Grasshopper Green

by a_fandom_affliction

Summary

In their game of cat and mouse, he wouldn't let Castiel slip away again.

Because, dammit, Dean loved the guy.

Notes

For everyone-is-gay-and-broken for her amazing comments on some of my other works! Thank you so much, love. I wrote you a thing that played out better in my head. I hope it’s up to par.

See the end of the work for more notes.

“Can you see me?”

“No.”

Dean’s words blew cold air into Castiel’s face, and he could see the heat of Dean’s breath in a cloud, lingering by chapped, full lips.
“Do you want to?”

Dean paused, and that scared Castiel a bit, or maybe he was just really cold. Either way, a shiver zipped down his spine. “No,” Dean finally muttered.

They sat on the roof outside Dean’s old window. Green paint chips lay on the wood panels. That was the color Dean had wanted it, the most disgusting green Castiel had ever seen, but he’d paid $14.96 for it, anyway. And when Dean’s mom yelled at them for painting the side of her house green, Castiel didn’t care, because Dean liked it.

“It’s kinda cold.” Castiel’s fingers were busy peeling paint. His mind was the most peaceful and nervous blank that he could imagine.

“Yeah.” Castiel heard the effort it took Dean’s body to breathe deep, in and out, huffing to stay alive. “Warm front’s supposed to blow through on Thursday.”

“Oh,” Castiel said. He didn’t want it to get warmer. Castiel liked the cold that Dean always seemed to bring in his back pocket.

Dean was visiting that first week of January because his brother stayed in town when the rest of the family left. Sam had said, “I’m not done watching the sun rise on this side of the world, just yet.” Castiel liked that. Sometimes, when he missed Dean really bad, he would whisper that too. Castiel shut his eyes and thought of Dean a few feet taller, sitting on the roof of his new house, watching the sun rise on his side of the world. Castiel always imagined that the sun was prettier where Dean was, but he thinks that might have been a lie he told himself to keep from crying.

During the hot summer nights that made Castiel wish it was socially acceptable to walk around in just underwear, he would sneak over to Dean’s brother’s house and sit on the roof outside the window of Dean’s old bedroom (that Sam had made into a library). Castiel watched the sky turn black and blue like the invisible bruises Dean didn’t mean to leave behind, but then it swelled with pink and orange, which made Castiel believe Dean was thinking of him, when really he knew that Dean was asleep, not thinking at all.

Castiel fell asleep on Sam’s roof one night, and woke up confused on the couch, green paint chips in his hair. Sam never said a word, even though Castiel knows he heard him slip out the front door. Castiel never said anything either, but Sam knew more than Castiel could ever put into words.
Castiel saw Dean’s dad’s old Impala in Sam’s driveway Tuesday morning, when he was jogging. He saw the AC/DC bumper sticker and knew that it was Dean’s old Impala, now. Castiel also knew that Dean was back, but he kept on running anyway.

It was Dean’s turn to chase, and Dean did.

“I didn’t think you’d show up,” Dean confessed quietly.

“I didn’t, either.”

Dean sucked in all the cold air his body could handle. “I’m glad you did.”

Castiel said nothing.

“You’re taller than I expected,” Dean said, fingers moving to Castiel’s worn shoes, flipping the laces between two fingers.

“I’m six feet tall.”

“I guessed that.” The silence between them was so intense that it made Castiel’s ears ring.

“You have muscles. I didn’t expect that,” Castiel said. It was true. Castiel had thought Dean would play music, not lacrosse.

“I play lacrosse.”

“I guessed that.” Castiel hadn’t, though. Sam had told him a week into sophomore year.

Sam told Castiel a lot about Dean, but Castiel didn’t want to say anything about him. He knew that Sam would just tell Dean over the phone, and he didn’t want that. Castiel wanted Dean to wonder.
“The sun’s coming up,” Castiel announced, as if Dean couldn’t tell.

“Here,” Dean said. He pushed the scraggly blanket over Castiel and moved closer. “Can I ask you something?” Dean’s voice was deep - a man’s. That was weird to Castiel. He’d seen Dean cry when a hamster died, and now he was a man. Castiel wanted to hate the way Dean’s face was symmetrical and acne-free, but he couldn’t make himself. Instead, he hated himself for wanting Dean.

“Sure.”

“Did you miss me?”

Castiel coughed. “You know the answer to that.”

“I just want to hear you say it, Cas.”

Castiel’s voice was tense. “I missed you more than you know.” Castiel searched for Dean’s hand in the dark, and found it 8¾ centimeters from his thigh. “I used to come up here when I missed you, but that just made me hate you for leaving me, and I didn’t want to hate you, so I stopped. I figured you can’t miss someone you don’t think about.”

“You didn’t think about me?”

“I thought about you every day, all the time.” Castiel’s words hated coming from his mouth, but they needed to be said.

“I keep your old baseball hat, the one you got from Minute Maid Park,” Dean laughed.

“I know. You posted a picture of you wearing it on Instagram.” It had killed Castiel to see it sit so perfectly on Dean’s head, tilted slightly to the side because he thought it made him look cool.

“You follow me on Instagram?”
Dean chuckled a bit, and laced his fingers in Castiel’s. Castiel relaxed and let Dean bend them the way he wanted. He was always manipulating Castiel.

“I think I love you,” Dean muttered into the pink sky.

“Then why did you leave without telling me that?” Castiel could picture his middle-school self, peering out the bedroom window, watching Dean ride away from him in the back of the old Impala that he now drove. Castiel cried for weeks in the bathroom with the faucet running, but his mother knew.

“Because I love you.”

“That’s a stupid answer.”

“It’s the truth.” Dean grazed his thumb across Castiel’s palm. Castiel didn’t flinch. Dean wouldn’t win this one, he swore it.

You grazed your thumb across my palm swiftly. I didn’t flinch. You wouldn’t win this one, I swore it.

“The truth is stupid. I hate the truth.” The last syllables of Castiel’s sentence echoed. He thought that was ironic.

“Tell me the truth,” Dean said.

“I loved you.”

“How do I know that’s the truth?” Dean was weary of Castiel. Castiel didn’t blame him.

“What color is the side of this house?” Castiel asked.
Dean hesitated. “Grasshopper green.”

“What’s my favorite color?”

Dean knew this; Dean knew Castiel. “Robin’s egg blue.” Dean’s voice was low, and Castiel sensed his embarrassment in the way he enunciated.

“That’s love,” Castiel said.

“Painting a house an ugly green when your favorite color is blue?”

Castiel could tell Dean had something to add, but he didn’t want to hear it. “You thought it was an ugly green?” Castiel asked instead. He was surprised. Dean had convinced Castiel and the paint guy at Home Depot that he had to have it.

“Yes.”

Castiel didn’t have words to spit back, so he sat silently.

Dean went on, “Remember when we went to the zoo in second grade?”

“Yeah.” Castiel did. Dean’s favorite animal was the zebra. He’d said, *God couldn’t decide which color he liked best, so zebras got both* . Castiel liked that.

“You pointed to a grasshopper and said, ‘I love that color,’”

Oh. Yeah, Castiel had said that.

“Do you know what my favorite color is?” Dean asked.
Of course Castiel did. “Hunter green.”

“That’s love.” Dean smiled. Even though Castiel couldn’t see it, he felt it.

“They’re both green,” Castiel told him.

“Grasshopper green and hunter green are completely different.”

“I guess so.”

“I still love you, you know.” Dean said it quietly, like Castiel wouldn’t agree.

“I know.”

There was a pause, and then, “How do you know?” Dean swallowed loudly.

“Your brother showed me a picture of your bedroom in the new house.”

“And?”

Castiel knew it was true when he said it, but he hated the irrefutably sobering truth about the distance between him and Dean.

“Grasshopper green.”

He and Dean were sitting in the January cold, figuring out the distance in centimeters of how far apart they were, in heart and in truth. They were 8¾ centimeters apart on the roof that night, and Castiel fell asleep searching for Dean in between the shades of people and pink in the rising sun on his side of the world.

“Do you like it?”
“What?” Castiel asked, caught up in his own thoughts.

“What?”

“No. I hate it.”

End Notes

I hope you liked this, guys! Please, please, please comment! Even if it's criticism, I love hearing from people.

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