By Any Other Name
by DarkmoonSigel

Summary

Gabriel has some unresolved feelings after 'Changing Channels' so he goes to harass the Winchesters about it. While doing that though, the archangel realizes that Sam might be the only one worth focusing on. Mostly Sabriel with some Destiel. This is rated M for future chapters.

The story's title is from Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet' and I obviously don't own that.
"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Notes

Story is set sometime in Season five when everything is going to hell in a handbag after 'Changing Channels' but before 'Hammer of God'. Other than that, I am taking liberties with the season and ignoring the events of how it ended. Read at your own risk. Also this is unbetaed, so all mistakes are my own. I'll fix it later if it's worth continuing.

This was first published on DA and Fanfiction but the story has been somewhat revised/polished for this site.

Chapter's title is a play on lyrics from Jay-Z's 99 Problems. I obviously do not own it.

See the end of the work for more notes
Sam Winchester had a problem. Well, Sam had a lot of problems actually. First and foremost in the world of travesties that made up Sam’s life was that Lucifer wanted to ride his ass in the worst way possible in every sense of the phrase, the tall hunter the Devil’s designated meat suit. It didn’t help matters either that Lucifer seemed to be stalking Sam in his dreams night after night, whispering threats and promises tainted with words of love that made Sam feel sick to the pit of his stomach but not for reasons anyone would expect. He knew everything Lucifer said was a lie or at least a twisted version of the truth but that knowledge didn’t stop him from feeling warm and wanted whenever the Devil started to wax sentimental. Even worse, he would sound sympathetic toward all of Sam’s mistakes. Sam wondered sometime how fucked up was his life that the forgiveness he so desperately sought was only being given to him by the Devil himself. If that wasn’t bad enough, he also had a coiling addiction to demon blood, a burning urge of consumption he had to fight off every time he gutted a hell spawn or else lose himself again to it.

And that was just the tip of the iceberg.

The life of a hunter was not an easy one, especially during the Apocalypse, especially during one that he had inadvertently started. Ok, technically Dean had kicked it off while he was serving time in hell, but actions under torture could be excused….had to be excused for the sake of continued sanity. Doing his own part, Sam had killed Lilith after Dean had begged him not to. In the end, it was Sam’s own foolish pride and misplaced trust in the demon Ruby that had gotten them into this mess.

So yeah, Sam had a lot of problems. His current one though appeared out of nowhere on his bed sucking on a strawberry lollipop in a very lewd way. The archangel’s sudden appearance made Sam dive out of his chair and go for his gun before he realized who or better yet what it was. One moment he was doing research in the usual run-of-the-mill motel room that the brothers’ favored, and in the next moment, he had the most unwanted company that he could think of smirking at him.

“Gabriel! What the….?! What are you doing here? Where’s Dean?!”’, Sam demanded out of immediate concern for his brother. He hoped that Dean was still in the bathroom and not in some bubble universe being killed over and over again for shits and giggles. Listening for signs of life from the bathroom, Sam put away his partially drawn firearm. Bullets would be about as effective as throwing marshmallows at one of Heaven’s most powerful warriors so there was little need for it.

“I’m out already! What the hell is your problem?! What are you shouting about?!”, Dean yelled as he exited the bathroom, fully dressed but rubbing his still wet hair with a scratchy towel. His eyes widened when he realized that they were not alone anymore. “Holy hell, what’s he doing here?!”

“How should I know?!”, Sam snapped back, throwing his older brother a irked look of confusion. It wasn’t like he had invited the former Trickster revealed archangel here.

“I’m still in the room.”, Gabriel said with a playful grin. He liked how befuddled the hunters looked with their figurative pants down around their ankles.

“Yeah, that’s the problem.”, Dean growled, regaining some mental ground before Sam, “Why the hell are you here?! You’re wasting your time if you want us to play your stupid games or agree to
be the contenders for Heaven and Hell.”

“Can’t a guy just pop in on friends when he’s bored?”, Gabriel shrugged as he stretched out across Sam’s bed and amused himself by making it a whole lot bigger with a wealth of fluffy pillows and fuzzy blankets.

“There are so many things wrong with that sentence I can’t even…”, Dean started with a look of barely contained disgust.

“Then don’t. You’ll blow what few brain cell you have left.”, Gabriel pointed out helpfully. He found he was getting tired of Dean but strangely enough Sam was still holding an allure about him. Gabriel wondered how mad the younger Winchester would be if he sent Dean somewhere for a little while so that they could talk privately.

“I’m calling Cas!”, Dean snarled, slamming the door behind him hard enough to shake the tacky pictures that always seemed to decorate the walls of these places. Gabriel arched a brow in surprise at the older Winchester’s sudden departure. Perhaps Dean’s self preservation instincts were better than he previously thought. Satisfied for the moment, Gabriel turned his attention back to Sam to find the hunter frowning at him with a thoughtful look tinged with worry.

“Gabriel. Why are you here?”, Sam interrupted the silent space that seemed to have fallen between them. “How did you find us anyway? Cas tagged our ribs. So far it’s been working.”.

“Why is it so hard to believe me? Don’t answer that.”, Gabriel sighed, “I really am bored. I thought I would just check in on you chuckleheads, and you’re not as hard to find as you think. You’re just lucky most of heaven doesn’t have sense of humor. All I had to do was keep an eye on these hovels you call motels and wait for a pair of idiots to check in under fake names based on bad 80’s metal driving a gas guzzling boat of a car.”.

“We still haven’t changed our minds. Dean and I are not saying ‘yes.’”, Sam said, risking a trip to TV land again or whatever oblivion Gabriel felt like sending him to. He braced himself for the annoying laugh of a faux live studio audience or sappy opening soundtrack. When none came, Sam risked a look at the archangel. He was surprised to find the former Trickster appeared to be thoughtful and even more so, a little down. If Sam had to guess his mood, he would have to say that Gabriel, wayward archangel and messenger of God, appeared to be mildly depressed.

“Screw the Apocalypse. I’m not here about that.”, Gabriel muttered, picking at the nonexistence fuzz on the newly created pillows. This wasn’t going as well as he would have liked. Sam didn’t look happy at all to see him and Gabriel really couldn’t blame him for that. It wasn’t like they had ever been on the same side of the line drawn in the sand. This time round, the only difference was that instead of seeing Gabriel as a monster in the guise of the Trickster, the Winchesters saw him as something entirely worse now that they knew his secret. It felt strangely nice that anyone, especially a pair of mortals, knew his deepest, darkest secret and it was a feeling that Gabriel wanted to explore.

Never one to ever hold himself back, Gabriel had dropped in on the hunters unannounced as soon as his mind was made up on the matter. Now that he was here though, things were going awry. Gabriel had been hoping that Sam would be at least willing to talk. The hunters had wanted to before, speak with Gabriel when he was still the Trickster about their insane little idea of him helping them out with the End of Days. Trouble was, Gabriel was starting to actually entertain the absurd idea of it. Some things said in the warehouse had hit home hard and for once in a really long time, Gabriel had felt something other than ashamed. Before he could expand on these thoughts though, Dean barged back in with an angel in tow. Groaned inwardly, Gabriel faked a smile at his brother.
“Gabriel, why are you here?”, Castiel asked, making Gabriel want to sigh at his earnest directness. Worldly and eloquent, the younger angel was not. He didn’t fail to notice that Castiel put himself in front of Dean or that the hunter looked a strange cross between angry and appreciative about it.

“So when’s the wedding?”, Gabriel smirked, winking at the oblivious couple. Castiel’s eyes narrowed, head tilting in open confusion as Dean dragged him back behind him.

“Go to hell, you sorry son of a bitch.”, the older hunter seethed the words through his teeth as his cheeks began to redden. He got it even the so obliviously his angel didn’t.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t realize we weren’t supposed to talk about the rainbow elephant in the room.”, Gabriel chuckled, wondering how long this little drama had been going on for or if Castiel even realized that it was happening and he was not only involved but also the source of it. Based on the existence of Castiel’s perplexed expression, the archangel highly doubted it. From what he knew about Dean, the stubborn ass of a hunter was probably in deep denial about his feelings for the angel. Unfortunately for them both, Castiel had very little experience with direct interactions with humans which included the complexities and intricacies of their relationships, romantic or otherwise. Most small children had more real world working knowledge on such matters than the endless angel did.

Proof of this was Castiel looking around the room for the fabulous pachyderm. “Stop it. There’s no elephant.”, Dean whispered harshly out of the side of his mouth while giving the angel’s arm a good shake. It didn’t escape Gabriel’s notice either that Dean kept his hand on Castiel’s arm, callused fingers curling into the trench coat that the angel perpetual wore. A glance over at Sam was all Gabriel needed to confirm that the younger Winchester was aware of it too.

“Then why……?”, Castiel asked, his head tilting slightly to the side again. The repetitive habit made Gabriel think of a puppy. He filed that thought away for later for when he wanted to do something interesting to Dean again. Gabriel was willing to bet that Castiel would make an adorable Australian border collie.

“This is one of those things we talked about. Drop it, Cas.”, Dean explained quickly, begging his angel with his hazel green eyes to shut the hell up. Castiel may not feel embarrassment but the hunter sure as hell did. Sam was all Gabriel needed to confirm that the younger Winchester was aware of it too.

And there was another thing Gabriel noted, besides the deep silent exchange between the hunter and angel. Of course, he had heard Dean’s shortening for the angel’s name before while they were all in TV land, but it was noteworthy then and now because it seemed to fall so easily from the hunter’s lips.

“I want one.”, Gabriel said without thinking, making the room look at him in surprise.

“Hell no. Wait, one what? What are we talking about?”, Dean floundered, obviously lost about the sudden turn in direction. Sam was looking miffed at well.

“A nickname.”, Gabriel clarified. He was met with stunned silence from the room.

“I know I am going to regret asking this but why?”, Sam breached the tense moment first while Castiel and Dean quietly exchanged confused looks with one another.

“Cassie has one.”, Gabriel pointed at, giving his brother one of his own.
“Same answer. Hell no.”, Dean groaned out in contempt, glaring at the archangel.  

“Why not?”, Gabriel pouted. Not to his surprise but Dean was entirely unaffected by it.  

“Cause Cas is awesome. You’re just a prick with wings.”, Dean growled, crossing his arms over his chest. Even though Castiel didn’t say anything, Sam and Gabriel could see the angel’s entire being perk up and take on a subtle glow of happiness, his body thrumming with it from toe to invisible wing tip like a puppy being given a treat just for being too cute for its own good. It made Gabriel want to gag that his brother had fallen so low and for such a complete idiot, but bizarrely, Gabriel tasted jealously along with that disgust. That was unexpected.  

“You know I could turn you into something gross with lots of legs. Your angel is too low watt to stop me or change you back. Not that he could before anyway.” Gabriel taunted to move out from under the unfamiliar prickling sensations of envy.  

Castiel interceded before Dean could react to the intimidation. “Brother, you should stop threatening Dean and Sam with bodily harm if you want their cooperation. I find humans are more open to ideas when they are not placed under mortal threat.”, Castiel suggested, his tone utterly sincere. Gabriel wanted to smack his in the head with the backhand of ‘no shit Sherlock’.  

“Yeah, not dying really puts me in a generous mood.”, Dean snarked. He was itching to make an angel ward on the wall but that would mean sending Castiel away as well. Dean dismissed the idea, thinking about his weakening angel. He could tell Castiel was starting to have more problems now that he was cut off from Heaven. It was one of Dean’s fears that one day his angel would not be able to return to him and would be stranded on the other side of the world. Tucking that stray thought in the back of his mind, Dean rationalized that Gabriel wasn’t giving them a chance to open a vein and take the time to draw the sigil anyway.  

“He still can’t listen to Asia without throwing a shit fit about it. I even had to get rid of my tape. Lesson learned, asshole. I hope you’re happy.”, Dean tried to draw focus back to the real problem here. He didn’t like how Sam was looking, his face going blank like it did whenever that place was brought up. Dean often wondered if he were a better brother or could speak about anything emotional like a normal person if they could have talked it out and made it better somehow. As it was right now, that little bit of mind fuckery was still labeled under ’Don’t Touch’ by Sam so Dean never pressed the matter.  

“I could…”, Gabriel started to offer to be cut short when he was met with cold eyes darkened with anger and more than a touch of fear.  

“Don’t. Just don’t. You’ve screwed with me enough.”, Sam said in iron willed controlled tones, his hands clenched into fists at his side. If the hunter were an angel that is what he would have looked while smiting Gabriel thought to himself sadly. Not seeing a way to fix the current situation, the archangel departed but left the refurbished bed behind as a sort of apology. At least Sam could get a good night’s sleep on a mattress that fit his gangly frame for once. It was the least Gabriel could do or expect Sam to accept from him at the moment.  

To his surprise, Gabriel found himself was already thinking about ’next time’. He still wanted to
see more of the hunters again. More accurately though, the taller of the two. Gabriel moved through that space angels could only travel in and made his plans.
The next time that Gabriel popped in on Sam, the hunter was doing pretty much the same thing as before, researching a case, and sucking down way too much espresso for normal healthy human consumption. He was essentially trading one addiction for another, but a triple red eye was affordable and no one had to die to get it so Sam was copasetic with the tradeoff. Sam did manage to fall out of his chair however instead of drawing his weapon this time on the archangel.

“Whoa there, bucko. I think it’s about time you switched to decaf.”, Gabriel chuckled as he rode out the waves in the waterbed that came into existence with him.

“Would you quit screwing around with my bed? I have to sleep on that you know.”, Sam snapped, picking himself up off the floor as he eyeballed the new room arrangement. Okay, the last bed had been pretty damn comfortable but Sam wasn’t about to willingly accept any favors from Gabriel. The only reason he had slept on the last bed at all was because Dean was a cover hog, a kicker, and an all around prick when it came to sharing any kind of bed space. On the plus side for Dean, angels didn’t sleep so if he and Castiel ever got a clue and went biblical with their weird relationship, Castiel would be awake to fend Dean off when he tried to unconsciously beat and shove the angel out of the bed.

Admittedly, it had been nice to sleep on a clean mattress his size, buried under soft mounds of fleecy blankets, not that he would ever admit that aloud(mostly because he never knew who could be listening). It was as close to heaven on earth as he was going to get without dieing…..again, but there was no way in hell that Sam was going to tell Gabriel that.

“What do you want? Why are you back?”, he asked gruffly. Sam wasn’t in the mood to deal with a bored and possibly very dangerous archangel who killed assholes with bad jokes for shits and giggles.

“Relax, Sasquatch. I’ve come to answer all your prayers and then some.”, Gabriel grinned widely up at the hunter as he mojoed up a bag of M&M’s to toss its contents back into his mouth. In his shock, Sam considered going for his gun for a slit second before rationality caught up with him.

“I-I’m sorry. Come again? What prayers?”, Sam stammered. This was sounding worse with every passing second. Gabriel looked way too pleased with himself and that usually meant that someone
somewhere was dieing a very ironic death.

“T’m here to join Team Free Will. Mazel tov!”, Gabriel yelled in his renewed excitement, jumping off of the water bed to throw his hands up into the air like he was about to hug the hunter. Sam quickly backed away, putting his hands up in self-defense which was not the reaction Gabriel was going for but that was to be expected. He hadn’t exactly nailed ‘cuddle angel’ his last visit.

Judging from Sam’s wary expression, Gabriel decided that his normal game of cat and mouse would not work on the hunter and Sam was too smart for that sort of thing anyway. He would catch on eventually, get royally pissed as a result, and then Gabriel would be back to less than square zero again. Direct contact and constant association was the way to go. Sam struck Gabriel as the type of person that would be more open to a suggestion if he saw the archangel in a more human light.

“Why?”, Sam asked guardedly, his bright hazel eyes darkening from stress as they narrowed. True, the idea had been his to begin with but he had come up with it when the brothers had thought that Gabriel was just a Trickster and not a near all powerful archangel. It didn’t seem like such a good idea anymore.

“Adventure, mayhem, riding around in gas guzzling vintage, eating crappy food, staying in shitty motels-What’s not to like?”, Gabriel shrugged, dropping his arms enough to gesture at the tacky room as if to give his statement some validity. “C’mon, you wanted me on the dream team. Here I am! You got me! Where do I sign to make this all official and can I skip the hazing?”. Gabriel would have continued but Sam was giving him such a look of disbelief that it made even an archangel pause.

“Why should I believe you? You stranded us in TV land! Hell, you hit me in the balls to get us to agree to ‘follow our roles’ and now you’re changing your tune, just like that? I’m not buying what you’re selling. What is your endgame here? What do you want with us?”, Sam glared, pulling away from the archangel as far as the room would allow him. He didn’t like the feeling of being backed up into a corner literally and figuratively, but Gabriel was really starting to freak him out.

Good things didn’t just happen to the Winchesters. Lady Luck was a bitch to the brothers and her favor was fickle as hell with them so when shit got bad, Sam and Dean tended to take matters into their own hands and make their own luck. Sam’s back hit the table and curled his fingers under the edge of it as if to steady himself and the poorly made furniture.

“No games. No tricks. I’m completely serious.”, Gabriel said with all sincerity, raising his hands up in mock surrender. Sam remained looking less than convinced, the hunter licking his lips nervously as he shifted his weight from foot to foot. Sam really wished Dean was here or that he had some kind of angel bazooka. In retrospect while he was at it, he might as well wish for world peace, Lucifer back in his box, and what the hell, a pony.

“Yeah. I don’t think so.”, Sam said as he flipped the table, revealing the Echonian banishing sigil painted in blood underneath it. He slammed his hand down on it to a welcome answering flash of light. Letting out a sigh of relief, Sam looked around the room to find it missing its uninvited guest though the water bed still remained. Sam leaned down to poke it with a curious finger, watching the mattress wave back at him as it shifted around soothingly before settling down again.

“That’s not right.”, Sam grumbled. He wondered how Dean felt about water beds and sleeping in them. Considering his luck today, Sam didn’t have a good feeling about his chances.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

“So what? We got ourselves a stalker angel now?”, Dean griped around a bite of burger, Sam
filling him in on current events as soon as the older hunter got back from the food run.

“Looks like. What do you make of it? You think he’s serious?” Sam sighed, rubbing his face tiredly. He really just wanted to go to sleep but true to his run of luck, Dean didn’t care for waterbeds especially ones conjured up by archangels who made it a hobby to kill the older Winchester in interesting and horrible ways. Dean only saw the waterbed as another potential demise but with a ‘Nightmare on Elm Street’ twist to it.

“Don’t know. Don’t care. The question now is what are we going to do about it? We can’t angel proof the room cause of Cas and the son of a bitch has already shown that he can find us whenever he wants.”, Dean said, polishing off the last of his burger with a swig of beer.

“Run?” Sam offered, looking up from his salad to vaguely gesture with his fork toward the Impala beyond the motel’s thin walls. Strangely enough, Dean appeared to be deep in thought, the older hunter’s gaze locked on his beer as if the label on the bottle held the answers to everything.

“Maybe. I mean really, what’s one more angel chasing after us going to do? It’s not like all of heaven and hell is looking for us already or anything.” Dean laughed though there was no humor in it. There hadn’t been for a while. The Apocalypse had that effect on ‘walking on sunshine’ thinking. The only time Dean got any real spark of life back in his eyes or voice was when Castiel was around him. Sam didn’t know whether to feel grateful or jealous for the angel’s effect on his emotionally retarded brother. He settled on a mixture of both until he figured it out, tapping that bittersweet toxin down deep while he was at it. They had enough shit going on in their lives right now without his own petty jealousy and third wheel loneliness adding to it.

“We could consider the possibility of letting him join us.”, Sam said after a moment to be met with a harsh look. Dean would have responded but he was beaten to the punch.

“I would love to know how you are planning on stopping me.”, said an all too familiar voice. Sam didn’t even have to turn around to know that the archangel was back with them and from the sounds of it, riding the waves of the bed again while munching on some hard candy of the candy shelled chocolate variety.

“With charm, stunning good looks and a give ’em hell attitude.”, Dean whipped easily though his body language sang about how tense he really was.

“Because that has worked so well in the past, Dean-o. I’m sure Lucifer will be blindsided by it.”, Gabriel smirked back, before chiding himself. He had to remember that he’d come here to mend fences, not send the boys running out the door, guns blazing first chance they got. “That’s why I’m here. To give you yahoos some real firepower and a genuine chance of surviving this fire fight.”

The hunters stared back blankly at the archangel. “Don’t fall over yourselves thanking me all at once.”, Gabriel said dryly a couple of confused blinks later.

“Not that we wouldn’t appreciate the help…..”, Sam started to say.

“….We just don’t trust the source.”, Dean finished for him, “I mean, seriously!? You make us dance like frigging monkeys and shove this ‘learn our place’ crap down our throat and now you’re suddenly all pro-choice for choice. I’m not buying it. Just tell us what you want or better yet, leave us the hell alone. We got enough problems of our own right now if you haven’t noticed.”.

Gabriel pressed his lips together in a thin line to better still his tongue, trying not to glare at the infuriating hunters. Even in his irate state, an idea came to him, making the angel snap his fingers out of habit. It made Sam jump while Dean flinched. “Hey Cassie, get your ass down here.”,
Gabriel called out to his kin, the vocal portion of the order purely for the human’s benefit as his own Grace found the seraph’s own, tugging on it.

“Why are you calling, Cas?”, Dean asked, already looking around for the trench coated angel. Gabriel tried not to smirk too hard at the hunter, his affection for the angel obvious behind all the poorly constructed walls of indifference and false bravado.

“So he can read my mind, genius, since you don’t believe me. If you hear it from your very own angel, maybe I can get a day pass.”, Gabriel rolled his eyes. How was Dean even still alive when he missed the blatantly obvious so constantly? “Ah, here’s our angel now. Cassie, be a sweetheart and read my mind. Assure the boys here that my intentions toward them are as pure as the driven snow.”

Not one to waste time with pleasantries, the newly arrived angel laid his hand upon Gabriel forehead as the celestial beings stared each other down.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Despite certain misconceptions on a biblical level, literally and figuratively, and certain hunter’s opinions on the matter, angels could feel emotion. It was just that they didn’t express them in the same manner as humans or any other living thing in this universe for that matter. One tear from an angel would equal all salt oceans on earth and more. Their emotions, like their true forms, were intense and generally overwhelming to most other life forms. Humans simply didn’t have the mental facilities to understand them, much less recognize them for what they truly were.

Angels like Castiel who had only watched the earth from afar could merely stare out of their vessels helplessly in answer when questioned about it as cosmic energies rose and fell within their meaty confines like strange, overwhelming tides. For Gabriel who had walked among humanity for innumerably lifetimes, the archangel could commit to one shade of feeling instead of the whole color spectrum, but it took practice and a hell of a lot of effort on his part.

So Gabriel got a kind of rush when the first angel he let read his mind in a couple millennia touched his forehead with an open palm and hit him with a hurricane of emotions, akin to two storm fronts colliding with one another on a cosmic level. Castiel’s mind set was almost desperate in a way, starving for contact, the angel not used to being alone for so long and away from the Host’s constant contact. It was bracing, like going from dead somber to bar dancing drunk in under a second.

To his surprise, Gabriel found himself wanting it as much as Castiel, this exchange, this melding of mind, thought, and passions. At first touch though Gabriel noted that Castiel’s grace was severely weakened. If he wasn’t careful, the archangel could end up drowning his ailing brother under the vast ocean that was his own Grace.

Grief, like burn blisters on skin, had sorrow leaking out clear and sticky as pus. Castiel had killed a few of their brothers in self defense, harming his own kin and kind for the sake of his own preservation and others. He and Gabriel grieved together over their brothers’ deaths, for every angel lost was family and thus known by name and nature. There were no faceless deaths among angels.

Anger, hotter than the hidden hearts of stars, pulsed within Castiel. The feud between Michael and Lucifer was coming to a head and all of humanity was going to pay for a stupid feud between two brothers because both of them wanted to win Daddy’s attention so badly they were willing to break the world for it. Michael and Lucifer were so busy with their own agendas though, they failed to notice or care that despite all the senseless death and suffering, God wasn’t bothering to give a damn about his creations or their wasted efforts for his approval.
Misery, deep and dark as black holes, filled Castiel’s being. He knew God wasn’t dead and in a way, that made everything far worse because everyone was going to die for no good reason other than ignorance and pride. It looked inevitable. Even his friends were going to die…….

Wonder, breaking through the thick shell of dank emotions, shone brightly in awe that he had friends. Not designated family but actual friends who had chosen him, despite him having lied to them and tried to coerce them to heaven’s will in the past. The Winchester were loyal to him, a rogue angel, and Castiel knew that they would throw away their meager existences for him if need be at a moment’s notice. It was touching….so deep.

Gabriel met Castiel’s amazement with his own amusement. This was why humans were so loved by their father and why Lucy would never get it.

Angels were near endless and existed on a plane all to themselves. They had all of time and infinity to play with. Time to an angel was as worthless as sand to a human. A lifetime to a human was dear and they were given so little time for it in comparison to monsters, demons, and angels. For a human to give up their life for an angel……

Personally, Gabriel thought it was like casting pearls before swine. Most angels would consider it a futile and very foolish gesture, a waste really. Only a few like himself and Castiel could see the priceless value of the gift given for what it was, the depth of selflessness it was given in. Like how Sam would give his life for Dean and Dean for him and now Castiel was included in that fold to his pure astonishment and utter shock.

Loneliness, but not from the blue eyed angel though he felt his own version of it, coursed through them. It was nothing compared to the extent of Gabriel’s own as the angels stared out across the arid deserts of the archangel’s solitude. Gabriel was a lone figure walking though the lands of this earth for millennia, devoid but yet so full. To an angel, the Host was all.

Gabriel, and now in a lesser sense Castiel, had given that all up to run away from the loving embrace of family. At the very least, Castiel had the Winchesters to fill his sense of loss. On his own part, Gabriel had tried to ignore it the best he could. When that didn’t work. he had gone out and adopted a new family of gods, petty little things that served as ghosts of his former family. The pagans had performed their purpose well enough though and Gabriel learned to cope, to survive.

Jealousy, thick and coiling as bitter honey, coated the angel’s minds and was tasted by Castiel in fascination. The younger angel was perplexed at why an archangel would be jealous of him, his life, of his close relationship with the two humans.

Hunger rolled in seamlessly after it. Just Hunger. Pure want, stronger than anything Famine could ever even dream up, prickled all around them and consumed every inch of their mingled beings. The want was not for food though but for touch. The simple beauty of physical contact, a skin on skin hunger so great that Gabriel’s imaginary play things could never truly fulfill the need. He was a starving man who had eaten nothing but air for far too long. The archangel had gotten of taste of something though, a lingering flavor he could not identify. Gabriel only got a whiff of this allure around Sam though and the archangel had learned to associate the hunter with this longing that gripped him.

Confusion rolled through both of them. Castiel’s was smooth and nonporous, almost clinical in its makeup. He asked the ‘why’ with detachment as he only looked for answers. Gabriel’s own was a cluster fuck ball of razors, wanting to tear out the answers as he screamed for impatient satisfaction.

Against all odds and the inequality in their earthly experiences, it was Castiel who came up with
the answer for it all.

Sweetness, light as air and heady as aged liquor, breathed out across the surface of their minds, shimmering like superheated air over tarmac as it moved all around them, their Graces braiding together. It was what Castiel felt for Dean but did not know how to express adequately to the human in terms that either could understand. Through his Grace, Castiel whispered to Gabriel, low and sweet.

“You are in love.”

Their connection was broken, Gabriel jerking back from Castiel’s palm with blown honey eyes, his look wide and ringed with startled trepidation. He couldn’t risk crushing Castiel under the weight of his sudden surprise and had to keep his Grace reacting from it. The two ethereal beings stared at each other in silence long enough to make the hunters in the room very uncomfortable. Their questions were ignored by the angels in light of several revelations on both their parts.

“Well, fuck.” was all Gabriel could say.

“He is telling the truth. I believe my brother means you no harm.”, Castiel concluded as he turned toward the brothers, acknowledging them for the first time though his gaze was only for Dean.

“Welcome to Team Free Will then?”, Sam said hesitantly, glancing over at Dean who was too busy glaring at the archangel to notice.

“Not so fast. What are you bringing to the party, sweet tooth?”, Dean growled, ignoring Castiel’s stunned look and Sam’s bitchface.

“Seriously? You’re asking for my resume? Beside recreating reality, constructing illusions, and being able to smite with extreme prejudice, I can also make strawberry waffles. I’m a freaking archangel, you ass. That kinda speaks for itself.”, Gabriel snapped, before an idea came to him, one too brilliant not to implement immediately. “For one thing, I can get your angel his mojo back.”

“How?”, The trio said in unison, one in surprise, one in hope, and one in disbelief.

“Like this.”, Gabriel said, snapping his fingers. Dean looked less than impressed as he stared down Castiel as if waiting for the angel to pop out a halo and a pair of wings. He looked as normal as ever or as normal as an angel can look wearing a meat suit except now Castiel had a small half smile gracing his full lips.

“I can feel it. The whole of my Grace….returning”, Castiel gasped, the angel’s features lighting up from within, his too blue eyes going wide with surprise and unspoken joy. “How have you done this, brother?”.

“Oh ye of little faith. I’m part of upper management remember? Just because I haven’t been in the office for a while doesn’t mean my keycard’s invalid.”, Gabriel smirked, preening a bit from his accomplishment. He turned his attention back to the hunters to find conflicting expressions there. Dean looked thrilled with a healthy side order of relieved. Peeking into the older Winchester’s mind, the relief there was near overwhelming. True to form, Dean blamed himself for Castiel’s fall and everything else that had happened to the angel which was ridiculous.

Castiel’s fall had been his choice. His dwindling Grace though was divine punishment from Raphael and Michael, and completely all their doing. Because their Daddy didn’t sanction it and maybe even liked his odd little angel boy, Castiel’s fall was painfully slow, the archangels only
able to stifle the flow of power to him from Heaven before they could shut it off completely. All Gabriel had to do was metaphorically turn the tap back on and break the spigot off so the other archangels couldn’t mess with Castiel again.

Being the messenger of God, Gabriel was the fastest out of any of his brothers. Like any delivery professional worth their salt, it also meant that he knew where every hidden door, back road, shortcut was hidden, and knew every dirty little trick in and out of heaven. Giving Castiel’s full Grace back was mere child’s play in the whole scheme of things. Satisfied that Dean wasn’t going to do anything too stupid for now like try to shoot or stab him, Gabriel’s empathic attention shifted over to Sam. He was thrown off completely by what he found there brewing in the younger hunter’s grapefruit.

Sam was feeling vacant, so utterly and carefully devoid of feeling as if he were afraid to really experience anything at the moment. He watched Dean rise out of his seat so that he could be closer to Castiel, his angel with a look of relief that was dangerously bordering on open love. Sam knew it was only a matter of time before Dean figured out what he was feeling was genuinely real and decided to do something about it. Castiel was too precious to his brother to stay willingly in this limbo between them. Sam knew it and the thought of Dean completing his connection with the angel made him numb with a strange fright. It felt like he was going to be abandoned, like he had done with his own family time and time again for shot at a normal life in college and with Jess.

The difference between the brothers was that Dean accepted his way of life for what it was and all the bloody supernatural strangeness that filled every shadowed corner of it. He would stick with the job but now with Castiel by his side who would never leave him. Dean could live out the rest of his life, if they survived the Apocalypse, hunting while he basked in the devotion and under the protection of his beloved angel.

And to Gabriel’s astonishment, that scared the bejesus out of Sam.

At first, Gabriel wanted to smack the kid. After all that Dean and Sam had been through and their fuck up lives together of living in each others pockets, Sam should know by now that his brother would never abandon him. Hell, it seemed half the time that Dean could barely stand to have Sam out of his sight for more than thirty seconds. The notion of Dean giving up his younger brother completely for anyone else was beyond ridiculous.

Giving it further thought though, Gabriel could bring himself to understand Sam’s feeling. It was something that he would have done, had done. Sam had run away from his life more than once before in hopes of something better. Gabriel could relate to that. Hell, he was the original poster child for it.

He also found it hilarious that in Sam’s mind, Dean and Castiel were already settling down in the countryside in a cottage with a white picket fence and the Impala parked out in front yard, maybe even with a dog or two. It was enough to make Gabriel snicker out loud. The archangel cringed as Sam’s head swiveled around to meet Gabriel’s gaze head on, honey gold meeting multihued hazel. For lack of a better word and to his shame, Gabriel panicked, unable to meet the human’s inquisitive gaze. Tricksters weren’t supposed to scare under such direct scrutiny but he did.

Gabriel- archangel of the Lord, messenger of God, the Norse god Loki, and Trickster extraordinaire- was beyond confused so he did the first thing that came to mind.

He left.
“Oh, you’re back.” was the greeting Gabriel got when he returned a few hours later. Running away didn’t sit well with him even if his melon was currently a hot mess of unrecognizable emotions and half formed sentiments. It was well into evening now at the bum fuck nowhere motel the brothers were currently staying at, hunting a run-of-the-mill ghost or something equally as dull in Gabriel’s opinion. Dean and Castiel were both suspiciously absent from the room, leaving only the younger Winchester there who was reading a rather banged up paperback on the water bed. To his surprise, Sam had found out the fluid filled mattress was more comfortable than previously thought so the hunter was taking full advantage of it while he could. Gabriel snorted in amusement when he recognized the book Sam was reading as ‘Good Omens’. At least the novel’s subject matter was fitting to their current situation.

“I’m losing my touch. No cursing? No threats? No firearms pointed at my head? Sammy, I’m hurt. I thought we had something special going here.”, Gabriel faked some laughter to go along with his brittle grin. He could remember when just a few hours ago this had been so incredibly easy to do before Castiel went and messed with his head.

His sudden reappearance didn’t even get a rise from the Winchester other than an arched brow aimed in his general direction, Sam too busy trying to finish the chapter he was involved in. He didn’t generally get a lot of down time to relax, especially by himself. Sam certainly wouldn’t have gotten invested in a book he had been trying to finish for a while now if he had known that Gabriel was returning to them so soon.

“Castiel made it sound like you weren’t coming back.”, Sam shrugged, his tone carefully bland as he bookmarked his place and set the abused, watermarked novel aside for now. With any luck, Gabriel wouldn’t hang around or make too big a nuisance of himself. Sam wasn’t in the mood for the archangel’s games or up to visiting time loops.

“What else did my dear little brother tell you?”, Gabriel made himself ask with a straight face even as he promised himself he would personally pull out every one of Castiel’s pinfeathers if the angel so much as breathed a hint about Gabriel’s feelings for the tall lanky hunter to him.
“Nothing much. He did tell us that you were serious about joining the team and not killing us again.”, Sam said. Castiel had been quite firm on those two points actually but had gone all Yoda vague on them when the brothers had pressed him further for any more information, even resisting Dean’s inquires which had been equally parts painfully awkward and hilarious to witness. Of course, Dean still didn’t trust the archangel though he was somewhat mollified by his angel, but it was enough to make Sam treat Gabriel with a tentative mindset. Though the archangel may be on their side, it didn’t make him safe to be around for extended periods of time. Gabriel tended to get bored a little too easily and alter reality for everyone’s liking or peace of mind.

“I only killed Dean.”, Gabriel muttered with a sigh. In hindsight, the Mystery Spot may have not been one of his better ideas, good intentions and all the paths they make to Hell aside for now.

Sam was amused to find an awkward angel on his hands and not the usually kind of Castiel, Gabriel more interesting in toeing patterns into the carpet than continuing conversation now it would seem. Sam thought it was kinda odd(and not cute at all) that an archangel would choose to wear kicks but the brown leather Sketchers with bright aqua accents seemed to fit Gabriel well.

“So, where did you go?”, Sam asked, because he was honestly curious and it was something he had been wanting to ask an angel, any angel for a while now. He had avoided it with Castiel though because the outcast angel had been falling and didn’t need reminders of what he had given up for the brothers and their cause. Other angels they had met along the way were either trying to order them around, referring to them as mud monkeys(which usually was a dead giveaway that they were not the chatting type), or attempting to capture or compel them, so Sam had never gotten the opportunity. Gabriel seemed safe enough to ask though, having been on Earth for a long while now incognito.

“My apartment.”, Gabriel shrugged, wishing a candy bar into existence for distraction. He looked over at Sam when he noticed a held silence between them to be met with an odd look and one not of the bitch variety. “What’s wrong?”. 

“You have an apartment?”, Sam sounded a little more than stunned to Gabriel for some reason and he couldn’t figure out why. The hunter was reacting rather extremely to such a commonplace answer. Gabriel tried to decipher the expression of open shock he was being given like he had just admitted to living on the Bunny Ranch as a Heff’s personal nipple inspector.

“Yeah….”, Gabriel answered as if Sam were mentally slow, “…..you think I just sleep in the clouds or something and get tucked in by cherubs and moonbeams?”. 

“No! I don’t know!”, Sam spazzed a little bit before he could recover maturely, “It’s just sounds so……. I dunno, normal.”. Honestly, he hadn’t known what to expect from the archangel but something as mundane as an apartment was not it. “I thought…..I don’t know what I thought. Never mind…..”, he trailed off, feeling more than a little lame.

“You wanna see it?”, Gabriel grinned. He liked the look of a surprised and flustered Winchester, all blushing and rubbing the back of his neck.

“You’re apartment? Really?”, Sam fumbled at his words again, caught off guard by the sudden offer, “Yeah, I guess. Just let me leave……”. Sam never got to finish that sentence, at least not from the motel room as Gabriel snapped his fingers. “…………. a note for Dean.”, Sam finished awkwardly, fighting through a wave of nausea. He really hated travel via angel air. Convenient-yes. Easy on the human digestive system- Oh hell no.

“So call him. I’ll just zap us back. He won’t even know that you were gone.”, Gabriel said as he opened his fridge to grab a couple of beers. He handed one off to Sam who took it with a grateful
look of approval at the label. Trust Gabriel to only have the high end stuff.

“Fat chance.”, Sam grunted, swallowing down half the microbrew in one go and let the alcohol wash away the last of his motion sickness. He almost ended up spitting out his next sip when a small black and white dog ran into the room to greet them. “Holy crap! You have a dog!”.

“If it looks like one and barks like one.”, Gabriel rolled his eyes, bending over to pet his pooch.

“Wow.”, was all Sam said, could say.

“It’s just a dog.”, Gabriel sighed until Dog growled at him. “Excuse me, an awesome dog.”. Satisfied, Dog left Gabriel to thoroughly investigate the newest thing in the room which turned out to be Sam’s boots as the giant man kneeled down the hesitantly pet the curious animal.

“I know. Can’t you just let my mind be a little blown now that I know that an archangel has a canine companion?”, Sam chuckled as Dog flopped over onto his side like road kill to have his belly rubbed. While he did that small kindness for the animal, Sam looked around the apartment which was much smaller than he would have expected. If he was being perfectly honest with himself, Sam had to admit he hadn’t known what to anticipate. Of course, there was a big ‘fuck off’ television set dead center in front of a LazyBoy made of bright red leather. Aside from that though, there wasn’t much else in the way of furniture. The décor was mostly done in black and white, and highlighted with red accents and decorations, so much so it looked like a theme and a tacky one at that. Oddly enough, it also looked vaguely familiar to Sam for some reason.

“So what do you think?”, Gabriel asked, finding to his surprise that he actually cared about the answer.

“Did you seriously model this after ‘Casa Erotica 4’?”, Sam chuckled, finally able to place where he had seen the room’s décor before. All it needed was the cheesy music, bad dialogue, and even worse attempt at a plot. Decades of living in motel room with pay-per-view and a horny older brother had finally paid off.

“Why Sammie boy, I am appalled your ape of an overprotective brother has let you soil your virtue.”, Gabriel feigned dismayed shock. “But at least you recognize a time honored classic.”

“It suits you.”, Sam smiled, ignoring the jibe. It was only a small smile but it was enough to make Gabriel’s heart start beating fast and hard, ridiculously so. It was just that kind of smile-soft, easy, and a little wishful for something hidden.

“Sure.”, Sam said, leaving off pet adoration and ignoring dog grumbles about it to look around the apartment again.

“What do you want?”, Gabriel made himself say though he wished the question referred to something other than food.

“Surprise me.”, Sam said, kicking himself as soon as he said it. That was the last thing you ever wanted to say to someone….something like Gabriel.

“Don’t tempt me like that.”, Gabriel’s grin was feral in nature, the former Trickster unable to pass up such an opening, even for his own good. Sam startled back when he suddenly found an archangel in his personal space, one that was leering up at him.
“G-Gabriel?”, Sam stammered, stepping back as quickly as he could. To his dismay the archangel moved with him. The hunter flinched when Gabriel reached for him.

“Nervous much? Drink your hot chocolate.”, Gabriel smirked, trading Sam his empty beer bottle for a large moose shaped mug of steaming hot chocolate topped with more than enough whip cream to kick start diabetic shock. Sam accepted it though he watched the angel’s every movements closely. Not wanting to be a poor house guest, something a Winchester rarely got to be, Sam took a cautious sip of his new beverage. As expected, it was better than just delicious, the creaminess of the rich cocoa making Sam inhale the delicate fragrances deeply and sigh from its pure chocolaty perfection.

Gabriel watched in fascination as Sam licked foam and cream from his upper lip. The impromptu show almost made him choke in surprise and even more so, a burning want to do it for him. Gabriel was willing to bet that Sam’s lips tasted even sweeter than the cocoa.

“Are you alright?”, Sam asked. He didn’t think it was possible for angels to choke to death, especially on air, but Gabriel was making a good attempt at it.

“Yeah, yeah. Why?”, Gabriel managed out between gasps as he tried to make his throat and tongue work again. Stupid vessel with all its stupid responses.

“You look tense is all.”, Sam said cautiously to have his concern waved off.

“Don’t mind me. Angel thing. Make yourself comfortable. Mi casa, su casa.”, Gabriel retreated, going back to his kitchen to put some distance and island counter between himself and the object of his desire. He watched as Sam started to look around the living room again while sipping at his hot chocolate.

“Do you stay here often?”, Sam asked, fixing an askew picture frame on the wall featuring a grinning buxom blonde.

“It’s just someplace to rest my head.”, Gabriel answered carefully, more interested in the hunter and the way that he moved than his current surroundings. Instead of plodding heavily about like most men of his height, Sam carried his large frame with a smooth grace that was almost disconcerting in its quietness.

“Is it real?”, Sam mused aloud, poking at the walls as if they were about to dissolve right before his eyes. “I thought angel didn’t sleep.”

“It’s real enough and I happen to like sleeping. Just because I don’t have to, doesn’t mean I can’t. Good little soldiers they are and because no one told them that they could, most angels just don’t realize that they have the option. Like eating and drinking. Or screwing.”, Gabriel explained. He paused when he noticed Sam giving him another look. “What?”.

“You’re so strange.”, Sam shook his head.

“Gee thanks. That means a lot coming from you.”, Gabriel said dryly in a flat tone. He was pleased to see Sam’s cheeks start to flush.

“Sorry. I didn’t mean that in a bad way…..”, Sam trailed off, unable to gauge if the archangel was actually insulted or not. He was really hoping not.

“There’s a good way?”, Gabriel teased, enjoying Sam’s discomfort to its fullest. Not only was it entertaining, it was adorable to watch the hunter fidget.
“No, I………strange is good.”, Sam concluded, shrugging helplessly before he dug himself in too deep. He went back to touching things in the apartment as if he didn’t believe they were real- the edge of a picture frame, the corner of a decorative table, the little knick knacks that Gabriel had collected over the centuries( Gabriel wondered how Sam would react knowing that he had just touched a vase carved from the hipbone of an ice giant). Gabriel watched this odd behavior as Sam ventured into the kitchen where he was hiding, studying everything there from the pasta strainer to the Hello Kitty blender(Gabriel loved Japan for its weird kitsch).

To Gabriel’s amazement, Sam looked at it all with longing but not envy which can be often mistaken for it. The archangel could feel within Sam a deep yearning for everyday, mundane things. Not for the items themselves exactly, but for what they represented. Gabriel reasoned it was only natural. The hunter had never had normal, at least not long term anyway. Just little stints of it here and there, and just long enough to wet Sam’s appetite and leave him starving for it.

“You could stay here you know.”, Gabriel found himself saying, the gears in his mind already working. “Whenever you want.”

Sam jumped at the offer as if burned, staring at the archangel like a deer in headlights. “B-but…”, he stammered, growing red as he realized what he had been doing. Normal people didn’t stare at blenders(even Hello Kitty blenders) like they are the holy grail.

“Don’t be like that. Father knows we all need a break from Dean-o. Hell, I need one after five minutes. You’ve been around that chucklehead your entire life, you poor thing. I can only imagine the amount of mental scarring it’s caused you.”, Gabriel said quickly, pressing his advantage further while he had the chance and Sam appeared weak.

“Dean’s not that bad.”, Sam said out of reflex, demands for pie coming to mind.

“He’s only going to get worse once he pulls his head out of his own ass about Cassie and starts getting himself some sweet angel nookie.”, Gabriel pointed out with a snicker.

“Thanks. There’s an image I didn’t need.”, Sam grimaced, trying not to think about what might be happening on his bed even as they were talking. Dean might not want to sleep in the water bed but that didn’t mean he wouldn’t tap some angel ass on it. “That’s your brother you’re talking about.”.

“Psssh. My ‘little’ brother is a millennia plus old virgin angel. I’m more worried about Dean than Cassie when he unleashes all that pent up frustration.”, Gabriel grinned, “Let me tell you, as well versed as your horn dog putz of a brother may be in the bedroom, he has absolutely nothing on angelic stamina. He’ll be grateful that I got Cassie’s healing power fully charged and if he’s smart, he’ll top when he has the chance. A shattered pelvis can totally ruin the mood.”.

“Ugh. Stop. Please, I’m begging you.”, Sam feigned dry heaving even though he thought it was well past time for those two. He didn’t know how many more long intense moments of eye fucking he could take, especially while in such close proximity. Driving around in the Impala had gotten to a brand new level of uncomfortable and to the point Sam was ready to bail out while the car was still in motion. The thought of him walking in on the two was a new and very probable fear.

“Only because you said the magic word.”, Gabriel smiled, mojoing up his own cup of hot chocolate though his steaming mug had chocolate whip cream, syrup, and chocolate sprinkles on it. The archangel leaned against the counter as he enjoyed his drink, looking very comfortable with himself and his company. Oddly enough, that set off a warning bell inside Sam’s head.

“So why are you being so nice to me?”, Sam asked. He hated to break this relaxed moment between them but something didn’t feel right. For one thing, the hunter felt safe. It wasn’t a luxury
that was afforded to Sam too often and it usually meant a trap or that something horrible was about to happen to him or his family.

“Cause I’m a nice guy. Just because I smite a few assholes doesn’t mean I don’t have a heart of gold. I’m an angel after all.”, Gabriel smiled, trying to keep his tone casual. Sam was tensing up on him and he couldn’t figure out why, the archangel quickly going over the last few parts of their conversation in his head. All of it seemed pretty good-natured and harmless to him.

Sam bit his bottom lip, wondering if he should push this issue any further. Technically he didn’t know where he was or even if the front door of the apartment actually went anywhere in reality or just into some random vortex. Pissing off the only ride in town might not be the best course of action but when had a Winchester ever taken the easy option? “Everything has a price.”, Sam said slowly, setting down his cup so he could focus totally on the archangel in front of him. “What’s yours?”.

“Holy hell, you putz. I’m offering you a couch and some cable, not trying to steal your soul out from under you. If you ever wanna pop in, bring some candy with you and we’ll call it even. Does that sound fair?”, Gabriel said casually with some effort. Sam was acting as nervous as a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Gabriel decided that trying to jump his bones right now might not pay off favorably so the archangel kept his tone light and playful even as he felt his insides twist in a painful manner.

It seemed to work though, the hunter’s stiff back and shoulders releasing some of their newly gained tension. “Okay.”, Sam nodded, “But how do I ’pop in’? Human, remember?”.

“Archangel, remember? Just pray to me like Dean does to Cassie but without half the blasphemy and attitude. I don’t know why my brother puts up with thatshit.”, Gabriel told him, “As long as you say my name in the prayer, it goes express mail directly to me and not any other angel. Heaven won’t be able to ping it as long as you keep it angel specific.”.

“You know why Dean does that.”, Sam smirked, giving Gabriel a pointed look.

“Yeah, I do but I don’t think the sun shines out of your ass so some respect, capiche?”, Gabriel shook his head but mostly to hide the devious smile he knew was trying to work its way out across his lips. His new plan was beginning to come together. If Sam wanted a safe place full of normalcy then by his Father, Gabriel would be the one to give it to him. In the end, the hunter would be offering himself up to him and best of all, Sam would think it was all his idea.

“Fair enough. I promise.”, Sam said, raising his hands in mock surrender.

“Good.”, Gabriel allowed himself to smile. He just had to keep it maintained on a conventional level and not give himself away. For a human, Sam was extremely observant on an annoying level when it came down to minor details.

“And Gabriel…”, Sam interrupted the archangel’s thoughts.

“What?”, Gabriel almost yelped, fearing that he had already been caught.

“…..Thanks.”, Sam smiled, really smiled at Gabriel. It outshone every expression that the hunter had given him before this moment, making everything else seem pallid when compared to it, to the unhindered joy that was coming off of Sam’s face.

Gabriel was glad that Dog had chosen that moment to beg for pets. It allowed the archangel a moment of solitude to melt in on himself and wrap the memory of that smile deep inside to admire
later. Gabriel supposed he should be worried that one word of thanks from Sam Winchester made him a complete mental wreck but right now he didn’t care. This moment was perfect and he wanted more of them.

Chapter End Notes

Gabriel’s apartment and dog based off of the ones he had in the episode ‘Tall Tales’.
Did I ask you for attention when affection is what I need.....

Chapter Summary

Chapter's title is from 'Twilight Galaxy' by Metric

Slow and steady wins the race and hopefully a Winchester's heart.

Chapter Notes

Gabriel’s apartment and dog based off of the ones he had in the episode ‘Tall Tales’.

Thank you for all the notes and kudos. They are appreciated.

“I pray to the archangel Gabriel with the power of fun size Butterfingers and Snickers.”

“Is that a short joke?”, Gabriel mused aloud, biting back a grin as Sam appeared in his living room with the aforementioned bags of candy in hand. He was willing to let it slide because his vessel wasn’t short. Sam was just too ridiculously tall and hell, the hunter had made good with the candy.

“What’s wrong with being sweet and easy?”, Sam teased, easily defeating the stern disposition that Gabriel was trying to maintain for appearance’s sake only. The more time they spent together, the more Gabriel noticed that Sam got increasingly playful and relaxed when he was comfortable with his company and surroundings, unlike his older brother. Even in times of rest and reasonable safety, Dean remained on guard with certain lines of his body tense and always ready to spring into action but forty years served in hell will do that to a guy. As far as Gabriel could tell, Castiel was the only one who could put those last vestiges in the hunter’s iron defense to rest.

“Not a thing. Gimme.”, Gabriel smiled wide, his hand reaching out to grab for the candy.

“You act like you can’t just materialize this with a finger snap.”, Sam chuckled, watching as the bags of candy were claimed and dumped(already unwrapped by angel mojo) into a giant bowl of popcorn to be mixed together by hand into a gooey buttery mess of salt, fat, and sugar.

“Free candy is tastier.”, Gabriel confirmed, snapping his fingers at the red leather LazyBoy to change it into a large red leather couch that was large and deep enough to be welcomed on any porno set.

“So what are we watching?”, Sam asked, plopping down in the cushy, slick leather and loving every inch of it despite the gaudy color. Gabriel’s furniture was always fantastic, fitting his lanky oversized form perfectly even when he wanted to curl up on it. He loved the feeling of being cradled.

“Lord of the Rings marathon, director’s cut.”, Gabriel decided, making it so with a glance toward the TV.

“That’s over nine hours.”, Sam groaned. His ass would be dead, never mind numb, by then.
“Good thing you know an archangel who can control time loops and manipulate couch cushions.”, Gabriel rolled his eyes, shoving mini candy bars and popcorn into his mouth to shamelessly lick the melting chocolate off of his fingertips. Sam couldn’t help but watch that bright pink tongue do its job so well.

“Touché.”, Sam shrugged as he tried to clear his head of all the other places he would like to see that tongue clean. Sam ducked his shaggy head as he reached for the popcorn in a vain attempt to hide his blush. Gabriel tried not to look too smug as Sam settled in, the hunter carefully paying full attention to the screen and not the lecherous tease of an archangel beside him.

Gabriel tried not to feel too disappointed when Sam kept to his side of the couch but kept in mind that even mountains were eventually wore down given enough time, weather, and water. Failing that and his rapidly dwindling patience, there was always dynamite.

It had taken over a week after Gabriel had made his offer for the first prayer to come in. It had been such a formal appeal, spoken all in Latin, that Gabriel had to tease Sam about it as soon as he arrived for using words like ‘beseech’ and ‘intercession’ until the hunter blushed and mumbled out “You said no blasphemy or attitude.”.

“I also wanted something from this century.\”, Gabriel had rolled his eyes. “Where’d you find that derelict plea? It should be up on blocks, seriously. I don’t’ think I’ve heard that version of my personal prayer since the Middle Ages.”.

After that awkwardness, Sam had spent their time together sitting on the very edge of the couch and flinching every time Gabriel shifted toward him or snapped his fingers, the hunter looking ready to bolt half the time at the slightest noise. The knowledge that Gabriel was his only ride back kept Sam in his seat though.

Gabriel tried not to feel too impatient as he made himself behave and stare at whatever was on the screen. Every visit was progress, slow and steady progress of breaking the wary hunter down bit by bit, one hot chocolate and tenacious movie at a time. Over time and repeated visits though, Sam began to noticeably mellow out and let his guard down gradually when it became apparent that he wasn’t going to be turned into anything.

All the while, Gabriel kept treating the Winchester like a feral cat, using food and drink to draw him in closer inch by precious inch. To Gabriel’s dismay though, Sam didn’t care too much for sweets or any junk food in particular. The man was more happy with a crisp apple than an ice cream sundae for fuck’s sake, but he didn’t seem to mind Gabriel stuffing his face with candy or bringing the archangel sugary snacks so Gabriel let it slide for now.

Dog did his part as well after a little shameless blackmail on the canine’s part (Gabriel would expect nothing less from his own pet), helping to relax the hunter. Sam was happy as a clam playing with the black and white pooch or napping on the couch with the canine. Gabriel found himself getting very jealous of his own dog during those instances, especially considering he had no luck bringing the tall Winchester any closer to his bedroom.

When Sam started to sleep over, he would only sleep on the couch. Apparently, Dean and Castiel had progressed a lot in their relationship and walking in on them doing it was not too high on Sam’s short list of ‘things I rather not live to see’. Gabriel considering taking the couch away altogether to make Sam choose the bed, but he figured with his piss poor luck with the hunter though, odds were that Sam would just choose to sleep on the floor. Flailing that, he would have to be hogtied and strapped down on the bed to make him sleep in it…..

…..which was an alluring thought but Gabriel didn’t think they were at that point in their
relationship yet.

“What do you want to eat for dinner?”, Gabriel asked, going to his tried and true method of prolonging Sam’s stay with him by offering food as if nine hours of hobbits wasn’t enough incentive.

“How do you feel about Italian? I make a great sauce.”, Sam asked after thinking about it for a moment. The hunter found himself not wanting to leave yet either. He was lounging for once instead of fighting for his life and he was going to enjoy the languid sensation as long as he could. Besides, Sam had a sleeping pup of warmth in his lap and a newly refreshed mug of spiced hard cider in hand. Returning to a fucked out, sweaty Dean snuggling with an equally fucked out Castiel (who would remain awake and staring while Dean dozed off cause that wasn’t creepy or awkward) and a lonely cold motel bed with the musky smell of coitus in the air seemed even less appealing.

“Why Sammie, are you offering to make little ole me a treat?”, Gabriel batted his eyes at the hunter, making Sam’s cheeks glow with a touch with pink.

“I’m offering to make us both a healthy, well balanced dinner. I think I am starting to get cavities by just watching you eat candy like it’s going out of style.”, Sam countered, becoming used to Gabriel’s milder flirtations. He could ignore those. It wasn’t like the archangel was serious or so Sam let himself think. He told himself not to even consider that an archangel could care for him that way or at all. Angels wouldn’t……couldn’t love demon blood addicted monsters who started Apocalypses.

“Healthy, Smealthy, but whatever floats your boat. Wanna wait until the wizard takes the plunge or when the hobbits split up?”, Gabriel gestured at the scene, freezing the movie.

“Well, I have to go get the ingredients if you want to….”, Sam didn’t even know why he even bothered finishing his sentence, the pair already in the middle of a busy outdoor market- people haggling complaining, buying, selling, or just standing around to share the latest tidbit of gossip, all in a language other than English.

“Where are we?”, Sam asked, more curious than upset. If the older Winchester were there in his place, Dean would have thrown a fit about the unexpected trip via angel air. The method of transformation always seemed to play merry hell with Dean’s digestive system.

“Florence, Italy on market day.”, Gabriel announced with an exaggerated flourish of hands. “Bellaissimo!”.

“Of course, we are.”, Sam just smiled, making Gabriel want to know all the little secret thoughts in that sweet eyed giant’s head without cheating by reading his mind.

“What? You wanted to make Italian. It doesn’t get more Italian than Italy.”, Gabriel sighed, getting ready to launch into a carefully worded explanatory. It was all shut down by Sam continuing to smile at him, that small sweet smile that the archangel or anyone else for that matter so rarely got to see.

“I’m not complaining. Just give me a heads up next time.”, Sam said lightly, shrugging. He was starting to get really distracted with all the hustle and bustle going on around them to really care how they had got there. As for the teleporting, he was getting better all the time with the angel air. Sam barely even got dry mouth any more from it and his stomach remained copasetic as well or else Gabriel was doing a little healing mojo for him on the sly. Sam didn’t know which option he
preferred.

“Life is full of warnings. Live a little.”, Gabriel said quickly to cover up a twinge of blush. That had happened with just a soft smile from Sam. Gabriel had no idea how he was going to maintain his status of friendly calm with looks like those. Even an angel, especially an archangel, had needs.

“Story of my life.”, Sam snorted, moving toward heaping piles of vibrantly green veggies. “Remind me to give you some money when we get back,”.

“You cook, I’ll pay. No arguments Winchester.”, Gabriel said before switching fluidly into Italian to haggle good-naturedly over the prices for tomatoes. Sam watched in amused awe as Gabriel flirt, chat, ate, and drank his way through the market, his hands always filled with something sweet whether it was fruit so ripe it gushed when bitten into or creamy gelato that never got the chance to melt even a smidge. It felt weird to Sam to be here but it was also really nice to just be walking around it the sunshine for once with the sounds of humanity all around him like a soft blanket of comfortable white noise. Being here and now, it was a little hard to believe that the world was coming to the end, dancing hand in hand with the Devil himself as he fox trotted the Earth’s end of days to last call.

After delivering the shopping back to the apartment with a snap, Gabriel opted to show Sam around Florence as only a wandering wayward angel could. Sam couldn’t bring himself to argue in thought or indecision. For the moment, he and his brother were safe and in the company of angels. Sam didn’t dare ask for anything more than that.

The pair walked down narrow mosaic tiled streets, past graceful pale buildings that all seemed to house something ancient and beautiful within their depths, and over low wooden bridges that creaked ominously as they passed over them under their combined weight. All the while, Gabriel gave a running commentary about anything and everything.

To his surprise, Sam found it all fascinating, even the random bits involving the occasional orgies and bi-curious nuns. He also reflected it was a good thing that angels didn’t need to breathe. Gabriel hadn’t stopped talking for hours but Sam couldn’t bring himself to feel even mildly annoyed. The archangel’s cheerful bordering on sarcastic voice was oddly soothing and that was a thought that was beginning to worry Sam though he couldn’t bring himself to interrupt or care. If the hunter let himself admit it to himself, Gabriel made Sam happy. Happiness was a strange foreign feeling now to him though, almost unrecognizable through the shit storm that was his life. Sam buried the sensation deep within himself, weary of its presence yet greedy for more if it. Sam wondered if a person could actually hoard happiness. He was willing to give it a shot.

Sam never did end up making that sauce. Florence with Gabriel was all he needed for the moment.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The conclusion of this story arch. Sam and Gabriel are done dancing around each other.

Chapter Notes

Sorry that this took so long to finish.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Why are we playing this?", Gabriel sighed, staring down a bit miffed at the board game of Monopoly being set up by Sam on the floor of his living room, the hunter shoving over the coffee table to make ample room for it and his scrawling frame.

"Because I don’t feel like watching any more movies. I need some mental stimulation.", Sam said as he set up the board and carefully straightened out all the fake money into neat stacks. “What token do you want to be?”. He had been spending a lot of time lately here at Gabriel’s apartment, enough so that it was beginning to feel like a second home to the tall hunter, after the Impala of course and a certain archangel was starting to feel like family to him, much to Sam’s initial surprise. He accepted it for what is was, embracing the almost unfamiliar warming sensation it made him feel toward Gabriel.

"Surprise me.", Gabriel rolled his eyes. To his amusement, the top hat was thrown at his head. Part of the archangel really loved that Sam could do this now with him, be comfortably enough to abuse him good-naturedly, didn’t care that he was an infinite wavelength of celestial intent, pagan god or whatever other title he disguised himself in, and could end his existence effortlessly with a less than a thought. “Swanky, but I would rather be the little dog.”. The archangel wiggled his eyebrows suggestively at the hunter. His flirting was pointedly ignored. Gabriel tried not to feel too disappointed, having another long night to look forward to with the hunter and the challenge that Sam presented.

"Tough. You should have picked then.", Sam grinned, snagging his own token with a ruthless determination, like he was used to having this argument and winning it, “Anyway, I’m always the dog.”

“And let me guess. Deano was always the racecar.", Gabriel snorted with some distain at how predictable the older hunter could be. The archangel looked up when he was met with a brooding moment of silence. Sam was still setting up the board but he looked sad now if his damnable puppy dog eyes were any clear indication.

“No. Dean switched off between the horse and rider or the canon. Dad was always the car.", Sam said softly, the large man scooping up the silvery tokens to study them as if the little pewter figures held all the answers to his fucked up childhood. Gabriel groaned inwardly, wishing he had chosen his words better. Sam was sensitive to anything regarding his family. To his dismay, the archangel
found he wasn’t allotted a chance to fix his blunder.

“Why do you hate Dean so much?”, Sam asked. The question was asked in a careful and very neutral tone but the oversized hunter was looking at him with those damn soul searching eyes again, all wide and sparkly, his expression open even though it hinted that he was expecting to get hurt. Gabriel could almost understand all the staring matches between their brothers, especially if Dean’s eyes were anywhere as achingly beautiful in color and form as Sam’s own hazel.

It took effort but Gabriel made himself look away to start playing with his token, twirling the top hat on its sharp edge against the laminated cardboard. “I don’t hate Dean.”, Gabriel admitted, watching the pewter figure fall over. A look up at Sam confirmed the hunter’s disbelief and told the archangel that wasn’t going to be enough.

“He reminds me a lot of Michael.”, Gabriel sighed, abandoning the top hat to run his hands through his hair. “Cocky, too full of himself but always seeking approval from Daddy….Loyal to a fault, his own and to everyone else as well. He could be a real dick sometimes…..most of the time…..but still devoting and so selflessly caring. He has a bad habit of taking everyone else’s problem on himself and feeling responsible when he can’t fix them. Stubborn bastard could never understand that some things weren’t meant to be fixed or just aren’t worth it to begin with, no matter how hard you try or how deeply you care.”. It had been a long while since he had talked about his family to anyone, much less a human. Gabriel hadn’t meant to say so much. It had just slipped out but he also couldn’t bring himself to regret it just yet.

“It had been a long while since he had talked about his family to anyone, much less a human. Gabriel hadn’t meant to say so much. It had just slipped out but he also couldn’t bring himself to regret it just yet.

“Are we still talking about Dean?”, Sam ventured, his tone almost insufferably patient and too kind for Gabriel’s liking, making the archangel wince from the overexposure. He should have counted on the Winchester picking up on it. Sam had always been too damn observant for his own good.

“You’re too clever for your own good sometimes.”, Gabriel squinted at Sam. “It’s going to get you in trouble.”

“Story of my life.”, the hunter shrugged with a small hollow sounding laugh. Gabriel didn’t like the tone of it, its noise too self-deprecating.

“If we are going to play, let’s play.”, Gabriel grumbled, ignoring Sam’s beautiful open expression still being directed full force at him, the one that told Gabriel that he could tell Sam anything and not be judged for it. He didn’t deserve a look like that, the potential moment of forgiveness and understanding it offered, so like the coward he knew himself to be, Gabriel deflected with an ease borne from an existence that had begun before time was considered time. “I’ll be the banker.”

“The hell you’ll be.”, Sam said, quickly snatching the fake money away from Gabriel before he could claim it or ruin the OCD neat piles, even as he sighed mentally. He knew retreat when he saw it, had grown up watching it play out between his father and more so, his brother. Sam loved his father, but part of him would never forgive the old man for what he did to Dean growing up, of using his older brother’s love and sense of duty against himself all in the name of obedience and even more so for using Sam as a tool or leverage to impress this way of thinking upon him.

“What’s a matter, Sammy? Don’t trust me?”, Gabriel waggled his eyebrows at Sam, hiding his relief that the earlier subject matter seemed to have been dropped.

To Gabriel’s surprise, Sam seemed to be actually considering the question. The archangel had been betting on a careless, diverting remark from the hunter but Sam surprised him with a little smile. “Yes, just not with fake money.”, Sam concluded after a moment, in all seriousness.

That simple statement meant more to Gabriel than it really should have, his Grace reacting to it by
lapping at the walls of his vessel. It wanted to seek out the hunter’s bright soul and sinking into its troubled depths. “Are you alright?”, Sam’s question floated down from somewhere through the golden haze that had become Gabriel’s mind, the archangel making himself focus on his company who was staring at him wide eyed.

“What’s with the look, Sammich?”, Gabriel asked, his focus returning to him to narrow in on Sam.

“Oh no reason. You’re just glowing is all.”, Sam stated dryly, sounding amused but unimpressed from the amount of weird that was his life. A quick look down confirmed that, yes, he was glowing, the archangel’s Grace seeping out through his pores from the simple joy of Sam’s words. Gabriel sighed at himself as he reeled his power in. Damn, he had it bad.

“Angel thing.”, Gabriel said casually, trying to shrug his moment of weakness off as nothing.

Sam wasn’t about to let it go so easily though. His tenacious nature was one of the worst and best qualities about him after all. “I’ve never seen Castiel glow.”, Sam pointed out, arching a brow at the archangel.

“Deano’s not doing it right then.”, Gabriel smirked, more than willing to thrown their brothers and their epically stagnant relationship under the avoidance bus.

“I’m sure he’s giving it his best shot.”, Sam couldn’t help but snicker. It amused him to no end that Dean, lady’s man extraordinaire and master of the one night stand, had been inadvertently committed into one of most enduring relationships of his life ever with an angel of all possible beings, and an emotionally equal clueless one at that.

“How are those crazy kids doing? Still staring holes into each others heads?”, Gabriel relaxed, warming up to the topic at hand. Anything to draw Sam’s questioning attention away from him.

“No. Just burning holes in other people’s heads instead. I have seen things I can’t unsee.”, Sam muttered, making a face of bitch in remembrance. Dean and Castiel’s relationship had made some progression to the ’getting to know you, all about you’ stage of undress and exploration. It was painful to witness all the uncoordinated awkwardness that ended in the fumbling, desperate explosions of passion that came with it. Dean had never been good at denying himself any carnal pleasure and Castiel was a cluster fuck of repressed feelings. When occurring in nature, that kind of pressure usually resulted in diamonds. In Sam’s case, however, the end result was seeing Dean and his angel in various stages of undress and covered in mixtures of bodily fluids.

“You can’t say something like that and not share.”, Gabriel leered, ignoring Sam’s discomfort and ire as he sidled up closer to the hunter, their thigh just barely touching.

“I don’t want to talk about our brothers screwing each other.”, Sam rolled his eyes at his new side by side company.

“You’re no fun.”, Gabriel pouted.

“Yes, I am. I’m tons of fun, just not with you.”, Sam sniffed, playing with the ignored game’s dice. The hunter watched the archangel’s shoulder slump a little, Gabriel making a show of studying all the game’s pewter tokens, looking anywhere else but at Sam to avoid eye contact.

“But I could be……”, were spoken almost wistfully.

When fingers touched Gabriel’s face, he looked up in surprise to find Sam unusually close to him, the hunter practically sitting on top of him, his ridiculously long legs bracketing Gabriel’s folded own. He had been so engaged in his own inner moping, he had failed to notice Sam’s movements.
He was fully aware of them now though, every nerve and synopsis firing with brilliant energy as Sam pressed his lips to Gabriel’s own.

As far as kisses go physically, it wasn’t anything mind blowing or ground moving. It was closed mouthed and chaste, the endearment almost childlike in its executions. Flesh rasped dryly against each other since Sam’s lip’s were chapped, Gabriel’s were bitten and never bothered to heal them. Sam kept his eyes closed while Gabriel kept his eyes wide open, unwilling to look away from the hunter for even a moment.

As far as kisses went emotionally, it was one of the best Gabriel as ever had, worthy enough to stand out from existence that had begun before suns burned into existence and stars were born to the sound of angels singing. It was sweet and endearing and everything Gabriel wanted but would never admit to, so much so it made his heart soar like a comet and his skin glow, his Grace reacting to the simple kiss on a nearly profound level.

Sam opened his eyes to find himself surrounded by gold. It encircled him, the brush of it soft and warm and so soothing, he could almost let himself get lost in the sensation. It took a moment for Sam to realize that what he was experiencing were Gabriel’s wings folded around them the barest hint of them within the realms of this reality. They were like liquid gold encased in the rough shape of plumage, flowing and moving within themselves, like trapped strange thick mist that sparkled and pinged with surreal energy. Three pairs furled and unfurled all around him, all sets seeking to touch the hunter, wrap around tight, and hold him close to Gabriel who at some point managed somehow to climb into Sam’s lap without him noticing, his hands buried in the plaid of Sam’s shirt and his legs wrapped around Sam’s waist to cross at the ankles, clinging to him as if he were a lifetime.

“Hello there.”, Sam smiled wide and dopey, feeling silly and relaxed and in such awe, it was really the only thing he could think of to say. His brain was having trouble stringing more than two words at a time together at least cohesively. He was being cocooned in a delicious warmth that seeped past his skin, down to his bones, and even beyond that, going soul deep. It was beauty and peace beyond sight, beyond sound, beyond anything Sam had experienced before in his short but interesting existence.

It also reminded Sam that Gabriel was an angel, and not just any angel, one of four archangels. He was the messenger of God, a divine being of unfathomable power and infinite knowledge, and so far beyond the likes of Sam, an abomination, a mere human filthy enough in body and soul to be the perfect vessel for Lucifer himself. Sam hung his head in shame for what he had just done and hoped that being smited would be painless, his hands pressing against Gabriel’s shoulders. His fingers bit down on the flesh there that had more properties with marble than meat, knowing he should push Gabriel away but was unwilling to commit to such a action, lacking the strength and the conviction. It was nice to feel loved just for once by someone other than Dean and Bobby even if it was brief.

Sam was drawn out of his moment of self hatred, confusion, and indecision by soft kisses, their butterfly touches quick and fervent, being pressed to his forehead, cheeks, nose, lips, and throat in rapid succession, arms wrapped firmly around his shoulders. It took him another moment to realized that Gabriel was talking and had been for a while. No, not talking. Begging.

“No, no, no, no, no,………Please, please, don’t think like that…..”, was being mouthed desperately into his skin. “Please…..”. Wetness was beginning to cover Sam’s skin and it wasn’t from fresh kisses, Gabriel pulling back far enough to kiss the locks of Sam’s hair for the hunter to see that the archangel was crying, the tears of angels like diamonds mixed with the glow of starlight and made liquid, shining and iridescent. It would have been beautiful to witness if it weren’t so
heartbreaking, a weight upon Sam’s chest knowing that he was the cause of it.

“Angels shouldn’t cry.”, was all that Sam could think of to say, wishing he knew how to make it stop. Gabriel’s face was never meant for such emotions, everything that he was committing to a sorrow and loneliness was near paralyzing to behold. Sam raised his hands to cup either side of Gabriel’s face to keep him still.

“We do though.”, Gabriel said, nuzzling the warmth that held him in place because he chose it, the hunter’s nearness freely given so he was going to enjoy it.

“I’m not worth it.”, Sam told him, smiling sadly at the archangel using his thumbs to brush away shining trails. The archangel’s tears made his skin tingle with more than just salt. “It’s obvious that you are so above me.”.

“You’re a fool, not an abomination.”, Gabriel sighed, closing his gold eyes as if in pain, shedding a fresh wash of divine salt water. “And before you bitch, quit thinking so damn loud. It’s hard to ignore……everything about you is hard to ignore, kiddo.”.

“I’m the Devil’s meat suit. I think that’s the very definition of the word.”, Sam choked out a rough laugh, heavy with barely suppressed grief of his lot in life. “I don’t really know how you can even stand to be near me or want me around.”. He couldn’t help but wonder what an angel’s tears tasted like, if they were mere wet salt or emotions so poisonous that he would die from misery alone. He started to draw back to find himself held in place by Gabriel’s hands upon his wrists, the archangel twisting his head in the grip to kiss the palms of Sam’s hands, reverently, his lips lingering over the lined flesh there that held fates and told fortunes.

“Please……don’t……”, Gabriel couldn’t even begin to voice what he needed, or the words that would make Sam stay with him here like this. He knew every single language that had ever been created by man, and even all the ones that were not, since the very idea of the spoken word came into existence and in his panic, he was reduced to nothing more than a useless few. “Please……”. Gabriel closed his eyes as he heard his voice beginning shake. He pressed his wings in closer around them, knitting the feathers together so that nothing in this existence, expect for his Father himself, could pull them apart or get past those golden feathers.

While in the eye of the storm that were Gabriel’s wings, it felt like being in every memory of coming in from the cold to be wrapped up in the warmness and a tranquility that come after heavy storms had passed. Sam tilted his head back to rest it against them, the wings making the silken locks of his long hair rustle from their raw power as barely there as it was in this perceived reality. His scalp sang with tingling sensations that raced deliciously up and down his spine to ping throughout the rest of his body.

“Oh Gabriel…..”, Sam breathed out the archangel’s name like the prayer it was and it resonated with the eartheral that was Gabriel.

“Kiss me.”, Gabriel said, pleaded, begged, beseeched like he was dying, and perhaps part of him was, and Sam’s touch was the only thing that could bring him back from the brink. It hurt him to do so. Pagan gods and archangels alike didn’t beg or least they weren’t supposed to, but he was for this. Gabriel needed and was suffering from it like only a direct creation of God could do, with every flicker of his Grace. It was threatening to consume him by bloody, existence shattering inches.

“I can’t. I ruin everything I love.”, Sam said desperately, wishing and wanting. If Gabriel had been human, his face would have been bruised by now from the hunter’s stress tightened grip on him. A war waged in Sam and he had no idea which side he should throw his lot in with. “Everyone one I
love dies. I can’t lose you.”.

Sam hadn’t know what to expect so the wide eyed wonder in shades of swirling gold was a complete shock to receive. “You…..You love me?”, Gabriel said slowly, his mouth a little slack from shock, tasting the truth of the hunter’s words like a fine heady wine of completion.

Unlike his brother who had near terminal emotional constipation, Sam was far more honest with himself and willing to admit the obvious aloud. He had always been the rebel in his family of suppressors for that. “Yeah, I really think I do.”, Sam said softly. “You mean a lot to me, despite everything that has happened between us in the past. I think you are braver than you would like to admit and love the world as much as us if not more having lived longer in it. You’re funny and kind and I can’t fuck this up and lose you like I’ve lost just about everyone else in my life by just existing.”.

“Kiss me, Sam.”, Gabriel sobbed, the sound of it wounded and lost. The archangel felt like he was breaking from the inside out as he pressed them closer together in the cocoon of his wings, leaning up as he pulled Sam down part way to rest their foreheads together. “Don’t let this all be in vain, not because you’re scared or I’ll die. I’ll won’t let that happen. We’ll stop Michael and we’ll kick Lucifer back in his cage but I can only do it if you’re with me. I’m so tired……..”. He trailed off, Sam’s hands still holding his face, those his touch of light, felt too fleeting, Gabriel’s own still upon the hunter’s wrists, keeping him locked into place. But for how long? If Sam really wanted to go, Gabriel would not keep him against his will as much as he would like to leave Sam in this pocket dimension of his own making until the Apocolypse blew over. So he stared unflinching at Sam with wide eyes made of gold and ether, hiding nothing from him.

Under the archangel’s open gaze, Sam shuddered as ‘what he wanted to do’ and ‘what he should do’ fought, making he feel weak and sick and so utterly human, but that was what won out in the end. Him being human, as he whispered, “I’m so sorry.”.

Gabriel closed his eyes, feeling a scream build up in his throat, his true voice threatening to emerge in the sudden onslaught of devastating grief and the eternal promise of utter solitude. He ended up swallowing it all back as lips were pressed to his own with force, tongue and teeth, Sam smashing them together like Gabriel was the cure to every horror in his life. Partially in shock but mostly because Sam was an enthusiastic kisser, the archangel parted his thin lips to have all of his mouth explored, like Sam was mapping it out for future reference. He let go of Sam’s wrists to wrap his arms tightly around his hunter, sealing the line of their bodies so that not even one of his own feathers could be slipped in between them.

The kiss was that of hunger and held the deperastion of two beings that were starving for lifetimes, one more so than the other. It was even more than that though. It was a silent promise between the two, Sam and Gabriel losing themselves to each other as they touched, ran light hands over each other’s bodies, more comforting than sexual, like they assuring each other that they were still there in this moment and this was real, that this was happening.

The kiss was only broken due to Sam’s very human need to breath, the hunter left gasping as he stared back at Gabriel with scared yet desperate eyes. “I’m sorry. I’m selfish but it’s been so long since anyone other than Dean cared about me or even wanted me around. You’re going to die and it’s going to be all my fault because I can’t be stronger.”, Sam gasped, his own cheek growing moist as all his hidden fears and sorrow spilled out down his face, his hands clinging to Gabriel, still stroking small circles into the archangel’s skin.

“Oh, Sammy, you don’t need to be strong for me. I’m more than enough for the both of us. I’ll protect you and yes, I might die trying but it’s my decision, not yours.”, Gabriel murmured, digging
his fingers through Sam’s long hair because he like the sensation of the locks running along his
touch as he used it as leverage to pull the hunter back in close. The next kiss was sweeter and less
frantic, a promise still as Gabriel bound himself to the hunter with a small connection of flesh
touching flesh ever so softly.

“What are you doing?”, Sam asked, because as much as he didn’t like to admit even to himself, he
wasn’t exactly human anymore and hadn’t been since he was a baby. He could feel strange
swirling energies linger over his skin to seep into it, mixing with the essence of him.

“Going to protect you but you have to let me do it. Give me permission.”, Gabriel told him, his
tone unusually solemn, closer to his true voice than that of a Trickster. “Do you trust me, kiddo?”

“With everything except Monopoly money.”, the corners of Sam’s mouth quirking up, even though
it wasn’t really that funny. He didn’t know was Gabriel was up to but as long as it meant that they
were not going to part ways anytime soon, he was good with it. He was holding an archangel who
loved him in his lap, wrapped in wings of light and glory being told he didn’t have to brave for
once in a life full of devastating loss, seemingly endless tragedy, and permanent horror. Even if he
met this end of days sooner rather than later as the Devil’s meat puppet, Sam knew he would
always cherish this moment as one of his best to his dying day.

“Smart ass.”, Gabriel smirked briefly before taking on a look of deep concentration which on an
angel was absolute in every sense of the word, giving off the patience of stone and the tides.
Gabriel put one hand on Sam’s shoulder, holding it with a firm grip while the other rested over the
hunter’s heart lightly. The hold upon him was necessary, Sam realized as he jolting, feeling his
own flesh begin to burn, Gabriel’s hand glowing with a gold light that was too bright for Sam to
look at directly. It disentrigate most of Sam’s shirt, leaving it in tatters to reveal a long and lean
sculpted torso of tanned skin.

The light intensified, Sam turning his head with his eyes clenched shut in a vain attempt to shield
himself from it. To his surprise, there was no pain, only the feeling of liquid bliss that took to
Sam’s blood seamlessly, carrying it to every part of his body as he curling his toes inward and
arched his back from it. Sam flung his head back, trying to remember to breath as he was bathed in
light that was seeping into him on what felt like a cellular level. He could hear the rush of his own
heart pounding in his ears. Within its quick tempt was a singing that overwhelmed every sense
until all there was, was music sweet and piercing. It only took Sam a moment to realize it was
Gabriel’s true voice, the barest whisper of it, chanting and praying in Enochian as he remade Sam.

The tarnish of demon blood that soiled Sam’s being couldn’t escape that light, that power that was
woven in with life blood. The filth was burned out with the Grace of an archangel, filling Sam with
odd sense of being empty, like part of him was gone forever. It was a momentary feeling, that void
filled up to the brim with and by Gabriel, the archangel touching the edges of Sam’s soul, his
Grace coaxing it with seeking tentative tendrils like it expected to be rejected at any moment.

Sam didn’t so much as give into it as throw himself at it, grabbing greedy spiritual handfuls of
whatever he could as Sam’s soul barreled into Gabriel’s Grace with a force not seen since the
beginning of creation. He was caught body, mind, and soul safely by the archangel who returned
all that the hunter felt with a possession and love that was pure and unbreakabley total.

“Mine.”, Gabriel whispered through him. Sam opened his eyes at the declaration to behold an
archangel of the Lord in all its splendor and glory looming over him, impossibly huge and divine in
its utter, stark beauty, as foreign as it was to him. Gabriel was ancient stars and shimmering
moonlight, velvety darkness beyond twilight, and shining skin of the sun itself merged together to
create an unfeasible creature whose many wings sang songs from the dawn of creation with every
movement. He was true power, the kind of which that could bring the spark of life to bare rock and unmake reality simply with his passing. Gabriel was all this and more and he was claiming Sam as his own.

Because he had to and that it could not be left unsaid, because Gabriel was waiting for it with the patience of the light from dying stars, Sam answered back.

"Mine"

-the end-

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading this story and sticking with the arch. Kudos and comments are always appreciated. :)

End Notes

This will probably be about 6 or 7 chapters long but I promise nothing. Thank you for reading and if you chose to do so, reviews/kudos are always loved and appreciated even if the author is complete shit at responding to them

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