**Running with the Wolves**

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/8663281).

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**Running with the Wolves**

by Dancingdog

**Summary**

Castiel made one mistake and it landed him with a child. Knowing his brothers would never accept an unmated omega with a child, Castiel chose not to tell his family about Samandriel for six years.

But Michael found out anyway and Castiel soon finds himself on the run from his furious family. To save both his and his son's lives, he flees into the wilderness, where the 'wild folk' reside and they must learn to live as wolves rather than humans if they are to survive.

Except, the wild folk are not the savages Castiel was led to believe whilst growing up, and he finds that maybe being a member of Dean's pack isn't so terrible afterall.

Then his brother, Gabriel, shows up and takes an interest in Dean's omega brother, Sam. The problem?

The Winchesters and Novaks have been enemies for centuries.
Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
For six years Castiel managed to stay off his brothers’ radars. Six years of peace and quiet for both him and his son, Samandriel. Then, Michael had found out about his unmated omega brother's young child and Castiel's life had been turned upside down.

The Novak family was large and well-known amongst most of the American population, be they 'civilised' or 'wild' folk. The Novaks were powerful due to their wealth and network of contacts, and few challenged their authority in matters of business, trade or finance.

Michael was the alpha head of the family (or ‘pack’ if you were one of the wild folk) and many people cowered from his intense gaze, stiff posture and ruthless manner of negotiation. He was intimidating not because of his strength or his growl (although those were also impressive), but because he could take away everything you'd ever worked for just by signing on a specific dotted line.

He was all about respectful appearances and how the public viewed his family, so for Castiel to have a six year old child he'd never informed his head alpha about was a very serious breech of family etiquette and protocol.

Thus, Michael had stormed into Castiel's home, growling threateningly and scent radiating anger and irritation as Lucifer, Raphael and Gabriel trailed him.

"Castiel!" Snarled Michael as he sniffed the air. "Reveal yourself!"

With no response forthcoming, Michael narrowed his eyes and stalked over to Castiel's bedroom, trying the door once to find it locked. He rumbled again.

"Open this door, Castiel."

Inside the bedroom, as Michael hammered mercilessly on the door, Castiel crouched in a corner, hugging Samandriel tight to his chest as they both remained as silent as possible. They knew what would happen if Michael managed to break through that door.

Samandriel had no desire to see his father's limbs broken or his body scarred and bloodied and Castiel refused to let his brothers anywhere near his child.

"I know you're in there, brother," hissed Michael. "Stand before your lead alpha."

Castiel tucked Samandriel further into his chest, nuzzling his hair comfortingly when the little alpha's eyes began to well with frightened tears.

"Is this why you never followed the family business?" Growled Michael. "You were too busy spreading your legs for every disgusting street alpha? You let yourself be knotted and bred by some low-life drunk and decided not to abort your abomination of a child? What is wrong with you? Mother and father raised you better than that; we raised you better than that!"

Samandriel let out a quiet whimper and Castiel kissed his forehead softly. He loved his son; nothing would ever change that, despite what Michael said.

"Michael, maybe you should calm down. Maybe this is the reason we were never told-"

"Silence, Gabriel. He knows protocol; this sort of behaviour can't go unpunished."
Castiel closed his eyes. Gabriel had always defended him when their older brothers scolded or belittled him. He was the only one in the family who had known about Samandriel from his birth, and he had been a very supportive uncle and sibling since knowing about Castiel's drunken mistake with that alpha all those years ago. Gabriel had promised never to tell their brothers about Samandriel for fear of what Michael, Raphael or Lucifer would do to Castiel or the young alpha if they ever found out the truth.

Yet somehow, Michael had found out and now there was nothing anyone could do about it.

"Castiel! Come here right now and I may not reprimand you as severely as I will if you continue to evade me."

The bedroom door slowly creaked open and Gabriel's eyes flashed with fear as his three older brothers growled lowly in anticipation of what was to come, teeth slightly bared in warning.

Then suddenly, a great black wolf with legs which faded to a reddish tan leapt through the door, ears flattened to its head and blue eyes cold and unforgiving as it snarled at Michael and tackled him to the ground, clawing and biting furiously at the shocked alpha.

Then Michael was morphing into a large white wolf, attacking Castiel with just as much vigour, and Lucifer and Raphael looked ready to join in.

Gabriel watched as Samandriel crept out of the apartment and as soon as he was out of sight, Gabriel transformed into a golden wolf and pounced on Castiel, pushing him away from Michael. The two tussled for a moment, snapping and growling at one another, before Gabriel whispered a "run" close beside his little brother's ear, and Castiel kicked his brother off him and scrambled through the door, after his son.

As Castiel sprinted through the corridors, snatching up Samandriel by the scruff of his white and black neck, he heard his brothers yelling over how Gabriel had let him escape, and soon enough, heavy paws could be heard pounding through the corridors of the apartment building.

Castiel pushed himself harder than he'd ever run before and he didn't stop until he reached the outskirts of the city, where urban civilisation met the rural wild lands. Castiel's brothers would never venture outside into the wilderness, but if Castiel attempted to stay within city limits, there would be nowhere he could hide where he wouldn't be tracked by his family members or their associates.

He had no choice but to flee civilisation.

The problem with that was he was used to living in humanoid form. In the city, people worked and lived in houses. They drove cars and bought their food from the local supermarket.

Wild folk didn't do that. They chose to live out their lives in their canine forms (slightly bigger than the regular wolf). They hunted in packs, killed whatever they deemed a threat and crowded into whatever pathetic shelter they stumbled across during their travels. They had territories and they followed the true alpha, beta and omega hierarchy, with omegas being at the bottom and alphas ensuring the rest of their pack did as they were told.

Castiel frowned. Samandriel would not be looked upon fondly by any pack leaders. He was the alpha son of an unmated omega which meant he was a threat to any alphas or betas who may want to take Castiel in as a breeder.

With Castiel being no good at fighting or hunting, his only option was to become a breeder if he was to join a pack and no one would want to breed him if he already had an alpha pup. They would
probably try to kill Samandriel in fear of him being competition for their own unborn offspring. Everybody knew wild folk didn't have the same regard for life as civilised folk.

Castiel shook his head. No, no one was touching his son. It would be better if he stayed away from packs and attempted to live as an individual.

It would be nearly impossible with all the dangers of rival wolves, violent creatures and scarce food threatening their survival, but Castiel was determined to keep Samandriel safe.

"Dad?" Asked Samandriel uncertainly and Castiel leaned down to nuzzle his head. They had to leave now before Michael could track their scents.

"Come on," the omega murmured as he nudged his pup towards the forest and Samandriel hesitated slightly before carefully padding into the dark tangle of trees.

* * *

Living in the forest was a lot more difficult than Castiel had anticipated.

The only shelter available tended to be trees and bushes, and when it rained, the flimsy vegetation had a habit of collapsing or snapping and Castiel and Samandriel were left soaked to the bone for hours on end.

Food was also hard to come by. To eat, Castiel needed to hunt and being as inexperienced as he was, smaller creatures like rabbits and rodents tended to evade him; far too used to being chased for Castiel's disappointing attempts. Larger animals like foxes and deer could sense his trepidation and would fight back, and Castiel had a few antler scars to prove it.

Then there were the venomous snakes and arachnids that both omega and pup had to watch out for, and the other packs of wolves who didn't take too kindly to Castiel's scent being in their territory.

After two months of being cold and hungry, coupled with the various scars and bruises he'd accumulated from hunts or near-scuffles with other wolves, Castiel was ready to give up and return to his abandoned apartment despite Michael, Lucifer and Raphael still being on the hunt for him.

He limped into the latest shelter; a deformed shrub littered with purple berries which stained their fur an odd colour whenever they sat under it, and dropped their evening meal at Samandriel's feet; an anorexic rabbit which had definitely seen better days.

The little alpha glanced at his father gratefully as his stomach rumbled loudly, and he tucked into the meal eagerly, making sure to leave some good bits for his starving father.

Castiel sighed defeatedly as he lowered himself to the ground and began to lick a few cuts Samandriel had gained from their latest near-death experience with a particularly aggressive pack they'd failed to realise was behind them.

After the pair had polished off the measly meal, stomachs finally hardened to raw meat, Samandriel nestled between his father's front paws, curling into his mud-ridden fur as he tried to find comfort in Castiel's scent.

Castiel frowned unhappily, heart breaking at seeing his child looking so weak and vulnerable and he
tucked him under his head as the pair began to drift off into a restless sleep.

An hour later they were startled awake by a low growl and Castiel immediately shoved Samandriel behind him upon spotting the yellow eyes staring at them not too far away.

The creature stepped out of the dark shadows and into the eerie moonlight and Castiel's breath hitched as a huge grey wolf riddled with deep scars bared his teeth in challenge.

Then there were more growls and snarls from all around them and Castiel's eyes widened at the realisation they were surrounded.

The grey wolf seemed to smile sadistically at them before snapping his teeth once and suddenly, about a dozen figures were leaping at Castiel and his son, and the omega grabbed Samandriel by the scruff of his neck and raced between two feral wolves.

He yelped as jaws latched on to his bad leg and he kicked violently at his attacker before sprinting further into the forest, heart pumping loudly in his ears as he heard the pack take up the chase.

Thankfully, the scents in the next part of the forest began to change and their pursuers began to slow to a halt, and the next time he risked a look behind him, the pack were slowly turning around and trotting back to wherever they had come from.

Chest heaving and leg burning with agony as blood trickled down it, Castiel fell to the floor and tried to catch his breath. Samandriel whined softly in fear as he tried to bury himself in his father's neck, and the omega licked his cheek gently.

"I'm okay," he assured and Samandriel released a breath of relief as he moved to clean the blood from his father's injured leg.

Both their heads shot up at the strange feeling of someone observing them.

Castiel dragged his son back between his paws when he looked up to find a lone brown wolf watching them from a fair distance away, atop a small hill.

Wary, Castiel scented the air and was dismayed to find the other figure too far away to identify.

To his alarm, the other wolf moved closer and Castiel gulped at the sheer size of the stranger. This was the biggest and strongest wolf Castiel had ever seen; stronger even than Lucifer. He would have no chance in a fight against the other male.

He was shocked by the scent of omega.

The other wolf, who Castiel could now see had chocolate coloured fur with flecks of pale brown interspersed between the base colour, scented the air cautiously before tilting his head.

"...Hello?" Castiel tried, hoping maybe this lone wolf would want to team up with him and his son. He may not trust anyone in the forest, but Castiel knew others would think twice about attacking someone of this stranger's size, even if he was omega. He could prove an asset to Castiel and Samandriel.

The other wolf took a step back, then retreated down the other side of the hill, out of sight.

Castiel sighed in disappointment and led his son towards a thick patch of bushes which should've provided some sort of shelter for at least a couple of hours whilst they slept. The autumn night was too chilly to be sleeping out in the open.
Just as they began to settle down, the brown wolf returned. With a friend.

Alpha.

Castiel stiffened and placed a paw in front of Samandriel. He scented the air, wondering if the two were mates, but whilst they had similar scents, they seemed to be more of a sibling nature. The two were brothers.

He bristled as they trotted down the hill and he poised to pick up Samandriel in case the need to escape arose.

"Back off," growled Castiel. "We're not bothering anyone. Leave us alone."

The intruding alpha rumbled threateningly. His fur was sandy with dark browns painting his legs, muzzle and the tip of his tail.

"You're in our territory," he said gruffly. "If anyone should leave, it's you."

Castiel narrowed his eyes. "We have nowhere else to go." He was tired of being pushed around; he just wanted to sleep.

"Not my problem," huffed the alpha and Castiel growled again. Arrogant alpha; always looking out for themselves.

The omega was surprised when the alpha's brother (the larger of the pair) nuded his side in reprimand.

The brothers shared a meaningful look and Castiel felt like squirming as the alpha's gaze landed back on him, scrutinising both him and his son.

He took in the blood pouring down Castiel's wounded leg and the amount of dirt caking both their bodies. He glanced at Castiel's protruding ribs and Samandriel's shivering, skinny form and sighed defeatedly.

The other omega twitched a triumphant smile before glancing at Cas with soft hazel eyes.

"Come with us," he said and Castiel knew it wasn't a request even if it sounded like one. He didn't want to follow them back to their pack or wherever they were taking him, but he knew if he didn't, he would be deemed an enemy and would be chased out of the area.

Castiel nodded warily and stayed a few metres behind them both, his pup by his side as they traipsed up the hill and into a lighter part of the forest, where the moon shone between the trees and provided visibility for the inhabitants of that part of the forest.

A few curious wolves of varying sizes and colours padded into the light, sniffing the air uncertainly.

"What's your name?" asked the large omega, glancing back at Castiel.

Castiel eyed his surroundings cautiously, working out possible escape routes.

"Castiel and this is Samandriel," he replied and the other omega smiled politely.

"I'm Sam and this is my brother and pack leader, Dean."

Castiel's eyes widened fractionally. Pack leader? Great; he'd practically led his pup into the claws of a lead alpha. He subtly slid closer to Samandriel.
"Would you like to bathe in the river first or sleep?" Asked Sam and Castiel hesitated. Sleep sounded wonderful, but he hadn't had a wash in weeks and he could barely smell his own scent any more from all the mud covering his body. Samandriel was no better.

"Bathe, please," murmured Castiel and Sam glanced at his brother before they parted ways and Castiel was left to follow the larger omega.

Sam trotted towards the sounding of flowing water and Castiel would never admit to the relieved sigh he made upon getting his first glimpse of the clear, inviting water.

"Take as much time as you need. I'll be back in a few minutes to take you back to camp," said Sam before turning and trotting back to where his brother had disappeared off to.

Castiel relaxed at finally being alone and slunk into the water, wounded leg rejoicing as the injury was cleaned. Samandriel carefully slid in beside him and began to clean himself, ducking his head under a few times and shaking when water got into his ears.

Castiel quirked a smile and began to clean the mud off them both.

A little while later, Sam returned, a small smile lighting his face and his tail up and obviously content.

"We've got a place set out for you," stated the chocolate wolf and Castiel blinked. A place set out for them? As in a place to sleep? Why would they do that for a stranger who had been intruding on their territory?

Sam looked mildly amused by his expression. "Come on," he insisted and Castiel slowly climbed out of the river, Samandriel copying.

Then Sam stiffened and his hackles raised as he lowered his head and bared his teeth.

Startled by the sudden hostility, Castiel took a step backwards, Samandriel cowering behind him.

"You're a Novak," snarled Sam and Castiel gulped. His family's reputation wasn't the best. They were known to be cold and cruel to others, and rarely cared about the needs of those around them. They were powerful and used people how they saw fit, and it was no secret they despised the wild folk. They made it nearly impossible for the wild folk to live in urban areas and they drove them out with threats even when they were trying to live in their humanoid forms.

"I am," agreed Castiel and Sam growled.

"You're not welcome here."

"I'm not here to threaten you. I've been driven out of my home by my family. They wanted to kill my pup. I promise you, I'm not like them," said Castiel quietly.

"Why should I believe you? This could be a plan to wipe out our pack. It wouldn't be the first time your family has done something like that," hissed Sam and Castiel winced. Throughout the centuries, his family had wiped quite a few pack names from existence. Mainly those who rivalled the Novak family in power and influence.

"I assure you I've never even heard of your pack. I stumbled across you accidentally. I'm just trying to keep my son safe."

Sam snorted in disbelief. "You've never heard of the Winchester pack? Right, sure."
Castiel's eyes widened. *Winchesters?* They were one of the largest and most impressive packs in the wilderness. They worked flawlessly as a team, were known to be intelligent and people looked to them for advice and help. They were like royalty amongst the wild folk and people looked up to them with awe.

And for those reasons, they were also one of the Novak's greatest enemies.

However, the Winchesters were too clever to be caught off guard by the Novaks and they continued to evade their attempts of assassination. Other wolves learned from them and rebelled against the Novaks and over the centuries, a deep hatred was formed between the Winchester and Novak packs.

But last Castiel heard, the Winchesters were led by a ruthless leader by the name of John. He didn't suffer fools gladly and was known to be an expert hunter and killer of anything he deemed a threat to his family.

So who were Dean and Sam? His sons?

"...I've heard of the Winchesters, but I had no idea you were them," said Castiel carefully. "I promise you this isn't a plot to kill you or your family. I really am just on the run."

Sam glared at him for a few moments, before he scowled and gestured for the black wolf to follow him.

"Fine. But one wrong move and I'll kill you myself."

Castiel let out a shaky breath and began to follow.

The camp was pleasant. More pleasant than Castiel had expected. It was light and a little more open than the rest of the forest, the trees here seeming to form a fence around the area the Winchesters had claimed as theirs, and the wolves residing there chatted amiably and quietly. A couple of female pups played nearby and a male pup stood by his mother watching them longingly.

A couple of adults were playing a game of tug with a thick stick, and they laughed when another wolf snatched the stick and ran off with it, a chase beginning.

Castiel cocked his head. Where was the brutal fighting and yelling he'd always heard wild folk partook in? Were was all the aggression and blood?

As Castiel neared the camp, a few wolves broke off from their conversations to stand and growl at him. They recognised his scent and didn't want him anywhere near here.

Dean appeared from a large patch of hollowed out bushes, and it was obvious they were sleeping quarters. They actually looked rather cozy and Castiel was impressed by the fact that they had obviously been created by the pack members through hard work.

The sandy alpha frowned at his suddenly wary pack and he scented the air to see what the fuss was about.

Then he snarled and stalked over to Castiel.

"Give me one reason why I shouldn't kill you and your pup."

Castiel stood protectively in front of Samandriel as he scowled.

"As I told your brother, I had no idea who you were. If I had, I would have fled the moment I saw
you. As it is, I'm on the run from the rest of my family."

"Why?" Demanded Dean. "Why would Castiel Novak run from his family? Your brother is head alpha isn't he? Michael?"

Castiel nodded, heart sinking at the fact Dean obviously knew who he was.

"He didn't take too kindly to a drunken one-night stand," murmured Castiel as he glanced subtly to Samandriel. "Now I'm hunted and so is my pup."

Dean frowned. "Why? Why would he try to harm you for that?"

Castiel blinked, confused. Was Dean joking?

"I'm an unmated omega who didn't inform his pack leader of his pup for six years. Why do you think he's hunting me down?"

Dean pulled a face and even Sam was looking confused now.

"Why didn't you tell him of your pup?"

Castiel's eyes widened. Dean couldn't be that stupid, could he?

"Didn't you hear the part where I'm an unmated omega with a child?"

The sandy wolf frowned. "So?"

Castiel was speechless.

"...Wouldn't you do the same to Sam if he suddenly revealed he was carrying a pup when he wasn't mated? Wouldn't you want to reprimand him for going behind your back and being bred by an alpha you hadn't approved of?"

Dean huffed in disgust.

"Sam's my brother. I would never hurt him or drive him out of the pack. Sure, I might be a little annoyed he wasn't more careful, but accidents happen. As long as he wasn't forced by the alpha, he can do whatever he likes."

Sam tilted his head. "Why would your brothers want to hurt you just because you have a pup? You're the youngest and an omega. What makes you think they would kick you out of the family?"

Castiel raised an eyebrow. "Because Michael barged into my home and tried to take a chunk out of me whilst spewing obscenities about how I didn't join the family business because I was too busy spreading my legs for vile street alphas' knots."

Sam and Dean blinked, eyes widening in shock.

"...Your own brother said that about you?" Asked Sam and Castiel nodded.

"He attacked you?" Scowled Dean and Castiel nodded again.

The brothers shared a look, seemingly communicating telepathically with one another before reaching a decision.

"Fine, you can stay with us until you find another place," stated Dean. "But I swear, if we find out
you're lying about any of this, you'll have more than a damaged leg to worry about."

Castiel nodded solemnly as he bowed his head in a show of respect and gratefulness, Samandriel quickly copying his movements.

Dean seemed a little surprised at the action but he turned to the rest of the growling pack and raised his voice for all to hear.

"Castiel is under our protection for now. We will not harm him unless his claims of amnesty prove fraudulent."

And with that said, the other pack members immediately relaxed and continued with whatever they were doing before the interruption.

Castiel was stunned by the sudden change in mood.

The Winchester brothers glanced at one another again, communicating silently before Sam gestured for Castiel to follow him. He led him to a small, hollowed out bush a little distance away from the others.

"You sleep here," mumbled Sam and Castiel had a feeling the end of that sentence should have been 'where we can keep an eye on you'.

The black and tan wolf nodded and slunk into the bush, curling around Samandriel as the pup cuddled into him. They really were exhausted, having not slept properly for days and as they settled down, Castiel protecting his pup like any good parent, the pair missed Sam's sympathetic gaze before he wandered off to chat to his brother.

For the first time in weeks, Castiel and Samandriel slept dreamlessly.
Chapter 2

Castiel was woken up bright and early the next morning by the sound of his own stomach protesting its emptiness.

He yawned and carefully stepped over his son, nuzzling him once to make sure he wasn't cold and then he limped into the open.

The leaves on the trees were gorgeous shades of golds and reds and oranges, and distantly, Castiel could hear the river flowing in the background as a gentle breeze rustled through the flora. Now he wasn't in so much danger, Castiel could begin to appreciate some of the beauty the wilderness had to offer.

He was just contemplating whether he should leave Samandriel alone with the Winchester pack whilst he hunted for some food, when Dean slowly padded over to him.

It was clear the alpha wasn't happy about him being there, but Castiel was too surprised by how green Dean's eyes were to take offence to it. Had they been that green last night?

"Good morning," Castiel murmured softly and Dean flicked his tail in acknowledgement.

"Good morning," he said suspiciously. "You're up early."

Castiel's stomach rumbled again as if on cue and Dean startled at the sound.

"Ah, I see," he said a little sheepishly. "We'll be starting a hunt in a couple of hours. Think you can wait that long?"

Castiel nodded and lowered his gaze respectfully. Technically, as a stranger he shouldn't be conversing with the pack alpha. He was too low in the hierarchy to be of any importance.

Dean watched him silently.

"Can you hunt?" The alpha asked after a few moments.

Castiel shook his head. "Not very well, alpha," admitted the omega. He'd been too tired and panicked last night to remember correct protocol for addressing important members of the pack, but now he'd recharged, he could think enough to use their proper titles.

Dean scrunched up his nose but otherwise said nothing.

"I don't suppose city life requires much hunting," he said quietly and Castiel briefly wondered why Dean was still talking to him. He was a member of a rival pack, and he was an omega at that. He was the very lowest of Dean's concerns, so why was the alpha chatting to him?

"I assume you've never been a decoy either?" Asked Dean and Castiel shook his head again.

"No, alpha."

Dean paused and an awkward silence fell between them.

"Are you good at fighting?" Dean tried and Castiel hesitated at that one. Why would Dean ask an omega that? Alphas were the fighters and omegas were the ones that stereotypically needed protecting. They were seen as far weaker than any other secondary gender. Maybe it was a test to see
if he would be submissive to the pack leader; if he would follow orders when he was given them.

"...No, alpha," replied Castiel, thinking that's what Dean wanted to hear.

Dean scowled irritatedly. "What are you good at?"

Castiel blinked in surprise before he realised what he was meant to say. He gulped at the thought of his fears coming to reality.

Slowly, he slunk over to Dean, tail tucked between his legs and ears flat to his head as he crouched low to the ground in the perfect submissive posturing. Dean watched him with a frown and startled when Castiel began to nuzzle gently at his neck, licking and scenting at his throat.

Then the omega shakily turned and presented to Dean, chest pressed to the floor as his rear lifted high, tail shifting out of the way.

Dean gasped sharply as Castiel whimpered.

"I won't fight, I promise. Just please, don't kill my son; he's not competition for any of your pack."

"Get up," Dean hissed and when Castiel turned, the alpha was averting his gaze, looking mortified.

Castiel took a step back. Had he offended Dean? Was this alpha not the type to associate himself with breeder omegas? Did he save them for his pack members to use?

"I'm sorry if I offended you, alpha, I just thought-"

"Don't call me that," snapped Dean and Castiel took another step back.

Suddenly the alpha sighed, shaking his head wearily.

"What do you think we are? Savages? We don't try to knot every omega we meet, despite what civilised folk might tell you. Yes, there is a hierarchy, but we don't live in the stone ages. Omegas aren't used merely for breeding or for sexual pleasure. In this pack, we don't have breeders; I won't allow it."

The alpha scowled at the thought and Castiel blinked in surprise. That's not what his family had told him. They said all wild folk used omega breeders to increase their numbers and in some cases to carry the pack name on from leader to leader.

Dean's gaze hardened. "And all that about killing your pup? We're not monsters. We don't slaughter children."

Castiel felt something inside him relax at the way the alpha growled that out. He seemed sincere and disgusted at the thought of mindless pup slaughter.

Samandriel was safe.

"I apologise. I was taught from an early age this is what you expected. Forgive me, I meant no offence, al-" he cut himself off. Dean had told him not to call him alpha, but what else could he address him as?

"Dean," finished the alpha with a small, pleased smile. "Just call me Dean. There's no need for traditional titles."

"...Dean," said Castiel uncertainly, but when the alpha nodded, Castiel offered a brief smile.
Dean's gaze wandered to his sleeping pack and for the first time, Castiel saw a fondness in his eyes and protectiveness in his stance. Dean was proud of his pack, of his family.

"Samandriel will be safe with us, I promise," murmured Dean before his curious gaze landed on Castiel. "And so will you, as long as you're truthful with us."

Castiel bowed his head again as a sign of respect and Dean let the gesture slide. "I don't expect you to believe me, but I'm not lying to you. I really am on the run and meeting you was completely accidental."

Dean lifted an eyebrow but said nothing. After a long pause, the alpha tilted his head.

"With your injury you will be of no use in a hunt. Stay here and guard the pups and the camp with Lisa, Bobby and Ellen. In time we'll expect you to hunt, but for now you should recover, and to do that I suggest you see Jody. She should have something to take the pain away."

At Castiel's blank face Dean cracked a smile.

"Black beta. More bite than bark. You'll know her when you see her. Don't worry, she's gentle," he winked and Castiel's smile became more genuine.

At that moment Sam sleepily trotted over to them, yawning widely and showing off his sharp canines.

"And what time do you call this?" Teased Dean, earning himself an unimpressed glance.

"Time I could've spent asleep rather than preparing for a dawn hunt," groused the larger omega. "Remind me again why we get up so early?"

"Because most creatures know there are two seven o'clocks in a day, unlike you," grinned Dean.

Sam shot him a glare and grumbled something that sounded suspiciously like 'Jerk'.

Dean rolled his eyes and nudged his brother's side with his muzzle.

"Go jump in the river. You're beginning to ripen."

Sam huffed and clamped down on Dean's ear, growling playfully as the alpha startled and tried to shake him off.

"Get off me, you giant fur-ball," rumbled Dean, but there was no heat behind his words and eventually Sam let go, allowing Dean to shake himself off.

Castiel watched Sam retreat to the river in stunned silence. The brothers' interaction had shocked him. If he or any of his brothers had even thought of doing something like that to Michael, the alpha would have probably ripped one of their limbs off for disrespectfulness.

For an omega to threaten the head alpha, even if it was just playful, usually there was severe consequences for the omega. Castiel had learned that the hard way when he had nipped at his father's tail when he was barely three years old.

Zachariah had smacked him across the room into a wall. He'd never made the mistake again.

"...You look like you've just seen a ghost," frowned Dean and Castiel shook his head to clear it.

"...You allow your brother to disrespect you like that?" Castiel asked quietly and Dean looked
"Disrespect me? Sam didn't do anything wrong, what are you talking about?"

"Biting you like that. You didn't punish him," stated Castiel wondering if he was missing something.

Dean paused as he stared at Castiel in disbelief. He shook his head.

"What do they teach you about us? How cruel do you think we are? Sam's my brother; unless he tore one of my legs off I can be certain he wasn't intending on causing me pain." The alpha closed his eyes exasperatedly. "Do all civilised folk think we're just killing machines? We care about family, just like you do."

Castiel frowned. That couldn't be right; wild folk were supposed to be savage and ruthless and civilised folk were supposed to be the calm and intelligent ones... so why had Zachariah hit Castiel into a wall when he was three and Dean hadn't batted an eyelid when Sam had chewed on his ear?

"...My apologies. It's what I've been taught."

Dean obviously hadn't realised he meant that's how his father had taught him to act and snorted disgustedly.

"Well, despite what you've learned, we don't do that sort of thing here. I suggest you find Jody to help with that leg," grumbled Dean before stalking off and Castiel's ears flattened to his head at the realisation he'd offended Dean without intending to.

He limped towards his temporary sleeping quarters and opted to stay out of the pack's way. There was no point in drawing any more attention to himself, so he curled back around his peacefully sleeping pup and nuzzled him softly, reassuring himself that the little alpha was okay.

Samandriel was all he had left now.

* * *

"Hey, Sleeping Beauty, get up. Come on, I want to take a look at that leg before we start the hunt. Don't want any infections festering in there."

A no-nonsense feminine voice woke Castiel from his apparent nap and he lifted his head to find a black beta wolf staring at him.

"...I'm fine," murmured Castiel and the beta shot him an unimpressed glare.

"That's not what Dean tells me. Now come out."

Castiel blinked. Dean had told the beta about his injured leg? Even after offending him?

"Hey! Anyone in there?" Huffed the beta, presumably Jody. "Don't make me drag you out of there."

Castiel scrambled out of the bush and presented his leg to the beta, who rummaged in a cloth bag beside her. Castiel had seen the same cloth bags in all the other sleeping quarters the previous night and he was curious as to what was in them.
He managed to peek inside Jody's and saw a mess of human clothes (not many), fruit and dried food (probably emergency supplies), a water bottle (for when they were on the move), and a myriad of medicines, bandages, needles, and small personal belongings like a phone and toothbrush and comb.

"Get a good look?" Asked Jody knowingly and Castiel averted his gaze, embarrassed.

"Apologies, ma'am. I was curious."

Jody chuckled. "I like you. You're far more polite than most of these clowns."

There was an indignant "hey!" from somewhere behind Jody and the beta rolled her eyes.

"Shut it, Harry!"

The beta picked up a bottle of clear liquid with her teeth and poured it over Castiel's leg. The omega hissed at the liquid stung his broken skin.

"Sorry, kiddo. Cleaning alcohol. Got to get all the bacteria out," grimaced Jody in sympathy.

Then she pressed some cotton wool to the wound and gently began to wrap a bandage around it.

"Not big enough to warrant stitches," she explained. "Don't worry, you'll live," she winked and Castiel couldn't help but flick his tail in amusement.

"Thank you," he said sincerely and the beta's gaze softened.

"No problem. Your pup got anything I should be worried about?"

Castiel shook his head and the beta nodded before calling to the rest of the pack.

"All done here!"

Dean gestured for the beta to join them and Castiel suddenly realised the whole pack had been waiting to ensure his injuries weren't life threatening. He was oddly touched by the sentiment and he watched them disappear deeper into the forest.

"I like her," came a young voice from behind Castiel and the omega turned to face his sleepy son. "She's kind and has a nice scent."

Castiel allowed himself a small smile. Jody had the sort of scent you'd associate with a nurturing mother. She may sound impatient, but she didn't smell or act that way.

"I like her too," chuckled Castiel as he nuzzled his pup good morning.

Samandriel stretched and stepped out of the bush, glancing around their surroundings.

"Are we going to stay here?" Asked Samandriel and Castiel hummed thoughtfully.

"For a little while. Until we find somewhere more appropriate."

Samandriel nodded idly as he spotted the camp's other three pups run into the open, yapping and laughing happily as they chased one another.

Castiel followed his son's line of sight and smiled.

"Why don't we get a drink from the river and then you can say hello?"
Samandriel nodded excitedly and the pair trotted towards the river, a little distance from the camp.

When they returned, three adult wolves were up and about, chuckling at the pups' antics or cleaning up after the other members of the pack.

The wolf chuckling was a pretty omega female with black and brown fur, and Castiel guessed that the male omega pup with the same colouring (barring the sandy underbelly and paws) was hers.

He nudged Samandriel in encouragement and the little alpha worked up enough courage to approach the male omega when the two slightly older females began to tussle.

"...Hello," said Samandriel quietly and the tricolour omega froze and took a step back.

"Hey," he said suspiciously and Samandriel's tail fell.

"I'm Samandriel. What's your name?" He tried and the omega frowned.

"...Ben."

"...What are you playing?" Asked Samandriel hesitantly and Ben kicked at a stray pebble.

"Um... tag." The omega paused. "...Do you wanna play?"

Samandriel perked up. "Okay."

Ben quirked a shy smile before pushing on Samandriel's chest with his paw.

"Tag," he grinned before sprinting off after the two other pups and Samandriel blinked before sticking his tongue out determinedly as he leapt after the trio.

Castiel chuckled at the pair and the other adult omega smiled at him as she padded over.

"Lisa," she introduced and Castiel lowered his head politely.

"Castiel," he replied and Lisa giggled at his chivalry.

"Looks like Ben's made a new friend," she offered and Castiel cocked his head to one side.

"He's yours?"

Lisa nodded, gaze full of love and pride as she glanced back to her son.

"He is."

Castiel smiled. "I suppose your mate is proud?"

Lisa chuckled as she shook her head. "Ben's father isn't in the picture. I don't even remember his name."

Castiel blinked. Wait... did that mean...?

Lisa smirked slyly at him.

"What? An omega can't have a little fun?"

Castiel clamped his mouth shut and Lisa snickered. She soon sobered as she glanced back at Ben.
"I might not have planned for him, but I definitely wouldn't know what to do without him. He's my world."

Castiel slowly turned his attention to his son and knew he felt the same way about his own pup.

"I can tell by your expression you have a similar story to tell," smiled Lisa and Castiel closed his eyes wearily.

"It's the reason I'm here." He frowned as he realised how that sounded. "Not that I wouldn't do anything for Samandriel, but my brothers aren't fond of the idea of an unmated omega raising a child."

Lisa pulled a sympathetic face. "The people here don't hold those kinds of ideals. If they did, I wouldn't be here." She turned to face him. "You're safe here, Castiel. You and your pup."

Castiel glanced at her, taking in her soft brown eyes and patient expression, and he couldn't help but smile.

"Thank you," he murmured sincerely and Lisa grinned brightly before raising an eyebrow as her son barrelled into her, Samandriel hot on his heels.

The black and white alpha pounced on Ben, shouting "Tag!" as he scarpered off in the opposite direction and Ben huffed out a laugh as he scrambled to his feet.

He eyed his mother slyly and poked her leg before scampering away, cackling.

Lisa chuckled and growled playfully as she chased the four hyper pups and Castiel found himself laughing with them.

Then suddenly, Lisa bowled into him, knocking him off balance as she pinned him to the floor.

"Tag," she smirked before carefully getting off him, avoiding his injured leg as she herded the pups away from him, and Castiel blinked before shaking his head and bounding after them.

"Idjits," came a gruff voice and Castiel looked up to find an older alpha rolling his eyes, but he wore a small smile and looked mildly amused by their antics so Castiel shrugged at the grey and tan wolf and continued the chase.

By the time the rest of the pack returned, Castiel had found out the older alpha's name was Bobby, and although he liked to pretend he was rough and hardened to the world, he had a heart the size of a watermelon and was absolutely fantastic with the pups. He even spoke of Sam and Dean as if they were his own children and Castiel couldn't help but wonder at that.

Ellen was a beta with blonde and grey fur and she was the mother of a feisty omega by the name of Jo. Ellen was like Jody; she didn't suffer fools gladly and wouldn't hesitate in ripping you a new one if she thought you'd done something particularly stupid, but she was loyal and protective of the pack; almost like a mother to Sam and Dean, and Castiel liked her instantly.

Castiel's eyes widened when the rest of the pack returned with two fully grown stags in their jaws. How had they managed to bring those down? He could barely catch an elderly rabbit.

Samandriel's tail wiggled excitedly and as a few members of the pack began to tuck in to the hard-earned meal, Samandriel joined his new friends and was about to take a bite when an adult alpha snapped warningly at him.
Shocked and frightened, Samandriel scuttled backwards and buried himself into Castiel's side.

Castiel nuzzled him comfortingly and was about to scold the alpha for scaring his son when the same alpha growled at him.

"Wait your turn, omega," rumbled the oak-coloured alpha and Castiel suddenly realised Samandriel's mistake and bowed his head in apology.

The other members of the pack paid no heed to Castiel and Samandriel's presence and when they'd all finally had their fill, only then was Castiel and his son allowed to eat the leftover scraps.

The meat was tough and of poorer quality and taste than the rest of the animal, but it filled their stomachs and Castiel and Samandriel didn't have the same aches and stomach pangs they'd been feeling all week.

Another alpha, this one female and nearly dark red in coat colour growled half-heartedly as she stalked past them.

"Make sure your pup learns his place," she muttered darkly and Castiel had a mind to snap at her as he pulled Samandriel closer.

He chose not to though, and prowled away, silently fuming that the pack had refused to allow his pup to eat. He understood the hierarchy, but honestly, what harm would Samandriel eating with the rest of the pack have caused?

It was just mindless tradition.

Castiel shook his head and led his pup towards the edge of the camp, where they would be hidden by trees and shrubs and Castiel could comfort and soothe his son without judgement.

"Ignore them," murmured Castiel as Samandriel cuddled into his chest. "Don't let them scare you; you've been though more over these past two months than any of them have in their entire lifetimes. You're far stronger than they believe and if anything, they should be showing you respect."

Castiel began to nuzzle and scent his pup, soothing his distressed scent and making him feel safe and loved.

Fortunately, children are far more forgiving than adults, so when Ben waddled over, looking rather sheepish at having intruded on a private moment between Samandriel and his father, and asked the young alpha to come and play, Samandriel wriggled out of Castiel's grip and licked his muzzle gratefully before scampering off after his new friend.

"I'm sorry, I forgot you're new to this," came an apologetic voice from behind Castiel, and the omega turned to face Dean.

"I should've told you about meal time hierarchy but it slipped my mind. Is Samandriel alright?"
Continued Dean, unwilling to venture any closer to the omega, and Castiel sighed, still uncertain why Dean kept coming to chat with him.

"He's fine; playing with the other pups. Besides... it's not your job to inform me of pack protocol. I should've remembered the rules before letting Samandriel go. My apologies once again."

Dean quirked a smile. "He was hungry. You let him eat before you. You're a good parent."

Castiel preened at the high praise from the head alpha and Dean chuckled at the obvious gesture.
"Thank you," mumbled Castiel embarrassedly when he realised he'd been caught. "I'll make sure such an error doesn't occur twice."

Dean nodded appreciatively.

"I'll have a word with Benny; make sure he doesn't get too snappy with the two of you. He's a bit of a traditionalist but I promise he's a good alpha. He's just a little protective over the pack."

Castiel nodded gratefully. "Thank you, Dean."

The alpha smiled and trotted away, leaving Castiel to wonder why Dean was being so nice to him when by all accounts they were still rivals.

He decided not to dwell on it, instead thinking of where he could take Samandriel to live permanently without fear of his family catching up with them.

After all, Castiel didn't want to live as one of the wild folk forever. He was used to his little creature comforts and independence; pack life just didn't suit him. So for the rest of the afternoon, he tried to map out all the nearby cities and towns and villages in his head, working out which was the least likely to be invaded by the rest of the Novak family.

By the time the moon rose into the sky, Castiel had a few ideas buzzing in his skull, but the villages were too far away for Samandriel and Castiel to walk on their own when there was so much danger in their path.

They would have to wait for the pack to move first.
The next morning was much the same as the first. The pack went on a hunt and due to his leg, Castiel remained behind with Bobby, Ellen and Lisa to guard the camp and the pups.

As Samandriel ran off to join his friends, Castiel decided to make himself useful and helped Bobby clear some of the fallen branches and leaves from the camp.

"How's that leg?" Bobby asked around a mouthful of branches as Castiel swept some leaves up with his tail.

"Better now Jody's taken care of it. She's very kind."

Bobby grunted in acknowledgement as he tossed the branches back into a thick congregation of trees.

They worked in silence for a few moments before Castiel finally decided to ask the question that had been niggling at his brain since finding out that he was in the presence of the Winchester pack.

"The last I heard of the Winchester pack, an alpha named John was leading it. Was he Sam and Dean's father?"

Bobby stiffened and rumbled lowly, but Castiel had a feeling it wasn't aimed at him.

"A poor excuse for one," the alpha huffed disgustedly and Castiel blinked at that.

Upon spotting the omega's bewildered expression, Bobby sighed. "John Winchester ran this pack with an iron grip. One step out of line and he'd deal out a punishment so severe, it wasn't unknown for members to break limbs. Ever since his mate was killed by a yellow eyed alpha by the name of Azazel, John turned cold and merciless. He was intent on finding Azazel and killing him and anyone who got in his way or defied orders deserved punishment.

"Then one day, Sam saw him snap at one of the pups, and being seventeen and rebellious, he confronted John in front of the pack, accusing him of not caring about his family.

"John didn't like being embarrassed in front of the pack by an omega and leapt at Sam, ready to sink his teeth into him as reprimand, but Dean ploughed into him before he got a chance."

Bobby shook his head, a look of sadness flashing behind his eyes.

"You've got to understand that Dean never defied his father's orders. He always looked up to his dad because he remembered what he was like before Mary died. I think he always hoped that maybe one day John would return to his former self, and if he helped his dad kill Azazel, it might happen sooner.
"Seeing Sam in danger because of his father's claws must have knocked the hope out of him. Dean has always looked after his brother since before Sam can even remember. He protected him during rival wolf attacks and hunts, gave him his portion of food when meals were scarce, defended him against any strange alphas that tried to take Sam against his will... Dean has always been there for his brother.

"So he and John fought hard, John roaring for his son to back down and Dean too set on protecting Sam to listen. By that time, the whole pack was tired of the way John treated them and everyone started threatening him, shouting at him to leave. A few of us even began to chase him off, like Benny, Jody, Ellen and myself, and in the end John had no choice but to run.

"Ever since then, we've looked to Dean as head alpha. It's a choice none of us regret and with him and Sam running the show, our team has been the most cohesive and strongest it has ever been in a long time."

Bobby's gaze softened as he smiled fondly.

"Dean's a good kid. So's Sam. They have their hearts in the right places and they always have the pack's best interests in mind."

"You're proud of them," Castiel stated softly and Bobby frowned as he nodded.

"There's no one more proud of them than me, boy. Under their leadership, we're not only a pack; we're family. How many other packs can claim that?"

Castiel shook his head in agreement. "Definitely not mine," he said and he missed the way Bobby's face fell in sympathy.

"Exactly," the older alpha murmured. "Now enough chit-chat. Let's get this camp cleared."

Castiel did as ordered and contemplated all he'd learned. He'd known Dean was protective of his pack; could see it in the way he watched over them, but now he knew there wasn't only a desire to lead within Dean. The alpha cared for his pack like a family. Despite having a tough upbringing and a poor role model to learn from, Dean had somehow managed to become a considerate and empathetic leader.

To learn that Sam also played a role in running the pack was a surprise. Usually alphas didn't like to share their leadership and to hear that Dean had given such responsibility to his omega brother was a shock. Omegas never had anything to do with making sure the pack worked together; they were there for looking after pups or for pleasing their mates. Yet Sam seemed strong and confident. He embraced his role as second-in-command and didn't seem frightened to argue with his brother if he didn't agree with something.

If Castiel had argued with Michael because he didn't agree with a decision the head alpha had reached, the omega would be sporting quite a few bite marks.

Yet Dean took his brother's words into consideration and altered his plans when necessary. It didn't look like either of them got into any vicious fights with one another.

The confusing thoughts made Castiel's head spin. He'd always been taught that wild folk didn't tolerate any form of differentiation from the alpha/beta/omega hierarchy. To learn that Sam and Dean quite happily worked together in running the pack was unbelievable to Castiel. Michael had always punished members of their 'family' for speaking out of line...

"Hey, kid! Stop daydreaming and help me move these branches," called Bobby's gruff voice and
Castiel padded over to help him.

* * *

When the pack returned, this time with a couple of does, Castiel and Samandriel waited for the others to finish before they had their own fill. Castiel was surprised when the oak alpha from the previous day nodded approvingly at them, offering them a brief smile before slinking off. Maybe that had been the 'Benny' Dean had been referring to?

He chuckled at the patiently waiting black and brown pup, body wriggling in eagerness a little way off from where they were eating.

Samandriel hurried to finish before glancing up to his dad longingly.

"Go on," murmured the omega with an amused smile, and his son's tail thumped the ground excitedly before he rubbed his head against his father's leg in gratitude and sprinted over to Ben. The two pups yapped playfully at one another before Ben pounced on Samandriel and they ran further into the camp.

Stomach full, Castiel shook his head with a grin and made his way over to the river.

He lapped gently at the water, the blood around his muzzle washing away and he was just about to shake himself off when there was the sound of voices a little further up the river.

Intrigued, he crept over to find Sam and Dean chatting softly. He hid himself behind a thick clump of long reeds and, despite knowing he probably shouldn't eavesdrop, listened carefully to what was being said. He was curious after Bobby's earlier chat and now was the perfect time to see just how the brothers really interacted.

"You need to rest, Dean. You spend all your time looking after everyone else, but I never see you looking after yourself," stated Sam quietly and Dean frowned.

"I'm pack alpha. That's my job."

"I know, but you're allowed to be happy too," protested Sam. "You don't have to keep prioritising everyone else's wants over your own needs."

"We're a family, Sam. That's what family does. If a head alpha can't provide for his pack, what use is he?"

Sam shook his head concernedly. "When was the last time you had a good night's sleep, Dean? One that didn't only last two or three hours?"

Dean kept his mouth firmly closed and his brother sighed.

"I've seen you prowling up and down the camp every night for the past five months. You're always watching over us, keeping guard... you don't have to do that. We can take turns, have some of the others on sentry duty as well-"

"I can't ask them to do that because of my own stupid insecurities," huffed Dean and Sam cocked his head to one side.
"...What are you so afraid of?"

Dean glanced up at his brother with the most heart-breaking pained look Castiel had ever seen and Sam closed his eyes sadly as his ears lowered.

"I miss him too," he murmured so lowly, Castiel almost fell out of the reeds straining to hear him.

"Alistair tore him apart and it was my fault for not looking after him," whined Dean, tail tucked between his legs and gaze lowered.

Sam's head snapped up as he growled.

"It wasn't your fault, Dean. None of it was. There was nothing any of us could've done to help him."

Dean scowled. "I should've protected him. He was practically a kid and I just stood and watched as Alistair ripped him open."

Sam huffed. "He was old enough to know we were in dangerous territory. He shouldn't have been out alone at night. You couldn't have known he was out there, and none of us would've even contemplated Alistair had trailed us." The omega's gaze softened. "You're not to blame, Dean. It was an accident that never should've happened."

The older Winchester turned away, upset and Castiel was stunned when Sam padded over to him and began to nuzzle him comfortingly, Dean actually leaning on his brother for support. The pair shared a moment of quiet affection and Castiel felt as though he was witnessing something incredibly intimate that he had no right to, yet he couldn't seem to turn away.

He had never seen a head alpha look to anyone for support. All the leaders he'd been around presented themselves as fearless, but witnessing Dean gently scenting at his brother's neck made him wonder if those other alphas weren't as strong as he'd first thought.

Dean wasn't afraid to seek comfort when he needed it and Sam wasn't too afraid of his brother to give it. As Castiel watched them nose and rub their heads against each other, the omega began to realise that this wasn't an act of weakness; it was an act of affection and desire to support one another.

Unlike Castiel's relationship with his own brothers, Sam and Dean really were a family. Even Gabriel had never shown him that much love, especially not in front of their other siblings.

"Kevin won't go unremembered," murmured Sam softly and Dean let out a low whine that had Sam rumbling protectively as he nuzzled his brother.

"We'll learn from his mistakes. Alistair won't touch anyone else," growled Sam quietly and Dean sighed shakily as he tucked his head under his brother's chin and allowed the omega to fuss over him.

When Sam began to rub his scent over Dean, the alpha taking comfort in his little brother's smell, Castiel averted his gaze and slunk further down the river. He'd seen enough.

These brothers weren't like any other pack leaders he'd seen. They took care of one another, protected one another and mourned each other's losses. Dean didn't state his dominance over Sam and Sam didn't let Dean suffer alone. They worked in harmony; complimented each other's skills perfectly and Castiel felt his heart ache with longing when he thought about how different he and his own brothers were.
It was a mockery to call the Novaks a family.

He'd always been told the wild folk were savage monsters who cared little for anyone or anything but their own needs.

How many other lies had been drilled into his mind?

That night, as the moon glowed brilliantly, casting a pale light upon the forest floor, Castiel sneaked a glance outside his little bush and his gaze softened at the sight of Sam keeping watch over the camp, his brother nowhere to be found.

He curled around Samandriel and for the third time in a row, had a good night's sleep.
A week later Castiel's leg was healing nicely and he no longer had to limp around.

Jody had changed his bandages once and now the wound was clean and in no danger of infection, he could remove the material completely and allow his leg to get some air.

Castiel was very grateful for her care.

He watched as Samandriel pounced on Ben, pinning the other pup to the floor as they laughed and tussled with one another, and then Claire, a white-furred omega pup growled at them both before diving into the pile.

Alex, a completely black beta pup, rolled her eyes and shook her head, but Samandriel quickly scrabbled out of the heap and bowled into her playfully, prompting the beta to smirk and leap at him, tugging at his ears gently as they wrestled.

Castiel and Lisa shared an amused glance as they watched but the black and tan omega was taken off guard when Dean came to stand beside him.

Castiel lowered his head slightly out of respect and Dean scrunched up his nose in distaste. The omega quickly stood upright again.

"Don't do that," Dean scolded softly. "There's no need for it."

Castiel averted his gaze embarrassedly. "Sorry, Dean." It still felt weird to not address him as 'alpha'.

Dean's gaze flicked to his healing leg and back to his face.

"I think it's time you learned how to hunt," he said and Castiel inwardly groaned. He knew he was terrible at hunting; the tracking part was easy, but the actual killing of the prey was the part that proved problematic. He was either too clumsy or too slow and his prey always heard him coming before he got a chance to even think about chasing it.

He really didn't want to lose the pack's hard-earned meal, especially when it was clear that they were still very wary of him and his son. Dean and Sam had tolerated him so far, but would they still offer him a place to sleep if he scared away their food?

Dean either didn't recognise or ignored his apprehension.

"Benny and Jo are our best hunters. They'll show you the ropes. Follow their orders and I'm certain your hunting skills will improve by the end of the day."

Castiel doubted it. He couldn't catch a sloth if it was dead.

He nodded anyway and Dean offered him a brief smile before walking away, observing his pack carefully as he did so.

Castiel closed his eyes in dread of what was to come.

"You may be surprised," chuckled Lisa. "Jo and Benny will teach you the best they can; you'll get
the hang of it I'm sure."

Castiel glanced at her doubtfully. The other omega had been very kind to him and maybe that was because they had similar pasts (barring the violent siblings), but either way, Castiel liked Lisa. She seemed to want to be his friend when everyone else was so cautious around him and her pup made his pup happy.

"Could you... could you look after Samandriel whilst I'm gone?" Asked Castiel carefully, even though he knew it was Lisa's job to do so. He didn't easily trust others with caring for his son, but Lisa was the best option at the moment and he knew she wouldn't harm him when Ben was so friendly with him.

The other omega chuckled warmly.

"Of course. He'll be safe, I promise. You just focus on what Jo and Benny have to tell you."

Castiel offered her a small smile and Lisa shook her head in amusement.

"Good luck, Castiel," she said and he would have answered her but a bulky oak-furred alpha paced over to him; the same one that had snapped at him and his son that day they'd accidentally broken mealtime hierarchy.

"I'm Benny," the alpha said gruffly and Castiel dropped his tail, lowered his head slightly and flattened his ears a little in the picture of submission. If this alpha liked hierarchy, then he'd better show some respect towards the stronger wolf.

Benny blinked before raising an eyebrow and grinning.

"Well, it's been a long time since anyone's ever done that for me. Whilst I'm flattered, there's no need for it."

Castiel paused. He'd thought that's what the alpha had expected of him. He was only showing his respect.

"Hope you don't do that to Dean too," chuckled Benny. "I know how much he hates it."

Castiel blinked before his head shot back up again, a guilty look on his features.

Benny laughed.

"I'll take that as a 'yes', you do do that. Word of advice: stop. If you keep it up, one day he's just gonna walk in the opposite direction and not say a word to you."

Castiel contemplated this information and stored it away for later analysis.

"Now, I heard you needed hunting practice," grinned Benny, seemingly in a much better mood than when he first walked over. "Well I think there's no better way to learn than on an actual hunt... Where's that wily omega got to?"

A blonde omega trotted over to them, tail curled slyly and eyes twinkling with mischief. Castiel was suddenly struck with an image of Gabriel.

"You wouldn't happen to be referring to me, would you, old man?" She teased before rubbing herself under his chin in a way which seemed incredibly inappropriate when they were being watched by another wolf.
Castiel blushed and averted his gaze as the new omega stretched her body out invitingly as she brushed against Benny.

The alpha rolled his eyes. "You are going to be the death of me," he huffed as he took a step back. "Do you flirt with everything that moves or just me?"

The blonde wolf grinned, bearing sharp pearly-white teeth.

"If it's single and looks interesting." Suddenly, she eyed Castiel.

"Hi, I'm Jo," she introduced before shooting him a predatory smile. "You're not single by any chance, are you?"

Castiel's eyes widened and his mouth opened and closed a few times, fishing for something to say.

"I'm an omega," he finally choked out and the other omega smirked and flicked her tail interestingly at him.

"Nothing wrong with a bit of fun," she purred and Castiel gulped. Unless they were betas, two of the same secondary gender never... copulated. It just didn't work.

...did it?

Jo suddenly yelped as Benny yanked her backwards with her tail.

"Stop scaring him. Not everyone has your ridiculously high sex-drive," huffed the alpha and Jo pulled her tongue out at him before winking at Castiel.

"The offer's there if you're interested."

Castiel took a step backwards, wondering what kind of pack he'd come to.

Jo cackled. "Alright, alright. Let's teach you how to hunt."

Heaving a silent sigh of relief, Castiel followed the pair as they joined the rest of the pack, all standing in preparation for the next hunt.

* * *

Castiel quietened his breathing as he crept forward through the long grass. Jo and Benny were either side of him, the rest of the pack closing in on the herd of deer eating serenely under the dawn light, blissfully unaware of the pack of wolves surrounding them.

Dean and Sam were at the head of the group, crouched low and silent as they eyed possible hazards and strike points to catch some of the more isolated deer.

Just like Benny and Jo said he would, Dean nodded to his brother and the large omega slunk away from the rest of the pack to the opposite side of the clearing, preparing to act as decoy by leading the herd straight into the Winchester pack's claws.

Each member of the pack had a different job to do and those that hunted also had specific tasks to perform. Jo and Sam were decoys due to their stealth; the betas and some omegas were the chasers,
sprinting after the panicked herd and slowing certain members down long enough for the stronger alphas like Dean and Benny to bring them down fully and protect the rest of the pack against the more aggressive stags if necessary.

Castiel was going to be a chaser today. There were a few of them so hopefully he would be able to work with them as a team and not lose the group their meal.

Castiel was snapped out of his musings when Sam popped his head up out of the tall grass and flicked an ear to indicate he was in position and ready.

Dean nodded and gestured for the chasers to move into position, ahead of him and as close as possible to the herd without them being spotted.

Benny gave him an encouraging grin as Jo began to move, and Castiel gulped as he carefully edged further into the clearing. He padded past Dean and joined the other betas and omegas as they began to form a crescent around the oblivious herd. Castiel moved to take his position at the end of the crescent.

And proceeded to step on a branch.

The lead stag's head shot up and turned to face the source of the noise and all the wolves froze, Castiel's eyes wide with mortification as the great animal stared directly at him.

For a few seconds nobody moved, waiting with bated breaths to see what would happen, but then the stag let out an almighty bellow and the rest of the herd shouted in fear, eyes wild as they leapt away from the pack.

And right towards where Sam was hiding.

As over a dozen sets of hooves thundered towards the suddenly alarmed Sam, Dean barked out a harsh command and all the chasers sprinted towards the left hand side of the herd, howling and snapping at the deer's feet to veer them off course. Sam managed to leap out of the way as the lead stag bowed his antlers and charged towards him, and he quickly joined the pack in trying to bring down one of the deer.

Realising if they didn't start running now, there would be no chance of the pack eating, Dean howled for the attack alphas to pursue the deer and soon enough, the whole pack had broken into a sprint after the frightened deer.

Unfortunately, the deer's stamina was far greater than the pack's and Castiel felt his stomach sink as the herd began to break away, galloping into the distance as the wolves started to tire and slow, chests heaving and tongues lolling.

Eventually, the pack came to a halt, empty handed.

"Is everyone okay?" Called Dean. "No broken bones or sprained ligaments?"

A chorus of panted "No's" greeted his ears and he nodded before making his way over to his brother.

The two shared a few intense moments of conversation before Dean was satisfied that Sam was unhurt and then the alpha finally turned to Castiel, a disapproving frown marring his features.

"Maybe it'd be better if you didn't come hunting with us again."

And with that the sandy wolf barked gruffly and led the rest of the pack back home. It seemed as
though they would all have to deal with empty stomachs tonight.

Castiel bowed his head in shame, tail tucked between his legs and ears lowered as he trailed after the rest of the pack.

Benny and Jo shared a sympathetic glance; maybe they had been wrong in assuming a 'civilised' omega like Castiel would just be able to learn hunting on the job. Sometimes they forgot city folk didn't grow up being taught such skills.

When they finally returned to the camp, they were greeted by the surprised raised eyebrows of those who had remained behind.

"Sparse pickin's, boy?" Asked Bobby, confused and Dean shook his head as he flicked his tail in Castiel's direction.

"Some people aren't as careful as they ought to be," he muttered and Castiel's head lowered even further as dozens of eyes turned upon him.

He waited for the pack to slowly return to their own activities before slinking to his sleeping quarters, where Samandriel was loitering, gazing at his dad with sympathy.

The pup whined softly and padded over to Castiel, rubbing his head against his father's chest in an attempt to comfort.

"You'll do better next time," murmured Samandriel. "I know you will. You kept us from going hungry for weeks."

Castiel allowed a small smile to cross his face. Samandriel was very thoughtful and always knew how to cheer him up despite being so young himself. He leaned down to nuzzle his son.

"You're very kind," the black and tan wolf whispered. "I'm so glad I have you."

Samandriel grinned and snuggled further into his father's fur as Castiel curled a paw around him.

"Hunt not go so well?" Asked a quiet but tender voice and both Castiel and Samandriel turned to find Lisa staring at them concernedly, Ben beside her with his ears flattened and eyes sad.

"I'm afraid I'm not very good at this 'wild living' sort of thing," admitted Castiel ashamedly and Lisa shook her head.

"It's not your fault you were raised a different way to us. I'm almost certain I wouldn't fit into your world very well. It just takes a little time to get used to. I think sometimes Dean and Sam forget that not everybody was raised to be like them. Don't let their words get to you; they don't always think before they speak."

Castiel cocked his head slightly.

"Then why do you follow them?"

Lisa chuckled softly. "Because they're good people. Their hearts are in the right place, but sometimes they can be a bit abrasive. They don't mean to be and they probably don't even know they're doing it, but they often need to engage their brains before rushing head first into things." Her gaze warmed.

"But they protect us and look after us in ways I've never heard of any other pack leaders doing. They dissolve tensions between members and they do their best to make sure we're all happy and healthy
and honestly, there's not many packs who can claim to have leaders who care for them so deeply.”

As he slowly nodded, Castiel felt a small amount of awe build within him at the affection and pride in Lisa's tone as she spoke of the brothers. He couldn't ever remember feeling proud at being a member of the Novak family.

Ben wagged his tail a little. "Mom always says 'when you fall off your horse, you have to brush yourself off and try again'."

Castiel chuckled. "Your mother's very wise," he said and Lisa giggled as Ben nodded enthusiastically.

Castiel smiled gratefully at Lisa. "Thank you," he offered. "For being so kind. You have no need to offer me comfort yet you choose to anyway. It's refreshing to meet someone so sincere."

Lisa smiled back. "I'm always here if you want to talk, Castiel. You aren't our enemy, even if sometimes you may feel like an outsider."

Castiel bowed his head graciously. "Thank you."

"Hey, wanna play hide and seek?" Asked Ben excitedly, glancing at Samandriel, and the little alpha perked up and looked to his father for approval.

"Go on," nodded Castiel, amusement infecting his tone as his pup bounded over to his friend and the two ran off into the main part of the camp.

"Don't wander too far," called Lisa, and she received two groaned responses of "we won't".

She turned to Castiel. "Ellen needs help with sweeping leaves if you think you're up for it?" She asked quietly and Castiel gazed at her kind eyes and motherly face before nodding and following her to another part of the camp.

Chapter End Notes

Very short chapter I'm afraid! Just wanted to write the hunting scene before I got further into the story! Hope you guys are still enjoying this!
The next morning, Castiel woke up to the feeling of someone staring at him. Tense, he pulled his sleeping son closer to his side and whipped his head around to face the source of his discomfort, baring his teeth slightly in warning.

Dean blinked at him.

Feeling nervous around Dean, especially after the previous day, Castiel licked his lips and cocked his head to one side.

"Hello, Dean," he greeted and the alpha bowed his head almost sheepishly.

"Hey, Cas."

Castiel raised an eyebrow at the nickname but said nothing more.

The alpha shuffled his paws, kicking at a stray twig and Castiel was reminded of a naughty school child.

"I'm sorry. For yesterday," murmured Dean. "Benny and Jo informed me that you've never worked in a pack whilst hunting and that makes it wrong of me for saying what I did. It was your first time and you can't be expected to get it right when you've got no experience."

Castiel's other eyebrow joined the first. He had never expected a lead alpha to apologise to an omega; and one from a rival pack at that. Yet here Dean was, glancing at him as though asking for forgiveness.

"Sometimes I forget that where you're from, people don't hunt or hollow out bushes for sleeping space. In fact, sometimes I forget not everybody lives in wolf form," confessed Dean quietly. He grimaced. "This must be difficult for you."

Castiel glanced at his son who, a mere couple of weeks ago, looked filthy and emaciated.

"Very," he said softly. "If it wasn't for you and your pack, Samandriel and I would most likely be dead. This isn't a life we're used to and whilst Samandriel may be able to adapt to it, I'm afraid I'm less fortunate."

He glanced up to catch Dean's guilty wince.

"Sorry, Cas, I'll... uh... I'll try to be a little more tolerant next time. You have a hard enough time as it is without me snapping at you every five minutes."

"Thank you, Dean," murmured Castiel and the pair stared at one another awkwardly for a few seconds before Dean made a gruff sound in the back of his throat, nodded and slipped away, leaving Cas to shake his head in bemusement and curl back around his pup.

"Klutz," sneered a distinctly feminine voice and Castiel blinked in surprise to find Ruby narrowing a glare at him from a few metres away. "Why don't you go burden another pack with your clumsiness?"

Cas frowned at the alpha but didn't answer and Ruby flashed her teeth menacingly at him before stalking off.
Castiel scowled at the mahogany wolf's retreating form. It's not like he wanted to be out here in the wild with a foreign pack any more than the Winchester pack wanted a Novak with them, but what choice did he have? It would be a lot easier if the other wolves weren't so intent on pointing out his flaws and belittling him; maybe then he could focus on trying to keep himself and Samandriel alive without the snide remarks of others.

He sighed. At least Dean had promised to go a little easier on him.

Although, he had a feeling Lisa might have had a hand in that.

* * *

That afternoon, Dean suggested the pack move onto new territory; there were other packs in their current area and with winter just around the corner, food was becoming scarce. Neither him nor Sam wanted to see their pack have to fight other wolves for a meal.

So the rest of the day was spent gathering up belongings and making sure nothing was left behind and when the next morning rolled around, the pack abandoned the camp in search of fresh grounds.

As Samandriel played with the other pups, Castiel decided to use this time to learn more about those he was temporarily living with. At first he was a little apprehensive; he didn't know how they'd react to him after having ruined the hunt for them, but he needn't have worried because when Jo saw him on his own, she and an auburn omega quickly sandwiched him between them.

"Hi, I'm Charlie!" Chirped the auburn wolf and immediately Castiel liked her. Her eyes were bright and warm and her smile could light up a room.

"Castiel," introduced Cas and Charlie wiggled her tail a little in acknowledgement.

"Charlie's our resident researcher," explained Jo. "If you want to know something about anything, you can bet she'll find an answer somewhere. Poisonous plants, dangerous insects, you name it she'll find it."

Castiel lifted an intrigued eyebrow as Charlie chuckled.

"Smart phones are wonderful things."

Castiel quirked a smile and the trio continued to chat for a couple of hours as they walked. Cas quickly learned about Charlie's craving and adeptness for all things technological, and he was impressed by Jo's ability to fight and protect her pack just like any alpha, despite actually being an omega. They were both very friendly with him and kind in that they understood how difficult this new way of life must have been for him.

They didn't treat him like a rival despite his surname and Castiel realised these wolves were highly intelligent.

Civilised wolves were always taught they were of greater intelligence and class due to their supposedly superior education, yet conversing with Charlie and Jo showed Cas just how wrong his teachers had been.

After a couple of hours, Castiel excused himself to check on his son. He knew the pups were still
playing together, but for the sake of his own peace of mind, the black wolf needed to lay eyes on Samandriel for himself.

Once he was satisfied Samandriel was safe, Castiel found himself trotting over to Benny. He and the alpha may have got off on the wrong foot at first, but it was clear Benny didn't actively hate him after what he'd said to Dean the previous day; he had only been doing what was best for his pack when they'd first met.

"Have the girls chatted your ears off yet?" Chuckled Benny as Cas slid beside him and the omega quirked a small smile.

"They're very friendly," he said and Benny grinned.

"I'll take that as a 'Yes'."

Castiel shook his head with amusement and the pair padded along in silence for a few minutes. Funnily enough, Cas didn't find it awkward. In fact, walking with the strong alpha made him feel almost... safe. After learning that Benny had taken part in asking Dean to take it easy on him, Castiel felt as though he could trust the oak-furred wolf.

It was a strange feeling. He'd lived with his family for years and only ever felt safe with Gabriel, and yet here was this supposedly rival wolf he'd only known for a little over a week and his instincts were telling him he could trust him.

"Thank you," murmured Cas softly and Benny arched an eyebrow at him.

"For informing Dean of my inexperience at all this," he clarified and the alpha smiled warmly.

"No problem, Castiel. You tried, it was easy to see that. We can't condemn you when you're doing your best."

Castiel ducked his head in gratitude; something in his natural instincts telling him he should in the presence of the kind alpha.

Benny rolled his eyes. "No need for that here. I don't know what those brothers of yours taught you, but we don't expect subservience from our omegas."

Castiel blinked before slowly raising his head.

"Apologies, I thought I was expressing respect."

Benny pulled a troubled face.

"That isn't respect. That's more like submissive behaviour." He cocked his head to one side. "Did your brothers expect you to do that when around them?"

Castiel nodded slowly. "Most of them did. In fact, all the alphas in our family expected omegas to show respect. It was what we learned when growing up. It didn't matter who you were related to or what position they held, all omegas had to lower their gazes in front of an alpha until the alpha expressed their approval."

Benny scrunched his nose up in distaste.

"Sounds to me like they don't particularly respect omegas."

Castiel shrugged. He didn't really see why the other wolf was putting up such a fuss.
"It's just how things were done. It always has been."

Benny huffed. "We may have a hierarchy here, but we will never ask you to perform such mindless obedience, even if you are only staying temporarily."

Castiel felt a smile slowly crawl across his face. He liked Benny; the alpha was very kind. He didn't often meet sincere alphas.

"Thank you," he murmured and Benny flashed him a brilliant grin.

"No problem."

They walked in silence for a little while before someone joined them.

Castiel glanced to his side to find a petite strawberry-blonde and white beta staring at him with a mixture of curiosity and timidness.

When she didn't look as though she was going to say anything to him despite being less than a foot away, Castiel cocked his head to one side.

"Hello?"

The beta startled a little before slowly beginning to wag her tail.

"Hi," she offered. "I'm Becky."

Castiel gave her a polite smile. "Castiel."

"Oh I know who you are."

Cas blinked, raising an eyebrow at the soft chuckle from Benny.

"Watch this one," he whispered into Cas' ear. "Once she gets her claws in, you'll never get them out." Then he trotted away, leaving Cas slightly wary of the beta beside him.

"You're very handsome," stated Becky and Cas almost stumbled at her boldness.

"...Thank you," he said. So much for her being shy. "You're very pretty."

Becky beamed and sidled closer until their fur was almost brushing. Cas had the strong urge to take a step away.

"Thanks," she grinned. "So, what's it like living in a proper house in the middle of a city? I've always wondered what it would be like to live in human form all the time."

As Castiel answered her questions, the beta slid closer until she was practically pressed up against him, and no matter how many times Castiel would try to pull away, Becky would ask another question and shove closer.

Just as he was about to make an excuse to check on Samandriel, a dark brown beta with mismatched patches of grey shuffled over to them with a put-out expression resting on his face.

"...Everything okay here?" He asked, glancing at Becky and the beta only then seemed to realise how close they were because she blinked and took a few steps away from Castiel. Cas breathed a sigh of relief, shooting the new wolf a look of gratitude.
"Everything's fine," mumbled Becky, looking a little guilty and the other beta pulled a face before turning to Cas.

"I'm Chuck. Sorry for interrupting."

Becky sent him an apologetic look which Castiel shook his head to, and as Chuck trotted off in front of them, Becky soon followed. With the way the strawberry wolf was glancing longingly at Chuck, Cas would have to guess they weren't quite yet an item, but he had a feeling it wouldn't be long if Chuck's obvious jealousness was anything to go by.

By the time nightfall rolled around, Castiel had met the rest of the pack, including Pamela, Ed, Harry, and a stoic wolf that didn't really speak that much to anyone by the name of Gadreel.

They were all amicable enough (even if it was clear some were still a little wary of his family name) and with the way they all interacted with one another, Cas could see why the group was so cohesive; why they worked so well together as a team.

They all held a lot of respect for Sam and Dean, and Castiel couldn't help but smile at that. His family had never really held respect for their head alpha; it was more like fear. If you got on the wrong side of Michael or any of his ancestors, you'd be lucky to still be alive.

As Castiel had proved.

"Dad," came a small voice from below and he glanced down to see Samandriel yawning widely.
"I'm tired. When are we going to stop?"

Castiel's gaze softened and he nuzzled gently at his pup's fur.

"I'm not sure. Want me to carry you?"

The black and white nodded sleepily and Castiel carefully picked up his pup by the scruff of his neck, smiling when Samandriel's eyes fluttered shut and he began to doze off.

"Settling in okay?" Asked a quiet but patient voice and Castiel glanced to his left to find Sam smiling at him, a grumpy-looking Ruby by his side.

Castiel carefully placed his pup on his back and Samandriel stretched contentedly and snuggled into his fur as the pack walked on.

"It is far different than I expected," murmured Castiel quietly. "Most things I've been taught about the wilds seems to be untrue."

Sam quirked an eyebrow. "What exactly do civilised folk tell you about us?"

Castiel pulled a face. "That you are all savage beasts with very little intelligence and no sense of helping others."

Sam wrinkled his nose as Ruby let out a warning growl. Sam frowned sternly at her and the alpha averted her gaze.

Castiel blinked at the odd exchange. He still couldn't wrap his head around the fact that Sam, as an omega, was allowed to run the pack in partnership with his alpha brother, and it always took him off guard to see the other alphas follow his orders.

"Well, I hope you think a little differently of us now and maybe we can change your opinion further
after you've spent a bit more time with us," smiled Sam kindly and Castiel offered him a smile in return.

"We'll leave you two alone," murmured Sam as he glanced to the sleeping Samandriel, precariously perched on Castiel's back and the older omega nodded his gratefulness.

As Sam walked on ahead, Ruby glared at Castiel disapprovingly before following the other omega, and Cas' ears lowered slightly at the prospect of having already made it onto the bad side of an alpha. He didn't know what he'd done to so gravely offend Ruby, but years of ruthless discipline from his family had taught him to keep his gaze low and posture respectful when in the presence of an angered alpha.

A cool breeze crept between the trees as the pack trudged on, and Castiel shuddered involuntarily as Samandriel snuggled deeper into his fur. The night was becoming chillier and it seemed as though they had a long journey ahead of them.
Eventually the pack had to stop to rest and recharge. Dean scented the area, telling his pack to stay put whilst he checked for danger, and upon identifying no threatening smells or sights, the group settled onto the forest floor in preparation of restarting their journey the next morning.

When they awoke, there was a thin layer of white blanketing some of the trees and certain patches of the ground.

Dean and Sam glanced at each other worriedly. Winter was finally here and it had brought snow along with it.

As the pups played and pounced on the snow, Dean and Sam told everyone to collect their belongings once more.

"We have to move," announced Dean, a hint of concern in his tone and everyone dutifully picked up their bags and followed the Winchester brothers.

The morning was dull and grey and Castiel sneezed as a few flakes of snow fell on his nose. He chuckled as the pups ran in circles around the pack, trying to catch the snow on their tongues, but upon spotting the grim faces of the adults of the pack, Cas soon sobered.

He'd always enjoyed snow because it usually meant he didn't have to go to work and that meant he could spend his time making snowmen and igloos with Samandriel, or having snowball fights or teaching him how to ice skate, yet the Winchester pack didn't seem too pleased by the light dusting of white on the trees.

Curious, he sidled up to Gadreel, noting the alpha was on his own, on the outside of the pack. He didn't usually address alphas if they hadn't spoken to him first, but there was something mysterious about the stoic Gadreel that had him wanting to learn more.

Still, just to be safe (and because it was so deeply ingrained within his instincts now), Cas lowered his head respectfully, scent submissive and non-threatening.

Gadreel eyed him silently as he approached.

"Cold, isn't it?" Asked Cas quietly, hoping to ease the tension between them.

"Indeed," murmured Gadreel after a couple of seconds, before returning to his natural silence.

"No one seems too happy about the snow," observed Cas when it was clear he wasn't going to get anything else from the alpha.

"So they shouldn't," replied Gadreel, body stiff and ears erect.

Cas fell quiet as he subtly glanced at the grey and white wolf. It was as if he was waiting for something; expecting a threat to jump out at the pack any second.

"Why is that?" Tried Castiel. "Why are you worried by snow?"

Gadreel blinked before turning a frown upon the omega, making Castiel shrink in on himself. Had he
already angered the alpha?

"When the first snow falls, it marks the start of poor terrain, unacceptable shelter and scarce food. It also increases our likelihood of fighting with rival packs, merely because of the competition for survival. Not every pack makes it through the winter," murmured Gadreel before returning back to whatever he was waiting for.

Castiel felt his stomach drop as he contemplated this and he glanced over to his son, playing blissfully unaware with Ben, Alex and Claire. He couldn't watch his son be reduced to the emaciated, filthy state he’d been when they’d first arrived in Winchester territory.

"Sam and Dean have never had any deaths through winter," offered Gadreel, voice soft as he stared at Castiel, understanding warming his gaze.

Cas suddenly felt himself relax.

"I'm beginning to get the impression they care a lot more than the average pack leaders," mumbled Cas and the alpha gave him his first genuine smile. Castiel felt rather comforted by it and he slid a little closer to Gadreel as the winter air nipped at their bodies. Gadreel didn't seem to mind.

They walked in silence for a while before Castiel glanced at the alpha curiously.

"Are you waiting for something?" He asked, noting the twitching ears and sharp eyes, and Gadreel quirked an eyebrow.

"I'm always waiting," he muttered. "It's my job as lookout to make sure I detect danger before it happens."

Castiel blinked. Now it made sense why the alpha was so silent all the time; he was always watching, listening and scenting his surroundings.

This pack worked so well together because everyone had their own jobs to do. They all cared and looked out for one another by playing their roles. Castiel began to wonder what his role could be, before he shook his head to clear the thought from his mind. He was only staying temporarily, then he would leave with Samandriel to find a new city to live in.

They continued their journey and Castiel chatted with Gadreel every so often; nothing too insistent in that it would irritate or distract the alpha, but he noticed the longer they conversed, the more Gadreel seemed to open up and warm to him until they could have a conversation where there were no long, awkward pauses between answers.

"Have you always been part of this pack?" Asked Castiel curiously. He didn't see the alpha interact that much with the other members and he wondered if maybe there was an underlying reason to it.

Gadreel shook his head.

"I was wounded during a fight and my old pack thought my injuries were too great to heal, so they left me to die in the snow one December. Sam and Dean stumbled across me when they were checking the territory for threats. I thought they were going to kill me, after all, I was head alpha of a rival pack, but they didn't. Like you, they took me in and Jody healed me.

"When I was a little better, Sam and Dean returned to me and gave me two options: Leave and try to find my own way, or stay here and become one of their pack.

"I liked the pack's dynamic and Sam and Dean had been kind to me when they had no reason to be,
so I stayed. To this day I owe them my life and I will forever be in their debt," finished Gadreel solemnly.

Castiel nodded thoughtfully. "And that's why you protect them now? That's why you're the lookout?"

The alpha nodded. "I would give my life for them."

Castiel raised an eyebrow. He'd never heard of a rival head alpha pledging his life to another alpha's pack, yet it was clear Gadreel meant every word and he really would lay down his life to protect Sam, Dean and their pack and he took his role very seriously.

His respect for Sam and Dean shot up a few notches. He'd always been taught that in the wild, rival leaders killed each other no matter the circumstances, yet this was obviously not the case. He wrinkled his nose. He couldn't imagine Michael, Lucifer, or even Raphael inviting a lead alpha into their home even if they were weak and dying. There would be no hope for the poor alpha.

Gadreel was very lucky it was the Winchesters who had bumped into him.

A particularly frosty wind bit at Castiel's body and he shivered violently.

Gadreel raised an eyebrow. His coat was a lot thicker than Cas' after years of harding it out in cruel weather. Cas, on the other hand, was used to central heating and perfect AC in a cosy apartment. His coat had never developed to protect him against the harsh weather.

Still, if he was to survive the next few weeks out here he had to learn to fend for himself; there was no point in complaining and he didn't want to become even more of a burden to the pack.

He continued walking, ignoring the quiet growl of his stomach protesting its near-emptiness. If the rest of the pack could survive on a meal every seventy-two hours, then so could he and Samandriel. They were originally built for it anyway; it was only city-life that had changed their meal-time rituals to eating at least two meals a day.

As the day progressed though and the wind became colder and harsher, Castiel felt his whole body beginning to shake.

The snow was suddenly coming down a lot thicker and Castiel could barely see the rest of the pack to the point where he'd herded Samandriel to his side in fear of losing him. Now his pup was burrowed deep into his side as they trudged through the deepening snow and Castiel couldn't help but be envious of the thick coats of the other wolves.

"I'm cold," whispered Samandriel, little body caked in snow and ice, and Castiel let out a distressed whine at seeing his son in such a state. He quickly brushed the snow off the small alpha and pulled Samandriel between his legs, using his own body as a shield to protect him from the biting cold.

Samandriel rubbed his head against his father's leg in gratitude and Cas licked his muzzle gently.

"Stay close," Cas murmured and Samandriel nodded obediently.

The temperature continued to drop as night fell until Castiel couldn't feel his legs any more. He'd had to pick up Samandriel because the snow was that thick and the little pup was convulsing wildly with the icy atmosphere. Cas tried all he could to warm him up, but with his own body lacking any form of heat, and his muscles also shuddering, he could do nothing but hope they would find somewhere warm soon.
Dean kept shooting him these concerned yet exasperated glances, as if he couldn't understand why Castiel was shaking more than the rest of his pack, and Castiel just hoped the alpha wouldn't kick him out of the group for being so much trouble. He didn't think he and Samandriel would be able to survive a week on their own in this weather.

Ruby kept rolling her eyes from Sam's side, sneering at his shivers and Samandriel's desperate attempts to get closer to his father's fur. She was often rebuffed by Sam, yet it was clear the other omega was also troubled by Castiel's poor adaptability to the surrounding environment.

Sam and Dean often glanced at him and they would converse quietly, seemingly arguing over something, before they would lapse back into silence and repeat the whole scene half an hour later.

Castiel could feel his body beginning to cease up, and he felt a spark of panic surge within him. If he fell now, would Sam and Dean leave him? They weren't obliged to care for him and he had proved to be a drain on their resources. It would be better for them to leave him; it would certainly speed the pack up.

Just as he stumbled, Samandriel gasping at the sight of his usually strong father in such a weak state, something warm pressed into his side, and he turned his head to find Gadreel huddled close, tail curled around him as he continued to walk in silence, still looking out for any danger despite the fact he was obviously cold too.

Castiel froze; he had never thought an alpha from a rival pack would care about him enough to save him from an icy fate, yet here was this stoic alpha, trying his best to keep him warm even though he was starting to shake too.

Michael, his own brother, would never have done that for Castiel. He'd have saved himself first; stating he was more important as head alpha. Lucifer and Raphael would have left him too, saying he was less important due to his status as omega.

"One foot in front of the other," murmured Gadreel softly. "Keep going."

Shocked and touched, Castiel quickly pushed further into the alpha's fur and tucked his head under his chin in the picture of omega subservience and gratitude.

Gadreel huffed but he subtly tugged Cas' head closer to his chest, not as a show of dominance, but rather an attempt to warm them both up.

"Stop bowing your head to us," mumbled Gadreel. "The alphas here don't expect you to, nor do we think it appropriate. You are an omega, not a slave."

Blood beginning to warm again, Castiel couldn't help but rub his head against the other wolf's chest in contentment, instincts fogging his mind and he almost purred when Gadreel, after a moments hesitation, began to reciprocate, nuzzling Cas' head and snuggling as close as possible to the frozen omega.

Cas scented at Gadreel's throat, comforted by the smell of protective alpha when the rest of the world seemed to be against him and his son, and Gadreel bared his neck further, allowing Castiel closer in a way that told the omega he had done this countless times as pack leader. It seemed as though the alpha had reverted back to caring leader mode and Castiel certainly wasn't going to complain, and nor was Gadreel if the way he was quietly rumbling was anything to go by.

However, Castiel was startled when the light weight of his pup was lifted from his back and he whipped around to bare his teeth at whomever had taken his son.
Jo stared at him, Samandriel huddling into her warm, thick fur as she wrapped her tail around him, and Castiel’s eyes widened in realisation before he bowed his head in appreciation. Jo quirked a smile at him before nuzzling Samandriel softly and continuing onwards.

Cas and Gadreel watched them trot ahead before the alpha once again tugged the omega closer, their tails curling around one another as they nuzzled contentedly at each another.

It was this sort of friendly contact Castiel had been craving for years now without realising it. His brothers had never given him much attention (except for Gabriel, but he had to keep up appearances and therefore couldn't be around as much as he would have liked), and because of city culture, alphas and betas (and even some omegas) didn't pay much heed to an unmated omega with a child, so the only real contact he got was from his son, and he couldn’t expect so much emotional support from his six year-old son.

Yet here, out in the wild lands where Cas had always been told it was everyone for themselves, a loyal alpha he'd only known for little over a week had tucked him into his side and given him the contact he’d so desperately needed. There was no underlying reason either; Gadreel just wanted to keep them both warm. If this had been a foreign alpha from the city, Castiel would most likely have been presenting by now; an unwanted knot deep inside him as payment for receiving so much care and attention, yet Gadreel was doing nothing of the sort.

As a great feeling of safety and gratefulness washed over him, Castiel's instincts demanded he bare his throat for the alpha. Gadreel had taken care of him yet asked for nothing in return so as an omega, he should display his appreciation.

Castiel exposed his throat in an obvious invitation to mark and claim, and the alpha's eyes widened in shock before he was gently nuzzling the omega's neck and growling protectively albeit quietly.

"Stop, Castiel. I'm not going to claim you. We're not like that here. I'm not asking for anything in return," murmured Gadreel as he nosed at the omega's throat, breathing in his sweet, comforting scent.

Slowly, Castiel came to his senses and he glanced at Gadreel in no small amount of horror at what he'd just offered the alpha. Gadreel shot him a small smile as he pressed back into Cas' side.

"I thought you might regret doing that."

Were he in human form, Castiel would have been a dark shade of scarlet. As it was he just hid his face in Gadreel's fur, ears flattened with embarrassment.

The vibrations from Gadreel's soft chuckle ran through Castiel's chest, making him feel oddly safe. Had he been with any other alpha, things could have turned sour very quickly in those past few minutes, yet Gadreel was a decent and caring alpha, and fortunately Castiel hadn't been in any danger.

"You always offer your throat to complete strangers?" Huffed an amused voice from his right, and Castiel turned to find Benny approaching his snow-exposed side.

The other alpha seemed to be fairing rather well against the freezing temperatures, but with the way the snow was sticking to his fur, Castiel guessed the oak wolf wasn't as warm as he made out to be.

"Stupid moves like that could get you killed," reprimanded Benny gently. "Both here and in civilisation."
Castiel lowered his gaze in shame. He understood the dangers of what he'd just done; he'd exposed his throat to a foreign alpha from a rival pack when he had a young pup who depended on him. Gadreel could've taken advantage of him and mated him when he wasn't in the right frame of mind, or he could've killed him there and then; one bite into his jugular and he'd be dead.

Fortunately, Gadreel wasn't cruel or sadistic.

Castiel jumped at the feeling of a cold nose nuzzling at his chest and neck, a quiet growl accompanying the caring behaviour and Benny quirked an eyebrow.

"Getting protective there, Gadreel?" He smirked and Castiel watched as a flash of guilt crossed the grey alpha's face and he slowly pulled his head away from Cas' chest.

"Apologies," he murmured softly. "Old habits."

Benny's expression softened. "I don't think Cas was particularly averse to it, were you?"

The omega blinked before shaking his head and he didn't miss Gadreel's shy smile.

Cas decided he really liked this alpha.

Another warm body pressed into his exposed side and Castiel glanced in surprise at the two alphas sandwiching him between them.

Benny laughed at his stunned expression.

"You're shaking like a leaf and there's only so much body heat you can leach off Mr. Protective."

Gadreel averted his gaze embarrassedly and Castiel would've protested that he could take care of himself, except he was wedged between two really warm alphas who smelled safe and kind and honestly, he was quite comfortable where he was.

Instead, he shrugged and wriggled into a more suitable position between them, ignoring the way Gadreel was practically radiating pride and happiness and how Benny was cackling beside them both.

They marched onwards.

Chapter End Notes

Uh oh the snow has arrived. Hope you enjoyed this chilli chapter and get ready for some Dean/Castiel interactions in the next chapter! :) Improvements always welcome
When they finally stopped to rest, it was nearing two in the morning and the snowfall had lessened to a light spatter. However, the thick blanket of white coating the ground had risen above their stomachs and the air was still terribly cold; frosty enough for the rest of the pack to now be shivering.

Dean glanced worriedly to his pack and scented the air, Sam copying his movements.

"We'll rest here until morning," Dean announced upon finding a clearing with no strange smells or paw-prints denting the snow.

Castiel wanted to collapse and just sleep for a week, but Benny and Gadreel guided him towards where the rest of the group were beginning to lie down, each member pulling a warm blanket from their bags.

Castiel was stunned when the other wolves huddled close together, practically lying on top of one another or curling round each other's bodies as they used each other's body heat to warm up.

Benny quickly joined where Jo was curled around Samandriel, a blanket strewn over them both, and the alpha pressed into Jo's fur and rested his head on her back, grinning at Castiel's raised eyebrows.

"C'mon, we won't bite," he chuckled as Jo snuggled into him contentedly.

"I might chew on your leg though. Not eaten in three days," mumbled the blonde sleepily and Benny huffed out a laugh as he tucked the blanket more securely around her and Samandriel.

Castiel hesitated for a moment. Watching the Winchester pack cuddle together for warmth seemed oddly intimate and it didn't feel right joining such a scene when he was a rival; part of the despised Novak family.

"Dad?" Asked Samandriel uncertainly, head tilted to one side from his position between Jo's paws.

"You coming?"

There was a gentle nudge to his side and Cas turned to find Gadreel smiling warmly at him.

"It's only for heat. You'll freeze if you don't."

That settled it then. Cas carefully padded over to the others and lowered himself beside Benny, startling when the alpha placed a protective paw over his haunches and tugged him as close to his side as he could get.

"Hey, I don't want to be cold either," the alpha winked.

Castiel jumped again when another weight pushed into his other side and he blinked as Gadreel curled around him. The grey alpha glanced at him once before beginning to nose the snow from Cas' fur, instantly warming the omega up and Cas used his tail to sweep the snow from Gadreel's back.

When he was satisfied, Gadreel nuzzled the omega's neck amiably before placing his own blanket over them both. Then he rested his head on Cas' back as his eyes fluttered shut.

Castiel's eyes widened at the tender gesture and he felt something in his heart expand and then ache
with longing. He watched Samandriel's tail wag happily before the pup settled down into Jo's fur once more and Castiel looked around the group of snuggling wolves and was hit with a strong sense of home and family.

Except his family were never this close. They had never been this affectionate with one another.

He frowned. All his life he had been told the wild folk only cared about personal gain; that they were savage and uncaring of anything else but their own needs, but watching the Novak family's long-time enemies proved these words to be lies. Castiel had never seen a pack or a family so trusting and protective of one another.

This was the kind of family he'd wanted Samandriel to have. Instead they were both on the run from Cas' brothers who wanted nothing more than to murder his pup and punish him for 'disgracing' the family name.

And wild folk were supposed to be the savage ones?

The sound of soft paws caught his attention and he watched Sam and Dean survey the area once before glancing fondly at their pack. They nuzzled one another goodnight before parting ways; Sam curling around Ruby and Dean wrapping himself around Lisa and Ben.

Castiel couldn't help but smile as he drifted off to sleep, tucked underneath Gadreel's head.

* * *

"I don't think he's suited to this kind of living."

"He's trying his best, Dean. It's not his fault he wasn't raised like us."

Cas blearily cracked an eye open at the low voices. He was very warm now and it was making it hard to wake up properly. As he looked around, it didn't look like anyone else was up either.

"I'm not saying it is. I just don't want a dead omega on our hands. He's got a pup, remember?"

Cas blinked to attention at that. Dead omega? Were Dean and Sam talking about him?

There was a weary sigh and Cas subtly slid his gaze to the two brothers without jostling Gadreel.

"I suppose. I'm not particularly fond of having a dead pup on our hands either," sighed Sam, troubled. "But what can we do with them? We can't just kick them out in this weather. It would be like sealing their fates."

"I know. But he's of no use to the pack. He can't live like us; he can't hunt, he can't fight, he's submissive to every alpha he meets..." Dean shook his head. "He's gonna get hurt if he stays in the wild. Or knocked up. Or both."

Sam chewed his cheek. "...Did you see what he did with Gadreel last night?"

Dean frowned worriedly. "I did. Baring his throat like that... he could've got himself killed. It's a good thing Gadreel isn't one of those alphas."

Sam quirked a smile. "I think Gadreel's a little attached to him. I've never seen him so... ah... cuddly."
Dean's lips twitched in amusement. "Well, that alpha needs a friend. I don't think he speaks more than two words a day to anyone."

The brothers soon sobered.

"So... what are we going to do about him?" Asked Sam quietly and Dean seemed to slump with the weight of the question.

"He said he's only going to stay temporarily. We'll just have to hope that he finds something he likes sooner rather than later."

Sam cocked his head to one side. "And if he doesn't?"

Dean paused for a moment, mulling it over and Cas waited with bated breath, anxious for his fate.

"We'll wait 'til winter's over," replied Dean. "If he hasn't found a place by then..."

"We're gonna have to kick him out," finished Sam unhappily and Cas closed his eyes as a strange feeling of disappointment washed over him.

He shouldn't care. Afterall, he was looking for a new town or city anyway; he shouldn't care about these wolves. Yet as Gadreel nestled into a more comfortable position during his sleep, gently tugging Cas closer with the paw that had unconsciously slung itself over Castiel's body, the omega couldn't help but feel a sense of loss upon hearing he and Samandriel were going to be thrown out of the group at the end of winter.

"Do you believe him?" Sam suddenly asked, voice low and Cas perked up again. "About what he said about his family?"

"Do I believe his family want to kill his pup and punish him for being unmated and with a child?" Huffed Dean after a moment. "Yeah, I think I do. If the Novaks had sent him to spy on us or kill us, the guy probably wouldn't have bared his throat last night. Nor would he have slept under an alpha's head all night with his pup in the paws of someone else."

Dean shook his head. "So unless they've sent him to ensure we'll starve to death, I doubt a spy would make so many rookie mistakes."

"They were both pretty thin when they arrived," agreed Sam. "And he really didn't seem to know who we were until we told him."

"And I doubt a spy would have presented to me when they first arrived," said Dean uncomfortably and Sam raised an amused eyebrow.

"He presented to you?"

"Thought we were gonna use him as a breeder."

Sam let out a low growl. "What kind of things do they teach about us?"

Dean shrugged exasperatedly. "Not a clue, but I'm beginning to think it's civilised folk who have hierarchy issues, not us. I mean, how must they treat their omegas if Cas thinks he has to act the way he does?"

Sam shook his head. "Poor guy. Doesn't fit in with his own family and can't live in the wild. Hope he and his pup find what they're looking for."
Dean nodded. "We'll keep him over winter. After that... we'll just have to see what happens."

Castiel didn't know how to feel. On one hand, at least the Winchesters believed his story, on the other hand, they were thinking of kicking him out.

He just hoped he could find a city before then.

* * *

When the sun finally rose above the horizon, the pack awoke to find themselves sufficiently warm, but their stomachs were rumbling unpleasantly, so Dean organised a hunt, telling Bobby, Ellen, Lisa and Cas to once again guard the pups and pack up everyone's belongings.

About half an hour into the hunt, Samandriel and Ben came bounding over to Castiel, bodies wriggling with excitement.

"Dad! Ben's never built an igloo before! Can we show him, please, please, please?" Begged Samandriel, putting his puppy-dog eyes expression into maximum drive.

Castiel chuckled. He'd finished helping with packing up which meant the four adults were standing around, waiting for the pack to return before they continued their move.

"Okay, okay. Find me a clear space with some really deep snow," he said and the two pups grinned at each other before bouncing off to do as asked.

He followed them at a leisurely pace and smiled at the sight of the two sat to attention, tails wagging furiously as they waited for him.

"First thing you've got to do is build a sturdy base," said Cas as he began to form a tightly packed block of snow, Samandriel copying him perfectly as Ben watched on with wide, curious eyes.

"So we've got to build a few bricks and put them in a big circle, leaving a small gap we can fit through," instructed Castiel as Samandriel helped Ben to form his own brick. After a couple of minutes, the trio had enough bricks to form the base of the igloo.

Usually, Castiel and Samandriel would have built the igloo in human form because opposable thumbs came in handy for things like that, but as it was, the air was far colder than they were used to and they had no clothes to put on once in human form, so it took them considerably longer to build the bricks, but it was manageable.

"And now we just keep piling more bricks on top of one another until it starts to look like a dome," explained Castiel and Ben nodded determinedly as he began to make some more bricks of snow.

After approximately half an hour, the trio had managed to make a rather large and fairly impressive snow dome, with only the top missing. As the pups couldn't reach up there anyway, Castiel packed some snow together in a thick disc-like shape and carefully placed it on top of the surrounding bricks so they had a full igloo.

Just to make sure it was safe, Cas crawled inside and firmly patted extra snow between the gaps of the bricks to ensure the snow wouldn't slide and cave in. Then he crawled back out and let the pups explore their creation.
"Cool," grinned Ben as he padded around the inside of the igloo, large eyes darting all around in wonder. Samandriel smiled and pressed up against his father's chest.

"Thanks, dad," he said quietly and Castiel curved a paw around him as he licked his muzzle.

"No problem. Now, go and play with your friend. He's waiting for you."

Samandriel grinned and wiggled his tail in appreciation before joining Ben once more.

"I've never seen anything as awesome as this!" Said Ben excitedly. "Your dad is so cool!"

Samandriel puffed his chest out proudly. "My dad knows loads of stuff. We used to do things like this all the time. You ever built a snow man?"

Ben shook his head and Samandriel gaped at him in shock.

"You've never built a snowman, ever?"

"What's a snowman?" Asked Ben confusedly and Samandriel's eyes widened before he was pushing the omega out of the igloo.

"Come on, I'll show you," he grinned and the pair scampered off, leaving Cas to roll his eyes in amusement.

"What is that?" Asked a wary voice and Castiel turned to find Lisa narrowing a suspicious gaze at the igloo.

Castiel quirked an eyebrow.

"It's an igloo. The kids wanted to make one."

"What does it do?" Asked Lisa as she sniffed at it cautiously and Castiel's other eyebrow joined the first in surprise.

"It's like a house made of snow. It doesn't do anything. You sit in it."

Lisa frowned. "Why?"

Cas opened his mouth to answer before realising he didn't actually have an answer to that. So he shrugged.

"It's fun? Some people live in them; very large ones in icy climates."

Lisa glanced at him in confusion. "But it's made of snow. It'd be freezing."

Castiel smiled. "Actually it's quite warm. The snow traps the heat in and since no wind can penetrate through such a thick layer of snow, the air in there is much warmer than it is out here."

Lisa blinked before carefully edging towards the igloo.

"It won't collapse will it?" She asked sceptically and Castiel chuckled as he shook his head.

"It's perfectly safe."

She crawled inside.

After a moment, she reappeared sporting an excited smile.
"It is warm," she grinned and Castiel huffed out a soft laugh.

"And it's a lot bigger in here than I thought it would be," she continued. "Actually, put a blanket in here and it would be quite cosy."

Castiel shook his head in amusement. "It's the same as sleeping in a hollowed out bush, except with snow and ice."

Lisa nodded with bright eyes before disappearing back inside the igloo to work out how it had been created. Castiel couldn't help but grin.

"What's that?" Came a gruff, uncertain voice.

Castiel whirled around to face Dean and the rest of the pack, all staring warily at the harmless white dome.

"Igloo," interrupted Lisa cheerfully as she poked her head out once more. "Cas, Samandriel and Ben made it. It's very warm in here."

Dean raised an eyebrow as a few other wolves began to scent the air curiously.

"...What does it do?" Asked Dean confusedly, yet seeming a little more relaxed at seeing Lisa inside the creation.

"You sit in it. Or sleep in it. People in Greenland and other icy places live in them permanently," replied Castiel, watching with concealed amusement as Dean padded over to it and began to sniff at the compact bricks.

"It's all snow?" He asked and Castiel nodded.

"It's not going to cave in?" Sam asked confusedly and Cas shook his head.

"Can't cave in at that thickness. And there's no gaps either so it's rather sturdy."

Dean thumped his tail against a few bricks to test its strength and Lisa's voice floated out from inside the shelter.

"Nothing's moved in here. No crumbling or sliding. I think it's safe to say this thing's not going to collapse."

Dean frowned thoughtfully before cautiously crawling inside with Lisa. Sam raised an eyebrow.

"That thing can fit two in?"

"Quite comfortably," replied Castiel, unable to help the smile creeping across his face.

Had none of the Winchester pack ever seen an igloo before?

After a few moments Dean resurfaced and stared directly at Cas.

"Teach us," he said and Castiel blinked in surprise.

"Teach us how to make one of these," continued Dean. "You're right, it is warm in here and it's strong enough to protect us against the blizzards. Every year we struggle finding shelter in the winter, but if we know how to make one of these, we won't be at such risk of freezing during the night any more."
As the other wolves began to trot forwards to inspect the foreign creation, Dean padded out to talk to Castiel alone.

"This is really impressive, Cas. I've never seen anything like it. Where did you learn to build one of these?"

Castiel cocked his head to one side. He wished he could say he'd learned it off his parents like most other children did when they were able to properly enjoy snow days, but his parents had never had much time for him.

"My brother, Gabriel," he replied eventually. Gabriel had always made time for him, even from them being very young, his older brother had always looked after him and made him laugh when the rest of the family seemed intent on making his life miserable.

Dean frowned. "I thought you were on the run from your brothers?"

Cas nodded. "I am. But Gabriel is the only brother who has ever cared about me; the only family member who actually pays any attention to me."

Dean narrowed his eyes but said nothing more and Castiel averted his gaze. He seemed to be very good at displeasing Dean.

The alpha glanced back at the igloo.

"So will you teach us?" He asked quietly and Cas startled.

"Of course. If that's what you wish," he replied softly and Dean quirked a small smile.

"Thank you. This may save lives, Cas. You don't know how grateful I am."

"It's only an igloo," the omega mumbled shyly and Dean chuckled lightly in a way that made Cas smile too.

"It may be to you, but to us, this is the thing that's gonna protect us from hypothermia. Now, let me round the guys up and you can show us how to build one of these igloos," said Dean before he whirled to gather his pack.

Eventually, after they had all had their fill of the two deer caught in the hunt, the pack gathered around Castiel, Samandriel and Ben in a semicircle, and Castiel explained what they were doing as the two pups helped to compact the snow as quickly as possible.

The other wolves watched with rapt attention, eyes bright and curious as they observed the dome being constructed until Castiel placed the final piece on top.

He explained to them how to ensure the structure was sturdy by keeping the walls thick and compressed, and he told them about keeping the igloo warm by filling any gaps between bricks with extra snow.

When he was finally finished, Dean instructed the pack to work in pairs to practice crafting their own shelters, with Cas, Samandriel and Ben surveying their progress in case the need for help arose.

The pups grinned excitedly at being entrusted with such an important task and the adults were patient and amused by their eagerness to help when their structures weren't quite perfect.

Castiel felt touched by the other wolves' easy acceptance and encouragement of his son's aid. His
family wouldn't take too kindly to being told what to do by a young pup, yet the Winchester pack didn't seem to mind who they got help from as long as they received it.

"Need some help?" Castiel asked Dean as he watched the alpha lag behind the other pairs. Sam had paired up with his mate, Ruby, leaving Dean on his own and although the alpha was doing well, he was a lot further behind than his pack.

Dean glanced at him gratefully and Castiel moved to help him.

They worked quickly and efficiently, and when they were finished, Dean gazed at their work, impressed.

"Looks great, Cas. Once again, I can't thank you enough. This is really gonna help us through the winter."

Castiel tried not to show his pride at the alpha's high praise. He didn't understand why he felt so joyful at Dean's approval, all he knew was he liked it. He rarely received compliments from alphas, so hearing a head alpha thank him made his omega preen.

"No problem, Dean. Samandriel and I owe you our lives. This is the least we can do."

Dean offered him a genuine smile; not a small one or a half-hearted one; a smile filled with fondness and amusement.

Castiel gave him one in return.

"Maybe we can stay here for a little while," mused Dean after a few moments as he gazed at his happy pack. "There's no danger here and since everybody has now built their own shelters, I don't see the harm in trying them out for a few nights. We might as well let our bodies warm up a bit before we start moving again."

Castiel flicked his gaze to the other wolves; each member seemingly thrilled by their handiwork as they crawled in and out of their shelters or inspected each other's igloos.

"I wouldn't be averse to a little bit of rest," murmured Castiel in agreement.

Dean nodded. "Then we'll stay for the night. Probably a few more. They deserve time to relax."

"So do you," hummed Castiel without thinking and Dean froze before glancing at the wide-eyed omega.

"...Maybe you're right," he said softly before his gaze flicked to his contented pack. Cas wondered how long it had been since Dean had just let go and spent time with his pack as a family rather than a leader.

He noted the alpha's tense muscles and the stiff way he held himself, as if he was frightened of relaxing for even a second in case it cost him one of his friends or family, and Castiel suddenly had the urge to press into Dean and nuzzle him like he had done with Gadreel the previous evening.

He wanted to ease Dean's tensions; let him know that he didn't have to shoulder all this stress he seemed to carry, and it seemed too easy to just reach out and rub his head under the alpha's chin; to nuzzle his neck and cuddle close in the chilly atmosphere.

Yet it felt inappropriate.
Dean was head alpha of the Novaks’ greatest enemies. It would seem wrong to practically snuggle into the Winchester pack's leader, no matter how Dean's praise and appreciation had made him feel.

Cas frowned at himself. He wasn't usually this cuddly, but there was something about the dynamics of the Winchester pack that made him revert back into comforting omega mode.

He'd have to be careful he didn't do anything else considered dangerous and stupid.

As night fell, Cas watched the other wolves retire to their respective igloos in pairs or with pups, and he and Samandriel trudged wearily into their original creation.

Just as Castiel began to curl protectively around his son, he noticed Dean slink into his igloo, tired and alone.

A pang of sympathy stabbed his heart as dropped into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Hey look! Cas did something right for once ;) Hope you enjoyed this update!
With the igloos providing shelter and warmth, Sam and Dean decided to stay a little longer than planned at their temporary territory. The snow was too deep for the pups to walk in anyway, and the wind was bitter and harsh as it blew great clouds of white across the landscape, so the most logical action to take was to remain where they were until the snow eased up a little.

Except after two weeks, it was clear the weather wasn't going to calm down any time soon.

Temperatures were reaching well below freezing point by now and the snow was falling quicker and heavier, sometimes even forming hailstone which forced the pack to retreat into their respective igloos.

Unfortunately, the unforgiving weather had also forced the pack's prey into hiding or into an early hibernation.

The pack returned from their fruitless hunt, frozen and exhausted and Cas watched Bobby, Ellen, Lisa and the pups pad over to the downhearted wolves to nuzzle and comfort them in hopes of warming them up.

As Lisa greeted Dean, brushing the snow from his fur and curling around him in an attempt to heat him up, Castiel spotted Gadreel trudging stiffly through the camp, body wracked with shivers and fur caked with ice.

Mind made up, Cas trotted out of the warmth of his igloo and made his way over to the shuddering alpha.

Gadreel startled when Cas nuzzled gently at his neck in greeting before brushing the frost from his coat.

Originally, Castiel would never have even imagined greeting a foreign alpha so intimately, but as Gadreel let out a sigh of relief, muscles relaxing as he leaned into the comforting contact, Castiel felt content at the idea of having pleased the alpha.

He chuckled softly as Gadreel wriggled further into his side, pressing his cold ears against the omega's toasty fur.

As the harsh wind whipped around them and the other wolves began to retreat into their shelters, Castiel nudged the alpha's side.

"Come on. Stay with us for a while; you're frozen."

Gadreel hesitated as he glanced at Cas and when the omega didn't look nervous at the prospect of having him near his pup, the alpha nodded slowly and followed Cas into his igloo, unaware of Dean's small smile at the sight of one of his pack being helped by Cas.

Samandriel sniffed cautiously at Gadreel as he stood awkwardly in the entrance to the shelter, as if he was testing to see if the older alpha was safe for his father to be around. Castiel smiled as Gadreel scented his pup curiously.
Upon watching another shiver contort his body, Castiel frowned and wrapped himself around the alpha and Gadreel closed his eyes in relief as the two lowered themselves to the ground.

Satisfied Gadreel seemed safe, Samandriel plodded over and nestled into his side and the older alpha couldn't help but smile at the tiny bundle of fluff acting like his own personal radiator.

He nuzzled Samandriel in gratefulness and the little pup's tail began to wag as he rubbed himself against the older wolf's side. Castiel grinned in amusement as Gadreel's own tail began to thump the floor and he curled more securely around Samandriel.

"I think you've gained a new friend," chuckled Cas as he sidled closer, resting his head over Gadreel's haunches, and the alpha smiled as he regained blood circulation to his legs.

"Thank you," he murmured. "You didn't have to do this."

Castiel nuzzled his neck. He seemed to be developing a habit after going so long without any friendly contact.

"I can't leave you to freeze. And neither can Samandriel, it seems."

Gadreel quirked a grin. "You're not the wolf I first assumed you were."

"Did you think I was a fierce rival set on challenging you and your pack?" Chuckled Castiel and Gadreel leaned into him.

"Well, you are a Novak," he murmured and Cas pressed his head into the gentle alpha's chest, strangely comforted by his scent and the way he had curled almost protectively around Samandriel.

Gadreel lay his head over Cas' and the omega had never felt so safe in his life. This pack was so kind and caring, and Cas suddenly had the urge to be a part of it. He wanted his son to grow up with a family who would take care of him and defend him and accept him even though he only had one parent. He wanted to be part of a pack that respected one another and treated its members with fairness. He wanted to have a leader that cared equally for all the wolves in their pack; a leader that valued every gender and secondary gender.

Cas sighed softly. He was so lonely. He had his son, sure, but they were only temporary members of the Winchester pack and what happened when they left? They would start a new life in a strange city with possibly new identities and not a single friend to help them.

Without thinking, he snuggled closer to Gadreel and the alpha frowned at his distressed scent before nuzzling gently at his fur and slinging a paw over him.

"Sam and Dean won't let us go hungry," murmured Gadreel, obviously misjudging the reason for the omega's stress. "I promise you we won't allow your pup to starve."

Cas gazed at the alpha for a few moments, taking in the prominence of his ribs and the dullness of his coat. He noted the huddled posture as he tried to conserve heat when his body was so malnourished and he frowned in sympathy at the exhaustion in the alpha's eyes. He glanced to his son as well, to find him in almost as equally poor a state, with jutting ribs and a rumbling stomach.

For the past week and a half the snow had made it impossible for the pack to even track food, let alone catch it, and since they weren't built like the regular timber wolf or any other form of non-human, their metabolism wouldn't let them survive as long without food as their smaller, canine counterparts.
Now, with no hopes of moving to new grounds, and very little chance of catching a rabbit, never mind a deer, it was beginning to look touch-and-go whether or not the pack would survive the next fortnight.

But if there was one thing Castiel knew, it was he wasn't about to let his pup die after they'd come this far. At the end of the day, this pack deal was only temporary and his son came first and foremost.

He glanced at the weary Gadreel; the alpha that had helped him through the snow when he could have left him to die.

"Rest," murmured Castiel as he nosed at the alpha's jaw. "You need it."

Gadreel made a quiet noise of approval at the omega's gentleness as his eyes fluttered shut and when it looked like he was dozing peacefully, Castiel carefully wriggled out from behind him and licked his son's head.

"Stay here," he whispered when Samandriel gazed up at him. "I'm going to see if I can find something for us to eat."

The pup glanced at the older alpha.

"Gadreel too?" He murmured and Castiel nodded. He couldn't let this alpha go hungry after everything he'd done for them.

Samandriel settled back down into the grey wolf's side.

"Be careful, dad," he whispered and Cas smiled at his son's thoughtfulness.

He crept out of the shelter and upon noticing the whole camp seemed to be empty of other wolves, he bounded off, deeper into the forest, unaware of the two figures scowling at his retreating form.

The snow covered a lot of scents and the strong wind displaced any that were remaining, but Castiel was used to living in a city where there were so many different clashing scents that focusing on a single one was very difficult but a must to stay sane.

He closed his eyes as the hard snow battered at his body and he scented the air deeply, hoping to catch a wisp of anything.

Then he got one. Rabbit.

Thin coat doing nothing to help him conserve heat, Castiel raced through the snow, nose low to the ground as he tracked his prey. He soon spotted the critter and crouched low to the ground, stalking it until he was confident it couldn't run any further, but something else caught his attention. A new scent.

Deer?

Torn between catching the skinny rabbit before him or chasing the new scent, Castiel glanced at the rabbit longingly. If he killed it now, carrying it would slow him down and the strong scent would throw him off locating the deer, and if there really were deer, that meant the whole pack could be fed.

Feed son or entire pack?

Closing his eyes in defeat, Castiel backed away from the rabbit and tracked the new scent. He
couldn't in good conscience let the other wolves starve. Especially wolves like Benny and Jo, who had helped him so often.

He trotted through the snow, cold seeping into his joints and after ten minutes found the end of the trail for the deer scent.

His eyes widened at the herd of deer stripping bark from the trees not fifty metres away. How had the hunting group missed this?

He took a look at the stag leading the group and some of the younger bucks protecting the does and frowned worriedly. There was no way with his awful hunting ability that he would be able to bring one of these animals down, let alone carry it back to camp by himself. He needed help.

Glancing around his surroundings to make himself familiar with them, Cas slowly turned and headed back to camp.

Only to bump straight into a stunned alpha and omega.

Cas shook himself off, hackles already raised as he tried to plan how to fight the two strangers off. Then the familiar scents hit him and he squinted at them through the storm.

"Sam? Dean?" He asked, voice low as the pair turned wide, shocked eyes upon him. "I was just about to look for you."

Then Cas frowned. "...Did you follow me?"

The pair looked a little sheepish but otherwise ignored his question as they peered over his shoulder to stare at the small herd.

"How did you find these?" Asked Sam. "There's no scent."

Cas frowned confusedly because he could smell them just fine.

"Yes there is. I followed it approximately ten minutes ago."

Sam sniffed the air before scrunching up his nose as the snow beat at it.

"I can only just smell them when we're right next to them. How could you track them for so long?"

Cas shrugged, uncertain what they wanted him to say. The smells had been faint, but they had definitely been there.

"Well done, Cas," murmured Dean softly, voice full of sincerity as he eyed the deer, and the omega blinked in surprise, before remembering his initial question.

"What are you two doing here?" He asked suspiciously and this time Sam lowered his head in shame as Dean stared apologetically at him.

"We saw you leave the camp and thought you were just looking after yourself and Samandriel. We followed you to tell you we all work as a team and sneaking off to feed just the two of you is something we dislike. Unless you are told to hunt for yourself by either me or Sam, you shouldn't do it." Dean lowered his ears in sorrow. "However, we misjudged you. You found this herd and turned back to inform the rest of the camp, didn't you? We're sorry for not trusting you."

Castiel felt a spark of guilt in his heart. That wasn't entirely true, was it?
"...Actually, I was just going to hunt for Samandriel, Gadreel and myself. I picked up the scent of a rabbit and was going to bring that back, but the deer caught me off guard and I couldn't leave you to go hungry when there was a chance I could find something more substantial," Cas mumbled, head lowered apologetically. "Only problem was I couldn't bring them back alone."

Dean shook his head. "Doesn't matter now. You found them and you were going to do the right thing." He paused thoughtfully. "Even if you aren't a member of our pack you still wanted to take care of us."

Sam shot his brother an odd glance and Dean looked at his brother in a strange way that made Cas wonder what they were thinking.

"Right, let's bring back a meal," huffed Dean and Cas' eyes widened.

"By yourself? You can't bring one of these down alone. I'll be of no help and the two of you can't fight that stag off."

Sam grinned wolfishly as Dean chuckled.

"C'mon," the alpha smirked as they crept closer to the herd. "Think you can play decoy for us? You won't have to do any chasing."

Cas nodded hesitantly. Were these two crazy? No way could they bring down one of the herd by themselves. They'd be trampled.

"Great. Crawl over to that tree over there and when you're ready, growl and snap and bark as loud as you can to get these deer running in our direction."

Cas nodded and slipped over to the appointed spot before taking a deep breath and doing as ordered.

The deer bellowed in fear before there was a tangle of hooves and legs, and suddenly, Cas was watching in mortification as the herd stampeded toward Dean and Sam.

However, Sam and Dean leapt up onto a straying doe's back, biting and clawing efficiently until she fell. As she did, the lead stag made a terrible noise of fury as he lowered his antlers and veered off from the rest of the herd, aiming directly for the two wolves.

Sam and Dean quickly leapt out of the way and Cas winced as Dean barely missed the sharp antlers.

But then, the brothers were snapping at the stag's heels and belly, taunting him and darting between his legs impressively until the stag had no choice but to turn around for fear of being brought down as well. He joined the rest of his herd and they disappeared into the snowy trees, leaving Sam and Dean to grin at each other in triumph as they trotted over to their meal.

"Hey, Cas? Mind giving us a hand carrying this home?" Called Sam as he picked up a forelimb, Dean grabbing a hindlimb.

Castiel perked up and trotted over to them, his expression awed at the brothers' skill and eyes bright at the idea of having aided the pack in some way.

He carefully picked up the doe's neck so as not to bruise it and the trio hobbled back home, tails wagging happily.
When they finally returned back to the camp, the other wolves' eyes lit up with excitement and they ran over to greet the trio, each curious as to how the deer had been located and caught. Sam and Dean quickly informed them of how Castiel had, amazingly, picked up the scent and they had merely killed it.

The black and tan omega was overwhelmed as the pack thanked and praised him, each stunned by his apparently highly sensitive sense of smell as Sam and Dean gazed at him in a mixture of fondness and pride.

Sam andriel and Gadreel joined him and the older alpha shook his head in amazement as the pack began to circle around the fallen animal.

"Well done," he whispered and Cas smiled gratefully as Sam andriel grinned up at him, little tail moving a mile a minute.

"You found her, dad? You tracked her all on your own?"

Cas chuckled as he nuzzled at his pup. "Well, Sam and Dean were the ones who brought her down. They even fought off a stag to do it. I merely found her."

"Yeah, but no one else could even smell any food," insisted Sam andriel. "You found a whole herd!"

Castiel smiled as they stood back and waited for the pack to have their fill first as hierarchy demanded.

"You're the best dad ever," grinned Sam andriel, voice quiet. "You went out in search of food for three people and you come back with enough to fill a whole pack."

Cas' smile fell slightly as he gazed at the other wolves about to tuck into the meal. He had originally left the camp to hunt for food to keep his pup from starving, yet once again, they were the last ones to eat.

It wasn't fair that his son would have to scrape up the remains and the scraps the rest of the pack weren't interested in. He had found the deer, why did hierarchy demand they had to eat last?

"Cas," came a soft voice and the omega glanced up to find Dean gazing at him, with Sam watching his brother curiously.

Dean subtly glanced to the doe and back to Castiel and the omega tilted his head in confusion. Dean glanced once again to the doe and took a small step backwards, and Castiel's eyes widened as he finally understood.

He flicked his gaze to his pup and that was when Sam coughed quietly and he, too, glanced at the doe and back to Sam andriel.

The little alpha cocked his head to one side, puzzled as he looked to his father.

"Sam andriel," murmured Sam gently as he took a step backwards and gestured to the space he'd just been standing in.

Castiel and his son glanced at one another in shock before cautiously rounding the pack to join the
brothers.

Dean offered them both a small smile and nudged them towards the doe, nodding in approval as they lowered their heads to eat.

Cas spotted Benny and Gadreel look to one another in confusion before they began to move away from their meal, offering for Sam and Dean to take their places, but the brothers shook their heads dismissively.

When Cas and Samandriel were finished, Sam and Dean took up their places once more and ate what was left.

"Thank you," murmured Cas quietly when the other wolves had retreated out of the biting storm, leaving him and Samandriel alone with the brothers. "You didn't have to do that."

Dean smiled, pleased. "No, but it's only fair. You tracked it so you deserve to eat first."

"But you actually caught it," pointed out Castiel and the alpha shook his head in amusement.

"I'm trying to say thank you for feeding my pack. Without you we would have been in danger of starving. You are quite the tracker."

"He's right," nodded Sam. "I don't know how you can pick up any scents in this weather; we certainly couldn't. You did in an hour what we couldn't in four. How did you pick up those scents?"

Castiel lowered his head in gratitude at the high praise.

"My sense of smell has always been a little stronger than my brothers' but I suppose I'm used to living in a large, confusing city with lots of merging smells. If you don't focus on one or two and try to take everything in, it can drive you insane. I suppose I'm just familiar with homing in on the one I want."

The brothers looked impressed and Dean tilted his head in thought.

"Maybe I was wrong about you," he said after a moment. "We do need you in the hunting group. How would you feel about becoming our lead tracker? None of the others have such sensitive noses and I believe you could really help us."

Castiel blinked in surprise. "You want me to accompany you on a hunt? Even after last time?"

Dean's ears lowered ashamedly as he glanced away.

"...I was too harsh with you last time. It was your first go and I embarrassed you in front of the pack because you made one mistake. I'm sorry, Cas. I know this is all new for you."

"Thing is... we need you," murmured Sam quietly. "This is one of the harshest winters I've ever seen and we're not going to make it through the week without you and your sense of smell. You've already helped us by teaching us how to build shelters. We know it's a lot to ask, but think you could do it again? Think you can help us hunt?"

Cas couldn't help the smile that flickered across his face. He had never been needed or wanted before. His family had thought him unimportant and useless and those strangers in the street who saw Samandriel had dismissed Cas as a stupid, unmated omega who had managed to get himself knocked up because of his carelessness.
He hadn't thought he would ever fit in with the Winchester pack; hadn't believed he could be of any use in the wild, yet here these brothers were, asking if he would help them.

"What do you say?" Asked Dean almost nervously and Castiel nodded at them both.

"Of course. You've offered me a place to live whilst I search for a home; you've offered my son protection when you could've killed us. How could I say no?"

Sam and Dean frowned and the alpha took a small step forwards.

"I wish you wouldn't say things like that," he muttered. "We're not monsters. We don't kill everyone we stumble across just because they're not part of our pack."

Cas' thoughts wandered to Gadreel.

"...So I've heard."

Sam glanced at Samandriel. "We don't kill pups either. Why do you think Jody looks after Claire and Alex? They're not hers, but we couldn't abandon them when we found them alone in the forest, both sets of parents dead."

Cas hadn't realised the two pups weren't related to the beta. She was so motherly towards them and the rest of the pack treated them as if they were their own. He'd had no idea they belonged to someone else.

"...I'm sorry," Cas said apologetically. "Civilised folk are obviously ignorant to your culture and my family is clearly misinformed about the Winchester pack's ways. I have no intentions of offending you, I promise."

Dean pulled a weary face. They were always so cautious around one another; always minding their words and actions.

"And we have no intentions of offending you. You are our guest, Cas and I've not always been kind to you. For that I'm sorry. I promise if you help us on our hunting trips, you will eat first."

"You don't have to-" Began Castiel, but Dean cut him off.

"No. Forget hierarchy. You find the meal you eat it and don't let anyone tell you otherwise."

He glanced pointedly at Sam and his brother narrowed his eyes in warning. Cas thought the gesture strange because Sam hadn't protested throughout the entire conversation...

"If anyone calls you or your son out, direct them to me, okay?" Ordered Dean as Sam huffed irritadely.

"Dean..."

"Alpha or otherwise," continued Dean, interrupting his brother's low growl and Cas glanced warily between the pair, sensing a tension between them that had deep roots.

He nodded slowly. "Thank you," he offered and both brothers relaxed.

"Great," grinned the head alpha. "Think you can accompany us on the hunt tomorrow? One doe isn't enough to fill the entire pack, but it will suffice for today."

Cas nodded with a small smile and Sam beamed.
"Awesome. I'll tell the others the good news." And with that he trotted off towards the congregation of igloos.

"I was wrong about you," murmured Dean suddenly and Cas glanced at him curiously.

"I always assumed civilised folk were arrogant and selfish, but when I see the way you look at your son..." Dean trailed off thoughtfully. "You even tried to take care of Gadreel, didn’t you? You took him into your shelter when you have no obligation to, you warmed him up and you even offered to hunt for him when we came back empty handed."

Dean shook his head as he averted his gaze. "You're a good person, Cas. Kind. Protective. You ran from your family to protect your son and there aren't many people like you. I misjudged you."

Cas was stunned. This lead alpha had just admitted he’d made a mistake and now he was humbling himself to a rival. How many alphas in the world would do something like that? His brothers certainly wouldn’t.

Cas frowned to himself. Was he really a rival? He had helped them make shelters, had formed some friendships and was now offering to help them hunt. That wasn't something a rival did. In fact, Dean had said he was a guest, despite his surname.

Something warm and happy flared in his chest at the prospect.

"You don't need to apologise, Dean," said Castiel softly. "You've shown both me and my son how you feel by what you did earlier."

Dean smiled amusedly before he frowned when he spotted Castiel shivering against the frosty air; his thin coat providing no protection.

Cas bit back a gasp as the alpha pressed into his side and carefully guided him and Samandriel back to their igloo.

"Let's get you inside," the alpha murmured as he wrapped his tail around Samandriel's tiny frame and Cas couldn't help but lean into the strong alpha; something inviting and safe about his scent.

"Once again, thank you. You've saved my friends and family from a cruel fate and you don't know how grateful I am," said Dean as he hovered in the entrance.

As the alpha turned to leave, Cas' mind wandered back to earlier when he’d seen Dean enter his shelter cold and alone.

"Stay," suggested Castiel. With Gadreel sharing with someone else, there was nothing to stop Dean from lingering a little longer. Afterall, this alpha had been so generous to him.

That and Cas liked his scent.

Dean hesitated. "...I shouldn't. I'm sure Samandriel wouldn't want me here."

Before Cas had a chance to protest, his pup scowled as he marched over to Dean and pointedly rubbed his head against his leg, startling the older alpha.

"You let my dad eat first and you've been really nice with him. Stay."

Cas bit back a snicker as Dean gaped at his son. Samandriel certainly knew how to get what he wanted.
He was also very astute for a six-year old.

"...Right," said Dean. "I guess I have no choice."

He paused uncertainly. "Is Gadreel coming back here?"

Castiel shook his head, wondering what Dean's odd tone meant. The other alpha quickly relaxed and sat down as Cas settled with Samandriel burrowed into his side.

Dean watched the scene with an almost fond smile.

"So, Cas. Tell me about living in a city."

Chapter End Notes

Hey look! Cas did something else right! ;) Hope you enjoyed!

People have been wondering when the Sabriel part is going to come in. I'm afraid it's going to be a little while yet because I want to focus on the Destiel part first. But don't worry, Gabriel's going to come in with a bang! I do have the plot jotted down so I'm going to stick with it; just bear with me!

Hope you all had a very Merry Christmas (or a happy Hanukkah)! :D
Chapter 9

For the next week, Castiel acted as lead tracker for the hunting group and there wasn't a single day where the pack returned empty handed. The other wolves were very grateful and they began to approach him as if he were a fully fledged member of the pack; greeting him warmly and nuzzling him amicably when he located prey or returned to the camp after a successful hunt.

Dean and Sam smiled at him a lot more and he couldn't stop his own tail from wagging when he noticed the other wolves' bodies beginning to fill out as their coats shone healthily despite the icy air and sparse pickings.

His son didn't look so thin anymore and Cas couldn't deny the feeling of happiness he got when earning the pack's approval. He'd always despised the idea of omegas seeking praise from alphas, but there was something rewarding about seeing the excited smiles of the pack when he tracked some prey, or the eager tails of the pups when they first spotted the adults returning from a hunt.

He had never believed he would one day want to please the head alpha of a pack, but Dean's proud grin and Sam's friendly nudge to his shoulder were definitely things he strived to earn regularly.

Sometimes, he even forgot this was only a temporary arrangement and soon he would have to find a new home in civilisation or face being kicked out of the pack once winter was over.

"Castiel, wake up," murmured the familiar voice of Gadreel and Castiel opened his eyes blearily, automatically curling further around his son as he turned his head to face the alpha standing in the entrance to the igloo.

"The snow has stopped. We need to move," whispered Gadreel softly and Cas forced himself to perk up and nuzzled his son awake.

"What time is it?" Asked Cas quietly as his pup stretched tiredly and tried to cuddle further in his dad's side.

"Judging by the moon I'd say about four o'clock," replied Gadreel as he stepped back to allow the pair to crawl out of the igloo.

The omega glanced around to find the other wolves emerging sleepily from their shelters, Dean observing them all patiently.

Cas watched Sam pad over to his mate, nuzzling her jaw and licking her muzzle affectionately as she muttered grumpily about being woken so early. She relaxed into Sam, however, and allowed him to lavish attention over her before they both joined Dean.

Cas raised an eyebrow at the subtle glare Dean aimed at Ruby and Sam's proceeding huff of disapproval.

Gadreel silently watched the scene unfold and the alpha's own frown was enough to tell Cas something was amiss. He didn't mention it though and instead herded Samandriel towards the rest of the pack.

Ben greeted Samandriel tiredly and the little alpha sat beside him, bodies pressed into one another in an attempt to stave off the cold. Snow was all good fun until it was four in the morning.

Lisa smiled at Cas and he nodded in acknowledgement as Gadreel took his place on the outside of
the pack, acting as lookout once more.

The pack restarted their journey.

Approximately one hour into the move, when everyone had woken up a little more, Castiel succumbed to his curiosity and he sidled up to Lisa.

"Do Dean and Ruby get along?" He asked lowly and Lisa startled at the odd question. She hesitated uncertainly and glanced once at the front of the pack, where the Winchester brothers and Ruby were standing, before leaning in conspiratorially.

"Dean doesn't exactly approve of his brother's choice of girl."

Castiel cocked an ear. "Why?"

Lisa gave him an unimpressed look. "Well, do you like her?"

Cas quickly snapped his mouth shut.

The black and brown omega quirked a grin. "Don't worry, you're not on your own," she whispered. "I can't understand what Sam sees in her, but it's not my place to judge."

Castiel glanced at the female alpha beside Sam. The omega was pressed right into her side, turning to her every so often to nuzzle at her face, but not once did Ruby attempt to return his affections, yet Sam didn't seem to notice.

"She's certainly not the most emotional of wolves," murmured Lisa, following his line of sight and Castiel couldn't help but nod in agreement.

They fell into a comfortable silence, during which Lisa managed to cuddle into Castiel's fur, thereby keeping them both warm. The male omega chuckled at her antics as she grinned at him, but he wasn't about to complain; her coat was far thicker than his and the snow was deep in this part of the forest.

However, the further they walked, the deeper the snow seemed to become and eventually, none of the pups could move through it, so Cas gently picked his son up as Lisa grabbed hers, and Jo and Jody scruffed Claire and Alex.

"This sucks," Cas heard Ben complain and Samandriel nodded grumpily in agreement.

They walked for two hours before a storm hit them. Except this wasn't the soft snow they were used to shaking off; this was hailstone. Large, hard chunks of the stuff battering at their cold bodies and Samandriel whined quietly as it pummelled his skin.

Cas tried to tuck him into his chest as much as possible, but the angle was difficult and the hail relentless. Still, they ploughed through it, trying to ignore the way the blizzard seemed to be growing stronger.

Sore and frozen, Castiel stumbled over a particularly deep patch of snow and he hadn't noticed how violently his body had been shaking until he tried to crawl to his feet again.

Lisa was murmuring soft words of encouragement as she helped him up, but Castiel's body was beginning to shut down and he didn't want to move any further. He stumbled again as his legs buckled and he grimaced at the cruel snicker from the front of the pack.
Sam growled for Ruby to keep quiet; they were all aching and frozen, but Cas didn't have the thickness of fur to protect him and he was trying to protect his pup too.

The mahogany alpha rolled her eyes when the omega turned away and she sneered at Cas as he hoisted himself to his feet once more.

As he took another step, he felt his joints protest, but before he had a chance to fall, there was something warm and sturdy wedged into his side and he leaned against it gratefully before glancing to whoever had been kind enough to help him.

Green eyes stared back at him.

"C'mon, Cas. Keep going."

Eyes wide and touched that Dean had come over to help him, Cas couldn't help but cuddle into Dean's thick, sandy fur.

Someone rounded his other side and gently took Samandriel off him, and Castiel was even more surprised to find Sam shifting his son into a more comfortable position before trotting on ahead, pup between his jaws.

Ruby didn't look too happy.

"If he can't take care of himself and his pup, then he's just a burden to us. He doesn't belong here."

Mouth otherwise occupied, Sam shot his alpha a warning glare and Ruby snorted in disgust.

"If it were up to me, I'd have left them where I found them. You should never have brought them back to the camp. They're not one of us."

Samandriel whimpered softly and Sam let out a low rumble; an order for Ruby to keep quiet. The alpha rolled her eyes and stalked on ahead of the pack, as if she was leading it.

Dean scowled but made no move to discipline her for her comments or for her disrespectfulness. It probably had something to do with the way he was supporting Castiel.

Dean brushed some of the hailstone from Cas' coat and the omega was so relieved at the slither of warmth, he rubbed his head appreciatively under Dean's chin.

The alpha startled but eventually relaxed and he tucked Cas' head further into his chest, protecting him from the harsh hail.

"Ignore her," he murmured quietly. "You are welcome here. You've done so much for us and we would never leave you behind."

"Thank you, Dean," whispered Cas and the alpha curled his tail around the shivering omega.

The pack ploughed onwards.

* * *

When they could no longer see in front of their noses and their legs were stiff with ice, the pack were
forced to stop. Fortunately, luck was on their side and they spotted a cave big enough to house them all if they squeezed in.

No igloo building tonight.

They collapsed in the shelter, uncaring of who they were practically draped over and immediately the pack fell into a dreamless sleep, the familiar scents of family and friends comforting in the dreadful weather.

The next morning, Cas awoke earlier than the other members of the pack due to a combination of not having his son by his side and the pine and leather smell of a certain alpha right under his nose.

Castiel refused to contemplate why Dean's scent was so inviting when it was this early in the morning.

He blinked sleepily and glanced around the cave for Samandriel only to find Sam curled around him, Ruby's back to them both.

Odd.

Cas shrugged. As long as Samandriel was safe and warm, he didn't care what relationship issues Sam and Ruby were having; it wasn't any of his business.

He frowned at his dry mouth.

Perking up at the sight of the storm having stopped, Castiel carefully stepped over the other wolves and padded outside, eating a mouthful of untouched snow to cure his parched throat.

Wanting to stretch his legs whilst the others were still asleep, Cas decided to explore where they'd stopped. He sniffed the air as he trotted around the camp and his tail began to wag as he picked up on a familiar smell.

There was a city nearby.

Maybe he and Samandriel would be allowed to visit it to see if they could live there.

...Later.

He would have to help the pack hunt first. And he had to check it was okay with Sam and Dean. He'd also have to tell the pack where he was going.

...Yeah, better wait a little before going house-hunting in the city.

Ignoring the disappointment in his heart at the thought of leaving the pack, Cas scented the area, wondering what kind of creatures lived here. He picked up on birds and hedgehogs and a couple of foxes before something else hit his nose.

There was another wolf here. Alpha.

Cas shook his head. He couldn't be certain the other wolf was even in the area any more. It could just be a lingering scent from a few days previous.

Although it was very strong.

Curiosity getting the better of him (afterall, the alpha could be hurt, like Gadreel was), he warily followed the scent away from the camp. He didn't take note of how far he'd walked until the scent
led him to a frozen river before it disappeared. He frowned at the river and turned to look behind him, raising his eyebrow as he realised he could no longer see the camp.

Oh well. It was probably time for him to return anyway; the other wolves would most likely be waking up now so he should probably follow the scent back to the cave.

He took one last look at the frozen river and was about to turn away when he saw the reflection of something that hadn't been there a moment ago.

Leaning in to take a closer look, he tried to make out the strange shape and his eyes widened as his brain finally made sense of the image.

Very subtly, his gaze flicked to the other bank and he stifled a gasp at the large, dirty grey alpha staring almost predatorily at him. Even from this distance he could see the other wolf's face and body was littered with jagged scars from brutal fights and Cas gulped shallowly as he turned away from the river as though he hadn't seen anything.

As he began to make his way back, he was aware of the alpha beginning to follow him and he felt his heart speed up in panic as his legs picked up the pace.

The alpha walked quicker.

Castiel bolted through the snow, heart racing as the alpha chased him and the moment the cave came into view, the other wolves just beginning to emerge, Cas pushed himself harder.

"DEAN!" He yelled and a few heads shot up in surprise before Sam and Dean scrabbled out of the cave, muscles tense.

When Cas finally reached them, pulse loud in his ears, he turned to snarl at the strange alpha only to find he had vanished.

Confused, Cas whirled to face the brothers.

"There's another alpha here," he panted. "Grey; white muzzle and paws; full of scars. His scent's all over the camp. He just chased me for half a mile."

Dean frowned and glanced into the distance, ears alert and body stiff as if preparing himself for a fight as Sam quickly did a headcount.

Ruby huffed. "Then where is this big, scary alpha?"

Cas scowled at her. "I don't know where he went. But there was definitely someone chasing me."

"Probably a rabbit," she muttered. "I can imagine everything in the wild to be quite terrifying to a city mutt like you."

"That's enough, Ruby," snarled Dean, hackles raised. "If Cas says there's an alpha here, then I'm inclined to believe him. His nose is far better than any of ours and so I kindly ask you to keep your opinions to yourself."

Ruby rumbled threateningly and Cas' eyes widened. Had Ruby really just challenged the head alpha?

Dean looked affronted and he whirled to fully face the other alpha, eyes narrowed. Even the other members of the pack were shuffling their paws uncomfortably as Sam stared on in horror.
"I won't pretend to understand why you're so intent on defending a Novak," hissed Ruby, "but I can't see any other wolves here. All I see is a pathetic city mongrel who can't handle a bit of snow, has no idea how to hunt, and was stupid enough to get himself knocked up with a child he can't take care of so has burdened him unto us."

She glared at Dean as he bared his teeth warningly.

"And beside him is a lonely, desperate alpha who sucks up to him because he wants a hole to stick his knot in."

Sam jumped between the pair as his brother's eyes flashed with fury and Dean took a step forward, lip curled up and baring sharp teeth.

Castiel scowled. He was getting sick of Ruby belittling him. These were the types of alphas he was used to dealing with in the city; crude, manipulative knot-heads with a penchant for making fun of those they believed to be weaker than them.

"Well if I'm imagining this alpha, could you explain why there are two sets of paw-prints in the snow over there?" Snapped Cas and Ruby quickly closed her mouth upon spotting the two aforementioned prints; one set leading straight to Cas and the other following them before making a U-turn and disappearing back towards the river.

Ruby looked away embarrassedly as a few other members of the pack had to bite back their chuckles, and Dean even winked at him, grinning from ear to ear.

Sam however, glared at Dean and non-too-gently shoved Ruby back into the cave, presumably to have a stern word with her.

Dean soon sobered as he realised the implications of another alpha in the area.

"Keep on your guard at all times. A roaming alpha is bad enough, but if he has a pack backing him up I don't want things getting messy. Kids, don't stray too far and make sure you can see us at all times."

The pups nodded obediently and Cas found himself with a side full of Samandriel.

Dean smiled warmly. "I want us to have a meal before we start moving again." He glanced at Castiel and the omega stood to attention.

"I want the hunting team outside and ready in twenty minutes," stated Dean and the other wolves nodded before going about their own business.

"Ignore her," muttered a voice from his left and he turned to find Jo smiling at him, Charlie by her side. "Ruby's a pain in the rear. If she wasn't Sam's mate, Dean would have kicked her out years ago."

Castiel glanced back to the cave.

"He certainly doesn't seem to get along with her."

Charlie shook her head. "Dean thinks she's a manipulative little witch, but Sam always growls at him whenever he tries to bring it up. I don't know what an omega as kind hearted as Sam sees in an alpha like her, but they seem happy enough." She paused as her ears pricked up at the sound of Sam and Ruby's raised voices.
"Or at least they did before Sam started liking you."

Castiel blinked in surprise and Jo chuckled.

"That's not a bad thing, by the way. Ruby doesn't like strangers very much. When Gadreel first joined, she almost attacked him. Fortunately, Gadreel isn't the type of alpha who retaliates and Dean was there to put her in her place. I remember Sam and Ruby didn't talk for a week because Sam was so peeved with her."

At that moment, Sam stalked out of the cave, face like thunder as Ruby growled at his retreating back.

"That's it, sulk with your brother like you always do," snapped Ruby before storming back into the cave.

"...They don't look very happy," murmured Cas with a worried frown and Charlie and Jo glanced at each other concernedly.

"I wouldn't call it the most loving of relationships," mumbled Charlie.

"Sam could do so much better," agreed Jo sadly. "But I think after what happened to Jess... he's certainly lost his confidence..."

Cas cocked his head to one side.

"Jess?"

"His previous mate. They were so happy together. Talked about having pups. Then there was a terrible fire and well... you can guess the rest," said Charlie quietly.

"Same wolf that killed Sam and Dean's mother threw petrol from the local village over the camp when we were out hunting. Lisa, Bobby and my mom barely managed to scramble out before the whole camp was burnt to a cinder. Jess wasn't so lucky," mumbled Jo.

"It crumbled Sam's whole world. He fell into a depression and even Dean couldn't snap him out of it. Then Ruby came along a little over a year later and for the first time ever we saw him perk up a bit.

"At first she was good for him and he believed he wouldn't have to worry as much about an alpha's ability to protect herself, but then she started bossing him around. She started making snide remarks about him and his family and questioning his orders wherever we went just because he's an omega.

"We thought he'd leave her, but they'd been together for six months and I think Sam made himself believe he needed her to distract him from his depression," sighed Charlie.

Cas' gaze softened. Poor Sam. He just hoped the other omega saw what was going on before he got hurt more than he already had.

The hunting team soon began to gather and Cas eventually joined Dean and a grumpy Sam at the head of the pack, once again putting his nose to good use as they trotted off deeper into the forest, thoughts of the city forgotten.
Chapter 10

The hunting team returned with a few foxes and with the hidden alpha on the loose, Gadreel, Benny, Dean and Sam took turns in standing lookout as the pack ate.

At the end of the meal, the pups ran off to play hide and seek whilst the adults discussed which direction to take next and whether to rest for another day or move that same afternoon.

They finally agreed to leave that same day; they weren't sure who the wolf was and they didn't want to risk a potential run in with a hostile pack.

Castiel glanced around in hopes of telling his son the plan, only to frown when he couldn't see him. Alex and Claire were obviously hunting for Ben and Samandriel, but the two were nowhere to be seen. Cas shook his head. That was the whole point of hide and seek; you weren't supposed to be easy to spot. They would be nearby. He decided to tell his son later and instead joined Lisa, Bobby and Ellen for a chat.

Meanwhile Ben and Samandriel were sprinting towards a good hiding place they'd seen, far away from the girls.

An old oak tree, gnarled and twisted by time and weather, sported a small hole at its base; big enough for two tiny pups to squeeze through, and the snow was deep enough to make it difficult for the pair to be seen.

The pair giggled as they heard Claire and Alex walk right by them, snuffling around before walking in the opposite direction when their noses grew cold from being buried in the snow for too long.

"They'll never find us here," whispered Samandriel with a grin and Ben nodded enthusiastically as they snickered.

They quietened down again when someone passed the tree and they had to bite back their grins as the shape missed them and continued walking.

But then it turned around again and began to sniff around the base of the tree, and Samandriel and Ben's smiles soon fell from their faces when the foreign scent hit their noses.

This wasn't Claire or Alex. This was an adult alpha. One that didn't belong to their pack.

The pups gulped and Samandriel instinctively stood in front of Ben, pressing the omega to the back of the tree as they both slunk to the ground, ears flat and breaths silent.

The foreign alpha stopped moving as he stood upright and the pups could just see his forelimbs from their position inside the tree. He was a dark grey and white and his legs were full of scars and wounds, and Samandriel automatically shielded Ben's body with his own as they held their breaths, waiting for the alpha to leave.

Suddenly, there were claws scrabbling at the inside of the trunk as teeth snapped viciously at Ben and Samandriel, the alpha snarling and grasping for the two cowering pups.

His eyes were cold and murderous and both pups whimpered as the bark began to crumble and the
alpha was granted that fraction more access. He grinned sadistically and swiped a paw at Samandriel, and Ben quickly tugged him closer, eyes wide with fear.

The large alpha snarled and his scent was intimidating and excited at the prospect of killing the two young wolves.

"Pups shouldn't be alone out here; they may get hurt," cackled the alpha as Ben and Samandriel scrambled to get away from him, hearts pounding and eyes terrified.

"Come out now and I'll make sure your deaths aren't too painful," grinned the alpha and Samandriel jumped as Ben let out a panicked howl.

"Mommy can't save you now," hissed the alpha, breath reeking of rotting flesh as he bared his teeth at them, scarred muzzle inching ever closer to the shaking pups.

He snapped again at them, claws reaching out as he continued to swipe at them and it wasn't long before the bark gave way and the violent alpha was granted full access to the pair.

The boys managed to sprint between his legs, but the older wolf was merciless and he chased them and taunted them relentlessly until Samandriel tripped on a snow drift.

The older alpha chuckled darkly as Ben pulled his friend to his paws again, but it was too late and the foreign wolf was already standing right above them, ready to clamp his jaws around Samandriel's shuddering body.

There was a feral snarl and Samandriel opened his eyes to find a sandy wolf tearing at the intruder, claws and teeth everywhere as they bit and mauled one another.

Dean.

The grey wolf clawed at Dean's throat and threw him to the ground before taking another shot at Samandriel and Ben, jaws wide and eyes wild, but Dean was up quicker than he anticipated, and the attacker was pinned to the floor once more as Dean fought with him.

Another wolf joined the fray, this one chocolate-coloured and larger than the first two.

Sam tore at the intruder, growling and clawing as his brother did the same. But the intruder was a dirty fighter, and Dean cried out as teeth clamped down on his leg and yanked as his stomach was brutally kicked and pierced by claws, and Sam fought harder than before.

Just as the alpha looked as though he was going to rip into Sam's throat, Gadreel pounced on him, gnashing and slashing at him until Sam and Dean had a chance to right themselves and join in.

The foreign alpha had no choice but to retreat, and he scrabbled away a few metres, hackled raised and teeth bared as blood trickled down his fur.

"Long time no see, boys," grinned the alpha as he stared at Sam and Dean, their chests heaving. "How's Kevin?"

Dean lunged.

The two alphas wrestled and soon, blood was caking their fur as they tangled in a brutal fight. The rest of the pack ran over to see what was going on and they gasped at the sight of their leader battered and hurting as the familiar alpha did all he could to kill him.
However, fuelled by anger and adrenaline, Dean managed to kick the grey wolf off him and Sam and Gadreel were immediately by his side snarling and flashing their teeth at their enemy. Castiel quickly pulled Ben and Samandriel to his chest, ears flattened in panic.

"Leave now, Alistair," rumbled Gadreel threateningly. "We wouldn't like to have to kill you in front of the pups."

Alistair made a furious sound in the back of his throat as he limped backwards.

"I will take your pack one day, Dean, when you aren't too cowardly to face me alone. And when I do, all your omegas and betas will be mine to knot and breed and do with as I please, and you will be the rug I wipe my paws on every morning. Just like poor Kevin."

Dean bristled and Alistair sneered cruelly before glancing at Sam.

"I know for a fact my pack would love to have a ride on your brother. How many knots can we stuff in him before he cries?"

Alistair stumbled backwards as Gadreel slashed his claws over his face, adding to the myriad of scars already marring his muzzle.

"LEAVE!" Roared Gadreel, most of the pack cowering at his uncharacteristic rage, and Alistair scrabbled back to his feet and sprinted into the distance.

The usually placid alpha turned to his leader and gazed worriedly at his injuries but Dean shook his head in dismissal.

Castiel raised an eyebrow in surprise when Gadreel suddenly bowed his head, tail tucked between his legs and ears flattened in shame.

"Apologies, alpha. I understand I'm not supposed to interfere during such a fight. I will not protest any punishment you deliver."

"Woah, woah," coughed Dean as his legs began to give way because of the damage to them. "I'm not going to punish you, Gadreel."

Sam quickly caught his brother as he fell and Dean glanced at him gratefully.

"Alistair may have believed that was a fight to challenge me for the pack, but we both know I would never take part in something as stupid as a one-on-one alpha fight to the death. You know I would never risk you guys like that."

Dean shook his head as he coughed up some blood.

"I want to thank you, Gadreel, not punish you. You stood up for me and my brother and our pack. You stood up for your family. That's not something to be ashamed of or apologetic over."

Dean scrunched up his nose in distaste.

"And don't call me 'alpha'. You're not a stranger; you don't need to be formal. You're family, Gadreel. You always will be."

The grey alpha lowered his gaze in gratitude and Dean shook his head with a weak laugh.

"You're almost as bad as your buddy Cas."
Gadreel blinked in surprise and Castiel and Gadreel shared a look before Dean let out a pained whine.

"Can we go back to the cave? I'm freezing my tail off out here and I think I've lost about a pint of blood already."

He forced a laugh and Gadreel's eyes widened before he wedged himself against Dean's side, and he and Sam supported Dean all the way back to the camp as Castiel and Lisa scented their pups worriedly.

"What happened?" Asked Lisa, tone laced with lingering panic and as they followed the rest of the pack, the two young males explained how Alistair had found them and trapped them, and how they had tried to escape but were eventually saved by Dean.

Castiel and Lisa glanced at one another; it looked as though they had someone to thank.

* * *

When Jody had finally finished simultaneously helping Dean and scolding him for reacting to Alistair's taunts, and the rest of the pack had stopped fussing over him, Lisa, Cas and their pups crept into the cave, heads lowered in gratefulness as the moonlight shone over the rest of the camp and the sleeping wolves inside the cave.

As they approached, they noticed Dean was on his side, scars littering his body and chest and two legs bandaged tightly. He looked to be asleep.

Dean snorted softly. "Please don't start with all that traditional respectful nonsense. You know how much I hate it."

So much for being asleep.

"Thank you, Dean," whispered Lisa, trying not to wake the rest of the pack. "For what you did today. You saved both our sons and we can't thank you enough. If it wasn't for you..." She trailed off, unable to think about what would have happened if Dean hadn't stepped in when he had.

The alpha's gaze softened and he rolled onto his bandaged chest, tucking his front left paw out of the way in a manner that suggested it was extremely painful to move.

"Lisa," he sighed softly. "You know you don't have to thank me. It's my job to look after my family."

The omega offered him a small smile. "Nonetheless, we're very grateful. You could've lost your life today."

Dean chuckled quietly as he shifted and Cas was stunned when Lisa padded over to the injured alpha and sweetly licked his scarred muzzle. Dean closed his eyes and let out a sigh of relief as she settled beside him, gently licking his injuries.

"How are they?" Dean asked and Lisa smiled tenderly.

"A little scared, but they think you're a real hero. You saved their lives and now you're the coolest
person they know."

Dean grinned as he lay his head on the floor.

"Hey, I am cool. Everyone knows that," he winked and Lisa rolled her eyes fondly as she curled around him.

"You just gonna sit there and gape all night, Cas?" Huffed Dean. "Come here and talk to us. I promise I don't bite."

Castiel blinked before creeping over to the pair and to show his appreciation for the alpha, he gently rubbed his head against Dean's neck before nuzzling his shoulder.

"Thank you, Dean. You had no reason to save my son's life today, not when we're not even members of your pack, yet you chose to do so anyway. I can't thank you enough."

A troubled look crossed Dean's face but it was gone before Cas could mention it. The alpha gestured to his side and Cas cautiously lowered himself to the floor.

Lisa was smiling at Castiel, her head already resting on Dean's shoulders and Cas began to wonder if there was something going on between the pair. Still, Dean was looking at him pointedly, so Cas shuffled over and pressed into Dean's side, the alpha smiling in contentment as Cas, too, began to lick his injuries.

Dean nuzzled Lisa affectionately as he curled his tail around Cas and Cas thought he should feel uncomfortable at the intimacy with this head alpha he shared no relationship with, but he didn't. Instead he felt safe and protected; this alpha had saved his son's life and protected his pack from a vicious stranger, and he had asked for nothing in return.

Cas couldn't imagine Michael or Lucifer or Raphael saving an outsider's pup and risk giving their own lives in the process. He couldn't imagine getting this close and personal with them either. Yet Dean was leaning in to him, despite him being so vulnerable in his injured state; the alpha was pressing into Cas as though he were family and not the brother of an enemy lead alpha.

The omega was snapped out of his musings when two sheepish pups tiredly slunk over to Dean.

"Thank you, Dean. For saving us today," murmured Ben as Samandriel nodded in agreement, and Dean chuckled softly, the sound doing something funny to Cas' heart.

"You're very welcome. Just don't wander too far from the pack next time, okay?"

The pups nodded guiltily and Dean smiled.

"You two were very brave today. Not a lot of people would be able to face Alistair like you did. You didn't let him catch you and that's very impressive."

Ben and Samandriel gave a little wag of their tails as Cas stared, wide-eyed at Dean. Dean was so gentle and good-natured and it took him off-guard. He hadn't expected the alpha to be so caring with pups that weren't even his own.

Samandriel yawned widely and Dean quirked a grin as he opened his paws invitingly.

"Come here," he chuckled and both pups smiled sleepily before trotting into his warm embrace, snuggling into his chest as they curled up.
Dean crossed his paws around them as Lisa began to dose beside him, and the alpha gave her ear one last lick before settling down himself.

Cas gaped at Dean. Had this alpha really just offered to snuggle his and Lisa's pups whilst they slept? To keep them warm and safe in a way Cas' own family had never offered?

Something strange happened inside him; a light flutter that made his chest ache and his heart beat a little faster as warmth blossomed within it. He gazed at the wounded alpha and the longer he looked, the stronger the feelings grew.

He nuzzled Dean's neck gratefully and the alpha cracked an eye open to glance at him, offering him a small smile.

Dean nosed gently at Cas' head as you would a pup to offer them reassurance, and the omega felt the urge to rub his head under the alpha's jaw as a gesture of appreciation.

Dean closed his eyes, his smile growing and he couldn't help but rub his scent over Cas' neck and head. The moment the omega realised what he was doing, his tail began to wag lightly and he leaned closer into the alpha, eager to be marked as a member of the Winchester pack.

Eventually they had to settle down for fear of waking Lisa or the pups, but as Castiel lay his head on the floor, a warm weight rested over his neck.

Dean made himself comfortable, draped over the omega with the pups still buried in his chest, and Cas felt his heart grow and his chest become lighter. He realised he was happy. He hadn't been this happy in a very long time.

"You're safe here," murmured Dean quietly and Cas' heart did something funny.

"You're safe here and so is your son. You're part of my pack now and I promise I won't let anything happen to either of you."

Cas snuggled closer to the alpha, tail curling around him as a contented smile grew on his face.

'We'll wait 'til Winter's over. If he hasn't found a place by then...' 'We're gonna have to kick him out.'

Cas' eyes flew open at the memory as cold reality set in.

This was only a temporary deal, wasn't it? If he hadn't found a place to live by the end of Winter, Sam and Dean were going to kick him out of the pack. It didn't matter how fantastic everything felt at the moment or how kind everyone had been to him, the truth was he would have to leave by the beginning of Spring otherwise it would be back to fending for himself and protecting Samandriel alone.

His heart suddenly felt heavy as a feeling of nausea spread through his gut. He bit back a sob. Why was his happiness always brutally ripped from him?

He knew good things were never meant to last.

Chapter End Notes

The drama thickens... ;) Hope you guys are still finding this interesting!
Despite his icy epiphany the previous evening, the next morning Castiel awoke warm and with the safe, familiar scent of pine and leather embracing him. Automatically, he cuddled into Dean's fur, lured by the inviting smell and the alpha huffed happily in his sleep and leaned into the sweet-smelling omega.

It must have been extremely early in the morning because the sun hadn't managed to quite lift itself above the horizon and the other wolves were still fast asleep.

In a fuzzy haze, Cas glanced at Dean, taking in his soft, sandy fur and strong brown legs and muzzle. He frowned at the injuries littering Dean's face and body and, mind still sleepy, began to lick the wounds soothingly.

He moved from Dean's shoulders to his head, and when he eventually began to lick and nuzzle the scars on Dean's muzzle, the alpha slowly blinked awake and glanced at Cas curiously.

When he worked out what Cas was doing, the alpha gradually tilted his head up, exposing his clawed and bitten throat and Cas released a low, distressed whine as he began to lick the obviously painful area, being careful to mind the sleeping pups burrowed into Dean's chest.

Dean sighed quietly in relief as Castiel took care of him and after a few minutes, the alpha shifted slightly to nuzzle at Cas.

They scented at one another for a few minutes, just familiarising themselves with each other as they shared a quiet moment of intimacy that they wouldn't have even dreamed of if they both weren't so drowsy, but they drew comfort from each other's smells. Also, Dean had Cas' pup curled between his paws and for a few heavenly moments, both adults' minds had decided because they'd slept snuggled together, they were obviously a family.

Then Lisa shifted and Cas quickly withdrew with wide eyes as he realised who he was with. The pleasant cloud of sleep disappeared from Dean's eyes, but he recoiled a little slower, mouth turned down in an unhappy (and maybe disappointed?) frown.

The two wolves averted their gazes as Cas shuffled a little further away from Dean and an awkward silence fell between them in the darkness.

"...Apologies, I never meant to interfere with your relationship with Lisa," murmured Cas embarrassedly after a few moments and Dean frowned in confusion.

"What relationship?"

The omega flicked his gaze to the alpha.

"Last night you two seemed extremely close. The way you interacted with one another... I just assumed you were together?"

Dean raised an eyebrow before glancing to the female by his side.

"Lisa and I had a thing going once, but that was years ago and it never worked out," muttered Dean.
"We still care deeply for each other though. I would never let anything happen to her or Ben."

Cas watched the ball of brown and black fur for a few moments, not understanding why his muscles seemed to have relaxed at the idea Lisa and Dean were not together. Then he noticed something on Ben's underbelly and paws.

Sandy fur.

*Wait.* Was Ben...?

Dean nuzzled Lisa lightly and Cas couldn't work out who he was comforting; the omega or himself. Cas felt his chest constrict.

"...Dean, is Ben... is he yours?"

The alpha startled before whipping his head around to face Castiel.

"What? No. Why?"

"He looks a lot like you," pointed out Cas and Dean glanced at the little omega's sandy paws.

"I have a type," came a tired voice, full of amusement and both males ducked their heads embarrassedly.

Lisa chuckled quietly.

"Don't have a panic attack, Dean. He doesn't belong to you."

"Well... Ben's six and it was six years ago when we... ah..." Dean trailed off, averting his gaze and Lisa shook her head with a smirk.

"I thought you'd have asked sooner, but it seems it took Castiel to make you put two and two together."

Dean's ears flattened in distress. "...Is he mine? Because if I'd have known, I would've-"

"He's not yours," assured Lisa firmly and did Dean just... deflate? He looked almost disappointed...

"What can I say?" Huffed Lisa. "I like strong alphas with pale coats."

Cas' chest did not just flutter because Dean had just been confirmed a bachelor.

A few other wolves began to stir and the trio fell quiet as dawn light poured into the cave.

They couldn't move anywhere today, not with Dean so damaged, so they had elected to stay until he healed.

Eventually, Ben and Samandriel blinked awake and Lisa nuzzled at her son.

"I think we'll go and stretch our legs," said Lisa, glancing knowingly at Castiel as she nudged her son towards the mouth of the cave.

Samandriel watched them go longingly.

"Go on," murmured Castiel with a smile as he licked his son's ear and the little alpha's tail burst into motion as he rubbed his head against his father's chin and bolted after the other pair, Ben greeting
"You going to babysit me?" Asked Dean with an amused smirk and Castiel rolled his eyes, relaxing now the cave was empty.

"Someone has to."

They lapsed into silence once more.

"What's your story, Cas?" Asked Dean suddenly. "Who are you? What did you do to be forced out of your own home?"

Castiel blinked. "I've already told you-"

"No. I don't want the summary. I want the full version. I want to know more about you," Dean cut in and Cas hesitated. He supposed it couldn't hurt to tell the alpha about his life; Dean didn't seem the type to ridicule or mock him for it like his own family.

"I have four brothers, all alphas. I grew up with traditional parents and me being an omega didn't fit in with their plan. I was never as good as my brothers, never as strong, never as brave, never as intelligent as them. My whole family said the same and eventually, so did my brothers. All except for Gabriel. He always did his best to look after me and comfort me when society looked down on me.

"I grew weary of the way everyone belittled me; sick of the way my family bossed me around or thought it right to 'put me in my place', often physically, when I had ideas of my own. So one day, when I was in a dreadful heat, I decided to try something new and against everything my family had ever taught me, I had a one-night stand with an alpha looking for some fun.

"I enjoyed it. There were no complicated feelings or bullying involved and he politely left my home before I woke up the next morning.

"Next thing I knew I was having hormone swings and I seemed to be gaining weight. Turned out I was with a child."

Cas shook his head, obviously troubled by the memory.

"I knew my family would never approve and I was so scared not just for me, but for the unborn child. If my brothers had found out about my carelessness, I'd have been stripped of all freedom and my life would have been hell under Michael's control."

Suddenly, the omega smiled.

"Of course, Gabriel had to stick his nose in places it didn't belong, and he soon found out about my pregnancy. I remember my heart stopping when he worked it out and for a few moments I was so certain my life was over. But Gabe did everything he could to protect me. He distracted our brothers from visiting me, told them he'd relay any messages to me so they wouldn't have to.

"Don't get me wrong, we had dozens of arguments about my thoughtlessness, but he never punished or hurt me like our other brothers would have.

"When Samandriel was born, Gabe was the only person who gave me any help. Nobody wanted anything to do with an unmated omega with a baby and I had to be even more careful around the rest of the family. Gabriel doted on Samandriel when no one else would. He was a fantastic uncle and I couldn't have asked for anyone better."
Castiel averted his gaze sadly and Dean almost shifted closer, lead-alpha instincts demanding he comfort the distressed omega.

"When Michael eventually found out about Samandriel, he wanted to kill him, so I attacked him to give him an opportunity to run. I thought Michael was going to kill me; he's far stronger than I am, but Gabriel saved both our lives. He pretended to attack me and in doing so allowed Samandriel to escape and then me.

"Gabriel has always disliked his family fighting and I have always loved my brother deeply, just as he loves me. I owe Gabe my pup's and my lives and I wish I could've had the chance to thank him."

The omega closed his eyes as a single tear slipped from behind his lashes.

"And now I'll never see him again."

Dean, however, was frowning.

"If he cares for you so much, why didn't he stand up for you in front of Michael and your other brothers? Why did he let you run into the wild, alone and without supplies or aid? Why didn't he protect you both?"

Castiel blinked in surprise.

"Michael is head alpha of the Novak family. We aren't like your pack, Dean. We don't care for friends and family the same as you do. We ally ourselves with the rich and powerful and when someone speaks out of line or goes against our traditional beliefs, we punish or exile them. It isn't unknown for us to kill our rivals and enemies. Do you really think Gabe could defend us against that?"

Cas shook his head. "I don't want my brother to be tortured or murdered. After everything he's done for us both, I refuse to condemn Gabriel to such a fate. We aren't the most merciful of families, as you already know."

Dean looked troubled.

"'We'?"

Cas cocked his head in confusion and Dean took this as a cue to clarify.

"Cas... do you... do you still consider yourself a Novak? As part of that pack?"

Castiel frowned uncertainly.

"I am the head alpha's brother and I do share the name."

Dean fidgeted with his uninjured paw.

"Oh."

Cas scowled at the odd tone. What was Dean keeping from him? What had he originally wanted to say? The alpha wouldn't look at him and Cas sighed quietly. Why couldn't the Winchesters just be straight with him? They'd already hidden their intent to kick him out of the pack after Winter.

Feeling as though he'd created another barrier between them, Castiel shifted as he made to stand. He needed some fresh air.
"I meant what I said last night," murmured Dean and Cas paused, eyebrow raised.

"You're safe here. Both of you. And you will both be valued members of this pack... if that's what you want?" Dean mumbled softly.

Cas blinked and his pulse sped up. Was Dean really asking what he thought he was?

"I... Dean... Do you..." Stuttered Castiel, unable to find the right words and the alpha smiled weakly at him.

"I want you as part of my pack, Cas. That is, if it's something you would like?"

Castiel snapped his mouth shut as his eyes widened.

"But I thought you wanted to kick me out after Winter?" He blurted and Dean's eyes bulged before his expression turned ashamed.

"Like I've said before: I made a huge mistake in judging you. I just assumed you were like all the other 'civilised' folk who look down on us and belittle us and call us savages. When you turned out to be a Novak, I thought you to be our enemy; someone who was going to manipulate or betray us. I can now see I was very wrong."

The alpha shook his head, gaze averted guiltily.

"You are an excellent parent. It's clear you'll do anything for your son and in this pack, family means everything. You reached out to Gadreel and offered him friendship despite everything you've been taught about alphas and the wild folk. You taught the pack how to defend themselves against the harsh weather and you helped us all when we couldn't find food, even though you could've just caught a meal for yourselves and your son.

"You cared for us even though you had no reason to and I can't think of anyone I'd rather have in my pack than you and Samandriel."

Cas was speechless as he stared, awed, at Dean and the alpha licked his lips nervously.

"So... I know you've not known us all that long, but I would like it very much if you'd join our family. Sammy and I have been discussing it over the past week and we believe we were wrong to say what we did about after Winter. You two obviously can adapt to our way of living and if you need a little help with certain things, that's what family's for. We can help you getting used to all this new stuff."

Dean began to fidget the longer Cas' stunned silence dragged on.

"Joining is a permanent offer. Forget what we said those weeks ago; we were wrong. I didn't even know you'd heard us, but let me tell you that none of that is what we think now. You're strong, Cas. Really strong. Ignore what your family told you; you're brave and smart and kind."

Dean glanced at the omega sincerely.

"You need a real family, Cas. One who actually cares about you. And we need you."

Castiel could feel his jaw slack and shocked. Had the head alpha of the Novak's enemy pack really just admitted to wanting him as a member?

His chest was warm again and his heart was beating double time as butterflies formed in his stomach.
Was he really going to be part of a family that didn't treat their omegas like something to be ashamed of or as objects to be used and thrown away? Were he and his son finally going to be safe from their psychotic family? Could he really find happiness living amongst the wild folk; with an enemy pack at that?

Cas scrunched up his nose. The Winchesters weren't his enemies. They were his friends. They had protected him and Samandriel; looked after them and taken them in when they had nowhere else to turn. He had learned so much despite only being with them for a few weeks and they respected both him and his pup in a way he'd never been granted before.

Dean's expression was beginning to fall and his ears were starting to droop the longer Cas remained silent.

"...You don't have to feel pressured into joining us; I just thought- "

"I want to," interrupted Cas quickly. "We both want to," Cas continued, thinking about how close Samandriel had grown to the other pups.

"I just... after that morning... what you said... I never thought you'd actually want me in your pack. Like you said, I can't hunt or fight like you. I'm not used to being around alphas who don't want to throw me to the ground and shove their knots in me, and so I act differently around them than the other omegas in your pack.

"I'm never going to be like the other members of your pack, Dean. I wasn't raised like you or your brother and it's too late for me to learn certain necessary skills for living out here. I don't want to become a burden to the pack and I don't want Samandriel to go through all the stress of losing another home if you grow weary of us."

Dean scowled at Cas' lowered gaze.

"If we hadn't thought any of this through, I wouldn't be asking you to join us. Listen, Cas, we're not going to get irritated or tired of you not knowing how to hunt or fight like us; you've brought other advantages to the pack. You're a fantastic tracker; the best I've ever seen, and you adapt to your environment in ways we've never heard of. You've brought a lonely alpha out of his shell and you were patient with me when I was a jerk to you.

"And all that about acting differently around alphas? Cas, you attacked your brother; the head-alpha of a very dangerous family, to save your son's life. You looked after Gadreel when he was frozen and starving. Heck, you were practically wrapped around me last night because I have a few cuts and bruises.

"I was completely off the mark when I said you were submissive to every alpha you meet. It was well out of order of me and I'm sorry. I've never met any civilised folk like you and I think you would be a great asset to our pack. And that's a permanent offer."

Cas' eyes widened before he was burying himself into Dean's side and nuzzling the alpha's neck gratefully.

"We want to join," he whispered. "We want to be a part of your pack. Please, alpha."

Dean rumbled lowly but didn't correct Cas' slip as he began to rub his scent over the omega's head. Cas whimpered softly and made an effort to tuck himself further under Dean's chin, desperate to mask the smell that marked him as a Novak.

Dean made a noise of approval as he continued to rub the Winchester scent over Cas' neck and back,
stumbling to his feet despite his wounds. Castiel immediately leaned in to support him as they brushed against each other and he didn't miss the way Dean's tail had started to wag happily. His own tail was moving a mile a minute anyway.

When the faint scent that labelled him as a Novak finally faded, leaving Cas' natural scent and the new Winchester smell, the pair settled down, smiles on their faces as Dean rested his head on the omega's back.

Their tails were still thumping the ground.

"Don't call me 'alpha'," snorted Dean after a while and Castiel chuckled as he relaxed.

"Apologies, alpha," he teased and Dean growled playfully.

"Quiet, omega."

Cas grinned. If Michael had said something like that to him, he probably would've been cowering with his head bowed by now, but Dean wasn't like that and Castiel didn't feel at all threatened by his words.

Dean hummed contentedly as he settled more comfortably on Cas' back and he placed a protective paw over the omega's body.

"Your brothers will never hurt you or Samandriel. Not under my watch. You belong to my pack now and I promise we'll protect you both."

Cas smiled and leaned into the welcome contact.

"Thank you, Dean," he murmured and the alpha huffed softly.

"No problem, Cas."

Chapter End Notes

People were beginning to wonder when Dean was going to open up and here it is! Hope you enjoyed this little heart-to-heart chapter. :)
Another week passed and with it, Dean's injuries began to fade. He wasn't strong enough to make the long journey to new territory yet, but he was healing well and Jody seemed pleased by his progress.

Ironically, the morning Dean had invited Cas and his son into the pack, Samandriel had come bounding over to Castiel, all smiles and tail wags after a game of tag with Lisa, Ben, Claire and Alex and had practically begged to stay with the pack just a little longer because he'd never had such good friends before. When Castiel had informed him of Dean's offer, the pup had howled with excitement and bowled his father over in happiness.

Now, with friendships growing stronger every day between the two Novaks and the other members of the Winchester pack, Cas was beginning to think he could get used to being part of such a close family.

With Samandriel playing with the other pups (most likely re-enacting the scene between Dean, Sam, Gadreel and Alistair the previous week, as they were wont to do now they considered the trio some form of superhero tag-team against the evil villain), Cas had been herded towards the river by Pamela in hopes of teaching him how to fish from frozen water.

He had been informed that the beta was the most skilled at fishing, despite her blindness.

The beta was coffee-coloured with black paws and a black tip on her tail, and her eyes were colourless and unseeing from being blinded by a snake bite when she was a pup. Castiel had been surprised to find her extremely flirty.

"So, Hotstuff, you ever fished before?" She smirked and Castiel looked away shyly despite being pressed into her side for warmth. She had obviously scented him deeply if she thought his scent was attractive.

He shook his head before realising she couldn't see it.

"No," he admitted. "I've never seen it performed without a rod either."

Pam smirked. "Big rods have their place, but I don't think you'll be needing one in this particular activity."

Cas flushed at the blatant innuendo.

Pam cackled at his silence and she began to slow down when the ground turned hard and icy under her paws, working out they must be near the river bank if there was so much frozen water in the ground.

Cas watched curiously as she tapped the frozen river carefully with her claws, before she backed up slightly until she was standing at the very edge of the bank.

Then she smashed her front paws into the ice, shattering it in one blow.

"Smell any fish, detective? And I'm not talking about the thing between my legs," she teased and Castiel sputtered in mortification. Pam and Jo were phallic enough to be sisters.

"I... yes... yes, I can smell something..." stammered Castiel as Pam grinned.
"Is it salty?"

Cas balked. Now she was just trying to make him squirm.

"Okay, okay. I've had my fun," she chuckled. "I'll be serious. First off, we need to clear the ice I've just broken. That way, the fish are more likely to swim to it to grab the oxygen they are sorely lacking at the moment.

"See, only the top of the river is frozen, and whilst the fish can swim beneath it, those that haven't died through oxygen starvation will be settled at the bottom of the river bed, where it's warmer. We've certainly got their attention by breaking the ice and they'll investigate further if they can detect oxygen in the water near the surface.

"You are going to use that sniffer of yours and those ears to detect the movements of the fish as it nears the surface, and you have an advantage over me in that you'll be able to spot it when its head or tail breaks the surface. That's when you take a swipe at it and knock it onto the bank. Here, I'll show you," she explained as she scooped the broken ice out of the water.

"Oh, and one last thing: don't fall onto the ice. It's weak now and if you fall into the river, you'll either die of hypothermia or you'll get trapped beneath the ice."

Cas gulped. He wasn't partial to either of those things.

He watched silently as Pam patiently waited for a single black fish to make its way to the surface. He observed her ears flick and nose twitch before the fish curiously popped its head above the water, and with one perfectly timed swish of her paw, the fish was floundering on the icy grass.

Cas raised his eyebrows, impressed.

"Your turn, sweet cheeks. Make a new hole."

Cas reddened again before taking a few tentative steps towards a different part of the river. He banged his paws against the ice, leaning all his weight into it and he startled at the freezing water as it seeped between his toes.

He quickly backed up, missing Pam's amused grin.

He cleared the broken ice and waited for a fish to break the surface.

He smelled the fish before he heard the tail movements of something a little deeper in the river and when an orange fish poked its head above the water, Castiel took a swipe at it.

And missed.

The fish, alarmed by the violent sloshing of the water, ducked back below the surface and Cas took another swing at it to prevent it from escaping, but he had to swipe his paw a lot deeper than he'd expected and he overbalanced.

Panicking, he tried to scramble backwards, but the bank was slippery and he stumbled again. Just as it looked as though he was about to fall head-first into the freezing river, something clamped onto his tail and snatched him backwards.

He looked up to find Pamela raising an eyebrow at him.

"First rule of fishing: Don't fall in. Second rule: No second chances. You miss the fish the first time,
you let it go and try again somewhere else."

Cas shrunk in on himself and Pamela softened at his silence.

"Fish are slippery critters. You'll get the hang of it with a little practice."

"Or in his case, a lot of practice," purred an unfamiliar husky voice and Castiel stiffened as he stepped in front of Pam and bared his teeth at the intruder.

**Or intruders.**

Standing on the opposite side of the river was an all-black, leering alpha male, accompanied by a smirking black and blonde beta female. They smelled mated.

Cas used his own body to shield Pam's. No way were these two going to kill or take advantage of the blind beta.

Castiel snarled at them, hackles raised and the alpha raised an eyebrow and began to cross another section of the river where the ice was stronger and thicker.

Castiel considered breaking the ice on his side of the river, but that would have put him closer to the pair and it would've taken too much time.

"You're new," the alpha hummed before sniffing the air. "Yet you aren't her mate."

Castiel scowled. "Back off."

The alpha chuckled as his mate scented the air curiously.

"I should be saying that to you, omega."

Castiel bristled. Who did this alpha think he was?

Behind him, Pam's nose began to twitch at the new scents and she frowned confusedly.

"Crowley?"

The black alpha chuckled. "Hello, dear."

Castiel grew bewildered when Pam's tail began to wag and her whole face brightened. She dodged Castiel and trotted over to the intruders, brushing up against him in greeting before hugging her neck around his.

The alpha's tail began to swish happily and the black and blonde beta looked on curiously, subtly sniffing the blind wolf.

Suddenly, Pamela buried her nose in Crowley's throat and scented deeply, making the alpha laugh quietly as he exposed his neck for her.

"You're mated," she stated and Crowley glanced to the unfamiliar beta.

"I am," he agreed softly.

Pam shoved at his chest with a paw.

"Well, where is she? I can't see, moron."
Crowley let her bat at him before gesturing his mate over. The other beta slunk over warily as she cautiously scented Pam. Pam however, marched straight up to her and buried her nose in her neck, making the new beta gasp.

Crowley shook his head. "Pam's not one for tradition. She prefers to get straight in there. She'll probably be flirting with you by the end of the week," he smiled and the foreign beta huffed out an amused laugh as she relaxed, despite Pam's nose still buried in her neck.

"My type of girl," the black and blonde wolf smirked and Pam grinned.

"Since Crowley doesn't seem to want to reveal your name, mind giving me something to call you?"

"Meg," the other beta chuckled. "Meg Masters."

"Pamela Barnes," the blind beta introduced. "It's a pleasure to meet someone who can stand Crowley enough to want to sleep with him."

Meg barked out a laugh as Crowley cuffed Pamela over the head. Pam turned to the alpha.

"Never thought you'd go sneaking around Dick Roman's pack. Thought he hated you? Didn't he almost kill you once?"

Crowley blinked slowly at her, expression smug as Meg padded over to him, leaning into his side.

"He does and he did. So I stole the object of his affections."

Meg rolled her eyes, but began to nuzzle Crowley's jaw.

Pam raised her eyebrows in surprise. "You escaped with and mated Roman's love interest?"

Crowley chuckled. "No. I escaped with and mated Roman's mate."

Pam's jaw fell open before she turned to Meg.

"You're Dick's mate?"

"Was," huffed Meg in distaste. "I've always hated him but he was head-alpha of a non-too-nice pack and I didn't want to get on the wrong side of him or his mindless crones. When he started showing an interest in me, I didn't have much choice in the matter but to go along with it. It wasn't all bad, I suppose. Being mated to a head-alpha certainly has its perks. You get to eat first and boss people around at least."

Crowley frowned. "And you also get forced into being knotted by a creep you can't stand whenever he gets bored."

Meg licked Crowley's muzzle soothingly.

"Which is why I love the fact you knotted and mated me in his cave. I just wish I could've seen his face when he smelled our... activities in his sleeping quarters."

"On every surface available, in every corner of that cave," purred Crowley, pleased and Meg snickered as she nipped suggestively at his jaw.

Pam whistled lowly.

"Sounds like you two had quite the rendezvous. You should tell the rest of the pack; I'm sure they'll
be thrilled to see you again, Crowley."

Crowley hummed in agreement before his gaze flicked to Castiel.

"Who's timid, dark and growly?"

Pam smiled. "Castiel. Newest member of the pack. He's a city omega."

Crowley and Meg eyed him interestedly.

"From the city? Must have a lot of stories to tell," purred Meg and Cas couldn't help but gulp at the way her eyes were shining predatorily.

Crowley, however, was scenting the air again, taking a few steps closer to Castiel. He suddenly froze, eyes narrowed.

"He's a Novak."

Meg's eyes widened as she took a step backwards. Everyone knew of the Novak family and it seemed Cas hadn't quite spent enough time with the Winchester pack to rid himself of the scent completely. Meg was frightened of him and Crowley looked ready to defend her if need be.

Pam clicked her tongue disapprovingly.

"Didn't you hear me say he's one of us now?"

Crowley eyed him sceptically.

"Since when do Novaks ask to become Winchesters? Especially the brother of Michael Novak."

Cas winced. So they did know exactly who he was.

Pam shrugged. "Since when do civilised folk flee their home with their six-year-old pup and try to make a life in the wild?"

Crowley raised an eyebrow as Meg perked up again, observing him curiously.

"Where's your mate?" She asked, tilting her head slightly and Cas frowned.

"Never had one." And probably never will, he mused. Samandriel was his main priority and if he ever decided to take a mate, they would probably want Samandriel gone to make way for their own pups. That wasn't going to happen.

Crowley suddenly looked very intrigued.

"An unmated Novak omega with a child? If I'm correct, isn't that breaking tradition?"

Castiel nodded stiffly and Crowley smirked.

"Well, well, well... aren't you just a peculiarity?"

Cas scowled as Pam huffed.

"Stop making him uncomfortable," she said, shaking her head. "C'mon. Let's get you back to the pack and you can introduce them to the lovely girl beside you."

Meg's tail wiggled excitedly as Crowley climbed to his paws. It was clear she liked Pam.
"Come on, Castiel, we won't bite," Crowley threw over his shoulder, just before Meg chimed in with a "unless you're into that sort of thing."

Pam snorted as Castiel trotted over to them, face heating up again.

His fishing lesson would have to wait.

* * *

That evening, when everyone had retired to sleep after an exciting day of welcoming Crowley back into the pack after his long exploration of the world, Dean and Sam decided to take a walk to stretch Dean's legs. He'd been mostly cooped up in the cave for the week and now, considering the snow had stopped, he wanted some exercise.

When it had been revealed Cas was still awake, the brothers had invited him to accompany them and Castiel had had no reason to say no except for the fact he didn't want his son to sleep alone when it was so cold.

Gadreel had watched the whole scene develop and had quietly padded over to them, and curled around Samandriel as he gestured for Cas to go.

Touched, Castiel nuzzled the alpha's neck gratefully and Gadreel smiled as he gently nudged Cas towards the mouth of the cave.

Now the trio were trotting through the forest, Dean between the two omegas in case he needed support.

"Hey, Cas? You ever heard of The Howling Chain?" Asked Sam and Cas cocked an ear as he shook his head.

"No. What is it?"

The larger omega grinned and shared a glance with his brother.

"C'mon, we'll show you," chuckled Dean as they suddenly veered off in a different direction, towards a small hill.

When they reached the peak of the hill, Dean lowered himself to the floor with a pained grunt and Sam watched him concernedly.

"You okay?" He murmured and the alpha nodded dismissively.

"Peachy. Go on. Show Cas The Chain."

Sam nuzzled his brother's ear worriedly before turning back to Cas with a smile and a flick of his tail.

"So if you ever find yourself lost or alone with no idea what to do next, find the highest point in the area and consult The Howling Chain. There will usually be someone there to help you, whether they be shifters like us or just your regular timber wolf."

You could tell a regular, non-shifting wolf apart from a shifting one, because they were usually a bit smaller and their pupils filled the entirety of their eye, just like a dog. In shifters, you could see the
coloured iris and some white. With there being no other creature that looked human, it was safe to say if you saw someone on two legs walking around in civilisation, they were definitely a shifter.

The great thing about being a shifter was you could speak in two languages without having to think about it. When human, they would speak whatever language was native to the country they were in and when in wolf form, they could speak to the rest of the animal kingdom. Strangely enough, if you were in wolf form you couldn't understand what a human was saying and vice versa.

Castiel watched as Sam sat on the freezing snow and took a deep breath before releasing a long, wordless howl.

A few moments passed before there was an answering howl. Sam cocked an ear as he listened.

"Non-shifter," he mumbled before throwing his head back and howling again.

Castiel watched curiously as he tried to decipher what the messages meant.

"It's kind of like morse code," murmured Dean, "except there's only a limited number of words you can get across. Just basic messages that will get you out of a pickle if you ever find yourself in one."

Castiel nodded interestedly.

"Want us to teach you?" Asked Sam and Cas smiled and nodded again.

"Okay, first off, directions are two short barks that vary in pitch depending on whether you're going North, South, East or West," began Dean as Sam demonstrated, and Castiel listened with rapt attention.

The remainder of the night was spent teaching Cas a few words and set phrases that would help him if he ever found himself separated from the pack. Castiel was an attentive listener and the trio quickly found themselves relaxing in one another's company as they conversed.

By around three o'clock they could feel their eyes growing heavy and the two omegas padded over to Dean and helped him to his feet, wedging him between them and supporting him when it was clear his injuries were acting up due to the amount of time he'd spent on the icy ground.

Dean murmured out his appreciation and the trio hobbled back to the camp, chatting and laughing quietly as they traded stories of their pasts.

Castiel had never felt so at home.
Another week passed, marking not only an improvement in Dean's wellbeing, but also another week closer to spring. The weather seemed to be easing up a little and whatever snow fell was light and pleasant, rather than harsh and biting.

Jody still prohibited Dean from hunting, but he was now allowed off bed rest and the pack knew it wouldn't be too long before they would start moving again, looking for something a little more permanent to call home.

Sam now led the hunting group, Bobby helping to make up numbers and with the atmosphere more bearable, Cas had no problems with quickly locating a herd of deer, weakened by the wintertime.

They returned with a couple of does and as they neared the camp, Cas' eyes widened at the sight of Dean playing with the pups.

They were obviously reenacting their favourite game of the fight between Dean, Alistair, Sam and Gadreel, because Dean was slowly advancing on Samandriel, growling playfully as he slunk across the ground.

Samandriel puffed his chest out, face the picture of determination as he stood in front of Ben, who was lying on his back on the floor, whining and whimpering as though he were afraid of Dean.

Behind Samandriel stood Claire and Alex, both baring their teeth and rumbling at Dean warningly.

Dean said something and suddenly, Samandriel leapt at him, nipping and batting at his chest and Dean growled as he pretended to try to fight the little alpha off.

Eventually, all four pups were jumping on Dean, tugging on his ears and pouncing on his tail and Dean howled in mock agony as he staggered a few paces and fell to the floor, whining over-exaggeratedly.

The children yipped excitedly as they climbed all over the alpha and Dean released a pitiful groan which made some of the adults chuckle.

Then, just when the pups were beginning to notice the hunting party's return, Dean wrapped his paws around them all and rolled over, trapping them against his chest with a teasing growl.

The pups laughed and tried to wriggle free, but Dean held fast and licked their heads sloppily, making them groan and grumble in disgust. They fought harder against him, but Dean just tugged them closer.

"Can't escape now," rumbled Dean playfully as the hunting group dumped the meal on the floor, some chuckling at their leader's antics.

The pups whined and pawed at Dean, a couple trying to push his paws away, but when it was clear the alpha wasn't going to budge, they looked to the other adults for help.

Sam shook his head with a grin as the others pretended not to notice the children's pathetic expressions, and the omega strolled over to them slowly.
"Alright, alright," he chuckled. "Let's get you away from the evil alpha."

"Never," growled Dean. "They're mine to eat."

The pups' tails began to wiggle as Sam lowered himself to the ground, eyeing up his brother.

"We'll give you one last chance, monster. Run now or face your doom."

Dean rumbled again and licked the pups' heads again, pretending to taste them.

"Which one should I have for dessert?" He asked and the pups gasped as they tried to escape once more.

"That does it," said Sam. "Prepare to face your end, evil villain!"

The children cheered the omega on as he sprinted towards Dean, and Dean growled playfully before his eyes widened when he realised what his brother's intentions were.

"Wait! No, no, no, no!" He panicked as he released the pups and attempted to scramble to his paws.

Sam jumped on Dean and the alpha collapsed under his brother's larger body, groaning as the omega flopped onto him like a dead weight. When he was sufficiently pinned, Sam began to lick his face messily and the pups laughed as Dean tried to shake his brother off to no avail.

"Get off me you giant moose," moaned Dean as Sam snuggled down into Dean's fur, winking at the pups as he pressed more of his weight onto his brother.

"I hate you," grumbled Dean and the pups cackled as the alpha pretended to flop dead under his brother.

Sam finally got off his brother and nudged him to his paws.

"I surrender," chuckled Dean as the pups grinned at him, and Sam nodded to the meal waiting for them.

"Go on," he said and the four bounded off towards the rest of the pack as Sam and Dean walked over at a more leisurely pace.

When the pair were finally in place, the rest of the pack began to eat, amusement clear in their eyes.

After they'd finished, Samandriel glanced up to his father, tail swishing happily.

"Dean and Sam are so cool," he whispered and Cas smiled. "Why aren't Uncle Michael, Lucifer and Raphael like that?"

The smile slowly fell from Cas' face. "They're just not that close a family. They never were."

Samandriel frowned. He knew his father had been bullied by the rest of the family for presenting as an omega. It hurt him to think that such a wonderful and kind omega like his dad had been shunned by the very people who were supposed to protect him.

Well, at least he had a proper family now; one who'd treat him like he should've been treated all those years ago.

"Oh... well at least we have a real family now," hummed Samandriel, leaning into his dad as they...
walked and Cas blinked down at him before his lips quirked upwards.

"We do."

Samandriel grinned and playfully batted some snow at his father. Cas chuckled and threw some back.

Suddenly, Samandriel was rubbing his body against Cas' leg.

"I love you, dad. I really do," he murmured and Castiel's eyes widened as his heart warmed, and he leaned down to nuzzle his son.

"I love you too, Samandriel. You're my whole world." The omega cocked his head to one side.

"What brought that on?"

The little alpha shrugged as Cas curled a paw around him.

"I just want you to be happy. You deserve it."

Cas smiled and tugged his son to his chest, nuzzling his face and head as he did so. He was incredibly lucky to have such a thoughtful, kind-natured pup.

"Samandriel? Wanna come play hide-and-seek with us?" Asked a small voice and both Novaks glanced up to find Ben staring at them.

"Sure," grinned Samandriel, all previous sentiment forgotten as he bounded off after the other pup.

Castiel chuckled quietly as he continued his walk. He wasn't alone for long as the scent of alpha drifted to his nose.

"Hello, Gadreel," he greeted as the grey and white wolf trotted over to him, nodding in acknowledgement.

"I was wondering if you'd like to accompany me to the river? I heard you've recently been trying to improve your fishing skill?" The alpha asked politely and Cas shook his head.

"Emphasis on the 'trying' part. I don't seem to be very good at it, despite Pam's excellent teaching."

Gadreel smiled in amusement.

"Then you should take the opportunity for practice," he said as he led them to the river.

Castiel felt himself relax as they settled on the river bank, and he watched Gadreel begin to break the ice.

He truly enjoyed the alpha's company; Gadreel was caring and sweet-natured despite his stoic facade, and Cas knew that one day the alpha would make a fantastic mate to some lucky shifter.

Gadreel never expected anything of him and he felt safe around the alpha, whereas before he would never have dreamed of getting this close to an alpha. It was heart warming to see Gadreel treat Samandriel with such fondness as well; to watch him protect the pup and Castiel had never believed he would be able to trust anyone as much as he trusted Gadreel.

He had never expected Dean to be good with pups either and watching him interact with the children today had made Castiel's chest feel light and fluttery in a way he wasn't familiar with.
Cas had never believed a lead alpha would make time to socialise with young pups, yet Dean seemed to actively enjoy it. He was protective and caring, and although he wore a gruff exterior, it was clear the alpha had a soft and gooey centre.

He had never met someone who cared so much about family.

The fish Gadreel had caught suddenly smacked him in the nose with its tail and jumped back into the water, disappearing forever.

Castiel burst into laughter as Gadreel gaped at the dark hole in the ice.

"Apologies," Gadreel coughed, ears flattened in embarrassment, "I'm not usually this awful at fishing. I appear to be distracted."

Cas snickered. "Are you certain it's me who needs the practice?"

The alpha rolled his eyes in amusement before gesturing to the river.

"Positive. Feel free to prove me wrong."

Castiel climbed to his paws at the challenge and moved to another section of the river, easily shattering the ice.

He waited for a few moments before a catfish popped its head above the water and with one perfect swipe, Castiel knocked the fish onto the river bank. He carefully picked up the fish and sauntered over, tail high and teasing as he dropped it in front of Gadreel's paws.

The alpha stuck his tongue out.

Castiel erupted into laughter once more at the uncharacteristic display, and Gadreel began to chuckle with him.

"Show off," he snorted and Castiel curled his tail facetiously as he strolled further up the bank.

They sat in a patch of soft snow, away from the hard ice as they chatted, both feeling completely at ease now they were alone, surrounded by such peace and quiet.

"I believe Dean is thinking of sending you to the city for supplies," said Gadreel. "Now you're part of the pack, you're going to need a few things to help you survive out here."

Castiel cocked an ear curiously. "What kind of things?"

"Emergency food, first aid supplies, clothes for your human form and a few other essentials. Whoever accompanies you will assist you," hummed Gadreel.

Castiel nodded. "General supplies like the ones you guys carry in your bags?"

Gadreel made a sound of agreement. "The problem is you have no clothes to explore the city in, and somehow I doubt you'll want to walk around naked in civilisation."

Castiel chuckled at the thought as he shook his head, and the alpha smiled before continuing.

"I could lend you some of mine, if that's acceptable? Unless you'd prefer not to use garments worn by an alpha. I understand it can be a sensitive topic."

Castiel shook his head.
"Trust me, Gadreel, you are the last alpha I'd feel uncomfortable around. In fact, if anything your scent makes me feel safe," he confessed, averting his gaze slightly and thereby missing the little wag of Gadreel's tail and his soft smile.

"I'm glad to hear that," murmured the alpha warmly. "Besides, we are of very similar size. It's only practical."

"The amount of times someone has been surprised that I'm not a beta is unbelievable," groaned Castiel. Omegas were generally smaller and more lean than he was so it caught people off guard when they smelled him. Of course, once they realised he was an unmated omega with a kid, they turned their noses up at him and walked in the opposite direction. Oh the joys of being associated with the traditionalists of the Novak family.

Then again, he wasn't a Novak any more, was he?

Gadreel chuckled. "Imagine how Sam feels."

Castiel huffed. Even he'd thought Sam was an alpha at first. It was a good thing the omega didn't live in civilisation because he'd have been shunned at every turn by every man, woman and child, and maybe even their pets.

Sam would be labelled as undesirable and a 'freak' if he were to step foot in a city and he would never have a chance of obtaining a mate, yet out here in the wilds, this didn't seem to be the case.

Too bad he'd landed himself with Ruby.

"Well, it'll certainly be a change from all the trees," mused Castiel, then his face brightened. "Do you think I'll be allowed to have a hot shower? I've really missed those."

Gadreel grinned. "I don't see the harm in it." He paused. "There must be quite a few things you miss about living in civilisation?"

Castiel contemplated his previous life and all he'd left behind.

"I miss the creature comforts like central heating and a warm bed and things of that nature, but I much prefer the company here. It is far more welcoming than any of the well-dressed, high-class snobs of my neighbourhood. And after spending so long with people who actually care what happens to one another, I don't think I could ever stand to see my 'family' again."

Castiel offered his friend a smile. "I'd much rather have a home of close friends than a house of luxuries and fake smiles."

Gadreel smiled fondly and Castiel offered him one in return. There was a chilli nip to the air now and Castiel shivered slightly, finally noticing it had grown rather dark in the time they'd been enjoying one another's company.

Gadreel frowned at Cas' shudder and stood, gesturing in the direction they'd originally come from.

"It's getting late. We should probably head back," he said as Castiel raised to his paws.

The pair walked close beside one another as they made their way back to the camp, chatting amiably as they did so. They joined the other pack members together, and neither Cas nor Gadreel noticed the odd glance Dean shot them before he returned to entertaining the pups with his brother.
Chapter End Notes

Bit of a shorter chapter I'm afraid, but I needed a whole chapter for the next plot point so consider this as a sort of (important) filler :)
Chapter 14

The next morning, Dean approached Cas just like Gadreel said he would. The alpha suggested he go into the city with Samandriel to gather some supplies and obtain a small bag to hold them all in.

Castiel had idly wondered who would be sent with him to tell him what he needed, but surprisingly, Dean himself had offered to go, checking with Castiel first that he’d be okay alone with an alpha.

Cas had chuckled, remembering the exact same conversation with Gadreel the previous afternoon and he’d quickly assured Dean that the alpha's presence wouldn't bother him in the slightest. Dean had grinned and then offered for Castiel to borrow his clothes temporarily until he could buy some of his own.

"It's alright, Dean. Gadreel has already offered me his. But thank you for the offer; it is much appreciated," said Castiel.

Dean frowned slightly, but the expression vanished before Cas got a chance to analyse it.

When asked why Dean was accompanying Cas to the city and not someone else, the alpha had shrugged and stated he hadn't visited a city in eight years and he wanted to see what it was like. He also said he needed to pick up some first aid supplies to replenish Jody's stock, and since he'd been the one to drain them, he'd better be the one to refill them too. There were other things he needed to collect for his pack too, and since he wasn't one to get distracted or awed by the sights, sounds and smells of the city, it would be quicker if he accompanied Cas and Samandriel.

So now the trio were bidding the rest of the pack a short farewell as Dean told them all that Sam was fully in charge now and his word was law. Then they left and made their way to the edge of the forest. It took approximately an hour but eventually they got there and when the city walls were in sight, Dean turned to Cas.

"We should probably shift and get dressed now."

Cas nodded and disappeared behind a thick oak tree with Samandriel, and the pair quickly morphed into their human forms and threw their clothes on (Ben having lent Samandriel his earlier).

When they returned from behind the tree, Dean was leaning casually on a trunk, waiting for them and Cas' breath hitched.

Woah.

Dean was gorgeous.

The alpha had a strong jawline with high cheekbones and his sandy hair complemented his wolf form well. He needed a bit of a shave and his hair was probably slightly longer than it suited, but that was only to be expected considering he probably hadn't morphed for eight years.

And those eyes.

He'd thought they'd been stunning before, but now? Framed by such a handsome face those eyes completed a masterpiece.
Cas slowly brought his thoughts back to reality to find Dean staring at him, eyes drinking in every inch of his human form and he unconsciously stood a little straighter, something about the alpha's intense gaze making him a little hot under the collar.

There was a moment where the two stared into one another's eyes, and Castiel felt something primitive and demanding rolling low in his gut before it quickly vanished as Dean blew out an almost shaky breath.

"Wow, Cas, you're... uh..." The alpha trailed off as he scratched the back of his neck awkwardly.

The omega shook his head to clear it as Samandriel glanced curiously between the pair.

"You need a shave," stated Cas after a moment and Dean blinked before patting his beard.

"Is it that bad?"

"Doesn't suit you," said Cas. "Neither do the long, wavy locks."

Dean combed a hand through his hair, grimacing when it fell past his shoulders.

"Do you think people will say anything?"

"You may get a few Khal Drogo jokes," hummed Cas and Dean winced.

"Charlie's obsessed with Game of Thrones. I've seen pictures."

Castiel chuckled. "We could always make our first stop the barber's?"

Dean hesitated before nodding. He didn't particularly like the city, but he didn't need to garner any unwanted attention. If people noticed he was one of the wild folk, he would be chased out of the city. He'd already had to mask his scent with cologne which his nose didn't appreciate at all.

"Here," said Dean, throwing the small cologne bottle to Cas. "Might wanna hide your scent."

Cas paused before remembering he didn't have the Novak scent anymore. Or at least it was very faint.

He suddenly started to grin as he happily rubbed the perfume into his skin, covering Samandriel's scent as well. It made him ecstatic to think the Winchester scent had grown so strong on them both that they would have to hide it for fear of the civilised folk chasing them out of the city for being members of a wild pack.

Dean chuckled quietly.

"Never seen someone so happy at the prospect of being chased out of a city."

Cas averted his gaze embarrassedly. "Apologies."

"No, no," said Dean, smile still lighting his face. "That's one of the biggest compliments a pack leader can get. I'm flattered you think so highly of my family."

They smiled at each other for a few moments before Samandriel impatiently tugged on Cas' trouser leg.

"Can we go now?" He huffed and both adults chuckled as they made their way to the city walls.
As they were walking down one of the many pavements, Castiel spotted a barber's on the opposite side of the street. He pointed it out to Dean and the alpha nodded and stepped out into the road.

Right in front of a moving car.

Castiel gasped and in the blink of an eye, hauled Dean back onto the pavement as the car sounded its horn angrily.

Dean stood frozen, eyes wide and panicked as he came to terms with what had nearly happened. The car sped around a corner and disappeared.

"Cars," breathed Castiel, pulse far quicker than it should have been. "There are cars in civilisation."

Dean released a heavy, uneasy breath and Cas nodded to a nearby crossing.

As they crossed, he couldn't help the smirk at seeing Samandriel subtly slip his hand into Dean's as he guided his elder across the road. Dean smiled sheepishly at the boy and Samandriel grinned cheekily.

Once safely inside the barber's, Dean explained which cut he wanted and the beta serving him openly gaped at his present 'style'. He got to work straight away and by the end of half an hour, Castiel was feeling hot under the collar again at the alpha's short hair and designer stubble.

Dean moved to pay and Cas suddenly realised he had a bit of a problem.

He'd left his cards in his old home. And his cash.

Dean glanced in concern at his frustrated expression.

"I've left my cards in another city. I won't be able to buy anything," whispered Cas and Dean chuckled as they left the shop.

"Yeah, I kind of figured that quite a while ago when you showed up at our camp with absolutely nothing on you. Relax, I'm paying."

Castiel stared at him.

"No. You can't spend all that money on me. I can't do that to you."

Dean shook his head. "You don't have a choice. Why do you think I offered to go with you myself instead of asking someone else to? I kinda knew this was going to be a problem."

Cas' eyes widened a fraction before he lowered his gaze.

"...Thank you, Dean. That was incredibly thoughtful of you."

He knew head alphas were supposed to take care of their pack, and he knew Dean was definitely better at that than most, but for the alpha to be so thoughtful and kind was something that never failed to amaze Castiel.
Dean hadn't wanted to embarrass Cas in front of the pack by saying he didn't have any money and now, not only was Dean going to pay for him, but he was also going to pay for Samandriel as well. Cas didn't think he'd ever met a lead alpha like Dean before.

Dean grinned. "Consider it an apology for acting like a jerk when you first arrived."

Castiel smiled and they continued on down the street, Samandriel once again sneaking his hand into Dean's in an attempt to stop the older alpha from picking any more fights with moving vehicles.

Dean squeezed Samandriel's hand gently and the little alpha grinned up at him as Dean winked. Cas felt his heart melt.

"Next stop: Clothes shop," announced Dean the trio marched onward.

* * *

"Pick whatever you want, Cas. Don't look at prices, just pick out whatever feels most comfortable," hummed Dean as they entered a small, but welcoming everyday-wear shop. "Oh and choose two sets of clothes in case you have the need for a spare."

Castiel glanced around the shop, taking in the myriad of different colours and textures. He glanced down to Samandriel and silently held his hand out for his son to take so they could look around together, but Dean spoke up.

"How about you look for something you like and I'll take Samandriel around and help him find something? When you're done just come over."

Samandriel glanced up to Dean before nodding happily at his father, and Castiel sent Dean an appreciative look. The alpha smiled and led Samandriel towards the children's section.

Not wanting Dean to pay too much despite his earlier words, Castiel chose two outfits that were comfortable and fairly inexpensive and as he was making his way back to Dean, he spotted some sturdy, hard-wearing sports bags lining the wall. They would be big enough to fit his and Samandriel's belongings, and they seemed easy to carry when in wolf form.

He picked up a black one with a single white feather adorning its front.

"You like that?"

Cas startled at Dean's voice so close behind him and the alpha held up his hand in apology. Cas quickly waved him off.

"It's rather cheap," said Castiel, checking the price tag and Dean rolled his eyes.

"What did I say about money?"

"It's only a bag, Dean," mumbled Castiel. "Besides, it seems sturdy enough."

Conceding defeat, Dean plucked the bag and the clothes from Cas' hands as he took all the items to the checkout.

"Kinda reminds me of an angel feather," mused Dean as the cashier folded the clothes and popped
them in a carrier bag.

"I suppose," said Cas as he grabbed the carrier bag and watched Dean pay.

They left the shop, in search of a supermarket. They needed general toiletries and emergency food now.

"So how do you have money when you live in the wild?" Asked Cas after a while, watching the cars zoom past.

"We each leave the pack for a couple of weeks every year and get a temporary job. Because we rarely have need to go into civilisation, we often have a bit of build up of cash; not a great amount, but enough for a rainy day. Comes in handy sometimes," explained Dean.

Cas contemplated this. "So when Crowley left...?"

Dean nodded, smiling at Cas' quick thinking.

"Crowley has always been a little more adventurous than most wild folk in that he's very curious about civilised life. He wanted to see what earning money in a stable job would be like and I'm not about to stop him from doing what he wants with his life.

"However, apparently it wasn't all what he'd thought it'd be so he decided to come back after six months to try and find us again. It just so happens he ran into Dick Roman's pack on the way and managed to find a mate. Or at least Dick's mate."

Castiel nodded in understanding. He'd been a tax accountant before he'd joined Dean's pack and getting up every morning at five, only to get home at eight in the evening was not something he could imagine anyone willingly wanting to do.

He'd only really had time for Samandriel on weekends and holidays, meaning he'd had to get a babysitter in if Gabriel wasn't available (and Gabriel had very little free time) and Cas had never liked the thought of someone else raising his son.

Now he saw Samandriel all the time and they were both a lot happier for it.

They continued to chat about jobs and schools vs. homeschooling and a few other differences between their upbringings, before a dreadful cough caught their attention.

The trio turned to find a grotty-looking alpha, clad in torn jeans and an old, ripped jacket, huddling his knees to his chest in a slim alleyway between two bars. His hair was matted and his skin filthy, and when he coughed it sounded as though he was choking on a chainsaw. He smelled like a dirty farm, but his scent was filled with desperation and hopelessness. He looked incredibly thin.

Cas pulled a face in sympathy. This was something he was used to seeing living in the city; the homeless people who didn't always make it through the night. At one time, he'd have given money to these sorts of people, but he'd been tricked too many times by beggars who'd used his money for more drugs or alcohol, and since society also looked down on Castiel himself, he'd given up trying to help society.

Dean however, stared at the other alpha in horror before glancing around.

"Why is no one helping him? Where are the medics?"

Cas shook his head sadly. "No one is helping him because nobody cares. He's just another nameless
face who lives on the street.” The omega sighed. "He probably won't make it through another night.”

Dean gaped at Cas and the omega felt his heart twist at the shocked look in his eyes. He remembered a long time ago when he used to think like Dean, but the harsh eyes of society had hardened him and now this was just every day life. Besides you couldn't help everyone.

However, Dean glanced to the bar next door.

"Wait here," murmured Dean before disappearing into the bar. After ten minutes, during which Cas contemplated following the alpha, Dean returned with a large paper cup of steaming tea and a delicious smelling doggy-bag.

He paced over to the homeless man and kneeled beside him.

The alpha took one whiff of Dean's scent and tried to shuffle away, growling weakly as if expecting to be attacked by the other alpha, but he froze when Dean gently handed him the hot drink and bag of food.

Dean smiled as the other alpha stared at him in disbelief.

"There's a train station two streets over. It'll be warmer in there," murmured Dean as he stood up once more.

The other alpha opened the bag of food as Dean began to turn around and he whined softly in appreciation.

"Bless you," he croaked out and Dean smiled at him once more before making his way back to Castiel and Samandriel.

Castiel suddenly wanted to wrap his arms around Dean and bury his nose in the alpha's neck. How had he managed to stumble across the kindest alpha in the world?

Cas' chest was doing all sorts of strange things, and the way Dean had lightly placed his hand on Cas' lower back to lead him further down the road was doing nothing to soothe his quick pulse.

"You may have just got that man through another week," murmured Cas, straining to keep his body under control. What was happening to him?

Dean quirked a sad smile. "Let's hope someone else takes a chance on him and gives him more than I can."

Cas nodded wordlessly, afraid that if he spoke, he might say or do something he would regret later.

They finally arrived at the enormous supermarket and as soon as they stepped through the threshold, Dean wrinkled his nose.

Cas raised an eyebrow as Dean pulled various disgusted faces.

"...Are you okay?"

"Too many smells and sounds," whispered Dean. He shook his head and closed his eyes, attempting to shut them out. "How do you stand it?"

Cas blinked. He hadn't really noticed anything.

Sure there were people chatting and children shouting; trolleys clanging and checkouts beeping.
There were tins being smashed together and women in high heels clacking their shoes on the laminate floor. Not to mention the smells of different foods and bunches of flowers, and the faint aroma of disinfectant from the mop bucket near the door. Oh, and the hundreds of combined alpha, beta and omega scents wafting throughout the store...

...Oh.

"Ah... try... try focusing on just one scent and one sound," murmured Castiel softly as Dean backed up against the far wall, earning some suspicious looks from the security guards.

Right. That was typical wild folk behaviour. Civilised people had learned to block out all the confusing chaos of city life but wild folk weren't used to it, and what Dean was doing now was typical of a shifter from the wild trying to infiltrate civilian life.

One of the alarms on the doors flared to life and Dean began to whine, covering his ears and the security guards perked up, scowling.

Cas panicked. He needed to get Dean to stop what he was doing before they were chased out of the shop by angry and disgusted civilised folk.

"Dean? Hey, Dean? Look at me, c'mon focus on me. Focus on my voice and only my voice." The omega crowded the alpha into a corner out of the way of the other customers and every other activity that was occurring, and Dean slowly opened his eyes to stare at Cas.

"Focus on my voice and my scent, Dean," murmured Cas, beginning to relax now Dean looked less frenzied.

The alpha scrunched up his nose.

"You smell wrong," he said and Castiel remembered the cologne masking his scent.

He was caught off guard when Dean tugged him to his chest and buried his nose into his neck, scenting deeply. He felt the alpha's muscles beginning to relax and Cas couldn't help but close his eyes at the warmth of Dean's body, and how protected he felt in the alpha's strong arms.

Without really thinking, Cas slowly bared his throat for Dean and the alpha's quiet rumble of approval vibrated through Castiel's chest, making him smile. Dean pressed his nose into Cas' throat, scenting the skin there and Castiel didn't miss the way Dean's grip around him tightened.

After a few moments of Dean just inhaling Cas' scent, Samandriel coughed quietly and the pair pushed apart with flushed faces.

"Food?" Reminded Samandriel, eying the security guard still watching them and Cas' brain had a hard time rebooting.

"Uh..." said Dean intelligently and Samandriel rolled his eyes as he grabbed Dean's hand and tugged him further into the store.

Samandriel could be a very pushy six year old when he wanted to be. He was also incredibly aware of his surroundings. Unlike Cas. And Dean.

"Next time, maybe just hold hands," muttered the little alpha and both adults blushed bright red, refusing to meet one another's gazes.

Dean was no longer whimpering or pulling faces though and Cas was fascinated with the way he
kept gently squeezing Samandriel's hand every so often, both alphas refusing to let go of one another.

It was actually rather sweet.

They picked up some packets of beef jerky and other dried meats and fruit that could be kept for a couple of years, before passing an inviting cheese counter.

Samandriel stared longingly at the various cheeses he hadn't tasted in months and Cas was about to usher him on when the beta girl behind the counter chuckled and leaned over to him.

"Which one's your favourite, sweetheart?"

Samandriel eyed her uncertainly for a moment, searching for any hints of ridicule he was used to receiving for being the son of an unmated omega. Upon finding none, he pointed at a lump of cheddar stuffed with cranberries.

The beta grinned. "That's my favourite, too," she winked before glancing up to both Dean and Cas.

"Would it be okay with your fathers if I cut you a couple of slices?"

Cas blinked. "We're not- "

"Of course," cut in Dean smoothly, placing a hand on Castiel's shoulder, and the omega immediately clamped his mouth shut.

The beta smiled and sliced off some cheese for Samandriel, giggling when he beamed at her.

"Thank you," he chirped as he took the offered slices and Dean nodded his head gratefully before guiding both Novaks down another aisle.

Castiel glanced at Dean in disbelief and the alpha shrugged.

"Not my fault they assume."

"No but you did confirm it," said Cas drily and Dean shook his head.

"She asked if she could cut the kid a slice of cheese and I said 'yes'. Where's the harm in that?"

"Because you insinuated we're a family," pointed out Cas and Dean tilted his head slightly.

"We are family."

Cas frowned. "Well... yes. But not in the sense you implied."

Dean sighed as his hand fell from Cas' shoulder, and the omega immediately missed the contact.

"I'm sorry. I didn't realise it was going to be such a problem. You said people looked down on you because you were unmated and with a child. I just assumed if I pretended to be your mate, Samandriel would get some cheese out of it. I'm sorry if I've offended you; it wasn't my intention."

Cas deflated. When you put it that way...

"...You haven't offended me, Dean. I'm just not used to people... caring about Samandriel or me."

The omega shook his head. "It's strange to find someone, and a lead alpha at that, who treats us kindly. I suppose I'm still a little sceptical of it all."
Dean's gaze softened.

"It's my job to look after my family," he said simply and it was enough to make Cas avert his gaze shyly as his chest grew warm and light.

The alpha smiled at him fondly. "I promise you will always be treated with the respect you deserve from me and my pack. We will never look down at you, no matter your history or were you come from," he whispered and Cas couldn't help the grin crawling across his face.

"Thank you, Dean. That means a lot," he murmured and the alpha flashed him a grin.

Samandriel glanced between the pair silently, a small, unseen smile lighting his face.

"Enough of all this chick-flick stuff, let's get you some drugs," winked Dean and Cas huffed out a laugh as they sauntered to the medicine aisle, where they could grab some pain killers, bandages and other emergency aid Dean said he might need.

They also collected some toiletries; just small things like soap and toothpaste and toothbrushes, but they were necessities to keep clean and healthy in the wild.

After they'd paid for everything (including the items Dean had picked up to replenish Jody's supplies), Dean glanced to his companions.

"How about something to eat? We haven't eaten since yesterday," he suggested and Samandriel quickly piped up.

"I have," he grinned and Dean chuckled.

"Two pieces of cheese doesn't count."

They exited the supermarket, ignoring the odd looks from the security guards and Dean automatically slipped his hand into Samandriel's, which shouldn't have amused Cas as much as it did.

They spotted a cozy café further up the road and began to make their way up to it. However, as they were passing a group of young, male alphas, one of them turned around to whistle lowly at Castiel as his friends leered at his rear.

"Want me to breed that pretty hole of yours, blue eyes?" Called one alpha as his friends cackled.

"Leave his mouth for me," shouted another as the group continued on down the street, eyes still flicking to Cas' lower half.

Dean bristled as Castiel bowed his head embarrassedly, and the omega felt the alpha begin to turn, a furious growl bubbling low in his throat.

Cas quickly grabbed Dean's arm and swung him back around.

"It's not worth it," he mumbled. "Happens all the time, don't worry about it."

Dean scowled, clearly unhappy that Cas was used to this sort of treatment.

"Then let me teach them a lesson and it won't happen again."

Castiel shook his head. "Not only is that a horrific idea considering you're outnumbered five to one, but just because you stop those boys from doing it doesn't mean the rest of the world will suddenly stop. Just leave them, Dean. Besides, you morphing into a wolf here is going to be a bit of a
giveaway that you're not from around these parts."

Dean didn't look too pleased and Cas almost missed the way the alpha's hand hovered near his waist, as if wanting to tug him into his side, before it fell limply beside his own body again.

Cas subtly slid a little closer to Dean, noticing the strong, protective scent radiating from him.

They disappeared into the café without further incident.

* * *

Dean groaned pornographically, making Cas chuckle and Samandriel grin.

"Okay, now I get why people want to come to civilisation," Dean murmured. "The food here is awesome!"

Cas shook his head. "You act like you've never seen a burger before."

"Oh, I've had burgers before," the alpha replied. "It's this other thing I've never had. What's it called again?"

"Apple pie," snickered Samandriel as Dean let out another groan around a mouthful of the sweet treat.

"Dean, there are children here," Cas teased and the alpha only groaned louder, making some of the waitresses snicker as they realised how appreciative he was of their dessert.

"I could definitely get used to this," hummed Dean as he scraped the crumbs from his plate.

"Take some back with you," suggested Cas and the alpha perked up at the idea.

"Now there's a thought," he said as he glanced over to the pastry counter. "I might take you up on that."

"Wait until he finds there are different flavours," Samandriel whispered to his father and Dean whipped his head around to face him, eyes wide and awed and full of hope.

"There are different flavours?"

"Would you like the bill, sir?" Asked a sweet beta and Dean focused his attention onto her.

"Please," he said as he took the bill from her hand. "Oh and is there any chance I could take home some of your delicious pie?"

The beta smiled. "Of course, sir. Which flavour? We have apple, cherry, pecan or cinnamon spiced."

Cas had never seen anyone looks so excited in all his life. Dean was practically vibrating.

The beta grinned. "All four?" She asked and since it looked like Dean was going to pass out from heavy breathing, Cas nodded.

"That would be lovely," he said and the beta chuckled as she whirled on her heel and made her way
to the pastry counter, gushing to her friend about the cute alpha who was hyperventilating over pie.

They left the café and once outside, Dean opened his doggy-bag and took a long whiff of its contents. His eyes rolled to the back of his head as he let out a happy sigh, and he smiled brightly as he gripped the bag tight in his palm, other hand once again searching for Samandriel's as if seeking support, making the boy laugh.

Cas gazed at the scene fondly and he idly wondered if Dean's mouth would taste sweet after all that pie.

...Wait. What?

The omega blinked and shook his head to clear it. That was strange. He shrugged it off and turned to Dean.

"Where are we heading?"

Dean winked conspiratorially. "The next one's a surprise."

Samandriel glanced up at the older alpha curiously, but Dean refused to reveal anything and Cas and his son had no choice but to blindly follow the other man.

They were confused to arrive at a hotel.

Dean casually stepped into the reception and nodded at the receptionist when she glanced over. She smiled politely before returning to filling out some paperwork, leaving Dean to stroll over to the floor plan of the hotel.

"Next floor down," he murmured before gesturing for his companions to follow him. They stepped into the lift and Castiel, puzzled, opened his mouth to question Dean, but the alpha held a hand up to silence him.

The doors opened, revealing the entrance to the empty pool.

Both Samandriel and Castiel glanced to one another. Why would Dean take them to a pool when they could swim in the rivers and lakes in the wild? Besides, they hadn't bought any swimming trunks and neither, to their knowledge, had Dean.

"A little birdie told me you miss a few things from your old life," hummed Dean as he took his shoes and socks off, and made his way into the changing area.

Cas and his son followed silently.

"One of those things being..." Dean trailed off as he rounded a corner and carefully opened a frosted glass door.

"Showers," grinned Dean and Cas' eyes widened before he whirled to face Dean.

"Gadreel told you," he accused, but he didn't sound unhappy and Dean shot him a grin.

"Maybe."

Cas' gaze softened. What had he done to deserve friends like these?

"Go on," chuckled Dean as he gestured flamboyantly towards the shower cubicle. "Promise I won't peek."
The omega rolled his eyes and stepped into the shower, Dean shutting the door behind him and Cas began to strip, listening as Samandriel ran into the children's cubicle around the corner.

He threw Gadreel's clothes over the top of the shower door, surprised when Dean tugged them off.

"I'll keep hold of them and make sure they don't get wet," he called and Cas gave his thanks before switching the shower on.

He released a quiet groan before he could stop himself as the hot water flowed down his back, warming him to his core. He didn't care if the pressure wasn't right or the drain was half-blocked with things he didn't want to think about, he'd not had a shower in months and after bathing in a river or lake, the constant pummel of hot water on his body was a welcome relief.

There was a small bottle of mango-scented soap attached to the wall, and Cas placed some in the palm of his hand before rubbing it over his skin.

He started with his stomach and slowly worked his way up to his chest, taking pleasure in the simple movements he'd gone so long without and as he felt his muscles relax, he leaned against the wall to support himself, letting the blissful water stream down his face and chest.

He closed his eyes, determined to enjoy the opportunity Dean had granted him, and as he smoothed the soap over his chest, he found his thoughts wandering to the alpha waiting outside.

He thought about how awed and touched he'd been at seeing Dean offer food to that homeless man; how safe he'd felt when those other alphas had ridiculed him and Dean had been ready to fight for him; how happy and content he felt at seeing Dean interact with Samandriel; how much Dean made him smile when he was expressing his love for something as simple as pie.

How much he'd wanted to kiss the alpha.

Before he realised what he was doing, Castiel was imagining it was Dean's hands caressing his body rather than his own; sliding over his chest before coming to rest on his stomach. He ran his hand down his leg, snaking it back up to his thigh as he pictured Dean's large palms slipping between his thighs and gently teasing the sensitive skin there.

Little moans and soft noises of pleasure were lost in the steady sound of flowing water, and Cas couldn't help but slip his hand between his legs, teasing at his half-formed erection.

After a few moments, he slid his hand further underneath and imagined Dean's fingers brushing over his slick hole. His breath began to shake a little as he pictured Dean holding him to his chest, whispering quiet words of affection as he worked Cas open with one finger, then two.

Cas groaned as he felt slick begin to coat his fingers, the substance already starting to drip between his thighs and he pushed his fingers deeper and faster as he imagined Dean's other hand sliding over his chest until he could brush a thumb over Cas' nipple.

After a few minutes Cas felt pleasure wash over him, Dean's name forming silently on his lips and he sighed happily at the flow of water still beating at his sensitive body.

Then, shame flooded his systems.

He'd just pleasured himself with his friend's name on his lips. He'd just imagined the lead alpha of the Winchester pack touching and teasing at him after Dean had been so kind and generous. How could he look his friend in the eye when he came out of the shower?
Cas wasn't looking for a relationship and Dean had no interest in him, yet he'd just used an imaginary version of his friend to get off. He wasn't even attracted to the alpha.

...Was he?

No. He definitely wasn't. Besides, why would Dean ever want him? The alpha could do so much better than an on-the-run city omega with an alpha son.

He took a deep, steadying breath and cleaned himself up again, turning the shower off when he was done. He grabbed the warm towel Dean had thoughtfully slung over the top of the door and began to dry himself off.

He stepped out of the cubicle, towel slung around his hips and was about to ask for his clothes back when he noticed the look Dean was giving him.

He froze at the dark, hungry expression, eyes widening slightly at the way the alpha slowly raked his gaze over his body, and something thick and needy pooled low in Cas' gut at Dean's scent.

Arousal and desire was pooling off Dean in waves and Cas inhaled the strong, enticing scent of alpha as he took a step forward.

Dean rumbled lowly in approval, gaze definitely interested as he eyed Cas' throat as if he wanted to sink his teeth into it and mark the omega as his forever. It was then that Cas realised he was emanating a cloying scent of omega pleasure and arousal, and probably had been for quite some time. He could also smell his own slick wafting in the air, so who knows what the maddening smells had done to Dean whilst Cas was in the shower.

He really wanted to ask Dean to take a shower with him.

By the looks of it, so did Dean.

Cas took another few steps towards Dean and the alpha stood, eyes full of intent as Cas gripped the towel around his waist, ready to let it fall to the floor.

"That was so much better than washing in the river," came a young happy voice and Cas heard Dean swear in panic as he rushed to hide the tent in his jeans. Castiel quickly grabbed his clothes and sprinted back into the cubicle.

"Yeah?" Dean asked, voice low and husky as he tried to calm his scent.

Samandriel nodded eagerly, oblivious to the odd tone. "I get why dad missed it."

Castiel stepped out of the shower fully clothed, and decidedly less flustered than Dean.

"Did you enjoy your shower, dad?" Asked Samandriel innocently and Dean choked as Cas smiled calmly.

"I did, thank you. Did you enjoy yours?"

The little alpha nodded as Dean's face flushed bright red.

Suddenly, Samandriel wrinkled his nose.

"What's that smell?"

Dean looked ready to suffer a heart attack, but Cas was quick to respond.
"I think someone walked in after us," whispered Cas secretively and Samandriel scrunched up his nose again.

"Well I hope they get a shower," he whispered back and Castiel nodded solemnly before offering his hand for his son.

"Come on, Dean," said Samandriel as his father guided him towards the exit, and Dean nodded silently as he walked over to them stiffly.

"What's wrong with your leg?" Asked Samandriel concernedly.

"Slipped on a wet patch of floor and I think I've pulled something," said Dean tightly and the little alpha gazed up at him with sympathy.

"Is it swollen?" He asked.

"I'm sure it'll go down," Cas muttered drily and he heard Dean stumble behind him as they slipped their socks and shoes on again before walking into the elevator.

"Where now?" Asked Samandriel as they left the hotel and Dean wouldn't meet Cas' gaze.

"I think maybe it's time to go home."

Cas couldn't agree more.

Chapter End Notes

I had too much fun writing this chapter so it became a bit lengthy...

Hope you liked this 'human' part!
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

Heads up: mentions of rape but nothing actually happens.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Apparently, the best way to deal with an embarrassing situation involving showers, nudity, and a concoction of alpha and omega pheromones was to just ignore that it ever happened. So that's exactly what Castiel and Dean did.

The trip to the city was discussed, but the incident in the showers went unacknowledged and neither Cas nor Dean had any intentions of ever bringing it up again.

Even if Cas sometimes caught Dean gazing at him when he thought the omega wasn't paying attention.

...Cas also refused to think about how many times he'd been snapped out of a daydream involving the alpha.

Still, life went on and another week passed, during which the pack continued their journey to new pastures. Cas and Dean still chatted (despite the air of tension that had developed between them) and the rest of the pack refused to question why their scents changed ever so slightly whenever they interacted with one another. It wasn't all that noticeable anyway and some of the more astute members of the pack were already forming their own conclusions.

With Spring approaching, the weather had become less harsh and it was easier for the pups to walk on their own now the ice and snow wasn't biting at their faces.

On the seventh day, the pack stopped to eat with Cas leading the hunting group to a small herd of deer. The deer were caught and the pack was fed, and Dean decided they could all use a little break after all the miles they'd trekked. They agreed to reconvene at dusk and continue walking for another few hours afterwards.

"Do you ever miss your old pack?" Asked Castiel as he and Gadreel made their way to the river for a drink.

"Sometimes," admitted the alpha. "My mate and I had pups together and I confess I do miss them. However, then I remember how the whole pack left me out there in the ice and it hurts to think the people I loved most in the world could do that."

Castiel's eyes grew wide.

"You had a mate?"

Gadreel nodded sadly. "She is probably mated to someone else now."

Cas scowled. "Your mate abandoned you to die in the snow? Surely she at least tried to help?"

Gadreel shifted uncomfortably. "You'd think that, wouldn't you? But apparently we weren't as close
as I'd believed."

Castiel growled. How could anyone leave someone as sweet and big-hearted as Gadreel to die alone, injured and frozen? The world was cruel and the people in it thoughtless and selfish.

Gadreel's gaze softened. "I'm much happier here, though. If giving up my title as head alpha means I can be part of a pack that truly cares for one another, where the leaders are fair and just, then I consider it a small sacrifice."

Castiel pressed into the alpha's fur, pushing his head under Gadreel's chin protectively.

"We will never leave you, Gadreel. We will never do what your old pack did; family sticks together and that means no one gets left behind, no matter the circumstances."

The alpha whimpered quietly and it was such a broken sound that Castiel felt his heart crack. He quickly rubbed his head under Gadreel's chin and the alpha snuggled closer to the omega, resting his head over Cas'.


"Castiel, I..." he trailed off, averting his gaze when the omega tilted his head curiously.

"Gadreel?"

"Nothing," replied the alpha, shaking his head. "It doesn't matter."

Cas raised an eyebrow but at Gadreel's gentle smile and nod towards the frozen river, he let the subject drop.

* * *

An hour after the sun had disappeared below the horizon, when the pack were on their way to find new territory, the winds picked up and with them came a freak blizzard.

The snow and ice came out of nowhere, catching the pack off guard, and temperatures plummeted into dangerous levels until most of the pack could barely move their legs because of the aching cold seeping into their joints.

The storm was loud; the winds whistling between damaged trees as the snow deadened all other sounds of the forest, and the pack's ears flattened in distress at the combination of coldness and icy pain.

The snow was so thick, the shifters could barely see in front of their noses and walking was near impossible. As the ice continued to batter at their bodies, the pack searched desperately for shelter, but it seemed their luck was dry because even the trees were broken and dying in these parts.

They had no choice but to stop and they all huddled together on the the floor, shivering and shaking in the violent winds as they threw blankets over themselves and each other to keep warm.

Cas tucked Samandriel deep into his side and curled around him securely until his son was near
completely covered by Cas' own body, but with both their coats a lot thinner than the rest of the pack's, Castiel and Samandriel were definitely in more danger than the other members.

Cas felt his extremities lose all sensitivity and his shaking was so aggressive that it had come to the point were he was feeling nauseous. However, the colder he got, the slower his brain functions became until even his breathing was sluggish and as he felt Samandriel shuddering silently beside him, he vaguely wondered if this is how they'd die.

He just wanted to rest.

Something large and warm curled around him protectively and Cas managed to open his eyes long enough to see Dean cuddling up to him, shielding him from an icy death as he wrapped his own blanket and Cas' around them all.

The alpha slung a paw around Castiel's stomach, tugging Samandriel even closer as the end of the paw rested over the pup's small body.

However, as Cas began to warm up slightly, he realised Dean was on the border of the pack cuddle-pile, meaning he was mostly unprotected against the elements.

The moment he felt the alpha's shaking worsen, Cas rolled over, pulling Samandriel with him, and he tucked his son between Dean and himself as he pulled the larger alpha to his chest, wrapping all four legs around him.

Dean whined quietly as he wrapped his own legs around the omega and their tails curled around one another as Dean tugged Cas' head against his chest.

They shuffled closer until the only thing stopping them from being practically moulded into one another was Samandriel curled up between them.

Tension between them temporarily evaporated, Dean nuzzled the top of Cas' head in gratitude and Cas tightened his grip on the alpha as they settled into a restless sleep, comforted by one another's scents.

* * *

The next morning, all was eerily quiet and when Cas awoke his tired brain suggested two things:  

1) He'd gone deaf

2) Everyone around him was dead

Panicking, Cas opened his eyes only to see the steady rhythm of Dean's chest moving with every breath. Relaxing slightly, he pricked up his ears to listen to the quiet snores of a few of his friends and it was then that he noticed the snow had stopped.

It was still dark, which was probably why he was the only one awake, but with him and Dean being a tangle of limbs and fur, and the blizzard having given up, he was far warmer than he had been when he'd fallen asleep.

He carefully scented Samandriel to check he was okay, and upon finding his son warm and happily
dreaming, Cas finally allowed himself to relax into Dean's comforting embrace.

There was a terrible ache between his back legs.

Cas frowned and shifted slightly, being careful not to jostle Dean considering said legs were thrown around the alpha and the ache only grew more painful. He shifted a little more and suddenly froze when he felt something wet and sticky trailing down the inside of his legs.

No, this couldn't be happening. Not now. Not in this position with the rest of the pack practically draped over one another.

He carefully tried to slide his lower half away from Dean, but the small movement was like opening a flood barrier and Cas' eyes widened in horror as the strong, sweet scent of slick reached his nostrils.

His lower half was drenched and it wasn't from the snow.

Cas felt uncontrollable fear crawl into his stomach. What did he do? He was out in the wild, surrounded by lots of alphas and betas, slick coating his pained body, with nowhere to hide as he suffered through most likely a two-week heat in the freezing ice.

If he'd have been in the city, he'd have just stayed in his house for the entire two weeks and taken heat suppressants and pain killers, and used toys until the heat finished its course.

But what could he do out here? He couldn't retreat to shelter because the pack was on the move and there wasn't any shelter, and on his trip to the city he hadn't thought to buy any heat suppressants. He didn't have any toys so that meant his heat would become absolutely agonising because it was receiving no relief, which in turn meant it would get stronger and even more arousing to alphas and betas because it was trying to attract a mate, or at least someone to breed the omega.

Cas felt his breathing quicken and grow shallow the more he panicked. This was the wild, wasn't it? Maybe omegas in heat were used by horny alphas and betas until the heat went away. Maybe he was going to be knotted and taken advantage of by the pack until his cycle finished.

What about Samandriel? If the alphas and betas in the pack attempted to breed him up would they try to kill Samandriel? Would they see his son as competition for their own unborn offspring?

Castiel began to shake. What if the pack took turns on him? After all, it was in their instincts to knot and breed omegas in heat. He wouldn't be able to fight them all off, especially not alphas as strong as Dean.

He could run and take Samandriel with him. Leave the pack before they woke up and just hope they didn't follow his scent. But where would he go? He would still be in danger of being raped by more hostile shifters; shifters who wouldn't care what happened to him, or if they injured him as they bred him. At least in Sam and Dean's pack he knew everyone.

Then again, if they were following their natural instincts it wasn't guaranteed they wouldn't go into a frenzy, and then Cas would have no idea if he was going to come out unharmed or not.

So frightened of his own awful thoughts, Castiel didn't notice Dean beginning to stir.

The alpha sniffed the air with a frown and wrinkled his nose, and Castiel almost cried out with fear as the alpha scented his head. Dean's eyes suddenly flew open and he pulled away slightly to look at Cas.

Cas whimpered as he pulled Samandriel closer.
Dean blinked at him before slowly glancing down to the omega's lower body, and his eyes widened at the amount of slick drenching his tail, stomach and thighs. Cas was mortified to notice that some had leaked onto Dean's fur during their sleep, and he glanced up to the alpha in terror when he detected the arousal and lust in Dean's scent.

"You're in heat?" Croaked out Dean, gaze worried and slightly panicked. "But it's Winter."

Castiel was too terrified to speak. Living in civilisation had made it so civilised folk didn't follow natural heat cycles any more as toys, drugs and other technology made it so they were comfortable all year round, and therefore able to raise children without fear of nature presenting fatal problems.

Dean must have registered how afraid Castiel was because he gently nuzzled his muzzle.

"It's okay, Cas. It's gonna be alright. We'll take care of you, promise."

Castiel whined in fear. Take care of him? Did that mean they were going to knot and use him until his heat ended?

Cas was shocked when Dean carefully untangled them both and climbed to his paws.

"Wait here," the alpha murmured quietly as he crept away and Cas suddenly felt very cold. With Dean's alpha scent missing, the dull ache turned into burning agony and Cas bit back a howl as he curled up on himself in an attempt to ease the pain.

"Dad?" Samandriel asked sleepily as he awoke, worried by his father's incredibly stressed scent. The little alpha sniffed the air and his eyes widened when he realised what his father was going through.

Knowing the scent of an alpha would soothe the searing pain, even if only a little, Samandriel crawled up to his father's head and curled up under his muzzle so the omega could scent him.

Cas licked his pup gratefully, comforted by the scent of family.

A few minutes later, Dean returned with a concerned-looking Jody and Cas' nose immediately latched onto eligible alpha.

"Dean," he whined brokenly as more slick dribbled down his thighs and his scent strengthened, inviting alphas to take a ride on him.

Cas saw the shift behind Dean's eyes to something more primitive, instinctive, and through his heat-fogged mind, Cas whined again, practically begging Dean to mount him.

Dean rumbled protectively and took a step forwards, scent radiating lust and want and interest, but Samandriel quickly jumped to his paws and growled warningly at the other alpha.

Dean narrowed his eyes and took another step forwards, getting ready to snarl at the pup, but Jody snapped at him, hackles raised and teeth bared.

"Back off, Dean," she hissed though it was clear the beta hadn't gone unaffected by Castiel's enticing heat, and Dean growled lowly as his instincts demanded he get rid of Jody and make the needy omega his.

"Leave, Dean," snarled Jody. "He's not your mate. I won't let you take advantage of him."

And the thought of claiming the omega whilst he was unaware of his own actions and under great strain was enough to clear Dean's glazed eyes as his expression slowly returned to something more
understanding. He took a step backwards, bowing his head slightly at Samandriel in apology, and the little alpha dared to relax.

Jody produced two pairs of brightly coloured pills in a clear bag. She carefully tipped them into Cas' mouth and offered him a flask of water from her bag to wash them down with.

"Painkillers and heat suppressants," she supplied when Samandriel glanced at her warily. "They won't get rid of the heat but they'll dull the sensations and the effects."

"What's that smell?" Came a tired voice and Jody froze when some other members of the pack began to stir.

"Dean," she whispered urgently and the alpha sprung into action.

Cas' mind started to clear from its heat-induced haze as Dean nudged him to his feet, supporting him yet urging him forwards. Now the drugs were starting to take effect, he was impressed with the alpha's control over his instincts. It couldn't be easy being so close to an unmated, slick-covered omega in heat.

There were mumbles of confusion as the pack began to catch onto what the strong scents meant and a few members glanced around, eyes already starting to glaze over with arousal.

Castiel caught Gadreel watching him, obviously interested if his scent was anything to go by, but the alpha surprised him when he turned away, offering Cas some privacy.

It was clear the other wolves were trying very hard not to react to Cas' scent, but the omega knew he needed to get away from the pack if he didn't want to have any incidents.

Beside him, Dean was throwing off a ridiculous amount of alpha arousal and Cas was half inclined to just present to him there and then. He smelled incredible and with the alpha being so kind and caring he would make the perfect mate.

He was vaguely aware that was probably the heat talking, but he didn't particularly care; he just wanted Dean's knot inside him now.

Just as he was weighing up the pros and cons of baring his throat for the alpha, another alpha stepped in front of the pair, teeth bared and hackles raised as she glared at Dean.

Cas foggy mind completely cleared. If there was anything he knew, it was that he definitely didn't want to be knotted by Ruby.

Dean narrowed his eyes and pointedly stood in front of Cas.

"Move, Ruby," he huffed. "Cas doesn't need any trouble."

The mahogany wolf snarled at Dean and she eyed Cas hungrily, taking another step closer as Castiel took one back.

Dean rumbled threateningly, baring his teeth at Ruby as she tried to dodge him and get closer to the omega.

"Leave him alone," hissed Dean and both alphas' scents combined in the air to create a dangerous mix of alpha arousal and challenge.

Just when it looked as though Ruby was about to aim for Dean's throat, Sam, unaffected by Cas'
scent, planted himself between the pair.

"Both of you walk away," he snapped before making his way to Cas' side and shoving him away from the two hormone-charged alphas.

"Let's get you somewhere safe," muttered Sam as they trotted away from the pack.

Cas sidled closer to the large omega and the pair wandered deeper into the forest until they were too far away to see or smell the rest of the pack.

"You okay?" Asked Sam sympathetically and Cas glanced to his slick-soaked body and lowered his gaze in embarrassment.

"The river's a few hundred metres that way," murmured Sam. "When you're ready you can bathe, but I'm guessing you might want a bit of... ah... relief first."

Cas wished the ground would swallow him up. He still couldn't quite get his head around why he hadn't been knotted yet. It was obvious that most of the pack had wanted to, yet Jody, Dean and Sam had all tried to keep him safe. Even most of the other alphas and betas had restrained themselves and Cas was confused as to why. If he'd been in the city and had gone into heat in public, he probably would have been dragged into some dark and dingy alleyway and knotted against his will.

So why had the Winchester pack tried to control themselves?

Another shifter's scent made its way over, and both Cas and Sam turned to find Lisa padding over with a strange-looking object in her mouth.

When she dropped it in front of Castiel, he averted his gaze and the skin beneath his fur flushed pink.

"It's clean," said Lisa, gaze full of understanding and Cas couldn't quite meet her eyes.

It probably had something to do with the fake knot at his feet.

"We'll leave you alone for a bit; we won't go too far, but I'm guessing you might need a bit of privacy. Shout when you're done," said Sam and before Cas got a chance to protest, the other two omegas bounded away.

Cas stared at the toy in front of him before glancing around to make sure there was absolutely no one else in the area. He really did need relief.

He shifted into his human form and slowly picked up the knot.

Chapter End Notes

In my head, this chapter seems a bit... bitty. I needed a sort of 'transition' chapter to get me into the next part of the story and I thought I would be able to write Cas' whole heat experience into one chapter, but obviously that didn't work and it would be mega long if I tried. So sorry if this one seems a bit weak after the last chapter, but I had no choice :/ (There's still fluff in it though!)
With no shelter available in their current location, the pack had to keep moving for fear of getting caught in another blizzard. This presented a major problem for Castiel as the drugs he was taking would only dim the heat, not get rid of it completely and as such, agony often ripped through his body, making it incredibly difficult to carry on.

He also had to walk at the back of the pack, a little way away from the others in case his strong scent caused any incidents between him and an alpha or beta. He was usually accompanied by another omega like Jo, Sam or Lisa, and because Samandriel hadn't hit puberty and therefore wasn't affected by sexual scents, the pup was also permitted to walk with Cas.

Sometimes, the searing pain burning through Cas' body became too much and the pack would stop their journey for an hour or two to let Cas relieve himself and recover. The omega was mortified through these times, but the rest of the pack assured him it was only natural and they weren't about to condemn him for his biology.

Throughout their journey to new territory, Dean ensured Cas was never bothered and his heat was never interfered with by any alpha or beta in the pack (he made a point of keeping an eye on Ruby) and Castiel was grateful for the privacy.

Jo and Pam (despite being a beta) seemed to have an endless supply of toys between them and Cas had to wonder what each of them got up to on their nights alone. Cas was convinced they were sisters by now considering how alike they were.

Lisa was a constant reassuring presence by his side. She encouraged him to keep moving when the pain was all he could think about and she distracted him when he needed it. She praised him and made sure he never fell too far behind, and Cas didn't think he could have kept going without her.

Jody was the one who looked after his health. She supplied the drugs, checked he wasn't running too hot or cold, made sure he ate and did all those other things that any good medical professional would do.

When he needed to be excused and wanted privacy, the pack would take care of Samandriel; playing and distracting him so he didn't start fretting too much about his father. The pack also made sure Cas got a meal from their hunt considering he couldn't join them when they ate and the omega had never felt so loved in all his life.

This pack who hadn't known him all that long had quickly become not only his best friends, but his family too. They looked after him and made sure he was healthy in a wild world he knew next to nothing about. They never belittled him for his history and past choices, and not once had they taken advantage of him when he was in such a vulnerable state.

They protected him and Samandriel; made sure they were safe and happy despite having no obligation to do so and Cas still couldn't quite believe how kind and generous they were. Apart from Gabriel, no one had ever expressed an interest in Castiel's wellbeing, and he had never managed to earn the respect of his so-called family because of his status as omega.

He'd always been taught he was less important than his alpha brothers; less skilled, less intelligent, less interesting than them, and after so long of having these thoughts drilled into his mind, he began to believe them.
He bowed his head when he was supposed, remained quiet and kept out of the way unless spoken to; submitted to stronger alphas and betas at every turn...

Yet here, he wasn't expected to do any of that.

The Winchester pack treated him as an equal. They helped him and taught him new skills and basically ensured he would have a fighting chance at surviving in a habitat he'd never grown up in. They had turned out to be patient and understanding and had eventually learned to trust him when he began to help them.

Ironic how his biological family wanted to kill him and his supposed enemies did everything they could to protect him.

Okay, that wasn't true, Michael didn't want to kill him... he just wanted to murder his son and brutally punish Castiel.

Much better.

After a week, the Winchester pack finally found the place they would call home for Spring.

It was a large clearing surrounded by a multitude of thick yews, pines and tall oak trees, and in the middle of the clearing ran a small, clear stream which would provide a safe place to bathe and drink once it had thawed.

There were bushes which would be soft and leafy once Winter was over and they would be perfect for hollowing out as shelters when it was a little warmer. There was also a sturdy cave near the back of the clearing which would provide shelter for the entire pack if any thunderstorms or freak weather decided to make an appearance.

Despite most of the trees looking withered and dying, the pack could see a few fruit trees and shrubs which would provide them with the vitamins and minerals they needed to thrive in the Spring.

All in all, it looked like paradise.

"Home sweet home," grinned Dean as he pictured their new territory without snow and ice, and imagined what it would look like with rich greens and vivacious reds and sweet yellows shading the ground and the trees. He envisaged the beautiful pastel colours of the flowers and fruits, and smiled when his pack looked around in excitement.

As the pack began to explore their new home, Dean cautiously made his way over to Cas, Lisa and their pups, Sam by his side.

"You need to rest, Cas," began Dean, making an impressive attempt to control the alpha instinct to mate and breed. "Make yourself comfortable in the cave. It'll be warm in there and no one will bother you. The rest of the pack can make igloos; it doesn't look like there are gonna be any storms tonight anyway."

Castiel bowed his head in gratitude, unable to help the instincts telling him to submit to the alpha now he was at the peak of his heat.

Dean stared at Cas a little too long before he forced himself to turn away and once again, Castiel was impressed with his self-restraint.

"Awesome," he said gruffly. "Now get out of here, Cas."
Lisa and Sam quickly escorted the needy omega into the cave before someone did something they would regret, and once settled, Lisa licked him gently on the cheek.

"If you get cold, just give one of us a shout," she murmured and Cas smiled at her gratefully. His heat had made his body temperature swing violently depending on his mood (and even those were unstable). It wouldn't be the first time another omega had had to snuggle up to him to keep him warm in the chilli air.

The little ball of toasty warmth he called his son was a blessing in times like these, and Samandriel was all too happy to help his dad fight off the cold.

Cas curled around his pup and closed his eyes, drifting off into a restless sleep.

* * *

He was in a shower; a bit like the one Dean had taken him to in the city. The warm, soothing water beat down on his human chest and face and it was a welcome relief after suffering through the freezing Winter blizzards and storms.

Just as Castiel was beginning to relax under the downpour, an uncomfortable ache made itself known between his legs and the omega scowled as he shifted in an attempt to ease the pain.

Instead, the pain worsened until it developed into a burning sensation, and Cas hissed as he tried to manoeuvre himself into a more comfortable position. The burn progressed into searing agony and Cas whimpered as he felt the beginnings of slick dribbling between his thighs.

He didn't want to be in heat. He hated the way alphas and betas looked at him when he was in heat. Like he was nothing but an object to be used and thrown away when they got bored of him.

But what could he do? No one wanted an unmated city omega on the run with a pup. Nobody would ever want him as a lover. He was destined to live a life of agonising, unfulfilling heats.

The pain between his legs throbbed fiercely, and Cas whined as he carefully slipped his hand underneath himself. He grimaced at the heavy flow of slick down his thighs and between his fingers.

Just as he was about to brush his fingers over his hole, something stepped into the shower behind him and pressed into his back.

Cas gasped at the feeling of a warm chest and strong arms wrapping around him, and he closed his eyes in relief as a large palm settled on his bare stomach, holding him close.

There was the distinct smell of pine and leather and Castiel immediately felt a safe contentedness settle deep in his gut as he recognised this particular alpha's scent.

He leaned into the alpha, instinctively knowing that he would be taken care of now. The alpha gently pressed his lips to Cas' neck, trailing kisses down it and across his shoulder, and Cas smiled at the feeling of something hard poking against his rear.

The omega interlaced his fingers with the ones splayed over his stomach and the alpha huffed out a soft chuckle as Castiel rolled his hips against the object pressing into the curve of his rump.
The alpha's free hand slid between his legs and Cas let out a quiet groan when calloused fingers started to tease at his slick hole. The hand Cas wasn't using to cradle the alpha's fingers reached behind him, grasping the other man's hips and pulling him closer until he could rock against the alpha's erection.

Clever fingers pushed into his needy hole and Cas whimpered as the alpha worked him open.

"Harder," whispered Cas and the alpha grinned against his neck as he plunged his fingers deeper, relieving some of the pain from his infuriating heat.

It wasn't enough though. He needed to be filled properly.

Deciding the best way of getting his message across was through action, Cas slowly backed the alpha against the wall and began grinding harshly against his pelvis.

The alpha growled, scent radiating arousal and Castiel smirked as their positions were flipped until he was being supported by the wall, bent forwards as the alpha got into position behind him.

Cas shivered in anticipation as hands slid down his sides before settling on his hips and he closed his eyes happily when sweet kisses were peppered over his spine.

"Beautiful," murmured the alpha in a voice that had Cas going weak in the knees as his heart began to flutter.

He moaned loudly when the alpha slid into him.

"And you're all mine," growled the alpha beside his ear as he wrapped his arms around Cas' stomach, trapping him to his chest protectively.

The alpha began to move, allowing his hips to find a steady rhythm and all Castiel could do was brace himself on the wall and enjoy the ride.

The pain began to diminish and Cas couldn't help but throw his head back as the alpha's thrusts became rougher, more aggressive as he scraped his teeth over the juncture between Cas' shoulder and neck.

"Mine," rumbled the alpha as Cas let out a blissful groan. "My mate. Mine to knot and breed. Mine to mark and taste. All mine."

Cas' breath hitched when the alpha wrapped his hand around his erection. Alphas weren't usually interested in those parts of an omega, yet this one seemed to want to touch every part of him.

They were both covered in slick now but Castiel didn't care. He just needed one more thing for the pain to disappear.

"Knot me," he breathed and the alpha nipped his jaw in approval as his knot made an appearance, sinking into Cas like it was made to stay there.

Cas cried out as the alpha continued to thrust into him, dragging the knot inside him for that extra bit of pleasure, and the omega felt his knees begin to buckle at the mixture of relief and ecstasy.

Just as he thought he was going to collapse, the alpha caught him in a strong grip as he continued to move inside him.

"I've got you," he murmured quietly as his knot swelled until there was no chance of it breaking free
of Cas’ pain-free hole.

After a few moments, the pair rode out their orgasm together, and they sunk slowly to the ground; the alpha flipping their positions once more as he let Cas settle in his lap, the knot tying them both together. It could be up to twenty minutes before it fully went down.

The alpha splayed a possessive hand over his omega's stomach once more as the other hand tangled with one of Cas’. He nuzzled at Castiel's neck, scenting him and humming contentedly when omega pleasure and satisfaction began to radiate from Cas.

The omega smiled when his alpha began to pepper light kisses over his jaw and neck and once again he laced his fingers with the ones on his stomach, brushing a thumb over the alpha's knuckles affectionately.

The alpha tightened his grip as Castiel's muscles loosened until he was completely relaxed in his lover's hold.

This felt like home. Cas felt safe here. Loved and wanted. Taken care of and needed. This is how he wanted to spend the rest of his life; pressed into his loving mate.

The alpha nuzzled his cheek tenderly and Cas slowly turned to face his partner, smirking as the knot inside him shifted fractionally as if to remind him that it was still there.

Green eyes and a familiar warm smile greeted his fond gaze.

Cas' eyes flew open as his head shot up, body caked with sweat and hind legs drenched with slick. His heart was racing and his temperature had soared, and it was clear by his erect length that he had been more than a little turned on by the arousing dream.

The omega groaned softly, eyes closed and scowling in an attempt to clear his mind. He needed to get his pulse back under control.

He grimaced at the sensation of dry and sticky slick coating his fur. He definitely needed a wash.

He clambered to his paws, being careful not to wake Samandriel, and crept out of the cave, hoping some of the snow would help clean him considering the stream was frozen over.

He sighed as he sunk into the snow, the white powder aiding in lowering his temperature. Why was he having wet dreams about Dean? Why was his heat-driven mind conjuring up pictures of Dean... servicing him?

The concerning part was that this wasn’t the first time something like this had happened. For the past three nights Castiel had been fantasising about a certain green-eyed alpha helping him through his heats; touching him, kissing him, claiming him...

The part about them being mates was new though.

Cas didn't really want to think what that could mean when it was around three in the morning. To be honest he didn't want to think about anything. He just wanted to go back to sleep.

Unfortunately, the thing between his legs had decided to start throbbing again and Cas knew it wouldn't stop unless he did something to relieve it.

With a frustrated sigh he trudged back into the cave and nudged his son awake. The little alpha blinked blearily up at him and Cas felt a sense of guilt stab his heart.
"Mind sleeping with Lisa and Ben for the night?" He asked softly and Samandriel nodded sleepily as he stumbled to his paws.

Cas felt like the worst being alive as he gently picked up his exhausted pup and padded over to Lisa’s igloo, gaze apologetic and ashamed as Lisa glanced tiredly over to him, obviously having just woken up.

She smiled though in understanding and welcomed Samandriel into her paws as the little alpha automatically made his way over to Ben and curled around the omega protectively. Both Cas and Lisa smiled at the scene before Cas nodded in appreciation and quietly wandered back over to the cave, where he would spend the next couple of hours trying to relieve his unbearable heat.
Chapter 17

Cas's heat finally came to an end when the first day of Spring arrived. There was still frost on the ground and the nights still came a little earlier than the pack would have liked, but the air grew warmer and the winds diminished into a cool breeze. Bluebells and Snowdrops bloomed throughout the forest as the trees began to shake off their heavy coats of snow, allowing the first leaves of the season the bud, and the frozen streams and rivers began to crack and thaw, making way for new fish and plants.

Cas felt undeniably free as he pottered out of the cave properly for the first time since they'd arrived, and he smiled as he inhaled the first scents of the season.

It smelled like a new beginning for him and his son.

He stretched and trotted further into the camp, greeting the pups already playing on the new, frosty shoots of grass, and he nodded at some of the other members of the pack like Chuck, Becky and Jody, before making his way over to Gadreel, Jo, Benny, Lisa and Pam, who had all perked up upon noticing his happy demeanour.

"Hello, stranger," chuckled Benny as Cas came to sit beside them, and the omega quirked a smile.
"Are we finally safe to talk to you without your bodyguard?" The alpha asked and Cas chuckled.

Samandriel had been quite the protective little alpha whilst Cas was on his heat. Every time anyone had approached the cave's entrance, Samandriel had stood in front of his father and sniffed the air warily. If the visitor had been an omega, he would allow them entry, however, if the visitor was alpha or beta, the pup would snarl at them until they told him their reason for being there. If there was no reason, or the reason sounded suspicious, Samandriel had chased them out of the cave.

Whilst none of the pack would intentionally harm Cas, their biologies were working against them all and sometimes the inviting scent of an omega in heat was too tempting to resist.

"I believe so," smiled Castiel as he relished the feeling of not being a slave to his biology. "It seems to be over."

Jo let out a mock sigh of relief, making the others chuckle. Pam quirked a grin.

"I couldn't even see the kid and he was making me edgy."

"I'm an omega and he was making me edgy!" Retorted Jo as the others laughed.

"The only one of us who was safe was Lisa and that was only because the kid spent half the time sleeping in her igloo," smirked Pam and Lisa chuckled quietly.

"Maybe it's because he just likes me more than you guys," she teased and Cas snorted.

"I think he likes you more than he likes me."

There was a mischievous twinkle in Lisa's eyes when she next spoke.

"That's because I let him get away with more."
The others began to laugh as Castiel rolled his eyes. Beside him, Gadreel glanced over him silently. "And you're not experiencing any pain? You're quite sure it's over?"

Cas smiled fondly at the alpha's concern. "No. Definitely no more pain. I feel much better than I have done these past couple of weeks so I'm fairly confident my heat's over."

Gadreel looked pleased by the news and Cas offered him a grin. "You all look like you're having far too much fun without us," came a distinctly feminine voice and the little group turned to find Meg and Crowley sauntering over.

Cas' tail wagged once. He liked Meg and Crowley despite their shaky first meeting. The pair were cocky and sly and got themselves into all sorts of trouble they weren't supposed to, but they were also fun to be around and incredibly loyal to their friends and the people they cared about. Most of the pack approved of them anyway.

"Hey, Pam, I thought I told you to take out the trash," teased Jo as Meg wedged herself between the blonde omega and coffee-coloured beta, Crowley settling on Pam's other side.

Meg growled playfully before tackling Jo to the ground and the two growled and wrestled for a few moments before Jo pinned the beta to the ground and stuck her tongue out. "Children," huffed Crowley and the pair eventually separated.

"I see you finally made it into the light, Clarence," said Meg as she turned her gaze upon Castiel, smirk in place. "You get bored of all your toys?"

Cas averted his gaze shyly as Jo shoved at the beta. "Shut up, Meg. We're not all as shameless as you," the blonde omega huffed.

The whole group raised their eyebrows at her and Jo rolled her eyes. "Well, maybe I am... but Cas isn't!"

The little group continued to chat, some breaking off between themselves to hold their own conversations.

"I was wondering if maybe you'd like to explore the forest surrounding the camp?" Asked Gadreel quietly. "Merely to stretch your legs. It can't have been easy being cramped up in that cave for a week."

Castiel smiled as he nodded. "I'd like that very much."

The alpha grinned and the pair climbed to their paws.

"Going to stretch my legs," said Cas as some of the group turned to look at them curiously. The pair began to make their way out of the camp, thereby missing the knowing glances of the other wolves. Just as they reached the end of the camp, a cheery voice stopped them. "Good to see you finally out of that cave, Cas. Heat over?" Asked Dean, eyes bright and tail
swishing happily at seeing Cas free of pain.

Cas' own tail wagged in response. He always felt happier around Dean.

"It is. Gadreel was just going to accompany me in exploring the forest a little more. Would you like to come with us?"

He missed the way Gadreel deflated fractionally, mouth barely curving downwards in disappointment.

However, he didn't miss the way the cheery expression slowly slid from Dean's face as he spared Gadreel a glance, as if only just realising the other alpha was there. Dean's tail drooped and his eyes suddenly lost a bit of their brightness.

"Ah... no, no. I'd better not... Sam'll probably want some help anyway in doing... things. It's... uh... it's good to see you up and about anyway, Cas."

Gadreel perked up slightly, but Castiel was too busy frowning to notice.

"Okay, if you're sure. You're more than welcome to accompany us though, right, Gadreel?"

The grey alpha looked caught off guard but he nodded hesitantly.

"...Of course."

Dean glanced up at Gadreel and the two seemed to stare at one another uncertainly for a few moments before Dean finally shook his head and smiled almost sadly at Cas.

"Nah, I'd better not. You two enjoy yourselves, okay?" And with that the alpha slunk away, his steps seeming heavy and unhappy.

Cas frowned but at Gadreel's gentle nudge to his side, he smiled again and trotted off into the forest beside his friend.

* * *

Castiel had always enjoyed Gadreel's company and exploring the forest with him was fun. They chatted and laughed and exchanged stories with one another. They stayed out all afternoon learning about one another and relaxing, and both seemed a lot more cheerful when they returned to the camp, dusk beginning to fall.

"I think Crowley's gesturing me over," murmured Gadreel, and sure enough, the black alpha was staring expectantly at Gadreel.

Castiel chuckled and rubbed his head against the alpha's shoulder, making Gadreel grin and his tail wag.

"Then you'd better see what he wants. Thanks for today. The exercise was a welcome relief and so was the company."

Gadreel chuckled. "You know where to find me if you wish to escape the camp for a day."
Cas quirked a smile before nodding over to Crowley. "I'll definitely be taking you up on that offer. But you'd better go to Crowley before he drags you there."

Gadreel shook his head in amusement before padding over to the other alpha, leaving Cas to wonder where his son had scampered off to.

Upon spotting the little alpha playing with Ben, Claire and Alex, Castiel let his thoughts wander to Dean and how he'd acted earlier that day. Why had the alpha seemed so disappointed after hearing Cas wanted to stretch his legs? Why had he refused to come with them? Maybe he'd wanted to talk to Castiel considering it was the first day off his heat? After all, they hadn't properly spoken to each other for two weeks.

Deciding this was the most plausible reason for Dean's attitude earlier on, Cas strolled off to find him.

He found the alpha conversing softly with Lisa, but when she noticed Cas wandering over, she nodded at him, making Dean turn.

"I was wondering if maybe you'd like to catch up later, when you've finished talking to Lisa?" Cas asked politely, pulse speeding up slightly when Dean's tail began to swish again.

"Sure, Cas. I'll come find you," said Dean, eyes a little brighter and Cas smiled as he made to turn away.

"Actually, you can go with him now," interrupted Lisa as she stood. "I'm going to round Ben up for a bath. I'll see you both later."

There was a mischievous sparkle to her eyes as she slipped away and Cas had to wonder at what the other omega knew that neither he nor Dean was privy to.

Dean watched her go in confusion before shrugging and turning to Cas.

"What did you want to talk about?"

Cas paused as he glanced around the camp filled with other wolves and he suddenly felt the urge to be alone with Dean, where neither of them could be interrupted.

"Actually, I was wondering if maybe you wanted to go to a beautiful little place Gadreel and I stumbled across today. It's quite a steep incline, but you can see a lot of the forest from it and there's a wonderful view of the camp from its peak. It's rather awe inspiring," suggested Castiel, confused when Dean's ears flattened slightly at the mention of Gadreel's name.

But upon noticing Cas' hopeful expression and sincere desire to chat with him, Dean nodded.

"Alright."

So, with the sun beginning to disappear below the horizon, Cas and Dean ventured away from the camp and towards the large hill.

It took them a little while to reach it, but they passed the time by chatting and discussing all Cas had missed whilst enduring his heat. They laughed about how Samandriel had chased Dean away from his father a grand total of five times, despite sometimes Dean having an actual reason to visit. They discussed what was to come in Spring, and how much easier their lives would become once the temperatures raised into pleasant levels. They said how they couldn't wait for the sun to rise earlier and set later, and for their prey to become more active and less scarce.
By the time they finally reached the peak of the hill, they were both smiling, tails swishing contentedly as they enjoyed one another's company.

"Wow, Cas. You were right... it is beautiful up here," murmured Dean as he surveyed the surrounding forest, noticing how small the camp looked from this distance.

Castiel relaxed with the serenity of it all, pleased by Dean's company. He watched the alpha observe their surroundings like a king looking over his kingdom and he mused how apt that simile was considering Dean was pack leader.

The sun had vanished now, leaving in its wake a bright moon and a few twinkling stars. The longer Cas stared at Dean under the moonlight, the stronger the longing ache in his chest became. He frowned and elected to ignore it.

Dean glanced back at him with a smile and plodded over, coming to sit beside him as they watched the stars twinkle peacefully.

"Mom used to take me stargazing when I was just a pup," murmured Dean softly after a few minutes and Cas glanced over to him sadly. "She took Sammy a couple of times, but he doesn't really remember. He was only six months old when she..." Dean trailed off, voice hitching slightly and Cas shuffled a little closer.

"Your mother sounds wonderful, Dean. From what I've heard, she was a very kind lady."

Dean grinned proudly, mind lost in memories.

"She was. I've never met anyone like her. She was always so good to us... so caring..." He sighed quietly and Castiel pulled a face full of sympathy. He had never had parents who particularly cared about him. Everything was always a front; fake and perfect for public eyes. The Novak family were traditionalists and anything that varied from etiquette and hierarchy was considered a disgrace; hence why Castiel as an omega got bullied so much by his family growing up.

It wasn't all bad; sometimes they just ignored him.

However, Dean and Sam had had happy, enjoyable lives at first but then it had all been brutally ripped from them. He couldn't imagine what that must have been like for the brothers; couldn't imagine what they had been through.

"I'm sorry, Dean," Castiel said weakly. What else could he say? It's not like he could bring back Dean's mother, no matter how much he wished he could give the alpha some happiness.

Dean shook his head with a tiny smile. "She would've loved you and Samandriel. Would've thought you were so clever and polite and Samandriel so thoughtful and funny. I can imagine you both getting on so well."

Castiel smiled. It was nice to know Dean thought someone he cared about so dearly would like him and Samandriel.

"I believe I would've loved her too. Especially if she was anything like you and your brother," stated Castiel and Dean shot him a touched smile before turning back to the stars.

A few moments later, the expression slipped from Dean's face.

"Do you ever get lonely, Cas?" The alpha whispered, tone full of pain and horrific memories, and the omega's heart clenched.
"More than you know," murmured Cas, thinking of the brothers who had chased him from his home.

Dean turned to him and Cas flicked his gaze over to the alpha. He looked at Dean, really looked at him, taking in the world-weary eyes and the sadness behind them. He thought about all Dean had been through; the death of his mother, the abuse by his father, the struggle of trying to raise an omega brother by himself, the leadership of the pack that had been thrust onto the alpha without him getting much say in the matter...

He thought about all the tragic deaths Dean had faced; his brother's mate's, his friends and family, and despite all this the alpha had stayed strong, put on a brave face for his pack and ploughed through all the agony and guilt without asking for so much as a thank you.

Dean hid behind a mask of sarcasm and gruffness, yet it was clear by the pain in his eyes that he had suffered for far too long without anyone but his brother's support.

Cas' heart constricted at the thought as Dean continued to stare at him.

However, the longer the pair continued to gaze at each other, the more Cas began to notice other little things about Dean, like the vividness of Dean's emerald eyes, and the length of his eyelashes and how his ears would twitch every so often as if scanning the area to make sure they were safe.

Dean's breathing seemed to have quickened a little and he licked his lips nervously as his gaze roamed over Cas' black face. Castiel gulped subtly as Dean's gaze flicked back to his eyes and he started to notice the heavy tension between them; the anticipation of waiting for... something to happen.

Castiel slowly closed his eyes as Dean leaned in...

Dean cursed under his breath as he whipped his head away and Castiel was left frowning in confusion.

What had just happened? Had Dean been about to lick his muzzle? Had Dean really just contemplated kissing him?

Had Castiel considered letting him?

He couldn't deny he was attracted to the alpha; his dreams had shown him that, and the way his heart seemed to speed up and how he felt so content around Dean was enough to tell him that he had a bit of a crush on the alpha. Dean was kind-hearted and protective, and he was fantastic with children, so it wasn't any wonder that Castiel found himself liking him.

But for Dean to reciprocate those feelings? It seemed unreal. Why would the lead alpha of a highly respected pack of wild folk desire a city omega on the run with his six-year-old son, who also just so happened to be part of one of the Winchesters' greatest enemies: the Novak pack. It made no sense. What could he offer Dean?

Dean's next words snapped him out of his musings.

"So... uh... Gadreel treating you well?"

Castiel raised an eyebrow, puzzled. Was this an attempt to cover Dean's mistake? Had it been one of those 'heat of the moment' things and the alpha hadn't meant to kiss him at all?

"...I suppose," Cas replied carefully and Dean seemed to slump slightly.
"...Does he... does he look after you? Both of you?" The alpha asked after a few moments, voice barely above a dejected whisper and this time, Castiel scowled. What was Dean going on about?

"He treats us with respect, just like every other member of the pack does."

Dean paused before nodding slowly and lapsing back into silence. When nothing else was forthcoming, Cas sighed and stood, making his way to the spot on the hill that would allow him to see the rest of the forest and the camp in the distance.

He was tired of being alone, tired of how his biological family treated and shunned him, and he was tired of the way his body reacted when around Dean; of the dreams he'd been having as of late. He had spent his life growing up in a civilised world and now he had to get used to a wild one and it was exhausting.

Just as he was about to sit down, Dean's voice once again made him pause.

"You and Gadreel aren't courting, are you?" He asked suddenly, expression full of realisation and Cas scrunched up his nose.

"What? No. Why would you think that?"

Dean's eyes widened as understanding crossed his face.

"I... I thought..." He took a step forwards and Cas found himself reciprocating, his pulse beginning to speed up again as Dean's expression brightened.

"You're not planning on courting him...?" Asked Dean as he took another step towards Cas, the omega quickly mirroring him as he shook his head, breaths becoming more shallow as Dean's tail began to sway.

The alpha gulped as they neared one another and if it was possible the atmosphere seemed to become more tense and thickly charged with anticipation and excitement.

They finally came to a halt in front of one another, barely a foot separating them.

"...You smelled really good in that shower," whispered Dean. "You looked beautiful. You still do."

Cas' breath hitched as he felt the urge to bury his nose in Dean's neck and never move. Since when were alphas this enticing to omegas out of heat? Not only his scent, but Dean's whole being was like a flame and Cas was the moth drawn to it.

"I want you, Cas. Have done for a while now," breathed Dean, muzzles an inch from touching, and it was clear just how nervous Dean actually was. The alpha's breaths were shaky and his eyes desperate and anxious, and Castiel wanted nothing more than to soothe his fears of rejection.

"Then it's a good thing I feel the same way about you," murmured Cas and Dean's eyes widened in surprise before joy lit his features.

"Shift into your human form," the alpha ordered lowly and Cas raised a shocked eyebrow.

"...I haven't got any clothes."

Dean smirked slyly, nose almost touching the omega's.

"For what we're about to do, you won't need any."
Cas blinked once before quickly morphing into a human and the second he was fully transformed, a pair of lips crashed into his and he was backed into a tree, hands gripping at his hips and chest, exploring every part of him, touching his exposed flesh and all he could do was moan in approval and tug Dean closer as his hands roamed over the alpha.

"Wanted to do this for so long," whispered Dean, exposing his throat when Cas pressed his nose deep into it, inhaling that musky alpha scent.

"Dreamt about you during my heat," confessed Cas shyly and Dean rumbled approvingly as he tugged their hips flush with one another. He claimed Cas' lips again, ravishing the omega's mouth as though it belonged to him.

"And here's me worrying I was pushing too fast."

Cas growled quietly as he tangled his fingers in Dean's hair, his other arm curling around the alpha's back.

"I've wanted to touch you for weeks. Wanted to know what you feel like inside me."

Dean tensed for a second before he was hoisting Cas' legs onto his hips, tasting the omega's mouth like he needed it to survive.

Castiel latched onto Dean just as hungrily, nipping at his lips as he tightened his grip in Dean's hair.

"You can't just say things like that and not expect me to be turned on," hissed Dean and Cas chuckled as he began to nip at the alpha's jaw.

"Serves you right for being a tease. First in that shower, then whilst I was in heat, and earlier when I thought you were going to kiss me and you turned away."

Dean huffed out a laugh.

"You mean when your kid was in the room, then when I didn't want to take advantage of you, and earlier when I thought you were already courting someone else?"

Cas smirked when Dean began to nuzzle at his throat, scraping his teeth lightly over the soft flesh. He had no idea why Dean had believed he and Gadreel were together, but he wasn't about to question it now when Dean's body was so tightly pressed against his.

"Smell gorgeous," murmured Dean as he scented Cas, the honey and ocean aroma curling around him and making him feel almost dizzy with arousal and contentedness.

Castiel closed his eyes, relishing the sensations of Dean's strong, warm body pinning him against the frosty tree as the safe smell of trusted alpha washed over him. He ran his hand over Dean's bare back, enjoying the feel of the alpha's exposed body against his.

Dean began to nip at his jaw and neck, eventually trailing over his shoulder where he alternated between gentle bites, licks and kisses over Cas' cool flesh.

Cas shuddered and brushed his thumb over one of Dean's nipples, making the alpha nip a little harder at his skin. The omega chuckled quietly as he repeated the motion, teasing at the alpha's nipple as he gently scraped his nail over it.

Dean made a noise of appreciation before once again moving to claim the omega's lips.
After a few moments of rough, desperate kissing, Cas rolled his hips teasingly against Dean's and the alpha rumbled as he held the omega closer.

"Eager," huffed Dean and Castiel smirked.

"Says the one who asked me to get naked just after admitting he has feelings for me."

Dean ground his hips against Cas' harshly, their erections sliding over one another, making Cas groan.

"Yeah, you look like you're complaining," countered Dean and Cas flushed pink.

"You're very attractive," he muttered shyly and Dean hesitated before gently cupping the omega's cheek and pressing their lips together tenderly.

"Now I don't know whether to knot you silly or just kiss and cuddle with you all evening," chuckled Dean and Castiel glanced away, an embarrassed but touched smile on his face.

Dean carefully moved Cas' head until they could look at one another properly, and then he began to pepper kisses over the omega's face and jaw until Cas buried his head in Dean's neck once more.

The alpha held him close, tender and loving in a way Cas wasn't used to and thought he'd never experience, and Dean began to smooth a hand over his back, large palms warming his skin in the chilli air.

"Both would be nice," confessed Cas after a few moments and he felt Dean grin into where he was kissing his hair.

When Dean seemed to be taking his time in sweetly kissing and nuzzling Castiel, the omega's legs tightened around the alpha's waist, trapping their bodies together and Dean raised an eyebrow in amusement.

"I thought you were supposed to be the innocent one?"

Cas nipped at Dean's jaw. "I'm sure I'll appreciate the kisses and cuddles later on, but right now, I really want your thick knot in my slick hole."

Dean's eyes widened and Cas snickered as the alpha's brain seemed to reboot before he was shoving the omega against the tree and teasing a finger at Cas' entrance.

As he worked Cas open, rumbling in arousal at the slick sliding between his fingers, he ravished Cas' mouth, tasting every part of him and committing it to memory for future use.

"Later on, we're going to discuss every little detail of those dreams you've been having and maybe we can reenact them at some point this week," growled Dean as Cas gasped at the clever fingers inside him.

He threw his head back with a loud groan as Dean slid into him properly, hands gripped firmly around the omega's hips.

The cold bite of the frost-covered tree into his back went ignored as Castiel focused on the feeling of Dean filling him, thrusting into him roughly as though he wanted Cas to know who he belonged to.

The omega whined with a mixture of pleasure and relief at finally getting the thing he'd been desperate for over the past two weeks. It didn't even matter that he was off his heat; the fact was that
Dean Winchester, his crush and the kindest alpha he'd ever had the pleasure of meeting, reciprocated his feelings and wanted him for more than just a one night stand.

Dean's thrusts deepened and quickened, and Cas wanted to howl out his happiness to all of the forest as Dean held him closer and began to scent his neck.

"Mine," Dean growled as Cas whimpered. "My gorgeous omega. You belong to me," he snarled as his knot finally made an appearance, arrogantly sinking into Cas as though it was made to stay there.

"Yours," Cas breathed as he urged Dean to go deeper, harder, until there wasn't a crevice inside him that hadn't been filled.

Dean's swelling knot dragged inside him and with a cry of bliss Cas threw his head back, baring his throat for the alpha to mark him, and Dean growled possessively as he sunk his slightly sharpened canines into Castiel's soft skin.

Pain flared in Cas' neck, but the alpha quickly began to lick and nuzzle at the wound, encouraging it to heal. Cas closed his eyes contentedly as Dean's knot swelled to its full size, the alpha still thrusting deeper despite not physically being able to remove the appendage from Cas' body now for up to twenty minutes.

Dean began to trail kisses over his throat and, overwhelmed by the amount of love and affection radiating from Dean's strong scent, Cas captured his lover's lips and caressed a thumb over his cheek.

Suddenly, after a particularly harsh thrust, Cas cried out, pleasure tearing through him and Dean quickly followed, the two sliding to the cool ground.

Dean immediately pulled Cas into his lap as he manoeuvred them both until he was resting against the tree with the omega snuggled into his chest.

"Mine," mumbled Dean as he nuzzled Cas' cheek, stroking his hand over the omega's back as the other one rested protectively over his waist.

"Gonna keep you safe. Make sure no one hurts you. Take care of you like a good alpha," he murmured as Castiel nuzzled at his throat, scenting and nipping at it possessively.

" Wanted you for so long. Should've had you sooner. Should've looked after you through your heat," frowned Dean and Cas claimed his lips hungrily.

"I'll have plenty more heats. For now though, just hold me. I want to kiss you and touch you and know that I'm yours." He scowled as he wrapped his arms around Dean.

"I don't want to be alone anymore," Cas whispered.

Dean growled and shifted his knot pointedly, making Cas gasp as the sensation.

"You won't be alone anymore. You won't have to worry about your family finding you. You won't have to worry about anything. I'll protect you, Cas, I always will."

Cas practically purred as he pressed closer to Dean, his slick slathered all over the alpha's thighs and stomach, marking him as the omega's. Everyone would be able to smell Cas on Dean now. The thought made Cas hold his lover tighter.

"And I'll take care of you," whispered Cas. "You've gone far too long thinking you have to shoulder all your worries and the pack's safety alone. You don't have to do that and I'm going to make sure
you know someone's there for you when you need it."

Dean whimpered softly and buried his face in his lover's neck.

"...I'd like that," he admitted quietly and Castiel released his own protective growl as he squeezed the alpha affectionately.

After a few minutes of tenderly stroking and caressing each other's bodies, nipping and kissing lazily as if they had all the time in the world to explore one another, Dean shifted until he could lie on the floor, Castiel draped over him.

"I could get used to this," hummed Dean contentedly in between sweet kisses and Cas chuckled as he settled more comfortably on Dean's knot, making the alpha sigh in pleasure.

"You might have to," commented Cas and Dean's grin could have lit up an entire room.

Dean nuzzled at his jaw. "Just us two, alone, touching and kissing and pleasing one another... sounds like paradise."

Cas made a sound of agreement before something began to niggle at the back of his mind. Something that made him frown slightly.

Well, they wouldn't exactly be alone considering Samandriel would be sharing sleeping quarters with them, but he understood what Dean was trying to say.

...Unless... unless Dean didn't want Samandriel to share sleeping quarters with them? Maybe now they had expressed an interest in one another, Dean would want Cas to himself? Maybe he would want Samandriel to sleep somewhere else?

What if it didn't only extend to sleeping arrangements? What if Dean wanted Castiel to give all his attention to the alpha? What if he got jealous of Samandriel?

Cas paled. What if Dean wanted to get rid of Samandriel completely?

It would make sense. Dean was head alpha of a highly respected pack and he'd probably want heirs now he had an omega. That meant Dean would probably think of mating and breeding Cas at some point, which also meant that Samandriel, being older and an alpha, would be seen as competition for any of Dean's offspring.

Dean wouldn't want some other alpha's kid challenging his own children for leadership (even if Samandriel would never do that), so it only made logical sense that Dean would want Samandriel gone.

Castiel wouldn't let that happen.

Samandriel came first, above all else in his life, and even if it would be difficult having to fight against Dean; the alpha he held so dear to his heart, he would do it for the sake of protecting his son. Nobody would hurt Samandriel. Cas wouldn't let them get near enough to try.

Dean was beginning to notice his increasingly panicked state and the alpha frowned worriedly as he felt the omega's pulse begin to race and his scent start to emit fear, heartbreak and determination.

His knot began to return to normal, his alpha hormones overridden by his worry for the omega and he gently placed his hand over Cas' arm in an attempt to snap him out of whatever dark musings he'd got himself trapped in.
"Cas?"

Wide blue eyes focused on Dean and the alpha froze at the hurt and terror in them, and before Dean got a chance to ask what was wrong, the omega leapt off him, morphed into his wolf form and sprinted towards the camp, leaving Dean to gape in bewilderment at his retreating figure.

"Cas!"

Castiel refused to stop. He bounded down the hill, back the way they came and made a beeline for the camp. He had to get to Samandriel. Had to protect him from any harm Dean or the rest of the pack might cause him if they thought he was competition for Dean's own unborn pups.

His heart pounded in his ears when he heard another wolf racing after him, and he pushed himself harder than he'd ever gone before. He couldn't let Dean get to Samandriel before he did.

There was another confused shout of his name; an order for him to stop, but Castiel refused to listen to it even as his muscles began to ache from exertion.

He'd been so stupid getting involved with the head alpha of a pack of wild folk. He'd known what the consequences were, yet he'd been selfish and gone through with it anyway, despite the risk it would cause his son. How could he have put Samandriel in danger like that?

He growled at himself in disgust and raced towards the camp. He would keep his son safe and if that meant fighting Dean and the rest of the pack off, then so be it.

Chapter End Notes

Whoops... my hand slipped ;)

...They got together didn't they? Sort of?
Castiel sprinted into the cave where he knew Samandriel to be curled up and waiting for him. He was thankful it was evening as the dark night kept him hidden in shadows and he didn't have to worry about the concerned or alarmed faces of the other pack members as most had retired to sleep.

He ignored his son's confused questions of what was going on and he shielded his body in front of Samandriel's the second he heard Dean's heavy foot falls enter the cave.

Samandriel began to panic when he registered his father seemed to be defending him against Dean and Castiel crouched low, hackles raised as he scowled at the large alpha.

Dean stared at him, befuddled.

The alpha took another step into the cave, ears flattening when Cas huddled closer to Samandriel and bared his teeth in warning.

"...Cas? What's going on?" Dean asked quietly, tail drooping between his legs in a mixture of confusion and rejection.

The omega narrowed his gaze. "Let us go and I promise we'll never bother your pack again. You won't have to set eyes on us ever again."

Dean tilted his head slightly, hurt plastered all over his face.

"What? You want to leave? But I thought..." The alpha frowned. "I thought you said you felt something for me? Were you lying?"

Cas growled lowly. "You won't get your claws on Samandriel. I won't let you. No matter how I feel about you."

Dean froze, all traces of anger vanishing, replaced by bewilderment.

"Get my claws on...? What are you talking about?"

Cas backed up a little, pushing Samandriel with him.

"That's what you'll want me for eventually, isn't it? You're a lead alpha; you'll want an heir to make sure your pack keeps running. You'll breed me up and then you'll want to make sure no one challenges your offspring for leadership. You'll want my son out of the way to make way for your own. That's how hierarchy works, isn't it?"

Dean's eyes were wide and shocked as he openly gaped at Castiel. He began to shake his head in horror.

"...What do you take me for? Some kind of heartless savage? He's your pup."

Cas raised an eyebrow as Dean closed his eyes.

"Cas, I would never do that. I would never hurt you or your son. I don't care what civilised folk tell you about us; I couldn't bear to see either of you hurt." He raised his gaze to meet Castiel's. "I would
never kill Samandriel. *Never.*

Cas frowned in confusion. That's not what he'd been taught. In fact, that's why he'd never started a relationship in the city. He'd always been frightened of what someone might do to his son, so he'd just assumed that any interested alphas and betas would want to kill his pup in the wild as well.

"My brothers would," stated Cas uncertainly. In fact, Raphael had killed a beta's alpha son because he believed him to be competition for when he bred the beta up.

Dean cocked an ear.

"Then it's a good job I'm not your brothers."

Cas hesitated. Now that he thought about it, Dean *had* protected Samandriel against Alistair despite having no need to, *and* he'd looked after him when Cas was in heat, *and* he'd kept him warm when the blizzards had hit.

Not to mention he'd been quite content to play Samandriel's father in that supermarket...

Dean sighed softly. "I know you've spent a long time on your own, Cas. I know you've spent a long time depending on no one but yourself. I understand that you're wary about trusting anyone else with your son, but... you've got to give me a chance. Let me prove that I'm not like the people you grew up with; like those who looked down on you for being unmated and having a pup.

"Let me take care of you both. I may never be as good as Samandriel at bringing you happiness, but let me at least try. You're both part of the pack now, and no matter what happens between us, you will always stay that way, even if we decide a relationship between us won't work. But you've got to give us a chance to see if we could become something more than friends. I'd really like to make this work between us."

Dean lowered his gaze nervously and Samandriel peeked his head around his father's chest, curious.

Cas hesitated at the alpha's words. He hadn't expected any of that and the heartfelt comments had quickly rendered him speechless. He didn't think he'd ever met an alpha who was not only willing to take on another alpha's child, but also to want to provide for him and protect him as though they were all a family.

"What do you say, Cas? Think you'd be able to trust me enough to try something?" Asked Dean, voice barely above a whisper and Cas took one more look at the anxious alpha and nodded.

"I believe so. You've proved your protectiveness and thoughtfulness for us both on numerous occasions in the past... I don't know what made me think you would be as cruel and cold-hearted as my family if we were to start something," admitted Castiel sheepishly.

Dean quirked a grin, though it was clear he was overjoyed by the reply.

"I suppose it's your instincts as a parent to protect your son. Nothing wrong with being a good parent."

Cas allowed a small smile to creep across his face, but his swishing tail gave away his excitement as his muscles began to relax.

"I'm sorry, Dean. For running like that. I'm honoured you think enough of me to come after me."

Dean frowned lightly. "Hey now, none of that. I don't know what kind of family drills it into
someone's head that they're not as worthy as their siblings or others around them, but to me you're the most amazing thing to have ever stumbled into my life.

"You're stunning, Cas, not just physically or because of your biology, but because of how you adapt to your surroundings, how you care for others, how intuitive you are... There's a reason I want you, Castiel. And it's not because you're an omega."

Cas averted his gaze as he felt a mixture of happiness and shame blossom in his stomach.

How could he have ever believed Dean would be like the alphas he'd heard about on the NEWS? How could he ever believe Dean would be one of the sadistic monsters who only cared about their own bloodline, hurting those who challenged their own offspring? Dean was kind and gentle no matter what his family had taught him to think, and Cas had never wanted someone as much as he wanted Dean.

"Dean... I... I don't know what to say..." mumbled Cas and the alpha beamed.

"...Does this mean you and Dean are finally gonna get together?" Asked a small voice and both adults blinked and looked down to see Samandriel glancing excitedly between them both, tail wagging a mile a minute.

Dean chuckled and leaned down on eye level with the young alpha.

"That depends. Do I have your permission to court your wonderful father? Think you'll be able to share him with me?"

Castiel huffed out a quiet laugh, but it was clear by Dean's tone that if Samandriel said 'no', Dean would respect his wishes and they'd probably all have to discuss what happened next.

Thankfully, that's not what happened.

Samandriel narrowed his eyes. "Are you gonna take care of my dad? Are you gonna do everything you can to make him happy?"

Dean nodded solemnly as Cas' gaze softened.

"I promise to look after you both and keep you happy every way I know how," declared Dean and Samandriel eyed him suspiciously for a few seconds longer before nodding in satisfaction and trotting over to the other alpha.

He rubbed his head affectionately against Dean's chest and the alpha smiled as he leaned down to nuzzle the pup.

"You gonna have a sleepover with us tonight?" Asked Samandriel eagerly and Dean glanced up to Castiel.

"If it's okay with your father," he said quietly and Cas padded over to him, eyes warm and smile fond as he curled his neck around Dean's.

"It's very okay with me," Cas whispered and Dean let out a sigh of relief as he nuzzled Castiel's cheek.

"For a few moments there, I thought I'd lost you," murmured Dean shakily and Cas pressed closer in apology.
"I'm so sorry, Dean. I don't know what came over me. I'm sorry I accused you of those horrible things."

Dean shook his head. "It's not like I don't understand where it came from. Afterall, it's not uncommon to hear of things like that. But I would never do that to either of you, I would never hurt Samandriel. When I say I want a relationship with you, I mean I want a relationship with both of you. I want to take care of you both."

Cas snuggled further into Dean's fur.

"Let's get some rest and we can talk about this some more in the morning," murmured Castiel. "Tonight, I just want to lie close to you."

Dean's scent began to radiate happiness and Cas buried his nose in the alpha's neck, addicted to the smell.

The trio stepped further into the cave and sleepy, little Samandriel flopped to the floor, snuggling into his father's fur when Castiel curled around him.

Dean grinned at the scene before wrapping himself around Cas' back, draping a paw over the omega just because he could, and Castiel's lips turned upwards as they all settled down to sleep.

Today had been a good day.

* * *

Cas woke up warm and surrounded by the scent of proud, protective alpha. He nuzzled the sleeping Samandriel gently, as he did every morning and smiled in amusement as a cool nose pressed into his neck.

"Good morning," mumbled Dean contentedly as he scented Cas deeply and the omega relaxed back into the alpha's body.

"Hello, Dean," he replied quietly and the alpha's paw tightened around his belly.

"I could certainly get used to waking up like this," hummed Dean as he leaned over to lick Cas' muzzle tenderly. "Do you always smell this amazing in a morning? I don't think I'll ever want to move."

Cas chuckled and turned to lick Dean's muzzle.

"We will have to face the world at some point."

Cas bit back a laugh as Dean slid his paws around him and tugged him until he was lying on his side, trapped in Dean's hold.

"I think we should just stay here forever," commented Dean as he licked Cas' head affectionately.

Cas closed his eyes again and let himself be cuddled by the strong alpha.

"I really am sorry about yesterday, Dean," he murmured after a few minutes. "I never should've run. I shouldn't have been so scared when you've done so much for both me and my son in the past."
Dean clicked his tongue quietly. "I thought we'd settled all this. Forget about it; you were only doing what you thought was best for your pup. I'd worry more if you didn't protect him."

Cas averted his gaze shyly. What had he done to deserve such an understanding alpha? If any of his brothers' mates had done run and bared their teeth at them, they would probably be missing a few limbs. In fact, Castiel remembered answering back to his father once when he was a teenager, and he had been nursing a swollen cheek for four days afterwards.

Dean shifted silently behind him, and being careful not to wake his slumbering pup, Castiel sat up to join him.

"Cas, there is something I want to talk to you about though," said Dean with a small frown and Cas tilted his head to show he was listening.

"Last night when you said about me... about me breeding you up... you know I would never do anything like that without your permission, right?" Stuttered Dean awkwardly. "You know I would never... I would never demand you to present to me or force you into having... intercourse with me if you didn't want to."

Cas blinked before nodding slowly.

"I thought as much." He shifted uncomfortably. "Dean... I fear my upbringing may have given me expectations of how omegas and alphas are supposed to interact that may be shocking or abhorrent to you. All my life I have been conditioned to believe that wild folk are unfeeling, instinct-driven barbarians and whilst I now know that to be a pack of lies, I'm afraid some residual... lessons may have remained. Such as those which made me believe you would wish to harm Samandriel."

The omega glanced up at Dean ashamedly.

"I don't want to offend you, but I'm frightened my upbringing will give me no choice."

Dean's gaze was full of sympathy as he shuffled closer to his lover.

"Maybe I've been a little stupid in thinking everyone grew up with the same ideals as me and Sammy. I know bad things go on in the world and I know every pack is different, yet for some reason, I've never made allowances for those who have had such different lives to me and my brother.

"I guess I'm trying to say neither of us is perfect, but we can work this out together, okay? I promise I won't get offended at the things you've been taught if you promise to be patient with me and my stubbornness."

Cas quirked a smile and Dean grinned back, nuzzling Cas' muzzle gently.

"We'll make this work," reassured Dean as Cas tucked his head under the alpha's chin. "I know we will. It'll just take a while."

Cas closed his eyes contentedly. Somehow, he knew Dean was right.

* * *
Later that morning, the two strolled out of the cave pressed tightly into one another's sides as they chatted about the days ahead.

At first no one in the pack mentioned anything, but the longer they remained practically welded together, the more people started to catch on.

Both Castiel and Dean started to snicker at the way the rest of the pack would whisper conspiratorially about them, as if trying to figure out if what they were seeing was real, and no one had the guts to confront either of them about it, so Cas and Dean remained as they were, chatting and laughing quietly until the late afternoon.

To no one's surprise, it was Sam who marched up to them and demanded answers.

"So is the PDA gonna be a regular thing now or are you two gonna keep your activities private? Because I think we'd all prefer noise to be kept to a minimum."

Dean snorted as Cas smirked lopsidedly.

"Depends," teased Dean. "Does it freak you out? Because if it does, me and Cas can do this all day."

The alpha began to rub his whole body against Castiel's, transferring his scent onto the omega and practically marking him in front of his little brother.

Sam gagged. "Jerk," he huffed.

"Bitch," countered Dean and Cas' eyes widened as he stared at his lover. Had the alpha really just degraded his omega brother so insultingly?

Yet Sam didn't seem to mind and he merely turned on his heel with a snort and plodded off.

Dean noticed his lover's shocked expression and he ran the encounter through his head before realising what had caused Cas' horrified gaze.

"It's just something we say," Dean hurried to explain. "It doesn't mean anything; we've been using those names since we were pups. I don't really think of Sammy that way and I'd tear into anyone who did."

Cas relaxed as Dean chuckled embarrassedly.

"You know how much I love my family, Cas. I'd never humiliate them like that."

"Sorry," said Castiel. "I've just never heard that word used... affectionately before."

Dean nodded in understanding before frowning as a thought hit him.

"...You've never had anyone call you that, have you?"

Cas paused for just a second and it was enough to have Dean scowling, muscles tense as though preparing to fight whoever had dared to insult his lover.

"Lucifer, Michael and Raphael have said it to me on multiple occasions. I remember when I entered my first heat, I was crying because I'd never felt such pain and there was nothing I could do to relieve it, and Lucifer walked in to my room, growling at me to shut up because I was giving him a headache.

"Then he got the first whiff of my heat and he had this look on his face... He started calling me a
'whiny, omega bitch' and he came towards me like a predator stalking its prey. I remember his scent being so confusing... he was my brother and he had never particularly cared about me, yet he seemed... aroused. Interested in me in all the wrong ways.

"I was quite terrified of him. He was far stronger than me and older too, and I had never seen him so riled up before. Of course at the time, I didn't know he was being affected by my heat and if Gabriel hadn't come barging into my room, I think Lucifer may have..."

The omega trailed off, unable to finish the thought of what his older brother may have done to him at the tender age of twelve. He risked a glance at Dean, expecting to see disgust and pity on his face, yet the alpha had bristled, fury and protectiveness burning behind his eyes.

"And they have the audacity to call us savages?" Growled Dean, but Castiel knew his rage wasn't directed at him. He carefully pressed his head into Dean's chest, feeling the unusual urge to seek comfort despite having gone so long dealing with all his problems himself.

Dean quickly tugged him closer and almost wrapped himself around the omega.

"They'll never come near you again," hissed Dean and Cas knew he meant all of the Novak family. "They'll have to get through me first."

As Dean scented at his neck, the omega began to relax in a way he never had before. He closed his eyes and let Dean comfort him, allowing himself to trust someone else to take care of him for once.

After a few moments of Dean holding him and nuzzling him, Cas slowly bared his throat for Dean and the alpha made a sound of approval as he began to lick the bite mark from the previous evening.

"No one will ever hurt you or your pup," promised Dean quietly. "I won't let them."

After a few minutes, the pair shifted until Cas was once again pressed into Dean's side. He liked being this close to the alpha; liked being able to scent him and feel his warmth.

"I'm going to organise a hunt this evening. You okay to lead us now you're off your heat?" Asked Dean. "I need a good tracker."

Castiel nodded and Dean smiled before licking his muzzle fondly.

"Awesome. C'mon, let's go tell the rest of the pack."

They wandered to the centre of the clearing, where Dean howled once to get everyone's attention. The other pack members padded over, forming an audience in front of Dean, and Cas tried to join them, but he was nudged gently by Dean in a silent plea to stay by his side.

Maybe Dean was just as attached to him as he was to Dean.

"I'm scheduling a hunt for this evening, when dusk falls," announced Dean. "Now we've got our tracker back, we might have a little more luck with portion sizes," grinned Dean making a few wolves laugh, and for Ed and Harry to roll their eyes.

"We're not that bad at tracking," grumbled Harry and Dean chuckled.

"No, you're not and we're all very grateful for you keeping us from going hungry these past two weeks."

The two betas perked up slightly as Dean shook his head in amusement.
"Right, that's all I wanted to say," said Dean, expecting his pack to return to whatever they had been doing beforehand.

"That's all you wanted to say?" Drawled Jo as she glanced pointedly between Dean and Castiel, and Cas ducked his head slightly as Dean blinked in surprise.

"Oh... right... uh... I guess Cas and I are... um... courting now," stammered Dean, confidence leaving him now the whole pack was starting at him with smirks and gazes of amusement. It was fun to tease your little brother, but when approximately two dozen sets of eyes were focused on you, it was harder to be nonchalant about such private matters.

"About time," huffed Benny. "Maybe now we won't have to endure the eye sex and ever-mounting UST between you both."

The others began to laugh and Dean smiled embarrassedly with them as Cas glanced around the pack.

He had half expected them to annoyed or at least disapproving of the relationship considering where he had come from and what his last name was. He had expected awkward pauses and frowns of disappointment from the rest of the pack considering Cas hadn't only decided to pursue an alpha within the pack when he already had a child, but the lead alpha of the pack. Yet, if anything, everyone seemed... happy for them. It was uplifting.

He felt himself beginning to relax as he scanned their audience, each wolf smiling or teasing them both, before he paused at Gadreel's expression.

The alpha looked almost defeated with his tail curled between his legs and his gaze pointing downwards. He was hidden at the back of the pack, but it was clear he wasn't as happy as the rest of them.

Cas tilted his head in confusion. Why would Gadreel look so forlorn? Surely he couldn't be unhappy in Dean's choice of lover? The grey alpha had always been so kind and protective of him; maybe he was just a little defensive of him. Afterall, if Gadreel found a lover, Castiel would be keeping an eye on them to make sure his friend was happy and being treated well.

Yes, that must be it. Gadreel must just be a little protective over him.

...Right?

He focused on the bright smiles and playful teasing of the rest of the pack. Maybe he could ask Gadreel about it later.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Gadreel...
Part II

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Millennia ago, all omegas had been female and all alphas had been male, with betas consisting of both genders.

Some people believed that male alphas had fought and killed one another so viciously and quickly over female omegas, that the population of alphas had dwindled too low, and female alphas had been created to increase numbers and decrease alpha aggression. However, as a result, there hadn't been enough omegas to satisfy all the alphas, so stronger, male omegas had evolved and these new omegas would less likely be torn apart by fighting alphas.

Other people believed that Mother Nature had seen there wasn't enough reproduction occurring to keep shifters from becoming extinct, and so she had created male omegas in the hopes that both male and female betas could mate and reproduce with them, rather than just male betas reproducing with female omegas. Female alphas were thought to have been created for similar reasons.

The way evolution worked was that the primary gender was assigned to the embryo first. This determined whether the child would be male or female, and would therefore tell the body which sexual reproductive organs it needed to create and what the structure and aesthetics of the child’s body would be (i.e. organ position, muscle build, lip shape and other features).

Next, the embryo would assign itself a secondary gender. This determined whether the child would be alpha, beta or omega, and thus would make adjustments to hormones and reproductive organs. All omegas would develop a uterus and all alphas would develop a knot, with betas undergoing little change to what their primary gender had assigned them with.

Because of this, male omegas had the ability to bear children as well as having a penis (even if they didn't possess a knot), and female alphas had a knot as well as possessing the ability to bear children (although they were more likely to miscarry).

It was all very complicated.

Sam didn't particularly care how it all worked as long as his mate was safe and sleeping soundly beside him.

He watched the peaceful rise and fall of Ruby's chest and he curled around her a little more securely.

He knew Ruby was an alpha and she was perfectly capable of handling herself against any danger that might come her way, but after what happened to Jess, Sam found himself wanting to be close to his mate, to know that he would have a chance to protect her if anything went wrong.

He was aware Ruby didn't enjoy being coddled by him, especially considering he was the omega, but Sam couldn't help it; he needed to keep her safe.

He carefully wrapped a paw around her and tugged her closer. It was still early in the morning and the pack probably wouldn't be up for quite a while yet, but Sam often woke earlier than the others due to the nightmares consisting of Jessica screaming in agony as she burned in tall flames. He was used to them now.

He scented at Ruby's neck to reassure himself. She was alive and safe in his hold.
He gently nuzzled her head, smiling at her soft, mahogany fur. She smelled like charcoal and smouldering timber and it reminded Sam of a warm Summer's day when he and Dean had crept into the city as teenagers, and had stumbled across a vivacious street party filled with BBQ's, music and people having a good time.

It was one of the happier memories from his younger years.

He tucked Ruby into his side and closed his eyes, mind finally content at knowing his mate wasn't about to suffer the same fate as his previous love.

Ruby began to stir and Sam subtly loosened his grip. If Ruby thought he was being overprotective of her again, it would probably result in another argument.

The alpha yawned sleepily and stretched, leaning into Sam slightly. She blinked and slowly focused on her mate.

"Sleep well?" She asked with a small smile and Sam nodded, licking her muzzle tenderly. He didn't mention the nightmares anymore as Ruby was well aware he had them and he had a feeling she was getting a little tired of hearing them.

It was okay; Jess had been gone for years and Ruby was his mate now, so it was probably better he didn't mention his previous lover anymore as he had to move on from her at some point. No point in bringing up memories of an old flame Ruby hadn't even met.

The alpha smiled at him and nuzzled his jaw affectionately before rolling to her feet.

"What time is it?" She asked and Sam glanced inside his bag to the small, elegant watch that had belonged to his mother.

"Six-fifteen," he replied and Ruby grimaced.

"Pack won't be up for at least another half hour," she mused, before a suggestive smirk slid over her features. She posed seductively.

"How about we start the morning with a little bit of fun?"

Sam winced internally. He really didn't want to engage in sexual activities this morning; not after the vivid nightmares he'd startled awake from, but at the same time, he didn't want to disappoint his lover.

He wished they could just cuddle for a bit, but Ruby wasn't an overly-affectionate person and he didn't want to bore her with what she called 'omega neediness'.

He nodded, forcing a sultry smile. "whatever you want, sweetheart."

Ruby's tail began to swish as she stalked over to him.

"Turn around and present to your alpha," she purred and Sam did as asked, biting back a sigh. She obviously had the intention of knotting him this morning. It wasn't as if it was unexpected; Ruby was an alpha afterall, but sometimes she let Sam take her instead and he had half hoped he would be allowed to set the pace after such disturbing nightmares.

Still, it wasn't his place to complain and he needed to please his alpha and keep her satisfied. It was his job.
He startled when Ruby mounted him, roughly tugging him further underneath her as she settled herself. She nipped at his neck and jaw possessively, nuzzling his shoulder apologetically when she bit down a little too hard, causing Sam to wince.

After a few moments, she slid into him, sperm protector to stop them from conceiving in place, and Sam tried not to gasp at the harshness of her thrusts. He knew his lover liked it rough, but sometimes the ache her movements caused still surprised him.

After a few minutes, Ruby paused and Sam closed his eyes with a quiet sigh. He knew what the problem was.

"You're not wet," she accused with a frown and Sam glanced over his shoulder apologetically. It was true; he wasn't aroused and therefore wasn't producing any slick.

"I'm sorry, I guess I'm just not into it this morning."

Ruby scowled and jumped off him.

"You're hardly ever into it in a morning," she grumbled and Sam shook himself off as he stood, removing the sperm protector inside him.

"I'm sorry," he said again. "I guess my body doesn't respond properly in a morning."

Ruby rolled her eyes. "You've been having nightmares again."

Sam averted his gaze. So she had figured it out.

"I can't help it. I want to please you, really, I do, but I just can't seem to-"

"Get it up?" She huffed, cutting him off. She shook her head. "Look, Sam, I understand she was your mate and you loved her dearly, but that was six years ago. You've got to move on."

Her gaze softened when Sam shrunk in on himself ashamedly and she padded over to him, licking his muzzle lightly,

"I'm here now and I'm not going anywhere. I'm not going to leave you because you're not the perfect lover. I'm not going to leave you because you're not considered a 'traditional omega'. You know I'm not like other alphas, Sam; you know I would never treat you like they would."

Sam bowed his head gratefully. He knew how lucky he was to have Ruby. Most alphas would turn their nose up in disgust at an omega like Sam. He was too big, too strong, too clumsy to be an ideal omega. What alpha or beta would want an omega who was larger or possibly stronger than them? What alpha or beta would want an omega who helped lead a pack; who was technically higher in the hierarchy than they were?

He was certainly fortunate to hold Ruby's interest.

The alpha smiled sympathetically at him and nodded to outside of their cosy, hollowed out bush.

"Take a walk, Sam. Clear your head and when you're feeling better, we can try again. Okay?"

Sam nodded wordlessly. He would rather stay here and snuggle with his mate for a while, but it wasn't fair of him to keep Ruby trapped in here when she was so restless.

"Thanks," he whispered, licking her cheek before slinking into the open.
He flicked his gaze up to the clear sky and bright sun and decided to wander away from the camp. It's not like anyone was up anyway.

*

Sam glanced around the frosty meadow. A wide river gushed nearby and a few game birds took to the sky when they saw his approach. The field was empty and quiet; the perfect place to calm his thoughts. He was a fair distance from the camp and judging by the position of the sun and the angle of the shadows from the tall oak trees behind him, it must have been around seven-thirty.

He settled on the cool ground and took a deep breath, watching a fluffy white cloud drift by.

"What's a pretty omega like you doing all alone in a dump like this?"

Sam sprang to his feet, immediately in defence mode as he whirled around to face the source of the flirty voice.

A few yards away stood a rather small, older, golden wolf, one ear bent over slightly and cocky smirk lighting his face. His eyes were amber and burning with interest.

Sam sniffed the air warily and wrinkled his nose. The wolf had coated himself in cologne, masking the scent of his pack, if he even had one, but the garish perfume wasn't able to hide the other strong scents emanating from the strange wolf.

"You smell like an omega orgy," growled Sam, eyes narrowed. He couldn't even tell what this wolf's secondary gender was because the smell of heat and slick was so strong.

The golden wolf grinned predatorily and Sam's hackles raised in warning.

"Wanna get in on the fun?" The wolf smirked and Sam pulled a face in disgust.

"Why any omega would want to have sex with you is beyond me."

The wolf chuckled and dropped his ears mockingly.

"I'm wounded. I thought I was rather charming."

"What are you? Ten years my senior? Eleven? Try going for someone your own age."

The other wolf raised an amused eyebrow. "Oh, I've had them all. Well... all the legal ones anyway. They seem to find me quite irresistible." He waggled his eyebrows ridiculously and Sam rolled his eyes. "How old are you, kid? Maybe I can add another age to the list."

The omega shot the intruder a glare. "Not likely. And I'm twenty-nine, not that it's any of your business."

The other wolf nodded thoughtfully. "Fifteen years younger," he stated and Sam raised an eyebrow. The wolf looked good for his age.

"Good for you," Sam huffed, clearing the thought from his mind. "You can leave now."

The other wolf pointedly sat down. "But we're just getting to know one another," he teased, flicking
his tail suggestively. He bowed extravagantly. "They call me Gabriel."

"Well Gabriel, as irresistible as you seem to think you are, I'm not really interested in partaking in any orgies. Especially not with jerks like you. So turn around and walk away," growled Sam.

Gabriel rumbled playfully. "Oh I do love my omegas with a bit of fight in them."

Sam bristled, muscles tensing. That was alpha talk. Worse than that, that was forceful alpha talk. Gabriel probably wasn't going to take 'no' for an answer.

It's a good thing he was about three quarters of Sam's size.

"You're an alpha," stated Sam, tone threatening and Gabriel grinned seductively.

"Oh, I'm all alpha, babe. Want me to roll over and prove it?" Gabriel paused contemplatively. "Better yet do you want to turn around and let me prove it?"

Sam snarled, teeth bared and scent radiating fury. Gabriel raised an eyebrow, unfazed.

"I'll take that as a 'no'."

"Go home, alpha. You'll be sorry if you don't."

Gabriel grinned cheekily.

"Can I take you with me?"

Sam's growls grew louder but when it was clear Gabriel was neither retreating nor advancing on him, Sam huffed irritably and turned on his heel, stalking back the way he came.

He frowned when Gabriel began to follow him, his footfalls light and cheery.

"So, kid. You got a name?"

Sam rolled his eyes. This alpha just didn't give up.

"Yes."

Sam sighed and came to a halt, the alpha stopping a couple of feet away.

"Mind giving me your name?"

"Yes."

Another minute of silence.

"Well if you're not going to give me your name, how about I make one up instead? How does 'Muffin' sound?"

Sam whirled around and Gabriel almost ran into his nose. The alpha took a step backwards.

"Leave me alone," hissed Sam before continuing his journey. So much for clearing his head.

"...Maybe I should just call you 'Grumpy'."

Sam sighed and came to a halt, the alpha stopping a couple of feet away.
"What do you want, Gabriel?"

The alpha smirked. "You know exactly what I want." He bluntly looked the omega up and down, biting his lip seductively as he did so.

"Well why don't you ask someone who's not mated and who doesn't think you're a knot-head?" Snapped Sam.

This seemed to catch Gabriel off-guard. "You're mated?"

"Yes," hissed Sam. "And I'm faithful too."

Gabriel nodded, brows furrowed before he tilted his head slightly in confusion.

"Then why are you out here all alone? There are no packs around these parts."

Sam scowled. "What makes you think it's any of your business?"

Gabriel stared at him, unimpressed, all former traces of humour vanished.

"Because I want to know what Sam Winchester is doing so far away from his brother's pack."

Sam ploughed into the alpha, pining him to the floor with a snarl. Gabriel made no move to defend himself, in fact, he was smirking smugly.

"How do you know my name?" Hissed Sam, pushing all of his weight onto the alpha and Gabriel chuckled.

"Sheesh, if I'd have known this was all it took to get you all up close and personal with me, I would've said it earlier."

Sam placed his claws over the alpha's throat.

"How do you know who I am?" He snarled and Gabriel wiggled his eyebrows, coughing when Sam pressed his claws into his neck.

"Your scent's easy to recognise," Gabriel choked. "You're name isn't exactly unknown to packs both in the wild and in civilisation. You're quite famous, y'know."

Sam hesitated and cautiously loosened his hold on the alpha. It wasn't untrue. A lot of people knew and respected the Winchester pack. They also had a lot of enemies, too.

"And which pack are you from?" Asked Sam suspiciously and a dark look flickered behind Gabriel's eyes before it vanished, replaced by mischief.

"Not sure I want to tell you. Mostly for my own safety," winked Gabriel and Sam narrowed his eyes, paw hovering over Gabriel's throat once more. The alpha eyed it warily.

"I don't have one," he huffed. "I... uh... I had a fight with them and I left."

"What's your last name then?" Demanded Sam. Gabriel narrowed his eyes and before Sam got a chance to register what had happened, he had been thrown three feet to the right by the small alpha. Gabriel was far stronger than he looked. Sam scrambled to his paws, taking up a defending stance.

Gabriel glared at him, posture neither defensive nor attacking.
"I'm not looking for a fight," he said. "I rather like all my limbs in the positions they're in."

Sam frowned, still on high alert.

"Then what are you looking for?"

Gabriel paused almost cautiously. "An omega."

Sam turned his nose up in disgust. *Typical knot-head alpha.*

"Good luck with that," he spat before whirling on the spot. He didn't want anything to do with revolting, entitle-complexed alphas who believed omegas were nothing but a hole for them to stick their knots in. He fumed as he skulked away.

This time, Gabriel didn't follow him.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my gosh guys! Over 10000 hits in three weeks? That's insane! You don't know how grateful I am for all the wonderful comments you have taken the time to give me; they are the reason I've stayed so interested in this fic. I hope you've enjoyed this chapter after so many of you begged *actually begged* me to introduce Gabriel and we'll be seeing a lot more of him throughout the rest of this fic!

Stay awesome; You guys are the best!
Dean prowled towards Samandriel, hackles raised and teeth bared threateningly. Samandriel growled from the tree he'd been backed into, body low and ears flattened.

Dean snapped viciously at the pup and Samandriel startled, scrabbling further back against the tree in surprise and Dean smirked. Then, with a loud snarl, he sprinted towards Samandriel, jaws open.

With a battle howl, Samandriel raced towards Dean and leapt at his chest, claws outstretched.

Dean rolled to the ground with a cry, wriggling on his back as Samandriel nipped and pounced at his chest. The little alpha growled again, swiping at Dean's muzzle and Dean howled with pain.

Both their tails were wagging.

Just as it looked like Samandriel was winning their game, Dean wrapped his paws around the pup and trapped him to his chest, making Samandriel laugh and try to squirm out of the older wolf's grip.

"No fair," giggled Samandriel as Dean tightened his hold whilst pretending to whine in pain and a few feet away, Cas shook his head in amusement.

"Dad," shouted Samandriel. "Help me!"

Cas quirked an eyebrow. "I'm not getting involved. You got yourself into this mess; you can get yourself out."

Samandriel pulled his tongue out and just as he turned back to Dean, the older alpha licked his face messily.

Samandriel made a gagging sound and struggled harder when Dean began to laugh.

When the pup realised he wasn't going to escape any time soon, he flopped onto Dean's chest with a grunt of defeat, and Dean ruffled the fur on his head fondly before opening his paws, tongue stuck out cheekily.

Samandriel pulled a face back and slid off the other alpha as Dean rolled over.

Just as he was climbing to his paws, Samandriel ran towards him and tugged on his ear playfully before leaping away. Dean chuckled and chased after the pup, gently picking him up in his mouth when he got close enough.

Samandriel giggled, little tail motoring from side to side as Dean deposited him in front of Castiel's paws.

"I believe this belongs to you," he said and Castiel sniffed him curiously before wrinkling his nose.

"I don't think so. This one smells like it's gone off. Find me a different one."

"Hey!" Protested Samandriel as he charged into his father's leg. "I've not gone off!"

"Well then, you must need a bath," whispered Castiel and Samandriel's eyes widened in realisation.
Just before he got a chance to escape, Dean grabbed him.

"Traitor," huffed the pup and Dean chuckled as the trio made their way (or in Samandriel's case was forced) towards the stream running through the centre of camp.

The second Castiel had finished washing his son, Ben bounded over with an excited smile.

"Come chase the squirrels with me?"

Samandriel immediately perked up and scrambled out of the stream, speeding after his friend, previous company forgotten.

"I feel used," pouted Dean as he watched the pups race off and Castiel snorted.

"You get used to it."

Dean watched his lover duck his head under the water in an attempt to clean some of the dirt from it, and when he resurfaced and began to shake himself off, Dean splashed more water over his face.

Cas cracked an eye open to glare at him and Dean snickered.

He was not prepared for the wave of water aimed at his face from a sweep of Castiel's tail.

The omega smirked at his wide eyes. This was war.

Dean leapt at his lover, trying to push his whole body under the water, but Cas was strong and kept managing to evade his attempts, almost succeeding in throwing Dean into the water instead.

Eventually, their wrestling match evolved into Dean just holding his lover close, nuzzling his head as Cas leaned into him contentedly. The alpha placed a protective paw over his omega's stomach.

"He really likes you," murmured Cas, closing his eyes. "I've never seen him so happy."

Dean smiled and licked Cas' ear affectionately.

"I like him," he replied before shifting to nuzzle his lover's muzzle. "I've never been so happy."

Cas' heart did something funny and he tucked his head under Dean's chin.

"I can't believe how lucky I am to have you. This doesn't feel real."

Dean quirked a smile as he tugged his lover closer.

"Well if this is all a dream, don't wake me up."

They nestled against one another for a few moments before Cas remembered the thing he'd been meaning to ask for the past few days. He pulled away slightly, gaze softening at Dean's protesting frown.

"On that hill... what made you think I was courting Gadreel?"

Dean raised an eyebrow at the non-sequitur and Cas shrugged.

"Just curious."

The alpha nodded. "Well, you always seemed very affectionate with one another and he seems to open up a lot more around you than with anyone else in the pack. You tend to go on long walks
together and you look after each other when it's cold or food's scarce. Not to mention we've all seen you sleeping together."

Dean looked away guiltily. "I just didn't realise you weren't actually, y'know, sleeping together."

Castiel frowned and mulled this over. All he'd done was offer Gadreel the friendship the alpha had offered him; there was nothing more there. He could vaguely understand why Dean might have thought they were courting, but all those things were what friends would do for each other. There were no hidden motives involved.

"I guess it didn't help that Gadreel looks at you the way he sometimes does," mused Dean and Cas paused.

"Looks at me?"

Dean nodded. "Y'know, that sort of fond, longing gaze where you just think how happy that person makes you."

Cas smiled lovingly and Dean blinked when he realised maybe he'd said that with a little too much emotion.

"Shut up," he huffed and Cas rubbed his cheek against his lover's. Castiel had often caught the alpha looking at him in the way he'd described; more now that they'd got together. He wasn't exactly immune to looking at Dean in that way either.

But he'd never noticed Gadreel looking at him like that. Yet Dean obviously had.

That couldn't be right though, because Gadreel was his friend. The alpha wasn't interested in anything more. He couldn't be.

...Could he?

Dean frowned as Castiel stilled.

"Cas?"

The omega glanced up at Dean worriedly. "Do you think I should go talk to him? See how he really feels? I wouldn't like to have hurt him."

Dean stiffened warily and Cas quickly nuzzled his throat.

"I promise there's nothing going on between us. But he is my friend, Dean. If what you're saying is true, I don't want him to think I was purposefully trying to hurt him. I wouldn't like to lose his friendship because I was too oblivious to notice his feelings."

Dean didn't look too happy, but he nodded slowly.

"I don't want to be the one to break up your friendship. If you think he does feel something for you, maybe you should talk it over with him."

Cas licked the alpha's muzzle.

"You know I will always choose you, right?" He whispered. "You're my alpha. No one else."

Dean seemed to relax at that and he smiled as he nosed at his lover.
"I'm just a little possessive. I do trust you, Cas. I wouldn't be with you if I didn't."

The omega chuckled and snuggled into Dean. "I've noticed," he murmured.

They settled against one another again, scenting and nuzzling at each other affectionately.

"I'll talk to Gadreel later," decided Cas. Right now though, he just wanted to be close to his loving alpha.

* * *

"I don't know what your brother sees in that pathetic city mutt," grumbled Ruby as she and Sam strolled through the forest together.

Sam frowned. He didn't understand why his mate hated Castiel so much, but he was frankly quite fond of the black and tan omega. Sam had never seen his brother so happy in years and anyone who could make Dean smile that wide was perfectly fine in Sam's books. Dean and Castiel were good for one another.

"They were broadcasting their affections in front of the entire camp today in that stream. You'd think Dean would want to keep the relationship a little more private considering who he's courting, especially when that omega already has a pup." Ruby shook her head in distaste. "What on Earth possessed your brother to court a Novak with an alpha son? He's not even planning on getting rid of the little mongrel."

Sam came to a halt and scowled at his mate.

"They're good for one another. Cas makes Dean happy and my brother has a soft spot for pups. What's wrong with my brother having a family?"

Ruby huffed. "Because he's the lead alpha of a wild pack. He's not supposed to settle down with a ready-made family; he's supposed to make his own pups. What's he going to do; pass leadership onto Samandriel? A city alpha who doesn't even share Dean's blood? You can't call the Winchester pack 'Winchester' if its leader is a Novak."

Sam pulled a face. "If all this works out between them and they decide to get mated, Cas and Samandriel will be Winchesters. They've already got the pack scent."

Ruby wrinkled her nose. "It's just not done. That mongrel and his offspring should've stayed in the city, where they belong."

Sam growled softly, patience wearing thin. "And let Samandriel be murdered by his uncles? Let Cas be maimed and punished by his brothers? Are you saying you'd prefer them to go through that than find happiness and safety here?"

Ruby's eyes narrowed and she rumbled pointedly, making Sam back down slightly. He hadn't meant to growl at his lover, but he was getting irritated with her hostility towards Castiel. However, he didn't want to threaten an angry alpha; it wouldn't end well for him.

"I'm saying they shouldn't expect us to provide and care for them when the Novaks have made our lives so difficult in the past. Castiel shouldn't just be able to waltz in here and mate our pack leader
and have his pup taken care of by your hard-working brother when he can't even hunt like he's supposed to."

Sam's mouth drew into a thin line. "Castiel is family," he said simply before continuing their walk.

He was startled by Ruby leaping in front of him and snapping at him warningly.

"No he's not! He's a city mutt from a deceitful, power-hungry family, and he's taking advantage of this pack!"

Sam scowled. "If you don't like it, take it up with Dean," he huffed and Ruby glared at him. The whole pack knew Dean and Ruby didn't get along; so how would he react if Ruby suddenly started sprouting insults about his lover?

"I knew you didn't really have any power within this pack," snorted Ruby, turning away from Sam. "You like to think you do and you stroll around acting all high-and-mighty as though you're better than the rest of us, but your brother overrules everything you say. Maybe it's for the best; after all, how could an omega ever hope to run a pack?"

Sam bristled as Ruby flicked her tail dismissively at him.

"I do run this pack," hissed Sam. "With my brother. We're a team and you would do well to remember that."

Ruby froze before whirling on Sam, gaze narrowed and hackles beginning to raise.

"Did you just threaten me, omega?" She spat and Sam gulped subtly. He didn't know why that part had slipped out but it had and Ruby wasn't too pleased about it. Still, he stood his ground.

"Castiel is my friend. He is kind and brave and he has helped us out on more than one occasion. I won't have you speak ill about him."

Sam yelped and stumbled backwards as Ruby swiped at his nose. She had been careful not to let her claws make contact with his skin, but the action had surprised Sam all the same. He could feel the numbness of where her paw had slammed into his muzzle.

"You are not an alpha, Sam. You don't control what I say or do. You don't intimidate me. You're not your father, so stop trying to be," snapped Ruby and Sam winced.

Ruby had never met John Winchester but she had heard stories of him; of how merciless and cruel he could be, of how he struck fear into not only his enemies' hearts, but also his own pack's. Sam had always told her how much he'd hated what his father had become after Mary Winchester's death, and how he had never wanted to grow up to be like him.

Ruby saying he was trying to act like his father cut Sam deep.

Sam bowed his head in a mixture of apology and shame and Ruby made a noise of disgust.

"Pathetic omega," she said before stalking away, leaving Sam alone to regret the whole conversation. Why had he been so snide with Ruby? She was right; he did act as though he was better than her and he had no rights to. Now they were arguing again because of his disgraceful attitude. He deserved that hit to the muzzle.

No point in sulking and feeling sorry for himself. He shook his head, disgusted at himself before starting to walk. He would let Ruby cool off before he apologised to her, otherwise it would just
result in another fight.

He didn't take notice of where he was walking and after half an hour, he found himself back in the meadow he'd met Gabriel in three days ago.

Sam hadn't told anyone about the golden wolf. He hadn't really had a need to. Gabriel had no idea where the pack was situated and although he was incredibly annoying and prejudiced, he actually didn't seem that hostile. He wasn't part of another pack (or so he'd led Sam to believe) and Sam couldn't see anyone from the Winchester pack wanting to hook up with the roving alpha. He'd have probably moved on in search of new grounds by now anyway.

The omega wandered over to the river for a drink as he replayed his and Ruby's earlier conversation through his head. Why did he always have to be right? Why did he always have to be so prideful?

"Do my eyes deceive me or is that an angel I see before me?"

Sam whipped his head around to find Gabriel smirking at him a few metres away, tail swishing lazily as his eyes sparkled with mischief.

Sam glared at him, ignoring the angel comment.

"Go away."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "Who urinated in your dog bowl?"

Sam tensed. Had Gabriel just called him a 'dog'?

"Woah, easy. It's just an expression, kiddo." He trotted over to Sam and the omega prepared himself for a fight. Was the alpha going to force himself on him today? He'd certainly implied something of the sort last time they'd met.

Surprisingly, Gabriel lowered his head into the river to lap at the gentle waves before stretching out on the ground and crossing his front paws over one another.

"So, what've you been up to?" Grinned Gabriel and Sam eyed him suspiciously.

"Nothing that concerns you."

Gabriel sighed and rolled over onto his back, scratching at his chest idly.

"Y'know, one-way conversations aren't all that fun."

Sam gaped at him. Had the alpha really just bared his underbelly for Sam? Didn't he realise how dangerous that was? Sam could easily attack him now and the alpha would have very little chance of being able to defend himself. Alphas just didn't do stuff like that. It was a silly mistake that could get Gabriel killed.

"You realise I could gut you now and you wouldn't be able to stop me, right?" Asked Sam, glancing at Gabriel's exposed stomach pointedly.

Gabriel blinked in confusion before looking to his body and making a noise of realisation. He shrugged and remained where he was.

"If you were going to slice me open, you would've done so by now." Gabriel paused before a grin wormed its way across his face. "I think you like me," he winked.
Sam snorted. "You're the most irritating alpha I've ever met."

Gabriel chuckled. "That's the strangest *I love you* I've ever heard."

Sam rolled his eyes and turned away as Gabriel rolled onto his chest. The alpha tilted his head slightly.

"You reek of unhappiness and self-loathing."

Sam stiffened. "Someone urinated in my dog bowl," he huffed before stalking away.

Gabriel quickly caught up to him, being a little braver this time as he trotted merely two feet away.

"Who?"

"None of your business."

Gabriel pouted. "C'mon, Sam. Humour me. I'm bored."

Sam shot him a dirty glance. "Why don't you partake in another omega orgy?"

He hadn't failed to notice Gabriel no longer radiated slick and heat, although he hadn't removed that cologne that was masking whatever scent he was trying to hide. Sam wasn't stupid; nobody wore that much cologne unless they wanted to hide something.

Gabriel shot him a wolfish grin. "You offering?"

Sam snorted in repulsion. "Leave me alone."

The alpha slowed a little. "Don't you want to talk about the thing that's obviously upsetting you?"

Sam stopped to glance at him. "Not with you."

Gabriel sat down. "But there is something bothering you then?"

Sam clenched his teeth. "Yes," he grated out. Why was Gabriel so interested?

The alpha nodded. "I assume you're going to discuss it with your mate?"

Sam hadn't thought he'd made any outwards indications of discomfort at that, but obviously he had because Gabriel raised both eyebrows.

"It's your mate who's the problem," he stated and Sam frowned before turning around and electing to ignore the alpha.

"Alpha or beta?" Asked Gabriel, continuing to trail Sam and the omega closed his eyes in annoyance.

"Alpha," he snapped. Maybe that would deter Gabriel from pestering him. Surely the golden wolf wouldn't want to face an alpha intent on protecting her mate?

"That would explain why you're out here on your own then. You have a fight?" Asked Gabriel curiously and Sam turned to him exasperately.

"Why do you care?"

Gabriel shrugged. "Curiosity. Boredom. You're kinda cute and I want to see if I can get you to
Sam snapped his mouth shut, skin beneath his fur flushing pink. That had actually been rather sweet.

"Oh," said Sam, not entirely sure how to respond to that.

Gabriel smirked. "Told you I can be charming."

Sam rolled his eyes with a snort of amusement. "Yes well, once again: I'm mated."

Gabriel cocked an ear. "Happily?"

Sam hesitated, just a fraction, and Gabriel's expression softened into one of sympathy.

"Yes," said Sam with a disapproving frown. He didn't want Gabriel's pity; especially when he enjoyed his relationship with Ruby. He was happy. Really.

"Yes, I'm happily mated," insisted Sam and Gabriel nodded.

"Okay," he said simply. "Want to talk about what brought you out here?"

"No," said Sam. He didn't want to discuss his relationship issues with Gabriel.

Not that he had any relationship issues. Couples fought all the time. It was normal. He was happy.

"I used to be mated to a beta called Kali," hummed Gabriel. "For ten years I thought I was happy. That was until I walked in on her being knotted by another alpha in my very own territory. Apparently they'd been going at it for seven years behind my back."

Sam couldn't help but grimace. Ouch. That must have hurt. They were real relationship issues. Cheating was far worse than a little slap on the nose.

"I'm sorry to hear that," offered Sam and Gabriel flicked his tail dismissively.

"It was a long time ago. I probably should've seen it coming but I decided to ignore the other alpha's scent and the fact that she never seemed interested when I had my ruts. I forced myself to believe I was happy and I wasted ten years of my life because of it."

Sam averted his gaze. He knew what Gabriel was trying to do but the alpha didn't understand. Sam wasn't wasting his life because he truly was content with his relationship. There was no cheating going on and Ruby loved him as much as he loved her. They were happy.

There was something odd about Gabriel's story though. Something... missing... Sam just couldn't put his paw on it.

"Is that why you never settled down?" He asked and Gabriel grinned.

"Making up for lost time."

Sam snorted and rolled his eyes. And there was the alpha response he'd been waiting for.

"Good talk," he muttered before continuing his journey back to the camp and there was a chuckle behind him.

"Any time, kiddo."
Sam shook his head and walked on alone. He'd apologise to Ruby when he next saw her. He had been out of line addressing her the way he did and she deserved an apology.

Then they could go back to being happy.

Chapter End Notes

Fun game: Take a shot every time Sam says he's happy...
Castiel yawned, smiling at the blanket of warmth curled around him. He glanced down to Samandriel, safely nestled between his paws, and the omega leaned into the warm weight behind him. Dean made a sound of approval in his sleep and tightened his grip around Cas' stomach with the paw that had somehow managed to worm itself around the omega during the night.

The rest of the pack had told Dean and Cas to sleep in the cave from now on instead of building their shelter from a bush or shrub, as they needed the extra room due to there being three of them. That and they had insisted they wanted Dean and Cas as far away from them as possible during the evenings when the two were 'exploring' their newfound relationship.

Last night though, Dean, Castiel and Samandriel had been worn out from a day of hunting, playing and roaming the surrounding forest, and had wanted nothing more than to cuddle together and drift off to sleep.

Cas had never met such an affectionate alpha before. He'd always been told by his teachers that in the wild, omegas raised the children and pleased their mates, betas hunted and kept the camp clean and running smoothly, and the alphas were there to protect the pack and hunt, with little time for the children, and the lead alpha was there to oversee everything.

Wild folk were supposed to follow an antiquated hierarchy with civilised folk seemingly more modernised and in favour of gender equality.

Dean was the antithesis of everything he'd ever been taught.

The lead alpha got stuck into hunts with the rest of his pack and he often helped with general maintenance around the camp, with things like cleaning and tidying. He always had time for every member of his pack and he was never curt or rude with them. He loved to play with the pups, despite being an alpha and he treated them as fairly as the rest of his pack.

And he treated Cas like royalty.

When they were alone together, Dean would whisper such sweet things into his ear; terms of endearment and affection, beautiful promises of protection and care that made Castiel's stomach turn to butterflies and his heart beat so fast, the omega thought it might explode.

The alpha would nuzzle him gently, making sure every inch of his body had been taken care of. When they were in human form, Dean would worship Cas' body as though he was an angel; too awe-inspiring to comprehend. He would kiss and touch and taste every part of Castiel until the omega could hardly breathe from how overwhelming it felt to be taken care of; to be cherished as though he was the most important thing in Dean's world.

In return, Cas would touch and explore Dean's body, kissing him until the alpha had to pull away and gasp for air. He would scent and nuzzle him meaningfully, trying to convey how much Dean meant to him. He offered support to the alpha via gentle caresses and quiet murmurs of affection when Dean's dark thoughts weighed heavy on his mind.

Sometimes, Dean was rough with Castiel, possessive yet protective as he nipped at the omega's throat and knotted him against a tree or the ground, both of them crying out their pleasure. Cas loved
this passionate side of Dean; the side which was driven by alpha instincts yet was controlled enough to ensure he never actually hurt his omega.

None of this was what Castiel had been led to believe about wild folk. He had always been taught that wild alphas were savage beasts who didn't care who they hurt, nor whether their partners were willing. He had grown up thinking wild alphas knotted nearly every omega they met just for fun, and they couldn't care less about whether the omega was crying in pain or fighting to escape.

Castiel wished he could march up to his so-called teachers and let Dean knot him in front of them, just to show them how wrong they were; how stupid they were.

"Mornin', darlin'," hummed Dean softly, licking Cas' ear affectionately. "Sleep well?"

Cas smiled and snuggled further into Dean.

"I always do when you're beside me."

Dean tugged him closer and began to nuzzle his head and Cas relaxed, a contented sigh tumbling from his lips.

"I never dreamed it would be like this," murmured Castiel quietly as Dean curled his tail around him. "I've always been taught such dreadful lies about you and other wild folk that this all feels like some strange fantasy world where everyone is so considerate towards me."

Dean's deep chuckles vibrated through his back pleasantly.

"I always thought civilised folk were cold-hearted, prejudiced snobs who believed they were so much better than us; more intelligent, more controlled." The alpha shook his head with a small smile. "I guess we were both wrong."

Cas smirked. "Oh, I'm not too sure about that last part. I'm rather certain I'm the more intelligent of us both."

Dean growled playfully. "Do you now? Maybe I need to remind you whose pack you're in."

He tugged at Castiel's ear and the omega managed to twist, without jostling his sleeping pup, until he could nip at Dean's neck in teasing reprimand. The two nipped and butted at one another for a few minutes, enjoying the harmless fun.

Then Castiel pressed his head under Dean's chin and the alpha's gaze softened as he began to rub his scent over Cas' head.

The Novak family scent had completely dissipated now, and if it wasn't for Cas' last name, both the omega and his pup would never have been associated as anything other than part of the Winchester pack.

"Mine," whispered Dean as he slung his paw over Cas' stomach again. Then the paw curled around the slumbering Samandriel.

"You're both mine," murmured Dean beside Castiel's ear and the omega released a shaky breath as he pressed his head into Dean's chest. They had only been together for two weeks, yet Cas had never felt more at home. This was his alpha and Cas couldn't be more grateful to this man who had taken such a shine to both him and his pup.

Despite their rocky start and the stark differences in upbringing, Dean still wanted him; wanted them
both. Castiel had never had a loving family outside Gabriel, yet here was this rival pack leader who doted on him, wanted to be his lover and best friend.

"My beautiful omega," whispered Dean as he licked Cas' head gently. "My brave little alpha," he murmured as his paw curled more securely around Samandriel.

"So lucky to have you both," continued Dean as Cas began to scent at his lover's throat, nuzzling and licking him gratefully.

Dean leaned down and rubbed their noses together, smiling when Cas shifted to lick his muzzle.

"So good to us," whispered Cas and Dean practically moulded himself around the omega.

"My perfect family," he mumbled, settling down as Cas relaxed beside him. They lay in silence for a few moments, cheeks brushing, before Dean squeezed his lover lightly.

"Any plans for today?"

"I asked Gadreel yesterday if he would like to accompany me on a walk around the forest this morning," muttered Cas, but there was something off about his tone.

Dean raised an eyebrow. "What did he say?"

Cas hesitated. "...He refused."

Dean lifted his head in surprise and Cas sighed, ears falling slightly.

"He seems to have been avoiding me ever since we revealed our relationship."

Dean frowned. "That... doesn't sound like Gadreel."

Cas pulled a weary face. "I know. It's not that he's going out of his way to ignore me; he talks to me when we're around the camp and outwardly, everything seems fine. But whenever I ask to speak with him alone, he politely declines, saying he has other matters to attend to. He no longer asks me to accompany him anywhere and it almost feels like he's distancing himself from me." The omega glanced at Dean guiltily.

"Dean... I think I've really hurt him."

The alpha frowned sympathetically. "Gadreel's a tough nut, but if you want, I can have a word with him? Make sure there are no hard feelings?"

Castiel shook his head, a troubled expression crossing his face.

"I have a feeling that may make things worse. I don't want you to go on my behalf; I wish to talk to him myself, but I can't if he refuses to let me."

Dean's mouth twitched unhappily.

"Maybe you'll just have to be patient. Let him cool off a little and then you can speak to him. He'll come around eventually; he cares too much for you not to."

Cas quirked a half-hearted smile at that. He hoped Dean's words proved true; Gadreel was one of his closest friends and he didn't want to lose him after all they'd been through.

He would just have to wait.
Sam startled awake from another nightmare, eyes wide and panting heavily as the images of smoke and burnt cream fur slowly receded from his mind. He glanced down to his mate to ensure he hadn't woken her and he nuzzled her head lightly to reassure himself that she was safe.

He pricked up his ears, listening for movement within the camp, but upon hearing only the gentle breeze ruffling the leaves on the trees, Sam glanced inside his bag to his mother's watch.

6:15.

Blowing out a tired sigh, Sam carefully stood, stepping over Ruby as he made his way out of the shelter.

He needed to get some cool air; the heat in their sleeping quarters, coupled with the heat of his mate's body was stifling and he needed to get outside to clear his horror-filled mind.

He began to walk around the camp, taking in the first leaves and buds forming on the trees and smiling at a few birds that flitted from branch to branch. He wiggled his toes at the feeling of newly formed grass and he let his paws take him wherever they wanted to.

Before he knew it, he was heading towards the meadow again.

It took him around an hour to get there and he wasn't really sure why he kept coming back; maybe he just enjoyed the change in scenery? The open field made a change to all the thick clumps of trees in the forest, and the sounds of the river were peaceful and relaxing.

He sat on the river bank and dangled a paw in the water, idly swirling a claw in the gentle waves.

"I stumbled across a lily in the woods today and I thought it was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. Then I saw you."

Sam flushed pink and slowly turned to find Gabriel watching him a little further down the river, tail swaying and one paw flopped into the water. He smiled at Sam but made no effort to move.

"Hey, kiddo. How've you been?"

Sam paused. "Okay," he finally said. "I'm good. How are you?"

Gabriel still wore a lazy smile. "A little lonely but I can't complain."

Sam nodded and turned back to the water. He barely glanced up when Gabriel slowly wandered over, coming to rest a couple of feet away, paw still flopped over the edge of the bank.

"How's the search for an omega going?" Sam asked quietly and Gabriel hesitated as a troubled expression crossed his face.

"...Not well," he admitted eventually and Sam frowned at the odd tone. Gabriel obviously wasn't telling him something, but Sam wasn't inclined to ask about the alpha's personal life or his sexual desires for that matter.

"How's the mate?" Asked Gabriel and Sam watched the water flow around his paw.
"We worked it out. She apologised as did I. We're fine."

Gabriel made a sound of acknowledgement and the pair continued to watch the river for a couple of minutes.

"Then why are you out here alone again?" Asked Gabriel.

Sam paused. "I'm not really sure," he confessed. "I guess I just like it out here."

"You sure it's not the company you enjoy?" Teased Gabriel and Sam snorted.

"Hardly." He glanced at the alpha. "I thought you would've moved on by now. Like you said, there aren't any packs around these parts; you're going to struggle finding available omegas around here."

Gabriel pulled a strange face that Sam couldn't quite decipher.

"I've picked up a scent," was all he said and Sam raised an eyebrow.

"Oh. Well... Good luck."

Gabriel cocked a half-hearted grin and Sam began to wonder if he was missing something. At first, Gabriel had seemed cocky and a stereotypical alpha who believed all other genders were his to use as he pleased. He obviously partook in sexual acts involving omegas (even if the smells had vanished from his coat), but between the heavy scent of cologne and the amiable way he chatted to Sam (despite their conversations being littered with innuendos), the omega began to wonder if Gabriel wasn't the alpha he'd assumed him to be.

Despite the jokes, he genuinely seemed interested in Sam's happiness.

"Where do you come from, Gabriel?" Sam asked curiously and the alpha eyed him in amusement.

"Thought you didn't care?"

Sam shrugged. "I don't. But like you said, one-way conversations are boring. This is me humouring you."

Gabriel smiled and rolled onto his side, exposing part of his stomach again and Sam still couldn't quite get used to how easily the alpha did that. He clearly trusted Sam not to hurt him, which was a stupid move considering they'd only met up three times, yet Gabriel didn't seem to care.

"I see," the alpha smirked, his bent ear only adding to the mischief shown in his eyes.

"So where are you from?" Insisted Sam and Gabriel cocked his head thoughtfully.

"A long, long way off from here."

"Where though? Which forest?"

"Near Apalachicola," hummed the alpha and Sam paused. Near? What other forests were near Apalachicola forest? It was surrounded by urban areas, wasn't it?

"What about you, kid? Where were you born?" Grinned Gabriel and Sam couldn't help but chuckle.

"In a dirty motel somewhere in Kansas."

Gabriel blinked in surprise. "Wait, I thought you were one of the wild folk?"
Sam quirked a smile. "I am, but my mom needed painkillers and because she was so heavily pregnant, she wanted to stay by my dad's side at all times to scent him, so she insisted she go with him when he tried to go to the city. They bought a room in a motel and on the last night of their two-night stay, she gave birth to me in the bath tub."

Gabriel cackled and Sam found himself grinning at the joyous sound. Gabriel had a contagious laugh.

"Does your brother have a similar story by any chance?"

Sam's smile grew wider.

"He was born in the back of a Chevy Impala."

Gabriel snorted. "I don't want to know."

"He was probably conceived there too."

"Sam!"

Sam chuckled at Gabriel's indignant shout and suddenly the alpha's gaze softened.

"You should smile more often. Suits you."

Sam blinked and averted his gaze shyly. He wasn't used to such sweet compliments, yet they seemed to roll naturally off Gabriel's tongue. It was rather endearing and made Sam rethink his original assumption that Gabriel was the stereotypical, knot-head alpha.

Gabriel grinned knowingly at him and Sam offered him a small smile in return.

Then the omega frowned as he scented the air. Gabriel was fairly close to him and the musky cologne was still masking the faint scent of his previous pack, but there was another smell underneath the perfume, too strong to be hidden.

It smelled like chocolate and hazelnuts.

Sam wrinkled his nose in confusion. That couldn't be Gabriel's natural scent, could it? He was an alpha. Alphas were meant to be musky, woody or smoky, not sweet. Omegas had sweet scents.

Sam subtly tried to shuffle closer to the alpha to check if what he was smelling was correct. His wriggling didn't go unnoticed by Gabriel and the alpha cocked an eyebrow.

"Are you coming on to me?" He teased and Sam froze, ears flattened with embarrassment as he shook his head.

"Sorry, it's just... your scent is..." He trailed off, unwilling to offend the alpha, but Gabriel tilted his head in encouragement.

"My scent is?"

Sam leaned towards him slightly, not too close, but close enough for him to get a good whiff of the alpha's natural scent.

"You smell like chocolate," frowned Sam and Gabriel huffed out a laugh.

"It's a good thing I like sweet things then," he said before glancing pointedly at Sam. "Probably why
I like you," he winked and the omega quirked a small smile.

Gabriel's cheesy flirting was actually kind of cute. Maybe this alpha wasn't so bad; he certainly hadn't made any move to force himself on Sam despite his earlier innuendos.

"But alphas never have sweet scents," stated Sam, puzzled, and Gabriel shrugged as he turned back to the water.

"Guess I'm special then."

Sam wanted to ask more, but he was frightened of irritating the strange alpha. He knew not all alphas were as tolerant with omegas as those in the Winchester pack were.

"...Not that it's unpleasant," mused Sam after a few moments and from the corner of his eye, he caught Gabriel quirking a grin.

"I'm flattered," he hummed and Sam turned his attention back to the river.

They lay in silence for a few minutes and Sam was surprised at how relaxed he felt in Gabriel's company. The alpha just radiated an easy-going attitude and it infected everything around him. Considering he didn't even know Gabriel's last name, this was quite a shock to Sam.

Yet he found himself enjoying the lazy morning. In fact, whilst he had been chatting to the golden wolf, he had forgotten about his horrifying nightmares and the whole reason he'd needed to clear his mind in the first place.

Gabriel's scent was rather nice. It reminded Sam of when he and Dean had had their first taste of chocolate as children when Bobby had come back from a trip to the city. The older wolf had brought back a little treat for the pups he might as well have called his own, and Sam and Dean had been ecstatic to try the sugar-filled bars.

"What is your last name, anyway?" Asked Sam and Gabriel eyed him amusedly.

"Now isn't that just the million dollar question?"

Sam sat up, intrigued now Gabriel was being so evasive.

"You're trying to hide something," he pointed out and Gabriel lazily stretched and sat up as well.

"Correct," he smirked and Sam blinked. He hadn't expected the alpha to agree with him.

"It's just a name," shrugged Sam. "It's not going to change anything."

Gabriel grinned. "Thought you didn't like me?"

Sam snapped his mouth shut before rolling his eyes.

"Shut up."

Gabriel wagged his tail. "Told you I was irresistible."

Sam snorted. "Whatever helps you to sleep at night."

"Admit it. You like my charming self."

"You do provide some aspects of entertainment to my otherwise dull mornings."
Gabriel chuckled. "And here I thought you didn't have a sense of humour. You just keep getting more perfect every time I meet you."

Sam tried not to show how humbled he was by the alpha's easy compliment. He was mated! He wasn't supposed to be flirting with other alphas.

...Although, technically it was Gabriel who was flirting with him, not the other way around.

"Maybe I haven't laughed before because you're not all that funny," the omega said instead and Gabriel took on a look of mock hurt and indignation.

"I'm wounded, kiddo. I was under the impression that you loved my jokes and quick wit."

Sam cracked a smile and Gabriel grinned.

"Ha! See? Told you I was hilarious."

"Hilarious-looking, maybe," teased Sam and Gabriel stuck his tongue out, his slightly floppy ear making the action seem even more childish.

"You know, you can go off a person quite quickly," pouted Gabriel and Sam rolled his eyes.

"Good, maybe you'll stop asking me to copulate with you."

Gabriel seemed to contemplate this for a moment before shaking his head.

"Not likely."

Sam huffed out a laugh. "I'm mated," he reminded slowly and Gabriel pulled a face as the omega stood up.

"I should get going. My pack will start to worry if I'm not back soon."

Gabriel made shooing motions with his paw.

"Then what are you still doing here? I don't want your big brother on my tail. Go on, get lost."

Sam snorted and began trotting towards the forest. He paused though, just before he left the meadow completely.

"...It was nice talking to you again," he offered sheepishly and Gabriel shot him a brilliant grin.

"You too, kid. Now get going."

Sam's tail wagged once before he continued his journey back to the camp, thoughts of Gabriel's last name entirely forgotten.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you once again for all your amazing comments! I'm glad to see so many people enjoying this! However, I've got some bad news. Uni starts next week and I'm afraid I won't have time to do every-other-day updates. Don't worry; this story will continue, but you may just have to wait a little longer for chapters to be written! (Not too long
though!) Sorry guys!
"What's it like in the city?" Asked Claire curiously. She was the second oldest of the small group, with Alex being the oldest, Samandriel third oldest and Ben the youngest of the four.

Samandriel shrugged, batting at a small twig.

"It's okay, I suppose," he sighed. "You don't get to shift into wolf form because a lot of people don't like it. There are loads of rules too and a lot of the adults seem grumpy most of the time."

"Grumpier than Bobby?" Asked Claire in surprise and Samandriel nodded solemnly.

"Much grumpier. They yell at you for little things like playing in their gardens."

Alex frowned. "But isn't that what gardens are for?"

Samandriel pulled a face. "Apparently not when they've got flowers in them."

Claire tilted her head. "What's the point of having flowers if you can't play in them and smell all the different scents?"

"That's not what Lady Bevell thinks," huffed Samandriel, remembering the thorough scolding he'd received from the scary English woman who'd caught him picking her Carnations to give to his father as part of a birthday present.

Alex screwed her nose up. "Civilised folk are weird," she stated matter-of-factly and Claire nodded her head in agreement.

Samandriel scratched at his ear idly.

"And there are all these strange hierarchy rules too. At least, there was in my pack."

Ben tilted his head inquisitively.

"What kind of rules?"

Samandriel frowned as the others sat in front of him, intrigued.

"Well... they had this thing about alphas being better than omegas and betas. Like... omegas had to do all this weird bowing stuff in front of alphas and if they disagreed with an alpha, the alpha could hurt the omega." Samandriel scowled, remembering his father coming home on multiple occasions with injuries from enraged alphas at work, or even from his own family.

Claire blinked, gaze full of horror. "Did that ever happen to your dad?"

Samandriel nodded sadly. "Sometimes. My Uncles were the worst for hitting my dad. It's a good job Uncle Gabe was there to stop it most of the times."

"That's horrible," breathed Ben and Samandriel nodded.

"They were really mean to him when he was on heat to. Alphas and betas would shout all these
awful things to him and it would make my dad really embarrassed. Some even touched him in weird places and my dad would slap them or growl at them, but that just made them angry and they started pushing him around."

The other pups gasped.

"Dean won't let anything like that happen to him," stated Alex. "Dean's a good alpha. He'll protect him against all those terrible ones."

Samandriel wiggled his tail. He was glad to hear that; he just wanted his father to be happy for once.

"Doesn't sound like there's anything good about the city," huffed Claire and Samandriel tilted his head thoughtfully.

"Well... there's TV, and books and video-games. Oh, and toys and chocolate and pizza. You also get to sleep in a bed and houses are heated so you never get cold in the Winter."

At the others' blank faces, Samandriel blinked and realised they probably didn't know what much of that stuff was. So he began to explain all the delights of pizza, the magic of television and the complexity of video-games, and by the end of it, his friends were wagging their tails excitedly, asking a million-and-one questions about other advantages of living in the city.

"Maybe we can go into the city one day," grinned Ben as Alex nodded, tail thumping the floor. "We could visit a big toy store and play in there for hours," he added and Samandriel smiled at the thought.

"And you could sleep over at mine if you visited my city, and we could watch movies all night and eat chocolate and popcorn."

This excited the pups even further and Samandriel began to like the idea of showing his friends around his city; teaching them all the things city folk were raised to know and do.

Suddenly, Claire frowned.

"I don't want to go into a city where I'll be bullied by stupid alphas though. I don't want to have to bow in front of them and only speak when spoken to."

Ben nodded in agreement. Both Claire and Ben were omegas, with Alex being a beta.

Samandriel puffed his chest out.

"I wouldn't let anything like that happen to you," he announced. "I won't let anyone hurt you; you're my best friends and no one'll ever bully my friends."

Ben grinned as Claire smiled gratefully.

Alex nodded. "Then it's settled. Next time we pass your city, Samandriel, we're going to spend a whole weekend there and we'll sleep over at yours and watch movies all night."

Samandriel nodded eagerly as the others discussed the upcoming plans.

They were all looking forward to it.

* * *
Ruby didn't usually like transforming into her human state, but she did make exceptions.

Like when she was knotting Sam against the forest floor.

They were alone, away from the camp and hidden by a thick patch of trees. They had originally wanted to have a stroll around the forest surrounding the camp, just to spend a little quality time with one another, but Ruby had flirted with him and Sam had been excited by the thrill of finally being away from the rest of the camp, alone with his uncharacteristically relaxed lover, and had flirted back.

Things had escalated from there, and their playful flirting had turned into rubbing up against one another, until Ruby had morphed into her human form and Sam had quickly followed, crushing their lips together heatedly. They teased at each other's bodies until eventually Sam pulled his lover to the floor and begged Ruby to knot him.

Whilst he didn't regret the events which had led them to this point, Sam half wished the alpha would be a little gentler with him.

He bit back a hiss as Ruby thrusted into him roughly. He was beginning to ache from her harshness and whilst he had been the one to pull them both to the floor, his body was now beginning to cramp from the awkward angle.

He tried to shift into a more comfortable position, hoping Ruby would get the message and slow down a little, but she merely growled and tightened her grip in his unruly hair, forcing his head back until his throat was exposed.

He gulped subtly. He had always found the idea of being marked by his lover rather arousing, but with how violently Ruby was taking him, he was more than a little concerned he would feel more pain than pleasure if she were to bite him now.

Ruby scented his throat, dragging her tongue over his skin, canines scraping his flesh lightly and Sam shuddered in a mixture of need and anxiety.

Ruby's other hand gripped his waist, nails leaving prints in his skin as her thrusts sped up.

"Mine," she snarled before claiming Sam's mouth messily, all tongues and teeth and the omega could do nothing but wrap his legs more securely around her hips and hold on.

He closed his eyes, trying to ignore how much his hole was aching now and he attempted to relax onto the cool ground, refusing to think about the amount of mud and grass sticking to his back and other parts that mud and grass shouldn't stick to.

His head shot up in surprise when Ruby grasped his erection, tugging on it a little too firmly and he bit his lip in an attempt to stop a whimper from escaping.

Ruby yanked his head back down, baring his throat once more and she moved to nip at his chest and nipples, smirking in satisfaction when she left little marks over the toned skin.

Sam attempted to tangle his fingers in her long, silky hair, but the moment his hands lifted from the ground, Ruby snatched his wrists and pinned them to the floor, her thrusts growing harsher.

"Don't touch," she growled and Sam squeezed his eyes shut as his lower half flared with pain. He nodded apologetically and Ruby's thrusts eased a little.
"You've always been a naughty omega," she whispered beside his ear, nipping and sucking at his jaw. "Always defying Daddy's orders; disappointing him with your rebellious behaviour."

Sam's inhaled a shaky breath as Ruby nipped harshly at his jaw.

"You don't want to disappoint me, do you, Sam? You don't want to make your alpha angry, do you?"

Sam shook his head stiffly as she continued to nip down his neck and over his shoulder.

"Because, you know what happens if you make me angry," she purred lowly. "It means I have to punish you..."

Her knot began to form and Sam stamped down on a yelp as she ground down on him hard, his back arching from the stab of pain and pleasure racing through his body.

He knew his lover wasn't intentionally trying to hurt him because Ruby loved him deeply, but sometimes she got a bit carried away in the heat of the moment and let her alpha instincts to knot and mark take over.

As long as Ruby was enjoying it though, Sam was happy.

"Are you going to beg for my knot, big boy?" Growled Ruby as she bit at his shoulder. "Are you going to whine for me to fill that wet hole like a needy, little omega?"

Sam had never really been into all that alpha/omega dirty talk, but he knew Ruby had a bit of a kink for controlling such a large male like him.

"Please," whimpered Sam in his best desperate omega voice. "Please, alpha."

"Please, what?" Rumbled Ruby as she kept his arms pinned above his head with one hand as her other buried itself in his hair again.

"Knot me," gasped Sam as his head was tugged backwards again. "Please alpha, knot me."

Ruby smirked as her knot fully awakened and stretched Sam. The omega gasped again as his lover rolled her hips roughly, filling him until there wasn't a part of him that hadn't been claimed by her.

Sam surged upwards, crushing their lips together and Ruby snarled as she shoved him non-too-gently back to the ground.

"Stay down," she hissed, thrusting her knot painfully inside him as reprimand and Sam whimpered. He lowered his gaze submissively and Ruby's grip in his hair tightened.

Sam bit back a few uncomfortable grunts as Ruby dragged her knot inside him despite it having swelled to its full size, and the alpha scraped her teeth down his throat possessively.

"My omega," she growled, scent strengthening and Sam wanted nothing more than to bury his nose in her neck, but Ruby wouldn't allow it and the omega had to settle with their bodies sliding over one another as they were.

Their breathing began to quicken and shallow and before long, Sam's slick was coating his thighs and Ruby's lower body.

The alpha rumbled in approval as Sam writhed beneath her and she began to work his erection, making the omega whimper softly as it was pulled just a little too hard.
Ruby didn't seem to notice though and as she was brought to a climax, she surged upwards and bit down on Sam's throat, making the omega whine as her teeth broke the skin surface.

Sam cried out as he orgasmed, but whether that was due to pain or pleasure, he wasn't entirely sure.

He desperately wanted to renew the mating mark on his lover's neck, but he knew Ruby wouldn't approve. Not when she was acting as the dominant alpha; she wouldn't want her submissive omega lover marking her up when she was in her current mood.

So instead, Sam wriggled over to his lover (she had had the good graces not to fall on him) and didn't try to pull her to his chest like he would've liked. He pressed his nose into her neck and scented her deeply, smiling at the strong smell of alpha pheromones radiating from her, before wrapping his arm over her chest and cuddling close.

Ruby practically purred as she tugged him to her side and she curled her arm around him possessively, nosing at his hair. She smirked as he gently caressed her breast, smoothing over the soft tissue with a large palm.

Although male omegas could birth children, a flaw in their evolution meant they couldn't lactate. However, all females could, despite their secondary gender (another flaw in evolution). Sam had often thought how well he and Ruby complemented one another. Whilst Ruby would have difficulties in carrying a child, she would be able to feed it and Sam would be able to birth it even if he couldn't offer it food for the first stages of its life.

These thoughts often left him contemplating when the right time for a child would be and how wonderful it would be to have their own pup snuggled between them during cold nights.

He'd never really been interested in having his own pup, but being with Jessica had turned those ideals upside down and he had been devastated at the prospect of never being able to have his own little ball of fluff when his mate had died. Having Ruby interested in him had brought all those fuzzy, excited feelings back again and he often wondered how complete their already wonderful mating would be with their own pup running around them.

Ignoring the stinging sensation in his neck, Sam moved to straddle his lover, peppering kisses over her face. Ruby chuckled and kissed him back.

"I love you," Sam whispered, nuzzling her cheek and Ruby smiled tenderly, stealing a kiss from his lips.

"I love you too," she murmured and Sam snuggled closer.

After a few moments of touching and trading kisses, Sam mouthed at Ruby's jaw softly.

"Would you ever consider pups?"

Ruby stilled and pulled away slightly, a small, confused frown settling over her elegant features.

"Excuse me?"

Sam smiled as he caressed a thumb over her cheek.

"Would you ever consider pups?" He asked again, quiet and loving. "I think you'd make a wonderful mother."

Ruby's frown deepened as she moved Sam's hand from her cheek.
"You're joking, right? Why would we want pups?"

Sam's smile faltered. "Well... why not? We're happy, we're stable and we have a protective pack. Wouldn't you like a child we could play and laugh with? Someone we could give everything to? Someone who would be part of both of us and who we could love and protect and see grow and develop?"

Ruby scrunched her face up and shifted until Sam was forced to roll off her body and sit up beside her.

"Why would I want a pup? All they do is cry, scream, dirty themselves and the den, throw temper tantrums and whine when they're hungry. What fun is that? Wouldn't you prefer to stay as we are? Wouldn't you prefer to run free and enjoy life how we want to? Not be tied down by a pup," huffed the alpha and Sam tilted his head.

"Of course I want to enjoy life, but one day we're going to grow old and then what? We'll have no one to pass our knowledge and wisdom onto, no one to watch grow up. It'll just be us alone. I'm not saying we have to settle down right this minute and have a pup, but I'm asking if you would ever consider it in the future?"

Ruby scowled at him.

"Are you saying I'm not enough to keep you happy? Because that's what it sounds like."

Sam's eyes widened. "What? No, that's not what I'm saying at all," he said hastily. "I'm just asking if you'd like to raise a pup with me; watch it grow and learn and explore the world. I just thought it might be something you were interested in."

Ruby narrowed a glare at him.

"What, because I'm female you think it's my job to raise a pup? You think all women are interested in bringing up children? Do you think it's my duty or something to look after the children why you and your brother go off and have a good time, leaving me stuck at home to protect our pup?"

Sam's face fell.

"I would never... I don't think of you like that. You're my alpha; I would never just assume your job was to raise children. You know I'm not like that."

"Well it sure sounds like it," snapped Ruby. "With the way you're talking anyone would think you're the alpha in this relationship, and I'm the one who follows you around like a piece of property, doing what you tell me to. The rest of the pack certainly thinks you're in charge and quite frankly I'm getting sick of being ordered around as if I'm worthless. You can be so pig-headed sometimes!"

Sam blinked before scowling.
"Alright, fine! I'm sorry I ever mentioned pups. You clearly don't want them!"

Ruby huffed and morphed into her wolf form, Sam quickly following suit.

"Don't turn this back on me," she growled. "You're the one who bosses me around and thinks I'll just go along with whatever you say. You're the one who wants me to carry pups and raise them."

Sam shook his head. "I know you're not as likely to be as successful carrying pups as I am. I'd carry them and I want us to raise them together!" He yelled exasperatedly and Ruby's hackles raised.

"Oh, so now you're better than me?" She hissed. "You think I can't carry pups as well as you? Do you think I'd kill them or something?"

Sam narrowed his eyes. "Statistically speaking you're not as adept at carrying them. It's not an opinion, it's a fact." He let out an irritated sigh. "Why are we even arguing about this? You obviously don't want children. That's all you had to say; you don't have to turn everything into a drama."

"I'm turning this into a drama?" Screeched Ruby. "You're the one who wants to ruin what we have by letting a little bratty kid loose in our home. And if it turns out to be anything like you growing up, then we will have problems, won't we?"

Sam bristled. "My father made me act the way I did. Our pup wouldn't grow up like that."

Ruby snorted as she rolled her eyes.

"Hate to break it to you, Sam, but you and John Winchester are more alike than you think."

Sam stiffened. "What do you know? You never even met him! You were lucky Uncle Bobby stumbled across you and protected you from Alistair, otherwise you wouldn't be here right now!"

"I could've handled Alistair on my own," snarled Ruby and Sam laughed humourlessly.

"If it wasn't for Dean, Bobby and Crowley, you'd be dead!"

Ruby stalked closer to Sam, teeth bared slightly.

"You're a prejudiced dog, Sam. You treat me as though I'm weaker than other alphas, just because I'm female. I've felt you wrapping you paws around me when we sleep, as if you're somehow 'protecting' me. I know how often you step in front of your brother when it looks like he wants to challenge me, as if you're saving the damsel in distress. You act as though you're stronger than me, more intelligent, more mature, and I'm getting tired of it. I don't need you to hold my hand wherever I go; I can handle myself, you stupid mongrel!"

Sam tensed, hackles raised, before he huffed and turned on his heel.

"I'll find my own way back to the camp," he muttered lowly before stalking away and Ruby growled at his retreating figure.

"Way to ruin a good day, once again," she shouted. "Come back when you decide to stop acting like a bratty pup."

Sam narrowed his eyes and picked up his pace, needing to get as far away from his infuriating mate as possible.

Maybe he wouldn't return to the camp tonight.
"You look pretty peeved for a guy who smells like he's been getting down and dirty with a very horny alpha."

Sam rumbled warningly. He had no intentions of talking to anyone for the rest of the day, certainly not any annoyingly flirty alphas. He wasn't even sure why he'd come to the meadow in the first place.

"Go away," he growled and Gabriel stopped his cheerful trotting a few metres from where Sam was sulking.

"Trouble in paradise?" The alpha teased and Sam whirled around, baring his teeth and snarling furiously at the golden-furred irritation.

"Leave me alone, you stupid mutt!"

Gabriel frowned.

"Listen, kid, don't take your anger out on me just because you're having a bad day. It's not my fault you and your mate haven't been getting along."

Sam blinked in surprise before a wave of guilt washed over him and he lowered his head apologetically.

"Sorry," he mumbled and Gabriel smiled again, walking over to him a little more carefully this time.

"Don't worry about it. Just don't do it again. I may look all cuddly on the outside, but don't let that fool you; I'm still an alpha on the inside."

Sam's head sunk even lower and Gabriel unceremoniously plonked himself down in front of the omega.

"How did you know it was my mate who's bothering me?" Sam asked curiously and Gabriel shrugged.

"You reek of alpha pheromones and you don't seem the type to cheat, so I'm guessing you two had an argument right after doing the do."

Sam quirked a smile at Gabriel's ridiculous eyebrow wiggle and once again he felt himself beginning to relax in the golden wolf's presence. Gabriel radiated fun and an easy-going aura, and Sam found all his worries and stresses fading into the background when he was around the alpha. It was like all the tension in his body had drained away.

Gabriel settled down and Sam slowly joined him, wondering why he was so relaxed around this wolf when alphas usually made him tense.

"Wanna talk about it?" Asked Gabriel and Sam's immediate thought was to shake his head and keep his mouth shut. Yet the longer he thought about it and the more he contemplated who he was with, the more he realised that actually, he did want to talk about his problems for once.

Plus, Gabriel's chocolate-y scent was really comforting and he didn't want the alpha to leave.
"I love Ruby, I really do, but there are some things that we just... don't agree on. We started off having fun and everything was fine until I mentioned pups."

Gabriel tilted his head.

"You want pups and she doesn't?" He guessed and Sam nodded slowly.

"I was never all that interested in pups in the first place until Jessica came along."

"Jessica?"

"My previous mate. The one before Ruby."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow and Sam glanced away sadly.

"It's not like that. Jess... she... she died. In a fire. I... I couldn't save her."

Gabriel's expression softened into one of sympathy and Sam closed his eyes, not wanting the alpha to see the tears welling in them.

"I'm sorry, kid. I didn't know," Gabriel said quietly.

Sam shook his head. "You've got nothing to be sorry for." He inhaled shakily as he pulled himself together.

"I never believed in true love until I met her. She was beautiful and witty and charming and everyone I knew loved her. I was besotted with her and I think she was pretty in love with me too. She was everything I ever could've hoped for and she made me forget about the way my dad was and how I didn't even know my mom. She could distract me in simple ways and she was always so caring and funny.

"She started talking about having pups and seeing her so happy and excited when she talked about them made me want them too."

Sam sighed wearily. "Then she died. And it was like everything we'd planned to do; all our hopes and dreams had all been shattered in the space of ten minutes. It was like she'd never existed and we'd never got around to having pups, so there was literally nothing left of her; nothing to keep her alive but memories.

"I don't want that to happen with me and Ruby. I don't want there to be nothing or no one to carry our memories on when we're gone. I want to have someone to watch learn and grow; someone that'll be a part of both of us. But Ruby doesn't see it like that. She sees pups as nothing more than irritating, crying, balls of hunger that'll tie us down. That's why we had an argument."

Gabriel pulled a thoughtful face. "I'm not going to tell you how to run your life, Sam, but I will tell you that having a pup is a big decision. It's hard enough without one of you not sure you even want to raise a pup, and a pup will definitely put a strain on your relationship if you're both not one-hundred-percent certain you're ready.

"Trust me, raising a kid on your own is difficult."

Sam glanced to the alpha. "Are you a parent?" He asked curiously and Gabriel paused.

"...No, but my brother is, and he came across a lot of hurdles trying to raise his pup as a single parent."
Sam's expression softened in sympathy as he thought of Castiel. He couldn't imagine Cas had had all sunshine and rainbows trying to bring Samandriel up on his own, either. Not to mention he didn't have the most caring of families to support him; it was a miracle Samandriel had turned out so polite and considerate, really.

"Sorry to hear that," he offered. Gabriel seemed like a caring brother. Hopefully he had helped his sibling when he was struggling to raise the pup.

Gabriel looked troubled, but the expression quickly cleared from his face.

"Kid turned out well. But you have to ask yourself if you want to go through that if your mate isn't willing to rear a child with you. Maybe talk it over a little and see if Ruby might change her mind later. Afterall, people change over time."

Sam nodded and turned his gaze to the direction he'd come from, staring into the forest as he contemplated whether he'd been a bit too hasty in snapping at Ruby. He had sort of sprung the suggestion on her; it's not as though they'd talked about pups before. Maybe he owed it to her to give her a little time to think it over; she had seemed pretty surprised.

The more he thought about his earlier interaction with his mate, the guiltier he felt. He'd suggested they have pups, shouted at her because she was uncertain about the idea, then stormed off because he couldn't get his way.

Ruby was right about him being a stupid mongrel.

What if she was right about all those other things too? What if he really did disrespect her or boss her around? What if he did treat her as though he was bored of her? What if he did act like his father? Maybe he was the one at fault here; the one in the wrong...

"Why's your neck bleeding?"

Gabriel's slightly alarmed tone snapped Sam out of his musings and he whirled his head around to face the other wolf, wincing at the sting in his throat.

Gabriel had his head tilted to one side and he was struggling to see under Sam's head, but the alpha was frowning in concern.

"Relax, it's just a mating bite," huffed Sam, not really wanting to lift his head and bare his throat to Gabriel. Exposing his throat to a strange alpha was extremely dangerous and not to mention entirely stupid.

Gabriel scowled. "With the amount of blood coating your fur, that doesn't look like it was pleasurable. You sure it wasn't an attempt to eat you?"

Sam blinked before standing up and moving to the river. It couldn't be that bad, could it? Gabriel was probably just exaggerating.

When he glanced at his reflection in the water though, the omega grimaced.

Ruby's teeth had sunk pretty deep into his skin and the fur around the wound was caked in dark blood. It would take quite a while to heal and whilst Sam liked to be marked, he didn't like having four deep holes in his neck. It was amazing she hadn't punctured his oesophagus.

He gingerly ducked his head under the water to wash the blood away and soothe the wound, hissing slightly as he did so.
"Jessica sounds like a good alpha," hummed Gabriel as he wandered over, plopping himself down on the riverbank as Sam carefully waded into the water, washing some embarrassing dried slick from his fur as well.

The omega quirked a reminiscent smile.

"Jessica wasn't an alpha," he commented as he continued to clean his throat. "She was an omega."

Gabriel blinked and was quiet for so long that Sam had to look over to him to make sure he was alright. The alpha was staring at him in shock.

"...But you said you were thinking about pups?"

Sam raised an eyebrow. "Yeah? She's female, I'm male. What's the problem?"

Gabriel couldn't seem to comprehend this.

"But... but you can't both be omegas! That's just... that's not right. You can't both have the same secondary gender."

Sam frowned. That was civilised folk rationality. Pure narrow-mindedness and prejudice. Even if he and Jess had had the same secondary and primary genders, what would it matter? Love was still love.

"Why not? Female and male omegas can still conceive together, just as female and male alphas can. We all have the right parts for it, it's just civilisation has deemed it abhorrent and unnatural for two omegas or two alphas to love one another. And what do they know?"

The wild didn't hold the same ideals as civilisation and they freely accepted same-secondary-gender couples. They also accepted polyamory between anyone, whereas civilisation frowned upon it.

Gabriel looked unsure and Sam felt himself tensing. Who was Gabriel to judge him for something he had no business in?

"What you choose to believe is none of my business, but I believe a few old, racist, homophobic alphas sat in their tall ivory towers in the cities shouldn't be able to dictate who's company we're allowed to enjoy, just because they have wealth or a long family history."

Sam huffed in distaste. "Just because they're miserable and lonely doesn't mean everyone else has to be."

Gabriel hesitated before something like understanding flickered behind his eyes and the alpha slowly began to relax. Sam had to wonder where Gabriel came from if he believed in ideals like that.

"...I... I never thought about it like that," murmured Gabriel. "Since I was very young I've always been taught..." he trailed off and snapped his mouth shut as if just realising where he was and who he was talking to.

"I'm sorry, Sam. I never meant to offend you. Who you give your heart to is no business of mine."

Sam tilted his head slightly. Gabriel was an odd alpha; that was certain. He gave off the impression of being brash and egotistical, but in terms of his ideals he seemed quite... reserved. Despite all the flirting and alpha posturing, Gabriel never ventured any closer to Sam than two feet away. He never attempted to encroach on Sam's personal space and he seemed to use more words than actions to convey his feelings.
He also chose his words carefully, like a poet crafting a masterpiece and it was enough for Sam to realise he must have been quite important in his old pack; maybe a more experienced wolf than he let on.

"It's okay. If you've never grown up with those sorts of notions, you can't be expected to know them when you're an adult," said Sam cautiously. "Where did you say you came from again?"

Gabriel suddenly grinned, but it was too sharp, too bright. He was hiding something.

"A long way off from here. Now, how's that neck?"

Sam wanted to question him further. Wanted to probe the evasive alpha to see what other information he could drag from him, but Gabriel wasn't one to be caught off-guard and Sam let the subject drop.

Despite his earlier thoughts, he bared his throat for Gabriel, letting the alpha take a look.

If he wanted information from Gabriel, he was going to have to show the alpha he could trust Sam. What better way to do that than to prove his trust towards Gabriel?

The alpha blinked in surprise at the display, but his warning smile turned into something more sincere and amused and he inspected the wound from his position a couple of feet away.

"Looks clean to me. And the slick's gone too," he smirked slyly and Sam lowered his gaze shyly, making Gabriel chuckle.

Sam made his way out of the water and shook himself off on the river bank. Gabriel watched him idly for a few moments before lying down on the meadow, a little way away from the river.

"Tell me more about Jessica then," called Gabriel as Sam made his way over.

The omega tilted his head in confusion and Gabriel quirked a grin.

"You obviously loved her very deeply. I can see you still love her. So c'mon, tell me about her. What was she like? What did she smell like? What was her favourite colour? C'mon, kid, details."

Sam smiled in delighted surprise. Nobody really talked about Jessica anymore because they were too afraid he'd grow upset. Not to mention he felt like he couldn't talk about her in front of Ruby. It didn't seem right to talk of his dead mate in front of his current one, and he was frightened of Ruby thinking he was comparing them both.

Yet Gabriel was curious, so who was Sam to ignore his request?

It's funny how Ruby never crossed his mind once in the four hours he and Gabriel chatted.

When Gabriel finished up a story about a prank he'd pulled on one of his older brothers when he was younger; one that involved a lot of feathers, glitter and honey that left Sam cackling with tears in his eyes, the omega noticed the moon was shining brightly and the forest was plunged into darkness.

"I better get home," said Sam. "My brother will start to worry."

Gabriel stretched as he stood. "It is getting late, I suppose. Be careful going home," he offered as he smiled warmly at Sam and the omega was touched by the alpha's concern.

"You too," he said softly and Gabriel nodded as he began to turn away.
On an impulse, Sam shot forwards and curled his head over the alpha's back in a gentle hug.

"Thanks, Gabe," he whispered and he didn't know whether he was thanking the alpha for talking to him about Jessica, or thanking him for proving to be a friend.

Gabriel went very still, muscles stiff and tight and Sam contemplated backing away and apologising for seemingly offending him. Maybe the alpha had personal space issues?

But then, Gabriel carefully relaxed, even if he made no move to return the hug.

"...No problem, kid," Gabriel breathed and his voice sounded stunned and shaky, almost as if he didn't want to break the intimate moment.

Eventually though, Sam pulled away and Gabriel looked almost... disappointed?

"Goodnight," murmured Sam and Gabriel bowed his head politely.

"Sleep well, Sam," he replied and as Sam made his way into the forest, he wondered if the alpha had anyone to go home to in the evenings; any friends to keep him company on the cool, lonely nights.

He frowned at the possibility that he didn't.

Chapter End Notes

Long chapter to make up for the lack of updates. Hope you guys are still enjoying this!
When Sam had wandered home in the late hours of the previous evening, Dean had been stern with him; telling him to inform someone whenever he wanted to leave the pack for such lengths of time. Sam had been a little sheepish and it was clear Dean was just worried for his little brother, yet when the alpha asked Sam where he had been, the younger Winchester was strangely vague. All he told Dean was he'd had an argument with Ruby and had needed some space, yet the story seemed to be missing something important, not to mention Sam seemed to be holding his head in a strange way.

And Castiel was sure he recognised the light scent of cologne clinging to Sam's fur.

He just couldn't place it because it was too faint. Sam also smelled vaguely like chocolate and Cas wondered where the other omega would've found chocolate in the middle of the forest.

He had decided to forget about the scents; they weren't important anyway.

What was important, however, was sorting things out between himself and Gadreel. He needed to know why the alpha had suddenly begun to distance himself from him.

Cas watched Gadreel make his way West, away from the camp, and, after telling Dean he was going to fix things with the other alpha, he followed the grey and white wolf.

It wasn't stalking, it was just... following without Gadreel knowing of his presence.

After twenty minutes, when they had gained enough distance from the camp to not be disturbed, Gadreel flicked an ear.

"I know you're there, Castiel."

Cas froze before sheepishly revealing himself from behind a bush. Of course Gadreel would know he was there; he was lookout for the pack.

"Hello, Gadreel."

The alpha raised an eyebrow before sighing quietly.

"You wish to speak with me?"

Castiel nodded and Gadreel slowly sat down.

"What did you wish to talk about?"

Castiel carefully padded over, watching the alpha's face for any discomfort, but Gadreel observed him almost wearily.

"You've been distancing yourself lately," said Cas softly. "From me. Why? Have I upset you?"

Gadreel looked vaguely guilty.

"I'm sorry if you feel that way. It wasn't my intention. You've done nothing wrong, I assure you."
Cas frowned. "Then what were your intentions if not to avoid me?"

Gadreel shifted uncomfortably. "I thought you and Dean would desire time alone together. Your relationship is very fresh and I thought Dean wouldn't be too pleased with you spending so much time around another alpha when you've only recently expressed an interest in one another. I don't believe Dean to be the jealous type, but you should really spend more time with him than me."

Castiel's gaze softened. "You were trying to give us space," he stated and the alpha nodded hesitantly.

"I wouldn't like to interfere with your relationship or for Dean to get the wrong idea."

Cas smiled fondly. He should've known Gadreel didn't have those sorts of feelings for him. The alpha was just looking out for him like any good friend would.

"Dean doesn't mind me spending time with you, Gadreel. You're one of my closest friends and he would never want to ruin that. He cares for you too; he wouldn't want to break up our friendship."

Gadreel offered him a small smile. "I'm glad to hear that. You're my closest friend and I wouldn't like to lose you either."

Cas' tail wiggled happily and he closed the distance between them and pressed his head underneath Gadreel's in a show of affection.

The alpha gently rested his head over Castiel's and the omega felt a wave of relief wash over him. He hadn't lost his friend and there were no hard feelings between them. Gadreel had just been doing what he thought was best and now their misunderstanding had been cleared up, their relationship wouldn't be as strained.

Cas pulled back and Gadreel smiled at him before gesturing forwards. The pair continued their walk, side by side, chatting amiably and tails swaying freely, reflecting their moods.

"How are you and Dean?" Asked Gadreel after a while and Castiel grinned.

"Great. I've never met anyone like him. He's so affectionate and caring with not only me, but Samandriel as well. All my life I've been taught wild alphas are savage and unfeeling, but everyone in this pack is so kind. I never thought I'd find anyone who'd want a city omega with a pup, yet Dean... he's so... wonderful..." finished Cas, glancing away shyly when he realised he'd been rambling.

Gadreel wore a tiny smile and he flicked his gaze to Cas.

"I'm glad you're happy," he said and Castiel felt his heart melt at the sincerity in the alpha's tone. He'd never really been around alphas who genuinely cared for him (other than Gabriel and Dean), so Gadreel was refreshing. Especially when they weren't even related and were just friends.

To be honest, Cas hadn't had all that many friends who truly cared about him until he came to the Winchester pack.

"Thank you," murmured Castiel softly and Gadreel chuckled at his humbled posture.

"Really, I am. You deserve to be with someone who you love and who loves you. You deserve to be happy."

Cas felt his face heating up and he looked away for a few moments.
"Have you got your eye on anyone?" Asked Castiel after a minute and Gadreel hesitated before flicking an ear dismissively.

"I did but they would never want me."

Castiel was curious. He tried to think who in the pack Gadreel would find attractive, but he had never seen the alpha treat one person particularly different to anyone else.

"Have you asked if they're interested?" Questioned Cas. "Have you talked to them?"

"No," replied Gadreel. "But I assure you they wouldn't be interested."

Castiel frowned. "You're a wonderful alpha, Gadreel. Considerate, protective, thoughtful... anyone would be lucky to have you. Talk to them; you may be surprised."

Gadreel sighed and stopped, making Cas do the same, a confused frown marring his features.

Gadreel's ears were lowered in sadness, yet his lips were quirked upwards slightly. His tail was tucked between his legs, yet he seemed to radiate understanding. The alpha glanced over to Castiel, eyes sorrowful and full of longing and the omega's breath hitched.

"Oh, Gadreel," he choked, finally realising how oblivious he'd been, and the alpha smiled sadly before lowering his gaze.

"That's why you kept your distance," breathed Castiel, understanding dawning on his face and Gadreel bowed his head slightly.

"I'm sorry, Castiel. I didn't want to upset your relationship with Dean. I thought if I stayed away, maybe it wouldn't hurt so much to watch you both together." The alpha shook his head. "I was wrong. It just made me miss you more."

Castiel felt his heart crack and he took a step forward, not knowing what to do.

"Gadreel... I'm sorry... I... I didn't know..."

The alpha chuckled. "I got that. You don't have to say anything. It's okay. I truly am happy you're with Dean." Gadreel's lips quirked upwards. "You smile a lot more now."

"Gadreel..." Cas croaked brokenly. How had he been so naive? How had he not noticed the alpha's feelings for him? He'd broken this poor alpha's heart without realising and there was nothing he could do about it. He'd done the one thing he'd never wanted to do; hurt his friend.

"Castiel, it's okay. It's just a silly little crush," murmured Gadreel. "Please don't think about it. It means nothing."

Cas could tell the alpha was lying. He could see it in the alpha's eyes; could see the longing and heartbreak in them. Could hear the sadness in his hushed voice, the loneliness in his smile.

"If I'd have known..." began Castiel, not certain how to finish that sentence and Gadreel seemed to sense it too, because he smiled bitterly.

"You'd have what? Ignored your feelings for Dean? Ignored his feelings for you? Pretended you were happy with me when inside you would always wonder how your life would've turned out if you'd have chosen Dean instead?"

Gadreel shook his head. "You don't love me, Castiel. You never did. And that's okay. Truly it is. It's
rare you find someone who cares for you as much as you care for them and you've found that in Dean, so don't lie to me and say things would be different if you'd have known."

Cas' face fell and Gadreel's expression softened.

"You're happy with Dean. I'd be a fool not to see it. And if you're happy with him then I'm just honoured I can call you a friend. I don't want you to spend your life wondering 'what if'. You're an intelligent, witty and beautiful omega, Castiel, and I'm privileged to know you," uttered Gadreel quietly and Castiel felt his stomach drop at the single tear rolling down the alpha's cheek.

Before he realised what he was doing, Castiel lunged at Gadreel, tugging him close and he buried his nose into the alphas fur, taking in his oak and roasted chestnut scent. He didn't smell as good as Dean, but the scent was certainly comforting and Gadreel tensed at first, before shoving his nose into Cas' neck almost desperately.

"I'm sorry, Castiel," breathed Gadreel, voice breaking. "I'm so sorry."

Castiel's heart ached and he curled around Gadreel tightly. Why was Gadreel apologising? He hadn't done anything wrong.

"I should be apologising to you for hurting you," whispered Castiel and Gadreel shook his head.

"You didn't know I love you."

Both wolves stiffened, equally surprised by the confession and Castiel felt Gadreel try to recoil, the alpha horrified by his own words. Castiel wrapped his paw around him and tugged him closer.

"I shouldn't have said that," panicked Gadreel, wriggling to break free. "I'm so sorry, I never meant to say that."

Cas held fast. "Please don't run," he begged and the alpha stilled.

"You're right, I don't love you. Not in that way. But I care so much for you," whispered Cas. "You're my best friend and I would die for you, Gadreel. I've never had a friend like you; you're my family and I would do anything for you. So please... I can't lose you. Please don't make me lose you."

Gadreel began to relax, settling against Castiel's body as he scented the omega's neck.

"...I don't want to lose you either. Like I said, I thought distancing myself from you would make it hurt less... but it just makes me miss you more."

Castiel sighed quietly and Gadreel winced.

"I shouldn't be making you worry about this. I should never have told you about any of it."

"No, no. I'm... I'm glad you told me. I just... I don't know what to do now," Cas admitted ashamedly and Gadreel released his own soft sigh.

"You carry on as you were with Dean. I try to get over my feelings for you and we continue being friends," he said after a few moments and Castiel frowned concernedly. He would never give up what he had with Dean, but he had to wonder if Gadreel would be okay. He so desperately wanted to stop his friend from hurting, but he just didn't know how.

"One day you're going to find someone who really loves you. Someone who'll take care of you and
treat you like you're their whole world," whispered Cas, tears beginning to well in his eyes despite him not being the one who'd had his heart broken. "What you feel right now for me will pale in comparison to how you feel about them. You'll live a long life together and you'll be happier than you've ever been."

Gadreel smiled and nuzzled Cas' neck appreciatively.

"I want you to be happy too," murmured Cas sadly. "You deserve it."

Gadreel chuckled quietly. "You are the kindest person I have ever met."

Castiel leaned away and gently licked Gadreel's muzzle.

"And you are the strongest," he breathed, and they both knew he didn't mean physically.

They gazed at each other for a few moments before Gadreel tentatively licked Castiel's muzzle and carefully rubbed their noses together.

Cas quirked his lips sorrowfully and the alpha watched him with tender eyes.

"I love you, Castiel. More than you can ever know. But you want to be with Dean. You both need each other and I need you to be happy. Be happy for me, Cas."

Castiel nuzzled away a tear from Gadreel's cheek and leaned their heads together for a few intimate moments.

"Go," Gadreel whispered.

Cas slowly stood and backed away from the heart-broken alpha, a lump forming in his throat at Gadreel's sincere smile.

After everything, he was still happy for Cas.

The omega silently turned around and ran back to the camp, refusing to look at the pining alpha he'd left behind even as tears flowed down his face.

* * *

That night, when Samandriel had wandered off to have a sleep over with Ben and Lisa, Cas told Dean everything that had occurred between himself and Gadreel.

At the end of the explanation, Dean pulled Cas to his chest and held the omega as he cried. He nuzzled and licked Castiel's head and face and throat, and whispered words of soothing into his ear of how Gadreel would find someone for himself one day; someone who would love him and look after him.

Castiel snuggled into Dean's embrace, murmuring sweet words of affection and want until the two were rubbing their scents over one another and caressing each other's bodies desperately, licking and nuzzling at anything they could reach.

"I love you," murmured Cas in between cuddles and Dean paused as he looked down at his lover. It was the first time either of them had mentioned the word.
He pushed Cas onto his back and straddled him, nuzzling his throat tenderly.

"I love you too, Cas," Dean breathed and the omega pressed their noses together gently as he wrapped his paws around Dean, pulling him closer.

After a few moments, they shifted until Dean was curled securely around his lover and Cas was pressed deep into his side, head tucked safely under Dean's.

The pair drifted off to sleep like that; wrapped up in one another's bodies and contented smiles lighting their faces with the knowledge that they were both exactly where they were meant to be.

Chapter End Notes

Since it took me so long to upload the last chapter I thought I'd give you a bit more Cas stuff considering he didn't appear in the last one. I know it's short but I thought it was better with no other story lines added on :)

Also Gadreel...
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Sam wasn't entirely sure why he hadn't told anyone of Gabriel yet. Maybe it was the thrill of being alone with a mysterious stranger; sneaking off to some place where nobody knew about and where his brother and the rest of the pack couldn't 'protect' him. All his life he had been raised and protected by his brother; their father drilling it into Dean that it was his job as alpha and eldest son to look after his baby omega brother.

Then when their father had left, Dean's mother hen instincts had kicked up a notch and Sam couldn't help but feel like his older brother was playing baby-sitter. Then Ruby came along and it was as though Dean was constantly watching his every move, just waiting for Ruby to slip up and hurt his precious brother.

Sam knew his mate and brother didn't get along; Dean hated Ruby's attitude and thought she was maltreating Sam, and Ruby thought Dean was too soft-hearted and stubborn to lead a pack.

Gabriel was a breath of fresh air. He was fun and light-hearted, yet his history was cloaked in mystery and wonder and Sam couldn't help but want to learn more about him. He was friendly and seemed like he genuinely cared about Sam despite knowing very little about him, and Sam grew to enjoy the sincerity in his company.

However, he knew if Dean ever found out he was meeting with a strange, older alpha from an unknown pack, his brother would forbid him from setting foot in the meadow again. It was dangerous for Sam as an omega to meet with an alpha he knew next to nothing about.

And if Ruby ever found out about Gabriel? Well... Ruby had thus far proved to be quite the jealous and possessive alpha if the mood struck her...

So, after the seventh time Sam had wandered back home after meeting with Gabriel, he had vowed to be more careful about what kind of scents he carried back to the camp.

Castiel had approached him with an odd look; one that screamed suspicion, as he quietly asked if Sam had been around any wolves outside the pack, and although Sam had thought it odd for Castiel of all people to be asking him things like that, the large omega lied that he hadn't. He didn't want to be banned from seeing Gabriel again.

Castiel had leaned forwards and scented him carefully and just as Sam was about to gently remind him he was also a pack leader and Cas shouldn't be treating him like a naughty child, the other omega frowned and shook his head before apologising and walking away.

This happened at least three times during the following month Sam kept meeting up with the golden wolf (with more subtle scenting on Cas' part), and Sam had quickly learned to bathe in a river before returning to camp. It cleaned the alpha's odour from his fur and stopped Cas from glancing at him suspiciously, which in turn, calmed Dean's nerves as well.

Ruby however, hadn't been so easily fooled. She had demanded to know where he disappeared off to all the time, which resulted in Sam not wanting to make her jealous. She had seen past his attempts to reassure her though and they had another argument ending with Sam storming towards the meadow, Ruby snapping hurtful comments at his retreating back.
Gabriel glanced up from where he was sprawled between the buttercups and offered Sam a bright smile, tail swaying lazily.

"And here I thought the flowers were the greatest masterpieces on this Earth," he drawled as Sam stalked over, and the omega felt the tightness in his chest ease off slightly as he stepped further into the sunlight.

He made a beeline for the alpha and Gabriel's mouth snapped shut in surprise when the omega flopped gracelessly onto the grass and buried his face into the alpha's side.

"...Sam?" Gabriel asked quietly. He sounded uncertain and maybe even a little disturbed by the contact. Despite that first brief hug, they didn't really touch each other that much unless it was by accident or in the form of a playful shove, so this was a new development.

Sam breathed out a heavy sigh of relief, strangely comforted by Gabriel's sweet scent.

"Sam?" Gabriel said again, worry creeping into his tone and Sam glanced up at him once, noting the perturbed look in his eyes, before heaving out another sigh and sitting up. Gabriel quickly copied him.

"You okay kiddo?" Asked Gabriel, but he seemed hesitant after Sam's display.

"Ruby and I got into another fight," huffed Sam. Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "Over what?"

"Over you," the omega replied and Gabriel blinked in shock. "I didn't want her getting jealous, so I didn't tell her about you and now she thinks I'm cheating on her or something. She keeps asking me where I disappear off to all the time and I don't know what to say, so I just keep telling her I need some time away from the camp every so often."

Gabriel frowned disapprovingly. "You can't keep lying to your mate, Sam. Just tell her the truth."

Sam shook his head. "You don't understand. If I tell her about you I won't get to meet up with you again. She'll think I'm having an affair with you or some other ridiculously sordid thing and word'll get out to Dean and the rest of the pack, and then I won't be able to leave the camp. I'll never be able to see you again, and Dean won't trust me, and Ruby'll get really possessive and start wanting to prove who I belong to. " Sam cut himself off, unwilling to reveal what else Ruby would do if she thought another alpha held Sam's attentions.

Gabriel scowled. "I'm going to pretend you didn't just imply you're in an abusive relationship and have been for quite a few years."

Sam shook his head. "You don't understand. If I tell her about you I won't get to meet up with you again. She'll think I'm having an affair with you or some other ridiculously sordid thing and word'll get out to Dean and the rest of the pack, and then I won't be able to leave the camp. I'll never be able to see you again, and Dean won't trust me, and Ruby'll get really possessive and start wanting to prove who I belong to. " Sam cut himself off, unwilling to reveal what else Ruby would do if she thought another alpha held Sam's attentions.

Gabriel scowled. "I'm going to pretend you didn't just imply you're in an abusive relationship and have been for quite a few years."

The alpha sighed. "Look, Sam. If coming to see me is straining your relationships with your pack, then maybe you shouldn't keep sneaking off to come here. Your family are just worried about you; there's no harm in that; I wish my family cared that much about me. I won't be offended if you decide to stop visiting me."

Sam frowned. "You're my friend," he said and Gabriel's eyes widened in surprise.

"...That's mighty kind of you, but am I really worth tainting what you have with your pack? With your family?"

Sam pulled a face before averting his gaze.
"I just... I feel like I can trust you. You're not who I first thought you were and I kinda like the thrill of meeting a mysterious alpha alone without anyone trying to 'protect' me or keep me cocooned in a safe little bubble. It's nice to be... free for once," he confessed quietly and Gabriel's expression softened.

"...Yeah, well... I know that feeling." He lowered his gaze in thought. "...Why don't you bring Ruby along next time, then?" He said after a while. "Then she'll see I'm not competition."

Sam wrinkled his nose. "...No offence, but I don't think she'll like you."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "Why not?"

"She doesn't take too kindly to strangers, and since you won't tell me about your pack or your last name..."

Gabriel chuckled. "Nice try, kid. I don't know why you particularly care about that stuff. A name's a name and like I said, I left my pack behind me. I'm never going back."

Sam quirked a smile before it slowly faded.

"Sorry, but I don't think things would end well if I brought Ruby out here. She's not exactly tolerant of a couple of the newest members of our pack, so I doubt she'll get on with you."

Gabriel shrugged. "Eh... Worth a try." Suddenly, he frowned.

"I'm not trying to pry or anything... okay, well, I am, but... you and Ruby seem to fight a lot. Is... is everything okay between you two?"

Sam felt a frown creep over his features. Was Gabriel implying something?

"Everything's fine. We just... disagree on certain things and we argue. That's all."

Gabe made an odd face.

"And these 'arguments' are just arguments, right? A bit of shouting maybe, but still all verbal?"

Sam stiffened. The alpha was broaching a subject he wasn't willing to discuss with his own brother, never mind a stranger.

"I don't really think that's any of your business, Gabriel," huffed Sam, backing up a little and the alpha glanced at him for a few moments before shrugging.

"Right. Sorry." He scratched his ear idly. "Anyway, I think it's safe to say you have absolutely no interest in me after all my attempts to flirt with you have fallen flat, so I have no idea why Ruby thinks I'm competition."

Gabriel winked at the omega and Sam quirked a grin, beginning to relax at the familiar banter.

"Does that mean you'll stop trying to get me to sleep with you?"

"You kidding? No, of course not. It just means I have to up my game," chuckled Gabriel and Sam rolled his eyes.

"Are you encouraging me to cheat on my mate?"

"Well, is it working?" Teased Gabe and Sam shook his head.
"No."

"Then no, I'm not. I'm just giving a very beautiful and intelligent omega some well-deserved compliments."

Sam averted his gaze shyly as Gabriel grinned cheekily at him. He wasn't used to that sort of talk. He couldn't remember ever being called 'beautiful', and his alpha-like appearance didn't usually warrant compliments of that nature. Like Ruby said: alphas and betas didn't want an omega who was stronger or larger than them. That's why he was so lucky to have found Ruby.

Gabriel's tendency to throw sweet comments his way never failed to catch him off-guard. They almost made him feel special; as if he wasn't a freak.

"Thanks, Gabe," said Sam quietly and the alpha's gaze softened.

"See, when you say stuff like that, I'd almost think no one ever says nice things to you. Surely a charming, kind-hearted omega such as yourself receives dozens of compliments every day. I bet most of them come from that mate of yours."

Sam must have made a strange face, or maybe he shifted uncomfortably, because Gabriel's playful expression slowly dimmed.

"Did I ever tell you about the time I set myself on fire?" The alpha chirped and Sam blinked at the rapid change in subject. He shook his head as a smile wormed its way onto his face.

Gabriel grinned wolfishly.

"Sit down and let me tell you a story."

Sam chuckled and plodded over to the alpha as Gabriel sat down. They sat side by side, a few inches separating them as they watched the river flowing crisp and clear.

"When I was a pup, mother and father always said I was too adventurous for my own good. I used to stick my nose into things I had no business in, I always wandered away from the rest of the family despite being told to stay where I was, and I loved everything that was dangerous. Still do, actually," smirked Gabriel and Sam grinned. He could imagine a little Gabriel wandering away from camp to catch a colourful fish in a river, only to fall in to the water, or maybe stumbling across a rival pack of wolves and having to be rescued by his parents.

"I remember when I was about six or seven, running away from home... again. I came across this street party in the city and they were having a BBQ. There were so many delicious scents, not to mention I knew there would be cake, because what type of party doesn't have cake?"

Sam snorted. He knew of Gabriel's sweet tooth. It was a shame the wild couldn't provide him with the chocolates and sugary foods he craved; in that respect, Gabriel would probably fit quite well in a city.

"Anyway, as a pup I was kind of offended I hadn't been invited to this party with so much wonderful-smelling food, so I just sauntered down the street and pretended I lived there as I made a beeline for the dessert table."

Sam raised an eyebrow at the thought. Wild folk were usually bullied out of civilisation if they tried to infiltrate it. Gabriel must have been a pretty good actor to be able to hide that he didn't live in the city.
He idly wondered what Gabriel's human form looked like.

"Seven-year-old me thought I was pretty smart having blended into this party and you can imagine my delight when I got my chubby little hands on a whole Black Forest gateau."

Sam had vaguely heard of that particular cake from Jo. He couldn't really see what was so inviting about it, but Jo had been really excited at having tasted one.

"Just as I was sampling the tiramisu however, some posh-looking beta snob spotted me and started screaming obscenities at me as she gestured for her husband to chase me off. So I pocketed a few cookies and jumped off this table of desserts, thinking I would be able to make a break for it without anyone catching me.

"Except I wasn't watching where I was going and I didn't realise one of the gardens I was sprinting across had a low fire pit that they were using for the barbecue. So I just ran straight over it."

Sam winced, imagining a young Gabriel unknowingly charging over hot charcoals.

The alpha chuckled. "Yeah. Ouch. You can imagine how loud my screams were as my shoes began to melt and I fell on the fire pit and set fire to the rest of my clothes."

Sam hissed in sympathy. "How on Earth did you get back to your pack after that?"

Gabriel shook his head. "I didn't. I went straight to hospital and my family picked me up from there."

Sam nodded his head in agreement before freezing as a thought struck him.

"Wait. How did they know your parents if they live in a city?" Sam asked and Gabriel hesitated, eyes widening imperceptibly as if only just realising what he'd said.

"They'd seen me around before," shrugged Gabriel a little too dismissively. "We lived pretty close to there."

Sam frowned in confusion. That didn't add up.

"...And they just took you to a hospital and told your parents where you were? Even though they hate wild folk; they let you use their health care?"

Gabriel flicked his gaze away.

"Pretty much, yeah. They rang my parents as soon as we got to the hospital and I went home a few days later. Civilised folk aren't cruel, Sam. They wouldn't let a child suffer from burns."

Sam narrowed his eyes as he leaned away from the alpha.

"They rang your parents?"

Gabriel paused, realising his mistake and he closed his eyes as a soft curse tumbled from his lips.

"Where are you from, Gabriel?" Demanded Sam and the other wolf sighed before glancing back to the omega.

"Tallahassee, Florida. I was born in the city and I grew up there. It was only recently I decided to leave." Gabriel stared at Sam wearily. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you before, but you can understand why I didn't want to reveal I'm one of the civilised folk."
Sam climbed to his paws and shot the alpha a glare.

"You told me you were one of us; one of the wild folk," he accused and Gabriel frowned.

"Actually, I never said anything of the sort. You may have assumed it, but not once have I mentioned where I came from."

"You said you came from Apalachicola forest," scowled Sam and Gabriel sat up.

"No. I said I was from near Apalachicola forest. I never said I came from the wild."

Suddenly, Gabriel sighed and Sam raised a confused eyebrow when the alpha stood, ears lowered slightly and tail drooping as he began to walk away from the river.

"I'm sorry for deceiving you. Don't worry, you don't have to chase me off, I'll be gone by the morning and you won't have to worry about me tainting the landscape with my 'city ways'," grumbled Gabriel bitterly and Sam blinked before trotting to catch up with him. He placed himself in Gabriel's path and the golden wolf paused, watching him with a mixture of wariness and confusion.

"I'm not going to chase you off," huffed Sam irritatedly. "Whilst we generally don't like city folk out here, my pack and I have reason to believe that maybe you're not all quite as arrogant and condescending as we originally believed you to be."

Gabriel looked intrigued at that, but no way was Sam about to reveal Cas' horrific life story to this alpha who'd been keeping secrets from him.

"Besides," murmured Sam, "if all the stories you've told me are true, it seems to me that your family haven't exactly been the greatest of people, and anyone who stands against prejudice and bullying is alright in my books."

Gabriel had relayed many tales about his older alpha brothers who had looked down upon omegas and even some betas, objectifying them and treating them like they were somehow less important to society than alphas.

Gabriel's distaste for his brothers' actions was evident in his tone and Sam knew right away that the alpha didn't hold the same values as his older brothers. It was why Sam respected him.

The alpha paused, looking at Sam in surprise. He obviously hadn't expected the omega to stop him from leaving.

"What I'm aggravated - and slightly offended - about is that despite me trusting you with my pack relationships and the interactions between me and my mate, you couldn't even find it in yourself to trust me with the fact you grew up in a house instead of a cave," huffed Sam. "I've already admitted I like your company and that I trust you enough to tell you about my family; why on Earth would you think I'd suddenly turn on you and chase you away from here just because of where you were born? Do you really believe me to be that shallow?"

Gabriel had the grace to look vaguely guilty.

"...I'm sorry, Sam... I didn't really consider you actually..." He trailed off as he averted his gaze. "A lot of wild folk have made their opinions of civilised folk quite clear and honestly? I'm not exactly well-equipped to be fighting off angry packs who don't want me near their territory. I just assumed if I told you where I was originally from, you wouldn't want me here."

The alpha glanced at him apologetically.
"It's not as though we've exactly made it easy for you guys to step foot into civilisation without you having to watch your backs. I just assumed the reverse would apply out here."

Sam rolled his eyes, relaxing slightly once he realised Gabriel wasn't inclined to start acting hostile with him now his secret was out.

"You being used to bricks and mortar rather than bark and leaves isn't going to change anything between us. Unless you've lied about everything else too, you're still the same annoyingly flirty alpha who has a bigger heart than he likes to admit and thinks he's the most hilarious thing to ever have walked the planet."

A smile slowly crept across Gabriel's face.

"Thanks, Sam."

The omega snorted. "It's not like I don't understand why you kept it a secret. I'm just kinda hurt you'd think I'd set my pack on you."

Gabriel looked marginally ashamed of himself.

"I guess I'm not used to people being genuine," he admitted in a moment of honesty and Sam's heart ached a little at that.

"Considering what you've told me so far of your family, I can believe that," mumbled Sam.

Gabriel being raised in a city would certainly explain why he seemed to avoid physical contact. Civilised folk were raised to be completely independent; they didn't often engage in touch unless they were really close to that person and fully trusted them. It wasn't uncommon for family members (or pack members) to never touch one another.

Wild folk were completely different. They sought physical contact regularly from pack members; it was a way of bonding and seeking comfort. It showed trust and friendly affection and for wild folk, going without touch was almost as bad as not eating.

Civilised folk were peculiar creatures.

Sam tilted his head slightly when Gabriel wouldn't meet his gaze.

"Well, now that's established, why don't you relax and tell me more about city life?" The omega suggested and Gabriel's gaze shot up, eyes widening.

"...You want to know about city life?"

Sam quirked a grin, tail swishing in amusement.

"Sure. Why not? Maybe we can compare childhoods or something as equally corny."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow before shaking his head with a small smile.

"You're just full of surprises, aren't you?"

Sam offered him a lop-sided grin as the alpha gingerly took up his previous position overlooking the river. Sam watched him settle down and made a spilt-second decision.

The alpha stiffened as Sam flopped down beside him, pressing into his side as though it was the most natural thing in the world.
"...Sam?" Tried Gabriel, voice quiet and uncertain, and Sam huffed softly as he leaned into the sweet-smelling alpha.

"I'm not gonna bite."

Gabriel opened his mouth to say something but immediately thought better of it and snapped it shut again as he eyed Sam warily. When nothing happened though, the alpha slowly relaxed and allowed Sam to settle more comfortably against his side.

"...Is this something you guys do out here?" Asked Gabriel tentatively and a tiny smile crossed Sam's features as he watched the river flow peacefully through the meadow.

"It's a way of bonding," he replied quietly. "To someone we trust."

Gabriel hesitated and Sam couldn't help but sneak a glance in the alpha's direction. His smile widened when he saw Gabriel gazing at him almost in awe, as though Sam had just granted the alpha the greatest kindness.

"So, what would you like to know about the city?" Asked Gabriel after a moment and Sam let his curiosity get the better of him as he asked Gabriel questions and answered the alpha's in return.

Three hours passed quicker than either of them had expected, and between their laughing, chatting and teasing one another, neither of them noticed when the stars began to twinkle in the darkening sky, casting shadows on the meadow.

Conversation slowly tapered off and Gabriel glanced around.

"I think it's time for you to go home, kid," he said. "Your pack's gonna get worried about you."

Sam glanced around too, raising an eyebrow as he first noticed that it was now dark.

"I guess so," he hummed before turning back to his friend with a subtle frown.

"Gabe?"

"Hm?"

"When I leave, where do you go? I mean if you used to live in a city and you haven't joined a pack out here, where do you sleep? And how do you catch food for that matter?" He remembered the emaciated states Cas and his son had been in when they first arrived in Winchester territory. Gabriel, whilst a little on the thin side, didn't look like he was going to starve to death any time soon.

Gabriel grinned lop-sidedly.

"I usually just sleep under any tree that looks like it's going to protect me from the rain, and I throw a blanket over myself to keep the cold out. Food-wise I brought some dehydrated meals and some cereal bars. They don't taste the greatest, but I don't plan to live in the wild permanently. I'm hoping soon I'll be able to find a new city and start again."

Sam couldn't help the stab of disappointment in his chest. Hearing that Gabriel would be leaving soon was actually quite saddening for the omega. He didn't want to lose his friend.

To think that the alpha slept alone with no protection and merely a tree to fend off the elements disturbed Sam in more ways than one. It was a miracle Gabriel hadn't been attacked for this long and the more Sam looked at Gabe, the more he realised just how lonely the alpha was. He was good at
hiding it, but being on his own for so long was wearing Gabriel down and it showed in his eyes if anyone cared to look.

"I could teach you how to hunt?" Offered Sam quietly. "Might taste better than some powdered grey dust."

Gabriel looked surprised.

"Won't my stomach have to get used to raw meat?"

Sam nodded. "If you're not used to it, it will. But we are built for handling that sort of food. You will get used to it."

Gabriel contemplated this for a few moments before nodding slowly.

"Okay... that sounds... great, actually. Thank you, Sam."

Sam's heart ached a little more. Did anyone do anything nice for this alpha?

He plastered on a smile. "Awesome. Next time I can get away from the pack, I'll come and teach you."

Gabriel's tail began to sway in suppressed excitement as the wolf himself nodded and Sam's smile turned more genuine.

"See you then," said Gabriel as he clambered to his paws and as Sam thought about the lonely alpha retreating to an old tree, settling on the cool, muddy ground with nothing but a blanket for comfort, he almost asked him to come back to the pack with him.

But then he thought about Ruby and how she would react at seeing him bringing home a foreign alpha, and how Dean would react when Gabriel refused to reveal his old pack and his last name. Then he thought about how the other pack members would react at having a city alpha joining them; one who was so secretive and he deemed Gabriel better off out here, where no one could judge or interrogate him.

"Good night, Sam," said Gabriel before beginning to turn away and for the second time that day, Sam stopped him.

Gabriel gasped sharply when Sam hugged him, nose buried in the alpha's fur as he curled his neck around Gabe's. The alpha's eyebrows rocketed upwards when Sam made a point of scenting him and then Gabe was cautiously nosing at Sam's neck as he relaxed, hugging the omega back gently.

Sam smiled as he inhaled Gabriel's chocolate and hazelnut odour, committing it to memory. The shock from earlier had dissipated and happiness and curiosity had taken its place, radiating from Gabriel's scent in waves. Sam wondered what the alpha truly smelled like when he wasn't wearing that ridiculous cologne.

The omega chuckled when Gabriel's cool nose tickled at his neck. The alpha was scenting him quite determinedly and it was clear he wasn't used to this sort of contact.

After a few moments though, Sam realised Gabriel was sniffing him for a reason.

"Gabe?"

The alpha pulled away with a confused frown.
"For a second, I thought you smelled like...." he trailed off and Sam raised an eyebrow.

A bright grin plastered itself over Gabriel's face and Sam wondered how the alpha was originally going to finish that sentence.

"Strawberries," said Gabriel instead. "Strawberries and freshly cut grass."

Sam quirked a smile. "So I've been told."

Gabriel pressed his nose back into Sam's fur and the omega laughed as the alpha made a point of inhaling deeply.

"It's a homely smell," hummed Gabriel. "Reminds me of Summer."

Sam wasn't sure why he ducked his head shyly at that, but he did and Gabriel noticed.

"You hugged me first; you're not allowed to get all bashful now," he teased and Sam rolled his eyes but was reluctant to let go of the alpha. He wasn't entirely certain why, but maybe it had something to do with the thought of leaving Gabriel alone again, with no one to talk to or look out for him.

He was well aware Gabriel was an alpha, but leaving him to fend for himself in the wild whilst he was used to the comforts of the city didn't sit well with him.

Okay, so maybe he was being a little over-protective now he knew his friend was one of the civilised folk.

"You'd better get going, kid," murmured Gabriel. "I wouldn't like your pack to start panicking."

Sam gently squeezed his friend in a brief hug and when he pulled away, Gabriel was smiling fondly at him in a way that made Sam's chest grow warm.

"Be careful out here on your own," said Sam softly, despite knowing the alpha would probably scoff at an omega worrying over his ability to protect himself.

To his surprise, Gabriel chuckled.

"I've not had much luck with that so far, between the spiders, poisonous frogs, toxic plants and every other thing that wants to kill me, I think I'm gonna have to hire you as my personal bodyguard."

Sam huffed out a laugh.

"Well... just... howl if you need help. Someone will hear."

"Will do, bucko."

Sam shook his head at the nickname before slowly turning around.

"Oh, and Sam?" Came Gabriel's quiet voice, making the omega pause.

"Thanks," murmured Gabriel sincerely. "For not forcing me away."

Sam shot the alpha a sad smile. How many times had Gabriel been chased off by other packs? How many times had he been attacked?

How come no one did anything nice for the alpha?
Sam stayed silent as he traipsed off into the woods, feet dragging slightly and heart suddenly heavier than it had been all day.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the lack of updates guys! Had exams in Uni. Not fun. Have some Sabriel after the Destiel/Cadreel chapter from last time. :)
Castiel was almost certain Sam was meeting with someone outside the pack. The other omega disappeared for hours at a time and came back looking slightly damp but happy. He was clearly trying to wash a scent off his fur, or something of that ilk, but Sam wasn't giving anyone any clues as to where he ran off to when things at the camp were quiet.

Not that Cas particularly blamed him. If he was mated to Ruby, he'd need long breaks alone too.

However, before Sam had started bathing in rivers or streams before he returned to camp, Castiel had often caught a whiff of something his brain demanded was familiar, yet he couldn't quite place the scents.

He had been sure he could smell something vaguely resembling a cookie, but mixed with Sam's own scent it was difficult to decipher. Then there was the faint stench of alpha cologne that Cas had definitely smelled before, but he guessed he'd only been around it once or twice because his brain wasn't making any connections with the odour. It was incredibly frustrating and something within Cas was demanding the information important, but he couldn't understand why.

When Sam had started washing the scents away before coming to camp, Castiel had even less hope of working out what was so familiar about them.

"You okay, Cas?" Came a kind, feminine voice. "You look troubled."

Cas was snapped out of his musings and he glanced to his side, where Lisa was lounging.

"Hm? Oh yeah. Just thinking." Castiel's gaze flicked over to where Dean was playing hide and seek with the four pups. He let a small smile grace his face.

Lisa followed his line of sight and chuckled softly as Dean deliberately walked past Ben's hiding spot, pretending he couldn't see the tail peeking around the tree trunk.

"I don't think I've ever seen him so happy," she hummed quietly before glancing back to Cas. "You make him very happy."

Cas looked away shyly. "He makes me very happy," he admitted and Lisa's gaze was tender and fond before a sly smirk crept across her features.

"The sex is just that good, huh?"

Castiel's eyes widened as his head swivelled towards the cackling Lisa.

"That's- that isn't- I..."

Lisa grinned at him cheekily. "You don't need to tell me any details," she teased before winking. "In case you've forgotten, I already know how good the sex is."

Castiel's jaw dropped even as something possessive and jealous shifted low in his belly.

Whilst he knew Dean and Lisa had been together years ago and that their fling had ended a very long time ago, Cas was ashamed to say that he still got a little jealous when Dean and Lisa chatted
together. He loved Lisa, he really did; especially after all the help she'd given him and Samandriel when they'd first limped into Winchester territory, and he would do everything he could to protect Lisa and Ben, but the thought that she had once been with Dean made him more than a little possessive.

He had a feeling Lisa had worked this out a few weeks ago and now just liked to rile him up or say phallic things about him and Dean when she got bored.

And she had such an innocent face too.

The black and brown omega grinned. "Try to keep noise to a minimum tonight?" She quipped and Cas realised then that Lisa definitely knew how much her teasing affected him.

Cas huffed petulantly and Lisa snorted before settling into a more comfortable position against his side.

"Oh please, you love an excuse to get all possessive over him," she smirked and Cas rolled his eyes despite curling his tail around her.

"I think he gets off on it more than I do," grumbled Cas and it was enough to wring a startled bark of laughter from Lisa.

"We'll have you as foul-mouthed as the rest of us in no time," she grinned, leaning her head on his shoulder and Cas shifted to accommodate her.

The concept of letting someone make contact with him like this was foreign to Castiel, but it was by no means unwelcome. Other than Gabriel and Samandriel, Castiel had never been shown such affection, so having Lisa or Gadreel or on one memorable occasion, Benny, just press into him like this made him feel as though he was wanted; as though he had never been a Novak.

They watched Dean sneak up on Ben and chuckled when the little pup yelped in surprise.

"It's good to see him relaxing for once," murmured Lisa. "He's always so tense; always looking out for us. He never gives anyone a chance to look out for him."

Cas nodded idly. Their relationship still had a few kinks to iron out; afterall it was still quite fresh, and Castiel had assumed that would mostly involve him having to learn how to act and think like one of the wild folk. He knew his upbringing had tainted his views on how omegas should behave around alphas and other pack members, but he had never considered that Dean might need help adjusting to the fact that he didn't have to keep all his worries and concerns bottled up anymore.

It had taken weeks to get Dean to begin coming to him whenever he was troubled. Dean had a tendency to keep everything to himself in order to save other people from stress, and Cas had had to continuously prod and poke at the alpha until he admitted to even the smallest of problems, such as him being worried about what time would be best for hunting considering the changing hours of daylight.

Then Cas had quickly realised how insecure his lover was over his own abilities to lead and protect everyone, and people like Ruby did nothing to reassure him.

Cas had developed a grudge against John Winchester for all he had done to his sons, both physically and mentally. He hoped the older alpha never returned because Cas wouldn't be responsible for his actions if he did.

"You're good for him, Castiel," hummed Lisa. "And I hope you won't be offended when I say he's
good for you."

Cas offered her a warm smile. "Not at all," he said as he nuzzled her cheek, making her grin.

"Although I do have a feeling you've been wanting us to get together for quite a while," he commented and Lisa laughed, her tail swishing joyfully.

"You caught me," she admitted. "What gave me away? The knowing looks or the teasing?"

Cas thought back to the time in the cave when Dean had been injured by Alistair and he, Dean and Lisa had curled up together to sleep.

"The morning after Alistair attacked Dean, you took the pups out to play and you left me and Dean alone together. When you walked away you gave me this... look, as if you already suspected something between us," he recalled and Lisa cast her mind back to that day, smiling as she remembered.

"All I remember is you looking rather upset at the prospect of Dean and I still being together."

Cas averted his gaze shyly. Had he really been that obvious in his attraction to Dean so early on? He himself hadn't realised he liked the alpha until the day they'd visited the city; was it possible he'd subconsciously been attracted to Dean much earlier?

"I suppose I should say thank you," mumbled Cas. "For giving us a 'nudge' in the right direction."

Lisa grinned and leaned her head against his shoulder again.

"You're very welcome."

"I'm wounded," huffed a gruff voice. "Already cheating on me, Angel?"

Castiel flushed at the pet name and Lisa stifled her own laughter as Dean winked at them both, two pups attacking his legs, one swiping at his tail and the other chewing quite determinedly on his ear.

Suddenly he reared up, front paws scrabbling in mid air for a moment in a movement not dissimilar to a fearful horse, and he howled comically as he tried to buck off his attackers.

"Away with you, terrible Hounds of Hell," he growled playfully, gently batting his paws at the pups, making them giggle and bark with excitement as they renewed their efforts to down him.

"Help," cried Dean. "I need my Guardian Angel!"

Lisa leapt to her feet with a smirk and just when the pups began to back up, thinking she was going to chase them away, she suddenly jumped on Dean, pinning him to the ground. The pups laughed in delight as Dean stared up at her in surprise, then he was wriggling desperately to break free as his ears and tail were assaulted by tiny teeth and claws.

"Where's my Angel?" He whined and Cas rolled his eyes.

"Slapping his forehead and wishing he had a different charge."

Dean pouted as he flicked his gaze over to Castiel.

"Why does nobody love me?"

Oh, but Dean knew just how to guilt-trip him.
Cas hoisted himself to his paws as he trudged towards the mess of limbs and fur.

He rumbled lowly as he approached, growl gravelly and sinister as he advanced on the children, body crouched and tail swishing threateningly.

Ecstatic at the prospect of another playmate, the pups growled back, barking and yipping as the omega stalked closer.

Then Castiel snapped his jaws at them and they startled and sprinted away laughing, Castiel hot on their heels. He was aware of Lisa letting Dean go and soon, the alpha was helping him chase the pups towards Lisa.

Samandriel yelped as Lisa trapped him between her paws, licking his face sloppily as Cas caught Ben and Dean grabbed Claire and Alex.

"Mmm... tastes good enough to eat," teased Lisa and Samandriel's eyes widened as he and his friends squirmed harder to break free of the adults' grasps.

Eventually they took pity on the children and released them, chuckling as the four bounded off to another part of the camp to play a new game.

When Castiel turned back to the other two wolves, he noticed Dean gazing at him fondly and his heart melted just a little, as it was wont to do around the gentle alpha.

Lisa glanced between the pair knowingly, a smirk lighting her features.

"Well, boys, after that I'm going to go take a nap. These legs aren't what they used to be and I could do with some rest. Don't do anything I wouldn't," she commented before sauntering away, leaving Cas and Dean to watch her go.

"Hey, Angel," hummed Dean quietly, and Castiel smiled shyly as the alpha nuzzled his jaw.

Dean had developed a tendency to use pet names, and his favourite by far was obviously 'Angel'. Castiel still couldn't quite get used to the affectionate name and his heart fluttered every time Dean used it. It was a good feeling though; a feeling of being adored and wanted.

Cas pressed his head under Dean's chin and the alpha happily rubbed his scent over his omega.

When Cas had first learned about how omegas in the wild submitted to alphas, he had been horrified and disgusted. Explanations were so crude; his teachers and professors speaking of omegas presenting, alphas forcefully knotting their subordinates, throat biting, alpha displays of dominance and aggression and many other things that Cas at the time had been repulsed by.

But nobody ever mentioned that submitting to a wild alpha could also be pleasurable, or make him feel safe. Nobody ever mentioned how wonderful it was to wedge his head beneath a trusted alpha's chin and have them tug him closer in order to embrace him with the comforting scent of pine trees and leather.

Nobody ever mentioned how good it felt to bare his throat when he and his alpha were making love, and know that his alpha would mouth kisses over it; suck and lick at the tender flesh in little shows of possessiveness.

Civilised folk never spoke of how loving wild alphas could be when they were dominating their omegas, but Cas had certainly learned how cruel civilised alphas could be with their omegas.
He snuggled further into Dean, pressing his head against the alpha's side until the two were practically curled around one another as they nuzzled and licked each other's fur.

Dean rumbled in approval and the vibrations shooting through Cas' frame coupled with the strong scent of pleased alpha made the omega within Cas purr in contentment. The smaller wolf made a soft noise of happiness and Dean growled quietly, possessively as he continued to lavish his lover with affection.

"Walk with me?" Whispered Dean and Cas felt a smirk slip over his features. Dean wanted to be alone with him.

He nodded and Dean led him out of the camp, nodding over to Lisa in silent explanation of where they were going. The female omega winked, apparently having no intention of taking a nap, instead choosing to chat with Meg and Crowley. The alpha and beta couple were smirking at Cas and Dean smugly and Cas felt his head lower in embarrassment.

Dean however, pressed further into his side and curled his tail around his lover as they left the rest of the pack.

They wandered in silence for approximately half an hour, enjoying one another's company and basking in each other's scents. Then Cas began to chuckle as he realised where Dean was leading him.

They climbed the hill they'd first started all of this on and when they got to the peak, they took a moment to glance at the beauty of the surrounding forest. It truly was peaceful up here; relaxing and calming.

"I love you, Cas," murmured Dean as they leaned into one another and the omega smiled as he tucked his head under his lover's and closed his eyes.

"I know all this can be hard for you to get used to, but I'm so glad you decided to stay with us. With me," mumbled Dean and Cas leaned back to lick his muzzle tenderly.

"You're right; it does get difficult. But I wouldn't trade being out here with you for anything. You've given me a home, Dean. I don't think I've ever had one of those before."

"...Do you ever miss the city?" Asked Dean softly, curious emerald eyes meeting sapphire and Castiel glanced down towards the tiny clearing he knew to be the camp.

"Sometimes. I miss my books and my evenings curled up on the sofa with a blanket and a warm drink as the TV makes the room glow gentle colours. I miss my cosy bed and my old radio. I miss my hot showers," he smirked, sneaking a glance at Dean, who chuckled.

"I miss Gabriel..." admitted Cas quietly and Dean's expression turned into something more understanding and sympathetic.

"But then I think about my time with you and your pack," continued Cas. "The time spent making friends and learning about all of you and the way you live. The time spent watching Samandriel explore and be happy for once. The time spent curled up with you, your body pressed against mine as your tail wraps around me, with your paw draped over me and Samandriel, protecting us, keeping us safe."

Cas nosed at his lover's jaw.

"And suddenly... I don't miss those other things quite so much anymore."
Dean's gaze warmed as his eyes shone with love and awe, and Cas rubbed their noses together affectionately.

"Make me yours, Dean," whispered Cas. "I want to belong to you. I want to feel your arms around me; taste your lips and breathe in your scent. I want to feel your body moving against mine; I want to feel your knot binding us together. I want you."

Dean's gaze brimmed with lust and an intensity Cas knew was only reserved for him.

"You're being needy today," murmured Dean as he nuzzled his lover's muzzle. "Is everything okay?"

Cas nodded and bowed his head submissively, allowing Dean to access his ears and neck.

Dean paused concernedly and Cas made a face.

"Maybe Lisa said a few things that made me a little jealous," he admitted and Dean huffed out a laugh before resuming his tender nuzzling.

"I assure you you're the only one for me, Angel."

Cas ducked his head at the name. "I know she's only teasing but sometimes..."

"You get extremely possessive and want to show everyone that I'm your alpha and no one else's, and that you're my omega?" Grinned Dean and Cas pouted.

"When you put it like that, I sound like some controlling assbutt."

Dean snorted and leaned their foreheads together.

"Not at all, darlin'. You know how much I just love being around you. It doesn't matter what we're doing, as long as I'm close to you, I'm happy."

Cas' heart was quickly forming a puddle of contented goo.

"Now, allow me to prove who my omega is," smirked Dean as he began to morph into his human form, Cas excitedly following suit when his brain caught up.

"Present," rumbled Dean, lead alpha authority bleeding into his tone and as Cas scrambled to his hands and knees, he thought about all those professors and teachers who had told him such sordid and terrible things about wild alphas, and he vowed to visit his home city with Dean at some point in the future, knock on all their doors and flip them off.

He gasped in surprise when Dean picked him up and carried him bridal style towards the tree they'd used for support last time they were up here.

Dean carefully lowered him to his feet and turned him around until he was facing the trunk.

"Present, omega," Dean said again and Cas quickly braced his hands against the bark, grateful that the Springtime had brought slightly warmer temperatures with it.

He closed his eyes when Dean's calloused hands fluttered down his bare sides. The alpha took his time exploring Cas, thumbs tracing over his thighs and warm palms sliding over his stomach. Lips trailed down his spine, making him shiver as fingertips lightly grazed the back of his neck.

A thumb brushed his nipple and Cas' breaths paused for a millisecond as Dean circled his digit over
the little nub before pinching it gently.

Cas didn't care what he'd thought of omegas submitting to alphas in the past, he would let Dean prove his dominance every day of the week if that was what the alpha wanted.

Dean scooted closer to his lover until their legs were pressed against one another and Cas couldn't help the tiny mewl of want when he felt his alpha's hardness pinned against him.

"That's my good, little omega," rumbled Dean as he scraped his fingernails over Castiel's spine and Cas practically purred at the praise, uncaring of the fact that at one time, he would have been disgusted at himself for conforming to the needy omega stereotype.

Dean draped himself over his back to nip and kiss his jaw and Cas arched into the alpha's warmth, making Dean slip his arm around his stomach.

He tilted his head to one side, giving Dean more access and Cas really should have been paying attention to where the alpha's other hand was heading because he could do nothing to stop the quiet moan escaping his lips as fingers slid between his thighs and glided upwards to fondle anything they could reach.

Slick was beginning to drip down Cas' thighs and Dean smiled against his jaw as he circled a finger around his hole, encouraging more slick to leak from it.

"All wet for me," whispered Dean and Cas' breath stuttered with arousal as he reached his own hand behind him for his alpha.

Suddenly, Dean snarled and trapped his hand back against the tree, rolling his hips roughly and succeeding in dragging a ragged groan from Cas' throat.

"I didn't say you could move, omega," hissed Dean, nipping his shoulder in reprimand and Cas stilled, allowing his alpha to return to his previous task.

As Dean continued drawing slick from him, Cas settled against his lover and Dean nosed at his jaw and pressed a chaste kiss to it, as if showing the omega that this was only a game; if Cas grew uncomfortable at any time, his alpha would stop immediately.

Cas turned his head to nuzzle at his lover's cheek, silently telling him he understood Dean would never actually hurt him and the alpha made a pleased sound before his slick-coated hand slid over Cas' erection.

Castiel gasped and Dean wrapped his hand around him, stroking him slowly but firmly and Cas made a choked whimper of pleasure that made his alpha huff in approval.

Dean began to lightly grind his hips against Cas and the omega wanted nothing more than to touch his lover; to offer him some of the pleasure Dean was giving him, but he knew he wasn't allowed to so he settled on arching into the alpha, letting out a desperate whine he knew would make Dean growl.

He wasn't disappointed when a heated grumble vibrated through Dean's chest, the noise full of lust and want and Castiel's breath stuttered when Dean ground against him particularly harshly.

"Dean... please..."

Dean snarled again and nipped at his shoulder in scolding once more and Castiel quickly realised his mistake.
"I'm sorry, alpha," he whispered and Dean hummed in approval as he nuzzled the area he'd just bitten.

Suddenly, Cas was flipped around and his back pushed against the tree as Dean crushed their lips together. Castiel found his wrists had been pinned above his head by Dean's grip.

Dean's tongue mapped out his mouth, savouring every taste of him he could get before he scraped his teeth over Cas' bottom lip, tugging at it gently.

As he thrust his tongue back into Cas' mouth, he slid their erections over one another teasingly, and Cas let out a pathetic whimper when Dean began to roll their hips together.

Feeling rebellious, Cas nipped at Dean's lip.

"Tease," he whispered and Dean growled warningly and pressed his body flush with Cas'. He shoved the omega's head to one side and began to trail little bite marks up the soft flesh of his neck.

A small sting accompanied each one, but Cas loved them all because they each signified Dean's claim on him; each one told the world just who he belonged to.

If he had been reprimanded by an alpha who truly wanted to show him his place, he had no doubt his neck would be covered in blood by now and his body would probably have a few bruises too.

To Dean though, this was a game. He hated how some alphas treated their omegas; hated how they liked to prove their dominance over them. Although he was quite willing to play along with the submissive omega/dominant alpha stereotype, there was no way he'd ever actually punish Cas with intent to harm him.

Cas remembered the first time they'd tried this game. They hadn't set out to fall into their gender roles, but the heat of the moment had reduced them to their base instincts and Cas had presented to Dean.

At first things had been fun, but then Cas had moaned Dean's name instead of 'alpha', and Dean had gently scolded him with a nip.

Cas had frozen, all his memories of the awful things wild alphas supposedly did to omegas rushing to the forefront of his mind. He remembered how his alpha brothers and father had hit him when he stepped out of line; how alphas on the NEWS were arrested for abusing omegas in horrific ways, and he had begun to shake, terrified for his safety.

However, he had been surprised when Dean paused to look at him, all the lust and desire vanishing from his eyes immediately when he saw how frightened his lover was.

He had loosened his grip so Cas could easily move and began to pepper sweet kisses over his cheek and neck.

"It's okay, Angel," he had murmured. "This isn't real. Not gonna hurt you."

Cas had very slowly relaxed and the pair had sunk to the ground, Dean tugging his distressed omega into his lap as he stroked his back soothingly. Once Cas calmed down enough to realise he really was in no danger, he had buried his face into Dean's neck and scented him for a few long minutes as Dean continued to whisper apologies and comforting words into his ear.

Their relationship had come a long way since then.
Castiel must have been a little unresponsive whilst lost in his memories because Dean loosened his grip slightly and began to pepper kisses over his face.

"You still okay, Cas?" He asked quietly and the omega blinked to the present and nodded, kissing Dean's lips softly.

"Thinking about the first time we did this," he murmured before slipping his hand from Dean's lax grip and pulling the alpha flush with his body again. Dean had obviously backed off a little, thinking he was nervous, but Cas was determined to show him that he wanted this; that he trusted Dean.

He slid his hand back above his head, into Dean's palm and he interlaced their fingers and rolled his hips encouragingly.

Satisfied his lover really was content to continue, Dean shifted until both their hands were tangled together and pressed his lips to Cas' once more.

Then to the omega's surprise, Dean began to trail kisses over Cas' chest. His hands slid to the omega's hips and Cas huffed out a laugh as his lips brushed over his stomach.

Just as Castiel was beginning to relax at light sensations, Dean's grip on his hips tightened and he was manhandled to the floor, lying on his back as Dean spread his legs.

Castiel's head shot up to look at Dean in surprise and the alpha winked mischievously before lowering his head between his lover's legs.

Cas let out a ragged groan as Dean began to lick the slick from his thighs before teasing at his hole.

Dean rumbled happily as he continued to taste his lover and Cas' head fell backwards onto the ground as he moaned shamelessly.

"Taste so sweet, little omega," hummed Dean and Cas arched upwards when the alpha did something clever with his tongue.

After a few moments, Dean slithered up his body again and captured his lips in a searing kiss and Cas whined in pleasure when he felt his alpha slide into him.

Cas attempted to tangle his fingers in Dean's hair, but Dean quickly interlaced their fingers once more and Cas' only choice was to wrap his legs around his lover's hips to show his appreciation.

"Such a good alpha," whispered Castiel in between kisses and Dean practically preened as he nuzzled his lover's jaw.

It wasn't long before Dean's knot began to form and Cas couldn't help but bare his throat for his lover.

He'd grown to love giving up all ounce of control to his alpha; adored knowing that Dean would keep him safe and protected when he was lying helpless like this. He wanted to give everything he had to Dean; to show him he trusted him completely; that he knew Dean wasn't like all those other alphas who hurt and abused omegas for their own pleasure.

Dean seemed to enjoy the shift in control as well because he nuzzled Cas' throat protectively and placed a single kiss to it.

"Mine," he whispered and Cas made a soft sound of agreement.
"My omega," growled Dean a little louder as his thrusts deepened and his knot began to swell.

Cas whined in the typical submissive omega manner and it was enough to drive Dean's alpha over the edge because with another possessive rumble, he leaned down and marked his lover's throat as he wrapped his hand around Cas' aching hardness.

After a few heated minutes, Castiel cried out Dean's name and both of them were coming down from their high.

Knot locking them tightly together, Dean rolled onto his side and Cas snuggled into him, inhaling his scent deeply. He smiled at the waves of happiness and pleasure rolling off his alpha.

Dean gently stroked Cas' back as he nuzzled his hair and the two couldn't help but wriggle closer.

"You smell amazing," murmured Cas and Dean placed a kiss to his hair.

"You're one to talk. I think I could get off on your scent alone."

Cas chuckled. "You smell like a very happy alpha."

Dean grinned as he hugged his lover.

"I am a very happy alpha."

Cas pressed his lips to Dean's chest as his thumb caressed circles into his hip.

"I love you, Dean. I love giving myself to you. I love being able to trust you and knowing that you'll never hurt me. I love wanting to be yours."

Dean looked embarrassed at the low rumble he let slip and Cas smiled as he pressed his nose into Dean's throat.

"My alpha," he murmured and Dean rolled over onto his back, tugging Cas with him as he stole a few kisses.

"Always," Dean promised and Cas smiled as he leaned down for another kiss.

* * *

Sam glanced at his sleeping mate. It was around three in the morning and he'd startled awake when his nightmares had brought about images of tall flames, dirty smoke and dreadful screaming.

He wanted to wrap a paw around Ruby to convince himself she was safe and then he could hopefully drop off into a peaceful slumber, but he knew his mate hated it when it looked as though he was trying to protect her. It made her feel weak and underestimated.

He contented himself with scenting her instead, but he wrinkled his nose at the smoky smell. For some reason he had been hoping for something a little sweeter, like chocolate.

He pulled his head away and settled down once more, closing his eyes.

Twenty minutes later, it was clear he wasn't going to get to sleep any time soon.
He flicked his gaze outside and his thoughts wondered to Gabriel. What was the golden alpha doing? Was he alone? Had he finally found an omega and was happily curled up with them?

For some reason, that thought made Sam's chest ache and he frowned at the tight feeling before glancing back down at his mate.

...Maybe he could check on Gabriel? Just to ensure he was safe? After all, no one else knew he was there; he had no one to turn to for help if he was ever attacked.

Convinced this was the most logical thing to do when he couldn't sleep at twenty past three in the morning, Sam carefully stepped over Ruby and crept out of the camp, glancing all around to make sure he wasn't being followed.

When he finally reached the meadow fifty minutes later, he was dismayed to find Gabriel absent.

He berated himself for acting on such an impulse. What was he thinking? It was dangerous being out here alone in the dark. He was a long distance from the camp and he'd left his mate on her own because he hadn't been thinking straight. He shook his head. What had he come out here for anyway? To check on a foreign alpha he'd only known for a couple of months? He was acting like a naive pup.

He was about to turn around and head back to camp when a cool breeze blew past his nose, carrying the scent of familiar cologne with it.

He sniffed the air and, despite his better judgement, followed the smell.

Ten minutes later, he spotted a figure lying under a tree, a blanket covering it and a small, leather bag propped up by the tree trunk.

Curious, Sam padded closer and a smile twitched at his lips when he recognised Gabriel sound asleep under the blanket, his floppy ear bent over one eye, making him look like an overgrown puppy.

Sam would never admit to the scene being one of the cutest he'd ever laid eyes upon.

He ventured a little closer, this time to check the alpha really was uninjured and when he got within six feet of his friend, he paused.

Suddenly, his back hit the floor sharply as his shoulders were pinned by two sets of claws and a threatening snarl accompanied the bared, pointed teeth directed at his face.

In blind panic, Sam swiped at the creature holding him captive and managed to throw him off before scrambling to his feet when the figure jumped at him again.

They tussled for a few moments, snapping and growling at one another as they tried to subdue one another. Then Sam threw the other wolf to the ground and placed his claws on his throat with a warning snarl.

Gabriel blinked up at him.

"...Sam?"

Sam blinked back.

"...Gabe?"
Sam quickly scrabbled off the alpha, allowing Gabriel to climb to his paws, where he proceeded to stare at Sam in confusion.

"What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be sleeping?"

Sam averted his gaze. "...Couldn't sleep," he confessed.

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. He knew of Sam's nightmares.

"And you came out here on your own at four in the morning looking for... what exactly?"

Sam shrugged. He honestly didn't know why he'd come out here.

Gabriel sighed. "You need to rest, Sam. Not take long walks in the dark to clear your head."

"I can't rest," huffed Sam. "I can't sleep," he said, glancing up to his friend with pleading eyes, begging him to understand.

Gabriel's expression softened.

"Okay, kid. I get it." He glanced at his blanket longingly before tilting his head in contemplation.

He walked over to his sleeping spot and settled back down before flicking his gaze over to Sam.

"Well, if you can't sleep, there's no point in me making you go back there, especially not on your own." He gestured to his side at Sam's puzzled tilt of his head.

"Wanna come here and talk about it?" He asked softly and Sam's eyes widened in a mixture of shock and awe and something in his heart warmed.

"I don't want to intrude," he said instead and Gabriel rolled his eyes.

"Trust me, you already did that when you decided to stare at me from six feet away whilst I slept. Anyone else might find that creepy, by the way," he teased and Sam ducked his head in shame.

"Just so happens I'm a light sleeper," commented Gabriel. "Even if you did still manage to pin me." He had to be a light sleeper. He had no one to watch his back out here; he was open to all sorts of danger.

"I'm sorry, Gabriel," Sam offered quietly and Gabriel shook his head.

"Yeah, well, I'm sorry for attacking you. Guess I should've looked before I leapt. So you joining me or not?" The alpha glanced to his side again and Sam slowly padded over.

"'S nice to have some company for once, anyway," murmured Gabriel and Sam picked up his pace a little.

He lowered himself beside the alpha and tensed in surprise when Gabriel threw the blanket over them both. Touched, Sam snuggled closer to the alpha and Gabriel eyed him in amusement before gingerly draping a paw over his side.

Sam grinned and Gabriel huffed out a laugh when the omega tucked his head under his chin. The alpha squeezed him gently.

"Want to talk about what's been keeping you awake?"
Sam hesitated before nodding slowly. It's not like he could talk with anyone else. Ruby had heard enough about Jessica anyway and Dean had Cas to look after now. He didn't want to burden any of the other pack members with his problems; especially when he was supposed to look strong in front of them as a pack leader, but talking to Gabriel just felt... right. Comforting. Safe.

"I miss her," whispered Sam. "I miss being with her, talking to her, lying close to her... I miss everything about her. And I can't get the fire out of my head. I can't get the smell of smoke out of my nose or her desperate screams out of my ears. Every night I wake up remembering the smell of her flesh burning, remembering her crying my name and knowing I could do nothing to save her. Every night I dream of her cream fur charred and tarnished with black, her ocean eyes wide with fear, yet dull and lifeless.

"It's like a mantra that never stops. Taunting me over and over about how I couldn't save her. How no matter how many times I see the fire or hear her cries, I'll never be able save her; never be able to see her again."

Tears trickled down his cheeks and Gabriel held him a little closer.

"I keep remembering the very last 'I love you' she said to me. I remember kissing her and discussing raising a family with her. I remember her saying how we'd have such a long life together; how happy we'd be as we grew old together.

"I should've saved her," whimpered Sam. "Should've been with her. She never should've died." He choked on a sob. "It should've been me in that fire, not her."

Sam closed his eyes to stop the tears from dripping down his face and Gabriel whined lowly in sympathy. After some hesitation, he began to nuzzle the omega's head comfortingly and Sam paused before pressing his nose into Gabriel's chest, scenting him.

He managed a smile at the familiar smells of chocolate and hazelnuts and he snuggled closer, releasing a soft sound of appreciation when Gabriel curled his tail around him.

"As long as you choose to remember her, she will always be with you," whispered Gabriel in between soothing nuzzles. "It was a horrible thing what happened to her, but she was happy. Having you made her happy and no one can ever take that away from her. She'll be watching over you, Sam. I know she will because she loves you so much, just like you love her."

The paw Gabriel had slung around Sam's middle tightened its grip.

"If she thought you were blaming yourself over what happened, she would be so upset. You couldn't have done anything. You can't beat a fire, Sam. If she knew you were saying things like 'it should've been me', do you think she'd be happy? Do you think she'd want to see you beating yourself up over this day-in and day-out?"

Gabriel gently stroked Sam's side.

"I know it's hard and sometimes you wish you could just hide from the world forever, but you've got to live your own life. Just like Jessica would've wanted you to. You've got to pick yourself up and keep going, no matter how much you don't want to. There are people who depend on you, Sam. People who love and care for you. You need to keep going for them, for your mate and your brother."

He tentatively licked Sam's ear, making the omega freeze.

"For me," Gabriel murmured and Sam pushed his head into his chest. He considered himself friends
with the alpha but he had never realised just how much the other wolf cared for him. After those touching words, he had no doubts of Gabriel's affection towards him.

Sam scented the alpha again, managing a small smile when he noticed the cologne had faded slightly. The sweet smell of chocolate was comforting and it took Sam back to his childhood, making him feel a little safer and warmer. The tight feeling in his chest eased off marginally as he thought of his younger years with his brother, back when they had both been rather innocent to the horrors and inequality of the world around them.

There was also another smell; one that prompted Sam to concentrate a little harder as he took a long whiff. He couldn't quite put a paw on the faint scent, but for some reason he was reminded of when Castiel and Samandriel had first arrived in Winchester territory. It was an odd thing to remember.

"Sam?" Asked Gabriel softly, tone laced with concern and the omega gingerly rubbed his head under the alpha's chin.

Gabriel's eyes widened and Sam didn't miss the way the alpha's hold on him tightened as if he was afraid Sam would disappear if he let go.

"Thank you, Gabe," whispered Sam and Gabriel offered him a small smile as he nuzzled his head a little more confidently.

Sam slowly lowered his head to the floor, lost in thoughts of his old mate and he was caught off guard a few moments later when Gabriel carefully curled around him.

He wanted to ask what the alpha thought he was doing; wanted to tell him that he already had a mate and he wasn't interested in whatever Gabriel had in mind, but a minute ticked by and Sam realised Gabriel wasn't trying to take advantage of him.

In fact, he felt quite guilty for even considering that thought when it became clear the alpha was merely holding him close; keeping him warm and... protected, maybe?

Sam began to relax and as he did so, he felt Gabriel's muscles begin to loosen as well. The alpha obviously hadn't been too certain about embracing him.

"Tell me more about Jess," whispered Gabe and Sam's heart seemed to flutter at the strange request. This alpha was the only person in his life who seemed to want to talk about Jessica rather than just listen to Sam's descriptions because they thought he needed some sort of outlet.

So he began to tell a few stories about his loving omega mate and as he did so, he felt his eyelids growing heavy and combined with Gabriel's warm body and an inviting feeling of protectiveness and care, Sam's mind began to shut down piece by piece until he fell into a peaceful sleep, a golden paw draped over him.

Gabriel smiled fondly at him before resting his head on the ground, muzzle lightly brushing his friend's fur as he too, drifted off.

Chapter End Notes

Some people were complaining there wasn't enough destiel in this anymore, so I put in a scene for you guys with our lovely Lisa ;)

Thank you for all your wonderful comments so far!
Chapter Notes

Quick warning guys! There is a character death in this one! (And no, it's not one of the main players!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sam awoke from one of the most restful sleeps he'd had in a very long time.

He yawned and stretched with a smile. He'd suffered no nightmares and he hadn't startled awake in a cold sweat, eyes brimming with terror. As he stretched, he felt a warm weight shift around his middle and as the memories of the early morning came to him, he stifled a laugh at Gabriel's position.

The alpha was clinging to Sam like a koala clings to a tree; both sets of paws wrapped around the omega's body. His face was pressed against Sam's shoulder and every time he moved, Gabriel would frown in his sleep and cuddle closer.

Sam's heart did something funny at the sight.

Unwilling to disturb his friend, Sam glanced at the shadows of the trees, trying to gauge the time from their angle. It looked to be around eight o'clock and he grimaced. Dean would start to worry if he stayed away from the camp for much longer. He was probably already starting to panic now. He wondered if Ruby was beginning to worry about him, but quickly dismissed the idea.

Ruby was possessive, but never concerned.

There was a quiet rumble which Sam was surprised to find was Gabriel's stomach, and the alpha slowly blinked awake, nuzzling Sam's neck tenderly as the haze of sleep struggled to clear from his mind.

Sam flushed when Gabriel idly began to lick his neck and jaw in the equivalent of affectionate kisses, and the alpha gently tugged Sam closer, curling his paws around him protectively.

"Good morning, beautiful," hummed Gabriel, eyes closed and Sam stiffened when the golden wolf began to scent his neck. "Smell gorgeous," the alpha whispered before licking his jaw again.

"...Not one of your conquests, Gabe," coughed Sam, trying to distract himself from how red his skin was beneath his fur and how hot he suddenly felt.

Gabriel's eyes flew open and after a single glance at Sam, the alpha scrabbled away.

"...Sorry, kid," gulped Gabriel. "Not used to company."

Sam stretched properly this time, arching low to the ground as his tail gracefully swung into the air, resetting even the smallest of bones. His throat dried though when he noticed Gabriel gazing at him intensely, following his figure with curious eyes.

When Gabe realised he'd been caught staring, he glanced away sheepishly, just as his stomach let out another growl.
Sam watched him for a few seconds before deciding he could handle whatever scolding he was going to receive from his brother for returning home later.

"I said I'd teach you how to hunt, didn't I?" Commented Sam and Gabriel glanced back at him, head tilted to one side.

"Sam, you don't have to do that. Besides, isn't your pack going to start panicking considering how late it is? You've been gone all morning."

Sam shrugged. "I can handle it. Anyway, I'm not the type to sleep with you and then leave early the next morning," he winked and Gabriel's eyes widened before he was glancing away in humiliation.

"Sorry about that. Again. I should really learn to look before I act."

Sam chuckled as he shook his head.

"Well, it's a nicer greeting than I usually get," he muttered before his own eyes widened and he snapped his mouth shut. Why on Earth had he said that?

Gabriel glanced over to him sympathetically and Sam cleared his throat.

"C'mon, I'll show you how to catch a rabbit. Might as well start small."

He whirled around smartly and trotted off deeper into the forest, Gabriel jogging to catch up.

* * *

"So remember what I said," whispered Sam as they observed the large black hare serenely chewing on a patch of clover. "Keep low and quiet, and when the ears go up, stop moving."

Gabriel nodded. He'd already missed his first two attempts, so he was determined not to let this hare evade him.

He stalked up to the hare, far more silent than his previous tries with rabbits, and when the creature's ear stood to attention, Gabriel froze, body crouched low to the ground. After a few moments, the ear flopped and the hare continued its mindless chewing as Gabriel approached. He was careful not to step on any particularly dry leaves or fragile twigs that would crack and send the hare sprinting off into the distance.

However, there was a gentle breeze that must have carried his scent, because the hare stood as still as a statue, both ears erect, and it turned its head slightly to spot Gabriel a mere five feet away.

Suddenly, the hare sprung into action and zipped across the forest floor, Gabriel hot on its tail.

Vaguely, Gabriel heard Sam's heavy footfalls as he raced to keep up and when it was clear the hare wasn't going to slow down, Gabriel pushed himself and closed the distance between himself and the creature.

The hare cornered sharply and Gabriel stumbled, cursing at the newly formed distance between them, but he forced himself to go faster, leaping over rocks and fallen branches, veering off when the hare turned and soon, Gabriel had closed the gap again. He leapt, predicting which direction the hare would take and he grinned excitedly when he realised he'd caught the slippery creature.
It took a few moments for Sam to join him and Gabriel was surprised by the omega's heaving chest and sweaty body.

"...Gabe... that was... you were... really fast," panted Sam, voice full of amazement and exhaustion. "How did... you do that?"

Gabriel shrugged. He was a rather small, male alpha which equated to a high muscle density to fat ratio. Also, less surface area meant he was generally rather quick anyway.

It had come in handy when escaping his furious brothers.

"Look! I caught it," grinned Gabriel instead, feeling like a child presenting their parents with their first drawing. "I actually caught it!"

Sam's eyes twinkled with amusement as his tail wiggled.

"Good job, Gabe."

Gabriel couldn't stop his tail from motoring from side to side. He felt like a pup but seeing Sam's grin widen made him feel a little less embarrassed.

What? He liked the kid's smile.

Sam sat down gracelessly. "Now you've just got to get your stomach used to it."

Gabriel glanced at the dead creature. It wasn't as appetising as the roast dinners he savoured in the city, and it certainly didn't smell as good as the restaurants that Gabriel had often frequented. Still, his stomach was built for it and he wasn't fond of the idea of going back to dehydrated powders.

The first taste of the raw hare made his stomach heave and he threw up whatever contents remained in it.

Sam grimaced in sympathy and dismissed the apologies Gabriel kept offering.

"You'll get used to it. You've just got to build a lining up that can cope with raw food."

All shifters had a strong stomach when they were children, but civilised folk tended to lose the hard stomach lining as they grew older because they weren't exposed to the bacteria and other microbes that raw food contained.

"Sorry, Gabe," whispered Sam as his friend vomited again. The alpha shook his head.

"Not your fault I'm a terrible wolf."

Sam frowned. "You're not a terrible wolf. You just aren't used to the local food. Give it some time and you'll be fine." The omega shot him a smile. "Heck, you're the quickest wolf I've ever seen. You should be a great hunter in time."

Gabriel quirked his own smile. Sam was very sweet. He had a way of making you feel good about yourself even if you were vomiting your guts out in front of him.

Gabriel eventually managed to finish the hare, keeping some of it down and Sam stayed by his side throughout it, ensuring the alpha was okay and wasn't about to choke or something equally as tragic.

He refused to eat with Gabriel even though he must have been hungry himself as he said he wasn't about to take the alpha's first kill from him, but Gabriel had a feeling it was more to do with the
omega being a little disgusted by the green puddle a few feet away, even if he hid it well.

It was an hour later, when Gabe had washed his face in the river and Sam had washed the alpha's scent from his coat, did Sam glance worriedly back in the direction of the meadow.

"I better leave," he said apologetically and Gabriel offered him a reassuring smile.

"Get home safe, kiddo. And good luck with your fretting brother."

Sam turned, but not before looking over his shoulder to his friend.

"...Thanks, Gabe. For this morning."

Gabriel's gaze softened. He was just happy he could help the omega get some rest.

"Don't mention it. Thanks for teaching me how to hunt."

Sam grinned and ran towards the meadow, disappearing from Gabriel's view.

The omega began to feel guilty as he made his way back home. He really shouldn't have been away for so long and he knew Dean would be out of his mind by now. He broke into a sprint.

When he was about ten minutes away from home, Sam began to slow down, a frown gracing his expression. He could smell a scent that seemed familiar and after a couple of minutes he realised who it belonged to.

He scowled. He would have to warn Dean about the troublesome scent.

Afterall, if Alistair had followed them to their current camp, there would be no doubt he'd try to challenge Dean again. Fortunately, Sam had picked up on the smell before the grey alpha could make a move. The alpha must have arrived that morning and was now prowling nearby, just waiting for the right time to attack Dean. Well, there was no way Sam would let his brother get hurt again by the psychotic alpha.

He picked up his pace, mind focused on informing Dean of his findings.

However, when the camp finally came into view, Sam's heart dropped into his stomach and the omega sprinted faster than he'd ever gone before, flashbacks of Jessica playing behind his eyes.

* * *

Dean felt sick. His pulse was far too fast and the putrid smells of blood and hormones were thick in the air. Snarls and yelps and the sounds of bodies colliding surrounded him, and he winced at the vicious crack of teeth tearing into limbs.

He couldn't see his lover or his pup; couldn't smell them either and for one terrifying moment his brain entertained the notion that they were already dead. He shook his head desperately and swiped a claw at the ivory beta trying to slice open his face.

"Something wrong, Dean? You look troubled," taunted the beta as she dodged out of the way and sunk her claw into his shoulder. "Worried about that pathetic Novak mongrel?"
Dean snarled and slashed his claws across her chest, forcing her to back up.

"Concerned we'll tear him apart like poor, old Kevin?" Lilith sneered and Dean snapped at her face, dismayed when she evaded him.

"I, for one, can't wait to sink my teeth into that scrawny pet rat of his. What was his name? Samandriel?"

Dean saw red. No one was going anywhere near his lover or pup.

He leapt at Lilith and the beta yelped as his teeth grazed over her throat. She kicked him off before he got a chance to do her any real harm.

He scrambled to his feet as Lilith's hackles raised and he charged at her again, a bitter smirk plastering itself over his face as his claws penetrated her soft flesh.

She hissed and bit at his leg and Dean tore a deep gash into her muzzle, making her crumple to the floor. She bared her teeth at him as he advanced, but when she saw the burning fury in his eyes she scarpered off to battle someone else.

Dean almost followed her, but he glanced around the destroyed camp and his heart sunk.

Azazel's pack had attacked them that morning. The same Azazel who had killed his mother and Jessica, and none of Dean's pack had had a chance to even begin to defend themselves. Azazel and his wolves had barged into their peaceful home and started tearing into everyone and everything.

Dean had been chatting to Crowley; Castiel and Lisa playing with the pups when the other pack had ambushed them. There had been horrified screams and surprised shouts as teeth ripped into flesh, claws slashing at personal belongings and shelters, and Dean had turned his panicked gaze upon his lover. Castiel had stared at him fearfully before he and Lisa were herding the terrified pups into the cave, shielding them protectively.

Dean had next turned to look for his brother.

Only to find him absent. Ruby wasn't around either.

Confused and with adrenaline pumping, Dean had raced into the fray of battling bodies, determined to defend his pack. He was well aware Sam could hold his own.

Presently, he spotted Gadreel and Pam fighting Alistair, and Dean saw the way Gadreel was relentlessly trying to deter the psychotic alpha from harming the blind beta. However, Alistair thrived on playing dirty and whilst Pam could do a lot by smell and sound alone, the surrounding scents and noises were throwing her off kilter and Alistair grinned as he threw her to the floor.

Gadreel snarled and leapt at the other alpha, grappling with him fiercely, but Alistair hooked his back claws into the stoic alpha's stomach, pulling the flesh apart.

Gadreel made a wounded sound as he pushed away, stumbling to the floor and just as Alistair was about to clamp his jaws around his throat, Dean bounded over and pounced on his back, slicing into his sides.

He leapt off the other alpha and stood defensively in front of the relieved Gadreel and Pam.

Alistair bared sharp teeth and sprinted towards Dean and the pair tussled, aiming violent blows to each other's head and chest.
Dean didn't know whose blood was coating his fur anymore, but he didn't care and he snapped viciously at his enemy's throat, hissing in agony when Alistair pinned him against the floor, teeth and claws flying at every angle. Then Gadreel was on his paws again, teeth deep in Alistair's neck and the intruding alpha howled in searing pain as he dug his claws into Gadreel's muzzle.

Dean kicked out at his enemy with a grunt and managed to throw the other alpha three feet to his left. Dean scrambled to his feet, teeth exposed and body ready to spring as Gadreel copied his movements beside him, and both alphas were satisfied when Alistair reluctantly retreated.

Dean and Gadreel shared a brief look before the grey and white alpha was helping Pam to her feet and Dean was racing towards where Abaddon had Crowley and Meg cornered as they stood in front of an unconscious Charlie.

As soon as Meg saw Dean sprinting over, she surged forwards, directing all of the red alpha's attention onto her and Crowley shouted in horror as Abaddon smirked and sunk her needle-like claws into the beta's side.

Meg bit back a yelp and Dean was quickly yanking Abaddon away, slamming her to the floor as Crowley sprung on her with righteous fury blazing in his gaze.

Meg limped over to Charlie, determined to protect her despite being injured herself as her mate tore into the red alpha.

Dean wasn't given a chance to turn before pain flared in his back and he whirled to find an oak beta trying to take a chunk out of his spine with his teeth.

He growled and smashed his paw into Gordon Walker's face and the beta gagged before ripping into his back again at an angle Dean couldn't reach him in. Dean staggered as he felt canines tearing into muscle, but the heavy weight on his back vanished abruptly and Dean turned to find Sam having a good go at trying to snap Gordon's neck.

"Sam," Dean croaked, relief and gratefulness for his brother's continued survival seeping into his tone, and Gordon howled as his ear was ripped clean off.

Sam grunted as a pair of legs made contact with his gut and he stumbled off the beta, hissing when claws hooked into his muzzle. Dean managed to put a few holes in Gordon's side before the beta scarpered away.

Sam glanced at the gaping wounds in his brother's back and fear and panic filled his gaze, but Dean shook his head.

"Help Jody!" He yelled over the cacophony of snarls and cries and Sam nodded silently before running to where the black beta was being taunted by two sneering omegas.

Dean caught Jo and Benny doing a number on a large beta and was just about to turn to help somewhere else when something crashed into his side and trapped him against the floor.

Dean's breath hitched when he focused on the two yellow eyes staring back at him cruelly, their owner smirking at him.

"Hello, Dean," whispered Azazel, lips curling upwards in an ugly grin. "How's mommy?"

With fire in his eyes, Dean struck a paw across the ash wolf's face, satisfied at the resounding crack of bone against bone.
Azazel snarled and Dean gasped in agony as claws ripped through the flesh of his throat, the other alpha's free paw smashing into the side of his face.

Dean dragged his own claws down Azazel's ribs; his back paws kicking at the alpha's stomach, and Azazel swiped at his muzzle again.

"Heard you've got yourself a pretty omega Novak," sneered the ash wolf. "When I kill you, I'll be sure to take him for a test run."

Dean's jaws lunged for Azazel's throat and the other alpha yelped when sharp teeth punctured his skin. Dean's head was slammed to the ground by another blow from his enemy.

"Can't wait to fill him with my thick knot; breed him up with my pups. I could even use the head of his own little brat as a trophy; a reminder of the day I claimed your pack. I think it would look good alongside the rug of your sandy hide," hissed Azazel. "Maybe Alistair could use that freakish brother of yours to satisfy his ruts. He's not as pretty as Novak so I'm willing to pass him around my subordinates. That omega of yours though... he's all mine."

Dean's outraged rumble was automatic. He clawed and snapped relentlessly at Azazel's face even as his own body was assaulted by his rival's. He barely registered his own pain; too busy trying to draw blood from his enemy.

"You'll never touch any of them," spat Dean. "You'll never get anywhere near my family. I won't let you."

"Hard to do that when you're six feet under," snarled Azazel as he managed to force Dean's head back until his throat was bared.

Dean scrabbled desperately to push his rival away, but it was no use, not when he was already weak from fighting and being pinned by the strong alpha. He closed his eyes, refusing to offer Azazel the satisfaction of seeing the fear in them.

The other alpha chuckled darkly and Dean heard the low growl that accompanied the baring of lethal teeth. He gulped, silently wishing he'd had the chance to see Cas and Samandriel one last time, even if only to ensure they were still alive.

Suddenly, the weight trapping his body vanished and Dean's ears pricked at the vicious sounds of teeth clamping around limbs, cadenced by shocked and agonised yelps. There was a scuffle and some growling and Dean rolled over to find Azazel on his back, ears low and paws swiping at the battered omega straddling him.

Dean's eyes widened.

Cas?

The omega's lips were pulled back in an intimidating snarl, hackles raised and claws tearing at Azazel's body despite Castiel being rather worse for wear himself. This obviously wasn't the first fight he'd been involved in today.

Cas fought mercilessly. Despite originally cowering from the idea of a wild lead alpha when he'd first run away from home, it was clear the omega held no reservations about going up against one now. He was strong; stronger than a lot of omegas and he used it to his advantage as he kept Azazel trapped beneath him.

Dean watched in awe as his lover aimed blow after blow at his enemy, Castiel's face the picture of
righteous determination as he systematically wore Azazel down.

"Stay away from my family," hissed Cas, dragging his claws down the yellow-eyed wolf's chest and Azazel cried out as he kicked at the omega.

Cas staggered off the alpha but quickly took a protective stance in front of the fallen Dean as Azazel climbed to his paws.

"You should've taught your omega his place, Dean," coughed Azazel. "Doesn't he know he's not supposed to interfere in a fight between two head alphas? Oh well... once I mate him I'll teach him a lesson he'll never forget..."

Cas made a sound of disgust as Dean growled protectively.

"I don't care who kills you, Azazel," said Dean as he stood, pressing into his lover's side to prove a point. "As long as you stay dead, I'd count it as a victory."

Azazel narrowed his eyes and then he was lunging for the pair, teeth exposed and claws outstretched. There was a flurry of flying limbs, snapping jaws and sharp claws, accompanied by the sounds of teeth tearing into flesh, snarling and a cacophony of cracks and blows, and slowly, the grass around the trio was spattered with varying shades of red.

However, after only a few minutes there was a thud as a body smacked the ground and Azazel quickly scrambled to his paws and howled weakly before dragging himself away from the Winchester camp with one last rumble in Dean's direction.

At the signal to retreat, Azazel's pack growled and snapped at their enemies before scurrying after their leader, each of them looking worse for wear.

As he was leaving, Alistair shot Dean and Cas a haughty look, lips curled up in a smug sneer and Dean barked out a very serious threat, forcing the other alpha to turn tail and scamper off.

Dean blinked in surprise when Cas snuggled into his neck, the omega's head rubbing desperately under his chin, and the alpha immediately tugged his lover closer as he began to lick the blood from the black and tan fur.

"Thought I was going to lose you," whimpered Cas quietly. "When Azazel was standing over you..." The omega trailed off and Dean closed his eyes in relief when a tongue gently licked at his painful wounds.

After a few moments, his gaze flicked around his bruised and bloodied pack; some members barely managing to pick themselves up off the floor. He was unable to stop the whine of concern when he saw just how injured his friends and family were.

"Everyone okay?" He asked, just to check there were no unresponsive bodies anywhere and he was satisfied by the chorus of exhausted groans that followed. He quickly performed a head-count, frowning when he couldn't see Lisa or the pups. He knew they'd disappeared into the cave when the whole fight had started and with a brief glance to Cas, the pair made their way over.

When they neared the entrance of the cave though, Dean's heart stopped and Cas' eyes widened at the weak cry echoing off the walls.

"Mom?"

The pair limped inside and their ears fell at the sight before them.
Three pups were pressed into the back wall of the cave, each looking terrified at the amount of blood surrounding them. Ben was the only pup who hadn't joined them and he was under his collapsed mother's paw, whining softly as he tried to gain her attention.

"Mom? Wake up."

Lisa didn't move. There was too much red surrounding her; too much torn flesh. Her eyes were closed and her chest lay still.

Dean felt his legs threaten to buckle the longer he stared and beside him Cas was whining in distress.

"Mom, please," begged Ben, eyes brimming with tears as his brain refused to accept what it was seeing. He nuzzled her muzzle desperately. "You're okay. Alistair didn't... You beat him. You fought him off. He ran."

Lisa didn't reply.

Ben choked on a sob. "You just gotta get up, mom. Please. Please get up."

He snuggled into her chest, uncaring of the blood seeping into his fur.

"You can't go."

Castiel bit back a sob of his own at the heartbreaking scene and Dean stumbled forwards. The rest of the pack were beginning to gather at the mouth of the cave and some were openly crying as they watched on. Dean was head alpha and his duty was to comfort his pack.

He'd already failed to protect them.

He heard Sam pad into the cave but with a swish of his tail Dean stopped his brother. The older Winchester had been extremely close to Lisa and in a way, he felt as though he needed to be on his own to say goodbye.

"Ben," he said softly and the weeping pup glanced up at his agonised expression and burst into heart-wrenching sobs.

Ben snuggled further into his mother.

"No! No! She's not dead! She can't be! She was just here! She was right here, protecting us!" Yelled Ben and Dean could barely gulp around the lump caught in his throat. He carefully placed a paw over the pup's back.

"I'm sorry, Ben. I'm so sorry. Come here..."

Ben threw Dean's paw off him, growling defiantly as he tightened his grip on his mother.

"Go away! You don't know anything! She's not... she can't be gone! She's my mom and she can't just leave!"

Dean inhaled a shaky breath, feeling nauseous at the state of the female omega he'd once called a lover. Her fur was clumped together from congealed blood and the colours were all wrong. Her throat had been ripped open and the rest of her body was severely mauled.

"Ben..."

"Leave us alone!" Snarled the omega before burying his head back in his mother's fur.
Dean took a step back. He didn't know what to do. What was he supposed to tell this young, devastated pup who'd just lost the only parent he'd ever known? He couldn't magically make it all better no matter how much he wanted to.

What kind of leader was he if he couldn't even take care of those closest to him?

Castiel took a small step forwards. "Ben, she's."

"I said leave us alone! All of you just leave us alone!" Roared the little omega. "We don't need any of you! You... you don't understand!"

Castiel snapped his mouth shut and Dean took another step backwards.

He wanted to give Ben some time alone, but he wasn't sure if the mutilated body of his dead mother was an appropriate sight for a young pup. Yet there was nothing he could do to stop Ben from having these last moments with her.

He still couldn't believe what had happened in the span of an hour.

How had they all lost so much?

Ben's heartbroken sobs rang out through the silent cave and most members of the pack hung their heads through a mixture of respect and mourning. Dean felt cool tears sliding down his muzzle and he closed his eyes so he wouldn't have to keep looking at Lisa's prone body.

However, it was Samandriel that caught everyone's attention.

The little alpha crept over to Ben and curled around him protectively, licking his muzzle, cheeks, ears, neck and any other part he could reach as he tugged the omega closer.

Ben immediately shifted into the contact and pressed his wet face into Samandriel's neck, soaking up the offered comfort as he cried.

"...She... She'll be happy forever now," whispered Samandriel as he nuzzled his friend. "She'll get her own little patch of forest where she'll be able to do whatever she wants forever and ever. She'll be able to watch over you through the clouds and whenever you're sad, she can ask the angels to make it sunny and warm.

"She'll make loads of friends and she can visit you in your dreams and you two will be able to do whatever you feel like, wherever you want to do it."

Ben listened quietly, tears tracking down his cheeks, before frowning slightly as he glanced back to his mother.

"...But... but I want her here now. Why isn't she awake?"

Samandriel thought about this for a few seconds.

"Because... because she's with the angels. They know how good and kind she is and they liked her so much that they couldn't wait to meet her, so they invited her into Heaven a little earlier than we expected."

Ben leaned into his friend as he tilted his head in contemplation.

"That sounds... nice."
Samandriel nodded. "I bet she's just checking in and she's signing all the forms that the Angels give her so she can live up there. Maybe... maybe she'll visit you tonight when you go to sleep. You could talk about her new home; I'm sure she's really excited."

Ben quirked a watery smile at the idea.

"I'd like that."

Samandriel offered him a small grin and Ben pressed into him, nuzzling his cheek in search of comfort which the alpha happily gave.

"I'm gonna miss her," whispered Ben and Samandriel curled his tail around his friend.

"I'm gonna miss her too," he replied quietly. "But we'll both see her again, someday... right, Dad?"

Castiel's face crumpled and Dean felt his heart crack. Both pups looked so hopeful.

"...Of course," murmured Castiel as he limped over. "Maybe not in this life, but this certainly isn't goodbye forever. Just... farewell for now."

Ben's tears seemed to have stopped at least. He glanced over at the body of his mother, ears falling slightly.

"I'll miss you, mom," he whispered, slinking over to her and licking her cheek gently. "I love you so much and I wish I could bring you back." Then, slowly he stood tall and proud, showing the rest of the pack just how strong he was as he turned away, holding back more tears. He walked straight towards Samandriel and the little alpha held him close, glancing over to his father in silent question.

Cas flicked his gaze over to Dean and the alpha nodded without hesitation, encouraging Castiel to join the two pups. The omega sat beside them both, wrapping a paw around them, which Ben immediately leaned into, burying his face in Cas' chest as he cried.

Dean watched the scene with an empty feeling in his chest as the rest of his pack slowly filtered into the cave to offer their goodbyes to the kind, nurturing omega they had so tragically lost.

* * *

When everyone else had retired to sleep, Dean staggered towards where his lover was resting, somewhere around two o'clock in the morning. They had had no time to remake all the destroyed shelters and the pack had decided to grant Lisa some deserved rest in the cave. The blood and torn fur had been cleaned up as much as possible and Dean had spent all night watching over her peaceful form, mind replaying all the time they'd had together; all the fun memories and the romantic ones. The moments where they had been young, joyful and naive and the world had been their oyster.

Now she was gone and Dean had done nothing to protect her.

Cas glanced up at his tear-stained face and his expression softened in understanding. He gestured to his side and Dean trudged over, managing a small smile at the two small balls of fluff tangled around one another as they curled into Castiel's fur.
Samandriel had all four paws wrapped around Ben and the omega's head was tucked safely under his friend's chin, his own paws draped around the alpha. Castiel was curled around them both, one paw resting tightly around their bodies as if he was afraid of letting go.

Dean's heart clenched and he automatically pressed his nose into his lover's neck as he settled on the pups' other side. Cas easily bared his throat for Dean and the alpha scented him deeply, taking comfort in the honey and ocean air smells. Cas was alive and safe. He pushed his nose further into Cas' fur and the omega closed his eyes sadly.

"I'm here, Dean. I'm okay."

Dean shuffled closer, pressing as far into Castiel as he could get with the two pups snuggled between them. He threw a paw over his omega and made a soft, possessive sound that immediately had Cas nuzzling his scratched muzzle.

"I can't lose you too," whimpered Dean as droplets of water began to leak from his eyes once more. "I hate seeing you hurt. I don't know what I'd do if you..." He trailed off, voice hitching and Castiel licked the alpha's cheek.

"I'm not going anywhere. I'm right here with you. I will always be here with you."

"You can't promise that," said Dean, shaking his head. "What if... what if I can't protect you? I couldn't protect Lisa or Kevin and now they're both-"

"Don't you dare blame yourself for what happened to them," growled Castiel lowly, placing a paw over Dean's. Then his face drew into something more empathetic.

"You can't keep doing this to yourself, Dean. You have to stop thinking everything awful that happens is solely your fault."

"I'm head alpha," protested Dean. "It's my duty to look after my pack." He glanced down at Ben, feeling a sharp stab of pain in his heart. "To look after my family."

Castiel sighed. "You can't protect everyone every minute of the day. You had no idea what was going to happen, and no one in the pack blames you for it, just like they don't blame your brother."

"Instead of beating yourself up over something you couldn't predict and could do nothing to prevent, blame those who actually did this. Blame Azazel and Alistair and all the others that had a hand in taking Lisa's life," spat Cas, mouth curling around their enemies' names as though just mentioning them was a sin.

Dean carefully leaned down to nuzzle at Ben.

"They won't get away with this," growled Dean. "If it's the last thing I do I promise they will pay for what they've done to this pack."

Cas nosed at his jaw tenderly.

"It won't be the last thing you do; I'll make sure of that."

Dean quirked a small, appreciative smile as he rubbed his nose against his lover's.

"I love you so much, Cas."

The omega grinned, closing his eyes as Dean rubbed his scent over his head.
"And I love you too. You know I'd do anything for you."

Dean rolled onto his side and wrapped all four paws around his lover, being cautious not to wake the sleeping pups between them. Castiel quickly leaned into the contact despite them both being rather bruised and sore.

"My beautiful, little fighter," Dean whispered, voice full of awe as he gazed at Cas and the omega pushed his head under his lover's.

"You're not alone anymore, Dean. You don't have to keep everything bottled up inside. I'll always be here for you. Always. None of this is your fault; what happened to Lisa and Kevin isn't your fault."

Dean tightened his grip on his omega.

"...She was my lover. There was a time we loved each other and I... I think somewhere deep down, I still..." Dean trailed off, a choked sob escaping his throat and Castiel curled his paw more securely around the alpha as he shifted to lick his muzzle.

"Tell me about her," whispered Cas, tone understanding and sincere.

They talked about the sweet omega for two hours until Dean eventually rested his head under Cas' chin and finally succumbed to exhaustion.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all your amazing comments guys and I will reply over the weekend, but Uni has been mega busy so I thought you'd prefer another chapter rather than a quick reply to your comments! (Although I do read every one and they are greatly appreciated!)
Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

Warning: Discussions of rape

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The next morning the pack gave Lisa a proper burial a little way away from the camp. The area was bursting with colourful flowers and fluffy shrubs and it was perfect for the joyful omega. Tears were shed as Dean and Sam spoke of Lisa's life and Ben was too distraught to say much about his mother other than how caring she was and how much he'd miss her. Samandriel held him as he sobbed.

A few pack members placed flowers over the grave and the seeds of snowdrops were scattered over her resting place, where they would bloom every year in her memory.

The rest of the day passed in a solemn dullness. No one could bring themselves to talk after what had happened and the dark spatters of blood coating the trees were a heavy reminder of what they'd all lost. Even the weather was grey and gloomy.

Sam, at least, had found something to be grateful for as it seemed his mate was far less injured than the rest of the pack, although she hadn't escaped unharmed. He hadn't seen her all that much through the attack, but he put it down to him being busy helping some of his friends. He should have been defending his mate but he knew she could handle herself. Still, he was thankful for the little miracles.

Sam had been on edge ever since the attack. He was bursting with guilt for being away from the pack when they were attacked and since then, he had refused to stray from Ruby's side. He nuzzled and licked her wounds, trying to display his eagerness to protect her and his devoted affection for her, yet Ruby if anything, seemed to get more and more irritated by his closeness. She had even rumbled at him a few times and whilst Sam knew she hated being coddled, he couldn't help it. He couldn't bare to lose her and he needed to reassure himself that she was safe even if Ruby didn't like it.

That evening, Sam curled around Ruby, grimacing at her warning growl and he backed off slightly despite still trying to scent her neck.

The alpha huffed irritably but eventually allowed him to cuddle closer, not bothering to protest when he wrapped a paw around her.

Finally content that his mate was safe, Sam drifted off to sleep.

However, at three o'clock in the morning, Sam felt chilli and he tried to tug his mate closer. Only to find no one there.

He blinked awake sleepily and glanced around their cozy bush, frowning worriedly when there were no traces of her. He put his nose to the ground and followed her scent.

His nose took him a little distance out of the camp and the further Sam travelled, the guiltier he felt about leaving the pack. Still, he had a lover to find.
However, another scent crossed his path and Sam froze, eyes wide and fearful as his brain generated a thousand different scenarios all resulting in a non-too-happy ending for Ruby.

Sam raced after the scents.

When he finally found his lover, his heart stopped and his muscles stiffened in horror.

Although he couldn't see her face, it was clear it was Ruby who Alistair was pinning to the floor, knot locked deep inside her as his paws trapped her to his chest. The grey alpha was merciless as he claimed her, teeth clamped onto her shoulder as his hips thrusted brutally against her rear and it seemed as though Ruby didn't even have the energy to fight as she let him use her.

Suddenly, Ruby cried out and Alistair growled in a sickeningly pleased manner as his thrusts grew harsher.

It was enough to send adrenaline surging through Sam's body and for fury to blaze through every nerve. Sam's paws were pounding over the ground before he had a chance to realise he was heading straight for the abhorrent scene.

Alistair howled out in agony as his knot was ripped from his victim and Sam tore into his side, wincing at Ruby's pained yelp as she staggered forwards.

Sam didn't stop though, because making Alistair pay for hurting his mate was his main priority and the omega viciously clawed at the alpha's already battered body, howling out a battle cry as he did so.

Alistair tried desperately to kick him off, but Sam was persistent and the outrage flying through his veins made him fight harder than he ever had before.

He clamped his teeth around any body part he could find and pulled hard, only satisfied when the alpha let out various screams and yelps, and Sam barely noticed that his own body was being heavily mauled in the process, blood pooling on the floor around them both.

Sam hissed when a claw hooked into his muzzle and he stamped on the alpha's stomach, maiming Alistair's chest when the alpha recoiled.

They tussled with one another for a few minutes, dealing severe blows to one another whenever they could and vaguely, Sam could hear Ruby shouting his name in horror. He didn't turn around though because he wouldn't let Alistair escape a second time. Not after what he'd done to Lisa and now to Ruby.

However, Alistair was strong and with a snarl he threw Sam off him, rolling unsteadily to his feet before advancing on the injured omega.

"Always wondered what your tight hole would feel like around my knot," sneered Alistair as Sam tried to pull himself to his paws, only to realise he was far more damaged than he had realised. He stumbled to the ground again, causing Alistair to chuckle darkly.

Sam gasped when he was roughly manoeuvred into a 'presenting' pose; tail shoved out of the way as Alistair pinned his shoulders to the floor and straddled him. The omega wriggled desperately to break free, but Alistair slashed his claws down his bloodied sides, making Sam yelp in pain.

Sam continued to thrash beneath the alpha, uncaring of the claws digging into his abdomen and Alistair snarled before clamping his jaws around Sam's neck in reprimand. Sam howled as blood trickled from the deep wound.
Suddenly, there was the sound of a few sets of paws thundering towards them and Sam had just enough time to turn and spot a sandy body lunge for Alistair.

There was a symphony of snarling, grunting and yelps as teeth locked onto limbs and claws collided with skin, and soon there was another body joining the fray and then another.

Sam blinked when Castiel's panicked face came into his line of vision and upon realising he was still alive, Cas took a defensive stance in front of the larger omega.

"Ruby..." Sam mumbled weakly but no one seemed to take any notice of him.

Dean, Bobby and Crowley made quick work of Alistair and soon, the alpha's mutilated corpse was lying in a heap on the ground.

Dean rushed over to his brother, nuzzling him fearfully as Bobby assessed his wounds.

"Sammy?" Whispered Dean, voice full of terror and the omega glanced over to the sandy alpha.

"'M okay," he reassured softly. "Just a little sore."

Dean glanced over to Bobby for confirmation, but at the older wolf's concerned scowl, Dean knew Sam's injuries needed immediate treatment.

He barked wordlessly and both Crowley and Castiel were immediately standing to attention for orders.

"Get him back to camp," huffed Dean and Cas and Crowley pressed into Sam's sides and supported him between them as they staggered back to the camp.

"Ruby's hurt," slurred Sam and Cas gently nuzzled the younger Winchester's muzzle.

"We'll bring her back home," he said quietly, sharp gaze flicking to Crowley when the alpha made a disgusted face.

"Raped," choked Sam and both Crowley and Cas stiffened.

"Alistair raped you?" Growled Crowley, pressing just a little closer to the larger omega and Sam shook his head when Cas began to lick at the bite on his neck.

"No. He... he knotted Ruby..." Sam bit back a sob and both Crowley and Cas winced. "Should've been there to protect her. Should've... should've been me."

Crowley snarled. "No, Sam. It shouldn't have been anyone."

Cas shook his head. "This isn't your fault, Sam. Don't blame yourself for it."

When they finally returned to the camp, most of the pack members were up and waiting for their friends' return. Some gasped at Sam's state, others whining softly in distress before Jody came running over, medical bag in hand.

As she tended to the most severe of Sam's injuries with what few supplies she had left after the last attack, Bobby and Dean herded an expressionless Ruby into the centre of the camp.

Sam spotted her and tried to go to her to offer some comfort and a slew of apologies, but Jody kept him still.
To everyone's shock, Dean rounded on the mahogany alpha.

"Why didn't you help him?" Snarled Dean, startling Ruby. "You just stood there and watched as Alistair abused him. Why didn't you do anything?"

Ruby opened her mouth in indignation but it was Sam who spoke first.

"Dean!" He snapped in disbelief. "She's been through enough!"

Dean rumbled warningly at his brother and it was enough to stun Sam into silence. The head alpha turned to Ruby once more.

"Answer the question. Why didn't you help him?"

Ruby growled angrily. "You're kidding, right? I was just forcefully knotted by Alistair and you're wondering why I didn't immediately jump into action?"

"You're his alpha," hissed Dean. "Your job is to protect him no matter what. You stood and watched him get pinned to the ground and you didn't do anything! What? Did you want him to go through the same thing you had?"

"That's enough!" Roared Sam as he clambered to his paws, hackles raised and teeth bared at his brother. "How dare you treat her with such contempt after what's happened! She's my mate, Dean, no matter how much you don't like it. You don't get to speak to her like that. You don't get to treat her as though you're better than her!"

Dean narrowed his eyes. "This isn't about me hating your mate, which by the way, I do. This is about your mate looking as though she was enjoying watching Alistair hurt you. It's about her looking as though she actually wanted him to knot you!"

A few wolves' eyes widened as their heads whirled to watch a silently fuming Ruby. Sam's jaw fell open in shock before he growled threateningly at Dean.

"What is wrong with you?! Can you even hear yourself? You're a psychopath! Did you just accuse my mate of four years wanting to see me get raped? After what Alistair did to her, you have the audacity to say things like that? Are you that messed up?"

Dean bristled. "Look at her, Sam. I mean really look at her. There are no new bruises or cuts on her; she obviously wasn't struggling against Alistair. Maybe we should be asking why that is!"

Ruby growled lowly. "You have some nerve, Winchester. With accusations like that, some might question whether you're fit to run a pack. Daddy obviously screwed with your head."

Dean took a step forwards. "Don't you dare bring my Dad into this. Stop stalling and answer the question. Why did you do nothing to help Sam?"

"You're really asking why I didn't jump to confront my attacker?"

"If he even attacked you," hissed Dean.

"He raped me!" Yelled Ruby and Dean snorted.

"Did he?"

Suddenly, Dean staggered to one side and he grimaced at the stinging sensation in his face. He vaguely felt a few droplets of blood trickle down his cheek and the rest of the pack fell into a
horrified silence.

Dean turned to find his brother snarling at him, teeth bared and hackles raised.

"Leave," he ordered lowly and Dean scowled at him.

"She's using you. She doesn't care about you, Sam."

"And you do?" Spat Sam. "You've always despised Ruby and I don't know why you can't just be happy that I've found someone who loves me. Are you jealous? Do you want me to be as miserable as you've always been? Maybe you're just insecure that I'll leave you like Dad did. You always were his perfect little soldier; always following his orders like a mindless drone." Sam pulled a face in disgust.

"I don't need you, Dean. You're not Mom or Dad. Sometimes you don't even act like my brother. You're not my protector and I'm not a little kid anymore. So stop interfering with my life because I'm sick and tired of you treating me like I'm some naive pup."

The younger Winchester hobbled over to Ruby, nuzzling her cheek gently.

"C'mon, let's go."

The pair turned, Ruby smirking subtly at Dean as they did so, but then the sandy alpha huffed.

"Tell me, Sam. Why were you away from the camp in the first place? Did you two decide to take a stroll at three in the morning, or were you out searching for your darling mate?"

Sam hesitated, but frowned eventually.

"Stay out of my life, Dean."

Dean laughed humourlessly. "Might wanna ask what your lover was doing so far away from the camp in the early hours of the morning. It's not exactly the first time that's happened, but you probably wouldn't know that because you tend to disappear off on your own as well, don't you? Not that I blame you; being mated to that has got to be agonising." He sneered at Ruby.

Sam whipped around to face his brother.

"Watch your mouth."

Dean merely smirked, but it was Crowley who piped up.

"Another question I'm sure we've all had on our minds lately," he drawled, "is why she's got fewer battle scars than the rest of us." He let his gaze wander over Ruby's body. "I can't be the only one who noticed she wasn't all that... active during the fight. In fact, I don't remember seeing her all that much."

There were a few murmurs of agreement and suspicious glances aimed in Ruby's direction and Sam stiffened.

"Don't you start," he warned the black alpha and Crowley shrugged indifferently.

"Just an observation."

"Are you guys serious?" Asked Sam in disbelief. "Ruby's been attacked and you're interrogating her?" This was ridiculous. How could the pack be so cruel and contemptuous towards someone who
had faced all that Ruby had? How could they treat her as though she wasn't a victim, but rather someone to be doubtful of? He had never thought the people he called family could be capable of such callousness, nor had he expected them to be so suspicious of his mate. He had always believed it was just Dean who didn't get along with her.

"I don't see why she can't speak for herself," said Jo, gaze narrowed in distrust as she eyed Ruby. Ruby scowled but offered no explanation as Sam shook his head.

"Unbelievable," he huffed before pushing his mate towards their sleeping area. "Goodnight," he growled firmly to the rest of the pack.

Just as he was about to follow Ruby into their shelter, there was a nudge at his side and Sam turned to scowl at his brother.

Dean no longer looked smug though. In fact, he looked rather concerned.

"Something's not right about this," he whispered and Sam snorted.

"Yeah. Your attitude."

Dean shook his head. "No. Don't you see it? There's something wrong about this whole situation. About Ruby and Alistair."

Sam tensed. "You'd just love that, wouldn't you? You'd just love an excuse to kick her out of the pack. Well you're not going to get one and if it came down to me choosing between you and Ruby, I can guarantee you'll be one brother less. Goodnight."

He tried to enter the bush again, but Dean placed a paw on his shoulder, his expression filled with worry.

"I don't want you to get hurt, Sammy."

"It's 'Sam',' snapped the omega before shoving his brother's paw away. "And the only one hurting me is you."

With that, he slipped into his shelter and pointedly curled around his mate.

Dean's ears fell at the scene and he limped back to the centre of the camp, telling everyone to go to sleep, before Cas joined him and the pair settled down around a confused Samandriel and Ben. Cas pulled his lover closer and licked his fresh wounds.

"Maybe... maybe there really isn't anything suspicious occurring. Maybe Sam's right," the omega murmured.

Neither of them believed it.

Nothing good would come of today.

* * *

It had been over a week since Alistair's death and Sam felt helpless as he watched his relationship
with Ruby fall apart. The alpha was quite withdrawn from him, actively pushing away from him sometimes and she never initiated any sort of intimacy anymore. Her words to him were clipped and snappy and her tone was off, as though she was upset or maybe angry; it was hard to tell because they no longer spent much time with one another.

Whenever Sam did reach out, the alpha shoved him away with a warning huff and Sam often woke up alone; Ruby having left in the early hours of the morning to do who knows what?

At first Sam believed her to be traumatised and he had tried to offer her comfort and understanding (as much as he could at least) but as the week progressed, it was almost as if Ruby was... irritated with Sam.

At the end of the week, Sam grew annoyed at their lack of communication and he began to question his mate about what she was doing when she left the camp for such long periods of time.

Dean and Crowley's words replayed over and over in his skull until he started to listen to them and the longer Ruby evaded his questions or yelled at him for doubting her, the more suspicious Sam grew, and his tone became more and more frustrated and annoyed. Ruby refused to give him any answers though and instead accused Sam of not caring about her as he seemed to disappear from the camp quite often himself. She accused him of having an affair and Sam was so furious by the remarks that he let it slip he believed maybe Ruby had wanted Alistair instead of him.

He had been hit for the comment, and maybe he had deserved it, but it only served to reinforce his doubts about her love for him.

What time they didn't spend ignoring or avoiding each other, they spent arguing and it was obvious the rest of the pack had noticed.

Sam was short-tempered with them, whereas before he had always been calm and patient, and he still hadn't made up with his brother, meaning they were more likely to snap at one another, despite it clearly hurting both of them.

Sam no longer attempted to wrap his paw around his mate when they slept; preferring to turn his back to her, causing Ruby to snort in distain. They never shared quiet moments of affection anymore like tender nuzzles or licks, but Sam couldn't bring himself to care because Ruby had never really been interested in those sort of things anyway and Sam refused to look weak in front of her.

Ruby constantly mocked him for being an omega; taunting him for being needy and submissive around other alphas, and Sam snarked about how she was evidently overcompensating for something and that she was no better than any other knot-head alpha that preyed on omegas.

They were petty with one another; insulting each other at every turn and it all served to make Sam more miserable and lonely. He considered apologising to his brother, but he was sick of Dean trying to mother hen him and he didn't need another 'I told you so' speech.

He missed Gabriel. He hadn't seen the older alpha for close to two weeks and after all the heartbreak and deception, he just wanted to escape for a while and talk to the golden wolf. However, after Ruby and Dean's accusations of him leaving the camp so frequently, he made a point of staying where he was. At least he could dispel the rumours that he was having an affair with someone outside the camp; the ones that he'd seen Dean glaring at him disapprovingly for.

When two weeks passed however, Sam felt more alone than he ever had in his life. His friends were wary around him; wondering if he'd lose his temper at short notice and they too would be clawed like Dean had been. Few people plucked up the courage to talk to him and those that did seemed
only to do it when necessary.

Even Bobby, the alpha he might as well call his father, hadn't held a full conversation with him.

The pups seemed almost frightened of him, and it broke his heart to think he'd scared them so greatly. Dean still wasn't speaking to him.

Sam decided enough was enough. His lover's spat with Ruby was cutting pack moral down and he couldn't do that to the people he called family. Nothing was being solved by them arguing and everything would run far smoother if Sam and Ruby apologised and they worked things about between them in a more civilised manner, away from the prying eyes of the rest of the pack.

He spotted the mahogany alpha storming away from the camp and even though it irked him that yet again, his mate was leaving, Sam willed himself to follow her.

So lost in her own thoughts was Ruby, she didn't notice Sam trailing her until they were a good twenty minutes away from the rest of the camp.

"Ruby," said Sam softly, and the alpha bristled before whirling on Sam, teeth bared.

"So you're stalking me now?"

Sam shook his head as he padded closer. His body still hurt from the fights with Alistair and Azazel's pack, but his injuries were healing slowly.

"I just wanted to talk to you."

"Well I don't want to talk to you," snarled Ruby before stalking off towards a deep river running through a thick patch of trees. She eyed it, seemingly contemplating how to cross it.

"Ruby, please," murmured Sam. "I'm tired of all this fighting. I want us to go back to the way we were. When we were happy."

Ruby stiffened but offered no reply as she stared blankly into the river. Sam crept over to her carefully.

"I'm sorry for how I've acted these past couple of weeks," sighed Sam regretfully. "You've been through so much and I should've been more patient with you. I know you're hurting, so please, just let me in. Let me help you."

Ruby's tense silence made Sam's ears droop.

"I love you, Ruby. You know I do. I want to be here for you. I want to help you get through this. I want to talk about what happened; to make you understand that I really don't think any of those awful things about you. I said some horrible things and I want to apologise... if you'll let me."

Ruby remained quiet and Sam waited a few seconds before tentatively leaning in to nuzzle her cheek. To his delight, she didn't push him away and he cautiously shuffled a little closer.

"Is it true you're having an affair? With someone outside the pack?" Asked Ruby eventually, voice strangely emotionless and Sam shook his head vehemently.

"No," he stated. He decided he needed to reveal some of his secret if he wanted his mate to truly believe him.

"There's an older wolf from the city who's living about an hour from the pack. He's lonely and
doesn't have anyone to talk to and I go to him sometimes to teach him about the wild. We share stories and he seems to be on the search for a mate, or at least a partner. I visit him and we've become friends. I can take you to him if you like. He won't mind."

Ruby listened quietly before nodding, yet the movement seemed bland as if her mind was on something else.

"...Are you okay?" Asked Sam concernedly, pressing into her side. "I mean... after everything that's happened... are you... okay?"

Ruby laughed bitterly. "No."

Sam winced and cautiously curled his tail around her.

"Do you want to talk about it?"

Ruby remained silent and Sam whined softly, distressed at seeing his mate so traumatised.

"I'm always here for you," he whispered as he sweetly nuzzled and licked her cheek. "No matter what happens, I'll always be here for you."

When Ruby's gaze remained glazed and unseeing as she stared into the river, Sam closed his eyes and leaned their heads together.

"I'm so sorry," he choked. "I'm so sorry for not being there. I should've protected you. I should've been by your side. It should've been me."

That got a reaction and Ruby snorted scathingly.

"Yes, it should have," she said before shoving Sam away and climbing to her paws as she faced him.

"It should've been your corpse rotting on that floor, not Alistair's," she hissed and Sam backed up in confusion.

"Ruby-"

"Shut up!" She snapped. "I'm sick of your pitiful whining and pathetic self-loathing. Four years I've been mated to you. Four years of living with your nightmares and survivor's guilt and daddy issues. Five years if you count the time we actually started courting! It's driving me insane!"

Sam's eyes widened as Ruby advanced on him. What was going on? Everything had been going so well a minute ago.

"Do you realise how grating your voice is? Do you realise how exhausting it is trying to stand in your presence? Your own father left because he despised you; can you imagine how it feels for me to pretend to love you?"

Sam froze. Pretend?

Ruby sneered at his expression. "You don't honestly believe I ever loved you, do you? You can't be that stupid to think I saw you as anything other than a tight hole to knot and a way to get to your brother?"

Sam's lips parted as if ready to protest but he found his words had been stolen from him.

Ruby laughed cruelly. "Poor pup. You actually though someone could love you? You're nothing but
a freak, Sam. An alpha build born in an omega's body, with the temperament of a beta. You're an abomination. And I had to stay with you and your stupid friends for so many years."

Sam shook his head. "No... no... you're... what's going on, Ruby? What's making you say this? This isn't like you-"

"You want to know what's going on?" Hissed Ruby. "How about the fact that you and that oafish brother of yours killed my lover? How about the fact that I could only catch fleeting glimpses of Alistair, stolen moments with him when no one was watching, all because I had to act as your mate for four long, dreadful years?

"I've been waiting for years for the right time to strike; for the right time to call my pack. I finally get it when you're off wandering in the woods and the chance to kill Dean was right there. Azazel would have sliced his throat open there and then if it hadn't been for that blasted Novak! I didn't think that clueless mongrel would actually have the guts to take on a rival head alpha, much less win a fight against him!

"Now we'll have to wait again to get rid of your brother; we'll have to wait to take over your pack. We've failed so many times and I really believed this time would work, but once again I was wrong."

There were angry tears in Ruby's eyes now as her lips curled up into a sneer.

"And just when I thought we'd finally made progress by killing that omega mutt everyone thinks was so sweet and charming, you and your brother murder my lover. Well... your crime won't go unpunished," she snapped, standing a little taller as she glowered at Sam.

"We were going to use all the Winchester omegas for breeding," rumbled Ruby, "but I think we can spare one."

Sam's eyes widened in shock as Ruby lunged for him, gaze full of cold contempt and scent brimming with hatred. Sam's brain couldn't process all the new information fast enough; couldn't believe that he had wasted five years of his life with this alpha he had thought loved him.

No, this couldn't be right! Ruby was lying; she had to be! Someone... someone was making her say these awful things. She loved him, just like he loved her. They had had so much fun together; there was so much affection between them.

Ruby couldn't be part of Azazel's pack! She just couldn't!

And no way was she Alistair's lover. The other alpha had raped her right in front of Sam... right?

Dean's words of Ruby watching him being abused by Alistair flashed in his mind and he squeezed his eyes shut to rid himself of the thoughts.

No, Ruby was his entire life. His mate!

A claw slashed at his stomach.

He remembered Gabriel's concern for him every time he told him he and Ruby had been in a fight. They seemed to fight a lot about the smallest of things.

Teeth clamped onto his leg and ripped through the flesh, making him yelp.

Images of Ruby's rough lovemaking burned in his skull, accompanied by thoughts of how the alpha had never shown remorse if she hurt him.
He remembered all the times Ruby had pushed him away when he had tried to be tender with her; all the times she had called him a 'weak omega' for showing he wanted to take care of her.

His head was smashed against the forest floor, making him collapse.

He thought back to all their arguments, about how he had always been the one to apologise first.

Then he remembered all the other times she had tried to manipulate him into feeling sorry for her, making him feel like he was being controlling and condescending. Like the time he had brought up raising pups together.

Jaws clamped around his neck and he was dragged along the ground, the sound of gushing water growing louder.

He remembered how Ruby had never wanted to listen to his feelings about Jessica; his nightmares and insecurities about the fire...

...And suddenly, he realised she never had loved him.

It was his last thought before his head was forced into the river.

Chapter End Notes

Guess who's got sinusitis guys? I feel like my face had a fight with a wasps' nest and the wasps won. Anyway, hope you guys enjoyed the latest update and I'm glad so many of you were so attached to Lisa. I wasn't sure if I was making her likeable enough!
Ben pressed himself deeper into Castiel’s fur and the older omega’s expression fell in sympathy. The pup hid his tears in Cas' chest, but his body shook with silent sobs and Cas tugged him closer, curling a paw around his back. He gently nuzzled Ben's head and the little omega wriggled into him desperately, seeking any comfort he could get.

Beside him, Samandriel whined quietly at seeing his friend so upset and he padded over before snuggling into Ben, wrapping his entire body around the distraught omega.

Ben choked on another sob when Samandriel began to nuzzle his muzzle and the two scented at one another for a few heartbreaking moments, trying to worm as close as possible to each other. After a couple of minutes, Ben tucked his head under Samandriel's chin and the young alpha tightened his grip on his friend.

Cas watched the pair with a tear sliding down his cheek. He pulled them into his side as he curled around them, nosing at them both tenderly.

Ben often tried not to show how depressed he was at losing his mother, but every so often, his mask slipped and he sought out the comfort of those closest to him, which tended to be Cas, Dean or Samandriel. He felt safe around them and he had quickly learned that crying was nothing to be ashamed of, even if he sometimes wondered whether he was being weak for letting his friends see him in such a sorry state.

He liked being close to them though. When he felt alone and lost, he knew he could count on Samandriel, Cas or Dean to be there for him. Samandriel especially liked to cuddle up to him when he was upset. The little alpha had been very good to him during his time of mourning and Ben always felt so protected when he awoke to Samandriel's paws wrapped tightly around him, the young alpha's body pressed warmly into his back and his head resting on the omega's.

Ben had thought it would feel strange at first; being so close to his friend for something that wasn't a game or a form of play, but as the fortnight after Lisa's death passed, Ben found himself seeking out Samandriel when he was down or lonely. The little alpha never pushed him away or told him to wait either; no matter where or when Ben sought him out, Samandriel would snuggle up to him and hold him until he felt better.

Ben began to scent at Samandriel's throat, nuzzling him appreciatively and Samandriel licked his head gently.

Castiel watched them sorrowfully and was startled when a tongue tenderly licked the wounds on his face. He glanced up to find Dean awake and looking as though he was frightened his little family would disappear at any second. Cas lifted his head and allowed his alpha to lap at the healing wounds on his neck.

Dean shuffled closer, enclosing the two pups between his and Cas' bodies and Ben settled down into the nest of soft fur, Samandriel practically draped over him as the young alpha continued to lick at his muzzle and cheeks affectionately.

Castiel nuzzled Dean's scars with a frown and the lead alpha threw a possessive paw over his lover.
"I love you so much," whispered Dean, voice cracking slightly and Castiel wedged his head beneath his lover's, letting Dean transfer his scent onto him.

"I love you too," murmured Cas. "More than you can know."

When he was satisfied Castiel smelled sufficiently of him and his pack, Dean glanced down to the two pups watching them curiously. He offered them a small smile and nuzzled them both gently.

"Why do you do that?" Asked Ben quietly, voice hitching in a hiccup. "Why do you rub your head against Cas'?

Dean raised an eyebrow at the question as Castiel licked at a scar on his cheek. The one Sam had caused, Dean thought miserably.

"Because he's my omega," replied Dean after a pause. "It's comforting to us both and it tells everyone that we belong to each other."

Samandriel cocked his head adorably.

"But how?"

Cas smoothed a paw down his son's back, making sure to catch Ben as well.

"Because when Dean rubs his chin over my head, he makes me smell like him. He's marking me as his and that's why we call it 'scent marking'."

Samandriel nodded as Ben scrunched his nose up.

"...But you're not an object. You don't 'belong' to anyone. My Mom always said alphas don't own omegas even if they act like they do." His voice broke on the word 'Mom'.

Dean quirked half a smile.

"Your Mom was smart. But me marking Cas as mine doesn't actually mean he's my property. It means other people aren't allowed to kiss him or cuddle him. Because that's my job."

Cas was smiling fondly at him and Dean felt his heart flutter.

Ben still looked confused. "So because you put your scent on him, other people aren't allowed to touch him? At all? Isn't that kind of mean? Does that mean he's not allowed to talk to other people?"

Castiel chuckled softly. "Of course not. I'm allowed to talk to whomever I please, just as I can touch them. What Dean means is there are some things only he's allowed to do and I'd only let him do them. Like when we go to sleep. I don't let anyone else hold me when we sleep, but I love it when Dean does it. I'm his and he's mine."

Samandriel frowned as he tried to piece the information together.

"So when you rub your heads together, you're just telling one another you belong to each other?"

Dean nodded in amusement. "Pretty much."

Ben shook his head. "That seems kind of pointless."

Cas held back a chuckle.
"Well... think of it this way. You know when you're sad and Samandriel hugs you? It sort of feels like that for me when Dean rubs his scent over me."

Ben's eyes widened as though he'd just had an epiphany.

"Oh. I get it."

Cas smiled. "Good."

After a few more minutes of quiet affection between the four, Dean stretched and licked Cas' muzzle.

"I've got to do a supply check with Jody to see how much medical stuff we actually need, so why don't you take Ben and Samandriel for a walk? It's a beautiful day. 'And it might distract Ben for a little while' was what he didn't say.

Cas understood though and nodded, rubbing their noses together lovingly. He had such a thoughtful alpha.

"What do you two think of an adventure?" Asked Dean playfully as he glanced at the pups, whose tails were already starting to swish.

Samandriel nodded enthusiastically as Ben grinned.

Castiel watched them fondly.

"Alright. Wash yourselves in the stream and we can set off."

The pair raced off towards the stream, leaving Dean and Cas to roll their eyes in amusement.

"Be careful," whispered Dean worriedly as he turned to his lover. "Don't wander too far. I can't lose you too."

Cas pulled him into a hug. "You won't. I'll be vigilant."

"You could always take Benny or Crowley or Gadreel with you," mumbled Dean. "Just to make sure you're gonna be safe."

Castiel nipped his lover's jaw playfully. "Stop worrying. We'll be fine. I promise. We won't go too far." He pulled back to glance sternly at his lover.

"Besides, you need to right things with your brother. All this tension between you both is hurting you. And you may not have noticed, but Sam is more miserable than I have ever seen him."

Dean frowned petulantly. "He won't talk to me."

"So talk to him," huffed Cas before his gaze softened. "I hate seeing you stressed and by not talking to Sam you're making yourself upset."

"I'm not upset," Dean snorted before snapping his mouth shut when Cas shot him an unimpressed glare.

"Yes, you are. You're more irritable with the rest of the pack and you get increasingly protective around me. So you will sort things out with your brother. With words. And feelings."

Dean opened his mouth to protest but Cas cut him off again.
"You are not being weak by admitting your worries to your brother. I know you seem to think being lead alpha means you have to bottle up all your concerns, but it doesn't and if you communicated with your brother without the use of alpha/omega posturing, you might find you'd be a lot happier than you are now."

Dean's ears dropped as he scowled like a small pup that couldn't get his way. Cas idly wondered if the alpha would stick his tongue out.

"...Fine," huffed Dean. "Go entertain the children." And with that he whirled on a paw and slunk away, clearly off to find somewhere to sulk.

"Dean," called Cas amusedly and the alpha paused as his lover trotted over.

"I just want to see you smile again," he confessed as he nuzzled Dean's cheek and the alpha relaxed and leaned into his omega.

"Okay, Cas. I'll try. For you."

Castiel grinned and headed over to the two impatiently waiting pups. He waited for them to come to his side before strolling away from the camp.

"Ben! Ben! Come over here! I found a squirrel! It's got wings!" Came Samandriel's excited voice after ten minutes of walking, and Cas chuckled as Ben bounded over, tail motoring from side to side as he and his friend chased the poor rodent.

"Cool!" Cooed Ben as the squirrel leapt off a branch and spread its arms and legs so it could glide into another tree, the air current taking it higher and higher until neither pup could see it.

Ben and Samandriel raced back to a patiently waiting Castiel, nearly bumping into him in their haste.

"What was that?" Asked Samandriel, bright blue eyes wide and wondrous as Ben nodded eagerly.

"I believe that was a flying squirrel," hummed Castiel as they continued walking. "He doesn't actually have wings, but rather a skin-like flap between his wrist and ankles. He uses the wind to glide."

Ben and Samandriel glanced at each other. They seemed a little disheartened by the fact the squirrel didn't actually have two wings sprouting from his sides. Cas decided to cheer them up a little.

"Although, I have heard that some of the wild horses in these parts have wings and horns. Beautiful stallions with wings so soft and huge, they look like clouds. They come in different colours and because they're so rare and barely anyone has ever seen one, it's rumoured that if you find one, they'll grant you a single wish with their mystical horn."

Both pups eyes widened in awe for a moment before Ben scrunched his nose up.

"That sounds like something out of the fairytales Mom used to tell me."

Castiel bit back a smile and donned a solemn expression.

"Oh, well, if you don't believe in them, I suppose you'll never find one."

Samandriel cocked his head to one side. "Do you believe in them, Dad?"

"Of course," said Castiel, feigning shock. "I'm sure I heard one galloping around the other night, but he must have been black because when I ventured outside to look for him, I couldn't see anything."
Ben frowned cutely. "...How do you know it wasn't just a regular horse?"

Castiel chuckled knowingly. "Because when a horse runs, it doesn't sound like a thousand wind chimes playing in harmony. A regular horse doesn't smell like warm toffee and chocolate when it passes, but these creatures do."

Ben and Samandriel looked at one another once more and Cas had to turn away when he saw their identical expressions of enthusiasm for fear of them seeing through his amused smile.

"I've heard they sleep during the daytime so maybe this would be the perfect opportunity for you to see one standing still," commented Castiel, grin growing at the pups' wiggling bodies.

He chuckled softly when they rushed ahead, noses to the ground and expressions determined as they tried to scent out the mythical creature. Vaguely, Cas heard Samandriel trying to explain what toffee was and what it smelled like.

They walked for another ten minutes, the pups not once losing concentration from their important task and Cas enjoyed the peacefulness of the thriving forest; the new buds on the trees; the first splashes of colour from the flowers determined to break through the hard soil; the tuneful melodies of birdsong as the little creatures readied themselves to become parents.

"Hey, Dad? Do the winged-horses make weird screams as though they're under water?" Asked Samandriel, looking a little disturbed and Cas frowned and was about to say 'no' when his son's words finally sunk in.

He rushed over to where both pups had their ears pricked up.

There was indeed something screaming.

Or someone.

Wary but curious, Cas followed the sound, ensuring the pups stayed behind him. He padded over the ground silently and when he finally reached the source of what was quickly becoming a very distressing noise, Cas stiffened and his eyes blew wide.

He wasn't quick enough to block the pups' view and they gasped in horror at the sight of Ruby attempting to drown a thrashing Sam.

"Tell Dean," he urged them hurriedly before revealing himself and sprinting towards Ruby, the pups scampering away as fast as their little legs could carry them.

Castiel saw red as he watched Ruby positively smirking as she thrust Sam's head deeper into the water and just as Sam lost his balance and his whole body tumbled into the fast flowing river, Castiel ploughed into the demonic alpha.

Ruby shouted in surprise as Cas bowled her over, but she was quick to recognise him and she snarled as she began to swipe at any part of him she could reach with blood-coated claws.

Despite being an omega, he was larger than her and Cas used it to his advantage as he kept her pinned, baring his teeth at her menacingly.

"City mutts don't belong out here," she hissed. "You will never be one of us."

Castiel yelped as both sets of Ruby's hind claws penetrated his stomach and he was thrown to the floor when the alpha kicked hard at him.
Then Ruby was tearing at his chest viciously and he had to fight to keep the alpha's jaws from clamping around his throat.

"You're nothing more than a pathetic omega dying for a knot to shove into his loose hole. How many other pups have you got? How many other alphas have claimed you? I bet you're just with Dean because he's got a fat knot," she sneered, clearly trying to get a rise out of Cas long enough for her to get to his throat.

Cas wasn't stupid though, and although the comments initiated something indignant and furious low in his belly, he wasn't about to let this traitorous alpha beat him.

He lashed out at her muzzle, making her growl as she mauled his chest again.

"Dean will never love you as much as he loved Lisa. You're just an easy rebound," spat Ruby and Cas would never admit how much that had stung. He knew it wasn't true, but it didn't make the comment hurt any less. Lisa was dead and Dean had only recently admitted he may have still held some attachment to her, even if he in no way regretted what he had with Cas.

"You're nothing to him," whispered Ruby. "Nothing compared to Lisa. How could you be? You're just a cowardly Novak omega on the run with his kid."

He knew Ruby's words were all lies and manipulations, but they had shaken him, and his already weakened state coupled with Ruby's mutilation of his chest had his defences faltering. Ruby grinned maniacally as she plunged her jaws towards his slightly bared throat.

Suddenly, Ruby's eyes grew wide as a body ploughed into her and Cas turned his stunned gaze onto a distraught Sam.

"He's better for Dean than you ever were for me," Sam bit out, tears welling in his eyes the longer he stared at Ruby's cruel sneer of disgust.

Sam shouted in shock as a claw ripped through his cheek and he staggered backwards as Ruby chuckled.

"See? Now you and your brother can have matching scars. Except I didn't cause his, did I?"

Sam snapped his mouth shut and he stumbled slightly, obviously distraught at the thought of having hurt his brother whilst trying to protect his cold-hearted mate.

Ruby smirked and looked ready to take another swing at Sam when Cas leapt to his feet and with renewed determination, lunged for the violent alpha.

"Stay away from him!" Cas snapped as they fought, claws outstretched, teeth gnashing and blood flying everywhere.

An agonised cry from Cas was enough to push Sam into action and he yanked Ruby away from the other omega when he realised the alpha had sunk her teeth into his leg.

Sam threw her against a tree like a rag doll and she slid to the bottom with a loud thump, groaning quietly.

"Cas?" Sam whispered worriedly as he tried to help the other omega to his paws and Castiel managed to flick a grateful glance to him.

Then Sam let out a pained yelp as jaws clamped around the back of his neck and he reared up to
throw the mahogany wolf off him once more. This time however, she was persistent and nothing Sam did could detach her. Cas sunk his teeth into her back, but she was desperate and her wild flailing caused Cas to get kicked in the face.

Sam decided to ram her into a tree, but even that didn't work and he howled as her teeth penetrated deeper.

Castiel leapt at her again, snapping at her belly and the pain was enough to make her release Sam; the large omega collapsing to floor with a wounded whine.

Cas snarled at the alpha, ignoring the way his omega instincts were demanding he cower to the furious alpha spewing waves of dominance and anger in her scent, and he managed to herd her away from Sam.

"Don't know why you're trying to protect that freak," she growled. "Worthless abomination. Might as well leave him to die; no one cares about him anyway, especially after what he did to Dean. Besides, who could love him? He doesn't even look like an omega."

Cas' hackles raised. "I care about him."

Sam whimpered despite himself and Ruby snorted in disgust at the reaction.

"How pathetic."

Cas wasn't sure how much longer he could fight a hormone-fuelled alpha. He was already battered and broken from the last fight with Azazel's pack; he was in no condition for another. But as a beaten Sam slowly raised to his paws and came to stand beside him, Cas wondered if together they might have a shot at winning this battle.

Ruby laughed bitterly before rumbling in full alpha attack mode and both omegas winced at the sound. Every bone in their body was screaming at them to back down and submit to the enraged alpha.

However, the second Ruby started to advance on them, there was a second alpha rumble; dominant and familiar.

Ruby froze and turned to find Dean thundering across the the forest towards her, face a cold, hard mask of fury as murder blazed behind his eyes. His scent radiated a combination of protection and intent to kill.

With one last glare at the two omegas, Ruby took off. She wouldn't victor in a fight against three wolves.

Dean didn't follow her. She wouldn't be coming back.

Not unless she wanted to see how it felt to have her head ripped from her body.

"Are you two okay?" He panted, trying to regain his lead alpha composure despite his voice cracking slightly with concern when he took in their appearances.

"Fine," affirmed Cas as Sam stared at his brother with wide, emotional eyes.

Dean didn't look convinced but turned to his brother to repeat the question when he was suddenly bowled over by the larger wolf.
"I'm sorry, Dean! I'm so sorry," Sam sobbed, burying his head into his brother's chest as the pair tumbled to the ground, knocking Dean off-guard. "You were right. You were always right about her and I'm just a stupid pup and I never believed you. You always said I shouldn't be with her, but I just thought you were jealous and I should've known that couldn't be right, because you've always looked after me and did what's best for me ever since we were pups, and you always said you just wanted me to be happy. Now I've done something stupid and I said terrible, hurtful things to you and Ruby wants me dead and now she's gone and I've lost my mate and I've hurt my brother and alienated my pack, and even Dad can't stand me because I'm such a screw-up and Jess is dead because I couldn't save her and-"

"Sam," huffed Dean, tone dripping with alpha command and Sam immediately snapped his mouth shut and lowered his gaze submissively, whole body shrinking in on itself in an attempt to make the omega look smaller.

Ashamed of his rambling, Sam tried to slink away from his brother; to lie in the river and finish what Ruby started, but to his surprise, Dean wrapped his front paws around him and tugged him to his chest. Still straddling his brother, the younger Winchester stumbled and collapsed onto Dean's body, but the alpha didn't seem to mind and merely held him closer as he licked a few of the bleeding wounds on Sam's face.

After a moment, Sam hugged his brother back just as tightly and tears soaked into Dean's fur as the omega scented the alpha's neck desperately.

"I'm sorry," whispered Sam, repeating the phrase like a mantra and Dean rumbled deep in his chest in a way that reminded Sam of their earlier years, when Dean protected his little brother from all the evil monsters in the world. It made him feel safe.

"I do want you to be happy, Sammy," murmured Dean. "But I want it to be with someone who deserves you. Someone who'll appreciate you as much, if not more than I do. Someone like Jess," he said sadly and despite never having been this clingy with his big brother in years, Sam wedged his head under Dean's chin.

He had never been averse to showing a little bit of affection towards his brother, but Sam had always wanted to prove to his older brother that just because he was an omega, it didn't mean he needed an alpha to protect him. He supposed the sentiment had sprouted because of his father; John had always seen Sam as weaker than Dean. Sam had often got the impression his father was disappointed in him and when he thought about it, because Dean had been closer to a father figure than John had ever been, he had always wanted to impress Dean as well.

Dean was so good at everything and Sam had at one point believed it was his biology that was holding him back. So he decided if he acted more like Dean; more like an alpha, then that would maybe make both his Dad and his brother proud.

Of course, as he grew older, Sam came to realise these ideals were nonsense. Being an omega didn't make him weak, but his father's pitiful looks and bitter words of failure never left him and Sam had decided he wasn't going to succumb to his biology and let his instincts rule the way he acted around alphas and betas. He had always hated how omegas were traditionally supposed to submit to every alpha they met; as if they were somehow lesser than the other gender.

He had made a few exceptions for Ruby. Look how that panned out.

However, in that moment, Sam was in a lot of pain, his heart had been broken, he had nearly died, he had lost one of his close friends, and the guilt of pushing his brother and pack away was eating him alive, so he rubbed his head lightly against Dean's chin, begging for comfort.
Dean made a protective sound and Sam relaxed as the alpha held him more securely and rubbed his scent over him, seemingly determined to rid the omega of every trace of Ruby.

"Dad?! Are you okay?"

Both brothers startled at the panicked voice and they glanced to the side to find Samandriel and Ben racing towards a silent Castiel, having only just managed to catch up. The Winchesters ducked their heads in embarrassment; they'd forgotten Cas was there.

The omega didn't seem to mind though and he smiled understandingly at them before leaning down to embrace his son and Ben.

"I'm fine," he reassured even as both pups screwed their noses up at his battered body.

"I'm very proud of you two," he said earnestly. "You were extremely brave travelling through the forest alone and you did as I asked and found Dean. Although I am surprised you didn't wait for us at the camp," he added, glancing sternly at Dean and the alpha opened his mouth as if to protest, when Samandriel cut him off.

"Dean told us to stay at the camp, but we couldn't just wait there when you were fighting with Ruby! What if you needed help? What if you got hurt and we didn't know?" Asked Samandriel, panic still lingering in his gaze as Ben glanced at him in just as much distress.

Castiel's heart melted and he leaned down to nuzzle the two pups.

"Thank you. I'm very glad I can count on both of you to take care of me."

Both pups nodded determinedly before snuggling into Castiel's fur as he hugged them.

Sam tilted his head slightly before slowly untangling himself from Dean and creeping over to them.

"Thank you," he said sincerely. "To all of you. You saved my life." His voice hitched and Samandriel and Ben cocked their heads at him as they regarded him carefully.

"Are you okay?" Asked Ben suspiciously. "You're not gonna keep acting all weird? You're really scary when you're angry."

Sam's heart broke and he choked back a sob as he dropped to eye-level with the pups.

"No. I'm better now. I'm sorry for scaring you these past couple of weeks. I would never hurt you."

Samandriel's eyes flicked to Dean briefly and the action brought a tight feeling to Sam's chest. How could he promise that when he'd already hurt Dean?

"...Okay," said Ben eventually, but he still looked wary and Sam realised he had a lot of making up to do.

Cas eyed the other omega sympathetically before glancing over to Dean, who was just rolling to his feet.

"C'mon," the alpha mumbled, concern in his gaze as he assessed the damaged inflicted upon both his lover and brother. "Let's get you two home."

The three of them managed to limp back to the camp, the pups sticking close and when they returned, they were immediately swamped by panicked questions and worried sniffing.
Sam was overwhelmed by how forgiving his pack was despite all he had put them through in the past fortnight.

"Where's Ruby?" Asked Benny gruffly, glancing behind the trio suspiciously and there was a beat of silence where Cas and Dean waited for Sam's permission to explain. The whole pack was surprised when Sam huffed bitterly.

"Hopefully dead."

A tense hush fell over the camp as everyone processed what Sam's words coupled with his injuries implied and then Crowley was quirking the corner of his mouth up into a smug smirk.

"Miracles really do happen."

There were some snickers before a few pack members cautiously slid over to Sam to nuzzle and scent him comfortingly. Sam leaned into them with a sigh of relief and his friends perked up a little when he nosed at them appreciatively.

"I'm so sorry," he whispered sincerely. "I should've listened to you guys. I should've taken notice of all the signs about Ruby being trouble, but I didn't because I forced myself into believing she loved..." Sam trailed off as he closed his eyes in defeat. "And I took my irritation out on you. I'm so sorry."

There was a gruff huff from somewhere behind Sam and the omega twisted around to find Bobby ambling over.

"As long as we've got you back, boy, that's all that matters. Just don't be takin' that kind of attitude with us again," he said sternly as Sam ducked his head apologetically.

"Alright, alright. Break it up guys. Let me through. C'mon let the medic through. Ed, move your tail."

There was an indignant "Ow!" and an eye roll as Jody shoved her way towards Castiel and Sam.

"Let's see what we've got. Dean, we're definitely gonna have to do another supply run after these past couple of weeks, but I think if a few people pitch in, I'll have enough antiseptic and bandages to stop these two from getting gangrene," muttered Jody as she manhandled the two omegas into the positions she needed them in and began her work, the other wolves eager to give up their medical supplies to help their friends.

Once Jody was finished a couple of hours later, Dean ceased his anxious pacing and joined the trio, Ben and Sam andriel trotting behind him quietly.

"You're good to go," smiled Jody. "Just don't overexert yourselves."

Dean wasn't subtle in the way his gaze raked over the omegas' bodies meticulously and both wolves rolled their eyes.

"We're fine, mother," chuckled Castiel and Dean blinked before looking away sheepishly.

"Thank you," he said, glancing at Cas. "For saving my brother. Sam andriel and Ben told me what happened and I can't thank you enough."

"I'm sure you'll find a way," murmured Cas solemnly, succeeding in making Sam choke and Dean look very flustered. The pups were glancing between the adults with expressions of puzzlement.
"Right, I'll uh... I'll leave you two to it then," stuttered Sam before turning to Cas once more.

"But thank you. Really. For saving my life. If you hadn't interrupted then..."

"Sam, stop. You don't have to thank me. You're practically my family," said Cas and Sam managed a small smile.

"Right. Still, thanks. And on that note... I'll leave you two to do whatever it is... that you... do..." He finished awkwardly before slipping away.

Castiel chuckled as he watched the giant omega stumble over his own paws in his haste to escape and now that the drama was over and everyone was fine, Samandriel and Ben quickly lost interest in the situation, instead informing Cas and Dean that they were off to play with Alex and Claire.

Castiel watched them disappear and was taken off-guard by the body that pressed into his side as a tongue licked at the gashes in his cheek.

He hummed quietly and leaned into Dean, closing his eyes in pleasure as his alpha relieved some of the pain whilst the painkillers were still trying to take effect.

"Thought you were gonna be careful?" Murmured Dean as he nuzzled his lover and Castiel licked his muzzle gently.

"It's not my fault your brother is a magnet for trouble."

Dean huffed and Cas smiled at the warm breeze gliding across his face before tucking his head under his lover's chin.

"Maybe you should take care of your brother tonight," whispered Cas quietly and Dean's resulting silence was enough to tell him that the alpha was confused.

"Sam's hurting both physically and emotionally and tonight he's going to return to the sleeping area he shared with the mate who betrayed him and he's going to be completely alone. How do you think that's going to make him feel? Trust me, Dean, he needs you. He needs his family."

Dean remained quiet for a little longer before nuzzling his lover's head.

"You're hurting too. Aren't I supposed to look after you? I don't want you to be alone after today."

Castiel chuckled as he licked his alpha's throat lovingly.

"I have Ben and Samandriel to keep me company. Sam needs you more than I do right now."

Dean smiled and tugged his omega into a long hug.

"What did I do to deserve an Angel like you?"

"Well, that thing you do with your tongue..."

Dean laughed and pulled his omega closer.

"I love you so much, Cas. You're unbelievably perfect."

Castiel snuggled closer and made a soft sound of contentment, making Dean huff happily. Cas loved this side of Dean; the secret romantic side of him that only got expressed when they were alone and being tender with one another. At first, Dean had seemed a little gruff and macho in the way that all
alphas were, but the longer the pair had been courting, the more of Dean's soft side Cas experienced.

Dean was opening up more and more the longer they were together, and Cas was honoured to know the alpha trusted him so dearly now.

On the other hand, Cas was able to trust Dean more and he could feel that he was beginning to embrace pack life. He was growing accustomed to having a close-knit family and he had found a lover who truly cared about him; something that he'd originally believed he'd never be able to have, especially not whilst he had Samandriel.

"Alright, Angel. I'll check up on Sammy tonight," murmured Dean as he licked his lover's muzzle and Cas gently rubbed their noses together.

"Don't forget to kiss me goodnight," he whispered and Dean beamed.

"It'll be the best kiss you've ever had."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the wait! Uni's being difficult!
Sam hesitated outside his and Ruby's sleeping quarters.

Well. His sleeping quarters.

He wrinkled his nose at the scent of the alpha and contemplated sleeping outside for the night, but the Spring air was frosty and Sam could already feel the chill seeping through his joints.

Everyone else had already retired but Sam had been dreading this all day and for a brief moment, he entertained the notion of asking Bobby if he could spend the night with him. He shook his head though; he had to do this at some point, and sooner was better than later.

He slowly limped into the bush, grimacing at the memories assaulting his brain; all the tender moments he and Ruby had shared together, the lazy mornings, the chats, the sex...

He shook his head again. It had all been fake. None of it had meant anything. Ruby had never loved him, no matter if Sam had spent the better part of five years believing she had.

The impression of where she usually lay was marked in the ground; an empty space mocking Sam's inner turmoil.

He treaded around it and took up his usual position, rolling over so he wouldn't have to see the groove beside him. He felt a few tears track down his muzzle and he tried to ignore the potency of her smoky scent. It clung to everything though, even his fur and Sam inhaled shakily before releasing it in a broken sob.

He closed his eyes, quieting his crying; he didn't need any curious noses searching him out and seeing him in such a wrecked state. He didn't need to let anyone know how much of a mess he was now he'd lost a mate who hadn't even wanted him.

He startled when a paw wrapped around him from behind and for a second, he thought Ruby had come to finish the job and he whirled around and snarled at the intruder.

Familiar green eyes blinked back at him and he froze.

"Thought you could use the company," murmured Dean and Sam paused as he took in the sympathetic expression and sincere desire to comfort him. Sam realised he was still crying.

"'S okay, Sammy. I'm here," whispered Dean as he wrapped both front paws around his brother and it took a moment for Sam to react.

The last time they'd slept together was when John had left the pack after trying to punish Sam. They had held each other in their grief and had taken comfort in each other's scents. That had been well over a decade ago. After that they had never been comfortable sharing sleeping quarters. They were two overly large wolves and brothers to boot.

Pups cuddled; grown adult pack leaders did not.

Now though, Sam thought about all they'd been through in the past two weeks, between losing Lisa;
an omega Dean had shared a very intimate bond with, and Sam being betrayed, all the agonising fights the pack had been involved in and all the arguing the two brothers had taken part in.

Sam threw himself at his brother with a heartbreaking sob and Dean pulled him closer as he nosed at him almost desperately.

They wrapped all four paws around one another and Sam realised Dean was clinging onto him just as tightly as he was to Dean. His brother obviously needed comfort too.

"I missed you, Sammy," the alpha whispered and Sam swore he felt tears that weren't his own dripping onto his cheek.

"I'm sorry, Dean," whimpered Sam quietly. "I'm so sorry for everything. For not listening to you, for yelling at you in front of the pack, for picking Ruby over my own brother..." He nuzzled the faded scar on Dean's cheek. "I'm sorry for hurting you," he choked out and Dean began to lick at some of the cuts littering Sam's muzzle.

"I shouldn't have postured," he whispered. "Just 'cause I'm an alpha doesn't give me the right to try and intimidate you into backing down. You're right; you're not a pup anymore and I shouldn't keep treating you as my kid brother. You've grown up and sometimes I forget that." Dean lowered his gaze apologetically and Sam wedged his head under his brother's chin, nosing at his throat submissively.

"You're my big brother. It's your job to keep me in check; to stop me from doing anything stupid. You've always been there for me; always looked after me even when I'm acting like such a brat. You've put up with a lot from both me and Dad and don't think I haven't noticed all the times you've taken the blame for my mistakes or sacrificed your meal to make sure I get one. You've always protected me, ever since we were pups, even when I could be so ungrateful and petty."

Sam closed his eyes, ashamed as he scented his brother's neck and Dean squeezed him tighter.

"You're not a brat. You've just had such a rotten time between Dad and your mates..." Dean nuzzled his brother's head soothingly. "You're a good guy, Sammy. Always have been. And I've never gone a day without thinking how proud I am of you. You always do everything so passionately; you stand up for what you believe in despite the consequences; you always help the little guys when they're being picked on; you care so much about everyone else. I am so proud to call you my brother."

Sam's eyes were watering for an entirely different reason now. He snuggled into Dean, remembering their days as young pups when Dean used to curl around him protectively; telling him stories when their Dad never had time for them. He remembered Dean making sure he got meals when their Dad forgot; the little alpha hunting for rabbits despite not really knowing how to creep up on them.

He remembered being terrified when they were attacked by Azazel's pack and Dean had shielded Sam's tiny body with his own, hiding Sam from the intruders even though Dean was frightened himself.

He remembered hitting puberty and enduring his first heat, and Dean had constantly been by his side, fending off any unwanted alphas and betas when they smelled his delicious scent. He had been in agony that first time and although Dean, as an alpha, must have been affected by the scents, his brother had succeeded in keeping him safe.

Even as they grew older, Dean always had Sam's back, eventually turning on their father to once again protect Sam. Dean had always been there for him.
"You're such a good alpha," whispered Sam, rubbing his head under Dean's chin pleadingly.

Dean made a rumble of approval and Sam felt the tightness in his chest ease off when his brother began to rub his scent over him. He leaned into the alpha; he wanted every remnant of Ruby gone and Dean was more than happy to oblige.

"You're so kind and forgiving. I don't deserve half the things you do for me, but you do them anyway. You're the best pack leader I've ever known; you care so much about everybody and everything you do is for them. You never think about yourself," mumbled Sam before curling his tail around his brother.

"But you've got to stop blaming everything bad that happens on yourself. What happened to Lisa was not your fault and every day I see it eating you up inside. You didn't kill her but you're acting as though you did and it breaks my heart to see you so broken." Sam nuzzled Dean's throat. "I'm always here if you ever want to talk about anything. I'm your brother and I just want you to be happy."

He licked the scar on Dean's cheek again, as if feeling guilty about it would make it vanish completely.

"I love you, Dean. I always will. We're family."

Dean let out a shaky breath he didn't know he'd been holding and it was like something inside him had been freed at Sam's words. He suddenly felt a lot more content than he had in a very long time. He nuzzled his brother's throat and wrapped his paws more securely around the omega.

"And I love you too, Sammy," he murmured softly, hiding his face so his brother wouldn't be able to see how touched he was. When was the last time they'd said they loved each other? When they were pups?

They enjoyed a few more minutes basking in each other's scents, nuzzling and holding one another as if they were pups again before Dean tucked Sam's head under his.

"Rest. You need it," he said as Sam yawned widely.

The omega cuddled into his brother.

"Promise you won't leave? I... I don't want to wake up alone."

Dean growled protectively and stroked a paw down Sam's back, the omega side of the younger Winchester making him mewl happily at the sound he'd come to associate with being taken care of by his big brother.

"Not gonna leave. I'll never leave you. You're my little brother," he rumbled as he wrapped himself around Sam; the omega curling into him like a young pup seeking comfort. It set off Dean's alpha instincts and he nosed and lapped at Sam's wounds, pulling him close and watching over him until the omega fell asleep.

Satisfied Sam was safe, Dean rested his head over his brother's and drifted off into a restful slumber.

* * *
The next morning, Sam awoke in a cold sweat, Jessica's dreadful screams still echoing inside his skull.

It was dark outside and Sam noticed he was facing the back of his and Ruby's sleeping quarters. There was a paw wrapped tightly around his middle and a warm body was curled around his back, and for a second he frowned because Ruby never cuddled him when they slept.

Memories of the previous day came rushing back to him and his heart constricted for a brief moment until he remembered how the day had ended.

With a small smile, he relaxed back into Dean, tucking himself into his brother's body and the alpha nuzzled him unconsciously before slipping both forelegs around him until he was practically hugging the omega to his chest.

Sam huffed out a soft laugh. Dean was acting as though they were pups again. It was nice. Safe.

Just as he was getting settled in his brother's hold, Dean scented his neck and squeezed him gently. "Told you I wouldn't leave," he murmured and Sam grinned as his brother licked some of his aching wounds.

"You this affectionate with Cas in a morning?" Teased Sam and Dean huffed as he moved onto a different wound, being careful not to tear the bandages around Sam's middle.

"Doesn't count as morning if it's still dark out. Besides, Cas and I aren't affectionate in a morning. We have hot sex. Lots of it."

Sam made a disgusted sound and Dean snickered as he wriggled closer to his brother. "What Cas sees in you, I'll never know," grunted Sam, but he made no attempt to move away.

They fell quiet for a few moments, just focusing on one another's breathing and relishing each other's familiar scents before Dean nudged Sam's head gently.

"Why're you up so early, anyway?"

Sam hesitated and it was enough to tell Dean all he needed to know. The alpha's face softened and he licked his brother's ear comfortingly. "Wanna talk about it?"

Sam sighed quietly and arched into his brother and Dean tightened his grip around the omega.

"I still have nightmares about her. About the fire. About not saving her. I can't get them to stop. I can't sleep without dreaming about how she... died."

Dean took to nuzzling Sam's neck, scenting him in a way Sam wasn't sure if it was meant to reassure him or Dean himself. "I still have dreams about Mom," Dean confessed after a few moments. "And Dad. Nightmares really. About Mom's death and Dad blaming me. Things get a little jumbled now and the dreams all sorta run into one, but they're still there."

Sam froze. He'd had no idea his brother had nightmares. Why hadn't he ever told him? The younger wolf shifted around until he was facing Dean and he automatically wound his paws around the alpha.
"Why didn't you tell me?" He asked softly and Dean shrugged.

"Honestly? They don't happen all that much anymore. I found a way to push them into the background and sometimes they may only surface three times a month at most."

Sam cocked his head to one side curiously.

"How do you stop them?"

Dean quirked a small smile. "I think about the good times I had with them instead of focusing on the horrible times. I think about Mom when she was alive and happy rather than how she died. I focus on when Dad was..." Dean trailed off when his voice hitched, closing his eyes as if it would take back what he'd started to say.

Sam smoothed a paw down his back.

"When he was acting like our Dad?" He offered in a rare display of understanding for Dean's continued affection for their father. Sam still didn't really understand why Dean was so defensive of their deadbeat Dad, but he wanted his brother to see that he could be sympathetic sometimes.

Dean nodded wordlessly, refusing to meet Sam's gaze and the omega slowly tucked his head under his brother's, nosing at his throat in a traditional display of trust and comfort. They had both gone far too long without such tender contact from one another.

"You're always welcome with me and Cas if you can't sleep," whispered Dean after a moment. "We're always there if you wanna talk."

Sam leaned into his brother's gentle nuzzling.

"I'm sure Cas won't want to hear about my problems. He's got his own and yours to worry about."

Dean huffed in amusement.

"Cas cares more for you than you think. He was the one who told me to stay with you last night. He thought you might be lonely and he said you'd need some familiar company."

Sam couldn't help but smile. "I was wondering how you'd managed to convince yourself to leave him after yesterday's fight."

"Don't remind me. I start growling just thinking about all his injuries," grumbled Dean and Sam laughed quietly.

He soon sobered however, when Dean licked at a deep cut on his muzzle.

"I get worried about you too, you know. Ben and Samandriel told me everything. About how Ruby was trying to drown you. I swear, if I ever see that demon again, I'm gonna rip her legs off."

He squeezed his brother almost desperately.

"I can't lose you, Sammy. I need you. I can't run this pack alone and I need you to help me make the right decisions. I need you by my side when we're hunting. I need you to ground me when I lose my temper. We're a team and I don't know what I'd do without you."

"You're not gonna lose me, Dean," murmured Sam as he allowed the alpha to scent him. "I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere."
Dean curled around his brother once more and Sam felt himself relax completely. He'd missed this closeness with his brother. Missed the time when they were younger and had been so open with one another. Being here made him feel as though everything was going to be okay; he was going to get over Ruby and he'd have his relationship with his brother back like when they were much younger.

"Cas is good for you," hummed Sam as he wriggled into his brother's warm body. "It's nice to see you happy for once."

Dean chuckled. "I never would've thought I'd fall head over heels for a Novak."

Sam grinned. "You're admitting you're in love?" He asked with a fake gasp. "Next thing you know I'll be mated to one of the Novaks' highest alphas."

Dean rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I can see you falling for Michael Novak's constipated expression and monotonous voice."

Sam snickered. "Really? I considered myself more of a Lucifer kind of guy. I've heard he's not bad looking."

"And crazy as a sack of cats," snorted Dean, making Sam laugh. "Do me a favour, no eloping with psychotic Novak alphas?" The older Winchester teased and Sam nodded solemnly.

"Okay, I promise."

"Good," hummed Dean as he hugged his brother tighter to his frame. Sam was beginning to form the impression the alpha was more cuddly than he let on.

Not that he minded. Sam had never felt so safe in his life.

"You really are welcome to stay with us if you ever need to," murmured Dean once they had quietened down again. "If you ever have a nightmare or you can't sleep, you know where to find us. Even if you just want to talk."

Sam nodded. "Thanks, Dean," he whispered and the alpha smiled before settling down and drifting off to sleep once more, Sam's head tucked under his chin.

* * *

A week passed and Sam, although still rather heartbroken, had never felt so free.

In some ways, he was happier than he had been in a long time even though he felt very alone without his mate, and the pack had been there for him whenever he felt down.

Cas and Dean were especially attentive.

On the third night after Sam and Dean's heart to heart, the younger Winchester had awoken alone with a shout, eyes wide with fear from yet another nightmare. Feeling stifled in the sleeping quarters he had shared with the mate who had attempted to kill him, Sam had taken a walk outside to clear his head. Dean had obviously heard him pottering around and had promptly dragged him into the cave he shared with Cas, Samandriel and Ben, despite Sam's protests.

Whilst the pups slept, the adults talked softly about Sam's insecurities and Sam had woken up the
next morning to find himself sandwiched between Dean and Cas, with two pups curled into his chest.

He had choked back a sob at the strong sense of family the little group were willing to offer him.

Two nights later something similar happened, but this time, Cas was the one to spot him wandering around on his own. The other omega had carefully guided him into the cave where the others were sleeping and Sam had learned something that evening.

Castiel was an incredibly cuddly sleeper.

The younger Winchester had woken up the following morning to Castiel clinging to him, front paws wrapped securely around his middle.

Granted, Sam had his head tucked under the other omega's and his own paws were hugging Cas tightly, but Sam didn't think he'd ever met someone quite as affectionate as the other omega was in his sleep.

Sam adored it.

Having grown up in a family who couldn't care less about him, sometimes even abusing him, Cas was definitely touch-starved and Sam was more than happy to help his friend. Besides, sometimes it was good to bask in the scent of another omega and it proved just how trusting Cas was of Sam when the older omega easily bared his throat for him to scent.

Behind Sam, Dean had slung a paw over his brother's belly almost protectively and when Sam had cautiously buried his nose in Cas' throat, inhaling deeply in an effort to calm some of his fear-filled thoughts, Dean had huffed in amusement at the way his lover unconsciously exposed his throat further for the cool nose.

"Told you he cares," Dean had murmured before snuggling into his brother's back and drifting off to sleep.

Sam had smiled and nuzzled the other omega gratefully, to which Castiel had cracked an eye open and tugged his friend closer before they both dozed off again.

Sam liked Cas. He was happy that Dean had chosen him to be his lover. His brother deserved someone as kind and considerate as the other omega. Sam wouldn't hesitate to call Cas his brother if the pair ever got mated. He really hoped they would. His brother needed some happiness in his life; someone he could have for himself and who would take care of him just as well as Dean would take care of him.

So far, Sam had stayed at the camp, waiting for his injuries to heal and attempting to reassure his brother that he would never leave him; that he was safe and grateful for everything the pack had done.

However, a week after Ruby's attack, Sam was beginning to wonder about his friend out in the meadow.

Had Gabriel moved on by now? Did he ever find an omega? Had he mastered hunting?

These questions and more buzzed around Sam's skull until one evening, when everyone had retired to sleep, Sam decided to creep out and check on his friend.

It had passed midnight and by the time Sam reached the clearing, only the crickets were active.
The quiet was rather eerie and Sam glanced around the meadow, taking in the distorted reflection of the moonlight in the river and the tall, imposing shadows from the trees surrounding the clearing. A cool breeze made Sam shiver and the cawing of a crow made him startle as it spread its wings in front of him and took off into the starless sky.

He froze when he spotted a body curled up by the riverbank, but when it didn't move for a few seconds, he crept closer to it.

The dark made it difficult to distinguish colours and Sam couldn't quite tell what colour the body in front of him was, so he stalked closer than he knew was safe in order to see if it was his friend who was resting so peacefully.

Suddenly, there was a snarl, and Sam yelped when his back hit the ground, sharp teeth bared in front of his face.

"Gabe! It's me!"

Sam immediately recognised the floppy ear and he placed his paws on the alpha's chest to stop him from causing any more damage to his already sore body.

Gabriel's eyes widened as the feral gaze was lost.

"Sam?" He asked in disbelief and when the omega offered him a smile, Gabriel's gaze roamed over his tattered body and bandaged legs and abdomen, and he whined despairingly as he scrambled to let Sam up.

When Sam rolled to his feet, the alpha took a step forwards before pausing and taking one backwards, seemingly unsure what to do.

"What happened?" He breathed, horrified at the omega's state and Sam laughed bitterly.

"That's a long story."

Sam was knocked off-guard when Gabriel darted forwards, yanking him into a hug.

The alpha seemed almost desperate as he nuzzled Sam's wounds and rubbed his head over the omega's. He curled around Sam protectively and began to lick at the faded scars, and Sam let out a shaky breath, heart fluttering strangely as Gabriel fussed over him.

"I thought you were... You were gone for three weeks and at first I thought maybe your pack had moved... but then I saw this alpha limping through the forest, and she was such a mess with all this blood everywhere... I thought maybe you'd been attacked and you were..." Gabriel trailed off helplessly as he continued to scent and nuzzle at Sam.

Sam closed his eyes in relief. He hadn't realised how much he'd missed Gabriel until he was pressed into the alpha's side; he'd even missed that stupid cologne.

"There was an attack," murmured Sam, unable to stop himself from nuzzling at Gabriel and brushing against him. "We lost one of our members." Sam's mouth drew into a thin line as he tried to forget about the way they'd found Lisa's body; her fur and skin mangled and body torn to shreds. "One of the mothers of the pups."

Gabriel paused and regarded Sam's distraught expression with sympathy.

"Come here, kiddo," he murmured, pulling Sam into a tender embrace. "I'm so sorry. What
happened?" He asked as he licked at a nearly-healed gash along Sam's cheek.

Sam's chest did something funny and he buried his nose in Gabriel's neck and scented deeply.

"That morning I went home from staying out with you... one of our rival packs attacked the camp. They were intent on killing my brother to take charge of our pack. We managed to fight them off but we lost an omega in the process. Her name was Lisa." Sam watched his own tears fall into Gabriel's fur. "She was the sweetest person I ever knew. She died protecting the pups."

Gabriel's expression softened and he nuzzled Sam gently.

"I'm so sorry, Sam. I... I wish I'd been there to help."

Sam smiled weakly. "It's not your job to fight for a pack you don't know."

Gabriel frowned and licked at another wound on the omega's neck.

"I know you. Is that not enough reason to help?"

Sam averted his gaze shyly but pressed further into Gabriel's body. He liked being close to the alpha.

"After the fight I found my mate being raped by one of our rivals. At least I thought she was being raped. We killed her attacker and two weeks later, she revealed she'd been working for Azazel's pack all along and she was furious that we'd murdered her lover. She wanted me to suffer and she said she was just going to try again to help Azazel take over our pack. Then after she attacked me, she tried to drown me."

Sam was startled by the low growl that burst from Gabriel's chest. It made the omega side of him want to curl into the alpha's embrace and never let go.

"I was rescued by Ca- by another omega from our pack." He cursed himself internally for the slip. Although he was pretty certain he could trust Gabriel, Castiel had been hunted enough and he didn't want to be the one who let slip the information of Cas' whereabouts. Who knew how many contacts the powerful Novak family had?

"We managed to fight Ruby off and when Dean showed up, she took off running."

"Wait, when was this?" Asked Gabriel with a frown and Sam raised an eyebrow.

"About a week ago."

Gabriel tensed. "Hold up a minute. Didn't you say Ruby had dark red fur?"

Sam nodded curiously and Gabriel narrowed his eyes.

"So that's who I saw limping in the woods. I couldn't smell her from so far away, but she was alone and covered in blood." Gabriel growled quietly. "I take it some of that blood was yours?"

Sam nodded and the alpha bit back another growl.

It touched Sam that Gabriel cared for him so much. After their terrible first meeting, Sam had assumed Gabriel to be the typical cocky alpha out to knot as many omegas as he could, but over time it had been proved that Gabriel had a much deeper emotional side to him than he let on.

"I take it she isn't coming back?" Huffed Gabriel and Sam shook his head.
"No."

"Good," muttered the alpha. "Means I can do this," he said before practically assaulting Sam.

Gabriel seemed determined to lick and nuzzle every scar and bruise he had and Sam was embarrassed at the tiny mewl of pleasure he released. Gabriel however, was clearly pleased by the sound and he moved onto Sam's jaw.

The omega closed his eyes and slowly tilted his head up, allowing Gabriel access to his damaged throat and the alpha hesitated for a moment, as if checking to see if Sam really trusted him. When the omega didn't back away, Gabriel gently licked at Sam's throat, soothing old scars and warming lingering aches.

Sam made a contented sound of relief as he released a heavy breath and Gabriel shuffled closer in a way that made the omega want to wrap his paw around the alpha and hold him tight. He managed to restrain himself.

Once Gabriel was satisfied, he carefully pulled away and nudged Sam into lying down, which the omega did without hesitation. Sam's heart was performing backflips by the time Gabriel curled around him protectively and the omega couldn't help but press his head under Gabriel's.

The alpha rumbled happily and threw a paw across Sam's body as he tugged the omega closer, and he began to rub his scent over Sam's head, making the omega whimper quietly.

Distantly, Sam realised this was not how friends acted if they were just friends. There was a subtle desperation to their movements that implied they were both looking for something else, but Gabriel's scent was comforting and familiar after all he had faced in the past fortnight and the alpha was being so tender with him, it was difficult not to just give himself to Gabriel. Not that he would. Because Gabriel was only a friend. It's not like he felt anything for the older alpha. Nothing at all.

That's what Sam told himself as he snuggled into the alpha and let Gabriel practically mark him. Gabriel rumbled again in the form of a promise of alpha protection and Sam whined as Gabriel's grip on him tightened. The omega quickly buried his nose in Gabriel's throat, grunting a soft sound of approval when the alpha bared it for him, and Sam licked at the warm flesh in appreciation.

Gabriel's breathing was shaky now and it was obvious the alpha rarely trusted anyone to get this close. Sam licked slowly at Gabriel's throat, comforting undertones vanishing to be replaced by something a little less innocent and neither of them were really aware of their actions as they pressed closer, turning slightly to get better access to one another.

Gabriel closed his eyes and placed his free paw over Sam's and the intimate gesture made the omega's breathing quicken. He paused long enough for Gabriel to shift and begin licking the scar on his muzzle, but the laps were slow and deliberate; almost loving.

Sam's breath hitched and Gabriel smiled as he nuzzled the omega's cheek. Sam licked Gabriel's jaw in the equivalent of affectionate kisses and Gabriel huffed in approval as he lowered himself to his side, keeping a firm hold on the omega.

Sam practically purred when Gabriel slid both front paws around him and he nipped teasingly at the alpha's jaw.

Gabriel's pleased growl made Sam's tail sway and he gently pushed at the alpha's chest until Gabriel rolled onto his back.

Sam was still amazed at how easily Gabriel bared his belly and throat to him and the omega hurried
to straddle him, something inside him snarling that Gabriel was his and Sam wasn’t about to let anyone hurt him.

Gabriel slung his paws around Sam's neck and the omega's breathing shallowed when the alpha's back legs hooked around his hips.

Sam lowered his head to lick a stripe up Gabriel's throat and the alpha tugged him closer until their bodies were pressed flush against one another and Sam was lying on the smaller wolf.

The omega licked another slow stripe up Gabriel's throat and the alpha smoothed a paw over Sam's back as he arched into the chocolate wolf.

Sam grinned at the reaction and nipped at Gabriel's jaw again, making the alpha rumble. Feeling playful, Sam nipped a trail over Gabriel's jaw and down his throat and by the time he was finished, the alpha was rolling his hips torturously slowly against Sam's.

Sam closed his eyes at the pleasurable sensations and he released a low, needy whine when Gabriel began to lick at his throat. He met Gabriel's slow hip rolls with some of his own and eventually, they were rutting against one another like a pair of horny teenagers.

They picked up the pace a little and Sam buried his nose in Gabriel's throat as the alpha held him tight. Gabriel smelled so amazing. Like chocolate and hazelnuts and alpha hormones all mixed together with a concoction of musky cologne.

Sam felt slick beginning to pool between his legs and if Gabriel's dark, lustful gaze was anything to go by, he could smell it.

Sam couldn't remember the last time he'd produced slick from foreplay. It had been a long time since Ruby had managed to arouse him whilst they were teasing. She liked to play rough and although Sam hadn't been that interested in that sort of thing, he had chosen to keep his mate happy.

Fat lot of good that did him.

Sam whined loudly when Gabriel rutted particularly firmly against him and the alpha grinned at the reaction, eyes sparkling with happiness.

Sam didn't give Gabriel much time to bask in his victory though, because he rubbed his slick over Gabriel's belly, making sure to drag his wet hole over the alpha's erection.

Gabriel hissed and slid their bodies together so that Sam was covered in his own slick and the alpha nipped gently at Sam's jaw.

"You are the most beautiful omega I've ever seen," he breathed and Sam's heart was hammering at his chest.

He rubbed his slick into Gabriel's thighs as he rutted against the alpha, and Gabriel growled possessively as he thrusted his hips upwards.

Sam whimpered and pressed his own aching erection against Gabriel's and the alpha curled his paw around Sam's back, accidentally digging his claw into a healing wound hidden by the bandage around Sam's middle.

The heat of the moment was lost as Sam yelped and Gabriel immediately released the omega with wide eyes. Sam scrambled off Gabriel and the alpha rolled away from Sam hurriedly, as if only just realising what they had been doing.
The pair stared at one another for a few moments, neither daring to breathe as the reality of the situation finally set in. Sam's heart was beating too fast. What was he doing? He'd just come out of one bad relationship; he didn't need to be searching for a rebound!

Suddenly Gabriel's eyes widened and he sprinted over to Sam, making the omega freeze. He was surprised when Gabriel stared at his back in horror.

"You're bleeding," he whispered and Sam blinked before twisting his head to get a better look at the crimson spot growing larger and larger on the clean bandages.

"Sam, I'm so sorry," said Gabriel, panic creeping into his tone. "What... what do I do?"

Sam shook his head. "It's nothing," he murmured. "You probably just caught a scab or something. Don't worry, it'll heal."

Gabriel didn't look convinced and he continued to gaze intently at the bandages as if he could somehow see through them.

"I'll get our medic to take a look at it later. Don't worry, it doesn't hurt," reassured Sam.

Gabe frowned. "You yelped," he pointed out and Sam ducked his head.

"Okay, it stung a little at first, but I'm fine now. Please, there's no need to make a big fuss about it."

Gabriel continued to scowl and Sam shifted uncomfortably. Every instinct in his body was screaming at him to just roll over for the alpha and let him have his way with him, but the logical part of Sam's brain was telling him that was a very Bad Idea.

Eventually, Gabe took pity on him and glanced away awkwardly, neither of them wanting to approach the rather large elephant in the room.

"So uh... losing your mate must be pretty... upsetting." As soon as the words left his mouth, Gabriel grimaced and Sam coughed quietly.

"Um... yeah," he said, unable to think of a more intelligent answer. What could he say to something like that?

"I'm sorry, Sam. That was insensitive of me," groaned Gabriel and Sam stared holes into the ground.

"No, no, that... don't... yeah," mumbled Sam helplessly. He'd just rubbed his slick all over Gabriel's body. He could still see it clinging to the alpha's fur and there was no doubt Gabriel could feel it drying on him. Sam didn't know where to put his eyes.

Gabriel gulped and seemed to be having a hard time stopping his scent radiating waves of arousal. Sam wanted nothing more than to curl up in the alpha's fur and bury his nose in his throat.

"You know... you... you smell a lot like..." Gabriel trailed off and Sam spared him a curious glance as the alpha closed his eyes and tried to collect himself.

"You smell a lot like the omega I've been searching for," whispered Gabriel and Sam tensed, alarm bells ringing in the logical part of his mind.

*Like the omega Gabriel was searching for?* Was that a pick up line? Did Gabe mean he liked Sam's scent so much, he wanted him as a mate? That what the city alpha was out here for in the first place, wasn't it? His mind wandered to the first time they'd met and he remembered the smells of omega
heat and slick embedded in Gabe's fur. Maybe the alpha just wanted him as a knotting toy? A sort of 'friends-with-benefits' kind of deal.

Whatever it meant, Sam had only just found his freedom from a dubious relationship and there was no way he was rushing into another.

Gabriel was staring at him oddly and Sam took a step backwards.

"I... This... this isn't a good idea," gulped Sam. "I'm sorry, I have to go."

Gabriel looked surprised and he took a step forwards as if ready to protest.

"Sam?" He asked, sounding genuinely confused, but the omega was already turning on his heel and pacing away.

"Wait!" Called Gabriel. "Wait, Sam, I'm sorry! I... I don't know why I..."

Sam picked up speed when he heard Gabriel beginning to trot after him.

"Sam, please. I'm so sorry," whined Gabriel, distraught tone almost enough to make Sam stop and pull the alpha into a hug. He pushed away these traitorous thoughts. If he turned back now, he had no idea what the consequences would be, but he had a feeling they would involve him and Gabriel finishing what they accidentally started.

He didn't even know Gabriel's last name.

"Sam, stop, please! Don't... don't go. I'm so sorry! Sam!"

Sam was running through the forest as fast as his aching legs would carry him. The dried slick between his thighs was uncomfortable and provided a constant reminder of yet another mistake he'd made even as Gabriel's heartbroken voice faded into the distance.

He galloped home, refusing to listen to the parts of him that were crying for him to return to Gabriel and make things right between them.

He collapsed into his sleeping quarters alone and sore. What had he done?

Chapter End Notes

Sam certainly knows how to get himself into a pickle...
Two days later saw Sam slipping away from the camp once more under the light of the evening stars, unable to cope any longer with the memory of how he'd abandoned Gabriel after the alpha had been so caring towards him.

What he didn't know was this time, he was being followed.

* * *

"Psst. Hey, Samandriel. Hey, wake up."

Samandriel blinked awake sleepily, frowning slightly at the lack of omega between his paws. He searched blindly for Ben in the dark before realising that the voice insisting he get up belonged to said omega and it was coming from a few metres to his left.

"Ben? What's going on?"

"He's doing it again," whispered Ben as Samandriel plodded over to him tiredly, leaning into his side as he followed his friend's gaze.

Sure enough, Sam was once again sneaking away from the camp in the middle of the night.

"Where do you think he goes?" Whispered Ben, starting a conversation they'd had countless times.

Samandriel squinted at the retreating figure. "Maybe he goes looking for those winged horses that Dad was talking about. Y'know, the wish granting ones. Aren't they nocturnal or something?"

Ben pulled a face. "Maybe," he murmured doubtfully. "Or maybe he has some sort of weird double life."

Samandriel perked up. "Like a secret agent?"

Ben had been told about the secret agent shows Samandriel used to watch on TV. There was one about a platypus wearing a special hat. It sounded really cool.

The little omega nodded. "Yeah, something like that. I mean, he goes off for hours at a time and he does it when everyone's sleeping. He's definitely trying to hide something."

Samandriel tilted his head at his friend. "So... what do you want to do about it?"

Ben eyed the patch of forest Sam had vanished into before turning to the alpha with a grin.

"Let's follow him."

Samandriel's ears drooped slightly.
"...I don't know, Ben... What if it's dangerous? Dad and Dean would have a fit..."

Ben frowned. "But what if Sam's doing something really awesome and we're missing it? I mean, if he really is a secret agent, don't you at least want to have a peek at the things he does? Didn't you say agents have all kinds of weird gadgets and gizmos?"

Samandriel contemplated this. "Yeah, they do," he conceded, looking a little more convinced.

"Then what are we waiting for?" Asked Ben with a wiggle of his tail and Samandriel finally grinned before the two pups sped after the wayward omega.

* * *

Sam gulped as he slowly padded into the clearing. He should never have run from Gabriel like he had. They needed to talk about what had happened between them; Sam needed to explain he was in no way ready for another relationship, especially when he barely knew the alpha.

Even if it had felt amazing.

Sam shook his head. Now was not the time to fantasise about Gabriel teasing him; he'd already had two wet dreams. He didn't need to add any more fuel to the catastrophe of a fire.

He crept through the meadow, glancing around for Gabriel and hoping that the alpha wouldn't be too mad.

"Gabriel?" Sam called out softly and there was a flicker of movement down the slope of the river bank.

"Gabe? That you?" Sam asked as he neared the river. He paused when a head popped up to stare at him sleepily.

"Sam?" Gabriel asked in confusion before his eyes widened and he scrambled up the bank.

"Sam, I'm so sorry. I promise it'll never happen again. It was an accident. You were hurt and I wanted to help you, but I got a little carried away and then you got carried away and we both- "

"Woah, Gabe! It's... it's okay. It was an accident, I know," Sam quickly interrupted, before averting his gaze.

Gabriel looked away embarrassedly and neither wolf spoke for a few awkward moments.

"Thing is," murmured Sam, "I can't be whatever... you want me to be."

Gabriel's head shot up as a look of bewilderment flashed across his face.

"I'm just not ready for... for another relationship."

"Sam-"

"Just hear me out, okay? I'm flattered you... care for me. And I've loved all the time we've spent together, but I can't... I can't be your omega. I can't be the thing you've been looking for. It's just too soon. I'm sorry but I can't," Sam exhaled shakily and waited for Gabriel's response.
However, when a minute ticked by in silence, Sam risked a glance at the alpha.

Gabriel looked incredibly befuddled, as if he wasn't even sure what the conversation was about anymore and his jaw hung partially open, words dissolving before they reached his lips.

"...Right," he said eventually, not seeming certain as to what he was agreeing to. His reaction was confusing Sam.

"I think..." Gabriel licked his lips nervously and Sam prepared himself for any begging or attempts to force him into reconsidering his decision. No matter if Gabriel tried to intimidate him into becoming his omega, Sam wouldn't change his mind. He just wasn't ready for another relationship.

Maybe he'd never be ready. He had to have some sort of curse on him when it came to relationships. His first mate had died tragically, his second one had tried to murder him and now he'd rushed head-first into something with an alpha he didn't even know the surname of.

Maybe he was better alone.

Gabriel cleared his throat and Sam braced.

"I think there's been a misunderstanding."

Sam balked. No way was Gabriel going to pretend he wasn't interested in Sam after the way they'd been rutting against one another last time they'd met. Was the alpha really that desperate to keep up his smooth-talking alpha reputation? Was he too prideful to face rejection?

Gabriel hesitated, seemingly weighing something up in his mind before turning a serious expression on Sam.

"Sam, when I said 'You smell like the omega I've been searching for', I didn't mean romantically. I mean you literally have a scent clinging to your coat that smells a lot like my-"

"...Uncle Gabe?"

Gabriel froze at the small voice and Sam's pulse tripled in panic. Why did that sound a lot like Samandriel? Please tell him Samandriel hadn't wandered out here alone whilst Sam was with a foreign alpha, in the dark and with no one else around to help them if Gabriel decided the young alpha was a threat.

Not that Gabriel struck him as the type to murder pups, but after Ruby turned out to be a traitor, Sam had no idea what the world had in store for him.

Gabriel turned his head almost in slow motion to face the source of the voice, eyes wide and stunned as Sam's worst fears came to light.

A few metres away stood a gaping Samandriel. And, oh good, he'd brought Ben with him.

Cas and Dean were going to kill him, Sam thought miserably as the four had a staring contest.

"Alfie?" Whispered Gabe and Sam scrunched his nose up. Alfie? Who the heck was Alfie?

Suddenly, Samandriel's face lit up with delight and he was sprinting across the meadow, even as Ben whined in fear for him to stop.

Sam gasped and was about to stand between Gabriel and Samandriel (because it was clear Gabe was confused with another pup and Sam wasn't sure what that meant for Samandriel) but Gabriel was
already racing towards the small alpha, and Sam knew there was no way he could catch up.

It didn't mean he wasn't going to try.

Sam growled warningly at Gabriel, but the alpha ignored it and distantly, the omega could hear Ben whimpering in terror as the foreign golden wolf advanced on his friend.

Both Sam and Ben were shocked when Samandriel pounced on Gabriel and the older alpha laughed excitedly as he rolled onto his back and allowed the pup to lick his face.

"Uncle Gabe!" Grinned Samandriel, tail motoring. "It really is you!"

Gabriel beamed and hugged the pup to his chest as he licked him sloppily, making Samandriel groan.

"Sure is, kiddo. You don't know how happy I am to see you!"

Samandriel snuggled under Gabriel's chin and both Ben and Sam's jaws hit the floor.

"I missed you," whispered Samandriel as Gabriel curled his paws around the pup protectively. "I thought I was never gonna see you again."

Gabriel's gaze softened and he stroked Samandriel's back soothingly.

"I'm here. I'm right here. I'm not gonna let you go again. I'll never let you go again."

Samandriel smiled and nuzzled Gabriel's chest and the older alpha licked the pup's head gently.

"I'm so glad I finally found you," breathed Gabriel, closing his eyes as he squeezed Samandriel closer, as if frightened the little alpha would vanish again if he let go.

Samandriel's head shot up enthusiastically.

"Dad is going to be so happy to see you!"

Gabriel grinned, eyes bright as his tail began to wriggle.

"Your Dad's okay?"

Samandriel nodded and Gabriel let out a joyful laugh as he pulled Samandriel close again.

Ben watched on curiously, his fear slowly dissipating with each smile and playful nuzzle the strange alpha shared with Samandriel.

Sam's expression, however, was quickly becoming more and more blank.

"Gabriel," he said quietly and the alpha glanced up to Sam with an excited smile, before noticing his emotionless expression, and he slowly rolled to his feet, keeping Samandriel tucked close to his side.

"Sam, this is my nephew," introduced Gabriel as he glanced to the pup, unable to stop his lips from quirking upwards at the sight of the young alpha so healthy and happy.

"Your nephew," repeated Sam blandly and Gabriel hesitated at the off tone before nodding.

"Yeah, his name's Alfie. Well, Samandriel, but I never call him that." Gabriel winked at the pup and Samandriel pulled his tongue out at him playfully.

Sam narrowed his eyes and Gabriel subtly pulled Samandriel closer.
"We've met," he replied curtly and that made Gabriel frown.

"...You've met?"

"Yes." Sam glared at the alpha. "I suppose you're Castiel's brother?"

Gabriel tensed, but he also seemed hopeful. "You know Cas?"

"He's my soon-to-be brother-in-law," said Sam dryly and Gabriel blinked, trying to work that one out for a moment before his eyes widened and his jaw dropped.

"Wait, what?!"

"You're a Novak," Sam accused with a soft growl and Gabriel froze before nodding slowly.

Sam snarled and whirled on his heel.

"Unbelievable! You weren't looking for a mate, or even just an omega to fool around with. The omega you're searching for is your brother! You lied to me, yet again!"

Gabriel scowled.

"Hold up. I never said jack about looking for a mate. Not my fault you assumed, once again, what you thought I meant."

Sam growled and turned on Gabriel.

"Really? You're gonna play the innocent card? So what? You're going to deny that you didn't want me finding out you're part of the Novak family? You're going to deny using that awful cologne to hide your pack scent? You're going to deny being evasive whenever I asked you your surname?"

Sam shook his head. "A lone city alpha who grew up with prejudiced parents, three older alpha brothers and an omega brother with a kid. You didn't even use an alias for your first name; how stupid could I be not to have seen it sooner?"

Gabriel huffed. "Look, kid, I get why you're upset but- "

"Upset?" Hissed Sam. "No. I'm definitely not upset. I'm furious. I've been spending all this time with a Novak alpha and every time I've come I've been alone and in the dark. I bared my throat for you, I even slept curled up beside you," snorted Sam in disbelief. "And last time we met I..." He trailed off when he noticed Samandriel and Ben staring at him. Better not go there.

"And what? You can't believe a Novak could ever care for you? You regret everything now because you know my last name and you wish we'd never met?" Bit out Gabriel.

"I trusted you," snapped Sam. "This isn't about you being a Novak. Cas is a Novak and I'd die for him! This is about you hiding things from me! You obviously can't trust me if you're too scared to tell me who you really are. You didn't even tell me it was Cas you were looking for! I put my faith in you; I let you closer than I've let a lot of people and it turns out I don't know anything about you at all because you've been hiding so much from me!"

Gabriel took a small step backwards.

"Why do I have to tell you anything? We're supposed to be rivals. Is it any wonder I never revealed Cas had run away from home and was out in the wild, alone except for the six year old son he was trying to keep alive? With the way our family histories are, I was pretty convinced if the Winchester
pack ever found him, they'd kill Samandriel and force Cas to be used as a breeder for the rest of his life until he dropped from exhaustion!"

Sam turned his nose up in disgust.

"What is it with city folk always thinking we kill pups and rape every omega we meet?"

Gabriel scowled. "Excuse me for not considering the possibility that one of the Novak's most hated enemies would welcome my brother into their pack with open arms!"

"We're not murderers!" Exclaimed Sam and Gabriel's mouth drew into a thin line.

"Well what are you going to do with me?"

Sam whirled to face Gabriel as though he'd been struck.

"Are you kidding me? You really thought I was going to kill you? Are you insane?"

Gabriel frowned. "I've been hiding things from you. I'm your enemy. I betrayed your trust. What are you going to do with me?"

Sam rolled his eyes.

"You're not my enemy, Gabriel."

The alpha snapped his mouth shut in surprise.

"I'm a Novak," he said slowly. "One of the top alphas in the family. You're the co-leader of the Winchester pack. Pretty certain we're enemies. And I'm not leaving whilst I know Cas is alive. The only way I'll allow myself to be separated from him is if I die and I highly doubt you want me anywhere near your pack. So, what are you going to do with me?"

Sam growled lowly as he stalked towards Gabriel, and the alpha braced himself for a fight. He liked Sam, but if it came down to his brother or the other omega, Cas would victor every time.

Sam didn't stop until he was towering over Gabriel, barely an inch separating their faces.

"You are going to pack your things and I'm going to take you to your brother," Sam rumbled and Gabriel blinked as the omega stalked away.

"Today, Novak," snapped Sam and Gabriel scrambled to pick up the leather bag he travelled with.

Ben was already by Sam's side when he returned, but he was delighted when Samandriel joined him instead, rubbing his head against the older alpha's leg.

Sam huffed and made sure to keep at least five foot in front of Gabriel at all times.

"He likes you really," whispered Samandriel and Gabriel stared at the pup disbelievingly. Samandriel grinned up at him. "He does! He wouldn't invite you back to the pack otherwise."

"He's only doing it for your Dad," murmured Gabriel and Samandriel shook his head.

"He trusts you. He can get really protective over the pack, and I've seen what he does to people he doesn't like but he trusts you enough to bring you to our home."

"He has more back-up at home," said Gabriel drily and Samandriel quirked a lop-sided smile.
"If he was just letting you meet up with my Dad, he would have brought him out to the meadow to see you. Instead he's brought you to Dad. Don't you get it?" Asked Samandriel in amusement and Gabriel glanced at him blankly.

The pup giggled. "He's going to ask you to be part of the pack."

Gabriel snorted and Samandriel raised an eyebrow.

"Why else would he ask you to pack up your things? You could've just left them in the meadow."

Gabriel slowed down as his eyes widened and Samandriel smirked as he trotted off after Sam, tail cocked high and smug.

Gabriel scrambled after them.

* * *

"Cas!" Came Sam's voice and Castiel blinked awake blearily as Dean frowned beside him.

There was another shout and they slowly untangled themselves from one another and dragged themselves towards the mouth of the cave.

"Where are the pups?" Asked Castiel, looking around and Dean raised an eyebrow as he realised they were indeed missing. They glanced at each other worriedly and stepped out into the dark night, where other pack members were beginning to surface, intrigued by Sam's growled call.

Cas and Dean breathed a sigh of relief to find the pups safe by Sam's paws, however they tensed when a strange figure joined the younger Winchester's side. The omega didn't look too enthralled by their guest.

Dean sniffed the air warily as some of the other pack members did the same and he kept Cas close to his side as they approached.

Then Cas got a closer look at the figure and his heart felt like it could burst.

"Gabriel," he choked and the golden wolf's eyes widened comically before he was racing towards Cas.

He was stopped by Dean jumping in front of his lover, teeth bared.

"Who are you?" He demanded as he subtly gestured for Sam to join him.

"Gabriel Novak," replied the other wolf, clearly not pleased at having been interrupted by the older Winchester. "I suppose you're Dean?"

Dean narrowed his eyes. "Novak? You're Cas' brother?"

"And apparently you're his lover," snarked Gabriel with a dangerous look flashing behind his eyes. "By the way, we need a word about that."

Dean raised his eyebrows in offence.
"Did you just threaten me in my own territory, with all of my pack surrounding us?"

Gabriel wiggled his eyebrows. "I'm just that kind of alpha. Now please move so I can reunite with my long lost brother."

Dean's hackles raised as he let rip a threatening snarl. "If you think I'm gonna let you anywhere near Cas-"

"Dean, please," begged Castiel quietly and the alpha's glanced at his lover. He looked desperate. Dean cautiously stepped aside.

Castiel launched himself at Gabriel and the alpha wrapped his paws around him tightly as they scented and nuzzled at one another frantically.

"I knew I recognised that cologne," Cas breathed and Gabriel smiled sadly before tugging his brother back in for a longer hug.

"I missed you so much, Cassie," Gabriel whispered, voice hitching slightly. "I thought... I was so scared you were dead. I was so frightened you'd died out here."

Castiel nuzzled his brother's jaw.

"I'm okay. We both are. Dean and his pack took us in. They kept us safe." The omega tightened his grip on his brother. "I thought I was never going to see you again." He choked on a sob and Gabriel felt a relieved tear escape down his muzzle.

"I'll never let you go again, I promise. You're my brother and I'll never leave you alone like that again. I'm so sorry, Cas. I should've been by your side that day. Should've stayed with you when you left."

Cas nosed at Gabriel's throat as the alpha licked at a few of his scars.

"You're hurt," murmured Gabriel in distress before turning narrowed eyes upon Dean.

"So much for keeping him safe," he huffed and Dean bristled as Cas grimaced.

"Gabriel-"

"And who are you to talk about protecting Cas?" Snapped Dean. "You and those psychotic brothers of yours drove him out of his home, out of the city, out of the only life he'd ever known all because he has a pup. Should I be worried for the pups in my pack? Are you going to try and finish what you started with Samandriel, 'cause I swear if you even look at him wrong I'll break your legs."

Gabriel sneered at him. "If you'd have bothered to take an interest in you're lover's life, Dean-o, you'd know that I had nothing to do with evicting him from his home. That was all Mikey, Luci and Raph. I was the one who managed to distract our 'psychotic brothers' long enough for Cas and Samandriel to make a break for it."

Dean rumbled low in his chest. "So I've heard," he said distastefully. "Tell me, Gabriel. If you're such the perfect big brother, why didn't you defend Cas and Samandriel against your brothers instead of letting them run into a world they knew nothing about? They're lucky Sam found them because if it had been Azazel's pack or any other violent pack who had run into them, I doubt either of them would be alive right now."

"Right, yeah, they're so lucky," growled Gabriel, fire flashing behind his eyes as he tugged his
brother into his chest protectively. "Cas is so fortunate to have the lead alpha of the Winchester pack using him as a hole to shove his knot in whenever he pleases. I bet he really enjoys having to present and submit to you whenever you demand it. Do you let your alpha buddies breed him up too?"

Dean snarled furiously as the rest of the pack snapped and barked warningly at Gabriel, but the golden alpha wasn’t concerned about them. What he was surprised about was when Cas fought to escape his grip, pulling away and glaring at Gabriel with burning anger.

"Gabriel!" Seethed Castiel as he stalked over to Dean, pressing into his side to prove a point. "The Winchesters do not abuse me or Samandriel. They treat us with respect and kindness and I would go so far to say that they are the closest to a family I have ever had. I am with Dean not because I have no other choice or because of my secondary gender, but because I truly love him. He is my alpha and I am his omega."

Dean smirked as Cas made a show of tucking his head under his chin and the alpha scent marked his lover in front of the gaping golden wolf.

Suddenly, Gabriel's hackles were raised and his teeth bared as he glared daggers into Dean.

"Cas, can you hear yourself?" He asked desperately. "Has life in the wild got you brainwashed or something? You're his omega? He's your alpha? You're not one of the wild folk. You don't have to follow their rules. You're not property just because you're an omega! Dean doesn't own you just because he's lead alpha. Think, Cas! You don't have to do what he says just because of a bit of posturing and some alpha growling. You're more intelligent than that."

Cas narrowed his eyes and Dean looked ready to tear into Gabriel.

"You're not hearing me, Gabriel," huffed Cas irritably. "I haven't been forced into this relationship. Dean does not treat me like property. The lessons we are taught about wild folk are inaccurate. Don't get me wrong, some packs are traditional and what we would call savage, but most packs don't follow an antiquated set of rules and ridiculous hierarchy any longer. Wild folk are... quite civilised."

Gabriel listened silently and Castiel ploughed on.

"I promise you, brother, Dean has never hurt me. Nor have any other members of the pack. I'm honoured to call them my friends and family. They took me and Samandriel in despite knowing we were from an enemy pack. They healed us when we were on the brink of death when they could have just left us to rot where we were. They have taught me so many wonderful things and they've given Samandriel love, acceptance and protection our family would never be willing to offer him.

"If anyone is savage and cruel, it's the Novak family," finished Cas, begging Gabriel to understand that he was happy here.

Gabriel stared at Cas before slowly tilting his head.

"I told myself when I started searching for you all those months ago, if I ever found you, I would bring you straight back home, no matter the consequences because I would protect you from our family." The alpha sighed. "But I can see you're already home. And you definitely don't need me to protect you from your family."

Gabriel turned an apologetic gaze upon Dean and he bowed his head respectfully.

"Forgive me, alpha. I believe I've made a terrible mistake. I've accused you of atrocities that are clearly false and for that I am deeply sorry."
Dean raised an eyebrow as Cas grinned at his brother.

"Yeah, you think?" Huffed a bitter voice and Gabriel winced when he caught Sam's wounded expression. He'd caused that. He'd caused his friend (former friend?) to feel so betrayed and hurt.

"Why were you accompanying my brother and two of our pups?" Asked Dean suspiciously and Gabriel was snapped out of his musings, even though he kept his head low.

"I was..." Gabriel trailed off. What was he supposed to say? If he told the truth, Sam would get into trouble for being alone so far away from the camp, especially if Dean realised they'd met up more than once. Yet lying to Dean would make the pack even more angry with him and although he believed his brother about them never having hurt him, that didn't mean to say they wouldn't hurt Gabriel, especially after how he'd introduced himself.

"Well?" Demanded Dean and Gabriel floundered.

"I've been meeting up with him in a meadow about an hour away from here," grumbled Sam. "I've been visiting him for months."

Dean obviously took that to mean Gabriel had been defiling his little brother for months because the older Winchester puffed up, ready to lash out verbally at the golden alpha before Sam rolled his eyes.

"As friends. I stumbled across him by accident. He was alone and apparently I like to torture myself with the company of incredibly annoying alphas because I kept finding myself going back to chat with him. I had no idea who he was. He didn't touch me. He just... made me feel better when I felt down," mumbled Sam, gaze trained on the ground.

Dean's brain had already made the translation from 'felt down' to 'was having a hard time with Ruby', and suddenly it made sense why his brother disappeared so often.

Still, Sam had been foolish enough to trust a foreign alpha and he had met up with him alone, without informing anyone of his whereabouts. Dean would be having strong words with his brother later and if Sam's dropping tail was anything to go by, the omega knew it too.

"I'm sorry, Dean," murmured Sam and Dean rumbled unhappily.

"Later," was all he said before turning back to Gabriel, curious when he caught the other alpha staring miserably at Sam's head.

"Don't be too harsh on him," murmured Gabriel. "Kid's been through a lot. It's my fault for not warning him to stay home the first time."

Dean was quiet for a few moments as he observed Gabriel and the genuine concern he seemed to hold for Sam. He wondered if his brother was telling him the whole story about their interactions with one another.

Cas had noticed it too if the suspicious manner he was glancing between his brother and Sam was anything to go by.

"Sam's an adult," commented Dean. "He knows his responsibilities and the consequences of his actions."

"So I've heard," Gabriel said drily, but there was no heat behind it, only a quiet bitterness laced in his words. "Rather a harsh lesson to learn."
Dean decided to test the waters.

"It's a lesson I'm sure he won't repeat."

Cas turned to him with a small frown and even Sam's mouth drew into a thin line, but Gabriel didn't seem to notice the double entendre.

"I hope he doesn't," the alpha murmured quietly and his gaze turned sympathetic when Sam glanced at him.

Cas and Dean shared a look before Dean grunted in acknowledgement.

"Do you still consider yourself a Novak? As part of that pack?" He asked gruffly. "Cause if you really do care about Cas, I'd like to hope you don't support your family's ideals on omegas, hierarchy and well, just about everything else."

Gabriel sighed.

"I can't change my blood. I am who I am. But that's not to say I approve of the way my family treats others. Honestly, I thought I would return home at some point, preferably with my brother and nephew by my side, but if that didn't work out as well as I'd hoped, I had plans to set up shop in a new city, all three of us together.

"However, now knowing how happy Cas and Samandriel are here, there's no way I could ask them to leave. And if they're staying then there's no point in me returning to a cold family with backwards traditions. So no, I suppose I don't consider myself as part of the Novak pack. I don't consider myself as part of any pack."

Dean watched as Cas inched forwards, desperate to reach out to his brother, yet it was stubborn loyalty that made him stay by Dean's side to support his lover and pack leader.

"Good," huffed Dean. "And if Michael, Lucifer and Raphael were to appear right now, right here where we're standing, what would you do?"

"I'd keep them away from my brother and nephew," replied Gabriel without missing a beat and Dean's lips twitched in a brief smile. He wanted to test Gabriel; to see how trustworthy the sassy alpha could be.

"And how would you do that? How would you keep your three big brothers away from Cas and Samandriel?"

Gabriel hesitated for a second before his expression grew grim. He knew what Dean wanted to hear and honestly, if it came down to choosing between his three older brothers and his youngest one, Cas would win every time. He didn't usually like to get involved with family infighting, but he wouldn't lose Castiel again. Not ever.

"I'd fight them if I had to."

Dean raised an eyebrow. "You'd fight the three brothers who practically raised you? The three people who have been there all your life; teaching you, looking after you, growing and learning with you? You could really turn against them?"

Gabriel shot Dean a dirty look.

"If it means keeping my nephew alive and keeping my youngest brother happy and safe, then yes. I'd
do it in a heartbeat. I won't make the same mistake twice. I'm never going to lose Cas again, no matter who tries to stand in my way."

Suddenly Gabriel narrowed his eyes. "That includes you, Winchester."

Dean raised an unimpressed eyebrow and Gabriel continued.

"You obviously make my brother happy, and although I have no clue what he sees in you, who am I to take his well-deserved happiness from him? However, I will be watching you. Just because I don't live in your camp, doesn't mean I won't be checking in on my brother every now and then and if I find any member of the pack has harmed even a single hair on Samandriel or Cas' heads, I promise you Azazel will be the least of your problems," warned Gabriel and a few surrounding wolves growled lowly at him.

Dean however, hummed amusedly.

"Well. You've got guts, I'll give you that."

The alpha turned to Sam with a smirk.

"You obviously brought him here for a reason. You even told him to bring his things with him. Wanna ask him the question now we know he's sincere? He was your friend first."

Sam rolled his eyes but nodded anyway. He turned to Gabriel and slowly approached him, coming to stand a mere two feet away.

"Gabriel Novak, we'd like to officially invite you into the Winchester pack," he stated and Gabriel blinked at the twist of events.

"...Huh?"

"You being a Novak doesn't change the fact that you're a genuinely good person. You were kind to me despite knowing who I was, you comforted me when I needed it and you never once did anything to actually harm me despite having ample opportunity - and reason, considering our family histories - to do so," explained Sam. "Like I've said before; a name doesn't really change anything."

Gabriel snapped his mouth shut as he continued to stare at the omega, dumbfounded.

Dean huffed out a laugh.

"You don't honestly think Cas never talks about you, do you? You're his favourite brother; of course we've heard a lot about you. You're the only one in your family who seems to genuinely care about Cas and Samandriel, so of course I'm not going to deny you the right to go and see them. I just had to test you to make sure you aren't going to bail the moment things aren't going in your favour. Think of it as a personality test to see if you'd fit in with the rest of the pack.

"You passed, by the way. Don't think I've ever met an alpha who had the gall to stand up against a whole pack and openly insult and threaten them."

Dean took a step towards Gabriel, who was beginning to wonder if this was all some crazy dream. Had he accidentally eaten another pot brownie?

"You don't have to say yes if you're not comfortable with this, but if you're anything like the way you are in the stories Cas tells of you, then I see no reason not to trust you. Besides, I would never deny Cas the right to see the only family member who treated him as a living person," commented
Dean, smiling when his lover leaned into his side gratefully.

Gabriel narrowed his eyes suspiciously.

"...I'm dreaming, aren't I? This is all the result of a toxic mushroom and I'm not even close to finding my brother, am I? I've conjured up all these weird images of truces and love and happiness because I'm on the verge of dying from a trip-inducing fungal infection."

Sam snorted as Cas rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, got it in one, Gabe," huffed Sam sarcastically. "Now are you going to give us an answer or not? Stay with us or go back to being alone in an empty meadow, hunting anorexic rabbits on your own, and maybe seeing your brother and nephew once or twice a week at most. What's it gonna be?"

Gabriel blinked. Then he blinked again when he realised he wasn't waking up to the bitter taste of bad mushrooms on his tongue.

He looked over to his brother longingly. Really, what did he have to go back to Tallahassee for anyway? His older brothers had made their opinions of him quite clear last time they spoke.

Maybe life in the wild with a real pack would be more enjoyable than having to endure so many fake smiles, cruel judgements from strangers, high expectations of the traditional Novak family and every other absurd rule, regulation and gender role that civilised society forced upon the people who chose to live that lifestyle.

Castiel seemed to enjoy living out here and Gabriel had rarely seen his brother happy, so wild folk couldn't be all that bad, could they? Sam wasn't. He was sure he could tolerate the others, even if he didn't like them; the most important wolves to him here were Castiel and Samandriel. He didn't really care how anyone else saw him.

...Well, except maybe Sam.

When Dean raised an expectant eyebrow, Gabriel flicked his tail nonchalantly.

"Sure, why not? How bad can it be?"

Chapter End Notes

The moment you guys have all been waiting for has finally arrived. Did you like it? Was it what you expected? Thank you for sticking with this story for so long!
"So, you've been searching for us for how long?" Asked Cas, stunned and Gabriel chuckled softly as Ben and Samandriel wrestled with one another a little way outside the cave.

"Six months, two weeks and three days," replied the alpha. "Pretty much the same length of time you've been out here. I started looking for you two weeks after you left."

Cas blinked at him in shock and Gabriel cocked a lop-sided smile.

"At first I thought you'd just fled to a different city, so I started making calls once our brothers began to lose interest in trying to sniff you out. Then when I realised nobody had seen you, I started trying smaller towns and villages. Of course, no one had seen you there either, so I attempted to track your credit card usage."

Cas raised an eyebrow at that and Gabriel snorted.

"I have my sources and I was worried about you. Sue me."

Castiel relaxed and Gabriel continued.

"Once I worked out you'd left your card at home and pretty much everything else, including your wallet, I.D., keys and phone," he glared at his brother and the omega ducked his head apologetically, "I figured you'd taken off into the wild without so much as a bottle of water on you.

"However, by then you'd already been gone for two months, so I had no clue where you were. I packed some essentials and after having a few choice words with our brothers about how they'd practically sentenced you to death - which they didn't take too kindly to, by the way - I ditched Tallahassee, slapped on some scent-masking cologne and started asking any packs I crossed if they knew where you were.

"Of course, asking around for 'the black and tan omega' and hoping to find you was pretty ridiculous considering how expansive the wild lands are and how many wolves are in it. Not to mention a lot of packs didn't like it when their betas and omegas decided to take an interest in my charming personality."

Castiel rolled his eyes. "I'm sure you played the perfect gentleman and politely told those omegas and betas that you couldn't possibly use them in such a way."

Gabriel shot him a toothy grin.

"But of course, dear brother."

Cas snorted. "And just last week, I noticed a pig flying overhead."

Gabriel snickered. "C'mon, Cassie, playing detective is difficult work! Are you really going to deny me what little pleasure I could get in such an abhorrent situation? I was so stressed wondering what had happened to you; I had to distract myself somehow."

"My heart bleeds for you, Gabriel," muttered Cas drily.
Gabriel chuckled again but after a few seconds the sound died down into a solemn silence. The alpha frowned, troubled, and his mouth turned down unhappily.

"...I really was worried about you, Cas. Both of you. I'm an alpha and I only had myself to look after when I got into the occasional fight, but you had Samandriel with you and some of the alphas I met... they wouldn't go easy on omegas or betas. Some of them looked like they'd even enjoy the idea of getting their grubby paws on an unmated omega. I was so frightened you'd run into someone like that, or maybe you were already dead.

"You had no supplies with you; you'd never been taught how to hunt; you weren't used to surviving in the wild, just like I wasn't... I had no way of checking you were even alive. The only thing I had to go on in the past few months was your scent, and I couldn't get very far because it kept leading me to the Winchester pack, and I never considered you would be with them."

Gabriel exhaled shakily as he turned emotional eyes onto his brother.

"Cas, I was so scared. I... I thought I'd lost you."

Castiel's gaze softened and he stood and walked over to his brother, settling into his side. Gabriel's eyes widened slightly, not used to being able to act openly affectionate with his brother; not that anyone was paying much attention to them whilst they were in the cave, bathed by the dusk light.

Gabriel cautiously wrapped his paw around his brother and Cas smiled in encouragement as he snuggled into the alpha's fur, tucking his head under a stunned Gabriel's.

"I'm here," murmured Cas, rubbing his head against his brother's chin. "I'm not going anywhere."

Gabriel pulled back with a shocked expression and Cas tilted his head in confusion.

"...You realise you just... begged me to mark you?" Whispered Gabriel, gaze darting to the mouth of the cave, making sure there were no witnesses. "You have a lover and you just asked me to mark you."

Castiel frowned, puzzled. "...Yes? What's wrong with that?"

Gabriel balked. "Do you really think Dean would be happy with you if he smelled my scent all over your fur?"

Castiel looked at his brother oddly. "Why would he care? It's not like I'm inviting other alphas to knot me. He doesn't doubt my faithfulness. Besides, you're my brother."

Gabriel stared at the omega. "You've changed."

Cas cocked his head to one side, a small, hurt frown gracing his features, and Gabriel shook his head in an attempt to correct himself.

"It's not a bad thing. I'm just... I'm not used to seeing you so relaxed around other people. To be honest, I don't think I've ever seen you so relaxed around me," admitted Gabriel softly and Cas nuzzled the alpha's jaw gently.

"Ever since I was a pup, I've been told it's wrong to be affectionate with you; that it's disgraceful to seek comfort in your scent; that I'm not allowed to be close to you or act like your brother should because I'm being disrespectful. But out here, the rules are different and so are the expectations," murmured Cas.
"Out here, I'm allowed to talk to you without having to bow my head. I'm allowed to sit beside you without lowering my gaze. I can scent and hug you without being reprimanded.

"And things are different for you too. You're allowed to seek comfort from me without being called 'weak' or 'soft'. You're allowed to talk to other betas and omegas without their mates or lovers side-eyeing you from a distance. You're allowed to relax; to take down your guard without fear of someone judging or confronting you. People are what they seem out here; they don't use you to get what they want and they don't stab you in the back once they've got it."

Gabriel listened to his brother carefully and when he was finished, the alpha frowned slightly.

"You make everything sound perfect, but if that was the case, everyone would live as wild folk. So what's the catch?"

Castiel sighed quietly. His brother had spent far too long being lied to and manipulated by everyone around him. Hopefully, being out in the wild would change that.

"You're right, it's not perfect. There is a hierarchy and there are rules that a lot of civilised folk wouldn't agree with, but it's a lot better than how we were treated in the city, and the Winchester pack does their best to make sure everyone is as happy as they can be, which is better than most packs."

Gabriel paused, mulling this over before nodding cautiously as he tugged his brother a little closer to scent him.

Cas closed his eyes, relishing the sweet scent of his brother. He was glad the awful cologne had been washed off and he couldn't help but smile at the oddness of his brother's scent. Alphas weren't supposed to smell sweet, yet Gabriel had always been different to the rest of the alphas in the Novak family. For example, he actually liked Cas.

"You have no idea how much I missed you," whispered Gabriel as he nuzzled Castiel's head. "How terrified I was of losing you."

"I thought I'd never see you again," murmured Castiel, voice small and insecure. "I thought I'd never get to thank you for saving my life."

Cas' heart leapt for joy when Gabriel finally began to rub his scent over his head. He couldn't remember the last time he'd been this close to his brother. Even when he was a child, Gabriel had been nine years older than him so hadn't been allowed to play with his omega brother because he 'needed to act his age'.

Castiel leaned into his brother, wedging his head further under the alpha's chin and Gabriel's grip around his middle tightened.

"Hate seeing you hurt," whined Gabriel softly as he glanced at all the scars and bandages littering Cas' body. "Heard you fought off Sam's mate. The one that tried to kill him."

Castiel raised an eyebrow at the barely noticeable sneer of disgust at the word 'mate'.

"I did. We won and hopefully she'll never bother us again."

Gabriel nuzzled Cas' head again. "Here's me thinking you try to keep away from alphas, yet your lover is the pack leader and you managed to fight off an aggressive alpha who was determined to kill everything in her path."
Castiel quirked a smile. "And I'm being cuddled by an alpha this very moment."

Gabriel snorted and nipped at his brother's ear gently.

"I don't count."

Castiel relaxed completely into his brother's hold and Gabriel shifted into a better position to accommodate him.

"Yes you do. You're an alpha, aren't you?" hummed Cas.

"A messed up one, according to our brothers," mumbled Gabriel and Castiel scowled as he rolled over to face the other wolf.

He knew how many harsh words and disgusted looks Gabriel received from their family for having the 'wrong' scent. It didn't help that Gabriel was also smaller than all of his brothers, including Cas. 'An omega with a knot' was what their brothers used to call him when they were younger.

Gabriel usually had a snappy comeback to irritate them with but it was clear to Cas that the comments got to him; especially now, when the alpha's ears were lowered and his gaze not quite meeting Castiel's.

Castiel couldn't help the low growl that bubbled up from his chest and he began to rub his own scent into Gabriel's neck and head, to the alpha's surprise.

"You're a far better alpha than any of them," huffed Cas. "A far better brother, too."

Gabriel was quiet for a few moments before he seemed to deflate.

"We've never fitted into the family. Have you ever wondered if maybe... if maybe we're at fault? Maybe there is something wrong with us. Maybe the rest of the family is right and we are just freaks; rebellious brats who see the world as being unfair and out to get us, when it's just us who don't want to follow the rules."

Cas' eyes widened. Sure, he'd considered it many times before without knowing how to 'fix himself', but he'd never believed the cocky, confident Gabriel had such self-depreciating thoughts.

Cas snuggled into his brother, offering all the comfort he could.

"At one time, I'll admit I thought there was something wrong with me. I wanted to fit in, but I didn't know how to and our family didn't make it easy. The expectations for omegas were ridiculous and I felt as though I was being treated as an object or at least less than a living person.

"Then I had Samandriel and things became ten times worse. I tried to keep to myself and away from others because the cutting remarks and scandalised glances were too much for me to handle.

"However, joining the Winchester pack gave me a new outlook on life. They don't treat me as an object and they care when I need comfort. They even like Samandriel and they never judged me for being unmated. It was everything I believed our family should have been, yet these people barely knew me.

"So maybe I did wonder if there was something wrong with me at one time, but now? I know I just considered the wrong people my family."

Gabriel stared at his brother for a few seconds.
"You really love them, don't you?"

Castiel smiled fondly. "They're my pack."

The alpha cocked his head to one side. "You prefer living out here to having the comforts of the city?"

Cas chuckled. "I prefer having a loving family to living alone with material things." He nuzzled Gabriel's jaw happily. "And now I have the one thing I loved the most about the city."

Gabriel rolled onto his side and yanked Cas into his chest, holding him as close as possible whilst he marked the omega's head desperately. Cas practically purred and curled into his brother as they wrapped their paws around each other.

"I want you to be happy too, Gabe," whispered Castiel. "I want you to be happy here. Just give them a chance; I know you could make this pack home."

"I'm not leaving," huffed Gabriel. "So long as you want to be here, I won't leave; I've got to make sure Dean treats you right, afterall."

Cas grinned as Gabriel fussed over him.

"Dean treats me very well. He treats Samandriel very well. He loves us both, which is a miracle in itself considering I never believed anyone would even look at me that way whilst I had a child."

Gabriel rumbled quietly. "Well, I'll be making sure. I won't let anybody mistreat you again. You're my little brother and if anyone makes you unhappy, you come straight to me and I'll deal with them."

Castiel rolled his eyes. "Dean is extremely good to both me and Samandriel, Gabe. He would never hurt either of us. In fact, he's practically adopted a pup who's just lost his mother. I don't think he could be cruel to us if he tried."

Gabriel pulled a face. "Yeah, well, we'll see. He seems a little brash and overbearing for my liking."

Cas shook his head and was about to reply when there was the sound of paws padding into the cave. Castiel and Gabriel quickly untangled themselves from one another and sat up, immediately on alert and straining to see who was intruding in the relatively dark cave.

Dean wandered over, something trapped between his jaws and he paused when he noticed Gabriel was accompanying his lover.

"Uhh..." he said, voice slightly muffled. "I didn't know your brother was here. I'll um... I'll go. Sorry."

The words were both slurred and muffled and the other wolves were intrigued by the strangeness of his tone.

"It's okay, Dean," called Cas as his lover began to retreat. "What did you want?"

"...It's nothing," mumbled Dean embarrassedly and now both Novaks were very curious. "I'll come back later."

"I won't bite, Dean-o," huffed Gabriel. "Say what you came to say."

Dean hesitated before slowly slinking over, head low and gaze not meeting either of the brothers'. He
stood in front of Cas and dropped a small bunch of vibrant flowers at his paws.

Cas' heart melted as Gabriel's eyes widened and Dean still wouldn't meet their gazes.

"Be careful with the roses; they have a lot of thorns," he muttered uncomfortably and Cas' smile grew wider. He leaned down to gently lap at a fresh cut he noticed on Dean's lip and the alpha slowly raised his head to look at his lover.

"I know you don't have anywhere to put them, but I liked the roses and the cornflowers reminded me of your eyes and the tulips looked so pretty, I just thought I'd bring them back to show you." He glanced away nervously.

"I guess I shouldn't have done that because that means they'll die now. I'm... uh... I'm sorry. I should've taken you to where I found them instead."

He noticed the alpha scent clinging to Cas' fur and he risked a glance to the gaping Gabriel.

"I'll go now, then. Sorry for interrupting... I'll just... yeah."

Dean turned on his heel and tried to make a break for the mouth of the cave, but Cas was quicker and leapt in front of him.

"You are the most thoughtful alpha I've ever met," he whispered beside Dean's ear and the other wolf relaxed slightly.

"They're just flowers," he murmured and Castiel licked his lover's cheek.

"They're beautiful."

"Like you," replied Dean, voice too low for Gabriel to hear, but it was clear the other alpha could tell what was being said by the way Castiel tugged Dean into a hug.

"I love you," whispered Cas and Dean smiled softly.

"I love you too, Angel. Now go and be with your brother. You've not seen each other in months and I think you have some catching up to do."

"Thank you for the flowers. They're wonderful," breathed Cas before pulling away and quirking his lips at Dean's tender expression. He leaned forwards and licked the alpha's muzzle, closing his eyes contentedly when Dean copied his movements.

Then Dean nodded to Gabriel and trotted out of the cave.

Cas' tail was swishing happily as he pottered over to the flowers to smell them.

"What was that you were saying about Dean being brash and overbearing?" Hummed Castiel playfully and Gabriel rolled his eyes.

"Just because he brings you a few dead weeds doesn't make him Mr. Perfect. He could've at least dethorned the roses."

Cas shot his brother a dry look and Gabriel flicked an ear dismissively.

"What? I have high expectations of the alpha who wants to court my baby brother."

Cas shook his head fondly. "Please don't start threatening him."
Gabriel took on a look of mock offence. "Why, brother, I would never. I'll just make sure he listens when I give him the 'big brother talk'."

"Gabe..."

The alpha sighed. "Alright, alright. I won't say anything. But I will be watching him. If he so much as makes you uncomfortable, I'll be on his tail."

Castiel chuckled as he padded over to his brother and pressed his head into his chest.

"There is such a thing as 'overprotective'."

Gabriel curled a paw around Cas' back, pulling him closer.

"Yeah, well, I have good reason to be."

The omega smiled. "I'm glad you're here."

"I'm glad I'm here too, kiddo."

* * *

"Sam?"

The omega raised his head at the voice. It was dark outside, the moon glowing dimly between the trees and only a few stragglers were left wandering around the camp.

Sam had retired to his sleeping quarters earlier than usual. He had no mate to talk to, Dean was busy and Jody had told him he wasn't allowed to overexert himself due to his injuries.

And he was still upset with Gabriel.

Sleep had seemed like a good option. It was a shame he couldn't seem to do it.

"Sam?" The voice called again and the omega frowned.

"What do you want, Gabriel?" He huffed and the alpha's sheepish face popped into view, just outside the entrance to the bush.

"We never talked last night and I've not seen you any of today," Gabriel murmured. "Wanted to see how you are."

Sam turned away. "Just peachy. You can go now."

Gabriel pulled a face. "Sam..."

"Go away, Gabriel."

The alpha scowled. "No."

Sam raised his eyebrows before turning to Gabriel.

"Excuse me?"
"I said 'no'," snapped Gabriel. "Look, Sam. I get you're annoyed with me, but can we at least talk about it? Yesterday you invited me into the pack, yet since then we've not once talked about why you're so angry with me."

Sam narrowed his eyes and crawled out of the bush, stalking over to Gabriel, where he loomed menacingly over the smaller alpha.

"You might be used to bossing omegas around from where you come from, but here, I run this pack with my brother. I'm responsible for them. So you will fall in line just like everyone else and you won't disrespect me when I order you to do something, because if you do I'm going to start questioning where your loyalties lie and whether you're a threat to my friends and family. Got it?"

Gabriel snorted. "You know very well I'm not disrespecting you."

Sam deflated. ",...I trusted you," he said softly. "I let myself get close to you and I told you so much about my life; I let my guard down with you, yet you couldn't even trust me with your full name. I'm 

hurt. What did you expect?"

Gabriel sighed. "Honestly? I thought the second I told you my name, you would have your jaws around my neck. I liked you and I didn't want to fight you so I thought it would be better if I kept my history a secret."

Sam frowned. "That's exactly my point. I was open with you. I told you about my problems with Ruby, I came to you when I needed someone to talk to, I slept by your side when I had nightmares. I understand why you didn't want to tell me anything when we first met, but how many months have we known each other? After all that, you still couldn't trust that I wouldn't try to kill you? You really believed I would just hear your last name and I'd try to murder you?"

Gabriel's ears began to droop and he lowered his gaze as the words sunk in.

"I'm sorry, Sam. I wasn't sure. And I didn't want to test things with the rest of your pack. The whole reason for me being in that meadow was because I thought I caught Cas' scent nearby. Only problem was your pack was in the way and I couldn't track him any further. Then you ran into me and I realised how friendly and kind you were, and I wanted to trust you, I really did, but my main priority was finding my brother. Of course, I didn't realise you had my brother..."

"Which brings me to the point of why you didn't just tell me you were looking for Cas. Instead you told me you were searching for an omega. You never once revealed you were looking for Cas," grumbled Sam. "If you'd have just said you were trying to find your brother, I would've taken you to him much sooner."

Gabriel's lips drew into a thin line. "I was scared, okay? Scared for Cas. Scared of hearing you'd already killed him. I thought I could smell him on you a couple of times, but with our packs being rivals, I wondered if you'd found him alone and had already slaughtered him, or maybe were keeping him trapped somewhere. I liked you and didn't want to ruin that impression of you so I never told you anything and tried to work things out for myself."

Sam fell quiet for a few moments, taking the information in.

"...I'll admit, I was a little wary of you when I realised who you are," he confessed and Gabriel quirked a small smile.

"See? Names do matter."

Sam frowned petulantly and looked away.
"Yeah, well. Your family isn't exactly noted for its tolerance and generosity. I just assumed Gabriel Novak, alpha brother of the pack leader, Michael Novak would be the same as the rest of his family."

Gabriel huffed out a soft laugh but Sam's next words made him snap his mouth shut.

"When I realised you were a Novak, I thought you were looking for Cas to kill him."

Gabriel stared at Sam. "I can assure you, I'm nothing like my older brothers," he said quietly and Sam nodded.

"Yeah, I realised that pretty much straight away. I remembered Cas talking about you and I figured a high-ranking Novak alpha would have killed a high-ranking Winchester omega the moment they got the chance, so obviously you were different."

Gabriel shifted from one paw to the other like a naughty pup being scolded and Sam sighed.

"I'm sorry, Gabe. I suppose I shouldn't be mad at you. You haven't really done anything wrong; you were just protecting your brother and yourself."

Gabriel perked up a little and risked a glance to Sam.

"...Does this mean I'm off the hook?"

Sam allowed him a small smile. "For now."

Gabriel chuckled and relaxed slightly before tilting his head.

"Thank you, Sam. For inviting me into your pack," he murmured sincerely. "I really am honoured."

"You didn't sound it last night," teased Sam and Gabriel scrunched his nose up.

"Well... no. But you've allowed me to stay with my brother and considering he's the only family I have, it means a lot to me."

Sam shrugged. "Give the pack a chance. Maybe he doesn't need to be the only family you have."

Gabriel snorted. "You sound like Cas. Besides, after the stunt I pulled last night, I highly doubt anyone likes me, let alone wants to welcome me into the pack with open arms."

Sam shook his head in amusement. "Be a little more respectful and you never know. You might just gain some new friends."

Gabriel pulled a face. "We'll see," was all he said. He didn't really feel like bowing down to Dean's command when the alpha was courting his little brother. He wanted Dean to know if he made even one wrong move, Gabriel would give him something to be frightened of. He couldn't do that if he had to grovel at the other alpha's paws.

Sam watched him worriedly. "Just... don't do anything bull-headed, Gabriel. You need to prove that you can be trusted. You're already on thin ice with the pack. Cas can only convince them you're a good guy so far and I can only do so much. The Novak name doesn't sit well with most people. Even Cas had to earn his place."

Gabriel stood a little straighter. "What do you mean he had to earn his place? What did he have to do?"
Sam sighed. "Nothing bad, just... you'll see. There are rules and you're going to have to follow them whether you like it or not. The pack is a well-synchronised team and right now, everyone's trying to gauge how much you'll fit in. Don't upset the status quo and you'll be fine."

Gabriel pulled a face. "You want me to follow your brother's orders without question," he stated and Sam exhaled deeply.

"They're my orders too, if it makes you feel any better. We do everything together and we consult one another on what's best for the pack. So basically if you argue with Dean, you're arguing with me as well."

Gabriel shot Sam a dirty look. The younger Winchester had only added that last part in to guilt trip him into blindly following orders.

Well, he had never been one to submit to others' whims so easily, not even his brothers' (it was how he earned the floppy ear) and he wasn't going to start now.

"Fine," said Gabriel curtly and Sam glanced at him almost pleadingly.

"Don't give anyone any reason to doubt you. Please, Gabe. I don't want you to get thrown out of the pack."

Gabriel's expression softened slightly. Maybe he didn't have to be quite as controversial as he was with Michael, Lucifer and Raphael.

"Okay, Sam. I'll try."

Sam smiled in relief before glancing at the twinkling stars.

"I'm gonna get some rest. You should too; we've got a hunt in the morning."

Gabriel nodded silently and backed away.

"Goodnight," called Sam quietly and Gabriel paused.

"Night, kiddo," he replied and watched as Sam grinned and slipped back into his bush.

The alpha retreated to his own shelter, where he promptly fell asleep, content that things were finally sorted between him and Sam.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my gosh! 20,000 hits? Guys are you kidding me?! You are so awesome! Thank you, thank you, thank you for being so patient with my updates and for taking such an interest in this fic! Hope you enjoyed the latest chapter.
A week passed before Castiel and Sam were allowed to hunt again, as per Jody's orders. In that time, Gabriel was on his own.

Dean had once again asked Benny to teach their newest pack member his role in hunting and although at first, the larger alpha was wary of Gabriel, he eventually came to realise the golden wolf was a lot more bark than bite, and the pair began to warm to one another.

Gabriel, like Cas, lost the pack their meal. Unused to working in a team, Gabriel didn't follow through with Dean's plan and ended up tripping over the older Winchester and Crowley, which in turn, made them tumble to the ground as well. The herd of deer pranced into the distance fairly unharmed.

Dean berated Gabriel for not listening to orders and Gabe had the decency to look a little sheepish at all the scowling faces surrounding him. He expected Dean to punish him; maybe a claw to the face, but the younger alpha never raised a paw to him. It surprised Gabriel.

The next time they went hunting, Gabriel tried his best to follow the plan. They caught the deer, but only just. The golden wolf hadn't been paying attention to where the stag was and when he'd leapt upon one of the doe's backs, the powerful stag had made a beeline for him.

Crowley and Benny had released the doe they were trying to down and raced to shove Gabriel out of the way. Crowley had let out a yelp when part of the antlers scraped his rump.

Once again, Gabriel had been shocked. It was every man for himself in the Novak pack; no way would anyone have rescued him if it put their own life at risk. Yet Crowley, who Gabriel hadn't spoken two words to after he'd made it quite clear upon his arrival that he held no interest in the pack aside from his brother, had just saved his life.

That evening he crept over to Crowley, grimacing at the slices in his rump that the pack had no supplies left to dress, and thanked the black alpha for saving him. Crowley had eyed him warily at first and for the umpteenth time, Gabriel internally cursed his family name. Then the black wolf relaxed and Gabriel was surprised to find himself actually enjoying the other alpha's company as they talked about old wounds and the mischief they had both got up to in their lifetimes.

He retired to sleep with a smile playing about his lips.

When Sam and Cas were finally allowed to hunt, Gabriel blinked at finding his brother at the head of the pack, nose to the ground and tail wiggling happily.

"My brother's a tracker?" Gabriel asked and Benny chuckled.

"Best one we have," he said fondly, as if he was remembering a time since passed and Gabriel's curiosity was piqued.

"Wait, so Cas tracked every meal for you guys in the Winter? Through all the blizzards and storms? He was the one who kept you going?" Gabriel asked, stunned, once Benny had explained some of the tales of when the omega had joined the pack.
Benny nodded proudly and Gabriel fell silent.

"Way to go, little brother," he murmured, impressed and Benny grinned at him despite him not noticing.

They found the herd pretty quickly and the pack soon fell into their usual roles. However, they didn't expect the three young bucks to try to defend their herd along with the stag and they were forced to release their prey and retreat.

They sprinted out of the way of the enraged bucks and were disappointed when they were forced to watch the herd stampede off between the trees.

Harry however, spotted a straggler that had been separated from the rest of its herd and he called attention to it. It was quite a distance from the pack and was rapidly catching up with its family, but Gabriel was already racing across the forest floor, ignoring Sam and Dean's anxious orders to return to safety.

He heard the brothers beginning to chase him, but he knew if he pushed himself just a little harder he could intercept the doe before it reached its herd.

The doe's eyes widened and she bellowed desperately when she realised her path would cross with Gabriel's and the alpha felt his pulse quicken when one of the bucks slowed to look at him.

He didn't stop though, even when Sam and Dean shouted in panic for him to turn around.

Suddenly, the buck was thundering towards Gabriel, antlers lowered and distantly, Gabriel heard Castiel cry out his name in fear.

But then Gabriel was on the doe's back, jaws clamped around her neck as she reared and kicked out frantically. The buck slowed when he spotted her beginning to tire and when her knees buckled, he whirled around and ran after his herd.

Gabriel watched as Sam and Dean took the doe down the rest of the way and she crumpled to the floor. He was feeling pretty pleased with himself and he glanced up at Sam with an excited grin, only for his face to fall when he found both Winchesters glaring at him furiously, chests heaving from exertion.

"We told you to stay with the pack," hissed Dean and Gabriel opened and closed his mouth wordlessly before scowling.

"Hey, I got you a meal, didn't I?"

"That's not the point," growled Sam. "You could've been killed because of your recklessness. We couldn't catch up to you. If anything had gone wrong and that buck had reached you first, we wouldn't have had enough time to fight him off you."

Gabriel huffed. "Well nothing happened, did it? I thought you'd be happy I managed to catch us something instead of the pack going hungry again."

Sam sighed. "Of course we're happy we've got a meal but it doesn't make what you did any less stupid."

"The pack can survive without a few meals," grumbled Dean. "We'd rather be hungry but have all our members safe than be full and have one of them dead."
Gabriel stared at them for a few seconds.

"...Oh," was all he managed, confused as to why they would care so much about him. Sam was his friend, sure, but he and Dean didn't exactly see eye to eye and he didn't understand why the other alpha cared so much about his safety. Surely he only cared about protecting the weaker members of the pack, like the betas and omegas? Surely he didn't try to protect the other alphas; that was just... weird. He couldn't imagine any of his older brothers defending other alphas; it was insulting. It was like assuming they were too weak to take care of themselves.

Yet Dean didn't seem as though he thought Gabriel to be weak. He seemed genuinely concerned for his safety. It was strange.

"Think how Cas and Sam andriel would feel if they lost you," murmured Sam and Gabriel ducked his head at that. Maybe he had been a little reckless.

Eventually, the brothers took pity on the golden wolf and they rounded the deer in order to pick it up.

"You're quick, I'll give you that," mumbled Dean as he passed the other alpha. "Maybe we should rethink your role."

It was as big a compliment as Gabriel was going to receive from Dean and he blinked at the lead alpha before nodding slightly, feeling oddly humbled by the praise.

He helped the brothers pick up the fallen doe and they led the pack back to the camp.

* * *

Gabriel stood back as he watched the other pack members tuck into the meal. Being alpha brother to the leader of the Novak family made it so he was usually offered first dibs on pretty much everything. So when Benny had rumbled at him warningly as he'd originally tried to eat with the higher ranks, Gabriel had been a little shocked.

He had learned rather quickly that he was supposed to give way to the other members first. He was afterall, at the very bottom of the hierarchy now.

However, today was different.

He sat a few metres away from the pack as they took turns eating, but he was surprised when Dean glanced up at him and took a step back from the deer, before nodding subtly to the spot he'd just been occupying.

Gabriel raised an eyebrow and Dean gestured to his place again.

Intrigued and more than a little stunned, Gabriel slowly slunk over to the lead alpha, head tilted slightly in question. Even Sam and Castiel were glancing at Dean oddly now.

"You caught it," murmured Dean as he took another step back to make way for the golden alpha. "It's only fair."

Gabriel blinked in shock, opening and closing his mouth when no words were forthcoming. He hadn't expected Dean to spare him a thought. It wasn't the lead alpha's place to sacrifice anything of
his own for someone who barely made it into the bottom of the hierarchy.

...At least, that's what being under Michael's leadership had taught Gabriel.

"Eat," ordered Dean quietly when Gabriel continued to stare at him and the golden alpha ever so
slowly bowed his head in gratitude. He didn't dare look at Dean afterwards and he almost sheepishly
crept over to the doe, refusing to make eye contact with any other pack member, despite him being
certain they were watching him intensely.

When he was finished, he stood back, gaze still trained on the floor as Dean took his place.

When the entire meal was over, Gabriel expected some of the other pack members to question or
confront him; to ask why he had eaten before Dean, but nobody approached him. No one so much as
shot him a dirty glare. In fact, Chuck even offered him a timid smile.

Gabriel felt utterly lost. He'd always been taught wild folk adhered to hierarchy without exceptions.
Anyone who broke rank was severely punished.

So why had Dean given up his place for him?

He would have to ask Cas about it afterwards.

* * *

A week later saw most pack members eying Dean warily as they returned from a hunt. Sam and
Castiel were watching the alpha with concern and Gabriel was glaring daggers into his back; the
only thing stopping him from rumbling warningly at Dean being Castiel, who kept shooting him
filthy looks.

Dean looked too hot to be comfortable and he kept shifting his weight between his paws restlessly.
His scent was beginning to strengthen as more alpha pheromones were released from his body and
he seemed to be growing increasingly impatient by the second, little growls escaping his throat every
so often, which he immediately apologised for with a wince. He began to waddle slightly, obviously
in pain, but he refused to complain about whatever discomfort he was feeling and was grateful when
the other alphas in his pack gave him a wide berth, no one rising to the challenging snarls and
grumbles he couldn't seem to help.

Nobody had noticed what Dean was facing at first, not even the alpha himself as when he'd first
organised the hunt, he'd brushed off the light warmth spreading through his body as being hot from
cuddling up to Cas and the pups all night. However, as the hunt progressed, it became clear that this
was not the case.

Dean was starting a rut.

He usually had two a year, just like every other wild alpha and they normally coincided with the time
of year that omegas began their heats, lasting two weeks, just like omega heats did.

When they reached the camp with their prey, Dean immediately limped over to the cave without
eating, appetite dissipated now that he realised how in danger he was of accidentally starting a fight
with some of his pack members just because of his overactive hormones. The pain in his stomach
and groin didn't help matters any.
Cas watched his lover disappear and he whined softly in distress at seeing his alpha hurt. He made to follow Dean but Sam stood in front of him.

"Eat first," the larger omega murmured. "He won't be happy if you skipped a meal because of him." Sam eyed the cave solemnly. "Besides, you're gonna need it."

Cas nodded hesitantly before quickly scarfing down some food. Gabriel only seemed to bristle more at his brother's determination to help Dean through his rut.

"If he harms even one hair on you, you howl as loud as you can and I'll make sure he never comes near you again, got it?" Growled Gabriel with a contemptuous sneer at the cave.

Cas frowned at his brother. "Dean won't hurt me."

Gabriel narrowed his eyes. "He's in rut. You can't be sure of anything he'll do."

"He won't hurt me," insisted Castiel. "I'm certain of it."

Gabriel's lips turned downwards. "We'll see," he grumbled lowly before eying his brother worriedly. "You don't have to go to him. You could always just wait for his rut to finish."

Castiel looked appalled at the idea. "And leave him to suffer in pain? Gabriel, I'm going to help my lover."

The alpha's expression grew tight. "Cas, right now? To him you're just a hole to stick his knot in. He's so hyped up on hormones and instincts that he won't care if you're consenting or not. If you say 'stop', there's a ninety-percent chance he won't."

Castiel growled softly. "I'm grateful for your concern, brother, but refrain from speaking ill of Dean. He won't harm me, nor will he see me as an object of relief. He cares for me; he won't let his hormones overrule that."

Gabriel huffed. "It's not your job to offer yourself to him just because he's in a rut."

"No, but I want to because I despise seeing him in pain. If I can help him in any way, I will."

Gabriel shifted wordlessly. He was used to his brother being stubborn, but he never thought he'd see the day were Cas would willingly offer himself to be used by an alpha; and a pack leader at that. The omega had always been wary of alphas after the way he'd been heckled, sneered at and abused by them in the city. Their own brothers were enough to put anyone off alphas for life.

"I promise I'll be safe," murmured Cas quietly, gaze softening at his brother's put-out expression.

Gabriel knew he'd lost so he nodded unhappily and watched as Ben and Samandriel trotted over at Castiel's silent gesture.

"Think you two could stay with Sam or Gabe over the next couple of weeks?" He asked and Ben tilted his head.

"Is it because Dean's sick?"

Castiel nodded. "Dean's not doing too well at the moment so I'm going to see if I can help him. I don't want us keeping you awake all night so maybe it would be wise if you stayed somewhere else until Dean gets better."

Both pups nodded.
"Okay, Dad," said Samandriel, a little frown gracing his features. "Just get Dean better. He looks hurt."

Cas allowed a tiny smile to creep across his face at the pups' concerned faces.

"I'll do my best," he assured before nuzzling Ben and Samandriel's heads in gratitude. "You might see me a little less than usual, but don't worry, hopefully Dean will be back to himself soon."

The pups nodded and Samandriel rubbed his head against his father's chest.

Castiel smiled tenderly and licked his head before shooting a pointed glance at Gabriel.

Gabriel rolled his eyes before plastering on a grin.

"Oh, don't be so glum kiddos. Dean'll get better pretty quick if Cas is looking after him. Now, who wants to play hide and seek? Let me tell you, I've never been beaten. In fact, I'm not sure if anyone can beat me."

Ben and Samandriel shared a glance.

"We'll beat you," smirked Ben, chest puffed out. "We always beat Alex and Claire."

Gabriel chuckled as Cas turned away.

"Really? You think you can take on the undefeated Trickster at hide and seek? Nah. I'm a master at this game."

"So are we!" Protested Ben and Gabriel raised a challenging eyebrow.

"Well, why don't you show me your stuff? Best out of ten? I'll start counting."

Castiel smiled as he slipped away towards the cave. Gabriel had always been good with pups. A little like Dean, really. If the two ever learned to trust one another, they would probably find they had quite a bit in common.

Castiel's smile immediately fell when he entered the cave and saw a human Dean writhing and whimpering in the corner, rutting against a toy that didn't look at all comfortable. The rut had worsened.

Cas morphed into his human form and gently pulled the toy from Dean's sweaty palms, grimacing at how worn and hard it was. There was no way that wouldn't do any damage to a desperate alpha in rut.

He threw it on the floor, heart cracking at Dean's pained whine before he crushed his lips to the alpha's and pressed their bodies flush with one another.

Dean pulled back slightly even though it was clear his body was reacting strongly to the presence of an omega.

"You don't have to do this."

Cas frowned and cupped his lover's cheek. "I won't let you suffer."

Dean looked anxious. "This rut's gonna get worse. I don't know how in control of my actions I can be."
"I trust you," murmured Cas, placing a sweet kiss on his jaw. "I know you won't hurt me."

"You can't be sure of that. I've not been around an omega whilst in rut for years," whispered Dean, tone shaky. "What if... what if I can't stop? I couldn't live with myself if I ever harmed you."

Cas pressed their lips together again, smirking when Dean deepened their kiss a little desperately.

"You won't," he insisted and Dean frowned.

"Hormones make us do all sorts of terrible things."

Cas sighed against the alpha's mouth.

"Well I can kick pretty hard."

Dean paused, seemingly surprised before he huffed out a laugh and snaked his arms around the omega's waist.

"Okay. If I do something you don't like and I don't listen if you say stop, you can start doing some target practice."

Cas rolled his eyes and tilted his head to one side when Dean scented at his neck. The alpha peppered kisses across the soft flesh and Cas slowly rocked his hips against Dean's pelvis.

Dean closed his eyes, exhaling in relief as a warm, pliant body brushed against his instead of the cold and unforgiving toy he'd been using earlier. He tightened his grip around Cas and bared his throat when the omega began to nose at it, kissing and licking at the pheromone-laced sweat forming there.

He was determined to keep things slow between them so as not to make Cas uncomfortable, despite his body aching in places he didn't know he had. However, as he was trying to ignore just how painful his crotch was as he inhaled the enticing smell of sweet omega, he startled when Cas' hand wrapped around his agonising erection.

He almost choked in relief when Cas began to move his hand firmly and he tugged the omega into a searing kiss. Cas' scent alone was able to reduce the intensity of the rut a small amount, but with the omega touching and kissing him, clearly enjoying the little moans and whimpers he was eliciting from Dean, the alpha's pain very quickly began to subside.

Castiel smelled like a happy omega, even if there was an underlying scent of concern, and it was making Dean's alpha puff out its chest in pride.

Cas began to brush his free hand over any skin available to it and Dean thrusted into his hand when a thumb began to circle his nipple.

Dean pouted when the omega pulled their mouths apart but he closed his eyes when a tongue licked over the sensitive nipple, nipping at it teasingly as his hand slid down to the flesh of Dean's rump and squeezed playfully.

Dean automatically smoothed a hand down Castiel's back and between his legs, teasing at whatever he could find and smirking when he felt how quickly the omega's slick surfaced.

Cas grinned at Dean's torturously slow rubbing and he leaned up to taste his alpha again. They shared a filthy kiss, all tongues and teeth and lip-biting, before Cas was pushing away from the alpha, confusing Dean as cool air hit his front.
Then, lips were wrapped around his aching hardness and Dean let his head fall against the wall with a groan.

"Cas..." he moaned as the omega glanced up at him, gorgeous sapphire eyes shining up at him innocently and Dean's heart stuttered as he tangled his fingers in fluffy raven hair that didn't seem to know which direction it was going in.

Dean's lips parted as if ready to say something. Maybe an 'I love you' or a 'You're so beautiful', but the alpha's brain refused to form a coherent sentence when Cas did something extraordinarily clever with his tongue.

Castiel's eyes widened however, when he suddenly found his back pinned against the cave wall as Dean ravished his mouth, and the omega quickly found his legs being hoisted onto Dean's hips as the alpha rutted against his erection.

Cas blinked, confused as to how Dean had changed their positions so rapidly, but he lost all higher brain functions when the alpha slipped two fingers inside him.

After some moaning that Castiel couldn't bring himself to be embarrassed about, the omega tangled his fingers in Dean's hair as his other hand tightened its grip on the alpha's back until his fingernails were lightly biting into skin.

Cas kissed his lover hard before hissing against his lips.

"Knot me, alpha."

Dean rumbled in arousal and Cas couldn't help but bury his nose in the alpha's neck at the strong burst of pheromones his order had encouraged. Dean smelled absolutely incredible and Cas wondered if it was possible to get off on scent alone.

Then Dean slid into him and Cas wanted to kiss and touch and taste every part of his lover.

Dean growled and claimed Cas' lips again with a snarled "Mine," and Cas shuddered at his possessive tone before nipping at his bottom lip.

Their breathing quickened as they enjoyed one another and soon Dean was leaving love marks all over Castiel's neck and jaw, claiming the omega as his where everyone could see.

"Need you so much, Angel," panted Dean and Cas bared his throat for the alpha to nip and kiss.

"I'm yours," whispered Cas. "Take what you need. Let me help you. Let me stop the pain."

Dean's knot buried itself deep in Cas' body, settling snugly into him as if it belonged there. The alpha let out a sob of relief and Cas continued to rock himself onto Dean's knot, prompting the older Winchester to manoeuvre them both to the floor until Cas was lying on his back and Dean was still thrusting his hips, despite his knot already having formed.

After a few minutes Dean's arms buckled and Cas caught him as he fell, tugging him to his chest and nuzzling his hair lovingly as they rode out their bliss together.

They wrapped themselves around each other and Dean pressed tender kisses to the tiny bruises he'd left behind as Cas caressed his back.

"Feel better?" Asked Cas after a few moments and Dean nodded tiredly, smiling warmly as he tightened his grip around his lover.
Cas grinned at the scent of blissful alpha and he nosed at Dean's hair again, inhaling the wonderful smell. He'd caused that. He'd made Dean happy and now the omega within him was practically purring from cuddling so close to his relaxed alpha.

"It'll certainly keep the pain away for a couple of hours," murmured Dean as he wriggled playfully, his knot shifting inside Cas, making the omega groan softly.

"Thank you," whispered Dean sincerely as he nuzzled Cas' jaw. "You didn't have to do that."

Cas frowned and squeezed his lover gently.

"My job is to make you happy and it is a job I take very seriously. Promise me you'll tell me when you're in pain. I want you to come to me when you need relief." He glared distastefully at the damaged toy lying a few feet away. "And if I ever catch you even looking at that ridiculous thing, I won't be responsible for my actions."

Dean raised an eyebrow. "You're not getting jealous over a toy, are you?" He teased and the look Cas shot him was so serious that Dean immediately snapped his mouth shut because, yes, Cas was in fact very jealous because Dean belonged to him and not a hard, uncomfortable piece of plastic.

Dean merely snuggled back into him and shoved his head under Cas' chin. He was perfectly fine with belonging to his omega.

Cas made a contented sound as he continued to smooth his hand down Dean's back.

"I can't believe I'm allowed to have this," whispered Cas, awed and Dean raised an eyebrow in query.

"You," murmured Castiel. "I can't believe I'm allowed to have an alpha who doesn't just want me as a knot-hole. I can't believe I'm allowed to have someone who treats me the way you do, who loves me and protects me; who dotes on me and is so thoughtful. And the way you take care of Samandriel... I never thought I'd find an alpha who'd willingly take on another alpha's child, yet here you are. He loves you. You make him so excited when you're around and I... I don't understand how I could deserve anyone like you. Despite the cliche, you are perfect."

Dean chuckled. "I know," he winked as he stole a sweet kiss from his lover. Then he cupped the omega's cheek and gently caressed his thumb over it.

"Have you ever thought maybe I think the same things about you? You're this beautiful omega who'll do anything to keep his family safe, including standing up against people who could cause you a lot of harm. Heck, you fought Azazel off to protect me, and you fought Ruby off to protect Sam, even though you were injured.

"You're so loyal and intelligent; you've taught the pack so much despite only being here for seven months and you've learned to adapt quickly to life in the wild. Not many civilised folk could do that and I know for certain I couldn't adapt to city life that quickly.

"And despite me being a jerk to you when we first met, you still chose me even though you were wary of alphas. You trusted me despite having very good reasons not to and being with you grounds me; keeps me calm. I get excited when I go to sleep now because I know I have a loving omega and an amazing pup to curl up with. Well, two amazing pups. I love being with all three of you because I never thought I'd find anyone to settle down with after things with Lisa didn't work out, but you put up with all my faults and you try to make me a better person, and the pups always seem to find a way to cheer me up and make me relax.
"You're all so considerate and caring and I can't believe I have this stunning omega who doesn't just want me because I'm pack leader. I can't believe I'm allowed to have someone who wants me because they love me and not because they want power or to take over the pack."

Castiel winced. He would never be Ruby.

He curled his arms more securely around Dean as he pressed their lips together.

"I can't believe I'm allowed to have a family," breathed Dean and Cas paused. He was well aware of Dean's insecurities when it came to looking after a family. The alpha was always thinking of how his deadbeat father had raised him and Sam after their mother had died and it was no secret that Dean was worried he'd follow the same path.

Frankly, Cas thought that was impossible.

"From what I've heard of your father, Dean, you are nothing like him. You're allowed to have a family because you deserve one. You're too modest about your own abilities and I hope one day I can get you to realise exactly how happy you make people, how happy you make me."

He cadenced his words with a firm kiss which Dean melted into.

"I love you so much," Dean mouthed against his lover's lips and Cas smiled.

"I love you too. More than you could ever know."

Dean stole another kiss before settling down onto Cas once more and closing his eyes.

"...So does this mean I have you to myself for two weeks?" He asked innocently and Cas chuckled warmly, the sound making Dean nuzzle at his omega's jaw.

"I'll have to check on Samandriel and Ben every so often, and Gabe will have both our heads if I don't show him you've not murdered me, but other than that, I'm all yours."

Dean rumbled in a stereotypically contented alpha fashion which had Cas shifting on the alpha's knot in a manner that suggested he was reminding them both they belonged to one another and Dean smirked as he nipped at the curve between Cas' shoulder and neck, working another possessive bruise into his skin.

"I can see Gabriel's going to be extremely pleased with us both," hummed Castiel drily and Dean grinned as he moved onto another patch of skin.

"Why? Am I ruining a masterpiece?"

Cas blushed a light shade of pink and Dean snickered before continuing his work.

After a little while of Dean marking his tranquil lover, Castiel opened his eyes.

"Thank you," he said softly and Dean paused as he glanced up. "For trying with my brother," clarified Cas.

"I know he can be difficult at times, but this really is a big adjustment for him. He's used to being a highly respected member of the Novak family. He's used to following their rules and expectations a lot more closely than I am. He's never really been alone and although he didn't agree with our brothers most of the time, he's still used to having them there for guidance. Being dumped alone at the bottom of the hierarchy of a pack he's always considered to be an enemy will be difficult for him.
He's used to making his own choices and the Novak family never had a good sense of teamwork, so having to find a role in this pack won't be easy for him," explained Cas and Dean sighed.

"I realised some of that a few days after he joined us. I can't say I particularly get on with him, but he deserves a chance. It would be easier if he actually listened to the orders he was given, but I understand why he might not be happy to follow my command, especially since I'm defiling his little brother."

Cas quirked a grin. "He's a good alpha, Dean. Give him a little time and I promise he won't be so controversial. When he sees that you're not like the people we were taught you'd be, he will warm to the pack. Who knows? Maybe you'll even grow to like him."

Dean snorted and Cas' smile widened.

"He might even grow to like you."

Dean huffed disbelievingly at that and Cas tugged him back onto his chest.

"However, I'd still like to thank you for what you did last week. You offered him your place at mealtime and considering he isn't used to people being nice to him when they don't want something out of it, I'd say that was a wonderful thing you did for him," murmured Cas and Dean absently circled his thumb around Cas' nipple.

"Even if I don't get on with him, he's still your brother and I have to be fair to him. He did come all this way to find you and adapting to living in the wild on his own couldn't have been fun."

Cas squeezed his lover gratefully. "And this is why I love you. You try so hard to be understanding of everyone else. It's rather endearing."

Dean raised an eyebrow. "Is that Cas-speak for calling me 'soft'?"

Castiel chuckled and planted a kiss against Dean's hair.

"Maybe a little."

Dean didn't seem too bothered though and he closed his eyes as his thumb brushed over the omega's nipple.

"Can't believe I'm half looking forwards to two weeks of rut."

"Oddly enough, so am I," teased Castiel and Dean smirked.

"Why's that, Angel?" Hummed Dean as he thrusted into Cas, ripping a moan from the omega's lips as his swollen knot penetrated deeper.

Dean let out a delighted laugh as Cas flipped their positions and began to work varying hickeys into his neck. He quickly realised his mistake however when Cas began to rock down onto his swollen knot.

"At least wait for it to go down," groaned Dean, trying desperately to stop his hips from thrusting upwards. If they were going to have another round, he wanted the full experience of touching and teasing again; not having to work around already being tied together.

Cas pecked his lips. "You started it," he commented before stilling his hips and returning to marking up his lover.
So content from having Cas draped over him, smelling of pleased and loving omega, and exhausted from his rut, Dean eventually drifted off to sleep, arms locked around his lover.

Cas glanced at him with a tender smile before snuggling into him and burying his nose into his neck to breathe in the scent of satisfied and protective alpha. He couldn't move anyway until Dean's knot disappeared so he reasoned he might as well make the most of the peace, because once Dean's rut started strengthening again, he had no idea how long it would take to get rid of the alpha's pain. There may be nights where he didn't get much sleep.

So Cas closed his eyes, arms wrapped around Dean, and dozed off.

Chapter End Notes

I thought we needed a bit of Destiel in there. Also how funny is it going to be when Gabe sees all those hiccups on his innocent little brother. Yikes.

Hope you enjoyed!
Gabriel was beginning to pace a groove into the ground. The alpha was highly agitated and bristling so much he actually just looked rather fluffy, as though he'd stepped out of a bath and had dried his fur with a hair dryer.

To Sam, it was a source of amusement.


Sam bit back a laugh.

"And he parades around like he's so proud of them," continued Gabriel. "Dean's chewing on him like a vampire and my brother is dumb enough to actually enjoy it!"

Sam clamped down on his tongue.

"I wouldn't mind so much if they were all the same size and shape, but I swear I caught one on him yesterday that looked like a rubber duck!" Snapped Gabriel. "A rubber duck!"

Sam chewed on the inside of his cheek.

"And don't get me started on the scents. If I have to put up with the stench of sickeningly satisfied alpha combined with disgustingly happy omega one more time, I'm gonna puke. I mean, how much sex are they having that makes it so we can't even walk past the cave without throwing up in our mouths? I wanted Cas to be happy, but not this happy," shuddered Gabriel.

Sam snickered and averted his gaze when Gabriel shot him a filthy glare.

"How are you not repulsed by this?" Demanded the alpha. Sam shrugged.

"It's rare I get to see my brother so content. Besides, at least Cas isn't being knotted against his will. That's what you were worried about wasn't it?"

Gabriel levelled a deadpan stare at the omega.

"A rubber duck, Sam."

Sam bit his lip. "...I think I saw a rabbit on his chest today."

Gabriel made a sound of horror before restarting his pacing.

"We've got another week of this! Another week! Soon there won't be anywhere left for them to gnaw on and that's when the really kinky stuff will happen."

Sam raised an amused eyebrow. "You sound knowledgable in the topic."

Gabriel hesitated. "Oh, shut up," he hissed, looking away and Sam was suddenly reminded that neither of them had really discussed what had happened between them in the meadow. The realisation made him avert his gaze embarrassedly and he began to wonder if they should stop dancing around the subject and talk about what had occurred.
Then again, Sam really didn't want to be the one to start that painstaking conversation up, because
that would mean potentially admitting to Gabriel that he found him *somewhat* attractive even if he
definitely wasn't interested in a relationship, and it was clear Gabe hadn't been adverse to bumping
uglies with him either.

Better to leave that can of worms unopened. Too many complications that Sam didn't need in his life
right now.

"How are you, Sam?" Gabriel asked softly, startling the younger Winchester. "I mean, how are you
really doing? These past few weeks can't have been easy."

Sam blinked and opened his mouth to brush the question off, but Gabriel's expression was enough to
make him rethink his answer.

"Lonely," murmured Sam truthfully, gaze not quite meeting Gabriel's. "Empty. I've wasted so many
years in a relationship I felt I was happy in, only to find I was being used. How do you think I feel?"

Gabriel sighed quietly. "I know it doesn't mean much, but if you want to talk about it I'll always lend
an ear. If you remember, my last mate wasn't exactly faithful to me, so I kinda know what it's like to
feel a little bit broken and very naive."

Sam was surprised when he had to hold back a jealous growl. For some reason, he didn't like the
idea of Gabriel being used by an ex-mate.

"I might have to take you up on that," mumbled Sam appreciatively and Gabriel offered him a small
smile before two small bundles of fluff raced over.

"Sam, Sam, Sam! Can you play secret agents with us?" Pledged Sam andriel excitedly as Ben
wagged his tail so hard, his whole back end was shaking. "We need a bad guy and the girls want to
be spies too. Please?"

Sam chuckled and a small smile lit Gabriel's face as the omega stalked over to the pups menacingly,
rumbling lowly.

"I've been expecting you, Mr. Novak," growled Sam and both pups barked eagerly as they bounced
backwards a few feet. Sam leapt at them, trapping them to his chest and he laughed evilly as they
squirmed against his grip. Gabriel's smile grew a little wider.

Suddenly, Ben stopped wriggling and stared at Gabriel almost curiously.

"Gabe can play too if he wants?" He said looking up at Sam for confirmation that it was okay to
invite the other wolf.

Sam offered him a small grin and Samandriel's tail motored from side to side as he gazed at his uncle
expectantly.

Gabriel raised both eyebrows as his gaze flicked between Sam and the pups.

"I... uh..." He trailed off. Of course Samandriel wanted him to play, but did the other pups actually
trust him enough to want to be with him?

Did the other adults trust him enough to be around the pups?

Being a high-ranking alpha in the Novak family didn't exactly make Gabriel the most well-liked
amongst parents, even if he had a soft spot for children. In fact, after Raphael killed that beta's son to
make way for his own offspring, a lot of people had taken to keeping their children away from
Novak alphas.

Yet Sam just watched him with a warm smile playing about his lips as the pups waited impatiently
for his response.

"...I'd love to," said Gabriel eventually, even though he glanced to Sam rather uncertainly, and
Samandriel grinned ecstatically at him as Ben smiled shyly.

"Awesome!" Crowed Samandriel. "You could be Sam's evil mate!"

Gabriel choked and Sam's eyes blew wide as his face heated up.

Ben nodded. "Yeah! You two could be mates who are both trying to take over the world!"

"Oh, and you hate pups!" Added Samandriel, grinning at Ben.

Neither of them noticed how both adults were staring intensely at the floor, looking rather flustered
as they kept their mouths firmly clamped shut.

"Is that okay?" Asked Ben and both adults nodded silently.

Samandriel and Ben scrabbled out of Sam's grip and nodded towards were Alex and Claire were
most probably waiting for them.

"C'mon guys," chirped Samandriel. "And don't forget to do mate stuff!"

Gabriel's eyes bugged out of his head as Sam nearly tripped over his own paws. They refused to
meet one another's gazes as they slowly joined the pups.

Gabriel and Sam were going to have a word with their brothers on what was appropriate to let pups
say in public.

* * *

Castiel groaned shamelessly as Dean thrusted into him from behind. The alpha rumbled in a pleased
manner and his grip around the omega's middle tightened as he quickened his pace.

"Mine," he snarled as he nipped at Cas' jaw and Castiel whimpered as his lover's thrusts grew
harsher.

Dean's rut had progressively worsened through the week and now it had reached its peak, making
the pain nearly unbearable for the alpha. Fortunately, Cas wasn't about to let his lover suffer and the
omega was very adept at working out when Dean was attempting to hide his agony.

It was clear Dean, when not gripped by pain, was afraid of hurting his lover unintentionally and he
constantly apologised to Castiel after every bout of intercourse, whining at the purpling love bites
he'd marred the omega's flesh with.

Castiel however, encouraged Dean to stop apologising for his biology and take what he needed,
never once complaining about any aches he may have developed over the course of Dean's rut. He
also seemed to be rather fond of the tiny marks littering every inch of his body.
Currently, Dean had Castiel pinned against the cave wall, one hand splayed possessively over his stomach as he nipped at any skin that was available to him and slammed his hips against the omega's with a force that had Cas bracing himself.

One particular thrust had Cas howling in pleasure and Dean made another satisfied grumble as he yanked his lover backwards against his chest and wrapped both arms around him.

"My omega," hissed Dean and Cas arched into him, wanting to feel all of the alpha; to have as much of their bodies pressed into one another as he possibly could.

"Belong to me," growled Dean. "All mine."

Cas whined when Dean's hand wandered downwards, wrapping firmly around his erection.

"My alpha," he breathed as Dean's hand began to move. "I'm yours. I'm all yours."

Dean smirked, another dominating rumble vibrating through his chest and Cas didn't think he'd ever had such a strong urge to just kneel on his hands and knees and present like a stereotypical submissive omega before.

He must have whimpered pathetically, because Dean's hormone-addled brain was soon thinking along the same lines.

"Hands and knees," he commanded and Castiel couldn't have resisted that tone even if he'd have wanted to. "Present to your alpha."

The omega was quick to do as ordered, wiggling his rear a little just to tease Dean and he released another filthy groan as the alpha sunk into him, fingernails lightly biting into his hips to keep him still.

Despite his hole beginning to ache Cas rocked into his lover and Dean nipped at his shoulders as his knot began to form.

The omega was taken off guard when Dean suddenly flipped him over so they were facing one another and proceeded to smash their lips together, ravishing his mouth as though it was the last time he'd ever be able to taste him.

Knot swelling, Dean rammed his hardness into Cas' sore entrance and the omega flung his arms around the alpha as his legs hooked around Dean's hips, and they panted and growled and whimpered against each other's mouths as they rode Dean's rut out together.

Then, after Dean's knot was fully formed, the alpha gave one final harsh thrust that put too much pressure on Cas' raw insides, and the omega cried out in pain, eyes squeezed shut as he tried to hold back a few cold tears.

Dean froze, eyes wide and mortified and even through the sea of hormones, he knew he'd done something terribly wrong.

Once he registered the pain on his lover's face, he immediately tried to pull out of the omega only to whine when he almost twisted his knot. Cas threw his head back in a yelp of agony and Dean grew horrified, remembering his knot was buried deep within the other man and it wouldn't go down for at least another twenty minutes.

"Cas," he choked in distress when a tear rolled down the omega's cheek and he tried to hold his weight off his lover, hovering above him awkwardly on his hands and knees.
"Cas, I'm so sorry," Dean croaked, fighting to clear his rut-driven thoughts. "I'm so sorry. What do I do?"

Dean was beginning to panic. He was struggling to clear his mind of the rut and Cas' deliciously sweet slick was all over him, yet he could see the agony in his lover's expression and he could smell the discomfort in Cas' scent. If there was one thing he had promised, it was that he would protect Cas and no amount of alpha biology was going to change that. He couldn't let himself hurt his lover any more than he already had.

"Tell me what to do," he begged, lust finally clearing from his gaze. "Cas, tell me what to do. Tell me how to make it stop hurting."

Castiel glanced up at him and Dean expected to see fear and betrayal in his eyes. There wasn't any. Only understanding and forgiveness.

"It's okay, Dean. Just... take what you have to. Let me make your pain go away."

Dean shook his head frantically. "No. I've hurt you. Tell me how to fix it."

The alpha could feel Cas shifting uncomfortably beneath him, legs trying to settle into a position that wouldn't make him feel so sore.

"I'm okay," insisted Cas, reaching out to stroke a thumb over his cheek. "You need this. I know you do."

"Stop," ordered Dean as he grabbed his lover's hand and Cas looked at him in surprise. "I need you to stop."

Dean took a deep breath as his instincts finally dissipated and logic returned at full force.

"Dean?" Cas asked, concern lacing his tone and the alpha flicked his gaze to the omega's worried face. He leaned down and pressed his lips to his lover's temple.

"I'm sorry, Angel," he murmured. "I'm sorry for hurting you. Please... tell me what to do to make you more comfortable."

Castiel was silent for a few moments.

"It was an accident," he said softly. "You don't need to apologise. It's not your fault."

Dean shook his head and once again pressed a kiss to his lover's forehead.

"I shouldn't have let my instincts take over like that. Nothing comes above your safety. You mean far more to me than a quick means of rut relief."

Cas fell silent once more and Dean began to pepper gentle kisses over his head.

"Hold me?" Asked Cas timidly after a few minutes and Dean didn't blink as he smoothly rolled onto his back and pulled the omega onto his chest without shifting his knot an inch.

Cas managed a smile despite the ache between his legs and he buried his face into Dean's neck as they wrapped their arms around one another. Dean lightly stroked Cas' back, nuzzling his hair soothingly as the omega inhaled his scent.

"I've never seen an alpha who can control his instincts like you can," mumbled Cas quietly. "Any other alpha would have continued regardless of my discomfort, but you just... stopped. I've never
heard of that before. I always thought alphas couldn't control themselves once they were gripped by a rut."

Dean huffed. "It's difficult when the rut hits its peak, but no alpha is incapable of controlling their instincts if they choose to. Those who don't or say they can't are lying. They just have no intention of controlling themselves."

Cas shuddered. All the stories on the NEWS of alphas who 'just couldn't help themselves'...

He snuggled into Dean and the alpha squeezed him comforting.

"Still doesn't excuse me from hurting you at first," Dean murmured regretfully and Cas shook his head.

"It was an accident," he insisted. "I know you would never intentionally harm me. I encouraged you to take what you needed; I'm as much to blame as you are, if not more."

Dean whined softly and nosed at his omega's hair.

"You were trying to help me. I injured you and now I can't even separate from you to check if you're okay. I have to wait because I'm stupid and I lost track of my actions."

Cas smiled as Dean tightened his grip on him. The alpha was warm and smelled inviting. His deep voice was soothing and his strong chest made Cas feel protected and safe; he hadn't felt like that in... well... ever. He didn't care if Dean had accidentally thrust his knot a little too hard inside him, the alpha's determination to take care of him now was warming Cas' heart and the omega never wanted to leave Dean's protective hold.

He had never realised how amazing it could feel to be wrapped in the arms of an alpha in rut; he had always believed they just wanted something to knot and that was it. He never thought they would be capable of such affection and love towards their partner when under the influence of raging hormones.

"I'm such a bad alpha," muttered Dean, closing his eyes and it was enough to startle a growl from Cas.

"You're the best alpha I've ever met," hissed Cas, crushing their lips together. "Don't you dare think that one mistake is enough to wipe out everything you've done for me, for Samandriel, for your brother, for all of the pack. I've already told you it was an accident and I don't blame you in any way for it. You are the most attentive lover anyone could ever ask for and I don't think anyone on this planet offers more love and care to someone than you do to me.

"I don't think you understand just how safe you make me feel. I've never felt protected before; I've always had to look after myself - most of my family didn't seem to want me. Alphas and betas never looked twice at me because I had a child and even some omegas turned away at such a 'scandal'. Yet you treat me as though I'm something to be cherished. You act as though I'm a rare and beautiful treasure and you speak about me as if you're honoured to even be able to look at me. I've never had anyone who's cared for me so deeply.

"Even in your rut, whilst you're facing immense pain, you still insist on looking after me; on making sure all my needs are met before your own. You hold me as if you're frightened of letting go; you pull me to your chest as though you can keep away all the evils of the world, yet you still trust that I can look after myself. You're never condescending; never doubt my abilities to defend myself and I've never met an alpha like that. I've never met an alpha who doesn't treat all omegas as being
weaker than they are. Even my brother can get a little too overprotective."

Dean refused to meet his gaze so Cas gently tilted his chin until he had no choice.

"I love being with you. I love touching and kissing and tasting you. I love hearing you moan and I love how you have such strong reactions to my body moving against yours. I love teasing you and watching you grow possessive over me. I love feeling wanted by you; knowing I belong to you just as much as you belong to me."

Cas' gaze softened as he captured Dean's lips sweetly.

"I love lying with you; being held in your arms as we kiss or cuddle. I love holding you and watching you interact with the pups. I love your smile and the way you find excuses to brush up against me or touch me or kiss me. I love how shy you get when I whisper words of affection when you least expect it. I love how proud of your pack you are, of your family. I love that I'm so lucky as to be able to call someone as wonderful as you my lover.

"I love you, Dean. One insignificant accident isn't going to change that."

Dean claimed Cas' lips almost desperately and their grips around one another tightened.

"I love you too, Cas," breathed Dean. "More than you could ever know. And I know you don't want to hear it, but I'm still sorry for hurting you, because I would never want to do that to you. You're quickly becoming the most important thing in my life and I need you to know how much you mean to me."

Cas' smile widened and he settled back down onto Dean's body, contentedly scenting and kissing his neck.

Dean sighed but there was an air of relief to it; maybe he hadn't believed Cas would forgive him at first, but now it was clear the omega really meant his words and Dean was beginning to relax.

Without jostling his lover, Dean reached into the bag being propped up against the cave wall and pulled out a large, soft blanket. He tucked it around them both before wrapping his arms around Cas once more, ensuring he stayed warm whilst they were both in their furless forms and the omega nuzzled Dean's neck happily before closing his eyes.

Once Cas' breathing evened out and he didn't seem inclined to move from being draped over Dean's body, the alpha allowed himself a hesitant smile before leaning his head against Cas' and drifting off as well, marvelling at how lucky he was to have found such a gorgeous and kind-hearted omega.

Chapter End Notes

Bit of a shorter chapter, but I decided to do a fluffy filler because people were curious about Dean's rut and wanted to see a bit more of it. Thanks for reading!
Gabriel knew Dean's rut was going to end soon; the strong smell of alpha hormones had faded slightly and that meant he would be able to see his brother properly and check the alpha hadn't done anything to hurt him.

He yawned and watched as Bobby disappeared into his shelter with Ellen, before making his way over to his own bush.

He was surprised to find two bundles of fluff curled up beside one another.

Usually Samandriel and Ben slept with Sam because Ben was more comfortable being around the familiar omega than he was being around Gabriel, and because the two never seemed to part (a fact which had initially surprised Gabriel because he'd never seen Samandriel have such a close friend), Samandriel usually joined the little omega.

Tonight was the first time he'd come back to find them in his shelter.

He briefly wondered if maybe they'd wandered into the wrong bush by accident and he took a step backwards, planning on sleeping outside for the night so he didn't make Ben uncomfortable. However as he backed away, both pups blinked awake sleepily to focus on him and Samandriel tilted his head when he noticed his uncle's hesitation.

"Uncle Gabe? Where are you going?"

Gabriel paused. "Thought you might want the place to yourself. I'll be just outside if you need me."

Samandriel visibly deflated. "You're not gonna stay with us?"

Gabriel hesitated. "...I didn't think you'd want me to," he said, glancing at the quiet Ben.

Samandriel turned to his friend and Ben nodded slowly. The alpha focused on Gabriel once more.

"Please stay with us?"

Gabriel blinked and watched as Ben shifted almost imperceptibly closer to Samandriel, obviously seeking safety in case he turned out to be unfriendly.

"...You sure that's what you want?" The older alpha asked softly and Samandriel nodded.

Cautiously, so as not to frighten Ben, Gabriel crawled into the bush and settled down as far away as he could from the two pups. Samandriel frowned and walked over to him, making Gabriel chuckle when he plopped down between his paws. The little alpha glanced expectantly over to his friend, who was watching Gabriel with uncertainty dancing in his eyes.

"C'mon, Ben. Uncle Gabe's nice. He won't hurt you; he always protected me and Dad."

Ben allowed himself another moment of nervousness before slowly slinking over and nestling beside Samandriel, much to Gabriel's surprise. He hadn't thought the omega would trust him.

Shocked at the new development yet curious at the warm sensations budding in his chest, Gabriel
carefully wrapped his paws around the pups, smiling delightedly when Samandriel purred and snuggled into him.

He nuzzled his nephew's head, making Samandriel grin as he closed his eyes and he was just about to settle down himself when he felt another pair of eyes on him.

He looked up to find Ben staring at him timidly.

Raising an eyebrow, Gabriel watched as the omega pressed closer to Samandriel and leaned his head on his friend's shoulders as he continued to observe Gabriel as if he wanted to ask for something but was too shy to do it.

An idea caught Gabriel's brain and he leaned down to Ben and gently nuzzled his head.

The pup stiffened at first but eventually relaxed into Gabriel's soothing nuzzling and the alpha was surprised when the little omega nosed at him gratefully.

Gabriel carefully placed his paw over Ben's back and the pup smiled shyly at him before settling back onto Samandriel and shifting Gabe's paw into a more comfortable position around him.

Gabriel watched the pups curl around one another, each cuddling a little closer to him as they did so and his heart felt large and warm in a way he was unfamiliar with. He hadn't realised his protective alpha instincts had kicked in until he was tugging the pups closer and resting his head over their backs, as if he could somehow shield them from the rest of the world.

With a fond smile and a strange feeling in his chest, he fell asleep.

* * *

A terrified scream startled both Gabriel and Samandriel awake. They glanced at each other's wide eyes before looking to Ben, whose breathing was far too deep and fur too wet from sweat. His eyes were glazed over and his ears flat against his head.

"Ben?" Asked Samandriel worriedly, nuzzling his friend's cheek in hopes that it would ground him back in reality.

The omega whimpered in fear before burying his head in Samandriel's neck.

Gabriel sniffed the air warily, making sure there were no foreign scents that would spell trouble for the Winchester pack.

However, upon finding only the aroma of frightened omega pup, Gabriel focused his attention on the crying Ben.

Samandriel was wrapped around his friend, holding him close as he nuzzled at the omega. He released soothing alpha grunts and rumbles which succeeded in calming Ben down slightly and not for the first time, Gabriel marvelled at how close the two pups were.

"Ben? Want to tell us what happened?" Asked Gabriel softly, once again placing his paw over the omega's back.

Ben didn't quite meet his gaze.
"Nightmare," he muttered as if it was something to be ashamed of and Gabriel's expression softened.

He leaned down to nuzzle the pup.

"Want to tell me what it was about?"

Ben shook his head and Gabriel began to lick his head in a way he knew mothers or omegas did to soothe their children.

Ben began to relax a little and Gabriel quirked a smile when the pup shuffled closer to him.

"Mom," he whispered. "It was about my mom. I watched her die again, but it wasn't how it happened. Azazel's whole pack was tearing at her. There was too much blood, and she was screaming and looking at me, begging for me to save her, but I didn't know what to do and I just stood there, watching them rip her apart and then they turned to me and I couldn't move and-"

Ben's breathing was too quick and his heart too fast and Gabriel saw the signs of a panic attack before the omega had even realised what was happening.

He pulled the pup into his chest and held him tight as he continued to lick and nuzzle the omega.

"Sshh, sshh," he cooed. "It's okay. It wasn't real. None of it was real. You're here with me and Samandriel and you're safe. We won't let anything happen to you. And your mom? She's being looked after by the Angels, remember? Nothing can hurt her. I bet she's watching you right now and she won't like it if you're upset because that'll make her upset too. You don't want your mom to be upset do you?"

Ben shook his head with a sniffle and Gabriel continued.

"Good. Then you've got to be the strong omega she raised and forget about that horrible dream. Azazel's pack won't get anywhere near you because I won't let them, okay? You're safe and your mom is in the safest place in the world. Nothing can hurt her. She probably has a whole pack of Angels taking care of her!"

Ben managed a small smile at that. He snuggled into Gabriel's chest and Samandriel plodded over to curl around him. He nuzzled Samandriel's jaw in gratitude before relaxing into Gabriel.

"Do you think she misses me?" He asked after a few moments and Gabriel wrapped both paws around the pups.

"I know she misses you, kiddo."

"But how? You've never met her," said Ben, a tiny frown creasing his brow and Gabriel was quick to remember how Sam had explained that they'd planted snowdrops over Lisa's grave.

"I know because there's so many snowdrops scattered through the camp," hummed Gabriel and Ben looked up at him curiously.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, have you noticed how many snowdrops keep popping up in even the darkest parts of the camp? Every time you play somewhere, a snowdrop appears. I think it's your mom trying to tell you that she's still watching, still looking out for you. Every time you see a snowdrop, it's because your mom is showing you how much she loves you."
Ben’s tail was beginning to sway and his eyes were bright and excited at Gabriel's explanation. A few tears remained stuck to the fur on his cheeks and Gabriel smiled at him before leaning down to lick them away.

Ben continued to watch the older alpha in awe. "Do you really think she's making them grow?"

Gabriel nodded solemnly. "Definitely. She's trying to tell you she's still watching everything you do."

Ben glanced over to a grinning Samandriel.

"She's still making sure you don't fall into any more badger dens," snickered Samandriel and Ben stuck his tongue out at the alpha and batted at his muzzle.

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "Badger dens? Now this I gotta hear."

Ben looked mortified and he shot the cackling Samandriel a dirty glare and pounced on him. The two tussled for a few moments before Ben eventually pinned Samandriel to the floor.

"Ben chased a squirrel and didn't look where he was going so fell into a badger den," rushed Samandriel before his mouth was covered by Ben's paw.

"Shut up!" Huffed Ben and Samandriel managed to shove the omega off before hurrying onto the next part of the story.

"And then this really old, grumpy badger came out of the den and started chasing him all over the camp! Everybody just stared because it was so funny and eventually it was Lisa who had to step between them and apologise to the badger - I think his name was Metatron - for Ben wrecking his home. He was a bit rude though because he said some really bad words about Ben that Dad says I'm not allowed to repeat. But it was really funny and Ben wouldn't leave the camp for two whole weeks!"

Gabriel chuckled as Ben growled playfully at Samandriel.

"Traitor," he muttered and Samandriel dragged his friend closer to nip at his ear as they pretended to fight again.

"Alright, settle down," grinned Gabriel and both pups were quick to comply as they snuggled into the golden alpha's chest again. They were obviously more sleepy than they let on.

They made a few contented sounds when Gabriel wrapped his paws around them and Ben rubbed his head against Gabe's chest.

"Mom would've liked you. You're kind and funny. I think you'd have been really good friends."

"Yeah?" Hummed Gabriel, heart doing weird things again. Why did he have such a strange reaction to being around these pups? Maybe it was just because he wasn't usually allowed near children because of suspicious parents.

"And you're fast. I bet you could've beaten her at tag," yawned Ben. "Although she was the best at that game, so maybe not."

Gabriel smiled and tightened his grip around the pups protectively.

"She beat you a lot at tag?"
Both pups nodded as they leaned into Gabriel, using his fur as a pillow.

"She wasn't very good at hide and seek though," murmured Samandriel.

"Only 'cause she was too big to hide," mumbled Ben, closing his eyes and Gabriel's heart melted when Samandriel reached out to tug the omega into his paws.

Ben smiled and wrapped his legs around Samandriel until Gabe could barely tell which limb belonged to which pup. Then Ben tucked his head under Samandriel's, still making sure to keep cuddled against Gabriel, and the little alpha nuzzled the omega's head happily before they both drifted off once more.

Gabriel was suddenly very aware of how much he longed for his own pup. Or pups. He was getting older and if he wasn't careful, old age would creep up on him and he wouldn't have a family to share his life with. Even if he couldn't have pups, a mate would be nice. Or even just a lover.

Gabriel sighed as he watched the sleeping pups. Had he always been this lonely?

With a sinking feeling in his gut, Gabriel lay down to sleep.

* * *

It felt good to be finally free of the clutches of his rut, thought Dean. It felt even better having Cas practically plastered to his side as they wandered around the camp, stretching their legs.

The last lingering effects of the rut made it so Dean craved being close to his lover and Cas was happy to oblige, smiling whenever Dean had the urge to lick his cheek or nuzzle his head or nip at his jaw.

And maybe he was acting overly affectionate with Cas partly because Gabriel's glares were growing more and more stony and it amused him.

Either Cas hadn't noticed his brother looked more furious by the second or he also found it entertaining because the omega kept making all these contented sounds of pleasure and leaning into Dean, sometimes even bearing his throat for the alpha to mark (and Dean was delighted to oblige).

The rest of the pack ignored the slightly out-of-character behaviour, already deeming it an after-effect of the rut and the only other people who reacted to their soppiness were Sam and the pups.

Sam kept shooting them these mock looks of disgust, where he would roll his eyes or turn his nose up and pull a face that had Cas snickering and Dean shaking his head, but it was clear the larger omega was happy for them because every so often they would catch him smiling fondly at them both, eyes warm and pleased.

The pups were just curious. They kept staring at the couple whenever Dean marked Cas or licked him adoringly and when Cas and Dean turned to look at them, they would bound away giggling and chatting excitedly about what they'd just witnessed.

After a few more minutes of Dean licking his mate adoringly and Castiel blinking smugly like the cat who'd just got the cream, the pair wandered over to Sam, who pretended to gag upon spotting them.
"Keep all the PDA away from me, guys. I've got a strictly PG zone surrounding me and it's got a radius of twenty metres."

Dean rolled his eyes and very deliberately tugged Cas closer to lick his muzzle.

Sam made another sound of disgust and tried to turn away but Dean cleared his throat lightly.

"Actually, I wanted to talk to you."

Sam immediately focused on his brother.

"I was thinking maybe we should move the pack," admitted Dean and Sam nodded as if he had expected the conversation.

"Because of Azazel's attack?"

Dean made a grim expression. "They're still around somewhere and I don't know if they're just licking their wounds for now or if they're waiting to plan another ambush. I'm worried the longer we stay here, the more danger we're putting the pack in."

Sam sighed. "Actually, I was planning on asking you the same thing once your rut wore off. I'm worried too. Last hunt, I smelled Abaddon lurking around the hunting grounds. She definitely wasn't there to grab a deer."

Dean winced. "I was afraid of that. I think we should leave but I'm not sure the suggestion will be taken too kindly..."

"Because Lisa's here," finished Sam quietly. "I know."

Dean glanced over to the direction he knew the patch of snowdrops to be in.

"I'm torn about it myself. I don't want to leave her here whilst we're all still mourning."

Sam glanced in the same direction.

"We could come back. In the Summer. We could give the camp enough time to lose our scents and encourage Azazel to move on and then we could come back, without worrying about whether we have to prepare ourselves for another fight."

Dean contemplated the idea for a few moments.

"I can't go through any more deaths," he murmured and Sam nodded in agreement.

"This way, we wouldn't have to."

"Do you think people will go for it?" Asked Dean softly. "I don't want to create any rifts within the pack."

Sam shook his head. "I don't think they'll be happy about leaving, but they'll understand. The person I'm worried about most though is Ben."

Dean sighed. The pup definitely wouldn't want to leave and how could he explain to a motherless six year old that it was for 'the good of the pack'? "...We'll work something out," murmured Dean. "We can't stay here. It's too risky."
Sam looked away sadly. None of them were looking forward to the next announcement...

* * *

"No! We can't go! We can't just leave her here!" Yelled Ben, making the adults grimace.

"Ben, we can't stay. Azazel's pack is nearby and we can't put our pack in danger. We'll come back in a few weeks," tried Dean but the distraught pup wouldn't have any of it.

"You're abandoning her!" He accused. "What if Azazel finds her?"

'And does what?' Thought Dean glumly. 'She's already dead.'

"No, we're not. I promise we'll come back. It's only for a few weeks. We're in danger if we stay here," he said instead.

Ben shook his head furiously. "I'm not leaving her here on her own. She loves this pack. We're her family!"

"We have to go," said Sam softly. "We don't want any more fights. What if someone else - " he bit his lip. *What if someone else what? Meets the same fate as your mother? Gets torn apart like she did?*

Tears were streaming down Ben's face.

"I don't want to go. You can't make me. You'll have to leave without me."

"We're not going to leave you," murmured Cas, taking a few steps towards the distressed pup. "Just like we're not leaving your mom. We'll come back in a few weeks. We just need to make sure Azazel has moved on. We want him and his pack to leave us alone. You want your mother to have some peace and quiet, don't you?"

Ben scowled even as his tears continued to flow.

"But what about the snowdrops? I don't want to leave her. What if she doesn't know where we've gone to?"

It was clear the other adults were confused and that's why they were surprised when Gabriel padded over.

"Hey, she's always watching, right? The snowdrops will go wherever you go because she'll be with you every step of the way; you won't have to leave her because she'll follow you. She'll always be with you, kiddo, 'cause she loves you," the golden alpha murmured softly and Ben eyed him suspiciously for a few seconds.

"...You promise?"

Gabriel nodded solemnly. "Cross my heart."

Ben pulled a face that suggested he was thinking about it and Gabriel stepped closer.

"Tell you what, if she for any reason doesn't follow us, I will personally bring you back here myself
and we can stay here and wait for the rest of the pack to return in the Summer. Sound fair?"

Ben cocked his head to one side. "You're that sure she'll find us?"

Gabriel grinned. "Almost certain of it."

Ben seemed to perk up at that and he turned to a highly curious Dean and nodded.

"Okay, fine. We can go."

Cas and Dean glanced at one another in surprise as Sam blinked at Gabriel, stunned.

"Um... great," said Dean. "We'll leave at sunrise tomorrow morning. Uh... thanks everybody."

The other members of the pack slowly dispersed, some glancing at Gabriel in bewilderment or wonder as Ben trotted over to him and rubbed his head against his chest affectionately.

Gabriel didn't pay much attention to what the rest of the pack thought and he leaned down to nuzzle at the pup.

When he next glanced up, Dean was gaping at him with wide eyes, Cas was beginning to smile and Sam was looking at him almost... longingly. There was a definite sense of fondness in his gaze too and Gabriel was acutely aware of the strange, airy feeling in his chest. It sort of tingled.

"Hm," was all Dean said before walking away.

Cas was full on grinning now as his gaze flicked from his lover to his brother and Gabriel half wondered if Cas knew something he didn't. He nodded to Gabe before jogging after his lover.

Upon realising he'd been left alone with Gabriel and Ben, Sam coughed lightly and managed a brief smile.

"Ah... thanks," he said awkwardly and Gabe searched for something to say but suddenly found himself tongue-tied. Sam's previous expression had thrown him off.

"No problem," he said eventually, wrapping a paw around Ben and Sam gazed at them for a second longer in a way that had Gabriel wanting to bury his nose in the omega's neck, before making a quick retreat to another part of the camp.

When he looked down at Ben, the little omega was glancing at him as if he was trying to work something out, before his gaze flicked to Sam and back again. Only this time he looked as though he'd just had an epiphany and was trying to conceal it.

For a fraction of a second his eyes darted to where Samandriel was talking to his father and Gabriel felt a strange sense of doom settle over him.

"I'll see you in the morning, Gabe," said Ben innocently before practically sprinting towards Samandriel with a huge grin plastered over his face.

Gabriel gulped.

Definitely time to sleep.

He paced over to his shelter and paused before entering. Ensuring no one was watching, Gabriel crept over to a small patch of snowdrops and located a tiny shoot. Carefully, he dug it out of the ground and slipped into his bush before safely placing the developing bulb into his leather bag.
Then he smiled and curled up to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I've realised I'm making most of this fic up as I go and I'm stretching it out because it helps me to relax after Uni. Basically, this fic is going to end up a lot longer than I planned... whoops!
Part III

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gadreel walked on the outside of the pack as was his place. He remained silent and ever vigilant just like he had the first day he'd been assigned guard duty over the pack. It was a role he took very seriously and his stoic silence often made people wary or bored of him but that was okay. He had been granted a second chance at life after being left to die by his mate, pups and pack and he wasn't about to give the Winchesters any reason to regret taking him in.

When Castiel had come along, it was the first time anyone (other than the Winchesters) had been truly interested in him and he had found himself growing protective of the omega the longer Cas insisted talking to him. People usually gave up after a few days, deeming him dull and passionless, but Castiel had seen past his stiffness and initiated a friendship with him. This, in turn, allowed him to begin to open up to the pack and recently, he had found himself spending more time socialising and bonding with them.

It was inevitable that Gadreel would fall for Castiel.

Sadly, it was not to be and Gadreel, although heartbroken, refused to let their friendship fall apart because of a few unrequited feelings. He had learned so much from Castiel; had spend too long building a meaningful friendship with him to just throw it away.

He also held nothing against Dean; the alpha had taken him into his family when he had no reason to and Gadreel couldn't think of an alpha who deserved such a loyal, intelligent and beautiful omega more than Dean did.

Still, he couldn't help the stab of longing he felt whenever he saw the couple together. He wasn't envious, but he certainly wished he could experience a similar feeling of belonging with someone; of sharing his life with someone who would never weary of him.

However, if fate had demanded he have a lonely life, then he would not test her. Not after the last disaster of a relationship. He couldn't go through that kind of pain again.

They hadn't even said goodbye.

Gadreel shook his head. There was no use in dwelling on the past, however agonising.

Instead, Gadreel glanced over the pack with the experienced gaze of a lead alpha, ensuring the pups were playing within a safe distance of the pack and that none of the older members, like Bobby and Ellen were lagging behind. He searched for tension within the pack; anything that would cause a tussle and upon spotting nothing, he turned his attention to Sam and Dean, who were side by side at the front of the group, chatting quietly.

Satisfied they seemed content, Gadreel glanced over to Castiel and Gabriel who were closest to him at that moment.

"I'm just saying you look like he's been using you as a chew toy," huffed Gabriel under his breath and Cas rolled his eyes.

"I can look after myself, brother. Besides, I rather like them."
Gabriel pulled a disgusted expression. "TMI, little brother. And I'm just checking he's not hurting you. Some of those bruises look painful."

Cas closed his eyes and were he human, he would have pinched the bridge of his nose.

"They're not. Dean's not hurting me. Not in a bad way, at least."

Another face pull from Gabriel.

"He's a good alpha, Gabe. Give him a chance. Please?" Said Cas before the older wolf got a chance to speak.

Gabriel sighed. "I just want to make sure you're safe, Cas. Of course I'm going to be suspicious of your new alpha lover who's supposed to be our rival and who's one of the wild folk. If Dean can prove to me that he's taking good care of you and that he's worthy of your love, then I'll happily back off. Until then I'm afraid you're just going to have to put up with me being overprotective."

Castiel watched his brother wordlessly for a few seconds before nodding and nuzzling his jaw lightly.

"I do appreciate you looking out for me. Don't think I don't. You've always been the only family member that matters to me."

Gabriel smiled as his brother sighed.

"Sometimes I just wish you'd make things easy though," muttered Castiel and Gabriel snickered.

"No can do," he chirped. "Gotta make sure my little brother is being treated right and that means testing our dear pack leader."

Cas groaned softly and Gadreel smiled. He couldn't fault Gabriel for wanting to take care of his brother, even if the golden alpha did sometimes rub him up the wrong way with his brashness and arrogance.

Suddenly, a soft, wounded cry made his ears prick up.

"Dean," he said immediately and the whole pack stopped. They all knew that tone. That tone meant something was wrong.

Dean trotted over warily, ears already twitching.

"Azazel?" Questioned Dean with a scowl and Gadreel shook his head, making the other alpha raise an eyebrow.

"She sounds hurt," Gadreel offered by way of explanation and Dean hesitated as he glanced into the thicket of foliage Gadreel was staring into.

"Could be a decoy," murmured Dean and Gadreel flicked an ear in acknowledgement. It wouldn't be the first time they had been tricked by a decoy wolf, resulting in them being ambushed.

"Sam, stay with the pack. If we don't return in the next ten minutes, take off. Don't come looking for us," ordered Dean and Sam opened his mouth to protest but grudgingly thought better of it as he stood a little straighter and gestured for the pack to huddle a bit closer together in case anything attacked from the sides.

Dean glanced to Gadreel and the pair set off towards the source of the distressed noise.
They wandered cautiously through the forest, side by side and ready to defend one another if the need arose.

They paused when they stumbled across a tricolour omega female, blood drenching her scruffy coat and deep gashes and large bruises decorating her emaciated body.

She sobbed fearfully when she spotted them.

"Easy, easy," murmured Dean placatingly as he glanced around to make sure this wasn't a sadistic trick. Surely no pack would stoop so low as to tear up one of their members just to ambush someone?

"What's your name?" Dean asked softly as he and Gadreel neared the whimpering omega.

The tricolour wolf tried to slink away from them, but found herself backed up against a tree. She cried despairingly.

Dean and Gadreel stopped.

"We're not gonna hurt you," cooed Dean and both wolves blinked in shocked horror as the omega dragged herself in a semicircle until her back end was facing them, and managed to heave herself into a presenting pose.

"Please... just take what you want and leave me alone," she choked, knees already beginning to buckle as she shifted her tail out of the way.

Gadreel and Dean quickly looked away, faces hot with embarrassment.

"We're not... we don't want that..." stuttered Dean, mortified. "Stop, please. We're not here to... to..." He couldn't finish the sentence so Gadreel cut in smoothly.

"We're not here to force you to do anything. We heard your cry and merely responded. Please turn around."

The omega hesitated for a few moments before nervously swivelling back around. As soon as she was facing them, she collapsed to the ground with a pained grunt.

"What's your name?" Asked Gadreel quietly, watching the omega unhappily. Where was her pack whilst she was in such a state?

"...Hannah," replied the broken omega, eying both alphas as if they were about to kill her at any moment.

Gadreel nodded. "Hannah, where is your pack?"

Hannah fell silent for a few seconds, clearly wondering if she should make up a lie or tell the truth.

"I don't know. Dead, maybe? I ran away."

Gadreel tilted his head. "Why did you run away?"

Hannah shot him a bitter glare after glancing down at her battered body and both alphas sucked in a gasp.

"They did this to you?" Breathed Dean and Hannah averted her gaze.
Dean and Gadreel glanced at one another. No wonder Hannah was so timid.

"Can you walk?" Asked Dean and Hannah looked up at him sharply. She nodded her head.

"Our pack is a little further South from here. We're trying to find new territory and I want you to come with us," stated Dean.

Hannah looked terrified and she shook her head frantically as she tried to shuffle backwards.

Gadreel lowered himself to the floor and lay down, proving he wasn't a threat and Hannah watched him suspiciously.

"I'm Gadreel and this is Dean Winchester; co-leader of the Winchester pack alongside his brother, Sam. I promise you we mean you no harm. You're injured and we only wish to help."

"Why?" Growled Hannah. "Why would you want to help me? You're lying. You just want to take me back to your pack so you can use me for whatever you desire, and then you'll kill me. Why can't you just leave me alone?"

Gadreel shook his head. "That's not true." He paused. "I was once in your position. I was leader of my own pack and when Winter came, we were part of a gruesome fight. I couldn't walk, couldn't move and my pack left me. I resigned myself to the fact I was going to die from either starvation, frostbite or infection.

"Then, the Winchester pack found me and I assumed they would immediately kill me, except they didn't. They took me in, healed me and when I was healthy, Sam and Dean gave me a choice: Become part of their pack or try to live on my own in hopes I could locate my old pack. Needless to say which I chose."

Hannah regarded the grey and white wolf curiously before flicking her gaze over to Dean and gaging his reaction.

"And we're glad to have him with us," muttered Dean, not quite meeting anyone's gaze and Gadreel felt an honoured smile tugging at his lips. Emotion did not come easy to Dean.

Hannah caught Gadreel's soft smile and it must have been enough to reassure her, even if only temporarily. Shakily, she climbed to her paws but she made no move to walk any nearer to the alphas.

Dean blinked and Gabriel nodded in understanding. He too had initially been wary of the Winchesters' intentions.

"We only wish to heal you, then you are free to do whatever you please," murmured Gadreel. "We can't in good conscience leave you here to die."

Hannah nodded but whether that was because she understood what Gadreel was telling her or was too afraid to speak against both alphas' wishes for fear of what they would inflict upon her, remained unclear.

The alphas slowly turned around made their way back the way they came, checking every so often that Hannah hadn't fallen too far behind with her battered body restricting her movements.

When Hannah finally saw the pack, she inhaled sharply.

"You really are the Winchesters," she breathed as the scents hit her at full force. Gadreel frowned. If
Hannah hadn't been able to tell which pack they were from by his and Dean's scents alone, that meant the omega's injuries weren't only superficial.

Hannah looked even more afraid now and Gadreel cursed John Winchester for making their name so highly feared. They were respected like royalty amongst the wild folk, but that didn't mean it was all good. Sure, they were known for being loyal to the pack and one another and for working efficiently as a team, but thanks to John, they were also known for their viciousness in battle and their mercilessness towards those who crossed them.

A few pack members eyed Hannah curiously and the omega shrank in on herself at all the unwanted attention. Gadreel wanted to go to her, but he had a feeling his desire to help wouldn't be taken too well by Hannah, so he remained put, cocking an eyebrow when he caught Dean speaking softly with Castiel and Sam.

Cas nodded and padded over to Hannah, bright blue eyes large and sympathetic as he neared her, and he lowered his head and ears in a non-threatening gesture.

Hannah hesitated as he came to stand in front of her and she sniffed the air subtly, relaxing slightly at the comforting scent of omega.

"Hello, my name's Castiel. I believe you're Hannah?" Murmured Cas softly and the other omega nodded warily.

"Welcome to the pack, Hannah. We're not as scary as we look, I promise," he smiled and Hannah seemed to study him curiously.

"Would it be alright if I took you to our medic? Those wounds don't look too clean."

Hannah nodded slowly and Cas smiled encouragingly at her. It was clear she still didn't fully trust him and that's why Gadreel quirked a grin when Samandriel plodded over after Sam had had a quiet word with him.

"Who's this, Dad?" Asked Samandriel, rubbing his head affectionately against his father's leg. Cas immediately caught on. He leaned down to rub noses with his pup and licked his head gently.

"This is Hannah. She's going to be staying with us for a little while. Well, that is, if she's comfortable in doing so."

Samandriel glanced at Hannah and as all pups with no sense of personal space do, trotted over to her to sniff at her.

"Hi," Samandriel greeted and Hannah finally managed a small smile.

"Hello."

The little alpha grinned, tail wagging and Hannah visibly relaxed. Castiel chuckled and nudged Samandriel backwards.

"Apologies. He's not yet learned when it's appropriate to scent," said Castiel, which was a lie, because Samandriel knew exactly when to stay behind his father and when it was safe to interact with other wolves. He was also very good at following orders from sneaky Winchesters.

"Oh, I don't mind," mumbled Hannah. "He's very sweet."

Castiel smiled at his pup fondly and it was enough to make Hannah let her guard down around
Castiel.

"He looks like you," she commented and Castiel smiled.

"Whether or not that's a good thing remains to be seen," he winked and Hannah's lips quirked upwards in amusement.

"Come on, let me take you to Jody to get some of those wounds fixed," hummed Castiel and Gadreel chuckled when Hannah slid slightly closer to the black and tan omega, obviously feeling a little safer around him now.

Gadreel glanced back to Dean and the other alpha grinned at him knowingly which in turn, made Gadreel shake his head in amusement. The Winchesters and their schemes.

The pack pooled the last of their supplies together to help Hannah (which shocked the omega a great deal) and although it wasn't quite enough, the worst of the injuries were treated and dressed.

Cas moved to the back of the pack and Hannah shyly slid beside him. Gadreel made sure to keep a close eye on them and the pack continued onwards.

* * *

"Wait, so you're from the city?" Asked Hannah, stunned and Castiel nodded.

"I am. So is my brother and pup."

It had been two days since Hannah had reluctantly joined the Winchester pack. It was clear she didn't plan on staying and the only reason she was with the pack now was because she was too weak to defend herself alone at the moment.

She barely spoke and when she did, it was only ever to Cas or Samandriel. Occasionally, she nodded or shook her head at Dean's questions.

She didn't trust anyone except Castiel and his pup, and even that was tentative. The pack knew there was something deeply wrong going on, especially with the severity and locations of all of Hannah's injuries, but with the omega keeping to herself, nobody was willing to ask her about it. They would probably scare her away if they did.

Hopefully, she would open up to them as time passed and they proved themselves to be non-hostile.

"Which one's your brother?" Hannah asked quietly and Cas nodded to a miserable-looking Gabriel.

"Golden alpha. His name's Gabriel and the reason he's sulking is because with me here, he has no one to irritate."

Hannah quirked a grin.

"He can't irritate any of the other pack members?"

"He could, but most would either ignore him, walk away or annoy him even more than he annoyed them. There are quite a few people here with sharp tongues and I think my brother has met his match with a couple of them."
Hannah's lips twitched in acknowledgement as she observed the rest of the pack.

"So... what's it like working under Dean's leadership?"

Castiel smiled. "Don't forget Sam runs this pack too. And I may be a little biased, but it's far better than what I left in the city. Here, the whole pack is family; they take care of one another and protect one another when the need arises. Nobody's ever left behind and the pack I'm originally from didn't work like that."

Hannah tilted her head. "Which pack were you originally from?"

Cas hesitated. He didn't want to scare Hannah off and he knew the Novak name wouldn't go down too well. Still, he didn't want to lie because he was trying to gain Hannah's trust.

"The Novak family," he confessed and Hannah's eyes widened just as Castiel had feared, and she shuffled backwards.

"You're... you're a..."

"I've not been a Novak for a while now. I don't think I ever was, really. I never fit in, my parents made it clear I wasn't as well liked as my alpha brothers and I couldn't even tell my family about Samandriel because I was frightened they'd kill him. They're a traditional family with traditional values and an unmated omega with a child doesn't fit into that view. I managed to keep him a secret for six years until my oldest brother hunted us down and we had to escape.

"Gabriel saved both of us that night and soon after, I ran into the Winchesters. They were suspicious of me at first and I must admit, I held some awful views on wild folk that made them dislike me even more. However, they looked after both me and my pup and I learned how inaccurate my teachers had been about wild folk, and now I'm proud to call them my family," Castiel explained, hoping that his story would show Hannah he had nothing to hide.

Hannah slowly relaxed and they continued trailing after the pack.

"So you enjoy being part of a pack that was initially your enemy? You don't mind following the orders of an alpha you've been raised to hate?"

Castiel chuckled. "I can't be too averse to it considering I'm in a relationship with him."

Hannah blinked. "...Excuse me?"

Castiel cracked a grin. "Despite getting off on the wrong foot, Dean and I decided to act out our very own Romeo and Juliet story. It's all extremely dramatic."

Hannah's eyes were wide. "...A Winchester got involved with a Novak?"

Castiel's grin widened. "A Novak with an alpha pup."

"...And nobody... cares?"

"Well, my brother isn't too happy, but I usually ignore him anyway."

"...But otherwise, everyone is fine with the fact their leader is sleeping with their enemy leader's brother?"

"Most of them congratulated us."
Hannah balked before looking away in contemplation and Castiel wondered if he'd just managed to change her opinion of the pack.

"Oh," was all she said (which was a little deflating but Cas wasn't giving up hope).

After a few minutes of silence, Cas glanced to the other omega.

"...Would you like to meet any of the others?" He asked softly and Hannah paused, her gaze, to Cas' surprise, flicking briefly to Gadreel before focusing back on the ground.

"I'm fine here, thank you."

Cas nodded slowly. "Okay."

After another few moments of quiet, Hannah risked a glance to Cas.

"...Could you... could you tell me a little more about the city? I've always wondered what it was like."

Cas beamed at her curiousness.

"What would you like to know?"

Chapter End Notes

Two chapters in two days? What's going on? ;) Hey look! Gadreel's back.
Since Cas had been tasked with babysitting the new omega, Gabriel had had to find someone else who was willing to put up with him. He thought about pestering Sam, but the omega was often walking with his brother and Gabe wasn't fond of the idea of socialising with the alpha who'd sucked holes into Cas' neck.

There was Benny who Gabe had to admit wasn't that bad and he would've joined him, but the alpha seemed to be having difficulties staring at anything but the flirty, blonde omega who kept swinging her hips in front of him and turning around to lick her lips and wink suggestively at him.

Gabriel hadn't realised Benny and Jo were an item but when he glanced at Ellen, her expression told him they weren't. Gabriel grimaced. Poor Benny.

He stayed well clear of Becky; Cas had already warned him of her tendency to 'latch onto things'. Although by the looks of it, Chuck had finally managed to grab her attention, even if he hadn't quite realised it yet.

Jody, Charlie and Pam were all giggling towards the back of the pack, apparently having a 'girl talk' and Bobby kept glancing at them and rolling his eyes.

As ever, Gadreel was alone, walking stoically on the outskirts of the pack, ears erect and eyes sharp. Gabriel shook his head. That alpha was the life of the party.

Still searching for someone to talk to, Gabriel's gaze swept over the forms of Ed and Harry, who were bickering over something or other as they murmured nonsense about ghosts and spirits and the underworld, and he raised an eyebrow.

No.

Finally, he spotted Crowley and Meg.

Who smirked right back.

He shrugged and joined them.

"Hiya, Grumpy," greeted Meg.

"Hello, Princess," Gabe shot back and Meg blinked slowly, slyly.

"I'm more of an evil Queen," she purred, arching her back seductively and at one time, Gabriel would have probably been interested, despite her mate standing beside her but for some reason, he didn't feel the same thrill towards rolling around with a random omega anymore.

Besides, he kind of liked Crowley.

Crowley however, didn't seem the least bit put out that his mate had half-propositioned Gabriel right in front of him and Gabe wondered if Meg was far more faithful and loyal than she made out to be.

"How are things?" Hummed Crowley and Gabriel flicked his unbent ear.
"Boring. Cas is otherwise engaged with the newest addition to the pack, which leaves me to stew in eternal boredom."

Meg rolled her eyes. "Maybe if you tried making friends with the rest of the pack, you wouldn't have to suffer."

"I'm talking to you, aren't I?" Pointed out Gabriel and Crowley huffed.

"Only because you've been forced to."

Gabriel clamped his mouth shut. Fair point.

"It would certainly make your time here more enjoyable, and it might make people a little less suspicious of your intentions," muttered Crowley and Gabriel snorted.

"I don't particularly care what others think about me."

"You seem to care what Sam thinks of you," smirked Meg and Gabriel narrowed his eyes at her.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Meg shrugged. "Just an observation."

"Glad we're not jumping to any conclusions," snarked Gabriel and Meg chuckled as though she was enjoying Gabriel's discomfort far too much.

"Is there anything going on there? Moose had a tendency to wander off a lot in the middle of the night back when Ruby was around," Asked Crowley, mouth curling up in distaste around the word 'Ruby'. At least he and Gabriel could agree on their opinions of that particular alpha.

"No," snapped Gabriel.

"Are you sure? We're not going to expect you to help Sam through his heat, are we?" Smirked Crowley.

"No," growled Gabriel. "And I would kindly ask you to stay out of my business, but I'm not all that kind. So keep your assumptions to yourself."

Crowley chuckled. "Just asking."

"Then don't," snapped Gabriel.

"Well aren't you just a joy to be around?" Drawled Meg, but there was a warning in her gaze which suggested she wasn't too happy with the way Gabriel was addressing her mate.

The golden alpha sighed, grimacing when he realised his fur was bristling. He forced himself to relax and refused to think about why he'd had such a strong reaction to someone insinuating he and Sam were... more than friends. Or at least using one another for sex. Gabriel internally recoiled at the thought. He would never do that to Sam, not when he knew how much heartbreak the omega had been through.

"Sorry. Guess I'm a little cranky," admitted Gabriel sheepishly.

Meg relaxed at the apology. "That's because you've spent too long socialising with only your brother and your nephew. Get to know the pack a little and maybe you'll feel a difference."
"What are you, my therapist?" Commented Gabriel drily and Meg smirked, flicking her tail suggestively.

"You wish I was, baby."

Gabriel shook his head and continued to chat with the pair for an hour and he came to the conclusion that actually, Meg and Crowley weren't half bad once you got past all the smug smirks, sarcasm and arrogance.

...He realised he'd described his own personality with that sentence.

Huh.

"So, how does a co-leadership work anyway?" Asked Gabriel. "I mean, Dean's the alpha, shouldn't he lead?"

"New set of eyes and a different mindset in a situation can go a long way," hummed Crowley. "Whilst Sam and Dean think very similarly on most occasions, there are some things they need to discuss to work out the best course of action. It's saved quite a few lives in the past and it means plans are more thought out before they're executed."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "And Dean's perfectly fine with sharing control over the pack with his omega brother? There's no infighting?"

Crowley shook his head. "You're talking about Sam and Dean 'Co-dependency' Winchester. They'd die for each other. They get depressed and emotional when they so much as argue, so no; there's no infighting and they really do share equal control over the pack. Besides, alphas, betas and omegas are of equal value in this pack. No gender is respected more or less than another."

Gabriel grunted in acknowledgement. Good to hear Dean cared for his family at least.

They lapsed into a comfortable silence for a few minutes before Gabriel cleared his throat.

"So... you don't like Ruby either?" He asked casually and Meg snorted.

"Considering she was the one who alerted Azazel's pack to our location and was also the one to give the signal to attack us, no. We don't."

Gabriel nodded. "I heard there was an epic showdown."

The other wolves grimaced. "Still not really sure who won. We were all pretty battered; I managed to break two ribs and a leg," grumbled Meg and Crowley shifted closer to her until he was pressed into her side protectively.

Gabe didn't miss the way the beta leaned into him as she spoke.

"I'm kinda sad I missed Alistair's death. I imagine it was rather satisfying."

Crowley rumbled darkly.

"It was."

Gabriel shuddered at the tone. He made a note to never get on Crowley's bad side.

"I would've loved to tear into Ruby as well after what she did. Not to mention everyone knows how she was with Sam. I'm rather disappointed she escaped," commented Crowley quietly and Gabriel
perked up slightly.

"So it was obvious she abused Sam? Why didn't anyone do anything about it?"

Crowley shook his head. "She hid her ways well, but every so often she would slip up. My guess is she kept most of her hostility and abuse to their alone time, when no one was around to see."

Gabriel scowled. "What kind of abuse did you guys see?"

"Belittling him in front of his friends, shouting, throwing a temper tantrum when things didn't go her way. You know, the usual," replied Crowley and Meg pulled a face.

"Don't forget about the way he used to walk after they'd had a roll in the hay."

Crowley shivered. "I tried to bleach my memory of that."

Gabriel snapped his gaze to Meg. "What do you mean?"

"Well, after they'd had their fun, sometimes Sam used to walk around as though he'd been on the back of a horse for too long. Most of the times he'd stay in their sleeping quarters and I have a feeling that was because it was too painful to move."

Gabe had to physically stop his hackles from rising. How dare Ruby hurt Sam like that!

Of course, he'd heard from Sam's own mouth what Ruby did to him, but to learn that other people knew of her ways meant that her abuse was not occasional. She had hurt Sam frequently and had tried to cover it up afterwards so as not to be confronted by other members of the pack. Not to mention she'd somehow brainwashed Sam into believing he was happy and so the omega had never asked for help.

Gabriel growled softly and sheepishly averted his gaze when both Meg and Crowley cocked an eyebrow.

"Well, I'm glad I never met her," murmured Gabriel. Because I'd probably kill her in a very slow and painful manner.

"Hm," was all Crowley said.

Gabriel coughed awkwardly. "Right... well, it's been great talking to you guys, but I'll give you two some alone time now."

Meg offered him a lazy smile and the beginnings of a smirk were twitching at Crowley's lips as they watched him trot away.

***

Another three days passed and the pack was still on the move.

"Who's that?" Asked Hannah timidly and Castiel followed her gaze to find Gadreel walking alone on the outside of the pack.

"Gadreel," smiled Cas. "He's the pack's lookout. Really sweet alpha."
Hannah's gaze swept over him.

"Why is he alone?"

"He takes his job seriously," replied Cas. "People don't want to distract him."

Hannah nodded silently and Cas tilted his head.

"Would you like to meet him?"

The omega paused for a few moments before ever so slowly nodding and Castiel blinked in surprise. It was the first time she had wanted to talk to someone outside of Cas and his pup.

He led her towards the grey and white alpha and Gadreel shot them a curious glance as they approached.

"Hannah wanted to say hello," greeted Castiel, sliding beside Gadreel so Hannah would at least have a small barrier between herself and the alpha if she panicked.

Gadreel nodded in understanding and glanced around Cas to the shy omega ducking her head.

"Good afternoon," he said softly. "How are you today?"

Hannah's wounds were healing slowly but they were nowhere near as gruesome as when they'd first found her.

"A little better," she mumbled, gaze low. "...Thanks for bringing me here."

Gadreel smiled warmly and Cas' face lit up. Hannah caught them both grinning and she raised her head slightly, offering them a small smile of her own.

"No problem," murmured Gadreel. "We wish you to have a speedy recovery. Hopefully when we pass the city in a couple of days, we can obtain a few more medical supplies to aid you further."

"...You've already done so much... you don't need to do that for me," muttered Hannah.

"We were going to have to grab some supplies anyway; we might as well use them to help you," said Cas and Gadreel nodded in agreement.

"You're very kind," she murmured. "Thank you. I don't know how to repay you."

Gadreel's smile dimmed slightly when he remembered how Hannah had presented to both him and Dean when she thought it would get them to leave her alone.

"You don't have to repay us," he said firmly. "We're doing this because we want to."

Hannah briefly met his gaze and Gadreel was struck by how blue her eyes were. She quickly looked away and they lapsed into silence.

"My pack was taken over by another alpha. He merged his original pack with ours and we didn't fit," whispered Hannah after a few minutes.

Cas and Gadreel glanced at one another.

"You didn't fit?" Gadreel asked and Hannah nodded.
"They weren't like us. They had different rules, a different hierarchy. They murdered our pack leader and forced us to work under them."

"And that's why you fled? They killed your pack leader?" Asked Castiel and Hannah shook her head.

"The new leader... he... he liked to prove his dominance over us. We weren't treated the same as his own pack. He said we were too soft and he was trying to toughen us up. He would attack us for no reason other than it amused him and he let his pack throw us around and taunt us. When we fought back, they would laugh and try to tear us apart." Hannah sucked in a deep breath as if to steady herself.

"Omegas and some betas were used as breeders and their alphas would use us whenever they pleased, sometimes one after the other. The other betas and alphas were used as playthings; objects to hurt and humiliate.

"We lost two omegas, a beta, three alphas and all the pups and eventually, it turned out to be every wolf for themselves. We weren't fed properly, we barely slept and we were battered every day, so in the end, everyone only looked out for themselves because if you didn't, the days would only be more painful."

Cas felt Gadreel bristle and he had to admit he was rather tense himself. No wonder Hannah was terrified of everyone and everything. Who killed pups so brutally?

Hannah startled and shrunk in on herself when Gadreel growled and Cas quickly shot the alpha a glare.

Gadreel grimaced and glanced over to the cowering Hannah.

"Apologies. That was not aimed at you. Nobody deserves to go through what you have; to endure what you've had done to you. I'm deeply sorry for your losses."

Hannah glanced away, a tear rolling down her cheek and Gadreel's face softened.

"I promise no harm will come to you here. You are under our protection and no one will lay a claw on you. You are safe."

Hannah nodded wordlessly and Cas' heart broke at seeing the other omega in such distress. Cautiously, he pressed into her side and at first she tensed, but when she saw who had leaned into her, she began to relax and ever so slightly shifted into him.

"You are welcome here for as long as you wish to stay," murmured Cas, daring to nuzzle her ear gently. "We will never treat you cruelly or use you in such abhorrent ways. You won't get hurt here."

Hannah hesitated before slowly pressing her head into Castiel's fur and the male omega nearly whined when he felt her cool tears trailing down his skin.

Gadreel glanced at him, a pained expression dancing behind his eyes and Cas returned the gaze. How could anyone ever treat another person so vilely?

"I miss my mate," came Hannah's small voice and Gadreel and Cas stopped cold in their tracks.

"...Are they... still with your pack?" Asked Castiel, a sense of dread settling over him when Hannah shook her head.
"We tried to escape," she whispered. "We tried to run in the middle of the night, when they were all sleeping, but they heard us. We couldn't lose them. There were five alphas and we knew if they caught us, I would be knotted by them, probably bred up by them so I wouldn't try to escape again and Balthazar... they'd just tear him apart. They might even have knotted him just to humiliate him because he was an alpha.

"They were fast and we didn't have much strength after being practically starved, and Balth was already battered from the last fight they'd picked with him. He fell and broke his leg and there was no way he could walk. He told me to leave him and I said I couldn't, but he just kept screaming at me to run. I tried to stay with him; I didn't want to leave him to die, but he snapped at me. He was desperate and started growling and baring his teeth at me. He almost bit my leg and he scared me so much that I leapt away from him.

"He told me he wouldn't stop snarling until I ran away. I didn't believe he would ever hurt me and I told him as much, but when I tried to go near him, he sank his teeth into my shoulder. There wasn't that much blood and he didn't hit anything important, but it hurt and it was enough to make me run. I remember him crying after me 'Don't look back', and I heard the alphas laugh when they found him."

Hannah choked on a sob. "He couldn't even fight back. I should've stayed with him, should've defended him."

Cas was horrified and he tugged Hannah closer, where she promptly broke down. She cried raggedly into his neck and Cas nuzzled her head comfortingly, whining at her devastated mantra of 'I want him back' and 'I need him'.

Gadreel however, looked absolutely livid. He didn't attempt to hide his furious snarls and Hannah risked a timid glance towards him.

"How dare they," seethed Gadreel. "How can anyone be so sadistic?"

At Hannah's wide, fearful eyes, Gadreel managed to stamp down on some of his fury.

"I'm so sorry," he murmured sadly. "I'm so terribly sorry for what has happened to you. To both of you. No one should ever have to go through that. It's cruel and inhumane."

He gazed at her tear-stained face. "We will protect you here; I promise you that. You will be treated with the respect you deserve and you will eat as we do. Omegas are not considered lesser than alphas in this pack and you will be looked after. If you choose to leave once you are healed, we will not prevent you from doing so."

"But we'll never kick you out either," murmured Cas, licking her head gently and Hannah glanced between them both before snuggling closer to Cas.

"Thank you," she whispered, voice full of emotion and sincere gratitude. "To both of you."

Cas and Gadreel were surprised when Hannah carefully moved to Castiel's other side until she was between them both, before cuddling back into the black and tan omega once more. She offered a shy, watery smile to Gadreel and the alpha felt his protective instincts boot up, and before he knew what he was doing, he was sandwiching Hannah between them both.

Hannah stiffened at first, but with an encouraging nuzzle from Castiel and a protective rumble from Gadreel, the omega relaxed and settled between them, briefly nuzzling at the alpha in appreciation.

Castiel chuckled when Gadreel puffed his chest out, clearly pleased at having made Hannah a little more comfortable, and the pair shared a knowing glance as they remembered a time when they'd
been in a similar situation; the cold seeping into Cas' body, making him seek comfort from an all too willing Gadreel.

Indulging in one last amused smile, Cas eventually nudged the other omega.

"Come on. Let's catch up with the pack. I'm sure they're wondering what's going on."

Chapter End Notes

3 chapters in 3 days?! Guys, I am on a roll here! Hope you enjoyed the latest update and poor Hannah's tragic backstory :(
Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It took the pack ten days to find a spot they were happy to set up temporary camp in. They hollowed out a few bushes or created their own shelters out of the few thick branches strewn over the ground. The ground was slightly muddy and the grass brown in some patches, but it would do. It was big enough to house all of them at least.

Ben however, glanced around the flowerless clearing and his face fell. His mother hadn't followed them. That night he crawled between Cas and Dean and fell into a restless sleep.

Gabriel waited for everyone to collapse into unconsciousness before rummaging around in his leather bag and carefully pulling out the slightly worse for wear bulb. The shoot was beginning to wilt slightly and Gabriel bit his lip. He really hoped it would pick up again soon.

He crept to the centre of the camp and dug a small hole before gently placing the bulb inside. He poured some water over it from his water bottle and placed a few small rocks around it to protect it from the wind and any vermin or birds, before sneaking back to his shelter.

The next day was spent cleaning up the camp and adding the finishing touches to any hastily made shelters, whilst Dean and Sam led the rest of the pack on a hunt. Ben remained miserable and broken hearted.

The small shoot went unnoticed.

In the early hours of the next morning, Gabriel crept over to Cas and Dean's shelter and whispered Ben's name.

"Ben. Ben wake up."

The pup blinked awake sleepily.

"...Gabe?"

Gabriel grinned. "Found something I think you're gonna like."

Ben frowned.

"Can't it wait til morning?"

Gabriel shook his head.

"What?" He asked and under the moonlight Gabriel could tell he'd been crying.

"C'mon. This way," he murmured and the pup trudged after him.

Then his eyes landed on the single snowdrop not quite fully bloomed in the centre of the camp and it was as though someone had just pulled the stars from the sky for him.
"Mom?" Ben breathed, looking to Gabriel for confirmation and the alpha grinned at him, heart warming when the omega's face lit up with delight.

Ben carefully nosed at the young flower and Gabriel melted into a little puddle of goo when the pup lay down in front of it, beaming ecstatically and tail wriggling.

"Hi, Mom," he murmured. "I guess you found us afterall." He glanced at the older alpha. "Just like Gabe said you would."

Gabriel smiled warmly and gave the pup some privacy.

A few minutes later he looked over to find Ben curling up and closing his eyes, nose nearly touching the tiny flower and the alpha blinked in surprise.

"Don't you want to go back to Cas and Dean?" He asked quietly and Ben shook his head.

"I'm fine here, thank you," he yawned and Gabriel contemplated informing Cas and Dean of Ben's whereabouts, or picking the sleepy pup up and carrying him back to his adopted family.

In the end, he sighed softly and crept over to Ben, curling around him to keep him warm. Ben smiled and snuggled into him, licking his muzzle once in gratitude.

"Thanks for showing me, Gabe," whispered Ben as he closed his eyes and began to drift away, and Gabriel quirked his lips as he wrapped a protective paw around the pup's middle.

"No problem, kid." Then he too, fell asleep.

A little distance away, three wolves stood watching the scene. One of them was smiling, one of them looked to be reconsidering his opinion of a certain golden alpha, and the final one felt his heart ache with affection he'd assumed he'd never experience again.

The first two wolves retired to sleep once more, curling around the pup remaining in their shelter, but the last one lingered a little longer. His gaze roamed over Gabriel's body and an amused yet fond smile tugged at his lips at the alpha's floppy ear. Memories of their time together looped in his mind and he felt drawn to Gabriel. He wanted to bury his nose in the alpha's throat, to snuggle into him and be held by him. He wanted to scent Gabriel, to lick and nuzzle him like he once had in a meadow.

He paused as he realised how hard he'd fallen for the quirky alpha. There was no way this could end well. Yet the sensations in his chest said otherwise. They urged him to confess his feelings for Gabriel, told him he could have his happy ending, but he knew it would only result in a shattered heart. He'd lost two mates now; love was clearly not meant for him. Maybe he was cursed. Maybe those whom he loved were cursed too.

He couldn't bear another tragedy. He couldn't go through another heart break.

He sighed softly and turned away.

* * *

"Gabe! Gabe! Wake up!"
Gabriel groaned at the thing tugging on his ear.

"Five more minutes," he huffed, searching for his warm, cuddly pup. He frowned when he couldn't find it.

"Get up, Sleepyhead! You've got to see this!"

"Just a few more minutes," Gabriel grumbled, curling in on himself and ignoring Ben's annoyed huff.

"Gabe... I think you should see this," came a stunned voice that sounded distinctly like Sam and Gabriel opened his eyes to find himself surrounded by a gaggle of balky wolves.

"What the heck?" He said, sitting upright as he scrunched his nose up in confusion. Then he followed their gazes and his eyes widened.

"I guess Mom likes you!" Grinned Ben and sure enough, surrounding Gabriel was a perfect ring of pristine snowdrops, all evenly spaced and in full bloom - and Gabriel knew for a fact they hadn't been there last night.

Right in the centre of the ring was the young snowdrop Gabriel had planted, looking the same as it had the previous evening.

Gabriel blinked as Ben scampered around the ring excitedly.

"You were right! You said she'd follow us and she did!" He chirped and Gabriel startled when the pup bowled into his chest.

"You're the best, Gabe," he grinned and Gabriel opened his mouth to say something, anything, but no words were forthcoming and Ben was already chasing Samandriel around the ring of snowdrops.

The other wolves gaped at Gabriel; each wondering how on Earth he'd managed to achieve this apparent miracle and even Sam, Dean and Cas, who knew of Gabriel's plot to plant the first snowdrop, were glancing at one another in bewilderment. They knew Gabriel had nothing to do with the strange ring.

Ever so slowly, Gabriel looked up.

He stared at the clouds for a few moments, gaze wary and when nothing happened he licked his lips.

"Lisa?" He mouthed silently and the other wolves must have caught it because one by one they subtly glanced to the sky, each looking uncertain or nervous.

There was a tense silence, but when there were no lightning flashes or trees snapping in half or floods crashing over the land, the Winchester pack turned to one another, unsure, before quietly returning to whatever they were supposed to be doing.

Dean gulped and shared a look with Cas, who had his lips parted slightly as if lost for words and the pair glanced to Gabriel, who didn't have an explanation either.

Dean nodded stiffly and paced away, Cas trotting after him silently.

Sam and Gabriel glanced at one another and the alpha carefully stepped out of the ring, making sure not to trod on any of the flowers, and hastily joined Sam. They stared at the ring for a few moments, but when nothing continued to happen, they slowly turned away and began to chat.
The young snowdrop in the centre of the ring quietly bloomed.

* * *

Sam and Gabriel were not subtle in their longing gazes towards one another and their fond smiles filled with affection.

At least, Samandriel and Ben didn't think so.

"When you were curled up with Uncle Gabe the other night, Sam was staring at him for ages," said Samandriel. "He just stood there smiling with these soppy goo-goo eyes."

Ben shook his head. "And yesterday, Gabe was too busy watching Sam to have a clue what your dad was saying to him. Cas had to repeat everything again because he wasn't listening."

Samandriel rolled his eyes. "Have you seen the way they look at each other when they're together? They're always glancing at each other's mouths or standing really close to one another or licking their own lips."

"And they always get really happy to see each other," huffed Ben. "All the time. They should just kiss already. Gabe's old and lonely and Sam needs someone who'll take care of him after what Ruby did. They're perfect for each other."

Samandriel nodded. "It's obvious they both like each other so why haven't they got together yet?"

Ben shrugged. "Adults are weird. They like to make things harder for themselves. Remember how long it took your dad and Dean to get together?"

Samandriel scrunched his nose up. "You're right. I thought they were never going to kiss." Suddenly Samandriel's eyes blew wide as if an epiphany had struck him.

"Hey! What if we try to get them together?"

Ben raised an eyebrow. "Sam and Gabe?"

Samandriel nodded excitedly. "Yeah, y'know like in the movies where someone tries to get their two friends to go out on a date without them knowing it."

Ben shook his head. "I've never watched a movie."

Samandriel looked scandalised. "First thing we're doing when we go to the city is watching a movie."

Ben grinned at his friend. That sounded fun.

"So we're going to trick Sam and Gabe into going on a date?" He asked.

"We'd only be helping them get together," said Samandriel eagerly. "In the movies, when people kiss, they get these... feelings and they realise that they were meant to be together all along. Maybe if we get Sam and Uncle Gabe to kiss, they'll realise they're meant to be together."

Both pups' tails began to wag.
"Do you think they'll be happy then?" Asked Ben and Samandriel nodded.

"Yeah. In every movie, when the couple fall in love they're super happy and it's like all their worries have disappeared. It's kinda like magic."

Ben looked intrigued by the concept. "When people fall in love they never get sad anymore?"

Samandriel thought about this for a few moments. "Well... maybe they get sad sometimes, but it's rare."

Ben nodded with a grin. Gabe definitely deserved to be happy, and so did Sam.

"Okay, let's do it. Let's get Sam and Gabe to kiss."

* * *

"Sam, Gabe needs help! He needs mouth-to-mouth!" Yelled Ben.

They were playing one of their favourite games again. The one where one of them pretended to be Alistair attempting to kill pups and the others were Dean, Sam and Gadreel leaping in to save the day.

Gabriel was playing the part of Dean, which amused Sam for some reason and the girls were both playing Alistair, reasoning that as they were smaller, two of them had to play the part. Sam, Ben and Samandriel were each playing themselves.

The chocolate omega raised an eyebrow.

"I don't remember that part," he said as Gabriel frowned and tried to get up only for Samandriel to push him back down insistently.

"We added it in," said Ben hastily. "Because we haven't got a Jody. Someone needs to save 'Dean'."

Claire tilted her head. "...I can be Jody if you want?"

Samandriel shook his head frantically. "You can't be! You said you wanted to be Alistair."

"Yeah, but if we haven't got- "

"Sam, hurry up, he's dying!" Interrupted Ben, making Claire and Alex glance at one another in confusion.

"Alright, alright," said Sam in amusement before trotting over to Gabriel and placing his paws over his chest. He pretended to perform CPR without leaning anywhere near his muzzle.

Ben and Samandriel watched on, puzzled.

"That's not mouth-to-mouth," Samandriel murmured slowly and Sam shook his head.

"No, it's called CPR. If you ever think someone's heart has stopped, this is what you do. Mouth-to-mouth isn't necessary when you do this and not to mention it's pretty dangerous too." He paused. "Maybe we should teach you pups how to do it. You could save a life. What do you think, Gabe?"
The golden alpha nodded. "Don't see why not. Gonna have to learn at some point."

Alex and Claire shot the other two pups a dirty glare as they were made to sit in front of Sam and Gabriel as the pair taught them what to do in an emergency. Samandriel and Ben ducked their heads in shame upon realising they'd caused the girls to endure what turned out to be a two hour lesson and when it was over, the boys slunk away, tails between their legs and heads low.

Well, that hadn't gone to plan.

* * *

A couple of days later, the pups tried again, and this time they let Claire and Alex in on their scheme. The girls were excited by the idea of trying to set Gabriel and Sam up together, but the boys had a feeling it was because they just liked to cause trouble for the adults.

They were playing another game. The one where Sam and Gabe were the mated evil villains who didn't like pups and so far, things had been going pretty well. The pups decided to put their plan into action.

Claire was captured by Sam and as Gabriel released a victory whoop, Alex stared at them.

"That's not what mates do when they get excited," she stated and Sam quirked his lips in amusement as he trapped Claire between his paws.

"Don't they? Are we not allowed to get excited?"

Alex shook her head. "Yeah, but you've got to act like mates."

Gabriel smirked. "Oh? And what do mates do?"

"Soppy stuff. Like hugging and nuzzling," replied Alex, her nose scrunched up as Claire's tail began to wiggle.

"And kissing. All mates kiss when they're happy."

Sam's smile dimmed. "...Huh?"

Alex had to hide her glee. "Yeah. When mates get excited, they kiss."

Gabriel paused. "...Well, yeah, but Sam and I aren't really mates, so..."

"You are in the game," Ben pointed out.

"Which means you have to do mate stuff," announced Alex. "So kiss."

A small frown wormed its way onto Sam's face.

"Guys, it's not really appropriate. Who we choose to kiss is... special. Kissing is meant for someone you really care about."

"...Don't you care about Uncle Gabe?" Asked Samandriel, looking put out and Sam sighed, meticulously ensuring he didn't meet Gabriel's gaze.
"Of course I care about your uncle. He's one of my best friends. But kissing is... different. It's for a different kind of caring."

Neither adult was looking at one another and Claire raised an eyebrow.

"...It's only acting. You're happy to pretend to hate pups, but not kiss? I don't get it."

Sam and Gabriel hesitated. When you put it that way...

Gabriel shook his head.

"It's... personal. Kissing is different to pretending."

Alex feigned realisation. "Wait, guys. I get it. They're scared. They're scared of not doing it right, that's why they keep coming up with excuses."

The other three pups blinked as if in understanding.

"Oh, that makes sense," said Ben. "Sorry, we didn't know. Never mind. You don't have to do it if you don't think you can do it right."

Gabriel balked as Sam flushed pink.

"...Now wait just a minute," stuttered Gabe but Claire was smiling at him in amusement.

"It's okay. You don't have to. We can just pretend you know how to do it."

Gabriel frowned as Sam's jaw opened and closed wordlessly.

"Fine," huffed Gabriel before stalking up to Sam and, to the pups' delight, licking the omega sweetly on the muzzle.

They grinned when Sam leaned into him slightly and turned to gently lick at the alpha's muzzle, and for a second their gazes met and the pups were so sure they were going to confess their love for one another with heartfelt declarations and emotional tears.

Except, nothing happened.

Gabriel merely turned away from Sam with a huff and trudged back to his previous spot. Sam let him leave before glancing at the pups.

"Shall we continue?" He asked, expression growing puzzled at the looks of defeat he received.

"What?"

Samandriel shook his head. "Nothing," he mumbled as Ben sighed.

Why hadn't it worked? Once they kissed they were supposed to fall madly in love and they were supposed to happy forever. They were supposed to figure out that they were made for each other; that they were destined to be mates.

So why hadn't there been any sparks or confessions of love? All the movies said that was how love worked. True love did, anyway.

Ben glanced at Samandriel worriedly and the alpha was immediately thinking along the same lines.

What if Gabriel and Sam weren't meant for one another?
Samandriel's mouth turned downwards. That couldn't be true because the way they looked at each other was enough to rival Cas and Dean's sappy staring and those two were definitely made for one another.

Yet, the little alpha couldn't help but wonder if maybe Sam and Gabriel were too different to be a match. What if the Angels didn't want them to be together?

Samandriel scowled. No. His uncle deserved to be happy and Sam definitely made him happy. Maybe they would just have to try something a little more subtle next time. Maybe the surroundings weren't right. After all, hadn't his father and Dean shared their first kiss when they were alone; away from the camp and everyone in it? Maybe Gabriel and Sam just needed some alone time.

He kept his thoughts to himself as they continued the game and later on, when Sam and Gabriel had left to attend to boring adult matters, Samandriel rounded up the other pups and relayed his next plan.

* * *

"Gabe, Sam told us to tell you to meet him tonight, on the little hill just North of here. He said you won't miss it and make sure to come when everyone's asleep," said Ben. Claire and Alex had got themselves into quite a bit of trouble with Jody when they'd wandered so far away from camp to find a spot for their victims to meet, but if they pulled this off, all the pups agreed it would be worth it.

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. "When did he tell you this?"

"This afternoon," lied Ben. "Sounds like he has something really important to tell you."

Gabriel cocked his head curiously. "Alright, thank you. Now you should be asleep, it's way past your bedtime, Mister."

Ben nodded, tail wiggling. "Okay," he said as he bounded off towards Cas and Dean's shelter, where Samandriel was patiently waiting for him.

"Did he believe it?" Asked Samandriel and Ben nodded excitedly.

"Did Sam?"

Samandriel grinned. "Yup."

The pups smirked before crawling into their shelter and curling around one another. Dean and Castiel wouldn't be in for another couple of hours at least, so Samandriel wrapped his paws around Ben as the omega pressed his head under his chin and they snuggled into one another contentedly before drifting off into the land of dreams.

* * *

Once everyone had fallen asleep, Gabriel crept out of his bush and slunk away from the camp. After ten minutes, he spotted the hill Ben had informed him of and sure enough, upon it stood a curious Sam.
Gabriel smiled. The moonlight shining off Sam's coat made it seem as if the omega was glowing and Gabriel hadn't realised Sam could look any more beautiful than he already did, but here was the proof.

He trotted up the hill and greeted the omega quietly.

Sam was gazing at him fondly and the tender look made Gabriel's pulse pick up. He wondered what the omega wanted to discuss with him.

"So what was it you wanted to talk about?" Asked Sam and Gabriel paused.

"...I thought you had something you wanted to tell me?" He asked and Sam frowned.

"What? No, Samandriel said you wanted to meet me here because you had something important on your mind."

Gabriel raised an eyebrow.

"Funny, Ben said the same thing about you."

They shared a knowing look.

"I think we've been set up," sighed Sam. "Again."

Gabriel chuckled. "So it's not just me who's noticed all the ways they've been trying to get us to kiss."

Sam grinned. "My favourite was the mouth-to-mouth one."

Gabriel shook his head in amusement and settled down, glancing at Sam affectionately when the omega came to lie by his side. They gazed up at the hundreds of twinkling stars blanketing the dark sky above them.

"I don't know. This one's missing a few candles but other than that, it's pretty romantic," hummed Gabriel.

Sam huffed out a laugh and without thinking, leaned into the alpha.

"Why are they so intent on getting us together?" Asked Sam, eyes drinking in the inspiring sky and Gabriel shrugged.

"Who knows? Kids like causing trouble for adults. It's a known fact."

Sam rolled his eyes. "No, you liked causing trouble for adults, as your many childhood stories have told me."

Gabriel grinned. "Don't tell me you never liked pulling a prank or two on Bobby or your father."

Sam hesitated and Gabriel's grin grew wider.

"Okay, maybe I pulled a couple on Bobby when I was really little, but most of them I saved for my brother," huffed Sam before his expression dimmed slightly. "My dad didn't really tolerate that kind of stuff."

Gabriel's smile faded a little and he shifted into the omega.
"No offence, but after everything you've told me about your dad, I'd say you're definitely better off without him. The whole pack is."

Sam sighed softly. "I keep telling myself that, but in the end, he's still my dad and sometimes... I miss him."

Gabriel's expression was full of sympathy as he nuzzled Sam's head comfortingly.

"I get it," he said quietly. "My brothers are jerks, but it doesn't mean I don't miss them sometimes. I grew up with them; they practically raised me, and abandoning them gets a little hard sometimes."

They returned their gazes to the stars.

"Do you ever get lonely, Gabe?" Asked Sam softly and Gabriel smiled humourlessly. He was forty-five, had lost the only home he'd ever known, had been bullied as a child and teenager for having the 'wrong scent for an alpha', had been cheated on by his mate, had left all his friends in the city, and was now trying to adapt to a life he knew nothing of, with a pack he was supposed to be rivals with.

"More than you know," murmured Gabriel and Sam rested his head on his paws glumly.

There was a tension between them; each of them waiting for something to happen, anything. What had happened in the meadow between them was still undiscussed and the more time that passed, the harder it was to bring up, despite them both being deeply attracted to one another.

They both had their insecurities and it made them hesitate whenever they got too close to one another; made them stop and think of all the reasons pursuing another relationship would be a bad idea and the loaded tension between them would once again go unresolved.

Gabriel wanted so desperately to just lean over and kiss Sam; a sweet lick on his muzzle, one that meant something, not a pretend one like in the game with the pups, yet he couldn't bring himself to do it. Sam had been through so much heartbreak in his short life and Gabriel didn't want to pressure the omega into feeling like he had to move on from his previous mates so quickly (even if Ruby had been poison). The omega needed time to fix himself; to sort out all the confusing emotions in his mind before he attempted another relationship and Gabriel wasn't going to rush him.

Not to mention he was fifteen years Sam's senior. Sam deserved someone his age; someone who would be able to keep up with him and fill his days with fun and happiness. He didn't need an old alpha mutt who came with sacks upon sacks of issues and heartache.

Gabriel slowly glanced away from the gorgeous omega. He doubted Dean would be too happy if he started knotting his brother anyway. Remaining as friends with Sam was the best option here.

Little did he know, Sam was lost in his own thoughts.

It was clear his crush on Gabriel had developed far further than he had ever imagined. The alpha was everything he could've ever dreamed of; smart, witty, fun, protective... the list was endless. Yet he couldn't bring himself to admit his feelings to the alpha.

He had so many problems; so many issues and messed up thoughts about how he was supposed to act and be treated by alphas that there was no way he could be any good for Gabriel. Not to mention he seemed to be cursed. Every time he attempted a relationship, his partners seemed to be doomed to either die or turn completely psychotic. Maybe he was that repulsive, he made them psychotic.

And he was built wrong for an omega. Everybody who met him always thought he was an alpha until they scented him and like Ruby said, why would any alpha want an omega who was stronger
or bigger than they were? It might be a novelty at first, but eventually Gabriel would probably grow weary of him and his size and Sam would suffer yet another heartbreak.

Sam closed his eyes miserably. He didn't want to lose Gabriel, but there was no way he could subject the alpha to a relationship with someone as broken as he was. It would be better if they just stayed friends.

Unknowingly coming to the same conclusion, the pair remained silent, even if they didn't move away from one another. If this was the closest they could get to one another, then they were going to take it.

Eventually, they began to chat about the new camp and the move. They even discussed the snowdrop, which Sam thanked Gabriel for because he'd made Ben so happy. They didn't talk about the other snowdrops that had appeared, but maybe that was for the best.

After a couple of hours they began to find their eyes growing heavier and it wasn't long before they fell asleep pressed into one another.

Chapter End Notes

A pup-centric chapter! Hope you enjoyed! (And how stubborn are Sam and Gabe?)
Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Hannah watched Gadreel curiously. It was well past midnight and yet the alpha was still wide awake and glancing around the camp, ears twitching and nose wiggling every so often.

She padded outside quietly and came to a halt a few feet away.

"What are you doing?" She asked softly, lowering her gaze shyly when the alpha turned to her.

Gadreel observed her silently.

"Watching for trouble," he said eventually and Hannah risked a glance at him. He didn't seem offended by her questioning.

She nodded and lowered her gaze once more. She wasn't sure what the protocol was for omegas addressing alphas and now she thought about it, this was the first time she'd spoken to anyone without Castiel by her side.

She backed up a little.

Gadreel caught the movement and tilted his head.

"You don't have to be afraid of me," he said. "I promise you're safe."

Hannah didn't dare meet his gaze. She'd been given that reassurance before and she'd ended up sore in places she didn't even know she had. She didn't trust any assurance of safety offered by an alpha.

Alphas had killed her mate.

Gadreel noticed her distrust and he looked away, pretending to be focused on something else.

"Why are you up so late? Can't you sleep?" He asked and he was surprised when Hannah glanced up at him fearfully.

"I'm sorry, alpha. I didn't mean to-"

"Woah. I'm not scolding you," soothed Gadreel. "I was merely curious."

Hannah glanced away in embarrassment as she shuffled her paws.

"My dreams are haunted with my mate's screams," she admitted, voice barely above a whisper and Gadreel's face fell in sympathy. He knew what it was like to have nightmares of a mate; except his were usually of them leaving him to die.

"I see," he murmured. "...Would you like to discuss them? Or maybe talk about your mate?"

Hannah shook her head. She'd only bore the alpha anyway and bored alphas did awful things, especially to omegas.

Gadreel nodded in understanding. "Well, if you ever need to talk, you know where I am."
Hannah nodded, eyes still trained on the floor. Gadreel sighed after a few moments and Hannah internally panicked because had she angered the alpha? Was he going to force her to present to him? Would he beat her?

She was surprised when Gadreel lay down.

"I can see you don't trust me," he said unhappily and Hannah felt her body begin to shake. She had angered him.

Gadreel raised an eyebrow. "I'm not going to hurt you, Hannah," he said quietly. "Your pack's treatment of you infuriates me. They have caused you considerable trauma and I can only hope to show you that this pack is nothing like the one you have originated from. We are not like those who abused you so horrifically."

Hannah slowly allowed her gaze to raise and when her eyes met Gadreel's kind, patient ones, she felt her body cease its cowering. This alpha seemed warmer than the ones in her old pack, more gentle somehow.

Gadreel offered her an encouraging smile when she didn't shy away, before tilting his head.

"Would you like to accompany me?" He asked. "Since you can't sleep, we might as well converse. Or you can watch the stars if you prefer; they might make you drowsy."

Hannah hesitated. Usually alphas weren't so subtle if they wanted a quick knot, but Gadreel's words didn't seem to contain any hidden meanings and Hannah briefly wondered if maybe the alpha was being genuine in his offer.

"Okay," she said cautiously before lying down a couple of feet away from Gadreel. The alpha merely smiled and continued observing the camp.

They sat in silence for a few minutes and Hannah was slightly confused why Gadreel hadn't tried anything with her yet. If she had been in her own pack, she'd have been forced to present by now.

"How are your wounds?" Asked Gadreel quietly, snapping Hannah from her musings and the omega paused.

"Fine." Alphas didn't like omegas who complained. That sort of behaviour warranted punishment.

Gadreel eyed her oddly. "How are they really?" He asked and Hannah blinked.

"...They ache a little," she confessed upon realising Gadreel wanted a truthful answer.

Gadreel frowned concernedly. "I'll ensure we obtain some painkillers when we venture into the city."

Hannah glanced over to him. "...You don't need to go to all that trouble for me." She didn't want to be a burden on the pack. She didn't want any more punishments.

"It's no trouble," commented Gadreel before meeting her gaze. "Like I said previously, you will be looked after here. We don't tolerate suffering amongst individual members of the pack."

"...You're very kind," Hannah murmured softly and Gadreel's expression folded into one of sympathy.

"You're very brave," he replied. "To have faced all you have. You deserve kindness."
Hannah's eyes widened slightly. She was unaccustomed to compliments.

"Thank you," she mumbled and Gadreel shot her a small smile before they both returned their gazes to the stars.

"...Does Dean ask you to keep watch over the pack every night?" Hannah asked after a little while and Gadreel shook his head.

"No, but he does often try to watch over it himself and it means he doesn't always rest. I offered to help keep watch if it would let him sleep sometimes."

Hannah tilted her head. "That's thoughtful of you."

Gadreel quirked his lips at her. "It's my job anyway. I'm just extending my hours." He glanced to the shelter he knew Dean to be resting in. "Besides, Dean needs a break. He does so much to keep us safe and healthy, yet he still blames himself for every detail that goes wrong. He has a habit of mentally punishing himself for things he has no way of anticipating and he thinks if he works harder, he would be better at protecting us even if we all know he's doing everything he can and more."

"You really care for him," observed Hannah and Gadreel offered her a sad smile.

"The Winchester brothers and their pack saved my life."

Hannah fell silent as Gadreel turned away again, but it was clear she was curious. She wondered if the alpha would grow irritated with her line of personal questioning.

Gadreel didn't seem the hot-headed type.

"What happened?" She whispered, looking ready to bolt if Gadreel so much as glared at her.

"To me?" He asked without a trace of annoyance and Hannah slowly relaxed as she nodded.

The alpha shifted into a more comfortable position as he turned to face her and she found the gesture oddly welcoming. It was... strange to have the full attention of an alpha who didn't seem to want to hurt her. She was used to being treated as less than a person, which meant her opinions were dismissed and her feelings ignored. To her old pack, she was an object to be used and thrown away when they grew bored of her.

Gadreel actually listened to her questions without judgement. He didn't tell her to leave; didn't growl at her or demand she do things in that alpha tone. He treated her like he would any member of his pack and he was open about answering her questions. His voice was soft and soothing and his eyes warm and in a few ways, he reminded her of Balthazar. They were both kind and thoughtful and they treated her with respect despite her being an omega.

She had to hold back a tear at the reminder of her mate.

"I was leader of the Milton pack for a decade. We were a fairly small pack, but we had few enemies and we were happy enough," began Gadreel. "I had a mate named Bella and two pups; Rose and Zeke, one five, the other eight. They were my world; everything I did was for them. My job was to keep my family safe and my pack was my family.

"One Winter, during a freak blizzard, we were struggling to find food. We'd been searching for nearly two weeks and we couldn't find a single scrap. My pack were weak and all the pups starving, but there was nothing we could do. Then, by some miracle, we stumbled across a den of foxes. Just as we were about to flush them out, another pack ambushed us. They too were hungry and this was
the only food any of us could find.

"Their pack greatly outnumbered ours and we were quickly defeated. We tried to retreat, but their leader wanted to make sure we would never interfere with them again and he attacked me. A couple of their alphas joined in and I remember there being so much agony and blood..." Gadreel closed his eyes, mind trapped in memories. He shook his head to clear it.

"They tore into my back and sliced into my sides. They broke two of my legs and left a gaping hole in my stomach. Then they killed the foxes and left.

"There was no way I could move and I knew the pack didn't have the supplies to keep me alive, so I told them to leave me. If I didn't bleed out first, I'd die of starvation or hypothermia anyway, so I told them to take what chances they had and run."

Gadreel glanced at his paws almost bitterly.

"I just didn't expect them to leave without saying goodbye," he murmured. "Nobody said a word to me. They just turned away and... left. Bella barely looked at me and she dragged our pups away without giving me a chance to tell them I loved them." He closed his eyes, pain clear on his face. "I... I don't understand what I did wrong..."

He cleared his throat suddenly, as if only just realising who his company was.

"The next day I was confused to find myself alive. Turns out the cold was slowing my blood flow and preventing me from bleeding out. I resigned myself to a slow death and waited for four hours only for the two leaders of the Winchester pack to stumble across me. I was certain they would kill me, especially when they asked for my name. They knew I was leader of another pack and as you know, that usually warrants death, especially in such abhorrent conditions.

"You can imagine my surprise when they supported me between them and took me to their medic. Not only that, but a couple of days later they realised my wounds were far more extensive than they had initially realised and they escorted me to a hospital in the nearest city. They knew nothing about me yet they were still willing to offer such effort to heal me. My own pack had left me to die yet the Winchesters were risking themselves and their pack to save a potentially hostile head alpha.

"Then, after weeks of nursing my wounds and using their supplies on me, they gave me two options: leave and find my own way in the world, or renounce my title as lead alpha and stay with their pack."

Gadreel flicked his gaze over to Hannah. "It wasn't a difficult choice."

Hannah felt her heart ache for the poor alpha in front of her. He'd suffered a great ordeal in being abandoned by his pack and he'd lost his mate and pups in the process. His whole family had left him to die without so much as a 'thanks for looking after us' and yet, Gadreel had carried on. He was obviously fiercely loyal to the Winchester pack and he had managed to create a new life for himself despite all that had been inflicted upon him.

This alpha was incredibly strong.

"...How did you keep going?" Asked Hannah quietly. "How did you force yourself to get up every day after everything that happened?"

Gadreel looked at her in understanding.

"Because I was given a second chance. Not everyone gets one and I wasn't going to waste mine."
Hannah caught his gaze. She had been given a second chance, much in the same way he had. She had never imagined a life without her mate, but maybe she would have to. Balthazar had made it possible for her to keep going, even if it had meant sacrificing his own life in the process and there was no way she would let her beloved mate die in vain.

If Gadreel could make a new life, then so could she.

She offered the alpha a genuine smile of gratitude and Gadreel nodded graciously.

"I'm going to get some rest," she said, suddenly feeling a little more confident around Gadreel and the alpha seemed to notice because he quirked a grin.

"Goodnight, Hannah," he murmured and she smiled again before retreating back to her sleeping quarters.

Tomorrow was a new day.

* * *

Dean licked Cas' head adoringly, one paw draped over his lover's middle. Cas settled into him as he tugged two exhausted pups into his chest and nuzzled them contentedly.

Samandriel and Ben grinned up at Cas sleepily, giggling when Dean nosed at their exposed bellies. They batted at his muzzle in weak protest before yawning and curling into Cas' warm fur.

"Night, Dad. Night, Dean," hummed Samandriel as Ben snuggled into him and both adults smiled at the heart-warming scene.

"Goodnight," whispered Castiel as he licked both pups sweetly on the cheek, Dean soon copying him and after a few moments, the two balls of fluff were snoring softly.

Cas nuzzled them gently, a sense of pride and love blossoming in his heart the longer he watched them and it wasn't long before Dean was licking his head again.

Cas closed his eyes. There was something soothing about the motion; something deeply comforting about being in the hold of his devoted alpha, with his two pups between his paws.

*Their* pups.

Despite Ben being adopted into their small family due to tragic circumstances, Castiel's omega instincts were insisting the pup was theirs. He liked to think Lisa would be happy about that; Dean was a fantastic father and Cas didn't think he'd done too bad of a job raising Samandriel so far.

Cas finally felt like he had a real family.

"You're so beautiful," murmured Dean, snapping Cas out of his musings. "I'm so lucky to have you, Angel."

Cas gazed at him tenderly. "I should be saying that about you."

Dean chuckled and tightened his grip around the omega as he licked his muzzle.
"My perfect family," he whispered as he and Cas rubbed noses. "I love you more than you could ever imagine."

Cas' heart was bursting with love and affection for the amazing alpha beside him. He loved this side of Dean; the side no one else got to see. This was the Dean that crept out of the shelter at five in the morning to pick bunches of flowers for Cas to wake up to. This was the Dean that led him up hills to watch the stars for hours on end as they talked about nothing and everything. This was the Dean that curled around Cas and wrapped a protective paw around the pups as they slept, keeping them all safe and happy.

This was the Dean Cas could imagine spending the rest of his life with.

He shifted into Dean and the alpha smirked in amusement even as he tugged Cas closer.

"Mine," he breathed, licking Cas' muzzle once more.

Cas turned slightly until he could lick Dean's muzzle and soon the two were sharing the equivalent of affectionate kisses.

"My omega," whispered Dean between kisses, "and my pups."

Castiel was beaming.

"Our alpha."

Dean couldn't help the pleased rumble he released and Cas wasn't inclined to protest. He pressed his head under Dean's chin, silently begging his lover to scent mark him and Dean was quick to oblige.

Dean seemed intent on kissing every part of his lover and Cas let out a soft whimper of approval as the alpha licked his cheek, muzzle, throat, jaw and anything else he could reach.

"You three belong to me," murmured Dean. "You're my family and no one will ever hurt you. You're mine to protect and care for. I'll always keep you safe."

Cas closed his eyes as Dean slowly licked his throat. The gesture was possessive and Castiel adored it.

"You're a great father, Dean," he whispered. "I know Lisa would think so too."

Dean faltered slightly at the name before leaning his head against his lover's.

"That means a lot," he admitted, nuzzling Cas' ear. "After the way Dad raised Sammy and me, I never thought..." He trailed off and Cas frowned.

"You're a wonderful father. Samandriel has been far happier since you came into our lives and so have I. We need you, Dean. All of us."

"And I need you," said Dean. "You three are the best things that have ever happened to me."

Cas smiled tenderly and licked his lover's cheek. He lay his head on the ground, delighted when Dean rested his head on his shoulders.

Their eyes flew open when tiny paws clambered over them and they both raised their heads to find Samandriel and Ben trying to squeeze between their bodies.

"We want to be next to you both," confessed Ben quietly and Dean's grin could have lit an entire
The adults shuffled apart just enough for the pups to settle between them and they curled around the tiny bundles of fur.

"Love you, Dad. Love you, Dean," whispered Samandriel when everything had gone quiet and Dean leaned over to lick the little alpha's cheek, heart melting when the pup licked his muzzle.

"Love you too, Samandriel," murmured Dean and the black and white pup smiled happily before snuggling back into the various blankets of fur surrounding him.

Cas was gazing at Dean in fond amusement and the alpha couldn't find it in himself to roll his eyes; there was absolutely nowhere else he'd rather be than with his lover and his pups, so he merely tugged Castiel closer and continued to lick the omega's muzzle, jaw and throat.

Eventually, Cas was lulled to sleep by Dean's gentle kisses, protective scent and possessive rumbling and the alpha smiled tiredly before falling asleep himself.

* * *

Sam groaned as pain flared throughout his body. He'd known this day was coming but he had forgotten about it after all the excitement of the past couple of months. It was late evening and his body had been aching all day, the pain slowly growing stronger and stronger until he'd had to retreat into his shelter for fear of attracting unwanted alpha or beta attention. When he'd limped away from the centre of the camp, he'd noticed a few curious glances and he didn't want to stick around for his hormones to kick in properly.

At the moment, his hole was aching and he could already feel slick dribbling between his thighs. He whined softly and tried to shift himself into a more comfortable position, but he knew in the next few hours things would only get worse. He needed a knot, or at least a fake one.

He shifted into human form and rummaged through his bag, grimacing when he pulled out a hard, plastic knot. It had been a long time since he'd had to use this monstrosity.

He pulled his long, bedraggled locks from his face (making a note to cut them later) and made a face as he used his own slick to lubricate the toy. He winced at the first thrust of the unforgiving plastic.

Still not certain if the knot would end up hurting him more than the heat was, Sam tried to relax and settled into a steady rhythm with the toy.

A couple of hours later saw Sam back in wolf form and whimpering as he curled in on himself. The knot had done its job and whilst his hole no longer ached, the heat was having other effects.

His stomach hurt and his brain felt like it had been set on fire. He was used to having a mate to help him through his heats and now he was alone, his body was protesting.

He wanted to be wrapped up in his mate's paws, being kept safe and taken care of as they nuzzled and licked one another. He wanted to bare his throat for his lover to mark, to inhale their scent and be warmed by their body.

He wanted his lover to knot him, to listen to their possessive growls and to feel their protective grip
around him. He wanted to prepare himself for breeding; wanted to have a pup that he could take care of with his mate.

His breath was shaky as he exhaled. He knew as the week dragged on, these urges would only grow stronger just as the pain would grow more agonising. He would have to confine himself to his shelter until the heat was over otherwise he may end up making a horrible mistake.

He forced his eyes closed. He might as well sleep if he couldn't do anything else.

After his body fighting with itself for another half an hour, Sam finally fell asleep.

He woke up four hours later, sweat coating his body and slick slathered over his legs. He vaguely wondered where the pitiful whimpering was coming from until he realised it was his own throat making the sounds and he whined at the fierce burning sensation in his lower half.

"Sam?" Came a familiar voice and the omega felt his blood turn cold.

Gabriel couldn't be here, not when he was in heat. Didn't the alpha know that? He didn't want to do anything he would regret later and presenting to Gabriel was high on the list of things he'd definitely regret. What if the alpha was overcome by hormones and knotted Sam without a second thought? How would they look one another in the eye once Sam's heat was over? What if Sam forced himself on Gabriel? What if they hurt one another because of hormones? What if they mated one another by accident?

What if Gabriel bred him up?

Turning pale at the thought, Sam tried to scrabble to the back of his shelter.

"Go away, Gabriel," he hissed. "You shouldn't be here!"

There was a pause.

"You were whimpering. You sounded like you were in a lot of pain. I just wanted to check how you were."

"I'm in heat, how do you think I am?" Snapped Sam. "Leave!"

Sam watched Gabriel's paws shuffle outside the entrance to the shelter.

"...Do you want me to help with that?"

Sam's eyes blew wide and mortified. Was Gabriel being serious?

"No!" He snarled, appalled. "Go back to sleep!"

"...That came out really wrong. I meant because my scent may help. Alpha scents are supposed to dull the intensity of a heat, right?"

Sam relaxed slightly. That didn't sound quite as bad as what he'd first assumed Gabriel's meaning to be.

"Oh... you'd better not. I... I don't know how my scent is going to affect you," he said. "Thank you for the offer though," he added as an afterthought.

"Don't worry about that, kiddo," called Gabriel. "Now would you be comfortable with me lying beside you or not? I know it sounds a little weird but it's better than being in pain, right?"
Sam frowned. "Gabe, I'm serious. My pheromones are pretty thick. I wouldn't like us to do anything we'd regret." He winced because had he really just insinuated he and Gabe would have sex if they were to go near one another?

"Trust me, I won't react to your scent," replied Gabriel. "Now can I help you or not?"

Frown deepening, Sam pulled a face.

"...Yeah," he said, because he was curious why Gabriel thought he wouldn't react to the scent of an omega in heat and he really was in pain.

Gabriel ducked his head through the entrance with a grin and Sam tensed automatically, waiting to see what the alpha would do.

However, Gabriel merely lay down and bared his throat.

Wary, Sam edged closer but when it was clear Gabriel really wasn't going to go into full alpha mode, the omega cautiously pressed his nose into the alpha's throat.

Gabriel chuckled when Sam whined in relief and pressed his nose further into his fur, inhaling deeply.

After a few minutes of allowing Sam to scent him, Gabriel glanced at the slick drenching the omega's legs.

"Let's get you cleaned up," he murmured and Sam watched him confusedly as he reached into the omega's bag and pulled out the packet of cleansing wipes most omegas carried for accidents like this.

Gently, Gabriel began to clean the slick from Sam's fur.

The omega watched him intently. His chest was aching again with a sense of... he wasn't sure what it was. But he knew he wasn't used to having an alpha's undivided attention on him in such an intense manner.

He should have been embarrassed, ashamed even at having Gabriel present for something so personal, but with the alpha so focused on looking after him, Sam couldn't find it in himself to care. Gabriel was being incredibly tender with him.

When Sam was as dry as he was going to get, Gabriel pulled out a small cloth from the bag and with a bottle of water, dampened the material before placing it on Sam's back.

He began cleaning the dried sweat from Sam's body and the omega closed his eyes at the sense of refreshment.

He shifted closer to Gabriel unconsciously as the fire in his brain dimmed slightly. For the moment it seemed content to let Gabriel take care of him, despite him not actually being Sam's mate.

When Gabriel was finally finished, Sam started to shake. His heat made his temperature swing wildly and the coolness from the cloth didn't help matters. Frowning, Gabriel slid closer to Sam and the omega immediately took the opportunity to press into him, tucking his head under the alpha's chin so he could scent him.

Gabriel carefully wrapped a paw around Sam and the omega closed his eyes happily. Gabriel was incredibly warm and his chocolate and hazelnut aroma was Heaven. Sam just wanted to roll in that smell forever.
He didn't care that Gabriel didn't have a 'normal' alpha scent; this was so much better.

Sam almost purred when Gabriel cautiously licked his head. It was a motion mothers or omegas usually performed with their pups to reassure them and since Sam was in quite a great deal of pain, Gabriel's offer of comfort was definitely appreciated.

Sam wriggled into the alpha and Gabriel continued to lick Sam's head soothingly until the omega was curled into him and dozing lightly. Gabriel smiled. He seemed to have succeeded in dulling the effects of Sam's heat.

With one last sweet lick (he couldn't quite believe Sam had allowed him to do that), Gabriel wrapped himself around the omega protectively and fell asleep.

* * *

This ritual of Gabriel curling around Sam and letting the omega scent him became a habit over the next five nights, and neither wolf was going to complain about it any time soon.

The other pack members grew suspicious (especially Dean, who bristled every time he saw Gabriel slinking out of Sam's shelter) but it was abundantly clear the pair's interactions were innocent; Gabriel wasn't showing the typical signs of a possessive alpha helping his omega through a heat and neither of them were vehemently protesting being apart through the daytime.

Yet, despite them not being sexually involved (a fact Dean was thankful for), Gabriel performed all the duties of an alpha taking care of his mate.

Whilst Sam was confined to his shelter, Gabriel would bring him food from their hunts, refill his water bottle, check up on him regularly, keep him company when no one else could venture near him and in the evenings, he would help dull his heat and allow the omega to rest.

It was actually rather endearing.

The heat was beginning to hit its peak and Gabriel chuckled as Sam scented him insistently. They were long past the awkwardness of being so close and Gabriel easily bared his throat for the omega, huffing in amusement when Sam immediately buried his nose into it, inhaling as deeply as possible.

"Smell so good,” murmured Sam and Gabriel had a feeling his hormones were beginning to cloud his judgement and therefore, his brain-to-mouth filter.

Gabriel opted not to say anything as the omega rubbed up against him, attempting to transfer the alpha's scent onto his fur, and eventually Sam was practically wrapped around the golden wolf, all sorts of contented rumbles and coos escaping his throat.

Gabe couldn't help but rub his chin over Sam's head. He rather liked the idea of his scent coating the omega and if it helped to alleviate some of Sam's pain, then where was the harm in it?

"Smell amazing," whispered Sam as he cuddled closer and Gabriel quirked a smile.

"You smell pretty sweet yourself, kiddo," murmured Gabriel. Sam was slipping into stereotypical omega behaviour as more hormones thundered through his body and now he was beginning to nuzzle submissively at Gabriel's throat, whimpering pathetically to make himself look more needy
and in need of a strong alpha to take care of him.

Had Sam been in his normal state of mind, he would have been mortified at his behaviour, but since he wasn't, he continued to throw himself at Gabriel.

The alpha, completely unaffected by the pungent scent of heat and knowing Sam would be disgusted by his own behaviour, merely lay down, tugging the omega with him.

"Okay, Samsquatch. Time to sleep."

Sam whined softly at Gabriel's immunity to his omega charm, but when the alpha opened his paws in invitation for the omega to snuggle between them, a happy grin lit his features and he pressed as close as he could to Gabe.

Gabriel took to licking his head again and Sam made a sound of contentment as he closed his eyes and snaked his paws around the smaller wolf.

"Do you really like my scent?" Yawned Sam and Gabriel chuckled. Sam was very affectionate during his heat.

"How could I not love the smell of strawberries?"

Sam smiled, pleased as he settled into Gabriel's chest. It was over an hour before either of them spoke again.

"How come you're not affected by my heat?" Asked Sam quietly and Gabriel blinked awake. He'd thought his companion was asleep but it seemed the omega was a little more alert now his heat had simmered down slightly.

"Suppressants," Gabriel mumbled by way of reply as he tried to tug Sam closer again. He rather liked having the younger wolf's head tucked under his.

The omega frowned. "What do you mean?"

Gabriel sighed. Sam wasn't going to budge until he got a proper answer.

"I take hormone suppressants twice a day so I don't go all alpha on you when I smell your heat."

Sam's eyes blew wide.

"What?" He gasped, mortified. "Gabriel, they're incredibly dangerous! You have no idea what they're doing to your body!"

Gabriel frowned confusedly. "I thought it would make you more comfortable. This way you can be sure you're safe and you won't have to worry about us doing anything we might regret."

Sam shook his head. "Where did you even get suppressants from?"

Gabriel shrugged. "I always carry them with me. Never know when you might bump into an omega in heat."

Sam tilted his head as he regarded Gabriel. So even when they'd first met and the alpha had been getting lucky with as many omegas in heat as he could find, he'd been taking suppressants to protect them? And now he was taking them to protect Sam?

Sam had never heard of an alpha as thoughtful and careful as Gabriel.
Still, he wouldn't let Gabriel damage his body for him. There had been rumours of alphas becoming infertile after clogging their insides up with suppressants, some had even developed organ failure as time went on.

"Stop taking them," ordered Sam. "They're not necessary and I don't want you facing any side effects."

Gabriel pulled a face. "If I stop, I don't know how I'll react to your heat."

"I don't care," huffed Sam. "It's not worth ruining your body. If it becomes a problem, we'll just have to keep apart until my heat's over."

Gabriel seemed unhappy with this idea.

"...Your heat will get worse if I leave."

Sam sighed. "I know, but I refuse to put you at risk. Please, promise me you won't take those suppressants again."

Gabriel hesitated but at Sam's pleading look, the alpha nodded defeatedly.

"I promise," he mumbled and Sam finally allowed himself a smile.

"Awesome," he hummed before settling down again and cuddling into Gabriel's body. He scented the alpha's neck and grinned; Gabriel really did have a fantastic smell.

The golden wolf raised an eyebrow.

"Sam... maybe this isn't the best idea. If you don't want me to take suppressants in the morning, it's probably not wise to be so... close to me."

Sam yawned. "Did you take suppressants earlier tonight?"

"...Yeah?"

"Then we'll be fine," huffed Sam. He really didn't want Gabriel to leave when the alpha was so warm and smelled so inviting. Besides, he trusted Gabriel; the alpha would never hurt him.

Gabriel didn't look too convinced.

"Kid, I really don't think that's a good-"

"We'll be fine, Gabe," interrupted Sam. "If it looks like anything's going to go wrong in the morning, I'll just kick you out. You'll probably be too sleepy to notice what's happened."

Gabriel pulled a face but eventually nodded.

"Don't kick too hard," he muttered, prompting a breath of laughter from Sam, and the two wrapped themselves around each other once more.

The last thing Sam felt before drifting off was Gabriel tightening his grip around his middle and gently nuzzling his head.

* * *
Gabriel woke up to a delicious smell. He wanted to bury his nose in the scent and leave it there forever.

It was still fairly dark out and he couldn't be bothered opening his eyes so he focused on his other senses. His paw was curled around something incredibly warm and soft and he smiled because he realised the wonderful scent was emanating from what was clearly an omega's body, which he just so happened to be holding. He had missed holding someone close.

Usually, by the time he woke up, his one-night stands had already disappeared back to wherever they had come from and he was left with a cold, empty space beside him, feeling more alone than ever. They didn't generally like to stay for post-coitus snuggles (which was a shame because Gabriel had been told he was a very cuddly sleeper).

Yet the omega beside him seemed very relaxed. In fact, it didn't look like they had any intention of leaving him within the next few hours and Gabriel's tail wriggled at that because he really wanted to hold this omega a little longer.

It was strange that he couldn't remember who he'd had sex with the previous evening, but anyone who smelled as delightful as this omega did had to be stunningly beautiful.

He pulled his mystery lover closer and pressed his nose into the back of the other wolf's neck, grinning when his companion arched into him. It seemed he wasn't the only cuddler.

A few minutes passed and Gabriel slowly came to notice the omega was in heat. He was beginning to shake and Gabriel could feel the muscles beneath his paws slowly starting to tighten as tiny whimpers of pain escaped his throat.

Frowning, Gabriel tugged the omega flush to his body and began to nuzzle his neck reassuringly as he slowly rocked his hips against the other's rump.

The omega whined in need and shifted his tail out of the way as he rocked back into Gabriel.

Gabriel quirked an amused grin and licked the omega's jaw sweetly, heart melting when his companion tilted his head to give better access. This omega was very affectionate.

Another whimper escaped the omega's lips and Gabriel frowned at the pungent smell of slick. He didn't like his lovers being in pain.

The alpha wrapped his other paw around his lover, placing it over his stomach protectively. He tightened his grip and began rutting against the omega and the other wolf's breathing quickened as he leaned into Gabriel's movements.

Encouraged, Gabe ground a little harder against the omega and he was rewarded with a soft groan and an insistent press of a rump against his pelvis.

When the omega's slick began to seep into his fur, Gabriel couldn't help the small, possessive growl he released; there was something different about this omega compared to all his other one-night stands, something that made his alpha rumble in protectiveness. He just couldn't quite put his finger on what it was.

His brain still hadn't woken up enough to remember who he'd slept with the previous night and he didn't particularly feel like opening his eyes.
It didn’t matter though, because his lover had placed a paw over his and was whimpering as he pointedly rubbed his slick against Gabriel's belly, thighs and any other region he could reach.

With a pleased growl, Gabriel nipped a trail along his lover's jaw, smirking when the omega bared his neck for him. He seemed to like being marked and Gabriel's alpha instincts were rejoicing; usually, the people he slept with didn't like sporting any evidence of their activities, so to find an omega that actively wanted to be marked by him was not only welcome, but a surprising show of trust.

Torturously slowly, he raked his canines down the other wolf's neck before licking it tenderly to show he wouldn't hurt the larger wolf, which earned him a whine of both pleasure and impatience. Then he nipped teasingly at the omega's neck as he gave a particularly harsh grind of his hips and his companion released a needy whimper.

"Please..." he breathed, desperately dragging his wet hole over Gabriel's erection and the alpha almost took him there and then.

*Almost.*

Gabriel's eyes flew open as ice settled in his gut. He recognised that voice.

"...Sam?" He gulped, dreading the reply and his worst fears came to light when the omega froze between his paws and slowly twisted his head to glance at him with wide eyes.

"...Gabe?" Choked Sam in horror as they stared at one another for a few heart-stopping moments and all Gabriel could think about was the slick slathered over his fur and the way Sam was still cuddled into him, Gabriel's hardness pressed into his rear as his paw splayed over the omega's stomach, Sam's own paw resting on top of it.

He glanced at the marks on his friend's jaw and neck, and he swallowed thickly at the combined scents of omega heat and alpha arousal swirling around them both.

Sam still smelled divine, only now he could smell his own scent on the omega and it was doing inappropriate things to his alpha instincts; making them believe the beautiful omega belonged to him.

He stared into those hazel eyes for what seemed like a lifetime as his heart paused mid-beat. He wanted nothing more than to act on his instincts; to make Sam his, but there was no way he would take advantage of his friend whilst the omega wasn't fully in control of his actions because of his hormones.

Gabriel really needed his suppressants if he didn't want to do anything stupid.

Unfortunately, they were in his shelter.

He knew it had been a stupid idea to promise not to take them.

His eyes widened however, when Sam's breathing shallowed and something shifted in his gaze.

The moment Gabriel felt Sam's body beginning to morph into human form, he speedily followed and suddenly, Gabriel was straddling a very handsome and very naked man who was gripping his hips in a manner that suggested he was frightened the alpha would disappear if he let go.

Still not entirely sure what he was doing (and a little bit in awe of the blindingly attractive omega beneath him), Gabriel tangled his fingers into shaggy locks.
"You need a haircut," he whispered.

Sam's lips crashed into his with enough force to make him grab onto the omega for dear life. He soon got with the programme though and all reasoning of why what they were about to do was a bad idea conveniently dissolving, Gabriel kissed back hard.

Hands roamed over bodies, exploring and touching and stroking clumsily as they tasted one another. Teeth clashed and noses bumped messily, but neither cared because they were both desperately rutting against one another, seeking more friction and skin and heat.

Tongues tangled, bodies pressed closer and nails scraped pleasureably over flesh as they nipped and licked hungrily at one another's mouths, and then Gabriel was pulling away with wild eyes, making Sam whine as he tried to tug him back down.

"I can't do this if it's just your hormones," breathed Gabriel hurriedly as he stared into a foreign face with very familiar eyes. "I can't just be the alpha that gets you through your heat." He couldn't treat Sam like all his other flings; couldn't do that to his friend.

Sam growled as he crushed their lips together once more.

"Then be my alpha," he hissed and Gabriel was passionate in his reply.

He thrusted deep into Sam and they both groaned in unison, the omega hooking his legs around the alpha's hips.

Gabriel's thrusts were slow and hard, and every crevice inside Sam felt filled as he arched into the alpha. They tightened their holds on one another and Gabriel couldn't help but bite down on Sam's shoulder as the omega moaned filthily with each slide of their bodies. He'd never wanted to claim someone so much in his life, but this ridiculously tall man was his and only his; Gabriel would make sure of it.

"Condom," groaned Sam as he threw his head back at another greatly satisfying thrust and Gabriel blinked in realisation before quickly fumbling in the omega's bag.

Sam's broken cry of protest when Gabriel slid out of him was enough to make the alpha hurry with his new task and he claimed the omega once more when they were sure they weren't going to have any procreation mishaps.

Sam pulled him into another defence-shattering kiss and Gabriel cradled the omega's head in one hand to stop it from contacting the cool floor.

There was a desperate need to Sam's movements and Gabriel wasn't entirely convinced it was only due to his heat. The alpha cupped the omega's cheek with his free hand and Sam slid his fingers into Gabriel's hair, sucking at the shorter man's bottom lip as he was filled by the alpha.

After Kali's betrayal, Gabriel didn't think he'd ever have the urge to settle down again, but after meeting Sam and realising exactly how lonely he was, Gabe found he couldn't think of anything more perfect than curling up beside the large, hazel-eyed omega every night.

He just hadn't expected Sam to want him so fiercely too.

The thought made Gabriel's heart flutter and he felt the urge to worship Sam's body; to kiss and taste and nuzzle and make the omega feel as good as he made Gabriel feel. He wanted to undo all the tragedies Sam had faced, all the sorrow and rejection he had suffered and most of all, he wanted to make Sam forget about everything Ruby had put him through. He wanted the younger man to feel
happy and loved and appreciated. He deserved it.

Sam's brows knitted together in confusion when Gabriel pulled away from his mouth and before those eyes had a chance to fill with fear of being rejected, Gabriel pressed his lips to Sam's chest.

The omega's gaze softened when Gabriel peppered gentle kisses over his chest and he closed his eyes when the alpha kissed his nipple before nuzzling it. The alpha's hands fluttered down Sam's sides, coming to rest on his hips as he slowly pulled out of the omega.

Sam whined softly and Gabriel pressed a kiss to his other nipple.

"Relax," he whispered. "Let me take care of you."

Kisses were trailed down the younger man's body until Gabriel was nuzzling Sam's stomach. He placed doting kisses over the flesh, smiling when Sam began stroking his back appreciatively.

Once he was satisfied the omega's stomach had been sufficiently covered in kisses, he moved to kiss Sam's thighs, smirking at the sweet slick drenching them.

Sam gasped quietly when Gabriel licked a stripe up the inside of his thigh and his gaze caught the older man's.

"Let's get you cleaned up," winked Gabriel and Sam grew hot as he watched the alpha lick the slick from his thighs.

He threw his head back in a loud groan however, when Gabriel shifted his legs a little further apart and lapped at the slick leaking from his burning hole.

Gabriel grinned at the reaction and his tongue did something clever, making the omega arch off the floor with a blissful keen.

Gabriel continued to torture Sam like this for a few minutes before the omega couldn't take any more and yanked him into a searing kiss.

"Knot me already," he hissed and Gabriel smirked but wasted no time in complying.

He thrust into the omega and just to catch his lover off-guard, wrapped a hand around his stiff member. The omega inhaled sharply and his fingernails bit into Gabriel's back as the alpha moved both his hips and his hand.

"Gabe..." Sam breathed shakily and Gabriel growled and claimed his lover's lips possessively. He liked hearing Sam moan his name; it meant he was pleasing the omega.

It took a few moments for Gabriel's knot to surface and when it did, Sam whined instinctively. He arched upwards and Gabriel quickened his pace at the erotic display. Sam truly was gorgeous.

When the knot swelled to its full size, completely filling Sam, the omega cried out with pleasure and Gabriel tightened his grip on him as the pair rode out their orgasms together.

They rolled onto their sides, the knot shifting pleasurably inside Sam, satisfying the lingering pain in his hole and Gabriel tucked his lover's head under his, purring when the omega scented and nuzzled at his throat.

They threw their arms around one another, legs tangled and bodies flush with each other and Gabriel rumbled contentedly as Sam produced soft, satisfied coos and purrs.
After mouthing a few kisses over Gabriel's throat, Sam nipped at the tender skin before settling down with a pleased smile.

Gabriel smoothed a hand over his back before squeezing him carefully.

"We need to talk about this, kiddo," he murmured and Sam snuggled further into him.

"Later," he promised. "When the sun comes up, we'll talk, but until then just... hold me. Please... let me enjoy this for a couple of hours and I swear we'll discuss what it all means when we wake up."

Gabriel stroked Sam's head with a fond smile.

"Okay. Later. Now, get some sleep. I'll be here when you wake up."

"Promise?" Mumbled Sam and Gabriel placed a chaste kiss atop his head.

"I promise. Now sleep."

Sam's lips quirked upwards and he cuddled into Gabriel's chest before closing his eyes and falling into a peaceful slumber. Gabriel watched the omega with a sense of hope blossoming in his heart and he nuzzled the too long strands of chocolate hair draped over Sam's head.

For the first time ever, Gabriel felt the ache of loneliness in his chest begin to fade. Maybe he could have a happy ending afterall.

Chapter End Notes

I know I didn't update over the weekend but I went to Crufts :D To make up for it, have an extra long chapter with lots of fluff.

Hey look! Sam and Gabe finally got their stuff together!
Sam was nervous.

With his head cleared of instincts and heat being dulled by his most recent... activities, Sam had awoken to find his head tucked under Gabriel's, nose pressed into the alpha's throat and his whole body snuggled into the shorter man's.

Oh, and they were both in their human forms, stark naked, covered in sweat and slick and reeking of each other's scents whilst Gabriel still lay buried deep inside Sam's satisfied hole.

Scratch that. Sam was terrified.

He'd messed up; he knew that much. He'd let his heat control his brain and now he was paying the price. He'd ruined his friendship with Gabriel and now they would have to discuss their future.

It was clear Gabriel was interested in him, but the nature of his interest eluded Sam. Did the alpha just want someone to have some 'fun' with or did he want an actual relationship? And if by some miracle Gabriel didn't honestly want a relationship with him, would it be appropriate? Fifteen years was a huge age gap and it was likely they would lose interest in one another after the initial excitement wore off. Not to mention Sam had so many issues regarding his father and Jessica and Ruby... He didn't want to lumber Gabriel with all his problems.

What if he cursed the alpha with his bad luck? Love didn't seem to be in the cards for Sam and the omega couldn't go through another death or betrayal. He couldn't watch Gabriel slip through his fingers.

...And maybe he couldn't bring himself to fully trust the alpha. He wanted to, he really did, but after what Ruby had done, he found himself hesitant to see Gabriel's attraction to him as genuine.

"Some pretty big thoughts going on in there," murmured Gabriel softly and Sam startled because he'd thought the alpha was still sleeping. He flushed at the realisation he was still naked and pressed against Gabriel.

He tried to wriggle free, but Gabriel's grip on him tightened and Sam realised he was trapped.

"If I let you go, do you promise not to bolt? We need to talk," whispered Gabriel and Sam paused before nodding slowly. Might as well get it over with.

Gabriel smiled into Sam's hair and nuzzled him lightly, catching the omega off guard, before pulling away slightly to look at him.

Sam was surprised when Gabriel cupped his cheek gently and brushed a thumb over his lips.

"I always thought your canine form was handsome but you never told me you were actually Eros in disguise," grinned Gabriel.

Sam blinked before blushing a pretty shade of pink at the compliment and Gabriel chuckled warmly.

"Don't get all shy on me now, kiddo," he hummed before leaning in for a sweet kiss. Despite his
earlier concerns, Sam couldn't help but press his lips a little firmer against Gabriel's, especially when the alpha squeezed his middle in encouragement. It just felt so natural to kiss Gabriel.

"That's better," Gabriel mouthed against his lips. "Now I know you're not gonna run away, wanna talk about what this means and where we go from here?"

Sam gulped subtly. Every one of his senses was working overtime. All he could smell was Gabriel's inviting scent, tinged with anxiousness and amusement. He could hear the quiet huffing of wolves just beginning to wake up and wander around the camp and he was tuned into Gabriel's breathing and the slight shift of his body into a more comfortable position.

He was also acutely aware of the fact that Gabriel was still buried inside him and every time one of them moved, Sam had to stop himself from settling onto the alpha. His heat was insisting it was a fantastic idea to spread his legs for Gabriel and Sam was resolutely trying to ignore it.

"...It doesn't have to mean anything," mumbled Sam, frowning at the hitch in his voice as he said it. The words tasted bitter and wrong.

"I suppose," murmured Gabriel, lips brushing Sam's with every syllable. "But I was kinda hoping it would... and I think you do too."

"I..." Sam trailed off. There was no doubt he was attracted to Gabriel. Where that attraction went was up to him though. He needed to think about his words carefully now.

"I want you," admitted Sam softly and Gabriel quirked a smile before pecking Sam on the lips again. "But I don't know if I can trust this won't end up like what happened with Ruby."

Gabriel frowned. "I'm not Ruby."

"I know. That's my point," sighed Sam. "I'm messed up. I'm not good at relationships. I let Jess die, Ruby hated me, even my Dad didn't want me."

The omega shook his head. "I'm broken, Gabe. There must be something wrong with me and I don't want to watch you walk away from me like my Dad and Ruby did. I'm terrified of watching you die like Jess did. You deserve better. You deserve someone who doesn't have Daddy issues a mile long. You deserve someone who doesn't wake up in the middle of the night screaming because of an ex-mate. You deserve someone who's fun and loving and will look at you as though you're the greatest thing in their whole world."

Sam glanced away. "You deserve an omega that doesn't look like an alpha; one that isn't the wrong shape or the wrong size or fights like an alpha. You deserve an omega who won't curse you with their bad luck; one that won't be suspicious of you despite you never having done anything wrong. You deserve someone better than me."

Gabriel scowled and gently caressed Sam's cheek with his thumb.

"There are so many flaws in your little pity party, I don't even know where to begin."

Sam blinked and slowly allowed his gaze to flick up to the alpha and Gabe shook his head.

"Let's get one thing straight: you didn't let Jessica die. There was nothing you could've done. It was a freak accident that never should've happened and you never should've had to watch it."

"And Ruby? Ruby was bad news from the moment she wormed her way into your life. She didn't deserve you and you're certainly better off without her," snorted Gabriel in distaste before his gaze
softened.

"Is that what she made you believe? That you're built wrong? That nobody wants you because you're not the stereotypical omega? That somehow you having nightmares or issues with your past makes you undesirable to alphas?"

At Sam's hesitant nod, Gabriel clicked his tongue unhappily.

"Listen to me, Sam. You are the most intelligent person I've ever met. You're loyal and brave and protective over the ones you love. You're strong and passionate and sometimes you're a little mischievous and I love that about you.

"However, you can also be as dense as concrete and stubborn as a mule," huffed Gabriel and Sam opened his mouth to protest before thinking better of it and letting the alpha continue.

"You're right, you're not the stereotypical omega. But that's what makes you so wonderful. You don't cower when there's danger; you fight to protect your family. You defend your pack and you don't let anyone hurt them.

"You're far bigger than the average omega and with more muscles to rival most alphas... but that's what makes you so stunningly beautiful. I've never seen an omega like you and everything about you takes my breath away, from your looks to your personality.

"And as for your nightmares? Everyone has a past, Sam. Some are worse than others. You had a bad start, a worse middle and the rest of it didn't look too promising either. But the thing is, you kept going; despite everything that tried to pull you down, you pushed yourself to move forwards and that's what makes you so brilliant, so unique."

Gabriel offered him a small smile. "I can deal with the nightmares and the trust issues and anything else you want to throw at me. If you just give me a chance and a little bit of time, maybe we can work through it all together. I'm not problem free myself, but my flaws are part of the package just like yours are and if we put a bit of effort in, I really think we could be good for each other."

The alpha tilted his head slightly.

"I know I'm not the youngest quadruped in town, nor am I the most handsome or the sweetest, but I do care for you a lot, kiddo. I do want to make you happy and I want to show you that you're not the omega you seem to think you are." He frowned. "Your Dad was wrong to treat you the way he did and you shouldn't listen to the things he said about you, because he was so far off the mark it's laughable.

"You are jaw-droppingly amazing and I don't think I've ever wanted someone so much as I want you. And that's not your heat talking," chuckled Gabriel and Sam gulped.

No one had ever spoken of him like that before. Nobody had ever talked about him as though he was a creature to be awed by; to be adored and cherished. He'd never thought an alpha would address him like that.

He'd never believed another alpha would want him. Ruby had made it so clear he was repulsive to alphas and betas, so why was Gabriel speaking so highly of him now? He was wrong and broken... wasn't he?

Gabriel sighed quietly as he tangled his fingers into Sam's hair.

"You still don't get it, do you?" He whispered as Sam's eyebrow's knitted together in confusion.
Gabriel leaned their foreheads together and the omega snapped his mouth shut.

"I love you, Sam," murmured Gabriel and Sam's eyes blew wide. "I think I have for a while."

"But... you... we..." Sam stuttered before shaking his head. "No, this... this is hormones. You... you have to go. You were right; you shouldn't have stayed the night without your suppressants. I'm sorry I got us into this mess. You... you should leave."

Gabriel's face fell. "Sam, please... don't do this -"

"This isn't right. You don't know what you're saying," rushed Sam and Gabriel tried to reach out to him when he started to shuffle away in panic.

"Sam -"

"No. You're not thinking straight. You don't want me. It's just my heat. You're making all these declarations of love and promising all these wonderful things, but the moment I'm off my heat, you'll realise you didn't mean any of it and you'll walk away, and I'll be alone again and we won't be able to look at each other and -"

"Sam."

Sam felt something cool and wet leaking down his cheek and he suddenly realised he was crying. Gabriel quickly gathered him into his arms, pulling their bodies flush with each other once more and Sam couldn't take it any longer. He broke down into the alpha's warm chest, burying his head under Gabriel's chin as he clutched desperately at his friend's back.

"I don't want to lose you," whimpered Sam between sobs as Gabriel rubbed his back soothingly. "I don't want to mess this up and I'm frightened you'll get tired of me. I'm scared I won't be able to trust you and I don't want to have to watch you walk away. I can't go through that again. I can't lose you as well."

Gabriel kissed the top of his head.

"Ruby really did a number on you, huh?" He muttered as Sam gripped him tighter. "I'm not going to walk away, kiddo. I promise I won't leave unless you want me to. Not sure if you've noticed, but I need you too. You make me incredibly happy and when I'm with you, I forget I'm not like other alphas. I forget I have the wrong smell and that my brothers don't care about me and my mate cheated on me. When I'm with you, I feel... wanted."

Sam's sniffling quietened and he carefully scented at Gabriel's throat. Maybe he wasn't the only one who was insecure.

"You are wanted," he whispered. "And I love your scent. You're amazing, Gabe; I've never met another alpha like you. You're so thoughtful and funny and caring. Kali was stupid to leave you."

He hesitated. How could he make Gabriel understand how wonderful he was?

"And I don't care if you're older than me... I... I think..." Sam closed his eyes to collect his thoughts.

"...I know I love you too," he managed and he couldn't help but quirk a watery smile at the way Gabriel's scent suddenly started radiating excitement and pride. He nuzzled the alpha's throat.
...Maybe they could do this.

"I just... I need you to be patient with me. I need you to give me time to trust you; to trust another alpha."

Gabriel smiled and hugged him joyfully.

"I'll give you anything you ask for." He paused. "...So it that a 'yes'? Does this mean...?"

Sam chuckled weakly and snuggled into Gabriel, hiding his face from the alpha.

"It means I really want to lie close to you and be able to kiss you whenever I want."

The loud rumble resonating through Gabriel's chest took them both by surprise and Gabriel glanced at a shocked Sam with a sheepish expression, but there was no doubt the alpha was trying to hold back the widest grin Sam had ever seen.

"We take this at your pace," murmured Gabriel as Sam settled into his chest once more, a small smile crawling onto the omega's face. "If I do anything you're the slightest bit uncomfortable with, you tell me straight away, got it?"

Sam nodded and leaned up to press a kiss to Gabriel's throat, which soon had the alpha purring.

"Thank you," whispered Sam, something warm blossoming in his heart and Gabriel's gaze turned tender.

"I should be thanking you for giving me a chance."

Sam's chest felt all tingly. He cuddled into Gabriel and the alpha smoothed a palm over his back, and Sam grinned because Gabriel was still inside him. He felt loved; he couldn't remember the last time he'd truly felt like that. Maybe when Jessica was alive?

It was a few minutes before either of them spoke again.

"...Can you... can you say it again?" Whispered Gabriel and Sam glanced up in confusion.

Gabriel wouldn't quite meet his gaze. "Could you say that you... that you..." He trailed off and Sam suddenly understood. A grin slowly slid across his face and he gently cupped Gabriel's cheek to force him to look at him.

"I love you," he whispered and he laughed at the loud rumble vibrating through the alpha's chest.

"Kiss me," he murmured and Gabriel was all too happy to oblige.

Once he was satisfied, Sam rested his head on the alpha's chest and closed his eyes contentedly, listening to Gabriel's heartbeat as a pair of arms slipped around his body.

Gabriel peppered kisses over his head and all was peaceful until the alpha snickered to himself.

"What?" Sam smiled, too comfortable to raise his head and Gabriel carded his fingers through the long tangle of chocolate hair as his eyes sparkled with mischief.

"Imagine Dean's face."

Sam snorted.
In the early dawn light, a figure observed the camp silently, its eyes narrowed as the occupants slowly roused from their slumber. The figure searched for someone in particular, but when it couldn’t locate them, it huffed irritatedly and batted at a twig, snapping it in half.

A sadistic smirk crossed over its face as twisted thoughts of death and blood flashed through its mind and it eyed the members of the Winchester pack with glee, imaging the stick to be a bone.

This next month was going to be fun.

Satisfied that it was still undetected, the figure crept through the thick trees and away from the camp, tail swishing smugly as it vanished.

Chapter End Notes

Now who could that be...? Bit of a shorter chapter since the last one was so long!
Dean growled softly under his breath. Something was going on between Sam and Gabriel, he was sure of it.

Sam was on the final week of his heat and Dean knew it would be over within the next couple of days, but what was irking him was the fact that for the past week, Gabriel had been spending more and more time in Sam's shelter.

He was sort of grateful the other alpha was taking care of his brother in that he was bringing him food and water and keeping him from getting lonely, and at first, the other alpha hadn't seemed at all affected by Sam's heat. However, now whenever they were apart, Gabriel was starting to display the signs of an alpha longing for his mate and Dean didn't like the implications.

Was Gabriel being affected by Sam's heat now? What had changed?

Dean would have questioned the other alpha about it but Gabriel rarely spent any time away from Sam anymore, leaving Dean to stew in his thoughts.

"He's fine," sighed Cas, trying to distract the alpha by licking his jaw. "Staring at that bush won't help anyone."

Dean huffed. "They're never apart."

Castiel rolled his eyes and took a step backwards. Dean almost grimaced; every night this week he'd grumbled about the suspicious activity between Gabriel and Sam and the other omega was probably tired of it. Still, Sam was Dean's little brother and he didn't trust Gabriel not to take advantage of him whilst he was in heat. If Gabriel dared hurt Sam, Dean would make sure he suffered.

"I would've thought you'd be happy. Sam doesn't seem to be in as much pain as he was last week," commented Cas.

"Which probably means Gabriel's knotting him at least twice a day," growled Dean lowly and Cas frowned.

"If he is, it's because Sam wants him to. I promise you my brother won't take advantage of yours."

"You sure about that?" Dean bit out before he could stop himself and his eyes widened at Castiel's sharp snarl.

"I understand your wariness of Gabriel, but he is my brother and I will not have you suggesting he could be capable of raping Sam," growled Cas dangerously and Dean had the decency to look partly ashamed of himself.

"I'm sorry, Cas. I'm just on edge about this whole situation. Sam's track record with relationships isn't all that great and I'm worried they're not thinking straight and things are gonna go horribly wrong."

Cas sat down and Dean felt guilty for having caused the weary expression on his face.

"Would it be so bad if they truly wanted a relationship with one another?" Asked Castiel. "They've
both had their hearts broken, Sam's been betrayed and Gabriel's lost his home. Would it be that bad if they decided to form a relationship? They could be good for each other."

Dean scrunched his nose up.

"Sam's fifteen years younger. And he's only been out of Ruby's claws for little over a couple of months. Is it really wise for him to use Gabriel as a rebound? Sounds to me like it's only going to end in tears."

Cas pulled a face. "What if Gabe isn't just a rebound? They've known each other a while, maybe there's something more between them." He raised an eyebrow. "And since when does age determine who we can and can't love?"

Dean shook his head. "Gabriel just... doesn't seem Sam's type. Jess was sweet and kind, and even if I hate her, Ruby was serious and commanding. Sam doesn't usually go for people who never take anything seriously and tend to sleep around. He needs someone faithful and who'll listen to him when things go wrong, not someone who'll turn everything into a joke."

Castiel heaved a sigh. "My brother is not unfaithful. You're forgetting he's the one who was cheated on, not the other way around. He won't 'sleep around' if he's head over heels for Sam. And Gabriel can take things seriously when it's important, he just thinks life needs a bit of humour and although his pranks and mischief can sometimes be exhausting, he means well."

"He will be there for Sam when things go wrong. I know that because he was there for me."

Dean still didn't look convinced. "I'm concerned this will turn out to be a mistake once Sam's off his heat. What if this all just hormones and pain causing them to go at it like rabbits? They probably don't want each other but they can't think clearly."

Cas rolled his eyes. "You don't know what they're doing, yet you're making assumptions about a relationship that might not actually exist. For all we know, they could just be talking in there."

Dean shot him a pointed glance and Castiel huffed.

"This is ridiculous, Dean. If you're so worried about your brother, why don't you just go and check on him?" And with that, he trotted away to play with the pups.

Dean contemplated the idea before slowly standing up. Tonight he would check on them, just to make sure Sam was safe and as comfortable as possible.

...And maybe to tear Gabriel a new one for taking advantage of his little brother.

* * *

Gabriel licked Sam's jaw when the omega groaned in pleasure. The alpha loved how he could take his lover's pain away and he tightened his grip on the omega's belly as he continued to thrust his half-formed knot inside Sam's aching hole.

Sam spread his legs a little further as he arched into Gabriel and another satisfied whimper escaped his lips. Gabriel grinned and nuzzled the back of his neck, relishing Sam's happy purr and before long, his knot was swollen and nestled inside Sam like a missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle.
They rolled onto their sides with a blissful sigh and Gabriel tugged Sam into his chest and continued to nuzzle the back of his head and neck, licking at them every so often.

"You're gorgeous," whispered Gabriel, smiling at Sam's wriggling tail. "I don't think I could've imagined someone as beautiful and intelligent and kind as you, yet for some reason you still decided to love me. I must be the luckiest alpha alive."

Sam blushed and he was glad he was facing away from Gabriel because he didn't think he'd ever smiled so wide in his life.

"I can't believe you're mine," murmured Gabriel. "I still feel as though this is all a dream and my alarm clock is going to scream at me at any moment."

Sam snuggled into the alpha. "If this is a dream then don't wake me up."

Gabriel chuckled as he licked Sam's jaw again.

"I could get used to this," he whispered as his paws slid over Sam's chest and stomach. "I could get used to falling asleep holding you and waking up with you draped over me."

Sam shifted slightly, just because he wanted to feel Gabriel's knot move inside him.

"Good," commented Sam. "Because I'm not moving."

Gabriel squeezed him gently before letting out a playful growl.

"Who says I'll let you leave?"

Sam smirked as he closed his eyes. "I could beat you up any day, Shortstack," he teased and Gabriel gasped in mock offence.

"What happened to respecting your elders?"

"So you admit you're old?"

"Older than the horny teen beside me."

"Always knew you were a cougar at heart."

"Except for the part where I'm male and and the one with the knot," commented Gabriel as he squeezed his lover. "It's more about me being irresistible to all the young, devastatingly gorgeous omegas around here."

Sam snorted but he couldn't wipe the smile off his face and he placed a paw over the older wolf's.

"You saying there's more than just me on your knotting list?" Asked Sam, feigning hurt and Gabriel nuzzled his neck.

"Oh yeah. Tons of omegas. Haven't you seen them all throwing themselves at me?"

Sam chuckled as Gabriel curled around him tightly.

"You're the only one I love, kiddo," murmured Gabriel. "You're the only one I want to be with."

"I figured," hummed Sam cheekily as he wriggled his rear, reminding them both they were locked together by Gabriel's knot. Eventually he relaxed into the alpha with a contented sigh.
"I don't think I've been this happy for a long time."

He laughed at Gabriel's loud, pleased rumble and the alpha nipped at his shoulder lightly.

"Quiet you," he huffed embarrassedly and Sam purred in the way all omegas were known for when they were extremely relaxed and feeling loved and safe. The purr was over-exaggerated though and Gabriel nipped at his jaw.

"Meanie."

Sam grinned but leaned back into his lover.

"I do mean it," he whispered after a few moments. "I really am happy here. I can't remember the last time I felt this wanted. Can't remember feeling so protected."

Gabriel took to licking Sam's head soothingly and the omega closed his eyes, wondering if he had finally found paradise. He couldn't imagine ever moving from this spot.

"Keep saying things like that and I really won't let you leave," murmured Gabriel softly.

Sam smiled contentedly and Gabriel nestled down, pressing his nose into the back of the omega's head.

"Rest, Sam," whispered Gabriel. "You need it."

"You still gonna be wrapped around me when I wake up?" Teased Sam around a yawn and Gabriel chuckled as he tugged his lover closer and licked his jaw.

"Can't think of anywhere else I'd rather be."

Sam's chest felt warm and airy. He was so used to Gabriel's snark and playfulness, he was always caught off-guard when the alpha acted so tender with him. The change wasn't unwelcome, mind you.

Sam settled down, placing a paw over the one Gabriel had curled over his belly and finally drifted off to sleep. Gabriel nuzzled the omega's neck for a few more minutes before curling around him a little more securely and letting himself fall into unconsciousness.

* * *

Three hours later, Gabriel was snapped out of pleasant dreams by a pained whimper and a body writhing beside him. He glanced between his paws with a frown to find Sam's face contorted in agony despite the omega still being asleep.

The delicious smell of slick wafted up to Gabriel's nostrils and the alpha in him booted up and began demanding he claim and breed the omega next to him.

Gabe ignored it. Sam was in pain and his first priority was to help his lover.

“Sam?” Murmured Gabriel, nuzzling the omega’s ear gently and Sam’s expression twisted into a tormented scowl before he began to rock back against the alpha.
“Sam,” whispered Gabriel again as he tightened his grip on the omega. He needed Sam to be awake to ensure he was happy with Gabriel knotting him again.

The omega’s eyelids fluttered and Gabriel gently licked his jaw to rouse him. Sam blinked awake slowly and an uncomfortable whine escaped his lips, making Gabriel huff concernedly as he nuzzled his omega.

“Gabe?” Asked Sam sleepily and the alpha nodded as he continued to nose along the omega’s jaw.

“Hurts,” whimpered Sam softly and Gabriel rumbled. His omega wasn’t allowed to be in pain.

“Let me take care of you?” Murmured Gabriel and Sam nodded, eyes closing when the alpha began rutting against him.

When Gabriel thrusted into him, Sam purred in relief and the golden wolf couldn’t help but tug him a little closer until Sam’s back was flush with his chest. His movements were unhurried and tender and he felt Sam’s body relax completely; the omega’s breathing shallowing until he had dozed off again.

Gabriel chuckled fondly and continued with his thrusts until his knot was swollen and settled snugly inside Sam’s wet hole. He licked the omega’s jaw and just because he knew it would make the larger wolf groan, he rolled his hips teasingly, his knot filling every crevice inside the omega. He was rewarded with quiet moan of approval and he smirked as he nuzzled Sam’s neck. He mused how lucky he was to have this beautiful omega by his side.

Suddenly, there was a hair-raising snarl and a set of jaws clamped around his back and ripped him away from Sam.

He howled in agony as his knot was forcefully torn from the omega before it had a chance to return to its normal size and his protective alpha instincts were raging when he heard Sam’s echoing cry of pain. The omega was fully awake now, eyes wide and confused and maybe a little fearful as Gabriel was thrown to the ground outside the shelter, and the alpha immediately rolled to his paws, hackles raised and teeth bared at his attacker.

Nobody hurt his Sam and got away with it.

He was shocked to find a pair of green eyes narrowed dangerously at him, sharp teeth exposed and familiar sandy fur bristled in anger.

Dean growled loudly and confusion flitted across Gabriel’s face for a second before his eyes widened when the other alpha lunged for him.

He managed to scrabble out of the way, but when he turned around to ask what was going on, Dean leapt at him again and pinned him to the floor, teeth dangerously close to his throat.

“How dare you!” Spat Dean. “You think because he’s in heat you can take advantage of him? You think just because you’re an alpha, you can do whatever you please?” Dean pressed his claw against Gabriel’s throat and the older alpha spotted Castiel sprinting over to them, expression bewildered and slightly panicked.

“Give me one good reason why I shouldn’t kill you now, Novak,” hissed Dean and Gabriel’s brain took a few seconds to catch on to what was happening.

“…You think I was raping him?” He choked, eyes like saucers and Dean growled again.

“Last I heard you weren’t in a relationship. Suddenly, he goes into heat, you start smelling like a
possessive alpha knot-head and I find you knotting him whilst he’s asleep. Did I miss anything?”

The younger alpha snarled and Gabriel scowled as Cas’ eyes blew wide.

“Yeah, you missed the part where we confessed our love for each other a few nights ago,” snapped Gabriel, kicking at Dean’s chest until he dislodged the larger alpha. He quickly climbed to his paws.

“I didn’t do anything to Sam that he didn’t want me to,” he huffed. “I would never hurt him. Never.”

Castiel glanced curiously at Gabriel, but Dean wasn’t convinced. His fur was standing on end as he rumbled threateningly.

“Right, because your thoughts and feelings aren’t at all affected by his heat. The second he’s out of it you’re gonna dump him with a broken heart and you’ll start on the next omega who goes into heat.”

Gabriel bristled as Castiel whipped his head around to face his lover.

“Dean,” he protested but Gabriel was livid.

“I am not Ruby,” he seethed, cutting Cas off. “You don’t get to say who I can and can’t love. And I don’t care if you’re leader of this pack; you don’t own Sam. He can do as he pleases just as I can and there’s nothing you can do to stop us. Stop treating him as though he can’t take care of himself.”

“Really? You think there’s nothing I can do to stop you from manipulating him?” Scoffed Dean as he stalked closer. “You’re fast, Novak. I wonder how long you can keep it up if I run you out of the pack? You’d be surprised how many people are protective of Sam. Think you can outrun all of us?”

Gabriel backed up a little, suddenly more wary of the other alpha. Dean was leader after all and he was far stronger than Gabriel. It was well within his rights to chase him out of the pack if Dean truly believed he had been claiming Sam against his will.

Castiel scowled at Dean and was about to snap at him when Sam suddenly planted himself between both alphas, frown in place as he glared at his brother.

“That’s enough, Dean. He’s telling the truth. I was fully aware of what was happening.”

Dean didn’t look happy.

“You let him knot you whilst you’re in heat? You know how dangerous that is. You know how hurt you’re gonna feel when he leaves at the end. You’re playing with hormones and they’re not going to like it when you don’t have a mate at the end of this. You’ll get depressed; start thinking there’s something wrong with you.”

Sam shuffled a little closer to Gabriel.

“Gabriel won’t leave. I know he won’t. We might not be mates, but he’s not going to break my heart and he’s not the type to be unfaithful,” stated Sam firmly and Gabriel slowly came to stand beside him.

Dean’s expression was more concerned than angry.

“Are you sure this isn’t just an attempt at a rebound? You’ve only just escaped the clutches of one bad decision, are you sure this isn’t another? It’s understandable you miss having a mate, but you don’t need to rush into another relationship. Enjoy having your own life first.”

Sam shook his head. “This isn’t a rebound, Dean. I’m not with Gabriel because I miss sleeping
beside someone or having sex. I’m with him because I enjoy his company; he makes me laugh, he
cares for me and he’s so patient and kind to me.” Sam glanced at his brother pleadingly. “I love him,
Dean.”

Dean pulled a face and was about to argue when Gabriel shuffled a little closer to his lover.

“And I love Sam.” He sighed wearily. “Look, I know you don’t trust me and with our families’
histories, I don’t blame you, but I’m not using Sam just because he’s in heat. He’s already been
through so much heartbreak… I want to try and take some of the pain away. I want to try to make
him happy. I know I’m not young or sweet or gentle; I’ll never be as good as Sam deserves. But that
doesn’t mean I won’t try.

“I’ve never begged for anything, but if I have to beg you to give me a chance with your brother, then
I will. I know I’ll make mistakes along the way, but I’ve never wanted anyone as much as I want
Sam and I promise I’ll do all I can to make him feel that way. Please, just… give me a chance.”

Dean hesitated for a few moments as he sized Gabriel up and the younger alpha was taken
completely off guard when Gabriel bowed his head respectfully, crouching slightly to show he
wasn’t a threat.

Dean huffed irritably. “Fine,” he said curtly. “One chance. But I swear, if you hurt my brother even
once, you’ll wish you’d never have left the city.”

And with that he turned swiftly on his heel and prowled away.

“Congratulations to you both,” murmured Castiel softly when Dean was out of earshot. “I’m happy
for you. You both deserve happiness.”

Gabriel beamed as Sam smiled warmly at Cas and the black and tan omega nodded in
acknowledgement before slowly turning away.

Gabriel pressed his head under Sam’s chin reassuringly before gently licking his cheek and the
omega sagged in relief.

“I won’t leave,” the alpha whispered. “I promise. And I’m going to do everything I can to prove it to
you.”

Sam nuzzled his lover gratefully and Gabriel nudged him back towards the shelter. They curled
around one another once more and when they were settled, Sam nosed at Gabriel’s throat.

“I’m sorry about Dean. I hope he didn’t hurt you too much.”

Gabe snorted quietly. “Your brother’s just protective over you. Can’t really say I blame him for that.
But you are your own omega and if that’s the message Dean wants to promote within this pack, he’s
got to let you live your own life. ‘Mistakes’ and all.”

Sam rolled his eyes. “You’re not a mistake, Gabe. And that may be so, but I’ll be having words with
him in the morning. He has no right to throw you around like he did.”

Gabriel shrugged. “He is lead alpha.”

“And I’m lead omega. He doesn’t get to hurt you just because he’s coddling me.”

The alpha chuckled to himself. “Something tells me he’s going to get an earful off Cassie anyway.”
Sam cocked his head and Gabriel smirked. “Dean forgets that I’m Cas’ favourite brother. He didn’t look too cheerful when Dean pinned me to the floor.”

Sam huffed out a laugh as he tucked his head under Gabriel’s. “Well he deserves whatever he’s got coming to him. And I’d hate to get on Cas’ bad side.”

“That protective of me already, kiddo?”

“Yes,” hummed Sam and Gabriel’s heart rejoiced. He lay his head over his lover’s and closed his eyes, Sam’s rhythmic breathing lulling him to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I'm finally back! Thank you for all your kind words of support in the last update; I've seen more dead lambs than I ever want to see for the rest of my life. For those of you who suggested I call the SPCA, unfortunately, I live in England so our equivalent is the RSPCA and they have no power of law; they can only seize animals if it looks like they're going to take their last breath. We lost about 35% of all lambs born, and 10% of ewes (excluding the ones that were born with three legs and had to be shot after years of living under a farmer who couldn't care less) and a lot of lambs have been rejected by their mothers due to psychological issues or the ewe having no milk, but we did manage to save some. I can only hope next year will be a better year for the farmer and his family, and "Dave", whoever you are, I hope no other animal ever has the misfortune of coming into contact with you. Quite frankly, you should be imprisoned.

Thanks again for waiting.
Dean grit his teeth together as he swiped at a stone outside his and Cas’ shelter. The pups were sleeping inside and he didn’t want his angered scent to wake them. He knew Sam wasn’t his kid brother anymore, but did he really have to crawl out of one manipulative relationship only to dive straight into another one a few months later? And whilst he was in heat, no less?

Dean huffed irritably as he batted at another pebble.

“Really, Dean?” asked an annoyed voice and Dean glanced up to find Castiel scowling at him.

“What?”

The omega’s frown deepened. “I told you my brother wouldn’t ever take advantage of yours, yet you completely dismiss my words and sink your teeth into Gabriel’s back? Do you not trust me?”

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“I trust you. But when I see my little brother sleeping peacefully whilst a potentially hostile alpha prepares to knot him from behind, you can understand why I reacted the way I did. An alpha, may I add, that has threatened me on multiple occasions and has made it quite clear that he has no intention of just submitting to my command.”

Cas narrowed his eyes.

“You couldn’t have handled the situation in a more civilised manner? One that didn’t involve injuring both of our brothers?”

“I was trying to protect Sam,” huffed Dean. “How was I supposed to know what Gabriel’s intentions were? You know what an omega’s heat can do to alphas, no matter who they are.”

Castiel glared at his lover. “So the logical conclusion was that Gabriel was attempting to rape Sam? Because of hormones?”

Dean hesitated for a second before snorting.

“I wasn’t sure what was happening. I just wanted to make sure Sam was safe.”

“And to do that you had to clamp your jaws around my brother’s spine and then throw him to the floor and press your claws against his throat?”

Dean scowled. “Gabriel isn’t exactly endearing himself to the rest of the pack. He’s rude, brash and arrogant; what reason do I have to trust him around my family?”

“Because he’s my brother!” Hissed Cas and Dean scoffed.

“Right, because your brothers are all perfect examples of loving, caring relationship material. Perfect for Sam, just like Ruby was.”

Cas tensed and Dean realised too late that he’d forgotten to turn his brain-to-mouth filter on again.
“Gabriel is the only family I have left, just as Sam is yours and I don’t appreciate you speaking about him as though he’s something to be disgusted by. He may have the Novak name, but so do I and if you insist on referring to him as though he’s somehow lesser than you and your pack, then you will have to treat me in the same manner,” snapped Castiel and Dean grimaced.

“You know I don’t think of you any lesser than the pack.”

“Yet you clearly think otherwise of Gabriel,” seethed Cas. “If it had been Benny, or Crowley or any other alpha in the pack you had caught in the same position, would you have reacted in the way you did? Would you have sunk your teeth into Crowley? Would you have thrown Benny to the floor with your teeth bared in his face? Would you have accused Gadreel of raping Sam if he had been the one in Gabriel’s position?”

Dean paused for a moment and Cas snorted.

“Exactly. You would’ve heard what they had to say first. You would’ve listened to Sam’s side of the story and made a judgement based on that before you started getting aggressive.” The omega narrowed his eyes. “I told you only this morning that Gabriel would never be capable of abusing anyone like that, much less someone he obviously cares for. Yet, you ignored me and assumed the worst of my brother. I understand you’re leading a pack here and you’re only trying to protect your family, but it would’ve been nice for you to have a little faith in me.”

Dean scowled. “I do have faith in you, Cas. But I don’t know Gabriel. So far he has been disrespectful, rebellious and abrasive. I don’t blame him for the Novak family history, but he hasn’t even attempted to prove he’s willing to work with the pack. I’m not expecting him to suddenly be perfectly adapted to living in the wild, but he could at least try to cooperate.”

Castiel frowned and opened his mouth to argue when Dean cut in.

“I consider myself pretty progressive when it comes to pack dynamics. I don’t like a lot of packs’ ideas concerning gender roles and I don’t pick fights with other alphas just to prove my strength. My pack isn’t just a team, they’re family and I see no reason why my brother can’t lead this pack too just because he’s an omega. Frankly, as long as my family is safe, then I can sleep easy.

“However, the rules and etiquette I have in place are there for a reason. I expect them to be followed and so far, Gabriel has fought me at every turn. He never listens and he has put my family in unnecessary danger. He’s threatened me more times than I care to count because of my relationship with you and now suddenly, he claims to be involved with my brother whilst Sam is experiencing the peak of his heat. Surely you can see why I don’t fully trust him?”

After a few seconds, Castiel sighed.

“I know you find him difficult, but I can assure you, Dean, he is trying. He’s used to being a very highly respected alpha within a family that is greatly feared by city and wild folk alike. He’s been betrayed by his wife, shunned by the people who raised him, forced to live alone in a world he’s unused to for so many months before stumbling across this pack… Sam was probably the only company he had in the wild who was genuinely kind to him and he risked his life coming out here just to find me.

“He’s been taught to be wary of wild folk, just as I was, and finding the lead alpha of a supposed enemy pack courting his lost little brother probably isn’t what he was expecting. Gabriel is used to living alone; he’s used to looking after and defending himself because nobody else would. He’s been mocked because of his size and scent and our older brothers have forced him to become hardened and suspicious of the rest of the world. He doesn’t let others in easily and I’m truly happy Sam has
managed to see past all the snark and defensiveness, and has found the fun, kind-hearted alpha I know my brother to be.

“Being part of a pack that looks out for one another is new for Gabe. He doesn’t trust that he won’t get hurt and he’s comparing you to Michael’s iron rule. However, I promise he’ll learn. It’ll take some time, but the fact he’s opened up to Sam shows me he’s willing to give the pack a chance. You just need to be patient with him. I’m not asking you to let him get away with disrespecting you, but just remember he’s used to having to fight to defend himself against our brothers; alphas who are far stronger, larger and therefore have more authority than him. He couldn’t fight them physically, so he used his words and had to be clever about keeping not only himself protected, but me and Samandriel as well. Our brothers are neither patient nor kind and their tempers are merciless.”

Dean absorbed this information silently.

“I’ll be as patient as I can with him, but he’s got to work with me. I’m not the only one proving myself here; he’s got to prove himself too. He has to show me he can work in a team and I want to see that he can be as good for Sam as you say he is. I can’t watch my little brother get hurt again,” said Dean quietly.

Cas padded closer. “I know. And you have to understand that that is exactly the same mindset that Gabriel has when it comes to you and me. He is judging your treatment of me in the same way you are judging his treatment of Sam.”

“You can look after yourself,” scoffed Dean. “He doesn’t exactly need to protect you. You have your own life and you’ve certainly proven you don’t need an alpha to take care of you. Heck, you’ve even saved my life.”

Castiel raised a pointed eyebrow and Dean hesitated before the penny finally dropped and he grimaced as the epiphany struck.

“Oh.”

Castiel grinned in amusement. “Oh,” he agreed.

“Alright, alright, I’ll admit maybe I’ve been a little overprotective of Sam.”

“A little?”

“Shut up.”

Castiel chuckled and wandered over to the sheepish alpha, licking his cheek when Dean refused to meet his gaze.

“I’m sorry,” mumbled Dean. “I should’ve listened to you.”

“I suppose I can’t be too harsh. Gabriel has been particularly difficult with you and I’ll see if I can get him to cut you some slack. I know these past few months have been… rather cruel,” Cas murmured sadly and Dean closed his eyes as a memory of Lisa flashed in his mind.

The alpha leaned into his omega and Cas lay his head over Dean’s.

“I do trust you, Cas. There’s no one I trust more than you, but sometimes I get an idea in my head and I’m too stubborn to listen to reason,” muttered Dean and Cas nuzzled his ear.

“We’re both stubborn, but I would never change the way you are, Dean. Your heart’s in the right
place and that’s what matters.”

Dean smiled and nosed at Cas’ throat.

“I’ll apologise to Gabe tomorrow. Maybe we can work something out between us? A way for us to stop being so suspicious around one another?”

Castiel chuckled softly and licked Dean’s head in gratitude.

“Thank you for trying,” he whispered and Dean nudged him towards their shelter.

“Well, he is your brother.”

* * *

“Dean?”

Dean turned at the strange tone and arched an eyebrow when he found Gabriel bowing his head slightly. A few other pack members glanced at the golden wolf in surprise. They rarely saw Gabriel demonstrating respect towards Dean.

“…I’d like to apologise for my behaviour since being accepted into your pack. I know I’ve been difficult and distrusting and I’ve gone out of my way to disobey your orders and pack rules. I was out of line and I’m sorry.”

Dean’s eyebrows rocketed skywards as Gabriel lowered his gaze and a few surrounding wolves began to mutter to one another in confusion.

Gabriel lowered his gaze a little further.

“There is no reason for you to grant me such an honour, but I still wish to ask for your blessing in courting your brother. I won’t ask for your permission because I’m going to do it anyway, but it would be good for Sam to hear you don’t condemn our relationship. I know how much you mean to him.”

Dean couldn’t help but quirk a small smile. Tradition stated the parents of an omega (or lead alpha of the pack) had to be asked permission to allow the omega to be courted by an alpha or beta. Gabriel might not quite have asked for that, but the intention was clear and whilst Dean could have been offended at Gabriel’s determination to go ahead with courting Sam with or without Dean’s say-so, he was strangely pleased Gabriel had bothered to ask at all.

He schooled his features into something more solemn.

“I see. Then I will give you my blessing on the condition you give me yours.”

Gabriel blinked once before risking a glance up to Dean.

“…Technically you don’t have to ask for my permission considering you’re lead-”

“I’m not asking for your permission. I’m asking for your blessing,” hummed Dean, the beginnings of a smirk tugging at his lips. “I’m going to court him whether you like it or not, but I think Cas would like to hear that his brother is happy for him.”
Gabriel paused before a miniscule grin touched his expression and he lowered his gaze once more.

“…In that case, you have my blessing.”

“And you have mine,” replied Dean, amusement dancing in his eyes.

“Doesn’t mean I’ll stop watching you like a hawk,” stated Gabriel under his breath, head still bowed and Dean snorted quietly.

“And I’ll still be here waiting for you to slip up,” whispered Dean, ensuring the rest of the pack couldn’t hear them and Gabriel flicked his good ear in acknowledgement.

“Thank you, alpha. You are most kind,” said Gabriel, a little louder and Dean grimaced, all traces of amusement vanishing.

“Don’t call me that,” he murmured. “It’s ‘Dean’, Not ‘Sir’ or ‘Alpha’.”

Gabriel peeked up at him, puzzled and Dean shook his head.

“It’s degrading and humiliating to you and anyone else who calls me by that title. I don’t like it.”

John had always insisted his pack address him by ‘Sir’ or ‘Alpha’. He said it was only respectful. Dean had seen how belittling it was for alphas such as Bobby to be forced to address John as ‘Alpha’. He would never ask any of his pack to call him by the title.

Gabriel was looking at him oddly and Dean frowned slightly when he realised his head was still bowed. It reminded him of when his dad forced others to submit to him when he believed they’d done wrong. It was a way of showing they wouldn’t fight back if John decided to punish them. Many lead alphas expected their packs to do the same.

“Stand up straight, Gabriel. My face is up here,” huffed Dean and when Gabriel slowly raised his head, the golden wolf was watching him in bewilderment.

Dean idly wondered what Michael’s expectations of his pack were.

“Right,” he said, suddenly uncomfortable with the implications of Gabriel’s wide-eyed staring. “I have things to do and I’m sure you do too. Look after Sam.” And with that he turned away.

He caught Gabriel disappearing back into Sam’s shelter as he made his way over to a far-too-innocent-looking Castiel.

“That went fairly well,” the omega hummed and Dean rolled his eyes.

“I take it you spoke to him this morning?”

“…Maybe,” smirked Cas. “You two are very alike, you know.”

Dean snorted. “If you’re going to get insulting, I’m leaving.”

Castiel shook his head. “I saw a few muttered words. What did you say to each other when none of us could hear you?”

“He told me he’d be keeping an eye on us and I said the same thing back.”

“And I’m sure it was a polite exchange,” drawled Castiel sarcastically and Dean shrugged.
“Polite as it’s gonna get.” His gaze softened. “Still… it was a nice gesture.”

Castiel smiled knowingly. “Be patient with him. He may surprise you.”

“If he’s anything like you, I’m sure he will.”

Cas’ gaze warmed and he rubbed his head under Dean’s. Something was still bothering the alpha though.

“Cas? Did you and Gabriel ever get… reprimanded by Michael?”

Cas tensed for a second before sighing. “Like I said: Gabriel’s not used to having a family that cares about him.”

Dean winced and Castiel leaned into his lover.

“Whilst my family have never cared for me very much, I had the luxury of being able to ignore them. I was able to go months without speaking to them, thereby avoiding most of their physical and verbal abuse as I grew out of my teenage years. Gabriel did not have that luxury.”

The omega sighed sadly. “Being an alpha, Gabriel was always under a lot of scrutiny by our brothers and parents. He wasn’t allowed to make mistakes; couldn’t deviate from ‘the rules’ and there were high expectations of him from an early age. If he ever slipped up, he was punished, first by our parents and later by our brothers. The older he got, the harsher the punishment.

“I remember when Raphael killed his mate’s child and Gabriel voiced his disgust. Our brothers battered him. Gabriel’s determined but he couldn’t fight off three large wolves and I wasn’t there to help him. He came to me the next day to inform me of Raphael’s mating but I think he was seeking a place to rest and recover. It’s why his ear is broken.”

Dean grimaced and Castiel sighed. “The abuse wasn’t just physical, they were manipulative and degrading. They humiliated him; made him out to be lesser than them because he was youngest and smallest. They told him he had been born as an omega with a knot. They constantly mocked and ridiculed him when they were with company and they dismissed his opinions when they were alone. There was always competition between them, but Gabriel was expected to back down for his brothers. If he didn’t, he was punished.”

“And you both faced abuse like this on a regular basis?” Asked Dean with an unhappy scowl and Castiel nodded.

“My ‘punishments’ were usually verbal; references to my secondary gender and the fact I was larger than the average omega. I was told I was unimportant to society and that I’d been born a disappointment to our parents for not presenting as an alpha. When I was a child, I was ignored or pushed around, laughed at and belittled, however I too faced my fair share of physical conflict. If I ever stepped out of line or fought back against my brothers, I was punished physically.

“You can guess Gabriel and I were closest with each other than any other members of our family.”

Dean rumbled angrily as he tugged Cas closer. He nuzzled the omega’s head and licked his ear soothingly, practically purring when Castiel relaxed into him.

“No-one’ll hurt you here,” promised Dean. “No-one’ll hurt either of you here. Sammy and I won’t let them.”

Cas smiled tenderly at Dean before licking his cheek.
“You’re safe here,” murmured Dean as he licked his lover’s cheek in return. “Both of you.”

“Gabe’s not used to being protected. He’s not accustomed to having a pack who wants to take care of him. Please, just give him time and he’ll prove he’s loyal and good to those he loves. You’ll see that he can be a wonderful addition to the pack,” whispered Cas as he nosed at Dean’s throat.

The alpha nodded. “Okay, Cas. I’ll be patient.”

Cas beamed and snuggled into his lover, relishing his light kisses. Maybe Gabriel and Dean could learn to like each other.

* * *

“You let your omegas hunt?” Asked Hannah in astonishment and Gadreel chuckled as they joined the hunting group.

“We don’t ‘let’ our omegas do anything. We don’t control them. Everyone eats so everyone should hunt. However, if you are feeling unwell, you may stay behind and guard the camp with Pamela, Bobby and Ellen.” He glanced over to her. “Have you ever hunted before?”

“In my old pack… before we merged… sometimes I was required to hunt during difficult conditions, but it wasn’t regular. I’ve not hunted in years.”

Gadreel smiled. “Then let us remind you,” he said as the group trotted off, Cas and Dean leading them. Hannah allowed herself a small quirk of lips.

It wasn’t too long before they stumbled across a herd of deer. There weren’t many, but that made it safer for the group as they were less likely to get stabbed by a set of antlers.

“If you join Jo, the blonde omega over there, she’ll show you what to do,” murmured Gadreel. “Come on, I’ll take you to her.”

Hannah shuffled a little closer to Gadreel as they crept towards the other omega. She didn’t know the others all that well and she felt relatively safe with Gadreel. He had proven himself kind and gentle with her and although it took only a second for an alpha to turn into a terrifying, snarling, uncaring beast, Gadreel didn’t seem to have any similarities with the alphas in her old pack.

“Jo? Would it be possible for you to ‘show Hannah the ropes’?” Asked Gadreel, the idiom falling strange from his usually formal tongue. Jo smirked in amusement before her gaze settled on Hannah.

“Sure. Come here, girl. Just follow my lead and you’ll be a professional hunter in no time.”

Hannah smiled politely before looking back to Gadreel and the alpha nodded encouragingly.

“She’ll look after you. I promise,” he murmured. “But I’m afraid I can’t stay with you as I’ve got to fall back until it’s time to bring the doe down. You guys have to isolate her from the herd first though. You’ll be okay, I know you will.”

Hannah averted her gaze shyly and Gadreel smiled. The omega clearly wasn’t accustomed to people having confidence in her and Gadreel knew that had to change.

“You’ll be great,” he whispered and he turned away when Dean gave the signal for everyone to get
into position. Castiel was the decoy today and when all the deer were too busy panicking over Cas’ presence on the other side of the clearing, the rest of the pack ambushed them from behind.

Hannah stayed close to Jo, following her directions to the finest detail and she found the thrill of the chase to be freeing. In that moment, it didn’t matter where she had come from or what had happened to her, she was just a wolf chasing its meal and the chaos around her was exhilarating. Her paws thundered over the grass, the wind whipping around her cheeks and she felt her legs wanting to run faster, to break away from all the horrors she had faced over the years.

There were excited barks and howls all around her as the deer called to one another in panic, each trying to intimidate the wolves or if they were brave, butt them away, and Hannah felt muscles she hadn’t used in years loosen for the first time. She finally felt free; she had escaped a nightmare and had been given a second chance and she was going to take it. There were hundreds of scents around her and she couldn’t remember the last time she’d had so much fun. There was so much going on and she let out joyful howl when Jo laughed at the danger of it all.

Hannah spotted two does straying from the pack and she made a beeline for them, Jo hot on her tail. “Go get ‘em, girl!” Cheered Jo and another eager bark burst from Hannah’s throat as she zipped between the does. They kicked out at her and Hannah quickly dodged them and she wondered when was the last time she’d ever been brave enough to take a risk like this? She’d been so terrified of disobeying her old pack’s orders, she’d forgotten what it felt like to live.

She snapped at one doe and the pair separated, making it easy for Jo and Hannah to lead the other deer away from its herd and suddenly, Gadreel and Benny were pulling her down, exhausting her until she couldn’t fight any longer.

When the doe finally fell, Hannah was buzzing with adrenaline and she turned her attention to the rest of the pack, watching as Meg, Jody, Dean and Crowley worked on another doe.

However, the lead stag lowered his antlers in fury and Hannah gasped as he stormed towards the four.

“Dean!” She cried out fearfully, but Jo held her back and Hannah was amazed when two betas, Harry and Ed if she remembered correctly, lunged at the huge stag. The pair dodged the stag’s swinging antlers and Dean stood, ready to help them if necessary. But then another beta (Charlie, Hannah thought) jumped onto the beast’s back and the stag bellowed in panic before bucking them off and galloping away.

Dean exchanged words with the trio and if their tail wagging was anything to go by, he had praised their efforts.

As the rest of the herd sprinted into the distance, Dean ordered the pack to group together to help carry their meal home and Gadreel gently nudged Hannah’s side.

“I knew you would perform outstandingly.” he murmured as Jo grinned at her and Hannah looked away embarrassedly despite the smile tugging at her lips.

“Thank you, alpha,” she mumbled and Gadreel shook his head.

“Gadreel,” he corrected. “Never ‘alpha’. We are all equal, remember?”

Hannah nodded hesitantly and Gadreel smiled kindly at her. “Come on. Let’s take your hard work home,” he said as he gestured to the fallen doe.
When they finally dragged their bounty back to the camp, Hannah was surprised when Gadreel stepped back from the meal to allow her to take his place. As an outsider, she usually had to wait until last to eat and Hannah honestly didn’t mind. In her old pack, she was lucky if she was allowed one meal a week, so eating nearly every day, even if it was just the scraps, was a step up from where she’d come from.

She’d never heard of an alpha sacrificing their place for an omega. It just wasn’t done.

“You caught it,” explained Gadreel when she looked at him with wide eyes. “You should be allowed to enjoy it. Eat.”

She padded over warily, but when it didn’t look like Gadreel was tricking her, she slowly lowered her head and did as she was told.

She couldn’t remember the last time she’d had a full belly and it felt absolutely wonderful. She nearly purred from contentment and Gadreel watched her fondly as he had his own fill.

“Hey, Hannah!” Called a familiar voice and the omega turned to find Jo trotting over to her.

“You were great out there,” the blonde omega grinned. “A real natural. Well done. You sure that was your first time?”

“First time in over a decade,” replied Hannah quietly and Jo whistled, impressed.

“Keep at it and maybe you’ll be giving me lessons,” she winked before sauntering off to flirt with an exasperated Benny.

Hannah decided she liked Jo.

Gadreel plodded over to her a few moments later.

“You look happy,” he said softly. “It suits you.”

Hannah shied away from his gaze once more. The alpha was very charming despite not really meaning to be. His warm expressions reminded her a little of Balthazar, except where her mate had been flamboyant and flirty, Gadreel was calmer and quiet. They were both very kind.

“I’ve not had so much fun in a long time,” she admitted and Gadreel cocked an ear.

“You found hunting enjoyable?”

Hannah nodded. “Very much so. I’ve not felt so free in years.”

Gadreel frowned slightly before a look of curiosity swept over his features.

“Would you be interested in learning how to fish? Pamela is an excellent teacher. She has a very different way of viewing the world and I have a feeling you’d find it interesting.”

“Fishing?” Hannah echoed. She’d never learned how to fish before; not many wolves had because they were so difficult to catch.

Gadreel smiled knowingly. “Indeed. I think you’ll enjoy it.”

Hannah searched Gadreel’s face for anything to suggest he was fooling her, but once again, she found nothing and she nodded slowly.
Gadreel flicked an ear in acknowledgement.

“Tomorrow afternoon I’ll introduce you to Pamela. I hope fishing brings you as much fun as hunting did.”

Hannah offered him a small smile.

She rather liked this alpha.

Chapter End Notes

It's taking me forever to get back into this fic! (I think I've got lambs on the brain...)
Anyway, hope you enjoy the latest installment.

Also: 30000 hits? Guys, I love you all so, so much!
When Sam was finally allowed out of his shelter, Gabriel constantly by his side as the lingering effects of the heat wore off, the pack weren’t sure how to approach them. The alpha had formed a relationship with one of their leaders during his heat, which sounded dubious at best and he had already proved to be fairly rebellious in regards to pack rules and etiquette, especially when he had failed to ask for Dean’s permission to court Sam in the first place. They were well aware that Dean didn’t approve of the relationship, but after the way Gabriel had sought him out and asked for his blessing, they knew the ex-rival alpha deserved a chance.

However, before any of them got an opportunity to congratulate the pair, the pups were bounding around their heels excitedly, tails motoring and grins thrilled.

“You’re together?” Asked Ben eagerly as Gabriel and Sam chuckled at their combined enthusiasm.

“We are,” confirmed Gabriel, winking at the little omega.

Samandriel yapped as he headbutted his uncle’s chest playfully.

“I knew you belonged together! I knew the Angels would get you to kiss eventually!”

“Is that so?” Smirked Gabriel as Sam pressed a little closer into his side with a soft smile.

“Uh-huh,” nodded Samandriel. “We all knew just by the way you look at each other!”

The adults blinked at that.

“How do we look at each other?” Sam asked curiously and Claire and Alex gazed exaggeratedly at each other, expressions dreamy and disgustingly sweet as they batted their eyelids and sighed loudly like every rom-com ever.

Gabriel snorted. “We do not.”

“Do too!” Retorted both girls in unison.

“You do it all the time!” Grinned Samandriel. “Especially when you think each other isn’t looking.”

Sam glanced at Gabriel in surprise and the alpha met his gaze guiltily, watching as a similar expression flickered behind Sam’s eyes, before they both turned to the pups once more.

All four pups were smirking at them.

“Fine. Maybe we're a little soft on one another,” huffed Gabriel before quirking an eyebrow. “But you know it’s contagious, right?” He said conspiratorially as he leaned down to their level and they frowned in confusion.

“What do you mean?” Alex demanded.

“Those looks that Sam and I share? It’s all part of the disease,” whispered Gabriel as Sam raised an amused eyebrow.
“What disease?” Asked Ben, looking concerned.

“The same disease that Castiel and Dean have. The one that spreads just by touching someone. You could get it too if you’re not careful.”

Far too used to his uncle’s pranks, Samandriel rolled his eyes as the others leaned a little closer in anticipation, waiting for Gabriel to tell them the name of the disease. Even Sam looked curious.

“What’s the disease?” Asked Claire.

“We’re *lovesick*,” grinned Gabriel before pouncing on the pups, trapping them to his chest as they all yelped. He licked their heads sloppily and there were a few giggles and moans of disgust as tiny paws batted at his chest.

“Uncle Gabe!” Groaned Samandriel as a slobbery tongue swept over his face. “Get off!”

“Nope! Now you’re gonna start staring at each other all dreamily and lovingly, and then you’re gonna start wanting to kiss each other,” the alpha winked.

“Eww!” Said Ben as the girls scrunched their noses up.

“No way,” huffed Alex. “I’m never gonna want to kiss anyone! Kissing’s gross!”

Samandriel wriggled in an attempt at escape.

“We’re not going to start doing any of that stuff. Uncle Gabe’s just saying all that to mess with us.”

“You sure?” Asked Sam trying to conceal his smirk. “I’ve heard that disease spreads pretty quickly. First you want to play hide and seek, the next thing you know you’re kissing and cuddling under the stars.”

Samandriel paused as his eyes widened. “Wait, it’s real?”

Sam nodded solemnly and the pups glanced at each other in horror. Gabriel opened his paws and the pups scampered away as fast as possible, yelling about how kisses were disgusting and cuddles were for babies.

Gabriel smiled softly as a tongue lapped at his broken ear.

“Kisses are pretty disgusting,” hummed Sam and Gabriel chuckled as he licked the omega’s jaw.

“That’s not what you were saying last night.” He wiggled his eyebrows and Sam huffed out a laugh before nuzzling Gabriel’s cheek.

“I don’t remember saying all that much last night,” he whispered and Gabriel smirked.

“Nothing coherent anyway.”

“’Sup, guys?” Greeted Charlie with a grin, oblivious to their whispered conversation. “Heard you two have started swapping spit. Congratulations.”

Gabriel’s tail wiggled upon seeing the red-furred omega. She was laid back and very easy to get along with. She was also one of the first people (besides Meg and Crowley) to make an effort to talk to him when he first joined the pack. He noticed she smelled very sweet.

“Yup. I just hope Sammy hasn’t got rabies,” he winked and Sam rolled his eyes.
“It’s ‘Sam’,” he huffed and Gabriel grinned.

“Sure thing, Sammy.”

Charlie snickered at the other omega’s wrinkled nose before scratching idly at her ear.

“So… how did Dean react? Something tells me he wouldn’t take too kindly to a Novak alpha hitting on his little brother. Or y’know… sleeping with him whilst he was in heat.”

Sam quickly averted his gaze, embarrassed as Gabriel arched an eyebrow.

“Nearly lost my throat, my back and other very sensitive parts of me that will go unnamed, but other than that, it was just peachy.”

Charlie winced. “Ouch.” She risked a glance towards the alpha. “Still, you seem to be tolerating each other.”

Gabriel shrugged. “He’s Sam’s brother. Not to mention a leader of this pack. He’s not a bad guy, just too overprotective.”

Charlie paused. “…He does have good reason to be,” she said pointedly and Sam closed his eyes at the reminder of Ruby.

Gabriel watched him with a small frown.

“Yeah, well, trust me; I’ll be first in line at the ‘maul Ruby’ fest.” He focused his gaze back on Charlie. “And I’m not like her. When I say I love Sam, I mean it.”

A small smile tugged at Sam’s lips and Charlie mirrored the expression for a second before turning her nose up.

“Ew. You two are disgusting. Get a room.”

“We’ve got one,” winked Gabriel. “We’re letting it air.”

Charlie gagged before standing up. “And on that note, I’m going to leave you two lovesick morons to whatever it is you do. Try not to freak Dean out any more than you have otherwise we’ll never hear the end of it.”

She whirled on her heel and trotted away, leaving Sam to nuzzle Gabriel’s ear adoringly.

Gabriel licked his lover’s cheek with a fond smile before the pair slowly began to make their way around the camp, letting Sam greet the friends he hadn’t seen in two weeks. There were lots of ‘congratulations’ and big grins and some not-so-subtle warnings directed at Gabe to ‘keep Sam happy’. The golden alpha took them without complaint though, nodding grimly and stating he would do his best.

It was a few hours later when Cas wandered over, greeting his brother with a rub of his head under the alpha’s chin. Gabriel still couldn’t quite get used to being so openly affectionate with his little brother, but it didn’t mean he didn’t enjoy it, and when they pulled apart, Gabriel was grinning.

He was surprised however, when Cas then did the same to Sam. Sam was more relaxed though as he rubbed his jaw over Castiel’s head, trading scents and Gabriel’s chest warmed at seeing his brother and lover so friendly with one another. It made him feel like he had a second chance at a family who loved each other.
When the younger wolves moved apart, they were smiling softly and it suddenly hit Gabe that Cas had just given his approval of their relationship; trading scents in a traditional display that the wild folk usually used to welcome someone into the family. Gabriel’s tail wiggled happily.

“It’s good to see you finally up and walking again,” said Cas and Sam nodded.

“It’s good to be walking,” he replied, stretching his legs out for emphasis. “It was getting a little cramped in there.”

“You’ve not missed much. Jo’s gone into heat so we won’t be seeing her for a while and judging by the scent, Charlie should be joining her very soon. Ellen’s been like a Rottweiler guarding that shelter and even Bobby’s been chased away merely for walking past. Benny’s been chased away the most. I suppose it’s to be expected though,” Cas commented.

Sam chuckled. It was no secret that although the alpha pretended to be exasperated with Jo’s constant flirting, he really did hold some form of affection for her. It was like watching a little boy trying to hide his first crush. It was a shame Benny hadn’t yet noticed that Jo never flirted with anyone else.

“Don’t go near Jo; got it,” hummed Sam, Cas nodding in agreement. Then he tilted his head with a raised eyebrow.

“I also wanted to ask you why my pup is so distraught about catching ‘lovesickness’?”

Sam chuckled and eyed Gabriel, who had suddenly found an interesting cloud to stare at.

“Gabriel…”

At Cas’ amused tone, the alpha ducked his head guiltily.

“I may have had something to do with that.”

Cas snorted. “You told the pups they were going to start kissing each other because you had a contagious disease?”

Gabriel shrugged hopelessly. “It sounded like a good idea at the time?”

“They wouldn’t let me or Dean get near them. They told us we were infected.”

Sam bit back a laugh as Gabriel grimaced, but then Cas turned to the other omega.

“And don’t play innocent. Samandriel says you played a part in this as well.”

Sam quirked a grin. “Guilty as charged.”

The older omega rolled his eyes. “You’re like two overgrown pups.”

“Sorry, Mom,” mumbled Gabriel, eyes focused on the floor and ears flat to his head as he pouted.

Sam bit back a snicker as Castiel arched an eyebrow at him.

Just as he opened his mouth to reply, there was a symphony of snarls and startled yelps from a different part of the camp and the whole pack turned in unison to find the source being Jo’s shelter.

Ellen bolted towards the shelter, Bobby hot on her tail and the beta was in and out in under three seconds, snarling and snapping at a black alpha no one recognised.
The strange wolf high-tailed it across the camp, Ellen and Bobby flanking him, but it was Benny who ploughed into him and the pair clawed and bit frantically at each other for a few moments before the black wolf managed to dislodge Benny and he sprinted away into a thicker part of the forest.

Ellen ran back to her daughter, disappearing back into the shelter as everyone wondered what they had just witnessed.

Dean was suddenly outside Jo’s shelter, looking a combination of worried and displeased and with a grim face, Sam joined him, leaving Gabriel and Castiel to stare at each other in shock.

“Is she alright?” Dean demanded, backing up at Ellen’s warning huff.

“A little shaken, but unharmed,” growled Ellen. “I think she took that Rover by surprise when she clamped her jaws around his throat.”

Dean rumbled unhappily. “He didn’t do anything to her though?”

Rovers were the enemy of all packs. They were lone alphas or betas that targeted omegas in heat (and occasionally the odd beta if they were alone), in hopes of stealing them away from the pack and breeding them up to start their own family. It was a way of creating new packs, but often, the omega was so desperate for a knot and too brainwashed by hormones to really consent to being taken away from their friends and family, but the Rover didn’t care. He or she was just looking for someone to breed and stealing desperate omegas was an easy way of going about that. It didn’t even matter if their victim was already mated.

Ellen shook her head and Dean sighed before glancing at Sam.

“You didn’t get any unwelcome visitors, did you?”

Sam shook his head. It was highly unlikely any Rover would try to approach him when Gabriel was in the same space as him. It wasn’t unheard of, but Rovers generally wanted an easy target when they were already in another pack’s territory.

“We’re all going to have to be on high alert,” murmured Dean as he glanced towards the thicket of trees the Rover had vanished between. “It’s heat season and we don’t need any more incidents.”

“We’ll probably need a lookout at night,” said Sam and Dean nodded.

“I’m quite happy to stay up,” the alpha replied. “As long as I can get a bit of sleep in the afternoon.”

“We’ll rotate,” said Sam. “We can do shifts. Swap every other night.”

Dean frowned. “No. I’m not letting you stay up alone to watch out for Rovers.”

Sam scowled. “Because I’m an omega?” Dean winced.

“I’m off my heat,” protested Sam. “I can defend myself.”

“I know you can. But Rovers target lone omegas,” replied Dean softly in a way he hoped was diplomatic. “It wouldn’t be very responsible of either of us to offer them a target.”

“Dean!” Hissed Sam, once again feeling like his biology was dictating what he could and couldn’t do. It was exactly like his father had always told him; he was useless because he’d presented without a knot. “I’ve faced worse than this. You know I can handle a Rover!”
Dean grimaced. “I just… think it’s better if we put an alpha on guard as a deterrent. It just seems… more appropriate in this sort of situation.”

“Then let me accompany Sam,” suggested Gabriel as he and Cas wandered over. “Then you’ll have two sets of eyes and you two can rotate every other night.”

Dean eyed Gabriel warily as Sam cocked an ear in contemplation.

“I may not be used to working in close-knit pack, but that doesn’t mean I can’t learn,” murmured Gabriel quietly. “Contrary to popular belief, you can teach an old dog new tricks.”

Cas smiled encouragingly at his brother as Sam stared pointedly at Dean and the younger alpha sighed.

“…Fine. I suppose two pairs of eyes are better than one. Just make sure it is the Rover you’re focused on and not each other,” warned Dean and Gabriel rolled his eyes.

“Maybe lookouts in pairs would be a good thing,” shrugged Sam. “It means if one gets tired, they can rest whilst the other keeps watch.”

Dean nodded. “Alright, we’ll do paired watches.”

“I’ll stand watch,” said a voice from behind and the group turned to find Benny staring at them grimly. His gaze flickered to Jo’s shelter and the group had to conceal their knowing smirks.

“Awesome,” chuckled Dean. “We’ll start tonight.”

As the group muttered their agreement and began to disperse, Dean took Sam to one side.

“You know I don’t think you’re any less capable just because you’re an omega, right?” He whispered and Sam sagged slightly.

“I know,” he admitted. “I just… I get a little sick of people treating me like I’m some fragile flower because I wasn’t born an alpha. Just because I have heats, it doesn’t mean I’m helpless.”

Dean tilted his head. “Nobody here thinks of you like that, Sam.”

“…Dad did. Ruby did.”

Dean blinked before scowling. “Yeah well, what do they know? They’re just a couple of stupid alphas with superiority complexes.”

Sam snapped his gaze up to Dean in surprise. It was rare to hear his brother bad-mouth their father.

“I didn’t mean to sound condescending,” muttered Dean. “I guess Cas is right. I am a little too overprotective over you sometimes. I know you can take care of yourself against an idiotic Rover or two. I just… I’m worried. I don’t want anything to happen to you, and I certainly don’t want anyone to take you away from this pack.”

Dean glanced away and a small smile tugged at Sam’s lips.

“I know you’re not sexist. You’ve always been fair to me. You’ve never followed stereotypes and I’m grateful for that. You’ve always treated me as your equal and I know a lot of alphas don’t usually do that to the omegas in their family.

“But I have a feeling this is less to do with the Rover than it is to do with Gabriel.”
At Dean’s subtle grimace, Sam sighed. “He’s not like Ruby. He’s not gonna take me away from you or turn me against you. He’s not manipulating me and I know you think I’m making a mistake in courting him when I’ve only just got rid of Ruby, but us getting together at the same time as me having a heat isn’t him using me or me looking for a rebound. We’ve known each other a little while and well… something happened between us a little before he even joined the pack.”

Dean’s gaze snapped up sharply to Sam. “What do you mean?”

“…It wasn’t the first time things got… heated between us,” confessed Sam embarrassingly as he remembered their time in the meadow.

Dean growled. “Why that- ”

“Dean.”

Dean bit back his curses at Sam’s pleading look.

“A lone older alpha who likes sex and isn’t afraid to look for it, just happens to stumble across you on your own, in a meadow where no one can hear or help you; he starts flirting with you and you spend more and more time away from your pack until things get ‘heated’ between you… you’ve got to admit he kind of sounds like a Rover,” huffed Dean and Sam rolled his eyes.

“A Rover who left his home and everything he ever knew to rescue his brother from what he thought was the brink of death, only to join a pack whose alpha leader hates him and where he’s way out of depth considering he’s used to living in a house and shopping at the supermarket for his meals, all to protect his brother and nephew from the wild and his own demented family. Yup. Definitely sounds like a Rover.”

“…Okay, maybe not that part. But he definitely acts like a Rover. He has no regard for pack etiquette, is openly rebellious to most of our orders and he suddenly enters a relationship with the pack’s highest omega when he’s in heat.”

“Dean, he’s trying. Cut him some slack; he’s not used to being out here. He’s not used to having a pack who cares about him. Stop assuming the worst about him.”

“Funny, that’s what Cas said,” muttered Dean drily.

“And that’s another thing. Cas hates his family, but he loves Gabriel. Doesn’t that say anything to you?” Asked Sam and Dean slumped in defeat.

“…I suppose.”

“Dean, please. He’s making an effort. Of course he’s not gonna fall in line as easily as Cas did; he’s one of the highest alphas in the Novak family and he’s older than us. Just give him a bit of time. I think he’ll surprise you; he surprised me.”

Dean blew out a breath. “Does he treat you well? Better than Ruby?”

Sam nodded. “He treats me very well. Far better than Ruby. He genuinely cares, for one thing.”

Dean pulled a face before nodding stiffly. “Alright. I’ll try to be civil with him.”

“That’s all I ask.”

The brothers were just about to part ways when a new voice joined the conversation.
“As much as I love the idea of having Sam all to myself and us skipping away into the sunset, I’ve grown rather attached to this wonderful group of misfits. It’s nice having friends who won’t stab you in the back over a bit of money or power.”

Sam and Dean’s eyes widened when they turned to find Gabriel and Castiel watching them with amusement.

“Next time you want to have an adorable heart-to-heart, maybe tell the people who are waiting for you so they don’t accidentally follow you,” grinned Gabriel.

“Or at least move to somewhere more private,” muttered Cas blankly.

Dean felt his face heat up as Sam stared holes into the floor.

“You heard all that?” Asked Dean, trying to put up a mask of nonchalance and Gabriel chuckled.

“More or less. It was very sweet. Gave me cavities.”

Dean couldn’t bring himself to meet the other alpha’s gaze. Gabriel’s expression softened.

“I know I’m difficult. I know I’m not making things easy and I’ve put you in some very awkward positions, just as you’ve found me in some very awkward positions.” He wiggled his eyebrows ridiculously and Dean couldn’t help but huff out a laugh at that. “But I’m not intentionally trying to make your life miserable. Well, not all the time. I’ve got to make your life a little hard considering you’re courting my baby brother,” he winked and Dean found himself relaxing slightly at the playful banter.

“But you make Cas happy and I’d have to be blind not to see that,” continued Gabriel. “I can’t hate the person who gives my brother what he deserves. And to hear you loving Samandriel as well? To hear you taking care of him like he’s your own son? Dean, you’re the best brother-in-law I could ask for.

“The problem here isn’t you being involved with my little brother. Sam and Cas are right; I have trust issues. I’m so used to following a lead alpha who’s a sadistic psychopath, I have trouble believing that not every head alpha treats omegas like dirt and wants to dominate every alpha he meets. I can tell you’re a good leader, kiddo. I can see that your pack loves you. I’m just not used to it.”

Dean slowly raised his gaze to meet Gabriel’s apologetic one.

“It’s been ingrained into me to fight my brothers at every turn. Nobody stuck up for me so I had to learn to protect myself and since I couldn’t beat them in a physical fight, I learned to make things tricky for them and put them in difficult social positions. I guess you being leader of this pack reminds me of them. I expected such a large rival pack to be similar to ours, but you’re nothing like the Novak family and I guess it caught me off-guard, so I still treat you like I do Michael. Old habits die hard and I know I’ve disrespected you more times than I can count, so I’m sorry, but you’re going to have to give me a little time to kick the habit.

“But in the meantime, I promise I’ll do everything I can to make Sam happy. He deserves it just as much as Cas and since you’re doing so much for my brother, let me do something for yours. Afterall, I do love him and if following your orders means keeping him with the added bonus of being part of such a protective and well-functioning pack, then I don’t see a problem. All I ask is that you be patient with me whilst I prove myself to you.”

Dean blinked in shock as Gabriel lowered his head respectfully.
Well. Now he felt like a jerk.

“Don’t do that,” murmured Dean. “I’ve not been particularly kind to you, either. I assumed you were out to hurt us just because of your last name, even though Cas has told me countless times that you weren’t like that. I’m as much to blame as you are.”

Gabriel cocked a curious ear at him and Dean shook his head.

“I’m supposed to treat everyone fairly, yet all I’ve done is prove my dislike of you. I didn’t even try to listen to you; I just made it clear I didn’t want you here and that’s not right. I shouldn’t have judged you upon a name and I shouldn’t have assumed you were going to use Sam.” He glanced away.

“I can’t blame you for wanting to protect your brother. I’m glad Cas has at least one family member who cares about him. And I’m at fault for expecting you to know wild folk rules and etiquette when you’ve lived all your life in a big city. I wouldn’t have a clue where to start if I ever had to live in civilisation, so you trying to adapt to our way of life is more than admirable. Like Sam says, it must be difficult for you to start following the orders of an alpha who, less than a year ago, was your supposed enemy. Especially when I’ve been so short-tempered with you.

“Then, when you take an interest in someone and make an effort to fit in with the pack by trying to make them happy, I rip you away from them and accuse you of something horrific. Heck, you have every right to make my life miserable. Just ‘cos Sam’s my brother doesn’t mean I get to try to tear your throat out and threaten you to get you to leave. I’m sorry, Gabriel. You didn’t deserve that. Nobody deserves that. Especially after all you’ve done for Ben...”

There was a pause, where neither alpha knew what to say.

“Okay, here’s the deal. I’ll do my best to learn and follow pack rules and I’ll try to kick the habit of snapping insults at you as long as you think you can be a bit more patient with me and not try to rip my knot off whenever I so much as lick Sam’s cheek,” proposed Gabriel and Dean quirked a smile.

“How about you come to me when you have a problem with a rule or some etiquette and I’ll come to you if I have a problem with something you’ve said or done and that way, neither of us gets huffy in front of the pack? And I promise I won’t attack you for making goo-goo eyes at Sammy.”

Gabriel perked up a little, tail swishing once.

“You wouldn’t mind teaching me?”

And if Dean’s heart didn’t break at that.

“Gabriel, you’re part of the pack. It’s time I started treating you like it.”

Gabriel’s tail swayed again and Dean’s smile grew.

“Thank you, alpha,” the golden wolf said and Dean grimaced.

“First lesson. Never call me ‘alpha’. Reminds me too much of Dad and besides, it’s belittling to you. It’s like making out I’m better than you and that’s certainly not true.”

Gabriel blinked and ducked his head sheepishly. “Sorry.”

Dean smiled and Gabriel found himself smiling too. He felt kind of warm and fuzzy; like he had a real home with people he belonged with. It was a foreign feeling.
“I feel like I just watched a soap opera,” muttered Cas and Sam snickered.

“They’re too precious for this world,” the larger omega teased. “Our adorable alphas being all sentimental with each other. I think I’m gonna cry.”

Gabriel stuck his tongue out at them but Dean rolled his eyes as he smiled, then padded towards Gabriel and rubbed his head under the smaller alpha’s chin.

Gabriel, Sam and Cas froze in shock but Gabriel eventually got with the program and slowly rubbed his jaw over Dean’s head, exchanging scents. Dean smelled a lot nicer than Michael.

“How’s that for a chick flick moment?” Winked Dean as they pulled apart and he trotted away, tail high and teasing as he left Sam and Cas gaping at his retreating figure.

Gabriel’s tail was thumping the floor.

“I think I could grow to like him,” he hummed happily and Cas and Sam stared at one another in horror.

“What have we done?” Whispered Cas.

“Imagine the pranks,” whimpered Sam and Gabriel shot them both a wolfish grin.

“Dean plays pranks?” He asked excitedly and both omegas shook their heads vehemently but Gabriel was already plotting.

“Maybe he’s not such a bad guy afterall…”

Cas sprinted after Dean. Probably to keep him as far away from Gabriel as possible.

“Don’t even think about it,” warned Sam and Gabriel plastered on an innocent smile.

“Think about what?”

Sam rolled his eyes but wandered over to his lover and nuzzled his cheek.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “For trying.”

Gabriel licked the omega’s nose. “You know I’ll do anything to make you happy, right?”

Sam pushed his head under the alpha’s chin.

“I think I do.”

Gabriel smiled and curled around the omega.

“One way or another, I’m going to prove it to you.”

* * *

A little distance away, a figure lurked in the shadows of the trees. It smirked. Dean Winchester was soft. Weak. He cared too much and let that omega brother of his get his way too often.
The figure chuckled as it thought about the Rover it had sent to disrupt the peace.

Soon certain pack members would be on their own during the evenings and that’s when the real fun would start. After toying with them it would focus on its real goal.

Because Dean was weak and let his brother get his way.

And soon, Sam Winchester would be alone.

Chapter End Notes

Exams are finally over and I am back! It might take me a little while to get into this fic again, but I've got a plan and I'm going to try to stick to it! How are y'all?
“I smell fresh meat.”

Gadreel rolled his eyes as Pam grinned at his and Hannah’s approach. Hannah glanced up towards Gadreel in panic, but the alpha shook his head gently.

“So, you’ve never been fishing before? Well, we’ll soon change that, won’t we Gadreel?” Hummed Pam with a smirk and Hannah tilted her head as she got closer to the beta.

“How did she know it was us?” Whispered Hannah and Pam arched an eyebrow.

“I’m blind not deaf, child.”

Hannah ducked her head ashamedly. “Apologies, ma’am. I’ve just never…”

“Met a blind wolf?” Finished Pam amusedly as the omega trailed off. “It shows.”

Hannah winced and Gadreel carefully nudged her shoulder to show the beta wasn’t offended.

“I recognise scents,” explained Pam with a patient smile. “I don’t know yours but I’ve been told Gadreel has been escorting a very pretty omega by the name of ‘Hannah’ around these parts, so I assumed that was you.”

Hannah glanced away shyly at the compliment and Gadreel smiled softly.

“Alright, let’s see if you’re any better than Castiel at fishing. Shouldn’t be too hard; he fell in the river the first time.”

Gadreel would have taken that as his cue to leave, except Hannah was still sticking close to his side and he couldn’t bring himself to leave the omega when she was looking so lost, so he followed Pam silently. If the beta noticed he had intended on leaving, she never said anything.

“Fishing in Spring is a little different to Winter. For one thing, there’s no ice to break,” explained Pam as they neared the river bank. “However, that means you’ve got to catch the fish when they’re either in shallow water, or when they jump upstream. It’s harder than it sounds.”

The beta’s ears pricked up at the gentle crash of waves and she followed the sound until she reached a small ledge where water was flowing over its end like a small waterfall. A smile tugged at her lips as she carefully made her way onto it and Hannah watched curiously as a salmon leapt over the ridge and continued its journey upstream.

Pam’s ears twitched at the sound of its tail thrashing as it hit the water and she braced herself on the ledge, putting her nose to good use.

Another salmon broke the surface of the water, but it never made it up the ledge because Pam bounced upwards to catch it and she smiled when it floundered in her mouth for a few moments before going limp.

Hannah’s eyes widened in awe. She had never seen anyone fish like that. The wolves in her old pack had preferred to keep away from fishing because they were never very successful and the fish
had usually slipped between their paws unscathed. Pam was fascinating to watch, especially when she was visually impaired.

“You’re amazing,” murmured Hannah as the beta padded over and Pam chuckled softly.

“Years of practice since I was a pup. Don’t worry, I’ve made my fair share of mistakes over the years. Would you like to try?”

“Okay,” replied Hannah as she glanced at another salmon jumping the ridge. She trotted over and carefully made her way to the middle of the ledge.

“You’ve got to predict the path the fish will take,” advised Pam. “Don’t focus on where it already is.”

Hannah stored the advice and waited for a fish to leap out of the water. She lunged for it, but she hadn’t calculated its trajectory correctly and its tail grazed her muzzle before it plopped into the water and shot off out of sight.

With a frown, Hannah braced herself once more and waited for another fish to break the surface. This time, she caught the fish, but it swung its tail and the force of it made her open her jaw reflexively in shock and the salmon motored off into the distance.

“Almost,” encouraged Gadreel quietly. “It will fight back so just keep a firm hold.”

Hannah nodded and leapt for the next fish.

However, she overshot and lost her balance, slipping off the ledge and into the water below. She yelped as she fell and every sound was muffled as her head was forced under the river by the current. Her nose filled with water and she closed her eyes when they began to sting and suddenly, she was reminded of being chased by a couple of alphas from her old pack.

“You can’t protect her forever, Balthy,” sneered a dirty brown alpha, teeth bared in challenge as Balthazar growled from his position in front of Hannah. The bronze and white wolf was battered; bruised and bleeding from being attacked so often by these particular alphas, but he was determined to protect his mate.

“Come on. Just let us have a bit of fun with her and we promise you won’t get hurt. All you have to do is step aside,” leered a great black alpha; far stronger and larger than Balthazar.

Balthazar snarled at them, backing up and forcing Hannah with him. The omega glanced behind her when she felt water seep between her toes.

They were backing into a river. One with a deep centre and a powerful current that made the water froth and crash against the rocks littered within it.

“Nowhere to run,” rumbled the brown alpha as he and his friend advanced on their victims.

The river was too loud in Hannah’s ears. She couldn’t think; could barely hear her mate’s snarls as they backed further into the river. She could feel the current trying to knock her off balance.

“Leave her alone,” snapped Balthazar, ears low and teeth exposed.

The black wolf chuckled. “If you insist,” he drawled before lunging for Balthazar.
Hannah cried out as her mate was forced under the water, their attacker clamping his jaws around the bronze and white alpha’s back. Balthazar yelped, but he slashed his claw against his rival’s underbelly and the black alpha released his back before diving for him again. This time, Balthazar was prepared and he clawed at his enemy’s face, kicking him harshly in the stomach as he gasped for air.

The black wolf cried out before shoving Balthazar back under the water and the pair grappled as they each tried to push one another under the fierce waves. Hannah made to help her lover, but something leapt onto her back and slammed her head beneath the water.

Her eyes stung and she couldn’t breathe and the crashing of the waves was muffled by the density of the water, but she was helpless as the brown alpha forced her to remain underwater. She didn’t know where Balthazar was and that was what she was most concerned about. Had her mate lost his life trying to protect her?

She inhaled water in her panic and began to choke, more water filling her mouth and she thrashed and flailed beneath her attacker.

He finally let her up for air and she gasped desperately, eyes wild as she looked around for her mate.

She was forced under the water again, unable to think and breathe as the brown wolf above her shifted. She was horrified when he yanked her into a presenting pose and she cried out as his claws bit into her sides. Once again, her mouth filled with water and she felt as though she was going to drown.

The brown wolf dragged her head up again, letting her breathe and that’s when she spotted Balthazar staring at her in horror from a deeper part of the river, waves slamming against his muzzle and making him cough as the black wolf kept him still from behind.

She noticed the black alpha was rutting backwards and forwards slightly and if she looked carefully enough, she could see Balthazar’s body rocking with him, pain and humiliation glinting in his eyes.

She sobbed at what their once happy lives had become.

Then she was forced back under the water as a fully-formed knot slammed into her.

Jaws clamped around her neck and she wailed, throat filling with water as she writhed, trying to escape her attacker. She was dragged to the surface and she gulped in air, coughing and choking on the water she’d swallowed. Her attacker moved to scruff her neck as though she was a pup and she howled loudly, begging for someone to help her as she kicked out at the other wolf’s body.

The other wolf grunted in pain but didn’t release her and she fought harder, claws slashing at the wolf she could now smell was an alpha.

…Except… that scent was familiar. ‘Safe,’ her subconscious supplied. ‘Kind,’ it begged desperately, willing her to understand. This alpha wasn’t like those other alphas.

She fell still as she frowned, brain whirring to put all the information together and her eyes blew wide in surprise as she was gently deposited on the riverbank.

There was another scent. A beta. Concerned beta. Confused beta. That was familiar too.
Her vision was blurred from the water, voices around her still muffled but after a few moments, her senses began to clear and she realised someone was calling her name.

Soft voice. Worried, gentle.

She blinked a few times and Gadreel’s panicked face came into focus. His muzzle was bleeding.


She nodded, head too heavy and uncoordinated, tongue thick in her mouth.

Gadreel sighed quietly in relief. “Are you alright? What happened?”

Hannah shook her head, water clearing from her ears and nose. “I… I don’t know,” she admitted, frowning at her elevated pulse.

“The water wasn’t that deep and the current’s not strong; we thought you’d get up but you started to contort as if you were fitting,” murmured Gadreel, concern lingering in his voice.

She glanced up at his worried expression and guilt wormed at her insides as blood trickled down his muzzle. Had she caused that?

“I… I had a flashback… to my old pack.”

Gadreel stiffened as Pam scowled.

“They… they were…” Hannah trailed off, unable to finish and Pam shook her head.

“Come on. Let’s get you back home and warmed up. I think that’s enough fishing for today.”

Hannah nodded wordlessly and was grateful when beta and alpha sandwiched her between them, worry radiating in their scents.

When they returned to the camp, a few wolves looked up at her curiously, but Pam and Gadreel paid them no heed as they hustled the omega into her shelter.

Gadreel trotted off, returning a few moments later with his own warm blanket and he tucked it around the omega as Pam cleaned a few reeds from the tricolour wolf’s coat.

“Is it okay if I tell Jody what happened?” Asked Pam. “Just so she can check you over later when you’re feeling a little better?” The beta didn’t say that she would have to inform Dean or Sam what had happened because she had a feeling Hannah wouldn’t want people to make a big fuss over her when she was already so timid.

The omega nodded shakily before realising Pam couldn’t see her.

“Okay,” she whispered and Pam smiled reassuringly before padding away.

Gadreel looked conflicted. He wasn’t sure whether his presence would make Hannah even more nervous; she hadn’t reacted too well when he’d jumped into the river to pull her out. Maybe his alpha scent would distress her further.

He was surprised when Hannah whimpered softly.

“Your muzzle,” she said and Gadreel licked at a cool spot on his muzzle, only to grimace at the coppery tang of blood. That must have been where Hannah had swiped a claw at him in panic.
“Don’t worry about it,” he murmured before tilting his head. “Are you okay? Are you unhurt?”

“. . . Yes,” whispered Hannah, lowering her gaze as she rested her head on her paws. She couldn’t get the terrible memory out of her head.

Gadreel frowned in disbelief, but he didn’t want to press the matter. There was no need to upset Hannah any further.

When the omega seemed unwilling to speak, Gadreel cleared his throat lightly.

“Do you wish to be alone? I wouldn’t like to make you uncomfortable.”

Hannah eyed him carefully for a moment before shaking her head.

“Stay with me?” She pleaded and Gadreel raised an eyebrow but nodded. He tilted his head when she shuffled over for him and he slowly made his way into her shelter, lying beside her.

After a second of hesitation where she looked incredibly nervous and Gadreel wondered if maybe staying had been a bad idea, the alpha’s eyes widened when a tongue lapped gently at his sore muzzle, cleaning the blood from it.

Once the blood had been removed, Hannah pulled away and lowered her gaze nervously.

This was a big step for her, Gadreel realised. She was usually so terrified of alphas, frightened of how they’d react if she did something wrong, so her reaching out to him to lick his muzzle in what was considered a rather intimate act must have needed a lot of courage. Showing care for an alpha must have gone against every instinct Hannah had.

With a small, pleased smile, Gadreel lightly licked the cold river water from Hannah’s head and neck.

She stiffened at first but eventually relaxed when it was clear he wasn’t going to harm her or force her to pleasure him. She closed her eyes and leaned into his warmth.

Protective instincts booting up at seeing a distressed omega, Gadreel gingerly placed a paw around her and to his delight, Hannah snuggled into him with a tiny smile.

As he cleared the water from her fur, he couldn’t help but scent her and his lips tugged upwards at the smell of buttercups and blueberries. A sweet scent for a sweet omega.

Eventually, they settled. Gadreel curled protectively around the smaller omega and Hannah had to admit she hadn’t felt this safe in a long time. This alpha had saved her from drowning, not even letting go when she fought against him.

“A couple of alphas from my old pack nearly drowned me and Balthazar,” she heard herself say. She wasn’t really sure why she’d said that but she’d never been able to talk to anyone other than her mate about her fears and now he was dead. She knew she shouldn’t bottle up her emotions but she didn’t trust people easily and telling other wolves about her vulnerabilities was a careless way of getting hurt.

Gadreel’s ears twitched and she knew he was listening. There was something different about Gadreel. Something that reminded her a little of Balthazar and her instincts told her that she could trust this alpha not to hurt her.

She was so tired of being scared and alone.
“They wanted to knot me but Balthazar wouldn’t let them. He protected me and even though they were bigger and stronger than him, he still fought them. We were already battered and starving but even when everyone else was looking out for themselves, Balthazar always made sure I was safe. He gave me his portion of food when he thought I looked too weak; he fought against the pack leader when he wanted me to pleasure him; he always stood up and defended me when there were fights.

“I tried to do as much for him as he did for me, but he was always so good to me, so protective. That day when those two alphas wanted me, they chased us into a river. Balthazar fought with one of them but he was too weak and injured and he was overpowered. He was pushed under the water and I tried to help but the other alpha pushed me under as well.

“When I was allowed to breathe, Balthazar was barely keeping above the water. The other alpha had him pinned and forced him to watch as I was knotted. As punishment, the other alpha knotted Balthazar and I was pushed under the water again.”

Hannah choked back a sob. “The worst part was the look in his eyes. He was in so much pain and he was so humiliated, yet he was more bothered about me. He kept staring at me as though it was all his fault and when we finally got back to camp, all he kept saying was he was sorry that he hadn’t protected me and ‘what kind of alpha couldn’t take care of their mate’? Everything he did for me and he didn’t believe he was good enough.

“I wish… I wish I could tell him how much he means to me. How proud and lucky I was to have him as my mate. I wish I could show him one last time how much I love him…” She whined softly as she let her head flop onto her paws, tears rolling down her cheeks.

“I miss him,” she whispered despairingly.

There was a soft growl and Hannah blinked, turning to find Gadreel scowling and rumbling in anger. Hannah gulped subtly, not sure whether the alpha was annoyed with her but then Gadreel tugged her closer and nuzzled her ear.

“Your mate sounds like a wonderful alpha,” he murmured fiercely. “A very special wolf just like you. I wish I could’ve met him. I wish I could’ve met you both under happier circumstances.”

Hannah’s heart fluttered. “He would’ve liked you. He would’ve loved this pack. I wish we could’ve been a part of this pack instead.”

Gadreel rubbed his chin over Hannah’s head, transferring the Winchester pack scent onto her. Hannah cuddled into him with a whimper of approval.

“I don’t know how anyone could treat their family so cruelly. If I could change things, I would make sure you and Balthazar never had to come into contact with that pack. I wish I could so neither of you had to suffer,” growled Gadreel.

Hannah’s chest did something weird and she pressed her nose into his neck, scenting him deeply. He smelled like oak and roasted chestnuts. It was a homely smell; comforting and safe.

Gadreel curled around her a little tighter. This omega didn’t deserve all she’d been through. She didn’t deserve a dead mate and a broken heart. She didn’t deserve a fear of alphas and what they had done to her.

He knew his pack leader instincts were firing up again but he couldn’t help it. There was a distraught omega beside him and she needed comfort. He needed to prove to her that not all alphas were like the ones she had escaped from.
He bared his throat and Hannah paused before moving to scent at the exposed area. Her tail wiggled and Gadreel smiled because he realised Hannah liked his scent.

“I will never hurt you, Hannah,” whispered Gadreel. “I promise. You don’t ever have to be afraid of me.”

Hannah was quiet for a few moments. She had been given that assurance before by the alphas in her old pack and it had quickly proved a lie, however there was something different about Gadreel that made Hannah feel as though she could trust him. The alpha had always been open with her, never lying to her and even when she had hurt him when he had rescued her from the river, Gadreel hadn’t tried to intimidate or punish her. He had merely been concerned for her.

“Okay,” she murmured eventually as she pressed into him, closing her eyes as she soaked up his body heat.

Gadreel gently lay his head over her shoulders, missing the omega’s small smile, and Hannah felt safer than she’d felt in a very long time as she dosed off underneath her new friend.

Gadreel arced a paw around her and watched over her, refusing to move until she awoke.

* * *

The sky had long faded to black, stars twinkling like diamonds around the huge moon. It was a clear night; peaceful and quiet so Castiel wasn’t sure what could’ve woken him other than the fact that Dean wasn’t next to him.

He licked the sleeping pups between his paws and carefully stood, slinking out of the shelter and smiling fondly when he saw his lover sitting to attention a little distance away, chatting softly to Benny.

Cas stretched and plodded over to the pair, smiling at Benny when the alpha flicked an ear in acknowledgement.

“Is that an Angel I see before me?” Commented Dean and Cas shook his head in amusement before leaning in to lick his lover’s cheek in greeting.

“Why’re you up so late?” Murmured Dean as the omega settled into his side and he nuzzled Cas’ ear affectionately.

“I think I just missed you,” whispered Cas and Dean’s gaze softened as he curled his tail around the omega.

“Hey, no PDA whilst I’m here,” huffed Benny from somewhere to their left and they chuckled quietly, Dean making a point of tugging Cas closer.

Benny gagged and turned his back on them.

“Pups asleep?” Asked Dean as he nosed at his lover’s head.

Cas nodded contentedly, closing his eyes as he enjoyed the pleasurable sensations of being looked after. “They miss you when you’re out here.”
Dean sighed. “I miss them too. I miss you.”

It was the eighth night of watch duty and so far, nothing had happened. Gabriel and Sam, Dean and Benny, and Gadreel and Crowley rotated on alternate nights on guard duty, with Bobby coming to check on each pair every so often, yet everyone was beginning to think it was a waste of time. There were no strange scents or foreign wolves or Rovers lurking around and the ‘guards’ felt more than a little useless.

Still, they would continue to guard the camp until Jo and Charlie came off their heats. Better safe than sorry, right?

“Never thought I’d see the day when Dean Winchester starts acting all domestic,” chuckled Benny and Dean quirked a smile at Cas.

“You’re just jealous,” Dean teased and Benny’s tail swayed.

“Well, you’re not wrong. Still, hearing you gush about pups and the omega who’s got you wrapped around his little finger… feels like some strange dream world.”

“’S not a bad thing,” murmured Dean as he glanced at Cas fondly. “Having a family. Never thought I’d get a chance to have one, yet here I am.” Then he rolled his eyes. “And I don’t ‘gush’.”

“Yeah, you do,” smirked Benny, tail thumping the floor in amusement when a twig was fired at the back of his head.

Cas quirked a grin before settling back down into Dean’s side.

“You should tell Jo,” he commented and Benny paused for a fraction of a second before flicking a dismissive ear.

“Tell her what?”

Dean licked Cas’ jaw. “Tell her how you feel, man. In case you’ve not noticed, she’s crazy over you too. You’re the only one she flirts with so… boldly.”

Benny sat a little straighter whilst trying to seem disinterested.

“I doubt that. She told me she flirts with anything that’s single and looks interesting.”

Dean smirked. “You’re single and you’re very interesting.”

Benny hesitated. “…I’m not interesting. I’m just an average, old, traditional alpha.”

Cas raised an unimpressed eyebrow. “Michael, Lucifer and Raphael Novak are traditional alphas. They kill pups that threaten their own offspring, they humiliate their younger alpha brother because he’s small and has an unusually sweet scent, and they’re currently trying to kill their nephew because their youngest omega brother is unmated.” He tilted his head. “Have you done any of those things recently?”

Benny shook his head slowly and Cas leaned into Dean when the alpha nuzzled his ear protectively.

“You’re the best hunter we have alongside Jo, so you’re definitely not average,” continued Cas, “and you’re a year younger than me so I’ll personally be offended if you say you’re old.”

Dean chuckled. “You are old, Cas.”
“Shut up, pup,” teased Cas. Dean was only four years younger than his lover, but the alpha loved to rub it in on occasion.

Benny was silent for a few moments, a pensive expression taking over his face and Dean offered him a small smile.

“Just tell her. I can guarantee you’ll be happier.” He glanced at Cas adoringly. “It’s nice knowing there’s someone to support you.”

Cas licked his muzzle and Dean nuzzled his omega’s cheek.

Benny watched them thoughtfully before finally nodding.

“We’ll see,” he murmured softly, then turned away to give Dean and Cas a little privacy.

“When I get into the shelter later, I expect lots of love,” whispered Dean and Cas chuckled as he snuggled into his alpha.

“If the pups are awake, I’m almost certain they’ll want to be close to you,” he hummed. “And I definitely will.” He licked Dean’s muzzle once more. “We weren’t joking when we said we miss you.”

Dean rumbled quietly when Cas pressed his head under his chin. The alpha tugged him closer and smiled proudly when the omega relaxed into him and closed his eyes. He still couldn’t believe how safe he could make Cas feel.

He licked his lover’s head gently, soothingly, encouraging him to get some rest whilst he watched over the camp and Cas looked to be dozing off when suddenly, his nose twitched.

The omega shot upright, eyes wide and ears erect as he sniffed the air.

Dean raised an eyebrow when Cas stood, looking very alert and almost wary. He sniffed furiously, brows furrowed and Dean tilted his head with a frown.

“Smell something?”

Cas was quiet for a few seconds and Benny turned to face him, immediately tensing because Cas had a fantastic sense of smell and if he said there was something in the air, then they needed to be ready.

Dean slowly stood and moved towards his lover’s side, keeping his voice low.

“What have you got?”

“Pack,” muttered Cas with a confused frown and Dean bristled, a hundred questions flying through his mind.

“Can you tell how many? Or who?”

Cas shook his head. “A dozen, maybe? Their scents are off. I don’t recognise the pack scent and it smells wrong.”

“Wrong as in how?” Asked Dean and Cas pulled a face.

“I can’t smell any alphas, betas or omegas. They’re just scents; earthy ones but they’re definitely wolves and the pack scent is very weak, if not absent.”
Dean frowned, puzzled. How could a pack and its members have no identifying scents?

“Want me to wake the others?” Asked Benny and Dean was about to say yes when he noticed a lone grey and reddish wolf staring straight at them from a thicket of trees a little distance away.

Dean tried not to growl. This wasn’t a Rover because its pack had followed and he didn’t know what their intentions were. There was no point in starting a fight if the other pack had stumbled upon them by accident. If they weren’t hostile, Dean didn’t want to give them a reason to be.

The strange wolf continued to stare at them for a few moments before turning and trotting away.

Benny and Dean glanced at each other.

“Warn the others,” Dean said but just as Benny was padding over to Sam’s shelter, five grey and reddish wolves lined up in the same space as the original one had, all staring at the awake occupants of the camp. Benny paused and his ears flattened when seven more lined up behind them.

He slowly continued his journey towards Sam’s shelter, but the strange wolves spotted him and growled lowly, making him freeze.

Dean watched the scene with a scowl. So much for not hostile. He subtly placed himself in front of Castiel, shielding him from view of the intruders as his alpha instincts screamed at him to protect his lover.

Then, Dean caught wind of their scents and his eyes widened.

The pack were all of similar colours and the members were quite noticeably smaller and leaner than Dean’s pack. Their ears twitched constantly and their noses wriggled as they gazed at Dean, Benny and Cas and some lowered their heads and licked their lips before raising them again and huffing quietly.

Their actions were jerky and quick and they panted far too much for an atmosphere that wasn’t all that warm.

Dean was conflicted. He now knew who this pack was but he wasn’t sure what to do. If he woke his pack, the other wolves would definitely take it as an act of aggression and although Dean’s pack greatly outnumbered them, the other wolves would have the advantage in that they would take Dean’s pack off-guard whilst they were still waking up and he knew how dangerous this pack could be when they fought. On the other hand, the intruders were unpredictable and even if Dean didn’t wake his pack and did nothing to warrant aggression, the intruders might attack them anyway.

For a few moments, nobody moved. Then the red and grey pack began to trot towards them and Dean and Benny stiffened, Castiel watching on curiously.

The omega gasped quietly as the intruders neared them.

“Their eyes,” he breathed in uncertainty and Dean sidled a little closer to his lover.

The intruders’ eyes were wrong. There were no whites in them and they had a large, black pupil surrounded by a ring of vibrant, almost ethereal gold. Cas still couldn’t pick up any alpha, beta or omega scents.

“Timber wolves,” muttered Dean by way of explanation and Cas’ eyes widened.

So these were non-shifting wolves? The feral ones Dean had told him about; the ones that usually
The pack of timber wolves slowed as they reached the camp and Cas was alarmed when he detected a hint of fear in both Dean and Benny’s scents. He glanced towards the shelter where the pups were resting.

“Hello,” Dean called but the other wolves ignored him, some pushing their noses to the floor and grunting or huffing quietly to one another as they tried to gather as much information as they could about Dean’s pack.

“Hello,” Dean tried a little louder, hoping it would wake his own pack and warn them that they weren’t alone.

He was relieved to see a few of his friends stick their heads out tiredly from the entrances to their shelters, before their eyes widened and they were scrambling out into the open.

The timber wolves growled and barked warningly and the sound was enough to wake the remaining members of Dean’s pack.

Sam was immediately by his brother’s side, Gabriel watching the intruders in bewilderment as he crawled out of Sam’s shelter.

The timber wolves licked their lips and flattened their ears slightly upon seeing the size of the Winchester pack, but they raised their heads high to make themselves look bigger as they grumbled and snorted.

Concerned for his pups, Cas tried to slink towards his shelter. He didn’t know much about timber wolves but Dean seemed more wary than usual and he’d already told Cas they were very unpredictable. However, once the smaller wolves spotted where he was heading, they snarled and curled their lips up at him, picking up the pace as they breached the perimeter of the camp.

Cas froze and Dean glanced at him worriedly, knowing exactly where his lover’s destination had been.

Eventually, the feral pack halted a mere four metres from where Dean was standing.

The packs sized each other up for a few seconds before one red and grey wolf, a little bigger than the others, stepped forwards.

“Who’s your alpha?” He demanded, voice a low growl.

“I am,” replied Dean, ducking his head slightly to show he wasn’t looking for a fight.

“Then you’re accountable for the slaughter of one of our pups,” snarled the lead timber wolf, baring his teeth at Dean.

The Winchesters’ eyebrows rocketed upwards before they glanced at each other.

“We’re sorry to hear about your pup, but we haven’t been anywhere near your pack,” said Sam, trying to keep his voice soft, but the alpha timber wolf snapped at him, his pack barking and snarling from behind him until Sam was forced to back off, ears lowered.

Dean scowled, not liking their intimidation tactics.

“My brother’s right. We’ve not killed any of your pups. We didn’t even know you were here.”
“You attacked us,” insisted the lead timber wolf. “Now you must suffer the consequences.”

A couple of young males broke away from the pack, noses low as they scented the camp and Cas tensed when one sniffed at his shelter, pausing at its entrance.

Dean had one eye on the wolf as it sniffed at the shelter’s opening and he growled when the intruder pressed his head inside. The lead wolf snarled at Dean, but the alpha paid him no heed, instincts too focused on the wolf that was threatening his pups.

When the young wolf pushed inside the shelter, Cas sprinted over and slid in after him, growling and snapping at him threateningly until the smaller wolf scrabbled out.

Samandriel and Ben looked terrified as they pressed into Cas and the omega licked their heads in apology and soothing before planting himself firmly in the entrance to the shelter and snarling at the young timber wolf still lingering nearby.

“Keep your pack away from my family,” growled Dean as he focused on the other pack’s alpha. “We’ve done nothing to warrant hostility.”

“On the contrary. Tonight, you killed one of my family,” hissed the other leader as his pack bared their teeth. “You sent one of your females in to kill my pup.”

“My pack have been here all night. None of them are missing,” huffed Dean.

“Liar,” snarled the alpha timber wolf and Dean narrowed his eyes as Gabriel tilted his head.

“What colour was this female?” He asked curiously, but the timber wolves looked at him oddly, seemingly confused.

“My pack has always respected your people,” stated the foreign leader. “We have never bothered you; have never interfered with your strange customs and scents, and we have tried to keep to ourselves. But we will not ignore an attack against our pack. We do not desire a fight but you have given us no choice.”

“We don’t wish to fight either. I assure you we never laid a claw on any of your pups. We don’t kill pups,” argued Dean, desperate for them to understand. He didn’t want more blood on his hands; they didn’t have any more medical supplies and fighting timber wolves could only end horrifically. He wouldn’t put his pack at risk, especially when they were being blamed for something they hadn’t done.

“There are no other shifter packs in this area. The wolf that attacked us was definitely one of yours. Her scent was too strong to be one of our people,” said the other leader. “Do not try to deceive us.”

“What colour was she?” Gabriel tried again. “It would be helpful if we knew what she looked like.”

Once more, the timber wolves glanced at him oddly, the leader not seeming to understand.

Sam crept over to his lover. “Monochrome vision,” he muttered. “They don’t understand what ‘colour’ is.”

Gabriel snapped his mouth shut, embarrassed.

“I will not pretend to understand your language,” growled the other leader. “Your culture confuses us.” He glanced in distaste at the shelters littering the camp. “All I can tell you is the female left a scent of smoke and fire within my territory, the blood of my pup smeared over the ground.”
Dean grimaced. As much as these timber wolves rubbed him up the wrong way, he couldn’t deny they had a right to be distressed and furious. If anyone had laid a claw on Ben or Samandriel, Dean would’ve been willing to kill just about anything.

However, ‘smoke and fire’ were very alpha-like scents and there were no female alphas in Dean’s pack. He shook his head.

“I’m truly sorry to hear about the fate of your pup, but you must believe me when I say there is no one in my pack with that scent. Scent us if you don’t trust me, but your attacker isn’t a part of my pack.”

The other leader looked wary, but when Dean gestured for his friends and family to line up to be scented, the timber wolves slowly began to sniff at each shifter, some wrinkling their muzzles or turning away in disgust at the strong scents their sensitive noses weren’t accustomed to.

Eventually, the timber wolves pulled away, looking a little less aggressive.

“There are no other shifters in this area,” rumbled their leader. “How do we know you’re not hiding her? She might be here and you’re protecting her.”

“Scent my territory and you’ll find she’s not here,” replied Dean. “I promise we wouldn’t kill your pups.”

The other leader didn’t look too pleased and it was clear he didn’t trust Dean’s words, black eyes cold and disbelieving.

“You have ways of hiding scents. We’ve heard of them before. You put them in clear containers and they look like water but you spray them over yourselves and they give you new scents. Your people are known for their magic and taboos.”

When it was apparent these wolves weren’t going to take his word alone, Dean sighed. He had to follow their customs if he wanted his pack to walk away unscathed, but the unpredictable nature of these wolves narrowed his options and anything he did would be risky.

With a subtle gulp and a steadying breath, Dean slowly bared his throat to their leader, hoping it would prove how certain he was that his pack had nothing to do with the attack on their pup.

If this had been a pack of shifters, Dean never would have exposed his throat, but he knew the timber wolves didn’t want to take his pack or his omegas, so he wasn’t putting his family in danger; only himself.

He saw the rest of his pack stiffen, each waiting with bated breaths to see what the timber wolf alpha would do and from the corner of his eye, he caught Cas’ ears lie flat to his head, the omega watching him in fear.

Immediately, the other timber wolves began snarling and baring their teeth as their leader shot forwards and poised his open jaw barely an inch from Dean’s windpipe. Dean closed his eyes as Sam took a step forward, but the lead alpha whirled on the younger Winchester and gnashed his teeth at him, black eyes flashing dangerously.

Sam forced himself to stay still and the other leader returned to Dean, pressing his nose deep into his throat and sniffing for a few seconds, growling intimidatingly at the show of submission. However, once he’d committed Dean’s scent to memory for future use, he slowly pulled away and Dean sighed as his pack closed their eyes in relief.
Then the lead timber wolf surged forwards and sunk his teeth into Dean’s neck.

Dean howled in a mixture of surprise and pain as agony blossomed around the puncture site and Sam leaped towards the pair, determined to separate them, but the alpha timber wolf had already moved away and was huffing and grunting at his pack.

The intruders quickly turned on their heels and sprinted away from the camp without a backwards glance, howling in fury as they did so.

Sam whined as he tried to get a closer look at his brother’s wound but Dean shook his head.

“I’m fine. Just a warning nip,” he muttered. “Took me by surprise.”

“You’re bleeding,” protested Sam and Dean pulled a face.

“It’s not all that deep. He wasn’t trying to kill me; it was just a warning bite.”

“You didn’t do anything wrong,” said Gabriel, shocked as he came to stand by Sam and he peered at the two holes in Dean’s neck. “Why would they warn you off if you haven’t done anything wrong?”

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line. “Timber wolves are unpredictable. They don’t always work logically and their customs can be a little strange. By me being submissive, it showed them that I was telling the truth and I was willing to risk my life for it. They could’ve killed me if they didn’t believe me, but apparently they did. Their leader biting me wasn’t only a warning for us to keep away from them, it was also a warning to his pack that he was the strongest of us and they needed to stay in line.”

Gabriel wrinkled his nose but it was Bobby who spoke next.

“And baring your throat to them was an idiotic idea, boy,” he growled. “You could’ve got yourself killed. You know how illogical they can be. Losing your life like that? There’s a fine line between brave and stupid.”

Dean sighed. “It’s better than having a full fight between our packs. It’s my job to keep my family safe and I’m not risking you over something we’ve not even done. I’m okay, aren’t I? None of you are hurt and I was only nipped. I think that was the best possible result, don’t you?”

Bobby huffed unhappily but said nothing and Dean offered a reassuring smile to his pack as Cas trotted over, the pups practically glued to his heels.

“I’m fine. Thanks for your concern, but I promise I’m okay. Go back to sleep; it’s late and we’ve got a hunt tomorrow,” announced Dean, Jody scowling at his wound before nodding tightly in agreement and the pack relaxed marginally at their medic’s reassurance.

“If that starts stinging or changing colour, you come straight to me, got it?” Whispered Jody and Dean nodded.

“You’re right, it isn’t that deep, but I don’t like the idea of you walking around with two holes in your neck. Unfortunately, I’ve not got anything to treat it with until we do a city run, so unless it becomes an emergency, you’re going to have to wait for it to heal,” murmured Jody, displeased.

Dean nodded and smiled fondly at her. “I’ll live,” he chuckled. “Now go back to sleep.”

He watched her and the rest of his pack shuffle back to their shelters and he turned to find Sam and Gabriel lingering as Cas and the pups waited beside them.
Sam frowned as Dean approached and the alpha quirked his lips upwards.

“I’m fine, Sam. I promise. It doesn’t even hurt anymore.”

The omega scowled at the punctures before turning to Cas.

“Make sure he doesn’t do anything else stupid,” he grumbled before leading Gabriel to the centre of the camp and sitting beside Benny.

Dean raised an eyebrow and opened his mouth to ask why Sam and Gabriel hadn’t gone back to the shelter, when his brother narrowed his eyes.

“If you think you’re staying on watch whilst your neck is pouring blood, I’m going to get Jody to check if you actually have some brain cells.” He gestured to Cas. “Rest and tell him you’re sorry for making him have a heart attack.”

Dean glanced at Castiel and for the first time, he realised the omega looked shaken, remains of fear glinting behind his eyes. The pups looked even more terrified.

Dean grimaced and led his little family into their shelter, nuzzling the pups’ heads when they pressed into his side, hiding their faces as they tried to assure themselves that Dean was still alive. Cas curled around him protectively and began to lick at his wound, and he leaned into his lover as the blood was cleaned from his fur.

“I thought he’d…” Cas trailed off, not able to continue for a few moments. “When you howled, I thought he’d…”

“We thought you weren’t coming back,” whimpered Samandriel, looking up at Dean with big blue eyes which looked a lot like his father’s.

“I’m sorry,” Dean whispered. “I’m here though. I’m okay. I’m safe.”

Samandriel and Ben cuddled into Dean and the alpha wrapped a paw around them.

Once all the blood had been cleaned away, Cas gently pressed his nose into Dean’s throat and just breathed in his scent. Pine and leather. Everything was okay as long as he could smell that.

Dean curled around the pups and Cas wrapped himself protectively around the alpha. He didn’t know what he’d do without Dean anymore and it wasn’t something he liked to think about. He lay his head over his lover’s shoulders as Samandriel and Ben pawed at Dean until he leaned down so they could lick his muzzle.

Dean’s heart melted and he licked their heads as they made themselves comfortable in his fur.

“I love you,” whispered Samandriel, voice slightly shaky as he rubbed his head against the other alpha’s side and Ben nodded in agreement, fear lingering in his eyes.

“So do I. I don’t want you to leave us.”

Dean tugged them around to his chest and nuzzled them as his instincts insisted they were his pups.

“I love you too,” he murmured as they smiled and pressed closer to him. “And I’m not going anywhere. I’m staying right here with my family.”

Cas shifted to lick at his jaw as the pups curled around each other and began to doze off, finally satisfied that Dean was safe.
“We can’t lose you,” Castiel whispered. “You mean far too much to us and seeing that timber wolf attacking you… I know you did it to protect the pack but I… I can’t…”

“I’m here,” murmured Dean, snuggling into his lover. “I’m right here.”

Cas exhaled deeply. “I love you so much, Dean.”

“I love you too, Angel,” smiled Dean as his heart fluttered. Sometimes he still found it hard to believe that he had such a close-knit family when he’d gone so long on his own.

Cas finally settled down and closed his eyes, focusing on the gentle rise and fall of Dean’s body as he breathed and the alpha fell asleep with a smile on his face.

* * *

Hidden by a patch of thick bushes, a figure observed the camp silently. Its mouth drew down as it scowled. It had hoped that by killing the timber wolves’ pup, the Winchester pack would have had a fight on their hands, but Dean was a quick thinker and had calmed the distressed feral wolves.

The figure growled to itself. It had thought that the timber wolf had sunk his teeth into Dean’s throat, but it had only been a warning bite and the Winchester’s leader was still alive.

Its plan had not run as smoothly as it had hoped, but at least it had scared the Winchester pack and they were now more than a little shaken.

Dean was very attached to those pups. So was Castiel and Sam and those were the three that deserved punishment. It had a special plan for Sam, but maybe it could toy with Dean and Castiel too after what they’d done to it.

It had already killed one pup. What was two more?

Chapter End Notes

Ooo look! Long chapter ;)
Chapter 44

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gadreel pricked his ears up at Dean’s approach. He was currently on watch duty with Crowley, so there was no one else up, yet the other alpha looked as though he had something on his mind and Gadreel stood to attention when the sandy wolf came to a halt in front of him.

“At ease soldier,” chuckled Dean as he sat and Gadreel relaxed. Whatever Dean had to say obviously wasn’t life-threatening, even if he should’ve been fast asleep by now. Gadreel tilted his head curiously.

“We need medical supplies,” began Dean. “We have absolutely nothing left in the kits and Jody’s been calling me ‘stupid’ for the past few weeks because we’ll be in a lot of trouble if anything attacks us. We need to do a city run, but the city’s two days walk there and two days back.”

The sandy alpha raised an eyebrow. “I was wondering if you’d like to take Hannah with you? She trusts you and after what happened at the river a couple of weeks ago, I thought it might be a bit of a distraction for her; something different to take her mind off the wild and all she’s suffered for a bit.”

Gadreel quirked a small smile at Dean’s thoughtfulness. This is why he loved being a part of the Winchester pack.

“It’ll be interesting visiting the city again. I’ve not been there for so long,” agreed Gadreel. “And I don’t think Hannah’s ever been.”

Dean’s tail swished. “Good. You’ll be able to show her around.”

Gadreel nodded. “Providing she says ‘yes’, when would you like us to leave?”

“ASAP,” replied Dean. “Maybe then Jody will finally get off my back about me being an ‘irresponsible pup’.”

Gadreel chuckled softly. That sounded exactly like their resident medic.

“I’ll ask Hannah when she wakes. Maybe we can leave this afternoon.” The grey and white alpha frowned. “Without meaning to sound rude, but why are you awake?” The dawn light hadn’t even filtered through the trees yet.

Dean pulled a face as he shifted restlessly from one paw to the other.

“Was thinking about what those timber wolves said the other day. A female alpha that’s going around killing pups? Who does that? How twisted do you have to be to kill innocent kids?”

Gadreel’s gaze softened. “You’re worried about Samandriel and Ben,” he stated and Dean glanced up at him.

“And Claire and Alex.”

Gadreel didn’t argue because he was sure Dean was worried about the girls too, but it was obvious that the other alpha saw Ben and Samandriel as his own pups now. If anyone hurt them, Dean would probably kill a whole pack out of revenge.
“We’ll keep them safe,” promised Gadreel. “No pup slaughterer will get near them.”

Dean nodded unhappily, mind racing. It was clear he was distressed.

“Is there something else bothering you?” Asked Gadreel curiously and Dean frowned at his paws.

“…’Smoke and fire’. That scent accompanying a female alpha. A female alpha who just so happened to be lurking near our pack? One who’s psycho enough to kill pups for seemingly no reason at all? Does that sound like anyone we know?”

Gadreel hesitated as he caught on to Dean’s line of thinking.

“Ruby.”

Dean nodded with a concerned expression and Gadreel frowned.

“Maybe it’s just a coincidence. There’s got to be more female alphas in the world with smoky scents. You chased her off; surely Ruby wouldn’t be brash enough to stalk us? She knows she’s not welcome here.”

Dean shifted uncomfortably. “I don’t know. Maybe I’m just being paranoid. If it was her, I’m pretty sure she would target Sam, but Cas fought her too and she’s never liked me, and if it was her who killed that pup…” He trailed off and Gadreel’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“You think she’ll try to get to you by attacking the pups,” he finished.

Dean glanced at him. “Do you think I’m overthinking this? It might not even be her.”

“…I think you’re being cautious,” said Gadreel slowly. “You’re protecting your family.” He straightened. “I promise no one will hurt your family, Dean. You know I won’t let them.”

Dean had no doubts that Gadreel would sacrifice his life for him, Sam and now Castiel and their pups. The other alpha was highly loyal and protective of those he cared about and no matter how many times the Winchester brothers had tried to explain his life held equal value to theirs, Gadreel had not altered his opinion on his duty to protect the pack.

Dean stared at the other alpha for a few moments before frowning softly when a thought that had been niggling at his brain for months resurfaced.

“Why is that?” He asked quietly and Gadreel tilted his head in confusion. “I can understand Cas, but why me? Why would you protect me?”

Gadreel raised a puzzled eyebrow. “You’re my friend and pack leader.”

Dean shook his head. “How can you be okay with that though? After everything that’s happened, how on Earth can you still like me?”

Gadreel seemed nonplussed. “…I’m afraid I don’t understand.”

Dean sighed and glanced at Gadreel sadly. “You said you loved Cas.”

The grey and white wolf stiffened. “I don’t wish to challenge you. I never meant to say that; it was an accident and I told Castiel as much. I would never separate you from each other.”

Dean pulled a face. “Stop, Gadreel, that’s… that’s not what I meant. I’m not looking for a fight, I just… I don’t understand. You loved Cas just as much as I did… so why didn’t you fight for him?”
Gadreel blinked innocently. “Because he didn’t want me. He wanted you.”

Dean was taken aback by the answer. “But… I mean, seeing us together… that’s gotta hurt, man. Shouldn’t you at least be bitter or hateful of me or something? When Cas first told me what went down between you two, I thought I was gonna lose a pack member. I was pretty certain of it, actually, but then you stayed.”

Gadreel frowned. “I don’t hold any grudges against you or Castiel. Neither of you have done anything wrong.”

Dean shook his head. “I don’t get it. Any other alpha who felt what you felt for Cas would have challenged me, or at the very least left the pack because of their spite towards me, yet you didn’t do anything like that. In fact, you’re still best buddies with Cas and your attitude towards me has never changed. You’ve even told me you’re willing to sacrifice your life for both of us and the pups. Why?”

The grey and white alpha cocked an ear. “Because you deserve happiness just as much as Castiel does.”

Dean opened his mouth to protest but Gadreel quickly interrupted.

“Hear me out. When you found me dying in the snow, you had every right to kill me. You should have; I was a rival pack alpha, food was scarce and I was half-dead anyway. Any other leader would have killed me. Instead, you and Sam took me in and healed me even though I was a drain on your resources without being able to hunt or give anything back to the pack. Not only that, but you took me in not as a dangerous rival, but as a friend who you offered your trust to. When I was healed, you gave me a choice to stay or leave and when I chose to stay, you welcomed me into your family and treated me like every other member of your pack.

“You gave me a second chance at happiness; a second chance at a family when mine had abandoned me. Not only did you spare my life; you gave me a new one. You barely knew anything about me; I could’ve slaughtered you in your sleep and taken your pack for myself, but you put your faith and trust in me and let me stay despite knowing the risks,” explained Gadreel. “So how could I ever hold a grudge against you? And how could I ever hate you when you make Castiel so happy? Like I told him, love is a rare thing and to find it reciprocated is practically a miracle. I’m not upset or angry that you two want each other; I’m pleased for you. After everything you’ve both been through and done, you deserve some good in your lives. If you can find that in each other, then what right do I have to interfere or judge you for it?”

Dean’s jaw fell slack. It was actually incredibly heart-warming to hear what Gadreel had to say and Dean knew saving the alpha all those years ago had been one of the best decisions in his life.

“That’s why I would give my life for your family, Dean,” murmured Gadreel. “You gave me a second chance all those years ago; it’s only right that I make sure your lives aren’t cut down before they’ve properly begun.”

Dean was quiet for a few moments. “Your pack were awfully stupid to leave you.”

Gadreel glanced up at him in surprise and Dean shook his head.

“You’re the kindest alpha I’ve ever met. In fact, I think you’re the kindest wolf I’ve ever met and if anyone deserves happiness in this world, it’s you. I’m honoured to have you in this pack and you have no idea how grateful I am that you chose to view me as a friend rather than a rival. I’m glad Cas has you to support him.”
Gadreel smiled almost shyly as he ducked his head in gratitude.

“You mean a lot to this pack, Gadreel. I hope you know that,” huffed Dean and the other alpha’s smile grew.

“Thank you,” he mumbled, tail threatening to sway and Dean quirked his lips warmly.

Honestly, Gadreel was just thankful that Dean hadn’t decided to warn him to stay away from Cas. He was rather certain Dean would never do anything like that, but most other alphas in his position would so it was good to know he was still welcome within the pack.

“Alright, well, if you’re gonna leave this afternoon, make sure to get some sleep when dawn rolls around,” said Dean gruffly, diffusing the emotional atmosphere. “Don’t want you passing out from exhaustion on your way.”

“Yes, Sir,” chuckled Gadreel quietly and Dean grinned before sneaking a quick glance back to his shelter. Gadreel’s gaze softened.

“Go to them. Rest with them and I’ll see you this afternoon.”

Dean smiled gratefully at the grey and white alpha before trotting off towards his little family. He slithered into the shelter and curled back around Cas and their pups before drifting off to sleep.

* * *

Although a little nervous, Hannah hesitantly agreed to accompanying Gadreel to the city. Whilst she wasn’t fond of the idea of being alone with any alpha (although she was slowly learning to trust Gadreel) and the prospect of venturing into a dangerous city where they were at risk of being chased out at by angry civilised folk was a daunting one, her curiosity for an adventure won out. Gadreel seemed genuinely pleased by her willingness to step out of her comfort zone, proud even, and that was enough to make Hannah smile shyly as he told her when they would be leaving.

Before they started their journey, Dean gave Gadreel a list of drugs and equipment they needed as well as a quiet order to buy Hannah some personal items like a bag and blanket, before promising to pay the other alpha back when he next visited the city. Gadreel shook his head and told him they could split the bill, refusing to give Dean an opportunity to argue.

Jo offered Hannah some temporary clothes and a bag for their five-day outing and alpha and omega set off on their trip.

Throughout their journey, they chatted lightly about the city and their surroundings, and anything else impersonal that came to their minds, and Hannah couldn’t deny she felt safe with Gadreel when the alpha was on constant alert; ears twitching subtly and eyes always focused on the area around them to make sure they weren’t going to be ambushed.

When night finally fell and the pair were too exhausted to continue, they settled down on the forest floor and willed themselves to fall asleep. Hopefully it wouldn’t rain tonight. The pair fell asleep to the sounds of crickets chirping and hooting owls.
“Hannah!” Balthazar screamed as he scrabbled to get to his mate. The alphas and betas holding him wouldn’t let him get very far, but he fought against them anyway because Hannah was crying as their lead and second-in-command alphas pinned her to the floor with sickening leers. They were taking turns in knotting her because they thought it was funny to hear her whimper and she had a ‘pretty face’ so she had obviously been ‘begging’ for their knots.

Balthazar clawed and bit at his captors viciously, but they merely growled back and sunk their teeth into his flesh or slashed at his face. His body was spotted with blood but nothing mattered because his instincts were snarling for him to protect his mate.

Eventually, the lead alpha narrowed his eyes and tore his claw through his second’s muzzle. The other alpha leaped backwards in shock and narrowed his eyes warningly as a growl bubbled low in his throat, but the head alpha snapped at him, forcing him to back off as he tightened his grip on Hannah. He turned to Balthazar, grinning when he saw the bronze and white wolf trapped beneath two other alphas, one of them eying him predatorily as he snarled curses at them.

“You should be honoured, Balthy. I’ve decided I want your mate to have my pups. Imagine how pretty they’ll be,” he hummed as he tenderly licked Hannah’s jaw and muzzle, mocking the bronze and white alpha as Hannah turned away in disgust.

“You stay away from her,” hissed Balthazar, hackles raised and teeth bared as he tried to wriggle free of his captors’ holds.

“I don’t think I will,” chuckled their leader as his claws bit into Hannah’s sides, making her whine. “I’m going to show you how to properly treat an omega, so get comfortable and enjoy the show.”

A few more expletives tumbled from Balthazar’s lips as he glared daggers at their leader.

“You’ll pay for this,” he snarled. “If it’s the last thing I do, I’ll make sure you pay.”

Their leader scowled before nodding to the two alphas pinning Balthazar, the same ones as those from the river. “Punish him however you please. He needs to be taught his place.”

Hannah cried out as Balthazar’s eyes widened and his face was smashed into the dirt, the black alphas mounting him. The brown alpha chuckled and moved towards his tail and Balthazar howled in agony as both alphas’ knots forced into him, already aroused and fully formed from watching Hannah’s ordeal.

Then their leader pinned Hannah beneath him and yanked out her breeding protector before roughly taking her with a howl of satisfaction.

Around them, the broken and frightened members of their original pack cowered, some turning away or closing their eyes as the new pack members jeered and laughed at Balthazar and Hannah’s desperate cries. Hannah glanced at an old beta friend of hers, Tessa, silently begging for her to do something, anything, but the other wolf dropped her gaze and slunk away, shattering Hannah’s heart and her trust in her old pack.

A particularly harsh thrust made her insides burn and she howled as agony raced through her body.

A warm weight settled around Hannah’s back and the omega startled awake, baring her teeth and snarling in an attempt to hide her fear from whoever was beside her, but when familiar grey eyes blinked at her, a sense of sadness and understanding in them, Hannah forced herself to relax. She lowered her gaze and Gadreel curled around her back, placing his head on her shoulders in an
unspoken offer of support.

Hannah delicately placed her head on her paws, relaxing into Gadreel’s comforting hold. His roasted chestnut and oak smell was soothing, homely and she subtly angled her head so that her nose was closer to his soft fur. Despite initially being wary of being alone with any alpha that wasn’t her mate, Hannah had to admit Gadreel’s company was welcome in that moment.

To be honest, she was beginning to think that Gadreel’s company was welcome in any moment.

“He tried to breed me,” murmured Hannah after a few moments. “Our head alpha.”

Gadreel stiffened and somehow managed to shuffle closer to Hannah as a soft, protective growl left his throat. Hannah’s heart warmed at the sound and she leaned into her new friend. She’d never admit it out loud, but Gadreel’s lead alpha instincts made her feel safe. Safer than she’d felt in what seemed like forever.

“He and his second-in-command took turns on me before he decided he wanted me to bear his pups. He told Balthazar as much and when Balthazar tried to defend me, he ordered two of the other alphas; the ones from the river, to ‘punish’ him. So, they forced him to watch me be bred as they knotted him.” She closed her eyes. “It was through sheer luck that I never got pregnant. Or maybe my body was just too stressed and broken to support them.”

She startled when another growl ripped from Gadreel’s throat and he snuffled at her head, nuzzling her ear possessively as he inhaled her scent.

Hannah couldn’t help but snuggle further into her friend. “It hurt so much,” she whimpered, submissive omega instincts booting up at the safe, protective alpha scent Gadreel was radiating, and the alpha scowled as he wrapped a paw around her.

“I won’t let anyone hurt you again,” whispered Gadreel fiercely. “I promise your old pack will never lay another claw on you. You belong with us now.”

Logically, Hannah knew Gadreel’s lead alpha instincts were making him say that, but she had to admit, the prospect of belonging to the Winchester pack made something warm blossom in her chest.

Although she had originally stated that her stay with the Winchesters was only temporary until she healed, now she was nearing her goal, she was beginning to realise that an independent life as an omega in the wild was not something she particularly enjoyed the thought of. Nor did she want to lose Gadreel’s friendship, or Cas’ and Samandriel’s.

The truth was she had seen the way the Winchester pack worked as a team and although she was still wary of some of the members, like Crowley and Bobby, she could see that there was little discord within the pack. They were far more efficient than any other pack she’d ever heard of and they seemed to all get along like a family.

A family didn’t sound like such a bad thing right now.

So she let Gadreel fuss over her. She cuddled into his side and let the alpha nose at her head and rub the pack scent over her neck and shoulders. She pressed her head under his chin like any submissive omega seeking comfort and reassurance and Gadreel rumbled in approval as he tugged her closer.

Tonight, she needed someone to take care of her; to protect her and show that they cared, and Hannah had a sneaky suspicion that Gadreel needed someone to take care of; someone to protect and care for.
The pair settled down, Gadreel keeping a firm grip on the omega as she nestled into his fur, and this
time, Hannah didn’t dream.

* * *

When they awoke the next morning, it took another eight hours to reach the city walls. They gave
each other privacy as they switched into their human forms and tugged their clothes on and Gadreel
frowned at his long, billowing locks of hair, both on his head and his chin. He needed a haircut.

He had to bite back a snicker when Hannah turned to face him, because the omega’s raven hair was
so long, she couldn’t see through it and consequently, her face was hidden behind it.

When she pulled her hair from her eyes, however, Gadreel’s grin faded and he found himself staring
at the innocent, pretty features of Hannah’s face. She was quite beautiful.

Hannah tilted her head at him, puzzled by his gaze and he cleared his throat as a distraction and
gestured towards the city.

“I think we need to fix our grooming before we do anything else.”

Hannah pulled a face at her unkempt hippie-hair and nodded, and the pair made their way into the
city.

They received a few disapproving glares as they walked through the city; people obviously assuming
they were hermits or indeed, hippies, but Hannah and Gadreel barely noticed them as they were too
busy wondering where they could get a haircut from.

It had been a long time since Gadreel last visited civilisation and since Hannah had never seen a city,
she was just as lost as he was. They searched the rows of shops until they spotted a small building
entitled ‘Comb and Collar’ and they watched as a woman with short, scruffy hair entered the
building, a Yorkshire Terrier trotting by her side.

Gadreel glanced at Hannah. “Does that look like a groomers’ to you?”

Hannah nodded at him and the pair made their way into the shop. They were momentarily confused
by the barking of small dogs but they assumed the owners of the shop just enjoyed keeping pets.
Civilised folk were weird like that.

The beta at the reception glanced over at them once she was finished with the woman with scruffy
hair and her eyes widened. She managed to tear her gaze away from their faces to glance at their feet,
and soon, a small frown graced her expression.

“Ah… what can I help you with?” She asked, forcing a smile when Hannah and Gadreel
approached the desk and Gadreel gestured to his face.

“Apologies for our appearances but we were wondering if maybe you could make us look a little
more presentable?”

The beta blinked at him wordlessly before squinting.

“Is this a practical joke?”
Gadreel dropped his hand in surprise. “…No? We have means of payment, we just wish for a more acceptable haircut. You are a groomers’ aren’t you?”

The beta scowled. “We are. So why would you come here for a haircut? Look, if you want a shampoo, condition and cut for your canine forms, you’re going to have to go to an actual barber shop. We style dog coats, we don’t offer cheap deals on your wolf form.”

Gadreel blinked. “…You groom pets?”

“Of course,” she scoffed. “Didn’t you see the sign? ‘Comb and Collar’. As in dog collars.” She narrowed her eyes. “You’re not from around here, are you?”

Hannah’s eyes widened as Gadreel frowned warily. “We’re from out of town,” he offered, vaguely. “Apologies for the miscommunication.”

With that he gently grasped Hannah’s wrist and lead her out of the shop before anyone decided to question them further. He glanced at Hannah apologetically but the omega shook her head in dismissal. Who thought civilised folk would be strange enough to have a hair stylist just for dogs?

The pair paced away from the ‘Comb and Collar’, but Hannah paused when she saw a building with a large glass window at the front; rows of chairs and mirrors lining the inside walls as people bustled around with hairdryers and brushes.

“Did that lady say we were supposed to go to a ‘barber shop’?” Asked Hannah curiously and Gadreel focused in the same direction to find the words ‘The Studio: Unisex barbers’ pasted on the window.

Gadreel tilted his head. “I believe she did.”

They entered the building and a few other customers turned their noses up in disgust at their appearance, whilst some of the staff looked horrified and immediately cleared a space for them.

Whilst Gadreel got away with merely picking a number and letting the stylist work her magic, Hannah had to scan the room for ideas and she finally spotted a photo on the wall and pointed to it.

It was an hour before they were finished and when the pair turned to each other, a clean shaven and short-haired Gadreel faltered for a fraction of a second because Hannah’s wavy hair was now at shoulder length, a fringe framing her face and it made her bright blue eyes and ridiculously pink lips stand out. He had always known she was pretty, but now she was stunning.

He shook his head to clear his thoughts, failing to notice how Hannah’s gaze had caught on his face, head tilted slightly in appreciation before the alpha made his way to the reception desk to pay.

Immediately, Hannah flushed pink at the realisation she had nothing to pay with, but Gadreel shot her a small, reassuring smile and the omega relaxed.

“You look beautiful,” Gadreel said sincerely as they exited the hairdressers and Hannah flushed pink for an entirely different reason. It was rather endearing how Gadreel always said what he thought; unaware of how his compliments could affect people.

“Thank you,” she murmured. “You look very handsome,” she added shyly and Gadreel smiled at her warmly before stopping at a street corner and glancing around.

“We’re supposed to be shopping for the supplies Dean ordered, but I’m not entirely sure where the supermarket is,” he mused and Hannah looked around their surroundings.
They wandered a few more streets before finally coming to a building that resembled one of the 
supermarkets Gadreel had visited six years ago and the pair ventured inside.

They were instantly hit with a thousand different sensations; too many sights, sounds and smells to 
handle and Hannah whimpered as Gadreel took a step back. He remembered this from last time; the 
squeaking of the trolleys, the bleeping of the cash registers, the hundreds of alpha, beta and omega 
scents intermingled with food and cleaning chemicals, the blaring of the radio over the crackling 
speakers and far too much movement in one building to take in at once.

Hannah put her hands over her ears and backed up, whining and a security guard narrowed his gaze 
at her. Gadreel stiffened because there was no doubt that the other alpha had his suspicions about 
Hannah coming from the wild; she was displaying typical wild folk behaviour.

Gadreel paced over to her, wincing at the loudness and the strong odours of the supermarket and 
gently led her out of the building.

“How do civilised folk cope with that?” Whispered Hannah, unwilling to break the peacefulness she 
suddenly found herself enjoying.

“I think they’re just numb to it,” commented Gadreel before frowning in concern.

“Are you alright? Do you wish to stay out here whilst I grab the items from the list? I shouldn’t be 
long.”

Hannah screwed up her face and shook her head. She really didn’t want to be on her own in a city.

Gadreel tilted his head. “You’ll have to pretend you aren’t affected by the chaos. We can’t draw 
attention to ourselves otherwise we’ll be thrown out of not only the supermarket, but maybe the 
entire city as well.”

Hannah nodded determinedly. If Gadreel could force himself to keep calm, so could she.

“I’m sorry,” she offered. “It was just a shock.”

Gadreel was quiet for a few moments. “…It may not be appropriate, but Castiel told me that last time 
he visited and Dean couldn’t cope with all the sensory input, he let Dean… scent him. He said it was 
something for Dean to focus on. Instead of trying to make sense of every little sound and smell, he 
made Dean focus on his voice and scent and Dean was able to walk around fairly normally.” The 
alpha shifted slightly. “…Do you think it may help?”

Hannah contemplated the suggestion for a few seconds before nodding slowly. She liked Gadreel’s 
scent anyway, so it couldn’t hurt, right?

Gadreel carefully bared his neck and Hannah shuffled over to him and pressed her nose against his 
skin. She smiled at the familiar homely smell and was surprised when Gadreel gingerly scented her 
neck.

Not entirely certain what to do with her hands, they hovered above Gadreel’s hips for a few 
moments before coming to rest on his waist and she pressed her nose deeper into his neck.

Gadreel’s eyes flew open in shock but he couldn’t help but place his own hands over Hannah’s 
back, tugging her closer as he inhaled her sweet scent.

Hannah felt herself relaxing and her smile had widened. Once again, she felt safe and protected in 
Gadreel’s hold and she snuggled into him when he began to rub circles into her back with his thumb.
She closed her eyes and nuzzled his neck happily, listening to his soothing breaths and Gadreel held her a little tighter. His body was warm and strong against hers and she found herself leaning into it, wanting to be closer.

Gadreel gently tangled his fingers in her silky hair and Hannah let her hands ride up to his chest, purring quietly when the alpha nuzzled her neck possessively.

“Get a room!” Crowed a teenager from somewhere behind them, his friends laughing and Hannah and Gadreel whipped apart, faces red with embarrassment and guilt as they refused to meet each other’s gazes.

“…I… uh…” Gadreel stammered uncharacteristically as Hannah lowered her eyes. What was she doing? She’d only recently lost Balthazar and suddenly she was getting all cosy in another alpha’s arms? And with her friend from another pack too? What was wrong with her?

“Shall we go inside?” Gadreel coughed to break the tension and Hannah nodded silently. She didn’t trust herself to speak after she’d just purred for the alpha.

However, when they re-entered the building, she found herself sidling up to Gadreel once more, needing him close so she could focus on his scent amongst the chaos.

“Are you alright?” Gadreel asked softly as he slipped an arm around her and pulled her to his side. Hannah didn’t have it in her to protest. Not to mention she rather enjoyed his body next to hers.

No. Stop it, Hannah. Pull yourself together.

She nodded and leaned into him so she could get a clear whiff of his scent and she couldn’t help but bare her neck when Gadreel shifted to scent her too.

…What was wrong with her?

First, they found the medication and first aid section. Then they realised they probably needed a basket, which they’d forgotten earlier because they were a little… preoccupied, so Gadreel ran to get one as Hannah collected a few items from the list.

The rest of the supermarket visit seemed to go pretty well until they came to pay and the old woman who was manning the till informed them they were a ‘lovely couple’, and both alpha and omega couldn’t look at each other.

Gadreel politely thanked the lady and they nearly sprinted out of the building.

Dusk was beginning to fall by then and the shops were closing up for the evening. Gadreel decided it was time they checked into a hotel to dump their bags.

They found a Holiday Inn and Gadreel paid for a room, the receptionist smiling at them fondly as she handed the key over (which both Gadreel and Hannah thought was a little strange, but neither said anything). Relieved to have a place to lessen the weight they’d been carrying all day, they located their room quickly and dropped their bags on the floor as they scanned the room.

Gadreel tilted his head as he noticed a potential problem.

“Should I have asked for a room with two beds instead of one large one?” He asked, puzzled and Hannah glanced at the king-sized monstrosity in the middle of the room before shrugging.

“Does it matter?” They shared a shelter all the time.
Gadreel frowned as if he was trying to solve all the mysteries of the universe.

“I feel like it should.”

Hannah raised an eyebrow. “Why?”

“I’m not entirely certain,” shrugged Gadreel. “It just seems like something civilised folk would get worked up about.”

A small smile tugged at Hannah’s lips. “They are very strange out here.”

Gadreel’s lips quirked upwards before gesturing towards the door. “Shall we search for somewhere to eat?”

Hannah nodded and Gadreel stood back to allow her to lead the way; a picture of the perfect gentleman. The omega giggled shyly and her step was light as she bounced through the door.

* * *

Gadreel couldn’t understand a lot of things about civilised folk culture. They all seemed so focused on things that weren’t important; their financial wealth, their personal belongings, their clothes and aesthetic appearance, yet family and friends didn’t always seem to feature very high on their list of what they considered important. Even Castiel had been living alone with his son for years; no pack or family around him… Gadreel couldn’t understand how anyone could be happy living like that. Without family, what was the point in anything?

However, if there was one thing Gadreel thought civilised folk had mastered, it was cuisine.

They had stumbled across a large establishment with dim lighting and musical instruments and motorcycles lining the walls. Music with a solid beat was thrumming away in the background and lots of people had been smiling inside, chatting and laughing amiably unlike most of the bars and restaurants they’d previously passed where people had either been conversing quietly and seriously, or shouting loudly and drunkenly. This place seemed to encourage joy and it certainly looked popular, so Hannah and Gadreel had slipped inside.

The waitress was very kind and greeted them with a genuine grin as she took their order, not once commenting on how they seemed to flinch at every loud crash from behind the bar.

Drinks presented a small dilemma as neither really understood what a cocktail was and when they asked the waitress, they flushed red at her explanation. It was clear all civilised folk would know what one was, even children and if the patient omega serving them hadn’t known they weren’t natives then, she certainly knew now.

To their surprise, the omega didn’t throw them out or start a riot, instead she lowered her voice and leaned closer as she suggested they stick with non-alcoholic drinks in case they had a low alcohol tolerance and got themselves into trouble by blurting out something they didn’t mean.

Gadreel and Hannah thanked her gratefully and she winked at them before offering to make them a mocktail of their choice.

Unsure what a mocktail was, Gadreel said to surprise them.
The omega (‘Anna’ as her nametag read) returned with two tall glasses with paper umbrellas and shiny tassels stabbed into blueberries and raspberries decorating its rim. The drinks were a deep pink, poured over crushed ice and Anna grinned as she placed them on the table, her bright red hair bouncing around her shoulders.

“Crushed Watermelon, blueberries and raspberries stirred with lemonade. One of my own creations,” she winked before sliding away when their food arrived.

Both alpha and omega gaped at the portion size. It seemed wasteful, yet they couldn’t deny it smelled delicious and this ‘Hard Rock Café’ certainly knew how to grill a steak. Even the sauces were heavenly.

Hannah had never used a knife and fork before but she picked it up pretty quickly and if the waitress noticed, she never said anything.

Once they were finished (and they did make sure to eat everything because they weren’t going to have food like this again for a long time) Anna asked them if they had room for dessert. Stomachs protesting at the mere thought of forcing anything else into them, both alpha and omega shook their heads. Anna chuckled softly and brought the bill, wishing them a safe journey home.

“Don’t be strangers,” she whispered and Hannah and Gadreel couldn’t help but smile warmly at her. It seemed not all civilised folk hated them.

Gadreel had seen a few others leaving extra money for wait staff to collect, particularly if they enjoyed the service, so unsure what amount to leave and wanting to show he was grateful for Anna’s kindness, Gadreel left an extra fifty dollars.

Just as they were weaving through the bodies of other patrons, there was a tap on Gadreel’s shoulder. The alpha turned and came face-to-face with another large alpha; one of Anna’s co-workers from behind the bar. His nametag read ‘Cole’.

“Anna told me you weren’t from around these parts,” he said lowly and both Gadreel and Hannah stiffened warily.

They were surprised when he handed them two small, brown paper bags.

“She says thanks for the tip.”

When they opened the bags, there was a slice of black forest gateau in them, a cherry adorning each slice.

“She said for me to snag a bit of dessert from the kitchen because you seemed to enjoy the mains so much, it would be a shame to return home without trying the best part of the meal.” Cole smiled at them and the pair relaxed upon realising they had another friend here.

“Thank you,” murmured Gadreel and Cole nodded before eying them, suddenly serious.

“Avoid the backstreets,” he warned quietly. “It’s Saturday night and things can get a little… rough around here.”

Then he was worming his way back to the bar.

Hannah and Gadreel glanced at each other before leaving the restaurant. By now, night had fallen and the only light was the moon and the occasional streetlight.
They took Cole’s advice and kept to the main drag, finding it difficult to navigate their way back to the hotel now it was dark, but they eventually spotted the dim green glow of their hotel’s sign a few streets away, and they picked up their pace, looking forward to relaxing in their room after their adventurous day.

Suddenly, there was a thud and a whimper accompanied by three vicious growls and omega and alpha paused when the scent of terrified omega drifted towards them.

Another frightened whimper and a filthy chuckle had the pair turning to their left and they peered down a dark, narrow alley to find a few figures struggling against a wall.

The scent of aroused alphas joined scared omega and Gadreel bristled as Hannah backed away slightly.

Gadreel stalked a little closer to get a better view of what was happening, but the alley was too dark and all he could see was four people struggling with each other as whimpers and snarls escaped every so often.

“Stay here,” muttered Gadreel as the scent of fearful omega strengthened and he handed his paper bag to Hannah.

“Gadreel,” Hannah protested, but the alpha was already prowling down the alley as silently as possible.

When he finally reached the abhorrent scene, his felt nauseous.

There were three alphas groping and gasping at a frightened female omega. They’d already ripped her clothes and she was doing her best to hold them on as she tried to fight the alphas away. Her cheek was bruised and the tallest alpha chuckled as he pinned her wrists above her head, her dress falling to the floor to reveal her bra and underwear. A handsome alpha leered at her as he grasped her breast, his other hand reaching for the clasp on her bra as the bald alpha claimed her mouth roughly, snaking his hand into the front of her underwear.

“Get away from her,” Gadreel snarled and the alphas startled, turning narrowed gazes upon him.

“Who are you?” Growled one alpha; the bald one who had been kissing the omega mere moments ago. “What are you doing here?”

The other two snarled at him warningly as the omega widened her eyes in shock at him.

“I said get away from her,” rumbled Gadreel threateningly, taking a step towards them.

“You have no business here,” replied the tall alpha who was still pinning the omega’s wrists. “Back off.”

“Let her go and I will,” said Gadreel lowly. “You have no right to treat this woman this way.”

The omega blinked at him in surprise as the other alphas glanced at each other in confusion.

“Listen, buddy. You have no idea what’s going on here. Get your own omega.” The bald alpha glanced over to where Hannah was hovering at the end of the alley. “Seems like you’ve already found one anyway.”

“Yeah, so keep walking,” growled the tallest.
Gadreel bristled, clenching his fists to ground himself. He didn’t want to morph into his wolf form here, but he would if these alphas didn’t leave their victim alone. The odds of victory in a fight were against him, but he wasn’t about to let these men take advantage of this poor omega.

“Although, she’s a pretty little thing,” hummed the good-looking alpha who had his hand on the omega’s bra as he eyed Hannah. “Wouldn’t consider doing a swap, would you?”

Gadreel rumbled threateningly as the nameless omega scrunched her nose up.

The alpha chuckled and returned to his task of attempting to undo the omega’s bra.

“Move along,” huffed the bald man as he snaked his hand back into the omega’s underwear.

When the last alpha returned his attention to the woman, Gadreel snarled and gripped one man by the neck as he took another one’s legs out from under him with a well-aimed kick to the back of the knee.

The tallest alpha didn’t have time to retaliate before Gadreel was punching him in the gut and slamming him into the wall.

“Leave,” he whispered calmly and the other man’s eyes were wide before they narrowed and a fist cracked against Gadreel’s jaw.

Offended and embarrassed, the remaining two alphas leaped to their feet and rammed into Gadreel, trying to shove him to the floor, but Gadreel was quick to swing his knuckles at them and they staggered backwards, clutching their faces.

“Back off,” snarled the bald alpha. “The omega is ours.”

“She’s not property,” muttered Gadreel drily and the handsome alpha bowled into Gadreel, clawing at his face.

“She is if you pay for her.”

Gadreel threw the other man off him but didn’t have time to get up before the tall one had a hand clenched around his throat. He squeezed hard, intending on choking Gadreel, but the usually placid alpha had had enough. He just wanted to get these disgusting men away from the injured omega.

He transformed into his canine form and the other alphas’ eyes widened as they stumbled backwards in shock. Civilised folk didn’t like utilising their second form and it showed as they backed off. They weren’t used to fighting like wolves; preferring to use their fists and feet instead of teeth and claws.

Gadreel snarled deeply and the alphas flinched at the feral sound. Still, they didn’t move away from the omega, so Gadreel lunged at them, jaws wide.

Stunned and more than a little frightened, the other men morphed into their wolf forms and scrambled to move out of Gadreel’s way.

They growled pathetically as they huddled together, trying to seem more intimidating, but Gadreel knew fighting in this form wasn’t their strong suit, so he darted forwards and snapped at them, making them whimper as they scrambled backwards.

“I said leave!” He spat as he swiped a claw at them, catching one on the muzzle and the other two tensed before scowling and surging forwards.
They tried to bite at Gadreel’s sides, but the grey and white alpha batted them away easily. The third alpha joined in and Gadreel struggled a little as they clawed at his back and sides, but biting their legs was enough to make them scurry to a different position. After a few minutes of snarling and clawing and biting at one another, Gadreel finally saw an opening and before anyone knew what had happened, the grey and white wolf had the handsome alpha’s throat between his teeth.

The other two cowered as Gadreel rumbled warningly, tightening his grip slightly and making his victim whine, and when Gadreel threw him four feet across the floor like a rag doll, the trio sprinted away, tails tucked between their legs and ears low.

Gadreel shook himself off as Hannah slipped into the alley, looking worried.

The alpha glanced in dismay at his torn clothes scattered over the dirty floor and Hannah averted her eyes when he morphed into his human form and tugged on the ruined pants and shirt.

The omega he’d rescued was scowling.

“I’m very sorry you had to endure that,” apologised Gadreel sympathetically as he neared the nearly naked omega. “Are you alright? Is there anyone you can call or stay with?”

The omega’s scowl deepened.

“What are you? Feral?” She hissed. “I was perfectly fine!”

Gadreel and Hannah blinked in shock and the bruised omega shoved harshly at Gadreel’s chest.

“What is wrong with you?” She snapped as he staggered backwards. “You just scared away my customers, you stupid mutt!”

Gadreel’s jaw opened and closed but he couldn’t find any words as the omega bristled.

“They were paying me for that and I’ve only got the down payment now!” She snatched her dress and began to re-zip it. “A whole hour of business wasted thanks to you!” She spat before eyeing Hannah filthily.

“And I don’t suppose you’re going to reimburse me, either?”

Hannah snapped her mouth shut and the other omega sighed irritatedly before grabbing her handbag and pushing away from the wall.

“Oh, and alpha?”

Gadreel turned to her and was greeted with a hard slap to his already bruised face.

“Unless you’re going to pay, rescue someone else,” she hissed before storming away, leaving a stunned Gadreel and Hannah to stare after her in silence.

“Rough area indeed,” murmured Gadreel as he rubbed at his sore cheek and Hannah frowned in concern as she inspected some of his wounds.

“Maybe we should get back to the hotel and clean you up?” Hannah suggested and Gadreel nodded in humiliation as the omega gently led him out of the alley.

When they returned to the hotel, Hannah grabbed a cloth from the bathroom and dampened it before moving to Gadreel’s side on the bed.
She cleaned the blood from his face and told him to remove his ripped shirt so she could tend to any injuries there too. She cooled some of his bruises and startled when a nose pressed into her neck.

“Your scent is very soothing,” murmured Gadreel and Hannah’s heart did something strange at that. She smiled and edged into his side, tenderly running the cool cloth over his angry bruises. A hand slowly wormed around her waist and settled on her hip and she couldn’t help but bare her neck further for the gentle alpha.

Gadreel nuzzled at her neck, inhaling deeply and Hannah shifted so the alpha would nose at her throat instead. She liked it when Gadreel did that.

“You were very brave,” she murmured as she slid her arms around his bare back and pulled him closer. “Most alphas wouldn’t have attempted what you did today.”

Gadreel buried his face in her neck in embarrassment as he wrapped his arms around her.

“That woman didn’t seem too pleased.”

Hannah screwed up her nose. “That wasn’t your fault. You were only trying to help and she had no right to hit you.” No one had any right to hurt Gadreel.

The alpha nosed at her throat again and Hannah carefully tangled her fingers in his hair. She enjoyed being close to Gadreel. She liked knowing he was safe in her arms.

The alpha hesitated before moving to nuzzle at her cheek and Hannah smiled as she closed her eyes and leaned into him.

After a few seconds, Gadreel tugged Hannah into his lap and the omega purred as he snuggled into him, tucking her head under his chin as she smoothed a hand over his back.

Gadreel rumbled happily and nosed at her hair as he held her close.

“Maybe we should get into bed,” whispered Hannah into the silence, for the first time noticing the strange tension that had settled between them. She swore Gadreel gulped as he nodded and she felt oddly self-conscious as she stripped down to her underwear and bra. She gave Gadreel some privacy as he changed into a clean pair of underwear and they slid into bed, unable to look at one another.

This was ridiculous. They’d slept together lots of times; only civilised folk got worked up about sharing a bed, yet this felt different to their previous sleeping arrangements. It seemed more intimate.

At first, they stayed on their respective sides of the bed, but it was clear neither of them was happy and after a few minutes in the dark room, Hannah slid into Gadreel’s personal space and slipped an arm around his bare stomach. She wasn’t sure how to feel about their skin brushing like this.

It was only a few moments before Gadreel turned on his side and gingerly curled his arms around her, his palm settling warmly on her upper back. Encouraged, Hannah wrapped her other arm around him and shuffled close enough to press her face into his throat.

He automatically tightened his grip and Hannah’s breath caught when their bodies lay flush with one another, bare skin contacting skin and every twitch of muscle, every breath, every heartbeat vibrating through each other’s bodies.

She liked it.
Fingers tangled into her hair and Hannah shivered at hearing Gadreel’s low voice so close.

“You smell so much better than that other omega. Better than any omega I’ve ever met, actually.”

Hannah’s body heated and it took her a few seconds to work out that Gadreel was half-asleep and not entirely aware of what he was saying.

“You’re beautiful,” mumbled Gadreel. “In so many ways. And you’re strong. You’ve faced so much and you’ve forced yourself to keep going. I’m proud and grateful.”

Hannah’s heart was beating quicker than usual. She ran a hand over his back just to feel his warm skin and Gadreel brushed his own hand down her side until it came to a rest on her hip.

“You’re so soft,” he smiled sleepily, eyes closed. “Perfect in so many ways.”

Hannah really wanted to know what Gadreel’s lips tasted like.

“Always protect you,” murmured Gadreel as he nuzzled her hair. “Always protect my omega.”

Hannah’s heart shattered.

She wasn’t Gadreel’s omega. She was Balthazar’s. So why was she having intimate thoughts about Gadreel? She knew she was friends with the alpha. She enjoyed his company and she felt safe with him; her heart even beat faster when he was being kind with her. Did that make her unfaithful? Did that mean she was disrespecting her mating with Balthazar? How could she be having romantic thoughts about another alpha?

And what about Gadreel? The alpha had already lost one mate; been betrayed by her really. Was the alpha struggling with similar thoughts? Did he only treat Hannah like he did because he was missing having his own mate? She was pretty certain he wouldn’t have referred to her as ‘his omega’ if he had been fully awake, so were his protective instincts latching onto Hannah now?

Hannah could have spent all night worrying over whether she and Gadreel were getting too close or whether their instincts were clouding their judgements, but as it was, she was comfortable and warm where she was and Gadreel was radiating her favourite scent of ‘happy alpha’, so she snuggled into him and closed her eyes, exhausted.

After all, Gadreel deserved someone to take care of him after losing his family, and Hannah didn’t like seeing those awful alphas from earlier tearing into her friend. She especially didn’t like watching that ungrateful omega hit him after he’d tried to save her. Hannah would make sure she tended to his wounds until they were healed, and she would fight anyone who tried to interfere with her plan.

Nobody was allowed to hurt her alpha.

Chapter End Notes

Oh look! Another city chapter!
Hannah woke up feeling happier than she had in a long time. She’d suffered no nightmares and she was warm and safe in the arms of her mate. She felt no need to open her eyes, so she snuggled closer to Balthazar and rested her head on his chest, contented smirk widening when he tightened his grip on her. She had always enjoyed the peacefulness of the morning that followed a passionate night of sex and she slid her arms around Balthazar’s waist as she pressed a tender kiss to his collar bone, before pushing her nose into her mate’s neck, searching for that familiar scent of ginger and cinnamon.

She frowned briefly when she got a whiff of oak and roasted chestnuts and although the smell was far from unpleasant, a wave of memories crashed through her mind and she stiffened at the realisation her mate was dead and she was actually sprawled over a slumbering Gadreel.

Seconds passed and Hannah found herself relaxing. She didn’t really want to move and although she knew she probably should, just to give Gadreel some personal space, she couldn’t find the will to slide off him.

She wondered if she should feel guilty at wanting to be so close to Gadreel, but honestly, he was so kind and gentle and trustworthy that she couldn’t really think of a reason to keep away from him, other than the fact she was still trying to learn to live without Balthazar. But that didn’t mean they couldn’t be friends, right?

A nose nuzzled at her hair and she smiled despite herself when Gadreel rumbled sleepily in contentment.

However, when Gadreel opened his eyes, he tensed upon spotting Hannah, a look of guilt flickering over his face before averting his gaze. Hannah sighed silently to herself and slid off him. She didn’t see anything wrong with what they’d been doing; Gadreel had curled around her all the time when they were in wolf form, so why was lying together in this form so different?

She stretched the kinks out of her spine and blinked when she felt a pair of eyes staring at her. She turned to find Gadreel gazing at her oddly, lips parted slightly and forming a small ‘O’, before he flushed pink when he realised he’d been caught and looked away.

Hannah tilted her head. *Interesting.*

She stood and padded towards the shower, half-excited to experience one, but paused when Gadreel threw the covers off and sat upright. She couldn’t help but let her gaze trail over his broad chest and rippling muscles as he stretched and heat flashed through her body, making her eyes widen in surprise.

Not wanting to dwindle to contemplate her reaction, she disappeared into the bathroom and locked the door behind her.

* * *
“Pick anything you want,” said Gadreel as they wandered through the mall. “You’ll probably need three changes so don’t be afraid to try things on.”

“Are you going to buy some new clothes after last night?” Hannah asked and the alpha nodded, pulling a face at the memory of ruining his clothes for an omega who didn’t even want his help.

They parted ways to search through their respective aisles and although a little nervous at being alone in a foreign place, Hannah was quickly distracted by colourful dresses spattered with glitter and elegant patterns. Not wanting to take advantage of Gadreel’s generosity, she checked the price tags and picked out three she liked that weren’t too overpriced before disappearing into the dressing rooms.

She’d never had free choice over what she wore since her pack merged with the abusive one and she was once again reminded of how much freedom she’d been granted by the Winchester pack. It was quite exciting.

Two of the items fit but one didn’t so she returned it to its rail and picked out the same dress in a different size. She turned and stumbled into Gadreel. He glanced at the dress and smiled encouragingly.

“That’s a gorgeous dress,” he commented and Hannah couldn’t help but smile back. She wasn’t used to alphas complimenting her. She wasn’t used to anyone other than Balthazar saying anything nice to her.

She made her way back to the dressing rooms and shrugged her borrowed clothes off. She tugged the dress on and smoothed her hands down its sides, admiring the glittery black swirls etched into its navy-blue material. The hem came to just above her knees and it hugged her body tightly; a stark contrast to her mid-length, flowery red dress and the sweetheart neckline, black dress. She smiled at how well it suited her, but the expression vanished when she noticed the faded scars and bruises marring her legs from years of being abused and beaten by her pack. She suddenly felt self-conscious.

“Hannah?” Gadreel called softly from somewhere nearby. “May I see you wearing the dress?”

She bit her lip. Gadreel had been too polite to mention her scars so far. She didn’t want other people turning their noses up at her damaged legs once she stepped out of the cubicle.

“I… it doesn’t fit,” she lied as she began to unzip the dress.

“May I at least have a look?” Asked Gadreel and she could hear the frown in his voice that suggested he didn’t believe her.

With a sigh, she pulled the curtain back and edged her way out of the cubicle, face heating in humiliation when a teenager openly gaped at her legs in shock.

Gadreel was loitering a few metres away, not wanting to intrude, but when Hannah revealed herself he straightened and quirked his lips.

“You look beautiful,” he said and Hannah ducked her head because she knew he was lying. She fidgeted with the hem of the dress, trying in vain to pull it down to cover more of her legs.

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“You look beautiful,” he said and Hannah ducked her head because she knew he was lying. She fidgeted with the hem of the dress, trying in vain to pull it down to cover more of her legs.

“I don’t think it suits me,” she murmured and Gadreel watched her fuss for a few moments before finally understanding her actions. He padded over to her and gently caught her wrists.

“There is no need to hide them, but if you aren’t comfortable, you could always wear tights?” He
muttered quietly and Hannah glanced up to him gratefully. He smiled.

“You really do look stunning.”

Hannah blushed and averted her gaze. Gadreel was so kind.

She nodded shyly and he chuckled and let her retreat into the cubicle. Once she’d donned her borrowed clothes, she left the dressing rooms with Gadreel by her side and she picked up a pack of tights and some lingerie (which made Gadreel blush peculiarly) before queuing at the tills.

Once they’d paid, Gadreel guided her to a sports and adventure shop so she could pick out a bag and some supplies to help her live with the Winchester pack. She grabbed a blanket, a water bottle and some toiletries as well as a few other necessary items before hunting down Gadreel so they could pay and leave. They didn’t need to visit anywhere else after this.

She finally spotted him in the corner of the store, hidden by a multitude of coat racks and tent displays but she frowned as she approached because he wasn’t alone.

A voluptuous blonde woman with hot red lips and sparkling green eyes framed by high cheekbones and long lashes was standing in front of him. She was leaning forwards slightly so her low neckline could barely cover her large breasts and she was smirking too suggestively and fluttering her eyelashes at Gadreel, her rear stuck out at a ridiculous angle so her tiny skirt was struggling to keep everything concealed.

As Hannah approached them, she frowned at the strong perfume the woman was wearing and she must have been an omega because it smelled faintly of heat and other sweet scents that were designed to attract alphas.

Gadreel looked distinctly uncomfortable and he was trying very hard not to wrinkle his nose in disgust as the woman kept leaning closer to his face. Civilised folk may be fond of such pungent scents, but wild folk found them nauseous.

The woman lightly touched Gadreel’s triceps, seemingly admiring his muscles and Hannah watched Gadreel lean backwards only to realise he was backed against a wall.

Something possessive reared its ugly head in Hannah’s gut and she picked up her pace, frowning as she did so.

“No wedding ring? How about tonight I help you feel a little less lonely?” Purred the woman as Hannah stalked closer and Gadreel shook his head and held his hands up placatingly.

“I’m afraid I’m already in a relationship,” he lied, attempting to sidestep the woman but she blocked his escape and herded him against the wall once more.

“I won’t tell if you don’t, handsome,” she winked, groping at his rump and making him startle. He flushed red and tried to move out of the way again but she pressed her body against his with a wicked smirk and Gadreel’s eyes widened when the woman boldly grinded against his crotch. She tried to guide his hand to her waist or maybe lower as she bit her lip provocatively, but by then Hannah felt unreasonably angry and she grabbed the woman rather roughly by the shoulder and spun her around.

The woman looked shocked at first but her eyes narrowed when she registered another omega.

“Can I help you?” The woman sneered, making a point of rubbing herself against Gadreel’s side despite the alpha looking like he wanted to flee.
Hannah wasn’t sure why she was so furious at seeing the other omega rubbing her scent all over Gadreel, but she knew she didn’t like this woman.

“Can’t you see he’s not interested?” Snapped Hannah in an unusual display of fieriness that had Gadreel’s eyes widening in surprise.

The woman glared at her. “Back off, slut. I was here first.”

Hannah growled and the other omega blinked at the feral behaviour.

“I said leave him alone,” Hannah snarled and if she’d been in wolf form, her fur would have been bristling and she would have bared her teeth.

The other omega scowled and straightened, giving a soft warning growl of her own.

“He’s never going to choose you over me, so go home and chew on a rubber toy or something,” the woman scoffed and Hannah clenched her fists, wanting nothing more than to get the unwelcome omega away from her alpha.

Gadreel. Away from Gadreel.

“Then why is he my mate and not yours?” She seethed before she could stop herself and Gadreel froze as her eyes blew wide.

The other omega stiffened and glanced between the two suspiciously, but Hannah decided she might as well roll with her lie so sidled up to Gadreel and linked their arms.

The other omega blinked and Hannah bit back a smirk when Gadreel carefully slid his arm around her waist instead and tugged her to his side.

The woman had the decency to look vaguely ashamed as she backed up and Hannah couldn’t help the small, threatening growl she released to force her rival to retreat. When the unwanted omega disappeared to harass some other unwitting alpha, Hannah extracted herself from Gadreel’s grip and rubbed the back of her neck awkwardly.

“Sorry about that. You looked… uncomfortable,” she said, attempting to give herself a reason as to why she’d reacted the way she had. Gadreel didn’t respond and when she glanced up, he was staring at her in something akin to awe. If Hannah didn’t know any better, she’d say she’d impressed him.

He must have noticed he’d been staring for too long for he cleared his throat awkwardly.

“Ah… thank you. I appreciate your aid. She took an… interest in me and I wasn’t able to dissuade her.”

Hannah giggled quietly at his flustered stammering. He was quite adorable.

“Right… have you got everything you need?” He asked and Hannah nodded, forcing her expression into something more serious to help the alpha relax.

They walked to the tills and paid and Hannah tried not to think about how it felt as though Gadreel had chosen her over the other omega.

* * *
They wandered around the city in search of a meal once they’d deposited their new bags in their hotel room and thankfully, they had no run-ins with any prostitutes. However, Hannah noticed Gadreel was starting to behave a little oddly. He was walking unusually close to her and every so often he would shift a leg or straighten his back or pull a face. These occurrences continued once they were eating and Hannah wasn’t sure what to make of it. She wasn’t entirely certain Gadreel even knew he was doing anything strange.

When they returned to the hotel though, Gadreel was frowning in confusion as if he was beginning to notice he was standing too close to Hannah and he was shifting his weight too often to be normal. Hannah glanced at him in silent query but he didn’t notice so she shrugged and stripped down to her underwear before sliding into bed. Gadreel was a bit slower getting undressed but he eventually joined her and turned the lights off.

The scent of roasted chestnuts and oak and something Hannah couldn’t quite put her finger on swirled around the room and the omega thought it was the best scent she’d ever had the pleasure of enjoying and without thinking, she rolled onto her side and buried her nose into Gadreel’s neck. The alpha smelled wonderful, far better than the awful perfumes civilised folk stunk their cities up with, and she wrapped her arms around him so she could scent him deeper.

Gadreel immediately rumbled in approval and turned until he could wrap his own arms around her and Hannah practically purred when he tucked her head under his chin and nuzzled her hair as he stroked her back.

Hannah felt a dull ache between her legs but it soon vanished and she relaxed into Gadreel’s embrace, happy to scent him.

A few minutes later the ache returned, this time in her stomach and she frowned and wriggled a little to displace it. It eventually faded and Hannah closed her eyes with a smile. She wondered why Gadreel’s scent was so strong tonight but she didn’t dwell on it because she was enjoying the alpha’s cuddliness and the scent was actually rather soothing. She never wanted to pull away.

She heard Gadreel’s breathing begin to even out and with one last deep inhale of his chest, she fell into a peaceful sleep.

* * *

The sun was barely peeking over the horizon and the streets outside were quiet except for the soft chirping of birds. There was a sweet scent in the air; too sweet, and Hannah wrinkled her nose and tried to snuggle into Gadreel’s chest only to find an empty space. She frowned and pressed her nose into his pillow instead, scenting at it to rid her nostrils of the sickly sweetness the rest of the room radiated.

Distantly, she could hear the shower running and she scowled because why was Gadreel up so early? It couldn’t have been much later than five o’clock.

Another ache made itself known between her legs and when she moved them her eyes widened because not only did a cramp flare in her stomach, there was something wet between her legs.

She shot upright and forced her breathing to calm before gingerly dipping a hand between her legs.
Her thighs were mostly dry but parts of her underwear were definitely wet and for a moment she panicked because her heats only ever brought pain; her old pack had made sure of that. She hadn’t had a normal cycle in years; they were always too long, too intense, too short, didn’t start properly, didn’t produce slick… the list of problems was endless. The stress from living with an abusive pack had rendered her heats abnormal, so she hadn’t expected to have one start now.

The shower shut off and Hannah’s eyes widened as she suddenly realised she was sharing a room with an alpha. Alphas meant pain and shouting and humiliation and she whined as she shrunk in on herself, scanning the room desperately for an escape route.

She slipped out of bed and hurried to throw her clothes on from the day previous. However, just as she was tugging her jeans on, Gadreel padded out of the bathroom wearing nothing but his underwear.

They were slightly tented and a tidal wave of pheromones washed over Hannah as the alpha stepped into the room. She whined fearfully as Gadreel glanced at her.

Gadreel was in rut.

She dropped her jeans in terror and backed herself against the wall, whimpering as she slid down to the floor and curled in on herself. Tears trickled down her cheeks and she stuck her hands out defensively.

“Please don’t,” she cried as she heard Gadreel advance. She’d only just learned to trust this alpha and now he was going to do exactly the same thing as every other alpha when they spotted an omega in heat. Life was so cruel. “Please, just leave me alone,” she begged, squeezing her eyes shut.

“Hannah,” said Gadreel calmly, alpha authority bleeding into his tone and Hannah cursed her biology for making her submit to the command. She looked up.

Gadreel was standing stiffly a couple of metres away. He reeked of rut pheromones but he seemed almost horrified, heartbroken at Hannah’s actions and the omega was surprised when he made no move to approach her. She cautiously uncurled and eyed him warily.

“You’re in heat?” He asked softly, all traces of alpha voice vanished and Hannah nodded in surprise.

“Starting one. It’s not intense,” she murmured quietly and Gadreel paused to contemplate this.

“Mine’s not too intense either but I have a feeling the longer I spend in your company, the more that’ll change,” he admitted. “We should probably leave a little earlier than planned.”

Hannah didn’t dare move and Gadreel’s brows drew downwards.

“There’s no need to be afraid of me, Hannah. I won’t hurt you, I promise.”

Hannah huddled in on herself. “Do you know how many alphas have told me that?” She whispered and she caught Gadreel’s expression of horror before he took a step backwards and shook his head.

“I won’t lay a finger on you, I promise,” he stated.

Hannah stared at him for a few moments before finally nodding and climbing to her feet. Gadreel smiled encouragingly and stepped out of the way of the bathroom, showing he wasn’t going to stop her from leaving. She offered him a weak smile before darting into the bathroom.
They checked out of the hotel at half six and had to juggle some of the bags around to make them easier to carry. Eventually they found a way to order them and they set off on their two-day trip back to camp.

Hannah was careful to keep four steps behind Gadreel at all times and although she felt a little guilty when the alpha’s shoulders sagged at her choice, she couldn’t bring herself to fully trust him whilst he was in rut. However, the further they ventured into wild folk territory, the more Hannah noticed how amazing the alpha smelled and she realised her heat was gradually getting stronger. She began to notice other things about Gadreel; how strong he was, how stoic he seemed yet he could also be so gentle and caring and protective. He never once pushed himself onto Hannah or even asked to scent her despite being in rut and she was quite shocked by it.

Hannah had never been around an alpha who attempted to control themselves whilst she was in heat (other than Balthazar) and to know Gadreel was in rut too made it all the more confusing for the omega. Shouldn’t he be pressing her against a tree and knotting her by now?

Yet Gadreel seemed to have no intentions of taking her against her will. He was as quiet and kind as ever and every so often he would ask if she was in pain from her heat or if she wanted him to carry one of her bags despite having his own.

When the terrain grew rougher and more difficult to navigate on two legs, the pair morphed into their wolf forms and dodged branches and fallen logs as they dragged their bags gracelessly with them.

They stopped once to snack on a blackberry bush but the rest of the day they spent trekking through the forest until their legs hurt and they couldn’t walk any longer. They found a stream and settled at its bank, lapping at the refreshing water as dusk washed over the sky in a blanket of pink and orange hues.

By now Gadreel was beginning to limp, the pain between his legs worsening and he shifted restlessly on the leaf-littered floor, attempting to find a more comfortable position. Hannah’s aching wasn’t nearly as intense as Gadreel’s, but her stomach was cramping more often now and she knew it wouldn’t be long before slick dribbled down her thighs.

Sympathetic, Hannah cautiously made her way over to Gadreel, knowing the scent of an omega (especially one in heat) would dull his pain. At first, Gadreel tried to move away, uncertain whether Hannah was comfortable with being so close to him, but she gently pressed into his side and he realised what she was doing.

He offered her a grateful smile as they both settled down again and he carefully rested his head over her neck. Hannah quirked her lips in amusement; trust Gadreel to subtly scent her instead of just jamming his nose into her throat. She wasn’t complaining though, because the position meant she could scent him and that helped dim the effects of her heat.

“Is this okay?” Asked Gadreel softly and Hannah nodded as she wriggled a little closer. The alpha was very warm.

“You’ll tell me if you’re uncomfortable?” He pressed and Hannah rolled her eyes and shifted until she was curled into him, their bodies pressed together.

Gadreel made a sound of surprise but it trailed off into one of delight and he curled around her
properly until they were spooning. His tail wiggled and Hannah giggled at his happiness. He placed a paw around her and all previous nervousness forgotten, Hannah grinned and leaned into him. How could she ever have believed Gadreel capable of hurting her?

“Which pack were you in when you were a pup?” Asked Hannah, content and wanting to start a conversation.

Gadreel nuzzled her ear delicately. “I was always part of the Milton pack. My mothers handed leadership down to me when they felt they were too old to run it. They died shortly after.”

Hannah’s ears flattened. “I’m sorry,” she murmured but Gadreel shook his head.

“They were old. They were in their early-fifties when they had me. They lived a full, happy life and they died of natural causes.”

Hannah smiled and relaxed into his nuzzling of her ear.

“Which pack were you born into?” Asked Gadreel.

“Technically none,” hummed Hannah. “My dad was a Rover and he took my mom away from her pack when she was in heat. She fell for him soon after and they lived on their own for nine months. Three days after I was born, he left and started roving again and my mom didn’t think she’d be able to look after me on her own so we joined a pack. That’s where I met Balthazar. We’ve known each other since we were pups and we grew up together. When Hastur’s pack took over, my mom was getting older and she got sick. The new pack didn’t care and they just… let her die.” A stray tear rolled down her cheek. “That was a long time ago though.”

Gadreel whined softly and to Hannah’s surprise, nuzzled her tears away. He tugged her closer and licked her head comfortingly, like a mother would her distressed pup. It was reassuring and Hannah snuggled into his fur.

“Thanks,” she whispered and Gadreel rumbled in acknowledgement.

They relaxed into each other and conversation turned to something a little more light-hearted and they chatted amiably until the stars twinkled high in the sky.

Hannah drifted off with a smile.

* * *

The next morning was more difficult than either of them could’ve imagined.

Gadreel’s rut was in full swing and Hannah’s heat was starting to flare because of it.

For the first time in years, she wasn’t stressed or suffering abuse and her heat was taking advantage of the opportunity for a normal cycle. Despite all the years of being terrified of them and trying to escape from them, Hannah realised she wanted a knot inside her. Not just any knot either; she wanted the one from the alpha that was enduring a rut beside her.

Gadreel was struggling to keep a level head. His pupils were dilated and the constant aroma of heat made it so he couldn’t get rid of his half-formed erection as he walked. It was painful and he
desperately wanted to stop and use a toy but he didn't have one with him and he also wanted to get them both back to camp safely. His stomach tensed agonisingly and his breathing was growing heavier with every step. The bags he was carrying were beginning to irritate him.

Hannah couldn't seem to help herself from pressing into his side as they walked and Gadreel immediately shoved his nose into her throat, breathing in her sweet scent.

Hannah easily bared her neck for him and for a second, all Gadreel could think about was marking her throat and pushing her to the floor until he could mount her.

He growled at himself in frustration and pulled away from her sharply. Hannah whined in disappointment, the sound muffled by the bags she was carrying, and nuzzled his cheek until he lost his internal battle and tucked his nose into her throat again.

He pulled back slightly when the scent of blueberries and buttercups suddenly increased twofold and he caught sight of the slick trickling down her legs. He couldn’t tear his gaze away and Hannah noticed his staring and cocked her tail upright, curling it seductively in invitation. Gadreel felt his resolve beginning to crumble.

He suddenly dropped his bags and squeezed his eyes shut, trying to centre himself but Hannah was quickly on him, licking at his throat and jaw and cheeks and rubbing her head submissively under his chin.

“Stop,” he choked out as his instincts screamed at him to claim, mate and breed, but Hannah ignored him and he had to push on her chest to get her to listen.

“This is your heat and my rut making you want this,” he grated out. “You’re going to regret this in two weeks’ time.”

Hannah’s eyes were a little glazed as she shook her head and attempted to nip at the alpha’s throat and with great effort, Gadreel took a step backwards.

“Stop,” he demanded, all alpha command and Hannah immediately winced and ducked her head submissively. He sighed and picked up his bags, huffing until Hannah did the same and the omega trailed behind him with her tail curved underneath her and her ears low like a scolded puppy. He felt guilty at using alpha intimidation tactics on her, but he couldn’t think of another way to stop her advances.

Eventually, he couldn’t take the pain any longer and he waited for her to catch up so he could scent her throat again as they walked. Hannah quickly perked up and exposed her neck to him, but she didn’t try to nuzzle or lick him again. Gadreel was grateful; he wasn’t sure if he’d be able to restrain himself around a willing omega a second time.

It was midday by the time they reached the camp and Gadreel was barely holding it together. Hannah was starting to make submissive and needy whimpers and whines and every instinct in his body was demanding he make the omega his. He blocked them out though and his whole body slumped in relief when the scent of the camp finally drifted to his nostrils.

Charlie was the first to spot them and her tail wagged as she trotted over to greet them.

“Hey guys! Have a good trip?” She slowed when she got a whiff of their scents and when she came within four feet of them, Hannah growled warningly at her.

Charlie blinked in surprise and Gadreel’s arousal rocketed upwards a few notches at the thought of Hannah being possessive of him.
Charlie glanced between them warily and subtly stepped backwards, suspicion flickering behind her eyes as she came to the wrong conclusion.

“Uh… do you want to leave the bags here why you go… sort yourselves out?” She asked cautiously as Hannah’s eyes widened at her own actions. The tricolour omega shook her head apologetically.

“I’m sorry, Charlie… I’m not sure what came over me…”

Charlie’s gaze flicked between them again. “Uh huh. Maybe you two should go somewhere more private so no accidental fights start.”

Hannah’s face heated in embarrassment. “…Oh there’s nothing… we’re not… things aren’t like that… we’re just—”

“Hi guys! Did you enjoy the city?” Asked Sam obliviously as he padded over and he received two snarls for his efforts; one off Hannah and the other off Gadreel as they both eyed him as a potential rival.

Sam stopped dead in his tracks, eyes like saucers as Charlie glance towards him sympathetically.

Gadreel licked his dry lips as he shook his head. “…My apologies, Sam. I assure you neither of us meant that. We seem to have managed to synchronise our heat and rut cycles. The last couple of days have been… problematic.”

Sam made no move to venture any closer.

“Right,” he coughed awkwardly, noting how Charlie was beginning to stare lustfully at Gadreel, which definitely looked weird when Charlie had made it clear how she preferred the company of other omegas.

Pheromones and hormones could definitely make things complicated.

“You need to get out of the open,” stated Sam, forcing himself to ignore the scent of alpha in rut. “We’ll take care of the supplies; you two take care of yourselves.”

Gadreel nodded and nudged Hannah’s side to stop her from baring her teeth at Charlie. Sam huffed sternly when it looked as though Charlie was about to growl back and Gadreel and Hannah slunk around the outskirts of the camp towards their shelters.

They paused for a moment when they realised they would have to separate, but Gadreel didn’t dare glance back at the omega in fear of doing something regrettable and without further ado, he slipped into his shelter and found his toy.

As he morphed into his human form and sought relief, he imagined a pair of sapphire eyes, long, silky black hair and pretty pink lips moaning beneath him.

Chapter End Notes

THIS FIC IS FINALLY BACK!

I'm so sorry for the long wait, guys; I lost my muse for a while but this week I found it hiding down the back of the couch and I've restarted this story! It might take me a
couple of chapters to get back into the flow so sorry if the writing isn't up to par; I'll try to get it back to its usual standard within the next few chapters. I promise I'll finish this fic! Hope you've all been doing wonderful since I last 'spoke' to you :) 

OH! Also, someone asked me for a list of the wolves' appearances, so here you go (italic stuff is what they smell like):

Dean – Sandy with dark brown legs, muzzle and tail tip – *Pine and leather*
Benny – Oak with varying shades of brown
Gadreel – Dark grey with white chin, underbelly, legs and under tail – *oak and roasted chestnut*
Crowley – Black
Bobby – Tan but greying with age
Samandriel – Black and white patches
Gabriel – Gold – *Chocolate and hazelnuts*

Chuck – Dark brown with patches of grey
Becky – Strawberry-blonde and white patches
Pam – Coffee colour with black paws and tail tip
Harry – Black and white patches
Ed – Ginger and white patches
Ellen – Blonde but greying with age
Jody – Black but starting to grey
Alex – Black
Meg – Black with blonde tail tip and paws

Castiel – Black with tan underbelly, legs and under tail – *Oceans and honey*
Claire – White
Ben – Black with reddish-brown muzzle, “socks” and tail tip, and sandy paws
Sam – Chocolate with varying shades of sand colour – *Strawberries and grass*
Hannah – Black, brown, white (tricolour) – *Buttercup and blueberries*
Charlie – Auburn
Jo – Blonde

Ruby – Mahogany/deep red – *Burnt wood and charcoal*
Azazel – Brown with grey muzzle, underbelly, legs and under tail
Michael – White
Lucifer – Dirty blonde with white muzzle, underbelly, paws and under tail
Raphael – Dark brown with black paws, muzzle and tail tip
Balthazar – Bronze with white muzzle, underbelly, chest, legs and under tail - *Ginger and cinnamon*
Alistair – Grey with white muzzle and paws

N/A: I've not included them all so if you're wondering about someone in particular, just ask :)}
“I hate maths,” grumbled Ben to Samandriel as Charlie taught them multiplication and division rules.

Samandriel had recently turned seven and Ben was due to turn seven in a couple of weeks, so that meant time to stop playing hide and seek all day and learn how to do useless things like Mathematics, English, Geography, History and other boring subjects that Samandriel had thought he’d escaped by fleeing to the wild. As they grew older, they would learn other subjects and skills like how to fish and hunt and fight, but for now they were stuck learning about everything Claire and Alex had been complaining about for the past year.

“Ben? Are you paying attention?” Charlie asked sternly and the young omega nodded innocently.

“What’s twelve times twelve?” She challenged and Ben stuck his tongue out in contemplation.

“One-hundred and forty-four,” he replied and Charlie smiled, pleased.

“Alright, kiddos. I’ve finished torturing you. Time to go to Bobby for your history lesson.”

They groaned.

An hour later, once their history lesson was over, Bobby told them the rest of the day was theirs and they grinned, tails wagging as they sped off to play tag with the girls.

“Don’t wander too far!” Called Bobby, but his voice was lost in a cacophony of excited barks and growls as the boys pounced on their female counterparts.

They squabbled in the centre of the camp for a few minutes before Ben broke free and raced towards the outskirts of the camp, the others hot on his tail and he laughed as he dodged trees and jumped fallen branches to get away. Claire caught up and flopped onto him and the pair giggled as they struggled to pin each other.

“Boys against girls!” Announced Alex as she slammed Samandriel to the ground and the little alpha laughed and batted at her, determined to win their game but the girls leaped away and zipped through the forest, evading their friends.

Samandriel and Ben rocketed after them for a few minutes, sidestepping rocks and crawling through bushes before finally managing to down them. The four rolled to the floor in one big heap and they pawed and growled and batted playfully at each other until they were out of breath and cackling at one another’s filthy fur.

It was then that they realised the camp was nowhere to be seen and they sobered.

“We should probably go back,” said Claire, glancing around the unfamiliar trees and everyone nodded and trotted back the way they came, following the chaos they’d left whilst running.

Every so often they pounce on each other with a laugh or chewed on one another’s ears until they were pushed away. At one point, Alex tackled Ben and they all somehow ended up rolling on the floor again for a few minutes, leaves and mud and grass caked over their fur.
An ominous growl made them freeze. They bounced to their feet and huddled together, ears flat as they glanced around. They couldn’t see anyone but they were a little shaken and it made them quicken their pace to get back to the camp.

“I think it’s this way,” said Samandriel when their paw prints faded but Alex shook her head.

“No, it’s this way.”

Samandriel creased his brow and sniffed the floor but when that didn’t help he shook his head.

“No. I’m pretty sure it’s this way.”

“Well, you’re wrong,” huffed Alex. “I know it’s this way.”

Samandriel flicked his gaze between the two paths in confusion. When he came to think of it, he didn’t recognise this area at all. Alex was beginning to look less and less sure of herself as well now that she was glancing around the tall trees.

“I think we took a wrong turn,” murmured Claire nervously as she looked back down the route they’d come from and Ben nodded in agreement. They turned and cautiously retraced their steps, but a hair-raising snarl had them stopping dead, ears flat and tails tucked between their legs.

“I want to go home,” whimpered Claire and Alex pressed into her side and looked around warily. Samandriel and Ben automatically stepped closer to each other.

Another intimidating rumble had the pups whining fearfully.

A bush to their left began to rustle and shake and a familiar smell of smoke and a sour scent of rage and intent to murder drifted from it, terrifying the pups.

“Run,” hissed Samandriel and he shoved harshly at Ben’s side to get him moving. He shot the girls a desperate look and they all raced through the forest together, crying out in terror when the sound of a set of paws thundered after them, deep snarls and the unmistakable scent of a hostile alpha a mere few metres behind.

The pups darted between the suddenly unforgiving trees and thorny branches and nettles tore at their legs making them yelp. Rotting leaves made their paws slip over the ground and hard rocks made them stumble as their hearts thumped too loud and too fast. A narrow stream slowed them down and they began to panic because they couldn’t remember passing a stream on their way out here, but their chaser was relentless and the sound of paws grew louder, its rhythm quickening.

The pups threw their heads up as they ran, howling desperately and hoping the wind would carry their frightened cries but they didn’t know how far away the camp was or if there was anyone around to hear them. They pushed themselves harder, faster until their legs began to hurt and their chests began to heave, but still their pursuer trailed them, closing the distance between them inch by inch and none of them dared to look back to see what kind of monster wanted to slaughter them.

After a few minutes, the pups began to tire and with dawning horror, they realised their pace was slowing, leading them right into the claws of their chaser and in one last act of desperation Samandriel howled at the sky as loud as he could, flinching at the dark chuckle from behind.

A claw swiped at Ben’s back and the pup collapsed to the ground with a strangled cry of pain and Samandriel immediately stopped, the girls turning in horror.
Mahogany fur and a flash of sharp teeth descended on Ben before anyone could blink and Samandriel didn’t think twice about sprinting towards the large figure, teeth bared and a snarl escaping his lips as he clamped down on any body part he could find.

The figure hissed and Samandriel yelped as a claw slammed into his muzzle and sent him flying into a tree. For a moment, he couldn’t see and he felt dizzy but then a familiar face came into view and the young alpha gasped.

Ruby.

Her teeth were bared as she stalked closer, a deep rumble vibrating through her chest and for a heart-stopping second, Samandriel thought Ben was dead but suddenly Ruby howled in pain and whirled around to slash at Ben, Alex and Claire who had moments ago sunk their needle-like teeth into Ruby’s legs.

“Brats,” she seethed before swiping at Claire and the omega hurtled into a tree with a terrible thump.

Enraged, Alex lunged for Ruby but the beta was smacked to the ground and Samandriel gasped when the alpha suddenly turned to Ben and clamped her jaws around his body.

Ben cried in agony, tears in his eyes as Ruby began to shake him like a rag doll and Samandriel instinctively rushed over to claw at her eye. She dropped her victim and Ben fell to the ground limply, blood trickling down his fur and as Alex and Claire staggered to their feet, Samandriel planted himself over Ben’s body despite his own shaking in fear and he snarled warningly at Ruby.

She smirked in amusement and opened her jaw again.

“Get away from them!” Spat another voice a fair distance away and Ruby stiffened, glanced behind her once and took off with a frustrated curse.

A few seconds later, Castiel skidded to a halt a couple of feet away, Dean a few paces behind and both adults looked around the scene in silent horror, taking in Alex and Claire’s staggering and the bloody Ben lying beneath a bruised Samandriel.

Castiel immediately slid over to his pups as Dean moved towards the shaken girls and the older omega whined as he sniffed at the boys.

Samandriel gingerly stepped away from Ben as Castiel licked the blood off his fur and the little omega choked out a scared sob as he tried to wriggle closer to Castiel.

Cas lay on the floor, paws wrapped around him protectively as he cleaned the blood away and made soft noises of comfort and reassurance and Samandriel gave in to the need to be close to his father and wormed his way beside Ben, between his father’s paws.

Ben snuggled into Cas’ chest and tugged Samandriel with him desperately and both pups nuzzled and scented at each other frantically as Cas held them close and licked their wounds.

“I want to go home,” whimpered Ben, tears flowing down his cheeks and Cas’ heart broke. He nuzzled the young pup tenderly, his pounding pulse only just beginning to calm.

“We’ll go home. You’re safe now. You’re safe,” he murmured, heart thumping wildly and he wasn’t entirely certain who he was trying to reassure.

Samandriel curled around Ben protectively. “It was Ruby,” he whispered and Cas’ eyes widened.
“You’re sure?”

Both pups nodded and a furious snarl burst from Cas’ lips. Ben and Samandriel rubbed their heads against his chest and he quietened and hugged them both.

After a couple of minutes, he nudged Samandriel to his feet and gently scruffed Ben as Dean rounded Alex and Claire to his sides and told them to stick close. They slowly made their way back to the camp.

Once there, the Winchester pack jogged over to them, noses and ears working overtime as they gasped or growled at the pups’ sorry states.

“What happened?”

“Who did this?”

“Are they okay?”

“Who are we hunting?”

Alex and Claire stumbled over to Jody, tears in their eyes as the older beta pulled them close and tried to soothe them. Dean nuzzled Samandriel worriedly and the little alpha rubbed up against his leg in search of comfort.

“What happened, boy?” Demanded Bobby as the rest of the pack muttered and growled about pup slaughters.

“Ruby happened,” said Cas after he’d lowered Ben to the ground and a cacophony of snarls and rumbles echoed around the camp. Dean glanced over to his lover in shock and the omega nodded grimly.

“I saw red fur when we arrived at the scene and the pups confirmed it was definitely Ruby who attacked them.”

Dean scowled and tugged Samandriel a little closer.

“So she has been hovering around the camp. I knew she had something to with that timber pup’s death.”

“She’s murdering pups now?” Snorted Jo in disgust.

“Picked a real winner there, Sam,” muttered Crowley dryly and Sam’s eyes widened in horror at the realisation he’d once been mated to that.

Gabriel surged forwards to sniff at Samandriel, licking a few of his scrapes and bruises as Dean stepped backwards to let the other alpha fuss over his nephew.

“You okay, Alfie?” Whispered Gabe and the pup nodded and snuggled into his uncle’s chest.

“She was really scary,” he murmured. “And she hurt Ben.”

Gabriel scowled and glanced over to Ben, checking him over in concern and the young omega padded over and cuddled into the golden wolf’s fur, smiling when Gabriel began to lick his wounds like Cas had.

Castiel watched the scene fondly; his brother loved children and since civilised folk had always been
wary of Novak alphas and had kept their children away from them, Gabriel had developed a habit of pouring all his pent-up love unto Samandriel and Ben. Not that the pups seemed to mind.

Dean watched on silently and said nothing as Gabriel fretted over the pups but it was clear he was pleased by the other alpha’s behaviour and Cas smiled as he watched his brother’s reputation raise a few notches in Dean’s eyes.

“Looks like we’ll have to crack open the medical supplies from Gadreel and Hannah’s trip,” huffed Jody, looking like she wanted to murder a certain female alpha as Alex and Claire burrowed into her sides. She glanced pointedly at Ben and Samandriel and Cas herded them away from his brother and followed them towards Jody’s shelter.

Drama over, the grumbling pack slowly began to disperse back to whatever they’d been doing until Sam, Gabriel, Dean and Bobby were the only ones left at its centre.

“How did you know something was wrong?” Asked Bobby curiously and Dean glanced over to his adopted uncle.

“I thought I could hear howling and went to investigate. Cas tagged along then suddenly started panicking, saying Samandriel was in trouble. He took off and I followed.”

Sam shook his head, distressed. “What kind of person kills innocent pups?”

“My older brothers,” stated Gabriel darkly and Sam winced before nuzzling his lover’s cheek comfortably.

“They won’t get near Samandriel,” he murmured.

“I’m sure that’s what Raphael’s mate said about her own child,” muttered Gabriel and Sam flinched again.

“Well they’ll have to go through all of us first,” huffed Bobby gruffly and Gabriel blinked in surprise and turned to the older alpha. Bobby narrowed his gaze. “What? You don’t think we’re just gonna hand Cas and Samandriel over to your demented brothers, do you?”

Gabriel shook his head. “No, I’m just… unaccustomed to hearing so many people caring for my little brother and nephew.”

Bobby rolled his eyes. “They’re good people. You stop acting like everyone’s secretly plotting to attack you and maybe we’ll start caring about you too. Heck, a few of us already do.”

A small, humbled smile slowly crawled across Gabriel’s face and he bowed his head respectfully. Bobby snorted at the display and wandered over to Ellen.

“When I find her, I’ll kill her,” rumbled Dean quietly and Gabriel scowled.

“I’ll back you up,” he muttered and the pair shared a glance before Gabriel gently licked his lover’s cheek and left Dean to wait for Cas.

* * *

“Trust me, Sammy, you’re gonna love Asia. The eighties had bad hair, awful makeup, terrible
clothes but some of the best music known to man,” grinned Gabriel as he expertly navigated his smart phone with his tail. “And Asia definitely had the best album cover art.”

Sam frowned adorably as the first notes of ‘Wildest dreams’ billowed through the tiny speakers. He seemed to be concentrating hard and Gabriel couldn’t help but lick his muzzle because his omega was too cute for words.

“It’s… catchy,” Sam admitted as he leaned into his lover and Gabriel didn’t just puff his chest out in pride because the omega was cuddling him. He didn’t.

“Of course it is. It’s Asia,” snorted Gabriel and Sam rolled his eyes and furrowed his brow once more as he listened. Gabriel licked his muzzle again because he could and they were too far away from the camp to be teased.

“I’ve never listened to much music,” confessed Sam. “It’s certainly interesting.”

Gabriel gaped at him. “You’ve never-? Okay, well that has got to change. Every day I’m going to introduce you to a new piece of music from classical to hip hop and we’re going to make you a connoisseur of all things musical.”

Sam shook his head in amusement. “Charlie’s not getting her solar-powered battery pack back is she?”

“I need to charge my phone somehow after using it to educate you.”

“You educating me? That’ll make a change,” smirked Sam and Gabriel feigned a look of offence.

“How dare you! Learn to respect your elders, pup. That’s the problem with your generation.”

“Who taught you to hunt?” Teased Sam and Gabriel pouted and fell silent as he stared at the stretch of pine and oak trees leading towards the horizon.

After a few minutes, the song switched to ‘Heat of the moment’ and Gabriel smiled because Sam clearly wasn’t happy with his silence and was beginning to nuzzle his cheek. Gabriel forced himself to keep quiet and Sam huffed in a manner that suggested he knew what the alpha was doing but was going to play along anyway.

He licked Gabriel’s cheek and jaw before moving onto his muzzle and Gabe finally gave in and licked his nose playfully. Sam sneezed lightly, making the alpha grin and before Gabriel could blink, Sam had him trapped between his paws as he rolled them onto their sides. He licked Gabriel’s head sloppily, tail wagging as the alpha laughed and Gabe scrabbled at the floor until he escaped his omega’s grip and could straddle him.

‘It was the heat of the moment, telling me what your heart meant. The heat of the moment shone in your eyes…’

Gabriel wiggled his eyebrows ridiculously and Sam snickered and wrapped his paws around his lover until the alpha was sprawled over his chest. Gabriel nosed at his neck contentedly.

“I love you,” murmured Sam as he nuzzled Gabriel’s floppy ear. “More with every passing day.”

“I love you too, kiddo,” whispered Gabriel, heart warming. “You’re the best thing that ever happened to me.”

“Don’t you ever miss the city though? It must be difficult trying to adapt to a whole new way of life.
Do you ever just wish you’d… stayed at home?” Asked Sam softly and Gabriel frowned and nipped at his jaw.

“You’re right; it’s difficult trying to live like you guys after growing up in civilisation and of course I miss things about the city; chocolate for one thing. Beds, showers, TV, books, my secret Haribo pot at the bottom of my wardrobe,” huffed Gabriel. “But the thing is, having all that stuff brought me happiness for the time I used them but I had no family to enjoy them with and I’m convinced half of my friends only hung around because I had more money than sense. They weren’t really friends, just people with a similar social status to me.” Gabriel shook his head. “I wasn’t even allowed to hug my own brother in public because I was deemed more important to society due to my secondary gender. How messed up is that?”

Sam cocked his head in contemplation. “Would you really have shared your Haribos with someone?”

“No, but I like to lie to myself that I’m a good person,” scoffed Gabriel. “But that isn’t the point. The point is being here with you has shown me what I’ve been missing for so long. I know the pack thinks I’m an arrogant, loud-mouthed jerk with a tendency to get into trouble, but I’ve seen the way they work together and how they are with each other and honestly? They’ve actually been kinder and more caring towards me than any of my supposed ‘family’ has ever been. You guys are so different from the Novak family and it’s driving me nuts because I know that and I can see it but for some reason I still act the same way as I did with my brothers.

“I can see how happy Cas and Alfie are and I know I could be happy here too because even though you guys don’t have all the luxuries of the city, I’m never bored or lonely because you’re all so fascinating and there’s always an adventure or a lesson or a piece of experience to be gained.”

Gabriel gazed at Sam fondly. “Being with you has been the best few months of my life, Sam. You’ve taught me so much, not only about pack life, but about myself as well. So, no; I don’t wish I’d stayed at home because I can’t imagine never having met you or your amazing family.”

Sam’s eyes widened in awe before he was surging upwards and licking Gabriel’s face frantically, kissing every inch of it until Gabriel was laughing and batting at his nose.

They scented at each other for a few moments, relaxing into each other’s warm bodies but then Sam got this mischievous sparkle in his eyes and he jutted his hips upwards.

Gabriel smirked wickedly and leaned down to nibble at Sam’s neck. The omega sighed contentedly and hooked his hind legs over Gabriel’s hips.

“You should definitely be inside me,” hummed Sam as if he was discussing the weather and Gabriel’s brain had to reboot at the sudden turn of the conversation.

“That’s a good idea,” he managed after a few seconds and his jaw dropped when Sam gently pushed him off his body only to turn and take up a presenting pose, tail curled high and out of the way.

Sometimes Sam was sweet and gentle and wanted affection and tender kisses and heartfelt words of love; other times he would stick his bottom in the air and show off his holes.

Gabriel wasn’t one to waste an opportunity to prove how much he enjoyed Sam’s company though and stepped forwards enthusiastically to run his tongue over the omega’s labia, relishing his lover’s quiet groans as he worked him open. He lapped greedily at the slick trickling out of the omega and Sam shuddered in pleasure as Gabriel dipped his tongue in and out of him until he was sufficiently wet.
A warm weight settled on his back and Sam closed his eyes as Gabriel draped his smaller body over him. Sam had to lower himself a little because of the height difference, but neither seemed to care as Gabriel nuzzled his spine and sunk into him with a pleased rumble.

Sam felt the urge to submit to the alpha wash over his whole body and he didn’t fight it. Gabriel would look after him. He wouldn’t hurt him like Ruby did.

“Relax, kid,” Gabriel murmured as he felt Sam’s muscles loosen beneath him, as if he was giving up control of himself and trusting Gabe to catch him. “I’ll take care of you.”

Sam slowly sunk to the floor and Gabriel held on to him tightly as he set a steady rhythm.

He wasn’t harsh or rough like Ruby was and instead of pain and discomfort, Sam only felt pleasure and satisfaction at being filled by Gabriel.

“Not got a condom so I’m not gonna knot you, okay?” Whispered Gabriel and Sam smiled at his thoughtfulness. Even when trying to get off, Gabriel always put him first.

Gabriel’s pace quickened and Sam’s back arched as the alpha hit a particularly sensitive spot. Gabe grinned and grazed the spot again, making Sam’s breaths stutter as he tried to rock onto the alpha’s erection.

“Harder,” breathed Sam and Gabriel wordlessly obliged, rumbling in approval when more slick dribbled over Sam’s thighs and onto Gabriel’s.

Gabriel tightened his grip and deepened his thrusts and Sam groaned wantonly.

“Hey, is that music?” Asked a voice from not too far away and both alpha and omega swore breathlessly as they tore apart and plastered themselves to the floor to hide the evidence of their most recent activities. They hoped their winces went unnoticed.

Dean padded over, Cas, Ben and Samandriel not too far behind, tails swishing happily as they glanced curiously to Gabriel’s phone which was now playing ‘Suspicion’.

“Uh…” Gabriel choked out, unable to engage his brain for a moment and Castiel glanced at him oddly. His tone was definitely off.

Dean cocked an ear as he listened to the song and Ben and Samandriel stared at the phone, entranced.

“Yeah. Yeah, it’s Asia,” Gabriel finally managed.

“Like the continent?” Asked Dean, confused and Gabriel had to shift into a more comfortable position because his erection wasn’t going down as quickly as he would’ve liked and there was a sharp twig underneath him.

Cas frowned at his awkward shuffling.

“They’re a rock band,” supplied Gabriel. “A supergroup actually.”

Dean didn’t appear to understand what any of that meant but he was apparently fascinated by the song.

“Never heard this kind of music before,” he said, hypnotised by the phone and Gabriel was genuinely shocked by that. He’d always pictured Dean as a leather jacket, classic car, hard rock kind
“They’re pretty good,” said Sam, voice a little higher than usual and Gabriel panicked when he saw Cas subtly scent the air.

“They’re great actually,” hurried Gabriel. “I can show you more once we get back to the camp. My battery’s dying,” he lied and Dean nodded enthusiastically, tail wagging.

“That’d be awesome.”

“Can we come?” Asked Sam and Gabriel nodded wordlessly as he shifted again, guilt flooding his brain that he was in the presence of two innocent children.

“Yes, well, we’ll meet you both at the camp in a little while,” announced Cas suddenly as he shot Gabriel a filthy look and ushered Dean and the pups away, ignoring Dean’s protests of “Wait, can’t we walk with them?”

Sam blew out a long-suffering breath and slowly clambered to his paws once they were gone. He grimaced at the slick staining his legs.

“There is one thing I really do miss about civilisation,” huffed Gabriel as he stood and when Sam raised an eyebrow, he snorted.

“Locked doors.”

* * *

Ruby snarled at a pebble and swiped at it furiously and it made a satisfying crack as it lodged itself into the trunk of a tree a few feet away.

She snarled again because she wished the trunk had been that pathetic Novak pup’s head.

She scraped her claws down another tree and imagined it to be Castiel’s body and when a chunk of bark shattered over the ground, she grinned.

Her plan to kill Sam and Ben had failed miserably and she had alerted the pack to her presence, but that didn’t mean she was going to give up. The Winchester pack had killed her mate and she would get revenge one way or another, she just needed to try something more direct.

She would never get to Dean with Castiel around; as much as she despised the omega, she had to admit he was a determined fighter when it came to Dean’s safety and there was no way she’d win against both Dean and Castiel defending one another.

Sam, however, was another story.

She’d almost managed to get rid of him last time but luck had not been on her side and Castiel had stumbled across them purely by accident. She only had herself to blame really; drowning Sam had taken far too long. She needed something more swift and precise. A bite to the jugular would do nicely.

All she needed to do was get Sam alone.
Two chapters in two days; I'm on a roll! Hope you enjoyed the latest installment :)

Chapter End Notes
“Admit it; you’re warming up to me,” teased Gabriel and Dean rolled his eyes but didn’t protest as the last notes of ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ were stolen by the gentle wind.

The night was clear, stars twinkling brightly above them and because Sam was a dork and listened to far too many of Gabriel’s stories, there was a small bonfire crackling in the centre of the camp, its flames dancing enticingly amongst the surrounding darkness. The other pack members were chatting amongst themselves in groups or pairs and the pups were sharing spooky stories in Jody’s den.

Dean, Cas, Sam and Gabe where settled beside the fire, fur toasty as they listened to the music Gabriel had decided to educate the Winchesters with.

“What’s ACDC?” Asked Dean, brow wrinkled as he scanned through Gabriel’s music playlist and the golden wolf chuckled and selected play on ‘Highway to Hell’. Dean instantly perked up as the opening chords exploded through the speakers. His tail began to wag as his eyes brightened in awe.

“I’ll admit that you have a really great taste in music,” Dean finally conceded and Gabriel beamed and began singing along with a surprisingly good impression of lead singer Bon Scott, which had Dean laughing freely.

“Would you look at that?” Murmured Cas softly and Sam smiled at him and leaned into his side.

“Wasn’t sure I’d ever see them acting like friends,” the larger omega whispered and Cas shook his head in amusement.

“The world is full of surprises.”

Sam gently nuzzled Cas’ ear and the older wolf grinned and allowed the lead omega to fuss over him. He was grateful for Sam’s approval of his relationship with Dean and it was an honour to call the other omega family. If it hadn’t been for Sam stumbling across him and Samandriel all those months ago, Castiel would’ve been a very sad, lonely, starving and possibly dead omega.

“I’m glad you came to us,” mumbled Sam as he nuzzled Cas’ head like a mother would her pup. “You have no idea how grateful I am to call you my family.”

Cas’ heart melted and he pressed his head under the younger omega’s chin, making Sam grin in joy as he rubbed the Winchester scent over Cas’ head.

“Thanks for saving my life,” whispered Sam and Castiel leaned further into him.

“Thanks for saving mine and my son’s.”

They lay down as they watched their brothers discuss the wonders of Guns N’ Roses and Castiel’s tail wagged once when Sam rested his head over his neck, one paw slung over his back.

“Is my brother treating you well?” Asked Castiel softly and Sam nodded.

“I’ve not been this happy in years,” he replied quietly. “He’s very good to me; nothing like what I expected a Novak alpha to be like.”
Cas chuckled. “Dean’s nothing like how I originally expected a Winchester alpha to be. I guess we’ve both been lied to.”

“Not that that’s a bad thing,” hummed Sam as he made himself more comfortable on Cas’ neck.

“Aww, aren’t they adorable?” Coed Gabriel teasingly and Dean watched his brother and lover fondly, a warm look in his eyes.

“Shut up, Gabe,” both omegas snorted in unison and the older alpha’s ears drooped comically and he pouted but it was clear he wasn’t really offended. In fact, he seemed pleased that his lover and brother were getting on so well.

The alphas eventually returned to their music exploration session, Dean gazing at Cas for a little longer until Gabriel cleared his throat obnoxiously as a reminder that he was in public.

Cas rolled his eyes at his brother’s antics but Sam merely snickered and nuzzled the older omega’s head.

“Don’t expect him to ask you because he won’t,” he whispered and Cas raised a confused eyebrow.

“Don’t expect who to ask me what?”

“Don’t expect Dean to ask you to be his mate because he won’t,” Sam clarified and Cas tensed for a moment, a hundred reasons as to why he wasn’t good enough to be Dean’s mate passing through his mind. Sam nuzzled his ear reassuringly.

“That was worded poorly. What I mean is Dean will never ask you to be his mate because he’s moving at your pace and following your lead. Dean’s not very good at asking for things he wants, but he’s excellent at giving everybody else what they want. I’m not forcing you into acting or anything, I’m just letting you know that if you ever want Dean to become your mate, you’re going to have to ask him first.”

Castiel blinked as he absorbed that information. It was certainly in-keeping with what he’d learned of Dean’s personality so far.

“Thank you, Sam. I’ll bear that in mind.” He wasn’t planning on mating Dean just yet, but he’d be lying if he said he hadn’t thought about it before.

“You’re good for my brother,” commented Sam and Cas’ chest swelled with pride.

“He’s good for me,” Cas murmured and Sam nestled into his fur with a smile as they let the music wash over them, their brothers’ chatter fading into the background.

For once in his life, Castiel Novak had a real family.

* * *

“You on chaser or muscle today?” Asked Sam as the hunting group trekked through the forest, Cas, Ed and Harry leading them towards a herd of deer they’d picked up on a few minutes ago.

“Dean’s still trialling me on chaser,” replied Gabriel. “His pep talk ended with ‘don’t screw up again’.”
“He wouldn’t say it if he didn’t think you could take it,” commented Sam and Gabriel rolled his eyes.

“I’ve not made any mistakes for a while now. Why’s he being awkward with me?”

“Because your last music lesson consisted of Justin Bieber, Ariane Grande, Kesha, Taylor Swift and nothing else.”

“…He secretly liked Taylor Swift. I could see it in his eyes.”

“…I know. His tail was wagging to the beat.”

Gabriel and Sam shared a secretive smirk before focusing their attention on the pack once more.

They marched onwards for another ten minutes, Gabriel tangling his tail with Sam’s because he was a soppy romantic at heart and because it made Sam smile, before Cas, Ed and Harry finally halted, tails stretched high in the air as a warning to keep silent so as not to frighten their prey.

There was no clearing and in fact, the trees actually seemed to congregate more in the midst of where the deer were grazing, which meant it would be that much more difficult to chase them. However, the Winchester pack were confident in their hunting abilities and were determined not to let a few trees get in the way of their meal.

Dean’s head swivelled towards Sam and the omega immediately understood it as a request to be the decoy for today. He nodded wordlessly and Dean gestured for people to move into position.

Gabriel licked his cheek sweetly. ‘Stay safe,’ it said and Sam rubbed their noses together. ‘You too,’ was the silent reply. It was an exchange that was quickly becoming a ritual before a hunt and Sam couldn’t say he was averse to it.

They parted ways and Gabriel watched his lover arc around the herd until he was opposite the rest of the pack and he disappeared behind a cluster of bushes as he waited for everyone to get into position.

Gabriel settled between Becky and Jo and once everyone was crouched low and ready for the hunt to begin, he turned to the bush Sam was hiding in and waited for the omega to leap into the open and send the herd stampeding into the outstretched claws of the pack.

They waited...

And waited...

And waited.

Nothing happened.

Sam didn’t emerge from the bushes and the deer continued to munch serenely on their short tufts of Spring grass.

Confused, Dean scowled and risked popping his head up to show his brother they were ready but the omega didn’t appear to notice because there was no movement from the bushes.

Gabriel would be lying if he said he didn’t start to worry at that moment. Had Sam passed out?

Suddenly, the lead stag twitched an ear and his head shot upwards as he glanced towards the bush Sam was hiding in. After a few seconds, the bush rustled and he let out an almighty bellow and four young bucks startled and started stamping their hooves and bellowing in response and before any of
the pack could work out what was happening, the does and their offspring were crying out in panic. The herd fell into chaos as the bucks lowered their short antlers and began chasing the does away from their grazing spot and the stag screamed again, rearing to get his herd to move and the Winchester pack had no choice but to reveal themselves if they were to grab a meal.

Taken off-guard and still confused as to what had startled the deer, they were slow at responding and their coordination was off as they tried to isolate one of the does. Eventually they got their act together and scattered the deer until they had two straying from the rest of the herd and all was going well until they heard an agonised cry and a savage snarl accompanied by the sound of a fierce scuffle.

Dean glanced towards the source of the noises and his heart stopped when he saw a lump of chocolate fur and a flash of dark red surrounded by a mess of thundering hooves and sharp antlers, some of which were taking a swing at the smaller figures.

“SAM!” Yelled Dean, horrified as none other than Ruby clawed at Sam’s muzzle and pushed him into the fray of panicking deer. His brother yelped when a hoof slammed into his stomach and Dean twisted one-hundred and eighty degrees to help his brother, but the deer were cantering towards him and he couldn’t see through the tangle of legs and antlers. Solid bodies slammed into him, knocking him further away from his brother and the demonic alpha and he hissed when a pair of antlers grazed his side.

A few other pack members had abandoned the chase in order to help Sam, but the herd was too large and stressed and they were racing back and forth to get away from their predators, bellowing and rearing and butting the wolves frantically.

There was another pained cry from Sam as Ruby sunk her teeth into his neck and began to shake his head like a doll and he attempted to slice his claw through her chest but the shaking disorientated him and he couldn’t focus. He scrabbled at the floor in a desperate attempt to get away, but Ruby held fast and tore through his face with her claw.

Sam whined and tried to regain his footing, but a deer crashed into his body again, knocking his back half to the ground as Ruby clamped harder onto his neck and jerked it violently.

Dean squeezed between the large bodies of the deer with a terrified howl as he watched his brother be tortured almost in slow motion. He would never get to Sam in time and there was already too much blood pouring down his neck. The other pack members had abandoned the chase entirely and were in a frenzy as they scrabbled towards Sam, forcing their way through the dangerous stampede.

They couldn’t reach Sam and they watched another deer trample over his hind legs, the omega choking out an agonised sob.

“SAM!” Dean shouted in despair as his brother’s struggling weakened, blood pooling around the wounds where Ruby was still latched on, teeth sinking deeper and deeper until tears fell from the omega’s eyes. His call was lost amongst the frightened screaming and stampeding of the deer.

A golden blur smashed into Ruby.

Sam groaned as his neck was released and he collapsed to the floor with a grunt, too exhausted to move out of the way of the deer attempting to crush him and he only managed to drag himself out of the commotion when a buck stepped on both of his back paws.

He couldn’t lift his head, but he cast his gaze towards Ruby and his eyes widened when he spotted Gabriel tearing into her, uncaring of the chaos around them.
The two alphas fought viciously, snarling and clawing and biting at any part of each other they could reach and when Ruby lunged for Gabriel’s throat, Gabriel slashed his claw over her nose and pounced on her, pinning her on her back. Ruby yelped in surprise and kicked out at Gabriel’s stomach, but the golden alpha was merciless as he clamped his jaws around her muzzle until he tasted blood. She cried out in pain and sunk her claws deep into his side, making him hiss but he didn’t release her and there was pure fury in his eyes as he clawed relentlessly at her chest.

She kicked his crotch and he grunted and lost his grip and Ruby howled out a battle cry as she shoved him away and tried to throw him in the path of a panicked buck, but the Winchester pack had moved away from the herd, allowing them to escape as the wolves scampered towards Ruby and Gabriel, and the young buck leapt after the last of the does and raced into the distance.

The pack slowed as they watched Gabriel bounce to his feet and slam into Ruby again, teeth bared and fur bristled as a snarl was ripped from his throat. They hooked their claws into each other and bit at one another’s legs and faces and Sam staggered to his feet in horror, stumbling towards them in hopes of getting Gabriel away from his demonic ex. However, Gabriel smashed his paw into Ruby’s face and the red alpha fell to the floor with a loud thud.

“Keep away from the Winchester pack,” snarled Gabriel, planting himself firmly in front of Sam. Ruby wrinkled her nose in disgust.

“Since when does a Novak alpha care about Winchesters? You should be helping me to kill him,” she growled as she nodded over to Sam. Gabriel tensed and snapped at her, making her flinch.

“Stay away from him,” he hissed fiercely and Ruby narrowed her gaze as she slowly clambered to her feet, the rest of the pack advancing on her, growls rumbling in their chests. She eyed them warily.

“Don’t tell me he’s begging for your knot now?” Scoffed Ruby as she glanced back to Gabriel. “He’s so pathetic.”

“He’s not pathetic,” said Gabriel lowly as he stalked closer and Ruby huffed.

“Of course he is. He’s just like every other attention-seeking omega whore.” She gazed at Gabriel in distaste. “And apparently, he’s sleeping with the enemy now. You’re the one he was cheating on me with? Never thought he’d lower his standards that far.”

Sam growled as he limped towards Ruby and Gabriel looked ready to tear into her again.

“He never cheated. You tried to kill him,” muttered Gabriel slowly, smirking as Ruby licked a trickle of blood from her muzzle.

“He shouldn’t have been a whiny bitch,” snapped Ruby, snarling at Dean when he rumbled at her. Gabriel bared his teeth. “And then you target innocent pups. And not only from this pack.”

“Castiel and his brat don’t belong here. Neither do you. The timber pup was collateral damage,” sneered Ruby and Gabriel narrowed his eyes.

“You should’ve left when you had the chance,” he rumbled. “You should never have come back. I’m going to make sure you regret every last thing you’ve done to my lover and the pups.”

Ruby laughed cruelly. “Oh? And who exactly are you supposed to be anyway? You look a little small to be a normal male alpha. You sure you’re not just a deformed omega? You certainly smell like one.”
“Gabriel Novak,” replied Gabriel lowly and for a brief second, Ruby froze, a hint of wariness entering her eyes.

Title of one of the highest-ranking members of the Novak family was enough to strike fear into anyone’s heart, civilised folk or not.

Ruby was quick to cover her slip and she snorted. “So do you pound him or does he pound you?” She smirked. “I used to make him bleed. The best times were when he cried.”

Gabriel rammed into her.

There was a certain savageness to his biting and clawing this time and the rest of the pack backed off a little as they watched, eyes wide with shock.

He tore at Ruby’s face with his teeth and his claws raked down her sides as they rolled on the floor together, Ruby snapping at him with just as much vigour. There were outraged snarls and pained yelps as both alphas fought to kill the other, pheromones thick in the surrounding atmosphere. Blood spattered the grass like rain drops and both alphas’ fur was stained in varying shades of red as they continued to battle.

A few surrounding omegas and betas bowed their heads with soft whines, tails tucked as the scent of intense alpha rage washed over them, forcing them to submit and cower and even the likes of Benny and Crowley backed off slightly, ears lowered due to the overpowering scents.

The pack had always seen Gabriel as a small, snarky, mischievous alpha with more bark than bite, but it was clear that assessment was wrong. When they’d met him, they’d never associated Gabriel with the violent Novak alpha all the rumours painted him and his older brothers as, but as he tore into Ruby like a piece of meat, uncaring of his own worrisome injuries, the pack glanced at each other nervously. Even Cas looked wary; he’d never seen his brother fight so viciously. Michael, Lucifer and Raphael had always been the aggressive ones; Gabriel didn’t like to fight.

Yet the pheromones radiating from Gabriel were nauseating; full of fury and desire to protect and intent to murder. He attacked like a machine, never tiring or slowing and he battered Ruby into submission, eyes cold and unforgiving.

With one last swing of his paw, Ruby slumped to the ground like a fallen log and she groaned as her body flooded with merciless agony. Gabriel stood above her bloodied form, chest heaving and teeth exposed and for a moment, all anybody could do was stare at the golden wolf in a mixture of shock and fear.

The silence dragged on for what felt like forever before Gabriel finally spoke.

“Tell me what to do, Sam,” he murmured quietly and Sam frowned in confusion, too nervous to speak. He couldn’t quite believe what he’d just witnessed.

Nobody could. This was the high-ranking Novak alpha everybody was so terrified of; the one that slaughtered packs without a thought, killed frightened pups and saw omegas as objects to be used for his own entertainment. This was the Gabriel Novak all the stories spoke of.

“Tell me what you want me to do, Sam,” growled Gabriel a little harsher as Ruby began to shift and Sam’s ears flattened at the tone as he shrunk in on himself. This wasn’t his Gabriel. This wasn’t his lover.

“He wants to know whether you want him to kill her,” said Castiel softly, soothingly as he glanced over to the other omega. He seemed to be the only one who wasn’t scared of Gabriel.
“I…” Sam’s mouth opened and closed but no words sprung out. He couldn’t speak and Gabriel’s anger was still thick in the air, making him nervous.

Cas’ expression softened in understanding and he cautiously padded closer to his brother, Dean immediately tensing in worry.

“Enough, Gabriel. Sam’s safe. It’s over; leave her. She won’t hurt anyone again.”

Gabriel relaxed a little but his scent didn’t change and Cas crept a bit closer.

“Brother, you’re scaring everyone. You’re scaring Sam.”

That got a reaction and Gabriel immediately turned to his brother with horrified eyes, ears lowered and scent fading into concern and apology. He glanced around the anxious pack and swivelled his head to look at Sam.

At the omega’s subtle flinch, all hostility drained from Gabriel and he limped over to his lover and crouched submissively as he licked at Sam’s muzzle.

The rest of the pack slowly straightened at the display and Sam cautiously nuzzled back, lingering shock evident in his stiffness.

Suddenly, there was a loud crack that made everybody wince and they turned to find Cas hovering over Ruby’s body, her neck between his jaws. He dropped her head gracelessly and gazed coldly at her unfocused eyes.

“Nobody hurts my pups,” he whispered to her lifeless body and the pack watched, stunned as he stepped over her cooling body and started the journey back to camp.

Gabriel licked Sam’s cheek gently in apology before nudging him in the direction of home and the omega let himself be guided, too shocked to do anything else.

The rest of the pack followed in silence.

Chapter End Notes

Short but satisfying?
Castiel nestled down with his pups, licking their healing wounds gently as they smiled and cuddled into him, oblivious of the fight that had occurred a mere hour ago.

Ben smiled when Samandriel curled around him and licked his tender back as Cas focused on his head. He licked Cas’ muzzle in gratitude before shifting so he could snuggle into Samandriel. Neither pup knew what had brought on Cas’ sudden desire to cuddle at three o’clock in the afternoon, but they weren’t complaining (although they did wonder why he wasn’t accompanying the hunting group).

The rest of the group padded empty-handed into the camp a few minutes after Cas had herded the pups into their shelter and when Bobby raised a confused eyebrow, about to ask where their meal was, Dean shook his head firmly and the older alpha snapped his mouth shut.

Gabriel slunk off to his shelter wordlessly and the others made no move to follow or speak to him and even Sam was cautious in approaching their sleeping quarters. Dean watched them leave and when the pack looked to him for guidance, he huffed helplessly and slowly made his way over to his own shelter, aware of the pack remaining where they were standing; too stunned to move.

“Cas?” Dean asked softly as he hovered outside their shelter and he watched Castiel flinch. The omega didn’t turn to look at him.

“Cas,” Dean said again, poking his head into the shelter and the omega slumped slightly, the pups glancing up at him, puzzled. Dean carefully slid behind him.

“…You okay, Angel?” Dean murmured and Castiel winced and turned his head away from the curious pups. Dean took that as his cue to shuffle beside him.

“Cas?”

The omega closed his eyes and refused to look at Dean.

“I killed her,” he mumbled quietly, voice chocked. “I killed someone,” he reiterated, ears flat and body hunched in on himself. “I murdered another person.”

Dean pulled a sympathetic face before finally nuzzling his lover’s cheek.

“You killed Ruby,” he murmured. “You were protecting your family.”

“I’ve never killed anyone before,” whimpered Cas. “I’ve fought, but I’ve never killed another shifter.”

“Ruby deserved it,” huffed Dean softly. “She tried to slaughter Sam and the pups.”

Cas whined quietly in distress and Dean curled around him and tugged him close as he nuzzled his ear, showing his support. Castiel tensed for a second, uncertain what to do with the sentiment but reluctantly leaned into Dean.

“I didn’t plan on doing that,” he whispered. “But when I saw her lying there… I watched her attempt
“You couldn’t let her get away and give her another chance to hurt your family,” finished Dean quietly and Cas’ breath shook when his lover nuzzled his jaw as though he wasn’t a murderer.

A paw slung over his back and Cas found himself tucked into Dean’s body, the alpha holding him securely as he lavished attention over the omega and Cas pressed his face into Dean’s neck, hiding his haunted eyes from their pups.

“Life out here is different from civilisation,” murmured Dean. “In civilisation, you fight with words and money. In the wild, we fight with tooth and claw. It’s not ideal but it’s how things work. Killing is never easy and it’s a heavy burden to carry, but done for the right reasons it’s not something to be ashamed of.”

Dean licked his muzzle. “I’m proud of you, Cas. Not for killing Ruby, but for protecting your family; your pack.”

Cas shook his head. “You must think I’m a monster.”

“Do you think I’m a monster for killing Alistair?” Asked Dean with a frown. “Do you think I’m a monster for killing other shifters who have hurt my friends and family?”

“No,” said Cas immediately and Dean nosed at his ear.

“None of us like to kill. We try our best to avoid it. Injuring is often more than enough but things are different in the wild than how they are in civilisation. There are some rare cases, like Ruby, where the only way to ensure the pack’s safety is to get rid of the attacker for good. You did the right thing. Ruby would never have stopped until she killed one of us or helped Azazel take over the pack. Like I said: I’m proud of you for protecting your family, even if you aren’t.”

Cas sighed quietly and Dean nuzzled his muzzle.

“And even though I’m shocked by your brother’s apparent viciousness in battle… I’m proud of him too. Not to mention grateful for him saving Sam’s life,” he muttered stiltedly and Cas’ eyes widened in surprise. Dean quirked a half-smile.

“What? You didn’t think I was going to be angry or upset, did you? Whilst I’m surprised at you both considering I always assumed you were placid city folk with more bark than bite, watching you both take down Ruby to protect us was a pretty amazing sight.” He tilted his head. “How could I be mad at either of you for taking care of your family?”

Cas’ tail flicked in delighted surprise and Dean chuckled and rubbed their noses together.

“I’ll tell Gabriel as much when he cools down. I have a feeling he and Sam have a lot to talk about.”

Cas’ expression dropped into one of worry. “You don’t think Sam will leave him, do you? I’ve never seen my brother so happy and he was only being protective of Sam—”

“I doubt Sam’ll leave,” interrupted Dean gently. “He may be a little wary at first, but he’s not stupid. He knows Gabriel was trying to protect him. I think we’re all just a little stunned at the moment. We didn’t expect Gabriel to be able to fight like that.”

Cas lowered his gaze. “…He’s never fought like that before; he’s always used his words and wit to fight because of his size. I’ve never seen him so fiercely protective of someone. He must really love Sam.”
“Good,” hummed Dean. “At least I know Sam’s in good paws.”

Cas smiled up at his lover and Dean licked his muzzle again.

“I’m proud of you, Angel,” he murmured. “Never forget that. No matter what happens we’ll figure things out together, okay?”

Cas nodded happily as Dean licked his cheek.

“But promise me one thing,” said Dean and Cas straightened. Dean eyed his lover sternly.

“If we ever get into an argument… please don’t snap my neck.”

* * *

They never actually reached the shelter, merely stood outside it staring in, out of view from the rest of the pack. For a while, neither of them spoke but eventually the silence dragged on too long and Gabriel sighed.

“Are you angry with me?” He whispered without looking at Sam and the omega didn’t answer for a couple of minutes.

“No,” he settled on finally. “But I am afraid.”

Gabriel flinched as though struck and Sam cast his gaze to him.

“I’ve never seen you act like that,” murmured Sam. “I didn’t recognise you.”

Gabriel shrunk in on himself. “I’m sorry.”

Sam frowned. “Don’t say sorry if you don’t mean it.”

Gabriel snapped his mouth shut. They stared at the shelter once more.

“For a few minutes back there… I saw the Novak alpha everyone is so terrified of,” whispered Sam. “The way you ploughed into Ruby and tore her apart… and then when Cas finished her off… It was like you were two completely different people. And your scent… It was… frightening.”

Gabriel’s head lowered and his tail tucked between his legs.

“I would never hurt you, Sam,” he whimpered softly. “I would never hurt you or your family.”

Sam glanced at him warily and Gabriel whined at the expression.

“I promise you, Sam. I’d rather die than hurt you. I was trying to protect you; I would never harm you or any of your pack.” He closed his eyes in shame. “I… I just got carried away. When I saw her jaws around your neck… I couldn’t help it. I never meant to scare you.”

Sam pulled a troubled face. “…I believe you,” he said quietly. “And I’m not trying to scold you, but hearing the rumours about the Novaks is one thing; actually seeing it…” He trailed off and Gabriel looked up at him sadly.
“I am my father’s son,” he murmured, heartbroken that he’d made Sam fearful of him. “I guess violence is in our genes.”

Sam shook his head. “You’re not your brothers or your parents. You’re not cruel or sadistic; you did what you did to protect me and the pack. I have no doubts about that and I’m grateful. I’m just… having a hard time dissociating your actions from the stories of your family.”

Gabriel cocked his good ear in confusion and Sam met his gaze.

“I’ve known you long enough to trust you wouldn’t hurt me. However, I grew up with stories of you and your family and whilst logically, I know you did what you did to save my life, seeing you fight like that brought back old memories. Your scent didn’t help. Even Benny and Crowley looked nervous.”

Gabriel wasn’t sure what to do with that information so he dropped his gaze.

“I love you very much, Sam… but I’ll respect your wishes if you no longer feel the same,” he choked out to the sound of his own heart cracking.

Sam looked alarmed and he quickly pressed his nose into Gabriel’s neck, to the alpha’s shock.

“What are you talking about?” Asked Sam, bewildered. “Of course I still love you. I’m grateful for what you did. I’m just struggling to come to terms with what I saw.” He leaned back to stare into his lover’s eyes. “You did nothing wrong, Gabriel. You saved my life. I just didn’t expect to see nor smell such… hatred coming from you.”

Gabriel frowned. “I don’t understand. Are you afraid of me or not?”

Sam exhaled heavily. “I was. Maybe I still am a little. But only because I’m not accustomed nor was I expecting to see you fight so viciously. I know you’re not going to hurt me but because of the pheromones you released earlier, my instincts are telling me to flee or hide. You gave us all quite a shock and I’m not the only one who was affected.”

Gabriel made a noise of apology before nuzzling Sam’s cheek and the omega took a deep breath to centre himself. He forced his biology to ignore the lingering scents of hostility and rage stuck to Gabriel’s fur.

“Give me a little time to adjust to what I’ve witnessed and the scents you were giving off and I promise I won’t want to cower in a cave or something,” murmured Sam and Gabriel pulled back slightly.

“What are you talking about?” He asked guiltily and the omega nodded apologetically. Gabriel grimaced. “I would never turn on you. I would never attack any of you. I don’t even like fighting; I only fought Ruby because she was hurting you. None of what you saw or smelled was even remotely aimed at you or the pack.”

Sam managed a small smile and licked Gabriel’s cheek.

“I know and once I convince my body of that, I’ll thank you properly for saving my life. However, you might have some reassuring to do when it comes to the rest of the pack. They were looking a little nervous earlier.”

Gabriel ducked his head and Sam edged closer.

“Did you think I was going to leave you?” Asked Sam softly and Gabriel glanced up at him.
“I wasn’t sure if I’d scared you away. I wouldn’t blame you considering my family’s reputation.”

Sam frowned and nuzzled his jaw, once again ignoring the remaining aroma of fury and repulsion.

“I told you I love you. One bad scent during a violent battle isn’t going to change that.”

Gabriel’s ears were flat. “I never meant to frighten you,” he whispered. “I just wanted to keep you safe.”

Sam forced himself to snuggle into the alpha’s blood-soaked fur and began to lick at the wounds decorating his neck and face. The more wounds he came across, the lower his ears drooped and he whined softly upon realising how battered his lover was.

“Come inside with me,” he murmured. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

Gabriel gently licked a gash on Sam’s neck in response and the omega felt his doubts and fears beginning to fade. This alpha had saved his life; had fought tooth and claw to protect him. How could he ever be frightened of him? How could he ever believe Gabriel would hurt him?

They slipped into the shelter together and Sam quirked a small smile when Gabriel curled around him and licked his wounds, determined to look after him despite his own injuries. Sam chuckled and shifted until he had access to Gabriel’s body and the alpha made a sound of delight when Sam wrapped his paws around him, tugging him closer.

They nuzzled each other for a few moments before tending to each other’s injuries and Sam’s instincts calmed as his body finally figured out that Gabriel’s rage wasn’t directed at him. The reality of the situation sunk in after a few moments and Sam pressed his face into Gabriel’s neck.

“Thank you,” he murmured. “For saving my life. For protecting me. For taking care of me. I… I can’t believe you risked your life for me.”

Gabriel nosed tenderly at his head. “You have no idea how scared I was when she started shaking you around. I thought… for a moment… I thought you were…”

Sam licked his muzzle reassuringly and Gabriel blew out a long breath.

“You mean so much to me, Sam. I’ve never felt this way about anyone before and I… I can’t watch anything happen to you. Promise me you won’t let anything happen to you.”

Sam tugged him close and tucked his head under the alpha’s chin and Gabriel squeezed him gently.

“Then you have to promise the same thing to me,” whispered Sam. “Promise me you won’t get yourself killed in another stupid act of bravery. Just because you’re apparently incredible at fighting doesn’t mean you’ll win every single time. Watching Ruby tear into you was horrifying.”

“If it means saving you, I’ll do whatever I have to,” protested Gabriel. “And I’m not saying that because I don’t think you can take care of yourself. I’m saying it because I can’t bear the thought of you getting hurt.”

Sam sighed quietly and snuggled into his lover.

“I’ve just got you. Don’t make me lose you yet.”

“Don’t date any more psycho alphas,” retorted Gabriel and Sam quirked a smile and licked a gash in Gabriel’s chest.
“Then why am I dating a Novak alpha?”

“I’m psycho in a fun way,” drawled Gabriel. “Like the Joker but less stabby.”

“…What’s the Joker?”

“…Enemy of Batman?”

“What’s a Batman?”

Gabriel looked mortified. “Alright, that’s it. I’m going to take you to a city for an entire week and we are going to binge watch movies and stuff ourselves with all things sugary and then I’m going to buy you the whole collection of Tolkien or something because I can’t live a pop-culture reference-free life.”

Sam raised an eyebrow. “What’s Tolkien?”

Gabriel made a wounded sound and flopped onto his back, paws covering his face.

“I’ve got no one to freak out with over the new series of ‘Game of Thrones’,,” he whined and Sam bit back a smirk.

“…You’ve got no way of watching it either.”

Gabriel groaned like a dying whale.

Sam chuckled and lay his head on the alpha’s chest, licking at a few bloody wounds he came across.

“Sometimes you’re a terrifying death machine, ready to wipe anything from existence that threatens your family and other times, you wail over missing an hour of story time.”

“GoT is not ‘story time’!” Protested Gabriel. “It is pure magic and art combined to produce a beautiful masterpiece of betrayal, deception, love and loyalty.” A pause. “It also has dragons, crotches and boobs.”

Sam rolled his eyes. “You’re such a typical alpha.”

Gabriel grinned, his floppy ear bobbing adorably.

“None of those things are as interesting as my cute, little sugarplum,” he teased and Sam scoffed but made no effort to move from the alpha’s chest. Gabriel gently wrapped his paws around him and licked at a cut above his eye and Sam nestled down.

Eventually, Gabriel leaned their heads together.

“You’re not scared of me now, are you?” He asked quietly and Sam rubbed their noses together.

“No. I never should’ve been scared of you in the first place. I’m sorry.”

“I guess I did go a little dark side,” admitted Gabriel. “But I promise I’ll never hurt you, kiddo. You mean the world to me.”

“Well that’s good to hear,” said another voice and Sam automatically lay his head over Gabriel’s exposed belly in an effort to protect him from any unwanted attackers. The pair looked towards the entrance of their shelter to find Dean peering down at them with a small smile.
Sam slowly moved away from Gabriel to cock his head at his brother in silent query but both Winchesters were surprised when Gabriel remained exactly where he was, belly bared and vulnerable.

Dean raised an eyebrow but said nothing as he met the other alpha’s gaze.

“I wanted to check on you two,” said Dean. “Ruby had a good go at you both.”

“We’re okay,” replied Gabriel a little tightly and it was clear he wasn’t accustomed to acting so submissive when in the presence of another alpha. Sam’s heart warmed to think his lover was trying so hard to prove he wasn’t hostile, even when in the company of the head alpha. This was an extreme show of trust for a Novak to expose his stomach to a Winchester alpha, especially when said Novak was also an alpha.

“A little sore, but okay,” murmured Sam, glancing at his lover fondly.

Dean’s gaze raked over Gabriel’s bloodied form and the brothers watched the older alpha squirm in discomfort at the scrutiny, as if worried he was about to be attacked and gutted.

Dean’s expression softened. “You don’t have to do that, Gabriel. I know you won’t hurt any of us.”

Gabriel blinked and he slowly rolled to his paws, bowing his head respectfully.

“I’m not going to reprimand or exile you, Gabe,” whispered Dean and the other alpha’s gaze snapped upwards.

“…But… my scent earlier… You were all frightened of me… I’m a threat to the pack, right? A potentially hostile alpha from civilisation. Shouldn’t you… punish me? Make an example of me in front of the others for challenging your command or something?”

Sam looked horrified as Dean pulled a disturbed face.

“Is that what Michael does?” Breathed Sam and at Gabriel’s hesitant nod, Dean scowled.

“Then it’s a good thing I’m nothing like your demented brother.” The lead alpha’s expression turned troubled. “You saved Sam’s life; you should be rewarded, not punished. I don’t consider you a threat to any of us. You’re pack, Gabriel. We’re no longer enemies and we won’t treat you as such.”

“…But… you were frightened of me. I saw it. All of you backed away,” said Gabriel, confused.

“Yeah, because we’re used to you being a sassy, loudmouthed alpha who likes to irritate people yet also has a soft spot for pups. Today you proved if anyone hurts your family, you’ll claw out their eyes and rip off their head and your brother will finish them off. I think we’re allowed to be a little nervous, especially considering the Novak reputation,” huffed Dean and Gabriel blinked once before ducking his head apologetically.

“I wouldn’t turn on any of you,” mumbled Gabriel and Dean quirked a smile.

“That’s reassuring. And hey, I’m not averse to having a brave, protective, caring, slightly crazy alpha looking after my brother and pack.” He winked and as the comment sunk in, Gabriel huffed out a surprised laugh.

“Just remind me to never piss you off,” grinned Dean and Gabriel’s tail wagged in delight as he smiled back and bowed his head in gratitude.
“Although the gesture is appreciated, you don’t have to do that,” murmured Dean softly. “I’m not Michael and I never will be.” He glanced off to the side and pulled a face. “Although, you might want to show the pack you’re not going to eat them or something. They’re looking a little edgy and honestly, I don’t blame them after what they saw.”

Gabriel startled when a tongue lapped at his ear encouragingly and he turned to find Sam plastered to his side, wearing a supportive smile. He glanced between the two Winchester brothers and felt something warm and happy stir in his chest and with a silent nod he followed Dean towards the rest of the pack, Sam never leaving his side.

A few of the pack eyed him warily as he approached and others sniffed the air to gage his mood. Some glanced off to the side, where Cas was slowly slinking towards them, tail tucked between his legs in embarrassment and pups at his heels, looking up at him puzzled. He sat beside Gabriel, ears low and the pack glanced between the pair uneasily.

“Knock it off guys, it’s still the same Cas and Gabe,” snorted Sam, making a point of lying beside Gabriel, front paws crossed to show he was relaxed. “Just more badass and apparently incredibly protective of their new pack and family.”

Cas pricked his ears up happily as Gabriel licked Sam’s jaw with a smile. Most of the pack visibly relaxed and stopped eying the pair suspiciously.

“So, I guess now we know how the Novaks got their reputation?” Drawled Crowley and Gabriel shook his head.

“Don’t go blaming us; we’re the placid ones.”

Meg snorted and Crowley grinned toothily. “You and I have very different definitions of the word ‘placid’.”

“Well, I for one am glad the bitch is dead,” announced Meg and she nodded at Cas. “You just got ten times sexier, Clarence.”

Castiel choked and Meg winked at him, ignoring the eye roll from her own mate.

“Paws off my warrior,” smirked Dean, leaning casually into his lover’s side and Meg wiggled her eyebrows.

“After that little demonstration, I’m glad they’re on our side,” Benny commented. “I didn’t think I’d ever be afraid of a scent alone.”

“It was like watching Vader and the Terminator battle the Wicked Witch of the West,” piped up Charlie, making Gabriel snort and the others glance at each other in confusion.

“Sam and Dean have just lost their titles of best alpha and omega fighters in the pack,” crowed Jo. “Hand your crowns to the real winners.”

Castiel lowered his head in embarrassment as Gabriel rolled his eyes and licked at the large wound on Sam’s neck. Sam bared his throat in a display of trust and Gabriel nuzzled it appreciatively as the pack watched on.

“So… we’re not in danger of being filleted and sacrificed to the trickster Loki or something?” Asked Harry tentatively and Cas shook his head hurriedly.

“Of course not. We understand your wariness but please believe that our intentions were not to
frighten any of you. We would never harm you and we’ve never... we’ve never killed anyone before.” Cas’ voice broke a little before he collected himself again. “However, seeing the alpha who plotted against the pack, who helped Azazel to find and attack us, who attempted to drown Sam and who tried to kill the pups… seeing her wrap her jaws around Sam’s neck in cold blood drove us both over the edge. I promise we would never dream of laying a claw on any of you, despite the Novak reputation. I’d give my life if it meant saving you,” confessed Cas. “You’re my family.”

“And you’re ours too, kid,” Bobby said gruffly but it was clear he was being sincere and Cas allowed himself a small smile when the rest of the pack made various noises and nods of agreement.

Gabriel sighed loudly. “Although I’ve not known you half as long as Cassie and we didn’t exactly start off on the right foot… you guys are kind of growing on me too. Like a fungus. But I’d never harm any of you either.”

There were a few satisfied and amused grunts and nods of approval and Dean looked over his pack.

“Are we all happy Cas and Gabe aren’t going to drug us and feed us to an evil cyclops?” At the answering nods and tail wags, Dean huffed. “Awesome. Go and be miserable about your empty stomachs until tomorrow.”

However, the pack didn’t just dissipate like the Novaks had been expecting. Jo and Charlie trotted over to Castiel and licked his face sloppily and Benny butted his shoulder playfully as Ellen nuzzled his ear like a mother would her child. Meg rubbed up against Gabriel’s side and Crowley cleaned the blood from his face as Chuck licked at a few wounds on his back.

“Idjits,” Bobby grumbled as he cast them both a fond look and both Novaks were stunned at the show of support from the whole pack.

Cas slowly nuzzled his friends in return, showing his gratitude, but Gabriel couldn’t move. He stood rooted to the spot, eyes wide and mouth slightly agape as the Winchester pack fussed and reassured him that he was still welcome within their ranks and for once in his life he found himself speechless. Becky slipped in front of him and rubbed her head under his chin gently in apparent gratitude for protecting the pack earlier and Gabriel had difficulty in swallowing.

His family had never shown him such love and support, yet here were his supposed enemies; the ones he’d been told were cruel and savage, taking care of his wounds and giving him affection. He hadn’t even been all that nice to them.

Was everything he’d been taught a lie?

“Thanks, guys,” he choked out and they smiled at him and disappeared one by one until he was left standing by Sam, overwhelmed and touched.

“You okay?” Asked Sam softly and Gabriel nodded wordlessly.

“Nobody’s ever...” He couldn’t finish but that was alright because Sam seemed to understand anyway and he smiled and kissed Gabriel’s cheek.

“More people care for you than you know,” whispered Sam and Gabriel gazed up at him for a moment before leaning into his side.

“...I guess having a real family wouldn’t be so bad.”

Sam beamed and it was the most beautiful sight Gabriel had ever witnessed. He vowed to try harder with the pack. If it would make his lover happy, he would open up more and attempt to bond with
the rest of the Winchester pack.

“You know we would never cast you out?” Murmured Sam. “You and Cas will always have a home here, no matter what happens.”

“Thank you,” Gabriel breathed, burying his face into Sam’s fur. “Thank you, Sam.”

“Thank you for saving my life.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed a bit of pack fluff. :) New plot line opens up in the next chapter!
Chapter 49

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

August rolled around quickly and with it came the heat. Heat and rut season had ended with the Spring and the Winchester pack had been free to enjoy a fairly stress-free life for a couple of months now. Ruby was long gone, food was plentiful and the sunshine was definitely something to be smiled at. The weather was so perfect that the pack rarely used their shelters to sleep now, preferring to relax outside during the warm nights and watch the tiny stars twinkle above them. All was peaceful and the pack was happy, if a little hot.

One evening at the beginning of the month, when dark had fallen and the owls were just beginning to greet one another with sleepy hoots, Hannah found herself plagued by another nightmare.

“Hannah! Help me!” Cried Balthazar as a brown alpha smirked and sunk his teeth into his side, tugging viciously until a chunk of flesh was torn from the howling wolf. A black alpha chuckled and crushed Balthazar’s hind leg between his jaws until it shattered and the bronze and white wolf sobbed in agony, begging his mate to save him. The brown alpha grinned sadistically and clawed at the smaller wolf’s face until it was swollen and bloody and he lunged for Balthazar’s back, rendering it a shredded mess.

“Hannah!” Plead Balthazar desperate, but Hannah didn’t move. It wasn’t that she couldn’t, she just didn’t. She watched her mate get ripped apart of her own volition and she made no effort to help him. Why, she wasn’t sure.

Balthazar sobbed again, a look of hurt and betrayal flashing behind his eyes and Hannah’s heart cracked because he’d never looked at her like that before, but why shouldn’t he? She wasn’t rushing to his aid like she should be.

The black alpha winked at her and locked his jaws around Balthazar’s neck, making him yelp. Blood soaked his fur and the black wolf smirked and shook his prey vigorously, taking great delight in Balthazar’s agonised begs for mercy. He tightened his grip until Balthazar’s words were choked and pained and blood began to leak from his mouth, pooling on the floor below and still, the alpha continued to shake him.

Hannah did not move.

Eventually Balthazar’s cries faded and the black alpha gave one last squeeze before dumping his body unceremoniously on the hard ground. Both attackers stared at it with satisfied smiles and neither paid attention to Hannah as they began to toy with the lifeless corpse, laughing over it and kicking it and tearing at it.

Still, Hannah did not move.

Hannah awoke with a sharp gasp, heart racing and breaths too fast and shallow. After getting her body under control, she scowled. That dream hadn’t been a memory. She hadn’t watched Balthazar die; he’d made her leave before the black and brown alphas could catch up and his leg had already been broken. Why was her imagination warping her memories? Why was she dreaming of herself
watching Balthazar’s death without helping him? She would’ve done anything to save her mate, but Balthazar had insisted she run; had snapped at her to scare her away. Did she feel guilty about leaving him?

Of course she did. She had left her mate to die.

She sighed. She was tortured every day by the idea of her mate’s death and now it seemed her nights would be plagued by illusions of her failure to save him as well.

“Hannah? Are you alright?” Whispered a familiar, gentle voice and Hannah managed to quirk a small smile at that. Gadreel’s observant nature and capacity for caring would never cease to amaze her.

“Fine,” she murmured without looking at him and the alpha’s expression softened.

“Another nightmare?” He asked and she nodded silently.

He settled beside her and lay his head over her neck in an unspoken ritual of comfort they undertook every time Hannah suffered a nightmare (which was more often than she cared to admit).

“It wasn’t a memory,” she offered without prompting. “I dreamt I watched him get killed without jumping to his aid. I would never do that, but apparently my imagination disagrees.”

Gadreel pulled a face and nosed at her ear soothingly and Hannah felt that flutter in her chest she’d come to associate with her apparent crush on the alpha. Another thing she’d royally messed up; how could she even think of looking at another alpha after only recently losing her mate? Her body and mind were such a mess.

“Your scent is turning sour again,” muttered Gadreel. “Stop torturing yourself with whatever thoughts you’re currently entertaining.”

Hannah huffed petulantly but did as asked and Gadreel nestled back into her fur again.

“It’s not your fault,” he murmured. “There was nothing you could do. He wanted you to run because it was the last thing he could do to save you. You didn’t abandon him; you respected his last wishes.”

Tears collected on her lashes and she wondered how Gadreel always knew exactly what to say to comfort her. She was grateful for his support.

“I miss him,” she breathed and Gadreel nuzzled her ear again.

“Wherever he is, I’m sure he misses you too. One day, you’ll be reunited with each other, but until then he’d want you to make the most of your time here. With what you’ve told me of him so far, he sounds like a wolf who enjoyed life greatly and I doubt he’d want you to spend the rest of yours in misery. He loved you too much for that.”

Hannah contemplated that for a minute before nodding and Gadreel nuzzled her head. It seemed she wasn’t the only one who liked them being so close together.

“May I show you something?” Gadreel asked suddenly and Hannah raised an intrigued eyebrow and leaned back to look at him. It was unfair that he was so handsome.

“Okay,” she agreed and he smiled warmly at her, setting butterflies free in her chest. Their wings tickled at her heart until it pulsed slightly quicker.
He climbed to his paws and crept out of the camp, careful not to disturb his friends and Hannah was by his side in a matter of seconds, excited at the prospect of an adventure. At one time, she would have been terrified of venturing into the darkness alone with a large alpha, but over the past few months she had learned that the Winchester pack were kind and protective and there was no need to fear any of them, not even their alphas. She was still a little underconfident around them sometimes, but the pack had worked hard to soothe her fears and she was thankful for their efforts, Gadreel’s in particular.

The ash and white alpha had been incredibly patient and generous since her arrival and Hannah felt safest when around him. He was thoughtful and calm and Hannah had never met another alpha quite like him; she still couldn’t believe how he’d restrained himself when they’d entered their heat and rut cycles together. He’d displayed a disciplined sort of restraint even Hannah hadn’t managed to achieve and it was refreshing to know at least some alphas weren’t merely interested in their own needs, regardless of the consequences.

They walked for a little while, enjoying the peace and warmth in amiable silence and Hannah had to stop herself from gazing at her crush’s muscular body and stunning face. She knew if she wanted her silly little infatuation with Gadreel to disappear, she needed to distance herself from him for a bit, but the truth was she didn’t want to stop seeing Gadreel. She enjoyed his company and didn’t want to give it up.

Suddenly, Gadreel came to a dead halt and glanced at her and Hannah’s gaze swept over the small clearing of long, lush grass. There seemed to be nothing particular impressive about it.

“Watch,” whispered Gadreel cryptically and Hannah cocked an ear in confusion, eyes wide when the alpha pounced on an innocent patch of grass.

A smile stretched over her face when a hundred tiny orange lights bounced into the air, a gentle buzzing accompanying the sight, and the glowing dots swirled around one another gracefully, gliding over Gadreel’s form and raising high into the air like lanterns being released into the wind.

Gadreel grinned and trotted through the tall grass and thousands of lights took to the sky, dancing through the darkness.

“Fireflies,” whispered Hannah. She’d never seen so many in one place. Then again, her old pack hadn’t exactly let her explore outside the camp unless accompanied by a ‘guard’. She’d forgotten about all the wonders nature could provide.

“Come on,” said Gadreel, gesturing for her to join him and her tail began to wag because she always had so much fun with Gadreel and the Winchester pack; more fun than she’d been allowed in years.

She chased after him and he laughed and bounced away, fireflies shooting out of the grass with every step they took and soon, they couldn’t see the stars because there were so many orange and yellow lights twirling and darting around them, sticking to their fur and tickling their faces. Gadreel’s tail was swishing from side to side as Hannah bounded after him and she giggled as he dodged her pounces, teasing and taunting her playfully. He pulled his tongue out at her when she jumped right and he ducked left and Hannah laughed freely when his face screwed up into an expression of disgust and he spat out two fireflies.

She tilted her head when he rolled to the floor abruptly and snickered when he clambered to his paws, dozens of fireflies clinging to his fur like the Christmas trees Castiel spoke so fondly of.

He smiled at her again, pleased to have amused her, before shaking himself off and sprinting away...
again, the omega hot on his heels.

She chased him around the clearing, laughing joyfully at the thousands of fireflies leaping into the air and buzzing around them in irritation at the disturbance in peace, and it took a few minutes but eventually she caught up to Gadreel and she lunged for him, knocking him to the floor.

They rolled around the ground for a few moments, batting at each other like young pups and tugging on one another’s ears before collapsing on their sides, breathless but still beaming.

“Thank you,” murmured Hannah as she gazed at her friend and Gadreel smiled tenderly at her, the fireflies still bobbing around them, illuminating their fur and making their eyes glow brightly.

Hannah’s heart thudded wildly in her chest and the longer she stared at Gadreel, the more she came to realise it wasn’t from overexertion.

Her smile slipped and Gadreel’s soon followed, confused as to what she was thinking, but then the omega leaned over and rubbed their noses together and the alpha froze in surprise.

Hannah gulped and licked his muzzle gingerly, as if asking for permission and for a second, all Gadreel could do was stare. Then he cautiously kissed her back and a beautiful smile swept across her face, making his tail beat the floor.

He shifted to straddle her and gently licked her cheek and her tail dusted the ground as she nuzzled back, rubbing their noses together again.

“Hannah?” He asked hopefully and her eyes sparkled up at him like a pair of sapphires, bright and joyous.

“Gadreel,” she answered cheekily and he chuckled and nosed at her cheek, licking it sweetly.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” He clarified and she sobered up, nodding.

“I wasn’t sure before, but… I like you, Gadreel. I like you very much and all those things you said about enjoying life and not wasting it… you’re right. I’ll always miss Balthazar and there will always be a special place in my heart for him, but that doesn’t mean there can’t be one for you too. I can’t change the past, but that doesn’t mean I can’t live for the future… and I want a good future, I do. So… if you think you can put up with all my faults and insecurities and nightmares, I’d be honoured to start a new chapter with you. In fact, I think I’d be the luckiest omega in the world to have you.”

Gadreel’s face lit up and he licked her muzzle softly.

“The honour’s all mine,” murmured Gadreel. “You’re a beautiful, intelligent omega with a heart of gold and I don’t expect to replace Balthazar, but I promise I’ll do everything I can to make you happy. You deserve as much and I’ll try my best to make Balthazar proud.”

Her gaze turned fond and she wondered what she did to deserve an alpha thoughtful and kind enough to help her cope with the loss of her old mate whilst at the same time wanting to pursue a relationship with her despite her faults.

He kissed her again and she couldn’t wipe the smile from her face as she wrapped her paws around him and tugged him into a hug.

“We go at your pace,” whispered Gadreel and Hannah’s heart melted that little bit more. She tuck her head under his chin and closed her eyes, listening to his strong pulse. She nuzzled his throat and he rumbled in that stereotypical way all alphas did when they were at their happiest and she smirked
and purred in response, making him rumble even louder.

It was a pleasant sound. A safe sound.

It meant everything was going to be okay and for once in her life, Hannah thought it might.

* * *

Castiel shoved Dean against a tree, smashing their lips together with a possessive growl rumbling deep in his human throat and Dean groaned as strong hands pinned his wrists above his head as his omega ravished his mouth. Castiel claimed every part of his mouth, biting at his lips and sucking his tongue, and as one hand held Dean’s wrists in place, the other fist his hair, tugging until his head was forced backwards and his throat was exposed.

Cas slid his tongue up it with a pleased growl before nipping lightly at the soft flesh and Dean gulped, aroused at how Cas circled his tongue around his Adam’s apple and sucked at it roughly. The hand holding his arm slithered down to his rump and squeezed hard and Dean whimpered in want as his lover crowded him further against the tree, their bodies flush. Cas squeezed again and Dean let his head fall against the tree trunk with a moan.

Cas leaned away from his neck. “You have a problem,” he stated deadpan and Dean cracked an eye open.

“You have a problem if you can’t understand how insanely hot you are.”

Castiel rolled his eyes. “You have a fetish for being manhandled,” he said and Dean pouted.

“I have a fetish for being manhandled by you,” he corrected and Cas shook his head.

“You are a very strange alpha.”

Dean grinned charmingly and winked and Cas couldn’t help but quirk a smile before he returned to sucking hickeys into the alpha’s neck.

They were a little distance from the camp, not too far to reach it in case of trouble, but too far away for anyone to accidentally stumble across their activities. The moon shone high in the sky and Sam and Gabriel were looking after the pups so Dean and Cas could have some rare alone time. It was a pleasant night; quiet if a little lacking in stars due to cloud cover but Cas and Dean appreciated the much-needed privacy. Castiel had suffered another poorly-timed heat the previous month and after two weeks of him and Dean being holed up in their overheated private space with no entertainment other than exhausting amounts of sex to keep Cas from being in pain, both alpha and omega had decided they didn’t need any more ‘adult fun’ for a long while. A month later, here they were.

After another pleased groan, Dean wrapped his fingers around Cas’ bare hips and claimed his mouth desperately, smirking when his omega fist his hair again and scraped his nails teasingly down his back. Cas rolled his hips harshly and swallowed Dean’s moan as their erections rubbed together.

“Cas?” Murmured Dean as he pulled away for air and the omega gazed at him silently, hips still rolling because he knew it would drive his lover crazy.

“Cas, can you…” He trailed off shyly and glanced away and Castiel’s hips stilled.
“Yes, Dean?”

“Can you…?” Dean trailed off again, seemingly unable to finish his request and Cas gently cupped his cheek and forced him to look at him.

“Can I…?” He prompted and when Dean stared at him a little wide-eyed, he kissed the alpha sweetly on the lips. “You know you can ask me anything,” he whispered.

Dean nodded slowly and closed his eyes to collect himself and Cas watched him gather his courage before emerald orbs stared back at him.

“Tonight, I really want you inside me.”

For a moment, Cas didn’t think he’d heard correctly and he half-gaped, half-frowned in confusion at Dean, but then the alpha began to fidget and he looked away in humiliation and Cas blinked. He gently guided Dean’s face towards him and he kissed the alpha like a man starving for it.

“Are you sure?” Asked Cas, barely pulling apart, lips brushing Dean’s with every syllable and the alpha nodded shyly.

…I’m curious,” he admitted softly and Castiel shifted to kiss his cheek and jaw.

“I see,” he murmured before pulling away from Dean slightly to press a finger into his slick hole. Dean watched hungrily as Cas teased at himself but he didn’t get long to enjoy it before the omega was wrapping an arm around him again and crushing their mouths together. Dean melted into the kiss and tugged his lover closer, relishing his sweet scent as his hands roamed over the omega’s strong body.

Suddenly, a wet finger fluttered over Dean’s entrance and the alpha’s breath hitched. Cas smirked and before Dean knew what had happened, his legs were hooked over the omega’s hips, his back wedged against the tree as a tongue invaded his mouth roughly. Nails scraped over his nipple as a finger pushed inside him and he shivered, surprised at his own pleasure.

“Okay?” Asked Cas after a few minutes and when Dean nodded, the omega slipped another finger inside him. Dean’s breaths shook and he cupped Cas’ cheek and fisted his hair as he dragged him in for another open-mouthed kiss.

Cas was patient in working him open and Dean was struggling to hold his pleasure in. He hadn’t expected to enjoy the foreign sensations so much and he was taken off-guard when Castiel carefully unhooked his legs from his hips. The omega dropped to his knees, fingers still buried deep inside Dean and the alpha watched him curiously, eyes widening when Cas smirked up at him wickedly and wrapped his pretty lips around the knot Dean realised was beginning to swell. His head fell back with a thunk as Cas took him into his mouth and as he did something spectacular with his tongue, the alpha shook his head vigorously and gently pushed on the omega’s shoulder.

“I won’t last,” he whimpered and Cas’ gaze softened as he pulled off.

“Turn around and brace,” ordered Castiel quietly and Dean was quick to comply, steadying himself on the tree as he leaned forwards, excited.

Hands settled warmly on his hips, grounding him and when Cas finally entered him he groaned deeply, bones giving way so Cas had to catch him. As he set up a rhythm, Cas peppered kisses down his spine and it wasn’t long before Dean’s knot swelled to its full size and both alpha and omega crumpled to their knees in pleasure.
Castiel held his lover tight to his chest, still buried inside him, and Dean bared his neck to let his omega scent him. Cas kissed a bruise on Dean’s neck before eyeing the alpha’s fully-formed knot and brushing his fingers over it.

Dean choked out a breath and Cas curled his fist around it mischievously, beginning to work it and Dean shook his head frantically.

“Too sensitive,” he pleaded, body shaking and Cas gave one last teasing tug, making Dean whine.

He carefully pulled out of Dean and the alpha whimpered, body arching and writhing beneath Cas and the omega flopped to the ground, pulling him into his arms. Dean automatically tucked his head under Cas’ chin and the omega huffed out a quiet laugh at how their usual positions had been flipped.

“You okay?” He asked as the alpha curled into him with a happy sigh and Cas wrapped his arms around him tightly, kissing his fluffy hair.

“We are so doing that again,” mumbled Dean with a grin, scenting at Cas’ throat and the omega chuckled and stroked his lover’s back.

“You definitely have a problem.”

“So what? I like it when my sexy omega bosses me around,” snorted Dean. “I have a kink and I’m not afraid to share it.”

Castiel grinned but said nothing more as he snuggled with his lover.

“I want to do everything with you, Cas,” Dean whispered after a few moments of silence. “I want to try everything with you.”

Cas pushed his nose into the alpha’s hair. “I want everything with you too,” he murmured. “I treasure every moment we have together.”

Dean beamed and squeezed his lover. “You make me the happiest alpha in the world.”

“I could say the same to you,” smiled Cas and the alpha nuzzled his jaw.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

They shared a gentle kiss before turning to gaze at the few stars peeking out from the clouds and they held each other close, focusing on one another’s breathing.

“…Would you ever consider mating me?” Asked Castiel softly, almost nervously and Dean blinked before swivelling his head to look at his lover. The omega was staring at him anxiously, as if he felt he had no right to ask that question and he’d possibly just marred their relationship.

Dean cupped his cheek and pressed their lips together passionately, pouring all his love and need into the kiss to reassure his lover, then he pulled back with an awed smile.

“Would I ever consider mating the most amazing, gorgeous, intelligent, thoughtful, strongest omega I’ve ever met? Other than the fact you’re too good for me, I can’t for the life of me think of a reason not to. I’d be honoured to belong to you.”

Castiel’s eyes widened before he was kissing Dean again, rolling him onto his back and flopping
onto his body until Dean was laughing excitedly and squeezing him.

“I want you, Dean,” breathed Cas, their lips brushing. “I want all of you. I want everything you’re willing to give me. I want to be yours and I want to give you everything I can. I want Samandriel to be raised in a loving family and I want us to be the family you’ve always hoped for. I love you deeply and it would make me ecstatic to be granted the honour of becoming your mate.”

Dean grinned and carded his fingers through his lover’s hair.

“I’d do anything to make you happy,” he whispered. “But you and Samandriel are already the family I’ve always wanted; you don’t need to become my mate to achieve that. However, showing you off and introducing you both as my mate and pup would make me the happiest man alive.”

Cas wedged his nose into Dean’s neck and inhaled deeply and Dean curled around him possessively and began to rumble.

“I’ve never felt this way about anyone before,” Dean breathed. “You always know what to say to make me feel good and you’re always there when I need you. I can depend on you and you keep me grounded when I make rash decisions and everything just… feels okay when I’m with you and Samandriel.”

Cas leaned their foreheads together.

“You make me feel so safe,” he whispered. “I never thought anyone would give me a second look after having Samandriel, especially not after I fled the city, yet here you are. You’re so kind and gentle and I owe you so much yet you never ask for anything in return. I… I want to make you feel as joyful as you make me feel.”

Dean held him close as their lips sought each other out again.

“I’m going to mate you, Castiel Novak and I’m going to worship your body as I do it. You deserve as much.”

Cas’ face flushed pink and Dean chuckled as the omega hid from him.

“But I’m not going to do it yet,” murmured Dean and Cas frowned and looked up at him in confusion and maybe a hint of worry.

“I’m not going to do it yet because I want to do this right and that means asking your family for permission to mate the most wonderful omega I know.”

A slow smile spread across Cas’ face as the words sunk in and Dean chuckled and rubbed their noses together.

“So, I’m going to suck up all my pride and dignity and grovel on my knees to your brother in the hopes that he’ll say ‘yes’.”

“Not that I’d listen if he said ‘no’,” commented Cas as he snuggled into his lover and Dean brushed a thumb over his cheek.

“Of course not, but it’s still the right thing to do and I’d rather have Gabriel’s blessing than his curse.”

Cas’ heart fluttered at Dean’s willingness to humble himself to another alpha, despite being leader of the pack. It showed just how thoughtful and considerate his alpha was.
“And then I’m going to scrape up enough courage to ask the same of Samandriel,” murmured Dean and Cas huffed out a soft laugh and nuzzled his lover’s neck.

“Samandriel loves you. He’ll be more excited than both of us to hear we’re getting mated. He thinks you and Sam are the best playmates in the world.”

Dean smirked proudly and pecked Cas’ temple.

“Still, it doesn’t hurt to ask for his permission.”

Cas’ gaze softened. “I’m so lucky to have you.”

“Imagine how I feel about you,” replied Dean smoothly and they shared another tender kiss before Dean stretched.

“Well, no time like the present,” he grinned and it was clear he was buzzing with excitement and Cas beamed and quickly morphed into his wolf form. Dean soon followed and they smiled brightly at each other for a moment, eyes sparkling in anticipation before they trotted back to camp side-by-side, a spring in their steps.

They couldn’t help but share teasing licks and nuzzles as they travelled and more often than not they were gazing at each other lovingly rather than watching where they were going, but since they were wrapped in each other’s scents, neither seemed to notice much of anything else anyway.

Suddenly, a small frown creased Dean’s brow and he paused, sniffing the air cautiously. They were only a few minutes away from the camp yet he could distinctly smell two foreign scents that definitely belonged to shifters.

“Trouble?” Castiel asked, immediately on alert and Dean’s frown deepened as he took another whiff.

One was definitely a beta scent; a fresh smell of mild mint and thyme and Dean wrinkled his nose as he tried to work out why the second scent was so familiar. It was a stereotypical alpha musk; spruce and nutmeg and for some reason, it rubbed Dean up the wrong way.

Castiel had picked up on the scents now too and was sniffing determinedly at the air, trying to calculate what kind of danger they were in and what type of precautions they needed to take in order to protect the pack and that’s when it suddenly hit Dean and his eyes blew wide.

He launched through the trees, racing to get back to the camp and he vaguely heard Cas shout in surprise as he sprinted after him.

“Dean, wait!” Cas called but Dean couldn’t because he knew that scent even if he hadn’t smelled it in years and he needed to warn the pack of the upcoming dangers.

When the camp came into view, he pushed himself harder, Cas barely able to keep up and he bounded into the space they’d made home and skidded to a halt, chest heaving as he tried to catch his breath.

He looked up wildly, surprised at finding the pack already standing in an arc before him and he opened his mouth to explain his findings, then finally registered the two figures standing a couple of feet away in the centre of the arc of stunned and horrified faces.

Dean’s blood ran cold and he felt his muscles threaten to give out on him as he stared at the two wolves. One was shorter and younger than the other and Dean didn’t recognise him but the stronger one wore a face that haunted Dean’s nightmares to this day.
Cas stumbled out of the trees, panting deeply and he glared at his lover for a second before frowning at his shocked expression. He turned to the two strange wolves and his frown devolved into a scowl.

The stronger wolf, the alpha, eyed Cas suspiciously and sniffed the air a couple of times before his mouth curled in distaste and he settled for narrowing his eyes at Dean.

Cas had no idea who these wolves were but one look around the pack told him they meant trouble and he was quite alarmed by how Sam was bowing his head, refusing to look at the intruders out of something that resembled nervousness. A glance at Dean confirmed the alpha was beginning to duck his head too and Castiel angled his bewildered gaze towards this strange alpha who embraced such an intimidating presence.

However, when Dean spoke, Cas’ veins turned to ice and he suddenly understood why the pack was acting like they were.

“Dad?”

Chapter End Notes

And so a new plot line begins...
There was a moment of silence where John Winchester’s gaze raked slowly over Dean’s body and the younger alpha ducked his head a fraction lower at the scrutiny. The strange beta glanced between the pair, analysing Dean’s every reaction to John’s presence and Castiel tilted his head because the beta couldn’t be much older than eighteen so surely that couldn’t be John’s new mate?

Dean forced himself to raise his head to address his father.

“What are you doing here?” He asked with a small frown, attempting to sound like the authoritative head alpha he was supposed to be, but he couldn’t help the small flinch caused by John’s eyes narrowing dangerously and the barest twitch of his lips into a sneer.

“You mean what am I doing here in the pack that my own sons ran me out of?”

Sam’s ears lowered and Dean winced but it was Bobby who huffed out a dark laugh.

“And with good reason.”

John rounded on him, baring his teeth in a silent snarl and the elderly alpha startled slightly before making a point of standing his ground.

“I’ve chased you out of this pack once and I’ll gladly do it again,” growled Bobby. “Now tell us why you’re here and then do us all a favour and leave.”

John’s gaze burned with anger at the blatant hostility but he knew better than to start a fight so he focused his attention back onto Dean and raised an eyebrow at Castiel.

“Who’s this?” He demanded because John Winchester never asked anything; he was a warrior and every word he spoke was a demand, an order or an accusation. Sam and Dean knew this well.

“You first,” said Dean, equally as cold as he flicked his gaze to the young, sandy and white-coated beta by John’s side. This was his pack and although his father was a force to be reckoned with, he wouldn’t allow the man to waltz in here and start spitting out orders at his friends and family. He lost that privilege thirteen years ago.

The black and brown alpha narrowed a glare at his son but Dean was unyielding and the older alpha huffed.

“This is Adam Milligan. He’s my son.”

Dean stiffened and Sam’s eyes widened, stung.

“So, what? Are you disowning us and stealing random pups now? You’re so disappointed in us, you’ve grabbed some scrawny kid and told everyone he’s your real son?” Growled Dean, fur beginning to bristle in a combination of anger and hurt.

Adam scowled at Dean and looked ready to growl, but John interrupted him.

“No, Adam is my actual son. Your half-brother.”
Dean recoiled and Sam’s jaw dropped.

“How old is he?” Snarled Dean suddenly. “Because you left this pack thirteen years ago and the kid looks a lot older than that. Did you knock some poor sap up and abandon them? Preyed on a desperate omega in heat and left them pregnant with no one to take care of them? How many other brothers and sisters have we got that you’ve not told us about? Did Mom really mean that little to you?”

John snapped at Dean and the younger alpha stepped backwards in shock as his father loomed over him, snarling.

“How dare you talk to me like that,” he hissed. “You know exactly how much your mother meant to me and if she could see you now, she’d be rolling in her grave. She’d be so disappointed in you, Dean. Family’s supposed to mean something and you abandoned yours. You don’t deserve to lead this pack. You never did.”

Dean tried to glare defiantly at his father, but his words hurt and his ears lowered enough to let John know he’d hit a nerve.

“Then why did you have a kid with someone else?” Bit out Dean and John growled warningly.

“Your mother had been gone a long time. I was lonely. My sons had turned their backs on me; I needed someone to talk to. I joined another pack and met a beta by the name of Kate Milligan. We had a son. That’s it. I’m not a villain.”

Dean scowled. “Then why did you come here if you joined another pack? What do you want from us?”

John raised his eyebrows and glanced pointedly at Adam and Dean pulled a face.

“Surely you couldn’t have come all this way to tell us we have a half-brother. You want something. What is it?”

John looked irritated but he sighed and levelled a glare at his son.

“We left. When Winter came, there was no food and what little they could get wasn’t enough to feed an entire pack. Thanks to being thrown out of my own pack, I started at the bottom of the hierarchy, as did Adam, so we rarely ate after a hunt. I thought we’d have a better chance of survival on our own, so I left and took Adam with me.”

“What about Kate?” Sam asked with a frown and John tensed, lip twitching in an emotion none of them could distinguish.

“Dead,” he replied bluntly and Cas thought it strange how Adam scowled and glanced away. An odd reaction to hearing his mother’s death put so coldly.

“You’ve still not answered the question of why you’re here,” said Dean but there was a noticeable drop in hostility in his tone, as if he was considering his father’s story and maybe feeling a hint of guilt at placing him in that position.

John squared his jaw. “Winter was unkind to us. I don’t ever want to see Adam starving again. I was hoping you would help me in that endeavour. Afterall, he is your brother.”

Adam shifted again and Cas tilted his head at the movement but Dean was too busy pulling his lips into a thin line.
“Half-brother,” he corrected pointedly, making Adam scowl as Sam padded to his side.

“You want to re-join the pack,” the omega surmised unhappily.

John nodded stiffly. “For Adam’s sake."

“Why should we help you?” Bobby growled suddenly. “You were cruel and merciless to not only your enemies, but your pack too. You snarled at pups and abused the rest of us; verbally and physically to the point where you broke bones. You made Sam feel worthless and forced Dean to grow up too soon and whenever they stood up to you, you scared them into submission. Then, when Sam tried to defend one of the pups, you attacked him because you’re a powerful and glorious alpha and Sam’s just an omega and he needs to learn his place, right? You were ready to tear into your own son with your teeth but Dean stopped you and instead of backing down, you battered him, remember? Right before you hightailed it out of our territory, you fought and tried to rip your son apart. Remember that? If it wasn’t for us chasing you off, Dean would be dead.”

Bobby’s gaze was burning with unadulterated fury, fur bristling and lip beginning to curl into a snarl.

“So, I’ll repeat myself. Why should we help you?”

John was tamping down on his anger and he glared at the alpha he’d once called a friend.

“I never claimed to be a good wolf and I regret most of the things I did in pursuit of revenge for Mary’s death. I’ll never be able to make up for all the wrong I did and I don’t expect to be forgiven, but don’t let Adam pay for my mistakes. He doesn’t deserve your judgement.”

“You are the furthest thing from a ‘good wolf’,” snarled Bobby and he would have continued if Dean hadn’t shot him a silencing glare at that moment.

“How long do you wish to stay?” Dean asked coolly and John stood a little straighter.

“Not long. Enough to teach Adam how to hunt properly. At seventeen, he should be able to fight too but kid’s pretty useless at defending himself. If we’re going to live on our own, he should at least have a chance at survival.”

As Adam scowled moodily and glanced away, Dean’s mouth formed a grim line.

“And once he’s learned those skills, you’ll leave? Both of you?”

John nodded stiffly and Adam shot Dean a filthy glare as the rest of the pack stared at their leader in surprise.

“You’re considering this?” Sam whispered, shocked and Dean’s responding nod was almost imperceptible.

“He’s our dad,” the alpha replied, voice just as quiet. “We can’t leave him to die.” Sam frowned but clamped his mouth shut.

“Fine,” Dean said loud enough for the pack to hear. “We’ll give you shelter until Adam has learned to hunt and fight to an acceptable standard. No longer.”

John nodded, satisfied but Dean wasn’t quite finished and he took a step towards his father, a stern scowl on his face.

“But don’t expect to step back into the role of top dog now you’re here. You gave that right up when
you attacked Sam. If you’re going to live in this pack, you’ll do so at the bottom of the hierarchy like every other new member. You don’t get special privileges and both you and Adam will follow Sam’s and my orders down to the T. Got it?”

John was still for a moment as he narrowed his eyes at his son, but he eventually nodded and Dean growled softly.

“And I swear, if you lay a single claw on any of this pack, I’ll make sure you regret it.”

John looked furious at having his son berate him, but he wisely kept his mouth shut as Bobby huffed in approval, the other wolves glancing at their leader, impressed.

“Welcome to the pack,” Dean said but he cadenced it with a warning glare and John was clearly fuming about the entire exchange but could say nothing as his oldest son ushered Castiel towards their shelter, gesturing for Samandriel and Ben to follow. It was an obvious dismissal proving that Dean was the one in charge, not his father and Sam was equally as pointed as he made his way over to Gabriel and directed him to their shelter. Sam was showing that just because he was an omega, it didn’t mean he couldn’t run a pack and Gabriel was happy to be obedient to his lover’s commands if it meant proving a point to the man who’d made his lover’s youthful life so miserable.

The wolves that knew John, such as the likes of Bobby and Ellen, turned and marched to their shelters without sparing the gruff alpha a glance. Those who had never met John but had heard stories of him were a little slower to follow, looking over the oldest Winchester warily before slinking away.

John and Adam were left on their own.

* * *

The night had been warm and humid and Castiel felt sweaty and dirty when morning rolled around. He almost regretted sleeping in the shelter, but after all the stories he’d been told of John Winchester, he didn’t feel his pups were safe in the open. He also wondered if maybe he’d wanted to curl around Dean in private to protect him from the horrors he knew John was capable of inflicting on his sons.

Either way, when the sun dragged itself into the sky and he noticed both Samandriel and Ben were awake, he carefully guided the pups out of the shelter and they made their way to the river a little distance from the camp. They bathed and horsed around in the water for a bit, Castiel making the pups laugh when he shot a fountain of water from his mouth and when the sun climbed higher towards the Heavens, Cas decided it was time to go back home.

He whirled and startled at the figure watching them from the bank.

The pups stopped splashing and inched their way over to Cas’ side, eying John warily.

“I don’t believe we had a formal introduction,” began John, deceptively pleasant. “You were with my son last night?”

Castiel nodded cautiously and John’s lips twitched into a small smile.

“You carry his scent. I assume you’re with him more often than not. I suppose you’re his mate?”
“Not yet. We have discussed it though,” he said carefully and John nodded, seemingly pleased as his gaze raked over Castiel’s body in approval.

“At least that boy’s done something right. A little masculine and muscular for my tastes but he’s certainly picked a looker.”

“And I have ears too,” Cas commented drily and John chuckled.

“Intelligent with a sense of humour. I can certainly see why Dean chose you.” John’s gaze flicked to Samandriel and Ben and Cas watched the alpha’s thought process play over his features.

“…They’re both yours?” John asked, clearly confused at the variation in colours between the two pups and Cas nodded once.

“Yes,” he stated simply, daring John to question it and Ben looked up at him with a small, grateful smile.

John hummed in satisfaction and nodded. “Personally, I’ve always waited until after mating to have pups, but you both seem very happy together and I can see Dean’s done well for himself. Congratulations to both of you.”

Castiel made no comment on the statement. John could believe what he wanted; it’s not like Cas had lied to him, just failed to correct him.

“Forgive me, what did you say your name was?” Asked John and Castiel remained impassive as he replied.

“I didn’t.” A pregnant pause. “It’s Castiel.”

“Ah,” said John. “Castiel…?”

Cas continued to stare at him and John tilted his head a little impatiently.

“Castiel what? What’s your surname?”

Cas narrowed his eyes and John’s ear flicked curiously. The older alpha was fishing.

“Alright, which pack are you from?” John asked instead.

“Is that information pertinent to your judgement of my character?” Asked Castiel testily and John blinked at the response before glaring at the omega.

“Only if you’re trying to hide something.”

“Do you believe I am?” Challenged Cas and the older alpha rumbled warningly at him.

“You’re not exactly making a phenomenal first impression with the father of the alpha you wish to mate.”

“Bobby likes me just fine, thank you,” Cas bit out before he could stop himself and John’s eyes blazed with anger as he took a step towards the omega and pups. Cas growled at him and the pups huddled closer.

“What did you just say to me, omega?” Hissed John and Cas curled his lip in disgust.

“You stopped being a father to Sam and Dean the second you started abusing them. If you hit and
belittle your children, don’t be surprised when they and those around them no longer respect you.” The words kept flowing and Castiel wasn’t all that shocked. At one time, he would never have dreamed of addressing an alpha in such a way, especially when he was alone, but John Winchester had hurt his lover and soon-to-be brother many years ago and Castiel held a great deal of contempt towards this particular alpha.

John looked livid but Castiel was ready to end the conversation and he nudged his pups towards a part of the river bank that wasn’t being marred by John’s presence.

“Don’t turn your back on me, bitch,” snarled John and Castiel suddenly rounded on him, teeth bared.

“My name is ‘Castiel’ and don’t you dare tell me what to do. Dean is my alpha and pack leader and I take orders from him, not you.” He growled. “And stay away from my children.”

He lifted his tail high into the air as a sign that the discussion was over and he pushed his pups gently in the direction of the camp, refusing to look back at the smouldering John.

* * *

John didn’t approach Castiel after their explosive meeting but he did shoot the omega a lot of filthy glares as he and Adam learned the names of the other pack members. The rest of the pack, especially the older wolves, made it quite clear that John wasn’t welcome and their conversations with him were clipped and curt. They preferred to stay away from him as much as possible and it became apparent that John was beginning to grow irritated even if he refused to confront them. Bobby refused to speak with him at all.

Interactions with Adam were a little more complicated. The pack knew it wasn’t his fault that he was the son of John but the fact that he was always with the older alpha made them instinctively wary of him. They tried to include him in conversations but the beta was moody and snappy and rather unpleasant to talk to. He gave off the impression that he didn’t want to be anywhere near other shifters and he had obviously taken an immediate disliking to his half-brothers, which set the pack on edge that much more. He barely spoke and had a tendency to glare at people when they came too close.

Three days passed since the pair had first arrived and there was no relief in sight. Tensions were high and Sam and Dean were starting to worry about the mental welfare of their pack. The last hunt had been uncoordinated and unfocused despite John and Adam not accompanying them, and stupid mistakes had been made that could have been avoided. Meg was sporting a couple of antler scratches along her side; nothing fatal but something that shouldn’t have happened.

They were all restless during the nights too; they didn’t trust John not to act untoward them whilst they were dreaming and their sleep schedule was suffering for it. If this behaviour continued, Dean and Sam would have to ask their father and half-brother to leave.

The pups however continued to play as usual, laughing and giggling at each other and groaning when they had lessons to learn. They could feel the tension between the adults but they didn’t really understand it and whatever it was probably didn’t involve them anyway, so they carried on as normal.

After a boring maths lesson, Samandriel and Ben raced over to the girls and immediately immersed
themselves in a wrestling match. They tumbled around the floor and chased each other to a quieter part of the camp so as not to disturb the adults.

Whilst enjoying a rough game of tug-of-war over a large stick, a black and brown figure with a white underbelly and black muzzle ambled over to them. John was silent for a little while as he watched them play and the pups chose to ignore him because their game was far more fascinating, but then John settled on the floor beside them and they glanced at him curiously, Ben and Samandriel backing up slightly.

“What are you playing?” He asked and Claire stared at him like it was the most idiotic question ever.

“Tug-of-war,” she said in a tone that meant it should have been obvious. John chuckled softly at her.

“My apologies. And what’s your name?”

“Claire Collins,” she replied before gesturing over to Alex. “That’s Alex Jones.”

John nodded, seemingly interested before glancing to Ben and Samandriel.

“And you are?”

“Samandriel and Ben,” replied Samandriel as he gestured to the other boy and John cocked an ear.

“Samandriel and Ben who?”

Both boys clamped their mouths shut. They weren’t stupid; Castiel hadn’t told John his last name for a reason and if the older alpha thought they were both brothers, they weren’t about to contradict him, nor were they about to let him guess what Castiel’s surname was from theirs.

John frowned fractionally. “Well?” He asked. “Your friends have told me their full names, what are yours?”

“Why do you need to know?” Asked Ben as Claire and Alex stared at them impatiently.

“Which pack are you from?” Asked John instead and Samandriel scowled.

“This one.”

John raised an eyebrow and Claire sighed. “Just tell him your names so we can get back to playing. They’re just names; it’s not like they’re important.”

Ben and Samandriel hesitated. If they weren’t important then why had Castiel refused to give his to John?

“It’s Ben Braeden and Samandriel Novak,” said Alex, losing her patience as she rolled her eyes at the younger boys. “C’mon, I’m bored!”

Suddenly, John’s eyes widened before narrowing in disgust and he snarled viciously at Samandriel, making the younger alpha whimper and scramble backwards as his friends looked on in horror. John snapped at the pup and Samandriel cried out in fear, whining in relief when Dean was suddenly standing between them, growling at his father.

“Make your next move very carefully,” hissed Dean as Castiel rounded the pups up and shoved them behind him. John bared his teeth at the omega and Dean barked at him warningly.

“I knew that pup wasn’t yours. It looks nothing like you,” bit out John. “You let two Novaks into the
“No. I let three in,” Dean shot back. “And you’re not going to lay a claw on any of them.”

“Three?” Snarled John. “You’ve already invited their leader’s omega brother and his son in, are you going to tell me next that you’ve allowed Lucifer in? Or maybe Michael himself?”

“More like Gabriel,” huffed Dean and John rumbled in outrage.

“You’ve let our enemies into our pack; the Novaks’ highest omega and one of the highest alphas and what? You wish to mate one of them and adopt his child? You didn’t once stop to think there might be something wrong with that? You never wondered if maybe they’re using you and they’ll stab you in the back the first chance they get? Are you really that naïve?”

Dean narrowed his eyes and stood firmly in front of Cas and the pups.

“One: this isn’t ‘our’ pack. This is my pack. Two: they’re on the run from a family who wish to kill Samandriel and punish Castiel and Gabriel. We offered them protection and if Sam and I happened to fall for them somewhere along the line, then I truly see nothing wrong with that. They’re family and no one’s gonna change that.” He eyed his father challengingly.

John bared his teeth once more. “Sam’s in a relationship with Gabriel? Seriously? You two are willingly setting yourselves up for a takeover. You’ve both made yourselves easy targets for the Novaks and I’m baffled how neither of you can see it. You’ll be dead before long and you’ll only have yourselves to blame.” John shook his head. “If they had begged me for amnesty, I would’ve put my pack’s safety first and killed them all on the spot. It would’ve been three less enemies to worry about.”

“Then it’s a good job this isn’t your pack,” spat Dean, fur bristling. “They’ve saved both me and Sam from being slaughtered by members of Azazel’s pack and they are nothing like the monsters we’ve been taught they’d be. They’re good people and I’m grateful they chose to join us.”

“They’re Novaks,” hissed John. “Civilised folk. They’re not welcome here; they’ll never be like us. They’re cruel and deceitful and they’ll turn on you the first opportunity they get. Do you really think they would’ve granted you kindness if you had begged them for protection? If you had been the ones to turn up in their territory?”

“That’s not the point. The point is Cas and Gabe are not who we thought they were. They’re family and they always will be,” snapped Dean. “And you won’t touch either of them or Samandriel.”

John snorted in repulsion and eyed the black and white pup in disgust.

“Never thought you’d settle for an unmated omega with a pup. An alpha pup at that. Are you really happy with having a second-hand omega? The unwanted leavings of another alpha or beta.” His gaze shifted to Ben. “Not only that, but you take on another pup as well. An orphan maybe? What kind of leader settles for other wolves’ pups? You’re supposed to make your own; that’s what a strong leader does. That’s what a strong alpha does; breeds to keep up their blood line. It’s only natural for an alpha to want to mate and breed, yet you can’t even do that right.”

John shook his head in disappointment. “When I first realised you were with Castiel, I was proud of you. I thought you’d done well for yourself; found a good omega and had two healthy pups. Guess I was wrong. You never earned your family. Then again, you never earn anything the traditional way, do you? Not even this pack. You’ve never worked hard for anything like a real alpha would.”

Castiel expected Dean to snarl at his father and tell him to back down. He expected Dean to call him
out on his lies and attempts to belittle his son and family.

He didn’t expect Dean’s ears to lower and for him to duck his head slightly.

“Cas isn’t ‘unwanted leavings’ and Ben and Samandriel are my pups no matter what their bloodlines say,” Dean said, but it was lacking the fieriness Cas had anticipated and he almost sounded… subdued. “And I’ll mate Cas when we’re both ready. We’ll have children on our own terms and if we never feel ready, then that’s okay too. Cas is an omega; not a hole to breed.”

John snorted and to Cas’ astonishment, turned his back on Dean and marched away without the lead alpha reprimanding him for his disrespectfulness. Cas glanced at Dean in confusion and startled when Dean’s expression radiated shame and defeat.

“Dean?” He asked softly, nuzzling his lover’s cheek and the alpha blinked and offered him a smile that didn’t come close to reaching his eyes.

“Pups okay?” Dean asked before Cas could question him and Samandriel and Ben padded over, rubbing their heads against his legs in gratitude. Dean leaned down to nuzzle them silently and Cas frowned because something was clearly troubling him.

“You two get back to playing with the girls. He won’t bother you again,” Dean promised quietly, licking both boys’ heads and Samandriel and Ben grinned up at him and pressed into his chest before galloping off with Alex and Claire.

“Dean? Is everything okay?” Asked Cas as Dean began to walk away, head still lower than usual and tail tucked between his legs.

“Everything’s fine, Cas,” Dean replied softly offering him another hollow smile as he pressed into the alpha’s side.

“Clearly,” Cas deadpanned before nuzzling Dean’s cheek. “You can tell me, Dean. You know how much I hate seeing you in distress.”

The alpha sighed and glanced over the pack as he walked towards an empty spot away from the chaos of the rest of the camp. He lay on the grass for a while as he watched his friends and family chat or goof around before finally turning to his lover, who had taken the space beside him.

“You think I’m a strong alpha, right? I mean… I work hard during hunts and I always fight to defend my pack, right?” Murmured Dean.

Cas’ eyes widened and he licked his lover’s muzzle gently.

“Of course I think you’re a strong alpha. I also think you’re a kind and compassionate alpha. You take care of Samandriel and Ben and you protect all of us. Despite what your father thinks, being a good leader means taking into consideration all of your pack members’ needs and feelings without letting the pack fall into chaos, not showing off your strength and forcing your pack to submit to you. You’re a great leader and a wonderful alpha, Dean. Stepping up as a father figure for Samandriel and Ben doesn’t make you weak or any less of an alpha. In my eyes, you had the courage to do the things no other alpha would; you protected and took care of my pup and an orphaned one. You were brave and selfless and you’re by far the greatest alpha I’ve ever met.”

Cas’ gaze softened and he nuzzled his lover’s cheek. “And don’t you ever let your father make you believe otherwise. You work hard in everything you do and the whole pack knows it. You throw yourself into hunting and fighting and protecting your friends and family, and everyone is grateful to be under your leadership rather than your father’s. You’re a better wolf than he could ever dream of
being.”

Dean smiled tenderly and this time it reached his eyes. He licked Castiel’s muzzle and rubbed their noses together.

“Thanks, Cas.”

The omega grinned and leaned into his lover. “No problem.” A pause. “…And if you ever wanted a pup with me, you know I could never deny you of anything.”

Dean chuckled, but his tail was swishing excitedly as he snuggled into his lover.

“Let’s get the mating out of the way first, yeah?”

Cas laughed and relaxed into his soon-to-be mate and Dean wrapped a paw around him.

“I have to admit though, I am worried about you stabbing me in the back whilst I’m sleeping,” teased Dean and Castiel snorted.

“It’s a legitimate concern. I’ve contemplated it many times when you were snoring.”

Dean grinned and tugged on Cas’ ear playfully. “You’re the one who sleeps like a cabbage. You spread yourself out as far as possible and sometimes I wake up with a paw in my mouth.”

“Probably because it’s an efficient way to silence your snoring,” Cas shot back. “It’s just irritating when you drool on my paw.”

“I do not drool!” Protested Dean with a laugh, slapping Cas’ shoulder and the omega quirked a smile.

“You drooled on Samandriel once. He woke me up to tell me he was soaked because you’d been using him as a pillow. Ben was laughing.”

“Oh? And why couldn’t I hear all this commotion?”

“Because you were snoring too loud.”

“Shut up!” Scoffed Dean, shoving at his lover’s shoulder again and Cas smirked and wedged his head under his lover’s chin.

“You’re the best thing that ever happened to me,” whispered Dean after a few minutes and Cas’ heart melted as he pressed closer to his alpha.

“I’ve never loved anything more than I love you and Samandriel and Ben,” Dean continued, idly rubbing his scent into Cas’ head. “You three mean the world to me.”

“And you mean everything to us,” murmured Cas. “We’d be lost without you. I’m sure the pups would agree.”

Dean licked his lover’s head. “I’m sorry you all had to meet my dad. It’s something I’d hoped you’d never have to experience.”

“He’s just another alpha,” sighed Cas. “He doesn’t mean anything to us. But he is your father and I know how deep family’s words can cut. Whatever he says, Dean, know that we will always be proud of you. We will always love you and to us, you’re the kindest and most thoughtful alpha to have ever walked this Earth.”
Dean buried his nose into Castiel’s neck, scenting deeply and Cas easily bared his throat for him, tail swishing when Dean tugged him closer.

“At least somebody’s proud of me,” whispered Dean.

Castiel wasn’t sure what to say to that.

Chapter End Notes

So... what do you guys think of John?
“So… you’re involved with Gabriel Novak, huh?” Asked John gruffly as he came to a halt beside Sam.

The omega eyed him suspiciously and continued fishing. His skills were a little rusty and he thought he could use the practice. Plus, it was a hot day and the water felt soothing between his toes. A salmon sailed high above his head and he lunged for it, frowning when it slipped between his paws and continued its journey upstream. He shuffled a little further towards the middle of the ledge and waited for the next fish to make the leap.

“You realise he’s Michael’s brother?” Said John. “As in brother of the leader of the Novaks.”

“Yep,” replied Sam without looking at his father. He focused on the huge salmon ambling its way up the river.

“And that doesn’t bother you?” Persisted John. “You don’t mind being an open target to one of the most vicious killers currently living in this world?”

Sam snorted. Gabriel was vicious when protecting his family; he was willing to kill and maim anyone who threatened those he loved. Gabriel also played hide-and-seek with pups and wouldn’t stop talking about it for days when he won. He purred like a kitten when Sam curled around him during the night and whined like a five-year-old when he didn’t get his morning kiss and cuddle.

Sam was clearly in horrific danger.

The salmon skimmed his left side and he scowled in frustration when he failed to even touch it.

“Are you listening to me, Sam?” Asked John sternly. “Gabriel is dangerous. How can you trust him so carelessly?”

Sam rolled his eyes and glared at his father.

“Gabriel’s not a threat to this pack, least of all is he a threat to me. He’s a good, thoughtful alpha and I love him very much. He won’t hurt me.”

“You’re being naïve,” said John. “He’s a Novak. They’re good at tricks like this. He’ll pretend he loves you then before you know it, he’ll have taken over the pack.”

Sam snorted and returned his focus to the river.

“Why do you always think you know everything?” Asked John, irritated. “I’m trying to warn you what will happen.”

Sam scowled at his father. “No, you’re causing trouble. Here’s my advice: don’t. You’re already on thin ice with the pack. Cas and Samandriel have been with us for eleven months now; they’re clearly happy here. These Novaks aren’t like the rest of their family; they won’t betray us.”

John frowned. “What about Gabriel? How long has he been here?”

Sam shifted, realising his mistake. “Four months, but I’ve known him far longer than that.”
John scowled in confusion. “How? How did you know him before he joined the pack? Why didn’t he come with his brother?”

Sam sighed and jumped off the ledge to join his father.

“Castiel and Samandriel were chased out of their home by Michael, Raphael and Lucifer because Cas is an unmated omega and had a child without informing his lead alpha. Gabriel allowed them to escape and they found us. We took them in and when Michael and his brothers cooled off a little, Gabe began searching for his brother and nephew. He found the pack but didn’t believe Cas would be with us so he waited to see if he could pick up the scent again.

“I took a walk and found him. He’d masked his scent so I didn’t know who he was and he refused to tell me his last name and which pack he came from and at first, I didn’t like him. But then I stumbled across him again and we started talking and I kept going back to him because I enjoyed his company. It was months before I worked out who he was and by then we’d been friends for a long time. I was angry at him for keeping his identity a secret but we invited him into the pack so he could see his brother and because he couldn’t go back to Tallahassee. He’s since proved a valuable member and he saved my life.”

Sam stared defiantly at his dad. “He’s good to me. Very good. I want to spend the rest of my life with him.”

John pursed his lips. “You went to him multiple times alone when you barely knew him? What did Dean have to say about this?”

Sam shuffled his paws guiltily. “I didn’t tell him until after Gabriel joined the pack.”

John’s mouth drew into a thin line. “You could’ve been killed. Nobody would’ve known where you were. A lone omega facing an alpha? Do you realise how dangerous that is?”

Sam scowled. “I can hold my own, thanks. I’m not as weak as you think.”

“You’re not as strong as an alpha. Especially a Novak. You could’ve died. You could’ve been raped; lots of alphas wouldn’t think twice about mounting an unguarded omega.”

Sam shook his head in anger. “I’m not weak!” He snapped. “I don’t have to be an alpha to fight one! I may be an omega but I’m just as strong as Dean. I can protect myself!”

John huffed in a way that said he disagreed and Sam made a sound of frustration.

“What if he had been a Rover trying to gain your trust?” Asked John. “He’d have taken you from the pack and you’d be stuck looking after his child. How would you get out of that one?”

Sam growled. “Well that’s not what happened, is it? So I don’t need to worry about it.” He frowned as a thought came to him. “You never told us how old Adam is,” he said suddenly.

John blinked at the non-sequitur and tilted his head.

“What does that have to do with-”

“How old is Adam?” Demanded Sam and John blinked.

“Seventeen.”

Sam’s expression morphed into one of distaste.
“So, let me get this straight: You had Adam seventeen years ago but you only left this pack thirteen years ago. You told us that when you left this pack, you joined another and met Kate and then you had a son together. That would make Adam twelve, at the oldest.” Sam narrowed his eyes. “Your story doesn’t add up.”

John stared at Sam for a moment before sighing.

“Fine. I met Kate before I left this pack. That’s why I was missing for days sometimes. I was having an affair with her.” He looked away. “I was lonely, Sam. You can’t fault me for that.”

Sam’s gaze narrowed further. “That still doesn’t add up. There’s no way Kate could’ve been part of another pack before you met her. We would’ve smelled them if they were so close and whilst sometimes you were missing for days, sometimes you were only missing for hours; there’s no way you could’ve travelled to another pack, spent time with Kate and then travelled all the way back. Even if you’d washed their pack scent off you, we would’ve known about another pack so close to our own territory. And no way would another pack let a foreign lead alpha have an affair with one of its betas. What aren’t you telling me?”

John was quiet for a long minute before huffing.

“Eighteen years ago, Kate was part of another pack,” he said stiffly. “Then she met me.”

There was a pregnant pause as Sam digested that information and then his eyes widened and he pulled a face dripping with disgust.

“You were her Rover,” he stated, shaking his head in repulsion. “You got her pregnant and made her unwelcome in her own pack. And you didn’t even stay with her! You used her for sex when you were bored and came back here when you were tired of her! You got her kicked out of her own pack and you didn’t have the decency to offer her a new one!”

John growled softly. “She didn’t tell me she was pregnant. If I’d have known-”

“You should have offered her a place with us anyway!” Hissed Sam. “You had to have known she’d been kicked out of her pack even if she didn’t tell you she was pregnant. And that doesn’t explain why you didn’t offer her or Adam a place here for the next four years you were leader! You left them to struggle on their own, only visiting them when you felt like it!”

“Would you have accepted them?” Bit out John. “Would you and Dean have accepted having a half-brother? Would you have accepted me being with someone who wasn’t your mom?”

“It doesn’t matter!” Shouted Sam. “You shouldn’t have let them struggle! You should’ve been honest with us! They were family whether we liked it or not!”

John made an odd face and Sam paused. The alpha looked guilty or maybe felt a hint of regret and it was such an unusual expression for John Winchester to make that Sam wasn’t sure what to say.

“You always told us how much you despised Rovers,” began Sam. “Yet you became one to Kate. You did the very thing you told us you hate Rovers for and you left her when she needed you most. You left her and your own son because you were what? Too prideful to bring them here? You didn’t want to admit what you’d done so you pretended they didn’t exist when you were with the pack?”

Sam shook his head. “How could you?”

John was silent for a very long time.

“I made some terrible mistakes,” he murmured. “Now Kate is dead and I’ll never be able to fix that
but I have a second chance with Adam.” He glanced up at Sam, humbled. “I really did join a pack after I left here. I took Kate and Adam with me and I mated Kate, but she was killed after another pack attacked ours. She was looking after the pups whilst we were out hunting and I... I couldn’t save her. When the hunting group returned, she was dead along with one of the pups and I…” John trailed off and looked away and Sam felt the fight drain out of him. His dad didn’t deserve to lose two mates. Nobody did.

“Last Winter, the pack couldn’t support all its members. Some of us hadn’t eaten properly in weeks and Adam... Adam was on the brink of death. He looked so thin and fragile and I couldn’t... I couldn’t let him die. I decided to leave the pack in hopes that we would have a better chance on our own. But Winter was harsh and we barely made it through.” John looked down at his paws. “You were the first thing I thought of. I wanted to make sure Adam would survive another year and I’ve spent the past few months searching for you in hopes you would grant us some kindness despite me giving you no reason to.”

Sam’s eyes blew wide at the confession and John glanced up at him with so much apology and shame, the younger Winchester felt the urge to comfort him. He remained where he was.

John was silent for another moment, seemingly collecting his thoughts.

“I’m not a good wolf,” he admitted quietly. “I was a terrible father to you and Dean and then again to Adam. I’m stubborn and distrusting and I can’t express emotions. I’ve hurt my friends and family in ways that horrify me and you all have every right to hate me. I’ll never be able to make it up to you, but I can try and first on that list is Adam. He needs a family and friends who care about him. I don’t want him to be terrified of not surviving another Winter. You and Dean are strong and generous and you care about your pack. I want Adam to be like that. I want him to be able to hunt and fight and care like you do. I want him to turn out like you two did.” The alpha’s gaze softened. “I reckon if he ends up half the wolf either of you are, my life won’t have been a total disaster.”

John bowed his head slightly, ears low. “I know I don’t deserve it, but I’d like to see if I can work for your forgiveness. For the pack’s forgiveness. I said and did some awful things to all of you and I’ll never forgive myself for attacking my own pack, especially you, Sam. I should never have tried to punish you for standing up for that pup that day and I’m sorry. I never should have fought Dean and the thought that I actually injured him disgusts me. I deserve a lot of things and kindness isn’t one of them, but I’m going to beg for it anyway for Adam’s sake. I want to prove to myself that I can be a father to at least one of my kids. I want to prove to myself that I’m not a total waste of oxygen.” John closed his eyes sadly. “I’m just sorry I never figured any of this out sooner. I’m sorry I couldn’t be the father you and Dean deserved.”

He shook his head and smiled weakly at Sam. “But you turned into the wolves I always dreamed you’d be, without my help anyway. Even if I don’t know how to show it and have a tendency to growl a lot, you have no idea how proud I am.”

The older alpha looked away again and Sam felt something heavy in his heart suddenly lift and before he knew it, he was nuzzling his father’s cheek.

John startled but relaxed after a moment and licked Sam’s head in gratitude and the omega pressed into his side with a delighted smile, a stray tear rolling down his cheek.

“You’re still our dad,” Sam whispered as he snuggled into the alpha’s fur like he remembered doing as a young pup. “You just have to learn how to stop being a leader and how to start being a family member.”

John sighed and nuzzled his son’s ear, making Sam’s tail wiggle.
“I don’t know if I can do that. I wasn’t very good at it before. I can’t even talk to either of you without snarling or upsetting you. It’s like a natural response to lash out at people when I’m concerned.”

Sam carefully pushed his head under John’s and the alpha gasped softly as his son made a show of wanting to be scent marked. John was quick to comply and Sam chuckled as his dad rubbed his scent into his head.

“So, you’re trying to tell me you yelled at me before because you’re worried about me?” Teased Sam lightly and John pulled away and glanced off to the side.

“…Well, they are Novaks. How was I supposed to know our centuries-old enemies actually aren’t all that bad when you get to know them?”

Sam grinned. “Give them a chance.”

John heaved out a heavy sigh and nodded. “Alright,” he murmured and Sam’s tail wagged again as he nuzzled his dad’s cheek.

“You need to talk to Dean,” he said. “You need to tell him the same things you’ve told me and explain to him that you’re sorry and you just want to put things right between us again. Believe it or not, but Dean really loves you and we… we’ve both missed you.”

John’s gaze softened.

Suddenly, Sam pulled back and stood to his full height.

“But you need to accept that Dean’s lead alpha,” he said sternly. “You can’t keep challenging him or growling at him in front of the pack, even if you are our father. Dean’s the boss and what he says goes, no matter how differently you might have done something.”

John nodded. “I understand. I never intended on challenging him. Or you, for that matter. Sometimes, I just say the wrong thing.”

“Because you’re concerned,” smirked Sam and John rolled his eyes.

“You’re never going to let that go, are you?”

Sam shook his head with a grin before butting his dad’s shoulder.

“Come on. There’s no time like the present and I know Dean’ll be thrilled to hear what you have to say.”

* * *

“What’s wrong, kid? Someone urinate in your dog bowl?” Drawled Gabriel as he approached the white and sandy beta. Adam was a fair distance from the camp, glaring grumpily at an uninteresting patch of mud as if it was to blame for all of life’s problems and he narrowed his gaze at Gabriel and growled.

“Did you just call me a dog?” He rumbled in an impressive impression of an alpha and Gabriel grinned brightly at him before flopping down by his side.
“Just an expression, kiddo. Although maybe it’s one I should stop using; Sam wasn’t too fond of it last time I used it on him either.”

Adam scowled at him before pointedly standing, turning his back to Gabriel and lying back down again.

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. “Rude.”

“Go away,” huffed Adam. “I’ve got nothing to say to you.”

“Well, have you ever thought maybe I have something to say to you?” Asked Gabriel, climbing to his paws and settling by the beta’s side again. Adam growled again.

“I don’t care what you have to say to me. I don’t want to hear it and I don’t want to talk to you.” He clambered to his paws and stalked off. Unfortunately for him, Gabriel trotted after him.

“What’s your deal, kid?” Asked Gabriel with a frown. “I know you’re a teenager and all, but your attitude is worse than my brother, Lucifer’s, and he drowns kittens for fun. Probably. So what gives? Why are you so bratty?”

“None of your business, that’s why,” snapped Adam. “Go knot my stupid omega brother or something.”

“Hey,” scowled Gabriel, stepping in front of Adam. “What’s your problem? You not house-trained yet or something? What makes you think you can go around speaking to people like that?”

“I’m not a dog!” Snarled Adam. “I’m not a pup and you’re not my dad!”

“You certainly act like a pup,” frowned Gabriel. “And you have the attitude of a spoiled Princess. Now I’m not leaving until you tell me why you’re giving the rest of the pack such a hard time. You act like we’re beneath you and that ain’t right.”

“Why would I tell you anything?” Hissed Adam. “You’re a Novak. My dad told me all about you and your pack. You’re a bunch of deceitful snakes who don’t care about anyone or anything and you’ll sooner stab someone in the back than make peace with them. Sam and Dean are idiots if they trust you and that feeble brother of yours.”

“Adam,” Gabriel warned but the beta merely sneered at him as he glanced over his body.

“I don’t need to tell you anything,” he huffed. “You talk tough but you’re not a proper alpha. Sam’s more of an alpha than you. You’re just an omega with a knot.”

Before Adam knew what was happening, his back was on the floor, all the wind knocked out of him and there was a weight on his chest and teeth very close to his throat as an intimidating snarl resonated above him.

Adam whimpered fearfully.

Gabriel frowned at him and drew up to his full height but refused to get off the younger wolf.

“In my old pack, if you’d have said that to any other alpha, your head would no longer be attached to your body,” growled Gabriel softly and Adam’s gaze filled with terror.

“Look around, Adam,” Gabriel continued. “There’s no one here. No one to help you. No one to come to your rescue. Yes, I’m small for an alpha, but you don’t know me. You don’t know what I’m
capable of and you don’t know my temperament. I’m a strange wolf from a pack you don’t know and you’re in my territory. I could’ve gutted you if I’d wanted to. I could’ve broken your legs and left you here for dead. I could’ve knotted you. Do you understand what I’m getting at?” Gabriel asked quietly and Adam continued to stare up at him in horror.

Gabriel sighed. “It doesn’t matter whether you’re a kid or not. It doesn’t matter whether you’re alpha, beta or omega. The point is you insulted a wolf you know nothing about. You were alone and in my territory and by growling and snarling at me, you challenged me. You provoked me to defend my territory and pride. Your actions have consequences, Adam. You need to think before you act because if you don’t, you’re going to have a very short, miserable life.”

Adam’s ears were low and he shrunk in on himself as Gabriel eyed him.

“What do you say?” Gabriel asked and Adam frowned petulantly and glanced away.

“Adam,” Gabriel insisted and the beta pouted.

“Sorry,” he mumbled and Gabriel grinned brightly again and hopped off the young wolf.

“Great. Now, why are you so grumpy?”

Adam scowled at him as he shook himself off.

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Alright then. But don’t take your frustrations out on the rest of the pack, okay? Remember: they’re strange wolves who you know nothing about, in foreign territory. Until you learn to open up, don’t provoke them into thinking you’re challenging them,” said Gabriel before sauntering off in the opposite direction, humming a cheery tune as he went.

* * *

Hannah giggled as Gadreel licked every inch of her face. She batted at his nose and when that didn’t stop him, she lunged at him and pinned him to the ground. His tail wouldn’t stop wagging and she tried to put a paw on it but he kept dodging her. When she next looked into his warm eyes, he licked her nose and she huffed in amusement.

Darkness had claimed the sky and Gadreel had led Hannah to the clearing where they’d found the fireflies. They’d not disturbed them too much this time and both were content to watch the little orange dots float between the long grasses. One landed on Hannah’s ear and she flicked it until it drifted away.

Gadreel licked her nose again and she snorted before settling onto his chest.

“I heard John apologised to Dean today,” murmured Hannah. “Said he wanted to start over and prove he could be a father. Apparently, he’s here to give Adam a better life and he wants to reconcile with his sons.”

Gadreel nodded. “So I’ve heard. It’ll certainly make Sam and Dean happier to know their father genuinely desires to be with them.”
Hannah hummed in agreement and snuggled into her friend’s fur. “I don’t think Bobby trusts him.”

“Bobby was the target of a lot of John’s ire back when he used to lead. I wasn’t here to see it, but I can understand why Bobby is more reluctant to let history slide. John did break his leg once because he questioned his upbringing of Sam and Dean.”

Hannah gasped. “He did? No wonder Bobby doesn’t trust him.” She paused. “Do you trust him?”

“I’ve never met the wolf,” replied Gadreel softly. “I only have rumours and stories to make a judgement. If Sam and Dean are willing to trust him, then so am I.”

Hannah smiled. “Sam and Dean looked so happy after they had a talk with their father. They haven’t stopped smiling yet.”

Gadreel chuckled and nuzzled his omega’s head.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d say this pack was growing on you.”

Hannah rolled her eyes and tucked her head under Gadreel’s chin. “Whatever gave you that impression?”

Gadreel grinned at her dry tone before wrapping his paws around her.

“Does that mean you’ll stay here? You’re not going to search for a new pack like you originally intended?”

Hannah batted his nose again.

“You’re seriously asking me that whilst I’m lying on top of you with your paws clenched around me like I’m your prey? Do I even have a choice to leave?”

Gadreel nipped at her ear playfully and she growled and gently caught his arm between her teeth, shaking it lightly until he rumbled in challenge and rolled her onto her back. They nipped at each other for a few moments, batting and pawing at one another’s bodies until things developed into something a little rougher and the two began play-fighting like pups.

Their tails wagged as they struggled and eventually, Hannah wiggled free of Gadreel’s grip and grinned when he leapt on her back, trying to drag her back down. She shook him off and turned to butt at his chest and ended up standing on her back legs, snapping teasingly at him as he reared up and held her in place with his front paws. They batted at each other a few times before Hannah growled and shoved him to the floor before racing off again.

Gadreel bounded to his paws and chased after her and when he caught up, he grabbed her back and threw her to the floor, straddling her until he could cover her face with wet, slobbery kisses.

Hannah laughed and attempted to return the onslaught but it resulted in them just licking each other adoringly until they were both smiling widely.

Hannah had never expected Gadreel to be so playful. When she’d first met the stoic wolf, she’d assumed that was his entire character; formal, focused and protective. She’d never dreamed of him being capable of behaving like a pup and the more she got to know this fun side of Gadreel, the harder she fell for him. He was perfect and Hannah was happier than she’d been in what felt like forever. The more time she spent with Gadreel, the more he drew her out her sassy and cheeky side; the part of her she thought had been beaten out of her a long time ago. He was slowly fixing her and Hannah couldn’t be more grateful. She just hoped she could give him as much as he gave her.
He’d moved onto nuzzling her cheek and jaw and she bared her throat to him, making him rumble, pleased. He scented her for a moment before licking her throat and she felt a simultaneous flutter in her heart and warmth pooling low in her belly.

He nipped gently at her throat; a small claim that she was his and she couldn’t help but expose her throat further just to watch the possessive spark behind his eyes.

He nipped again before licking a long, slow stripe up her throat and heat flared in her belly again.

Not wanting to think too hard about it all, she morphed into her human form beneath him and when she stared up into surprised eyes, she suddenly felt small and weak beneath his huge body. It wasn’t as scary as it should have been.

She didn’t experience these feelings for long though because suddenly Gadreel’s human body was straddling her and Hannah was struck with the ridiculous thought of how naked they both were.

“He’s mine?” Gadreel asked quietly, clearly trying his best not to let their skin make contact whilst also desperately forcing himself not to look down at Hannah’s very naked breasts.

Instead of an answer, Hannah gently cupped Gadreel’s stubbly cheek and pressed their lips together. His throat made a shocked noise but he was very quickly kissing her back, brushing his tongue over her lips until they parted for him and he could taste her mouth.

She tangled her fingers in his hair and he made a happy noise that had Hannah smiling and wondering what other sounds he could wring from him.

She trailed a finger down his spine and he pressed a little more insistently against her mouth so she stroked a hand up his side and brushed a thumb over one of his nipples.

He whimpered softly and Hannah circled the digit around the nub because he was obviously touch-starved and Hannah was going to rectify that.

She pulled away from his mouth and latched onto his throat, sucking at it and kissing it and nipping it until Gadreel was whining. She squeezed his nipple teasingly and he groaned softly and bared his neck for her.

Her hands wandered to his hips and she stroked circles into them as she rolled him onto his back. He looked up at her in surprise as she kneeled above him and she trailed kisses over his chest and down his stomach, worshipping his body with every touch of her lips and he sighed shakily when she lapped at his navel. She bit back a smirk at his straining erection but otherwise ignored it for the time being as she crawled back up his body, sucking a nipple on the way up, and claiming his mouth again.

He was breathing heavily by now and she grinned into his mouth when he placed his hands on her back, uncertain whether it was acceptable to put them anywhere else. She pulled back and kneeled above him before carefully taking his hands and placing them on her breasts. She chuckled when he flushed pink.

He pouted at her laughing so she kissed the expression away and he slowly began to rub his thumbs in circles over her nipples, exploring their softness and smoothness.

Their tongues tangled in a passionate embrace and she slid her hands over his chest possessively, making him rumble in approval. Then she shifted until her legs were bracketing his hips and he gasped as she ground against his erection. She did it again and he tangled one hand in her hair and licked frantically inside her mouth, nipping at her lip and sucking on her tongue as she continued to
grind against him unhurriedly.

He released a strangled moan and bucked upwards and Hannah’s brain thought it was the most amazing thing ever because she ground down harder against his crotch and pressed him deep into the floor as she ravished his mouth. He groaned and pulled her flush to his body, wrapping one arm around her and holding her tight so he could feel the slide of her breasts against his chest and they rutted against each other, their bodies moving together as though locked in a complicated dance.

She wanted so desperately for him to take her, for him to be inside her but he never made the move and when she tried to rock back onto him, he carefully pushed her away just enough so he could speak.

“No condom,” he murmured and her face fell in realisation. Then an idea struck and she smirked and nipped at his jaw.

“Don’t need one,” she whispered and before he could question her, she was making her way down his body, kissing every inch of it until she got to his crotch. She licked teasingly at his thighs and he watched her, enraptured as she kissed the tip of his erection. Then his eyes widened as she took him into her mouth.

His head fell back with a thump and he groaned filthily as she worked on him, determined to wring every last delicious moan out of him and after a few minutes, his knot began to swell and he whimpered and hissed as she licked and sucked every bit of it.

“Hannah,” he breathed and she didn’t let up until he was spent. She crawled to his side and cuddled up to him as he tried to catch his breath and she laughed when he was suddenly straddling her and kissing the life out of her.

She moaned when two fingers slipped between her legs.

He grinned mischievously at her and bent down to suck on one of her nipples as he coated his fingers in the slick she was leaking. Then he was teasing at her entrance and she was groaning wantonly as he slipped inside her. He explored her for a little while and she felt a little guilty at the crescent marks her nails were probably leaving in his back, but her guilt soon vanished when he slithered down her body and replaced his fingers with his tongue.

Gadreel hummed in approval as he tasted her slick, lapping it up greedily as she arched beneath him and when he carefully spread her legs wider, she whined pathetically. He rumbled in response and lapped deeper and faster and it wasn’t too long before she was crying out his name in release.

He dragged himself up her body and trapped her to his chest as he rolled onto his back and she mewed contentedly as she curled her arms around him. He nuzzled her silky hair and kissed her head as she scented at his throat and she sighed happily and nestled down.

“Why didn’t we do that through our heat and rut cycles?” Asked Hannah with a yawn and Gadreel huffed out a laugh.

“Because we were still pining over each other.”

“Well, next time our cycles hit, you are knotting me through the floor.”

Gadreel laughed warmly. “Elegantly put, dear.”

She slapped his shoulder. “I’m an elegant omega, I’ll have you know. And besides, I’m not putting up with unbearable heat pain again when I have a warm knot in my possession.”
“Is that all I am to you?” Asked Gadreel with a pout. “A warm knot for you to use whenever you desire?”

She nodded.

His lip quivered.

She kissed him until it stopped. “Don’t pretend you’re unhappy. Your semen is all over the floor.”

His eyes blew wide and his mouth dropped open in shock as he gaped at her. She smirked devilishly at him.

 “…You’re not the innocent omega I thought you were.”

“Oh please. You love it.”

“Never said I didn’t.”

Chapter End Notes

So... what do you think of John now? ;)


Dean snarled at Ben. The little omega growled back but he knew he stood no chance against the large alpha on his own so he took a step backwards, then another and another. Dean only rumbled louder and Ben sunk low to the ground, fur bristling as he was cornered against a tree. The large alpha smirked and bared his teeth, claws closing in on the pup and Ben began to panic because there was no way out.

Suddenly, Ben saw hope. Samandriel crept past Dean, silent and crouched and Ben smirked. This was his chance of escape.

“Samandriel, help!” He yelled and the little alpha turned to shoot him a betrayed glance which soon changed into a filthy glare when Dean’s head swivelled in his direction. Dean quickly pounced on the pup and Samandriel yelped in surprise.

“Tag! You’re it!” Grinned Dean before he scampered off, Ben laughing beside him.

“I’m gonna get you, Ben!” Shouted Samandriel as he raced after the pair, tongue poking out from between his lips in concentration.

There was a snicker from behind a bush and Samandriel paused and grinned. He bounded through the bushes and slammed into Claire, who screamed and tried to bat him away, but he held fast.

“You’re it!” He beamed before scarpering away and Claire pouted before chasing after Alex, who had abandoned her the second Samandriel had jumped through the bush.

A few metres away, Adam observed their play, ears low and brows furrowed. He watched Dean and the pups goof around and scowled deeply when Dean wrung another laugh from the small group by sticking Alex on his back and charging around as though he was a powerful stallion and she his rider. He even whinnied once or twice.

“There’s room in the game for one more,” murmured Castiel as he settled by Adam’s side, a soft smile on his face as he watched his lover and the pups.

Adam huffed and made a point of turning his head away.

“In case you’ve not noticed, they’re a little young for me,” he snorted and Castiel glanced to the back of his head.

“That’s not stopped Dean,” he pointed out. “He seems to be having fun, wouldn’t you say?”

“He’s only pretending to have fun because they asked him to play with them.”

Cas raised an eyebrow. “What makes you think he’s pretending?”

“Because he’s too old for pup games,” sneered Adam. “They asked him to play and he’s humouring them.”

“If he didn’t enjoy it, he would’ve said ‘no’. He’s not obligated to play with them,” explained Cas. “He’s joining in because he wants to. Just like how if you want to, you can.”
Adam glared at the omega. “Didn’t you understand the part where I’m too old for pup games?”

“I’m sorry you feel that way,” hummed Cas. “I don’t think anyone’s too old to have a bit of fun.”

“That’s because you have a pup,” grumbled Adam. “You have to play with him.”

“Actually, I have two,” said Castiel. “And I enjoy playing with them both. Sometimes it’s good to relax and push adult issues to the side for a moment. Spending time with family and friends is healthy.”

Adam pulled a face. “You have one pup,” he stated. “That’s Samandriel. Ben is another omega’s. Lisa or something. He isn’t yours.”

Cas frowned slightly. “Not biologically, no. But since Lisa can’t take care of him, Dean and I have taken on that role. He’s family.”

“You’ll never replace his mom,” said Adam. “And Dean will never be his or Samandriel’s dad.”

Cas scowled. “Not by blood. Dean cares very much about both pups, as do I. He’s raising them as his own just as I’m treating Ben like my own pup.”

Adam scoffed. “That’s stupid. A head alpha is supposed to have his own pups, not raise someone else’s, and omegas shouldn’t raise other omega’s kids. It’s just not done. How’s Dean gonna carry on the Winchester bloodline if his only alpha heir is a Novak?”

Cas sat up, mouth turned downwards.

“Having children isn’t just about continuing bloodlines, Adam. You have children when you’re in a happy relationship and wish to make it better. Having children is about passing your wisdom and experience onto another generation. It’s about wanting to share your life and love with someone besides your partner. You don’t have to be genetically related to do that.”

“Then why aren’t you still with Samandriel’s other biological parent?” Huffed Adam. “If you were in such a happy relationship and you wanted to have Samandriel together, why is Dean burdened with him now?”

“Adam,” Castiel protested with a scowl, but the beta shook his head as he too, sat up.

“You’re a prime example of why your own explanation is invalid. You said Dean isn’t obligated to play with Samandriel but he is really because you two are a package deal because you made a mistake with another alpha or beta a long time ago. Dean likes you and he knows if he wants to keep you, he has to make out he likes Samandriel too, so he plays with your pup to keep you happy and with him. Why else would a lead alpha choose to raise someone else’s pups? My dad certainly wouldn’t.”

Cas pursed his lips. “You’ve got that very wrong, Adam.”

“I’ve really not,” grumbled Adam. “You’re just lucky Dean’s not like these alphas that kill other pups to make sure their own don’t have competition. I still think Dean’s gonna breed you up once you’re mated. You wait, he won’t care about Ben and Samandriel then.”

“Adam,” warned Castiel but the beta just frowned harder.

“You probably don’t understand any of this though, do you? You’re from the city and things work differently out there. They do weird things like look after other people’s pups and they break matings
when someone else catches their eye. They don’t live in packs and there’s no real loyalty to anyone except themselves. You don’t know what it means to live in a pack. You don’t understand that mating in the wild lasts for life. You don’t understand why it’s wrong to take on another omega’s pup and why Dean shouldn’t have to look after yours. You don’t get any of it because you’re not one of us.”

“So, do you propose I should’ve let Ben fend for himself?” Asked Castiel with a hard scowl. “Do you suggest I should’ve left Ben on his own to die?”

“Not everything has a happy ending,” snapped Adam, climbing to his paws. “That’s how things work out here. If a pup loses a parent, it doesn’t just get a replacement!”

“Adam, you’re being ridiculous;” said Castiel, surprised at the hostility in the teen’s tone. “Ben lost his mother so I took him in. Why is that such a bad thing?”

“Because it is!” Hissed Adam and Cas’ eyes widened when he noticed how glassy the beta’s gaze was. “It’s wrong just like it’s wrong for Dean to raise your mistake!”

“Adam, enough,” growled Cas. He wouldn’t have anyone talking about Samandriel with such contempt.

“No!” Shouted Adam, fur bristling and ears pinned to his head in anger. “Why should they have a second chance at two loving parents? Ben should have been made to survive on his own when his mother left him and Dean should’ve killed your scrawny brat the second he staked his claim on you!”

Castiel bit the beta’s rump; not enough to cause damage or particularly hurt, but enough to shock. Adam yelped and sunk to the ground, shaking slightly.

“Act like a pup, get treated like a pup,” growled Cas, eying the teen sternly. He didn’t like undisciplined children. Undisciplined children resulted in rude, aggressive adults and the world could do with far fewer of those.

Samandriel was a well-behaved child for a reason.

“You bit me!” Choked out Adam and Cas stared at him unimpressed.

“You were displaying infantile behaviour. I rectified the problem.”

“You can’t go around biting people!” Protested Adam angrily and Castiel watched a tear roll down his cheek.

“I hate to break it to you Adam, but that’s what happens in the wild,” said Cas coolly. “You growl and insult people and they react in a way to make you stop.”

“You wouldn’t have done that if I was older!” Hissed Adam, another tear crawling down his cheek. “You think you can do what you want because I’m younger than you, but that’s not fair! You never would’ve bitten someone your own age.”

Cas narrowed his eyes and stepped closer.

“The last wolf that threatened my pups was an alpha around my age. I snapped her neck.” He stood to his full height. “Ask anyone in the pack about it. My brother plays a good part too.”
Adam trembled slightly as he stared up at Cas in terror.

“One day, you’re going to learn that you can’t say what you want to people and think there’ll be no repercussions. You’d better learn it sooner rather than later because you’re growing older, Adam and some wolves won’t settle for a small nip on the rump,” warned Cas.

A few tears dripped down Adam’s face and the beta squeezed his eyes shut and turned away.

Cas watched him for a couple of minutes and his gaze softened when the beta’s body began to shudder with concealed sobs.

“Adam, come here,” said Castiel quietly and at first the teen refused, but Cas was patient and encouraged him once more.

“Adam. Come here. Tell me why you’re upset.”

“No,” sniffed the beta as he curled in on himself, refusing to look at the omega.

Castiel sighed and padded over, sitting by his side. He gently licked Adam’s head and the beta stiffened and tried to wriggle away, but Cas wrapped a gentle paw around his middle and continued licking his head like he did when Samandriel needed comfort.

Eventually, Adam sat up and buried his face into Castiel’s chest, sobbing quietly.

Cas rested his chin on the beta’s head and let him cry for a few moments before nuzzling his ear.

“Tell me what’s wrong?” He asked softly and Adam stilled.

“I miss my mom,” he whispered. “Why did she leave?”

Cas’ heart cracked and he licked the beta’s head again. It suddenly made sense why the teen was distraught at seeing Ben being raised by him and Dean; Adam had lost his mother and John wasn’t going to win any father of the year awards. Ben had been granted another chance with a loving family, Adam had lost his pack and been left with John.

“I’m sure she never wanted to. I know she loves you very much. Sometimes, awful things happen in life and there’s nothing you can do to stop them.”

Adam frowned so Cas nuzzled his ear again.

“She’s probably watching over you from a cloud somewhere,” Cas murmured. “I bet she’s smiling down at you right now.”

He felt Adam’s lips twitch into a tiny smile before the beta slowly rubbed his head against his chest, seeking comfort.

Cas gently pushed him to the floor and wrapped a paw around him so he could tug him into his side and the beta pushed his face into his neck, sniffing into it as he tried to memorise Cas’ scent.

“I’m sorry,” whispered Adam and Cas smiled.

“Just don’t do it again,” he murmured as the beta tried to snuggle closer. He licked the younger wolf’s head again and sighed when Adam mewedled softly.

The poor kid had lost all his friends and family when John had made the decision to leave the pack and Cas’ heart went out to him. He was in foreign territory with no one of his own age and he’d
recently been told he had two brothers he’d never met before. His mother was dead and he’d nearly
died over Winter. If Cas was in his position, he’d probably be pretty grumpy as well.

“Hey, Adam?” Said a little voice and Cas peeked down to find Ben and Samandriel tilting their
heads at the beta.

Adam cracked an eye open. “What?”

The pups glanced at each other and Cas watched Ben shoot a quick look at Dean, who nodded in
encouragement.

“Will you come play with us?” He asked and Adam frowned in confusion before lifting his head to
stare at the pups.

“Excuse me?”

“Will you play with us?” Asked Samandriel and Castiel smirked and nuzzled Adam’s ear.

“They want you to play with them,” he murmured. “It’s your choice. You don’t have to.”

“But we really, really want you to,” said Samandriel, laying it on thick like Dean had probably told
him to.

“…You do?” Asked Adam, perking up a little and both pups nodded, tails wiggling like they’d
rehearsed a few minutes ago.

“But if you think you’re too old, I’m sure they’d understand,” commented Cas and Adam shook his
head frantically when both pups pouted.

“I’m not too old,” he said before realising how excited he sounded and shrugging. “I mean… I
suppose I could entertain them for a little bit.”

“Would you?” Asked Cas, sounding grateful and Adam nodded again, making a show of dragging
himself to his paws despite his tail motoring a mile a minute.

“Awesome,” grinned Ben, running circles around Adam to add that little extra flair to their act.

Adam beamed and chased after him and Samandriel until they joined with the girls and began a
game of hide-and-seek.

Dean trotted over with a smug grin and Cas chuckled as he stood to lick his nose.

“How did you know he was going to say ‘yes’?” Cas asked as they padded away to give Adam and
the pups some privacy. Dean shook his head.

“Because that’s how Sammy used to look when the other kids didn’t invite him to play. He used to
get so grumpy when he thought people were leaving him out when in actual fact, all he had to do
was ask could he join in.”

“He always wanted the other kids to make the first move,” Cas summarised and Dean nodded.

“Hey, you okay? You looked unhappy at whatever he was saying to you. I saw the bite; what
happened?” Dean asked after a few moments and Cas shrugged.

“He was mouthing off so I thought I’d teach him a lesson. I didn’t like what he was saying about you
or the pups so I decided to scare him a little; show him what can happen if he upsets the wrong
wolf.”

Dean hummed in understanding. “Kid’s gotta learn some way. He’s gonna face far worse otherwise.”

“Hopefully he’ll learn a little more than fighting and hunting in his time here.”

* * *

Sam ducked under the water again, chasing the tiny colourful fish with no real purpose. The sun was beating down over the land and he had decided to take a swim to cool down. Gabriel had been mysteriously missing all morning, so Sam hadn’t seen a reason to stay at the camp and he had made his way down to the river somewhere around noon. Two hours had passed since then and Sam was considering going home.

He launched to the water’s surface to gasp a breath and was pleasantly surprised by a certain golden alpha lounging on the bank, one paw dipped in the water as he smirked lazily at Sam. Sam grinned at the flashback to their first meeting.

“Is that an Angel I see before me?” Drawled Gabriel as Sam paddled his way over, shaking himself off once he was clear of the river.

He trotted over to his lover and Gabriel automatically rolled onto his back as Sam straddled him and licked his muzzle.

“Maybe, because you blow me out of this world,” smirked Sam and Gabriel laughed warmly.

“That was far cheesier than any of mine,” he said as he nuzzled his omega. Sam merely grinned.

“You’ve been gone all morning,” he commented. “Not running off to the river to meet with a runaway city omega, are you? Do I have competition?”

Gabriel licked his lover’s nose and glanced somewhere to his right. Sam followed his gaze and cocked an ear at the old plastic Walmart bag resting inconspicuously on the grass. He tried to sniff at it whilst still straddling his alpha but it was a couple of metres away and Gabriel huffed out a laugh.

“Go on,” he said, gently pushing at Sam’s chest and the omega prowled towards it cautiously, wondering why it smelled so sweet.

He popped his head into the bag and grinned.

“Is this your version of giving me flowers?” Chuckled Sam and Gabriel bounced to his paws and trotted to his side.

“Flowers are pretty and all, but you can’t eat them. Strawberries have the best of both worlds and you can look sexy when you suck all that honey off them.” Gabriel wiggled his eyebrows and Sam shook his head in amusement.

“Strawberries and honey?”

“I couldn’t find any bees that made whipped cream.”
Sam laughed again and licked Gabriel’s cheek until the alpha was cuddling into him with happy rumbles and sighs.

“You’re sickeningly adorable. I hope you know that,” murmured Sam and Gabriel beamed and made a point of snuggling under his chin.

“Anything to please my little Shnookums.”

“Never say that ever again.”

“What’s the matter, my silly Pookie-bear?”

“I’m going to shove a strawberry down your throat.”

“Ooo kinky.”

Sam huffed yet couldn’t wipe the smile from his face. He had the most amazing alpha ever. Gabriel had fought a hive of bees for him.

“Come on, Samsquatch. Human time,” announced Gabriel suddenly and Sam raised an eyebrow at him in confusion.

“What? Did you think I was joking about the sexy strawberry sucking?” Smirked Gabriel and the omega rolled his eyes.

“I should’ve known there would be a catch to you being so romantic.”

Gabriel winked and his whole body shifted as fur disappeared and pinkish skin took its place. Sam sighed but quickly followed suit and he blushed when Gabriel leered at his naked body with a wolf-whistle.

“Now there’s a sight I could get used to,” the alpha grinned and Sam pulled a face.

“You’re already used to it.”

“And yet I still think it’s the most beautiful sight I’ve ever witnessed.”

Sam flushed again. Gabriel was a confusing whirlwind of innuendos and sweet compliments and Sam never stopped being surprised by him.

The alpha winked and sidled up to him, gently pushing him to the floor. He kneeled above him and pressed their lips together, tracing his chest with his fingertips as they kissed lazily and Sam felt himself completely relax beneath Gabriel’s familiar weight. He wrapped his arms around the alpha and Gabriel smiled into his mouth and tangled one hand into his mop of chocolate hair (cut to just above his shoulders due to Gabriel’s insistence he couldn’t walk around looking like Princess Rapunzel).

He stroked his hand over Gabriel’s back and tilted his head so the alpha could kiss and suck at his throat. He closed his eyes and let Gabriel do what he wanted and the alpha chuckled when he felt Sam’s muscles loosen beneath him. Gabriel didn’t think he’d ever held so much trust from one person and his heart flipped to think that Sam loved him so much.

He carefully slid off the omega, one hand still tucked under his head and he kissed Sam tenderly when the omega whined in protest. He smiled when Sam slipped a hand around his waist.

Gabriel reached into the bag and pulled out a honey-slathered strawberry, large and ripe and shining
a deep red. He dangled it over Sam’s mouth, watching the honey drip onto his lips and he grinned when his impatient omega leaned up slightly to snatch it from his grip. He licked his lips with a hum of approval.

“You didn’t let me pull the stalk off,” snickered Gabriel and Sam shrugged.

“Didn’t want to waste any.”

Gabriel reached into the bag again and dangled another strawberry above Sam’s lips and the omega tried to bite back a smile as he licked the tip of the fruit erotically, cleaning every last drop of honey from it.

“Careful, Sam. We’ve got a whole bag left and I plan on getting through them,” murmured Gabriel and Sam grinned and devoured the strawberry.

Before Gabriel could plunge into the bag again, Sam grabbed another fruit and offered it to his alpha. Gabriel ate the strawberry and before Sam could recoil, sucked his fingers clean of sticky honey.

“This is the corniest thing I’ve ever done,” laughed Sam and Gabe beamed and kissed his lover chastely on the lips.

“I’m betting we get half way through the bag before we start wrapping our lips around more interesting things.” He wiggled his eyebrows again and Sam snorted.

“Oh please. You don’t have that much self-control. I say a quarter.”

Gabriel took that as a challenge and reached for another strawberry.

To Gabriel’s credit, they did finish half of the bag, but his knot was already deep inside Sam by then and most of the strawberries had started between Gabriel’s lips and finished between Sam’s or vice versa.

Now, Gabriel’s knot was beginning to swell and he was whispering continuous loving compliments as he thrusted deeper and deeper and Sam was just happy Gabriel had thought to stick that condom (and the spare) to the side of the bag.

“I love you, Sam,” whispered Gabriel breathlessly. “I love your scent and your eyes and your lips and your voice. I love every inch of you and you have such a beautiful mind and such a large heart and you have no idea how gorgeous you are. I’ve never met anyone so wonderful.”

Sam kissed Gabriel frantically, as though his life depended on it and the alpha thrusted into him with so much passion and desperation that Sam threw his head back with a shameless moan. His knot began to catch and Sam arched upwards, instinctively baring his neck for Gabriel to mark and claim and the alpha immediately latched onto it, sucking and scraping his teeth over the soft flesh.

“Harder,” Sam begged, urging Gabriel to clamp down; to bite and mark him as his forever, but Gabriel ignored the request and after a few moments, Sam forgot what he’d asked for as Gabriel’s knot swelled to its full size and both of them found release.

Gabriel lay sprawled on his lover’s chest, panting heavily as Sam tried to catch his breath beneath him. The alpha rumbled happily at the pungent aroma of Sam’s satisfaction and the omega replied with a pleased mewl as he kissed Gabriel’s hair.

“You smell awesome,” Sam hummed, nuzzling Gabriel’s hair as best he could with the shorter alpha locked inside him and Gabriel grinned blissfully and kissed his lover’s chest.
“You smell happy,” murmured Gabe. “Makes me happy.”

“I’m very happy,” Sam agreed, petting his alpha’s back. “Always happy when I’m with you.”

Gabriel rumbled proudly and Sam slung his arms around him with a purr.

They lay there for a few minutes, basking in each other’s company as they waited for Gabriel’s knot to go down and both felt content as the sun warmed their bodies and the water gushed quietly behind them as they lost themselves in each other’s scents. This was what life was all about.

Suddenly, there was a horrified yelp and a panicked barking accompanied the sound of claws scrabbling at leaves and twigs, and both alpha and omega’s eyes flew open, hearts racing as they tried frantically to locate the source of the noises.

They were defenceless like this; they couldn’t switch to their wolf forms because they were tied together and would be for another ten minutes so whatever was watching them would have a clear window of attack. They were like sitting ducks.

Sam immediately rolled Gabriel to the ground, shielding his body with his own despite the alpha’s hysterical protests and he growled lowly in hopes it would be enough to intimidate their attacker. He flinched at how pathetically human he sounded.

Then his gaze caught on the figure facing away from them as it made its way back towards the forest and Sam felt his heart drop into his stomach.

A brown and black wolf with a white underbelly was edging away from the bank, head clearly angled away from the pair and Sam sniffed the air with a sinking feeling in his gut.

Alpha.

Gabriel’s eyes blew wide when he too registered the scent accompanying the other wolf and Sam groaned and hid his face in the ground as the other alpha vanished between the trees.

“Please tell me that was just a wolf who looked like your father,” whispered Gabriel and Sam shook his head, face still pressed into the dirt and thoroughly humiliated.

Gabriel closed his eyes.

“Crap.”

* * *

“He’s going to kill me.”

“He’s not going to kill you.”

“He found a city alpha knotting his omega son, both butt naked, both moaning like they were paid to do it, out in the open and both covered in honey. I’m fifteen years older than you; he’s gonna think I’ve brainwashed you or something.”

“We were not covered in honey and he’s not gonna care about age.”
“I would kill me!”

“Gabriel, relax! It’s going to be fine. You mean a lot to me and he’s not going to do anything. He’ll just be a little… awkward at first.”

“He’s going to sink his teeth into my throat the moment he sees me coming.”

“Gabriel. Read my lips. It’ll be fine.”

Gabriel sighed and traipsed after his lover and Sam rolled his eyes.

“Just… be yourself. I promise nothing will happen. He’ll be just as embarrassed as we are.”

Gabriel pulled a face that suggested he didn’t believe the omega, but he tightened his grip on the bag of strawberries and marched onwards.

When they arrived at the camp, they spotted John alone in a corner, staring at the grounded and looking a little haunted.

Gabriel and Sam shared a glance and a gulp before edging towards him.

John’s gaze snapped upwards when they reached him and his eyes rounded a little before he glanced away as though struck.

“…Hi, Dad,” coughed Sam awkwardly and John didn’t meet his gaze.

“Sam,” he greeted stiffly. “…Gabriel.”

“Sir,” Gabriel blurted and Sam shot him an exasperated glance.

“We… uh… we got you these,” coughed Gabriel as he nudged the unfinished bag of strawberries towards John. “As a sort of… apology for anything you may have witnessed earlier.”

John stared wide-eyed at the bag and at first, Sam and Gabriel wondered if maybe the older wolf didn’t like strawberries, but then John slowly turned the bag around and both alpha and omega’s faces drained of colour.

Taped cheerily to the side of the bag lay the unused, spare condom.

John clambered to his paws a little hurriedly. “How about I pretend I saw nothing and you pretend you never gave me this?” He cautiously pushed the bag back towards the pair. “And then I can take a long, long walk somewhere quiet and away from here.”

Gabriel looked constipated as Sam nodded stiltedly.

“Sounds like a plan.”

“Great,” huffed John before shuffling away.

Gabriel stared brokenly at the traitorous bag.

“Why.”

“I know.”

“Just why?”
“I know,” mumbled Sam. “I think… I think I’m going to go to sleep.”

“…But it’s only just turned six.”

“I know.”

“…Can I come with you?”

Chapter End Notes

_Bucashu_ requested some Sabriel fluff and I know I’ve not answered your comment yet, but I have read it!

I couldn’t resist writing the last part! Also grumpy Adam is turning out to be my favourite thing to write...
Hannah awoke to a bouquet of poppies and daffodils. Her heart fluttered as she smelled them and she dug a small hole to plant the still-attached roots in. With the roots intact, the flowers wouldn’t die so Hannah placed them neatly in front of the entrance to the shelter she shared with Gadreel. She admired them for a few minutes before a set of footsteps approached her from behind.

She turned to find a rather soggy Gadreel bearing a large salmon.

He dropped it in front of her paws and greeted her with a lick to the cheek.

“Thought you might appreciate some breakfast before we start the hunt,” he said and Hannah’s gaze softened.

She was a new member of the pack and as such had to start at the bottom of the hierarchy. That meant she was in the last group to eat and whilst the pack wasn’t cruel, it was rare to be given any good quality cuts of meat. She wasn’t left with scraps, per se, but it wasn’t anything to be savoured either.

This didn’t bother her of course as she was accustomed to the rules of the wild and she was merely happy she was offered any food at all after what she’d been subjected to in her last pack.

Gadreel however, obviously wasn’t satisfied with any of that because he often liked to go fishing in the morning before Hannah had even opened her eyes and surprised her when she woke up with an array of different fish each morning. Sometimes he didn’t even eat any fish himself, just caught a meal for his lover.

“Gadreel, you don’t have to keep doing this,” she said as had become habit. She still couldn’t quite grasp why any alpha would treat her like Gadreel did. She was nothing special yet Gadreel’s actions disagreed.

“I want to,” he said simply before moving to her side to nuzzle her ear and kiss her head as she tucked into his hard work. Gadreel was unbelievably kind to her and sometimes she wondered if she was dreaming. If so, she never wanted to wake up.

“You’re too good to me,” she whispered and he smiled and watched her eat, nuzzling her gently as he did so.

Once she was finished, he picked up the carcass and discarded it outside the camp. When he returned to his lover, Charlie was chatting animatedly to her and she grinned at Gadreel as he approached.

“Hey! Benny, Jo, Pam and I were thinking of going for a paddle in the river since Dean and Sam said we’re going to do an evening hunt because of the heat. We were wondering if you two want to join?”

Hannah perked up and Gadreel smiled fondly at her before nodding at the auburn omega.

“Great!” Beamed Charlie before ushering Hannah towards the small group waiting patiently for them. Gadreel trotted after them and Benny immediately wandered to his side, leaving Hannah, Jo, Pam and Charlie to chat as they walked.
As Charlie and Pam teased Jo about her apparent crush on Benny, Hannah mused at how friendly this pack was despite how she’d avoided them at first. She thought about how lucky she’d been to stumble across the Winchesters; she’d been able to start a new life with new friends and a new lover and nobody judged her for her past.

She would always miss Balthazar, but that didn’t mean she couldn’t live life how she wanted to. Gadreel would never replace her first mate, but that didn’t mean they couldn’t build a new life together and create new memories; it didn’t mean Gadreel meant any less to her. He was just different.

A good different. Gentle and soft-spoken and calm, yet oddly playful. He was everything she needed and she was determined to be the omega Gadreel deserved. He’d already had one mate abandon him and toss him to the side like dirt… his pups had left him and his pack had been content to let him die. Hannah would make sure he never experienced that sort of heartbreak ever again. She would lavish him with love and attention and prove to him that he was everything to her. She would hold him and kiss him and curl up to him and whisper sweet words into his ear about how much he meant to her and she would make it her mission to repay all his kindness and patience, even if it took the rest of her life.

She paused at that thought. *The rest of her life.* A life with Gadreel sounded incredible.

A tongue swiped across her face and she scrunched her nose up as Jo snickered.

“Earth to Hannah. Come in Hannah.”

The tricolour omega rolled her eyes and Charlie tilted her head.

“You okay? You looked kinda spacey.”

Hannah offered her a reassuring smile. “Just thinking.”

“…Not about your old pack?” Jo asked, suddenly concerned as Charlie’s gaze softened.

“They’ll have to get through us before they get to you, darlin’,” said Pam and Hannah’s smile turned shy and grateful. How amazing was the Winchester pack? They had quickly welcomed her into their family and she didn’t think she’d ever felt so cared for by so many people in her life. How could she ever repay their generosity?

“No, nothing like that. I was thinking about Gadreel,” she replied and chuckled when the others began giggling and *oooh*ing at her.

“Is he really so good that you can still feel it the next day?” Grinned Pam and Hannah snorted and shook her head.

“Why do you make everything into porn?”

“One of my many talents,” smirked the blind beta before beginning a new conversation about how she’d once stole fish from a bear when she was a pup.

Hannah shook her head in amusement and smiled at her new friends. And they were her friends; she’d never had friends like them before.

The more she learned about the Winchester pack members as individuals, the more she grew to like them and the idea of staying with them forever became more and more appealing. They were becoming her family just as she was becoming theirs and honestly… it was exciting.
She even liked Dean, despite his status as lead alpha and she found him to be a fair and considerate leader. She’d never enjoyed the company of a lead alpha before, not even before her old pack merged with Hastur’s. Even her original leader, Ligur had made her nervous. He wasn’t particularly nasty but he had been strict and liked people to follow orders. His presence had made wolves uncomfortable in the way being around a stern police officer did. He wasn’t cruel but he wasn’t kind either. He was a leader and he made sure everyone knew it.

Of course, Hastur had slaughtered him and life had been torture afterwards.

However, Dean was good company. Hannah still got a little edgy around him sometimes, merely for the fact he was a lead alpha, but he was actually interesting and made her smile when he tried to tell one of his dire jokes that he thought was hysterical but just made everyone else groan.

Hannah began to realise Gadreel wasn’t the only thing keeping her in this pack.

She genuinely enjoyed being a part of the Winchester team and she got on well with the other wolves. She felt at home with them and with Gadreel by her side, she doubted she’d ever want to leave.

Pam suddenly cuffed Jo over the back of the head and the omega cackled as Charlie tittered to herself and began teasing the beta.

Hannah smiled fondly and thanked whomever had led her to this crazy, caring pack.

* * *

Cas woke up with a smile and a warm feeling in his heart. Dean was wrapped around Ben and Samandriel protectively; his paw slung over them both as they snuggled into his side and not for the first time, Cas wondered what he did to deserve such a caring alpha. He curled around Dean a little tighter and licked his head softly, being careful not to wake him.

The nights were far too warm to sleep in their shelters now so Cas watched as the pack slowly roused from their slumbers, blinking awake sleepily and squinting at the bright sun before stretching and starting the day.

Dean’s ear flicked once, twice and his eyes fluttered open. A smile tugged at his lips when he registered Cas’ kisses and he tilted his head slightly to nuzzle his lover’s muzzle.

“Mornin’, beautiful,” he whispered and Cas flushed slightly before licking his lover’s jaw.

“Oh, Dean,” he replied, voice more gravelly than usual from sleep. Dean grinned and glanced over the sleeping pups. His gaze softened and he tugged them a little tighter to his body and Cas rewarded him with another lick to his cheek.

“I can’t believe I didn’t have any of this a year ago,” murmured Dean. “I didn’t even know you,” he glanced at Cas and the omega rested his head over his shoulders.

“A lot has changed since then,” he agreed and Dean gazed at him fondly, tail swaying contentedly.

After a few moments, Cas shifted to nuzzle at his alpha’s cheek.
“You look happier since you spoke with your father,” he observed quietly and Dean smiled and nodded.

“I am. He said he wants to start over; try to be the father he was supposed to be. Wants to make up for all the mistakes he made when we were younger. Wants to make up for not being there for us as we got older.”

“You believe him?” Cas asked curiously and Dean nodded again.

“I do. The way he said all those things… the way he was looking at me and Sam… I’ve never seen my dad cry but he looked on the verge of tears back then. He sounded so heartbroken and he clearly meant every word.” Dean glanced down at the pups. “And he’s already working to fix things for Adam. He brought him all the way here despite knowing we could reject them. He was willing to beg to Sam to make him understand why Adam needed to be here. He’s trying and it’s more than I’ve ever seen him do before.”

Cas nuzzled his jaw and Dean rubbed their noses together.

“I know he’s not been the greatest alpha. I know he’s hurt the pack in the past and I know he’s suspicious about everything and can be a real pain to deal with, but he’s lost two mates and we kicked him out of this family. He nearly lost Adam and he was forced to leave his new pack. Maybe it’s time someone gave him a break,” whispered Dean. He licked Cas’ mouth. “He told me you two didn’t exactly get off on the right paw.”

Cas shook his head. “I was admittedly wary of him after hearing all the stories and he was distrusting because I refused to tell him my surname.”

Dean nodded in understanding. “He told me to tell you he was sorry. Sorry for the things he said to you and for lashing out at Samandriel. He thought I’d be better passing the message on in case you were still wary of him.”

Cas raised both eyebrows in surprise. “I see. That’s… thoughtful of him.”

Dean grinned. “He’s not a totally bad guy.”

“Well, if you trust him, I trust him,” said Cas slowly and Dean beamed. He kissed Cas’ mouth again.

“Don’t get me wrong; he’s still got to watch his step. He doesn’t get forgiven just like that,” said Dean. “He did a lot of crap and he’s gonna have to work hard to put things right, especially with Bobby. But… I think he’ll do it. I think he misses his family and he’s already trying to make himself better.”

Cas smiled at his alpha’s enthusiasm and Dean glanced downwards with a happy grin.

“He said he was proud of us. He’s never said that before. He’s never been proud of us.”

Cas’ gaze softened. “And so he should be. You and Sam are the most amazing wolves I know; you’re kind and protective and generous when it comes to your family and friends and your father should be the proudest alpha on this planet. You’ve both achieved so much despite having such a horrific start in life and you’ve stuck together through thick and thin; always working your way out of a tricky situation. He should be proud; I know I am.”

Dean licked Cas’ face sloppily and the omega chuckled and squeezed his eyes shut as a tongue assaulted his face.
“I’m sure I just keep you around to stroke my ego,” teased Dean and Cas grinned and threw a paw around him.

“That and for sex,” said Cas and Dean huffed out a laugh.

“Yeah, that’s pretty good too.”

Beside Dean, the pups began to stir and the older alpha leaned down to nuzzle them gently as Cas lay his head on his shoulders and watched fondly.

Samandriel yawned and stretched, sharp canines peeking out from under his lip and he blinked up at Dean blearily. Ben was a little slower to wake and he tried to cuddle back into Samandriel, frowning when the small alpha stood to nuzzle at Dean.

Ben pressed back into Dean’s fur with a happy sigh and Samandriel moved to lick Cas’ muzzle in greeting before nudging the young omega’s side. Ben grumbled and batted him away, so Samandriel began butting him until he cracked an eye open to glare at his friend.

Samandriel smirked and pounced on Ben and the young omega grunted out an ‘oof’ as he wrestled with the alpha. The adults chuckled at their antics as they tugged on each other’s ears and pawed at each other’s sides and as they rolled around the floor, nipping and struggling, their tails began to wag and shake their small bodies.

Eventually, Samandriel managed to pin Ben to his chest and began chewing playfully on his ear and at first, the omega wriggled in a desperate attempt to escape, but it wasn’t long before he gave up and wrapped his paws around Samandriel, snuggling into his chest and closing his eyes again.

Cas and Dean glanced at each other in amusement when Samandriel tugged his friend closer and licked his head instead, Ben mewling happily.

Dean rolled over to wrap his paws around Cas and the omega sighed in contentment as they nuzzled and held each other.

“Ugh. Gross,” teased a voice above them and they glanced up to find Jo smirking at them. “Get a room,” she said as Dean pulled his tongue out at her.

“We have one. It’s too hot,” he grumbled and Jo rolled her eyes at him.

“I’ve come for the brats. They’ve got an English lesson with my mom.”

There were two pathetic groans somewhere behind Dean.

“Time to get up, you little monsters,” called Jo cheerily. “Socks, shoes and notebooks please.”

The pups dragged themselves to their paws and trudged into their shelter. English lessons meant writing. Writing meant human forms because you couldn’t hold a pen in a paw.

Both boys emerged, fully dressed in their human forms and Jo nodded in satisfaction before gesturing for them to follow. There was no point in speaking to them because they wouldn’t be able to understand her. They followed her towards a human Ellen, who led them to the outskirts of the camp, out of the way of any possible distractions.

Dean stood and stretched the kinks out of his spine, smiling at Cas when he followed suit. He froze when a thought suddenly hit him.
“I need to speak with Gabriel,” he said out of the blue and Cas glanced at him in surprise, but Dean was beaming and before he had a chance to question it, the alpha had licked his face and was trotting towards a cuddling Gabriel and Sam.

* * *

“Trouble at three o’clock,” muttered Gabriel as he eyed the approaching Dean warily. Had he heard of the condom escapades and was coming to ridicule them both? Maybe John had said something to him and Dean was coming to reprimand them both or most likely Gabriel for corrupting his little brother.

“Gabriel,” Dean greeted and Gabriel groaned softly because it looked like the latter option.

Sam glanced up at his brother with a questioning frown and the pair rolled to their paws.

“I ah… I have something to ask of you,” Dean said, tail swaying.

“Look, if it’s about the condom, I swear I thought I’d taken it off,” grumbled Gabriel.

Dean’s eyes blew wide and he stared at Gabriel as though he’d just told him he’d eaten his firstborn. Gabriel blinked as he realised his mistake. “Disregard that last sentence. My brain isn’t awake yet,” he lied.

Dean nodded slowly, clearly a little disturbed, before shaking his head.

“I… need to ask your permission for something,” said Dean and Gabriel tilted his head in confusion. Why would the lead alpha need to ask his permission for anything? He subtly glanced at Sam and was surprised to see the omega grinning from ear to ear as though Dean had just told them Christmas had come early. His tail was thumping Gabriel’s leg in excitement.

“Uh… okay… shoot,” said Gabriel and the other alpha stood a little straighter as if he was trying to… impress Gabriel for some reason.

“In wild folk culture, it’s tradition to ask the omega’s lead alpha for permission, but since Cas isn’t exactly on speaking terms with Michael and I obviously can’t ask myself, you are considered Castiel’s current alpha and protector,” explained Dean a little nervously. Gabriel absorbed this information, thought it was ridiculous because Castiel could protect himself, and wondered what on Earth it had to do with anything.

Dean suddenly bowed his head low to the ground.

“Gabriel Novak, brother and protector of Castiel Novak. I ask your permission to mate the most beautiful, intelligent, fierce yet considerate omega I’ve ever had the privilege of meeting. I promise to protect him with my life, to keep him happy and healthy for the remainder of our days. I promise never to hurt him for he deserves love and affection and tenderness and I wish to offer him all of these and more. Will you grant me the honour of sanctioning our mating, alpha?”

Gabriel gaped at Dean and he was acutely aware that the rest of the camp had fallen silent, dozens of eyes focused on him in anticipation of his answer. Dean’s head was still bowed and Castiel looked just as shocked from his position a few metres away.
Civilised folk didn’t have any traditions like this. People married whomever they wanted. It wasn’t even called a ‘mating’. What was he supposed to say? Was there a specific line he had to respond with?

“…Yes?” He tried uncertainly.

Suddenly there was a cacophony of cheering and whistling from the rest of the camp and Sam was bounding over to Castiel and knocking him over and licking his face excitedly. Castiel was laughing and hugging Sam back, their tails motoring a mile-a-minute and Dean was practically hopping on the spot, grinning ecstatically. Gabriel watched the chaos unfold, wondered what had just happened and was suddenly attacked by Dean as the other alpha crushed him into a hug and squeezed him tight, forcing him to balance on his hind legs.

“Thanks,” he whispered quietly into Gabriel’s ear and the older alpha smiled and finally hugged back.

“Yeah well… you’re kinda the best alpha we’ve both met,” murmured Gabriel. “And I’d be honoured to call you my brother.”

Dean’s tail was doing a good job of sweeping the floor and he buried his nose into Gabriel’s neck, scenting him deeply.

“But I’m still going to irritate the shit out of you because I have a reputation to uphold,” teased Gabriel and Dean huffed out a soft laugh and pressed his nose into the other alpha’s throat.

“I’d be worried if you didn’t,” he chuckled and Gabriel easily exposed his throat further, letting Dean scent him.

Eventually, they pulled apart and Dean chuckled when his pack came bouncing over to him.

“Hold on, hold on,” he said. “I’ve still got one more person to ask.” They looked at him in confusion and when he glanced over to Samandriel, who was now in his wolf form after Ellen had spotted what was going on between Dean and Gabriel, the pack laughed and stood aside for him.

He approached slowly and Samandriel tilted his head in confusion. Dean lowered himself to the floor and bowed his head once more.

“Samandriel Novak, son and protector of Castiel Novak. I ask your permission to mate your father; the most incredible and amazing omega I know. I promise to protect him with my life, to keep him happy and healthy for the remainder of our days. I promise never to hurt him for he deserves love and affection and tenderness and I wish to offer him all of these and more. Will you grant me the honour of sanctioning our mating, alpha?” He asked softly and Samandriel scrunched his nose up.

“What does ‘sanctioning’ mean?” He asked and there was a quiet round of giggles from the rest of the pack as Dean smiled fondly.

“It means will you let me mate your father?”

Samandriel’s eyes widened and his face lit up as his tail wagged.

“Does that mean you’ll be my dad?”

Dean heart was a puddle of goo somewhere around his paws.

“I suppose it does,” he agreed and Samandriel yipped excitedly before nodding.
“Yes! Yes! You can mate my dad!” He barked and bounded between Dean’s legs, nuzzling and licking and rubbing his head against any part of the older alpha he could reach.

There was another chorus of barking and howling and cheering from the rest of the pack and Dean dragged Samandriel in for a hug, the pup squirming and wriggling in his excitement until he fell over.

Suddenly, Cas was behind Dean and the alpha whirled around to lick and nuzzle his soon-to-be mate eagerly. They pressed into one another to a racket of cheers and whistles and both laughed when the pack began to usher them out of the camp, butting and shoving them into the surrounding forest.

“Go and consummate your bond,” called Jo.

“Somewhere where we can’t see it,” added Benny.

“We’ve been waiting for this for weeks,” said Charlie. “Go and suck on each other’s throats.”

“Bring me back a new brother, Dean,” yelled Sam.

“Don’t snap his neck, Cas,” commented Gabriel and there were a few shocked choking sounds and a couple of snorts of amusement from around the pack. Cas shot his smirking brother a filthy glare and Sam cuffed the back of his head.

“You’ve still got to ask me for permission for Sam yet,” reminded Dean without turning around and Gabriel’s eyes widened.

“You’re the best brother-in-law ever. Love you, Dean.”

Dean cackled and trotted off with his lover.

* * *

Dean pressed his lover against the tree and slotted their lips together, hands roaming over each other’s bodies as they explored one another’s mouths.

“We’re going to be mates,” breathed Dean and Cas hummed into his mouth.

“Mates,” grinned Dean excitedly. “With mating marks and everything!”

Cas huffed out a laugh and flipped their positions so he was pinning Dean to the tree. He trailed kisses down the younger man’s neck and shoulder before leaning back up again to claim his mouth gently.

“I love you,” he murmured into the alpha’s mouth and Dean’s arms snaked around his middle.

“I love you too, Angel. More and more each day.”

Cas smiled and pressed his face into Dean’s neck, scenting him as they held each other close. He had such a soft alpha, even if he would never say that directly to his lover’s face.

One of Dean’s hands slid into Cas’ hair, keeping him in place as Dean shifted to scent Cas and the omega pressed his body flush with his lover’s, wanting to feel the warmth of his skin against his
They stood like that for a few moments, listening to each other breathe and taking in each other’s scents as the significance of what they were about to do sunk in.

“I’m so glad you came here,” whispered Dean. “I’m so grateful you chose to stay with us.”

“I’m thankful you offered us a home despite our names,” murmured Cas. “I’m thankful you like Samandriel and didn’t try to reject him like most alphas would.” He squeezed his lover carefully. “I’m grateful for everything you’ve done for us.”

Dean pressed his lips to Cas’ neck.

“I love you both very much. And I’d be honoured to call that little bundle of fluff my son.”

Cas chuckled even though his heart was melting and Dean grinned against his skin.

“You’ve done a lot for this pack too, Cas. You’ve saved mine and Sam’s lives. You got us through Winter with your tracking skills. You made the pack’s bonds stronger. You’ve made me a better alpha. I’ve never felt so happy as when I’m with you.”

Cas leaned back to press his lips to Dean’s. After a few moments, he slowly pulled his lover to the floor, lying on his back and letting Dean straddle him.

Dean smiled tenderly at him before dipping down to kiss his chest. He peppered kisses over his nipples and down his midline to his belly and grazed his lips over the soft flesh. Not one to stay idle, Cas’ fingertips danced over Dean’s back, across his shoulders and down his biceps, touching every muscle like a claim.

Dean nuzzled his belly before sliding lower out of Cas’ reach until he could kiss his left ankle. He slowly crept up Cas’ leg, kissing his shin and his calf and every inch of his knee, before crawling higher so he could kiss his thigh. Cas watched, entranced as Dean peppered kisses over his thigh, parting his legs slightly so he had access to the inside area. Dean nuzzled the inside of his thigh, painting it with kisses before he moved onto the other leg. He did exactly the same with the right leg, interspersed amongst the kisses and nuzzles, Dean began to lick the flesh too.

He wiggled his eyebrows at Cas and nipped gently at his thigh and Cas propped himself a little higher so he could watch. Dean kissed the skin again, nuzzled it and lapped at it before nipping a bit harder.

Cas angled his leg to give Dean more access.

Dean smirked and sucked gently at his thigh, hooking a hand behind his knee to keep him still. He kissed the area again and followed it with another nip.

Suddenly, he pulled away from Cas’ thigh and moved onto his belly, dragging his tongue over it hotly and nipping where he stopped. Cas couldn’t tear his gaze away and Dean kept eye contact as he trailed his tongue over his belly again and nipped harder at the place he stopped.

Cas splayed his hands possessively over the alpha’s back, fingernails scratching lightly at the tanned skin and Dean slid further up his body, kissing his chest and swirling his tongue around a nipple.

Cas stared as Dean took the nub between his lips and began to suck and a small whimper of want escaped his throat. Dean bit back a chuckle and nipped at the nipple, gently holding it between his
teeth before moving onto the next one to give it the same treatment.

Cas closed his eyes as Dean sucked on his other nipple and he let his hands explore Dean’s familiar frame. They smoothed over his back and down his sides to his hips, before meeting at the curve of his rump. He flexed his fingers against the cheeks, grabbing handfuls of flesh and he smirked when Dean leaned into him, encouraging him to play.

He rubbed his hands over the area, warming it and claiming it as his and he gave the alpha a tiny slap because he knew it would get Dean riled up.

As predicted, Dean lunged for his mouth, forcing his tongue between his lips as he ravished Cas’ mouth, tasting every part of him. Their tongues wrestled and Cas nipped cheekily at Dean’s bottom lip, nails scraping his rump in an attempt to fuel Dean’s passion.

The alpha growled quietly, possessively and fist ed Cas’ hair as their tongues battled, but when Cas tried to throw his legs around Dean’s hips, the alpha pulled away and pinned him to the floor. He slithered back down his body and nipped harshly at the insides of Cas’ thighs, leaving little red marks in his wake, and Cas felt heat pool in his belly when Dean eyed his erection hungrily.

The alpha trailed kisses up it and licked at its tip once before nuzzling the dark hair that met its base. He nuzzled the omega’s testicles and licked each one of them before licking a stripe up the omega’s hardness. Cas let out a ragged breath but continued to watch as Dean licked long, slow strips. He desperately wanted to touch the alpha, to pleasure him and kiss him but Dean wouldn’t allow it and Cas was forced to push his fingers into Dean’s short hair.

When Dean took him into his mouth, Cas groaned low and filthy and Dean started to suck because the sound of Cas’ pleasure was clearly doing things to him.

When the omega’s slick began to drip down his thighs, Dean pulled off and lapped at the liquid, humming in approval as Cas whimpered quietly.

“Taste so sweet,” Dean murmured, lapping at another dribble of slick and Cas spread his legs wider, prompting another pleased growl from Dean. The alpha’s tongue darted between his legs, licking greedily and Cas moaned shamelessly when Dean wrapped his hands around his thighs to keep them apart. The omega arched upwards as Dean cleaned him of slick and he cried out when the alpha began to suck at his entrance, tongue probing and stretching.

“Dean,” Cas begged, tightening his grip on the alpha’s hair and Dean smirked and pulled away, tilting his head innocently.

“What’s wrong, Cas?”

He wasn’t prepared for the omega shoving him to the ground and straddling him, grinding their erections together desperately. A mouth assaulted his and Dean groaned and held on tight as Cas grinded against him.

“You’re so hot,” growled Dean, nipping at Cas’ lip and the omega nipped at his jaw because Dean definitely had a thing for him taking control and no way was Cas going to pass up an opportunity to tease his alpha.

He swirled his tongue around Dean’s nipple, hands clenched around the alpha’s biceps and Dean started rutting upwards, desperate for more friction.

Cas latched onto Dean’s mouth again and lined them both up and the alpha’s eyes blew wide in surprise when he realised he was inside the omega. There was no need for a condom because Cas
was sporting a coil; an invention from the city, so Dean groaned deeply because he could feel all of Cas, every crevice and movement.

Dean levered himself upwards, seated Cas more comfortably in his lap and kissed the breath out of him as they snaked their arms around each other tightly. Cas rode his alpha desperately, swallowing every moan and arching into every movement of Dean’s and he whimpered when Dean pressed his nose into his throat.

His knot began to swell after a few minutes and Cas’ groans grew louder, head thrown back in bliss, so Dean ran his tongue hotly over his throat before scraping his sharp canines down the area.

Cas shuddered and leaned into Dean.

He cried out when pain blossomed where his shoulder met his neck, but didn’t recoil. He tightened his grip on his alpha and let Dean’s teeth sink a little deeper into his flesh and was rewarded with gentle licks to the sore area when Dean was satisfied with the bite. The droplets of blood were cleaned and the wound was kissed sweetly and the second Dean lifted his head, Cas was pushing his back to the floor.

The alpha automatically exposed his throat for Cas to scent and suck and it wasn’t long before the omega was nuzzling at the same point between Dean’s neck and shoulder.

Dean hissed as teeth pierced his skin, but the pain didn’t last long because Cas began licking the bite once he was satisfied. A few seconds later, Dean’s knot expanded to its full size and it all seemed too much for Cas, who lost his balance and collapsed onto Dean. Dean rolled him onto his back with a possessive snarl and thrust a few times until the omega was brought to release, which prompted Dean’s own pleasure.

Dean rolled onto his side and tugged his mate to his chest, nuzzling his wound with a feral growl and Cas snuggled into him with a happy mewl.

“My mate,” growled Dean, not entirely in control of his actions as he kissed and nuzzled his mate’s wound. His body wasn’t used to the idea of a mate and a lot of hormones had just been dumped into his system through its excitement. His scent quickly strengthened and began to radiate a nauseating amount of protectiveness and possessiveness, warning other alphas and betas to keep away from his omega lest they desire a bloody fight.

Castiel purred at the scent, pressing his nose into Dean’s neck and relaxing completely into his hold as he trusted the alpha to take care of him. Dean smelled absolutely wonderful and Cas couldn’t get enough of the unique scent. He curled his fingers into Dean’s hair to keep the alpha’s head in place so he could scent him more deeply.

Dean seemed pleased by the action and he stroked the omega’s back tenderly and continued to emit his overpowering aroma, rumbling when Cas released a submissive yet happy whimper.

When Dean’s knot began deflating, both alpha and omega felt their instincts-hazed minds starting to clear. They shared a loving kiss before Dean slowly pulled out of his new mate and inspected the claim on his neck.

“You look stunning,” Dean murmured, brushing the pads of his fingers over the purpling mark in wonder and Cas smiled lazily.
“And you look incredibly alluring,” he whispered, cupping Dean’s cheek. “Now come here and knot your new mate.”

Dean didn’t have to be told twice.

* * *

When they returned to the camp much later in the afternoon, the pack jeered and teased them for taking so long. They badgered the pair for a peek at their new mating marks and both wolves showed them off with pride, grinning at each other all the while. John smiled at his son but did not approach and Adam stayed glued to his side with his gaze cast downwards, but Dean was too busy being yanked into a bone-crushing hug by Bobby to really care.

Dean thought the best part however, was when Samandriel bowled into his legs, demanded proof that they were mated and upon receiving it, launched himself at Dean and determinedly licked every centimetre of his face. Dean was quick to reciprocate and he pinned Samandriel to the ground as he nuzzled and licked the pup until Samandriel couldn’t breathe from giggling so much and when he turned to Cas, both him and Ben were observing the pair with tender gazes of amusement.

Much later, when they were all settling down to sleep and the pups were curled into Cas as Dean plastered himself around the omega’s back, a protective paw slung over him, Castiel nuzzled Dean’s jaw.

“Dean?”

“How?”

The omega was quiet for a moment, contemplating his next words carefully.

“In civilisation, when an alpha and omega get mated, or ‘married’, it’s custom for the omega to change their surname to that of the alpha’s.”

Dean raised his eyebrows as he realised what Cas was asking him and he turned to his mate in no small amount of delight.

“You want to change your name from ‘Novak’ to ‘Winchester’?”

Castiel nodded slowly and Dean hadn’t believed the day could get any better but he was ecstatic at being proven wrong.

“Well, we don’t usually change our names out here, but I kinda like the sound of ‘Castiel Winchester’,” whispered Dean.

Cas’ tail wiggled. “It does have a certain ring to it, doesn’t it?”

Dean beamed and rubbed their noses together.

“I’m honoured you want to take my name, Angel. I think you’ve made me the happiest alpha in the world.”

“Good,” murmured Cas. “I want my mate to be happy.”
Dean’s heart somersaulted at the ease at which Cas uttered the word ‘mate’ as if it came naturally and he’d been saying it for years.

They nestled down again, Dean curling a little tighter around his lover and they closed their eyes and began to drift off into a peaceful slumber.

“We’re mates,” whispered Dean into the darkness, still not quite able to wrap his head around the fact. “We’re mated.”

Cas smiled sleepily and leaned into his strong body.

“Yes. Yes we are.”

Chapter End Notes

Happy now, guys?
Dean awoke to the heart-warming sight of his new mate curled around their pups. He grinned and his heart fluttered as he snuggled closer to Castiel, throwing a paw around him because he wanted to touch his lover.

He licked his mate’s head and nuzzled his ear gently and Cas stirred, blinking awake slowly. He glanced back at Dean and smiled before nuzzling his cheek.

“Mornin’, Angel,” whispered Dean, arching his paw more securely around him and Cas sighed happily and leaned into his mate.

The action jostled Ben and Samandriel and the pair yawned widely and smiled at each other before stretching.

“Good morning, you two,” chuckled Cas as the pups automatically padded towards one another and rubbed up against each other’s bodies, transferring their scents and cuddling in sleepy greeting. Their close bond and little rituals never ceased to amuse Cas and Dean and both adults had a feeling that bond would one day develop far past friendship.

“Morning, Cas. Morning, Dean,” said Ben tiredly as Samandriel moved to nuzzle his father as usual. Suddenly, an expression of shyness swept over the black and white alpha’s face, making him look down.

“Good morning, Dad,” murmured Samandriel and Cas glanced at him, about to lick his head, but paused when he realised the pup was facing Dean.

Dean froze and stared at the other alpha and for a few moments, nobody spoke.

“Mornin’, Son,” said Dean, clearing his throat and Samandriel beamed up at him, tail beating enthusiastically. He trotted over to Dean and pressed into his chest and the older alpha tugged him closer and nuzzled him eagerly, his own tail wiggling behind him.

Ben padded over to Cas and settled between his paws and the omegas smiled at each other as they watched the alphas greet one another.

Eventually, the sweet, touching moment between the pair morphed into play and Samandriel chewed on Dean’s ear and batted at his nose as the older alpha growled playfully and nipped at the youngster.

Ben bounded over to join in on the fun and Dean rumbled again when the omega pounced on his back.

Cas watched his mate play with their pups and he chuckled softly when Dean practically lay on both giggling pups, trapping them beneath him. He pretended to taste Ben and the pair laughed and wriggled harder in an attempt to escape.

“Which one do you wanna eat, Cas?” Dean asked and the omega eyed both pups up before smirking and glancing back to his mate.
“You.”

Dean’s eyes widened when Cas bowled into him, knocking him onto his back as he straddled him and the pups cheered and raced over to jump on Dean. The alpha groaned as they chewed on his ears and bounced on his chest and he sent Cas a filthy glare when the omega tickled his belly with his nose. Castiel took that as a challenge and attacked him again and Dean laughed as the omega’s nose brushed all his sensitive spots.

Dean’s heart felt like it was going to burst. He had his mate and his two pups and that made him the happiest alpha on the planet. Life couldn’t get any better than this.

“Did you ask him?” Samandriel suddenly asked, staring up at Castiel expectantly and Cas nodded once.

“What did he say?” Demanded Samandriel as Ben and Dean exchanged a glance.

Castiel quirked the corner of his mouth upwards and Samandriel’s eyes brightened and he bounced around Dean excitedly like a Spring lamb. He came to an abrupt halt.

“Does this mean I can change my name too?” He asked, tail wiggling and gaze hopeful. He glanced at Dean and the older alpha’s eyebrows rocketed upwards when he realised what the pup meant.

“You want to be called Samandriel Winchester?” He asked and when the pup nodded eagerly, Dean wondered if his heart was going to explode.

“I’d be honoured,” whispered Dean, voice a little choked as Cas moved away and let him roll to his paws. Samandriel grinned and bounded between his paws, pushing his head into his chest and scenting the older alpha. Dean held him close and licked his head and Samandriel made a little sound of approval as he burrowed into Dean’s fur.

Castiel settled by his side and pressed his face into the alpha’s neck with a small smile and Dean couldn’t wipe the wide grin off his face.

Suddenly, Cas frowned and cast his gaze to Ben, who was hovering awkwardly a few feet away, obviously worried about intruding on the family moment. Cas opened his paws in invitation and at first, Ben was reluctant to venture closer, but then Cas whined softly and the young omega’s tail wagged and he trotted over to curl up in the black and tan wolf’s paws. The omegas nuzzled for a second and Dean leaned over to nose at the pup’s head.

Ben grinned up at them both; the significance of including him in such a private family moment not lost on him.

Cas wedged his head under Dean’s and the alpha rumbled in that way they all did when their souls were happy and their instincts were telling them their family was safe and sufficiently protected.

Castiel automatically responded to the sound with a contented purr and he rubbed his head under Dean’s submissively, allowing the alpha to scent mark him. Samandriel attempted to return the rumble, the sound small and high-pitched compared to Dean’s and both adults chuckled as the little alpha tried again, pressing further into his step-father.

Dean grinned and rumbled again, low and loud like a powerful engine and he bit back a laugh as Samandriel made the adorable noise once more and tried to mould himself into Dean’s chest.

Ben purred quietly, a little cautiously in case he wasn’t supposed to and Dean and Cas immediately smiled at him, warm and encouraging. He carefully shuffled closer to Dean and when the alpha
leaned down, he rubbed his head under Dean’s chin, copying Cas’ movements.

Once Ben had settled between Cas’ paws again, Dean licked Cas’ cheek and the pair gazed at each other tenderly.

“I have a family,” whispered Dean and Cas leaned into him and closed his eyes.

“As do I.”

Dean curled his tail around his mate and released a happy sigh as Cas cuddled into him. He could certainly get used to this.

After a few minutes, Cas licked his lover’s cheek.

“You and Sam need to speak to Adam,” he murmured and immediately Dean frowned.

“The kid hates us. He won’t even look at us.”

“I don’t think he’s entirely to blame, Dean,” muttered Cas gently. “You two aren’t exactly making an effort to reach out to him.”

“Why should we?” Huffed Dean. “He’s rude to the pack and he’s eternally grumpy. Why should we strike up a conversation with him?”

Cas sighed. “Because no matter how much you don’t like it, he’s still your brother.”

“Half-brother,” Dean corrected quickly and Cas shook his head and turned to look at his mate.

“That’s exactly what I’m talking about. He’s still your father’s son and he’s alone. He lost his mother and had to leave his pack. He lost all his friends and he nearly died of starvation through Winter. He doesn’t know anyone here and there’s no one his age. Imagine how he’s feeling, just for a moment. He might hide it through glares and grumbling but he’s not even an adult yet and he’s lonely and probably a little scared. Wouldn’t it be good for him to know his brothers don’t actively despise him?”

Dean scowled, bottom lip pouting slightly.

“He doesn’t want to talk to us and to be honest, I’m perfectly okay with that. He doesn’t fit in anyway and he probably won’t stay for long. As soon as he learns to hunt and fight and fish, he’s leaving. What’s the point of trying to get him to like us if he’s going to leave?”

Cas was quiet for a few moments as he tilted his head.

“Are you jealous?” He asked softly. “Of his relationship with your father?”

Dean stiffened. “No.”

Cas sighed. “I should’ve worked that out sooner. Why are you jealous?”

“I’m not,” protested Dean and Cas eyed him, unimpressed.

“Don’t lie. It’s unbecoming of you.”

Dean sagged and glanced away. “Because Dad left us. Why did he have a pup with someone else when he didn’t want to stay with us? Why did Adam grow up with a father and we didn’t? Why does Dad care so much about Adam?”
Cas frowned sympathetically and nuzzled Dean’s cheek.

“Your father made a mistake with you. Later he felt guilty and tried to rectify that mistake by treating Adam as he should have treated you. You and Sam aren’t at fault, but neither is Adam. You can’t blame him for any of that; it’s not fair.”

Dean grimaced and looked down at Samandriel, who was glancing between him and Castiel, one ear cocked curiously. He nuzzled the pup and Samandriel smiled at him, tail wiggling.

“Fine. I’ll make an effort,” he murmured quietly and Castiel nodded in encouragement. “But he’s got to make an effort to,” huffed Dean sternly.

Cas licked his cheek again. “I don’t expect you to have the same relationship with him as you do with Sam, but you should at least talk to him. Get to know him a little. Maybe you’ll find you aren’t so different after all.”

Dean sighed and closed his eyes. Why did Cas have to be right all the time? Why was he always the voice of reason?

“Alright,” Dean conceded. He had no idea how to get Adam to talk to him or Sam. So far, they hadn’t spoken a single word to each other that wasn’t Dean or Sam reprimanding the beta for inappropriate behaviour towards other pack members or Adam biting out insults towards them in return. They glared at each other from opposite ends of the camp and made a point of avoiding each other. Sometimes there was a warning growl involved.

How on Earth was he going to get Adam to open up?

* * *

“Get up. We’re going hunting,” huffed Dean gruffly as he stood before Adam, staring at him blankly. Sam was behind him, looking like he wanted to be anywhere but there.

Adam glanced uninterestedly at the pair, raised to his paws and flopped back to the ground with his back to the brothers.

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line and he paced in front of Adam’s line of view once more.

“I said get up,” he ordered and the beta narrowed his gaze.

“No,” he replied curtly and glanced away again.

Dean growled warningly and stepped closer. “I’m your alpha and you’ll do as you’re told.”

Adam’s gaze snapped towards him and the beta growled in an impressive impression of Dean.

“You’re not my anything and I don’t need to listen to anything you say.”

“You’re part of this pack,” Sam scowled, padding to his brother’s side. “You have to follow our orders, particularly Dean’s.”

Adam scoffed. “I’m not part of this pack. You’ve made that quite clear these past two weeks. And I’m not exactly thrilled to be here either. Leave me alone.”
“You’re here to learn certain skills,” said Dean. “Hunting is one of them. Now get up before I make you get up.”

Adam shot him a filthy glare. “What part of ‘leave me alone’ don’t you understand? I knew you were stupid but I didn’t think you were that stupid.”

Dean rumbled threateningly as Sam narrowed his eyes and Adam huffed out a condescending laugh.

“Yeah, snarling and dirty looks are gonna scare me. I’m not just going to roll over and submit. Especially not to an omega.”

Sam’s eyes widened in surprise as Dean’s narrowed even further.

“The way I see it is you don’t have much of a choice,” said Dean lowly. “You can’t fight or hunt or do anything a normal wolf is supposed to do at your age. The only thing you can do is cower and hide and hope the big bad monsters go away.”

Adam snarled at him. “You have no idea what I’ve been through. I can fight and hunt just fine. I’ve survived this long, haven’t I?”

“Barely,” snorted Sam. “If it wasn’t for Dad, you’d be dead.”

“Shut up,” hissed Adam, jumping to his paws. “Shut up; you don’t know anything!”

“We know you’re an undisciplined pup with no manners and an alpha-complex,” Sam fired back.

Adam’s hackles raised. “That’s rich coming from you. Dad told me all about you and how you used to argue with him over every decision he made. If anyone’s undisciplined and has an alpha-complex, it’s you! No wonder Dad left you,” he sneered and Sam snarled in return, unwilling to admit how much that last comment had stung.

“Hey!” Dean snapped. “What gives you the right to talk to people like that? You’re not endearing yourself to anyone, kid. In fact, I’m sure quite a few people here would love to put you in place. Most other packs would’ve by now and considering you can’t fight or defend yourself, I’d say you’d be wise to keep your mouth shut.”

“Is that what you’re gonna do?” Bit out Adam. “You gonna put me in my place? You’re an alpha, right? It’s what alphas do; assert their dominance over those they think are weaker than them. You want to show you’re the leader so you’ll sink your claws into me to prove a point. Go on then. Beat me up. See what Dad has to say,” he challenged, crouching low as if ready to pounce.

He didn’t expect Dean to narrow his eyes and turn away, gesturing for Sam to follow him.

“Come on. Pup’s too stupid to learn,” snorted Dean as he trotted away from the camp. “Come back to us when you grow up,” he called over his shoulder.

It didn’t take long for Adam to follow them; fur bristling and teeth bared in a snarl.

“You think you’re so tough because you’re head alpha but the truth is you didn’t earn your position. Neither of you did. Dad never handed the pack over to you because he thought you were good enough to lead; you turned against him and people felt sorry for you because you were so young. If it wasn’t for the pack chasing Dad off, you two would’ve had no chance fighting Dad. You should’ve been dead. You couldn’t defend yourselves back then; what makes you think you have a chance at defending an entire pack?”
Sam and Dean continued walking, but their ears were lowered in anger and their hackles were starting to raise.

“You have no idea what this pack has stood through,” huffed Dean. “You have no idea about anything because you’re an antisocial kid who gets threatened by everyone who approaches you. Ironic that you can’t do anything. You don’t even have basic survival skills. Were you dropped on the head at birth or something? Even pups know when to shut up.”

They were out of view from the camp now but none of them cared.

“Sam didn’t when he was a pup,” countered Adam. “He never saw eye-to-eye with Dad. He never knew when to keep his mouth shut. And you talk about me having no skills but how come you could never impress Dad? You were never as good as he expected you to be; you were never the alpha he wanted you to be. And Sam isn’t even an alpha. I can’t imagine how disappointed Dad must have been when he had an omega son who acted like an alpha and an alpha son who behaved like an omega.” The beta scoffed.

“That must be why he chose me over you.”

Suddenly, Dean whirled and pounced on Adam, teeth bared and a snarl erupting from his chest. Adam yelped and froze for a second, shock and fear bubbling in his gut as Dean dug his claws into his sides, pinning him to the floor as he straddled him.

The alpha snapped at his face, making Adam’s ears plaster themselves to his head and a paw slammed against his chin, forcing his head back harshly until his throat was completely exposed. Adam whined in terror as Dean’s jaws opened and sharp teeth headed towards his vulnerable neck.

“Kick his stomach, Adam,” ordered Sam and the beta blindly followed his demand, kicking out in panic. Dean grunted in pain and his grip on the beta’s chin slackened.

“Again,” ordered Sam and Adam kicked out harder until Dean was forced to release his head completely.

“His face is too close. Move it away,” said Sam harshly, a little like a drill sergeant and Adam automatically swiped his claw against Dean’s cheek until he turned his head away. However, Dean was quick to respond and he swiped his own claw across Adam’s face, leaving bloody scratches across his cheek. The beta cried out in pain and terrified tears collected in his eyes. He hadn’t expected Dean to actually attack him.

“Don’t be pathetic,” snapped Sam. “His stomach’s still vulnerable.”

Adam kicked out hard and when he heard Dean’s grunt, he kicked out again and again until the alpha stumbled away, hunched up in agony.

“Get up,” snarled Sam and Adam rolled to his paws, ears flat, tail tucked between his legs and head lowered submissively.

Dean narrowed his eyes and growled as he approached, gnashing his teeth again at the beta and Adam backed up.

“I’m sorry,” he began, shaking his head frantically but Dean snapped near his face and the beta scrabbled backwards.

“Too late,” rumbled Dean, stalking towards the younger wolf and Adam trembled slightly before dropping to the floor and starting to roll onto his back in a classic display of submission and
unwillingness to fight.

“Roll over and I’ll sink my teeth into your throat,” snarled Dean. “Run and I’ll catch you and rip you apart. You only have one option here, Adam.” He advanced on the beta and Adam choked out a whimper as he scrambled to his paws. He curled in on himself to make himself look smaller as he stared wide-eyed at Dean.

“I don’t want to fight,” he begged but Dean sneered in disgust and leapt at him again.

Adam whined as teeth sunk into his leg and a hind paw slammed powerfully into his stomach. A claw tore into his side again and he could feel warm blood dripping down his fur.

“Please,” Adam begged again, tears slipping down his cheeks as pain burned through his body but he clamped his mouth shut when Dean hit him across his face.

“Shut up,” snarled Dean. “Focus.” He hit Adam across the muzzle.

“Stomach,” Sam said simply and Adam closed his eyes as he channelled all his energy into the blow to Dean’s stomach. The alpha groaned so Adam kicked him again, making Dean stagger backwards.

“Get up,” growled Sam and Adam immediately did so. “Pin him.”

The beta hesitated, uncertain how to do that and it was enough time for Dean to recover and lunge at him again.

“Don’t let him trap you,” shouted Sam and Adam barely managed to balance on his hind legs and keep Dean from pushing him over. The alpha dug his claws into Adam’s sides, keeping him still and the beta sobbed at the burst of pain.

“Focus,” snapped Dean when Adam’s eyes closed and the teen stared at him fearfully.

“You’re exposing your throat,” said Sam. “Lower your head.”

Adam did so and Dean opened his jaws again, giving the beta a view of terrifying teeth.

“You’ve got two sets of claws free,” reminded Sam. “Keep away from his mouth.”

Adam pushed at Dean’s chest, but the alpha’s claws were still attached to his sides and it resulted in more pain. He hit Dean across the muzzle but Dean quickly angled his head to catch the paw between his teeth.

Adam yelped and yanked his paw back and Dean snapped near his face again, Adam barely managing to push him back.

“Look where your right paw is,” commanded Sam and Adam glanced down to see it resting just below Dean’s throat. He understood immediately and smashed his paw against Dean’s Adam’s apple and the alpha choked and tumbled to the floor.

“Pin him,” demanded Sam and Adam didn’t hesitate to throw himself on the alpha’s back. Dean staggered, unable to throw him off and Adam sunk his claws deep into the older wolf’s sides, keeping tight hold. Dean hissed in agony and bucked a few times, but Adam kept a firm grip and Dean began to tire.

“Go for his neck,” ordered Sam.

Adam paused. Dean had attacked him but he didn’t want to kill the alpha.
Suddenly, Dean gave a particularly harsh buck and with his lapse in concentration, Adam was thrown to the ground. Dean was on him before he even opened his eyes.

“You shouldn’t have hesitated,” snarled Dean and Adam yelped when Dean smashed his paw into his chin and exposed his neck again. He tried desperately to kick out at Dean’s stomach, but the alpha kicked him first and put his weight down so his leg was in the way of Adam’s target. Adam whined at the throbbing in his belly.

“Use your front claws,” yelled Sam but Adam couldn’t think. He hurt all over and he was bleeding and Dean’s teeth were sharp and scary. Dean was radiating a scent of anger and his pheromones were intimidating like all aggressive alphas were. He looked furious and determined to make the beta bleed and Adam didn’t want to fight anymore.

He didn’t want to die.

Tears flowed down his cheeks and he squeezed his eyes shut.

“Please, please, stop,” he begged desperately. “I don’t want to fight! I want my dad!”

For a moment, nothing happened, but he could still feel Dean’s weight on his stomach and chest and he could hear his heavy panting. He couldn’t hear any movement from Sam but the alpha hadn’t released his chin yet and his throat was still vulnerable.

“Let me go, please,” he whispered but there was no response.

Gingerly, he cracked an eye open and Dean loosened his grip slightly on the beta’s head as Adam tried to look at him.

“You’ve got a lot to learn,” growled Dean and Adam sighed in relief as Dean took his weight off his chest and belly.

Then the alpha lunged for his throat.

Adam screamed as Dean wrapped his teeth around his neck and he sobbed pleadingly for someone to rescue him.

“Sam!” He shouted desperately, unable to see through his tears and he cried freely as Dean held his throat between his jaws. He was so frightened that he didn’t notice how light Dean’s grip was and how careful he was being to not penetrate the skin, and it was only when he noticed how quiet Sam and Dean were that he realised he wasn’t going to die.

He fell silent, eyes wide and confused and Dean finally released him but continued to straddle him.

“Consider that your first fighting lesson,” huffed Dean. “You suck at it, by the way.”

Adam stared at him. “…You don’t want to kill me?”

“If my intentions were to kill you, you’d have been dead within the first ten seconds. I was going easy on you,” snorted Dean.

Adam’s eyes widened. “Easy? You made me bleed!”

“That’s what happens in a fight, kid,” scoffed Dean. “There tends to be a lot of blood.”

The beta’s gaze narrowed accusingly. “You didn’t stop. Even when I begged you to.”
“Neither will your opponent. Not even if you sob and bawl for them to,” stated Dean harshly. “You lose focus or start begging, you become an easy target. You die,” he stressed. “You have to keep fighting.”

“But you’re stronger than me,” grumbled Adam and Dean eyed him sternly.

“Then you’ve got to be smarter. Strength doesn’t account for everything.” Dean shook his head. “But experience helps. That’s why you’re going to come out here every morning from now on and Sam and I will teach you how to fight.”

Adam glanced at his injuries. “I won’t be healed by then.”

“You want to cry about it?” Huffed Dean gruffly and Adam clamped his mouth shut and shook his head.

“Good answer. Be here tomorrow at six, sharp.”

“Six?” Adam groaned and Dean snorted.

“You didn’t think we were going to go easy on you after these past two weeks, did you? You’re a brat and you need to learn to respect your peers. You’re an adult now.”

Adam scowled. “Something tells me you’re not going to teach the pups how to fight with this method.”

“They don’t hate me or Sam. Nor do they need an outlet to work out all their frustrations on. I think you’ll benefit from trying to hurt us both,” said Dean lowly and Adam sneered.

“Don’t pretend you’re not going to enjoy sinking your claws into me.”

Dean laughed darkly. “Oh, trust me; I’m looking forward to it.”

The pair glared at each other for a few moments before Dean shook his head and leaned down to lick at a nasty scratch in Adam’s side.

Adam kicked him in the face and Dean stumbled backwards, bewildered as the beta bounced to his paws, teeth bared, hackles raised and a snarl vibrating in his chest.

“We’re not fighting anymore, Adam,” said Sam, padding to his side and the beta immediately turned to snarl at him.

“Yeah, right.”

“Sparring’s over,” repeated Sam. “Dean was trying to clean you up.”

“Cleaning up the wounds he inflicted?” Sneered Adam.

“Yes,” snapped Dean. “It’s etiquette to clean up each other’s wounds after sparring. It shows there are no grudges and all parties involved still care for one another.”

“Care for one another?” Said Adam disbelievingly. “You hate me and I hate you! You can’t wait for tomorrow to come so you can beat me up again! You expect me to let you anywhere near me and the wounds you caused?”

“Would you quit arguing for one second?” Exploded Dean. “I’m not going to kill you or fatally wound you! You’ve got a few scratches and a couple of bruises and that’s all. So have I. We’re both
in pain, but it’ll fade in an hour! Yes, I stuck my claws in you but not deep. I wasn’t trying to make you suffer; I was trying to prove a point! I was giving you a taste of something similar to a fight, just to see how you reacted. I wanted to see how much you already knew, but you apparently know nothing. Why do you think Sam was giving you instructions? C’mon, Adam, think. You’re not even limping!”

Adam glared at the brothers distrustfully. After a few moments, Dean shook his head and sighed before walking away, albeit a little stiffly.

Adam grimaced slightly; whilst Dean hadn’t clawed too deep into Adam’s sides, Adam thought he’d been fighting for his life and Dean was sporting a few nasty wounds.

“We’re trying to help you,” said Sam with a frown and Adam startled at the omega’s sudden appearance by his side. “You need to learn this if you’re going to survive in the wild. You’re not going to last long if you don’t know how to defend yourself.”

“Why would you want to help me?” Asked Adam, not quite meeting Sam’s gaze and the omega scowled.

“Honestly? We don’t. But you’re Dad’s son just as much as we are and he… he clearly cares for you. He wants us to teach you how to fight and hunt so we will. We’re doing it for him. You should too.”

Adam looked away and remained quiet so Sam sighed and trailed after his brother.

“Dean, wait,” called Adam softly and both brothers paused to glance at each other in surprise as Adam approached warily.

The alpha and beta sized each other up before Adam sagged slightly and padded towards Dean to lick at a bloody scratch on his back.

Dean stiffened at first but began to relax as Adam moved onto a wound on his side. The alpha leaned over to clean the blood from Adam’s leg and after a few minutes, Adam pulled away without meeting Dean’s gaze.

When the beta didn’t flee, Dean cautiously licked at the claw marks on Adam’s cheek before moving to his muzzle and when he was finished, Adam returned the favour.

Once they were both clean, Dean did a quick lap at the wounds on Adam’s side to catch any stray drops of blood and his eyes widened in surprise when the beta leaned into him.

He glanced down at Adam to find him burying his face into his sandy fur, seemingly seeking comfort and he blinked at Sam in shock, the omega’s eyebrows raising as he watched.

“Adam?” Dean asked gently and the beta shot upright and backed off slightly, refusing to look at Dean and Sam.

“Thanks,” he mumbled. “See you tomorrow.” Then he paced away.

Sam and Dean watched him go for a few moments until he was out of sight.

“That was weird,” announced Dean and Sam nodded in agreement before looking over Dean for any missed wounds. Adam had done a good job.

“He’s going to be hard to teach,” Sam commented and Dean huffed softly.
“He’s got to learn.”

Sam was quiet for a whole minute. “Why hasn’t Dad taught him yet?”

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line. “That’s what I’ve been wondering for the past two weeks.”

Chapter End Notes

Finally got this chapter out!
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sam awoke with a start, eyes wide and chest heaving heavy breaths. He was hot and sweaty and for a second, he couldn’t work out where he was or what he was looking at.

The night was warm and everyone was once again sleeping under the moon, except tonight there were no stars; thick, grey clouds were shielding them from view and the atmosphere was charged and uncomfortably humid. A storm was brewing.

Without the gentle twinkling of the stars and only a partial view of the moon, the forest had been plunged into darkness and Sam could barely see what was in front of him. He blinked to clear away his sleepiness and he rolled onto his front and raised his head, trying to focus on anything that wasn’t darkness.

His chest was tight and his breaths were beginning to shake as he tried to rid yet another horrific nightmare from his memory and he jumped when a paw settled over him.

For a moment, he had a flashback to Ruby and he tried to squirm away, her attempts at killing him replaying through his mind, but the paw gripped him tighter and a nose nuzzled clumsily at his cheek.

“Sam?” Whispered Gabriel. “It’s me. You okay?”

Sam immediately calmed at the familiar voice. “Sorry,” he mumbled. “Couldn’t think for a second.”

Gabriel nodded once before shifting more comfortably onto his front and placing his paw over one of Sam’s.

“Nightmare?” He asked softly and when Sam nodded, the alpha licked his cheek.

“Jessica?” He guessed and Sam nodded again. “Wanna talk about it?”

“It’s late,” whispered Sam. “You should go back to sleep.”

Gabriel pulled a face. “How many times are we gonna go through this, kiddo? If you need to talk, then talk. That’s what I’m here for. We take care of each other, right?”

Sam leaned into him gratefully.

“You’re so different to her,” he commented and Gabriel knew he meant Ruby. He huffed quietly.

“Good. You deserve better. Now what’s on your mind?”

Sam settled against his alpha and Gabriel tried to wrap himself around the omega despite being three-quarters of his size. Sam chuckled at his wriggling.

“Everything was jumbled up. Jessica died in a fire, but Ruby was the one to start it. Then she came after me and when I called out to Dean for help, he was dead and Azazel was pack leader. I watched Alistair mate Cas and kill the pups and Adam pinned me down so Ruby could drown me. Dad just stood by and watched.”
Gabriel raised an eyebrow. “That’s one messed up dream. Did I make an appearance?”

Sam shook his head and Gabriel nuzzled his ear gently.

“At least you know none of that could ever happen. Alistair and Ruby are dead and somehow I doubt Cas would let Azazel hurt Dean,” winked Gabriel and Sam huffed out a quiet laugh. “And nobody’s gonna lay a claw on my sweet Princess,” Gabriel teased, licking Sam’s muzzle.

“Shut up,” Sam murmured in amusement as he shoved his head under Gabriel’s. “You’re the Princess.”

“I’m the dashing Prince who slays the evil dragon and saves the day,” grinned Gabriel, licking Sam’s head comfortingly and the omega snorted.

“More like the old hag.”

Gabriel cuffed him over the head.

“Rude.”

Despite that, the alpha slung a paw around him and rested his head over his neck.

“Want to know what I dreamed about?” Asked Gabriel, as he usually did when Sam had a horrific nightmare and a smile touched the omega’s lips as he nodded.

In fact, Gabriel had slept dreamlessly that night, but he always managed to weave an elaborate tale about even the simplest of things and it never failed to send Sam into a peaceful slumber. Tonight was no different.

“Well, I dreamt there was an alien slow-dancing…” he began and Sam’s smile grew as he closed his eyes and listened to his lover’s soothing voice. He’d never heard the end of one of Gabriel’s made-up dreams yet, but the alpha didn’t seem to mind and Sam always felt an inviting feeling of love and safety cocoon him when Gabriel spoke so softly to his tired mind. He fell asleep in a matter of minutes and Gabriel smiled when he noticed and licked his head once more before closing his eyes and drifting off as he listened to Sam’s rhythmic breathing.

The last thing that crossed through his exhausted mind was how come Adam had just padded out of the forest and into the camp?

* * *

The rules of sparring were simple; no traumatic wounds, keep away from the eyes, ears, nose and genitals, no deep biting or clawing and always clean each other up once the session was finished. The fight wasn’t over until one had the other’s neck between their teeth. That’s what Sam and Dean had told him.

“His stomach’s free, Adam,” said Dean as Sam pinned the smaller wolf to the ground, teeth bared in his face and the beta kicked out harshly, sending Sam staggering backwards.

“Get up,” ordered Dean and Adam did so, crouching low into a defensive position.

“On his back,” demanded Dean as Sam began to recover and the beta bounded over, closing in on
his side.

Once he was a couple of feet from the omega’s shoulder, Adam leapt into the air, claws outstretched but Sam turned slightly and swiped a claw across his face. The beta crumpled to the ground and when he tried to stand he swayed, disorientated.

“Always approach from the flank,” said Dean. “You jump near the head or to one side, you give your opponent room to manoeuvre into a defensive position or into an attacking one.”

Adam shook himself off with a soft groan. He’d been at this lesson for an hour now and he was sore and tired. Sam and Dean weren’t making this easy for him. He collapsed to the ground again.

“Get up,” Sam grunted. “Try again.”

“I can’t,” he grated out. Every part of him hurt.

Dean scowled. “Don’t give us back-chat, kid. Get up.”

“No,” snapped Adam. “I can’t.”

“Adam, move,” growled Dean but the beta remained where he was.

“No! This isn’t fair. I’m still sore and worn out from yesterday but I have to fight Sam, who didn’t have a single scratch on him when we started. Why aren’t I fighting you again? That would make things fair!”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “You want to fight me? I’m happy to do that. Get up and we can begin.”

Adam paused. He hadn’t thought Dean would be so ready to accept that idea. He remembered the fight with Dean yesterday and held back a shudder.

Sam was patient when he fought; giving Adam time to recover and he helped the beta see where he’d gone wrong, not hitting him or clawing him too harshly; just enough to prove a point. He kept his moves slow and clear so Adam could see how to avoid them in the future. He worked Adam for a long time and it was laborious, but at least he was learning with every mistake and triumph.

Dean’s method of teaching was completely different; basically trial and error. It was intense; quick moves and hard blows and learning was more difficult because he couldn’t always see his mistakes. He had to rely on instincts with Dean and considering he didn’t seem to have any fighting ones, that had proved near impossible. Dean held back a little, but not nearly as much as Sam and he knew fighting Dean would prove short but painful.

“No, I’ll stay with Sam,” he grumbled and a tiny smirk twitched at Dean’s lips as he nodded. Sam wasn’t even trying to hide his smirk.

“Get up,” Sam ordered and Adam did, turning to face his opponent.

“Ready?” The omega asked and after a deep breath, Adam nodded. Dean wouldn’t have waited for him.

Sam nodded in acknowledgement before sprinting towards him at full pelt and Adam braced himself for impact.

“Jump!” Shouted Dean and Adam did, colliding with Sam and they grappled with each other for a few moments before Sam finally sunk his claws into the beta’s sides.
Adam whined and lost his balance, knees threatening to give out on him as pain burst through his body and he felt Sam loosen his grip slightly, claws barely in him.

Sam bared his teeth near his face and Adam remembered Dean performing a similar move the previous day. He looked to his right paw in its position resting just below Sam’s throat and he struck the omega’s Adam’s apple, making Sam gag and stumble backwards.

Whilst he was distracted, Adam lunged forwards and grinned when he finally managed to latch onto the omega’s back as he used his weight to keep Sam’s head down.

“Adam!” Dean warned urgently but it was too late and Sam had already sunk his teeth into his left hindleg. Adam cried out and tried to pull his leg out of Sam’s grip, but the omega clamped down harder and Adam scrabbled at his back, desperately trying to get him to release it.

Sam finally let go of his leg and Adam groaned in relief but before he knew it, Sam had hit his side and sent him staggering to the left and the omega pounced on him and pinned his back to the floor.

“Your neck is exposed!” Called Dean but Adam didn’t care because his leg was throbbing.

Sam gave him a couple of seconds to react but when he didn’t, the omega lightly wrapped his teeth around his throat and Adam closed his eyes in a mixture of frustration and pain from his leg and nearly every other part of his body.

“Dead,” announced Dean blandly as Sam stepped off him.

“Always jump on the back from behind,” reminded Sam as Adam slowly rolled to his paws, back to the omega. “Your lower half’s a target from the front, even if you think your opponent’s head is pinned.”

“Alright, try again,” he continued, taking up a defensive position and Adam narrowed his eyes and refused to face him.

“Get into position,” said Dean, tone leaving no room for argument yet Adam still didn’t turn, pointedly sitting down so he could lap at the wound on his leg.

Sam frowned. “You okay, Adam?” He asked, a hint of concern in his tone as he approached.

Suddenly, Adam whirled around with a vicious snarl and swiped his claws over Sam’s face, across his eye. They struck deep and Sam scrabbled backwards with a cry, blood pouring down his face and eye already beginning to swell.

“Sam!” Yelled Dean in horror as he ran to his brother, inspecting the wound and Adam sneered.

“Let’s see how you like it,” he growled. “Now we’re both bleeding.”

Quicker than he could process, he was on the floor, face pulsing in agony as though he’d been hit by a rock and Dean was towering over him, teeth too close to his neck and eyes burning with fury.

“Say one more word and my teeth clamp deep into your throat,” hissed Dean. Adam opened his mouth to protest but Dean slammed his paw into his chin until his head was painfully forced backwards and his neck exposed. He found himself unable to move.

“You may have just cost Sam his eye,” snarled Dean quietly and Adam came to realise how serious the situation was. He couldn’t move an inch and Dean was forcing him to bare his throat. This wasn’t like yesterday when Dean had been teaching him a lesson; this was the lead alpha protecting
his wounded brother from a rival.

Adam’s ears plastered themselves to his head and he began to tremble as an intimidating alpha stench wafted towards him. It was bursting with fury and protectiveness and aggression and Adam whined in fear because he’d never had anything so terrifying directed at him before. Dean’s scent from the previous day was placid compared to this.

“Go see Jody,” Dean ordered and Adam heard Sam mumble something in reply before padding away.

With the angle his head was currently at, Adam couldn’t see Dean’s expression but he knew the alpha was glaring at him. He’d really messed up, hadn’t he? He’d been in pain and he’d wanted Sam to understand why he didn’t want to continue sparring. He hadn’t meant to claw so deep.

…What if Sam really did lose an eye?

He hadn’t meant to do that! He never wanted to hurt Sam like that!

The omega hadn’t even hurt him all that much. He’d loosened his grip when Adam had been uncomfortable or sore and he hadn’t really bitten that deep into his leg. It was more of a bruise because he’d held it for so long. There hadn’t even been that much blood.

What had he done? What would the rest of the pack say?

What would his dad say?

He fell limp beneath Dean, whining softly to show he was sorry and he wasn’t going to fight any punishment Dean doled out.

“Get up,” growled Dean, walking away and taking up a defensive position a few metres away.

Adam remained on his back but turned his head slightly in confusion. Why hadn’t Dean punished him?

“Get up!” Snapped Dean and Adam scrambled to his paws, tilting his head, puzzled.

“You have a lesson to finish,” rumbled Dean and Adam’s heart sunk as he realised the implications. He slowly took up a defensive position and Dean sprung forwards.

They sparred for another long hour and during that time Dean offered no advice or corrections on his technique. He learned by trial and error and when he failed, it hurt. Dean was probably fighting at sixty percent of his usual standard but to Adam it felt like every blow was fatal. Unlike Sam, Dean gave him no time to recover and when he cried out or yelped in agony, the alpha didn’t loosen his grip or ask if he was okay; the beta was forced to keep fighting and dodging and defending even though his muscles were aching and his bones were bruised and he could barely see through his own pained tears.

After one last heavy blow to his jaw, Adam crumpled to the ground, unable to even open his eyes. Everything hurt. Everything was bruised or bleeding and Adam was half convinced Dean would kill him in that moment.

Dean glanced over him in disgust and stalked away.  

“Lesson’s finished,” he threw over his shoulder before vanishing into the forest.
Adam sobbed silently.

* * *

Gabriel’s eyes blew wide when he spotted his lover and he cursed loudly as he scrambled towards him.

“What happened?” He fretted, sniffing at Sam and taking in as much information about who’d accompanied him and where he’d been for the past two hours as he gaped in horror at the deep slashes across his face and the red, swollen left eye. It was half-closed and all Gabriel could think was Sam must be in agony.

“Sparring accident,” muttered Sam vaguely and Gabriel frowned because Sam had sauntered out of the camp earlier with his brother.

“With Dean? Bull. He’d never hurt you like this. You look like you nearly lost that eye.”

Sam pulled a face and paused in a way that suggested he didn’t really want to tell Gabriel what had happened.

“Sam,” Gabriel pleaded. “Who did this to you?”

The omega hesitated. “…Adam,” he sighed eventually and Gabriel immediately puffed his chest out, scent flooding with alpha protectiveness and anger.

“Why that little… Where is he? Tell me where he is so I can scoop his eyeballs out! He’s been trouble since day one and someone needs to teach the little punk a lesson.”

“I have a feeling Dean’s already given him his… ‘just desserts’,,” murmured Sam, sounding troubled. “…I hope he wasn’t too hard on him.”

“Too hard?!” Exploded Gabriel. “I hope your brother beat him to a bloody pulp! He doesn’t get to go around clawing people’s eyeballs out! Kid needs a verbal and physical beat down!”

Sam shook his head then grimaced as the movement made his face throb.

“He… he was in pain. We weren’t exactly being kind to him and we kept making him get up and fight even though he was sore. He was frustrated and I guess… I guess we were being less than encouraging. He was taking his anger out on us during sparring but I suppose we were kinda taking ours out on him too. It wasn’t fair considering he’s never learned how to fight before.” Sam sighed quietly. “He’s just a kid.”

“He should know better,” said Gabriel firmly before licking the deep gashes in Sam’s face. He frowned. “What do you mean you were taking your anger out on him? What anger?”

Sam glanced away in shame.

“There’s a reason Dean and I haven’t been talking to Adam and it’s not to do with the fact that he’s moody.”

Gabriel tilted his head in confusion and Sam’s ears lowered.
“He’s our half-brother,” Sam murmured. “We share the same dad.”

Gabriel cocked an ear, still at a loss and Sam pulled a face.

“Dad chose him over us.”

Gabriel blinked and his mouth worked open and closed a few times before he stared in surprise at his lover.

“You must know that’s not true.”

Sam wouldn’t meet his gaze and Gabriel blinked again.

“…You’re jealous,” he realised suddenly and Sam ducked his head guiltily. The older wolf’s gaze softened and he nuzzled his lover’s cheek.

“Your dad didn’t choose Adam over you. He was an idiot and left you, then thought he could make things right by treating Adam like he should’ve treated you. You, Dean nor Adam are to blame for that,” smiled Gabriel and Sam rolled his good eye at Gabriel’s insult towards his father, but otherwise ignored it.

“I know,” he confessed, “but it doesn’t make it hurt any less that Adam grew up with our father.”

“So, you’re punishing him because you wish your dad would’ve stayed with you instead of going to Adam? I’ve got to admit, that’s not very fair,” murmured Gabriel and Sam winced. Gabriel licked at his wound again.

“I know,” muttered Sam. “I wish I’d have come to that conclusion before I gave him a difficult time during sparring. I shouldn’t have worked him so hard.” The omega sighed regretfully. “He had tears in his eyes from pain yet I kept making him get up and try again. He should’ve had a break; no wonder he lashed out at me.”

Gabriel contemplated this for a few moments before cocking an ear.

“Maybe you were a little harsh on him, but that doesn’t give him an excuse to cause you harm like that. No, you shouldn’t have blamed him for your father’s choices, but he should have a better grip on his emotions. He’s seventeen now. If he goes around hurting the wrong people, one day someone’s gonna kill him.”

Sam fell quiet as he digested that information and Gabriel took the opportunity to cuddle into his side and soothe his eye with gentle laps.

A few minutes later they watched Dean prowl into the camp, fur spattered with blood, body bruised and scratched and expression stormy. He scanned the area and when his eyes fell on Sam, his face immediately softened into concern and he trotted over.

Sam glanced over his brother’s figure and his blood ran cold.

“Where’s Adam?” He blurted and Dean scrunched his nose up in distaste.

“Where we left him.”

Gabriel’s eyes were wide as he stared at Dean’s less-than-presentable appearance. “…Is he… is he alive?”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “…Yeah?”
Sam felt his chest relax in relief. “Oh. Good. Uh. Maybe you should do something about… all the…” He trailed off as he glanced over his brother’s body. He reeked of Adam and if their dad caught a whiff of him, he’d assume the worst and that would be a nightmare to explain.

Dean glanced at his body disinterestedly. “Right,” he grunted before snapping his gaze back up to Sam worriedly. “You okay? What did Jody say about your eye?”

“Just a scratch,” Sam shrugged. Jody had said a lot more than that and there had been a lot of cursing and panicking involved, but his brother didn’t need to know the details; he’d only get worked up. As long as Sam protected his eye and cleaned the area surrounding it every day, he’d be fine.

“…Good,” said Dean, but he didn’t look convinced. He inspected Sam’s eye for a moment before the omega huffed in irritation.

“I’m fine. Go bathe.”

Dean nodded slowly and trotted out of the camp again, this time towards the river. A few pack members openly gaped at his appearance.

Gabriel stared at his retreating figure for a few moments before squinting suspiciously.

“You sure he was telling the truth about Adam being alive?”

Sam cast his gaze towards his lover.

“…I hope so.”

* * *

It was late in the evening. Thunder rumbled above him and lightning split the dark sky in half. He startled at its brightness. His fur was wet from the rain beginning to pound the Earth, disturbing the soil and smaller plants and although the winds were warm, they made him stumble. He hissed as they whipped at his aching body.

He’d stayed out in their sparring spot for the rest of the day, licking his wounds and too ashamed to face the rest of the pack. He didn’t want to return to find that Sam had an empty hole where his eye should have been. He had no more tears to cry and his voice was slightly hoarse from sobbing but he forced himself to limp through the forest back to camp because the storm had arrived and he didn’t fancy his chances out alone in it. No hunting rabbits tonight, he mused.

By the time he returned to camp, the rest of the pack had retreated to their shelters, dry and safe. He glanced around the camp in search of his dad in hopes that the alpha had been looking for him; afterall he’d been gone all day and some part of his mind hoped his father would fuss over him and take care of him in his wounded state, comfort him and maybe even curl around him and protect him whilst they fell asleep.

He bypassed his own shelter and crept towards his dad’s, peeking inside with the hope the alpha was worrying about him and would leap up to greet him in relief.

He was disappointed to find John sound asleep.
He wasn’t surprised though.

With a soft sigh he trudged towards his own shelter and curled up inside it. His soaking fur sapped the heat from his body as it evaporated and he began to shiver, scowling at his own inability to take care of himself. He should’ve shaken himself off before he’d crawled into his shelter but he’d forgotten and now the floor and his skin was wet.

Why was he such a screw up?

He forced himself to put up with it; he probably deserved the punishment anyway.

After twenty minutes, it was obvious he wasn’t going to sleep anytime soon. His mind was buzzing with the day’s events and he still didn’t know if Sam had retained his eye or not. And he was shivering violently. He would’ve thrown his blanket over him, but that would only get wet too.

Resolve strengthening, Adam slipped out of his shelter and tip-toed over to Sam and Gabriel’s. He just wanted to see if Sam still had his eye or not.

He lowered his head and peered inside the shelter and his heart ached with an emotion he couldn’t describe when he saw how Gabriel was curled around the larger omega, Sam’s face buried into Gabriel’s chest and the alpha’s paws slung around him, keeping him safe. They clearly loved each other.

Adam closed his eyes, letting the rain seep into his skin. It stung his cuts and scrapes but he didn’t care. He felt guilty, ashamed even; it was an emotion he’d never experienced before. In hurting Sam, he’d worried Gabriel and offended Dean, which in turn would affect Dean’s little family. How many people had been affected by his childish behaviour? He’d punished the pack for his own history; how was that fair? He’d been cruel and insulting towards Sam and Dean and their lovers because he couldn’t deal with his own past and emotions. What was wrong with him? How was he supposed to set things right? Could he set things right?

“If you’re here to have a shot at his other eye, I suggest you dig yourself a nice hole where you want to be buried.”

Adam jumped at the quiet voice and snapped his gaze towards its source.

He saw Gabriel staring right at him, head laying over Sam’s neck.

Adam shook his head frantically, throat dry. He didn’t want another fight.

Gabriel regarded him for a few moments. “Any reason you’re peeping into people’s shelters at midnight? Makes you look a little shifty. Or maybe horny.”

Adam paused in confusion before shaking his head again. He glanced at Sam.

“Does he… his eye, is it still… has it…?” He stumbled over his words and Gabriel’s gaze softened. He licked Sam’s muzzle a few times and the omega grumbled at being woken. He tried to bury himself back into Gabriel’s fur.

“Someone’s here to check on you,” whispered Gabriel and Sam mumbled something intelligible which Gabriel took to be confusion. He licked his lover’s face again and glanced towards the entrance of the shelter. Sam frowned and rolled over before squinting blearily with his good eye. The first thing he saw was sandy fur and he blinked slowly.

“Dean?” He grumbled before his eye finally focused and he was suddenly very awake as he stared in
surprise at Adam.

The beta lowered his head in shame but he felt relief pool in his chest at seeing Sam’s eye intact, if very swollen.

“I… uh… I wanted to apologise,” mumbled Adam. “For clawing you. I wanted to see if you were… okay.”

Sam raised an eyebrow.

“Oh. Well. I’m… fine. I guess.”

Adam nodded stiffly and Sam squinted again, trying to focus on Adam’s figure through the rain and darkness and his one functioning eye. Something didn’t look quite right about him…

“…Good,” huffed Adam before falling into an awkward silence.

The trio gazed at each other for a few minutes.

“…There something else you wanted?” Asked Sam uncertainly and Adam shifted a little before shaking his head.

“No. Sorry. I’ll go now.” He hesitated a second before slowly turning away.

“Can’t sleep?” Asked Gabriel knowingly and Adam flinched before glancing embarrassedly towards the alpha.

“You’re welcome to stay with us tonight as long as you shake yourself off before you come in,” commented Gabriel and Sam looked at him in surprise. Adam perked up a little before he caught another glimpse of Sam’s face and he winced.

“That’s okay. Thanks. There’s not enough room anyway.” He turned away again and made his way towards his cold, lonely, damp shelter.

“Come here and apologise to your brother properly, Adam,” said Gabriel and Adam blinked and whirled to face the alpha. Even Sam looked shocked.

“He’s not my brother,” Adam replied automatically and Gabriel stared at him, unimpressed.

“Yes, he is. Now, he feels guilty for treating you so cruelly and you feel guilty for hurting him, so get in here so you can both sort things out.”

Both Sam and Adam opened their mouths to protest but Gabriel glared at them both.

“Do you really want to have a relationship like I have with my older brothers?”

Both younger wolves snapped their mouths shut.

“Come here, kid,” repeated Gabriel and Adam did so, tail tucked between his legs and ears flat. He squeezed in awkwardly beside Sam and the pair eyed each other for a moment before Sam gulped.

“…Did Dean do this to you?” He asked quietly, taking in the beta’s bloodied fur and various wounds. He looked like he’d had a practice round with Azazel.

Adam nodded without meeting the omega’s gaze. “I kinda deserved it.”
Sam frowned. “You really don’t.”

Adam cautiously looked up at him and the omega sighed. Adam had clearly been crying recently and it reminded him just how young the beta was.

“I’ve been too harsh on you,” murmured Sam. “I blamed you for something that’s not your fault and I’m sorry. I was jealous of you and punished you wrongly for it. You didn’t deserve to be treated like that.”

Adam gaped at him. “Too harsh on me? I’ve been a jerk to everybody these past couple of weeks. I nearly took your eye out!”

Sam huffed. “I used your leg as a chew toy. I didn’t give you a break. You were exhausted and sore and I just worked you harder.”

Adam snorted. “Please. I was acting like a pup. There wasn’t even that much blood on my leg; I was just making a big fuss over it because my favourite hobby is complaining about everything and insulting everyone around me.”

Sam quirked a smile and Adam glanced at his paws.

“Why were you jealous of me?” He asked lowly and Sam’s smile faltered.

“Because you’re right. Dad chose you over us.”

Adam was quiet for a long time.

“You’re wrong.”

Sam cocked an ear and Adam slowly turned to him.

“I said that to hurt you. I lied.”

Sam frowned. “Then why didn’t he stay with us? Why did he leave? Why didn’t he stay with this pack and bring you and your mom with him?” Sam looked down. “Things could’ve been different.”

“We could’ve been raised together,” said Adam bitterly. He closed his eyes. “He made a lot of mistakes.”

“And we’ve been punishing each other for them,” sighed Sam. He pulled a face as he glanced over the younger wolf’s battered body.

“I’m sorry, Adam. Truly.”

The beta shifted his gaze to Sam’s eye. “So am I,” he whispered.

“I’ll tell Dean to lay off,” promised Sam. “He shouldn’t have done this to you. It’s cruel.”

Adam looked nervous for a moment before he slowly leaned over and licked the gashes around Sam’s eye. The omega paused but eventually relaxed and surprised the younger wolf by lapping at the dried blood and scrapes and bruises littering his face.

After a few minutes, Sam moved on to his body and Adam made a small noise of contentment and pressed his face into Sam’s soft fur. A tiny smile tugged at Sam’s lips and he nuzzled the teen gently before returning to cleaning him up and lapping the cool rain water off his coat.
Adam sighed and leaned into the omega, basking in his warmth and sweet, inviting scent and Sam gingerly wrapped a paw around him, tugging him closer. Adam made another happy sound of approval and closed his eyes as Sam took care of him. He was surprised by how good Sam smelled; like home. A little like how his mother had smelled to him when he was a pup. A family smell. Comforting. Safe.

Gabriel watched on in silence for a few minutes before heaving himself to his paws and rounding Adam’s free side. He plopped down next to the young beta and he too, cleaned up the scrapes and claw marks decorating the teen’s body.

Unused to so much attention and care, Adam ducked his head shyly and both adults chuckled and squished him further between them, drying him off and keeping him warm.

When Sam and Gabriel were finished, they nuzzled one another goodnight before settling down to sleep. Adam watched them relax, a strange feeling in his chest and he slowly lay down and glanced between the pair, wondering when they were going to kick him out. When they didn’t, he gulped because he was pretty sure he didn’t deserve their kindness and he stared at Sam’s eye in shame.

After a few minutes, when he was sure both adults were sleeping soundly, Adam leaned over and licked the omega’s swollen eye again, wanting to soothe the inflammation. Sam huffed softly and Adam paused, knowing he’d been caught but the omega shifted slightly so he had better access to his face and cautiously, the beta returned to his self-appointed task.

Exhaustion came soon after and Adam grew too weary to keep his eyes open, so he lay his head over Sam’s shoulders, snuggled into his warmth and finally fell asleep with a tiny smile.

Chapter End Notes

Awww ;)
Chapter 56

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sam stretched and yawned widely. It took a while for his eyes to focus and he wrinkled his nose in confusion at the foreign scent swirling around the shelter. Mint and thyme. Strange but not unpleasant.

He glanced to his left and bit back a laugh.

Gabriel was wrapped around Adam, all four paws latched onto him as he buried his face into the back of the beta’s neck, snoring loudly. Adam stared at Sam pleadingly.

Sam’s grin grew and he had to bite his tongue to stop himself from snickering at the beta’s desperate expression. He’d woken up many times with Gabriel cocooning him like a burrito, snoring down his ear but it never bothered him and truth be told, he enjoyed being so close to the alpha.

“Help me,” begged Adam and Sam stretched lazily and continued to smirk at the beta.

“Gabe’s a cuddler.”

Adam huffed. “Yes. I’m aware.”

They stared at each other for a few moments.

“Could you please untangle me?” Adam asked exasperatedly and Sam grinned and rolled onto his back.

“Don’t feel like it.”

The beta blinked. “I’m being crushed by your boyfriend.”

“Consider it your punishment for nearly scooping out my eye.”

Adam snapped his mouth shut and glanced away guiltily and Sam’s expression softened.

“Hey, it was just a joke. We discussed this last night. We’re starting over, okay? Whatever happened between us these last two weeks is history. It stays in the past where it belongs.”

Adam glanced up to him gratefully and Sam smiled. It hadn’t escaped his notice that Gabriel had suddenly fallen suspiciously silent.

Sneaky eavesdropper.

“I still seem to have a problem,” muttered Adam gesturing to the paws still clenched around him and that was the moment Gabriel decided to lick the back of his head sloppily, covering him in drool.

Sam cackled as Adam made an indignant noise of disgust and the alpha finally let the teen go with a mischievous smirk.

“Seriously?” Groaned Adam, plastering himself against Sam in order to get as far away from Gabriel as possible. Gabe shrugged and stretched before pawing at the air in Sam’s direction.
“Where’s my good morning kiss?” He pouted and Adam gagged as Sam leaned over to nuzzle and lick his lover, Gabriel returning the gestures as loudly and obnoxiously as possible.

“Now how about my good morning sex?” Asked Gabriel with a wicked grin and Sam snorted as Adam scrambled out of the shelter, panic flooding his gaze.

“Was it something I said?” Asked Gabriel innocently as he rubbed noses with Sam and the omega rolled his good eye before slinking out of the shelter.

“Ignore him,” chuckled Sam when Adam eyed him warily. “I usually do.”

Gabriel joined them both and rubbed up against Sam’s side. “You didn’t say that the other night when I did that thing with my-”

“As fascinating as your sex lives are, I’m going to leave you both alone now,” interrupted Adam drily and Sam shook his head.

“Actually, I was going to ask if you wanted to learn how to hunt?” Asked Sam. “We’ll probably start a group hunt sometime in the afternoon or maybe in the evening if it gets any hotter, so you might as well have a lesson beforehand. I have a feeling Dean’ll throw you in the deep end today.” Sam grimaced and tried to look apologetic. “I promise I’ll have a word with him about everything.”

Adam once again felt a rush of shame. Sam was kind despite having every reason to hate him. How had he believed the omega deserved to suffer?

“I’d like that,” Adam admitted quietly and Sam smiled before glancing towards Gabriel, a twinkle in his eye.

“Good. I know exactly what you can hunt.”

* * *

Gabriel would have his revenge. When the time was right, he’d make Sam and Adam regret forcing him to be the butt of the joke.

Pretending to be Adam’s prey was bad enough, but the duct-taped twig antlers were a step too far. He could hear the pair snickering behind him.

“You’re not gonna catch much if you keep laughing at your prey,” grumbled Gabriel. “It’ll hear you coming a mile off.” He shook his head, hoping to rid himself of the ridiculous antlers, but unfortunately they held firm. This was his third pair in the past hour. Sam clearly had a fetish for duct taping things to him. It wasn't as sexy as he'd thought it would be.

The pair fell quiet and Gabriel pricked up his ears. So far, he’d been able to tell when Adam was coming because there had always been the snap of a branch or the crunch of leaves to give him away, but this time he couldn’t hear anything and he began to wonder if this was all a prank and Sam and Adam had returned to camp and left him to work it out.

Suddenly, there was the sound of a twig cracking about two metres from his flank and Gabriel immediately swivelled his head to find Adam preparing to pounce. He dodged the beta’s attack and sprinted between the trees, listening to Adam’s paw falls behind him. He leapt over rocks and fallen
logs and made a few zig-zag turns like any herd animal would to escape a predator and he heard Adam lose distance on him. Sam shouted some advice to the beta that Gabriel couldn’t quite catch and after a couple of minutes, Gabe heard a loud thud and a pained whine.

The alpha halted and turned to find Adam sprawled over the floor, eyes clenched shut and back leg caught behind a hidden tree stump. Sam slowed to a stop and scrutinised the beta’s leg.

“Can you move it?”

The beta nodded and slowly clambered to his paws. He stretched the leg out and Sam inspected it for bruises and wounds.

“I’m ready to try again,” stated Adam determinedly and Sam glanced at him in surprise.

“Woah, take it easy. Make sure that leg isn’t sprained or damaged first.”

Adam shook his head. “It’s okay. I want to try again.”

“Adam-”

“I can do this,” interrupted the beta before looking at Sam pleadingly. “I want to do this. Let me try again.”

Sam hesitated before nodding cautiously and he glanced at the teen’s leg once more before taking a step backwards and gesturing for Gabriel to get into position.

“Remember, you’ll be put on chaser,” said Sam. “You don’t need to bring Gabriel down, just make sure you can control his direction. You can pounce and slow him down if you get close enough, but if you don’t feel up to it, don’t. Let muscle bring the prey down all the way; they’ll be right behind you.”

Adam nodded and crouched low again as Gabriel trotted a few metres ahead.

“When you’re ready,” nodded Sam and Adam crept forwards again, eyes on Gabriel’s flicking ears. When he was a couple of metres away, Gabriel suddenly swivelled and took off between the trees again and Adam raced after him, Sam not too far behind. He was more aware of his surroundings this time and he scampered under fallen trees and leapt over rocks and he barely noticed his aching leg.

Gabriel came to a thick section of bushes and lost his footing a little as he turned to avoid the thorny foliage and Adam gained ground on him. Gabriel noticed and tried to dodge him with a diagonal pattern, but Adam was prepared and stayed on his outside, his path smooth and fairly straight. When he was less than two metres behind the alpha, Adam pushed himself faster; a short burst of adrenaline allowing him to close in on the other wolf and he remembered Sam and Dean’s words from the previous day.

‘Always approach from the flank.’

He lunged forwards and latched onto Gabriel’s rump and the alpha faltered, skidding across the floor for a second and Adam gripped him harder, pulling slightly to slow him. Gabriel stumbled again and Adam grinned when Sam was suddenly on the alpha, pinning him to the ground.

Gabriel collapsed with a soft groan, chest heaving and sweat slicking his fur. One of his antlers had fallen off.
Adam panted heavily as Sam stepped off his lover and the omega smiled approvingly at the teen.

“Well done.”

Adam’s tail wiggled. He wasn’t accustomed to compliments.

“Thanks,” he grinned, looking like a young pup who’d just been told his parents were extremely proud of him.

Sam chuckled at the excitement he was clearly trying so hard to conceal and Gabriel finally hauled himself upright.

“Do that in the field and you’ll impress a lot of people,” he said before shaking himself off.

Sam nodded. “You wouldn’t have to work that hard with a deer because you’ll have a team helping you, but in the Winter, large prey is hard to come by. You’ll need to learn how to catch rabbits and foxes and other small creatures at some point, but I think you’ve done well today.”

Adam’s tail wagged harder. “I’m not too bad with rabbits. I’ve been hunting them for a while.”

Sam cocked an ear in confusion. “I thought Dad said you couldn’t hunt?”

“I’ve never hunted deer, but I taught myself how to catch rabbits and badgers and stuff.”

Sam and Gabriel shared an amused glance and the omega shrugged.

“Impress me,” he challenged and Adam nodded and put his nose to the air.

Sam and Gabriel chuckled softly and trotted after the beta. They weren’t really expecting Adam to actually catch anything, but if the beta wanted to show them what he’d taught himself, then they were happy to humour him. Teaching oneself hunting was extremely difficult; Adam didn’t seem the type to be patient enough and determined enough to teach himself such a skill. If he didn’t know how to hunt deer in a pack, what were the chances of him being able to hunt on his own?

Adam suddenly stopped and put his nose to the ground. His tail wiggled eagerly when he caught a scent and he shot off after it. Gabriel and Sam trailed him, only pausing when Adam glanced at them to tell them to be quiet. Both adults sniffed the air and sat down when they realised how close by the creature was.

Adam was still for a moment and he surveyed the forest floor until his gaze struck the large brown hare nibbling serenely on a patch of clover. It hadn’t spotted the predators yet and Adam crouched low and padded in an arc until he was in line with its tail. He crept forwards and hesitated when the hare’s ears swung in his direction. It reared its head and turned slightly until he was in view.

Once again, Adam padded around it until he was in the blind spot at the back of its head. It blinked and returned to the clover. The beta slid closer and the hare popped its head up again, keeping one eye on him. Adam moved to its blind spot.

This pattern continued until the beta was three metres away and suddenly, the hare kicked off and bounded through the forest, Adam hot on its heels. As he ran, he made sure to stay in its blind spot at all times and the hare soon began to slow, tired and unable to detect Adam’s presence. He surged forwards and clamped his jaws around the back of the animal’s neck, scruffing it rather than outright killing it. It panicked and kicked out a few times, wriggling desperately to escape but Adam held firm and it soon fell limp in exhaustion, all the fight drained from it.
He turned to Sam and Gabe, who were a few seconds behind and presented his work to them.

Both adults stared at the bundle of fluff in surprise.

“Wow. That was pretty good. How did you learn how to do that?” Asked Sam, honestly puzzled. He’d assumed Adam couldn’t hunt at all, yet obviously he was wrong.

Adam carefully dropped the hare and it sprinted away into the distance. The trio watched it until it disappeared from view.

Adam shrugged. “I just forced myself to learn. I’ve never hunted in a pack but I enjoy hunting on my own. Sometimes I just catch things and let them go.”

Gabriel tilted his head. “Why?”

“I get bored,” replied Adam. “It’d be cruel to kill everything I catch just for the sake of it. If I’m not hungry then I let it go. I use it as practice.”

Sam blinked. “That’s… kind of you.” He frowned. “And difficult to do. You didn’t even scratch that hare. That takes care and precision. And lots of practice.”

Adam’s lips quirked upwards at the genuine compliment and Sam shook his head.

“Adam? Why did you never learn to hunt in a pack? Why didn’t Dad teach you?” He asked, confusion colouring his tone.

Adam suddenly fell silent and his gaze dropped to the floor. He shrugged.

“I just didn’t,” he said tightly before frowning up at Sam. “That’s why we came here.”

Sam wanted to push the matter further but something told him Adam would only get aggravated with that line of questioning. He nodded.

“Oh. Well. You certainly don’t need any lessons on how to hunt small prey. I think you’re managing perfectly well with that.”

Adam cracked a grin again, tail swishing and Sam returned the smile.

“Let’s get back to the camp. The real hunt will be starting soon and we don’t want to be down a good chaser.” He would’ve winked at the younger wolf, but it would’ve looked strange with his swollen eye so he merely glanced at the teen and Adam perked up happily.

They removed Gabriel’s remaining antler before trotting home.

* * *

“Adam, you’re on muscle,” Dean grunted without looking at the teen and both Adam and Sam glanced at him in shock.

“Shouldn’t I be on chaser?” Asked Adam as the rest of the pack openly eavesdropped whilst joining the hunting group.
“Did I say chaser?” Asked Dean irritably and Adam’s ears dropped as he frowned at the lead alpha.

“You’re on muscle,” huffed Dean.

“…But… I’m a beta,” protested Adam. “I’m nowhere near as big as the other wolves you have on muscle.”

Dean whirled on him. “You questioning my authority, kid?”

Adam shook his head and Dean narrowed his eyes. “I want you on muscle, where I can keep an eye on you.”

Adam scowled. “You’re trying to make things difficult for me,” he stated and the surrounding wolves glanced at each other, some mumbling amongst themselves.

Dean prowled closer to the beta and Adam shrunk in on himself slightly. He still hurt from yesterday and he had no intention of starting a real fight with Dean.

“I’m trying to keep my pack safe. I don’t want any of them losing an eye because you can’t keep a lid on your emotions,” growled Dean and Adam watched his father glance at Sam’s face in realisation.

The beta scowled even deeper. “No, you want to make a fool out of me because you know I have no chance of bringing a deer all the way down. You probably want to watch me get trampled,” he huffed and Dean growled warningly.

“If you don’t want to get trampled, stay out of the way,” barked Dean before turning and pacing away.

“And what’s that going to teach me?” Called Adam in frustration. “You’re supposed to be teaching me how to hunt, not side-lining me or trying to make things more difficult for me.”

Adam half-hoped someone would agree with him or back him up, but with the way he’d treated the pack these past couple of weeks, everybody was huffing or nodding in agreement with Dean. Some, like Bobby and Benny and Crowley, looked wholly disinterested with the entire conversation.

“I don’t have to teach you anything,” snarled Dean, marching towards him again. “Sam tried to teach you how to fight and look what you did to him.” There were a few surprised and appalled glances between Sam and Adam. Some wolves scowled at him in distaste.

Adam shrugged back. “I’m sorry,” he tried. “I never meant to hurt him like that.”

“As I recall, you absolutely meant to claw his face like that. You’re a sore loser and a petty pup,” growled Dean.

“Adam, is this true?” Asked John. “Did you mean to cause Sam to suffer even when he was trying to help you?”

Adam shook his head frantically. “I… It was an accident! I didn’t-”

“An accident?!” Seethed Dean. “You looked pretty unapologetic when it happened. The way I remember it, you had the gall to smirk and tell him that now you were both bleeding!”

Adam’s gaze turned desperate. “I never wanted to do that to him! I lashed out and I’m sorry, but—”

“I think we need to have a word tonight,” growled John, leaving no room for argument and Adam sagged. He knew what that meant.

“You’re on muscle,” rumbled Dean as Adam’s lips drew into a thin line. He glared at Dean.

“Oh, so it’s fine for you to rip me to shreds, then?” He gestured to his scraped and bruised body.

Dean flinched and eyed his father warily for a moment before whirling to scowl at the beta.

“We were training. You get injured during training. At least I didn’t try to claw your eyes out.” He shook his head. “If you can’t handle a few aches, don’t ask us to teach you to fight.”

“A few aches?” Repeated Adam, disbelievingly. “You were enjoying sinking your claws into me! You knew I’d never fought before, yet you didn’t exactly go easy on me!”

“I’d consider it a fair punishment after what you’ve done to Sam,” stated John and Adam snapped his mouth shut as Dean quirked a bitter smirk at him. He couldn’t believe how everyone was ganging up on him like this. It wasn’t fair.

“Get to the back of the pack,” ordered Dean harshly and Adam thought about protesting but he knew he wouldn’t win, so he closed his eyes in defeat and turned away.

“Since when do you put betas of Adam’s size on muscle?” Scowled Sam. “Since when do you put first-timers on muscle?”

Dean blinked in surprise at being challenged by his brother.

“I’ve just explained all that,” he said, confused. “Plus, Adam’s not your average first-timer. He should’ve learned how to hunt years ago.”

“It’s still his first time,” argued Sam. “Whether he should’ve learned to hunt earlier or not. He’s right; you’re not being fair.”

There were a few stunned looks and shocked murmurs around the camp and Dean gaped at his brother.

“Sam, what are you doing? The decision’s been made. He’s on muscle. Why is this such a big deal?”

“Don’t be a jerk, Dean,” huffed Sam. “He made a mistake. You’ve punished him enough. He said he’s sorry. Forget about it.”

Dean scowled. “He nearly took out your eye.”

“I’m aware,” snorted Sam. “He apologised for it. Let’s get on with our lives and teach him how to hunt properly.”

“You’ve changed your tune,” huffed Dean. “Yesterday you were quite happy to teach him a lesson and be tough with him. What’s different today?”

“What’s different is he came into my shelter last night at midnight, soaking wet, frozen, clearly been crying and looking like he’d done a sparring session with Azazel!” Snapped Sam. “He came to check that I still had two eyes, blurted an apology out at me and would’ve trudged back to his shelter in that state if it hadn’t been for Gabriel inviting him in and getting us to actually communicate with each other!”
The omega shook his head. “So, stop humiliating the poor kid and try talking to him!”

Dean’s eyes blew wide before they narrowed, a touch aggravatedly.

“I’ll trust him when he proves he’s learned how to behave appropriately in a pack.” He glanced at Adam. “Back of the group. Now.”

Adam winced and trudged to the back of the pack, but Sam snorted.

“Screw that. Adam, you’re with me.”

“Sam,” Dean warned as his brother turned his back on him but the omega threw a cool glare over his shoulder with his good eye.

“Stop trying to show off in front of Dad.”

Dean clamped his mouth shut as Sam took up position by Adam’s side. The beta glanced up at him gratefully and Sam offered him a small smile.

John glanced between his sons with an unreadable expression and Dean frowned.

“In case you’ve forgotten, you’re muscle too,” he snapped at Sam and the omega rolled his eye.

“Gabriel’s not.”

Gabriel’s eyes widened as he glanced between Dean and Sam. The other alpha was staring at him waringly; telling him to stay where he was, but Sam was watching him expectantly, encouraging him to take Adam’s other side.

Gabriel heaved an internal sigh and took one step towards his lover.

“Gabriel,” Dean growled softly and the smaller alpha paused, looking at Dean like a scolded pup. John was watching the proceedings with interest; the rest of the pack waiting in suspense.

Gabriel’s gaze flitted over to his lover helplessly and he grimaced when Sam’s expression fell.

He took another cautious step towards Sam and winced at Dean’s light growl.

With an audible sigh, Gabriel made his way to Adam’s other side and he cast his gaze to a disgruntled Dean.

“Sorry, Dean. I’m afraid I’m with Sam on this.”

Dean was tense for a moment and Gabriel wondered if the alpha would reprimand him. Michael would have. In fact, disobeying a head alpha’s demand so blatantly was hard for Gabriel. It usually resulted in a horrific beating and he tried his best to avoid those. Would Dean punish him?

Sam and Dean stared at one another for a few long moments and Gabriel held his breath. However, Dean eventually backed down and looked away.

“He better not lose us a meal,” he grumbled before stalking to the front of the pack, where Castiel was frowning lightly at him. They exchanged a few words before Dean snapped at everyone to get moving.

“Thanks,” whispered Adam quietly, sincere appreciation bleeding into his tone and when Sam smiled softly at him, the beta gently rubbed his head against Sam’s shoulder. He immediately did the
same to Gabriel.

He focused on the path ahead and Sam eyed Gabriel gratefully for supporting him. He leaned across to lick Gabriel’s cheek.

“I know how hard that was for you,” he breathed into the alpha’s ear and Gabriel offered him a shaky smirk.

“You’d better make it up to me,” he murmured, licking Sam’s swollen eye.

Sam grinned and curled his tail around Gabriel’s.

* * *

The comment about showing off had stung. It set Dean in a bad mood for the rest of the hunt and he was hurt that his brother had seemingly turned against him when he had been trying to defend Sam in the first place.

Sam had challenged his authority often enough that it shouldn’t bother him; sometimes it was good to have a differing opinion off his brother. However, this afternoon had been different. Sam didn’t often challenge him in front of the pack and he’d never brought another pack member into their argument, yet today Gabriel had been forced to choose between his lover and his leader in full view of everyone else. Technically, Dean had every right to make an example out of Gabriel but he would never do that because Gabriel had been forced to make a tough decision.

Sam however, was a different matter.

He’d never harm his brother but he would be having strong words with him later. Sam had questioned his authority in front of the pack and he’d acted inappropriately by involving Gabriel. If the pack thought it was okay to question Dean’s orders or challenge his authority, things would spiral into chaos and the pack would fall apart. He couldn’t just let incidents like that go.

His father would never have allowed that to happen. Nobody ever questioned his dad’s orders and the pack always stayed in line. What would his dad think about what had happened this afternoon?

Dean paused. Why did he care what his dad thought? He didn’t want to lead like his dad had; he was trying to move away from that sort of thing. It’s not like he was trying to impress him or anything.

…Was he?

“If you insist on thinking so hard, your eyes will explode,” muttered Cas.

Dean glanced over to him. He could tell his mate wasn’t happy and was only holding his tongue because Dean was frustrated with the day’s events.

“You gonna gang up on me too?” Dean muttered, unable to help himself. Cas shot him a filthy glare.

“You are going to insist on behaving like a child?” The omega fired back and Dean looked away.

“First Sam, then Gabriel, now you. What is it? Pick on Dean day?” Grumbled the alpha and Cas snorted.
“You’re being too harsh on Adam,” Cas said bluntly. “I understand that you needed to show him his actions have consequences and whilst I believe you went too far in sparring with him and causing all those injuries, it’s obvious why you did it. Placing him on muscle in his first hunt is pure cruelty. I can’t tell whether you want him to hold back and stay out of everyone’s way or whether you wish for him to physically suffer. If it’s the latter, I’m appalled,” he continued, refusing to sugar-coat anything.

Dean frowned and wouldn’t meet his gaze.

“He hurt Sam.”

“Sam appears to be over that fact.”

“I’m not!” Huffed Dean. “Kid needs an attitude adjustment and he’s gonna learn the hard way.”

Cas scowled. “No. You’re going to force him to learn the hard way. I don’t understand why you can’t talk to him.”

“He won’t listen,” Dean shot back and Cas’ mouth drew into a thin line.

“Or maybe it’s just you don’t want to listen to him.”

Dean scowled and Cas didn’t give him time to protest.

“It’s not his fault that John’s his father. Stop treating him as though it is.”

Dean clamped his mouth shut and kept his gaze lowered.

“It’s nothing to do with that,” he grumbled even though he knew it was. “I can’t let him get away with treating the pack like he does.” He shot the omega a glare. “As I recall, you had no problem biting him.”

Cas huffed. “A warning nip on the rump. I never actually set out to hurt him, merely shock him. Not only have you physically injured him, you’re humiliating him. You’re setting him up to fail despite his confession of remorse.”

Dean frowned but remained quiet and Cas scowled. “You’re being unreasonable. Reconsider his position.”

“No,” grunted out Dean stubbornly. “He stays on muscle.”

Cas’ lips drew into a thin line and he turned to determine the direction of the scent he’d just caught. He led the pack off at an angle.

“I’ll be disappointed if you truly are attempting to ‘show off’ in front of your father,” Cas muttered and Dean’s ears drooped.

“I’m doing what I have to,” said Dean under his breath and Cas shook his head in a manner that suggested he didn’t believe him.

“The pack wanted you to lead; impress them not your father.”

“Shut up, Cas. You don’t even know my father,” Dean hissed and he flinched as soon as the words left his mouth.

Cas stiffened and refused to look at his mate as he tracked the scent in silence. He trotted a little
further ahead of Dean, tail high and offended and Ed, Harry and Becky, the pack’s other trackers, glanced at him curiously. It was unusual for him to venture away from Dean’s side during tracking.

Tail tucked between his legs and ears flat, Dean crept towards his lover after a few minutes.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that,” he whispered apologetically and Cas didn’t even flick an ear in acknowledgement.

“You know I didn’t mean that,” murmured Dean. “I don’t know why I said it.”

No response.

“Cas, I’m sorry,” whispered Dean. “I always value your opinion.”

Nothing.

Dean closed his eyes and sighed softly. The omega had hit the nail on the head; that’s why he’d snapped at him. He was just too stubborn to admit it.

“Alright, I was a jerk,” confessed Dean. “I’m jealous. I took my anger out on the kid. I’m still taking it out on him…” He shook his head. “I’m sorry for offending you. You know that’s not how I feel. You ground me even when I want to stew in my frustrations and sometimes I lash out because I can’t always handle when I’m told I’m in the wrong.” He licked his lips.

“You’re right; I was totally out of line back there and I was trying to humiliate him and watch him suffer. I probably shouldn’t have laid into him during sparring like I did, but I don’t regret it too much because he does need to learn. However, I’ll go a little easier on him from now on and I’ll try not to tangle him up with my own personal issues, alright?” Dean tried sincerely as he gazed at the side of his lover’s face.

Castiel gave no implication that he’d even heard Dean and the alpha frowned in surprise. This was supposed to be the part where Cas rolled his eyes, huffed and then forgave Dean. So why wasn’t any of that happening?

“Cas? I’m sorry. I’ll put the kid on chaser, okay?”

Cas refused to acknowledge his presence.

Dean’s ears plastered themselves to his head and he stared at his mate pleadingly.

“Cas? Please don’t fight. I’m sorry; you were right. I was being unnecessarily cruel and I hurt you in the process, but I didn’t mean to. Please forgive me.”

When Cas still didn’t look at him, Dean cautiously leaned over to lick at his cheek. He recoiled with wide eyes when Cas growled softly.

Cas never growled at him.

He shuffled away and hunched in on himself slightly as he stared at his mate with a wounded expression. What was going on? Why wasn’t Cas forgiving him? Had what he said really been so cruel? He didn’t understand.

Why was everyone getting on at him today?

He kept quiet as they trekked through the forest, his thoughts turning more self-depreciative the longer Cas refused to speak to him. Why was he such a screw up? Why did he keep hurting people
he cared about? Why couldn’t he admit to his own mistakes?

“Cas,” he whined quietly. “I’m so sorry. Tell me what to do to fix it.” He just wanted his mate to want him again.

Finally, Castiel glanced at him.

“Now you know how Adam feels,” he murmured and Dean blinked in confusion. Out of all the things he expected Cas to say, that wasn’t one of them. The omega paused for a second to let Dean catch up and the alpha carefully pressed into Cas’ side, delighted when the omega nuzzled his jaw.

“I ignored you, made you feel unwanted and when you tried to get close to me, I growled at you and refused to acknowledge you. I never bit you, but it was still a rejection and a method of hurting you mentally. I humiliated you and made you feel small by disregarding everything you had to say,” stated Cas quietly. “Did you enjoy it?”

Dean shook his head frantically and Cas nodded.

“Exactly. Compare what I just did to what you’ve been doing to Adam. Don’t forget that you physically hurt him too. How do you think he’s feeling right now?”

Dean glanced away in shame and Cas watched him for a moment, holding off from offering comfort. He needed to prove a point. “It’s easy to punish someone when you don’t consider their emotions and thoughts.”

“I need to talk to him,” mumbled Dean.

“Yes.”

Dean winced and glanced back towards his lover. “I’m sorry.”

“I know,” Cas said, gaze softening. “I didn’t enjoy that either.”

Dean slowly rubbed his head under Cas’ chin and the omega purred comfortingly, proving he wasn’t angry.

“Something tells me this is about more than me being jealous of my half-brother,” muttered Dean and Cas sighed quietly.

“I don’t want to see you turn into my older brothers,” he mumbled. “Michael bullies people who are younger than him all the time. He judges people by their genders and whilst I know you’re nothing like him, watching you give Adam a hard time reminded me of him. Michael, Lucifer and Raphael all punish those who disagree with them, verbally and physically and everyone is frightened of them, even their own pack. They always tried to impress Father even when they knew that meant being cruel or unfair and they reprimanded all those who stood up to them.” Cas lowered his gaze.

“When you growled at Gabriel, I… I had this flashback to…” The omega shook his head, unable to continue and Dean quickly cuddled into his side, licking his head and nuzzling him soothingly.

“When I was younger; I’d just started having heat cycles the previous year and my mother insisted I take suppressants and stay out of school until the cycle was over. I wasn’t allowed to see my friends and my parents mostly isolated me in my room for the entire cycle with the reasoning that I would distract my brothers from their studies. After all, they were more important because they were alphas and I was the youngest.
“At fourteen, my cycles were irregular and unpredictable and some lasted a few days whilst others lasted for weeks. I had more than two per year. I was embarrassed and frustrated at being on house arrest and with my hormones all over the place, I would argue and yell at my parents and brothers, explaining how it wasn’t fair that I had to stay in my room because I was a ‘distraction’ to alphas and betas. Eventually, my family had enough.

“Mother and Father had been yelling at me for a while when Michael arrived. I was at the peak of my heat and I just rounded on him. I remember his fury and the nauseating scent he was spewing as he approached me. I knew he was going to batter me but I couldn’t think to defend myself. All I wanted to do was submit to him; his scent was that intimidating. I remember him raising his hand and suddenly Gabriel was in front of me, snarling and warning Michael to back off. The next thing I knew, Michael had Gabriel on the floor, his fist smashing into his face repeatedly and there was so much blood coating Gabriel. It was horrifying. I couldn’t do anything and Mother and Father refused to break them up because they believed Gabriel needed to learn a lesson about staying in line.”

Castiel closed his eyes at the painful memory.

“I never argued about the pills or being locked in my room again. I knew Gabriel would stand up for me and I didn’t want him to go through that ever again. I was scared about being beaten too. When Sam and Gabe stood up for Adam today and you started growling… all I could think about was…”

He didn’t need to finish. Dean growled protectively and nuzzled his mate’s jaw.

“I would never hurt Gabriel or Sam like that. They’re family.”

Cas smiled softly at him and Dean licked his muzzle. “I’m sorry I hurt Adam. I should never have gone that far. I’m sorry for distressing you.”

Cas leaned into him. “Promise me you’ll talk with him?”

“I promise,” agreed Dean and Cas smiled in satisfaction and licked his mate’s nose.

* * *

Adam was surprised when Dean wandered over and gruffly told him he was on chaser. It was a relief though and Dean had taken him off guard when he said when they got home, he wanted to apologise for his earlier behaviour. Sam had glanced at the alpha proudly and Dean nodded at both him and Gabriel before trotting off to the front of the pack again.

Now he was in the middle of a meadow, deer thundering all around him, his legs pounding the ground as fast as they could go and the pack was barking and laughing and cheering in every direction.

He was having the time of his life.

He’d never had so much fun.

They’d messed up. Jo had been the decoy but when she’d crept to the front of the herd, she hadn’t expected the wandering fawn in her way and it had stared wide-eyed at her before crying out for its mother.

The herd had panicked and the mother had raced over and butted Jo into a tree, before the lead stag had guided everyone away from Jo and the rest of the pack. The chasers had immediately bounded
around the meadow to stop their escape but they weren’t quick enough and the herd split, some continuing forwards whilst others backed up and turned around. Focusing on the half that had changed course, the chasers ran straight through the centre of the meadow and tried to isolate one of the deer, but in doing so had startled the other half that had nearly escaped and sent them stampeding in ten different directions, which in turn had started a chain reaction and now there were deer everywhere, none of them knowing which way to gallop.

Orders and plans went out the window in these situations and the pack focused on trying to stay with one deer long enough without getting speared by an antler or crushed by hooves, and they were having fun doing so.

Adam grinned and dodged a young buck with its antlers lowered and he slipped between the legs of a doe. He spotted Meg expertly leap over a fawn in her quest to chase a doe that appeared to be limping slightly and he changed course and rocketed after her.

Muscle was hot on the tails of any chaser they came across and Adam was delighted to find Crowley already backing Meg up. He eyed Adam for a second before gesturing to the doe’s free left side and Adam pushed himself faster, nipping at her heels when she turned to break away from Meg.

Meg leapt upwards and rammed into the doe’s side, making her stumble and Adam bit at her belly until she faltered, giving Crowley enough time to catch up and lunge for her back. She kicked out at him and he struggled to hold on but then Meg was on her too, teeth latched onto her shoulder.

The doe cried out and skidded across the ground, bucking a rearing like a rodeo bull in hopes of dislodging the pair, but Adam wrapped his jaws around her back leg and she overbalanced and toppled to the floor. By the time her head hit the ground, Crowley already had his teeth in her neck.

“Good work, kid,” drawled Meg and Adam beamed, tail wagging as he glanced to the rest of the pack.

He watched Chuck and Becky manage to slow a doe long enough for Benny to leap on its back, but before the alpha had a chance to latch on to its neck, the lead stag stormed over, lethal antlers lowered and heading directly for Chuck.

The beta had his back turned to the threat and Benny’s eyes widened at the speed of the stag. He hopped off the doe and smashed into Chuck’s side, pinning him to the floor and grimacing when a couple of sharp antler prongs grazed his flank.

Chuck gasped and both wolves stared in horror as the stag whirled and headed towards them again. They scrambled to their paws and tried to run, but they were slow to start and the stag was gaining ground on them fast.

A few pack members barked urgently in terror as they watched the scene unfold and as the pair turned sharply to dodge the stag, his antlers scraped Chuck’s rump and the beta yelped at the flare of pain. The stag was relentless and he thundered after them mercilessly, his herd parting for him as he lowered his weapons again, gaining ground on his enemies, but suddenly he bellowed in agony and reared, allowing Benny and Chuck to scarper.

The stag made a furious sound as he swung his antlers towards his back, bucking and rearing and snorting and Adam gasped when he noticed Dean clinging on to his back, biting and clawing viciously. He growled when the antlers stabbed his side and wrapped his jaws around the stag’s thick neck. Sam was quick to join him and snapped at the animal’s throat, bouncing out of the way when it tried to smash its antlers into his face.
Dean dug his claws into the stag’s shoulders and the creature bellowed in outrage as it reared high into the air and tried to stamp on Sam, but the omega lunged for its stomach and it stumbled and cried out in agony.

Dean wrapped his teeth around its neck again and tugged, making it stagger to one side and Sam took a running jump at its hindquarters until it lost its balance. Dean yanked its neck again and it toppled onto its side, bellowing in fear as its legs scrambled for purchase on anything they could reach.

Dean managed to leap out of the way before he got crushed by its weight and Sam locked his jaws around its throat until it fell silent and lifeless.

The rest of the herd had escaped a while ago; the stag giving his final breath to protect them and Dean and Sam stared at its humongous form for a moment, panting heavily, before turning to Chuck and Benny to check if they were unharmed.

Adam suddenly realised why Dean and Sam were leaders of the pack.

Upon confirming the pair were relatively unscathed, Sam turned to his brother and glanced worriedly at his side, all earlier arguments forgotten.

“You okay?” Sam asked softly, troubled gaze landing on the blood trickling slowly through Dean’s fur. The alpha nodded with a reassuring quirk of his lips before asking his brother the same question. Sam nodded freely and both brothers glanced at the fallen doe that Adam, Meg and Crowley had downed. They turned back to the mighty stag.

“We can’t carry him back,” Sam observed. “Those antlers will catch everything they touch.”

Dean nodded. “We can eat here and we’ll carry the doe home for Bobby, Ellen, Pam and the pups and anyone who isn’t filled here.”

Murmurs of agreement flitted around the pack and Dean shrugged.

“Dig in.”

* * *

Once they were back at the camp and everyone had polished off their meal, Dean slowly made his way towards Adam, who was chatting to Crowley and Meg. The young beta was smiling and Dean realised it was the first time he’d seen Adam happy.

“Adam,” he coughed lightly and the beta’s smile faded slightly as he approached. Crowley and Meg glanced at each other and subtly left the pair alone.

Adam lowered his head ever so slightly as a sign of respect and Dean blinked because he’d never seen the beta do that either. He sat in front of the teen.

“You did well out there,” he commented. “I’m impressed. You said that’s your first time hunting?”

Adam nodded. “First time hunting in a pack.”

Dean cocked his head to one side. “You’ve hunted before, then?”
“Only rabbits and little creatures,” mumbled Adam, still not quite meeting the alpha’s gaze and Dean began to wonder if it was more out of fear than respect. He looked over the beta’s bruised and scratched body and grimaced guiltily.

“Well… I’m proud of you,” Dean admitted quietly. “You proved yourself a valuable member of the team.”

Adam blinked in surprise but still wouldn’t meet his gaze and Dean felt shame flood his systems when he noticed the beta was hunching in on himself a little; attempting to make his form look smaller.

“Adam, look at me.”

The beta did, slowly; as if he was frightened Dean would lash out at him. The alpha sighed.

“I’m sorry,” he murmured. “My behaviour towards you these past few days has been wholly unacceptable. I had no right taking my emotions out on you and I regret every injury I caused you. I should’ve been more patient. I shouldn’t have treated you with such contempt.” He shook his head. “And I should never have humiliated you in front of the pack like that. I was out of line. I hope you can forgive me despite having every reason not to.”

Adam’s tense posture finally relaxed.

“You had every right to put me in my place,” muttered Adam. “I was rude and offensive and I hurt Sam. At first I didn’t understand why you were leader, but today I saw it. You’re so protective of your pack and I kept saying such terrible things about them and you and I wanted to hurt you because I’m just a stupid pup with major attitude issues; no wonder you wanted to teach me a lesson. I’m so sorry.” The beta glanced at his paws and Dean’s gaze softened.

“Hey, none of that ‘put me in my place’ nonsense,” huffed Dean. “This pack doesn’t work like that. Yes, I was trying to teach you a lesson about respect, but I went about it completely the wrong way and there’s no excuse for that. You shouldn’t be so scared you can’t look at me.”

Adam’s gaze snapped to his face.

“And if you’re a stupid pup with major attitude issues, then I’m a bigger, more stupid pup with more attitude issues,” murmured Dean. “And you had every right to stand up for yourself earlier today. I was being cruel and I’m glad you could see that.”

Adam looked stunned by the confession and Dean tilted his head.

“Is it true you checked up on Sam last night?”

Adam nodded and lowered his gaze shyly.

“I couldn’t sleep and I wanted to make sure he still had both eyes. He and Gabriel were very kind; they cleaned me up and dried me off and let me sleep with them because I was so cold. This morning they gave me a hunting lesson.” He smiled slightly. “I had a lot of fun.”

Dean’s lips quirked upwards for a moment before the expression faded.

“You stayed out in that field all day yesterday?”

Adam nodded silently and Dean grimaced.
“Adam, I can’t even begin to apologise for what I did to you…”

“It’s okay, I deserved it.”

“No, you didn’t.”

“It’s what Dad would’ve done.”

Dean snapped his mouth shut. That wasn’t the reply he had expected Adam to shrug so casually. Yes, their father could be harsh with punishments, but he would never beat his own son like that. Not over something so trivial.

…Would he?

Adam seemed to realise what he’d said and his eyes widened fractionally before he shook his head.

“…I mean… he… he wouldn’t go that far, but he’d certainly have something to say about it. My lack of respect, I mean.”

Dean nodded hesitantly. Adam’s stuttering was worrisome. Had… Had his dad hurt the beta previously?

No. He couldn’t have. He’d changed since Sam and Dean had last seen him; that much was obvious.

“Either way, I shouldn’t have caused you so much pain. When you’ve healed, I promise I’ll show you how to fight, without causing so much harm,” offered Dean and Adam perked up a little.

“Thank you.”

Dean smiled. “No problem. Now go make some new friends,” he said, glancing over to the unsubtle eavesdropping duo of Crowley and Meg. Adam grinned and bowed his head properly, this time out of respect and Dean returned the gesture, making Adam’s tail wag. He trotted off towards the other couple.

With a contented smile, Dean returned to his own mate.

* * *

“Dean and Adam seem to have worked their issues out,” commented Hannah as she followed Gadreel to their favourite spot. She swept her tail through the grass just to watch the fireflies leap into the air in protest.

“I know. I accidentally stumbled across Castiel telling Dean how ‘proud’ he was of his alpha and how he was going to ‘reward’ him for being a good leader,” shuddered Gadreel. He'd made a U-turn when Dean started whispering filthy comments down Cas’ ear and decided his query about Dean’s injury and health could wait. Clearly his wound wasn’t that important.

Hannah giggled and Gadreel shook his head in exasperation as he wandered through the long grasses.

“You know… we could always follow their example,” Hannah hummed coyly and Gadreel paused because that sounded like an excellent suggestion.
The omega smirked and rubbed herself against his side, tucking her head under his chin in a silent beg to scent mark her. He did so enthusiastically and she curled their tails together with a grin.

After a few moments, he wedged his nose into her neck, scenting her contentedly. He smiled at her sweetness and pressed closer, seeking more of her enticing blueberry and buttercup aroma. Her scent never failed to relax him and tonight was no different. He always felt inexplicably content when around her but when they were alone, the feeling intensified and a thrill ran up his spine when she started flirting with him.

She buried her own nose in his neck and sighed happily, closing her eyes. His heart pulsed a little faster at knowing he made her happy and when she snuggled into him, he rumbled deeply.

She chuckled and purred in teasing and he licked her cheek gently.

She pulled back slightly and gazed at him with a certain heat that made warmth pool in Gadreel’s belly as his blood began to migrate south. She licked his mouth and nipped at his jaw and Gadreel ducked to nuzzle and lick her throat lustfully. She hummed approvingly and Gadreel nipped her neck gently, greedily inhaling her scent and lapping at it.

Suddenly, Hannah latched onto his ear and tugged on it like a pup. She growled playfully and when Gadreel shot upright in a mixture of surprise and confusion, she laughed and scurried away.

With a smile tugging at his lips, Gadreel chased after her.

The fireflies rocketed out of their path, lighting the clearing in oranges and yellows and Gadreel admired the glow of the moonlight upon Hannah’s fur. She looked much healthier than when she’d first arrived at the pack and Gadreel couldn’t help but think how beautiful she was; ethereal almost. Her fur was incredibly soft and her body delicate and agile and Gadreel couldn’t believe she was his. She had changed so much since they’d first met. Her personality was far more apparent now; placid and determined and affectionate with a hint of cheekiness when they were alone. Gadreel adored it.

They may not have said it to each other yet, but Gadreel knew he loved her.

She waited for him to catch up and leapt out of his way when he lunged for her. She nipped at his tail and sprinted away again and he raced after her, eventually closing in on her until her could pin her to the ground.

He chewed on her ear with a grin and she laughed and batted at him without much protest, so he growled and pretended to prepare himself for a fight. She growled back and they play-fought for a few seconds, gently biting at each other’s legs and neck before Hannah took the alpha off-guard by rolling him over, licking his face messily and sprinting away again.

He scrambled to his paws and galloped after her and she winked at him and quickly dropped her chest to the floor, wriggling her rump in the air as she shifted her tail out of the way.

Gadreel’s face heated at the blatant presenting position but he rumbled lowly and stalked towards her.

“Talk dirty to me,” she teased and Gadreel ducked his head with a shy smile, making her laugh.

When he reached her, he nuzzled her exposed entrance and lapped at it a few times, making her groan quietly.

Then, with a smirk, he tackled her to the ground and rolled her onto her back and nipped at her ear.
“I win,” he teased and she pouted and licked his muzzle.

“You’re not very good at this game,” she stated solemnly and he quirked a grin and tickled her belly with his nose. She burst into a fit of giggles and batted at his face until he began their play-fighting again and this time they were a little rougher as Hannah attempted to prevent the alpha’s occasional tickling of her belly.

He nipped at her neck and suddenly, a blur of bronze and white smashed into Gadreel with a feral snarl and the alpha yelped as a claw slashed his face, leaving deep wounds in its wake.

“Gadreel!” Hannah cried in horror as what she could now tell was another alpha pinned him to the floor and snapped far too close to his neck.

The grey and white alpha kicked out hard, sending the other alpha tumbling to the ground, but he was quick to climb to his paws and the pair clashed heavily, snapping and snarling and clawing fiercely at each other.

Gadreel threw the other alpha to the ground and shoved his body in front of Hannah’s, shielding her from their enemy’s view. Hackles raised and teeth bared, Gadreel snarled viciously at his attacker as the other wolf righted himself and leapt at him again.

“Stay away from her,” the other alpha hissed as he clawed at Gadreel’s sides and sunk his teeth into his shoulder. Gadreel bit back a yelp and returned the attack, digging his claws into the other alpha’s back as he bit into the side of his neck.

Gadreel chose not to reply to the odd comment and this seemed to irk the deranged alpha more. He slashed Gadreel’s muzzle and attempted to lunge for his throat, but Gadreel head-butted him and sent him crashing to the floor. The grey and white alpha leapt on top of the smaller wolf, noting the hundreds of scars and bruises and old gashes already littering his frame and Gadreel was honestly surprised the other alpha could fight at all in that condition. He should barely be able to walk.

Why would he start a fight with a perfectly healthy alpha who was also larger than him?

However, fight he did. The smaller wolf hooked his claws into Gadreel’s shoulders and Gadreel growled as more claws penetrated his stomach. He struck his enemy across the face and wrapped his jaws around the side of his neck the moment it was exposed. The smaller wolf cried out in agony as Gadreel bit deeper and he dragged his claws from the larger wolf’s shoulders, down his back, leaving deep, bloody gashes.

Gadreel hissed and tried to smash his paw into the other alpha’s chin so he could bare his throat, but his enemy bit his paw and with an aggravated snarl, Gadreel lunged downwards, aiming for his throat.

His enemy shouldn’t have been able to fight so furiously, yet the smaller alpha clamped his jaws around Gadreel’s muzzle and for a few moments, their teeth clashed and they gnashed at each other for a second before Gadreel finally managed to slam his paw into the other wolf’s Adam’s apple.

The smaller alpha gagged and recoiled, but Gadreel didn’t expect his enemy to recover so quickly and just as he was leaning down to sink his teeth into the other alpha’s throat, his opponent shot upwards and Gadreel shouted in agony as teeth ripped into his throat.

He was fortunate they didn’t penetrate too deep, but he was even more fortunate that Hannah had managed to worm her way around to their enemy undetected, and she clawed his face and bit at his neck.
The smaller alpha yelped and shoved the stunned Gadreel off him, hitting Hannah in the process and seeing Hannah recoil made something within Gadreel snap.

He pounced on the other alpha, jaws wide and claws outstretched and the two battled furiously for a few minutes, landing heavy blows and slashing at each other’s bodies. They snarled and tore into each other, pulling out fur and never stopping even when blood was pouring down their frames.

With an outraged snarl, Hannah teamed up with Gadreel. Nobody was allowed to hurt her alpha.

She bit at their enemy’s sides and sliced into his back and face and both she and Gadreel were shocked when the battered alpha yelped and scrambled backwards, staring at her with wide eyes as she pressed into Gadreel’s side and positioned her head in front of his injured throat, protecting him.

The bronze and white alpha stared at them both for a second, unmoving and chest heaving as Gadreel growled threateningly at him and as his expression fell into something wounded and heartbroken, Hannah’s eyes bulged.

For a moment she couldn’t speak, her blood like ice in her veins and Gadreel could sense there was something wrong for he nuzzled her ear worriedly, wondering why her scent had abruptly turned sour in a combination of mortification, shock, confusion and horror.

Hannah gulped and took a small step towards their enemy and Gadreel huffed warningly at her. She ignored him and scented the air, never taking her eyes off their apparently devastated opponent.

“Balthazar?” She breathed.

The other alpha nodded cautiously and Gadreel gaped, frozen in horror.

Tears rolled down Hannah’s cheeks and she choked out a sob as she ran towards her mate. He dragged himself to his paws and held her tight when she threw herself at him, relieved tears streaming down his face.

“I thought you were dead,” sobbed Hannah, burying her face into his neck and he scented her just as desperately.

“I’ve missed you,” he choked out, trying to curl his whole body around her until they couldn’t figure out where one began and the other ended. “I thought I’d never see you again.”

“I’m here,” whispered Hannah, her tears coating Balthazar’s fur. “I’m never leaving you again.” She sounded wrecked and Balthazar nodded and hugged her tighter, licking her neck and jaw tenderly as she lapped at his wounds.

Gadreel watched his whole world come crashing down around him.

His knees trembled, threatening to give out under his weight and he could suddenly feel ever injury and bruise Balthazar had inflicted upon him.

He wanted to cry.

He didn’t though and when Balthazar eyed him suspiciously, he sat as stoic as ever, returning his gaze steadily.

“Who’s that?” The bronze and white alpha asked loudly and pointedly, making it known that he didn’t appreciate Gadreel’s presence.
Hannah finally turned to look at him.

“This is Gadreel Milton of the Winchester pack. He’s my…” she trailed off, eyes widening as she realised what problems Balthazar’s arrival had created.

“Friend,” finished Gadreel smoothly when Balthazar narrowed his eyes. “I’m her friend.” He wanted to scream.

Balthazar clearly didn’t buy that explanation.

“You had her pinned to the floor on her back and you seemed to be struggling with her. Last time I checked, alphas trap omegas when they are unwilling and want to knot them. At least, that’s what I thought you were trying to do before she started defending you. So, what are you to her really?”

Hannah turned to her mate, mortified and Gadreel wanted to growl at the other alpha for insinuating he’d do something so horrific to Hannah. He stared coolly back.

“A friend,” he repeated. “I enjoy Hannah’s company very much. She’s intelligent and playful and she’s the most interesting wolf I’ve ever met.” He stood. “However, if my presence bothers you, I will return to camp. When you both are ready, you should do so too. Those injuries need to be tended to, Hannah will lead you.” He closed his eyes briefly to centre himself before glancing back up to Balthazar.

“I’ve heard many great stories of you, Balthazar. I apologise our first meeting caused such damage to both of us and I can only hope we can be friends in the future. Congratulations to both of you on your reunion.”

Without another glance in Hannah’s direction (because if he did, he probably would cry) and to the sound of his heart shattering, Gadreel turned on his heel and trotted away, leaving the mated pair alone amidst the gentle glowing of the fireflies.

Chapter End Notes

I didn't know how to separate this chapter into two parts so it got clumped together. Sorry.

Also... whoops...?
Chapter 57

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Gadreel kept his gaze low as the pack gathered around Hannah and Balthazar, assessing the new arrival. He’d visited Jody as soon as he’d returned to the camp and by the time she had finished patching him up, Hannah and the apparently alive Balthazar had made their way over.

He refused to meet Hannah’s gaze, knowing if he did he’d crumble, but he managed to catch the expression of barely concealed fear and panic on Balthazar’s face when the scents of over half a dozen foreign alphas wafted over to him. His gaze darted around the unfamiliar faces, calculating escape routes and chances of survival and for a moment, Gadreel felt sorry for him, but then he frowned because this alpha had taken his lover from him.

Dean padded forwards a few steps to scent the new alpha and Balthazar flinched, looking away. Dean blinked in surprise and took a step backwards.

“Who’s this?” He asked Hannah and the omega looked troubled as she flicked her gaze to the bronze and white alpha.

“This is Balthazar.”

Dean cocked an eyebrow and subtly glanced over to Gadreel. Gadreel lowered his gaze once more and refused to acknowledge the pitying looks aimed at him from the other pack members.

“I see,” the lead alpha murmured before turning to the nervous Balthazar. “We’ve heard many stories of you. It’s good to finally put a face to the tales,” he smiled reassuringly and Balthazar relaxed slightly, watching Dean in surprise.

“Our home is as much yours as it is Hannah’s,” continued Dean, once again flicking his gaze to Gadreel uncertainly before returning it to the new alpha. “We hope you’ll find it more… comfortable than your last one.”

Balthazar ducked his head lowly out of a mixture of fear and respect.

“Thank you, alpha,” he mumbled and there was definite worry in his voice, as though he was frightened Dean would turn on him at any moment.

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line but he didn’t correct the title because Balthazar looked as though he would bolt if Dean so much as said ‘boo’ to him. He looked over the other alpha’s battered frame.

“I advise you to see Jody. Some of those wounds need to be disinfected. Hannah will introduce you, I’m sure.”

Hannah nodded as Balthazar glanced up at her and once again the new wolf returned his gaze to the floor.

“Thank you, alpha,” he repeated and Dean bit back a sigh.

“Welcome to the pack, Balthazar. My name’s Dean and that’s my brother, Sam,” he introduced, gesturing over to the large omega. “If you have any troubles or worries, we’ll be happy to help. I hope we prove friendlier than your old pack.”
Balthazar grimaced at the reminder of where he’d come from and Dean mentally scolded himself for saying the wrong thing.

“We’ll leave you two alone,” offered Dean before glancing pointedly around his pack and the other wolves dispersed, leaving Hannah and Balthazar on their own.

As he turned to leave, Gadreel allowed himself one look at Hannah and the omega was staring at him, strained and clearly desperate to say something. He nearly paused but then Balthazar breathed a sigh of relief and pressed his nose into her neck and Gadreel couldn’t look any longer.

As he trudged back to his shelter, he startled at the nose that nudged his hip. He turned to find Castiel watching him sadly, Dean not too far behind.

“If you need to talk…” Cas left the offer hanging and Gadreel managed his first small genuine smile as he glanced between the pair.

“Thank you,” he whispered and Cas returned the expression with a tiny nod as Dean bowed his head slightly.

They walked away a few moments later and Gadreel closed his eyes wearily and slunk into the shelter he used to share with his omega.

* * *

The sun was barely peeking over the horizon, signalling the start of a fresh day and Adam slunk out of his shelter, tip-toeing past his father’s shelter with a nervous glance in its direction and heading towards the lead alpha’s resting place.

When he arrived at his target, he glanced at Castiel curled around his pups and the protective paw Dean had slung around the omega’s middle and he smiled softly because Dean truly loved his little family, even if his pups weren’t biologically related. He felt almost guilty to have to wake the alpha.

Still. He had a schedule to keep.

Adam nosed at Dean’s shoulder, bending awkwardly beneath the entrance of the shelter until Dean awoke with a small groan of protest.

He rolled over tiredly and blinked at Adam a few times before his vision focused and he frowned in confusion.

“It’s nearly six,” Adam supplied helpfully and Dean moaned again, scrunching his eyes shut.

“What do you want?” He grumbled quietly and Adam tilted his head, ears drooping slightly.

“You said to be ready in the meadow at six for my fighting lessons,” he reminded and Dean blinked before looking over Adam’s battered body. Guilt tugged at his heartstrings when he remembered their vicious sparring session, but he frowned when he noticed a long slash spreading from his eye to his muzzle that he swore hadn’t been there the previous day. It looked pretty sore.

“You need to heal before you start training again,” said Dean. “Wait a few days. Maybe a week. Then we can restart the lessons.”
Adam frowned, ears dropping further. “…But I thought you said-”

“I’m not making you fight when you look like you’ve had a brawl with a tiger,” huffed Dean. “Heal. Then we’ll start again.”

“Dean… I want to do this. Please. I promise I’ll be a good student this time. I want to learn,” begged Adam and Dean’s gaze softened as he lay on his chest.

“It’s not about willingness; I can see you have plenty of that and that’s a good thing. The problem is you’re hurt and I don’t want you getting hurt any further. You need to heal.”

Adam’s ears flattened as his gaze lowered. “…Please, Dean,” he whispered. “I want to prove I can do this; not only to myself but to you, too.”

Dean blinked in surprise and cocked an ear. “You don’t need to prove anything to me, Adam. I-”

“I want to be a normal wolf,” pleaded Adam. “Everyone else can fight and hunt and do all those other things but I can’t and no one but you and Sam has been willing to teach me. Please, please let me learn. I want to learn.”

Dean once again thought it odd their father hadn’t taught him any of those skills.

He glanced at the long slash across his face, mouth drawing into an unhappy line before he sighed and nodded in defeat.

“Alright, fine. But don’t expect to engage in much sparring. You look battered enough as it is,” Dean huffed as he slid out of his shelter. He nuzzled Castiel’s head once and the omega made a sound of acknowledgement, blinking up at him sleepily to let him know he’d heard the conversation. Dean nodded and trotted towards Sam’s shelter, where the omega was wrapped around Gabriel like a blanket.

Adam’s tail wiggled excitedly as Dean nudged his brother awake.

Sam frowned grumpily and tried to bury his head back into Gabriel’s soft fur.

“Get up, Sammy. Adam wants a fighting lesson,” Dean grunted and the omega groaned in protest and snuggled further into Gabriel.

“C’mon, Sam. Kid’s excited. Get up.”

“Don’t wanna,” mumbled Sam childishly and a small smile quirked Dean’s lips.

“You’re such a pup,” chuckled Dean fondly. “Rise and shine, little brother! We’ve got work to do.” He nipped playfully at Sam’s ear and the omega growled half-heartedly, back still turned to Dean.

“Why can’t I sleep in just once?” Grumbled Sam, hugging Gabriel tighter as the golden alpha made a quiet rumble of irritation. “Can’t you teach him on your own?”

Adam’s tail tucked between his legs and he lowered his head embarrassedly. Maybe he should just retreat to his shelter? He was obviously becoming an annoyance to the Winchester pack; maybe he should keep quiet for a bit?

Dean glanced at his posture and frowned before nudging Sam’s back again.

“You’re making him upset. Stop being a jerk and get up.”
“’M not a jerk,” protested Sam, waking up more as he scowled. “Is a good night’s sleep too much to ask for?”

“Sorry,” murmured Adam guiltily. “I’ll uh… I’ll go. Didn’t mean to bother you. Sorry.” He was about to turn around when there was the sound of shuffling from within the shelter and Dean backed up a little as Sam poked his head out.

“Wait, wait. Don’t leave. I’m not… I’m just…” He pulled a face and crawled out of the shelter, stretching with a wide yawn. “I’m just tired, that’s all.” He glanced at Adam with his good eye and offered him a small smile.

Dean yawned too and shook his head. “Yeah, well, that’s my fault for being a dick and giving Adam an unreasonable time to train.”

Adam snickered as Sam nodded in agreement and Dean shot him a glare. The alpha cast an apologetic gaze to the beta.

“Maybe next time we can start lessons at a normal time? Say… nine?”

Adam nodded enthusiastically, tail wagging and Dean smiled tentatively.

“Awesome,” grumbled Sam as he clambered to stand. “Maybe I’ll be able to have a lie in.”

“And maybe I’ll actually be able to get some sleep,” griped Gabriel as he trudged out of the shelter and glared at the three brothers. “I’m not even involved in this, yet I still can’t get any rest.” He narrowed his eyes at Dean. “I’m stealing your shelter and cuddling your mate and when everything in there smells like me, you’ll have no one but yourself to blame.”

He stalked away, grumbling under his breath and disappeared into Dean’s shelter before Dean had a chance to protest.

Adam held back a laugh as Sam shook his head in amusement and Dean pouted at Gabriel’s retreating back.

“Aww,” Dean whined quietly and Adam released a snicker.

“Alright, come on. You’ve got us both up. Time to work,” huffed Dean as he nudged Adam towards the outskirts of the camp.

The beta’s tail swayed happily.

* * *

“Dean?” Asked Castiel sleepily as something warm curled around his back and draped a paw around him.

“Is an annoyingly loud pest,” huffed Gabriel as he snuggled into his brother’s fur. “You’re stuck with me instead.”

Castiel smiled and leaned into his brother, making Gabriel rumble contentedly.

“I suppose it could’ve been worse,” hummed Castiel quietly as he closed his eyes. Gabriel snorted.
“Yeah. I could’ve been Lucifer.”

Castiel shuddered and nestled further into his brother’s body. “It could’ve been a lot worse,” he agreed.

Gabriel nuzzled his ear gently before resting his head over the omega’s neck.

“Remind me to rub up against every single belonging of Dean’s when I wake up,” he mumbled and Castiel chuckled quietly and settled down to the sound of his brother’s quiet snores.

* * *

Dean was far gentler than Adam had expected. He never once used his claws and he only nipped Adam instead of full-blown biting when they sparred. Fighting with Dean was hard and he still gave the beta no time to recover before he was up and on him again, but Adam was grateful for Dean’s restraint and after twenty minutes, he realised he was genuinely having fun battling the alpha.

After an hour of Sam correcting his moves and teaching him better methods of defending himself, the omega’s advice slowly tapered off and he fell quiet as Dean and Adam sparred. Their sparring suddenly felt a lot less like fighting and more like play.

Dean pinned Adam to the ground and tugged on his ear and Adam growled teasingly and lunged upwards for Dean’s jaw. They nipped each other playfully before Adam rolled Dean onto his back and the alpha trapped his head between his paws as he chewed on his ear again.

Adam laughed and tried to wriggle free, but Dean hooked his hind legs around Adam’s hips, keeping the beta in place. Adam scrabbled at Dean’s chest and when the alpha loosened his grip, he swiped gently at the older wolf’s nose. Dean caught the paw between his teeth and chewed on it lightly and Adam ducked his head to pull at one of Dean’s ears.

The alpha released his paw and gripped his face again and the pair jawed at each other like pups, teeth clashing as they grasped each other’s muzzles.

Even Dean’s tail was wagging and Adam yipped excitedly as he latched onto Dean’s ear, refusing to let go when Dean nibbled on his paw. The alpha kicked gently at his legs but Adam still didn’t let go, so Dean batted him to the floor and the pair scrabbled and nipped at each other for dominance until Dean eventually straddled the younger wolf and began nosing at his belly.

Adam laughed and batted at the alpha’s head to stop him from tickling him, but Dean merely smirked and nosed at all of his sensitive spots until the beta slumped in defeat, too busy giggling to defend himself.

Dean eventually stepped off him and Adam rolled to his feet, still smiling and there was a mischievous twinkle in Dean’s eye as his gaze roamed over Adam. He snapped playfully at the beta and Adam leapt out of the way, yelping when Dean lunged for him again and when the alpha growled teasingly, Adam grinned and sprinted away, Dean hot on his heels.

Dean chased him around the meadow for a few minutes, howling and barking and butting his side when he got too close and Adam gave him the run-around, switching directions every few seconds and sometimes nipping and butting Dean back when the alpha caught up.
Then, something large and heavy ploughed into Adam’s side and the beta laughed as Sam pinned him to the floor and chewed at his paws. He kicked gently at the omega but Sam wouldn’t budge and soon, Dean was on him too, pulling his ears and grasping his muzzle between his jaws again.

Adam knew he stood no chance against the two larger wolves but he didn’t mind and he remained on his back, letting Sam and Dean tease him. It felt rather nice to be fussed over and played with.

Even when the older wolves pulled away, Adam remained on his back, belly up and Sam smirked at the submissive behaviour and tickled his exposed stomach, making the beta writhe.

Dean watched them play for a few moments before he winked at Adam and lunged at his brother and Adam cackled as Sam yelped and wrestled with Dean. He was quick to join in and beta and alpha ganged up against the larger omega, forcing him into submission until they could nip and tickle him. Unlike Adam, Sam fought back and a symphony of soft growls and barks escaped the trio as they battled.

Sam managed to trap Adam to his chest and he and Dean snapped lightly at each other’s jaws for a moment before Dean switched sides and chewed on Adam’s tail.

Adam tried to wriggle out of Sam’s grip but the omega was strong and he eventually slumped over the larger wolf’s chest with a huff of defeat.

Sam laughed and nipped at the teen’s ear once more before loosening his grip but he was pleasantly surprised when Adam pressed his nose into his throat, scenting deeply in the picture of submission.

Dean raised an eyebrow at the display and Sam shrugged and bared his neck further as Adam nosed deeper into his fur. The beta sighed happily and closed his eyes as he basked in Sam’s scent.

The omega smelled like family… like home and with how happy he felt at that moment, he never wanted to move. He whimpered joyfully when Sam slowly wrapped his paws around him again and he snuggled further into the omega’s body, scenting him again.

Dean watched on silently and when Adam finally settled, he padded over carefully and licked at the wounds littering the beta’s body. He still felt incredibly guilty over those.

Sam frowned at the long slice over the beta’s muzzle and he nudged Adam’s face to one side so he could inspect it. Adam’s ears lowered when he realised where Sam’s gaze lay and he tried to hide his face in the omega’s neck once more, but Sam wouldn’t let him and his frown deepened.

“Is that… fresh?” He asked quietly. “I don’t remember that one.”

Dean paused and glanced at the beta as Adam lowered his gaze and nodded.

Sam scowled, a sense of dread bubbling in his stomach.

“Where’d you get it?”

Adam shrugged. “Ran into a bush.”

Dean’s brow furrowed. “Must have been a thorny bush to cut that deep.”

Adam wouldn’t meet his gaze. “Guess I’m just clumsy.”

Sam and Dean shared a glance. Adam wasn’t telling them something.

“You sure it was a bush?” Asked Dean carefully. He didn’t want to push the teen too much; not
when they were just learning to get along.

Adam shrunk in on himself and buried his face in Sam’s neck. “Yeah,” he mumbled.

Dean’s mouth drew into a thin line as Sam nudged his face to the side again, despite Adam’s soft whine of protest. The omega licked the wound carefully and Adam eventually relaxed when he realised he wasn’t facing any more questions. Dean glanced at the beta worriedly once more before settling beside the younger wolves and lapping at Adam’s scrapes and bruises.

After a few minutes, Adam shifted and pressed his head under Dean’s gratefully and Dean blinked in shock as the beta began to scent him. Even Sam was wide-eyed.

“Thanks for giving me another chance,” Adam whispered and Dean felt a surge of something protective well inside his gut. He nuzzled the teen’s ear.

“No problem,” he murmured, stunned and Adam quirked a smile and snuggled back into Sam.

He liked Sam and Dean’s scents; they smelled far better than John’s. Although, with John it wasn’t that the scent itself was unpleasant – spruce and nutmeg was an amiable enough combination – it was the associations with that scent that Adam hated.

Here though, cuddled close to Sam as Dean took care of his aches and pains, he was content and for the first time ever, he felt… valued. Like he actually mattered to someone. Like he was wanted. Like he belonged.

Strong thoughts for a couple of wolves he’d hated a mere few days ago, but he couldn’t remember the last time anyone had played with him like Sam and Dean had. His mother, maybe? It was hard to recall. It had been a long time since anyone had paid any sort of attention to him that didn’t involve him getting yelled or glared at.

Or clawed.

He decided he wanted to hold onto those feelings of contentedness and he hoped Sam and Dean would warm to him in time. Maybe… maybe having a family wouldn’t be so bad. He wouldn’t mind having brothers like Sam and Dean; there were certainly worse options.

Mind made up, Adam smirked and launched himself at Sam’s ear and the omega laughed and rolled him to the floor as their play fighting restarted. Dean growled and pounced on Sam and the trio struggled once again, past grudges forgotten.

* * *

“Kid seems happier,” noted John as he settled beside Sam, who was watching Gabriel and Adam goof around with the pups. “You boys finally knock some sense into him?”

Sam spared his father a glance before shaking his head. “More like we actually talked for once. Cleared up a few things between us. Guess none of us are all that good at communicating.”

John huffed out a laugh. “Yeah, well, you learned that from me.”

Sam quirked a small smile and focused on how Gabriel and Adam were ganging up on the four
pups, cornering them against a tree before pouncing on them.

“You look happier too,” John murmured. “Even with the disgusting eye.”

Sam snorted. “Thanks, Dad. That makes me feel great.”

John smiled and shook his head. “It’s a good look on you.”

“What? The puffy, swollen face?” Scoffed Sam and John’s gaze softened.

“Contentedness,” he corrected quietly and Sam snapped his mouth shut as he glanced at his father.

“It appears I was wrong about Gabriel. You seem pretty happy with him. Settled,” commented John and Sam’s gaze trailed back to Gabriel as a fond smile crawled over his face.

“I am,” agreed Sam. “He makes me very happy. Happier than I’ve been in a long time.”

“You say that with the tone of the experienced,” murmured John. “Why do I get the feeling I’m missing something?”

Sam’s smile faded as he glanced to his paws.

“I mated twice before meeting Gabriel. To an omega named Jessica and later to an alpha named Ruby.” If this had been civilisation, John might have scrunched his nose up at the idea of an omega mating another omega. As it was, he didn’t even flinch.

“I loved Jessica deeply. We were mated for a good few years before she… before she died,” he choked and John frowned concernedly. “Azazel,” Sam supplied and John snarled viciously, startling Sam.

“He set the camp on fire when we went hunting and Jess couldn’t escape. She was dead by the time we arrived.” A tear trickled down Sam’s cheek and he looked away to hide his face from his father; some instinct in him demanding he hide his weakness from John.

“I was… lost. Broken. Then Ruby came along and she was… different. I fell for her and for five years of mating, I believed she loved me too. A few months ago, she tried to kill me. Attempted to drown me and it turned out she was part of Azazel’s pack; Alistair’s lover sent to spy on us so Azazel could take over the pack. I was lucky Cas was there to save me.” Sam sighed.

“I should’ve known in hindsight. I was never truly happy with Ruby and being with Gabriel has shown me just how abusive she actually was. I believed the way she treated me was just normal alpha behaviour; displays of dominance. Gabriel was the one to show me how an alpha truly treats their mate. Or at least, how they’re supposed to.” His grin wormed its way back onto his face as he watched the pups battle Gabriel; the alpha pretending to be hurt as he crumpled to the floor and let the pups jump all over him.

“Gabriel has never hurt me. Not like Ruby did. I don’t think he ever could hurt me. When Ruby came back for revenge, Gabriel was the one to protect me.” He turned to his father. “Gabe’s a good wolf. He makes mistakes but he learns from them. I know he’s from a city and trust me, Dean didn’t get along with him at first either, but he’s trying to get used to our way of life. Considering he was originally a high-alpha from a powerful pack, I’d say he’s doing pretty well.”

John arched an eyebrow and nodded slowly and Sam’s tail swished once because it seemed his father was willing to give his lover a chance.
“I had no idea you’ve been through so much,” muttered John, gaze not quite meeting Sam’s. “I’m sorry I wasn’t there.”

Sam bit back a comment at that. Things were just beginning to smooth out between him and his father; he didn’t want to go rocking the boat again with his reply of ‘Well, I’m not.’ Truthfully, he believed his father’s presence would have made things worse and he definitely wouldn’t have been allowed to stay with Gabriel.

Instead, he kept his mouth shut and if John noticed, he didn’t say anything.

“I’m glad you’re happy, son,” murmured John quietly and a smile plastered itself over Sam’s face as his tail started beating the ground. John was trying to be a father and that’s all Sam could ask for.

Chapter End Notes

IT'S BEEN SO LONG!

I'm trying to slowly ease myself into this fic again so I'm not entirely sure how this chapter turned out. Feedback is most appreciated! Sorry for the hiatus and I promise I'll get around to answering all of your comments on the previous chapter!
A week and a half after Balthazar’s reappearance saw Gadreel sighing at his distorted reflection in the river. He dipped a paw in the cool water and watched a little orange fish approach it warily before shooting away.

The atmosphere was still hot and stuffy but near the riverbank, the air was cooler and fresh. It helped Gadreel take his mind off the pack and his ex-lover and the alpha who’d stolen her from him. He knew he shouldn’t hold a grudge against Balthazar, especially after everything the wolf had suffered through, but he couldn’t help it. He and Hannah had been happy and then Balthazar had waltzed back into her life and suddenly, Gadreel was alone.

Again.

He didn’t have much luck with lovers. First Bela, then Castiel now Hannah. Maybe he was destined to be forever alone.

He let his head fall onto the grass and he stared forlornly at the gushing water.

His ears pricked up at the sound of soft padding behind him and he swivelled his head to find a familiar bronze and white alpha watching him warily. With a soft frown, Gadreel turned back to the river and waited for Balthazar to approach.

The other alpha had been jumpy and defensive ever since arriving in Winchester territory. He was submissive and nervous of practically everything and had made barely any effort to interact with any of the other pack members, barring Hannah. In a primitive, rarely listened-to part of Gadreel’s mind, the grey alpha sneered in distaste and thought how Balthazar could never protect and care for Hannah when he was so weak, but the more reasonable side of him admonished these thoughts and reasoned that Balthazar had every right to be wary and that he’d had no problem in fighting Gadreel when he’d believed Hannah was being attacked.

So, Gadreel was silent as he watched the water and after a few minutes, Balthazar crept over, tail low and suspicious frown in place. The thin alpha sat beside Gadreel, not too close but not too distant either, and stared into the water.

“Hannah’s told me a lot about you,” Balthazar murmured after a few minutes of tense silence.

Gadreel flinched and frowned lightly. “How much?”

Balthazar scowled. “Enough.”

The larger alpha sighed and looked away. He’d hoped he wouldn’t have to face this confrontation; this speech where Balthazar warned him to stay away from Hannah because he was her mate and Gadreel wasn’t involved in their relationship. He wasn’t in the mood for alpha posturing and threats.

“I see,” Gadreel muttered, waiting for the inevitable growling and pungent scent of anger from Balthazar.

He was shocked when Balthazar slumped to the ground with a huff.
“She’s miserable without you,” he grumbled.

Gadreel raised his eyebrows and turned to the grumpy alpha and Balthazar spared him a glance, lips drawing into an unhappy line.

“She says she’s not. Pretends she’s happy I’ve returned.” He shook his head. “I can tell she’s conflicted. She’s relieved I’m alive, but she’s not happy.” He trailed his defeated gaze to Gadreel. “She misses you.”

Gadreel blinked, opened his mouth to say something, then immediately shut it when he didn’t know how to respond.

Balthazar huffed a humourless laugh and averted his gaze.

“…I… I don’t know how else to help,” admitted Gadreel. “I’ve already backed off… I’m not sure what else you desire me to do.” He frowned. “I won’t leave the pack though.” He’d stay away from the couple but he refused to leave his home.

Balthazar narrowed his eyes in distaste. “I’d never dream of asking you to leave. Didn’t you hear anything I just said?” He said a little snappily and Gadreel was surprised by the challenge in his tone. It made him sit up and Balthazar was quick to copy his movements.

“Hannah misses you. She wants to be with you; she doesn’t want you to leave.” Balthazar looked away. “The problem is she wants me too.”

Gadreel’s eyes widened. That was a problem. So… what? Would they have to fight for her? Whoever won was rewarded with her affections? That was the traditional method of settling this sort of dispute, but Gadreel wasn’t fond of the idea of fighting anyone; much less an alpha who’d suffered all that Balthazar had. What if neither of them surrendered and it resulted in a fight to the death? It wasn’t uncommon. He pawed idly at the ground.

“Then what do you propose?”

Balthazar looked wary as he eyed the grey and white alpha up and Gadreel was legitimately concerned the other alpha would demand they fight. The thought made him restless and in turn that made Balthazar even more suspicious.

“What if we share her?” Suggested Balthazar quietly. “Alternate days. You have her one day, I have her the next and so on. That way, she can have both of us.”

Gadreel stared wide-eyed at him. That… wasn’t what he’d been expecting.

“Um…” How was he supposed to reply to that?

Balthazar hunched in on himself defensively, ears low. “If you’re not comfortable with that idea, then I’m afraid I have no other suggestions. I realise it’s not exactly… conventional, but I don’t see any other way of solving the issue.” He looked worried as he glanced at Gadreel. “Unless… you do?”

The implication was clear; Balthazar thought Gadreel was going to challenge him for her. He didn’t realise that was exactly the scenario Gadreel wanted to avoid.

He doubted Hannah would be pleased if one of them drove away or killed the other; she was more likely to despise the winner.
Gadreel shook his head. “No,” he stated firmly and Balthazar seemed surprised for a moment before he slowly relaxed and shifted to fully face the other alpha.

“Oh… well… that’s relieving,” he admitted and Gadreel quirked a small smile when he realised Balthazar had exactly the same mindset as he had.

The other alpha noticed his smile and a tiny grin tugged at his lips too, easing the tension between them slightly.

“Indeed,” hummed Gadreel before tilting his head in contemplation. “We could try your suggestion,” he said before frowning. “Are you sure you’re content with me… intruding on your relationship?”

Balthazar snorted. “Honestly? No. I’d rather things go back to the way they were between us. But I can’t deny that you’ve been a big part of Hannah’s recovery and she clearly cares for you. She’ll never be happy with the way things were before and I’ll do anything to make her happy again. So, if you’re willing to try this, then so am I.”

Gadreel bowed his head slightly. “That’s very noble of you.”

Balthazar gazed at the floor. “I’m not sure how well this will work, but we have to try something,” he murmured before glancing up at Gadreel. “I think… maybe we should tell Hannah together. She might not believe just one of us. I certainly wouldn’t.”

Gadreel chuckled softly, spirits suddenly lifting. Whilst it was a less-than-conventional relationship, maybe he still had a shot at love. Hopefully this would work and he’d still get to be with Hannah, even if he had to share her.

Afterall, Balthazar had no obligation to inform him of Hannah’s unhappiness. He was her mate and Gadreel was just a fling really; it’s not like they’d been courting all that long. It was kind of Balthazar to even suggest sharing his mate.

“You’re… chipper for someone who’s just been told they have to share their loved one with another alpha,” observed Balthazar suspiciously as they made their way back to the camp.

Gadreel chuckled softly again and his tail began to sway.

“I thought you were going to challenge me to a fight to the death. Imagine my delight when I realised what you were actually offering.”

Balthazar blinked and huffed out a surprised laugh.

“Fair point.” He relaxed a little more, ears pricking up. “I actually thought you were going to challenge me,” he admitted after a moment and Gadreel shook his head with a smile.

“I much prefer this option.”

A small grin crept onto Balthazar’s face and he suddenly didn’t look too nervous despite being around another alpha.

“We can make this work,” decided Balthazar after a few minutes and Gadreel’s tail wagged excitedly.

* * *
“Wait, I don’t understand,” frowned Castiel, trying to get a glimpse of the sticks taped to his head. “What is the purpose of the twigs?”

“Comedic value,” muttered Dean under his breath, making Adam, Ben and Samandriel snicker. “It helps Adam visualise the deer,” he called out instead and Castiel pulled a face that suggested he thought otherwise, but he remained quiet, back turned to the four as Dean explained to Adam what his task was.

“Watch your footing and try to guide the deer rather than chase it. I’ll be your muscle so your job is to slow the prey down enough for me to catch up. Guide him in the direction you want him to go and I’ll bring him down. Got it?”

Adam nodded determinedly and Dean smiled and nudged him towards Castiel, who was sniffing disinterestedly at the grass.

Dean glanced at the two pups, tails wiggling excitedly as they watched in fascination. “Think you two can keep up?” Dean winked and Samandriel and Ben nodded eagerly.

Dean smirked and watched Adam creep over to Castiel, body low to the floor and paws light. He accidentally tripped on a small, hidden rock and he stumbled forwards, making Castiel’s ears prick up. The omega turned to Adam and suddenly bolted off between the trees. Adam cursed and chased after him, leaping over fallen logs and small bushes but Castiel was fast and Adam began to tire quickly. He slumped down after a few minutes, chest heaving and tongue lolling and Dean sat beside him a few moments later.

“Not as easy as it looks, huh?”

Adam shook his head and Dean smirked and threw his head back in a howl, signalling to Castiel that the chase was over. He joined them around the same time the pups caught up. “You guys are fast!” Huffed Samandriel as he collapsed to the floor, Ben leaning against him as they both panted and wagged their tails.

Castiel chuckled and tugged them between his paws as he licked their bodies to cool them down. The pups giggled at his ‘antlers’.

Adam watched them for a few moments before climbing to his paws and shaking himself off. “I’m ready to try again,” he stated and Dean smiled in approval, making Adam’s tail wiggle. He wasn’t used to people being proud of him. “C’mon, deer,” said Dean, smirking at his own joke and Castiel rolled his eyes and trotted a few metres forward.

“Can I remove the twigs?” He asked as he shook his head. They were beginning to itch.

“No,” said Dean. “You won’t look realistic and it’ll throw Adam off.”

Adam grinned in amusement as the pups tried to hide their giggles. Castiel huffed. “I feel like a clown.”
“You look like one too,” Dean mumbled so Castiel couldn’t hear him and Adam bit back a laugh.
“You look amazing, Angel,” called Dean as he manoeuvred Adam into position, offering him a few
tips before sending him on his way.

“Remind me again why I agreed to mate you?” Asked Castiel drily but when there was no reply, he
frowned in confusion and was about to ask again when suddenly, in the corner of his eye, he caught
Adam sneaking up on his flank, barely two metres away.

His eyes widened and he bounced into action, Adam hot on his heels.

He zigzagged through trees and leapt over rocks, skidded around bushes and splashed through a
small stream, but Adam was determined and he kept on his tail until eventually, Castiel made one
wrong turn and Adam was immediately by his side, snapping and growling to make him change
direction.

Castiel allowed him to control their direction and when he next turned, Dean was waiting for him
with a smirk. He braced for impact and sure enough, Dean leapt at him, tackling him to the ground.

He nipped Castiel’s rump teasingly and the omega huffed indignantly as Dean glanced at Adam.

“This one tastes funny,” he grinned and Adam shook his head in amusement as Dean sat on Cas, to
the background music of a groaning omega.

“That was some fine chasing you did there,” praised Dean, ignoring Cas’ grumbling. “You stuck
with him until he faltered and the speed with which you got him under control was pretty impressive.
Well done, kid.”

Adam rolled his eyes at the nickname but his tail was beating the tree beside him in happiness. He
kind of enjoyed making Dean proud; it was quite rewarding.

There was a fit of giggles behind Dean and Samandriel and Ben had tears in their eyes as they saw
the position Castiel was in.

Dean smirked and shifted his tail over Castiel’s head and the omega huffed and tried to throw his
lover off him, but to no avail. Dean settled more of his weight on Cas’ back.

“You want one more go at this?” Asked Dean and when Adam nodded eagerly, Dean grinned.
“Next lesson, maybe we can try having a deer who’ll fight back a little. Not all of them are willing to
let you control them.”

“There won’t be any ‘deer’ if you succeed in breaking my back,” grumped Cas.

Dean chuckled and pulled himself to his paws, nudging Cas up whilst he did so. He licked his mate’s
muzzle cheekily and Cas sent him a withering glare before ripping the ‘antlers’ from his head.

“Last time, I promise,” said Dean pleadingly as he attempted Sam’s puppy-dog expression and
Castiel scowled and stalked into position.

“That works better coming from your brother,” he huffed and Dean smirked.

“Yet you’ve never refused me,” he pointed out.

“There’s a first time for everything.”

Dean rolled his eyes and turned to Adam. “Ready? Do exactly what you did last time.”
Adam nodded and crouched low, ready to attack.

The next chase dragged on for longer as Castiel was determined to test the beta’s skills. However, Adam eventually caught up when Castiel failed to spot a fallen branch and he stumbled, losing speed. Once again, Adam herded Castiel towards Dean and the omega found himself on the floor, trapped beneath his lover.

“Good job, Adam,” said Dean proudly and Adam puffed his chest out with pride as Castiel staggered to his paws.

“Congratulations,” he offered because Adam didn’t seem like he got much praise. “That was quite a performance.”

Adam looked like a pup who’d just been told he could stay up past midnight.

Dean stumbled backwards as Adam ploughed into him, rubbing his head against his chest and tail motoring from side to side. The alpha’s eyes widened in surprise and Cas’ gaze softened, a small smile quirking his lips as he glanced at Dean.

Dean cautiously rubbed his chin against Adam’s head and the beta must have realised what he was doing because he quickly jumped backwards with an apologetic gaze.

Dean and Adam stared at one another awkwardly for a few moments until Cas shook his head in amusement and nuzzled the young beta’s head like he would his own pups and nudged him towards the camp.

Adam seemed shocked at Castiel’s blatant display of affection but he soon grinned when the pups started brushing up against his sides and butting his chest. He nipped at their ears and they laughed and let him chase them on their journey back to camp.

Dean pressed into Castiel’s side as they watched their pups and the teen play.

“He’s… changing,” observed Dean quietly and Castiel smiled, small and secretive as he licked Dean’s cheek.

“He’s opening up,” the omega murmured. “To you and Sam. To the pups. To the rest of us.”

“He looks happy,” whispered Dean and Castiel sent his mate a sidelong glance.

“As do you.”

Dean averted his gaze. “Well… yeah… as long as the kid’s learning and listening. Y’know… following orders and all that… makes my job easier… less of a headache…”

“Hm,” said Cas, his grin widening. Dean was a terrible liar when it came to feelings. That’s why he got all flustered like he was now.

Dean shot him a confused frown. “What?”

“He’s growing on you,” Cas hummed and Dean quickly clamped his mouth shut and looked away.

* * *
Sam was pleasantly surprised by his father’s apparent character change. They had been spending more time together recently and the omega was genuinely enjoying his father’s company, even if Bobby had told him to be wary.

John was a completely new wolf. He no longer made comments about Sam’s secondary gender and he didn’t belittle him or dismiss his opinions because he was an omega. He didn’t bully Dean into being ‘the perfect little soldier’ and he didn’t posture or challenge other pack members when they didn’t agree with him.

Bobby would always be the father that raised him, but he saw nothing wrong with reconnecting with John now that the wolf seemed to have changed so drastically.

He didn’t even make remarks about Gabriel and Castiel’s old pack. If anything, he seemed quite accepting of their residence within the Winchester pack.

Gabriel was acting overly affectionate with him today. Sam wasn’t complaining; far from it, but the alpha seemed to be intent on licking and nuzzling every inch of him for some reason. Sam was enjoying himself immensely though and he stretched over the ground as the alpha continued licking and nuzzling his jaw.

Gabriel buried his nose in Sam’s neck, scenting him deeply and Sam closed his eyes happily. Then Gabriel nipped at his shoulder gently and Sam huffed and cracked an eye open to stare at his lover. Gabriel didn’t seem to notice and he scented at Sam’s neck again, rumbling approvingly when Sam bared it for him and when the alpha nipped at his neck a little harsher, Sam turned to his lover.

“Gabe,” he protested. They were in the middle of the camp in broad daylight with the pups playing not too far away. Everyone could see Gabriel’s blatant flirting.

“Sorry,” murmured Gabriel and he really did sound apologetic. Sam shook his head and less than a minute later, Gabriel was scenting him again and licking his muzzle.

He nipped at Sam’s jaw and Sam huffed out a laugh and tried to shake his lover off him.

He was surprised when Gabriel growled softly and began rubbing his chin over his head, scent marking him with determination.

“Dude,” grunted Sam in confusion, pushing Gabriel away from him. Why was the alpha acting so strange?

Gabriel’s ears lowered and he dropped his gaze embarrassedly. “Sorry,” he muttered again, seemingly forcing himself to stop touching Sam.

Sam raised his eyebrows and was about to ask what was wrong when John suddenly settled in front of them.

“You boys soaking up the last of this sun?” He smiled. “It’ll be Autumn next week.”

Sam grinned and nodded. “I know. We’ve been complaining about the heat all Summer but we’re gonna miss it once it’s gone.”

John hummed in agreement before he suddenly frowned at Gabriel.

“You okay? You’re doing a lot of fussing.”

Gabriel tried to stop shifting his weight between his front paws. “Yeah. Peachy,” he mumbled, not
meeting John’s gaze. Sam shot him a weird look.

“Are you gonna stay with us over Autumn?” Asked Sam, hope shining in his eyes even though he tried to mask it from his voice.

John smiled fondly and shrugged. “I don’t see why not. Adam’s enjoying himself and he’s still got a lot to learn from you boys.”

Sam’s tail began to wiggle as he grinned up at his father, but Gabriel frowned and shuffled closer to his lover, scenting his neck deeply.

Sam froze and shot Gabriel an exasperated stare. John tilted his head, puzzled but otherwise ignored Gabriel’s weird behaviour and eventually Sam relaxed and continued his conversation with his father.

“Adam’s doing really well, actually,” commented Sam. “He’s a pretty fast learner.”

John chuckled. “Just like another Winchester I know.” He lifted his paw to bat at Sam’s ear playfully but when he got too close, Gabriel suddenly growled and flashed his teeth at John.

John recoiled, shocked and Sam shoved Gabriel away with a scowl.

“What is wrong with you?” Hissed Sam and Gabriel realised his mistake and suddenly hunched in on himself, ears flat and tail tucked between his legs.

“I… I don’t know. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to…” Mumbled Gabriel in genuine distress and Sam frowned in concern because this was very out of character for Gabe.

John eyed the other alpha suspiciously and Gabriel ducked his head lower.

“You sure everything’s alright between you two?” Asked John pointedly, narrowing his gaze at Gabriel and just as Sam was about to reassure his father, Gabriel bared his teeth at John and pressed into Sam’s side, hackles raised and a challenging growl rattling in his throat.

“Gabriel!” Snapped Sam and Gabriel flinched as though struck, dropping to the ground submissively. He refused to meet Sam’s gaze and the omega began to worry.

He turned to his father and noticed the older alpha was also baring his teeth at Gabriel, only the first few, but it was clear he didn’t appreciate the younger alpha challenging him.

“Dad, stop. There’s something wrong,” muttered Sam as he approached Gabriel cautiously. “I think he’s sick.”

Gabriel whined softly when he realised how wary Sam was of him and he shifted to try and nuzzle Sam’s throat before pausing and lying back down, ears flat when the omega took a step backwards.

Carefully, Sam sniffed at Gabriel and when he caught whiff of an odd scent, he pushed his nose into the alpha’s neck. He shot upright with wide eyes.

“You’re entering a rut,” he announced, surprised and John lifted an eyebrow.

“You sure? In Summer?”

Sam nodded as Gabriel lifted his head.

“Cas and Gabe have weird heat and rut cycles because the seasons didn’t affect them in the city. Cas
had his first in the peak of Winter and his second a few weeks ago. That means Gabriel’s going to have one through Winter too.”

Gabriel whimpered quietly. He’d never faced a Winter in the wild, but he knew from Cas’ stories that they weren’t pleasant. Suffering through a rut at the same time was going to be exhausting.

John’s mouth tugged downwards. “Ruts and heats through Summer and Winter? That’s just wrong. Why do civilised folk think it’s okay to change nature?”

Sam frowned at his father. “It’s not Gabe’s fault.”

John didn’t look convinced, but Sam chose to ignore it.

“You need to go back to the shelter,” said Sam gently as he gazed at Gabriel. “I’ll be there in a minute.”

“It’s too hot,” Gabriel whined before trying to shove his nose into Sam’s fur and Sam felt more than a little guilty at having snapped at Gabriel for behaviour his biology was forcing upon him. He turned to his father.

“Sorry, Dad… I need to take care of this. Make sure he’s alright.” He nudged Gabriel towards their shelter, despite the golden wolf’s protests. However, something caught his flank and he swivelled to find John frowning at him.

“You don’t have to do anything for him,” whispered John. “You don’t owe him.”

Sam scowled. “He’s my lover. I have to help him.”

“He’s in a rut,” said John lowly, so Gabe couldn’t hear. “Right now, you’re just a hole to him.”

Sam narrowed his eyes and backed up slightly. “I’m really not.”

“What do you think all the biting and scent marking is?” Hissed John. “You’re something to claim and dominate. That’s what alphas do.”

“Gabriel’s not like that,” snapped Sam, making the golden alpha’s ears prick up. “And I don’t appreciate the insinuations. His biology’s working against him and I’m going to help.”

With that he whirled around and herded Gabriel towards the forest. If his lover was running hot then the shelter would be a terrible torture for him. Not to mention, Sam didn’t want his father being privy to anything that was about to take place.

When they were a little distance from the camp, Gabriel suddenly wedged his head under Sam’s and whined.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered. “I didn’t mean to cause any arguments.”

Sam shook his head with a reassuring smile as he nuzzled his lover’s ear.

“Hey, it’s not your fault. Don’t worry about it.” He licked the alpha’s muzzle as Gabriel lowered his gaze guiltily.

“Tell me what you need, Gabe,” Sam murmured as he rubbed his scent over Gabriel’s head. The alpha rumbled happily and snuggled into his chest.

“Just to be close,” he whispered. “I want to scent you and kiss you and hold you.”
Sam swapped positions until his head was pressed under Gabriel’s and they were practically moulded into each other.

“Do you want to nip me as well?” He asked after a few moments and Gabriel nuzzled his ear embarrassedly.

“…Is that alright?”

Sam smiled and rolled onto his back, exposing his throat. Gabriel rumbled in delight and straddled his omega, nosing and licking and nipping until there was no inch of Sam that hadn’t been seen to. By then, Gabriel was emitting a constant low growl of possessiveness and even though he probably didn’t know he was producing the sound, Sam couldn’t help but smile and nuzzle with his alpha. Gabriel’s tail wiggled at Sam’s affection and after a few moments, they somehow ended up play fighting; batting and nibbling each other’s ears and paws until it grew into a gentle wrestling match.

After a while, they tired and Gabriel slumped over Sam’s larger body with a contented sigh. He scented Sam’s throat and snuggled into his fur and Sam wrapped his paws around him.

“I love you so much, Sam,” whispered Gabriel and the omega smiled and held him tighter.

“I love you too, shortstack,” he teased and Gabriel nipped his throat in light reprimand. Sam merely chuckled and let Gabe settle down again.

“We’ll get through this,” hummed Sam, licking his lover’s muzzle. “You know I’m gonna be there for you, whatever you need, right?”

Gabriel smiled and nestled into his fur. “If I do anything you’re not comfortable with, you tell me straight away, got it?” At Sam’s nod, the alpha nuzzled his cheek. “I’m so lucky to have you,” he breathed. “I’ve never met an omega like you. Strong and confident. Not afraid to snap at us stupid alphas when we’re being idiots. Yet you’re kind and gentle too; caring and sympathetic. Not sure what I did to trick you into thinking I’m attractive, but I’m glad I did it. You’re just about the best thing that ever happened to me.”

“Don’t need to butter me up,” huffed Sam. “I’ve already told you I’m going to have sex with you.”

Gabriel barked out a laugh and cuddled closer. “You know very well that wasn’t my aim.”

“I know,” smiled Sam. “I just like hearing you laugh.”

Gabriel rumbled happily and lay his head on Sam’s chest. He had a pretty awesome omega.

Chapter End Notes

Happy new year guys! Hope you’ve had a great Christmas!
The leaves were changing colours; vibrant oranges and golds and reds, littering the floor in similar colours as they fell. The flowers were dying back and the insects were starting to disappear. Even the birds were gearing up to migrate.

Autumn was coming.

Hannah licked Balthazar’s cheek sweetly and crawled out of their shelter towards Gadreel’s, leaving the bronze and white wolf to sulk on his own.

It had been a week since his suggestion that he and Gadreel share Hannah and whilst the omega had been wary of the idea at first (glancing between the pair as though they were aliens), she now seemed content to at least try. Today it was Gadreel’s turn to have her and Balthazar was once again alone.

When he was with Hannah, at least he had someone to talk to. When she was with Gadreel, he usually stayed in his shelter or on the outskirts of the camp, avoiding everyone. It had taken a lot of willpower in approaching Gadreel that day, so no way was he going to approach anyone else when the whole pack was watching. There were so many alphas in this pack; who knows what they would do to him if he said the wrong thing?

Dean had been tolerant of him so far; never pushing him to greet the others and allowing him to stay in the camp when they’d set out on a hunt. However, he had a feeling the lead alpha wouldn’t allow that behaviour for long and he would soon be expected to pull his weight and talk to his fellow pack members. He wasn’t even sure he wanted a pack.

He was thankful that the Winchesters and their pack had kept Hannah safe when he hadn’t been able to, but at the same time, he wished Hannah would just run away with him and forget about the pack; about the Winchesters and the pups and the other strange wolves. He wished she’d forget about Gadreel.

Balthazar frowned. Why did she have to go and fall in love with another alpha? It hurt that he wasn’t enough her anymore. Why did Gadreel have to stroll into their lives and ruin everything?

A tear crawled down his cheek and he swiped at it furiously. After a few moments, he sighed. There was nothing he could do and he loved Hannah far too much to ask her to run away with him, no matter how much he wanted to.

He heaved himself to his paws and traipsed out of his shelter. He couldn’t mope around all day.

Giving the other pack members a wide berth, Balthazar slunk around the edges of the camp and forced himself to enjoy the sunshine and the cool breeze that marked the beginning of Autumn.

Ten minutes later, he startled as something nudged his hip.

His ears flattened automatically as he jumped to his paws and crouched slightly in fear, tail tucked between his legs as he tried to make himself smaller. Had he upset someone? Was someone going to punish him? Was he in for a long fight?
He blinked when he realised Gadreel was staring at him, eyes wide and alarmed and ears erect and concerned. The other alpha glanced around them quickly, wondering if something had spooked Balthazar, but when he sensed no danger, he frowned in confusion and focused his gaze onto the bronze and white wolf once more.

Balthazar’s gaze flicked to Hannah; the omega standing a few metres behind Gadreel, waiting for him and looking worried at her mate’s reaction.

“What?” Balthazar bit out rather snappily because the last wolf he wanted to see right now was Gadreel.

Gadreel’s ears lowered slightly.

“I… I was wondering if you wanted to accompany us to the river? We’re going fishing,” he said softly and Balthazar almost felt guilty.

He shook his head and looked away a little bitterly. “You don’t have to pity me. We made a deal. This is your time with Hannah,” he muttered.

“And I was hoping to spend it with both of you,” Gadreel murmured gently.

Balthazar blinked in surprise and snapped his gaze back to Gadreel. “…Excuse me?”

The other alpha tilted his head slightly. “We did make a deal about sharing Hannah but I don’t remember creating a rule about never speaking to one another. Since I’m sharing your mate, I thought I ought to get to know you.” Gadreel was wearing a tiny smile and Balthazar cocked his head to one side because he wanted to hate Gadreel, but the other alpha kept finding ways of being nice to him. He’d even acknowledged Hannah was Balthazar’s mate and not his.

“I… wouldn’t like to intrude,” Balthazar said carefully, even though he wanted nothing more than to be with his omega. Gadreel’s smile grew as he shook his head.

“It’s not an intrusion if we’ve offered.”

Balthazar perked up slightly. It would certainly beat being around a bunch of wolves he had no intention of talking to.

“If you’re sure,” said Balthazar quietly and he was surprised when Gadreel’s tail wagged a couple of times before he gestured for the smaller alpha to follow.

Hannah looked ecstatic that he’d chosen to join them and she licked his muzzle happily in greeting.

Balthazar ducked his head slightly and his gaze flicked to Gadreel. Would the other alpha be angry Hannah was showing him affection? Would he want Balthazar to stay behind them; to ‘know his place’, so to speak? Would he reprimand Hannah for kissing him when it was Gadreel’s turn with her? Would he punish Balthazar for allowing Hannah to kiss him?

He was shocked when Gadreel merely wiggled his tail and smiled fondly at Hannah before trotting off in the direction of the forest. He was even more shocked when Hannah chose to walk by his side instead of Gadreel’s.

Hannah nuzzled Balthazar’s jaw, amusement dancing in her eyes.

“He’s a kind alpha,” she whispered knowingly. “You don’t have to be scared of him.”

Balthazar frowned, puzzled by the whole morning as he pressed into Hannah’s side and remained...
silent.

When they arrived at the river, Balthazar watched in dismay as Hannah and Gadreel immediately bounded over to the water and began fishing, laughing every so often when a fish escaped their jaws or one of them slipped into the water. They were having fun; their easy-going attitude broadcasting that they’d done this a hundred times before and as Balthazar watched Hannah’s face light up as she caught a small trout, Gadreel praising her proudly as if he was her mate, a dark feeling of jealousy bubbled inside Balthazar because it should’ve been him who was making his omega smile, not another alpha.

He didn’t even know how to fish.

He turned away and squeezed his eyes shut. Clearly all he was good for was taking another alpha’s knot and being used as a chew toy when a whole pack got bored. He really was as worthless as everyone kept telling him. He couldn’t even keep his own mate happy.

“Balthazar?”

The close proximity of the voice made him jump and he crouched low to the ground again in fear.

Gadreel immediately backed off, head bowed in apology (and wasn’t that a peculiar thing for a stronger alpha to do?) before his gaze tracked back up to Balthazar’s face.

“We realised you might never have learned how to fish…?” He murmured and Balthazar closed his eyes because even Hannah was beginning to realise how useless he was.

When he received no response, Gadreel took a tentative step forwards. “We were wondering if you’d like us to teach you?”

Balthazar blinked. He cast his gaze to Hannah, who was smiling at him warmly, tail wagging contentedly behind her as the water flowed over her paws, droplets clinging to her coat and making it sparkle under the morning sun. Her eyes gleamed brightly with happiness.

She was more beautiful than ever.

“…Balthazar?”

The alpha snapped back to the present to focus on the curious Gadreel.

“You… you can say no…” Gadreel mumbled awkwardly and Balthazar had to think quickly to remember the question.

“Oh, if it’s not too much trouble… I’d… um… I’m willing to learn,” he said and Gadreel instantly straightened and nodded his head towards the river.

“Great,” he said as he made his way towards Hannah, Balthazar following a little more warily. Hannah was quick to join him, smile shining with excitement as she showed him what the Winchester pack had taught her. Gadreel chipped in every so often, teaching him useful hints and tips whenever he missed a fish and it wasn’t long before Balthazar caught himself smiling and genuinely having fun for the first time in what felt like forever.

After an hour, he caught his first fish and just as he was presenting it proudly to Hannah, the trout slapped his nose with its tail and he yelped, allowing his prey to escape. Both Hannah and Gadreel began to chuckle and suddenly, Balthazar’s tail drooped as he realised they both thought he was useless; something to be laughed at and mocked.
He shrank in on himself and tried to subtly edge his way out of the river, but Hannah didn’t seem to notice his mood as she pressed up against him and licked his cheek with a grin.

“Slippery, aren’t they? You’ve got to keep a tight hold when they start wriggling; Gadreel and I have been hit so many times it’s a miracle we can smell anything other than fish. Try again and I bet you get it this time.”

Balthazar paused his escape and tilted his head slightly. Wait, he wasn’t the only one who’d failed to catch a fish?

Gadreel noticed his expression and frowned. “Balthazar? Is everything okay?” That had Hannah frowning in concern too and Balthazar shook his head with a small, relieved smile.

“Ah… yes. My nose is a little… numb,” he lied and Gadreel nodded, satisfied as Hannah scrutinised him for a moment longer before nodding.

“Try again, then,” she said, although she didn’t look too convinced at his lie and Balthazar offered her a charming grin before focusing on the water once more.

Once they grew tired of fishing, they lounged under the sun for the remainder of the afternoon, chatting lightly and watching the wildlife scuttle around them before returning to camp and Balthazar realised he’d had a pleasant day with his mate and the alpha he was supposed to hate. He was happier than he’d been in a long time and even that evening, when Hannah curled up with Gadreel in his shelter, Balthazar didn’t feel quite as sour as he probably should have.

That didn’t mean he was any less lonely though.

* * *

Gabriel was at the peak of his rut. Whilst Sam was steadily growing more and more exhausted, he was also secretly enjoying seeing Gabriel lose all of his careful composure as he pinned his omega to the floor with a snarl and a rough, intense knot.

The alpha was far stronger than he looked and as Sam presented his slicked hole to Gabriel, both of them in human form and Sam on his hands and knees (thankfully a long way away from the camp), the alpha growled appreciatively and clamped his hands around his omega’s hips.

Sam mewled and wiggled his hips teasingly, throwing in a soft, pathetic whimper because he knew it would drive Gabriel’s instincts wild.

Gabriel snarled possessively and lapped at Sam’s dripping slick, scenting deeply because his omega’s sweet scent was strong here. He ran his tongue over the omega’s vulva, relishing Sam’s shudder and quiet whine and then he pressed his tongue deeper until Sam’s face was pressed into the grass as he whimpered and rocked back against Gabriel’s face.

Gabriel sucked gently, savouring Sam’s slick and he smirked when Sam whined in frustration. He pulled away slightly to nuzzle and lick Sam’s other hole and as he did so, he pressed a thumb into the omega’s clitoris.

“Gabe,” begged Sam, rocking his hips against his alpha’s thumb and Gabriel chuckled and suddenly flipped Sam onto his back as he claimed his lips heatedly. He slid their erections together and
swallowed Sam’s needy whine as he ravished the younger man’s mouth. He pulled away to bare Sam’s throat and he licked and nipped the exposed flesh with a little too much enthusiasm as he rubbed their erections together once more.

“One day, I’m gonna breed you up and fill you with pups,” hissed Gabriel as he grabbed the stray condom by their side and cracked it open. “Gonna make you mine and knot you until your belly’s full of our pups.”

Sam pressed his nose into Gabriel’s neck with a happy mewl. Whilst he knew this was mostly Gabriel’s rut talking, he liked the idea of starting a family with the alpha. Unlike Ruby, Gabriel was a good alpha and he’d take care of their pups; he’d protect them and help Sam look after them. He’d teach them about the world and make them happy and when the moon was shining above them, he’d curl around their tiny pups with a smile and keep them safe, because Gabriel was a tender alpha and he loved his family more than anything else in the entire universe.

…Okay, maybe Gabriel’s rut was affecting Sam too.

Sam gasped as Gabriel entered him. He’d been so lost in thought, he’d forgotten about the real world. Gabriel chuckled at his surprised expression and nipped at his stomach (too short to reach his neck, which was endlessly amusing to Sam).

“You’re my omega,” he whispered. “My gorgeous omega who cares about everyone else and thinks too little of himself.” He tightened his grip on Sam’s hips and harshened his thrusts.

Sam gripped Gabriel’s hair and squeezed his eyes shut because Gabriel wasn’t holding himself back and Sam maybe had a kink for rough sex; a kink that Gabriel had definitely found out about somewhere down the line.

Sam’s back arched as Gabriel hit a particularly sensitive spot and a burst of delicious pain-pleasure swept through his body.

“Such a pretty omega,” panted Gabriel as he nipped as Sam’s nipple, making the omega groan filthily. “Who makes such dirty noises,” the alpha teased and Sam scraped his nails down his lover’s back.

“Alpha, please,” Sam whined in his most pathetic, needy voice because Gabriel needed a taste of his own medicine.

The reaction was instantaneous. Gabriel snarled and jerked his hips hard enough to jar Sam’s entire body.

“Alpha,” moaned Sam again, barely holding back a smirk as Gabriel’s rut-clouded mind shifted into overdrive as it screamed at him over and over how Sam belonged to him and he needed to prove it. He bit down on Sam’s hip, hard enough to bruise and Sam’s body arched again as Gabriel’s knot began to expand and the alpha refused to slow his harsh thrusts.

Because he was feeling cheeky and because Gabriel was hot when he lost control, Sam tugged gently on the alpha’s hair.

“Harder, Ruby,” he groaned.

Gabriel snarled in fury and slammed into Sam relentlessly, digging his fingers into his waist to hold him still as he scraped his teeth over the omega’s chest, swirling his tongue over his nipples, before dragging Sam’s head down for a searing kiss. He bit at the omega’s lip before claiming his mouth as his own and growling deeply as he tasted every part of Sam.
“You aren’t hers!” Gabriel snarled, uncaring of the awkward position he had to hold Sam in so they could be face to face. “You belong to me,” he hissed before claiming his mouth again.

“My omega,” he rumbled as his knot began to lock inside Sam, his hips still moving. “Mine,” he bit out as he scraped his teeth over Sam’s throat.

Sam purred as Gabriel buried his face into his neck and scented deeply. After a few moments, the alpha’s movements became jerky and Sam threw his head back with a groan as Gabriel’s knot dragged inside him, nearly fully expanded.

“Gabe!” He cried as his body spasmed and a snarl ripped from the alpha’s throat as he sunk his teeth into Sam’s bruised hip once more.

A few seconds later saw Gabriel draped contentedly over Sam as the omega purred and stroked his alpha’s hair.

Gabriel nuzzled Sam’s stomach before pressing a gentle kiss to it.

“Little turd,” he murmured as he cracked an eye open to glare at his lover. Sam laughed warmly as he laced their fingers together.

“You’re so hot when you’re jealous,” he teased and Gabriel grumbled and nipped his belly, making Sam jump. The omega grinned and closed his eyes as he focused on the feeling of Gabriel’s soft hair beneath his fingers.

“It’s not like you don’t know I’m yours,” he mumbled and Gabriel smiled and nuzzled his belly.

“Say that again. My rut likes it.”

Sam snorted. “Your ego likes it, you mean.”

“Hush. Say it again.”

Sam smirked and massaged his lover’s head. “I’m yours, alpha. Only yours.”

Gabriel rumbled happily and kissed his stomach. “And I’m yours, omega. Now and forever.”

Sam grinned and squeezed Gabriel’s hand gently. He wished he could kiss the alpha but he had to wait for his knot to go down. He’d have to settle for a bit of cuddling.

Gabriel suddenly shifted to nuzzle at his hip.

“Does it hurt?” He asked concernedly, frowning at the large purple bruise he’d left against otherwise perfect skin.

Sam raised an eyebrow. “It aches a little, but nothing to worry about.” He smirked. “You get a little carried away there?”

Gabriel glanced at him with a small smile. “I wanted to mark you. Didn’t think you’d be very happy about me leaving a mating bite on your neck, so I just managed to get your hip instead.”

Sam’s heart fluttered as he grinned. “You wanted to mate me?”

Gabriel shrugged. “You’re a beautiful, intelligent omega who I’m completely head over heels for. Kinda hard to think of a reason why I wouldn’t want to mate you.”
Sam’s grin brightened. “All that talk about pups…?”

Gabriel flushed pink and dropped his gaze. “Maybe I was getting a bit ahead of myself.”

Sam chuckled and cupped his lover’s cheek. “You have no idea how much I want to kiss you right now.”

Gabriel perked up. “Can’t wait.” He kissed Sam’s stomach again. “But there’s no rush,” he murmured against it. “We have all the time in the world, Sam.”

Sam knew he wasn’t talking about the kiss. Gabriel was quite right; they didn’t have to rush into mating. They could do whatever they wanted; there were no rules or deadlines for happiness.

Sam stroked Gabriel’s hair again as he sighed and closed his eyes with a smile.

* * *

Evening approached and the sky was shrouded in blackness with only the moon and a myriad of twinkling stars to light the ground below. Camp life was winding down with some of the older members retiring to bed and others (like Meg and Crowley) slinking away for some fun.

The pups were playing in the centre of the camp, under the watchful gazes of the adults but they soon tired and bounded over to their guardians.

Castiel greeted his son and Ben with gentle licks and both pups wagged their tails and snuggled into his chest for a moment before they looked up at him hopefully.

“Dad? Can we sleep with Adam tonight? He said he had some scary ghost stories to tell us. We said he won’t scare us but he bets he can. Can we sleep with him tonight? Pleeeeease?” Begged Samandriel as Ben turned the puppy dog pout up to full volume.

Castiel raised an eyebrow, surprised at Adam’s willingness to snuggle with the pups, but a glance in the teen’s direction confirmed that the beta was also awaiting Cas’ response, despite looking like he was occupied with a particularly interesting stick.

“Alright,” agreed Cas. “Don’t stay up too late.”

“We won’t,” grinned Ben in a way that said they definitely would be, but Cas didn’t really mind and he watched both pups bound over to an excited Adam. A few moments later, Alex and Claire joined them and the group played about for a few minutes before Adam ushered them into his shelter, tail wiggling.

Dean flopped down beside Cas with a thoughtful expression. He dropped a lily in front of the omega’s paws and pretended he hadn’t as he stared at Adam’s shelter.

“He playing pup-sitter for the night?” Asked Dean and Cas leaned into his mate with a smile as he tugged the lily closer.

“Seems like it. I think he’s developed a soft-spot for them.”

Dean hummed in approval and nuzzled his mate’s ear. “So much for being all cold and aloof.”
“Like a certain alpha I know,” teased Castiel as he pawed at the lily. Dean glanced away.

“I just thought… It looked nice and I… Well, you are my mate…” Dean stumbled over his words and Castiel chuckled and snuggled into his side. He had such a sweet alpha.

“By the way, tell your brother to stop trying to eat mine,” huffed Dean in an attempt to change the topic. Castiel raised an eyebrow.

“Excuse me?”

Dean snorted. “Sam had a massive bruise on his hip today and when I tried to get a closer look, your darling brother snarled at me and tried to take a chunk out of my leg.”

“He is in rut,” Castiel pointed out and Dean pulled a face.

“I know. Half the camp has been trying to get his attention. Becky and Chuck can’t tell whether to focus on him or each other, Pam has been blatantly scenting the air every time he and Sam leave the camp, Ed’s starting to stare hungrily and even Charlie looks like she wants to jump him every time she sees him. It’s a good thing Sam and Gabe leave the camp during the day because yesterday I spotted Jo and my brother having a stand-off over who gets the horny alpha. I swear it looked like Jo was gonna challenge him. Benny looked so put out.”

Cas chuckled. “Sam did get challenged this morning when he and Gabriel tried to sneak out.”

Dean’s eyes blew wide. “Seriously? By who?”

“Harry.”

Dean’s jaw fell open. “You’re joking.”

Castiel shook his head with a smirk. “Nope. This morning, I watched Harry shove Sam out of the way in an attempt to get to my brother. Gabriel managed to hold himself back as Sam started snarling and raising his hackles at Harry. Harry growled back and they both leapt at one another. There was a bit of tussling, but it was over rather quickly and neither of them looked hurt. Sam merely pinned him to the ground and growled a little and Harry was quick to bare his throat. Sam released him and it was over.”

Dean groaned. “Harry was lucky Sam didn’t bite him! What was he thinking, challenging my brother?”

“I think the point was he wasn’t thinking at all,” muttered Castiel drily. Dean rolled his eyes.

“Sam’s gonna be mortified when Gabe comes out of his rut. So will Harry. I can imagine there’s gonna be a lot of apologising.”

Castiel hummed in amusement as he tucked his head under Dean’s chin. Truth be told, if anyone tried to flirt with Dean when he was in rut, Castiel would do exactly as Sam had, hormones or not.

Suddenly, Dean stiffened and Cas immediately sat up as he spotted John ambling towards them. Dean relaxed again and Castiel frowned because his mate still had a slight fear of his father; a moment where he would revert back to ‘Daddy’s little soldier’ whenever the other alpha approached. Cas didn’t like his mate being nervous.

“Dad,” Dean greeted with a small smile as John sat in front of them. Castiel bowed his head politely and John quirked a grin of approval.
“Where are the little fur balls?” He grunted and Dean gestured to Adam’s shelter.

“Cuddling with the big fur ball.”

John raised his eyebrows in surprise before shrugging. “He’s changing.”

Dean smiled and curled his tail around Cas. “Yup.”

“Thanks to you and Sam,” said John and Dean gazed fondly at his lover.

“Not just us,” he corrected as Cas rolled his eyes and leaned into his mate.

John nodded before falling quiet for a few moments.

“Did you see that bruise on Sam’s hip earlier?” He asked quietly and Dean snorted.

“Just been telling Cas about it. His brother looked like he was hungry.”

“And Sam’s… okay, then?” John asked slowly and Dean nodded.

“Positively glowing,” he drawled. “Looked quite proud of it actually.”

John fell silent once more and Cas frowned slightly because he didn’t like that pensive expression on the other alpha’s face.

“You’re quite sure he’s… happy?” Pressed John and Dean sobered as he cocked his head to one side.

“…Yeah. Looks happy. Why?”

John hesitated. “Gabriel’s not… hurting him, then?”

Cas stiffened as Dean frowned. “Pretty sure Gabe wouldn’t hurt Sam.”

John’s mouth drew into a thin line. “It’s just… I heard of Sam’s track record with relationships and Ruby hurt him but no one seemed to notice.”

Dean tensed. “Gabe’s not Ruby.”

“I know that,” huffed John. “But you never noticed when Ruby was hurting Sam so what makes you think you’ll notice if Gabriel is hurting him?”

Castiel narrowed his eyes. “My brother won’t hurt Sam, I assure you. He loves him dearly.”

John looked troubled. “I’m just trying to keep my son safe. I wouldn’t like him to have to go through a repeat of Ruby. I just want him to know that this time he has someone to turn to if he’s getting abused.”

Cas was very close to growling at John. “Whilst I’m sure your intentions are well-meaning, Gabriel has no desire to ever hurt Sam. Sam does not appear affected by his bruise. It was probably a side effect of the rut.”

John shook his head, dropping his gaze in apology. “I didn’t mean to offend you, Castiel. I just wanted to put my mind at ease about my son.”

Castiel’s eyes remained narrowed. “Well, I hope we were enough to reassure you.” He didn’t
appreciate the older alpha’s insinuations.

Seemingly sensing he’d upset Castiel, the older alpha ducked his head and slunk away to his shelter, disappearing from view.

Castiel frowned and nuzzled his mate’s jaw to reassure himself, but when he realised how silent Dean had fallen, he pulled away to observe him. He was shocked to find the alpha’s gaze lowered towards his paws, his ears flat and his lips tugged downwards.

“Dean?” Castiel asked worriedly and the alpha glanced at him briefly before staring at his paws unhappily.

“I should have done something about Ruby earlier. Sam shouldn’t have had to go through all that abuse,” he whispered and Cas blinked in surprise.

“Dean, you did as much as you could. Sam wanted to be with her. Besides, she’s gone now; you helped him escape from her. She’s never coming back.”

Dean shook his head. “You and Gabe got rid of her. What did I do? Nothing. I just let her abuse Sam and I did nothing. Heck, at first I didn’t even know. What kind of pack leader can’t see abuse when it’s happening right under their nose? What kind of wolf lets his younger brother get abused and does nothing to help?” Dean looked away ashamedly and Castiel frowned because was Dean really still bothered by Ruby? Sam had moved on a long time ago, so why was Dean concerned about it?

“You tried to get Sam to leave Ruby a long time before both Gabriel and I showed up, so don’t say you never did anything. You were the one who drove her away when she attacked me and Sam. Don’t convince yourself you did nothing.”

Dean pulled a face. “I just… wish I’d done more.”

Castiel scowled and licked his mate’s muzzle. “Sam is happy,” he murmured. “You’re a good leader and an excellent brother. You’ve protected him since you were pups and you’re still protecting him now, sometimes against my brother,” said Castiel and Dean sighed and nodded even though he didn’t look too convinced.

“Ruby’s dead,” murmured Castiel. “She can’t hurt Sam anymore.”

Dean nodded quietly and Cas frowned as he guided the alpha towards their shelter. He curled around his mate and lay his head over Dean’s, nuzzling his ears and head every so often and eventually, Dean’s troubled expression faded as he drifted into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

What do you all think of Gadreel and Balthazar's 'arrangement'? ;)
Balthazar tensed as Dean made his way over. He involuntarily sunk lower to the ground in submission and Hannah gazed at him sadly as Dean hesitated and slowed his approach. Hannah nuzzled his ear, encouraging him to stand, but Balthazar couldn’t bring himself to. He kept his gaze low and his tail tucked between his legs as Dean stood in front of him.

“We’re starting a hunt in about an hour,” said Dean. “I’d like you to join us.”

Balthazar refused to meet Dean’s gaze. “Yes, alpha.”

Dean grimaced. “You don’t need to call me that.”

Balthazar flinched, realising he’d said something wrong and he braced for the inevitable attack. Dean frowned and glanced to Hannah helplessly.

“He won’t hurt you, Balthazar,” Hannah whispered softly, licking her mate’s cheek.

Balthazar reluctantly nodded but still wouldn’t meet Dean’s gaze.

“Yes, al-” He cut himself off abruptly and panicked for a moment, wondering how he was supposed to address his new leader.

“Dean,” the larger alpha supplied helpfully and Balthazar hesitated because his old leader had punished anyone who referred to him by his first name.

“…Yes, Dean,” mumbled Balthazar and Dean’s expression grew troubled as he gazed at the cowering wolf.

“You’ve hunted before?” Asked Dean quietly and Balthazar nodded.

“Yes, Dean.”

“And what position do you take?”

Balthazar frowned in confusion. Why was Dean asking that? He was an alpha; what position did Dean think he took? Maybe… maybe he wanted to change it? Maybe he thought Balthazar was too weak to be muscle and was thinking of making him decoy or tracker. Maybe Dean thought he was too weak to be an alpha.

“Muscle, but I’m willing to obey any orders you give me, al- Dean.”

“No, no, just double checking,” hummed Dean before offering him a reassuring smile. “See you in an hour.” And with that, he trotted away.

Balthazar finally glanced up and turned to Hannah in no small amount of surprise. He didn’t know what he had been expecting but Dean’s kindness certainly wasn’t it.

Hannah curled her tail around his and cocked her head to one side with a lop-sided smile.

“He’s a good alpha,” she promised. “A good leader.”
Balthazar nodded slowly and wondered when his lover had become so confident.

* * *

An hour later saw the hunting group gathering at the centre of the camp. Balthazar slunk to the back with Hannah padding by his side and he scrunched up his nose when Gadreel joined them, tail high and easy smile lighting his face when he spotted Hannah grinning at him. She nuzzled him in greeting and his tail wagged, making Balthazar pout because this was supposed to be his turn with Hannah, so why couldn’t the other alpha just leave them alone? Why was Hannah so happy around him?

As Gadreel licked her nose, making her giggle, Balthazar had to bite back a growl and his sulking seemed to go unnoticed by the pair.

At the front of the pack, Dean stood talking to his brother and they both agreed it would be wise to let Sam tend to Gabriel’s needs. They had John to take Sam’s place and Adam would provide a useful substitute for Gabriel.

Adam looked positively ecstatic to be ‘needed’ and his tail motored from side to side, making some of the more experienced hunters like Jo and Benny snicker. The beta was so excited that he accidentally bumped into Dean in his haste to take his position in the pack and Dean chuckled and nipped his ear playfully, winding the teen up even more.

Adam was practically vibrating with excitement as he finally took his place.

The pups ran over to Bobby as they usually did when there was a hunt and Bobby pretended to be irritated with them but everyone knew he had a soft spot for kids. He probably already had at least three stories lined up for them.

Dean began the hunt and Balthazar kept his head low as he trailed after the pack. They walked for a long while before they found their prey and surprisingly, it wasn’t their usual meal.

Now Autumn had arrived, the male bull moose were beginning to herd the female cow moose together as they showed off their strength and their impressive antlers in preparation for the mating season. That meant a new dish for the Winchester pack.

The pack had stumbled across a pair of bulls fighting for three cows’ attentions and whilst moose were extremely large and dangerous, their sparring could be an advantage for the wolf pack.

Unlike with the deer, the pack split off into two halves with Jo facing the cows and the rest of the pack surrounding them. The bulls were too busy fighting to notice and when Jo leapt out of her hiding place, snarling and snapping, the bulls looked surprised and Jo would later laugh about how they cursed under their breath as they looked at one another in shock.

The cows bellowed wordlessly in panic and scrambled in the opposite direction to Jo, unknowingly straight into the waiting jaws of the rest of the pack. Dean’s half of the pack leapt out of the bushes, the omegas quickly closing in on the three females and Benny’s half wasn’t too far behind, crowding them from the rear until they had nowhere to go.

There was a cacophony of curses and shouted threats from the larger bulls and as they charged at the pack, great antlers lowered, the alphas jumped into action, snapping and snarling and yelling at the
males to keep them away from the females.

Balthazar was surprised to find himself enjoying the hunt. He growled and barked intimidatingly at the bulls and for once in his life, he felt like he was in charge; felt like he was powerful and in control of the situation. He felt like a normal alpha.

He was in Benny’s team and as the other alphas in the small group forced their bull moose to back up, Balthazar realised he was smiling because he was part of the team. He wasn’t just a pathetic toy to be used and thrown away when people grew bored of him; he was proving that he was just as strong and useful as the other alphas of the Winchester pack.

The moose bellowed angrily and stamped his hoof as he waved his antlers around and Benny’s team backed up slightly. Benny barked wordlessly and a few betas stood to attention at the order and joined the alphas in their defence against the bull moose. They bared their teeth and raised their hackles and the moose rumbled low and furious, refusing to back down.

As the stand-off dragged on, both Dean’s and Benny’s omegas and remaining betas teamed up to pounce on one of the cow moose. As soon as Meg sunk her claws into one of the female’s flanks, she cried out and the bulls reared in rage. They charged at the Winchester pack, the other two angry females kicking out at the wolves and Dean howled for his pack to scarper. They immediately dodged out of the way of the galloping bulls before closing in on their rears and Balthazar gasped as Dean, Benny, Crowley and Gadreel lunged for the bulls’ flanks.

Dean and Crowley sunk their teeth deep into the bull’s huge thighs and the moose cried out in agony before swinging around, away from the cows to charge at his attackers. Benny and Gadreel initiated the same manoeuvre, but their bull was clever and realised they were trying to distract him from the females. He kicked out instead, grazing Benny’s side with a powerful hoof and both alphas immediately dropped back, watching in dismay as the bull positioned himself in front of the females, stamping his hoof and snorting at the surrounding wolves.

Balthazar watched as Gadreel and Benny advanced warily towards the moose, growling and flashing their teeth at him as the omegas tried to round the free side of the cows. Unfortunately, the females noticed the omegas’ plan and began scraping their hooves along the floor and snorting angrily. The omegas paused; cows could be just as dangerous as bulls when they were desperate.

Both species were at a stalemate, with nobody able to advance, but Balthazar was in a unique position. Whilst the betas and omegas were surrounding the cows and the alphas were trying to attract the attention of the bulls, Balthazar found himself out of the line of sight of both bulls. Two of the females could see him, but since he was so far away and nearer the bulls, their attention was on the omegas and betas. That left Balthazar staring at the rump of the bull protecting the females.

With a quick glance around the snarling pack, Balthazar felt a rush of exhilaration shoot through his body. He could help the pack here. He could be that fearsome hunter he hadn’t been in so long.

With a wicked grin, he bounded forwards, mind focused solely on the hunt.

Benny’s eyes widened in shock as Balthazar raced towards the rear of the bull and the moose didn’t have time to register the new presence as Balthazar leapt up and sunk his claws into his hide. The bull groaned in agony, startling the cows and making them lose focus of the surrounding omegas and betas.

Meg, Jo and Charlie rammed into the injured female and she staggered sideways, making her fellow cows scramble backwards in fear. The bull swung around in a desperate attempt to protect the injured cow, but that granted Gadreel and Benny the opportunity to sink their teeth into his legs and
he stumbled to get away from him.

The herd split, leaving the omegas to surround the injured female as the betas snarled and snapped at the remaining cows, who backed away with a frantic call to their downed friend. The bull bellowed in panic to the collapsed cow as the omegas pounced upon her, but Benny, Gadreel and Balthazar snapped at his heels until he deemed her a lost cause and fled, the remaining two females in tow.

Balthazar watched them go with an excited grin and a wagging tail. He hadn’t felt the thrill of a chase in years.

“Good job, Balthy,” drawled Benny with a friendly smile and Balthazar had too much adrenaline coursing through his veins to notice that he should’ve been scared of the other alpha. His grin grew wider and his tail wagged harder as he panted from exertion.

It felt good to be praised for once.

Suddenly, there was a panicked bellow and the pack turned to find Dean and Crowley struggling with the other bull moose they’d forgotten about. Crowley was on his back as he sunk his claws into its thick sides and Dean snapped at its throat and quickly dodged the antlers that brushed his leg. The moose snorted viciously and smashed its right antler into the ground, where Dean had been standing a mere second ago. Crowley growled in frustration and shimmied his way up its back, wrapping his teeth around its neck until the moose grunted and shook its head wildly to dislodge him.

“Adam!” Dean yelled and the young beta startled before racing over to his brother.

“Stay away from the head and keep to the legs!” Dean ordered. “Don’t get kicked!” The alpha lunged at the moose’s throat once more.

Adam blinked in surprise before jumping into action. He aimed for the bull’s hind leg, biting down on its ankle as hard as he could as Crowley worked to control the moose’s head movements by clawing and clamping down on his neck.

The moose made a sound of distress as it stumbled forwards and Dean latched onto a forelimb, making its front legs buckle.

“Belly!” Dean ordered curtly and Adam was quick to obey. He snapped at the beast’s belly and it groaned and collapsed.

Unfortunately, Adam was right below it.

“Move!” Yelled Dean, but Adam wasn’t quick enough in scrambling away and the huge moose would have flattened him if it hadn’t been for Dean ploughing into his side. Crowley leapt off its back just as it plummeted to the ground and sunk his jaws into its throat, killing it cleanly.

For a second, nobody spoke, gazes focused on the unmoving moose just to ensure it really was dead, but then Dean nipped Adam’s ear playfully.

“Good job, kid,” he grinned, still practically draped over the teen and Adam beamed, tail thumping the ground as he wrestled with Dean for a moment in an attempt to throw him off.

Dean chuckled and humoured him for a few seconds, growling softly as they fought, then he climbed to his feet and nudged Adam upright.

“You okay?” He asked quietly and Adam nodded eagerly.
“Good job, Crowley. Yeah, I’m fine, thanks for asking,” drawled Crowley sarcastically as he shook himself off and glared at Dean without much heat. The lead alpha snickered and raised an eyebrow.

“Sorry, did you do something to help? I didn’t notice.”

Crowley huffed and slunk away to check on his mate. Dean glanced at Adam with a fond smile and the beta puffed his chest out slightly, grin wide.

“Looks like we’re feasting today,” announced Dean as he approached the rest of his pack with a proud gaze. “Eat your fill of the bull and we’ll drag the cow back to camp for the others. This should do us for a little while.”

There were murmurs and tail wags of agreement and the pack tucked into their meal, waiting for Dean to advance first.

Balthazar was the last to eat and his good mood from the thrill of the hunt quickly dissipated when Gadreel offered his place to Hannah, allowing her to eat with the first group. She licked his muzzle appreciatively and nuzzled with him for a few moments before taking his position and Gadreel merely smiled as he watched on; the perfect, generous alpha giving up his spot for the weaker, abused omega he was trying to court.

Balthazar’s ears flattened in distaste. Gadreel was obviously competing for Hannah’s affections and he had Balthazar at a disadvantage due to his more respected position within the pack. The bronze and white wolf looked away. Gadreel was stronger, handsome, confident, considerate, respected and loyal to the pack; how was he supposed to compete with that? How was he supposed to beat Gadreel at this game for Hannah’s love? He would have to be smart about it, prove that he had everything Gadreel had and more. He would have to remind Hannah why she mated him and why Gadreel could never be as good for her as he was.

He would get her back. She wouldn’t want Gadreel’s attentions once he was finished.

* * *

When Sam saw the moose the hunting group had hauled back to camp later that afternoon, he could have kissed his brother. When Dean told him most of the pack had eaten and the creature was mainly for those who had stayed behind, Sam was ready to kiss the rest of the pack too.

He and Gabe were starving and exhausted from the energy needed to satiate Gabriel’s rut. He ate vigorously and pulled a hefty chunk of meat off for Gabe before disappearing back into their shelter to the accompanying sound of his brother’s soft chuckles.

Gabriel whined quietly in relief as Sam squeezed in behind him once more to curl around him and the alpha practically inhaled his meal before snuggling into his lover. They scented at each other for a few moments, Gabriel licking Sam’s head and muzzle almost obsessively in attempt to show he cared for his omega deeply and Sam huffed out an amused laugh as Gabe’s rut continued to affect his behaviour, turning him into an overprotective, needy, clingy ball of fur.

Sam wrapped a paw around him and bared his throat, allowing Gabe to shove his nose into it with a happy rumble.

It wouldn’t be long before Gabriel would have his knot once again locked inside Sam’s aching hole,
* * *

“You did well today, son,” John said as he sat in front of Dean and Cas. The younger alpha offered his father a grateful smile before returning his attention to grooming Castiel. The omega made the most wonderful noises when he was content.

“The pack works together flawlessly. I can see why they think you’re a great leader,” huffed John and Dean’s heart swelled with pride at his father’s praise.

“Thanks, Dad,” Dean murmured softly as Castiel smiled at him warmly. He licked Dean’s muzzle tenderly and the younger alpha couldn’t ever remember being happier.

“I’m impressed,” chuckled John. “I’ll admit it. I didn’t think you’d be able to bring that bull down, just the three of you. But you did. You certainly have skill.”

Dean’s tail swished across the floor. He couldn’t remember his dad ever telling him he was impressed. He’d never been able to earn his father’s approval when he was younger and having it now was like filling a void in his heart. He’d made his dad proud and it was a wonderful feeling.

“Maybe next time you won’t almost get Adam flattened.”

Dean’s tail stopped wagging as the smile slid from his face. John’s expression was still friendly and easy-going, but there was a certain intensity behind his gaze; as if Dean had disappointed him somehow despite impressing him.

“I know you don’t particularly care for him as much as the rest of the pack, but he’s still my son, Dean. Ordering him to stand under that moose was thoughtless and more than a little reckless. His inexperience could’ve got him killed and you should’ve known that,” stated John quietly as Dean’s ears began to flatten in shame.

“I do care for Adam, Dad,” Dean protested. “He wanted to learn how to hunt. I thought practicing in the field was a good way of teaching him. He’s never hunted a moose before and Crowley and I… we had it under control. We wouldn’t have let Adam get hurt.”

John frowned. “Crowley could barely keep that beast restrained and you were grazed by its antlers. I hardly call that ‘under control’. Adam could’ve got hurt. He’s just a pup.”

“But he didn’t,” argued Dean weakly. “He’s fine and he enjoyed the hunt. He learned something new. Isn’t that what counts?”

“I’m just asking you to be a little less careless,” huffed John. “I understand you’re a bit biased about him and you don’t really want him here, but don’t let your judgement of pack safety suffer. You’re a good leader; don’t ruin that because of personal grudges.”

Dean’s ears dropped as he bowed his head slightly. Had he really put Adam in harm’s way? Was his judgement clouded because of Adam? Did he still secretly hold a grudge against the teen? He’d known bull moose were extremely dangerous and he and Crowley had struggled to restrain the beast. Maybe he shouldn’t have called Adam over. One powerful kick or a slice from those antlers was lethal and Adam had shown that he wasn’t experienced enough to move out of the way when
the situation demanded it. Dean should’ve known that…

“I’m sorry, Dad,” whispered Dean, ashamed. “I thought… I thought I was doing the right thing…”

“I also thought you did the right thing,” stated Cas suddenly, nuzzling Dean’s cheek. “Adam learned a lot and he earned the satisfaction of a successful hunt without injury. I’d say you were a fantastic teacher.” The omega glanced sharply at John, daring him to argue.

John blinked before frowning again. “He was lucky this time,” he began but Cas quickly interrupted.

“I don’t think luck had anything to do with it. Adam didn’t get hurt because Dean was watching over him.”

John narrowed his gaze at being cut off by the omega, but Castiel glared right back, pure challenge in his gaze. He was past being intimidated by large alphas; he could hold his own, thank you very much. He didn’t need some alpha ordering him around or forcing him into submission and he certainly wouldn’t stand for anyone belittling his mate.

Especially not the alpha who abused his sons and the rest of the pack.

Dean blinked at his mate in surprise before casting his gaze to his father.

“That moose could have crushed Adam. It nearly did,” stated John firmly and Cas sat upright, ignoring the older alpha’s strengthening scent as he tried to force Castiel into defeat.

“But Dean pushed him out of the way because as he said, he was in control of the situation,” countered Castiel in exactly the same tone. The alpha’s scent was becoming overpowering and Castiel could feel his instincts kicking in, begging him desperately to back down. He ignored them.

“He should never have got Adam involved with that creature. He was fine with the cows; he didn’t need the added danger of the bull,” John nearly growled. Castiel’s ears automatically flattened. The scent accompanied by the growl of an angry alpha was enough to scare any omega’s natural instincts. He refused to back down though.

“He coped well with the bull. Dean assisted when necessary,” Cas retorted lowly, muscles beginning to tense because he wasn’t entirely certain of John’s intentions. The alpha looked ready to snap at any moment.

“Dad, stop posturing,” ordered Dean coolly with the voice of an experienced leader and a protective mate. He pressed into Cas’ side pointedly as he stood and Cas bit back a smirk when John flinched and controlled his scent. He glanced at his son.

“Dean… you must know I’m merely offering a little advice. I’m not questioning your leadership in any way. I’m trying to protect my son,” John murmured softly and Cas scowled and had to bite his tongue to prevent himself from snapping out a comment on how he never protected Sam and Dean all those years ago.

Dean’s expression smoothed out as he relaxed. “I know. Trust me, I’m not trying to hurt Adam. Yeah, we’ve had our differences but… we’re getting past them and I’m trying to teach him what you’ve asked.”

John nodded, satisfied. “Just… be careful, okay?” He said before padding away, leaving Dean and Cas alone.

Cas immediately licked his mate’s face. “You were wonderful today, Dean. You proved a competent
and encouraging teacher. I believe Adam thought so, too.”

Dean shook his head and pulled a face. “No… Dad’s right. I was careless. He’s just a pup really and I led him into a dangerous situation. I should’ve been more cautious.”

Castiel frowned and opened his mouth to protest, but Samandriel and Ben chose that moment to bound over and leap on Dean and the alpha’s attention quickly shifted to them, leaving Cas to close his mouth and stare at his mate in concern.

Chapter End Notes

I'm loving all these amazing comments, guys!
“You’re still quite the romantic, aren’t you, Mister Singer?” Teased Ellen as she gazed up at the twinkling stars, Bobby lying beside her. The alpha huffed out a laugh and nuzzled her cheek sweetly before casting his gaze to the night sky.

“Just ‘cause I’m old it doesn’t mean I can’t be romantic,” he said quietly and Ellen relaxed into his side and listened to the trees rustling around them. They were alone, a little distance from the camp, atop a small hill that gave them a perfect view of the stars as well as a soft bed of grass to lounge on. It was quiet and peaceful and the older couple enjoyed the rare moments they could spend together, away from such a large, young pack. It was hard being the oldest, sometimes. They just didn’t have the energy of the younger generations.

“Benny’s quite terrified of you, y’know,” chuckled Bobby softly and Ellen snorted and closed her eyes as Bobby curled his tail around her.

“Good. He’s been sniffing around Jo far too much lately.”

Bobby tilted his head. “Don’t you like him?”

Ellen shifted uncomfortably and frowned. “It’s not that, it’s just…” She trailed off and Bobby smiled knowingly.

“She’s growing up, Ellen. You’ve got to let her make her own decisions. Benny’s a good alpha; she could’ve had far worse.”

Ellen scowled. “I know she’s not a pup anymore, but she’s still my daughter and I don’t want her to do anything she’s going to regret.”

Bobby raised an eyebrow. “Like court Benny? She seems pretty interested in him too. They’ve known each other a long time. Maybe it’s time to stop protecting her from the world. She’s quite adept at handling herself.”

“Don’t tell me what to do with my daughter,” huffed Ellen petulantly and Bobby chuckled and licked her muzzle.

“You know I’m not. I’m just saying give Benny a chance. He’s a good kid; he’ll keep her safe. Almost as well as you do.” He winked and Ellen finally quirked a smile as she let her head rest on her paws.

“I know he will. I know Benny’s a good alpha and he would never hurt her. It’s just…it’s hard to let go,” she sighed and Bobby’s gaze softened as he placed his head over hers.

“I know. Watching Dean fall for a runaway Novak was hard. Watching Sam getting knotted by a cocky, arrogant, high-ranking Novak alpha with a penchant for mischief whilst he was in heat was even harder. Sometimes, I wanted to strangle that Novak.”

Ellen laughed quietly as Bobby rolled his eyes. He nuzzled her head gently.

“But they’re happy and that makes me happy and honestly… now I couldn’t imagine the pack
without Castiel and his little fluff ball. Heck, even Gabriel’s grown on me, especially after how he saved Sam from that red demon.”

Ellen listened silently and Bobby draped a paw over her back.

“The thing is, she’ll always be your daughter, but you’ve got to give her some freedom to make bad decisions and do all the things that makes us into the wolves we are. You can’t keep her in the nest forever.”

Ellen dropped her gaze and nodded slowly. “You’re right,” she sighed. “As usual. I just… I guess I didn’t expect her to grow up so fast.”

Bobby smiled and licked her head soothingly. “At least if she courts Benny, she’s not likely to want to wander off and join a new pack.”

Ellen groaned and squeezed her eyes shut. “Don’t be giving me more things to worry about!”

Bobby laughed warmly and settled down on his mate’s head once more.

Suddenly, a familiar scent and a quiet set of paw falls had both alpha and beta sitting to attention, minds shifting into defence mode. Whilst their guest wasn’t a rival, that didn’t make him any more welcome.

“Bobby. Ellen,” John greeted softly and the older alpha narrowed his eyes and pressed closer to his mate, barely biting back a warning growl.

“John,” Ellen greeted coldly, making sure to emphasise the name in order to point out the lack of a title. She no longer had to address him as ‘alpha’ and she was going to make the most of it. “What can we do for you?”

John hesitated before sitting down. “It’s been a long time since we’ve spoken,” he tried and Bobby’s mouth tugged downwards.

“For good reason.”

A frown flickered over John’s face before he sighed and lowered his gaze.

“Bobby… I can’t begin to apologise—”


John’s ears flattened as he ducked his head. “All of it. I was foul-tempered and cruel and you didn’t deserve any of it. I was supposed to be the one who protected all of you.”

“And you did a pretty poor job of it,” quipped Ellen with a dark scowl as she pushed her head under Bobby’s; a typical defence display to protect Bobby’s throat in case John decided to lunge at them.

John’s tail tucked between his legs at the show of wariness and he bowed his head even lower.
“I know. I hurt you and I shouldn’t have. I was a horrible leader and I don’t deserve your forgiveness, but I’m going to ask that you give me a second chance to prove that I’ve changed. I’ve already made amends with my sons, now it’s time to do the same with you,” murmured John, gaze raising hopefully.

Ellen frowned uncertainly but Bobby merely continued to glare suspiciously at the younger alpha.

“What have you really changed?” He asked and John nodded eagerly.

“I’m trying my best to keep my temper in check. I’ve not lashed out in years and since leaving the pack, I’ve become more patient. I know what I did was wrong and I’m trying to make myself a better alpha. I want to prove to you all that I can be a good wolf.”

Bobby didn’t look convinced. “Are you sure you’re telling the truth about all that?”

John nodded once more and Bobby narrowed his eyes dangerously.

“You sure you’ve not lashed out in years? Because after Dean made up with Adam the other week, I saw a fresh gash across the kid’s face, stretching from his eye to his muzzle. Kid says it was from a bush but to me, it looked deep enough to be a claw. Somehow, I doubt Dean did that. What do you think?”

John blinked and clamped his mouth shut, eyes wide in shock and Bobby snorted in distaste.

“I’m not Sam or Dean. I’m not naïve enough to believe that you’ve suddenly changed and want to be the father you’ve never been to those boys,” growled Bobby warningly. “But if you want my advice, I suggest you start acting like the wolf those boys think you are because if you hurt them again, you’ll have us to answer to.”

Ellen gave a soft growl of agreement and John’s eyes widened even further before narrowing sharply.

“I won’t hurt my sons,” John said lowly. “I’ve already explained all that.”

“You’ve already hurt Adam,” countered Bobby and John bristled.

“What makes you think I have?” He snapped. “Do you have any proof that I clawed my youngest son?”

“With your history, I don’t exactly need proof,” spat Bobby before he nudged Ellen’s side and began leading her away from their unwanted visitor.

“Don’t turn your back on me, Singer,” snarled John and Bobby whirled around and bared his teeth.

“You might have everyone else fooled, but you don’t have me, John,” he hissed. “If I see you lay a claw on either of my boys, you’re gonna wish you’d never stepped paw in this pack.”

John’s hackles began to raise. “Your boys? They’re my sons. You’re not their father and you never will be.”

“And neither will you!” Snarled Bobby. “You never were! You don’t deserve them.” He flattened his ears, fur bristling in anger. “Don’t think I haven’t been watching. I’ve seen how guilty Dean looks whenever you have one of your little ‘chats’. At least Sam’s been able to keep away from you. I don’t know what you’re saying to my pup but you’d better not restart your old tricks, Winchester. You’ll be sorry.”
“Is that a threat?” Growled John lowly, scent radiating waves of alpha fury and offence, but Bobby didn’t even flinch as he matched John’s posture, scent drowning in protectiveness and hatred.

“It’s a promise,” whispered Bobby, eyes narrowed before he turned and led Ellen away.

* * *

Balthazar scowled as he watched Gadreel drop roses at Hannah’s paws like some lovesick pup desperately trying to catch the attention of his crush. He snorted at the other alpha’s pathetic attempts to win the omega’s affection and had to turn away when Hannah smiled brightly and buried her nose into the roses, inhaling their sweet scent. Balthazar grumbled under his breath and ignored the pair. Once again, it was Gadreel’s turn with Hannah, leaving him alone to sulk.

He briefly wondered whether he should try interacting with some of the other members of the pack, but quickly discarded the idea when he glanced at the alphas. They were all strong and confident and probably wouldn’t hesitate in tearing him apart if he so much as looked at them wrong.

He was snapped out of his musings by Gadreel’s soft voice.

“We were thinking of taking a walk whilst the weather is still amenable. We were wondering if you would like to accompany us?” Asked Gadreel, expression open and tail relaxed and swaying gently.

Balthazar knew it was just a show because Hannah was standing a few feet away. The other alpha probably would have snarled at him to stay away if it hadn’t been for Hannah still having an attachment to him.

He was about to refuse when he realised this would be the perfect opportunity to prove to Hannah why he was the better alpha.

“Sure,” Balthazar smiled sharply, voice like honey. “I’d love to join you both.”

Gadreel’s expression seemed to brighten and he glanced over to Hannah, silently communicating that they had a third member to their party. Her tail wiggled and she trotted over, grinning at them both before licking their cheeks sweetly.

“I’m so glad you both get along,” she whispered happily before padding towards the border of the camp, expecting her lovers to follow. Gadreel gazed at her fondly, eyes glazed over for a few moments as his tail wagged and when he came back to reality, he smiled warmly at Balthazar.

Balthazar narrowed his eyes and stalked towards his omega, missing Gadreel’s confused expression and the way his tail drooped behind him.

A few minutes later saw the trio sauntering through the forest, watching the wildlife rush around them, building nests and storing food for the upcoming Winter months.

“Winter isn’t far away,” commented Hannah quietly before casting her gaze to Gadreel. “How are Winters with the Winchester pack?”

“Why? Thinking of staying?” He teased and Hannah chuckled and butted his shoulder.

“Are you saying you want us to leave?” She threw back with a smile and Gadreel shook his head as
he glanced between the mates.

“Not at all. I’m growing rather fond of you.”

Hannah giggled and Balthazar rolled his eyes when she wasn’t looking. Talk about sucking up.

Gadreel frowned at his behaviour in confusion before his smile returned as Hannah licked his muzzle.

“Well, it’s a good thing I’m rather fond of you as well,” she winked and Balthazar’s ears lowered when he realised how much Hannah genuinely cared for the other alpha. In a desperate attempt to shift her focus away from his rival, Balthazar nuzzled her ear.

“Do you remember that Winter we found that fox cub?” He asked, feeling smug about how he had a long past with Hannah that Gadreel didn’t. He could bring up memories of their time together and Gadreel would be left out because he wouldn’t know what they were referring to. Plus, it had the added bonus of reminding Hannah why she fell in love with Balthazar in the first place, before Gadreel has ruined everything.

Hannah’s face lit up with delight as she chuckled and nodded, sapphire eyes sparkling with joy. Balthazar would never get over how gorgeous she was.

“How could I forget?” She smiled like she knew a secret. “We practically adopted her for two weeks before she found her mother. What was her name again? Amy… Alice…”

“Audrey Elmer,” recalled Balthazar. “With the teddy bear.”

Hannah laughed and nodded. “That’s right. She stole that stuffed bear from another shifter pack and refused to let it go. She was quite the little character. I was sad when she left.”

“You adopted a fox cub?” Asked Gadreel in surprise and to Balthazar’s dismay, Hannah turned to the other alpha with a grin and nodded.

“Little Audrey got lost. Apparently, a pack of timber wolves tried to prey on her family and she was separated from them. We found her shivering in the dark, weighed down with snow and ice and at first, she was terrified. Thought we were going to eat her.” Hannah shook her head. “As if we’d ever prey upon a child.” She glanced at Gadreel. “We took her in and kept her warm and although we did get a few odd looks from the rest of the pack, we ignored them and I suppose we treated her like our own pup for the two weeks she was with us. Then, her mother crept into the camp, following the scent of her daughter and we had to hand her back. We never saw her again.”

Hannah’s ears lowered and Balthazar shifted to nuzzle at her cheek. She leaned into him appreciatively for a few moments before licking his muzzle adoringly.

“Balthazar was such a caring father. He protected her when our pack snarled at her and he never once turned his nose up at caring for someone else’s child. There aren’t many wolves out there willing to do that, especially for a fox cub. He’s so tender… so unique,” murmured Hannah as she gazed at her mate with those mesmerising pools of blue and Balthazar’s heart summersaulted because he’d never loved someone as much as he did Hannah and it seemed she loved him just as equally.

“He is,” agreed Gadreel softly and Balthazar blinked in shock at that and cast his gaze to the other alpha, only to find him quirking a tiny smile at them both. Shouldn’t Gadreel be angry because another alpha had his lover’s attention? Shouldn’t he be growling or snorting or attempting to grab Hannah’s focus? Was this another attempt at making himself seem nice because Hannah was with them?
Balthazar tilted his head, puzzled and Gadreel smiled kindly at him before directing his attention to the path ahead.

“Of course, that was before our pack was taken over,” sighed Hannah quietly and Balthazar flinched and nuzzled his mate’s cheek comfortingly. She huddled closer to him and scented at his neck for a few moments as Gadreel frowned.

“You’re safe now,” he murmured and Balthazar was surprised by the conviction of his tone. “Both of you.”

“Thank you,” Hannah whispered as she cuddled into Balthazar’s side and the smaller alpha experienced an unfamiliar sensation as Gadreel walked beside them, head held high and scent radiating protectiveness as he led them through the forest confidently. It wasn’t an unpleasant sensation; in fact, it soothed his restless mind, distracting it from horrific thoughts of his old pack and in a brief mental lapse he shifted closer to Gadreel, startling Hannah.

The omega whipped her head around to face him and he quickly snapped back to reality and moved away again, dropping his gaze and frowning at himself.

“You never answered my question about Winters with the Winchester pack,” said Hannah after a few minutes and Gadreel spared her glance before quirking a tiny smile.

“They are very similar to Winters with any other pack, except no member has ever starved and we now build igloos.”

Hannah’s eyebrows rocketed skywards. “What’s an igloo?”

“Shelters composed of compacted snow and ice. They’re rather enjoyable to construct.”

Hannah tilted her head curiously. “Wouldn’t that be cold?”

“The snow traps heat,” replied Gadreel. “Castiel taught us how to make them when he first arrived.”

Hannah smirked and brushed her tail over his. “Was this before or after your crush on him?”

The skin beneath Gadreel’s fur flushed pink as he ducked his head.

“Possibly the start of it,” he coughed awkwardly and Balthazar’s ears pricked up because Gadreel had originally held a crush for Dean’s mate? He needed to remember that; maybe he could use it against the other alpha later in this game for Hannah’s love.

“So, nobody’s ever gone hungry?” Asked Hannah. “No one’s ever… died?”

Gadreel shook his head. “We’re a family; no one gets left behind. Or forgotten. That’s the way of the Winchesters.” The alpha smiled, lost in memories. “I’ll be the first to attest that.”

Hannah’s gaze softened and Balthazar glanced between the pair, feeling like he was missing something. He frowned and licked Hannah’s cheek to distract her from smiling so tenderly at the other alpha.

His ears flattened when she merely licked his cheek absent-mindedly and continued to gaze adoringly at Gadreel, who for the most part, seemed oblivious. Balthazar’s tail drooped. Why wasn’t he enough to keep his mate satisfied?
“Can we go exploring?” Asked Samandriel, gazing up at Cas and Dean pleadingly as Ben tried to make himself look as cute as possible. “Please?”

Dean and Cas glanced at one another before Cas nodded. “You can’t go on your own, but we can take you, if you’d like?”

Ben shook his head. “Adam’ll take us!”

Dean cocked an eyebrow. “And how are you so sure of that?”

“Because he wants to. He said he’s going for a walk anyway and he was going to tell you that he’d be gone for a couple of hours, but we asked can we go with him and he said yes as long as it’s okay with you guys,” Ben rushed out, tail wiggling. Samandriel nodded enthusiastically beside him.

Castiel rolled his eyes with a small smile as Dean chuckled. “Alright, but be careful. Don’t wander too far and stay close to Adam.” Adam wasn’t the best fighter but at least he knew the basics of how to defend himself now.

The pups grinned and raced off towards Adam, Claire and Alex not too far behind as Jody shook her head in amusement. The four ploughed into Adam and the beta laughed and rolled onto his back as he let them attack him and lick his face excitedly.

“Come on,” he grinned. “Let’s go on an adventure.”

The pups howled and bounced around in excitement and Adam snickered and glanced towards Dean and Cas in silent appreciation. They nodded at him and he nudged the pups towards the outskirts of the camp.

As they ventured deeper into the forest, the pups nipped playfully at Adam’s legs and he chased them for a little while, laughing and batting at them whenever they got too close. They pounced on him and he rolled around the floor with them, uncaring of the dirt embedding itself into his fur. He definitely had a soft spot for the pups and he wasn’t afraid to admit it; he felt like a big brother.

They stumbled across a shallow brook and with a smirk, Adam shoved Alex into the water. She yelped in protest before glaring at the teen and when Claire began laughing, she yanked her in too. Samandriel and Ben jumped in and began splashing Adam and the group was once again distracted by their play. Adam had never had a childhood, not a true one and he’d never been able to play with other pups when he was younger, mostly because there weren’t many other pups when he grew up and the ones that they had never wanted to play with him. He’d been very lonely, only having his mother and occasionally his father for company and now his mother was gone and his father… well…

He frowned and shook those dark thoughts out of his head. He had a chance at a real family with the Winchester pack; a loving family who genuinely cared about him and he was going to start with the pups. He would try his best to follow Sam and Dean’s orders and he’d do everything they asked of him so they could see how much he wanted to be here. Maybe they wouldn’t kick him out once he’d learned all the skills his father had asked them to teach him. Maybe… maybe he could stay? Maybe he could have a proper family.

Maybe he wouldn’t have to be left alone with his dad ever again.
He shuddered and focused on the splashing pups once more. He pounced on them and grinned when they laughed and tried to chew on his paws and ears.

After half an hour, they tired and crawled onto the soft grass, basking under the sun as they let their fur dry. Autumn wasn’t quite in full swing yet and whilst the trees were bathed in oranges and reds, the air was still warm, if a little breezy. It was pleasant.

“Adam?” Asked Claire quietly and when the beta glanced at her curiously, she tilted her head.

“What was your old pack like? Were the pups like us? Were they as fun as us?”

Adam smiled and couldn’t help but nuzzle the little omega’s exposed belly. She giggled and batted at his nose as the others gazed at him in question.

“There weren’t many pups in my old pack,” sighed Adam. “There weren’t many teens either. When I was younger, the other pups didn’t want to play with me and as I grew older, I didn’t really have any friends. Nobody liked me that much.”

Samandriel frowned in confusion. “Why? You’re awesome. You tell great stories and you’re fun and you never get bored of us being younger than you. You play with us all the time and you’re so cool… Why would anyone not like you?”

Adam’s heart melted and he nearly dragged the little alpha into a hug. Instead he shrugged.

“I guess I can be a little abrasive. It’s why the pack’s wary of me.”

Ben tilted his head and scrunched up his nose in concentration. “What does ‘abrasive’ mean?”

Adam cocked an ear. “Um… harsh. It means when you don’t care about other shifters’ feelings.”

Ben frowned. “But you’re not like that. You’re always really nice to us.”

Adam smiled. “I wasn’t at first. If you remember, I was really mean to Sam and Dean. I didn’t want anything to do with the rest of the pack and I argued and snapped at them all the time.”

“But you’re not like that now,” protested Ben. “You’re really nice and funny and Sam and Dean like you, now.”

Adam raised an eyebrow. “You really think so? You think they like me?”

Samandriel nodded firmly. “Yeah. They talk about you all the time; say how much you’ve changed. Even my dad has called Dean out on it. They both like you a lot.”

Adam perked up. “Cas likes me, too?”

Ben and Samandriel nodded with matching grins.

“And the rest of the pack are starting to like having you around,” added Alex. “Jody thinks it’s really cute when you play with us.” She scrunched up her nose. “I’m not sure why.”

Adam’s tail began to swish as Claire padded towards him.

“And we like you,” she said. “We like you a lot.”

Adam’s heart felt like it was going to burst. He tugged Claire between his paws, ignoring her startled protests and began tickling her belly with his nose until she was wriggling with laughter, desperately
Alex cackled and ploughed into Adam and soon enough, the teen had two giggling pups between his paws as another two tugged on his ears or leapt on his back. He pretended to taste Alex and the girls growled playfully at him. Then he rolled over and managed to swipe Samandriel from his back, pinning the three struggling pups to his chest with a smirk. Ben howled out a battle cry and charged at the older wolf, jumping on his stomach until Adam released his hostages and grabbed Ben instead. They wrestled for a few moments and soon, Samandriel, Alex and Claire joined in and Adam understood why his older brothers enjoyed playing with the pups so much. It wasn’t about humouring them to make themselves seem like better wolves to the rest of the pack or their lovers; it was about having fun and bonding with the youngest members of the pack.

Suddenly, a hair-raising rattling noise snagged Adam’s attention and he froze, ears twitching as he tried to determine the source. He squinted off to his right and gasped at the enormous Diamondback rattlesnake slowly slithering towards the oblivious Claire. It was a combination of green and black scales with an elegant pattern of white diamonds trailing down its spine and it flicked its tongue out a few times, smelling the air and locking onto Claire’s scent.

“Claire!” Shouted Adam and the pup startled before whirling around and yelping at the huge serpent slithering towards her. She scampered behind Adam and the teen stood and shoved the pups behind him as he growled at the creature and slowly backed away. These snakes mainly only ate rabbits so maybe it wouldn’t try to fight something as big as Adam. Whilst it didn’t have the most fatal bite in the world, it didn’t mean it couldn’t kill him and Adam was hoping he wouldn’t have to risk it.

The snake paused at his snarl and Adam tried to herd the pups away from the creature, but the snake was clearly hungry for something more than a skinny rabbit and it surged towards Ben, displaying its huge fangs.

Adam barked in warning and flashed his teeth at it and it recoiled for a few seconds before springing towards Ben again when the teen tried to back up.

Adam’s hackles raised as he pounced towards the snake, never touching it but landing close so the vibrations would deter it from getting any nearer. As predicted, it hissed and slithered backwards slightly.

“Adam,” whimpered Alex quietly, worried for the teen’s safety and when the snake turned towards her, she whined and hid behind the teen’s body. She didn’t like snakes.

“Leave us alone,” growled Adam and the snake seemed to smirk as it rattled its tail again and circled the group. It eyed up the pups and bared its fangs again, making them cower.

“I said: go away,” snarled Adam, snapping his teeth at the creature even though he felt like running. This was a long, heavy snake and its venom was definitely capable of killing him; every instinct in his body was telling him to high tail it out of there. He had to protect the pups though. He couldn’t let the pups get hurt; he wouldn’t let them get hurt.

“No,” smirked the snake in a raspy voice, its tongue tasting the air once more as it decided on which pup it was going to eat. Adam placed himself in front of the younger wolves, obstructing its view and it flicked its tail in annoyance and tried circling the group in the opposite direction, taunting them with its rattle.

Adam backed up, shoving the pups with him and the rattlesnake hissed in warning before Adam watched its muscles tense as it got ready to spring at them.
He quickly turned and grabbed the first two nearest pups by the scruff of their necks and shoved the remaining two out of the way with his head, jumping after them just in time to dodge the snake’s powerful bite. He began sprinting, rumbling for Samandriel and Alex to start running as he grasped Ben and Claire tighter in his jaws. He could smell the snake behind him and he knew it was giving chase, determined to win a meal. Or five.

Eventually, running with the two omega pups clasped in his jaws proved inefficient and he swung them over his back, wincing slightly as they scrabbled to keep hold of him. His body still ached a little from his fight with Dean.

They ran and ran until Alex and Claire began to tire and Adam was sore from the extra weight and exertion. Still, his gaze flicked around them hurriedly, determining if a threat remained and when he couldn’t see one, he slumped to the floor, panting. The pups immediately pressed into his sides, licking his face and paws and snuggling into his fur in an attempt to comfort each other and themselves. He smiled and licked their heads soothingly, curling around Alex and Claire protectively and huffing out a laugh when Samandriel and Ben plodded around the same side to snuggle into him once more.

The teen’s gaze softened as Samandriel dragged Ben closer and practically draped himself around the young omega, offering reassurance with his scent as Ben pressed his nose into his throat. Alex soon followed their example and tugged Claire closer (albeit huffily) before offering her throat for Claire, who scrunched her nose up and pretended she didn’t want to scent the other girl. A few seconds later she had her face buried in Alex’s neck and Alex was pulling Claire closer and frantically scenting back.

Adam smiled fondly and curled tighter around them, calming his breathing and reassuring himself that the pups were safe.

Then he heard the rattle.

His eyes flew open and by the time he’d scented the air to determine the snake’s location, it was already too late and he managed to throw himself over the pups, covering them entirely before the snake lunged at them and sunk its fangs into Adam’s thigh.

Adam howled in pain and he could feel the pups struggling and whining frantically beneath him as the snake held tight and ejected its venom into his bloodstream.

He quickly whirled around and sunk his own teeth into the snake’s body and it writhed in agony before falling limp between his jaws, lifeless.

He dragged the snake off his thigh and winced at the fang still lodged into the muscle. He could already feel the limb beginning to numb and weaken and his thigh was starting to swell. He flattened his ears in fear and gingerly removed the fang as the pups whimpered below him and tried to get a closer look at the small wound.

“I need to get back to camp,” said Adam as he lost all feeling in his thigh. The pups nodded and stayed close to his sides, glancing up at him worriedly every so often. Adam tried to keep his face neutral, determined not to show how frightened he really was. He’d never been bitten by a snake before and he remembered Pam saying something about going blind because of one. Was he… was he going to go blind? Or deaf? What if he lost his leg?

“Adam? Are you gonna be okay?” Asked Ben with a gulp as his gaze flicked to the swollen thigh, getting bigger by the minute. “You’re gonna be fine… right?”
Adam forced a smile. “Of course. Jody’ll patch me up and I’ll be better in no time.”

“You promise?” Whispered Claire and Adam hesitated before nodding with a reassuring grin.

“Cross my heart.”

The pups huddled closer.

* * *

When they finally made it back to the camp, Adam couldn’t feel his leg and his vision was starting to blur. He collapsed on the outskirts and the pups cried out in terror as his eyes slipped shut.

The pack immediately crowded around him and as Dean scented at him hurriedly, desperately trying to figure out what had happened, Sam yelled out for Jody to get her first aid kit.

“Rattlesnake,” gasped Dean and Sam’s eyes widened as he ran off to tell Jody.

There were worried mutterings and some concerned scenting from the rest of the pack as Dean licked Adam’s face to keep him awake, murmuring reassuring words to calm his frightened whines. The pups whimpered and Cas herded them away, clearing space for Adam to breathe and the pups cuddled into Castiel, desperately seeking comfort.

“He saved us,” whispered Samandriel and Cas arched an eyebrow. “The snake came after us and he protected us. He jumped in front of us and saved us.”

Ben pressed his head into Cas’ chest, hiding the tears threatening to fall. “He’s gonna be alright, isn’t he?”

Cas offered him a gentle nuzzle. “Jody will help him,” he promised, glancing at Adam in a new light because this supposedly antisocial, argumentative teen had just risked his life to save pups he barely knew and had been complaining about not too long ago.

Jody and Sam bustled their way through the swarming pack members and Sam watched the young beta anxiously as Dean continued speaking softly to him and Jody began inspecting his wound.

“What’s going on? Adam? Adam! What happened? What happened to my son?” Rumbled John Winchester as he shoved his way through the pack, eyes widening at the sight of his youngest son sprawled limply over the ground, thigh swollen and bruised.

“Adam?” He breathed and Dean moved backwards to allow his father to scent at the beta.

Adam made a sound of discomfort as John moved nearer and the alpha leapt backwards as the beta suddenly vomited at his paws.

Jody looked panicked as she glanced over to Sam.

“Get him in my shelter, now,” she ordered and Sam hastily slid the younger wolf onto his back and made his way into Jody’s shelter; the rest of the pack looking on uneasily.

John stared at Jody’s retreating form in a mixture of stress and nausea and suddenly rounded on Dean.
“You were supposed to be taking care of him!” He snarled. “What kind of leader lets his pack members get bitten by a rattlesnake? And a teenager at that! He’s barely out of his pup years!”

Dean blinked in shock and backed up as John narrowed his eyes in fury.

“Dad, I… he said he was going for a walk… I didn’t know he was gonna…” Dean trailed off, unsure how to finish, but John was just getting started.

“You should be keeping an eye on him! You shouldn’t be letting him wander off on his own! Why weren’t you with him?” He demanded and the pack watched in horror as John slowly advanced on his son, who was backing up, ears low and tail tucked between his legs in humiliation.

“How was I supposed to know he’d get bitten?” Asked Dean, frowning, somehow finding his voice. “He’s left the camp before and never had any problems; I didn’t think I needed to accompany him – he’s not exactly a pup anymore.”

“He can’t defend himself!” Snapped John. “You said yourself he’s a terrible fighter and what? You just thought you’d let him wander off on his own? With young pups, no less,” he sneered. “What were you thinking?”

“He’s been out on his own before,” huffed Dean, not quite meeting his father’s furious glare. “Besides, he has to learn how to look after himself at some point. He’s nearly an adult; we can’t keep treating him like a pup.”

“Oh? So, him getting bitten by a venomous rattlesnake is just a ‘learning curve’?” Hissed John. “Is it going to make him a better wolf at the end of the day?”

When Dean winced, John shook his head in disgust. “I knew you hated him, Dean, but I never thought you’d stoop this low. You don’t even seem to care that he could die! Pity help us all if it had been one of your pups that was on death’s doorstep, but since it’s just your half-brother, it doesn’t matter, does it? Heck, you’ll probably be glad if he dies.”

Dean stiffened and Cas began to growl at John, but it was a newly returned Sam that stepped to his brother’s defence.

“That’s a load of bull and you know it,” snarled Sam, fur bristling as he stormed his way over to his brother’s side. “None of us had any idea Adam would get hurt; we’d have to be psychics. And you know very well that Adam and Dean have been getting along fine. Dean cares for him; we all do, so don’t start guilt-tripping my brother because it’s not his fault.”

John narrowed his eyes at the omega. “‘Getting along’? That’s funny; last I heard, Dean beat the crap out of Adam during what was supposed to be a training session. Is that what you call ‘caring’?”

Dean ducked his head in shame, the guilt of that morning eating at him from the inside until he felt dirty and wrong and cruel. He couldn’t deny his actions and Dean closed his eyes because his dad was right.

Sam tensed, shuffling closer to his brother in a show of support.

“Adam’s your son,” growled Sam lowly. “Your responsibility. Instead of pushing the blame onto your other son, why don’t you ask yourself why you weren’t taking better care of him?”

John’s eyes widened before his muscles drew taught and he took a step towards Sam in pure anger.

“If you raise a paw to that boy, I’ll break your leg,” snarled Bobby suddenly, baring his teeth at John.
as he pushed his way into the centre of the ring the pack had made around the trio.

John startled and glanced at Bobby, sizing him up for a few moments as Bobby’s hackles raised and he flashed his teeth at the oldest Winchester.

“Choose your next move very wisely,” warned Bobby and John growled softly before finally backing down, ears flattening and tail tucking between his legs as he looked away, defeat crossing his expression.

Bobby refused to take the bait but Sam was a little more sympathetic as he sighed.

“Adam will be okay. Jody’s the best medic out there; he’s in good paws.”

John glanced once at the omega before slinking off, head bowed and expression troubled. His gaze flicked briefly to Jody’s shelter before he disappeared into his own, leaving the rest of the pack to glance at one another in relief.

Dean was the next to leave, head hung low and paws dragging over the ground as he vanished into his shelter, ignoring Sam and Bobby’s soft protests.

The sight made the rest of the pack uneasy and they shared concerned glances before slowly dispersing, gazing at Dean’s shelter uncertainly before returning to whatever it was they’d been doing before Adam had arrived, albeit distractedly.

Bobby and Sam sidled up beside a worried Cas and the older alpha smoothly rounded the pups up and whisked them away, but not before whispering a “Take care of him,” into Cas’ ear.

Once Sam and Cas were alone, Sam turned to the older omega.

“I’ll send Adam over once Jody’s finished with him. I think they’ll both need each other tonight,” he murmured before turning a troubled gaze to Cas. “Dean still feels guilty over that fight with Adam. He needs to know that Adam has forgiven him for it.”

Castiel nodded in understanding. “And I doubt Adam particularly wants to be alone tonight,” he agreed and Sam offered him a weak smile of appreciation before it faded.

“Dad had no right to say any of those things to him. Dean’s a good leader and he cares about every pack member; sometimes too much,” he whispered and Cas nuzzled Sam’s ear soothingly.

“You don’t have to convince me,” the older wolf murmured before quirking a small smile. “Don’t worry, Sam. I’ll take care of him. Just send Adam over when he’s ready.”

Sam relaxed and pressed his face into Cas’ neck, scenting him.

“Thanks, Cas,” he mumbled and the older omega nuzzled Sam’s head gently.

“Thank you for defending him,” Castiel replied softly and Sam managed a tiny smile before tugging the older wolf into a hug. Castiel smelled safe and reassuring, like how family was supposed to smell. He smelled of Dean and Gabriel and the pups and his own unique scent and Sam couldn’t help but relax because Cas was calm and patient and he would fix Dean. He would make everything okay again because Cas was awesome like that and Sam couldn’t have asked for a better brother-in-law.

“Go to Gabriel,” murmured Castiel quietly. “I’m sure he’s wondering what’s happened.”
Sam nodded obediently and scented the other omega once more before traipsing off to his shelter, where Gabriel would probably be frantic with worry over the commotion he could hear but not see.

Castiel watched him go before slowly making his way to his and Dean’s shelter. He found his mate curled into a little ball as he tried to hide his face with his tail, bottling up all his hurt and anger and humiliation in a stereotypical Winchester fashion.

Cas slid in behind him and curled around his back, wrapping a paw around his middle before licking his head and neck and ears repeatedly, like a mother would her pups to reassure them, before Dean finally sighed and pressed his face into his mate’s neck.

“Why am I such a screw up?” He asked softly and Castiel frowned before shaking his head.

“Why do you have such a low opinion of yourself?” He countered and Dean closed his eyes.

“’Cos everything he said is true.”

“I can think of two dozen wolves who might disagree.”

“How can you say that?” Sighed Dean. “You know what I did to Adam. Dad’s right; I should’ve protected him more. I’m supposed to be lead alpha – he’s my responsibility and now there’s a very real chance he might die. What if… what if I really do hate him? What if I’m holding a grudge without even realising it? What if I want to get rid of him because I’m jealous that he grew up with Dad?”

Cas raised an unimpressed eyebrow. “I assume you realise how crazy you sound? You’re being ridiculous.”

Dean pouted. “But he’s right. What if-”

“Dean, your father was out of line in his comments and if he truly believes Adam getting bitten by a rattlesnake is your fault, then quite frankly, he’s an idiot.”

Dean blinked in shock and Cas rolled his eyes as he licked his mate’s cheek. “And you’re an idiot if you believe him.”

Dean snapped his mouth shut and dropped his gaze before uncurling and snuggling into Cas. He pushed his face into the omega’s neck and relaxed as Cas tugged him closer.

“You don’t hate Adam. You don’t hold a grudge against him; that much is obvious in the way you play with him and teach him and praise him for the things he does correctly. You were worried about him when you saw him collapse and you and Sam acted immediately. That tells me you care for him.

“Maybe you are a little jealous of him growing up with your father, but what does that matter? It’s a natural response, Dean and as long as you two are getting on well, I don’t see a problem with a bit of jealousy.”

Dean hid his face further into Cas’ neck. “…What if Adam dies?” He breathed and Cas’ ears flattened before he nuzzled his mate’s head.

“He won’t. Jody will make him better.”

“But what if-”

“Dean. He’ll be okay.”
The alpha sighed. “I shouldn’t have let him go out alone. I should’ve protected him.”

Cas shook his head. “He wouldn’t have wanted you to. You’re right; Adam’s not a pup anymore –
he needs to explore the world a little on his own. Your father was just… worried. He lashed out
unfairly at you. Ignore what he said; none of it is true and the rest of the pack knows it.”

After a few moments, Dean nodded slowly and let Cas fuss over him for a while. He closed his eyes
as his omega licked his muzzle and cheek and began nuzzling his ears. He didn’t think he deserved
all the love and attention, but he was selfish and greedy and he let Cas look after him anyway.

Night had fallen and half the pack was asleep when Castiel finally heard two sets of paws approach
their shelter. He glanced towards the entrance and smiled when he spotted Sam encouraging Adam
to slip into their shelter.

Dean blinked awake sleepily and gazed at the entrance, eyes widening in surprise at the sight of
Adam and his brother. He scrambled upright, determined to check on the beta’s leg and stumbled a
few times in his haste to turn around.

“Adam,” he said softly and the beta startled before smiling shyly at Dean. He made a noise of
surprise as Sam shoved him into the shelter from behind and yelped when Dean was immediately on
him, sniffing and scrutinising his numb leg. It was still slightly swollen (although not half as bad as
before) and Jody’s antivenom had worked quickly, meaning he didn’t feel nauseous anymore and
thankfully his vision wasn’t blurring. There was a large bruise stretching over the limb and Dean
frowned at it for a moment before curling around Adam protectively and tugging him to the ground,
obviously intending on making the beta sleep with him.

Adam looked bewildered by it all and Cas chuckled quietly and took his other side, smiling in
amusement at the beta’s helpless gaze.

“How are you?” Asked Cas and Adam took a moment to compose himself before shrugging.

“Could be better. I can’t feel my leg and my hip kinda aches, but I’ll live.”

Dean curled his paw tighter around Adam and began licking his head comfortingly and Cas bit back
a laugh as Adam slumped in relief and leaned into the alpha.

“I’m sorry,” mumbled Dean after a few moments and the beta frowned in confusion.

“For what?”

“For not taking care of you,” murmured Dean guiltily. “For letting you get hurt.”

Adam stilled before rolling over to face Dean, eyes wide with shock.

“How were you supposed to know I’d get bitten by a rattlesnake? You don’t honestly believe that
was your fault, do you?”

Dean blinked and Adam’s eyes widened a fraction more. “I didn’t believe Sam when he said you
were beating yourself up over it. I thought he was just saying that to…” He trailed off with a frown
as he contemplated something.

“…Did… Dad say something to you?” He asked carefully, out of the blue and when Dean’s ears
lowered, Adam huffed and buried his face into Dean’s neck.

“Ignore him,” he bit out. “He doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”
Dean and Cas shared a surprised glance before Dean gingerly wrapped his paws around Adam. The beta snuggled into him with a happy huff and slid his own paws around Dean.

“You’re a good leader,” whispered Adam. “Don’t listen to Dad. I should have been paying more attention to the snake; I’m the only one to blame for me being bitten and I’m not gonna beat myself up about it, so you definitely shouldn’t.” He scented Dean’s throat for a few minutes and smiled because Dean smelled like a mess of comfort, worry, fear and protectiveness and nobody had ever been panicked over him before. He’d never known anyone to be so protective over him and it felt good to know at least someone cared about him.

He felt Cas sidle up to his back, the omega wrapping himself around him and nuzzling his head.

“I heard you saved the pups,” he murmured. “Thank you. You were very brave and I can’t express how grateful we are.”

Adam’s tail commenced wiggling. “Couldn’t let them get eaten,” he grinned and Cas huffed out a quiet laugh as he slid his paws around Adam’s middle.

“You did something amazing,” he said. “You were willing to sacrifice your own life to save theirs and there aren’t many shifters in the world who would do that. You’re a hero.”

Adam beamed. Nobody had ever complimented him so much in his life and being with the Winchester pack was like being granted a new start. He was beginning to realise this was the family he’d always wanted and even though he’d hated the idea of his half-brothers when first arriving, he now realised they were the best thing to ever happen to him.

He wriggled closer to Dean, wanting to bury himself in the scent of pine and leather and when Dean huffed gruffly and pressed his nose into Adam’s head with a command of “You’re staying here tonight,” Adam didn’t even contemplate complaining.

Cas was a warm, solid presence at his back and as the scent of oceans and honey drifted over and tangled with pine and leather, Adam closed his eyes and rid his mind of thoughts of his father’s scent and how it made his nose wrinkle and his ears flatten. This felt like home, just like being with Sam and Gabe had.

Now if his father could just leave them all alone, that would be Heaven.

He drifted off to Dean’s rhythmic breaths and Cas’ gentle nuzzling.

Chapter End Notes

Long chapter because I didn't know how to separate it!
Adam awoke to a pair of warm bodies either side of him and quiet conversation drifting over his head as a nose snuffled gently at his injured leg. He smiled and leaned into Cas, granting Dean better access to his leg and the omega huffed out a soft laugh and wrapped his paw around Adam, beginning to lick his head.

“Good morning,” murmured Cas quietly and Adam closed his eyes again and buried himself in Cas’ silky fur. It was much softer and finer than wild folk fur and Adam loved it.

“Mornin’,” he mumbled, stretching his injured leg slightly. Dean started licking the wound, soothing the redness around the skin and Adam sighed happily because nobody had ever given him this much attention before.

Well. Not the type of attention he liked, anyway.

“How’re you feeling?” Rumbled Dean and Adam just wanted to curl into that protective scent the alpha was radiating. He felt safe here. He’d never felt safe before.

“Happy,” mumbled Adam without really thinking and both Cas and Dean blinked in surprise before Cas tugged him a little closer, like a protective parent would and Dean slithered up his side, curling around his smaller body.

“Strange that you’re happy when you’ve been chewed on by a snake,” huffed Dean gruffly, but Adam’s brain clearly wasn’t quite back online as he pressed his face into Dean’s neck and practically presented himself for scent marking, ears low and head rubbing pleadingly under Dean’s chin.

Dean froze and Cas’ eyes widened as Adam sighed contentedly.

“I like it here,” hummed Adam. “I like being part of this pack and I like you guys and Sam and Gabe and the pups. I feel safe. Never been safe before.”

“You’ve always had Dad to protect you,” Dean murmured carefully as Adam continued brushing his head under his chin.

The beta snorted, wrinkling his nose and frowning. “And who protects me from him?”

Adam’s brain kicked back into full power as soon as he’d realised what he’d said, but the damage was already done and when he leaned back to look at Dean and Cas, both adults were staring at him with wide, rounded eyes and mouths slightly agape.

“I mean… I- I feel safe with Dad,” Adam stuttered. “It’s just… I meant I like being part of a pack because… well, you don’t have to fend for yourself when there’s danger and… and it’s hard hunting alone, especially for Dad because I’m useless at everything… he always told me it was difficult looking after me on his own and now he has help… and you guys… you look out for me- for us, I mean?” He snapped his mouth shut and winced at all his slips. He’d messed up and now Dean and Cas were going to suspect something was wrong.

Which there was, but they didn’t need to know that.
Dean scowled and Cas tilted his head.

“Adam… why did your father never teach you to hunt?” Castiel asked cautiously. “If it was so difficult for him, why didn’t he show you so you could help?”

Adam dropped his gaze. “He just didn’t. Maybe he didn’t know how,” he lied.

Castiel clearly didn’t buy it but he knew when someone didn’t want to talk and he refrained from asking further questions, hoping Adam would open up once he was ready.

Dean on the other hand, had no problems with pushing.

“Yeah, sure. Now what’s the real reason he never taught you to hunt?” Demanded Dean. “Or fight, for that matter. Or do anything a wolf should be able to do by your age. Why’d he want us to teach you?”

Adam shrugged a little too forcibly. “I don’t know.”

Dean narrowed his eyes. “Adam, cut the crap. He never joins us on our hunting or fighting lessons; he doesn’t seem all that interested in your progress… why did he never teach you?”

Adam was starting to panic. If he revealed the reason, his dad would kill him, quite literally. Or maybe he’d kill Dean; it was hard to tell with John. Either way, he couldn’t tell them about what his father had threatened him into secrecy with.

“I don’t know,” insisted Adam. “He never told me.”

“We both know that’s a lie,” frowned Dean. “Why did you say you needed protection from Dad? What’s going on? What’s he done?”

Adam realised this was going to get messy. It had to if he wanted to keep his dirty little secret.

“It was an accident,” Adam huffed. “Nothing’s going on. He’s done nothing. I was still half-asleep, that’s all.”

“If he’s hurting you, you must tell us,” murmured Castiel quietly, gaze pleading and even though Dean looked pained by the idea of his father getting up to his old tricks, he nodded in agreement.

“He’s not,” bit out Adam, trying to hide his wince at raising his voice to the sweet omega who’d done nothing but keep him comfortable. “Can we stop talking about this?”

Dean shook his head. “Not until you tell us the truth. What’s going on? Why are you so scared of Dad? Don’t think I haven’t noticed how you never interact with him. You stay away from him as much as possible and you avoid speaking to him at all costs. You look scared when he asks to speak with you alone and I know all that because that was me and Sam thirteen years ago,” he said, ears lowered as the memories came back to him.

It made Adam feel even guiltier for what he was about to do.

“Well, maybe he just didn’t like you as much as he likes me!” He snapped, shame eating at his heart as Dean flinched, looking betrayed. “Stop wishing Dad abuses me just because he abused you! I know you’re jealous, but I’m getting tired of all these ridiculous questions!” He hissed, nearly whining at Dean’s hurt expression and the way he backed away from him.

“Adam,” protested Castiel and the beta knew he’d have to upset Cas too.
“No,” he growled, whirling to face the omega as he shoved at his body to dislodge the paw still draped around him. He felt cold when it slipped away. “I’m sick of this. I’m not avoiding Dad and I’m certainly not scared of him.” He snorted in distaste. “I thought you guys actually liked me, but it turns out you’re just using me to get imaginary dirt on Dad. Just leave me alone.”

He backed up and tried to slide out of the shelter, but Cas stopped him with a frown.

“You know very well that we like you, Adam. Cease this infantile behaviour and tell us what’s wrong. We only wish to help, but we can’t do that if you keep secrets.”

Adam wanted nothing more than to cuddle between the pair again, but he knew he couldn’t.

“That’s rich coming from you. The whole reason you’re in this pack is because you kept secrets from your brothers. Samandriel was a pretty big secret, wasn’t he?”

Castiel scowled. “Enough of this. Is John hurting you? Is that why you’re frightened of him? Does he abuse you?”

Adam hated the entire situation.

“The only alpha who’s hurt me is Dean when he left me to die in that field. I could barely walk and the grass was stained red with my blood and I still ache now. Not everything’s healed and I’ll probably be scarred for life. I’ll never forgive him and you’re worried about what my dad does?” He asked, disbelief colouring his tone.

“The only wolf I should be scared of is our great and mighty leader. Even his mate has threatened me and has proved he’s got no problems with biting me. Although, I should have expected that from a filthy Novak. You’ve made yourself quite comfortable with the Winchester’s head alpha. You’ve even got him to look after your scrawny brat. Your plan has played out quite well, hasn’t it? Even got your brother to flirt with the Winchester’s highest omega. You’ve set yourselves up quite nicely. Once Sam and Dean are out of the picture, you’re in control of this pack and everyone else is too stupid to see it. Dad was right about you; never trust a Novak,” he spat.

Castiel eyed him coldly, all former affection gone. “It’s ‘Castiel Winchester’,” he growled quietly and Adam could see how much his words had stung both adults from the hurt dancing in their eyes. He wanted to cry.

“Not to me, it’s not,” he snorted. “You’ll never be one of us. You’ll always be a filthy city mutt.”

“Get out,” growled Castiel, but his ears were flat and his tail was tucked between his legs and Adam despised himself as he stalked out of the shelter he’d felt so safe in mere minutes ago. He trotted to his shelter, ignoring the greeting smiles of the few wolves emerging from slumber and slid inside, swiping furiously at the tears rolling down his cheeks. Eventually he gave up and let them fall, his memory replaying Dean’s betrayed expression and Castiel’s look of devastation over and over until he was sobbing into his paws.

He hated his dad. He hated how terrified he was of the older alpha and he hated how he couldn’t confide in anyone for fear of being mauled by the alpha. He hated how he’d hurt Cas and Dean and how he hadn’t been able to tell them his secret.

He hated himself.

* * *
Balthazar scowled as he followed Hannah and Gadreel through the forest. He didn’t know why Gadreel kept asking him to accompany them on his dates with Hannah, but he refused to pass up an opportunity to show his mate why Gadreel wasn’t as sweet as everyone thought and why he was the better alpha out of the two of them.

It was evening, the sky caught somewhere between deep scarlet and blackish-blue and the stars seemed to twinkle brighter than usual around a large, not-quite-full moon.

Apparently, they were going to chase the fireflies, like Hannah and Gadreel had done when they first hooked up and Gadreel turned his nose up at the idea because the last thing he wanted to do was visit the place where he’d lost his mate to another alpha. He wanted to call the idea of chasing fireflies boring and stupid, but it was just the right side of cheesy romantic and he was secretly annoyed he hadn’t thought of it. One point to Gadreel; zero to him.

They trekked through the forest and eventually came to the long grasses that had Hannah’s tail wiggling in anticipation. They stopped at a small clearing, where the grass seemed to glow with gentle orange hues and Gadreel smirked at Hannah before the omega howled excitedly and raced off, sending the fireflies shooting into the air either side of her. They swarmed and danced around, glowing various shades of oranges and yellows as they tried to dart out of the way of a laughing Hannah. Some were more daring and they chased her furiously before falling back into their group.

Gadreel chuckled and chased after his lover, tail wagging high and happy and Balthazar’s heart ached as the other alpha teased his omega, nipping at her tail and legs until she pounced on him with a playful growl. They rolled around the floor, wrestling with one another and sending the fireflies zipping upwards, before Hannah licked Gadreel’s face and hopped off him, sprinting away again in encouragement of another chase.

Gadreel’s eyes brightened and he began a new chase, but after a few seconds he paused and turned to the sulking Balthazar with a cocked ear.

“Are you coming?” He asked with a lopsided smile and Balthazar was overcome with a wave of anger and jealousy. This alpha had stolen his mate, was playing and flirting with her openly in his presence, waving their relationship in his face like he’d won a competition or something and now he was asking if Balthazar was going to make a fool of himself by chasing after Hannah like some pathetic, pining pup? Did the other alpha want to prove he was better by challenging him in a chase for his own mate? Was this alpha really so arrogant?

He snorted and turned away from Gadreel, snuffling the ground in an attempt at showing he wasn’t interested in Gadreel’s silly competition.

Gadreel frowned but the expression faded when Hannah butted his side. He grinned and chased after her again, leaving Balthazar to feel like he’d somehow lost despite saying ‘no’ to the other alpha.

Balthazar watched the pair goof around for at least twenty minutes and the longer he watched, the lonelier and left-out he felt. He just wanted Gadreel to leave so he could spend time with his mate, but he knew that wasn’t going to happen.

For a moment, Balthazar’s heart leapt into his throat and his muscles tensed, preparing for a fight as Hannah ploughed into Gadreel and began wrestling roughly with him. She pinned him to the ground and chewed on his ear and Gadreel fought back, shoving at her body until she stumbled off him and he was able to pin her instead. Their teeth clashed as they tried to attack one another and their paws scrambled at one another’s bodies as their playing grew dangerously close to sparring and Balthazar
growled lowly before he could stop himself; a warning for Gadreel to back off. Hannah had faced enough trauma in their old pack; she didn’t need another alpha to start abusing and hurting her.

Except when Gadreel and Hannah turned to look at him, they were both grinning and their tails were wagging hard.

Hannah tried to wriggle out of Gadreel’s grip so she wasn’t gazing at her mate upside-down, but Gadreel growled softly at her as he pressed more of his weight onto her and she growled back but gave up trying to escape. She looked rather adorable smiling upside-down at Balthazar.

“Come on!” She said excitedly. “Stop being such a sour puss and get over here.” Her whole body was beginning to shake from the force of her tail and Gadreel began to chuckle.

Balthazar wanted to join his mate oh-so-badly, but playfighting? Wasn’t that for pups? Or people who hadn’t been beaten up by the entirety of their old pack?

Why was Hannah letting Gadreel abuse her?

Hannah suddenly threw Gadreel off with a howl of triumph and he fell onto his side before springing back to his feet and shaking himself off. She laughed at the fireflies that buzzed angrily around him before flying away and Gadreel smirked and leapt on her whilst she was distracted, shoving her to the floor and lying on her because he knew he was far larger and heavier than she was and she would find it very difficult to throw him off this time.

She slumped down with an “oof” and gazed at Balthazar.

“Save me,” she whined dramatically as Gadreel lazily chewed on her ear and Balthazar’s ears lowered because this wasn’t the mate he remembered.

Since when had Hannah become so easy-going? Since when had she become so relaxed around other alphas and betas? Since when did she actually enjoy being part of a large pack? Since when had she enjoyed playfights and fishing and challenging hunts and all the other things she did with Gadreel but not with him?

Since when had she changed into a wolf Balthazar barely recognised?

“Come on! Where’s my knight in shining armour?” She winked, snapping Balthazar out of his thoughts and the bronze and white alpha slowly stood and stalked towards her, eying Gadreel warily as he rolled Hannah onto her back and began wrestling with her again.

Wrestling morphed into tickling and Hannah laughed loudly as Gadreel tickled her belly mercilessly with his nose. She batted at his face a few times, but it wasn’t enough to deter him and Hannah threw her head back in a fit of giggles and cried out to Balthazar.

“Help!”

Balthazar approached them, unsure what to do, but as Gadreel growled at him playfully, memories of alphas snarling at him and shoving him to the ground, forcing him to present assaulted his mind and he froze up, eyes wide and ears flat before he ducked his head submissively and crouched low to the floor, whining softly in fear.

Immediately Hannah and Gadreel stopped playing and Hannah rushed over to him as Gadreel backed off, tail tucked in shame as Hannah wrapped herself around her mate, licking his face and purring quietly in a way she hoped was comforting.
Balthazar pressed his face into Hannah’s chest, cursing his instincts and he scented her deeply, her sweet scent calming his overactive memory. She’d smelled happy at first and now he’d tainted it with worry and concern because he was a weak alpha who couldn’t even stand up to Gadreel.

“Sshh, it’s okay. I’m here,” Hannah whispered. “No one’s going to hurt you.”

He ducked his head in shame as she licked his face. He was supposed to comfort her through her trauma, not the other way around. She probably went to Gadreel for her own nightmares, he thought bitterly.

“I’m sorry,” whispered Gadreel apologetically, looking like a scolded pup. “I wasn’t thinking. I shouldn’t have growled… I never meant to scare you.”

Balthazar bristled at the idea of Gadreel thinking he’d intimidated him because he was the stronger alpha. He couldn’t have Hannah thinking he was any weaker than she already believed him to be.

“Maybe it would be better if you didn’t say anything at all,” snapped Balthazar as he pressed closer to Hannah in full view of Gadreel, letting him know that he wasn’t welcome.

Gadreel ducked his head guiltily and took another step back as he glanced to Hannah. She gazed at him helplessly before focusing her attention on Balthazar once more. Gadreel lay down silently, trying to prove he wasn’t a threat and Balthazar was able to ignore him and focus on Hannah’s tender care.

A little while later, Hannah and Balthazar were pressed into one another as they followed a quiet Gadreel to a small hill that had a fantastically clear view of the sky and the forest below.

Balthazar was finally enjoying himself because Hannah hadn’t once given Gadreel any attention since his mistake in the firefly clearing and had instead chosen to nuzzle and kiss Balthazar until he felt his muscles loosen and his mind relax. They licked and nosed at each other on their journey and Balthazar was delighted to find Hannah’s tail swaying contentedly like it used to when they were sharing a romantic evening together.

He still had a chance at beating Gadreel in their competition, then.

They settled on top of the hill, gazing over the dark forest as the night was filled with the sounds of nocturnal creatures just beginning to wake. A bat squeaked as it whizzed past them and Hannah chuckled as she leaned into Balthazar’s side with a smile. He licked her head adoringly and smirked when Gadreel took the omega’s other side, but with at least two feet between them.

After a few moments, Hannah glanced up at the inky sky and her gaze softened as she watched the stars shine above them.

“How have you ever seen anything more beautiful than the stars?” She whispered in awe and Gadreel smiled and gazed straight at Hannah with the sappiest expression Balthazar had ever seen.

“Yes,” he whispered and there was no confusion as to what he meant.

Hannah grew all doe-eyed and fond smiles and to Balthazar’s horror, she patted the space beside her invitingly.

Gadreel’s tail wiggled excitedly and he slid closer, pressing into her free side with a single, sweet lick to her cheek.

Balthazar scrunched his nose up in disgust and glared holes into the side Gadreel’s face when
Hannah wasn’t looking. He hated how good the other alpha smelled. It wasn’t fair that Gadreel was handsome and had an amazing scent. Stupid, mate-stealing alpha with all the best pick-up lines that Balthazar wished he’d thought of.

Gadreel must have felt a pair of eyes on him and he shifted his gaze to Balthazar and raised an eyebrow at how the smaller alpha was staring at him with hostility burning behind his eyes. Gadreel tilted his head slightly in question but Balthazar merely narrowed his gaze further and licked Hannah’s cheek pointedly.

Gadreel blinked and looked away.

Balthazar smirked and made sure Hannah’s attention shifted to him as they gazed at the stars and he watched Gadreel’s ears drop lower and lower throughout the night the longer Hannah remained affectionate with him and not the grey and white alpha.

Balthazar even wrapped a paw around Hannah, just to prove a point and Gadreel winced slightly and cast his gaze to the sky.

Balthazar smirked. One point to him; zero to Gadreel.

Chapter End Notes

Shorter chapter since the last one was so long, but I’d still love to hear you thoughts on the characters in this one ;)

Also: GUYS! 50000 HITS?! THAT’S INSANE!
It was the day after his outburst at Castiel and Dean and Adam was planning on spending it sulking in his shelter and trying not to come into contact with anyone, just like he had done yesterday. Maybe he could stay in there all week and just rot and die. That sounded like an appealing option.

Fate obviously thought otherwise.

“C’mon, sleepy head! Get up! Your fighting lesson awaits!”

Adam yelped in surprise as Gabriel suddenly shoved his way into his shelter and manoeuvred them both until Adam found himself outside and staring at a smiling Sam. He winced and prepared himself for getting yelled at for upsetting Cas and Dean.

The scolding never came and a newly rut-free Gabriel practically skipped out of his shelter and began nudging Adam towards the outskirts of the camp, Sam trotting beside them both in amusement.

Adam glanced between the pair warily, still waiting to be punished. Maybe he wanted to be punished. He certainly deserved it for hurting the wolves who’d taken such good care of him. He wanted nothing more than to crush Cas and Dean into a hug and beg for their forgiveness after telling them how sorry he was, but he knew if he apologised, they would insist on asking him what was going on with his father and he couldn’t answer that. He had no idea what John would do if he told them.

It suddenly struck him that he was going for a fighting lesson with Sam and Gabriel. He paused and glanced cautiously at Sam.

“Where’s Dean?”

Sam scrunched his nose up. “Couldn’t come. Said he’s busy doing something. Not sure what. Told me to take Gabe with us instead.” Sam grinned at the teen. “Why? You not like Gabe or something?”

Adam shook his head quickly as Gabriel winked at him and he managed a smile even though his heart was aching and his mind racing. Dean hated him. That’s why he wasn’t accompanying them. He wanted nothing to do with Adam because he despised him so much. Adam wished he could curl up in a dark hole somewhere, never to be found again.

“Who needs him when you have an awesome brother-in-law like me though?” Teased Gabriel, nudging the beta’s shoulder playfully. “I’ll show you how to have a good time.”

Sam rolled his eyes as Gabriel smirked and Adam’s ears lowered even further because he didn’t deserve their friendship and teasing banter. He was a coward and a bully and a screw up. Why were they being so nice to him?

They eventually reached the clearing they usually reserved for sparring sessions and Gabriel stood opposite Adam, glancing to Sam with a wicked gleam in his eyes.

“Right, so how do we do this? I beat him up and you tell him how to do better?”
Sam raised an eyebrow. “Pretty much. Just avoid his bad leg if you can. Remember, he’s pretty new to this so don’t go bulldozing into him at full strength.”

Adam flinched. He wished Gabriel would go hard on him after what he’d said to Cas and Dean.

“Okie-dokie, kiddo,” hummed Gabriel, tail wiggling with excitement. It felt good to be able to stretch his legs after being holed up in his shelter for two weeks. “Normal sparring rules?”

Sam nodded and Adam was half-tempted to not defend himself and just let Gabriel plough into him.

The lesson commenced a few moments later and Adam knew he was distracted but he forced himself to focus just so Gabe and Sam wouldn’t start asking questions.

Fighting Gabriel was very different to fighting Sam and Dean; the golden alpha was quicker to attack and although his blows weren’t as heavy as Sam or Dean’s, they were far more frequent and just as precise. Sam and Dean were calculated in their attacks, but Gabriel was unpredictable and chaotic and Adam had a hard time anticipating his moves. Whenever he thought the alpha would swipe at him with his claw, he would actually snap his jaws at him; whenever he expected Gabe to kick out at him, he would run headfirst into Adam’s side and pin the teen instead.

Sam and Dean were very serious during sparring sessions; concentration solely on the fight, but Gabriel practically teased him, tail wagging at full speed as they battled. The alpha even had the audacity to lick his face and tickle his belly once or twice.

Adam found himself grinning half-way through an ear nip and even though his leg was starting to ache from all the strenuous activity, he was having fun.

At one point, when Gabriel mowed him down, he felt his leg pulse and he yelped without meaning to. Immediately, Gabriel ceased his attack and Sam stopped giving instructions long enough to check on the beta. As soon as he spotted how red the skin beneath Adam’s fur was, he ordered Gabriel to release the teen and Adam slowly dragged himself to his paws, chest heaving, tongue lolling and smile wide despite the ache.

“That was awesome,” grinned Adam, tail swaying. Gabriel had given him a real work out and he’d had the pleasure of trying a different fighting style. Not to mention he’d enjoyed the alpha’s playfulness. Maybe he could fight Gabriel more often? He’d learned a lot today.

Gabriel stretched with a smirk as Sam plodded to his side.

“I had quite a bit of fun myself,” he hummed. “Your training’s come on a lot since I last knocked you on your ass in the woods,” he winked.

Adam chuckled and shook his head. “It could be better though. Maybe I could spar with you again some time?”

Gabriel grinned wickedly. “What’s this? The moody teen actually likes me?”

Adam snorted. “Don’t flatter yourself. You’re just a good sparring partner,” he teased and Gabriel nodded.

“But not bad for a filthy city mutt, huh?”

Adam froze.

That… couldn’t be a coincidence, could it? Those words… did Gabriel know…?
“Not bad for a filthy Novak either,” chimed in Sam and Adam’s heart sunk as his head lowered in shame. They knew.

Their expressions had lost all humour and suddenly they were staring at him with a mixture of pity and disappointment and Adam couldn’t take it. He flicked his gaze to the direction of the camp and wondered if he sprinted, would they be able to catch up to him? He soon dismissed the thought. They would punish him wherever he went; might as well get it over and done with when the entire pack wasn’t there to witness it.

With the fluidity of a wolf who’d practiced this same movement countless times, Adam crouched low to the ground and dropped his gaze submissively before crawling towards Sam and Gabe to present himself for punishment. He wondered which one would punish him and how they would do it. Gabe was the alpha, but Sam was Second-in-Command of the pack, so he’d probably do it. He hoped he wouldn’t need stitches after this; he didn’t want to explain what he’d done to Jody as well.

After a few moments of silent anticipation, Adam cautiously looked up. Sam should have bitten or hit him by now, maybe even clawed him. So why was he still unscathed? He frowned when he realised Sam and Gabe were staring at him with almost disturbed expressions, as if they weren’t entirely sure what he was doing.

“Adam, stand up,” Sam said quietly and Adam did, albeit cautiously. Why wasn’t Sam hurting him?

“Where… where do you want me?” Asked Adam hoarsely when Sam didn’t offer anything further and both alpha and omega’s eyes widened in horror before Sam shook his head quickly.

“I’m not…” He took a breath before trying again. “I’m not looking to hurt you, Adam. I just… I want to know why you said what you did to Cas and Dean. They’re worried for you and so are we.”

Gabriel nodded in agreement and Adam suddenly lowered his gaze and hunched in on himself.

“They shouldn’t care about me. I said some horrible things to them,” he mumbled. Sam sighed.

“And they could tell you didn’t mean any of it. They seem to think you’re hiding something; that you lashed out like that to protect yourself. Is that true?”

Adam scowled, lips pulling into a thin line. He didn’t want to discuss his problems with Sam and Gabriel, just like he hadn’t wanted to explain them to Cas and Dean. He wasn’t able to. He didn’t want to have to insult Sam and Gabriel as well.

“Is that why you brought me out here? Dean sent you for information?” Adam muttered, unable to ignore the hurt and disappointment weighing heavy in his heart.

Sam shook his head. “It’s one of the reasons, sure, but not the only one. We promised to teach you how to hunt and fight and that’s exactly what we’re going to do.” His gaze softened. “But you’ve got to be honest with us. You’ve got to let us help you.” He took a step forwards and lowered his voice.

“You know we’ll protect you, right?” He whispered. “Whatever’s going on; whatever’s making you so scared, you know we can keep you safe? You’ve just got to trust us.”

Adam wanted so badly to believe Sam’s words. He wanted to cuddle into Sam’s fur and let the omega take care of him and protect him. But he knew if he told his brother what was bothering him, Sam would shy away and his sweet promises would turn out empty and false. No, it was better for everyone if he kept his mouth shut.
Gabriel must have noticed his expression beginning to close off and he quickly intervened.

“If you don’t want to tell us, that’s fine,” he said. “We’re not going to pressure you into anything, but promise me one thing, kiddo? Promise me, when you think the time is right, or if you get too scared, promise you’ll come to us. We can help, but you’ve got to let us. If everything gets too much, we’ll be here for you.”

Adam hesitated, contemplating the alpha’s words, then finally he nodded, eyes closed.

“I promise,” he whispered and Gabriel smiled and plodded over to him. He began to lick a few cuts and scrapes gained from their sparring session and Adam relaxed into the soothing lapping of his tongue. He cleaned Gabriel up slowly and was surprised when Sam rounded his other side to lick at the swelling on his injured leg. He nearly collapsed from the relief of being taken care of and after a few minutes of both adults fussing over him, he buried his face in Sam’s neck and inhaled that sweet scent of strawberries and freshly-cut grass that he adored.

Sam’s soft chuckle vibrated through his body and Adam was mortified when he let out a tiny purr as the omega began nuzzling his head. He couldn’t help it; Sam was so gentle and he smelled and acted so protective that it was hard not to feel safe and wanted around him.

Gabriel huffed out a laugh beside him and continued lapping at his scrapes, before eventually pausing.

“Apologise to them,” he whispered quietly and Adam pulled away from Sam long enough to glance at the alpha curiously.

“You don’t have to tell them any secrets, but apologise to Cas and Dean. They won’t be mad, but you need to fix things between you,” Gabriel murmured quietly and Adam flattened his ears in shame and nodded.

Sam nosed at his head. “They’ll forgive you. They’re just worried about you. Show them you didn’t mean any of what you said.”

Adam nodded once more and pressed his face into Sam’s neck again. He didn’t deserve Sam and Gabriel’s patience, nor their kindness.

An hour later saw them returning to the camp. Sam gently nudged Adam in the direction of Cas and Dean as Gabriel smiled encouragingly. Swallowing his nervousness and plucking up as much courage as he could, Adam took a deep breath and made his way over to the pair, who were talking to Bobby with soft smiles.

Castiel spotted him first and he nudged Dean, making the alpha raise an eyebrow at his approach. Butterflies beat their wings at his ribcage and Adam wondered if he’d lose his nerve before he managed to cross the distance of the camp. What if Sam and Gabe were wrong? What if they were angry? What if they yelled at him or even worse, ignored him? What if they wanted nothing to do with him?

John suddenly intercepted him.

“I want a word,” he commanded, because John never requested or spoke like a normal wolf. He was an alpha; he commanded and ordered and expected everyone else to do as he said without complaint.

Adam dropped his head. Dean and Cas’ apology would have to wait.

“Yes, sir,” he mumbled and his heart sunk as John whirled on his heel and headed for the outskirts of
the camp. He wanted *that* kind of word, then.

He slunk after his father, tail tucked and head bowed and in doing so, he missed Gabriel and Sam’s expressions of shock and Bobby, Dean and Castiel’s frowns.

Sam and Dean glanced to each other and Sam was quick to follow their father, not trusting his intentions after the way Adam had been acting so defensive and fearful this morning. Gabriel trotted after him silently and Sam was grateful for the support.

John paused just outside the camp and suddenly whirled around to face Gabriel and Sam, raising an eyebrow as he did so.

“We having a party?”

Sam stopped and frowned. “Just wondering what you wanted with Adam? Must be pretty important if you’re taking him out of the camp to speak with him. Maybe I should hear it too, since y’know, Second-in-Command and all that.”

A look of irritation briefly flickered over John’s face before Sam could analyse it and the alpha smiled a little too forcedly.

“I’ve only taken him away from the camp because it’s quieter here. Nothing important, I’m afraid. You don’t have to stay for this. I just want a quick word with him, that’s all.”

Adam flinched and it didn’t slip Sam’s notice. He sat down pointedly. “Well, if it’s not important, I guess you won’t mind me hearing it? That okay with you, Adam?”

The beta looked up with wide eyes before nodding enthusiastically, gaze grateful.

John looked to be growing rather annoyed. “There’s really no need-”

“I won’t interfere. Promise. Say what you have to say and you won’t even know I’m here,” Sam said lightly, but there was a challenge in his eyes and Adam could’ve kissed his brother for being so suspicious of their father.

John pursed his lips, realising he wasn’t going to win. He turned to Adam awkwardly.

“I… just wanted to know how you were getting on with your fighting lessons. I know you had one this morning and I just wanted to check on your progress.”

‘Liar,’ Adam nearly growled. John had never cared about his progress before. That hadn’t been the reason for this little trip out of camp.

“Fine,” Adam shrugged instead, feeling a little braver now Sam was here. Their dad wouldn’t try anything with the Second-in-Command of the pack watching. “Sam says I’m doing well, right, Sam?” He glanced over to the omega and his brother smiled encouragingly.

“Right,” he nodded. “He’s a quick learner,” he continued, gazing at his father.

Adam’s tail wiggled because Sam was an amazing wolf and even though John was standing a mere few feet away, he felt safe in Sam’s presence.

John nodded tightly. “That’s… good. Any improvements he could learn? Maybe there’s something I could help with?”

Sam paused, contemplating the questions. “Not yet,” he said after a few moments. “I might
reconsider once his leg has healed, but for now, we’ll take it fairly easy.” He gazed at Adam fondly. “He was very brave saving the pups. I’m impressed.”

John nodded slowly as Adam’s tail wiggled harder.

“Oh… well… that’s all I wanted to ask,” said John after a few seconds and Sam grinned.

“Awesome. C’mon, Adam. You still have one more task.” He gestured to the beta and Adam was quick to join him. He pressed into Sam’s side gratefully without making it too obvious that he wanted to get as far away from his dad as possible and as they returned to camp, they missed John’s eyes narrowing at their retreating backs.

Once back at the camp, Sam and Gabriel guided Adam towards Dean and Castiel before leaving him to their curious glances. Adam’s ears flattened uncertainly and he averted his gaze in shame. Bobby was still lingering beside them and he had no illusions that the older alpha didn’t know what he’d done wrong. They were all waiting for some sort of apology and Adam didn’t even know where to begin.

The silence stretched on for too long and Dean cleared his throat.

“Can we help you?” He said gruffly and Adam winced before glancing up at them desperately.

“I’m sorry,” he rushed out. “For what I said. I didn’t mean any of it. I was being a brat because I didn’t want to talk and I still don’t want to talk but I know what I said to you was wrong and inappropriate and cruel and I just want you to know that I don’t think of any of you like that. I really do like you guys and I love this pack and I’m sorry I’m such a stupid, immature pup and that I hurt you, because I really don’t want to hurt you. You’ve been so nice to me; kind and patient and I threw it all back in your face because I like to self-destruct and push everyone away when they try to help and I didn’t know what else to do because you were asking questions I’m not supposed to answer and I didn’t know how to make you stop, so I yelled horrible things at you and I didn’t even want to or mean any of them and now you hate me and I deserve it because I’m such a screw up and-”

“Woah! Woah! Slow down, Adam,” said Dean with wide eyes as he paced forwards and tugged the younger beta into a hug. Adam buried his face into Dean’s neck with a whimper and it was only then did he notice his cheeks were wet and his chest was heaving erratically.

Castiel slithered up beside him and wrapped himself around Adam’s smaller body and the beta choked out another sob because he didn’t deserve their forgiveness but he sure craved it.

His breathless monologue had degraded into a quiet chant of “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” and Dean held him tighter as Cas began licking his head soothingly.

“We know you didn’t mean it,” whispered Dean. “We’re not that stupid,” he smirked and managed to drag a pathetic huff of choked laughter from Adam.

“We just wanted to make sure you were okay,” Dean continued, sobering. “I don’t tolerate abuse in my pack, Adam, no matter who the culprit is and the way you were talking… I just wanted to make sure you felt… safe here. I didn’t expect you to blow up at us, though. Kinda seemed like a self-defence mechanism…”

“So you sent Gabe and Sam to question me,” huffed Adam, snuggling deeper into Dean’s warm fur. Why did his brothers have such wonderful scents? Pine and leather was quickly becoming one of his favourite concoctions.

Dean chuckled guiltily. “Maybe. I couldn’t exactly ask you myself and I think Cas felt the same
“So you sent spies in,” mumbled Adam with a small grin and Castiel chuckled as Dean nuzzled his ear with an amused smirk.

“I guess I did.” He hesitated. “It’s… okay if you don’t want to talk about things, but just know that we’re always here if you need us. You don’t even have to talk to me or Sam; you can talk to anyone in the pack, okay? Don’t bottle everything up.” He glanced over at his mate and Cas smiled back proudly. Dean had come a long way since when he’d first met the alpha.

“I second that,” huffed Bobby. “If you get worried or scared for even a second, know my shelter’s always open. It was open for your brothers when they were little and it’s open for you, too. Don’t let anyone make you feel less than what you are and don’t let them hurt you either.”

Adam wondered if Bobby knew what John had been doing to him but when Dean flinched, he was shocked to realise the older alpha was referring to Sam and Dean’s younger years. Wait, had Sam and Dean gone through exactly the same as what he was facing now? Had John not changed in all those years? He’d always assumed it was just him that John treated like that; had Sam and Dean been abused the same way…?

Adam glanced over at Bobby and nodded appreciatively and the older alpha offered him a small smile before backing away and leaving him to bask in the attentions of Dean and Cas.

He loved this pack.

“I’m sorry,” Adam said one last time, just because he felt he had to and Castiel snorted and nuzzled his ear.

“Apology accepted. Stop apologising.”

Adam smiled and squished himself further between them both, ignoring the amused grins of the rest of the pack. This, right here with Dean and Cas, or Sam and Gabe, this was his safe place. His happy place. He was wanted here; protected.

His dad couldn’t hurt him here.

* * *

“You’re such a pup,” giggled Hannah and Gadreel winked as they trotted towards a very old, large cave they’d stumbled across on their three hour walk. They’d been gone for most of the afternoon and now evening had fallen, shrouding the sky in darkness, they were preparing to make the three-hour tip back home.

It was Gadreel’s turn with Hannah, but as usual, he’d invited Balthazar along and the smaller alpha had been less-than-pleased to see how excited Hannah got at the mention of an ‘afternoon adventure’ with the other alpha. She seemed enthralled with everything Gadreel did, from fishing (he wasn’t even that good at it) to visiting Firefly Meadow (just a bunch of insects) and when he’d asked her about an afternoon-come-evening of exploration a fair distance away from their usual hang-outs, Hannah had eaten it up without pause for thought.

She hadn’t stopped smiling and was clearly enjoying herself, to Balthazar’s irritation. Gadreel had
sniffed out a blackberry bush and charmed her when he pulled the fruits off for her so she wouldn’t cut herself on any of the brambles. He’d tried the same trick with Balthazar, but Balthazar had snapped at him and told him he wasn’t some pathetic damsel in distress who needed protecting from the big bad world. Gadreel’s ears had drooped but he’d ignored it.

Later, they’d come across a shallow, perfectly transparent brook and Gadreel had grown excited over some tiny colourful fish that he called ‘Guppies’. They weren’t at all interesting in Balthazar’s (possibly biased) opinion. He’d shown Hannah and when they’d leaned closer to take a look at their beautiful fantails, Balthazar had ‘accidentally’ knocked Gadreel’s leg until he lost balance and fell face-first into the water, startling the fish and making Hannah gasp and help drag him out. Gadreel stared at Balthazar with an almost betrayed expression but Hannah didn’t notice and began licking his face, removing the excess water. It was enough to distract Gadreel and he grinned at her fondly as she licked his nose and muzzle flirtily. Balthazar scowled and stalked away.

Afterwards, they’d continued their ‘adventure’ with Gadreel and Hannah at the front and Balthazar sulking behind them. In his brooding, miserable, jealous state, Balthazar hadn’t been paying attention to where he’d been walking, too busy trying to come up with ways to remove Gadreel from the picture and he’d heard the warning rattle far too late. His eyes blew wide and just as the snake sprung at his face, something heavy ploughed into his side and he crashed to the floor; the other body sprawled over him.

He looked up to find Gadreel staring at him worriedly and when the larger alpha turned to watch the aggravated snake slither away, Balthazar scowled and shoved his unwanted rescuer off him, non-too-gently.

Gadreel winced as Hannah bounded over to Balthazar, expression flooding with concern.

“And you okay? Did it bite you? Did you get hurt?” She hurried out, panicked and Balthazar sighed and shook his head, leaning forwards to lick her muzzle reassuringly. However, she turned to Gadreel before he got a chance and nudged him to his feet as she asked him the same frantic questions.

Gadreel smiled and shook his head and Balthazar tensed when Hannah allowed him to lick her cheek.

“I think you’d better thank Gadreel for saving your life,” teased Hannah, gaze turning sopp and adoring as she glanced at the grey and white wolf and Balthazar had to bite back a snarl.

“Thanks,” he snapped out bitterly before slinking away, leaving Gadreel to scowl and Hannah to stare at his retreating figure in bewilderment.

Now, they were heading towards a dark, ominous cave that Gadreel was convinced held a fruit bat colony. His brilliant plan was to wake them all up and watch them soar into the air and form a huge black cloud that apparently was one of those awe-inspiring sights you had to witness before you died. Balthazar thought it was a stupid plan and he half hoped Gadreel got bitten by one of the nasty little creatures and died of rabies.

Hannah thought the larger alpha’s excitement was adorable and she lay down beside Balthazar when she was told to as Gadreel crept into the cave.

He paused for a moment, crouching down so he wouldn’t get overwhelmed by a flurry of leathery wings and once he was certain he was clear of the exit path of the bats, he released an almighty howl.
Nothing happened.

He frowned and looked around the darkness before barking loudly and when nothing continued to happen, he stood and nosed blindly at the walls, grimacing at some of the excrement under his paws.

It seemed the bats had already left for the evening in search of food.

Slumping slightly in disappointment, Gadreel trudged out of the cave and wiped his paws on the grass before glancing to Hannah apologetically.

“It seems we were too late,” he said softly and Hannah smiled and shook her head fondly before licking his nose to perk him up a bit.

“You can show us again another day,” she promised and Gadreel managed a small grin as he rubbed their noses together.

Balthazar turned away in disgust. “Well, thanks for a disappointing end to a disappointing evening. Can we go back to camp now? We have a three hour walk ahead of us and since I’m going to spend the night alone anyway, the quicker I get to sleep, the quicker it’ll be over,” he said airily, turning his back to Gadreel as he headed back the way they’d come.

Gadreel’s lips turned downwards and even Hannah frowned at his attitude.

“…You don’t have to spend the night alone,” she said carefully, glancing at Gadreel. “You’re quite welcome to stay with us.”

Gadreel said nothing, but he didn’t protest either and Hannah offered him a brief, appreciative smile before casting her gaze to Balthazar.

Balthazar snorted and didn’t turn around. “And be subjected to more affectionate kisses and flirting between you two? Where do I sign up?”

“Balthazar,” Hannah frowned, ears flattening in hurt and confusion and Gadreel tensed as Balthazar continued walking away.

“You two enjoy yourselves,” Balthazar tossed over his shoulder. “Mongrel only wants somewhere to stick his knot anyway,” he muttered bitterly under his breath and maybe he hadn’t said that quite as quietly as he’d first thought because Gadreel suddenly snapped.

“If you’ve got something to say to me, come here and say it,” snarled Gadreel, patience finally worn out. “Stop being a coward and muttering everything under your breath. Face me, Balthazar.”

Balthazar froze, realising his mistake too late. He’d been so irritated by Gadreel stealing his mate’s attentions, he’d completely forgotten about his paralysing fear of angry alphas. Gadreel had never acted hostile towards him before, so he’d slowly forgotten about being wary of him; now he was beginning to remember why he wasn’t supposed to challenge other alphas.

“Balthazar,” ordered Gadreel, lead alpha command bleeding through his tone. “I said ‘Face me’.”

Balthazar slowly turned around, eyes wide and panicked when he realised Gadreel was slowly advancing on him, stormy scowl set in place and scent radiating fury and offence.

“Care to repeat your last sentence?” He growled darkly and Balthazar couldn’t move; legs locked and gaze fearful as he was overwhelmed by Gadreel’s powerful alpha scent. This wasn’t patient, caring Gadreel with the reassuring scent of roasted chestnuts and oak trees; this was an angry lead
alpha who was gearing up to fight and hurt him. Gadreel was bigger and stronger than he was; he could really do some damage.

“Well?” Snapped the larger alpha and Balthazar shrunk in on himself, crouching low to the ground in a sign of submission. His ears flattened and his tail tucked between his legs and he shook his head frantically, pulse beating twice the speed it should have been. Was Gadreel going to knot him? Show him who was boss? Or would he just beat him to a bloody pulp?

“I’m sorry,” Balthazar whimpered desperately, fear gripping his heart. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it.”

“Gadreel,” Hannah breathed, eyes wide as she glanced between both alphas uncertainly. “You’re scaring him.”

“Good,” growled Gadreel, all trace of kindness gone. This was not the Gadreel Balthazar nor Hannah recognised. “I’m tired of his pithy comments and immature behaviour. I’ve put up with it for long enough and I’m not willing to stand for it any longer.” He prowled closer to Balthazar and the smaller alpha whined quietly.

“Gadreel, I’m sorry,” he begged. “Please, I didn’t think. I’m a stupid pup and I promise I’ll never challenge you again.”

Gadreel snorted. “Challenge me? You’re too much of a coward to challenge me. You can’t even make a friend within the pack because you’re too terrified of your own shadow. What kind of alpha are you? Do you really think Hannah will choose you over me?”

“Gadreel!” Hannah gasped in shock as Balthazar flinched. So, he’d been right then? Gadreel had been competing with him for Hannah.

Gadreel ignored the omega’s indignant shout as he closed in on Balthazar.

“You were the one who suggested sharing her and yet you’ve done nothing but display your intentions to push me out of her life. I’m tired of being patient with you, Balthazar. If we can’t share her, then we’ll have to find another way to settle this problem. Get up,” he ordered lowly and Balthazar whimpered because he could smell the aggression and anger in Gadreel’s scent and he could see the other alpha’s hackles beginning to raise as he bared his teeth. Gadreel wanted a fight.

“I said GET UP!” Snarled Gadreel, snapping his teeth at Balthazar and the smaller alpha yelped and scrambled to his paws, memories of his previous pack flashing through his mind. It seemed all alphas were the same. They all wanted to hurt him.

“Stop this, Gadreel!” Yelled Hannah as Balthazar began shaking, but Gadreel ignored her and began circling the terrified Balthazar.

“You’re so pathetic,” he sneered. “You can’t even stand up for yourself. A few minutes ago, you were quite happy to insult and degrade me; now look at you. You’re shaking like a newborn lamb. All because I flashed my teeth at you. Why on Earth would Hannah want you? Face it, Balthazar, you’ve lost her. She’s mine.”

Balthazar frowned and glanced at Gadreel to protest, but he staggered backwards when the alpha suddenly lunged towards him with a hostile snarl. Balthazar sunk lower again, showing his unwillingness to fight but when Gadreel advanced on him once more, he gulped and bared his throat in a show of submission.

He was shocked when Gadreel darted forwards and tried to take a chunk out of his neck. With a yelp he scarpered backwards and stared at Gadreel in horror.
“You’re not escaping so easily,” growled Gadreel. “Either fight or roll over and let me kill you.”

Balthazar’s stomach dropped. Traditionally, this is how alphas settled their claim to an omega or beta. Fight or die. More recently, alphas could back out of a fight or admit defeat, but in the original world of claiming betas and omegas without their consent, back when alphas were something to be truly feared and could take as many mates/breeding stock as they wanted, they would fight to the death to prove who was the strongest alpha.

Now Gadreel wanted to bring that tradition back.

“Please,” begged Balthazar, tears slicking his cheeks. “I don’t want to die. I’m sorry.”

Gadreel growled. “Stop being so weak. Do you want Hannah or not?”

“I’m not property,” hissed Hannah from somewhere behind him and Gadreel actually laughed.

“Yes, you are.”

Hannah snapped her mouth shut and stared at the larger alpha in open horror. He swivelled his head towards her. “And if you ever look at this worthless rodent again, I’ll prove it to you.”

He glanced at Balthazar in disgust and Hannah looked wrecked as she stared at the alpha she thought she knew, gaze turning glassy as unshed tears were brought to the surface.

Gadreel had no right to upset Hannah.

“You won’t touch her,” growled Balthazar warningly. Gadreel raised an eyebrow.

"Excuse me?" He asked in distaste.

“I said you won’t touch her,” Balthazar snapped. Who did this alpha think he was?

“I’ll do what I want with her,” huffed Gadreel. “It’s not like you can stop me.”

Balthazar scraped up the courage to growl at the larger alpha intimidatingly. He would die to protect Hannah and after everything he’d faced, he wasn’t going to let some stoic, soft-spoken idiot kill him.

Gadreel eyed him in amusement before pouncing on him and knocking him to the floor. Before he could do anything else though, Hannah suddenly raced over and shoved him off her mate.

“Enough!”

Gadreel snapped at her face and when she scrambled out of his way, he bared his teeth at her. That was the final straw for Balthazar.

He lunged for Gadreel, relishing the yelp he gave when teeth connected with skin and suddenly, claws were flying and teeth were clamping onto anything that became available. They rolled around the floor, snapping and snarling and swiping at one another and for once, Balthazar wasn’t terrified because compared to the monsters he’d faced in his old pack, Gadreel was nothing.

He soon found himself enjoying their fight. Gadreel didn’t play dirty like the other alphas. He fought hard and long, but he didn’t have any friends to pin Balthazar down and he wasn’t trying to knot him either; it was just a regular, emotionally-charged fight and Balthazar felt days of anger and hatred and jealousy pouring out of him as he clawed and bit Gadreel.
Hannah’s whimpers spurred him on and he dug his claws into Gadreel’s sides and wrapped his jaws around his legs as the other alpha kicked out at him and tried to flip their positions so he was on top. They struggled and cursed and the whites of both their coats were spattered with red before Balthazar felt himself beginning to tire.

Gadreel was a skilled fighter and hadn’t let him near anything vital, but that didn’t mean the other alpha wasn’t exhausted too. Their blows and snapping began to slow after a little while and their breaths were heavy and laboured. Balthazar’s legs began to shake and wobble and Gadreel immediately took the opportunity to pin him to the ground.

Balthazar narrowed his eyes fearlessly and bared his teeth, but as Gadreel merely stood above him, panting, Balthazar couldn’t keep the expression up and his tongue lolled out of his mouth as he desperately sucked in air.

He vaguely noticed Gadreel’s scent had changed to something less hostile and more tired, as if he’d never been psycho in the first place.

“Better?” He whispered, staring down at Balthazar warily and Balthazar’s brows drew together in confusion. He was even more puzzled when Gadreel slowly released him and moved away, allowing him to scramble to his paws. He stood protectively in front of an equally distrusting Hannah and scowled at the other alpha.

“Still frightened of me?” Asked Gadreel softly and Balthazar tensed.

“Hardly,” he spat.

A tiny smile crossed Gadreel’s face and he nodded. “Good.”

Balthazar frowned again. Why was Gadreel smiling? Why wasn’t he trying to attack Balthazar again?

“And are you experiencing any feelings of jealousy?” Gadreel continued, leaving Balthazar even more perplexed.

“Of you? You’ve got to be kidding.”

Gadreel’s lips twitched. “And if I was to attack you again… would you be confident in defending yourself?”

“From what I can see, you’re the one with the most blood outside your body,” rumbled Balthazar.

Gadreel’s smile grew slightly. “So what you’re saying is you’re not afraid of me, even though I’m an alpha, and you’d be quite willing to fight me again rather than bare your neck to me?”

“I’d fight you a thousand times over if it meant keeping your filthy paws away from Hannah,” snarled Balthazar and Gadreel merely smirked.

Hannah gasped quietly and when Balthazar glanced at her, she looked as though she’d just been hit with an epiphany. She stared at Gadreel in realisation and he offered her a lopsided smirk that trailed off into a grimace as he lifted his left forepaw and repositioned it.

“As crude as it is, sometimes an old-fashioned brawl is the best way to settle things,” he chuckled, coughing slightly.

Balthazar felt as though he was missing something.
“But… neither of us won. What did we settle?”

Hannah licked his cheek gently.

“You weren’t scared to stand up for yourself, Balt.”

Balthazar frowned, puzzled, so Gadreel stepped forwards.

“You were jealous of me but you were too scared of what I’d do to you if you spoke up and I didn’t realise you felt that way until I pieced it together today. I thought you just didn’t like me until you said you hated how affectionate Hannah and I act together. I knew you wouldn’t listen if I said there’s no need to be frightened of me, so I thought I’d show you that you don’t have to be scared of me instead; that you can defend yourself and you don’t have to bow into submission all the time.”

Balthazar blinked as Hannah licked a cut on his muzzle.

“I didn’t know you were jealous, Balt. Why didn’t you just say something?”

Balthazar glanced at her then cast his gaze back to Gadreel in realisation. Gadreel really hadn’t been competing with him. Hannah hadn’t even known there was anything wrong.

“Because me being an alpha is a problem after everything you’ve both been through,” sighed Gadreel softly. His gaze was sincere as it flicked to Balthazar.

“I’ll never fully understand what you’ve experienced, but I know you’re strong. I know you can overcome this fear of alphas and betas and the rest of the Winchester pack. I’m not like the alphas of your old pack, I promise. None of us are. If you don’t like something I do or you feel left out or you experience any form of jealousy, know that you can come to me, Balthazar. I won’t get angry. I won’t ignore you or try to hurt you. This is supposed to be an equal relationship we share with Hannah; I don’t want to push you out. You’re her first mate and you always will be. I’m not trying to change that. You’re a determined wolf and you deserve happiness too.”

Balthazar’s ears dropped guiltily, gaze softening. He hadn’t considered Gadreel wanting him to be happy as well as Hannah. He’d been so sure the other alpha would want to hurt him or ‘show him his place’ if he mentioned his discomfort, so he’d tried subtle ways of chipping away at Gadreel’s confidence and degrading his feelings for Hannah, even belittling him under his breath.

Now he felt like a jerk.

He thought about the past outings with Gadreel and Hannah and he realised the other alpha had done nothing but try to boost his confidence and include him in everything. He was trying to help Balthazar and all Balthazar had done was demean and insult Gadreel.

“I’m sorry I fought you, Balthazar,” Gadreel said quietly, apologetically. “I couldn’t think of any other way to make you see that you can stand up for yourself; that you don’t have to be afraid of every alpha you meet.” He bowed his head slightly. “That you never have to be afraid of me.”

Balthazar dropped his gaze. He felt like a complete fool. He’d needed Gadreel to literally beat some sense into him.

“You don’t have to fight the nightmares alone,” whispered Gadreel cautiously, worried he would overstep a boundary of some sort. Balthazar thought they were well past that; his blood was all over Gadreel’s fur.

“Hannah will always love you and be there for you… and I am here if you need me. I understand I’ll
never be your first choice, but I do want to help in any way I can. Please, don’t be afraid to ask.”

Balthazar winced. He didn’t deserve Gadreel’s kindness. He’d been cruel and petty towards the other alpha and Gadreel was nothing but sincere.

“I…” Balthazar trailed off, at a loss for words. He’d labelled Gadreel as ‘evil’ the moment they’d met and he’d spent so long looking for fault in the other alpha that he didn’t know what to do now he could see exactly how wrong he’d been.

Fortunately, Hannah was there to save the day. She nudged his hip and nodded to the other alpha and Balthazar licked her muzzle appreciatively before slowly slinking towards Gadreel. Gadreel didn’t move, so as not to spook him and when he finally reached the grey and white alpha, he was hit by the comforting scent of roasted chestnuts and oak.

He grimaced at the blood trickling down Gadreel’s fur and began to lap at it, slowly cleaning his cuts and gashes and he nearly whimpered when Gadreel began returning the favour.

A wave of emotion crashed down on him as he realised everything Gadreel had offered and wanted to teach him and he pressed his face into the alpha’s neck and just inhaled.

“I’m sorry,” he breathed, tears seeping into the other alpha’s fur.

Gadreel curled around him and this time, Balthazar did whimper because how could this wolf be so protective of him after everything he’d done? He couldn’t even put his paw down without wincing thanks to Balthazar.

“It’s okay,” Gadreel whispered. “I think you needed that.”

Balthazar pressed closer and he was amazed at himself for snuggling with an alpha. Gadreel was right; he didn’t have to be so scared all the time.

“…It was good to finally vent my frustrations on something,” admitted Balthazar and he felt Gadreel smile cheekily.

“Oh someone.”

Balthazar huffed out a weak laugh and Gadreel nuzzled his ear.

“I assume it goes without saying that I never meant any of that stuff about you being pathetic and worthless?” He murmured carefully and Balthazar closed his eyes.

“I assume it goes without saying that I meant all of that stuff about you being sickeningly affectionate with Hannah to the point where I want to gag.”

Gadreel let out a startled laugh and licked a cut on Balthazar’s cheek.

“Hannah warned me of your sarcasm.”

“If you’re lucky, you’ll get to hear more of it.”

Gadreel grinned and rested his head over Balthazar’s.

“Does this mean I’m going to get pushed into a lot more rivers?”

Balthazar ducked his head guiltily, making Gadreel snicker. “Don’t think I’ve forgotten.”
“Something tells me that fight wasn’t only for my benefit,” Balthazar said drily and Gadreel began working on a gash between his shoulders.

“…I may have been a little frustrated with you.”

Balthazar grimaced and shoved his face into the other alpha’s neck again. He could get used to Gadreel’s safe, reassuring scent.

They lapped at each other’s wounds in silence for a few minutes before Hannah slid over.

“…Are we… good?” She asked slowly and Gadreel offered her a small smile. Balthazar took them both by surprise when he pushed his head under Gadreel’s chin.

Hannah beamed and Gadreel’s tail began motoring from side to side, making Balthazar chuckle softly.

Suddenly, Hannah narrowed her gaze at Gadreel.

“I should be mad at you for scaring me like that,” she huffed. “When you started talking like that, I thought you were secretly one of those alpha assholes we’ve tried so hard to escape from.”

Gadreel ducked his head ashamedly. “I… uh… I couldn’t think of any other way to get Balthazar angry than to treat you like…”

“Property?” Huffed Hannah and Gadreel flinched.

“I don’t really think of you like that. I don’t think of any omega like that.”

“You’d better not,” she snorted, batting him lightly over the head.

“Go easy on him, love,” murmured Balthazar. “It’s my fault he had to do any of that.”

“And you’re an idiot for not telling me you were jealous,” stated Hannah. “You might have been worried about telling him but you had plenty of opportunities to tell me when we were alone together. Why didn’t you say anything?”

Balthazar ducked his head, suitably cowed. “I… um… I thought I wouldn’t have to if I got you to see how evil Gadreel was.” At Hannah’s incredulous staring, Balthazar looked away. “I realise now there might have been a small flaw in my plan, in that Gadreel’s not exactly… evil.”

Gadreel buried his face in Balthazar’s fur and the smaller alpha had this sneaking suspicion he was covering his laughter.

“We really are idiots,” he whispered into Balthazar’s shoulder, low enough for Hannah to have missed it. Balthazar cracked a smile.

“Alphas,” complained Hannah. “Why couldn’t I have fallen for a couple of handsome betas? Or cute omegas?”

She startled at Gadreel and Balthazar’s unison growls of jealousy and stared at them wide-eyed as they bit their lips in embarrassment.

“You two are going to get along fabulously,” she said blandly before shaking her head and trotting away, starting the journey back home and not bothering to check if her lovers were following.

Before Balthazar could join her, Gadreel caught his side.
“Stay with us tonight,” he ordered softly. “Don’t be alone.”

Balthazar blinked at the offer before tilting his head. “No, this is your time with her. You don’t have to include me in everything. I get it now, I won’t get jealous—”

Gadreel snorted. “Of course you’ll get jealous. I get jealous when she spends the night with you. A bit of jealousy’s okay as long as you don’t let it fester. But stay the night with us. It’ll make Hannah happy to see us getting along and I want to make sure you don’t bleed out in your sleep.”

Balthazar quirked an eyebrow. “Don’t give yourself too much credit. You’re not that great of a fighter.” At the smaller wolf’s smirk, Gadreel shook his head with a smile.

“Humour me anyway. You can plot ways to get rid of me whilst I sleep.”

Balthazar barked out a startled laugh before nodding. “Alright. I’ll take you up on that.”

The larger alpha grinned and nudged Balthazar towards the exasperated Hannah, who was now tapping a paw at their dawdling.

The journey home was long and tiring and both Balthazar and Gadreel were aching from their fight, but when Gadreel and Hannah slipped into Gadreel’s shelter and Balthazar slid in after them, nobody complained. Hannah may have quirked a tiny, pleased smile when an alpha settled either side of her and as the sweet scent of blueberries and buttercups mingled with the smoky scent of roasted chestnuts and oak trees, for the first time in a long while, Balthazar felt safe and happy.

He placed his head over Hannah’s neck and closed his eyes, trying not to smile when he felt Gadreel lapping at his sore wounds.

* * *

Adam was snuggled between Sam and Gabriel. He was warm and toasty and he didn’t mind Gabriel’s soft snores nor the way Sam was clinging to him like a koala bear because he was safe and content and he didn’t have to sleep alone because these two wonderful wolves were maybe a little overprotective of him after everything that had happened today.

Sam andriel and Ben wanted to sleep with Dean and Cas and that meant Adam would have to sleep alone, but a certain golden alpha hadn’t been happy with that and when his giant omega lover had agreed, Adam had been whisked away into their shelter where they’d exchanged stories until both adults had dozed off, leaving Adam to smile fondly at them both.

His eyes were just beginning to slip shut when he heard someone call his name softly.

He looked up in confusion, but when he saw no one in the entrance of the shelter, he shrugged and settled down once more.

“Adam.”

He frowned and looked up again, but when he couldn’t see anyone, he carefully extracted himself from Sam’s grip and crept outside.

“Adam.”
He whirled around and his blood ran cold. John Winchester was standing a few feet away, looking like the powerful, stern alpha he always was when nobody was watching.

He gestured to the outskirts of the camp. “Let’s take a walk,” he said and Adam knew what that meant. He subtly glanced to Sam and Gabe’s shelter, wondering if he should make some sort of sound to alert them.

John growled softly.

“Come on.”

His piercing gaze never left Adam’s figure and the beta sunk down obediently and trudged towards the outskirts of the camp. He was dismayed to learn that his father had no intentions of stopping there, so they continued deeper into the forest until Adam knew for a fact the pack wouldn’t be able to hear them unless he screamed at the top of his lungs.

“Why’re you sleeping with Sam?” John asked casually and Adam knew he had to be careful. He shrugged.

“They were telling me stories. Gabe was talking about the city.”

“Oh,” said John. “You tell them any stories?”

“No, sir,” Adam replied quickly. “It was more just Gabriel talking and us listening.”

“I see,” hummed John, still padding through the forest. “And what about Dean? I heard you had a nice, long chat with him this afternoon. What was that all about?”

John hadn’t been there when Adam apologised to Dean. He was still where Adam had left him just outside the camp; he hadn’t returned until much later.

Adam chose his words carefully. “I… had a fight with him and Cas yesterday. I said some horrible things and I apologised for them this afternoon.”

John finally sat down and raised an eyebrow. “Oh? What did you fight about?”

“Nothing important, really. I was being a bit of a brat. I… uh… I didn’t think he was very fair in our last sparring session.”

“Your last sparring session? Before the snake bite?”

Adam hid his flinch. He’d forgotten about his last sparring session with Dean being before the rattlesnake.

“Uh… yeah.”

John tilted his head. “How did that come up when it was so long ago?”

Adam shrugged. “Can’t remember.”

John nodded and gazed at something past Adam for a few moments.

“Dean and Castiel have been looking at me funny for the past couple of days.”

Adam froze and tried to wrestle his pulse under control.
“Oh? Any idea why?”

John stood up. “Well, it started right after your ‘fight’ with them.”

Adam felt his breathing pick up a notch.

“And I’m sure you noticed Sam and Gabriel acting a little weird too – right after your sparring
session with them today. There seems to be a common theme going on here.”

Adam’s legs wanted to give out. He nearly whined when his father started stalking towards him and
he began to back up slowly.

“Dad… you can’t think I had anything to do with that?”

“I think you have a big mouth and don’t know when to shut up,” John growled and Adam cowered
slightly.

“Dad, please… I never told them anything. They don’t know. It’s not my fault.”

“Then why did Sam and Gabriel follow me out this afternoon, hm? They had to know something.”

Adam shook his head frantically. “It’s not like that! They were just worried!”

“About what?” Snarled John and Adam knew he’d said the wrong thing.

“I’ve not told them anything!” He whimpered. “I promise! They don’t know! It was just coincidence
they came out today!”

Too little, too late.

John lunged at Adam and Adam cried out as a claw swiped at his face, slicing into his cheek. Teeth
sunk into his injured leg and he sobbed as the limb throbbed in agony. Then jaws wrapped around
the top of his neck and he was shaken like a rag doll before he was launched into a tree, his head
cracking against its thick trunk. He slid to the floor, tears rolling down his cheeks as sobs wracked
his frame.

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry!” He cried. “I won’t do it again! I promise!” He’d learned over the years that
confessing he’d done whatever his father accused him of was the only way to get him to stop. As
usual, the theory proved correct and John snorted.

“Don’t be so pathetic. Get up.”

Adam did as ordered and John shook his head.

“If you mess up one more time, boy, I’ll do more than bite. Get back to camp.”

Adam kept his head low as he limped towards the camp and he expected the final warning that
usually accompanied a beating.

John surged forwards and clamped down on his injured leg and Adam bit back a scream because that
would make John furious if he thought someone had heard them. John quickly released him and
Adam staggered forwards, leg bleeding and skin raw and swollen once more.

“Get on with it,” growled John as he shoved his way past Adam and the beta nodded and dragged
his leg across the forest floor until he reached the camp. By the time he got there, John was long
asleep, curled up in his shelter and uncaring if Adam got home safely or not. He’d always been a
burden to his father; the beta pup nobody had planned for or wanted.

It’s why his mother had left.

His leg was stinging and throbbing all at once and Adam glanced longingly at Sam and Gabriel’s shelter, but he knew he couldn’t return now, not without them asking questions. So he stiffly limped over to the shallow stream that ran through the centre of the camp and bathed his leg in it for a few minutes, cleaning the fresh blood away and managed to haul himself to his shelter, where he wrapped his leg in the bandages he may have stolen from Jody’s supply and curled up to sleep.

In the morning, when Sam and Gabe asked him why he hadn’t stayed, he’d explain that he was too hot so he took a walk in the early hours of the morning and ended up slicing his leg open on a sharp rock he’d tripped over in the dark. They’d look at his bandaged leg in concern and ask him how he got the scratch across his face and he’d tell them that was also from when he tripped.

They’d see the bite wound on his neck that he’d forgotten about and they’d know he was lying, but they wouldn’t ask any more questions because it was clear he didn’t want to talk about it, and so they’d wander off and tell Dean and Cas what they’d found and both Winchester brothers would start to wonder if maybe they’d made a mistake in eagerly accepting their dad’s sudden change in personality.

Chapter End Notes

Long plotty chapter! :D
Dean’s body was warm beneath his and Castiel let out a low moan as Dean thrust slowly upwards. He leaned down to capture the alpha’s mouth and their tongues tangled heatedly for a few moments before Dean’s hand rode up into Cas’ hair and the omega raised himself upright again, eyes closed as he basked in the sensations of being filled by Dean.

Cas’ hands explored his mate’s chest, smoothing over his nipples and massaging the muscles beneath the taught skin. Dean’s free hand shifted to wrap around Castiel’s erection and the omega’s breath stuttered as the alpha began to move his hand in long, languid strokes.

It had been too long since they’d had time to themselves like this and Cas’s chest had been aching ever since he’d learned the mating mark on his neck was starting to fade. He’d wanted to renew it, but they’d never seemed to find time for it.

He could feel Dean’s knot beginning to swell and he couldn’t help but smile. They hadn’t done anything particularly erotic this evening but apparently Dean was just as desperate as he was and being in contact with each other’s bodies like this was too much to bear.

Cas pushed himself down onto Dean’s forming knot and the alpha groaned, tightening his grip on his mate’s hair. Castiel ducked downwards again and claimed his mate’s lips, kissing him for longer this time as he set about his devious plan.

Dean was completely oblivious to Cas collecting some of his own slick as he lapped at his mate’s mouth hungrily. He should’ve registered the omega was plotting when Cas began to smirk against his lips, but he didn’t react until the omega’s slicked fingers were already teasing at his entrance.

Dean released a choked sound at the pleasant sensations, but his whole body arched as a finger slipped inside him, neck falling backwards as his lips parted in silent bliss.

Cas latched onto his bared throat immediately, sucking hickeys into it with a fierceness that had Dean whimpering in want. He loved it when Cas took charge; when his omega scoffed at all the gender stereotypes and took control of his alpha like a giant middle finger to society.

Speaking of middle fingers…

Castiel did something clever with his and Dean bolted upright with a loud moan, closing his eyes as Cas wrapped an arm around him, nails clutching at his back and began sucking hickeys into his jaw, their chests now flush with one another.

He sank down onto Dean’s knot once more and the alpha was overwhelmed with sensations from everywhere all at once. Cas’ body was like fire against his and he couldn’t get enough of it. He crushed their lips together and breathed in the scent of his mate and Castiel growled in approval as he slipped two fingers into the alpha.

“Cas,” Dean breathed, voice cracking and the omega shoved him against the ground once more as he picked up the pace, thrusting his fingers in and out until Dean was panting. Between clever fingers and the way Cas was riding him like a cowboy, Dean knew he wouldn’t last much longer.

Castiel seemed to know that too and when Dean squeezed his eyes shut and let his head roll
backwards, the omega pounced and sunk his teeth into the alpha’s faded mating mark.

Dean gasped, eyes flying open as he gripped his lover tighter, wanting the mixture of pain and pleasure and joy to never end and Cas growled possessively before finally releasing Dean and lapping at the wound.

Dean knew he was done for. He dragged Castiel down and clamped onto the omega’s mating mark as his knot locked in place and relief coursed through his body. Castiel whimpered in happiness and refused to let Dean go even as the alpha released him. He nuzzled Dean’s neck with adorable little purrs and for a moment, Dean was content, until he spotted Cas’ aching erection.

Without warning, he gripped the omega’s length and jerked it hard and fast until Cas cried out his release and snuggled into his mate with a smile, Dean’s knot holding them tightly together.

Dean smirked and stroked the omega’s back soothingly and Castiel hummed happily and buried his nose into Dean’s neck.

After a few moments of scenting lazily at one another, Dean nudged Cas’ head to one side and began lapping at his mating wound, cleaning it and making it sting that little bit less.

He pressed a sweet kiss to the mark and finally allowed himself to relax.

“I’m pretty in love with you, Angel,” he whispered and Castiel smiled and nuzzled his mark.

“I should hope so considering we’re mated,” he teased and Dean let himself roll in that word for a moment. Mated. To Cas. Life couldn’t get much better.

Lips grazed his own. “I’m rather hopelessly in love with you, too,” murmured Cas softly and Dean pulled his lover onto his chest, tucking the omega’s head under his chin as they both closed their eyes with satisfied smiles.

Dean petted Cas’ back for a few minutes before kissing his hair.

“Do you ever miss the city?” He asked softly as Castiel traced a finger over his chest. The omega paused and frowned in contemplation.

“I miss the comforts of the city,” he whispered after a little while. “My books, the variety of food, Netflix, hot showers…”

Dean cracked a smile as he remembered their last trip into the city and Castiel’s joy at a simple shower. That was so long ago now. Maybe he could take Cas into the city again…?

“But then, I think about my life there and compare it to my life here and I realise how much more I have here. I have a family here, friends… people who care about me. I never had that in the city. In the city, my life had no purpose; I went to work, came home, never really saw Samandriel except for weekends… I didn’t really have any friends. I had to keep most of my life a secret so my brothers wouldn’t attempt to kill my pup and I was looked down upon by everyone else for being an unmated omega with a child.

“Here, things are very different. There’s a certain… thrill to living in the wild. Life is an adventure where every successful hunt brings about a sense of achievement; every fight is an adrenaline rush; every new season presents new challenges. Your priorities lie with your pack; your friends and family and time spent with them is to be cherished and appreciated. City folk aren’t like that; they’re independent and isolated and nobody seems to have time for each other unless it’s to tell them what to do or to get something out of them.”
Castiel pressed his lips to Dean’s jaw. “I’d much rather be here, even if I do miss the occasional creature comfort.”

Dean rubbed the muscles between his mate’s shoulder blades.

“It’s okay if you really do miss the city, Cas. I’m not gonna get mad. You don’t have to say those things just ‘cos you think it’ll keep me happy.”

Castiel shook his head and laced his fingers with Dean’s.

“I’m not deceiving you. I really do prefer it here. You’re the best pack leader I’ve ever met. You’re kind and fair and you treat everyone as equals. Not only that, but you’re fantastic with children and you treat all of your pack like family; you never put them in unnecessary danger and you keep them fed and happy and healthy. You even take in the occasional stray, like Gabe and me.”

Dean quirked a grin and kissed his mate’s hair. “You’re not a stray, Cas. You’re a runaway.”

“You’re right. That’s so much better,” Cas deadpanned.

Dean snorted and held his lover closer. “We can always take another trip into the city,” he said after a few moments. “You can have that hot shower you keep dreaming about.”

Castiel smiled and nuzzled his mate’s throat. “Are you asking me out on a date?”

The tips of Dean’s ears turned pink and he cleared his throat softly.

“I mean… uh… I didn’t intend it to sound… that is, if you want it to be… uh… yeah. Yeah, I am.”

His cheeks were heating up and Castiel bit back a laugh and tilted his lover’s head until their lips could meet.

“You’re knot is buried inside me and you’re getting flustered about asking me on a date? How adorable,” Cas teased and Dean stuck his tongue out childishly before scenting his mate’s neck. He loved Cas’ scent.

“I’m worried about Adam,” Cas admitted quietly after a few minutes and Dean arched an eyebrow, waiting for his mate to continue.

“Something’s… not right about him. He’s clearly hiding something and not only that, but he’s terrified. And his wounds…” Castiel trailed off, troubled and Dean’s mouth drew into a grim line.

“He looks as though he’s been attacked,” Dean murmured. “By something with claws and sharp teeth.”

“It can’t be a rival pack,” whispered Cas. “He’d tell us. Not to mention we’d smell it on him.”

Dean was silent for a few moments, his body stiff and muscles taught with discomfort. He was thinking about his next words very carefully and Cas could tell it was upsetting him to entertain such thoughts.

“Sam said he smelled like Dad.”

Castiel stilled, sympathy for his lover weighing heavy on his heart and anger at John bubbling in his gut.

“I don’t know what to do,” confessed Dean softly. “Adam won’t talk about it so I don’t know for
certain and I know Dad will deny it whether he’s involved or not. I don’t have any proof of what’s happening and unless I have valid evidence, there’s not all that much I can do.”

Castiel’s heart ached for his lover. Dean so desperately wanted to believe his father had changed; it was written in the pain behind his eyes, but Adam’s injuries were beginning to make him question John’s claims. If John really was abusing Adam, having to kick him out of the pack for a second time would probably break Dean. He’d been so excited at hearing his dad was different.

“We’ll have to keep an eye on Adam,” murmured Castiel. “Even if we don’t understand what’s happening, he might come to us. I doubt he’ll be able to keep secrets forever.”

Dean sighed softly and nodded unhappily as he petted his lover’s hair.

They waited in silence for Dean’s knot to constrict.

* * *

Autumn was in full swing now. Birds were beginning to migrate and the squirrels and other small rodents were venturing further to harvest nuts and berries for winter. Insects were disappearing and the trees were shedding their golden-brown leaves, littering the ground in a crunchy carpet of colour.

Balthazar glanced over the camp anxiously. Gadreel and Hannah were by the river, fishing and he’d decided to offer them some privacy, no matter how much his jealousy gnawed at his insides. Gadreel’s words during their fight had struck a chord within him and he was determined to swallow his fear and make at least one friend in the pack. He’d ruled the alphas out immediately; there was no way he was up to that yet even if he had managed to share a hug with Gadreel. He ruled out Sam too, because he didn’t want to get on the wrong side of the Second-in-Command. Castiel was Dean’s mate, so that was a no-go as well.

He was just eying up Charlie when a presence made itself known beside him.

“As delicious as you look, I promise no one’s going to eat you.”

He startled at the sly feminine voice and whipped around to face a black beta with blonde paws and tail tip. She smirked at him and sat down to show she wasn’t a threat.

“Quick reflexes, tiger. You always this jumpy?”

“Only when people creep up behind me,” he snarked back, narrowing his eyes. “What do you want?”

Meg raised an eyebrow. “Only to offer my irresistible company. You this polite to every stranger you meet?”

“My ‘politeness’ is reserved solely for you, darling,” quipped Balthazar, still a little embarrassed over how much he’d jumped earlier. He didn’t care if Meg thought he was being rude. After Gadreel’s demonstration, he felt a bit more confident in defending himself, especially against a female beta.

Meg’s lips curled into a smirk. “I’m honoured. Any reason as to why you’ve not said ‘hello’ to anyone since your arrival? Some might think you’re a bit shifty.”
“You can think what you like, love. I don’t have to socialise. As long as I pull my weight, I can be as antisocial as I’d like,” he huffed.

Meg nodded. “True. But that would make you very boring and not worth my time. Judging by what we’ve all heard of you from your sweet little mate, you’re far from boring. Some might say you’re a hero. So, I’m offering you an ear and an open mind despite your distaste towards Gadreel during your first few weeks of joining the pack.”

Balthazar stiffened. Meg was displeased with him then? He’d already offended someone due to his behaviour towards Gadreel. He was pretty sure he could defend himself, but what if she got her mate involved? Wasn’t she mated to Crowley? An alpha?

Meg’s gaze suddenly softened. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to upset you. I can be a little brash sometimes and you sounded as if you were playing along so I thought you were okay with it. I wasn’t trying to scare you or anything. Just thought you looked like you needed a friend.”

Balthazar relaxed marginally. “Maybe I was a little rude, myself. A friend sounds like an excellent suggestion,” he offered sincerely, forcing himself to remember the Winchester pack was nothing like Hastur’s pack. They weren’t cruel and sadistic.

Meg smiled and flopped onto her stomach lazily, waiting for Balthazar to sit beside her.

“So… new pack, new rules, new faces… how are you finding it?” Meg hummed and Balthazar glanced at his paws.

“Difficult,” he admitted softly. “I’m not entirely sure what’s expected of me.”

Meg arched an eyebrow. “All you have to do is ask. Everyone here is happy to help. They gave me a warm greeting when I met them not too long ago.”

Balthazar blinked and faced the beta in surprise.

“What do you mean? How long have you been a part of this pack?”

Meg smirked and flicked her tail in amusement. “Under a year. Probably wouldn’t think it though. Feel like I’ve been a Winchester all my life,” she winked and Balthazar lay down beside her, instantly curious.

“You’ve not always been a part of this pack? Where did you come from? How come you changed packs?”

Meg chuckled and stretched into a more comfortable position.

“Crowley’s responsible for me switching packs. He kinda kidnapped me but I didn’t exactly put up a fight so I’m not sure if I just ran away.”

Balthazar’s eyes widened and Meg snickered. “He’s not a bad alpha, I promise. Kinda soft and romantic actually.” Her gaze glazed over for a second, a fond smile gracing her lips before her wicked smirk was back in place and her attention returned to Balthazar.

“I was originally from Dick Roman’s pack,” she said and Balthazar nearly choked.


Meg nodded. “I was his mate,” she grinned and Balthazar’s eyes grew rounder.
Richard Roman was well known amongst the wild folk; possibly as well known as the Winchester pack. The Roman pack was known for their high in and out-flow of members. Richard wasn’t interested in loyalty or family or friends (other than his Second-in-Command, Edgar, who stuck by his side at all times), he was more concerned with progress and trade. He was possibly the only wild wolf in America who had managed to establish an alliance with the civilised folk, to the point where some of his pack resided in the wild and some resided in civilisation.

He’d established a business by scattering his pack members throughout America and making a trade out of the food industry and the clothing market. The wild wolves would do all the dirty work in hunting any and every animal they could get their claws on or scavenging rare fruits and vegetables that couldn’t be grown in civilisation. The pack members that lived in the countryside of civilisation would farm domesticated species like sheep and cattle and even bees. They would also skin the animals that the wild folk brought them. The civilised pack members that lived in the suburbs would courier the skinned animals and rare fruits to towns and cities all over America, where tailors and haberdasheries would fix clothing out of the fur pelts or leather hides. Restaurants and butchers and supermarkets would pay for the meat and fruits and vegetables and the civilised folk would pay good money to taste delicacies that were hard to come by in the cities and towns.

Roman made a fortune and he was also granted unrestricted access to civilisation. For six months a year, he took advantage of it and nobody really knew if he was one of the wild folk or one of the civilised folk anymore.

His pack wasn’t so much a pack as it was an enterprise. He had lots of members but he paid the civilised folk a salary and the wild folk weren’t exactly loyal to him and tended to leave his pack fairly quickly when they grew bored of the strange dynamics and independence they were forced to learn when working with him. He wasn’t a typical pack leader, yet younger, brash, cocky wolves loved working with him because he was different and basically let them get away with anything they wanted as long as it didn’t affect trade. Once they got a little older and wanted a family, they moved on.

The Roman pack was enormous, but most of the members never even came into contact with one another and quite a few had never met Richard either.

Wild folk packs tended to steer clear of the Roman pack because they were far too different and strange. The pack weren’t interested in territories and fighting (although some of the younger, more arrogant wolves were), so other packs often ignored them.

“Mated to Richard Roman. What was that like?” Asked Balthazar, stunned. He hadn’t even realised Roman thought about love.

Meg screwed her nose up. “For six months of the year I barely saw him because he was off flashing his wealth in the city. For the other six, he was so focused on business he didn’t pay any attention to me except when he wanted a quick knot. It wasn’t exactly a fulfilling relationship.”

Balthazar frowned and shook his head. “Why did you stay with him?”

Meg shrugged. “He was powerful and being his mate came with a lot of benefits. I got to boss other wolves around, visited the city a few times without having to worry about being chased out of it, ate first after a hunt… I think some of the pack were a little scared of getting on my bad side in case Dick ripped their heads off. Only problem was I knew if I left him, they wouldn’t be so scared anymore and some of those wolves weren’t exactly pleasant to be around. It wasn’t too bad; I gave him sex and for the rest of the time I could do whatever I wanted.”

Balthazar raised an eyebrow. “…And you were happy with that arrangement?”
Meg pulled a face. “At first. Then I got bored. I had an empty relationship with an alpha I no longer loved; I was nervous about having an affair in case his minions decided to target me or in case Dick himself decided to punish me for being unfaithful. He didn’t care about loyalty to the pack, but he was possessive over what was his. His money, his business… me. He didn’t love me, but I was younger than him and he told me I was pretty and I guess that made him feel even more powerful.”

Meg smirked. “And then Crowley came along.”

Balthazar quirked a smile as Meg blinked slowly, like a cat who had everything it wanted in life.

“Crowley was… intriguing. He’d stumbled across the pack by accident but he and Dick obviously knew each other because as soon as my darling mate caught a whiff of Crowley, the whole pack chased him off. He seemed angry and I asked him why and it turned out that Crowley had once worked on a large farm in Texas that was struggling to get business because Dick had practically taken over all the meat industry over there. His boss knew he came from the wild, but they had a deal of some sort that whenever Crowley needed cash, he was welcome to work on this farm for a few weeks.

“Apparently, the boss said Crowley wouldn’t get paid if he couldn’t find a way to get their meat back on the market, so Crowley marched right up to the biggest supermarket chain in Texas and informed him that Roman’s meat was contaminated with some exotic disease only found in the wild and the only reason he knew was because he was an ex-hunter of Roman’s. The press went wild and all of Texas banned Roman produce, leaving Crowley’s farm to exploit the new market.

“Of course, Roman managed to soothe everyone’s fears that Crowley had been lying, but by then the damage had been done and his profit from Texas had halved. He’s hated Crowley ever since.”

Balthazar cocked an ear. “How did he know it was Crowley who’d made the story up?”

Meg rolled her eyes. “Because Crowley’s idiot boss told him. The supermarket owner knew the informer had come from the farm and then Crowley’s boss told Dick business had been booming ever since Crowley had spoken to the supermarket owner.”

Balthazar couldn’t help but smile. Crowley was intelligent and sly and, in another life, Balthazar might have been good friends with him.

“So how did you become Crowley’s mate?” Asked Balthazar. Meg grinned.

“Crowley came back after he’d been chased off. Dick and the rest of the pack went off hunting, leaving me and a few betas and omegas to clean and treat the products of the previous day’s kill. I was wary of him at first. Thought he was a rover until he mentioned being part of the Winchester pack. He didn’t do anything at first except talk.”

Meg glanced away. “It was nice to be paid attention to for once.”

Balthazar’s gaze softened and Meg quickly turned back to him. “He kept returning every evening for a week whilst the hunting pack were out, just to talk and on the seventh evening, he knew how lonely and bored I was and he asked me to run away with him. I said yes and just to spite Dick, we fornicated in every corner of his cave until the whole place smelled like us.

“We took our time returning to the Winchester pack, getting to know each other and after four weeks, we were mated. You’re probably thinking we rushed into it, but honestly… I’ve never been happier,” she admitted quietly. “I don’t regret a single second.”

Balthazar smiled and relaxed completely. At first glance, Meg seemed snarky and cocky but deep
down, she was actually quite soft and tender.

“That’s quite a story,” hummed Balthazar. “I would’ve loved to see Dick’s face once he crawled into his cave.”

Meg snickered. “So would I. I just hope Crowley doesn’t have another run-in with him.”

“Run-in with who? Are you spreading rumours about me?” Drawled a familiar voice and Balthazar immediately stiffened as Crowley sauntered over and settled beside Meg, licking her cheek gently. He glanced over to Balthazar and lowered his gaze, bowing his head slightly to show he wasn’t a threat.

Meg leaned into him contentedly. “Balthazar wanted to know where I came from and how we met.”

Crowley arched an eyebrow and glanced over to the tense bronze and white alpha. “Which version did she tell you? The one where I visit every evening and ask her to run away with me on the seventh evening, or the truth?”

Meg grinned in amusement as Balthazar cocked an ear in confusion. Crowley snorted at his mate’s expression.

“Right. Let me tell you what really happened. She was bored and lonely and frustrated at being a decoration for Dick. I stumbled across the pack and got chased out. She was curious once she learned why Dick hates me and she followed me. Started flirting with me and told me she hated how Dick never paid any attention to her and how she felt trapped in the relationship because no other wolves stopped by due to the Roman pack reputation and she couldn’t exactly start a passionate affair with one of the other pack members.

“She told me she wanted to piss Dick off and I was all for that, so we went back to his cave and had sex. I left to find a place to sleep and after a few hours, she grew nervous about how Dick would react and she sniffed me out and asked if she could come with me. She obviously thought I was a rover so I told her I was part of the Winchester pack and she asked if she could follow me half way. I said yes, we talked, ended up not wanting to part, I offered to introduce her to the Winchesters and four weeks after meeting her, we were mated and we returned to the Winchester pack with no intention of leaving each other alone.”

Balthazar’s eyebrows rocketed skywards and Meg laughed as Crowley rolled his eyes.

“It wasn’t the least bit romantic,” he huffed. “And if you’re thinking we rushed into mating, that’s because we did.”

“And you clearly regret all of it despite renewing my mating mark close to every week,” Meg purred as she rubbed herself over Crowley’s side.

Crowley snorted. “Did I say I regret it? No. I just said it wasn’t romantic like you’d have everyone believe.”

Meg snickered. “I’m trying to make you out to be my sparkling unicorn, darling. What’s wrong with a little fantasy?”

“What’s wrong with the truth?” Crowley countered as he nuzzled his mate’s ear. “I’ve got nothing to hide. I’m quite pleased that I kidnapped Dick Roman’s gorgeous mate.”

Meg blushed at the compliment and Crowley smirked before casting his gaze to Balthazar.
“You’ll soon learn to ignore everything she says. She’s a compulsive liar.”

Meg stuck her tongue out and Balthazar quirked a grin.

“I prefer the second story,” he said airily. “Much more realistic.”

“I agree,” said Crowley as Meg rolled her eyes.

“That’s because neither of you have any imagination.”

“No, it’s because we both know you’re no princess,” snarked Crowley, encouraging Meg to shove his shoulder.

“Fine. You’ve heard all my gossip,” huffed Meg as she turned her gaze sharply to Balthazar. “What about you? You said you’re finding it difficult here. That wouldn’t have anything to do with Gadreel, would it?”

Balthazar’s ears flattened uncertainly as Crowley nudged his mate reproachfully. She brushed him off.

“We’re not here to judge, Balthazar. But we thought you were dead and suddenly you come back to find your mate in the paws of another alpha. No wonder you’re finding it difficult.”

“Meg,” scolded Crowley quietly but Balthazar sighed and dropped his gaze.

“You’re quite right. I’m a broken, beaten alpha with a phobia of other alphas and I’ve unwillingly joined a large pack where I find my mate is screwing another alpha.” He shook his head and closed his eyes. “And I’m in some weird love triangle with them both. Can my life get any better?”

“You don’t have to tell us anything,” said Crowley quietly, trying to keep his posture relaxed and hinting at submissive. He didn’t want to frighten the other male.

Balthazar laughed humourlessly. “What does it matter if I tell you? It’s not like you can’t work it out anyway. I cower at every alpha I meet and I’ve spent the last few weeks trying to remove Gadreel from Hannah’s life as cruelly as possible. You already know the type of thing I faced in my old pack because of Hannah’s stories. What does it matter if I tell you, myself?”

Meg and Crowley’s ears lowered guiltily as Balthazar gulped and rested his head on his paws. He still wasn’t entirely comfortable with Crowley’s scent, but he could manage if the other alpha didn’t make any sudden movements.

“When I made Hannah leave me, I thought I was going to die. I’d already accepted it and I just waited for the other pack members to tear me apart. Except they didn’t. When they reached me, they did punish me for trying to escape, but they had no intention of killing me. I became their plaything. Their toy. They battered me and raped me and used me as they liked whilst I couldn’t fight back. My leader, Hastur, told me that since I’d let Hannah escape, I would have to act as a replacement omega. For four months I became ‘his omega’. Every so often, he’d let the others ‘have a play’ with me too.

“When I finally had enough strength to run away, I left through the night and managed to evade those chasing me. I survived on my own just barely for a few weeks and that’s when I came across Hannah and Gadreel. I was… upset to learn of their relationship.” He sighed and glanced at his paws. “I’m still jealous, but I think, in time, I’ll learn to accept it. He’s been a large part of her recovery and I can’t take that away from either of them. I suppose I’m lucky Hannah wants to be with me at all after how I failed to protect her.”
Both Meg and Crowley frowned.

“Failed to protect her?” asked Meg. “From what I heard, you did everything you could to protect her. The way Hannah speaks about you... I wasn’t kidding when I said you’re a hero.”

Balthazar blinked. “A hero?” He repeated incredulously. “The things I let our old pack do to her-”

“You didn’t let them do anything,” scowled Crowley. “You did your best to keep her safe and looking at her now, I’d say you succeeded. She’s happy, Balthazar and you can thank yourself for that.”

Balthazar frowned. “No. I can thank Gadreel for that. He’s the one who made her happy.”

Meg pulled a face. “You’re kidding, right? Sure, he helped her recover, but you saved her life when you made her leave you. You were the one who was there for her when she was part of your old pack. You protected her. She probably wouldn’t be alive if it wasn’t for you.”

Balthazar opened his mouth to protest but found he had nothing to say and immediately snapped it shut in surprise. He hadn’t realised the Winchester pack thought so highly of him.

Meg scooted closer and Balthazar was shocked when she carefully pressed into his side.

“Stop demeaning yourself,” she murmured. “You’re brave and determined and everyone knows you’re not as weak as you seem to think you are. You’ve survived so much and you’re still facing problems with a grim face and a clear head. Do you realise how many wolves would’ve given up by now? Do you realise how many wolves would’ve just accepted the horrors of your old pack? You’re strong, Balthazar. Stronger than most. Don’t ever think you’re broken and beaten because you’re not,” she whispered determinedly.

“But that’s not to say you don’t need help,” chimed in Crowley. “You don’t have to bottle everything up and we all want you to know that we’re here if you need us. If you ever want to talk, or maybe you just need a shoulder to lean on, we’re always happy to help. All of us. You’re part of the pack now and we’ve always got your back, whether you think you need us or not.”

A tear rolled down Balthazar’s cheek and he swiped it away furiously. He hadn’t realised how kind the Winchester pack was and facing it head-on was more than a little overwhelming. They barely knew him and yet they were already offering him so much. He couldn’t remember the last time anyone other than Hannah had genuinely cared about him.

He tilted his head. Actually, that was a lie. Gadreel apparently cared about him too.

He flinched when a tongue lapped at his cheek, wiping away another stray tear and he turned to find Meg staring at him sadly.


There was a tight feeling in his chest and something warm and powerful blossoming in his heart. He found himself unable to speak, his throat closing up and his eyes welling with water. He desperately needed someone to talk to. He knew he was traumatised but he wasn’t sure if he could bring himself to open up in front of another alpha. Even a beta was pushing it. The betas in his old pack hadn’t exactly been innocent of abusing him.

Meg curled her tail around him and began nuzzling his ear soothingly, despite his small wince. Eventually he leaned into her and pressed his face into her neck, letting the tears fall.
Meg held him for a few minutes as Crowley’s face fell further and further in heartbreak. He’d never seen someone so traumatised and it was gut-wrenching.

“It still hurts,” whispered Balthazar through hitched breaths. “Everything hurts and the nightmares never stop. I just want the pain to end.”

Meg’s face crumpled and she tugged the alpha closer, nuzzling his head like a mother would her pup. Balthazar’s sobs were silent and well hidden, but Meg could feel them against her fur and she had no idea what to do.

Crowley quickly made up his mind and despite the warning voice at the back of his mind, he stood and rounded Balthazar’s other side, wedging him between him and Meg. Immediately, Balthazar whimpered in fear and tried to wriggle free, but Crowley gently rested his head over the other alpha’s shoulders.

“Relax, Balthazar. It's okay. I'm not going to hurt you. I want to help. I want to protect you.”

Balthazar stilled. He wasn’t sure how to feel about that. Was it okay for an alpha to protect another alpha? Wasn’t he supposed to be able to look after himself? He didn’t even know Crowley.

Meg licked his head lightly as Crowley snuffled at the scars buried deep beneath the fur of his back. It felt… nice to be fussed over. He cautiously relaxed and Crowley grunted in approval.

After a few moments, he rested his head on his paws and began to tell them about his experiences with Hastur.

* * *

Arguments were bound to happen amongst people who live together for many years, but violent disputes were a rare sight within the Winchester pack. Not because the members never disagreed, but because they were too much of a family to consider settling arguments with tooth and claw.

Unfortunately, two wolves forgot that one afternoon whilst Dean, Cas and Pam were out teaching Adam how to fish.

“You lied to me!” Snarled Ed as Harry rolled his eyes. “You told me it was a timber wolf! It was a friggin’ fox!”

The black and white beta snorted. “Oh, come on. It was a prank. Lighten up.”

“A prank?” Hissed Ed. “I nearly broke my leg trying to scramble away from there! I think it’s sprained!”

“Not my fault you’re so gullible,” shrugged Harry and Ed narrowed his eyes.

“When my supposed best friend tells me there’s a timber wolf behind me and I turn to see a bushy tail and something that vaguely looks like a wolf staring at me whilst I’m trapped in a deep river with no quick way of escape, I’m going to believe him! I’m not going to expect him to do nothing as I thrash against the current and sprain my leg against a pile of jagged rocks lying below the water! I’m not going to expect him to do nothing to abandon me as the thing behind me starts advancing on me! I thought you’d left me to die, Harry!”
Harry frowned. “I’d never do that, Ed. You know that. It was a harmless prank. I just wanted to see how you’d react.”

“I got hurt!” Seethed Ed. “That’s how I reacted! I tried to escape and twisted my leg on those rocks! I thought if I didn’t get mauled by that ‘wolf’, I’d drown because you left me!”

“I didn’t know you’d twisted your leg,” scowled Harry. “And I told you; I wouldn’t leave you to drown.”

“That’s not the point!” Growled Ed. “The point is you lied to me and left me and you made me panic when I was already in a situation I couldn’t quickly get out of! You’re so immature and I’ve had enough of it!”

Harry’s mouth turned downwards. “It was supposed to be a bit of fun, but I suppose you don’t know the meaning of that word do you? Not with that stick you’ve got rammed so far up your ass!”

Ed growled, fur bristling. “Well one of us has to be mature, because you still act and think like a stupid spoiled brat!”

By now, their voices were loud enough to carry over the entire camp and the rest of the pack were beginning to watch warily as angry scents radiated from the pair.

“Oh? I’m the spoiled brat? At least I trust my friends! You’ve just proved that you have no faith in me and after everything we’ve been through, you think I would leave you to die!” Snapped Harry.

“What friends?” Scoffed Ed. “Everyone thinks you’re an irritating ass, just like I do! Nobody likes you! You’d be better off gone!”

Harry’s face crumpled into one of wounded betrayal before it hardened and he bared his teeth at Ed briefly before lunging for him.

The rest of the pack watched in muted horror as both betas snarled and bit and clawed at one another, rolling around the floor and trading blows as they swore and yelled insults at one another.

Sam scrambled out of his shelter at the racket, leaving a bewildered Gabriel to bound after him as he mourned their interrupted cuddle session.

“Hey! Hey! Break it up!” Shouted Sam, eyes wide with shock as he neared the scene. Both betas ignored him in favour of clawing at one another.

“Guys! Break it up!” Yelled Sam with a frown as he came to a halt beside them. When they ignored him again, he tore them apart and stood between them with a hard scowl.

“I said enough!” He snapped as Ed and Harry glowered at each other.

“Then tell him to stop being such a childish ass!” Hissed Ed and Harry bared his teeth, hackles rising.

“Tell him to stop being a whiny dick!”

Sam narrowed his eyes. “You’d both better stop or I’m gonna make you sit in your shelters like a couple of pups and you won’t be able to leave until I tell you.” He glanced between them, noting their lowered ears. “Now… what happened? What started all this?”

Harry looked away as Ed huffed.
“We went swimming and he told me I was being watched by a timber wolf. I panicked and tried to get out of the river and sprained my leg and he just left me. Then I found out he lied. It was just a fox,” grumbled Ed. “Now he says I was overreacting by telling him he’s immature.”

Harry scowled. “You are overreacting. It was a prank. I didn’t think you’d actually get hurt. It’s not like it’s even that bad.”

“That’s not the point!” spat Ed.

“Oh, and telling me no one cares about me is? That the pack would be better off with me gone?” Hissed Harry.

Sam growled warningly and both betas snapped their mouths shut.

“When I give you an order, I expect you to follow it,” he rumbled firmly. “I don’t expect to have to repeat it. I told you to knock it off three times and now I’m having to repeat myself a fourth. That is unacceptable and if you continue to ignore my orders, there will be serious consequences. Do I make myself clear?”

Ed and Harry dropped their gazes in embarrassment and Sam’s mouth drew into a thin line.

“Whilst it may have started out as a prank, you should have helped Ed out of the river once you saw him get hurt,” Sam said as he turned to Harry. “A joke stops being funny when people get harmed.” Once Harry bowed his head in shame, Sam turned to Ed. “And whilst I understand you’re upset, you must know by now that Harry would never intentionally hurt you or let you get hurt. Claiming that no one cares about him and that the pack would be better off without him is an outright lie and you should never have said it.”

Ed dropped his gaze and Sam shook his head.

“I’d better not see any fighting between you two again. We’re supposed to be a pack. We help each other; we don’t maul one another. Do you understand?”

Both betas nodded silently and Sam closed his eyes for a moment before gesturing towards the outskirts of the camp.

“Either talk things out or let each other cool down.”

Slowly, both betas traipsed to the outskirts of the camp to make up and the rest of the pack nodded or gazed at Sam appreciatively before returning to whatever it was they’d been doing before the altercation.

“Clean, firm and short. Nicely handled,” hummed Gabriel approvingly as he took Sam’s side. The omega smiled and nuzzled his lover’s cheek.

“I’m not always soft and cuddly,” murmured Sam and Gabriel chuckled and leaned into his lover.

“You’re like a teacher dealing with little kids,” he winked and Sam snorted.

“Sometimes I feel like I am.”

They nuzzled one another for a few moments before a familiar alpha wandered over.

“Fights like that usually happen?” Asked John gruffly and Sam straightened as he turned to his father and shook his head. Gabriel leaned into his side lazily.
“Not usually. We’ve not had a fight like that in a long time. Months.”

John nodded. “I’m guessing you mean other than Dean and Adam?”

Sam frowned briefly and even Gabriel thought that was a strange thing to say. He glanced at John curiously as Sam shook his head.

“Dean and Adam were sparring. Things just got a little… out of hand.”

“Still a fight,” John grunted and this time Gabriel frowned because what was John getting at?

“Uh…” Sam trailed off, unsure how to reply.

John offered him a small smile. “Anyway, you handled that pretty well,” he praised. “Well done.”

Sam allowed himself a tentative smile. “Thanks, Dad.”

“Wasn’t sure if they’d listen to you, but they did eventually,” commented John and immediately Sam frowned in confusion as Gabriel cocked his good ear.

“…What’s that supposed to mean?” Asked Sam and John blinked as if surprised Sam had even asked the question.

“I’m just saying I didn’t expect them to stop fighting when you asked. I know it took a few tries, but still… you broke them up.”

Sam scowled. “What do you mean you didn’t expect them to stop fighting when I asked? Why wouldn’t they listen to me?”

John hesitated as if choosing his words carefully. “Well… it would have been different if they were omegas,” he said cautiously. “But with them being betas, I wasn’t sure if they’d… y’know…”

Sam stiffened, muscles tensing as Gabriel scowled.

“No, I don’t. Explain to me exactly what you mean,” huffed Sam irritatedly and Gabriel could understand why. Was John really insinuating what they both thought he was?

John shifted awkwardly. “Well… I mean, if it had been your brother intervening… I would’ve expected them to separate immediately but watching you break them apart so quickly was rather impressive.”

Sam’s fur bristled and Gabriel could smell the annoyance and hurt seeping from him.

“What? Because I’m an omega? You don’t expect the pack to take orders from a weak omega like me, right?”

John’s eyes widened and he shook his head. “I never said that.”

“You said enough,” snapped Sam. “I’m Second-in-Command of this pack and I’m respected for it despite my secondary gender. You might not believe that, but I am. Dean isn’t the only one who can lead.”

With that he whirled on his heel and marched into his shelter, but Gabriel could see the tuck of his tail and his flattened ears and the way his whole body seemed to radiate humiliation and upset. John’s words had hit a nerve and now the omega was beginning to question himself.
Gabriel shot John a filthy glare.

“Thanks for that,” he growled before stalking away and leaving the older alpha to stare at his retreating back with narrowed eyes.

He slipped into Sam’s shelter and curled around his lover, frowning at the tenseness of his frame.


Sam closed his eyes. “Everyone prefers Dean,” he whispered. “They respect him more. Dad’s right. Ed and Harry wouldn’t have dared ignore his orders.”

Gabriel scowled, his distaste for John growing. Sam had already gone through insecurities about his gender before when he was younger. Now with John’s reappearance, it seemed he was facing them again.

“First off, that’s not true. Nobody prefers anybody. Nobody respects anybody more than anybody else. Secondly, you’ll never know what Ed and Harry would’ve done if your brother was here because he wasn’t here. You were. You stopped them from fighting. Isn’t that what matters?”

Sam didn’t look convinced. “I guess.”

Gabriel scowled harder.

When was John going to leave?

Chapter End Notes

Some people were wondering about the other side characters and I may have got a little excited about exploring Meg and Crowley's stories... Hope you enjoyed!
Chapter 65

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Balthazar didn’t know why Gadreel kept inviting him on his dates with Hannah, but the smaller alpha was really trying to get along with his counterpart.

He still grew jealous when his mate spent time alone with Gadreel, but he was trying his best not to let it consume him; to not let these feelings fester into hatred and disgust for the other alpha, who hadn’t actually done anything wrong.

Balthazar loved Hannah with all his heart and if Gadreel made her happy then the least he could do was be civil with the other male, no matter how he felt, and honestly… Gadreel wasn’t all that bad.

Originally, Balthazar had assumed Gadreel to be this stoic, cold, uninteresting alpha who took his role in the pack too seriously and was an antisocial, arrogant jerk because of that. After spending some time with Gadreel, he realised how wrong he’d been.

Gadreel took his job seriously not because he thought he was more important than everyone else, but because he loved the pack dearly and would do anything to keep them safe. He was quiet and focused when protecting the pack, but as soon as he was granted some free time, he relaxed and chatted softly with anyone who approached him. He was kind and gentle and never made anyone feel unwelcome or as though they were bothering him.

However, when he was with Hannah, Balthazar witnessed a side of him the rest of the pack rarely saw.

When Gadreel was around Hannah, it was like watching a teen with a crush. The alpha would go out of his way to make her smile or laugh and his eyes would brighten and a grin would slip across his face whenever she was near. He became playful and mischievous when he was alone with her and he knew a little bit about everything, so he was able to show Hannah new things; listening attentively when she also had something to teach him.

Balthazar began to understand why Hannah had fallen in love with him.

They looked good together too. They somehow suited one another and often stared at each other with the same amount of love and unbridled affection. When he was accompanying them, Balthazar sometimes felt as though he was intruding on a special moment and it invoked a strong sense of sadness and longing within his heart. He never interrupted them though, because he felt he didn’t have the right to. They were in love and he should be thankful they’d let him join their dates.

After their fight, Balthazar had noticed both Gadreel and Hannah trying to include him in more and more activities. He was grateful and humbled by their attempts and in turn, he’d begun to invite Gadreel on his outings with Hannah. It was a little awkward at times, especially when affection was involved, but they just about managed and Hannah was happier for it.

Balthazar had also noticed his confidence was slowly increasing, not only around Gadreel, but with the rest of the pack too.

He still suffered from nightmares and often had flashbacks when confronted with the other alphas of the pack, but after making friends with Meg and Crowley, Balthazar had been forcing himself to hold his head high and not let his fear win. He’d managed to strike up a conversation with a few
other members of the pack, like Charlie and Jo and Jody and for the first time in a very long while, he began to hope again. He’d even managed to talk to Bobby without lowering his head.

Hannah was proud of him and she told him every time he approached another wolf or didn’t drop his gaze whenever someone spoke to him. He was surprised to find Gadreel smiling at him in these moments too, tail wiggling and eyes bright as though the other alpha was also happy he was confronting his fears.

Gadreel was a very strange alpha.

They were wandering through the woods, in search of the bat cave Gadreel had tried to show them last time. Only this time, Balthazar wasn’t acting like a selfish, jealous jerk and was genuinely trying to make himself seem excited. It wasn’t all that hard when both Hannah and Gadreel were grinning like a couple of hyperactive pups. Balthazar hadn’t seen his mate this happy for a long time.

It made him smile.

They’d been walking for three hours and during that time, they’d once again stumbled across the brook home to the little colourful fish. Balthazar had actually taken an interest this time and he was surprised at how beautiful they were. He admired them for all of ten seconds before he was shoved face-first into the water by a smirking Gadreel.

He deserved that one.

The shock on Gadreel’s face when Hannah pushed him in too was priceless.

Now he and Hannah were lying a little distance away from the cave, dusk beginning to settle over the sky in pretty purples and pinks and they waited patiently as Gadreel crept towards the cave. He disappeared inside for a few moments and suddenly released a mighty howl.

Hannah and Balthazar gasped as high-pitched squeaking echoed from within the cave, accompanied by a loud beating of wings and a black cloud burst from the cave’s entrance, hundreds of bats soaring into the sky and hovering above the cave. They seemed to dance and glide as they screeched angrily, covering part of the sky like a huge, black blanket.

They were mesmerising to watch, their little bodies diving and sailing through the air, using the air currents to guide them as they tried to figure out what had woken them. It was like watching a complicated, synchronised ballet with hundreds of experienced participants. They never even touched one another, despite being so close together.

Gadreel slunk out of the cave silently and sprinted away from the bats when a few of them spotted him and plunged towards him.

“Sorry!” He yelled out with a wide grin that ruined the whole apology and Balthazar swore he heard a few of the little creatures curse at him and non-too-nicely order him to leave. Hannah was biting back laughter beside him so Balthazar assumed she’d heard it too.

Gadreel trotted over to them, tail wiggling excitedly as he waited for their comments.

“I can see why you wanted to show us that,” murmured Hannah. “They are fascinating to watch.” Her gaze flicked to the swarming bats once more as they began to quieten and file into the cave again.

“I especially liked the part where they yelled at you,” said Balthazar drily and Gadreel chuckled and shook his head.
“I had hoped they wouldn’t see me.”

“You know they’re not actually blind, right?”

Gadreel snorted and rolled his eyes as Balthazar returned his attention to the remaining bats. Some were still buzzing around the cave agitatedly.

“I’m glad you brought us,” he said softly. “It was worth the wait.”

Gadreel’s face lit up and Balthazar had to bite back a laugh at how excited the other alpha looked, like a pup who’d just caught his first rabbit and was presenting it to his parents.

This was the side of Gadreel the rest of the pack didn’t get to see and Balthazar felt oddly humbled that he was allowed to witness the bigger alpha’s playful side. Gadreel was only ever like this when around Hannah; he had a secret mischievous personality when no one else was watching and he finally let his guard down when he was alone. He was a far cry from the stoic, cold alpha Balthazar had labelled him as originally and the smaller alpha felt rather honoured Gadreel trusted him with his hidden side.

Gadreel settled on Hannah’s free side as they watched the remaining bats zip into the cave. It wouldn’t be long before they’d have to take to the skies again in search of food.

As the evening fell silent once more, the pink and purple sky slowly darkening as the pale moon poked out from behind the fluffy clouds, Hannah smiled and leaned against Balthazar, curling her tail around Gadreel.

“I love you both so much,” she whispered, gaze focused on the gorgeous colours of the sky. “You make me so happy.”

Balthazar’s heart caught in his throat, his chest light and airy. He couldn’t remember the last time Hannah had sounded so content, so relaxed. In their old pack, ‘I love you’s’ had been desperately murmured, voices low and full of pain as they tried to distract themselves from the horrors of the life they suffered through. They’d been a lifeline; something to cling to in a world of torment and agony, uttered as if each one would be their last because neither were sure if they’d make it to the next day.

Balthazar let out a shaky breath and watched as Gadreel smiled fondly and licked the omega’s cheek.

“We love you, too,” he said quietly and Balthazar found he couldn’t speak as reality abruptly crashed into him.

They could be happy here. They could say ‘I love you’ without worrying if it would be the last time they ever saw one another alive. They didn’t have to be terrified of being beaten or raped or tortured and the wolves here were a family. They didn’t hurt each other. They were safe here and if that meant sharing Hannah with Gadreel (who was actually rather sweet and dorky anyway), then that was a small price to pay and Balthazar would snatch the opportunity.

He licked his mate’s muzzle gently and closed his eyes as he leaned their heads together.

“More than anything,” he added softly and Hannah smiled and closed her eyes, enjoying the peacefulness.

Gadreel watched them with a small smile before casting his gaze to the clouds. He let them enjoy their moment for a few minutes before he smirked and nipped Hannah’s ear playfully.

She huffed at him and ignored him, so he nipped it again.
When she buried her nose in Balthazar’s fur, he bit back a snicker and nipped her rump instead.

She gasped and shoved half-heartedly at his shoulder as Balthazar cracked an eye open curiously.

Gadreel whined pathetically and pouted until Hannah sent him an unimpressed glare.

“You’re behaving like a four-year-old. Go play with a squirrel.”

Gadreel bit back a smirk and shot her a kicked-puppy look, ears lowered and head bowed as he let out a sad whine.

“You’re the oldest out of all of us,” Hannah snorted. “When are you going to start acting like it?”

Gadreel looked down sadly and it was the most heart-breaking thing Balthazar had ever seen since arriving at camp Winchester.

Hannah scowled. “You play dirty,” she huffed before nipping his ear.

Suddenly, Gadreel dragged her off her paws and rolled her to the ground, tail wagging as they wrestled. Hannah laughed and tried to shove him away, but he was stronger and began licking her face sloppily until she was groaning in disgust.

She nibbled his leg until he stopped and chewed on his ear when he tried to back off. He laughed as she wrapped her paws around him, holding him in place.

“You wanted a war,” she teased.

As they wrestled and struggled against one another, Balthazar cocked his head to one side. Their play was gentle and even though Gadreel was far stronger and larger than Hannah, he wasn’t using that to his advantage. They looked like they were having fun and Balthazar once again wondered when his mate had changed so much.

Hannah caught his staring and smiled kindly at him. “Come on, Balt,” she said quietly, hopefully and as Gadreel paused to quirk his lips at him, Balthazar gulped and tried to calm his flaring anxiety. It had been so long since he’d goofed around like that… he wasn’t sure he could do it in the presence of another alpha.

“I won’t bite,” Gadreel whispered, backing off from Hannah slightly as he gestured for Balthazar to take his place.

The bronze and white wolf closed his eyes for a moment, calming himself before he cautiously slunk over and straddled his mate. He could do this.

She licked his nose in encouragement and he felt himself smile before he cautiously slunk over and straddled his mate. He could do this.

She wrapped her paws around him and butted their heads gently and Balthazar began to relax, confidence growing as they nipped at each other.

For a few minutes, everything was fine and Balthazar wrestled with his mate lightly, chuckling when she chewed on his paw. Then something nipped at his shoulder and he tensed, whipping his head around to stare wide-eyed at Gadreel, who was becoming more sheepish the longer Balthazar gaped at him.

“Sorry,” he began awkwardly as he backed away but Balthazar forced himself to relax. This was just a game. Gadreel wouldn’t hurt him. Gadreel was trying to help.
He swallowed his fear and took a deep breath before surging forwards to nip the other alpha’s ear.

Gadreel startled before a wide grin blossomed over his face and he carefully retaliated by butting Balthazar’s shoulder. The smaller alpha exhaled shakily and managed a small smile.

Thirty minutes later, Gadreel had both Hannah and Balthazar pinned. The smaller wolves laughed and tried to wriggle free as they batted and nipped at their captor, but Gadreel was extremely strong and eventually sprawled over them both and closed his eyes as he pretended to fall asleep.

With combined effort, Hannah and Balthazar shoved the larger wolf off them. They scrambled to their paws, panting yet smiling and Gadreel chuckled and rolled onto his back submissively, letting them pounce on him. They tickled him and nibbled on his paws, claiming their revenge before Hannah finally slumped over him and snuggled into him with a happy grunt. His gaze softened and he nuzzled and licked her head affectionately as he held her close.

Balthazar stood and smiled at them both. That had possibly been the most fun he’d had since he was a pup. Gadreel had been so gentle and careful with him without making him feel like he was fragile and broken and Hannah looked ecstatic at having her lovers play together.

He panted tiredly and was about to settle down when Gadreel suddenly tilted his head at him and slowly stretched out his paw in invitation. Balthazar blinked in surprise and hesitated but when Gadreel offered him a reassuring smile, he raised an eyebrow and wandered over, lying beside Hannah and wondering if it was okay for him lean against Gadreel like he was.

His question was answered when Gadreel suddenly wrapped his extended paw around him and tugged both alpha and omega further onto his chest.

Hannah grinned and snuggled into both of her lovers, wrapping a paw around Balthazar contentedly. Gadreel licked her nose before raising an eyebrow at Balthazar in silent question, asking if he was okay with this.

Balthazar managed a weak smile as he let his head rest on the other alpha’s chest. He wasn’t sure how he was supposed to feel, but he knew he felt safe. Safer than he’d ever been before. He subtly scented at the other alpha and found himself cuddling further into Hannah and Gadreel, basking in their combined scents. He nearly purred in contentment when Gadreel tightened his grip around them both. He wondered if Hannah felt the same way when she was with the larger alpha.

Gadreel returned to licking Hannah’s head soothingly and for the first time ever, Balthazar didn’t feel a pang of jealousy in his heart as he watched Hannah snuggle closer.

Carefully, Balthazar licked his mate’s cheek, watching Gadreel for any signs of disapproval, but the alpha didn’t even blink as he continued nuzzling his lover’s head, so he shifted slightly to groom his mate, quirking a grin when Hannah sighed blissfully and Gadreel’s tail wiggled.

Maybe sharing Hannah wouldn’t be so bad.

* * *

“Wait, there’s bets going?” Asked Dean, surprised and Sam laughed as he shook his head.

“Everyone’s been waiting for this for a long time, dude. Of course there are bets. High stakes,
actually. Everyone was kinda miffed you guys didn’t do it in the camp.”

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. “What exactly do they think we’ll be doing? They know it’s not an actual fight, right? I’m not gonna tear his eyes out or anything.”

Dean snorted. “As if I’d give you a chance, pipsqueak.”

Gabriel rolled his eyes and Sam chuckled.

“Well, they don’t expect you to play nice with each other, that’s for certain. Some of them are pretty shocked you two haven’t gone at it sooner. Like, for real.”

Dean frowned as Gabriel shook his head.

“Am I really that annoying?” Wondered Gabriel and Dean snorted out a laugh.

“Yes.”

Gabriel shot him a filthy glare before cocking his head. “So is that the only reason you and Cassie wanted to accompany us today? You’ve placed bets on us with the rest of the rabble and you’re going to be the witnesses to our little sparring session?” He teased and his eyes widened when neither Sam nor Castiel would meet his gaze.

“Oh, come on! Seriously?” Groaned Dean. “You guys too?”

Both omegas shrugged sheepishly.

The four fell silent for a few moments before Dean cleared his throat.

“So… uh… Who did you bet on?”

Sam and Castiel quickly shook their heads.

“Oh no. We’re not telling you anything. It might bias the result,” said Sam and Gabriel frowned.

“At least tell us what’s at stake.”

The omegas glanced at each other before nodding.

“First dibs on meals for a week,” replied Sam. Dean raised an eyebrow.

“That it?”

“…There may be slavery involved,” muttered Cas quietly and both Gabriel and Dean blinked before gaping at their brothers.

“To be fair, the second part is between me and Cas. Although I’m sure there are quite a few others who have a similar bet too,” coughed Sam.

Gabriel and Dean’s eyes widened.

“Wait, you bet against each other? Who bet on who?” Demanded Dean as he glanced at Cas.

“You’re not gonna question the slavery thing?” Asked Gabriel drily and Dean snorted.

“It serves them both right for making bets against us.”
Gabriel nodded after a moment and cast his gaze to his lover.

“C’mon, kiddo. Spill the beans. Tell me you voted for me.”

Sam glanced away guiltily and Gabriel’s jaw dropped as Dean cackled.

“Yeah! Thatta boy, Sammy!”

“That means Cas voted for me, idiot,” huffed Gabriel and Dean’s grin faded as he turned betrayed eyes upon his mate.

“Cas!”

“I’ve lived with Gabriel for far longer than I’ve known you, Dean. I’ve seen what he’s capable of and... well...” Cas trailed off embarrassedly as the golden alpha smirked.

“He knows the truth,” Gabriel finished off with a wink, making Dean pull a face.

“Yeah, but Gabe’s never sparred with Dean before,” argued Sam. “He beat Ruby because he was truly angry at the time; he doesn’t have the experience like Dean does. No offence, but city folk don’t usually fight with tooth and claw.”

Dean puffed out his chest proudly. “You tell ‘em, Sammy.”

Gabe and Cas rolled their eyes in unison.

“Well, if you guys are so sure of yourself, why don’t we spice up the wager a little bit? Whichever brothers lose have to be slaves to the other brothers' desires for the entire week,” suggested Gabe. He wiggled his eyebrows at Dean and the bigger alpha wrinkled his nose.

“I hope you’re not talking about sexual favours.”

Gabriel recoiled in disgust. “Don’t flatter yourself, Winchester; I’ll leave the trash to Cas. I meant when you guys lose, you have to do everything we say. If we say jump, you ask ‘how high?’”

“When?” Snorted Sam. “I think you mean ‘if’. And it’s a pretty big ‘if’.”

“Do we have a deal or are you two too chicken?”

Dean grunted. “Why not? It’ll be nice having you two follow our every order for once.”

“That’s not what you said last night,” piped up Cas, making both Gabe and Sam choke and stare at a blushing Dean.

“TMI, Cas,” groaned Sam as Gabe shook his head. He grinned between Cas and Dean.

“Please tell me he’s a bottom. Please tell me our great and powerful alpha leader is a bottom to my little omega brother. That would be gold!”

Dean scowled. “Anything else you’d like to know about our sex life?”

Gabriel cackled. “This is too good!” He turned to Cas with a grin. “Is he into BDSM? Are you his dom?”

Sam wrinkled his nose. “BD- what now?”
Gabriel burst into a fit of giggles at both brothers’ confused expressions.

“They’re so precious,” he wheezed. “They’ve never even heard of BDSM! How adorable are they?”

Cas looked very pale. “Gabriel!” He hissed. “Of course they haven’t heard of it. It’s a civilised thing!”

“I think Dean would look amazing in a leather, studded collar.”

Sam and Dean blinked in horror, making Gabriel laugh harder.

“You… you put collars on people in the city?” Breathed Sam, mortified. “Is that a type of punishment? Do people get treated like dogs if they do something wrong? Do you use those shock collar things, too?”

Dean’s eyes were wide. “Do you use muzzles? Do people get muzzled in the city if they do something bad? How long do you have to wear them for?”

Gabriel soon sobered at their terrified gazes and Castiel shot him a filthy glare.

“Ignore my brother,” huffed Castiel. “He’s being inappropriate. Nobody gets muzzled or has to wear collars in civilisation. They aren’t forms of punishment.”

Gabriel ducked his head slightly. “I didn’t mean it like that, guys. It was just a joke. BDSM isn’t punishment for breaking the law.”

Dean frowned. “Then what is it?”

Gabriel grinned. “Sex and stuff pertaining to it. Kinky fun that sometimes involves ropes and chains and collars and whips. There’s usually a lot of leather involved.”

Castiel scrunched up his nose in distaste as Sam and Dean frowned.

“…That doesn’t sound very… sexy,” said Dean. “Sounds like a lot of pain and humiliation. Who wants to be chained up and have their freedom and dignity taken away?”

Gabriel frowned as he realised how it sounded to people who spent most of their lives in their canine forms.

“It’s not like that. Some people like it because they can give up control or maybe take control of someone else. It’s about comfort too and trusting your partner. Sometimes pain is involved, but not always. It’s…” Gabriel trailed off at the confused expressions he was met with. “It’s hard to explain, actually,” he sighed.

Castiel rolled his eyes and glanced at the brothers reassuringly.

“Our cultures differ greatly in some areas. Bear in mind that people in civilisation don’t live in their canine forms. Our definitions of ‘humiliation’ and ‘freedom’ probably have very different meanings.”

Sam and Dean didn’t look convinced but they shrugged anyway.

“City folk are weird. Don’t see how anyone can get off by being chained to a lamppost with an uncomfortable collar around their neck,” huffed Dean.

“And who wants to be whipped in the street?” Asked Sam incredulously. “Do you hogtie each other with the ropes and see who’s the first to escape?”
Castiel and Gabriel blinked before glancing at each other with small smiles.

“Something like that,” smirked Gabriel in amusement. “Sometimes little red balls are involved,” he said because he couldn’t resist.

Dean pulled a face. “You play fetch during sex? What kind of kink is that?”

Even Castiel was biting back a chuckle now.

“Enough, Gabriel. We don’t need to hear about your sexual awakening.”

Sam cocked an eyebrow. “You’re into this BDSM stuff?”

Gabriel smiled. “I dabbled.”

Dean frowned in confusion. “Did you get chained up outside a house or a shop? Did anyone come to feed you?”

Gabriel laughed quietly. “I don’t think you quite understand what BDSM is.”

“Did they make you chase after the little red ball?” Asked Sam, looking concerned. “Were you in human form or wolf?”

“Actually, I was the dom.”

Sam scowled. “Why did you have to change your name? Is that custom?”

“Wait, does that mean you were the one throwing the ball?” Asked Dean curiously and Gabriel squeezed his eyes shut as he shook his head.

“I’m going to have to ask you both to stop talking otherwise I’m going to bust a lung,” he laughed, a tear rolling down his cheek as Castiel chuckled quietly.

“But you still haven’t explained where the leather comes into it,” frowned Dean. “Do you have to fight cows or something? Is that part of your sexual customs?” He blinked at Cas as if he’d had an epiphany. “We don’t have many cows out here, but we might be able to find some ox. Would fighting an ox get you off, Cas?”

Gabriel lost it.

“You are my favourite brother-in-law,” he cackled as Castiel stared at his mate with wide eyes.

Dean scowled. “I don’t understand. Have I said something wrong?”

Castiel shook his head reassuringly as he licked his mate’s cheek. “Not at all. Gabriel is being an assbutt.” He glared at his hysterical brother, making the alpha laugh louder.

“Cows have nothing to do with our ‘sexual customs’, Dean,” he managed between giggles. “You’ve been spending way too much time around Cas,” he added. “You’re beginning to sound like him.”

Sam huffed and shook his head. “Sometimes, I swear you’re from another planet, Gabe.”

“Your boyfriend’s making me uncomfortable,” grumbled Dean as they finally arrived at the clearing reserved for sparring sessions. “Not sure how I feel about sparring with him.”

Castiel shrugged. “You could always surrender…”
Dean raised an eyebrow. “Nice try. Don’t think I’ve forgotten about your betrayal.”

Castiel huffed and moved to the side as Gabriel finally sobered and planted himself opposite Dean.

“Usual rules?” He asked and Dean nodded as Sam and Castiel moved out of their way, lying beside each other as they watched.

“Try not to kill my mate,” said Castiel airily. “I’d be very upset.”

Gabriel grinned at his brother as Dean pouted and glanced at his own brother. “Say something encouraging, Sammy.”

“If you lose, I’ll kill you myself.”

“Thanks, Sammy.”

Gabriel and Castiel laughed as Dean growled softly at his rival, setting the mood.

Gabriel immediately dropped into a defensive position, gaze never leaving Dean’s body as the larger alpha began to circle him, teeth bared and hackles raised.

Suddenly, Gabriel lunged, knocking Dean off his paws, but his advantage didn’t last for long as Dean flipped their positions and pinned him to the ground. Gabriel kicked out swiftly, sending Dean staggering to his left and he pounced once more, but Dean met him half way and the pair ended up standing on their hind legs as they wrestled and snapped at one another.

Being taller, Dean wrapped his paws around Gabriel, restraining his head against his chest and Gabriel struggled desperately against him before hooking his paw around Dean’s ankle and swiping his paws out from under him.

Dean fell on his back, dragging Gabriel with him and the pair wrestled roughly for a few moments before Dean managed to wrap his jaws around Gabriel’s muzzle. Gabriel yelped and struck his hind paw against Dean’s stomach a few times. When that didn’t work, he slammed his forepaw against the other alpha’s Adam’s apple and Dean gagged as he released Gabe.

Gabe quickly lunged for Dean’s neck, but Dean was quicker and he swiped his paw across his opponent’s face, sending him stumbling away. Dean shot forwards and tackled Gabriel to the ground, but he didn’t expect Gabriel to use his momentum against him and in one smooth roll, the smaller alpha threw him three metres to his side.

Determined, Dean pounced again, colliding into Gabriel once more as they rolled around the floor, swiping and snapping at one another.

A pained cry caught their attention.

They immediately stopped, ears pricked as they glanced into the forest.

There was a distant whimper and all four wolves paled.

“Adam,” breathed Sam before he sprinted into the woods, Dean hot on his heels as Castiel and Gabriel raced after them both.

“Adam!” Yelled Dean as a limp body came into view. It was slumped against a rock and it tried to pick itself up a few times only to crash back onto the hard stone. As they neared the teen, their eyes widened in horror.
The wound on Adam’s back leg had reopened. Blood was pouring down it and he looked like he had a new gash over his side.

When Adam saw them rushing towards him, he whimpered softly and tried to stand, stumbling a few times as he attempted to hide his injuries.

Once they reached him, Dean scented the air furiously, determined to work out who had been there and if they were in any danger as Sam scented Adam’s body, gathering as much information as he could about his attacker.

Both brothers came to the same conclusion and they glanced at each other grimly.

Adam backed off with a frown, away from prying noses.

“Who did this to you?” Asked Castiel worriedly even though he had a feeling he knew what the answer was.

Adam shrugged a little forcedly. “Timber wolf.”

Dean and Sam both scowled as Castiel pursed his lips. “Are you sure?”

“Yes,” huffed Adam despite not meeting their gazes.

“A timber wolf in these parts?” Asked Dean. “Funny. There aren’t any packs around here.”

“It was a stray one,” lied Adam and Sam scrunched his nose up.

“Timber wolves don’t stray from the pack. They aren’t like us.”

Adam winced and shuffled his paws awkwardly.

“There’s always a first,” he said eventually. “I think I know what I saw.”

“You were supposed to be in the camp. Did you tell anyone where you were going?” Demanded Dean. “Does anyone know you’re out here?”

Adam hesitated. “…Dad does. He knew I was coming out here.”

“He was with you,” Sam said and it wasn’t a question.

Adam grimaced and nodded slowly before abruptly turning to Gabe.

“He wanted to ask me why you were giving him funny looks. Said you always look suspicious of him. Act kinda hostile towards him sometimes. He wanted to see if I knew why.”

Gabriel’s eyes widened as he realised he was possibly the reason for Adam’s current injuries. If John was using him as an outlet for his anger because Gabe had been irritated with the older alpha’s attitude towards Sam…

Suddenly, his face hardened. Adam was John’s kid.

“I see. Was that before or after he beat you up?” Gabriel scowled.

Adam’s eyes blew wide before he narrowed his gaze.

“It was a timber wolf.”
“As well as?” Huffed Gabriel, causing the other adults to stare at him in surprise. Adam looked away.

“Dad went home before the timber wolf saw me. He had nothing to do with any of my injuries.”

Gabriel scoffed. “Right. Sure. Was there a pig flying overhead, too?”

Adam frowned in confusion and Sam stepped forwards.

“We can’t smell any other wolves, Adam,” he said quietly. “Just you and Dad.”

Adam tensed. “Then there’s something wrong with your noses.”

Dean scowled. “Did Dad do this to you?” He demanded and Adam paused just a little too long before shaking his head.

Dean sighed tiredly. “Alright, c’mon. Let’s go home and get you fixed up,” he murmured gently. He wedged the teen between him and Sam and they supported him as he limped back to the camp, Castiel and Gabriel following the trio as they shared unhappy glances.

Once they returned home and ushered Adam over to Jody, Dean and Sam glanced at each other grimly.

“We need to do something,” Sam said softly. “This has gone on for too long.”

Dean sighed wearily. “I know. I don’t want to believe it, but I… I can’t see any other explanation.”

Gabriel and Castiel looked between the pair worriedly as they glanced over to their father, who was obliviously watching the pups play with Bobby.

“What are you planning?” Asked Cas cautiously and the brothers turned to him slowly.

“We need to ask him,” murmured Dean, gaze pained. “We need to find out what’s going on with Adam. Kid’s suffering.”

Gabriel frowned concernedly.

“…If he tries anything with you, anything at all…” He trailed off pointedly and Dean dropped his gaze.

“Thanks,” he whispered sincerely, voice broken and full of hurt.

Castiel and Gabe slumped slightly. They couldn’t imagine how hard it must have been to finally have a father back after so many years, believe he’d changed, then find out he’s still up to his old tricks with the little brother you didn’t even know you had.

“Be careful,” Cas said quietly, licking his mate’s muzzle. “Don’t let him bully you.” He glanced at Sam. “Either of you.”

The Winchester brothers each managed a small smile before they turned their gazes upon their father and began stalking towards him. John tilted his head at their approach.

“We need a word,” said Dean gruffly, not bothering to greet the older alpha. He wasn’t in the mood for pleasantries and neither was Sam.

John frowned briefly, obviously displeased by their attitude, but he raised an eyebrow.
“Alright, shoot.”

“Not here,” huffed Sam as he nodded towards the outskirts of the camp. “Somewhere private.”

John glanced between the pair warily before nodding and slowly making his way towards the edge of the camp.

Once they were out of earshot of the other members of the pack, Dean’s lips drew into a thin line as he scowled at his father. He forced himself to stand tall, grateful for Sam’s presence by his side as he confronted their father.

“What’s going on with Adam?” Dean demanded.

John closed his eyes with a soft sigh. “What’s he done now?” He sounded weary.

Dean narrowed his eyes. “More like ‘what’s been done to him?’ I assume you saw him limping into the camp a few minutes ago; leg torn up, new gash on his side, probably more bruises under all that fur? Any ideas what could’ve done that to him?”

John stiffened slightly. “I did see him. Looked like a timber wolf attack to me.”

Sam snorted in disbelief. “A lone timber wolf out here? They refuse to come near us and there aren’t any packs around here. It’s painfully obvious it wasn’t a timber that got Adam.”

John narrowed his eyes dangerously. “I’m not sure I appreciate what you’re insinuating, boy.”

“What exactly is it you think we’re insinuating?” Sam challenged.

John rumbled softly. “Don’t get smart-mouthed with me, Sam. Why don’t you both just spit out what’s really on your minds?”

“Are you abusing Adam?” Sam asked bluntly. Dean had never been able to speak out against their father quite like Sam had and it was certainly showing here.

John straightened, gaze cool and unforgiving.

“I knew this would happen,” he muttered, making his sons tilt their heads in confusion. John laughed bitterly. “I knew you’d never truly forgive me for how I treated you all those years ago, no matter how much I try to convince you I’ve changed. Would that make you feel better? If I said I was abusing Adam, would that make you feel good about yourselves?” He accused.

Sam and Dean frowned, opening their mouths to protest, but John beat them to it.

“I don’t know what else you want me to do. I’ve apologised and I’ve promised to treat you like you deserve and respect your command, but all you seem to do is find more faults in me. I’m sorry I wasn’t the father you wanted but don’t start accusing me of being the same wolf I was back then. I know you’re still a little jealous of Adam, but it wasn’t my intention to seem like I’m playing favourites. You’re all my sons and I… I care for you equally.”

The fight slowly drained from Dean and Sam as they deflated and glanced at each other.

“We’re not… we’re not trying to find fault in you, Dad. We just want to know the truth,” sighed Sam. “Adam’s getting hurt and we want to know why and by who so we can stop it.”

John frowned. “So, your first thought is it must be me because I’m the monster? I always was, wasn’t I? I’m the evil, cruel alpha who cares more about power than his own family. Is that what you
want to hear? That I’m beating my own son?”

“You’ve done it before,” said Dean before he could stop himself. His eyes widened at his own slip and both Sam and John turned to him in shock.

John’s lips drew into a thin line.

“I see. At least now I know how you think of me.” He straightened and glared at his eldest son. “Why don’t you stop being a coward and hiding behind your brother, Dean? If you have something to say to me, face me and say it. You’re pack leader, aren’t you? Start acting like one.”

Dean shook his head. “I didn’t mean it… it was an accident. I don’t really think of you like that. You’ve changed, I know you have. I don’t hold any grudges, I promise.”

John snorted. “Don’t lie, Dean. I know exactly what you meant.” He wrinkled his nose. “And only soldiers kiss ass. Leaders don’t. Thought you were supposed to be head alpha, not a slimy suck-up.”

Dean snapped his mouth shut, ears flattening as he dropped his gaze. Beside him, Sam frowned. “He’s not sucking up. It was an accident. Let it go. We need to know what’s happening with Adam.”

John huffed in irritation. “I wasn’t talking to you, Sam. Your brother can stand up for himself. You have something to say to me or not, boy?” He glanced sharply at Dean.

Dean once again shook his head, a little more desperately this time. “No, Dad. I swear I didn’t mean it. I don’t even know why I said it.”

John snorted. “I know exactly why you said it. You’ll never forgive me and I suppose there’s nothing I can do about that, is there? To you, I’ll always be a heartless monster, no matter how much I try to better myself and now you’re going to make everyone believe I’m the villain. I’ll never be good enough in your eyes, will I?” He shook his head in disgust. “If you wanted me to leave the pack, you should have been an alpha about it and just told me.”

“I never said I wanted you to leave the pack,” protested Dean, but John rolled his eyes. “Not in words, no. But you’re accusing me of beating my youngest son; just because you want it to be true, doesn’t mean it is.”

Sam stiffened. “We don’t want that to be true.”

“You sure? You sure you don’t want Adam to suffer the same treatment you did? That would make things fair, right? He should have the same upbringing you did,” John scoffed, tone bitter and angry.

Sam and Dean flinched. His words stung because what if he was right? After all, they had been jealous of the kid at first, hadn’t they? They’d not exactly been easy on him when first meeting him. It had taken a long time for them all to warm up to each other.

When they took too long to respond, John sneered at them. “That’s what I thought.” He glanced at Dean, repulsed. “Am I dismissed, alpha?”

Dean winced and looked away as he nodded silently.

John swiftly turned and headed to his shelter, but not before he paused to glance over his shoulder at his sons.
“And here I thought we had a shot at being a family again.”

Then, he trotted over to his shelter and disappeared inside, leaving two ashamed Winchesters behind.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Sam and Dean :( They just can't get around their father, can they?
“You always this tight, Balty?” Sneered a gruff voice from behind him. Nails bit into his hips. “Maybe we should do this more often. Make you loosen up a little?”

Tears rolled down his cheeks and he tried not to choke on the knot slamming in and out of his mouth.

_Hastur laughed behind him and continued ramming his knot into his aching hole. The broad alpha raked his nails over his spine, drawing blood and making the flesh sting. In front of him, Asmodeus, Second-in-Command of the pack, clutched his hair painfully tight and forced him to swallow more of him down. He gagged and was slapped hard across the face.

He could feel blood beginning to trickle down his legs the longer Hastur used him. It burned.

After a few minutes, both alphas flipped him onto his back and there was a brief moment of relief as he lay there, everything aching and stinging and burning. Unfortunately, it didn’t last long. Two knots suddenly forced their way inside him and he cried out in agony when they pinned him down and thrust in and out of him roughly.

Asmodeus slapped a hand over his mouth with a warning growl. Hastur wrapped his hand around his neck.

“That sound like ‘harder’ to you?” Grinned Hastur wickedly, his grip around Balthazar’s throat tightening.

Asmodeus chuckled. “Sounded a bit like ‘faster’ too.”

They picked up the pace, despite the awkward position and as their thrusts harshened, Balthazar felt blood pool between his legs. He could smell their increasing arousal; the joy they were experiencing from seeing him like this. He sobbed.

“Next, we can have a go on that cute little omega of his,” said Asmodeus.

_Balthazar shook his head desperately, eyes wide and horrified.

_Hastur suddenly squeezed his throat and for a long sixty seconds, Balthazar couldn’t breathe; pressure building in his head and chest as his vision began to fade at the edges, all whilst Hastur and Asmodeus continued knotting him. Then, he blacked out._

* * *

_Balthazar scrambled to his paws with a yelp and he backed into the wall of his shelter with a thump. His gaze darted around the darkness for a few panicked moments, desperately trying to work out if he was still alive and where he was and more importantly, where Hastur and Asmodeus were.

Finally, he remembered the Winchester pack._
He released a shaky breath and shook his head to clear it before reluctantly settling back down to sleep.

An hour later, it became obvious he wasn’t going to get any rest any time soon.

Judging by the shade of black painting the sky and the brightness of the moon, it must have been around three o’clock in the morning. He sighed exhaustedly and stepped out into the cool air. He just wanted to have one night without nightmares; was that too much to ask? They weren’t even real nightmares; they were memories, flashbacks… how messed up was that?

He glanced over at Gadreel and Hannah’s shelter. He needed Hannah. He needed to scent her and convince himself that she was okay; that she was safe. This was the problem with sharing her; when she was with Gadreel, Balthazar had to face the nightmares alone and those were the nights he couldn’t sleep. Usually he just wandered around the camp until morning, but living on a few hours sleep every two days was beginning to take a toll on him. He needed to rest.

He wondered if Gadreel would let him borrow Hannah for an hour or so, just until he fell asleep. Then he felt guilty because how selfish was he for wanting to wake the omega up at three in the morning just to coddle him? He couldn’t expect that of her when she was probably warm and cosy snuggled up to Gadreel. He closed his eyes in defeat and began wandering around the camp to entertain himself.

Approximately twenty minutes later, a tricolour head popped out of Gadreel’s shelter.

“Balthazar?”

The bronze and white alpha startled and whirled to face a puzzled Hannah.

“What are you doing?” She asked quietly and Balthazar shrugged nonchalantly, trying to play his distress down so he wouldn’t worry her.

“Got warm in the shelter. Came out here to cool down.”

Hannah frowned. “…In November?”

Balthazar grimaced. November wasn’t exactly a warm month.

“I suppose. It’s refreshing out here.”

Hannah easily saw through his lie.

“…Did you have another nightmare?” She asked softly and he winced and nodded without meeting her gaze. She frowned and crawled out of the shelter.

“Why didn’t you just tell me?” She questioned quietly, padding over to him and nuzzling his cheek gently. “I’m supposed to be your mate. I want to help you.”

Balthazar couldn’t look at her. “I didn’t want to disturb you,” he admitted quietly. “You don’t need my problems; you have your own.”

Hannah scowled and buried her face into his neck. “I wish you wouldn’t say things like that. I care so much about you. I hate the thought of you suffering alone.”

He bit back a sigh. She didn’t know he had nightmares every night and if he had a say in it, she’d never know.
“I can manage, mon cœur.”

She smiled at the term of endearment before licking his muzzle. “Need some company?” She offered, but before he got a chance to respond, Gadreel poked his head out of his shelter sleepily.

“Hannah?” He called out around a yawn and Balthazar’s ears lowered. So much for some company.

When Gadreel finally managed to focus, he cocked his head curiously.

“Balthazar? Is everything okay?”

The smaller alpha nodded. “I was just returning to my shelter.” He managed to turn thirty-five degrees before Hannah stopped him.

“He had a nightmare,” she whispered and immediately Gadreel’s eyes widened, making Balthazar flinch. Why was he so weak?

“…About…?” Gadreel managed, unable to finish the sentence and when Hannah nodded sadly, he licked his lips and swallowed thickly.

“Would you like to stay with us?” He offered and Balthazar’s automatic response was to say ‘no’ and hastily back away from the other alpha, but then he remembered which alpha he was talking to. He hesitated and Hannah nuzzled his jaw.

“Stay with us,” she begged quietly.

Balthazar found himself nodding and before he registered what was happening, Hannah was curled around his left side, Gadreel on his right and there was that wonderful scent of blueberries and buttercups and roasted chestnuts and oak trees saturating the air. He blinked in surprise and wondered how he’d made it to Gadreel’s shelter.

“You’re safe here,” whispered Hannah as she licked his head sweetly. “We both are.” She lay her head over his neck. “Would you like to talk about it?”

He shook his head and Hannah flicked an ear in acknowledgement and closed her eyes.

A few minutes later, just as he was beginning to close his eyes from the warmth enveloping his body, a strong forepaw wrapped around his middle.

He blinked and turned to Gadreel. The larger alpha blinked back at him.

He slowly let his head fall against his paws once more and curled his tail around Gadreel and a few moments later, Gadreel tugged both him and Hannah closer and licked the slumbering omega’s cheek before laying his head on his free paw.

A smile crept across Balthazar’s lips and he carefully leaned into Gadreel’s side and pressed his nose lightly into the other alpha’s neck. He was surprised when Gadreel cautiously bared his neck further, allowing him to scent at the larger wolf more deeply.

“…If you ever wish to talk about what happened, I’m always here,” murmured Gadreel sincerely.

Balthazar was quiet for a few moments before he closed his eyes and took a centring breath. He probably should have just ignored the comment or fallen asleep without answering, but something inside him told him to take a risk and open up to the alpha who just wanted to help. It was probably a
stupid idea, but he suddenly needed someone to talk to; someone who hadn’t also suffered through what he had. He just… needed to tell someone.

“They raped me,” he whispered, voice breaking with the vulnerability he was feeling in that moment. “Over and over, even when I was unconscious. Two of them. The pack leader and his Second-in-Command. They hit me and raped me until I bled.” Tears slid down his cheeks. “And even then, they didn’t stop.”

Balthazar was shocked when Gadreel growled lowly and wrapped his paw around him more securely. He suddenly wanted to bury himself in Gadreel’s fur and never leave.

“It hurt so much,” he choked out, unable to stop the tears now they’d started. “Everything hurt. They knotted my mouth until I couldn’t breathe, hit me when I gagged, thrusted rougher so I’d cry louder.” Now he was telling Gadreel about that afternoon, he couldn’t seem to stop.

“They used me for four hours that afternoon. They marked me with their fluids and bit me afterwards and told me I was their ‘whore’. They laughed at all the blood leaking out of me and told me it made me look pretty. They hauled me back to camp in my human form and presented me naked in front of the pack. Told everyone to use me however they pleased. Some did. Some just laughed or watched. I can’t remember much because I passed out again.”

Gadreel snarled, making Balthazar startle and cower, but the larger wolf rolled onto his side and dragged Balthazar into his chest, letting him sob silently into his fur.

It took less than ten seconds for Balthazar to wrap his paws around Gadreel and hold him close, desperately in search of comfort.

“I’ll kill them,” hissed Gadreel. “If I ever see them, I’ll kill them,” he vowed before licking Balthazar’s head soothingly as the smaller alpha felt something warm and excited blossom in his chest. He snuggled closer to Gadreel, an odd sense of security and reassurance washing over him.

“They’ll never hurt either of you again,” promised Gadreel fiercely. “They’ll never touch either of you again because I won’t let them.”

Balthazar let out a shaky breath and shoved his face into Gadreel’s neck. He felt weird. Kind of… happy. Nervous, but in a good way.

He tightened his grip on Gadreel.

“You’re part of our pack now,” breathed Gadreel. “You’re ours. We’ll take care of you. We’ll never let anything happen to you.”

Balthazar whined softly, submissively, but it wasn’t a frightened sound; it was a sound of relief and appreciation and trust. Balthazar couldn’t remember the last time he’d trusted anyone outside of Hannah.

Gadreel responded immediately with the deep, comforting rumble of a caring lead alpha. His whole chest vibrated with the noise and Balthazar couldn’t help but smile as the vibrations passed into him. Lost in the moment, Gadreel slowly rubbed his chin against Balthazar’s head, transferring his scent onto the smaller alpha.

For a second, Balthazar froze in panic, but he soon relaxed and leaned into Gadreel’s scent marking, purring contentedly when Gadreel began rumbling again. Gadreel’s other paw slipped around him as his hind legs also wrapped around him and Balthazar soon found himself pressed flush against the other alpha, cuddling each other tightly as they scent marked and rumbled or purred at one another.
He couldn’t believe his own courage.

“You’re always welcome in this shelter,” whispered Gadreel. “Even when you don’t have nightmares, you’re always welcome to sleep with us.”

Balthazar’s heart did something strange. He scented Gadreel’s throat.

“Why are you being so nice to me?” He mumbled. “I’ve treated you atrociously.”

“You’re hurting,” murmured Gadreel as if that answered everything, so Balthazar whimpered again, nudging the other alpha’s chin with his head.

Gadreel chuckled quietly and began scent marking him once more.

“Rumble for me?” Asked Balthazar shyly and Gadreel smiled and did as asked, the vibrations shooting through Balthazar and relaxing him to his core as he closed his eyes.

“I can tell you were a lead alpha once,” he yawned softly. “A good one. Kind. Caring.”

Gadreel raised an eyebrow. “How did you figure that out?”

Balthazar shrugged and snuggled deeper into Gadreel’s body as Hannah frowned grumpily in her sleep and latched tightly onto her mate, burrowing into his fur.

“You just… seem like that type,” whispered Balthazar. He paused. “Were you a leader once?”

Gadreel nodded slowly. “I was. Of a fairly small pack.”

Balthazar flicked an ear. “What happened?”

 “…They left me to die one Winter after a fight with a rival pack.”

Balthazar stiffened before growling softly. “They were idiots.” He squeezed the other alpha gently. “Our gain.”

Gadreel’s throat made a surprised noise before he began nuzzling Balthazar’s ears.

“You’re always welcome in my shelter too,” whispered Balthazar after a little while. “You don’t have to sleep alone either.”

Gadreel smiled. “Be careful, I might never leave.”

Balthazar smirked. “Maybe I don’t want you to.”

Gadreel blinked at that. “…Maybe I don’t want to either,” he said carefully.

 “…Maybe I feel safe around you,” confessed Balthazar, all humour suddenly faded.

 “…I’m flattered.”

Balthazar didn’t even know he was holding his breath until Gadreel gently squeezed him. All the tension and anxiety suddenly flooded out of him as he closed his eyes and let Gadreel hold him. He wasn’t sure where all this courage to sleep beside another alpha had come from but he knew the last thing he wanted to do was leave Gadreel’s shelter.

“Sleep,” murmured Gadreel tenderly as Hannah sighed softly at her dream. “We’ll both be here
when you wake up.”

A smile crawled across Balthazar’s face. He liked that idea.

** * * *

Gabriel and Castiel scowled at their lovers before turning to each other unhappily. Dean and Sam had been miserable all last evening and all morning ever since their talk with John. Even the pups hadn’t been able to cheer them up and both Samandriel and Ben were beginning to grow worried by the Winchesters’ depressed attitudes.

“I don’t understand why you’re listening to him,” huffed Cas. “Neither of you wish Adam any ill health; in fact, you set out to help him. Why are you suddenly convinced you want him to suffer what you did when you were his age?”

Dean shook his head slowly. “We don’t want him to suffer, Cas. The problem is we don’t want Dad to play favourites, even if we don’t realise it. Why was Dad our first suspect? Anyone could be abusing Adam and they might not even be from this pack, but because Dad beat us when we were pups, we suddenly want our other brother to go through the same thing because that’s only fair. We’re still jealous of Adam, if even only subconsciously and Dad hit the nail on the head when he said we’re trying to find fault in him.”

Castiel frowned in confusion. “…So, you believe you’ve been unfair in questioning your father because you’re biased about his past and you think you’re looking for something to blame him for because he hurt you when you were younger, but hasn’t done the same to Adam?”

Dean nodded hesitantly and Cas stared at him incredulously.

“You realise how ridiculous that sounds?”

“Is it really that ridiculous?” Asked Sam quietly, head on his paws as he watched the rest of the pack wander about the camp. “We’ve already admitted we were jealous of Adam before. Maybe we never got over it.” Sam shrugged numbly. “Maybe we do want him to hurt.”

Gabriel narrowed his eyes. “Or maybe your father’s just very good at deflecting interrogations. Tell me, when you asked if he was abusing Adam, was his first response a clear ‘no’?”

Dean and Sam glanced at each other before shaking their heads. Gabriel’s lips drew into a thin line.

“I don’t know about you guys, but if someone accused me of beating someone the way Adam’s been and I hadn’t done it, my first response would be an indignantly yelled ‘no’.”

Sam closed his eyes. “But he was hurt. Dad was upset we chose to accuse him of beating Adam even though he’s told us multiple times he’s sorry for the times he hurt us. He’s right; we’re letting his past bias our judgement of him and unfairly accusing him of harming Adam.”

Gabriel and Castiel gaped at both Winchesters.

“Guys! There is a reason he’s your number one suspect,” hissed Gabriel. “He abused you when you were younger. Suddenly, Adam, his other kid, is being abused. That’s not being biased, that’s called using common sense! You were right to question him and what a surprise, he didn’t outright deny
beating Adam!”

Dean scowled. “Look, you don’t get it. You weren’t there. He’s really upset; he thought we wanted him to leave the pack. Everything he said about us was right.” Dean closed his eyes wearily. “What kind of leaders are we if we can’t separate our emotions from our duties?”

“Your father is manipulating you,” argued Cas. “He’s hiding something and I’m surprised you can’t see that. Adam is terrified of him and whenever you question your father about it, he finds a way to take advantage of your insecurities. Your fears are far from the truth and they’ve been planted in your heads by your father. You are not the wolves he says you are.”

Sam and Dean tensed in restrained anger.

“He’s not manipulating us,” huffed Dean. “He’s pointing out the truths we don’t want to hear. We need to start facing them. The pack deserves better.”

“Adam deserves better,” hissed Gabriel. “Better than the abuse he’s facing at your father’s claws. When are you going to see that your father knows exactly how to get what he wants?”

Sam scowled. “And what is it he wants? What can he possibly gain from pointing out that we’re biased in our questioning?”

Gabriel deflated slightly. “I don’t know. But he’s playing you two like a fiddle. Every conversation with him has you two doubting yourselves. When are you going to stand up to him?”

“Enough,” warned Dean. “You don’t understand what’s going on. You’re making accusations without knowing all the facts and the truth is Dad was right about us. If we weren’t so intent on putting up a wall between him and us, maybe we could’ve been a family again. Maybe we could’ve accepted Adam as family.”

“Dean! When John first came here, he threatened Sam and me! He threatened me! He demeaned you both for letting Novaks into the pack – do you really think he’s concerned about being a good father? About being a family?” Cas finally snapped.

Dean bristled. “He apologised for all that. When are you gonna forgive him? People make mistakes! He can’t keep apologising for stuff he regrets!”

“But he’s fine with belittling you two at every turn? All the comments about being a sorry excuse for a lead alpha, all the comments about being less important because you’re an omega? He doesn’t seem to regret any of them,” scoffed Gabriel.

“He doesn’t mean anything by them,” ground out Sam. “We were overreacting. He doesn’t mean to insult us. They’re just passing comments.”

“And I’m certain he didn’t mean to hurt Adam all those times he hit him or clawed him or bit him,” growled Cas. “You said yourself you could smell John on him yesterday! That isn’t a coincidence!”

“Of course he smells like Dad! He’s his kid!” Snapped Sam.

“So are you! It didn’t stop him from nearly killing you both when you were younger and it’s not going to stop him with Adam now!” Cas hissed, making both Sam and Dean recoil in shock.

“He’s changed,” Dean said after a few moments, voice deceptively calm. “Now stop talking about this.”
“No, he’s not,” scowled Gabriel. “He’s manipulating you and you need to stand up to him.”

“I said *enough*,” growled Dean but Gabriel shook his head.

“He’s hiding something. Adam’s still hurting. Stop blaming yourselves and do something about it!”

“Gabriel,” Dean warned dangerously, but Gabriel just frowned harder.

“He’s twisting things so you blame yourselves. You’ve not done anything wrong! In fact, you’ve done everything right and it sounds like he’s worried you may be onto him. Stop concerning yourself with what he says and get the truth out of him!”

Before anyone had time to blink, Dean had Gabriel pinned on his back; teeth bared, hackles raised and a low snarl rumbling through his throat. His scent radiated fury and his teeth were far too close to Gabriel’s neck for the older alpha’s liking.

Gabriel froze, eyes wide as flashbacks of Michael and Lucifer practically tearing him apart assaulted his mind. Would Dean kill him? Would he just maul him for disrespecting his leadership? He could smell his own fear as he automatically bared his throat to show his compliance.

“I said: *stop,*” growled Dean softly before stepping off him and stalking towards the opposite side of the camp, Sam in tow.

For a few seconds, Gabriel couldn’t move. His pulse was racing and he couldn’t stop his scent from flooding with fear. Why hadn’t Dean punished him? Michael would have. If he’d ignored an order from Michael… he shuddered.

“Gabe?” Breathed a small voice and the golden alpha flicked his gaze to his right to see Cas staring at him, horrified. Gabriel gulped and slowly rolled to his paws, chest aching when he realised neither Sam nor Dean would look at them. It hurt that Sam hadn’t defended him, instead siding with his brother. Then again, he had disobeyed an order... he shuddered.

“Gabe?” Breathed a small voice and the golden alpha flicked his gaze to his right to see Cas staring at him, horrified. Gabriel gulped and slowly rolled to his paws, chest aching when he realised neither Sam nor Dean would look at them. It hurt that Sam hadn’t defended him, instead siding with his brother. Then again, he had disobeyed an order... he shuddered.

Castiel shoved his face into Gabriel’s neck, startling the alpha for a moment before he relaxed with a quiet sigh.

“I didn’t expect that,” he admitted softly and Cas exhaled a little shakily.

“I doubt he would’ve done anything untoward, but for a moment there… he reminded me of…”

Gabriel closed his eyes. “I know.” He nuzzled Cas’ head, as much in search of his own comfort as he was offering it to his little brother.

“Uncle Gabe?”

Cas and Gabe froze in horror and turned slowly to find Samandriel and Ben staring up at them with wide, frightened eyes. They glanced over to Dean nervously before racing forwards and burying their faces in Gabriel’s leg.

The older alpha quickly dropped to the floor and tugged them into his chest, grimacing at their tear-stained faces whilst Cas settled beside him.

“Does… does Dean want to hurt you?” Whimpered Samandriel and Gabriel managed a small smile despite the twinge of fear still swirling inside him.

“No. He’s just… upset at the moment. I guess I said the wrong thing to him.”
Ben frowned. “We heard you talking. It’s about his dad, right? You were trying to make him and Sam feel better but they didn’t believe you.”

Cas and Gabe blinked. They hadn’t even realised the pups were listening. Last they checked, they were playing with the girls in the centre of the camp.

“Uh… yeah. Sort of,” said Gabriel eventually and Samandriel scowled and snuggled further into his uncle.

“I don’t like John. He’s mean and scary and he hurt Sam and Dean when they were little.”

Gabriel held them tighter. “We don’t really like him much either.”

Ben looked up at him. “You’re not gonna leave, are you? I’m sure Dean didn’t mean to scare you.”

Gabriel chuckled and licked Ben’s head. “Nah, I’m not gonna leave. You’re my family, right? Can’t abandon my family. Even if my brother-in-law is a bit of a drama queen.” He whispered the last bit with a playful wink and Ben’s tail wiggled as he snuggled into Gabriel happily.

“Good. Don’t want you to leave.”

“Neither do I,” piped up Samandriel. “You’re the best uncle ever and I don’t want to lose you ever again.” He buried his face in Gabriel’s chest and the older alpha’s heart warmed as he held the pups close.

Castiel leaned into his side and Gabriel smiled, nerves beginning to calm.

Just then, John returned from his walk and paused on the outskirts of the camp. He glanced over everyone before his gaze flicked to the irritated Sam and Dean and then to Castiel and Gabriel on the opposite side of the camp. His lips twitched into a brief smile before it faded upon noticing Adam playing with Claire and Alex. He began making his way over to his youngest son and when Adam spotted him, he flinched and stepped away from the younger pups, limping slightly on his injured leg.

Gabriel saw red and judging by the way Castiel had stiffened beside him, the omega had been watching him for a while too.

Samandriel and Ben glanced up at them curiously before following their gazes to John. Samandriel cocked his head when his father and uncle made to stand.

“Are you going to yell at John?” He asked almost excitedly and Castiel nodded curtly before marching over. Gabriel licked both pups’ heads and quickly caught up to his brother.

“Can we have a word?” Asked Castiel stiffly as John reached Adam. The beta glanced up at him gratefully as John’s gaze flicked between omega and alpha suspiciously.

“If it’s the same words I shared with my sons yesterday, maybe you should speak to them,” he dismissed, but Gabriel narrowed his eyes.

“Different words. Promise.”

John cocked an eyebrow but eventually nodded and followed Gabriel and Castiel out of the camp. He seemed a little surprised when they didn’t stop on the outskirts, instead continuing deeper into the forest until they were out of sight and earshot of the camp.
When they stopped, he raised an eyebrow.

“Well? What was it you dragged me out here for?”

Castiel suddenly growled threateningly and took a step towards John, eyes flashing with rage.

“Back off from Sam and Dean,” he snarled. “And keep away from Adam. Nobody needs your demeaning comments and if we ever catch you raising a paw to Adam, you’d better pray you can outrun us.”

John’s eyes widened in shock before he bristled and snarled warningly at Castiel.

“I don’t know who you think you’re talking to, but you’d better show me some respect or I’ll-”

“Or you’ll what?” Sneered Gabriel, coming to stand by his brother’s side, scent emanating waves of anger. “Hurt us? Beat us like you do your sons? Just try it, John. I can guarantee we’ll fight back unlike your usual victims.”

John snarled at them, alpha intimidation tactics coming into play as he bared his teeth and flooded his scent with outraged alpha hormones.

“You’re obviously deluded. I don’t know what Sam and Dean see in either of you. I don’t beat my sons and I don’t take orders from a couple of Novaks.” He shook his head in disgust. “I hope my sons realise what a mistake they’ve made in pursuing you. They deserve far better.”

“They deserve a better father too,” growled Castiel.

John tensed. “You’re one to talk. Tell me, where’s Samandriel’s other parent? Oh wait, he was a mistake, wasn’t he? Now you’ve forced my eldest son into looking after him because you were a whore. At least my sons were planned.”

“At least I love my son,” growled Castiel.

John snarled and took a step towards him but Gabriel was quick to jump to his brother’s defence.

“Lay a claw on him and you’ll learn why the Novaks have a violent reputation,” he warned, making John pause.

“I wonder how Sam and Dean would react at knowing you’re standing here threatening me? Imagine the heartbreak at realising their lovers want to start a fight with their father. Are you really willing to betray them like this? They want to spend the rest of their lives with you and you repay them like this? By threatening their only living parent?” John asked incredulously.

Gabriel snorted. “Yeah. That’s not gonna work on us. You can’t manipulate us like you do your sons. Now shut up and listen,” snapped Gabriel, eyes blazing with hatred.

“If you upset Sam or Dean once more; if you make them doubt themselves or worry that they’re not good enough for the pack, then you’ll either leave the pack willingly or we’ll force you out kicking and screaming.” Gabriel suddenly stalked closer until he was in John’s personal space.

“However, if you ever hurt Adam again, I promise you won’t make it out of the pack. Do we understand each other?”

John looked furious. “You trying to start something, boy? ‘Cos I’m all for kicking your ass right now.”
"If you wish to speak to the last alpha that threatened my family, you’ll find her rotting corpse two hours North of here,” said Castiel lowly as Gabriel returned to his side.

John stared for a second before scowling.

“I am their father,” he stated slowly as if this was going to make the brothers back down.

“And we are their lovers,” stated Cas just as slowly. “And we’d appreciate you keeping your insulting comments to yourself.”

“We don’t know what your game is,” said Gabriel. “But if we find out it involves hurting any pack member in any way at all, nothing on this Earth will stop us from hunting you down.”

“You talk tough for an omega with a knot and a runaway slut,” snorted John.

Both brothers tensed but they knew they couldn’t lash out, no matter how desperately they wanted to. They were already on thin ice with Sam and Dean.

“Remember what we’ve discussed,” growled Cas. “Next time, we won’t be so patient.”

John chuckled. “Once again, tough talk, but I don’t see any action, omega.”

“We could say the same to you, knothead,” snarked Gabriel as he began to follow Cas towards the camp. He hated it when people referred to his brother as ‘omega’, as if it was something to be ashamed of.

John smirked as if he’d won and Gabriel was desperate to slug him one in the face. He barely managed to restrain himself, especially when John trotted past them and shoved Castiel’s shoulder with a scoffed “Stupid bitch”.

When they returned to the camp, Gabriel and Castiel felt more infuriated than when they’d left.

* * *

“Gabe?”

Gabriel lifted his head, keeping a tight grip around Castiel as he tucked Sam andriel and Ben into his chest. It was late; the sky had been dark for a long while and everyone had retired to bed a couple of hours ago.

He and Castiel had chosen to bunk down together whilst their lovers were still angry with them. Neither of them had been able to get to sleep, instead chatting softly about times gone by as they watched the pups nestle down.

Gabriel turned to the shelter’s entrance to find Dean gazing at him apologetically, Sam by his side and both brothers’ ears flat against their heads with tails tucked between their legs.

Gabriel cocked an eyebrow as Castiel flicked his gaze to the younger wolves.

“I’m sorry,” Dean said softly and he sounded like he truly meant it. “I overreacted. I had no right to take my emotions out on you. I definitely had no right to attack you.”
Neither of us did,” whispered Sam, gaze low. “We shouldn’t have yelled at you. Either of you. You were only trying to help and we were acting like brats. We’re both really sorry.”

Dean shuffled his paws. “We’ll figure something out with Adam. Maybe… maybe we can talk to Dad again in the morning? We just… please don’t be mad at us,” murmured Dean, the last part sounding suspiciously like a whine. “We never meant to upset you. We’re so sorry…”

Gabriel and Castiel glanced at each other before small, relieved smiles slipped over their faces. They carefully slid out of the shelter, making sure not to wake the pups, and tugged their lovers into warm hugs.

Dean and Sam slumped in relief and buried their faces into their respective lovers’ necks.

“We’re really sorry,” mumbled Sam and Gabe licked his cheek sweetly.

“Yeah, well… maybe we were a little too pushy. I know if our brothers were to show up, I’d have a hard time facing them too.”

Castiel hummed in agreement and snuggled into Dean’s fur, baring his neck to let his alpha scent him. Dean whimpered softly at the show of trust and held his mate close.

After a few moments Dean turned to Gabriel.

“Doesn’t excuse what I did,” he said quietly. “I shouldn’t have attacked you.”

“It was hardly an attack,” huffed Gabriel lightly. “And you’re head alpha, so…”

Dean frowned and shook his head. “Being leader doesn’t grant me the right to bully my pack members. Doesn’t give me the right to intimidate my family. I’m so sorry, Gabe. I hope you can forgive me.”

Gabriel blinked, stunned by the ‘family’ comment. He slowly pulled away from Sam and stretched out a paw towards Dean in invitation.

“Come here, kiddo.”

Dean slunk towards him, clearly ashamed as he kept his head low, but once he reached the smaller alpha, Gabriel dragged him into a tight hug and tucked the younger alpha’s head under his chin.

Dean soon sagged and pressed further into the older alpha’s hold.

“I’m sorry,” he whimpered quietly and Gabriel nuzzled his head soothingly.

“Hey, do I look hurt to you? No harm, no foul.”

“You were terrified,” whispered Dean. “I could smell it.”

Gabriel grimaced. “Yeah, well… not your fault. My fears are thanks to my darling older brothers and their affinity for using me as a punching bag.”

“The more I hear about your brothers, the more I want to roundhouse kick them in the face,” muttered Dean, making Gabriel grin. “But that doesn’t excuse the fact that it was my fault you were terrified. If I hadn’t pinned you to the ground, you wouldn’t have been reminded of your brothers,” mumbled Dean.

“You’re nothing like my older brothers,” sighed Gabriel. “And please don’t beat yourself up over it.
You already have enough on your plate without worrying about losing your temper with me. I’ve already forgiven you so just forget about it, okay? It doesn’t matter and you never did any harm. I know you were frustrated and upset and I’m partly to blame for that.”

Gabe nuzzled Dean’s head again and the younger alpha relaxed and butted his chin affectionately. Gabriel smiled and let the other alpha pull away.

“Thanks, Gabe,” mumbled Dean and the golden alpha winked playfully.

They turned to their lovers to find both omegas having their own cuddle session, with Castiel’s head tucked under Sam’s chin and Sam tugging the smaller male into his chest as he licked his head in apology. Castiel scented at Sam’s neck with an amused smile before rubbing his head under his chin in silent question. Sam immediately began transferring his scent over to Cas and the smaller omega sighed happily and leaned into his friend.

“We could always have a sleep over,” Gabriel suggested teasingly as he leaned on Dean. “Y’know, since it seems like they’re not gonna separate any time soon.”

“Because you’ve not been draped over Dean for the past few minutes,” muttered Cas drily.

Gabriel poked his tongue out at his brother but Dean tilted his head in contemplation before shrugging.

“Alright.”

Gabriel blinked in surprise at the other alpha. “Wait, seriously?”

Dean tilted his head in amusement. “You sound shocked. It’s not as though the pack doesn’t form a huge cuddle pile in Winter when the snow and ice and harsh winds start battering our bodies.”

Gabriel’s eyes widened. “…Cuddle pile?”

Sam chuckled quietly as Dean grinned.

“You’ve not spent a Winter with us yet,” he realised. He shook his head, laughter dancing in his eyes. “Hope you don’t mind PDA. Winter’s when we start getting cosy with each other.”

Gabriel whipped around to face Cas. “…Cuddle pile?”

Castiel chuckled and nodded. “And we’ll probably hit our heat and rut cycles exactly in the middle of it all.”

Dean and Sam groaned in remembrance of last Winter’s heat disaster.

Gabriel gaped at them all. “…Cuddle pile?”

Dean laughed and tugged the other alpha in for a bone-crushing hug before dragging him to the floor and draping himself over him.

“Bet you thought I was one of those macho, don’t-hug-me types,” Dean teased and Gabriel stared up at him wide-eyed.

“Uh… yeah. Kind of. You don’t exactly strike me as the kind of alpha that likes… cuddles.”

“Wait ‘til you see Benny,” snorted Dean before settling down into Gabriel’s soft fur. “He’s gonna love your fluffiness.”
Sam snickered at Gabriel’s disturbed expression as he guided Castiel towards their brothers. The omegas soon settled against the alphas and the four were practically sprawled over one another like a litter of new-born, uncoordinated puppies.

Gabriel’s tail began beating the ground. Is this what it felt like to have a real family? Brothers and a lover who actually cared for him and each other? He could get used to this. It was far better than the 'family' he had in the city.

He startled when two sets of tiny paws clambered over his back. He grinned when Samandriel and Ben snuggled into the centre of the little cuddle pile, curling around one another as they fell asleep, safe and warm amongst the blankets of multicoloured fur. Dean chuckled softly as Cas arced a paw around them and Sam smirked.

"You okay, Gabe?" Sam murmured and Gabriel quickly nodded and nestled into the body under his head. He couldn't remember the last time he'd felt this happy and loved by so many people.

With Dean draped over his back, Cas under his chin, Sam wedged into his side and the pups in the middle of it all, Gabriel finally closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

Plot, plot and more plot (with a bit of fluff on the side) ;)

Chapter End Notes
Balthazar could feel the tension and anxiety slowly draining from him as the days passed. He felt more relaxed around the camp; around the other members and although he still struggled around alphas, his fears weren’t nearly as strong as they once were. In fact, he was pretty proud of how confident he was growing around Gadreel.

He smiled more and he began to notice his sarcastic personality returning. For once, he felt hope; he wasn’t terrified of everyone anymore and even though he sometimes had lapses into his submissive behaviour, the pack was patient with him. He particularly liked Meg and Crowley and they seemed to enjoy his budding personality if their playful teasing was anything to go by. He’d even managed to speak to Dean once without dropping his gaze.

However, Gadreel and Hannah were the most helpful. It was a far cry from the relationship they had originally shared and although Balthazar still had the odd occasion where he was jealous of Gadreel, they were becoming far fewer and longer between.

It probably helped that they’d been sleeping together every night.

Ever since Gadreel’s heart to heart with him in his shelter a week ago, they’d taken it upon themselves to never let each other sleep alone. It was possibly one of the best decisions they’d ever made and Balthazar was beginning to see Gadreel’s scent as something comforting and safe when he was having a bad day. Gadreel was all too happy to help out and Hannah would merely grin at the pair whenever she caught them snuggling in the mornings or evenings. It didn’t happen often because usually she was between them, but sometimes they would drape a paw over each other or curl a tail around one another and Hannah would comment how adorable they were.

Currently, Gadreel was speaking to Dean back at the camp about something important that Balthazar didn’t quite catch, whilst he and Hannah had a stroll through the forest. It was relieving to be alone; the camp made him a little nervous at times despite his attempts to fit in with them and the peacefulness of being away allowed him to clear his head.

“I’m proud of you, Balt,” hummed Hannah softly as she leaned against him. “You’re doing so well to cope with all the changes and I still can’t believe you’re alright with Gadreel being a part of us. You’re so brave and selfless.” She licked his cheek adoringly. “I think I love you a little more every day.”

Balthazar smiled. “I could never make you choose between us. Besides, he’s not that bad of a guy once you get to know him, I suppose.” He winked and she giggled. “And you help me a lot with all these changes. You get me through the days and I hope maybe some time in the future, I won’t be so nervous around everyone. Maybe I’ll even be normal.”

She chuckled. “You’ll never be normal, love,” she teased and he nipped her ear in reprimand. She pressed into him again and tangled their tails.

“Something tells me I’m not the only one helping you,” she murmured after a while. “You and Gadreel are getting closer.”

Balthazar was quiet for a few moments before nodding. “He’s… very kind. Patient. He’s certainly
dismantling my view of alphas. He’s not at all what I expected.”

Hannah chuckled. “Welcome to my world.”

Balthazar raised a surprised eyebrow. “Oh?”

“What? You don’t think I was head over heels for him at the start, do you? I was terrified of him. I thought he was like Hastur and Asmodeus. Thought he was just trying to get close to me so he could have his way with me. Never entered my mind that he could just want to help.”

Balthazar blinked and processed that. He’d never thought about Hannah having to face the same fears as he’d faced when first meeting the pack. It had probably been worse for her now that he thought about it; she’d thought he was dead and had faced the Winchester pack alone. At least Balthazar had Hannah.

He tilted his head with a soft noise of realisation and she smiled knowingly at him before licking his muzzle.

“Where are we going, anyway?” She asked.

Balthazar smiled. “I said Gadreel could meet us at the river once he was finished. Thought we could catch a few salmon; it’ll be the last time we see them for a while.” Once the river froze over during the Winter months, the salmon wouldn’t be able to access their migration destination and the wolves would lose a valuable source of food.

Balthazar just thought it was fun to try to catch the salmon.

Hannah grinned and nodded, trotting after her mate happily. She was always happy these days and Balthazar couldn’t say he wished anything was different.

Once they reached the river, they spent half an hour trying (and mostly failing) to catch the slippery fish leaping out of the water. The river was cold and Hannah and Balthazar decided to warm up on the bank by huddling together and waiting for the third member of their party to arrive as they watched the fish swim by.

A sound from behind them caught their attention and they glanced around, expecting to find Gadreel trotting towards them.

What they actually saw was a familiar, large black wolf sporting a toothy grin and more than a few battle scars.

Hannah gasped in horror as Balthazar leapt to his feet and shoved his mate behind him despite the fact that his ears were flat and his heart was racing. He heard Hannah whimper and the scent of a second wolf drifted over from behind him.

Hastur and Asmodeus.

He wondered where their pack was.

“Balty, Hannah… long time no see,” sneered the muscular black wolf they knew as Hastur. The big brown alpha behind them chuckled cruelly when Hannah and Balthazar flinched.

“We’ve missed you,” hummed Hastur as he stalked slowly towards them. “The whole pack has. Imagine their delight when we bring you home.”
Balthazar growled warningly, fur bristling. “We’re not going anywhere with you.”

“Ooo feisty,” laughed Hastur, his voice nasally and grating. “I’m afraid you’re not getting a choice, lover.”

Balthazar winced and backed up slightly as the musty stench of the black wolf hit his nose, bringing back memories of years passed.

“We’re on our way to find some new turf,” said Asmodeus as he advanced on them. “We’d love it if you could join us. You could be the entertainment. We’re getting bored with the toys we have.”

“We don’t answer to you anymore,” spat Hannah, sounding more confident than she felt. “We have a new pack.”

Hastur raised an eyebrow. “A new pack? Do tell, little omega.” He prowled towards them with a smirk.

“We’re part of the Winchester pack,” she hissed. “So you’d better back off because they won’t take too kindly to you assaulting two of their members.”

Hastur chuckled. “And where is your new pack, hm? You sure you’re not lying to us, sweetheart?”

Balthazar snarled when the commander got a little too close for comfort.

“Stay away from her,” he warned. Hastur chuckled.

“Or you’ll what?”

Balthazar narrowed his eyes and tried to make himself smell as intimidating as possible. He didn’t come all this way and face all his fears of alphas and the rest of the Winchester pack to have his newfound safety snatched away from him.

Hastur seemed less-than-impressed by the display. He raised an eyebrow.

“Do you need to be reminded of your place, whore?”

Balthazar flinched at the word but he gathered strength from Hannah’s outraged snarl.

“My place is with the Winchesters and my mate,” snapped Balthazar.

Suddenly, he found himself hitting the ground with a hard thump. The air raced out of his lungs as Hastur pinned him to the ground and slammed his paw into his throat, choking him.

Hannah cried out in alarm, but her voice tapered off into a gag as Asmodeus tackled her to the ground with a cruel grin. He clawed her cheek to shut her up.

“Your place is under me,” whispered Hastur, making Balthazar’s eyes widen in fear and he yelped as he was clawed hard across the face. Then, a set of teeth clamped onto his neck, keeping him in place as Hastur positioned himself in a familiar way.

Agony blossomed in Balthazar’s neck and his heart sunk when he heard Hannah scream in frustration as she was manhandled into a presenting pose. Asmodeus bit down on her neck and she whined at the pain.

Furious, Balthazar kicked out at Hastur, smirking in satisfaction when the alpha grunted as his leg made contact with his gut, but Hastur merely locked his jaw tighter around Balthazar’s neck and
restrained his forepaws as he began grinding their bodies together.

Hannah whimpered as Asmodeus began rutting against her and she struggled in vain to escape his clutches, but he was strong and determined and she barely moved an inch as he dug his claws into her sides.

Balthazar yelped as Hastur began pressing at his entrance and he wriggled desperately but to no avail. The larger alpha chuckled at his squirming and Balthazar felt a tongue lapping at the blood trickling from his neck. He shuddered in disgust and tried to shake the other alpha loose.

He whined brokenly when Hastur finally pushed inside him and he heard Hannah sobbing out his name behind him. His heart shattered when her sobs trailed into pained whimpers as Asmodeus claimed her and he was powerless to do anything; practically paralysed by Hastur’s fatal grip on his neck. He could easily kill Balthazar if he wanted to and the smaller alpha was helpless to fight back against the restraint.

He closed his eyes in defeat as Hastur’s thrusts roughened.

Suddenly, Hastur screamed in agony and his weight was lifted from Balthazar’s body. Balthazar looked around in shock to find Gadreel tearing into the black alpha, gaze blazing with fury and scent swimming in protectiveness and hatred and murder.

Whilst Gadreel wasn’t as muscular as Hastur, the black alpha had no chance against his enemy as Gadreel sliced into him with tooth and claw, blood spattering over the ground. He shook Hastur around like a rag doll before throwing him to the floor and laying into him once more.

Asmodeus quickly shoved Hannah away to attack the new alpha, but Gadreel was too quick for him and pounced on the brown alpha, a loud snarl rocketing through his chest as he systematically wore Asmodeus down.

He didn’t even register his own injuries (however few of them there were) and Balthazar watched in horror as Hastur growled and stumbled to his feet before ploughing into the grey and white wolf.

The three battled viciously and neither Balthazar nor Hannah had ever seen Gadreel fight so mercilessly.

Claws tore into flesh and teeth clamped onto limbs, blood flying and snarls and yelps punctuating the air in sharp bursts and in a matter of minutes, Gadreel had Hastur’s throat between his teeth. In one swift move, the black alpha’s windpipe crumpled, his jugular sliced and his cold, limp body slumped to the ground in front of Gadreel’s paws.

Asmodeus stared at his leader’s corpse in shock before his fearful gaze flicked up to a seething Gadreel.

“They’re mine,” Gadreel hissed, fur bristling and blood dripping down his muzzle.

Asmodeus took a shaky step backwards and Gadreel immediately retaliated with one forwards, teeth bared.

The brown alpha took a little too long in deciding to run and Gadreel tackled him, clawing at his face and chest and snapping his jaws at any body part he could reach. Asmodeus kicked out powerfully, sending Gadreel stumbling and before the grey and white alpha could have another round with him, Asmodeus scrambled to his paws and sprinted away.

For a moment, it looked like Gadreel would follow him, but then he turned and rushed over to the
wide-eyed Balthazar and Hannah. It was easy to see he’d inflicted more damage to Hastur and Asmodeus than they had him. If anything, it looked like he’d merely engaged in a rough sparring session.

He paused before he reached them, unsure if his presence would frighten them, especially with the rage and hatred still cloying up his scent, but it looked extremely hard for him to restrain himself.

He shifted from paw to paw, a whine in the back of his throat as he glanced over them both.

“Are you… are you two… okay?” He choked out, clearly desperate to scent them but uncertain if he was allowed.

Within seconds they were pressed into his sides, rubbing against him and cleaning the blood from his coat and soothing his wounds.

He exhaled shakily and tried to pull them nearer.

“Mine,” he muttered to himself and Balthazar felt no need to correct him as he snuggled closer.

“Thank you,” whispered Hannah around a soft sob and she pushed her face into his chest. “Thank you,” she breathed again. Nobody had ever tried to save them before, let alone succeeded.

He licked her head and muzzle, frowning at the gash across her cheek. He lapped at it gently before scrutinising Balthazar.

The smaller alpha was surprised when Gadreel carefully licked the wound over his muzzle, dulling the sting and once he was finished, Balthazar’s heart did something weird. He cautiously licked at the scratches over Gadreel’s face and when the other alpha didn’t recoil in disgust, he wedged his head under Gadreel’s chin with a quiet whine.

Gadreel tugged both smaller wolves closer and nuzzled at them determinedly.

Balthazar glanced at Hastur’s body blankly.

“You did say you’d kill him if you ever saw him,” he mumbled.

Gadreel growled softly and licked Balthazar’s head.

“I keep my promises,” he whispered and Balthazar shivered as some sort of… thrill shot through his body.

Hannah and Balthazar pressed their noses into his neck and Gadreel rumbled, his scent growing protective and possessive to the point where all the smaller wolves wanted to do was cuddle into him and never let go.

“Let’s go home,” whispered Gadreel and Hannah and Balthazar refused to leave his sides as they walked. Not that Gadreel complained.

Once they returned home, Gadreel ushered the pair into his shelter before anyone got a chance to question their appearances. He would encourage them to see Jody later on, but for now he was going to be selfish. He didn’t think they’d mind.

He rolled onto his back and they quickly lay on him, practically purring as he wrapped his paws around them. He traded a few frantic kisses with Hannah as they snuggled into him and smiled when Balthazar nuzzled at his neck.
His scent and state of mind began to calm down now that he knew his friends were safe and after a few minutes, all three of them began to relax, nuzzling and scenting at each other until they were fully calm.

When they finally settled down, coming to terms with what had happened Balthazar took Gadreel off guard by gently licking his cheek.

“Thank you,” he whispered sincerely when Gadreel turned to stare at him. “For saving us.”

“I wish I’d been there sooner,” murmured Gadreel, but Hannah shook her head.

“You protected us,” she breathed. “You stopped them and you protected us. Nobody’s ever done that before.”

Gadreel frowned and growled quietly at that before licking Hannah’s neck, where Asmodeus had sunk his teeth into the flesh.

“I’ll always protect you,” he promised. “Both of you.”

Balthazar licked his cheek lightly again and Gadreel raised an eyebrow at him in surprise. The smaller wolf looked embarrassed but he once again kissed Gadreel’s cheek and the larger alpha tentatively lapped at the wound in Balthazar's neck.

Balthazar’s face heated and he buried it in Gadreel’s throat as Hannah shared a shocked glance with the larger alpha.

Gadreel held them both closer.

* * *

The pups laughed as Sam and Dean chased them around, growling playfully as they tried to catch them. Eventually, Sam wrapped a paw underneath Alex and she yelped as he held her in the air with a smirk. She wriggled in hopes of escape but had to admit defeat when Sam gently lay on her, challenging the others to steal her off him.

Claire and Samandriel charged at Sam whilst Ben was almost snatched up by Dean and when the pair ploughed into the giant omega, Sam rolled onto his side with a dramatic groan, allowing Alex to escape.

Adam chuckled at his brothers’ antics and grinned when Gabriel suddenly began chewing on his ear. He rolled onto his back and batted at the alpha when Gabriel straddled him and they tussled for a few minutes as Castiel smiled fondly at them both.

Play stopped when John padded over.

Adam shrunk in on himself slightly as his father glanced over them all and Gabriel tensed, lowering himself protectively over Adam without even realising what he was doing.

Sam and Dean straightened, faces blank as they slipped back into ‘Daddy’s little soldiers’ mode.

Castiel narrowed his eyes at John, fur bristling when his gaze landed on the pups.
“You kids look like you’re having fun,” John smiled at Samandriel and Ben. “Have room for one more?”

Samandriel and Ben shared a nervous glance, shuffling their paws awkwardly before the little black and white alpha finally shook his head.

“Um… we have a lesson, actually,” Samandriel murmured. “We have to go now.”

John raised an eyebrow. “You have lessons on a Saturday?”

Samandriel flinched. He’d forgotten it was Saturday.

“Yes. They have a history lesson with me,” growled Castiel softly, gesturing for both pups to join him. Samandriel and Ben raced over and rubbed their heads against the omega’s chest gratefully. They really didn’t like John and they were thankful Castiel had played along.

John tilted his head, clearly not buying the lie. “What’s the lesson about?”

Castiel shot him a withering glare. “Abusive parents of the twentieth century.”

He hiked his tail high into the air to signal the end of the conversation before ushering his pups off towards the other side of the camp, leaving John to stare after him in shock. Gabriel smirked as Sam and Dean’s eyes grew round with surprise. Even Adam looked like he was biting back a smile.

John slowly glanced to Alex and Claire and both pups looked at one another before sending John nervous grins.

“I think I just heard Jody shouting us,” said Alex as Claire nodded enthusiastically and before John got a chance to argue, the pair shot off towards the older beta.

John scowled. Gabriel’s smirk widened.

“I guess they didn’t want me to play,” muttered John as Sam and Dean glanced at him apologetically.

“Maybe you’re just not that great with kids,” offered Gabriel with a sharp smile and when John shot him a filthy glare, the smaller alpha merely grinned.

Adam bit back a laugh.

Sam and Dean turned to Gabriel disapprovingly but Gabriel feigned innocence with a shrug and wide eyes and the brothers rolled their eyes and focused on their father once more.

“I was wondering how Adam’s training was going,” said John as he sat down with a friendly smile that Gabriel wanted to wipe from his face. “Not heard his progress in a little while.”

Sam glanced at Adam fondly, making the beta’s tail wiggle.

“He’s doing really well. Quick learner. Fishing lessons are going great, hunting small game he’s a natural. Bigger game needs a little bit of work in that he needs to learn how to work as part of a team, but there aren’t too many problems there; it’s just experience and considering he’s in a new pack, the occasional fault is to be expected. Fighting lessons have been postponed for a little while until his leg gets better, but from what I can tell, he’s getting there. He can certainly defend himself now, but the attacking part needs a bit more practice.” Sam turned to his father. “I think Winter’s gonna challenge
him and stretch his skills.”

John nodded almost dismissively before glancing to Dean and when Sam’s face fell slightly, Gabriel had the urge to beat some respect into the older alpha.

“I was thinking in the next hunt, maybe Adam could try being on muscle? He’s been on chaser long enough, don’t you think?”

Sam frowned. “Yeah but… he’s good on chaser. What’s the point in moving him off if he’s actually good in the position he has? Might as well refine the skills he already has.”

“And prevent him from trying anything new?” Challenged John.

Sam’s frown deepened. “It’s not about preventing him from doing anything. He has skills as a chaser; why let them go to waste? He’s not exactly conventional muscle.”

“Neither are you,” shrugged John, reminding Sam once again that he was an omega and should have been more suited to chaser. Gabriel stiffened as Sam’s ears flattened.

“Yeah, well… I’m not exactly the conventional omega either.” He sounded subdued and almost sad and Gabriel’s was getting angrier by the second.

“I suppose not,” hummed John as if he hadn’t noticed how insecure Sam looked. “Anyway, isn’t Adam’s position your brother’s decision?”

Sam ducked his head and Gabriel saw red.

“Uh… yeah. Yeah, it is,” mumbled Sam defeatedly as he backed away a couple of steps.

Just as Gabriel was contemplating clawing John’s tongue out, Dean frowned and glanced back at his brother, nudging him forwards again with his hip.

“Actually, it’s Sam’s decision too. My brother’s point of view is very important to the choices I make and I have to agree with him on this. Adam is good on chaser and I see no reason to switch him over. Besides, it’s the safest place for him, especially with that bad leg. Maybe in time, I’ll reconsider but for now, I think chaser suits him.”

John didn’t look too pleased by the response but he nodded stiffly. “If you think it’s for the best, I won’t argue.”

“We do,” confirmed Dean and Sam managed a small smile at that. Gabriel could’ve kissed the younger alpha.

Suddenly, John frowned and tilted his head thoughtfully and Gabriel could already tell he wasn’t going to like what the guy was about to ask.

“So… if you and Sam disagree on something… whose choice is it then?” Asked John curiously and Dean shared a look with his brother.

“Well, we tend to talk things over until both of us agree or we can come to a compromise,” Dean said and John frowned.

“And if you can’t? What if you still don’t agree?”

Sam shifted uncomfortably. “Dean’s lead alpha. It’s his prerogative.”
John nodded slowly. “So, his decision wins out?”

Both Sam and Dean nodded stiffly.

“But that pretty much never happens,” argued Dean. “We always come to a compromise even if we don’t fully agree with each other.”

“But at the end of the day, your word is law,” stated John and Sam and Dean snapped their mouths shut as their father raised an eyebrow.

“Basically, you listen to Sam’s opinion when he agrees with you, but when he doesn’t, you make the decision without him? You include him when it suits you?” Asked John as his sons dropped their gazes.

“That’s not quite how it works…” began Sam weakly but when John waited patiently for him to explain, he found he didn’t have an argument.

“So, I was right? It’s always Dean’s decision?” Hummed John as his sons grimaced.

“Sam’s view is very important to me,” murmured Dean softly, wincing when his father snorted.

“Clearly.”

Adam frowned at his father, troubled and Gabriel decided he had heard enough.

“And did you listen to Mary when she disagreed with you?” He snapped, stepping away from Adam as he faced John full-on.

John stiffened and narrowed his eyes as Sam and Dean stared at Gabriel in shock.

“Of course I did,” he growled quietly. Gabriel smirked bitterly.

“And when you still couldn’t reach an agreement, whose decision won out? Yours or hers? Whose orders did the pack follow?”

John narrowed his eyes, silent for a few moments before finally grating out a clipped “Mine.”

Gabriel straightened triumphantly. “And did that mean her opinions were any less valid in your eyes? Did that mean her point of view didn’t matter, just because you were leader?”

John squared his jaw in aggravation. “No.”

“Then now you know how Dean feels about Sam’s opinions,” Gabriel sneered. “Maybe think next time before you start throwing around accusations.”

John looked livid but with Sam and Dean standing opposite him, Gabriel knew the older alpha wouldn’t try anything.

“Kindly keep my late mate out of your arguments,” growled John when he didn’t have a comeback and Gabriel snorted and returned to Adam’s side, winking when the teen beamed at him.

John obviously wasn’t happy with Gabriel’s triumphant demeanour, so he shook his head in distaste.

“You’d think you’d have more respect for your lover’s deceased mother, but I guess your kind just aren’t that considerate.”
Gabriel scowled at both the city jab and the insult and he opened his mouth to protest, but Sam beat him to it.

“His ‘kind’? What’s that supposed to mean? And Gabe respects Mom a lot. He was just trying to prove a point.”

John looked caught-out by Sam’s abrupt rush to his lover’s defence and he stared for a few moments before shaking his head.

“I… ah… I didn’t mean to imply… I just meant… I just… really miss your mother, that’s all. I get a little defensive of her sometimes.”

“Gabe didn’t mean any harm, Dad,” huffed Dean.

John glanced between his sons before nodding. “Right. Of course. Um… sorry.” He seemed very uncomfortable as he glanced behind him. “I’ll uh… I’m gonna go now. Leave you boys to… whatever it is you’re doing.”

Gabriel smirked as John turned tail and slunk away almost embarrassedly. He glanced at Adam to find the teen looking distressed as he stared at his own paws and Gabriel tilted his head in confusion, about to ask what was wrong when a nose gently nuzzled his ear. His gaze flicked upwards to land on a lightly smiling Sam.

“Thanks,” the omega whispered quietly and Gabriel’s expression softened as he licked his lover’s muzzle.

“No problem, kiddo.”

Even Dean looked grateful and Gabriel offered him a grin. The younger alpha glanced over to where his mate was entertaining the pups (although Gabriel had no doubt Castiel had been watching the entire scene pan out like a hawk).

“I’d better go see how they are. Not sure why the pups lied to Dad.”

Gabriel nodded sympathetically. Dean knew exactly why the pups had lied; he just didn’t want to admit they didn’t like his father. He trotted away, leaving Sam and Gabe to raise an eyebrow at Adam.

“…You okay?” Asked Sam concernedly when he noticed the beta still staring at his paws as though he was having an existential crisis.

Adam blinked and snapped his gaze to his brother.

“Huh? Oh, right. Yeah. I’m fine,” he dismissed a little too quickly before he pulled a face and clambered to his paws. “I’m uh… gonna… take a walk. For an hour or so… if that’s alright?”

Sam nodded confusedly and watched as Adam skittered off into the forest. He frowned. “That was… weird.”

Gabriel nodded slowly before focusing on his lover and smiling slyly. “Guess that leaves us alone, huh? No one to interrupt us. We could do… anything we wanted…”

Sam smirked and prowled closer to his lover, curling his tail invitingly as he stepped into Gabriel’s personal space.
“Did you have something in mind?” He whispered and Gabriel’s eyes twinkled with mischief.

“How much time do you have?”

“For you? All the time in the world.”

Gabriel’s heart melted. “You’re so corny.”

Sam licked his cheek. “Come knot me already, alpha.”

Gabriel didn’t have to be told twice.

Chapter End Notes

Short chapter because next one has a major plot point ;
“So, Gadreel’s in charge when you two leave the camp?” Asked Adam, nose scrunched up.

Sam nodded and Adam tilted his head. “But wasn’t he a lead alpha once? Aren’t you afraid he’ll try to take over the pack?”

Dean chuckled and shook his head.

“Gadreel’s loyal. And he’s a good guy. He’d never try to take over the pack because he’s happy with his role here.”

“And him being an ex-leader is better for us,” commented Sam. “We know he has experience looking out for a pack, so if anything happens, we trust he’ll make the right decision. Like he did with Hastur.”

Dean nodded grimly. “Guy deserves a medal for that.”

Adam nodded slowly as they came to a halt in the familiar clearing.

Gabriel and Castiel were chatting quietly behind them and they stopped when they noticed they’d reached their destination.

“You sure that leg’s okay?” Asked Sam sternly and Adam quirked a small smile.

“It’s healing and it doesn’t hurt at all now. I’m good to go.”

“Alright. We’ll let you pick your opponent,” hummed Sam and Adam glanced between the four older wolves before he smirked.

“Cas.”

The omega blinked in surprise. “Me?”

“No, the other omega named Cas,” snorted Adam. “Yeah, you. I’ve sparred with everyone else. Now I want to try something new. Besides, I still haven’t got you back for that nip on the rump when I first arrived,” he teased.

Castiel glanced at the other adults. He’d only come to observe Adam’s progress. He hadn’t watched the three brothers spar before and he was curious. Now it seemed he was going to be taking a more ‘hands-on’ approach. Or at least a ‘paws-on’ approach.

“…I hope I can prove a challenging opponent,” murmured Cas and Adam grinned, tail wagging as he looked to Sam and Dean for instruction.

Dean smirked and eyed his lover. “Don’t go too easy on him, Cas. Kid can take it.”

Castiel nodded slowly and Sam chuckled quietly as he glanced at Dean. “You direct him. You probably know Cas’ skills better than I do anyway.” He stepped back a little distance and lay down, Gabe snuggling up beside him as they both watched their brothers get into position.
“Usual rules. Try to avoid Adam’s gross leg,” said Dean and Adam poked his tongue out at the alpha.

“Jerk.”

“Bitch,” Dean winked, making both Sam and Adam grin. “Remember, you’re focusing on attacking so don’t let Cas overpower you otherwise you won’t be able to get out of defence mode and that’s not what we want to do today.”

Adam nodded seriously as Cas crouched into a defensive position.

“And Cas?” Hummed Dean, making the omega glance up at him. “No mauling my little brother, okay?” He smirked.

Adam beamed, tail motoring from side to side as Castiel smiled softly.

“Of course, Dean.”

“Alright. When you’re ready,” said Dean as he took a step backwards.

Castiel stood still as Adam circled him, fully focused on the beta’s every movement. When he saw Adam’s slight turn of paw towards him, he dropped into a springing position and leapt at the beta when he came within range.

Unlike Adam’s previous opponents, Castiel was silent when he attacked; there was no snarling or barking or whimpers when claws or paws made contact with body parts. Adam could barely hear Castiel breathe, despite the exertion. Although his blows weren’t as powerful as Sam or Dean’s, his reactions were quick like Gabriel’s and Adam sometimes found himself struggling to keep up with the omega. His attacks were varied with a plethora of kicks, snaps and swipes, but all were calculated and as the lesson progressed, Adam learned to anticipate Castiel’s reactions to his own movements.

At first, it was clear Castiel was the victor of their sparring, but as the rounds continued, Adam began to use Cas’ techniques against him and the omega smiled when he realised what Adam was attempting.

Dean started out the session by correcting Adam’s movements every five minutes, but as time passed, the alpha became quieter and quieter until he didn’t feel the need to intervene.

Finally, after a long two hours, Adam managed to pin Castiel, his jaws inches from the omega’s throat.

Dean smiled. “Well done, kid.”

Adam stumbled off Cas, chest heaving and tongue lolling, but eyes bright and excited. When Castiel rolled to his paws, the omega was barely panting and Adam wondered how he kept his composure after two hours of sparring.

“Impressive,” hummed Cas. “You’ve learned a great deal since first arriving here.”

Adam’s tail wagged. “Yeah, well, I have a couple of really great teachers.”

Dean chuckled. “Flattery will get you nowhere.”

Adam grinned when Castiel padded over and began lapping at the shallow cuts he’d acquired
throughout the session. The omega was such a mother hen. Adam had never had so few injuries when sparring.

He licked at Castiel’s cuts and nuzzled a bruise he’d accidentally caused on the omega’s shoulder.

“‘You’re doing well,’” said Dean. “‘You need a bit of work on your approach of your opponent; you have a tendency to leave yourself vulnerable when closing in on them, but you do recover quickly each time. Maybe next session, we can work on that.’”

Adam nodded and leaned into Cas, grinning when the omega tugged him closer and began snuffling at his head for any injuries.

“Thanks, guys,” Adam offered softly, aiming his words at all the adults. “For doing this with me. I know I should’ve already learned this stuff and I really appreciate you guys teaching me. I know there’s other things you’d rather be doing so, just… thanks. For everything.”

He received some softened gazes and a comforting nuzzle from Cas.

“Adam… you’re pack,” murmured Sam quietly. “You don’t need to thank us for teaching you this sort of stuff. This is what we’re here for.”

“We’re your big brothers,” huffed Dean gruffly as he tried to pretend he was just stating a fact. “It’s our job to teach you things.”

Adam bowled into Dean, knocking him off his paws until he could cuddle into him with a wide grin and a wiggling tail. He tucked his head under the alpha’s chin and nearly purred when Dean wrapped his paws around him with a breathy laugh.

Suddenly, Sam dropped all his weight onto them and they groaned as the omega snickered and refused to move. Distantly, they could hear Gabriel cooing at them as Castiel chuckled softly.

“Dude, you’re crushing my rib cage,” Dean complained as he glared at Sam and the omega reluctantly stood, helping Adam up with him as Dean exhaled heavily.

“Come on, let’s get back to camp. I think I need Jody to check for punctured lungs,” snorted Dean, shoving Sam back when the omega rolled his eyes and pushed at his shoulder.

“Such a drama queen,” muttered Sam as Gabriel sidled up to him with a solemn nod.

Dean huffed and ignored the jab as he made his way over to Castiel and began the journey back to the camp, Adam trotting after the older wolves with a grin.

After a few minutes, the grin faded and his pace began to slow as he stared after the four wolves he’d come to call his family. He came to a halt, ears flat and expression troubled as his gaze slowly trailed to his paws, mind racing.

“You okay, kiddo?” Asked Gabriel once he realised the younger wolf wasn’t following them. The group turned and walked towards him with concerned frowns.

Adam grimaced and closed his eyes, clearly facing an inner turmoil.

“Hey,” Sam said softly, nudging Adam’s shoulder and making the beta startle. “‘Everything alright?’”

Adam gulped as he stared at his brother and Sam swore the beta looked as though he was on the verge of tears as he slowly shook his head.
“I… I have something to tell you,” he gulped.

“Okay, well… shoot,” shrugged Sam. “Whatever it is, I’m sure we can help.” He really hoped the beta was about to reveal the real reason why he kept getting himself injured.

“My mom isn’t dead,” Adam whispered, squeezing his eyes shut.

The others blinked in surprise. That wasn’t what they had been expecting.

Dean cleared his throat. “Uh… what do you mean? I thought Dad said-”

“Dad’s a liar,” bit out Adam with a fierceness that shocked the others. “Mom didn’t die. Mom left him. She couldn’t stand it anymore, so she left him… left me.” The beta dropped his gaze sadly. “Guess I just wasn’t that important to her.”

Sam frowned and sidled up to the teen, curling his tail around him comfortingly.

“I’m sure that’s not true. What happened. Why did your mom leave?”

Adam hesitated before gazing up at his brother with what looked like a hint of fear.

“We joined my Mom’s original pack a long time ago, when I was a tiny pup. But Dad could never quite fit in with them; he couldn’t fall into the role of submitting to another leader after being head alpha of the Winchester pack. As the years progressed, it got worse and Dad started challenging our leader all the time, sometimes verbally, sometimes physically. Our leader was patient with him, thinking he was just struggling because of being kicked out of his old pack, but it never got better and one day, Dad outright challenged our leader to a fight for the pack. Traditional rules of first to surrender loses, or failing that, a fight to the death.

“Dad lost and our leader finally got tired of him and threw him and me and Mom out. Except, Mom begged our leader to reconsider her exile. She promised she would leave Dad and our leader accepted. I had hoped she’d fight for my return as well but she… didn’t. Dad told her I was to stay with him and… that was that. She never protested.

“Dad changed after that. He’d always been hot-headed, but he’d never… he’d never hit me before. Once Mom wasn’t around, he started blaming me for things. Started beating me and telling me I’d better not turn out like my half-brothers. He never taught me how to hunt or fight or do anything I should’ve learned because he said that he didn’t want me becoming too independent. If I could fend for myself, I didn’t need him anymore and that meant I could stand up to him. If I had to rely on him for food and protection, I could never ‘drive him away or turn on him’ like his other sons had.

“That was six years ago,” whispered Adam, unable to look at the others. “A few weeks before we arrived here, Dad caught scent of your pack. He was… angry. He wanted you to suffer like he had, so he made a plan to return to the pack.

“He told me if I said anything about it to you guys, he’d… he’d make me regret it. I didn’t doubt it so I just… went along with it.” He looked up at Dean desperately, eyes wide and scared and pleading. “He wants the pack back. He wanted to make you feel sorry for him and let him re-join the pack by telling you I needed help with basic skills. He doesn’t really care whether I learn how to fight or hunt; he just wants to be sure he’s on your good side before he challenges you for the pack.”

A tear rolled down Adam’s cheek as his voice began to break and wobble.

“I’ve heard how he belittles you and Sam. He’s chipping away at your confidence until you don’t feel like you’re strong enough or good enough to take him on. But he’s not just going to challenge
you like that; he wants to wait until you’re injured. He wants to wait until you’re definitely weaker than him and then he’s going to request a traditional fight for the pack. A fight you won’t be allowed to refuse.”

Adam began to tremble as the tears flowed down his face.

“I don’t want him to challenge you,” he whimpered. “I don’t want him to hurt you. You don’t deserve it! You’re a good leader and you care about everyone and he doesn’t; he just wants to be in control of everyone and feel powerful and I hate him! I hate him so much and I know I should’ve told you earlier, I should’ve told you the moment I stepped paw in the camp, but I didn’t because I’m a useless coward and you probably hate me because I lied to you but I was just so scared of him and he kept hurting me to warn me from telling you anything, but I can’t keep watching him do this to you and I don’t want anything to happen to you because you might be the only wolves who have ever cared about me in my miserable life and I love you so much and—”

His voice broke into wretched sobbing as he buried his face in Sam’s fur, shoulders shaking and tears forming a puddle at his paws.

“I’m sorry,” he cried. “I’m so sorry. Please don’t hurt me.”

He gasped when Sam suddenly growled and tugged him into a bone-crushing hug. The omega held him tight and nuzzled his head protectively and it was then that Adam realised Castiel and Gabriel were snarling, looking livid as Dean brokenly stared at nothing, expression devastated.

“We’d never hurt you,” whispered Sam fiercely. “Never.” He tucked the beta’s head under his chin and Adam sobbed again, cuddling into Sam.

“You’re right; you should’ve told us sooner,” said Gabriel, a growl rumbling in his throat. “We would’ve been able to protect you.”

“We would’ve stopped your father from laying a claw on you,” said Cas darkly before he turned to his mate and his face fell at his look of betrayal. Adam ducked his head.

“…Dean?”

“…It was all a lie?” Asked Dean after a few moments, voice small and hurt. “He didn’t… he didn’t really want us to be a family again? He just… he wanted to take over the pack? Everything he’s told us since coming here… he’s not changed?”

Adam felt a shift in Sam as the omega came to the same realisation and as Sam’s ears began to flatten, the beta looked away in shame.

“…I’m sorry.”

Dean swallowed thickly. “He… he wants me to get hurt so he can challenge me? He’d really do that to his own son?”

Adam’s lips drew into a thin line. “Never stopped him from tearing into me.”

Sam whined softly as Dean’s eyes glazed over.

“He’s our Dad,” breathed Dean. “How can he do this to us? How can he…?” He trailed off and suddenly, his face hardened as he stood straighter and turned his attention Adam.

“He’ll never hurt you again, Adam. Not on my watch. I’m gonna deal with this right now. He’s a
danger to the pack and I’m not gonna sit by and watch him threaten my family. He needs to learn that his actions have consequences.”

“This is our pack,” growled Sam softly. “Not his. We need to tell him that.”

Dean nodded determinedly and glanced at Adam apologetically.

“His abuse won’t go unpunished,” he murmured quietly. “Not this time.”

Sam licked his head gently and Adam choked out a small noise of relief as he snuggled back into the larger omega.

“I’m sorry I lied,” whimpered Adam. “I’m so sorry I kept hiding everything from you. I don’t deserve your forgiveness.”

“You were scared,” murmured Sam. “And after everything Dad did to you…” He swallowed, voice cracking slightly before he pulled himself together. “Don’t be sorry. You’ve told us now and that’s all that matters. We’re going to sort this out. Promise.”

Adam tucked his head into Sam’s neck.

“I love you guys so much,” he whispered and Sam wrapped a paw around him.

“We love you too, little brother.”

After a few moments, Dean cleared his throat and shared a look with Sam.

“We need to deal with him,” he stated and Sam nodded, slowly releasing Adam.

“Lead the way.”

* * *

Castiel was expecting to return to the camp and watch his mate lay into John Winchester like they’d all been waiting for. He was expecting Dean and Sam to yell and curse and tell their father exactly what they thought of him. He was secretly hoping that maybe he would get an opportunity to tear into the vile alpha himself, preferably alongside Gabriel, who had just as strong feelings about the guy as he did.

He was not expecting to find Azazel’s pack ripping into the Winchesters’.

Dean and Sam immediately sprinted off in separate directions, teeth bared and snarls loud in their throats as they tackled their smirking enemies.

Gabriel looked stunned and confused as he observed the brutal fighting but the second he heard a yelp from Charlie as Lilith sunk her teeth into her leg, the alpha bristled and raced towards the white wolf. He pounced on her back and tore into her as he dragged her away from Charlie. Nobody hurt his friends.

Castiel’s pulse picked up as he saw Abaddon advancing on the four cowering pups. He bounded towards her and just as she was about to wrap her jaws around Claire, he bowled into her, pinning her to the ground as he wrestled and snapped at her throat.
With ears flattened and a terrified expression on his face, Adam quickly joined the pups and ushered them away, shoving them into a shelter and cramming in with them so he could place himself between them and the entrance. They whimpered and whined and he winced when he heard Samandriel begging to see his father, but he refused to budge. He couldn’t let them get hurt.

He could hear the snarling and yelling outside; bodies colliding heavily as teeth and claws ripped into flesh. He could hear the cries and yelps of pain from not only Azazel’s pack, but the Winchesters’ as well. He could hear some of Azazel’s pack laughing as they drew blood from their opponents, enjoying the advantage of surprise they’d had. Nobody had expected them to attack and the Winchester pack was suffering greatly for it.

Adam flinched when a body hit the shelter. He heard Crowley groan as he staggered to his paws and suddenly, the black alpha was hurled against the shelter again, breaking it. A one-eared Gordon stood over him, grinning in delight as blood trickled down his muzzle and Adam quickly pushed the pups behind him as he stared in horror at the scene of Gordon jumping on the downed Crowley. The dark alpha’s teeth plunged towards Crowley’s throat, aiming for the killing blow, but suddenly, Meg leapt on his back with a livid snarl and dragged her enemy to the ground. They wrestled and clawed at each other and Adam whimpered softly at the blood coating Meg’s fur; her own blood. After a few moments, Crowley managed to pull himself to his paws and he stumbled towards the pair, determined to help his mate.

Adam herded the pups away and pushed them into another shelter, placing himself between them and the entrance once again.

His eyes widened when a dirty blonde alpha popped his head into view. Upon seeing the cowering pups and a terrified Adam, he grinned.

“My name’s Jacob,” the alpha chuckled as he fully faced the shelter. “Jacob Styne. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance.”

He slowly stalked towards Adam.

* * *

Sam sunk his teeth into Brady’s side. The beta howled in agony as Sam raked his canines through his flesh before throwing the smaller wolf to the floor. They’d been fighting for at least twenty minutes now and Sam couldn’t tell which pack was winning. His stomach dropped as he watched Azazel circle a limping Dean. His brother looked exhausted and bloodied and whilst Azazel wasn’t in the best of conditions, he was smirking triumphantly at Dean, clearly not quite as injured as the other leader.

Sam began to limp over, wincing at his own agonising wounds, but Brady slipped his mind and suddenly, the beta was on him again, clawing at a particularly painful gash in his thigh. Sam cried out and turned to the beta to begin their second round, all the while wondering how Azazel had found them.

The fight lasted another ten minutes and the camp was completely destroyed once it was over. Azazel’s pack was determined to kill and Dean and Azazel were locked in heated combat as they slashed and bit at each other. Blood spattered over the yellowing grass and fur was yanked out of its natural place as the packs battled, a cacophony of howls and snarls and yelps echoing between the
trees after every strike or kick.

Every part of Dean’s body stung or ached, but he willed himself to keep fighting because he knew if he stopped, Azazel would kill him. He kicked out powerfully at the other alpha’s stomach and managed to flip their positions until he was standing over Azazel. They continued clawing and tearing at each other’s bodies, vicious snarls erupting from their chests until Azazel managed to clamp his jaws around Dean’s muzzle, obviously trying to crush his airways.

Dean bit back a cry of agony and clawed at Azazel’s throat, making the other alpha choke and cough up red fluid as Dean was released. Then Dean dove towards his throat, jaws gaping, but Azazel was quicker and he kicked out at Dean’s genitals, making the sandy alpha wince and stagger to one side. Just as Azazel was about to shove him to the ground again, Dean slashed at his enemy’s eye, flinching at Azazel’s howl.

When he next took a look at Azazel, the other alpha’s eye and cheek were gushing with blood and Dean knew instantly that he’d blinded him.

Unfortunately, he still had his other eye.

More determined than ever, Azazel pounced on Dean and the pair battled for a few minutes before Dean swiped at the brown wolf’s blinded eye once more and the alpha leapt backwards and snarled at him with pure hatred before howling out to his pack for a retreat.

After thirty minutes of fighting, Azazel’s pack finally staggered away, bodies coated in red and some limbs not working correctly.

Dean’s chest heaved as he dragged himself to his paws with a grimace. Everything hurt. He looked around his pack and opened his mouth to speak only to cough up a good measure of blood.

“Is… is everyone… alive?” He choked out, dreading the answer as his pack frantically checked on their friends and family. When he received no sobbed replies or anguished cries, he exhaled heavily. Then his blood ran cold at Cas’ panicked voice.

“Where are the pups?”

No response.

“Ben!” Dean shouted fearfully. “Samandriel! Claire!”

“Alex!” Jody yelled, tears beginning to flow as she forced herself forwards, desperate to find her girls.

“Adam!” Sam called out, eyes wide when he realised he couldn’t spot the teen. Sam and Dean shared a horrified glance before their gazes scanned over the wrecked camp.

“Samandriel!” Cried Cas, voice cracking as he stumbled forwards and sniffed the air frantically. Dean’s heart shattered.

“They’re here,” came a weak voice and the entire pack turned to see a heavily limping Adam, caked in blood and bruises and various other wounds, emerge from one of the few remaining intact shelters, the traumatised but unharmed pups sticking close to his sides.

Cas sobbed in relief and ran towards the little group, uncaring of his protesting injuries. Samandriel and Ben immediately raced over to him, crying into his fur when he pulled them close.
Jody pulled her girls into her chest, a few tears escaping her as she sniffed and nuzzled them, checking them for any injuries and they cuddled closer, quietly pleading for her to never let them go.

Adam’s legs threatened to give out, but Sam was already by his side, gently tugging him into a protective hold as the teen began to silently cry.

“I’m so proud of you,” whispered Sam fiercely as he nuzzled Adam’s head. “You have no idea how proud and grateful we all are.”

Adam whimpered and snuggled closer to Sam, desperate to just be held.

“I’m so sorry we weren’t there to protect you,” whispered Sam, a soft whine in his throat as he gently squeezed the young beta. “I’m so, so sorry.”

Adam shook his head and pushed his face into Sam’s fur, letting the tears flow.

“Gadreel?” Came Hannah’s horrified voice and when the pack whipped around to face the omega, their faces paled.

The stoic alpha was collapsed on the floor, chest heaving and body covered in red. His eyes were closed and his mouth open as he gasped in air and it was clear his back left leg was broken. There were deep claw marks littering his body and face and it looked as though someone had managed to sink their teeth into the back of his neck, nearly hitting important nerves and blood vessels. It would be a miracle if he wasn’t paralysed.

Above him, a battered Balthazar stared at him with wide, terrified eyes. He was trembling slightly as he glanced slowly up at the rest of the pack.

“He… he tried to protect me…” He trailed off as his gaze fell to the broken alpha. Hannah sobbed fearfully as she dragged herself towards the two alphas.

“Gadreel,” she begged, lying beside him. “Please, wake up.”

When there was no response, her heart clenched and she nuzzled his cheek desperately as Balthazar’s shaking worsened.

“Gadreel!” She pleaded through tears and when there was once again no response, Balthazar dropped to the other alpha’s side with a whimper.

“Gadreel, please. Don’t do this. You can’t… you can’t do this. Not now…” He could feel his own tears seeping into Gadreel’s fur as he nudged the other alpha’s shoulder. “Please… don’t… don’t die.”

Dean took a shaky step towards the trio, then another when he realised there was still no response. He could hear his pack’s quiet whimpers and whines and it made his heart hurt.

Suddenly, Gadreel groaned, muscles tensing as he slowly prised his eyes open.

“Gadreel!” Hannah sobbed as she buried her face in his neck and Balthazar whined in relief as he pushed his head into the other alpha’s shoulders.

“Hannah?” Gadreel mumbled, clearly confused and Dean realised the other alpha must have been unconscious. He sighed in relief, dropping his head, before limping over to the trio. Hannah backed up for him reluctantly, as did Balthazar and Gadreel glanced up at his leader unfocusedly.
'...I’m guessing I’m not dead then?’ He asked, still a little out of it and Dean managed a weak smile before shaking his head.

‘Nearly there.’

Gadreel frowned, brain slow to process what was happening as he glanced over his own body.

‘Did we… win?’

Dean closed his eyes. ‘I don’t know. They’re gone now though.’ He gazed at Gadreel worriedly.

‘Can you move?’

With a thoughtful frown, Gadreel shifted his legs into the correct position to stand and winced at the bolt of pain from his broken leg. Ignoring it, he carefully pushed himself to his three working paws. And promptly collapsed with a groan.

Dean flinched but was internally thrilled to see that his friend wasn’t paralysed.

‘Stay down,’ Dean said softly and Gadreel did as ordered, closing his eyes again as he coped through the pain. He smiled when Hannah and Balthazar lay beside him.

‘We need everyone to pull together,’ said Dean, lead alpha voice bleeding through along with his concern. ‘We need everyone to group up and help fix each other; Jody can’t heal us on her own and she needs help too. Dig deep into your medical supplies and do what you can for each other. Clean any major injuries, but do not attempt to repair them if you don’t know what you’re doing.’

As the pack nodded in understanding, Dean closed his eyes wearily.

‘I’m so sorry this has happened,’ he said. ‘I don’t know why or where they came from, but I’m so sorry you had to face all this bloodshed today. I wish I could do more for you.’

‘You could’ve done more,’ growled John suddenly, making everybody snap their gazes towards him. ‘If you and Sam had been in the camp today, none of this would’ve happened. Our leader, his Second and their mates left us unprepared. What kind of leaders leave their pack unguarded? Where were you?’ Hissed John.

Dean flinched before the conversation with Adam popped into his mind and he narrowed his eyes.

‘You don’t get to talk,’ growled Dean. ‘You don’t get to criticise our leadership when you can’t even teach your own son basic skills because you’re too afraid of him turning on you!’

John blinked, eyes wide and then Sam narrowed his gaze too.

‘Why aren’t you as beaten up as the rest of us?’

It was true; John was injured, sure, but his wounds were fairly shallow and he didn’t seem to be in that much pain at all.

The pack started to mumble suspiciously, gazes disapproving and John glanced around them all, stunned before he turned to Dean with a scowl.

‘I have no idea what you’re talking about.’

Dean snarled and stormed towards his father, ignoring his painful injuries.
“Don’t give me that crap!” He snapped. “You’ve been beating up Adam for six years! He told us everything; you’ve not changed a bit!”

Sam stalked closer. “Cas and Gabe and Bobby were right about you. You’ve been manipulating us; slowly trying to lower our confidence and we’ve been so blinded by your sob story that we refused to acknowledge it. Now we hear you’ve been abusing Adam too. What kind of father hurts his own pups?” Seethed Sam.

John’s gaze darkened as Dean continued. “And all that stuff about Kate being dead? Lies. All of it! You’ve done nothing but lie to us and degrade us since arriving and we were stupid enough to believe you!” Dean turned to his pack.

“Dad didn’t choose to leave his other pack; he was thrown out of it! For challenging their leader too many times. He dragged Adam with him and began abusing him in exactly the same way he did with me and Sammy, only this time, he refused to teach the kid how to fight or hunt because he was scared he’d turn out like us and ‘rebel’.” Dean slowly turned to his father with a growl. “That was six years ago.”

There were gasps and soft rumbles from the rest of the pack and Bobby looked ready to tear into John despite all his cuts and bruises.

John stared at Dean coldly before shooting Adam a pain-promising glare, making the beta cower.

“He told you everything?” John asked quietly and Sam nodded.

“Including your little plan once you found us.” The omega shook his head, expression falling into one of betrayal. “How could you do that to us? We’re your sons. Why would you want to hurt us?”

“Because you drove me out of my own pack!” Roared John, making Sam and Dean step backwards, shocked.

“What kind of sons defy their father?” Hissed John. “What kind of sons battle their own father then chase him out of his own pack? I would’ve passed it onto you anyway! You didn’t need to get rid of me! Once your time came, I would’ve handed control over to you!”

“You were going to hurt Sam!” Snarled Dean, fur bristling. “You were going to wrap your teeth around his neck just because he stood up for one of the pups! It wasn’t about power! It was about protecting my little brother!”

“You chased me off!” Seethed John. “You ran me out of my home!”

“You abused us!” Snarled Sam. “When Mom died, you stopped caring about us!”

John glowered at the brothers. “I never stopped caring,” he hissed. “I wanted our pack to be feared! I didn’t want anyone to attack us ever again. I didn’t want us to go through another heartbreak like your mother, so I hardened the pack up. Hardened you up.”

“You don’t harden your kids up by hitting them!” Spat Bobby, stomping forwards. “You don’t harden them up by hurting them!”

“What would you know?” Hissed John. “You don’t have kids!”

“He has us!” Snarled Sam.

John recoiled, gaping at Sam for a moment before he turned his icy gaze towards Dean.
“I dare to challenge your rule, alpha; until either first surrender or death.”

The pack gasped at the formal challenge. John had requested a duel for the pack and since he was a member of said pack, Dean couldn’t refuse him. It seemed John would stop at nothing to regain power if his request for traditional rules were anything to go by. One of them would have to surrender and if neither of them did, it would be a fight to the death.

“Dad,” Sam breathed. “You can’t… you can’t be serious? You don’t want to… He’s your son!”

“He’s my opponent,” rumbled John. “Now get into position, boy!”

“You can’t do this!” Snapped Cas. “He’s hurt! It’s not a fair fight!”

“Your slut makes a good point,” huffed John airily. “Would you like to surrender?”

“Now listen here, John,” snarled Bobby. “You lay a claw on that boy and I’ll-”

“It is my right to challenge him!” Spat John. “This is my pack! It always was! He stole it from me!”

“We chased you off, you son of a bitch!” Yelled Bobby. “Not them! The pack chose to run you out!”

“And I’ll remember that once I’m in charge again,” rumbled John as he faced Dean a few metres away. “Are you fighting or not, boy?”

“Son, you don’t have to do this,” pleaded Bobby. “We won’t let him hurt you. Let us help.”

Dean was oddly blank-faced as he stared at his father.

“He asked for a fight and that’s what he’s going to get,” he said quietly.

Sam’s eyes widened as Cas and Bobby gasped. Samandriel began to cry silently.

“Dean, don’t do this. You’re hurt,” begged Cas. “I can’t… I can’t lose you. Please, let us take care of him.”

Dean slowly turned to his mate, concerned frown in place.

“I have to uphold the rules, Cas.” He swallowed thickly, expression becoming vulnerable and insecure. “…If I lose… will you… will you stay with me? If I’m forced to surrender and I have to leave the pack… would you… would you follow me?”

Tears dripped down Castiel’s face as he leaned their heads together.

“Of course I would,” whispered Cas. “I’d follow you to the end of the Earth and beyond. I’d never leave you and neither would Samandriel.”

Dean managed a weak smile and a sweet nuzzle before he reluctantly turned to his father with a disgusted scowl. With blood dripping down his face and his left forepaw hovering slightly above the ground due to pain, Dean squared his shoulders and lifted his chin.

“I accept your challenge.”

Chapter End Notes
...Uh oh...
Thepack backed up as Dean and John circled each other, giving them room to fight. They growled and bared their teeth at John, not afraid to show their disgust for him and some of the more confident members like Benny and Crowley openly threw insulting slurs at the older alpha, goading him into turning his back on Dean. John ignored them, too focused on his son’s movements.

Dean was limping heavily and he knew his reflexes wouldn’t be as quick with all the pain his body was suffering from. He wanted nothing more than to check on his lover and pups; to make sure they were okay and safe, but he forced himself to concentrate on the battle for the pack. He didn’t want to fight his father, but after everything John had put him, his brothers and the rest of the pack through, some carnal part of him wanted to prove he was and always would be the better leader. A part of him wanted revenge for everything the older alpha had caused.

He didn’t expect the attack to come so quickly.

John was faster than he’d anticipated and his body wasn’t restricted with deep wounds like Dean had, so when he ploughed into Dean, the younger alpha was hit with the full, unrestrained power of his furious father. Dean smacked into the ground like a sack of bricks, his body throbbing and nose overwhelmed by the scent of raging alpha hormones.

Claws sliced through his cheek and he heard Bobby curse in panic as the rest of the pack grew silent, shocked and not quite believing that John was actually fighting his own son.

Dean hissed and kicked out, making John grunt, but the older alpha was on him again before Dean had a chance to clumsily roll to his paws. John placed a paw on his chest, pushing all his weight down onto Dean and Dean could feel his already bruised ribs protesting, threatening to crack when John jumped on him, winding him.

He coughed, the taste of blood coppery on his tongue and he tried to shove his father off him, but the older alpha kicked him in the stomach and Dean felt sick as tears of agony threatened to fall.

“What are you gonna achieve from this?” Yelled Bobby desperately. “We’re never gonna follow you, John! If you win, we’ll leave anyway! All this violence will be for nothing!” He glanced over Dean’s weak body with terrified eyes. “Don’t do this!”

John clamped down on Dean’s injured leg, making the younger wolf cry out. He shook it for a moment before hauling Dean off the floor with it and throwing him three feet to his left.

“Stop this right now!” Snarled Bobby, but John wasn’t listening as he advanced on Dean.

The younger alpha coughed and tried to roll to his paws, but he stumbled and John grabbed him by the back of the neck and shook him like a rag doll before slamming him into the ground. Dean whimpered, eyes squeezed shut and Bobby decided he’d had enough.

He marched onto the battlefield, fur bristling and teeth bared as he headed for John. Just before he lunged, John whirled around to face him.

“You interfere now and that’s an automatic surrender for him. I’ll be leader of the pack and the first thing I’ll do is exile you both.”
“That’s better than watching you kill him!” Spat Bobby but surprisingly, Dean shook his head.

“He’s right, Bobby,” he choked out. “Don’t interfere. If I’m going to lose, let me do it honourably.”

“There is no honour in what your father’s doing,” growled Bobby, shooting John a filthy glare, but Dean once again shook his head.

“I accepted the challenge. Let me finish it.”

Bobby looked torn, but with a defeated expression, he nodded and slowly backed away. John smirked coldly and turned to face Dean once more.

“Now you know what it feels like to have your pack stolen from you,” rumbled John as he stalked closer. Dean closed his eyes.

“We never stole anything from you,” he murmured. “You stole everything from us. Our childhoods, our happiness, our safety... we lost everything when Mom died. Because of you.”

John’s face twisted into an ugly scowl and the pack gasped when John forced Dean onto his back and slammed a paw into his chin until his throat was exposed.

“She’s not yours anymore!” Bobby shouted, but John ignored him and continued.

“Yield,” John growled, frustrated when Dean sighed defeatedly as if he’d given up. “Yield, boy or I’ll do it.”

In truth, the agony Dean was facing was starting to play havoc with his senses. His vision was beginning to fade and the noise of the outside world was slowly getting drowned out by the rushing of blood in his own ears. All he could smell was blood and alpha hormones and he felt as though he was barely clinging to consciousness. He wanted to throw up but he couldn’t quite work out what position he was in and every part of him throbbed. He felt a tear slip down his cheek.

The day had started out so well.

John quickly grew aggravated with his lack of response and Dean yelped as his face was slashed by a claw once again. Distantly, he could hear his pack whimpering and whining for him to do something, anything, but he just couldn’t will his limbs to move. Then over the chaos, he heard Cas crying his name desperately. Everything sounded muffled and sort of in slow-motion, but he managed to focus on Cas’ voice.

“Dean! Dean, please! Just surrender! Please! I can’t watch you die! Just give in! Please, Dean! I’ll follow you wherever you go! I’ll stay by your side forever, but you have to surrender! I love you! I love you too much to watch you… I can’t, Dean! Just give in!”

He was sobbing brokenly, pouring his heart out and begging for Dean to hear him. His mate was frightened and frantic and Dean knew that wasn’t right.

He was suddenly reminded of the scared omega that had arrived in Winchester territory over a year ago.

He remembered the scared omega who’d run away from home to keep his son safe; who’d come from the city and faced all the horrors of the wild to protect his son from his demented pack. He thought about how Cas had barely managed to survive on his own in the wild and then he’d found the Winchester pack and he’d been so terrified of them killing Samandriel; of Dean raping Cas to produce his own heir. He remembered the fearful look on the omega’s face whenever he was near an alpha he thought wanted to use him for breeding.
Then he was hit with the memories of Cas slowly opening up to the pack and in turn, Dean opening up to him; them beginning to trust each other a fall in love. He remembered Cas’ mistakes with hunting only to find out he was an amazing tracker; the trick Cas had taught them all about igloos; the awe he’d been in when Cas had defended him against Azazel, proving his fighting abilities.

He remembered when Cas had first begun to see the Winchester pack as home; how in love he was with Dean when the alpha had grown attached to Samandriel. He remembered their city escapades and how well Castiel fit in with the pack after getting over his initial distrust; how he wanted to change his name from ‘Novak’ to ‘Winchester’.

The Winchester pack was Cas’ home. If Dean surrendered and was forced to leave the pack, he would be taking Cas’ home away from him. This was the home Castiel was supposed to feel safe in; the one he knew he was protected in from his cruel family; the one Cas had found all by himself. Taking the Winchester pack away from Cas would mean all that struggling he’d been through at the beginning; all that starvation and filth and fear he’d suffered through before arriving at the pack… had been for nothing.

How could he take the only home Cas had ever loved away from him?

Scratch that. How could he take the only home any of his pack had ever loved away from them? How could he rip their safety away from them? This was his family. The ‘Winchester’ name belonged to them. He was their protector; the one who took care of them. He wasn’t about to let John Winchester take that away from him.

As Cas’ gut-wrenching sobs continued, Dean forced himself to focus.

This was his pack. His family.

“Yield,” growled John again, harshening his hold on Dean’s chin until the skin of his throat was stretched so tight it hurt.

“No,” snarled Dean before kicking his father’s abdomen powerfully, sending John staggering to the right. Dean dragged himself to his paws before John had a chance to leap on him again.

He bared his teeth at his father and just as John was ready to lunge, Dean beat him to it.

The pack fell silent once more, this time in shock that Dean wasn’t only defending himself, but actually attacking too and as both alphas clawed and kicked at each other, Sam stepped forwards.

“Come on, Dean!” He called in encouragement. “You’re the only alpha we’ll follow!”

Gabriel was quick to pipe up too. “Prove to him why you’re boss, kiddo!”

The pack glanced at each other and slowly began to join in, showing their support for Dean and the younger alpha smirked despite all his aches and pains and fought back hard, blocking his father’s blows and getting in a few of his own.

They fought viciously, biting and slashing at one another until finally, Dean managed to pin John to the ground. They snapped at each other a couple of times and John managed to slice into Dean’s chest, but after a few minutes, Dean had his jaws poised around his father’s throat.

He didn’t need to say anything as the pack quieted and John was left panting and looking rather nervous with his life in Dean’s paws.

“Yield,” said Sam after a minute had passed.
John began to move so Dean tightened his grip ever so slightly on the other alpha’s throat and John quickly fell limp, unwilling to fight back.

“Yield,” growled Sam firmly.

John closed his eyes, his body looking as battered as the rest of the pack’s now.

“…I yield,” grumbled John.

Dean released his throat in distaste and backed up slightly, hard scowl in place as his father clambered to his paws. John glared defiantly at Dean and for once, Dean glared right back.

“Before I throw you out, answer me one thing. Did you have anything to do with Azazel finding us?” Dean rumbled, head high in the picture of authority.

John squared his jaw and Dean sneered in disgust.

“Answer your alpha,” he spat.

John’s lips drew into a thin line.

“Yes. I did. I came across their scent on my walk yesterday and made sure they picked up mine. I led them here.” He snorted bitterly. “I tried to lead them to you but you just had to go out today, didn’t you? I wasn’t expecting them to come so quickly and I certainly wasn’t planning for them to attack the pack when you weren’t even here.”

Dean stiffened. “You planned for them to attack the pack just so they’d hurt me? You put the pack in danger because you wanted me to suffer?”

“I wanted them to weaken you,” hissed John. “I didn’t think they’d cause that much damage to everything else.”

“You mean to my family?” Seethed Dean. “You didn’t think they’d cause that much damage to my family.” Dean pulled a face. “Are you stupid? Azazel doesn’t just want to kill me; he’d happily kill everyone here - he doesn’t want to just take over the Winchester pack!”

John lowered his gaze. “It wasn’t my intention to get everyone beaten up like this,” he mumbled.

Dean snorted. “Get out,” he spat. “I don’t want you anywhere near this pack ever again. Leave and never return.”

“I am your father-”

“You are my nothing!” Roared Dean. “Now get out!”

John stiffened, expression blank before he turned to Adam.

“C’mon, Adam. Let’s go,” he huffed.

The beta hesitated and John narrowed his eyes. “I said come here, boy. We’re leaving.”

Adam flinched and moved to join his father, but Sam quickly put a paw out to stop him.

“You’re leaving,” Sam stated coldly. “Adam stays with us.”

John stared. “…He’s my son. He’ll do as I say.”
“He’s our brother,” Sam countered. “He’ll do as he pleases.” He glanced over to the beta, voice softening. “You want to stay here? As part of this pack? No one will ever hurt you again.”

Adam gaped at the omega before nodding enthusiastically. He hadn’t expected his brothers to forgive him after keeping secrets for so long, yet it appeared they truly wanted him to stay. He’d never been wanted before.

Sam smiled fondly before turning his hard scowl onto John once more.

“He stays. You go.”

John looked genuinely shocked that he was leaving alone. He glanced around the hostile faces of the rest of the pack and watched in silence as Cas, Samandriel and Ben padded over to Dean, taking his side in a show of support.

Dean lifted his chin. “Leave my pack.”

John gulped and lowered his head in apparent shame, a sigh escaping his lips.

“You should never have mated a Novak whore,” whispered John before lunging for Samandriel in a last-ditch attempt at ruining his son’s happiness.

Castiel intercepted him before he even came close to the yelping pup, but all too quickly, John managed to wrap his jaws around the back of Castiel’s neck.

Castiel gasped and let himself be dragged away from Dean, eyes wide as his brain finally registered what had happened.

Dean’s expression flooded with fear, as did the rest of the pack’s.

“Let him go,” Dean ordered, panicking as he took a step forwards, but John immediately squeezed his jaws around Castiel’s neck until the omega choked and Dean stepped backwards again, gaze filled with terror.

“Let him go,” pleaded Dean. “This is between you and me!”

John snorted and squeezed harder. Castiel coughed and scrunched his eyes shut as pressure was placed on his fragile windpipe.

“Let him go!” Snarled a new voice and John barely had chance to turn before Adam was bounding over and biting at John’s own throat.

The older alpha gagged and released Cas as Adam leapt at his shoulders, biting fiercely at the back of his neck until his father yelped and smacked the beta away. Adam shook himself off and his ears flattened when he realised John was about to pounce on him, but Sam and Gabriel were quickly by his sides, baring their teeth and snarling heatedly at the older alpha.

John growled back but paused when he realised every other member of the pack was growling at him too, each of them slowly advancing on him.

Gabriel bit at his shoulder, making him scramble backwards and then Benny bit at a foreleg. Just as John turned to stare at Benny, Bobby slashed a claw across his face with an intimidating snarl. John stumbled backwards, yelping when Crowley bit at his hindleg.

“I think you’d better leave,” warned Ellen with a narrowed gaze and John didn’t have time to reply
as Gabriel surged forwards again and snapped at him, narrowly missing his face. He stumbled backwards before turning and pushing himself into a sprint, Bobby, Crowley, Gabriel, Benny and Sam hot on his heels.

Once he was out of view, the five returned to the camp and Gabriel pressed into Sam’s side with a huff of approval.

Then, everyone turned to Dean, awaiting his orders.

Dean looked around his battered and bloodied pack with pride in his gaze and cleared his throat, preparing to thank them all for standing by his side.

However, the floor tilted sharply to the right and Dean’s body was hit with a wave of fresh agony as the adrenaline of the fight finally wore off.

Cas caught him before he fell and gently pushed him upright once more.

Dean coughed weakly as his head began to spin. He was going to throw up.

“I think… I think I need to lie down.”

* * *

The evening slowly rolled in as the pack took care of one another, healing each other as best they could before they looked around the ruins of their camp with a weary sigh. Dean had told them once everyone was feeling strong enough, they would move on to new territory; they couldn’t stay here now that Azazel knew where they were and nobody wanted to risk John attempting to return for revenge.

Dean and Castiel were pressed into one another, Samandriel and Ben between their paws. The little family huddled close, taking care of each other’s wounds and scenting one another maybe a little desperately as they tried to reassure themselves that they were all alive and safe.

Cas wrapped a gentle paw around Dean, pulling him flush with his body and Dean smiled and let the omega fuss over him; lapping at his wounds and nuzzling him every so often.

“So proud of you,” murmured Cas as he licked the deep claw marks in Dean’s muzzle. “Proud of how you stood up to him. How you protected your pack.”

Dean would never admit to how his chest puffed out at that. It seemed lead alpha instincts were ingrained into him now and hearing his mate tell him how he’d protected his pack made that side of him purr in delight. Cas smiled at the reaction but didn’t comment.

Dean rubbed his head under Castiel’s chin, wanting to be marked by his lover’s sweet scent.

“I feel like I should be upset,” admitted Dean quietly. “I feel like I should have wanted to sort things out between us; to maybe try to understand why he did what he did.” Dean leaned further into his mate. “But honestly, I’m just relieved he’s gone.”

Castiel huffed in agreement and licked his mate’s ear.

“As are the rest of us. He had no right demeaning you and Sam and he certainly had no right to hurt
Adam.” Castiel quirked a small smile. “Watching you verbally lay into him was probably a little too satisfying for all of us.”

Dean chuckled. “I can’t imagine how watching me beat him in a fight must have felt, then.”

Castiel rumbled and kissed Dean’s muzzle. “You have no idea,” he whispered.

Dean shuddered and moved to lap at the wounds John had caused on Castiel’s neck. He scowled.

“Every time I see more of what he’s done to the wolves I care about, it just makes me angrier.” He nuzzled Cas’ neck. “I’m glad he’s gone. I don’t want him around our pups and I don’t want him around you ever again.”

After a few minutes, once they’d settled and were content to just bask in one another’s company, they let their gazes trail to the pups. They smiled when Ben burrowed further into Samandriel’s body and the little alpha curled around him protectively, licking his head and ears and huffing softly when Ben returned the favour.

Samandriel wrapped his paws around Ben, tugging him closer and Ben was quick to reciprocate, tucking his head under the alpha’s as he closed his eyes.

Neither of them were harmed, but it was clear they were both still shaken and in need of comfort. Dean wrapped a paw around them both and they glanced up at him gratefully.

A couple of weights settled either side of Cas and Dean and both wolves startled before relaxing at the sight of their brothers. Sam and Gabriel settled beside Cas as Adam lay beside Dean and Dean immediately pulled the beta into a hug, tucking him into his side as he licked at the wounds on his face. Adam’s tail wiggled as he cuddled into Dean and it wasn’t long before Gabriel and Sam were fussing over Cas, determined to inspect every wound on his body. Cas rolled his eyes and began to nuzzle his brother and Sam, showing his appreciation for their concern.

“You did good today,” rumbled Dean, resting his head over Adam’s. “Not only did you protect the pups, but you stood up to Dad. You saved Cas. You’ll never know how grateful I am.”

Adam sighed happily, for once feeling like he was actually wanted.

“You gave me a home,” whispered Adam. “You gave me a family. The least I can do is try to defend it.”

Dean grinned and squeezed the beta gently. “Well, you certainly did that.”

Adam closed his eyes and let his head fall against the ground, Dean’s still resting over his. Sam, Gabriel and Castiel smiled at each other before snuggling into one another and closing their eyes. Today had been a long day and they all needed rest.

They jumped when Benny and Jo slumped down behind them, using their rumps as pillows. Sam turned and raised an eyebrow at them and Benny sent him a tired look.

“I’m getting cuddles whether you like it or not.”

Dean snorted in amusement and sent a pointed look at Gabriel, who laughed and shrugged before flopping back down onto Cas again, Sam’s paw curling around both smaller wolves.

It was only a matter of time after that before the rest of the pack joined the snuggle pile. Once the sky was shrouded in darkness and the owls and crickets began calling into the night, the whole pack was
ignoring each other’s personal space; some members wrapped around each other, others lying on top of one another and some just happy to lay beside their friends and family.

Dean was at the centre of the chaos and he lifted his head once to watch over his pack, smiled proudly at their sleeping forms and slipped into a peaceful slumber once more.

* * *

Balthazar had been reluctant to join the ‘snuggle pile’ as Hannah had put it, but he had faced his fears once more for both Hannah and Gadreel's sakes.

They had nearly lost Gadreel today.

Seeing Gadreel’s unconscious form earlier… believing him to be on the brink of death… something inside Balthazar had broken. He didn’t know what it was or what it meant, but merely remembering all the blood coating Gadreel’s body after that fight made Balthazar nauseous. His chest felt tight and he could barely breathe at the thought of the other alpha dying and it wasn’t something Balthazar had ever thought he would feel regarding another alpha.

Gadreel had saved him. Again.

Balthazar had barely been able to fight off the beta that had been tearing into him. She had taunted him, said things that reminded him of what Hastur and Asmodeus and most of his old pack liked to do to him and he had struggled to keep focused on their fight. Hannah had been fighting her own battle with another omega and Balthazar had been humiliated because he should’ve been better at defending himself, but his phobias just kept holding him down. It had taken him an embarrassingly long time to defeat the beta and when he finally managed to calm down and get his head in the game, an alpha had attacked him and he’d frozen. The alpha was strong, very strong and when he’d started mocking Balthazar for his ‘prettiness’, the bronze and white wolf had been paralysed, too terrified to fight back.

He’d taken blow after blow until he could taste blood on his tongue and he could barely feel his own limbs and then out of nowhere, Gadreel had rushed over with a furious snarl and Balthazar had been freed.

He’d watched in horror as an already-bruised Gadreel fought with the other alpha, but he’d had to take his eyes off them when a beta tried his hand at offing him. He’d managed to concentrate for that fight, but the next time he turned around, Gadreel was lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood, eyes closed and unconscious.

Balthazar quickly shook the image of the broken Gadreel from his mind. He was beginning to feel sick again and his throat was dry.

He glanced down at Gadreel’s sleeping form. It was the early hours of the morning, when the stars were still twinkling and the moon shining brightly. The rest of the pack had been asleep for a solid few hours, but Balthazar had startled awake from a nasty nightmare involving both Gadreel and Hannah dying in the fight.

He glanced over to Hannah. She had changed so much since coming here. She had gained so much confidence in herself and she wasn’t afraid of conflict anymore. She could stand up for herself and was pretty adept at fighting and Balthazar fell a little bit more in love with her every day. He could
see the fiery, strong omega he’d first fallen in love with all those years ago; before Hastur’s pack had come along.

He wished he could be like her. He wished he wasn’t so afraid all the time.

He was frightened that one day, she might realise he had become this cowardly, broken wolf that couldn’t even protect himself, let alone his mate and that she would leave him for someone better; someone she deserved and could laugh with and have fun with, without having to deal with all his baggage.

Someone like Gadreel.

Honestly, they’d be so much better off without him.

He looked away, frowning at the tear sliding down his muzzle. Why was he so screwed up?

A nose gently nudged at his shoulder and Balthazar whipped around to see Gadreel staring at him concernedly.

“Nightmare?” He asked softly and Balthazar closed his eyes. He didn’t deserve this alpha. He didn’t deserve his understanding and patience and kindness.

Gadreel should just take Hannah and leave him to his miserable little life. At least they could be happy that way without him holding them back.

Gadreel frowned and wrapped a paw around him, gently brushing away the tears he didn’t even realise he was producing.

“Balthazar? What’s wrong?” The bigger alpha asked and Balthazar wanted to sob. Gadreel was battered, could barely walk, must have been in an endless amount of agony, mostly because of Balthazar, yet he was still worried about the bronze and white alpha’s wellbeing. He definitely didn’t deserve Gadreel’s friendship.

He couldn’t look at the larger alpha.

“I thought… I thought you were going to die,” Balthazar confessed weakly. “Seeing your body like that… seeing you unconscious and bleeding…” He forced himself to stop as he felt bile rising up his throat. “I had a nightmare about it. About both of you…”

Gadreel looked genuinely surprised for a moment before he tugged Balthazar closer, being careful not to wake the sleeping Hannah on his other side. He lapped at the wounds on the back of Balthazar’s neck before slowly working his way up to his head. Balthazar closed his eyes and tried to relax, leaning into the other alpha and feeling that strange sense of reassurance wash over him once again.

A few minutes passed and Gadreel pulled away with a silent gulp, gaze still focused on Balthazar’s face. He grinned when Balthazar immediately returned the favour, lapping at the gashes and slashes over his neck and face, only slightly hesitating when it came to the claw marks across his muzzle.
Once he was satisfied, he cautiously nuzzled a bruise on Gadreel’s cheek.

His chest felt tight again, but this was different. It felt like... excitement. Like something was trying to burst out of his ribcage. It was... weird.

Gadreel nuzzled his cheek in return and Balthazar felt his face heat up. It wasn’t out of humiliation or anger though, it was something... different.

He found himself automatically pushing his head under Gadreel’s chin, begging to be scent marked and Gadreel happily obliged, rumbling quietly as he did so. The vibrations made Balthazar want to smile.

The paw around his shoulders tightened, tugging him closer and Balthazar didn’t resist. He curled his tail around the older alpha and shoved his head more firmly under his chin, demanding Gadreel scent mark him more.

Gadreel seemed pleased by this and he growled softly, possessively as he pushed Balthazar flush with the ground and determinedly rubbed his scent all over the other alpha’s head, neck and shoulders.

Once Gadreel was finished, Balthazar frowned and lifted his head, meeting soft, grey eyes. He butted their heads together lightly, making Gadreel smile, then surprised both himself and Gadreel by rolling onto his back without thinking and baring his throat.

As soon as he realised what he’d done, he stared at Gadreel with wide eyes to find the other alpha staring back, just as stunned.

Then Gadreel growled quietly and pulled Balthazar half under him, until he was straddling the other alpha’s exposed chest and Balthazar made a soft sound of surprise when Gadreel shoved his nose into his throat, scenting at him frantically.

Strangely delighted, Balthazar let his head fall backwards, giving Gadreel more access and when his paws gingerly slipped around the bigger alpha’s shoulders, Gadreel rumbled in approval.

There was a certain thrill to trusting Gadreel like this when the pack was sleeping mere inches away. Balthazar would never have exposed his belly or his throat like this had anyone else been awake, but this was... fun. Gadreel was a big softie and he just wanted affection really and Balthazar needed someone to show him how to trust again; to show him it was good to be confident.

Balthazar’s tail began to wag and Gadreel grinned when he saw it, his own starting to swish. They chuckled at each other and the position they’d got themselves into and Gadreel nuzzled Balthazar’s throat once more to show his appreciation that the smaller wolf was trusting him.

Balthazar’s expression softened as he relaxed into the other alpha’s comforting nuzzling and he wriggled into a more comfortable position to properly enjoy the sensations. Gadreel automatically moved a leg to straddle him fully, allowing Balthazar to lie in a straight line and it was then that they realised how awkward a position they’d shifted into it.

They stared at each other for a few seconds, their bodies inches apart and Balthazar felt heat flare up in his belly; a kind of... want. He blinked and like a teenager who was excited by the thought of trying not to get caught doing something naughty, he leaned upwards and licked Gadreel’s mouth, fully aware there were no wounds there.

Gadreel’s eyes widened fractionally before he lightly licked Balthazar’s mouth in return.
Uncertain yet oddly brimming with anticipation, Balthazar slid his paws a little tighter around Gadreel’s shoulders and exposed his neck once more.

Gadreel gulped and licked a long, slow, erotic stripe up Balthazar’s throat and the smaller alpha shivered, a thrill shooting down his spine. He tugged gently on Gadreel’s neck and felt his pulse pick up as the other alpha carefully lay on him, their bodies pressed together. Gadreel smelled wonderful and it was doing strange things to Balthazar’s belly.

Gadreel licked another stripe up his throat and Balthazar shuddered again, wrapping his hind legs around Gadreel’s hips in an attempt to get closer. Gadreel let out a shaky breath and Balthazar realised he wasn’t the only one who was oddly excited.

He wondered what Gadreel’s human lips tasted like.

Gadreel tapped his chin with his nose and Balthazar snapped his gaze up to him to find his friend baring his throat for him. With a sharp inhale, Balthazar rushed to scent at him, basking in that amazing scent as he pressed his nose deep into the column of Gadreel’s throat and once he was satisfied, he licked a filthy stripe up the other alpha’s neck. It was messy and possessive and Gadreel obviously thought it was perfect because he exhaled heavily and leaned more of his weight on Balthazar, lowering his head so the smaller alpha had easier access.

Balthazar smirked and licked another filthy, heated stripe up Gadreel’s throat, tightening his grip on the other alpha and Gadreel whimpered softly and closed his eyes.

A few metres away, Harry mumbled in his sleep, frowning and both alphas froze, terrified of being caught. Then Harry rolled over and fell silent once more.

Balthazar wasn’t sure if that had ruined the mood, but then Gadreel began lapping at his mouth urgently and Balthazar smirked and teased him with another dirty throat lick.

He paused when he felt Gadreel’s growing erection poking into his stomach, suddenly nervous, but Gadreel nuzzled his cheek gently and Balthazar remembered who he was with.

Then Gadreel shifted to a more comfortable position to nose at his jaw and Balthazar gasped as their erections brushed together. He didn’t even know he was sporting one.

Gadreel halted his movements as he scrutinised Balthazar’s face for any hints of fear. He was delighted when Balthazar carefully wriggled until their arousal slid together again. Gadreel carefully licked a long stripe up Balthazar’s throat as he gently rutted against the other alpha and Balthazar froze for a second before groaning quietly and wrapping his legs more firmly around Gadreel’s hips.

Gadreel’s movements were soft and controlled and not once did Balthazar fear the other alpha. His breathing deepened and he began to rut upwards into Gadreel. The larger alpha muffled his groan in Balthazar’s neck and Balthazar held him closer, eyes slipping shut as they moved together. Gadreel was warm and strong and he felt so safe with the bigger alpha. This wolf who’d saved him twice now from the horrors of the world and who loved Hannah just as much as he did. Gadreel was so kind and patient and he never took advantage of anyone and-

Balthazar’s train of thought was derailed as Gadreel growled possessively into his ear. “Mine.”

That was hot.

He humped Gadreel a little harder. “Clearly.” It was good to know his sass hadn’t completely left him.
Gadreel rumbled in approval and Balthazar bit back a moan as he was pressed into the ground, Gadreel thrusting against him deeply until he could feel all of Gadreel’s impressive erection sliding against his own.

“Morph into your human form,” whispered Gadreel suddenly and Balthazar had to think for a moment before his brain latched onto that as being a fantastic idea.

He shifted about the same time as Gadreel did and they stared at each other for a minute or so, taking each other’s appearances in and noting that their injuries looked far worse on hairless skin.

Balthazar also noticed that Gadreel didn’t only have a good-looking canine form; his human form was pretty jaw-dropping too.

He wasn’t able to dwell on it too long before Gadreel crashed their lips together, fingers tangling into hair as a tongue plunged into Balthazar’s mouth. Balthazar’s groan was swallowed by the other alpha and he fist ed Gadreel’s hair, his free hand clutched around his back as their bodies ground together.

They pulled back for air but Balthazar was quickly on Gadreel again, claiming his mouth and savouring the taste of his tongue. It was even better than he’d expected.

They began to pant as their humping quickened and Gadreel rumbled in arousal as Balthazar’s hand slid downwards to squeeze his ass.

Gadreel abruptly pulled away from Balthazar’s mouth to suck on his throat and the smaller alpha let his head fall back as he clamped down on a groan.

He could feel Gadreel’s knot begging to emerge and he rubbed himself against it roughly, making Gadreel whimper. His own knot was beginning to swell too and as they caught on each other, Gadreel choked and Balthazar sucked in a breath, their grinding quickening.

Their mouths sought one another out clumsily and Gadreel cupped Balthazar’s cheek tenderly, making the smaller alpha surge forwards, desperate for more contact as he plunged his tongue into Gadreel’s mouth and ravished it.

Gadreel wrapped his free arm around him tightly, their chests flush and with one more buck upwards from Balthazar’s hips, Gadreel’s choked cry of pleasure was swallowed by the smaller wolf as something sticky landed on Balthazar’s stomach.

Achingly hard and aroused from the display, Balthazar reached down to finish himself off, only to have Gadreel bat his hand away and do it for him.

With a few greedy tugs Gadreel had Balthazar breathing his name, which was muffled by the larger alpha stealing a filthy, wet kiss from his smaller lover.

They panted for a few minutes, trying to calm down and then Gadreel began to pepper Balthazar’s face with sweet kisses that had the smaller man practically mewling.

He was amazed they hadn’t woken anyone up yet.

Gadreel’s stubble scratched against his (Balthazar had always taken good care of his human form’s grooming) and the smaller man couldn’t help but nuzzle into it. It was oddly appealing.

Gadreel kissed the corner of his mouth and Balthazar tilted his head to meet his lips properly. He licked inside the other alpha’s mouth and smiled when Gadreel easily allowed him entrance.
Gadreel’s thumb stroked his cheek and Balthazar’s hand rode from the other alpha’s ass to his shoulders. He scratched Gadreel’s head lightly, petting it and carding his fingers through his short hair, loving how they were doing nothing now but making out. He hadn’t expected Gadreel to be this great a kisser although he wasn’t sure why he’d thought that. Maybe because Gadreel had originally struck him as stoic and cold.

He wasn’t afraid to admit he’d been wrong about that.

Balthazar gently tilted Gadreel’s chin up until he could nuzzle and suck at his throat. He was still awed by the fact Gadreel trusted him with this. Despite being battered and aching, Gadreel still trusted Balthazar near his throat.

After a little while, Gadreel nudged Balthazar, signalling that it was time for them to shift back into their wolf forms. They did and Gadreel was quick to wrap his paws around Balthazar, pulling him into his chest as they rolled onto their sides. Balthazar smiled and snuggled closer, tucking his head under Gadreel’s chin as he slipped his paws around the other alpha until they were tangled tightly together.

“Sleep,” whispered Gadreel. “You’re safe and so are Hannah and I. We’ll be here when you wake.”

“So will your seed,” snickered Balthazar and Gadreel’s eyes widened in mortification as he realised the smaller alpha’s stomach was still painted white. Gadreel moved to get up but Balthazar frowned and held him down.

“I’ll deal with it in the morning,” he huffed. “You need rest. You need to heal.”

Gadreel hesitated but eventually nodded and held his friend closer, eyes sliding shut.

Balthazar wondered if the high he was currently feeling would fade in the morning. Would he be ashamed of what had happened? Did this mean things were different between him and Gadreel now? Or was this just a ‘heat of the moment’ type deal? Were they tender lovers or just casual sex partners? Did Gadreel feel anything for him? Did he feel anything for Gadreel? Would Gadreel expect him to submit to him now? Would Balthazar freak out if they tried anything more than a bit of humping? Would anything even come of it?

Balthazar scowled and shook these thoughts from his head. He could deal with everything in the morning.

Chapter End Notes

Hehe whoops ;) Hey look! Cuddles!
The morning rolled around and Balthazar was wide awake before any of the pack had even twitched an ear. He was still tucked into Gadreel’s chest and the other alpha’s fluids had dried tacky on his fur.

Balthazar’s mind was racing. He didn’t know what was happening between him and Gadreel and he regretted their early-morning activities. He was scared. He shouldn’t have let Gadreel kiss and grind against him; they were both alphas and Balthazar knew what that meant. One of them had to submit and he knew Gadreel wouldn’t want to. Balthazar would be back to being a hole to knot and he couldn’t live like that again. He couldn’t keep being terrified for the rest of his life.

Breaths becoming more panicked and temperature rising, Balthazar wriggled out of Gadreel’s grip. He needed to find a river or a stream to clean Gadreel’s seed off him. He needed to scrub away any evidence of what he’d done with the other alpha. He felt dirty and wrong and he couldn’t believe he’d let another alpha do that to him. He should’ve pushed Gadreel away.

What would Hannah think? She didn’t even know about their activities; would she be disgusted? Would she want them to engage in a true three-way relationship? Would she be upset if Balthazar admitted his fears?

His wriggling and rapid breathing jostled Gadreel and the other alpha blinked awake sleepily. He frowned when he noticed Balthazar slipping out of his grip and gently tugged the smaller alpha beside him again, much to Balthazar’s horror.

“Is everything okay?” Gadreel asked quietly, still not fully alert, but when Balthazar stared at him with wide, terrified eyes, Gadreel forced himself into wakefulness.

“Balthazar? What’s wrong? What’s happened?” He asked concernedly, pulling the smaller alpha closer into his protective hold. He glanced around the outskirts or the broken camp, looking for any danger, but upon spotting nothing he frowned in confusion at Balthazar.

“I… I need to go,” gulped Balthazar, voice shaking. “I need to get cleaned up… I’m sticky and I… I can’t… I just…”

Gadreel’s eyes widened when he realised Balthazar was frightened of him. His ears flattened when the other alpha began struggling against his grip.

“I thought…” Gadreel began quietly. “I thought you were…” He trailed off and sighed, releasing the smaller wolf as he dropped his gaze. “Don’t wander too far. We don’t know who’s still lurking around.”

Balthazar paused and took in Gadreel’s defeated expression. His ears lowered because logically, he knew Gadreel wasn’t like his old pack; Gadreel genuinely cared about both him and Hannah, yet his instincts were to flee and hide. He couldn’t become another knotting toy to another alpha, no matter how kind and soft-spoken they were.

Balthazar turned away and crept towards the little stream running through the camp.
Dean opened his eyes slowly, smiling at the warm body under his head and the scent of his mate by his side. He licked Adam’s head gently as he lifted his own and quirked a grin at the sight of Gabriel and Cas snuggling together as Sam wrapped his gangly limbs around them both. He leaned into Cas’ back and enjoyed the relaxing morning.

He heard shuffling behind him after a little while and turned to see Sam observing him, head resting over Cas and Gabe’s backs.

“Mornin’,” Dean greeted quietly and Sam offered him a warm smile before frowning worriedly at the wounds in his side. Dean shifted until he could lie his head over Cas’ back, allowing him to be closer to his brother.

Sam licked a gash on his muzzle.

“…I thought I was going to lose you yesterday,” he admitted softly and Dean blinked at the slight tremble in his voice. He nuzzled his brother reassuringly.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he promised. Sam sighed and scented his brother for a few minutes. Dean let him, not afraid to admit he was enjoying being bathed by his brother’s sweet scent.

“Watching Dad tear into you… watching him throw you around like he did…” Sam gulped and shook his head. “I was scared.”

Dean frowned and leaned over to lick his head comfortingly. He nuzzled his ears, scowling at the omega’s nasty injuries and lay their muzzles beside each other as a sign of reassurance.

“I’m here,” he whispered. “I’m right here and I always will be.”

Sam closed his eyes and leaned against Dean’s muzzle. “Never do that again,” he whimpered softly. “Next time… just surrender. We’d all rather have you alive and defeated than victorious and…” Sam trailed off, unable to say the word. Dean licked his muzzle once more.

“I had to defend my pack,” he whispered. “Had to defend my family.”

“You could’ve died,” stressed Sam. “You’d already faced one battle. Fighting Dad was a stupid decision.”

Dean scowled. “I couldn’t just let him win. After everything he’s done, after everything he would’ve done to the pack… I couldn’t just hand you all over to him.”

Gabriel suddenly snorted. “You honestly think we would’ve followed him?”

Dean frowned. “You’d have had no choice. He’d have been your leader.”

“And we would’ve left the pack and followed you anyway,” huffed Castiel grumpily. He wasn’t a morning person.

Dean cocked an eyebrow. “…You’d have lost your home. Your pack. If I’d surrendered and been exiled and you’d followed me, you would have lost everything.”

“Dean… home isn’t a place. Home is family and the people in it,” said Sam softly. “Don’t you get it? We would’ve followed you no matter what. We might not have had the Winchester name but we
would’ve had you and that’s enough.”

Dean blinked in surprise. “But… I’d have lost. How could you follow me? How could you put your faith in me as leader if Dad had beaten me?”

Castiel scowled. “Because being leader isn’t about winning fights. My brothers win all of their fights; do you really think I’d ever follow them again?” When Dean coughed embarrassedly, Castiel rolled his eyes and swivelled his head to look at his mate.

“You’re compassionate, just, protective, understanding… the list goes on. That’s why we’d follow you no matter where you go. Because we want to. Because we love you. Do you really think losing one unfair fight against your psychotic father is going to change any of that?”

Dean glanced up at Cas shyly. “And you wouldn’t care about changing the pack name? You’d still stay even if we weren’t called ‘Winchester’?”

Both Gabriel and Castiel snorted at that.

“Ah yes. That name is the only thing keeping me here with you,” deadpanned Castiel, making Dean smile.

“I kinda like the name ‘Lafitte’. Has a nice ring to it,” drawled Benny from somewhere near their tails. “The Lafitte pack. Sounds exotic, don’t you think?”

Dean chuckled and shook his head. “Even if I had surrendered, I wouldn’t have even considered that name. Sorry, Benny.”

“What about ‘Harvelle’?” Piped up Jo. “That would have been an awesome name.”

Dean grinned and shook his head. “Try again,” he teased.

“What about Singer?” Grumbled Bobby sleepily and Dean’s chest felt like it was going to burst from love as his apparently awake pack began to snicker and suggest new names for the imaginary pack they were going to form.

It seemed Cas, Sam and Gabe weren’t the only ones who would’ve stuck by his side.

“Alright, guys. I get it. You all want a piece of the action,” Dean chuckled.

“As long as you’re leading it,” said Charlie immediately. “As long as you and Sam lead us, I wouldn’t mind changing the pack name to ‘Bradbury’.”

Dean wasn’t sure whether to laugh or sob at the love from his pack. So, he did what he usually did and cleared his throat gruffly.

“Unless you guys can come up with a better name, I think I’d rather be a stray.”

The pack snorted or rolled their eyes at him, but it was Bobby who spoke next.

“In all seriousness, your brother’s right, boy. What you did was stupid. You could’ve lost your life yesterday and then where would we have been? We would’ve followed you no matter what happened and whilst I’m certain we were all extremely satisfied by the way you beat his ass up, it was unnecessary. You surrendering wouldn’t have made us look at you any different. Heck, it might even have saved you some blood.”

Ellen nodded and stared at Dean sternly. “We might’ve even thought you had a couple of brain cells
to rub together.”

Dean ducked his head shyly.

“Whilst I’m honoured at your faith in me, beating Dad in a one-on-one fight… I think some part of me has been waiting for that for a long time. I think… I think I needed to do that not just for you guys, but for myself too.”

Bobby’s gaze softened and he nodded in understanding. “Well… you sure did that. I’m proud of you even if I think you’re an idjit.”

Dean chuckled and let his head fall against Cas’ back once more.

“Yeah, well… I’m pretty proud of you guys too.”

* * *

Two days passed and the pack were sporting bandages now that they knew their wounds weren’t going to open up again and suddenly start gushing with blood. That was the problem with being in the wild; limited resources meant soiled bandages didn’t always get replaced and nobody wanted to walk around with filthy bandages. Jody had been able to look over the pack properly as well, which meant everyone was a little more confident and comfortable. It was a miracle no one had needed surgery; a city trip to the hospital in this state was the last thing they all needed.

They weren’t quite ready to move onto new territory yet, but it was clear Dean and Sam were itching to go. They didn’t like the idea that Azazel’s pack could still be creeping around and they wanted everyone as far away from their father as possible. The second everyone could walk at least two hours without collapsing in pain, the pack would start their journey.

Balthazar hadn’t spoken to Gadreel since the morning after their escapades. He was nervous and still a little freaked out, although he was beginning to wonder if maybe it had been a bad idea running off like he had without at least talking with the other alpha. Hannah was starting to suspect something was up between them and obviously Gadreel hadn’t told her anything either.

Balthazar was grateful and hurt at the same time.

The bronze and white alpha sighed and shook his head at himself as he padded through the forest. Dean and Sam had strict orders that no one was allowed to wander too far from the camp, so the river was off-limits. They had to stay within immediate howling range in case any of them needed help to come quickly.

He just needed to get out of the camp for a little while. Be on his own to clear his head and think about the situation with Gadreel.

He knew Gadreel wasn’t cruel or sadistic but could he really let the other alpha be intimate with him? He still had nightmares about other alphas knotting him; he didn’t want to relive them. He wasn’t convinced he even had feelings for Gadreel. Maybe gratitude for everything he’d done and a bit of awe for rescuing him twice, but did he really have any feelings of affection for Gadreel? Had their actions not been spawned from a bit of sleepy lust and the thrill of not getting caught?

Balthazar sighed and continued his journey. He had no particular destination in mind; the walking
just felt good.

A breathy moan caught his attention.

Curious, he pricked up an ear and slunk towards the source.

His eyes widened at the sight of Gadreel and Hannah in their human forms, bodies writhing against each other and Hannah whimpering as the pungent smell of blueberries and buttercups and something a little more intense swamped the area.

Hannah was in heat.

It had been a long time since Balthazar had seen Hannah in heat; all the trauma and atrocities they’d faced in their old pack had stopped their heat and rut cycles. They couldn’t raise pups if they were struggling to keep themselves going and mother nature wasn’t cruel enough to have them suffering through heat and rut too. Balthazar couldn’t remember the last time he’d had a rut, but it seemed Hannah’s heat had come back with a vengeance. They probably weren’t cycling properly (and this one did indeed look too intense to be a normal heat only just beginning) and Balthazar couldn’t be sure if her heat would last the full two weeks, longer or a mere few days; that’s usually what happened after trauma – heats and ruts became unpredictable.

He focused on the two groaning humans. They were on the floor, kissing hotly as Gadreel thrust in and out of the omega a little stiffly as his injuries strained his movements.

The large alpha was so careful despite how Hannah’s heat must have been driving his hormones crazy. His hands smoothed up her sides as she wrapped her legs around his waist, her hand fisting his hair as she dragged him closer. Her other hand clutched at his bandaged back and he brought his palm up to her cheek, his other hand fondling her breast as he set up a rhythm for their hips.

He pulled away to kiss her jaw and she closed her eyes, lips falling apart slightly as he slipped down her body, worshiping every bruise and scar and gash on her neck and chest with kisses. Her hand slid out of his hair as he moved lower and he caught it with the hand he’d had on her cheek, tangling their fingers together tenderly.

He pressed open-mouthed kisses to the cuts and bruises on her ribs before swirling his tongue over her nipple.

She whimpered quietly, squeezing his hand as more slick dripped from her and he smirked and took the little nub into his mouth, sucking on it gently.

She groaned, arching upwards and he slid his free hand around her back, pulling her into a more accommodating position for his broken leg (the area below the knee was splinted and bandaged and Gadreel figured as long as he didn’t put any weight on it, he could walk at least a little bit each day. Jody hadn’t been too impressed).

Balthazar gulped as he watched his mate moan after Gadreel gently took her nipple between his teeth. He should have been embarrassed watching them, but he wasn’t. If anything, he wanted to see more.

Was that creepy?

Gadreel pulled off her nipple to place a tender kiss to her other breast and then he caught her lips again and thrust into her deeply. She groaned loudly and placed a protective hand over his bandaged spine, throwing her head backwards for him to suck at her neck.

Balthazar licked his lips and forced his breathing under control. The show was doing things to his
body and he didn’t want them to catch him watching because two alphas and an omega in heat was bound to have consequences that spelled trouble for Balthazar. Even if the omega was his mate.

Gadreel pressed a tender kiss to a claw mark on Hannah’s cheek and she turned to place an equally loving kiss against his scarred face. He smiled adoringly at her before wiggling his eyebrows and latching onto her nipple again, extracting first a laugh, then a deep moan.

Her head fell to one side as Gadreel thrust deep inside her again and that’s when she spotted Balthazar behind one of the bushes.

Balthazar cursed himself for being a creep and for being too curious about Gadreel’s tender loving despite being under the influence of Hannah’s heat. Hannah placed a hand on Gadreel’s shoulder to still him as she pointed towards Balthazar’s position. The older alpha raised an eyebrow and tilted his head at Balthazar’s ashamed expression and the smaller wolf knew he had no choice but to reveal himself fully.

He slunk forwards between the trees and bushes and was too embarrassed to meet either human’s gaze. If he didn’t shift into his human form, they wouldn’t be able to communicate and that suited Balthazar just fine.

Hannah made a strange, garbled noise and Balthazar figured she’d probably just spoken his name and he couldn’t understand the language.

With a soft sigh he glanced up at her, cheeks heating at seeing his mate and Gadreel completely naked and one buried inside the other, slick dripping over both their thighs. From this distance, Hannah’s sweet heat was beginning to rouse his own hormones and he started to worry what that would mean for him and Gadreel. Alphas had killed each other over an omega in heat.

He could already see Gadreel beginning to puff out his chest, his grip on Hannah tightening ever so slightly. If he’d been in wolf form, his fur would have been starting to stand on end.

Hannah made that same garbled sound again and Balthazar flinched. She wanted him to shift.

He obeyed her command and felt extremely awkward standing naked in front of the two lovers. He refused to meet their gaze, instead finding the floor far more interesting.

For a moment, nobody said anything. No one knew what to say. So Balthazar cleared his throat.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to see any of that. I was just taking a walk. I didn’t know you two were…” He grimaced. “Here,” he finished quietly. “Nor did I realise Hannah had started her heat. I’ll leave you both alone.”

He turned away quickly, feeling the need to cover himself from Hannah and Gadreel’s piecing gazes, but suddenly, Gadreel called out to him.

“…Stay,” he said quietly.

Balthazar froze and turned slowly to face the other alpha. He noticed Gadreel looked nervous, uncertain even.

“I don’t think that’s a good-”

“She needs us both,” Gadreel said softly and Balthazar clamped his mouth shut, still awkwardly covering himself with his hands.
Hannah stared between them both silently, sensing a strange sort of tension between them and her face gave nothing away as Balthazar glanced at her.

“Do you want her like this or not?” Asked Gadreel carefully, referring to Balthazar’s willingness to have sex with the omega. Balthazar would have been quite happy to help his mate if Gadreel hadn’t been present.

“I…” He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Hannah was his mate. He could do this for her.

“Yes.”

Gadreel nodded and took a steadying breath to keep his instincts under control. Balthazar wondered why his own instincts to challenge the other alpha weren’t kicking in. Maybe he was too damaged.

“Come here,” Gadreel ordered as he slowly pulled out of Hannah and Balthazar’s eyes tracked the slick stringing between them. His belly flared with heat.

Gadreel shuffled backwards, wincing as he jarred his leg slightly and Balthazar felt a twinge of guilt, but the other alpha quickly gestured for him to take his place.

He faced Hannah and both of them watched as Gadreel half-limped, half-crawled around the omega’s back. He kneeled once more in relief.

“Happy?” He grunted, probably in pain and Hannah reached for his hand and tangled their fingers together again. He smiled appreciatively and glanced at Balthazar, who was staring at him with wide, slightly terrified eyes.

Hannah quickly pressed her lips to Balthazar’s, stroking his cheek with her free hand and all his worry disappeared for a few moments as her sweet smell washed over him, igniting alpha hormones that were probably rusty from disuse.

He kissed back just as eagerly and she giggled and pulled back a couple of inches.

“Are you okay with this?” She asked concernedly. “You can walk away if you’re not.”

Balthazar gulped and briefly glanced to Gadreel, who was looking away sadly. The smaller alpha winced. He’d caused that. The other alpha had been enjoying himself until he’d shown up.

“…I am,” he whispered. “Is Gadreel?”

Hannah cocked an eyebrow and peeked over her shoulder at the startled Gadreel. He nodded silently and she smiled before turning a concerned gaze to Balthazar.

“Are you sure? You’re not just saying that because you think it’s what I want?”

Balthazar frowned. He was tired of being a fragile flower. He needed to toughen up.

“It’s not like I haven’t done this sort of thing before,” he shrugged, more confident than he felt.

Hannah pursed her lips as Gadreel’s gaze snapped to his face, stunned.

“What?” Asked Balthazar. “I was quite adventurous before I became this pathetic mess,” he sniped and Gadreel’s eyes rounded as Hannah huffed.

“Please don’t remind me of your previous flings,” she said in distaste and he had the decency to look ashamed.
“Sorry, love.”

She rolled her eyes and kissed his lips once more. “You’re not a mess,” she whispered, stroking his cheek. “You’re my mate and I love you so very much. I just don’t want you doing something you’re not ready for nor comfortable doing.”

Balthazar lowered his gaze and placed a hand over the one she was cupping his cheek with.

“I can do this,” he promised, leaning their heads together. “I want to do this.” He really did.

“Good,” whispered Hannah. “Then can one of you please get inside me because there’s a puddle underneath me and I feel like my uterus is on fire.”

Gadreel gently pushed Hannah towards Balthazar and the smaller alpha stared in surprise as Gadreel sat back and watched the omega claim the younger alpha’s mouth heatedly. He tugged her closer as she began grinding against him, painting her slick over his crotch and stomach.

He whimpered in pleasure and tangled his hand in her hair as he sat down and pulled her into his lap. Their tongues slid together, bodies flush and she let her hands wander over his bruised chest as he palmed at her ass.

She moaned softly, grinding up against him again and any doubts Balthazar might have had promptly vanished as his instincts kicked in. He pulled away to scent at her neck greedily, nuzzling the mating mark he’d renewed time and time again and licked her throat hotly before pressing a wet kiss to a nasty bruise on her jaw.

She mewled sweetly and leaned down to nuzzle a deep cut on the side of his neck and he smirked as he subtly slid two fingers between her legs.

She gasped and buried her face into his neck, scenting deeply as he rubbed her slit and he felt her hips rolling gently, begging for more.

Suddenly, Gadreel was pressed against her back, kissing down the top of her spine as he slipped one arm around her stomach and the other hand to one of her breasts, gently massaging it as Balthazar continued kneading her ass and rubbing between her legs.

Gadreel carefully moved her head to one side to kiss her neck and when she closed her eyes and groaned softly, Balthazar watched in fascination as the other alpha ran his tongue along her smooth neck.

Once again, heat flared in Balthazar’s belly and he began scissoring the omega open with two fingers as he watched Hannah share a deep, long kiss with Gadreel.

She moaned into Gadreel’s mouth and Balthazar realised he was the one causing that and it sent his belly burning and his lower half began to take an interest.

Gadreel pinched her nipple, tugging on it lightly as they made out filthily and Balthazar carefully moved the other alpha’s hand out of the way as he swirled his tongue around the omega’s stomach, kissing the cuts there every so often.

He listened to the wet sounds of Gadreel and Hannah kissing and with arousal shooting through every part of his body, Balthazar parted the omega’s legs a little further and replaced his scissoring fingers with his tongue.

Hannah moaned breathlessly, pulling away from Gadreel to fist her hand in Balthazar’s hair and the
older alpha flicked his gaze down curiously, rumbling in approval at the sight of Balthazar lapping at the omega’s slicked entrance.

In one fluid movement, Gadreel tugged Hannah into his own lap as he sat down, allowing Balthazar to bury his head between the omega’s legs.

Balthazar made a soft sound of appreciation as he greedily lapped up the omega’s sweet slick. She tasted amazing and he couldn’t get enough. He glanced up once to see Hannah and Gadreel both staring at him hungrily and he felt his pulse pick up because that was incredibly hot. He gave them a show, nuzzling the curly hair between her legs before pushing his tongue inside her and making her groan.

Gadreel held her a little more securely before sliding his hand down her back and when she gasped and jerked her hips forwards, Balthazar realised Gadreel was playing with her other hole.

After a few minutes of breathless moans and soft panting from Hannah, Balthazar heard Gadreel whispering sweet words into her ear about how beautiful she looked and how gorgeous she smelled and how perfect her whimpers and groans were. Balthazar shifted his gaze to watch Gadreel pepper kisses over her jaw, Hannah biting her lip as she squeezed her eyes shut.

Balthazar smirked and suddenly sucked.

She whined and Gadreel’s gaze flicked sharply to Balthazar, watching intently as he sucked and licked at her. Her scent was getting stronger which meant her heat was growing more intense, desperately trying to entice either alpha to take her.

Balthazar replaced his tongue with his fingers once again, briefly meeting Gadreel’s lust-filled gaze before claiming Hannah’s lips hungrily. She shuddered and Balthazar smirked because he’d bet his tail that Gadreel had just slipped a finger inside her ass. He knew he was right when she began rocking her hips, encouraging either alpha to move their fingers.

When they pulled apart for air, Gadreel was staring at his mouth longingly and Balthazar hesitated for a few moments before forcing himself forwards to meet the other alpha’s lips.

Hannah gasped and Gadreel tensed for a second before lapping into his mouth hungrily, after the taste of omega slick on his tongue.

Balthazar began to relax as Gadreel ravished his mouth eagerly and he smirked into the kiss when he felt Hannah’s gaze on them both, pupils blown wide. This… wasn’t so bad. He remembered how much he’d enjoyed kissing Gadreel the other night.

They pulled apart to find Hannah staring at them both and Gadreel smiled softly and leaned in to kiss her again as Balthazar subtly lined himself up with Hannah’s slicked hole.

She threw her head back against Gadreel’s chest when Balthazar pushed inside her, a filthy groan escaping her lips and Gadreel growled in approval as he watched Balthazar move.

After a few minutes of Balthazar thrusting in and out slowly, Gadreel pulled away and let Hannah recline on the ground as the other alpha straddled her. He watched them writhe and kiss for a couple of minutes before tentatively reaching out a hand to card his fingers through Balthazar’s hair.

Balthazar hummed happily and wrapped his arms a little tighter around Hannah, fully aware that Gadreel was stroking himself as he watched them both.

Hannah bared her neck for Balthazar and the smaller alpha kissed it and nipped the mating mark
gently, nuzzling a few of the bruises on her chest afterwards. He noticed Gadreel scooting around his back and smirked when the other alpha began kissing the knobbles of his spine, nuzzling any wounds he could see on his back.

Hannah watched in surprise and Balthazar winked at her, suddenly feeling a lot more confident than when they first started. Gadreel wouldn’t hurt him; how could he ever think he would? His restraint around Hannah showed him that and despite them both being ‘rival alphas’ in the presence of an omega in heat, not once had either of them tried to intimidate one another or attempted to compete for her attention.

Gadreel wouldn’t use him.

Strong arms slipped around his stomach and Balthazar chuckled as Gadreel peppered sweet kisses over his back. Hannah grinned as Balthazar tangled his fingers with Gadreel’s over his stomach and the smaller alpha deepened his thrusts until she was arching beneath him.

Gadreel hummed appreciatively and leaned his chin against Balthazar’s shoulder as he watched, kissing his neck every so often.

Balthazar squeezed the other alpha’s hand as he felt Hannah beginning to lose control beneath him. She orgasmed with a cry and Balthazar leaned down to kiss her, wondering if he and Gadreel would finish one another off.

No sooner had he thought that, did Gadreel growl and pull him upright, leaving Hannah to watch them in surprise.

The larger alpha claimed his mouth filthily and began to stroke his length. Balthazar reached behind him blindly and jerked on Gadreel’s erection and the larger alpha rumbled and tugged him flush with his chest.

Four rough jerks later, Gadreel began slowly rutting against Balthazar’s ass. The smaller alpha paused but ignored the flare of anxiety in his chest. Gadreel wouldn’t use him like that.

When Balthazar began fondling the other alpha’s testicles and stroking up his length to swipe his thumb over his tip, Gadreel manoeuvred Balthazar onto his hands and knees and pressed a finger into his entrance.

Balthazar went rigid beneath him, eyes wide with terror as images of Asmodeus and Hastur knotting him until he bled played on loop in his mind.

He shoved Gadreel off him harshly and curled in on himself, flinching at Gadreel’s whimper of pain as he jarred his leg again.

“…Balthazar?” Gadreel asked quietly, once again confused and maybe a little hurt and that was enough to finally break the smaller alpha.

Tears flooded down his cheeks as he buried his face in his hands. Gadreel wasn’t the problem here, was he? Balthazar was the one who couldn’t get it into his head that the other alpha wasn’t like his old packmates. He’d been blaming Gadreel for being an alpha when the truth was he was the one who couldn’t differentiate between someone who genuinely cared about him and someone who liked to rape him for fun.

“I can’t do this,” choked Balthazar. “I can’t be… whatever it is you want me to be. I’m not… I’m not strong enough. I’m broken and weak and I’ll never be good enough for you. For either of you.”
He squeezed his eyes shut, tears streaking down his face.

“I’m damaged and I’ll never get better. You’re better off without me. You were so happy without me and now I’ve ruined it. I don’t deserve either of you and I… I can’t… I can’t do this!”

He sobbed into his arms, uncaring of how pathetic he looked.

“I’m sorry,” he cried. “I’m so sorry. Just leave me. I should be dead anyway.”

He yelped when he was dragged into someone’s arms and he wriggled to find Gadreel holding him tightly, a scowl on his face before he leaned their heads together.

“You’re not broken,” he whispered as Hannah crawled over to them and wrapped her arms around him with a soft whine.

“Balthazar? What… what happened? I thought you and Gadreel…?” She trailed off and he glanced away, vision blurred.

“I can’t,” he whispered. “Every time I try to relax, I think about them and I… I freak out. I can’t do this. I’ll never be able to do this. I’m so sorry.”

Gadreel kissed his head tenderly and pressed his nose into the back of his neck.

“Calm down, Balthazar,” he whispered. “Calm down and stop thinking.”

Balthazar forced his breathing to slow and his mind to clear as he leaned backwards into Gadreel’s chest. The other alpha slid his arms around his stomach and kissed his neck lightly.

“You were doing fine until I messed up,” Gadreel murmured. “I forgot myself for a moment because you were making me feel so good. I just wanted to be closer and I messed up. It wasn’t your fault. You did nothing wrong.”

“I shouldn’t have reacted at all,” mumbled Balthazar. “You should’ve been able to do that without me freezing and shoving you away.”

Gadreel snorted quietly. “You realise very few alphas like to be knotted? We’re fine when we’re doing the knotting, but when it comes to presenting ourselves for knotting, not all of us are eager on the uptake. You could’ve reacted far worse.”

Balthazar frowned. “That’s not the point. I shouldn’t be so afraid of you. I don’t want to be afraid of you and yet…” He sighed. “I’m so messed up.”

Gadreel squeezed him gently. “Everyone’s a little ‘messed up’. That’s nothing to be ashamed of. You don’t think I’m in perfect mental health after being abandoned and left to die by my entire pack, my mate and my pups, do you? You don’t think I never ask myself if there’s something wrong with me; if maybe it’s my fault that my entire family left me without so much as a second glance, do you? The idea is to stop focusing on how ‘messed up’ you are and start focusing on how to overcome that or at the very least, learn to deal with it.”

Balthazar hesitated, mulling over Gadreel’s insightful words before slowly shaking his head.

“I don’t know how to,” he confessed softly and Gadreel contemplated that for a few moments before kissing the back of his neck again.

“If I was an omega, would you be okay with us?” He murmured. “With all three of us being
Balthazar frowned, puzzled and nodded slowly. “I suppose.”

Gadreel hummed and pressed another kiss to his neck, which Balthazar was beginning to really enjoy.

“And what if I was a beta? Would you be okay with us being together then?”

Balthazar paused. Many betas in his old pack had liked to hurt him and use him once Asmodeus and Hastur were finished with him.

“I… I’m not sure. Maybe?”

Gadreel made a quiet sound of understanding and kissed his neck again.

“So, what you’re saying is, me being an alpha is the problem. If I was any other gender, you’d be more willing to accept us?”

Balthazar hesitated and Gadreel nuzzled his cheek. “Then pretend I’m not an alpha.”

The smaller alpha frowned. “I’m not sure what you mean.”

Gadreel smiled and kissed his cheek tenderly. “Pretend I’m an omega or a beta. Whichever makes you more comfortable.”

Balthazar scowled. “I’m not convinced it works like that. I can’t just pretend you’re a different gender.”

Gadreel sighed and closed his eyes. “You’re nervous about me knotting you, correct? You’re worried that if we become a three, you’ll be forced to submit to me. I’d tell you that isn’t true and I’d never make you do anything you’re not comfortable with, but I don’t think your instincts are going to believe that, so I’ll take a more active approach to convince you.”

He tilted Balthazar’s head so he could capture his lips.

“Knot me, alpha.”

Balthazar’s eyes blew wide as he recoiled from Gadreel and the larger alpha smiled and kissed his shoulder.

“Excuse me?” Choked Balthazar. Gadreel chuckled and leaned back on his hands.

“Want me to present? Is it an omega you’re imagining?”

“What?” Squeaked Balthazar and Gadreel laughed and lay down on the grass, spreading his legs for the other alpha.

“Did it ever occur to you that I’d be just as happy in a submissive role as I am in a dominant one?” Teased Gadreel and Balthazar gaped.

“It did, but I immediately dismissed the idea as delusional.”

“Come here, Balthazar. Let me take care of you.”

That sounded so good right now.
He slowly crawled on top of the other alpha, straddling him shyly and tensing slightly as Gadreel slipped his arms around him, one hand raising into his hair. Their lips met in a sweet kiss and Balthazar shuddered as the other alpha petted his hair lovingly. This felt different to their heated, lust-driven rutting from a few nights ago; it was more intense, more meaningful and as Gadreel made no move to go any further than some deep kissing, Balthazar found himself relaxing on top of the alpha, being careful not to aggravate the wounds beneath the bandages around Gadreel’s middle.

Hannah shuffled closer, smoothing a hand down Balthazar’s back reassuringly and the smaller alpha began to smile as Gadreel shifted to nuzzle and scent at his neck.

“Have I ever told you how much I love your scent?” Breathed Gadreel, kissing his neck. “Like cinnamon and ginger. I can’t get enough of it.” He licked a stipe up Balthazar’s neck, making the smaller alpha hum in approval.

“Yours smells like home,” admitted Balthazar softly. “Like safety and warmth and happiness and I love sleeping beside you because I can’t recall the last time I ever felt like that.” He sighed defeatedly. “I just wish I could remember that all the time.”

Gadreel kissed his cheek tenderly. “I won’t hurt you, Balt. I’m not like them and I never will be. I just want you to be happy.”

Balthazar smiled at the nickname. He’d never heard Gadreel shorten his name before.

“I know,” whispered Balthazar, burying his face in Gadreel’s neck. “I just don’t always remember it.”

Gadreel tilted the smaller alpha’s head so they could share a deep kiss and Balthazar felt the other man’s hands roam over his shoulders and down his arms before sliding back up them to slip down to his hips. It was almost as if Gadreel was exploring his body, mapping it out for later reference. Gentle fingers brushed over old scars; painful reminders of his time with Hastur’s pack. The older alpha frowned at the number of injuries littering Balthazar’s body, both old and new and his thumbs rubbed circles against his hips as they tasted each other’s mouths.

Hannah watched them curiously and maybe with a little bit of delight as Balthazar carefully lifted his weight off Gadreel until he could look down at his battered body.

Azazel’s pack had done a number on all of them. It made Balthazar’s heart ache to see Gadreel so beaten up.

Balthazar leaned down to kiss the other alpha’s chest, nuzzling bruises and cuts until he came to the other alpha’s nipples. He swirled his tongue over one and took into his mouth and Gadreel groaned softly and let his head fall back onto the ground.

It was a strange experience to be on top of another alpha and Balthazar watched in fascination as Gadreel’s hand slid down to own erection and began stroking it. Curious, the smaller sat back on his knees, watching Gadreel play with himself for a few moments before he pressed a finger against the other alpha’s entrance. They were still slick from pleasuring Hannah and Gadreel shuddered as he began teasing at his ass.

He pushed a finger in and watched the larger alpha moan and spread his legs a little wider. Arousal flared inside Balthazar and he surged downwards to claim the other alpha’s lips as he moved his finger in and out, entering a second one when Gadreel rocked his hips upwards.

Hannah purred as she watched and both alphas turned to see her playing with herself, slick streaking...
down her thighs. Gadreel rumbled in pleasure and reached out to help her and Balthazar groaned quietly and inserted another finger into the other alpha.

Gadreel arched and with his spare hand, Balthazar batted Gadreel’s palm out of the way to work the larger alpha’s erection.

“You two look gorgeous,” choked Hannah as Balthazar jerked Gadreel’s erection roughly, smirking when his knot began to swell.

The larger alpha bared his throat desperately, purring when Balthazar latched onto it, sucking and licking at it hotly.

“Knot me, Balt,” groaned Gadreel, sending heat bursting through Balthazar’s belly and he felt his knot beginning to swell, pressing against Gadreel’s tightness.

He moaned and thrust deep into the other alpha and Gadreel whimpered in pleasure, scissoring his fingers inside Hannah.

After a few minutes, Balthazar’s knot locked inside Gadreel and the alphas crashed together in a heated kiss, groaning out their satisfaction as they came in unison.

Hannah quickly followed and before long, Gadreel had two armfuls of alpha and omega nuzzling and kissing his neck. He tightened his grip around them with a pleased growl.

“How was that?” Gadreel asked after a little while, nosing at Balthazar’s hair. The smaller alpha smiled and pressed his face into Gadreel’s neck shyly.

“Better. Amazing. Incredibly hot.”

Gadreel chuckled and kissed his head. “See? We can work this out. You’re not broken, Balthazar. You’re not damaged or weak. You’re so strong. I’m in awe of everything you’ve fought through to be here. I’m honoured you’ll even let me near you, let alone allow me to share your beautiful mate and yourself with me. If I was in your position, I probably would’ve given up long before you escaped from your old pack.” He kissed his hair. “We can work through this together. You don’t have to face your nightmares alone. Let us help you.”

Balthazar snuggled into Gadreel’s body, his knot locked deep inside the other alpha.

“Know that I will never hurt you, Balt,” Gadreel whispered. “I’ll never hurt either of you. I’ll protect you both until my dying breath and I will never, ever treat you like your old pack did. I will never use you or take advantage of you. I may get a little possessive, but I will always listen to you. I’ll never do anything you don’t want me to. Understand?” Gadreel squeezed both alpha and omega gently and Hannah hummed in agreement as she pressed into his side.

Balthazar wrapped his arms around Gadreel and his mate. He knew this wouldn’t be the end of their problems, but it was definitely a start. He could work through them with Hannah and Gadreel and even though they hadn’t said it, their actions showed that they had no intention of letting him leave. They would struggle through this together; Hannah and Gadreel wouldn’t let him give up and they weren’t going to give up on him any time soon either.

He might not love Gadreel yet, but he could certainly learn to.
He was kind of looking forward to it.

Chapter End Notes

Lots of the trio here because their storyline has come to a bit of a resolve now, so there won't be too much of them in later chapters (although we will be checking in on them every now and again).

This is the end of 'part 3' of the story and we will now be moving into the final (and much shorter) 'part 4', where we will finally have the confrontation we've been waiting for since chapter 1. Can you guess who will be making an appearance? ;)

Autumn rolled into Winter and the pack finally gathered enough strength to move on to new territory. There was a chill in the air; the wind icier than it had been these past few months and the leaves had darkened from their stunning reds and oranges to a lifeless brown, rotting unceremoniously on the soggy ground once they fell.

The pack pushed through the cold air despite their slowly healing injuries, but Dean and Sam refused to work them too hard; resting every few hours to make sure their friends didn’t suffer from too much pain. The pack was grateful.

The pups played and goofed around whilst the adults rested, keeping everyone in high spirits despite their aches and pains and a few adults like Benny and Charlie and Jo even joined in with their games.

Currently, the pack were resting, giving Alex and Samandriel ample opportunity to play wrestle as Claire and Ben cheered them on. The pair rolled around the floor as they struggled but once Alex pinned the young alpha, they grinned at each other and began giggling, chewing on each other’s paws and ears until Ben and Claire bounded over and joined in.

“Tell us more about the city,” said Claire as they began to settle down and the other pups looked to Samandriel expectantly.

“What do you want to know?” Asked the little alpha, nose scrunched up thoughtfully. Claire flopped down and pressed into his side, using him as a pillow and he grinned and curled his tail around her. He loved his friends. He’d never had friends like this in the city. A lot of the other kids had been frightened of his family so they didn’t talk to him all that much.

“What was ‘school’ like?” Claire asked. “You said you went to school for over a year before you came to us.”

Samandriel pulled a face. “School was boring. I had to be away from Dad for hours and hours because I was supposed to learn new things there, except I never really learned much and the teachers liked to shout a lot and it just seemed a waste of time. I could’ve learned everything so much quicker at home with Dad and I wouldn’t have got yelled at for stuff other kids did.”

Alex frowned. “Then why didn’t you just stay at home? School sounds awful.”

Samandriel shook his head. “I wasn’t allowed. There are these weird laws in civilisation; rules that everyone has to follow or they’ll be punished. One of them is everyone has to go to school when they reach five or six.”

Claire huffed. “That’s stupid. You don’t learn anything at five; that’s why we only start at seven and we don’t have to go to school to learn.”

Samandriel nodded and leaned his head on hers. “I like your way better. And I like all the teachers here, like Bobby and Ellen and Charlie. They’re so nice and you can talk to them whenever you want about anything. They’re not just teachers; they’re family. School teachers aren’t like that. A lot of them don’t really care about your questions because they’re too busy complaining about uniforms and bringing the wrong food in for lunch and making a mess.”
“What did you guys even learn?” Asked Alex. “I mean, you never hunt in the city and you don’t fight properly and you use tools to help you fish. What did you go to school for?”

Samandriel frowned. “Reading, writing and ‘ryth… ‘rythma… math.”

“…Is that it?” Scowled Alex. “Didn’t you do anything useful?”

Samandriel shrugged. “My teachers said those things were useful.”

“Yeah, if you want to be a writer or… or… a watch maker,” said Claire. “We learn about that stuff too, but we’ll never really use it. What about fun stuff? Didn’t you learn anything interesting?”

Samandriel frowned. “…We learned a bit about the Roman Empire, although I’m not sure how useful that is.”

Ben screwed his face up. “My Mom told me about them. Said civilised folk used to throw people to lions for fun.”

Samandriel nodded. “That’s what we learned.”

Alex cocked an eyebrow. “That doesn’t seem very civilised.”

Samandriel shrugged. “I didn’t really pay that much attention.”

“So, school sucked and the teachers were awful. What about the other pups?” Asked Claire. “It must have been fun having all the other pups to play with.”

Samandriel glanced at his paws sadly. “They didn’t like me very much. Said I was a Novak so they couldn’t talk to me in case they got into trouble. I used to hear people snickering at me because I was on my own. I didn’t really have friends. Not real ones anyway.”

The other pups blinked in surprise as Samandriel glanced away.

“Civilised folk have a thing about genders too. The omegas didn’t want to play with the alphas because I guess they were scared of us? Even some betas didn’t like alphas. A lot of the other alphas thought it was funny and they used to go around growling and scaring the omegas and betas. Most of the alphas in my class weren’t very nice. They even fought with each other sometimes.”

“And they were five and six?” Asked Alex incredulously and Samandriel nodded.

“Why do you think my Dad was so nervous around everyone when he first came here? We thought you guys had worse gender roles than civilised folk.”

Alex and Ben made their way over to Claire and Samandriel, snuggling into the young alpha to prove a point.

“Well, I don’t know why anyone would think you’re scary,” huffed Alex, nipping at his ear. “We certainly don’t. Claire’s scarier than you!”

The omega huffed indignantly and poked out her tongue at the older beta. Alex ignored her.

Ben rubbed his head under Samandriel’s chin. “Don’t listen to those other pups. You’re an awesome friend and I’m glad you left them because now we get to have you.”

Samandriel grinned as his friends hummed in agreement and cuddled into him.
“I love you guys too,” he grinned, making their tails wiggle. “And I like it here a lot more than the city. It’s so much more fun!”

He chewed on Ben’s ear, growling playfully until the omega rolled onto his back, prompting Samandriel to straddle him so they could wrestle. He liked how even though Ben was an omega, they could still be rough with each other. In the city, he would have been yelled at for ‘attacking’ a weak omega. Ben was anything but weak.

And so were the girls, proved by how they bowled into him, knocking him to the floor with triumphant smirks.

Yeah. He had the best friends.

* * *

They walked for another couple of hours before the sky faded to black and the cold atmosphere dropped another few degrees. After scenting the area for danger, Dean was satisfied his pack was safe and informed them they would be settling down for the night. They picked their spots on the forest floor, grimacing slightly at the coolness of the ground and relief washed over them at being able to alleviate the pain of their injuries for a few hours.

Some pack members cuddled together whilst others merely lay beside one another, still shaken and maybe a little protective of one another after the fight from a few days previous. It was heartwarming to see everyone so concerned over one another and Dean and Sam smiled proudly as they watched their pack drift off to sleep.

An Elton John song played softly on Gabriel’s phone as Dean lovingly nuzzled his mate. Beside Cas, their pups were curled around one another, fast asleep and beside Dean, Sam and Gabriel were pressed close, licking each other’s muzzles tenderly.

After a few minutes, the four lay down, listening to the song contentedly as they relished each other’s company. They were just relieved they were all alive even if they were sporting a canvas of injuries; Dean more than everyone else.

Since arriving at their current sleeping spot, both sets of brothers had been meticulously fussing over one another’s injuries before moving onto their respective lovers and finally lying side by side once they weren’t quite so determined to scrutinise every single wound their partners had.

A little while later, Gabriel began shooting Dean almost anxious glances, head shifting restlessly on his paws to the point where Sam started frowning at him in confusion and a slither of concern. The older alpha’s leg started bouncing and Sam nuzzled his lover worriedly, silently asking what was wrong.

Gabriel immediately licked a cut on his muzzle before shooting Dean another glance.

It was only when the golden alpha’s gaze tracked over Dean’s body with a soft growl did Sam finally understand.

The omega smiled adoringly at his lover before nudging him in encouragement and Gabriel stared at him for a second before standing and shuffling over to Dean.
Dean made a startled sound as Gabriel began licking a few cuts on his head and neck before rubbing his chin and cheek over the same areas, transferring his scent onto the other alpha as he growled protectively.

Castiel’s gaze softened as Sam chuckled. Gabriel had once been a high alpha of a large pack and it seemed his instincts to take care of the younger, wounded members were beginning to show. It probably didn’t help that the golden alpha was touch-starved because of his old pack.

Dean’s eyes widened as Gabriel straddled his back, rubbing his scent more insistently into the rest of Dean’s body and claiming the younger alpha as his.

“…Uh… Gabe…?”

The older alpha growled possessively, moving to rub his scent against Dean’s head and ears and Sam’s grin widened as Castiel smiled at them both.

Eventually, Dean relaxed as he let Gabriel mark him and a small smile graced his lips as he closed his eyes and dropped his head to his paws. Knowing the older alpha was so protective of him was nice, actually. He liked the idea of Gabriel wanting to take care of him.

That was something he’d never thought he’d admit to.

Gabriel licked at a deep wound on his back, whining quietly.

“Hate seeing you hurt, alpha,” he whispered and Dean’s possessive instincts flared violently.

Before anyone could even blink, Dean had Gabriel on the floor, a paw wrapped around him as he licked frantically at the bruises and gashes littering the older alpha’s body.

Gabriel was his. Part of his pack. His family.

His brother.

Gabriel mewled in joy at all the attention and quickly rolled onto his back, baring his belly and displaying his trust for Dean. Dean growled appreciatively and nuzzled the other alpha’s belly, tickling him lightly and tugging Gabriel closer.

He marvelled at how far the older alpha had come from when they had first met; how far both of them had come.

They hadn’t exactly been on friendly terms when Gabriel had first arrived and Dean had been less-than-pleased to find the golden alpha attempting to pursue a relationship with his brother. They had irritated each other and Gabriel had made it clear he wasn’t interested in being a true member of the Winchester pack and that he was only joining to look out for his little brother.

The older alpha had been distrusting of Dean, regularly comparing him to Michael and he’d faced real difficulties in submitting to Dean’s orders as well as making any friends within the pack.

Now, here he was rolling over for Dean and fussing over him and growling protectively just because the younger alpha had a few injuries.

Not only that, but Dean was feeling possessive of Gabriel too; the older alpha was painted with cuts and bruises and he was obviously touch-starved. He was in desperate need of affection and Dean was now convinced that the Novak pack didn’t deserve the golden alpha. Gabriel was fun and playful and protective and Dean rolled the other alpha onto his front and began working his scent
into his fur because Gabriel belonged to his pack now.

He couldn’t imagine anyone better for Sam.

Gabriel mewed and snuggled closer as Dean rumbled and wrapped his paw tighter around his friend.

“Ours,” growled Dean quietly and Gabriel whimpered happily and bowed his head for Dean to mark.

“Yes, alpha,” Gabe whispered, vulnerable and obedient and the exact opposite of everything he was around Michael. He needed this. He needed to be part of a family that loved him. Needed to know his leader cared about him unlike his previous one.

Dean didn’t correct the title. He rumbled again and licked his friend’s head comfortingly. His lead alpha instincts were screaming at him to give Gabriel the affection he craved. He wanted the world to know Gabriel belonged to the Winchester pack, not the Novak pack. Gabriel was theirs.

Gabriel shoved his nose into Dean’s neck, scenting deeply and sighing contentedly at the smell of pine and leather. Dean’s scent was so much better than Michael’s; he smelled like home and safety and family and Gabriel couldn’t get enough.

Dean never hurt him like Michael and Lucifer and Raphael did. He didn’t bully him or call him names. Didn’t think he was weak and never said he was just an ‘omega with a knot’.

Sure, they still annoyed each other to no end and they had their little tiffs every now and then, but Dean respected him; thought of him as an equal opponent during sparring sessions, never tried to intimidate him into submitting, didn’t punish him for the tiniest of mistakes or accidents. Dean grew worried when he was hurt; treated him like all his other pack members despite them once being fierce rivals.

He was so much kinder and more patient than Michael would ever be and Gabriel was proud to follow him; to be a part of the pack he’d been told to hate. Dean was his leader and he would never follow any of his brothers again. He was part of the Winchester pack now and he would protect his newfound family to his dying breath. He had friends here; family outside of his brother and nephew, and he had Sam, the lover he’d never thought he’d have and wouldn’t give up for anything or anyone. What had he done to deserve this pack?

He smiled when Dean began nosing at his neck scenting and nuzzling the injuries there. He growled softly and tucked Gabriel’s head under his chin, instincts blazing when Gabriel whimpered pathetically, snuggling closer.

This was the side of Gabriel not many people got to see; the side he kept hidden away for fear of others mocking him. He desperately needed affection after going so long without it, but it was hard for him to let his guard down because with his older brothers, it usually got him hurt. He put up a wall of snark and sass to protect himself; made people laugh or roll their eyes at him in irritation because that was safer than opening up and letting someone close, only to have them betray him later.

That’s why he loved Sam so much. Sam didn’t judge him, didn’t mock him or belittle him; he just liked being around Gabriel. He enjoyed listening to Gabriel’s stories and opinions, wasn’t afraid of him or afraid to be seen with him, never denied him affection and love when he asked for it. Sam genuinely loved him and Gabriel had never had that before outside Cas and Samandriel.
Now it seemed Dean wanted to make him feel loved too.

The younger alpha licked his head comfortingly, nuzzling his ears and nosing at his injuries. He rumbled protectively as he sniffled at Gabriel’s floppy ear and Gabriel felt a rush of warmth course through his body and he whined lowly, trying to show how much he appreciated what Dean was doing for him.

“Thank you,” Gabriel whispered shyly, burying his face in Dean’s chest. Sincere confessions like this didn’t come easily to Gabe; he found it so hard to trust people not to use them against him.

“…For what?” Asked Dean softly, resting his head over the other alpha’s.

“For giving me a home,” Gabriel murmured. “For letting me share your family.”

Dean huffed but it was clear he was touched by the admission. Verbalising his feelings didn’t come easy to Dean either.

“I know we didn’t exactly get off on the right paw, but you’re ours now. You always will be. This will be your home for as long as you want it to be.”

Gabriel chuckled quietly. “Don’t say that – you’ll never get rid of me.”

Dean smiled. He could see through Gabriel’s humour because he used exactly the same techniques to keep himself from getting hurt after having his Dad abuse him for so long.

“Then it’s a good thing we want you to stay,” whispered Dean, nuzzling Gabriel’s head gently.

Gabriel squeaked in surprise at the uncharacteristically sweet confession before pressing his face into Dean’s neck once more.

“Great, ‘cos I really don’t want to leave,” mumbled Gabriel.

Dean’s smile widened.

“I’m proud to follow you, alpha,” admitted Gabriel quietly and Dean’s heart warmed as he tightened his paw around the other alpha.

“You don’t have to call me that,” he reminded softly but Gabriel shook his head.

“I want to. You deserve it more than Michael ever will. Just for tonight, let me call you by your title. You’re the only alpha I’ve ever wanted to say it to.”

Dean swallowed dryly. That was a big honour. “Okay.”

“Thank you, alpha,” murmured Gabriel, closing his eyes in relief.

Dean slowly returned to rubbing his scent over the golden wolf’s head and Gabriel hummed in approval. It surprised him just how affectionate Dean actually was and he wondered how alike they truly were. Cas obviously loved the lead alpha and his little brother didn’t give his heart out to just anyone.

Eventually, Gabriel lay down, allowing Dean to rest his head over his back. They both smiled when Sam and Cas cuddled into Dean, resting their heads on Gabriel’s body as though he was a fluffy pillow. Dean wrapped a paw around Castiel as Sam placed one over Gabe’s with a tender smile. Gabriel had no intentions of complaining about his use as a pillow.
They fell asleep like that, content and warm and each of them feeling loved and wanted.

* * *

A little distance away, Adam snuggled into Bobby; the older alpha’s paw strewn across him as Ellen pressed into Bobby’s other side. Adam smiled at his brothers’ cuddle pile, shaking his head in amusement and Bobby huffed softly.

“Idjits,” he grumbled fondly before tugging Adam closer. Kid needed a bit of attention after the past week. It wasn’t like he’d ever been given any off John and Bobby was determined to change that, just like he had for his other boys.

“Softie,” Ellen mumbled without opening her eyes and Bobby huffed again, this time indignantly. He wasn’t soft. He just… wanted to make sure Adam wasn’t traumatised.

Yeah, that was it.

He nuzzled Adam’s head, ignoring his melting heart as the beta purred quietly, and closed his eyes.

“Night,” whispered Adam after a few moments.

“Goodnight,” rumbled Bobby gruffly, missing Adam’s grin and the way he shifted his head a little closer to the older alpha.

Adam was the last of the pack to finally slip into a deep slumber.

Chapter End Notes

People were asking for some fluff after all the action in the last few chapters, so... have some fluffy filler :)

8 months earlier

“So, let me get this straight… first, your whore of a brother keeps his bastard child a secret from you for nearly seven years, then when you finally find out, you let him escape unpunished? And now you’re telling me Gabriel has disappeared? Have I got that right?”

Zachariah Novak’s expression was cold and disapproving, gaze hard and mouth pulled into a tight, thin line. It was a face his children were familiar with and as his scent radiated displeasure and barely restrained disgust, Michael lowered his head in shame.

“I’m sorry, father,” the younger alpha began as his brothers averted their gazes, unwilling to catch the attention of their father.

Zachariah sneered at his eldest son. “’Sorry’ isn’t going to return them to us.”

Michael winced. “We’ve tried to locate them, but it appears they’ve left the city.” He paused for a moment, debating whether to mention the next part of their research as Zachariah’s frown deepened and Naomi pursed her lips. “We have reason to believe they’ve fled into the wild,” Michael admitted.

Zachariah narrowed his gaze and crossed his arms, leaning back in his chair, his scent reeking of irritation.

“How do you expect to lead a pack when you can’t even control your own brothers?” He huffed, shaking his head. “Maybe I was wrong to pass the family onto you, Michael. Maybe you’re not mature enough.” He glanced behind Michael as the younger alpha bowed his head, ashamed.

“Perhaps I should’ve passed leadership onto Lucifer,” mused the oldest Novak and Michael stiffened as Lucifer smirked. There had always been competition between the oldest Novak siblings, some of which amounted to physical violence as well as the usual verbal sparring. Lucifer and Michael’s relationship had always been tentative at best; in fact, the five Novak siblings had never really seen eye-to-eye on much of anything and had engaged in a fair few scraps because of it.

“I will find them, father,” assured Michael tensely. “I will bring them back to us and Castiel will be punished for his disobedience.”

“And the child?” Prompted Zachariah impatiently.

“I’ll kill it myself,” huffed Michael and Zachariah made a face that suggested he didn’t believe him but waved his hand in dismissal anyway.

“Excellent. Castiel will soon learn his place in the family. Disobedience and secrets will not be tolerated.” He eyed Michael sternly. “You have to earn respect, boy. It doesn’t just get given to you. If you want the family to respect you, then you’ve got to show them what happens if they don’t.”

Michael nodded. “Yes, father.”
Zachariah hummed and waved his hand once more as he returned to his meal, his beta wife glancing at Michael disinterestedly.

“Shut the door on your way out,” she said as she cut into her smoked salmon and her three sons nodded obediently and filed out of the house.

Once outside, Lucifer sidled up to his brother with a condescending smirk and Michael immediately tensed.

“And just how do you propose to find them?” Drawled Lucifer. “Castiel has been missing for months and somehow I doubt Gabriel is going to answer his phone.”

“Which is precisely why I forced everyone in the family to install tracking chips in their phones,” growled Michael. Lucifer raised an eyebrow and Raphael snorted.

“You give our brother far too little credit, Lucifer.”

Michael smirked and Lucifer scowled before his sly smirk fell back into place.

“And what of Castiel? How do you suggest we track him? He left his phone in his apartment, remember?”

“I suggest we track Gabriel first and use him to find Castiel’s location,” growled Michael.

“What if he’s not with Castiel?” Lucifer challenged. “Why do you assume Gabriel left to find him? They’ve never shown all that much affection for each other in the past.”

Raphael scoffed at him. “Not when we’re with them, no. But Gabriel and Castiel have always been closer to one another than the rest of us. Don’t pretend you haven’t noticed. I wouldn’t be surprised if Gabriel has known about Castiel’s child since its birth.”

Michael nodded in agreement. “Gabriel protected Castiel the day he left and no one will convince me otherwise. He didn’t attack our little brother; he gave him an opportunity to escape.”

“And now he’s set off after Castiel,” mused Raphael. “If little brother isn’t already dead, that is.”

Michael hummed thoughtfully. “That’s true. It’s likely Castiel is already dead; I doubt he can survive for long in the wild.”

Lucifer chuckled. “Can you imagine him trying to hunt? I’d pay good money to see him go up against some wild beast.”

“If starvation doesn’t strike him first, those wild shifter packs will,” said Raphael and Michael quirked a smile.

“Plenty of shifter packs would kill him on sight. Our scent is quite recognisable.”

Lucifer grinned, scent swimming with lust for a fight. “I’d love to hear of him stumbling across a powerful pack like the Winchesters. Imagine the bloodbath. They’d have no problems tearing into him and that little brat of his.”

Michael made a sound of agreement, ignoring the violence in his brother’s scent.

“Perhaps we should wait a little. I doubt Gabriel will fare any better against the wild. Maybe we should let their own decisions destroy them before we return their corpses home. It would be a waste of resources to search for them and we can use their bodies as a reminder for the rest of the family to
stay in line.”

“Suits me fine,” drawled Lucifer. “I have no desire to sleep in mud and battle disgusting insects out there. Let our brothers rot, track Gabriel’s phone once it stops moving, bring the corpses home and set them on display for the rest of the family.”

“We’ll keep an eye on the tracker,” mumbled Michael. “If it stops moving for a few days, we’ll be certain he’s dead. Then we can search for him.”

“And if Castiel’s not with him?” Asked Raphael curiously and Michael shrugged.

“We’ll still have one body. Who cares about a wayward whore and his worthless brat?”

* * *

Now

Dean sunk his teeth into the juncture between Castiel’s neck and shoulder and the omega whimpered at the burst of pain before sighing happily as his mate lapped at the wound.

“I love you,” growled Dean quietly as he thrust deep into his lover and Castiel mewed and bared his neck further, granting the alpha better access to work at the mating mark he’d just renewed.

“I love you too,” panted Castiel, clutching at Dean’s back and the alpha grinned, pleased, before nuzzling his neck.

“Your turn,” he whispered as he bared his neck for Cas and the omega smiled and nosed at the alpha’s mating mark before clamping down. Dean whined softly and Cas groaned as the alpha’s knot swelled inside him, locking their bodies together.

Dean closed his eyes and Castiel lapped the wound soothingly, rubbing their cheeks together once Dean relaxed onto him. Their stubble scraped together, making them both grin and Dean hummed contentedly and wrapped his arms tightly around his mate as he pushed his face into the omega’s neck. He breathed in Castiel’s familiar scent of oceans and honey and couldn’t help but run his tongue over the omega’s neck, rumbling at the combination of sweet and salty.

Cas closed his eyes and held his lover securely as he exposed his throat, smirking when Dean nipped and licked at it greedily. He felt so full and content.

They dozed lightly under the sun despite the chill of the Winter air and even when Dean’s knot returned to its normal size, they refused to move, too comfortable to consider returning the short distance to the pack.

Dean cupped his mate’s cheek and brushed a thumb over it adoringly as Cas smiled with half-lidded eyes.

“We need to do this more often,” murmured Dean. “I don’t spend enough time worshiping your body.”

Castiel chuckled. “What happened to that macho alpha façade you were so fond of?”
Dean snorted. “Same thing that happened to your alpha-fearing, independent omega façade.”

Castiel rolled his eyes playfully before holding Dean close once more. He couldn’t get enough of his alpha.

Dean traced a finger over his bare chest. “Are alphas really that bad in civilisation? I know you originally thought we were worse, but city alphas must be pretty bad if you thought we were all murderers and rapists.”

Castiel contemplated the question for a moment as Dean rested his head on his mate’s shoulder, hand splaying protectively over his stomach.

“It would be wrong of me to say all alphas in civilisation are crude and aggressive,” began Castiel slowly. “There are variations in personalities just as there are out here. Some alphas are genuinely kind and considerate but unfortunately, I had more run-ins with the ones that weren’t. My brothers, for example.” Castiel shifted into a better position to cuddle Dean as the alpha slipped his arm around him.

“In fact, most of my family aren’t exactly wonderful people. They’ve always held… traditional beliefs. They think alphas should be at the top of the hierarchy with betas and omegas acting subservient to them. Most higher paid jobs and better-quality education are offered to alphas as they’re expected to provide for the family. Omegas are mostly expected to look after the house and the family even if society likes to believe we’ve moved on from those gender roles.”

Dean frowned. “That’s messed up. What about the omegas that are stronger than alphas? What about the betas that are more intelligent than alphas? What about the alphas who are better with pups than both omegas and betas?”

Castiel quirked a small smile and kissed his mate sweetly on the cheek. He was so lucky to have Dean.

“Society looks unfavourably upon them. They don’t fit into the ‘correct boxes’. They don’t belong so they get shunned or bullied or driven out.”

Dean scowled and tugged his lover closer. “For shifters who think they’re ‘civilised’, they’re pretty cruel.”

Castiel shrugged. “You can understand why I never told anyone about Samandriel. I was an unmated omega from a wealthy and powerful pack and yet I had a child. I would’ve brought shame and disgrace to my family and we both would’ve paid dearly for it. I had to be careful where I took Samandriel in case people recognised me. I couldn’t pick him up from school, struggled to take him to public places… I had to lie about my relationship to him when I was questioned. I had to tell people he was a distant cousin’s son I was taking care of, just so word didn’t get back to my brothers.

“It was hard on Samandriel too. He could never call me ‘Dad’ or ‘father’ in public. He had to lie about who he was and no one wanted to be associated with him because he was part of the Novak family. We rarely spent any time together because I had to work and he had to go to school and outside of that, we had to be careful where we went together and who saw us. When I was called to attend meetings or functions with my brothers, Samandriel had to stay at home. He didn’t want to talk to the babysitters and child minders I was forced to hire, but I had no choice if I wanted to keep him safe from my family.”

Castiel shook his head. “If the media ever found out about him, there would’ve been such a scandal.
My family would’ve been even more furious than they were when we escaped. My life would’ve been controlled by my brothers; I would’ve been forced to mate some rich alpha I didn’t know just so we could pass Samandriel off as a contraceptive malfunction. Samandriel would either have been killed at my brothers’ hands or the rich alpha’s and it would’ve been made to look like an accident because my family is obsessed with ‘pure bloodlines’.

The omega averted his gaze. “I was scared when Gabriel found out about him. Whilst we have always been closer to one another than the rest of our family, our lives were very different because Gabriel is an alpha. He spent far more time with our older brothers than he did me and whilst he didn’t always believe in the choices they made, he had to go along with them to show his support for his family. It was expected of him because of his gender and in the public eye and whilst with our family, he was forced to act like Michael, Raphael and Lucifer. Sometimes, he was such a good actor, it was hard to remember he wasn’t really like them. I was terrified when he found me bottle-feeding Samandriel. I was afraid he’d think I was trying to shame the family and that Samandriel was disgusting and impure. In that moment, I wasn’t sure if he’d kill Samandriel and present me to our brothers.”

Dean held his mate tighter. “Something tells me that’s not in Gabe’s nature.”

Castiel smiled. “No. But I wasn’t sure at the time. We’d spent so long away from each other and Gabriel spent so long acting like our brothers and putting on a façade for both the public and our family, I felt like I didn’t know him anymore. He was angry at me for not telling him I’d had a child and it probably didn’t help that I was feeling protective of Samandriel whilst I faced what my body was telling me was a threatening alpha. We yelled at each other a lot and at one point we got into a small scrap because I shifted into my canine form and that only served to make Gabriel even more furious.”

Dean raised his eyebrows in surprise and Castiel shook his head with a small chuckle.

“We were both rather frustrated and hurt by life at this point. I think we just snapped. After that, we started to cool off. We apologised and began to plan how to keep Samandriel a secret. Over the next few years, we grew closer again and Gabriel was a wonderful uncle to Samandriel, even if he wasn’t always allowed to show it. I’m grateful to him.”

Castiel frowned suddenly. “I’m sorry, I think I diverged off on a tangent. I didn’t mean to bore you with my past problems.”

Dean kissed his mate’s neck, right over the mating mark. “Your life is far from boring, Angel. I want to know everything about you,” he hummed. “Besides, I asked you about civilised life. You’re painting a pretty clear picture.”

Castiel smiled and snuggled into Dean, practically purring when Dean rolled off him and opened his arms in invitation.

“We should probably get back to the pack soon,” murmured Dean after a few moments and Cas nodded in agreement even though his arms tightened around his mate.

“I have to admit,” Dean mumbled quietly, “I’m glad you ran away. I may not be a rich alpha and I highly doubt your family would approve of me, but I can’t think of a better mate and son.”

Castiel grinned and pressed his head under Dean’s chin. He still couldn’t quite believe how easily Dean called Samandriel his son. He’d always been taught that no alpha wanted to look after another alpha’s child. Dean proved all his teachers and family wrong.
“Gabe and Samandriel approve of you,” corrected Castiel. “And they’re the only family I care about so I suppose you’re in the clear.”

Dean laughed softly and stroked his omega’s back. “Sometimes I wonder about Gabe.”

Castiel nipped his lover’s jaw. “Maybe if you didn’t irritate each other so much…”

“We’re hard-headed alphas. It’s what we do,” teased Dean. “We can’t all be cute and cuddly like you and Sam.”

Castiel scrunched his nose up. “Sam and I aren’t ‘cute and cuddly’.”

Dean snorted. “Please. You and Sam are secret BFFs. You’ve saved his life and he loves cuddling up to you on Winter nights when he thinks no one’s watching. And you don’t exactly push him away.”

Castiel hesitated guiltily and Dean laughed. “See? You all think I’m blind, but I’m really not.”

“Sam’s like a large, warm blanket,” pouted Cas. “It’s not my fault my coat’s not as thick as yours. I was born in a perfectly heated room, cleaned up and given to a nurse to check over.”

Dean smirked. “My fragile mate.”

“Yes,” agreed Castiel petulantly. “And Sam clearly feels more sympathetic because he at least tries to keep me warm and alive.”

Dean snorted. “Oh? What am I? A wet lettuce? Do I not cuddle you and the pups every night?”

“…Sam’s warmer and bigger,” huffed Castiel under his breath and Dean snickered.

“Are you having an affair with my brother?” He asked, trying to keep his expression serious and Castiel nodded, equally as solemn.

“For about five months now. He’s asked me to break up with you and run away with him.”

“I’ll beat him up,” growled Dean playfully as he nipped Castiel’s shoulder. “I won’t let you leave.”

Castiel shoved his face into Dean’s neck as he plastered himself over the alpha. “No. Please. Let me go,” he deadpanned.

“Never. You’re mine,” rumbled Dean, fingers brushing lightly over Castiel’s sides until the omega was squirming and biting back snickers.

“Come on,” Dean said after a few minutes. “We need to get back to the pack.”

Castiel nodded slowly and shifted into his wolf form, Dean quickly following suit and pressing into his side.

“I’ve got a brother to beat up,” Dean chirped, tail high and wagging happily even as Castiel shook his head in amusement.

* * *

* * *
Sam had no idea why Dean had attacked him. He’d been talking contentedly with Gabriel about their childhoods when suddenly, Dean had stalked over to him and pounced on him.

He wasn’t complaining because playfighting with Dean reminded him of when they were pups and he kind of loved goofing around with his brother. Dean tugged on his ears and nibbled on his paws and after a few moments, he snorted and trotted over to Castiel.

“That’ll teach you to steal my mate,” he growled lightly and Castiel rolled his eyes and shoved his shoulder as Sam tilted his head, completely and utterly befuddled.

“Um… should I ask why you just attacked my lover?” Drawled Gabriel, but he didn’t look very concerned.

“He’s having an affair with Cas,” Dean stated and Cas groaned softly and shoved his shoulder a little harder.

Gabriel arched an eyebrow as he turned to Sam. “Oh? And when were you going to tell me about this?”

“Three-forty-seven next Tuesday afternoon,” Sam said drily. “We’re getting mated and flying to Cuba for the honeymoon.”

“Will there be cake?” Asked Gabriel as Castiel closed his eyes, defeated and Dean snickered beside him.

“We ready to start moving again?” Asked Dean, glancing around his relaxed pack. It was just after midday and the frost was melting slowly. “Or are we hungry?”

“I think we should walk a little further before we use all our energy up on a hunt,” hummed Sam. “We’re not exactly going to starve and I think we should make use of the good weather instead of wasting it on a hunt.”

Dean nodded. “Sounds like a plan.” He turned to the rest of the pack and barked wordlessly, gaining their attention. “We’re leaving in five minutes. Do what you have to do then get into formation.”

There were huffs and grumbles of agreement as wolves clambered to their paws and stretched.

“So, is Winter really as bad as everyone says it is, or are you guys just trying to scare the naïve civilised folk?” Hummed Gabriel. “Benny’s been telling me stories but I’m not convinced I believe him.”

Castiel snorted. “If that’s how you feel, I’ll be stealing my brother-in-law for use as a blanket. You can have him back in Spring.”

Gabriel arched an eyebrow as Sam laughed and rubbed his head over Castiel’s affectionately as he walked past.

“It can’t be that bad,” protested Gabriel and Dean chuckled as he made to follow his brother.

“There ain’t any heaters in the wild, shortstack. And you certainly won’t be getting any of those ‘hot chocolate’ things you keep waffling on about.”

Gabriel pulled a face as he and Cas followed their lovers. “They’re just messing with me, right?” Whispered Gabriel as he leaned closer to his brother. “I mean, Benny told me wolves die out here in the Winter. He said they starve and die of frostbite and pneumonia and a ton of other things. He said
he remembers watching someone get trapped beneath the ice when crossing a frozen river. Told me they drowned and none of his pack would help him.”

Castiel shot his brother a pointed look and Gabriel’s eyes widened fractionally, ears lowering.

“…But… he said… he said packs fight to the death over a measly rabbit in Winter. Said they get more vicious and aggressive and whole packs can be wiped out because of starvation. Said some wolves get buried under the snow and can suffocate. That’s not… I mean, that’s not real, right? They’re just exaggerations.”

Castiel raised an eyebrow and Gabriel’s tail fell.

“You must be aware of Gadreel’s story,” murmured Cas. “Of how his pack was unable to find food for weeks and when they finally found some, they were challenged by another pack. He was fatally injured and he told them to leave him, so they did.”

Gabriel’s eyes widened in panic. “I just thought his pack were cruel. I didn’t realise it was because…” He trailed off as a thought hit him. “Wait… so what if we get attacked over prey and we can’t walk properly? Would Dean… would he leave us? What if there’s not enough food to fill everyone? Do we have to fight over it? Is it every wolf for themselves? What if we fall through ice? Would the pack leave us to die? Would they just watch us drown? Are we gonna die of frostbite? What if our toes fall off? What if-”

“Easy, Gabe,” interrupted Dean soothingly as Sam pressed into his side. Gabriel glanced between them, eyes wide and scent reeking of panic and fear. He hadn’t realised his voice was growing steadily louder, his words quickening until most of the pack could overhear.

“Whilst some packs work on an ‘every wolf for themselves’ basis, we don’t. We’re family, remember? We take care of each other, even when times get hard,” said Dean gently.

“No one’s going to leave anyone to die,” huffed Sam as he licked the alpha’s muzzle comfortably. “If anyone gets hurt, we stay by their side and help them through it. If anyone falls through ice or gets trapped by snow, we work together to save them. Family doesn’t leave each other behind.”

Gabriel ducked his head, embarrassed. “I… I thought…”

“They’re not like the Novak family,” said Castiel quietly. “They look after one another.”

As Gabriel’s head dipped lower, Sam and Dean shared a sorrowful glance. With Gabriel’s sarcasm and fiery personality, it was easy to forget how his family had abused and bullied him.

“You’re pack,” murmured Sam, rubbing his cheek against his lover’s. “We’ll get through Winter together. We’ve not had a death yet and we don’t intend on starting this year.”

Gabriel glanced at him briefly before looking away again and as Sam nuzzled his head, Dean turned to Benny.

“Do I have to make a rule about not scaring new members?” He asked sternly and Benny grinned and shook his head.

“Sorry, Sir. Didn’t think he’d get freaked out. Thought he was enjoying the stories.”

“I was until I learned they were real,” mumbled Gabriel and Benny chuckled.

“Sorry. If it’s any consolation, none of those stories were about this pack.”
“I’m using you as my blanket,” grumbled Gabriel. “I think you owe it to me to let me use that fluffy coat of yours.”

Benny smirked. “What is it with Novaks using me as their own personal heater? Last year it was Cas and Samandriel, this year it’s you. I’m beginning to feel objectified.”

Gabriel perked up a little at the friendly banter, smiling when Benny trotted over to his side and pointedly pressed into his smaller body.

“Warmer?” Benny teased and Gabriel snuggled up to the larger alpha with an exaggerated purr.

“Alright guys, c’mon. Let’s set off before Benny really does need to offer his services,” stated Dean, glancing at the sky. He could see grey clouds on the horizon and they were making him uneasy.

As everyone nodded and made their way over, Benny winked at Gabriel.

“We’ll look after you,” he whispered before sliding away to the outskirts of the group and Gabriel’s chest blossomed with warmth and affection for his newfound family.

As Sam and Dean led the pack onwards, Castiel took his brother’s side and Gabriel knew he was home.

Chapter End Notes

So apparently there are actually five parts in this and not four like I originally thought. We are on part five not four. Hope you enjoyed the mix of fluff and plot!
“So much for Gabriel dying in the wild,” huffed Lucifer. “His tracker’s still moving.”

Michael bristled, narrowing his eyes at his brother in a withering glare. “I’m aware.”

“Not only that, but it’s been stuck wandering the same area for a few weeks now. I’d say he’s found a place to settle down,” continued Lucifer, sneering at his brother. “Might even have snagged a wild girl or something. Our brother does enjoy sex; savage sex seems right up his alley.”

Michael shuddered. “Enough, Lucifer. For all we know, someone or something could’ve stolen his phone.”

“But you don’t really believe that, do you?” Taunted Lucifer. “You know just as well as I do that Gabriel’s still alive and you were wrong about him.”

Michael’s eyes flashed angrily. “We were wrong,” he corrected. “If that is indeed Gabriel.”

“Either way, we’re going to have to bring a body out soon,” huffed Lucifer. “Father’s starting to question your lazy leadership and I’ve heard whispers amongst the family; murmurs about how Gabriel and Castiel have escaped for a free life with Cassie’s bastard child and we’ve let them. If we’re not careful, I think we’ll have a few more deserters.”

Michael growled softly. “Fine. We’ll start working on a scout team and we’ll plan a route through the wild. Keep an eye on Gabriel’s tracker; make sure it doesn’t start moving and we’ll begin a retrieval mission for our wayward brothers.”

“That could take weeks to plan and get together,” protested Lucifer. “Who’s going to take over the family in our absence?”

“Father will be here. Since he’s so concerned about the way the family is run, we’ll allow him to look after whoever won’t be coming with us,” grumbled Michael bitterly. “He’s old but I’m sure he can take care of a few weak omegas and betas. The rest will be on the retrieval team.”

Lucifer blinked in surprise. “Wait, you want a big team on this?”

“In the wild? Yes. Their pack strength comes from numbers and skill. Since most of our family doesn’t have much skill in fighting in their canine forms, we’ll have to hope that large numbers will deter any savage packs from attacking us.” Michael suddenly smirked. “I also think it will keep our family in line; show them what it is exactly that Gabriel and Castiel have fled into. Those murmurs you’ve heard of desertion and betrayal… they might think twice upon seeing what all the wild has to offer.”

Lucifer quirked a smile. “I see. Well, it’ll certainly give them a shock.”

“Yes. Inform Raphael of our discussion. We need to start planning as soon as possible,” said Michael
as he swept out of the room, leaving Lucifer to smirk at the monitor showing Gabriel’s location.

“Don’t get too comfortable, brother.”

* * *

Now

“So, each city is run by a mayor and there’s a conglomeration of cities in a state. A governor is in charge of a state and all governors are alphas except in Utah where it’s a beta. In charge of all the states is the President, who’s an alpha and he can override every decision the governors and mayors make. Is that right?” Asked Charlie with a wrinkled nose and Castiel smiled and nodded.

“Basically. There are plenty of other branches of politicians that are complicated and have specific roles, but the basis is what I’ve told you. That’s only true of the U.S. though; other places have different politics. Britain for example has a Queen, who’s an omega, and she can override every other politician in all of her countries and territories.”

Charlie grinned. “That’s more like it! Give the lady omegas some power!”

Castiel chuckled and returned his attention to the path ahead.

“Isn’t that a lot of power to give to one person though?” Frowned Jody. “A whole country run by one person? Alpha, omega or beta… that’s a lot of responsibility and doesn’t it take away people’s freedom? All those laws and rules… what if every state doesn’t agree with a general blanket of rules? Who takes into account what an individual has to say? Not all laws and rules are going to suit or even be applicable to everybody.”

“That’s why people starve or go homeless despite there being enough food and space for everyone,” said Castiel. “Out here, you guys don’t have many luxuries, but you take care of friends and family. In civilisation, people don’t care about each other the same way. They care about themselves and their closest family members, but often, many families don’t have a great relationship with each other. Not to mention people need money to survive and there are only so many jobs to go around; some of which aren’t even minimum wage.”

Benny wrinkled his nose. “City folk confuse me so much. Why do they have four bedrooms in a house that only has two people in it? I don’t get it.”

“Luxury,” supplied Gabriel. “They like knowing they have the extra space merely in case they ever need it. They’ll probably never need it, just like they don’t need three bathrooms and a sixty-foot square garden they’ll never use, but they like to know they have it.”

Benny frowned. “But all those homeless people… can’t the folks who have spare bedrooms and bathrooms take them in? Then there won’t be any homeless.”

Castiel shook his head. “People in civilisation don’t trust one another. They won’t sit next to a stranger on a bus, never mind invite one to live with them.”

“And a lot of people are quite fearful of the homeless,” sighed Gabriel. “Won’t talk to them on the
street if they can help it. A lot of people don’t like dirt and illness and that’s how they see the homeless.”

Charlie scowled. “That’s awful. How do they expect those poor people to get anywhere if no one will give them a chance?”

“As long as they don’t have to deal with them, most city folk don’t care,” shrugged Gabriel. “Same with most businesses. They won’t offer them jobs because they don’t ‘look the part’, but they can’t earn any money so they’ll never look the part.”

“What about pups?” Asked Becky. “Are there any homeless pups? Does anyone look after them?”

“There’s plenty of them,” murmured Gabriel. “And most of the times they have to take care of themselves. Some steal and get into trouble with the law, some just starve and others are put into orphan houses. Once they turn eighteen though, they get kicked out.”

“How can people turn a blind eye to a pup in need?” Scowled Jody as Alex and Claire pressed into her sides, rubbing their heads against her fur gratefully as they realised how lucky they were to have been given a chance. All those poor pups in the city who never got an opportunity to grow up with a loving parent, merely because they lived in the streets.

“Civilisation runs smoothly when you have money. If you don’t… well…” Gabriel trailed off and Crowley quirked an eyebrow.

“Doesn’t always run smoothly if you have money. You three are part of a rich and powerful pack and Cas and Samandriel are on the run. No offense, but you haven’t exactly had the greatest upbringing either.”

Gabriel grimaced. “Fair point. That’s more to do with gender roles and expectations though than money.”

“Which are also ridiculous,” huffed Sam, glancing at Gabe sympathetically.

“And I always though wild folk hierarchy was a little on the traditional side,” snorted Meg drily. “But civilised expectations take the cake.” Gabriel smiled at the saying she’d learned from him.

“It’s an alpha-run world,” mused Castiel. “No offense to the alphas in this pack,” he added.

“None taken,” said Benny. “I wouldn’t be too happy with alphas if I’d grown up in your paws. Imagine being told what you can and can’t do your entire life just because of your secondary gender…” He glanced at Castiel. “No wonder you were terrified of us all when you first came here.”

“It’s not just omegas and betas who are told they’re not as good as alphas,” hummed Cas. “Alphas are told they have to act and look a certain way and strive for specific things otherwise they’re deemed lazy and weak. If they’re not one hundred percent confident in themselves, they’re told they aren’t ‘real alphas’. If they prefer to stay at home and look after the pups when their significant other works a high-profile job, they’re told they’re useless and pathetic and that they’re leeching off their partner.”

“For being a good parent?” Asked Jody incredulously and both Castiel and Gabriel nodded.

“If they earn less than their significant other, despite them both working, the alpha is deemed submissive and unambitious,” explained Castiel and the pack pulled various faces of disgust.

“So basically, if you don’t live up to the archaic stereotype of alpha, beta and omega, you don’t
belong in society?” Asked Jo with a hard scowl and Castiel nodded.

Benny suddenly chuckled. “Can you imagine Jo growing up in a city? She’d beat up every alpha who looked at her funny. She’d have been thrown out of the city before she reached the age of six.”

The pack snickered as Jo rolled her eyes.

“I’d have started a revolution,” she snorted.

“You’d have begun a war between alphas and omegas with betas as the referees,” drawled Crowley.

“And I would’ve won,” grinned Jo, a wicked gleam in her eyes as she winked at Crowley.

“No arguments here,” he smirked.

“Jo would’ve been President at sixteen,” snorted Sam.

Jo puffed her chest out proudly. “President? I think you mean ‘Queen’, darling.”

Benny laughed and growled at her in light challenge and Jo growled back and chewed on his ear. They scuffled for a moment before Ellen cleared her throat and sent Benny a narrowed glare. Benny ducked his head shyly and took a step away from the blonde omega as Jo scowled at her mother.

“Sorry, Jo. You’d just be a Princess. I think your mother would take the title of Queen,” grinned Dean.

“Or Dark Overlord,” grumbled Jo, earning a swat across the back of the head from a scowling Ellen.

“So how does mating work in civilisation?” Asked Chuck curiously. “You don’t tend to see many couples with mating marks in the city, so how do they work?”

“Fifty percent don’t,” snorted Gabriel. “Those that do aren’t always happy relationships.”

The pack glanced at Gabriel, surprised.

“We don’t tend to call it ‘mating’ in civilisation,” offered Cas. “We call it ‘marriage’. We exchange rings instead of mating bites, although some couples do both. There’s a lot of paperwork involved and sometimes financial assets become a problem. Some marriages are arranged and some are based purely around money. They don’t always work out and statistics show that almost fifty percent get dissolved after only a few years.”

“Exhibit A,” huffed Gabriel, gesturing to himself. “Although mine was based on my sweet, darling ex cheating on me in my own house. That was a pleasant sight to come home to after a long day of work.”

The pack winced as Sam growled softly.

“Kali was an idiot,” rumbled Sam. “She didn’t know what she had.”

Gabriel’s gaze softened and he quirked a small smile. “As adorable as that is, I’m pretty sure she knew what she had. We’d been married a fair few years before she decided to start up her affair with Odin. It’s a shame it took me another few years to find out.”

“Who does that?” Huffed Charlie. “Why did she mate you in the first place if she wasn’t interested in mating? And why didn’t she just tell you she didn’t want to be in a relationship anymore? Why cheat?”
“Money,” Cas and Gabe said in unison.

“If I died, my wealth would have been transferred to her. She was hoping I wouldn’t find out,” Gabriel supplied, chuckling at the expressions of distaste from the rest of the pack.

“Money seems to make everything worse,” observed Harry. “Why have it if it’s going to ruin relationships and segregate people?”

“Because if civilisation didn’t have money they’d either return to bartering, which was just as bad, or there would be more riots and violence and greed than there already is because people could just take what they like.”

Harry frowned. “But we get along fine without money.”

Castiel smiled in amusement. “Because you live simply. You don’t place any importance on expensive objects or materials. Your wealth is based off your friendships and pack relationships. Civilised folk don’t really care about those things; they come second to personal belongings. People don’t live in conventional packs in the city, that’s why they call them ‘families’. They’re not always related and they live in separate houses, sometimes separate states or countries, but they have alliances with a specific name or family so they refer to each other as part of the same family or pack.”

“Problem is they can switch packs very easily because there’s no real loyalty,” added Gabe. “As soon as a better deal comes up, people can switch packs without a second thought. All they have to do is send a text or a letter to their original leader to tell them they are no longer allies. It’s a little different depending on how high up the chain of command you are and different again when wealth is involved, but people in the city don’t really care about pack dynamics because they like to be independent.”

Benny shuddered. “Life without a pack where mates always cheat and betray one another and break up on a whim… where pups are left to starve and people can walk past a homeless person without even looking at them and everyone is forced to fit within a certain stereotype with no personality of their own… sounds like a terrible nightmare.”

Gabriel cocked an eyebrow. “When you put it like that…”

Castiel smiled. “There are good things about civilisation too.”

“Such as?” Prodded Benny.

“Pie,” Dean interrupted eagerly. “Pie is good.”

Benny stared at him, puzzled.

“The food is awesome,” Samandriel grinned, wiggling his tail as he glanced up at a smirking Dean. “There are so many different flavours from all over the world! And you get cakes and chocolate and a load of other things you can’t get in the wild!”

Castiel smiled warmly as Gabriel perked up at the mention of chocolate.

“Aww… I miss chocolate,” the golden alpha pouted and Castiel bit back a snicker.

“There are movies and books and live music,” explained Castiel. “Theatre productions and theme parks and sport hubs. There are many different sources of entertainment and opportunities for pleasure that are aided by technology and materials from the city.”
The pack listened with rapt attention despite not understanding what half of those things were and they asked questions about the pleasures of civilisation as they travelled through the forests, Gabriel, Castiel and Samandriel all too happy to answer their queries.

A few hours passed and the pack began to quieten as the sun slowly slid lower towards the horizon.

Grey clouds claimed the sky and suddenly, a bang echoed around the trees, huge and deep and taking all of the pack off-guard. A crack of lightning followed it, lighting the sky in a flash of white and another intimidating rumble spread through the atmosphere, making the pups scuttle towards the adults.

Dean and Sam glanced at the sky, then to each other before looking around urgently for cover.

“Pick up the pace, guys,” ordered Dean, leading the pack into a quick trot once he spotted a rocky mound in the distance. He could see the narrow opening into the hill from here and although it would probably be a tight squeeze, he was pretty certain he could keep his pack dry and safe.

The rain caught them when they were less than fifty metres away. It pelted the ground mercilessly and made their healing injuries ache with its heavy drops. The pack broke out into a run, the sky brightening to the sound of thunder once more and Sam and Dean stood by the entrance to the cave-like crevice as they ensured their pack were safely inside. They slipped in after their pack and everyone stared at each other’s sodden forms for a few moments before bursting into laughter.

The water sapped the heat from their bodies, but with everyone in such a small, crowded space, they barely felt the cold and were quick to settle beside one another, enjoying the company and shared warmth.

Gabriel startled when Sam began lapping the excess rain water from his fur and he smiled when he realised the omega was trying to dry him off. He shifted so he could offer Sam the same treatment and before long, the pack were drying each other off as best they could.

Once satisfied, they told stories until the moon lifted itself high into the sky and the sound of the rain and the growling of the thunder accompanied them into a world of dreams.

* * *

Adam was the first to wake. He stretched lazily and smiled at the realisation Bobby had a paw draped around him. He nuzzled the older wolf’s side gently and slipped out from under his hold. He shook himself off, shifting his fur back into order and fluffing it up again before precariously stepping over the pile of warm bodies and heading towards the entrance of the cave.

He shivered at the fresh chill of the air outside and had to do a doubletake at the light dusting of white over the landscape.

When had the snow come?

He shivered again and retreated backwards a few steps as he took in the snowy scenery. Fortunately, it was only a thin layer, but it was still snow and the pack wouldn’t be too happy about it.

A familiar scent hit his nose and he paused, glancing around in confusion. His face lit up as he spotted the small herd of Roe deer pottering around an evergreen less than twenty metres away. This
species of deer wasn’t very large and since the pack was still healing, they would be a perfect hunting source, so long as they were quick enough to catch the little creatures.

Adam smiled. These deer were smaller than most members of the pack.

He shuffled backwards into the crevice again and whipped around when he heard a voice.

“What can you see?” Dean asked softly and Adam wiggled his tail and glanced towards the deer.

“Bit of snow. Some Roes.”

Dean frowned at the mention of snow but he quickly perked up at the idea of food. He carefully untangled himself from Cas and the pups and padded outside, raising an eyebrow at the proximity of the deer. If there was one good thing about snow, it was that it dulled everybody’s senses, even prey’s.

“We’ll wait for everyone to wake up,” murmured Dean. “We can have an early breakfast if everybody’s quiet enough.”

Adam nodded excitedly as Dean settled beside Castiel and his pups once more. Adam watched him for a few moments and Dean rolled his eyes and gestured to his free side. Adam grinned and snuggled beside his brother, shoving his head under Dean’s with a happy sigh. This was the life. A family who loved him and took care of him and a pack he actually felt useful in.

Dean nuzzled his head as he wrapped his paw around Cas and Adam hummed in approval and chuckled when Samandriel and Ben blinked at him sleepily before shuffling closer to him. He loved his brother’s pups.

He waited patiently for the rest of the pack to wake.

* * *

The deer had been an easy catch and as they tucked into their meals, having caught a few does because of their smaller size, Hannah pressed into Balthazar’s side with a happy hum. He glanced at her curiously and she smiled before working on their breakfast. He copied soon after and wasn’t all that surprised when Gadreel joined them.

They ate in a comfortable silence, chuckling when the four pups scampered over and joined in with their little group as the other adults grouped up around the other fallen does. Hannah watched the younger wolves play and eat with a longing sparkle in her eyes and Gadreel’s gaze softened as he licked her cheek gently in promise. Balthazar watched as his mate grinned at Gadreel and a smile quirked his own lips at the excitement in Hannah’s gaze. Gadreel chuckled and returned to his breakfast as Hannah flicked her attention back to the giggling pups.

Balthazar thought about the three of them as he ate. He wondered how their lives would progress now he’d accepted Gadreel into his and Hannah’s relationship and he wondered if he would ever be completely comfortable around the other alpha. He was trying, just as Gadreel and Hannah were working hard to prove to him he had nothing to fear in the Winchester pack, but past traumas weren’t so easy to get past and he found himself slipping up sometimes without wanting or meaning to. Little things would set him off; a playful growl from another alpha, an argument between other pack members, Gadreel just being too close sometimes…
It was frustrating because Balthazar didn’t want to be afraid of everything but every time he felt like he was making a bit of progress with his fears, he’d suddenly take a giant leap backwards merely because Gadreel had kissed him when he hadn’t expected it or Dean had ordered him into position on a hunt. He hated how worried he was of the pack looking at him as if he was fragile; he didn’t want to feel weak and pathetic, but every time he had a flashback or felt his whole body shut down on him, that’s exactly how he saw himself.

How on Earth was he supposed to stay in a relationship where he was constantly terrified? It wasn’t fair on Hannah and Gadreel. They had better things to do than be his therapists. Maybe they were alright with it now, but in months to come, they would tire of him, resent him for putting a strain on an already difficult relationship. He had to get better, had to force himself through his fears if he wanted to stay with them. Otherwise… they’d be better off without him. He’d have to leave and let them live the life they deserved rather than making them look after him. He had to be stronger than he was right now.

He just didn’t know how to do that.

“You’re thinking too much again,” murmured Hannah quietly, nuzzling his cheek worriedly. “Relax, Balt. We’re okay. Everything’s okay.”

Balthazar ducked his head guiltily. There he went again, making her worry. If he wasn’t careful, she’d soon grow tired of him.

Why could Hannah move past her trauma and he couldn’t?

Gadreel observed him concernedly. He slid closer to the smaller alpha and nuzzled his ear lightly, frowning at Balthazar’s tense muscles.

“Are you alright?” Gadreel asked softly. “If there’s anything you need to talk about…” He let the question hang between them and Balthazar sighed and shook his head. He wondered if entering a romantic relationship with Gadreel had been a good idea. He froze up far too often around him and he was still rather intimidated by the larger alpha despite Gadreel doing his very best to show him he didn’t need to be. He was obviously the problem, not Gadreel and he had no idea how to fix himself. Maybe he’d never be able to fix himself.

Gadreel frowned and pressed his nose into his neck, taking in the scent of worry and stress and fear and he sighed and nuzzled his neck tenderly. Balthazar wondered if Gadreel was already getting bored of him and his never-ending problems.

“I know it’s hard right now, but we’ll get there,” Gadreel whispered as he watched the pups bound away excitedly, playing and yipping as they sped over to Dean and Cas. “We have to keep trying. We can’t just give up.”

Balthazar dropped his gaze. “Sometimes I want to give up,” he confessed quietly. “I don’t feel as though I’m getting anywhere. Half the time, I’m still afraid of you, never mind the rest of the pack.”

“It’s understandable,” murmured Gadreel sympathetically. “You’ve done so well to get to this point. You can do this, Balt. I know you can.”

Hannah watched them silently, ready to offer support to either of them if they needed it, but her heart sunk at Balthazar’s next words.

“I… I’m worried I’ve made a mistake,” Balthazar admitted a little hoarsely. “I’m worried starting a relationship with you wasn’t… wasn’t a good move for me.” His eyes were beginning to glaze over
with water and Balthazar realised then how utterly afraid he was. He just wasn’t sure what he was afraid of. How stupid was he?

Gadreel paused and Balthazar winced as he realised how that may have sounded.

“‘I don’t want you to leave Hannah,” he whispered. “I was thinking… I was thinking maybe I should… maybe I should go. Leave you both to your happiness…””

Tears were rolling down his cheeks and Balthazar had never felt so pathetic in his life. He felt so lost and worthless and he knew everyone would be happier with him gone. He was a drain on the pack’s resources anyway.

Gadreel’s next words were slow and measured, as if he was thinking carefully.

“…I don’t think that’s what you really want.” He frowned for a moment, collecting his thoughts. “I believe you may be depressed. Or maybe experiencing PTSD.”

Balthazar squeezed his eyes shut. Great. He was even more messed up than he thought he was.

“I’m sorry,” Balthazar said without realising how unnecessary the apology was and Hannah’s face fell as Gadreel’s mouth turned downwards.

“You don’t have to be sorry, Balthazar. There’s nothing to be sorry about.”

“I’m broken,” whimpered the smaller alpha, voice hitching and pulse speeding up for reasons even he couldn’t decipher. He was so useless. Gadreel blinked before tugging the other wolf closer and nosing at his head reassuringly.

“You’re suffering,” he corrected quickly. “You’re not broken; you just need a little help.”

He suddenly tucked Balthazar’s head into his chest and held him for a few moments. He didn’t nuzzle the smaller alpha or kiss him, merely held him and rested his head over Balthazar’s, trapping him to his chest and for a moment, Balthazar was highly confused, breathing quickening as his eyes widened and a strong wave of fear washed over him for no particular reason.

Then he began to focus on Gadreel’s soothing heartbeat and the way his chest lifted and fell as he breathed and the rest of the world faded away. He closed his eyes and listened to Gadreel’s quiet breaths and his steady pulse and he felt some of the tension and anxiety slide away.

Gadreel was warm and his head a grounding weight on Balthazar’s own. Little by little, he relaxed into Gadreel’s soft fur and focused all his attention on the soft thudding of the other alpha’s heart. The familiar scent of oak and roasted chestnuts embraced him, making him feel safe and at peace and his breathing began to even out, matching the rise and fall of Gadreel’s chest.

He wasn’t sure how much time passed; minutes, hours, but when Gadreel finally lifted his head, allowing Balthazar to look up at him, the smaller alpha felt somehow lighter, more content. It was as though someone had slipped inside his head and silenced all his fears and doubts, if only for a short while and for once, he didn’t feel worthless or pathetic.

He found himself beginning to smile in wonder and Gadreel offered him a small one in return before tucking him into his side once more and silently returning to his meal.

Balthazar stared at him for a few seconds, briefly entertaining the idea of the other alpha being a wizard or maybe some sort of angel, before he decided he had no idea what had just happened and happily began eating again, tail wiggling behind him.
Hannah glanced between them both in surprise before shaking her head in amusement and eating in a comfortable silence.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Balthy :( Loving all these comments, guys!
December rolled in, taking everyone by surprise. The snow fell suddenly one night and didn’t stop, blanketing the already slushy ground in layers upon layers of white. The air was frosty, a harsh bite to the wind as it whipped the forests and all who lived there and the snow continued to dance to Earth, forcing most creatures into hiding.

There were times the Winchester pack had to stop, blinded by white and paralysed by the cold and those were the nights they curled up together, determined to keep each other warm and alive. Sometimes, there was a lull in the weather; the snow falling a little lighter and the winds resting for a short while as the sun peaked over the clouds. Those were the days the pack’s spirits lifted, smiles brightening and will power strengthening.

The pranks helped. They made everyone snicker when they were at their lowest. Gabriel was soft like that.

It had started one morning after a particularly freezing night. Everyone had been miserable and quiet even when the morning was proving to be a bright and mild one. Dean had been watching his pack mope around, looking far too tense and concerned, so Gabriel had sidled up to the tree the other alpha was beneath and knocked it with his hip.

A huge lump of snow had plopped onto Dean, flattening him with a yelp and everyone had turned around in confusion to find merely a black nose poking out from a giant heap of white. One by one, wolves began to laugh until they could hear Dean whimpering pathetically (and probably pouting) from beneath the snow. Sam and Cas dug him out and Gabriel cackled as Dean immediately growled at him and chased him around the forest, swiping snow at the smaller alpha as he did so. Unfortunately, he wasn’t watching where he was going and he hit another tree, another pile of snow cascading onto him and making the pack laugh even harder as Gabriel cackled louder.

Ever since then, Gabriel and Dean had been locked in a playful prank war, some wolves joining in whenever they felt like, but most content to watch one disaster after another play out between the two alphas.

This morning saw Dean dropping a harmless grass snake beside Gabriel’s paws as he slept and when he awoke, the whole pack was catapulted into wakefulness by the golden alpha’s panicked screams. Even the snake looked terrified and it quickly slithered away, grimacing at Gabriel’s yelps. Dean merely smirked as Ellen swatted the golden alpha over the head with a disapproving huff.

“Pull yourself together, boy. Just a grass snake.”

Gabriel stared at her with wide eyes as the rest of the pack grumbled and stretched. He shot Dean a filthy glare as the larger alpha trotted past, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed with a grin on his lips. He winked at Gabriel before licking his mate’s cheek in greeting and yelping when Cas cuffed the back of his head.

“Overgrown pup,” he scolded quietly, making Gabriel smirk, but it quickly fell when Cas narrowed his eyes in his direction.

“Guess we’re not hunting today,” grumbled Bobby. “Any prey within a ten-mile radius will have
made a break for it after Gabriel’s shrill screaming.”

Gabriel pouted. “It wasn’t shrill.”

“You’re gonna have baby birds flocking to you, thinking you’re their mama,” countered Bobby and Gabriel snapped his mouth shut as the pack smiled.

“How was I supposed to react at seeing a snake three inches from my face?” Huffed Gabe and Bobby snorted.

“You say ‘good morning’ to them. Grass snakes are usually quite polite.”

“How am I supposed to tell the difference between a grass snake and a python?” Protested Gabriel.

“Well for one, there ain’t any wild pythons in America. Two, one’s a little bigger than the other,” said Bobby drily.

“Still ugly,” grumbled Gabriel and Sam snorted in amusement.

“Sorry, Gabe. We didn’t mean to offend your delicate, city-alpha sensibilities.”

“Yeah, we forgot how scary the wild can be to someone of your sheltered upbringing,” grinned Dean and Gabriel rolled his eyes and shot him a withering glare.

“You can shut up. This is all your fault anyway.”

“Me?” Gasped Dean. “Don’t go blaming me for your weak constitution, my precious little city slicker.”

“Country-bumpkin,” grumped Gabriel as he padded over to Sam for comfort.

“I believe the term you’re looking for is ‘dashing savage’,” hummed Dean and Gabriel snorted as he cuddled into his lover.

“More like ‘pretty Poodle’.”

Dean frowned. “Hey!”

“Well ‘savage’ is hardly a fitting term,” explained Gabriel.

“And ‘Poodle’ is?”

Gabriel merely grinned.

“Anyway, I’m glad we’re all up,” stated Dean, easily slipping back into the role of leader. “The weather’s eased up and we need to keep walking before the next storm comes around. I want to get a bit further South before the temperatures start to really drop.”

Gabriel squeaked in horror as he glanced at Sam. He’d barely been able to keep going in the sub-freezing temperatures they’d experienced so far; was it going to get colder?

Sam glanced at him reassuringly and shuffled a little closer and Gabriel sighed at his lover’s warm, thick fur.

The pack mumbled and muttered in agreement and Dean nodded.
“Five minutes to get yourselves together, then we start walking again.”

Once they were ready to go and back in formation, Charlie piped up.

“So, why do the Novaks and Winchesters hate each other anyway?” She asked. “Isn’t there supposed to be some age-old rivalry between you guys? What happened?”

Sam and Dean tilted their heads in contemplation as Gabriel and Castiel glanced at one another. After a few moments, Sam cleared his throat.

“Well… from what we’ve been told, centuries ago, the Winchester and Novak families were allies. They both lived in the wild in neighbouring territories. This was back when alphas really did rule and omegas and betas were forced to be subservient and fighting for territories and mates happened practically every day. Back when killing and murder was a part of normal life.

“The Novaks and Winchesters were pretty friendly and they allowed each other into their territories all the time. But then, one evening a rogue member of the Novak pack crept into Winchester territory and slaughtered their leader’s pregnant omega mate. The Winchester pack was outraged and their alphas stormed into Novak territory and killed as many omegas as they could find.

“The two packs became sworn enemies and over the next few years, there were many battles between them, each pack losing more and more members until eventually, the Novaks decided to leave the forest and relocate into a little village in the region of Florida. They built their numbers up and adapted their lifestyle to fit what we now call ‘civilisation’. They expanded the village into a town, which then eventually became a city and it kept growing into what we now know as ‘Tallahassee’.

“As the village grew, the Novak pack grew with it and they made allies with other families, deciding that the Winchesters should be kept out of their ‘civilisation’ because they only brought death and destruction to their family and lands. In retaliation, the Winchester pack refused to allow the Novaks to return to the wild and whenever either pack were seen toeing the border, a huge battle would ensue, killing many on both sides. Eventually, both packs involved their allies and their hatred for one another grew.

“Centuries passed and the ban on Winchesters entering civilisation extended to all wild folk, just as wild folk were ready to kill and drive out any civilised folk that crossed the border. Nowadays, people are more likely to run one another off their lands rather than kill, but the occasional accident still happens depending on the relationship between the two packs.”

“The clincher is that ‘rogue Novak’ was actually a part of a completely different pack; some small, insignificant family that held a grudge against the Winchester’s highest omega from some falling-out they’d had as pups. The alpha had hidden himself as part of the Novak pack for only a couple of years before he’d taken his revenge on the omega, leaving the Winchesters to despise the Novaks and seek a twisted sort of justice. Once everyone found out about the rogue, there was too much bad blood and mindless slaughter between both packs for them to even consider becoming allies again and they’ve hated each other ever since,” sighed Dean.

Charlie blinked in surprise as the pack mumbled amongst themselves, discussing what they’d learned.

“Wait, so… the whole rivalry between both packs was just… a misunderstanding?”

“Pretty much,” murmured Sam and Charlie turned sharply to Gabriel and Castiel.
“Do you guys get told the same story? Or are there two different versions of this rivalry?”

Gabriel raised an eyebrow. “No, that’s pretty much the same as what we get taught. Obviously, there’s a lot more emphasis on how stupid the Winchesters are for believing their allies would turn against them when they had such a strong bond. That and we’re constantly shown how because the rogue wasn’t a true member of the Novak pack, it was actually the Winchesters who caused the animosity between our packs because they were the first to attack by slaughtering innocent Novak omegas.”

Dean frowned. “Except the rogue was part of the Novak pack. He had been for two years. He just came from a different family.”

Gabriel shrugged. “I’m not arguing about a silly war from centuries ago. Wasn’t there. Have no way of knowing exactly what happened. I’m just telling you what we’re taught.”

Charlie glanced between both alphas. “Wait, so this thing between you guys is pretty serious? Like, there’s a lot of bloodshed between you. You had every right to kill Cas, Samandriel and Gabe when they arrived here.”

Dean frowned. “No, there’s a lot of bloodshed between our ancestors. Cas, Samandriel and Gabe haven’t done anything wrong. They’re Winchesters through and through.”

All three Novaks perked up and Charlie smiled warmly. “Right, sorry.”

Sam licked his lover’s muzzle, smiling when Gabriel’s tail began to wag.

“This centuries-old rivalry is stupid anyway,” Sam complained. “I mean… we’ve never even met the Novak pack or their allies apart from Gabe, Cas and Samandriel. Neither did Dad or his father or the father before him. What’s the point of having all these enemies when we can’t even remember the names of the shifters who forged them in the first place?”

Charlie wrinkled her nose in agreement before tilting her head.

“So, if you guys get taught all the same story and you know it’s a misunderstanding that caused it all… why don’t you just… let history fade into the past? You know; water under the bridge, let bygones be bygones and all that.”

Sam shrugged and opened his mouth to answer when Castiel beat him to it.

“Knowing how our family is, you might want to avoid them for another few decades,” he said with a grimace. “Whilst the Winchester pack has clearly mellowed out and matured with time, the Novaks have… decidedly not. You may be happy to give your rivals a chance, but our brothers are not above murder. We’d rather have you all alive and safe.”

The Winchester pack was harshly reminded of why Castiel, Samandriel and Gabriel were with them.

“Although, thanks for not killing us,” chirped Gabriel cheerily. “We appreciate that.”

There were a few amused snorts and a couple of eyerolls and no one missed the way Sam slid closer to his lover, pressing into his side protectively. Even Dean was side-eying Cas.

“You’re welcome,” Dean muttered drily, but he brightened when Cas subtly slipped closer, Samandriel butting Dean’s side gratefully.

They lapsed into silence as they continued their journey.
One month earlier

“Is everyone ready to go?” asked Michael authoritatively as his brothers entered the room. Raphael nodded.

“There are twenty-one alphas and six betas waiting in the hall,” the dark-skinned alpha informed his brother. “Six of our allies were generous enough to offer the services of their strongest alphas, plus eight of our own.”

Michael raised an appreciative eyebrow. “Ensure those families are given a pay-rise for their kindness.” He paused. “Did the Carver family offer any assistance?”

“Two male betas,” hummed Raphael. “However, they are strong and eager so I suppose we can’t be too harsh on them.”

Michael made a sound of disapproval but he nodded anyway. “They’re treading on thin ice with our family. They know very well they had to contribute something to this hunt and offering male betas is the bare minimum they knew we’d accept. Father doesn’t agree with their politics and neither do I. Demote their lead alpha’s son down two grades in whatever job it is he has. It’ll serve as a warning.”

Raphael nodded tersely and pulled out his phone, sending a quick text to one of his contacts before shoving his phone into his pocket once more.

“Lucifer, have you ensured our technology will work in the wilderness? There won’t be any… hitches?” asked Michael and Lucifer blinked slowly.

“Our experts assure me everything will hold. If not, we can call them and they have back-ups here. They can direct us over the phone.”

Michael smiled. “Excellent.”

“There have been a few of our hunting team worried about the weather warnings,” said Lucifer. “They’re wondering how long we’ll be gone.”

Michael scowled. “As long as it takes to find our idiotic brothers and the brat. They’re not frightened of a little cold, are they? I thought these were supposed to be the strongest our families have to offer?”

“I think they’re more worried about the predicted snow.”

“It’s just snow,” scoffed Michael. “Have them bring their warmest blanket and tell them to keep quiet.”

Lucifer nodded with a quiet chuckle. “Of course, brother. I’m sure there’s nothing to worry about.”

Michael nodded and clasped his hands behind him. “Shall we set off?”

His brothers nodded and left the room, heading down to the hall, but Michael paused in the doorway
and glanced to a drawer at the back of the room. He padded towards it and pulled it open, reaching for the silver-plated, pearl-gripped handgun hidden inside. With a small smirk he dropped the gun inside his travel bag and made towards the hall with a jaunty whistle.

* * *

Now

Sam hummed in contentment as Gabriel nuzzled his cheek and scented his neck and nipped at his jaw. He curled around the alpha protectively, shielding his body from the cold bite of the snow and Gabriel rumbled in appreciation and snuggled closer, his own thin coat doing nothing to keep him warm. The wind whipped around their ears, making them both shiver, but the night was fairly young and they could afford a bit of intimacy before they returned to the pile of sleeping pack members a few metres away.

Gabriel rubbed his head under Sam’s and the omega bit back a chuckle at the role reversal. He loved being with Gabe; the alpha never wanted to dominate him or force him into a submissive role just because he was an omega. Gabriel was so laid-back.

“Do you remember when we first met?” Whispered Gabriel. “Back in that meadow. You thought I was a knot-headed jerk. I kept asking you to sleep with me and you told me you couldn’t understand why any omega would want to sleep with someone as disgusting as me.”

Sam chuckled and nuzzled his lover’s head. “You were a bit of a jerk.”

Gabriel grinned and rubbed their noses together. “To be fair, I thought you were an aggressive wild savage.”

“You’re not wrong,” Sam growled playfully as he nipped his lover’s floppy ear and pretended to chew it. “Although I was pretty far off the mark when I thought you were some form of weird roving alpha from the wild who’d run away from his pack.”

Gabriel smiled. “I’d almost forgotten about that. You originally thought I was from the wild, didn’t you?”

Sam smirked and tugged his lover closer, licking his muzzle adoringly. “Not sure how I thought that when you can’t even tell the difference between a python and a grass snake.”

“Shut up,” huffed Gabriel with a scolding nip to Sam’s jaw. The omega chuckled and rubbed their cheeks together.

“So good to me,” he murmured after a few moments, remembering the days of when he’d first met Gabriel, back when he was still in an abusive relationship with Ruby. “Always so patient and understanding.” Gabriel never grew annoyed with him when he had nightmares about Jessica’s death. Never growled at him to go back to sleep when he woke up panting, eyes wide. Never got jealous about the little place in his heart reserved for Jess. Never told him to move on or stop talking about her. In fact, Gabriel was always there when he needed someone to talk to; even encouraged Sam to talk about her when the nightmares became too much.
Gabriel’s gaze softened and he wrapped a paw around his lover supportively.

“That’s what I’m here for, kiddo. I’m here to make sure you’re happy. Like your very own guardian Angel.”

Sam smiled and buried his nose in Gabe’s neck, inhaling deeply at the scent of chocolate and hazelnuts. He never got tired of Gabriel’s unique scent. Sweet suited his little trickster lover and Sam didn’t care what convention said; Gabriel was special.

“I love you, Gabe,” Sam whispered. “You have no idea how much.”

Gabriel rumbled contentedly and bared his throat for Sam, allowing the omega to scent and nip it possessively.

“That’s good ‘cos I love you too. You’re my fluffy teddy bear and I plan on keeping you for a long time.”

Sam grinned and lay his head on the ground, allowing Gabriel to rest his over it. The light snowfall dusted their fur and they watched an owl glide above them silently. The air would have been cold if they hadn’t been tangled so close together.

“What do you think about mating?” Gabriel suddenly asked a few minutes later.

Sam blinked, startled before raising his head to look at Gabe. “…Like… us mating?”

“No, Jo and Benny,” asked Gabriel deadpan before snorting. “Yes. Us.”

Sam cocked his head to one side, swallowing drily. “I… um… I’ve thought about it.”

Gabriel stared at him, suddenly unsure. “…And? What have you thought about?”

“Well… I…” Sam suddenly couldn’t form full sentences. Of course he’d thought about mating Gabriel. He’d dreamt about it and wished for it to happen, but he’d enjoyed taking things slow too because he enjoyed everything he did with Gabriel. Was the alpha about to ask him what he thought he was? Was he really about to mate the wonderful wolf beside him? Excitement bubbled low in his belly, anticipation rising until he couldn’t speak.

Gabriel shifted uncomfortably, obviously taking his hesitation to mean something else and he slowly slid his paw off Sam.

“I’m not trying to push or anything,” mumbled Gabriel. “I just… I think about spending my life with you a lot and I guess I like the idea of wearing your mark and you wearing mine. But if you’re not ready to do that, I completely get it because you’ve been through a lot with Jess and Ruby and I understand if you’re a little hesitant to mate me because we’ve not known each other particularly all that long, but I really love you and I had to ask because I’ve wanted to for a little while now and-”

“Gabriel,” Sam interrupted smoothly and Gabriel clamped his mouth shut and glanced at the omega embarrassedly. Sam’s gaze softened. Of course Gabriel would think he was at fault for pushing too fast; that’s just the kind of considerate alpha his lover was. He talked tough and pretended he was confident and cocky, but deep down he was soft and caring and he needed reassurance from those he loved.

Sam pulled his lover closer and licked his cheek.

“I’m not nervous. I’m excited,” he whispered. “Ask the question.”
Gabriel blinked, stunned before licking his lips drily. “Sam Winchester, will you be my mate?”

The omega grinned and kissed his alpha’s mouth. “Yes.”

Gabriel’s tail beat the floor repeatedly as his eyes brightened and his face lit up with delight. He pushed Sam onto his back and lapped at his face joyfully, making the omega laugh quietly and Sam threw his paws around his lover, heart fluttering in excitement.

They kissed and held one another for a few minutes, happiness rolling through their scents in waves and they couldn’t stop smiling and giggling at one another, whispering tender words of adoration to one another as they rubbed their scents into each other’s bodies.

“How are we going to do this?” Whispered Sam. “Shall we move a little further away from the pack? I wouldn’t like anyone to interrupt us.”

Gabriel chuckled and rubbed their noses together. “Slow down, tiger. I’ve got to ask for your brother’s permission first, remember? I should probably ask Bobby’s too since he’s the one who raised you.”

Sam’s heart melted and he crushed Gabriel to his chest. He couldn’t describe how much he loved this alpha. Gabriel was following wild folk tradition for him. Nobody had ever asked for permission to mate him before, not even Ruby (and hadn’t that rubbed Dean up the wrong way?) yet Gabriel was prepared to humble himself to the pack and ask for their judgement of whether he was good enough for Sam.

“What if they say ‘no’?” Teased Sam and Gabriel huffed.

“Stuff them,” he winked and Sam bit back a laugh. Maybe not so traditional then.

“We’d work something out,” Gabriel murmured a few moments later and Sam blinked because he’d thought Gabriel would mate him whether his brother said ‘yes’ or ‘no’. To realise he actually would take Dean’s decision seriously made Sam’s respect and awe for the alpha racket up a few notches. He licked Gabe’s muzzle tenderly.

“They’re not gonna say ‘no’,” he promised and Gabriel smiled warm and affectionate.

“I’ll ask in the morning,” whispered Gabe. “For now, let’s get back to the pack. It’s bad luck to sleep with the bride before the wedding,” he winked and Sam scrunched his nose up.

“…Something tells me that’s not how that saying goes.”

Gabriel chuckled and gently pushed Sam to his paws. “C’mon. I’m freezing my ass off here.”

Sam rolled his eyes but couldn’t wipe the smile from his face as they settled into the pile of warm bodies curled around one another. He doubted he’d be able to sleep tonight.

* * *

Dean cracked an eye open, waiting for the inevitable prank Gabriel would play on him. When it never came, he smirked, stretched and nuzzled his mate and pups gently before clambering to his paws. The snow was falling faster than the previous evening and Dean’s mouth turned downwards.
Today would be a hard journey.

He was shocked when a dead hare landed at his paws and he stared at it in confusion for a moment before glancing up to find Gabriel grinning at him.

“No prank, I promise. Just thought I’d catch you some breakfast. Y’know, as appreciation for taking such good care of my brother and nephew.”

Cas opened one eye and stared at his brother suspiciously and Dean narrowed his gaze warily.

“Right,” he said slowly, sniffing the hare for anything poisonous or anything that would knock him unconscious. Upon finding nothing, his suspiciousness tripled.

Gabriel merely grinned a little wider. “You’re such a good brother-in-law, Dean. I don’t show my appreciation often enough. You were so kind in inviting me into your pack and you’re so protective of us all. You’re a very generous alpha.”

Castiel lifted his head with a frown as he tried to work out his brother’s game.

“Okay…” murmured Dean, a little disturbed. Gabriel was acting weird.

“You know I wouldn’t play all those pranks on you if I didn’t think you could take it,” continued Gabe. “And I know we’ve had our differences in the past but I’d like to think we’ve matured and moved on. I’d even go so far as to say we’re friends, wouldn’t you agree?”

Dean backed up slightly and even the rest of the pack were beginning to stare at Gabriel as though he was an alien.

“Is everything okay?” Asked Dean uncertainly. “You’re feeling… well?”

“Maybe the cold’s finally got to him,” whispered Jo to Benny and the alpha nodded slowly.

“Everything’s great,” chirped Gabriel. “Better than great. Everything’s wonderful, actually. I’m part of an amazing pack and I follow this caring, brave, loyal leader who makes my brother very happy and I couldn’t have asked for a better brother-in-law.”

“You’re scaring me,” said Dean a little nervously. He was waiting for the punchline; for the giant tarantula to be catapulted at his head.

Gabriel blinked, frowned and back off slightly.

“I’m just trying to express how great I think you are,” he pouted. Dean scowled.

“That’s the problem. You’re being overly nice. Why are you sucking up to me?”

“I’m not!” Protested Gabe. “I’m just… trying to boost your self-esteem.”

“Just ask him the question, Gabe,” snorted Sam, rolling his eyes so hard they almost disappeared into the back of his skull.

Dean glanced between his brother and the golden alpha for a second before Gabriel sighed and bowed his head low to the ground.

“Dean Winchester, brother and protector of Sam Winchester and leader of the Winchester pack. I ask your permission to mate the world’s most gorgeous, kind-hearted, intuitive and strongest omega. I promise to protect him with my life, to keep him happy and healthy for the remainder of our days. I
promise never to hurt him for he deserves love and patience and joy and I wish to offer him all of these and more. Will you grant me the honour of sanctioning our mating, alpha?"

Dean’s jaw dropped as the rest of the pack gaped at the golden alpha in surprise. That… wasn’t what they had been expecting.

Dean quickly cleared his throat, raising himself to his full height as he glanced towards his excited brother. He smiled fondly at Sam’s bubbling anticipation and glanced towards Gabriel, who still had his head low even though his paws were shuffling slightly in nervousness. He clearly wanted Dean’s approval and the idea that the golden alpha had even thought to follow wild folk tradition made Dean’s heart swell with pride and affection.

He smirked wickedly.

“No.”

Gabriel grinned, tail wagging with unrestrained happiness and he moved to hug Dean before his reply sunk in and his eyes widened, face falling in horror.

“…Excuse me?” Breathed Gabriel, panic rising by the second and Dean wondered if he was being too cruel then decided against it after remembering the last prank Gabriel had played on him with that ginormous, bite-y rat.

“You heard me,” scoffed Dean. “I said ‘no’.”

Gabriel’s ears flattened as he scuttled backwards. The pack turned to Dean, stunned as Gabriel glanced to Sam helplessly.

Sam scowled. “Now wait just a second, Dean-”

“No,” interrupted Dean with a snort. “I won’t ‘sanction your mating’ to this city alpha.”

Gabriel winced and dropped his gaze as Sam gaped at his brother in shock. Dean rolled his eyes and shook his head before raising a disapproving eyebrow at his brother.

“He’s far too good for you.”

There was a long, pregnant pause before Dean yelped as Cas swatted him over the back of the head.

“Assbutt,” Cas muttered as Gabriel blinked and stared at the grinning Dean in bewilderment.

“My best prank yet, wouldn’t you say?” Hummed Dean smugly and Gabriel blinked before narrowing his eyes and lunging for Dean with a few choice curses.

Dean laughed as Gabriel nipped at his paws and ears, huffing frustratedly at the larger alpha, but then Dean wrapped his paws around Gabriel and crushed him to his chest. The older alpha collapsed onto him with a shaky sigh of relief and Dean chuckled.

“Of course I’m happy for you to mate my little brother. You’re already part of the family anyway,” Dean offered. “I may pretend I don’t like you, but I do really,” he whispered.

Gabriel pouted. “Don’t think I’m going to forgive you that easily. You nearly gave me a heart-attack.”

Dean laughed and rubbed his scent over Gabriel’s head.
“You’ll just have to get me back later. For now though, go mate my brother.”

Gabriel managed a small smile and released Dean, glancing at his relieved lover. He watched the large omega approach and leaned in for a quick kiss, only to laugh when Sam smacked his brother hard enough to make him stumble.

“Jerk.” growled Sam and Dean stuck his tongue out.

“Bitch.”

The pack snickered but fell silent as Gabriel turned to Bobby and slowly walked over to him, bowing his head.

“Robert Singer… father and protector of Sam Winchester. I ask your permission to mate the world’s most gorgeous, kind-hearted, intuitive and strongest omega. I promise to protect him with my life, to keep him happy and healthy for the remainder of our days. I promise never to hurt him for he deserves love and patience and joy and I wish to offer him all of these and more. Will you grant me the honour of sanctioning our mating, alpha?”

Bobby’s eyes widened and he opened his mouth only to have Gabriel cut him off.

“I swear, if you say ‘no’…” he grumbled and the older alpha barked out a laugh before smirking.

“Well, I was thinking about it…”

Gabriel huffed and glared up at Bobby before dropping his gaze into something more respectful again. Bobby’s gaze softened.

“You don’t have to ask me for permission to mate Sam, son. I’m not his father nor his protector.”

“With all due respect, I disagree. It would mean a lot to both of us if you’d give your approval,” murmured Gabriel and Bobby’s heart became a puddle at his paws.

“Then you’ve got it,” he smiled warmly and Gabriel glanced up at him gratefully.

“Thank you, Sir.”

Bobby had to bite his tongue to stop himself from saying something overly sappy and not at all manly.

Gabriel suddenly perked up, tail motoring from side to side and he whirled around to face Sam before bounding over to him and knocking him off his paws with a yap of eagerness.

Sam laughed delightedly and held his soon-to-be mate close as they nuzzled and it was only Jo clearing her throat that reminded them where they were.

“Keep it PG, guys,” she huffed in disgust. “We’re happy you guys are finally gonna mate, but I’m pretty sure none of us want to watch the magic happen.”

Sam ducked his head apologetically, but Gabe merely smirked and stared at Dean.

“I don’t know. I think it could be my retaliation prank to Dean. Make him watch me defile his little brother. Give him some tips for Cas.”

“Pups,” growled Castiel. “There are four pups here.”
“Forget the pups, I think I’m gonna be sick,” said Charlie and Gabriel grinned before reluctantly letting Sam up.

Thunder clapped above them, making them startle and a flash of lightning cracked against the nearby hills.

All humour quickly drained from the group and Dean eyed his brother apologetically.

“Your mating will have to wait,” he said softly, shuddering as the winds picked up force. “We need to move.”

Sam nodded seriously and nuzzled his lover in promise as Gabriel’s face fell. The snow fell faster and harder.

“Keep together,” Dean said as Cas herded Sam andriel and Ben to his paws. “Don’t fall behind. We have to leave. Now.”

The lightning cracked the hills again, this time a little bit closer and a roar of thunder echoed over the land, making the pack grimace.

“Come on,” said Dean, watching his pack huddle together against the biting wind. They had a long way to go.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Sam and Gabe :( Raise your hand if you think Dean’s a jerk ;)

Also! MAPMonstersArePerceptions wrote some amazing little ficlets for this ‘verse in the comments on some chapters and I told them to post them as full works because they're so adorable! You should definitely check them out ;) Just look under 'Inspired works' at the bottom of this page!
Five days passed before the pack felt it was safe enough to stop and rest for a couple of days. They were aching from not only the cold, but their healing injuries too and that first night, the pack were quick to huddle together and practically pass out. The second night however, Sam and Gabriel had other plans.

The snowfall was calmer here, the winds not quite as bitter and if everyone wasn’t so sick of snow, they would have said the glistening hills and frost-dusted evergreens were a picture-perfect landscape.

Sam was grateful for Gabriel’s forward thinking as he relaxed into the blanket beneath him. It was Gabriel’s own blanket; soft and clean and barely used and Sam loved that it smelled of his alpha. His human skin bubbled with goosebumps from the chilly atmosphere, but Gabriel was soon on him, kissing him heatedly and plastering their bodies together.

Sam hummed in appreciation and wrapped his arms around his lover, holding him tighter because Gabriel was feeling the cold too, but neither of them cared because they knew they’d be warm soon enough.

“You’re the best thing that’s ever happened to me, Sam,” Gabe breathed and Sam knew he was telling the truth because he’d used his actual name.

He flipped their positions, pushing Gabriel’s back onto the blanket and Gabriel yelped in surprise before Sam claimed his lips and they melted into each other once more. Sam pulled away after a few moments and held Gabriel’s hips as he nuzzled his stomach, kissing the scars and yellowing bruises that littered the skin. He worked his way up Gabriel’s chest and neck, paying careful attention to every injury the alpha carried and when he finally reached his lover’s face, Gabriel was beginning to tremble.

Sam’s gaze softened and he pressed their mouths together once more, savouring the taste of his lover’s lips. He mewled when Gabriel tangled his fingers in his hair, deepening their kiss as he lapped inside Sam’s mouth. He couldn’t help but cup Gabriel’s cheek, a needy whine escaping his throat because he knew what it would do to the alpha’s instincts.

As expected, Gabriel growled possessively and wrapped his free arm tighter around Sam’s back.

“Mine,” he whispered against Sam’s lips and the omega smiled and nuzzled his cheek tenderly.

They kissed and nuzzled and scented each other for a few more minutes before Gabriel gently pushed Sam onto his back once more and began nosing and kissing some of Sam’s faded bruises and wounds. He began at his neck and worked his way down the omega’s chest and stomach, worshipping his body with tender touches and nuzzles. Fingertips brushed over skin, light yet intense, as if amazed they were allowed to touch. Lips trailed over the omega’s stomach, warmth breath ghosting over goosebump-painted flesh and making Sam close his eyes as he petted his lover’s soft hair.

He released a shaky sigh when Gabriel moved onto the insides of his thighs, sucking and nipping the tender areas until Sam spread his legs a little wider.
“Gabe,” he whimpered, desperate to touch his lover, but the alpha merely smiled and began nuzzling the tight curls of hair at his crotch. He scented Sam with a happy hum, burying his nose deeper into the dark hair before he smirked and lapped teasingly at the omega’s hardening length.

Sam made a quiet noise of want at the back of his throat and Gabriel grinned and licked his lover’s erection once more, from the base upwards. At Sam’s tiny hip thrust, Gabriel quickly wrapped his mouth around the omega and bobbed his head a few times, tongue sliding over the sensitive organ gracelessly.

Sam groaned and tried to still his hips as Gabriel worked on him, but that was difficult when the alpha was smirking up at him heatedly as his mouth made all sorts of delicious wet sounds around his stiffening erection. He nearly choked when Gabriel effortlessly took him down to the base and when the alpha casually slid off him, his hips thrusted upwards into the cold air, desperate for more contact.

Gabriel smirked wickedly and hoisted his legs further apart as he began lapping at Sam’s testicles, swirling his tongue around them and taking them into his mouth one by one until Sam was writhing shamelessly. His thumbs rubbed slow, erotic circles into the insides of the omega’s thighs and when Gabriel pulled away again, he watched Sam’s hips rock upwards a few times in pure desperation. With a grin, Gabriel lightly stroked his lover’s erection; a few teasing touches that had Sam whining for more.

He nipped the omega’s thigh before lazily running his tongue over his labium and Sam gasped. Gabriel hummed in approval and smoothed his tongue over the area again before teasing his way inside.

Sam squirmed as Gabriel pushed his tongue deeper inside him and he keened desperately when the alpha toyed with his clitoris, licking and sucking at it until Sam’s fingers clawed into the cold ground. “Gabe,” he whined again, breaths quickening as he watched the alpha reach for his own erection, jerking it a few times as he lapped the slick leaking out of Sam.

The omega whimpered when Gabriel pulled away and sat up, carefully sliding a condom out of its packet. Seeing his chance for revenge, Sam snatched the condom and shoved Gabriel to the floor, swapping their positions. As soon as Gabriel’s back hit the blanket, Sam had his lips wrapped around the alpha’s length, sucking and licking mercilessly until Gabriel was a writhing mess beneath him.

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“Sam!” Choked Gabriel, stunned and the omega smirked, running his hands down Gabriel’s rapidly heating skin, over his chest and stomach and thighs. One hand came to rest on his balls, fondling them and running them between his fingers as he bobbed his head greedily over Gabriel’s erection.

The alpha gasped, head falling backwards as his lips parted and when Sam circled one teasing finger around his hole, a shiver ran through his body. Sam taking control was certainly a sight to behold.

He felt Sam shift and he looked down to find the omega stroking himself as he eased a finger into Gabriel. He lapped his lover’s testicles and Gabriel moaned wantonly, back arching at both the stimulation and the visual of his lover playing with himself.

Sam rolled the condom onto Gabriel’s length soon after, removing his finger from the alpha as he quickly slid himself down onto Gabriel.

Gabriel made a noise of bliss at the tight, wet heat enveloping him and he dragged his omega down for a filthy kiss. It was awkward and messy because of the height difference and the way Sam had to curl in on himself, but neither of them cared because they were wrapped in the scents of each other, bodies warm and hands roaming over any skin they could reach.
Sam raised and lowered himself onto Gabriel in an unsteady rhythm, finding the angle difficult to
relax into but not wanting to break contact from his alpha’s lips, but Gabriel soon took pity on him
and gently pushed him off.

They switched positions and Sam sighed in relief as Gabriel straddled him and slipped into him once
more. They couldn’t kiss at this angle but that didn’t stop Gabriel from pressing his lips to his
omega’s chest.

“So beautiful,” breathed Gabriel, mouthing at his lover’s skin. “Smell like home and mate and
everything I’ve ever wanted. Need you,” he whispered hips thrusting slowly, ensuring Sam could
feel every movement, every tiny slide of their bodies. “Love you. Will always love you.”

Sam tangled his fingers in his lover’s hair. “I love you too,” he whimpered after a particularly deep
thrust. “Want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

Gabriel grinned, heart bursting with joy as he picked up the pace. What had he done to deserve this
gorgeous, gentle-giant of an omega? How had he caught the attention of a wild, high-ranked omega
from a rival pack? One who was fifteen years younger than him, no less. What on Earth could
someone as stunning as Sam see in some annoying, dumb, old city mutt like him? He didn’t even
look or smell like a real alpha. What kind of alpha smelled sweet? He was the smallest of his family
too; clearly he wasn’t meant to be an alpha, yet Sam loved him anyway. How lucky was he?

Sam suddenly whined frantically and bared his throat.

“Gabe,” he begged, tightening his grip in the alpha’s hair and Gabriel felt a lump form in his throat at
the realisation Sam wanted him to mark him with that mating bite.

He shifted eagerly then his face fell as he realised he was too small to reach Sam’s neck. He stretched
and whined when it wasn’t enough, cursing his stupid un-alpha-like body, but Sam quickly realised
the problem and arched slightly until his lover could nuzzle his neck with a happy mewl.

Sam hissed as teeth sunk into flesh but the pain was over as fast as it had begun and Gabriel lapped
the wound tenderly, rumbling in approval before he felt his knot starting to swell.

He bared his own neck for Sam and the omega latched onto it like he needed it to breathe. He bit
down hard, sucking until a bruise formed around the wound and Gabriel shuddered as the idea of
Sam having a kink for marking him. The fun they could have with that…

The pain faded as Sam nuzzled and licked the bite and it wasn’t long before pleasure raced through
their bodies as Gabriel’s knot made itself comfortable inside the omega.

Sam relaxed, leaving Gabriel to sprawl over his chest, rumbling contentedly. The omega stroked his
alpha’s back with a satisfied smile and Gabriel began to wonder if being an unconventional alpha
wasn’t such a bad thing as Sam held him close. Sam certainly seemed to enjoy wrapping himself
around Gabriel and scenting him when they cuddled. Sure, the height difference could be a little
awkward at times, but Gabriel had found he quite enjoyed being the little spoon.

He glanced up at the mating mark between Sam’s shoulder and neck and he grinned, pleased. Now
everyone would know Sam was off the market. Not only that, but he’d get to show off his own
mating bite and tell everyone which perfect hunk of omega he belonged to.

Sam glanced at him with a goofy smile and Gabriel snickered and kissed his chest.

“Hello, gorgeous mate of mine,” grinned Gabe and Sam’s smile widened in pure delight as he
stroked his alpha’s hair.
“We’re mated,” he breathed as if he couldn’t quite believe it and Gabriel rested his chin on his mate’s chest, eyes sparkling with happiness.

“Yup. And we’ve got twenty minutes to stare into one another’s eyes adoringly before my knot decides to release you.” He wrapped his arms around Sam’s waist.

Sam chuckled and brushed a thumb over his mate’s cheek before sighing and closing his eyes contentedly.

After a few moments, Sam smirked.

“That was so much better than my mating with Ruby,” he said casually, as if discussing the weather and Gabriel tensed before growling and thrusting his hips pointedly. Sam groaned as the alpha’s swollen knot pulled at his insides and Gabriel huffed in satisfaction, biting at a nipple just to remind Sam of who he belonged to.

“I should think so,” he grumbled before settling onto his omega once more. Sam bit back a mischievous grin.

“Ruby was very possessive. She liked touching and marking every part of me,” he hummed as if the words were just idle chat.

Gabriel rumbled and began rubbing his scent into Sam’s chest and stomach. He ran his hands over the omega’s arms as if branding him with his touch and Sam closed his eyes happily.

“She hated cuddling,” Sam drawled. “It was all about the sex and anything after that she wasn’t interested in.”

Gabriel huffed and wrapped his arms tightly around his mate, lavishing his body with kisses and nuzzles until Sam was purring softly.

“You’re going to give me a complex,” muttered Gabriel after a few moments and Sam laughed quietly.

“I’m just winding you up, Gabe. I kinda like it when you get all possessive of me and your alpha starts to show. Don’t get me wrong, I love your playful, fun-loving side just as much,” said Sam, “but I guess I get a bit of a thrill out of seeing you become that powerful, serious, territorial alpha we all originally thought you were.”

Gabriel hummed thoughtfully and relaxed onto Sam. “I’ll keep that in mind.” He raised an eyebrow. “Didn’t think you had a kink for being overpowered, kiddo.”

Sam flushed pink. “I… I’m kind of a… large omega and not many wolves can overpower me; omega, beta or alpha. It’s a bit of a thrill to find someone who can be both submissive and dominant without, y’know… wanting to actually hurt me.”

Gabriel’s gaze softened and he kissed his mate’s chest once more. He hated that Sam had been hurt and belittled so many times just because he wasn’t the stereotypical omega. He especially hated Ruby and John for causing most of the hurt, although Ruby was mostly to blame for the physical pain.

Gabriel’s lips drew downwards. How dare she bring Sam pain during sex and intimacy; the things that were supposed to represent love.

“I’ll never hurt you, Samsquatch. You tell me if you’re ever uncomfortable, got it?”
Sam smiled and nodded before he gazed at Gabriel innocently.

“I’m kinda uncomfortable now. On this cold ground. With nothing to keep me warm.”

Gabriel laughed and wrapped himself around his lover as best he could whilst they were still tied together.

“Better?”

“Much.”

They closed their eyes and waited for Gabriel’s knot to return to normal.

* * *

Ben purred as Samandriel curled around him and licked his face and head protectively. Everyone else was asleep, snuggled up in a pile to shield themselves from the cold. Ben and Samandriel would have joined them had Ben not woke up from a nightmare at three o’clock in the morning, breathing ragged and sweat slicking his fur as he whimpered softly for his dead mother. He’d watched her get torn apart by Alistair again and the image of her bloodied, mauled body wouldn’t leave his mind as tears streaked down his face.

Fortunately, Samandriel was very tuned into his friend and he woke up almost immediately, tugging Ben closer and wrapping himself around the younger omega so Ben could scent him and sob into his chest. Samandriel was always there for his friend when the other pup had nightmares and Ben was grateful for the little alpha.

An hour had passed since they’d both woken up and now Ben and Samandriel were merely content to snuggle and nuzzle and scent one another, the omega’s tears having finally dried up.

Ben smiled as Samandriel rubbed his scent into his fur. He liked Samandriel’s scent. It wasn’t very strong because he was still just a pup, but he smelled vaguely of paprika and cedar wood and Ben couldn’t get enough of it. Samandriel seemed to like his scent too; said he smelled like sweet potato and apples and the little alpha loved burying his nose into Ben’s fur when they slept.

Ben grinned when Samandriel gently pushed him to the floor and sprawled over him. He held Ben tight and nuzzled his head and rumbled adorably and Ben purred because his instincts told him to. The alpha rubbed his head over Ben’s body, covering him in his own scent and the omega giggled and pressed into his friend. He loved it when his friend scent marked him. Ever since Cas and Dean’s explanation of how it meant Samandriel cared deeply for him just as he cared for Samandriel, both pups had taken a liking to coating each other in their scents.

As soon as Samandriel was satisfied Ben smelled like him, they switched places and Samandriel grinned as his friend rubbed his head over his fur.

After a little while, they curled up to one another again, wrapping their paws around each other as Ben tucked his head under Samandriel’s.

“You’re not gonna leave me, are you?” Asked Ben quietly, ears flat as he thought about his mother’s fight with Alistair. Samandriel frowned and tightened his grip on his friend.
“Never. You’re the best friend I’ve ever had. I’ll never leave you.”

Ben pressed his head further into Samandriel’s neck.

“Promise me you won’t leave,” he whispered. “Promise you’ll stay with me forever.”

“I promise,” breathed Samandriel without hesitation. “I promise to stay with you and protect you forever and ever.”

“I promise to protect you too,” whispered Ben as he nuzzled his friend’s neck and Samandriel smiled and closed his eyes.

“Good,” he murmured as they lapsed into silence once more.

“…Samandriel?” Asked Ben after a few minutes. “Why does Gabe call you ‘Alfie’?”

Samandriel groaned softly. “When I was three, I had an imaginary friend called ‘Sully’. Apparently, I told everyone ‘Sully’ said my real name was ‘Alfie’ and that I was an angel sent down to Earth to sell the world’s best hot dogs. Dad says I made everyone call me ‘Alfie’ for three months.”

Ben snickered and Samandriel nipped his ear with a huff.

“Shut up, I had no friends so I had to make my own. I was three,” grumbled Samandriel and Ben’s smile fell as he nuzzled the alpha’s cheek.

“Those city pups were stupid anyway,” he stated. “They don’t deserve you.”

Samandriel relaxed and nuzzled his friend’s ear in apology. “Thanks.”

Ben pulled away slightly to press their foreheads together and he quickly tightened his grip on the alpha.

“I like it when we cuddle,” Samandriel admitted softly, closing his eyes. “You smell like home.”

Ben beamed. “You make me feel really safe,” he confessed quietly. “I like it when we cuddle, too.”

Samandriel made a happy sound at the back of his throat and cuddled closer.

“Good night, Ben. Love you,” he whispered and Ben closed his eyes with a smile, relaxing into his friend’s paws.

“Love you too. Night, Alfie.”

He snickered when Samandriel nipped his ear.

* * *

Two weeks earlier

“How is he moving so fast?” Growled Lucifer frustratedly, shivering against the biting winds. The cold snow stuck to his fur, weighing him down and making his joints ache. “How are we losing
ground on him?"

They’d driven through two states to get closer to Gabriel’s location, only entering the wild when they had a mere thirty miles to trek through to reach him. However, as they’d ventured further into the forest, the warmth of civilisation disappeared and the stormy weather and frosty temperatures seeped into their bones, building and building until it battered their bodies mercilessly and they could barely walk. Six of their team had already come down with flu and most of them couldn’t feel their limbs.

They were hungry; their protein bars and dehydrated meals doing little to provide energy and warmth. They barely slept because the cold kept them awake and their thin blankets were useless against the near-blizzards they had to face.

“So much for ‘a bit of snow’,” grumbled Uriel under his breath. Michael shot him a warning glare and the large black and brown alpha looked away stiffly.

There was a thud behind them and Raphael called Michael’s name in alarm. He turned to find Tamiel, a grey and white beta from the Edlund family, lying unmoving on the ground. Raphael shuffled over to him, shivering violently against the harsh winds and he sniffed the beta for a moment before frowning and placing an ear over his chest, then his neck. He straightened soon after and turned to Michael tensely.

“He’s dead.”

Tamiel’s friend, Zephon, stared at the other beta in horror and rolled him onto his back, desperately beginning chest compressions, but Tamiel was too cold and stiff for his efforts to make any difference. Tears rolled down the yellow beta’s face as he whimpered Tamiel’s name over and over, begging for him to get up, but nothing happened and Lucifer dragged Zephon away after a couple of minutes, growling at him to keep moving.

In shock and too exhausted to argue, Zephon nodded numbly and followed the Novaks.

Raphael and Michael shared a nervous glance but said nothing as they continued their journey. They had to keep moving otherwise they’d all end up like Tamiel.

* * *

Now

Balthazar shuddered and pressed further into Gadreel’s side. The pack had been forced to stop because the blizzard had become so strong, they hadn’t been able to see a metre in front of their faces, not to mention none of them could feel their toes.

Castiel, Gabriel and Samandriel were the worst. The poor wolves could barely keep standing and Gabriel had actually collapsed at one point, almost unconscious. Sam and Benny had wedged him between them immediately and that’s when Dean had decided enough was enough. They needed to huddle together for protection against the elements. It was times like this when they wished they could utilise Cas’ trick with igloos, but the snow was too thick and they didn’t have the energy to spend time constructing shelters. Not to mention it was too dangerous to make themselves vulnerable to the cold on days like this.
Now, the pack were pressed into one another, taking comfort in each other’s scents and what little warmth they could offer one another. A tangle of blankets stretched over the entire pack as they huddled close and everyone made sure they were all covered as much as possible.

Balthazar thought he would have felt nervous at being so close to the other pack members, but honestly, he was just relieved he was shielded from the snow. It was actually rather cozy. Hannah was squished up against his left-hand side, Meg beside her, and Gadreel was on his right, on the outskirts of the pack as usual.

Charlie’s back was under Balthazar’s head and someone was pressed against his backside but Balthazar didn’t care because all that fur was keeping him warm. He frowned when he felt Gadreel beginning to shake.

He glanced to his right to find Gadreel’s ears flattened against his head, discomfort and pain plastered over his face as his whole body shivered violently. Being on the outskirts of the pack, Gadreel only had Balthazar’s body heat to leech off and since the larger alpha was attempting to be respectful of the smaller wolf’s fears, he was trying his best to keep to himself and not encroach too much on Balthazar’s personal space.

As Gadreel’s shaking worsened, Balthazar scowled and rolled onto his side, dragging the other alpha into his chest as he wrapped all four paws around the grey and white wolf. Gadreel’s life was more important than Balthazar’s nightmares.

He tucked the larger alpha’s head under his chin, holding him tight and Gadreel quickly wrapped his paws around Balthazar, shoving desperately closer with a relieved exhale. The larger alpha’s body was freezing and Balthazar shivered once before rubbing his head over Gadreel’s in an attempt to create a bit of heat between them.

“You’re frozen,” Balthazar said softly and Gadreel merely pressed closer in response.

He rubbed the larger alpha’s back with his front paws and when that didn’t work and Gadreel was still shuddering, Balthazar huffed and dragged the other alpha beneath him, lying over his entire body.

Gadreel stared up at him in surprise but soon wrapped his paws around him again, smiling when Balthazar copied his movements and he held the smaller alpha tight to his chest, making sure Balthazar didn’t sacrifice too much of his own warmth for Gadreel.

Balthazar nestled down and closed his eyes and Gadreel gently leaned their foreheads together in gratitude.

“Thank you,” Gadreel whispered and Balthazar huffed.

“Just ask, next time.”

He smiled in surprise when Gadreel licked his muzzle shyly and after a moment, Balthazar returned the tentative kiss, chuckling when Gadreel rumbled quietly in delight.

“You two are adorable,” murmured Hannah with a playful smirk, one eye open as she watched the pair and both alphas ducked their heads in embarrassment at getting caught. Hannah giggled and snuggled closer to them both, making Gadreel rumble a little louder in contentment.

Balthazar merely smiled and settled down on Gadreel’s chest.

“This is nice,” he confessed softly and Gadreel squeezed him gently and licked his cheek.
“We’re not going anywhere,” yawned Hannah as she cuddled into them both.

Balthazar closed his eyes and a grin tugged at his lips when he noticed Gadreel had stopped shivering. He fell asleep soon after.

Chapter End Notes

Coming to the climax soon, guys! Which means this fic is coming to an end!
Chapter 76

Michael tried to ignore the pain in every step; the ache in his ears from the wind. He tried to ignore the soft whimpers of the rest of his team and the way they cursed him under their breaths with every metre they walked. Under different circumstances, he would have put them in their place for questioning his leadership, but with two of their members now dead and another nearly there, he was beginning to question his own leadership.

The blizzard battered at his frame and he closed his eyes against it, lowering his head to make himself less wind resistant. They were moving at an agonisingly slow pace and at this rate, they’d all be dead by the end of the week. Truth be told, it wasn’t the first time Michael had considered giving up and going home. Gabriel’s dot on the tracker was getting further and further away from them by the day and no one had any clue as to how he was surviving alone in this weather, clearly going strong.

Dark had fallen, the air turning colder as the sun retired from the sky and the search team shuddered violently, some of them collapsing against the onslaught of snow.

Michael’s eyes widened when Raphael suddenly stumbled before dropping to the floor in defeat. Michael and Lucifer quickly slid to their brother’s side, concern and panic shining in their eyes for the first time in years. Being in the wild had opened their minds to how lucky they were and how easy they had it in civilisation. Out here, money and titles got them nowhere and whilst they might have been feared and respected back in the city, out in the wild, they were the weakest creatures alive. Even the owls laughed at them (and hadn’t that been a shock when they’d first heard the creatures of the forests talking to one another? They’d gone so long in their human forms, they’d nearly forgotten they had the ability to speak to animals).

“Brother,” whispered Lucifer, uncharacteristically soft. “You have to get up. We have to keep moving.”

Even the powerful and aggressive Lucifer had been reduced to a shivering wreck at the hands of the wild. He had no energy for his usual fiery temper and bloodlust. He just wanted to find Gabriel and go home.

The problem was that none of the brothers (or their followers) had ever needed to rely on anyone else. They all lived so independently, perfectly happy to go about their lives without ever talking to one another again. However, in the wild, there was no chance of surviving alone. They needed each other and whilst it had taken them a long time to admit it, the relentless cold had driven them closer to one another, both physically and emotionally.

Raphael lowered his head and squeezed his eyes shut, body rattling and Michael’s ears fell as Lucifer tried nudging the dark alpha to his paws, with no luck. Michael turned to watch the other wolves slowly drop to the ground in exhaustion and his mouth drew into a thin line before he sighed and shook his head.

“Everyone huddle together,” he said loudly. “It’ll be warmer.”

Lucifer glanced at his brother questioningly and Michael padded over to Raphael, curling around him protectively as he sunk down into the snow.
“We can’t keep going,” murmured Michael softly as Lucifer raised both eyebrows. “We have to rest.”

Raphael hesitated a moment before snuggling up to his brother desperately and Michael gingerly wrapped a paw around him, silently gesturing for Lucifer to sit. For once, Lucifer did as ordered and slumped against Raphael’s free side. He paused for a minute before sighing in defeat and cuddling into his brothers, relief flooding through his veins at the feeling of warmth.

Michael glanced behind him, towards the rest of the team and he pulled a face before gesturing them over.

“Come here,” he commanded not quite as gruffly as he would have liked and they did so reluctantly, not entirely sure what to make of the idea of snuggling up to their leader.

A particularly harsh gust of wind made the decision for them and they pressed in close to the Novak brothers, relaxing minutely at the heat of one another’s bodies.

Michael found himself licking Raphael’s head lightly; an offer of comfort and for a moment, the oldest brother was reminded of their days as children, back when the cruel reality of the world hadn’t quite sunk in and they were free to play together and believe they could be whomever they wanted. Back when politics and business were just things adults talked about. Back when he, Lucifer, Raphael and Gabriel were excited at the prospect of an adorable baby omega brother.

Back when they’d genuinely cared for each other.

Raphael abruptly lifted his head to frown at Michael in confusion and the older alpha grimaced and glanced away apologetically.

And just like that, the memory faded into nothing.

“Sleep,” Michael muttered. “You need to rest.”

Raphael stared at his brother a moment longer before dropping his head and closing his eyes. Lucifer gazed at his older brother silently in question, but Michael didn’t feel like explaining himself, so he rested his head over Raphael’s shoulders and slept.

* * *

When they awoke the next morning, it was Lucifer who picked up on the strange scents. He wrinkled his nose, puzzled, sniffed the air and his eyes widened in panic when he realised what the scents were. He glanced around frantically, ignoring the sleepy gazes of confusion on the rest of the team’s faces and shoved at Michael and Raphael to rouse them.

Raphael cursed and glared at his brother as Michael scowled tiredly.

“What, Lucifer?” He grumbled and the orange, grey and white alpha lowered his voice as he looked around.

“There’s another pack here.”

Michael scrambled to his paws, Raphael soon following. They glanced around, sniffing the air, but
the sound of paws had them turning in unison towards a huge brown and white alpha. He was quickly backed up by three more alphas and whilst they weren’t exactly a pack, it was clear they worked together.

Unbeknownst to the Novaks, these four alphas were rovers on the hunt for mates. They scanned the Novak ‘pack’ eagerly, gazes landing on the four remaining betas of the group and whilst their faces fell a little at all the betas being male, the large brown and white alpha obviously saw something he liked in Zephon.

He sized the ‘pack’ up warily and when they didn’t make any move to chase him off, he perked up in surprise and advanced on them, his friends slowly beginning to follow.

Michael glanced at his team and noted their thin bodies and exhausted faces and he knew fighting these four strong, healthy alphas would not have a good outcome if they tried to fight independently. He hated the idea of running from a mere four alphas and even if they did flee, these young alphas would surely catch up easily.

As he squared his shoulders, he hoped their rivals wouldn’t cause too many injuries.

He growled lowly when the brown and white alpha came within ten metres of his team and the wild alpha paused, glancing at him warily before beginning his approach again, much slower this time.

Michael growled again, Lucifer and Raphael joining in and the wild alpha’s friends suddenly gaped and scuttled backwards as if they’d just reached the same conclusion.

“Jay, back off,” a smaller black alpha hissed. “The scent!”

The brown and white alpha, or ‘Jay’ as his friends called him, hesitated again, glancing at Michael curiously before grinning.

“I know who they are,” he called back to them. “But I’m going to take my chances.”

He was probably around the same size as Lucifer and he kept low to the ground as he advanced towards Zephon, keeping a watchful eye on the Novak brothers as he did so. When they glanced at each other in confusion, clearly not understanding what was going on and not certain as to whether they should attack or wait a little longer, Jay smirked and came to a halt two metres in front of the yellow beta. He straightened to his full height and Zephon stared at him nervously, the two having some sort of tense stand-off.

Then, all chaos broke loose.

Jay shoved his nose into Zephon’s neck, scenting him eagerly and the beta yelped in panic, glancing wildly to the Novak brothers, who stiffened and raced towards the wild alpha as one, baring their teeth and snapping at him intimidatingly.

Jay rumbled warningly at them but when they got too close, he wrapped his jaws around Zephon’s neck and dragged him backwards.

The beta cried out in fear as the Novaks stilled, eyes widening as they tried to work out how to rescue Zephon without Jay killing him, but Jay just kept dragging Zephon backwards by his neck, rumbling at the brothers to keep away.

The Novaks shuffled forwards, uncertain, the rest of their ‘pack’ following as they stared at the scene in horror. Jay finally released Zephon when he reached his friends and the beta’s hackles raised as he snarled at the alphas and tried to escape, but the four alphas closed in on the beta, blocking his exit at
every turn and Zephon glanced at Michael, terrified.

Michael stared helplessly as the four alphas herded Zephon in the direction they’d come from and after a few moments of feeling useless, Michael made his first ‘uncivilised’ decision. In the city, he wouldn’t have batted an eyelid at watching some beta he barely knew get dragged off by a group of strange alphas, but for the first time ever, he decided to risk himself to help someone else.

He bounded after the wild alphas, ignoring the startled shouts from his brothers and he watched in fury as Jay began to rub his head over Zephon’s, making the beta whimper in confusion as the other alphas stared on curiously.

“Not gonna hurt you,” cooed Jay, tail wagging. “Just wanna take care of you.”

The large wolf produced half a fox he and his friends had obviously been snacking on before they’d caught scent of the Novaks’ search party and he presented it to the hungry Zephon with a grin.

Zephon stared at it in bewilderment and growled softly when Jay began nuzzling his cheek sweetly.

“Don’t be like that, petal,” chuckled Jay. “I just like you, that’s all. Want to get to know you a bit better and I couldn’t do that with those Novak wolves growling at me.”

Zephon narrowed his eyes suspiciously but startled when Michael rammed into the three alphas holding him captive. He snapped and snarled and bit down on anything he could reach but the fight was over in a matter of seconds as the three alphas pinned him to the floor with frustrated growls. He struggled against them but to no avail and Jay yanked Zephon beneath him to prevent him from running to his leader’s aid.

“Would you look at that?” Crowed Jay excitedly. “Looks like the Novak pack isn’t as fierce and formidable as they like to believe. Who would’ve guessed Michael Novak is a weak, worn down alpha past his prime? I’ve seen pups scrap better than that.”

Michael bared his teeth but one claw to the face from the black alpha had him slumping to the ground.

“Kudos for trying though,” continued Jay thoughtfully. “Thought you would’ve left a beta to his fate. You do believe other genders are beneath you, right?”

Michael closed his eyes in defeat as Jay hummed.

“I am surprised.” He glanced down at the fearful Zephon and nuzzled his head, despite the beta’s disgusted expression.

“Easy, petal. Since your lead alpha can’t protect you and he’s clearly not done a good job of feeding you or keeping you warm and out of this dreadful snow, I’m gonna take you off his paws. You’ll be safe with me and I’ll make sure you get fed. Promise.”

He rubbed his scent into the horrified Zephon’s head once more before grinning at Michael.

“I don’t know what you’re doing out here, but thanks for the love interest. I promise to protect him and get him back to a healthy state. Catch you later, champ.”

He grabbed Zephon by the scuff of his neck and gestured for his friends to follow him as he hauled the unwilling beta through the snow.

The black alpha snarled at Michael and clawed his face once more for good measure.
“Don’t follow us,” he hissed, glancing over to where Raphael and Lucifer were racing closer before high-tailing it away with his friends.

Michael stared after them numbly, blood trickling down his face. It stung but he didn’t care because for once in his life, he felt helpless. He’d failed in protecting Zephon. What kind of leader couldn’t protect his pack?

He frowned. Zephon wasn’t pack. He was part of a family that was an ally to the Novaks. City folk didn’t even have packs.

He stared at the disappearing figures of the wild alphas. Still. He’d failed to save the beta. What if it was one of his brothers next time?

Raphael lapped at the wound on Michael’s face, whining softly and both Michael and Lucifer turned to him with wide eyes. The younger alpha stiffened and backed off, averting his gaze. He had no idea why he’d done that. His actions were primitive and instinctual; wild. He was civilised – he shouldn’t be giving in to instincts.

“…Are you alright?” Asked Lucifer quietly and Michael nodded curtly. He wasn’t alright. He’d never felt so pathetic in his life. Zephon was gone.

“You shouldn’t have left the pack,” growled Michael, stalking past his brothers because he didn’t want them to see how disturbed he was. “That was idiotic.”

Lucifer and Raphael wisely refrained from commenting on Michael’s use of the word ‘pack’.

* * *

The next day, the team found themselves out of food. They hadn’t expected to stay in the wild for so long and now they had no supplies left. Michael cursed and glanced around the forest, seeing nothing but white. The trees were dying and the snow buried everything else. Not only that, but the blizzard was starting up again and they were struggling to see anything through it.

“We need to hunt,” said Michael quietly and Lucifer snorted.

“Except none of us know how to do that. Nor is there anything to hunt.”

Michael’s head lowered slightly. He’d made a grave mistake in bringing everyone here. They couldn’t even return home because it would take weeks to get back to any form of civilisation, especially in the worsening weather. He’d possibly handed the entire search party a death sentence.

“Instead of growling at me, help me find something,” hissed Michael, patience worn to its limit. The hunger and cold was getting to him and Lucifer’s sarcasm was affecting him more than usual.

“Where?” Snapped Lucifer. “Where should I start looking? Under the snow drift or the lump of snow?”

Raphael rolled his eyes but stilled at the sight of a figure watching them in the distance.

“Stop arguing,” hissed Raphael, gaze never leaving the other wolf. “We have company.”
Michael and Lucifer shut up immediately, tensing at the thought of the four alphas returning for a second prize. They glanced up at the lone figure and bristled.

“He’s blocking our path,” murmured Lucifer, glancing at the tracking device.

Michael winced and eyed his pa- team. His *team*. They wouldn’t fair well in a fight at the moment.

“We’ll walk around him,” muttered Michael.

Except, when they tried taking a different route, the lone wolf mirrored them, watching their every move.

Michael cursed and halted. Surely they could fight one lone wild wolf off?

…Unless of course, there was a pack waiting behind that one wolf.

Michael cursed again and glared at the distant figure.

“We’ll have to move forwards,” he stated. “We’ve got no other choice if we want to find Gabriel.”

“…Maybe we could turn back?” Asked Xapham hopefully, a young, maroon and orange alpha from the Novak ranks. He was a professional boxer who earned enough money to warrant the Novak leaders turning a blind eye to his ‘distasteful career’.

Lucifer glared at the younger wolf. “Sure. Is there a particular song you’d like for your funeral?”

Xapham dropped his gaze submissively.

“Let’s go,” mumbled Michael and the team slowly advanced on the lone wolf.

…Who quickly disappeared.

Michael smiled in relief and quickened his pace a little, only to freeze when the wolf returned, accompanied by nine of their friends.

Lucifer bit out a curse and glanced at Michael for direction.

“No way can we fight off ten of them in this state,” the fiery wolf growled and Michael nodded in agreement. They gasped when the ten wolves began trotting towards them.

They shuffled backwards a little, trying to figure out what the other wolves were planning, but as the wild pack picked up the pace, soon breaking into a run, Michael turned around.

“Run!” He snapped.

The team were sluggish to start and the wild pack gained ground fast, snarling and barking warningly even as the search party gained speed.

They struggled through the snow, their bodies cold and aching and their legs slow to break free of the hardening snow. The wild pack were experienced with the terrain however, and bounded effortlessly through the snow drifts, sending clouds of white billowing behind them.

All too fast, the wild pack were on the Novaks, snarling and snapping at their heels. Lucifer twisted and clawed at a female omega biting at his hip and he was shocked when she easily dodged the move and pounced on him, pinning him to the ground.
He swiped at her face and she raked her claws down his chest, making him hiss. He kicked out at her and she grunted when his paws made contact with her gut but before he had a chance to roll over, she was on him again, biting at his legs and clawing at his stomach.

He yelped and smacked her hard across the nose and she stumbled as he clambered to his paws. She leapt at him again, giving him no time to recover and he cried out when she bit his muzzle.

He’d never encountered an omega like this. Usually they cowered before him (sometimes spreading their legs for him in bed if he demanded it) but this omega had no intention of submitting to him. It was humiliating that she was able to injure him like she was. Even worse that she was female.

He swiped at her clumsily and she had the audacity to laugh at him before tackling him to the ground again and clawing at his face.

By now, Michael and Raphael were turning to help him, but before they got a chance, a smarmy-looking alpha with black and silver fur whistled and the onslaught suddenly stopped.

“Billie,” admonished the strange alpha as the female omega returned to his side and she snorted before hiking her tail high into the air and standing behind him disinterestedly.

“They’re in our territory,” she drawled, burgundy fur perfectly groomed and almost glinting purple under the sunlight.

“Yes, but these aren’t our regular intruders,” hummed the alpha as his pack sized the Novaks up.

The voice and scent suddenly registered in Michael’s mind.

“…Roman?”

Richard Roman smiled, eyes twinkling as he bowed his head. “The one and only. I must say, Michael, I didn’t expect to see you out here.” He politely refrained from mentioning the wolf’s appalling appearance.

“We’re searching for our brother. Or maybe two if the other is still alive,” said Michael, relaxing a little. He’d met Richard before. They’d done a fair bit of business together in the past, but he hadn’t realised the alpha had one of his ‘groups’ stationed in these parts. He wondering what they were dealing in when there was nothing but snow in the area.

“I see,” Richard purred, eyes sparkling in a way that suggested he knew something. “That wouldn’t happen to be Castiel and Gabriel Novak, would it?”

Michael blinked in surprise before nodding. “Castiel is alive?”

“Very much so,” hummed Richard. “Very healthy in fact. They appear to be enjoying life in the wild.”

Michael, Lucifer and Raphael blinked in disbelief.

“Enjoying life out here?” Asked Lucifer. “It’s a living Hell!”

Roman chuckled, smirk never leaving his face.

“Rumours are they’ve joined a pack and are getting down and dirty with their leader and Second-in-Command.”

The Novak brothers balked and Michael scowled.
“Which pack? Is there any truth to these rumours?”

Roman grinned. “I think there’s a lot of truth to them. All the forests are talking about it. I wouldn’t be too surprised if there are pups on the horizon.”

Michael growled under his breath. “Which pack? Do you know them? Are they strong? How many members?”

Richard laughed condescendingly. “I should hope I know them. I don’t think there’s a single pack in the wild that doesn’t. Does the name ‘Winchester’ mean anything to you?”

The brothers tensed.

“…You’re joking,” growled Lucifer. “This is a load of bull. You expect us to believe our little brothers and an alpha child has been welcomed into our enemies’ pack with open arms and are screwing their leaders? Enough games, Roman, where are they?”

“I’m telling you the truth,” chuckled Richard. “Sam and Dean Winchester have them. Apparently, they’re quite inseparable and very fond of the child.”

There was a pause before Michael snarled out a curse, eyes closing in resignation. How were they supposed to fight the Winchester pack in this state? There was no way the Winchesters would give up Castiel and Gabriel freely if what Richard was saying was true. And they certainly wouldn’t allow them to kill Samandriel.

They were out of options. All this way for nothing. Two betas had died and another had been taken by savage wild alphas. All for nought.

Richard smiled smugly then and Michael knew there was a deal about to come out of his mouth.

“You outnumber them,” said Richard slowly. “You’d have a shot at beating them if you had the correct training and… diet.”

Michael perked an ear in interest and Richard smirked. “You’d be able to… rescue your brothers and nephew if you learned how to fight like the wild folk.” The black and silver alpha shrugged and looked away nonchalantly. “Although, I’m sure you already have a plan, so I’ll keep quiet.”

Michael narrowed his eyes. “What do you want, Roman?”

“Only for some of my best clients to be a happy family again,” pouted Richard and Lucifer snorted, making the lithe alpha smirk. “Money. And more trading opportunities with Texas.”

Michael rolled his eyes. Typical Roman. “Done.”

Richard grinned and bowed his head in gratitude. “Let’s get you warmed and fed and we can discuss training whilst you send off a few texts to the big wigs in Texas. I know a few wolves you can use as sparring partners and I have a couple of ideas about gaining the upper hand against those pesky Winchesters. I’m sure my contacts will be happy to send you any extra supplies you need.”

“You’re too kind,” Lucifer deadpanned and Richard winked.

“I have my own score to settle with a couple of members of the Winchester pack. My ex-mate and her new mate, to be precise. They caused a lot of trouble both business-wise and personally. I figure why get my own hands dirty when I can get yours?”
“At least you’re honest,” grumbled Raphael and Richard laughed.

“Then you don’t know me at all.”

Chapter End Notes

Some insight into the Novaks’ progress in this chapter. Hope you enjoyed!
Three weeks passed slowly as the snow continued to pelt the Earth, seemingly getting heavier by the
day and showing no signs of stopping. The Winchester pack were cold and exhausted and they let
out a simultaneous sigh of relief when Dean announced they would be setting up a temporary camp
in a thick patch of forest surrounded by evergreen bushes. They were happy to see the return of the
igloos, even if only for a week and Gabriel hadn’t stopped giggling about the cluster of snowy
domes for two days. Everyone else was just happy to have a warm shelter.

Balthazar smiled as Gadreel kissed up his neck. He closed his eyes and let the human alpha wrap
him into a warm embrace, his back plastered against the larger alpha’s chest as he perched between
Gadreel’s legs. There were two blankets wrapped around them, keeping their skin from contacting
the freezing snow and Balthazar couldn’t stop grinning because Gadreel had been kissing him non-
stop for seven minutes now.

Hannah was holed up in Jo’s igloo, tittering and gossiping about alphas and probably making Benny
very paranoid when he heard Jo mention his name as he walked past. That left Balthazar to relax and
warm himself in their own shelter and he had nestled into the blankets strewn over the floor of their
igloo.

Then, Gadreel had wandered over, conversation with Castiel finished and he had smiled fondly at
the bronze and white ball of fluff wrapped in blankets and hadn’t been able to help himself from
joining in. The scene had looked cosy and Gadreel had been feeling a little chilli from standing
outside for so long.

Gadreel had snuggled up to Balthazar, who complained about having to share his blankets and
Gadreel had pointed out that one of those blankets was his. Balthazar refused to release his prize
however, and the pair had wrestled playfully for possession of the blanket. That had somehow led to
them switching into their human forms to better steal one another’s blankets, which in turn had led to
Balthazar huffing and snuggling into Gadreel in defeat, which had then led to Gadreel kissing the
other alpha in triumph and now here they were, with Gadreel’s arms wrapped around Balthazar from
behind and both of them cocooned in blankets.

The atmosphere was light and playful and Balthazar kept tickling the backs of Gadreel’s knees in
half-hearted attempts to steal the blankets back. Eventually, Gadreel nipped the other alpha’s
shoulder in mock scolding and Balthazar shifted slightly as heat flared in his belly.

Oblivious, Gadreel returned to peppering kisses over Balthazar’s neck and he stroked a thumb over
the other alpha’s stomach, gentle and tender and the complete opposite of what Balthazar associated
with alphas. It made the smaller alpha gulp in anticipation for… something.

Gadreel slid his mouth to Balthazar’s shoulder, kissing the area a few times before nosing at the back
of his neck with a happy smile. He pressed his lips to the top of his spine, adoring and sweet and
Balthazar’s breath hitched as his belly flared with warmth again.

After a moment, Gadreel rested his chin on the other alpha’s shoulder and raised a hand to smooth
down Balthazar’s arm idly, fingertips brushing old scars and marks. He frowned and held the smaller
man tighter, tracing a particularly nasty scar on the inside of Balthazar’s forearm. It was wide and
deep; clearly caused by a set of teeth and Gadreel carefully raised the arm and pressed his lips to it,
long and sorrowful and full of apology despite the mark being no fault of his.

Balthazar swallowed thickly, overwhelmed by some sort of emotion he couldn’t decipher and when Gadreel pulled away, he tangled his fingers in the larger man’s hair and slotted their lips together hungrily.

Gadreel smiled into their kiss, obviously amused but then, Balthazar placed his hand over the one Gadreel had over his stomach and the larger alpha raised his eyebrows in surprise.

They parted briefly to gaze at each other, but then Balthazar turned and pushed Gadreel onto his back, straddling the alpha as he locked their mouths together hotly. Gadreel’s hands splayed wide over his spine and Balthazar lowered himself onto the larger alpha’s body, the promise of warm skin against skin too tempting for his mind to resist. He wasn’t disappointed as their bodies pressed against one another and Gadreel made a sound of approval as he fist Balthazar’s hair in an effort to deepen their kiss.

Gadreel groaned quietly as their kiss turned filthy and Balthazar was surprised at how much he loved the other alpha being vocal during any form of intimacy. He wondered what other sounds he could wring from his lover.

They separated for air and Balthazar made a bee-line for Gadreel’s neck, nipping and sucking at it mercilessly and smirking when Gadreel whimpered for more, quickly baring his throat. Balthazar took great pleasure in running his tongue over Gadreel’s throat, nipping at it hungrily before pressing his nose into it with a deep inhale.

Were other alphas allowed to smell this delicious?

He nipped Gadreel’s throat again, harder this time and grinned when Gadreel let out a needy whine. That was a sound he could easily get addicted to.

Gadreel brushed a hand down his back, fingers running over scars and other marks and Balthazar’s movements stuttered for a moment, suddenly feeling very vulnerable and ashamed of his appearance. He was mutilated and weak; how could he expect anyone to truly desire him? He looked a mess and his mind was no better and soon, Gadreel would push him away in disgust.

He gasped in surprise when Gadreel abruptly flipped their positions, his mouth roaming hotly over Balthazar’s scarred chest. He licked and nipped and kissed his way down to Balthazar’s stomach, nuzzling each mark as he came to it and Balthazar choked back a sob as Gadreel claimed his mouth with a rumbled “mine”.

The larger alpha brushed the smaller’s tear away with a gentle thumb before kissing him a little softer and nuzzling his neck with a contented sigh. He scented the smaller man with a smile and Balthazar closed his eyes and exposed his throat without feeling a single thread of fear.

Gadreel pushed his nose deep into Balthazar’s throat as he wrapped his arms around the smaller alpha and Balthazar wasn’t at all embarrassed by the tiny purr he made.

Gadreel chuckled and rolled them onto their sides, tucking Balthazar’s head under his chin as he wrapped the blankets around them both. He petted the younger alpha’s back tenderly and kissed his hair.

After a few minutes, Balthazar frowned at the inaction. Cuddles were great but that’s not what he’d originally been going for.

Gadreel was far too sweet sometimes.
The other alpha yelped as he was shoved onto his back and his mouth attacked hungrily. Balthazar’s hands roamed over his chest and sides before the alpha himself began crawling down his body, kissing any skin he came across.

Gadreel shuddered as Balthazar wrapped his teeth around a nipple, tugging lightly before swirling his tongue around it. He fist the smaller alpha’s hair with a breathy sigh.

Balthazar smirked and shimmied lower, nipping Gadreel’s stomach teasingly before moving onto his thighs. He nuzzled them adoringly before lapping at their insides, scraping his teeth over the sensitive skin every so often and Gadreel’s gaze snapped to him, eyes glazed over with want.

Balthazar smirked and nipped once more at the soft flesh before eying the other alpha’s stiffening length. He hesitated, a flashback of Hastur running through his mind and Gadreel caught it before he could hide it.

“Balt,” he murmured quietly. “Don’t do anything you’re not comfortable with.”

Balthazar scowled at himself. Gadreel wasn’t Hastur or anything like the alphas in his old pack for that matter. Gadreel was his lover. The one alpha he knew would never hurt him or Hannah. The one alpha he could trust with everything; all his doubts and fears and hopes.

He gazed into Gadreel’s concerned grey eyes for a second before cracking a grin and nuzzling the dark hairs of his crotch. He marvelled at how much he loved Gadreel’s scent.

Then, keeping eye contact with his lover, Balthazar ran his tongue wetly over Gadreel’s erection, messy and filthy and his smirk never leaving his face as Gadreel’s eyes blew wide. He wrapped his lips around Gadreel’s length, swallowing him down expertly as he winked at his lover and Gadreel tensed, knuckles white.

Balthazar teased him like that for a little while before pulling off with a thoughtful hum when Gadreel closed his eyes. With a wicked grin, he pinned the other alpha’s arms above his head and claimed his lips again, chuckling when Gadreel deepened their kiss eagerly, tongues tangling and bodies pressed together.

Balthazar began to rock his hips slowly, getting them both used to the feeling of each other’s bodies sliding together, but as Gadreel began to relax, rumbling happily, he ground his hips deep against the larger alpha’s and Gadreel choked as he felt every part of Balthazar’s erection pressing into his own.

They rutted against one another for a few minutes, kissing and touching any skin they had access to as the tension between them grew. Then, Balthazar teased a finger around Gadreel’s hole and the older alpha nipped his lover’s lip in encouragement.

Balthazar pulled away for a heart-stopping moment to find Gadreel’s bag. The larger alpha whined and whimpered desperately as Balthazar fumbled for the tube of lube and when he finally grabbed it, he wasted no time in slicking himself and his fingers. He slid a finger into Gadreel and relished in the alpha’s happy groan. He soon slid a second finger in and by then Gadreel wanted something to occupy his mouth with. He dragged the younger alpha down for a heated kiss and Balthazar was too impatient to wait any longer. He slipped inside Gadreel and the larger alpha moaned deeply.

“Move,” he breathed and Balthazar hurriedly complied.

He bit out a curse when Gadreel arched.

“I love this,” Balthazar heard himself saying. “I love the sounds you make for me. I love how gentle and tender you are. I love how much you trust me when we do this.” He captured Gadreel’s lips
frantically. “I love that you don’t just pretend to enjoy me touching you for Hannah’s sake.”

Gadreel’s eyes widened and he cupped his lover’s cheek.

“Pretend? Balt… you have no idea how much I want you. How much I love every moment we share; with Hannah or not. I need you both. I want you both. Now I’ve had a taste of you and Hannah, I’ll never be happy without you.”

Balthazar’s cheeks heated and he buried his nose in Gadreel’s neck, hips still thrusting. He reached down to grab Gadreel’s stiff length and stroked it achingly slowly until the larger alpha was writhing and groaning beneath him.

One of Gadreel’s hands slipped from his hair to his back, then to his ass, squeezing it in encouragement.

Balthazar expected to feel a slither of fear but what he got instead was a bolt of arousal.

Surprised, he thrusted deeper, shivering in pleasure when Gadreel began kneading his ass.

Overjoyed that he seemed to be making some sort of progress with his fears, he claimed his lover’s mouth and Gadreel tightened his grip on his back.

Balthazar’s thrusts quickened and hardened, his stroking mirroring his movements and Gadreel made a desperate sound at the back of his throat before sliding his hand lower until he could press a finger against Balthazar’s hole.

The smaller alpha froze at the sensation and Gadreel realised his mistake immediately. He cursed and pulled back with wide eyes.

“Balt, I’m so sorry! I wasn’t thinking-”

“Lube,” murmured Balthazar softly and Gadreel frowned in confusion before the smaller alpha held out the tube of lubricant.

“Lube,” he said a little more determinedly and Gadreel balked before shaking his head.

“No, I don’t want that. I’m sorry, it was an accident. I never meant to make you uncomfortable-”

“I’m not,” interrupted Balthazar in a puzzled tone as if he couldn’t quite understand why that was. He wasn’t scared; it had just been a knee-jerk reaction to freeze because usually he did feel fear at someone touching him there, but this time… he hadn’t.

He blinked before pressing the tube into Gadreel’s hand.

“I want you to.”

Gadreel stared for a whole minute before Balthazar rolled his eyes and nipped his jaw.

“Today, alpha.”

Gadreel launched into action and Balthazar was surprised when he gently pulled off him and pushed his back to the floor. He raised a questioning eyebrow and Gadreel managed a weak smile.

“We’re doing this properly.”

Balthazar felt that familiar grip of panic. “I don’t think I can take a knot-”
“I have no intention of going that far,” reassured Gadreel as he placed a sweet kiss to his stomach. “But I want you relaxed and in a position to push me away if you feel uncomfortable.”

Balthazar gulped. What had he done to deserve this wonderful alpha?

Gadreel gently parted his lover’s legs and nuzzled his thighs for a moment, watching the smaller man relax little by little. Balthazar gasped when a tongue smoothed over his testicles. Then Gadreel paused and frowned for a moment, tilting his head adorably as he tried to work out how to do what he wanted.

Balthazar cocked an eyebrow.

“…Okay?”

Gadreel blinked and nodded before parting Balthazar’s legs a little wider and frowning again.

Balthazar watched him for a few seconds.

“…Have you ever done this before?”

Gadreel’s cheeks tinted pink. “Of course.”

Balthazar raised an eyebrow. “…With an alpha?”

Gadreel suddenly flushed red and glanced away, coughing lightly. “…No.”

Balthazar sat up. “You’ve never been with an alpha before?” He asked softly and Gadreel shook his head, not meeting Balthazar’s gaze. The smaller alpha thought that was odd because not many alphas coupled with alphas so it wasn’t anything to be ashamed of.

Unless…

“…You have been with a man before though, right?” Asked Balthazar and Gadreel ducked his head lower.

“…You’re my first,” he admitted quietly and Balthazar gaped before cursing and grabbing Gadreel’s arm.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” He breathed in horror and Gadreel shrugged shyly.

“Gadreel, I didn’t know you were new to this.” He paused, eyes widening as a thought hit him. “…You’ve never been knotted before,” he whispered and when Gadreel blinked at him innocently, Balthazar swore violently.

“You should’ve told me!” He hissed. “I never would’ve been so harsh that first time…” He remembered the first time they’d had sex and the way Gadreel had asked him to knot him. He remembered being rough with the other alpha, thrusting into him relentlessly because it was the first time he’d ever felt any power over another alpha and now it turned out that had been Gadreel’s first time with a man.

He swore at himself as Gadreel frowned.

“I enjoyed our first time,” he said but Balthazar closed his eyes in defeat.

“I’m so sorry,” he whispered. “I didn’t know you…” He trailed off and sighed. He’d been so bothered about his own worries, he’d never even thought to ask about Gadreel’s.
Gadreel shrunk in on himself, looking like a scolded pup and Balthazar relaxed slightly.

“Come here, love,” he whispered and Gadreel perked up at the pet name and shuffled over, smiling when Balthazar wrapped his arms around him and kissed his cheek.

“Easiest way is for me to get on my hands and knees,” Balthazar murmured. “You’ll have better access.”

Gadreel nodded eagerly and Balthazar chuckled at his excitement. He was feeling a little excited himself to be honest.

“Plenty of lube and be gentle,” he added. “Whilst some like it rough, I’m afraid I might need a bit more time to acclimatise. One finger at a time, okay?”

Gadreel nodded solemnly and nuzzled his neck in gratitude that Balthazar was trusting him with this.

With a subtle gulp, Balthazar shifted onto his hands and knees and waited for a finger.

He gasped when a tongue licked at him instead. It teased inside him and Balthazar shivered.

“Sly mutt,” he croaked and Gadreel nipped his ass cheek playfully.

When Balthazar was fully relaxed, Gadreel slicked his finger and slipped it inside and the smaller alpha settled around him, humming in approval as Gadreel slowly slipped it in and out.

After a few minutes, two fingers slipped inside and Balthazar was surprised at how quickly he grew accustomed to the sensations, wanting more. It probably helped that Gadreel was trailing slow kisses up his spine.

Gadreel didn’t slip in any more after that, merely took his time in touching and tasting his lover and Balthazar groaned as a hand slipped around his erection. Fingers brushed against his prostate, making him arch and moan and he felt Gadreel smirk against his back.

Pleasure came quicker than expected and Balthazar shuddered as Gadreel continued to stroke his sensitive knot, lazy and determined to drag the sensations out as long as possible.

After a minute or so, Balthazar dragged Gadreel into his side and worked the other alpha’s erection, claiming his lips when satisfaction finally washed over him.

He mewled contentedly when Gadreel tugged him into his lap again and wrapped the blankets around them both once he’d cleaned the pair of them up.

Arms slithered around Balthazar’s stomach and the smaller alpha sighed and relaxed into a broad chest.

“Next time, I’m going to knot you slow and gentle until you’re begging for more. Going to treat you like you deserve,” he mumbled and Gadreel rumbled happily.

“Can’t wait.”

* * *
“Tag! You’re it!” Crowed Claire as she leapt away from Ben and the tricolour omega chased after Alex, tongue poking out the side of his mouth in concentration as his friends dodged his swipes.

He bowled into Adam, startling the beta and with a wide grin jumped away. “Adam’s it!” He howled and the teen cocked his head, bewildered before smirking and chasing after the pups with a playful growl.

Castiel smiled as he watched them and leaned further into Dean, letting Aerosmith’s epic riffs drift over his head as they echoed through Gabriel’s phone. He wondered how difficult making love in an elevator actually was.

Sam and Gabriel were beside him and Dean, watching over the camp contentedly as they nuzzled and kissed; still excited over their new mating. Dean grinned fondly at his brother’s happiness and shifted to nuzzle Cas’ head.

“You used to get excited about our mating bites,” whispered Dean with a playful smile and Castiel rolled his eyes and licked his muzzle.

“You used to be romantic,” Castiel countered without missing a beat and the alpha huffed before nipping his ear.

“I’m still romantic.”

“To whom?” Asked Castiel innocently and Dean barked out a laugh before wrapping a paw around his mate.

“I can be very romantic,” he whispered, nuzzling Cas’ cheek before licking his jaw. He nipped his mate’s neck, smiling when Castiel leaned into him further.

“You make me so happy, Angel,” Dean murmured. “Sometimes, I can’t believe you’re mine. I watch you at night, when you’re curled around our pups, sleeping peacefully with that tiny smile on your face and I wonder what I did to deserve you. I wonder why you chose me when there are so many alphas out there who could give you so much more.”

Dean rubbed his head against Cas’. “I get a rush every time you let me touch you. Every time you look at me with those gorgeous sapphire eyes, every time you smile at me, my heart tries to break out of my chest. And when you pull me closer or press your lips to mine… well… the world just stops turning.

“I love you, Cas. I love your voice and your eyes and your lips. I love your heart and your mind and that cute little head tilt you do when you’re confused. I love the smile you reserve just for the pups and the way you bare your neck for me ever-so-slightly when I nip your jaw.”

He nipped Cas’ jaw in demonstration and smirked when his mate automatically cocked his head to one side, eyes closed.

“I love your needy growls when we make love and the way you purr when I tug you closer whilst you’re asleep. I love the way you tease me because you know I only have eyes for you; the way you subtly flirt with me all day until I drag you into our shelter and have my way with you. I love how tactile you get when you’re in heat; how you just want me to hold you close and kiss you until it’s all over.

“I love your fierceness and protectiveness; the way you never give up even when times get tough. I love your possessiveness over me and how you aren’t afraid to defend yourself. I love your determination and loyalty and how you call me out when I say or do something stupid.
“I love all of you, Cas. I love you so much I can’t breathe sometimes because I can’t believe you love me too.”

Castiel snuggled closer and licked his mate’s muzzle happily.

“…Maybe you are romantic.”

Dean chuckled and squeezed his mate lightly. “Only when I’m with you, Angel.”

Cas tucked his head under Dean’s, making the alpha rumble as he scent-marked the omega.

Suddenly, Samandriel head-butted Castiel’s chest.

“You’re it!” He grinned, wiggling his tail hopefully and Cas chuckled and clambered to his paws, shaking his head when the pups squealed and bounded away.

Adam chuckled and glanced at Castiel with a smile, but the omega smirked and Adam yelped as Castiel suddenly lunged for him. Dean cackled as Adam scrabbled out of the way, racing after the pups as the omega sprinted after him.

“You get him, Angel!” Dean called as Castiel narrowly missed Adam’s rump.

They raced towards the outskirts of the camp, Cas holding back slightly as the pups giggled and dodged him and ploughing after Adam when the teen thought he could escape. They chased one another into the forest, not too far from camp but enough to be out of view and the pups laughed when Cas finally pinned Adam to the ground.

“You’re it,” drawled Castiel before bounding away, the pups galloping after him as Adam rolled over and shook himself off. He raced after them with a battle-cry.

After a few minutes of playing however, Castiel froze, catching scent of something musky and unusual. He sniffed the air warily, ignoring Adam when he finally caught up and pounced on his back.

“Tag!” Grinned Adam, but his face fell when he realised the omega was sniffing furiously at something.

Castiel frowned. “Pups,” he ordered quietly and their giggles and tail wagging stopped immediately, ears lowering nervously as they scampered to his heels.

Adam sidled a little closer to the older wolf, ears dropping worriedly. “What is it?” He whispered and Castiel shook his head with a troubled expression.

“There’s someone nearby but their scent isn’t natural. Masked by perfume.” He glanced around nervously before nuzzling the pups to reassure himself. “We need to get back to camp.”

The stuck close together as they trotted back to camp in an anxious silence and when Dean saw them, he knew something was wrong.

“Cas?” He queried in concern as the pups pressed into his mate’s legs and Adam looked behind them tensely.

“There’s someone here,” Castiel said. “Their scent is masked by perfume so I can’t tell who but they smell rather close.”

Dean stiffened. “Sam,” he called and his brother looked up curiously, slipping out of Gabriel’s hold
Gabriel’s ears perked up.

“Cas caught a scent,” Dean murmured. “Masked by perfume. Could be a rover.”

Sam scrunched his nose. “A rover masking his scent? Doubt it. They usually want their victims to smell them.” He tilted his head. “Perfume’s a city invention. Why would wild folk want to mask their scent with perfume?”

“To hide themselves,” said Dean grimly. “To keep anyone from recognising them.”

Gabriel stood and wandered over. “I wore it so no one would know what family I came from,” he agreed and Dean frowned unhappily.

“Could be someone trying to get the drop on us,” mused Sam and Dean nodded.

“We’re not exactly short of enemies. Could be any one from Azazel’s pack or Hannah and Balthazar’s old one. Could even be Dad.” He grimaced at the thought and watched Adam sink lower in fear.

Dean glanced at Sam and the omega nodded.

“Stay here,” Sam said to the others as he and Dean made their way to the outskirts of the camp.

Adam, Cas, Gabe and the remaining pups glanced at one another uneasily.

They waited twenty minutes for the Winchester brothers to return and by then, the whole pack knew something was up. They quietened as Sam and Dean wandered back into the camp.

“Couldn’t see anyone,” scowled Dean.

“But there were tracks a little further out from where you guys were,” added Sam. “Two different tracks. Looked like they’d been watching you guys.”

Castiel tensed. Two wolves had been watching them? Why? Had they been eying up the pups? He tugged the four pups closer and they rubbed their heads against his legs.

“No scent though other than the perfume,” grumbled Dean. “Can’t tell what gender they are or what pack they’re from, if they even have a pack.”

“They could just be passing through,” suggested Gabriel. “Might have been a bit surprised at seeing other wolves here.”

Dean nodded slowly but he didn’t look too convinced. “Maybe. I’d feel better if we had lookouts tonight. Just to make sure. I’ll stay up and keep guard.”

“I’ll stay with you,” said Castiel. “Two sets of eyes are better than one.”

Sam looked ready to protest when Cas turned to him. “Can you take care of the pups?” He asked to prevent Sam from arguing and Sam snapped his mouth shut and nodded.

Castiel smiled gratefully. Truthfully, he wouldn’t be able to sleep knowing Dean was facing a couple of wolves alone. At least he would have back up if anyone tried to attack them.

“Just come get us if you want company,” frowned Sam and Castiel and Dean nodded in understanding.
The older Winchester turned to the rest of his eavesdropping pack and began to explain what they’d found and what the plan was.

Later that night, when everyone retired into their igloos and Samandriel and Ben were tucked safely between Sam and Gabriel, Castiel and Dean sat together, eyes wide and ears alert. Every so often, Cas would scent the air but when no threats were forthcoming, the pair leaned into one another.

“Maybe they were just passing through,” hummed Dean, nuzzling Cas’ head. “I’m probably just being paranoid.”

“Better safe than sorry,” murmured Castiel. “I don’t like the idea that they were watching the pups, or even Adam.”

“Maybe they were watching you,” chuckled Dean. “Maybe they thought you were a gorgeous, sexy omega and it’s a shame you’re already mated.”

Castiel rolled his eyes and nipped his mate’s ear.

“Hush.”

Dean smirked and rested his head over his lover’s, chuckling when Cas purred softly.

They suddenly stiffened when they caught whiff of the musky scent. They looked around as they stood and scented the air.

When there were no growls or sounds of paws bounding towards them, Dean’s hackles raised as he stalked towards the outskirts of the camp, sniffing warily. Castiel watched on worriedly, taking a few steps forwards but the silence stretched on and Dean began to relax. Maybe the wolves had passed by the camp and continued their journey to parts unknown.

He was just about to turn to Cas to reassure him when a soft growl caught his attention.

He whirled around and screamed as hot oil was thrown at his face, flames engulfing his vision.

Chapter End Notes

Ruh-roh...
No sooner had the fire flared over his face did Dean shove his head into the snow, dousing the flames and wiping most of the oil off his fur. His vision blacked out for a moment, ears loud with the sound of his own gushing blood and his nose was numb, overwhelmed by the smell of burning and cloying smoke.

Before he even raised his head to look at who or what had attacked him, he automatically bounded to Castiel’s side, a little unsteadily, ready to protect his mate if need be. He shook himself off and finally turned to his attacker, vision spotty for a few seconds before he finally focused on the wolves in front of him.

A large white alpha glared coolly at him, a huge orange, grey and white alpha and an intimidating ebony and cocoa alpha padding to his sides. Dean subtly scented the air, but the smell of smoke was still clogging his nose and he was finding it difficult to determine who these intruders were. Castiel made it easy for him.

“Michael,” Cas breathed, eyes wide and terrified as he took a step backwards.

Dean snarled, hackles raised and teeth bared as he pressed into his mate’s side, but Michael merely narrowed his eyes and ignored his little brother, focusing only on Dean.

“Consider that a warning,” he began. “An insight into what will happen if you don’t cooperate.” He straightened, a small smirk playing about his lips as the rest of the Winchester pack scrabbled out of their shelters, catapulted into wakefulness by Dean’s screams. The moment they saw the Novak brothers and the horde of alphas and betas slowly slinking towards them, they growled warningly, baring their teeth and moving to back Dean and Cas up.

“You’ve taken something that belongs to us, Winchester. Three things, actually. Return them and there doesn’t have to be any bloodshed,” stated Michael.

Dean placed a paw in front of his mate as Sam did the same for Gabriel. Adam’s narrowed his eyes and shoved Samandriel beneath him, snarling a little louder.

“We have nothing of yours, Novak,” growled Dean. “Go home.”

Michael chuckled as the alphas and betas behind him began baring their teeth and rumbling intimidatingly.

“Now that’s a blatant lie. I can see all three of them. Hand them over.”

His nose began to clear and Dean could smell his mate’s fear despite the scowl the omega was wearing. He pushed Castiel a little further behind him.

“You’re in our territory,” growled Dean. “Leave or we’ll guarantee there’ll be bloodshed.”

Michael smirked sharply and took a step forwards, making the Winchester pack snarl louder.

“Once I have my brothers and nephew safely returned to me, we will,” hummed Michael.
Dean glared at the other alpha. “Do you really think you’re in a position to make demands? A bunch of city mutts with no experience in the wild; do you really think you have any chance at coming out on top here? We’ll tear you apart before you have a chance to blink. Now, leave!”

Michael chuckled. “We’ve made it this far, haven’t we? Maybe you shouldn’t make assumptions, Dean.”

“We have more fighting experience,” growled Sam as he came to stand by his brother, Gabriel behind him, looking a little nervous. “No matter how many brutish alphas you think you have, you won’t be able to keep up. Why don’t you just go back home to your nice, warm houses and your TV dinners and leave the fighting to the real wolves?” Sam scoffed.

“Our time in the wild has been… educational,” mused Michael. “Especially our time with Richard Roman’s pack. I dare say we have found a new ally in him. He’s taught us a great deal these past few weeks. He was particularly useful in training us in your savage ways.”

Dean and Sam stiffened. The Novaks had been helped by Roman? Is that why they had survived in the wild for so long? How good were their fighting skills?

The Winchester brothers glanced around the sea of alpha and beta faces, wondering if any of Roman’s pack had joined them. They’d really be in trouble if they were facing Dick’s pack as well.

Michael smirked. “He’s not here. He had other business to conduct with his pack. However, he did ask me to warn a Mrs. Masters and Mr. Crowley not to come near his territory again. He said there’s some bad blood between you three and he wouldn’t like to have to kill you.”

“Although he’s told us to do whatever we want with you,” drawled Lucifer.

Crowley and Meg stiffened but didn’t respond.

Dean was growing uncomfortable with the stench of the Novaks swirling around his camp. He didn’t want them anywhere near his family.

“Go home, Michael,” he warned lowly. “They’re happy. They’re not bothering anyone out here. Leave them alone and let them live in peace.”

Michael’s smirk fell and he stared coldly at Castiel.

“You’ve caused a lot of trouble within our ranks, brother. Come home and we can sort this mess out.”

Castiel stared at Michael, eyes wide and Dean quickly jumped in.

“He is home,” Dean growled. “If you can’t keep your pack in line, that’s your own problem. Don’t blame Cas or Gabe.”

Michael scowled. “They don’t belong here. They’ll never be one of you. Sooner or later they’re going to die out here because they’re not wild. They belong in the city, where they were born and raised.”

“And where their psycho brothers are going to beat them to death all in the name of hierarchy and a set of archaic rules?” Snapped Sam.

Michael tensed. “We’re not going to murder our brothers,” he hissed. “They may have disgraced our family, caused treason amongst our ranks and betrayed us by sleeping with the enemy, but they’re
“You’ll just kill my son,” said Castiel quietly, scowling at his brothers and Michael sneered at the omega.

“He shouldn’t be here in the first place.”

“He’s your nephew,” stressed Castiel. “Your own flesh and blood.”

Michael’s lips drew downwards. “He’s a mistake,” he murmured.

“Why? Because father says so?” Asked Gabriel angrily. “You want to murder an innocent pup because he’s not ‘pure’ like mother and father expected of their grandson? You’d rather Cas be married off to some pedigree, possibly abusive, rich, asshole alpha who’d take away his freedom and happiness and give him a son who’ll grow up to be exactly the same? Is that what you want for your own brother? The baby brother you grew up with?”

Michael flinched and both Castiel and Gabriel paused at the reaction. They’d expected Michael to snort and ignore Gabriel’s accusations. They’d never seen Michael look anything less than sure of himself.

“You cannot be an unmarried omega with a child,” Michael said. “You will either return to bachelorhood without the child or marry Arthur Ketch and he will do with the child as he pleases.”

Castiel stiffened. Arthur Ketch was one of Michael’s ‘high society’ friends. He was arrogant, condescending, saw omegas as the scum of the Earth and was rumoured to be some sort of assassin. He also despised children and would have no qualms about killing Samandriel before making Castiel’s life a living Hell with his controlling, perfectionist personality.

“So Samandriel dies either way?” Spat Castiel, glaring defiantly at his brother. Michael narrowed his eyes but Gabriel interrupted him with a snarl.

“And Cas is subjected to beatings by you or Ketch? Hard decision. I think we’ll take staying in the wild for one-hundred dollars, please.”

Strangely, Michael winced before scowling at Gabriel.

“That’s not an option,” he snapped.

“Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but Cas isn’t an unmated omega,” rumbled Dean. “And Gabe’s not an unmated alpha either, in case you decide to marry him off too.”

Michael blinked and glanced between his two youngest brothers before his eyes widened imperceptibly and he glowered at the Winchester brothers.

“You mated them?” He hissed furiously. “You mated our little brothers?”

“We didn’t think you’d mind,” drawled Sam with a smirk.

“Yeah, sorry. Your invitation must have been lost in transit,” hummed Gabriel.

“It doesn’t matter,” growled Raphael. “Their mating means nothing once we take them back to the city. There are no legal contracts binding them together.”

“If you think we’re just gonna let you take them, you’re sorely mistaken,” scoffed Dean. “Now, leave!”
“There are twenty-nine wolves here intent on bringing Castiel and Gabriel home,” said Michael, irritation beginning to bleed through his voice. “We aren’t leaving without them.”

“Well, you ain’t leaving with them,” snarled Dean.

Michael closed his eyes in frustration before glaring at Dean.

“. . .If you care so much for the child, keep him. But return our brothers. Samandriel doesn’t have to get harmed in this so long as you relinquish our brothers. I can tell my family you’ve already killed him and no one will bother you,” he sighed.

Castiel blinked in surprise.

…Michael was letting Samandriel live?

“How about you let all three of them stay and tell your family they’re already dead?” Huffed Dean.

Michael growled softly. “Because then we would be expected to produce at least one body.”

Dean frowned in confusion. “You’re pack leader. You can do anything you want.”

“No, I’m head of a family,” Michael murmured quietly. “There’s a difference.”

Dean blinked at the odd tone and Castiel and Gabriel shared a disturbed glance at their brother’s uncharacteristic behaviour.

What had the wild done to him?

“My family will expect a body, dead or alive,” stated Michael, more authoritatively this time. “So, which one is it going to be?”

Dean stiffened. “Neither. They’re staying here.”


“We’ll take our chances,” rumbled Dean.

Suddenly, Cas nudged Dean’s shoulder with a wide-eyed look. “He said there’s twenty-nine of them,” he whispered and Dean huffed.

“We can take them.”

Castiel shook his head fractantically. “I can only see twenty-five.”

Dean frowned in confusion before a few yelps rang out behind him, accompanied by the scent of something burning. He whirled around in horror to find four Novak wolves setting fire to the oil they’d just splashed around the camp whilst everyone had been distracted. The flames burst into existence, tall, angry and unbearably hot; exactly like the ones that had claimed Jessica and Mary Winchester’s lives.

The flames danced and flickered around them, lapping at their heels and bathing the landscape in an ominous orange glow. It crackled and sparked, embers shooting out of its tips like tiny comets and each one would set light to more oil that had splashed over the snow, making the fire spread and grow.

Unaccustomed to fire and the horrific thick smoke that accompanied it, the Winchester pack whined
and backed away like frightened animals, fear gripping their bodies at the sight of the fierce flames. They couldn’t fight fire.

Sam was hit with a flashback of Jess’ charred, black corpse and he cowered in terror, paralysed by the smell of burning oil. He couldn’t face this again. Even Dean looked afraid, ears plastered against his head and pupils dilated as he crouched lower to the ground, trying to make himself smaller in the face of the uncontrollable flames.

“Roman was generous in offering supplies,” stated Michael coldly as he watched the Winchester pack whimper in fear. “We are not here to negotiate, Winchester. Hand my brothers over. My patience is wearing thin.”

“Are you crazy?!” Snapped Gabriel, coming to stand in front of Sam protectively as the omega began to tremble. “If we fight, we all get burned! Even with all the training in the world, you can’t protect yourself against fire!”

Michael raised an eyebrow. “Then don’t fight. Come home with us and no one has to suffer burns.”

Both Gabriel and Castiel paused, glancing around the terrified Winchester pack and their stupor with the flames and their hearts ached. They’d caused this. Their family was the one causing all this horror. They couldn’t hurt the Winchesters any more than they already had.

“Samandriel can stay here?” Whispered Cas. “You won’t hurt him?”

Michael’s gaze softened slightly. “As long as he never returns to the city, he’ll be safe.”

Castiel and Gabriel shared a sad glance before taking a tentative step forwards, ears low. They were shocked when Sam and Dean suddenly sprung into action, knocked out of their apparent trance, and leapt in front of them with a snarl directed towards Michael.

“You’re not giving up that easily,” growled Dean, shooting Castiel a stern glance. “You want them? You’ll have to go through us,” snapped Dean, focusing on Michael once more. Castiel and Gabriel were honoured by the Winchesters’ determination to protect them and they stood a little straighter, puffing their chests out defiantly and smirking bitterly at their brothers.

Michael bristled. “Fine.”

Three seconds later and there was chaos. Snarls and yelps drowned out the sound of the crackling flames, claws and teeth tearing into flesh as bodies slammed into the ground with sickening thuds. Some wolves were pushed into the fire slowly taking over the camp and screams burst from their mouths as they struggled against their enemies and the terrific heat.

Dean toppled onto his back as Michael lunged for him and they fought viciously, kicking and biting at one another, holding nothing back as centuries of hatred between their families poured into their battle. Beside him, Dean could see Castiel struggling with two Novak alphas as Sam and Gabriel battled Lucifer and Raphael respectively.

A claw tore through the side of Dean’s face and he kicked out hard, winding the other alpha. He flipped their positions and clamped his teeth around Michael’s leg as he pinned the white wolf beneath him and Michael hissed before raking his free claw down Dean’s face.

They grappled, but Dean was the better fighter and just as he was about to sink his teeth into Michael’s throat, another alpha attacked him from behind, saving his leader. Dean snarled as teeth latched into his back and he easily kicked the other wolf away, but by then Michael was on his paws
again and slamming into Dean.

There was a shout from Lucifer as Sam threw him into the fire and Michael froze for a second, giving Dean an opportunity to pin him once more.

“You should sack your trainer,” smirked Dean as he clawed through Michael’s face and the other alpha yelped as he tried to shake his rival off.

Eventually, he sunk his teeth into Dean’s chest and the younger alpha dragged his claws over Michael’s stomach until he released him.

“I don’t know why you’re so intent on protecting Gabriel,” hissed Michael as his teeth clashed with Dean’s. “He’s the one who led us here.”

Dean paused a fraction too long and Michael kicked him away and rolled to his paws.

“What are you talking about?” Snarled Dean, scent radiating fury and hatred for the creature in front of him.

“Gabriel led us here,” Michael repeated, loud enough for everyone to hear.

Gabriel swiped viciously at Raphael, making his brother back up as Sam kicked out at Lucifer.

“You expect us to believe that?” Scoffed Sam, taking a swing at Lucifer’s nose and smirking when the alpha grunted in pain.

Michael snarled at the younger Winchester. “Ask him yourself. I’m sure you know he carries a phone?”

Gabriel’s eyes widened in realisation and he swore as he turned to Sam and Dean with a guilty expression. Sam raised his eyebrows as Dean blinked in confusion.

“Any injuries gained here are Gabriel’s fault,” rumbled Michael. “Maybe you’ll be a little less eager to defend him now you realise how he’s betrayed you.”

“You forced him to install a tracking device on his phone,” bit out Cas. “That’s hardly a betrayal. Carelessness on both mine and Gabriel’s part, maybe, but neither of us have betrayed the Winchesters.”

Dean and Sam glared at Michael.

“Clutching at straws, aren’t we?” Drawled Dean. “We’re not going to turn on them, no matter what you say. They’re family.”

Michael tensed in frustration before leaping at Dean again.

The fight continued, the Novaks far outnumbering the Winchesters, but the Winchesters having more experience and sharper reflexes. Even the blind Pam managed to hold her own against two betas.

The fire spread, melting the snow and making the air hot and cloudy until the smoke stung everyone’s eyes. Castiel yelped as two alphas herded him through the flames and he dropped to the snow, cooling his burns and cursing when the alphas leapt on him.

He managed to wrap his jaws around the neck of one, but the other attacked his chest and he clawed the alpha’s stomach in retaliation.
Distantly, he could see Sam wrestling Lucifer, the pair snapping aggressively at one another, blood flying and staining their fur as they dealt blow after blow to one another’s bodies.

Raphael and Gabriel were a little more hesitant to battle, preferring to swipe and growl at one another than actually rip each other apart, but an alpha soon pinned Gabriel to the ground and the golden wolf had no problems in tearing the cocky kid a new one.

Meanwhile, Adam was shoving the pups behind him as a large beta advanced on him, baring his teeth and chuckling at the sight of Samandriel growling weakly from behind Adam’s leg.

Before Adam had time to blink, the other beta was on him, taking chunks out of his chest, but also suffering more than a few injuries at the claws of Adam. Samandriel suddenly raced towards them and bit at the rival beta’s neck as hard as he could until he released Adam and the teen kicked out harshly until the other beta stumbled backwards.

Furious, the red and white rival snarled at Samandriel and charged at him, but Adam easily downed him and they wrestled over the floor until Adam held his opponent’s head in the fire for as long as he could.

The red and white wolf howled in agony before kicking Adam off and stumbling away.

Adam quickly took a protective stance in front of the pups as an alpha eyed him up, ready to take on another threat.

The fight was long and intense but after forty minutes, it was clear the Winchesters were going to win. They were quicker and smarter in their movements and the Novaks knew they weren’t going to win unless a miracle happened.

Castiel threw the dead body of the alpha he’d been fighting onto the fire and snarled at the bloodied, whimpering alpha limping away from him. There were a few corpses littering the ground; five to be exact, and all of them were cocky Novak wolves who had more bark than bite and a bad attitude to match.

That wasn’t to say the Winchesters were unscathed. They had more burns and injuries coating their skin than any of them particularly cared to count but they were winning and soon, everything would be over.

Dean tore out the throat of the irritating alpha who’d tried to claw out his eye and watched his lifeless body slump to the ground before whirling around to lunge at the bloodied Michael. The older alpha was weak from their fight and if he didn’t do something to turn the tables soon, he’d be like the alpha Dean had just murdered.

He glanced over to Lucifer to find his brother’s throat bared, head pinned by Sam’s giant paw as the omega opened his jaws and dove in for the kill.

Horrified, Michael suddenly found the strength to throw Dean off him and in a moment of pure, thoughtless panic at the idea of losing his brother, he ignored Dean in favour of charging at Sam. It gave Lucifer enough time to recover and although his chest was heaving in fear and adrenaline, eyes wide and ears flat, he joined in the fight with Michael, pinning Sam to the ground.

Michael glanced around his beaten and burned ‘pack’ and watched as Crowley and Meg ganged up on Raphael. Heart beating with fear and eyes round as he saw Dean racing towards him with a seething scowl, Michael decided enough was enough. He wouldn’t let his brothers die and he had no intentions of dying tonight either.
He scampered towards the outskirts of the camp, Dean hot on his heels and when he re-emerged from the bushes in human form, he heard Castiel howl in fear as Dean’s eyes blew wide and he tried to scrabble backwards.

Heart racing and breaths ragged, Michael aimed the gun and pulled the trigger twice without hesitation.

Two shots cracked out of the barrel and the camp fell silent as a body hit the ground, blood pouring from its stomach.

Michael froze. Then his hands began to shake and he morphed into his wolf form, mouth paralysed and veins turning to ice as he stared at the body in front of him.

“Gabriel!” Screamed Sam as he raced over, tears blinding his vision as his mate lay on the floor, struggling to breathe.

Dean stared, unable to speak or move as he watched blood leak from the golden alpha’s stomach. Those bullets had been for him yet Gabriel had jumped in their path at the very last moment, saving his life and sacrificing his own.

Michael watched in horror as Castiel ran over and nuzzled their brother’s head.

“Gabe?” He whispered brokenly. “Gabe, don’t leave us. You can’t…” His voice trailed off into a choked sob as he glanced at the bullet holes.

“Uncle Gabe!” Cried Samandriel, bounding through the camp despite the threat of rival wolves and Ben was hot on his tail, tears beginning to leak down both pup’s faces.

Sam was a mess. He sobbed openly against Gabriel’s clawed neck, babbling desperate pleas for him to stay with them. He whispered how he was by the alpha’s side, how much he loved him and how he couldn’t live without him and that was the point Dean cracked and leaned down to nuzzle the older alpha too, telling him he wasn’t allowed to die; he wasn’t allowed to leave them.

Gabriel closed his eyes, listening to their murmurs as he tried to focus on anything that wasn’t the pain bursting through his stomach. The movement made Sam sob harder.

“I can’t lose you,” Sam cried frantically. “You can’t go. This wasn’t supposed to happen! We were supposed to be happy!”

Michael watched the scene to the background music of his own heart shattering. Memories of his childhood flashed through his mind on repeat; the games he used to play with Lucifer, Raphael, Gabriel and even baby Cas; the books he read to Cas and Gabriel when they were little; the pranks Lucifer taught Gabriel and how he always pretended to be annoyed with the pair but secretly loved all of their jokes; the times Gabriel had a nightmare and cuddled up to his ‘Mikey’ in bed because Michael always knew how to keep the monsters away - his big brother would always protect him.

He remembered when they started drifting apart; when their father and mother started conditioning them for their ‘roles’; how they’d been told they weren’t allowed to play with Cas anymore because he wasn’t like them - wasn’t strong enough or clever enough or good enough because he had a cervix instead of a knot.

He remembered as they grew older and less naïve; how they’d compete with each other for title of pack leader, always wanting to please their parents; obeying their every command; hurting one another in the process.
He remembered his first fight with Lucifer; that time he’d first hit Raphael; the time he’d first beaten Gabriel bloody…

How had it all gone so wrong?

He gazed at the bullet wounds in Gabriel’s stomach and staggered backwards at the pool of blood slowly growing bigger and bigger beneath his brother. He watched Sam and Cas crying over the golden alpha and how Dean was barely holding it together himself. He watched Sam and a friend of his push themselves under Gabriel’s front paw, desperately begging him to get up.

It hit him then how much they all loved Gabriel and how much he loved them. This really was his home. He’d found a new family; a better family where he’d thought Michael, Lucifer and Raphael couldn’t hurt him and would leave him in peace. Somewhere where he was safe and happy and cared for; where he could live how he wanted and with whomever he chose.

And Michael had shot him.

What kind of monster was he?

He’d wanted to punish his own brothers for trying to find happiness. He’d wanted to kill his own nephew.

He was disgusted with himself.

“…Gabe?” Breathed Lucifer, shocked as he crept forwards and Michael saw similar memories play over both of his alpha brothers’ faces as their ears lowered and their eyes filled with pain.

Gabriel choked out a wounded groan.

Sam suddenly straightened and glared at Michael, hatred and pure disgust shining in his eyes.

“If you’ve ever cared about him, get him to a hospital,” he growled and Michael blinked, stunned at the intensity and depth of emotion in the younger Winchester’s voice.

“Save him, you son of a bitch!” Roared Sam, making Lucifer and Raphael flinch.

“I don’t know how,” whispered Michael, shaking his head slowly, feeling nauseous at the amount of blood draining from his little brother.

“Call an air ambulance,” rumbled Cas with narrowed eyes. “Then leave.”

Michael stared at Castiel then nodded shakily and ran to get his phone.

He returned a few moments later, looking shaken.

“There’s a meadow a mile West from here. They said they can land there.”

Sam’s hackles raised as he stood over Gabriel protectively.

“Great. Now leave before I kill you.”

Michael blinked and gazed at the large omega a little too long and Sam finally lost his temper.

He aimed straight for Michael’s throat and shook it between his teeth a few times, making Michael whine and struggle before Raphael swiped at Sam’s nose and dislodged him.
The three Novaks quickly turned tail and ran, their worn-down ‘pack’ following close behind.

Sam immediately grabbed some clothes and shifted into his human form, tenderly picking up a shaking Gabriel who’d gone into shock. Castiel offered the human a blanket and Sam wrapped it around his mate before stalking West.

“How with him,” said Dean quietly and Castiel glanced at him gratefully. He licked his mate's bloody cheek before throwing on some clothes once in his human form and following his brother and brother-in-law.

Solemnly, Dean turned to his silent pack and ordered them to start putting out the flames.

Chapter End Notes

The bit you guys have been waiting for! Was it what you expected? ;)

Chapter End Notes
Chapter 79

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Gabriel’s eyes flickered open slowly. His vision was a little blurred and the sounds around him were muffled; a little like being underwater. Distantly, he could hear the soft bleeping of some sort of machinery and some garbled language he couldn’t quite understand but assumed were people talking. His muzzle felt tight and uncomfortable and his stomach ached, but he was warmer than he should have been in the wild in the middle of Winter and he was pretty sure there was a pillow under his head.

He stretched, mind peaceful for a moment before the memories trickled in and the panic began to rise.

Where was he? Where was Sam? Had Dean been shot too or had Gabriel managed to save him? Had Michael taken Castiel? Was Samandriel alive?

His breathing picked up and he began to whine as he scrabbled at the tubes in his paws and the mask on his face. Realising he was in a hospital, in the special ward for shifters who couldn’t morph into their human forms for treatment, he willed himself into a human and snatched the tubes and masks from his face.

He doubled over in pain as his stomach burned; the stitches jarring at the sudden movement and he groaned as he tumbled onto his rear, holding his abdomen.

Sam raced into his room, eyes wide and the coffee he’d just bought spilling over the polished white floor. He skidded behind Gabriel and pulled him into his lap, holding him tight and covering him with a blanket as he bared his neck for his alpha.

“It’s alright,” whispered Sam. “It’s okay, you’re safe. You’re alright.”

Gabriel wedged his nose into Sam’s neck, inhaling deeply as he relaxed into his mate’s hold. Sam was safe. His mate was alive and with him.

He ignored how the nurses glanced at him with disturbed and slightly distasteful expressions; probably disgusted by his ‘primitive’ actions of needing to scent his mate so openly. Only wild folk displayed such ‘animalistic’ behaviour.

Gabriel thought about where they could shove their opinions.

Sam stroked his hair gently, squeezing him a little tighter as he breathed a sigh of relief. It looked like Gabriel hadn’t been the only one who had been panicking.

He wrapped his arms around Sam’s back and closed his eyes, breathing beginning to even out as his instincts calmed at the presence of his mate. Sam kissed his head lightly.

“How’re you feeling?” He whispered, ignoring the impatient nurses who were waiting for him to release the alpha so they could fix his IV lines and probably refit his mask and ECG leads.

Sam cracked a small smile and wrapped his arms protectively around Gabriel before glancing at the nurses to signal they could tend to the alpha. Carefully.

As the nurses set about fussing over Gabriel and the machines, the alpha glanced up at Sam worriedly.

“Where’s Cas? Is Dean okay? Did Michael…?”

“Dean’s okay. You saved his life. As for Cas, you can ask him yourself,” murmured Sam and Gabriel cocked an eyebrow before Castiel glided through the door, looking cool and professional and every bit like a force to be reckoned with.

Once he saw Gabriel was awake, he sagged slightly and paced to his side. The nurses seemed to flinch at his appearance and they kept their gazes low.

“You’re awake,” Cas stated softly and Gabriel smirked playfully.

“You weren’t worried about me, were you, little bro?”

“Very,” Castiel said honestly without even an eye roll and Gabriel wondered how serious his injuries had been.

Gabriel took a long look at both omegas and noted that a lot of the bruises from their fight had yellowed and even some of their deeper gashes were beginning to heal. He frowned and glanced at his own body, realising he seemed to have far fewer injuries than when he’d first come in.

“Uh… how long have I been out?” He asked quietly and Sam nuzzled his hair gently.

“Two weeks.”

Gabriel balked. He’d been in hospital for two weeks? Why couldn’t he remember?

“You suffered a high amount of blood loss,” explained Castiel. “Once the surgeons removed the bullets, you slipped into a coma. You never woke up from the anaesthetic. They believe your brain was suffering from a lot of trauma and it just… shut down.”

Gabriel’s eyes blew wide.

“…How did I even get here?”

Castiel glanced at Sam. “Your mate was… very determined. He carried you for a mile and refused to leave your side. He carried you into hospital and placed you on the operating table himself. He had to practically be hauled away by security so they could begin.”

Gabriel frowned. “I’m surprised they considered operating on me. I’m not exactly affiliated with civilisation anymore.”

“I think Cas might have had something to do with that,” hummed Sam before grinning knowingly at the other omega. He leaned closer to Gabriel’s ear. “Your brother’s a lot scarier than I gave him credit for. He made three male, alpha surgeons cower. They won’t even look at him now when he stalks the corridors.”

Gabriel chuckled and winked at his little brother. “Show ‘em who’s boss, baby bro.”

Castiel blinked slowly, like a particularly smug cat.
Gabriel suddenly hissed as a nurse reconnected his IV line, jabbing the catheter into his arm and Sam growled waringly, eying the beta woman with distaste.

Castiel glared impatiently at the two women. “Are you quite finished?” He asked lowly and both nurses startled at his voice and dropped their gazes submissively. Castiel was very well known amongst the hospital staff now and no one wished to aggravate him. They shuffled out of the room without a word.

Once they were gone, Gabriel yanked his brother into a tight hug, still perched on Sam’s lap and the younger Winchester grinned and threw his arms around them both.

Castiel chuckled softly and returned Gabriel’s hug.

“We thought we’d lost you,” he whispered as he delicately pressed his face into his brother’s neck, the scent of chocolate and hazelnuts reassuring him that the alpha was okay.

Gabriel’s gaze softened and he pressed his lips to his brother’s hair comfortingly.

“You’re not getting rid of me that easily,” he murmured.

Castiel smiled then pulled back to stare at his brother gratefully.

“You saved Dean,” he stated and Gabriel shrugged.

“Someone had to,” he dismissed casually but Sam and Cas stared at him incredulously.

“You took two bullets for him,” said Sam. “You were willing to sacrifice your own life for his.”

Once again, Gabriel shrugged. “He didn’t deserve to die.” He frowned. “Not like that.”

“Neither did you,” Sam said and this time, Gabriel looked away uncomfortably.

“It was my fault they found us in the first place,” he mumbled. “If I’d been a little less careless…”

Castiel scowled. “Our brothers would have found another way to locate us,” he finished. “What happened was not your fault, Gabe. Our brothers were determined to track us down, one way or another.”

Gabriel didn’t look convinced but he nodded anyway. Then, he glanced up at his brother and mate.

“Any idea about discharge dates?” He asked. “I don’t wanna stay here any longer than I have to.”

He glanced around the clinical room with a scrunched nose. The smell of bleach and disinfectant clung to every surface and the incessant beeping and whirring of machinery was a far cry from the peacefulness of the wild. Even the people in the hospital were grating; rude and abrupt and far too uncaring of those around them. He could see two doctors gossiping about a nurse, pointing and laughing at him when his back was turned and it irritated Gabriel that city folk were so two-faced and detached from their fellow shifters.

He wanted to go home. He missed his pack.

Sam and Cas shared a glance before Castiel nodded and stood gracefully. “One moment please.” And with that, he vanished from the room.

Sam held Gabriel tighter and kissed his cheek tenderly.

“Never do that again,” he whispered. Gabriel raised an eyebrow.
“The nearly dying thing or the saving your brother thing?”

Sam huffed. “The scaring me thing.” His voice softened. “I can’t lose you, Gabe. Watching you bleed out… watching you not wake up for two weeks… Gabriel, I… I need you. I love you. We’re supposed to spend a long, happy life together and for a while back there… I thought it was all over.” He squeezed his eyes shut, a stray tear escaping down his cheek.

“I can’t go through the loss of another mate,” he whispered. “I can’t do it, Gabe. I can’t deal with losing you. If I lose you… it’s over for me.”

Gabriel stiffened and cupped his omega’s cheek. “Don’t say that. You can’t think like that.”

“It’s true,” whimpered Sam. “I don’t know if I’m cursed or maybe just really, really unlucky, but my track record with relationships isn’t the greatest. Losing three mates? Losing the alpha who makes me laugh and smile; who taught me how to trust again; who listens to all of my fears and insecurities and actually tries to do something about them; who loves me despite my flaws and my past? It would break me. I can’t survive that.”

Gabriel frowned tucked his head under Sam’s and slipped his arms around his back.

“…Then it’s a good job I’m not going anywhere, huh?”

Sam sighed in relief as a troubled expression flitted over Gabriel’s face. He held his omega tighter.

A few moments later, Castiel slipped into the room again, the doctors and nurses parting like waves as he passed through the corridors.

“They want to keep you for two more nights, just to check your systems and that your brain is stable,” he informed his brother and Gabriel nodded and pulled the blanket further around himself.

“Two more nights. I can do that,” he muttered as a nurse popped his head around the door nervously.

“Yes?” Growled Castiel, having lost patience with the infuriating hospital staff over a week ago.

The nurse gulped and nodded towards Gabriel. “We’re going to move you to a room with a bed now you’re human… if that’s okay?” He glanced worriedly at Castiel and the omega rolled his eyes and nodded.

The nurse scuttled away to grab a gown for Gabriel and the alpha chuckled at his brother’s irritation.

“Chill, Cassie. I think you’re gonna give someone a heart attack.”

“They’re in the right place for it,” grumbled Castiel as the nurse returned and gingerly handed the alpha a scratchy blue gown. Once he’d put it on, he followed the nurse out of the room, Sam’s hand tangled with his and Cas trailing them like the grim reaper.

Maybe they’d only keep him for one night, just to get Cas as far away from them as possible.

* * *

“So, you failed? You let them escape and now the family will respect you even less because you let your youngest brothers walk all over you?” Scoffed Zachariah in distaste. “Why did I think you were
ready to lead this family, Michael? I see now I should have passed leadership onto Lucifer. You’re clearly not cut out for the responsibility.”

Michael stared blankly at the floor, mind numb. Lucifer and Raphael were standing behind him, gazes low and memories replaying on loop in their heads.

Naomi scowled in disgust at Michael’s unwillingness to even defend himself.

“Look at your father when he’s speaking to you,” she barked and Michael slowly looked up to his sneering father. A single tear rolled down his cheek, but he couldn’t feel it. Zachariah took it as a sign of weakness.

“Man up!” He growled. “You’re an alpha, Michael. Act like one! Only omegas and the weakest of betas cry. Stop feeling sorry for yourself because I’m confronting you about your failure! Take it like an alpha!”

Michael clenched his fists. He didn’t care about his father yelling at him. He wanted to know if Gabriel was alive.

Zachariah returned to his phone, typing out a text to one of his clients and not bothering to look at his son for the next part.

“I don’t think you’re ready for leading a family. That’s why I’m passing the responsibility over to your brother. Hopefully, he’ll be able to fix the mess you’ve caused. Lucifer, your first task will be getting the ranks in line. Some of them think it’s okay to do as they please without asking permission from the head of the family. I’ve heard of a few making deals with non-allied families without consent and you need to make an example of them. Understand?”

Lucifer’s eyes widened and he subtly glanced to his older brother, watching his knuckles turn white. For once, Lucifer remained silent. He suddenly had no desire to lead.

“Good,” Zachariah said dismissively. “You may leave.”

They didn’t.

“He’s your son,” whispered Michael and both Raphael and Lucifer could hear the fury behind his words. They glanced at each other nervously.

Zachariah frowned and glanced up at Michael in confusion. “Excuse me?”

“Gabriel is your son,” growled Michael a little louder this time. “Our brother.”

“…Your point?” Asked Zachariah disinterestedly.

Michael’s nails bit crescents into his palms. “I’ve just told you I shot him, twice. I don’t know if he’s alive or not.”

Zachariah sighed in annoyance. “What are you getting at, Michael?”

Michael’s palms slammed down on the table his parents were sitting at, hard and heavy and making his audience jump.

“Gabriel is your son and you don’t care if he’s dead or not!” Snarled Michael. “I shot my own brother and you don’t care!”

Zachariah narrowed his eyes warningly. “I care, Michael. I care that even though you shot him, most
probably killed him, you still couldn’t manage to bring his body back. You might have actually earned some respect from the family if you had.”

Michael snarled again, feral and angry and Zachariah and Naomi recoiled in surprise.

“Fear doesn’t equal respect!” He yelled. “Doling out punishments doesn’t make you a good leader! Winning a fight doesn’t make you the better alpha!”

Michael squeezed his eyes shut, holding back a few furious tears as Zachariah and Naomi’s jaws hit the floor.

“You weren’t there,” Michael whispered. “You don’t understand what it’s like in the wild. Money, power, technology, trade deals? It all means nothing out there. They laugh at us because we have it so easy. We’re born into our hierarchy. We’re born into our ranks. Out there… you’ve got to earn it.”

He scowled at his father. “They work together. Pack dynamics actually mean something to them. We live independently; only look after ourselves, but out there? They take care of each other. Family means everything to them and that’s how they survive.

“If it hadn’t been for Roman’s pack rescuing us, we would’ve died after only a few weeks. Some of us did die,” Michael murmured, glancing away when his heart clenched.

“Watch how you speak to your father,” hissed Naomi but Michael slammed his hand on the table once more.

“You’re not listening!” He roared. “We lost men out there and you don’t care! Gabriel and Castiel have run away from us and the only thing you’re focused on is punishing them! They’re your sons! They ran away because they’re frightened of us! They’re frightened of their own parents! Of their own brothers!”

Michael clenched his fists. “You wanted me to kill Samandriel just because he doesn’t have a second parent. You wanted me to kill my own nephew. My own flesh and blood. And the most disgusting thing? I was quite happy to do it. I was happy to slaughter an innocent child for the sake of keeping the family in line. No wonder Castiel ran! You wanted me to punish him too! After killing his child, you wanted me to beat my little brother!

“Do you honestly think that’s good leadership? Do you honestly think people respect us for murder and abuse? They’re terrified of us! And not only that but we treat omegas like dirt! We treat them as if they’re less than people and even betas we’re not exactly pleasant to. Castiel was barely three when you told us we couldn’t play with him anymore! You told us he was different; lesser than we were. We weren’t allowed to associate ourselves with him because he would never be as good as we were.”

Michael swiped a tear from his cheek.

“You let us fight each other. You never said anything when we beat one another. You never stepped in when we used to taunt Gabriel mercilessly; calling him derogatory names because of his size and scent. We hospitalized each other! Lucifer and I hated each other! And you never did anything! You didn’t care! You told us it would stand us in good stead for leading a pack and you let us fight one another constantly!”

“That is enough, Michael!” Spat Zachariah, standing, but Michael wasn’t done and he squared his shoulders and lifted his chin defiantly.
“No, it’s not!” He hissed. “Gabriel and Castiel left to protect Samandriel from their abusive family. They were very different around the Winchester pack. That pack loves them. I saw it, Lucifer saw it, Raphael saw it. That pack was willing to fight for them; to protect them no matter the cost. And Gabriel and Castiel were happy! They finally found a family who loved them and they were so happy! They had mates and friends; when was the last time you saw Castiel with friends? When was the last time you even saw Castiel?”

“Get out of my house, boy,” growled Zachariah but Michael stood his ground.

“Listen to me!” He snarled. “You talk about being a good leader and having the pack respect you and Dean Winchester has all of that, but not in the way you preach. Dean takes care of his family and they don’t only respect him, they love him for it. Gabriel took two bullets for him! Do you honestly think any of our family would jump in front of a gun for you or me? Gabriel didn’t even blink! When Gabriel fell,” his voice faltered and he swallowed thickly.

“When Gabriel fell, that pack didn’t care what danger they were in. All they cared about was Gabriel. About keeping him alive. They dropped everything to save him. His mate begged me to save him. Sam Winchester begged the leader of the Novak family to save said leader’s own brother. Do you think Raphael’s wife would care if he was dying after he killed her pup like you advised? Do you think Mother would care if you were dying? You don’t even like each other! You never married for love; you married for money!”

His parents stiffened and glared at their son but Michael scoffed.

“Nobody in this family gives a damn about anyone but themselves. And when Castiel and Gabriel finally found people who did care about them, we ruined that for them too. We’re desperate to make them suffer and we all treated Castiel like a mistake before he could even go to school. And why? Because he has a heat instead of a rut? Because he has a uterus instead of a knot? He’s our little brother! We were supposed to protect him!”

Michael closed his eyes, voice low and distraught. “We were supposed to protect Gabe. The little boy who loved playing pranks and ate far too much sugar. The little brother who used to sleep in my bed and tell me he knew he was safe because his ‘Mikey’ would keep the monsters away.” Michael scrubbed a few fresh tears from his face.

“I killed him,” he breathed. “I killed my little brother.” He looked up at his father, eyes glazed with water. “And you don’t even care.”

Zachariah glared coldly at his son, eying his tears with disgust.

“Another word and I’ll kick you out of this family,” he hissed. “How dare you speak to me like that, and in my own home! Get out. You’ve outstayed your welcome. I have business to discuss with Lucifer.”

Michael’s face fell and he sagged in defeat. They’d never understand. He turned and began trudging towards the door, but a hand caught his shoulder. He glanced to his right and found it was Lucifer who was preventing him from leaving. The taller alpha gazed at Michael for a moment before scowling darkly at his father.

“I won’t lead. And I won’t follow anyone other than Michael,” he stated firmly.

Zachariah blinked, shocked and even Michael’s eyes blew wide. Lucifer had always wanted to lead and he’d never stopped taunting Michael at every opportunity he got over how he should’ve been leader.
“Lucifer, this is your chance to prove you’re the better alpha, like you’ve always wanted. You can succeed where your brother failed,” protested Zachariah, but Lucifer shook his head.

“No. Michael’s right. Those Winchesters knew how to lead; we’re not even close. Our family hates and fears us. We’re abusive, arrogant, self-absorbed dictators. We’ve never shown the least bit of care for their lives and it made two of our brothers run. Things need to change. We need to change.”

Raphael nodded, coming to stand by Lucifer’s side. “We need to work together, not against one another. We wouldn’t be facing ‘treason’ if we’d been a little nicer to the family. They’re rebelling because they’re unhappy, like Castiel and Gabriel were.”

Zachariah stared at his sons, eyes wide and mouth gaping. He straightened soon after and scowled at them.

“I see,” he hummed. “You’ve been in the wild too long and it’s affected you. I understand now that none of you are fit to lead. It is a pity. Fine, then. If you enjoy the wild so much, live there. Do as you please. However, if you wish to re-join this family, make sure you understand what responsibilities that comes with; I will not allow you to cause havoc in this family and for now, I think it’s best you leave. Get some therapy. You’ve obviously been through a lot.”

The three brothers stared at their father, stunned.

“…You’re kicking us out of the family?” Breathed Raphael and Zachariah nodded curtly.

“You’re not thinking clearly. The stresses of running a family will only make things worse. You need some time alone. Time to sort your ideas out,” he stated calmly.

“You’re kicking your own sons out of the family?” Growled Michael, knuckles white. “The sons you would’ve quite happily left to die in the wild? The ones you never once contacted despite the dangers of the wild? The sons who have returned to you, scarred and bruised and limping and who you have called failures without once checking to see if they’re okay? You’re kicking those sons out of their own pack?”

Naomi clicked her tongue in distaste. “Family. We don’t have ‘packs’ like those savages out there.”

Michael sent her a withering glare and Lucifer snorted in bitter amusement.

“Family. Ha. That’s a joke. I don’t think any of us have been a family in decades. Who cares about family when money and reputation is involved?” Lucifer snapped sarcastically. “Are you two really so heartless? We’re your children!”

“Not anymore,” said Zachariah coldly.

Michael and Raphael bristled and Lucifer growled at their parents.

“You’re lucky I don’t have a gun on me right now.”

Zachariah narrowed his eyes. “Come back in a couple of years. Clear your heads of these savage ideas and I might change my mind. Until then, leave this city.”

Lucifer looked ready to morph into his wolf form and tear his parents apart, but Michael placed a gentle hand on his shoulder.

“They’re not worth the effort,” he said calmly. “Come. I hear California is quite nice this time of year.” He placed his hands over his brothers’ backs and guided them out of the house, head held.
The door slammed behind them and they walked a few metres before Michael turned grateful gazes upon his siblings.

“Thank you,” he whispered. “You didn’t have to do that.”

Raphael offered him a small smile. “You were right. We all need to start caring about more than just ourselves.”

Lucifer hummed in agreement. “I kinda like the sound of us being a family. Loved instead of hated? Respected instead of feared? Sounds great to me.”

Michael cocked his head to one side thoughtfully. “Maybe a fresh start is what we need.”

Raphael nodded. “My wife will be pleased at our divorce. She has never liked me.”

Michael and Lucifer glanced at him sympathetically but Raphael shook his head grimly. “I deserve it. I have been less than pleasant to her over the years.”

The older brothers grimaced. They had a lot to make up for and change.

One thought still niggled at Michael’s brain and he gulped and looked down uncertainly.

“Do… do you think…”

“I don’t know,” whispered Lucifer sadly, knowing Michael was referring to Gabriel. “I don’t think we’ll ever know.”

Michael squeezed his eyes shut and didn’t wipe away the tear that rolled down his cheek.

“I miss him too,” whispered Raphael and Michael glanced at him brokenly.

“I miss both of them.”

They huddled together against the cool night air, Michael wrapping his arms around his brothers. They gazed at the horizon and wondered what to do from there.

* * *

The familiar scents hit Dean before the sight of the trio did and immediately, Dean perked up, tail beating excitedly from side to side.

The rest of the pack soon picked up on the scents and their faces brightened as Sam and Castiel trotted into view, a healthy-looking Gabriel between them both and a bag of medical supplies between Sam’s jaws to replenish their empty stock.

The pack ran towards him in unison and before he could even make it into the camp, Gabriel was swarmed by a sea of fur and cold noses.

He laughed joyfully as they scented at him and inspected his wounds, lapping at some of the deeper ones and rubbing their scents over his body and head to rid him of the nasty clinical smells still
clinging to his fur. They asked him a hundred and one questions all at once and it was only when Dean complained at them to let him at least make into camp did they give him some room.

As soon as he was comfortably in the camp, they pressed closer again, nuzzling and rumbling in greeting.

Gabriel wanted to cry and hug all of them. Was he really this well-loved?

“Charlie’s been getting calls and a couple of text updates from Cas,” explained Dean when the pack finally settled down and backed off. “When we heard you were in a coma…” He trailed off as a few pack members whined worriedly.

Gabriel’s gaze softened. “I’m okay,” he reassured and a few pack members like Jo and Charlie shuffled forwards to nuzzle him gratefully.

He chuckled and returned the gestures.

Something butted his leg insistently and he looked down to find Samandriel staring up at him, Ben just behind him. He sat down and tugged them both into a warm hug and they mewed happily.

“We thought we were never gonna see you again,” whispered Samandriel as Ben nodded, upset.

Gabriel held them closer. “You really think two measly little bullets are enough to get the better of me?” He winked. He glanced at Ben. “Besides, I know your Mom’s looking out for me. She wouldn’t let anything happen to me now, would she?”

Ben brightened and shook his head and Gabriel grinned and licked their heads sloppily until they groaned. When he released them, Dean padded over, scrutinising his stitches.

“Everything to your liking, Sir?” Gabriel teased.

He was stunned when Dean yanked him into a hug, burying his face in Gabriel’s neck.

“Never do that again,” he whispered, emotion bleeding into his voice and Gabriel’s eyebrows rocketed skywards in surprise and he held Dean a little tighter.

“But thank you,” murmured Dean. “You saved my life and I don’t know how I’m going to repay you.”

“You’ve already repaid me, Dean. You gave me a pack and a home. I was merely showing my gratitude,” Gabriel whispered and Dean choked out a laugh before scenting Gabriel’s neck to reassure himself the other alpha was safe.

“Well don’t do it again,” huffed Dean as he straightened. “I got the message.”

Gabriel cracked a grin and relaxed when Sam pressed into his side, Castiel greeting Dean with a kiss and a nuzzle.

After a moment, Gabriel cocked his head to one side, taking in the healing injuries of the pack.

“Forgive me but I don’t remember much after being shot… What happened to our opponents? Cas said Sam trekked a mile with me in his arms. Didn’t my brothers try to stop him?”

There were a couple of growls and flattened ears and Dean didn’t look too happy to be talking about the wolves who almost killed his brother-in-law.
“Well, after Michael called the helicopter, Sam nearly ripped his throat out and they scarpered.”

Gabriel blinked and turned to his mate, who straightened defensively.

“He’s lucky it was ‘nearly,’” he huffed. “I thought you weren’t gonna make it.”

Gabriel licked his cheek lightly. “My knight in shining armour,” he teased and Sam managed a small smile as he nuzzled his lover’s ear.

“Enough about those psychopaths,” grunted Dean. “What do you think, Jody? Those city doctors do a good job?”

Jody bustled her way through the crowd and inspected the sutures before nodding.

“You need to rest,” she said sternly. “If you’ve been in a coma, your brain could do with little to no excitement. Rest. Curl up next to your mate. Relax for a few days. And you lot,” she barked as she glanced around the pack. “No pestering him. He can tell us everything when he’s not in danger of passing out again.”

“Yes, ma’am,” grunted Gabe, standing to attention and the beta rolled her eyes and shooed him away, Sam trotting behind the pair with an amused smile.

Castiel greeted a few of the other pack members before they all dispersed, leaving him alone with his mate.

“How was it?” Dean asked softly. “Everything go okay? Any problems?”

“Sam was… distraught,” murmured Castiel. “He barely spoke that first week and in the second he would only exchange a few words with me. He wouldn’t leave Gabriel’s side and sometimes I wondered if he could even hear the questions the doctors were asking him. He never responded to any of them. He didn’t eat for a week.”

Dean frowned concernedly. “Sounds like it was a good thing you were with them. I’m guessing you were the one who sorted everything out; who answered the questions and found out all the information?”

Castiel nodded. “Your brother says I was rather… stern with the staff.”

Dean raised an eyebrow. “Oh?”

“I just wanted to make sure they’d give Gabriel the best possible treatment despite him being affiliated with wild folk,” hummed Castiel innocently and Dean grinned knowingly.

“And how exactly did you go about that?”

“As much as I loathe to admit it, I am of Novak blood. My brothers aren’t the only vicious ones when it comes to getting what we want,” mumbled Castiel.

Dean chuckled and wrapped a paw around his mate. “You terrified them half to death?”

“They were being quite stubborn and uncooperative,” argued Cas. “I didn’t like their attitudes.”

Dean made a contemplative noise. “Now there’s something I would’ve loved to see.”

Castiel rolled his eyes but smiled when Sam andriel and Ben came bounding over to cuddle into him.
“We missed you,” said Samandriel, sitting between his father’s paws. “You were gone way too long.”

Castiel nuzzled both pups. “Was Dean not taking very good care of you?” He asked with a small smile and Ben scrunched his nose up.

“Dean was fine. He didn’t sleep much because he missed you and he was worried about Gabe, but he still cuddled with us,” said Ben. “But we missed you a lot. It wasn’t the same without you.”

Cas’ heart melted and he kissed his pups’ heads before gazing fondly at Dean, who found his paws very interesting in that moment.

“I missed you guys too,” murmured Cas. “How about I tell you a story tonight?” He suggested and the pups’ faces lit up with delight as they nodded enthusiastically. Castiel smiled and nuzzled them both once more as he relaxed into his mate’s side.

It was good to finally be home.

Chapter End Notes

...Guys... one last chapter to go... :(

It's all over really, but this last chapter will be a kind of 'tie a bow on it, that's the end' sort of deal. If there's anything I've missed or anything you'd like to see in this last chapter (loose ends sort of thing) pop me a comment and I'll see what I can do :) Other than that... I hope you enjoyed the penultimate chapter.
A brief epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Endings are hard.

Hard to write. Sometimes hard to read. Even harder to experience.

I could end this story by telling you that Balthazar eventually comes to love Gadreel and Hannah equally. He never truly gets over the trauma he faced at the claws of Hastur’s pack, but he tries and after months of hard work, he trusts both Gadreel and Hannah more than anyone he’s ever met. They become mates, all three of them, and Balthazar actually grows into a rather important member of the pack. Who knew he would be such a skilled fox hunter?

He even becomes good friends with Gabriel and once those two get together, the pack knows there’s going to be an epic prank involved.

Gadreel feels loved and wanted for the first time in a long while and when they mate, it’s the happiest day of his life.

Of course, his ex-mate and pack have to show up and put a dampener on things, but Hannah and Balthazar have no intention of letting their mate suffer and they tell Bella exactly where she can stick her flirty tail flicks and batting eyelashes. Gadreel is theirs and they don’t plan on letting her ruin his life again. They certainly don’t plan on sharing their alpha with anyone but each other.

After that, things settle down and Hannah is just happy that her alphas love each other. She’s easily pleased and absolutely adores it when they squish her between them and hold her through the night. She eventually forgets her fear of alphas.

On the other hand, I could tell you a little bit about Adam. He’s pretty happy without his dad and Bobby and Ellen prove to be the parental-figures he never had. His mother never tries to find him but he doesn’t mind too much because he has his half-brothers and a pack who loves him and that’s all he needs really. His training comes along quite nicely and Dean eventually does move him onto ‘muscle’ because the kid grows up strong, just like the Winchester bloodline usually does.

After a few months, he meets Jack; an omega with a lack of social skills. He’s the same age as Adam but where Adam had joined the Winchester pack as a moody teen with a bad attitude, Jack is dumped upon them by a pack of timber wolves. The omega acts like a timber wolf and has no idea what alphas, betas and omegas are. He knows there must be something wrong with him because his pack kicked him out, but both of his parents died when he was a tiny pup and he’s been living with timber wolves ever since. He’s practically feral, has no idea that he can shift into a human and everyone’s wary of him but he takes a special interest in a frustrated Adam and things only go downhill from there.

For a little while, at least.

I suppose I could also end this story by telling you the fates of Michael, Lucifer and Raphael. Out of all the characters here, they probably had the hardest lesson to learn. Their lesson was: they were in the wrong. They move to California for a little while, to make a fresh start, but they soon come to realise that is nowhere near good enough. They’d hurt a lot of people; killed some and they need to right their wrongs.
They start by visiting Raphael’s ex-wife. He apologises for everything he’s ever done to her and he tells her he’ll never forgive himself for killing the baby she’d had with another alpha before she met him.

She tells him she’ll never forgive him either.

As their horrific past actions begin to sink in, the brothers realise exactly how monstrous they’ve been and the more people tell them how cruel they are and how much they loathe them, Michael, Lucifer and Raphael slip deeper into a depression. They wander into the wild one Winter with no real aim other than to be alone with their thoughts (and maybe to punish themselves for all they’ve caused) and the snow thickens and the temperature drops until the brothers can travel no further.

They’re reluctantly rescued by a familiar wild pack.

After that, they return once to their father and to the Novak family and things begin to look up for them and a few others too.

‘And what of the pups?’ You’re probably asking.

The pups are happy. Samandriel and Ben grow into teenagers and they develop mood swings and all those other delightful things that come with puberty. Dean has to explain why Samandriel suddenly has the urge to hump a certain sweet-smelling omega every waking minute of the day and promptly has to reassure the young alpha that growling at other alphas whilst Ben is in heat is perfectly normal and no, he’s not offended.

Meanwhile, Castiel has to explain why Ben cries out Samandriel’s name when he’s in heat. He tells the young omega that it’s natural to want the alpha close and that wanting to bare his throat every time Samandriel so much as looks at him is normal too.

The teens visit the city to watch those movies and read those books that Samandriel told so many stories about and when a gaggle of omegas start cooing over Samandriel, flirting with him unabashedly whilst laughing at Ben and calling him names like ‘Country Bumpkin’ and ‘Ugly savage’, jealousy and anger boil over in Ben’s gut. He gets into a fight for the alpha and later that night, when Ben is ashamed of himself and his actions, Samandriel rolls over and kisses the omega for the first time.

I should probably tell you about Gabriel and Sam too.

Unfortunately, life keeps throwing curveballs at them. Once Gabriel has recovered from being shot, the pair enjoy their mating. A little while later, Gabriel realises he isn’t getting any younger and Sam is all too happy to give him a pup.

There’s a miscarriage.

It strains their relationship. They grow distant without really meaning to, both believing themselves to be at fault. Their brothers eventually knock some sense into them and they make up and try again.

Nothing happens. Sam can’t get pregnant, no matter how hard they try.

Determined not to fall apart this time, they visit a city to see what’s going wrong. The doctor informs them that Gabriel’s sperm count is low, but before Gabe has chance to curse his inadequacy as an alpha, the doctor asks if he’s faced any severe trauma within the past twelve months as that can affect fertility. At Gabriel’s response, the doctor merely smiles and says: “Wait a little longer”.

Lastly, there’s Dean and Castiel.
With Samandriel and Ben growing up, the pair decide to have another pup. Unlike Sam and Gabe, there are no difficulties (which only serves to make things worse for their brothers). Little Ambriel comes into the world healthy and grumpy. She’s an omega and Samandriel and Ben are extremely excited at the new addition. They’re protective of her (which amuses Cas and Dean to no end) and Castiel can’t help but snicker every time he sees Dean puff his chest out with pride at his baby girl.

He doesn’t think he’ll ever forget how possessive Dean was of him when he was pregnant.

Providing milk is no problem despite the genetic flaw that male omegas can’t lactate; a quick trip to the city proves useful in obtaining all sorts of fancy milk formulas and bottles and Castiel loves watching his mate warm baby bottles over a fire before taking their pup into his arms and carefully feeding her.

The reunion with their older brothers goes about as well as expected when there’s a tiny omega pup present, a pregnant Sam and memories of Gabriel’s bullet wounds swirling clearly in everyone’s minds.

Things turn out okay in the end though.

Like I said, I could tell you about all these things; I could write chapters and chapters about Castiel and Dean’s love, or Sam and Gabriel’s insecurities. I could make the ending solely about the pups, or even poor Zephon, who was kidnapped by Jay and his buddies.

But I’m not going to.

I’m simply going to say this: For now, the Winchester pack are happy.

They have their family and friends around them and despite the snow and freezing temperatures, they’re happy because they have each other and that’s all that matters really.

As for the rest of our characters, you’re probably thinking: ‘what happens to them?’ Will John ever return? Does Asmodeus get his comeuppance? Is Azazel still hunting the Winchesters?

Well…

That’s another story.

Chapter End Notes

*Fin*

So that's the end, guys! I hope you've all enjoyed reading this as much as I've enjoyed writing it! I've adored each and every one of your wonderful comments and kudos to those lovely people who commented on every chapter (or thereabouts) - you guys kept me going! Actually, all the comments kept me coming back to this fic, so thank you!

As you can probably tell by this 'future' ending... I'm thinking of writing a sequel. Or at least a bunch of time stamps. Maybe both. It might be a little while though because I want to finish some of my other fics and clean one or two up and not to mention... Uni is also a thing.

Anyway, I'm sad to see this fic end but also relieved and once again, thanks to you
amazing readers! Hope to see you in the next one!

(By the way, if you want to friend me on FB, just for a chat about anything: Supernatural, flowers, animals, life in general, my name is 'Dancing Dog' ; https://www.facebook.com/dancing.dog.92)

End Notes

This is something I started and the plot kept blossoming until I felt like it was telling me to write it. So I'll just see where the story takes me :) Happy reading!

Works inspired by this one: Running with the Wolves - In Which Dean Learns He Has Value by MAPMonstersArePerceptions, Running with the Wolves - In Which The Pups Are Overheard by MAPMonstersArePerceptions, Running with the Wolves - In Which Ruby Muses on the Winchester Pack and Cas by MAPMonstersArePerceptions, Running with the Wolves - In Which John Receives Psychiatric Help by MAPMonstersArePerceptions, Running with the Wolves - In Which the Novaks Make Changes and Daddy Dearest is Oblivious by MAPMonstersArePerceptions

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