Dean's Heterosexuality Was Dead to Begin With: A Destiel Carol

by VampirePam

Summary

After so much heartbreak, Dean is fresh out of Christmas spirit. When he finds himself visited by three ghosts, he is surprised to discover that their true purpose has little to do with Christmas and much to do with a certain Angel of the Lord...

Notes

Some significant spoilers for the show up through 5.10 (and vague allusions to later events, but nothing spoilery).

See the end of the work for more notes

The sudden whirr of a chainsaw had Dean sprinting toward the living room. "Sammy? Sammy?" he shouted, shotgun in hand. With everything that had happened in the past few months, he was taking no chances.

After rounding the corner, however, he discovered that his concern had been misplaced. "Is...is that what I think it is?"

Sam smiled - a broad, slightly sheepish grin that made him look so young, it hurt. There beside
him was the biggest goddamn pine tree Dean had ever seen, its trunk newly shortened. "I cut it down in the park. I probably shouldn't have - pretty sure it's illegal - but it was so perfect that I couldn't resist."

"What the hell is it doing here?" Dean asked, though he knew the answer. He walked a few paces closer to it, strangely unwilling to relinquish the shotgun.

"What do you mean, 'what's it doing here'?" The grin faded a bit. "It's Christmas, Dean! Close enough, anyway."

"I thought we'd mutually agreed to give up on this 'Joy to the World' bullcrap," Dean said. They hadn't celebrated Christmas since Dean's ill-advised attempt to give Sam one last holiday memory before he was dragged off to hell. Funnily enough, he hadn't felt much like having himself a merry little Christmas after that.

Sam sighed. He let the tree fall to the ground, and straightened so that he was standing a foot or two from Dean. "Look, I know it's been a hard year."

"A hard year?" Dean almost laughed. "Yeah, man, I think you could say that."

"But don't you see? That's why we've got to do it!" Sam gestured around them helplessly. "You had it right before - the way we live, any Christmas could be our last together. And the way I figure it, that means we've got to do it up right."

Sam's wounded, pleading look punched Dean right in the gut, but he just...Couldn't.

"Ellen and Jo aren't even a month in the ground yet, Sam. Bobby's only just stopped threatening to blow his brains out on a daily basis from being in that damn chair. Hell, you're still only a couple months off the demon blood!"

"And you know who could give a flying fuck about any of it? The same Big Guy Upstairs everyone's so keen to sing Hallelujah to. How's he spending his Christmas, I wonder? I'll tell you - lying on a beach somewhere with a couple of blondes, sipping margaritas, and laughing his cosmic ass off at all of us and our petty little problems."

Just thinking about it made him want to slam his boot into that Christmas tree over and over again until he'd shaken every single needle to the floor. Only the certain knowledge of how much it would hurt Sam stopped him.

"Dean..." Sam began, reaching a hand for him, but Dean shrugged him off.

"You deck all the halls you want to, Sammy. I'm out." He turned and stalked out of the room to avoid seeing the disappointment and worry all over his brother's face.

There was a time when he would have given anything to see Sam so excited about Christmas. All those years he'd spent cobbling together little pieces of other people's holidays, desperately hoping that his little brother wouldn't notice that the presents were stolen or the decorations made of tin foil...and now it was Sam using Christmas to play pretend for him.

He wasn't sure if the terrible irony of it all made him want to laugh, cry, or punch a hole in the wall of Bobby's panic room. As tempting as all three sounded, Dean was forced to admit that another alternative appealed even more.

God, it was fucking ridiculous - was he actually considering summoning an angel of the Lord just to yammer to him like a girl at a slumber party about his feelings? When had he gone this soft?
Desperate for distraction, Dean picked up the nearest piece of artillery - which happened to be the shotgun he'd brought with him - and focused all his energy on polishing it to a burnished shine.

Besides, he thought as his rag moved over the wood, Cas must have some sort of important angel business to be doing on Christmas Eve, anyway. As much as Sam liked to joke otherwise, it wasn't as if Cas was actually his angel.

"God damn it," Dean muttered, thrusting the gleaming shotgun to one side and picking up a revolver. This was supposed to be taking his mind off Cas and Christmas trees, and all it was doing was giving him more time to think about both.

Still, there was jack shit to do in the panic room for fun - and he was definitely not heading back to the land of mistletoe and holly to have another fight with Sam. So Dean polished the weapons, unloaded then reloaded them, tested their springs, counted the bullets, then rearranged them on the wall.

As he worked on his fifth shotgun, Dean felt his eyelids grow heavy, his aching shoulder muscles begin to release the weapon from his grip. Maybe closing my eyes for just a few minutes wouldn’t hurt...

"Now, I know Bobby taught you better than that, boy," a familiar female voice said, cutting through the fog. "Falling asleep with a firearm? You never know who or what might be lurking around."

A few thoughts occurred in quick succession: How did this woman get into the panic room? How did she know him? Why did she sound so much like...

Dean's blood ran cold. In seconds, his eyes were wide open, his back against the wall, and his hand on the trigger. "What the hell are you?"

"You're not Ellen," he growled, thrusting the gun closer to her face. "These walls? Lined with salt and iron. No demons or ghosts allowed. So I'm gonna ask one more time before I just fucking shoot you. What. The. Hell. Are. You?"

He knew it wasn't her, but damn if the illusion wasn't complete. The way she dressed, spoke, even carried herself... It took everything he had to keep the shotgun from shaking in his hand.

Not-Ellen chuckled. "Nothing gets past you, does it, Dean? Okay, fine, you got me - I'm not her. Not on a basic atomic level, anyway."

"Ten seconds to actually answer the question or I start firing and don't stop til every single gun in this room is empty. And let me tell you - Bobby's got a lot of guns."

"But you're wrong, too. I don't just look like her, you know." The woman seemed distinctly unimpressed by his threats. "Her personality, her memories? They're all in here."

She made to step closer, but backed up again when Dean shoved the shotgun at her once more. "She didn't blame you, you know. Not even at the end, when her baby was dying in her arms. She knew it wasn't your fault."

"Three. Seconds!" Dean shouted, silently cursing the waver in his voice.

"All right, all right, don't get your panties in a bunch!" Not-Ellen smiled again before backing up
to take the seat Dean had vacated on the bed. "I'll cut to the chase for you. Fact is, I can't tell you what I am. Trust me when I say, your tiny mortal brain can't handle it."

"Why don't you try me?" Dean crossed to her and lifted the gun to her temples. "Unless you'd rather try having your brainsplattered across the wall."

"Knock yourself out, kid," Not-Ellen said with a sigh. "Although I gotta be honest, all these guns are really cluttering up the ambiance of the room." Dean watched in horror as she snapped her fingers and every piece of artillery in the room evaporated into thin air. "There. Much better."

Dean staggered back again, bracing himself on the nearest desk. "How did you...?"

"I told you, sweetie." Not-Ellen crossed her arms, her expression amused. "You, tiny mortal brain. Me, ineffable cosmic powers. Now that we have that sorted out, why don't you try a question I might be able to answer?"

Dean ran his hands over his face. What the hell was going on? He thought about yelling for Bobby and Sam, but something told him it wouldn't do any good. Besides, just because Whatever-The-Hell-She-Was was feeling warm and fuzzy now didn't mean she wouldn't turn on him in a second. He couldn't risk putting either of them in harm's way - especially when it was clearly him she wanted.

Dean supposed that was as good a starting point as any. "What, uh, what is it you want?"

Fuck, he wished she'd stop smiling at him like that - like she was just Ellen, popping down from the hereafter for a quick Christmas hello. Enemies wearing the faces of friends was one thing; he'd seen enough people he loved possessed by demons to be able to handle it.

But even though Dean knew his senses were lying to him, when she smiled at him, exuding that warm, but fierce protectiveness that was so essentially Ellen...a tired and broken part of him wanted nothing more than to throw his arms around her and beg forgiveness until his throat was sore.

His poker face must have been as piss poor as Sam's generally were, for she stopped smiling and said quietly, "This will be easier if you pretend I'm her. Just two old friends having a little heart-to-heart."

Under normal circumstances, Dean would have told her, with a half dozen creatively deployed expletives, to go to hell. But the truth was, he was tired. His shoulders ached, his head pounded, and every second more he stared at Ellen felt like a hole in his chest was ripping a little bit wider.

So maybe he was giving in - so what? Not like anybody was there to see. Besides, his gut was telling him pretty damn clearly that whatever this woman was here to tell him, he'd have a much easier time talking about with Ellen.

He took a deep breath and began again. "What're you doing here, Ellen?"

She shifted to one edge of the bed and cocked her head to one side, in a gesture that clearly said, "You want a drink? No conversation on earth that doesn't go down better with a glass of whisky."

"Well, yeah, but we don't have -" he stopped midsentence to watch two tumblers and a bottle arrange themselves on the table beside Ellen.

"Perks of the gig," she said, pouring the light amber liquid into a glass, then handing it to him. "Now drink up - you're gonna need it."
Dean eyed the whisky suspiciously. Ellen rolled her eyes, laughing a little. "Do you honestly think I'd go to all this damn trouble just to poison you? Hey, you want to go into this sober, it's your funeral."

He debated for a moment before deciding that no, sober was just about the last thing he wanted to be right now. When he drained the glass in one, Ellen reached over to pour him another.

"Now, let's get down to business. Fact is, I'm here because the Powers That Be are staring down a future they'd do just about anything to avert. I can't give you the nitty-gritty, against the code, but let's just say things go real bad, real fast."

Dean picked up his glass again. This time he sipped slowly, letting the liquid burn his tongue before scorching its way down his throat. "Yeah, well, from where I sit, my genius brother freeing Lucifer from Hell and setting off the motherfucking Apocalypse makes that old news. These "Powers That Be" want me to do more about that than I already am, I'll tell them just where they can stick it."

"You've got it wrong," Ellen said, knocking back her own glass of whisky. "This has got nothing to do with the Apocalypse, Lucifer, any of it."

"All right, then, what?" Dean demanded, tired of all the back-and-forth. "What the hell is it about?"

Ellen put down the glass and pivoted to look him straight in the eye. "Castiel."

Dean felt his stomach drop and prayed that his instinctual panic hadn't shown in his face. He also tamped down his initial urge to hit her with a barrage of questions about Cas - Was he okay? Had they sent someone to talk to him, too? What did he have to do with this unspeakably terrible future? - and instead shot back, "What about him? I'm not my angel's keeper."

"No," agreed Ellen, "You're just the stubborn idiot who's head over heels for him and too chickenshit to do a damn thing about it."

Dean had to quickly stifle his initial urge to vomit. He could feel Ellen's stare boring through him. Whatever he might have been expecting, it sure as hell wasn't that.

He forced himself to laugh. "You might want to tell those "Powers That Be" to get themselves a new crystal ball. Afraid they're barking up the wrong tree on this one."

And it was laughable, wasn't it? Him, in love, with Cas! Sure, he had a sort of weird affection for the guy. Yes, maybe a stray thought of that kind had come to him once or twice in a weak moment, but, come on, that kind of thing happened to everybody! It didn't mean a damn thing.

Ellen raised an eyebrow, clearly unimpressed. "Uh-huh. Look, kid, you don't have to convince me - I'm just the messenger. The heavy lifters come later."

"Heavy...lifters?" Dean did his best to sound only politely curious, but had a feeling he'd failed miserably.

Ellen's smile was less benevolent this time. "They've got names in our language, but most humans know them as Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come."

Dean nearly poured the remaining whisky down his shirt in shock. "I'm sorry, are you seriously telling me that I'm getting Christmas Carol'd right now?"
"We've got a few thousand years on the story," Ellen said, a bit defensively. "Just made the mistake of giving the treatment to a nineteenth century novelist with writer's block. Won't be doing that again anytime soon."

"Oh, well, silly me, that explains everything," Dean proclaimed, choosing pacing over sitting. "So, let me just check that I've got this right - whether or not Cas is getting laid is so goddamn important to the future of the universe that God is sending these "Ghosts of Christmas Whenever" to make sure the job gets done?"

She snorted derisively. "Who said anything about God? You said it yourself - Big Guy's out of the game. The guys I work for? We pick up where God leaves off."

"Gosh, thanks, that sure is comforting," Dean shouted. "Glad someone out there's picking up the pieces. You could be out stopping the Apocalypse, maybe stirring up some world peace, but you know, trying to orchestrate my sex life's good, too. Definitely of equal importance."

"Go on, yell away, if it'll make you feel better," Ellen said. "Hell, yell the house down for all they care, Dean - it's not gonna change their minds. Once something like this is set in motion, no force on heaven or earth can stop it."

Dean examined her face, searching for any trace of deceit, but found only more of the steely resolve he wasn't sure whether to credit to Ellen's influence or the woman's true nature.

Finally, he sighed and downed the rest of his whisky. He had a feeling he would need it before this was all over. "Fine, let's say I believe you, and figments of Charles Dickens' imagination are coming to visit me tonight. What now?"

"Come on, Dean, you know the drill," Ellen said. "There was a time when you read it every year on Christmas Eve after Sammy had gone to bed. You should expect the first ghost..." She looked at him expectantly.

Dean felt like he was in middle school again, being forced to answer for himself by a seemingly omniscient teacher. "When the bell tolls one..." he muttered, looking away.

"A plus, boy," Ellen said with a grin, rising from the bed. "Well, I'm afraid that's all there is. I should go, give you a little time to prepare yourself."

"Wait!" Dean shouted, suddenly not so ready to be alone with this new information. "I gotta ask you something."

Ellen turned, her expression intrigued. "Go on, then, shoot."

"Why you?" Dean had merely been meaning to stall her, but once this question escaped his lips, he realized that it had been on his mind all along. "Why'd they send you to play Marley?"

Ellen's smile turned sad. "I was wondering if you'd think of that." She began to rub her fingers up and down her arms, as if suddenly cold.

"Let's just say you're not the only chickenshit here when it comes to matters of the heart." As she spoke, she began to move slowly around the room, trailing her hands reverently over every surface. Dean watched her, mesmerized. It was almost as if - but no, it couldn't be...could it?

"You're not saying that you...and Bobby were...?" Dean trailed off, feeling hopelessly out of his depth.

"It was never anything official - a look here, a touch there, a few unspoken understandings. But if
I'd stopped getting in my own way, who knows? Hell, maybe we'd still be playing house today, hanging tinsel over the sigils, garlanding the gun racks. My own damn fault I'll never know."

Dean felt like the bottom had dropped out of his world for the second time that night. "Ellen, I..." he reached out an uncertain hand toward her shoulder.

At his touch, she turned back toward him. "Do me a favor, huh, kid?" she asked quietly. She reached up to brush a hand over his cheek.

Though he knew that technically, she wasn't Ellen, he couldn't help but feel like all the important parts were there regardless. And if there were a chance he could do something to make things right, he knew equally well that he'd never forgive himself for not trying. So he nodded.

"Take care of him for me?" Tears glistened in her eyes. "His damn pride makes him hide it, but he's hurting, bad. Make sure he doesn't do anything stupid."

Dean had to push past the lump forming in his throat to get out, "Yeah, Ellen, I promise."

She smiled one last time. "Bobby was always saying you were a good kid. Glad to know he was right." With that, she stepped back and gave him a little wave before fading again into nothingness.

Alone once more, Dean stumbled to the bed and let himself fall. His head spun with all the knowledge he had just received and the frightening possibilities of the visions he was yet to see.

As he laid his head on the pillow for what seemed like a few seconds, Dean heard the quiet beeping from an alarm clock from somewhere in the panic room.

It soon grew louder and more insistent. He sat up with the intention of finding it and turning it off, but was dissuaded by the blinding white light that soon filled the room. With it came a different, yet equally familiar female voice: "Hello, Dean."

Though his vision was still returning, Dean didn't need it to recognize his visitor. "Hello, Anna. Or do you prefer Christmas Past?"

End Notes

Apologies for any liberties taken with the source material, as the bulk of my knowledge of it comes from having watched Muppet Christmas Carol roughly a skabillion times.

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