These Ember Days

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Summary

Dean, a damaged omega, needs a very different sort of care than a traditional Alpha can provide. Castiel, a doctor specializing in Omega treatment, is chosen for him and does his utmost to care for his difficult and complex omega.

Here be Kink! Also, massive amounts of hurt/comfort, overprotectiveness, not strictly necessary medical care, D/s and seriously hardcore caretaking. Against expectation this fic has actually developed into something quite loving and hurt/comforty, just stick with it past the first chapter. Nothing gory I promise!
This fic (and Castiel overall) is warmer than the first chapter describes. I wrote it on a lark and then decided to add to it, so the tone changes quite a bit from the second chapter onward.

That said, this has medical kink (and other kinks) so as much as I have tried to research and be somewhat realistic there will be many inaccuracies, please suspend your disbelief and enjoy the journey.

I am tagging this dubcon because of the inherent power imbalance in this type of relationship. Castiel cares about Dean and though he is definitely dedicated to giving Dean everything he needs (even contractually obligated!), it's not always what Dean wants. Also, he's a kinky, kinky man and so is Dean. This is basically me experimenting with alternate modes of submission and dominance in a bdsm and abo universe.

It's also about someone needing to care for another to the point of domination and someone else needing to submit but being unable to do it through the usual methods. This is kink and not meant to represent a realistic D/s relationship or medical care.

They absolutely live by an alternate moral structure with different psychological and physical needs to the rest of us. Please do not read if you are easily triggered or have issues related to body autonomy!!!
“Relax Dean, remember to swallow as it goes down,”

“No, Cas. I’ll do better. I don’t need this again.” Dean’s voice shook as he stared at the roll of tubing currently resting innocently in Castiel’s hand, the rest of the nasogastric feeding kit sitting on the table next to him.

“Shh, sweetheart this isn’t a punishment. You know it’s not.” He pulls Dean in close to his chest, rubbing his back with his free hand comfortingly. “We talked about this. When you drop 5% below your minimum weight range the tube goes back in. It’s to help you. I need to help you.”

“I just...”

“No,” His voice firm, the strict tone he knew would work on him, “You’ve been trying. I know you have but now it’s my turn to take over, I’ll look after you till we get back to where you need to be. With you forgetting to eat and pushing yourself too hard, it’s to be expected. I’m not upset, you did so much better, you managed almost six months this time. You just need a little more help is all.” He cups his jaw and places a gentle kiss on Dean’s forehead.

“I hate it.”

“I know you do. And once this is over I’m going to be better at enforcing more regular meals and forcing you to finish what you have. We’ll do it together.”

“Yeah,” quietly, almost a whisper, "yeah ok.”

“That’s good. That’s real good. Now you gonna let me put it in?”

“Do I have a choice?” his voice a resigned acceptance.

Castiel doesn’t reply and instead leans over to position Dean’s head and throat just right for the insertion.

Not for the first time did Dean just wish he hadn’t been matched with a doctor, he loved Castiel with everything he had but sometimes wished that he had been an architect or painter or something. Even though he knew a different alpha would probably be more traditional in his discipline, a fear Dean really didn’t want to entertain, not after...he just couldn't.

And he knew, really knew, right down to his bones that Cas was good for him, good to him, that he needed him in some essential, necessary way. Even if that scared him a little, at this point he couldn't imagine life without him.

As an officially and voluntarily registered Submissive Omega (High Needs), legally Castiel could do just about anything to Dean so long as it was considered ‘Consistent with the wellbeing and ongoing care of the Omega’ and Castiel was obsessed with his ‘care’, it was a huge part of his dynamic. Dean himself needed it, he admitted that much, he wasn’t good at looking after himself, was too likely to ignore an injury, forget to eat, forget to sleep, he assumed that was one of the reasons why they matched him with a doctor. And he loved when Castiel doted on him, loved it when he was the centre of Castiel’s entire focus, loved to get home from work and have him waiting there for him at home. He just wished that sometimes Castiel could do it in a little less humiliating, physically intrusive ways and sometimes it hurt.
“Ok, I’m starting the insertion now.” He was always like that, kind but insistent, no room to refuse even as he comforted and commiserated. He lubricated the tip with a small amount of anaesthetic gel and held it up to for Dean to see before he gently threaded the tube inside of the left side of Dean’s nose and pushed insistently. Dean gagged, he always gagged at this point and Castiel knew to expect it, expected him to try to pull away from the discomfort. That was why he had positioned him sitting in a chair against the wall, and had placed his free hand behind his neck. Nowhere for him to move, to escape.

“Ok, take a sip of water now,” he said releasing Dean’s neck and lifting the cup up to his lips, the water helped the tube slide down into the right position, with only a small amount more gagging as it went. He reached across and checked the length inserted.

“Almost done now. Just got to check it’s positioned properly. Then we can get you fed,” He smiled encouragingly, like that was a reward or something. He got the PH testing kit out, aspirated and checked it, obviously satisfied.

“That was perfect Sweetheart,” He said as he measured out a length of tape and fitted it carefully across Dean’s cheek.

He helped him up then and led him over to the couch where he had already set up a gravity bag on an IV stand. Settling him against the cushions, he attached the bag, cleared the tube and toggled it to slowly flow down the tube.

“That’s it. You can relax now,” He sat next to him on the sofa and he eases Dean’s body down so he was relaxing with his back resting against Castiel’s chest “I’ve set it to a slow feed.” Dean groaned, of course he’d set it slow. He loved to see Dean unable to move, tied physically to the stand, reliant on Castiel even down to this basic level.

Castiel drags his fingers through the short strands of Dean’s hair, pleased that he was finally relaxing into the process. He had his eyes shut, not asleep but resting as the liquid slowly made it’s way down the tube and into his body. Castiel knew Dean had a hard time accepting his help with this, still fought giving up the autonomy over his own body, but Castiel was patient, willing to wait him out as he struggled with his own conflicting desires to submit and his fear of giving over too much.

The Omega Support Program (OSP) had warned him that Dean would need a firm hand and a lot of coaxing to get him where he needed to go. They had chosen Castiel specifically because he specialised in Omega care and they knew him by reputation. Dean was special to them, explained plainly, he had a natural generosity but hopeless at self care, headstrong needlessly at times and struggled to find himself amongst the other Omegas. He’d won them all over with his natural charm but frustrated them in their attempts to help him. Traditional discipline rarely worked with him and had actually backfired at times, sometimes severely with him reacting to physical discipline as traumatic instead of steadying as a normal Omega would. They needed someone with a different tactic, someone who could work Dean down, let him feel the control and guidance needed without using traditional methods.

Castiel had taken one look at Dean’s file and agreed immediately. There was always something about him that drew him, even before the offer came in, something that he wanted to own, control and also love, shower with affection and carefully maintain.

He’d renovated his home clinic where he occasionally saw private patients in preparation for him and less than a month later brought him home.
That first day had been hard on both of them, he’d needed to set the tone for their relationship. Putting Dean through the first and most thorough of what would be his weekly physicals, he’d spent hours familiarizing himself with Dean’s body, easing his fingers and instruments inside him, stretching him out and opening him up. He’d taken samples to send away and checked his reflexes. Working him hard and long and then when he was satisfied with that he’d brought him to the training room and run him through his physical movement and obedience exercises. When finally exhaustion had set in he’d taken them both to bed, gently and with the utmost care made love to him, giving him orgasm after orgasm till he fell into unconsciousness.

The next day, for the first time the feeding tube and catheter had gone in, as well as the application of glucose monitors, pulse oximeters, blood pressure, and other monitoring devices. He’d spent the day interviewing him, digging down as far as he could into Dean’s medical history, family history, everything, interrogating him about past. He would spend the next few weeks documenting every part of him, collecting data, learning and building a plan.

“I’m going to take such good care of you,” he’d explained as he slipped into bed with him that night, careful not to disturb any of the attachments, “you’ll see.”

He liked to think he had, was, fulfilling his promise.

The OSP had been right, Dean needed a gentle, carefully placed hand. Experimentally Castiel had spanked him once, when Dean had forgotten to drink enough, leaving the carefully labeled bottles in the fridge for Castiel to find when he returned that night. Dean hadn’t fought as Castiel shifted him over his knee but he hadn’t relaxed either. Not even when Castiel had steadied him, working his hand down his neck and along the edges of his spine like it normally would. Instead he took the hits with a flinch and a hiss, forcing himself through sheer will to endure it.

Castiel had stopped even before his skin started to pink up. He’d seen that look before in Dean’s eyes and that was misery, deep seated and enduring, no lessons would be learnt here, no calming release, nothing healthy. He couldn’t continue.

Instead he’d pulled Dean up again and wrapped his arms around him, letting him tuck his face into his neck for comfort.

“I’m sorry, that wasn’t the right thing to do was it?” Dean shook in his arms, clinging tightly for reassurance, his head shaking against Castiel’s skin, “I won’t do that again. Ok? I promise.”

The whispered ‘thank you’ was almost inaudible but enough to reassure Castiel that Dean would be ok. He became non-verbal when he was really not coping, Castiel had stopped in time.

“Let’s try something else,” he suggested, his mind running a mile a minute coming up with possibilities.

Dean tried again to talk him out of the feeding tube as they readied for bed that night. Castiel bathed and prepared Dean with his nighttime dilation devices, another area that Dean had had to grow to
accept. They were significantly bigger than the daytime dilators Dean wore and took some getting used to, but like the feeding tube, Dean eventually grew to accept it. It just took Castiel being firm and consistent in his expectations.

Now Dean knelt over the custom bench in the bathroom, cushioning his head on his arms and allowed Castiel to clean him out thoroughly and prepare him. Castiel started with his anal passage, giving Dean and small warm enema, designed to be soothing and comforting, before easing him up against him and letting him release into the toilet basin fitted below the bench specifically for this purpose. He flushed it and then he settled him back down, ran his hands between this legs to check his testicles and penis careful.

“You're doing great sweetheart,” he said resting his hand gently on the base of his spine, feeling the tension there.

Dean couldn’t help a slight moan as Castiel slipped his lightly lubricated fingers inside him. Castiel hadn’t entered Dean nor allowed him any release for several days and Dean was obviously missing it. Rarely did Castiel deny Dean this long but he firmly believed that it was in his best interests to be denied at times, for him to understand his needs and be pushed to accept Castiel’s control over this aspect of his life now. It was hard for him, Castiel knew that, he was such a sexual being, but thankfully in this at least Dean understood that Cas was helping him, training his body and mind to submit, accept. He wouldn’t beg, not yet at least.

Castiel slid in his first custom dilator. It wasn’t large yet, it started as a moderately sized metallic object, fitted with a slightly flared base and slid easily into Dean’s welcoming passage. It wasn’t until Castiel pulled up the app on his phone that controlled the device that it’s real size was felt. It expanded, sensing automatically the edge of true discomfort and skirted it, frustratingly expanding gradually, hour after hour until come morning it would need to be to be disabled and reduced before removal was possible. It didn’t ever become painful, but unsettling enough that the first few night of its use Castiel had needed to fit Dean with medical mitts to prevent him trying to remove it and cause himself harm. The pelvic floor exercises Castiel included twice daily in Dean’s physical training more than made up for the taxing of the internal muscles. Plus, the increased pleasure he (and Dean!) felt entering him made it absolutely worthwhile.

The vaginal dilator in Dean’s other passage was shaped slightly differently but acted much the same and though he didn’t introduce it until Dean accustomed himself to the first device, both were now familiar enough that Dean no longer hesitated in laying himself over the bench.

Once fitted Dean had an hour or so before they started expanding as they were designed specifically to give him time to fall asleep. So, Castiel quickened his movements, knowing Dean would need as much time as possible to settle for the night.

He eased him up and walked him into the bedroom, helping him sit on the edge of bed.

“Do we really have to do this?”

“You know we do.”

“It’s just…”

“Dean.”

Castiel reached behind his neck and picked up the end of the feeding tube, checking that it was clean and getting the port ready to connect it to the nighttime feeding machine. He’d set it up earlier and readied the tube. All the was needed now was Dean to lay back and relax while he attached
everything. It would take around five hours to complete the feeding.

He fixed Dean with a look that told him exactly what was expected. Dean sighs, and finally shifts back against his pillows.

“How long? How many days?”

“Let’s try two weeks and see how we go from there;” Castiel smiled down at him, kissing him on the forehead as he eased the blanket up to chest height. He loved the times when he controls this aspect of Dean’s life, it’s unfeasible for long term use but simply the periodic reminder is enough to have Dean eat more regularly.

He slips in the other side of the bed and curls around Dean, checking his pulse and blood pressure on his phone before settling in to sleep, his ear resting over Dean’s heart where he can feel it beating steady and sure.
Chapter 2

The next morning the attitude is back and Castiel has to hold back his frustration and disappointment. He knows that it takes Dean time to accept this every time they have to do it and that it's nothing personal. But seeing the love of his life scowling at him from the minute he opens his eyes, is not the most pleasant experience to wake up to.

“Seriously, I needed to pee like yesterday,” he says fixing Castiel with a look that so clearly illustrates who he blames for this.

“Ok, just let me unhook you,” Dean groans, but doesn’t comment further as the machine is detached. The liquid nature of the feeding inevitably meant that Dean had to use the bathroom much more frequently than normal and Castiel wasn’t going to begrudge him the inconvenience. When Dean had first arrived at Castiel’s house and he’d started him on a feeding tube he’d fitted him a catheter to deal with this aspect, but felt that it was unnecessary at this juncture. At that time Dean had needed the extra support, he wasn’t nearly as healthy as he is now and emotionally needed the reassurance, as much as he will deny it now.

Dean doesn’t wait for Castiel’s assistance, instead barreling into the bathroom and obviously desperate for the release.

“Dean,” Castiel warns, a firm reminder.

“Shit, shit come on then!” he says, leaning over the bowl and bracing himself against the back wall in an attempt to hold on a little longer.

Cas steps in behind him and with practiced ease slides one hand down his abdomen to rest gently against Dean bladder while the other grasps his penis expertly.

“Oh, you can let go.”

The response is immediate as well as the groan of obvious pleasure passing Dean's lips. Castiel checks carefully and the liquid is a very pale yellow, perfectly hydrated, just as he should be.

He doesn’t always make Dean wait for his assistance, obviously it’s impossible while either of them is at work or when they’re separated for other reasons but when they are together the expectation is that Dean will ask, will wait for him. A sure fire sign that Dean wants (or needs) to go back on the urinary bag is not telling Castiel when he needs to go, or more problematically going before asking assistance.

When he’s done Castiel leads him back to the bench and deactivates the dilators. They slip out easily and he puts them away to sanitise later. The relief Dean feels is palpable.

“Better?”

“Yeah, thanks.” he’s settled some now and is pliant enough for Cas to do a quick internal exam. He slips his finger inside each passage and reassures himself that all is well before guiding Dean back up and into the shower stall.

The both sleep naked so it’s an easy thing to turn the water on and scrub them both down, with Dean pliant enough that he allows Castiel to use the inbuilt enema hose in the shower wall on him instead of the manual one that he prefers. Castiel kisses him encouragingly and has him hold it for a few minutes while he washes both their hair.
He had Dean release into the toilet while he gets dressed.

“What’s your plans for today?” he asks curious, mostly on Thursdays Dean works from home, though lately he’d been going in more often to work with some students on a particular project for the university’s anniversary. Dean doesn’t like to go out as much when he has particularly obvious attachments, it’s perfectly accepted for an Omega to need extra support at times but the particular methods that Castiel uses are unusual enough to draw some uncomfortable questions. Luckily most of the students and fellow staff are familiar now with Castiel and his methods, they see the benefit his guidance has had on one of their most popular teachers.

Castiel had seen the changes himself, not just in Dean physically and emotionally but also in his work. He’d heard of Dean before he met him for the first time, been to more than one of his openings and been viscerally challenged and struck by his art. The work he completed in the years prior to their relationship was stunning, that much was obvious, but it was also heartbreaking. The sculptures he created were a combination of metal spires welded together with pottery fired with shards of glass, graceful yet brutal, and painful to comprehend. He understood why the university had stepped in to practically force Dean to enrol himself in the Omega Support Program, they didn’t want to lose one of their most talented and beloved staff members. His destructive spiral down into harmful behaviours needed to end.

The work he made now though. It was magnificent in a completely different way. Still utilising metal, clay and glass but it felt open and freeing. It allowed colours to shimmer through the stained glass panels, it illuminated every room it was in and generated a sense of peace in chaos. Dean was still struggling, at times desperately, but his art told Castiel everything he needed to know, it just took time.

“I have to go in,” Dean sounds reluctant, “Charlie needs help with some welding and I can’t trust Mark alone with the kiln.”

“Ok, no problem. I have patients lined up till around one and I want you fed at least twice before then so we’ll do one now and I’ll send Gabriel by around eleven with the next bag.” he wishes he could do it himself but he has other responsibilities. Gabriel is an excellent nurse and can be relied upon to care for Dean in his absence. They’re also friends which helps quiet Dean’s protests that he can do it himself, he looks forward to catching up with Gabe.

Before Dean gets dressed Castiel reattaches the various biometric and monitoring devices he uses with Dean. Technology has come a long way in the last few years and Dean’s almost obsessive need to find the least intrusive and easily managed models means that they’re all wireless and can be accessed instantly from Castiel’s phone or computer at work. He slips his hand between Dean’s legs feeling his passages for lubrication, not enough he decides and retrieves his spare bottle from the draw by the bed.

“Lean over for me. You’re a bit dry.” he instructs and Dean does, settling his arms easily against the pack of the chair. Cas slicks him up gently, not wanting to stimulate him too much as he doesn’t plan to take this any further. He slips two fingers into each passage and asks him to clench and release, checking his pelvic floor.

“Ten sets of five seconds each. Do you need me to count?”

“No, I can do it.” Dean is a little tense, trying to keep his breathing even like Castiel had taught him. Castiel rests his hand lightly between his legs, feeling the muscles clench and release rhythmically, the pelvic floor exercises getting easier for Dean the longer he does them.

“Do an extra set for me later this morning when Gabe visits? You feel a little loose,” Dean just nods,
he knows how important it is for him to keep his pelvis floor strong. Cas then slips in both daytime dilators, much smaller and more comfortable, designed to move with Dean’s body and more for monitoring purposes than anything else, as they had a full range of internal sensors.

Dean dressed quickly and they make their way out into the kitchen. Cas grabs one of the feeding bags for Dean from the fridge, he’d brought a dozen or so from the hospital yesterday but would need to remember to get more. His feeding schedule for Dean was six bags a day and it really was just easier to use the prepackaged ones.

Cas set Dean up at the kitchen table with a gravity bag hanging on the IV stand and set it to flow fairly quickly. He’d want this over with as soon as possible.

He sets out a small glass and fills it with ice cubes and hands them to Dean to suck on, it helps his body accept the fullness in his stomach and helps with the irritation in his throat.

“Remember sweetheart. Nil by mouth until I say so. You can suck on some ice to wet your mouth but that’s it.”

“Yeah, yeah. I remember,” he dismisses the concern lightly, crunching down on an ice cube just to spite him. Cas chooses to deliberately ignore it.

Castiel makes himself some toast and coffee, sitting down across from him and opening up the newspaper. He hands Dean the sports section and keeps the international news for himself. They sit quietly for a while, enjoying the calm before the storm of their busy lives engulfs them. Castiel looks up for a moment and catches Dean eyeing the mug of coffee enviously, he’d normally have gulped his own down greedily by now and is probably feeling the lack of caffeine keenly. When he first met him, Dean had been consuming six to nine cups a day and had built up a significant tolerance for the stuff. Cas had cut him back to two cups a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon after the effects of the first had mostly worn off. But, it couldn’t be helped really and Castiel wasn’t going to bend his rules for simple cravings so he ignored it, finishing off his own cup quickly enough and putting it in the dishwasher.

“Nil by mouth,” Castiel reminded gently as Dean continued to stare at the mug.

“I know,” he sounded almost ashamed.

Castiel left earlier than Dean, shrugging on his jacket and collecting his phone and keys. He spent a moment disconnecting the tube, clearing it out with water and helpfully taping the end to the inside of back of Dean’s shirt so it’s not in the way. He’d kissed him then, drawing him close and working Dean’s equally enthusiastic mouth against his.

“See you at one,” he called as he shut the door behind him.

“Bye,” Dean calls out, still panting a bit from the kiss. God he wished he could get off! He wished Castiel would just reach down and touch him, ease him through another of those earth shattering orgasms it seemed only he could ring out of Dean’s body. But no, he was in the middle of some plan, something about training Dean’s body to accept denial or something. Dean didn’t care he just missed the tender rather than clinical touches.

Plus, it’s not like he could masturbate or anything, Castiel would be ringing him immediately to ask
about the elevated heart rate and why the sensors in his daytime dilators were registering unusual readings.

He gives a last longing look at the coffee pot before grabbing his own keys and phone. He didn’t want to be late and knew that Charlie would be waiting for him in the studio.

As expected Charlie is there already working. She climbs down off the ladder she’s currently teetering on dangerously and gives him a suspicious look, eyeing the NG tube with disdain.

“You’ve lost weight again haven’t you.”

“I didn’t mean to!” Dean reaches up and touches the tube self-consciously but she batts his fingers away.

“Don’t touch it! If you dislodge it Cas is going to be so pissed.”

“Yeah, I know.” He pulls his hands away, resisting the urge to tug on the tube experimentally. He’d done that once before and then been forced to feed it back in himself before Cas saw what he had done. Not an experience he wants to repeat.

“Was he angry?”

“Nah, you know him. He doesn’t get angry. Just gets all disappointed and starts plotting ways to ‘fix it’.”

She laughs quick and easily, which is nice. When Castiel had first arrived in Dean’s life she had been the first to condemn him, insisting that the university take back its threats to fire Dean unless he got help. They hadn’t backed down, Cas had stuck around and eventually she had grown to respect Castiel for his commitment to Dean if not his methods.

“What are we up to today?”

“Gonna finish off this section,” Dean says gesturing to the currently six foot pile of twisted metal, “and then see if we can get to the next section in the afternoon.”

“Sure thing Boss,” she salutes exaggeratedly and flips back down her helmet, traipsing off back to the ladder and the obscene amount of welding equipment.

Dean smiles lightly, he’s so glad he hired her right out of the undergrad class he taught, he’d never met a more talented or dedicated welder in his life.

For a couple of hours he focusses on his own job drilling patterned holes in sheet metal ready for her to weld. Stopping only a couple of times to suck on some ice from the fridge in the back. It’s hot
work and hard going on the shoulders. He’s leaning back stretching his spine out from the hunched over position when Gabriel walks in carrying a cooler and whistling at him suggestively.

“Looking hot Deano!”

“Shut it Gabe. You try drilling through 70 pieces of sheet metal.”

“Just saying, I appreciate the view!” There is no way Gabriel would ever even consider seriously coming on to Dean but the banter between them remains playful and Cas doesn’t seem to mind. Trusting them both instinctively.

“Got some lunch for you. You ready?” he said holding up the cooler.

“As I’ll ever be.” Dean shrugs and eyes it unhappily.

“Hey,” Gabe says seeing the humour fall from Dean’s expression, “I know this sucks. I’d hate it too you know, I couldn’t stand a day without reaching for the nearest candy bar. But Cas, he’s only doing this because he loves you.”

Dean sighs, “Let’s just get this over with.”

“That’s the spirit!” Gabe’s voice all false cheer. He knows how much Dean dislikes this process and Cas is super strict with him about it. Absolutely nothing except water was allowed to be swallowed for the whole whole time the tube was in and even that was minimal.

“You piss yet?”

“No.”

“Ok, let’s do that first. You might need some extra water so I’d like to check for dehydration.”

Dean leads him to his office in the back and shuts the door behind him. He pulls the blinds as well, unable to not be self conscious. There is an ensuite bathroom off to one side and Gabe follow him in there.

Unlike Castiel he allows Dean to touch himself when he goes but is carefully watching the colour and the amount of liquid expelled. Dean doesn’t bother to button up his fly yet, waiting for Gabe who’s pulled out his tablet and is making a couple of notes for Castiel.

“Feel like you need some more lube? Cas noted you were dry this morning.” He’s looking down at his tablet at the notes Cas had provided.

Dean shrugs, knowing Cas would required Gabe to check anyway. And he does, reaching down between Dean’s legs to feel the edges of the dilators. He hums thoughtfully.

“Feels ok for now. Cas will be by in a couple of hours and will probably check again then. Let’s leave it for now.”

Dean lets out a relieved breath, he hated having anyone but Castiel’s fingers inside him. Even though he knew Gabe well and had gotten somewhat used to having him do this, it still felt pretty awful.

“Cas told me to have you do some of your pelvic floor exercises.”

Dean nods, he remembers the instruction from this morning. Gabe slides his hand down between Dean’s legs, laying his palm flat along his pelvis, not the most accurate position, which is internal but enough for him to feel if Dean is doing the exercises properly.
Dean takes a steadying breath and starts. He clenches, holds, counts and releases, eight times. Not strenuous but takes long enough for him to grow seriously uncomfortable with Gabe’s hand.

“You’re doing good, just two more.” Gabe reassures him, placing his free hand on Dean’s shoulder, sensing his unease.

Once Dean is finished, Gabe gives him a moment to gather himself, spending just a little too long washing his hands and readying the equipment.

“Want to do this on the sofa or at the desk?”

“The sofa,”

“Sure thing.”

He drags over the spare IV stand that rests in the corner of the office. Dean sits gingerly on the sofa, readying himself for the process.

“Lean over.” Gabe reaches behind his head and pulls tape off of tube and checks the end. He grabs the PH kit and tests the tube gently.

“Ok, here we go.” he says as he attaches the bag, “How fast should I set this?”

“20min?”

Gabe gently toggles the device and lays the extra tubing against Dean’s shoulder so as not to pull at the tubing taped to his cheek.

Gabe can see his tension, “Just relax man, let it happen.” he says, flopping down beside him on the sofa and pulling out his tablet.

“Have I shown you this hilarious cat video Chuck sent me?”
Castiel arrived at 1pm exactly as promised and Dean can’t help but feel a little thrill at having him right there in his studio. It wasn’t often that he could find the time to come down with their busy schedules often conflicting. He also knew that Cas didn’t want to influence him here, his art was his alone and Cas absolutely refused to change that.

It was a line they both drew. Dean knew Castiel had his body and his love but he would never touch his art. He swore to himself that if he ever even tried, that would be the end of it, he would call the OSP and terminate the contract then and there, his lovelife be damned, his job be damned, his sanity be damned, the whole world can go to hell as far as he is concerned. He knew he was better off with Cas, more stable, but that didn’t mean there weren’t lines that couldn’t be crossed, luckily Cas seemed to instinctively understand this, one of the many reasons Dean loved him.

But, there was one small benefit of the damn NG tube Dean mused, Cas had to find the time to visit him here. They got to spend at least an hour at lunch together every single day. Dean was nervous but thrilled at the chance to show Castiel his new work. It was to be the centre sculpture in a new fountain being built to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the university and was the first commission Dean had ever done involving water.

“Hey Cas!” he yells over the screech of welding equipment and power tools. He drops the drill, happy for the break.

“Hello,” the warmth of his smile infectious in its sincerity, “How is the work progressing?”

“Great! Only about a million more holes to drill and a metric ton of metal to weld together but at least we’re still on schedule to get this done in time. Can’t believe it’s finally coming together, I’ve been designing this thing for the last 18 months.”

“That’s wonderful to hear,” the pride evident in his voice,

No one believed in him like Castiel did. His belief in Dean was rock solid, nothing could shake it. Time and time again, when Dean was struggling and needed reassurance Castiel was there, telling him, showing him just how precious he was. Of how much he was capable. Of what he could take and stand up again, against it all.

And for that alone Dean would have loved him, forget the gentleness buried deep in his eyes, forget the way he checked over and over that Dean was ok, forget that literally every breath Dean took, every beat of his heart was watched over by him, forget the small and immediate kindnesses he showered over him every single day. It was enough that he knew, with absolute certainty that Dean was special and he made sure Dean knew it too.

Yes, it was hard. At times all he wanted to do was scream at Castiel to just leave him the hell alone! But, Dean had been alone before. He had pushed everyone and everything away, including his own health and well-being, and it had almost killed him. He didn’t want to walk down that darkened road again, and he didn’t have the strength to turn around again and reach begging into the light for help. He knew what it was now to walk the road together, sometimes carried when his will gave out, sometimes led, but never alone, never again.
He shook himself away from the troubled thoughts, clearing his mind and dragging himself back up to the present moment.

Castiel was looking at him with a vaguely troubled expression.

“Is everything alright?”

“I’ll be fine in a minute,” he confessed, “just getting lost in my own thoughts again.”

Cas nodded used to having Dean struggle with himself at times.

“Shall we head over to your office?”

Dean leads the way, settling better this time into the familiar process of the feeding. Castiel doesn’t even have to prompt him as he prepares the bag and connects up the tubing. Dean has other things on his mind, he wants to show Castiel the new sketches he’s drawn and the final mockups of the fountain’s base.

So they sit, for a comfortable hour going over the different design elements and construction strategies while the meal slowly makes it’s way into Dean’s stomach. Castiel for his part has a turkey on rye sandwich with an apple juice, nothing fancy but enough to make Dean’s mouth water already, not even a full day into the process. Dean can’t help but feel a stab of jealousy but tamps it down quickly, he wants this he reminds himself, he needs to train himself to remember to eat and if a couple of weeks of denial is what it takes to incentivise him to remember then so be it.

Castiel for his part isn’t hiding his own lunch but he isn’t making a big deal out of it either. Eating his fill and throwing away the packaging within the first few minutes of their time together. He knows this is hard for Dean and while part of the process is about building more enthusiasm towards eating, he’s not going to make Dean suffer needlessly.

Dean clears his throat roughly, it had been hard work out there and while he isn’t technically thirsty, his mouth feels dry and a little rough. Castiel wordlessly retrieves a glass of ice chips for him and rubs his back encouragingly.

“Do you have a lot more work to do today?”

“A couple of hours at least, it’s slow going, I’ll try not to be too late.”

“I’ve got a few follow up consultations and Dr. Meyers has asked me to consult with him this afternoon. Apparently a young Omega patient of his is having trouble stabilising her heats and she doesn’t want to look for an Alpha till she is regular.” Dean nods sympathetically. He’d gone through a similar thing a couple of years ago and could appreciate just how draining it could be on the body and the mind never knowing just when a heat would hit.

“Shall we aim to be home by seven, barring emergencies of course?” it wouldn't be the first time Cas had been forced to stay late in the hospital or rush off there in the middle of the night. Omegas were much rarer than either Betas or Alphas, so, while it was less common for Castiel to be needed at a moment’s notice, occasionally it did occur that a specialist was necessary.

Dean wished that if he ever was in real trouble that a dedicated doctor like Castiel was on hand to treat him.
Luckily no emergencies occurred that afternoon and after a satisfying consultation with the young Omega in which several strategies were discussed, Castiel was able to leave right on time.

He knew the day had been hard on Dean, the first couple were always the hardest by far and he wanted to reward him. He had several ideas in mind.

He found Dean resting in the living room when he got home but he immediately got up and greeted him at the door.

“Thank god! I really need to pee and I knew you’d want me to wait. But I’d almost given up!”

He nods his approval. If possible Dean knew he was to wait for Castiel before he went at night, it wasn’t always possible but mostly they succeeded.

Dean takes his customary stance in front of the bowl waiting, if not patiently.

At least he tries to wait but the liquid starts to flow the minute Cas grasps his cock, he groans in annoyance but doesn’t attempt to stop the flow. It’s a lot Castiel can see, it must have been rather uncomfortable to hold so long.

“It’s ok. You held it as long as you could.” he rubs as his abdomen comfortably as the last of the liquid makes it’s way into the bowl.

“Can’t get used to this liquid diet thing.” Dean grousches without malice.

“You will” he promises.

Castiel made himself a simple meal of reheated stew and set Dean at the table with another glass of ice and a full bag flowing down steadily inside him. Once they were done, Dean made to head into the training room where they usually spent a couple of hours after dinner working on various physical movement and obedience exercises.

“Not tonight. You’ve worked your body hard enough today. Go in the bedroom and lay down. I’ll be there in a minute.”

Cas heads into his clinical rooms to collect the scentless oil he uses in clinical massage and a couple of instant ice packs.

Dean is looking gorgeous resting heavily amid the silk sheets on their bed. He isn’t asleep, Cas can tell by the still tight muscles of his back and shoulders as he struggles to unwind from the day.

Cas eases himself down beside him, gently running a soothing hand up his spine, pushing him back down to the mattress when he attempts to raise himself.

“Shh, just relax sweetheart. I’m just going to give you a massage.”

“Really?” he sounds sleepy but delighted, he had obviously expected to be spending the evening doing several hours of grueling exercise. Cas is quite happy to surprise him.
“But first, we’ve got to get rid of this.” He says gesturing to the growing length between Dean’s legs. Dean groans, knowing exactly what that will entail. But, he flips himself over and grabs the headboard obediently bracing himself for the inevitable. They’d done this often enough now that the process is familiar if not entirely bearable.

“Ok, deep breath.”

The ice back is placed down gently between Dean’s legs but still hits him like a strike to the nuts. He involuntarily clenches up and then down, trying desperately to escape it, but Cas following him through it, keeping one hand holding the pack down and the other gentle of his forehead, all the while talking to him soothingly, talking him through the agonising sensitivity.

Eventually the words filter back in, Cas’s voice soothing and calm, sounding like he’d been speaking for quite a while.

“...that’s it. Good. Just a little longer. You’re doing so well…” Dean can feel the wetness on his cheeks and dampening the pillow where the tears had pooled.

“I know sweetheart,” Cas was saying, gently brushing the hair back from his forehead, “I feel like such an asshole doing this to you. But you’ve got to believe me, it’ll be worth it. I promise.” The earnestness in his voice winning Dean over all over again.

The ice pack in finally removed and Dean has to stifle the urge to peer down at himself, shriveled up and pathetic between his legs. Instead he looks up at Castiel, who meets his eyes lovingly, the pride and what could almost be amazement shimmering in his eyes.

“Oh Dean, you took that so well. You have no idea how proud I am of you!” he looks so absolutely convinced of this that Dean can’t help but smile back at him, his heart warming if not his dick.

Cas helps him shift back over, settling him on his front again. He can hear the snick of a cap opening and the sensation of a warm liquid pooling in the middle of his back.

Before long Castiel has settled his hands in the dip of Deans lower back and begun working the muscles there with expert precision. Dean can’t hold back a moan of absolute pleasure, the burning ache he’s developed throughout the day slipping away under Castiel’s more than capable hands.

Cas works his way up the spine until he reaches Dean’s neck and then fans out, sure fingers finding every knot, ache and tension in the muscles and guiding them back to complete relaxation. It’s a feat few have time for but his patience is seemingly eternal when it comes to Dean. Dean knows he enjoys seeing him pliant and needy that’s exactly what he becomes. Arching up into the touch, letting him guide him under into utter languid calm.

Castiel finishes the massage with the base of Dean’s feet, working the sore spots until he can feel them release under his fingers. Dean is placid like this, calm like he almost never gets to be in normal life. With his job and the pressures he places on himself, this is an indulgence he almost never gets, or gives himself. Cas hopes to remedy that in time but until then he works at making the most of these hard fought moments, let Dean unwind for the now and let it all go.

Soon he’ll have to rouse him, get him cleaned off and ready for bed. But not yet, not in this quiet moment.
“Sam rang last night, while you were asleep and I didn’t want to wake you, he asks if you could please ring him back,” Cas and Dean were sitting at the kitchen table, breakfast laid out in front of him, Dean trying desperately not to look at Cas’s eggs and toast.

“Ok, I’ll just,” he gestures to the office.

“Of course,” Cas doesn’t begrudge him his privacy.

Dean grabs the IV stand and wheels it into the office with him, shutting the door behind him.

Sam picks up after only a couple of rings, his voice cheerfully warm on the other side of the line.

“Dean! So good to hear from you!”

“You too, sorry I haven’t called more. I’ve been so busy with the new commission,”

“Hey, no problem. I know how it is. How is it coming along?”

“Slowly, it’s one thing to design it and another thing completely to build it. But we’re getting there and Cas is being great about the long hours. I feel bad you know, getting home so late each night and working all these weekends.”

“How is Cas?” Sam’s voice is carefully neutral.

“He’s good Sammy,” Dean can’t keep the affection out of his voice.

“And you?” Sam’s voice is tentative, like he fears the answer.

“I’m doing good too. Honestly. It’s hard with the extra classes they’ve asked me to I teach and the commission work, but I’m happy, feel like I’m really achieving something here.” but then his voice drops and he guiltily adds, because he knows Cas would want him to keep Sam informed, “but, I lost some weight again, been pretty irresponsible with my meals outside the house. Cas put me back on that damn liquid diet.”

“Dean,” Sam’s voice is reproachful, “You got to take better care of yourself. Cas can’t do everything.”

“You think I don’t know that! God, you think I don’t try? It’s just...” he pauses, like he doesn’t want to admit it, to himself or Sam, it’s unclear, “It’s just that sometimes it’s easier, you know, feels good to hand over the reins.”

“I get that. I do” the worry evident in Sam’s voice, “and I want you to have that, but, he can’t be with you all the time. And as much as you both wish it could be different sometimes it’s just not possible. You got to look after yourself.”

“I know alright. You don’t think I try?”
“I know you do.” defeat edging the corners of Sam’s voice, this is known territory for them, a conversation that feels old and worn, “I know this is hard Dean and you’re doing so much better. I do see it. But I’m your brother, so I have a right to worry.” Sam knows he’s being overprotective but almost losing your brother will do that to you.

“Jerk,” Dean’s smirk catches the edge of his words, “honestly, I’m good.”

“Yeah?”

“Absolutely!”

“That’s real good Dean. Because Jess and I were hoping to come up and visit, maybe next weekend? We’ve got something to tell you guys.”

“That would be awesome. Let me just check if Cas has anything on.”

Dean disappears from the line for a moment and can be heard chatting quietly in the background before reappearing a moment later.

“He said he’d love to see you. When you planning on driving down?”

“Friday night, after work. We’ll pick up something for dinner on the way so don’t worry about feeding us.”

“Not like I’d get to join in anyway even if we did,” Dean grous, but laughs at himself after a moment, “maybe I can convince Cas to let me off easy this time. Sounds like it’s going to be a special occasion.”

“I wouldn’t bet on it,” Sam teases, “that man is the most inflexible alpha I’ve ever met”

“Doesn’t mean I can’t try!”

“You do that. I’ve gotta go to work and I bet so do you,”

“Yeah, fountains don’t build themselves you know.”

“Bye Dean. Hope it goes well and see you next Friday.”

“You too. See you soon.”

“How was Sam?” Castiel enquired, sipping contentedly on a cup of coffee, Dean wanted nothing more than to yank it out of his stupid hands and gulp it down in one hit. Instead he shoved his hands in his pockets, slumping back down in his seat at the table.

“Good. I think he’s getting married. He didn’t want to come out and say it yet. But they’ve been together for ages now. It’s probably time.” Both Sam and Jess were betas and if they wanted to conceive, they’d probably have to start trying soon. Unlike omegas, betas had a harder time falling pregnant, well normal Omegas anyway, for once Dean was glad he didn’t have to worry about that, even if it was still a sore spot he didn’t like to think about too often.
Castiel nods thoughtfully, “It’ll be good seeing them. I also need to talk to Sam about a few things,” he says mysteriously. Dean doesn’t press, he knows he won’t get anywhere.

“So, I’ve got a couple of classes today and then I’m just in the studio in the afternoon. When are you thinking of coming by?”

“Gabriel will have to do the 11am feed again since I’ll be in surgery all morning, but, I’ll come by and check on you though in the afternoon. Say two?”

“Sounds good,”

“Gabe told me yesterday that he noticed you were having issues with him touching you.”

“Fucking Gabe. Tells you everything.” Dean bit out, a little betrayed.

“He’s just worried. He’s a nurse Dean, he just wants to help you and he needs to know that you trust him.”

“I do!”

“Then I want you to work on accepting his touch, trusting him to look after you. I don’t expect you to allow just anyone, in fact I would be angry if you did, but I need someone who can act on my behalf that we both trust. If Gabriel isn’t the right person for that job, we can try and find someone else.”

“No! No, I like him. He’s just… not you.”

“Oh Dean,” Cas pulls Dean’s hand across the table and kissed the knuckles, “I know you struggle with this but I promise you, I’ll never let anyone hurt you ever again. If you can’t deal with Gabe touching you, we’ll work something else out.”

“No, I can. I like him. Honestly. I’d like to work on it.”

“Alright. I’m going to have him do the pelvic floor monitoring internally today. I want you to try at least, if it’s too much, ask him to step back. It won’t be a failure if you can’t do it. Ok?”

“I’ll try.”

“And Dean,”

“Yes?”

“Don’t just endure it if it’s makes you feel unsafe and don’t do it for me.”

Dean rolls his eyes at him. Of course it’s for him, but it’s for Dean too. He wants to learn to trust, it’s just really hard.

The morning at work ran smoothly enough, the only sore spot being the obviously pitying looks his students gave him as they spotted the NG tube. He tried his best to ignore them and luckily none of them were rude enough to comment. It was common enough (although not universal by any means)
to see an Omega wearing a visible reminder of their Alpha, such as neck or wristbands, some even chose to wear cuffs or GPS devices, in fact it was encouraged as it helped many of them feel grounded and cared for.

For an Omega to also be classified as Submissive, like Dean was, it was almost expected that he would wear something linking him to Cas. That none of the monitors he normally wore were visible did result in the occasional uncomfortable question about his status. It was well known that he was Submissive and no one mistook him for beta or alpha but he just didn’t feel able to show his status publicly, no matter how proud his was of being Cas’s omega. He wishes he was more confident, more willing to embrace this, but too many painful memories crowded in every time he tried, every time he reached for the beautiful necklace Cas had engraved for him, every time he wished he could just pull on the purple wristband of his identity, he shook, anxiety bombarding him illogically until he took it off.

He knew Cas wore his own matching necklace and wristband but, he didn’t push Dean into wearing his and he was eternally grateful for that.

This uncomfortable tube was as close as he got, it could be excused as medically necessary, as anything really but the mark of a Dominant Alpha who loved him. He just wished he was strong enough to do more.

Gabe came at 11am as promised and Dean couldn’t help feeling his heart start speed up. He could do this he told himself, it’s not like it’s the first time Gabe has examined him, hell, he does it almost every time he visited. It’s just for a little bit longer, he scolded himself.

Gabe for his part looked a little tense too, shifting the cooler repeatedly as he chatted to Charlie about her progress.

“Hi, cool wings!” he says gesturing to the still half completed back third of the sculpture.

“They’re getting there,” Dean answers dismissively, his voice tight.

“Listen man, I wasn’t trying to go behind your back with the touching thing. I’m just trying to look out for you, do my job. I figured Cas needs to know if there is anything wrong.”

Dean sighs, “I know you meant well. I just struggle with it. I know you do your best but it’s going to take time.”

“But you want to work on it?”

“Yeah, I do.”

“Then let’s do that!” Gabe saunters back to the office, false confidence ringing off him with every step.

He’s got a sheet out and is in the process of laying it across the sofa as Dean enters the room.

“This ok?”

“Yeah, it’s fine.”

“You need the bathroom first?”
Dean shook his head, “How do you want me?”

“How do you usually do this with Cas?”

“Oh my back, knees up,”

“Then let’s do that.”

Dean takes a moment to lay down on the sofa, pulling his knees up and tucking his heels down like Cas had taught him.

“Ok, before we do this, I want you to know you can tell me to stop anytime you want. Even if you’re just not feeling it alright?”

Dean nods, yep, got this talk from Cas too, he thinks but for some reason isn’t up to speaking out loud. His nervousness palpable in the room.

Dean tries to breathe evenly. Remember how uncomfortable you were at the start with Cas, he reminds himself, that went away too.

Gabe doesn’t touch him yet, he’s waiting for something, searching Dean’s face for some signal that he’s obviously not getting. He looks so sad all of a sudden.

“Why didn’t you tell me before how hard this was for you? Why did you hide it?” the hurt and betrayal evident in his voice.

“I…” Dean doesn’t know how to respond, he was used to hiding, to putting on a brave face. Telling people that he was hurting wasn’t something he knew how to do, had ever been allowed to do before. But he knew it was something he wanted now, he wanted to be honest, he wanted to trust that when he needed it people would listen, Cas and Gabe would listen.

“I was stupid. I should have said something,” his voice grew more determined with every word, “I want this ok. I want to trust you.”

Gabe is silent for a moment considering, but Dean’s resolve must have shone through because all of a sudden Gabe was smiling again. Reaching out to ruffle Dean’s already messy hair.

“Well ok then! Let’s do this thing.” The earnestness in his voice settling Dean’s nerves more than any drug could ever hope to.

“Let’s get these out of you,” Gabe slips the dilators out gently and puts them away, giving Dean a moment to adjust to the feeling.

“We’ll keep this simple. 10 sets of 5 second just like normal. I won’t count seconds or anything, just do your best. If you want me out you say so ok? Or lift your hand, like this” he lifts his left hand up and shows Dean his palm.

Dean nods, laying back and thinking of as little as possible. He doesn’t close his eyes, instead focussing on Gabriel’s face, familiarising himself with every inch of skin. Watching his brow furrow with concentration.

The first touch of fingers makes him jump a little, but he catches himself, easing his hips back down to the cushions.

“That’s good.” Gabe encourages as he slips inside. It’s definitely not the first time Gabe had done
this, he’d checked the dilators Dean wore and even slicked his fingers up and worked lubricant inside him. But this was the first time Dean truly let himself feel Gabe’s fingers, didn’t mentally take himself some place else for the short time it took for him to do it.

“Ok, you can do the first five and then I’ll swap passages. Sound ok?” Gabe’s voice is gentle but strained.

Dean nods and fixes his gaze on Gabe, I’m okay, he tried to communicate even when words didn’t come because he truly was. For the first time that he can remember he is okay, with Cas he has the Alpha/Omega bond between them but this time, all he has is trust. Trust that Gabe is going to be professional, isn’t going to take this any further than Dean wants it to go, that right now Dean is the one in control.

Dean starts his exercises, feeling the familiar pressure of fingers testing the muscles, measuring his internal strength. And for a moment he feels brave, brave enough to lift his hand and tell Gabe to stop.

It’s like a shot rang out. Gabe is up and out, pulling bodily away from him, giving him space.

“Shit, Fuck! I knew you weren’t ready. Shit! Dean I’m so sorry!”

Dean smiles, glorious confirmation. He knew it!

“Are you ok?” Gabe’s voice sounds shaky, miserable.

“You stopped,” the words come easily now, smooth and calm.

“Of course. God Dean, you scared me half to death.”

“I’m fine. Just wanted to check,”

“Well damn. Give a man some warning next time.”

“There won’t be one. I trust you.”

“Well,” he seems at a loss for a moment “Thank you,” he sounds almost proud, like he’s earned something precious, maybe a little in awe.

“We can finish now if you want,” Dean suggests, wanting to get it done with now that the worst is over.

“Sure. Just give me a minute ok. I think my heart might be trying to beat out of my chest.” and he wasn’t kidding, his breath was labored and he looked a little off.

“I’m sorry, I just needed to make sure.”

“It’s no problem. Just don’t do that again unless you really mean it ok. I felt like the worst person in history there for a moment.”

“I mean it too. I do trust you, and I won’t unless I need to. Thank you Gabe.”

“You’re welcome,” he says, just slightly out of breath now, “go again?”

Dean nods, settling back in his previous position. Heart beating calmly, steadily.

Gabe swaps sides and has him finish off the second set of exercises and in under a minute they’re
done, with Gabe wiping off his fingers on a towel and reaching for the dilators to give them a clean. He heads into the bathroom and Dean takes a moment to catch his breath.

He can’t believe how easy the second set was, how what half an hour ago felt like an impossibility was now over and instead of wrecked, he just felt calm. Reassured. He felt taken care of and that was an amazing feeling.

That night as Cas was putting him to bed Dean reached out to touch his face, fitting his fingers along his stern jawline, he gathered his courage and said “Thank you,”

“What for?” the confusion clear in his eyes.

“For suggesting I do that exercise today with Gabe. For knowing that I was struggling but pushing me to overcome it. For believing in me enough that I’m learning to believe in myself, and others...well Gabe anyway. For being you.” Dean wasn’t fixed yet or even close, but he felt he was learning.

Cas leant over and caught his mouth in a bruising kiss, not letting up till Dean was gasping for air.

“You’re the bravest person I have ever met,” Castiel whispered leaning their foreheads together, “I don’t know what I would do without you.”
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Okay, chapter 5 is back up now and has been rewritten with a much more enthusiastic Dean. I hope you all like it

This is totally a BDSM fic and therefore pretty much all of this chapter is kink, while some actual medical care occurs in this chapter, most of it is kink! Don't even try to figure out a medical reason for Cas doing everything that he does here, there isn't any, it's a scene (actually more than that since they're living a 24/7 D/s lifestyle). Much like much of the stuff they do, it's part of their dynamic and not all medical necessity ;) If that's not your cup of tea because you're reading this fic for the caretaking aspects feel free to skip this chapter, it won't affect the plot much and we'll get back our regular programming then. Thanks for joining me for the ride!

P.S. Reminder that tapping out is totally okay! If it's just too much skip this chapter or just tap out completely, I don't want people uncomfortable or triggered!!

New tags for Chastity Device and Orgasm Denial.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Dean,” Castiel gently wipes his hair back from his forehead, smiling warmly at him as he crouched beside his side of the bed, “You need to get up. We have a lot to get through today.”

Dean groans and attempts to pull the blanket over his head to hide from the daylight streaming busily through the window.

“Seriously Cas why can’t we do this through the week? Like Wednesday night, Wednesdays are boring, I would love to do this on Wednesdays. It would make my day seriously! Wednesday!” he pulls the cover tighter over his eyes, daylight sucks.

Last night had been so nice that all he wants to do is ignore the new day. Friday nights were always indulgent; watching movies snuggled together on the sofa and long baths soaking in each others arms. But Saturdays... Saturdays meant his weekly physical and any tests Cas might want to run, it meant new obedience and body movement exercises were taught. And though he groaned and moaned because right now all Dean wanted to do was sleep, he knew that once he was up, he would totally be into it. But, right now, now the blankets were soft and all he wanted to do was cuddle back together and ignore the day for a little bit longer.

Cas chuckles, drawing back the blanket to peek underneath. Before planting an indulgent kiss on Dean’s forehead.
“Come on sleepy head. It’s not so bad is it? It’s almost Ten.”

Dean doesn’t grace him with an answer. Sure, he thought, it was nice to spend a whole day with Cas, and he secretly loved having Cas’s hands all over him but Saturdays were for sleep, for eating junk food while playing video games, for lounging round and ordering pizza. Or at least they were before. But before, most days had ended badly, most days he didn’t want to remember before, wanted to curl up in Castiel’s world and never leave, let him guide the way and forget what had been.

Cas sighs, losing patience for the weekly grumble, he knows eventually Dean will get on board, he just needs time to wake up fully.

“Come on, a shower should help.” he said encouragingly, knowing Dean well enough by now that he didn’t bother argue, Dean will convince himself soon enough and Ten o’clock really is late enough. He walked purposefully into the bathroom and started to pull out equipment, letting Dean work himself awake.

“Uhh! fine!” Dean practically rolls himself out of the bed and shuffles over to the toilet, radiating sleepiness. Thankfully Cas had already disconnected his night feeder or he probably would have ended up pulling it right out. And wouldn’t that have been fun, he thought to himself annoyed at his own forgetfulness, he never would have heard that last of it.

Cas doesn’t comment as he encircles Dean in his arms, his chest pressing comfortingly against his back. The warmth from the shower he obviously just took still radiating from his skin.

“I don’t want you to start today in bad mood, this is meant to be good, for both of us.” he says as he slips his hands gently around Dean’s penis. Just holding it for a moment, letting his fingers wrap around the head and his other hand reaching down to cup Dean’s balls. It could almost be described as possessive if not for the gentle way he’s holding him, like something too fragile to be carried, delicate and understated. Dean knows why he’s being so careful, any more and Dean would be so hard he couldn’t pee if he wanted too.

“It is! You know I want this. I just..” Dean huffs, annoyed with himself, “It’s just hard to get going sometimes.” Cas kisses the back of his neck commiseratingly.

Cas has obviously already had a shower (one of his concessions to the weekend was letting Dean sleep in a little while he got himself ready) and he’d dressed casually as he always did on a Saturday, in soft pants and simple comfortable shirts. He usually had Dean shower himself on Saturdays, his hands will be all over him for the rest of the day anyway, and it’s good practice to have Dean do these basic self care tasks himself once in awhile.

Though it still feels weird to Dean, standing under the spray and feeling his own hands working the soap and the shampoo up into his hair, it’s disconcerting. He’d actually refused to have Castiel wash him when he first came here. He had railed against the gentle way Castiel had soothed the washcloth over skin, the expensive goat’s milk soap Cas preferred, the care taken. It scared him, the intimacy of it all. He wanted it so badly but at the same time was so unused to gentle touch that it felt dangerous, it terrified him how much he wanted it, what it did to him when he could have it. The chance it might all be taken away.

Castiel being his usual self, could see right through Dean’s false unwillingness and in response was completely uncompromising. In typical fashion (not that Dean knew him well enough at the time to know) he’d done the inverse. Every time Dean had tried to reject him, he’d turned off the shower and run a bath, turning what could have been just a couple of minutes long task into an hour or more of intimate physical contact. He’d eased himself into the water as well, seating Dean between his legs
and wait him out, giving him time to process, to work through his own reluctance. He’d wait, letting the warm water and stillness soothe them both till Dean was ready to continue the cleaning process. He never relented, carefully assertive, but was infinitely patient.

Dean finished his shower and turned off the tap, turning to face the wall hands braced against the cold tile. Cas reached around him for the enema hose and filled him, letting the water do its work. Saturdays required a larger volume so by the time Cas shut it off Dean was panting slightly, gritting his teeth against the cramping. Cas rested his hands against Dean’s swollen belly, soothing slightly the ache.

“Just a few more minutes,” Cas said as he meticulously towed Dean dry, avoiding putting too much pressure on his stomach.

By the time Cas led him over to the toilet Dean’s eyes were watering, his hands clenched at his sides in the effort. Cas sat him down, letting him rest his head against his stomach as he let go, shushing him and running his fingers through his hair comfortingly.

“That’s good sweetheart, you took that so well.” Dean liked feeling clean, even if sometimes he had to grit his teeth to get there, and the praise for it didn’t hurt either.

Dean pulled on the sweatpants Castiel offered him, there was no point getting properly dressed, he’d just need to take it all off again in a little while. Might as well be comfortable, not gonna be dressed for very long anyway.

Dean moans a little as Castiel slides the metal prongs steadily inside him, he’s much too aroused now to not respond to the intrusion, canting his hips the small amount possible against the straps. But Cas shushes him, leaning forward to pull the hip and thigh straps tighter and prevent him from moving against the speculum.

“Breathe Dean,” he reminds, calm as ever while Dean goes to pieces on his examination table. The want is just too much, seven days and Cas hasn’t entered him once, hasn’t let him come once. The desires is like a drug coursing through his body, searing his skin with hot tendrils of want. God, he thinks to himself, if it’s this bad now, what is it going to be like in a few days.

He gets why Castiel wants him to wait, the intrinsic and frankly base desire to submit, to offer himself up in this way would be enough but the build up is delicious too. The way his skin tingles every time Cas touches him, the way he can’t following the line of Cas’s ass with renewed want everytime he sees it. It’s going to feel amazing having him inside him again.

But honestly, and he does need to be honest with himself, he’s learning that, he also wants to be denied, he wants Cas to use his body for pleasure without receiving any himself because that in some way will be true submission, let him give Cas everything for once, everything he has.

He can’t help it though and unconsciously shifts again against the speculum, even the small movement sending sparks up his spine and forcing him to bite back a moan, not wanting Cas to stop what he’s doing. He doesn’t mind being up on the table, actually loves being the centre of Cas’s entire focus for the several hours every Saturday morning, but that doesn’t meant he doesn’t struggle with the position.
Mostly it’s the damn stirrups that Dean dislikes, he actually threatened to take to them with a hacksaw but Cas won’t let him. Reminding him that they are the *most efficient and appropriate method* to allow him the necessary access. Even though Cas went out and bought special padded ankle and foot rests, that he kisses the inside edge of Dean’s foot before he pulls the velcro tight, that he should be *used* to this by now, he still doesn’t like them. It’s that all he can see while Cas is working on him is his own legs forced up and out, his body completely aroused, exposed and open. Cas knows all this and still straps him in every time, still pulls his legs apart and shifts his hips just right, so that he has maximum access. And sometimes, if he strains too much trying to see, Cas will sigh, sounding all disappointed and get out the head strap, clipping it to the headrest and pulling it tight across his forehead. Reminding him to relax and trust him, just let it happen, let go, submit. And Dean will remember how much he wants it, would feel regret if he missed this, filling some basic instinctual need, but sometimes it takes a while.

Sometimes he leaves Dean like that for a while, up on the table while he gets ready for whatever he’s planning to do. Pulling instruments out of the sterilizer and fussing with the temperature of the room. Sometimes he’ll just strap Dean in and sit with him a while, talking to him about nothing important, holding his hand and waiting him out, letting him decide when he’s ready. Sometimes it’s longer, sometimes it’s less but it’s always like he’s waiting for some invisible signal, some sign, letting Dean work through it while the minutes tick by unhurriedly.

Not today though, today Cas had started in almost immediately, sensing his desire to get on with it. Taking him first through the general part of the examination carefully but quickly, listening to his lungs and heart, taking his blood pressure and glucose levels etc. He’d only slowed down when he went to draw blood, sitting Dean down and taking his hand tenderly. Cas didn’t like to see him bleed, even if it was just for testing, it disgusted him, but he did it anyway, always the obsessive collecting of data and testing for everything. Dean would tease him about it except he understood how much it meant to Castiel.

Then he’d had him up on the table, efficiently working him open both passages at once, obviously trying to help Dean but getting through it quickly and efficiently. So much for that Dean thought wrily as he clenched his muscles again slightly, working himself as best he could against the metal instrument inside him.

Cas can feel Dean shivering with the need he’s been denied, his body betraying exactly how hard this past week has been. Not once has Dean attempted to ease his discomfort, attempted to gain the self-pleasure that was once habitual for him but it’s been hard won and Cas wants to ease this for him as much as he can.

The speculum was cold as Cas eased it in, he’d purposely not warmed it, hoping the slight discomfort might be enough to distract him but instead it just seems to have drawn his focus further inward. He’ll have to change the plan, Cas realizes, give him some form of relief even if psychologically Dean wasn’t ready for the denial to end quite yet, he wasn’t yet where they both wanted to go.

After he eases out the speculum, he pressed his palm flat against Dean’s abdomen, leaning over trying to gain back his focus.

“Dean.” his voice soft but firm, “come on, look at me.”
Dean does eventually, eyes rolling over to his slowly, dark with need.

“I’m going to undo you in a minute, but first I’m going get something to help you with this. We talked about it before remember?”

“The thing?” he asks, a little dazed, the want making him breathless.

“It’s a chastity device. Remember we ordered it last month and I explained how it fits.”

Dean nods, comprehension finally reaching his eyes. He remembers picking it out together from that website and when it arrived opening it together. He also remembers Cas pulling it apart and showing him how it locked together. He remembers the slight exhilaration he felt thinking about Cas owning him in that way, taking over control in that fundamental way. Even now he has to bite back a moan of arousal, his heart beating a little faster at the thought.

“How long?”

“A few days. Just to give it a try this time. Three at most.”

“Three,” Dean’s mulling it over, “I want it. I do. But Cas I’m already desperate here, I’m not sure I can do three more days.”

“Sweetheart. I know something that can help. Take the pressure away. If I do that do you want it?”

“Yes,” clear and precise, as much as it was hard, Dean truly did want to try this, give this over to Cas, submit his needs to him.

Cas leaves for a moment, rummaging around in a storage cupboard at the back of the room. Dean tries to see what he’s doing but the forehead strap holds him in place securely. All he can hear is boxes being opened and searched through.

“Cas?” he asks, suddenly nervous.

Cas reappears, the device resting in his hand. It’s made of plastic and metal. Dean eyes it a little warily, it looks different now that it’s about to be put on him.

“Not a design I am completely happy with, but since it’s only for a few more days. I think it’ll do. If this works for us, we’ll get something custom made.” Cas is playing with the device, checking there are no rough edges or sharp spots, distracted for a moment. He reaches under the table and retrieving an ice pack and shaking it casually. And then Dean isn’t so sure for a moment, the ice looking mightily cold.

“I’m not sure I...” it’s getting harder for him to speak, nervousness stilling his voice, what if it’s too much?

Castiel has noticed and pauses what he’s doing, dropping the device and ice pack on the nearby instruments table.

“You doing ok?” the worry evident.

“Yeah, yeah I…” Dean murmurs, trying to follow the objects now once again out of his field of vision,

“Tell me sweetheart. What do you need?”

“You. You inside me tonight, I don’t want to come but I want you, us together. Please!” his voice
breaks a little, showing his weakness. He misses Cas inside him, the connection. He doesn’t want to
go back to bed tonight and just have them fall asleep in eachother’s arms. He wants more, needs more.

Cas doesn’t even need to considers it, he kisses him then, passionately, possessive tongue working
against Dean’s greedy mouth.

“You’ll have that. I promise,” he smiles and kisses the inside of Dean’s thigh, thanking him for
everything, for this gift he’s giving him.

“That looks painful.” Dean remarks dryly, but feeling a little sheepish, the intimate moment broken
by the reminder of the coming cold pack currently defrosting on the instrument tray.

Cas looks pityingly down at his erection, obviously realising just how much this was going to suck
and feeling more than a little sympathy.

“If I try to be quick?”

Dean is familiar enough with it now to know that doesn’t help much but it’s all Cas can offer. He
balls up his courage and remind himself that he wants this, damn it, stop being such as pussy!

“Do it!” he growls, steeling himself.

The ice pack is back and before he can say a word it’s pressed against him, eliciting a shout and a
curse.

“Fuck!” he wants to move away but as always the straps hold tight. “Uhhh!” he had been so hard
that the ice felt like a knife, slicing away the skin, or a burn, cold as dry ice.

Then the ice pack is gone and the device is back. Cas works as quickly as he can, his hands shaking
slightly in urgency to get this done. It fits snuggly around his dick, snow soft and tender to touch, not
enough cold to numb it, just to sear the arousal away. Cas is gentle as he eases Dean’s penis down
the plastic shaft, a perfect fit. Then the feel of Cas’s fingers pulling his testicles away from his body
tentatively while he fits the metal ring around the back of them. The lock snaps shut with an almost
inaudible click. Dean shudders, the cold still seeping into his bones.

But, then something is placed over him, soothing away the cold and the pain, a warmed blanket he
realizes. Cas kept them in a special cupboard for moments like this.

It feels amazing, his muscles begin to relax, the tension falling away as Cas lays another and another,
the weight an added relief. He didn’t realize just how much he was fighting the restraints till he stops,
lets go, soaks in the luxurious warmth.

“It’s ok,” Castiel comforts, petting him tenderly “we’re almost done for the day, just one more thing
then we’re done, I promise.”

Dean just wants to sink through the table and curl up on the floor in his pile of blankets, make a nest
in the warmth, pull Cas down with him and together hide out for the rest of the afternoon.

Cas huffs out a laugh at Dean’s blissed out face.

“Alright, you can keep them,” Dean ignores him, preferring to close his eyes and soak up warmth for
the moment.

"I’m going to unstrap you now,” Cas warns but it’s casual, purposefully mild “Don’t move just yet.”
He starts at the bottom, levering up the base section of the examination table and locking it into place before unstrapping Dean's legs and laying them flat on the table. He carefully pulls the blanket over them, knowing how Dean appreciates it before continuing up the undo thigh, hips, chest and forehead. He ends with the arm and wrist restraints, pulling Dean’s hand up for a light kiss on the knuckles before tucking it back under the blankets.

“Turn over for me,” he voice a study in composure.

“uhh” Dean moans annoyed at having to shift but does as told.

“Elbows and knees. You can keep the blanket over the top half but I need rear access.” Dean bites back a huff but complies, theatrically flipping the back half of the blanket up over himself and over his head, hiding himself in a cocoon of darkness. Cas huffs out another laugh but doesn’t comment, instead easing his knees so they shifted wide apart, his enclosed dick hanging down between his legs. Cas had placed something down on the table between them, probably a specimen container.

“This should help with the pressure and the need a bit. I’m going to give you a prostate massage. We’ve done this once before, when you first came to me. Do you remember?”

Dean remembers a lot from those days, but much of it is a bit blurry around the edges. He knows he wasn’t in a good place and that affected his ability to care about what had been happening to him, apathy and pain had played a great part in his descent. He thinks he remembers vaguely a day Cas had spent an inordinate amount of time fingers deep in his ass but he can’t be sure that is what he’s referring to, Cas spent a lot of time deep in his ass in those days.

“Maybe?” he grunts out from his pile of blankets.

“Well, it should help. It shouldn’t hurt, if it even stings I want you to tell me. I’ll be utilising it more and more as we explore your denial and submission needs so I need to know that it’s working properly.” Dean grunts his agreement, looking forward to having Cas in his ass again, even if it’s just his fingers.

“I’ll be massaging your prostate for a few minutes to stimulate a release. You won’t orgasm and you won’t get hard, though it should feel fairly nice, if a little intense. You might feel like you need to go, you don’t. The best thing to do is just relax, let it happen.”

Dean doesn’t reply, but instead snuggles down deeper into the blankets, getting comfortable. Cas takes this to mean he’s ready. He’s warmed the lube thankfully, so all Dean feels is the welcome intrusion of fingers making their way deep inside him. He bites back a little panting moan and tries unsuccessfully to think unsexy thoughts.

Then the pressure starts, and Cas wasn’t kidding, he did feel the need to go but it’s peripheral, instead he wants push into it, the half burn half caress is maddening. But Cas seems to know this and rests his other hand high up on his back, anchoring him in place.

“That’s it.” He praises, “Keep still.” the direction clear as a bell, even when spoken in Cas’s soothing voice.

Dean tucks himself tighter, not away, just inward, letting the sensation flow over him and out. It’s not like it was leading anywhere anyway so he releases it. Enjoying it for what it is and not what it isn’t.

It goes on like this for a while, Cas occasionally praising him and continuing to work him further and further along. But eventually Dean feels it, the nothing release, the slip of liquid out of his cock and the unfulfilled ache flowing away. He still wants to come but now it’s emotional instead of physical,
he can feel it easing away. He smiles privately into the blankets, trust Cas to know just what to do.

When Cas decides he’s had enough, he pulls his fingers out and wipes him off. The collection jar is whisked away, probably to be sent to some lab somewhere knowing Cas and the still warm blanket pulled back over the rest of him, tucked in tight and secure.

Dean slides his legs back down and eases his stiff knees. He just wants to sleep now, to drift off to nothingness, it’s nice actually, the empty feeling without the rush of release, new but nice.

Cas pulls back the blanket just slightly, but just to ease a pillow under Dean’s head and to curl a warm hand under his jaw with affection.

“I’m going to feed you now. But you can sleep if you like.” Dean is already dropping off before Cas has even finished speaking, his vision blurring before blackness sweeps across everything.

That night as Cas readies them for bed Dean turns, his voice demanding and plain.

“You promised.”

“I haven’t forgotten.” a smile playing on Cas’s lips.

The rest of the day had been spent easily enough. Cas had woken him after an hour or so and gotten him up and into the training room for some basic obedience exercises. He hadn’t worked Dean too hard, just some basic crawling techniques and stress positions, knowing that Dean was already feeling pretty vulnerable. Then they’d had dinner and Dean had watched a movie while Cas read through some research papers on Omega fertility. Dean knew that Cas was still looking for something to help him but he no longer commented, not wanting to build any unfounded hope. If Cas found anything, he’d tell him.

Cas pulls him close, running his hands down his side and cupping his ass possessively.

“I’ll always give you what I promise, I’d give you anything.” he says, looking directly into Dean’s eyes like a challenge, before he shifts, pushing Dean backwards and easing him onto the soft bed. Then he crawls between Dean’s legs, leveraging his back up against the pillows and parting his legs gently, kissing his way down from the knee till he reaches the cage, blessedly stopping before touching the plastic. Dean knows that even with the release earlier that would still be too much.

“Please!” Dean begs, suddenly needy, the headrush of touch making him a little delirious, the desire hitting him harder than he ever expected.

Cas is quick then, knowing he needs little prep, the hunger his his eyes burning Dean a little, he wants to look away but can’t, he’s trapped there and gasping with his own desire. It’s so immediate, he want Cas inside him now, now, now.

“Do you know how much I’ve wanted you too? I’ve not been able to have you...” his voice is deeper than usual, shaded in arousal. “Every morning, I would wake to your need. God! I wanted you so badly then and every night I would go to sleep knowing how much you wanted it.” he’s panting too, working himself so that Dean can see, his cock thick and ready.
“Please!” Dean begs again, knowing he’s repeating himself but like always words defeat him, the need shattering his mind just enough. And though the thing between his legs keeps him down, he wants Cas just as badly as ever, it’s just a different want, a less physical and more instinctual one.

But Cas is there, knowing him, finally entering him, finally sliding in like he was born to be there. “Ohhh,” and “aahhmmm” and “uurr” become his only vocabulary.

And it’s everything and enough all at once.

And Castiel is there, finally back where he belongs, back inside him, where he should have been the whole time.

And he’s working into Dean hard, just like he likes it.

And Dean is putting all of Cas’s training to work, clenching and releasing his muscles just right, able to focus he realises on Cas’s need instead of his own. The tide is in but just enough to let him wade through it and back to shore before the waves crash, back to where he can make Cas his every thought, Can give himself completely to this.

It’s with awe he realizes what a gift Cas has given him. Cas gave him control.

Filled with a new determination he flings himself into the task, meeting Cas thrust for thrust, movement for movement till the man is groaning and driving into him with an almost animal ferocity. His eyes shadowed with pleasure.

It happens so quickly that Dean is left breathless and gasping. Both of them pushed to the edge and finally coming back down. And though it’s a different high than an orgasm, something about it makes it just as sweet. Cas is curling into to him protectively, engulfing him as much has he can, their bodies still tied together with the knot.

And it’s then that Dean finally realizes how much this had meant to Castiel too, to give him this. He looks at Dean desperate to see that he’d done the right thing, that his choice had been the right one. And Dean but can’t help return the gaze with something akin to pride. No matter what, Cas seemed to know exactly what Dean needed, what he wanted more than anything else.

Chapter End Notes

Did you like the rewrite? I know it's still probably a bit much for some people, but hey best I could do, more caretaking and angsty backstory in next chapter and less kink :)

Please do tell me what you think! I genuinely like to know which parts people like and which parts they're not fussed on. Helps me become a better writer and judge the direction a fic should go in (I have the basic plot mapped out, I'm looking more at the
tone of the writing and the kinks!), especially when I'm writing out of my comfort zone as I am with this fic. So please comment, comment, comment!
The rest of the weekend had gone so wonderfully smoothly that Dean felt like he should have expected it all to come crashing down come Monday. He just didn’t expect it to crush him quite so completely.

“Dean? Dean Winchester?” The voice sounded friendly, male and possibly a little familiar. Dean turned, he’d been making his way across to park to his studio but, decided he’d be better not rudely walk away since the man obviously seemed to know him and the day outside was so nice, he didn’t mind the interruption at all.

“Yes?”

“Oh man! I’m so glad to see you and you look so good! I honestly didn’t think I’d ever see you again.”

“Um…” Dean is confused, is he meant know this man?

“After the last time I mean, I was so worried. That last time man, it was rough, no one figured you’d be able to take that much but you did! You were a champ!” but the jovial tone faded and then man’s eyes clouded over with regret, “I worried... didn’t think you’d make it a year putting yourself through shit like that let alone show up here looking so great. It’s a relief you know.”

“I don’t... um...” Dean suddenly knows, knows where he recognises the man’s voice from, he knows he needs to reply, is expected to, but the words are locked in his throat. His fingers are going numb, shock he realizes, but he can’t stop it. Tries desperately not to give himself away, but the man won’t stop talking.
“No. No, of course you don’t do that anymore. I don’t either. Shit man that place is really fucked up. I stopped going ages ago. I just wanted you to know how happy I am to see that you’re doing okay.” He pats Dean familiarly on the shoulder, smiling at him like they share a secret or something. Dean can’t help but flinch, pull back bodily, please don’t touch me, he wanted to beg. But instead he just pulls in on himself, unable to speak, unable to run, do anything.

The man seems to realize that he’s sincerely messed up because he pulls back his hand immediately, dropping back into a less imposing stance. His voice growing gentler, a little horrified at himself. “Yeah, you probably don’t want the reminder. Sorry! I just, I just wanted you to know I’m glad you’re doing good, not doing that to yourself anymore.” he does sound sincere, not that it helps much. “What went down with you convinced me not to go back, It wasn't right... it was….yeah” he realizes he should really stop talking now. Clumsily halting but obviously wanting to say more, unsure what to do now, but not wanting to leave it be.

“Dean? Are you ok?” It’s Charlie, Dean can hear her steps quickly approaching, she’s practically running, reading from his body language that he’s really not ok.

“What did you say to him?!” She demands of the man, the anger seeping into every word. “It’s ok I knew him before.” he raises his hands and backs away slightly, “Shit! No...I probably shouldn’t be talking to him. I’m sorry. Okay? I’m sorry!” He tries to address Dean again, but Charlie is in front of him, basically blocking Dean from being seen. Her presence the only thing preventing him from breaking down entirely.

“Get out of here. If I see you again, I’m calling campus security.”

“Ok, alright.” The man flees, but his words remain, hanging in the air like a curse, damning Dean with every breath he takes. He’s panicking, he knows this but can’t seem to stop, can’t seem to breathe enough to do anything.

“Shit, ok. Sit down.” She helps him move backwards, towards a bench on the side of the path and sits him down. Crouching in front of him, but not touching him.

“Tell me what you need.”

“Cas.” he gasps out, desperately wanting the world to stop hurting so much all of a sudden. But he can’t breathe, can’t focus.

“Ok, I’ll ring him. You got drugs for this?” He can’t reply, but between gasps he clumsily pushed his satchel towards her hoping she’d get the picture. She does and while rummaging through it pulls out his phone and dials Castiel. “Cas? It’s Charlie. Dean’s having a panic attack. What do I do?” Dean can’t hear the reply but Cas must be talking her through it.

“Yeah, I got it right here.” She pulls out the med kit he carries and opens it up.

“I really don’t want to be the one to give you a shot, can you swallow?” she’s talking to Dean and holding two pills in her hand as well as his water bottle, he must have faded for a moment because he missed her getting those out. She still has the phone wedged between her shoulder and ear, but Cas must say something because then she’s holding it out, pushing it against Dean’s ear and he can hear Cas’s voice.
He sounds every bit the doctor, calm and precise in his instructions, even if his voice is a little tight around the edges, it soothes Dean immediately.

“I’m coming. I’ll be there in seven minutes. I want you to take the pills and focus on the breathing exercises we worked on.”

Dean can’t reply, but Cas doesn’t seem to expect him to. Instead he says, “I’m going to hang up now because I need to drive, be strong, I’ll be there soon. And let Charlie take care of you…” and after a moment “I love you.” Then he’s gone, a lifeline cut much too far from shore.

He reached for the pills and hastily swallowed them down, choking a bit on the water but managing to get them to stay down.

It’s the longest seven minutes he has ever known, the world fades out of focus and all he can feel is the shooting agony and fear of the days, years before, they come crashing back and there is nothing he can do to escape it. His chest feels like someone has taken a knife to his ribs, slicing away at his flesh and bone. He knows he’s curled into himself, can feel all his muscles protesting as he gasps out his pain, knows it all in some distant, unreal way. If only the pain would stop.

It doesn’t register when Cas first arrives. He can feel hands on his shoulders and tries to get away from them, tries to escape but they don’t let him. He struggles, unable to speak but he groans, forming inhuman sounds from between locked teeth.

But then his head is forced up and he comes eye to eye with a very worried looking Castiel. His voice however doesn’t waver when he speaks.

“Dean, I need you to listen to me and follow my instructions, just like we’ve practiced,” Dean nods, desperate for anything, any way to escape this, but he thinks he’s about to pass out. He takes Dean’s hands and places them, one on his chest and the other lower on his stomach. He rests his hands over Dean's, a warm reminder.

“Ok breathe out gently. Pause. Now in, feel it to your stomach. Relax.” He’s pressing there slightly, “Good. You’re doing so good. Out again. Pause. Slow yourself down. Feel your body. That’s really good. Slowly, gently, relax. That’s it. Now again…” On and on he spoke, repeating until Dean was following him properly. His world narrowing back on Cas’s voice.

He can feel the drugs starting to work finally, and the tightness starting to ease a little. He’s started to cry he realizes, can taste the salt. He can feel the slight breeze across the park and the sound of the leaves moving slightly above them in the trees.

“Cas...I”

“Shh,” He whispers, knowing how hard it is for Dean to speak when he gets like this, “Whatever it is, we’re going to handle it together. Just breathe for me.”

He nods, resting his head against Cas’s solid shoulder. They sit there for a moment longer, listening to the sounds of the world slowly drift back, the traffic noise from the street behind them, the clatter of feet passing, calming in its unimportance.

“You ready to go home?”

“Please.” He’s not begging but it’s close.

“Okay,” he’s helped up, with Charlie on one side and Cas on the other, he’d plain forgotten she was even there in the panic. But right now he half walks, half hangs off them as they guide him to the car,
gently easing him into the passenger seat.

“Is he going to be ok?” She asks Cas after a moment.

“We knew this might happen eventually. Don’t worry, he’s strong. But, he might need a few days.”

“I’ll tell the boss that he’s sick. He won’t mind, Dean is his favourite.”

Dean has his eyes shut, leaning against the window, a grave weariness overcoming him. He’s exhausted, but can’t actually fall asleep. He can hear their quiet exchange though, spoken with the assumption that he was unconscious.

“What happened?”

“Some man was talking to him. You should have seen him, it was like he saw a ghost. I’ve never seen him so pale.”

“What did the man say?”

“Not much. Just that he knew him from before. That he probably shouldn’t have spoken to him though.”

Cas is quiet for a moment thinking.

“Thank you Charlie. Thank you for being there for him.” he sounds so genuine, suddenly so upset about it all. Dean can’t hear Charlie’s reply or even if she gave one, but he can hear the steps she takes closer to Castel, the gentle brush of their clothes as she pulls him into a hug.

“You’ll figure it out. You always do.” she reassures him, her voice a little brittle too.

Then Cas is climbing into the car and they’re driving away. Unconsciousness does take him then finally, once he can hear Cas’s breath, beside him, easing him off to sleep.

He wakes to Castiel pulling him out of his trousers and easing him into the bed.

“Dean?” he asks hesitantly, seeing that he's roused “I know it'll hurt, but we’re going to have to talk about this eventually. I need to know what happened so I can keep you safe.”

“Yeah,” he murmurs, meaning it, the drugs thick in his blood but he'd answered truthfully. It was time he realized to tell Cas everything, all the shameful and painful truths he wanted to hide forever. He owed Cas that much.

“Soon.” He promised, consciousness slipping away again to the feel of Cas’s strong arms around him, keeping the world away for a little while longer.
Cas rests curled up with Dean till he can feel his breath even out with the heaviness of deep sleep. The drugs will keep Dean under for several hours yet and the app on his tablet will allow him to monitor all his vital signs effectively. He resists the urge to set Dean up for a polysomnogram, although he has all the equipment for a proper sleep study, this is not the time and although it would serve to make him feel better, it would do nothing but disturb Dean’s sleep. So as tempting it would be, Cas resists. He’ll do it another time he decides, he’d planned to anyway, but not now.

Instead, he pulls out the earliest file he has on Dean, the one the OSP gave him when he first agreed to the contact. It has what little was known about Dean’s past, which Castiel has practically memorised by now. He’s added to it over time, what little Dean had been able to share and from his own observations but much of it is still blank, still barely filling in the gaps of a history drenched in pain.

He pulls out his phone, a new pad of paper and a pen, time to finally update the file properly he supposed. The conversation tomorrow is going to be bad enough without knowing all the history behind it.

Cas made the call. He didn’t want to, but he desperately needed to know, they had to face this and Sam was really the only one who would be able to tell him the whole truth, what he knew of it anyway. Thought he knew Dean wanted desperately to tell him everything, had even tried to in the past, he just wasn't capable of seeing it for what it was, not yet at least. For him it was too distorted by suffering, too clouded by his innate desire to please and obey his father.

Dean had told him to ring Sam before but he had wanted to do this together, carefully, gently and at his pace, but now he was out of time. He needed to at least get the timeline sorted out, the facts right. Sam could do that much for Dean. But Dean would still have to do the rest.

“Hello?” Sam’s voice sounds tired and a little tense. Cas supposed that he’d probably just come home from work, was ready to crack up open a beer and de-stress from the day.
“Sam, it’s Castiel.”

“Cas? Hi, what can I do for you?”

“We need to talk about Dean.” Castiel didn’t want to have this conversation over the phone, hell he didn’t want to have this conversation at all, but it was for Dean so he persisted.

“What’s happened?” the fear choking his voice.”Is Dean alright?”

“He’s fine now. He had a panic attack today and is sleeping off the medication. Someone who knew him from before confronted him today. I think it was just too much.”

“Yeah, that would do it.” Sam sighs, “Look Cas. I’m happy to fly up early, I can be on the morning flight out...”

“No, I don’t think that’s necessary. Not yet anyway. I’ll handle it. I’m actually calling because I need you to tell me everything you know about what led up to Dean getting put under the OSP contract. He’s told me a little and there is some information in his file. But honestly, I need to hear the whole truth. I can’t help him unless I know.”

Sam is quiet for a long time, mulling over what to say, his loyalty to Dean’s private nature battling with his need to help his brother.

“It’s complicated and a really, really long story. I genuinely think Dean should be the one telling you.” he’s nervous, unwilling.

“Do you think he can?” Cas asks, honestly curious as to how well Sam understood his brother.

“Damn! No. He can’t talk about this shit,” Sam’s voice growing angry, “Would probably tell you it was all his own fault anyway.” Cas can hear him sitting down in the background, obviously settling in for a long conversation. He sounds strained, upset but keeping it together.

“You said he met someone he knew, that it upset him?” Sam asks.

“Yes, though Charlie didn’t recognise him and she knows most of our friends.”

“Could be anyone. I could make a guess but honestly, you’ll have to ask Dean that one himself...” he trails off before building courage once more “But the rest, yeah, I’ll tell you what I can.”

“Thank you Sam.”

“God, it’s such a mess! I don’t even know where to start. How do you break down someone whole life into episodes of trauma? It’s just...” he falls quiet for a moment thinking, clearly not ready to talk about this, Cas doubts he’ll ever truly be ready, but Sam loves his brother enough to try.

“It wasn’t all bad. There were times when we were happy. I can remember him smiling, laughing at my stupid jokes, I remember good times too!” his voice like shattered glass, fragile, brittle.

“He’s talked to me about what you had together, the better memories. He knows you loved him even then and he remembers when it was good.” what small solaces Cas can offer feel cold, meaningless coming from him.

“Yeah.” Sam sounds hopeful but fractured, lost in thought.

Cas waits, letting Sam sort it all out in his head.
“You know our mother died when Dean was still young?” his voice toneless, deliberately emotionless.

“Yes, his file says she died when Dean was only four, a break-in gone wrong.”

“Ha” he laughs humorlessly, “they would record it like that! I was six months old so I don’t remember any of it but Dean does. Apparently, some guy broke in while Dad was at work one night, the cops said he was on drugs, delusional, ranting about Omegas being possessed by demons, that he had to kill them. He got into the back of the house, broke the back door down easy as, like it was nothing, started ranting while he staggered from room to room.

He found Dean first since he’d run out thinking it was Dad home from work, the man even managed cut him, on his thigh, I’m sure you’ve see the mark.”

“Yes,” of course Cas had, it was an ugly line, deep and sore looking still, circling right across from Dean’s lower leg till it reached up behind, almost up to his backside. He’d known it hurt Dean to think on so had never mentioned it, once he ascertained that it no longer caused Dean any pain or loss of mobility he had let it lie, let the past remain past.

“He’d found a knife in the kitchen, was waving it around crazily slicing anything he could reach. But Mom, she got between them screaming at him but he ran at her, cutting her open. Then Dad got home and he…” Cas knew the telling of this story was painful for Sam, the way he kept it as short as possible, giving over only the most significant of details. “But Dad, apparently he got out his hunting rifle and shot the guy … square in the chest. It was too late though. For her.” Sam’s voice broke a little then, up until that moment his voice had been flat, like he was recounting something that happened to someone else, but now it was broken, open and raw.

“No one blamed Dad for killing the guy. He was just protecting his family. But with Mary gone and the blood practically still wet on his hands, he packed us up and fled. My earliest memories are sleeping in the car with Dean, curled up in the backseat as we moved from town to town, Dad getting what little work he could till the alcohol and his vicious nature cost him the job, over and over.

I can see it now, looking back, how messed up he was, how cruel. He never actually said it and he’d have denied it if asked (even to himself I reckon) but I knew he blamed Dean. Didn’t want to, Dean was only a kid, a baby and it was totally illogical. But that’s pain for you, can make you think crazy things.

But he started in on Dean. He convinced himself that if Dean was tougher, wasn’t a weak Omega, hid who he was, that maybe he’d be better off. Be able to protect himself. He taught Dean to shoot, to fight, would go at him over the littlest things, like how he wore his clothes, brushed his hair, how he talked. Everything was too weak, to Omega. Even then I knew it was wrong but I didn’t know how to fix it.” the regret colouring his voice, the guilt. Sam, Castiel couldn’t help thinking, probably didn’t even realize how much it had hurt him too, watching your brother suffer and being powerless to stop it, and he truly thought he was the undamaged one. He wondered how Jess dealt with it. He should probably bring it up with her on the weekend, another painful conversation to have, he thought bitterly, so many dark places yet to explore.

“You should have seen the day Dean was given his submissive designation, Dad flipped! The school brought in a Dynamic Assessor for all the kids that were missed in early childhood and Dean tested out Submissive on the 96th percentile. He was shaking all the way home, terrified of Dad finding out and of the meeting the school had wanted for the next day. But, they had already rung home, you know how they panic when a submissive streak that strong is identified. Anyway, by the time we got home Dad had already packed up our stuff and was waiting to leave. He ordered Dean not to tell
anyone, ever.”

Cas fights back the urge to wake Dean up and check him over, check for damage he knew wasn’t there to be seen. He also knew of the test results, the originals were right there in his file. But he can’t get the image out of his head of teenage Dean panicking and frightened over something he has no control over. Fearful and ashamed when he should have been reassured, protected.

“He got good you know, at hiding it. Worked out, built up muscle. He’d watch Dad and other alphas, copy their movements, their way of speaking. He’d get me to help him pick clothes and stuff. If you met him then you would have sworn he was a beta, maybe even a weak alpha. But for Dad it was never enough, I’d come home to him taking his belt to Dean for speaking in a certain way or sitting wrong. I swear, nothing Dean could do was good enough. He was black and blue more often than not.” And that was it, the cruelest thing, because that was all an Submissive ever wanted was to be accepted, to be good enough, to be loved. Cas’s heart broke for young Dean.

“Why didn’t social services step in?”

“They tried. We moved. Way to often for them to catch up with us. And Dean, he was so good at hiding it. He’d swagger in, all cool as you like to every school and pull off the perfect Beta. You’d never know, hell even I forgot sometimes, he’d hide it from me too, best he could anyway.

But, it fucking ruined him, I know that now.” Sam’s voice breaks off, lost in a misery of old recollections. Cas takes pity on him and changes the topic.

“What about his heats?”

“You should already know the answer to that. Isn’t it in his file?” his voice is hesitant, like he just want to avoid the topic altogether. Too painful Cas supposes.

“Some.” But Cas needed it confirmed, “How did it start?”

“Too young. You know he didn’t have a choice right? Illegal, toxic suppressants Dad got off some shady dealers that he’d force Dean to take, even though it made him sick. He started Dean on them before he’d even had his first heat. He had to know what it would do right? What did he think it would do? Fix him?” Sam practically screams down the line, seething with old anger, old resentment for things he can’t change.

“How old was he when he started taking them?” his doctor voice calming, directing him back to rationality. Cas has a pen out and is correcting the notes in the file, the old habit long ingrained from his job, it’s easier if he rationalizes it as just another patient, just another messed up body to fix. His eyes flicking every few seconds to the screen on his tablet showing Dean’s steady, reassuring heartbeat.

“12 or 13? I’m not sure. Dean mostly wouldn’t let me see when he took them. He’d go hide in the bathroom or out the back until the nausea passed. He took ‘em right up until I took them away, until we both moved to Stanford.”

“So 10, maybe 11 years on them? Consistently?” Cas asks jotting down the answer. He knew it had been a long time, but Dean hadn’t said just how long, the reality horrifying him.

“Yeah, he never forgot once, took them everyday like clockwork. Even tried to get some once we moved away.”

“He never competed a heat in all that time?”
“His body tried. I can remember a couple of times when the fever would hit but he’d just double down on the meds and try to ignore the pain. And Dad, he’d act like it was Dean’s fault. Tell him to toughen up, his answer for fucking everything.”

“So you left?”

“Yeah, when I got into Stanford and I took Dean with me. I just told him that he had to, for the first time ever I gave him a direct order. He didn’t even argue, just packed his bags and got on the bus with me.

Dad was angry at first, but it was a token gesture, probably happy to be free of the ‘burden’. He eventually just drunk himself into oblivion like usual, didn’t even see us off at the bus stop.”

“And Dean? How was he?” Cas was almost afraid to ask, knowing the importance of creating a routine and firm guidelines in stabilizing him.

“At first he tried to go on like he had before, but without Dad telling him what to do all the time. The cracks really started to show. And on top of that I took away his meds, flushed them. Stupid! I know that now. So fucking dumb. I could have killed him! He went into shock when he couldn’t get any more. I came home one night to find him seizing on the floor of our apartment. I called an ambulance, so fucking scared I was about to loose my brother.

They rushed him to the hospital and put him back on the suppressants. Then they called the OSP on me.”

“Yes, I read the report in the file.” Cas flips through and pulls it out, flipping through the social worker’s statement.

“Yeah, they were... god they saved us both. They’d been trying to find Dean for a long time, apparently Dean had been flagged multiple times on their system as a possible abuse case, guess his teachers were more observant than we thought.”

“A kid like Dean testing out as both Omega and a High Needs Submissive must have raised a few eyebrows and to have him come and go from so many different schools it would have been unusual enough for them to take notice. But, they would have been powerless till each school filed a complaint and by then you were long gone. Then he aged out of school and the reporting stopped.” Castiel explains, noting the almost two dozen reports filed with them over the years.

“Yeah, they sent someone who knew all about us and interviewed me and Dean separately. I thought they were going to take him away.”

“It says here that they thought separating you at that time would have emotionally crippled Dean, he apparently relied on you too heavily for that to be an option.”

“So they told me.” Sam sounds sad, like it’s his fault somehow, Cas could imagine the conversation he must have had with the OSP people and it couldn’t have been pretty. “I felt like such an asshole, not even thinking about what it would do to Dean going off his meds cold turkey. I was so sure that all he needed was to get away from Dad and everything would be fine, Dean could be a normal Omega finally. So fucking naive!”

“Sam you were 18 and it was all you had known.”

“Yeah, I know that now. Then I just felt like when finally we were free the world was still shitting on us from on high.” Sam huffs out a bitter little sort of laugh.
“I can see how it must have felt like that” Cas offers sympathetically.

“Well anyway, they got us into supported housing and Dean on a program. He had to step down off the suppressants, painfully slowly too, over about eight months. They had him come into the OSP Centre every day while I was in class. They taught him stuff he’d missed out on and put him into therapy sessions with other omegas. They helped me too, sending over a support person to teach me how to help him and just to talk with about it all.”

“How did Dean feel about all this?”

“Said he didn’t need babysitting. That he was fine without it. But it worked you know. Dean got so much better, they made sure he was taking his meds, ate right, looked after himself, even got him started on the sculpture and art track. There was a woman there who took him to galleries and art shows, worked with him on developing his own style. And when he was ready they got him into classes at the local college, just a couple at first then more as he grew more confident. He did so well with it all, with people who actually knew how to look after him.”

Cas could imagine it, Dean finally, finally getting the help he needed. He’d grumble and put up a token resistance but the beautiful man who just wanted to please could finally come out, find release. Cas was sad he had missed that time, a time of awakening, of growth into the amazing man Cas knew. Of course, it had all come crumbling down once again. But for a moment there, there was hope and a chance he had never had.

“How was his first actual heat? It says here he needed hospitalisation.” Cas is almost afraid to ask.

“Horrific. You know what heats are like for him now? Well, think that but worse, so so much worse. They knew it was coming, weeks before and tried to prepare us, but how do you prepare for that? For watching your brother sick with it, begging and begging for it but too exhausted to even move, do anything but beg and moan in pain. And all I could do was watch, I’m a beta so I couldn’t help him in any way, even though they let me in the room to comfort him, it did nothing. It was so awful! They couldn’t use an actual alpha, he’d refused, so they soaked the room in artificial pheromones. Gave him patches and injections to help with it. They tried toys, their hands, even a weird machine to get him through it.

But after four days it just wasn’t subsiding and they knew his body couldn’t last much longer. They sedated him, even though you’re not meant to do that, that it normally does more damage than good. But, he couldn’t keep it up any longer, he was dehydrated, starved and incoherent. It was the worst thing I…”he falls into the memory, having to take a moment to pull himself together, “It was so, so bad.”

“But you know what’s worse?” Sam all bitter resentment, “They’d get him fed, hydrated and up on his feet again for a couple of weeks and then the next one would hit and the next and the next, for months. He was in and out of hospital and basically living at the OSP centre between heats. Even though they said it would get better, I eventually stopped believing them, not that I let Dean know that, but it was just… just so scary and I was so angry. I wanted to track Dad down, make him go through what Dean was going through. I wanted to hurt him for it.”

“But it did get better. After…” Cas flips through the file for the answer, “seven heats?”

“Yeah, they finally settled down a bit, eventually, spaced themselves out normally. Though you’re the last person I need to explain to how awful they still are for him, his body just never properly recovered from it all. With the infertility from suppressant toxicity and the way it still affects his hormone function and brain chemistry, they say he’s just never going to be…” Sam sighs, muttering under his breath something Cas can’t quite catch.
“You did the right thing by him,” Cas can at least offer this this little bit of consolation, “The minute you could you got him out and you got him the help he needed. No brother could ask for more than that.” He doubts it’ll make much of a difference, but he truly did believe it. Sam did the best he could in a shitty situation.

“Yeah, well where was I the next time he needed me? I’d fucked off with Jess, that’s what!” Cas can hear him swallowing raggedly in the background, obviously fighting off tears, the guilt Cas knew he held still for not being with Dean now. “Where was I when that Bastard came back?”

And there it was. Cas knew it would come up eventually, the return of the infamous John Winchester, the man behind this whole mess. Because just like that, after years of nothing, like some ghost that refuses to stop haunting him, he showed up in Dean’s life again to destroy what he had built.

“That was years later Sam. You couldn’t have known. Dean was by all accounts doing well, he had his job at the university lined up, he was living independently, hell, he even had the OSP fooled.” The least Cas could do was reassure Sam that it wasn’t his fault, the blame lay squarely on the shoulders of their father.

“Shouldn’t have mattered. I should have been there.”

“And what? Stayed with Dean the whole time? Turned down the job of a lifetime to babysit a brother who was by all accounts excelling?”

“I should have been there. I could have stopped it.”

Chapter End Notes

Mentions of past child abuse, misuse of legal medication, death of a minor character (Mary Winchester), description of past violent acts, - any others you'd recommend?

Please comment! All feedback desired and respected :)Sorry for the info dump but they'd skirted the issues long enough I thought, time to come clean, face it head on. Somewhat anyway :P Plus I want to get on with plot :) So please tell me what you think!!
Dean dreams. He remembers.

He dreams of terrifying hands crawling all over him, bodies pressed against him, pressed inside him. He hears his own voice, begging. He dreams of the man, his voice whispering to him of how good he was being. He remembers being pleased, wanting it. Sick with it.

He sees the door, the dark corridor, the smell of freshly laundered sheets, the alphas, all waiting, there, for him. He dreams of dirty sheets, of daylight days later, sunlight searing his eyes after the darkness. He screams.

Dean screams and screams. He panics and shudders. Ripping, tearing the bedding off himself. He begs.

Cas drops the file he had been annotating and runs, crashing into the bedroom. Dean isn’t wake, he’s begging but he’s still asleep, somewhere else, somewhere monstrous.

“Please!” desperation, want and pain and all of it again and again, “Please! Please! Please!...”

Cas drags back the covers and throws himself over Dean, pinning him down, holding him tight.

“Dean. Wake up! Right now. Wake up!” he orders harshly, knowing it was one of the only ways to break this, break through to him.

“Dean. You were dreaming. It wasn’t real. Listen to me. You are in our apartment, it’s Monday the 21st of March and you are safe. You hear me? You’re safe.”

Cas pins him down, holds him tight, past experience has taught him to hold on, hold him and don’t let him go. Otherwise Dean just breaks faster, breaks further, curls in on himself and lets the pain take him over. Loses himself. The suffering all consuming.

Dean resists for a moment, limbs hard and tense again his, his body arching up, eyes shooting open in panic. He’s lost still but coming around, gaze unfocused, searching, frantic.

“Breathe baby. Come on. It’s me,” Cas encourages and Dean does, drawing in a ragged breath, finally collapsing under him. Cas can feel the tremors still racking his body.

“Cas?” he gasps out, it’s barely a word, confused, timid.

“It’s me. You’re safe. I promise. You’re safe.” Cas repeats, hoping finally the words might get through.

Dean can’t talk, not really, not yet. Cas was lucky to get that much out of him.

Instead he curls himself against Castiel, pulling inward towards him, drawing in like he’s trying to enter him bodily, hide inside him.

“I know sweetheart.” Cas shushes, resting his head beside Deans on the pillow, letting his solid weight do the rest. He has Dean’s arms pulled up above both their heads, resting on the pillow, his wrists gripped tight in his hands, he doesn’t let go.

Cas waits, gently reassuring him with an endless run of words, whispered and gentle directly into his ear. Listening to Dean’s lungs gasp and pant, slowly calming, slowly coming back.

“It’s me. That’s it, slow your breathing down. You aren’t there anymore. You’re here with me. Here in our home. That’s it.”

He feels rather than sees the tears, Dean’s an expert at hiding his pain, but his cheek is damp where they’re pressed together. Cas knows better than to comment.

Eventually, Cas shifts back up, not letting Dean’s wrists go, it’s too early for that. Instead he turns them down so his arms are resting by his side, wrists still firmly held. Dean’s body under his weight where Cas is kneeling over him, still keeping him down, keeping him safe.

“I know that was a bad one. Thank you for coming back to me.” He offers Dean an encouraging smile. It’s returned, albeit weekly.

“You with me now?”

Dean nods, pale but lucid.

“Think you can talk yet?”

He shakes his head, not meeting Cas’s eyes, ashamed.

“No, Dean. Look at me.” Cas waits, Dean does, fearful. Cas wants to reach back in time and punch John Winchester in the face, “I’m proud of you. It’ll come give it time.” Cas leans forward to plant a soft kiss on his lips.

“What do you need?”
Dean looks away meaningfully, dragging his eyes across the room and fixing them in the corner, fixing them on the wooden chest resting there.

“Are you sure?”

Dean nods, certain, needing.

Cas is reluctant, he hadn’t planned on this but upon reflection he should have expected it. He had needed to do this to Dean almost every night when he had first come to Castiel.

“Alright.” His voice determined to be strong, clear.

He drags Dean’s arms back up above his head and fastened his hands around the metal frame.

“Hold these. Don’t let go until I say so.”

Dean nods, his breath catching but grips the bars firmly.

“I’ll be right back.”

He pulls off Dean, walking quickly over the the chest and opens it. He eyes the contents critically and decides, in for a penny in for a pound. He reaches in, scoops out the lot.

He can tell it was the right decision when he turns and Dean catches his eye, determined and fighting for it. His fingers are white where they hold onto the bed frame, he’s far from ready to be left alone but he’s coping, watching Cas with conviction.

Cas dumps the contents of his arms on the bed beside them both, sorting through it quickly and organising his mind while he does it.

When he’s done he nods, both to himself and for Dean’s benefit.

“Okay, first this.” Cas reaches under the bed and pulls out the straps permanently fastened there. He flips them first across Dean’s body, checking the length and positioning. He slides them under Dean. One under his ankles, one his hips, his waist, and the last under his shoulders.

“This has to go too ok?” He asks, gesturing to the pillow under Dean’s head. He nods and allows Cas to slide it away. He lets his head fall back against the mattress, no longer able to watch what Cas is doing, trusting him.

Cas walks around the other side of the bed and clips the straps to their counterparts. He tests them, convinced.

“Okay, first set.” He warns, before gently placing Den’s ankles against the leather, positioning them comfortably apart. He fastens the first of the ankle cuffs around Dean’s leg, checking the fit by sliding his fingers underneath it. They’re medical restraints, softly lined and designed especially for this but he doesn’t want to take chances with them. The other follows easily.

Next is the thighs, he normally doesn’t bother with these anymore but Dean needs it this time.

Then the waist. It’s a heavy belt, almost eight inches wide and fastened in two places to guard against tampering. He likes this model, had bought it especially for Dean because it can be combined with the shoulder straps to provide a much more secure system. He pulls them down from the strap under his shoulders and across Dean’s torso, effectively immobilizing him against the mattress. It also has the option of two additional side straps that prevent Dean from turning within the belt. He fastens
Before he picks up the last of the restraints he leans over, fixes Dean with a questioning look.

“Last ones. Ready?”

“You’ll stay with me?” Dean replies instead, calmed enough by the process to find his voice again finally.

“You know I will. Always.”

“Then yes. I want it.”

“Okay,” Cas kisses each palm before guiding it down to his waist, pulling tight the wrist cuffs he’d attached to the belt earlier, his hands resting comfortably at his sides.

“I’ll be here all night. I promise. I’ve got you now,”

Dean nods, before testing the restraints, working his muscles against the soft leather, feeling the resistance, the security.

“One last thing,” Cas remembers and returns to the chest, reaching right into the bottom and pulls out the specially designed weighted blanket folded inside.

He lays it carefully over Dean, making sure the weight is evenly distributed before pulling the covers back over both of them.

Dean eyes are already falling shut again, now that the adrenalin has faded and the medication not yet completely out of his system, consciousness fleeing. Cas feels the moment he falls asleep, his tense body finally relaxing back into the restraints.

He sleeps. For hours he sleeps, peacefully, bonelessly. Better than Cas could have hoped, till daylight sneaks across the floor, intrusive and unwanted.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

John Winchester is a bastard. Cas and Dean face up to the past.

Chapter Notes

TRIGGERS!!!! See the end notes for warnings.

This chapter sucked to write and took me way too long because I avoided it. I set this pain up and then didn't want to write it. Well it's done now, and Cas as usual comes through for him as best he can. On to brighter things and well, more angst :P oh and porn! Dean gets an orgasm soon, only took forever, poor guy! I'm sorry!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Cas lets him sleep. As long as possible. Long past the dawn and into the late morning, unwilling to end what his body must desperately need.

Consciousness comes slowly for Dean, the ache of sore muscles, heavy limbs finally easing and he can feel the familiar weight of Cas’s arms draped over him. The straps weren’t tight but he didn't try to test them, having them there was enough, having Cas there.

He feigns sleep for a while, leaving limbs touching, breathing synchronously, hearts beating against each other's chests. Reassuring and quiet in the calm morning.

Cas shifts, opening sleepy eyes and curls up to sneak a kiss, light and tender against Dean's jaw.

“You look better,”

“Yeah, These helped a lot. Thanks,” Dean stretches slightly feeling the resisting leather against his chest holding him down to the bed.

“Hmmm,” thoughtful murmur from Cas, “If you want it, all you need to do is ask,”

Dean can't meet his eyes. Cas knows that mostly he can't ask, mostly he'll just withdraw, pretend that everything is fine, until it really isn't.

“Dean,” Cas scolds gently, “sometimes you need this, you even want it. You have to know by now that I'd never deny what you need. Ever.”
Dean nods against Cas’s neck hiding a little.

“But you have to tell me before it gets too bad, before I have no choice but to force you,” Cas is leaning over, willing their eyes to meet, he holds Dean's chin tightly circling his head with his other arm, weight pressing them both down to the bed. Locking him into the uncomfortable conversation.

“I know it's hard sweetheart. But we’re going to practice because we can't let the past ruin this for you you.”

Dean snorts, but it's a sad lonely sound, “If that was all it was, I'd....God Cas! You don't know the shit I've done.”

“No baby, I don't. And it'd be a lie to say I didn't care, because I do, so much.” He pulls in tighter to Dean willing it to communicate what neither of them can vocalise, what Dean for so long couldn't hear. He is quiet for a long time, words hanging heavily in the air between them.

Dean winces and almost invariably “I know.”

Cas kisses him then, possessive and understanding.

“You gonna need a little more help today?” he says already knowing the answer.

“More than a little,” Dean winces.

They shower and get ready slowly, for now putting off the inevitable conversation. But it can't last and Castiel isn't about to have Dean obsess and fret over it all day till he breaks. It’s time.

Cas pulls out the familiar file and contemplates his options. He knows Dean’s going to need reassurance and grounding, some way to stay connected to the present moment when the past threatens. Something physical he thinks, something to tether his control to. The blindfold is therefore out and he needs to speak so a gag can’t be used. He looks around the room considering before laying his eyes on the heavy wooden chair settled in the corner.

He hadn’t needed to use it for such a long time, he’d almost forgotten it’s usefulness in situations like this. It looked like any other decorative but sturdy chair, positioned between the bookcase and the window, perfect for reading in the afternoon light. He’d actually bought it second hand from an antique dealer and had it customised subtly with hidden catches for straps and restraints. It was made from hardwood throughout but comfortably cushioned on the seat, back and each armrest. It had an unusually high back that allowed for additional immobilization of the head and neck if necessary.

When Dean had first come to him Cas had used it often. Both as a comfortable restraint method for feedings and such (Dean had a tendency to pull out the NG tube early on) but also as a time-out device, to give him time to process and reflect without falling apart. It seemed to work with Dean that when he was physically restrained it helped him keep himself together mentally. Helped him pull together the pieces of himself and a reminder that Cas was there to help him, to take away some of the burdens, the painful choices he didn’t have to make alone anymore.
Dean had inevitably spent many hours early on in that chair looking out the window or listening to whatever music Cas put on the stereo. And while sometimes the chair was used for disciplinary purposes, it wasn’t meant to be a punishment, more a place to reflect on himself and sort out his mind. Cas always tried to make Dean’s time there as comfortable as possible. There were even times when Dean had simply lowered himself down onto it tensely and hoped Cas could figure out the rest, which he invariably did.

Cas drags the chair over to the table and digs out the full set of restraints. He doesn’t give Dean a choice about using it but he does ask “How many do you want?” Gesturing to the small pile of leather sitting on the table. Dean eyes the pile with a mixture of contempt and longing.

He flops down on the familiar seat and grunts in annoyance at himself for needing it, “Just buckle me in. Tight. This is really going to suck.”

And Cas does, working his way up from the straps around his ankles, calves, thighs, hips, chest and neck. He even adds the wrist and upper arm cuffs for good measure before holding out the final one. It’s a little different from the others as it has a padded panel at the front for Dean’s forehead and an extra strap to hold it on firmly. They’d added that after Dean had struggled and shifted too much once and marked himself. Although the leather was lined, it was still enough to abrade the skin lightly, and any mark was more than Castiel allowed. This modification Dean doesn’t really like Cas knows, it feels heavy-handed and a little claustrophobic but puts up with it regardless. This time though he doesn’t comment, he meets Cas’s eyes and holds perfectly still for him.

“That’s good sweetheart. Just one more thing.” Cas says as clips a new bag to the waiting IV stand, it can drain while they talk, he glares at it but doesn’t protest.

Cas takes his own seat across from Dean, readying himself by taking a slow mouthful of coffee and considers how to start.

“Okay. I’m going to tell you what I know and you can fill in the gaps. I’ll also ask you some questions and I want you to answer them as best you can, even if you need a moment to consider. If you need a break just say so and we’ll stop.”

Dean can’t nod, even though he tries unconsciously before realizing and uttering a broken “Yeah, I’ll try”

But, before he starts he recites his promise to Dean and the very first thing he ever said to him. “I want you to remember this above all else. You are now safe. You are with me. I won’t let anything or anyone harm you. I will never harm you. I will always take care of you. You can stop fighting now,” It’s like a mantra, one Dean has heard Cas say thousands of times. He’d first said it in the OSP clinic on that first day, as Dean lay on the gurney, strapped down and ready for transport to Cas’s home. He’d leant over and checked the IV before cupping Dean’s face and speaking those words, Dean had been woozy at the time but heard them clearly enough. Heard the promise in them. The finality of them.

At the time he hadn’t known whether what he was feeling was relief or terror, probably both he’d supposed. He’d always known it would end like that, being handed over to an Alpha, a random owner like some piece of property, he’d always known it was all he was worth. And though he didn’t picture the day including Sam walking beside the gurney, tear reddened eyes and hand clasping his tight and warm, or the gentleness of the man, forehead creased with worry as they loaded him into the ambulance for transport, he did expect the numbness to burn through him, apathy searing away the despair, shutting him down. Finally, he’d thought to himself, finally it’s happened, I can stop fighting now, I can give up.
Of course, the words meant something else entirely now. Now they meant safety and home. Because Castiel had refused to let him shut down, refused to let him hide inside his own mind and let the numbing agony quiet him. Cas had in his unfailingly dedication drawn him back out and convinced him to live. Even if he hadn’t always gone quietly, or gently for that matter.

So now when Dean hears them, he breathes deeply. Knowing the hardest part is to come. “I’m ready.”

“Oh.” Cas shuffles the papers slightly, taking a breath, “We know you first started exhibiting signs of increased stress about February of 2013. It says you had to leave a class due to a panic attack on the 14th but was able to convince your OSP welfare officer that you were fine. I assume this the approximate time that John returned?”

“He uh…he just turned up one night, boot full of whiskey and told me he was crashing for a while. Told me not to tell Sam, said Sam was dead to him.”

“And you didn’t tell Sam?”

“No. I should have….maybe if I had…” He’s cut off by Castiel before he can form that thought.

“No!” You did what he asked you to do, that’s not your fault. He was a manipulative, abusive asshole who knew exactly the hold he had on you.” Cas doesn’t sugar coat it, knowing that’s not what Dean needs.

“I thought I could bring him around.”

“But you couldn’t”

“No, he…he was a mess. Worse than usual. I don’t think I saw him sober the whole time, he… he was just so angry you know.”

“I can imagine.”

“But, he was my Dad. I owed him so much. After Mom…he tried his best.”

“Dean.” Cas tried to keep the frustration out of his voice, Dean’s blindness when it came to his father was an old pain he had so far been unable to shift, “He abused you,”

“Yeah, I know he did,” he says it plainly, like he’s reciting a learned verse or pledge, not like he believes it, not fully, “He was still my father. I owed him.”

“Is that why you didn’t inform the OSP about him?”

“They wanted to arrest him!” Dean snarls, angry and hurting, “Cas, let me up. I can’t do this!” He shifts against the straps, pulling and trying to dislodge himself. The heavy chair easily resisting the struggle, till he collapses again, letting the leather take his weight. “I can’t.”

“It’s ok.” Cas leans forward into Dean’s space, one hand coming up to cup his face tenderly, “You can. Just walk me through it, step by step. Okay?”

Dean closes his eyes and breathes raggedly, words refusing him.

“Look at me.” Cas commands, “We’re doing this together. It wasn’t fair what happened, what he did to you. But you are strong enough. Stronger than you know. And the only thing I want you to ask yourself is this; Do you want to do this? Do you want me to know? If you do then we will get
through this, that’s all that matters. ” He has both their hands clasped now, their knees touching.

“More than anything. I want to get this shit out there. Over with. I hate you not knowing…and what...what I did after...I feel so fucking guilty, and so fucking.....weak.”

“You’re not. And you never were! You raised a kind and confident brother in Sam, you kept yourself together through years and years of his abuse and you came out the other side still the brilliant man I love. Don’t you ever call yourself weak!” Cas’s voice a study in harnessed rage.

Dean laughs, bitter but affectionate towards the fury in Castiel's voice. It breaks the moment, releasing the tension. Cas knows, if he could go back in time John wouldn’t last long enough to hurt Dean this way, but the past is done. And now he has this beautiful man here with him, dragging himself through hell to share his pain, willingly laying open his soul. Bearing the wounds up and trusting Castiel not to carve them deeper. He can barely comprehend the courage it must take, an act braver than any he himself has ever committed.

“Everyday you amaze me how strong you are.” Cas says, pressing a kiss to Dean’s lips, trying desperately to communicate, “Everyday I get to come home to the kindest and finest man I know, despite you father, despite everything.”

Dean looks away at the earnestness in Cas’s eyes, he knows better than to argue, even if all he feels counters that belief entirely. Dean doesn’t know why Cas loves him, only that he does. He knows this to be true, a fact, even if he can’t explain why or even how he knows it.

He can’t understand how when Castiel looks at him, he sees beauty. When Dean looks inside all he sees is the damage. A broken twisted thing. Sharp and cutting. When he dares, it’s like picking up shards of glass or razor wire. It’s agonising to remember, to pick through the past without it cutting him. It’s all knotted up, the good and the bad and every time he thinks he’s untangled something warm from back then, the edges end up being razor-sharp and bloody him further.

Sometimes, he knows, it’s only been Cas and Sam, his therapist, the centre and all the other people invested in him surviving that have kept him sane, kept him alive. He knows, he’s broken. But hopes. In some distant, fantasy way that maybe one day he might catch a glimpse of what they tell him they see clearly. For now, he imagines it in his art, from once depicting the tormented things he saw when he looked inside, he now creates what he dreams they see in him, what beauty he wishes he too saw deep inside.

“Go on,” He steels himself, “Next question.” He catches Cas’s eyes, daring him to continue and Cas, ready to take the hint does, pen in hand again and notebook ready.

“He was with you for two weeks?”

“Yeah, got tanked each night and slept through the day while I worked… He’d wake as I got home and crack open new bottle. Make me share it with him as he...he talked, told me how worthless I was, how useless life was anymore.” Then his voice changes, turning to Cas to explain, the guilt evident, “I swear I didn’t want to drink, I know I’m not allowed to without supervision,” Cas nods, an old rule between them, borne from experience “and the meds they had me on then anyway, it
made me just feel sick, want to vomit.”

“I’m not mad. We weren’t together then and you were trying to connect with your father, it’s understandable.”

“Yeah, well I couldn’t keep up and it was worse than before. Everything came back. He could see I was different. He hated me even more. It was like he just came back to torment me.” He said the last with a brokenness Cas had never heard, an acceptance that almost shattered Cas’s resolve. That bastard of a father didn’t know what he had.

“I think he did you know? Come back as one last act of cruelty,” Dean confesses.

Cas could imagine it, John driving himself further and further down that bitter road of resentment till finally snapping and releasing it all on the one who loved him most seemed logical. Angry at the world, and at a boy innocent but forever blackened by an act that destroyed them both. The guilt must have eaten at him till it turned around back on Dean. Guilt over his own actions that night, grief and loss never resolved. And though he never met John, Castiel felt he knew the man, understood the fractured way his psyche saw it, and condemned him nonetheless.

“Then what happened?”

“He got down to his last bottle. I came home to him sitting at the kitchen table with it, pulling long draws from the bottle and snarling at me. He told me that it should have been me, not her that died.” Dean’s voice is monotone, the only way he’s able to speak is to distance himself, Cas stays silent, letting him continue.

“Then he waved his gun at me, said I was just a worthless piece of ass and a bitch, only good for alpha cock. He said he wished I had never even been born but that he had been too weak to end me, should have. Said he gave up trying to fix me. Said he was done and I should give myself over to it or die, said it was all I was worth.

Then he grabbed me. Fist full of my hair, dragged me to the Impala and shoved me in the passenger seat. He was blind drunk and angry. Could barely get the key in the ignition but when I tried to get out, tried to talk him down, he slammed my head into the dash. By the time I figured out what was happening, we were driving on some middle of nowhere street.

He was going too fast. I knew he...I knew what he wanted to do.

Last thing he said was too slurred to hear properly, but I’m pretty sure he wasn’t even talking to me. He was muttering ‘Mary’ over and over and ignoring me. I begged him to stop, begged him to slow down. But he wouldn’t.

I tried to reach across to the steering wheel, don’t even know what I wanted to do but I had to do something.

He spun the wheel.

Ripped it around and flipped the car. I can...I can still feel that motion sometimes, like I’m on a fucked up kids ride, rollercoaster flipping me again and again, like it would never end. But it did. And then I remember the silence of the empty road and my heartbeat louder that I’ve ever heard it before, like some fucking hammer beating down on my chest. Till there was nothing but that beat, and then nothing at all.

I just remember waking up in the ambulance. The paramedic told me I was lucky I had been wearing a seatbelt or I would have been thrown from the car like my father. He told me that I was lucky to be
alive.

Dad, he wasn’t so lucky. Got what he wanted I guess. Partially anyway.” The last word is almost regretful sounding, agonising.

Cas snaps. He can’t not have this man in his arms a moment longer.

He’s instantly in motion, clicking the quick releases open on the straps; ankles, legs, chest, head and catches Dean slumping forward. Every part of him grateful for the weight of Dean’s body, heavy and reassuring against his chest, his breath against his neck, his heartbeat fast and fearful but strong and healthy.

The weight of their bodies pulling them together, Dean is clinging fiercely in his arms. He’s not crying, not able to yet. But he tucks his head into Cas’s neck, hiding from the fear he saw in Cas’s eyes. Hiding from reality a moment longer.

“I lied.” He whispered to the bend between Cas neck and ear, “I told them it was an accident. I said he came for a visit and we were going out to dinner. I lied and told them it was an accident and that he didn’t realize how drunk he was. I didn’t want them to know just how worthless I was, that my own father tried to kill me.”

“You’re not….!”

“I know.” Dean says, weakly stopping Cas’s protestations, “but I thought that then.”

Cas pulls away slightly, forcing Dean’s face to meet his, nose to nose and eyes to eyes.

“You. are. not. Worthless. I don’t care how many time I have to tell you. I’ll keep telling you, every day. Every hour if I have to.” And despite the anguish still ripping Dean apart, he can’t help but lean in, pull them forehead to forehead.

“I know.” And it’s enough.

Enough for Cas to slip his hands down to curl them about Dean’s waist and pull him in, it’s enough to let him lean in and kiss him. Gently opening up and guiding his tongue inside Dean’s welcoming mouth possessively. It’s enough to give him the strength to ask.

“Do you want to go on?” Fearing the answer, but believing in Dean enough to trust him with the choice.

“I have to. If I don’t now. I won’t ever.”

“Okay,” Cas said, more to himself than Dean, “Okay. Just… just give me a moment.”

So they sit together for a while, kissing gently but thoroughly, letting their wills rebuild some of the resolve they need to finish this conversation.

Until Cas sits back again, against his chair and takes a deep breath. He looks down at the medical reports, thick and damning in the file and curses the man for teaching Dean to be such a good liar.

“You suffered no long term damage from the accident?”

“No. Couple of bruises and scrapes but nothing significant. I was out of the hospital after a day or so.”

“And the OSP?”
“I gave the hospital a fake name. Never told them what happened.”

“And your father?”

“I didn’t want to deal. I got the morgue to send his body off to some place for cremation. I didn’t even pick up the car. Just let it get towed off and impounded.” He sounds upset about that, Cas knew he loved that car, but the rest is spoken emotionlessly, an empty story.

“I pretended for a while that nothing had happened. I was totally numb to it. Like it had happened to someone else. I went to work, ate a little but never enough, drunk myself to sleep every night. I tried to forget. But it rotted inside me, the knowledge. It was like I could hear his whispering to me all the time. Telling me how worthless I was, how I was only a hole to be filled by alpha cock. The thoughts got into me so bad, sometimes I couldn’t breathe.

I started to fear that every word I spoke, every movement I made might give me away. I couldn’t talk to anyone without feeling like a fake, I wasn’t worthy of taking up their time, wasting their breath on me but I was so desperate for anything to make me feel something, I wanted it anyway. But it just made it worse. I wanted touch and affection so bad it almost killed me. But more than that I didn’t want them to find out that I really was.”

Cas cups his jaw and leans in for another gentle reminder for his lover, lips pressed chastely against lips.

“I convinced myself that he was right. He convinced me, every night in my sleep, I saw him mocking me and calling me a whore. Ordering me to give in to it. Eventually I did.”

“What did you do?” Cas is fearful but already suspects the answer.

“Four weeks after he died, I walked into an Alpha Club and told them to give me Verindox.”

Cas’s breath catches in horror. That is the absolute last drug Dean should ever be prescribed, with his history and medical needs it might have killed him. He can’t help the groan of disgust that escapes his lips, he’d known Dean had had unprotected sex, actually guessed he’d probably spent a heat outside the centre. But for anyone to give him Verindox was not only illegal but immoral.

“They need to be arrested...I’ll call the…”

“Please,” Dean practically begs, “I need to finish this. I asked them. They didn’t want to but I convinced them.” Cas doubted that was very hard to do.

“They took me into a back room, it was obviously set up for it. And they gave me the drug. I don’t know whether I wanted them to hurt me or fuck me. But I got both.”

Cas was hastily trying to remember the effects of Verindox, desperately cataloguing side effects and duration. It was a drug he refused to prescribe himself due to it’s potency and awful side effects of memory loss, depression, nausea, headaches to name a few. Most reputable doctors no longer even considered it an option.

“The drug worked? You went into heat?”

“Yeah, and it was fucking agony. Every cell was burning and there was nothing I could do for it but let them take me. I begged them to, over and over. I’m not even sure how many. I stopped thinking, stopped remembering, stopped being. I know that’s fucked up alright. But it was the only thing that worked. It felt right that they used me. I’m sorry!” He looks shattered and guilty as if his actions were somehow damaging to Castiel instead of himself.
“I think the drug lasted too long or something. It’s meant to wear off after a day or so but it didn’t. I remember them forcing me to eat and drink, arguing amongst themselves about what to do. I remember the room growing light and then dark and light again three times. I remember getting weaker and weaker till I couldn’t even lift my head up of the pillow, I think I kept begging for it.

I woke up four days later, they’d given me an IV of something. It must have flushed the drug from my system. But I was...I think I wanted to die. The owner of the club was there, he looked as terrified, scared shitless that he’d almost killed me probably. He kept apologising, promising he’d never give the drug anyone else again, begging me to not tell the cops what happened. He and a couple of other alphas got me up and practically carried me upstairs. They shoved me inside a van they had parked up there.

Apparently, they drove me to the OSP centre and dumped me at the front door. No plates so they couldn't do anything. I was unconscious the whole time and the drug was out of my system. I didn’t wake up again for 36 hours.” Dean sighs, sounding ashamed but honest.

“It says here that you were severely dehydrated and underweight as well as suffering from mild shock and extreme post heat syndrome. I’m not surprised it took that long for your body to recover enough for you to regain consciousness,” Cas notes.

“Sam was there when I woke up. He’d flown down as soon as they called him. I’ve never seen him so scared.” Dean looks away, refusing to face the guilt he feels.

“Pretty soon after that they came in with a lawyer and explained what a Guardianship Contract was and how important it was that I sign it. I didn’t want to, but Sam begged. He said that he didn’t want to loose his brother. That he didn’t think he was enough and that I needed more help than he could give. He was so desperate, but I just felt numb. Like nothing of myself mattered anymore, just Sam. I didn’t want to see Sam so scared ever again."

“So you signed it?”

“Yeah, the university sent their lawyer to go over the documents for me and they were pretty clear that to keep my job I had to sign it. There had been dozens of complaints and worried emails from students and staff. I guess they wanted to safeguard their investment.

For me it meant nothing, whether I kept my job or not, nothing, I didn’t care. I just wanted to disappear. Figured that getting handed over like a broken toy to some strange alpha had been inevitable from the start, might as well accept it. Dad was right again.”

“But you got me and I’m thankful for that every single day,”

“I did,” the smile that greets him, brighter and more alive than Cas had ever hoped to see. He can remember the desperation he’d felt in those earliest days, of trying to break through Dean’s emptiness to find the man he knew existed underneathe, the one he saw through his art. He remembers the first time Dean cared enough to resist his help with fondness, the first time Dean argued back had delighted him, and he remembers one morning the light streaming through their window and watching Dean lay himself down in the warm patch of sunlight on the rug, finally giving himself over to the simple pleasure of feeling.
Chapter End Notes

Suicide (John Winchester), psychological and physical abuse, drug usage, General fuckedupedness that is John Winchester in this fic.

PLEASE reassure me that I haven't destroyed this fic, I feel like I plummeted it into darkness. This chapter was so sad to write, I set it all up in previous chapters and then realized that I actually had to write the awfulness I'd foreshadowed. Happier things to come I promise. If I can get over how harrowing this chapter was. Comments keep me actually writing, in fact they're probably the only reason this chapter even managed to get written!!!
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Dean gets a reward. Short but hopefully sweet.

Chapter Notes

Sorry I haven't had a chance yet to reply to everyone's comments from the last chapter, I appreciate you all so ridiculously much and I promise I will do my best to reply ASAP. Life is a bit overwhelming right now but I figured you'd all prefer a new chapter first :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I let him fuck me. That man yesterday. In the club. I asked for it,” Dean says it so quietly that Cas barely catches the words, ashamed and whispered to the water that surrounds them. Cas had run a bath and now they rest, curled around each other, limbs entwined, soaking away what they can of the earlier pain.

“It’s okay, I already know sweetheart,” Cas can only offer so much reassurance, so much comfort, but he can offer this. He’d worked it out immediately, once the truth was plain, but he wanted to be gentle about it now.

“I was my first time,” spoken plainly like Dean tends to do when it hurts.

“Oh, Honey. I’m so sorry.” he pulls Dean closer, hoping to drown out the memory of their touch with is own more immediate presence.

“Me too,” spoken with a tired conviction, “I just wish it had been you.”

But there is little Castiel can offer for that, little relief from a regret that he too feels intensely, that it had happened that way. The chance for a better start for Dean, for them both, hangs hauntingly between them. But he pushes back the regret, conscious of his responsibility and the chance that they have now, and slips his hand down to encircle the cage resting between Dean’s open thighs.

“What’s important now is that this is mine now. And so are you. All of you. Even all that you regret and I’m thankful for it, because it’s a part of you.” He kisses the Dean openly, holding his gaze, “And I’m so proud of you. For getting through today and being so fucking strong. I think a reward is in order,” he lets his hand gently massage Dean balls and slide down the enclosed shaft. Fortunate that he’d decided to focus on denial this week as Dean’s body would welcome the chance for release
and distraction. Cas hoped that maybe he could forget for a little while at least.

Dean groans at the touch, shifting his hips against the teasing strokes, weeks of denial winning out to rush through him with desire and need.

“Please,” he practically moans the word, “Please, Cas!”

Cas shifts him so that Dean’s back is completely resting against his chest and his head heavy against his shoulder. He can tell that Dean wants to move, to thrust but he’s being so good, letting Cas maneuver him, letting his Alpha take control.

“It’s okay, take it easy. I’m going to get you off, don’t worry.” He turns his head to whisper in Dean's ear as he slowly works the plastic in his hand, “I’ve got you.”

It had to hurt but Dean is desperate enough now to like the pain a little. Cas knows that when he gets like this, some denial and then a little pain, it’s almost enough by itself, damn the cage. Almost.

But Cas wants more than enough. He wants to give Dean everything, all that they’ve been working towards for months.

Dean whimpers a little, hands clenched tight to the outside of Castiel’s thighs, tight enough for bruises in the morning, a little unconscious revenge. But Cas doesn't rebuke him because Dean’s trying not to touch, to speed this up, taught that lesson through frustration and denial early on. Plus for Cas, a little pain of his own only feeds his desire.

But Cas is being kind tonight, wanting to release the tension for Dean not build it up. So he reached up behind his head and pulls up the key fastened to a chain around his neck.

“Shh..” he soothes as his fingers find the lock, slipping the key in place and turning it immediately. Then he eases apart the plastic, careful not to catch or pinch the skin before dumping the whole thing on the floor by the bath.

Dean groans audibly and relieved, more bruises added to Cas’s thighs, as he fights the urge to touch, to disobey.

“Okay sweetheart. I got you.” Cas lets his voice guide them both as he eases his fingers down again, grasping at the base of the shaft. He holds Dean firmly there, letting him catch his breath, lest this be over all too soon.

Dean is panting, his chest rising and falling in the water but Cas waits him out, gentling him with reassurances, till his breathing returns to normal. Before starting up again, his own desire secondary to the need to care for the man in his arms.

His hand is slick with the scented oil they’d added to the water and readily slips along the shaft, keeping his hand just this side of too tight, too slow. And he can feel Dean holding himself still, feet braced against the bottom of the tub, the muscles of his thighs practically vibrating with tension. But he doesn’t move, fights back to urge to push up against the palm now working over the head of his cock.

He’s gasping a little again, quick small breaths, trying to gather oxygen in a desperate attempt to keep control.

Cas takes pity and releases him, but only to slide his hand down to massage his balls. Casually he slips his other hand down further, seeking the first passage, sure to be slick with need. He eases a couple of fingers inside in search of that other spot, that place that soon has Dean begging again and
forcing his back to arch up and out, causing his feet to momentarily lose traction on the bottom of the tub so he jolts down slightly before he catches himself, serving only to plant himself even more firmly on the now three fingers working themselves steadily in and out of him.

“Cas!” he gasps, “I can’t…”

“Shh...not yet.” Cas warns, but does sympathetically assist by again tightly circling the base of his cock, holding off release a little longer, drawing out the need. Cas’s other hand however isn’t so helpful and continues to work in and out of Dean, pushing again and again against that inner place his thumb massaging and unerringly finding that outer mound that has Dean practically thrumbing with it.

“Almost there sweetheart. I want to feel you as well as see you come,” he says wanting Dean to have the full simultaneous orgasm possible only for Omegas, knowing Dean struggles with it, but he wants to give him this. Make him know just how good it can be.

He can feel it building, almost imperceptible clenches of those internal muscles that precede the crash, he speeds up, edging towards it.

“Almost baby.”

Dean wants to scream, but all that slips out are panting moans, he wants so badly to touch himself, can’t, wants to anyway. I’ve been good, he wants to beg, please just let me come. But Cas is merciless, drawing it out, further and further, deepening the pleasure till it’s building down, deeper inside him. Like during the heat. Familiar yet so foreign still.

So rarely does it build to this that it scares him. Like he’s about to lose himself to the heat, like he’s about to slip over into that mindlessness instead. But Cas’s is absolute and his conviction keeps him here, not fighting it, but wanting it.

The fingers inside him are dipping deeper with every thrust and the hand working his cock again finally moving, finally letting the pressure….the pleasure….

“That’s it sweetheart.” Cas allows, finally, “Let it go.”

And he does, releasing his control, giving in to it.

“Uhh!” He hears the animal like sound thrust out of him before the rest of it even hits. It feels like every muscle in his body has gone tense, gripping against the overwhelming rush of it. Better than before, not like a heat, better, purer. He can feel his release push out between the fingers holding the head of his cock, the inner muscles of his body working themselves against Cas’s fingers as they push back in against them, each time another and another slamming wave of pleasure.

He’s holding his breath he realises, lightheaded and gasping for air as the last of it passes in gentler movements now, Cas’s still working him through it, giving him every moment possible before it becomes too much, too sensitive.

“...my beautiful Omega. I knew you could do it. Look at you...” the stream of words Cas is speaking finally breaking through to his jumbled mind. His voice the anchor he needs not to fall apart, not entirely, but Cas notices anyway, he always does.

“Back with me?”
Dean nods, not trusting words yet.

Cas slips his hands away and uses them to turn his face towards him, sinking into the kiss willingly. He keeps them like that for a little while, lazily working their lips together as he lets Dean gather the pieces of himself back together.

“Time to get out I guess. Your brother is coming tomorrow so we should get an early night,” Cas sounds a little sad to be ending the moment, but resigned.

“You don’t want...?” Dean asks nervously, never sure when it comes to offering himself.

“No honey. Tonight was all about you.”

“Oh,” Dean’s not sure whether to feel disappointed or relieved. He was exhausted, down to the bones tired and wrung out. All he wanted now was empty unconsciousness, with hour upon hours of dreamless sleep.

As they readied for bed Cas secured the straps across Dean’s body without him even having to ask

Chapter End Notes

Please comment, it keeps me writing!! Plus I'd really like to know what you guys thought, sex scenes are weirdly hard to write! I'm not actually all that happy with this one but I want to get on with Sam arriving and then later giving poor Dean a heat to get through (Gabriel will feature and I'm super looking forward to that!) So I can't keep procrastinating. Onward!
“Cas?” Dean’s voice has a strange nervousness to it, enough to make Cas look up from the research paper he was reading and peer at him curiously.

“Yes?”

“Do you think..is it ok if…” he looks across at the door as if Sam might walk through it at any moment when he knows full well that Sam won’t be there till much later.

“Out with it.”

“Canoutaketueoteaypase?”

“Sorry?” the jumble of words and sounds barely contained any meaning though Cas can guess what Dean is wanting. He’ll have to ask though, it’s important that he expresses what he wants.

“Can you take the tube out a bit early? Please? I told Sam I’d ask cause I want to share a meal with them. On Sunday before they go. Please!”

“Hmmm....” Cas pretends to think it over but he’d already known this would be coming, Dean always had a problem showing any weakness to Sam, “I tell you what. You pass the physical tomorrow morning, a weigh-in on Sunday and if it all looks good, you can have it out then.”

“Seriously?” he sounds disbelieving, like it’s too good to be true.

“Of course. You’ve dealt with the process admirably, consistently gained back the weight you lost and above all that, I know how much you enjoy sharing food with your brother. I see no reason to deny you.”
Dean smiles at him as if summer warmth had just appeared suddenly in the middle of a winter's day.

“Thank you. I mean it.”

“You need to pass the weigh-in mind you.”

“Yes. I know. I’m sure I will.” He looks so relieved that Cas hasn’t the heart to tell him that it’s probably a fifty/fifty chance, two weeks isn’t a long time to gain weight, even with the help of a specific diet.

Sam arrives just after eleven. He’s smiling cheerfully but looks exhausted enough to collapse, a whole day’s work and a long drive will do that to you. Cas knows Sam hates flying but it cuts so terribly into the limited time Sam and Dean have together, it frustrates Cas a little.

The minute Sam enters Dean is up and across the room, throwing his arms around Sam like a lifeline.

“Dude! I need to breathe!” gasps Sam, amusement colouring the moment.

“No way, with your gigantic lungs, you could hold it for hours. Just shut up and let me hug my baby brother.” Dean replies, not budging an inch.

Cas can’t help but feel proud of Dean. I had taken a lot for him to be able to show physical affection, he still can’t with most people, but now, with those he trusts he lets himself indulge a little.

Sam patiently waits him out, holding his own arms gently around Dean, understandably although mistakenly fearful of his past fragility, knowing full well how lucky he is to have this at all.

Eventually the moment is broken and Dean huffs out a laugh.

“Good to see you Sammy. Real good.”

“Yeah, you too,” undeniable love, quietly present behind each word.

Sam steps back and takes a good look at his brother. His eyes linger on the tube for a moment too long, causing Dean to drop his head slightly in embarrassment but he doesn’t comment. Instead he turns to Cas and holds out his hand in greeting.

“Cas, it’s good to see you too.”

His hand is greeted with equal pleasure from Cas. So often he’d wished they’d had more opportunities to develop their friendship further. He knew that if Sam lived closer or was able to visit more frequently then there was every chance they could become good friends. They already shared a deep respect for eachother built slowly over the years. Sadly though, most of the times Sam had been with them was by necessity, when Dean needed him most, either during heats or when he wasn’t doing so well physically or emotionally.

Sam trusted Cas with his brother and Castiel respected him for that, that he could let another care for his brother, trusted Cas to do a better job that he could.
Cas respected the man he was becoming even more, he could see Sam achieving great things, given time and opportunity. He just hoped that didn’t pull him even further away from his brother.

“Jess,” Dean soon had her in his arms as well, although a lot more hesitantly. He really did like her and thought she was perfect for Sam, he just had a hard time showing her the affection he felt.

For her part she returned the hug enthusiastically and seemed honestly happy to see him.

“You look good Dean,” she said as they parted, goodwill radiating off her.

Dean snorted and gestured to the tape holding the tube across his cheek, “Not with this sticking out of my face, I don’t,” there was no malice in it, something closer to annoyance.

“She’s right. You do look good. Happy.” Sam added with a shrug.

“Thanks,” he sounded genuinely touched, if a little shy at the compliment, “Can I help you with this?” He said gesturing to the bags Sam had brought in.

“Sure. Same room I’m guessing?”

“It’s yours.”

They had three spare rooms in their house but kept one especially for Sam and Jess, Cas hoped it might encourage them to visit a little more often.

“We’re just going to crash, if that’s alright. It’s been a really long day,” Sam brushed a hand over his eyes, the exhaustion obviously getting the better of him.

“Of course,” Cas volunteered, “just let us know if there is anything you need.”

Soon enough they were settled in for the night and had retreated to their room to ready for bed, Cas led Dean away to their room and firmly shut the door.

“I should just check if they need anything.”

“They’re fine. They’ve been here often enough to know where everything is. We can go to bed now too.”

Dean huffs but doesn’t put up a protest. He’s well aware how worked up he gets over Sam’s visits.

“Fine. Just please, don’t strap me in tonight. I need to be able to get up if they need anything.”

“Are you sure? It’ll help you sleep.”

“Yeah,” he sighs, “At least this way I won’t be tense all night.”

Cas knows he will be anyway, it’s only two days ago that he was struggling through panic and fear, the effects won’t have worn off so quickly. But, he doesn’t protest, he doubts Dean would get much sleep either way.
“Would you like to take something to help you sleep?”

“Do I have to?”

“No, not tonight, we’ll see how you go. But, if you can’t sleep for a few nights then it’d be a good idea. We don’t want you falling back into old patterns again. You know how sick you got the last time we let that go on too long.”

“Yeah. I remember,”

Cas does too. The irritability, the attitude bordering on outright disobedience. The emotional wreck that Dean became. He’d vowed not to tell that happen ever again and had added a supply of sleeping pills to his everyday kit just in case.

Dean climbs into bed easily enough but can’t seem to settle. He tosses and turns, catching himself on the tube more than once, kicking his feet out of the blankets and tossing his second pillow aside.

Cas doesn’t comment, just curls around Dean tighter than usual, pressed his weight down onto him and grasped his wrist with a spare hand. Offering what little support he could.

Dean slept little, fitfully waking each time the slightest noise could be heard. Cas didn’t sleep well either, worry waring with frustration and easily overcoming his need for rest.

They had worked on coping strategies, sleep techniques, meditation, and even the limited use of medication. Mostly they had it sorted and were now focussing on the nightmares, but, Cas couldn’t help when circumstances meant that Dean struggled more than usual.

“Quiet your mind,” he reminded, “The house is quiet. Everyone is safely asleep. You can rest.”

He felt Dean purposefully matching his breathing, a technique taught by the OSP to calm himself. And he could feel him just as purposefully loosening his muscles. It worked, for a time, over and over, he’d wake and sleep and wake again.

Dawn broke to brittle rest and try as he might, Dean couldn’t return to sleep.

He got up instead, letting Cas gather a few precious hours more. The guilt felt over the disturbed night outweighing his need for companionship.

He decided that he might as well make use of the time and set about pulling together ingredients for a batch of muffins and some banana bread for breakfast.

He had to stop himself tasting the batter several times but reminded himself, just one more day. And anyway, he could always make himself another batch on Sunday. Cas would be so proud of him fantasising about food for once instead of forgetting it.

“Smells amazing!” came Sam’s voice as he emerged from his bedroom sleepy eyed and slightly ruffled.

“I hope so. Couldn’t check the flavour so I had to guess.” said Dean pulling the muffins out and
setting them to cool on the rack.

Sam snatched up a still steaming one and bit into it, groaning at the flavour.

“Damn! Where’d you learn this? I practically burn water.”

Dean laughed, remembering the many, many failed attempts Sam had made over the years. A particularly black and smoking lasagna coming to mind especially. “The OSP taught me a little. Cas usually makes dinner but I like baking, desserts mostly but cakes and pies too.”

“No wonder, you always did have a sweet tooth,” Sam smiles, seeing his brother taking such joy in something always feels new and somehow unexpected.

“How’re you coping? With that I mean?”

“Not hurt if that’s what you’re worried about,” Dean shrugs, “It’s not the most comfortable thing and most days I would rather it out, but honestly, and I’ll never tell Cas this cause he’d totally want to use it more often if he knew, but it’s a bit reassuring, you know? Not having to make sure I eat enough everyday and knowing for sure that Cas is keeping me healthy. It’s a mind trip, but I kinda have a love/hate relationship with it.”

“Yeah, I guess I can see how that might happen.” Sam sounds uncertain, still finds it unusual to hear his own brother talking about getting looked after.

“Hey, don’t get me wrong. I definitely want it out. I even asked Cas if he could take it out early, for lunch tomorrow.”

“What’d he say?”

“He said it would be fine, so long as I pass the physical and weigh-in,”

“Awesome.”

They’re interrupted by the arrival of Cas and Jess as if called by magic (or maybe just the beeping of the oven).

“Good morning,” Cas leans in for a kiss, “Thank you for making breakfast.”

“No problem,” Dean smiles as he plates up the banana bread for Cas, his favourite.

Sam too grabbed a couple of slices each for him and Jess and carried them over to the table. Dean sets out juice and coffee for them all before sitting himself down in his usual spot to wait for Cas to set up his bag. He tries not to be embarrassed, this is far from the first time either Sam or Jess has seen the process, but he still couldn’t meet either of their curious gazes.

Cas brings him his ice chips, kisses him affectionately on the head before casually arranging the tubing.

“So, any specific plans for your visit?”

“Not really. We mostly just wanted to catch up with you both. I mentioned I had some news. Well, now is a good a time as any,” Sam casts a look over to Jess who returns it with a smile, “We’ve decided it’s time to start thinking about the long term and we both want to have children soon. So,
we’re going to get married.”

Although Dean had been expecting it, the heady rush of emotion hit him hard, he’d thought Sam would wait for tomorrow at least, he hadn’t been expecting it right away. To have it confirmed to unexpectedly, was like a direct hit to the sternum.

He’d wanted that for Sam as long as he could remember, feared neither of them would ever find it. He’d always hoped to see him with kids underfoot, a good job and a lovely woman like Jess. He couldn’t help the choked gasp and tremor that started in his hands, he opened his mouth to speak but nothing came out. His emotions running too high.

Luckily, Sam and Cas knew him well enough to wait, Cas giving him time to process by pulling Sam into a hug, “Congratulations Sam. We’re both thrilled for you.”

Dean nodded, smiling. “I’m…” he takes a breath and carefully finds the words, “I’m proud of you.”

“Thanks Dean,” Sam leans over and pulls him into a hug that for all the world feels like it would never end.

Jess is next, warmly pulling her soon to be brother-in-law into her arms.

“I’m so happy to be joining your family. I’d mean so much to us if you could both be there.” she whispers to him as her arms pull him in tight.

“I want my brother standing up the front with me.” Sam’s gone a little misty eyed, but holds it together.

Dean can’t respond, not yet but nods, tucking his face into Jess’s neck, hiding himself from the emotional onslaught.

“It’ll be something small,” Jess reassures Dean, “Private.”

“We really just want you guys there and Jess’s immediate family.” Sam adds, “and we’re going to do it soon. Maybe in July.”

Dean finally lets go of Jess and lets himself be guided in under Cas’s arm. Castiel knows how Dean struggles with emotion this powerful, with happiness especially.

Even with the prior warning, Cas had known that this would hit him roughly. Dean expects so little happiness from life that every small piece of joy feels sharp and cruel, adding more weight to the things he might lose, the unfair but completely understandable expectation of it all being ripped away yet again. The possibility of losing it all just that much more painful to bare.

He stutters a little but manages to congratulate them both. Even engage them in a sort of stilted conversation about their plans for the ceremony. Sam and Jess patient and considerate of his clumsy but heartfelt attempt.

Cas stays quiet and supportive, though this is hard he knows that Dean wants build back up his ability to engage with these types of emotional conversations, these moments he’d run from for so long. Happiness, still such new territory for him.
They end up chatting about plans for the wedding over the rest of breakfast and well into the morning until finally they really do need to get on with the day. There are things that need to be done, no matter the occasion.

“Dean, it’s almost 11, we really should start your physical.”

Dean turns a little guiltily in his seat and looks over at Cas, “Sorry, yeah, let's do that. Morning got away from us.”

“Sam, are you joining us?” Cas asks, even though Sam always does.

He never misses an opportunity to check on his brother, Cas thinks he finds it comforting to see for himself that Dean is healthy and strong. He’s long since got past any squeamishness when it comes to his brother.

“Absolutely, let me just wash up and I’ll meet you in there.” He gets up and heads into the bathroom, calling out over his shoulder as he goes, “Don’t start without me.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it.” Dean huffs a little annoyed.

He doesn’t mind his brother sitting in, actually, it was the only way he’d managed to get through the OSP physicals in the beginning. But right now, he just wants it over and done with, not sitting around and waiting for Sam to be ready.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment, tell me what you think!!! Honestly with my life right now, comments are one of the only reasons I'm still updating at all, so thank you all :) I love you guys!
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

An examination, Dean remembers. Kinda painful and kinda sad but also loving and welcome in the end.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The room is warm enough, Cas always makes sure of it, but Dean can't help but shiver slightly in remembered cold. It’s like his body forgot the world around it and focused inward, on memories he’d rather forget, sending unwanted tremors outward, displaying his weakness to the whole world.

Because sitting here and waiting to be opened up, he can't help thinking back to those early examinations, dozens of cold uncomfortable hours spent on his back while the doctors tried to figure out what was going on with him internally. So many test, so many samples. And though they tried to be kind, be quick and gentle, Sam's hands, one on his shoulder and the other smoothing back his hair, was the only thing that kept him from fighting off those who were only trying to help. Well that, and the straps that held him tight.

He knows that's when they realized, saw him slowly coming undone under a doctor's gentle examination and thought to themselves, this will do.

He remembers seeing Castiel just once before they’d been contracted, but that was enough, enough to light the flicker, kindle sometime waiting deep. Though he can’t explain it, something in that nothing and otherwise insignificant moment changed everything.

At one of his gallery showings, before it all went to hell, he’d watched a man in a tan coat fight rough and drenching weather to see his art. It was one of the only times the gallery had been nearly empty and Dean had been so thankful for the quiet reprieve from the normally hectic nights. He watched as the man stood long minutes in front of each piece and with such a complex expression on his face that Dean had lost the courage to speak to him, as much as he had yearned to.

Cas had spent hours there that night, slowly making his way around the room, taking in with quiet focus each sculpture, expression unreadable. And that time Dean, for the first time, wanted to ask another how they felt about his work. It had always been such a personal thing for him that he could barely stand to be in the room with people even looking at it, it felt like they were looking at his soul, it hurt. Mostly he hid, blending into the crowd or letting his manager or Sam answer questions.
But though he’d felt an almost physical draw towards him, still does, he never did approach him. But that same feeling lingers, even now as he wipes down the examination table with intense concentration, his attention to detail is so alluring still.

Dean’s knows that those first days with him he wasn’t right, disassociated and emptied of anything but pain and anger. But somehow it being Cas they chose, the man he felt so entirely drawn to but able to approach began a flicker, a whisper of something, a spark.

It was with bitter humour at that irony, for first time he had laughed again. With a gallows humour he’d told Sam ‘Of course a man with the name ‘Castiel’ would be the one to take the contract, like some sort of fucking guardian angel, plunging down into hell to drag my pathetic soul back up into this shithole’.

The man Dean had watched, yearned for before this all went to hell, here to claim him, now that it was all done, ruined. It felt less like a mercy and more a sort of cruel joke meant to torment him further.

He knows differently now, knows how lucky he really was. What could have happened, would have if not for him. Because Dean knows, with clear and terrible certainty that if it hadn’t been for Cas he would have found a way and nothing would have stopped him. The end would have been a mercy, a relief.

And though he knows differently now, it's still a knife edge, sharp and dangerous and he has to try desperately to force himself away from that place that offers him nothing.

He breathes, controls the in and out in carefully counted pace. It’s enough for Cas to notice, he pauses, smiles at Dean reassuringly

“Almost ready,”

“Yeah,” Dean replies, caught up, but tries not to forget how much he wants this.

A knock sounds out across the room, hollow against the metal and plastic. Sam enters and smiles at them. He's changed into a comfortable shirt and pants, his hair still a little damp.

“Jess says goodbye. She’s off to catch up with a few friends till later tonight, told me I needed a bit of brother time,” he laughs, delighted and casual, Dean wishes he felt the same ease. But he nods, thankful for her thoughtfulness. Time alone with Sam was always a rare luxury.

“Ok,” Sam pulled out his tablet, “Where do you want to start?”

Castiel gestures to the spare chair beside his examination table. Dean groans, of course they want to do this now, with him sitting there half naked, stuck listening to them discuss him in the most intimate detail.

Cas pulls up the heart rate app and show Sam a readout. “We recently did a 48 hour holter monitor heart test, the results were pleasing but further monitoring will be necessary to rule out….” Dean start to zone out, disinterested in the boring conversation, comfortable enough to let him mind wander. He should feel thankful, he reminds himself, that the only feeling he’s dealing with now is boredom, too many times before he’d sat in similar examination rooms and listened to himself being talked about, talked to, and all he could feel was misery at his own weakness and shame at needing this.
He can't help thinking back the first of those examinations at the OPS, with his little brother and the doctors anxiously whispering between themselves, Sam's voice a tale of fear and uncertainty. Sam was still a teenager then, thrust unfairly into legally making decisions for his older brother, a role he just didn't know how to fulfil.

Dean had refused for weeks to do the pelvic examination. They'd asked, then requested, then sent Sam to convince him before resorting to vague threats about sedation. They had to do it soon they explained because no one ever had, he might be very sick and they couldn't know unless they checked. But he refused. Till Sam was begging, all his terror laid bare.

“Please Dean, they're worried about you, they're worried the pills were carcinogenic. I promise I'll be there the whole time. Please don't make me sign the form you to have you sedated, I don't want to force you but I can't let you be sick.”

The thought of being unconscious as a doctor spread him open, worked his way inside. It forced Dean's hand.

“It won't be so bad, you'll see,” Sam said as they wheeled him into the exam room.

Dr Miller was there waiting, her own anxiety over having an unwilling patient clear in her eyes. Dean knew her a little, she meant no harm.

“Thank you for agreeing to this today.”

“Like I had much choice,” Dean practically growls, he can feel his fear like ice water in his veins.

“I'll make this is gentle and as quick as I can,”

Dean grunts, unable to speak over his growing fear.

“Let's get you up and settled,” She has a hand on Dean's elbow, guiding him up towards the table.

“Ok no. I've changed my mind.” this suddenly seems too much.

“Dean…”Sam starts hesitantly.

“No! If you're so bent on it, why don't you do it?”

“I would, if it could help, you know I would. If it was me, you would want me to be healthy, to make sure.” his voice despairing and a little broken, a teenager scared he might lose his brother.
And that's the point though isn't it, that if their places we switched Dean wouldn't hesitate in pushing Sam into this, making sure he was safe.

“Fine,” he ground out practically throwing himself down on the cold vinyl covered table, “let's just get this over with.”

The doctor is gentle but insistent guiding Dean down onto his back, giving Sam the opportunity to calm him before she gathers his feet and he eases them apart and out, stirrups cradling his feet like they were precious.

She doesn't strap Dean in, instead she cautions him with her words.

“Try to keep as still, I want this to be as painless as possible,”

And though he tried, it was far from easy. She is taking it slow, fractions of an inch, muscles barely pressed before resting. Her face growing increasingly pinched and worried.

“I need to get a smaller instrument. Are you ok waiting for a moment?"

Dean nods, his heart racing. Sam has his hand clenched tight and afraid. The room feels larger, colder.

The doc returns a few minutes later with a different tray of objects covered with a cloth. She rolls over a low stool and settles in, obviously realizing that she’ll need to be there a lot longer than she had expected.

But her fingers still don't breach him, instead testing the muscles around his opening, working around it again and again.

“Ok,” she sighs, “first off, and this isn’t terrible so don’t get worked up but your body hasn’t had a chance to adapt to being an Omega. Supressants closed down your body's natural cycles in such an extreme way that it's not yet capable of being penetrated normally. It's actually not that uncommon for both women and omegas to experience this. But, it does make examining you internally very difficult. We still need to do it but we can't do it properly yet, not without pain, possibly tearing.” Sam's breath caught.

“Don't worry,” she's quick to reassure, “I won't let that happen.”

The pressure of her fingers is back, pressing, working the muscle. Dean can't help but tense up, it doesn't hurt exactly but it's sore, like fingers on a bruise where she keeps working it over and over.

“I know it's hard but try to relax. I'm going to slide in a small swab now and take a sample. It shouldn't hurt,”

And though it doesn't, Dean can't help but squirming, panting from the effort not to push himself away, off the instrument carefully but determinately making it's way inside him. It's barely even entering him, not even the width of a pencil but he can feel it, can't help tensing, shifting.

Sam puts his hands on Dean's shoulders effectively pressing him back down onto it and inexplicably that settles him more than he wants to admit. He doesn't have to fight it if Sam is holding him down, he can’t fight it. And he relaxes unconsciously, his body giving in.

The doctor gives Sam an unreadable look, but nods, coming to a decision.
“I’m going to need you to stay still, this should help.”

She pulls a wide piece of material across his chest another across his hips. As he felt the velcro cinch tight, he lets out a shaky breath, the fight going out of him. He can feel his mind start to wander, the world gone hazy and easy. Though he can feel her still, it's not unwelcome, not a battle like before.

Before he realises it his breath has calmed, slow and fluid.

She speaking to Sam, something about an atypical response to immobilization but Dean isn't really listening because suddenly he's so tired, so heavy and somehow weightless all at once. He just wants to sleep, let it all go.

But Sam is speaking, trying to rouse him.

“Tired Sammy,” he slurs.

“I know, you can sleep soon but not yet. We've got to get this finished. Did you hear what the doctor just said?”

It's like he's battling a storm, fighting through rain and wind to hear his brother, to care about anything but the warm and winter feeling of giving in. It's like some natural elements are dragging him down. Like something in him has been waiting, down and forgotten but awoken now and clouding his mind.

“What?” He manages.

“Dean?” the doctor asks her voice a little strange.

He knows he should answer, but can't make himself care.

“This is not the normal response, not what I expected,” he can hear her distantly telling Sam, “It's good though, he needed this. Give him a moment, he'll come around.” she sounds pleased, even relieved.

And he does eventually, the world slipping back gradually into focus.

He can see Sam and the doctor sipping what her assumes is coffee and doesn't know how long he was go out for.

But Sam is up quick to notice. He smiles at Dean for a moment his gentle eyes obviously pleased at what he sees.

“Dean? Can you hear me?”

“Yeah, Sammy. Loud and clear.”

“We have a few things to discus about what just happened,” the doctor says in measured tones, “You've never experienced that before, have you?”

Dean shakes his head.

“It’s what we call subspace, it'll happen to you more and more as you come off the suppressants. Don't be scared of it, it's what your body and you mind needs to be healthy. We were worried since we hadn't seen you go there yet, so it's a relief to see that you can.”
“I…” Dean doesn’t know what to say, still processing what just happened, but somehow his muscles feel like a weight has been lifted off him, a weight he didn’t even know he had been carrying till it was gone.

“Are we finished?”

“Almost,” she responds, pulling out an object he would grow very familiar with in the coming months.

“This is a dilator, it fits inside you and you wear it everyday. When your body is comfortable accepting this size, we go up to the next and so forth until your passage is ready for comfortable penetration.”

He looks at the thing, a little horrified. The warmth of the drop dissipating at the reminder of just what he’s faced with.

“How long….” He tried again, “How long will I have to use this?”

“Everyone is different. Some adapt quickly and only need to use them for couple of months, but many use them on and off for the rest of their lives. It really just depends on what your body needs. Once you go into your first heat, your body will naturally loosen up a lot, but many find it helpful to prepare for their heat by using these for a few days or weeks beforehand.” She sounds so matter of fact, like she hadn’t just told him that he would be held open for weeks possibly months at a time, plastic thrust inside him, open and reminded constantly of just what a weak and broken thing he was. Not even a proper Omega. Not even good for the pathetic role he was born into, not good enough yet again.

She has the thing between his legs, and she’s showing him how it will fit. It’s not bigger than a single finger, not much wider than other instrument had been, but longer, almost four inches and made of some slightly flexible plastic.

“Ready?”

He’s not, but he nods anyway. Not like it matters, he’s not getting up off the table till it’s in and right now that’s all he wants, to be up and away from her cold hands, away from Sam’s sad eyes and the cold air moving against his skin.

She presses with slow and persistent force.

He’s never had anything inside him and his body knows it. It hurts, in that unfathomable way that makes him think, wrong, wrong, wrong, want to push it back out.

But he can’t. She’s holding it too securely. He wants to close his legs, but he can’t the stirrups still hold him wide open, allowing this penetration.

He starts to cry, wet and unwilling tears against cold cheeks. He’s disgusted at himself, even in this he’s showing his weakness. He just wants to hide. To run away from this and never return.

He wants to find his Dad and tell him that he was right. Omegas are nothing but weak, miserable, vulnerable creatures. And that he’s sorry, sorry for everything. He wants to beg, please don’t make me do this, irrationally he knows, because it’s the last thing really he wants, yet he does want it, to go back to John and beg him to take him away from this place. He doesn’t know how to feel anymore.
But it’s finally in and she is smiling proudly at him. And Sam has a soft cloth and is wiping away the evidence of his fear.

“This’ll help you remember not to take it out,” she sounds apologetic as she fastens a belt round his waist with small straps that she slips between his legs and fastens to the device inside him. He can feel her tightening a screw or something between his legs.

“You won’t be able to undo these yourself, you’ll need one of the staff or Sam to help you.” she warns before turning to Sam, “If he’s with you, you’ll need to swap it out and check that he has enough lubricant. If he tells you it’s uncomfortable, believe him and bring him in to have it assessed. We’ll tell you when he’s ready to move up to the next size.”

Sam nods, pulls out his notebook to jot down a few notes.

“Just like we spoke about before, if he’s feeling anxious, uncomfortable or hurting at all you bring him in immediately. And you,” she turns to Dean with a fierce expression, “Don’t you dare tough any of this out. You tell Sam or us immediately if anything feels wrong or you’re worried about something. You talk to your therapist, you talk to me. You do NOT keep quiet.”

Dean almost laughs, a little resentful at how well she’s beginning to know him.

“Let’s get these off you,” the doctor interrupts his bitter thoughts, pulling the velcro away quickly, businesslike now that he has been dealt with.

She even pulls together the two sides of his hospital gown, giving him back the illusion of privacy. She allows Sam to pull his feet off the stirrups and help him up into a seating position. He can’t help a wince as he feels the thing shift inside him. It doesn’t hurt, a small mercy that does little to ease the humiliation.

“For now I want you to just get used to having something inside you. Next week I’ll teach you the exercises that will assist with treatment.”

Next week, he thinks embittered, it’s said so casually, like she hasn’t done enough yet, no, she needs to remind him that next week and the one after that he’ll be back here, on his back with his legs spread letting her take him apart, piece by piece.

He was back the next week and the one after that. For months, almost a year he’d had to return week after week as she and other doctors patiently and with the utmost care remade him.

He wasn’t stupid, he knew they realised that there was something unusual about his reaction to them, they knew it affected him, knew it opened up parts of himself that he couldn't continue to deny, needs he hadn't realized he had. He just didn't know how to deal with it, not for a long time. The straps had become another requirement each time, slowly increasing in number till he could barely move once they were all done up. And though they helped, they allowed him to sink down, to that peaceful nowhere place, it wasn't ever enough, not like when Cas did it.

Not till Castiel with his warm hands and kind voice. Not till it felt so good.
Not till he wanted it.

And he wants it now. Wants to get to the part where he had Cas’s inside him. Where he can feel Cas’s fingers smoothing down the straps, working him open. He’s had enough waiting.

“Come on!” he practically whines hating the sound of his won voice but wanting it too badly to care, “You can talk later. I’m waiting here!”

Sam bites back a laugh and Cas looks over to him fondly.

“Alright, I suppose we’ve covered enough for now."

Dean snorts, sure of the conversation they’ll be having later about proper record keeping and the need for thorough explanations.

But Cas is smiling too, eager to reach for his stethoscope and begin the practical part of the exam.

He works thoroughly through the initial exam. Having Dean breath in and out for him a couple of times before allowing Sam a listen to his heartbeat, knowing well the reassurance that comes from hearing it himself. His heart and blood pressure is checked. And then all the small things significant and necessary in Cas’s estimation at least, blood drawn, reflexes checked.

And finally, finally Dean is allowed up and back on the table. He doesn’t even complain about the stirrups once. Because soon enough it’s Cas’s fingers working him open, Cas taking away all the other doctors hands, replacing them with his own. And though it’s not arousing like it normally would be, not with Sam watching every small detail closely, it’s comforting, known.

Because every Saturday, without fail, Castiel opens Dean up and proves just how much he cares.

Chapter End Notes

That came out way sadder and angsty than planned :( Weird chapter I know, but some people have been asking for flashbacks to Dean at the OSP for ages now and while I didn’t want to deal with Cas and Dean’s early days (thinking a sequel for that, what do you think?) I did want to go into the immobilization thing and how they figured out that Dean might respond to medical intervention in an atypical way. He’s still pretty messed up in the head at that point so it reads as pretty dark and sad, sorry about the feels!

Happy times in the next chapter :) 

Also, I'm super curious... In the interest of guiding how I write this fic and what areas to focus on more. What do you actually read this fic for? Is it the angst? The medical kink? The D/s? The hurt/comfort? The caretaking? In which areas would you like to see more detail?

Thanks again for commenting!!!
Interlude Part 1

Chapter Summary

Think of this as a flash forward, a glimpse in time a couple of months ahead when Dean goes through his first Heat without Sam's help. Gabe tells his part of the story in two parts. Dean has powerful heats that Castiel alone can't manage, this time Gabe is there and it can't help but bring back memories from years earlier.

Chapter Notes

I'm back writing :) I was stuck with this fic until I decided to tell myself that I could skip a bit and go back later. So here we are, a jump ahead and a different POV. Hope you like the interlude and I'm sorry it's taken me so long to continue this! The spark has returned in force so hopefully I'll get it all out soon :) Thank you for sticking with me!!!

And don't worry, I've already written most of the next chapter continuing the weekend with Sam and Jess, I just wanted to get this bit out there.

p.s. I know it's rough (anyone want to beta?) but I figured better to get it out there.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Interlude: Part 1

Gabriel lent over to check the contents of his bag yet again, trying to calm the nervous energy that coursed through him. Of course Castiel would have all the necessary supplies but his own need to be thorough won out every time. He'd visited the hospital supplies room earlier and stocked up on all the extra little things they might need, including a few he hoped they won't ever have to use.

It's the first time they have asked him to be the Assist with a Heat and he couldn't help but feel the heavy weight of that trust. Heats are so hard for Dean and it's the first time that Sam hasn't been able to make it, he's stuck in the middle of a significant trial and couldn't abandon his client, but he felt terrible. In his typical foolhardy style Dean had assured him that the progress he'd made with Gabe recently would be sufficient to get him through it without him, promised Sam that he would be fine.

Gabe hoped desperately that it was true.
The memory of Dean pale and unconscious in the hospital haunts him still, the Heat having ravaged his body to the point that inducing a coma was better than finishing the heat. He remembers an awful day, months earlier than even that, Dean coming hard off the suppressants and Sam so desperately afraid. Having to make the agonizing decision to report them to the OSP (Omega Support Program), Reading that heartbreaking file on a man let down time and time again by those meant to love and protect him. The months of watching him slowly recover from years of abuse to only slip back again, to watch him suffer all over again, he just couldn’t face it again.

So he’d promised himself; this one would get the happy ending, this one would be okay, this time he would live up to his namesake and watch over him as best he could. He’d made the call.

But it was all still a painful work in progress.

He zipped the bag shut and shouldered it. No point worrying about the possibilities, better to deal with issues as they arise. Better to not think of everything that could go horribly wrong.

Cas had just finished packing up his own supplies as Gabe entered his office. They had already gone over the plan for the next few days in minute detail, Gabe had read over the copious notes Cas had kept documenting Dean’s previous heats and the file passed on from the OSP, they were as ready as they possibly could be. They had it planned down to the minute with strict contingency plans for every possibility, it’ll be fine Gabe told himself, he could always call for the OSP if he needed extra help. Didn’t stop the gnawing worry settling deep in his chest.

The problem was that Dean’s heats were far from easy, in fact they were excruciating. Both their duration and their intensity were far, far above the normal range and while they were thankfully regular, Cas was simply unable to do it alone. One person just wasn’t capable of taking care of Dean throughout all of the estrus period and Gabe, like Sam, was a beta, perfect to assist with this. As he was not affected by the pheromones they both were giving off, he could keep a clear head and a steady hand when needed. His training as an Omega Nurse and history with Dean were also an essential part in making this a success, Dean needed to trust him intimately or it just wasn’t going to work.

It was an added bonus just how very protective Gabe was of Dean.

“You ready to head home?” Gabe asked, the tension obvious around Cas’s eyes, this was as hard on him as it was on Dean.

“Yes, mostly. Dean rang a few minutes ago, he’s having a bath, trying to keep calm. He think’s he’s about 6 hours in so we have a while yet before we need to get started.”

“Good, that gives us time to get some food in him, hopefully a little sleep and ready the room.”

Dean was out of the bath by the time they both arrived at the house. His skin was still pink from the water, hair still wet, and he looked jittery, like electricity was pulsing under his skin, Gabe supposed that in a way it was. He shifted from foot to foot, nervous need pouring off him in waves, he wasn’t too far gone yet but it was building. He looked terrified and desperate all at once.
Cas pulled him into his arms, easing their bodies together and letting Dean soak up his scent and presence. Calming him as best he could.

“Breathe, Sweetheart. We can’t do anything now, not yet. Soon, I promise,”

Dean panted a little, refusing to give into it just yet, putting off the inevitable for as long as possible.

“Have you eaten?” Cas asked, solemn.

“A little,” Dean sounded hesitant, ashamed, “I tried.”

“It’s ok. I know you did, but I want you try again though, you’ll need all the energy you can get,”

Dean nods, familiar with the routine. He pulled away, turned instead to Gabriel.

“Thank you for agreeing to help me.” Dean sounded shy but determined.

“Of course,” Gabe smiled warmly, “Always. You know that.”

“And from me too,” Cas added, “We’re both so grateful. We really didn’t want to have to do this at the centre.”

Gabe nodded, meeting Cas’s gaze squarely, he knew how hard the request really was on both of them, how intimate this would be.

“Can you stomach a proper meal?” Gabe asked Dean, hoping to turn the conversation away to more comfortable topics.

“Probably not,” Dean grimaced, knowing what that meant.

“How about a shake?”

Dean looked relieved, “I think so,”

“Chocolate?”

“Vanilla,”

“Coming right up.”

He retrieved two of the cans from the fridge and poured the first into a glass before handing it over. Cas guided Dean over to the sofa and pulled him down, bodies close. He took the glass from Dean’s shaking hand and held it up to his mouth for him, tipping it gently but insistently against his lips.

“Slow sips,” Cas reminded him, “Till it’s done.”

Gabe placed the second can on the table, Cas would make sure Dean drank all of it.

“I’m going to get the Heat room set up.”

“Thank you,” Cas sounded grateful, but distant, focussing all his attention on the man in his arms.
carry his and Cas’s equipment bags into the Heat room. He’d already set his own belongings up in
the his bedroom (the spare that he habitually used when he was needed to stay over) so he only had
these last few things to bring into the house.

It’s a large room, practically an apartment by itself, with a small kitchen and separate bathroom off to
one side. There’s king size bed tucked into one corner, near the bathroom and a sofa in another
corner, one wall is mounted with screens featuring readouts from the dozen or so monitoring devices
Dean wears, as well as some medical supply cabinets and a wardrobe for extra sheets, blankets and
towels against the other wall.

The rest of the space is taken up with the heat or medical equipment of various shapes and
dimensions. He understood why Dean never came in here outside of his Heats, it’s really quite
daunting looking at all this stuff, needed or not.

It’s only accessible through the garage as it’s an addition to the house, and usually remained locked
between heats. Cas’s had it added last year after spending their Heats at the OSP centre had grown
increasingly problematic for Dean. Gabe sympathised with them, having to go through such an
intimate and vulnerable process under the supervision of the centre staff must have been an ordeal.

But now that the room is built and they can do it at home, allow themselves that small luxury, if not
complete privacy.

Gabe’s been in here before, to restock the supplies and to go over the equipment with Cas in
preparation. He was familiar with almost all the pieces already, having worked with Omegas for
most of the last decade but knew it was helpful to revise some particulars anyway.

The only piece of equipment that was new to Gabe was actually the most important. It took up most
of the middle of the room, was designed to Cas’s exacting standards, and like most of Cas’s
equipment, custom made.

Gabe supposed you could call it a piece of furniture and it did nominally resemble a bed in its current
neutral state. But a bed was actually the least of it’s uses, it was more a frame for Dean rest on, to
hold his exhausted body as the Heat raged through him than any sort of bed.

Through a combination of mechanical and electronic components it could be adjusted into a wide
variety of shapes and configurations. Dean’s body wasn’t forced to move with the frame, in fact the
the slightest resistance halted it entirely, But while it gave support, it also restrained him and once in
place held tight through a wide variety of straps and harnesses, Dean could be held open and
immobile in almost any position. A small collection of machines sat waiting for Dean in the corner,
each could be mounted to the frame in different configurations designed to work Dean through his
relentless heat. A technician had been by yesterday to check them over so Gabe didn’t need to.

Gabe ignored it for now, choosing instead to focus on the bed, pulling off the covers and back the
sheets. By the time they needed it, Dean would be much too far gone to bother with the covers.

Then he checked over the room, setting the air conditioner to cool it slightly and flicked off the lights
everywhere except over the bed. Dean didn’t need the reminder of the rest of the room until he was
too far gone to care.

Cas and Dean were still curled up on the sofa when Gabe returned. Dean had leant back slightly
against Cas, his arms relaxed at his sides and one of Cas’s hand rested high up on his chest, his eyes
were shut and he was breathed steadily, too controlled to be anything but forced. He was obviously working his way through one of the breathing exercises Cas had taught him.

“How’re we doing?” Gabe asked, pulled out his tablet to take preliminary notes for Cas.

“Eight hours since initial symptoms. He was slightly feverish at 100.4F, taken ten minutes ago, but that is to be expected. At 6:30pm he managed two cans of nutritional supplement and has since had one glass of water, 300mls. He continues to pass all cognitive test questions and therefore initiation of the intervention phase may be delayed upon reassessment in an hour.”

Gabe typed it all down, noting the time and frequency of Dean’s breaths as well.

“And you?”

“So far so good.” Cas answered with a brittle grin, “Rut hasn’t kicked in yet, thankfully. Mine was never very strong anyway.”

Gabe notes that down too.

“How long do you think?”

“I’m going to try put it off for a several more hours at least,” Dean groaned in frustration and his breathing picked up speed, obviously listening in to the conversation, even if he didn’t feel able to take part.

“Shhh…” Cas comforted, “Keep your breathing steady, that’s it. Just ignore us. Focus on keeping yourself calm.”

Dean’s breath slowed back down, forced in and out at a regular pace.

“Good. That’s it,” Cas used his other hand to wipe Dean’s hair back off his forehead, “You’re doing so well.”

Gabe flicked his screen over to the app recording the various vital signs from the sensors placed about Dean’s body, they were elevated but not worryingly so, fairly normal for a pre-heat Omega.

“Looks good here too,” he turned the tablet around and showed Castiel the readouts.

“Might as well try and get a couple of hours sleep. I doubt we’ll manage much but it might be helpful to at least lay down. You should nap too. Sam always tried to fit in as many hours as he could early on,”

“Yeah, sounds good. You need help getting him to your heat room?”

“I can…” Dean finally managed to pull together the strength to interject, “I can still walk!”

“Oh, okay,” Cas huffed out a laugh, “for now, we walk.”

And they did, easing up together and down the corridor, Dean clenched his fists and tried desperately to act normal.

Gabe woke to the sound of raised voices, he winced, Dean’s throat was going to be completely raw
by the end of this if he was determined to start at that volume.

He pulled on a shirt but left his feet bare. Cas had insisted he not wear scrubs for this as he wanted to keep it as informal as possible. He felt a little weird without shoes but was willing to go with it.

He knocked on the door and entered, knowing he needed no approval to do his job.

Dean was pacing back and forth at the end of the bed, rubbing his palms up and down his hips in an obvious self soothing motion. Cas was sitting on the end of it, hands out trying to calm him but no longer touching him at all. The distance between them obviously painful.

“No!” Dean couldn’t seem to control the level of his voice, “I can’t wait any longer. Please Cas!”

“I’m sorry.” he sounded a little broken himself, denying Dean this was just as hard on him, “If we start now, your body won’t be able to handle it. We have to put it off as long as possible.”

“But you won’t touch me anymore!”

“I can’t, I’m so sorry.” Cas’s voice was rough, hurting, “You’re too far gone. If I touch you now, I’ll go into rut too soon.”

Dean growled, frustrated and angry.

Gabe stepped into the room and held his hands out, telegraphing his movements as he made his way over to Dean. This was expected as well, he knew what he needed to do.

“Dean, it’s me. We’re going to do this just like we practiced. I’m going to walk over to the bed and I want you to come with me.”

Gabe purposefully didn’t crowd him, but he did make eye contact, hoping to reassure him.

He climbed up on the bed and rested his back against the headboard, legs open and his body language non threatening.

Dean visibly stiffened and bit back a growl but he did comply, crawling down the length of the bed from the base, forcing Cas to skirt backwards lest they collide.

“Good,” Gabe encouraged as Dean arrived at his front and shifted to place his back against him. The tension, tight and visible in every movement he made.

“Okay, tuck your arms around your chest, just like we practiced,” Dean obeyed, gritting his teeth but otherwise staying silent.

Gabe first leveraged his own legs against Dean’s, pressing them together before pulling the weighted blanket over both of them and tucking it tight around their legs. Then he reached around and moved Dean’s arms more securely under his own armpits and eased his head back to rest against his shoulder before he pulled him close, both arms around Dean’s chest, holding him steady and firmly against him.

Gabe could feel the change immediately. Dean's muscles relaxed, his breath became less laboured and his eyes drifted closed. Some sort of miracle of human evolutionary reaction there, he marvelled. Dean stilled, calmed for the moment.

“That's it. Try to sleep a little. We’ll both be right here.” he pitched his tone low, soothing.

'Thank you,’ Cas mouthed, not wanting to shatter this moment. Even he looked better, more
collected. He lay down on the camp bed by the wall, curled his body purposefully away from them and tried to go back to sleep.

Gabe could help but ache for him, unable to help when Dean needed him most, and thankful for himself, saved this fate by a mere chance of genetics.

He must have dozed a little himself because the next thing he knew Dean was moving in his arms, fighting against the hold he continued to maintain around him.

His eyes were shut and he was feverish, twisting in his arms.

Cas was up almost immediately, rushing to his side.

“Sweatheart? Dean? Open your eyes for me. Can you talk?”

The groan he was met with was anguished and low, Dean didn't even try to respond, instead practically throwing himself at Cas. Gabe's firm hold the only thing stalling the desperate movement, pulling him back down.

“Dean! Dean, breathe for me. Calm down, I'm right here.” Cas guided a little brokenly, while Gabe wrestled back control of the struggling man.

“I can't… please,” Dean growled, angry and hurting. But Cas holds back, doesn't even approach the bed, though it's obviously difficult.

“Can you wait? Just a little longer?”

The suggestion sets Dean of again, viciously scratching (though they'd cut his fingernails yesterday for just this reason) and tearing at the arms around him.

“No!”

“Ok,” Cas sighs, “Ok. Gabe, you can give us a little space now. I'll need you in a couple of hours so stay close. The cctv is on and I have this,” He holds up his wrist to show the wireless alert bracelet, “I'll press when I need you.”

Gabe knows how hard it is to control Dean alone during his heat, later on they'll strap him down, but right now he has too much fight in him, too much desperation, he needs to get it out, to move. If he's immobilized now, he'll hurt himself fighting it. But, this small amount of privacy to feel a little normal, like Dean's heat isn't going to be the trial they all know it will, Gabe desperately wants to give both of them that.

Cas's ruts are mild, not unusually so but on the lower end of the spectrum. He actually requires physical contact to initiate it and it will abate within a few hours, far too short a time to satisfy even the barest of Dean's needs. A typical Omega’s heat will eventually sync with their Alpha's, abating once the Rut has passed but as usual Dean is the exception.

Gabe nods, giving Cas time to climb up into the bed, to rest his hands on Dean's chest before he slips away.
He flicks the television in the main house over to the cctv channel but tries not to focus too much on it, instead lets it stay in the corner of his eye while he prepares himself and Cas something to eat. It'll be a few hours till Cas is ready for it so he places his plate in the fridge.

He pulls out one of the novels he'd packed, knowing he wouldn't make much progress with it but figuring it'd at least give him something to think about other than what's going on in the other room.

His mind drifts back to the day he called Cas, knowing full well just what he'd been asking him to take on.

“Hello? Gabe is everything alright?” Cas's voice had sounded tired, ready for bed, it was almost midnight.

“Not really, remember that artist Dean Winchester?”

“You know I do.”

“The OSP just brought him into the hospital, Cas he’s… you gotta come. You're the best there is and he needs… he's really fucked up.”

There was silence on the other end of the line. For a long moment, nothing until had shakily Cas replied.

“I'm not sure that's a good idea. You know how I feel about getting emotionally over invested in my patients. It's not healthy for me or them. Gabe, I can't,” his voice was cracked, ragged.

“Cas, you gotta man. I know how you feel about him, his work. But if you don't step in, he's... they're organising a guardianship contract. He'll go to someone else.”

“Shit! Fuck.” Cas almost never swears, a thump is heard as the receiver is dropped.

Gabe heard shuffling in the background, papers hastily shoved into a briefcase, the phone obviously forgotten.

“Cas?” He calls out.

The phone is picked back up.

“Email me his file. I'll meet you at the hospital.”

“Dr. Novak? Gabe told me you were on your way here, I'm so glad you could come. I know he isn't your patient but I'd really appreciate some expert advice here,” the registrar looks equal parts relieved and exhausted. Gabe understood the feeling.

“What can you tell me?”
“Have you read the file already?”

Cas nodded, he'd already been over to see Dean, pausing just outside the door so as not to intrude. Sam had been with him then, holding his hand, miserably silent.

“That's all we know. He was dumped at our centre in the last stages of an uncontrolled heat. But he'd already gone into shock and toxicology says he'd been drugged, that it was induced. Before he fully lost consciousness, he said he did it to himself. But he couldn't have gotten his hands that drug alone and no one would have prescribed it to him. We're very worried about Post Heat Syndrome, so we're keeping him sedated for now. Working on getting his fluid levels up and flushing out the drugs. The rest you know already.”

“Ok, and his hormone levels?”

“All over the place. A mess.”

“Right, you need to start stabilizing that immediately. Who's here from the OSP?”

“Mahni Conelly.”

“I want to speak to her, where is she?”

“The OSP office,” a designated room just off the Omega ward for OSP staff to have private meetings.

“Gabe, can you show me the way?”

“I don't see that we have any other choice, bar confining him to our facility for the foreseeable future, possibly permanently. This is the best option we have,” Mahni’s tense voice clearly audible as they approached the door.

“Yes, I know it's drastic. But with Dean’s history and needs... we were too shortsighted, we failed to monitor him closely enough, to do our duty and look what happen. If we let him walk out that door alone again, we may as well sign his death certificate ourselves and you know it.”

It's silent for a moment as whoever is on the other end of the phone speaks.

“At Gabe’s suggestion I've agreed to approach Dr. Novak about it. If he says no, we'll find someone else. It'll be a month before Dean's ready to be released...hopefully we can convince him by then.”

“Ok, I'll make a few calls.”

She hangs up just as they get to the doorway.

“Mahni?” Cas didn't bother knocking as the door was open.

“Castiel? Thank God, please tell me Gabe explained what we need.” Gabe shouldn't have been as surprised as he was that they were on a first name basis. Castiel was familiar with almost all the leadership at the local OSP, even if he didn't deal with the centre himself regularly. Though if Gabe had anything to do with it, that would soon change.

“Yes, Dean Winchester. Gabe told me on the phone that you're putting him under Guardianship.
Can we speak privately?"

“Of course.”

Gabe excused himself and shut the door.

It was almost an hour before Castiel and Mahni reappeared. Gabe had retreated to the nurse’s station to complete his paperwork but had kept one eye on the OSP office and the other on Room 406, Dean Winchester's room.

“We’ll have to get Sam’s signature and a judges before we can formally proceed. Ideally, I’d also like Dean to sign the contract, but at this juncture it's not necessary to proceed. When he is healthier we can renegotiate the terms of the contract if needed.”

“I need his signature. I can't do this unless he agrees, I couldn't forgive myself otherwise. And with what I'm going to have to do… I need it.”

“Are you sure? Are you willing to walk away if he says no?”

“Yes, I am,” Cas, the resolute bastard Gabe knows and loves.

It had taken almost a month to get Dean fully stabilised. Castiel had stayed in the background for most of it, carefully monitoring Dean's progress and guiding his principal physicians as to the best treatment methods.

Sam had been reluctant at first to sign the guardianship contract. He had desperately wanted to stay with Dean, to move back in with him like last time. But, he was intelligent enough to realize that this time would need to be different, a more drastic intervention would have to be put in place. Something long term and substantial.

What Dean needed was much more than Sam was capable of providing and he knew it.

Cas met with Sam many, many times in the weeks prior to the hand over. They discussed his needs, medical and emotional. Sam gave what little insight he was emotionally ready at the time to share, which wasn't much. It was easy to see from the outside that Sam was dealing with his own trauma.

Cas had his home refurbished and prepared for Dean’s arrival. He met extensively with all of Dean’s current and former physicians and support staff. Put together a treatment and rehabilitation plan that was cross checked against every possible resource. He had Dean put through every conceivable test to ascertain when he was ready to be released.

Gabe remembered the many hours he'd spent pouring over medical catalogues, desperately looking for those perfect pieces of equipment, before finally resigning himself to having them custom made. Castiel was nothing if not a perfectionist and when it came to Dean, he was even worse.

He took six months leave of absence from his position (though he still did consultations when necessary) and brought Dean home.
The man Dean is now and who he was then may as well be considered different people.

Castiel brought home a ghost. A sickly, pale and vacant memory of who Gabe had first known, it had been hard for him too see any of the man Gabe had met that night years ago.

The truth was that Gabe had actually met him first, at one of the OSP’s fundraising events. Dean had agreed to auction off one of his works.

For a moment Gabe had almost mistaken him for a beta, the way he walked, his choice of clothing, his height. Almost. But there was something else about Dean Winchester that screamed Submissive Omega. Outwardly, he was utterly beta, and had Gabe been looking at a photograph he would have been convinced. But, the hesitance to maintain eye contact, the way he held his shoulders, like he was fighting to hold them back, the careful way he listened to others, it all gave him away.

He was the kind of Omega that was hard to overlook, even though it was obvious that he tried to blend in. He was taller than most Omegas, and had a pretty face that nevertheless remained clearly masculine. He was clean shaven and simply dressed in slacks and a button down shirt.

He was shy, that much was also obvious by the way he held himself back from the crowd. Nodding and responding politely the lavish praise his work was receiving without ever really engaging in conversation. Gabe was definitely interested in meeting the Omega that everyone was talking about but mostly he just wanted to rescue him from the, fifth or maybe sixth leery Alpha that was simply not getting the ‘not interested’ message that Dean was clearly telegraphing.

“Thank god I found you, May needs you to sign that contract of sale ASAP. She's looking pretty frazzled.”

Dean just gave him a confused look “May?”

“Yeah,” Gabe snuck in a wink, “She asked me to come get you. Sorry, was I interrupting anything important?”

“Actually…” the clueless Alpha started up.

“No, it’s okay. I can come.” Dean caught on quickly.

“Right, this way.” Gabe gestured to the staff only exit and lead them both out through the staff offices to the back garden.

Dean took a couple of slow calming breaths once they're out and turned to him curiously.

“Don't worry. I'm not here to hit on you or whatever. You just looked like you could use a polite escape.”

Dean nods, relieved, “I don't have a lot of experience with Alphas. My instructors keep telling me that I need to socialise more, meet new people, 'welcome the possibility of friendship',” he's obviously quoting someone.

“Good advice, wrong crowd. Alphas aren’t always like that, but, maybe start with betas and work your way up,” Gabe grinned and held out his hand, “Gabriel. Beta. Not at all interested in getting in your pants. Nice to meet you!”

Dean smiled back, steeling himself for a moment to reply.

“Dean….uh...Omega,” he adds after a hesitation, “nice to meet you too.”
“Good! Now that we've been properly acquainted, how about we go back inside and see if we can't raid the dessert table. I heard that the strawberry cheesecake that's to due for!”

Gabe smiled to himself at the memory. Dean and he had practically devoured the dessert offerings, with Dean actually sneaking an entire cherry pie for them to share later.

They'd sat through the auction bored until finally giving up to temptation and sneaking back out to the garden to finish it off.

Gabe had met a man unsure of himself and still learning to trust, to open up to others, but also someone kind and giving. A man who gave everything to his art and who obviously knew how to love, if the way he spoke about his brother said anything. And he was trying so hard, Gabe could see him struggle to connect with him, to fight of his own insecurities time and time again to meet his eyes and welcome a smile. He hid behind a beta mask but even then, Gabe could tell that Dean desperately wanted to embrace who he really was.

It was Gabe who had suggested to Castiel that he see Dean’s work, visit his opening the next week. Knowing that they would fit, hoping they might just find each other amid the crowds.

He'd tried not to be too disappointed when he next day Castiel had described with passion the art and it's creator as 'brilliant' and 'inspired', but never chose to interact with him. Not then anyway. He had just continued to support his work and appreciate him from afar. Castiel had been convinced that Dean just wasn't ready for an Alpha and had dismissed the idea from his mind.

And maybe he had been right to leave it alone, Gabe wonders. Maybe, if things hadn't blown up just so spectacularly, they might have gotten together anyway. When Dean was ready. Had drinks. Dated for a while. Taken it slow. Built trust.

But instead, they had been thrust together cruelty. Castiel’s hand had been forced, his actions necessarily drastic. A union forged through desperation.

Gabe knew Castiel regretted having to treat Dean so harshly in the early days. To force him back to himself, to bring him back from that cruel edge of apathy and despair. Castiel had known what it would take, accepted the months of work required, the inevitable anger Dean would feel, the resentment. And he had done it knowing full well that there was a high chance that once Dean was strong enough, emotionally and physically ready to renegotiate the contract, he would walk away. He'd chosen to help him anyway, knowing full well that Dean might hate him for it.

Gabe flicked his eyes to the TV screen, all was calm right then. Cas had Dean on his back, was positioned over him and working in and out with the minute thrusts that signified they were knotted. Dean had his arms and legs around him, pulling them together, holding him so tightly that it left little room for Cas to move at all. He was looking at Cas though with a tenderness that spoke volumes. He had everything he wanted, right there in his arms.
Gabe couldn't help but grimace in sympathy for how utterly shattered that quiet happiness would be, soon enough. He pulled his eyes away, better to give them what little privacy he could. He turned back to his book, flicking it open at the first page, but listening intently for the alarm.

They all had a long night ahead.

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter: On to the heat full speed. Poor Dean!

Please do comment and tell me what you think, it was a couple of comments in the last few days that really got me excited to continue this story, Thank you! I love you guys!

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