Summary

The Winchesters are a notorious larceny crew, and a routine job goes south when two of their members get caught red-handed by a SWAT Team. They have a goddamn mole. Now’s the time for a prison break.

Dean is an omega posing as an alpha because strategically, it makes sense. His stupid optimism may have landed him the leading role in a full-out Romance Novel. He fell for his cellmate. In the friggin' true-mates-way. What are those odds?! 

Except, Castiel isn’t just another inmate—he’s a Krushnic. Born into a family of killers with an innate bloodlust who charge top dollar for their expertise. Their family is breaking Castiel out.

Both Dean and Cas make it clear to their families they come as a pair. It was accepted, but the Krushnics and Winchesters clashed, fighting for the swifter extraction. 

A sloppy jailbreak is dangerous, even with unexpected alliances. Cas has his own concerns, hoping Dean will still love him outside of the prison walls, and that their bond's true...because Castiel enjoys his occupation and he doesn’t want to have to choose between who he is and his true mate. As the stakes rise, blame and mistrust run rampant through the group.

Is there even a chance for a happy ending?

Notes

It's been a joy to work with my amazing artist Alex during this challenge! Give my gal some love! She's fantastic <3

Sending out a huge, massive thanks to nerdgirlsarethebestgirls for beta-reading, idea-bouncing, and generally being an amazing person who I cannot wait to work with in the future!

Ann's Notes: Ah, every year the DCBB comes around I get excited because this was my first Bang and this is my third year participating! I'm super excited to share this fic and I hope everyone else enjoys it, too!

Each chapter title is inspired by a quote that's expanded within the text, and the fic title comes from Frederick Douglass: 

It is not light that we need, but fire
it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.
Chapter Summary

"The thief, as will become apparent, was a special type of thief. This thief was an artist of theft. Other thieves merely stole everything that was not nailed down, but this thief stole the nails as well."

—Terry Pratchett, Sourcery

It was pure luck that Sam had a law degree. It worked in the Winchester brothers' favor to no end, because instead of those monitored calls where they were separated by Plexiglas with haphazardly drilled holes? They could actually fucking talk without a problem. Dean had a few items to add to the roster of things he needed from Sam during this visit—because jail wasn’t Target.

They still needed to play it safe and be careful, although they had a system for this very instance. In case any one of them got caught. “Any one of them” meaning their top-dollar breaking and entering team. The Winchester Family was a best-of-the-best tactical theft group, hand-chosen by the brothers, and they were making the big bucks on the outside.

Except this time, during one of those heists...Dean had been left behind. He’d been caught in the goddamn act by a S.W.A.T. Team and they still didn’t know which asshole had left him for dead. Since all of them were like fucking family, Dean wasn’t going to narc; he wasn’t going to give the cops any names of his crew for a plea deal even though they’d offered immunity.

Hence, the whole being in prison thing.

Even though Sam was here as a ‘lawyer,’ he was actually in charge of the tech and tactical gear they used out in the field. Sometimes, he’d even join them. For his size, he was pretty fuckin’ graceful and moved in the shadows like he belonged there.

To the guards and the cops, it looked like they were discussing their next move with the case. What they were really chatting about, with open-ended phrases and loose mentions—was a prison break.

And it wasn’t only Dean they needed to get out. On the other side of the penitentiary, there was a small ward for the women. Some of whom were awaiting transport to the high-security women’s prisons, while some were in limbo before trials. Somehow their friend and ‘coworker’ Jo had ended up there, caught as Dean had been.
Their team was in complete chaos. And they needed to get this rescue mission together. Soon. Too much time had passed as it was.

Casually, Sam slipped him one of his ‘care packages,’ and asked nervously, “How’re you holding up?”

With a wide grin, Dean announced, “Pretty fantastic. Blockers and suppressants keep me in the alpha ward. Which is right where I plan on staying. I managed to climb the ladder to the top alphas here. I’m rich with fuckin’ cigarettes, which means I’m practically a millionaire. And the food ain’t bad!”

“I’m an optimist!” he defended instantly, “You gotta be. Especially when one of your friends stabbed you in the fucking back, dude. Oh, I forgot! One more thing I’ve gotta add to the goodie bag list when you come ‘round.” He’d already tucked the things that disguised his omega status away, hiding them close to his chest within a narrow package.

The location of the alpha ward wasn’t merely ideal for a jailbreak, but being an alpha in public was where Dean was comfortable. When Sam and he met with ‘clients’ Dean was constantly disguised as an alpha so they’d take them seriously. After all, no one wanted them to be confused for a mated pair or worse—

Someone incompetent because at the top of the food chain, a silly omega playing dress-up with the big boys was trying to run shit. Yeah, Dean excelled at being an alpha.

Then from the moment he was arrested, he needed to stay this way, knowing he could count on his brother. If word got out that the notorious “Dean Winchester” was an omega, it would make their clients not only feel betrayed, but turn off potentials. After all, word of mouth was a huge factor in their business.

Before Dean could scope out the scenery, he also had to posture like crazy to make sure no other competition was on the inside, that no one working with theft groups could get under his skin and had already built a hierarchy here. Phew, Dean was lucky! The alpha guise was paying off, and there was so much more...

“Anything, Dean. Just tell me what you need, and I’ll make it work,” Sam agreed instantly, his puppy eyes out, because he missed his brother. This was a shit situation, one that needed to be over and done with ASAP, and—

“Need some birth control.”

Sam’s thoughts slammed to a halt, and he tried to muffle the shrill screech of, “What?!”

Because that would mean—

That told Sam someone found out Dean was an omega, which wasn’t good for the business, his pride, the extraction and—!

...Dean was sleeping around in prison!?

“Don’t you judge me!” Dean pointed a finger and jabbed it into Sam’s leaned shoulder, as far as the cuffs would allow. “It’s uh, this guy. God, this is gonna sound fucking ridiculous, but he’s sexy as hell and he’s my bunk mate. Sure, we’ve messed around a few times, when he figured out the truth...about me, he helped me with covering up the scent. He’s got my back and well, it’s not just some random.”

The omega shifted in his seat, almost nervous to tell his oddly silent brother the other part. “He’s kinda in the same situation as I am. We talk a lot. He’s, uh, a hired gun. Trying to get out, too. And I hope we can get him out too because—”

“Don’t think you can pull one over on me. I’ve done my research, Dean, don’t you think I know who you’re bunking with??” All this information amounted to something highly disturbing, and Sam exploded with, “Castiel Krushnic?! You’re fucking around with him?!”

“Uh…yes. I am,” Dean furrowed his brows, not sure what the correct answer would be, so he went with the truth.

Damnit, the omega should have known his brother would’ve vetted whoever he was sharing a cell with!

“Do you have any idea how dangerous that family is? Specifically, Castiel? He’s a fuckin’ walking, talking murder weapon. How the hell have you—”

A bold, haughty smile bloomed across Dean’s features as he slapped the table and wiggled his eyebrows. “Well, that’s fantastic! Because it sounds like you sure as hell don’t want me havin’ his pups, amiright?” He finished with a cheesy wink, and Sam was left baffled and off-kilter.

“Dean,” his voice dropped to a serious timbre, urging, “Please. I know you can get yourself into trouble, hell, it’s what you do best. But... this kind of trouble? If he, I don’t know, hurts you? Is playing you? We may be thieves, we may know how to KO some civilians and cops if it’s necessary, but these guys. They deal in death. No survivors. It’s a different level of ‘bad.’”
Being the proper omega, Dean listened and nodded. “I know that, Sammy. Believe me. I’ve been in here, what? Four months? And we’ve been roomies for that long. It took me a while. And it was when he figured ‘it’ out that I respected and started trusting him. Sure, I thought he was hot as fuck from day one, but things, they...changed. He’s gone out of his way to protect me. Not, like, ‘protect the poor omega,’ but tell me if my blockers are starting to wear off and I need more. It’s like because we’re paid criminals, we look out for each other. Just…”

Dean blew through his lips, and even though Sam didn’t look convinced, he looked intrigued. “Just make sure I don’t get knocked up? Yeah?”

Sam acquiesced and decided, “As long as you’re careful. It kind sounds like you’re in deep, Dean. Please, please. I’m close to getting you out, we’re just locating and making some heavy... distractions.” Oh, Dean knew that was code for some massive fireworks going off in the form of untraceable home-made bombs. “And he’ll be able to exit, too. Until then, stay safe. I’ll be back this time next week.”

When Sam stood up and smoothed down his suit, he glowered at his brother and made it a point to say, “Can you keep it in your pants until then?”

With a shit-eating grin, just to be a little fucker, Dean countered, “Can’t promise to keep it in my pants, but nothing’s going in my ass. How’s that?”

“Ahh?” Sam’s hands flew up to cover his ears, his briefcase knocked him in the jaw in the process, ending up doing more damage than anything. Fuck! “Didn’t need to hear that! Anyway, go back to your room and don’t die!”

“Got it!”

The moment Sam had left, the guards came in and unlocked Dean from the table and back to the handcuffs in front of him. He sighed as he was marched back down the long hallway of the cellblock, paying no mind to the other inmates. Still, Dean glowed to see that his own very special person of interest was relaxing back in the bottom bunk, reading a book.

They let Dean go and locked the doors behind him.

The alpha looked captivated, as his eyes flew over the words on the page and that was fine. Dean waited until the guards left the cell block. The others weren’t paying them any attention so he pulled out what Sam had brought him and went about hiding them. It was a different location each time. He couldn’t let anyone know he was an omega or all the rules would change.

He needed to be around alphas. He needed that challenge to stay sharp; that aggression and posturing to take his frustration out if there was a fight in the prison yard, and these days? He, uh…kinda needed Cas, too.

This was one of Dean’s memoirs, release date TBA: “How I Fell In Love With A Hit Man Behind Bars.” Chapter...whatever.

Once he finished (after popping a new pill and trying out the new blockers), he didn’t want to disturb Cas. One thing they’d learned very, very early on was respect. Respect of privacy, time, belongings and such. This looked as though it fell under the category of time.

Except, when Dean grabbed the bars to jump up to the top bunk, it was like lightning. There were hands on his hips, they startled him, and pulled him back down.

He was spun around and now face to face with stunning and piercing blue eyes (he’d never get over those, he could fuckin’ wax poetic in this chapter of his book - write haikus and shit) and a deep voice inquiring, “No hello? No ‘I’m back?’ Just mindless wandering and ignoring me before your nap? I thought more of you, Dean,” it turned downright wicked as he traced a line with the brush of his fingers, along his jaw and down his neck. “That’s rather rude.”

“Didn’t mean it.” The omega quivered under Cas’ touch. “Mm, didn’t wanna interrupt your reading time. ‘Course I wanted to come in here. Tackle you. Kiss the hell out of you. Tell you that next time Sam’s here, he’s bringing birth control.”

The last part was a whisper. Yet, that whisper was more than enough to make Cas bite his lip and his eyes dilate. He pulled Dean back to the bottom bunk, setting the book aside so they could face one another with their legs crossed. Which confused Dean, but Cas was loving it.

“You want me so badly that instead of smuggling in drugs or the normal contraband, you chose birth control.” Castiel’s expression wasn’t patronizing, it was impressed. He reached out and stroked the side of Dean’s face with his thumb. “God, you are one in a million. You really want to feel my cock, my knot, swell inside you that badly?”

Just the tone of his voice on top of the dirty words made Dean whimper. He couldn’t hold back and he had to avert his eyes. Castiel’s gaze was too intense, too fucking beautiful and sheer seduction and Dean could feel the beginning twitches of his cock responding.

Cas cuffed his fingers under Dean’s chin and forced his attention, pulling him closer. “You’re absolutely perfect for me, you know that?”

Although his head was tilted partly in submission, which wasn’t uncommon, Dean said, “I hope
“Very much so,” Castiel responded, and leaned in enough to steal a single kiss. “You surprised me, my beautiful omega,” his voice was soft and quiet so no one had a chance of hearing. “I cannot wait. I hope it’s oral medication and not a simple condom. I want to stretch you on my knot, make you feel every load of my cum.”

“Jesus,” Dean hissed out and shook his head, “Yer gonna get me ready to go in no time flat.” Trying to figure out something that would totally kill his boner, trying to reel this back in…he found the topic. “My brother…he’s heard of you. He’s afraid of me being with you. I told him to fuck off, he doesn’t know the story. He doesn’t know how much I trust you and how much you look out for me.”

Dean reached out this time and ran a hand through Cas’ hair. “And if he saw you right now? Holy shit, I’m glad he’s an alpha because anyone else wouldn’t be able to stay away from you. I’d whoop their asses, because you’re all mine, babe.”

Amusement danced in Castiel’s eyes from the way the omega spoke about the encounter. “What did he find issue with?”

Before Dean could explain, Cas maneuvered Dean around until he was sitting on his lap, personal space be damned. Although the one thing that would make it better was if the alpha could scent him. He wanted this all to be over so he could experience Dean’s natural fragrance freely, not the breakthrough nuances that he was on guard to tell the omega to cover up right away.

From his perched angle, Dean sighed and mentioned, “I think a large chunk of his worry is the family name. And, while we’re criminals in the theft sense, you guys are a little more…hands on, hardcore. As he said—final. It doesn’t bother me. I wouldn’t be a split-second away from grinding on your dick if it did. It’s just…Sam. He’s careful. He’s worried about me because of the lengths that I’m going to in order to stay with you.”

“Ah.”

That was all Castiel said, and for some reason, Dean assumed there would be…more?

But instead of words, Castiel ducked his head forward and began sucking marks and nipping the outline of his teeth against Dean’s neck. Once the previous marks had faded, Cas always, always needed to refresh them, obsessed with proving to everyone that Dean was his. Except in the middle of this (or beginning or end, it didn’t really matter) Dean began gasping, and a mix of precum from his achingly hard cock and slick between his legs started to drip.

“A-Cas,” he moaned his name like a prayer, “If you stop here? I’m not gonna be happy with you…”

He chuckled and asked, “Where do you wish for me to stop, Dean? Tell me, in a perfect world, how would you like this to go?”

A sharp breath from an equally sharp nip to Dean’s throat prefaced his fantasy. “First off, I’d demand and get the real reason you like turning my neck black and blue with your mark. But after that?” He rolled his hips, in the perfect position to grind downward on Cas’ cock, making him gasp. “I’d tease, I’d be bad, I’d make your alpha come out because, Jesus fucking Christ, Cas—your alpha? It’s so strong, powerful, all-consuming. The only alpha that’s ever been able to control me.”

Cas pulled away, breathing heavily, to watch him speaking as he panted; the words driving him to a certain manic level of madness. And that same alpha Dean spoke about? Was just itching under the surface.

“I’d want you to lay me out and kiss me until we both couldn’t breathe, fingering me fast to get me ready for your fat, huge dick. If you ordered me to present, I’d be on my hands and knees before you could finish saying the word. If you wanted me on my back? Or if you wanted me to ride you? I’ll do whatever my alpha wants,” Dean bared his neck in submission, scenting the most glorious teeming of lust and perfect hunger for him, for the omega, before he finished.

Dean licked his lips, it seemed as though he was challenging Cas by the direct eye contact because a lesser alpha (and any omega) would have looked down. But Dean needed to say this to his face.

“I’d beg you over and over again to fuck me raw. Until my hole was used and abused by your size and see how many times you can fuck me in a night. I want to take your knot, feel you swell inside me and blow your load. But not once, alpha, I’d wanna milk you dry. Just when you think you couldn’t give me anymore? I’ll take over, give you another mind blowing orgasm as your cum rearranges my insides, claiming me as yours.”

“Dean,” Castiel’s voice was a low warning, “The moment you get the birth control, I’ll give you everything you want. I simply hope you weren’t exaggerating, because every moment of that plan has been ingrained into my brain and now my cock is aching with need because of it. You are glorious, omega—completely and utterly glorious.”

He soothed his hands down Dean’s back and grabbed his ass, growling out, “And you are mine.”

With an animal-like snarl of his own, Dean crashed their lips together and kissed him with everything he had.
This, right here, was the only thing he was unsure about. It was the only thing that he'd mentioned at the beginning of his fantasy. He wanted to know the truth behind the markings, behind each and every ‘mine’ and ‘claim’ and potential fight if someone looked at Dean the wrong way in the prison yard.

While that was easily handled by the omega, all the other ‘what if’s were driving Dean insane.

Their encounters were staggering, their hips just rocking together as they kissed the air and the words away from the other’s lungs. Dean reached down to free their cocks from their obnoxious prison garb and swiped his hand between his legs, coating it in desperate, needy slick, to wrap around their cocks.

Cas gasped in his mouth from the scent, sensation and knowledge, “O-Oh God,” and began thrusting upward and clinging onto his omega.

“So gorgeous under me like this, Cas. I could get used to it,” Dean whispered into his ear, just to tease him, and the alpha was grappling for Kleenex as he spoke.

“Thought I’d give y-you some free rein. Once you’re on the birth control?” Cas grabbed a fistful of Dean’s hair and wrenched it to the side as they continued to fuck his slick, sloppy grip. “I’m going to take advantage of you over and over again. You won’t even be able to sleep at night, omega, my cock will be right where it belongs. Tied inside your ass.”

“Fuck, C-Cas—” Dean pitched forward and sunk his teeth into the fabric of Castiel’s shirt to keep from crying out, because when his orgasm hit, it hit hard. The alpha was there was tissues, and his rapid breathing and jerky rhythm showed Dean he followed right afterwards.

He also, since Dean hadn’t recovered yet, grabbed one of the wet wipes they had and after using the Kleenex, cleaned away any signs of slick, like it had never happened. Dean was always wiped out after sex, physically and mentally, and the oddity was that their alpha and omega worked together, even though Dean played alpha.

In these moments, they truly were their designation, Castiel falling into the natural habit of doting on him and taking care of him without complaining or ever asking his omega to do it instead. And for Dean…feeling taken care of was something new, completely. He was used to being the ‘big brother,’ to having an entire team look up to him, but Cas?

Cas was amazing.

“Thank you,” Dean whispered, and crawled to the alpha’s chest after another round of blockers. “Out of all the bunkmates. How the hell did I win the luck of the draw?” Dean’s voice was slurred, but in a happy way.

With a chuckle, Cas pulled him close, needing the physicality just as much as the omega and said, “Who knows?” After a kiss to Dean’s forehead, he mused, “We need to send out an SOS to your brother to get this delivery right away. Now that these thoughts are running rampant in my head, I don’t know how long I’ll be able to hold off…”

“Oh God,” Dean wiped a hand down his face with fake-dramatics. “Were you always a knothead, or is this something new? Please tell me it’s new.”

There was a lopsided grin on his face when Castiel confirmed, “It’s a new-because-of-you thing. What have you done to me? I used to have such disregard for human life and now I’m simply addicted to you.”

His tone and words were nothing if not honest and Dean simply watched him for a second. He very well could be falling for this man and that, right there, was the number one no-no of the job. Dean could only imagine it ran both ways, maybe even more intensely on the other end with Cas. So where did that leave them?

Fuck, this was troubling, and after that brief silence, the alpha’s brows raised and he whispered in concern, “Have I said something wrong?”

“No, you said something right,” he chuckled, pulling Cas closer. “I’m addicted to you too.” Then Dean dared to say, “Hope that’s not a problem.”

“Of course not, my perfect omega.”

His heart was still racing, because Cas was so many things, but Dean was the only one who was allowed to see him sweet, open and vulnerable like this. Just how he loved him. Well, there were so many ways that he did, but in these moments he could pretend that Cas loved him too, because his words and actions made it feel real.

“Heh, we talking about perfect? How about you look in a mirror, alpha?” he teased the last word and cuddled closer, thinking a nap was in order. “Motherfucker, I just wanna be naked.”

“Tonight,” Cas promised, because that was another thing they’d managed to work out.

“Oo, that promise has got me all tingly,” Dean sucked Cas’ earlobe into his mouth and worried it with his teeth. “Already seducing me in record time.”

“Tonight,” the alpha repeated, stole a hot, open-mouth, passionate kiss and then they both collapsed. “We’ve still got ‘enrichment activities.’ And I have a meeting with my own brother. I
most definitely need a nap to deal with his ass.”

“Makes sense from what you’ve told me,” Dean agreed and shut his eyes. “Yeah, let’s take advantage of this while we can.”

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While Castiel didn’t have the luxury of Dean’s ace up his sleeve (the lawyer trick would’ve proven invaluable), he did have a silver-tongued brother who spoke in the proper riddles that didn’t alert the authorities. Castiel…mostly listened and agreed when necessary, disagreed when he thought Gabriel was acting too boldly and conveyed most of his thoughts through his facial expressions. Which were primarily glares, rolled eyes, and exasperated sighs. Still, if his brother could get him out of here, that’s all that mattered.

He was led into the room and caught sight of Gabriel immediately, walking over and taking a seat. They both picked up the phone, and naturally—the other alpha dove right in.

“You know, never thought I’d say this, but prison looks good on you. How the hell did you manage that?” Gabriel squinted at him, and that caused Cas to freeze.

Leave it to Gabriel to notice something was different, that something had changed. And it was something big during his stay here.

“I merely haven’t let it get the best of me,” he attempted to keep his voice even and stare his brother down, because wandering eyes would be the first giveaway. “How’ve you been?”

It didn’t look like Gabriel fully believed him, but he continued, “Good, good. Family business is still going strong. We all miss you. Hell, if there was a price to pay to get you out, we’d all cash in. It should work that way, shouldn’t it?”

That was the first clue. They were all guns-for-hire, and if Gabriel mentioned pay dirt and giving Cas a ‘donation,’ it meant everyone was in. The family was ready to make a move, they’d discussed it, and the question was if they’d formulated a plan or not.

Cas laughed, playing the part and asked, “That’s kind of them. How high of a bounty would all of them chip in to save me? Didn’t think I was that special.”

“Oh, I bet the sky’s the limit,” Gabriel gave him a significant glance, “Especially, once they get their next paycheck, those goons should be celebrating within a week. You know how we love our family time!”

Holy shit. A week. Castiel would have thought it was longer, but they must have figured out a loophole or something. How could they have gone from literally nothing, to a plan since the last visit he’d had with Gabriel?!

“Well, just wanted to check on you, little bro! It was good to see—”

“Gabriel!” He all but shouted, stopping him in his tracks and causing a few heads to turn.

Fuck, was he really doing this?!

His brother did a double-take, but slowly sat back down, as he’d been rising during his good-byes.

Cas took a deep breath and whispered, “Gabriel, I…found someone.”

“You…what?” Gabriel’s jaw dropped, and then he sputtered, “I don’t know whether to be pissed off, curious or impressed by this…but what the fuck?”

“I know, I know,” Cas hung his head, cradling his brow in his palm. “Obviously, it wasn’t supposed to happen, but it did. I need you, need the family,” he emphasized, “to know that I’ve fallen for someone. He’s my cellmate, Dean Winchester, he’s—”

“Nah, no, no, no Winchesters allowed, Cas. Dammit, you know better than that! They are not on the ‘Can Fuck’ list, okay?!”

With his teeth ground, Castiel immediately snapped, “What about the ‘Can—”

“Nope. None of ’em. Except the ‘Pain in Our Ass’ list. That’s the only one.” Gabriel wasn’t budging, but Castiel had deliberately told him to tell the family because they’d be breaking both of them out.

He refused to leave without Dean and so once he noticed Gabriel was snapping his gum, Castiel said plainly, “Is that the stupid strawberry flavor you buy that’s obnoxiously expensive?” When his brother looked confused, he finished, “I’d refuse just one pack. It’d have to be a two for one deal. Otherwise, it’s not worth your time.”

At first, Gabriel’s eyes widened at Castiel’s blatant disobedience and then narrowed dangerously, “You’ve always had horrible taste. Goodbye, Cas.”

He slammed the phone back against the wall and stood up, pivoting on his heels. Castiel clenched his fists as he watched Gabriel walk away because he had no idea where that left them. He’d said his piece, it was in the Krushnics’ court now.

It’s not as though it would be any more difficult, they were in the same goddamn cell! And that’s
what infuriated Castiel. It wouldn’t be a problem if Gabriel didn’t have a vendetta against the Winchesters. Right up until the name was mentioned, Cas had a feeling everything would be a ‘go’ but his brother was stubborn. Too damn stubborn.

Castiel was trying to keep his alpha under control, but he was spinning—for some stupid fucking reason, and it had happened fast without him even knowing until it was done—he thought of Dean as his omega. His to protect, take care of, get out of here, even though he knew damn well Dean could handle himself.

Maybe…he didn’t want Dean to be forced to…this overwhelming alpha instinct wanted to do it for his omega, and he had to hold back. He knew it would piss Dean off. Castiel knew he was proud, and that was one of the many things that made his omega so alluring.

Yet right now…Castiel and his alpha were riled up, because the unknown status of the pair escaping together was the same thing as failure. Goddammit!

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Sam was staring at his computer, chatting over a secure server with the members of the team about what the next step was. He was also trying to figure out who the fucking weakest link had been, the asshole that had given Dean and, in turn, Jo away. Obviously, they were all good at what they did—and a chunk of that revolved around lying.

So finding their Judas? That would be extremely difficult.

He knew it wasn’t Charlie, she would live and die for them. Ruby had a thing for Jo and would never, ever, leave her in the dust. Garth…well, they didn’t even know how he got into this business in the first place, the dude had a heart of gold! No way he’d be the one.

That meant Sam was debating between Benny (who seemed to have a bromance with Dean) and Anna (who had a crush on Dean at one point). Wait, no, none of this made sense! Now that he thought about it, everyone was back to being a suspect, because they were all so damn close!

It was making Sam’s head pulse with stress, and he massaged his temples with a sigh.

His phone vibrated, announcing a text message, which confused him because it wasn’t his day-to-day phone. It was his ‘work’ phone. And he was talking to the team online, right now, so why…

An unknown number popped up and said:

TEXT FROM UNKNOWN NUMBER
cease and desist whatever bullshit rescue plan you have
leave it to the professionals kids

Sam blinked and read the message again and again.

It wasn’t as though he was focusing on his compromised phone number or who was behind the call (he was pretty damn sure he knew), it was the fucking audacity and balls behind the message that shot liquid alpha fury through his veins. Sam was lucky his hands didn’t crush the phone because, naturally, he chose to punish himself and it over and over, becoming angrier with each read.

He growled to himself, “Professionals. What a load of crap,” as he punched the touch screen hard enough to break the damn glass.

This person knew who they were. There was no need for beating around the bush and playing dumb. So Sam just went for it.

TEXT TO UNKNOWN NUMBER
Our job is ‘professional’ breaking, entering and retrieval. I’m guessing you don’t have the grace nor means to pull this mission off. Stick to pay-per-person slaughter.

Sam turned back to the screen, where his friends had already noticed his absence and were sending him ‘???’s and other questions. Here he thought that would be the end of the texts, he could get back to their plan, yes, their plan—but his fucking phone vibrated again!

TEXT FROM UNKNOWN NUMBER
is that how you lost one a yer dudes in the first place?? real graceful srsly back off we’ll get your bro back safe and sound

While that last statement actually surprised the hell out of Sam, surprised that the freaking Krushnics even gave a fuck about Dean, it wasn’t only him. It was Jo. And even if Castiel, by some stretch of the cold-hearted bastard’s imagination, really cared about his brother? They wouldn’t give a shit about Jo.

No, all these dicks would do covered one cell. Sam and his team were working large-scale disturbance and chaos, they needed it in order to pull off escapes from two parts of the prison, two wards, and get them the fuck out of there.

So, of course, Sam handled it like a mild-mannered adult.

TEXT TO UNKNOWN NUMBER
I don’t trust you with my brother for one fucking second
Appreciate the text, but nothing’s changing
My advice to you?
If our timelines match up, be ready to hold your breath

He immediately changed the setting to ‘Do Not Disturb’ and threw the phone half way across the room.

When Sam got back on the secure chat once more, there was a fire under his ass when he wrote the team:

GROUP MESSAGE
Plan’s changed
We’ve gotta move up the timeline
Give Me My Romeo

Chapter Summary

“Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-browed night; Give me my Romeo; and, when I shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars, And he will make the face of heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night...”

— William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

Dean and Cas were cuddled together in the corner of Cas’ bunk with Dean’s sheets tossed haphazardly over the front of the top bunk, cascading downward like a curtain. This way they could be together freely under the privacy of the linens, away from the outside world without anyone knowing. Well, a good amount of the prisoners knew, but they didn’t give a fuck.

They were chatting and laughing in low voices, recalling and sharing stories of jobs gone wrong with split-second fixes before they ended up here. Jostling them out of their memories was the sound of a key clanking against a metal door. Specifically, the metal door to their cell!

Dean, previously seated in Castiel’s lap, literally launched himself across the bed to lay on his stomach and grabbed a book sitting at the end of the mattress. The alpha righted himself with his back against the cement wall, but he hissed to Dean before the door swung open, “The novel’s upside down!”

“Fuck!” Dean cursed and flipped the book over.

“Winchester,” the guard greeted him. “Your lawyer’s here. You can come with—”

“Wha—? I didn’t think we had a meeting until next week.” Dean’s confusion was palpable as he sat up, but he figured it had to be something important. “Okay...maybe he caught a break in my case or something,” he mused aloud in puzzlement and held out his hands for the cuffs.

Behind him, Cas’ scent was suspicious with barely-there tinges of worry. He kept his composure and didn’t say a word, he just leaned back with his own book and continued to read.

As Dean was led through the halls, his brow remained furrowed as they walked. Their neck of the block was close to the meeting rooms, so he didn’t have much time to think about why in the hell he was being summoned. Soon enough, Dean took his normal seat and in the next second he saw Sam enter.

“Hey. What’s going on?” Dean tried his hardest to keep the anxiety from his voice, because Sam also looked a bit frazzled. That was not like him.

Even under the craziest circumstances, his brother had a helluva poker face. He was cool under pressure, which was what made him so damn good at his job. This was different and it made Dean nervous because the stakes were already so high. The plan required a steady hand and a level head. It didn’t look like Sam had either right now.
“We’re reaching go-time, Dean. We’re moving up the schedule. One of your boy-toy’s family members reached out to me,” his teeth were ground when he explained, “Said to stand down. Looks like they’re planning a prison break, too. Even said you were on the roster, so I guess Castiel really does care about you. He must, if he put his family up to that.”

Dean’s eyes widened as Sam continued, “We need to hit first. I know they’ll be stealthy and we’ll make him move. We’ve got to in order to get Jo. I’m not backing down, that’s why we’re gonna do this quick. And, sure, Castiel can come, too. They extended that courtesy with you; we’ll reciprocate,” he grumbled that part out, and sighed. “I don’t know what you got us into, Dean, but I hope it’s not a war between families.” Sam pinched the bridge of his nose worried about an impending migraine.

Dean didn’t seem to understand the urgency and perked right up with, “I’d make a badass Romeo.”

“You’re Juliet, don’t kid yourself,” Sam laughed for the first time in God knows how long. He also made a covert hand off with Dean, per usual, but this time with something new. “You’re lucky I’m me, because even though I loathe the family? I won’t hate on your relationship. Especially if it makes you happy, all right?”

“Holy shit.” The omega was actually kind of speechless, because in spite of all the turmoil the Krushnics now presented and their original plans going to shit because of it...here Sam was. Being the best brother of all time. Caring about Dean and the dude he cared about, despite being on the wrong team, and actually smuggling in the birth control. “You’re awesome, Sam.” Dean tried to convey just how moved he was when he said it.

He carried on that sincerity when he said, “I’m sorry it’s a mess. I’m sorry that it’s, like, a race to the finish line. I’ll try and talk to Cas, all right? See if he can’t call off his family because we need Jo, and lightning ain’t gonna strike twice with whatever plan they’re hatching. Have you talked to her? How’s she doing?”

“Heh,” Sam smirked and replied, “Ruby’s handling her case. Remember that one heist where Ruby and I went to that estate, pretending we were working in Elder Law and writing up the wills? Old, batty dude told us where all the goods were? Rubes remembers all that I taught her. Probably brushed up on her lawyer skills, since it’s Jo behind bars.” The alpha capped it off with, “Oh, young love everywhere.”

“Don’t hate. We’ll find you a pretty omega soon. I promise,” Dean flashed a wide, toothy smile stressed, “I really will talk to Cas. Try to see if he can get his psycho whoever to call off the Krushnic extraction. I know you’ve got us. All of us.”

“I do,” Sam nodded, his shoulders slumped and looking so damn tired. “I’m going to need a little break after this one’s over, all right?”

“We’ve got the goods, even though they got some of us. Let’s go to Hawaii. I’ve got enough fake IDs, they won’t flag me.” The omega teased him and tried to make light of an exhausting situation. “Go home, Sammy. Get some sleep, okay? You’ll need it. And...thank you. So much.”

“You do realize those sentences contradict each other, right?” Dean snickered.

“Young love everywhere.”

“Fuck off. You know what I meant.”

“Yeah, yeah, I got it. Seriously. Hit the sack.”

Sam opened the door and nodded, pitching his voice for those outside to hear his goodbye, “Exactly what I’ll be doing. Take care, Mr. Winchester. I think we’ve got a real shot with your case.”

Even though Dean was led here with trepidation and confusion, he was led back to his cell with excitement and bubbling mischief because he couldn’t wait to tell his ‘cellmate’ the good news…

Neither Dean nor the guards had noticed the prison uniforms Sam had stolen and stacked up inside his empty briefcase while doing some ‘pacing,’ waiting for Dean to arrive. It was pivotal to their plan, and now they were one step closer.

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Both Castiel and Dean were teeming with sexual energy from the moment Dean popped his first pill. They worked right away, almost like a Plan B when it came to immediate effectiveness, rushing through the omega’s system. He felt a little sick at first but that was the last thing on his mind.

It was funny in a way. The pair were waiting until lights out, but they had prepared everything before then.

Sam had gotten him two different kinds of blockers and alpha scents as to not raise suspicion. Those were basically like an oil he applied to his neck and wrists - his scent points as others would express their emotions through. That may have been one of the reasons Dean flew to the top of the hierarchy—it appeared he was unflappable. And to be honest—he was. But his bag of
tricks didn’t hurt him.

The oral blockers hid his designation, and the spray blockers were in case of a breakthrough scent if he was caught in a high-stakes situation. But those were emergency-use-only. Since it would cover up the alpha scents also. Still, in that situation, it would be better to raise a little curiosity than be outed as an omega. Now, more than ever, they’d used these spray blockers to hide the scent of slick. ’To spray on clothing, and tonight...’

They sprayed them all over Cas’ bed. His sheets, his pillows, his mattress. They were going to create their own fortress, and hopefully no one else would be able to notice a difference. Hell, they even sprayed themselves down and Dean’s random sheet that hung as cover.

“Hey, babe,” Dean called down to Cas from where he was keeping up appearances from the top bunk as they waiting for lights out. “I know this isn’t sexy talk. But, uh, I think our brothers got into a fight.”

The alpha sprung from the button bunk, suddenly on high alert and grabbed Dean’s forearms instantly. “What do you mean?” he was nervous—that was putting it lightly.

“I guess someone on your side found Sam’s number and told him to stop. They kind of fought back and forth. The good thing is, both sides said they’d help us as a pair. Still, Sam’s plan...it’s not just for me and you. We need to do what we need to do to get Jo from the omega women’s ward. She’s family, too, and I know you guys couldn’t care less.”

Castiel was actually happily surprised that Gabriel had decided to take Dean with him. He’d actually managed to get through to him, he’d—

“I…Dean, you haven’t mentioned ‘Jo’ before,” he said carefully with a frown, wondering just who this woman was to Dean that he’d risk an easy extraction for her. He needed to know before his jealousy manifested, because it was on the horizon. “Did she come in recently? How do you know her? What’s your relationship?”

Dean smiled, because he knew his mate (fuck! His brain was already wired to think that way, and it was too much too soon. He’d only slipped a few times, luckily it was only in his head...but he knew if he said the word aloud, Cas would be done with him!?)—he knew Cas’ alpha was more concerned than Cas, himself.

“She’s like my little sister, we grew up together; her, Sam and me. It only made sense that when we were building the team she joined it. She’s got mad skills.” He smiled as he recalled the beginning stages of their hit-and-miss missions until they got good. Too damn good. “I didn’t mention her to you because…well, we didn’t get close until you figured out my...thing. Then I fell for you. I guess I felt like I’d already given you the family download since we’d known each other so long, but it turns out I didn’t;” Dean shrugged. “Guess we’ve got more to chat about, huh?”

“Shit,” Cas cursed and shook his head, knowing this was a wrench in the machine. “I know you care for your own. You’re honorable. I don’t know what I can do about my brother, but we will figure it out, Dean, if only I could—”

Just then, the lights flickered off. The guards walked through the hallways, announcing, “Light’s out! Hit the sack, boys!” clanking their sticks against the prison cages, as they did every night.

That shut Cas and Dean up in record time, and the second they heard the door to their prison row shut and lock? The conversation was forgotten and the levee broke.

Cas’s instincts kicked in; he tackled Dean to the bed and instantly glued his lips to the omega’s in a hungry moment of desperation. Only fumbling for a second, Dean wrapped one arm around Cas, and tried to bring that scent-blocked blanket over top of them like they’d planned. But damn, Castiel was too taken, too fanatical, as he sucked on Dean’s neck and began to tear off his clothes.

They were definitely pressing some boundaries here. All the boundaries.

Which was why Dean summoned up all his strength, all his courage in the face of a damn-near-feral alpha, to grab Cas’s chin, force his attention and growl, “Under the friggin sheets. Now.”

Cas nodded, clearly having forgotten because of the blinding haze of lust, and pulled them both under the covers.

The second that the alpha ripped off his own shirt, Dean hummed happily, while his hands wandered across the perfectly muscled chest and abs covered in ink that drove him insane with want, “Mm, so much better.”

It was rare that they ever took their clothing off, because that was playing with fire. Gathering all the discarded scrubs if a guard was outside their door with a key would be damn near impossible. But knowing that this may be the last time they had to worry about a quick prison fuck? And this being the first, true time they could be together when they’d been wanting it for so long?

Why the hell not?

Dean couldn’t help but take in the moment, take in lines and shading etched into the alpha’s skin. In the low light, he couldn’t stop from brushing his thumbs over the words ‘Angel of Sorrow, Bringer of Death’ scrolled out under Cas’ collarbones that began the chestpiece covering those the toned plains and dips. It was a goddamn masterpiece of intricate ‘sacrilege,’ as Dean had been told in jest when the omega had discovered the art with wide-eyes and thrill.
Broken rosaries with scattered beads, the most fascinating, life-like cut-out of flesh—only showing ribs where his heart should be, a passage in something called Enochian circled by a broken halo, and loose feathers. Those wrapped around along Cas’ flank, connecting to the magnificent pair of ebony wings spanning his entire back. The tattooed sleeve on the alpha’s arm was impossibly more complex; the centerpiece a sleek, metal blade, but Dean could see that everyday…

These ones were private, these were for his eyes only—

Cas smirked knowing he had Dean’s rapt attention and teased, “See something you like?”

Shit, he hadn’t meant to be caught, but he wasn’t going to lie about it. “Friggin always.”

The alpha moaned quietly as their cocks rutted together through the pathetic excuse for pants and he whispered a teasing, “Would your brother, your family, be bothered by the way I claim you? By the way my mouth can’t seem to hold back from your delicious neck?”

Dean keened as that very first mark brushed on the edge of just too rough. If Cas hadn’t pulled himself back at the last moment—instead of leaving the indentation and scratch marks—he would have sunk in and left a bleeding, fresh mating claim. And that’s why Dean was left reeling because, motherfucker! The omega wanted that claim!

“They already know about us, so I’d say you’ve got free reign.” He teased, but then added a more meaningful, “Every part of me is yours if you want it. And tonight, we’ll be together.”

He received one of those rare, honest smiles from the alpha that lit up his eyes and made that bright blue shine, even though his pupils were dilated with wild lust. Castiel ran a hand through Dean’s hair, pausing a moment to just take him in.

His swollen lips, his flushed cheeks, the way his freckles popped in moments like this, and his heady green eyes, they were filled with more expression than one could deliver in words. And Dean belonged to Cas. At least, the words he’d said conveyed that. He wanted Dean to say it while they weren’t in the middle of a roll in the sheets. It was all Castiel craved, and that was something he never thought he’d want...

For Dean to profess he belonged to Castiel while they were in their right minds. To call Castiel his alpha and to wish for the claim. But speaking of…

Without preamble, Cas’s hand dove down Dean’s pants and bypassed his throbbing cock to tease his gushing hole. “Tonight, Dean. I’m going to claim you in another way, too. Would you like that?”

The omega tried to muffle his gasp as the alpha pushed three fingers inside him, twisting and stretching him (their previous sexcapades allowed easy entrance) but knowing he was being prepped? For something they’d never done before? It was overwhelming.

Dean writhed and tried not to whine needily at the intrusion, more and more slick from what was about to happen leaking from his desperate hole. They’d have to wad up these sheets, shove them in a corner and use Dean’s. Or something. Because, holy hell, he was about to leak through the cot-like bed.

He pulled Cas close, until their foreheads were resting against one another and whimpered, “It’s all I can think about. Claim me with your knot, your cum. Claim me however you want, I’m yours, alpha. All yours.”

Those words always, they always revved Castiel up, but tonight they had an oddly different effect.

He kissed Dean passionately, removed his fingers and pulled down the garments that were in his way to Dean’s ankles. From the rustling, Dean could only imagine that Cas was doing the same. He crouched back, settling between Dean’s legs and his breath caught in this throat. But both of Cas’ hands were cradling his face, kissing him tenderly and adoringly.

This…was not how Dean had expected things would go.

He expected the fast a furious ripping of clothing at the beginning, but then him on his hands and knees, being fucked within an inch of his life. He expected rough and feral, all alpha and omega fighting against one another, as they raced towards release in the end. He anticipated Castiel pushing him to the very limits of his body.

Not…holy fuck—

While Cas kissed him hotly, Dean could feel the thick, huge head of Cas’ cock lubed with a coating of his slick, rubbing and swirling around his hole. It was a tease, and he could feel Castiel’s smirk as he dipped just the tip into his puckered entrance. Dean was about to scream, they’d basically already done this before, but now he could handle the entire thing without repercussion—

And then, without knocking the air out of him, without slamming inside—like the aggressive alpha Dean had grown to know and love—his cock caught at Dean’s rim and Cas slowly took his time sinking into the omega’s body.

Dean was all grappling hands, that never changed, and he reached out to grab Cas’ (amazing) naked ass when he bottomed out. Castiel moaned out and scented of pure bliss, pulling away
from Dean’s lips and resting against his neck to catch his breath. And the omega did much of the same, because, damn.

A cock down your throat was much, much different than one in your ass, if it was on the large side. And that would be Castiel Krushnic.

“Cas,” Dean choked out, “Is it crazy? That you feel, like…”

“Perfect?” the alpha finished and laughed, now rocking his hips in a steady rhythm. “I said it before, I don’t know what I did to deserve this, but God—” he groaned as he began snapping his hips faster.

The build up to this, during their entire relationship, felt like it had taken forever. That they’d been waiting to become one since they met or something. And you know what the kicker was?

They felt like one.

Dean tilted his hips to intensify every one of Cas’ thrusts; but it wasn’t violent, it was making their minds blown from the deep angle he could reach inside the omega. When Cas sped up, leaning down and stealing kisses, his intense focus never leaving Dean—the omega felt it.

The beginnings of Cas’ knot pushed in, past his rim; and while normal couples may ask ‘is this okay?’ there was no hesitation, they wanted this more than anything. Both of them sped up their efforts, both of them were chasing orgasms, but not for themselves—for their lover.

Castiel was consistently brushing Dean’s sweet-spot while the omega was trying to grind and tug on his alpha’s sensitive knot, needing to feel the swell and the cum. It was a game they were playing against one another and everyone was the winner.

Castiel pulled Dean towards him, both covered in sweat and both breathless. He hooked an arm under the omega’s lower back that had just arched off the bed and whispered into his ear, “I’m gonna cum, Dean, please tell me you’re close.”

He looked into the alpha’s imploring eyes and nodded, “Anytime, any fucking time, you’re driving me insane. I’m trying to hold on so I don’t blow my load too early,” wrapping his arms around Cas’s neck. “Darnnit, Cas, I’ve never felt like this before, your cock, the way you fuck me…Do it, now, stretch me open with that knot.”

The alpha growled low in his chest, Dean’s words and wants sent a shiver down his spine and in a few more thrusts, he delivered. His knot was swelling, locked inside the omega he’d completely fallen for, and spilling inside him took everything to new heights. He continued to rock his hips, knowing that Dean could take more. Just as he blew another load, he could see Dean’s eyes widening, then squinting shut, as he slapped a hand over his mouth.

Castiel would have none of that. He dipped down and ripped Dean’s hand away by the wrist. He quickly replaced it with his lips, feeling the omega’s release on both their stomachs and his alpha rumbling happily that he’d pleased him.

Dean kissed him over and over again, as Cas tried to do what he could in the way of clean up on their bodies. The next round of cleanup would take some work, but damn, was it worth it.

While they relaxed, sated and happy—covered in the blocker-sprayed blankets and pillow, Dean noted, “I honestly imagined you demanding me to present, or something,” he laughed lightly, “That…was fucking awesome. It…was kind of an amazing surprise.”

Castiel was running his hand up and down the omega’s back as Dean rested on his chest, returning, “There are some times I find presenting degrading. Other times, as long as both parties are interested, it could be a turn on. But my first time with you? I wanted to see you every second, be able to kiss you every second, I—”

“Where’d this romantic side come from? You’re seducing me even more, be careful, I…” Dean had to give him something, a hint, a prompt, something, “If I’m in too deep, I break easily. My box says ‘Handle with Care’ around you. So stop the seduction unless you—”

“But I mean it?” the alpha asked, “And if I do mean it?”

His voice was suspiciously devoid of tone, of anything, any clue, that could give Dean somewhere to do.

“I say, seduce away! But I’m, uh, not gonna lie. I’m…scared.” Dean may as well get these things out while they were here together.

The fireworks, two separate (combating) rescue teams and all the bullshit they didn’t know how to handle was on the horizon. This could be the best chance they had to speak about it.

With a kiss to the forehead, Castiel asked, “What troubles you? I hope I can help.”

“After all this,” Dean took in a deep breath, absently tracing the outline of a feather, “will we still be together? Even though our families are rivals, they know about us, which is half the battle. Or are we both gonna fade into our separate shadows of the world?”

“Nothing will keep me away from you.” There was a finality in Cas’s statement. “I said you’re mine, you’re mine. Not merely inside these walls; we’re getting out together and we’ll be
together. No matter how unconventional our meeting, I...do not wish to be without you ever again."

Finally that nervous prickling, that voice inside that kept screaming at him to ‘enjoy it while it lasts’ was actually muffled. Dean maneuvered himself to cross his arms on Cas’ chest and rest his chin there, eyeing the alpha. “That makes me happy. And that’s all I want. I don’t know why the hell I’m feeling so fearless, maybe it’s because of the looming disaster,” Dean snorted and rolled his eyes.

Cas scrunched the pillow a bit more squarely so he was able to speak, “Be fearless. It’s one of the things I love about you.”

Both men felt Castiel freeze when the ‘L’ word dropped. While it wasn’t directly said to Dean, it was about Dean and it was taking a risk. Well, a risk Cas didn’t seem to mean to take right now. The happy chemicals in his brain, while knotted inside his gorgeous omega, must have destroyed his filter. But he should really rest assured.

Because Dean was about to one-up him.

“I’m glad you enjoy that, sometimes it annoys people,” he chuckled kissing Cas’ lips and rewording his sentence so it didn’t bother him. “I need you to know that when we speak, when we’re making out, fooling around or, finally, knotted together, well, uh. When you said I’m yours. Cas, I mean it when I say it back. If you truly wanted me, I’d be yours in an instant.”

“Never, ever felt something like this, not even in the fuckin’ ball park.”  Dean reached out to cup the alpha’s face, smiling lightly, “I’d be your omega, alpha. I wanna be.”

Castiel’s hand shot up to cover Dean’s and pulled him up into a kiss. “It’s something I think about frequently. I want it, too. You’ve awoken something inside me, Dean, but you have to understand everything that comes with me. Once we’re out? Once we’re back in the real world and we stay together? If you still want me, I will mate you in a heartbeat.”

There was nothing anyone could do to pull Dean down from the clouds, specifically—the ninth one. He was light and floaty, he was in love. And that same love said he’d be more than willing to put a mating mark on Dean’s neck. That all they’d need was time.

“Well, then I’m gonna go ahead and pretend we’re mated,” Dean replied cheekily. “You’re my alpha. I’m not worried and I…” yeah, fuck it, he really didn’t care, “I love you.”

Castiel lit up, even though there was worry in his voice from the ultimatum, and he kissed him as much as he could despite the position, whispering, “I feel the same, Dean. So much.”

Now, they weren’t apprehensive about the race to get them out of the prison—Cas and Dean had a whole new mission of their own. Making it in the real world. Because the love, camaraderie and devotion was there; they just needed to see it in action. And then they’d get their “Happily Ever After.”

Fingers crossed.

Even though Sam had been ‘ordered by his big brother’ to go home and get some sleep, that was the last thing he wanted right now. He was riled up, on edge, and for the first time in a long time he felt the urge to go out and get plastered. It was the only thing that made sense and the liquor would help get him out of his own head.

After he chatted with the team, planning out exactly how much they were moving up the timeline and talking specifics, he dug into his wardrobe to find something appropriate. And, dammit, did he have to dig. Once he pulled on an outfit that would help him blend in, not attract attention, he walked down the side streets until he hit the main road to hail a cab.

It wasn’t long before he was seated at a seedy bar, throwing back shots like it was his day job. Since he was trying to forget his goddamn day job.

He made small talk to with the waitress and turned down a few omegas who had come around to flirt with him, using the excuse that he was in a relationship. Until an unfamiliar voice piped up and asked, “Did I not stalk you properly? ‘Cause I sure as hell don’t have ‘taken’ written up in my dossier.”

The tone, the boldness, and the undeniable scent of alpha had Sam’s hackles raising as he glared at the man helping himself to the barstool on his left.

The man easily waved over the bartender and said, “Wanna surprise me with a drink, sweetheart?” and his scent clearly affected her, because she was batting her eyelashes and following it like a command.

That’s when Sam knew exactly who this asshole was, and he had to suppress the growl when he snapped, “Did you put a goddamn tracker on me? What are you doing here?”

He completely ignored Sam in turn for exchanging some obnoxious flirtations with the omega bartender when she brought him a shot and a drink. Yet, what annoyed him the most was this alpha’s request of “Keep those coming, all right, darlin’?” which meant he wasn’t planning on
leaving anytime soon.

“Who are you?” Sam didn’t bother to hide the snarl this time. The alpha turned with mischief dancing in wild amber eyes, as he said casual as could be, “Name’s Gabriel. You already know the last name. Now, Sammy. We’ve gotta chat about you guys chillin’ out and letting the big kids take care of a certain problem.”

“Hah, is that a threat?”

Gabriel tilted his head, eyeing him with interest, “It’s a conversation. Look, we’re getting your brother out, so I don’t see what the big deal is and—”

“And with our plan, we’re getting Cas out, too,” Sam cut him off immediately. “So let it go. Hell, your brother’s been on the inside a lot longer than mine. If you could have done something, you would have by now. So another group is on the task, they’re doing it quicker and better than you, and your family gets, what—offended? That they hadn’t extracted him yet? So now you’re all up in arms?”

Suddenly, Gabriel’s face transformed into something neutral as he leaned on the bar, tossing his shot back and asked, “And how, exactly, are you planning on doing this, kiddo?”

“Why?” He sneered, “Need help with an idea?” Sam rolled his eyes as the bartender smiled, setting another shot in front of the pair and he decided to take it. Then, he said fuck it, because it wasn’t like this guy knew when or where. If he tried to stop them, he may lose a goddamn leg in the process. “We’re setting up explosives. Blast radius will take out the entire yard and blow out the walls of the alpha ward and the omega women’s ward. It’s gonna shake loose the framework of the cells, anarchy will take over and in the chaos we pull Dean, Cas and Jo out while the others are escaping, too.”

“Huh,” Gabriel’s grin was bright once more as he said, “I call bullshit! You don’t care about Cas. Not one bit.”

Sam did a double-take while he was sipping his drink, surprised the alpha had said that of all things.

“Sure I do. My brother is basically in love with him,” he scoffed and shook his head, “Dean would kill me if—”

Suddenly, Gabriel was right up in his personal space, scent filled with equal parts intrigue and interest. “Oh, no, you’re just going through the motions! You’re a little evil genius, aren’t you? Once everything goes ka-boom, that ward, in a high-security prison, is filled to the brim with the Most Wanted names. The murderers, the psychos, and the cops’ll be going after the bigger fish! Dean’s small time compared to the company he keeps in that mania.”

Sam looked damn surprised that Gabriel had figured it out. But...he had.

Flopping back into his seat, Gabriel took his shot and tsked the other alpha with, “Cas is one of the bigger fish, huh, Sammy? Dean’s theft, no matter how grand, won’t be a priority in the middle of the madness and shoving inmates back into their cells. Cas’ll be grabbed before Big Bro.”

“Fine.” Sam finally shrugged, because he was drunk. It didn’t matter because their plan made sense, and if Gabriel figured it out, good on him. “You’re right, so what?”

“After all those fireworks, you’re willing to let all these murderers, these crazy fucks go out into the world as cannon fodder?” Gabriel was truly impressed, after thinking that Sam Winchester was a simply technical genius behind a high-priced, highly regarded theft outfit. No, he was downright heartless.

“I am. I’ll do pretty much anything for my crew. I’m doing the same thing in the women’s ward; something you don’t care for, whatsoever,” Sam huffed and tossed back a shot.

Gabriel was completely, utterly and absolutely taken. This was not the man he thought he’d find tonight. This, oh, this right here? Was so much better.

The alpha hummed and tilted his head, “You know, no one told me about the women’s ward. Perhaps if I had known, we could have bartered and figured out a better play. Still can, ya know.”

Sam’s, “I don’t trust you,” was instant.

“Aaah, come on, we both want the same thing, don’t we?” There was a suggestive tone to Gabriel’s voice that almost caught Sam off guard, but he didn’t fall prey to it.

“What part of ‘I don’t trust you’ do you not understand?” Sam turned his body completely and eyed him, “Our way is foolproof. We’ve done extractions every way in the damn book. You want a sure-fire plan? You blow shit up! Go back to basics. Jump into the chaos, and jump out with the target. Bam! You’re done!”
“Hmm, I like something with a little more finesse,” Gabriel took the opportunity to give Sam a lewd once-over now that they were face to face. “You, my good sir, used to have it. Did that all fly out the window when two of yours got caught? You’re not using the brain in that pretty little head’a yers.”

The fact that he dared to reach out and tap Sam’s brow was enough to make him lash out and nearly seize his wrist…until Gabriel ran a hand through Sam’s hair and caught him completely off guard, going far enough to lightly tug the brown locks and release.

“If only it was as easy to reason with you as it was to entice you,” Gabriel said smoothly with bold statement. “Don’t make this an arms race. It’ll make both of our plans sloppy. And there are better ways to get sloppy, as I’m sure you know.”

The offending alpha tossed back the rest of his drink as Sam watched with curiosity. He pulled out his wallet, stating, “You know my number. Let me know if you grow up anytime s—”

There was a large hand wrapped around Gabriel’s forearm and a demanding, “Where do you think you’re going?” pitched like a predator that stopped him in his tracks.

Normally, this would have pissed off another alpha, but Gabriel wasn’t simply confident—he was overly confident so this thrilled him. Apparently, he’d pushed one of Sam’s buttons. Probably a red one. Because Sam’s scent had changed to something wonderfully different that, in no way, was related to their clashing families.

Unless Sam had some strange kinks.

Gabriel asked innocently in return, “Where should I be going?” even though his gaze was anything but chaste.

“After a few more drinks?” Sam haughtily decided, “You’re coming with me.”

“Huh,” Gabriel lived for these moments, of being caught off guard in a world full of the mundane. Of constantly being the aggressor. Of misreading people (which never, ever happened) and being roused by the results. This was the perfect mistake. “We’ll just see about that.”

Sam hailed the waitress for more booze as Gabriel watched, his alpha barely suppressed, giving Sam a moment to fall into a sense of false-security. A chance of blissful ignorance to feel like he had one up on him. Oh, but he didn’t. Not for a second. He’d let the kid pretend all he wanted, though.

If this continued the way he thought it would? Sam Winchester was in for a hell of a surprise. And a hell of a night.
What the hell had even happened with this night? What had begun as two opposing businesses colliding with threats of ordering one another to stand down…well, it turned into a night of drinking to forget about the entire mission in the first place.

If either Sam or Gabriel mentioned the prison break, they had to take a shot.

Hell, they were going shot for shot anyway.

Sam had sought out a bar tonight to get blitzed, wipe his mind into somewhat of a clean slate, before shit hit the fan. He managed not to blab to Gabriel about their timeline, even though he offered forth the plan freely. He considered that a win. It didn’t matter who his current company was—Gabriel seemed just as likely to forget about their moonlighting as Sam did. This…strange phenomena turned into something else.

The moment Sam’s nose picked up the scent of an interest that was by no means platonic, he decided he didn’t care. He had stopped Gabriel from leaving the bar. He didn’t bother to hide his own attraction either, because—you know what?

Dean had already crossed this same line. Ruby and Jo were together and fighting for each other, soon to be reunited again. Benny had a damn fiancée! And Sam was the one working his ass off more than any teammate, day by fucking day, to the point they all blended together. He deserved something, anything, and if it was literally sleeping with the enemy? Sam didn’t care.

And it wasn’t as though Sam was simply picking ‘anyone’ up.

The more they spoke as equals, (you know, without the death threats and constant arguing back and forth) the more Sam’s attraction grew. Gabriel wasn’t just smart as a whip, he was clever; he
had a witty remark for anything and could seduce in multiple, exciting ways. Whether it be edgy one-liners that served as pick-up lines or calculated and downright sensual comments that went right to Sam’s dick, Gabriel knew exactly what to say to keep Sam interested and focused on him alone.

It was a fact. The more and more they drank, the more they got to know each other on a different level—and damn, Sam wanted him. Gabriel didn’t hide the fact that the feeling was mutual. Why would he? The alpha was the definition of bold, and the liquor didn’t seem to affect him very much. Unlike Sam.

Sam was feeling fantastic. Gabriel was smiling more, he was both open and irresistible but he still didn’t seem to be at the same level of intoxicated. Which was why Sam flagged the waitress down and asked for three shots. The uneven number had Gabriel raising an eyebrow, but he soon understood why.

When they were set down, Sam took a swig from his beer and pushed all three in Gabriel’s direction.

With wide eyes, the alpha demanded, “The fuck are you doing? Trying to get something out of me, Winchester?”

“Trying to get you on my level!” Sam announced with a tip of his beer. “What’s up with your tolerance?! I thought mine was high but you’re like, an elephant.”

“I resent that comparison,” Gabe narrowed his eyes, but looked back to the liquor. “Besides, you were already here, drownin’ your sorrows before I showed up.”

Gabriel gave Sam kudos at least—he’d taken into consideration he was more of a bourbon kind of guy and decided to shake things up. He began with a bullshit innocent, “What’s my reward?” then dropped his voice into a husky timbre, “I think I deserve one after these.”

With a chill running down his spine, Sam gained control of the situation and bit his lip in thought. Eventually, he said, “Why don’t you tell me. Once I see if you can handle those.”

There was a casual wink, then Gabriel smoothly tossed back one shot after another, until all three were downed and turned over on the counter. He made a face and hissed as the burn caught up to the back of his throat. He didn’t bother asking, he just reached out to chase the harsh taste with Sam’s beer, since he didn’t have a refill of his own.

In awe, Sam blinked and admitted, “Yeah. I’d say you do need a reward.” He leaned in and asked, “You think that’s enough to do it? We on an even playing field yet?”

“That’s a damn good question, Sammy. I am hoping to play.” Gabriel was only following Sam’s example, he would stop if he were admonished.

Until then, he ducked forward enough for his nose to graze Sam’s neck and take in the scents that were purely Sam. He thoroughly enjoyed the shudder that he provoked before the kid pulled away.

Yet, before he did, Gabriel managed to fill his lungs with the attempts to hide his desire, his barely-almost-concealed lust, and the bravado he was constructing; plus plain old intrigue. But now Gabriel knew the truth. The younger alpha was itching to get a taste. It was obvious. He was trying to get Gabriel intoxicated enough so there was no taking advantage of anyone.

What he didn’t realize, was that there was no way in hell Gabriel could be taken advantage of, and it was Sam who instigated this in the first place.

For a second time that night, Gabriel pulled out his wallet and eyed Sam as he did, “Is this okay?”

Round two had ended up being a success. Gabe shelled out a couple hundreds for not only the drinks, but the wait staff who was truly on their game tonight.

Now, they were both waiting for the question to end all questions...

After leaving the bar and once they were walking on the sidewalk, Gabriel pulled the trigger and inquired, “Where are we headed?”

Sam’s eyes were flickering around looking for something instead of replying. That was when he caught a glimpse of the employee entrance to the bar. It was a small walkway in a corner adjacent to the patio with nice bricks; rather than your weathered, trashy alleyway mixed graffiti, vomit and piss.

In a flash, Sam grabbed Gabriel’s hand. He swung him around, until he had him pinned. And before Gabriel could figure out what the fuck was happening—

Sam glued their lips together.

There wasn’t more than a half-beat before Gabriel surged upward and joined in. He returned the heated kiss with just as much ferocity, his arms wrapping around Sam and gripping the jacket with his fists. He licked into the younger alpha’s mouth with hunger and with the promise of more. Still, Gabriel also made sure that Sam didn’t take this further than a hot make-out.

The moment Sam’s hips bucked forward in an attempt to grind against him, Gabriel moved fast and grabbed his pelvis, chucking his tongue and a deep, rumbled, “Let’s move this behind closed
doors, kiddo. Because there’s so much I wanna do to you. Things we need to get a helluva lot more horizontal for.”

Sam’s pupils were blown wide open from lust, but he agreed, “Yeah. I needed to get that out of my system though. Your fucking teasing was killing me. I’ve been thinking about kissing the hell out of you all night.”

That pulled a happy sigh from Gabriel when he admitted, “Oh, I’ve been thinking about a lot of things. Please, please say we can get this moving?”

With a nod, Sam laced his fingers through Gabriel’s and they headed back to the street to flag down a cab. Taxis were everywhere, so there was no need to call a Lyft or Uber, and the pair of alphas hopped into the first one that they could find. Sam rattled off an address, and they were off.

Except, leave it to Gabriel to notice something very, very peculiar.

“You’re not taking us to a hotel.” When the realization dawned on him, he didn’t bother with ceremony, the booze frayed his filter. “You, Sam Winchester, are taking me to home base. You…trust me enough to reveal where you live? How does that make any sense?”

Sam barked out a laugh and shook his head. “If you can figure out the number to my private phone? Why the hell couldn’t you figure out my address? I like to wake up in my own bed. Anyone else, yeah, I’d take them to a hotel. But it’s you. You’ve got some high-end intelligence network. Finding out anyone’s location would be a piece of cake.”

The second part, the part that Sam wouldn’t say aloud, was that he was showing Gabriel and expecting a certain degree of trust.

Even if Gabriel wasn’t the most tech-savvy person on his team, he could forward classified information while the other alpha was sound asleep. Bypass security on Sam’s personal device, see what he could make of their plans from tech within their personal network. He had just enough skill to pull that off...infiltrate their operation from the inside...

But they promised no more shit about the job.

If Gabriel wanted this to happen again (and he was almost hoping already that they could make this random hook-up a thing) he couldn’t betray Sam. He made that promise to himself now.

When they arrived, Sam beat Gabriel to his wallet and left the cabbie another obscenely large tip. It was a nice, unassuming house and Sam pulled his keys out of his breast pocket. When he opened the door, they hung up their jackets, then toed off their shoes, and the world stood still for a silent moment.

Until a blurted question.

“What do I want you so fucking bad?” Sam demanded, staring at him as if Gabriel had a straight, concise answer. “You’re the enemy. But outside of that, you’re mesmerizing, exciting, seductive and really? Every-fucking-thing that I’d look for in a mate. How? Why?”

Gabriel couldn’t help his devil-may-care grin as he stepped past the entryway and into the house. “Didn’t you just answer all by yourself? And thank you. I’m quite flattered. Ironically, I could say many, many of those things about you, Sammy.” He coaxed the befuddled alpha into the house with him, “How about we learn a little bit more about each other?”

Just the thought made an explosion of carnal energy and scent to erupt from Sam, because he suddenly realized he didn’t have to hold back anymore.

He wasn’t at the bar, he wasn’t walking down the street, nor was he in a cab...he didn’t have to center himself or stay in control any longer. And, in turn, it did things to Gabriel. Things that he never thought could be ripped from him by another person. A ferocious want, a deep-seated need to take, to claim, and to have. His alpha...it didn’t behave like this, it shouldn’t feel these things. It should be damn near impossible.

“Follow me, now,” Sam ordered as he flicked on lights through the hallway upstairs and turned them off once they passed.

In no time, they were in Sam’s bedroom, and Gabriel only had half-a second to appreciate the scenery before that light was turned off, too. His lips were back on Gabriel’s as he continued with his alpha-voice that Gabriel loved (even though he was going to soon turn the kid’s world upside down) and Sam demanded, “Clothes, off.”

“Aww, no foreplay? No undressing each other?” Gabriel tried to sound put-out, but that wasn’t what he felt. Not even a little.

He’d seen the way Sam’s muscles showed through that v-neck at the bar every time he moved, twisted, stretched... He knew damn well the kid was in obscenely good shape, and once everything had hit the floor, Gabriel’s hands were greedy.

Oh, hell yes, he loved being right.

Gabriel needed to see him in the light, it was his future mission. His roaming hands could feel every detail, every slope and mountain of pure muscle, every individual ripple on those washboard
abs, and his chest? Holy hell, Sam was a masterpiece, even in the dark.

He continued exploring without hesitation and as he wrapped his hand around Sam’s aching cock, wet with precum, he was also quite impressed. Gabriel loved the way Sam moaned fearlessly and bucked into his hand. Little did he know, this was the end of Sam being in charge of the evening’s activities.

“You’re fucking gorgeous, Sam,” Gabriel whispered, and backed him against the mattress (or what he hoped was the mattress) before he shoved Sam back down. “I’m going to have so much fun taking you apart,” he announced, swinging Sam’s legs onto the bed instead of letting them hang.

Sam’s confused, “W-what?” was adorable.

But once Gabriel rolled back up his body and kissed him again, hard enough to steal the wind from his lungs, he also displayed his strength by holding Sam’s hands above his head. Sam loved every second of the kiss, he was desperate for it, he needed the intimacy and tried to rut their cocks together. Yet, once he tried to move his hands to wrap around Gabriel only to realize he couldn’t…Sam’s scent changed rapidly.

At first, Sam thought it was a fluke. Then he started fighting against Gabriel’s hold, but his grasp was like iron bars. While he was fighting and squirming, Gabriel wasn’t worried one bit; he was sucking a mark against Sam’s neck. That actually did wonders to calm the younger alpha and make him bare his throat for more.

He moaned against the touch, but then demanded, “Why?!”

“Why are you hot and bothered when I’m leaving a couple little reminders of our night together? Possibly because you like being claimed, in a way. Or, you just like me,” Gabriel teased, biting down a bit more roughly on his collar bone, and groaned, “Oh, you’d look so stunning with my mark, Sammy.”

“No-no, not that,” he protested, struggling again, “Why are you so strong?!?”

“Bloodline,” was the simple explanation. “Krushnics who present as alphas are all alpha, born and raised. Think of the biological tier system, it runs in our family line going back to the pedigreed, pureblood lycanthrope. I know you’ve studied it in some class, since I’ve studied up on you. All scholarly, Sammy.” He tightened his grip before letting go and cupping Sam’s cheeks, getting his full attention. “Now, for the real question. And I need a truthful answer.”

Sam was captivated by the lust dancing in his gold eyes, yet they contained an equal part sincerity. “Does it frighten you? Or does it turn you on? You can think about it a little longer while I worship your body.” Gabriel placed a single kiss on his lips, and picked up right where he left off.

He kissed down Sam’s torso, jumbling any thoughts he had as Gabriel rolled his nipples into hard, sensitive nubs with a bit of suction and a little teeth. His nails raked down Sam’s sides, just on the right side of rough, sending him arching upward, now a slave to his body’s wants. Gabriel was a bit more gentle when he nibbled at Sam’s hip bones, even though it made the younger alpha writhe and whimper.

Just before moving down any further, he glanced back up. “Gonna need an answer.”

“I would’ve given you an answer, if you weren’t so damn distracting!” Sam growled, and complained with no venom, “Jesus, you’re gonna get me off without even touching my cock.”

Gabriel’s was thrilled by that reaction, but it still wasn’t the response he needed. He hovered over Sam’s erection, he could feel the heat of Gabriel’s breath, and he finally made his choice.

“It doesn’t frighten me. I don’t know why, but I trust you. Gabriel. Not the you on the job, but you off the clock. As a person, if that makes sense, even though it shouldn’t. And, yeah, it is kinda hot,” Sam finally managed to pronounce, but had to ask, “Does that mean…you’re gonna top?”

He sounded nervous around the edges, so Gabriel faced him once more to make sure Sam could see his sincerity rather than hear and make assumptions. For some reason it was important to him.

Gabriel soothed Sam, running a hand through his hair and explained, “Only if you want me to, babe. It’s all up to you. I’ll be gentle, I won’t hurt you, and if you want to stop for any reason, I’ll back off. If the thought bothers you, we won’t even worry about it.”

“You’re…dammit. You just added another thing to my list of reasons I could fall for you,” Sam cursed, but Gabriel preened. “I’ll let you know, I guess.”

“You should probably fall for me anyway,” he whispered in Sam’s ear and sucked the lobe into his mouth. “Now, I’ve been trying to suck your dick for how long?” Gabriel teased. “And…just to be proactive, you wouldn’t happen to have any lube around, would you? I know this may be one of your first alpha experiences, but I can always hope that you’ve hooked up with some betas.”

Sam flashed a triumphant grin, and confirmed, “I actually do have lube. So in case we need it…”

“Can I finger you a little while I deep throat you?” Gabriel wiggled his eyebrows, “You know.
See if you like it…”

“You’re so determined, aren’t you?” Sam chuckled and reached for the nightstand. Except, he missed while shouting out, “Oh my God!” as Gabriel made good on his promise.

He took Sam’s entire cock down his throat at once and swallowed, constricting around it further. Sam was heaving in breaths, dazed, yet he still made the grab the second time, chucking the bottle to the side of the other alpha, “Holy shit, that feels amazing…”

“Gonna make it even more amazing for you, Sammy,” he purred and flipped opened the cap to the lube. “Remember, you can stop me whenever you want to.”

With a shaky sigh, he nodded—the shakiness wasn’t necessarily from nerves, but anticipation. Sam squeezed his eyes shut and focused on the feelings surging through his body to see what he was in for. He didn’t know what Gabriel had up his sleeve, so the only thing he could count on...was the unexpected.

Still, after experiencing what Gabriel’s mouth was capable of? He was willing to try whatever the other alpha threw at him.

Sam knew his muscles were tense, but the second a hot tongue began languidly lapping his dick from base to tip, he sank into the mattress. The sensation made his heart race, almost as much as the slick finger slowly tracing the outside of his hole. The two moves coupled together were almost like foreshadowing, slowly acquainting Sam with this kind of stimulation. Then, once Gabriel started to tease the head of his cock, his finger pushed past Sam’s rim.

The alpha’s skill at this tandem onslaught had Sam keening and needing more. He’d figured out Gabriel’s game: his mouth and his hand worked as a team. The more Sam wanted his tongue and his lips? The deeper that finger pushed and twisted inside him.

It actually…felt good. Sam gasped, his eyes flying open when the other alpha brushed something inside his body that shocked him with a whole new kind of pleasure. In fact, his hips were sinking down, wanting more of Gabriel inside him than his mouth. And, oh fuuuuck, Sam could have sworn Gabriel was a mind reader—

Because the next thing he knew, Gabriel was working in a second finger.

He was still bobbing up and down on his cock, Sam’s body addicted to every touch, every brush, every single move that Gabriel made. It was like he knew all the things that made him tick, and if Sam had been completely sober, maybe he would have been having a crisis over the fact that he was moaning, “More, Gabriel, more—”

But he wasn’t.

Something was happening. This level of trust, of need, it wasn’t normal. This wasn’t like any other one night stand because Sam wasn’t focused on getting off. He was stealing glances at the other alpha, enamored with the sight of him crouched between his legs, but more importantly in his bed.

Here, in Sam’s world.

This was damn far from any other sexual encounter, he knew it, they’d already teased one another about it and the fact that he had this pulsing bruise already marked against his neck—it was insane. He was fearlessly writhing against a fourth finger, thinking about Gabriel making him his.

What the hell? Where were these thoughts even coming from?! It was baffling, a bit terrifying; but more than anything, it was a dangerous, amazing kind of reckless passion.

Sam was actively trying to block out the fact that Gabriel was sucking his cock all the way down his throat because he was too close, and now he couldn’t get the thought out of his head—

“S-stop,” he whimpered, reaching down to grab the alpha, trying to catch his breath, “C’mere, Gabriel, God—”

Pulling away from him completely, Gabriel’s scent took a turn toward concerned. And, fuck, Sam hadn’t meant for it to happen that way, because he was almost positive he knew what Gabriel was thinking, and the funny thing was, it couldn’t be more untrue.

Once he was within distance, Sam latched onto Gabriel and kissed the other alpha for all he was worth, pulling their bodies flush and pouring all this goddamn pent-up emotion into his lips. Gabriel made a noise of surprise, not only because of Sam’s actions but from the scents surrounding him. Still he surged into it with just as much conviction and fierce desire. He moaned as he ground his own hips against Sam’s stomach, starved for touch and hungry after teasing Sam for so long.

Gabriel was aching for any kind of friction, the noises that Sam had been making, the way he was trying to move back into his fingers was incredible. But now Sam had told him to stop, just when Gabriel’s optimism had begun thriving. Still, he knew damn well it was difficult for an alpha to shove aside their pride and bend over for another. He’d respect him, he’d—

“Holy shit, Gabriel, I was gonna cum, you’re amazing.” His voice was breathy and he turned the tables, sucking a mark against Gabriel’s neck that punched an unexpected bark of surprised laughter and awe from his chest.
“C-can’t do that, kid,” he reprimanded, “Not when we’re this drunk.”

“Why not?” Sam instigated with a smirk, “You did it to me. Why is it a problem, unless…” he left the words hanging, daring him to say something because he couldn’t be alone.

“You know why, you little shit,” Gabriel yanked on a handful of hair, and roughly, returning the favor again, this time nipping it harder, “You’re such a fucking tease and—”

“Gabriel,” Sam’s alpha voice was out, and it instantly caught the other’s attention. “I want it,” he said the words like a prayer, making Gabriel’s eyes go wide, “Didn’t think we’d take it this far, but God, do I want it. I want you, want you to fuck me and claim me on the inside.”

He had to swallow and clear his dry mouth, scenting the air to make sure Sam was serious and, fuck, Sam’s scent said it all. He didn’t just want, he needed, he craved it and Gabriel only had a moment to be flabbergasted before his body went into overdrive and he couldn’t stay away.

Brushing his lips across Sam’s neck, and then hovering just beyond his lips, he asked huskily, “Are you ready for the best sex of your life, Sammy?”

Sam’s hazel eyes were alive and shining with this indescribable power as he nodded; this connection that fused with Gabriel’s. Like some kind of light switch, like something—a bond.

Fuck, they were bonded and they hadn’t even sealed the deal. Which made everything even more frantic.

“You really do trust me, don’t you?” Gabriel asked in awe, coating his cock in lube but refusing to leave Sam’s gaze quite yet. “Why?”

“My gut,” he answered instantly, but hesitantly added, “And something more—it’s heavy. I told you, maybe everything is stacked against us, but we aren’t against each other. It’s indescribable,” there was a look of wonderment on his face. “Maybe you’ve gotten your wish.”

“My wish?” he asked in confusion, but Sam grinned and didn’t reiterate nor give him clues. Instead, he gave him a filthy kiss and asked, “How do you want me?”

All the images of countless ways to fuck Sam flashed through Gabriel’s head and made his cock drip precum once more. Fuck, he was wet, but two things stuck out. He wanted to make it easy on Sam. And he wanted to fuck the young alpha within an inch of his life.

Gabriel grinned and traced the line of his jaw, adding a soft yet lewd, “I want you on all fours. I’m gonna fuck you from behind.”

The words, the timbre and desperate scents coming from Gabriel wound Sam up in a way that made him just as desperate. Gabriel was right. Once he flipped over, this wasn’t like he was presenting, plus he’d have some ground to hold and control. Sam was shivering with anticipation, trying desperately not to look back at Gabriel but he wanted to see those lust-blown eyes.

Sam knew he could take it, but the thing he couldn’t handle was the wait. He wasn’t above demanding, “Gabriel, please! I’ve waited too fucking long, you made me want you like this, you need to deliver!”

And no sooner did the words leave his mouth than he felt the tip of the alpha’s cock pushing into him, his loose (but not quite loose enough) rim protesting against the girth as it continued to slide.

He could take the burn, hell, Sam lived for physicality. He loved a good challenge, and even though taking a cock wasn’t exactly on his bucket list, something about being flush against Gabriel as he bottomed out and they were both moaning just felt…right. In fact, it wasn’t even the liquor courage anymore. Sam just didn’t give a shit, he spoke freely because Gabriel always seemed to do the same.

Although Sam was gasping as Gabriel rolled his hips, he said over his shoulder, “Do you feel that? You can’t tell me you don’t.”

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Slowly but surely, Gabriel grabbed Sam’s hips and began thrusting in and out of him. He made sure to punctuate each thrust as their bodies collided, brushing that bundle of nerves with his cock and sending Sam for a loop. Sam couldn’t speak; moans of pleasure were punched from his chest and he ground his teeth together. Quickly, he remembered he could do something about it.

As the rhythm increased, so did the rocking; Sam snapping his own pelvis backwards to meet Gabriel’s, which earned him a surprised shout. And the added praise of, “Aren’t you a dream, kid?” as he stroked one hand down Sam’s back.

Now that Sam had regained some control, he didn’t stop and he felt his own knot thickening at an alarming rate. He felt like he’d been edging for fucking hours and he was so close. “Gabriel, I’m gonna cum,” he urged, and it was then that the other alpha finally wrapped a hand around Sam’s cock and gave him his release.
Gabriel fucked Sam through his orgasm, reaching around to massage his swelling knot and admitted, “You’re damn right I feel it, all of it. There’s…so much,” and took his own pleasure listening to Sam’s moans of euphoria and writhing back on his cock.

It was almost too late for Gabriel, but he managed to pull out just in time before he knotted Sam. Fuck, he was so caught up the glorious scents of Sam’s release, his complete pleasure and the tight grip around his cock from the alpha’s virgin hole that he almost forgot. Still, Gabriel didn’t want to risk ruining the experience for even a moment.

He wouldn’t take the chance that his knot would swell and hurt Sam, he refused to lay knotted together while this kid (whom he was most definitely falling for) was grinning and bearing that pain. Although, Gabriel did, indeed, have an indescribable urge to claim him, one way or another. It was overwhelming.

He could scent Sam’s confusion when he was coming down, no doubt he had questions. But they were stifled when Gabriel pressed the head of his cock just far enough into Sam’s hole (causing Sam to wantonly gasp and mewl in realization) to jerk himself off and blow his load inside Sam’s body.

Even though Gabriel couldn’t knot him, he sure as hell was going to fill him with cum. And Sam’s newfound excitement was through the roof, feeling Gabriel’s cum barely stretching inside him even without tying them together.

“Jesus, you are so fucking sexy,” Sam said in bafflement, collapsing down to the bed, dragging Gabriel in and holding him. “Let’s just…stay here. Forever.”

With a huff, Gabriel allowed himself to be cuddled (another first) and honestly admitted, “Doesn’t sound like such a horrible idea, does it?”

“Not at all. Thank you.”

“For what?”

“Dealing with my drunk ass. Coming here. Being patient. Taking your time…all of it. I don’t even know why you decided to. But I’m really, really glad you did.”

Gabriel was taken aback once more and it took Sam’s grounding, blissed-out scent to keep his own somewhat neutral. Although he could admit, “Yeah. I’m glad, too. Whataya say we pass out? Know I’m worn out.”

Because he was. And not just physically. His brain, it actually hurt from all these ups and downs and loops around and…other things. Things that shouldn’t be happening, not in a million years. Things that betrayed the very principles and foundations of the Krushnic family and how Gabriel had led his entire life without a lick of difficulty.

Yet…the bitch of it all, was that he didn’t want to be anywhere else right now.

Sam hummed happily and pulled him closer. The thing was, Gabriel didn’t only allow it, he made himself comfortable as well. There was one thing on his mind though, now that his confidence in the situation was bolstered and they were here, just…tucked in.

“What did you mean about ‘my wish?’” Gabriel asked because even though there was nothing keeping him there, even though they weren’t knotted, neither wished for him to hit the road.

“You told me I should probably fall for you,” Sam reminded him and kissed his shoulder, “I think you won. Like you usually do.”

That should have frightened him, but instead his mouth ran without his brain’s permission, saying, “Huh. Think I like that.”

“You would,” the other alpha chuckled, but it was sleepy and he was nodding off, “there you have it.” Or he thought that was what he heard.

Hoped that was what he heard. It was garbled, Sam was sleeping and it was so easy for Gabriel to close his eyes, as well. Even though it was reckless and stupid, he felt safe and in an idiotic move, just went with the flow. Sam’s damn scent was the thing that lulled him into this sense of security and more. Gabriel was out like a light not long after him.

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Stone-cold sober, Gabriel was in a hell of a bind.

He shouldn’t have let things go this far. Well, it depended on which part of Gabriel you asked, because it looked as though some time during last night he’d developed multiple personalities, and they were waging war inside Gabriel’s head. Oh, and were they going at it. Not in the sexy way.

Sam…did something to him. Many, many, things to him but this new side was problematic. He was using these soft expressions when they were not the case. What had developed was a massive conundrum and he had no idea what the hell to do.

Right from the get-go, Sam wasn’t what he was expecting.

He had sources, he had eyes everywhere that painted the picture of a mild-mannered, polite and highly intelligent alpha.
The alpha he found turned out to be cunning, strategic and yet dangerous at the same time. Sam was confident, too bold, but Gabriel knew he always had a contingency plan. Why else were they waking up in the alpha’s bed instead of a hotel? Because Sam, even drunk, knew all the reasons it didn’t matter one way or another.

He was intriguing, Gabriel was still trying to figure out precisely what made Sam tick. To find any omega, beta or alpha out there who Gabriel couldn’t quite pin down? That was new. Gabriel would read anyone and predict their actions three moves ahead.

Now, though. Now there was some kind of…connection forged. Some kind of…thing that had Gabriel’s previous self arguing with who he was yesterday. Because last night changed him and he could say for certain, feeling the rise and fall of Sam’s chest as they lay tangled together, that today he was a new man.

Which just wouldn’t do.

Not now. Not this late in the game. It wasn’t supposed to happen but he’d run into a snag, one that stood over six feet tall.
Gabriel frowned to himself as he glanced down at Sam’s relaxed and still sleeping face. He wondered how the hell he could even be at ease, passed out and blissfully unaware. Why didn’t Sam tell him to leave? Instead, the kid chose pillow talk and even a potential morning-after with a known assassin from the other team. If given the choice, Gabriel sure as hell would’ve pushed the person out the door, even without the red flags.

Instead, Sam had done the complete opposite.

Gabriel cursed to himself as the arms around his middle tightened and tugged him in closer. That meant the kid was most definitely beginning to stir. Now, Gabriel’s escape plan (if he even had one) was gone and Sam was already burying his face in his neck, taking a deep inhale to scent him.

He knew from his musings and his stewing, the younger alpha would sniff out nothing good.

With concern in his voice and scent Sam asked, “What’s wrong?”

Bingo.

“I didn’t know if you’d want me gone by now. Overslept. Shoulda booked it, huh?” Gabriel chuckled—because that was half-true, right?

“That’s good news. But this is a bit of a nasty surprise. You know what they say, ‘Hah, no. I was actually hoping you’d stay.’"

That came out of left field. Gabriel felt blindsided by Sam’s honesty and sincerity. Hell, like it was expected!!
Once more, it proved the fact that Gabriel didn’t know a damn thing about the way the young alpha’s brain worked. His assumption would have been Sam was humoring him and just waiting for him to make an escape. Not the case. And even going as far as to ‘hope’ Gabriel was staying? What good would that do? Unless it was to argue about the prison break again now that they were sober…

“Why would that be?” Gabriel inquired, moving around to try and subtly catch his own sniff of Sam, seeing what he was feeling. “Wanna go for round two?”

There was a sleepy smile that bloomed on his face as he shook his head. “No. I wanted to talk about last night. I wanted to…I don’t know. See you were thinking and—”

He stopped Sam from going further and said, “I’d give it a good score. The sex was—”

“I’m serious.” He, apparently, was not about to be bullshit or interrupted. “What if…we keep this off the books? No one has to know. You got my private phone number, for God’s sake, I mean…” Sam paused with those gorgeous puppy eyes, “I wanted to know if you’d want to continue this. Like, keep seeing each other. You sounded all for it last night,” he tacked on the ending statement with a half-grin that was forced, but the words were honest.

Sam’s scent was wilting and Gabriel felt a pang in his heart as his instinctive response. Like this was wrong, Gabriel couldn’t treat Sam like this because this alpha was his, or some shit. They’d bonded last night (Gabriel was damn sure right now because he shouldn’t be responding to Sam’s scent so much) and it was changing him on a primitive level!

“Hey, Moose.” Gabriel began, snapping Sam upward to attention. “I won’t lie and say that doesn’t sound amazing, but—”

“Not buts. You’re your own person, Gabriel. The business is just that—business! What you do with your down time doesn’t involve anyone except you, and maybe me if you make that choice. Don’t give me that ‘I wish’ bullshit.” Sam rolled his eyes and flopped onto his back, staring at the ceiling without an inch of skin touching Gabriel now. “I fucking hate that excuse. I fucking hate that everyone else gets to be happy. I fucking hate that I’m on the sidelines, I’m doing all the work and living the job. But that’s all it is! It’s a job!” A self-deprecating chuckle prefaced his ruefully spat, “I finally figured that out. I’ve been an idiot.”

Startled by Sam’s outburst and the sheer venom behind his words, Gabriel realized that last night had changed an integral part of the other alpha too. While it had clouded Gabriel’s head, it had cleared Sam’s.

They wanted the same thing, but everything else was so complicated.

“It is a job,” Gabriel confirmed slowly. “Right now, ours cross.” He paused and decided to go for it. “You know what, Sammy? I’m willing to try. But if something happens on the job that fucks us up, I can’t help it—because it’s the business, okay? This was going down, this was already going to happen way before we happened.”

Sam turned his head and scented sincerity. And while it was a double-edged sword, he considered it.

“Fuck it.” Sam laughed and rolled back over to hover above Gabriel, “Then I’ll take my anger out on you,” and kissed him hard.

The smile spreading across Gabriel’s face as he returned the kiss was real. The way he grabbed handfuls of Sam’s hair and tugged was because he couldn’t get enough of the kid. In this moment, he felt alive, ignoring everything else that existed outside of them.

He could pretend nothing else mattered, because Sam made it so easy. Their connection, this bond, it was something he never wanted before but now he didn’t think he could let go. It was perfect. Sam was perfect and Gabriel let himself get lost in the moment.

After a quick morning make out and trading sloppy blow-jobs, Gabriel felt weightless.

It wasn’t until after their goodbyes and he was walking down the street that everything crashed down on him again. Stupid. Fucking. Reality.

Who he was, what he did—most importantly; what he needed to do.

Gabriel reached in his pocket and found his phone. There was just enough battery life to make the call he needed to. But, punching in the number was so damn difficult. His fingers locked up on each individual digit. When it began to ring, he forced himself to get his shit together. Gather up the pieces that constructed that steel resolve with a dash of wit. He had this!

“Yeah, it’s me.” He was impressed by how collected he sounded. “They’re not budging. Time for a message.” With a sharp inhale, he waited for the reply, and then gave his order: “Give our guy his cue.”
When Gabriel hung up, he felt sick to his stomach. But he wasn’t backing down. He couldn’t—even though Sam had called this a business, this was also Gabriel’s family. One that couldn’t merely be the target of a thrown gauntlet without repercussions. No, if it was known to the family someone or several someones were standing against them, there was a price to pay.

The Krushnics didn’t take a challenge lightly—they acted and made a statement, and it was always Gabriel’s choice as to what retribution would be doled out. Now, it was coming.

The sun was almost too bright while Castiel enjoyed it from the shade, watching the other inmates move around the prison yard. He liked to observe more than anything. His name alone granted him his privacy, no one wanted to cross paths with a Krushnic and there had only been one dolt foolish enough to try.

That particular fight had lasted ten seconds, the other man KO’d on the ground with a broken rib. Hardly anyone would even cast a glance the alpha’s way after that. Although, there were days that the alpha could use someone to fight (he found himself missing life on the outside more and more) he didn’t want to attract any more attention in the process. For himself or Dean.

Even though he attempted to keep up his rough exterior, he couldn’t help the tug of a grin when he heard Dean shout out, “Gotcha!” from the picnic table. He slapped down his poker hand, revealing a pair of Kings, with a resounding -thwack-, scamming other inmates out of their possessions. As per usual.

Cas could only shake his head and suppress the laughter because Dean didn’t need any one of those things he was playing card games for. The omega found pleasure in the victory, and his growing collection of junk. But that was just Dean.

It was one of the first things Castiel had noticed about him.

When Dean arrived, they kept to their own devices; although, Cas could see the other ‘alpha’ was aggressive and willing to pick a fight. Castiel thought the newcomer was haughty and he’d be ready and willing to put him in his place, if Dean needed a lesson. Except, no matter how rambunctious he got, his scent…it never changed. Sure, someone in the prison yard wouldn’t have noticed, but his cellmate?

The alpha knew something was off.

He asked himself how it was possible, because in a word, Dean was vibrant. He was expressive and open, but the nose couldn’t detect any changes. All it picked up was generic alpha tones. It didn’t make sense, because while some trained for years to control their scent glands through therapy or science, this was so extreme Cas couldn’t buy it.

Until Castiel figured out his secret.

And then it made sense as to why he made such a ruckus in the yard, in the cafeteria, everywhere he went. Because if he was shy and appeared to be hiding, maybe someone would pick up that he was hiding something. Even though Cas still hadn’t picked up his real, full omega scent, he felt the need to help him.

If only because of the lengths he’d gone to in order to stay in the alpha ward, which was dangerous for an omega. He had fought to keep his place despite the hazard, and who was Castiel to tattle? That was one of the things that brought him closer to Dean. One of the first things he loved about Dean.

His sheer power of will, his tenacity, his strength. He was...amazing. Castiel couldn’t find the proper words to describe how perfect his omega playing alpha was.

That was also when he realized he’d been staring off, watching Dean and he quickly cleared his throat and focused blankly into the yard. From day one, this was the basis of his activities outdoors.

He never bothered with the knotheads who torqued up with the gym equipment here. Castiel preferred training in the cell with Dean’s cat-calling. He loathed the majority of the company. Well, all the company—minus one. The fact that they’d be leaving in a matter of days was a relief. He was getting itchy, needing to get out in the real world, needing a job, needing—

He froze at that thought because—

What if Dean couldn’t deal with the killer inside him?

Dean said he could, that he loved every part of him, he didn’t even consider them flaws—but those were words. It would be different when you were living it. To go to sleep with your mate, freshly out of the shower because he had the blood of a kill on his hands, and the blood wasn’t metaphorical: it was a crimson splash from a slaughtered man. Dean had to know that was something completely different. It honestly terrified Castiel that Dean may not understand the severity of Castiel’s commitment to his family, to his job.

It wasn’t a job he could walk away from, nor did he want to. He’d been one of the lucky few who had actually found his calling. It was something he was great at, he got results, and the pay was excellent. He could support and take care if his omega for the rest of both their lives...but he
had a feeling Dean would never, ever be a stay-at-home omega.

If Castiel told the truth…he wanted it all, and was that so wrong?

The numbers for the bounty, the strategy of the hunt, thrill of the chase, his finger wrapped around the trigger…and the adrenaline high from the kill? This was Castiel’s life.

He hadn’t lied when he said that Dean had awoken something new inside him. It was love for this omega, and this omega alone. It was equally enthralling, just as intoxicating and the act of seduction before making love was comparable.

Maybe Castiel was an adrenaline junkie, pure and simple. Both did it for him, and he refused to let go of either...

It wasn’t some new optimistic outlook on the world, he wasn’t seeing anything differently because of love. Castiel did not suddenly have a sparkling new regard for human life. He was still a stone cold killer. Outside this prison…could Dean truly love him?

A shaky sigh was enough to get someone’s attention, or perhaps it had been his scent, because Dean had turned around from the table and mouthed, “You okay?”

With a terse nod, Castiel flashed him a half smile and Dean hesitantly turned back around.

Castiel didn’t want to worry him. Dean seemed to be having fun. Because that’s just who he was—he made the best of a shitty situation and found some kind of entertainment in the mundane. Castiel wished he had the same talent. For now, he just watched over the omega and the rest of the group, his heart warming every time Dean shouted about another victory.

This was where he was content.

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After the yard, they had a little bit of downtime before dinner and hitting the showers. Castiel had been sitting with his annoying, ugly thoughts of life outside these walls; how fleeting these moments inside were. So the minute the guard had left the prison block, he made his move.

Dean had been counting his bounty on the small ledge of the barred window to the world outside when the alpha struck. And he struck swiftly.

Castiel used his hand to cover Dean’s mouth, keeping him from cursing or yelping when he swung him over, knocking him off his feet and pinning him down to the bed. When he slowly removed his hand, the startled omega was wide eyed and fighting to catch his breath, yet his interest was thoroughly piqued.

“You could warn a guy next time, Cas,” he teased and shimmied his back around to get more comfortable. “Got something on your mind?”

“You.”

That was the only warning Dean received before the alpha descended upon his lips and kissed him breathless, all over again.

Castiel had never experienced self-doubt. In the past, when Cas had heard others express the notion he thought it was a mere annoyance; little did he know it was all-consuming. He’d never had something he wanted so badly, to hold onto someone so dearly that the thought of losing this was crippling. He wanted to take advantage of each moment without regret. He needed to remember Dean at a time where he wanted and loved Castiel unconditionally, because he didn’t know what the world outside would bring.

Perhaps it could work. The alpha would fight for it to work. But until then, he’d cherish every moment here. He wasn’t an optimist, he was a realist, and Dean may be too just and good for him.

Hot hands were exploring under Cas’s uniform, the hardness already thick and heavy between his legs had him humming in approval. Dean playfully nipped Castiel’s lip and pulled away to look him in the eyes with amusement dancing within his own.

“You’re fucking perfect, you know that?” In a gentler move, one that was newer to the pair, he cupped Castiel’s cheeks and said, “Damn, do I wish we had time for a quickie. You evil tempter. What did you plan on getting out of this, huh?”

With a grin tugging at his cheek, Cas stared down at the omega underneath him and asked, “So I’m not allowed to kiss you?”

“You always have ulterior motives, Krushnic.” Dean raised an eyebrow, and then arched his hips off the bed, grinding their erections together in order to make a point—except, it did little more than make them moan and want more. “Fuck. Bad idea. I’m an idiot,” he griped, but still hadn’t let go of Cas’s face. “This is proof, ya know.”

“Proof?” Castiel echoed, and would have tilted his head if it wasn’t so firmly grasped in Dean’s hands.

“Yeah,” the omega looked happy, so damn happy. “You always used to tell me, when we started fucking around:” Dean dramatically lowered his voice to mimic the timbre of Cas’, “’Dean, don’t
think this means anything. I don’t have feelings. I’m a heartless monster from the black lagoon.’ I knew it was bullshit. You ain’t a softie, but you’re more than you give yourself credit for.”

Taken aback, Castiel attempted to recoil, but Dean anticipated the move and yanked him closer still. To the point where the alpha fell almost completely on top of him, and their foreheads were pressed together.

“Shhh. Don’t bitch and complain. I already know.”

“You seem to know a lot,” Cas growled with a bit of his alpha voice because he didn’t like being undermined.

It had the opposite effect, because Dean was fearless and he began laughing. “I do. But what I know, is that you only feel it for me.” He pulled the alpha into a lingering, sweet kiss. When he pulled away, he wanted to make sure he had Cas’s absolute attention when the hushed, “I love you,” passed his lips.

Castiel realized he no longer had control of this situation. He wondered if he ever did. Dean had a way of diverting attention, turning the tables and with them, Cas, upside down in the blink of an eye.

That made him think that perhaps it could work. Dean was much more cunning than he gave him credit for.

Before he could dwell on it anymore, he smiled and kissed Dean’s forehead, “I love you, too.”

Dean watched as Castiel rolled over onto the side of the bed. Now that Cas’ plans had officially changed, maybe they should take this time for something else? He gestured to Dean to lay on his chest, knowing anything beyond resting together would lead to their previous…habits. Though neither of them could be blamed for their electric chemistry.

“What’s on your mind?” Dean asked as he made himself comfortable.

“Out in the yard…” Castiel began, reached down to take one of the omega’s hands into his own. “I was contemplating many things. Would you be bothered if I asked you some of them?”

With a snort and a shake of his head, Dean challenged, “Since when have we held back?”

That was extremely true.

Castiel pursed his lips before he said, “Have you ever killed a man, Dean?”

There was no tension in his body, no awkwardness around the question, it was what it was and Dean was completely unaffected.

“Are we playing twenty-questions before mating? Would it make me less or more of an ideal mate?” Before Castiel could protest, because he hadn’t meant it that way at all, Dean answered, “Two. One on accident, one on purpose.”

This was new, and it piqued the alpha’s attention but he wasn’t sure if this was the time to talk specifics. So instead he answered, “Ah.”

“Seriously though…” Dean’s voice was uncharacteristically timid. “You said you did some thinking. Are you, like, changing your mind? About how you feel? About…us?”

“God, no, Dean,” Castiel rolled on his side with wide eyes, “you couldn’t be more wrong. I just…there are things that are going to happen. On the outside. Things that we don’t have to worry about in here. And I need to know you’re prepared for them.”

Even though Cas made the deliberate move to roll over, Dean took it a step further as he sat up and challenged, “Lay it on me! Tell me what you’re worried about, all of it! C’mon, get it out. I know you stew, I know you hold it in, but you know what? You can pull that bullshit with anyone else, I don’t give a fuck. But not with me.”

That fire. There was that burst of heat, fervent like licking flames and conviction that Cas was drawn to, that he watched to just…burn within himself and lighting everything in it’s wake on fire every time he was with Dean. That flame he felt whenever he was with the omega.

“All right. Fine.” He sat up, and he wasn’t going to mince words. “You can take care of yourself, I know it. But there are many people who want me dead. I need to know that you’ll be willing to kill to protect yourself. I need to know that—”

“Done. What’s a dropped body when I have my alpha?” Dean said candidly, without a thought about it.

Once again, Castiel was surprised.

“Truly?”

“I’ll protect you. I’ll protect us. I’m already ducking and dodging the law. The fuckers who come after us are far from innocent. It’s self-defense, right?” With a crooked smile, Dean mused, “Maybe I brought some kinda light out of you. Maybe you brought something dark out of me. I don’t care. I’d do anything for you. Love…changes someone. Like I said, I wouldn’t flinch. Didn’t when I dropped my first body. That was revenge. A threat? A real threat? I’m a damn
good aim.”

“And you said I was perfect,” Cas grinned widely and pulled his omega into his arms, kissing him with a kind of passion that should have been inappropriate given the motivation and the subject. But he didn’t care.

Maybe they were a little fucked up.

And when he slowly but surely manipulated Dean’s body into the corner where they were hidden away, things escalated and became a bit more heated.

Castiel couldn’t help it. His attraction for the omega grew like wildfire and the fact that he could be just as dangerous ignited something new. It wasn’t as though he doubted Dean was capable, but the words on his tongue, which he was currently ravaging, tasted sweet. God, he couldn’t wait to scent him.

The real him.

All riled up and wanting more, because the suppressants, alpha scents and blockers always obstructing it, while necessary, were an irritation.

Castiel wanted to lay his omega down in his full glory, scent every inch of him, let it go to his head. Holy hell, did he want it. Because even the smallest of tendrils that only the alpha, up close and personal, had caught the barest whiff of…he knew he was doomed. He was captivated and hungry for all of it.

If they didn’t have to be in the cafeteria soon, he would have had his way with Dean right now.

While tracing his tongue along the shell of the omega’s ear, he echoed that thought. “If only I could take my time with you…”

A wild grin appeared on Dean’s face as they locked eyes. “Funny, I was thinking the exact same thing about you.” His hand boldly dove down and wrapped around the outline of the alpha’s cock, causing Cas to choke. Dean leaned in closer and lewdly ordered, “I’m gonna ride you, Cas. Next chance I get, I’m gonna be the one to make you lose it. I’m gonna milk you dry.”

Castiel had to grind his teeth to keep all his instincts from lashing out at once because everything in him was screaming out: take.

Even as he shamelessly arched into Dean’s hand, he had to control his inner animal because the omega brought out the worst in him. It created a frenzy of this sexual energy, an overwhelming desire that never existed before Dean. When Castiel presented as alpha, none of those knothead desires had come with the package—Dean Winchester brought them out instead.

“Isthat right?” he quipped back, reaching out and grabbing the base of Dean’s neck, holding him prone against the wall. If anything, being restrained turned the omega more because he loved a challenge. “Are you going to fight me for it?” he taunted with a raised brow.

“Nah,” Dean’s voice was pure, hushed sex, “Won’t be much’a a fight, I’m gonna win.”

Castiel couldn’t hold back, he kept Dean pinned and sandwiched the omega’s body between the cement and his own body. Dean’s hands flew up to wrap around his neck and grasp handfuls of his hair as he rutted into the figure pushing against him, low whimpers and moans cast against the alpha’s lips.

“I can’t wait to get you home,” Castiel urged, hiking Dean up so his legs could wrap around his waist from where he was crouched. “We’re gonna play rough. I know you want it, and I can’t wait to give it to you.” After another delicious moan, he amended, “Give everything to you.”

“Fuck yeah, Cas,” Dean agreed with urgency, “Want it all, with you—”

That was when they heard the clanging of the gates seven cell blocks down clattering. The metal was knocking together and heavy footsteps were paired with chatting voices.

The guards were here. Which meant it was dinner time. And, fuck, they need to pull away.

“Ugh,” Dean complained as Cas pried himself away from where his body had been plastered against the omega’s and he stood to walk off his hard on. Dean flopped down to the bed and complained, as he had a knack for, until he got onto a topic that was so random or disgusting his dick was soft in his uniform. Still, he groused, “Can we opt out? I’d rather have you than the crappy prison food.”

“If I remember correctly, you rather enjoy it,” the alpha countered with both a smirk and a pointed look. “I’ll never understand. You can eat anything.”

“Away,” Dean exclaimed as Cas pried himself away from where his body had been plastered against the omega’s and he stood to walk off his hard on. Dean flopped down to the bed and complained, as he had a knack for, until he got onto a topic that was so random or disgusting his dick was soft in his uniform. Still, he groused, “Can we opt out? I’d rather have you than the crappy prison food.”

“If I remember correctly, you rather enjoy it,” the alpha countered with both a smirk and a pointed look. “I’ll never understand. You can eat anything.”

With a laugh, he readily agreed, “Better to go with the flow than be picky, right?”

“I hope that only applies to food.” Castiel snarked and crossed his arms as he saw the guards two cells away. “Although, I think my favorite thing to taste in the entire world is sitting right in front of me.”

“Hey!” Dean admonished with a pointed finger, “I just got my traitorous body under control!
That’s no fair!”

He shrugged and offered, “I told you I’d never lie to you, Dean.”

“Yeah, yeah. Shoulda read the fine print on that one, huh?” He hopped off the bed and began stretching, then asked quietly, “You and your fine ass didn’t make me break through anything, right?” Dean stepped close enough to allow Cas to sniff him.

With a shake of his head, he mournfully admitted, “I wish.”

“Soon, babe, promise.” Dean laid an obnoxious smack of a kiss on Cas’s cheek before their turn was up.

With a side-eye and a secret smile, the alpha agreed, “I know. I’m quite looking forward to it.”

Being a seasoned criminal had its perks. You could tell when something wasn’t exactly right, things caught your eye that a normal person wouldn’t take notice of. Or the feeling that something was off. Even though Castiel and Dean both felt it, neither said anything to the other and ate dinner like it was business as usual.

Dean was the first one who felt eyes on him. He refused to give in and follow the gaze. Instead, he carried on his animated chatting with some fellows high up on the totem pole that he’d gotten in cahoots with (they were actually decent dudes, not serial killers or rapists, more like strong-ass alphas who wanted to keep the peace), day one. He made sure nothing threw up red flags.

The omega was good at laying low, and this was how it went. Not changing a damn thing. After all, he’d been in here—how long?

The weird thing was whoever was watching him; it wasn’t another prisoner with a beef. It was a member of the staff, and Castiel was the one who noticed and whispered the info because of his view.

It only took the alpha one glance to see that Dean was in-fucking-deed under a microscope. The kicker was, (when that gut feeling set in) Cas had also caught one of the other inmates speaking with her. A total bottom-feeding alpha from further down their block, someone so insignificant Cas wasn’t even sure of their name. Apparently, they’d said something.

Which meant Cas had to say something to his omega.

Waiting for a lull in the conversation with the other alphas (or even better, for Dean to stuff his face so the others would talk), Castiel made sure his expression was neutral, unreadable to anyone watching them, when he asked the omega, “Nothing’s changed, has it? I would have noticed if it had.”

Slurping a noodle, Dean remained eerily cheerful and asked, “Who’s the creeper?”

“Got to a guard. Potential narc. Don’t know what they’d go after, though,” he kept his tone conversational, but he did notice the slight tension in Dean’s shoulders.

But then…something else happened. Something that both surprised and terrified Castiel at the same time.

“Fuck.” The curse just dropped out. Dean had never witnessed the alpha lose his cool, but this wasn’t good.

“Cas.” His voice was a warning, “Gimmie something more than that. No leavin’ me hangin—”

“There’s a nurse speaking with the guard.” Castiel knew this could only mean one thing.

A fucker from their row, a whistle-blower, tattled to a guard and while a guard can’t make the call—a nurse can. What can a nurse do that a guard can’t within a prison system while staring at Dean? Fuck, now approaching Dean!

Dean looked at Cas with a split-second of fear, and whispered with a now bravado-filled grin as he ducked to his ear, “There’s no way, right? No way they could tell. How…why now? What the fuck, they can’t—”

“Dean Winchester?” the nurse politely interrupted and he finally turned around and waved a greeting. “I’m going to need you to come with me, please.”

“Uh, sugar, last thing I knew I wasn’t sick or injured. Pretty sure I ain’t got any need for the medical ward,” he clucked his tongue and played up all this charms, even as both the men were internally freaking out.

“I understand that. But I believe when you were incarcerated, we made a mistake,” she explained, “it’s for your own good. I don’t understand why you’d want to risk yourself like this, but we need to move you to the other ward immediately.”

Dean played dumb, he had to, he couldn’t move! He couldn’t leave Cas, this wasn’t in the playbook, there was no fucking way!

“Oh, I’m sorry and I’m not here to question your authority. I’m all about all about getting parole
on good behavior, I think you’ve got some wires crossed. I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he appeared every bit as confused as he should, lost and not understanding the words she was leaving unspoken.

That was when she flagged over the guards with a heavy sigh and admitted, “You have been showing good behavior, Mr. Winchester. Which is why we’re doing this, to help you. Please don’t make me have to say the words. And please don’t make us take you by force. You know just as well as I do where we’re transferring you. You don’t have to smuggle in the things we found in your cell any longer. You can just be you.”

Her exasperated voice was two seconds away from announcing to the entire dining hall that he was an omega. Fuck, she knew, she was convinced, and Cas’s hand darted out to grab his in a show of support.

He hauled Dean in, and the lack of the omega’s scent changing was like another nail in the coffin of whatever this fucker said, where Cas’ scent was turning into something fierce. He whispered, “I’m going to find this piece of garbage, Dean. I will put him in his place and find out what he knows. Remember, soon. Soon, I promise, I—”

“Krushnic, please keep your distance.” That was a guard, one of many who were already afraid of him. “Winchester, now.”

The entire cafeteria was watching the scene unfold in complete silence, some doing guess work in their heads from those oddly coded words, but no one knew for sure. And none of the inmates were about to ask Castiel.

In fact, everyone was watching the alpha instead of Dean being dragged out of the dining hall. Because his scent? Would have made a lesser man piss himself.

The alpha knew he had a small window while they walked his future mate to the omega ward. Those two guards were the ones that kept a vigil over the dining hall and he’d seen the fucker who’d been whispering in the taller, more muscular guard’s ear. Without hesitation, the alpha flew up from his chair and stalked across the linoleum. Everyone’s breath caught in their chests as wrath and rage exploded from Castiel’s scent.

He didn’t bother with a warning.

Castiel drew back his fist and punched the asswipe across the face, feeling the break of a nose underneath his knuckles. He was knocked to the floor with a shout and Cas dove down to pick him up by his collar.

“What the fuck did you get out of this?!” he growled in a low voice and pure horror appeared in the man’s eyes.

In Cas’ mind, the answer took too long and he recoiled for another swift punch. This time the offending alpha spat out blood along with a tooth.

He pleaded, “All right, all right!” but Castiel never loosened his grip, “I was paid to give him away, okay?! The alpha wards are on the outside, the omega ward is right in the middle of the jail and someone wanted him there! I got cash for informing the authorities! I didn’t know—”

“Who paid you?” he demanded, “How would anyone even know?!”

“I didn’t know, it was someone who visited me and talked me into—”

Castiel didn’t go for his face again, the two seething hits had landed him a broken nose, swollen eye and the alpha was damned if he hadn’t felt the crack of teeth.

Oh, Cas wasn’t done here, he was furious and he would beat the information out of him. He used the momentum from his shoulder all the way down, nailing the man in the ribs, causing him to scream out in pain. If they weren’t broken, they were cracked. He knew the feeling of shattering bones and he was damn near positive that he’d broken every single bone in the human body before. The recovery on these would be retribution.

“Who?” he growled again, “I will kick out your knee caps if you don’t tell me now.”

“I-I-,” he was crumbling and Castiel’s grip was the only thing holding him up. “N-no name. Woman. Long d-dark hair. Told me she n-needed him in the center no-not outskirts for some p-plan. Nothing beyond that!”

Castiel was seeing red because now…he was almost damn sure this was some bullshit that had to do with the escape plans. That his own family had fucked him because the Winchesters had crossed the Krushnics.

This was all a petty war and a race against time, and he and Dean were suffering because of it; when in the beginning both families supported it.

He was so unhinged, there was so much unbridled fury—

Castiel decided to throw another fucking wrench into the system.

The pounding of feet coming back into the room could be heard down the hallway, and even though this man was more than likely a pawn? He had a new job to do.
With the disclaimer, “For what it’s worth, I apologize,” he continued to beat the living shit out of the other alpha.

Castiel pummeled and pounded until his knuckles were split and there was blood staining his clothes.

Until he was sentenced to solitary.

Being without Dean? It was the same thing…

And it was also a big fuck you to his family.

Sure, he was still ‘technically’ in the alpha ward. If you counted where it began, where the long cell block sprouted from. Isolation was in the mighty heart of the penitentiary. It was heavily guarded, mostly because a few thickly sealed and secured doors down was the bustling and thriving center of it all. If they didn’t regroup with this information soon, it could be fatal. Why couldn’t Castiel bring himself to care…?

He had never been belligerent in the past, they wouldn’t see this coming. Now, his emotions were out of control and he wanted to see what they’d do in the wake of his change of location. The tables had turned (been flipped upside-down) again. Who knew which of their families would be able to scramble up a new escape plan the fastest?

Cas actually sounded like a lunatic because within the confines of solitary, he laughed over the matter as his voice echoed off the walls.
It Haunted Me Day and Night

Chapter Summary

*It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none.*

- Edgar Allen Poe—The Tell-Tale Heart

It wasn’t merely the fact that it was an omega ward that made Dean’s skin crawl. He was without his blockers, his suppressants, his alpha-scent spray, his fucking birth control and he felt like he was spiraling without Cas.

Not just Cas. He ached for his alpha’s unique, all-encompassing scent surrounding him, always there with him.

This new cell, this new block, and all the other mingling scents that were nothing but omega—he loathed it. Even on the outside, he was surrounded by alphas, or his friends, his team, his family laid low on blockers but God, there were just so many of them in such a small area, it made his nose scrunch up in disgust.

Even though he was laid into by the authorities, even though they demanded why the fuck he’d pull that, why he’d ‘put himself in danger,’ because he was such a delicate fucking flower—this was all wrong! Dean realized very, very quickly that the only time he wasn’t enveloped within what he knew was his future mate’s alpha-essence was when they were showering.

Any other time he was with Cas...they weren’t mere cellmates, they were in the yard together, they ate together, they fucked around together, they curled up together and friggin’ cuddled whenever they got the chance. And now Dean felt this…itch.

Like he was withdrawing…and he wasn’t sure if that was a thing. He’d heard stories about couples being ripped from their mates and having emotions manifest into the physical kind, and fuck, this hurt. From the pure amount of time he was with Cas, it could very well be the case—because Dean felt sick.

The other sweeter, mild and floral-y garbage smells made him want to gag. He was always cool under pressure but right now he could see himself lashing out in agitation because everything felt wrong, he really was experiencing a visceral loss. This…fucking feeling wouldn’t go away.

He flew to his feet and began banging on the bars, shouting out to the guard, “Hey! Hey, over here, dammit!”

These guards were new. These hadn’t been trained to deal with Dean Winchester.

No one in this prison block had. That was probably why his cellmate was hiding in the corner in the top bunk.

Dean kept pounding against the metal, the clanking noise and his shouts drawing the attention of every curious and slightly terrified omega in this joint. He wasn’t going to let up until he was heard. One guard kept glancing over, and Dean knew if he kicked up enough of a fuss, they’d do anything to get him to shut the fuck up.

And it finally happened.

A female guard, she looked to be a beta, stalked over and ordered him, “You’re going to have to learn how to behave if—”

“Oh, because I’m a poor, helpless omega now?” Dean feigned a pout, hands wrapping against the cold steel. “Let’s be honest. Neither of us want me here. I need to speak to my lawyer.”

“He’s not going to be able to get you back—”

“Did I say anything about getting me back, sweetheart?” He raised a patronizing eyebrow. “I
said I needed to speak to my lawyer. Now, be a good girl and get him on the phone.”

She looked baffled that he’d have the guts to speak to her that way, narrowed her eyes and
drawled right back, “Well, sugar, how about we let you marinate for a little while longer. Then,
maybe, after you learn some manners I’ll think about helping you out?” With a snort, she backed
away and with finality said, “I don’t know how you ‘alphas’ do things, but we try something
called respect around here.”

Fuck! Dean knew he’d fucked up as he watched her retreating back completely disappear. He
knew he was being a dick, but he couldn’t help it, all he could think about was getting back to his
alpha and it all seemed so damn hopeless right now. His gut churned and ached, he’d never felt
this way before.

If he’d known that this was what happened when you fell in love, maybe he would have thought
twice, because this fucking sucked.

He staggered backwards from the door until he collapsed down onto his new bunk—the lower
one this time. The one that mirrored where he’d always hide away with Cas, even though he’d
‘claimed’ the top bunk. Now, this one was truly his but he was alone.

Dean stared at the thick rungs constructing the shitty bed hovering over him and zoned out, trying
to figure out a plan. He needed to get a message to Sam, somehow.

Without any idea where he was heading, Sam wouldn’t be breaking into two of the branches and
calling it a day. No, everything had changed now.

His fist clenched on instinct and he slammed it down on the mattress. The squeaking springs were
obnoxiously loud, even more so than usual and he knew damn well right then and there. The
emptiness, the need to fill the void, the restlessness that wouldn’t stop all over his damn body! All
of him ached...Dean was positive he was going through withdrawal from Cas.

When he listened to his body, all the symptoms of a fucking drug addict were there; but he
yearned for something so much different.

Dean clapped his hands over his face to cover his eyes and groaned heavily, trying to stay calm
because freaking out wouldn’t do him any good, no, it would—

“Hey,” a hushed voice above him demanded his attention.

Slowly, Dean removed his hands to see a man (his new cellmate whom he’d barely even glanced
at, looked more like a kid than anything) peering over the top bunk and staring down at him.

“That was Jody. You don’t mess with her. If you’re on her good side, she’ll help you out. She’s
not one of the bad guys, but you don’t want to make an enemy of her,” the guy instructed him,
and Dean narrowed his eyes suspiciously.

“What do you want? Giving out free advice for the fun of it?” he asked sarcastically.

He laughed and shook his head, “I’m trying to help everyone out. You’re clogging up the entire
block with your fumes. What were you smuggling in that they found, anyway?”

“The hell is that supposed to mean?” Now Dean was just downright confused.

“You gotta be sobering up from something. You’re off the charts with that brand of sour.”

“Oh.” Dean frowned because...it was real, his fears were confirmed and...he cleared his throat.
“’M sobering up from my mate.”

There was a lull, a silence before the inmate said, “Shit. That sucks, dude. But...you were
transferred, right? You didn’t just leave them, I thought that—”

“You ask a lot of questions,” he snapped, cutting him off because this was heavy and Dean
needed to think.

Now, Dean was worried it would get worse before it got better. Fuck!

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It wasn’t until Sam was playing his lawyer card with Jo that he found out the news.

And it dropped down on him like a nuclear warhead.

“Wait. What?” he blinked, because he couldn’t have heard the woman right, “You didn’t just say
—”

“Yeah, Sam. Someone found out Dean was an omega, narc’d on him, and now he’s in the male
omega ward.” She leaned forward and demanded his attention, “I don’t have to emphasize how
much that changes the mission, do I?”

“Fuck!” Sam slammed his closed fist down on the steel table and ground his teeth because he had
a damn strong feeling this was his fault. When he looked back up, Jo’s brows were furrowed in
concern, but he didn’t care, he needed to think aloud. “That’s in the goddamn middle of
everything. It’s not a wing, it’s next to the cafeteria, the showers, hell, the offices of the doctors
and the staff are there. There’s no way we could rig a bomb around there.”
Jo cautiously watched Sam falling apart, he was tugging at his hair, eyes wild as he thought over the options and it didn’t look like there were many.

“We don’t want civilian casualties. We can still get you out, no problem. But Dean…how the hell—” he scrubbed a hand down his face, “I don’t even know where to begin. If this wasn’t a high-security place, we could get away with the usual but there are eyes everywhere, too many cameras to hack, too many security checkpoints in place. And now he’s stuck in the thick of it.”

It was the fucking Krushnics, it had to be. Dean had been doing damn well on his own until then. Until now. And everything’s a tangled mess since we were going back and forth about backing down and this stupid fucking rivalry! They had to have given him up!

And Sam had been idiotic enough to fall for one.

“Well.” Jo reached across the table and gripped his wrist in support. Even though touching was against the rules she felt she needed to help Sam. “If it makes you feel any better, Castiel is in solitary. Beat the dude who tattled on Dean to a bloody pulp. So in the end, all of us, Krushnics included, need to come up with something new, huh?”

Sam took in that information with a bit of surprise. It’s not as though he didn’t believe Dean when he proclaimed he had feelings for this alpha with an asshole of a family, but…risking your own rescue, risking the looming threat of solitary confinement (which ended up being the case) for just another hook-up after he’d been taken away?

All right, they were much, much more serious about each other than Sam had given them credit for.

Still, where did that leave them? It wasn’t just a puzzle, this was fucked, they were fucked and now, hanging his head in shame because he couldn’t keep his brother’s designation under the radar this far in the game, he’d need to tell the team his discovery.

Before he could take off, he promised Jo, “You’ll be easy, so don’t worry. We’ll get you out of here, ASAP.”

“I know,” she smiled kindly, knowing that Sam was ready to snap. But she had to ask, “Do we know who gave us up that night yet? Who landed me and Dean in jail?”

This was just another brick in the wall of ‘Sam is a shitty leader and they needed Dean back calling the shots,’ because they used to do things, run things, together. He missed his brother. He missed the trouble they’d get into, he missed every aspect of them together.

So he turned back to Jo with a tired smile and said, “Soon. We’ll figure it out soon, Jo. Hopefully, before you two get out so they can’t sabotage us again.”

“Right?” she agreed and stood up as well, ready for the guards to escort her back. “Good to see you, sir,” she teased with a wink, and while Sam grinned it didn’t do much of anything for his morale.

Walking down the stairs, he wondered if there was a place for him? Hell, maybe he could let it go to trial and get Dean out the old fashioned way? Sam didn’t feel safe going towards the male omega ward, mostly because he wasn’t disguised. He had a feeling there were people down there that would recognize him and blow his cover.

Instead, he jotted down a note and asked one of the guards to run it to Dean Winchester, saying it was confidential and from his lawyer. Hopefully, it would help.

He knew his brother would be stewing, frustrated and pissed off at the very least right now. Maybe it would be better for him to sleep it off, Sam decided. Then tomorrow, he’d switch his wardrobe around a little more so no inmates recognized him.

Everything was already going to hell, that little snag (since avoidable) could be remedied. And, dear lord, did they need some kind of win.

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It was all hands on deck.

Each member of the team was going to work on the tasks that Sam had assigned, even though this plan was more dangerous than the previous one. They were still going in with a bang, but now there had to be an additional element added if they wanted to save Dean from the depths of the high-security prison.

Sam was still musing over whether or not he wanted to help Cas at all. He knew that this hadn’t been the alpha’s fault. He knew that he’d delivered a beating to the fucker who landed his brother in the male omega ward, but more than anything…

In the midst of the chaos and assignments, Sam punched in a number and let it ring.

“Why, hello. Miss me already, gorgeous?” his voice practically purred.

But Sam wasn’t having it as he spat back, “This was you. This was you getting into my head, realizing I’d never fucking back down, and then retaliating. You piece of shit, you—”
“I did what had to be done.” Gabriel’s voice was like ice. “What did I tell you about my family? The job? It came along first. And—”

“And I’m fucking pissed. So you’ve got an hour.”

That was the first thing that made the other alpha pause, his voice changing to a confused, “What?”

“You heard me. I need something to take my anger out on.” Sam hung up the phone and chucked it over so it landed on the couch.

The ball was in Gabriel’s court, he’d previously accepted and holy hell, did Sam need it.

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The night was the worst. Dean couldn’t stop tossing and turning, he felt this…excruciating emptiness that just wouldn’t go away.

Fuck. If this was ‘sobering up’ he may as well have been doing fucking meth in his other cell.

Cas was worse than heroin. His absence, it was a gaping hole, and nothing—for the love of God—could help him sleep.

He missed the alpha’s strong arms around him.

He missed Cas’ scent. The passionate kisses turned soft before they turned in for the night.

Hell, it didn’t even make sense, because most nights they didn’t even risk sleeping in the same bunk! They didn’t want to get caught oversleeping and some guard deciding to be a douche and separating them. But it turned out happening anyway. But now, Dean couldn’t even look forward to hanging out with his alpha in the yard, eating meals with him, flirting in the showers…

Dean kept telling himself they were getting out.

Sam’s note had said as much. But who knew when, now? Even though his brother promised it’d be speedy in his round-about way of saying it, Dean wasn’t an idiot.

This was one of the reasons they’d made sure he kept up the farce as an alpha. Because of the location of the omega prisoners.

How the fuck was he going to get out? They couldn’t drop a nuke right in the center of the joint, they weren’t killers!

The only thing that worried him, was that Dean knew his kid brother. He knew that the alpha had a breaking point, a point of no return.

Dean had been there for one such occasion and had talked him back from that edge. Holy hell, it had been terrifying. He couldn’t deny there was a darkness in Sam. It was one that he was damn careful to hide from the team, because they needed a fearless leader; not one they feared. Sam… was both, underneath those layers.

It was a fine line, but considering they were in a race against the Krushnics now…who knew what trouble Sammy was getting into? Now, Dean was lonely, hollow, and scared.

He needed Cas here to reassure him his brother wasn’t going to push the red button. That Sam would keep a cool head. But…would Dean even believe him?

Now that there was this tug of war in his brain, Dean sure as hell wasn’t getting any sleep now. He was too busy trying to think about what he could do from the inside. He wondered if the male and female omegas had any contact, if he could get to Jo somehow…

He doubted it, it was high security for a reason. Everyone here was dangerous, just in different ways. Even though ‘lawyer Sam’ was working on an ‘appeal,’ Dean was only looking to lessen his years through the guise of their communication. He was still guilty, they were just trying to prove he was less guilty.

Cas…couldn’t even try. Dean was almost positive his sentencing didn’t come with the chance of parole, let alone a Krushnic lawyer attempting an appeal. They were just going to break him out.

But how?

It delighted Dean that Cas had beaten the fuck out of that narc and wounded him, but Cas had gotten isolation. Of course, the alpha’s move was to fuck over the Krushnics, but it fucked over Dean’s team just as badly. So in the end…what was the point? They clearly hadn’t seen Cas’ actions on the horizon, his head wasn’t as level as it used to be but (Dean thought with a smile) that’s what love did.

That was the thing that kept him going.

The vows of being together once they got past all this shit, no matter how it happened. No matter who got who out, as long as he could see Cas again. That was Dean’s sole focus at this point.

Dean closed his eyes and took in deep breaths as he imagined the dumbest things to keep his aching heart at bay.
Getting a house together. Maybe taking baths after particularly physical and exhausting jobs. Falling asleep together. Being mates. That was really all Dean wanted.

He wanted to belong…to Cas. And he wanted that damn alpha to be his.

He was going to fucking get what he wanted, too. Even if he had to tear down these goddamn bars himself, and march into solitary.

That thought, at least, made Dean grin.

They’d do it. He had faith in Sam, and also in Sam knowing how damn stubborn he was. He wouldn’t leave Cas high and dry. He wouldn’t have told Dean Cas’ status on that stupid little message if he didn’t care—he would have left it out.

Despite his carefully concealed dark side (one that only Dean knew was there), Sam was a hopeless romantic and he believed in love. That was another thing Dean knew he had going for him. His brother had the biggest damn heart. Dean only wished Sammy could find someone who loved the way he did. His little brother deserved it. After looking out for everyone, after loving their little ‘family,’ Sam needed someone to care for him in return.

With a snort, Dean mused about him and Cas finding Sammy a mate. It was stupid things like this that kept him going. His brother’s happiness was another good one to add to that list, right?

He heard an exasperated grumble from the bunk above him, and knew it was his cellmate scenting the ‘withdrawal fumes’ but they were probably laced with amusement now because if there was one thing Dean Winchester could do it was bullshit, and right now he was bullshitting himself. Entertaining himself, because he knew sleep wasn’t happening.

He had wondered just how strong his scent was, since he’d been wearing blockers for almost his entire life. Well, it appeared it was strong enough to piss off a cell block and keep his roommate awake. It really was too bad Cas wasn’t here, he’d never gotten a chance to experience Dean’s true scent, and he was the only person who really wanted to. Irony at its best.

Just like that, Dean was back to wallowing all over again, because that was just another punch to the gut about how badly he missed him. He hoped Cas returned the feelings even a tiny bit, that he was thinking about him as Dean was thinking about Cas.

The alpha wasn’t leaving his head anytime soon, tonight was a lost cause.

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He typed away at the keyboard furiously, asking Charlie how her task was going and receiving confirmation. Ruby had given him shit about taking over as Jo’s other lawyer today because that was one less day she got to see her girl, but Sam needed to see with his own eyes how the omega was holding up. She was part of their team and he needed confirmation.

Benny had told him he had one more errand to run before the heavy artillery was ready and Anna had just gotten back from a shopping trip, checking everything off the list Sam had sent her. Garth had done enough the previous night, he was getting some shut-eye and he deserved it. Sam had him running everything he could through the system to check out Dean’s current cellmate.

Luckily, he didn’t look to be a threat. If anything, he could prove to be an asset if they chose to use him…but that was neither here nor there.

Sam double-checked over Charlie’s work and examined each and every detail. He instructed her to go for a test run if she felt up to it.

Naturally, she did.

If there was anyone who wanted to get this over and done with as much as Sam did, it was Charlie.

Not only was she worried sick about Dean and Jo, she wanted to get back to work. Their real work. She hated being benched—she wanted to be in the field again, stretching her legs and feeling that adrenaline rush.

Sam had a feeling they all did, and this snag was a pain in the ass for exactly that reason.

He couldn’t even count how many jobs they had to turn down, but they wouldn’t pursue a job without Dean. No way in hell would they just leave his brother to rot while they were out there in the field, making bank. That was another one of Ruby’s biggest complaints.

She was the one (besides Sam) making the most goddamn noise.

The omega had a penchant for the nicer things, and this was, quote, “Ruining her sex life and bank account.” As if Sam didn’t already fucking know that! Each time she came back from visiting Jo, she bitched. All of that made her the very least-likely to have betrayed them.

Which was something, in the heat of all of this, that Sam was trying to deduce. And it was driving him mad. He had half a mind to just ditch the entire plan, go in guns blazing on a suicide mission and get the pair tonight. He could if he didn’t already know that Dean would turn around and get the fucking alpha.
That was the thing, Sam had pretty much figured out they needed to include Cas in their rescue mission, because his brother—

“Knock, knock,” a husky voice whispered right next to his goddamn ear.

Sam spun around at the desk to see Gabriel, not just inside his house, but directly in front of him. With narrowed eyes, he demanded, “What are you doing here? I said in an hour.”

Gabriel snorted and put his hands on his hips, “It’s been an hour, brainiac,” then he looked over his shoulder, “Whatcha got going on over there?” and bent in for a closer look.

Sam swung back around, but had to individually exit out of the chats, snapping, “None of your damn business,” shocked he’d lost track of time.

Sam wished this was just a laptop he could slam shut, but he needed the juice from a larger processing system for the work they did. By the time she was shutting down, he realized he hadn’t heard anything from Gabriel which was concerning. While he wanted to be livid and enraged, take his anger out on him as he’d initially planned, he turned around with caution.

The alpha looked pensive while trying to appear neutral, and that put Sam on guard instantly.

“What’s going on?” Sam stood up just so he could get some height, feel like he had some control back. “Why aren’t you—”

Like a switch flipped, Gabriel crowded him and asked, “Thought you needed some anger management,” and grabbed a fistful of his shirt to haul him down.

Although Sam would have loved to sink into that rough kiss, something about his expression…he couldn’t shake it. He couldn’t let him change the subject, even though Sam had called him here for exactly this.

He grabbed Gabriel’s shoulders and, dammit, it took a ridiculous amount of strength to push him away, but he did. The alpha in front of him didn’t look happy with being interrupted and was poised to say as much, but Sam cut him off.

“You saw something. You were being a dick and trying to catch something about our operation, but you saw something else,” he pressed the question, “What was it?”

“I was actually just trying to be a dick and trying to catch something about our operation, but you saw something else,” he pressed the question, “What was it?”

“If you didn’t want me pissed off, why the hell did you fuck me over?! I’m not gonna play the ‘I thought we have something’ card, because I know we did, but the job obviously comes first.” He knew he was letting his emotions get the best of him, “I wasn’t expecting a truce! But doing that to Dean was a low blow! Putting him out of reach like that was fucked up and—”

“Part of the gig, had to keep up appearances. I took no joy in doing it, if you’ll believe me,” Gabriel corrected with a wink, “But. Yeah.”

“If you didn’t want me pissed off, why the hell did you fuck me over?! I’m not gonna play the ‘I thought we have something’ card, because I know we did, but the job obviously comes first.” He knew he was letting his emotions get the best of him, “I wasn’t expecting a truce! But doing that to Dean was a low blow! Putting him out of reach like that was fucked up and—”

“Part of the gig, had to keep up appearances. I took no joy in doing it, if you’ll believe me,” Gabriel shrugged, but there was honesty in his eyes as he gestured for Sam to sit. There was even a moment where he tried to reach out, but aborted the motion. “Now, if I remember correctly, Dean-o and Joanna Beth—who I’ve now done my research on, since I know of her existence—were left behind, right?”

Of all the things he could’ve said, that wasn’t what Sam expected. Which meant there was more. And that led to Sam taking Gabriel’s lead and sitting his ass down.

“That wasn’t what Sam expected. Which meant there was more. And that led to Sam taking Gabriel’s lead and sitting his ass down.

“Yeah,” he confirmed, knowing it didn't matter how many details Gabriel knew, if he could somehow help Sam would walk him through step-by-fucking-step from the beginning and not just about the incident. “Somewhere along the line, they were given away so the others could escape. Locks were engaged again, they were trapped and ready for the cops. It wasn’t an accident, it was deliberate, but it was a mess and our equipment fizzled so we don’t even have footage to know what went wrong and who it was. Whether it was someone on tech or another scout, we just haven’t been able to figure it out.”

Gabriel nodded and then laughed after he took all the information in.

“What’s so funny?” Sam snapped, “You’ve got one of your men on the inside, too. At least—”

“I’m not laughing at you, kiddo. I’m laughing at the irony of it all,” he promised and actually reached out to grab Sam’s thigh with a smile.

“What’s ironic?”

“The codes made to look like times. They’re names, right?” he asked with a carefully raised brow.

Sam nodded slowly, surprised that Gabriel knew that because the whole point was to make the chats, at first glance, appear to be documents. Yet, it seemed like he’d recognized one, which was even more surprising.

“You kids picked out your own? They weren’t assigned?”

When Gabriel received a nod, Sam’s stomach dropped, because a wicked smile crossed his face.
“Oh, Sammy. We’re gonna skip the angry sex and go straight to make-up sex, because I’ve got your traitor.” He tsk’d his tongue, loving the shocked expression on Sam’s face when he added, “And they didn’t start off in the game with you muttonheads, either.”
Sam was gobsmacked and stunned by the news, but more than anything he had to ask Gabriel, “Why are you helping me?”

He shrugged his shoulders, grin still on the right side of clever mischief when he said, “Why not? Am I back in your good graces? Will you let me back into your bed?” A bitchface was emerging, but Gabriel cut it to the nitty gritty. “Real reason? One of our men in the trenches should’ve handled the betrayal. They got away from us, and we haven’t seen hide nor hair since.”

“So you want revenge,” Sam realized, then snapped, “If you try and fuck us over anymore—”

“Oh no, doll,” he reached across to pat Sam’s cheek, even though it riled him up more. “I’ve seen a darker side of you. I know you’re damn well capable of handling this yourself. Sure, we’re at odds about the prison break, but as long as they get what’s coming to them, have at it.”

Those words seemed to quell Sam’s alpha, which was on a rollercoaster of ups and downs whenever he was around Gabriel. Was he on the defensive? Moving to the offensive? Was he forgiving too easily, did he need to take what he felt was his and have his way with him? He didn’t know which option felt like the best, because his brain had kind of…fizzled.

“Okay.” His voice was even, “Thank you for the information.”

Gabriel tilted his head to watch him, wondering…was that it? Now that he’d done something to prove himself useful, was Sam kicking him out? He sure as hell better not be, because that would be the last time he did anything nice for the little fucker—

“Come on,” Sam abruptly stood up, gesturing to Gabriel who was still confused as hell. A devilish smirk flashed on his face. “Wasn’t it you who suggested make-up sex? Or was I mistaken?”

The scent of Gabriel’s alpha rearing up was all the confirmation Sam needed as he led the way, having done all he could when it came to the team tonight. Now, after all that work; it was time to play.

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In the morning, Sam lounged and actually made coffee because he couldn’t give away their play. And the fact that it was happening. Tonight.

He needed to keep up his façade—calm, cool, collected, without a worry in the world besides rolling his eyes at some of Gabriel’s comments. But when he was laying in bed, just talking in hushed voices with the other alpha about nothing at all, Sam was having second thoughts.

Would they be better as a team? A team Gabriel refused to join, though. Would things be different, now that they had a common enemy?

Should Sam go after Castiel? It was so much more trouble and they’d be hitting three targets instead of two, on completely opposite ranges of the prison. Was it really worth it?

He knew Dean wouldn’t go quietly…he needed to study the blueprints all over again.

For some odd reason, though—once those thoughts manifested, he was able to save them for later. Sam allowed himself to breathe in the other alpha’s scent, get lost in his outlandish stories of grandeur and actually enjoy himself. He was smiling freely, laughing openly, and in these moments he didn’t have a care in the world.
“How do you do this?” Sam never bothered with preamble around Gabriel; he never saw a point. With a raised brow, Gabriel pulled the other alpha close to his chest, squeezing him for fun and asked, “I do a lot of things, you’re gonna have to be more specific.”

Sam stole a kiss from Gabriel’s lips before sitting up against the headboard and grabbing the mug, taking a sip of the rich (and strong as hell) coffee. “At first I thought it was me. Being with you made me ignore all my responsibilities and give myself an escape. But now, I realize it’s the opposite. It’s you, whisking me away from everything and dropping us in this…bubble that is outside time and space.”

“Mm,” Gabriel smiled, he actually smiled about Sam’s sentiments and followed his lead, sitting up next to him. “We’ve got heavy jobs. It’s good to get away. Good to know I’ve got what it takes to kidnap you.” His sip became a chug and he leaned his head on Sam’s shoulder, “Can we not let this stupid fucking mission ruin that? Like you said last night…we do. Have something.”

It was whispered, like a silent plea and Sam…he wanted the same thing. He wanted it so badly, but it was Gabriel himself pulling all the stunts and fucking things up. So the point was moot. He shouldn’t be the one telling Sam they ‘shouldn’t let it affect them’ or whatever.

With a heavy sigh, Sam felt himself slip back into reality and agreed, “I hope the mission doesn’t ruin it. I really, really hope.”

Gabriel huffed a breath, finished his coffee and then went about collecting his clothes. “I’ll get out of your hair. God knows we’ve both got some scheming to do. Now, you’ve got a traitor to deal with and time is of the essence!”

Once he was dressed, though, he took a moment to approach Sam once more. He cradled his cheek with his palm, and gave him something much, much more thorough than a standard ‘goodbye kiss.’ Not that Sam was bothered at all, he moaned into it and wrapped his hand around Gabriel’s wrist to caress him.

As their lips lingered, the kiss turned oddly tender and so did their scents. And it may have made Sam’s heart skip a beat because, dammit, this was…he was already in over his head. He didn’t even give a shit how fast it happened, it just…did.

When Gabriel finally pulled away, he pecked Sam on the forehead and said, “See ya when I see ya,” and left Sam alone in his bed.

He waited to hear the front door close before he, himself, sprung out of bed and instantly got on the group chat, where everyone was waiting for him. Everyone was waiting for the signal. It was time! They were putting their plan into action.

“Signing in to see Miss Harvelle, of course,” the man working the sign-in sheet already knew Ruby by name (well, alias) but with Anna alongside her, he raised an eyebrow. With a huff, he moved the sheet over and asked, “Who are you?”

“Oh, this is a junior associate with the firm,” Ruby answered with a bright smile. “I think we may have a break in Miss Harvelle’s case, and I need her to take notes and be a second pair of eyes for me. While she’s seen the inside of a courtroom, it’s normally family court. This is a step up.”

“I’ve been following the paperwork on the Harvelle case for a while,” Anna confirmed, “I only have yet to meet her.”

“Well, alrighty, then,” he glanced down to the sheet, “G’luck today, Miss Milton.”

There was only a minor moment of worry as they walked through the metal detectors and beyond the security workers who chose visitors at random for pat-downs. Still, they’d seen Ruby enough, and she was here for her job. Plus, her scent of sheer confidence probably unnerved them.

In addition, Ruby made it a point to greet people on the way to the conference room. She smiled as she strode past security, and even chatted people up by the coffee machine. Ruby made her presence known so she wouldn’t be a surprise guest (AKA—suspect) when all this shit went down. And with Anna alongside, she looked as though she was just another accessory to Ruby’s normal presence.

Soon enough, they were down the hall and in position, waiting for their cue.

Sam had to make a hasty exit from his place and barely managed to look put-together by the time he got to the prison and visited Dean.

Dean looked unimpressed, until his nose caught up with him and he demanded, “Dude! Did you get laid?! You’ve got a fuckin’ hickey on yer—”

“Not the time, or the place,” Sam hissed at him, “We’re ahead of schedule. And it’s starting now. We’re busting you out, we’re still gonna have fireworks. But more is going to be happening from
within than we originally planned. You’re gonna be the trigger.”

“Uh, and how do I do that?” Dean was in mission-mode, any heckling of Sam had fallen to the
wayside. “Just call ya up on my phone and say, ‘oh! It’s time?’”

“It’ll be in fifteen to twenty minutes after I leave,” Sam said simply, “Everyone’s in position, you
just need to take this.” He opened a folder from his files, and pushed it towards Dean, so to
anyone on the outside it would appear as if he was showing him something in the text.

However, within the center pages, there was a single pill tucked up inside the folder. When it was
released and tilted on the angle, it tumbled down to the desk. Luckily, the folder was obstructing
enough of the view, and the cuffs on Dean gave him just enough range of motion, so he was able
to snatch that sucker right up in his palm.

Dean continued the charade, staring into the folder and gesturing to random parts as he said,
“Now, this isn’t gonna kill me, or anything, right?”

“No,” Sam chuckled, “After all the struggle we went to save your ass? You’re fine. Just take it
and lay down in the bunk. Everything else will follow.”

With a heavy sigh of nerves, anticipation and excitement, Dean nodded. He had all the faith in the
world in his brother, and he was ready to blow this joint. But…just as it had been on repeat night
and day, constantly in his head and not allowing sleep, he had to ask:

“What about Cas?”

“We’ll help him,” Sam said, and it was a choice he finalized just recently. “Benny’s got a
detonator for the alpha ward, Anna’s got one for the female omega ward. It’s gonna be chaos, but
so long as there’s pandemonium, we can cut across to get him up on the way, then exit down the
alpha wing. It’s you who took a little more…planning.”

“Yes, fifteen to twenty minutes, apparently,” he snorted, but was genuinely shocked when he
told Sam, “You’re being serious. You are risking even more to get him out. For me. I-I don’t
know how to thank you, Sammy.”

“Don’t worry, we gotta get this started. Everyone’s waiting on that cue,” he smiled at the omega
and sucked in a breath, “We’ve got this. In and out. Kind of.”

“You know. But I’m confident, so do your job. We’ll do ours.”

Sam left, and the rest passed in a blur. Dean kept his hand loose so nothing appeared suspicious,
but the capsule was wedged between his thumb and palm. As soon as the cuffs were off and the
guard’s back was turned, Dean dry-swallowed the thing and right after…something caught his
eye.

Charlie.

She was undercover, keeping her eyes down and wearing heavy alpha scents to be able to work in
the omega ward and fend for herself. The custodial jumpsuit was what surprised him as she
passed his cell, mopping the floor. They locked eyes for a split second, before she shot him a
don’t blow this’ face, then his hands were grabbing the edge of the bottom bunk and he was
kicked back—appearing to relax.

Yeah, she was right. This was not the time to blow this, this was—

Dean really, really should have asked Sam what he’d given him.

It could have been anything from ecstasy to a friggin poison, but all at once (fifteen to twenty
goddamn minutes later) a sour taste just bubbled at the back of his throat. He knew this feeling.
Fuck, did he know it! He flung his body towards the toilet, but the rapid onset of the fucking
meds only got him as far as leaning to his left to push off the bed—

Before he projectile-vomited over fucking everything.

There was still more bubbling in his stomach, and his shoes slid in the mess left on the floor as he
spewed his guts into the tin fucking can of a toilet.

“Oh, no, man!” his cellmate groaned, and started gagging from both the smell and the sight
covering Dean’s bed and the floor. “I’ve got a weak stomach, I—I—!”

And then in no fucking time at all, Kevin was hurling over the edge of his top bunk, adding to the
mess on the floor. God, it was a shit show!

That’s when the other dudes in the cell block began shouting for the guards, calling out, “God,
that stinks something nasty!” and “I’mma ‘bout to puke listening to these fools!”

Dean was sure he had finished emptying his stomach, because every dry heave only produced
bile, if he was lucky.

He heard a guard from behind curse under his breath and ordered both omega prisoners, “Get
your asses over here, wait in the hallway.” He ushered them outside the cell, and called over his
shoulder. “Laura!” Charlie perked up, answering to the name, and strolled over to where he and
two other guards were holding Dean and Kevin with the filthy cell’s door wide open. “Think you can handle this?”

She looked at the mess and commented, “Gonna need more supplies, but yeah. You wanna call Jose and see if he can help? I can get started, at least.”

“Yeah, let’s do that.” The guard marched down the cellblock, clearly put out—and once he was behind closed doors…

Charlie struck one of the remaining alphas in the throat, leaving him unable to speak or scream, while the other guard stole his keys and knocked him unconscious. Dean whipped around, because Charlie may be awesome, but taking on two guards by herself—

“Heya, Dean,” Garth greeted with a smile from under the cap. “Whatcha say we start a little anarchy?”

“Fuck yeah,” he eagerly confirmed with a goofy grin, and stole the guard’s gun off his unconscious body. “So was that the signal?”

Charlie reached into her pocket and shot off a message.

The moment she did, there was the briefest pause…

Right before the entire building shook like an earthquake had struck it.

They were in the center of the prison, the epicenter of the two blasts were on the outskirts—and even here the majority of the lights crashed down and shattered. There was shouting and screaming that rang out through the cell block from the other inmates. The alarms started blaring an ugly, ear-piercing wail along with the pulse of red light.

Charlie winked and said, “And that, homie, was the signal,” before she pointed to Dean’s cellmate. “Hey, you’re Kevin Tran, right? Hacker extraordinaire, got in trouble with getting the codes to the nukes and other government funsies?”

He nodded slowly, “That was just what they caught me for.”

“I like you,” the omega decided in the next second, “Wanna get out of here?”

His eyes doubled in size, but he agreed excitedly and followed as Garth set a pace, armed with the keys as they entered the sea of chaos and disaster that laid ahead.

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When Anna pressed down on the detonator for the omega ward, she made sure they were all behind the cement wall in the conference room. Even there though, the impact knocked over the chairs they’d abandoned and the paperwork became confetti in the air, but they knew it had done its job.

There were yelled exclamations outside the room, guards demanding to know what the hell that was, and others telling their coworkers to look at video feeds. But what they didn’t know was beforehand, Charlie had hacked into the security footage and prison was now operating blind. The guards would need to get out and see the damages for themselves—and if everything had gone according to plan?

Prisoners would be running rampant.

Ruby put on her game face as the concerned lawyer, peeking out of the room and demanded of the singular man still there, “What’s happening?! What was that?!”

“All right.” He nodded tersely, because no one crossed Ruby when she got into that mood. He was damn near terrified of her; so terrified, in fact, that she was able to pickpocket his firearm without him even realizing it.

With a wicked grin, she motioned the women in the room out, Anna already having picked the lock on Jo’s handcuffs. Ruby locked the door from where the guard had left and popped open her briefcase.

Jo grinned widely as both Ruby and Anna began peeling off their clothes in exchange for the orange inmate scrubs Sam had craftily stolen the other day. If they looked like authority in a prison back in the hands of the inmates, they’d be targets. This way, they could blend in with their fellow thieves, murders and wayward companions.

With a whistle and a pout, Jo commented, “Damn, did I miss that ass. You couldn’t arrange conjugal visits?”

“I’m gonna conjugal the fuck out of that ass the moment we’re home free,” Ruby pulled her into a hot, desperate kiss because it had been God knows how long since she’d been able to taste Jo.
Anna put the finishing touches on her outfit, as well as placing another explosive device on a timer to destroy all the personal belongings they came in with. It would be as though they were never there. Soon, there would be no evidence of Jo’s escape nor the ‘lawyers’ that had visited her.

She pushed the button and grinned with a, “Ready to make a break for it?”

Ruby brandished the gun in her hand and agreed, “I was born ready.”

Sam told Charlie and Garth to get this Kevin kid (whom Charlie told him about over text) and Dean out; that Sam would go after Cas himself. It was something he didn’t divulge during their meeting at the prison because he knew damn well Dean was going to fight him on it. But they needed to get their own people away and to safety first. Sam didn’t think twice when he was jumping into the fire for Jo and Dean, they were a family! After he received word Jo was out safely, Sam was now risking it all for Castiel, a hit man from an opposing group who had openly sabotaged the Winchesters! Sam didn’t owe Castiel a thing, in fact, it was the opposite and the fact Sam was changing his destination in this clusterfuck of a jail break didn’t make sense.

But still, Sam would do it. For his brother.

Except…once he was in the building in the middle of the uproar he noticed something right away.

Something was wrong. Extremely wrong.

The guards were getting everything back under control at an alarming fast rate. And they shouldn’t be, because this was a group of very dangerous, high-profile criminal alphas! What the hell?!

Ruby had said that the coup on the omega side was just that. The chaos and the bloodshed was insane, the omega prisoners were nowhere near being corralled and they’d found their way to the exit just as the three women had intended. It was madness that couldn’t be controlled and the wardens were considering calling for outside reinforcements.

So if the omegas were in a state of complete rebellion and anarchy—what was happening with the alphas being returned in a proverbial goddamn single-file line to their cells; alphas who were known for being more ruthless, aggressive and prime idiotic knotheads?

Sam ducked into one of the bathrooms, figuring no one in this mess would need to take a piss. He waited as the phone rang, and a familiar voice answered with, “How’s it going, brother? You got that Krushnic fella out yet?”

“Benny…what happened with the explosion? Something’s not right, I—”

“Af...
“Nah, you were good. Had me fooled. I was waiting in the wings.” He slid to a halt, a new obstacle in their way, and cheerfully greeted, “Oh, hello there. You must be Dean!”

Dean was covered in sweat, staring at his brother and demanding, “What the fuck is this?! Charlie said everyone was out, but this ward—!”

“Hi, I’m the one who’s saving your asses! I fucking told you Anna was the rat, so of course, you would have been most likely to get caught saving Cas. That’s why your blast radius was cut down, that’s why we’re about to fight for our lives here,” Gabriel pulled out an assortment of guns and weapons he’d been hiding inside his jacket and handed them out, “Hurry up, you fuckers!”

“Wait!” Dean kept up with the new unforgiving pace, even though he didn’t know the man or what part he played in their escape plan. But he trusted his brother and Sam was already going balls to the wall to sprint alongside him, “Anna?! Why the hell would Anna leave us high and dry! Lay a trap? And, stab in the dark, you’re Gabriel, huh?”

“In the flesh,” the shorter man winked, and when a guard turned the corner with his gun drawn, Gabriel was faster and shot him down with deadly precision. “We’re almost to solitary. But Anna?! Ooh-woo! Anna’s not only vengeful, she’s in the business because she’s all about the adrenaline high,” Gabriel explained about her. He snorted and offhandedly remarked, “She used to have it bad for Cas. To the point it was obsessive, like, creepy Lifetime Movie, obsessive.”

Gabriel emphasized heavily, “And obsessive means danger. So we thought we got rid of her. But from what Sammy said, it sounds like she started doing the same thing with you, Dean-o.” He tsk’d and then they finally had an empty hallway to full-out sprint down. “Seems like a case’a since she knew she couldn’t have him, no one could. She got her own revenge with you behind bars. But looks like she knew you guys wouldn’t kill her like the Krushnics would, so she’d wait it out. Maybe this was another go at getting rid’a ya too.”

“Crazy bitch!”

“Gonna be even crazier, now that you two found each other,” Gabriel scoffed wryly, “You didn’t mention that on your group chat, did you, Sammy?”

“How does he know about the group chat?” Dean suddenly demanded, and then a giant question mark of about two million things Gabriel shouldn’t have known either sprang to mind. “Wait, how does he know any of this about our team?!”

They were running down the hallways and this was what Dean decided to bring up?! Sam blew out a breath of frustration. The three stopped behind a corner, watching rogue inmates fly by and the omega was another second away from opening his mouth.

“It’s a long story,” Sam tried to nip it in the bud, “It doesn’t matter, he’s helping us right now, isn’t he?!”

“And I’d like to know why!”

Jesus, could he be any more hard-headed when they were literally on a search and rescue in a maximum security prison, looking for Dean’s boyfriend who was in solitary while they had an almost nonexistent window to retrieve him?!

Gabriel flagged them ahead, the coast being clear as they ducked and dodged between three guards caught up in hand-to-hand combat with the prisoners. They were trying to wrangle the inmates back into the cells, but everything was still (luckily) out of control. The shrieking sirens and flashing red lights told them as much.

And soon, they were looking toward the still-locked-down bars of Castiel’s prison block.

“I get why you care about Cas,” Dean changed his approach, addressing the new alpha, “But why do you know so much about my brother and our operations?”

Gabriel was trying to calculate the odds in the situation and how many guards would be holding down the fort in solitary. He looked back over his shoulder, at a loss without the means to open the cell for his own brother, and then decided to face Dean head-on.

Only, instead he raised his gun along with his attention. Now the omega was beginning to think his harassment was misplaced and really fucking stupid. He kept forgetting the Krushnics were assassins and Castiel was the exception, but before he could bumble out an apology—

The safety was flipped off, the trigger pulled and a body dropped behind them.

Icily, Gabriel ordered, “Grab those keys. It looks like the guards are retaking control, we need to move.”

There was a stumble in his step as Dean turned around and fell to his haunches, grabbing the keys from the guard’s utility belt who’d snuck up behind them. He swallowed around his stolen breath because Gabriel…was the real deal. He hadn’t shot to incapacitate as they would’ve, given the chance. Gabriel shot to kill.

The guard was dead before he even hit the floor, the bullet piercing his skull. It was a direct headshot without an ounce of hesitation.

Dean swallowed his unease at the realization as Sam kept a lookout behind them with his gun
trained on any intruders that could stop them.

When the omega placed the keys into Gabriel’s waiting hand, he tutted, “Oh, and to answer your question, since he’s gonna be all coy and shy about it, I know the inside info because I’m fucking your brother. How’s that for full circle?” He winked and turned to the door, finding the key on the third try.

“W-what?!” Dean gaped at the same time Sam hissed, “Gabriel!"

“Was that supposed to be a secret?” he asked innocently, “My bad,” and pushed through the doors.

Gabriel ordered, “Guns ready, the blast didn’t do a damn thing this far in,” as they cautiously entered, not knowing whether there were any guards hanging out in here, or if they’d run to join the others to take back the prison.

Both alphas had studied the layout of the prison, it was burned into their memory, but one of the least scrutinized areas was solitary. After all, no one could have predicted Castiel’s actions, or the fact that he would end up here. They weren’t sure how the prison even went about the isolation periods, but—

“He’s over here!” Dean whispered harshly and waved for them to follow.

“What?” Sam blinked, “How do you know?”

The omega was dashing away when he looked over his shoulder and explained, “I can scent him! Cas!” he shouted out and took an abrupt turn around another hallway—

But before either Gabriel or Sam could turn the corner, or stop Dean from doing it—they heard a gunshot.

“Dean!” Sam shouted out, Gabriel grabbing his arm and hauling him backwards to avoid making the turn blind.

He shoved Sam up against the wall, even though he was struggling and ordered, “Get your shit together! Breathe. We’re gonna take this guard out, okay? Sam!” Gabriel lowered his voice and finally got his attention, “I’ve got this. We’ve got this. We’re getting out of here with both our brothers. Don’t run in blind.”

Gabriel didn’t like how affected he was by the fear in Sam’s eyes, because in that high-stakes moment, he wanted to comfort the man first, and then eliminate the threat second, when it should be (should always fucking be) the other way around! But Gabriel still lowered his hand and grabbed Sam’s, and felt reassured when the other alpha squeezed his.

Slowly, they kept their backs to the wall and inched towards the block.

They could hear both Castiel and Dean—which was music to Sam’s ears, even though it was his brother grunting in pain. It sounded like a guard was trying to usher him into a cell…

But Castiel barked out, “You can’t lock him up, he needs to go to the infirmary! He needs a fucking doctor!”

“In case you were unaware, a doctor isn’t a luxury we have right now,” the guard growled, “Now, you be a good omega and—”

“Go fuck yourself!” Dean snapped, and then grunted as they both heard the sound of a swift kick in the gut. “Heh, that’s all you g-got?” he continued taunting. “Real big man! Hiding back here when the rest’a yer coworkers are doing their jobs, fighting for their lives, you piece of—”

Sam couldn’t wait, he swung around the corner with both hands gripping his firearm, demanding, “Back away. Hands where I can see them.”

The guard was just about ready to take another cheap shot at Dean when Sam had come out of nowhere, followed by Gabriel—who simply strolled out in the open. He slowly did what the alpha asked, and Gabriel whistled with a skip in his step as he disarmed the man and stuffed the gun into the back of his pants.

“Heya, Cassie! Told ya we’d be coming!” he greeted, and turned back to the guard, “Unlock him.”

Sam kept the gun trained on the guard, but pleaded with Gabriel as the guard moved, “Where’s Dean hit?”

He didn’t get a chance to crouch down to check and respond because Castiel had shoved past the guard and his brother, and was kneeling at Dean’s side. He scooped his mate up in his arms and kissed him hard, asking in frustration, “What were you thinking?!?”

With a goofy grin, Dean responded, “That I was gonna save my damsel!” and looked down to his leg. “I think I fucked up.”

“Damn right you did.” Castiel reached out to his brother in an unspoken communication.

Gabriel smoothly took the the guard’s gun and handed it over. And, God, did the weight feel amazing in Castiel’s grip again. He’d missed this, he’d missed the job, the freedom, the power…
Castiel turned with a blank expression, and fired off a round into the guard’s femoral artery. He collapsed, screaming in excruciating pain, with blood spurting everywhere.

The alpha tucked the gun away and explained, “An eye for an eye.” As he wrapped Dean’s wound that was by no means fatal, he called over to the guard, “It won’t be long now. You’ll bleed out soon.”

It was eerie to see it in action—Cas’ disregard for human life—but Dean knew that he’d done it because of him. All for him. The way Cas dipped forward and placed a kiss on his forehead was tender, it was so sweet and very suddenly a huge smile spread across his face as his eyes lit up.

“Dean!” he said with excitement, “I can… I can scent you. Without the blockers. Right now, it’s a bit hidden by the physical pain, but underneath it all…” Castiel was tender when he cupped his cheek, the reunion nearly perfect (minus the gunshot wound) when he whispered, “my omega,” and kissed Dean’s lips.

He couldn’t help it, Cas’ secondhand joy was contagious—it was strange and out of place, but it didn’t matter. “I missed you so goddamn much, Cas. You have no fuckin’ idea. Whattya say we get out of here? Make it a real good reunion?” Dean wiggled his eyebrows.

“Of course, can you stand?” the alpha slowly worked with his omega as he spat out curses trying to get to his feet. That was the hard part.

Still, Castiel had a wide smile on his face, even when the expletives were aimed in his direction because just seeing Dean was enough. Being with him again, knowing they were on their way out? They were in a bubble, stealing kisses while trying to determine how weight-bearing Dean’s leg was which proved to be...not very.

Sam and Gabriel were watching from the outside and both, while keeping guard, were really, really fucking distracted. They’d never witnessed either of their brothers acting this way, and what was more baffling? What they were watching unfold…it was real. It was so fucking real.

This... was the true mates phenomenon.

The fact they’d found each other by chance was insane. It shouldn’t have happened, there was no reason for them to have crossed paths in their professions, both jobs relying on living in the shadows. The staggering odds against their slightly twisted fairy-tale were unimaginable, but oddly inspiring.

Gabriel pitched his voice over to Sam and said candidly, “Guess now I know why it was always a two-for-one package, huh?” There was no tension, it was acknowledgement.

“Yeah,” Sam locked into Gabriel’s stare and could have sworn he caught something…unfamiliar in it.

The alphas hadn’t realized they’d zoned out, until Cas had Dean’s arm around his shoulder, pressing, “We need to move.”

“Y-yeah,” Sam agreed, “I’ll be in front, Gabriel, you take the rear. The van should be ready out of the west end’s exit point. Everyone else has left the building, it’s just us now.”

“All right, let’s hustle!” Dean agreed enthusiastically. “Even if you have to drag my limp ass, I don’t give a fuck. We’re running out of time before they regroup!”

It was true.

It was too damn true.

On the way back out, it was nothing like the journey infiltrating the prison to collect their friends.

Their exit was punctuated with bloodshed. There were bullets that the Winchesters regretted and the Krushnics proudly let fly.

Soon enough, they recognized the situation for what it was. There was only one way they were going to make it out alive, and that was by handing Dean over to Sam to carry. They needed to move fast: Sam knew Dean’s weight and the brothers might hesitate to take a life when firing, and that could cost one of the men theirs.

Not only did they need firepower and perfect aim, they needed Castiel and Gabriel to take the emotional weight from them. It was impossible to try and shoot only to stop—to incapacitate—someone in an escape like this. It required the fatal touch of a Krushnic.

The Krushnics got their hands dirty, they were born for it, firing off rounds through the cell blocks where the guards had regained control of the prisoners. It just took one or two uniformed men hitting the cement, and chaos erupted once more. The problem was, the bodycount spiked at such an alarming rate. Their aims were too good, not a single bit of ammo was fired to debilitate. It was always a…hit.

Gabriel took a bullet to the shoulder, and it made Sam’s blood run cold…but the alpha barely even flinched. The same way Castiel was sucker-punched into a stone wall, and another bullet ricocheted and grazed his side—he didn’t blink. No, these two were the real deal. Nothing would slow them down, and from the wings Sam noticed something.
The Krushnic alphas were exuding alpha scents. They were posturing, they were the danger, they were strength and power lit up like fireworks.

Yet, they were also protection.

It was that mode where the ferocity was not driven by self-preservation, it was completely sparked by the match of a need to defend another. The scent was different, the notes gave away that they were fighting to take care, fight for and watch over something (or someone) damn special. Sam and Dean were directly behind them, inhaling it like an old, beat-up truck’s exhaust as they fought their way through.

And it would make all the sense in the world, coming from Castiel. Especially, after seeing how he and Dean were together, even for the briefest moment. It was truly something beautiful.

But the kicker? Was that Sam could scent the same goddamn thing coming from Gabriel.

And in the heat and rush of it all, it made him confirm his own feelings—and hope that what he was scenting was real.

They caught sight of Charlie’s wild red hair, she was throwing open their exit but looked on in confusion as Gabriel was leading the brigade along with Castiel. Unsure of how to interpret it, she drew her own gun and on instinct, Gabriel raised his—

“No, no!” Sam quickly spat out, “All friends! It’s okay, we’re here!”

Charlie side-eyed him, but helped the Winchesters (especially Dean) the second the vehicle was in place. Gabriel was slowing down and looking around for his own escape path, as if he was headed to turn tail some place else. Sam was not having that.

“Gabriel! Get your ass in! Ruby’s got medical training, we need to get that bullet out!” he snapped. Castiel was already inside the disguised (hijacked from years ago) ambulance, “I don’t fucking care about rivalry, I care about you! That’s a goddamn order!”

“Woah,” Charlie put her hands in front of her and glanced at the new alpha, confirming, “Sam just used his alpha voice. Which I’ve heard a total of once. This is serious. Get in, so we can get the flip out of here!”

He chewed his lip, but once Sam began stalking over, Gabriel realized Sam wasn’t leaving without him. He figured this was for the best, and he could keep an eye on his brother. Plus, the bullet in his shoulder hurt like a bitch.

They all piled in and hit the road, gunning it through a few stoplights with their siren blasting just to put some distance between them and the prison before they all regrouped at the safe house. Only a couple among them knew where it was. When they got into some deep shit, it was how they worked; it was better that way.

As a precaution, a few team members would pick the location (even though the inside would always be set up the same) and everyone was taken, half in the dark so no one could squeal if captured. They’d be isolated and away from the world, this time it was Garth’s turn on security detail after they dropped off the Tran kid somewhere random. He was driving not only the vehicle, but their plans, and Sam was grateful he was merely along for the ride.

Not being in charge for once felt liberating. Making it out of the prison felt liberating. Having his brother back? Was priceless. Sam could finally breathe again.

Ruby was sweating from all the bullets she was pulling out of people. Jo was helping with stitches, claiming she’d been doing nothing but sitting on her ass for the last few weeks anyway. Plus, any chance to calm her girlfriend and steal a quick kiss, she would take.

Everyone was curious about Gabriel’s story and they’d all (every single one of them) heard Sam shouting at him from outside the ambulance.

They knew he was someone important, or someone special.

The team had anticipated Castiel’s presence. They had attempted to be welcoming, knowing what lengths their leader had gone to for this man. The team had tried at first to make small talk, but the pair were too busy cuddling, tangled up practically in each other’s laps. They whispered to each other in hushed voices with bursts of excited and joyful scents. It was like watching it on a TV screen.

It didn’t merely surprise the group, some had dropped jaws. Dean Winchester, wasn’t known for relationships. Or even liking alphas besides those close friends and family. The revelation was that much more perplexing, and even though they had prior knowledge, it didn’t prepare them.

But this was a good type of shock. Dean had deserved this all his life: happiness, and if it came in the form of an alpha, assassin mate? Well, they’d never judge him.

Through the blood, sanitizers and rubbing alcohol, their scent warmed the inside of the ambulance and put a smile on everyone’s face for a job well done.

Gabriel kept stealing glances at Sam because he wanted to speak with him, but there was no privacy here. And he needed privacy. He had to admit, while he chit-chatted with Ruby, she was the smart kind of cunning he’d expect from someone on Sam’s team.
Maybe he was kind of vetting them. Analyzing them. Not kind of, he was doing it deliberately. After all, they had been enemies until just a few hours ago. Who knew? Everyone in here still could be an enemy, besides his brother, Sam and perhaps Dean. His strategic brain wouldn’t allow him to just drop it. Until he heard a whispered, “I love you,” from his brother to Dean fucking Winchester. That stopped him from everything, mind screeching to a halt. Because Castiel didn’t do love. He wouldn’t even fake it. And yet…this omega had pulled it out of him and it didn’t appear to be a fight. Cas had wholly given himself over, and there wasn’t a hint of regret. Fuck. Gabriel sank against one of the seats and told himself to chill out. This wasn’t a game, he needed to stop pretending everything was a chess board and take this for what it was. They’d saved Dean and Cas, Sam cared about him enough to get him patched up, and what was more—Sam trusted him enough not to pull anymore jackass moves with the team. Because he could have. So easily. No one had disarmed him, they were technically opposing teams and— Gabriel…made a choice. He was going to turn this around. Now that they weren’t pitted against each other, he would work to be worthy of Sam’s trust, and that would start right now. He could do this. And when he caught the kid’s smile from across the back, he returned it with something honest and brilliant. He hoped it resonated with Sam. Gabriel hoped that Sam didn’t regret bringing him along because Gabriel knew damn well he had some making up to do. Gabriel owed it to that jackass couple across from him, because if his little brother was in love? He sure as fuck wasn’t going to stand in the way of that. Damn, Cas was like a new man, and Gabriel was happy for him. It hadn’t slowed him down, it hadn’t turned him soft because Gabriel had witnessed just how many bodies Castiel shot down during the prison break. He was kind of awestruck by it. To realize love wasn’t a weakness; Gabriel was proud of his little brother and approved of this mating. No matter how ‘Romeo and Juliet’ it had been at first.
Chapter Summary

“True love, like any other strong and addicting drug, is boring—once the tale of encounter and discovery is told, kisses quickly grow stale and caresses tiresome… except, of course, to those who share the kisses, who give and take the caresses while every sound and color of the world seems to deepen and brighten around them. As with any other strong drug, true first love is really only interesting to those who have become its prisoners. And, as is true of any other strong and addicting drug, true first love is dangerous.”

Stephen King, Wizard and Glass

The four who really had put their lives on the line and knew exactly why the (sabotaged) bomb hadn’t detonated with its full force were staying quiet. Gabriel was curious as to what Anna was thinking. If she was internally freaking the fuck out, while riding shotgun as Garth drove them up and down side streets before they even began to head to their destination, she didn’t show it.

It looked as though the other three felt the same, their eyes flickering over to her for any signs of a tell—because she clearly didn’t want them to escape with their lives. And the fact that not only Castiel was here, but Gabriel too?

Oh, these blasts-from-the-pasts were not only a danger, they were soon-to-be-fatalities.

Their frustrations after a while could be scented and if they didn’t do something to be distract themselves, stewing in the face of yet another betrayal, they’d all go crazy. They didn’t want to alert the rest of their team just yet either.

The ambulance was wide without a gurney to worry about. There were bench seats as well as places on the floor where Ruby and Jo had chosen to sit down. That was something Gabriel could work with.

“Miss Harvelle,” he began, leaning his elbows against his knees, “I owe you an apology. I should have done a little more homework and realized you were incarcerated, too. Unfortunately, I was too distracted trying to comprehend what an amateur move my idiotic brother had made.” He could feel Castiel’s glare on him, but that didn’t hold him back. “My little brother actually turning human and getting feelings? Hah! At the worst fuckin’ time, too. You can see why I was a little preoccupied, or else you would have been part of my mission.”

If there was one thing the team had in common, it was that they were cautious and untrusting. Ruby’s arm was around Jo, so she felt safe. In the meantime, she didn’t like that no one had taken the gun away from the alpha newcomer.

A newcomer who didn’t have a story, only the overheard name of Gabriel, nothing else. All they scented was strength, but now they knew he was a Krushnic because he spoke of Cas as his brother, and he knew Sam. Other than that, he was a mystery with a bullet wound and many other battle scars.

She spoke clearly and concisely. “I accept your apology. But I can’t help but wonder…why are you here?” Jo noticed that Gabriel didn’t even flinch, so she felt the confidence to keep going, “I get it, Cas and Dean have something going on. Something serious as hell. It’s actually disgustingly cute in this weird way,” she flashed a wide grin, and Dean waved his middle finger.

Jo turned back to Gabriel, coolly saying, “But you? Shouldn’t you have hit the road? Once you knew your brother was safe?”

“I ordered him to come,” Sam swiftly interrupted. “He took a bullet for us, Jo. And multiple grazes. Who knows how much blood he would’ve lost. Hell, he wouldn’t have even gone to a hospital because of his mug. I don’t know if their family have medics on deck! Without him, we wouldn’t have made it out.”
While Gabriel was surprised by the amount of sheer intensity, he was more shocked by the fact that Dean spoke up for him next.

“Yeah, dude,” he ruffled Jo’s blonde hair, “I was worthless. I was deadweight, being friggin carried out by Sammy. Cas and Gabriel? They took down anything in our path, they stirred the pot again because the prisoners were losing. And that wasn’t part of the plan. If it wasn’t for them, some kinda martial law would’ve kicked in within the prison, and how much do you wanna bet they’d use ‘lethal force’?” He scoffed, still as close to Cas as he could get without being (completely) in his damn lap. “Gabriel’s serious, guys. He saved our bacon. And Sam…” he paused, remembering the awkward exchange during the escape, “Uh, trusts him.”

Dean didn’t know what other way to phrase it, because he wasn’t about to word-vomit and force them to ‘come out,’ or whatever. Truth be told, he still needed a conversation with his own brother about…well, that. Because everything was so murky and he didn’t quite believe what was coming out of Gabriel’s mouth. Cas had told Dean his brother was full of shit already, but the omega had a feeling this wasn’t one of those times…

“We’re pullin’ in, everyone get ready!” Benny called looking out the window, apparently one of the people who knew about this particular safe house.

“Get ready for what?” Gabriel asked curiously.

Charlie explained, “We’ve gotta hide the vehicle. Garth’s usually the one who disarms the security system because he installed it and chose the location this time. But he’s gotta be fast. We get our shit together, and then we can finally unload inside. Re-rig the security system again.”

“Ah,” Cas acknowledged, the concept of their safe house being somewhere Dean wished to bring the Krushnics back to still surprising to him. Maybe, in retrospect, they didn’t have a choice.

“How long do you usually keep out of sight?”

“Until the news dies down,” Ruby answered, standing up when she felt the gears shift into park. “We’ve got satellite everything here: TV, internet, it’s not the fastest, but it’s tucked back. We’re decently remote and inconspicuous, but we still hide in plain sight—so you get what you can get with a ‘basic package.’”

“All right,” Gabriel watched them pile out of the back, wondering about this mysterious safe house because he couldn’t see much from inside the ambulance; “What can I help with?”

“Nothing,” it was Jo who stopped him, now that she understood the big picture. “Everyone’s right, you and Cas, you two fought for us. Now, we’ve already got a system in place. We get our shit together, and then we can finally unload inside. Re-rig the security system again.”

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“Nothing,” it was Jo who stopped him, now that she understood the big picture. “Everyone’s right, you and Cas, you two fought for us. Now, we’ve already got a system in place. It shouldn’t take very long. You can hang out with Garth until he disables the security, then head in and check out the digs. Maybe even take a hot shower, get out of those bloody clothes.”

Ruby hummed and agreed with her girlfriend, “We’ve always got extra sets of clothes stored when we pick out our location, Castiel—you could fit into Dean’s but Gabriel…you may be SOL. We’ll have to dig to find you something that isn’t something stowed for the girls.”

“I ain’t worried,” he shrugged with a chuckle at the thought and dug his hands into his pockets, following where Garth had wandered off to, feeling eyes on him. Eyes he knew were Anna’s.

Castiel was a step behind when he whispered, “What should we do about her?”

“I was thinking bullet to the head. She didn’t betray only us, she’s fucked over these guys. Multiple times. I don’t know what’s going to happen, but you talk to Dean about it, I’ll talk to Sam.” With a sigh, he pressed, “If they’re trigger shy? Remind them that we aren’t. It’s dangerous now that she knows we’re here and we’re involved. In the same lockdown-mode as her, bitch could get desperate.”

“She’s a ticking time bomb,” Castiel confirmed, a hint of a snarl in his voice. “We need to protect them. All of them.”

Before they got to Garth, Gabriel cut off his path and grinned at Castiel eerily, now that they were finally face-to-face. “You’re treading into some deep water here, kiddo.”

Cas looked surprised, but wasn’t given a chance to question it because Gabriel continued.

“A different listening ear may think you’re switching teams. Something punishable. If you give our secrets away, that’s a death sentence—”

“You know I would never—” Castiel defended with pleading eyes, because if anyone could grasp it, it’d be this brother of his. “It was never, has never been my intention to leave the family. I was merely saying that the group, this group, they’re not our rivals. Perhaps, in the future, we could work together. Maybe it would be for the best if we had a connection in the arena of grand theft and larceny. You cannot dispute that having them on our side would be an advantage. Plus…”

Castiel looked around, seeing that the others had brush to cover the vehicle. They were all grabbing their bags, finding other things amidst the shrubs and everyone had more clips, since they’d unloaded the majority of their artillery at the prison.

He didn’t have much time to tell Gabriel, “Plus, these are good, smart people. They wouldn’t weigh us down. And I’m going to be with Dean regardless. I don’t know your relations with Sam, but they took us right in when we were injured. They risked caring for two dangerous, heartless killers, going on the word of two of their men. They’re not ignorant, they have a bond
That resonated with Gabriel, because it was true. If a Winchester said it—it was the golden truth. He pursed his lips together and nodded, noticing Garth was now inside the safe house (which was nothing to laugh at, it was a gorgeous condo-looking getaway on a lake that was by no means roughing it) and headed that way.

Gabriel dropped his volume and agreed, “We do owe them. We need to take care of Anna. No one gets hurt because she’s desperate to find a way out. We talk to the boys tonight. No exceptions.”

Castiel’s eyes twinkled with this happiness that still spooked Gabriel. Not in a bad way, it was just so…surreal. That his formerly heartless, sees-the-world-in-black-and-white slayer of a brother found something fucking soul-changing. It shone brightly whenever he even thought about the damn omega? Well, all right—maybe Gabriel was downright jealous.

When Garth ushered them in, he pointed both Krushnics to the showers (of which they had two) and offered to bring them a change of clothes as long as they left the doors unlocked.

Even though it was against Gabriel’s instincts, he was trying to remember all the things that Castiel had said. That Sam had said. He…was safe here. They were making sure of it. They were in his debt, or...something. He needed to relax, and he knew that damn well.

So leaving that door unlocked was a huge fucking step that no one could have possibly understood. It left him on edge. But he did it anyway, and hopped in the shower, watching all the blood (some from others but mostly his own) swirl down the drain. He must have lost more than he realized because halfway through the shower, he began to feel light-headed.

Fuck…he reached out to balance himself against the wall, his vision blurred and cursing because he’d been here before.

He knew it, right then and there. It was the damn adrenaline that had kept him going before.

Gabriel slammed the water off and barely made it out of the shower before he reached the towel. He collapsed down to the unforgiving tile floor, fading in and out, trying to hold on to consciousness.

“…This…is not what I was expecting for a safe house,” Castiel’s eyes were inspecting every inch, every exit (out of habit) and every amenity (of which, there were many) of the lovely condo while Dean gave him the tour as they explored, holding hands. “I would have imagined something more…”

“Rustic? Shitting in the woods? Nah. That’s old-school. We’re also a big group, don’t wanna live on top of each other. We need some kinda space, ya know? We’ve got the money, why live in some rundown dump when we’re flying under the radar. ‘In hiding’ is all relative, when you think about it. Plus, this place looks exactly like all the others in the area. This is our usual pick. A gated community, at the end of the row where it turns into forest. The condo or townhouse wherever they stopped expansion. We use that out to our advantage if we need to ditch.”

“As you also utilized it to hide the vehicle and bring out some supplies,” Cas recalled as Dean led him up the stairs, still leaning heavily on the alpha because of his leg wound. “This place is lovely. Now that I think about it, I highly doubt anyone would come here for questioning on a routine investigation.”

“I know, right?” he winked boldly and pulled open a door at the end of the hallway. “This is where I call home when we’re waiting for a storm to blow over!”

Castiel did a double-take and asked, “You get your own bed?”

“Yes! That’s always in the manual for when our mini-team sets up shop. Suburbia, condos, four bedrooms—nice places they scout are required to have four. Ruby and Jo share, Sam’s too big to stretch out and he has his own, should be one more at the end of the hall which we let Anna and Charlie have, ladies first—even though Anna’s a fuckin’ snake in the grass. And we’ve usually got a pull out couch. Benny and Garth flip a coin as to who gets it, the other gets first watch, then they alternate.” Dean pulled Cas into the room with a come-hither grin.

“You and Sam are royalty,” the alpha said with a teasing grin—because he’d finally figured it out, “You two are the heads of your organization, aren’t you?”

Dean blinked in surprise and worried his bottom lip before he nodded. “Yeah. We are. Which is why it fucking sucks that Jo got caught up in the middle of it. If Anna wanted to fuck me over, great! Have at it! But Jo?” He shook his head, “Yeah. This is Sam and my pig. Which was why it was high-priority to get me out. We couldn’t move forward, couldn’t take on anymore jobs, couldn’t run the family business without me. Now, things can go back to some kind of normalcy…almost.”

“Almost?” Cas echoed as Dean pulled him close and closer to the bed. Funny thing was, he felt like he was pushing as much as Dean was pulling—like gravity, or magnets.

“Yeah.” Dean paused and cupped the side of Castiel’s face with a smile, “Only difference is, I’m gonna have a gorgeous, sexy, dangerous mate. Hope you didn’t forget about that,” he playfully
reminded and went directly in for a hot, passionate kiss.

Castiel’s arms instantly wrapped around him and pulled him closer. Ever since he’d finally, fucking finally, been able to experience Dean’s true scent? After all, they didn’t bother giving the inmates blockers and suppressants in the omega ward. He didn’t think he could fall deeper in love, but he did. Dean’s scent was nothing short of intoxicating and the moment it became rich with arousal, Castiel growled in response.

He wanted his omega. He wanted Dean with everything in him, and he wanted him now. Forever.

The words were monumental. It seemed overwhelming, but more than anything?

It was right. Nothing else made more sense than what he was feeling in his gut, in his heart, and the fact that he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were made for each other. It was indisputable, and with heavy breaths Castiel pulled away.

“Please tell me you’re experiencing what I am?”

Before he could say anything, Dean’s inner animal rose from right under the surface and began ripping and tearing clothes from their bodies. He had a mission all right, and Castiel had never witnessed Dean move so damn fast. Still…he didn’t have an answer.

Castiel grabbed a fistful of Dean’s hair, demanding his attention and repeated the yearning, “Please tell—”

“You have no fucking idea,” Dean’s whimper cut him off. “I—I think…I feel…it just—it’s just so intense. I need you, Cas. Please, don’t tell me to wait. Don’t give me this bullshit about ‘not loving you in the real world.’ It doesn’t matter where we are! I love you, the person you are, the alpha you are, and if you try and argue and say we’re not meant to be?” He scoffed and rolled his eyes, “Something’s fucked up.”

A smile cracked on Cas’ face and he hauled his omega upward and carried him the rest of the distance before they both crashed down to the bed, injuries all but forgotten in response to the surging lust. “We are meant to be, Dean. I know it, I know it with every goddamn fiber of my being and I just need to know—”

“‘If I want it? God, I do. If you mated me,” there was nothing but thrill and excitement in his words, not even apprehension about Castiel potentially bucking down, “it would make sense. Everything would make sense and I need my alpha.” He grabbed Castiel’s chin playfully, “That’s you, babe.”

Castiel snatched Dean’s hand away, drew it to his lips and placed a kiss in the palm as he breathed, “Forever?”

Castiel’s scent was laced with energy burning so hot under his skin, he was barely in control anymore. His body needed Dean, but something inside him needed Dean on an even deeper level now that their scents were intertwined as they never had before; blockers gone and the pair laid bare. He had to voice it, he had to tell the omega—

“Dean, I know that this need. It can’t be stopped. Now that I can scent you, scent us, now that we’re alone and it’s possible? I won’t have the power to hold myself back. You need to understand this a—and—”

“Be ready?” Dean wore that devil-may-care grin. His scent was alight with fire and joy at the reminder, “I told you, I want this. Hell, it’s all I want, to spend my life with you. How about we get this party started?”

With an abrupt bark of laughter, Castiel readily agreed, “That sounds like a life I yearn for,” and met Dean halfway as he pushed up from the bed, Cas ducking down and their lips collided.

There was no use in holding back any longer, there was no need and it was so damn liberating.

Castiel had planned on taking advantage of every little amenity they had in the room because it was truly perfect. With his mouth glued to Deans and their hips rocking, he shoved them both onto the bed. It was large enough that they could fight for dominance, rolling around playfully, and tease the other with wandering hands.

Dean’s gasp was muffled into Cas’ shoulder, and the alpha cupped his face with his palms and joyfully reminded, “Dean. We’re not in hiding. You don’t have to stay quiet. I’m sure your friends will forgive you if you make a little noise.”

“Oh,” he said slowly as he processed what their change in circumstance meant. “Holy shit. You’re right.” Dean rolled and shoved Cas down and held him there, kissing and nipping down his body, tracing his tongue along the scars and tattoos. “We don’t have to worry about loose-lipped prisoners. No guards that could pull us apart. Not being distant in the yard. I can be with you however I want.”

“Yes,” Cas groaned as Dean mouthed along his still-clothed erection. “We’re free. To be together a-as we please. Plus, we’ve got a much nicer bed.”

With a chuckle, Dean ripped Cas’ boxers off and whimpered at the sight. “It’s crazy, isn’t it?” The omega pulled off his own boxers and watched Cas unabashedly sniff the air. His nostrils
flared and it was a good thing Dean’s hands were on his shoulders pinning him because the scent of Dean’s slick (fuck, he could feel it dripping down his legs!) had the alpha turning feral.

“W-what’s crazy?” Cas tried, he really tried not to be overwrought by the animal, but he was salivating and just waiting to strike—

He wanted his omega so badly. Hell, it felt like a surprise rut had snuck up on him and taken over his senses, his logic! Even though Castiel rationally knew it was impossible, this was the pull of true mates when they experienced each other in their full glory no longer hidden under blockers or suppressants. The pair had been damn lucky that the first chance they got was right here. That it was right now. Some place with a bed, because Cas was hyper-focused on Dean’s neck.

“Heh,” Dean saw that, and shook his head, “How careful we had to be. How we only really got to be together, shit…hardly at all.

“We were always together.” Castiel was firm with his words and bucked Dean over. He couldn’t stand it anymore, he descended upon Dean’s neck as he teased his cockhead around his future-mate’s hole.

It was gushing and the slip and slide, the barest push against the omega’s rim left Dean bucking off the bed. “Jesus, Cas! Just do it!” Dean demanded, but it looked like his alpha wanted to tease him. So he went back to his question, “And I meant together-together. Like, knotted together. As soon as I got that birth control, it was like the next thing we know, they were pulling us apart. God, I want you,” there was awe in his voice. “I want your cock, your knot, and your mark. I wanna be yours for the rest of our lives, so please—”

Castiel couldn’t say no to Dean, he never could, but he could still catch him off guard and slam into him—needing to hear the noises Dean could make freely now that they weren’t in prison. A strangled cry turned into a whine, the omega grasping his alpha’s back, digging his nails in fiercely. Cas moaned as he ground his hips, forgetting how amazingly tight Dean was, how—just maybe—he should have prepared him a little…

Then again, Dean’s body was begging for it. Slick was pulsing out of Dean’s needy hole in waves, there was no way he wasn’t hungry for Cas’ cock. And Dean’s moans, his pleases were music. They were the sweetest things Castiel had ever had the pleasure of hearing, and it didn’t matter whether it was a simple “more” or “faster,” it was all in the way Dean said it.

“God, you’re beautiful,” Cas praised, now slamming in and out of his omega, “You keep captivating me more, day after day.”

Dean was thrusting upward and meeting the rocking of Cas’ hips halfway. Their bodies, the grappling, the moaning, the fucking, it was an orchestra in Castiel’s mind—one he’d never forget. Because now, it was time.

“Hush,” Dean snorted, never one to take a compliment. “Need you, Cas. I’m really close.”

“Me too,” he agreed, feeling sweat dripping down his back.

The mating pheromones were heavy in the air. It caused a heady, yearning kind of drunken-on-each-other experience like nothing before. Dean was trapped, caught in Cas’ eyes, but he knew that he could feel the alpha’s knot tugging; just thickened up enough to catch on his rim, now trapped inside his body.

That extra stimulation, shit, that was all it took. So Dean seized the moment.

The omega surged upward in a moment of sheer confidence, surprising the hell out of Cas and sunk his teeth in. The dripping of Cas’ blood was in tandem with the dripping of Dean’s cum, all over them—the omega staking his claim. Dean gasped and arched back, sensory overload kicking into high gear. Cas was riled up from the rush of pain and pleasure, equally fucking perfect.

The wound wasn’t just a wound, it was in a hot spot that sent out pulses of endorphins and he had to return the favor before it was too late. He needed Dean to experience this, and he needed to claim his mate.

His knot was swelling as Cas head-butted Dean’s jaw to the side, and the omega proudly stretched his unblemished neck, begging, “Do it, Cas, please—”

He didn’t have to beg. Cas had just found the perfect location to wrap his mouth around and claim him. Again, Dean tried to muffle his shout, but he didn’t stop rolling his pelvis while Cas rode out the most intense orgasm of his life. Mating pheromones like that would never rush through them again. That was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and it ripped the rug out from underneath them, taking their breath away.

Being tied together, it felt right and they’d never had enough chances to do it. The only thing that sucked, Dean admitted, was that he wished to taste Cas’ lips. Although the tenderness and intimacy afterwards, the overwhelming need that came at the end of claiming took precedence. Ingrained into both of their biology, was the need to tend to the marks and take care of them right away.

Which was why Cas was lapping up Dean’s blood as it beaded at the surface, trying to use his tongue as pressure to staunch the bleeding. It didn’t really hurt, but it did make Dean shiver like hell. Plus, Dean wanted to help Cas, damnit! He knew damn well that Cas wouldn’t let him until Dean was taken care of, so hopefully that would be soon.
After all, Dean hadn’t been fucking around. Cas’s mark had a line of blood trailing from the teeth marks, down the length of his neck, over the bump that was his clavicle and stopped right around his chest. What kind of mate was Dean to let that happen?! It had gotten so far along, he couldn’t even reach it with his mouth now! Oh yeah…they did have wet wipes here…

“How’s it looking, mate?” Dean asked with a smile.

Castiel’s voice was pure reverie when he replied, “As it should. Just as I’d hoped. You look complete now. —” he shook his head, searching for the correct word. “I look forward to the future with you by my side. I haven’t always done that.”

Dean’s heart did that fucking skipping a beat shit in the come down and he made sure their hips were stable before he rolled them, so he was finally on top. Now, he could attend to Cas’s wound. Luckily, there was hardly any fresh blood and after he reached into the drawer for a baby wipe, he could clean up the trail. Yet, when he tried to smooth it around the actual claim itself, yeah—these things needed a mouth.

Maybe it was part of the instinctual pull, and that’s what they responded to? Maybe it was all about the ‘afterwards’ and finding that closeness, keeping that closeness. Well, Dean was sold.

It didn’t bother Dean because this was the greatest accomplishment of his entire life and he had no idea why he was worthy, but he was thrilled. The mark would scare off anyone who even looked at Castiel because he was taken, thank you. Although…Cas could probably scare people off by being Cas, but that was beside the point!

“You looking forward to the future is great and all. But I’m savoring every second of right now,” Dean teased, and tugged on Cas’s earlobe with his teeth. “Don’t forget about that part, my alpha.”

“Oh, don’t worry. I’m doing precisely that, too.” He wrapped his arms around Dean’s waist and said, “Thank you.”

Even though it was odd, Dean just went with it, finally getting the bleeding to stop and said, “You’re welcome.”

Dean scooted as far as the knot would let him, so his head was in the crook of Castiel’s neck. Yes, it was the side without the claim because he didn’t want to irritate it. He could feel the sensitivity of his own, knowing they were both tender. Still, nothing could keep the smile from his face.

Inside the haze of his giddiness, he trailed his fingers along the tattoo above Cas’ heart, or the one portraying a lack therefore of, and snickered, “You gotta get that one fixed. Maybe put my name there.”

“Mm, ‘Property of Dean Winchester,’ perhaps?” he countered, actually laughing himself.

“Exactly. It’d look real pretty.” He sighed out in contentment, “I love you, Cas. Goddammit, I am so happy right now.”

“Words don’t exist to describe how I feel,” Castiel was confident in his statement. “But I think loving you with every part of me, with everything in me, is a good start.”

With a stupendously happy, blissed-out smile, Dean eagerly agreed, “I think that’s a good one, Cas. A real good one.”

Sam didn’t care how suspicious it looked.

After all, he was the one who demanded Gabriel get into their escape vehicle. He ordered Ruby to remove the bullet and dress his wounds. He allowed the alpha into their safe house. Even though no one blinked as a limping Dean dragged Castiel into his room, there was a round of murmurs that made it sound like a goddamn scandal when Sam did the same with Gabriel.

Once more, he didn’t care. Gabriel was the reason they’d all made it out. If they’d lost either of the Krushnics, Sam and Dean’s asses would have been grass. But Castiel and Gabriel were invaluable, and Sam had things he needed to discuss with the other alpha. It wasn’t as though he was inviting him into his bed, just his room. At least, not in the biblical sense yet.

Of course, Gabriel deserved a warm bed, and they’d shared enough to know how to ‘get along.’ It wouldn’t be a problem.

Not to mention, there was another friggin factor. It scared the shit out of Sam when he found Gabriel basically passed out on the floor of the bathroom! He hadn’t seen the other alpha in a while and for a moment he was worried he’d high-tailed it out of there, but that wasn’t the case.

No, Gabriel was finally feeling that bullet wound—whether it was because the hot water got to him, or the blood he’d lost, or something else entirely. But he physically had to haul Gabriel to his feet and slap him on the cheek to get him to focus. That’s what made Sam realize that he needed Gabriel with him, if only to watch over him.

Still, when Gabriel followed behind Sam, he appeared wary.
“What’s up, kiddo?” he asked hesitantly, hovering just out of range as Sam pulled open a drawer from the dresser to change into something clean.

As he pulled off his shirt and turned back, grabbing the fresh one, Sam asked in confusion, “Why are you being so shifty? I thought you’d want to sleep somewhere you wouldn’t have to look over your shoulder constantly. Unless I did something to—”

Gabriel’s expression changed on a dime and he exhaled, “Oh. That’s what this was about.”

“What else would it be about?” Sam noticed the way the other alpha’s eyes raked over every inch of his skin until he had changed into his pajamas. He looked into another drawer to find something for Gabriel. Usually there were odds and ends everywhere. It was a safe house they’d actually used a couple years ago and things tended to linger. “And I wanted to talk, I guess.”

“What kinda talking are you thinking?” Gabriel asked suggestively, inching closer to Sam now that he had his swagger back.

Finding a pair of pajama pants that looked to be his size, yet no shirt, Sam went back into his own drawer and opted to grab one of his own. He held out the clothing and his scent read pure curiosity as he asked, “What did you think you were here for, Gabriel?”

He stared at the offering in Sam’s hand before admitting, “I know what we’d do at this point in the game. Take care of those who knew too much. They’d—”

“You think I’d bring you into my bedroom to kill you?!” Sam was shocked but more than that—he was insulted. “That’s all the faith you have in me? After what we’ve been through?” He hissed, “I wanted to talk about handling Anna. But screw it! Let’s just go to fuckin’ bed,” as he shoved the clothes at Gabriel, who instinctively caught them.

Gabriel knew in the blink of an eye that he’d fucked up, but the way the Winchester operation handled things was just so…foreign to him.

They were like a family should be. Which was ironic. Because even though the Krushnics were linked by blood, they’d never be as close as this random group brought together by camaraderie was.

“Please. Sam, you gotta understand, we’re from different worlds. You just,” he looked for the right word, “exceeded my expectations.” With a huff, he admitted, “To be honest, you exceed my expectations every damn day. You’re always surprising me.”

Although he hadn’t meant that as a confession, after the words left his mouth Gabriel realized they sure sounded like one. As the large ball under the covers began to move to sit up, Gabriel abruptly turned his back, cursing to himself, and began changing into the new clothes. Anything was better than the blood-soaked ones he was currently wearing after the shower, since he couldn’t exactly flounce around in a towel. Even the fucking dress of a shirt that made him feel like a little kid playing in his father’s closet was better.

“Gabriel,” Sam’s voice was soft, even though the alpha wasn’t turning around yet. He was fiddling with the drawstring of his pants. “I…I’m still coming down from the escape. I shouldn’t have snapped at you, I—”

“Eh, shut up. I’m a big boy, I can handle it.” Gabriel turned around if only to roll his eyes and get on with it. He crawled into the bed next to Sam, who was sitting up, and mirrored his posture, “So are we getting sleep, or what?” He tried so hard to ignore all the friggin affection in Sam’s scent. He hated it because of this stupid unaddressed thing between them and he was terrified his body would turn against him.

Sam pursed his lips before he stared out into the room, clunking his head against the headboard and sighing heavily. “What should I do? About Anna?”

“Ignoring what she did to us,” Gabriel prefaced, “She, a woman scorned, landed two of your team in prison because she couldn’t handle rejection. Lucky for you guys, you’ve got brains and brawn. However, she also sabotaged the escape plan because she was a jealous bitch, unable to handle the thought of my brother getting out to be with your brother. She risked everyone in that scenario.”

Without conscious thought, Sam took a deep breath, reached out and grabbed Gabriel’s hand. Gabriel, who didn’t think twice about supporting him in his anxious tension, laced their fingers together.

Clearing his throat, he laid it out: “She doesn’t have a place with you. Anywhere she goes, she wreaks havoc. She destroys everything she touches. She doesn’t have place anywhere. And…if you need me—”

“I’ll do it,” Sam swiftly interrupted. “You’re right. All of it, you’re right. She’s a manipulative bitch.”

Gabriel nodded his agreement, but he had to ask, “What’s keeping her from hightailing out of here, Sammy? She knows that since Cas and I have seen her, we’ve told you about the connection and—”

“I’ve got Benny on her,” he said easily. “He’s…well, he’s furious. There’s no way that he’s
gonna let her ditch out. Tomorrow, she’ll have her reckoning.”

“Mm, good choice.” Then Gabriel asked, squeezing Sam’s hand, “And tonight?”

Sam finally turned his head and took in all that was Gabriel. Not just his face, but his scent, his expression and the fact that he hadn’t let go of his hand. If anything, he was holding on even tighter…

“God, I wish you hadn’t gotten shot,” Sam chuckled with a half-quirked smile.

Gabriel snorted and rolled his eyes, “You and me both, kiddo.”

“Would it be weird…” he started, but found he couldn’t say exactly what he wanted to for fear of being mocked.

“Weird?” Gabriel encouraged, “C’mon, I’m not gonna kink-shame you. Just tell me.”

“Would it be weird if we just held each other tonight and went to sleep?” Sam finally blurted and felt himself blush. Which was absolutely ridiculous. Considering his profession, the fact he’d killed people tonight, he was planning murder tomorrow, and he’d already been fucked by Gabriel multiple times, but the idea of cuddling was what made him uncomfortable? What garbage was that?

There was a smirk growing on Gabriel’s face as he countered with, “Damn, I was expecting something much, much more hardcore. But I’m not disappointed. That’s some good thinking, considering the beating we took and what not.”

Sam was grateful that Gabriel remained nonchalant about it, because Gabriel was doing it for him— Gabriel was behaving and allowing Sam’s need to touch, the craving for closeness. On any other day, in any other situation, Sam knew damn well the alpha would tease and mock Sam until the cows came home, but something about tonight was different. And thank God it was.

Sam offered a genuine smile and said, “Thank you, I’ll even let you be big spoon because of your shoulder.”

Gabriel laughed aloud and playfully quipped, “Ah, how quickly you forget! I always get big spoon privileges!”

Sam didn’t care. This was good, this was what he needed. He’d give Gabriel whatever he wanted right now just because he wanted to be with him. As they settled in and the other alpha wrapped his arms around Sam, he reached out to flick the bedside lamp off and the room was shrouded in darkness. He was surrounded in a wonderful heat.

“Glad ya didn’t off me, Sammy,” Gabriel teased, and kissed his back, the tender and random affection making Sam’s heart swell.

With an ever larger, secret smile, Sam tried to keep his damn scent under control when he countered, “Yeah, me too. You’re too comfortable to kill off. G’night, Gabriel.”

“Night, kiddo. Get some real shut-eye, we had a hell of a day. Tomorrow will be just as big.” His voice was soothing, and something in his scent actually helped Sam do just that.

Because he knew he had Gabriel in his corner when it came to Anna. After everyone else knew, they would be too. But first and foremost, he had the confidence because he’d found his rock in the strangest of places. And because of that, he did sleep well that night, in the arms of a former enemy, as they did nothing but hold one another in the warmth of the darkness.
I Have Sinned By Betraying Innocent Blood

Chapter Summary

Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself.

—Matthew 27:3

When Dean awoke, he wondered if last night had been a dream…

Not the prison escape, that had been a friggin nightmare. The second he shifted his leg in just the wrong way—oh, yep—he could feel that. Motherfucker! He knew damn well the particular pain and field-dressing of a gunshot wound. But the promise that came after words, that also meant…

He glanced to his side and noticed that Cas was still sleeping and right there, right on his neck, he wore Dean’s claim. It made the omega’s heart skip a beat because, holy shit, they had made it! Their whole meeting from start to finish was all kinds of amazingly bizarre: posturing alpha-versus-fake-alpha cellmates, engaged in sexcapades only to become lovers. Then boldly making a sabotaged escape from a high-security prison together as Dean’s future-mate left a trail of bodies in his wake; and they still loved each other, maybe even more now—

The ultimate truth was they’d made a life-long commitment because they knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this was real. It was fact, was un-fucking-shakable and they mated—

It was insanity in the most beautiful way. They were perfect chaos spun together in an off-kilter romance novel.

God, just watching his alpha warmed Dean in a way he'd never came close to feeling. This was what love felt like. This was what poetry tried to explain, the thing that men went to battle for, what turned a person’s life upside down. Dean knew because that’s what had happened to him. He was a different person before he met Castiel, he was a new person with Castiel.

For better and for worse.

It didn’t bother him one bit.

“You’re still doing it,” Castiel mumbled and laughed under his breath. “Don’t think I didn’t notice in prison.”

“Huh.” Dean sounded thoughtful, nuzzling closer and saying, “Probably did it for longer than you thought, too. If you’re referring to my creeping.”

“Is that so?” the alpha opened his eyes. He blinked the sleep away in the morning sun that was casting warm beams of light into the room.

“Yep,” there was no shame in the admission. “Day one, when we were introduced: I thought ‘damn, he’s hot as fuck.’ But I needed to stay away, keep from making friends. Especially you.

With a wiggle of his eyebrows, Dean said, “Doesn’t mean I didn’t fantasize. Only time I could really get away with appreciating that sexiness was when you were asleep.”

With a snark, Cas shook his head and wondered aloud, “And why doesn’t this surprise me?”

“Cause you know when I want something, I’ll take it when I can get away with it. And I wanted you the second I saw you,” Dean purred, his hands roaming Castiel’s body under the sheets.

“Your devilishly handsome good looks. Your perfect body. Your scent, dear lord, your scent… and after I figured out who you were, maybe there was a little fun in the danger too.”

“Heh, if I had properly been able to scent you right away, there would have been no wait. I would’ve pinned you against a wall, and had my way with you before we even made
introductions.” Cas emphasized his words by dragging his nose along the column of Dean’s throat, earning him a whimper. He flicked his tongue over the raw, new mating bite, voice throaty when he said, “Everything’s as it should be.”

Dean was playful this morning, grabbing handfuls of his mate’s ass and inquiring, “What did you think when they shoved me into your cell?”

“I was annoyed, I had enjoyed my isolation,” Castiel admitted because it was true, and he enjoyed teasing his lover. “You were quite odd. Unique. I’d never met anyone like you. Your routine, your behavior in the yard, there were many things that were so…intriguing. Of course, I appreciated your physical beauty, but the way you went about things was fascinating. And when I discovered your secret, I was taken aback by your strength. Both physical and force of will.”

“I believe that’s when I fell in love with you,” the alpha smiled, cupping Dean’s cheek and kissing his forehead. “You left me speechless. On many occasions. I doubt I could manage half the things you do, if I were in any given situation. You’re truly a fighter. One with a tender heart. So rare, and so perfect.”

Dean’s eyes were flickering all over, because it looked like he’d unleashed the damn floodgates when all he wanted was a sentence or two. Not…all that. He had always been shy around compliments, no matter how matter-of-fact Cas meant them, he just…froze up.

“Nah, I just—” his words turned into a yelp as Cas sealed his mouth over the claim and Dean writhed at the overwhelming sensation.

It was so tender, so careful, but the touch still sizzled down his spine and pressed all his goddamn buttons at once. He was reaching out blindly for Cas, and once he’d grabbed him he didn’t know weather to push him away or pull him closer. The omega was conflicted; his body acting on its own accord, clearly responding and appealing to his alpha. For some reason—that didn’t bother him.

This natural biology didn’t scare him as it once had, the way mating shifted the dynamics. The way an omega’s body would naturally submit, entice and please a mate of a higher designation upon mating.

Hell, Dean would willingly be Cas’ omega for the rest of their live. Because he trusted Cas, loved Cas, and he knew Cas would never do anything to hurt him or use him. Maybe tease the fuck out of him, like right now, because he was nibbling down Dean’s neck and hauling their bodies together, slowly grinding against him, but—

There was an abrupt knock on the door.

While Cas glared and appeared annoyed, Dean was confused because it was—what time? He glanced over at the clock to see the numbers read as seven in the morning. What the hell did that mean?

“Uh, come in!” Dean called out, and out from behind the door popped Gabriel’s head.

“Yo. Family meeting, or whatever. Think you boys know what it’s about.” With no tact whatsoever, Gabriel sniffed the air, narrowed his eyes, and marched on over. “Well, fuck me! You actually did it, you love-sick muttonheads! I suppose a congrats is in order? Phew! Didn’t waste any time on that one, did ya?”

Castiel raised an unimpressed eyebrow and deadpanned, “Is that why you smell like Sam and you’re wearing his shirt?”

Gabriel cackled and patted his brother on the back, lamenting, “Unfortunately, Sammy and I only talked shop. Nothing down and dirty. But we’ve got a trial to handle, one that affects both families and you two more than anyone.”

Dean nodded, knowing it was about Anna and all the good vibes just flew right out the fucking window. “Thank you, Gabriel. We’ll be right down.”

With a tight smile, he flashed a thumbs up and disappeared.

Both shifted to sit, trying their best to hide their own aches and pains until Dean commented, “Wow, we really went hard last night, didn’t we? When our asses were already kicked in the first place?”

Castiel actually winced as he stood up out of bed (completely naked—Dean shamelessly enjoyed the view) agreeing. “You’re correct, we didn’t begin in the best of shape. But last night?” He stared at Dean as though he were his prey as he pulled the jeans on Ruby had thrown at him the previous night, “Every second. Oh, was it worth it.”

“God, I love you,” Dean blurted, but when he tried to get out of bed, his leg protested. Angrily. “Fuck! Can you, uh, help me with something?”

Cas crossed to his side of the bed and asked, “What is it?”

“Second drawer on the left. Just grab me a pair of gym shorts and a t-shirt. You’re welcome to anything in there too, dear mate.” He threw in the last part because he could. Because it was exciting and…maybe it was to remind himself he wasn’t still dreaming? Who knew?
But Castiel made good with his assistance and brought him the most comfortable, loose gym shorts he could. Dean didn’t even bother with boxers. He pulled them on and, like he’d planned on account of their looseness, they didn’t bother his injury. His upper body was more or less just sore from the escape and the awesome sex; so pulling on the shirt awakened the sweet soreness of over-worked muscles, not the pain from a bullet wound. The sensations were night and day from each other.

He glanced over and found Cas taking him up on his offer and grabbing a fresh t-shirt to wear. A little part of him, the possessive part, glowed as bright as the dawning sun to see his alpha walking around in his clothes.

“That’s hot,” Dean couldn’t help but announce, clinging to his mate’s muscled chest and tugging the band tee. “Shit, you’d think I really was an alpha with how much I’m getting off on this.”

“It’s not your fault—you told me when I discovered your secret that you were raised alpha. It was why being in the alpha ward came so naturally for you. It’s a difficult habit to break.” Cas leaned forward and stole a heated kiss. When they came up for air, he said, “I think it’s attractive you’re feeling possessive. Perhaps I’ll get ‘your alpha’ riled up more and continue, hm?”

“Oh, you’re playing with fire,” he quipped back, already tempted and aroused from a few kisses and the sight before him.

But he knew what they had to do.

Slowly and steadily, he stood up and this time the pain didn’t scream bloody murder, it grumbled and complained. Which meant Dean could do this. Cas was watching him worriedly, but Dean brushed him off. After all, Gabriel made it sound like they were all headed to the meeting room, so he only had to make it that far, right?

Even so, Dean instructed his alpha, “Just…spot me. Make sure I don’t fall.”

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Their meeting space was a glorified living room, but instead of the couches and chairs all facing a television set, there were more of them and they were set up in a complete circle. It was like a conference hall, where everyone was an equal, everyone could see each other, but they had the luxury of relaxing on Lay-Z Boys and plush couches.

Once Dean hobbled downstairs, it appeared that everyone was accounted for.

And everyone had the same reaction as Gabriel.

Jo was the first one to cheer and say, “Oh my God! Congrats, you two! That’s awesome!”

“Seriously, though, you need to write a book,” Ruby sneered from the loveseat, her arm around Jo, “Love Behind Bars, total harlequin novel. Make some extra cash!”

“Like we need extra cash,” Garth chuckled, but agreed, “Good on you two!”

“Thanks, dudes!” Dean flashed a winning smile and saw there was an open space on the large couch that was also occupied by Sam and Gabriel.

Which was absolutely perfect. They’d all need every bit of backup they could get. When they plopped down, Castiel wordlessly took Dean’s leg and propped it up on his lap. Dean just hoped that the shorts were long enough that no one could see his balls from this angle...although, he supposed, there were much more important things to worry about than his junk.

“All right.” Sam began the meeting. It looked as though he was prepared, and he glanced around the circle with a smile, the one that always seemed genuine because he was just that good. “So we kicked ass last night. We recovered our teammates, Ruby hustled to take care of injuries before we even got to the safe house. And now we’ve gotta lay low.”

Sam’s face shifted slightly and his smile took on an eerie, menacing quality as he looked around and asked, “Questions? Concerns? Information? I wanted to make sure everyone slept well, because it was a helluva circus. But now’s the time to debrief.”

Dean was curious as to where Sam was going with this, but he knew his brother was smart. Too smart. And if he’d been plotting and planning with Gabriel—the two working together? Jesus. Dean didn’t even want to imagine the conniving ideas they’d come up with. It was like a pair of evil masterminds plotting the destruction of anything and everything with style.

Benny’s hand shot up and Sam gestured for him to continue. “Alpha ward, the rescue of Castiel. Now, I personally made both the bombs that were used in the omega ward and the alpha ward—side by side. They were identical. Omega ward: it went off without a hitch, ladies were out incognito and in the van before you could blink, but the other bomb? It was tampered with. Did the exact math last night on guard duty, because it was driving me crazy. Blast radius ended up at forty-three percent of projected coverage.”

“That’s why it took you guys so long,” Jo appeared confused, “it was the bomb being…defective?”

“No, not defective. Benny’s right and it was tampered with. Because if someone found it before our plan was set into action, they would’ve just dismantled it. Called in a bomb squad.” Garth
realized suddenly, “That means that we were sabotaged. Again!”

Ruby stood up with vehement passion, “We’re not leaving this room until we find the traitor! Sam and Dean could have been killed! Not only that, but Castiel and Gabriel? They put their lives on the line to save our guys! If these two alphas didn’t switch teams for the day, we’d be done! Our entire fuckin’ operation would be done! This is the end of the road for the rat!”

“That’s exactly where I was hoping this would go,” Sam shot Ruby a grateful expression and she responded in turn, being pulled down by her girlfriend who appeared thoroughly shaken. “Can’t be Jo, she didn’t have access to the outside, obviously it’s not Dean nor I.”

“Charlie had been undercover for twelve hours prior.” Ruby was determined to get to the bottom of this. “She drew the short end of the straw with janitorial work, and we put her in early so she’d be a common face around the prison, moving ward to ward on her ‘shifts.’ Planted her so no one would suspect when she was in the omega ward, getting Dean out with Garth.”

“And Garth was with Benny all day, looking for a guard to pick off to steal their uniform,” the alpha Winchester wasn’t running out of steam yet, so close to the prize since Ruby was just as intent on finding out as he was. “They were hiding damn near the explosion site, too. They are each other’s alibis.”

Ruby dramatically turned and narrowed her eyes. “Before we all went in as lawyers to get Jo out…where were you, Anna?”

She recoiled, almost offended that Ruby would even suggest that. “I was getting ready! I double-checked the omega-ward bomb, maybe Benny should have done the same! Then it was crunch time. I did my hair, make-up, put on my goddamn pant suit, disguised the detonator as a freakin’ tampon and met up with you!”

Sam’s voice was icy when he asked, “If you had enough time to check the omega-ward bomb, wouldn’t that give you enough time to check the alpha one, too?”

“No! On the other side of the damn prison?” she scoffed, “Sure! Another wanted fugitive, skirting around the perimeter of a high-security institution, risking my own ass to fuck with something that doesn’t even involve me! I was assigned to Jo, and only Jo! I did my job, I—”

“I did it.”

It came out as a blurted confession, through shaking hands covering her face where she was doubled over.

After a quivering breath and a wet sniff, Charlie looked up through watery eyes and blurted out, “I messed up the alpha bomb, don’t blame Anna!” leaving the room silent and in complete shock.

No one had seen that coming. And no one knew what the hell to do…because this was Charlie—

“Char…” Dean’s voice was soothing as he leaned forward and asked with concern, “What happened? What made you do it?”

Even though everyone should have been livid about the betrayal, when more tears started cascading down her face…they couldn’t. Hell, Jo even ran to get her a box of tissues, which she blubbered out a thank you for, while trying so hard to control the tremors of her body.

Dean tried once more, “Hey, we made it out. But please. Tell me what was going on in your head. Why, girl? Help me understand?”

“I-I wanted all of us to escape, I wanted every one of us to make it out safely and easily, b-but there was no reason to go back to the alpha ward when Garth and I could get you out of the male omega ward ourselves, Dean!” Charlie’s voice was impassioned. “This is our team! That’s what it was supposed to be about! A prison break to get you and Jo free! And that’s it!”

The realization dawned on Dean and he blinked widely, his stomach churning, rolling into knots as he voiced, “You...didn’t want Cas to make it out. That’s why you reconfigured the bomb.”

She nodded, wiping her eyes. “During a shift, I took a ‘smoke break’ and took off into the woods. I wanted it to detonate, but I didn’t want the blast to do…much of anything. Just go off, and we’d call it a fluke. I didn’t think you’d still go back for him! I never thought that I—I’d actually put your lives in more danger and I’m sorry. I’m so, so, so sorry that you got hurt, Dean. And you too, Sam.”

Ruby’s fire had dimmed, but she was still in the game. “We all knew about Dean and Castiel. We knew they came as a pair. Even though they were separated, it was a given they’d come out on the other side. Together, Char. He’d get out, eventually. Why would you risk anyone? Hell, even yourself, right now?”

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Charlie’s expression…fell. It was like she’d gone numb. Yet all her focus was on Ruby, as if she’d much rather speak to her than Dean.

“R-remember my mom?” She was staring at Ruby with deadened eyes that were truly freaking out the other woman.

“Of course, I do. The accident and—”

“It wasn’t an accident.” Now, Charlie was a fierce force as a wild, nearly-feral hatred
overwhelmed her. “I told everyone it was a car accident. Drunk driver. It wasn’t. She was at the wrong place at the wrong time. She was an unintentional witness to a Krushnic murder. Do you know how they take care of these witnesses? Well, with my mama, a flying bullet has left her in a coma I know she’ll never wake up from. But I can’t let her go! I can’t pull the plug, I… I can’t, I refuse! We don’t even have insurance, that’s the reason why I took this job! All my friggin’ money goes to hospital bills to keep her breathing, even though I know I’ll never hear her voice again!”

Charlie turned on Castiel and Gabriel, angry tears running freely and gesturing wildly, “And it’s because that’s how they do business! Of course, I don’t want my Dean with him. I didn’t want Dean or anyone to risk their life for him! I don’t want us to have anything to do with their psychotic family! I thought that if I could just get us out, it would be okay but…I caused even more of a mess—”

When she began sobbing openly, no one knew what to do.

This wasn’t how this meeting was supposed to end up, this wasn’t the outcome they expected and they couldn’t name Anna their Judas now. Of course, they could for the initial crime, but was a single one really enough that called for death?

And now Charlie…

Where did the blame lie, she thought she was protecting them, she thought…

Sam turned to Gabriel whose face had become a mask and asked, “Do you know anything about this?”

“I’ve never killed a bystander. I swear on my life. Castiel hasn’t either. It’s…in the rule book. It’s part of not getting caught. We have some fuckers who toe the line. I can offer her retribution, if she has a description or a name,” he said coldly, like it was all-business, but Sam knew he wasn’t any less upset than the rest of them.

Dean turned to Gabriel, overhearing his words and dropped his voice to a whisper. “What do we do, man? I can’t…she’s like my little sister…and we all made it out.”

“It depends on your leadership. How you wish to present. If you punish Anna, which I highly suggest you do, you’ll need to do the same with Charlie. If you want respect, you must earn it, don’t cut corners, be absolute,” Gabriel looked into the omega’s eyes as though he was staring into his soul, those on the couch could barely hear him and had to lean in when he finished, “You and Sam have choices to make. Heavy ones. They will make or break you.”

When Dean’s breath turned into a shudder, he turned back to Cas and the alpha said, “Heed his words. Gabriel is an excellent leader. Strong. Held in high regard and never questioned. He’s the best we’ve ever had. Listen to his advice.”

Dean kissed Castiel’s cheek then stood up and crossed the room.

He crouched down in front of Charlie, whose face was red from sobbing. Once she saw him, her scent exploded with fear and she tried her hardest not to duck in submission or even run away.

But Dean’s words were soft as he instructed her, “It’s still early. I want you to go sleep more, all right? You’re wearing yourself too thin. Just please, take this time, not for a breakdown, but to sleep and…” he chuckled and emphasized, “I know I don’t gotta tell you twice, but don’t try to run away. Please? You owe us that much.”

She nodded, cradling her box of tissues as she stood up. Charlie glanced around to everyone except the Krushnics and said honestly, “I am so sorry you guys. If I could take it back, I would. I wasn’t thinking straight and all I could think about was Mama, I—” she stopped before she began crying again. “I’m sorry.”

They watched as she turned her back and headed to the bedroom she’d been sharing with Anna.

And if that didn’t just pull on Dean’s fuckin’ heartstrings…if there was a reason to sabotage? That kind of revenge? Of course, he would have been the most affected, he would have been the one fucked over in the end but Charlie wasn’t just a badass, she was a genius, she was loyal and this situation was like a cut-out moment in time. A one-off. And she had promised her allegiance to the team.

Not to Castiel or Gabriel.

It was so muddy, it was so many shades of grey.

When he turned back to the rest of the group, they kept their mouths shut. As he sat next to Castiel and the other alphas, they were still silent and wouldn’t meet his eyes.

Then he decided to let it all out, because why the fuck not?

“Anna. We know that you left me and Jo behind. We know that you sold us out. Charlie? That was a surprise. But the arrest, that was all you,” Dean said with confidence. “And if you hadn’t been petty, if Jo hadn’t gotten caught in the crossfire, Charlie never would have had to act out. How do you plead?”

Everyone’s head spun around towards the woman like whiplash.
She crossed both her legs and her arms and shrugged, “Guilty. But you’re forgetting, Dean. You’re about to lose half your team. Everyone’s turning against you. Looks to me like you’re a shitty leader.”

“Oh, hell no—” Dean growled, and was only held back by Cas and his brother. “You used to work for the Krushnics. You’re a fuck-up. You’re proud of it? Now, the question is what should your sentence be? Ruby? Any thoughts—she got your girlfriend locked up while she was deliberately betraying me.”

“Get rid of her,” Ruby’s voice was another low snarl. “Can’t be trusted. Going after members of the team? That’s totally different. You’re not protecting us from anything, you’re turning on us.”

“All right,” Anna stood up and brushed off her hands. “I’ll go pack my things.” It was so casual as she strutted up the stairs, a certain swagger in her exit.

“I—I can’t believe this,” Jo was flabbergasted, “We’re falling apart. How is this happening? Why is this happening? We used to be the dream-team. B-but—”

“Things are always in transition, sweetheart. Sometimes you need to tear it down to rebuild something better,” Gabriel offered her, because he liked this one. “Cutting off the dead weight is for the best.”

Vehemently, Jo protested, “Charlie is not dead weight! She did this because of your people!”

“Hey, hey,” Sam tried to use his puppy eyes, “It wasn’t Castiel or Gabriel, okay? Remember, they saved us from a botched attempt to keep us away from Dean’s mate.” He lowered his voice and challenged the entire room with, “Yes, mate. This wasn’t something casual. It wasn’t a prison fling, this is as serious as you can get, Jo. Tell me you can understand that?”

She sunk into the cushions and heaved a breath. “I don’t know what to believe.”

Everyone left the meeting on their own terms, but nothing had truly been settled. Dean, Castiel, Gabriel and Sam went outside to get some fresh air away from the ungodly negative fumes stirring around in the house—even opening the windows hadn’t done anything to clear the air.

Of course, they remained out of sight in the back but now there was something heavy on the Winchester’s minds and they’d do anything not to have to make the choice.

“Cas,” Dean was still holding his alpha’s hand as he asked seriously, “You would’ve been the victim here. What do you think about Charlie? Her plan, her reasoning?” He was hoping to get a direction.

Castiel thought about his words carefully, not wanting to upset Dean and trying to help with the muddled situation. “She’s very remorseful. It was never her intent to kill me, merely to keep me in prison. And away from you. My family… the name alone strikes fear into people’s hearts. And for Charlie? It hurts her, it reminds her of how she lost probably the most important person in her life.”

Cas glanced at his brother to see if they were on the same page, “She’s a good soul. Just seeing how she broke down about it. She never intended or expected how it would happen. How deep our love went. I’d put her on probation, I wouldn’t harm her. Anna, on the other hand.”

This time, Gabriel filled in the blanks, “Like we mentioned, she’s a friggin basket case. You saw what she did when she was called out. She’s probably already looking for other operations to dig into. She’s bat-shit crazy. I…” he huffed, looking at Sam, “I believe she’s a waste of space and an accident waiting to happen.”

“So kill her?” Dean raised an eyebrow and looked at his brother, “You agree.”

The only thing he offered was a nod.

“Wow.” The omega was downright shocked. “Uh. I don’t…I mean, I guess.”

“We wait until she’s left. Until the team assumes she’s just hit the road. Take care of her then,” Castiel suggested, “Then it’s merely a matter of who wishes to pull the trigger, since we all have had run-ins and reasons.”

“Yep.” Gabriel popped the ‘p.’ “Any takers? Or are we gonna have to rock, paper, scissors this?”

“I’ll do it.”

Three sets of eyes flickered to see Dean standing strong, confidently staring off into the yard.

Almost instantly, the men began speaking on top of one another, Sam saying, “Dean, you don’t have to be the one—” while Cas protested, “I can take care of her,” and Gabriel adding, “Kid, it’s our fault she got away in the first place—” But the omega chuckled and shook his head. “No, this time it’s on me.” Dean turned to the three alphas and explained plainly, “She’s not a Krushnic problem anymore. She’s in our territory. I was the one who landed in prison because of her.” He squeezed his mate’s hand, admitting, “Even though it wasn’t the worst thing to happen, she fucked over Jo and I. If I’m gonna be that
good leader we talked about? Gotta lead by example, right?” With a slight scoff, he mused, “Even if the others don’t know about it.”

Sam’s brow furrowed, because he was internally whirling with conflict—wondering if and hoping Dean wasn’t trying to prove himself to his new mate. He knew his brother: Dean was a lot of things but he wasn’t a killer. Still, he didn’t know if it was his place to say something, to get involved.

Castiel was of a similar mindset, but who was he to stand in Dean’s way?

Only Gabriel seemed to accept the choice right away and rolled his shoulders. “Sure you can handle it? Not the offing her part. But she’s manipulative. Maybe she’s just waiting for someone to tail her. Plus, you’ve got a gimp leg.”

“I can handle it,” Dean all but growled, his posturing on point with any of the other alphas. “Just like we talked about. Wait until she’s gone. Now,” he let go of his mate’s hand, “You assassins may know how to pull off a hit, but us? We know about stealth. Gimp leg, or not. I’ve been doing this a damn long time, there’s nothing to worry about.”

The first thing that Dean needed was a shower. He couldn’t have Anna scenting him while he was stalking or tracking.

He knew damn well she’d take off on foot, first before she hot-wired a car.

With a sideways glance, he looked at his mate and said, “Come join me?” as he headed towards the house, and then turned back to the other alphas. “If you see her slip out, tell me right away. I’m gonna get ready.”

Sam’s voice was oddly neutral as he nodded and agreed, “Okay, we will,” then added, “Gun suppressors are in the closet.”

With a genuine smile, Dean said, “Thanks, Sammy,” and took a deep breath, letting his face settled into an expression of fake serenity, as his mate followed him curiously.

He needed to make sure that if he ran into anyone inside the house, he’d be prepared for anything they threw at him, while not giving away that he was preparing for a hunt.

Dean only wished that he wasn’t hunting one of his former comrades.
The hot spray of the shower did little to relax the tension in Dean’s body, but it did feel nice against his sore muscles. His mate’s hands helped as well.

Luckily, he had only run into Benny and Jo on the way in and neither of them were in a chatty mood. Dean almost wished that he could speak to Charlie. No matter the sin, she really was like his little sister—and everyone fucked up. Her end game never was to hurt anyone, but shit went sideways damn quick.

Even though this was more of an actual shower than a playful romp in the water, Dean didn’t take for granted any time he was with his alpha. Hell, he was still getting used to the fact that he was mated, and his honeymoon could continue the second after he took care of business. Sure, he’d steal kisses once in awhile, but as he shampooed his hair, the conversation…well, it wasn’t light.

“What did she do for you? The Krushnics?” Dean asked, point blank. “Was she a resource? Intel? Or did she work jobs like the rest of you?”

Cas raised an eyebrow and thought aloud, “You’re wondering how dangerous she is. Questioning her competence.”

“Yeah.” He leaned back, letting the suds wash away as the alpha’s thumbs absently brushed his hipbones.

Responding to the question, Castiel kept his answer clear and concise, “She began with reconnaissance. Towards the end, she did work jobs. I believe it was to prove herself. To get closer. To me.”

“Hah,” Dean scoffed, “It’s kind of a bad punch line, isn’t it?”

With curiosity sparkling in his blue eyes, Cas asked, “What is?”

The omega allowed himself to be pulled in closer to his mate, and gently brushed his lips over the claim when he teased, “She wanted to be the black widow after we both turned her down. Then we end up together instead. And the curtain’s gonna close with Anna on the other end of my gun.”

Dean couldn’t help it, the proximity was too tempting and Castiel’s lips were too beautiful—slightly parted and damp from the steam. Although his scent was overwhelmed by whatever flowery fragrance was mixed in with these products, just the slightest underlying smell of true Cas was enough to drive the omega mad.

Of course, he had to rein it in, but a few heated kisses wouldn’t hurt, right?

Especially with the eager, hungry way his alpha responded. God, it was lewd and delicious, too much and not enough.

To be honest, Dean wasn’t sure what he was doing.

Was he distracting himself for what was to come? Or was he using Cas as grounding to gain the confidence he needed?

Dean felt safe here. He felt loved and on top of the world.
He felt like there wasn’t a thing he couldn’t do, and unfortunately…one of those things happened to be Anna—delivering what was coming to her, that was.

Dean twitched at the realization and surged deeper into the kiss, nipping Cas’s lip and licking into his mouth more aggressively because maybe it was about the distraction. The alpha’s calloused hands dared lower around Dean’s waist and hauled their bodies flush; wet, hot and gliding together.

Except, Dean’s sharp inhale wasn’t merely from the contact. It was from his leg protesting.

“Shit,” he hissed, and pulled away.

Castiel’s hands retreated from his back and rose to cup Dean’s cheeks, pressing their foreheads together. A soothing, “Dean, don’t push yourself,” almost instantly earned a rebuttal, but he squashed it and swiftly continued, “You’ll need to let me wrap that tight for your mission, okay?”

With a lopsided grin, Dean nodded even though he was shaky. Fuck, maybe he was more ‘gimp’ than he thought. He knew damn well he was good with a firearm. His aim was bar none, and he could outmatch her hand-to-hand. It didn’t matter what shape his leg was in.

“She,” he urged, and drew away. Castiel’s hands retreated from his back and rose to cup Dean’s cheeks, pressing their foreheads together. A soothing, “Dean, don’t push yourself,” almost instantly earned a rebuttal, but he squashed it and swiftly continued, “You’ll need to let me wrap that tight for your mission, okay?”

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“Yeah, you can do that,” Dean agreed and kissed Cas on the nose. That was when he caught sight of the expression on his face. “What?”

“Allow me to be your cleaner?” It wasn’t a suggestion. “I’m not doubting your abilities, but I can foresee trouble when it comes time for disposal. I’m not saying you need backup, although I would suggest backup. Even Krushnics tend to hunt in pairs. But I’d prefer if you’d let me take care of removing her body.”

Dean stared at Cas long and hard, trying his damnedest to figure out an ulterior motive. What did Cas see wrong with Dean that he needed to do this for him? Was it his physical state? His emotional well being? Or did he plant the concept of being back-up while focusing on the part about getting rid of...or maybe Dean was getting in too deep.

“What, Cas?” he tilted his head to the side and raised a questioning brow, “I already told you I have blood on my hands. Don’t think I can pick up my toys after playing with them?” He taunted the alpha, looping one arm around Cas’s neck, and trailing a finger down his chest, tracing the scars and line-work of the art there. “Sometimes I wonder if you take me seriously…”

A dark chuckle was followed by, “Oh, Dean—” his expression could only be described as a come-hither stare, “I learned a long time ago not to underestimate you. I was merely trying to assist with the dirty work. I’m offering you one of my specialties. So you and I may continue on with our own…dirty work.”

Dean couldn’t stop the shiver shooting down his spine if he tried. There was a sick thrill in this. Mostly, because Cas believed every word he was saying.

He believed in Dean.

He wasn’t doubting Dean’s ability to go through with it; he wanted to aid, to speed up the process and get it over with. All so they could get back to them. Dean wondered, as a smirk quirked his lips, if this was his new normal. He...didn’t hate it at all. He felt fearless next to his Cas, Dean felt like nothing was beyond his reach and it didn’t matter if no one else understood...

“Fuck, I love you.” It was a low, rumbling growl that Dean was unapologetic for since Cas approved of his hybrid alpha-omega sense of self.

He could be as forward and confident as he wanted. After all, this was the person his mate fell for.

And the wicked grin on Castiel’s face was confirmation of just how much he enjoyed it.

They couldn’t remain apart—their mouths clashed even more greedily than before. It wasn’t the time, there were much more important things in their focus, but they physically couldn’t keep their hands off each other. The alpha grabbed handfuls of his mate’s ass and crashed their hips together, fingers spreading his cheeks apart, tantalizingly close to Dean’s hole.

In the midst of tongue and teeth, Castiel confessed, “Seeing that claim, being here with you and not touching you? It’s torture.” As he lightly brushed his mate’s opening, a shameless moan followed the roll of hips. “You, Dean Winchester, are stunning like this.”

With a chuckle, knowing he was flushed and wet, Dean changed his focus, because something finally clicked. Seeing the lust in Cas’s eyes served as proof, and he tangled his hands in his alpha’s hair to force his attention.

“I think you’re getting off on this,” Dean murmured, his voice surprisingly husky to his own ears. “I think before, yeah, you may have believed me. But seeing me go dark side? I think you’re hard thinking about it.” He whispered into his mate’s ear, “I’ve got you figured out, Castiel Krushnic. why you’re hot and bothered. What makes you tick.”

Dean drew his mate’s earlobe into his mouth and nipped it roughly, then needed (not merely wanted) to see how Cas reacted. There was a split-second of caution, like maybe Castiel was
caught and it was wrong, but the mischief on Dean’s face told him maybe...maybe this sinful rush lying right under the surface pressed all the right buttons and did it for him too.

Dean knew damn well it ran in Winchester blood, yet neither he nor Sam (who he was always worried about giving in) had the chance to act on it, and Dean’s mate? Castiel and his life, his livelihood...was his opening, his chance. An outlet of sorts, someone who could understand and it wasn’t about one man or the other. Both were utterly captivated that this borderline bloodlust had finally cracked through and they saw it for what it was.

Holy hell, the sexual energy between them was out of this world, but facts were facts—Dean had a mission and that had to take priority right now.

Still, that didn’t stop him from throwing nearly all his body weight at Cas, slamming him against the shower wall and kissing him like he was his last drink of water. The alpha was left reeling, trying to brace them, but the show of force was enough to spark a growl in his chest and hike up Dean’s injured leg high enough so his cock could slide between the omega’s slick legs.

That gushing wetness wasn’t from the shower beating down on them. The teasing glide made Dean throw his head back and moan, but the echo off the stall walls reminded him—

They weren’t alone. No, there were two others waiting for them to finish up in here. Castiel and Dean were not in the shower for a quickie, they were scrubbing the scent from their bodies, preparing for blockers and a damn mission!

With a mournful sigh, Dean groaned out, “If I had it my way, I’d let you knot me right now. But...” he grimaced when Cas took his cue and allowed him to stand on his own two feet, “We’ve got work to do. And then you can fuck me into next week.”

“Mm,” the alpha nodded, the scent of lust running rampant around them, like a heavy fog in the already-humid air, and admitted, “I believe we’ll have to wash up again.”

That brought a laugh from Dean as well as an agreement, because before they’d scented of tension and endless distress. Now, the remnants of mating pheromones were back on their skin, as well as slick and arousal, which required another scrub-down.

“Do you see what you do to me?” Dean snorted and reached for the washcloth again. “Fine. I’ll let you be my cleaner. Just so we can hurry our asses up and get back to this.”

Cas looked satisfied now that he had a verbal confirmation and purred, “I’m quite good at my job. Let’s set things in motion.”

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The suppressor was exactly where Sam had said it was, they were in position, and when Dean asked around, surveillance told them Anna was leaving just after sunset. It looked as though her plan was to disappear into the night. Which, of course, was a good plan—but it involved waiting around a safe house with a group of people who wanted you dead. Well, to give her credit, Anna must have balls of steel.

Sam confirmed that no one outside of Gabriel and himself knew that they planned on killing her. Even though Ruby and Benny had been ranting and raving about it. Or rather, Ruby had been ranting and raving. Benny had been nodding along to let the woman get it off her chest.

His brother also said that Charlie had locked herself away all day, and her sobbing hadn’t stopped until an hour ago. That right there, was a punch in the gut. Dean would make it a point, once they were back, to talk with her. He couldn’t let her go on thinking she was hated and blamed. Dean got it—he really did.

When family was on the line? You did some crazy shit. And what happened involved her current family, as well as her past. He’d get through to her. He had to, he loved that little squirt.

Castiel and Dean were perched on the edge of their bed when they heard it.

The front door opening and closing.

Both men stood up, rather calmly—given the circumstance—and walked to the window. When they peered out to scan the area, they could see Anna with a lone duffle bag, making a turn from the front door to cut back into the woods. She obviously couldn’t hijack the ambulance for a getaway car, but she had chosen a path where she would have cover for a reason. She knew damn well that she’d be followed—and she was right.

“How much of a head start shall we give her?” Castiel wondered aloud, watching the harsh light of the setting sun cast equally harsh shadows against the trees of the forest.

Dean stepped away from the window and experimented with how much weight he could put on his leg, lunging and clenching his teeth when he pushed too far. He abruptly stood upright and glanced across the weapons spread across the comforter. He was in the zone, forgetting Cas had even asked a question, as he began to load up the gun, a flashlight, and his favorite knife; just in case.

As he was pulling on his jacket, he realized Castiel was watching him intently and asked, “What?”
before he headed back to the window and pushed it open. “We can carve her up in the ambulance. Got supplies there, let’s go,” he ordered, and crawled out onto the roof.

The omega didn’t want the others to know he was going after Anna, so it wasn’t like they could waltz out through the front door with a suspicious ‘be right back.’

He’d instructed Sam to keep them busy, which happened to be with dinner, and have Benny on watch. He was the only one who knew their plan and wouldn’t squeal. He supported it wholeheartedly and couldn’t wait for the confirmation it was finished.

Cas didn’t know all these details, which was why he was taken aback and had to scramble to grab his own gun and jacket before following Dean onto the roof.

Their window faced the back woods so the rest of the condos wouldn’t see two men scaling the wall, and as long as they were quiet on their feet, they could walk along the second story roofing that wrapped around directly into the forest. The awning was deep enough that a person could get enough leverage for a jump to the shed. Then after balancing on a rather steep roof and making their way to the other side, there was a trellis to climb down to hit solid ground; which was exactly what they did.

This was mission-mode, the impact didn’t even phase Dean despite the bullet hole in his leg because he couldn’t let it. He knew damn well that Anna wasn’t out for a nice evening stroll. She had probably taken off like a bat out of hell, running for some kind of shelter the moment she was out of view.

Dean stared at the ground in the scarce light they had left and scanned for broken twigs, moved brush and petite shoe prints. Before Castiel could say anything, the omega had already picked up the trail and began to follow it silently.

It went without saying, the time to talk was over because this was a matter of stealth, but Castiel couldn’t believe how much grace his mate moved with. How quickly, yet silently, he could maneuver in and out of the trees without disrupting anything, even a wayward branch. Castiel was having a hard time keeping up, it was like the gauntlet of covert missions. Dean was flawless, this was his medium, his expertise and the alpha was having second thoughts about his own involvement.

He wondered if he would hinder the hunt with one misstep and set Anna off. Their speed and her caution trying to lead them astray meant they were rapidly closing the gap between them. Castiel knew the stakes were getting higher and higher, would he cave under pressure? Should he stay back?

Because the trail was hot—

The trail was…

All at once, Dean dodged around to make a hard left and began running with abandon, cursing under his breath because night had fallen and they were heading towards an area lit up by lights.

It was another subdivision!

Castiel could barely make out the outline as the figure in front of them fought to fling herself forward, to emerge from the woodland and head into the new populated suburbia. Where there would be witnesses. Someplace that was too fucking close to their safe house. Still, Dean drew his gun, thinking maybe if he could get her just barely on the outskirts, they could drag her back or —!

Right outside the grove, a car sped in and almost hit the figure they’d been tracking. The headlights illuminated Anna’s swinging, vibrant hair as she staggered backwards after nearly being run over. If only luck had been on their side. Except instead of continuing forward, Dean reached out and cut Cas off, his arm thudding against the alpha’s chest to halt his momentum.

The window rolled down and time stood still, both Cas and Dean’s heart’s skipping a beat because this couldn’t be happening—

“Get in!” a familiar voice ordered, and Anna glanced over her shoulder, sending the mated pair a twisted sneer visible in the wash of light, as she looked around and got into the passenger’s side.

With spinning tires and the acrid scent of burnt rubber, the car was gone. Dean and Cas were frozen in shock, still lingering in the tree line.

Dean’s hand was locked up, still rigid against Cas’s chest because he felt like he’d been punched in the gut. He felt like the floor had just opened up and he was tumbling down. Dean couldn’t believe that his knees hadn’t buckled and he didn’t have a dropped jaw full of rotting dirt right now.

Swallowing around a lump in his throat, Dean choked out, “T-there’s no way…”

Castiel slowly raised his hand to grab Dean’s and lower it down, his voice hushed in the darkness, night completely surrounding them, when he said, “You couldn’t have known. No one could’ve. I—”

“Bullshit!” Dean rounded on him, his eyes wild as he shouted, “We both saw it! We both heard her, earlier! I never should’ve let my guard down, I never thought that…”
“Hush. We need to regroup and figure out a new plan,” Cas ordered him, because he knew that Dean would be in pieces in no time.

The alpha knew what this meant to his mate, if only from the few, small interactions he’d witnessed so far. And, to be honest, Castiel was proud and relied on his own gut instincts, too.

Cas never would have imagined it would be Charlie, of all people, to backstab the group so completely. There was no coming back from this one.

She had just rescued Anna, turned her back on their family and was now on the run with her. It appeared as though she had been there to set them up, maybe even from the very beginning. But Castiel wasn’t there to investigate. He was there to make sure his true mate didn’t shatter.

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It looked like the news had broken by the time Dean and Castiel arrived back to the safe house. They didn’t bother sneaking back in, they went through the front door.

Instantly, they were hit with a barrage of questions: Where were you? Where’s Charlie? What did you do with Anna? What’s going on?

Still, the fact that he’d been so totally and utterly betrayed after planning an act of mercy and forgiveness, the reality was still creeping up on the edges of Dean’s mind. And the thing that solidified it so thoroughly wasn’t anyone’s words, but the judging expression that fucking Gabriel sent his way. Since the alpha knew the plan, he also knew without word being spoken, what a spectacular failure it had been. All because Dean was too soft.

Instead of handling the situation, handling Charlie, he did—what? Sent her upstairs with a fucking box of tissues for a nap? He may as well have read her a bedtime story and tucked her in!

He’d been a goddamn idiot.

Dean was a sucker. And now he was paying for it. Because who the hell knew what Anna would do, who the hell knew what that pair was capable of together. They were too smart, too good at everything they did, they were a God’s honest threat and if they sought revenge—

“Are you gonna say anything?” it was Garth asking the question in a firm voice that finally made him snap out of everything.

Dean clenched his fists, barely inside the doorway when he explained, “I went after Anna. But before I could get to her…Charlie picked her up.”

“Picked her up?” Ruby repeated in a monotone voice, “What is that supposed to mean?”

Even though Gabriel had apparently figured it out, it didn’t look like Sam was putting the pieces together yet. His brother sure didn’t contribute to Dean’s cause by demanding, “Wait, you mean she drove the getaway car? You’ve gotta be joking, Charlie wouldn’t—”

“Yes, Sam. That’s exactly what I fuckin’ mean! Now, there’s nothing more to say about it! That’s what happened! We’re done here!” Dean snarled dangerously, daring anyone to try to say a word, but his posturing was damn effective and everyone shut up.

The silence was deafening as the scents in the room spoke while the words were left unsaid. Everyone’s eyes followed as Dean stormed into the kitchen, grabbed a fifth he knew would be waiting for him and marched out to the back porch, slamming the door. Castiel didn’t try to follow because this was one of those times he knew the omega needed to cool off, and solitude was the best way to do so. Even though he wasn’t particularly fond of his mate turning to alcohol, he didn’t blame him. This was a lot to take in.

Instead, Castiel hung his head and turned to the stairs, heading up to the bedroom. He decided it best to let Dean come to him on his own time.

The rest of the occupants of the room were shaken. They may have gotten answers, but there were so many more questions. At least one of which Sam had no problem voicing.

“Was no one watching her?” He looked around the room, and everyone ducked down, almost ashamed.

Everyone except Gabriel.

“You guys treated her like a goddamn princess. Why would you have a guard on her?” He was sarcastic and patronizing, and Sam was two seconds away from punching him. “Sure, she was a good kid. But not only did you save Cassie, but you housed, fed and bathed us after her breakdown. You shoulda either watched her, or gotten ridda us. Unless she’s been a snitch from the beginning.”

“Gabriel,” Sam growled in a warning, “You’re not helping.”

“Sorry, kiddo. I’m gonna say it because no one else will—you’re kind of fucked right now.” He shrugged his shoulders and turned back to the kitchen. “Just saying what people are probably thinking but afraid to say. Oh! You have queso dip! Wonderful!”

“Is it too late to get rid of him?” Jo asked, wearing a small smile, even though she was tense and clearly upset.
operation. But something’s gotta give, because Ruby chuckled and shook her head, “I wouldn’t need to. I don’t claim to be the brains of this you” “Because I was on my way to put a bullet in Anna’s skull! Would how the hell would you? You crossed me? You should’ve handled it! You even stood up for me, telling people that we came as a pair! That’s what she was banking on! You to do your job! Not risking all of us by going back for him!”

Dean’s jaw dropped, and he spat out, “You defended me! You even stood up for me, telling everyone that we came as a pair! That I’d be going back for him! The team fucking knew?”

“Yeah, but now I’m wondering…wondering if Charlie was right all along. Why should we have put everyone on the line for someone who wasn’t our own?” Ruby crowded his space and demanded, “What about Sam, huh? You know damn well it was your own brother who you made go play Cowboys and Indians with the guards to save your little alpha. What if he’d gotten mowed down in the commotion? What if he was captured, or worse? Would it be worth it? Is that alpha’s dick worth it, sweetheart?”

Dean surged to his feet. He would let her talk all the shit she wanted about him, but not about Sam or Cas. His voice was cold and threatening, when he countered, “Is Jo worth it? Ask yourself that. What lengths are you willing to go to for her? You should know, Ruby.”

“And that’s why I’m wondering what the fuck is wrong with you. Because we’re in the same danger-zone now! All over again! Because you don’t know what it takes to be a leader!” Ruby shouted, throwing her arms in the air. “If Anna crossed you? You should’ve handled it. If Charlie crossed you? You should still fucking handle it. We’re not a corporation, Dean! We don’t get our ‘two weeks’!”

“How the hell would you handle it?!” he barked back, stepping into her space as she had his, “Because I was on my way to put a bullet in Anna’s skull! Would you do that to Charlie? Would you be able to pull the trigger?!”

Ruby chuckled and shook her head, “I wouldn’t need to. I don’t claim to be the brains of this operation. But something’s gotta give, because everyone’s leaving you. Maybe there’s a reason
your operatives are traitors? Because you can’t do what needs to be done, you—!

“Ruby?” Jo burst through the back door, looking worried, “What’s going on out here? I can—”

“Trying to give Dean a pep-talk.” Her eyes never left his as she pronounced, “Priorities and shit. Who knows if it did any good.”

The omega looked between her girlfriend and Dean, who took a remarkably long pull from the bottle. “I don’t get it. What are you—”

“Jo, I love you, but your girl can be an outright bitch,” Dean managed to force out through clenched teeth.

“Hah!” Ruby’s hand rose to her chest, “That’s it? That’s all you’ve got?”

Jo walked hesitantly between the two and pushed them apart (they were practically chest-to-chest) with wary steps, “Okay, seriously…what’s happening? We’ve got enough on our plates, we don’t need more fighting. You two look like posturing knotheads.”

“Let me ask you a question,” Ruby slowly turned her attention on Jo and regained her poise, if only to infuriate Dean further, “If you were in charge and you knew Anna and Charlie were traitors who could give away our location and throw us all under the bus after both of them fucking us over already, what would you do?”

Jo sighed and ran a hand through her hair, refusing to look at Dean when she said, “If it was my call? And the rest of the team was at stake, our family? There wouldn’t be a choice. It’s black and white at that point.”

Ruby looked like a damn cat with a canary and sneered back at Dean, “See? Not too difficult a question then. The team comes first. Always. Mating pheromones must be clogging your head, impairing your judgment. Because this should have been a no-brainer. Hell, even your mate would agree with us.”

There was venom wrapped around the word ‘mate’ that made Dean’s fists clench. Jo turned to him and offered a sympathetic smile. They both knew she didn’t want to get in the middle of it, but her position was clear.

“Leave,” Dean ordered, sitting back down on the porch. “Sam’s looking for new safe houses. We’re doing what we can. But get out of my fucking face.”

“Dean,” Jo reached out to place a hand on his shoulder, but he jerked away. “Okay…good night. We’ll see you in the morning. I guess I’ll start packing tonight.”

He didn’t say a word, and even when they were gone, he didn’t feel any sort of relief. Dean’s stomach was tied in more knots than ever, and now he wasn’t just questioning his position, he fucking knew. He wasn’t the right man for the job. He’d failed spectacularly, in so many ways and the only band-aid he could slap on it was the booze.

So he continued drinking.

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Sometime around midnight, Benny joined him with his own cup, reaching out to Dean to fill his glass. There wasn’t much left, the alpha realized that instantly and he knew he had to tread lightly. A drunk Dean was unpredictable at best, sometimes he was a daring, fun good time, but emotional drinking? That was a whole other can of worms.

Most everyone in the house (probably the damn neighborhood) had heard Ruby screaming at Dean during her rampage. There were varying degrees of agreement within the house, but everyone knew damn well that the omega didn’t deserve the level of rage that he received. Ruby was volatile, especially when she got cabin fever, Jo was in danger, and there was an outlet at hand.

Her outlet was Dean.

Now, Benny was damage control.

“You feelin’ good yet, brother?” he asked, gesturing to the bottle. “Now, Cas has never seen you drunk, has he?”

With a snort, Dean said simply, “Alcohol wasn’t my number one priority to sneak into prison, dude.”

“Does he drink?” Benny was trying to make simple conversation, but he noticed Dean’s pause and laughed, “You don’t know, do you? It’s okay, those things come with time. True mates trumps everything. What matters is if he’s gonna get pissed because you’re drunk.”

“Yeah,” he hummed and raised the mouth of the bottle to his lips, killing it and finally set it down. The fact that it was warm made him spit it out in mild disgust, and he answered the alpha’s question, “Well, like it or not, he’s gonna have to deal. ‘Cause there ain’t no stopping my love affair with whiskey.”

“It won’t make it or break it,” Benny said with certainty, “Although, the timing’s a little poor. Even you got to admit that, Dean. You should be talking to him. Maybe figuring things out
rather than moping out here, lookin’ for answers at the bottom of the bottle.” He gestured to the empty fifth, “You find anything down there?”

Dean finally looked over and was relieved not to find pity in Benny’s eyes. That was something he always appreciated. Benny never sugar-coated a damn thing, he treated Dean with respect and the situation…well, it was what it was. The omega could admit, “Nah. Never find anything. Doesn’t mean it’s gonna stop me from lookin’ for a message in one.” Oh, there was a heavy slur in his voice he just recognized.

Well, if he was going to be drunk in front of Cas, he may as well dive in headfirst.

“Yeah,” Benny agreed, “Rarely find those answers, do we? I think yer mate can help, though. God knows you’ve left him just camping out in your room by himself. Probably afraid everyone’ll try to burn him at the stake, after a certain lady’s tirade.”

Dean wiped a hand down his face and nodded, because he hadn’t even thought about that.

“Fuck. You’re right! How long has he been up there?”

“As long as you’ve been drinkin’, brother.”

Dean finally stood up, but the abruptness caused him to sway. Benny rushed up beside him and helped him balance the next second. Dean internally cursed, but knew he had something to do. He smiled at the alpha and sighed, “Think I need some water.”

“Well, if he was going to be drunk in front of Cas, he may as well dive in headfirst.

“Yeah,” Benny agreed, “Rarely find those answers, do we? I think yer mate can help, though. God knows you’ve left him just camping out in your room by himself. Probably afraid everyone’ll try to burn him at the stake, after a certain lady’s tirade.”

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“Think that’d be a good idea. Let’s grab you one and then you take care’a your mate, all right?”

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The most frustrating thing about waiting was the complete solitude and hoping that Dean was all right. Castiel knew that he needed space, he’d been told as much by Sam in the brief time he and Gabriel stopped in to tell him they’d zeroed in on the next safe house and they’d leave in the morning. Now, if only Dean was next to him so he could relay the plans.

Without a cell phone, a computer, much of anything to keep him busy he simply waited. And worried.

Cas’ ears perked up as he heard boots on the stairs, knowing that since it was after two in the morning, only one person could be ascending. And the few tripping-he heard were most definitely from a drunk mate. This would be interesting.

He was sitting on the bed with the bedside lamp on, and when Dean finally entered there was a stumble in his step. He closed the door behind him, reeking of alcohol, but Cas wasn’t here to judge. Especially given the situation at hand. He’d follow his mate’s lead, see what he wanted to speak about, or leave unsaid.

“Hey,” the omega greeted and cleared his throat, kicking off his boots while he held the door frame, water bottle in hand. “Listen, I’m real sorry about you being up here by yerself, it was selfish and I didn’t even think about it, I—”

“Dean, you have every right to be alone with your thoughts. I understand what happened was heavy,” Cas directly intervened, and reached out as the omega finally made his way towards the bed. “Do you wish to talk about it?”

They shuffled around silently until they were sitting on the edge of the bed, since Dean seemed more content watching his socks than meeting Cas’ gaze. He huffed out a sigh, uncapping the bottle and chugging the water. Castiel was patient, he wouldn’t push, although…he did have some advice.

“You know, we can still salvage this,” he whispered, taking Dean’s hand once he set the water on the nightstand.

That perked up the omega’s interest, he changed his focus at the drop of a hat and narrowed his eyes. “Salvage this? Salvage what? My team falling apart? All of them thinking I can’t lead? Hell, all of them hating me and—”

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Castiel’s alpha scent flared up and he pressed a finger to Dean’s lips before he could have a legitimate breakdown. “Stop. Right there.” Replacing his finger with his lips, Cas kissed him until he was positive Dean would hear him out. Eventually, he pulled away to say, “Charlie and Anna. We can still track them and end them. We both saw the car, you were…upset. You wanted to leave, but I caught a partial plate. Between Gabriel and Sam, we could run down where they’re headed. We can still finish the job, Dean. This isn’t the end.”

Cas reached up and cupped Dean’s cheek, the omega looking both surprised and hopeful when he pressed, “Yes, my beautiful mate. Then when we finish this, your team won’t think badly of you. It’s misplaced to begin with, the fault lies with Charlie and Anna but they don’t know how to hate them. Perhaps myself, too. You’re the only person who will fight back, so that’s why they get off on it. We will make this work, okay?”

“You’re serious,” Dean realized with a gasp, “You really think…we can do this?”

“I know we can.” His smile was sincere, finality in his voice. “Let us get some rest. While the team relocates to the next safe house, we’ll be tying up loose ends. How does that sound?”
Dean barked out a laugh, sheer relief flooding his veins as his forehead crashed down on Cas’s shoulder, “Holy fuck, Cas, that sounds—”

“But you won’t be making it to that safe house.”

Both men froze, completely startled, because a new voice sounded in the room when it shouldn’t be possible, Dean locked the door behind him. Yet, it came from behind them. Both Castiel and Dean could feel a gust of wind from an open fucking window, but they had never heard the intruder enter! They were so caught up in their own world, they hadn’t been on guard!

“Don’t move,” the voice ordered smoothly. “Don’t think about grabbing a weapon. Don’t pull anything cute. Just stand up nice and slow and head for the door. Or else we’re gonna add a red accent to these lovely grey walls, and spill some brains all over the carpet. You don’t want that clean up. It’s a mess, trust me.”

“Fuck,” Dean cursed, but followed suit as Cas stood up like they were ordered to do.

This was not how he wanted this night to go! Just when he thought things couldn’t get any fucking worse—ta-da! Even though he didn’t recognize the voice, this could most definitely be a hit, now he was stone-cold sober. Charlie and Anna…they had the money, maybe they were tying up loose ends before he and Cas could get the chance to. But…why were they headed to the door? And was Cas playing it cool for some specific reason, even though it was two on one and they were both dangerous?

“Down the stairs,” was the next order, and Dean’s nose perked up, telling him that all his people, all his family was already down there. Rounded up. Like goddamn animals, waiting to be put down.

Fuck, this was a slaughter waiting to happen! Dean needed to do something, but what? He kept glancing over to his mate, unable to understand how he was so composed in this situation. Maybe he had a plan…but if he didn’t?

God, they were done for. It wasn’t supposed to end like this—
Loves, Plans, Heroic Ideals, All These Lofty Things are Worthless

Chapter Summary

“History is not made by great dreams, but by the petty wants of all respectable, moderately thievish and selfish people, that is, of everyone. All our ideas, loves, plans, heroic ideals, all these lofty things are worthless.”

— Karel Čapek

Dean’s heart was in his throat as he descended the staircase and saw lights glowing from the living room, but heard nothing but silence. Castiel was behind him, hand loosely tracing down the handrail and it sounded like a hiss in the stagnant air. Once Dean reached the landing and turned the corner to the living room, he saw that everyone was on their knees with a gun to their head.

Everyone except Gabriel.

His mind whirled in confusion, but once Dean was shoved into the circle he was ordered by the intruder who got the jump on him and Cas, “On the ground!” Apparently, Dean wasn’t swift enough, because a steel toed boot kicked him in the back of his legs, making him crash to the floor.

“Fuck!” Dean spat out hunched on his hands and knees, his wound flaring up like it’d been set on fire under the dressing!

At the same time, he heard his mate growl, “Inias! Stop!”

Suddenly—it clicked.

Dean whipped his head around, seeing that his alpha had not been ordered down to the ground. Oh fuck no, he was standing proudly among those holding his team hostage—his goddamn family—at gunpoint! That’s why he wasn’t afraid, that’s why the alpha never scented of fear—Cas didn’t have a plan, he was a part of these fuckers!

“Krushnics, huh?” Dean snarled, trying to mask the pain of his injury as he looked around the room. “Ya know, you could’ve just knocked?”

“Oh, really?” One of the men sneered, the one training is gun on Benny, “Is that all it took? You’d have allowed our captives to go, then? Skip away freely?!”

“They’re not captives!” Dean was flabbergasted, then shouted at Gabriel, “What the fuck are you doing?! Do your people just tune you out like we do?!”

Gabriel narrowed his eyes into something deadly, something Dean had witnessed on the inside of the prison toward those Gabriel had butchered without thought. Shit, Dean naturally shrank under the intensity, not from his omega status, but from self preservation alone. Gabriel’s voice was cool and even when he said, “I was trying to explain the situation when you came down here huffing and puffing.” He tilted his head, his entire presence sinister and menacing. He was someone Dean didn’t know. “Perhaps you’ve noticed you’re still breathing? You’re welcome for that.”

Castiel shoved Inias to the side, his alpha amping up as he said, “We weren’t kidnapped! There’s no reason to harm this group.”

“And you’ll notice we haven’t,” a woman rolled her eyes. “Here I was, looking for a good old fashioned massacre. Her gaze flickered around as she stated, “Everyone got lucky. Damn lucky. The first room we infiltrated was Gabriel’s,” she tapped on the earpiece, “He said stand down. That is the only reason you all aren’t a smear on a pillow case.”

“And being rounded up for an execution is better?” Ruby rumbled under her breath, and the woman kicked her over, the echoing grunt and the face-full of carpet had Jo reaching out, but stopping.
She was smart not to rock the boat. Damn smart. And Dean looked across the circle to thank her. They didn’t want to endanger anyone, they needed to play along. Jo and Dean both knew Ruby would be okay, but they couldn’t risk anything. These fuckers were trigger happy, everyone knew it, but they had Castiel and Gabriel, masks-on, in their corner. It was the only shot they had.

Except, this damn woman. She talked too much, and she was too perceptive. And she enjoyed gesturing with her gun.

“Why, Clarence. You’re sporting a nice, circular I’m-a-fucking-idiot sign on your neck. Did you fall, hit your head, and wake up like that?” Her voice dropped dangerously, “Where the fuck did you get it?”

“From my mate.” Castiel moved boldly, and he knew he was being reckless when he reached out and pulled Dean up from his knees. “This is my omega. This serves as proof we aren’t in need of your ‘rescue,’ Meg. Proof that you will stand down.”

All right, so Cas may have had balls of steel, but Dean felt a cold sweat run down his back when he was hauled off the floor and to his feet. Not simply because he was a target but a fucking prime bulls-eye. This was stupid! It was like his alpha was throwing the gauntlet and being rebellious when people’s lives were at stake, Dean’s people, but it was a gamble he had to take. Trusting his mate...

It wasn’t just Meg who growled. Every last one of the Krushnics were protected by blockers, but there was a physical change, small tells that said they were not happy with the news. Oh no, not by a long shot, and Dean’s goddamn alpha was playing with fire! And all eyes were now zeroed in on him.

Still, Dean stood proudly, he didn’t dodge a single glance because as Cas’s omega? He...wasn’t allowed to. Dean had to match his mate’s intent—which right now…happened to be acting like an arrogant, proud and unapologetic dick with a deathwish.

“As I said, before these muttonheads showed up and stirred the pot,” Gabriel smoothly interjected, trying to save a sinking ship, “It was this crew who pulled off the extraction. Oh, remember? Castiel, our brother? The one we were supposed to bust out of prison? Yet, everyone was too damn caught up in their own little missions, and left him to rot?!”

There was fire being stoked and Gabriel, no, he wasn’t wearing blockers and righteous fury filled the room. “They agreed to take Cas with them when they pulled out two of their own. They went out of their way and risked their lives to do it! We’ve been here. Of our own choosing. Helping them with an assignment to settle the debt, working a job, which is why it’s been radio silent.”

“I know another way to make it radio-silent. And we don’t owe them a damn thing,” one of the men said simply. “That’s how we work. We don’t—”

“Shut the fuck up, Uriel,” Gabriel snapped. “We can cut off ties after this mission is done. You’re not needed here.”

“Doesn’t seem like it. Cas’ll need to pick a side,” Meg’s eyes still hadn’t left the pair, and she added, “Disgusting,” under her breath, but everyone heard.

“You want me to pick a side, Meg?” Castiel’s voice was heated, and Dean could feel the palpable tension rise by the second. Hell, he could feel it in Cas’ grip around his waist tighten, “How about we—”

It was a flash out of the corner of everyone’s eyes, but it happened so fast—they couldn’t act before it was too late.

Garth used both his height and agility, combined with his innocent-seeming nature to spring up off the ground and slam his elbow straight upward into Uriel’s jaw. With a punched-out grunt, the Krushnic rocked back with the force of the blow, but not before Garth was on his feet, sucker-punching him across the jaw and snatching his free-falling weapon. Two face shots equaled a knock-out.

It was slow motion after that—

The gun in Garth’s hand pointed at the man above Benny, who grudgingly handed over his weapon since Uriel, his backup, was on the ground. Everyone was on guard, but the tables hadn’t just turned, they’d flipped.

The Krushnics realized in a flash that this had turned into a statement since Castiel and Gabriel weren’t backing them either.

In fact, Gabriel’s voice boomed, “Now! Let’s put down our toys like good boys and girls and have a talk, shall we?” and it was an alpha’s order. “Divide up. Go to separate sides of the room, everyone on their feet.” When Meg hesitated, he barked out, “Don’t test me.”

She glowered and turned on her heel, collapsing down onto one of the chairs. What was interesting was that Castiel moved with the Winchesters, and Sam stayed resolutely next to Gabriel. No one even bothered With Uriel’s body. In fact, Ruby conveyed a message as she strutted right overtrop of him.

Now, they were watching each other like it was a showdown, each side posturing—but the
Winchesters had the advantage of scent on their side. It was overwhelming and filling the room with powerful aggression and violence. Although, it didn’t seem to bother the Krushnics whatsoever.

They were waiting.

Something that both Dean and it looked like Sam found interesting, was how they followed Gabriel’s command. If he’d stopped them from being put down like dogs? That meant something. And he was in control of this situation, which was the best case scenario. They had a chance.

The Krushnic alpha watched as they’d parted, studying them with a cautious eye to make sure no one went rogue. Once he seemed satisfied with the situation, he spoke up.

He locked gazes with his crew, making sure they were paying attention when he jerked his thumb. “Shitheads. Meet Benny, Jo, Ruby, Garth, Dean and Sam—”

“What?” Dean exploded, “You can’t just—!”

With a sweeping arm gesture, Gabriel returned the favor, knowing the omega was pissed at their identities being given up. Countering with, “Other shitheads, meet Meg, Balthazar, Inias, Hannah, Hester and...Uriel, on the ground. You already know Cas and I.” He clapped his hands together and said, “Now that our lovely meet and greet is done, you both gonna fuckin’ listen?”

He was met with silence, which allowed him to continue.

Gabriel had no problem turning his back on the Winchesters, knowing no matter whether they had a firearm (or two) or not, they were in the most need of saving. “I told you. Point-friggin-blank, they’re no threat.”

“I beg to differ,” Balthazar raised his voice and wore a thoroughly amused grin, “The gangly one taking out Uriel was quite the surprise! I thoroughly enjoyed that.”

“Even though you were disarmed at gunpoint?” Hannah demanded in a quiet voice.

Balthazar retorted, “It earned my respect, darling.” He crossed his arms and shrugged, “Lighten up.”

Anyway,” Gabriel clearly wasn’t enjoying the beta’s commentary, “This is how it’s going to go: You’re all going home. We finish up here. That ties up the loose ends. You get it?”

Dean and Castiel were looking on, standing close enough that they were able to subtly hold hands from behind because they were praying that whatever Gabriel said would work. The question lingered, the prospect was terrifying because…what happened to them? This divide was strong, the teams were so evenly unified. And it was against one another.

If they had to part, if Cas was taken away from Dean, he couldn’t—

His heart was beating out of his fucking chest, because the Krushnics weren’t just going to let him go. That much was obvious!

“No.” It was Hester who spoke up. “That’s not how loose ends are tied, Gabriel.” She stood up, taking the time to stare down every last member of the Winchester party. “You just named us. To them! They’ve seen our faces, they know our identities, you just—!”

“And you know theirs,” Gabriel countered, “Everything goes both ways. This is an opportunity! We’ve worked together to get Cas out. We’re both the best in our fields, can’t you think a little bigger?” He marched over to the woman until they were practically nose to nose, “This is an opening. The chance for resources, if we need them. How about you use your brain a bit more instead of being a trigger happy bitch?”

She fell backwards to the couch, her face blanched from his presence and biting words. A moment later, a voice from behind spoke up.

Jo questioned aloud, “Using each other as resources? On jobs?”

“Give the girl a prize!” he gestured theatrically and pointed, “We worked together once. We have different skill sets, and there’s a chance we could need each other again. Better associates than a slew of dead bodies.”

“I’m in,” Dean instantly agreed. Not only for safety but because...it made sense.

Allies. Especially, given the current circumstances with Charlie and Anna, plus the empty space in the team caused by their disappearances.

“Pretty words,” Meg snorted. “Too much at risk, going on good faith alone. This is idiocy, this is —”

“I’ll stay with them.”

Castiel’s words surprised Dean more than he thought they would.

In fact, when Dean whipped his head around to stare at him, his mate’s gaze was defiantly locked with Meg.
Her eyes were narrowed and she looked downright livid with his choice, but the next words out of her mouth made a sick kind of sense. “Well. Can’t say I’m happy, but I’m not surprised. You’ve been making some dumb fucking choices lately, haven’t you? While the thought is nice and all, we’re left the short end of the stick. Ya even think of that? Rah, rah, Team Winchester! Got one of our best assassins, and what are we left with? A gaping fuckin’ hole of jackshit and—”

“I’ll go.”

“What?” Dean exploded, at the same time Jo gasped, “Sam! No one is making you—,” while Benny blurted out, “Brother, we need you here!”

Except, Sam smiled softly, glancing over to Gabriel who appeared just as stunned and stated, “It’s fine. I’m not worried and Meg’s right. It needs to be a trade to make it work, and a fair one.” He stressed the word. “Now, I know Cas is high up in the Krushnic food chain. Anyone gonna bitch about getting one of the Winchester Brothers in the swap?”

While Gabriel was still staring in disbelief, shocked speechless, Meg was the one to whistle and confirm, “Yeah. I say we made out better than you fuckers did.”

“Then, it’s settled.” Sam sighed, running a hand through his hair, “Soon as the mission’s over, I’ll come back with Gabriel.” Always the crowd pleaser, he stood up and walked over to the Krushnics, reaching out his hand and shaking everyone’s individually and said, “I look forward to working with you.”

“He’s delicious,” Balthazar commented lewdly, staring Sam from top to bottom, and then crossed the room to get his gun back. “I believe our work here is done.”

One by one, the assassins left, the situation defused and the deal…was done.

Dean was furious, but he wouldn’t make a scene, not yet. He was going to wait to get to his brother in private.

Everyone took a breath after the attack. Even though it was in the middle of the night, anxiety was running high and everyone had different coping mechanisms. Fuck, they had to. Jo and Garth hit the bottle, well…it was more like Jo grabbed Garth and pulled him to the bottle to toast him for a job well done. He had basically saved their bacon, after all.

It only took him two shots to be out like a light, which was what Ruby had been counting on when she slipped over to take his place, joining her girlfriend. Benny had wandered outside, pulling out a crumpled pack of cigarettes he only reserved to calm his nerves in high-stakes situations. This situation most definitely qualified.

Dean…well, he was lying in wait. His arms were crossed, sitting on the couch as he watched Gabriel and Sam speak in low voices in the kitchen. The smells rolling off the alphas could be scented from Dean’s position and none of them were good. He could tell they were fighting, and while Dean would normally cut his brother some slack when he was already getting beaten down this—

fuck. He wouldn’t be able to hold back this time.

His mind kept circling around the same idea.

What if—

What if this was one of the last times he would see his brother?

It felt like a hostage situation, like something could happen, like something would—

“Dean,” Cas’ voice was firm as he sat next to him and grabbed his hand. He’d been quiet, a silent support but apparently the levee broke. Dean continued to stare ahead, but didn’t stop his mate from speaking. “I know what you’re thinking. But you’re wrong. Sam will be an asset, he won’t be in danger. My family…they’ll know, well—they’ll assume that if anything happens to Sam, your team will do the same to me.”

“No,” Dean snapped, “fuckin’ nothing is gonna happen to you. You’re my goddamn mate.”

“When I say assume, they’ll think you’re as cutthroat as they are. It’s good. It’s a safeguard.”

His scent was frustrated, and Dean should have seen the order coming. “Look at me.”

There was no room for argument in his tone, yet Dean was stubborn. It wasn’t until Castiel grabbed his chin and forcefully pulled his face towards him that he couldn’t ignore him any longer. That didn’t mean he couldn’t glare something nasty.

“Dean,” this time, there was a warning there. “If it had been merely myself, or only Gabriel, things could’ve gone very, very differently. If Sam hadn’t stepped up, we could be grieving. You wouldn’t be sitting here, petulantly, ignoring me like the brat I know you can be. Please, take this as a win, I—”

“Should be prancing my happy ass around and doin’ a jig because all my family aren’t splatters on the ground?” He couldn’t help the venom that slipped out. “I should be ecstatic that your Manson gang is taking my flesh and blood away as a parting gift??!”

Cas was trying, Dean could feel the grip on his hand ebb and flow with pulses of barely-contained
frustration. He was swallowing words and phrases, looking for the right words that would soothe Dean rather than detonate the bomb that was so close to explosion.

He dropped his volume to a hush when he glanced over into the kitchen. “You’ve seen it. The way they are together. It’s growing, it’s…something real. My own brother, he cares about Sam. Under Gabriel’s wing, he’ll be safe.”

Dean wanted to kick and scream, throw a tantrum but deep down…he knew that, too. Why else would the alpha put himself in the line of fire during the prison break when shit went south? Obviously, Cas was safe in solitary. No harm would come to him. But Sam went kamikaze, Gabriel was already with him when Dean turned tail from the omega ward and joined them.

Yeah. He’d seen them together. Hell, they were sharing a room—you didn’t do that with fair-weather friends.

He chewed his lip to buy time, because Gabriel and Sam wouldn’t be arguing like this if there wasn’t something more there. Gabriel would just take his prisoner and be glad there were no casualties. Hell, he shouldn’t even care if there was a death toll, so long as Cas was okay, right?

Castiel was observing him, hoping that he’d made an impact. Unfortunately for Dean, he had.

“That doesn’t mean that I don’t hate it, Cas,” he grumbled, finally meeting the alpha’s eyes on his own terms. “I don’t know how your operation works. I don’t know protocol, I don’t know logistics, I don’t know fuck-all about it. I don’t know what Sammy is gonna be doing. I don’t want him to be…”

“Tainted?” Castiel asked, even though it was more than a guess. He already knew.

Dean’s rigid back finally broke, leaning against his mate and confessing, “More tainted.” He shook his head and scoffed. “I’ve been watching him since he was in diapers. Basically raised him. The way he thinks, the way he does things, it just…it’s different. He’s different. So yeah, maybe he can hold his own, but I don’t want him to. It’s the kind of place where I can’t watch him, pull him back from the edge if he needs it. He’s already got this darkness he hides so damn well from everyone, but I know it’s there.”

“Maybe,” Cas placed a kiss on Dean’s forehead, “he’ll thrive. He’ll never be in a situation to get caught. He’ll never find himself in a place without back-up, he’ll be free, Dean. Is that so awful?”

The question was loaded in so many ways. If he said it was, he’d be judging Cas and the life he led, the way he was and the way he’d continue to live. If he said it wasn’t, he’d be accepting his little brother, no, enabling him to give in and revel in that darkness. Neither of the options was all right.

“I don’t know.” Dean could only tell the truth. Cas knew him too well already, he’d call him out if he bullshitted, and he didn’t want to lie to him in the first place.

There was a loud and exaggerated, “You know what? Fuck it, if you need me, I’ll be getting wasted with the girls!” from Gabriel, and he stomped out of the kitchen.

Castiel and Dean watched Sam slump over the sink and hang his head, looking defeated.

“Now’s the time you’ve been waiting for,” Cas squeezed his mate’s hand and added, “Please. Remember he did this for the right reasons.”

Now, most of the fight had left him and Dean wasn’t prepared to face Sam. He knew damn well there was only a short window of opportunity, and he had to take it. While he didn’t verbally respond, he squeezed Cas’s hand in return and stood up. It took a second for his feet to move, but once they did, he marched over and he could hear Cas’ retreating footsteps as he headed for the stairs to give them privacy.

The second Dean reached the kitchen, Sam just sounded tired when he asked, “You here to bitch me out, too? Go ahead. I’m sure I’ve already heard it.”

Everything Dean had bottled up, everything he was ready to launch at his brother…it was gone.

Instead, he patted him on the back and said, “Sounds like you’ve had enough bitching out for one day. Especially from that dude. God knows he never shuts the fuck up.”

Sam slowly looked over to him with his brows scrunched in confusion. “Wait…you mean…you’re not gonna yell at me? I thought—” he chuckled and shrugged, “I actually thought you’d wind up for a punch.”

“Yeah. That was my first instinct,” Dean admitted, “But you look too pathetic. And you gotta look tough, headed over there. Can’t show up with a shiner, they’ll think you’re a loser who can’t win a fight. ‘Cause I’ll always beat your ass, ya know.”

Sam’s chuckle transformed into actual laughter as he agreed, “Yeah, probably not the best introduction.” He turned to his side where Dean was leaning against the counter. “I know you’re mad. Probably furious. But you know it couldn’t have been anyone else. The girls come as a pair, Benny has Andrea and Garth couldn’t do it. I couldn’t, fuck, after seeing you and Cas together there’s no way I’m breaking you guys apart. Please, tell me you get it?”
“Oh, I get it,” Dean said with honesty. “But just because I understand, doesn’t mean I have to like it. I’m your big brother. I’m always gonna be your big brother. And...we’re partners. This whole operation?” He whirled his hand around in a circle, “This is us. We started this. Together. I...don’t know what I’m gonna do without you next to me. I...” Dean didn’t know where all this fucking sincerity and vulnerability came from, because it sure as fuck wasn’t part of the plan!

“Dean,” Sam’s smile was kind as he reached out and grabbed his shoulder. “You don’t think Cas knows a thing or two about leadership? Not to mention the bond between you two...you’ll get everything up and running in no time. I’ll be demoted, I’ll probably just be another brain in their operation, I’m not gonna have anyone’s trust. We’ll both be fine.”

With hesitation, the omega wondered aloud, “What was that fight all about?”

“Probably what you wanted to say to me, but decided to cut me some slack.” Sam blew out through his lips and stared at the floor. “Called me an idiot with some other creative names, told me I made a huge mistake. And I...”

When he began fumbling over his words and his scent changed, Dean went into instant Big Brother mode and asked softly, “Hey, it’s okay. What happened?”

“I...told him it was okay. That I could hold my own and I-I wanted to be with him. Like, for real. I didn’t mean to say it, but it just kind of came out because the argument but I shouldn’t have fucking said it, I—” Sam wiped a hand down his face and closed his eyes. “He told me that was an even more idiotic reason. Even though...” He couldn’t finish his thought, and Dean’s hackles rose.

“Sammy. You know that it’s not you, it’s him, right? That he’s freaked, just like I was, and he was first in line to ream your ass out. I know damn well that if I was the first to yell at you, I woulda said a bunch of shit I didn’t mean. But I had time to cool my head.” He tried, God, did he try to fill his words with all the meaning, all the intent that he could.

Because his little brother looked friggin heartbroken.

And Dean knew damn well what happened.

“No,” Sam snorted and pinched the bridge of his nose. “He meant it. Pretty sure he wants nothing to do with me. I jumped the gun, I thought there was something there when all there was—” His mouth clamped shut abruptly before saying, “You don’t want to hear about this. Jesus, I sound like a little girl. Anyway,” with a shaky breath he forced a smile and said, “I’ll be fine.”

“I know,” Dean agreed without pause, “You will be. How about you head to bed and get some sleep? Just...promise you’ll wake me up before you leave?”

“Yeah, of course.” He looked so tired, so weary, of everything.

Dean couldn’t believe he had been about to give him hell. He looked like a kicked, abused puppy —and because of that he didn’t even stop himself from reaching out and pulling Sam into his arms. He came willingly, surprisingly pliable in the moment, the damn giant all loose limbs in Dean’s embrace. With a hearty pat on the back, they parted and Sam headed right for his room.

Left alone in the kitchen, hell, the whole lower level, Dean needed to figure out his next move. The countdown had him on edge, and he couldn’t let Sam leave when he was upset like this. He couldn’t let uncertainty and rejection linger in his brother as he set off on his new journey.

*Hell no.*

And Dean knew damn well where this mouthy asshole was. It didn’t matter the time, he needed to set things right.

He stomped back out through the kitchen and to the glass doors to see that the girls and, yep—Gabriel, were drinking on the back yard patio where Dean had previously been getting wasted by himself.

Dean threw open the back door and left it open with the suggestion, “How about you ladies take that bottle to your room and have girl time before bed?”

Naturally, they knew it wasn’t a suggestion.

In fact, after Ruby looked at Jo, she looked past her and drunkenly whispered, “Oh-ho, someone’s in trouble!” without a hint of delicacy or tact.

Gabriel stood up when the women stood up and stated, “Well then, I’m done, too—”

“No, you’re not.” Dean not only cut off his sentence, but his path as well, no matter how dangerous a move it was. He knew he was playing with fire, but he’d walk over hot coals for his brother.

Luckily, the alpha let the girls move around him, saying his good nights and usual casual flirtations and waited until the door was closed. After that, the pleasantries were over.

“Dean. Do I have to remind you that I just saved your life?” Gabriel’s voice was oddly monotone and he was perfectly still, staring the omega down. “I said I’m done here. Don’t make me move you.”
“Heh, pretty sure that Sam saved my life, but everyone’s got their own version, right? Since it was your family that was gonna kill us, anyway.” He fearlessly stalked forward. “What’s the deal there, anyway? ‘Cause as far as I knew, you were pretty damn proud’a you and Sam. From the first time I met you, you boldly introduce yourself as the dude sleeping with my brother. What happened to that?”

“That’s none of your concern. As of tomorrow, I’ll gleefully never see your ugly mug again. How about you go hop in bed with my brother so we can get this moving along?” He narrowed his eyes, and just as he went to shove Dean’s shoulder, the omega reached out and grabbed his wrist. The move seemed to amuse Gabriel more than anything. “Really? I mean…really? What are you to me, little omega?”

“I’m the one telling you to get your head out of your ass.” Dean’s grip tightened and, sure, he didn’t know why the fuck he was doing this, but he was posturing like hell and he couldn’t turn back. “My brother is strong. My brother is a genius; he’s brave and he’s just as conniving as you can be. He’s the definition of alpha. Somewhere along the way, he was stupid and he began liking you.”

Dean threw Gabriel’s wrist away, but right as the man was about to open his mouth and launch into something, Dean interjected faster. “But I get it. I was stupid, too. I wasn’t supposed to fall for Cas. But I did. And it was the best, stupid thing that I’ve done in my life. Except, here’s what’s different: Cas was dumb with me. He knew what was happening shouldn’t have been, but he didn’t care because I didn’t. Sometimes, it doesn’t matter what makes sense on paper, it’s what makes sense between two dumbasses. I think you know exactly what I’m saying.”

The passionate words had made Gabriel back up as Dean was spitting them out, and the omega knew that they’d resonated. He knew, because the alpha didn’t have a single thing to say to him. He was all clenched fists and wearing a fixed scowl. Yet, no retort. Dean considered that a win. And the fact he didn’t have his throat ripped out…that was a huge win, too.

Dean stepped to the side, the glass sliding door still open and said, “Sam just went up to bed. He’s wiped out. Don’t think he’d put up much of a fuss if you decided to share the bed with him.”

Gabriel was above stomping, sure, but that didn’t mean that he didn’t smoothly maneuver past Dean, and when the omega glanced back—yep. He’d made the impact he’d hoped, and the fucker was headed for Sam’s room. Thank God.

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Now Dean was completely exhausted and needed his mate. Especially because (he wouldn’t admit aloud, no way, no how) he thought he may have gotten the living hell kicked out of him for pulling that move. But sometimes, bluffing usually pays off in the end, and this was one of the times it did.

When Sam landed in his room, he’d crashed hard. That didn’t mean he wasn’t automatically on guard for any more intruders. After all, in the back of his mind (his twenty-four-seven, expecting-the-worst mind) he’d also taken into account that the Krushnics may change their minds. That the ‘deal’ wasn’t sweet enough, and they could turn around to take care of loose ends.

Except, the Krushnic who came into his room was unapologetic and brash, not concealing his presence for a second and he…

Crawled into bed with Sam…?

“What are you doing?” Sam blurted out with no preamble, because the last time he checked, Gabriel wanted nothing to do with him. And now he’d crossed right on over to wrangling Sam onto his chest and holding him.

To say Sam was stunned was an understatement. Stunned, but not silenced.

“I asked what are you doing?” he repeated, even though there was a surge of relief, that didn’t explain the other alpha’s behavior.

“Would you just hush and go to sleep?” Gabriel groused, turning the previous embrace into a stranglehold. “Jesus, you and your goddamn brother! You never zip your lips, do you?”

“Dean…” Sam suddenly realized, “he…talked to you? Why the hell would he—”

Fuck. That didn’t mean anything good. Not only had his brother confronted Gabriel, which was a stupid, ignorant move on his part, he’d probably painted a picture of Sam that he didn’t want. Some kind of pathetic, love-struck moron who couldn’t speak for himself and needed his big brother to stand up to this alpha because he couldn’t handle it and—

“Stop.” It was an order, but it didn’t have a sharpened edge. It was softened, as he continued, “No way I’m gonna be able to sleep with you smelling like that. Just,” he groaned heavily. “You’re right. Everything is gonna be fine and I didn’t mean to….”

The pause was so damn long, Sam almost wondered if Gabriel had fallen asleep. Of course, he hadn’t, because his arms were still holding him just as tightly, but maybe that was all she wrote. Maybe Sam shouldn’t have expected much different.
“Shit.” Gabriel cursed under his breath. “I don’t know how to say I’m sorry, okay? I don’t do it because I don’t need to. But I gave you a lot of flack and you didn’t deserve it. And I ditched out at the wrong time. I know that.”

No, Sam knew he was being too damn sensitive: that was the problem, so he said, “You don’t need to apologize, Gabriel. It is what it is. Just…let it lie. It’s fine.”

“No, it’s not.” There was determination in his voice, as well as his scent, but the words were still difficult; plus Sam had already tried to put him out of his misery once, he couldn’t keep pressing matters. “The reason I threw a fit was because I care. If you were just another one of the crew, it wouldn’t have bothered me. But knowing it’s you, that you’re the one with that weight on your shoulders and sacrificing yourself, it’s—”

“My choice. I know I’ll be safe, I’m smart, I—”

“You’re not getting it!” There was nothing but vexation bursting from the alpha as he rolled them over and towered above Sam, who suddenly shrunk under the intensity. “You’re my goddamn weakness, Sam! And now, instead of being in this nice little corner of the breaking and entering market, you’re smack-dab within sniping range!”

There was a grin on Sam’s face, and Gabriel frowned at the fact that he was smiling, but Sam couldn’t give a crap about it. “Good.”

“What about this is good?!?” Gabriel hissed, trying not to shout and alert the others, “Nothing—”

Sam silenced him with a kiss. It wasn’t rough and tumble like Gabriel would have responded to, it was sweet and tender to throw him off even more. With the barest brush of his tongue, Sam fell back to the mattress and ran a hand through the other alpha’s hair, still grinning. Gabriel’s face showed confusion; he was lost and that’s exactly where Sam wanted him.

“It’s good I’m your weakness,” Sam stated plainly. “Because if that’s your only downfall? I’d say you’re in the clear. You know damn well there’s nothing ‘weak’ about me. You’re only pissed off because you suddenly have one and you’re admitting it, but as far as Achilles’ heels go, you got off lucky. Not to sound arrogant, but I’m willing to bet I’m better than most of your team already.”

Suddenly, a grin tugged on the corner of Gabriel’s mouth when he sneered, “You little fucker. You just wanted to hear me say it.”

“That you’re totally in love with me?” He grabbed a fistful of Gabriel’s hair and raised an eyebrow. “Yeah. Something like that.”

“I’m totally in hate with you,” he lamented and dove forward to suck a mark into Sam’s neck, “And now I’m stuck with you.”

“Mm, you can be both,” Sam chuckled, brushing his cheek against Gabriel’s brow, finally feeling that sense of relief. “Hell, you sure started out at the other end of the spectrum. Although, things got…muddled. Remember the first night we had together? God, we wanted to mate on the spot. It was so fucking hard to keep away, everything was,” he moaned unintentionally, just as Gabriel grazed his throat, “T—that night was everything.”

There was a brief pause where Gabriel mulled over Sam’s words and he said, “Yeah. Can’t really forget it. But things aren’t as muddled as you think they are. Nothing’s changed, kid.” Then Gabriel asked against the hinge of Sam’s jaw, sending a shiver down his spine. “You gonna shut up yet?”

While he held back his shudder, he couldn’t hold back the contented sigh when Gabriel started moving back towards his lips. And the words. Because that admission…God, Sam needed it. He needed it like he needed air, because he second-guessed all the things he thought he knew, with what they were being right at the top of the damn list. Hearing Gabriel say that? It changed Sam and gave him hope, gave him a new spark again.

“I’ll shut up if you make me,” Sam teased, now face-to-face with a wicked expression on the other alpha’s face.

Gabriel could barely contain his glee when he said, “I’d hoped you’d say that,” and proceeded to render Sam speechless.
Hold Fast to Dreams

Chapter Summary

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

—Langston Hughes

When Dean eventually went back in his room, it was to Cas’s open arms, his warm body and the scent of pure, amazing alpha mate. This was something he would never tire of; he already knew it. Dean completely and utterly collapsed after the adrenaline, and his mate was ready to catch him, pull him close to his chest and kiss his forehead.

Some time in the early hours leading up until morning while Dean was in a friggin coma, Cas even managed to grab another blanket, because a spike in the electric bill may draw some unwanted attention. Water was water, it didn't matter—but heating a joint this size? That was just a no-go, plain and simple since they were glorified squatters.

It was Castiel who heard the morning traffic downstairs. It was a little more chaotic than usual for obvious reasons, and he knew damn well Dean wouldn’t want to miss his brother leaving. So Castiel kissed him into consciousness.

Soon, green eyes opened with a flirtatious, yet sleepy expression when Dean said, “Mm, I could get used to this, babe—”

“Sam. I believe he’s saying his goodbyes.”

“Oh no, not without me!” Dean pushed out of the bed, “We’ll have to work on your ‘good morning’ etiquette, okay?”

“I’m more than aware it’s lacking,” the alpha followed closely behind, although Dean paused in the doorway.

Cas sighed and brought both his hands up and massaged the back of Dean’s neck and his shoulders. When Cas leaned forward to kiss him on the cheek, he had to remind Dean (he’d do it as many times as his mate wanted him to) that, “Gabriel’s is an asset, Sam will be safe, everything will be fine.”

He thought his omega knew that already, so the hesitation was strange. After all, the previous night all the bitter scents from stewing about Sam had surprisingly turned sweet when Dean eventually returned to their room. And it all centered around a conversation he apparently had with Gabriel. Dean had set out to make things right, and Cas had been a listening ear as his mate described the win.

“Cas…?” Dean’s voice was throaty and a low warning, “’M not worried about Sammy. I stopped because I’ve got one helluva hard-on and I can’t exactly skip down stairs and hug my brother goodbye with a raging boner because of yer wake up call!”

“Oh.”

That would make sense. Castiel quickly dropped every point of contact between them and glanced down to notice that he, too, was half hard. Which would’ve been a disaster, given the fact that the well-worn flannel left nothing to the imagination. “Very, very good idea,” Cas crossed his
arms and began thinking of...unsavory textbook-style imagery.

Maybe it hadn’t been the best idea to kiss his newly-mated omega awake in this instance, Castiel would save that information for the future.

The only problem was that whenever he glanced at Dean, he’d gulp all over again because Cas was just imagining all the things he wanted to do with his mate once this wrapped up and they had alone time... Seeing Dean with a pulsing, fully-hard cock hadn’t happened since they mated because of all the chaos. They were due for some personal time.

After Sam and Gabriel took off, their job was to remain on standby, in limbo. Sam said he’d let the team know (through a burner phone he’d easily snap in half) when he was back to the Krushnic ‘base’ and then most likely, go ahead to settle in with Gabriel. Which was why Castiel hoped Dean would come around to seeing his brother truly had nothing negative looming in the future.

“Whew! All right!” Dean clapped his hands together, “I think I got this!”

“At least until the next moment you can’t keep your hands off me,” Castiel replied snidely, stepping in front of Dean while walking down the stairs.

“I hate you,” the omega growled, “So goddamn much.”

“I know,” Castiel winked lasciviously.

When they got to the bottom, it was immediately apparent that a few things weren’t right.

Yeah, Gabriel and Sam may have been packed, but it was rounding on ten o’clock (Cas would’ve counted on daybreak) and they were still...lounging. The ruckus that had served as Castiel’s alarm clock should have gone off much sooner than this—he hadn’t realized they’d slept in until now. The delayed departure didn’t make sense, Dean noticed it too, as he was side-eyeing a bit of commotion.

It was Jo who eventually caught Dean, swinging him into another room and snapping, “Bobby’s been trying to get ahold of you! Says it’s urgent! Won’t talk to anyone but our fearless leader.”

She rolled her eyes and added, “Plus, you and Sam are the only ones with the tech to hook up Facetime with the TV so we can all see what he’s got for us!”

“Urgent?!” Dean was automatically on his toes and alert. “Did something happen to Bobby? Is he—”

“I promise, he’s a-okay! It’s good news, sounded like?”

“Urgent, good news?” Dean deadpanned “That doesn’t fucking happen. I didn’t know that was a thing. But let’s hear him out, his brain works in ways Sam and mine doesn’t. He’s gotta have something important. Sammy!?”

Jo jumped at the loud noise, and Sam reappeared after, beginning the technical side of the work. Ruby soon joined the party and asked, “You connecting everything with the TV? I’ll get the cords prepared for the convo. ‘Cause while Bobby wants the call to be to you,” Ruby gestured to Dean, “He wants everyone to hear it. Like...how does that make any sense?”

Now Dean was nervous, even though he probably shouldn’t be. Bobby would’ve given a warning if it was life or death and it would have been a private discussion. Not a ‘rah, rah, go team’ kinda shit. Maybe he needed to see Dean with his own eyes; after being in prison, followed by hearing about the Krushnic crisis, and to make sure his mating was legitimate? After all, it would be easy to say that Dean was there, but unavailable. It meant more to take the call from Dean’s phone—maybe Bobby’s paranoia wasn’t unwarranted, given what the omega had been through lately. Checking in on him actually made sense.

“Okay, we’re in business,” Sam responded as Ruby handed him one more cable. “You can call him now.”

With a steadying breath and making sure his mate was next to him, he set the phone in the middle of the glass table. It was literally up for grabs, whoever wanted to send him a message, talk to him about whatever this was about, Dean didn’t know. Bobby always seemed to be one step ahead, and was constantly warning the group if they were charging headfirst towards a cliff.

His image came up on the plasma TV, Dean grabbing the phone first to prove it was he who’d placed the call. “Heya Bobby. Heard you’ve got some info. I know you were worried I’d hear whatever you’re cooking up, and call BS unless I got it from the horse’s mouth. And you’re the horse.” That’s what Jo had told him, even though Dean knew it was much more.

“Yes, you gotta hear this from me, son, or not at all.”

Dean hummed and panned the camera around the room, circling around until he leaned it up against a set of coasters so Bobby could see his face. All of them were staring at the screen, waiting.

Jo asked cautiously, “You said it was good news? We’re seriously lacking in that department.
“Then yer gonna think y’al all died and went to Heaven,” Bobby scoffed and leaned back. “Know Sam contacted me about switching safe houses. You don’t need to. You guys can head right on home, there’s no threat anymore.”

Garth cleared his throat, and pointed out, “Uh. I’m pretty sure we’re still under fire and need to get out of this house today. Do you have a new safe house or not, Bobby? I—”

“You heard me. Threat’s gone.” His frown of frustration on the big screen burned into their eyes, and the next statement made them freeze. “Listen here, and listen good. Charlie wasn’t drivin’ a getaway car when she picked up Anna. She was playing a role. So everyone who thinks she’s the bad guy and went rogue? Git that bullshit out of your head right now.”

“How do you know this?” Benny was the only one not shell-shocked enough to ask.

“Girl called me ahead of time. We talked it out, worked logistics from every angle, before she put her plan into motion. Needed me to fill some roles for her, if it came down to it. Said Ruby may need me to play boss and represent her law firm, but to make sure I never heard the name Milton.” Bobby sighed and explained, “She called me last night after they checked into the hotel. Then called the cops on an anonymous tip line. She turned herself and Anna in as punishment for some kinda betrayal?” He raised an eyebrow, because Bobby obviously helped the planning and had a vague idea to what prompted it, but didn’t know Charlie’s precise motivations.

“Holy fuck,” Dean was breathless, because the sight he’d witnessed...he thought he’d been stabbed in the back. Twice. And the second time, by someone whom he considered to be his litter sister, would be a scar he carried for the rest of his life. But the image of that car driving away...it was to win Anna’s trust? To turn them both in?

He knew damn well his scent was souring, even though he tried to hide it with an unwavering expression, it was like a punch in the gut. No one would say anything or look at him the wrong way so he didn’t need to hide it, but he felt it was his duty. But still, the team was in the same boat. Cas was there for him, and he didn’t need to hide it, but he felt it was his duty. But still, the team was in the same boat. Cas was there for him, without missing a beat with a soothing touch. Just enough to steady him and not coddle him. God, what would Dean do without him?

“It’ll be on the news, soon. Charlie’s gonna confess to her and Anna being behind the prison bombings. Two bombs, two women. With a fast search, Charlie found a gang of inmates that all escaped together. She’s gonna say they were the ones they were aimin’ to get out. It won’t link back to you. So many escaped, the numbers are too high, and Charlie’s pleadin’ guilty.”

“Jesus,” Ruby gasped and shook her head, “But what’s keeping Anna from narking on us?! That fuckin’ bitch has stabbed so many people in the back, she’s only looking out for herself!” And, yeah, Ruby had a damn good point.

Bobby’s confidence hadn’t wavered, not once. “We talked about that, too. About what’s stoppin’ Anna from a plea bargain? Said we’d tell her Krushnic loyalists were on the inside of all prison walls. She’d be doin’ time, no matter what. Plea deal would get her dead, no matter what. Yer right, she’s always lookin’ out for herself. Anna doesn’t wanna die, she’ll be looking for a contingency plan.”

“But Charlie’s going down with the ship.” Dean felt helpless and growled, “This isn’t right! Charlie shouldn’t have to live out her life like this, just to take the heat off us! Just to punish Anna!”

“Dean,” Bobby’s voice took on that soothing, father-like tone when he said, “She wanted this. Charlie was so damn insistent about it. Felt it was her atonement, she said.”

Instantly, Dean responded, “Doesn’t mean I have to sit by and like it! Where did they put her?!”

“I was trackin’ em.” His voice sounded remorseful. “They’re being shipped somewhere remote. Probably a blacksite, with their history of prison breaks. Authorities’ll assume they’ve got others workin’ with them. Which means it’s safer if no one knows where they are, thinkin’ they’re high risk to get out and cause a fuss again. They fell off my radar four hours ago.”

“So. That’s it.” Dean’s words sounded empty and hollow, Cas wrapped an arm around his shoulders and everything was silent in the room.

Charlie had given up everything for them and it was so...Charlie. There was a feeling of mourning in the room that counteracted the relief and left a mixture of emotion and sullen scents. Jo was holding Ruby’s hand and leaning into her, Garth and Benny were staring at the floor, Sam’s arms were crossed and his lips were pursed with Gabriel flanking him and standing close enough to discreetly rest his hand low on Sam’s back.

Dean was taking it the hardest. Because now everything made sense. There weren’t any ‘what if’s?’ and there weren’t any gaping holes in stories. There weren’t any questions about ‘can you really know someone’ at all any more. It was loss, plain and simple. Castiel was the only thing keeping him afloat, the only thing that kept his feet planted.

He was a quiet but strong force, now with his hand on Dean’s thigh, whispering into his ear,
“Everything’s okay. We can go home now.”

‘Home.’ That word resonated, because it solidified their true mate bond, how they were in this together and even though this was a trying time, they’d make it through.

Dean whispered, “Thank you,” and kissed him like he meant it, only to be interrupted by Bobby clearing his throat.

“Okay, lovebirds. That ain’t the only reason I called.”

Confusion and puzzlement enveloped the room in a fog of scents, and Jo asked, “There’s more?”

“Yes. After Charlie told me her plan, I knew you guys would be lookin’ a little light in the intel department. Now, I’ve known you boys since you were kids, know your operation, know it’s a damn good one and don’t deserve to go down the shitter because of a rotten apple.”

To say he had everyone’s undivided attention was an understatement. Because even though the danger had been imminent, this was their livelihood. It wasn’t like Ruby was going to flip burgers or Benny was going to be a barber. This was their life, they loved it, and it made them the big bucks. So this perkcd them right the hell up.

“We’re listening,” Dean prompted, leaning in to stare at the phone instead of the screen, showing Bobby he meant business.

“Did some research on your second cellmate when you were relocated, Dean. The one Charlie let come along in the escape? Name’s Kevin Tran. Kid’s a genius, we’re talkin’ government-level hacking, classified information at your fingertips in nanoseconds. I reached out to him after the prison break, vetted him and did my research, and he’s in the market for a job. Said he could start right away if we want him.”

“Holy shit, Bobby, you’re awesome!” Ruby lit up like a firecracker, “We never thought we’d get anyone close to Charlie again! Dean, did you like this guy?”

With a snort, Dean couldn’t help but laugh, “He’s chill. But Bobby’s right, he’s a kid. Didn’t know his qualifications, but he’d mesh well, not stir the pot or create drama. Hell, if he’s our brainiac? That’s perfect!”

“Glad you approve,” Bobby shook his head. “As for Anna? I’ve got pick of the litter in freelance, and I think you’re gonna like my choice. Sam, I’m sending you profiles right now, check your phone.” Just as he said that, the alpha’s ‘work’ cell lit up and he pulled it out to open the encrypted message. “Yer looking at Alicia and Max Banes. Probably haven’t heard of them because while they’re newer to the scene, they’re damn shadows. I’ve worked a couple jobs with ‘em, they’re the real deal. Max can be a pain in the ass sometimes, but I could say the same for all of you.”

“Twins?” Garth noted, looking over Sam’s shoulder as he scrolled through what little information Bobby had. “Do they have that, like, telepathy?” Everyone ignored him with an eye roll. “Hey! That’s a legitimate question! It’s science!”

“Okay, ignoring Garth,” Dean waved him off, “You’re vouching for ‘em? So long as I know they’ve got your seal of approval, that’s good enough for me.”

“You know I’d never lead you astray. Anna was a snake that slipped through the cracks, and I’ll have to live with that mistake the rest of my life. Can’t apologize enough.” Bobby hung his head and his shoulders tensed up, probably as his whole body did, but they couldn’t see that far. “I’ll give you their contact information. Told ‘em if you liked what you saw, you’d reach out.”

“Bobby, thank you,” Sam smiled as he glanced up from his phone. “You’re right. They look like fantastic field operatives. I’m glad we can fill in the missing holes.”

“You boys take care.”

Just like that, the screen went black.

“Hell yeah!” Ruby exclaimed, “We are back in business!”

“I don’t get it,” Gabriel spoke up and looked around the room in disbelief. “This old guy calls, gives you names, you just let these random dickwads into your business? Just like that? I mean...how does that make any sense? It’s no wonder you ended up with Anna.”

“This old guy is like a father to us,” Sam snapped at Gabriel before anyone else had a chance, because he had no doubt at least three others would rip Gabriel a new asshole. “He got us into the business. He showed us how to forge a team. He vetted everyone on the team, who’s like family. In case you don’t remember, Anna fucked you over, too. So yeah. If ‘this old guy’ calls and gives us the okay, we’re gonna trust him.”

“All right.” Gabriel shrugged his shoulders and acquiesced rather easily. “Different way of doing things, but now it makes a little more sense. I have heard of the Tran kid. I’d give him my vote. The Banes Twins? No idea. Either they cover their tracks or they’re nobodies. Either way, we’ve gotta blow this popsicle stand, snookums.”
Sam had already lost all his fight and laughed, agreeing, “We really do. Didn’t plan on staying here so long. But I know I’ll see you guys around?” He looked out to the team, his chest tight, knowing that things would never be the same.

After all, unbeknownst to them, Sam had contacted Bobby, too. That’s why the twins were called in, because they weren’t just replacing Anna, they were replacing Sam. It was a miracle there was an actual two-for-one deal on the table, and a damn good one that Bobby would have recommended in the first place.

Sam had no idea how much investment Castiel would honestly put into the venture. Who the hell knew if he had any larceny experience, which was why he needed Bobby to help fill his shoes. Sam needed to exit knowing the team’s roster was full, that he wasn’t leaving them high and dry with his impulsive choice. Goodbyes were difficult. Even his friends—no, his family—with the roughest exteriors almost broke down when they were hugging Sam for what could be the final time.

When Sam came face to face with Dean, fuck, he thought it would be easier because they’d hashed things out and chatted the night before. Except, Sam actually heading for that door? It was completely different.

“Take care’a yourself, okay? Don’t let shortie push you around, remember—you can always step on him,” Dean’s voice cracked when he he wrapped his arms around Sam. They were close enough for him to whisper, “You know, it’s okay to spread your wings now. To be yourself. I’m not gonna judge you or hold you back, Sammy, and not just because I’m not there—’cause I want you to be free. There’s no angel or devil on your shoulder, there’s just...you. Being happy. Okay?”

Sam was not expecting those words, but it made him hold Dean tighter, his scent exploding with love for his brother. “I...can’t tell you how much that means to me. I’m gonna miss you, but I won’t drop off the radar. I promise I’ll keep in touch. And the whole point of this was to work together, right?” They pulled away just enough to speak face to face, “Working together means getting to see your ugly mug all the time. Besides, you’re all grown up and mated now, you don’t need me to bail your ass out like I always used to. I’m passing the torch to Cas. He has no idea what he’s in for.”

“Hah! Ain’t that the truth,” Dean all but cackled, and the reassurances actually did what they were supposed to. In a hushed voice, he added, “You know, I’m not blind. And my nose works. Even if you think it’s unconventional, or somethin’ ain’t right about it—the only thing that matters is how you feel. Or...how he makes you feel. Don’t be a pussy. Make a move if he won’t, Bitch.”

“I’m sure he will, Jerk. Whatever you said last night...it worked. Thank you.”

Dean winked. “I know, I’m a badass. Now, before you’re here until dusk, let’s get you loaded up and on the road, huh? Since we can all leave now, too!”

“That’s a great feeling, isn’t it? Didn’t expect it to turn out this way, that’s for sure, but it all worked out,” Sam’s scent was full of disbelief. “C’mon, walk me out to the car.”

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With excitement and joy, the call of confirmation from Sam—that he was all right and was headed back to Gabriel’s (where it sounded like he was interested in calling home base and living?!)—the team had a party with the rest of the booze in the house while they pulled the ambulance out from where it had been hidden. This was the tricky part. They were all loaded up, and they needed to cruise, but not flip their headlights on. Everyone had used alternative means to get to the prison, so their cars and trucks were at home.

Which meant the ambulance was a glorified bus.

And the last person had to drive it to where they stowed it, walk a mile or two, and get a cab home. Still...they were going home! They didn’t have to look over their shoulder and they didn’t have to lay low anymore. It was an amazing feeling they hadn’t been expecting to have for God knows how long!

“Jesus, Dean! You’re stinking up the place!” Jo complained, pinching her nose for dramatic effect.

Dean was half sitting in Cas’ lap, his good leg bouncing up and down, when he snipped, “Well, excuse me for being stoked to show my mate out home for the first time!” He turned to the front and demanded, “Benny! Can you go any faster?! Shit, it’s like you’re a little old lady! We’re in an ambulance without a speed limit, for fuck’s sake!”

“That’s it!” Benny snapped, “You just got the ‘skip the line’ pass, brother. Not because you’re special, but because you’re annoying. Hope no one minds if we drop him off first?”

A resounding “No!” was shouted from the back, as well as from the passenger seat.

“I mean...I didn’t mean to do that,” Dean said with a wicked grin forming on his face, “But I sure
as hell will take it!”

Cas shook his head fondly and sighed, “What have I gotten into with you, Dean?”

“Oh, you’re about to find out!” He was nothing but mischief and the waggle of eyebrows, teasing and tempting his alpha.

Until the others yelled at him to stop. And then he stopped. Because, very soon, they’d be home anyway. Dean had waited this long, what was a few more miles, right?

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Castiel and Dean wished everyone a good night as they were all but shoved from the vehicle and out onto the sidewalk. The omega hadn’t taken Cas’s hand yet, which left him in limbo, as Dean went over through the rock garden and began digging. Eventually, he came up with a house key.

“How’s the security system?” Cas asked dryly with a raised eyebrow. “You’re head of a larceny group, and you hide the key to your home as does the rest of the population? Those who get broken into?”

“Hey! I’ve got a security system!” Dean instantly defended, and was rocking on his heels in anticipation, “You ready to see the place?”

“I’ve never been more ready,” the alpha smiled and it warmed Dean’s heart, his scent giving him even more fuel than he already had.

“C’mon!” Dean waved him on and the alpha was right behind him.

Just as Dean had said, there was quite an elaborate security system with passwords, codes and a fingerprint scanner once you reached the landing. Offhandedly, he told Cas, “All of the team has access to the house, gotta knock Anna off and put you on. We’ll scan your prints tomorrow. Hmm…” It was so matter-of-fact, but Castiel felt his heart race.

Knowing this would be his place in the world, the one he hadn’t been searching for and never knew he needed? It was right here. With Dean. He’d never anticipated a future being so filled with joy, and Cas knew damn well that exact scent has spiked through the air.

The omega turned to back to him with a smile, “Okay, so this part’s gonna be quick, ‘cause I can’t keep my hands off’a you.” He made a sweeping gesture as they walked through the hallways and he pointed out random spaces. Although it didn’t look like anything grand outside, the interior was a completely different story. It was immediately apparent to anyone inside Dean’s house that he had money (lots of it), yet it wasn’t tacky—there was simply a fine touch to things.

It certainly had Castiel captivated even as the omega rushed them along, “Okay, so kitchen, dining room, living room, down here I’ve got my ‘study,’ but upstairs is my office—AKA headquarters. Safety precaution, it’s the room right next to my bedroom. Uh, here’s one of the two bathrooms and a…closet.”

It was ridiculously obvious that Dean wanted to get upstairs, like, yesterday. “Dean,” Castiel’s voice was a reassurance, “It’s dark out, isn’t it? Wouldn’t it be better to see your lovely home in its full glory in the daylight? Why don’t we visit the bedroom? After our sleep being interrupted by my…tactless family, your worries about Sam, and the alcohol, I doubt you got any decent rest.”

Before he even finished, Dean was walking backwards up the stairs, staring in amusement at Cas, “Oh yeah. That’s totally it. Sleeping, uh-huh. You’re right, though. Rest of my house is better when it’s not all artificial light.” He turned around to walk up the stairs the correct way. The last thing Dean wanted was to break his neck after they’d come so far. “Think it’ll do the bedroom justice, though. At least for…sleep,” he quipped back playfully.

Cas was grinning, and that right there was a testament to how far he’d come. Before prison, he’d never even cracked a smile, unless it was amusement over a mark’s last words, or something equally sadist. Now, he was laughing; he was beaming openly, freely, and that was all due to Dean. This fucking true mate’s magic, it had him under a spell and he never wanted to change. He didn’t think he could if he tried.

Dean threw open the door and flipped on the second light switch—which illuminated the floor lamps that created mood lighting rather than harsh, bright coverage. Cas took in the large space, with an equally large bed and chuckled because it was so Dean. There were family photos on the walls, and little trinkets all around on his mahogany chest of drawers—or as Dean told Castiel in prison: trophies.

His omega had sticky fingers and would find something mundane, whether it was a nickle or a small piece of something extravagant that was alongside something they were lifting on jobs, because if they were stealing, they were stealing. It was for the memories; it reminded him of his family, of their teamwork and the funny stories that came with them.

Of course, Castiel was eager to experience Dean’s memory foam that he’d boasted about behind bars; but right as he was about to step in, the omega stopped him.

Cas raised an eyebrow and asked, “Do you wish for me to carry you across the threshold, _mate_?”
"Actually, I wouldn’t hate that," Dean snorted and muffled a burst of laughter. “But! The bedroom? It’s a no-clothes zone.” He ran his hand down Castiel’s arm as he emphasized, “Gotta take ‘em off before entry, I’m afraid.”

In that case, Castiel wouldn’t waste time. He began undressing so quickly the omega balked, so Castiel bantered back, “Did the room make the rule? Or did you? That must be uncomfortable when you have your brother over and you need to show him something in here.”

The alpha took advantage of his mate’s flabbergasted state and dove in to kiss down his neck. In the process, he unbuttoned Dean’s flannel and cupped it on the ground, cupping the front of his jeans. Castiel felt the undeniable hardness in his palm and when Dean’s arms wrapped around his neck and kissed him for real?

God, he couldn’t wait!

“Here, just—” Castiel was ripping the jeans off but being careful of the bullet wound. When Dean stumbled and cursed, he nearly knocked them both over, almost toppling to the floor—but they were damn lucky the alpha was strong and stopped the fall. “Yes, just—step out of these. Okay, now your socks, Dean. Good, very good.”

The moment they’d shed their clothes in the doorway, the previous thought was still a niggling desire in Castiel’s mind. So he went for it.

Dean yelped in surprise as Cas picked him up—bridal style—and carried him across the threshold to lay him down and spread him out on the bed.

And, oh, was he a vision. With darkened pupils, pink cheeks that made his freckles stand out and grabbing, fearless hands.

Dean was demanding, “Get over here! Or do I have to remind you of how awkward this morning was? Been thinking about this all day.” When Cas finally descended and ground their hips together, pulling delicious sounds from Dean’s chest, the omega had to fight for his words—because this felt so damn good! “N—not just the sex. And not just today. Been w-wanting you here. In my home. With me. Feelin’ like it’s your home, too. I hope you c-can,” he gasped as Cas’s cock slipped through the gushing wetness between his legs—just a tease for now.

“You are home. You’re where my home is, Dean,” Castiel made sure he had the omega’s full attention, and he knew he did when Dean gulped with a swirling of hope and love coming from his scent. The alpha tilted his head and wondered, “Do you think you can take it?”

There was only a split-second of confusion before Dean whispered like a prayer, “Fuck yes,” but amended, “Only if you’re kissing the hell out of me. I miss those lips, babe.”

“I think that could be arranged.” Cas’ heart was beating out of his chest as Dean lifted his hips just so, and the alpha grabbed the base of his own dick.

It wasn’t difficult for him to find the source of the gushing, free-flowing slick and he pushed the head of his cock into Dean’s needy hole before switching it up. Fuck, Dean wanted more of Cas’ cock, but he knew exactly what Cas was doing. He was slowly sliding into him as he moved back up Dean’s body and grabbed a handful of his hair. It was all to kiss him breathless as he pushed into his body—as he promised.

A long, groan that lasted the duration of Cas’ smooth movement before he bottomed out was ripped from Dean’s chest. “Fuck!” he said in between kisses, “You’re huge. You were made for me...you’re all mine,” Dean stammered out, and began raising his hips to meet Cas’s inward thrusts.

“You are all right, though?” The alpha had to ask, just to be sure.

“Fuckin’ peachy. Now, do your worst, alpha,” a glimmer of mischief was on Dean’s face.

He knew damn well that Cas would deliver and as he upped the pace and the intensity. Dean was on cloud nine, sucking up and down the his mate’s neck, licking at the still-fresh claim that represented the rest of their lives...

That really seemed to rile Cas’ alpha up, because whenever Dean went anywhere near that bite, he’d growl in his chest and punch the breaths from Dean’s lungs by pumping into his ass. It was so sensitive, so real and physical; a sharp reminder of their intense, fearless love. Not to mention the way they belonged to one another, completely and forever.

Both could feel Cas’s knot beginning to swell, and neither even had to bring up pulling away anymore. Freedom felt so goddamn amazing!

“I love you,” Dean praised, arching his back and feeling his impending orgasm, “Love you so damn much.”

The phrases echoed in the scent of Dean in his purest form, speaking the most honest words from his heart—Castiel’s true mate...he should have anticipated he wouldn’t have lasted that long, but their chemistry was without equal.
Castiel cradled the back of Dean’s head, kissing him a note sweeter as his knot swelled and then both men were cumming. While Cas held onto Dean as though he was something cherished and precious, the omega continued to grind and twist on his mate’s knot, needing to give him as much pleasure as he could.

Sure, it was a bitch on his leg, but seeing Cas like that? Those were the moments he lived for. And it didn’t take much—a bit of a steady pace, tugging against his sensitive knot the right way and then a few dirty demands and the alpha was blowing another load into his mate.

After that overwhelming satisfaction, Cas looked down at a smug omega who was wearing a shit-eating grin, but his eyes were watching Cas with all the adoration in the world.

“I hope you’ll like it here, alpha,” Dean teased, and that’s when Castiel wondered—was that what this was about? Securing Cas here? The alpha made it abundantly clear that he was a glorified nomad, and to settle down with his mate, well, it was a dream. Maybe he’d continue the game a bit longer…

“I suppose I do,” he smirked and rolled them onto their sides. “The memory foam is...interesting.”

Dean’s heart skipped a beat because he could change the mattress. He totally would in a second! Should he ask Cas if it was awkward? Should he wait until he’d gotten a few good nights’ rests on it? Should he—

“You are overthinking. Merely looking into your eyes tells me a story of chaos, Dean.” Castiel brushed his thumb over his omega’s cheek bone. “I already enjoy it here. I’m quite excited to see it in the light, as we’ve talked about. But more than anything, I’m with you. I’ll go where you go, you’re my home. You know what this means?”

There was a bit of a lull before Dean hesitantly replied, just shy of a whisper, “A whole helluva lot?”

“I believe that’s a good answer,” the alpha confirmed. “I missed my opportunity earlier, but you already know that I love you beyond measure.”

Apparently, it was possible for Dean to blush an even more furious pink. “I know you do, Cas. That’s why I’m so excited for the future. Our future.”

“And the state of your team doesn’t look too bad either. You lose Anna, Charlie and Sam, you gain Kevin, the twins and myself. I’d say you’re coming out on top.”

That statement meant everything to Dean. Up until now, Castiel hadn’t committed to the crew one way or another, but this was verbal confirmation! It was like all of Dean’s dreams were coming true. He would’ve have pinched himself, except for the fact that he had taken a bullet to the leg, and that was flaring up...so he knew that it was real.

“I think we’ll be back in business soon,” Dean announced, and kissed Cas soundly. “Couldn’t have done it, any of it, if it weren’t for you.”

“I could say the same,” he reflected the thoughts back and gathered the omega up in his arms, “Here’s to better times ahead. Not a new beginning, because we need to remember where we came from to get here.”

“I’ll take it.” Oh, Dean sure as hell agreed.

He wouldn’t be duped again, he wouldn’t lose another crew member who was silently suffering. Hell, Dean would never get caught by the cops again! Once was enough, and he made it out with a nice souvenir too. He couldn’t beat this beautiful, warm and muscled trophy, holding him and smelling absolutely heavenly. Dean would have to change some things moving forward. Because now?

It wasn’t Sam and him. It was only...Dean. That changed things. Still, he knew he could handle it. Castiel was his support, and while the others may view the alpha as a wild card, there had been so many situations where he could’ve resorted to violence and solved the problem but he held back. The family just needed to get to know him, not as “Dean’s hitman mate” but as Castiel. They’d all understand then.

“The best times ahead,” Dean muttered, mostly to himself, but Cas picked it up. Castiel held Dean closer, kissing the top of his head and agreeing right away. “Yes, the best times.”
Epilogue: Nothing Good Gets Away

Chapter Summary

“If it is right, it happens—the main thing is not to hurry. Nothing good gets away.”

- John Steinbeck

From day one, Sam was surprised at how easily the Krushnic way of life came to him. In a way he should have expected it, knowing Gabriel was well as he did. Even though their relationship started out fast and furious, they understood each other and knew more about the other than anyone, right after their first night together.

It was interesting. Even though Sam hadn’t known Castiel for long, seeing where he came from, the way the Krushnics were raised and did the job; it made him appreciate just how much the alpha had changed for his brother.

Over here, it was cold. It was about the mission, the chase and the pay-off.

But at night, Sam was warm.

Any differences, any problems or frustrations Gabriel had with Sam or vice versa, they’d work out in a very physical manner—alpha on alpha—horizontal in bed.

The best part was that Gabriel didn’t hover. He allowed Sam to integrate, at first working his way up in intelligence, until he actually got a job. After he developed a surprising friendship with the woman, it was Meg who partnered with Sam on missions. Gabriel didn’t even know that Sam pulled off a hit until after it happened.

Hell, he wouldn’t have known at all until the bounty came in and he wondered where the cash came from, Sam was so calm and collected, completely unaffected by it afterwards. Just as Gabriel assumed he would be. Secretly, Sam could tell that Gabriel was proud of him. There was even one night when they were both exhausted from a huge job that utilized the entire family to eliminate their contractor’s rival cartel, that Gabriel sleepily mumbled how glad he was that Sam was there.

It wasn’t much longer after that the topic of mating came up. Of course, it was during an argument.

“I can’t exactly tell him to go fuck himself, can I?!” Sam snapped at Gabriel one night. “I’m sick of these accusations! At first, I was a glorified POW! You told me explicitly to play nice with everyone—just in case. It’s not my fault that Balthazar flirts with me like there’s no tomorrow! Don’t you dare even think I’m hooking up with him! Are you an idiot?!”

Gabriel was angry, because this happened all too often and he was sick of it! What Gabriel didn’t know was that the beta only threw himself at Sam whenever Gabriel was around. He was taunting his fellow Krushnic and Sam didn’t know why but he did play nice; maybe he played along a little, seeing if Gabriel would make a move. Every time, though, the only thing he did was rage at Sam!

“I don’t know, are you an idiot?! You know damn well you’ve earned your place, you can talk openly to whoever you want! Do you like the extra attention?” Gabriel stalked forward until they were practically nose to nose. “Do I not give you enough, that you need it from someone else? A sleaze like—”

“No! Jesus, Gabriel, you’re out of your fucking mind!” Sam growled and grabbed the back of other alpha’s head, another hand cupped against his cheek. “Don’t you get it? Do you not see it? Or do you not want to?”

With dangerously narrowed eyes, and a voice full of suspicion, he returned, “What, precisely, am I not getting, kid?”
“You’re it for me. I don’t even see anyone else—I’ve got fuckin’ blinders on. It doesn’t matter if anyone flirts with me, they’re not on my radar! Nothing’s changed, I knew it was you from the first night. And now we’ve been here, living together for how long?” Sam was pure iron-clad determination. “Even if you did think it was temporary housing, you would have moved me by now. So I know you feel the same. I know because you’ve told me. You know a sure-fire way to slap a hands-off sign on me?”

Although Gabriel was never one to be outdone, he didn’t know what the right answer was. So he decided to go with, “You tell me. You sure as shit seem to have a good idea and God knows I’m sick of yelling at you.”

Sam’s fingertips trailed down Gabriel’s neck, and he grinned when the other alpha shuddered. “A mating claim, Gabriel.”

His eyes widened and his pupils dilated at the same time. “Yep. That...certainly would be a good hands-off sign.”

Sam looked like he was waiting on something because he expected more from Gabriel after dropping a bomb like that. After an awkward silence, boldness softening into puppy eyes, Gabriel finally gave in. “Is that what you want, Sammy? Do you want to be all mine?” he pitched the words seductively and stole a heated kiss.

It was one Sam melted into, their previous reason for fighting gone, but that wasn’t an answer. They made out until they’d tumbled into bed, until their clothes had been tossed away and their lips were swollen. But still, Sam had to ask because this was important, dammit—and Gabriel always used sex as a distraction!

“All gone,” he shoved the other alpha at arm’s length, hands on Gabriel’s chest—both breathing hard and their bodies protesting the hiatus. “I do. I do want to be yours, but you’ve never told me before and it’s always—”

“Yes.” He didn’t even let Sam finish his second-guessing, he pushed beyond the barrier holding them so far apart, their skin flush again, but with enough space to speak. “Yes, I’ll be yours, Sam. I didn’t think I had to say it for you to know, it’s pretty damn obvious how I feel about you.”

Sam chuckled and shook his head. “Actually...it’s not. You may think you’re being direct, but I never had any friggin idea. This is the first time I’ve really known for sure. I love you, Gabriel.”

He needed to get those words out there because if this was really happening like he hoped it was happening, it would be a joke to mate without saying those words first.

With a smile (not a grin or a smirk), an actual smile, Gabriel’s touch traced the exact spot his teeth would sink in if they were going to go through with it. “I love you, kid. Fuck, you got me thinkin’ about this, it’s on repeat in my head! Do you really mean it?”

“More than anything.” There was no hesitation, Sam was looking Gabriel straight in the eyes, and the Gabriel’s own gold ones lit up with excitement.

“Well then,” Gabriel stole another kiss, “You better be loud and proud of this hands-off sign,” and flicked his tongue over his throat.

“I want the world to know,” Sam gasped from the teasing, with love bursting from his heart and his scent, and his nose told him that everything was reciprocated. Which was honestly astonishing.

All through the night and almost into morning, the mating pheromones high in the air, they couldn’t get enough of each other. It was obsessive, yet fueled by unconditional love they hadn’t given voice to until now. But it was never too late, was it?

Yeah, things were going pretty damn good. Sam felt as though he’d found his niche, his freedom and Dean had already given him his blessing about spreading his wings. Now, he also had his own mate by his side, whom he didn’t have to worry about, knew he could count on and—hell, was more dangerous than he was. It was real, as well as a strange turn-on, but it looked like Winchesters never did anything by-the-book and it had to be unorthodox for it to work, as a rule.

And, dammit, was it working fantastically. Sam was content; truly, genuinely over the moon with his new life. He’d never experienced this kind of liberation and he was going to fight like hell to hold on to it, whatever it took.

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To put it simply, ‘mated life agreed with Dean.’ It was true, because Ruby, of all people, had said it. And that chick did not bullshit!

Castiel found his way into the team, and he worked on the security detail while they were running missions; any witnesses were KO’d in the blink of an eye before they even saw what was going on. Jo really enjoyed his dry sense of humor, he fit in easily because he didn’t stir the pot and Dean was downright giddy about the assimilation.

Of course, Dean wasn’t naïve. He knew damn well that Gabriel or another Krushnic would still
forward Cas targets every now and then, when they were overloaded with their own. Yet, it wasn’t really about the Krushnics. It was about Cas. Dean knew that, he accepted it; it was just another aspect of his mate that made him who he was.

When Cas stumbled home covered in blood and it looked like a hit had gone wrong, Dean wouldn’t say a word. He’d get the shower running, pull off his alpha’s clothing and try to see what the situation was like underneath the garments. He might ask, “Do any need stitches?” and Cas would answer in a calm voice.

No matter how worried, Dean would always smile when he caught even a flash of Cas’ newest tattoo, the words ‘Raised From Perdition’ scrawled across the top of his back, as tribute to Dean, poised above those beautiful wings. The omega never hesitated to tease him about how he ruined his mate’s theme of ‘sacrilege,’ but then Cas would always make him blush with romantic words in return. Fuck, Dean never saw them coming...

While Cas was in the shower, Dean would get him pajamas, fill up the tub in the other bathroom to soak the crimson-stained articles in cold water and get out his kit if he needed to. Once Cas dried off, he’d put on his boxers, drink the Gatorade Dean brought for him (sometimes there was a good amount of rum in it, depending on the damage) and sat on the closed toilet seat as his mate went to work easily plunging a needle through his flesh and tying him back together.

Cas would steal kisses, he’d whisper sweet nothings and thank him for his help. Dean knew he appreciated not being asked specifics, just being here for his alpha in the aftermath. He never thought for a second Cas wouldn’t win out in the end. His alpha was invincible and if he was gonna get a run of bad luck for saying that? It didn’t matter.

Because Cas hunted these people for himself. But he always came home to Dean.

Getting to fall asleep every night next to his alpha without worrying about a random prison guard walking by was a dream come true. With their work schedule and jobs being...freelance, they could have as much time together as they wished. They made love in the early mornings sometimes, stayed up all night after a successful job. And—oh God—the first time Dean got his heat?

It was pure insanity.

The omega had decided now that he was mated, he may as well try it out. It had been so long since he’d been in heat, he didn’t even know if the right things were still working correctly...down there. With Cas’ agreement, they both waited with bated breath for Dean’s heat to arrive. When it did, Dean probably left bed a total of ten times, and that was to use the bathroom.

Castiel’s alpha side was in overdrive in response to his mate. The sex was phenomenal, as it always was. By the time it was over, Dean couldn’t walk right for three days and ended up laying on the couch to recuperate, his muscles sore and his hole utterly wrecked. He wasn’t mad, though. It was an amazing reminder that made him smile through the discomfort because it was proof he could have heats again and his alpha would be there.

Oh, something neither of them had been expecting in the least, was a whole new side to Cas that developed during Dean’s cycle. The alpha provider. The protector. The alpha who needed to take care of his omega.

It was gentle and sweet, and went against every-fucking-thing Castiel was—that was the Castiel who surprisingly emerged. Dean got breakfast in bed. He didn’t even know Cas knew how to cook in the first place! Dean was carried lovingly to a full, ready-to-go-bath, joined by his mate, and showered with affection and cleaned by Cas’s gentle touch. At first, Dean had been shell-shocked. But then he’d quickly grown to love every second of it.

But he couldn’t talk about it with ‘sober’ Cas. Because he’d undoubtedly get pissed off or embarrassed by his own behavior. And Dean wanted to experience that again…

Yep, mated life did agree with him.

Everything was officially back to normal with the team and after a few months (weeks, in Kevin’s case), all the newcomers had earned their stripes. It was true, they never thought they’d find someone as good as Charlie was with tech, hacking into security cameras, accessing databases, deactivating alarm systems. Bobby having sent Kevin their way was a miracle.

In prison, Dean had no idea that he was sitting on a gold mine with the kid, and he felt like an asshole for taking some of his separation anxiety from Cas out on him. Let alone choking the kid on his god-awful fumes, and making their cell puke-fest-central. Kevin took it in stride, he was pretty damn stoked to have the job.

The twins were something else...Max flirted with everything that walked, Benny constantly kept having to remind him he had a damn fiancee and he didn’t swing that way. Ruby loved him for the entertainment. Everyone enjoyed Alicia, she was a sweetheart and had a cool head. Garth was absolutely taken with her. From a distance, of course. But everyone knew about his little crush.

Just recently, the pair had proved their worth in spades, totally saved their asses on a run that was a race against time. They’d put Max and Alicia in along with Ruby and Jo because the pairs
worked well together. Except, the guards were making their rounds earlier than they were supposed to, and the warning was nearly screamed from Kevin into their ear pieces.

Maybe Garth was correct about the Twin Mind Reading? In a flash, Alicia and Max double-timed their duties, then maneuvered to the other side of the bank, the twins all but threw their loot at the women, and told Jo and Ruby to take it and go, saying they’d finish the girl’s share and ordered Ruby and Jo to rush back out. The women were reluctant and they didn’t want to leave them behind to fend for themselves, but Kevin kept yelling at them to get out of there! And they had half the bounty in their arms; they needed to get it back and into the van!

Everyone was watching the screen holding their breath, and not only did they pull it off; they got every single item that Ruby and Jo were supposed to bring back, and then took an extra—something for the group to sell off. There was an unspoken communication, like they’d been perfecting it since birth. It was the only reason they hadn’t gotten caught or aborted the mission!

Since that was now a very, very strict rule for the entire team. If you were in danger, you got the fuck out. No one, and Dean stressed no one, was ever going to be put in harm’s way and in a situation where they could get caught. He valued them too much, and he’d rather throw away a deal than risk what he’d been through for the cash.

Even though Dean was initially angry with the twins disobeying, they assured him that they hadn’t even once doubted they were going to make it out fine. That’s when Max and Alicia had been taken out for drinks and in that moment, Dean admitted it felt right.

Like they really were getting to be family. The twins had risked themselves getting caught, putting Ruby and Jo first. That meant something, and everyone recognized it. Especially Dean. He never thought he’d have another team as well-oiled and as tightly-run as the one he used to have. These new players proved themselves. They were the best additions he could’ve asked for, and while Charlie and Sam couldn’t be replaced, they could say they...opened up these positions for the three newcomers. Or something.

Castiel whispered one night, “I’m quite happy for you, Dean. I admit, when we were taken in after the prison break, I had my doubts and concerns. But I understand the situation was highly unusual and tumultuous for everyone involved. Seeing everything from the sidelines, watching you work, I never could have grasped it while we were locked up. But seeing you in motion—you’re an amazing leader, Dean. I’m constantly in awe of you every day.”

Dean was blushing, he knew it. But...how should he respond? Did he brush it off, or...? Cas didn’t open up like this very often. The alpha wasn’t afraid to, but the occasions just never arose. Apparently, it looked like right now was the time to tell Dean all of this.

So Dean chuckled and said, “Weren’t expecting me to lead the crew, huh?” So what—he had to throw a little self-deprecation in there. “But thanks, Cas. That, uh, means a lot to me. I guess you do have a different view, don’t you? Like, a hybrid kinda thing. Working with us and working with your family, but mostly, being my rock and being my mate. I wanna thank you for that,” Dean voiced and held Cas tighter. “If I hadn’t found you, I woulda gone my entire life with a hole in my heart. A piece of me missing that would never be filled.”

“The concept is still baffling,” Castiel agreed, kissing the top of his mate’s head. “The odds, staggering, the results...inspiring and absolutely stunning. Although I was decently used to...being somewhat empty, being whole is an experience I could never imagine living without again. You’ve made me better for it, Dean.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Dean chuckled and nipped Castiel’s collarbone. “You’ve always been perfect, shut up.”

“Oh but you’ve allowed me to continue being myself. And I cannot be more grateful. I was so nervous that when we left, you’d feel different about my... extracurricular activities as time passed. And yet, you haven’t so much as batted an eye. Your word, as I’ve come to find out, is steel. And you don’t make promises lightly, for that sole purpose. I feel blessed each day that you’re in my life, in my arms—” He cuffed a finger under Dean’s chin and redirected his focus upward.

Dean knew damn well he was fuckin’ beet-red. Probably all the way to the tip of his ears! Castiel gave him a knowing smirk, before he descended upon Dean’s lips. Then he didn’t have to act. All he had to do was feel. And that led to a lovely, raunchy evening.

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Dean had printed off a sheet of finances and was doing one of the things he loved and loathed.

Math.

He’d had the most trouble with fuckin’ math when he was in high school, not because he didn’t understand but because of shit teachers who gave him a complex! It was funny how those things always lingered with you. It made him triple-check every number, even though he always got it right the first time, but this wasn’t something he could screw up.

These were paychecks. The money part of it? Yes—that happened to be the part that Dean loved. Adding up the jobs, seeing the totals, what they all grossed from the previous records he had—it was his own twisted enjoyment that always sucked him in. And these last three jobs?
They were gonna have the team assured and excited that they’d stuck it out and were still working with the Winchesters!

Winchester. Singular. Fuck.

“Dean?” Cas’s brows were scrunched as he brought him warmed-up alfredo from the previous night for a snack. “Are you alright, your scent is—”

Dean stole the bowl and jammed a forkful into his mouth so he didn’t have to answer. Except for the fact it was blistering hot and Dean’s jaw fell open and he dropped the half-chewed food right back in. Slowly, he turned to look over his shoulder to find Castiel looking thoroughly unimpressed with crossed arms and a raised eyebrow.

“Now do you wish to tell me what’s going on?” He took the dish away to let it cool off. “Since you’re being a child.”

“Nothin’. Just...lots of work here. And I was…” He trusted Cas and even though Dean may have hesitated, he went ahead and shared his thoughts. “I was just thinking about Sammy. I miss him, ya know?”

“Oh.” The alpha eyes lit up in understanding. “Yes, I can see how that would be quite difficult. Is this a job he would normally do?”

Dean nodded with a sigh. “Yeah. Anything brainy went to Sam. Anything that goes ka-boom went to me. Pretty simple concept. Or, it was, anyway.”

“He’ll always be on your mind, he’s your brother. And you two were very close. It’s all right to mourn, in a way. It’s fine to miss him. Know that I’m here to talk,” Cas made sure Dean was looking into his eyes, then pressed a kiss to his forehead.

“Thanks, Cas—” he had to pause, because his butt was buzzing.

Or rather, it was the cellphone in his back pocket that was set on vibrate. He handed the papers over to his mate as he fished it out.

When he looked at the name, his jaw dropped and he gasped out, “Holy shit—” He instantly answered, and gleefully greeted, “Heya, Sammy! Long time, no talk!” and the shocked expression on Castiel’s face mirrored Dean’s own feelings because this was the classic definition of ‘speak of the devil!’

“Heh, I know, right? I’m sorry about that, integration has been...well, you know how that goes. Is Cas with you?” Sam asked brightly, and Dean was glad he sounded like he was doing well.

When he set the phone down on the table, next to the scalding pasta, he said, “Gotcha on speaker. Have to say, I’m a little bummed out that you didn’t call to catch up and you want to talk to my damn mate, too. Gonna give me a complex, bitch.”

“I swear, Dean, I’ll call soon and we’ll chat, just you and me! Even better, we can see each other!” He really did sound like an excited puppy, wagging its tail.

While Dean paused, Castiel picked up where he left up and asked, “See each other? If you’re where I saw you last time, that would be rather difficult, Sam.”

“Not as hard as you may think. Actually, that’s the whole reason I called, Gabriel’s working a job that requires a little extra stealth. You guys in?”

Cas and Dean were already relaxed back into normalcy, even if it was criminal normalcy, so taking on another job would be a piece of cake! Plus, seeing Sam? Dean would jump at the chance!

“Fuck yeah, we are. Wanna send over the details? We’ll give ’em a glance and see what the plan is. How are you, Sammy? Feel like we never talk, and Cas sees you more than I do.”

There was a frown on Dean’s face, and his alpha couldn’t debate that it was a lie. It was true—Cas had seen Sam more than once, and Dean had seen him a total of zero times since the trade. On the random occasions Castiel had checked into HQ for bounty information that couldn’t be electronically wired, Sam was always there. Sam was always glowing with a smile, and Dean...

“I’m really, really good. Actually…” his voice dipped down into something timid. “We, um. We mated.”

“What?” Dean’s voice was shrill into the phone and caused a loop of static. “I mean...wheew, good for you! I mean, I…” he didn’t have the words. Or at least the right ones, and even though he had been the one to encourage it, the fact that his little brother was mated still surprised him. But he could offer, “Congrats. If you two are happy and he’s not being a jerk-off, that’s all that matters, all right?”

That must have sounded sincere enough, because Sam sharply inhaled, and in the next breath he instructed, “All right, paper work’s coming through now. Give it a look, call me back with your answer, okay? And yeah. I am. Really happy.” He followed by inquiring with caution, “How’s
the team doing? New guys?” because it was the brothers who’d founded the larceny group.

Sam still had an emotional stake in it, no matter where his home base was now.

“Oh, my sweet baby bro, worried about us?” the omega crooned, leaning on his elbows. “Twins are stellar. But dude, I’m going crazy in between cases! Yeah, Kevin’s good, but he’s too good. He can usually make us meet with the marks all cordial and shit, then take off. What ever happened to scaling buildings? Breaking and entering like supervillains? Being sneaky and the rollercoaster thrill-ride of a it all?”

“Well…” Sam hummed and obliged, “There was this one time where you were in an incredibly high-security penitentiary which was considered a wake-up call. Kevin, in the same boat—hell, same cell. But, bygones, right?”

“Hey! I’d say that we both got what we wanted out of that…misadventure! A Krushnic apiece, amiright?” he said lewdly, and Sam snorted.

He called Dean out with, “You’re wiggling your eyebrows. Stop it, you freak. You take all the value and the meaning out of it when you—!”

“Let him have his fun!” That was Gabriel’s voice in the background

Sam could be heard shifting around in his seat and reminded his brother, “Just…look shit over. And call me back.”

“Fine. Fine, fine Sammy! I’ll do homework! As if crunching numbers wasn’t enough!” Dean huffed dramatically and hung up, slamming his phone on the table.

“Mm,” Cas was pulling the pages out of the printer as they were being spit out in the next room over.

Dean whirled around and raised a brow at his mate, echoing, “Mm? What’s that’s supposed to mean?”

Nothing could disguise the shark-like grin on Castiel’s face as brought the paperwork back, then aimlessly reached out for his mate. He was so distracted, captivated by the job in ink, that Dean took pity on him, taking his hand to lead him.

Castiel chuckled, “This will be fun. You’re going to love it. As am I.”

“Is that a fact?” Dean asked as his alpha had pulled them together, bodies flush so Dean could whisper in his ear and flick his tongue over the shell. “Am I gonna love it as much as I love you?”

“You better not.” Castiel turned around went back for another round when he heard more whirling from the machine. He set the ever-growing stacks of papers on the table, so they wouldn’t pile up and fall out of the tray. Once he thought it was finally finished, Cas was right back to Dean and wrapped his arms around him. “I promise, it’s a good one, though. You seem stressed. Want to wrestle in the bedroom?”

“If by wrestle you mean have crazy, friggin aerobic sex, then, yes.”

“That’s exactly what I was implying,” he confirmed with a serious nod but his scent was lighting off like fireworks.

Dean loved every second, and if this was just the beginning? What other amazing scents would be be able to draw from his mate this time? Oh, the challenge was enticing and right before their lips brushed, Dean pulled away. Confusion danced in the already lust-dilated pupils, but Dean didn’t force him to wait very long.

Instead, he took off running, shouting, “Catch me!” over his shoulder and heard a very, very alpha growl.

Today was going to be awesome, he could already tell.

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