Cas lay there panting heavily, his entire body coated in a thin layer of sweat. Dean climbed back up to kiss him, allowing Cas to taste his own slick as their tongues tangled. His body, flush against the omega’s, pressed him down into the mattress.

Dean’s kisses eventually turned soft, tender; gentle reminders that he was there to take care of the omega. He knew Cas was open enough to take him, but he didn’t want to push him before he was ready. “Whenever you’re ready, baby,” He mumbled against Cas’s mouth. Cas smiled up at him, his eyes radiating trust and contentment.

“I’m ready,” Cas whispered, and Dean nodded. He pressed one more firm kiss to Cas’s mouth before he propped himself up on a single elbow, his free hand reaching down to grasp his cock. He slid it up and down Cas’s hole, coating it in the omega’s slick before he finally lined himself up and slowly pushed in. Cas’s rim immediately clenched, trying to fight off the intrusion, but Dean’s nose stroked down the side of his face, soothing him. “Just relax, baby. It’ll be so much easier if you relax.”

Cas nodded, willing his body to relax. Dean could feel the pressure lessen, and he waited a couple of seconds before resuming his slow push. Inch by inch he slowly slid into the omega, stopping every few seconds to pull back and let Cas adjust to the length.

Sweat beaded along his brow with the effort of restraining hips that wanted to just shove in and claim what was his. But Dean took his time, murmuring words of encouragement as he pushed further, touching parts of Cas that the omega hadn’t known existed.

And then, after long minutes of this torturous pleasure, he pushed in for the last time, bottoming out inside Cas’s tight channel and bringing their sweat-soaked skin into complete contact. Cas gasped at the fullness, his head falling backward against the pillow as he stared up at Dean.

“It feels...” He tried, but couldn’t finish. Dean stroked a hand down his cheek and gave another long kiss as Cas grew accustomed to the feel of something so big being inside of him. When Dean pulled back, Cas finally smiled up at him, “I feel so full.”

“Yeah?” Dean asked, and Cas nodded. “Is that a good thing?”

“Yes. Can you please move now?” He asked timidly, and Dean laughed at the fact that he had to ask. Cas moaned as Dean slowly pulled out, nearly unseating himself, before pushing all the way back in. It burned at first, but it was a nice sort of burn. As they moved together, Cas’s hole started producing more slick, easing the way for Dean.

Cas shifted his hips, and gasped as the alpha’s cock slid in at a delicious new angle. He began to rock his hips experimentally, trying to match Dean’s rhythm, lifting himself to meet every thrust.

“How does that feel, baby?” Dean asked, his voice choked as he continued to push into the omega’s tight heat. Cas nodded desperately, his blue locked onto Dean’s green, and Dean was shocked to see tears pricking at the corner of the omega’s eyes.

“Honey, are you okay?” He asked, concerned that he was hurting the omega, but Cas shook his head.
“It just feels so good,” He whispered brokenly. “You feel so good inside of me.” Dean’s hips jerked, his entire body spasming at the words, somehow innocent despite what they were doing. He stared down at Cas, his expression greedy as he studied the flush that spread along Cas’s sweaty skin. The little sounds that spilled from Cas’s lips were downright sinful. The omega was so responsive, his reactions bordering on obscene whenever Dean did something new.

It felt amazing, overwhelming, earth-shattering, but Cas wanted more. He wanted them to be as close as possible, even closer than they were now. Almost on their own volition, his legs wrapped around the alpha’s waist, hooking at the ankles behind Dean’s back, and Dean thrust in again, grunting as Cas’s long legs pulled him in tighter.

The omega’s arms flung around his shoulders, his nails digging into the skin there, scratching deep marks as he arched up against Dean. Dean cursed and buried his face against Cas’s neck, his lips latching onto the skin there to suck a dark bruise.

“Dean, I want…” Cas sobbed, unable to articulate what his body wanted. Dean knew, though. It was basic biology; Cas’s body needed his knot, just like Dean’s needed to give it to him.

“I know, baby. I’ve got you,” He promised again.

Dean could feel his knot building, growing, and he pulled his head back so he could watch Cas’s face as it slipped past his tight rim. Cas’s eyes widened in shock as his ass clenched around what it so desperately wanted, and then they screwed shut as he sobbed with relief. It was big, bigger than he’d anticipated, but it felt right.

Dean gave a few more shallow thrusts, the knot keeping him from doing much else before he was exploding in Cas’s ass with a loud groan, the knot locking them in place. Cas screamed as his own orgasm swept through him, and Dean pressed another hungry kiss against his pliant mouth, swallowing the scream down. Cas’s ass clenched around Dean’s cock, milking it dry as the alpha continued to grind himself into the omega.

Dean fell forward, his heavy weight collapsing on top of Cas, and Cas slumped underneath the weight. As he caught his breath, Cas reached up to run soothing fingers through Dean’s hair, down his spine, the pads of his fingertips skimming apologetically over the scratch marks on his shoulders. He peppered Dean’s face with soft kisses, whispering gentle endearments as Dean came back to himself.

Dean slowly lifted his head to stare down at Cas, slightly in awe of the little omega beneath him. Dean had just wrecked him, completely and utterly used him up, but he was still comforting Dean. He was taking care of the alpha when the alpha should have been taking care of him. Dean buried his face in Cas’s neck, scenting the sweaty skin there.

“It’s okay; I think I got a little carried away, too,” He nuzzled at the bruise on Cas’s neck, and Cas tried not to think too hard about the fact that he’d sucked the bruise right where the mating mark would usually be. They lay there in silence for several minutes, savoring the feel of each other so close. After a while, however, Cas started to grow uncomfortable. He pressed at Dean’s chest.

“Off! You’re really heavy!” He complained, and Dean rolled his eyes as he shifted them onto their sides to face each other, careful that the knot didn’t tug on Cas’s rim as he did so. He smiled at Cas, “So, I think it went well.”
Cas blushed. “Yes, it did.”

“You did so well, taking my knot on your very first time.” Cas preened under the praise. It didn’t even concern him when Dean warned, “You’re probably going to be a little sore tomorrow,” Cas nodded; he didn’t doubt that one bit. But he found that he didn’t mind it, either.

As they waited for the knot to go down, Dean whispered quiet praises, showering Cas with gentle kisses and light touches. Dean’s spent cock finally slipped from Cas’s hole, and he went to grab a washcloth. After he’d cleaned them both, his touch gentle as he wiped at Cas’s puffy hole, he climbed back under the covers and pulled the young man tight against him.

“Good night, Cas,” He mumbled into Cas’s hair, his eyes heavy with sleep.

“Good night, Dean,” Cas whispered back as he placed a soft kiss in the center of Dean’s chest. He rested his head there and listened to the steady beating of Dean’s heart as he slowly slipped into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Here it is, the first smut chapter. May I say, in my own defense: I suck at writing smut. So I'm hella nervous about posting this. If you have any positive suggestions for improvement, please let me know!
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

But then he thought about a future with Dean, about eventually mating with him and having kids with him, and he already knew that was never going to happen. Dean would leave him; it was inevitable.

Really, it all just boiled down to one question: now or later?

Chapter Notes

Many thanks to my amazing friend for reading this and providing feedback. You know the friendship's on point when your straight friend agrees to read your gay porn for you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Dean walked out of the bathroom the next morning, his eyes immediately moving to the bed. He smiled at the sight Cas made, sprawled out across the bed on his stomach, his face buried in Dean’s pillow. Dean sat down on the edge of the bed and ran a gentle hand down Cas’s spine. Cas stirred but didn’t move otherwise.

“Time to wake up, Cas,” Dean coaxed as he gently shook the omega’s shoulder.

Cas startled awake at the touch, his face jerking up from the pillow. He looked around the room. Where was he? His sleep-addled brain struggled to remember how he’d gotten into a strange bed in a strange bedroom. He finally registered the firm hand rubbing his back, and he relaxed. He was with Dean.

“What time is it?” He mumbled, looking around for an alarm clock.

“Seven,” Dean replied matter-of-factly, and Cas groaned, “In the morning?”

“Yes, in the morning. Come on, time to get up,” Dean said, but Cas shook his head.

“Five more minutes,” He pleaded. He flopped back down onto the pillow, ready to sink back into sleep. He’d just snuggled his face into the warm fabric that smelled so deliciously of Dean when a sharp hand came down across his bare ass, causing him to yelp as his eyes flew open. Dean leaned down over him, his lips right next to Cas’s ear as he murmured, “You have exactly three seconds to be out of this bed, or I will put you over my knee. Yes, sir?”

“Yes, sir!” Cas squeaked.

The alpha stood up, and Cas stumbled over himself trying to get out of the bed. He turned to Dean, his face bashful as he clasped his hands in front of him. Dean seemed pleased at how quickly he’d obeyed, and stepped forward for a quick kiss. Before Cas could get lost in it, though, the alpha was pulling back, wrapping Cas’s hand in his. “Let’s go grab a shower.”
Cas allowed Dean to lead him toward the bathroom. “We’ll have to make this quick; I have to get ready for work,” Dean explained, and Cas paused at that. He’d thought that maybe, with what had happened the night before, Dean would at least take the morning off. Not that Cas needed the affirmation, but it would have been nice to spend some time with him. But then Cas remembered that this wasn’t the same for Dean as it was for him. To Cas, it had been monumental, earthshattering, his first time; but for Dean, it had been just another night.

Dean turned on the water and tested the temperature before he stepped into the stall, pulling Cas with him under the spray of water. He leaned down for a kiss, smiling fondly at the omega as he grabbed the shampoo from the shelf and squirted some into his palm. He began to lather Cas’s hair, and Cas leaned into the touch, sighing contentedly. His hands came up to trace the outline of Dean’s abs, fingers skimming over the toned muscle as water sluiced over them.

After Dean had washed Cas’s hair, he began to lather his own hair. Cas reached up on tiptoes to slide his own fingers into the alpha’s hair. His mouth brushed against Dean’s as he whispered, “I really wanna blow you.” Dean smirked and nodded. His firm hand on Cas’s shoulder guided Cas down to his knees on the shower floor.

The blow job didn’t last nearly as long as Cas would have liked. He’d just barely gotten his lips all the way to the base of the shaft, the head hitting the back of his throat, when Dean’s finger’s tightened in Cas’s hair, warning Cas that he was about to finish. Cas kept his mouth around Dean and hummed eagerly, letting the alpha know that it was okay to shoot in his mouth. Dean’s head tipped backward, his orgasm wrenching a loud groan from him as he shot straight down Cas’s throat. Cas licked the shaft clean before he stood and pressed his mouth against Dean’s for another hungry kiss.

After they’d gotten ready, Dean took Cas back to his apartment. He smiled apologetically at Cas as they pulled up to the curb. “I’m sorry I can’t spend the morning with you; some of our investors are coming in to the office today, and I’m expected to be there.”

“It’s fine,” Cas assured him. “I need to do some grocery shopping, anyways.”

“I’ll call you later?” Dean asked, and Cas nodded happily. He leaned across to peck Dean on the cheek.

“Thank you…for everything.” He murmured, a hesitant little smile playing at the corners of his mouth.

Dean cupped Cas’s jaw and tugged him in for a brief kiss. He pulled back just enough to murmur a soft, “Thank you. And I promise, I’ll make up for ditching you later.”

Cas’s smile widened, and he gave Dean another quick kiss before he pulled away and climbed out of the car. Dean watched him as he went inside, and Cas turned around to offer one final wave before he shut the door.

As soon as he walked into his apartment, he was greeted by catcalls and loud cheers of “The conquerer returns!”

He grinned as Inaias jumped up from the couch and wrapped him in a big hug. “My little baby’s all grown up and bedding rich alphas!”

“Get off of me, dumbass,” He groused, but his smile belied the words. Inaias grinned but didn’t step away. Balthazar hooked a finger into Cas’s shirt collar, pulling it away from his neck enough to study the skin there.
“Well, no bite, but that is quite the pretty little bruise you’ve got yourself,” He observed, and Cas blushed.

“We’re not going to mate, Balth,” He protested, but Balthazar shook his head, tsking his tongue in disapproval.

“Cas, I honestly thought more of your intellectual capability.” Cas opened his mouth to argue, but Balthazar pressed on. “I mean, yeah, he didn’t give you the bite, but he still marked you up real good.”

“We just got…carried away,” Cas muttered, his mind returning to the marks he’d left on Dean. Cas had gotten a better look at the scratches that morning in the shower when he’d washed Dean’s back. They weren’t incredibly deep, but they were still there, a small reminder on Dean’s skin that Cas had been with the alpha, that he’d claimed the alpha with his marks just as much as the alpha had claimed him with his.

“Sounds promising,” Balthazar prodded, smiling lecherously. “Care to share with the rest of the class?” Cas rolled his eyes and pushed them away so he could walk toward the kitchen.

“I’m going grocery shopping; either of you idiots need anything?” He asked as he opened the fridge to inspect their stock of milk and eggs. He sighed as he realized that almost everything in the fridge had either already expired or was about to. “God, it’s so hard to keep up with this shit. I mean, I’ve been so busy…” He trailed off.

“Yeah, and you’re about to get busier now that school’s starting up,” Balth reminded him.

“Speaking of school, are you still going to try to see Dean once the semester starts up? And by see, I mean fuck.” Inaias clarified as he reached around Cas to grab a beer. Cas closed the fridge and arched an eyebrow at Inaias as his friend took a long pull from the bottle.

“Inaias, why are you already drinking? It’s not even nine.”

“So? You know that we’re not going to be able to drink once the semester starts up, what with the random alcohol and drug tests. I’m already pretty high on their watchlist, I’m sure.”

“Yes, well maybe if you didn’t try to pull so much stupid shit…” Cas muttered.

“I’m the one pulling stupid shit? Honey, please! You’re the one who thinks he’s still going to be able to sneak off to fornicate with his boyfriend once the semester starts. You know how it is during the school year; they watch us like hawks.” Inaias reminded him, and just like that, Cas felt his good mood fall flat. Inaias was right. Between classes and work, Cas would have little to no time for Dean, and add on top of that the necessity of sneaking around… It would be nearly impossible to make it work.

“Maybe if I get all morning classes…” He murmured to himself, trying to work out a schedule that would allow him to still fit everything in. “Schedule early morning classes so that I can be done by ten; I could work from eleven to five or six, do classwork on breaks, and still have time to see Dean in the evening.”

“Yeah, and maybe if you forego eating and sleeping for the next year, it might just work,” Balth suggested, sarcasm dripping from his tone. Cas groaned and dropped his head into his hands; Balth was right. It was going to be a very tight squeeze.

“I’ll just see what happens in my meeting with the registrar this afternoon and work my way from there.” Cas decided.
Cas’s meeting with the registrar was a bust. All of the classes he needed for his course of study met in the mid-morning and early afternoon, meaning that he’d have to split his work schedule between a morning shift and a late afternoon shift. He’d done it before and managed, but he hadn’t had Dean before.

Cas wondered if he should just tell Dean that it wasn’t going to work and let the alpha go. Cas tried to ignore the tinge of pain that ran through him as he thought about saying goodbye to Dean. Yeah, it might hurt a little now, but it would be easier that way, in the long run. Cas could go back to his regular, boring college life with work and classes, and Dean could go back to his exciting life with yachts and models.

“I don’t think that’s what he wants,” Balthazar said as they talked about it over Sunday brunch.

“Oh, really? Because you’re suddenly the expert on all things Dean Smith?” Cas deadpanned. Balth rolled his eyes.

“No, you annoying fucker, but I am an expert on all things human. That man, he wants you.”

“Well, he’s had me.” Cas pointed out, “So we should be good on that front.”

Balthazar threw down his fork, suddenly fed up. “Cas, why the hell do you always do that? Why is it so hard for you to believe that he might actually want you?” Cas opened his mouth to protest that Dean did want him, but Balth cut him off, “For more than just sex? Do you even see the way he looks at you?”

Cas set down his own fork, his eyes angry. “Yes, okay? I know. He looks at me like I’m the fucking most amazing thing he’s ever seen in his life. But I’m not, okay? I’m just some nerdy college kid who managed to escape from his college’s rules for a few months.”

Balth thought about it, and he realized Cas was right. It would be very difficult to pull something like that off.

“Well, college isn’t forever…” Balth tried, but Cas shook his head.

“I have three years left. That’s a long time for anyone to wait. And after college, I’ll have to go back to my parents’ house; and if you think the college is strict…” He let the thought hang between them before a moment before continuing, “I can’t ask that of him, okay?”

"At least talk to him. Give him the choice," Balth suggested. Cas said nothing, so Balth took it as a small victory. At least he hadn't said no.

"Why do you care so much?” Cas suddenly asked. Balth looked surprised by the question, and he had to think for a moment before responding.

"You're happier." He stated simply. He could immediately tell from Cas's expression that wouldn't be a good enough explanation, so he tried to find a better way to phrase it. "I don't know if it's because this is the first time you're actually doing something you want, or if it's him, or what. But you finally look like you're enjoying life, not just enduring it."
Cas took a bite and chewed slowly as he considered that. He thought about his time with Dean, and he realized that his friend was right. He was happy with Dean, something that he couldn't remember being in a really long time. Being with Dean made him feel excited, wanted. He’d never had that with anybody before. And now that he had it, he found himself rebelling against the thought of letting it go. He should talk to Dean. There was no point in losing a good thing that didn't need to be lost, right?

But then he thought about a future with Dean, about eventually mating with him and having kids with him, and he already knew that was never going to happen. Dean would leave him eventually; it was inevitable. But Cas had a choice about how it happened. He could lose Dean now on his own terms, walking away without a backward glance, or he could let Dean leave him behind later, proving that Cas hadn't been good enough. So really, it all just boiled down to one question: now or later?

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When Dean asked Cas out for dinner on Tuesday, he still hadn't decided, so he went. He laughed when Dean told him about stupid shit he'd pulled in college, he blushed when Dean complimented his new shirt, he melted when Dean kissed him in the car, and he accepted when Dean invited him back to his place.

And in the silence of Dean's penthouse, when the touches grew urgent and the kisses hungry, he gave himself to the alpha completely, not holding anything back. But then after, in the quiet darkness that surrounded their joined bodies, the question arose in the back of his mind, persistent and invasive. Now or later?

This continued on for three weeks; they would go out on dates, and Cas would enjoy himself so much. He would hold Dean's hand and steal kisses from the alpha. He would tease and flirt and blush like nothing was wrong, but the thought was always there in the back of his mind. With every stuttered beat, the question repeated in his mind. Now or later?

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"Next customer, please," Cas called one Friday afternoon, and a perky girl with blonde hair and a too-bright smile stepped up to the counter. Cas thought she looked vaguely familiar, but given that he was at work, he'd probably seen her when she ordered coffee before. "What can I get for you?" He asked.

The girl smiled flirtatiously. "You're Castiel Novak, right?" She asked eagerly. Cas drew up short at her question.

"Yes?" He replied, and the girl hopped up and down excitedly.

"I knew it! Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?"

"About?" Cas wondered, his stomach turning anxiously. She held out her phone to him, showing him the screen. Cas's eyes widened as he saw a picture of him and Dean kissing outside of his apartment building.

"Dean Smith, of course." She said it so matter or factly, but Cas's mind had screeched to a halt. Why the hell did she have a picture of him on her phone?
"Uhhhh..." He stuttered out, trying to collect his thoughts enough to tell her to fuck off.

"Great!" She pulled out a notepad and asked, "How does Lisa Braeden feel about your dating her alpha?"

The question jolted him. Cas's mind finally started to function again, and he realized why she looked familiar. She was one of the columnists Cas had read when he first looked up Dean Smith. Her name was Britney or Becky or something.

He opened his mouth, about to reply angrily, when Meg stepped up next to him, laying a soft hand on his shoulder. "Castiel, why don't you go ahead on break? I can take care of our guest here." Her smile and tone were nothing but sweet, but her eyes were venomous.

Cas nodded and hurried toward the back, ignoring Becky's annoyed, "But..."

Meg cut her off. "I'm sorry, but I don't take kindly to people harassing my employees. This is a coffee shop, not a gossip blog. You either order a drink, or you leave. What's it gonna be?"

Cas didn't hear the columnist's reply as the door swung shut behind him. He nearly ran all the way to the back and slumped down onto one of the chairs there. He dropped his head into his hands and rubbed at his eyes. His stomach still churned unpleasantly from the brief interaction.

It hadn't lasted long, but it had been long enough. Her single question had been more than sufficient to punch the air out of Cas. She'd called Dean Lisa's alpha, Cas recalled numbly. He let out a snort at his own shock. Well, of course she'd called him that; that's what he was. He was, for all intents and purposes, already claimed.

Cas had never asked Dean about his relationship with Lisa, but he knew enough about the pair to know that they somehow always found their way back to each other. Cas knew that when his thing with Dean ended, the alpha would go back to her again. Everyone knew it, which meant that they didn't view Cas as a young, happy omega with his alpha. They viewed him, at best, as a snack between courses or, at worst, as a thief stealing another omega's mate.

If Cas needed anymore reason to call things off with Dean, he had it now. He wouldn't let them look at what he had with Dean as something wrong, to look at Dean as wrong. He wouldn't do that to Dean; he wouldn't ruin his reputation. He had to break up with the alpha now.

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When Dean texted the next day to invite him to dinner, Cas agreed. His stomach dropped when Dean texted, "Wear something nice." Fuck. Dean was taking him somewhere nice, and Cas was going to break up with him.

When Dean texted him saying that Benny was going to pick him up, Cas nearly sighed in relief. That meant he wouldn't have to see Dean for a little while longer, wouldn't have to put on a fake smile and pretend that everything was okay. Or maybe he shouldn't... Maybe he should just get it over with right off the bat. That would be better, right? It would kinda be a dick move if he let the alpha buy him dinner knowing that he was going to end things afterward.

When Benny picked him up, he offered a small smile and a murmur of thanks as he slid into the back seat. As they drove toward the restaurant, Cas's mind swirled with uncertainty and sadness. He didn't realize that Benny had been studying him in the rearview mirror until the driver said, "You seem awfully distracted this evening."

Cas's head shot up as his eyes met the driver's through the mirror. He smiled tightly. "Just thinking,"
He explained. He hesitated for a moment before asking, "You take care of him, right? Of Dean, I mean."

Benny nodded. "It's part of my job to protect him, yes. But taking care of him... I thought that was more your area of expertise." Cas felt something crumble inside of him at the words. He almost mumbled that it wouldn't be for much longer, but thought better of it.

When Benny pulled up to the restaurant, Cas sighed inwardly. Just like he'd thought, it was a really nice place.

"Mr. Smith will be driving you home afterwards," Benny explained, and Cas nodded. He smiled again, "Thank you for everything, Benny." He got out of the car and walked inside.

The maître d glanced him over and smiled, "Mr. Novak?" Cas nodded, and the man led him back into the restaurant, all the way to the back to a private room. He smiled kindly as he opened the door and motioned him forward. "Mr. Smith is waiting."

"Thank you," Cas murmured as he stepped through. His entire posture relaxed when he saw Dean, handsome and tall and strong and perfect, standing by the small round table set for two. But then he remembered what he was about to do, and he tensed back up again. Dean held out his hand toward Cas, and the omega's feet carried him forward of their own volition. He took the alpha's warm hand, his own grip clammy with nerves.

"Hey," Dean murmured, pulling Cas in for a kiss. Cas almost resisted, but then he remembered that this was going to be the last time he ever got to kiss the alpha. He allowed himself to be drawn in, despite knowing what a mistake it was.

The knowledge that it would be his last taste of Dean caused panic to flare in him, sharp and painful, turning his kiss desperate. He pressed tight against Dean, determined to take as much as he possibly could, as if he could store it up for the long, lonely days ahead.

He felt Dean hesitate, obviously confused by his behavior. This wasn't one of their normal greeting kisses. Cas renewed his attack to Dean's mouth, trying to draw out the kiss for as long as possible, but Dean pulled away, his eyes concerned. "What's wrong, Cas?"

It was only when Dean swiped his thumb across Cas's cheek that Cas realized he'd started crying.

"I'm sorry," He whispered.

"For what?" Dean asked, his eyes intent on Cas's. Cas shook his head, unwilling to speak because he knew what he had to say. "Tell me, Cas," Dean said, his tone firm. Cas knew he couldn't put it off any longer now. He opened his mouth to reply, girding himself for his next words, when there was a light knock on the door.

"Hello?" A soft female voice called as the door opened behind Cas, but he didn't turn to see who it was. He kept his eyes on Dean's chin as the alpha spoke to the newcomer.

"Lisa, Bela! What are you doing here?" He asked, his arms sliding around Cas to hold him close when the omega stiffened.

"Lisa, Bela! What are you doing here?" He asked, his arms sliding around Cas to hold him close when the omega stiffened.

"Well, hello to you, too," A woman with a British accent spoke. "Lisa and I were just trying to be friendly."

"We saw your friend passing by with Charles, and I figured you'd be back here," The first woman's voice explained, the tone soft and appealing. Cas realized that it must be Lisa speaking, and his mind
latched onto the fact that she knew exactly where Dean would be. Hell, he’d probably brought her to this very room before, and he probably would again once Cas was gone.

"Have you met before?" He asked, glancing down at Cas. Cas shook his head, but Lisa was the one who answered.

"No, but Bela recognized him from the picture."

Cas froze at the mention of the picture. He hadn't told Dean about Becky's visit the day before. Dean looked to Lisa, his eyebrows furrowing, "What picture?"

"The one plastered all over every gossip site," Bela explained, her tone implying that she thought he was an idiot as she tapped away at her phone to bring up the image. She brought it up on Becky's site and held the phone out to Dean. Cas felt the alpha’s arms tighten around him, and he turned his head from Dean's chest to look. It was the same picture Becky had shown him, but plastered across the bottom of the image was the word "Homewrecker?"  

Cas's eyes flickered toward the two women who still stood in the doorway, and he drew up short. They were both gorgeous, tall and elegant in their expensive dresses, and Cas felt like a dowdy country bumpkin next to them. But their expressions didn't match their appearance. Cas had thought that they would look at him with contempt or disdain, possibly even blame him for the picture, but there was nothing but concern in their faces. Lisa, whom he recognized from the pictures online, smiled encouragingly as they made eye contact.

"Cas," Dean murmured, his tone apologetic, pulling the omega's attention back to him. He obviously thought that Cas's tears were from this picture. He opened his mouth, searching for a way to comfort his omega, but Lisa spoke up before he could say anything.

"Listen, Castiel, honey," Lisa soothed, "don't worry about it. That girl spews out nothing but hateful trash. Nobody who reads that actually believes it."

Cas was shocked at her kindness. Wasn't she mad at him for taking Dean? But when his eyes met hers, and there was understanding there. He smiled hesitantly at her and nodded. It was nice to know that at least she didn't hate him or blame him. It didn't change anything; he still had to let Dean go. He didn't want to do it in front of Dean's friends, though, so he decided to make himself scarce until they'd left.

He looked up at Dean, his eyes still moist. "I'd like to go get freshened up, please." Dean nodded, although he seemed reluctant to let Cas go.

"It's down that hall right outside the door," Lisa said, and Cas delicately extricated himself from the alpha's grasp. He smiled at the two women, "I'm Cas, by the way. Sorry about all this." He gestured toward his wet cheeks, but Lisa's smile was kind.

"Listen, we've all been there. Just last month, Becky said that Bela's outfit was a crime against humanity," She teased, trying to make Cas feel better.

"I sobbed for a day!" Bela assured him, and Cas giggled, in spite of his tears.

He wiped at his cheeks with his hand. "Um, excuse me," Cas murmured as he scooted past them toward the door.

He took the hall like Lisa had said and found the bathrooms at the end. He went into the omega bathroom and moved toward the sink. He began to wash his hands while his eyes studied his reflection in the mirror. God, he looked awful. The bags under his eyes looked even more prominent
than usual, and his cheeks looked drawn and pale. This entire thing was taking so much out of him.

Cas’s mind turned to Lisa. She probably wouldn’t let a silly little breakup tear her to pieces. She’d be strong, which was what Dean needed. He needed a mate who could face the good and the bad with him. It was obvious that she supported Dean and his decisions. She hadn’t even known Cas, but she’d still taken his side. She’d made that decision completely based on her friendship with Dean. Either that, or she was just a really nice person. Which, if that was the case, Cas was glad for it. Dean needed someone like that; he deserved someone like that. The only thing standing between him and someone like that...was Cas.

Cas just needed to get this over with, be done with it. He knew how this was going to end, so why was he prolonging it? It should be so simple to do, really. He just had to explain that his schedule wouldn’t permit him to be in a relationship.

But what should have been simple was turning into something so incredibly difficult. Now that the time had actually come, he found that he couldn’t let it go. He was too selfish. He thought about all of Dean’s possible reactions, from anger to indifference to hurt to relief, and he found that he wouldn’t be able to handle any of them.

"I can't do it yet," he murmured to his reflection. "I can't." But he also knew that he couldn't go back to that room, so small and intimate and stifling. Dean would be waiting for him there, his green eyes kind and concerned as he tried to comfort Cas and promise him that everything would be okay. But Cas knew that it wouldn't be okay.

Cas stood there with the towel in his hands, wavering between the choices. He could go break up with Dean now and leave them both in misery, or he could go eat with him and pretend that everything was fine when it really wasn't. Or there was a third option...

The thought had no sooner flitted across Cas’s mind and he was rushing from the bathroom, his only thought escape. As he passed through the main dining room, his heart slammed against his ribcage, and his eyes darted about, keeping watch for Dean. He kept praying that Dean didn’t see him or try to stop him. He didn't allow himself to look back as he hurried toward the front door, out to the street beyond.

"I need a cab," he told the valet. The man must have sensed his desperation, because he immediately ran out to the road and hailed down a cab. Cas practically threw himself into the backseat, shouting his address at the driver before he'd even shut the door behind him.

As the driver pulled away, Cas curled himself into a tight ball, wrapping his arms around his middle to try to hold his broken pieces together just long enough to make it home. He lasted for all of about five seconds before the sobs overtook him. It was for the best, he repeated to himself over and over again; maybe if he kept repeating it, he'd eventually believe it. He could feel his heart clenching tighter and tighter as the cab sped further away from the restaurant, further away from Dean.

Chapter End Notes

CLIFFHANGER!!!!! I know, I hate a cliffhanger as much as the next girl. But really, it's not that hard to figure out how this is going to go... Yeah.

Now, on to some matters of business. Due to the school year starting again, I have decided that I will be posting a new chapter each weekend. Hopefully, by putting
myself on a schedule, it will keep me accountable to make sure I write/post every week (plus, with that schedule, I already have the next month taken care of!).

Yes, in case you can't already tell, this fic is going to be looooooong as fuck. I mean, the fic is about Cas being dean's kept boy, and we still haven't even gotten to the part about him being kept! But this chapter was the buildup for that, so you'll see that dynamic enter their relationship soon.

As always, please leave me comments, questions, and suggestions!! I love hearing from you bc it helps me know what areas need more work/explanation (Positive criticism only, please! My poor heart can't handle too much negative lol).

Ok, enjoy. Byeee!!
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Cas felt like he'd been slapped. He'd always worried that his lack of experience in bed would chase the older alpha away. He'd never even considered his lack of experience outside of the bedroom.

Figured, though. He'd known, deep down, that one way or another, he wouldn't be good enough. He couldn't be.

Chapter Notes

More thanks to my amazing friends who proofed this chapter for me! Love you guys.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When the cab reached his building, Cas paid the driver and stumbled up the stairs toward his apartment. He fumbled with his keys for a few seconds before he was finally able to let himself in with shaky fingers. Balth and Inaias looked up from their video game, eyes widening as they took in Cas's disheveled appearance, but he didn't acknowledge them as he ran straight to his bedroom.

"Holy shit, I think he did it," Inaias said just before Cas slammed the door shut.

He threw himself onto the bed and grabbed his pillow to hold it against his stomach as he curled into a tight ball. His head was throbbing, his eyes burned, and his throat was hoarse from all of the crying, but he still couldn't stop. He rolled over onto his side and buried his face into the mattress, muffling his frustrated scream. Why did this have to be so hard?

Eventually, his sobs abated until he was left with nothing but sniffles and weak hiccups. He lay there, staring at the wall, wondering what Dean was doing right now. As he thought about Dean and his bright eyes and his warm smile, a small smile drifted across his face. His eyelids grew heavy. He had just started drifting off to sleep when he was suddenly jolted awake by a loud banging.

He bolted upright, his mind scrambling. What the hell? He climbed out of bed and walked out into the hall just in time to see Balth open the front door for the furious alpha.

"Where the hell is he?" Dean demanded. His eyes swept the apartment and landed on Cas. "You!"

He pointed at the omega and started moving toward him, his eyes flashing, his stride purposeful. Cas had never seen him angry before, and it was a little frightening.

"Dean..." Cas faltered, unable to tear his eyes away from the alpha as he slowly backed up. His back hit the wall behind him, and he was left with nowhere to go. Dean didn't slow down, and within seconds he was right in the omega's space, grabbing the sides of his face as he bent down to claim a rough kiss.

His lips were bruising, punishing even, and Cas whimpered against the alpha's mouth. His eyes slid
shut as his hands came up to grip Dean's wrists, his nails digging into the skin. Dean growled as he shoved his tongue into Cas's mouth to thrust against the omega's, tantalizing him, baiting him, driving him crazy.

Cas distantly heard Balth and Inaias leave the apartment with the promise of returning much later. He felt panic flare up within him, sharp and bright, at the realization that he was suddenly alone with an angry, powerful alpha. But then one of Dean's hands was stroking down the side of his cheek in a soothing motion, and Cas remembered whom he was with. This was Dean; he trusted Dean.

Cas gave up complete control of the kiss to the alpha. He was slightly in awe of the fact that even like this, angry and hungry as he was, Dean still maintained a steel rein on his actions. Every nip of teeth, every swipe of tongue, every renewed press of lips was controlled, purposeful, intended to draw a specific reaction from the small omega. When Dean bit down on the omega's lower lip hard enough to bruise the skin there, Cas moaned hungrily, his own tongue reaching out to find Dean's.

Then he remembered that he wasn't supposed to be kissing the alpha. He was supposed to be leaving him. He shoved at Dean's chest with both hands, pushing the alpha away. "No!" He gasped out.

Dean looked startled at the outburst, his chest heaving as he struggled to catch his breath. "No?" His voice sounded dangerous, but Cas wouldn't back down.

"No! What the hell are you thinking, barging into my apartment, acting like you own me!" Cas yelled, suddenly angry.

"What the hell am I thinking? No, Cas, what the hell were you thinking, leaving like that? Something could have happened to you!" Dean replied, his voice sharp.

"Really? Are you sure that's what this is about? Because if I didn't know any better, I'd say it's about your need to control everything. What, did things not go exactly the way you wanted? Are you going to punish me because I didn't follow your script?" Cas goaded. "Maybe you should put me over your knee! You keep threatening to spank me; maybe it's time to make good on your threats, teach me not to disobey. That's what this really is about, isn't it? My obedience."

Dean's expression was incredulous. "No! I'm not here to punish you, I'm here to make sure you're okay."

"Why?" Cas challenged, his tone petulant.

"Because you ran off in the middle of dinner, no explanation, nothing! What the hell did you think was going to happen? Did you think I'd just let you go without another word? You could have been hurt or worse!"

"Well, as you can see, I'm fine. So you can go. Now!" He pointed at the door.

"No! Something is wrong, and I am not leaving until you tell me what it is." Dean said, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides. "Tell me what's wrong so I can take care of it."

"Oh, so you'll take care of everything, just like you always do! Never mind if it's my problem. I obviously can't be trusted to take care of my own problems!" Cas knew he was being unreasonable, but he didn't care. After internalizing so much of the pain, it felt good to finally lash out at someone. "I'm an adult, Dean!"

"Really?" Dean countered, just as angry. "Cause you're not acting like it. Adults don't run out on their dates in the middle of dinner. Adults talk through their problems instead of running away from them. Right now, you're not acting like an adult; you're acting like a child."
Cas felt like he’d been slapped. He’d always worried that his lack of experience in bed would chase the older alpha away. He’d never even considered his lack of experience outside of the bedroom. Figured, though. He’d known, deep down, that one way or another, he wouldn't be good enough. He couldn’t be.

He stared at Dean in shock, his mind scrambling for a way to retaliate. But Cas couldn't do that; that was childish. He wasn't a child. He didn't need Dean thinking of him as a child anymore than he already did. He needed to end this with some maturity, or else it would just look like a child throwing a tantrum.

He could feel tears threatening again, despite all of the crying he'd already done, but he fought the urge down. He would not cry in front of Dean. He drew in a deep breath, locking down his emotions like he'd learned to do with Zachariah. It was easy, falling back into that mindspace he'd learned so well as a child.

//My face is just a mask// he reminded himself. He'd always fooled Zachariah then, and he could fool Dean now. When he looked up at the alpha, his expression was blank, his eyes shuttered.

"I'm sorry." He stated simply. "You're right. I am acting like a child. I should have just told you."

Dean drew up short. What the hell had just happened? It was like Cas had pulled a complete 180. Within the space of a second, he'd gone from angry and passionate to cold and clinical. It was...wrong. Even his eyes, usually so vibrantly blue and full of life, had somehow dulled to flat and lifeless. This wasn't Dean's omega who giggled and blushed and smiled happily. His face was blank, eyes empty, like something had gone out in him.

"Told me what?" Dean asked, his expression cautious.

"I'm breaking up with you."

Now it was Dean's turn to look stunned. "What?" He choked out, his voice hoarse.

"I can't do this anymore." Cas explained with a careless shrug. "The semester is starting again soon, and I just can't handle a full work and class schedule and keep seeing you." He said it flatly, like it was no big deal, when in reality, he was trembling inside, praying for the strength to make it through.

"Cas, you can't do that!" Dean protested, his eyes suddenly panicked.

"Why? Because I'm a child?" Cas asked.

"Look, I didn't mean..." Dean started, but Cas shook his head.

"Yes, you did. And you're right. I'm a kid; I don't know how to do any of this." He gestured between himself and Dean. "And you need someone who does know, someone you don't have to babysit all the time."

"Cas, stop!" Dean demanded, his voice desperate. "Stop saying shit like that. It was a slip of the tongue."

"Sometimes slips of the tongue are the most honest words spoken. Trust me, this will be better, for both of us. I can focus on my studies, and you can go back to Lisa."

Dean's expression turned incredulous. "Lisa? What the fuck does Lisa have to do with this?"

"She's your omega, or she will be someday." Cas replied, ignoring the twist of pain those words
"I don't have a mate, Cas! And when I do choose one, it's sure as hell not going to be Lisa. She's like my annoying little sister, more than anything else." Dean admitted. Cas felt his heart lift at the words, but he immediately clamped down on the flutter of hope. Even if it wasn't Lisa, Dean would still choose someone else someday.

"Well then, whoever it will be, it's not going to be me. I just...I don't quite make the grade." Cas offered a half smile.

"This isn't about some sort of grade! This is about who I want, and I want you." Dean cried, frustrated at Cas's lack of emotion. God, he'd take the anger again over this...emptiness.

Cas's smile was understanding. "I'm sure you do, but what about next month when you won't be able to see me for days at a time? What about next year, when we haven't been able to spend the night together in months?"

"We can make it work, Cas!" Dean promised, but Cas didn't stop talking.

"How? If we do stay together, we'll have to sneak around like our relationship is something wrong. Do you really want to do that for the next three years, Dean? Always hiding and lying about what we have?"

"I don't care! We can keep it a damn secret. Just give me a chance. We can work it out!" Dean said. He reached up to grab Cas by the face as he pleaded, "Please, just give me the chance to figure something out!"

Cas stared at him, slightly in shock. He'd thought that when he broke it off, Dean would be relieved. But Dean seemed...desperate. Which couldn't be the case; it didn't make any sense. Why would Dean Smith, millionaire alpha with omegas falling over themselves for him, be desperate for someone like him?

"Dean, I don't think you understand." Cas finally started to sound exasperated. "I'm giving you an out, no questions asked."

"Well, I don't want an out. I want to stay right here with you." He pointed his index finger at Cas.

"Why won't you just accept that this is going to end and let it go?" Cas asked.

"I guess I'm just stubborn." Dean said firmly. "Look, I'm not going to say that you're wrong about this ending someday, because it might. But I'd rather take the chance that maybe we could have something great until it does end instead of just breaking it off now based on a bunch of what if's."

"Either way we go, whether we stay together or break up, there's going to be a lot of what if's," Cas reasoned, his voice sad. "But if we break it off now, there will be less heartache later, for both of us."

Dean stared at him for several seconds before throwing his hands up in frustration. "Fine! Let's break it off! Let's end a good thing." Dean huffed. Cas felt his stomach drop. Well, this was what he wanted, right? He glanced down, willing his mask not to slip, but then Dean grabbed him by the chin and lifted his head. Cas was shocked at the challenge in the alpha's eyes. "But not before you tell me the real reason why."

"I told you the reason why. My classes—" Cas started, his expression still carefully blank, but Dean shook his head.
"Don't you dare lie to me, Castiel. That's not the real reason; I can tell it's not, just like I can tell that this...persona you're putting on isn't really you."

"How do you know this isn't me? Maybe I've been faking with you this whole time," Cas tried weakly, but Dean shook his head, smirking.

"You forget, Cas. I know you, inside and out. I looked straight into your eyes when my knot locked us together that first time, and I saw you. The real you. And this," he pointed at the omega, "isn't what I saw."

And just like that, the mask started to crack. It should have scared Cas, how easily Dean had seen straight through him, but it didn't. Cas deflated as he slumped back against the wall for support. His face crumpled, and he shook his head. "I knew I shouldn't have let this happen," he whispered. "I knew it would just hurt more."

"It doesn't have to hurt, Cas. This doesn't have to end; we can work something out!"

"But if I let this go on, it will just hurt more when you leave me later." Cas reasoned, his eyes pained.

Understanding lit on Dean's features "So that's what this is really about." He murmured, and Cas nodded pitifully.

He took a deep breath as he finally admitted, "I didn't want to lose you to someone else, so I figured I'd leave you before you left me."

Dean looked shocked for a moment, like he hadn't anticipated Cas's being so honest. "Why would I leave you?" He finally asked.

"Because you'll get bored with me." Cas explained. "You'll get tired of having to wait for me and having to put up with my stupidity."

"Cas, you're not stupid. You should never say that about yourself." Dean chided.

Cas shook his head, "I am, though! I don't know anything about any of this. I feel like you don't ever enjoy what we do because you spend the entire time making sure I'm doing everything right."

Dean stared at him incredulously. "Baby, do you know how rare it is, to find someone who gives so much of themselves as willingly as you do? Every time I ask you to do something, you throw yourself into it wholeheartedly." Cas blushed and looked away, but Dean squeezed his chin and made him look back.

"Ours is probably some of the best sex I've ever had. Yeah, I had to give you some guidance here and there, but you picked up on it so quickly. And your reactions are so perfect, so awe-inspiring. I thrills me that I get to be the very first person to make you feel those things."

"Really?" Cas muttered.

"Really." He looked hesitant as he reached out to pull Cas against him. Cas froze for a brief moment, wondering if he should push the alpha away again, but then Dean started stroking soft fingers up and down his spine, and Cas realized that he was tired of fighting against something that they both wanted. He sank against Dean, his arms wrapping around his alpha. He felt Dean sag in relief when he finally gave himself over to the touch.

They stood there in silence for several long minutes, wrapped up in each other. Cas buried his face against the alpha's chest and listened to his steady heartbeat, allowing his own heart to fall back into
rhythm with it.

Dean was the first to break the silence. "I'm sorry I called you a child; I was angry and worried, and I didn't think before I spoke." Dean murmured, pressing a kiss to the top of Cas's head. Cas stiffened in his hold; he'd almost forgotten that.

"It's fine." He replied, almost too quickly. "I shouldn't have goaded you with the whole control and spanking thing." Dean wondered at the quick subject change, but let it go.

"It's okay. Although, I will say that I have used spanking before, and it is very effective."

Cas shivered against him at the words, something that Dean immediately caught onto. He almost asked about it, but then decided they had more pressing things to talk about. He pulled back from Cas just far enough to look him straight in the eye as he spoke.

"We need to talk about what happened tonight." Dean said, and Cas nodded meekly. "What you did was rash, foolish even, and I feel like we may need to set some ground rules for here on out." Dean decided, and Cas glanced up at him.

"What kind of rules?" He asked hesitantly.

"Common sense rules that will help both of us." Dean assured him, and Cas was reminded that above all else, Dean was his alpha. He wanted to protect Cas. He nodded mutely, indicating for Dean to continue.

"First rule: you must never lie to me, just like I will never lie to you." Dean promised. "This includes both blatant lies and withheld information." He explained.

"Withheld information? Like, in general, or specifically regarding us?" Cas wondered.

"Specifically regarding you and your safety and comfort, both in and out of our relationship." Dean clarified. "Like, with the picture. You had seen it before, but you hadn't told me about it. Why?"

"I didn't want to upset you," Cas admitted. "I guess that didn't work out too well."

"Why would the picture have upset me, Cas?" Dean prodded.

"Because of how I found out about it..." Cas hedged. Dean stared at him expectantly, waiting for him to explain further.

Cas licked his lips nervously. "Becky. She, uh, came by my work yesterday to ask me some questions." Dean's eyebrows furrowed, so Cas hurried to assure him, "I didn't answer any of them; I didn't even really talk to her before Meg shoved me into the back and pretty much told her to get the hell out. I don't think she took it too well."

The alpha looked somber for several moments before he spoke. "If something like that ever happens again, you must tell me immediately. I would count withholding that information about Becky as a lie." Cas swallowed. "Any lies, whether blatant or by omission, will be punished. Do you understand?"

Cas hesitated. He would be punished for lying to Dean...that made some sense, given the nature of their relationship. But what about when Dean lied to him? Would he be held accountable? Cas thought about voicing his concern, but then realized that if they didn't figure out a way to make this work, the rules wouldn't really matter, anyway.
What would be the purpose of causing strife if nothing was going to come of the relationship? He decided to bide his time until they figured out something definite.

He nodded at the alpha. "Yes, sir, I understand."

"Second, you must always consult me on decisions regarding our relationship; we will discuss the problem and reach a resolution together. Tonight, you were ready to completely end everything based on your own fear. If you had simply come to me and told me how you were feeling, I would have been able to save us both a lot of anxiety."

"I'm sorry; I just didn't think it through." Cas apologized again.

"I know you're sorry, and I know you thought that you were doing the right thing. But you can't act that rashly ever again. If something had happened to you... I never would have been able to forgive myself. Which leads to our third... Well, it's more of a preference than a rule."

Cas furrowed his eyebrows. That sounded ominous.

"I'm not saying you can't go out after dark, and I'm not giving you a curfew or anything like that, but I would prefer to know if you do go out late." Dean explained. Cas looked a little offended, and Dean smiled kindly at him. "It's not that I don't trust you or your judgment; I just... I panicked, not knowing where you went tonight. It was probably the most scared I'd been in a long time. So, for my peace of mind, I would like it if you would just shoot me a text letting me know that everything's okay with you."

Cas looked down at where his fingers toyed with a button on Dean's shirt. It wasn't a totally unreasonable request, and it wasn't like Dean was putting any sort of limitations on him. He glanced up at Dean.

"Um, will you do the same for me? Like, if we haven't seen each other in a couple of days? I'd kinda like to know that you're okay, as well." Cas explained.

Dean nodded immediately, "Yes, of course." Cas smiled and looked down at Dean's chest again. He seemed lost in thought for a couple of minutes, when a sudden blush rose up along his cheeks.

"Um, will I be punished for what I did tonight?" Cas asked, his voice filled with trepidation.

Dean shook his head. "No, because we had not set the rules yet. But now that they are in place, any breaking of them will result in a punishment."

"What would my punishment have been?" Cas wondered, trying to keep his tone casual.

"Probably a spanking, like you said earlier." Dean replied matter-of-factly, and Cas shivered in his arms again. That was the second time Cas had reacted that way to the mention of spanking... "Why?" Dean asked, his dark eyes suddenly predatory.

"Um, it's just that... I wonder if it would hurt a lot?" Cas whispered. In that moment, his face looked so innocent and pure and everything Dean wished he could be.

Dean suddenly understood. "It all depends on what we'd use for the spanking," Dean explained, his voice dropping to a low rumble. "Sometimes, if it's not too bad, I'll just use my hand. Other times, if it's really bad, I'll use something harder, like a paddle."

"A paddle?" Cas whispered, and Dean nodded. Cas looked back down at his chest, the blush worsening.
"You know, there's other kinds of spanking, too. You don't have to break a rule to ask for a spanking," Dean informed him. Cas's pupils dilated at that, and his breath hitched. "Do you want me to spank you, Cas?" Dean asked, his voice low and sultry. Cas hesitated for only a moment before he looked up at the alpha and nodded.

"All you have to do is ask," Dean murmured.

Cas blushed as he forced the words out, his eyes looking anywhere but the alpha's face. "Will you spank me?"

Dean grasped him by the chin and brought his face up until their eyes met. "What do we say when we want something?"

Cas licked his lips, a quick flash of defiance running through his eyes as he whispered, "Will you spank me, please?"

Dean smiled proudly. He leaned down for a quick kiss before he released Cas. "Take everything but your underwear off and then meet me in the kitchen," He instructed. He walked into the kitchen, leaving Cas alone in the hall. Cas quickly removed his clothes and set them aside, stripping everything but his bright green briefs before he followed Dean into the kitchen.

Cas stopped in the kitchen doorway, naked but for the brightly colored briefs, waiting for further instructions. He looked expectantly at Dean, his hands folded tightly in front of him.

Dean had removed his suit coat and tie and left them hanging them over the back of a chair. He'd rolled up his shirt sleeves to his elbows, accentuating the lean muscles in his forearms. Cas's eyes followed the line of muscle down the alpha's arms to his hands; they were so big.

"Come here," Dean said, holding his hand out to Cas. The omega timidly stepped forward and placed his slim hand inside of Dean's much larger one. Dean ran a possessive hand down the center of Cas's chest, down his stomach to his underwear.

"Do you always wear underwear like this?" Dean asked as he snapped the waistband against Cas's flushed skin.

Cas nodded, swallowing thickly. "I like the colors." He explained unnecessarily. Dean's eyes flickered up to his with a knowing look.

"I bet it feels like having a little secret that nobody else knows about." The guilty flush that rose up along Cas's cheeks confirmed his suspicion. "You like having dirty little secrets, don't you?" Cas nodded, his breaths growing labored as Dean continued to run his fingers over the top of his underwear.

"Have you ever worn panties before?" Dean asked, his tone casual.

"Panties?" Cas asked.

"Lingerie," Dean explained, and the blush on Cas's cheeks worsened. He shook his head no. "I think you'd probably like it."

"I, uh, certainly wouldn't mind trying it," Cas offered, and Dean smiled.

"Good; we'll go shopping tomorrow." The alpha promised. He pulled out one of the chairs at the table and sat down on it.
He pulled the omega to sit on his lap so that they were face to face. "Since it is our very first time, we are only going to do ten. Before we do, though, we have to talk about safety." Cas nodded.

"When I give you instructions, you must follow them to the letter. If I tell you to stay still, you will stay still. When I'm using something a little harder on you, the instinct will be to move away. But if you try to move right as I try to spank you, I could end up hitting you somewhere dangerous," Dean paused to make sure Cas understood before continuing.

"You will also need to choose a safeword that you can remember easily under physical duress." Dean advised.

Cas shook his head. "But I trust you..."

"And I'm glad you do," Dean smiled gently. "But this isn't just about trust. If we're role playing when we scene, you might plead for me to stop as part of the role. We need to establish a way for me to tell the difference between play and reality. The safeword lets me know that you're serious about stopping. If you use it, I will immediately stop."

Cas thought for a moment before he decided, "Gerbil." Dean's eyebrows lifted at that, but he didn't ask.

"Gerbil it is, then." Dean said. "One more thing. Sometimes, in the middle of a task, I'll ask if you're green, yellow, or red. On a stoplight, green means..."

"Go?" Cas replied, wondering if this was a trick question. Dean nodded.

"Yellow means?"

"Proceed with caution."

"And red means?"

"Stop." Cas responded with finality.

Dean nodded. "You will choose a color based on how your body feels. If you do not think you can finish the scene, you must answer red. There's nothing wrong with it; I won't be upset. I would rather you feel safe than anything else," Dean assured him. Cas nodded. "Also, make sure to stay hydrated; you'll need to drink a lot of water after every scene." It was only then that Cas noticed the cup of water on the table; it must be for after.

Dean must have felt that he'd explained everything enough, because his next words were, "Stand up, Cas." Cas swallowed nervously as he stood from the alpha's lap.

Dean guided him down to lay across his thighs, situating the omega so that his ass was resting on Dean's right thigh.

"Place your hands on the floor," Dean instructed, and Cas did. "Make sure to keep your legs straight together." Cas slid his legs tightly together.

"Now," Dean said as he started to rub Cas's ass cheeks through the bright green underwear. "I will give five over the underwear, five on your bare skin. Do you understand?"

Cas nodded, but Dean squeezed his ass cheeks, pulling a silent hiss from the omega. "I need to hear you say it out loud, Castiel. Do you understand?"
"I understand." Cas responded.

"Good. Now, I want you to count them for me," Cas nodded, and Dean hummed approvingly as he ran gentle fingers up Cas's spine. He rubbed Cas's ass cheeks a little longer, kneading the skin with his long fingers. Then all contact stopped, and Cas arched up a little bit, seeking it again.

Right when Cas arched upward, Dean brought his hand down across the right cheek, a firm slap in the middle. Cas yelped and jumped a little, but Dean immediately began to rub the skin there, easing some of the sting.

"Cas, count." He reminded.

"One." Cas said. He could feel his cock stirring as Dean's hands played with his ass. Somehow, the slight sting heightened the sensation.

The next slap came down across the left cheek, in the exact same spot where the right one had been.

"Two," Cas gasped out. His entire body was focusing on that little area of skin where Dean's hand had slapped him, the sensation pleasurable in spite of the pain.

The third one was closer to the bottom of the left cheek, and it stung more than the first two had.

"Three," Cas bit out between clenched teeth.

The fourth one fell near the top of right cheek, and Cas actually yelped with that one.

"Four."

The fifth one was back in the middle of the left cheek.

"Five!" Cas cried out. His cock was now completely hard, and he could feel his hole producing slick. He knew that Dean could feel it when he rubbed his ass through the fabric.

"We're halfway there, baby. You're doing so good," he murmured. Cas nodded, and then Dean was sliding the fabric of his underwear down over his ass, exposing it to the cool air of the apartment. Cas gasped, and Dean chuckled. His fingers slipped into Cas's hole, and the omega moaned wantonly as Dean coated his fingers in slick. "So fucking wet..." Dean breathed, and Cas shivered.

"I think you're really enjoying this, Cas." Dean said. Cas heard him suck his fingers into his mouth, tasting Cas there. "You taste so good, baby. You're going to be a little spanking slut, aren't you?" Dean guessed. "Do you like it when your alpha spanks your ass?"

Cas nodded, his ass lifting up for more. "Please," he gasped out.

"Since you said please." Dean murmured, and then his hand was coming down across Cas's bare ass. The omega whined high in his throat at the sting; it was so much sharper without the fabric, and the slap echoed through the room.

"Six!"

Dean brought his hand down across the bottom of the cheek again, and tears started pricking at Cas's eyes.

"Seven!" He cried out, his voice shrill. Blood pounded in his ears, and his vision narrowed. Sweat coated his skin from exertion, and his arms wee trembling. His entire body was focused on his ass, waiting for that next blow.
Dean brought eight and nine down quickly, slapping twice right in a row on the same spot. Cas barely had time to count them.

And then for the last one, Dean hesitated for a long while, allowing the tension to build. Cas squirmed on his lap, impatient for it to be done with. Just when he thought that maybe Dean wasn't going to give him the last swat, it came down, right over his hole.

"Ten!" Cas screamed, his entire body arching. He collapsed onto Dean's lap, and the alpha's hands were immediately there, gentle as ever as they pulled him up into a sitting position. Dean pulled Cas against his chest, taking the omega's weight for him.

He reached over to the table and grabbed the cup of water. As he brought it up to Cas's lips, Cas realized that he was parched. He took several long sips as Dean rubbed soothing circles on his back as he murmured words of encouragement and praise. When Cas handed the almost empty cup back to Dean, the alpha set it aside and turned back to cup his omega's face with gentle hands.

"You did so good!" Dean murmured, stroking at Cas's cheeks with his thumbs. Cas smiled shakily as Dean pressed soft kisses against his cheeks and forehead. "You did exactly what I asked you to do, and on your very first time. I'm so proud of you."

"Thank you," Cas whispered. He smiled gratefully and leaned in for a kiss. As their lips met, their tongues immediately slid into each other's mouth, exploring, tasting. It didn't take long before the omega was squirming on Dean's lap. He could feel the alpha's erection prodding against him, and he reached down to cup it through his black slacks.

Dean groaned into their kiss, and Cas pulled back long enough to whisper, "Will you fuck me now? Please?"

"Well, since you said please..."

Chapter End Notes

See, and you all were worried! Of course dean's gonna go after his omega!

And here in this chapter, we have our first spanking! This is the first time I've written about anything like that, so I did a shit-ton of research on different positions and rules and all sorts of wonderful stuff. If you have helpful comments on how the spanking scene could be improved, please let me know!

If you have any questions or positive suggestions, please comment! As always, enjoy!!
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

When Cas thought about it, thought about what Dean was offering him, he was shocked by how much he wanted. He wanted it, more than he'd ever wanted anything before.

It wasn't a question of want; it was a question of capability. Could he do this? Could he, essentially, play house with Dean, knowing that it was on borrowed time?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chap 7

*That feels really good...* Was the first halfway coherent thought in Cas's mind. He unconsciously shoved his ass upward, presenting himself. He heard a deep chuckle behind him, and then all was silent as something pushed itself into the omega's ass.

Cas let out a moan, his face pressed tight into the pillow that smelled of Dean, his ass clenching around his alpha's probing tongue. He gasped and arched his back, rolling his hips to shove his ass back. "Right there, Alpha!" He gasped out.

Dean grabbed onto his hips to steady him as he began to thrust his tongue in further. Cas keened into the pillow, his body jerking as Dean slid in a finger alongside his tongue. He began to alternate the finger with the tongue so that there was always something filling up the omega.

"Dean! Dean, please!" Cas moaned, his fingers twisting into the sheets as his his body began to spasm, his hole fluttering around Dean.

Dean continued to slowly fuck cas, pulling him apart bit by bit with just his tongue and one digit. He didn't stop or falter, even when Cas began to moan that he was close. Instead, he crooked his finger to hit that one spot deep inside the omega, striking against the bundle of nerves repeatedly until Cas came with a loud wail, his lithe body spasming under Dean's hands.

As Cas's orgasm rolled through him, Dean clambered up to mount him from behind. His cock slipped into the omega's loosened hole easily, and he immediately set a brutal pace. As Dean's thrusts pushed Cas toward another orgasm, Cas screamed out his pleasure. Tears began to stream down his cheeks as his ass, already over sensitive from the first orgasm, clenched tighter around the alpha, coaxing it to produce a knot for him.

"You want my knot, Sweetheart?" Dean ground out as his thrusts began to grow erratic. "Your greedy little hole want my big alpha knot?"

Cas managed to sob out a broken, "Yes, Alpha," as he nodded his head enthusiastically.

"Beg me for it," Dean growled out against Cas's ear. "Beg me for my knot, Cas."

"Please! I need it! So bad...Please!" Cas babbled. "Feels so good in me, Alpha! You always feel so good, always take such good care of me!"
Dean's hips slammed forward, burying his cock to the hilt as his knot slipped past Cas's rim. The omega sobbed with desperation as Dean's knot settled inside of him, ready to explode. He began to grind back against Dean as he tightened his ass around the fullness.

"Please, Dean! Knot me," Cas whispered brokenly. And with those words, Dean's orgasm slammed through him. His knot exploded, flooding Cas's ass. Cas's second orgasm washed over him, his ass clenching around his alpha's knot, milking him completely. Dean collapsed over his back, his sweaty chest sticking to Cas's back.

He eventually rolled them over onto their sides, curling around Cas's soft body to wait out his knot. He pressed a gentle kiss to Cas's shoulder as he slid a hand around the omega's waist, absently stroking the smooth skin there.

"Good morning," he mumbled, and Cas giggled. Dean smiled and leaned forward to kiss the younger man, swallowing down the sound. Cas's laugh was becoming one of his favorite sounds, an adorable mixture of shyness and exhilaration that seemed to bubble up from deep inside at the slightest provocation.

"Good morning," Cas whispered as he shifted back against him. His hand reached down to cover Dean's.

"I wasn't too rough?" Dean checked, but Cas shook his head.

"It was perfect; the perfect way to wake up." Cas assured him. Dean let out a sigh of relief. He really shouldn't have been so rough, especially not after the desperate way he'd fucked him the night before.

He hadn't really been thinking about comfort when his body had been driven by the instinct to mark and claim his omega. As he glanced down at the hickeys that covered Cas's chest and neck, he couldn't quite help his smug smirk. Well, at least he'd been successful with the marking part.

He thought about after, when Cas had fallen asleep against him, so trusting and perfect. Dean had watched him sleep for a long while, his mind whirling with possible solutions for their problem. He'd finally come up with one, and really, when the idea popped into his head, it almost seemed too simple. The only problem was, would Cas go for it?

When Dean was finally able to slip free, he used a towel to wipe them both off before rolling out of bed with a grunt of discomfort.

"Come on, let's go get breakfast...or I guess lunch, at this point." Dean said as he tried to pull Cas up from the bed.

He groaned as his back protested slightly. It probably hadn't been the best idea for them to sleep in Cas's tiny twin-size bed. The night before, with his arms full of sleepy, sated omega who smelled of sex and contentment, Dean had loved the way they'd had to tangle together to fit. But since he'd woken up this morning with Cas sprawled across his chest, pinning him to the uncomfortable mattress, he'd been slightly regretting the decision.

"But that means I have to get dressed!" Cas groaned. Dean tugged on his hand again as Cas shook his head. "I like being naked!"

Dean chuckled and leaned down to kiss him, "I like you being naked, too. However, we have to talk, and I feel like that'll work better if we're clean and dressed and fed. Yes?"

Cas sighed. "I guess." But he still lay there, unmoving.
"Cas, if you don't get out of bed, we can't shower together." Dean coaxed. Cas pretended to consider it for a moment before he smirked mischievously and jumped out of bed.

"Race ya there!" He called over his shoulder as he ran from the room.

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Dean took him to the hot dog stand in the park for lunch.

"It's just like our first date," Cas observed as Dean pulled him toward a park bench. "But I'm not nervous this time."

Dean almost assured him that he was nervous enough for the both of them, but he decided to wait until after they'd eaten to broach the subject.

When they finished eating, Dean tossed their trash into a nearby garbage can. Cas stood, ready to head back to the apartment, but Dean caught his fingers and tugged him back onto the bench. "We need to talk."

Cas's face immediately turned somber, but he nodded and settled back onto the bench beside Dean. Dean kept hold of his hand as he started talking.

"When does your semester start?"

"A week from tomorrow on Monday." Cas replied, his tone sad. Dean's fingers squeezed his reassuringly.

"Do you have to live in the dorms there, or can you keep an apartment off campus like you did this summer?" Dean asked. He needed to confirm this first; the rest of his plan wouldn't work if this was a no.

"We can have an off-campus apartment," Cas confirmed, and Dean breathed a sigh of relief. "But for Balth and Inaias, it's cheaper and more convenient to live on campus I couldn't afford the apartment by myself, even with my job."

Dean nodded. He thought for a moment before asking, "How attached are you to your job?"

"Well, it helps pays school bill, so I'm very grateful for it." Cas sounded like he could care less either way about it.

"So then, if your school bill was taken care of, you wouldn't need it?" Dean asked, and Cas's expression grew cautious. He felt like he understood where these questions were going.

"Dean..." He started, but Dean shook his head.

"Just answer the question, Cas. Please."

Cas hesitated for a moment before replying, "No, if the school bill were taken care of, then I wouldn't need the job. Hell, I'd quit in a second," he admitted. But he rushed on to say, "But I won't let you pay my school bill, Dean."

"Why not?" Dean asked.

Cas shrugged. "I don't like charity."

"But it wouldn't be charity." Dean protested.
Cas smiled. "It would be because you wouldn't really be getting anything out of it."

Dean smiled at him reassuringly. "I would be, though. I'd get to see you."

Cas gave him a flat look. "Yeah, cause that's a totally even payout. And I'd still have a lot of restrictions on me from the school's rules."

"But only if you actually live in their dorms, correct?" Dean verified. Cas's eyebrows arched.

"Nuh uh! You are not paying for an apartment for me on top of paying my bill." Cas insisted. Dean rolled his eyes.

"Don't be ridiculous, Cas. I wouldn't buy you an apartment." He licked his lips, suddenly nervous. "You'd, uh, you'd be moving into mine."

Silence fell over them as Cas contemplated what Dean was offering. Dean's stomach pitched with nerves as the silence stretched on for several minutes.

Cas finally spoke. "So, would we be mating?" He kept his tone cautious, wary, so he wouldn't sound overly-eager.

Dean couldn't help the way his stomach dropped. Cas didn't sound happy about the idea of mating. So maybe he didn't want it. Dean tried not to let that sting; he'd take whatever Cas was willing to give him for now.

"No! Uh, no mating." Dean hurried to assure him, and Cas breathed a sigh of relief even as he felt disappointment flood through him. Dean had seemed a little too adamant with his answer, but maybe that would change eventually.

"But I still don't understand what you'd be getting out of this." Cas admitted. "Like, would it be an on-call sex thing?" He wondered.

Dean shook his head. "Not really, no. I mean, I hope that sex will be part of it. But, uh..." He struggled with how to explain.

His mind returned to his condo, big and impressive and expensive...and empty. Dean had always hated being there; it was part of the reason why he'd worked so much before he met Cas. But then he thought of the nights Cas had been there, and those nights had been completely different. The condo hadn't felt cold or empty at all. He thought of Cas wandering into the kitchen the morning after, his body clad in nothing but Dean's dress shirt. Cas had made it feel like a home.

"Dean?" Cas asked, and Dean realized that he'd zoned out. He smiled apologetically.

"Sorry. I just... I was thinking about my place. You've seen it." He said it like a reminder, and Cas nodded.

"It's very nice and big," he recalled.

Dean smiled ruefully. "Yeah. Too big. It always feels so empty with just me in there. When you were there, it felt different. Like, I wouldn't mind returning home if I knew you were there. Hell, I'd probably look forward to it."

"I was about to say, don't overwhelm me with your enthusiasm!" Cas teased.

Dean drew in a deep breath as he admitted, "Cas, seeing you is already the best part of my day, and
the days I don't get to see you absolutely suck. So really, you'd be doing me a favor because this way, I'd have an excuse to see you every day."

Cas hesitated a couple of seconds before asking, "So what would be expected of me? Like, cooking and cleaning? Sex marathons every weekend?" He wriggled his eyebrows suggestively, and Dean smirked.

"If you wanted." Dean agreed. Cas's eyebrows arched at that. Well, of course Cas wanted. When Cas thought about it, thought about what Dean was offering him, he was shocked by how much he wanted. He wanted what Dean was offering, more than he'd ever wanted anything before. It wasn't a question of want; it was a question of capability. Could he do this? Could he, essentially, play house with Dean, knowing that it was on borrowed time? Knowing that he was just a temporary placeholder for Dean's actual mate, the mate he might meet at any time?

And what would happen to Cas when Dean met that mate? Would he kick Cas out? Would he help Cas get on his feet again, or would he just leave Cas on his own? Forget after... What did he expect Cas to do now?

"What about when you change your mind?" He asked suddenly.

Dean's eyebrows arched in surprise. When? No, it was never going to happen. Dean shook his head, "I highly doubt that will ever happen."

Cas rolled his eyes. "Let's be realistic, Dean. What's going to happen to me when you decide to move on?" Dean opened his mouth to protest again, but Cas shook his head. "Okay, or after I finish college? Will I move out? Will you let me stay while I get my feet under me?"

Dean's mind rebelled at the thought; if Cas was going to leave, it would be his own choice, never Dean's. Still, Cas didn't want to hear just words. He needed to see actions; it needed to be proven to him. But how could Dean prove it? Before he could even begin to map out a plan, Cas was speaking again.

"What if we came up with a contract?" Cas suggested. Dean's head snapped back to look at him. Was the omega joking? But Cas's face was completely serious, his eyes earnest.

"You want a contract?" Dean asked, and Cas nodded.

"Exactly. It'd list what was expected from each of us during the relationship, what we wanted, rules that we may have, and what steps would be taken if it ever ended."

"Okay...I mean, we have to do the non-disclosure anyway, so I guess it could just be a part of that." Dean conceded, his mind racing through the logistics of it. He didn't notice the way Cas stiffened at the words.

Non-disclosure agreement. He'd said it so casually, like he'd done it many times before. Hell, he probably had. Suddenly, Cas couldn't think about anything but the other omegas who'd signed that same agreement. Those omegas knew about Dean, what he was like in bed, how he acted the morning after, what his preferences were—intimate knowledge that only lovers could know. There were omegas who knew Dean from the inside out, just like Dean knew them.

But instead of being jealous of them, Cas was sad for them. Probably because he knew that he'd someday be one of them. In one way, they were all like him; there'd been that moment when they'd signed the agreement, when they'd loved Dean enough to do that for him. Maybe they'd taken their knowledge and memories and stuck them away in a safe place like Cas did now, knowing that there
would be a day that Dean would no longer be theirs and those memories would be all they have.

Maybe they hadn't known that it would end; maybe they'd thought that they would get to keep him, at the end, and their hearts had broken all the more for it. Cas wouldn't be so foolish as that. He would go in with both eyes wide open; hence, the contract. He forced a smile onto his face.

"See, perfect! Non-disclosure would be one of your rules."

Dean nodded. "Okay. Yeah. It could work. So, we'll need to sit down soon and discuss it. We could each take some time to write out a list, and then we'll compare the lists and draw up the contract based on that."

Cas nodded. That was simple. He could do simple.

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All throughout the next few days, Cas kept his list in his pocket, scribbling down things as yet came to mind. Some of the items were completely random, like No surprise birthday parties. Others were a little more serious, like No pregnancy while still in school.

Not that he didn't want to have Dean's pups, but he was still an unmated omega attending a Christian college; if he got pregnant, he'd be expelled. Plus, Dean had essentially said the same thing back when they'd first started talking about sex. Cas figured it would be good to show that they were on the same page about that from the start.

By Wednesday evening when Dean picked him up from his apartment, Cas's list had reached almost a page. Dean didn't bring up the lists, though. He acted like this was the start to any other date between them. Cas sure as hell wasn't going to be the one to bring it up. So they spent the car ride over to Dean's condo talking about the new merger Dean was working on and Cas's new co-worker Adam.

Even when they got up to his condo, Dean didn't talk about the lists. Instead, he pulled off his suit jacket and tie and collapsed into his recliner, pulling Cas down to sit sideways across his lap.

Cas released a contented sigh and snuggled into his chest as Dean began to card his fingers through Cas's hair.

"I know we have to talk about it eventually; I promise I'm not avoiding it. But I really just need some of this first."

"Long day?" Cas whispered.

"The longest." Dean admitted. Cas nuzzled his nose into Dean's neck, scenting the older alpha before pressing a soft kiss to his throat.

"I'm sorry." Cas said, his tone regretful, but Dean shook his head.

"You're already making it better." He assured the omega, and Cas preened with the knowledge that he could help his alpha. He could be the kind of omega that supported and comforted his mate (even though Dean wasn't really his mate yet).

After several long moments, Dean spoke up again. "You know, I think this is what I'm looking forward to the most." Cas glanced up at Dean, confused, and Dean smiled softly. "When you move in." He explained.
Cas's mind drew up short at that. He hadn't even thought about it that way. Dean was right, this was what they would be doing. And this wasn't very hard. In fact, it was a million times easier than anything Cas had ever done before. So why was he trying to make it harder on them? Why was he trying to complicate things with the contract?

Sure, the relationship might end someday; hell, it might end tomorrow. But whenever it did end, whatever the reason, he already knew he'd be fine. Dean would take care of him, just like he always did. Cas didn't need a contract to tell him that. His attention was drawn back to Dean when the alpha spoke up again.

"So, do you have your list?" He asked, but Cas shook his head.

"Let's not." Cas said suddenly, his hands fisting in Dean's shirt as he brought his eyes up to meet the alpha's. Dean's eyebrows furrowed.

"Let's not...move in together?" Dean asked, his tone wary. Cas's eyes widened and he shook his head.

"No! I meant the contract! I mean..." Cas sighed, his irritation clear. Why couldn't he ever say things right?

"Cas, do you still want to move in?" Dean asked, his tone kind.

"Yes."

"But you don't want the contract." Dean clarified, and Cas nodded.

"I don't want the contract." He confirmed. Dean's face split into a wide grin as he bent down to press a kiss against Cas's mouth.

"Awesome." He breathed when he pulled back. Cas smiled at his enthusiasm, already sure that he'd made the right decision as he reached up for another kiss.

Several long kisses later, Dean pressed their foreheads together so he could stare right into Cas's eyes.

"What changed your mind?" He wondered, and Cas shrugged.

"This." Cas replied simply. Dean arched an eyebrow, so Cas explained further. "I never really thought about how easy it is, being with you."

Dean smirked. "Well, I am pretty easy." Cas whacked him on his chest.

"You know what I mean." Cas griped. Dean continued to brush his fingers through his hair for several long seconds before speaking again.

"Do I get to see it?" He asked.

"See what?"

"Your list." Dean held out his hand, and Cas pulled the folded-up sheet of paper from his pocket. He stopped, a wicked smirk spreading across his lips.

"I'll show you mine if you show me yours."

Dean laughed and pulled out his own list. They handed each other their lists and unfolded them in
unison.

"No surprise birthday parties?" Dean arched an eyebrow. "Care to explain?"

Cas arched his eyebrow right back. "Only if you explain no drunken karaoke."

"Touché." Dean muttered.

Chapter End Notes

So this is a bit of a longer chapter...hope yall don't mind! It was much shorter when I originally wrote it a couple of weeks ago, but then I decided that I needed to get a move on with the whole "kept" aspect of their relationship, so I added a scene or two.

As always, let me know what you think! okay, byeeeee! *kisses*
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Quality time with friends is always important

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Do you want me to come with you?" Dean asked when he dropped Cas back off at his apartment the next morning. Cas shook his head.

"I think this'll go better if I'm the one breaking it to them." Cas admitted, and Dean smiled and nodded. He leaned forward for one more kiss.

"I'll see you on Saturday?" He confirmed when they pulled apart, and Cas grinned.

"Definitely. I'll finishing packing my stuff up today and tomorrow, so I'll be all set to go." He promised.

"Awesome. See you then." Dean said. Cas started to climb out of the car, but Dean's hand on his arm stopped him. Cas turned back, only to immediately be met by Dean's mouth against his. When they pulled apart, Dean grinned unapologetically. "One for the road."

Cas rolled his eyes and finally stepped out. He watched Dean pull away before heading upstairs. As soon as he entered his apartment, he was met by chaos.

"Dude, where did you put the hot pot?" Inaias was shouting from the kitchen.

"Up your ass." Balth yelled back from his bedroom. Cas rolled his eyes. He was about to call out when Inaias yelled back.

"I have had plenty of things shoved up my ass, but a hot pot is definitely not one of them!"

"Guys! Family meeting!" Cas yelled before anything more colorful could be added.

"Now!?" Balth and Inaias yelled back in unison.

"Yes, now! Get your dumb asses in here." Cas yelled back.

Inaias and Balthazar trudged in from their respective areas of the house, grumbling under their breath about being too busy for this shit.

"Cas, I'm up to my nads in packing tape and bubble wrap. This had better be really fucking important." Balth grumbled as he and Inaias plopped down onto the couch. "And are you even close to being done with your packing? I wanna start loading up the car tonight."

"About that..." Cas murmured as he perched on the edge of the coffee table across from them. Now that he actually had to tell them, he found that he didn't have the words. He rested his elbows on his knees and leaned forward. He rubbed his hands together, his nerves rising to the surface. He cleared
his throat and glanced down his hands.

"There's something we need to talk about..." He began again.

"Holy shit." Balth murmured, comprehension in his tone. Cas's head shot up, his eyes meeting his friend's. "You're moving in with him, aren't you?"

Cas let out a sigh of relief. Of course, Balthazar would catch on right away. He nodded solemnly.

"Yes. I'm moving in on Saturday when you all move back into the dorms." He announced. Silence fell over the small group for several moments.

Inaias was the first to speak. Ever the rule-breaker, his first concern was the cover. "So...what's the story going to be?"

"Uhh, I was thinking maybe my parents paid for me to live off campus? Maybe they're concerned that I'm being corrupted by low standards in the dorm, evil roommates and such," Cas finished with a grin.

Inaias rolled his eyes. "I'm not that ba—"

"Does he know?" Balth suddenly interrupted. Inaias shot him a glare, but Balth ignored him.

"Does he know what?" Cas asked.

"Oh, I don't know..." Balth pretended to think before glaring at Cas. "Anything. Like what's waiting for you after college? Or how your parents treat you? Or how about how you feel about him?" Balth asked.

"He knows how I feel." Cas argued, but Balth shook his head.

"Have you explicitly told him 'Dean Smith, I am in love with you and I want to mate with you for life and have a million little pups for you'?"

Cas blushed. "Not those exact words, no."

"Cassie..." Balth sighed softly, his eyes pained. "You need to tell him."

"I will." Cas promised, a little too quickly. Balth gave him a stern look, and Cas rolled his eyes. "I promise. And he kind of knows about what my parents want for me after college."

"Kind of?" Balthazar asked, and Cas shrugged.

"I may have mentioned it in passing during our argument on Saturday."

Balth looked like he wanted to say more, but he could tell Cas was done.

Silence fell over them again, but Inaias never had been good with awkward silences, so he spoke up. "So then tonight is our last night together?" Cas nodded. A wicked grin spread across Inaias's face.

"Time to get plastered!" He crowed. "Last hurrah before the semester."

Balth grinned, but Cas blushed and looked down at his hands. They both noticed his lack of response and glanced over at him with matching arched eyebrows.

"Uh...I can't." Cas admitted.
"Why?" Inaias sounded wary. "You're not meeting him tonight, are you?"

"No, but..."

"But what?" Balth prodded.

"I kind of promised Dean that I wouldn't drink." Cas said.

"Why would you do that?!" Inaias cried in disbelief. Cas's blush deepened. He didn't want to tell them Dean's exact words—"I need you sober in case we scene."

"You know..." He murmured uncomfortably.

"No?" Inaias replied.

Cas sighed and dropped his head. "He wants me sober when we...uh...when we have sex."

"Why? I find that being drunk is half the fun." Balthazar said with a laugh.

Cas blushed even harder. "Not with our kind of sex." He muttered under his breath. They still heard it.

"Ohhh..." Inaias and Balth said in unison. Inaias looked surprised, Balth looked shocked.

"Cassie! Is Dean your Dom?" Inaias teased with a lascivious grin, and Cas whacked him on the leg as he rolled his eyes.

"None of your business."

Since Cas couldn't get wasted, and Balth and Inaias didn't want to without him, they spent the night in, eating Digornio's and playing video games in their boxers. Well, the other two were in boxers; Cas put on a onesie that Balth had given him for Christmas the year before. Despite their impending deadline for being out of the apartment, they stayed up nearly all night avoiding the task.

Because they had to be out of the apartment early on Saturday morning, they spent all of Friday packing and cleaning the place. By Friday night, they were too exhausted to do anything other than turn on the TV (the one thing they had not packed up yet) and watch mindlessly.

Balth and Inaias were finishing off the rest of the alcohol in the fridge since they couldn't take it with them to the dorms, which meant they were both slammed. Cas wasn't drinking, but after staying up nearly all the night before and packing and moving all that day, he was pretty slap happy, none the less.

"Why are we watching the home shopping network?" Cas wondered aloud.

"It soothes my soul." Balth responded blearily.

Cas laughed. "Like you have a soul."

Cas and Balth were sprawled over the couch while Inaias lay across the floor, watching some blonde woman try to sell her new purse line.

"She looks kind of familiar..." Inaias murmured. Balth rolled his eyes.
"She's from that one show... You know, the cop one from the nineties." He flapped his hand, as if that would make Inaias remember.

"Oh! Yeah. How the mighty have fallen." Inaias muttered. "I mean, she doesn't even get the good time slot."

"There's a good time slot on here?" Cas wondered, and Inaias snorted.

"Is there a good time slot, he asks. Of course there is! Everyone knows that people—" Inaias began, but Balth suddenly interrupted him.

"You are going to mate with him, aren't you?" He asked, his tone hopeful.

"Who?" Inaias asked, his tone confused, but Balth ignored him in favor of staring at Cas intently. Cas rolled his head sideways to look at his best friend.

"Balth..." He murmured, his tone pained.

Balth suddenly sat up and grabbed Cas's arm in a tight grip. "Promise me, Cassie!"

He sounded so desperate yet sincere, and it broke Cas's heart because he knew he couldn't promise that. Dean would never mate him.

"Why?" He asked instead.

Balth's face twisted into a grimace. "I'm not sure. Maybe if it happens for you, it'll happen for me too. Except I don't need a millionaire. I just need...someone." He finished lamely. For the briefest of moments, his eyes flickered over toward the floor where Inaias lay, his attention already back on the television.

Cas's face slid into an understanding smile. "I think you're pretty good on that front."

"But what about you? What's going to happen to you?"

"I'll be good, too." Cas murmured. "You know me. I'm always good."

"Even if..." Balth trailed off, his scrambled brain unable to form the right words. "Zachariah?"

"Yes. Even if that." Cas promised, a small smile on his face. "But that's not for a little while. Right now, I'm with Dean, and he's going to take care of me. He always does."

Balth contemplated his words for a few seconds before nodding and turning his attention back to the screen.

"That purse is hideous." He muttered. "I'm going to order ten and give them away to people I hate."

"Then you're going to need a lot more than ten." Inaias responded, and Balth burst out into giggles.

Cas smiled between the two of them. Yeah, they'd be okay.

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When Dean picked Cas up the next morning, long hugs were exchanged between the three friends as Dean finished loading up the trunk.

"If I weren't so hung over, I'd cry." Balth grumbled, and Dean laughed as he slammed the trunk
closed. Balth winced. "Not so loud, Dean!"

Dean walked around to where Cas was standing with his friends and wrapped a long arm around his omega's waist, drawing him against his side. "Sorry about that!" Dean spoke louder than necessary, causing both Balth and Inaias to wince.

"Dean, play nice." Cas murmured, but a small smirk flitted across his lips as he looked up at the alpha. Dean bent down and pressed a brief kiss to his lips.

"What if I don't feel like playing nice right now?" Dean whispered against his lips. Cas blushed.

"Save it for when we get home." Cas whispered back. Dean drew up short at that last word, and Cas worried that maybe he had misspoken.

But then a small smile flickered across the alpha's face. "When we get home." He promised.

"Ugh! Would you two stop with the goo goo eyes. I already feel sick enough as it is." Inaias groaned, running a hand over his eyes.

Cas turned back to his friends. "Look, I'll see you all in classes, and we'll still have Taco Mondays and stuff."

"I know... It just won't be the same!" Inaias griped, and Cas rolled his eyes.

"You're just jealous that I get out of dorm life and rules."

Inaias smirked. "Damn straight, I am. Doesn't help that you have your own sex god here to keep you happy." He winked at Dean, causing the alpha to glower at him.

"Don't listen to Inaias. He gets a little saucy when he's trashed." Balth explained, whacking the other beta on the back hard enough to make him wince.

Cas smirked again. Balth, jealous. Who would've thought? He was pulled from his thoughts when Dean's fingers hooked under the waistband of his jeans and rubbed gently at his hip.

"Ready to go?" Dean whispered right into his ear.

"Well, you definitely are." Cas muttered with a smirk. He looked back at his friends. "We're going to take off. See you in class Monday?"

"Ecclesiology with Uriah at 8 in the morning? Wouldn't miss it for the world." Balth assured him, but his tone was sarcastic.

Cas chuckled. "That's the spirit." Dean opened the passenger door, and Cas slid inside.

Dean jogged around to the driver's side. "See you boys around." He said as he opened his own door and slid into the driver's seat.

The car door had barely shut behind him before Dean was leaning across to claim Cas's mouth in a hungry kiss. He pulled back with a grin. "Let's go home."

They'd only made it a few miles down the road before Dean felt a soft hand sliding across his thigh. He glanced over at Cas with a stern look. "Not while I'm driving."

Cas's hand paused but remained put. "But Mr. Smith, it's such a long drive!" He groaned. Dean smirked.
"Oh, don't worry. I'll more than make up for the wait when we get home, I promise."

Cas sighed dolefully and pulled his hand back. "I suppose..."

Dean reached across and grabbed the hand, linking their fingers together.

At the next stoplight, Cas suddenly turned to face him. "Were you being serious earlier?"

"Deadly. About what exactly?" Dean asked, his gaze still on the road ahead.

"About not playing nice." Cas murmured, his eyes darkening. Dean's eyes flickered over to him, his mouth set in a hungry smirk.

"Absolutely." He rumbled, and Cas shivered.

"Good." The omega whispered, his tongue flicking out to lick at his lower lip as the alpha's eyes tracked the movement. "Because I really feel like we need to do something special to celebrate."

Dean's eyes were still glued to Cas's lip when he replied. "I may have an idea."

"Yes?" Cas breathed.

"I never did take you panty shopping last Sunday." Dean reminded, and Cas's face split into a grin.

"No, you didn't." He agreed. Dean shifted his attention back to the road when the car in front of them started moving.

"We can head there now." He suggested, his tone deceptively light. Cas nodded eagerly.

"I like that idea." He murmured. "I like it a lot. Then home?"

"Then home." Dean responded with a small smile.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... Total filler chapter with no smit and very little interaction for our boys. Don't worry, the next chapter more than makes up for it. ;)}
This is ridiculous. Cas grumbled internally. His inner voice was chastising, mocking even. You are a grown-ass college student. You have a 4.0 GPA; you're top of your class; you once wrote a ten-page paper on the soteriology of celestial beings the morning it was due and got an A. With another grunt, he stretched back around to try again, only to have the satin material snap back away.

He sighed heavily. It didn't matter how many pep talks he gave himself. Obviously, he wasn't that smart if he couldn't even figure this out. The bra had won.

Honestly, how did girls put up with it? And on a daily basis?

He tore the offending slip of fabric away from his chest and tossed it at the couch with a frustrated huff. The panties had been easy enough; put feet through holes, slide up legs. Simple and straightforward. Hell, even the thigh-highs had been easy to figure out. And he loved them; the silkiness of the fabric sliding against his skin gave him a hard-on within seconds. But the bras... What the actual fuck?

He couldn't quite master the whole clasp-behind-the-back thing. He'd tried so many different ways, from sliding it over his head to stepping into it, but he somehow always ended up with the straps twisted and digging into his skin. And that was with the simple bra! He hadn't even started trying on the ones with straps that crisscrossed and doubled back over and under and around and just went every which way.

Yeah, the purpose for the trip had been strictly panties. But when Cas had seen the way Dean's eyes had lingered on the bra, he'd immediately requested to try it on. He wanted to make Dean happy, and it's not like he actually minded the garter belts and babydoll nighties and bras...other than the fact that he couldn't get the bras on.

Dean's voice rose up from just outside the fitting room door. "Everything going okay in there?"

"Just peachy." Cas bit out.

There was silence for several long seconds before Dean spoke again, his tone confused. "So... Is that a yes or no?"

Cas sighed heavily. He ran a hand over his eyes. This shouldn't be this much trouble, right? "I'm just having a teensy bit of trouble." Cas finally admitted.

"Do you want me to get Pam?" Dean offered, and Cas nodded before he remembered that Dean couldn't actually see him.

"Yes, please." He said. He heard Dean's retreating footsteps, and he slumped down onto the couch to wait. His eyes flitted around the fitting room. For a lingerie shop, this place was really fucking
nice. From the outside, it hadn't looked like much, just a plain brick building on a street corner. But on the inside, it absolutely looked like the kind of place that millionaire alphas would frequent with their partners, with mirrored display tables and ornate chandeliers and marble floors and plush couches and all sorts of other decadence.

But what really set the shop apart from any other store that Cas had been into was that there wasn't a single price tag to be found in the place. Apparently, people in Dean's tax bracket didn't need price tags because money wasn't an issue. And here Cas was, right in the middle of it all trying to act like he belonged.

Cas's internal rant was interrupted by the knock on the fitting room door. Cas stood to let Pamela in. He smiled hesitantly at her as she shut the door behind her.

"Wow, those look really good!" She exclaimed when she saw the light blue silk panties that Dean had picked out for Cas. The omega blushed and smiled.

"Thanks."

"So what's the problem, Sweetie?" She asked, glancing around the fitting room.

"That!" He pointed accusingly at the matching bra on the couch. Pamela's eyes widened for a moment, and then she smiled kindly.

"Ah. Yes. So I take it you've never worn lingerie before?" She asked knowingly, and Cas nodded. Usually he'd be embarrassed about his lack of knowledge, but there was something about Pamela that put him at ease. He could tell that she wasn't mocking him, simply stating a fact.

"I would have asked Dean to help, but, uh..." He trailed off, and she nodded. She had a strict no-touching-while-wearing-the-lingerie rule. "Trust me, it never ends well for my poor products." She'd explained to Cas with a wink.

"That's okay. We'll just have to start you out the easy way." She said. She showed him how to clasp the bra in front and then slide it around and slide his arms through. "Once you get used to how the clasps work, you can start just sliding your arms through and clasping it in the back. But until you're more comfortable with it, you can use this method." She assured him.

Cas smiled gratefully at her. She showed him how to put on a few other items as well, like a garter belt to hold up the thigh-highs.

"How do you like the feel of those?" She asked, nodding down toward his legs encased in white silk. Cas blushed and nodded.

"I really like them. They feel so smooth." He admitted shyly, and she grinned.

"Yeah, us omegas tend to be pretty hairless to begin with, but since you're a male, you do have some hair there. When you shave your legs, the hose feel twenty times more amazing!" She commented lightly, and Cas nodded.

When they were done, he wore almost the full ensemble—bra, panties, and hose. Pam's smile turned mischievous.

"How do you feel about giving Dean a sneak peek?" She asked.

Cas blushed but nodded. "I suppose it'd be kinda mean to not to, since he's been waiting out there so patiently." He said with a smirk.
Pamela laughed, obviously surprised. "I like you, Hon. You'll have to come back and see me soon." She decided. She smiled at him and then suddenly thought of something. Her eyes widened as she held up a finger. "Wait a couple seconds."

She left, but only a couple moments passed before she was back with something folded up in black cloth in the palm of her hand. She held it out to Cas and smirked. "Why don't you try that on for size?"

Cas experienced a small amount of trepidation as he reached out toward Pamela's hand. What the hell had the shop owner brought him? But when he unfolded the cloth, his breath caught in his throat. It wasn't anything overtly fancy or outlandish like he'd feared.

Nestled into the black cloth was a simple white lace collar, more of a choker really. Cas felt his pulse pick up a beat as he thought about what it meant, what it would mean to Dean. They might not be able to date in public, they might have to keep it a secret from everyone else, but at least Dean would know that Cas was completely his. The collar would be affirmation of that.

Cas slowly slid the strip of white lace around his neck, tying it off in the back with gentle fingers. He glanced over at the mirror, his blue eyes wide with disbelief. It looked perfect, nestled snugly against the long column of his neck, the white lace contrasting beautifully with his tan skin.

Pamela's grin was triumphant. "Oh, he is going to love you in that."

She stepped back out into the shop. Dean glanced up at her from where he sat on one of the couches. "I'm going to let you have a peek, but you are not allowed to touch. At all. Yes?"

Dean smiled innocently. "Pam, you know I would never ever disobey one of your rules."

"Damn straight, you wouldn't." She muttered. She called back over her shoulder, "Cas, come on out, Hon."

Cas stepped out of the fitting room, his cheeks blazing and his hands folded demurely in front of him. His eyes were trained on the ground, his entire body tense, but at Dean's hitch of breath, his blue eyes shot up to meet his alpha's.

In a heartbeat, Dean's pupils had dilated, darkening until there was no more than a sliver of green at the outer rim. His tongue reached out to swipe at his lower lip, and Cas's tongue unconsciously followed suit.

Dean slowly stood and walked toward Cas like he was in a trance, his eyes skimming up and down Cas's form. They immediately focused on the collar stretched around Cas's neck. His hands twitched unconsciously.

"Dean..." Pam's tone held a warning note, and Dean shot her an annoyed glance.

"Just looking." He assured her as his eyes returned to Cas. He slowly walked around the omega, his eyes studying him from every angle. He loved the gentle flush that covered Cas torso, accentuated even more by the blue in the fabric. The silk panties hugged the omega's pert little ass perfectly.

He stopped back in front of Cas, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides in an obvious attempt to maintain the no-touch rule. Cas felt a rush of excitement and pride at the obvious way his body was affecting his alpha.

"Beautiful," Dean breathed out, and Cas smiled tremulously at the praise. Dean finally turned back to Pamela. "Can he keep these on underneath?"
"Of course," she agreed with a grin.

"Underneath?" Cas murmured uncertainly. "Like, underneath my street clothes?"

Dean nodded, his eyes dark and predatory as he muttered, "I want to be the one to take these off." Cas's blush heightened even more, and Dean grinned wickedly. "You can take the collar off, since it will be visible, but we'll definitely be taking it with us today." Cas nodded and immediately returned to the fitting room to obey.

He slipped back into his jeans and button-up shirt, his fingers brushing against the silk fabric of the lingerie as he did so. When he finished buttoning his shirt, his fingers skimmed over the lace collar. Dean had said that he could take it off, not that he had to. Cas's stomach fluttered at the thought of wearing it out of the shop with the rest of his lingerie.

The lace collar was somewhat hidden by the collar of his shirt, but not completely. Anyone who noticed it would know what he was wearing and that he was wearing it for Dean. They would know that he was Dean's, to own and use. Cas fought down the surge of arousal that broke to the surface at that thought.

By the time he stepped out of the fitting room, once again in his street clothes but with the dirty little secret underneath, Dean had already taken care of everything.

"Let's get back to our apartment." He said, holding out his hand toward Cas; his eyes immediately dropped to the collar again. Cas felt his heart flip at the way Dean growled, his eyes intent on the scrap of lace. He also felt some of the tension drain from him; he hadn't been sure how Dean would feel about his keeping it on, but he could tell that his decision pleased his alpha.

"What about the other stuff?" Cas asked, glancing back at the still-littered the fitting room.

"I'll get delivered later. Right now, though...let's worry about what's on you." Dean murmured. Cas giggled and nodded, allowing Dean to pull him from the store.

Dean managed to keep his hands mostly to himself for the ride home, despite the air being thick and tense between them. There were a couple of times where his hand slid onto Cas's thigh to skim up and down the jean fabric there. But he'd always stop if the omega's breathing became to erratic or hitched. It drove Cas a little further insane every single time.

It only got worse when they stepped onto the elevator in Dean's building. As the elevator slowly ascended upward, the console dinging with each new floor, Cas thought he might suffocate from the tension if his alpha didn't touch him soon. Even without the heightened senses of an alpha, he could scent the arousal on Dean. His inner omega yearned to satisfy that hunger, but he dest know if he was allowed to touch yet. As if he could read Cas's mind, Dean's arm slid around his waist, his thumb stroking softly along the waistline of the panties at Cas's hip as they rode upward.

As soon as the door shut behind them in Dean's apartment, Cas found himself shoved back against the door, his small body held firmly in place by Dean's larger one as the alpha buried his nose in Cas's neck to scent him. He began to nose at the lace collar, pulling the most delicious little sounds from Cas's throat.

"God, you taste so fucking good." He bit out against Cas's neck, and Cas's body arched into him as his legs fell open to allow Dean full access. "I can smell how slick you are for me; you have been since the store. You like wearing pretty things for me, don't you? Look at how hard you're getting for your alpha."
Dean reached down to cup Cas's small cock through his jeans, his fingers stroking over the fabric as his mouth claimed his omega's in a hungry kiss.

"Dean..." Cas breathed out against his lips. "Dean, please!" Dean growled into his mouth, his lips desperate.

"Get out of these clothes. Now!" He finally demanded, his hands moving to the buttons of Cas's shirt. Cas placed a hand on top of his, stopping him. Dean practically growled at the interruption, causing Cas to arch an eyebrow. Apparently, Cas in lingerie stretched Dean's control pretty thin, because the alpha usually had more of a handle on himself. His green eyes were dark and hungry, but they cleared slightly as Cas shook his head, his smile teasing.

"Dean, I feel like we should take time to enjoy this. I mean, you spent so much money to make me look pretty." Cas reminded him. "Don't you want to savor this?"

Dean drew up short at that, and then his lips spread into a lecherous grin. "Are you going to strip for me, Cas?" Cas blushed prettily.

"Only if you want..." He murmured demurely, glancing up at Dean through his lashes. Dean slowly pushed away from the door and took a few steps backward, his hand reaching to tangle with Cas's.

"Where do you want me?" He asked.

"On the couch?" Cas suggested, and Dean nodded. He pulled Cas into the living room and sat down on the couch. Cas stood in front of him, his face a delicious shade of red. The omega kicked off his shoes and toed them aside, leaving his feet bare but for the hose.

"Um, I don't really know how..." He admitted softly. Which was true; he didn't know how, but he knew he wanted to do this for Dean. The alpha's smile was kind.

"I'll talk you through it." Dean promised as he leaned back against the sofa cushions and laid his arms out over the back, his long legs spread wide. At that angle, Cas could see the bulge of his hard cock clearly outlined under the fabric of his slacks, and the omega unconsciously licked his lips in anticipation. He didn't even realize he'd done anything until Dean made a small strangled sound in the back of his throat.

Dean's voice sounded strained when he said, "Start with your shirt." Cas's hands moved to fumble with the buttons of his shirt, trembling and excited, but Dean shook his head. "Slower, baby.

Cas nodded and forced his fingers to move more slowly. He took his time with each button, his eyes never leaving Dean's as he revealed inch after inch of tanned skin. Despite the fact that he was already painfully hard, Dean felt his cock swell when the omega popped open the button that revealed the lacy blue bra they'd just bought.

"You look so gorgeous." Dean breathed, his voice thick with want, and Cas whimpered softly. He bit at his plush lower lip as his fingers moved on the next button. Once the shirt hung completely open, he started to slide it off, but Dean shook his head. "Slower, baby."

Cas nodded and forced his fingers to move more slowly. He took his time with each button, his eyes never leaving Dean's as he revealed inch after inch of tanned skin. Despite the fact that he was already painfully hard, Dean felt his cock swell when the omega popped open the button that revealed the lacy blue bra they'd just bought.

"Leave it on for now and start on the jeans." Dean directed, and Cas's fingers dropped to the waistband of his jeans. He slowly unhooked the button and slid down the zipper, acutely aware of Dean's eyes tracking his actions. "Now slide them down, nice and slow."

Cas slid the jeans down his thighs, careful to avoid the top of the thigh high as he did, and then stepped out of the pants and kicked them away. He stood there, blushing from head to toe as he waited for Dean's next instruction. Dean's eyes roved over his body, enjoying the innocent little
picture his omega made in his matching silk panties and bra under his open shirt.

The strip tease hadn't been the most skilled that Dean had ever seen, but it had been shy and sweet and innocent. That's what Dean loved about it. It hadn't been practiced and perfected for some other alpha before him; it had been just for his eyes. The thought was heady and empowering.

"Come here, Castiel." Dean said, bringing a hand off the back of the couch to hold out toward Cas. Cas stepped forward, right between Dean's spread legs. Dean slowly pushed the button-up off his shoulders, mouthing at the soft skin of his shoulder as he did. But he stopped when it was halfway down Cas's alarms, trapping the omega's arms behind him. He held the shirt with one hand as his other hand smoothed down over the silky fabric covering his hip.

"This blue brings out your eyes." He whispered reverently. "Has anyone ever told you what it's like, looking into your eyes?" Castiel shook his head. Dean smiled. "Like looking right into the sky."

Dean sat forward, his eyes slipping down to Cas's lace-encased chest. He brought his free hand to Cas's other hip to hold him steady as he leaned forward to lick at the omega's nipple through the fabric. Cas's gasp was loud and startling in the tense silence of the apartment, but Dean didn't stop. He began to lap insistently over the fabric. Cas's head fell back, exposing the long column of his neck, encased in the white lace collar, as his fingers clenched and unclenched behind him.

It was heady, the feeling of being completely at Dean's mercy. He couldn't touch the alpha like he wanted to, but he found that help liked it, being trapped and restrained like he was. But soon, it became too much. His knees started to go weak, and he whimpered.

"Dean!" He gasped out. "Alpha, I need to touch!" He pleaded softly. "Please!"

Dean finally released Cas's shirt and slid it the rest of the way down his arms, allowing it to fall to the floor. Cas immediately reached up to tangle his long, slender fingers through Dean's hair, gripping his head tightly for support.

"I've got you, baby." Dean whispered the familiar promise against Cas's chest as his arms slid around the omega's back. Cas let himself collapse back into the touch, trusting his alpha to support him.

Dean used his nose to push the lace cup down, giving him better access to the pink bud, which he immediately latched onto. Cas moaned high in his throat, his fingers tightening in Dean's hair as the alpha sucked on him greedily. Cas whined when Dean nipped at him gently with his teeth, his tongue lashing over the bud, leaving it puffy and red.

Dean finally released him, only to move to the other side and give it the same attention. After several seconds, he switched back to the first puffy tit, abusing it further with his teeth and tongue. Tears started to slide down Cas's cheeks from the overstimulation to his already sensitive skin, little whimpers escaping his throat as his fingers stroked through his alpha's hair in a soothing gesture.

Cas began to squirm under Dean's mouth, his hips moving in little thrusts seeking some friction. "Alpha!" He pleaded hoarsely. Dean kept one arm around his waist as his other hand slid down toward Cas's crotch to feel the damp fabric there.

"So wet for me." He muttered hungrily, and Cas nodded.

"Need you, alpha!" Cas gasped out, causing Dean to chuckle.

"What do you need, Castiel?" Dean asked softly.

"I need you inside of me." Cas whispered brokenly as Dean leaned back down to flick at his nipple.
again. Dean shoved the crotch of the panties aside and slid his middle finger into the wet heat there. Cas tightened around the digit, a low moan escaping as Dean began to fuck it in and out.

"Like that?" Dean whispered, but Cas shook his head.

"More..." He broke off as Dean suddenly rubbed against his prostate, causing his hips to jerk. Dean slid another finger in beside the first and used both fingers to stretch the omega further. He felt a gush of slick cover his hand as he hit Cas's prostate again, and he smirked.

"You like that, sweetheart?" He whispered as he began to scissor his fingers inside of Cas.

"Yes, yes, yes!" Cas chanted when Dean hit his prostate again, his hips jerking violently. He looked down at Dean through half-lidded eyes, all reserve gone as he begged, "Give me your cock! I need it so bad!"

"What do we sa—" Dean didn't get to finish before Cas was screaming out, "Please!"

Dean didn't waste any time in unzipping his slacks and pulling his cock out. He gathered slick from the omega's leaking hole and used it to slick up his cock before yanking Cas forward and sliding him down in one smooth thrust. Cas cried out when Dean was fully seated inside of him, his tight hole contracting around the alpha, squeezing him in a vice-like grip.

Dean sat there for a couple of minutes, allowing the omega to grow accustomed to the feel of him again before he began to rock his hips in gentle thrusts. Cas moaned and leaned in to kiss the alpha hungrily, his tongue thrusting in to tangle with Dean's. He began to rock his own hips in time with Dean, and then lifted himself up and dropped back down. He didn't say anything, but his actions were obvious.

"Is that what you want, Cas? You want me to be rough with you?" Dean asked, and Cas nodded.

"Fuck me good, alpha." He pleaded. A feral growl ripped from the alpha's throat. He grabbed Cas's hips in a bruising hold as he began to snap his hips upward, shoving his large cock into him.

"Just like that, Dean! Right there! You fuck me so full, alpha." Cas praised as Dean slammed into his ass again and again. Dean leaned forward to tug at the lace collar with his teeth, growling around the soft fabric.

Cas's hands slid up around the back of Dean's head, his fingers gripping tight to the hair there. Dean barked out a sharp cry of pain as Cas pulled his hair tighter, but if anything, it seemed to drive him harder.

"I'm getting close..." Cas moaned out, his entire body jerking with every thrust. He could feel his stomach tightening in that familiar way, his legs curling in tighter against Dean's thighs, squeezing around the alpha as he pushed himself harder.

"Don't come yet." Dean commanded jerkily, causing Cas to whine pathetically. Had he just heard right? He was right there! How the hell was he supposed to hold off? His eyes scrunched shut as he tried to focus. He bit down hard on his lower lip, almost hard enough to draw blood. Dean slowed his thrusts to allow Cas to collect himself.

Once the omega seemed in control of himself again, Dean spoke. "Look at me, Castiel." The omega's eyes fluttered open to meet his alpha's. "If you feel close, you must tell me." Dean said. "Tell me, and I'll slow down so you can control it. Yes sir?"

Cas nodded with a meek, "Yes, sir."
"Good boy," Dean muttered. He waited until Cas nodded, and then he slowly began to push up again. He tried to keep it slow and steady for Cas, tried to keep a pace that would help the omega. But within seconds, his thrusts had picked up speed as his hips snapped up into Cas's tight heat.

Cas rolled his hips in time to Dean's even though he knew it wouldn't help him at all with obeying Dean's command. Dean had done this before, made him hold off his orgasm until they could both come together, but he'd always warned Cas before they started so the omega could prepare himself mentally. Now, though, there had been none of that. Dean had set a brutal pace from the start, pushing Cas toward that peak, ratcheting his desire higher and higher, and then had suddenly, right when Cas was right there, had yanked it out of reach.

And somehow, Cas loved it even more. He loved that his alpha demanded more and more of him every time, pushing him farther and stretching him thinner, teaching him to obey. But this one, this demand might just be the death of him.

Don't come yet...don't come yet! Cas chanted to himself as he panted into Dean's neck, trying to ignore the delicious slide of their sweat-soaked skin. He had to be a good boy for Dean, an obedient omega for his alpha.

Just when he felt he might have control of himself, Dean slammed right against his prostate, pulling him right back to that edge. His eyes snapped open, he body trembling right on that brink. He nearly sobbed in frustration. He needed to come so badly.

"Dean!" He gasped out, his eyes mirroring his desperation. "Help me," he pleaded.

Dean reached down to wrap his long fingers around the base of Cas's cock, staving off his orgasm as he slowed his thrusts again. He stared right into Cas's eyes as they waited it out. "So good for me, baby. Such a good little slut for your alpha. Do you want my knot, baby? You want me stretching you wide open?"

Cas moaned at the image Dean's words produced as he nodded eagerly.

"Then you wait for me." Dean growled out. "If you come before I do, you don't get my knot up in that pretty little ass of yours."

Cas began to sob as Dean resumed their fucking, as he pounded harder into him, his cock slamming right against Cas's prostate again and again. Cas's fingers tightened in Dean's hair as the pleasure rose up in him again. He needed to tell Dean; he needed him to stop...but it just felt so damn good! And then it was too late to stop it.

He tried to fight it, to deny his body its release, but then he felt it rushing up in him, and he knew he wouldn't be able to stop it. Not this time.

He wrapped his arms tight around Dean's head and clung on tight. "I'm so sorry, alpha." He whispered right before his orgasm ripped through his small body, wrenching a loud, strangled cry from his throat.

Dean's thrusts immediately stopped when he felt the gush of slick coat his cock and the spurt of come hit his stomach simultaneously. He sighed heavily; he'd really hoped Cas would make it.

He stroked Cas's back as the omega rode out his orgasm, but as soon as it was over, he reluctantly pulled Cas off his cock. He lifted him into his arms, bridal style, and carried him toward the bedroom. Our bedroom. He reminded himself.

"I'm so sorry." Cas mumbled as they walked, and Dean shushed him.
"So am I, sweetheart, but you know the deal." He lay him down on the king size bed and leaned down over him. "I think we may need to look into some toys to help you with not coming so soon." He murmured. "Maybe a couple cock rings to wrap around that pretty cock of yours? Or even a cage?" Cas shivered at the thought, but said nothing.

Dean stood up and walked toward the bathroom to get a wash cloth. He stopped short at Cas's next words. "What about you?"

"What about me?" Dean asked.

"You didn't come yet." Cas's glazed eyes dropped to the alpha's still-hard cock hanging heavily between his legs.

"I told you..." Dean started, but Cas glared at him.

"You said that I couldn't have your knot, I know. You never said anything about not making you come." The omega argued. "Please, let me make it up to you." Cas pleaded.

Dean smirked and stepped toward the bed. He climbed up and kneeled next to Cas's torso, but when Cas reached over to grab his cock, Dean shook his head.

"No touching, sweetheart." Dean murmured. He reached down to swipe his finger through Cas's hole and collect some of the slick still there and then used it to lube his shaft as he began to jerk himself above Cas. He was already so close that it didn't take more than a few jerks, his fingers twisting on each upstroke.

"That's it, alpha." Cas whispered, watching Dean's hand intently. He licked his lips, and the alpha groaned.

The words had Dean coming with a low growl, shooting across Cas's flushed chest and staining the blue lace bra.

Dean had to kneel there for several long seconds, panting heavily and bringing himself back together before he could move again. When he finally looked at Cas's face, he found the omega studying him with a tiny, discontent frown. He leaned down and grabbed Cas's chin in a steady grip, staring right into Cas's blues as he pressed their mouths together in a hungry kiss.

When he pulled away, he kept his lips right there so they slid in tantalizing brushes against the omega's as he whispered, "When I say wait for me, you wait for me. Yes, sir?"

"Yes, sir." Cas replied softly.

"Good." Dean murmured before he claimed Cas's mouth for one more kiss. When he pulled back, he smiled at his omega. "Don't worry; we'll work on it." Cas smiled softly as Dean climbed off the bed. "I'm going to go get a washcloth."

He left but was back within seconds with a warm washcloth. He used it to gently wipe Cas's torso and hole before setting it aside so he could help Cas out of his lingerie. He pressed several soft kisses against Cas's tan skin as he removed each piece and tossed it aside. Once the omega was naked, he slid in next to him and pulled the covers up over them. Cas snuggled closer to his chest, his nose nuzzling lazily against the skin there.

"So I think we should take a nap, and then start unloading your stuff from the car." Dean suggested softly, but Cas didn't respond. He glanced down only to find the omega fast asleep, his ear pressed
against Dean's chest.

Dean pressed a soft kiss to the top of his omega's head before allowing himself to join him in sleep.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Dean smirked. Boring old married person life? Yeah, he and Cas definitely didn’t have that. But they had . . . something. Something he wasn’t quite sure how to label, but it was something that could lead to an old married person life.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Monday morning, Cas’s alarm went off far too early. He groaned into the pillow and turned his head just enough to find his phone and swipe at the screen.

“Mornin’,” Dean rumbled from beside him. Cas’s only response was to groan again and roll over so he could burrow into the warmth of Dean’s chest. Dean chuckled and slid his arms around Cas’s slim frame, holding the omega close as he pressed a soft kiss to the top of Cas’s head. His omega was definitely not a morning person.

Dean allowed Cas to lay there in silence for a few more minutes before he really tried to wake him up. He dropped another kiss to Cas’s hair as his hands slid up and down Cas’s spine.

“Come on, Cas,” He murmured. Cas shook his head and mumbled a pitiful, “Don’t wanna.”

“You have to,” Dean reminded. “First day of classes, remember?”

Cas sighed heavily and slowly brought his face out of Dean’s chest. “You aren’t going to let me sleep in, are you?”

“Nope,” Dean replied.

“Why?” Cas groaned, drawing out the word.

Dean grinned wickedly. “Because if you sleep in, we don’t get any early-morning shower sex.”
Cas considered it for a moment before nodding. “I can live with that.” And then he buried his face back against Dean’s chest.

“Wha—?” Dean made a face at the top of his head, which Cas couldn’t see, of course. He sighed gustily, and Cas thought he’d won. But then Dean was pulling away, effectively removing Cas’s heat source.

“Well, I can’t live with that. Come on, Sleeping Beauty,” Dean said as he scooped Cas up in his arms bridal-style. The omega let out a surprised squeak and threw his arms around the alpha’s neck.

“Dean!”

“Cas!” Dean replied, a smirk settling over his handsome features.

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After their shower, Dean and Cas returned to their room to get dressed. Cas walked over to the dresser and pulled out a pair of grey pants and a blue sweater vest along with some regular cotton briefs, but when he turned around, Dean shook his head.

“I don’t think that’s a good back-to-school outfit, Cas,” He said. Cas looked down at the folded clothes in his hand, his eyebrows furrowing. What wasn’t good about it? He looked back up to Dean to ask, only to find the alpha holding something out to him, something pink and silky. “I feel like you would do better with these.”

Cas blushed but smiled as he took the panties from Dean. He slowly slid them on, keenly aware of the way Dean’s eyes tracked his movements. Once they were on, the smooth silk flush against his small cock, he looked back up to find Dean’s blown eyes studying him.

“Much better,” the alpha whispered approvingly. He stepped up to Cas and grabbed the omega’s slim hips, his thumbs rubbing over the soft fabric as he bent down to claim a kiss. When he pulled back, he looked right into Cas’s eyes and spoke in a slow, measured tone. “Today, every time you feel the fabric sliding against your little cock and pretty ass, I want you to think about me.”
He ran his thumb along Cas’s lower lip, admiring the way the pink skin there stretched and pulled. “Think about me pounding into you while you’re still wearing these panties.” Dean whispered. He leaned down and brushed a soft kiss along Cas’s mouth, the action so completely at odds with the words.

Cas moaned softly and pressed himself closer to his alpha, not even caring that he was supposed to be getting ready to leave. Right then, all he could concentrate on was the feel of Dean, a strong line of heat pressed completely against him.

“God, you look so good in these; I don’t even think we’ll make it to the bedroom tonight,” Dean warned, causing Cas to whimper. Dean smirked, “You like that, huh? The thought that we won’t be able to control ourselves long enough to make it to a bed.” Cas nodded, causing Dean to smirk.

Dean brushed his fingers over the waistband of the panties and snapped the elastic against Cas’s skin, pulling a sharp hiss from the omega. "Maybe I’ll take you right over the couch, or on the kitchen table, or on my desk. And all day, you’ll be wondering where it will end up happening. While all your classmates are thinking about whatever religious class you’re in, you’ll be thinking about me and my cock. Whenever that happens, I want you to picture my big alpha cock slamming into your tight little hole. Can you do that for me, Castiel?"

Cas’s breath hitched and he nodded. “Yes, Alpha,” he breathed.

Dean smiled approvingly. “Good.” He brushed another kiss against Cas’s mouth. “Now get dressed; you’ve gotta take off soon if you’re going to make it on time.”

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When Cas left the apartment, he paused to press up for a quick kiss.

“So the calendar says you’ll be home around 5:30?” Cas confirmed, and Dean nodded.

“Yep, unless something changes. I’ll be sure to add anything that does come up,” he assured the omega. Dean had taken Cas out the day before and bought him an iPhone, since the phone Cas had before was something that looked like it had been pulled straight from the medieval era. They’d synced their phones’ calendars, that way they could easily see when they both had free time.
“Sounds good; I’ll see you then!” Cas called as he turned and hurried out the door. He used one of
Dean’s old cars, which was still way nicer than anything Cas had ever driven, to drive himself to the
college.

He got to class with only a few seconds to spare, Inaias waved to him from the back of the room
where he was sitting with Balth.

“Hey,” he greeted as he slid into the empty desk beside them.

“Hello! Long time no see,” Inaias said with a happy grin.

“I know! It’s been almost two whole days without me having to see your dumb asses,” Cas
commented lightly.

Balth rolled his eyes. “Please, darling. Don’t pretend like you don’t want this.”

Cas opened his mouth to retort, but Inaias beat him to it. “Dude, have you seen what he’s got at
home?” Cas immediately shushed him, his eyebrows lowering.

“Not so loud! I can’t keep this a secret if you yell about it all over campus!” He chided.

“Sorry!” Inaias whispered. “How was moving in?”

“Good. It didn’t take too long.”

Inaias wiggled his eyebrows. “I wonder what you did with all that extra time.”

“Guess,” Cas whispered, smirking.

Right then, the door flew open, and the professor strode in.
“Hello. I am Professor Uriel King. Welcome to—” He’d glanced up to scan the room, but stopped the moment he was the three of them sitting in the back. Inaias waggled his fingers at the professor in a semi-wave. “Not you three again! I thought I got rid of you after last semester.”

“Well, professor, your class was so enthralling that we simply had to take the follow-up,” Balth explained dryly. Uriel glared at them and shook his head gravely. Cas slumped deeper into his seat and sighed; it was going to be a long semester.

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

They ate lunch at one of the restaurants near campus and discussed the classes that they’d already taken that morning.

“You know, for some reason I feel like Uriah’s already got it out for us,” Inaias mumbled around a mouthful of food.

“Really? Maybe it has something to do with the prank you all pulled at the end of last semester?” Cas suggested sarcastically. Inaias paused chewing for a moment to consider it before nodding.

“Yeah, I can see that. Well, I mean, there’s no way he can know for sure it was us.”

Balth snickered. “Who the hell else would it have been but us?”

“You know, I used to be a good, upstanding person before I met you two,” Cas recalled, sighing wearily. “Teachers actually liked me.”

“Gross,” Inaias said, his face reflecting his disgust.

“Yeah, you’re right, Inaias. Ingratitude is always gross,” Balth observed.

“Ingratitude?” Cas arched an eyebrow, and Balth nodded.

“If it hadn’t been for me, your upstanding ass would never have gotten the job at Meg’s in the first
place, hence you would have never met Dean and started to date him and fell in love with him or moved in with him, hence I am to be credited with all of your mated bliss.”

Cas rolled his eyes, his cheeks heating. “We’re not mated, Balth.”

“But you will be,” Balth assured him flatly. Before Cas could contradict him, he changed topics. “Speaking of Meg’s, how did she take it when you quit?”

“Pretty good. She didn’t ask, but I think she knew what was going on,” Cas said. “Actually, she’d have to be an idiot not to know what was going on.”

“Yeah, but she’s cool. She won’t say anything to anyone about this,” Inaias said.

Cas nodded and opened his mouth to respond, but right then, he felt his phone give a quick buzz in his pocket. He pulled it out to find a notification on the screen: New event added: International conference call with Kaito Yamauchi at 8 p.m.

Cas had barely had time to process the information before the phone in his hand was buzzing with a call from Dean. He immediately answered and brought the phone up to his ear.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Cas. You got a minute?” Dean asked, his voice low and rushed.

“Of course,” Cas responded.

“Good. Listen, I just had something come up. I, uh, added it to the calendar.”

“Yeah, I saw,” Cas said, trying to keep the disappointment from his tone. Dean still heard it.

“I’m so sorry. It’s a call that I have to do with one of our suppliers, and their main office is in Japan. It’s a thirteen hour time difference, so I have to wait until late to make the call,” Dean explained. He hesitated a moment before continuing. “Which means I’m not going to get home until late.”
“Yeah, I figured,” Cas murmured softly.

“I’m so sorry, babe,” Dean said, his tone regretful. “I’ll make it up to you later, okay?”

“Okay. Miss you,” Cas said.

“You, too,” Dean responded before hanging up. Cas slid the phone back into his pocket and started picking at his lunch again.

“What was that about?” Inaias asked after a couple seconds of silence.

“Dean had something come up at work, so he won’t be home until late,” Cas explained, his tone purposefully light.

“That sucks,” Balth said, and Cas shrugged.

“It’s okay. It happens. Let’s just finish eating so we can get back to campus.”

“Wait,” Balthazar suddenly interrupted, looking back to Cas with squinted eyes. “How did you close that call?”

“Miss you,” Cas mumbled.

“Why miss? Why not love?” Balth asked, and Cas shrugged.

“We just . . . haven’t said that yet.”

“Look, I’m not going to say it first, okay? What if he doesn’t feel the same way? Then it will be awkward and awful and he’ll feel sorry for me. I don’t want pity, Balth!” Cas finished with a huff.

Balth held up his hands in an appeasing gesture. “Look, it was a simple question. And trust me, Cas, he does feel the same way. He might just be waiting for you to say something first.”

“That doesn’t even make sense!”

“It kinda does,” Inaias interjected. Cas glared at him, but he continued speaking. “He might not want to rush you into anything, since you are so much younger. Maybe he wants to make sure you actually feel that way instead of just responding to him, you know? He doesn’t want you to feel pressured to feel something.”

Cas stared at Inaias, his mind working through the hidden logic. Inaias actually had a point. Cas looked back down at his food, staring blankly as his mind whirled through the possibilities. What if Dean did feel the same way?

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Since Dean wasn’t home, Cas spent the afternoon working ahead on his class assignments. He tried not to think about how he’d spent all morning gearing up for an evening of mind-blowing sex, only to have it ripped out from under him. Yes, he knew that he could always go ahead and take care of himself—Dean had bought him some toys to use for when he was away on business—but Cas found that he didn’t want to do anything without Dean there.

He thought of calling Balth or Inaias to see what they were doing, but then he remembered that they were going to some party in the city with Crowley tonight. Cas did not want to have to put up with that bag of dicks trying to grope him all evening. So, he wasted the evening watching TV and eating pizza rolls before dragging himself into the bedroom to sleep.

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When Dean got home around 11:30, it was to a dark, quiet apartment. He flicked on the living room light and found a couple of Cas’s textbooks and notebooks spread out over the coffee table. He walked over and picked one of the notebooks up, smiling as he studied the careful, neat penmanship that lined the page in black ink.
He flipped the page and found more of the same neat handwriting, but in the margin, there were several notes written back and forth with a purple pen.

*Sorry about this evening.*

It’s fine. *Stop writing in my notebook.*

*No. It looks boring. You need more doodles.*

There was a doodle of owl with big eyes.

*Stop drawing on my notebook.*

*No. You should come hang out with us tonight. We’re going to a party.*

*Where?*

*Somewhere downtown with Crowley.*

*Ew no*

*He’s not that bad.*

*He’s too gropey.*

Dean had to turn the page to read the next part.

*He’s just a touchy guy. He likes hugs.*
Yeah, which is why he tries grabbing my ass every time.

He doesn’t.

Yes, he does. And you know I don’t like parties anyways.

God, you’re such an old married person. I hope you and Dean are happy with your boring old married person life.

Trust me, we are. Now stop writing in my notebook.

The conversation ended there. Dean smirked and put the notebook down. Boring old married person life? Yeah, he and Cas definitely didn’t have that. But they had . . . something. Something he wasn’t quite sure how to label, but it was something that could lead to an old married person life. He smiled at the thought; he liked the idea of them being an old married couple together someday, sitting on rocking chairs on the front porch of a big house with a big lawn.

He walked into the bedroom and finally found the omega curled up on his side in the large bed, his entire body wrapped tight around Dean’s pillow, his face buried in the fabric. Dean’s smile widened as he quietly stripped and slid into bed beside Cas. He had planned on letting Cas sleep, but no sooner was he under the covers than Cas was releasing the pillow and rolling over to face him. He wrapped himself tight around Dean.

“Hey,” Dean murmured softly as he pushed a stray lock of hair out of Cas’s eyes.

“Welcome home,” Cas whispered, smiling sleepily. Dean leaned forward, intending to press a quick kiss against the omega’s mouth, but Cas obviously had other ideas as he chased after the alpha’s mouth when he tried to pull away. He flitted his fingers up Dean’s chest, brushing them along the planes of Dean’s abs as he tilted his head to deepen the kiss. When they finally broke apart for air, Cas smiled. “I missed you.”

“Are you wearing my shirt?” Dean asked, glancing down at the large green t-shirt Cas wore.

“I said I missed you,” Cas defended. “And this smells like you.”
Dean shook his head. “I don’t mind. Hell, take them all.”

“Okay. I just might,” Cas whispered as he leaned in for another kiss. “How was your call?”

“Long and boring,” Dean replied. “How were classes?”

“Long and boring,” Cas echoed just before Dean took his mouth in a long kiss. Their tongues slowly tangled as they pressed even closer together. “This isn’t boring,” Cas whispered breathlessly when they pulled apart.

“No, definitely not,” Dean assured him.

“Balth thinks we’re an old married couple,” Cas confided, and Dean chuckled.

“He’s just jealous that him and Inaias aren’t an old married couple, too.”

“Yeah, but they will be soon. I think,” Cas added.

“Great. Now can we stop talking about your friends while I’m trying to get into your pants?” Dean asked as one of his hands slid down past the loose waistband of Cas’s pajama pants. Cas gasped as Dean’s fingers wrapped around his dick and gave a few short strokes.

“Dean,” Cas breathed out. Dean rolled them over so Cas was lying on his back with Dean hovering over him. The alpha grabbed Cas’s loose-fitting pajama pants by the waistband and pulled them down, his fingers brushing against Cas’s hips as he did.

Once he got both of their bottoms off, he settled himself over the omega, his long body pressing Cas down into the mattress as he brushed another kiss against his mouth. It was unhurried and languid, the way their bodies slid together. There wasn’t any of the fire or desperation that either of them had imagined that morning. Instead, there was the silent apology of Dean’s mouth against Cas’s neck and the ready acceptance and forgiveness of Cas opening himself up to Dean. Dean’s fingers stroked along Cas’s body, tracing secret patterns that only they would ever know into his skin as they whispered soft encouragements to each other. His hands slid down between them to Cas’s hole, only to find it already slick and ready for him. When Dean finally lined himself up slid in, it was slow and steady, nothing but tenderness in his movements as he buried himself deeper with every roll of his hips.
Their movements were slow, responsive, a gentle give-and-take that pushed them both toward their completion. Dean peppered soft kisses along Cas’s jaw, his neck, his forehead before he rested their foreheads together so his eyes could remain locked onto Cas’s as they moved together.

“Why do you look so sad?” Cas whispered tentatively, his hips still moving against Dean’s.

“I wasn’t here to take care of you tonight,” Dean admitted hoarsely. “I made you wear those panties to school and got you riled up this morning and promised that I’d be here to take care of you after, and I wasn’t.”

Cas smiled and shook his head. He pulled Dean down into another kiss, and then trailed a soft line of kisses up to Dean’s ear.

“You’re so good to me;” Cas whispered into Dean’s ear as his fingers carded through Dean’s short hair. “Always know just what I need and how I need it. And you are taking care of me now, just like I’m taking care of you.”

Dean groaned and bent down for another kiss, his movements growing jerky and unsteady as he felt himself draw closer to that edge.

“I’m almost there, baby;” he breathed out against Cas’s lips, and Cas wrapped his long legs around Dean’s hips, locking his ankles together and pulling the alpha in tighter.

“Do it, Dean. Come inside me like a good alpha,” he encouraged. Dean came with a muffled groan as he buried his face in Cas’s neck to scent him, his knot locking him inside the omega as he rode out his release. Cas whined at the feeling of being filled, marked, owned. He gasped as Dean grinded his knot inside of him, sparks of pleasure shooting up and down his spine as his own orgasm washed through him.

After they caught their breath, Dean rolled them over onto their sides so they could wait out his knot. Dean’s smile was tender as he brushed his fingers over Cas’s cheek, his green eyes shining in the dim light of the room.

“I love you,” Cas whispered. He’d tried so hard not to say the words, had withheld them for so long, but he couldn’t. Not after what they’d just shared. And now that he’d said it, he found that he had to say it again. “I love you, Dean.”
Dean stared at him, and Cas felt anxiety rise up in him. Maybe he’d been right to keep it to himself. He should have just kept his mouth shut. . .

Dean suddenly pressed forward and slammed their mouths together in a bruising kiss. When he pulled back, a wide grin stretched across his face. “I love you, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello! So, I have some big projects coming up due next week, and as per usual, I've procrastinated until the last minute. So, because I'm going to be hella busy working on those this weekend, and to celebrate the beginning of October, I'm posting this week's chapter a little early!

Enjoy!
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

"You know, the day isn’t over yet. We still have plenty of time to do something fun," he suggested.

“Oh really? And what did you have in mind?” Cas wondered.

“Something that will help us both to relax,” Dean replied with a smirk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“The four eschatological duties of angelic beings are praise of the Father, releasing of the vials, reading of the Book, and . . . and . . .” Cas shut his eyes so he wouldn’t look down at his notes as he tried to recall the last item on the list, his face scrunching up in concentration. “And . . .”

God, he hated finals. Between studying for the tests and writing the final papers for multiple courses, he was under perpetual stress for at least two weeks leading up to finals and that week itself. During those weeks, he could hardly eat, and he never got a good night’s sleep. He would toss and turn all night, his brain refusing to shut down, leaving him tired and cranky.

And that had been before he’d moved in with Dean. Now, it was even worse, because his restlessness didn’t just affect him anymore; it affected his alpha as well. Cas would still toss and turn all night, but now he shared a bed with Dean, and his tossing and turning kept Dean awake, too.

Every night, without fail, Dean would have to roll over at some point to gather his omega to him and tell him to calm down and go to sleep. He was always so gentle about it, often pressing soft kisses to Cas’s jawline or forehead and whispering soft endearments into his ear until Cas fell into restless sleep.

Even though the older man was always kind about it, Cas knew it had to be straining him. He had a fucking company to run, and here Cas was keeping him up at night over silly finals at a college he didn’t even like.

It just added more stress to Cas because he knew that he wasn’t being a good omega for Dean. And more stress meant less concentration for studying, which kept Cas up at night. It was a vicious cycle that Cas was ready to be finished with.

He tried repeating the list again. “The four eschatological duties of angelic beings are praise of the Father, releasing of the vials, reading of the Book, and . . . oh, fuck it!” He cried. He threw the notebook across the room with a huff right as Dean stepped into the kitchen.

“Whoa! Easy there, tiger,” Dean chided as he barely managed to duck out of the way of the oncoming projectile. Cas blushed and slumped back into his chair.

“Sorry,” he mumbled. “I just . . . God, I’m so frustrated right now!” He cried, exasperated. Dean came up behind him and rubbed his shoulders. Cas sighed and leaned back into the strong touch.
“Babe, it’s going to be fine. You’ve been studying for days. Hell, today you studied for six hours straight,” Dean said.

“How is this supposed to help me relax?” Cas wondered as his hips jerked again, his entire body tense and coiled tight. He would have asked Dean, but the ball gag in his mouth prevented him from saying much of anything. He did manage a muffled groan when Dean’s tongue, after what felt like years of rimming and teasing, finally shoved deep into his hole. Cas’s entire body jerked, his wrists pulling at the cuffs that held his arms securely in place.

“Easy, baby,” Dean murmured as he ran a gentle hand down the inside of Cas’s thigh. “Don’t strain yourself.” Cas nodded, but his body remained tense even under Dean’s soft touches. Cas felt the bed shift as Dean climbed over him, the heat from his body blanketing Cas completely. And then the alpha’s voice was right there by Cas’s ear.

“This will only work if you let it work,” he whispered, his breath tickling along Cas’s cheek with every word. “I can’t help you relax if you won’t let go for me. Can you do that? Can you let go for me?”

Cas wanted to, he really did. He wanted to let go and give himself completely over to his alpha, but he couldn’t. There were too many distractions warring in the back of his mind, demanding attention.
He would have told Dean this, but the gag prevented it. It didn’t matter, though, because Dean understood without being told.

“Cas, I know you can do this. I need for you to forget everything else. You won’t think about finals or papers, just like I won’t think about meetings and conference calls. All you need to focus on is us. All you need to think about, right now this second, is what I’m doing to you right now.” With that last word, Dean sunk one of his long fingers into Cas’s hole. Cas whined around the gag as his hips jerked up.

“What am I doing to you right now, Cas? Think about that,” Dean commanded softly. “Don’t even think about what I’m going to do next. Just focus on what we are doing right here and now.”

Cas could do that. Hell, it was easy to give his mind over to the distraction that Dean's finger provided. He shoved away all other thoughts, forcing them back to a quiet place for later, and then focused on Dean’s finger slowly pushing in and out of him.

Dean felt the omega loosen and smiled. “Good omega,” he praised as he pressed a gentle kiss onto Cas’s chest. And then there was another finger pushing inside of Cas, stretching him. Cas clamped down on the fingers, his entire body focused on that one spot, that one focal point of pleasure. Each slide of Dean’s fingers past his rim burned deliciously, and Cas couldn’t stop the small whimpers.

“You’re doing so good, baby,” Dean murmured. He added another finger, and Cas moaned hungrily, his hips rolling up into each thrust. “That’s it. You’re taking my fingers so prettily.” Cas felt the bed shift beneath him as Dean crawled back between his legs. Dean's fingers pulled away, and Cas could hear Dean stroking his dick, slicking it up.

"Your hole’s going to look so pretty stretched around my cock,” Dean ground out. And that was the only warning Cas received before Cas felt the head of Dean's cock pushing against his rim, demanding access. Then Dean was pushing in, slow and steady, inch after inch filling Cas’s tight channel, stretching the omega further and further. It was torturous, that slow give and pull of Dean's cock inside of him, one inch in, half an inch out. This went in for ages, millennia even, until Dean bottomed out.

After all of that teasing, finally having Dean completely seated inside of him was nothing short of sweet relief, relief that caused tears to stream down Cas’s cheeks and soak the blindfold. Dean pressed sloppy, open-mouthed kisses along the bottom of his jaw, and Cas arched his neck to allow his alpha better access. As Dean’s hips began to move, slowly pulling back and then pressing in, Cas pressed upward, trying to meet his alpha thrust for thrust.

"That's it, sweetheart," Dean encouraged, as his hips began to roll faster, each thrust stealing another breath from both. "Just like that," he gasped out raggedly.

Cas keened behind his gag, his eyes squeezed shut tight behind the blindfold. He felt Dean shift yet again, and then there were long fingers digging into his hips, gripping the soft skin there hard enough to bruise. Cas felt every roll of Dean's hips clear up his spine, each thrust sending a shot of pure pleasure coursing through his system.

"You're getting close, aren't you?" Dean ground out. "I know you are. I can feel the way your pretty little ass is clenching down around my cock m, trying to get a knot."

Cas nodded desperately and moaned around his gag. He could feel his entire body tightening, that familiar surge of heat swirling in the pit of his stomach, threatening to overtake him at any moment.

But he could tell that Dean was close, too.
The alpha's hips were starting to snap into him faster, harder, his own body demanding that a knot be supplied for its omega. Cas could feel it building, pressing against his rim, demanding entrance. And then with one final shove, the knot pushed past Cas's rim, locking them into place.

Almost on instinct, Cas bared his throat, his mind screaming _Mark me, Alpha!_ And as he came with a scream into his gag, he was suddenly so glad for it. He knew that if it hadn't been there, he would've screamed that last thought out loud and that...that could never happen. Dean could never actually mate him, and Cas should never ask him to.

Dean ground against Cas a few more times before coming, spilling inside the omega with a groan. He collapsed forward, his body completely covering Cas's as he slowly came back to himself. Dean reached up and unhooked the ball gag and pulled the blindfold off, smiling contentedly as he looked into Cas's bright blue eyes.

"That was fantastic," he mumbled, and Cas nodded with a smile.

"You were right; I feel very relaxed now," Cas slurred, causing Dean to smirk and press a quick kiss to Cas's mouth.

Dean tossed the gag and blindfold off to the side before reaching up again to unclasp the cuffs around Cas's wrists. He took each one in turn and rubbed the red skin, peppering soft kisses across the inside of each wrist.

"You were amazing," he murmured into the soft skin there, his eyes warm and loving on Cas. "I asked you to let go for me, and you did. That took a lot of trust."

"It's easy to trust you," Cas replied shyly, his cheeks heating with a warm blush as he remembered those last seconds as his orgasm had hit him, that thought that flashed through his mind that must never be spoken.

He looped his arms around Dean's neck and smiled. "How 'bout you? Are you relaxed now too?"

"Very," Dean responded. "I am very, very relaxed right now." Right then, his stomach growled loudly. He looked embarrassed for a split second but then shrugged. "And, apparently, very hungry, too."

Cas burst out into giggles and buried his face in Dean's neck.

They waited for Dean's knot to go down, whispering softly back and forth to one another until Cas began to drift off to sleep.

As soon as the knot had slipped free, Dean started to pull out, but Cas tightened his arms around him.

"Don't go," he mumbled into Dean's neck.

"Babe, I can't order the pizza without my phone," Dean reasoned, and Cas sighed heavily.

"Okay, but come right back," he urged, and Dean grinned as he pressed a hungry kiss to his mouth, "Promise."

He came back into the room a few moments later, a small frown on his handsome features as he stared down at his phone screen.

"What is it?" Cas asked warily from where he was still sprawled across the bed. Dean sighed and sat down on the edge of the bed.
"I have to go to New York," he said, his displeasure clear.

"What? When?" Cas asked, shifting up onto his knees so he could kneel next to Dean.

"This coming week. John has some new investors coming in, and he wants me there to meet them," Dean explained, holding his phone up so Cas could read the short message from Dean's father demanding his presence in New York on Monday afternoon.

"Why?" Cas wondered. "He doesn't usually drag you out there just to meet new investors."

Dean shrugged. "I know. I told him earlier during our call that I didn't want to go."

So that's why he'd been stressed. Cas wrapped his arms around Dean's torso, plastering himself to his back and pressing a soft kiss to his neck.

"I don't like it when you go. The apartment feels so empty," Cas admitted quietly as he rested his chin on Dean's shoulder, and Dean nodded.

"I know, baby. It's just for a few days," he assured. He smirked and turned his head to capture Cas's mouth in a kiss. "And I'll more than make it up to you when I get back."

"Or you could make it up to me sooner," Cas suggested. Dean arched an eyebrow, and Cas blushed prettily. "You could call me every night to...talk."

Dean's face split into a wide grin. "I could do that, yes."

"And we have all day tomorrow," Cas reminded.

"And the rest of tonight..." Dean said, his eyes mischievous as he turned around to grab Cas by the waist and tug him into his lap.

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Chapter End Notes

Guys, thank you so much for your positive and supportive feedback! I was absolutely overwhelmed by it.

As it turns out, two things I had for this weekend got canceled, so I ended up with a TON of free time (since I had worked ahead in preparation for having almost no free time). So, I got the next few chapters written!!

Thank you so much for your suggestions! A few of them were similar to things that I already had in mind for the story, but there were a few that opened up completely new roads for me to explore!!

Anyways, hope you like the chapter. Please feel free to comment and leave suggestions. Okay, kisses!!
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

"I'll miss you," Cas stated simply.

"I'll miss you, too," Dean echoed.

"Call me tonight?" Cas whispered, and Dean nodded with a grin.

"Absolutely."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sunday passed far too quickly for both Dean and Cas, despite their efforts to drag the most out of the day. When Cas bid Dean goodbye on Monday morning, he looped his arms around his neck and pulled him down into a long, deep kiss. Dean's hands moved to his waist, pulling him even closer.

When Cas finally pulled away, Dean's eyelids fluttered open, a surprised expression on his face.

"That was very enthusiastic," he trailed off, and Cas shrugged with one shoulder.

"I'll miss you," He stated simply. Dean smiled and nodded.

"I'll miss you, too," he echoed. He bent down for one more kiss, reluctant to let his omega go. The kiss quickly deepened, their tongues finding their way into each other's mouth for one last taste before the long days ahead. Cas finally pulled away and nipped at Dean's lip once more with a smirk.

"Call me tonight?" He whispered, and Dean nodded.

"I will. If something goes wrong..." Dean began, but Cas interrupted.

"Call Benny, I know. I'll be in study group until nine, but you can call me anytime after that."

"Okay, I guess I can work you into one of my late slots," Dean teased.

Cas rolled his eyes. "I'll see you Thursday," he said, tugging free of Dean's grasp and walking out of the apartment.

Dean leaned against the door frame and watched him go. "I love you," he called when Cas reached the elevator, and Cas turned around with a smile.

"I love you, too."

Dean waited until the elevator doors shut before going back inside and shutting the door behind him.

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"Well, this was productive," Balth grumbled as they left the library late that evening. "I still feel
totally unprepared for Uriel's test tomorrow."

"We'll do fine," Cas assured him, even though he felt the impending sense of doom himself.

"You know, we should go out tomorrow after the test to celebrate. Get smashing drunk in honor of finishing yet another shitty semester at this shitty college," Inaias proposed, but Cas shook his head.

"Can't." He didn't give them the reason, but they didn't ask. At right about the one-week mark of the semester, they'd figured out that Cas would choose an evening at home with Dean over going out drinking every single time.

Cas glanced down at his phone; it was 9:15. He had to get home now if he wanted to be in bed by the time Dean called. He started hurrying toward his car, barely glancing back at his friends to call out, "I'll see you tomorrow. Maybe we can go out for coffee after or something."

"Yeah, yeah," Balth yelled after him, rolling his eyes.

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Cas had just snuggled under the covers when his phone rang. He plugged in his headphones with the microphone before answering, that way he could talk to Dean while still using both of his hands.

"This is Jake from State Farm," he answered, his tone teasing.

"Well, hello there, Jake from State Farm," Dean replied in a low voice. "What are you wearing?"

"Khakis," Cas replied with a giggle.

"Nice," Dean said, and Cas could hear the smile in his voice. "How did your test go today?"

"Good, I think. I just have the last one tomorrow for Uriel's class, and then I'll be in the clear," Cas answered, his tone reflecting his relief.

"Awesome! I'm proud of you," Dean praised, and Cas felt the warmth from those simple words rush through him like a drug. He blushed and glanced down, even though Dean wasn't there to see him.

"Thank you," he murmured shyly, his fingers tracing nonsensical patterns into the comforter. "How, uh, how did the meeting go today?"

"It didn't," Dean replied, and Cas could hear the annoyance in his tone. "The investor isn't getting here til tomorrow, but John wanted me here today so we could talk."

"About what?" Cas wondered, his eyebrows furrowing.

"Fuck if I know," Dean said with a sigh. "He just asked me about how my life was going and stuff, how I liked Chicago, how I feel about the branch's progress."

"Wow, it's like he's your dad and has some sort of vested interest in your personal life or something," Cas remarked, sarcasm lacing his voice. But then he thought about his own relationship with his parents and realized that he had no right to say such things. He immediately felt guilty. "I'm sorry—"

"No, it's okay," Dean sighed. "It just...it worries me. He's never shown this much of an interest before. Hell, after mom died, he pretty much left me to be raised by the nannies."

"I get it," Cas hastened to assure him. "I don't like it when Mother calls to pry into my life, either."
"I wish he'd kept it to a simple phone call. But no! He has to drag my ass all the way up here instead," Dean grumbled.

"Well, it's only for a few days," Cas reminded. "And just think, when you get home," Cas's tone dropped to a murmur, "I'll be here to help you feel all better."

"Really?" Dean asked, his own voice dropping at least an octave. "And how will you do that, Castiel?"

Cas shivered at the alpha's use of his full name but kept speaking. "Well, I wouldn't want to ruin the surprise..."

"Humor me," Dean insisted, and Cas smiled.

"If it's really that important to you," he said with a sigh. Dean chuckled but didn't interrupt as Cas continued. "I'll meet you at the door wearing nothing but that sheer purple teddy you love, the one with the big bow around the back and the matching panty. And I'll be wearing my new black leather collar, the one you just bought me.

"I'll be kneeling right inside the door like a good little omega waiting for his alpha to come home, and I will be so wet just waiting for you, thinking about you," Cas murmured breathily.

"Do you always get wet thinking about me?" Dean wondered softly.

"Always," Cas promised. "Always so wet for my alpha. But I won't touch myself, because I like it better when you touch me. I want to wait until you're there to make me feel good."

"Are you touching yourself now?" Dean asked.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because you didn't say I could," Cas replied simply.

Cas could hear the pride in his voice when he said, "Good omega. Go ahead and touch your tits for me."

"Over your shirt or under it?" Cas asked.

"You're wearing my shirt?" Dean asked, and Cas hummed in agreement.

"Your blue Zeppelin one," Cas informed.

"That's one of my favorites," Dean commented lightly, and Cas giggled.

"I know. That's why I chose it," he admitted.

"Do you usually wear my shirts when I'm gone?" Dean asked.

"Yes. It helps when I can scent you on them," Cas said.

"Good. I like it when you wear them," Dean said. "But for right now, go ahead and take it off. You can put it back on when we're done. Take off anything else you're wearing, too."

"Yes, sir." Cas pulled the headphones out for a moment so he could pull off the shirt and briefs he
was wearing. As soon as he was naked, he put the headphones back in.

"Okay," he said to let Dean know he was back.

"Go ahead and play with your pretty little tits for me," Dean said. Cas reached up to rub at his hardened nipples, a soft sigh escaping his lips when he did.

"Does that feel good?" Dean asked softly.

"Yeah," Cas gasped out. "I wish it was you, though. I wish you were here touching me. Are you touching yourself?"

"Not tonight, baby. Tonight's all about me listening to you," Dean said. "Now, tell me what else you're going to do for me when I get back."

"You're going to hook your finger right under my collar and use it to guide me back to our bedroom, like a good dom would," Cas murmured. "And then when we get there, I'm going to lay right in the middle of our big bed and spread my legs open wide for you, just so you can see what you do to me, how wet you get me." Cas's last word cut off on a gasp as his fingers pinched his nipple. "So good..." He breathed out.

"Are you playing with your pussy yet?" Dean asked, and Cas moaned out a soft no. "Why don't you go ahead and do that for me, sweetheart? Why don't you stick a finger up that little hole, just like I'm going to do when I see you."

Cas kept one hand playing at his nipple while his other hand trailed down his stomach to toward his sopping hole. He took the barest of moments to rub at the rim there, just enough to get his finger slick, before he sunk his middle finger right in. He moaned and arched up, his eyes fluttering shut as he pictured Dean standing over him, watching him pleasure himself.

"Your finger always feels so good inside me, alpha," Cas murmured. "You know just how to fuck me with it, just enough to tease but not enough to make me come. The way you can keep me on edge for ages. Do you remember that weekend in Cleveland?"

He could hear Dean's smirk as the alpha replied, "Yes. I didn't let you come all weekend."

"You just kept teasing and teasing! And I hated it so much," Cas admitted with a breathy chuckle. "But I love it, too, because I know that when you finally let me come, it'll feel so fucking good. You'll look so good, standing over me, fucking me with your finger. You won't even be undressed yet; you'll still be in that sexy green tie that I love to see you wear." Cas's finger sped up.

"Add another finger," Dean suddenly commanded.

"Yes, alpha," Cas gasped out, sliding in his fourth finger on the next thrust. "Oh god, I feel so tight around my fingers!" Cas rolled his hips up into his fingers and let out a whine. "Dean, it feels so good."

Having experienced the sensation of Cas's tight channel clamping down around his fingers multiple times, Dean knew exactly how good it felt. He also knew how to make it feel even better.

"Why don't you go ahead and fuck yourself on three fingers for a little while, get that hole nice and open for me," Dean suggested, and Cas added his index finger on the next thrust with a whimpered, "Yes, alpha."

For the next several minutes, the only sounds carrying over the line were Cas's gasps and whines and
moans, each breathier and shorter than the last until he was gasping and rolling his hips with every
thrust of his fingers.

Soon, Cas's entire body was coated in a light sheen of sweat, and his fingers started to ache from
how fast they were moving. But it wasn't enough. He knew he wouldn't be able to come just on his
own fingers, just like Dean knew.

"Alpha! Alpha, I need more," Cas pleaded, his fingers still thrusting.

"What do you need?" Dean asked.

"I need your cock!" Cas whined, and Dean smiled.

"I know, baby. For now, you'll have to make do with something else. Why don't you go over to the
dresser and pick something out."

"Okay," Cas said, releasing a deep breath to calm himself. He pulled his fingers out, sighing with
relief as he stretched them, and stood to walk over to their dresser on shaky legs. He opened the
fourth drawer down to reveal all of the toys Dean had bought him so far.

"Which one should I choose?" He wondered aloud to Dean.

"Which one do you want to choose tonight?" Dean asked. Cas hummed softly as he glanced over the
toys, running feather soft fingers over a couple.

"I really like that green vibrating one you just bought me, but I also really like the bunny vibrator,"
Cas said. "And there's always the big purple one that you love using on me."

"You know, I don't think we've really used that green one enough yet. Go ahead and grab that one,"
Dean suggested.

"Yes, sir," Cas replied. He grabbed the green toy and shut the drawer before returning to the bed.
Once he was settled back against the pillows comfortably, he reached down to rub the head of the
dildo right against his entrance, using his other hand to scoop some of his slick out and coat the toy
with it.

"All ready," he said.

"Good. Go ahead and stick just the tip in, just a little bit past your rim," Dean instructed. Cas placed
the toy right up against his rim and slowly pushed it in, just enough so that the tip was inside of him.

"It's so big!" Cas ground out. "Almost as big as you."

"Hmmm, maybe I should be more careful with the toys I pick. That thing could be putting me out of
a job," Dean teased.

"Never," Cas assured him. "I said almost, remember?"

"Good. Why don't you push it in a little further?" Dean said. "Just a couple inches more, just enough
to stretch yourself."

Cas breathed out through his nose as he pushed the dildo in further, his hole clamping down around
the intrusion. He released a loud whine from the back of his throat, and Dean gently shushed him
from the other end of the line.

"Don't push yourself too much, baby," he reminded.
"I'm not," Cas replied after a couple of moments. "It just feels really good. Good choice," he praised. "You always know what'll make me feel good."

"Well, it's not that hard. I just look for big and long," Dean admitted, causing Cas to bark out a sharp laugh.

"You're making me sound like a size queen or something," Cas accused lightly.

"Hmm...I wonder why?" Dean teased back. "How are you feeling?"

"Good," Cas replied.

"Do you think you can take a couple more inches?" Dean asked.

"Absolutely," Cas breathed, already moving to push the dildo in further. It went in a few more inches before it couldn't go any further. He stopped. "Okay," he panted.

"Good omega," Dean murmured. "I know you look so amazing with your little hole stretched around that toy."

Cas suddenly got an idea and grabbed the phone from where it rested on the pillow beside him. He angled it downward so he could snap a picture of the toy stuffed inside of him, but he didn't send it yet.

Instead he asked, "Can I start fucking myself with it?"

"What's the magic word?" Dean goaded.

"Please, may I fuck myself with it?" Cas pleaded, his voice pitching higher.

"Slowly," Dean said. "Very slowly. I want you to feel the burn with every single slide."

Cas's breath hitched at the mental image the words produced. "Yes, Alpha," he murmured. Then he grasped the dildo and slowly pulled it out, hissing at the slight tug on his rim, until there was nothing but the head left inside. And then he pushed it back inside just as slowly, moaning at the sensation of being filled so completely.

"That's right, baby. Moan loud for me," Dean encouraged, and Cas moaned again.

"Dean, I'm so full!" He groaned as he pulled it out and pushed it back in again. "So big..." He whimpered on the next thrust.

After several minutes of listening to him fuck his hole, when he was sure that the omega was well and truly stretched by the toy, Dean spoke again. "Faster, go a little faster."

Cas's moans grew louder and lasted longer, his voice hitching with every quick thrust of the dildo. Dean could hear the tell-tale catch at the end of each moan, the slight rasp that signaled how close the omega was.

"Cas, you have to tell me before you come. Right when you're right there, you have to tell me," Dean commanded, and Cas may have made an assenting sound. Dean really couldn't tell between the breathiness and groaning and keening.

It was only a few thrusts more before Cas felt that clench in his gut, the tightening in his balls.

"Alpha! I'm so close!" He warned.
"Shove it in as far as it will go, Castiel. I want you to shove it right against your prostate," Dean instructed. Cas shoved it in, shuddering as the head pushed against that magic spot. Dean's next words nearly tore him apart. "Turn it on, baby. I want it vibrating right there against your prostate."

With a flick of the wrist, Cas had turned on the vibrator, and then he was coming. His entire body shuddered as wave after wave of pleasure suffused throughout his small frame, his toes curling into the sheets below him, his eyes squeezing shut, his red-bitten mouth dropping open with a scream of Dean's name. And then he blacked out.

When he came to, he still had the vibrator shoved up his hole, his entire body twitching as tiny aftershocks coursed through him. But the more pressing matter was Dean, whose anxious voice persisted in his ears over the headphones.

"Cas? Cas, baby?"

"Dean," he slurred out, a dopey smile on his face as he reached down to shut off the vibrator and pull it out.

"Oh my god, Cas. Did you just...did you just pass out?" Dean asked, his voice half-incredulous, half-lustful.

Cas chuckled breathily and nodded, even though Dean couldn't see him. "That I did."

"Baby..." Dean murmured. "God, I wish I could've been there to see that."

"Maybe I can manage a repeat performance when you get back," Cas murmured.

"I think we may just have to look into that," Dean agreed. "You okay?"

"Dean, I am fan-fucking-tastic," Cas assured him. "Trust me, I have the biggest smile on my face right now."

"Yeah, I can hear it," Dean replied.

"The only thing that could make this better was if you were here," Cas said.

"Thursday," Dean reminded. "I'll be home then and we can pick up with that little fantasy we were talking about earlier."

"Can't wait," Cas mumbled, his eyes growing heavy.

"Me, neither. Love you, Cas," Dean said.

"Love you, too," Cas responded.

"I'll call again tomorrow," Dean said.

"Wait!" Cas called, just realizing that Dean was about to hang up.

"Yeah?" Dean asked.

"Talk to me until I fall asleep? Please?" Cas pleaded softly.

"Of course," Dean replied, a smile in his voice. "What do you want to talk about?"

"Hmmm...your favorite book," Cas decided.
"Definitely Vonnegut," Dean answered.

"Cat's Cradle or Slaughterhouse Five?" Cas asked. He smiled as Dean immediately launched into a lengthy comparison to the two. He pulled Dean's discarded t-shirt to him so he could breathe in his alpha's comforting scent as his deep, steady voice lulled him into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Here, have another fluffy chapter (filled with hot phone sex).

For those who were prepared for an onslaught of angst...I figured I'd give you an extra week to prepare. ;)


Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Cas's heart shriveled in his chest as the thought flashed through his mind that Dean might be cheating. But then he realized that it wouldn't really be cheating, because Dean wasn't really his.

This thing they had was temporary; it always had been. Cas had known that from the start. He'd simply...forgotten. He'd let himself get caught up in the fantasy, but now that fantasy would be coming to an end.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

"Well, I think this meeting has gone very well," John said on Tuesday afternoon. He extended his hand toward the tall, stern man who'd been glaring directly at Dean for the entirety of the meeting.

"That's yet to be seen, I believe," the tall man replied, glancing disdainfully at John's hand.

"It was very lovely to meet you both," the stern man's daughter said, stepping forward to offer her own hand.

"And you, Tessa," John replied, smiling warmly.

She turned to Dean next. "It was very nice to meet you as well, Dean."

"Same," Dean replied with a tight smile, quickly withdrawing his hand after they'd shaken.

It wasn't that he didn't like Tessa; she seemed like a very nice young woman. But it had only taken about five minutes for Dean to realize that this meeting with a potential sponsor, as his father had put it, was actually a meeting with his potential mate and father-in-law. And Dean, he didn't need that, didn't want it. So, to avoid giving the wrong impression to Tessa or his father, he'd maintained a polite demeanor, but nothing more.

Right then, the tall man's phone buzzed, and he glanced down at it quickly before shaking his head.

"Well, it appears I have a last-minute appointment across town." He looked up at his daughter.

"Tessa, do you think you can make it on your own for the afternoon?"

Tessa opened her mouth to respond, but before anything escaped, John was speaking.

"Dean can show her around the town," he volunteered, smiling cheekily at his son. "Can't ya, Dean?"

Dean was about to protest, but he was interrupted by the tall, stern man. "Sounds like a wonderful idea. Tessa, I'll see you at dinner." He turned to Dean and shoved a long, bony finger in his face.

"Don't let anything happen to her."

The elevator arrived then and the tall man stepped on. Once the elevator doors shut behind him, Dean shot Tessa an anxious smile.
"Just give me a moment to collect my things from my office, and then we can take off," he explained and turned away before she was able to respond. He grabbed John by the elbow and started tugging him toward his office. "A word?"

No sooner had the heavy oak door shut behind him than Dean was spinning on his father, his face a mask of barely concealed rage.

"What the hell was that?" he asked, pointing out toward where Tessa waited by the elevators.

"What?" John asked, feigning innocence.

"You know what," Dean growled. John continued to stare at him blankly, but Dean stared right back. John finally let out a heavy sigh and shook his head.

"Dean, you know my birthday's coming up soon," he began. Dean rolled his eyes. If the old man went for the I want grandchildren while I'm still young enough to enjoy them speech, Dean was going to lose it.

"Now, just hear me out," John said before Dean could voice his annoyance. "I'm turning sixty-five; I'm getting old, too old for this shit." He gestured out toward the main office. "I'm going to be retiring soon, which means you'll be taking over. The investors are getting antsy. They want the company to go to someone who's settled, mate and kids, the whole shtick." He pointed out toward the elevators.

"Tessa's a good omega, comes from a good family. You could do a lot worse. You're getting too old to keep playing this bachelor card; you need to find someone."

Anger flared hot and bright within Dean. "I already have someone!" He snapped without thinking.

John's eyebrows arched, and Dean flushed. "In mind," he tacked on lamely. "I already have someone in mind."

"Great! Give me a name, and I'll have my PI look them up," John enthused, pulling a pen from his breast pocket.

"No! Not this one," Dean argued, his tone low and dark.

John arched an eyebrow. "Dean, I'm not going to give you my company just to let some little tramp steal it from you in the divorce settlement. We need to—"

He was cut off by Dean's snarl, "I said, not this one. You're not going anywhere near him."

"Oh god, it's not another alpha, is it? Because I can convince the investors to put up with a lot, but an alpha on alpha pairing, well..." John trailed off.

Dean shook his head. "Even if it is, it's none of your damn business. Just...I need time, okay? It'll happen eventually, but until then, you and your PI stay the hell out of it. Okay?"

John held up his hands in an appeasing manner.

"Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go spend the afternoon playing babysitter to Daddy's Precious Little Angel out there," Dean spoke condescendingly, and John couldn't seem to help his smirk.

Dean strode out of the office, barely restraining himself from slamming the door behind him like some teenager. He walked back toward the elevator where Tessa still waited.

"Sorry about that. The old man forgot where he put his life alert button," Dean explained, and Tessa chuckled.
"Listen, Dean, you really don't have to do this. I can tell you're uncomfortable with it; to be honest, so am I," she said.

"Really?"

"Yeah, and I think it's probably for the same reason," she admitted with a kind smile.

"And what reason would that be?" Dean wondered.

She pulled out her phone and showed him the background, a selfie of a man holding beautiful little girl, both smiling broadly. "His name's Amos. We met last year when he started working the security night shift for my apartment building. That's his daughter, Jenna."

Dean thought of the picture Cas had sent him that morning, a simple shot of the giant green dildo disappearing into his tight hole. Yeah, he definitely couldn't show that picture to Tessa.

Instead, he smiled at the picture on her phone before looking back up at her. "Listen, I really don't mind showing you some of the sights, as long as we both know that this," he gestured between them, "is going nowhere."

She smiled and nodded. "Absolutely!"

"You can tell me more about Amos and Jenna," Dean offered as he pressed the down button for the elevator.

"Only if you tell me about yours," she responded, and Dean grinned.

"Deal."

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"Another semester down, only five more to go!" Inaias whooped, skipping around Cas and Balth in circles. "Take that, you no good sons of bitches!" Inaias yelled back toward the building they had just exited, flashing both of his middle fingers.

Balth rolled his eyes, but Cas caught the slight upward tug at the corner of his mouth. Cas didn't even try to hide his grin.

"Language, Inaias!" Hael chided from the other side of Balth without looking up from her phone. Cas did roll his eyes this time. Hael was a pain in the ass, but they still kept her around for some reason.

"I swear, some people are just too pretty for their own good," she murmured.

"Ah, yes, but it is a curse I must bear as best I can," Balth responded. Hael smacked him in the arm.

"Not you; him," she pointed down at her phone. "Dean Smith."

Cas's head shot up from where he'd been on his own phone, about to text the very man she spoke of. He glanced over to find her pointing at a picture of Dean with a beautiful, dark-haired woman. He was laughing at something, and the woman was smiling up at him softly. It was his full-body laugh, the one where he bent completely backward, like the laughter was too big to be contained; it was the laugh that Cas loved the most. The caption under the photo read, "Young Love?" The time stamp on the picture showed that it had been posted just minutes before.

Cas's heart shriveled in his chest as the thought flashed through his mind that Dean might be
cheating. But then he realized that it wouldn't really be cheating, because Dean wasn't really his. This thing they had was temporary; it always had been. Cas had known that from the start. He'd simply...forgotten. He'd let himself get caught up in the fantasy, but now that fantasy would be coming to an end.

It had to end, now that Dean had found his mate. Because that's who this was; this woman in the picture was his mate. Cas realized that this was probably the "investor" John had brought Dean to New York to meet. This was the kind of omega John wanted in his family.

Countless times he'd pictured the omega who would get to keep Dean after he was gone, and now he finally had a face to match that picture. She was just what Cas had imagined she'd be.

"Cas, are you okay?" Balth asked, his voice concerned. Cas's head shot up, and he smiled brightly. "Never better," he lied. He drew a deep, steadying breath. "You know, I think I will go out with you all tonight."

Inaias's eyebrows shot up. "Really? Awesome!"

"Are you sure?" Balth asked.

Cas nodded, his smile tight. He'd said no when they'd first invited him, just because he'd been planning on Dean calling. But now, after seeing that picture, he knew Dean wouldn't be calling him. Dean would be taking that girl out to dinner somewhere nice, maybe back to his hotel after. He wouldn't waste his time calling some twink college student who'd fallen irrevocably in love with him.

"Absolutely."

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Cas stared down at the half-finished row of shot glasses in front of him, his vision starting to blur as he reached for the next one. The group around him kept chanting something about one more, but Cas couldn't understand what they were all excited about. He'd always had a very high tolerance for the stuff, but tonight it appeared he'd reached his limit. Well, that was no surprise; he'd been off of the stuff for months at Dean's behest.

Suddenly, a hand was slamming down onto his shoulder, causing him to stumble a bit and drop the shot glass. He giggled as it hit the floor and rolled away. It was only after a moment of staring after the shot glass that he realized someone was talking to him. He looked over to find Balthazar's blurry features glaring at him. He tried to force himself to concentrate on his friend's words.

"–looking all over for you!" Balth was shouting. He started tugging Cas toward the front door, and Cas stumbled along after him until they were suddenly outside in the frigid night air.

Cas shrugged. "Sorry." He wasn't really sorry.

Balth pointed back toward the house. "What the hell are you doing? I thought your alpha told you not to drink."

Cas smiled sadly and nodded. "I know! He did. I know," he admitted. "But he's not going to be my alpha for much longer, so it doesn't really matter," he explained in slurred tones and half-finished words.

"What?" Balth asked.
"You saw the picture, Balth."

"Yeah, and?" Balth prodded, still confused.

"He found her, Balth. He found his mate!" Cas explained, tears forming at the corners of his eyes.

"You dumbass, you're his mate!" Balth muttered, but Cas shook his head vehemently. He stumbled a step backward and held up a hand when Balth moved forward to help him.

"No! I'm not! So stop saying that!" The omega commanded hoarsely. "I'm not mated to him, okay? My body just thinks I am. And it needs to stop because this really fucking sucks. Okay? It sucks a lot because I'm going to have to leave now, and my body is going to miss its mate, even though it never really had one in the first place."

"Cas," Balth murmured, moving forward to pull the omega into his arms. "Stupid, stupid Cas. Why don't you just talk to him?"

"No, I don't want him to feel saddled down by me, not when he's finally found her," Cas mumbled petulantly.

Balth sighed and shook his head. There would be no reasoning with him, not when he was like this. "Come on, let's get you home. You've got everything? Your keys, your phone?"

Cas reached down to his pocket to check. There were the keys; and the phone was...

"Where the hell is my phone?"

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Inside the house, the man wearing all black picked up the ringing iPhone from the top of the bar. "Hello?"

The British voice threw Dean off for a moment. He could hear loud music and shouting in the background. He checked his screen to make sure he'd pressed the correct number to call.

"Hello?" The British voice reiterated.

"Who the hell is this?" Dean demanded.

"Name's Crowley," the voice responded. "And whom do I have the pleasure of speaking to?"

"How the hell did you get this phone?" Dean demanded, and Crowley sighed heavily.

"I found it," he explained.

"What? Where?" Dean asked, his voice reflecting his anxiety. Why did some random British guy have Cas's phone? And why did the name Crowley sound so familiar?

"I found it on top of the bar," Crowley explained, his tone long-suffering.

"Do you know where the owner is?" Dean asked.

"No, but judging by the long row of shot glasses, I'd say a safe guess is naked in the bushes," Crowley stated.

Dean felt panic settle low in his gut. Where was Cas? He was about to ask another question when he
heard a familiar voice carry over the line.

"Give me that, dickwad!" Suddenly, the voice was right there in his ear. "Dean?"

"Balth?" Dean asked, his eyes narrowing.

"One and the same," Balth responded. "Sorry about all that."

"Where's Cas?" He asked, and Balth's long "uhhhhh..." told him exactly where Cas was.

"Listen, Dean..." Balth began, but then another voice came carrying over the line.

"Holy shit! Is that Dean?" Cas cried. Dean let out a sigh of relief; so he was alive and somewhat well. Cas was still speaking. "He is gonna be so pissed!"

"Look, Balth, just get him home, please?" Dean asked, his tone weary and agitated.

"Will do. And, uh, Dean, before you get too pissed and do...whatever it is you two do...at least listen to his side of it," Balth pleaded.

Dean let silence fall over the line. He was so tempted to ask Balth to explain what Cas's side of the story was, but then he realized that he wanted to hear it straight from Cas himself.

"Good night, Balth," Dean said before hanging up.

Dean sighed heavily and dropped his head into his hands. He'd really been looking forward to that call. After the stress of dealing with his father that day, all he'd wanted was to speak to his omega, to hear his voice and know that everything was okay.

He'd timed it perfectly, aiming for right around the time that Cas usually went to bed. He'd expected the soft tones of his sleep-bleary omega right on the cusp of sleep. He'd thought that he would get to walk Cas through fingering himself, maybe fucking himself with another toy. He'd planned on actually joining in the fun tonight. He'd thought he would end the call talking his omega to sleep like the night before. Instead, he'd gotten a sardonic British man.

Now, instead of the wonderful little scenario they'd planned the night before, he was going to have to discipline Cas. The plea from Balth nagged at the back of his mind. *At least listen to his side of it.*

Dean sighed and looked back down at his phone, typing out the quick message before he could change his mind.

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When Cas woke the next morning, it was with a pounding headache and a dry mouth. He groaned and rolled over to bury his face in Dean's pillow, inhaling the familiar scent. Immediately, he could feel his system begin to calm.

After several more minutes or hours or years, he finally looked back over to the nightstand to find a cup of water and three aspirin waiting for him. He downed the aspirin in one gulp and drank the entire cup before picking up his phone to look at it.

He had one missed text from Dean. It was short and to the point, nothing more than a few words.

*Home at 6:30 tonight. Indigo.*

Cas stared down at the text for a solid minute then shut his eyes tightly, willing for this to be some
hangover hallucination. But when he opened his eyes to look again, nothing had changed. The text was really there, the single word glaring up at him. *Indigo.*

"Fuck."

Chapter End Notes

And now I present unto you the much-anticipated angst, part 1 of 7. I kid, I kid. There'll only be a couple more angst chapters... Maybe. Sorry it's a bit of a shorter chapter, but...well... CLIFFHANGER!!! *ducks and hides*
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Cas hadn't anticipated how vulnerable he would feel, how nervous he would be. But now, kneeling there, he understood.

Chapter Notes

Warning: disciplinary spanking

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Cas kneeled just inside the apartment door, his head downbent, eyes fixed to the carpet beneath him. His hands rested flat on his thighs, and he had to fight the urge to fold them in front of himself. It made him feel so vulnerable, being bared like this, naked except for the heavy black collar around his neck.

*Indigo*. Cas had never thought that they'd ever actually have to use that word. In fact, the first time Dean had explained what it meant, Cas had thought it was actually kind of silly.

"Punishment spanking? Really?"

*Dean nodded somberly.*

"Why can't you just *tell* me that I'll be getting a punishment spanking?"

"I could, but this entails a lot more than just the spanking," Dean explained. *He pointed toward the spot just inside the door. "If I ever use the word indigo, I'll expect you to be waiting for me just inside the door here, kneeling, hands flat on your thighs, and naked."*

Cas hadn't understood then, when Dean had first explained it, that the waiting would be the worst part of it. But now, waiting for Dean to come home... the first thing that he would see when he walked through the door wouldn't be Cas running up to kiss him eagerly but Cas kneeling, waiting for his punishment; it wrenched at Cas. He hadn't anticipated how vulnerable he would feel, how nervous he would be. But now, kneeling there, he understood.

Tears welled in his eyes as he thought about what was about to happen. He'd brought this on himself, really. He'd known the rules, and he'd willingly chosen to break them. Hell, he'd broken almost every single one of them in a single night, and now he was going to face the consequences.

The rebellious part of his mind screamed at him to get up and leave, save his own skin. Dean had already found his next mate; Cas's days here in this apartment were numbered. Why stay and take punishment for rules that weren't going to be in place for much longer?

But then the other part of Cas, the part that was desperately in love with Dean, shoved the thought away. Cas wouldn't run away; he wouldn't leave until Dean absolutely forced him to go. He couldn't
leave his alpha, not until it was an absolute necessity.

He heard the lock turn, and his shoulders stiffened as the door swung inward. He didn't look up, didn't move his eyes from where they stared blankly at the carpet.

Dean didn't speak to him or acknowledge him as he moved into the apartment. He shut and locked the door as usual and then walked past Cas without a second glance. Cas felt the silence like a blow, and the tears that had welled began to slide silently down his cheeks. Cas continued to kneel there, refusing to move until Dean allowed it. But what if Dean didn't allow it? What if he left Cas kneeling there all night?

Cas tried to quell the sudden surge of fear in his stomach. Dean wasn't cruel. He'd never been cruel to Cas before, and he wouldn't start now. He was still a good man, a good alpha, even if he had found someone else.

Cas kneeled there in silence for several minutes longer, his eyes staring at the carpet. Dean's voice suddenly rang out through the apartment, causing him to flinch.

"Come here, Castiel." The alpha's voice was cold, unrelenting and absolute, demanding nothing but obedience.

Cas hesitated for a moment. Should he crawl? Should he walk? Dean hadn't told him he could walk, but he hadn't told him he couldn't either. He decided to go with the method that would get him there the fastest. He stood, pausing to get his feet back under him. He grimaced at the sudden rush of blood back into his calves, but still forced himself to move forward into the living room.

Dean sat on the couch, his body sprawled out like he hadn't a care in the world. He pointed at the floor in front of him, right between his legs. "Kneel."

Cas hurried forward to kneel in the indicated spot, his eyes immediately affixing themselves to the floor again. Dean had different plans, though.

"Look at me, Omega," he demanded. Cas slowly lifted his eyes to meet his alpha's. The next command was short, simple, but still so very hard. "Explain."

Tears welled in Cas's eyes again, and he cleared his throat, trying to force his voice to work.

"I, uh—" he hesitated. What could he say? *I saw a picture of you and your actual mate, the one who's going to get to keep you for the rest of her life, and it sent me into a downward spiral that pushed me to drink away my pain.*

He couldn't admit that to Dean; not now. He wouldn't be a burden.

He cleared his throat and began again. "I, uh, thought you were cheating," he lied. His eyes remained steady on the alpha's as he drew on all those years of lying to his parents and Zachariah to make his lie as convincing as possible.

"Why?" Dean wondered, his tone still flat.

Cas shrugged. "I saw the picture."

"What picture?"

"The one on E! News's website," Cas explained. "The one of you and the other omega." His voice trailed off at the end.
Dean's lips tightened into a flat line. He stared at Cas for another minute before speaking again. "You thought I was cheating, but instead of calling to ask me about it—like a mate should—you decided to get back at me by breaking the few rules I have put down for you?"

"Yes," Cas replied hoarsely, trying so hard to ignore that word, the word Dean had used to describe him. It's not true. Don't get your hopes up, he reminded himself sternly.

"Why?" Dean asked, his voice showing the first flicker of emotion. "How could you ever think that I would cheat, after everything we've shared?"

I don't! I don't think that, Cas's mind screamed, but he forced his mouth to say, "People cheat every day. It just made sense that it would happen to me."

"What? Why?" Dean questioned, his eyes darkening.

"Because you're Dean Smith, and I'm nobody special," Cas explained, finally relieved at having some truth to offer.

Dean suddenly reached down to grab him by the chin and pulled it upward so that Castiel had no choice but to stare into his green eyes. "I don't waste my time on nobodies, Castiel."

Oh, god, this was it. Dean was finally going to break up with him. He'd finally come to his senses about who Cas really was; he was finally ending it. Cas's eyelids slid shut, his heart refusing to watch as Dean said the words that would end him.

But they never came. Instead, Dean whispered, "So don't ever think that about yourself."

Cas's eyes flashed open to stare at his alpha, his mind uncomprehending.

"I don't...understand," he finally admitted. "You aren't breaking up with me?"

Dean's face revealed his first real emotion of the night: shock.

"No! Why the hell would I make you get naked just to break up with you?" Dean asked, his voice disbelieving.

"Because you don't need me anymore," Cas said without thinking. He could have bit his own tongue as soon as the revealing words were out there.

Dean's fingers were gentle as they slowly brushed along his cheekbone, his eyes sorrowful. "I will always need you, Castiel. But I also need to be able to trust you; I need you to be there for me through thick and thin, and not go flying off the deep end every time things get a little rough," Dean explained. "That's why I'm doing this, to teach you that there are consequences for disobedience. If I didn't need you, I'd let you go without a second thought."

"Really?" Cas whispered, and Dean nodded.

"Before we begin, I need you to understand exactly why you're being punished. Do you know why?"

"I broke the rules," Cas murmured.

"Which rules?"

Cas drew a deep breath before reciting the rules. "I went out late without telling you where I was going. I consumed copious amounts of alcohol, to the point of becoming inebriated. And I lied
through withholding information about my actions and whereabouts."

"Precisely," Dean agreed. "Castiel, do you remember why I set those rules in place?"

"For my protection," Cas replied.

Dean nodded somberly. "Drunk omegas who are out alone get taken advantage of. Especially unmated ones," Dean said. "And as far as everyone out there is concerned, you are unmated. You don't have my mark yet," his eyes fell to Cas's neck, the spot where the mating mark would go.

Cas's mind froze at that last word. Yet. He didn't have Dean's mark yet. As in Dean was planning on him having it some day... As in, he was planning on Cas not leaving, but staying... permanently. Before Cas could ask about any of that, Dean continued speaking.

"Remember the system we agreed on?"

The question yanked Cas's mind back to the task at hand.

"Ten for every rule," he replied weakly.

"Yes. That's thirty for tonight."

Cas's eyes widened. That was a lot... He considered screaming his apology and begging for the alpha's forgiveness, but he knew didn't deserve that yet. He couldn't receive forgiveness without first receiving discipline; his conscience wouldn't allow it. So he simply nodded instead.

"I want you to know that this isn't just about inflicting pain. It's about choices and consequences. You made very specific choices, and those choices have consequences. Do you understand?"

"Yes, alpha," Cas murmured.

Dean finally stood and held out his hand toward Cas. The omega took the proffered hand and allowed Dean to help him stand.

"To the bedroom," Dean directed, his hand moving to the collar on the back of Castiel's neck to guide him toward the bedroom. Once inside, he pointed toward the bed. "Up."

Cas climbed onto his hands and knees on the bed, presenting his ass to the cool air of the room.

"Not that one; not tonight," Dean chided. "On your back."

Cas rolled over to his back, his eyes staring straight up at the creme ceiling. Dean walked up next to him and directed him to bend his legs up toward his chest. Once his knees were bent upward, completely exposing his ass and thighs to Dean, the alpha slid a pillow under his lower back, elevating his ass even further.

"This is called the diaper position," he explained. "You're going to hold your legs up for me, understand?"

"Yes, sir," Cas replied.

"You are not to lower them again until I say so. Lowering them will result in more spankings being added. Yes, sir?"

"Yes, sir," Cas repeated.
"Now hold this position," Dean directed. Cas watched as he walked over to the tall dresser, the same one that Cas had pulled the toy out from two nights before. But instead of opening the fourth drawer where the toys were stored, he opened the fifth drawer.

He stared down into the drawer as he contemplated the options, much like Cas had done when he'd picked his toy for their phone sex. Dean finally pulled out a paddle and shut the drawer before turning back to where Cas still lay on the bed.

Cas's breath caught in his throat when he saw the paddle Dean had chosen. It was a long, thin one with several holes drilled into the flat oak of the paddle. Dean came up to stand at the base of the bed, right where Cas was positioned. Dean rubbed his hand over the smooth skin of Cas's ass, his eyes dark.

"I don't like having to do this, any more than you like having it done," he murmured. "But we have an agreement. We have set rules, and the breaking of those rules must be disciplined. If I didn't discipline you, I wouldn't be keeping my word; I wouldn't be trustworthy. Do you understand?"

"Yes, alpha," Cas said.

"I'm going to start with ten for the first rule, and you're going to count them for me."

Cas nodded, his teeth digging into his lower lip as he waited for the first blow. He could feel the way his skin tautened across his ass with this position, and he suspected that this was going to hurt like a mother.

When the first blow fell, his suspicions were immediately confirmed. His flesh screamed in pain, but Cas managed to keep any reaction contained. Instead, he did as instructed.

"One," he jerked out.

"Only five more," Dean murmured, his hands rubbing over the bright red skin of Cas's ass. Cas hiccuped out another sob, but he still nodded.

Tears flowed down the sides of his face, soaking the sheets beneath his head. The skin of his ass and the back of his thighs burned, taut and tight and swollen and red. His eyes were itchy and red-rimmed from all of the crying. His arms ached from holding his legs up, and his thighs were shaking with the exertion of staying elevated. His throat was hoarse from all of the screaming, but it was almost over.

The swats had been steady and consistent in their groupings, one set fast and tight on his ass, the next set slow and evenly spaced on more of his exposed skin. Dean had known exactly when and how to administer each set.

There had been nothing sexual about the spanking; it had been completely about the discipline. Dean had made sure of that, reminding Cas every so often that "This doesn't have to happen again. It's completely up to you."

Which only made it worse, because Cas knew that Dean was right. This was completely on Cas; every single one of the twenty-five swats so far had been Cas's fault, and Cas had counted every single one.
At first he'd hated the counting, but then he'd realized that the counting grounded him, steadied him. It kept his mind centered, didn't let him float away with each wave of pain. Again, Dean had known what he would need and had provided for it.

"Ready?" Dean asked, pulling his mind back to the moment, and Cas nodded.

Dean brought the paddle down against his left cheek in a whoosh, and Cas felt another flash of pain surge through him.

"Twenty-six," he sobbed.

Dean brought the paddle down again on the right cheek.

"Twenty-seven!" He yelped.

The next swat landed on his upper right thigh. "Twenty-eight."

Dean brought the paddle down on Cas's left cheek again.

"Twenty-nine!" The omega choked out.

And then the paddle was landing right on the bottom of his right cheek.

"Thirty," Cas gasped out, his body shuddering with the pain, his skin screaming in agony. His first instinct was to collapse and curl into a ball, but Dean hadn't told him he could lower his legs yet. He hadn't given him permission to move.

And then Dean's hands were there, gently removing his hands from his legs and lowering his legs to the bed. Cas hissed at the sting of pain that ran through him when the burning skin of his thighs met the bedspread, but also at the relief that flooded his system at finally being allowed to stretch his legs. Dean slowly rolled him over onto his stomach, and Cas heard a lid uncapping. Then Dean's hands were there, spreading some cooling lotion over Cas's raw skin with feather-light touches.

Cas felt the tension slowly leaking from his body, and he allowed himself to sag into the soft mattress below him.

"That's it, baby," Dean coaxed. "Just relax." He finished rubbing the lotion in, but left Cas on his stomach as he moved to the dresser and put the paddle away.

Dean returned to the bed and helped Cas sit up. He held up a pair of pajama pants, and Cas nodded. Dean took Cas's left leg and slid it into the pants, followed by the right leg. He tugged the pants up Cas's legs, careful to keep the elastic waistband away from the tender skin of Cas's thighs and ass. As he allowed the waistband to settle into place low on Cas's hips, he placed one gentle kiss against Cas's tummy, right above the waistband of the pants.

He reached toward Cas's neck to remove the collar, but Cas shook his head. "Can I keep it on, just a little bit longer?"

"Why? Your punishment is over," Dean pointed out, his eyes concerned.

"Because it reminds me I'm yours," Cas admitted softly.

The alpha nodded once and crawled up onto the bed, still dressed in his work clothes. He held out his hand toward Cas. It was an invitation, not a command. He wasn't forcing Cas to come to him if he didn't want to; he was giving him the option to stay away if he needed it.
But Cas, he needed his alpha, more than anything. He willingly crawled up into Dean's lap and buried his face into his chest, sighing contentedly as long arms wrapped around him to hold him tight.

Cas snuggled into the warmth of Dean's chest, inhaling his scent and allowing it to calm his system. He wanted to fall asleep right there, but Dean had other priorities. He nudged Cas's head to the side where he had a glass of water waiting.

"Drink," he instructed, and Cas complied. Once the water was gone, Dean set the cup aside and wrapped his arms around his omega again.

Cas knew what was supposed to come next. He was supposed to apologize and promise to never do this again, and Dean was supposed to forgive him. But he found he couldn't. Not that he didn't want to, because he wanted to so very badly. He craved those words of forgiveness from his alpha, but he couldn't bring himself to ask for them.

Even though he had taken his punishment, he still felt like he didn't deserve the alpha's forgiveness. Which wouldn't usually make sense, but to Cas it made perfect sense, because he knew exactly what was hindering him from making peace with Dean.

He knew that he had lied again, just that evening, lied during a time when there was only supposed to be truth. When he was supposed to be giving up any secrets, he had only added more.

And besides that, Dean now thought that that Cas believed him capable of cheating, which was so far from the truth. Cas knew that Dean would be faithful through and through until the very end. And Dean, Dean didn't deserve to think otherwise. He deserved to know that his omega believed in him completely and without fail.

Cas couldn't lie anymore. He couldn't do this to Dean or to himself. He needed to tell Dean the truth about what he'd thought when he saw the picture and let the chips fall where they may.

Perhaps Dean would realize how far gone he was and send him away. Perhaps he'd let him stay, out of pity, until the next omega arrived. Or maybe...Cas's mind flashed back to what Dean had said earlier: You don't have my mark yet. Maybe he'd let him stay for a different reason...

He pulled away from the alpha, ignoring Dean's confused expression as he crawled out of his lap and kneeled next to him instead.

"I know that this is the part where I'm supposed to apologize and ask for your forgiveness," he said. "But I can't yet. My conscience won't let me. I have something else I have to confess to you first."

Dean's eyebrows lowered in confusion, but he nodded for Cas to continue.

Cas licked at his lips nervously, wondering what would be the best way to phrase this—he suddenly caught himself. There wasn't a best way to phrase this; the best way would be to just admit the truth outright.

"I lied to you earlier," he admitted softly. "When you asked why I went out drinking. I said it was because I saw the picture and thought that you were cheating, but that's not true. I know that you would never cheat on me, ever."

Dean looked relieved, yet still anxious. "Then why did you go out drinking?"

Cas drew in a deep breath, his stomach clenching painfully as he whispered, "because I saw the picture, and I thought that you had found your mate."
Dean looked shocked, but Cas continued on before he could say anything. "I knew, as soon as I saw the picture, that she was the one your father wanted you to meet. I knew that he wanted you to mate her, and I thought..." He trailed off, his throat growing thick with fresh tears.

"You thought that I'd said yes," Dean whispered. Cas nodded slowly.

"You just...you looked so happy in that picture, so happy and open and laughing. And I didn't want to ruin that for you. If you were going to mate with her, I didn't want you to feel saddled down by me. So I lied, because I thought it would spare you any regret or embarrassment you might feel over some dopey college kid falling so far in love with you."

"How far?" Dean suddenly asked, his green eyes intent on Cas, watching closely for any hint of another lie. "How far did you fall?"

"Deep enough that I never want to leave," Cas whispered brokenly, tears streaming down his cheeks. "I want to stay here with you for as long as you'll have me, which I hope is a very long time."

Dean stared at Cas, his eyes wide, and then he was suddenly right there kneeling in front of Cas on the bed, claiming his mouth in a hungry kiss.

Cas seemed shocked at first, but then his hands were curling into the front of Dean's dress shirt, fistng bunches of the fabric as he returned the kiss desperately.

When Dean finally pulled away, he rested his forehead against Cas's and smiled. "We're both such idiots!" He said on a chuckle.

"What...what do you mean?" Cas wondered.

"You were trying to save me from being saddled down by some dopey college kid while I was trying to save you from being saddled down by some dopey older man," Dean explained.

Saddled down? Dean thought that Cas would be saddled down by staying with him? He opened his mouth to protest, but then Dean was kissing him again.

"I know," he whispered when they broke the kiss. "You would probably feel saddled down by me about as much as I would feel saddled down by you."

"I wouldn't feel saddled down at all," Cas confided.

"Neither would I," Dean replied. "I've wanted to ask you about staying for a while, but I didn't want to put too much pressure on you."

Cas offered him a deadpan look, and Dean chuckled. "I know, I just...you've been so stressed about finals and all that other shit, and I didn't wanna add this on top of that."

"Well, you should've asked me," Cas scolded, and then his face broke into a wide smile. "I would've said yes."

Dean grinned and pulled Cas into another hungry kiss, his arms sliding around the omega to draw him in as close as possible. He leaned back against the pillows without breaking the kiss so that was on his back with Cas lying on top of him, their legs tangled together, the omega's slim hands cupping his face reverently.

"Holy shit, this is for real," Cas whispered tremulously. Dean didn't have to ask what he meant; he
was struggling with the same thought process himself. Cas traced gentle fingers down his cheekbone. "I want you, and you want me, and we're actually going to make this work?"

"We're going to make this work," Dean promised. Cas smiled brightly and bent down for another long kiss. When the omega pulled back, it wasn't very far.

"I'm so sorry about lying," Cas whispered against his mouth. "I'm so, so sorry. Please forgive me," he pleaded.

"I already have," Dean assured him.

"Thank you," Cas whispered, pressing a quick kiss against his mouth. Dean rolled them over so that they were both on their sides facing each other, their smiles content.

"I love you," Dean whispered.

"I love you, too." Cas replied, and then a long yawn broke loose.

"Get some sleep," Dean encouraged. "We can talk more in the morning."

"I'm fine," Cas countered, but then another yawn slipped out.

Dean smiled fondly and shook his head. "You need sleep."

Cas looked like he was about to argue further, but at a stern look from Dean, he caved.

"Yes, alpha," he mumbled as he burrowed against the warmth of Dean's chest, his eyes slowly sliding shut.

Dean traced patterns into the skin of his back as he listened to his breathing even out. He couldn't seem to stop his dopey smile as he thought about their future together, which somehow felt settled despite how uncertain everything still was.

They'd have to wait a little longer, of course; there were things to be taken care of. He'd have to get in touch with Cas's parents to ask for their permission. He sighed at the thought. He'd never met Cas's parents, but from Cas's description of them, he suspected that he probably wouldn't like them. But, they were Cas's guardians, and he would defer to them.

There was also the matter of Cas's school. Would they allow Cas to continue classes after they mated? He didn't think it would be an issue, but given the school's strict stance in other areas, it wouldn't surprise him if they said no.

Dean also had his own father to deal with; John would probably want to look into Cas's background, which Dean wasn't about to allow. That would probably lead to another huge battle between them.

Dean paused and looked back down at Cas when the younger man stirred and mumbled something about waffles before burrowing closer to Dean with a contented sigh. Dean chuckled and kissed his hair, then he buried his nose into the same spot to scent his omega.

As the familiar scent coursed through him, settling back into his system, his eyes slid shut. He knew they would make it, no matter what happened with Cas's parents or the school or John. In the end, Dean would get to keep his omega.

Dean sighed happily. His omega. Cas was really going to be his omega.
Hello! So, this was an intense chapter, huh?? Right from the beginning of this fic, even before I posted the first chapter, I knew that I wanted to include a disciplinary spanking at some point. However, as I have never been in a D/s relationship before, I also knew that I didn't have nearly enough knowledge on the topic to tackle it at that time. So, I started researching. That's right, clear back in August, I started researching for this specific chapter.

That being said, I still feel like I know next to nothing about D/s relationships or consensual disciplinary action. So if there's something in this chapter that isn't accurate, I'm sorry. I truly did try to capture the proper mindset that's necessary for this kind of scene.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to leave them. I love hearing from you all! Okay, byeee!
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Yeah, their sex life had been good before, fantastic even, but ever since that conversation, it had only compounded, leading them to have sex at any time in practically any place—like the backseat of the car, or the bathroom at the theater.

Or like here, in Dean’s office.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean had just read over the same proposal for the fourth time in a row, and it still didn't make any sense. Why the hell was it so hard to draft a simple proposal? He tossed the papers down onto his desk and leaned back in his chair, a heavy sigh escaping as he ran a hand over his face.

He glanced over at his computer screen; it was barely past 1, and he wasn't planning on leaving until at least 5:30. At least today was his last day of work before the offices closed for the holidays. Hopefully, once he left today, he wouldn't have to think about anything even remotely related to work until after the new year.

He glanced at his phone and thought about calling Cas. He'd love to hear his omega's voice, even if for a few minutes, just to ask him about his day. Not that Cas really had much going on now that his semester was over, but Dean would take any excuse to call his omega.

He picked up the phone, about to make the call, when he heard a burst of laughter erupt from his waiting area. That laugh sounded very familiar... He was up out of his chair in an instant and to his office door in the next.

He swung the door open to reveal Cas standing in front of Hannah's desk, laughing delightedly. As soon as the door opened, he turned to face Dean, his blue eyes sparkling with humor.

"Hey, babe!" He greeted with a small wave, looking absolutely adorable in the new navy peacoat and patterned scarf that Dean had bought him just the weekend before.

Dean's grin was huge as he stepped out into the waiting area and pulled Cas into his arms.

"Hey, yourself," he murmured as he bent down for a kiss.

"Ew! Not in front of my desk!" Hannah chided, but Dean didn't listen, instead deepening the kiss. When he finally pulled away, he flashed his PA an unrepentant grin.

"What are you doing here?" He asked Cas.

Cas gestured toward a wrapped plate on Hannah's desk. "I had to bring Hannah her Christmas cookies. And I have Benny's, but I haven't seen him yet."

"Is that what these are?" Hannah asked, immediately snatching up the plate and unwrapping it eagerly.
Cas grinned proudly. "Yep!"

"Are these the same ones your mom always makes for the cookie exchange at church? The cinnamon ones?" Hannah asked, her eyes lighting with hunger.

Cas nodded. "Yep, the very same."

Hannah took a bite of one and moaned happily as her eyes slid shut. "Oh my god, I've missed these so much!"

"Just how good are they?" Dean asked as he reached across and snatched one from the plate.

"Hey!" Hannah protested, but Dean just shot her a smug smile before bringing the cookie to his mouth and taking a bite. No sooner had the cookie landed on his tongue than his eyes were widening with pleasant surprise.

"Oh my god!" He exclaimed, immediately shoving the rest of the cookie into his mouth. "That's delicious."

"I know," Cas replied smugly. "Old family recipe."

"Cas, you are a godsend!" Hannah exclaimed as she bit into a second one. Dean reached across to grab another, but Hannah yanked the plate out of reach. "No! You've got your own cookie-maker right there; get him to make some for you."

Dean looked to Cas with pleading eyes, and Cas smirked. "There's a batch waiting for you at home."

"Well then, I may just need to cut out early," Dean decided.

Cas reached up on tiptoes to whisper into his ear, "That's not the only thing waiting for you."

"In that case, I'll definitely need to cut out early," Dean muttered.

"Yeah, probably as soon as possible. I mean, who knows what I might get up to, all alone in that big, empty apartment," Cas teased, allowing his lips to brush the shell of Dean's ear.

"You know, on second thought, I may just need to keep you here with me while I work," Dean decided. He glanced at Hannah, who was pointedly ignoring their gross display of affection. "What else do I have scheduled?"

"You have a call with Juan Dacia at 1:30, and a conference call with Jason Scott and Trevor Lundt at 4," she answered.

"Cancel the conference call at 4; I'll be leaving after my call with Dacia," Dean said as he started tugging Cas back toward his office. "And set up a meeting with Bill Watts for after the holidays; I want to go over this proposal with him. Maybe teach him how to write a proposal in the first place."

"Yes, sir," she responded with a smirk. "I'll call his office now."

"Good. And then you go on home. Have a good Christmas and New Years" Dean said.

"You too, sir," she called.

Cas pointed at the extra plate of cookies as Dean tugged him through the office door. "Can you make sure those get to Benny?" Hannah looked indecisive, so Cas called as Dean was about to shut the door, "Don't eat them! And don't forget!"
"I know! Not a word to your family," Hannah called back.

Once the door was shut behind them, Dean immediately shoved Cas back against it and buried his face in his neck. "God, you smell good!"

"I used that body wash you bought me," Cas explained, sighing happily and sliding his fingers into Dean's hair as the alpha nipped at his neck.

"What was that Hannah was saying about your family?" Dean asked, his mouth latching back onto skin as soon as the words were out.

"She's going home for the holidays, and I asked her to keep this little thing between us to herself. I don't want my parents deciding against this before you get the chance to talk to them." He bared his neck more, and Dean nodded in understanding.

Dean still hadn't given Cas his mark yet. He wanted to wait until he could talk to Cas's family and get things settled with the school. But even without the mark, Cas had been more open with him than ever before, and Dean loved it.

He loved the way Cas's eyes lit up whenever they were in the same room together, the way the omega practically threw himself at Dean everyday when he came home.

Yeah, their sex life had been good before, fantastic even, but ever since that conversation, it had only compounded, leading them to have sex at any time in practically any place—like the backseat of the car, or the bathroom at the theater.

Or like here, in Dean's office. And if the way Cas was spreading his legs so Dean could slot between them was any indication, then they were very definitely having sex here...and now.

But then Dean's computer dinged, reminding him that he had a call in ten minutes, and while Dean and Cas had done their fair share of quickies, Dean was not in that mood right now.

"Fuck," he ground out after tearing his mouth away from where he'd been sucking a bruise into the soft skin of Cas's neck. Cas smiled up at him with heavy-lidded eyes, his nose wrinkling when Dean pressed a kiss to the tip of it. Dean pushed himself away from the door and started tugging the omega toward the couch.

"Sit here silently until I'm done with this call," he instructed. Cas smiled up at him innocently.

"Of course, Mr. Smith," he teased. Dean gave him a suspicious look before turning away to walk back to his desk. He'd barely settled in and pulled out the file he would need for the call when his phone beeped and Hannah's voice filtered through the speaker, "Mr. Dacia on line one for you, Sir."

"Thank you, Hannah," Dean replied as he hooked the handsfree headset over his ear. "Dean Smith speaking."

About five minutes into the call, Cas stood up and pulled off his coat, folding and draping it carefully over the back of the sofa. He could feel his alpha's eyes on him, and he smirked as he turned to face him. Dean's eyes were narrowed in suspicion, but given that he was on a call with a client, he couldn't really do anything to stop the omega. Cas smiled innocently as he began to run his hands up his torso.

He nibbled at his lower lip as he reached up to rub at his chest through his grey shirt. He let out a small gasp as he tweaked his nipples, his eyes still intent on Dean. He could see how Dean was struggling for composure, for control, and he couldn't help his giggle.
Dean glared at him, but Cas didn't stop. Instead, he reached up to his first button, slowly unhooking it, and then his second. Dean's eyes trailed his hands, studying each inch of exposed skin.

Cas paused for a moment, letting the suspense build, and then he unbuttoned the third button to reveal the black and red lace bra he wore beneath. It finally seemed to click with Dean then. The alpha realized that he had planned all of this from the cookies to the deliciously scented body wash to the adorable peacoat.

Dean seemed to startle as he spoke again into the headset. "Right, yes. No, I'm still here. Go ahead."

Cas finished unbuttoning his shirt and untucked it from his dress slacks so he could pull it off and toss it aside. He started on his pants next, first unclasping the belt and sliding it from his belt loops before moving on to the button and zipper of his slacks. He slowly pulled them down, revealing the rest of his ensemble: a black thong trimmed in red lace with black thigh-highs and a matching garter belt.

Once he'd kicked the pants away, he slowly turned around and bent over, hooking his hands around his ankles so that Dean could see the base of the glass plug nestled snugly in his ass. He glanced back at Dean over his shoulder with a smirk and a wink. He started to reach back, ready to work the plug loose, when Dean pointedly cleared his throat.

He made sure he held Cas's gaze as he crooked an index finger back toward himself, beckoning Cas to him. Cas slowly stood up straight then walked over to Dean's chair. Dean rolled back and pointed at the space between his legs. Cas dropped to his knees, his eyes wide and hopeful on his alpha.

Dean pointed to his zipper in a silent command. Cas immediately reached up to unzip his slacks and pull his cock out. He involuntarily licked his lips, his blue eyes hooding.

Dean put a finger under his chin to direct his attention upward. He pressed the mute button on his phone and then spoke quietly and quickly. "Just warm it for me."

"Yes, sir," Cas breathed, his eyes already returning to Dean's long, heavy dick. He opened his mouth wide, slackening his jaw and curling his lips over his teeth so he wouldn't scrape Dean on the way down, and then took the alpha completely into his mouth.

After a few minutes, Dean's left hand slid into Cas's hair while his right hand continued scribbling notes onto a memo pad.

"And you're absolutely sure about those numbers?" He asked as his fingers started carding through Cas's hair. "Right, well there's always going to be a small margin for... Of course, I understand."

At one point, he slid his hand out of Cas's hair and down his cheek, down to his mouth. He swiped his thumb across Cas's lower lip, tugging roughly at the tender skin. Cas hummed softly, but stopped when Dean shot him a stern look.

Cas ended up kneeling there for over thirty-five minutes, watching his alpha with those adoring bright blue eyes. He stayed still the entire time, apart from once or twice when his tongue fluttered instinctively, but Dean couldn't really fault him for that.

When Dean finally ended the call, he pulled the headset off and reached down to stroke gentle fingers along Cas's cheek.

"You've been a very bad boy, omega," he chastised. Cas's blue eyes shone with mischief. Dean clucked his tongue and tapped the side of the omega's cheek. "Do you think it's amusing to tease your alpha like this? To work him up and make him want to lose control?"
Cas nodded as best he could in his current position, and Dean frowned. "Stand up," he commanded. Cas slowly pulled off his cock and stood. Dean spun him around to face the desk. "Hands behind your back." Cas brought his hands behind his back, and then Dean was using his tie to bind them together. Once he'd tied him up, he bent him over the desk, pressing his face right against the cool, dark wood, keeping a hand at the base of his neck as he held him down.

"Look at these little panties you're wearing. Such a little slut. I don't even have to take them off to spank you," he emphasized his point by suddenly slapping Cas's bare ass cheek, pulling a startled yelp from the omega, "or I could just fuck you. I could just push it right to the side like this."

He pulled the thin scrap of fabric away and grabbed the base of the plug. He pulled it out and set it aside, and Cas groaned at the empty feeling. But then a moment later Dean's cock was there, pushing past his loosened rim to fill him up.

Cas let out a moan as Dean set a brutal pace right off the bat, his hips jarring the omega forward with every snap. Cas began to squirm, but a sharp slap to his ass stilled him. "Don't squirm, Castiel. You know how I hate to be interrupted when I'm playing with my pretty little hole." Cas moaned and nodded.

"Yes, sir," he gasped out.

"Castiel, who does this hole belong to?" Dean asked softly as he continued to fuck deep inside Cas.

"You," Cas responded automatically. "Your pretty little hole."

Dean shoved back inside with a grunt. "That's right; it's my pretty little hole. So if I tell it to sit on the couch and behave, what should it do?"

"Sit on the couch and behave," Cas replied shakily as Dean thrust forward again. He moaned loudly as Dean began to hit his prostate with every thrust, waves of pleasure coursing through him.

"Alpha," he gasped out. "I'm so close!"

Dean let go of his hip to reach below him and wrap his fingers around the base of his cock. "Oh no, you don't. You don't get to come yet, not after your bad behavior earlier."

Tears began to course down Cas's cheeks, but Dean didn't let up. "Don't you dare come, Castiel, or you will receive a spanking."

His thrusts were brutal and deep, his fingers digging into the back of Cas's neck hard enough to bruise, his balls slapping against Cas's ass with every thrust.

He could feel his knot begin to build at the base of his cock, so he forced himself to stop. Cas whined high in his throat, "Alpha!"

Dean ran a soothing hand down his spine, shushing him.

"As sexy as it may seem, I really don't want to pop my knot in this position. It'll get real uncomfortable for you real fast," he murmured, slowly pulling out. Cas groaned at the emptiness, his hole fluttering around nothing.

Dean grabbed Cas by the shoulder to pull him up into a standing position and then guided him over to the couch. He gently pushed him back so that he fell onto the couch, his long, hose-covered legs stretched out in front of him.
"Spread 'em," Dean murmured as he dropped to his knees in front of the omega, and Cas obediently spread his legs open wide.

Dean grabbed Cas's left leg under the knee and tugged it up to hook over his shoulder, pressing a soft kiss just above the knee, then repeated the same process with the other. He tugged Cas toward him so that just his shoulders rested on the couch while the rest of him arched up toward Dean, his crotch right in Dean's face.

Dean wrapped his hands around Cas's thighs to hold the omega steady. He grabbed the strap that held the thigh-high in place with his teeth and allowed it to snap back into place, yanking a startled gasp from Cas. He smiled as he nuzzled his nose against the soft skin there just above where the thigh-high ended.

"Mmm, your skin feels so smooth," he commented, pressing a kiss there. "Did you shave today?"

"Yes, alpha," Cas breathed, his back arching as Dean moved his attention to the wet spot on the crotch of Cas's panties. He breathed out over the damp material, and Cas whined high in his throat.

"You've just been very busy today," Dean commented. "Between baking and shaving and getting all dressed up for me."

"I like looking pretty for you, alpha," Cas admitted breathlessly, his hips jerking as Dean swiped his tongue over the crotch of his panties, tracing the outline of his hole through the fabric.

"I know you do, baby," Dean said as he swiped at the fabric again, drawing a shudder out of the omega this time. He did it again and again, not licking Cas, just the fabric. He'd pull back occasionally to suck a bruise into the tender skin of Cas's inner thigh, but then he'd immediately return his attention to the crotch of Cas's panties.

"Alpha!" Cas keened, his hips rolling against Dean's face. His legs extended straight out behind Dean, his toes curling in pleasure until they were cramping. "Alpha, please!"

"What do you want, Castiel?" Dean asked. "Use your words for me."

"I want...I want..." Cas panted out, his entire body jerking with each new spasm. "I want you to lick me."

Dean licked the skin on the inside of his thigh. "Like that?" He teased.

Cas shook his head, trying to keep his moans in.

"Tell me where, Cas. Tell me exactly where you want my tongue," Dean commanded.

"My hole! Put it in my hole!" He begged, and Dean chuckled.

"Okay, baby," Dean agreed, bringing one hand around to push the crotch of his panties aside. And then his tongue was right there, pushing into the slick hole and filling Cas.

The omega moaned as Dean began to lick at his hole, his tongue dipping in to scoop out slick and pull it back into his mouth. He growled at the way Cas's head fell back, his eyes sliding shut as Dean fucked his tongue in and out.

"You taste so good," Dean rumbled, the vibrations from his voice sending sparks up Cas's spine.

Cas whined. "Alpha!" His hole squeezed tight around Dean's tongue the next time it pushed in, and
Dean groaned.

"Look at your pretty little hole, looking for a knot. That's all it wants, isn't it? My big alpha knot?" Dean goaded, and Cas nodded eagerly.

"Please! Dean!"

Dean smirked wickedly and pushed his tongue back in again, relishing the loud moan Cas gave.

"Please! No more teasing," Cas begged. "I can't take much more."

"Really? After the way you teased me earlier?" Dean chided.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" Cas panted. "Please, I'll behave! I promise!"

"You promise, huh?" Dean murmured, pulling the fabric of Cas's panties into his mouth to suck at them. "You promise to be my good little omega and obey? Hmm?"

"Yes! Yes! Please, I can't take much more," Cas sobbed.

Dean grinned and shook his head. "Oh, I think you can take as much as I say, omega," Dean chided, nipping at the inside of Cas's thigh. "And I say you can take just a little bit more." And then he shoved his tongue back inside, pulling another long wail from Cas.

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Dean and Cas lay tangled together on the couch, the soft throw that Dean had pulled over them barely covering their torsos and upper legs.

"I really need to invest in a longer blanket for this thing," Dean said, and Cas chuckled.

"It would be more comfortable, yes," he admitted. Silence fell over the room again as he continued to brush light kisses over Dean's face and neck.

"We should get going soon," Dean murmured eventually.

"Why? You have somewhere you need to be?" Cas wondered, and Dean shook his head.

"Not really...well, sort of. I had Hannah make us supper reservations at that little place right on the river," Dean confided, and Cas's face broke out into a wide smile.

"Really? Like an actual date in public?" He teased, and Dean blushed.

"Well, I figured that since we're going to be mating soon, we might as well put it out there for the world to see, right?"

"I don't see why not," Cas agreed.

"And afterward, we could go look at the windows at Macy's, maybe walk down to see the big tree again," Dean suggested, his eyes hopeful.

Cas had decided long before they agreed to be mates that he would be staying here with Dean instead of going home for Christmas, and he didn't regret a single moment of his time here. Dean had already shown him so many of the Christmas traditions around the city, like the ice skating and the Christkindlmarket and the light show at Lincoln Park Zoo.
But the best part was the way Dean's eyes would light up when he dragged Cas around to the
different places. Cas could tell that his alpha loved Christmas, loved getting to share it with Cas.
That's what had prompted Cas to bake the cookies; he wanted to start as many traditions of their own
as early as possible.

"I'd really like that," Cas agreed, his eyes worshipful on Dean's face.

"Stop looking at me like that," Dean scolded, his cheeks heating.

"Like what?" Cas asked playfully.

"Like, I don't know, I saved your drowning kitten or something."

"Okay, but this isn't my 'saved my drowning kitten' face," Cas explained.

"Really?" Dean asked, and Cas nodded.

"It's definitely my 'you just gave me the best orgasm of my life' face," Cas whispered
conspiratorially, and Dean burst out laughing. He kissed the tip of Cas's nose.

"Really? Of your whole life?" Dean wondered, and Cas shrugged.

"Well, I mean, what do you think? You've been there for all of them," he pointed out, and that
caused Dean to pause. Cas was right; every sexual experience Cas had was completely wrapped up
in Dean. The thought suddenly threatened to overwhelm him, but in the best way possible.

He pulled Cas into a kiss and murmured, "Thank you for that."

"Thank you for that," Cas echoed with a soft smile. "You've been so good to me, every single step of
the way."

Dean felt a surge of pride rush through him with the words. He had taken good care of Cas, provided
for him like an alpha should. He suddenly felt the urge to claim Castiel right then and there, parents
and consequences be damned. But he knew that he wouldn't. He didn't want to claim Cas on an
uncomfortable couch in a cold office; he wanted to claim him in their home, in their bed.

He settled for burying his face in the crook of Cas's neck, where the mark would go, and sucking a
bruise there while Cas let out little half-gasps and whimpers.

Dean eventually managed to pull himself away from Cas's skin. He threw the blanket off and stood,
pulling Cas with him. Between soft kisses, they redressed each other, and then Dean took a moment
to shut off his computer and gather up his phone and keys. Once he was sure he had everything, he
grabbed Cas by the hand and tugged him out into the outer office.

Hannah had locked up the waiting area for Dean's office like she always did, but the chairs weren't
empty like they should have been. A familiar man sat waiting for them.

Dean's eyes widened as the unexpected guest stood to greet them, and he unconsciously moved to
place himself between Cas and the man.

"Hello, Dean," The tall man greeted. He turned to Cas next. "Hello, Castiel."

Cas's eyes had also widened in recognition, but it was Dean who finally choked out a response.

"Dad?"
Chapter End Notes

So, long story short, I posted this chapter this morning, but then I decided to change one little thing that turned into one big thing, so I deleted the original chapter and posted the updated one instead. So, if you managed to read the chapter I uploaded this morning before I deleted it, the only thing that really changed was the sex scene... I decided that I wanted naughty Cas instead. Hehehe
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

"Dad, what the hell are you doing here?" Dean asked, his back ramrod straight, his entire posture stiff and defensive.

John offered a half-smile. "What? A man can't spend the holidays with his son and future omega-in-law?"

Cas felt Dean's fingers tighten around his, and he squeezed back instinctively. The small action seemed to pull Dean out of his shock enough for him to finally manage to get the obvious question out.

"Dad, what the hell are you doing here?" Dean asked, his back ramrod straight, his entire posture stiff and defensive.

John offered a half-smile. "What? A man can't spend the holidays with his son and future omega-in-law?"

"Not really," Dean replied slowly. Cas caught the flicker of hurt that flashed through John's eyes, but Dean was already steaming ahead full-speed. "You didn't call, didn't ask! You've never wanted to spend the holidays with me before, never even seemed to give a damn about me for years." Dean pointed at John accusingly. "But now all of a sudden, you're yanking me up to New York to pry into my personal life and then showing up out of the blue just to visit?"

And just like that, with Dean laying it all out so plainly, Cas knew what was going on. John wasn't just picking any Christmas to start becoming involved; his Christmases were numbered.

"Just to visit? Dean, it's Christmas. It's not like I picked some random Tuesday in October to show up," John defended, his tone heated. "You've always been going on about how I wasn't involved enough in your life; well, now here I am!"

Cas could practically feel Dean's ire rise with that, and he knew that, given the chance, both alphas would argue until kingdom come. He needed to make sure they didn't get that chance.

Dean opened his mouth to argue further, but Cas stepped forward and gently placed his free hand on the alpha's arm. Dean paused and glanced down. Cas smiled encouragingly at him.

The alpha's eyes tightened with the silent question, Are you sure, and Cas nodded serenely.

"It is Christmas, after all," he reasoned, offering a small smile to John.

Dean seemed about to argue again, but then all of the stiffness left him in a rush. He sighed heavily and nodded, but he made no move to speak to John. So Cas spoke up instead. "We'd be thrilled if you joined us for the holidays, John."

John's smile nearly split his face, and Cas knew he'd done the right thing.

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That night, Cas woke up suddenly, his ears prickling. He glanced over at Dean in the darkness and found his alpha still sound asleep, his breaths deep and even. What had woken him? He heard the sink turn on in the kitchen, and then he remembered their unexpected guest.

He rolled over and buried his face in Dean's shoulder, trying to go back to sleep, but something in the back of his mind kept niggling at him, prodding him to go talk to the older alpha. Cas tried to ignore it, tried to turn his mind off. It didn't work.

After several minutes of lying there with his eyes tightly shut, he let out a weary sigh and rolled back over. He got out of bed and headed for the bedroom door, pausing to snatch Dean's robe from the chair and slide it on.

He slipped out into the hall, careful to keep his footsteps light as he made his way toward the dimly lit kitchen. John was sitting at the table, several documents spread out in front of him, a half-drunk glass of water held loosely in one hand.

"Trouble sleeping?" Cas asked as he stepped into the kitchen, and John glanced up at him with a wry smile.

"Always," he admitted. He gestured toward the chair across from him. "I wouldn't mind a little company."

"Actually, I was thinking of making myself a cup of tea, if you'd care for some," Cas offered as he moved to the cabinet to pull out his chamomile tea tin.

"Nah, I'll just stick with water," John said.

Cas started the kettle on the stove and then turned around to face the older alpha at the table.

"Sometimes, Dean has trouble sleeping, too," he confided.

"Comes with the territory," John said with a shrug.

"I suppose," Cas agreed. He smirked. "We've found our ways of dealing with it."

"So it seems," John said, glancing around the kitchen. "It's so much more domestic than the last time I was here."

"How so?" Cas wondered, glancing around to try and see what John was seeing.

"It actually looks lived in," John explained. He pointed at the strainer next to the sink, "There are used dishes," at the covered plate on the counter, "home-made cookies," at the fridge, "honest-to-god food in the fridge." John smirked, "Last time I was here, all he had in the fridge was creamer. I'd say you're already doing him a world of good in his eating habits alone, not to mention his other...habits as well."

Cas glanced down, his cheeks heating. He was surprised that John had noticed so many of the little things, little things that Cas had started to take for granted.

"Dean is good for me, too," he murmured, toying with the tie on Dean's robe.

"You're good for each other," John supplied with a gentle smile, and Cas nodded.

"I'd like to think so, yes," he replied.

Silence fell over them for several minutes. The kettle started to whistle, so Cas removed it from the
stove and poured the steaming liquid into his mug. He moved to the table to settle into the chair that John had indicated before.

The alpha finally broke the silence, but he didn't look at Cas, instead choosing to study his water glass intently. "You know why I'm here, don't you?" Cas blushed but didn't respond otherwise, instead choosing to bring his mug up and take a long sip. John shrugged. "It's okay; I saw it in your face earlier."

Cas set the mug down but kept his long, slender fingers wrapped around its warmth. "You're sick," he murmured. It wasn't a question, but a statement.

"Acute Myelogenous Leukemia," John confirmed, his voice flat and resigned. "I found out last month, right before Thanksgiving. Apparently it's a very aggressive disease." He chuckled mirthlessly. "Kind of makes sense; spent my whole life fighting my way to the top; figures I'd get a fighting disease."

"That's why you suddenly called Dean up there earlier this month," Cas guessed. "And why you were so concerned with getting him a mate."

John nodded. "Yes. I, uh, wanted to tell him then, but I just..." He trailed off, rubbing a hand over the back of his neck. He smirked. "It looks like I didn't have anything to worry about, though."

Cas smiled and shook his head. "I certainly hope not."

They each took a sip of their drink, comfortable silence filling the space. John looked up. "You didn't mention anything earlier, did you? About my...?"

Cas shook his head. "No, I figured that was for you to tell him," he explained.

"Thank you. I really appreciate that," John said, and Cas nodded.

Silence fell over them for a few moments, when John suddenly spoke up again. "I could smell you on him in New York, you know. Your scent."

Cas glanced up at him, surprised. "Really?"

"Yep," John replied. "At first, I couldn't really put my finger on what it was because it had been so long since I'd smelled anything like it. But then he said he'd found someone, and I realized that his scent was softer around the edges, like mine used to be before Mary passed."

John hesitated for a moment before continuing. "You kind of remind me of her."

"Mary?" Cas asked, and John nodded. He smiled wistfully. "She had this way of creeping up on me from behind, you know? I was the big strong alpha, the head of the home, but then she'd just creep in there, and next thing you know, we'd be doing things her way. Which usually worked out better, anyway."

He looked at Cas with a sly smile. "Kind of how you were with Dean earlier; if it had been up to him, my ass would've been out on the street. But one little look from you, and he's pulling a complete turn-around."

Cas's eyebrows furrowed at that. He didn't want Dean to ever feel like he had to give in to him. Almost as though he could read his thoughts, John shook his head.

"Trust me, he loves it. We alphas love it when we have an omega to keep happy. That's what I
picked up on the most in New York. He smelled like he had a content omega waiting at home for him, like he had something—or rather someone—to be proud of.”

Cas blushed again and looked down at the tea in his cup. "I guess it would make sense for him to smell like that, since I am very content."

"Really? Because I'd say it smells like a very happy omega here in this apartment," John said. "Forget the contentment."

Cas smiled against the rim of his cup as he took another sip, and John chuckled. "So then it's official? You are going to mate with him?"

"Yes," Cas stated simply. "We talked it over just last week, and we agreed to see this thing through. But I don't think it'll be too much of a sacrifice for either of us," Cas admitted with a smirk.

"No, I don't suppose so," John agreed. He stood and stretched then carried his cup to the sink. "Well, I'm headed back to bed. I'll see you in the morning, Cas."

"Good night, John," Cas replied. He sat at the table for a few minutes more, thinking about their conversation, before he placed his mug into the sink and headed back to bed. This time when he curled up against Dean's side, he fell right asleep.

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The next morning when Cas woke, Dean was already out of bed. Cas threw on the same robe from the night before over his pajamas and headed out toward the kitchen.

Dean was standing at the counter with his cup of coffee, his head bent down as he read the news on his iPad.

"Morning," Cas murmured as he slipped up behind him and slid his arms around his waist. He pressed a kiss to the alpha's shoulder, causing Dean to hum contentedly.

"Morning, Babe," he mumbled, turning so he could gather Cas into his arms. He pressed a quick kiss to Cas's mouth. "How did you sleep?"

"Pretty good. I woke up for a little bit in the middle of the night," Cas admitted. "But, uh, I made some tea and went back to sleep right after."

"You should've woken me," Dean admonished, but Cas shrugged.

"You're starting to sound a little possessive there," Dean teased.

"Does it bother you?" Cas asked with an arched brow, and Dean shook his head.

"It's okay," Cas assured him. "Your dad was up so we talked for a few minutes."

Dean arched an eyebrow. "Talked about...?"

"Us," Cas replied with a smile. "He said that you smell like me."

Dean smiled at how proud Cas sounded of that fact. "I should hope so. I mean, we've been living together for several months now. It would only make sense for us to smell like each other."

"Yeah, but it's still nice to hear," Cas said. "I like knowing that other omegas can smell me on you."

"You're starting to sound a little possessive there," Dean teased.

"Does it bother you?" Cas asked with an arched brow, and Dean shook his head.
"Absolutely not."

"Good," Cas murmured. He reached up on tiptoes for another kiss, his mouth brushing against Dean's, tantalizing him. Dean hummed happily and let his hands settle on Cas's slim hips. He spun them around and lifted Cas so that the omega was perched on the edge of the counter, right at his waist level. Cas wrapped his legs around Dean and crossed his ankles behind his back, pulling him in closer as he angled his head to deepen the kiss.

Dean's big hands smoothed up Cas's back, pulling the omega's body flush against his as he nipped at Cas's lower lip. Cas moaned and opened his mouth to Dean, sighing happily when Dean's tongue slid inside to tease along his. Dean started to thrust his tongue against Cas's, pulling excited little whimpers from the omega.

They were so caught up in their kiss, they didn't hear John walk into the kitchen. It wasn't until he cleared his throat loudly that they finally froze. Dean reluctantly tore his mouth away from Cas's and dropped his head into the crook of Cas's neck to regain control of his breathing. Cas's face was bright red, but he still managed a tight smile in John's direction and a small, "Good morning."

"Oh, there's no need to stop on my account," John said with a smirk. "Just wanted to grab some coffee."

Cas knew that his current position blocked the coffee maker, and his blush grew.

"Of course," he murmured, gently pushing Dean back so he could hop off the counter. "Mugs are in that cabinet over there."

"Thanks," John replied as he grabbed a large mug from the cabinet that Cas had indicated. He moved toward where Cas and Dean had been standing and grabbed the coffee pot to pour himself some. "So what are the breakfast plans for today?"

"We hadn't really decided on anything yet," Dean explained, his voice rough and low.

"Well, in that case, let me treat you both. We can go catch a late breakfast at Vinny's place," he offered. Cas saw the tightness around his eyes, the anxiety lines around his mouth, and he knew that John was going to tell Dean over breakfast.

"You know, that sounds wonderful," Cas said. "But I have so much to get done around here. Why don't you go, Dean?"

Dean's eyes widened, and at first he looked like he might say no, but at a warning glance from Cas, he sighed and nodded.

"Sure, let me get dressed," he said as he headed back toward their bedroom.

John waited until he heard the door shut before he turned back to Cas. "Thank you."

Cas nodded but didn't say anything as he turned to the cabinet and started pulling out cookbooks. Maybe he'd make pie for their Christmas Eve dinner the next day.

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Cas had just finished scrubbing out the tub when he heard the apartment door open and close.

"Cas?" Dean's deep voice rang out through the apartment.
"In here," Cas called back as he stripped off his bright yellow gloves and tossed them into the sink. Dean stepped into the bathroom a moment later, and Cas could immediately see it in his face, could see that John had told him.

He stood and pulled Dean to him in a tight squeeze. Dean immediately slumped against him, letting him take his weight as he buried his face in the crook of Cas's neck.

"Where's John?" Cas asked, and Dean shrugged.

"He said he needed time to himself. I don't know where he went," Dean admitted.

"So he finally told you?" Cas murmured, and Dean shook his head. "I'm so sorry, baby," the omega whispered as he slid his fingers through Dean's hair.

"You knew?" Dean wondered, and Cas nodded.

"I guessed as much yesterday, but I knew for sure when he told me last night," Cas said. "I would've told you, but I figured it was something that he should do."

"I don't even...I hardly even know him, but it still hurts," Dean admitted. "If he dies..."

Cas shook his head. "Don't think about that. You of all people know how stubborn he can be; he's going to fight this, tooth and nail."

"I know," Dean whispered. He drew a deep, shuddering breath. "I just...if he goes, I won't have any family left."

Cas stroked gentle fingers down his back, shushing him softly. "You'll always have me," he promised.

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Cas leaned back against Dean as he ran his hands through the warm, soapy bath water.

"This was a good idea," Dean mumbled into his shoulder. "Just what I needed."

Cas chuckled. "Well, what's the purpose of scrubbing out the tub if you can't use it for a bath?"

"That's some sound reasoning," Dean agreed, nuzzling at the warm skin of Cas's neck with his nose. Cas giggled and tilted his head to give Dean better access.

As Dean started sucking at the skin there, Cas sighed and reached down below the water to tangle his fingers with Dean's. He began to hum a Christmas song under his breath, and after a couple minutes, Dean began to sing along, his deep voice vibrating through Cas.

"Once again, as in olden days, happy golden days of yore. Faithful friends who are dear to us will be near to us once more..." He trailed off, and Cas turned his head to try to look back at him.

"Keep going," he urged, but then he heard the sharp, broken hitch of breath. "Dean?" He wanted to turn around to see his alpha's face, but with the way they were seated, he couldn't move.

"I'm sorry," Dean breathed out. "I shouldn't... I don't even know why this is affecting me so much."

"There's nothing to apologize for. He's your father," Cas assured him.

"But that's just it! He's my father, but he's a complete stranger. When I said that I never spent
Christmas with him before, I wasn't exaggerating. He spent every holiday season away on business."

"I'm sorry," Cas murmured. "I truly am. But, I mean, he's trying now. That has to count for something, right?"

"Yeah, now that he's under the guillotine, now he wants to spend time with me. It literally took a fatal disease for my own father to want to spend time with me," Dean said. "What does that say about me?"

"That you had a shitty father," Cas replied adamantly. He wished he could turn around to look into his eyes, that he could convince him of this. "It had nothing to do with you, Dean Smith. This is completely on him. And think of it this way: at least you'll know how not to act with our kids someday."

Dean immediately tensed up at the words, his arms tightening around the smaller man. Cas worried that he'd misspoken, that he'd somehow overstepped. They hadn't talked about kids, but he'd kind of assumed they were part of the deal.

"Dean?" He whispered, his voice tense. Dean's fingers tightened around his, but he still didn't say anything. Cas cleared his throat, which suddenly felt thick and cottony. "Never mind. Forget I said anything," Cas murmured, pulling his hands from Dean's and sitting forward. Dean grabbed his hands back.

"No, Cas..." He whispered. "Don't. You didn't say anything wrong."

"It doesn't feel that way," Cas replied, his tone hurt. Dean pulled him back against his chest and hooked his chin over his shoulder.

"Look, it's not... I just don't..." Dean tried to explain.

"You don't want kids?" Cas supplied, and Dean sighed heavily.

"It's not that," he contradicted. He drew a deep breath. "It's just, before I met you, I never even thought I would be mated to anyone."

Cas frowned and cocked his head. "Why?"

"I never met anyone who...interested me that way. Until I met you, I was convinced that I would die an old bachelor."

"Really?" Cas asked, and he felt Dean nod his head up and down.

"Really. So, it's not that I don't want kids. It's just that before you, they weren't even a remote possibility," Dean admitted.

"But now that you have met me?" Cas prodded.

"It's something I'm willing to consider...for the future," Dean conceded.

"Like, how far into the future?" Cas asked.

"Distant," Dean immediately replied. "I want to have time to get to know you as my mate before I have to share you."

"That makes sense," Cas admitted. "But you do...you will want them eventually, right?"
"Yes," Dean assured him. "I want us to share every experience life has to offer, including 2 a.m. feedings and diaper changes."

"You know, now that you mention it, waiting a little while doesn't sound like such a bad idea," Cas said. Dean chuckled and pressed a soft kiss to his neck.

"Glad to know that we see eye to eye on this."

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When John finally returned to the apartment later that night, Cas actually pulled him into a tight hug. When he pulled back, his smile was encouraging.

"You're going to fight this, yes? You said that it's an aggressive disease, so that means you're going to have to fight," Cas admonished.

Tears brimmed in John's eyes as he nodded. "Of course, I'm going to fight."

Cas nodded toward Dean, and the alpha spoke up. "Then we'll be with you every step of the way."

John looked to Dean, his expression shocked, like he hadn't expected any kind of support from his son.

"Thank you," he finally managed. Dean said nothing, instead giving a small nod.

Cas felt a swell of pride rise up in him for his alpha. It hasn't been emotional or overwhelming or dramatic, but it had been a step in the right direction.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Dean sighed. John's visit had kept him on edge from the start. He kept thinking that something was going to happen, that John would do or say something to push Cas away. Turns out that Dean didn't even have to wait for John to fuck things up; he'd done it all on his own.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"You'll shoot your eye out!" Cas cried.

"A Christmas Story!" Dean yelled right as the buzzer sounded.

"Yes!" Cas cried, flinging his arms into the air triumphantly. He leaned across the couch to kiss Dean. "You are so amazing."

"That round was seven points for Dean," John said from his spot on the recliner, ignoring their latest display of affection.

It happened so often that he didn't even bat an eye anymore. But in their defense, it was pretty usual behavior for newly-mated couples—or in Cas and Dean's case, about to be mated. When he and Mary had mated...well, it hadn't been so different from Cas and Dean.

They almost always had some form of physical contact between them, whether they were in private or in public. Cas would wrap himself around Dean when they sat on the couch, or Dean would slide his arms around Cas from behind when they stood waiting somewhere, or one would grab the other's hand as they walked. John couldn't even imagine what it must have been like when they were trying to keep the relationship under wraps.

"So overall, he's up to twenty," John finished tallying.

"You know, I really think I'm gonna win," Dean boasted with a smirk as he passed his phone on to Cas.

"I wouldn't be so sure," Cas sing-songed as he grabbed the phone and pressed the button that would choose his category. The little ticker on the screen flashed past the category titles, slowing until it landed on Literature Classics.

Cas groaned. "Scratch that. I suck at lit." He glared across at Dean. "How do you always get the easy categories like Christmas movies while I get the hard ones? It has to be rigged!"

Dean grinned unrepentantly. "Well, if you wanna forfeit..."

Cas stuck out his tongue as he pressed the start button and held the phone up to his forehead. He turned on the couch so he was facing John.

"Steinbeck," Cas replied as he flipped the phone forward to move on to the next one.

"Those books about...the wizard kid," John said, trying to keep from saying the name.

"Harry Potter," Cas answered, flipping the phone again.

John paused at the next name, scrunching his eyes as he tried to come up with a description. His eyes suddenly widened in recognition, and he smiled triumphantly. "Dean's favorite author!"

"Vonnegut," Cas replied without hesitation, moving on to the next screen. Neither noticed the way Dean's eyes widened at the exchange.

When the round ended, Cas moved to hand off the phone to John for his turn, but Dean's question stopped him.

"How did you know?"

Both John and Cas looked to him, slightly confused. Dean was staring at John, his eyebrows furrowed like he was perplexed.

"How did I know what?" John asked.

"How did you know he was my favorite? Vonnegut."

John smiled and pointed toward the bookshelf in the corner. "You have all of his books." He shrugged. "Plus you were always reading his stuff back when you were in high school, so I figured it was a pretty solid assumption."

"You knew what I read in high school?" Dean wondered, and John nodded.

"Of course. You'd always leave whatever book you were reading for school by the recliner," John explained. "And Vonnegut turned up there more than anyone else."

"Oh," Dean mumbled, a blush rising along his cheeks. "I never realized that you noticed any of that."

John sighed and shook his head. "Look, Dean, I may have sucked at the communication thing, but I always knew what was going on with you."

Dean looked at Cas, and the omega smiled encouragingly and reached over to squeeze his hand. Dean looked back to John with a small smirk.

"Always?"

John chuckled and nodded. "Always. And I know I didn't say it enough then, but I always had your best interests at heart. I just...I wanted to do right by you and your mother, but I think I missed something along the way. I fucked up..." He trailed off, his eyes pained with the silent memories, but then his expression grew determined. "but I'm trying to make up for it now."

Dean glanced down at his and Cas's joined hands for a moment before looking back up at his father, a tiny smile tugging at the corner of his mouth.

"That's gotta count for something."

Cas squeezed his alpha's hand, his smile proud. He knew it had to be hard for Dean, changing his attitude and assumptions toward John after years of holding them, but he could tell that his alpha was
trying.

It wasn't long after that that John turned in for the night, leaving them with a wink and the admonition to not stay up too late. Cas waved at him from his spot against Dean's side before smiling up at his alpha.

"That was fun," he murmured, and Dean couldn't seem to stop his smile.

"Yeah, it was," he agreed, but he seemed distracted. Cas thought about asking him what he was thinking about, but he already had a pretty good inkling of what it was, and he knew that Dean would tell him when he was ready. He snuggled into Dean's side and stared at the Christmas tree instead, his own mind wandering.

He studied the conglomerate of different ornaments that littered the tree, most from Dean, some from him, a few that they had bought together. He smiled softly as his eyes landed on the "Our First Christmas" ornament they had just bought the week before. It had two snowmen holding their twig hands and snuggling together.

It reminded him of the ornaments that his parents had bought over the years, the number of snowmen growing with each new addition to their family. Cas could already picture their tree being graced with similar ornaments as the years passed, and his smile grew at the thought.

His mind flashed back to his and Dean's conversation the night before, and his smile faltered the tiniest bit. What if Dean never wanted children? He'd said that he would get there, but what if he couldn't? Cas immediately shoved the thought back, his inner voice chastising. Dean had told him that they would have kids someday; he just needed to trust that Dean would remain true to his word. The alpha always had before; he wouldn't stop now.

Dean said that his hesitancy came from his poor relationship with John, that his lack of a father figure would hurt his own relationships with his kids. Cas could understand that reasoning, he could. But the way Dean was trying so hard to fix things with John, even after all the years of silence between them, just proved to Cas how good Dean was at being in a family, whether as a son or as a father.

The problem was that Dean didn't believe that, which was preposterous. No one deserved more than Dean did. Suddenly, Cas needed for Dean to know that, that he was a good person, a good son, a good mate, and that he'd be a good father. Cas looked up at Dean again and brought his hand up to cup his cheek so that Dean would look down at him.

"I'm proud of you."

Dean smiled fondly. "Really?"

Cas nodded. "Yeah. The way you're trying so hard to make things right with John...a lot of people wouldn't."

"Well, you know me. Just an all-around good guy," Dean teased, but Cas's eyes remained serious.

"You are, you know. You're the best alpha I've ever met, and you work so hard to make life good for me," he faltered for a moment, unsure of whether he should say anything more, but then he knew that he had to say it; he had to make sure that Dean knew.

He drew a deep breath and continued. "I know you think that your relationship with John has doomed you to be a terrible father." He felt Dean stiffen under him.

"Cas," Dean warned, his tone stern.
Cas pulled away just enough so he could look straight at Dean. He shook his head and pressed on, his tone desperate. "Dean, nothing could be further from the truth. The way you're trying to mend that relationship proves it. You're an amazing person and an amazing mate, and you'll be an amazing fath—"

"Cas," Dean cut him off. "Stop!" His tone was so forceful that Cas actually flinched. Dean either didn't notice or didn't care. "We talked about this last night. I'll be ready when I'm ready, and not before then."

"I wasn't trying to rush—" Cas tried, his eyes widening.

Dean shook his head, his eyes scrunching up in confusion, his tone upset. "Then why bring it up at all? We talked about this last night, and that settled it!"

Cas stared at him, shocked at the sudden outburst. It was so unlike Dean. But Cas had known even before he'd spoken that it was a touchy subject for the alpha, and he'd still chosen to say it. Dean was right; he shouldn't have said anything at all.

"I'm sorry," he murmured, his eyes dropping to his folded hands to hide the sudden tears that threatened to spill over. "I just thought..." He trailed off. It didn't really matter what he'd thought; he'd been wrong. He let out a deep sigh. "Never mind."

He chanced a look at his alpha, only to find Dean staring down at the floor, his gaze distant, his mouth twisted into a frown. Cas considered reaching out to him, but he didn't want to upset him any further. He decided to leave Dean to his thoughts before he could say anything else stupid.

"I guess I'll turn in early. Good night," he murmured barely loud enough to be heard. His silent farewell finally tore Dean out of his thoughts. They were the same words as always, but they had still been so different from the usual.

Their good nights were supposed to be whispered between sated smiles and lazy kisses, the last thing either of them heard before sleep. They weren't supposed to be called out across the living room in a choked voice...

Dean looked up just in time to see Cas leave the living room. "Cas," he called out, immediately regretting his harsh words, but the omega was already shutting their bedroom door behind him.

Dean dropped his head into his hands with a groan. Fuck. Why the hell had he overreacted like that? Cas had just been trying to help him. Instead of accepting his help, Dean had shoved him away.

Dean sighed. John's visit had kept him on edge from the start. He kept thinking that something was going to happen, that John would do or say something to push Cas away. Turns out that Dean didn't even have to wait for John to fuck things up; he'd done it all on his own.

John's deep voice broke into his reverie. "It's natural for them."

Dean's head shot up as his eyes met his father's. He hadn't even realized that John had come back into the room.

Dean nodded. He glanced down at his hands before looking back up at John. "What's natural for them?" He asked.

"To want a family. Your mom was the same way," John explained as he stepped further into the
room. "I wanted to hold off until we were more settled, you know? But she wanted a kid."

"What did you guys do?" Dean wondered, and John smiled.

"We had a kid. And you know, even though I didn't feel ready beforehand, things actually worked out. You were nothing like what I'd expected."

"In a good way or a bad way?"

"In a very good way," John assured him. He jerked his head toward the bedroom. "Cas, he may have agreed to wait, and he may even understand why he needs to wait, but his body is telling him that he needs to get a move on. He just doesn't realize that's what's going on yet."

Dean stared down at the floor as he contemplated his father's words. Cas might not even know what he was asking for; all he knew now was that Dean yelled at him, when all he'd done was be honest about what he was feeling.

Dean suddenly looked back up at his father. "Why are you telling me all this?"

John glanced back toward the closed bedroom door with a smile. "I like Cas; I think he's good for you. And I think you know that. But in order for you all to make it, you need to understand that he can't wait for ever."

"It's not forever. It's just til I'm ready," Dean defended.

"Yeah, but take it from another career-oriented alpha: you won't ever really feel ready until it's here, and then you especially won't feel ready, but you'll just have to take it a day at a time like the rest of us."

"So pretty much you're saying we should just go for it... So you want grandkids soon," Dean concluded, and John chuckled.

"I wouldn't mind having someone to spoil, but I'm not saying go get started right this second. Just...don't expect to ever feel ready. You won't."

Dean considered what he'd said for a moment then nodded. "Thanks."

"Yep. Now go take care of your omega," he instructed, jerking his head toward the bedroom again.

"Yes, sir." Dean stood and walked toward the bedroom, pausing to clap John on the back as he passed.

When he stepped inside, the lights were off, but he could make out Cas's form on the bed. The omega had curled up into a tight ball and pulled the covers completely over his head, hiding himself away.

Dean's entire body ached when he heard the omega's shaky intake of breath and his soft sniffle, and he cursed himself and his stupid stubborn streak again. He flipped on the bedside lamp as he sat down on the edge of the bed.

He reached out a tentative hand toward Cas, trying not to take it to heart when the omega flinched at the contact. "Cas?" He murmured, his tone uncertain. There was no response. He tried again. "Cas, sweetheart."

"Yes?" Cas mumbled from beneath the blanket.
"Will you come out?" Dean requested. "Please," he added as an afterthought. "We need to talk."

"Don't worry about it, Dean. Go to sleep," Cas said, still hidden away.

"No, I need to see you first," Dean persisted, his hand stroking up and down Cas's arm through the blanket. "I need to fix this."

"There's nothing to fix," Cas insisted, his voice still shaky. "You were right; I shouldn't have said anything."

"No, I wasn't. You were just being honest, like I asked you to, and I shot you down. I... I've never been more of an idiot or more ashamed of my actions. I hurt you, and that's inexcusable. Please, Cas, look at me so I can make this right!" Dean pleaded, his voice thick with emotion.

A long pause filled the room, and then Cas finally stirred, his head popping free from the blanket. Tear streaks painted his cheeks, and his eyes were red-rimmed and puffy.

"Sweetheart," Dean crooned, holding his arms out toward the omega in a silent offering.

There was no hesitation on Cas's part. He slid across the bed to Dean and crawled into his lap, burying his tear-stained face in the alpha's shirt front. Dean began to card his fingers through Cas's dark hair, his breath tickling along his skin as he whispered, "I am so sorry, love. So, so sorry."

"No, I'm sorry," Cas whispered. "I knew it was a touchy subject for you and I still brought it up. I shouldn't have—"

Dean cut him off with a shake of his head. "Yes, you should have. You were just being honest and trying to care for me, like any omega would. I was in the wrong here, Cas. Please forgive me."

"There's nothing to forgive," Cas assured him softly. "We've both been wound a little tight lately."

"I know, but that's still no excuse—" Dean tried to argue. Cas pressed a finger to his lips.

"Okay, Dean, yes, my feelings were a little hurt. But you're here now, taking care of me. That's what matters to me. I'd be an idiot to think there aren't going to be bad times, but as long as you're there to hold me after, I'll be okay."

"You make it sound so simple," Dean whispered, his smile rueful.

Cas shrugged. "I love you."

And really, it was as simple as that. Dean smiled softly and brushed a thumb along Cas's cheek. "I love you, too."

He ducked to kiss Cas gently, his lips soft and unhurried. He pulled away with a serious expression. "About the other thing..." He began. Cas shook his head.

"I really wasn't trying to rush you or anything."

"I know," Dean assured him. "I just...I need time."

"Of course!" Cas agreed. "You just tell me when you're ready, and I won't bother you anymore about it until then."

"No, I want you to talk to me about it," Dean countered.
Cas's eyebrows furrowed. "Really? Are you sure?"

Dean nodded. "Yeah." He licked his lips nervously. "I think... I think talking about it—you know, being open with each other about what we want for our future—will be good for us. Like, we don't need to talk about it every single moment of every single day, but we shouldn't be afraid to voice our thoughts to each other, either."

"Okay," Cas agreed. "But I wasn't telling you because I want kids right this minute or anything." He brought his hands to Dean's cheeks so he could hold the alpha's gaze steady on his. "I told you because I needed for you to know that you are going to be a wonderful father whenever we do have kids, just like you're wonderful at everything else you do."

Dean shook his head. "Cas, you can't know that for sure..." He tried, but the omega shook his head adamantly.

"You try so hard and give so much," Cas whispered, tears brimming again, but for an entirely different reason. "You've had years of estrangement and disregard from your father, and now that he wants to mend things, you're putting yourself out there for him. Tonight, you hurt my feelings a little bit, and you immediately tried to fix it. The type of man who does that will make a fantastic father someday."

"The only reason I'm talking to John is because you keep pushing me to," Dean admitted, and Cas shrugged.

"Sometimes we all need a nudge in the right direction. I know that someday, if you don't fix things with John, you'll wish you had. So really, I'm just..." He trailed off.

"You're just looking out for me, like always," Dean supplied with a rueful smile.

Cas leaned in to press a quick kiss to his mouth. "We look out for each other. It's what mates do."

"You know, you saying things like that makes it really hard for me to wait," Dean admitted.

Cas smirked. "Well then, Mr. Smith, maybe we should take a trip down to Pontiac to see my parents. That way you can finally make an honest omega out of me," he teased as he moved in for another kiss.

"We could drive down there for New Year's" Dean suggested.

"If you'd like," Cas replied, but he was already focused on their next kiss. Dean allowed the kiss to deepen, but all too soon he was pulling back. "Come on, time for sleep."

"But why? We don't have to get up early tomorrow!" Cas protested.

"I know, but we still wanna try to be out of bed by noon," Dean said. "Plus think of it this way: the sooner we go to sleep, the sooner we can wake up and open presents."

"That's what my parents used to always say," Cas complained as he slipped back under the blanket, this time pulling Dean with him.

"Did it work?" Dean asked as he flipped off the bedside lamp then rolled over to cuddle up behind Cas.

"No! It just meant I had to lie in my dark bedroom instead of in the living room!" Cas grumbled, causing Dean to chuckle.
"Well, if it makes you feel any better, I'll be here with you this time."

Cas sighed heavily. "I suppose it does help some," he conceded, but there was a smile in his voice.

Dean brushed his nose against the shell of Cas's ear. "Good night," he whispered.

Cas rolled over to face him and kissed him softly. "Good night," he whispered back.

Dean couldn't stop his smile. That's how it was supposed to go.

Chapter End Notes

Guys, imma be honest with you: I feel a little unsure about this chapter. Like, I wrote it weeks ago, and I've been editing it like usual, but it just doesn't seem to flow right. However, I'm still going to post it based on the advice of my amazing proofreaders (you know, my straight friends who read my gay porn).

It still got the main points across (you know, family time with John, further discussion of Dean's reluctance to have kids, angst and feels all around), but it might not have been the smoothest. So, if it feels disjointed or whatever, just know I tried. Anyways, enjoy!
Despite Cas's assurances that he wouldn't have any problem waking up early on Christmas morning, Dean still had to struggle to get him out of bed.

"Cas," Dean sat on the edge of the bed and began to run his fingers through Cas's hair, his voice still low and gravelly from sleep. "Cas, it's time to wake up."

Cas whimpered pathetically and rolled over to bury his face in Dean's thigh, trying to block out as much of the late morning sunlight as possible. "Not yet," he mumbled.

"Cas, you can't open your presents if you don't wake up," Dean prodded. "Come on, you know you want to."

Cas's eyelids fluttered open, and he glared up at his alpha. "Can't we open them later?"

"Oh, I think you'll want to open this one up as soon as possible," Dean teased, walking his fingers up Cas's spine. Cas groaned and rolled away from him to the far side of the bed.

"No! No tickling!" He protested, but a smile had finally found its way to his mouth. He peeked an eye open and looked over at Dean.

Dean leaned across the bed and grasped Cas's chin between gentle fingers. "Merry Christmas, Darling," he whispered as he brought his lips to Cas's.

It didn't take long for the kiss to grow heated, their lips insistent and demanding. Dean crawled further onto the bed until he was above Cas, his large body looming over his omega. When the kiss broke, Cas smiled shyly up at Dean, his fingers skimming down his chest.

"Merry Christmas, my love," he whispered back.

"I have something for you," Dean said. He sat back on his knees, still straddling Cas's thighs, and reached over to the nightstand. Cas sat up and watched with eager eyes as he opened the top drawer to pull out a flat, square gold box tied with a creme bow.

"I thought we were opening gifts with John later?" Cas wondered, arching an eyebrow.

"Don't worry; we'll open the socks and new watches with John," Dean assured him. "But this is something you wouldn't want to open in front of my father."

"Well, if you say so..." Cas murmured even as he reached for the box. Dean grinned and held it just out of reach.

"What do you say?" He reminded.

Cas smirked and wrapped his arms around Dean's neck, bringing his lips to brush against Dean's as he whispered, "Please, Alpha? May I please have the very special gift you bought for me?"

"You really want it?" Dean asked, his eyes teasing. "I feel like I may need some more convincing."

"Really?" Cas asked as he moved to nibble at Dean's jawline. "Because I'd think that you'd want to
Dean finally tore his mouth away, chuckling ruefully as he brushed a lock of hair off of Cas's forehead. "You really need to stop distracting me."

"Oh really? I'm the one distracting you?" Cas countered. "You're really gonna say that when you're sitting there in nothing but boxers?" He slid his hands down Dean's chest, over his abs, to toy with the waistband of said boxers. He snapped the waistband against Dean's tanned skin.

"At least I'm wearing something," Dean chided.

Cas giggled and shook his head. "Don't act like you don't like it," he accused.

"Oh, that's not the problem. The problem is that I like it too much," Dean admitted, brushing the hair out of Cas's forehead again.

Cas smiled softly. "You know, sometimes we're kinda hopeless."

"I know," Dean murmured. He pulled the box out from behind his back and handed it to Cas. "Merry Christmas, baby."

Cas grinned and eagerly tugged at the ribbon, his eyes lighting as he pulled the lid off. He gingerly peeled back the layers of red tissue paper inside to reveal the two gifts. There was a dark metal collar nestled inside the box and, inside of that, a metal bracelet, two rings perfectly situated one inside of the other.

"Dean..." Cas breathed, his eyes widening. "They're gorgeous." He stared down at the gifts, almost unwilling to touch them for fear of smudging the metal.

"They're titanium," Dean explained as he pulled the bracelet out. He gestured toward Cas's wrist, and Cas extended his arm so Dean could clasp it in place. The metal felt cool against Cas's skin, solid and reassuring.

He smiled up at Dean. "Am I allowed to wear this out in public?"

"That's the general idea," Dean encouraged, his expression fond. "I mean, the collar would obviously be too much for public, but the bracelet is kinda..."

"Perfect," Cas finished. "I love it," he breathed as he surged forward for another kiss. He tossed the box aside and climbed into his lap as he slid his tongue into Dean's mouth to tangle with the alpha's.

"So I'll take that to mean that you love it?" Dean asked, somewhat breathless, afterward.

"Yes," Cas assured him. "I love that I'll finally have something that everyone can see, something that marks me as yours." Dean smiled but didn't respond otherwise.

"Now it's time for your gift!" Cas cried as he clambered out of his alpha's lap. Dean watched him with narrowed eyes as he ran over to the walk-in closet and flung it open. He disappeared inside but quickly returned with a long, thin, wrapped box that he had to carry with both hands.

"What's that?" Dean asked as he stood from the bed and met Cas in the middle of the room to pull
the box from him.

"Did you really think you would be the only one with a naughty gift to give?" Cas teased. Dean set the box on the bed and began to gently pull at the carefully folded wrapping paper.

Cas watched for a few seconds, but soon his impatience got the best of him. "Dean, what are you doing?" He asked, his expression flat.

"I don't want to ruin your gift wrapping," Dean explained. Cas rolled his eyes and reached down to tear at the paper.

"Hey!" Dean protested, but Cas kept tearing.

"Dean, wrapping paper was made to be torn," Cas huffed. Dean seemed about to argue further when his eyes caught the picture on the box. His own hands immediately joined Cas's in tearing away the wrapping paper to reveal the box beneath.

"Is this...?" Dean asked, his tone almost reverent.

Cas smiled innocently and nodded. "Uh-huh!"

Dean turned and pulled him into his arms. "Did you really...when?"

"Well, as you know, I'm already pretty good at dancing," Cas reminded.

Dean smirked as he thought of that date way back when Cas had taught him how to waltz, back when they'd shared their very first kiss. He'd soon discovered that that wasn't the only dancing Cas was good at. More than once since they'd moved in together, he'd walked into the kitchen to find Cas shimmying around to some tune on his headphones, his tight little ass swaying seductively.

"I am aware, yes," Dean confirmed. "But I wasn't aware that you were proficient at this specific kind of dancing."

"Well, I had to practice, of course! Meg owns one, and she let me go over and use it," Cas explained. "You'll need to help me set it up."

"Of course," Dean agreed readily.

Cas slipped his hands up to rest on his chest. "And then once we set it up, I'll be able to show you how much all of that practice has paid off."

"And people say I'm the corrupting influence here," Dean murmured as Cas nuzzled at his jawline.

"Are you saying you're not?" Cas asked.

Dean gestured toward the box. "I'm saying that before I met you, I never even would've considered installing a stripper pole in my place," he admitted.

"First of all, they're called exotic dancers, not strippers," Cas reminded with a smirk. "Second of all, how do you feel about it now?" Cas wondered.

"Now, I can't wait," Dean whispered as he ducked down for another kiss. "But for right now, we need to get around. John'll be up soon, if he isn't already."

By the time they made it out of the bedroom, John was already up with a fresh-brewed pot of coffee.
and Cas's pre-made cinnamon rolls in the oven.

Cas grabbed a mug from the cabinet and moved to pour himself a some of the coffee. He smiled at John, "You are a godsend."

John chuckled and shook his head. "Honestly, it's purely selfish. I can't function without the stuff." His eyes caught sight of the bracelet around Cas's wrist. "Nice bracelet."

Cas blushed prettily as he looked up at Dean with adoring eyes. "Thanks."

Dean ducked to quickly kiss his forehead before he moved away to pour his own mug.

Cas hummed happily as he brought his mug up and took his first sip. "So how do we want to do this? Do we wanna eat the rolls before we open gifts or while we're opening them?"

"Well, they'll be done in about three minutes, so we can just take them out there with us," John suggested, and Cas nodded.

"That sounds good. Why don't you all head on out there? I'll pull them out of the oven and be out in a few."

John and Dean headed out to the living room. John took the recliner while Dean took the love seat so he and Cas could sit together.

"So the bracelet was a gift, I take it?" John asked, and Dean nodded. "I think he really likes it."

Dean grinned smugly as he took another sip of coffee. "Yeah, it looks really good on him."

Cas came from the kitchen then with the cinnamon rolls in one hand and his coffee in the other. He carefully set the rolls down on the coffee table before settling into Dean's side.

John passed out the gifts, since he was closest to the tree. There were silly gifts, like the bumblebee apron Dean gave Cas, and practical gifts, like the leather-bound desk calendar that John gave Dean or the new tea tin he gave Cas. But probably the most appreciated gifts were the unexpectedly sentimental ones that John gave the couple.

Dean stared down at the picture frame in his hands, his eyes misting as he stared at the picture of his mom. She looked so vibrant and energetic, her bright eyes shining out at him even all these years later.

John cleared his throat. "I, uh, noticed that you don't really have many pictures around the place, so I figured..." He trailed off and made a gesture with his hand. Dean looked up at him and smiled. "It's perfect. Thank you," he said, and John nodded briskly.

Cas unwrapped his present from John next and smiled fondly at the picture of him and Dean. John had somehow taken it without either of them noticing that first night he'd come into town. They were standing in front of the big Christmas tree, and Cas was reaching up on tiptoe to kiss Dean on the cheek.

"Thank you," he murmured, smiling at John. "I think I'm going to put it on my dresser."

John nodded again, clearly uncomfortable with the extra attention. "I've learned the hard way that you can never have too many of those things." He didn't have to say whom he had in mind when he spoke; both Cas and Dean could see it in his face.
Once they'd finished cleaning up the wrapping paper, Cas headed back to the kitchen to get started on dinner, leaving Dean and John to talk in the living room.

"So, I'm going to be taking off back to New York tomorrow," John said.

"So soon?" Dean wondered. It was a simple enough question, but it spoke volumes about how their relationship had already improved.

John nodded. "Yeah, I have an appointment right after New Year's, and I wanna have a few days to rest before then," he explained.

"Makes sense, I suppose. Will you be okay to travel back by yourself?" Dean asked.

John rolled his eyes. "Yes, mommy. I'm a big boy, I can travel on my own."

Dean smirked. "You know what I meant."

"Well, I wouldn't mind the company if you and Cas wanted to come up for a few days, and it might be nice to have someone there for the appointment," John admitted.

Dean nodded but then stopped short. "Actually, Cas and I were talking about going to see his parents for New Years, that way I could meet them and talk to them about everything."

John nodded. "Yeah, that's a little more important right now."

"Actually," Cas spoke up as he moved back into the living room, "I wouldn't mind a trip up to New York." When both arched disbelieving eyebrows at him, he shrugged. "I've never been," he explained.

"Are you sure, babe?" Dean murmured. Cas nodded as he settled back onto the couch.

"Absolutely. Pontiac is only a few hours' drive away; we can head down there any weekend. This is more important right now." He smiled warmly at John.

"Listen, Cas, I really don't mind..." John tried, but Cas shook his head.

"John, Dean told you that we would be there for you every step of the way, and Dean always keeps his promises. We'll go back with you to New York."

Dean smiled down at him and reached over to squeeze his knee. Cas smiled back before looking back to John.

"Trust me, Dean and I can bear to live in sin a few weeks longer."

John chuckled. "Well, when you put it that way, I guess it's settled."

"Perfect!" He grinned up at Dean. "I love doing spontaneous things!"

When Cas went back to the kitchen to check on his dough for the bread a few minutes later, Dean went with him.

"You know what this means, don't you?" He asked as he started helping Cas knead the dough.

"What?" Cas wondered.

Dean leaned over to whisper directly into his ear. "Your little dance demonstration will have to wait
until we get back."

Cas turned his head so he could whisper into Dean's ear instead. "Not if you stop complaining and go set up the pole now. Then I can do my little dance demonstration, as you put it, tonight before we leave."

Dean pretended to contemplate the options for a moment before he pecked Cas on the cheek then headed for the sink to wash the flour from his hands. He rushed away toward the bedroom, calling over his shoulder as he went, "Call me if you need anything!"

Cas smirked and kept kneading the dough, humming a soft tune under his breath. He'd known that his gift would be a good investment.

Chapter End Notes

So, apparently the way to get a to of feed-back from you all is to say that I don't like a chapter because then you all leave me a ton of wonderful comments about said chapter. Hence my decision to say that I don't like every chapter from here on out! I kid, I kid.

But really, thank you all for your kind comments last week; I loved reading them! Hell, I always love reading your comments, so make sure to leave some love! Also, apparently my fic got some extra attention on Tumblr (my thanks to Hermione James Weasley asking around about it), and there were several of you that said, "Oh, I love that fic!" But (unless you have a different username here as opposed to there) I didn't even know you liked it. Guys, I am a struggling, insecure author...I NEED to hear from you! I NEED YOUR LOVE AND VALIDATION! All that to say, leave comments! I'm really nice and usually respond to most, if not all, of them.

Okay, hope you enjoyed this chapter and my rant! *kisses* Byeeme!!
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Cas's fingers moved to toy with the big white bow that held his teddy closed in the front and smiled innocently. "Would you care to open your present, Alpha?"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Cas took a deep breath and reached out, his fingers hesitating for the briefest of moments before they wrapped around the doorknob and slowly opened the bathroom door. He stepped out into the dimly lit bedroom, his eyes immediately finding his alpha in the semidarkness. He smiled softly as he sashayed forward, his hosed feet sinking into the plush carpet.

He could feel Dean's eyes raking down his body, hungrily watching his slim hips sway beneath the thin, sheer material of the red teddy he wore. Cas could feel the smooth satin of the white panties rubbing against his ass with every step. His eyes dropped to the erection that Dean was doing nothing to hide, and he couldn't help his breathy chuckle as he stopped in front of Dean's chair. He bent over and gripped the armrests of the chair, smirking as he brought his mouth against Dean's in the lightest of brushes.

"Now, usually, you wouldn't be allowed to touch the dancers, but I think I may make a special exception for you, Mr. Smith," Cas breathed out against his alpha's warm lips. "But first you need to be a very good boy for me."

Dean smirked and pursed his lips, pressing them against Cas's as he pretended to think about it. "I suppose I can do that for you."

Cas slowly straightened up and brushed his fingers down along Dean's jawline with a gentle murmur of, "Good alpha."

His fingers moved to toy with the big white bow that held his teddy closed in the front and smiled innocently. "Would you care to open your present, Alpha?"

Dean reached up with reverent fingers and gently tugged at the bow, untying it. Once the ribbons hung down uselessly in front of Cas, the omega slowly slid the flimsy garment off his shoulders, leaving him in nothing but the thigh-highs and panties. He dropped the teddy onto Dean's lap.

"Hold this for me, will you?" He teased with a wink before turning away and slowly walking to the pole now set up in the center of their playroom. He paused by the dresser to start up the music. He turned to smile at Dean.

"I feel like this song describes us perfectly," he murmured as the slow beat started. Dean couldn't seem to help his smirk when the first lines of the song filtered out.

"Well, I heard you were trouble,  
And you heard I was trouble."

Cas sauntered up to the pole and walked around it a few times, purposefully shaking his ass for Dean
as he walked away from him.

"No games, just a slave to you totally."

Cas spun so that he was facing Dean, his back pressed up against the pole. He used one hand to hold on to the pole above his head and slowly slid down into a crouch, his hips undulating as he went. He pressed his thighs tight together then spread them wide, giving Dean a perfect view of his small cock straining against the fabric of his panties. His free hand slid down to ghost over his erection through the material, a gasp escaping as he did.

His eyes dropped down to Dean's tented pants, which looked positively delicious. He ran his tongue over his lips, smiling wickedly at Dean. "Alpha, don't I make you want to touch yourself?"

Dean smirked. "Do you want me to touch myself, baby?" Cas nodded, and Dean kept his eyes locked on Cas's as he reached down to unzip his slacks and pull himself out.

"So pull me down if you want to, and I hope that you want to."

Cas straightened back up then spun again to the side of the pole so that Dean could see his profile as he slid back down, popping his ass when he reached the bottom before standing again, rolling his hips on the way up.

"You can show me where trouble goes, and tell me secrets only trouble knows."

He grabbed onto the pole and pulled himself up, twisting himself upside down and supporting himself with his hands so that his legs were above his head, spread wide in a V. He flipped back right-side-up and wrapped one leg around for pole to hold him in place as he shimmied upward.

"I want you to know that I've got your back even when the foundation seems cracked."

He couldn't watch Dean, not with the concentration he had to give this task, but he could smell him, or more specifically, his arousal. The alpha's scent grew more saturated with need and lust as he watched Cas twist into impossible shapes and slide his ass and crotch against the metal.

"We could be king and queen of the moonlight. Two young lovers, and when the mood's right, you hear me say..."

The song suspended for a moment, and Cas froze his twisted position on the pole, letting the tension build for that split second before spinning around the pole with, "I want you."

Cas could feel himself growing slick, and he knew that it was Dean's scent playing havoc with his system. He'd never had this problem while practicing, but now, with Dean's green eyes on him, he was practically gushing. It turned him on even more to know that Dean could smell it on him, could smell what he was doing to him.

The song went into its last chorus, and Cas began to work his way back down the pole, rolling his hips and ass as he went, using his legs as leverage as he bent his body backwards so Dean could see his chest, pretty and flushed with exertion. Once the chorus ended, his slid the rest of the way down, landing on the floor in a perfect split on the last note.

Dean's eyes were dark and predatory as he stood from his chair and moved toward Cas, his stride purposeful. He dropped down onto his knees in front of the omega, his hands reverent as they came to cup his chin. He stared into his blue eyes for the briefest of moments before yanking him into a heated kiss.
"That was fucking perfect," he breathed as he pulled away. "You were so fucking perfect for me, baby."

Cas smiled tremulously as Dean leaned in for another kiss, his tongue demanding entrance as his fingers began to run up Cas's torso. Cas sighed happily and wrapped his arms around Dean's head, possessive in his hold as Dean's tongue grew insistent against his.

"I'm glad you like it," he gasped out when they tore apart. Dean shook his head.

"Like it? You really have no idea what you do to me, do you, Sweetheart? Feel this?" He grabbed one of Cas's slim hands and pressed it up against his heavy cock. "You do this every fucking time you bat those pretty blue eyes at me."

He began to kiss down Cas's neck, nipping at the sweaty skin there. "I could smell you, getting so slick for me, like a good little omega should for their alpha. You liked it that I watched you, that my body wanted you. Your body wants me too. I can scent it on you," Dean growled as he latched onto Cas's jaw to suck a bruise into the skin there.

Cas gasped prettily and slid his finger's into Dean's hair, his nails scraping along his scalp as he pressed Dean's face tighter to his neck. "That's it, alpha. Mark me up so everyone knows I'm yours."

Dean pulled away from Cas's neck and dove in for another kiss, his mouth demanding against his omega's. Cas looped his arms back around his neck, pulling his body to the alpha. After several long, heated kisses, Cas pulled back just enough to demand, "Take me to bed, Alpha."

Dean wasted no time in picking Cas up and carrying him to the giant king-sized bed. He gently placed Cas down on his back, but the omega had other ideas. He rolled over onto all fours, presenting himself to the alpha. "Like this," he urged, shooting Dean a heavy look over his shoulder. "Please, just like this."

Dean groaned and shook his head. "You're killing me, Sweetheart!" But he was already clambering up onto the bed, eagerly reaching for Cas. He tore the white panties away, leaving the white fabric in shreds so he could dive in to lap at the omega's slick hole. Cas keened and rolled his hips back onto Dean's face, moaning in approval when Dean grabbed onto his ass cheeks to hold him steady as he sucked him with his tongue.

"Yes! Yes! Yes! Just like that, Dean!" Cas cried out. His eyes slid shut as his face twisted with pleasure, his teeth digging into his plump lower lip. Dean hummed against him, sending delicious vibrations up his spine.

For several long moments, Cas was lost to the pleasure of Dean's tongue, his entire body focused on that single spot where they were joined. But Cas knew it wouldn't be enough. Dean was still lapping at his hole when Cas reached back to tangle his fingers through his hair and gently push him away. "Dean! I need you inside me, now!"

Dean slapped his ass cheek, leaving a red handprint on his smooth, flushed skin. "Bossy omega," he chided, but then a moment later, Cas heard him shedding the rest of his clothing. And then the head of Dean's cock was pushing at his hole, demanding entrance, and with one roll of his hips, Cas pulled him halfway in.

"So slick, baby," Dean breathed, bending down to kiss the top knob of Cas's spine. Cas moaned softly and rolled his hips again, pulling Dean further into his tight channel.

"Always slick for you, alpha," Cas promised, whining high in his throat. Dean slid out just enough to...
make Cas feel the loss, and then slammed back in with a hard thrust of his hips. Each roll of his hips was slow and deliberate as he pounded into his omega, reveling in the high whines Cas was letting loose.

"Faster, Dean!" Cas pleaded. "Give it to me faster!"

Dean wrapped an arm around Cas's torso, curling his hand around Cas's shoulder so he could pull him upright, his back flush against Dean's chest as the alpha fucked up into him. "You want it rougher, huh? Such a pretty little slut for me, always begging for it."

He nipped at Cas's neck, growling as he buried his nose there to scent his omega. He was so caught up in the feel of the omega around him, caught up in his scent.

"Yessss!" Cas screamed as Dean set a brutal pace, fucking into Cas with abandon until the omega could no longer speak. Soon, all he could manage were encouraging moans and whimpers, his hips shoving down into each thrust.

Dean released Cas, causing the omega to slump back forward. Cas barely caught himself on his elbows as the alpha grabbed onto his hips and thrust into him harder. The sounds of skin against skin filled the room, and Cas could feel Dean's balls slap against him.

His arms eventually gave out, and his sweat-soaked torso collapsed onto the bed. Dean's grip on his hips was the only thing holding him up. Cas could do little more than rub his face against the smooth fabric of the sheets. The new angle made Dean's cock brush against Cas's prostate with every thrust, pulling a new round of choked moans and whines from the omega. Dean reached down to wrap his hand around the back of Cas's neck, shoving his face further into the bed.

With every plunge of his hips, he pushed deeper into his omega, filling every inch of him. He could feel his knot swelling at the base of his cock, and he let out a feral growl as his fingers tightened around the back of Cas's neck.

"I'm gonna pop a knot right in that pretty pussy of yours, omega. Gonna give that hole exactly what it wants," Dean promised as he shoved his knot past Cas's rim, right into his tight, searching channel. The alpha groaned as he felt Cas tightening up around his knot, milking it, his body searching for that release.

"You ready for my knot, baby?" Dean ground out, but Cas couldn't do much more than groan into the mattress.

Dean gave a few more thrusts, and then with a roar, he exploded inside of Cas, his knot popping, pumping the omega full of his release. Cas sobbed as his orgasm followed right after, his hole clenching around Dean, milking even more from him. Cas suddenly felt a sharp spike of pain at his neck, but then another wave of pleasure washed through him, pushing away any trace of the pain from his consciousness.

Several long moments later, Dean collapsed on top of Cas, their bodies still held tightly together by the his knot. He ran his hands up and down Cas's side and drowsily nosed at the omega's neck, humming in contentment for several long moments, then suddenly froze.

Cas slowly came back to himself, his entire body shuddering as he drew in several deep, heaving breaths. He felt something warm and gooey sliding down his neck, and he gently reached up to feel the skin there. His neck was covered in something sticky, something other than sweat.

"Dean?" He whispered, his entire body tensing under his alpha's. "Dean, did we just..." He trailed
off, unable to finish the thought. There was nothing but more labored breathing from the alpha. "Dean? Dean, answer me, please!"

Not that Cas really needed an answer. He knew what had happened; it wasn't that hard to figure out. What he really needed to know was how Dean was taking it. He needed to see his alpha.

He tried to push himself up. "Let's go, Dean. Onto our sides," he encouraged, and after a couple of seconds, Dean complied. Carefully, very carefully, Cas twisted himself around, grimacing in discomfort as Dean's knot tugged at his rim. But the discomfort was worth it, because he could finally look into Dean's bright green eyes.

"Dean? Talk to me, please," Cas pleaded.

"Cas, I didn't want—I mean, yes, I wanted, but I didn't mean..." He trailed off, his eyes staring down at the bite mark on Cas's nape. Cas took his face between his hands and pulled it up so they were looking right at each other.

"Dean, use your words," Cas murmured, a small smile tugging at the corners of his mouth. Dean shook his head, his eyes sad.

"Cas, I'm so sor—" he began. Cas cut him off.

"Don't you dare apologize to me, Dean Smith!" He fumed. "I just got mated to the love of my life, and I'll be damned if I let you turn this into anything other than the best thing that's ever happened to me."

"Cas, your parents..." Dean tried, but Cas shook his head emphatically.

"My parents will either be accepting or they won't. I am an adult, and I can make my own damn life choices. And I chose you a long time ago." Cas drew a deep breath, "Dean, answer me this: would this thing between us ever have turned out any other way?"

Dean's answer was immediate and sure. "No."

"Exactly! Even if you had talked to my parents, and they had said yes, we would have ended up like this. Or if you had talked to my parents, and they had said no..." Cas let that thought hang between them before smiling softly. "We still would have ended up like this."

"Really? Even if they had said no?" Dean asked, but there was a teasing lilt to his voice now. Cas nodded, his eyes bright.

"Definitely. Dean, you're it for me. You're my mate, my alpha."

A soft smile finally found its way to the alpha's mouth. "And you're my omega," Dean murmured, his fingers brushing along Cas's cheek. He leaned in to press a tender kiss against Cas's forehead, his touch reverent as he gathered the omega to him. "I just wish I could have done this right."

"Dean, what could possibly not be right about this?" Cas wondered hesitantly.

Dean pulled back so he could look right into Cas's eyes again, his face determined. "Nothing! Everything is perfect about us. I just...for once, I wanted to do right by you."

"But you do right by me every day," Cas defended. "You take very good care of me."

"You know what I mean. I wanted to make it official. go talk to your parents and all that other shit.
Play by the rules this time."

"Yeah...we have a habit of not really following the rules, don't we?" Cas admitted with a chuckle. "I mean, I was supposed to say no and walk away after that first date; but I said yes. I was supposed to break up with you in August, but then I moved in with you. We were supposed to have some mindless sex to blow off the stress, and we ended up mating." As he said the words, his eyes widened, and he let out a half giggle. "Holy shit! We mated! We're actually mates now!"

"It's really nothing new. I mean, we'll still be living together and sleeping together and all that other domestic shit we already do," Dean pointed out, and Cas giggled.

"All that other domestic shit, huh?" Cas teased, and Dean rolled his eyes.

"Shut up." He paused for a moment, a heavy blush staining his cheeks as he admitted, "I actually kind of like it."

"I know you do," Cas murmured, his blue eyes scrunching up as his smile grew. He leaned forward to kiss the alpha's chin. "I like it, too."

"We'll have to go visit your parents to tell them eventually," Dean murmured.

Cas pretended to think about it for a moment before shaking his head. "Naahh! I don't want to scare you off just yet."

Dean chuckled. "Trust me, if John hasn't scared you off, I don't think your parents are going to scare me off."

Cas sighed heavily. "I suppose, eventually. But right now, we need to focus on your family, which means going to New York tomorrow and not worrying about my parents."

"I know, but when we get back, we'll go visit them."

"Yes, of course." Cas agreed, snuggling closer to Dean. "For right now, can't we just enjoy being mates?"

Dean leaned in to brush their noses together, his eyes serious as he whispered, "I'll always enjoy being mates with you."

A heavy blush stained Cas's cheeks as he leaned in for another kiss. "Aw, you big sap!"

Chapter End Notes

Sooooo..... SURPRISE!!! Hehe, that's exactly what this chapter was for me, honestly! When I started writing it, I had no intention of mating them yet. But then around the middle I realized that I was sick and tired of waiting, much like many of you, so...yeah.

Now, my usual method is to write the chapter a couple of weeks ahead of time then go back and reread it periodically to make sure it flows right and makes sense, yadda yadda. Well, this morning when I went back to reread this chapter, I realized that I must have been, like, really horny when I wrote it or something because it was SUPER INTENSE!!! So yeah, sorry about any little problems *that* may have caused... Hehehehe not really.
For the dance, I used the song "Pull Me Down" by Mikky Ekko. It's a fantastic little piece that I absolutely adore! I know, I know; this would have been the perfect chance to incorporate some Christmas music (Santa Baby, anyone?) But I only have one shot for the pole-dancing bit, and I wanted to use this specific song.

I know, you might be thinking, Just write another pole dancing chapter. Yeah, that's not happening. Writing pole dancing scenes is fucking hard!! Like, I tried not to get too incredibly technical, but at the same time I had to be a little technical...and ugh!! It annoyed the shit outta me. Even after multiple edits, I don't feel like I got it right.

Anyways, sorry about the long note, but I just had SO MUCH to say! Anyways, enjoy! Byeeeee!
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

They stood there for several long moments like that, holding each other, Cas whispering soft encouragements to his alpha. When Dean's shoulders still refused to release the pent-up tension, Cas gently nudged Dean so they could move away from the door.

"Come on. I know how to make you feel better," he promised, pulling the alpha toward the bed.

Chapter Notes

Many thanks to Tyne for reading & providing feedback!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"So, how are things going today, Doc?" John asked from his spot on the examination table.

The doctor, a young woman named Amelia, smiled gently as she settled into her chair at the desk. "Pretty well. How were your holidays?"

"Great! I spent Christmas with my son and his new mate, Dean and Cas," John explained, motioning over to the couple sitting in the chairs.

"That must have been nice," she offered. "It's always nice to have family to spend your holidays with." She smiled over at the couple but kept speaking to John. "So tell me how you've been feeling."

"Pretty okay. You know, a little discomfort here and there, a lot of fatigue throughout the day."

Out of the corner of his eye, Cas saw Dean's eyebrows furrow, so he reached over to take the alpha's hand, smiling up at him as he linked their fingers together. He turned his attention back to Amelia, who was scribbling something down in her folder.

"This discomfort, is it anywhere specific?"

"Not really, no," John assured her.

"Any dizziness? Fevers? Numbness?" She asked.

"Yes to dizziness and fevers, no to numbness," John replied.

"Okay, that's good. So we'll go ahead with the next round of treatment as planned," she affirmed.

Dean looked down at Cas, his expression perplexed. Next round? he mouthed, but Cas shrugged. John hadn't mentioned anything to him about previous treatments either.
Amelia saw the exchange and smiled at them. "John already went through one round of treatment before the holidays."

John smiled apologetically and shrugged, "Sorry, I figured it wasn't a big deal."

"That's okay," Cas offered. He smiled encouragingly. "What matters is that it works, right?"

"What does a round of treatment involve?" Dean asked, eyeing the folder that Amelia was still scribbling in.

"Right now, we have your father on a mixture of drugs, such as Tabloid, Depocyt, and DaunoXome. This treatment plan has shown a high remission rate, and his body accepted the first round of treatment fairly well, so it's very possible that we'll see a similar result from this next round," Amelia explained.

"How long does each round last?" Cas wondered.

"It's different for every patient. It all depends on the medications and the patient's body. There are some that can receive their treatment in one day by sitting for hours at a time. The more common schedule, which is the one John is following, is receiving treatment for several days in a row then resting for a few weeks."

She looked to John. "So you go home and get rested up, and we'll see you tomorrow."

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John sagged into the leather seat of the town car, his entire body slumping in on itself as Dean and Cas slid in across from him. Cas leaned forward to rest a hand on his knee.

"You okay, John?"

John smiled at the omega and nodded. "Yeah, just a little worn out. It, uh, really takes a toll on me, all this."

"Okay," Cas murmured, smiling at the older alpha again before pulling back and curling into Dean's side. "You okay?" He asked his alpha, and Dean nodded as he pulled out his phone.

"Yeah, I'm fine," Dean assured the omega with a kiss to his forehead. "I just have to text Hannah about rescheduling that appointment with Watts on Thursday."

John arched an eyebrow, but Dean just shook his head. "We're going over a proposal he submitted right before the holidays. Believe me, it was fucking awful."

"Don't worry about it, Dean," John assured him. "Listen, it's been nice having you all here this past week, but I understand that you've all got your own stuff going on. Cas's classes start up again soon, right? And trust me, I've seen my fair share of proposals from Watts; that man needs all the help he can get!"

"Are you sure?" Cas murmured, and John nodded.

"It would be nice to have you around, but I'll probably be too tired to be much of a host. And really, I just need a good bed to collapse into at the end of the day," John assured them. "I'll be fine."

Cas nodded, but his eyes were still uncertain. He decided to change the subject instead.

"So I know it's getting close to supper, but I would love a nap before that. John, would you mind if
we took a couple hours to rest and then had a late dinner at your place? Dean and I could pick up something on our way over?" Cas suggested.

John looked slightly relieved as he nodded. "That would be perfect. I'll just have the driver drop me off at home first, and then you can all can use the car to come back later."

"Sounds like a plan," Cas agreed.

John reached back to slide open the partition between himself and the driver so he could relay the instructions. While he spoke, Dean smiled down at Cas and whispered, "I see what you did there."

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Cas whispered back, his expression too innocent. They both knew that John would be too proud to admit he needed the rest. This way, he got the rest he needed with his pride still intact.

As the car started for the condo building where John lived, Cas snuggled up against Dean's side and watched the snowy city scenery pass by outside the window. He half-listened to John and Dean's conversation about the new contract they were working on, but he didn't really pay attention to what was being said until John said, "With everything that's going on, I'll need you here more, Dean."

Dean felt Cas stiffen against him, and he smoothed a hand down the omega's arm in an appeasing gesture as he spoke to his father. "How much more?"

"Maybe every other week or so," John replied.

"That's a lot of traveling," Cas murmured, his tone reflecting his discomfort.

John shrugged, "I know, and I wouldn't usually ask if of him, especially not so soon after mating." He offered Cas a small smile. "But we still have a business to run, and I won't be able to do as much now. Plus, we need to start preparing for him to take things over, in case...in case, well, you know."

Cas nodded. He did know.

"Well, let's hope it never comes to that," he said.

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The next day, Cas and Dean went with John to his appointment. Cas tried to keep up some cheerful chatter with the nurse as she hooked the IV into John's catheter on his chest, exchanging stories about baking disasters. He kept his hand in Dean's offering reassuring squeezes every now and then when he could feel him tensing up.

Afterwards, they took John back to his condo and made sure that he was settled in comfortably before they headed back to the hotel. They rode in silence, each lost to his own thoughts as the white city scenery passed them by. Cas kept his hand in Dean's offering reassuring squeezes every now and then when he could feel him tensing up.

Afterwards, they took John back to his condo and made sure that he was settled in comfortably before they headed back to the hotel. They rode in silence, each lost to his own thoughts as the white city scenery passed them by. Cas kept his hand in Dean's, his thumb rubbing along the back in small circles.

Once they were alone on the elevator headed up to their room, Dean slumped back against the elevator wall, rubbing a hand over his eyes. He couldn't help his small sigh of relief when he felt Cas slide up against him and wrap his arms around his waist. The omega rested his head against Dean's chest, listening to his heartbeat.

"You okay?" He asked, pressing a kiss to the center of his alpha's chest. Dean's eyes fluttered open, and he looked down at Cas.
"I will be, especially since you're here," he murmured. "Thanks for coming with me."

"Of course," Cas whispered. "I wouldn't be anywhere else."

The elevator doors slid open on their floor, and Dean stepped out into the hall, tugging Cas along with him.

He stopped at their hotel room door and used the key to unlock it before pulling Cas inside. He'd barely allowed the door to shut behind them before he was pushing Cas back up against it, burying his nose in the omega's neck to scent the mating mark there.

Cas slid his hands up to cradle his head and began to card his fingers through his hair. "It's okay, sweetie. You're okay."

They stood there for several long moments like that, holding each other, Cas whispering soft encouragements to his alpha. When Dean's shoulders still refused to release the pent-up tension, Cas gently nudged Dean so they could move away from the door.

"Come on. I know how to make you feel better," he promised, pulling the alpha toward the bed. He pulled him to a stop then reached up to slide Dean's jacket off his shoulders, his fingers brushing along Dean's torso as he did. Once the jacket had been tossed away, Cas reached for the buttons of Dean's dress shirt, undoing them so he could slide it off as well.

He dropped down to his knees, his hands moving to tug at the waist of Dean's slacks. He pressed a kiss to the warm skin of Dean's stomach right above the fabric as his fingers started to loosen the button and zipper. He pulled them down just enough to expose Dean's cock. He kissed the tip of it, earning a gasp from the alpha as he pushed the pants down so Dean could step out of them.

Once Dean was naked, Cas pushed him back onto the bed and crawled up over him. He slid his hands down Dean's chest, his fingers tracing over his abs. He smirked. "How the fuck do you even maintain these?"

Dean chuckled and slid his hands into Cas's hair. "Well, I used to have a gym membership, but lately I've found other ways of keeping in shape."

Cas leaned down to press a soft kiss to Dean's stomach. "Sounds compelling. Do tell," he urged.

"I have this really amazing personal trainer," Dean murmured, his eyes warm on Cas as the omega nibbled at his skin. "He says he knows how to make me feel better."

Cas crawled up over Dean, his mouth twisted up in a small smile. He brought his lips to Dean's and brushed a light kiss there. "He does," he breathed. "He knows all sorts of wonderful ways to make you feel better."

"Care to share?" Dean whispered. Cas pulled back just enough to look Dean in the eye.

"Do you trust me, Dean?"

Dean's eyebrows furrowed as he considered the question for only a moment before he responded, "Absolutely."

Cas drew a deep breath, unsure of how Dean would take his request, but forced himself on.

"Do you remember when I was studying for finals, and I was very stressed, and you asked me to trust you, to give up control to you?" Cas asked.
"Dean nodded. "Yes, I remember."

Cas smiled softly. "Do you think you could do that for me?"

Dean's eyes widened as he finally understood what Cas was asking. He stared at the omega for a moment, his expression uncertain. "Cas..."

Cas took his face between his hands so that they were staring straight at each other.

"Dean, have you ever done it before? Given up control to someone else?" Dean shook his head but said nothing. Cas smiled softly. "Then you don't know...you can't understand how freeing it is, submitting to someone you trust implicitly. You don't even have to think about it; you just let them do as they please. But somehow, what they please becomes what you please, because you know that it's for you."

Dean's eyes softened as he listened to Cas's description, and he couldn't seem to help himself when he asked, "Is that how it really is? For you?"

"Every single time," Cas promised. "And I know that it'll be hard for you to give up control, but it will be so rewarding when you do."

"I don't know if I can," Dean admitted in a hoarse whisper. "It's not that I don't trust you. I do! But I...I've never..."

"I know," Cas whispered, bringing his lips to graze over Dean's cheeks. "But that's just it. You do trust me. I'm your mate, and I know what will help you. I just need for you to show me that you trust me enough to let go."

Dean stared at him for several long seconds, his eyes still uncertain, but then he offered the smallest of nods. Cas huffed out a chuckle and pressed his mouth against the alpha's.

"Thank you," he breathed. He pressed a kiss to Dean's cheek, then to his temple. He brushed soft lips along his forehead, across his cheekbones, down to his chin, along his jawline. He kept each kiss light, a barely-there hint of lips against the alpha's heated skin as he moved down his neck, across his throat, over a freckled shoulder.

Dean's breath hitched when Cas moved down his chest toward his nipple, his entire body tensing as Cas licked down his pec. When Cas purposefully skipped over Dean's nipple, the alpha let out a frustrated groan, his hands tightening in Cas's hair, trying to guide him.

Cas immediately stopped and reached up to tug Dean's hands from his hair. He crawled back up, his hands holding Dean's hands together as he stretched them up over the alpha's head, stretching his body out.

"Dean, don't make me tie you up," he warned with a nip to the alpha's chin, making Dean groan. "You need to be a good alpha and trust your omega."

"Cas..." Dean moaned, but Cas softly shushed him. "Don't make me gag you, Dean."

It was so empowering, this newfound knowledge. He knew from personal experience that Dean could have easily flipped him over by now, pinning him and taking back control. But he hadn't. He let Cas hold him down, even though Cas could still feel it there under the surface, all that strength straining to break loose.

"Let me take care of you, alpha," he whispered. "I'll take such good care of you, Love." And then he
was starting again at Dean's forehead, slowly kissing his way downward. He followed the same path as before, purposefully avoiding Dean's nipples when he finally reached his chest again.

Dean kept his hands above his head, but his body arched up toward Cas, his chest sticking out. Cas chuckled and nosed at his jaw.

"Pushy pushy," he chided, but he paired it with a soft flicker of tongue at Dean's throat, removing any sting the words may have held. He kissed and licked back down to Dean's chest, pausing to suck a hickey on his right pec. When he reached his nipple, he didn't avoid it like before. Much to Dean's mingled relief and frustration, he held his mouth right above it and breathed out, his warm breath tickling the skin.

"You're so sensitive there," Cas observed reverently. "It was one of the first things I noticed, that first time we slept together." He slipped his tongue out to flicker at the bud, pulling a gasp from Dean. But he didn't get what he was really aiming for–a long deep groan that seemed to be yanked from his alpha's very core–until he wrapped his lips around it and began to suck.

Cas's eyes darted back up to Dean's then, only to find the alpha's head thrown back, his hands fisted in the sheets, his mouth open on a gasp. Cas felt a gush of slick coat his inner thighs, but he tried to ignore it. Dean still picked up on the scent, and his head jerked up so he could look back at Cas. His pupils were blown wide, the barest sliver of green visible around the edges.

"Do you smell that, alpha?" Cas whispered. "Smell what you do to me? You make me so fucking slick, so wet."

Dean's tongue flicked out to wet his lower lip, and Cas smirked conspiratorially. "You wanna taste?"

Dean nodded eagerly, so Cas stood from the bed, eyes locked onto his alpha as he tugged his t-shirt off and then pushed his jeans and underwear down, kicking them away.

Once he was naked, he climbed back onto the bed and kissed his way back up Dean's torso, up to his mouth. He pressed a quick kiss there before he lifted his leg and spun himself around so that he was straddling Dean's face, his hole directly above Dean's mouth.

"Go ahead and taste me, Baby. Taste what you do to me," Cas urged, and then Dean's tongue was there, stroking him, tasting him, driving him wild. Cas shuddered and reached down to tangle his fingers into Dean's hair.

"That's it, alpha!" Cas moaned. "Lick out your good little omega."

Dean's tongue began to move faster, becoming more insistent as he began to fuck up into Cas instead of just lap at his hole. Cas keened high in his throat as he ground his crotch down against Dean's tongue.

Cas bent over then, keeping his hole above Dean's mouth as he brought his own mouth to Dean's stiff cock, the long, thick member curving up toward the alpha's stomach. In one gulp, he took the alpha down to his base, pulling a choked groan from him.

Dean renewed his attack to Cas's hole, earning several appreciative hums around his cock. Cas kept his mouth on Dean's dick as he reached down to play with Dean's heavy balls. He stroked and fondled them as he began to bob his head up and down, coating Dean with his spit.

When he reached behind Dean's balls to stroke the skin there, Dean moaned into Cas's skin, his hips jerking upward as Cas massaged his prostate from the outside. Dean's thighs began quivering, his toes curling down into the mattress. Cas held off for a moment longer, allowing the anticipation to
build, and then he wrapped his long fingers around the base of Dean's dick, cutting off his orgasm. Dean whined, his hips twitching under Cas, but the omega didn't release him. He waited until Dean stilled, and then he sat up and crawled off Dean's face. He bent down to kiss the alpha, tasting himself on his tongue.

"You're doing so well, but I need you to wait. You're going to come inside me," Cas explained between kisses. Dean nodded, his eyes desperate as Cas straddled his hips. He took Dean's cock in hand and lined it up with his hole before slowly sinking down. He hissed as Dean stuffed him full, stretched him further, even.

Once he was fully seated, he began to roll his hips, just the tiniest bit, just enough so that he was feeling the most delicious friction. He smiled down at Dean as he began to grind their bodies together. He rested his hands on Dean's chest. He slowly lifted himself up, just the tiniest bit, his channel squeezing tight around the alpha's cock, then dropped back down.

After several long moments of teasing them both like that, he began to pick up his pace, his body lifting up more with each roll of his hips until he was nearly unseating himself every time before pushing back down and stuffing himself full again. He watched Dean the entire time, their eyes locked as their bodies moved together. His eyes flicked up to where Dean's hands were still fisting the sheets, and he couldn't help his small smile.

Cas reached up to those hands and tugged them loose, twining their fingers together as he brought his mouth to Dean's for a deep kiss. Their tongues explored each other's mouths, and Cas let out a soft whimper when Dean's tongue started to thrust against his, mimicking the movement of their bodies.

When Cas broke the kiss, he dropped one more gentle kiss at the corner of Dean's swollen lips. He brushed their noses together, reveling in the way Dean's mouth dropped open in a silent cry when Cas began to move more quickly on his cock.

"You've been so good for me, alpha," Cas whispered brokenly. "You gave up control so well."

Dean smiled tremulously at the words, and Cas brushed another light kiss to his mouth as he whispered, "Why don't you finish us off?"

And with that, Dean was suddenly in motion, grabbing onto Cas's hips and flipping them over so the omega lay beneath him. He hooked Cas's legs over his shoulder. His pace was frantic as he snapped into Cas, little grunts and gasps escaping from the couple as they moved together. Cas met Dean thrust for thrust, his back arching upward as they drew nearer to the end.

"Almost there," Dean ground out, and Cas nodded eagerly.

"Me too," he panted. He bit down onto his lower lip as heat roiled in his stomach, his entire body tightening up in anticipation. Cas felt Dean's knot pushing against his hole, and then with another thrust, the alpha was pushing it into his omega, filling him completely. Dean came with a loud yell, his entire body spasming as his orgasm tore through him. Cas watched him, his eyes misting over. "Beautiful," he whispered, and then he was lost to the pleasure as his own orgasm washed over him. Cas's mouth dropped open in a scream as his back pushed upward against Dean, his body arching like a bow, his channel milking Dean's knot. Dean turned his head and bit down onto the inside of Cas's knee, sucking a bruise to the tender skin there as he ground against Cas, riding out the last of their orgasm.
Cas's legs slid from Dean's shoulders, allowing the alpha to collapse on top of him. His lips immediately found Cas's neck to suck at the mating mark. Cas moaned as he tightened around Dean's knot, milking more come from him. Dean's hips jerked as his body struggled to give more to the omega.

"Don't move," he pleaded softly. "No more moving!"

Cas chuckled and kissed his throat. "Yes, alpha." Silence fell between them, broken only by their deep breathing that quieted further with each moment.

After an eternity of staring into each other's eyes, Dean rolled them over onto their sides so they could comfortably face each other as they waited out his knot.

"You know, since we're going to be up here so much, we may want to think about getting a place here," Dean finally murmured.

"Like a house?" Cas wondered, but Dean shrugged.

"Maybe, or maybe just another condo, for now."

"If you really think we need it. I mean, once the new semester starts, I'll only be able to fly up on weekends," Cas reminded.

"I know, but it'll be nice to have somewhere that's ours instead of a hotel room."

"I'm with you on that one," Cas murmured. "Not that this hotel isn't very nice."

Dean looked around. "Eh, it's okay. It doesn't really smell like us, not like a home would."

Cas smiled softly. "Yeah, I kinda miss our apartment already."

"Don't worry; we'll be back home soon." Dean promised. "I have a meeting set up with Bill Watts to go over that proposal of his for Thursday. So, we'll go with John to his appointment tomorrow, then head back home the next day."

"Okay. I'll be sad to say bye to John," Cas admitted.

"Me too, Sweetheart," Dean murmured. "I'll miss him, too."

They lay there wrapped up in each other until Dean's stomach growled, abruptly interrupting their peace and quiet.

Cas giggled and patted the alpha's stomach. "Come on, let's go get some food to take to John's."

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Cas and Dean stopped at the deli across from their hotel to pick up some sandwiches for dinner. They stood waiting in line with Cas leaning back against Dean's chest and the alpha's arms wrapped securely around him.

"That mozzarella with red peppers looks good," Cas commented.

Dean hummed thoughtfully, his breath tickling the hair behind Cas's ear. "I don't know...I'm kinda feeling the mama's special."

Cas smiled. "Then get that one."
"But what if I want something else?" Dean moaned.

"Do you want something else?" Cas asked.

"No, but I might later!" Dean argued, a teasing note to his voice.

"Wow! Too bad there's a law against buying two different sandwiches!" Cas muttered. Dean nipped at his earlobe, pulling a squeak from the omega.

"Don't tempt me," he muttereddarkly. "I might just end up skipping the sandwich altogether."

As they waited, Cas found his gaze wandering around the mostly empty restaurant, studying each of the few dine-in patrons. He never imagined that he would actually see anyone he knew, so when he caught sight of the familiar face in profile, he almost didn't recognize him. He did a double take, his eyes widening in surprise as he studied the alpha sitting at the counter.

"Gabe?" He called, surprise evident in his tone. The man turned to face him, his expression confused until he laid eyes on Cas. His face immediately brightened as he hopped off the barstool and rushed forward.

"Cassie!" He cried, pulling the omega into a hug. "Oh my god, it's you!"

"Yeah! It's me!" Cas confirmed as he squeezed the alpha he hadn't seen in years. "Holy shit, I didn't know you lived up here."

"Yep, I've been here for about four years now," Gabe explained. Cas turned his head to look back at Dean, his smile bright. He didn't see the way Gabe's widened eyes landed on the newly exposed skin of his neck.

"Dean, this is my older brother Gabe. Gabe, this is my—"

"Holy shit!" Gabe breathed, reaching up to tug at Cas's shirt collar so he could get a better look at the mating mark. Cas felt Dean tense up behind him, and he reached back to place a soothing hand on his arm. "Holy shit! You're mated!" He looked to Dean. "You're his alpha."

Cas blushed heavily, leaning back into Dean's chest for support. Dean spoke up then. "Yes, I'm his alpha. And I'd really appreciate it if you would stop that," he motioned toward where Gabe was running his fingers over the mating mark.

Gabe jerked his hand back. "Sorry! Sorry! I just, uh..." He huffed out an incredulous chuckle. His expression turned mischievous, and it reminded Cas of all those pranks he uses to pull as a teen. It had made Cas uneasy back then, that expression, and Cas found that it was no different now.

"What is it, Gabe?" The omega wondered, his eyes narrowing.

Gabe ran a hand over his face, his smile so wide he could barely contain it. "Oh my god, Mom and Dad are so fucked!"

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... How bout that Gabriel?? Yeah, I know. It's exciting.
One small thing: this past week a reader asked about Sammy, who's mentioned in chapter 2 during their first date. I think it's when Dean talks about how he didn't learn to waltz until Sammy's wedding. That was supposed to be Benny, not Sammy. In this verse, Dean and Sam aren't brothers, so they don't really know each other all that well. So yeah, sorry about that! I didn't even realize until someone asked about it.

Okay, hope you enjoy the chapter! Byeeee!
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

"It's just that...for years, years, I never thought I would have a choice in the matter. And now, I can't help but feel that even though I chose you, they'll find a way to take that back," Cas whispered hoarsely.

Dean reached over with his free hand to link their fingers together, then brought Cas's hand up to kiss his knuckles. "They can't. Trust me; I won't let them."

Many thanks to my proofreaders: Tyne and my straight friend who reads my gay porn. Love you guys!

Chapter Notes

Hallo! So, I intended to get this up yesterday as a Christmas gift for you all; however, that didn't happen. So (only a day late) MERRY CHRISTMAS!!! Here, have an angst-filled flashback chapter.

Now for the warning: the shit is about to hit the fan. Like I said, it's a flashback chapter, showing how life was for Cas growing up, and as we've previously hinted at, Cas's parents were pretty free regarding their son with rich older alphas. So, I have added the non-con label to the work because of that.

However, as we know, Dean was Castiel's first everything, so I don't think it's really ruining any surprises to say that there is no rape or sex in the flashback, just elements of non-con. But, if you don't want to read it, I totally understand. Just skip ahead to the notes at the end of the chapter and I'll give you a brief summarization of what happened.

Okay, see ya down there!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Early afternoon sunlight streamed in through the deli window, painting the corner booth where Gabe, Cas, and Dean sat in soft golden hues. They were all smiling and laughing, pretending that this was just a normal lunch, not the shit storm that it was building up to be. Gabe let out another half chuckle as he stared at Cas and Dean across from him.

"Sorry, I just... Wow! My baby brother mated to fucking Dean Smith!" Gabe clapped his hands together as his face spread into a malicious grin. "And Mom and Dad don't even fucking know! Oh my god, this is too perfect! It's so...so..."

Cas sighed and rolled his eyes. "Yes, I know. It's fantastic. You've said that about twenty times since last night. Now will you please explain what you meant about Mom and Dad being ruined?"

Gabe smirked and shook his head. "Oh, Cassie. You'll have to talk to them about that one. But I'll
give you a hint; it has to do with your favorite alpha ever."

Cas's eyebrows furrowed as he tried to figure out who Gabe meant.

"Zachariah," Gabe whispered dramatically.

He wasn't expecting Cas's reaction; to be honest, Cas probably couldn't have anticipated it himself. But at that name, Cas drew up short, his entire posture stiffening as his scent grew anxious and distressed.

Dean immediately wrapped an arm around him and slid his hand up and down his arm in a soothing gesture as he glared across at Gabe. He knew that Gabe was Cas's older brother, but so far all the man had done was drop vague proclamations and upset Cas further. Dean felt he had a right to not like this man so far.

"Who's Zachariah?" He asked

Cas shook his head, and when he spoke, his voice was little more than a whisper. "He's an alpha that mother and father wanted me to mate with. He's...much older than I am, and he's..." Cas trailed off, unsure of how to explain the alpha whose mere name still managed to scare him.

"A grade-A creep," Gabe supplied, an apologetic grimace on his face. "He's had his eye on Cas since before he even presented. And then when he presented omega, well... Cassie didn't really stand a chance."

Cas could still remember the first time Zachariah had cornered him, the first time he had ever felt that clutch of panic and fear and disgust all mixed into one awful moment.

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Four Years Earlier

"Castiel!" Naomi called, her heels clicking across the hardwood floor in the main hall. Castiel didn't respond from his hidden spot in the library alcove. Instead he curled in more tightly, his attention completely focused on his book as he flipped another page.

He was vaguely aware of Naomi's heels clicking here and there throughout the house as she called for him. Castiel ignored it for as long as he could, craving the peace and quiet of his hiding spot for just a few moments more, but then he heard Naomi cross the library threshold, and he knew it wouldn't be long until she'd found him.

He carefully marked his page and set the book aside. He stood and stretched out, yawning softly.

Time to face the music.

"Up here, mother," he called. He walked to the railing to look down toward the main library below. Naomi glared up at him, her usual serene expression missing.

"I've been calling you. Come down here now!" She demanded, punctuating the words by jabbing her index finger toward the floor.

"Yes, ma'am," Cas replied. He slowly descended the black wrought iron staircase that spiraled up one corner of the library, drawing it out for as long as possible.

"Hurry up, Castiel!" Naomi snapped. "We don't have all day."
When Castiel was within reach, she grabbed him by the arm and yanked him from the library, her spike heels beating out a rapid rhythm as she dragged him upstairs toward the bedrooms.

Cas expected her to lock him in his bedroom again, like she had for the last few parties, but instead she led him to Anna's bedroom. She didn't even knock as she flung the door open and pushed him inside.

Anna stood from her vanity stool, her eyes wide as she turned to them. Naomi shoved Castiel toward her.

"Get him ready for tonight. Eyes, cheeks, mouth. You know the drill. Then get him in his gown." She hurried from the room, slamming the door shut behind her. Silence echoed in the space that she left behind, but her children still felt her presence.

Cas could barely look at the older sister he'd once counted as his closest friend. Since she'd presented as an omega two years before, Naomi had separated her from her other siblings, effectively estranging Castiel from the only family member he trusted since Gabriel left.

Anna held her hand out toward him, her smile kind. "Why don't you come sit down?"

Castiel looked uncertain as he walked over to the vanity and settled down onto the low stool in front of it. Anna stepped up behind him and began to card her fingers through his dark hair.

"Your hair is still so soft," she murmured.

Castiel muttered a quiet thank you as he stared down at his hands. Naomi pulled out a comb and some gel and began to brush out his hair.

"What did she mean, eyes, cheeks, mouth?" Cas asked after several moments of silence.

Anna smiled gently at him through the mirror. "Most alphas like their omegas to look a certain way. You know, big doe eyes, flushed cheeks, pouty lips. So we're just going to put a little bit of makeup on you to highlight those assets; little bit of eyeliner, some blush, some lip stain."

"Oh," Castiel murmured. "And the gown?"

Anna pointed over toward the corner where a beautiful shimmery white gown hung. "You'll be wearing that tonight."

Castiel grimaced. It didn't seem very practical. What if he spilled something on it? "Why white?"

"It symbolizes your purity," she explained. "Lets the alphas know that you haven't been touched at all by another alpha yet. You'll wear pretty white gowns just like that one until you've been claimed."

"Oh," he repeated, his tone defeated.

"You sound upset about that. Don't you want to look pretty?" She encouraged.

Castiel shrugged. "I wouldn't mind it, if I knew the alpha I was dressing up for. If I loved him."

Anna chuckled, her voice sad as she explained, "Love doesn't have anything to do with it. To mother and father, it's all about money."

Cas lapsed into silence then, his heart twisting in his chest. Why couldn't love have anything to do with it? Why were his parents so desperate for more money? It's not like they didn't have plenty of their own.
As Anna kept brushing, she spoke softly. "Mother said you had your first heat last month. How was it?"

"Awful," Castiel responded, a heavy blush staining his cheeks as he recalled days and nights filled with a hunger he hadn't been able to understand. "I felt so empty inside and everything ached and my stomach hurt and my entire body burned."

Anna made a sympathetic noise in her throat. "I know; they are awful. But now that you've had your first one, you can go on suppressants."

"What are those?" Castiel asked, wide-eyed.

"They help control your heats," Anna explained. "They'll put them on hold until you have your alpha."

"My alpha?" Cas whispered.

"Yes, silly, your alpha," Anna smiled ruefully. "When you get your alpha, he'll help you through your heat. He can, uh, make the burning go away."

Castiel tried to imagine how anything could sate that awful, burning hunger that had torn him up from the inside. As though Anna could read his mind, she chuckled as she tousled his hair. The old, familiar action put him at ease some.

"You'll see," Anna promised as she began to work the gel into his hair. They sat in silence for several moments until Castiel whispered, "Is that why I'm going to the party tonight? To find an alpha?"

Anna forced a smile, but her eyes remained sad. "Yes, mother and father are trying to find your future mate, so they've invited a lot of alphas over for the party."

"How will they choose?" Castiel questioned.

Anna's smile tightened. "Like I said before, it's all about money. They'll choose whoever offers them the most money."

"Is that how they chose Michael for you?" Castiel asked, and Anna froze at the name of her betrothed. She finally offered a terse nod, but nothing more.

Castiel saw Anna's eyes flicker nervously toward the door, and then she was bending down to whisper in his ear, her determined gaze holding his in the mirror. "Listen, mother and father already have someone in mind, I can almost guarantee it. So when they bring you to an alpha, make sure that you smile, okay? They like it when you smile at them. And don't fight them; it only makes it worse."

Castiel nodded, his eyes wide and afraid, but his mind still whirled with questions. Who were these alphas? They were complete strangers to him. Why would he ever want to fight complete strangers?

That night at the party, there were many alphas in attendance, and most of them managed to claim Castiel for at least one dance. As alpha after alpha spun him around the ballroom floor, he found himself chagrined by their unwanted advances. They held him too close, touched him too familiarly, stared at his body for too long. But Anna had advised him not to fight.

So instead he smiled and bore it, listening to each and every one of them wax eloquent about himself, his job, his golf handicap, or his 401K. One alpha even bragged about his pet tiger in an attempt to earn Castiel's respect, but all Castiel could feel was sympathy for the caged creature. He could
understand what it was like to be locked away when you were supposed to be free.

As the evening progressed, his head started to hurt and his feet to ache. He just wanted to sit down and rest, but every time he had a split second of peace, another alpha came up and dragged him out to the floor. He felt like he was about to burst into tears from the strain and exhaustion when he felt a gentle hand on his lower back.

He turned his head to find Zachariah, an older friend of his father's whom he'd already danced with, standing there. A gentle smile lit his face, and Castiel felt himself ease at the kindness he saw there.

"You must be exhausted," he guessed, and Castiel offered a small nod. "You poor little omega. Come along, let's find somewhere for you to sit and rest for a little while."

Castiel smiled gratefully at the older man and allowed himself to be led from the ballroom. He couldn't help the way he leaned into the alpha's hand at his back. He almost thanked Zachariah for being so kind, but before he could say anything, the older man suddenly gripped him by the arm and dragged him into a small dark alcove. He shoved him against the wall there.

Castiel gasped as the alpha leered down at him, all kindness absent from his face. Now that they were so close, the omega could smell the alcohol on the alpha's breath. He felt panic bubble up in him. He'd had little to no experience with older alphas, much less older alphas who were drunk.

He tried to push the old man away, but Zachariah just chuckled, the stench of alcohol on his hot breath making Cas gag. The omega strained to wriggle free, his senses flooded with a disgusting scent that was overwhelmingly alpha.

He'd heard that they were supposed to smell good, that the scent was often the first positive indicator that an omega had about their mate. But this scent was disgusting. It made him feel sick and degraded. It made him want to cry and scream, but he knew that he would be punished severely for such behavior, especially toward a guest as prominent as Zachariah.

Zachariah pinned Castiel back against the wall and shoved his face into the crook of Castiel's neck, rubbing his nose along the smooth skin there. Castiel realized belatedly that he was scent-marking him, and he struggled against his hold.

"Smells so good," Zachariah muttered into his skin. "Can't wait to mark this neck up properly."

"Please stop," Castiel gasped, tears brimming in his eyes. "Please!"

Zachariah laughed as his fingers tightened at Castiel's waist, wrinkling the fabric of the white gown. "That's right, beg for it."

Cas tried to push him away again, but Zachariah just grabbed him by the arms and shook him. "Stop fighting me, Castiel!" But he was grinning maliciously, like he actually enjoyed the struggle.

Castiel let out a soft hiccup as the tears streamed down his cheeks, ruining the eyeliner that Anna had put on him. Zachariah's face suddenly morphed back into the kind expression that he'd worn earlier, his eyes almost tender as he brushed his thumb along Cas's cheek to wipe away the tears.

"Don't cry, little omega. I'll do right by you."

"Please, please don't do anything!" Cas whispered.

"Don't worry, I won't do anything just yet," the alpha assured him, then he turned and strode away, laughing wickedly.
Castiel slumped back against the wall, his entire body shuddering as the tears gave way to wrenching sobs. He remained there for several long minutes unable to think or move beyond panicking over the alpha's threat. He'd said he wouldn't do anything yet, which meant he planned on doing something at some point. But when?

When Cas had finally calmed enough, he managed to push away from the wall on shaky legs that barely supported him. He stumbled toward the staircase, determined to hide away in his room for the rest of the evening, but as he staggered past the darkened drawing room, he heard a soft groan.

He really didn't want to look, didn't want to see anybody or anything else. He didn't need anymore fodder for his nightmares. But almost of its own accord, his head turned until he was looking straight at the couple pressed up against the wall.

"Anna..." The alpha groaned, and Castiel realized that it was his sister shoved up against the wall with Michael's face buried against her neck, just like Zachariah had done to him.

Anna's body was completely lax in Michael's arms, her arms hooked around his neck, her head thrown back against the wall to afford her betrothed better access to her neck. Her face though, that was what really captured Castiel's attention. It was completely blank, expressionless even, like she couldn't be brought to care that her neck was being attacked by the alpha.

The only reaction that she allowed to escape was the small gasp when Michael suddenly yanked her head to the side by her hair so he could begin sucking a hickey into her pale skin. Michael laughed derisively as he yanked at her hair again, pulling another pained gasp from her.

"Always knew you were a little slut for the pain," he growled, grabbing Anna by the jaw and shoving his mouth onto hers.

Castiel couldn't stomach any more. He ran up the stairs to his bedroom, slamming the door shut behind him. He tore off the white gown, unable to wear the disgusting thing for a moment longer. It smelled like Zachariah.

He threw himself across the bed and buried his face into his pillow, sobbing out his fear and anger. Even without the clothes, he could still smell Zachariah on him, on his skin, invading his senses even after he was safely closed away. He couldn't escape him.

As his sobs subsided to hiccups and sniffs, he could hear the soft strains of the string quartet still playing below, mocking him. The image of Anna, lax and pliant under Michael's hands, flashed through his mind, and he realized with sudden certainty that that was what he was destined for, what he was doomed to. He felt crushed under the weight of it.

The tears and the music had long ended, the guests all departed, the lights all extinguished, when his bedroom door clicked open. He tensed, listening intently for some clue as to who the intruder was. If Zachariah came for him, he wouldn't be able to stop him; he wouldn't be able to anything but submit. Maybe if he shoved him hard enough, he could buy enough time to run into the bathroom and lock the door...

"Castiel? Are you awake?" The soft whisper immediately put him at ease, and his body sagged back down onto the bed.

"Yes, I'm awake," he whispered. He felt the bed dip behind him as Anna climbed up. He rolled over to face her.

"What happened?" She whispered as she ran a gentle hand over his face. "Who was it?"
"Zachariah. He, uh... He pretended to be nice to me, but then when we were alone, he..." His voice caught on a sniffle. "He, uh, pushed me up against the wall and... and..." He trailed off, unable to say anything more.

Anna pulled him to her, wrapping her arms around him. She pulled his face to her neck, almost like she wanted him to scent her, but then he caught a whiff of alpha and froze. Michael's scent still lingered on her skin from where he'd marked her.

"You can still smell him on me, can't you?" She asked. Cas didn't respond, still fighting the urge to gag from Michael's scent. "That's why they do it, Love. They don't want anyone else touching what's theirs."

"But I'm not his!" Cas protested, pulling away.

Anna smiled sadly. "You will be, someday. And let me give you some advice: don't fight them."

"How? How can you not?" Cas asked, his tone incredulous and accusing. "How can you just slump there? With your face so...so blank?"

Anna stiffened. "You saw us?"

Cas realized that he'd revealed more than he'd meant. "I didn't mean to. It just sort of happened," he explained, his tone apologetic.

Anna sighed, her eyes apologetic. "I'm sorry that you had to see that. But my face...I keep it blank so that he can't get to me."

Cas furrowed his brow as he struggled to understand. "So that he can't get to you?" He echoed.

"Castiel, alphas like Michael and Zachariah, they like the control. They like the domination. But if they can't see the real us, then they can't control the real us." She paused to draw in a shaky breath, and Cas realized that she'd started crying as well. "That's why I keep my face blank with Michael. My face is just a mask; it protects me. It'll protect you, too."

"My face is just a mask," Cas breathed.

Anna nodded, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Just keep telling yourself that, and you'll be okay."

Cas had learned how to control himself. He'd become a master at wearing that mask for Zachariah. He always looked so perfect and pliant, so willing, just like Anna had that night at the party. But the entire time, he'd be quoting it to himself again and again, My face is just a mask. Every time Zachariah had scented him in the years following, he'd been so careful to keep his mask in place.

And then Dean had come along and torn that mask away in one desperate conversation in Cas's empty apartment. On the night that Cas had thought he would be slipping back on the mask for good, he ended up losing it altogether. But he didn't need it with Dean; he never had.

Cas didn't realize that he'd been silent for so long until he felt Dean's hands tenderly cupping his face, pulling his focus back. Cas forced his eyes back onto Dean, forced himself to listen to what his alpha was saying.

"Come back to me, baby," Dean was whispering, his tone anxious. When he saw Cas's eyes start to clear, he smiled gently. "Where did you go?"
Cas shook his head, tears brimming in his eyes. "Somewhere awful," he whispered.

"Well then, maybe you should stay here with me, huh?" Dean encouraged, swiping at the tears that were just spilling over. Cas nodded, his teeth worrying at his lower lip.

"Dean, he was...he was awful. For years, he was convinced that I was going to be his. Even before he talked to mother and father, he treated me like I was his property, like I was something to be possessed."

Dean's eyes narrowed, so Cas hurried to assure him, "He never, uh, never made it under the clothes, and he never kissed me. Just, uh, some scent marking whenever he came over to visit."

Dean nodded tersely, but Cas could tell he was angry. Cas drew in a shuddering breath and looked away from his alpha, away from the disgust and anger in his eyes. Cas would've been disgusted too, if he'd been in Dean's shoes. He looked down at the tabletop instead, unable to meet his alpha's gaze.

"Zachariah is the reason I left for school," Cas admitted, looking briefly over at Gabe. "You know that mom and dad would never in a million years have let me go. But I knew that Zachariah held some kind of sway over them, so I, uh..." His cheeks heated as he cast a nervous glance at Dean.

"You manipulated him," Gabe supplied, and Cas nodded, worrying on his lower lip as he stared anxiously at the table top.

"I knew it wouldn't be much longer until he tried to claim me. So I made up a lie about how I didn't feel good enough for an alpha like him yet, how I needed more training before I could be a good omega like he deserved,"

"And that conceited son of a bitch bought it. He wanted the best of the best for his mate, so he convinced Naomi and Bart to send me to school. And at first I thought it was just a small reprieve from the inevitable, you know? But then..."

He drew a deep breath and looked over at Dean, "I met you, and it was the first time I ever truly felt like I could have something better, someone better."

Dean's eyes were soft as he brought his hands up to cup Cas's chin. His thumbs stroked gently over the smooth skin of Cas's jaw as he whispered, "Why didn't you tell me any of this before?"

"I, uh..." Cas licked his lips nervously, his eyes darting away for a brief moment. "I tried. But I couldn't; I thought you'd send me away. It was part of the reason I tried to break up with you back in August."

Dean's eyes widened as he thought back to that conversation. "That's what you meant when you said your parents had plans for you?"

Cas nodded, the tears spilling over again. "I didn't want to get you mixed up in all that. And then you were asking me to move in, and I figured that maybe I could just live the lie for a little bit, pretend that I was allowed to have someone as wonderful as you for just a little while."

Neither of them paid any attention to the way Gabe glanced around, obviously uncomfortable with the conversation.

Cas's voice had dropped to a whisper. "And I didn't let myself think about Zachariah or my future or any of that. I figured that you'd be long finished with me before Zachariah came back. I was just trying to save up as many good memories as possible for when it happened."
By the end, Cas was sobbing. Dean pulled the small omega to his chest, shushing him softly as he ran his fingers down his back. He pressed Cas's face against his neck so that the omega could scent him, hoping that would calm him some.

"Wow... This is intense!" Gabe suddenly spoke up again, pulling Dean's attention back to him. Dean had been so caught up in what Cas was saying that he'd actually forgotten that the other alpha was there. His eyes narrowed.

"What's going on, Gabe?" He whispered. "Why is this going to ruin your parents?"

Gabe's eyes darkened for the briefest of seconds as he shook his head. "It's not my place to tell. They need to account for their own actions to their son. I won't do their dirty work for them, not any more."

Dean looked like he was about to argue, but then he nodded. He pressed a soft kiss to the top of Cas's head as he murmured soft encouragements into his hair. When Cas's sobs had settled into soft hiccups, Dean pulled back just enough to look down at his tear-stained face.

"Why don't we go back to the hotel for some rest? You look like you could use it."

Cas nodded and then looked back to Gabe. "I'm sorry. This lunch was kind of a bust."

"It's perfectly fine. We can always meet up some other time," Gabe suggested.

Cas shook his head. "We're flying out for Chicago tomorrow, but we're going to come back here soon. And you have my number now, so we can text."

"Definitely. Give me a call when you're in town. We'll do lunch. Maybe we can actually see that smile for a little bit next time."

Cas chuckled as he slid out from the booth. Gabe also stood and held out his arms toward his brother.

"I truly am sorry about all this," he murmured when Cas accepted his hug. "I wish...I wish mom and dad had at least tried to do right by you."

"I know," Cas whispered hoarsely.

Gabe pulled back and smiled at Dean, holding out his hand for him to shake. "At least things worked out for you guys, in the end."

Cas smiled up at Dean as the alpha shook Gabe's hand and nodded. "Yeah, that's what it looks like."

Gabe and Cas exchanged one final hug outside the diner before heading their separate ways, Gabe back to his work and Cas back to the hotel with Dean.

Cas didn't protest when Dean laid him down on the bed, clothes and all, for some much-needed rest. The alpha walked over to close the curtains before climbing into bed next to him, spooning him from behind. Cas rolled over to bury his face in Dean's chest, nosing at the warm fabric there as he began to drift.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Zachariah," he mumbled.

Dean ran a soothing hand up and down his spine as he shushed him softly. "Don't worry about it, Sweetheart. I understand why you didn't."
"But I still lied," Cas protested.

"I know. And while I'm disappointed about that, I'm glad that you finally told me the truth today. I know it was very upsetting to talk about, but you did such a good job."

"Am I going to be punished?" Cas whispered tentatively.

Dean made a soft dissenting sound. "Not for this. You've apologized, and I've forgiven you, and we're going to leave it at that. Yes?"

"Yes," Cas murmured, his eyes sliding shut as he began to drift off. "Thank you, alpha."

Dean waited until Cas's breaths had evened out, when he was sure that his omega was asleep. He slipped from the bed and stepped into the other room, shutting the door softly behind him. He pulled out his phone, along with the business card for his dad's PI that he kept in his wallet.

The phone rang twice before it was answered. "This is Sam Wesson speaking."

"Hi, this is Dean Smith, John's son?"

"Ah, yes! How are you today, Mr. Smith?" Sam asked.

Dean huffed out a chuckle. "I'm not quite sure," he admitted. "Listen, I need for you to look into someone for me."

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That next morning, they went out to breakfast with John. Cas had been tired and out of sorts since their lunch with Gabe the day before. He tried to put on a good front for John, but the older alpha could see right through it. When Cas excused himself to the restroom, John leaned across to ask in a hushed tone, "What the hell happened yesterday, Dean?"

Dean sighed and ran a hand over his face. "Well, it's like I said at your appointment; we went out to lunch with Cas's older brother."

"And?"

"I don't know! He kept saying how Cas and I mating was going to ruin Cas's parents, but he wouldn't say why, just said that it had something to do with this older alpha named Zachariah."

"Well, it really got to Cas. Apparently the alpha was this grade-A creep who's had it out for Cas for years. He went super possessive alpha after Cas presented, scent-marking him, the whole bit."

"That's rough," John muttered, and Dean nodded.

"Cas went completely...I don't know, it was like he was having a panic attack! At first, the things he was saying didn't make sense. I mean, given how strict his parents are, I couldn't understand how they'd allow any alpha, especially an older one, to act that way toward Cas."

"Right, doesn't make sense," John agreed. "Unless..." He trailed off, his face growing concerned.

"Unless..." Dean prodded.

"Look, I don't want to go jumping to conclusions, but I have heard of super religious families--like Cas's--who set up arranged marriages for their omega. It's a really old-fashioned custom, and usually the alpha offers them some sort of compensation for the omega when they do mate."
Dean nodded somberly. "That could be it. If Zachariah had made an offer on Cas...but I still don't see how that would've ruined them? Since he and Cas didn't mate, he wouldn't have...paid for him yet." Dean felt sick even saying the words, talking about Cas like he was some sort of good to be sold. John shrugged then sat back.

Dean shook his head and stared down at his coffee mug. "If they did do that, Cas doesn't know about it. It'll devastate him," Dean whispered, his eyes desperate. "How the fuck am I supposed to take him back to that house, to those people, after that?"

"Dean, I know I'm no expert on the topic, but he is their son. You can't just decide to keep him away from them."

Dean sighed and looked back down. "I know. I know that. I just... I'm supposed to protect him, right? How the hell am I going to protect him from that? It'll hurt him like a mother, either way."

"I know," John agreed. "But, son, sometimes it's not about protecting them from the fall; sometimes it's about catching them and supporting them after the fall."

Dean snorted. "Been reading more Dear Abby?"

John chuckled and shook his head. "She knows her shit, I'll tell you that."

"Who knows her shit?" Cas asked as he slid back in next to Dean.

"Dear Abby. Dad was waxing eloquent a second ago," Dean informed as he brought an arm around to lay over the omega's shoulders and pull him in closer. Cas smiled up at him before picking up his fork and digging into the scrambled eggs on his plate.

"When will you all land this afternoon?" John asked as he nibbled on a piece of toast.

"Around three," Dean replied. "That'll give us a little extra downtime before I start back to work tomorrow."

Cas sighed heavily. "I can't believe your vacation is over already," he murmured. "I was just getting used to having you all to myself."

Dean chuckled and kissed the tip of his nose. "You'll still have me all to yourself."

"Yeah, in the evenings and on weekends," Cas countered.

"Exactly! We'll still have plenty of down time then," Dean assured him. "Except for when we have to...you know, do stuff that's not so relaxing. Which, speaking of which, we should probably plan to go see your parents this weekend."

Cas nodded his head forlornly. "I know."

He was so busy staring down at his plate, he didn't see the grim look that passed between the alphas.

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John rode with them to the private airstrip to see them off. Cas wrapped him in a tight hug.

"You'll call if anything comes up, right?" He confirmed.

John nodded and offered him a tight smile. "Definitely," he promised. "And you make sure to come up with Dean when you can."
Cas nodded then pulled away so that Dean could say farewell. After the two alphas gave each other the cursory half-hug complete with a clap on the back, Dean took Cas by the hand and led him onto the plane.

Dean took one of the leather bucket seats by the small marble table like he usually did, but instead of sitting next to him, Cas settled into one of the seats near the front of the plane. Dean almost asked about it, but decided to give Cas his space for now.

Cas stared out the window as they lifted off while Dean pulled out some paperwork to work on. Neither spoke for the first several minutes, both absorbed in their own thoughts. Dean glanced up once or twice to check on Cas, more out of habit than anything else. When he heard the soft sniffle, his head shot straight up.

"Cas?" He muttered, setting aside the paperwork so he could move around to kneel next to Cas's seat. Tears streamed down the omega's cheeks as soft sobs began to escape. The omega dropped his head into his hands.

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" He gasped between sobs. "I don't wanna...wanna..." He broke off as a fresh round of sobs wracked his slim frame.

Dean cupped Cas's jaw with gentle hands, pulling his face up so their eyes could meet. His expression was gentle as he smiled softly.

"You don't wanna go to your parents' house?" Dean guessed, and Cas nodded wordlessly. "Why?" The alpha questioned.

"I don't...wanna...lose you," Cas admitted between shaky breaths.

"You're not going to lose me," Dean assured him, his tone soothing as he began to pet a hand through Cas's hair.

Cas shook his head, tear tracks reflecting the plane's dim lighting. "What if...what if they try to separate us? What if they keep us apart?"

Dean shushed him, shaking his head emphatically. "Cas, you are an adult omega; you have the right to choose your own mate." His fingers brushed over the mating mark on Cas's neck. "You're my mate now."

"But Zachariah..." Cas whispered.

"Can't ever get to you, ever again. You didn't choose him; you chose me, and I chose you. We're mated, and nothing that anybody does can change that," Dean replied, his expression earnest. "Do you understand?"

Cas stared at him for several long seconds before finally nodding. "Yes, alpha."

Dean nudged his shoulder. "Come on, come sit by me," he urged. Cas allowed Dean to pull him up from his seat and lead him over to the table. He slid into the seat next to the window, leaving Dean the seat on the end.

"I'm sorry," Cas whispered again. "I know it must seem ridiculous..."

Dean wrapped an arm around his shoulders and pulled him in against his side. He pressed a gentle kiss to his temple. "Absolutely not."
"It's just that...for years, years, I never thought I would have a choice in the matter. And now, I can't help but feel that even though I chose you, they'll find a way to take that back," Cas whispered hoarsely.

Dean reached over with his free hand to link their fingers together, then brought Cas's hand up to kiss his knuckles. "They can't. Trust me; I won't let them."

Chapter End Notes

So, for those of you that skipped the chapter, here's the run-down! If you don't want the summarized version, just skip on down to the next paragraph bc I actually have a shit-ton of things to say.

Cas, Dean, & Gabe are eating lunch. Gabe mentions that Zachariah has something to do with their parents imminent ruin, Cas flips out, cue FLASHBACK! The flashback pretty much shows that Cas's parents were willing to do anything for money, including promise their omega children to rich alphas. Zachariah scent marks Cas, completely freaking him out. Back to the present, Cas has a mini meltdown bc he realizes what his parents were doing, Dean's all strong and supportive. They decide to go visit Cas's parents that weekend. Dean promises Cas that nothing can keep them apart.

Okay, now onto the notes! As you may have noticed, I put an end chapter on the fic. That's right, there are going to be 30 chapters total! I hope...

I actually have all of the chapters written (what can I say? I made good use of my Christmas break). However, since I am a perfectionist who enjoys torturing her readers, I'm not going to post the chapters until I'm done editing them, which (for me at least) may take a couple of days per chapter. So, I'm not going to give a definite deadline yet, but I can promise that we are close to the end! Yaaaaay!!

That being said, I need to figure out an actual name for this fic. I know, I know, the current title is okay; I mean, it's short, sweet, to the point, doesn't leave anything to guesswork. But it's not really a title, you know? The sad thing is, I suck at naming shit. (Exhibit A: my fish who I've owned for two years? I call him Fish.) So, I would like to take some suggestions from you all, my lovely readers who've stuck with me for fucking ages. If you have an idea for the title (and please, nothing gross or grotesque) leave it in the comments! Or just leave me comments; I love hearing from you all!

Okay, whew! That was a lot of stuff to say! But I think I got it all out there. I hope you enjoyed the chapter; I'll hopefully be posting the next one soon. Love you all! *kisses*
"You were a vision in your white gown," Zachariah reminisced with a sigh. "But then again, you always were. Always so beautiful for me."

Cas shook his head emphatically. "Not for you," he muttered.

"Oh, Castiel," Zachariah murmured, his smile condescending like he was talking to a small child. "You were always for me."

Chap 22

Cas gripped Dean's hand tightly as they walked up the long front walk toward the dark, imposing mansion. His heart slammed against his rib cage, making his breaths puff out faster into the cold afternoon air. As they drew nearer, he glared at the huge building that represented so much misery in his life, and for a moment, he felt paralyzed by it.

It was an old family home built by an insane ancestor who'd believed that demons were trying to claim his soul. As a result, several wards and vigils had been carved into the stone foundation of the house and into the frames around the windows and doors. Busts of famous Angels, one of whom Cas had been named for, overlooked the front walk, keeping constant vigil against evil. Their empty stone eyes tracked the couple's slow approach, pinning Cas down under their vacant stare.

Dead leaves rustled and roared from the trees, sending a chill down Cas's spine. It felt as though the weight of a thousand stares rested on him, whispering to him, accusing him of his sin. He shivered and tightened his hold on Dean's hand.

He stepped up to the door to knock, only to find it already open. They were waiting for him. He stepped inside, pulling Dean along with him, but no one greeted them. The entry hall was empty.

Cas glanced around, confused. Where was everybody?

"They must not be home," Dean commented, but Cas shook his head.

"No, I told them we were coming."

He heard it then; the soft strains of music filtering through the air. He glanced over to Dean to see if he had heard it as well, but the alpha was preoccupied with the family portrait hanging above the fireplace.

"Come on; I think they're in here," he murmured, pulling Dean toward the end of the hall. He paused for a moment, drawing a deep, steadying breath, then pushed the door to the ballroom open.

The music grew louder as he stepped inside, swelling and building, overwhelming him. Cas didn't even have time to register what was happening before a cold blast of wind slammed open all the
French doors that lined the far wall, scattering the floor with dead leaves and debris as the white curtains billowed and swirled in the wind. He had to blink against the sudden onslaught of soft white light that shone through the open doors.

Once the curtains settled and his eyes had adjusted, Cas was finally able to look around the ballroom, his stomach churning. He immediately found the source for the music. The string quartet that his parents had hired for most of their parties sat on their usual platform, their expressions too serene as they played a soft, haunting melody that seemed to echo from everywhere at once.

But other than the musicians, there was no one there. He almost turned to head back to the main hall, but then he saw the solitary figure that emerged from the large oak doors at the far end of the room. The man approached, his shoulders thrown back, his head held high, his gait firm and assured. Cas squinted his eyes, trying to figure out who it was. He scented the air, then froze.

It was him.

Cas tried to turn, tried to run, but his feet were glued to their spot by some power greater than himself. Fear gripped him, and he watched with terrified eyes as the alpha approached.

"Arioso from the Cantata by Bach," The alpha said, his tone conversational, his expression fond. Cas shrunk backwards, his entire body retreating as the alpha kept speaking. "Don't you remember it? They were playing it the first time we danced."

Cas shook his head, his eyes wide as they tracked the alpha, like a prey watches his hunter.

"You were a vision in your white gown," the alpha reminisced with a sigh. "But then again, you always were. Always so beautiful for me."

Cas shook his head emphatically. "Not for you," he muttered.

"Oh, Castiel," Zachariah murmured, his smile condescending like he was talking to a small child. "You were always for me."

"No!" Cas yelled, cutting his hand through the air with an air of finality. "I don't belong to you! I belong to Dean!"

"Who?" Zachariah asked, a frown settling on his toad face.

"My alpha! Dean Smith!" Cas replied belligerently.

"Castiel, you don't have an alpha yet. I'm going to be your alpha."

"He's right there!" Cas yelled, pointing behind him. Zachariah looked to where he pointed, his expression confused. Cas spun around, only to find the empty room behind him.

Panic welled up inside of Cas as he began walking back toward the doors. "Dean?" He called.

"Stop this now, Castiel," Zachariah commanded. "You haven't been claimed; I would smell it on you if you were."

Cas ignored him as he called out, "Dean? Dean? Where are you?" He tried to open the doors to go back out to the main hall, but they were locked tight. Cas yanked at the handles, the door shuddering in its frame as Cas tried to pull it open.

He spun back around toward Zachariah, his eyes narrowed in accusation. "Where's Dean? What
"Have you done with him?"

"Castiel, I command you to stop with these delusions! You're only hurting yourself," Zachariah sneered.

"They're not delusions! I am mated to Dean Smith! He gave me his bite!" Cas cried. "See?" He reached up to pull at his collar to show the alpha who was slowly creeping toward him.

But as he yanked the fabric away, his fingers brushed over the nape of his neck where the mark was, or rather, where it was supposed to be. Cas gasped and ran his fingers over it again, trying to figure out what the hell was happening. Panic choked him as he frantically rubbed over the smooth, unblemished skin again and again, almost as if he could make the mark reappear.

"Perfect for the taking," Zachariah growled, his eyes reddening as he advanced on Cas.

Cas slumped to the floor, his hands moving up to protect himself. "Stay away!" He pleaded. "Please! Don't touch me!"

Zachariah just laughed darkly as he licked his lips in anticipation. "Your fear," he breathed. "It's so intoxicating!"

And then he was yanking Cas up by his hair, his eyes intent on the omega's unmarked skin.

"Stop!" Cas screamed. "Dean! Help me!"

Cas jolted awake, panic flaring in his chest making his heart thunder faster. His breaths came fast and heavy, like he'd just run a race, and sweat coated his entire body. He remained frozen there for several long seconds, the fear from his dream still tangible in his sleep-addled brain.

As his mind began to clear, he drew several slow, deep breaths, his limbs unlocking. He was safe. He wasn't with Zachariah; he was with Dean. He rolled over onto his side to face the alpha, his eyes lovingly tracing his mate's profile in the dim morning light.

He was tempted to reach out to him, to trace the contours of the face he already knew so well, but he didn't. He needed these moments alone to prepare himself, to collect his thoughts.

They were going to Pontiac today to see his parents, and Cas couldn't shake the sense of foreboding that had hung over him since they'd talked to Gabe in New York. Dean had assured him that everything would be fine, that it would all work out, and Cas had nodded and agreed, but he'd been plagued by these nightmares since then.

Cas lay staring at Dean for a long while, his mind racing with the possibilities. So much could go wrong. Then again, so much could go right. He could finally resolve this situation with his parents and receive their blessing for Dean. That's what the alpha wanted, after all. Cas knew that Dean couldn't be truly content until he had it.

Around and around his thoughts ran, chasing each other, wearing him out. Cas finally huffed out a frustrated sigh and climbed from the bed. Grabbing his phone and a blanket, he headed to the living room, the blanket wrapped tight around his shoulders.

He settled down on the couch and pulled his knees up to his chest, curling himself into as tight a ball as possible. He brought up his contacts list and only hesitated for a moment before pressing the name on the screen. The phone rang for several minutes with no answer, and Cas was about to hang up when he heard the soft click followed by a bleary, "Cassie?"
"Hey, Balth," Cas murmured.

"What's up?" His friend asked, and Cas could tell that he was pulling himself up into a sitting position. He heard a familiar voice mumble something, and Balth said, "No, it's just Cassie. Go back to sleep."

Cas couldn't help his small smile. "Is that Inaias?"

Balth chuckled. "Yeah, it is."

"Congrats," Cas muttered. "Thanks for telling me."

"Look, I would've called, but it only happened a few days ago, and we've been pretty busy fucking each other's brains out."

"Sure, sure. You gotta have your priorities," Cas allowed. Balth snorted.

"Yeah, I guess. How's mated life treating you?"

"Pretty good," Cas replied with a soft smile. "Dean's being very good to me."

"He better be!" Balth muttered, but Cas could hear the smile behind his words. Silence settled over the line until Balth asked the obvious question.

"Cassie, why are you calling me at 5:30 in the morning?"

Cas sighed. "Because we're going back home today. Well, not my home...to my parents' home."

"You still haven't told them," Balth guessed.

"No, I haven't. I mean, it's not really the kind of thing you say over the phone, right? But I don't just want to show up with Dean in tow and shock them."

"Maybe you could go without Dean?" Balth suggested, but Cas's answer was immediate and firm.

"No!"

The outburst seemed to shock them both. Cas paused for a moment, pulling in a deep breath before continuing.

"Balth, do you remember when I first got here?"

Balth sighed heavily. "Nightmares again?"

"Yes, but now...now they're worse."

"How so?" Balth asked.

"Because before, the worst thing that happened was that Zachariah claimed me. Now..." He trailed off.

"Now?" Balth prodded.

"Now, Dean keeps abandoning me," Cas whispered softly. "Like, he'll be there at first, but then he'll suddenly be gone!" Cas felt the panic from the dream flare up again, and he fought to keep his breathing steady. It didn't work; his breaths grew ragged as his entire body started to shake.
"Cassie," Balth murmured, his voice purposefully pitched low and slow. "Cassie, calm down. Listen to my voice, yes? Deep breaths. It was just a dream; it wasn't real. You know that Dean would never leave you. Big, deep breaths. There we go."

It was just like their first year of college, when Balth would wake up in the middle of the night to Cas's sobbing. Cas tried to focus on his voice, to keep his thoughts in check. But then the first snuffle broke through.

"Balth, what if...what if he sees how it was, and he...what if he changes his mind?"

"He's not going to change his mind." Balth assured him. "Trust me, there are a lot worse things than having some creepy alpha stalker in your past."

Cas opened his mouth to protest, but Balth kept on speaking. "You need to go wake him up and tell him, Cassie."

"I can't," Cas whispered hoarsely.

"Yes, you can. You just told me, didn't you?"

"Yes," Cas mumbled.

"Well, how do you think he'll feel when he finds out? He'll probably be hurt," Balth reasoned. "He's your mate, Cassie. You need to be able to share this stuff with him."

Cas was about to protest further when he smelled it, the subtle scent change in the air. He looked up to find Dean shuffling into the living room, his hair sticking up at odd angles, his eyes squinted against the dim light. He shuffled over to the couch and settled down next to Cas, pulling his omega against his side and burying his face against his neck.

"I gotta go," Cas murmured as he reached a hand up to stroke through Dean's hair. "Dean just woke up."

"Tell him," Balth urged one final time before hanging up.

Cas set the phone aside and brought his other hand to cup Dean's neck. Dean kept running his nose over Cas's pulse point, his hands smoothing up and down Cas's back.

"What are you doing?" Cas wondered, even though he already knew.

"Waking up," Dean mumbled. "See, usually when I wake up, I have my omega there to help me. But this morning, he wasn't there."

"Sorry," Cas whispered. "I had a nightmare."

"I know," Dean replied. Cas pulled back, surprised.

"Really?"

Dean nodded, studying Cas intently. "You've had them every night since we got back. Are you ready to talk about them yet?"

Cas stared at him, slightly awed at the quiet trust and strength in those brilliant green eyes. Drawing in an unsteady breath, he finally nodded.

"I, uh, I used to get these nightmares, when I first came to college. Usually about Zachariah claiming
"How often did you get them?" Dean asked.

"Every night," Cas whispered shakily. "I dreamt about it over and over and over again, and I'd always wake up crying and afraid. And Balth would talk me through it, help me calm down enough to go back to sleep."

Dean silently thanked Cas's best friend once again for watching out for Cas when no one else would. If Balth hadn't been there, Dean didn't know that he would have ever met Cas, or if he had, if he would've gotten to keep him.

"Eventually," Cas continued, "they faded away. It took a long time though; a long, long time."

"How long?"

"I had my last one the week before I met you," Cas admitted. "At that point, they were down to once every few weeks or so."

"And you haven't had any since?" Dean wondered.

"No, not until now. But now they're worse, because I'm not just getting claimed by Zachariah; I'm losing you, too."

"You're not going to lose me," Dean whispered the promise against his hair.

"It's not just losing you, though," Cas protested. "It's like...like you abandon me!"

Dean ran a hand down Cas's spine. "Cas, baby..."

"I know. It's stupid! But..." He trailed off.

"But?" Dean prodded gently.

"But there's a tiny part of me that keeps thinking, 'What if he thinks you're not worth it?' Or 'what if he regrets his decision and leaves you there?'" Cas admitted shakily.

Dean took Cas's face in his hands, his expression firm as he murmured, "Castiel Novak, you listen to me. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that could change my mind about this! You were the best decision I ever made, and that won't ever change."

Cas stared at him as he drew in another shuddering breath. "Promise?"

"Promise," Dean echoed. "You are my omega, my mate, and no matter what happens at that house today, you always will be."

Cas leaned forward then to capture Dean's mouth in a gentle kiss. "Thank you," he whispered.

"Thank you for telling me," Dean whispered back. They sat wrapped around each other, whispering softly back and forth, until Dean's alarm went off in the bedroom. With a heavy sigh, Cas pulled himself off of Dean's lap.

"I guess it's time to go," Cas murmured. "Can't put it off forever."

Dean smiled and pulled him into a kiss. "Just think how glad you'll be to have it over."
"Yeah, if we could just skip to that part..." Cas said.

Dean chuckled. "Well unfortunately I'm fresh out of time machines, so I guess we'll just have to do this the old-fashioned way."

Cas snorted out a laugh as Dean pulled him toward their bedroom. "Old-fashioned...like that could ever describe us!"

"Well, I have heard that we're like an old married couple," Dean pointed out, and Cas giggled.

"Yeah, that doesn't really apply to us either."

Dean paused in their doorway, pulling Cas tight against him. His eyes roamed over the omega's face, almost as if he were memorizing him. "You know we have to do this, right? Now or later, it has to be done."

Cas nodded. "I know. I trust you."

Dean smiled as pride surged through his chest. He hadn't specifically asked for it, but Cas had known what he needed to hear.

He dipped down to claim Cas's mouth, his lips insistent against the omega's. "Thank you," he whispered when they pulled apart.

Cas blushed softly. "Any time."

Chapter End Notes

So what did you think of the dream part? Was it a good enough description? Like, were you able to picture it in your mind? I ask because I'm trying to work on my description of setting more. My writing is usually very dialogue driven, you know? And I want to try to expand beyond that. So let me know what you think in the comments.

Anyways, I *think* I have a title settled on, but I am still taking suggestions!!

As always, please comment! Even if you feel like you don't have much to say, or even if you don't usually comment, you totally should because I loooooove hearing from you all. It's always fun to read your comments! Okay, kisses!!
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Despite his calm demeanor, Dean couldn't help the sick feeling in his stomach. He'd gone into this hoping to find some closure for Cas; but so far, things had only managed to get worse.

Cas stared straight out through the windshield, his face an impassive mask. If was the same blank expression he'd worn with Dean when he'd tried to break up with him; apparently it was his default expression when dealing with his family.

It hadn't worked so well when he'd tried it on Dean, because the alpha knew him through and through. Even now he could see the anxiety simmering below the surface, ready to break loose at the slightest provocation. Dean hoped that it never did.

To anyone else, Cas would appear calm, serene even. The only indication that he wasn't completely emotionless was his hand; his fingers kept playing nervously with his titanium bracelet, twisting and twirling it around his wrist. Since he'd started wearing the bracelet on Christmas Day, that had become his tic, his tell.

Cas hadn't said more than two words together for the entire trip, and Dean couldn't help the uneasy feeling in his gut. He once again found himself questioning his decision to take Cas to his parents' house, and that did not bode well with him.

He had never been one to fluctuate in his life, whether personally or professionally or anywhere in between. His process had always been the same: analyze the situation, make a decision, and carry it out neatly and efficiently. It's what made him a good businessman and a good alpha, or so he used to think, before he met Cas.

Now, though, not a week passed that he didn't feel that pull of doubt. Before, it had always been so cut and dry, so straightforward when Dean had only had himself to look out for. Cas had changed that, changed him.

After their very first date in the park, Dean had felt it, had known even then that his life was about to change. He couldn't have anticipated then just how accurate that feeling had been. Everything had to be reanalyzed through a completely new set of priorities that revolved around someone other than himself. Cas was his omega, and it was Dean's responsibility to protect him and do what was best for him.

And now, as he cast another furtive glance at the omega who'd placed his trust in Dean completely, the alpha found himself doubting again. Was it really a wise decision to take Cas back to a place that inspired nightmares? Could he really expose him to those people who had, essentially, betrayed their own son to a monster? Because that's what Zachariah was: a monster.

Dean thought about the phone call he'd received from Sam Wesson, his dad's PI, the evening before. The things Sam had said had chilled Dean, and he felt the rage rise up in him again. It wasn't just rage against the alpha who'd tried to claim his omega, but also against the people who'd been eager to let him.
Sam had a lot to share about the older alpha who'd had his gaze on Cas. Zachariah was nothing better than a bully who hid behind his money, a criminal who'd evaded justice more than once for his awful acts, which according to Sam, there'd been plenty of.

The case files had been hidden away, buried in among other files in a Philly precinct's system, but Sam had found them, or at least eight of them. Dean hadn't seen the files or the pictures inside of them, but according to Sam, it had been bad. The omegas had been raped and beaten brutally; he said that some of their faces were swollen beyond recognition in the photos. They'd all said the same thing, that they'd been lucky to escape with their lives.

Dean knew that there had to have been more than the eight strippers, maybe others whose work hadn't been so legal who'd been afraid to go to the police. All eight of the ones who had been brave enough had eventually dropped the charges, probably for a hefty payout.

Again and again in each file, the disgusting truth had been there. Zachariah was a monster who didn't just hurt his prey; he got off on it. And Bartholomew and Naomi had been prepared to throw their son to that monster. And for what? A little bit extra in their bank account every month.

Dean didn't realize he'd been clenching his jaw so tightly until he felt Cas's fingers brush over it. He startled out of his reverie to find the omega staring at him, his eyes concerned.

"Dean?" He murmured.

Dean smiled tightly and shook his head. "Sorry. I'm just nervous, I guess."

Cas's expression was understanding. "Me too," he whispered. "But I'll be glad to have it over with."

Dean nodded once then turned his attention back to the road. Only forty-five minutes more until they arrived, and Dean found himself dreading and anticipating it in equal measure. He didn't want Cas to ever return there, and he knew that after today, he'd make sure that he never did. But Cas needed closure on this part of his life. He needed for this chapter to end before anymore could begin.

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Cas huddled close to Dean's side as they walked up the front walk toward the house. It was so similar to his dream from the night before, yet somehow different, because he could actually feel Dean there beside him; he could feel the warmth of his palm.

"You ready?" Dean murmured. Cas shook his head no even as he reached out to ring the doorbell. They stood together in the cold sunlight, both holding their breaths as they waited.

The lock clicked in its latch, and Dean felt Cas stiffen beside him. He squeezed his hand once, and Cas squeezed back before pulling away. They'd agreed beforehand that they wouldn't rub it in Bartholomew's and Naomi's faces; Cas would explain the situation to them first.

The door swung open to reveal a petite red-headed omega smiling vacantly at them.

"Welco—" she trailed off, her eyes widening as she recognized who was standing there. She stared at them for a long moment before she was finally able to whisper, "Cas?"

Cas smiled weakly. "Hello, Anna."

"It's actually you!" She murmured, rushing forward to yank Cas into a hug. "I thought you were going to be like Gabriel. You know, go away for school and never come back."
Cas chuckled weakly. "Yes, that was definitely a temptation. But, uh, well, something came up."

Anna's gaze finally flickered to Dean, who stood just behind Cas. Her eyes widened as she subtly scented the air between them.

"Your alpha?" She breathed, looking back to Cas. Cas nodded, his smile hesitant yet hopeful.

"This is Dean. I, uh, brought him home to meet everybody."

For one split moment, she looked happy, joyously so. Her eyes shone with the realization that her little brother had done it; he'd escaped his...

Anna's eyes dimmed, panic slowly creeping in as she shook her head. "Cas, you shouldn't have come back!" she whispered sharply.

Cas's face drained. This was not what he'd expected, not from her at least. "What the hell are you talking about?"

Anna stepped back into the house and started to close the door. "You need to leave now, before they —"

She was cut off by a sharp voice. "Anna, who's at the door?"

Both Novak omegas stiffened, a reaction that had been instilled in them since childhood. Cas heard the sharp click of heels crossing the entry hall.

"Mother..." Anna began, but Naomi cut her off again with an irritated huff.

"For god's sake, Anna, let our guests in!"

Anna hesitated for only a moment longer, but finally gave in. She stepped back into the house, granting the couple access. Cas stepped inside, his heart hammering in his chest, even though he could feel Dean close behind him.

He stopped just inside the door, his entire body tense and on edge. His first inclination was to lower his eyes in deference to the older omega; years of training demanded it of him. But he couldn't do it. He couldn't revert back to that, not after all that Dean had taught him.

He slowly lifted his eyes to meet the cold stare of his mother, her disdainful expression so familiar even after the months apart. Her hair was perfectly coiffed, her makeup meticulously applied, her clothing neatly pressed. Dressed for a typical Saturday afternoon at home.

"Castiel, it is so good to have you home again," Naomi greeted as her eyes swept over him then his companion.

Cas heard Anna quietly shut the front door behind them. The latch clicked into place, sealing them inside.

"Hello, Mother."

She began to walk toward them, her heels clicking against the hardwood floor with each step.

"I was downright thrilled when I received your call," She commented lightly. "It's been far too long since we've seen you."

"Yes, and a lot has changed since then," Cas explained, his own voice wavering. He felt the soft
hand that Dean placed at the center of his back, and he drew a deep breath, steeling himself. He forced another smile. "Where's father?"

"He's up in Philly for a conference with Michael and Zachariah," she replied as she stopped a few feet away from them.

Dean stiffened at the mention of Zachariah and Philly in the same sentence. Every one of those eight beaten omegas had been from Philly, and Dean hated to think about what was happening right then. He wondered if Bartholomew knew about his friend's habits. If he did, did he just look the other way? Did he even care that he'd been sending Cas to a similar fate?

"Oh, I thought that he might be here," Cas said. "I called ahead so we could all be here for this."

Naomi ignored his comment, instead focusing her sharp gaze on Dean. "Who's your friend?" She said it casually, like she didn't really have an interest in the answer, but the tense set of her shoulders said otherwise.

Cas stepped aside, taking Dean's hand in his so he could pull the alpha to stand next to him. He smiled up at Dean as he responded.

"Mother, this is Dean Smith. He's—" Cas began, but he was cut off by the sharp gasp that escaped from his mother.

Her face had paled and her eyes had narrowed as she scented the air between them. She reached up to yank aside the collar of his navy peacoat.

Cas froze, eyes wide and wary on his mother. She stared at the bite mark that stood out perfectly against the pale skin of Cas's neck.

"What the hell have you done?" She breathed out. When Cas didn't answer, she yanked at his coat collar, shaking him as she repeated the question more loudly, "What the hell have you done?"

Cas took a step back, trying to remove himself from Naomi's hold, but she just stepped with him as she screamed for a third time, "What the hell have you done!"

It was like watching a perfectly sculpted statue break apart piece by piece. Naomi's eyes shone with something frantic, something lunatic, something that she'd kept hidden away for a long time. Cas had only seen it once or twice, but he'd never been the cause of it before. Now, as she stared at the mating mark on his neck, that perfectly situated mask she'd hid behind for so long was slipping away to reveal the true face beneath.

"Mother!" Anna cried, stepping forward as if to intercede, but Naomi had her sights locked on Dean now.

"Don't you dare speak to my son, alpha! This is my home, and I will say what I please to whom I please to say it!"
Her words struck something inside of Cas, something deep and dormant that had been buried away for years under layers of his parents' scorn. He felt the shock slip away, and in its place, a resolve to protect his alpha arose.

"I always knew you would be the end of us!" She hissed at him. "What? Did you bare your neck for the first dick who popped his knot in that hole of yours? Like some bitch in heat? Huh?"

Cas stepped forward, his own eyes darkening. "Enough!" He cried, emboldened as he met her head-on. "You leave Dean out of this," he growled. "He is my mate, and he has taken better care of me this past year than you ever did the entire time I lived here."

Naomi laughed shrilly. "I bet! Stuffs a knot in that slut hole of yours every chance he gets," she accused.

Cas blanched at the words, and Naomi let out a delirious giggle. "What? You think I don't know what omegas like you do? Honestly! Throwing yourself at them, begging for a pup so you can trap them in a life of misery!"

Cas gaped at her, his mind racing. Holy shit, he had done that. He'd asked Dean for a pup, not even considering the repercussions for the alpha. No wonder Dean had said no; he knew what a pup could do to them.

Naomi let out another laugh, her eyes lighting with realization. "You did, didn't you? You asked him for a pup? God, how desperate can you be?"

Cas couldn't let her win. He forced a small smirk onto his features as he said, "Well, I learned from the best. I mean, isn't that what you did to Father? Tell me, Mother, do you actually believe it when father says that he's going away to those conferences? Because you and I both know that's not where he is."

Cas felt Dean's hand tighten around his in a silent warning, but Cas wasn't about to back down. He'd put up with her verbal cruelty for years; now it was his turn.

"Shut up!" Naomi growled. "Don't try to turn this on me, whore!"

Cas opened his mouth to bite out his own accusation when he felt Dean's hand at the back of his neck, his only warning a soft, "Cas."

Cas considered ignoring him and continuing on with this argument that he'd been owed for years. It was so tempting to take it a step further, to hurt Naomi as much as she'd hurt him. But Dean was his alpha, and to ignore him would hurt them both. His eyes slid shut as he took a deep breath then stepped back, allowing Dean to step between him and Naomi again.

"Naomi, I understand that you're upset," Dean acknowledged. "But you need to calm down so that we can discuss this. If you can't do that, then Cas and I will leave and return another time."

Naomi glared at him for several long, tense moments, but she finally gave a small nod.

Dean breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank you." He tightened his hold on Cas's hand as he announced, "Yes, Cas and I have mated, but we have done nothing wrong."

Naomi scoffed at the alpha. "Nothing wrong? What part of mating without his parents' consent doesn't sound wrong?"

"He is of age," Dean defended. "He chose me of his own free will, and as such, the mating will
"I'm not talking about legally, you fool! I'm talking about morally," Naomi hissed.

Dean's ire rose with that. He arched an eyebrow. "Morally? You want to talk about morality now?"
Dean wondered. Naomi began to protest, but Dean spoke over her. "Tell me, Naomi, is it moral to
sell your barely presented son to a monster?"

Dean heard Cas's soft gasp behind him, and he faltered at the thought of what his next words would
do to the omega.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Naomi lied, her expression suddenly guarded.

Dean wanted to counter her claim, but hesitated. He didn't want to hurt Cas...

"Say it, Dean," his omega urged, his voice icy. Dean glanced back at him for a moment to check, but
Cas was glaring at his mother. Dean looked back to Naomi.

"You sold Cas to Zachariah in exchange for Zachariah's financial support," he explained. "That's
why our mating has ruined you."

"There's no possible way you could know about that," Naomi challenged. Dean shook his head.

"No, but you just confirmed it. You sold Cas to Zachariah with the promise that he could claim your
son when he was of age."

"What the hell?" Cas breathed. "That's why you never did anything to stop him!" He cried angrily.
"Every fucking time! You'd act like I was in the wrong for being afraid and hurt."

"Castiel, you act like he was doing something awful," Naomi countered primly. "It was only a little
scent-marking. Your father and I ensured in the contract that he would not touch you sexually until
he claimed you."

Castiel stared at her, mouth gaping. What the hell hadn't been sexual about Zachariah's disgusting
advances?

"Honestly, you should feel honored for your part in keeping our family secure," Naomi encouraged.

"Honored? My part?" Cas asked, his eyes narrowing.

Naomi sighed wearily, like it was all such a great trial to explain. "In return for a few years of scent
marking you, he promised to support us financially. You saved all of us."

"Unwillingly!" Cas countered.

"Stop acting like you didn't benefit from it," Naomi snapped. "Because of Zachariah's kind support,
you were able to grow up with all of the comforts you were used to. You were able to live in this
beautiful house..."

"I hate this house," Cas cut in.

Naomi glared at him. "Stop interrupting, Castiel. It's unbecoming of an omega."

"If it's all the same to you," Dean interrupted, "I'll decide what's unbecoming for my omega."

Naomi smiled falsely. "Of course, alpha."
"Dean," Cas corrected. Naomi arched an eyebrow at him. "His name is Dean."

"Dean," she said, over-enunciating the word, "as I'm sure your aware, this leaves us at quite the disadvantage."

"I am aware," Dean acknowledged. "And I'm sure that Bartholomew has something to say about that."

"He does," Naomi agreed.

"When will he return?"

"Tomorrow evening," Naomi replied.

Dean looked down at Cas for a moment before turning back to her. "Then would you mind if Cas and I returned on Monday morning to see you both? We can discuss this more fully with everyone present."

"Yes, I believe that would be best," Naomi agreed, her perfect facade fully back in place. "How does 9 a.m. sound?"

"That's fine. Cas and I will stay in the area until then. Here's my card if you need to reach me," Dean handed her a business card that he pulled from his wallet.

She barely glanced down at it before handing it off to Anna. "Well, until then, I believe that is all that we have to say."

"I believe so," Dean agreed. He took Cas's hand in his and led him back toward the door. "We will see you on Monday."

Just as they were about to pass over the threshold, Cas paused. He looked up at Dean, his eyes silently pleading. Dean nodded, and Cas spun back around. He rushed forward to pull Anna into a hug, his eyes damp. She immediately wrapped her arms around him, holding him close.

"I miss you," he admitted.

"I miss you, too," she responded.

"You smell like him now," he whispered sadly.

Anna huffed a laughed and pulled back enough to ruffle his hair. "And you smell like him," she nodded her head toward Dean, but her tone was happy, excited. She smiled fondly. "I'll see you around, Castiel."

Cas nodded. "I'll see you around, Anna."

He returned to Dean then, slipping his slim hand into the alpha's. Dean offered him an encouraging smile before leading him back toward the car. He could feel Naomi watching their retreating backs, but he didn't dare turn around.

Despite his calm demeanor, Dean couldn't help the sick feeling in his stomach. He'd gone into this hoping to find some closure for Cas; but so far, things had only managed to get worse.
Dean brushed a gentle kiss against Cas's mouth. "Do you trust me?"

"Always," Cas promised.

Dean drew in a deep breath before announcing, "I'm going to pay off Zachariah for your parents."

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Dean didn't know what he expected from Cas when they got back into the car after the confrontation with Naomi. He expected screaming or tears, maybe a demand for some kind of explanation. He didn't expect the silence.

It was a shock, after how strong Cas had been in front of Naomi, to see him revert to the scared omega from before. Only now it was somehow worse. On the way to his parents' house, Cas had at least been somewhat responsive to Dean. Now, he stared down at his hands in his lap, his gaze vacant.

Dean considered letting it go, leaving the omega to his thoughts. Maybe he needed the space to sort his own feelings. But the protector in him balked at the thought. He pulled over to the side of the road and turned off the car.

"Cas?" He murmured gently. When there was no response, he reached out to touch his arm. Cas jolted violently and shoved himself back against the passenger door, away from Dean.

Dean tried not to let the hurt show; right now was about his omega, not him. It wasn't Cas's fault that his parents had fucked him up so badly. But Dean had hoped that Cas would instinctually know that he didn't have to fear Dean.

Cas seemed to realize then what he'd done. His expression immediately turned apologetic as he took his alpha's hand in both of his.

"Sorry!" He murmured. "I'm so sorry! I didn't mean..."

Dean shushed him softly, running a hand down his face. "I know, I know. It's okay."

"No, it's not!" Cas protested. "It's not!"

Dean took his face between his hands. "It will be, I'll make sure of it."

Cas shook his head. "No, it won't! It won't be okay! You shouldn't have to make sure of anything!"

"Cas," Dean soothed, but the omega wasn't listening.

"I dragged you into this! Me! I got sold, Dean, like a piece of fucking property! And now you have
to deal with that!"

"Hey, hey," Dean murmured as he unbuckled so he could reach across to pull Cas into his lap. It was a tight squeeze with the steering wheel, but Cas wrapped his arms around Dean's neck and buried his face there to scent him, affording them some more room.

Dean ran his hands down Cas's back, shushing him. "It's not your fault, Cas. There's no way you could have known."

"That doesn't change anything," Cas muttered. "I knew something was off, and I still..."

Dean shook his head. "No, it's not your fault, not at all. And honestly, you didn't drag me into anything. I jumped headfirst into this from the word go.

"I was the one who went back to that coffee shop, okay? I was the one who asked you out, and I was the one who kept going after you again and again. Even when you tried to end things with me, I couldn't let you go. If anything, I dragged you into this, and I don't regret a moment of it."

"You don't?" Cas mumbled.

"Baby, if I hadn't found you, you would be mated to Zachariah, and..." Dean drew in a shaky breath, wondering if he should say anything about what he'd learned about Zachariah. He really didn't want to hurt Cas further, but he felt like holding it from him was lying, something that he himself had forbidden between them.

"What is it?" Cas whispered, his face anxious.

Dean grimaced. "Look, Zachariah is... He's... He's a monster. There were these omegas in Philly who...who..." Dean had never felt so inarticulate in his life, but was there a good way to tell someone that their parents had essentially sold them to a serial rapist?

Cas's brow furrowed. "What did he do to them, Dean?"

Dean drew in a deep steadying breath before looking Cas right in the eye and answering. "He raped them."

Cas gasped softly, anger and disbelief welling in his eyes. "Wha— How? I mean, not how, but... Why is he still..." He trailed off.

Dean shook his head. "The PI I called found eight of them, but all of the omegas dropped the charges before anything could be done."

Cas gaped at him in disbelief. "Why would they do that?"

"He probably pays them off," Dean guessed, and Cas let out a delirious half chuckle.

"Of course he did!" He exhaled shakily, his entire body shuddering as his voice cracked. "Because that's all we are; expendable things that can be bought and sold."

This time when the sobs started, Dean didn't shush him or try to quiet him. He just pulled the omega's face into his neck and waited for the tears to subside.

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When Cas woke up, he immediately felt panic set in. It was quiet and dark in a room that smelled very unfamiliar. He didn't know where he was, and he couldn't smell his alpha, other than on the
large t-shirt he was wearing. He sat up in bed and glanced around the room wildly, trying to figure out where he was.

The clock on the nightstand read 7:30 p.m. The last thing Cas remembered was talking to Dean in the car after his visit to his parents' house, and that had been a good four hours before.

He was just about to call out for Dean when he heard his muffled voice coming from behind a closed door across the room. Cas climbed out of bed and headed for the door, only hesitating for a moment before opening it.

Dean was pacing in the small living room area of the suite, talking hurriedly into his cell phone. His dress shirt hung open, like he'd been in the middle of taking it off when he'd been interrupted, and his hair looked disheveled like he'd been running his hand through it repeatedly.

Despite everything that had happened that day, Cas felt his heart ache at the sight. He padded into the room, right up to his alpha, and wrapped his arms around him. Dean startled for a moment, but then he was relaxing in Cas's hold.

"Look, I gotta go. Tell me what you find out," he said into the phone. Another male voice responded from the other end, and then Dean hung up.

Dean slid the phone back into his pocket and wrapped his arms around Cas, smiling gently down at the omega. "Did you have a good nap?"

"Yeah, but I don't really remember falling asleep," Cas admitted.

Dean chuckled. "Yeah, you kind of fell asleep in my lap earlier."

Cas blushed heavily. "Sorry," he mumbled.

"Don't worry about it," Dean assured him as he led him over to the couch. "Gave me an excuse to carry you up here."

Cas snorted a laugh. "Yeah, I'm sure that looked totally normal."

Dean sat down on the couch then pulled Cas down with him, letting the omega settle against his chest. Cas began to brush his fingers over Dean's face, gently smoothing the lines around his eyes and mouth, his gaze soft and warm on Dean.

"I'm sorry about all this," Cas eventually murmured. Dean shook his head.

"You have nothing to be sorry for, baby," the alpha assured him.

"Yes, I—" Cas tried, but Dean silenced him with a kiss.

"We talked about this in the car. Cas, I would do anything for you, anything...well, short of murder. I'm not quite ready for prison yet." Cas giggled, his warm breath tickling Dean's neck. "But I am willing to do what it takes to make this right."

"Meaning?" Cas prodded. Dean pulled back just enough to look down at him, his eyes earnest.

"Before I go any further, I want you to know that I am not trying to buy you. You aren't just something to be traded off or sold, unlike your parents and Zachariah seem to think. You are my entire world, and even if I was to give up my entire company, it still wouldn't be enough for what you mean to me."
Cas nodded somberly. "I know."

"Good," Dean murmured. He brushed a gentle kiss against Cas's mouth. "Do you trust me?"

"Always," Cas promised.

Dean drew in a deep breath before announcing, "I'm going to pay off Zachariah for your parents."

Cas's eyes widened as he shook his head vigorously. "Dean, they've been taking money from him for years! It's too much!"

Dean silenced him with another kiss, his mouth more insistent this time. When he pulled away, his eyes were heated. "Cas, you just heard me say that you're worth everything to me. Trust me, nothing would be too much to guarantee our future together. I have more than enough put away in savings to cover whatever it may be."

Cas looked like he was about to argue further, but at Dean's stern look, he nodded. He drew in a deep breath. "Okay. So you'll pay him back. Then what?"

"Well, that's up to you," Dean offered.

Cas arched an eyebrow. "Up to me?"

"Look, Zachariah's out of the picture for sure," Dean said. "But your parents are a different matter. You'll have to decide whether you want to keep in touch with them or not."

Cas looked confused. "I'll decide?"

"They're your parents, baby. If you wanna keep them in your life, then that's what we'll do. If you don't, then we won't." Dean said it all like it was so simple, like it was nothing but common sense. But Cas knew from personal experience that omegas often didn't receive such choices. He reached up to kiss his alpha.

"Thank you!" He whispered softly.

Dean smiled softly. "My pleasure." He let Cas take his mouth in another kiss.

Dean was just getting lost in the feel of Cas's mouth against his when Cas suddenly pulled back, his expression confused. "Wait, you said that Zachariah paid off the omegas in Philly?"

Dean nodded, "Yeah."

Cas shook his head. "Look, I don't know that much about all this, but I know that to get the charges completely dropped, he'd have to pay more than just the omegas."

"Yes, he would have," Dean confirmed.

"He couldn't though," Cas countered.

Dean's brow furrowed. "Why?"

"He's bankrupt," Cas stated simply. "Or... He was at my eighteenth birthday party. I heard him talking to someone else about it, but he didn't think I understood. He made some bad investments, and he lost nearly everything."

"Then how is he making the payments?" Dean mumbled to himself. He pulled his cell phone out of
his pocket and brought up his recent call list, pressing the most recent name listed.

The phone rang twice before a deep voice answered on the other end. "This is Agent Henriksen."

"Hey, Vic; it's Dean. I may have some more information for you to check into."

Cas and Dean spent the rest of the weekend at the hotel watching tv and eating dine-in room service. Cas tried to keep up his normal happy banter, but there were moments when he'd suddenly grow quiet, his stare distant and vacant as he became lost in his own thoughts. Dean would do his best to talk him out of it, cracking jokes and asking silly questions, but he still grew more anxious every time it happened.

Then there were the tears. They'd spring up at the most unexpected moments, once during a Febreze commercial, once between bites of a caesar salad. And Dean couldn't do anything but wait them out, wrapping cas up in his arms as he gently rocked him back and forth until the sobs subsided and cas drifted into a fitful sleep.

Dean knew that the nightmares were still happening. He'd listen to Cas whimper in his sleep, and he'd hate that there was nothing he could do. Well, there was nothing he could do yet, but he was working on it.

On Monday morning, Dean and Cas ate a small breakfast in their hotel suite. As they ate, they discussed the impending meeting with Cas's parents.

"I don't want to do the talking," Cas murmured.

Dean pinched his brow together. "Why?"

Cas pushed the scrambled eggs on his plate around with his fork as he considered his answer. He knew why, but he didn't know how to explain it, not without sounding like some kind of hopeless victim.

"Cas," Dean murmured, reaching across the table to cover Cas's hand with his own. "I need you to use your words."

Cas's blue eyes flickered up to meet his. "That's just it! I can't use my words because..." He faltered.

"Because?" Dean prompted.

"Because they always find a way to turn them against me," Cas admitted. "Ever since I was a kid, they always had this way of...making me feel lesser. It was part of the reason that I was so quiet and docile. I didn't want to feel that way, so I avoided talking altogether."

Dean nodded. "They can't do that anymore, Cas. I won't let them."

"I know," the omega responded. "They can't cowl me back into a corner anymore, not now. But they can still get under my skin, and as you saw on Saturday, I don't respond very well."

"I thought you handled yourself incredibly well, given the circumstances," Dean argued, and Cas snorted his disbelief.

"Really? Dean, I was ready to tear my mother's throat out after she said all that shit about..." A heavy
blush stained Cas's cheeks. "You know."

Dean did know. Naomi had said some truly hateful things. She'd managed to simultaneously attack her own son's self-worth and mock his desire to have pups of his own. Dean had tried to talk to Cas about it, but the omega had waved it off with a weary, "We've already talked about it, Dean. We'll be ready when we're ready."

Dean knew that they couldn't put off that conversation for ever. After the damage he'd already done with his own careless words on Christmas Eve, he didn't need Naomi adding to Cas's insecurities about someday having kids. But that was another conversation for another day. For now, they had other more pressing matters that needed to be resolved.

He squeezed Cas's hand. "Okay, I'll do the talking."

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Dean and Cas rang the doorbell at 9 a.m. on the dot. After a couple seconds, they heard the sharp click of heels crossing the front hall toward the door. Cas moved closer to Dean, pressing into his side as the latch clicked in the lock.

The door swung open to reveal Naomi, her appearance as flawless as ever. She smiled coldly. "Alpha Smith," she greeted, nodding to him. She completely ignored her son. "Welcome. Please, come inside."

She stepped aside, allowing room for them to pass. This time Dean moved inside first and Cas followed, his body half-hidden behind Dean as if he were using him for a shield.

"If you'll come with me to the drawing room," Naomi offered, already clicking away toward one of the rooms that lined the entry hall. Dean followed at a distance, his hand reaching back to find Cas's as they walked.

Cas tried not to let his anxiety show. He kept a serene expression fixed on his face as they entered the drawing room, but the moment the two men inside turned to face him, his eyes widened with a panic he was not able to hide.

The older alpha stepped forward, his arms held open like he was greeting an old friend. He ran his bulging eyes over Cas as his mouth spread into a wide, repulsive smile.

"Castiel, it's been far too long," Zachariah purred.

Chapter End Notes

For those of you that may have seen the slight mistake I made, I accidentally uploaded chapter 24 before chap 23, but never fear, for I have corrected the problem!

Also, I may end up with a little more than thirty chapters...just a little bit... Okay, gotta run. ^kisses^
Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Castiel stared in horror at the balding, old alpha as Bartholomew and Zachariah stepped forward to greet them. Their eyes locked onto the couple like hunters tracking their prey.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Castiel stared in horror at the balding, old alpha as Bartholomew and Zachariah stepped forward to greet them. Their eyes locked onto the couple like hunters tracking their prey. Bartholomew extended his hand toward Dean.

"Welcome, Alpha Smith. It's an honor to have you in our home," he greeted. Like Naomi, he completely ignored Cas, refusing to acknowledge his presence.

Zachariah, on the other hand, ignored Dean, instead choosing to stare at Cas as he approached the couple. He offered a malicious grin, chuckling at the way Castiel flinched into Dean's side.

Dean took a step forward, his entire stance defensive as he attempted to shield Cas from Zachariah's gaze. "Bartholomew, Zachariah. Thank you for agreeing to meet with us. However, I'd appreciate it if you directed all of your comments toward me."

Bartholomew and Zachariah exchanged surprised glances, like they were impressed at the show of dominance. Dean suddenly found that he didn't like the idea of Cas remaining silent, if for no other reason than to show these asshats what a real bond between alpha and omega looked like, but it's what Cas had wanted.

That was okay, though. Dean had played his part in several contract negotiations over the years, and he knew that there was more than one way to give Cas his fair share. Bartholomew and Zachariah would see his respect for his omega.

"Why don't we all go sit down?" Bartholomew offered, and Dean nodded. He placed a hand at the small of Cas's back and guided him toward the couches that Bartholomew had indicated.

Bartholomew paused for a moment. "Actually, this all might be a little over the omega's head. Maybe it would do better to go sit with Naomi in the greenhouse."

Cas definitely didn't want to be separated from Dean, and his eyes reflected his panic. Dean offered him a reassuring smile before turning back to Bartholomew.

"If it's all the same to you, I'd prefer to keep Castiel here with me," Dean explained, making sure to enunciate the omega's name.

"Oh, come now, Alpha Smith, it will probably be a little overwhelming for it to be here with three alphas, especially when we're discussing such heavy topics," Zachariah said so condescendingly. Dean, who was not usually prone to violence, suddenly felt the urge to punch him in his smarmy face.
"All due respect," Dean echoed, "I am not letting my omega out of my sight while we're in this house, especially," he shot Zachariah a false smile, "when we're discussing him and his future." The unspoken part about him not trusting them was perfectly clear.

Both alphas' expressions darkened at that, but Bartholomew said nothing when Dean pulled Cas down onto the couch to sit next to him. Cas shot Dean a grateful smile, and the alpha gave the back of his neck a light squeeze. Dean saw the way Cas fingered the bracelet around his wrist, and he felt a surge of pride that Cas had worn it, despite knowing the type of situation they were going into.

He turned his attention to Bartholomew as the alpha began to speak. "As I'm sure you're aware, your mating has put us at a slight disadvantage," he explained. "It has not only cost us financially, but it has also cost Zachariah personally."

"Right, because you sold your barely-presented son to him," Dean supplied.

"Sold is such a strong term," Bartholomew countered. "Promised would probably be a better word."

"Okay," Dean allowed, arching an eyebrow. "So you promised him to Zachariah in exchange for monetary gain."

"Yes, so you can see how this mating of yours has caused us both some...concern."

Dean smiled tightly. "I'm sure, and I'm willing to recompense Zachariah for his...payments."

"Just for the payments?" Zachariah muttered.

Dean turned to face him, his eyes cold and hard despite the smile he still forced. "Are you telling me that you were expecting more?"

"Well, yes!" Zachariah said. "Alpha Smith, I'm sure that you can understand how hard it is for an alpha without an omega by his side. For years, I've been anticipating the day when I would finally have an omega to claim, and now, I have no one!"

Dean forced a laugh. "Oh Zachariah, you and I both know that you've had your fair share of omegas throughout the years."

Zachariah paled. "I'm sure I don't know what you mean."

"Of course you don't," Dean replied cheekily. "Zachariah, while I understand your struggle, I'm afraid that it's not really my concern. I'll pay you back for the money you gave Cas's parents, but beyond that, you're on your own."

All of this was said with a smile, but there was venom hidden there, and neither Zachariah nor Bartholomew seemed to know how to respond. Zachariah gaped at Dean, his bug eyes bulging.

"Now, let's talk specifics so we can get this over with. How much did you pay Bartholomew?"

Bartholomew and Zachariah shared an uneasy glance. Bartholomew finally answered, "Five thousand every six months."

Cas's eyes widened as he did the math. He looked at Dean, "That's forty thousand!"

Dean took his hand and gave it a reassuring squeeze, ignoring the sounds of disapproval coming from the other alphas. Cas shook his head slightly and mouthed Too much, but Dean just winked at him before turning back to the others.
"Forty thousand? Did Cas do the math right?" He checked, and both alphas nodded in unison. "Perfect! You accept checks, right, Zachariah?" He pulled his checkbook out of the breast pocket of his jacket. "What a silly question! Of course you do. Now, who should I make this check out to? Zachariah Adler or Sandover Investments?"

Zachariah may have looked shocked before, but it was nothing compared to the expression on his face then.

"What?" He finally managed to choke out.

"Sandover Investments? The company you consult for?" Dean said this like he was reminding him, but then his tone became accusing. "The one you've been embezzling funds from for years?"

"Yes, I do consult for them," Zachariah bit out, "but why would you ever think that I'd embezzle from them?"

"So you're saying that you had nothing to do with all that money that went missing a couple years ago?" Dean asked.

"They caught that man and currently have him in prison," Zachariah replied.

"Ah, yes! The pencil-pusher who never actually had access to the accounts that were stolen from."

Zachariah huffed indignantly. "Alpha Smith, I have no need to embezzle funds! I have plenty of my own money that was passed down to me from my parents."

Dean shook his head. "You and I both know that's not true, Zachariah. See I've heard from a very reliable source that you made some very unwise investments a few years ago, and they left you practically bankrupt. But you still kept paying off Bartholomew here, and you still kept paying off other people, you know, up around Philly?"

Zachariah's eyes narrowed. "What exactly are you accusing me of, Alpha Smith?" Zachariah challenged.

"Embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, rape of eight omegas, bribery of your victims to drop the charges, and bribery of the authorities in Philly to avoid further pursuance of the cases." Dean said this all with a flat expression, like he could care less.

"That's preposterous!" Zachariah sputtered, his face turning an ugly shade of red.

"Maybe so. Probably not." Dean shrugged. "Luckily for you, it's not up to me. I mean, cause if it were, well..." He let the thought trail off before continuing. "But as it stands, both embezzlement and bribery are federal crimes, so I've turned it over to the proper authorities. I'm sure that Agent Henriksen from the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be getting in touch shortly. And I can assure you that he is very thorough in his investigations; he may even have to open some closed case files."

Zachariah gawked at him, his mouth hanging wide open, his eyes bulging. He shook his head. "That's impossible! Don't you know—" he began to threaten. Dean cut him off.

"No, and honestly, I don't care," he informed him dismissively. "Now, I'm sure you understand, given the circumstances, why I'm hesitant to pay anything to you just yet. But as soon as this is all cleared up, feel free to get in touch with my office, and we'll work out the details, yes?"

Zachariah sputtered for a moment or two, unable to come up with an appropriate response.
Dean smiled. "Great. Now, if you would be so kind as to step out, I believe the rest of my business is with Bartholomew only."

Zachariah looked to Bartholomew for support, but Bartholomew only jerked his head toward the door. The older alpha hefted himself off the couch, glaring at Dean as he walked past him toward the door. He paused in front of Cas, almost as if he were about to say something, but at a low growl from Dean, he moved past without a word. To Cas's credit, he didn't even flinch.

As they waited for the older alpha to leave the room so they could discuss further arrangements in private, Dean glanced down at Cas. The omega was staring up at him adoringly. Dean smiled softly and went willingly when Cas pulled him down to whisper in his ear.

"Why do I ever doubt you?" He asked, and Dean smirked. He pressed a soft kiss to Cas's temple before turning back to Bartholomew.

"I'm sorry about all that," he apologized with a small smile.

Bartholomew's face stretched into a false smile. "Of course." He cleared his throat awkwardly. "You know that I didn't know anything about that, right?"

Dean offered his own false smile. "Of course not. Now, let's talk about what's going to happen with Cas."

"Yes. I assume that you're willing to compensate us for the omega?"

Silence fell over the group. Cas gaped at his father, his mind struggling to comprehend how he could be so dense. Before Dean could respond, Cas was speaking.

"How dare you? My alpha just saved you from piling mountains of debt to a verifiable monster, and you're still trying to get money from him?"

"Cas," Dean murmured as his hand up and down Cas's back in a soothing gesture. "It's okay."

"Do not speak out of turn to me, Omega!" Bartholomew bit out.

Cas shook his head. "No! I will speak! I am not some item to be bought and sold! I am a person, and a damn good one. My alpha doesn't owe you anything," he hissed.

"It's not right!" Bartholomew countered. "We put up with your useless ass for years, and we are owed something for that."

"Enough!" Dean cut in sharply, silencing both father and son. He pointed to Bartholomew. "You will not speak to him that way. We may be in your house, but he is my mate, and I can assure you that useless is the very last word that would describe Castiel."

He brought his hand to the nape of Castiel's neck and gave a reassuring squeeze, the silent command clear. Cas slumped into his side, still shooting daggers at Bartholomew with his eyes.

Dean sighed heavily and looked at the older alpha. "He's right, though. I just released you from thousands of dollars of debt—"

"Debt that I would not be facing if you had not claimed my omega," Bartholomew interjected.

Dean glared him into silence. "He is an adult. He can give himself to whomever he chooses. And he chose me. The debt you incurred was through no fault but your own. As such, I am under no
"Obligation to pay you."

"No obligation?" Bartholomew sneered. "You're under no obligation to repay me for my omega?"

"Actually, he's my omega," Dean corrected. "And he's right, he's not something that should be pawned off between owners." He took a deep breath and looked at Cas once, his face determined. He looked back to Bartholomew. "However, I am going to pay you," he heard Cas's sharp intake of breath, and hurried on to explain. "but not in exchange for Castiel."

"Then for what?" Bartholomew wondered.

"I am doing it because you are my mate's parents, and I believe it would be negligent of me to not help my family in their time of need, no matter how strained the relationship is." He looked down at Cas. "You once told me that you kept pushing me to mend my relationship with John because you knew I would regret it later if I didn't. Well, now it's time for me to return the favor."

Not even caring that his father was in the room, Cas reached up to press his lips to Dean's. "Thank you," he whispered.

Dean smiled at him before turning his attention back to Bartholomew. "I will give you this money today, and in return, you will give Castiel and me our space."

Bartholomew stared at them for several moments, but then he finally gave a terse nod. "That sounds feasible."

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Once Dean and Bartholomew had worked out the details for the payment, Bartholomew saw them back out to the door. There were no hugs or tearful goodbyes exchanged. Naomi didn't even come to see them off. Bartholomew shook Dean's hand, thanked him for his visit, nodded once at Castiel, then ushered them out the door.

As they walked back down the front walk to the car, Cas couldn't help the small glance he cast back toward the large, imposing house with its protection symbols and stone guardians. He may have imagined the faint silhouette of his mother hidden behind the sheer curtains of a second story window, offering him one final wave. He didn't wave back.

Chapter End Notes

Hello!! Okay, so I know a lot of you were screaming for Zachariah's blood, so I hope this kind of appeased that (because I was not about to have Dean do some of the things you all were suggesting... Sorry)!

BTW, we just passed the 20,000 mark with this past chapter!! Yay! Thank you thank you thank you! Also, thank you for all of your kind comments; they mean so much to me! Keep leaving them!

Hope you enjoyed the chapter! Hugs n kisses n all that
Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

"Not that I don't mind the wake-up call, but is there any particular reason?" Dean wondered as Cas straddled his waist.

"I figured that you deserved a big thank you," Cas breathed against his mouth, "after what you did yesterday."

Chapter Notes

Here, have a chapter of pure smut to make up for all the angst of the last chapters. This may or may not be one of my dirty, dirty kinks. Don't judge me! *runs and hides*

Dean woke up slowly, his entire body humming in pleasure. But then he realized that wasn't his body that was humming. He looked down to where Cas's lips were wrapped around his cock, and the omega hummed again.

Dean's hand dropped into Cas's dark hair, and he smiled softly.

"Well, good morning to you, too," he murmured. Cas responded by running his tongue under the sensitive rim of the head, pulling a throaty chuckle from his alpha.

Cas pulled off just enough to ask, "This amuses you?"

Dean shook his head. "It fills me with all kinds of good feelings," he assured the omega.

Cas rolled his eyes. "I'm sure it does." He looked like he was about to sit up, but Dean pressed gently on his head.

"Yeah?" Cas whispered, tongue flicking out to lap gently at the head.

"Yeah," Dean echoed, his fingers tightening in Cas's hair. Cas chuckled and licked a stripe up the bottom of his cock.

"Well, it's always nice to be appreciated," Cas acknowledged before taking Dean back into his mouth.

After several more minutes of enthusiastic sucking on Cas's part and equally enthusiastic encouragement from Dean, Cas pulled off with a pop. He climbed up over Dean, settling his slim body over the alpha's as he brought their mouths together.

Dean's hands smoothed down Cas's back, down to cup his ass. Dean gave him a light slap there, and Cas moaned into his mouth, his tongue diving in to tangle with Dean's. He began to suck on Dean's
tongue, his body squirming against his alpha's as Dean slapped his ass again.

He released Dean's tongue, only to grab onto his lower lip with his teeth and tug gently. Dean chuckled and gave his ass another slap, causing Cas to release his lip on a gasp.

"Not that I don't mind the wake-up call, but is there any particular reason?" Dean wondered as Cas sat up, straddling his waist as he began to roll his ass down onto Dean's erection.

"I figured that you deserved a big thank you," Cas breathed. "After what you did yesterday."

"Yeah, but you already gave me a big thank you last night," Dean murmured teasingly. The night before when they'd returned from Bartholomew and Naomi's house, Dean had barely made it to the bed before Cas was straddling him, screaming his name as he rode him through orgasm after orgasm until they collapsed together, exhausted but sated.

It looked like things were going to go pretty similarly this morning. Dean was suddenly glad that he didn't have any appointments the next day; he didn't think he would've made them, not with the way Cas was grinding against him, his slick coating Dean's skin.

But then Cas's hips stopped moving. "You know what; you're right. I think one thank you will be enough," Cas decided. He started to climb off of Dean, but the alpha's hands on his hips stopped him.

"Don't you dare go anywhere," he growled, and Cas giggled.

"Yes, alpha," he breathed as he leaned back down for another kiss. Dean's hands smoothed up Cas's back to wrap around the omega as he attacked his mouth.

Cas gasped when Dean suddenly flipped them over, his big body blanketing Cas as he started to move his mouth across Cas's cheek to the hinge of his jaw, down his neck to his collarbone. Cas moaned breathily when one of Dean's hands smoothed down over his ass.

"Dean, if I ask for something very nicely, will you do it for me?" He asked.

Dean pretended to contemplate it for a moment, but then he smiled. "Sure. What did you have in mind?"

Cas reached up until their mouths were almost touching, his blue eyes wide and innocent. "I really haven't decided yet, but when I do, I'll be sure to let you know," he breathed. "And I'll even say pretty please." He punctuated this with a kiss to the alpha's chin, and Dean couldn't seem to stop his dopey smile.

"I think that can be arranged," Dean murmured. His mouth claimed Cas's again as his hand sneaked down between them to find Cas's slick hole.

Cas moaned throatily when Dean's ring and middle fingers sunk into him without any resistance, his mouth falling slack under Dean's.

"You're so fucking wet for me, sweetheart," Dean gasped into Cas's open mouth, and the omega moaned. Dean began to pump his fingers in and out of Cas, pulling beautiful little gasps and moans from his omega.

He stared at Cas, his eyes devouring the sight of his wanton little omega bucking up into his hand. He pulled back so he could kneel between Cas's spread legs and watch his fingers pump into the omega.
"Another, Dean! Another finger," Cas pleaded, so Dean slipped in a third. Cas groaned loudly as Dean kept fucking him with his fingers, spreading and twisting them. Cas writhed under him, his neck arching beautifully as he threw his head back in a soundless cry.

"I'm gonna slip another one in there, sweetheart," Dean warned, and Cas nodded eagerly.

"Yes! More, please!" He whined. Dean added his pinky on the next slide, leaving only his thumb out as his fingers pumped in and out of Cas's tight hole. Cas keened high in his throat as Dean's fingers started passing over his prostate with every thrust, his body shuddering as he fought to keep from coming yet.

Dean pulled his hand out then pushed it back in, pumping his fingers a few times before pulling out completely then pushing back in again. Cas's hips jerked and his back arched upward.

"Dean," he gasped out, reaching out toward the alpha. "Dean," he called out again. When Dean finally looked up at him, he smiled wickedly. "Do you wanna see if you can get your whole fist in there?"

Dean arched an eyebrow at him, contemplating his request.

"Pretty please," the omega breathed.

"I think that can be arranged," Dean allowed, but his face still looked uncertain. "Are you sure, though? It can be a little uncomfortable, from what I've heard."

Cas chuckled. "Baby, have you seen how thick you are? And when you put your knot in me, I know it's huge. I don't think your fist will be a problem."

Dean smiled, "Well..."

"And remember all those times you had two dildos stuffed in me?" Cas reminded him. Dean felt his cock harden further with the memory of Cas's wet hole fucked open by two thick dildos.

"Yeah," he breathed, his pupils blown wide. Cas giggled and shook his head, "Yeah, I don't think it'll be a problem."

"Wait, we should probably wait til we have lube," Dean suggested.

Cas sighed and rolled his eyes. "I guess. Oh wait..." His smile turned mischievous. "I think I may have packed some... Maybe..."

Dean grinned and leaped off the bed to go find Cas's suitcase. "Which pocket?" He called.

"Hmm...I can't recall," Cas called back. "Maybe you should hurry up and look."

Dean returned a few seconds later, the bottle of lube in his hand, to find Cas fucking himself on his own fingers. Dean arched an eyebrow and Cas smiled innocently and shrugged. "I got lonely."

Dean climbed back up onto the bed between Cas's legs and pulled his fingers out of his hole, bringing them up to his mouth so he could suck them clean. Cas watched him with dark eyes as Dean ran his tongue around each of his fingers, lapping at them hungrily. Once he was finished, he dropped Cas's hand back to the bed. "No more touching yourself," he commanded as he uncapped the bottle of lube.

He drizzled some over his fingers before bringing them back down to play at Cas's hole, spreading
the lube around liberally. When he'd fucked them in and out a few times, he poured more lube on them. He repeated this process a few more times before he was satisfied that both Cas's hole and his hand were lubed up well enough.

He gradually worked back up to the four fingers again, pushing them completely inside of Cas, spreading them wide to stretch him further. When he felt that he'd stretched Cas as far as possible, he looked up at the omega.

"Ready?" He murmured. Cas bit his lower lip, his eyes hooded and hungry. He nodded once, and Dean smiled.

"Make sure to take deep breaths," the alpha advised before looking back down to where his fingers pushed into Cas.

He twisted his hand upside down and cupped his thumb against the side of his hand, tightening his fingers together before slowly pushing in. Cas gasped, his head falling back as his hole was stretched wider than it had ever been before.

As Dean pushed in, he began to gently rotate his hand back and forth, slowly working his way past the tight rim. When he got to the center knuckle, he looked back up at Cas. "This is the hardest part, okay? Deep breaths."

Cas nodded, a light sheen of sweat coating his forehead. He stared down at the top of Dean's head as the alpha turned his attention back to Cas's hole. He felt the pressure there against his rim, tighter than he'd ever felt before. He took a deep breath and forced himself to relax as Dean's knuckles slowly pushed past.

Once Dean had passed the knuckles, he was easily able to slide in the rest of the way. Once he was completely inside, his hand curled in on itself almost naturally. Cas let out a breathy laugh as he clenched around Dean's fist.

"Holy shit," he breathed. "We fucking did it."

Dean chuckled. "You know, your mouth gets downright filthy during sex."

"Don't act like you don't like it," Cas teased, his stomach spasming as Dean twisted his hand inside of him.

Dean nodded and gave an assenting hum. "I do like it. It tells me that you're ready."

"Ready?" Cas asked.

"You're right at that point where you're exhausted, you know, when we've been at it long enough that you're giddy with it. Right before you really let go."

Cas grinned. "Wow, nice to know if have a tell."

Dean rolled his eyes, "I wouldn't really call it a tell, it's more of—"

"Dean," Cas interrupted him. Dean arched an eyebrow but didn't respond. "Your fist is inside of me. While I appreciate you're trying to help me relax, I'd really like it if you..." He nodded down toward where Dean's wrist disappeared inside of him.

"You'd like it if I what?" Dean goaded as he slowly pulled his hand back out then twisted it back in. Cas moaned hungrily, his hips jerking upward. "That's what I thought."
Dean set up a slow rhythm, pulling out then pushing back in, sometimes pulling out completely, other times twisting on his way back in. He hit Cas's prostate every time, making Cas's hips jerk. Little gasps and moans fell from his mouth. His eyes slid shut, but at a disapproving sound from Dean, they snapped open again.

"There we go," Dean whispered approvingly. "I love it when I can see those pretty blue eyes." Cas whined in response.

Dean's hand began to move faster, pulling little moans and grunts from the omega. "Are you going to come for me, sweetheart? Come all over your alpha's fist?"

Cas nodded frantically. "Need to come, alpha!" He pleaded. He could feel his muscles tensing, his stomach tightening. The pleasure built steadily, threatening to spill over at any moment.

"Come for me, sweetheart," Dean urged. It only took a few more thrusts. Cas came with a scream, his entire body spasming as his channel contracted around Dean's fist like a knot. Slick gushed from him, coating Dean's hand and the sheets beneath him. Then Dean twisted his hand again, brushing right against his sensitive prostate. Cas released another scream as more slick flooded from his hole.

Dean was so hard it hurt, but he didn't wanna push Cas any further. He didn't want to go past his limits. He slowly pulled his fist from Cas and began to move away when Cas reached out to grab at him, his blue eyes wild and hungry. "I want you inside me, Alpha."

Dean shook his head. "Baby, you need to rest."

"I need your cock," Cas protested. He reached down to slide his fingers into his wrecked hole as he nibbled at his swollen lower lip. "I need your knot filling me up."

Dean's cock ached to be buried in the omega's tight heat, and his brain was having a hard time coming up with excuses as to why he shouldn't. "I don't wanna hurt you, baby," he tried again.

"Could never hurt me, Alpha," Cas slurred. "Always make me feel better." He gasped as his fingers brushed over his prostate, his hips jerking as he let out a low moan.

Dean growled, his pupils dilating until there was hardly any of the beautiful green left. Cas had found that, while he loved Dean's green eyes, he loved when they were black and hungry just as much, if not more. Cas loved when his alpha gave in to his hunger, because he'd always pull Cas in right along with him.

Reaching down to yank Cas's fingers from his hole, Dean snarled, "What did I say about touching yourself?"

"Sorry, alpha," Cas apologized, but he didn't look very remorseful. Dean grabbed Cas's legs and hooked them up over his shoulders so that he was practically bending the omega in half when he settled over him to line his cock up with Cas's hole.

His grin as he slowly pushed in was downright feral, and Cas couldn't help his pleased moan. Dean leaned down to capture Cas's mouth with his, swallowing down the moan as he sheathed himself completely in the omega.

"How does that feel, Sweetheart?" Dean goaded as he began to pump his hips in little circular motions. "Is that enough for your hungry little hole? Huh?"

Cas shook his head, his eyes dark and mischievous as he groaned. "Harder, alpha! Fuck me harder."
Dean's thrusts deepened, his hips moving harder and faster, driving into Cas, building them both to a frenzy. Tiny grunts escaped from the omega with every thrust, and Dean couldn't seem to help himself as he licked into Cas's mouth to taste them.

"Deeeeeeaaaan," Cas keened.

Dean laughed wickedly. "You gonna come for me again, omega? Gonna come a third time on my cock?" The squelching sound that filled the room as their bodies moved together was downright filthy, and Dean couldn't get enough of it. "Listen to how wet you are for me! Already soaked the sheets through like a whore. Gonna soak em again? Coat my cock with your slick?"

Tears streamed down Cas's cheeks as Dean began to thrust wildly, his hips jarring Cas forward as the bed shook beneath them. Dean's knot began to form, and he moved his hips harder to thrust it into the omega's hole.

"You ready for my knot? Ready for your alpha to fill you up?"

Cas nodded frantically as he began to babble almost incoherently. "Fill me, alpha! Need your knot so bad, need it! Please! Dean! Please! Alpha!" And then with a final long scream of Dean's name, he came on Dean's knot, coating it with another gush of slick.

He collapsed against the bed, his body warm and pliant under Dean's as his alpha began to thrust faster, chasing his own release. Cas reached up to run a hand down his face, smiling contentedly.

"Why don't you go ahead and pop that knot for me, alpha?" He murmured, reaching up for a kiss. Dean slammed forward one last time, his knot lodging firmly inside of Cas as his release pumped into him.

When he finally collapsed on top of Cas, his seed still spilling into the omega, Cas chuckled breathily. After several long moments, Dean pulled back just enough to look at him.

"Hi," Cas murmured shyly.

"Hi," Dean murmured back. Brushing a piece of hair back, he kissed Cas's sweat-soaked forehead. "How are you feeling?"

Cas smiled serenely. "Pretty good. Ready for some snuggles."

"Well, I figured you'd want to snuggle after that," Dean agreed as he slowly rolled them over onto their sides.

Cas snuggled up against Dean's chest. "I feel a little boneless."

Dean chuckled as he brushed his nose over Cas's hair. "I can see that. But in case you didn't notice, you kind of made a mess on the bed."

Cas flushed bright red. "Yeah, I'd read that could happen with fisting."

Dean glanced down at him, his eyes narrowed. "You'd read? As in...you researched this?"

Cas's blush worsened. "Maybe..."

Dean smirked. "How long have you been thinking about this?"

"Only for a little while," Cas reasoned innocently.
Dean nodded, his smile teasing. "A little while, huh? Is there anything else you've been thinking about for a little while?"

Cas giggled, his face brightening as he nodded. "A few things."

"Well, I don't have to be back until Thursday, so we have all day today," Dean offered, wiggling his eyebrows suggestively. "We can check out and drive back tomorrow."

"Sounds like a plan," Cas agreed as he pulled Dean down for a kiss.

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They didn't check out of the hotel until that weekend.
Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

"There's this old tradition," Dean informed between kisses.

"Oh really?"

"Yes, you may have heard of it. It's called christening the house," the alpha murmured as he began to kiss his way down Cas's neck toward his mating mark.

"Sounds painful," Cas observed, but Dean just chuckled.

"Oh, trust me, sweetheart, it's actually a lot of fun."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

"Cassie!" Balthazar cried when he saw his friend on the first day of classes. He ran across the parking lot, scooping the omega up into his arms. Cassie giggled as he returned the enthusiastic hug.

"Hey, Balth!" He greeted.

"Hey, you never let me hug him first!" Inaias protested from behind.

Cas turned to him to hug him as well. "Aw, poor baby! Here's a hug for you!"

Inaias wrapped him up tightly, humming happily as he rotated back and forth.

"Okay, okay, get off of me, you perv!" Cas groaned, pushing the beta away. "How was Wisconsin?"

"Fantastic!" Inaias cried as the three of them started walking toward the school. Cas glanced down to find his friends' hands linked between them, and he couldn't help his small smile.

"It was balls cold, though," Balth complained.

Inaias snorted. "Yeah, like you ever got outside to experience it."

"We didn't," Balth admitted to Cas. "We stayed in bed pretty much the whole time after we, uh, you know..."

"Confessed your undying love for each other?" Cas supplied with a grin.

Inaias rolled his eyes and shoved him with his free hand. "Shut up, dumbass."

"Language!" Balth chided, but Inaias just grinned at him unrepentantly. "Besides, Cassie here is just jealous that he and his old married mate don't do fun stuff anymore."

Cas scoffed at the accusation. "Bitch, please! You call staying in bed for a few days fun? Try two weeks!"
Balth's eyebrow arched. "Two weeks? Like all at once?"

Cas shook his head. "Nah. One was up in New York when we went up with John for his appointment, and then the other was in Pontiac a couple weeks ago when, you know..."

"Ah yes! When you gave the old parents the old heave ho," Balth recalled.

Cas snorted. "The old heave ho? What are we, British infantrymen now?"

"You know what I mean. By the way, why in the world are you still here?" Balth asked as they walked into their first classroom together.

"What do you mean?" Cas asked, scanning the room for empty seats. He spotted three clumped together near the back and headed that way.

"Well, I mean, your parents aren't really in charge anymore, and they were the ones who wanted you here. Why are you still in school?"

Cas settled into his seat with a sigh. He shrugged. "Well, I'd already registered for classes and paid the first bill, so it just made sense to stick it out for this semester."

"Really? And the school didn't have anything to say about the whole mating thing?" Balth wondered.

Cas shook his head. "Nope! We just had to fill out a form so they have his information in the system, but that's it." He pulled his laptop out of his bag as he explained, "We'll see what happens after this semester. Dean and I figured we could talk more about the schooling this summer, see if maybe I wanna transfer to an online school for next year or something."

"Why online?" Inaias asked.

"Traveling," Cas explained lightly. "We'll be traveling between here and New York a lot more now, so it would probably be easier. I mean, I already have plans to fly up there twice this month."

Balth offered a low whistle. "That's a lot." Cas shook his head.

"Dean'll be traveling a lot more than that," he said, his voice reflecting his anxiety.

"Yikes," Balth muttered.

"What?" Cas asked, but Balth just shook his head.

"It just seemed like an appropriate response."

"Yeah. Your appropriate responses kind of suck. Anyone ever tell you that?" Cas teased. "Trust me, we'll be fine."

The teacher strode in then, and Cas made a face at the little balding man who'd given him hell the previous semester. "Metatron," he growled.

"Ah, yes. Your old arch nemesis! What nefarious plots has he worked up for us today?" Balth murmured.

Cas rolled his eyes as the short man began to introduce himself.

"So when are you going to New York next?" Balth whispered.
"This weekend; we're looking at apartments," Cas whispered back.

Right then, Metatron's attention snapped to them. "Ah, my favorite students! Tell me, Asstiel..."

"Is he allowed to call a student that?" Inaias mumbled.

Cas just shrugged. It was going to be a long semester.

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"So what do you think?" The realtor, a young alpha woman named Sarah Blake, asked after they'd looked over the third upscale condo she'd shown them that morning.

"Give us a second?" Dean requested, and she nodded before stepping away to make a call.

"So?" Dean asked, moving to stand next to Cas who was staring out the floor-to-ceiling windows that lined one wall of the open living and dining room area.

"It has a nice view," Cas offered. "And it has plenty of space."

"It's right between John and the office," Dean added. "And the price isn't bad at all."

"No, it's not. And I really like the hot tub," Cas mumbled, causing Dean to grin lecherously.

"Yeah, you do!" He said, and Cas blushed heavily as he rolled his eyes.

"Shut up," he muttered, but it was said good-naturedly. Dean just chuckled and pulled him in for a quick kiss.

When Sarah returned, Dean told her, "Yeah, we'll take it."

"Perfect! I'll get the paperwork ready," and then she was off in a flurry of activity, contacting the owners of the building to settle on a price.

She came back ten minutes later. "They've accepted your offer."

"That was fast," Dean commented, and Sarah shrugged.

"I think it helps that you're paying in cash, plus the last name doesn't really hurt. We'll get those papers drawn up so you can sign them at my office on Tuesday."

"Sounds good," Dean agreed. "My lawyer and I will drop by sometime in the morning."

"When can we move in?" Cas asked hesitantly.

"Once the paperwork is signed, which should be done by Tuesday, then it's all yours," she assured him.

Dean and Cas went through that same day and picked out colors for the rooms so that the painters could get in there as soon as possible after the papers were signed. Dean picked blue for the kitchen, while Cas picked green for the living and dining room area; they chose the color for the bedrooms—a deep shade of purple—together.

That next day they went to a small privately-owned gallery to pick out the furniture for their home. Cas tried not to giggle as Dean went from bed to bed, pretending to test for firmness.
"You're going to get us kicked out!" He hissed between giggles as Dean lay down on yet another bed and bounced around some.

"Cas, if I'm going to sleep on this mattress for the rest of my life, I need to make sure it fits me!" Dean protested.

"You and I both know that you're going to end up choosing a memory foam mattress anyway," Cas muttered. Dean contemplated what he'd said for a moment before nodding.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. Still, no harm in testing the possibilities!" And then he was moving onto the next bed, this time pulling Cas down with him.

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

When Cas showed Balth and Inaias pictures of the condo at lunch on Monday, Balth let out a low whistle.

"Cassie, this is really nice. Like, really, really nice."

"Yeah, we looked at a couple others, but then this one just felt right," he explained.

"Ooh, hot tub!" Inaias exclaimed after the next picture.

"You have three bedrooms there," Balth commented lightly, and Cas nodded.

"Yes, we do have a guest bedroom for you to crash in if you're ever in New York, but you can't move in permanently, according to Dean."

"Damn! There goes my plan to become a kept woman," Balth muttered under his breath.

Cas laughed and shook his head. "Uh-uh! I'm not about to share my alpha with anyone, especially not someone who eats anchovies!" He made a face at Balth's pizza. "You'll make his mouth taste all nasty."

Balth rolled his eyes. "Please, Cassie! Give me a little more credit than that. Real professionals don't kiss their marks. Helps us keep the emotional distance." He winked at Cas. "Really, though. Three bedrooms is a lot of space. Any plans? You know, of the nine-month to life variety?"

Cas snorted and rolled his eyes. "No, Dean and I are waiting for that."

"Just like they were waiting to get mated," Inaias whispered to Balth. Cas kicked him under the table.

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

When Cas returned with Dean to the apartment two weekends later, all the rooms were painted and the furniture situated. They walked through, changing small things here and there. Cas put the picture that John had given him for Christmas on the mantle, and Dean added a couple of his own small touches.

"You know, I think it turned out really good," Cas observed as he settled down onto the couch.

"You know, I think I agree with you," Dean replied as he bent over to kiss the omega. Cas giggled. He tangled his fingers in Dean's tie and used it to pull the alpha down over him. He met Dean's mouth with his, giggling breathlessly.
"There's this old tradition," Dean informed between kisses.

"Oh really?"

"Yes, you may have heard of it. It's called christening the house," the alpha murmured as he began to kiss his way down Cas's neck toward his mating mark.

"Sounds painful," Cas observed, but Dean just chuckled.

"Oh, trust me, sweetheart, it's actually a lot of fun."

Several hours later, as Cas and Dean lay panting and sweaty on the floor of the laundry room, Cas chuckled.

"You're right; this is a lot of fun."

Dean propped himself up on an elbow so he could drop a kiss to Cas's mouth. "And just think, we still have three rooms to go!"

Cas groaned as Dean began to kiss his way down his torso. "I don't know if I can handle three more rooms just yet!" He let out a small shriek when Dean suddenly attacked his tummy with a raspberry.

"Dean!" He giggled, twisting to get away, but Dean kept tickling his sides. "Dean!" He screeched.

"I can't help it! It's so soft!" Dean cried as he pressed a kiss to the skin there.

Cas sighed wearily. "Yeah, I know. I think mated life is agreeing with me a little too well. Maybe I should get a gym membership."

"But I like it!" Dean protested.

"Do you really?" Cas murmured shyly. Dean smiled softly and kissed his tummy again.

"Absolutely."

He'd just started kissing his way back up to Cas's mouth when the doorbell rang. They both froze for a split second, staring at each other with wide shocked eyes as they remembered their plans for the evening.

"Shit, what time is it!" Dean asked as he sat up.

"I don't know!" Cas replied as he jumped up and hurried out to the kitchen. The clock read six p.m. He grabbed Dean's pants from the kitchen floor and threw them at him. "Your shirt's in the living room. Go get dressed and let him in!"

"Yep!" Dean agreed as he struggled into his pants and then hurried toward the living room while Cas ran to the bedroom to change into some fresh clothes.

Dean pulled on his shirt and was buttoning it as he ran toward the door, calling out, "One second!"

At the last moment, he spotted Cas's frilly white panties lying under the coffee table. "Shit!" He hissed as he ducked to pick them up and then stuffed them in his pocket.

He finally made it to the door and flung it open, a wide smile plastered on his face. "Hey, Dad! You're early!"
John glanced down at his watch, his brow furrowing. "I thought we said six?"

"Yeah, but who actually arrives on time these days?" Dean joked.

John stared at him, his expression flat. "You guys were christening the place, weren't you?"

"Uhhh..." Dean ran a hand over the back of his neck. "Maybe?"

John rolled his eyes as he stepped into the apartment. "You both are hopeless. Where's Cas?"

"Here I am!" Cas called as he hurried from the bedroom. "Hey, John!" He moved forward to give the alpha a hug.

John hugged him quickly, and then started to pull back, when he suddenly drew up short. Cas smelled...different. He smelled sweeter and softer, somehow.

Before he could ask about it, the doorbell was ringing again, and Cas was moving away to answer it.

"Gabe!" He cried, pulling his brother into a hug. He turned to John, a wide smile on his face.

"John, this is my brother Gabriel. Gabe, this is my father-in-law, John."

"Pleasure to meet you," John greeted, extending his hand toward the younger alpha.

"Pleasure's all mine!" The young man assured him. Dean and Gabe exchanged their own greetings, and then Cas was offering them a tour of the place.

"The pizza should be here soon," he promised as they moved further into the condo. "We ordered deep dish," he confided.

"Ooh, what toppings?" Gabe exclaimed.

"Just pepperoni," Cas replied.

Gabe sighed. "I guess it'll have to do."

"You guess?" Dean asked with an arched brow.

"I mean, it sounds great!" Gabe burst out.

Cas chuckled and swatted Dean on the arm as he passed him. "Stop antagonizing my brother."

"No promises," Dean muttered.

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By the end of the evening, all four were at ease with each other. Dean had warmed up to Gabe considerably, especially after he started telling stories about Cas's growing up years, much to Cas's dismay. In retaliation, John told Cas embarrassing stories about Dean's teenage years until the omega's side was in stitches from laughing so hard. Dean couldn't even find it in himself to be upset, not with how happy Cas seemed.

When it came time for John and Gabe to leave, hugs and handshakes were exchanged all around.

As Cas pulled John into a tight hug, the alpha caught another whiff of that scent from before. Now that he'd had the evening to analyze it, he had no problem identifying the scent. He almost mentioned
it to the couple, but he knew that they hadn't quite caught on yet.

Instead, he smiled widely as he requested, "Call me with any news."

Cas scrunched his face up in confusion. "Okay. I mean, I don't think there'll be much news; I'm just back in classes for now."

"I know. Just keep in touch," John urged.

Cas nodded before turning to hug Gabe as well. "I'll see you next time?"

"Definitely," Gabe replied, nodding. He and John left the apartment together and headed toward the elevator bank.

As the two alphas waited for the elevator, they shared conspiratorial smiles.

"You smell it?" Gabe asked, and John nodded.

"Yeah, but I don't think they know yet."

Gabe chuckled softly, his face splitting into an eager grin. "They will soon enough."

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so... In case you want to know, it actually takes a very long time to buy a condo. Like, 45 days is the shortest amount of time I saw. However, I didn't start looking up info on buying condos until I wrote this chapter, and then I realized my mistake. In order to be realistic with the timeline, I would've had to write them looking at condos clear back in chapter 15 or so. Yeah. So, just be aware that this chapter takes some... *ahem*... artistic liberties with the timeline.

Ok, enjoy your last shmoopy chapter...bc things are about to get angsty!!!
Hehehehehehehehe
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

Dean didn't want a pup. He didn't want any more complications. So Cas would make sure that there would be no more complications.

Chapter Notes

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I don't know about you, but I can't think of a better way to ring in this year than with some good ol' angst!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cas leaned over the toilet, his entire body straining as he wretched into the bowl again. As he felt the bile burn his throat, he once again cursed Balthazar and his need to force ethnic foods upon his friends.

He didn't care how much Balth complained about culture; the next time that fucker tried to drag him to some tiny restaurant in the ghetto, Cas was putting his foot down. Culture be damned, he'd stick with his burgers and PB&J. At least they didn't make him die a thousand slow deaths the next morning.

He'd woken up minutes before to a wave of nausea that had him running into the bathroom in time to hurl into the toilet. As the vomiting gave way to dry heaving, his stomach spasmed violently.

When the heaving subsided, he reached up to flush the toilet then rested his forehead against the rim of the bowl, slowly pulling several deep breaths through his mouth so he wouldn't have to smell anything. He heard the bathroom door open, then Dean was there, his hand smoothing down his back.

"Hey, you okay?" He asked.

Cas nodded weakly. "I think that restaurant Balth dragged us to last night didn't agree with me."

"I'm sorry," the alpha muttered, his fingers carding through Cas's hair. Cas sighed and leaned into the touch, his eyes fluttering shut. "Maybe I should cancel my trip."

Cas shook his head. "I'm fine now; I think I just needed to get it out of there."

"You sure?"

"Positive. You go; you have that big meeting this afternoon," Cas recalled.

"Yeah, but I can call in," Dean assured him. "If you need me to stay here, I will."

Cas finally opened his eyes to look at the alpha. "Baby, it was just a tummy ache. I'm fine now."
"Promise," Cas replied. "Now go back to bed. I gotta get around."

"Nah, I'll go make breakfast," Dean decided. He gripped Cas by the hand and helped him stand. "Any requests?"

"Cinnamon raisin oatmeal," Cas said. He moved toward the sink and grabbed his toothbrush. He needed to get that nasty taste out of there before it inspired a whole new round of sickness.

"You got it," Dean called as he walked out toward the kitchen.

By the time Cas had showered and dressed, Dean had made himself scrambled eggs and bacon and Cas's oatmeal. Cas padded over to the coffee maker and went to pour himself a cup, but suddenly stopped, wrinkling his nose in distaste.

"Did we change coffee brands?" He asked as he set the coffee pot back on its base without pouring himself any.

"Nope," Dean replied without looking up from his iPad.

"Ugh, it smells awful!" Cas muttered as he moved to sit across from Dean at the table.

Dean frowned down at his own cup. "I didn't make it any different."

"Maybe it's still my stomach acting up," Cas guessed as he took a bite of his oatmeal.

Dean arched an eyebrow at him but said nothing as he looked back down to finish reading his article.

After breakfast, Dean walked Cas to the door. He bent down to give him a quick kiss. "Promise you'll call if anything happens?"

"Promise," Cas murmured against his lips. "I'll see you on Friday afternoon?"

"Yeah, I'll pick you up from the airstrip," Dean assured him.

"Okay. Have a good trip today," Cas said as he stole one more quick kiss.

"Have a good trip on Friday," Dean replied as Cas slipped out the door.

"Love you!" Cas called over his shoulder.

"Love you, too," Dean called after him.

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

At lunch, Cas shot Dean a quick text to let him know that he was feeling much better. He knew Dean was probably still in his meeting, but the alpha still sent him a winky kissy face in return. Cas giggled as he pocketed his phone.

"Care to share?" Balth asked, interrupting his thoughts.

Cas rolled his eyes, "Not particularly."

Balth sighed heavily, like Cas's withholding information was the greatest trial of his life, but
continued on with what he'd been saying. "Anyways, there's this delectable little cafe down on Madison that we have to try!"

"Uh, no," Cas immediately replied. Balth and Inaias both looked to him, and he shrugged. "That place you took us to last night made me sick."

Balth arched an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Yeah, so no more suggestions from you," he teased.

"Did Dean get sick too?" Balth wondered.

"No, just me."

"Well, that's odd!" Balth looked to Inaias. "Neither of us got sick."

"And I ordered the same thing as you," Inaias supplied.

"So maybe it wasn't the food from last night that made you sick this morning," Balth concluded. His mouth was twisted up in a small smirk, and Cas had to think for a moment before he realized what he meant.

"Haha, very funny, assholes," he muttered defensively.

Balth held his hands up. "Hey, I'm just saying. I mean, given how much you two go at it, it's not completely out of the realm of possibility."

"Actually, it is, since I'm still on suppressants," Cas countered.

"Those things aren't foolproof," Inaias pointed out, and Cas rolled his eyes.

"Guys, I think I would know if I were pregnant," Cas defended. Balth and Inaias exchanged knowing glances.

"Okay, Cassie. If you say so," Inaias allowed.

"No need to sound so condescending about it, fucker," Cas muttered. Inaias just winked at him.

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

Cas woke up the next morning, his stomach offering a violent heave. He jumped out of bed and ran to the bathroom. Dropping to his knees, he hugged the cold glass base as he threw up.

He'd had chicken alfredo for dinner the night before, something that he always ate, so he couldn't really blame this sickness on the food. Even as the bile burned its way up his throat, Cas's mind was whirling, making his pounding headache even worse. It took several more heaves before he was able to stop wretching.

He reached up to flush the toilet then slowly slumped down onto the floor until his flushed cheek rested against the cool tile. He lay there, limp and boneless, his eyes unseeing as he stared at the base of the tub.

"Fuck," he whispered.
Cas didn't know how long he lay there on the floor before he was able to get up and drag himself back to their bedroom. He huddled under the comforter, his entire body shaking as his mind raced with the possibilities. He could just have some kind of flu? Or maybe the chicken had been out of date?

But even as his desperate mind supplied excuse after excuse, it also countered with evidence after evidence as to why there was no other possibility but...that. His tummy was softer; his scent was different; his sense of smell had changed, if the coffee from the day before was anything to go by. The sickness was another big one.

His hand slowly slid down to cover his stomach, but he yanked it back quickly. No! He wasn't doing that, allowing himself that, until he was sure.

He didn't go into class that day, and he ignored Balth's and Inaias's calls and texts throughout the morning. After eating some oatmeal for lunch, he pulled on jeans and one of Dean's t-shirts then threw on his coat and headed down to the Walgreens on the corner. He didn't know shit about pregnancy tests, so he grabbed three different brands, a gallon of orange juice, and a bottle of Pepto-bismol before paying and heading back up to the condo.

He had to drink three glasses of the juice before his bladder felt full enough for the first test. After he followed the instructions, he placed the stick flat on the sink counter then sat on the toilet, staring at it anxiously as he waited for the result to show. Within two minutes, he found himself staring at a tiny blue plus sign.

He walked back out to the kitchen and paced around the island, gulping down more orange juice. After four more cups, he returned to the bathroom and pulled out the next test. He peed on the stick then set it on the counter, staring at it again, silently praying for a different result. This time, two pink lines showed, but it meant still the same thing: positive.

Cas struggled to hold back the tears, but it was a lost battle from the start. Within seconds, the sobs had started. Cas didn't even bother with the third test; he knew what it would say. He stumbled back to the bedroom and threw himself on the bed, burying his face in Dean's pillow as he sobbed out his anger and fear.

Dean didn't want pups yet; he'd made that perfectly clear on more than one occasion. But now... Cas knew he had to tell him, but he didn't know how his alpha would react. What if he didn't want the child? What if he refused it?

Cas knew there were other options, if that ended up being the case, but the thought had no sooner crossed his mind before he was shoving it away. He would keep this pup, no matter what. Even if he lost Dean over it, he wouldn't give this up. It was his and Dean's, and he deserved to have that, deserved to have something that belonged to them both.

Cas's hand smoothed down over his flat stomach that was already softening, and he let out a hysterical giggle. Dean had said that he liked the softness. He probably wouldn't have said that if he'd known what was causing it.

"Don't worry, baby," he whispered. "Even if your daddy doesn't want you, he'll still do right by you. He's a good alpha, and he'll take care of us."

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The next day, Cas was back in class, his usual smile plastered on his face. He kept up his banter with Balth and Inaias, complained about Metatron being a hardass, ate lunch with them. He brushed off
his absence with an excuse about oversleeping his alarm and staying in bed. It was partially true, at least.

He left the school that afternoon with assurances that he would see them on Monday. As he drove back to the apartment, he finally allowed his cheerful facade to drop, leaving him empty and cold and panicked. He packed a small bag with some toiletries, moving through the motions mechanically as he contemplated how to approach the pregnancy with Dean.

He could just say it at dinner, no buildup, no drama, just drop it in the middle of talking about his classes. He immediately dismissed the idea; he couldn't just throw something like this at Dean without some preparation.

He mulled it over on the entire ride to the airstrip, only offering the briefest of responses to Benny's attempts at conversation. He decided to do it after dinner, maybe when they were curled up on the couch. Cas figured if Dean was in a good mood, he'd take the news better. Cas would start out by reminding him of all the problems they'd overcome, how they'd come so far already. He'd build up to it then make it sound like the best thing that could happen to them.

When Benny opened his door and he got out, he smiled at the driver. "Thank you. Sorry I was a little distracted," he apologized.

Benny waved his hand dismissively. "We all have those days. I just hope everything works out for ya."

"Me too," Cas mumbled as he moved toward the plane.

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He texted Dean when he was an hour out to let him know he would be landing soon. The text had no sooner sent than his phone was ringing, Dean's picture filling up his screen.

He answered with a hesitant, "Hello?"

"Hey, baby," Dean greeted softly. Cas could hear voices in the background, and he knew that Dean had to be in a meeting. "Listen, I just had a meeting come up, so I'm going to be here for a few more hours. I'll have dad's driver pick you up."

"Of course," Cas replied. "What time will you be home?"

"I have no idea!" Dean growled. "These assholes are being very uncooperative right now."

Cas sighed internally; that did not sound promising. "Okay, well, text me when you're on your way home."

"Will do," Dean promised.

"I love you," Cas said, but Dean had already hung up.

Cas tried not to let the abrupt end to the call affect him. Dean was just busy; he hadn't really meant anything by it. He probably didn't even realize that he'd done it.

His ride from the airstrip to their condo was spent in silence. He didn't know John's driver, an alpha named Gadreel, like he did Benny, so he didn't try to strike up a conversation—not that he was really in a talkative mood. Once he managed to drag his two bags up the elevator to the condo, he sent a quick text to Dean.
There was no response, not even an emoticon like usual. Cas sighed and tossed his phone onto the end table as he slumped down onto the couch. He turned the tv on and flipped through the channels until he found a documentary about bees on the Discovery Channel.

He hadn't realized how tired he was, but as he watched, he found his eyes drooping shut. He struggled to keep them open, wanting to remain awake in case Dean made it home earlier than he'd anticipated, but within minutes, he'd drifted off.

When Cas opened his eyes again, it was dark in the room, and the tv had been shut off. He sat up, and a blanket that had been placed over him fell to the floor. He knew that Dean had to be home, but before he could go looking for him, he heard his voice filtering out from the kitchen.

"No, they spent the entire meeting blocking our proposal!" He said. It took a moment for Cas to realize he was on the phone. He immediately felt the pull to go to Dean and comfort him, but he didn't want to interrupt his call.

Dean spoke again. "I swear, Sanders better have a damn good excuse for the shit he pulled in there! He essentially bribed the committee into accepting his proposal! Yes!"

It was rare that Dean grew angry, and even rarer that he let that anger show. Cas trembled softly, his heart beating rapidly. This did not bode well for his plans. If Dean was already pissed, he couldn't possibly bring up the pregnancy and expect the alpha to be understanding.

"Sorry, sorry!" Dean muttered. "I've just been really on edge lately, you know? I mean, first there was the whole thing with Cas's parents, which was a disaster from the start. Thousands, Dad. That's how much I had to pay to get them off our backs. And then we barely get some down time, and now this!"

Cas felt his heart wither in his chest. He'd known that Dean wasn't thrilled about paying his parents, but he hadn't realized how upset he was about it. Cas knew that it was his fault, even if Dean claimed otherwise, and he knew that Dean had to blame him at least a little bit. And now he was about to make it worse.

He brought his knees up to his chest and wrapped his arms around them, tightening up into a ball as he listened to Dean speak.

"I don't know if I can take any more of these complications," Dean admitted. "We just need to..."

Dean's voice faded away as Cas's mind slipped back to a warm summer night when he and Dean had just started dating. They'd been standing on Cas's stoop, exchanging their farewells when Cas had looked up at Dean like he was his whole world and whispered, "I want you to be my first. I... I think I'm ready."

And Dean's first response had been, "You need to make sure that your current suppressant includes birth control. We can't really afford any complications."

And now, there was a complication. Despite the suppressants, Cas had managed to fuck up somehow. He'd gotten pregnant before Dean was ready. Maybe if he hadn't wanted it so badly...

But he had. He'd begged Dean for a pup, just like Naomi had said, and now he was going to have one. Naomi had been right; he was going to trap Dean in a life of misery. He'd already cost the alpha thousands of dollars; having a pup would cost exponentially more.
He couldn't do that to Dean. He couldn't trap him like that.

His attention was pulled back to Dean when he heard the alpha ending his call. "Yeah, I have to go back in tomorrow, but hopefully we can resolve it by lunch. Yes sir, I'll call and let you know."

He pulled the blanket back up over himself and flipped over to face the couch, hoping that Dean wouldn't try to talk yet. He knew that there was no way he could talk to him without breaking down. When Dean walked into the living room, Cas gave no indication that he was awake. He heard Dean pad across the floor in his socks, and then his fingers were brushing down Cas's arm.

Cas didn't move, resolutely remaining silent. After a couple of minutes, Dean sat down on the couch next to him and gently shook him. "Cas, Cas baby."

Cas slowly rolled over to face him, blinking a few times for good measure. He forced himself to smile softly, like nothing was wrong

"Hey, baby. How was the meeting?"

"Fucking awful," Dean muttered as he bent down for a kiss. Cas tried not to react any differently than usual, returning the kiss eagerly even though he wanted to pull away. It felt wrong, kissing Dean like this when Cas was withholding so much.

"Bed?" Dean murmured eventually, and Cas nodded. Dean scooped him up in his arms and carried him to their bedroom. He undressed Cas then himself before crawling into bed and spooning up behind the omega.

"I love you," he whispered, pressing a soft kiss to the shell of Cas's ear.

"I love you, too," Cas whispered, struggling to keep his voice even. As Dean settled into sleep, Cas kept staring straight ahead at the wall. His entire chest ached, and his eyes burned. He felt the first tear gather in the corner of his eye, then slip down across the bridge of his nose, down his opposite cheek, down to the sheet below. It was followed by another then another, until he was weeping silently, his tears soaking the sheet beneath his head.

*It doesn't have to be like this,* the voice in his head whispered. *You can tell him, and he might accept it.*

Cas pushed the voice away. Dean didn't want a pup. He didn't want any more complications. So Cas would make sure that there would be no more complications.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think?? Angsty enough for ya? Haha, yes!

Okay, I will admit that I suck at writing about sickness...it makes me woozy to overthink it, so if the morning sickness bits aren't the greatest, I do apologize...

Okay, have a great day! Leave me comments!
Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

Cas slowly walked through the apartment, each step taking a monumental effort on his part. His heart hammered in his chest, and his blood pumped loudly in his ears. He could feel the tears pricking at his eyes, but he blinked them back. Now was not the time.

Cas counted it a blessing when Dean left very early the next morning before his morning sickness set in. He tried not to think about the fact that the last time Dean saw him would be when he was pretending to be asleep. He felt his breath catch in his throat at the soft kiss that Dean brushed over his temple, and he felt fresh tears start to well.

"I love you, omega," Dean whispered as he ran his hand through Cas's hair. Cas once again considered abandoning his plan, but he knew that he had to remain strong. Dean would thank him, in the long run.

It wasn't long after Dean left that Cas's body forced him to the bathroom for his new morning routine. Once the sickness had passed, Cas forced himself to wash up and get around. He dragged himself through the motions, panicking at the thought of what he was about to do.

*Just stay,* that same hopeful voice from the night before pleaded. *Stay with your alpha and talk it out. He doesn't deserve this.*

Cas ignored the voice in favor of packing up a small duffel bag, the only thing he was taking with him. He didn't take any of the frilly panties or the naughty toys. He didn't take any of the pretty clothing or the flashy collars. He left everything but a few changes of clothes.

He left his cell phone on the nightstand and his titanium bracelet that Dean had given him for Christmas right next to it. He'd considered leaving it at that, but he knew that Dean would think the worst if he didn't leave some kind of note, so he took a second to scrawl out three short sentences on a steno pad in the drawer. He placed the note next to his phone, that way Dean could find it easily.

He slowly walked through the apartment, each step taking a monumental effort on his part. His heart hammered in his chest, and his blood pumped loudly in his ears. He could feel the tears pricking at his eyes, but he forced them back. Now was not the time.

He reached for the doorknob, his hand hesitating for the briefest of moments before he grabbed onto it and twisted. He paused in the open doorway to turn and take one final look at the apartment. His eyes landed on the mantle, on the picture of him kissing Dean's cheek in front of the big Christmas tree in Chicago, and he felt a sob catch in his throat. Before he could even consider what he was doing, he was rushing across the room to snatch the frame and stuff it in his bag.

He spun around, tears misting his vision as he strode purposefully toward the door. He didn't pause this time, he just walked straight through, shutting the apartment door behind him without a backward glance.

He rode the elevator down to the lobby, his back ramrod straight as his eyes watched the floor
numbers tick down. He rushed from the building, holding on to his resolve tighter than ever before.

"Taxi, please," he asked the doorman. The older gentleman waved down a taxi, and Cas climbed into the back. He listed off the address then allowed himself to slump down into the seat. As the taxi moved through the bustling city streets, Cas could feel his heart aching in his chest.

It reminded him of another time when he'd run away, another time his heart had broken in the backseat of a taxi. Just like then, he willed himself to keep it together, to not cry, to not collapse emotionally in the back seat of a fucking cab. And just like then, he failed. As the tears began to slip down his face, he wrapped his arms around his midsection, his hands smoothing over the material there.

By the time the cab arrived at his destination, his eyes were itchy and red-rimmed, his nose was runny, and his cheeks had tear-tracks staining them, making them feel tight and unnatural. He paid the driver with cash then climbed out, carrying his small duffel bag with him.

He walked up to the locked door of the apartment building and pressed the button for G. Novak. It took a couple minutes, but eventually he heard the sleep-groggy voice of his older brother. "Hello?"

He cleared his throat. "Gabe, it's Cas. I, uh... I need your help."

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Dean glanced down at his phone for what felt like the fifth time in as many minutes. Usually Cas would have texted him by now, something quick and cute to let him know that he was thinking about his alpha. But no texts had come through.

He decided to send out the first text. *Stuck in a boring meeting. Save me.* He included an emoticon making a gagging face. There was still no response. Maybe Cas was in the shower?

A few minutes later he tried again. *I should be done by 11:30. Where do you wanna go for lunch?*

Again, there was no response. Maybe Cas had left his phone charging in the room? He tried twice more, but both times his texts went unanswered.

When they had a break in the meeting, Dean stepped out into the hall to call Cas. The phone rang until it went to voicemail. He hung up with a sigh. Maybe Cas was sleeping? He'd seemed tired the night before.

He thought about calling again, but then his coworker was frantically beckoning to him from the conference room, and he knew he had to get back in there. He shot out one last text, *Text me when you wake up*, before pocketing his phone and heading back inside.

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

The meeting didn't end until 1:30, but Cas still hadn't called or texted. Dean didn't even wait around afterward to exchange the usual empty pleasantries. He just grabbed his coat and took off for the condo, practically running down the street. Something didn't feel right about this.

He made it to their building in record time, barely acknowledging the doorman's greeting as he ran inside. As he rode the elevator to their floor, he watched the numbers tick upward, his fingers drumming out an anxious rhythm against his leg.

When the elevator stopped on his floor, he rushed out, fumbling with his keys as he approached the door. It took him a couple seconds, but he finally managed to unlatch the door and push it in.
"Cas?" He called as he stepped into the apartment. Everything felt too still, too quiet. "Cas!" He called again as he hurried toward the bedroom.

As soon as he stepped into the bedroom, he saw it. The short note scrawled on yellow steno-pad paper froze him in place. He stared at the note, weighted down by the phone and bracelet, and willed himself not to panic. He forced his feet to move toward the nightstand, eyeing the note like it was a venomous spider about to lunge at any second.

He gingerly picked up the note, his eyes reading and re-reading the three short sentences again and again. *I'm sorry. I just need some space to think. I'll be in touch soon.*

What? Where the hell had Cas gone? Why did he need to think? He'll be in touch soon? As in, not returning? The wording made it sound like he was going to drop a line, maybe send a postcard. It didn't sound like he was planning on returning.

That couldn't happen. Dean needed to get his mate back now.

He yanked his phone out and dialed the first person who came to mind.

"Dad?" He croaked.

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Cas sat at Gabe's kitchen bar, his fingers wrapped tight around a mug of chamomile tea.

"Cassie, you need to call him," Gabe urged.

Cas shook his head as he brought the mug up to draw another small sip. "No!" He replied petulantly as he set the mug back down.

"He's your alpha, and he deserves to know," Gabe chided.

"I know who he is," Cas growled. "And I already told you, he doesn't want pups."

"Really? Did he tell you that?" Gabe challenged.

"Yes!" Cas replied vehemently. "Several times!"

"Well, he still needs to know. It's wrong to keep it from him," Gabe countered. "I bet he's freaking out right now."

"I left a note," Cas muttered defensively.

"Oh yeah, cause that's a sufficient explanation," Gabe shot back.

"Look, Gabe, I wanted to tell him, I really did! But then..." He trailed off, his mind replaying that painful conversation he'd overheard the night before.

Gabe laid a gentle hand on his arm. "Yes?" He prodded.

"You know that he paid dad, right? He said it wasn't for me, that he was just doing it because they were my parents, and he wanted to help them out. But he gave them ten thousand. Ten fucking thousand, Gabe!"

"And? What? You figured you'd repay him by running away?" Gabe arched an eyebrow.
"No! I just... I didn't think that it bothered him too much, but then last night I overheard him talking to John, and he sounded pissed about it. And then he was talking about how things had just settled down and how he didn't want any more complications..." Cas trailed off, fresh tears spilling over as he stared vacantly into his tea.

"And a pup would be a complication?" Gabe wondered, and Cas nodded. "Why?"

"He told me so," Cas explained. "He said that he doesn't want them yet. He had a really fucked up relationship with John until recently, and he thinks it'll make him a bad father."

"Well, maybe it's up to you to show him otherwise," Gabe suggested. Cas shook his head.

"He doesn't want it, Gabe, and I won't force it on him."

"Cassie..." Gabe murmured, his eyes hesitant. "I just don't know."

"It's not up to you, Gabe. It's my decision, and I need some time to figure out what to do," Cas barked out. He took a deep breath to calm himself before asking, "Are you going to help me or not?"

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It didn't take long for John's PI to track down Gabe's address. As soon as he called Dean with the information, the alpha took off down the stairs toward the lobby, too impatient to wait for the elevator. He ran out to the street and hailed a cab.

As he jumped into the back seat of a cab, he gave the driver Gabe's address. "I'll give you fifty extra if you can make it in under ten," he promised.

The car lurched forward as the driver sped away, weaving through traffic, even drifting on a couple turns. Dean held onto the seat in front of him, his foot tapping anxiously as he watched the driver's progress through the windshield.

The car screeched to a stop in front of Gabe's apartment at exactly ten minutes. Dean pulled out a bill from his wallet and tossed it up. He leaped from the car, ignoring the driver's call that he'd given him a hundred. He ran for the door, pausing to scan over the names by the buzzers. He found G. Novak and mashed down the button.

There was no response. He tried again, pressing it twice more, but still no answer came.

"Come on!" He muttered impatiently, pressing down again. He was vaguely aware that he probably looked like an insane man to people passing by, but he found that he didn't care.

Insane was the exact adjective that Gabe would have used to describe Dean Smith when he walked up his street and found the alpha insistently ringing his buzzer. Gabe thought about approaching him, but then he realized that he didn't really need any more confrontation that day. He spun around to head back in the other direction, but then he heard Dean yelling after him. "Hey! Hey! Gabe!"

He tried walking faster, like he hadn't heard the insane man yelling after him, but then Dean yelled, "Don't pretend like you don't hear me! I see you!"

Gabe sighed and slowly turned back around, an appeasing smile on his face. "Dean-o! What brings you around today?"

"Where is he?" Dean demanded.
"Who?" Gabe asked, feigning ignorance.

"You know who!" Dean growled, stepping right up into Gabe's space.

"Dean, have you been learning about personal space from Cassie?" Gabe teased. Dean just glared at him. Gabe held up his hands in an appeasing gesture. "He's safe, I promise! He's with friends of mine."

"He should be with me!" Dean corrected.

Gabe sighed and glanced away before looking back at the older alpha. "Look, Dean, I like you. You seem like a good guy. But Cas is my brother, and if he wants some time to himself, then who am I to say otherwise?"

Dean's glare faltered as he shook his head, his voice raw as he pleaded, "Gabe, he's my mate! I know that you're trying to do right by him, but I have to find him. I have to bring him home."

Gabe grimaced sympathetically. "I wish I could help you, I really do! But Cas has some...stuff he's working through, and it's not my place to tell."

"Please, just tell me what it is," Dean asked again.

"I can't; I promised him," he admitted. He ran a hand over the back of his neck, contemplating the options. Cas thought that Dean wouldn't want the pup, but one look at the desperate alpha before him proved much differently.

Dean sensed Gabe's hesitation and pushed his advantage. "Please, Gabe. Let me make this right. You know that I'm crazy about him; I..." He faltered for only a moment before quietly admitting, "I love him."

"And he loves you," Gabe finally supplied. He let out a gusty sigh. "But I can't break my word to him, Dean. I've already let him down enough; I can't do it again."

Dean let out a frustrated growl, running a hand through his hair. "What the hell am I supposed to do, Gabe? Just let him go?"

Gabe nodded solemnly. "He'll come back to you. He's too crazy about you not to."

Dean glanced away, trying to hide the fact that a tear had slipped loose. He was still staring off in the distance when he whispered, "Can you give him a message?"

"Definitely," Gabe hurried to agree.

"Can you tell him to come home? Please? I can't do this without him. I just can't," the alpha admitted brokenly. He finally looked back to Gabe, his lips pulled into a tight line. "Just... I'm begging him, okay? I'll do anything."

Gabe nodded, "I'll tell him."

Dean said nothing more. He turned and stumbled back down the street, his head hung low, his hands shoved into his pockets.

He'd never felt so powerless.
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

"Cas?" Dean breathed, staring at swell of Cas's shirt. "What the hell?"

Cas offered a tight smile. "Surprise?"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Four Months Later

Dean stared at the city skyline, completely oblivious to the meeting behind him. They were supposed to be discussing the new antibiotic that Smith Pharmaceuticals was about to release onto the market, but as usual, the men had digressed into talk of sports and boats and golf handicaps. Dean couldn't find it in himself to give a fuck about any of it.

His phone buzzed in his pocket, and he yanked it out, his breath catching in his throat. His heart immediately slumped when he saw that it was only a text from his father. He typed out a terse response to John's question about the meeting then shoved the phone back into his pocket.

He knew that he probably shouldn't be taking this out on John, but there was something off about the older alpha. He kept casting these guilty looks at Dean when he thought that Dean wasn't looking, like he knew something that his son didn't. Dean had tried asking him about it, but he just brushed it off, claiming it wasn't his place to interfere.

Apparently Cas had gotten to him and asked him to keep whatever was going on under wraps. Which meant that John knew what was happening, but he was purposefully withholding it from Dean. But if he knew something that could help get Cas back, why wasn't he sharing it? Why was he letting Dean suffer?

Everyday for four months, it had been the same. Anytime his phone dinged or the apartment buzzer announced a visitor, his heart missed a beat as his breath caught in his throat, waiting, hoping. And then he'd see that it wasn't Cas and he'd slump back to indifference.

He'd done everything to try to get in contact with Cas. He'd even taken over the New York branch so that he could stay in the city for when Cas called. But he hadn't called. It was torture to wait, and every time his heart slumped, it felt like a tiny piece chipped off.

He figured that it couldn't go on much longer. Either the day would come when it would be his omega, or the day would come when he'd stop expecting it to be. Until then, he kept holding his breath, kept waiting, stuck in limbo until something–anything–happened.

"Alpha Smith?" One of the men called. "We need your signature on these forms."

"Of course," Dean murmured, turning his attention back to the meeting.

-----------------
"How you feelin' today, Hon?" Ellen asked as she set a plate of toast and a cup of orange juice in front of Cas.

The omega smiled up at her gratefully. "Pretty good. It's started kicking," he announced proudly.

"Well! Isn't that something!" Ellen exclaimed. Jo, who'd been walking past, stopped at their table.

"Ooh, can I feel?" She asked, her eyes wide and eager.

Cas smiled hesitantly. "Um, sure, but it doesn't actually move very much yet. I guess that happens more later on?"

"Oh," Jo muttered as she headed away toward the kitchen.

"It does," Ellen confirmed as she set Gabe's plate of pancakes in front of him. "I remember when Bill was pregnant with Jo, she didn't get really active until the end of the second trimester."

"That's encouraging," Cas murmured as he watched Gabe pour half a bottle of syrup over his chocolate chip pancakes, his face reflecting his disgust. He could feel his stomach roil at the sight, and his hand smoothed over his bump almost unconsciously. At twenty-two weeks along, his stomach was growing more prominent every day.

"Well, that won't be long now," Cas said. "And he's getting bigger every day."

Ash, who'd been loping past on his way to the bathroom, paused to eye Cas's belly. "I'd say it's about the size of a papaya," he determined then continued on toward his destination.

Ellen rolled her eyes. "That dumbass doesn't know what he's talkin' about. Anyways, we've got a job tonight for some charity event, and I can use all the servers I can get. You in?"

"Yes!" Cas immediately agreed. "I could really use the cash." He ignored the face Gabe made at him.

"Okay, meet us here at 5:30," Ellen instructed before moving away to wait on other tables.

Cas brought his toast up to start nibbling on it, trying to avoid looking at the sugary mound on top of Gabe's plate.

"You know who would really like to feel the baby kick?" Gabe prodded.

Cas shot him a warning glare. "Gabe..."

Gabe ignored the warning. "Dean Smith, that's who. In fact, I bet he'd be downright thrilled!"

"Will you stop bringing him up?" Cas hissed, glancing around to make sure that no one had heard his brother say the name he didn't ever allow himself to say out loud.

"Are you going to call him today?" Gabe countered.

"No!"

Gabe shook his head. "Then no. Cassie, this little tantrum of yours has gone on long enough. I've tried to be understanding, but at this point, you're just being idiotic and selfish!"
"Shut up, Gabe!" Cas cried. "We've talked about this."

"Well, we're talking about it again," Gabe persisted. "You need to call him. He needs to know about the pup. I can guarantee you that he will still want to be part of your life."

"You can't know that," Cas argued. "I'm not going to force this on him."

"You know what, fine!" Gabe snapped. "But how do you think he'll feel when he finds out that his mate and baby are living in an apartment with two other alphas? Huh? How do you think he'll feel when he finds out that you're having money problems?"

"First of all, Jo and Ash are both good people. They wouldn't do anything to hurt me. Second, I'm not having money problems," Cas huffed. "I'm just trying to save up for when the pup gets here."

Gabe's eyes narrowed. "When the pup gets here? Cas, if I didn't know better, I'd say it sounds like you're not planning on going back to Dean."

Cas held his head up proudly, meeting Gabe's gaze head on. "So what if I'm not? He said he doesn't want any more complications; I'm just giving him what he wants."

"God, you're so proud!" Gabe seethed. "Just go to him and talk things out."

"Not until I'm ready, Gabe. You promised!" Cas reminded.

"Yes. I know." He threw down his napkin and slid out of the booth, pulling out his wallet and tossing down a twenty onto the table. "And I wish to God that I hadn't!"

He stormed out of the restaurant, leaving Cas alone at the table. Ash was returning from the bathroom then, so he slid into the spot Gabe had just left and started tucking into the leftover pancakes.

"You do realize that those are nothing but sugar?" Cas pointed out.

Ash shrugged. "Food is food."

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

Outside in his car, Gabe stared down at his steering wheel, trying to figure out what to do. He couldn't tell Dean, that much was certain, but he also couldn't let Cas ruin his life over one overheard phone call. He needed help.

He pulled out his phone and brought up the contacts list. He'd never thought the he would have a reason to call this number. The phone rang twice before a soft, professional voice answered. "John Smith's office."

"Hi, this is Gabriel Novak. I was hoping to talk to John about his son-in-law."

"Please hold," the woman responded. Peppy music filled the line as Gabe waited, and he hummed along.

When the line clicked again, it wasn't the receptionist like Gabe was expecting.

"Gabe!" John cried enthusiastically. "I've been waiting for you to call."

---------------------
Cas slumped down onto his tiny twin-size bed, letting out a soft groan as his feet screamed in relief. It had been another long night filled with a bunch of people who were too rich for their own good standing around bragging about their kids and dogs and boats. They had somehow managed to annoy the hell out of each and every one of the wait staff, which was really something. But rich people tipped generously, which was why they all kept doing it.

When Gabe had first sent him to Ellen’s, scared and alone and confused, the alpha had taken one look at him and said, "You'll need some prenatals, a place to stay, and a job to save up some money for when that pup gets here."

So that evening, he'd found himself working for her catering business as a waiter. And afterwards, he'd ridden home with Ash and Jo to stay in their spare bedroom until other accommodations could be found. He'd kind of just stuck around since.

He didn't really have much; the room was sparsely furnished, and he hadn't brought much with him to begin with. Other than a few pieces of maternity clothes that Ash's brother had left over from his pregnancy, he hadn't added much since. The only personal items he owned were the picture frame he'd grabbed from the mantle and some newspaper clippings about Zachariah's trial and arrest from the past few months.

Despite not having much, he still felt pretty okay. Well, other than the fact that he didn't have Dean. His roommates were good to him. He liked Jo and Ash, despite their quirks. They weren't romantically involved, but they somehow managed to act like an old married couple.

He sat up when someone knocked on his door. "Come in!"

Jo poked her head in, her smile soft and reassuring. "Hey, I'm about to head to bed. Need anything?"

"Nah! I'll be fine," Cas assured her. "Is Ash..." He let the question trail off.

Jo rolled her eyes. "That dumbass is set up at his computer again. Probably getting involved in all sorts of illegal shit." She yelled this last part over her shoulder.

"I'll just blame you," Ash yelled back.

Cas chuckled at the exchange. It was obvious that Ash and Jo were tight-knit. If they weren't both alphas, they probably could've made a decent go of it. Maybe they still would; who knew. He'd heard of alpha on alpha pairings, rare as they were.

"Well, good night," he said.

"Good night," Jo responded as she shut the door.

"You're going to be an active one, aren't you?" He murmured. The flutter came again, and Cas smiled to himself as he stripped out of his white shirt and black slacks.

Throwing on his pj's quickly, Cas climbed back into the small bed and snuggled under the covers. He stared up at the ceiling, and for the first time all day, allowed his mind to drift to Dean. This was the only time he let himself do it, the only time he allowed himself to concentrate on his alpha.

He knew that Gabe was right; Dean deserved to know about their pup and make his own choice. But every time Cas imagined telling Dean about it—and he'd imagined it countless times in countless ways—he could see it so clearly in his mind, the way Dean's face would fall. He'd try to smile and act excited, and maybe he'd even ask Cas to stay for a while. But it wouldn't be long until he was
regretting it, trapped in a mating with a pup he didn't want in the first place.

And Cas would watch him pull further away, day by day, until there was nothing but the pup left to link them. The love would be gone, the tenderness would be gone, the hope would be gone. Cas would be all alone, left with an unwilling mate, just like his mother. So really, him leaving Dean now was just saving them the slow, painful steps.

Tears started to leak out of the corners of Cas's eyes, streaming down his face to soak into the pillow below his head. He rested his hands on his bump, rubbing gentle little circles into the skin there. Maybe someday he'd see Dean again, and everything would be okay. Maybe it wouldn't hurt so much.

"Okay, that's enough," he breathed out. He never let himself think about Dean for very long; it always hurt too much. "We're going to go to sleep now, and we're not going to have any nightmares, right? This was our choice. Dean didn't abandon us. We can do this."

He shut his eyes, forcing himself to concentrate on other things, anything besides his alpha. He thought about work and the crazy lady with the dog down on the corner and the crib he'd need to start looking for soon and his next appointment with his obstetrician. Around and around his thoughts ran, always circling, always rushing, but never touching that one thought right there in the center.

But as sleep overtook him and he felt his body go lax, the image of bright green eyes shining in the afternoon sun flashed through his mind, searing into his brain for the rest of the night. So when Cas woke up at three a.m., crying and panicked and alone, those green eyes were the first image his frantic mind supplied.

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To: dsmith@smithpharmaceuticals.net

From: jsmith@smithpharmaceuticals.net

Subject: meeting on Friday

I need you in that meeting with Davis on Friday. It's a lunch meeting; starts at 11:30. Try to be nice this time.

John Smith
CEO, Smith Pharmaceuticals

***

To: jsmith@smithpharmaceuticals.net

From: dsmith@smithpharmaceuticals.net

Subject: Re: meeting on Friday

I'll be there. I'm not make any promises about the other part.

Dean Smith
Head of New York branch, Smith Pharmaceuticals

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Kevin just called in sick. Can you cover his shift for the business lunch today? You'd just be setting it up.

From: Cas
To: Ellen
Sent on Friday, June 12, 9:40 a.m.
Yeah, give me a few minutes to get ready.

Cas hurried into the Roadhouse, shoving his shirt tails into his slacks as he went. He waved at Jo behind the bar as he ran into the back.

"Hey!" He called.

Garth looked up from the order sheet he was studying, a dopey smile spreading across his face. "Hola, Amigo! You ready to kick some ass?"

Cas just rolled his eyes as he tried to grab the order sheet.

Garth yanked it out of reach, wagging his finger in Cas's face. "Uh uh uh! I'll handle this part. Go grab a couple of deli platters."

As they worked together to load up the refrigerated truck, Garth kept up a happy dialogue, updating Cas on all the cute things his girlfriend Bess had done since they last spoke. Cas gritted his teeth and kept his mouth shut.

Cas liked Garth, he really did, but ever since the dopey beta had started dating an alpha female the month before, it had been nearly unbearable. It's not that Cas was against all romance and love now, but the pain was still too fresh for him.

As they drove downtown toward their destination, Garth asked Cas about the baby.

"He's pretty okay; he's already kicking some," Cas murmured.

"That's so awesome! Can I feel?" Garth asked.

"Maybe later when it picks up more," Cas replied with a fond smile.

"Excellente! How's life treating you, other than that?" Garth wondered, but Cas just shrugged. He didn't really have anything to share, just sadness and pining and more sadness.

His eyebrows furrowed as he glanced around at their surroundings. He knew this neighborhood...

"Where's the place we're headed?" He asked, concern creeping into his voice.

Garth glanced down at the GPS. "Uhhhh, some kind of office?"

"Wow, that's great," Cas muttered. "What's the name of the office?" He asked as they pulled into an alley.

"Uhhhh, that place there," Garth replied as he pulled the truck to a stop outside of the service
entrance. Cas's eyes widened as he took in the company label on the door.

"I can't go in there!" Cas cried.

"Why not?" Garth wondered. "You got a restraining order or somethin'?"

"No... I just... I can't do it," Cas replied petulantly.

"Uh, I hate to break it to you, amigo, but you gotta. I can't set this up by myself, and there's not enough time to get someone else here." Cas just sighed heavily, so Garth asked, "Look, why is it such a problem for you to go into this office building?"

"I have a...friend who works here, and I really don't want to see him," Cas admitted.

Garth snorted. "Is that it? Cas, do you see how huge this building is? The chances of us seeing your friend are slim to none! And you know how it is; half the time no one even notices that we're there."

Cas still looked uncertain, so Garth tried a different tactic. "Look, how about we go do this really fast, like super-speed ninja fast, and then I'll take you for some Coldstone? How does that sound?"

Cas shot him an uneasy look. "Super fast?"

"Super-speed ninja fast," Garth replied with a grin.

Garth hopped out of the truck then moved around to Cas's side to help him step out. They loaded up the carts they used to transport food then pushed the carts inside, the door labeled Smith Pharmaceuticals slamming shut behind them.

Cas remained on edge and wary for the entire ride up to the fortieth floor. Then from the elevator to the conference room was another long trip; Cas's eyes scanned the area frantically for both Dean and possible hiding spots if he saw Dean. He was in the middle of planning an escape route through the Appalachian Mountains when a receptionist met them, interrupting his train of thought.

"Hi! You must be the caterers," she greeted enthusiastically. "I'm Charlie." Her eyes widened as they landed on Cas's bump. "Ooh, a baby!" She smiled up at Cas, "Now if you'll follow me, please!"

She practically bounced as she led them back to the conference room where they would be setting up. "Okay, so you can set up your goods over on that counter there. I will be out here at my desk if you need anything!"

"Thank you!" Garth called as the door shut behind her. "She was nice," he commented to Cas.

"Yeah, let's hurry up and get this shit set up," Cas muttered.

Out at her desk, Charlie picked up her handset and dialed in the extension.

"He's here!" she announced.

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Garth and Cas were nearly done setting up for the lunch meeting. The deli and cheese platters had all been set out, as had the breads and spreads.

Cas was growing antsier by the moment. The longer he stayed here, the greater the chance he'd see Dean. That couldn't happen. He had to disappear before his luck ran out.
"Hey, you think you've got this from here?" Cas asked Garth, already backing toward the door.

"Yeah, man. You gotta go to the potty? I hear that's common for pregnant people," Garth confided.

Cas squinted his eyes and tilted his head. "No. I'm going to wait out in the truck before my friend shows up."

"Ah, gotcha! Well, yeah, I guess I got it," Garth allowed, glancing around.

"Perfect; I'll be out in the truck," Cas said and then he hurried from the conference room straight to the elevator.

He pressed the down button twice, like that would somehow make the elevator arrive faster. He tapped his foot as he waited with his arms wrapped around his belly, watching impatiently as the number display above the doors slowly ticked upwards. He glanced around once or twice to make sure Dean hadn't appeared out of thin air, but he was completely alone in the hall.

The elevator dinged twice, and Cas breathed a sigh of relief as the elevator doors slid open. That sigh caught in his throat as the alpha who was already in the elevator glanced up from his phone, his brilliant green eyes meeting Cas's.

Cas froze utterly and completely, his mind in too much of a panic to do anything but stare. Even stunned as he was, he couldn't help breathing in that delicious scent that he'd been deprived of for so long, his eyes tracing the contours of his alpha's face, memorizing them all over again.

He normally would have been embarrassed from staring too long, but the alpha was studying him just as intently. His gaze swept over Cas, halting on his belly.

"Cas?" Dean breathed, staring at swell of Cas's shirt. "What the hell?"

Cas offered a tight smile. "Surprise?"

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so let me explain...keeping our boys apart for four months was such a hard decision for me. Like, so fucking hard. My thoughts kept fluctuating is much, like...do I want to reunite them quickly? Or do I want cas to be super pregnant when he and Dean see each other again? As you can see, the super pregnant option won out.

But, hey, now they're back together!! Yaaay!!! *crickets chirping*

Okay! Moving on! So many people left comments for the last chapter. Thank you so much! I love hearing from you all, and it literally brightens my entire day.

Okay, have a good night! Kisses!
Chapter 31

Chapter Summary

Dean shook his head as he shoved his finger in Cas's chest. "You should've trusted me, Cas. I promised you that I would always take care of you."

"I do trust you!" Cas argued.

"No, you don't," Dean contradicted forcefully. "Because if you did, you would've stayed. You wouldn't have run!"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

"Surprise?" Cas murmured hesitantly, his cheeks heating under his alpha's gaze.

Dean stared at his stomach, his eyes wide and shocked.

"Dean," Cas whispered. "Please, say something."

The alpha suddenly surged off the elevator, moving so quickly that it shocked Cas. He grabbed the back of the omega's neck in a firm grip and started pulling him back down the hall toward the executive offices.

"Four fucking months," Dean growled, "and all you have to say is surprise?"

"Dean!" Cas pleaded, tears pricking at the corner of his eyes. Arching his neck, he tried to break loose, but Dean just tightened his hold. Cas could smell his own fear, so he knew that Dean could scent it too, but the alpha didn't seem to care as he pushed him down the hall.

He shoved Cas into his office and slammed the door shut behind them. He glared at Cas, his eyes burning dark red. Cas had only seen him angry a few times for the entire duration of their relationship, and like those other times, Cas found himself truly afraid.

"You're hurting me!" He cried when Dean grabbed him and shoved him up against the wall.

"Yeah, well, I guess now we're even," Dean snarled, glaring at him. "What the hell were you thinking? What, once I got Zachariah off your back, you figured you didn't need me anymore?"

Cas tried to hold back the tears as he shook his head. That hadn't been it at all.

"Answer me!" Dean yelled, grabbing him by the shoulders and shaking him. "Is that all I am to you? A giant paycheck?"

"Stop! Please!" Cas burst out. "You'll hurt him!"

Dean froze immediately, his face paling. His eyes swept down toward his omega's prominent stomach, and for a moment he seemed utterly captivated. His hands fell from Cas's shoulders, and it almost looked like they were moving to touch the omega's stomach. But at the last minute, he pulled
"We'll talk about him later," Dean muttered, his gaze returning to Cas's. "Tell me why you left."

Cas's hand smoothed over his tummy. He shook his head feebly. "I was just giving you what you wanted."

Dean's eyes narrowed. "What I wanted?" he hissed. "You thought that I wanted this? Cas, there were days, weeks even, where I couldn't even eat or sleep because I was so worried!"

"Yeah, well, I haven't been doing much better!" Cas defended. "You think this has been easy for me? I've had to put up with losing you and being pregnant."

Dean leaned in closer to glare at him. "You didn't have to do anything. You chose to leave! You chose to stay away for four fucking months!"

Cas tried to keep his breathing steady, tried to keep his gaze on his alpha's. But Dean was so very angry, and Cas felt himself reverting to old habits, habits that he'd learned and perfected with a different alpha in a different lifetime.

He forced himself to put on his mask, the one he'd thought he'd never need again. He slid his face into its old vacant expression, if for nothing else but his own dignity. He wouldn't be surprised if Dean made him leave after this. Cas just had to make it until then; he had to put on a brave face. He could break down later when he was alone again.

"I already told you, I was just trying to give you what you wanted," Cas explained as evenly as he could.

"No!" Dean fumed. "When did I ever say that I wanted you to leave?"

"You said that you didn't want a pup yet," Cas countered.

Dean faltered for a moment. He had said that. He'd shoved it in Cas's face again and again that he wasn't ready for children. But now, with his child between them, even as angry and broken as they both were, he could feel the pull to it. He could feel his need to protect it and provide for it, just like he'd felt for Cas from the start.

"You should've talked to me," he accused bitterly, running a hand through his hair. "You shouldn't have just decided like that! We talked about this, clear back in August! Do you remember that? When you promised to be honest with me?"

"I was going to tell you," Cas explained. "But then I heard you talking about not wanting anymore complications and complaining about having to pay off Bartholomew, and I knew that a baby would just make things worse."

Dean shook his head as he shoved his finger in Cas's chest. "You should've trusted me, Cas. I promised you that I would always take care of you. I stood by you at Bartholomew and Naomi's house. I fixed everything for you, and then you repay me with this?"

"I do trust you!" Cas argued.

"No, you don't," Dean contradicted forcefully. "Because if you did, you would've stayed. You wouldn't have run."

"I did it to save you, okay?" Cas yelled, his voice desperate. His fingers curled into the front of
Dean's shirt. "I was trying to protect you from something you didn't want."

All of Dean's anger seemed to evaporate at once, and in its place, a devastating sadness settled. "Well, you didn't," he sighed as he disentangled Cas's fingers and moved away. "You just hurt me more."

"I'm sorry," Cas blurted, stepping after him. "Okay, I'm sorry! I thought I was doing the right thing. Please, I know I fucked up, and I know that you hate me, but..." He trailed off. Now that he was back with his alpha, he knew he couldn't leave him again. He couldn't bear to be separated from Dean any more. "I'll do anything to make it right. Please just don't send me away," he pleaded.

Dean stared straight ahead for several long moments as if deciding what to do. He finally turned back around to face Cas, his expression resigned. "I don't hate you."

Cas's breath caught in his throat, the first flutter of hope stirring in his chest. "You don't?"

"Cas, I could never hate you, ever," the alpha admitted sadly. "I need you."

Cas stepped closer, his expression hopeful. "Still? After everything?"

Dean nodded, his eyes wet. "Always."

"Are we... Does that mean we're coming back?" Cas asked hesitantly.

Dean's brow furrowed in confusion as he nodded. "Of course. You're my omega." He didn't even mention the pup.

Cas walked up to Dean and slid his arms around his neck. He raised himself up on tiptoes to kiss his alpha, a silent thank you, but Dean looked away at the last moment.

Cas felt like someone had sliced into his chest.

Dean removed his arms and muttered, "I'm going to need time, okay?"

Cas stepped back, his arms sliding around himself as his shoulders hunched inward. "Of course. I understand," he murmured, his voice small.

Dean ran a hand over the back of his neck. "Come on, let's get you home."

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

They drove in silence to Ash and Jo's apartment to pick up Cas's stuff. It was so forced and awkward, so crushing. Cas tried to start a conversation once or twice, but Dean gave nothing but terse, one-word replies, effectively shutting him down.

It had never been like this between them, not even when they first met. Cas couldn't help but wonder how he was supposed to win Dean's trust back when the alpha wouldn't even talk to him.

After the apartment, they stopped off at the Roadhouse so Cas could say bye to everybody. Dean stood just inside the door as Cas moved from person to person, offering farewells.

"That's him?" Jo muttered when Cas got to her, glaring at the older man.

Cas nodded. "Yeah, that's my alpha."

"All these months you've lived with us, and you cried every night for this guy. But now you're back
"with him?" she asked, and Cas nodded again. "Then why do you both look so miserable? If you love each other so much?" She questioned.

"Because I fucked up," Cas explained simply.

"Yeah, but you apologized, didn't you?" She asked.

Cas snorted softly "It's a little more complicated than that."

He moved on to Ellen and pulled her into a tight hug. "Thank you for everything."

"You're welcome," she murmured. "Look, I know he's mad right now, and he probably has every reason to be, but you gotta be patient. He'll come around; trust me."

Cas nodded and headed back for the door, but paused when Ellen called out, "Hey!"

He looked back to her, but found that she wasn't talking to him. She was talking to Dean.

"You take care of him," she ordered, pointing to Cas. "I know he's a dumbass, but he was trying to do the right thing."

Cas smiled at her gratefully, but Dean didn't respond at all. He just turned and walked out the door, leaving Cas to follow.

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

When they got back to the apartment, Dean took Cas's small bag to one of the guest rooms. He didn't say it out loud, but the message was plain. Cas wasn't going to be sleeping in their room with him anymore.

"I'll go get dinner ready. You should get some rest," Dean encouraged.

Cas nodded silently, but the alpha was already gone. As Cas climbed up into bed, he realized that they still hadn't talked about the pup. Dean still hadn't really even acknowledged it yet. If Cas needed any further proof of Dean's reluctance, that was it.

He buried his face in the pillow that didn't smell like him or Dean, his entire body shaking as he tried to stifle the sobs. Was this how it was going to be between them? Dean ignoring him and their child? Because if that was the case, why the hell had he bothered to bring them home at all?

Chapter End Notes

So a lot of you are *very* angry at Cas right now...I kind of feel bad that I've done this to him! Have pity on the poor thing; he's hurting too.

So, I'm planning on posting a few chapters today and a couple chapters tomorrow, so...if all goes according to plan, we should be done by tomorrow!!! Yay... *cue internal crying*

Okay, enjoy the chapter! I'll hopefully post the next one in a few hours!
Chapter 32

Chapter Summary

Dean stepped up to the omega and ducked to press a quick kiss to his cheek, sending tremors through Cas's heart.

"Thank you," he muttered before striding away toward his office.

Cas stood there for a long while, one hand resting on his stomach while the other moved up to touch the spot on his cheek, a tiny smile on his face. Yeah, they were making progress.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Dean and Cas fell into an uneasy pattern around each other as the days passed. Dean would go to work in the morning, and Cas would make sure to see him off. He never tried to kiss him again after the failed attempt in the office, but he'd always offer a small smile with a soft, "Have a good day."

Cas would spend the day puttering around the apartment, binge watching Netflix and picking up here and there. After his lunch, he'd go out for a walk around the block so that he and the pup could get their exercise. Then at four or five in the afternoon, he'd start cooking dinner so it would be ready for Dean when he returned from work.

That was where the difference from their previous relationship really showed. Some days, Dean would tell him about his day, and while it was nowhere near like old times, it was progress. But then some days were rougher than others, and on those days, Dean would barely look at him, and Cas would despair at ever reaching their former level of trust again.

But no matter how the evening went, whether Dean was congenial or cold, the nights always ended the same, with Cas going to the guest bedroom. He'd always make sure to say good night to Dean in hopes that the alpha would change his mind, and he'd always let himself foolishly think that tonight would be the night when Dean would let him back into their room. But it never happened.

So night after night he curled up with just himself and the baby in the giant bed in the guest bedroom, his hands gently cupping his abdomen as he promised his pup that everything was going to turn out okay.

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He never could have anticipated that the nightmares would start up again, not when he was safe at home with Dean with no real threats in sight. But they did. And every night in his sleep, he slipped further and further from his alpha, crying out for him but receiving no response.

One night he kept screaming louder and louder, determined that he would be heard, that he would force his alpha to pay attention to him. He couldn't ignore him for ever, and Cas knew that if he could get his attention once, he'd have it for good. So louder he screamed.

And then he was waking up to gentle hands on his face, large hands that cradled his cheeks and
thumbed at his tears. "Baby, calm down. Please stop crying, Sweetheart."

Cas reached up to cover the hands with his own, desperate for their touch. "Alpha," he whimpered. He turned his face to nuzzle into the warm palm. "Alpha, don't leave me."

Dean shushed him softly, his hands running through his hair and down his side. "I'm not going anywhere," he whispered.

The bed dipped beside him, and then his alpha was curling around him, his big body cocooning Cas, protecting him. Cas rolled over and buried himself against the alpha's chest, inhaling the spicy, comforting scent that could only come from his alpha.

"Don't leave me," he whispered as he began to drift off again.

"Never," Dean promised.

But when Cas woke the next morning, the bed was empty. The only evidence that remained of his late night visit was the scent that clung to Cas's bedsheets. As Cas stumbled through the apartment, he found it empty.

Usually he saw Dean off, but the alpha had ensured that that would not happen this morning. Cas felt a deep ache fill his chest as the alpha's message became clear. He would stay with Cas, but only at a distance. Because he was his alpha, and he needed him, not because he loved him.

Dean's behavior when he returned home that evening only reinforced Cas's suspicions. All throughout dinner, he refused to look at the omega, instead keeping his focus on his tablet. When Cas cleared away the dishes, the alpha barely offered him a nod before retreating to his room for the night. Cas heard the lock turn in the bedroom door, and with it, he felt his heart crack a little more in his chest.

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Despite the tension in the apartment, Cas tried to put on a brave face for the few times they went out to dinner with John. He'd laugh at his father-in-law's jokes and stories, and he'd blush softly when John would tease them about becoming parents, and he'd smile at Dean over his pasta. Dean would occasionally smile back, but more often than not those smiles were tight and forced, unnatural looking. Sometimes Cas felt like he could scream, it was so frustrating.

It was at one of these dinners, when Dean had tersely excused himself to the bar, that John confided, "You know he's really glad to have you home?"

Cas snorted and shook his head. "I'm not so sure about that." He glanced over to where Dean stood at the bar, waiting for his drink. "He never used to drink."

"It's not like he drinks a lot, just one drink here or there," John defended his son. He shrugged. "He just had a long day today."

"You know, he used to come to me when he had a long day," Cas murmured sadly. He looked back at John. "He used to trust me with everything, but now... Now he'll barely tell me anything."

"Give him time," John urged.

Cas offered him a watery smile. "I'm trying. But most days... It seems hopeless. I keep wondering why he brought us back at all."
John's brow lowered. "You're not thinking of leaving again?"

"No," Cas assured him. "I can't. The pup... I don't know if it's biology or what, but it knows. It knows that its alpha is here to take care of it." He shook his head. "I don't think either of us could bear to be away from him."

John smiled. "Have you told Dean that?"

"He doesn't like to talk about it," Cas explained, his hand resting on his bump protectively. "He...he didn't even ask me about it until I'd been living with him for almost a week."

"You should try bringing it up more; he'll warm up eventually. Us alphas can be pretty stupid when it comes to this shit; that's why nature made you guys the carriers."

Cas chuckled, but it soon died away. He didn't think Dean would warm up to him or to the pup.

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Despite John's advice, Cas rarely brought up the pup with Dean. Every once in a while something would slip out, like "It was really active today," or "This pup has the weirdest craving for pickled eggs." But from the way Dean always responded with silence and the occasional small smile, Cas guessed he didn't particularly care. So he tried to talk about it as little as possible.

However, it was inevitable that it would come up eventually. In all honesty, Cas hadn't planned on mentioning the appointment at all. But at dinner in August, Dean suddenly asked, "Do you have any big plans for tomorrow?"

Cas stared at him, his mind racing. Should he mention it? He didn't want to upset Dean, but he couldn't lie either. He finally nodded, his cheeks heating. "Yeah, I actually have my twenty-eight week checkup."

"Oh," Dean murmured as he brought another bite of chicken to his mouth. Once he'd chewed and swallowed, he looked back at Cas, his eyes nervous. "Can I come with you?"

The question was so unexpected, Cas could only stare at him for a moment or two. He finally managed to force out, "Of course! We'd love to have you along."

Dean smiled at his use of the word we; he was using it more and more often these days, and he didn't even notice most of the time.

"Awesome. Uh, just give me a time and place and I'll meet you there?"

"Yes. Missouri's going to be doing a few tests, just to make sure everything's going smoothly," Cas explained.

"Oh," Dean murmured as he brought another bite of chicken to his mouth. Once he'd chewed and swallowed, he looked back at Cas, his eyes nervous. "Can I come with you?"

The question was so unexpected, Cas could only stare at him for a moment or two. He finally managed to force out, "Of course! We'd love to have you along."

Dean smiled at his use of the word we; he was using it more and more often these days, and he didn't even notice most of the time.

"Awesome. Uh, just give me a time and place and I'll meet you there?"

Cas couldn't quite hide his eager smile as he began scooping up their dishes and carrying them to the kitchen.

The next morning, he made sure to write down the address for Missouri's office and the time for his appointment on a small slip of paper that he handed to Dean at the door when he left for work.

"I'll be there a little earlier than this, if you want to try to arrive about ten minutes ahead of time. If you can't get there til two, that's fine."
Dean smiled at him. "Thanks. I'll see you there."

"I'll see you there," Cas echoed faintly as Dean stepped out into the hall. As he shut the apartment door, Cas couldn't help the excited giggle he let loose. He looked down at his stomach, his voice soft and warm. "Your daddy's going to be at your appointment!" Cas laughed at the kick that the pup suddenly gave. "Yeah, I'm excited too."

Cas arrived to Missouri's office at 1:45, a little earlier than he'd told Dean. When 1:50 rolled around and Dean still hadn't arrived, Cas didn't think anything of it. But as the minutes ticked by and the alpha still didn't show, Cas felt his heart sink lower and lower.

Maybe he got held up by a meeting, the helpful part of his brain supplied, but Cas knew otherwise. The chances of Dean actually coming to this appointment had been slim to none, and Cas had known it from the start. He'd hoped, of course, but he'd known in the back of his mind that Dean wouldn't show.

At 2:15, the nurse came out to call Cas to the back. Cas let out a defeated sigh as he slowly stood and followed her to an examination room.

It was a few more minutes before Missouri finally made it to his room, and she immediately caught onto his sour mood.

"What's going on today, Castiel?" She asked as she settled into her chair.

Cas shrugged. "Not much. It's been pretty active lately, but..."

Missouri cut him off with a wave of her hand. "No, I'm talking about you! Today! Why do you look so sad?"

Cas's gaze fell to his folded hands in his lap. "Oh, uh... My alpha was supposed to come here with me, but, uh...he never showed."

Missouri chuckled and rolled her eyes. "Alphas! God save us from their stupidity sometimes. You know, he probably just got caught up at work or something."

"I'm sure," Cas agreed, but his broken heart whispered otherwise. Missouri pulled out her folder to begin asking the usual questions when a sharp rap sounded on the door.

"Come in!" Missouri called. The receptionist opened the door just enough to stick her head in. "I have an Alpha Smith out here who's looking for Castiel."

"Well, send him on in!" Missouri urged. Cas felt his heart soar with relief as Dean stepped into the room, his cheeks flaming and his breaths fast and heavy like he'd been running.

"Sorry I'm late; I got stuck on a call, and traffic was hell," he explained. He glanced at Cas and offered a small smile, and the omega smiled back beatifically.

"Watch your mouth, Boy!" Missouri chided. "We got little ears in the room," she explained, pointing at Cas's stomach.

"Sorry," Dean muttered.

"Just don't do it again. Go ahead and have a seat," the obstetrician encouraged, pointing toward one of the chairs in the room. As Dean settled into it, she turned her attention back to Cas.
"Now tell me, how often have you been exercising?" She asked as she continued scrawling in her file.

"Every day. I go out walking after lunch," Cas replied.

Missouri's brow furrowed as her lips pursed. "It's so hot then! Don't you get hot?"

Cas blushed a little bit. "Uh, yeah. But it's never too unbearable, and if it gets really hot, I usually cut my walk short."

Missouri thought for a moment. "I'd feel better if you went at a cooler time. Maybe you guys could go in the evening after you get home from work," she suggested with a pointed look at Dean.

Shaking his head, Cas immediately replied, "No, that's okay! Dean's usually so tired when he gets home from work, so I don't think—"

"Oh hush!" Missouri cut him off. "That's what he's there for." She looked to Dean. "You make sure to take him on his walks in the evening."

"Yes, ma'am. We'll start tonight," the alpha assured her. Cas was surprised at how easily Dean agreed to it. Maybe he didn't want to look like a bad alpha in front of Missouri?

"Good! Now Cas, let's go ahead and measure your abdomen," she instructed, none the wiser about what she'd just done.

When the appointment was over, Dean and Cas walked out to the parking lot together.

"Thank you for letting me come," Dean murmured as they stopped by Cas's car.

"Thank you for asking," Cas replied, a blush staining his cheeks. "I thought that maybe..." He bit his lip and trailed off. Now wasn't the time for accusations, since he'd obviously been wrong. "But, uh, never mind that. Are you headed back to work?"

"Yeah, I've got a couple things to take care of, but I'll be home around the usual time," Dean assured him. "Uh, we can go walking around 7:30, if that's all right?"

"Absolutely!" Cas hurried to agree.

"Awesome. I'll see you in a few hours," Dean said as he opened Cas's door for him. The omega slid into the driver's seat and smiled up at Dean.

"Thank you for coming today; it meant a lot."

Dean nodded once then shut the door for him.

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Their evening walks quickly became Cas's favorite part of his day. Dean was a lot more talkative as they walked past the brownstones and through the parks, often sharing stories from his day. He'd talk about his lunch with John or his cheerful new receptionist Charlie.

The first evening he reached over to take Cas's hand in his, the omega almost cried. It was the first real contact he'd had with his alpha since he'd had the nightmare, and it set his stomach fluttering. But instead of mentioning it, Cas described the cradle he'd seen that afternoon while out shopping.

"You should get it," Dean encouraged him, his thumb rubbing over the back of Cas's hand.
"I would, but I'm not sure which color to go with," Cas admitted, trying to ignore the internal havoc that Dean's thumb was causing.

Dean's mouth turned down at the edges. "Why?"

"Well, I don't know if the pup's a boy or a girl yet," Cas explained.

"I thought you called it a he before?"

"Yeah, because he is the grammatically acceptable pronoun for all genders," Cas defended.

Dean chuckled. "But what if it's a girl? She might not like being called a he."

Cas faked a heavy sigh. "Fine, I guess I'll call it an it from now on."

They walked a few steps in silence when Cas suddenly asked, "Do you want to know the sex beforehand?"

Dean thought about it for a moment then glanced over at Cas. "I'm not sure. What do you want?"

"I kind of like being surprised," Cas admitted.

The alpha smiled warmly. "Then it'll be a surprise."

"Thank you," Cas offered, and Dean nodded. "Although the that does make it more difficult to pick out stuff for the nursery...like the crib."

"I could go help you pick out a crib...if you'd like?" Dean suggested, but he seemed almost hesitant.

The flutters in Cas's chest kicked up even more, and he smiled bashfully. "I'd really like that."

"Good, good," Dean murmured almost to himself. He looked up at Cas. "Um, is Saturday okay?"

Cas nodded, his weary heart working overtime as he smiled widely at his alpha. "It sounds perfect."

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The only problem with moving the walks to the evening was Cas always got so tired afterwards. When he'd walked in the middle of the day, he could still fit in a nap before he started cooking dinner. Now, he'd barely make it through his bedtime routine before falling asleep.

Sometimes, he didn't even make it to his evening routine. He'd doze off on the couch as he read or watched Dr. Sexy with Dean. And on those nights, Dean would gently pick Cas up and carry him to the guest bedroom, which was starting to feel more and more like his permanent room.

He didn't expect it to change now, not after nearly two months of living together again. He still wished Dean good night every night, but he never actually expected him to ask him back to their room anymore. So one night when Dean carried him into their bedroom instead of the guest bedroom, Cas was more than a little surprised. He stirred against Dean's chest, his fingers tugging at his shirt.

Dean just shushed him softly as he whispered, "Why don't you sleep with me tonight."

Dean still didn't touch him; he laid on his half of the bed and kept his hands to himself. But as Cas settled down into the warm sheets that smelled like his alpha, he couldn't find it in himself to be upset. At least they were making progress.
But according to Balthazar, it wasn't enough.

"Finally!" He growled when Cas told him about it during their regular Saturday call. Dean was out for the afternoon, so Cas was taking the extra time to get some folding done at the kitchen table. He had Balth on speakerphone as he folded the onesies that Hannah had sent him.

"I swear, that dumbass needs to get off his ass and start acting like your alpha again!" Balth muttered.

"Balth, stop!" Cas called toward the phone as he picked up another onesie to fold. "He still takes care of me... Of us. He's still a good alpha; he's just healing."

"No! See, this isn't healing, Cas; this is prolonging. I didn't hear from you for four months either, and I've already forgiven you! He needs to pull his head out of his ass and..."

"He just needs time. He asked me to give him time, so I am!" Cas defended. Both Ellen and John, alphas whom Cas trusted implicitly, had advised him to allow time for Dean to heal, and Cas was trying to do that.

"It's been almost two months, Cassie!" Balth cried, obviously frustrated.

"Yeah, and I was gone for four. I was a dumbass and an idiot and all sorts of wonderful things. Okay? I fucked up, big time, so he can take all the time he needs."

The line suddenly became very silent, until Balth asked, "What about when the pup gets there?"

"What do you mean?" Cas replied.

"Look, I'm no expert on the subject, but having a pup is hard. It's stressful and it's dirty and it requires all hands on deck at all times. Your alpha," he snarled the word, "needs to figure out what the fuck he's doing before the shit hits the fan."

Cas opened his mouth to argue that Dean would do just fine, when a deep voice spoke over him. "Balth!" Cas spun around in his chair to find Dean standing a few feet behind him.

"Dean," Balth responded angrily.

"Watch your language around my pup," Dean warned, and then he stormed back out of the kitchen.

Cas stared after him, his emotions warring within him. On the one hand, he was upset that Dean had overheard Balth's remarks. On the other hand, Dean had called it his pup.

"I gotta go!" He called to Balth before hanging up. He hurried to the living room, hoping that Dean hadn't locked himself away in the room again. He found the alpha on the couch with his elbows propped up on his knees and his head in his hands.

"Hey," he murmured. Dean slowly looked up, his lips pursed like they got when he'd been overthinking something. "Um, I'm sorry that you had to hear him. He's just... He's just a little upset."

Dean nodded but didn't say anything, his big green eyes studying Cas. The omega took a hesitant step forward and offered a small smile.

"You, uh...you'll be a good father, Dean, just like you're a good alpha," Cas assured him.

"Do you really believe that?" Dean asked, his tone low and unreadable.
There was no hesitation for Cas. "Absolutely. You're...We're making progress. We'll get there."

Dean nodded once, his gaze returning to the floor. Cas, assuming that was his cue to leave, turned to walk back to the kitchen, but was stopped by a hand on his wrist. He glanced back to find Dean slowly standing, his hold still firm on Cas. He stepped up to the omega and ducked to press a quick kiss to his cheek, sending tremors through Cas's heart.

"Thank you," he muttered before striding away toward his office.

Cas stood there for a long while, one hand resting on his stomach while the other moved up to touch the spot on his cheek, a tiny smile on his face. Yeah, they were making progress.

Chapter End Notes

You all are killing me with the comments! Like, they're glorious and wonderful! Keep them up! I'll be posting the next chapter later this evening.
Chapter 33

Chapter Summary

Like a man in a haze, Dean stepped up to Cas and tugged the robe back open, exposing Cas's bare body for his hungry eyes. He rubbed his hands over Cas's belly, and Cas gasped at the touch, his entire body buzzing under his alpha's hands.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Cas had learned early on in his life that there were few things he enjoyed more than a hot bath. It was his go-to indulgence, and since he'd come back to the apartment, he'd indulged a lot.

Usually he took his baths during the day while Dean was at work. But when Dean told Cas that he had a business dinner on Thursday evening, Cas immediately knew what he'd be doing while the alpha was out.

On the night of the dinner, Dean didn't come home, instead heading straight for the restaurant after work. So after Cas ate his small meal, he began to strip down for his bath. With a contented sigh, he slid on the warm, fuzzy robe that Ellen had given him as he padded into the bathroom to turn on the tub.

As he waited for the tub to fill, he stood in front of the full-length bedroom mirror with his fuzzy robe hanging open to assess the new changes to his body. At his last appointment with Missouri, his stomach had been at 27 centimeters, which was right where he was supposed to be. But his stomach wasn't the only thing that had grown.

His chest was fuller now, softer and more sensitive, ready for him to start nursing the pup. His hips were rounder too. Cas pinched at them, watching the way his skin stretched and molded under how fingers. He smiled ruefully; all these wonderful changes, and Dean refused to touch him.

He turned so he could study his bump from the side, his hand smoothing down over the swell of his tummy. He'd just reached up to cup his chest to test the fullness, his gaze focused on his reflection, when he heard the sharp intake of breath. He spun around to find Dean standing in the doorway to their bedroom, his eyes wide as they ran over Cas's form.

"Uh, I thought...I thought you were out...for the evening..." Cas stuttered as he hurried to wrap his robe around him.

"I forgot..." Dean's brow furrowed as he faltered for a moment, "something. I can't remember what...just now," he admitted as he stepped further into the room. His eyes remained locked on Cas's body, and the omega could feel himself flushing from head to toe.

Like a man in a haze, Dean stepped up to Cas and tugged the robe back open, exposing Cas's bare body for his hungry eyes. He rubbed his hands over Cas's belly, and Cas gasped at the touch, his entire body buzzing under his alpha's hands.

Dean reached up to slide the robe off of Cas's shoulders, letting it drop to the floor behind him as his
gaze roved over his body. His hands smoothed up to cup Cas's tits, pulling a soft moan from the omega as he thrust his chest outward.

"So soft," he breathed as he thumbed over Cas's nipples. The omega's head fell back, his neck arching as his mouth fell open.

"Alpha," he moaned. His chest was already so sensitive, but under Dean's touch, it felt heightened, like Cas had never known the true meaning of beautiful pain mixed with overwhelming pleasure until that very moment. Dean ducked down and pressed a gentle kiss to the hard bud, pulling another gasp from Cas before he latched on and pulled it into his mouth.

Months. It has been months since Cas had felt his alpha's mouth on him, and now that he had it, his body didn't know what to do with it. Pleasure exploded from where Dean's mouth suckled him, and Cas could feel himself growing slick with want.

Cas's hands wrapped around Dean's head, holding tight as the alpha ravished his chest with nips and licks. He felt his knees give out, but Dean had already wrapped an arm around his waist to support him.

Little whimpers spilled from Cas's lips as Dean kissed over to the other tit, giving it a fair share of the attention. His fingers scrabbled through Dean's hair, tugging at the short strands, pulling hungry moans from the alpha. When Dean finally pulled back, his eyes dark and hooded, Cas's tits were swollen and red. Cas let out a low hiss when Dean thumbed over them again.

"Alpha, please," he moaned. "I need you."

Dean growled as he effortlessly lifted Cas in spite of the extra baby weight and carried him to the bed. He gently laid him down and then stripped down. Cas let out a soft moan when he saw Dean's fully-hard cock curving beautifully up toward his stomach. Dean moved to climb up next to him, but then Cas whispered, "The tub!"

Dean groaned and rushed away to turn off the water, but he was back seconds later, climbing up next to Cas. He reached down between his legs to stroke at his wet hole, sliding a finger in easily. After all the months of not being touched or stretched, Cas was tight and hot around his finger.

Cas's hips bucked up into his hand, his teeth nibbling at his lower lip as he watched his alpha's face. When Dean slipped in another finger, Cas cried out wordlessly, his entire body arching up. He grabbed onto Dean's bicep, his fingers tightening around it as the alpha continued to attack his hole. Cas wanted to reach up for a kiss, to claim the alpha's mouth with his own, but Dean hadn't kissed him. Cas didn't know if it was allowed yet.

Dean pulled his fingers out and brought them up to his mouth to taste. He looked at Cas, his eyes wild and desperate. "How can we do this?"

Cas's mind was in such a jumble, his body flush and needy. "What?" He asked.

"How would this be most comfortable for you?" Dean clarified, and the omega blushed.

"On my side," Cas replied breathlessly. Dean helped him roll onto his side then spooned behind him. Cas felt him run the head of his cock over his slick hole, coating it with his juices. Once he had his cock lube up enough, Dean lined up with Cas's hole and slowly, torturously, pushed inside with a
low moan that matched Cas's perfectly.

After he was fully sheathed inside of his omega, Dean waited a couple seconds, allowing Cas to get used to the feel of him after months apart. Then he slowly began to move, pulling his cock in and out in tiny, gentle thrusts. Cas felt overwhelmed by how tender, how careful Dean was with him. His touch over Cas's skin was feather soft, reverent even, and Cas felt his heart swell.

"Dean! Yes, right there!" He cried when Dean brushed against his prostate. "Just like that!"

Dean shifted his angle so that he could hit that magic spot again and again, his hands digging into Cas's soft hips. He still moved slowly, but his hips started pushing deeper, stretching Cas further, until they were both sweaty and shaking, their bodies plastered tightly together.

"Dean..." Cas gasped out. "I'm gonna... I'm gonna...."

Dean nipped at his shoulder, a gentle warning. It was the first real show of dominance he'd displayed, and Cas reveled in it. He missed that, the feeling of giving control to his alpha, letting him take the lead.

Dean nuzzled the back of his neck then pressed a soft kiss to the sweat-soaked skin there. Cas moaned hungrily as he reached back to cup the side of Dean's face. It had been months since he'd had Dean's mouth on his, and he was suddenly desperate for the feel of it again.

Cas turned his head to the side in a silent plea, his lips right near Dean's. The alpha just nosed at his jaw, pushing his mouth away as he kept thrusting.

It took a moment for Cas to comprehend what had just happened, but when it sunk in...Cas felt like he'd been stabbed in the chest, it hurt so much. Apparently he was good enough to fuck, but not good enough to kiss. He felt his body go numb, almost as if it were unwilling to keep up with the charade. Because he realized that's all this was: a farce of what they used to have, a sad impression of what it had been like when they were actually happy and in love.

His entire body ached, and tears started to burn in the corners of his eyes. He slid them shut and willed the tears away. He forced himself to focus on the feel of Dean inside of him, trying to build his body back up to where it had been. At least he was getting this.

Dean's fingers tightened over Cas's skin, and Cas could feel the knot pushing at his rim, demanding entrance. He forced himself to relax as Dean gave one final thrust and buried himself inside Cas. With a few more shallow thrusts, his knot exploded, shooting his release into the omega.

Cas's hole clenched around the knot, milking it like it was supposed to. But he didn't come. He couldn't. He couldn't feel anything anymore, not physical pleasure, not emotional pain. He was numb.

Dean ground his hips against Cas, forcing his knot right against the omega's sensitive spot, and Cas gasped, but he still couldn't come.

"Cas..." Dean whispered, his tone pleading. "Come for me, sweetheart."

No! Cas's mind screamed even as his body tried to obey its alpha. Cas panted as he pushed himself back against Dean.

"You were so close earlier," Dean reminded, and Cas let out a delirious chuckle. Yeah, and then his alpha had turned him away. He didn't want Cas; he just needed his body. He just needed a good fuck.
Well, Cas was his omega, so that's what he would be. He'd be a good fuck. He closed his eyes and thought about how it had been before, when Dean had peppered his lips with ready kisses and had smiled and laughed with him.

He ground back against Dean, his hips rotating in small circles, tiny whimpers escaping. Dean's arm slid around him, his big hand splaying across Cas's tummy as he pulled him closer. He pressed a gentle line of kisses along Cas's shoulder blade, his mouth warm and soft on Cas's skin.

Cas thought about Dean under him in that hotel room in New York, when the alpha given up control to him. He thought of Dean over him on the yacht, when he'd first given himself to the alpha. He thought of Dean around him in bed, cuddling him because he actually wanted to, not because he was required to.

"Come for me, Castiel. Come for your alpha," Dean commanded against the shell of his ear. Dean's bright green eyes flashed through Cas's mind, but they weren't cold and distant like they'd been lately. They were warm and loving, like back when Dean still made Cas feel special, cherished. Back when he still loved him.

"Dean," Cas breathed, and then he came, his entire body spasming as his orgasm was forced from him. His hole clenched around Dean's knot again, painful pleasure radiating outward from where he was wrapped tight around Dean. Tears spilled from under his closed eyelids as his body gave and gave, until there was nothing left to give.

He slumped into the bed, his shoulders shuddering as he tried not to outright sob. He'd never once felt used when Dean and he had sex; he guessed there was a first time for everything.

When he was finally able to move, Cas scooted forward, putting as much distance between him and Dean as the knot would allow, curling in on himself.

"When will you ever love me again?" He asked on a shaky breath, his throat aching from holding back the tears.

"I do love you, Castiel," Dean promised, but his voice was sad, like he wished it weren't so. "I love you far too much."

Cas snorted out a skeptical laugh. "Right, of course."

"Cas..." Dean tried to rub a hand down his arm, but Cas flinched.

"Don't touch me!" He took another deep shuddering breath. "I don't think I can handle any more lies tonight." Dean didn't contradict him, and Cas felt it like a physical blow.

When Dean's knot finally slipped loose, he pulled away from Cas. "I'll go get a washcloth," he murmured as he climbed out of bed.

He walked into the bathroom and moved through the motions almost absently: pull the plug on the tub so it drains out, grab a washcloth from the shelf, run it under some warm water. He returned to the bedroom to clean up Cas, but the bed was empty.

He hurried to the bedroom door, only to see the door to the guest bedroom closing behind Cas. Dean heard the lock click in its latch, and he felt pain course through him. Cas had never locked him out before.

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The next morning, Cas didn't get out of bed to see Dean off to work. He lay there for hours, staring up at the ceiling, trying to figure out what to do. He'd tried everything, fucking everything. He'd thought that maybe if they made love, if he could have Dean locked inside of him, that would somehow make everything better.

That had been one of his most idiotic ideas yet. In hindsight, he knew that the sex couldn't work. How the hell was he supposed to give himself over physically to an alpha who remained distant emotionally?

He thought of the way Dean had pushed his mouth away, refusing to give him what he wanted, what he needed. At first he'd been confused about the alpha's refusal to kiss him, but now he knew why. Balthazar's flippant words from months before played through his mind over and over again. "Real professionals don't kiss their marks. Helps us keep the emotional distance."

Dean was keeping his emotional distance, and Cas was suffering for it. He couldn't keep on like this, especially not after the pup was born. He wouldn't submit his pup to that kind of home.

He'd grown up in a home where his parents hated each other and him. He somehow felt that bringing his pup up in a home where only one parent loved the other would be ten times worse.

He couldn't run away again; that hadn't done him any good the last time. But what else was there to do?

He could give Dean an ultimatum. Either man up and act like an alpha should, or lose us both. Cas laughed at the thought; Dean would probably be thrilled about that. He'd be the one packing Cas's bag.

Cas hadn't prayed in years, not since he'd been a teenager. He could still remember those tear-filled nights when he begged God to get him out of that house, out of that marriage. When it hadn't happened for years, he'd eventually just stopped. Now, he still wasn't sure if his getting away and meeting Dean was his own work or the Father's, but he still found himself turning to that old habit.

God, I don't know if you're even listening, or if you ever did, but...something has to change. I can't make it like this anymore. My pup and I...we need our alpha back.

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When Cas finally managed to pull himself out of bed, he dressed slowly, tugging on some light grey sweatpants and a oversized t-shirt he found in the bottom drawer.

He wandered out to the kitchen to find a snack, and he'd just opened the fridge when the doorbell rang. He hurried to the door, pausing to check his appearance in the hall mirror before opening it. He found Gabe grinning widely at him.

"Hey, baby bro!" He greeted.

"Gabe!" Cas opened his arms wide to pull his brother into a tight hug. "What are you doing here?"

"What, I can't drop in to see my baby bro?" Gabe teased as he returned Cas's hug. "Dean at work?"

Cas tried not to let the tiny dip in his emotions show; he tried to keep his expression even, but Gabe must have seen something. His brow furrowed. "What is it, Cassie?"

"It's nothing," Cas assured him with a smile. "It was just...kinda a long night."
"I bet! You look like shit," he supplied helpfully.

Cas offered him a bitch face. "Thanks." He started walking toward the kitchen, leaving Gabe to follow. "I was about to make some food. You want anything?"

"Uh, you got ice cream?" Gabe wondered.

Cas rolled his eyes. "It's in the freezer."

"Awesome!" Gabe enthused as he went for the fridge.

They'd just sat down at the table with their food when the doorbell rang again. Cas started to push himself out of his chair with a sigh. "What the hell is this? Grand Central?"

"I got it," Gabe assured him. He went to answer the door, and Cas heard him conversing with whoever was there.

"Wow! Someone really loves you!" He yelled as he walked back into the kitchen, hidden behind a bouquet of giant red roses.

Cas pushed himself out of his chair as Gabe set the bouquet down on the table. The omega grabbed the small card that was nestled in among the flowers and pulled it from its envelope. Neatly typed on the card was a single sentence. *I'm sorry about last night.*

Cas stared at the card, his mind stuttering to a halt as his heart shriveled in his chest. Dean regretted their sex. So he had ordered a dozen flowers to apologize for it. And he hadn't even bothered to write the fucking card himself.

"These are really nice!" Gabe enthused, unaware of Cas's inner turmoil. Cas studied the flowers blankly, trying to control the anger that threatened to break loose. Gabe didn't even notice as he kept on. "I mean, Dean-o's got good taste!"

Cas huffed out a bitter laugh. "He didn't pick them out."

"What?" Gabe asked.

"The card is typed," he muttered, holding up the card. He shook his head as he let out a delirious giggle. "My mate sent me an apology bouquet with a fucking typed card."

"Cas..." Gabe murmured, eyeing his brother uneasily.

Cas ignored him as he laughed again, the sound somehow bitter and angry and manic all at once. He crumpled the card. "My mate used me for a fuck, and then he sent me a fucking bouquet that he didn't pick with a card he didn't write!" He was screaming by the end, tears pouring down his cheeks.

"Cassie!" Gabe yelled as Cas picked up the vase. The omega hurled it against the far wall, the fragile vase shattering as water and roses exploded in every direction, painting the wall and floor in soaked petals.

"I don't want your fucking flowers!" Cas screamed to the empty apartment. He glared at the ruined bouquet as if it were somehow to blame, but then all of the anger seemed to seep from him at once. He slid down to the floor, his body wracked with sobs as he whispered, "I just want my mate back."

Gabe gawked at the mess of glass and roses, his mind struggling to comprehend what was
happening. Cas and Dean had finally reunited, and he'd thought that everything was fine. Obviously not...

He hurried over to where his brother slumped against the cabinets and bent over to wrap his arms around him. "Come on," he encouraged. "Let's get you up."

He gently tugged at Cas's arms to help him up, but the omega suddenly let out a sharp gasp.

"Gabe, stop!" He cried out, his hands flying to his abdomen. "It hurts!"

Gabe looked down at his stomach, his eyes widening as they dipped lower to the crotch of Cas's light grey sweat pants.

"Cas," he breathed, his voice tinged with horror. "Cassie, you're bleeding!"

Chapter End Notes

Guys, I have to confess something to you; this is the first chapter I've written that's actually made me cry. Usually I'm so clinical about my writing, i.e. "I just used that verb two paragraphs ago....use this one instead," or "I haven't had a compound-complex sentence in a while...lets string one of those together." What can I say; it's the grammarian in me.

But this chapter...it tore my fucking heart out. I edited and re-edited it until I had it perfect (like usual), but then when I re-read it straight through...I actually cried.

So just know that if this chapter hurts you, it hurt me too. It still hurts. But this is my personal motto for when I'm writing: the greater the conflict, the greater the resolution, and trust me, our boys have one hell of a resolution coming! Just trust me, okay?

Okay, I'm planning on posting the last chapters tomorrow, so hang in there! I love you all so much for sticking with me the way you have. Sorry that I haven't been responding to your comments; I've been a teensy bit busy; I do read ALL of them, even if I don't respond.

Ok, hugs n kisses! (Please don't kill me)
Chapter 34

Chapter Summary

He felt the fear clawing at his throat, threatening to choke him. He couldn't lose Cas. If those four months apart had taught him anything, it was that he couldn't make it without him. He'd be lost.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Charlie ran down the hall, her wild red hair streaming behind her as she skirted around mail carts and groups of meanderers. She didn't bother answering the questions of the people she passed. She flung the door to the conference room open and hurried straight to Dean's chair, ignoring the indignant whispers from the other people in the meeting.

She bent down to whisper in his ear, cupping her hand to hide her lips from the others. Dean's face paled, his eyes widening with fear.

"What? Why?" He barked out as he leaped up from his chair and headed for the door.

"I don't know," she admitted as she hurried after him. "Gabe just said that he was bleeding a lot. He was still conscious when the ambulance got to the hospital, but they still don't know about the pup."

"Is he there now?" Dean asked.

"Yes, Missouri's already there, and they're running tests."

"Get me a car," he commanded as he headed for the stairs, unwilling to wait for the elevator.

"Gadreel's already waiting for you," she called, but the stairwell door had already slammed shut behind him.

Gad had the car waiting at the curb for him. Dean pointed at him, "I don't care what it takes. Get me there as fast as you can!"

As the car sped into the early afternoon traffic, Dean stared out the window, his mind a jumble of panicked thoughts. His omega was in the hospital, and he didn't know why.

He felt the fear clawing at his throat, threatening to choke him. He couldn't lose Cas. If those four months apart had taught him anything, it was that he couldn't make it without him. He'd be lost.

But Cas didn't know that. Dean had told him that when he'd first returned, but he hadn't shown him that since. He'd been selfish, holding himself back from his omega. And at the time, it had made sense, a last ditch effort to preserve himself and his sanity.

He'd been devastated by Cas's leaving, barely functioning some days. He'd always prided himself on his personal control, but when Cas left, that had fled as well. And as the days passed and the loneliness settled in, he'd gotten used to it. He'd forced himself back up on his feet, forced himself to live again.
But then Cas had returned, beautiful and bright and everything that Dean remembered. But beyond that, he also remembered the pain and the devastation, and he'd been determined to save himself from that at all costs. He'd promised himself that he wouldn't let himself be hurt again.

He'd thought that he could go back to the way it was before Cas, when he'd been completely in control of his life and his purpose and he'd been self-sufficient. He'd thought that he could be a good alpha with without involving himself emotionally.

He hadn't counted on his conscience accusing him every time Cas looked away sadly. He hadn't counted on his heart being drawn to his omega every time he'd cried at night. He hadn't counted on his body being overwhelmed with need the first time he saw his mate naked.

His mind once again returned to the night before, like it had been all morning, and he cursed himself internally. He's been so desperate for Cas, so hungry. He hadn't stood a chance; he'd broken his strict self-imposed no touching rule without a second thought. The taste of his omega under his mouth had been intoxicatingly heady, driving him on.

And after all those months apart, it had been beautiful, wondrous, perfect. It had burned him up from the inside out until there was nothing left but Cas and his beautiful gasps and his hungry moans and his flushed body writhing back against Dean, demanding more.

But then something had gone wrong. Cas had gone cold, distant. He'd curled in on himself, protecting himself from Dean like his alpha had hurt him to his very core. And in hindsight, after replaying every moment of their love-making again and again, Dean knew what it had been that caused that. He'd been selfish, holding back the kiss from Cas. He hadn't counted on that hurting his mate, but that's what it had done.

In trying to save himself, he'd hurt his mate. And now the pain was so sharp that he could barely breathe. His omega and his pup were in the hospital, and the last thing his omega had heard from him was a forced confession of love that had sounded false even to his own ears.

Cas is a fighter, he reminded himself. He won't give up.

But the pup... Even if Cas made it, there was no guarantee about their pup. He forced his mind away from the negative thoughts. Cas had been alive when the ambulance had dropped them off, and that's what he would focus on.

His mind returned to that morning, when he'd stood outside of Cas's bedroom door, trying to work up the courage to knock, to apologize in person. He hadn't been able to then, but now he wished he had. He wished he had done a lot of things differently.

He wished he hadn't pushed Cas away. He wished he hadn't been so determined to protect himself. He should've just talked to Cas, told him the truth. He should've admitted that Cas's leaving as devastated him, so that Cas could understand what was going on. Instead, Dean had left him in the dark, confused and hurt.

God, he'd been a fucking idiot. He'd pushed Cas away again and again, but Cas had still been so kind and so patient, doing everything under the sun to make him happy. Balth had been right; Dean hadn't been healing. He'd been prolonging. But that ended now.

He was going to make this right. He was going to have to work for it, but he'd do it. He'd do whatever it took to make things right.

If you get the chance, the ever helpful voice in his head reminded. He pushed the thought away. Cas
would make it; he was too strong not to. And the pup...the pup was just like Cas. He was a strong little person, and he'd fight his way through.

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The car hadn't even completely stopped when Dean jumped out and ran into the hospital. He strode to the front desk and announced, "My name is Dean Smith and I'm looking for my omega."

The receptionist, an older black lady with kind brown eyes, smiled at him. "What's his name?" She asked calmly.

"Castiel Novak... Or Smith...or..." He trailed off, his brow furrowing. She just chuckled and started typing into the computer. She'd been at this for a long time, and she'd seen some alphas who couldn't remember their own name, much less their mate's.

She glanced over the information on her screen, trying to find a room number. Castiel was a twenty-one-year-old omega who was currently being held for observation in the birthing center. She should've known; all expectant fathers had that same look about them.

She smiled up at the alpha. "Castiel is in the birthing center, which is on the third floor, in room 337."

"Thank you!" He called as he rushed toward the elevator. He followed the hospital signage to the birthing center, his heart hammering in his chest as he checked the number for each of the rooms he passed.

He finally found room 337, and was about to rush in, but at the last moment he forced himself to pause at the door. He drew in a deep breath to steady his nerves. He didn't need his anxiety rubbing off on Cas, not with the state he was currently in.

He pushed the door open, his pulse racing as he steeled himself for the worst. The first person he saw was Gabe, standing by the foot of the bed, and next to him, Missouri. But his focus was already on the bed, to the small omega settled back against the pillows.

"Dean!" Cas cried out, relief flooding his voice as the alpha rushed toward him.

"Cas!" Dean breathed as he stopped by the bed. He bent down to rest his forehead against Cas's, one big hand sliding into his hair to hold him close, the other moving down to cover his swollen stomach. His eyes slid shut as he pulled in deep breaths of his omega's scent, soft and gentle and still tinged with that sweetness that the pup gave.

Cas's hands slid up onto his face, petting his cheeks and temples. Dean's eyes opened to find Cas staring at him intently, his blue eyes dark and deep and full of love, but behind that, there was still the sorrow. Dean couldn't allow that sorrow to remain; it would tear them apart. Before he could say anything though, Cas started apologizing.

"Dean, I'm so sorry!" He whispered frantically. "I didn't mean to... I was just so mad and hurt and I didn't even realize what I was doing! And then there was so much pain and I was bleeding, and I..."

He trailed off, his voice cracking.

"Hey, hey," Dean soothed, his hand rubbing over Cas's belly to calm the sudden fluttering under his palm. "Slow down, sweetheart. What are you talking about?"

Cas shook his head. "I got so angry when you sent the bouquet this morning, even though I knew it was stupid to. I was just so hurt and angry, so I threw the vase against the wall, and...and I almost
hurt the baby! I wasn't even thinking."

Dean stroked his fingers through his mate's hair, shushing him softly. "It's okay. It's fine. You're safe, and the baby's safe, right?" He finally turned to Missouri, and the doctor nodded.

"They're both doing just fine!" She assured him. Dean let out a sigh of relief, a chuckle escaping as he rubbed his hand over Cas's belly. He buried his nose in Cas's hair and pressed a gentle kiss there. "See, everything's okay now," he whispered.

Cas turned his head to bury his face in his neck, inhaling his scent as he let it calm him. Dean kept pressing soft kisses against his hair, whispering forgiveness and encouragements to his omega until Cas had stopped shaking.

"What happened?" He asked when he finally looked back up at the doctor.

"Castiel experienced a partial placental abruption," the doctor explained, her mouth flattening some.

Dean's brow furrowed. "What the hell is that?"

Missouri shot him a glare. "Language!"

"Sorry," Dean muttered, and Cas huffed out a laugh against his neck.

Missouri waved off his apology as she slipped into lecture mode. "The placenta is the part of Castiel's body that nourishes the pup, provides it with oxygen and food and such. Well, with a placental abruption, the placenta peels away from the uterus," she made a peeling motion with her hands to demonstrate, "which can cut off the nourishment to the pup."

"So... it isn't getting oxygen?" Dean asked, his heart slamming to a stop, his fingers tightening the slightest bit on Cas's belly, but Missouri shook her head.

"No, Castiel only had a partial abruption," she reminded, "so the placenta is still mostly attached. That means that he should be able to bring the pup to term normally. We ran some tests, and it looks like the pup's fine. His heartbeat's steady, and he's still active."

"So... they'll both be okay?" Dean asked again, and Missouri nodded.

"Yes. We'll keep them here for a few days for observation, but if things continue as they are, we should be able to send them home soon," she reassured him. "But at the very least he'll probably be on light bed rest until the baby comes."

Dean nodded, his green eyes dampening as his body released the last of its tension. "Thank you," he murmured. He looked back down at his omega. "You're going to be fine. I'm going to take you home and take very good care of you both."

His fingers traced gentle patterns over Cas's stomach, and the omega reached down to cover his hand.

"I know," he breathed. "You always do. I just... I can't... if I hadn't lost my temper, I wouldn't be here in the first place," he reminded the alpha.

"Actually," Missouri interrupted. "I don't think that throwing a vase of flowers could really cause enough of a jolt to detach the placenta suddenly. Usually, you'd need something huge like a car accident or a big fall." She shook her head. "No, I think it's probably been slowly detaching for a little while now, but we just didn't realize it because you weren't displaying any of the symptoms."

She smiled at Cas, "As awful as it sounds, I think the extra exertion today was just what it needed to
manifest itself. Now that we know about it, we can act accordingly."

"What would have happened if we hadn't found out?" Dean wondered, and Missouri shook her head solemnly.

"See, those are the worst, because usually by the time we do realize what's happening, it's too late," she explained, her voice sad. "But since we caught Castiel's in enough time, he and the pup will be fine. We'll have to keep them under close observation, but they'll make it." She patted Castiel's foot. "They're both fighters."

"Thank you," Cas murmured, and she nodded.

"I'm going to check on a few other patients. I'll be back in a little bit," she called as she headed for the door.

Once the door shut behind her, the three that were still in the room descended into silence, each unsure of what to say. Now that the initial panic had passed, Cas guessed that Dean would be leaving again. He probably had meetings and other things to look after. Cas just needed to be strong enough to tell him he could go at any time. It would be selfish to keep him when he didn't want to be there. Before he could say anything, Gabe spoke up.

"We need to talk," he announced. Dean glanced down at Cas, but the omega shook his head.

"Don't leave me," he pleaded selfishly. He wasn't strong enough to let Dean leave yet. He just needed him there for a little while longer. Dean nodded. "Of course not." He looked at Gabe, "Whatever it is, you can say it in front of him."

Gabe sneered. "Oh, so now that it's convenient for you to act like an alpha, you're all for it?"

"Gabe!" Cas chided, but Gabe shook his head.

"No! He needs to answer to me about why he's treated my younger brother the way he did! Why?" He snarled.

Dean sighed heavily. "Because I was angry and hurt, and I didn't ever want to get that way ever again."

Gabe snorted. "See, I seem to remember a day in front of my apartment when you begged me to bring Cas back, and you swore up and down that you loved him and you needed him. And then I worked my ass off to get the two of you back together so that you could take care of him and his pup. But from what he's been saying, you're not taking care of him; you're punishing him."

"That was never my intention!" Dean defended, glaring at Gabe. The two alphas were so busy glaring at each other that neither noticed the way Cas glanced down, tears brimming. When they heard the sniffle, their gazes immediately shot to him.

"Then what was your intention?" Cas whispered, not meeting Dean's eyes as he toyed with the edge of the blanket.

Dean gazed at the top of his head, his heart melting for his mate. "I just wanted to protect myself," he admitted grudgingly.

Cas let out a chuckle. "Of course...protect yourself from me."

Dean looked so lost for a moment, so guilty, that Gabe almost found it in himself to show pity.
then he remembered Cas that morning, bleeding and in pain, and the pity fled. He didn't care what Missouri said about the abruption manifesting itself; Dean had hurt his baby brother, and Gabe had helped him.

Dean suddenly looked at him, "I need to talk to Cas alone."

"Like hell!" Gabe protested, but Cas's quiet voice cut him off.

"Gabe...please. I appreciate what you're trying to do, but I need to speak with my mate. Please."

Cas knew that despite his earlier promise, Dean now had every reason to leave. Cas had been reckless and stupid, and Dean would be stupid not to hold him accountable. He'd rather that his brother not be there for the fallout.

Gabe looked torn for a moment, but finally nodded. He pointed at Dean. "Fix this shit!" And then he turned and stormed from the room.

The door shut behind him, leaving the two mates alone. Cas gulped noisily, and he suddenly found that he was unable to look up at Dean again. Dean placed two gentle fingers under his chin and lifted his head so that they were making eye contact.

"Why did my flowers make you angry?" He whispered, his brow furrowed.

Of all of the questions or accusations that Cas had expected, that was not it. He frowned in confusion, too perplexed to think up a plausible excuse. "You sent me an apology bouquet for our sex, Dean. What else was I supposed to be?"

Dean seemed shocked for a moment, then shook his head vigorously. "Cas, the flowers weren't to apologize for the sex." Cas squinted his eyes in confusion. "The flowers were to apologize for me not going after you when you left to the guest bedroom."

"What?" Cas breathed.

"Cas, I never should've let you spend the night in the guest room, not last night and not when you first got back. I never should've treated you like you had to earn my love back. You have it, utterly and completely. You always have."

Cas looked away, unwilling to let himself be caught up in more lies and forced confessions, but Dean guided his face back up. "I love you, so, so much."

"But you don't want me," Cas countered. "You're just keeping me around because you need me."

"No!" Dean protested. "I mean, yes, I need you, yes, but I also want you. I want you back with me where you belong."

"But why does it feel like you don't? Why does it feel like every time you say you love me, you wished you didn't? Why do you always sound so sad when you say it?" Cas questioned.

Dean paused for a moment before responding, "Because I was hurt and angry, and I didn't want to feel it when you first got back."

Cas laughed bitterly. "When I first got back? Dean, what about just last night? Huh? What about when you used me for sex, and I practically had to tear the words out of you?"

Dean's eyes widened, his fingers tightening on Cas's chin. "No! Cas, I didn't use you for sex, okay? I
wouldn't ever do that to you...ever. You are my mate, my everything, and...and every time I get to touch you, it's like...like..." He trailed off.

"Like what?" Cas prodded, still selfish enough that he needed to hear it one last time.

"Like I get to touch the sun," Dean admitted. "It burns me from the inside out; it always has." He breathed in shakily. "And for months, I didn't allow myself that because I didn't want to get burned. I didn't want to get hurt anymore."

Cas felt the hope die inside of him. Dean didn't want to get hurt anymore, which apparently meant that he didn't want him anymore.

"Yeah, well... You hurt me instead, so I guess we're even now," Cas muttered, tears clogging his throat.

"That's not what it was about, Castiel! I never meant to retaliate, okay? I was just trying to protect myself," he admitted.

Cas smiled wearily. "I thought that was my job." He looked away so Dean couldn't see the pain in his eyes. "I know. You don't want it to be. Don't worry; you've made yourself pretty clear about that."

"No, I haven't made myself clear at all," Dean growled. "Cas, I was an idiot, a huge fucking idiot! I am so lost without you, and...and I know I haven't acted like it lately, but I can't lose you! Today was the scariest day of my entire life because I thought that I'd lost you for good this time, and all I could think about was how I hadn't told you how I really felt in a long time."

Cas finally looked back at him, his eyes watery.

"Cas, baby, please give me another chance," He pleaded. Cas stared at him for several long seconds before speaking.

"What about the pup?" Cas asked, his fingers toying with the edge of the hospital blanket. "Do you want it?"

Dean seemed shocked by the question, but then he rubbed his hand over Cas's belly as he nodded. "Absolutely. Of course, I want it! You and I created it together, and...and I'd have to be a complete dumbass to not want it."

"See, you say that, but you don't really act like it. When I bring it up, you don't act excited or happy. You just seem...I don't know... Bleh."

Dean chuckled, shaking his head ruefully. "Trust me, Cas; I am far from bleh about this pup." He seemed to hesitate for a moment, like he was considering something, but then he nodded decisively. "Can I show you something?"

Cas nodded, his expression begrudgingly curious as he watched Dean pull out his wallet. The alpha opened it and pulled out a bent-up picture. When he turned it around to show Cas, the omega's breath caught. It was his last sonogram.

He looked up at Dean, his eyes perplexed. The alpha blushed as he explained, "Uh, I asked Missouri to give me a copy after your last appointment. I, uh, I put it on my desk at work and talk to it sometimes." He shrugged, obviously embarrassed. Cas found the action more endearing than anything he'd ever seen, and he could feel the ice around his heart start to melt. "And sometimes, when you'd fall asleep before me, I'd talk to the pup then too," he admitted.
Cas smiled. "I didn't know," he admitted.

Dean reached down to take both of his hands in his and looked at him earnestly. "Castiel, tell me what I have to do to prove how much I want this to you?"

Cas snorted out a laugh. It sounded so similar to what he’d said months before when he’d returned, so similar to what Dean had said back in August when Cas had almost broken up with him. Cas felt himself sadden. It was like a merry-go-round with them; around and around and around they chased each other, never quite reaching the other.

But then he realized that it didn't have to be that way. He had the power right then and there to stop the cycle. He didn't have to repeat their previous mistakes; he didn't have to bring his pup up in that kind of home. He didn't have to submit himself or Dean to any more pain or uncertainty.

He thought about what he wanted to say for several long moments before finally answering. "You need to love me. And not like what you have been doing. Like what it was before, when we were happy and whole and together for real."

"Okay," Dean agreed as he let out a deep breath. "I can do that."

"We can do that," Cas corrected gently. "We have to talk to each other, even when we get mad. Actually, we should especially talk to each other when we're Because I know that there will still be days when you get so mad at me, and there'll be days when I get so mad at you, but we can't let those days ruin every other day, right?"

"Right," Dean confirmed, a small smile on his lips now.

Cas hesitated, unsure of how Dean would react to the next part, but he forged on anyways. "You need to tell me that you love me every single day, and I have to tell you every single day. And...and..." He faltered for a moment, but at Dean's encouraging nod, he whispered, "you have to kiss me every single day." He rushed on to explain. "I know why you haven't: I know that you're just trying to protect yourself. But you can't hold that back from me. I'm your mate, and I need you, all of you."

He reached up to cup Dean's cheeks. "I will never ever leave you again. Ever." He stared straight into his alpha's eyes as he quoted a verse he'd learned when he was still a child: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Dean Smith."

Dean nodded, his eyes sharp and sure as he whispered, "I know. And I'll never leave you, either. You and the pup have me now and for ever."

Cas smiled then, and it was the beautiful smile Dean remembered and loved so well. He brushed his nose against his alpha's softly, teasingly, his blue eyes fond and loving. "Then go ahead and kiss me, Alpha."

Dean slowly dipped in, his gaze dropping down to Cas's mouth as he whispered, "Breathe in..."

Cas's eyes slid shut in anticipation. He breathed in, his lips quivering as he waited for his alpha's kiss. It felt like an eternity before Dean finally brushed their lips together in a feather soft touch. The kiss was hardly more than a breath against his mouth, but Cas still felt his heart explode with exhilaration. He smiled under Dean's mouth, and he felt Dean smile back.

"Breathe out..." The omega finished as they pulled apart. His joyful eyes fluttered back open to gaze up at Dean adoringly. Dean reached up to brush his fingers through Cas's hair, his smile tender. Cas leaned into the touch as he whispered, "Can we just...start fresh, from here on out?"
"Yeah, we can do that," Dean promised as he kissed the tip of Cas's nose.

"You missed," Cas complained. He tilted his face up eagerly, and the alpha chuckled.

"Here, let me try again," he murmured as he ducked back in for another kiss.

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"How are you feeling?" Dean asked as he pushed Cas's wheelchair down the hall toward their condo.

Cas rolled his eyes. "Same as I felt in the car...and in the lobby...and in the elevator..." He muttered dryly.

"Hey, I'm just being thorough!" Dean defended.

Cas smiled up at him. That had been the alpha's excuse for the entire five days that they'd been at the hospital. He'd stayed by Cas's side for every minute, except for those times when Missouri would shoo him away with the admonition to "Go get yourself some food! Your pup doesn't need a sick father!"

The time together in the hospital room had done them a world of good. They'd talked and teased and laughed like they used to, the months of silence and separation melting away with every gentle kiss and kind word.

No matter what time of day or night, Dean had been there every time Cas had woken up. He'd been there to wipe away Cas's tears every time he'd cried. He'd been there to kiss him every night before bed and every morning when he woke up and a hundred other times besides. He'd been there with Cas, one hundred percent with him, holding nothing back. And now Cas was more in love with his alpha than ever.

Dean stopped in front of the door and reached out to push the doorbell. Cas's eyebrows furrowed as he started to ask why, but then the door swung inward to reveal John, Gabe, and Charlie, all grinning widely.

"Welcome home!" They cried, almost in unison.

As Dean pushed his chair into the apartment, Cas let out a delighted laugh. Blue and pink streamers draped from the ceiling and matching balloons floated above almost every chair. A giant banner that read Welcome Home! hung from one end of the room to the other, and vases stuffed with bright flowers covered every flat surface.

Cas smiled brightly. "You did all this for us?"

"All this?" Charlie snorted, flapping her hand toward him. "This is nothing!"

"I picked out the colors!" Gabe volunteered. John rolled his eyes.

"We just went with both, since you don't know the gender yet," he explained.

"And I ordered the banner!" Charlie added. "And the flowers are from people in the office...well, except for those." She pointed to two big bouquets in the corner. "One of those is from Balthazar and Inaias, and the other is from Ellen and everybody from the Roadhouse."

"They wanted to be here, but they didn't want to overdo it since you're supposed to be on bedrest,"
Gabe explained.

"Aw, tell them thank you for me, please," Cas requested, and Gabe nodded.

"Okay, we should get going so you can get your rest," John decided, and Cas smiled at him gratefully.

"Thank you, John, Charlie, Gabe," he looked at each of them in turn. "You spoil us."

"Well, it was worth every bit," John assured him as he bent down to give him a hug.

Gabe bent down for his own hug, patting Cas's stomach twice. "We're glad that you're home too," he called loudly, and Cas winced.

"Yeah, go ahead and bust my eardrums open," he muttered.

"It wasn't even that loud," Gabe replied as he stepped back.

"You know, I don't think you truly understand the concept of volume control," Cas retorted. "Inside voice?"

"Oh yeah, I have a ton of those! And they all love you," Gabe assured him with a grin. "Except for Sully...he's still on the fence."

Cas just sighed heavily, but his expression was fond. "Get out of here, dumbass."

Gabe ruffled his hair before following John out the door. Charlie stepped up, but instead of hugging Cas, she patted his shoulder. "I'm glad you're okay, Cas."

"Thank you, Charlie. And thank you for doing this," he said, motioning toward the room. "I know that most of it was probably your idea."

She smiled proudly at having her handiwork acknowledged. "My pleasure. " She started flouncing toward the door, when she suddenly stopped and spun back around. "I totally forgot! Dean, they're on the island in the kitchen."

Dean's face broke out into a smile. "Really?"

"Yep! Got delivered just this afternoon!" She announced happily. "So, uh...yeah. They're in there for you." And then she turned back around and headed out the door, closing it behind her.

"Thank you!" Dean called after her.

"What was that all about?" Cas wondered, but Dean just winked at him.

"Let's get you settled in, then I'll tell you." He pushed Cas to the bedroom and helped lift him into the bed. Once Cas was situated amongst a mountain of pillows and blankets, Dean ran out to the kitchen to grab the mysterious item.

When he came back in, he handed Cas a manila envelope. "Why don't you go ahead and look at these," he suggested as he sat down on the edge of the bed next to his mate. Cas opened the envelope, his eyes narrowing as he pulled out the sheaf of papers inside. He started to skim over the first page, then drew up short.

He looked up at Dean, a wide smile settling over his face. "You bought us a house?"
Dean nodded, flushing as he ran a hand over the back of his neck. "Yeah, I, uh, well... We said that we were going to have a fresh start, and I figured a fresh start with a new pup deserves a new home. I mean, not that this place isn't nice, but...well, we haven't really had the best experiences here."

Cas thought about it and nodded. "Yeah, I suppose you're right." He glanced down at the papers again. "When did you even have time to do this?"

"Uh, I didn't really," Dean admitted. "This house is actually in my old neighborhood where I grew up. Dad saw that it was up for sale, so he told me about it."

Cas chuckled. "So, we own a house that neither of us have seen."

Dean shrugged. "Eh, dad looked at it and said it was a good fit. I find that he usually gives pretty good advice."

"That he does. I can't wait to see it," Cas murmured.

"Yeah, which leads to our other surprise," Dean announced.

"There's another surprise?" Cas cried, and Dean rolled his eyes.

"Don't be a smartass," he chided. "I actually got the okay from Missouri for you to go see the house this weekend. We can't be very long, but uh, at least we can figure out colors and all that. Maybe after the pup comes, we can go straight there," he suggested.

"I think that's a good idea," Cas agreed.

"Most of my ideas are," Dean bragged with a grin.

"Oh, really?" Cas teased as he reached out to take Dean's hand in his.

"Really," Dean confirmed. He began to rub his thumb over the back of Cas's hand. "I get good ideas practically every day. Some better than others."

Cas hummed thoughtfully. "I don't know; if they're all so good, how can you really decide which ones are better?"

"Well," Dean drew out the word. "One day, I walked into a coffee shop, and I saw the cutest little omega standing behind the counter, and I thought, 'I should really ask him out on a date.'" He smiled up at Cas. "Turned out to be one of my best ideas ever."

"Well," Cas replied, drawing out his word as well, "I bet if you asked that omega, he'd say that agreeing to that date was probably one of his best ideas ever."

"Do you really think so?" Dean murmured as he leaned in toward his omega.

"I know so," Cas whispered just before Dean's lips claimed his.

Chapter End Notes

What did I tell you? BIG resolution, right? I tried to cover all of my bases, make sure that nothing went by the wayside. If I didn't address something, I'm sorry. In the words
of the incomparable Chuck: Endings are a bitch.

I know, this isn't really the end; I still have the epilogue to post. I have it mostly written, but due to...things (like waking up at ass-o-clock in the morning to catch a plane), I'm not quite finished with it. Never fear; it *will* get posted sometime tonight or early tomorrow. Unless I die in a fiery plane crash, in which case, at least you got them back together, right?

Okay...thank you so much for all of your comments; you don't know what they mean to me. Love you all! *kisses*
Chapter 35

Ten Years Later

Cas had just started icing the cupcakes for Mary's tenth birthday party that afternoon when he heard the soft giggle followed by a gentle "shhh" behind him.

He purposefully kept his head bent over his work, like he couldn't hear the exaggerated whisper, "You need to be quiet if we're gonna sneak up on Papa!" or the giggles that followed.

A smile crept across his face as he felt Dean's hand slide onto his hip in a gentle greeting. His alpha's thumb ran over the yellow fabric of his apron, and Cas tried to remain still.

"Attack!" Dean suddenly cried as he buried his face into the side of Cas's neck and pretended to bite him, making monster noises as he did. Cas felt another sloppier kiss on the back of his neck as Tyler pressed his own lips there.

"Oh no, you got me!" Cas cried even as he reached back to cup Dean's head and stroke his fingers through his hair. He felt Dean smile against his neck, and he sighed happily.

He spun around to face his attackers, a mischievous gleam in his eye as he yelled, "And now I'm going to get you!"

Their three-year-old son squealed in delight as Cas buried his face in his neck and pressed sloppy kisses there, making his own monster noises. Tyler wiggled, trying to escape, and Cas chuckled.

As the youngest of their three pups and their only boy, Tyler was proving to be a handful. Well...he won't be the youngest for much longer, he reminded himself.

Cas heard Dean chuckle next to him, and he pulled his face away from their son, a wicked grin on his lips. "Don't think you're getting away that easily!" He warned as he leaned in to attack his alpha's neck.

Dean's arm that wasn't holding Tyler against his hip slid around Cas's waist, pulling him in close. Cas nipped at Dean's skin lightly in response, pulling a hiss from his mate.

When he pulled back, Dean ducked in and gently nipped at his lower lip, a silent promise for retaliation when they were alone later. Cas smirked eagerly.

"Alfie here!" Tyler cried enthusiastically.

"What?!" Cas replied. "That must mean that Auntie Anna's here too!"

"We are," a soft, amused voice called from the kitchen doorway, and he turned to find Anna standing there with her seven-year-old son.

"Hey!" Cas greeted as he moved forward to pull her into a hug. He bent down to kiss Alfie's forehead, but the kid gave a disgusted face along with a dismayed cry of, "Uncle Cassie!"

"Alfie's getting too big for kisses," Anna explained somberly, but her eyes were bright with amusement.
"Ah, I see. Well, in that case..." Cas ducked back down to plant a sloppy kiss on his cheek.

"Yuck!" Alfie cried, wiping at the infected skin. Cas just chuckled.

"Why don't you and Tyler go play while your mom helps me finish up these cupcakes?"

"Okay!" Alfie agreed. He grabbed Tyler by the hand and started leading him away to his bedroom.

"Gently!" Anna called after him. She looked back at Cas and rolled her eyes. "Boys!"

Cas felt Dean move up behind him, his arm sliding around his waist, and he leaned into his alpha's warmth. Anna's smile softened like it always did when she saw the two of them together.

"So how's everything?" Cas asked quietly, and Anna shrugged.

"Same. Michael wants me to testify at his appellate hearing to get a reduced sentence, but..." She trailed off and sighed.

Michael had been trying to appeal the judge's sentence since he'd first been convicted five years before. It turned out that Zachariah's crimes had been more far-reaching and involved than any of them had guessed. In all, seven other alphas, including Michael, had been tried and found guilty of embezzlement, while five Philadelphia police and court officials had been charged with accepting bribes from the old alpha.

When Michael had been arrested, Dean hadn't been sure how Cas would take it, since Anna had just given birth to Alfie and was now without her alpha. Anna had called to thank Dean herself, and Cas had been equally enthusiastic to show Dean how grateful he was; if Michael was in prison, he couldn't hurt Anna anymore. That enthusiastic demonstration had given them their second pup, six-year-old Emma.

Anna shrugged again. "I don't know if I want him out. Alfie and I are doing so much better now. Like, yeah, it's sometimes hard without an alpha, but overall..."

"Tell them that," Dean encouraged. "Don't lie for him."

"Yeah, but if his lawyer calls me to be a testimony witness, I'm supposed to make him sound good, right?"

Dean shook his head, smiling gently. "You're supposed to tell them the truth, no matter what it might be."

"I know," Anna conceded. She wrapped her slim arms around herself, "I'm just worried that it'll come back to bite me in the ass when he does get out."

Cas shrugged casually. "Not if you had another alpha to protect you," he suggested, a mischievous smirk settling on his lips. "You know, maybe like Gadreel?"

Anna blushed and glanced away. "I don't think so. He's too good; I don't wanna drag him into this."

Cas knew that Gad wanted otherwise. Ever since Dean had asked the driver to transport Anna and Alfie back and forth for Michael's trial, he'd taken on the role of Anna's protector. Cas figured it was only a matter of time before Anna figured it out and let the alpha take care of her like he obviously wanted to.

But Cas let it drop for the time being, instead motioning for her to follow him into the kitchen.
"Come on, come help me finish frosting the cupcakes."

As Anna moved to grab an apron, Cas leaned up to whisper to Dean. "Make sure Gad stays after he picks up Balth and Inaias from the airport."

Dean winked at him before ducking down for a kiss. "I'll go check on the girls."

"Thank you!" Cas called after him. As he moved to stand next to his sister at the counter, she reached across him to grab a spatula. She suddenly froze, her nose sniffing the air around him.

"You smell different," she observed, and Cas just blushed. She set down the spatula, shaking her head in mock disapproval. "Not again!"

"Surprise?" Cas replied.

"God, what is this? Number four?" Anna teased.

Cas didn't bother reminding her that it was actually number five. Sadness coursed through him as he thought of the pup that they'd lost during his second pregnancy. Missouri had warned them that there could be complications with his other pregnancies after his first placental abruption; he still hadn't been prepared for it when it had happened suddenly at seventeen weeks along.

It had been devastating for them both, but they'd stuck together. They'd held each other past the tears and slowly made it through the pain. When Emma had come along the following year, Cas had been so scared, but Dean had been his rock, promising that no matter what happened, they'd stick together.

Now, as they headed into their fifth pregnancy, they were both well aware of the risks. But they also knew that they'd made it through the worst before, and they could make it through again.

"I wonder what mother will say?" Anna teased, interrupting his chain of thought.

Cas shook his head. "You know she'll be thrilled."

Despite Naomi's hateful words at her home years before, she'd since warmed to Dean, especially after Mary had been born. Bartholomew hadn't been eager to make up with the mates, but Naomi had put her foot down. Through Anna, who Cas had kept in touch with, she reached out to Cas and asked for another chance.

There were still times when Cas would grow downright furious with his parents if he let himself dwell on what had almost happened, what his parents had allowed. But then, almost as if he could sense it, Dean would wrap him up tight and whisper, "I'm so glad we found each other." And Cas could feel himself forgive his parents more with every time, because while it didn't cancel out those years of pain and sadness, it certainly made them more bearable, now that he was looking at them from the other side.

Right then Mary and Emma ran into the kitchen.

"Can we go swimming?" Emma asked eagerly.

"Not yet," Cas responded. "Wait until after lunch."

"But we're bored now!" Mary groaned. "And lunch isn't for another hour. What are we supposed to do?"
Cas shot her a stern look. "Attitude," he warned.

"Sorry," she mumbled.

He nodded over to where their aprons hung by the stove. "Put on your aprons; you can help us frost."

Emma's eyes lit excitedly. "Ooh! Can I put m&m's on mine?" She batted the big green eyes that she'd inherited from Dean, and Cas shook his head ruefully. She'd learned early on that Cas had a weakness for those colored eyes, and she used it often.

Cas smiled fondly. "Yeah, let me get them."

"I'll get them!" Emma cried, running off toward the pantry.

"How do you know where they are?" Cas arched an eyebrow.

Emma froze. "Uhhhh..." Mary just glared at her.

Cas jerked his head toward the pantry. "Go get them." He leaned over to Anna. "Guess we'll need a new hiding spot for the candy."

Once the girls had washed their hands and put on their aprons, they all stood around the island and spread frosting onto the cupcakes for later that afternoon.

"Hey," Mary suddenly said, glancing over at Emma. "You have something on your nose."

"What? Where?" Emma asked, crossing her eyes to try to see.

Mary swiped a stripe of frosting down the bridge of her nose. "Right there!"

"Hey!" Emma cried indignantly. She reached out to swipe some across Mary's cheek.

"Girls!" Cas scolded. He glanced over at Anna. "They're hopeless."

"I'll say," Anna agreed. She suddenly reached over to plop a dollop of frosting onto the tip of his nose. She and the girls burst out giggling as Cas's eyes narrowed.

"Oh, it's on!" He promised.

That was how Dean found them, giggling and breathless with purple smeared all over their faces. He couldn't help his fond smile as he shook his head.

"I swear, I leave you all alone for five minutes," he murmured as he stepped up to Cas and ducked down to suck the icing from the tip of his nose.

"Ewwww!" Emma, Mary, and Anna cried in unison.

"Aw, shut it!" Dean chided, glaring at them. While he was looking away, Cas reached up to smear icing across his mouth. Dean looked back down at him, only to find Cas grinning unrepentantly.

"Looks like you got something there, Alpha Smith," he teased.

"Well then, why don't you wipe it off for me, Omega Smith," Dean whispered. Cas reached up on tiptoes to brush his mouth over the alpha's, ignoring the cries of dismay from the others.
When they pulled apart, Dean glanced over at the girls. "Go get cleaned up for lunch, please."

"Yes, sir," they replied in unison as they hurried away. Dean reached down into the bowl to swipe out some icing.

"Hey!" Cas cried, swatting his hand away.

Dean arched an eyebrow. "You're really going to get after me when you were just..." He swiped his finger over a smear of icing on his mate's cheek.

"Exactly, so why would you go getting your icing from there when there's plenty available right here?" Cas asked innocently, but he wore a smirk.

Dean pursed his lips as he pretended to consider Cas's words. "You do make an excellent point."

"Wanna help me wash it off?" Cas offered, and Dean chuckled. He pulled Cas from the kitchen as the omega called back to his sister, "We'll be back!"

"I'll just...keep frosting... I guess..." Anna called back. At the last minute she yelled, "You guys are super gross!"

"Stop hanging out with Gabe!" Cas called back.

Dean tugged Cas into the bathroom down on the first floor and shut the door behind them with his foot as he backed Cas up against the counter. His hand splayed over Cas's flat tummy as he claimed a kiss from him.

"You doing okay?" He murmured, his fingers brushing nonsensical patterns over the fabric of Cas's apron.

"Yeah," Cas whispered as he placed his own hand over Dean's. "I'm absolutely fantastic."

"Yeah?" Dean whispered back, bending his head to brush his mouth over Cas's. Cas nodded, his gaze soft and adoring on his alpha's face.

They'd kept their promises from that day in the hospital, talking and being open with each other, no matter how hard it had gotten. Like Cas had predicted, there'd been times where they'd resorted to yelling or, on occasion, screaming. But then after the screaming, after the storm had subsided, there'd been the tender apologies whispered against heated skin as they moved together, a different kind of storm building between them.

When Cas felt that old insecurity pull at him again, when the fear built up and he experienced that need to run and hide, he'd curl up against Dean's side and let his alpha convince him otherwise. And if Dean ever felt the pain from those months apart flare up again, he'd curl around his omega, just to prove to them both that they were still there with each other.

Dean smiled warmly. "Let's get you cleaned up. I gotta go start the grill soon."

"You know that John's going to fight you for grilling rights," Cas reminded as Dean grabbed a washcloth and began to wipe at his face.

Dean just smirked. "I'd like to see him try."

"He's probably going to win," Cas warned, and Dean rolled his eyes.

"Your support," Dean bent to kiss his cheek, "is overwhelming."
"Always happy to help," the omega promised.

John won rights to the grill, but Dean didn't seem to mind so much, especially not when Cas settled down into his lap. Bartholomew and Naomi, who'd long since gotten used to the couple's displays of affection, didn't even bat an eye as they picked at their potato salad.

"I will give you everything in Inaias's wallet if you will please stop," Balth offered as he settled into his seat across from them.

"I second that," Gabe called from his end of the patio table.

"Hey!" Inaias protested.

Cas glanced down at Dean, but the alpha was busy tapping away at his phone again. He looked back up at the others. "We'll take your offer under consideration."

Dean patted his tummy. "That's my omega."

"I tell you what, I don't miss it," John announced as he set a plate of burgers down in the middle of the table.

"Miss what?" Bartholomew asked, reaching for a patty.

"That," John responded, nodding toward Dean with his phone.

John had stayed at the company for as long as he could with his chemo treatments, but Dean had finally sat him down and asked him to consider holding off until the treatments had ended. Once John had gone into remission, he'd decided to make the retirement permanent. As he'd put it, "I've been given another chance, and I plan to enjoy it!"

"Retiring was the best professional decision I ever made!" John proclaimed as he settled down into his seat. "There was never a moment of peace."

Cas giggled as he looped his arms around Dean's neck. "We always manage to find some time for ourselves."

"We know!" Balth, Inaias, and Gabe cried in unison.

Naomi glanced up from where she'd been feeding Tyler a cut-up hot dog and pointedly nodded toward Cas's tummy. "It is pretty obvious."

Dean and the others burst out into laughter while Cas simply blushed.

The pair did manage to find some quiet time for themselves later that evening, after the guests had left for their homes or hotels and the kids had been put to bed. With the house silent and dark and locked up for the night, Dean scooped Cas up in his arms, ignoring his omega's squeal of protest, and carried him to their bedroom.

"Don't want you overdoing it, Omega Smith," he teased as he gently set Cas down on their bed.

"But maybe I wanna overdo it," Cas murmured as he began to run his hands over his torso, down towards his hole. He nibbled on his lower lip as he grinned wickedly at his alpha. "Maybe overdoing
"Hmmm..." Dean hummed as he ducked down to nose at Cas's mating mark. "What did you have in mind?"

Cas giggled as he tugged Dean down onto the bed next to him and then rolled over to straddle his waist. "I hadn't quite decided, but I was thinking..." He rolled his hips, grinding himself against his alpha's erection. "Something like this," he gasped out.

Dean's hands slid up to rest on his hips. "You know, I believe that can be arranged..."

Cas moaned as Dean's big hands kneaded his hips, easily lifting the omega so they could roll against each other. Cas placed his hands flat on Dean's chest to brace himself as he began to move faster.

"I love it when you're like this," Dean breathed, "so soft and sweet and round. So easy for me to grab onto."

Cas panted prettily, his lips bitten and swollen, his blue eyes shining down at his mate. "All for you, alpha." He leaned down to breathe his promise into Dean's mouth, "I am going to ride you into next week."

"I like the sound of that," Dean growled. He reached down to cup Cas through his slacks and panties, but then stopped and chuckled. "Maybe we should get our clothes off first."

Cas froze for a moment, then slumped forward, burying his face in Dean's neck as he huffed out a laugh. "We're worse than teenagers."

Dean brushed his fingers through the omega's hair, smiling fondly. "Good to know we still got it."

"Oh, sweetie," Cas whispered, nuzzling his nose against his alpha's. "I think we'll always have it."

Chapter End Notes

Well...that's it. That's the end. That is the wrap up of 5 months of work.

Holy shit. I am feeling so emotional right now! Like, I don't know if i wanna laugh or cry or feel relieved or proud or sad or devastated... There are just so many options here! After 5 months of working on this verse, I don't know if I'm quite ready to let it go, but that's part of life, moving on to the next big thing.

So, let me thank a few people. First of all, I'd like to thank my original proofreaders, my straight friends who read my gay fanfiction. That takes dedication and loyalty, and you two were the best. Love you both so much!

I also wanna thank the beautiful, incomparable Tyne, who started helping me with feedback and such clear back around chapter 19. Guys, she has helped me so much!

See, my mind is a terrible, terrible thing that gives me at least 5 different options every time I try to story-line, and I can never decide which one is the best! So right before I posted chap 19, I gave her two possible story lines, and she helped me choose this one.

And then she went a step beyond that and actually read my chapters to provide overall
feedback and suggestions, you know like "I think you should include John's perspective here" or "Dean's mindset needs more explanation." She was actually the one who pointed out that the original ending I had planned with 30 chapters felt a little rushed, hence the five extra chapters.

You might think, "wow, that's so awesome! Yay for her!" .... Nope.

Lemme tell you, I am the most insecure motherfucker ever, especially when it comes to my writing, and Tyne had the patience of a saint! I'd email her a chapter and then within five minutes email her back saying "Scratch that! Imma rewrite it!" Or I'd tell her one thing was going to happen, and then the email I'd send would have something completely different happening. Or I'd email her like, "I know you said this chapter was great, but are you *sure*? Bc I'm not sure about *insert item here*"

So, make sure to include some love for Tyne in your comments. She's been ever so wonderful, helping provide some much-needed reader's perspective. Tyne, you're the best and you deserve *at least* 12% of those kudos.

Also, my thanks to those who helped provide feedback about a title! I settled on this title because I liked Hirotashi's recommendation to include the word 'promises,' but I still wanted to keep the word 'kept' in there somehow. Hence, our new title!

Okay, this leads me to my last thank you: thank you all, my wonderful readers. You all have provided me with so much love and support and suggestions and feedback through your comments! I wouldn't have dreamed when I started this back in August that my lil fic would turn into something so big! And that happened because of you all.

You are truly amazing, and I am so honored that I've gotten to know so many of you through your comments. Make sure to stop by my tumblr, madam lit nerd, to drop a line every once in a while.

Also, speaking of tumblr, if you all should happen to share my work on there (hint hint, nudge nudge, wink wink), please tag me in the post! You can do that by typing the @ symbol then start typing in my name. Tumblr should provide a list of users to choose from (even if you're not following me, which I absolutely forgive you for! Just kidding, go follow me *now*)

Well, I've rambled on long enough; at this point I'm just prolonging the inevitable. After I finish typing this, I'm going to click post, and that'll be it! You know, I think I really am going to cry.

So, one final time, I hope you all enjoyed the fic. I love you, hugs n kisses, stay in touch and all that. Okay, byyyyyyeeeee!

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